

Insomnia Soothe Yourself to Sleep



We all know the feeling. You're exhausted. You finally get to bed. Your head hits the pillow and suddenly all the day's events and worries come flooding into your mind. You lie there tossing, turning, ruminating over the past or worrying about the future. Or, maybe you find yourself falling asleep only to wake up in the middle of the night unable to go back to sleep.

Over 100 million Americans fail to get a good night's sleep. Everyone has trouble sleeping once in a while, but the long-term effects of insomnia can be serious. Sleep deprivation depresses the immune system, increases irritability, slows reaction time, and actually accelerates the aging process. Without enough sleep, we are less able to focus, prone to making mistakes and forgetful. Sleep deprivation increases the likelihood of car crashes and other accidents.

If you find falling asleep a problem, excessive stress and anxiety are the likely culprits. When it's time for bed, try winding down with these calming yoga poses.

Yoga Solutions

1



Seated Forward Bend

Pascimottanasana
15 to 45 seconds

Props

- ✓ One blanket or block
- ✓ One strap

Instructions:

Sit with your legs extended out in front of you holding onto your feet with your hands. If you can't reach your feet, place a strap around them. Sit up straight and slowly release forward. Hold for 15 to 45 seconds.

Modification: If you have tight hamstrings that prevent you from bending forward with ease, sit on the edge of a folded blanket or block



Legs Up the Wall Pose

Viparita Karani
1 to 10 minutes

Props

- ✓ One bolster
- ✓ A wall

Instructions:

1. Place a folded bolster a few inches away from a wall. Sit sideways on the edge of the bolster, with the right side of your body touching the wall.

2. Slowly lower yourself down to the bolster so that your legs swing up the wall and your back body rests on the

Insomnia Soothe Yourself to Sleep

Yoga Solutions

Insomnia 2

bolster. Once your legs are up the wall, make sure you are as close to the wall as possible. The bolster should support your lower ribs. If the backs of your legs feel uncomfortable in this position, scoot the buttocks away from the wall. Make any other small adjustments to bring relaxation.

3. Bring your hands to your sides, palms facing up. Relax your throat and the sides of your neck. Descend your chin slightly.

4. The most important thing to do in this pose is “nothing” - just relax. Stay, breathing evenly, for 1 to 10 minutes.

5. To come out of the pose, bend your knees, roll onto your right side and sit up slowly.

Modification: If you prefer, practice this pose with your back flat on the ground.

Reclined Twist

Jathara Parivartanasana (modified)
30 seconds to one minute

Props

✓ One block or folded blanket

Instructions:

1. Start by lying on your back



with your knees bent, your feet on the ground, and your arms out to the sides. Move your arms in a “Big T” position, palms facing up.

2. Exhale and release your legs to the left dropping them to the ground. Keep your right shoulder on the floor as much as possible. Turn your head toward the right and gaze softly at your right hand.

3. Stay for 30 seconds to one minute, breathing evenly. Return your legs to center and practice on the opposite side.



Modification: If the twist feels too intense, place a block or folded blanket under your knees and rest them on that support.

Deep Breathing

1 to 5 minutes

1. Sit upright against a wall, in a chair or lie down with your legs straight and slightly apart, your toes pointed comfortably outward. Close your eyes and let your shoulders melt away from your ears.

2. Place your hands on your abdomen. Bring your attention to your belly, feeling it rise or expand gently on inhalation and fall on exhalation.

3. Keep the focus on “being with” each inbreath for its full duration and with each outbreath for its full duration.

4. Every time you observe that your mind has wandered off the breath, notice what it was that took you away and then gently bring your attention back to your belly and the feeling of breath flowing in and out.

5. If your mind wanders away from the breath a thousand times, then your “job” is simply to bring it back to the breath every time, no matter what it becomes preoccupied with.

6. Practice one to five minutes daily, whether you feel like it or not, for one week. You’ll be amazed at the results.