

# Yōga Nidra

We have spent a lot of time in the head recently so I thought a '*yoga nidra*' meditation would help us return our focus to the body. It is important that we retain that connection between mind and body to experience wholeness.

We spend about 33 % of our lives asleep. We tend to fall into bed at the end of the day exhausted and expect to fall asleep in minutes and sometimes we do. But, more often than not the quality of our sleep is not very good.

If we sleep well then we are more in touch with ourselves, others, nature and the rhythms of life. Bhuddist Monks don't have alarm clocks, they don't need them, this is because through meditation they are in touch with their circadian rhythms and know when it is time for them to wake.

- **Experiment: Try setting you internal alarm clock by telling yourself what time you want to wake up.**

## Preparing for Sleep

1. Don't eat for 3 hours before bedtime
2. Drink water before bed – helps to dilute toxins in the body.
3. Shower – cleanses any negative energy you have accumulated from others through the day.
4. Gently stretch your muscles to release tension/negative emotions held there.
5. Ensure you are well supported in bed.
6. Set yourself an intention (sankulpa) before bed  
e.g. I am . . . .
7. Settle down, breathe and do body scan.

Yoga Nidra is a great way to ensure good nights sleep.

## What is Yoga Nidra?

Ⓢ Yoga = (Yolk/Union)

Ⓢ Nidra = Sleep

- Yoga Nidra is yogic sleep (feels like the stage where you are just falling asleep between sleep and awake)
- Typically induced by guided meditation.
- Ancient technique from India, as old as yoga itself.
- Used widely across the world – US Army uses technique to help soldiers recover from PTSD.
- Study published in the *International Journal of Yoga Therapy* “showed significant decreases in negative thoughts of self-blame and depression.”
- Yoga nidra is a state in which the body is completely relaxed.
- Practitioner becomes systematically and increasingly aware of the inner world by following a set of verbal instructions.
- Yoga Nidra guides practitioners into the “hypnagogic state”—the threshold between alpha and theta waves - the very edge where the body “sleeps” while the mind is lucid.
- In yoga nidra we internalise all other senses apart from hearing
- Goal is to achieve Samadhi - ‘put together’. The last of the element of the 8 fold path (remember that from when we learned about the 4 noble truths?!)
- It is deepest possible state of relaxation while still maintaining full consciousness.
- It is said that 1 hour of yoga nidra is equivalent to 4 hours of deep sleep.

### **Benefits of Yoga Nidra**

- Ⓢ Reduces stress and anxiety
- Ⓢ Slows brain waves
- Ⓢ Allows body to rest and heal more effectively
- Ⓢ Helps to heal trauma
- Ⓢ Reduces chronic pain
- Ⓢ Reduces insomnia and promotes quality of sleep

- Ⓢ Helps regulate hormone levels.
- Ⓢ Reduces symptoms of Type 2 Diabetes - body has better control of glucose levels.

### Positives

- Ⓢ Anyone can do it.
- Ⓢ You can't do it wrong – it's okay to fall asleep
- Ⓢ Easily incorporated into everyday life – before bed.

### Preparation for Yoga Nidra

- Ⓢ Be in a space where you can lie down and not be disturbed
- Ⓢ Lie in savasana position (as pictured below)



- Ⓢ Savasana means Corpse Pose
- Ⓢ You may want a pillow under your head to support your neck
- Ⓢ You may need pillows under your knees to support your lower back

- Ⓜ It is VERY important to be comfortable. You don't want any distractions.
- Ⓜ Cover yourself with a blanket – to keep in the heat and energy you produce.
- Ⓜ You can cover your eyes if you wish
- Ⓜ More effective when listen to through headphones.
- Ⓜ Don't worry if you drift off to sleep – the practice is still beneficial as it taps into the subconscious mind.
- Ⓜ Enjoy x