



Sitting/Laying Sequence for Sleep and Stress Release

1. Cat and Cow Asana:

A word on alignment- Please ensure you are on a supportive foundation with sufficient padding for your knees (i.e. fold your yoga mat in half for more support), but it should be leveled. Wrists line up under your shoulder and knees under your hips. Knees approximately shoulder width apart. Solid like a table. Breath in and then....

Cat-Exhale...the pose should look like a cat stretching its back. Release the crown of your head toward the floor, relax your neck, but don't force your chin to your chest. Round your back and pull your belly-button towards your spine.

Cow- Inhale slowly arch your back, rolling your shoulders back, to open your chest. Your tailbone points upward. Your stomach will drop towards the floor. Try not to over extend your neck, but turn your face upward and up. exhale as you return to Cat... Repeat 5-20 times, and then rest by sitting back on your heels with your torso upright. Notice your breath and sensations.



Benefits: Cat-Cow pose- helps to release any stress within the spine and helps to move the energy throughout the body. You may recall I mentioned about the sympathetic fight/flight response center) and parasympathetic nervous system (rest/digest response center). It is suggested that for now please avoid breath retention due to the potential spike in the sympathetic

nervous system and focus more on the exhale to promote the parasympathetic nervous system. Nice, smooth exhales as you move through these positions.

2. Child Pose:

Begin on your hands and knees. Spread your knees wide apart while keeping your big toes touching. Inhale & sit up straight and lengthen your spine up through the crown of your head. Exhale, bowing forward, draping your torso between your thighs and shifting your buttocks towards your heels. Keep your arms long and extended, palms facing down.

*****Modification-** Make two fists with your hands and stack them so you can place your head onto your hands. If you have a block or a firm pillow you can place it in front so you can rest your head comfortably. Also, you can have your knees closer together and this will allow your thighs to apply gentle pressure on your stomach as you breathe, massaging your internal organs. There should be no sensation of pain.



Benefits: Child's Pose helps to stretch the hips, thighs, and ankles while reducing stress and fatigue. It gently relaxes the muscles on the front of the body while softly and passively stretching the muscles of the back torso. This resting pose centers, calms, and soothes the brain, making it a therapeutic posture for relieving stress.

3. Thread-the-needle

Lie on your back with the head flat on the floor. Bend the knees and place the soles of the feet on the floor. Bring the right knee toward the chest. Keeping the hips even, place the right ankle below the left knee with the right knee pointing to the right. Flex the right foot to keep the muscles engaged and protect the knee from strain. • Lift the left foot off the floor and bring the left knee toward the chest. Bring the hands on either side of the left thigh for support. You should feel a stretch on the outside of the right hip. As you breathe in and out, try to bring both hips parallel. Repeat on the other side. Only go as deep as you need to feel a gentle stretch. Remain in this pose long enough to send your breath to the back of the thighs, to the hips and to the shoulder & neck.



Benefits: Releases stress within the hip region and stretch large muscle group which contributes to the process of de-stressing. Furthermore, it stretches the shoulders and upper back which are two common areas where people hold tension which impacts quality of sleep.

4. Upavistha Konasana (wide-angle seated forward bend)

Sit upright on the floor, without slouching.

Extend the legs in front of you in a V shape, placing hands behind the buttocks for balance. Only go so wide as is comfortable.

Inhale and lengthen the spine, ensuring the lower back isn't rounding.

Exhale and bend forward from the hips, with hands in front of you. Focus on the breath as you lengthen the spine with every inhale and relax forward with every exhale.



Best Health tip: If sitting in this pose is challenge enough, skip the forward bend and keep the hands behind the buttocks; focus on sitting up without rounding the back. Try sitting on a cushion or folded blanket, or bending the knees and placing support under them.

5. Legs-up-the-wall:

Start by placing a pillow, folding blanket hip width from the wall. Sit on it with your left side close to the wall with your legs parallel to the wall (your body is in a somewhat L-shaped position). Mindfully place your right elbow on the floor and slide your legs towards the wall. Shimmy your hips as close to the wall as possible, but your buttocks should not touch the wall as you want space within the hips. Gently turn onto your back. Then start walking your feet up the wall. Make any adjustments to facilitate a more relaxing space- I suggest pressing your feet into the wall to lift your hips to make sure your support is under your sacrum (hips and lower back area). Maybe place a pillow under your head or in that space under your neck. Let your arms rest on your belly/chest, out to the sides or above your head (this creates space along your side body). At this point, focus on your breath- try elongating your breath, taking a deep, slow inhale through your nose and a slower exhalation through your nose. Try to stay in the pose for at least 5 minutes for optimal benefits.

When getting out of the pose please bend your knees to your chest with an exhale and inhale turn to your side (fetal position). Take a few breaths in this position before trying to sit up to avoid feeling light-headed.



Benefits: This pose can relieve a lot of tension in the hips, a great source of lower back pain. We often hold tension in your hips. Also alters our circulation and allows us to view the world from a different angle...new perspective.

6. Shavasana-Yoga Nidra:

Shavasana is an asana, a posture. Yoga nidra is a state of consciousness, somewhere between sleep and being awake. It is complete relaxation of the body, while the mind stays awake. Proper use of shavasana may allow one to experience yoga nidra, but the two are independent concepts. Turn your attention to each of your body part and imagine it relaxed. It takes time as sometimes we are in tuned as to how to relax a particular body part. Muscle Relaxation can help prepare us to connect with our body more to have this experience.

Regardless, Shavasana is an essential part of your practice. It allows your body to absorb all the changes in energy, alignment and allows the body to cool down.



Sending you nurturing thoughts, Sending you nurturing words, Sending you positive intentions.

The Light in me acknowledges the Light in you. Namaste.

In Light, Angelique