

A Basic Introduction to Yoga Nidra

Yoga Nidra is the yoga of aware sleep. In this lies the secret of self-healing. Yoga Nidra is a pratyahara technique in which the distractions of the mind are contained and the mind is relaxed. – Swami Satyananda Saraswati. (who adapted and presented the practice of Yoga Nidra in a scientific way in 1960s)



What does yoga nidra mean?

In Sanskrit, 'yoga' means 'union' and 'nidra' means sleep. Yoga nidra is a deep relaxation form of yoga; a yogic sleep through which subconscious of the mind is accessed while being in the complete state of rest. It may seem a little complicated to many of you. In simpler words, *yoga nidra* is the practice of deep sleep while you are still awake and your mind and body are relaxed to that extent that you float between consciousness and unconsciousness. It is a powerful meditation technique to stimulate the connection between mind, body, and soul. In psychology, the state achieved through yoga nidra is termed as hypnagogic state – a state in the middle of sleep and wakefulness.

Significance of yoga nidra

At present, human life has become fast paced, and hectic. The current lifestyle demands us a lot of adjustment, and we all are straining every nerve to do so. Some of us do it by becoming extra-active and some by escaping the situation. When we fail to make a balance, a negative state arises in our personality which brings about distress as well as mental & psychological problems. As a result, in majority of people, the mind always remains in a state of tension or arousal. Yoga nidra is a technique of *pratyahara* which provides relaxation to mind, body, and soul.



Stages of yoga nidra

Preparation

Yoga nidra is performed by resting comfortably in *shavasana* (corpse position) with eyes closed. The stage is commenced with the relaxation of the body and inducing the mind with awareness of stillness, comfort, posture, breath and remaining conscious to the external environment. The systematic meditation takes the practitioner through *pancha maya kosha* (five layers of self).

Sankalpa

The literal meaning of *sankalpa* means a solemn vow. In this stage, when the body and mind are relaxed, the practitioner takes resolve as per his/her wish. Sankalpa should be short, clear and positive which is repeated by the practitioner at least three times with full confidence.

Rotation of consciousness

It is the third stage of *yoga nidra* where the awareness is shifted to various body parts in an organized manner. The practitioner remains aware listening to the instructions and shifts his/her mind rapidly as per the instruction. Physical movement remains nil as explained by centers for yoga teacher training in London.

Breath awareness

This stage focuses on making the practitioner aware of his/her natural flow of breath. It is done by feeling the breath in nostrils, chest, abdomen and the passage between the navel and throat. Each inhalation and exhalation are mentally watched.

Sensations

In this stage, physical or emotional sensations are experienced as much as the practitioner can. Usually, the sensations practiced involves opposite pairs of feelings like heat & cold, pain & pleasure and so on.

Visualization

As the name suggests, this stage is about taking the awareness to the dark space, in front of closed eyes termed as *Chidākāsha*. As per the instruction, the practitioner visualizes some objects, stories or situation.

Sankalpa

Once again, *sankalpa* is repeated at least three times, mentally with full faith.

Conclusion

The practice is ended by slowly coming to awareness to the external environment, sounds, objects, and persons. The body parts are then moved slowly and stretched.

Benefits of yoga nidra

- ✓ Yoga nidra induces deep relaxation of mind and body causing a reduction in stress level.
- ✓ The practice helps to cope up with depression and anxiety.
- ✓ It contributes improving concentration and memory.
- ✓ Yoga nidra is considered a great stress buster.
- ✓ In helps you to connect yourself.

So what do you think about this transformational yoga technique? You have to get to try this because with a long-term practice of yoga nidra, it is possible to bring change in the way of thinking or your entire personality. It also helps you to achieve peace and calmness of mind even in a short period.

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