

Yoga Nidra practice 3

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Preparation - *shavasana*

Prepare yourself for a 40 minute Yoga Nidra. Lie down in shavasana and adjust your posture until you become satisfied. Close your eyes. Be aware of your whole body, it's position, form, how much space it fills. The whole body, from the soles of the feet to the top of the head, lying here, still.

Relaxation - *breath awareness*

The body is also breathing. Feel the air flow into your body, and then out again. The breath is always there in the background, but now you are conscious of it. But sometimes when we become aware of this breathing process, it may be difficult not to influence it in some way or other, so if you feel it changing, let it change. Be completely aware of this rhythmical process of the body breathing all by itself. Be a witness to the spontaneous flow of air, in, and out of the body.

Sankalpa - *resolution*

Now it is time to repeat your sankalpa, your resolve. Please repeat it to yourself several times with feeling. Be prepared to remain still until I say 'Om Tat Sat' to signify the end of the practice, and then you will again get the chance to repeat your sankalpa.

Rotation of Consciousness - *alternating right/left*

You will now be guided on a journey through the different parts of your physical body. Mentally repeat their names as I say them. Start on the right hand. Right hand thumb, second finger, third finger, fourth finger, fifth finger, all five right fingers together. Palm, back of the hand, wrist, lower arm, elbow, upper arm, shoulder,

armpit, right side of the rib cage, waist, hip, right thigh, knee, calf, ankle, heel, sole. Right big toe, second toe, third, fourth, fifth, all five toes together. The whole right side of the body we just went through. Can you feel a difference between the right and left sides of your body.

Go to the left hand. The thumb, second finger, third finger, fourth finger, fifth finger, all five left fingers together. Palm, back of the hand, wrist, lower arm, elbow, upper arm, shoulder, armpit, left side of the rib cage, waist, hip, left thigh, knee, calf, ankle, heel, sole. Left big toe, second toe, third, fourth, fifth, all five toes together. This whole left side of the body. Recall the right side of the body. Both sides together.

Now awareness travels alternately, right and left, from the toes up to the top of the head. Start with all five right toes together. All five left toes together. Right sole, left sole, both soles, right heel, left heel, both heels, right ankle, left ankle, both ankles, right calf, left calf, both calves, right knee, left knee, both knees, right thigh, left thigh, both thighs, right buttock, left buttock, both buttocks. Right hip, left hip, both hips. Whole right leg, whole left leg, both legs together.

Right side of the abdomen, left side of the abdomen, the whole abdomen, navel. Right side of the chest, left side of the chest, whole chest, center of the chest.

Right shoulder blade, left shoulder blade, centre of the shoulder blades, upper back, centre of the back, lower back, right side of the back, left side of the back, the spine, the whole back.

Right shoulder, left shoulder, right upper arm, left upper arm, right elbow, left elbow, right lower arm, left lower arm, right wrist, left wrist, right palm, left palm. All five right fingers together. All five left fingers together. Whole right arm, whole left arm, both arms together.

Right collarbone, left collarbone, centre of the collarbones, throat, back of the neck, whole neck.

Chin, lower lip, upper lip, both lips, all the teeth, tongue. Right cheek, left cheek, both cheeks, right ear, left ear, both ears. Right nostril, left nostril, nose tip, whole nose. Right eye, left eye, both

eyes, right eyebrow, left eyebrow, eyebrow centre, forehead. Whole face, back of the head, top of the head, whole head.

Then feel all of these individual parts of your body together, as a wholeness. The whole body lying on the floor.

Opposites - *heaviness/lightness, cold/heat, sleepy/awake*

Concentrate on the subtle points of contact where your body meets the floor. The back of the head is touching the floor, shoulder blades are touching the floor, back of the arms, buttocks, back of the legs and the heels are all touching the floor. Feel all these points of contact together, creating a plane of contact between your body and the floor. An abstract experience as its neither the body or the floor, but the contact between them. Between the body and the floor.

Notice the force of gravity pulling your body down against the floor. The whole weight of your body pressing down against the floor. Gradually the body is becoming heavier, and heavier, so heavy that you are sinking into the floor. Intensify the feeling of heaviness. It has become so heavy that you are unable to move even an eyelid. The whole body is so heavy.

Turn to the opposite sensation and feel the body gradually becoming lighter. The arms are light, the legs are light, the head is light, the back is light. The body is as light as a feather and gently floating upwards.

Having identified these two points, move between them, back and forth. Go back to the heavy body, immovable and as solid as a mountain. Return to weightlessness. Explore these two sensations. Side by side. Is there a moment where you can feel both at the same time?

Letting that go, recall now a sensation of warmth in the body. Imagine that you are lying on a beach on a hot sunny afternoon and enjoying the glow of the sun on your skin.

Bring to mind the chill of a winter morning. Recreate that feeling of coldness and spread it throughout the entire body. The feet are cold, the palms are cold, the forehead is cold.

Move from one to the other, remembering heat in the body. Then a chill in the body. Return to heat, then invite cold. Back and forth. Let them go. Remember what it's like to be fully awake. And what

does it feel like to be extremely sleepy? Move between them, from awake to sleepy, back and forth. Is there a moment when both are true?

Chakra - *location*

We will take an internal journey and discover the locations of the principal chakras, starting from the bottom and progressing upwards, and come back down again. A little above the perineum, between the anus and the genitals, lies the location of mooladhara chakra. Don't contract the point, but try to feel spontaneous contractions or a pulse there. Awareness at mooladhara. Swadhisthana is the second chakra and is located on a level with the pubic bone at the base of the spine. Discover the pubic bone, and then sink backwards until you reach the spine. Swadhisthana chakra. The third chakra is manipura, located in the spine at the same level as the navel. Find the navel, then mentally draw a vertical line down to the spine. Manipura chakra.

Anahata chakra is the fourth. From the center of the chest move backwards to the spine, directly behind the heart. Anahata chakra.

Vishuddhi is the fifth chakra. Go to the throat, then draw a line to the back of the neck. Vishuddhi chakra. The sixth chakra is ajna. Let go of any tension around the eyes and forehead. Sense the space between the eyebrows, the eyebrow center. Sink backwards to a place in the middle of the head at the top of the spinal cord.

Last is sahasrara chakra, situated on the top of the head, and a little above and around the head. Concentrate on sahasrara. Back to ajna, in the middle of the head behind the eyebrow center. Vishuddhi, back of the neck. Anahata, behind the heart at the spine. Manipura, behind the navel at the spine. Swadhisthana, at the base of the spine. Returning to mooladhara chakra, situated in the perineum.

Breath - *mental nadi shodhana, counting 27*

Become aware of the rhythm of your breath. Feel the flow of air moving in and out of your lungs. It is natural and automatic. Allow the body to take care of the natural breathing process, just as it does normally.

Now just observe the spontaneous breath through both nostrils.

Can you feel a difference between inhalation and exhalation? That the exhalation takes longer than the inhalation. Perhaps a difference in the temperature also? That the inhalation is cooler than the exhalation. You may even notice a difference between the right and left nostrils, that one is more open than the other.

Continue your awareness of breathing, but imagine you are now breathing through alternate nostrils, in through one nostril, and out through the other, in through the other and out of the first, in through the first, then out of the other, and continue like that. You may be able to control the breath this way, or just imagine that you are.

Maintain awareness of breathing through alternate nostrils, and at the same time start counting your breaths backwards from 27 to 1 as follows: inhale through the first nostril 27, exhale through the other nostril 27, inhale the other nostril 26, exhale the first nostril 26, inhale first nostril 25, exhale the other nostril 25, and so on. Say this mentally to yourself as you practice. If you make a mistake, go back to 27 and start again. Full awareness of mental alternate nostril breathing and counting. There should be no mistake and no sleeping. Continue counting with total awareness. Now leave the breath behind.

Visualisation - well

Imagine yourself walking along a path through a forest on a warm summer afternoon. You come to a clearing where there is a well with butterflies dancing around the top. Look inside the well, it is very deep, a bottomless tunnel into the depths of the earth, down into utter darkness. There are steps on the inside of the wall, spiraling downwards. Climb over the wall and go down the steps, moving from daylight into dim light and descending into darkness. Holding onto the wall for support, you feel that it is damp and mossy. You hear the squeaks and rustling sounds of small animals and insects. Look up and see a small circle of light at the top of the well. You descend deeper into the unknown. At the bottom of the well it is dark, but there comes a faint light from a tunnel. You enter the tunnel and come out on to a golden beach beside an infinite ocean of peace and bliss.

Self - *baby on lotus*

On the water a large blue lotus flower is rocked gently by the waves. On the flower there is a baby lying, and that baby is you. Feel yourself as that baby, rocking gently on the waters of the infinite ocean of tranquillity. Experience the vibration of OM over the ocean.

Sankalpa

Om Tat Sat. Now repeat your sankalpa several times, using the same words as before.

Returning

Om Tat Sat Yoga Nidra is over. Become aware of your breathing. Then be aware of your whole body from the top of the head to the tips of the toes. Become aware of your body lying on the floor, of your surroundings. Move your hands and feet. This is the end of Yoga Nidra. Om Tat Sat.