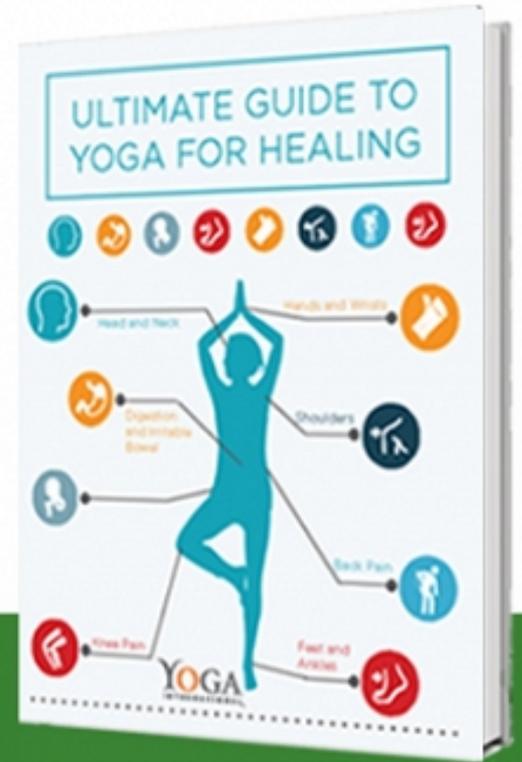


2 Guided Relaxations in Savasana

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Are you a yoga teacher?*

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As difficult as it may be to find time for daily relaxation, there are plenty of reasons to do it. Most important, you'll feel better. Just 10 minutes of resting with your eyes closed can transform a problem, calm shattered nerves, and relieve sensations of fatigue. But there are other benefits as well. With regular relaxation practice, you'll bring your best self to the day—including

that meeting you were nervous about, the morning you want to spend with your kids, and the lunch you've been looking forward to with your best friend.

When it comes to stress management, relaxation methods offer you the chance to transform even the most stressful reaction into one that is easier to handle. It's a matter of systematic training—training that begins with posture, because the posture you choose for relaxation will have a profound influence on the process of relaxing itself.

The best posture for relaxation is shavasana, the corpse pose, because it enhances the body's innate ability to heal and rejuvenate.

The best posture for relaxation is *savasana* (<https://yogainternational.com/article/view/corpse-pose>), the corpse pose, because it enhances the body's innate ability to heal and rejuvenate. To make the best use of this posture, however, you will need to enter it methodically and learn to recognize the cues that signal relaxation in both your body and mind.

Step-by-Step Instructions for Savasana

To begin, lie on your back on a firm, flat surface. Place a thin cushion under your head and neck, shaping the cushion so that it supports the natural arch in the neck. Bring the legs about 12–18 inches apart, adjusting the distance until the hip joints relax. Draw the shoulder blades down away from the ears and slide them toward one another until they seem to rest flat against the

floor underneath you. Let the weight of your upper body rest on the shoulder blades. Then release the arms to the sides, placing them 8-10 inches from the body with the palms turned up.

Gently lengthen your lower back, sliding the buttocks in the direction of the tailbone. The lower back retains a natural arch, but this arch is not exaggerated or constricted. If lying with your legs straight creates discomfort in your lower back, place a folded blanket or a bolster underneath the knees. Adjust the height of the support under the knees to gain maximum relief.

When you are ready, close your eyes. Turn your head side to side a few times, gradually resting it upright and in the center, nestled on the cushion under your neck.

Guided Relaxation #I

Now take a moment to survey your body, adjusting it to make it as comfortable as possible. A bunched-up portion of clothing that pushes unevenly against your body or a lopsided pillow can distract you. Don't ignore these small details; when parts of your body are still asking for attention, they are not completely at ease and continue to disturb the central nervous system.

Now turn your attention to your breath. Inhale through your nose and be aware of the breath as it fills your lungs. Your abdomen rises. Without pause, begin the exhalation, continuing to breathe through your nose while allowing the abdomen to fall naturally as air leaves your lungs. Relax and allow the rhythmic nature of the breath to take over as inhalation and exhalation flow effortlessly into one another.

To make the best use of shavasana, you will need to enter it methodically and learn to recognize the cues that signal relaxation in both your body and your mind.

Soon the back of the body will begin to feel a gentle warmth as it rests against the floor. Allow this sensation to rise through the front of the body. Soften the face, the front of the neck and throat, the chest, the tops of the shoulders, the arms all the way to the tips of your fingers. Relax the rib cage and the area of your heart. The abdomen softens as it rises and falls with the breath. The tops of the thighs soften, and your relaxed attention flows all the way down to the tips of the toes. Then move it back to the crown of the head.

As muscles relax, the nerve impulses traveling to and from them decrease, and the brain calms down. A message of relaxation spreads throughout the entire nervous system, and gradually the tensions that have crept into your body and mind release. Maintain the pose for about 10 minutes. You'll begin to notice that distracting or stressful thoughts are increasingly unimportant and fall away. You will be more alert to the mental processes that disturb your relaxation. And as you recognize how these thought patterns affect your body, you enable yourself to change—and to empower your body's natural healing properties.

Guided Relaxation #2



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Once you're comfortable with Guided Relaxation #1, try this six minute exercise by Himalayan Institute faculty member Sandy Anderson, which explores systematic relaxation in greater detail.

[#relaxation practice \(https://yogainternational.com/article/tag/relaxation-practice\)](https://yogainternational.com/article/tag/relaxation-practice)

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Luke Ketterhagen earned a degree from Marquette University in Biomedical Sciences, and then immersed himself in the study of yoga. He is certified by the Himalayan Institute, and specializes in hatha, meditation, diet and nutrition. Based in New York, He travels throughout the US, conducting yoga teacher training programs and weekend workshops.

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