

# Positive beliefs about accepting Yoga Nidra: Implications on humans for relaxation

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## ABSTRACT

Psychosomatic illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension, migraine, asthma, ulcers, digestive disorders and skin diseases arise from tensions in the body and mind. The leading causes of death in developed countries, cancer and heart disease, also stem from tension. Modern medical science has been trying to tackle these problems in many ways, but frankly speaking, they have failed to deliver the necessary health to man. This is because the real problem does not lie in the body; it originates in man's changing ideals, in his way of thinking and feeling. In yoga we deal with the problems of tension with a wide periscope. We realize that if the mind is tense, the stomach will also be tense. And if the stomach is tense, the whole circulatory system is also tense. It is a vicious circle of events. Therefore, in yoga, relaxation from tension is one of the chief concerns.

## 1. Introduction

Yogic philosophy, as well as modern psychology, enumerates three basic types of tension which are responsible for all the agonies of modern life. Through the systematic practice of yoga nidra, these threefold tensions can be progressively released. *Muscular tensions* are related to the body itself, the nervous system and endocrinal imbalances. These are easily removed by the deep physical relaxation attained in the state of yoga nidra. *Emotional tensions*, which stem from various dualities such as love/hate, profit/loss, success/failure, happiness/unhappiness, are more difficult to erase. This is because we are unable to express our emotions freely and openly. Often we refuse to recognize them, so they are repressed, and the resulting tensions become more and more deeply rooted. It is not possible to relax these tensions through ordinary sleep or relaxation. A method such as yoga nidra can tranquilize the entire emotional structure of the mind. *Mental tensions* are the result of excessive mental activity. The mind is a whirlpool of fantasies, confusions and oscillations. Throughout our life, the experiences registered by our consciousness are accumulated in the mental body. From time to time these explode, affecting our body, mind, behavior and reactions. When we are sad, angry or irritated, we often attribute that condition of the mind to some superficial cause. But the underlying cause behind man's abnormal behavior lies in the accumulated tensions on the mental plane. Yoga nidra is the science of relaxation which enables each of us to dive deep down into the realms of the subconscious mind, thereby releasing and relaxing mental tensions, and establishing harmony in all facets of our being.

## 2. Resting more efficiently

Most people think that relaxation is very simple; just recline and close your eyes. Yet, excepting the scientists, nobody understands what relaxation really means. You are tired so you go to bed and think that is relaxation. But unless you are free from muscular, mental and emotional tensions, you are never relaxed. Despite a superficial sense of wellbeing, most people are full of tensions all the time. They habitually bite their nails, scratch their head, stroke their chin,

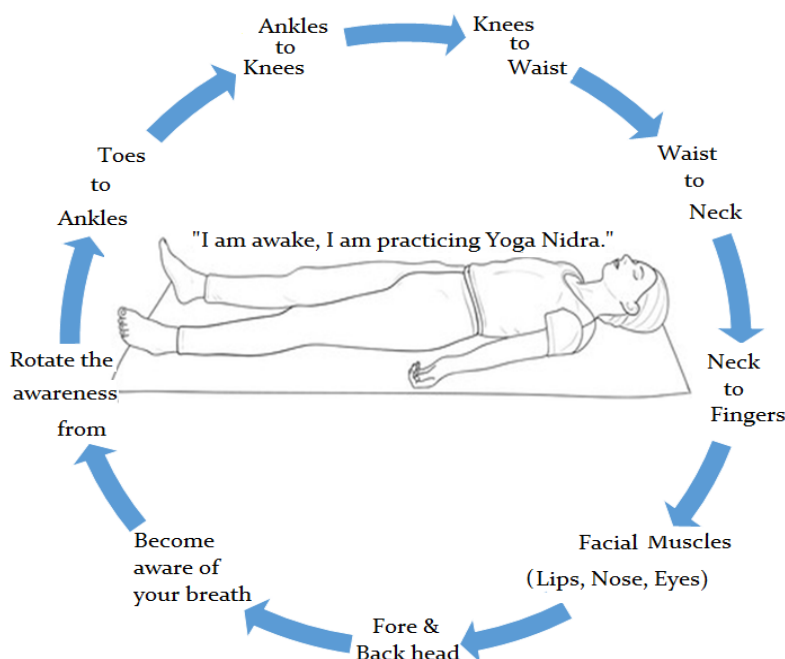
or tap their feet. Or they may pace about restlessly, talk compulsively, display constant irritability, or chain smoke. People do these things because they lack awareness of their own inner tension. They may think that they are relaxed, but a closer look reveals that they are not. Even while sleeping, thoughts and worries revolve in the mind, so that the tense person wakes up feeling exhausted. In order to relax completely, the inner tensions of the body, emotions and mind must be released. Then the actual state of relaxation dawns. The practice of yoga nidra is the scientific method of removing these tensions. Yoga nidra is a more efficient and effective form of psychic and physiological rest and rejuvenation than conventional sleep. Those who adopt this technique in their daily routine soon experience profound changes in their sleeping habits. The total systematic relaxation of a yoga nidra session is equivalent to hours of ordinary sleep without awareness. A single hour of yoga nidra is as restful as four hours of conventional sleep. This is one of the secrets of the superhumefficiency and energy of many great yogis, past and present, who have managed to achieve so much in one short lifetime. In fact, the capacity to sleep and dream consciously in yoga nidra is an evolutionary process which has been utilized by many exceptional people throughout history, paving the way to greater inspiration and achievement in their lives. The officers of Napoleon, the 17th century general and emperor of France, for example, have reported that he possessed an unfathomable and tireless source of energy and inspiration. At the very height of pitched battle, just when the outcome was in the balance, he would hand over his command to a subordinate, leaving instructions that he was not to be disturbed for twenty minutes under any 14 circumstance. Then, retiring to his tent and stretching out upon an enormous bearskin, he would enter yoga nidra. Within seconds his loud, regular snores would be emerging to mix with all the desperate sounds of battle. Precisely twenty minutes later he would emerge, fresh, invigorated and inspired, remount his horse and inevitably lead the French army to a decisive victory.

## 3. How Yoga Nidra Transformation

Through the practice of yoga nidra, we are not only relaxing, but restructuring and reforming our whole personality

from within. Like the mythological phoenix, with every session we are burning the old samskaras, habits and tendencies in order to be born anew. This process is not only much quicker than other systems which work on an external basis only, but the results are also more reliable and permanent. I will tell you about an experience I had with hardened criminals which will make this clearer. In 1968, during a world tour, I was invited to a detention camp to teach yoga. As soon as I arrived in the compound, about six hundred prisoners converged on me. They laughed and hooted, pulled my dhoti and one of them presented me with a packet of cigarettes. They had no sense

of honour or respect. I knew I could not teach them any yoga in that state, so I decided to try yoga nidra. I told them all to lie down quietly on their backs and get ready for the practice. But they could not be still. They kicked and pulled each other, shouted, spat and did many disturbing things while I was waiting for them to calm down. For half an hour I only uttered two sentences, "Please close your eyes. Don't move your body." I was waiting for them to become quiet, but they never did, so finally I gave up and returned to my hotel. The next day I phoned the detention camp to inform them that I would not be coming again. But the man in charge begged me to return.



**Fig.1 A reference frame showing Supine posture yoga nidra**

“Swamiji,” he said, “you have cast a spell over them. They have been quiet ever since you left.” So they persuaded me to come again. 15 The second time I went to the prison, the same prisoners lay down quietly. When I asked them to get ready for suryanamaskara, they said, “No, we want the yoga that you taught us yesterday.” So for six days I taught them yoga nidra, how to relax from top to bottom, outside to inside, every part of their being. Daily reports came to inform me that their dispositions were improving and there had been fewer quarrels than ever before. On the seventh day there was a farewell meeting, and all of them were there. When it was my turn to speak, I took out the packet of cigarettes which I had been given and said, “The first day you wanted me to smoke. Here are the cigarettes you gave me, and now I will smoke them with you.” The man who had given the cigarettes to me immediately came running up onto the stage and apologized profusely, “Swamiji, I am so sorry that I gave you those cigarettes. Please give them back to me.” This man, who had not known how to behave with a swami one week earlier, was completely transformed, without being taught anything except yoga nidra. What is the secret of this transformation? Sermons? No. Admonitions? No. Release of tension, relaxation and peace of mind are the secret of transformation. When a man is under tension, his behavior is influenced, and when he relaxes, he becomes natural. He knows the reality,

the truth. Then he also knows how to behave, because the knowledge of truth is necessary for right behavior. And knowledge of truth only comes when you are free of tension.

**4. Yoga Nidra is more than Sleep**

Yoga nidra means sleep with a trace of awareness. It is a state of mind in between wakefulness and dream. When you practice yoga nidra you are opening the deeper phases of your mind. At this moment, your intellectual mind is operating, but when you are able to relax, the subconscious and unconscious levels of the mind open. If you practice yoga nidra, then the nature of your mind can be changed, diseases can be cured, and your creative genius can be restored. The subconscious and the unconscious mind are the most powerful forces in the human being. This simple practice of yoga nidra has the capacity of penetrating into the depths of the human mind. The subconscious mind is a very obedient disciple, and immediately carries out the orders that you put to it. If you know how to practice yoga nidra, you can train your subconscious mind completely. Then the ordinary mind and intellect will follow suit.

**5. Benefit of Yoga Nidra**

According to a study (Amita et al., 2007), Yoga-nidra with drug regimen had better control in their fluctuating blood

glucose and symptoms associated with diabetes, compared to those were on oral hypoglycemic alone.(Kumar, 2018) the result shows a significant change in the practice group as yoga nidra positively decreased the stress level of the male and female subjects. Several other studies prove yoga nidra equally influences anxiety level significantly in both male and female subjects, as well as yoga nidra positively increase the general wellbeing of the subjects (Kumar, 2014). Yoga nidra changes in nervous system & these changes demonstrate a favorable shift in autonomic balance to the parasympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system for both conditions, and that Yoga Nidra relaxation produces favorable changes in measures of Heart rate variability whether alone or preceded by a bout of Hatha yoga (Markil et al., 2012). According to

(Rani et al., 2011),the current findings suggest that patients with menstrual irregularities having psychological problems improved significantly in the areas of their wellbeing, anxiety and depression by learning and applying a program based on Yogic intervention i.e. *Yoga Nidra*.

## 6. Conclusion

As per above discussion, Yoga nidra helps to Reduce anxiety, depression, insomnia etc all kind of mental diseases. It works on mind level & mind directly affects to body, in last it is to say yoga nidra is good to promote mental & physical health.

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