

Relaxation - Light, Love & Joy

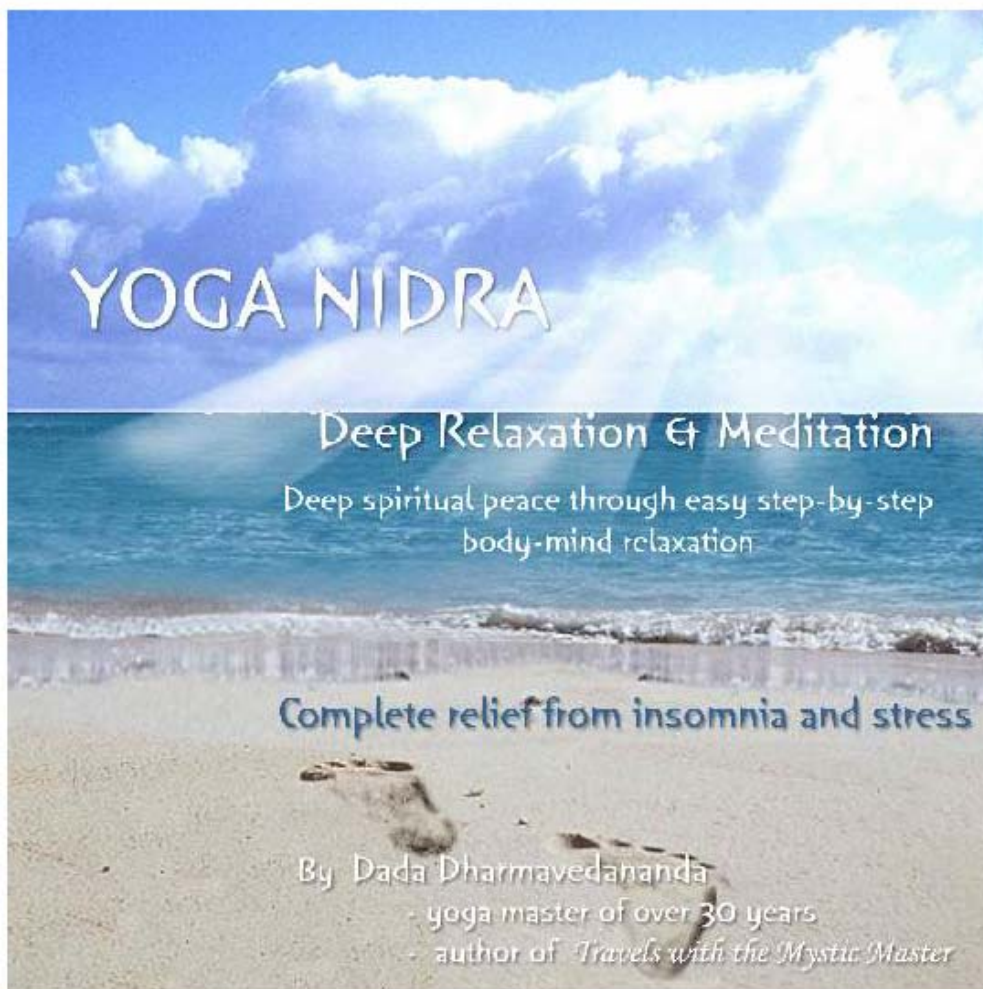
Acknowledgement: *Awakening*,
Kamala & Peter Sprague

BABA NAM KEVALAM

Preferred conditions for Yoga Nidra:

- A dark room
- Lie on the back with neck & spine straight, eyes closed, arms slightly away from sides, palms upward, feet about 30 to 35 cm apart
- Stomach empty or almost empty of solid food

Chanting a *mantra* is the quickest way to mental peace and spiritual inspiration. *Mantra* is Sanskrit for “a word or words which free the mind from bondage”. Try to feel “Baba Nam Kevalam” through its meaning – *Baba* means “infinite Love or God”, *Nam* means “feeling or name”, *Kevalam* means “only”. *Everything is only the feeling of infinite Love or God's Name only.*



BABA NAM KEVALAM

Yoga Nidra: "Yoga of Sleep"

Guided by a beautiful compassionate voice, feel each nerve & muscle of your body relax. Cosmic music and soft breathing dissolve your stress, and gradually free you from every physical and psychic limitation.

By the end of the music, you will either be peacefully sleeping or deeply meditating. Or both.

Other Benefits:

Physical: Overcome body pains and headache

Strengthen the immune system to combat disease

Rest more deeply than sleep

Mental: Increase memory, concentration & creativity

Spiritual: Meditate even while sleeping –

slowly expand consciousness toward Self-realisation



Dada Dharmavedananda helping kids in the Philippines

Relax – Yoga Nidra

Yoga Nidra is a nice relaxation technique. Acarya Dharmavedananda Avadhuta takes you through the technique on the audio file. The word 'nidra' in Sanskrit means sleep. And 'yoga' means 'union'. So through a special, yet simple, relaxation technique you go into a 'yogic sleep' or rather 'yogic relaxation state', which also allows you to tune into yourself.

This technique slows your heart rate and breathing. It clears your mind, and helps you to calm down. It incorporates aspects of:

- **Meditation**
- **Deep breathing**
- **Visualization**
- **Thought-stopping**
- **Hypnosis**
- **Muscle and organ relaxation**
- **Yoga**

Actually, all these things will come naturally when you follow and become absorbed in the Yoga Nidra relaxation technique.

Meditation

Meditating lets you enter a state of peace and quiet reflection, calming your body and mind. With Yoga Nidra, you will also be listening to music in the background, which has a wonderful calming effect. Meditation removes you mentally from where you are while your mind and body rest. Research shows that people have immense success with meditation to relieve stress, according to Roger Jahnke, doctor of acupuncture and oriental medicine, and author of "The Healer Within."

It is commonly thought that you can meditate two ways: by focusing your mind or by emptying your mind; the latter is not really practical. Yoga Nidra allows you to focus and guide your mind to a particular state which is immensely helpful for beginning meditation. People are more inspired when the mind is focused on something deep and totally absorbing. Taken to its conclusion, that which is the deepest and most absorbing is Infinite Love – it inspires people the most.

Deep breathing

You can actually practice deep breathing anywhere - while you're meditating, doing yogic postures, waiting to give a speech, or in your car stuck in traffic. Most forms of meditation include some type of breath practice, according to Jahnke. Breathing deeply and slowly helps you calm down and feel more relaxed. Yoga Nidra is a way to practice deep breathing – you actually slip automatically into it. The idea is to do it slowly. If you want, you can then see that you are actually breathing using the abdomen.

Breathing is one of the most important ways to gain energy. We can do without food for a period of time, but without breathing our life would be quickly extinguished. Most people have lost the natural art of breathing. Right now take a deep breath, what do you notice? Does your upper chest expand? If so your normal day to day breathing is shallow and weak.

The proper breathing, is when you inhale your stomach expands, this is the breathing that a professional singers uses. When you breathe with your abdomen you are able to bring in much more air. Slow and deep, but not too deep. With Yoga Nidra you end up doing this deep breathing. In a few weeks it will be your normal way to breathe – certainly when you sleep it should be.

Visualization

Also known as guided imagery, you can direct your dreams. Think of a peaceful, beautiful setting – its nice isn't it. With Yoga Nidra, the idea is to tune into your body (and your mind). It involves imagery. The colour emerald green is considered the most relaxing colour. The emerald green concept is very much part of the Yoga Nidra technique. Using visionary guidance centred on your body and its organs, Yoga Nidra lets you stay with a vision for several minutes, with the wonderful emerald green colour, until you feel your mind and body relax. With the help of the audio file, you can practice visualization to guide you into a deep relaxing state.

"Stress is caused by worrying," says David Bresler, a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles. "Worrying takes place in our imagination because we're worrying about things that haven't happened yet, or we're worrying about things from the past." According to Bresler, guided imagery reduces stress by giving people greater control over their imaginations.

Thought-stopping

This technique involves stopping stressful thoughts before they have a negative effect on you. Yoga Nidra, in a somewhat uncanny and mysterious way, allows you to isolate the stressful thought and silently slip into a stream of consciousness that transcends emotional baggage and unnecessary desires.

Hypnosis

For Yoga Nidra, hypnosis is a trancelike state of deep relaxation while your mind stays restfully alert and open to suggestion. Ordinarily it also involves deep breathing and visualization. With Yoga Nidra, use is made of a powerful yet very subtle mantra. It is the Baba Nam Kevalam* mantra. This is the background mantra sung in a purely relaxed way on the audio file. The fear people might have about hypnosis comes from its being used on the commercial stage, says Jahnke. And of someone else controlling your mind.

With Yoga Nidra, the mantra means something like 'Everything is an expression of Infinite Love' or 'The Supreme Self is the dearest thing to me' or something like similar that you feel comfortable with. So, it is actually a type of self-hypnosis or

rather self-absorption. Jahnke says that hypnosis can be used “as a health management and stress reduction tool”. In Yoga Nidra it is used in that way, but also elevates the mind at the same time by higher thoughts or rather higher vibrations from the mantra.

* Strictly, it is Baba Nam[a] Kevalam[a], but the [a] are silent, in order to give 8 beats.

Muscle and organ relaxation

Muscles tense up when stressed. Learning to release stress and tension from muscles is simple. Yoga Nidra allows for the tensing and relaxing of different sets of muscles and organs in a particular order. This is by starting with those at the feet and working your way upwards to your head. The audio file guides you through this process.

Yoga

Yoga as an ancient mind-body practice can reduce stress and help you become calm and centred. It also builds strength and flexibility – physically, mentally and spiritually. However, it is mainly a spiritual practices, and so with Yoga Nidra use is made of the mantra which has the highest idea (or ideation behind it) – something transcendental and beyond all relativity of time, space and person. That is, the Infinite.

Most western yoga practices focus on the physical postures, breathing exercises, and mental visualisation. Yoga Nidra introduces the spiritual – merely by use of the mantra and its subtle psycho-spiritual vibration, as background music in the relaxation technique. Yoga really does mean ‘union’ – union of mind into spirit. While this requires real spiritual meditation, Yoga Nidra also introduces the practitioner to this. Indeed, the practitioner becomes aware of it themselves.

Ending Relaxation

To end the relaxation for a more lasting effect:

- slowly deepen the abdominal breath while becoming aware of the increasing energy, spreading through the body; and then
- slowly bend the fingers and toes, moving hands and feet, arms and legs, and finally stretching and bending the body.

