



Yoga Matters

Yoga For a Good Night's Sleep:

I often hear students say yoga really helps them to sleep better. According to the National Sleep Foundation in America this is true. Many people, particularly women complain of fitful sleep, insomnia and a feeling of drowsiness during the day.

Sleep deprivation depresses the immune system, increases irritability, and slows reaction time, increasing the likelihood of car crashes and other accidents. A recent study also confirmed that losing sleep actually accelerates the aging process.

So – the message is clear: we must get enough uninterrupted sleep in order to feel at our best and to keep our immune systems strong enough to ward off colds and flu and potentially more serious disease. Most people need seven to nine hours sleep in order to function at their best, and stress is often the culprit in causing us to have difficulty falling asleep, or worse still to wake up frequently during the night.

Regular yoga practice helps to squeeze out tension from the body and the mind. Regular breathing practice also has a very beneficial effect on relaxing the body and therefore improving our chances of a restful night's sleep. Calming poses such as forward bends, twists, simple inversions and gentle breathing will help to prepare the body for sleep, while the stronger standing poses may raise our heart rates and after a physical workout it is often easier to get to sleep and to sleep more soundly.

Eating a heavy meal before going to bed does not help the body to rest peacefully, so avoid too much food in the few hours prior to bedtime. Happy Sleeping.