

# Yoga Nidra

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Yoga Nidra is conscious relaxation inviting refreshment to the mind and body. The goal is to relax with awareness allowing the mind to calm, emotions to resolve and the body to let go. Don't worry if random thoughts pass through your mind or if you fall asleep.

When practicing Yoga Nidra with a class first explain the purpose/benefits. Second, outline the 8 steps participants will pass through during the practice of Yoga Nidra. Third, take them through Yoga Nidra. Finally, ask for a sharing of impression, experiences or if they have questions.

## 1. Entry

Lie down on your back on the floor. Legs slightly apart, arms a little away from the body, hands turned upwards. Let your body sink into the floor. Make any last adjustments so your body is comfortable and can remain completely still during the practice. Settle deeper into the ground. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath and feel your cares and worries carried away from you.

Simply develop the feeling of relaxation. It is like the feeling just before you go to sleep. Sleep may come but try to remain awake throughout the practice.

During Yoga Nidra you are developing hearing and feeling with caring and compassion. Don't analyze or intellectualize the instructions. If thoughts, sensations, impressions come to you let them come, then continue with the practice.

Now invite relaxation through the entire body. Focus on complete stillness. Develop an awareness of your body from the top of your head to the tips of your toes. Inhale and exhale. Again. Allow yourself to let go. Sink deeper and deeper.

Become aware of the sounds outside the room one by one. Now bring your awareness to the sounds inside the room one by one. Now bring your awareness to your physical body lying on the floor in stillness. Feel the body become heavier and heavier.

## 2. Sankalpa/Resolve

Go inside and inquire into your heart's desire. Discover a personal resolve or sankalpa to guide your practice. Find something with meaning; a short, positive statement. For example: "I am peaceful." "I am happy and healthy." "I am positive and in charge of my life." "I am successful in all my undertakings." Repeat your sankalpa or personal resolve three times to yourself with awareness and feeling as if it were already happening.

## 3. Body Scan

Focus your mind on the parts of your body. Relax each area as it is mentioned. Quickly bring your awareness from part to part in your body. Repeat that part of the body in your mind with attention and compassion. Do not concentrate too intensely, simply remain alert and bring your awareness to each part



of the body. Imagine your life energy flowing from one part to another bringing health and vitality. You may want to image a healing light shining on each part as it is mentioned. (Guide through the body.)

#### 4. Breath and Prana Awareness

Notice your breath. Feel it flowing naturally in and out. Don't change the rhythm. Allow it to happen naturally. Continue in complete awareness of your breath. Feel the gentle rise and fall of the abdomen and chest. Imagine a wave of breath passing through your body. Exhale and the wave flows down, carrying away all tension. Inhale and a fresh wave flows upward through your body bringing calm, health and vitality. (Guide with counting through 3-20 breaths.)

#### 5. Feelings and Sensations

Feelings and emotions come in opposite pairs: hot and cold, pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow, etc. Relax into your feeling body. Notice any feelings, emotions or sensations that arise. Welcome them with compassion and without judgement. Bring your attention to one dominate emotion or sensation. Identify it without prejudice. What color is this feeling? What is its shape? Where do you experience this feeling in your body? Now invite the opposite feeling to permeate our body and mind. Allow it to fully form. What color is this feeling? What is its shape? Where do you experience it in your body?

#### 6. Visualization

Imagine your favorite place. A place of comfort, relaxation, strength, safety. It may be:

- A deep blue ocean with a white sand beach, the warm sun shining down upon you
- A field of green grass with a blue cloudless sky overhead, birds singing, the breeze softly blowing
- A tall tree, stretching up to the sky, roots firmly planted into the soil
- A babbling mountain stream, cool water cascading over the rocks
- A cozy blanket tucked around you, your favorite warm drink cradled in your hands

#### 7. Repeat Sankalpa

Return to your sankalpa or resolve. Once again repeat it with feeling and emphasis.

#### 8. Return to Awareness

Start to take normal natural breaths. Bring your awareness to your body lying relaxed on the floor. Become aware of the room, the four corners, the ceilings, the floor, the noises. Take your time. Bring yourself slowly back to awareness. Start to move, gently, slowly, stretching as you awaken. Rub your hands together creating heat, then cup them over your eyes. As the heat fades gently massage your face. Bring your knees to your chest and roll over onto your side. Whenever you feel ready open your eyes.