

What is yoga nidra?

Yoga Nidra is a practice that supports the deep rest of your body and mind while your consciousness remains alert and awake. Unlike other schools of yoga, this simplified form of ancient tantric relaxation is done entirely while lying down in *savasana*, or corpse pose as it's referred to in yoga. Yoga nidra is not sleep in that we remain aware of our surroundings as we practice - it's sometimes referred to as 'yogic sleep'. Yoga nidra is both a *practice* and a *state* of consciousness that occurs just before the body is about to go to sleep. The practice originated in ancient times and made a resurgence in the 1960s through the writings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati.

Who is yoga nidra for?

If you have a body and a place you can rest, yoga nidra is for you. Yoga nidra is for sleep-deprived and postpartum moms, for [athletes](#), for those who know insomnia well and need to rest, for [veterans](#), for those who want to support a meditation practice, for those with anxiety / for those with stress / for those feeling overwhelmed with being human in today's world / for those who want to put their phone away for 20 mins!

Why practice?

The deep relaxation and stillness that the yoga nidra practice supports can promote rest, be an effective stress management tool, and can support us in a deeper understanding of ourselves and personal resolutions. Some say that one hour of yoga nidra feels like 4 hours of sleep – the *dream* these days! Even a practice of 20 mins can still feel deeply restful.

As one of my teachers Tracee Stanley writes, “the most potent portals are the moments when you are about to fall asleep and awaken.” Thomas Edison made use of this state, and Albert Einstein described it as the gateway to many of his greatest breakthroughs. The Spanish painter Salvador Dali created his own yoga nidra practice after experiencing such great creativity as a result. There are many resources online if you're curious about the practice, its powerful effects, and how you can use yoga nidra in your life.

Setting yourself up to practice

Yoga nidra is not sleep, as the awareness will remain alert and we remain aware of our environment. It's recommended to not practice yoga nidra from your bed, as our bodies associate our bed with sleep. While it may feel as if you are in a deep sleep state in yoga nidra, the goal is to have a gentle, awake awareness and to avoid completely dozing off! So, it's recommended that you practice from a yoga mat or padded mat, with the support of some pillows/blankets, from a couch, etc. You are welcome to practice yoga nidra while sitting or standing as well (just please also do not practice while driving...)

What you need to practice

You only need your body and a place to rest for this practice. Be warm. Cover yourself in layers, get comfy socks, grab your eye pillow or a light scarf for your eyes. Get quiet and put your phone on do-not-disturb for 20 mins.

Grab a journal and feel free to write for the 5 mins after practice. This doesn't mean that you always have to write something following the practice, but if you have a few words, or a couple of lines to a poem, or you draw, you can put this in your journal. The space following the yoga nidra practice can be a potent time for creativity, and you may have some brilliant insights. Use this journal to record an understanding, or an epiphany, or ah-ha moment.

The rest will come in the yoga nidra. And, the **rest** will hopefully indeed come to your mind, body, spirit.

Sources:

[The Origin and Clinical Relevance of Yoga Nidra](#)

[Radiant Rest](#), by Tracee Stanley

-[Caitryn](#) Megan McCallum