

Yogis Sleep Better

When your mind is still going at full speed or your body is restless, “yogis” (people who practice yoga) recommend enjoying gentle yoga to help you wind down from the day. Harvard University researchers discovered that regular yoga practice can help people fall asleep easier, stay asleep longer, and have an overall improved quality of a restful night. When your mind and body are calm, sleep is much easier to catch. I’m hoping these work for you, as they definitely help me fall asleep better. Even if I wake up in the middle of the night and can’t get back to sleep, these poses help me tremendously. They help me get rid of the extra energy and tension from the day.

Please try and enjoy these following yoga poses for improved sleep.

1. **Supported Inversion Pose (Legs up the Wall):** Lay down on the floor next to a wall. Put both of your legs on the wall, with your bottom flush next to the wall too. Place your arms gently by your sides with your palms facing up. Close your eyes and take some deep calming breaths. This simple inversion calms the adrenal system, helping lower stress production.
2. **Pigeon Pose (right and left):** Get on the floor in a crawl position, on your hands and knees. Bring your right knee behind your right wrist. Then, gently angle your right foot towards the left until you feel a stretch in your right hip or bottom. Slide your other left leg back as far as comfortably possible. Slowly walk your hands forward until you are comfortable. You may choose to put a pillow under your right hip. You may also place a pillow under your stomach, chest, and head for support in the front. Yogis believe that not only does this wonderful stretch reduce a lot of physical tension in your hips, but it also releases your emotional tension that tends to hide in your hips too. Please repeat and enjoy this pose on the opposite side.
3. **Butterfly Pose:** Sit on the floor. Bring the bottoms of your feet together until they touch, so your legs create a diamond shape. Then, let your knees gently drop to the side like a butterfly. You may choose to rest your arms to the side on the floor or let your arms reach forward to gently stretch your back too. It may be helpful to put a pillow underneath both of your knees to decrease the intensity of the stretch in your hips. Use this terrific stretch to open your hips and back.
4. **Seated Spinal Twist Pose (right and left):** Sit on the floor with both your legs stretched straight out on the floor in front of you. Cross your right knee over your left extended leg. Place your right hand on the floor beside you or a little behind you. Hug your right bent knee with your opposite left hand. Look to your right. As you inhale lengthen your spine. As you exhale gently twist your spine as you look to the right. Any twist is detoxifying, releasing toxins and stress from the day. Feel this awesome stretch in your hip, lower back, and spine. Please repeat and enjoy this pose on the opposite side.
5. **Supine Spinal Twist Pose (right and left):** Lay on the floor facing up. Bring your right knee in towards your chest and cross it over the left opposite side of your body. Extend your right arm to the right. Hold your right knee in place with your left opposite hand. This is a great stretch for your spine, lower back, and hips. You can either keep your head facing up, or look to the right toward your extended right arm if you want to add a neck stretch. Please repeat and enjoy this pose on the opposite side.

6. **Cobra Pose:** Lay down on the floor facing down. Put your palms flat on the floor with your elbows bent next to your chest. Your hands are on the floor under your armpits. While inhaling, gently lift your head and chest off the floor by pushing gently on your hands. Make sure you're bringing your chest forward and up, and letting your shoulders drop down away from your ears. Only come up as far as you comfortably can, keeping your hips on the ground. This pose is particularly useful for people who spend a lot of time bending over a computer, stretching your shoulders, chest and stomach.
7. **Seated Angle:** Sit on the floor. Bring both your legs out to your side on the floor. Your legs should look like a "V" on the floor. As you inhale, reach your right arm straight up to the sky. As you exhale, reach that same arm to the opposite leg. Make sure to keep both of your legs completely straight on the floor. You should feel a nice stretch in the back of your extended legs in your hamstrings and calves. There will also be a good stretch on your side waist, lower back, and spine. Please repeat and enjoy this pose on the opposite side.