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Yoga Nidra for Deep Relaxation

By Fabienne C. Grossman, RD,LD, E-RYT 200, RYT 500, YACEP



As individuals, we often hold tension in our minds and bodies, which can result in mental and physical fatigue. Yoga Nidra, an ancient yoga practice that has recently gained popularity, helps act as a remedy to this growing issue.

Literally meaning “yogic sleep,” Yoga Nidra is a form of meditation and mind-body therapy. One appears to be asleep, but the consciousness is functioning at a deeper level of awareness. Rod Stryker, founder of ParaYoga and instructor of Yoga Nidra since the mid-1990s, states “it is sleep with a trace of awareness.”

One experiences a deep relaxation state that is achieved by systematically slowing down and relaxing each body part. Students experience a more restful state and awaken more refreshed than an evening of sleep. During Yoga Nidra, students are led through a guided meditation to scan the body and then given techniques to become aware of and let go of the mental and physical tension that are present in different areas of the body. This technique enables the body to slow down allowing for optimal functioning of the endocrine and the parasympathetic nervous system. Yoga Nidra, therefore, may be highly beneficial for people suffering from stress, insomnia, migraines, asthma, ulcers, digestive issues, skin diseases and other conditions.

In the November 2011 issue of *Yoga Journal*, Cheryl LeClair, a yoga instructor teaching Yoga Nidra Meditation Technique for marines with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and brain injuries at Camp LeJeune, wrote of her success with Yoga Nidra Meditation. “Many of them fall asleep in the very first session. To see them relax and let go is just amazing.”

In addition to total relaxation, Yoga Nidra gives one the potential to access the power of the subconscious mind, in order to gain knowledge, increase creativity, and realize their true self. A Sankalpa or resolution is created by each individual on their own while in a state of deep relaxation. The Sankalpa is a short, positive affirmation mentally repeated while sinking into



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this deeply relaxed state. Sankalpa may be something one wants to happen in their life – an affirmation that is then implanted deep in the subconscious mind. It takes root and grows long after the Yoga Nidra practice itself is finished. The subconscious mind is much more receptive than the conscious logical mind: resolutions planted in the subconscious mind will more readily grow and enrich one’s life positively.

Yoga Nidra can be practiced by anyone. It brings calmness, quietness and clarity which leads to awareness on many levels. When one is in a conscious relaxed state, peace of mind comes naturally, and the individual’s overall well-being improves.

About the Author:

Fabienne C. Grossman a certified Relax & Renew ® Restorative Yoga teacher, ERYT 200, RYT 500 & Registered Dietitian. She is also a Certified Ayurveda Yoga Specialist and holds a Certificate in Plant Based Nutrition, a Certificate in Thai Yoga Body Work, as well as a Certificate in Integrative and Functional Nutrition from The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. She has over 20 years experience in nutrition and yoga. She interweaves ancient wisdom and philosophy from various traditions along with modern evidence based findings into all her offerings. She shares these teaching with love, compassion & playfulness. She is currently based in South Florida and travels nationally and internationally offering her expertise in her group classes, workshops, yoga teacher training and one on one private sessions on location and online. She is passionate with her work and encourages students to explore the depths of their own potential, and is committed to helping others apply the powerful healing practices into everyday life.

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