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Jaideep Sharma

M.A Yoga, Mohanlal Sukhadia
University, Udaipur, Rajasthan,
India

Yoga Nidra

Jaideep Sharma

Abstract

Stress is considered to be a severe problem nowadays due to changing competitive environment. People differ in their perception, beliefs, attitude, likes and dislikes, societal and cultural background and so forth, these factors in turn create conflict at the workplace and family life. In organization, managers are under constant pressure to meet the deadlines for fulfilling the targets. This may result in increased profits and faster growth in short- term but in turn deterioration of the health of the employees facing distress in the organization.

Yoga nidra (also known as yogic sleep) is a powerful technique for controlling your body's relaxation response. Yoga nidra can be as restorative as sleep, while you remain fully conscious. Giving your mind and body an extra window of deep relaxation offers powerful benefits. While yoga nidra works on the inner harmony within yourself, it also enhances your abilities and experiences as you move forward in life. Meditation and yoga nidra invites you to treat every moment and encounter as an opportunity to cherish.

Keywords: stress, sleep, relaxation, mind, yoga, meditation

Introduction

Yoga Nidra (Sanskrit for Yogic Sleep) is a powerful Yogic technique from the Tantra Yoga tradition. Yoga Nidra is probably best-known technique to induce complete physical, mental and emotional relaxation. Yoga Nidra is a state of consciousness, which is, neither sleep nor awaken, neither is it concentration nor hypnotism. It can be defined, as an altered state of consciousness. It is both a name of a state and of a practice which creates an altered state of consciousness allowing the practitioner to relax and heal their being, expand their faculty of imagination, enter the realm of subconscious & super-conscious, effectively manifest seemingly magical changes in their life. Swami Satyananda Saraswati (2002) explains Yoga Nidra as a state of mind between wakefulness and dream.

When someone practices Yoga Nidra he opens the deeper phases of the mind. During the practice of Yoga Nidra the consciousness is at different levels and the consciousness is suspended for a few moments periodically, which means that it alternates between the subconscious and unconscious states. Few studies have been conducted to examine the effectiveness of Yoga Nidra on stress related to psychological and psychosomatic disorders.

The 8 stages of the Yoga Nidra practice include

- a) Internalization / Relaxation – Preliminary preparation of the body.
- b) Affirmation (Sankalpa) – A personal goal previously decided upon is declared silently.
- c) Rotation of Consciousness – The consciousness is taken on a tour of the whole body in a structured fashion.
- d) Respiration awareness – A period of awareness of the breath at special positions in the body.
- e) Manifestations of Opposites – Pairs of feelings and emotions are experienced.
- f) Creative Visualization – Various Archetypal images are visualized mentally.
- g) Affirmation- Sankalpa is repeated and, now in a highly suggestible state of consciousness, is programmed into the subconscious mind.
- h) Return to Full Awareness – A careful and gradual return to a normal state.

Correspondence

Jaideep Sharma

M.A Yoga, Mohanlal Sukhadia
University, Udaipur, Rajasthan,
India

Benefits

- Everyone can practice. Even beginners who have no experience with meditation.
- Physical stresses and tensions are removed.
- Mental stresses and unwanted impressions are removed.
- *Emotional balance is restored.
- *The faculties of imagination and visualization are Practiced and enhanced.
- The subconscious is focused on and able to manifest any personal goal be it physical.

Effect of Yoga Nidra on Emotional and Mental Health

It can assist in the achievement of a state of so called self-realization (complete self-awareness) Yoga Nidra helps in restoring mental, emotional and physical health by way of relaxation, and makes the mind more conducive to Pratyahara - withdrawing senses from their objects, Dharana - concentration, and meditation. The practice helps harmonize the two hemispheres of the brain and the two aspects of the autonomous nervous system (sympathetic and parasympathetic).

Typical Effects

The most easily observable effect of the Yoga Nidra practice is the extremely deep relaxation of the nervous system and healing of the body by allowing it the rest and recharge it usually lacks in our all too busy lifestyles. Yoga Nidra has been clinically shown to be one of the most powerful methods available to achieve this state of deep relaxation and sedation without the use of chemical agents as demonstrated in various clinical trials. In Yoga Nidra exactly opposite process is used to make the brain centres active by focussing awareness on the parts of the body in a definite sequence. Thus, the person tries to stimulate various parts of the brain by focusing the awareness on the corresponding parts of the body. By awareness is implied 'attitude of witnessing' towards physical or mental actions of the body.

Mechanism of Yoga Nidra

Yogic philosophy as well as modern psychology, enumerates three basic types of tension which are responsible for all the agonies of modern life. These three types of tension are classified as Physical, Mental and Emotional. Through the consistent practice of Yoga Nidra, these threefold tensions can be progressively released.

1. Physical Tension: This is termed as muscular tensions related to the body itself, the nervous system and endocrinal imbalance. These are easily released by the deep physical relaxation attained in the state of Yoga Nidra.

2. Emotional Tension: It controls the emotional state of the mind, tranquilize the entire emotional structure of the mind.

3. Mental tension: Everyone involved in some kind of mental activity in day to day life. The mind is whirlpool of fantasies, confusions and oscillations. The tensions related to family, workplace, and interpersonal relationships are accumulated in the consciousness state of the mental body.

This may bring psychological and behavioural changes in the body responsible for abnormal behaviour of an individual. Yoga Nidra is the science of relaxation which enables to enter into the realms of the subconscious mind, thereby releasing and relaxing mental tensions and establishing harmony in all facts of life.

Conclusion

Yoga Nidra is the powerful technique to induce poor stress management. It is not only a way of coping with stress, it provides a means of transforming and positively utilizing tension as a stepping stone to greater awareness, efficiency and achievement in life.

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