

Yoga Nidra for Healing

INTRODUCTION

It is time for yoga nidra. Find a comfortable reclining position lying down on the floor on your yoga mat. Or, if moving to and from the floor is difficult, lie down on your bed. Try to place yourself symmetrically in the yoga pose known as Savasana. Be sure that the position can be maintained in comfort and stillness for the duration of the practice. You may wish to use a pillow for the head, support the backs of the knees with a rolled blanket or bolster and be sure that the heels are not touching the floor. Rest your arms either on your belly or beside your body. Close the eyes and cover them with a light scarf if the room is too bright. Ensure that you will be comfortable, warm, and not disturbed.

Practicing Yoga Nidra cultivates the witness consciousness; that part of your awareness that watches what occurs in the physical body, emotional reactions, and habitual thoughts. My voice will act as an anchor which will keep you awake and in the present moment. In the space between full wakefulness and sleeping, where the witness resides, deep healing takes place in the body and emotions. Yoga Nidra cultivates equanimity where you are free from mental and emotional entanglements, desires, opinions, and judgments. During this practice, your attention will move to breath awareness, bodily sensations, and image visualization as you follow the instructions. If the mind becomes overactive with thoughts or worries, simply return to the sound of my voice and continue the practice with ease.

ACTIVE LISTENING

Besides the sound of my voice, become aware of any other sounds you can hear in this moment. Nothing else but what you can hear without strain. Begin to focus on the most distant sounds that you can hear. Let your sense of hearing radiate outward, searching out distant sounds and following each for a few moments. Move your attention from sound to sound without labeling the source. Allow each sound to add to the symphony of vibration that is present without pushing away any sound. Gradually bring your attention to closer sounds, to sounds outside the building, to sounds inside the building, to sounds inside the room, to the sound of breath moving in and out of your body.

BREATH AWARENESS

Focus on your natural easy breath. Notice the feeling of the breath as it comes in to your nostrils. There is a sense of coolness as you inhale the breath. Follow the path of your breath into your nose, your sinuses, the back of your throat, into your lungs. There is a sense of warmth as you exhale the breath. Feel this warmth on your upper lip as you breathe out.

Allow each breath to become longer and slower to help calm the anxiety of the day. Take a long slow inhalation, followed by a long slow exhalation. Make your exhale even slower and more relaxed. Can you notice the slight pause after the exhale? Long, slow inhale, longer, slower exhale, and pause. The urge to breathe in will bubble up and when you need to inhale, please do so. Long slow inhale, longer slower exhale, and then pause where the body is neither breathing in nor out. Continue breathing in this way for a few more moments. Now go back to the natural easy breath pattern, releasing any control over the inhale or exhale.

SANKALPA

From this state of deep relaxation call to mind your sankalpa or resolve; the short positive statement in simple language stated as though it were already true. Allow it to arise from your deepest wish for self-nurturance repeating it silently three times. The sankalpa you make during yoga nidra plants a seed in the fertile soil of your mind to bring about transformation and healing. Also say to yourself, "I am practicing yoga nidra, I will not sleep"

ROTATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

You will now embark on a journey of awareness through the physical body. As you hear the different parts of your body mentioned, repeat the name silently, move all of your awareness into that area and notice the movement from one part to the next. Keep yourself alert and focused on the sensations arising from the body. Begin with the...

Right hand thumb ... 1st finger ... 2nd finger ... 3rd finger ... 4th finger ... palm of the hand ... back of the hand ... wrist ... forearm ... elbow ... upper arm ... shoulder ... armpit ... chest ... waist ... hip ... groin ... buttock ... thigh ... knee ... calf ... ankle ... heel ... sole of the foot ... top of the foot ... right big toe ... 2nd toe ... 3rd toe ... 4th toe ... 5th toe.

Left hand thumb ... 1st finger ... 2nd finger ... 3rd finger ... 4th finger ... palm of the hand ... back of the hand ... wrist ... forearm ... elbow ... upper arm ... shoulder ... armpit ... chest ... waist ... hip ... groin ... buttock ... thigh ... knee ... calf ... ankle ... heel ... sole of the foot ... top of the foot ... left big toe ... 2nd toe ... 3rd toe ... 4th toe ... 5th toe.

Moving now to the top of the head ... forehead ... right temple ... left temple ... right ear ... left ear ... right cheek ... left cheek ... right eyebrow ... left eyebrow ... eyebrow center ... right eye ... left eye ... right nostril ... left nostril ... whole nose ... upper lip ... lower lip ... chin ... jaw ... throat ... right collarbone ... left collarbone ... right chest ... left chest ... heart center ... upper abdomen ... navel ... lower abdomen ... right groin ... left groin ... the pelvic floor ... tailbone ... sacrum ... right buttock ... left buttock ... entire spine ...



right shoulder blade ... left shoulder blade ... back of the neck ... back of the head ... crown of the head.

Now feel the whole right arm ... the whole left arm ... both arms together ... the whole right leg ... the whole left leg ... both legs together ... the torso ... the face ... the head ... the body ... the whole body ... your entire body.

AWARENESS OF SENSATIONS

Heavy/Light: Continue to feel the entire body and notice that each part of the body feels very heavy and sinking. The arms are heavy, the legs are heavy, the head is heavy, the torso is heavy. The body is feeling so heavy and dense that you seem to be sinking down into the floor.

Now feel the whole body becoming light and buoyant. A floating and weightless sensation comes into the arms and legs. The head and torso feel light and floating. The whole body seems so weightless that you could rise from the floor toward the ceiling.

Come back to the sensation of the body resting in peace and safety in Yoga Nidra.

Discomfort/Ease: Scan through the body and look for any places of discomfort or pain. There may be one place or many. As you find these uncomfortable places see them as glowing with red light. Inhale into these areas and imagine that they are glowing with red light. Then, as you exhale the breath, imagine the red glowing light dissipating and moving out of your body. Continue with this visualization, breathe into the painful areas of the body and breathe out the pain from your body until you are left with only relaxation and ease.

Make another scan through the body and search out those places that feel especially comfortable. Which parts of your body feel easy and free? Use your inhalations now to expand the comfortable sensation into all parts of the body. Take a few more breaths to spread comfort and ease into every single part. Breathe in comfort, even into the difficult places of the body.

You are the practicing Yoga Nidra, you are awake and aware.

INNER SPACE

Gaze deeply now into the space in front of your closed eyes. What do you notice when you look into this blank space? Stay detached from what you witness. You may see light and shadow,

colors, patterns or images. Watch what your quiet mind reveals without judgment or direction.

RAPID IMAGE VISUALIZATION

- Imagine an expansive red desert ...
- peacock feather ...
- Buddha meditating ...
- family portrait ...
- full moon ...
- a good night's rest ...
- your reflection in a mirror ...
- foggy morning ...
- sun shining overhead ...
- an afternoon nap ...
- peaceful garden ...
- an ancient tall tree
- receiving help from others ...
- cool clear water ...
- trusting completely in life ...
- a relaxing afternoon...
- laughter with friends...
- letting go ...
- warm embrace...
- burning candle ...
- unfinished puzzle ...
- temple on a mountain ...
- path in the woods ...
- nourishing meal prepared with love
- vibrant sunset ...
- taking a deep breath ...
- holding the hand of a loved one ...
- the sound of my voice...
- your body resting in Yoga Nidra...

GUIDED VISUALIZATION

Bring your attention into your entire body and become aware of your prana or life force. This life force is contained within each breath that you take, in the sunlight overhead, in the nourishing food that you eat, in the energy of positive people. As you breathe in and out, become aware of this sensation of life within you. Imagine your breath as it comes into your body. See the life force within the breath permeate into every part of your body - your torso, your limbs, your head, your hands, and feet. See your entire body glowing with prana. Breathe in health, breathe out illness. Breathe in hopefulness, breathe out despair. Breathe in calm, breathe out worry. Breathing in and breathing out.

As you maintain awareness of your body's life energy; see your body as whole and healthy. Visualize that all pain and illness have been removed from each cell. Your mind is free from stress and worry and you are completely at peace. Your body knows how to heal itself, feel this power running strongly within you. With each breath you take, and every beat of the heart this healing power grows ever stronger.

Now as you inhale feel the area around your heart expanding. With each and every breath the heart grows larger, more full of joy and compassion. A wondrous sensation of gratitude comes over you. Know in this moment and in every other moment that you are whole and perfect.

From your heart center, send gratitude out to all of your care-givers, doctors and treatments. Send compassion to everyone who is with you on your healing journey. They create a circle of support that embraces you during each step of the process. Imagine them surrounding you providing the emotional and physical support you need during each moment. Hold this image in your mind and come back to it whenever you need to feel this support and remind yourself that it is always present.

REPEAT SANKALPA

It is time to repeat your sankalpa. Please repeat the same statement made at the beginning of the practice three times silently.

RETURN

Come back to the feeling of your breath flowing in and out of your body. Maintain awareness of breath and develop awareness of your physical body. Your body is relaxed and lying on the floor in Yoga Nidra. Feel the container of your skin and the clothing and props touching you. Notice the heaviness of your body as it rests on the floor and take your awareness into all the points that are touching the floor; the back of your legs, buttocks, shoulder blades, arms, hands and head.

Do not open your eyes yet but visualize the surrounding room. Imagine where you are in the room and the other objects that are near. Lie quietly until you feel ready to move. Take your time, there is no hurry. Wiggle your fingers and toes, stretch arms and legs. When you are sure that you are fully awake, gently open your eyes. Bend the knees one at a time and roll over to your favorite side. Stay on your side for a few more moments. Use your hands to press yourself back up to seated. The practice of Yoga Nidra is now complete.

Namaste,

नमस्ते

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