

# As Restorative As Sleep - Relax Yourself With Yoga Nidra



End your yoga routine with these step-by-step instructions for a perfect yoga nidra.

Simply described as effortless relaxation, yoga nidra is an essential end to any yoga pose sequence. Yoga postures 'warm up' the body; yoga nidra 'cools it down'.

Ask yourself – after a yoga routine, what do you do? Gaze outside your window, start planning the next steps in your day, head for a juice?

While most people treat yoga as a body workout, the truth is a yoga routine provides deep restoration to your body and mind. And to make your practice more effective, it's ideal to end your yoga sequence with yoga nidra.

Just as a car engine needs to be turned off and allowed to cool down after a long drive, similarly, after doing yoga postures, we need to cool our body with yoga nidra. It helps conserve and consolidate the energy from the yoga poses (active) practices. Yoga nidra relaxes the entire system, preparing it for pranayama and meditation. It is therefore important to keep aside sufficient time for yoga nidra after yoga postures.

## Let's Get Ready For Yoga Nidra

In yoga nidra, we consciously take our attention to different parts of the body, which activates the nerves in those areas and helps to integrate the impact of the asanas (yoga postures) into our system.

Here is a step-by-step guide to do yoga nidra.

Tip: It is a good idea to cover yourself with a blanket to keep yourself warm. The body becomes warm while doing postures and a sudden drop in temperature is not suitable.

## How Yoga Nidra Benefits You

- Cools down the body after yoga postures, restoring normal temperature
- Activates the nervous system to absorb the effects of yoga poses
- Flushes out body toxins

Lie down straight on your back in Corpse Pose (Shavasana). Close your eyes and relax. Take a few deep breaths in and out. Remember to take slow and relaxed breaths, and not ujjayi breaths.

Tip: If you feel any discomfort or pain in lower back, adjust your posture or use a pillow to elevate the legs a little, for more comfort.

Start by gently taking your attention to your right foot. Keep your attention there for a few seconds, while relaxing your foot. Then gently move your attention up to the right knee, right thigh and hip (again for a couple of seconds). Become aware of your whole right leg. Repeat this process for the left leg.

Similarly, take your attention to all parts of the body: genital area, stomach, navel region, chest, right shoulder and right arm, followed by the left shoulder and left arm, throat, face and the top of the head.

Take a deep breath in, observe the sensations in your body, and relax in this still state for a few minutes.

Now, slowly becoming aware of your body and surroundings, turn to your right side and keep lying down for a few more minutes.

Taking your own time, you may then slowly sit up, and whenever you feel comfortable, slowly and gradually open your eyes.

Yoga nidra is thus a joyous, effortless way to end your yoga practice. Just let go, relax and enjoy the experience that follows.

(Based on inputs by senior Art of Living Yoga teachers: Dinesh Kashikar and Shriram Sarvotham.)

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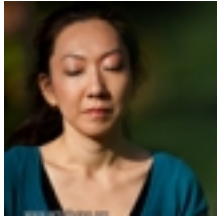
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