

Expert Tips: How to Practice Yoga Nidra for Deep Rest & Well-Being

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Yoga Nidra (often described as “yogic sleep”) is increasingly recognised by wellness experts as a distinct practice—lying down, guided, between wakefulness and sleep—with powerful effects for body and mind.

As one recent review observes, the technique “emphasises relaxation itself rather than the more complicated procedures of other schools of yoga.

Because it requires no complex poses and can be done lying flat, yoga nidra appeals to people of varying fitness levels and busy schedules.

Major Benefits Backed by Research

Stress & Anxiety Relief

Studies show yoga nidra activates the parasympathetic (rest & digest) nervous system while calming the sympathetic (fight/flight) side — which supports relief from chronic stress and anxiety. A six-month intervention found significant reductions in anxiety and depression among female participants who practiced regularly.

Improved Sleep Quality

Some articles note that a 30-45 minute session can feel like a highly restorative rest — even akin to deeper sleep.

Physical Recovery & Cognitive Clarity

Beyond mental benefits, practitioners report improvements in pain management, muscle tension release, and concentration/memory support.

For example, one review described how nursing students practicing yoga nidra saw improved breathing patterns and reduced fatigue.

How to Practice Yoga Nidra: A Step-by-Step Guide

Though styles vary, a common structured method includes the following key phases:

1. **Preparation** – Lie down in a comfortable position (commonly in Shavasana/Corpse Pose) on a mat or bed. Use pillows or bolsters for support as needed.
2. **Set an Intention (Sankalpa)** – Begin with a short, positive intention or resolution in your mind.

3. **Body Scan / Rotation of Consciousness** – The guide takes your awareness through different parts of the body, often naming and visualising each part to release tension and deepen relaxation.
4. **Breath Awareness & Sensation Exploration** – You focus on the breath, observe sensations and may alternate between contrasting feelings (comfort/discomfort, heat/cold) to integrate awareness.
5. **Visualization / Inner Journey** – Many sessions include imagery: colours, nature scenes or symbolic environments to facilitate deeper internal awareness.
6. **Reaffirmation of Intention (Sankalpa) & Externalisation** –you gradually return awareness to the room, your body and the outer sounds, then gently transition out of the practice.

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