

Brief Outline of Yoga Nidra

The entire session of yoga nidra was conducted in the following steps.

- a) Preparation
- b) Samkalpa
- c) Body part awareness
- d) Breath awareness
- e) Feeling and sensation
- f) Visualisation
- g) Ending of Practise

General advice given to subjects

- Though yoga nidra instructions are easy to follow from a tape or CD, however, a new subject should do initial supervised sessions in the presence of an experienced person to guide after the session and observe during the session.
- The practise should be done in a relatively quiet room
- The individual should practise at a time when he is alert and not try to do it at night or just before sleep.
- The subject should follow instructions during the practise mentally. He should not concentrate, but, just listen to the instructions and follow them mentally.
- The subject should at all times refrain from sleeping.

Preparation for the practise

The subject lies in posture used for *shavasana*.

The mind is then instructed to focus on external sounds and move from one sound to another. With this, the mind becomes calm and this method of calming is called *antar mouna*. The *antar mouna* is important to prepare the individual for yoga nidra. At no time one should force the subject to stop thinking about the different sensations. Forcibly stopping thinking about sensations can create restlessness. While slowly concentrating on the different sensations and then moving on, creates the right preparation required for later steps.

Resolve or Samkalpa

The subject is advised to choose his own samkalpa according to his need and inclinations. It should be short and precise. Once chosen it should not be changed again and again.

Rotation of Consciousness

Rotation of consciousness should be done through the different parts of the body in a systematic way. It is not a practise of concentration and neither any physical movement.

The rotation of consciousness must start from the right thumb, ending in the right foot little toe, then starting from the left thumb to left foot little toe. Then heels to back of the head and, from the head to individual facial features to the legs.

The subject should be aware, listening to the voice and move the mind very rapidly according to the instructions to different parts of the body.

The pace at which the instructor says is very important and the pace of rotation of consciousness should be fast enough, systematic following the same sequence and automatic and fluent.

Awareness of breath

After the rotation of awareness, attempts are made to concentrate awareness on the breath. Without forcing it or trying to change it, one is only required to observe it either at the nostrils, chest or the path from navel to throat. This is known to assist in pratyahara and helps in the practises that follow.

Feelings and sensation

Intensely physical or emotional feelings are awakened or recalled and then removed. This is done with pairs of opposite feelings eg. Cold and heat, love and joy, pain and pleasure, etc.

Visualisation

In this stage the practitioner is asked to visualise images named or described by the instructor. The images which are used often have powerful associations and so it is

believed that the hidden contents of the deep unconscious mind are brought to the conscious mind. This then leads to concentration of the mind or dhyana.

The visualisation practise ends with an image which causes peace and calmness.

Ending of practise

Resolve is again taken and stated clearly. The practise is then ended with gradually bringing the mind from this kind of state to wake state.