



sleepability™

Bedtime yoga for insomnia, stress and anxiety

This short yoga sequence is designed to invite your body and mind to relax and unwind just before you go to sleep.

Katya Andrews for Sleepability™

Why you can't sleep

If you experience insomnia or other sleep problems, or have a busy mind, it is likely that your nervous system is stuck in the 'fight, flight or freeze' response of the sympathetic nervous system. These simple poses help you switch over to the 'rest and digest' response of the parasympathetic nervous system, so important for your wellbeing, healing and quality sleep.

The poses can be done either on a yoga mat before you go to bed, or in the comfort of your bed.

Pose 1 is best done up against an empty wall space.

Wear something loose and comfortable – maybe even your PJs - and make sure you're warm.

Try one pose per day until you feel confident and build up to a sequence of all 3 for optimum effect.

These poses are suitable for beginners. However, if you are injured, pregnant or recovering from an illness or surgery, please consult with your doctor before beginning any new exercise.

Before starting

Please read through these instructions once or twice before trying the poses so you are familiar with them and to minimize any risk of injury. For any queries or questions, please contact Katya directly (contact details on back page)..

Equipment

2 or 3 pillows or rolled up blankets **or** a yoga bolster

Eye pad or soft scarf

Extra blanket

Extra pillow

Setting the Scene

Warmth and darkness are prerequisites to relaxation and sleep.

Make sure you are warm. Wear a pair of socks if you suffer from cold feet. Keep an extra blanket handy and turn the lights low or off completely. A nice addition is to place an eye bag or a soft scarf over your eyes while doing the poses.

And it goes without saying: your phone or tech does not belong in the bedroom. Switch it all off ... there's no such thing as sleep mode for tech!

1 Viparita Karani - Legs up the wall

Sit with your back to the wall to the right edge of your mat, with the short edge of your mat against the wall. Bend your knees while sitting and slowly and gently swivel to the right – while still sitting upright - so you're almost facing the wall.

Then tilt back slightly and lift your legs slowly until you are laying down with your back on the mat, with your bottom as close to the wall as possible, and your legs up the wall (see photo).

Alternatively, if you have good flexibility or it is easier, gently lift your legs up the wall and shimmy your hips as close as possible to the wall (see photo).

Bend your knees a little to push your feet into the wall, lift your pelvis and slide the pillow/blanket under your pelvis to support your back. Make sure the whole of your pelvis is on the support.

If the backs of your legs are tight, move slightly away from the wall and keep your knees bent. Otherwise keep your legs straight but do not lock your knees.

Place your eye bag/scarf across your eyes if using.

Rest your arms alongside your body, out to the sides in a 'T' shape or place your palms on your belly.

Take your time to relax, soften your face, jaw and tongue. Relax your neck, shoulders, arms, chest and belly. Release any tension in your legs and let the weight of the pelvis and spine be supported by the blankets/pillows.

Tune in to your breath – just *allow* yourself to breathe - focus on the flow of the in-breath and out-breath, like the tides of the ocean. Stay in the pose for a 3-10 minutes.

To come out of the pose, don't rush. Bend your knees into the chest, giving them a hug for a moment, then roll onto your side. Rest there for a moment before sitting up.



Benefits:

Low back pain; digestive issues; insomnia; high blood pressure; stress-related headaches; adrenal fatigue; varicose veins; restless legs; supports flow of blood and lymph into the abdomen and heart.

If you have your menstrual period, do not elevate the pelvis. You can do the pose without the support or bolster.

2 Supported Balasana – Child's Pose

Place your blanket/pillow in front of you on the centre of your bed/mat, lengthways. In a kneeling position, and facing the blanket/pillow, bring your big toes together and widen your knees apart, and slide the blanket/pillow between your thighs.

Place your hands on the floor alongside the blankets/pillow, one on each side. Take a moment to lengthen your back from your hips upwards and through to the crown of the head. Slowly and gently bend your chin into your chest to lengthen the back of the neck.

Keeping the spine long, walk your hands forward as you lay your belly and chest over the blanket/pillow. Turn your head to one side, cover up with your duvet or spare blanket. Close your eyes and rest.

Let your awareness gently flow down to your kidneys, on your back, behind the lower ribs. Imagine you can soothe the kidneys - like two deep, dark blue pools of water - with your breath. Breathe slowly into your kidneys.

Stay in the pose 2-5 minutes.

Lift your head and chest, taking care to keep your neck long and chin bent towards your chest, turn your head the opposite way and rest.

Stay for 2 - 5 minutes.



Benefits:

Decompresses the spine; soothes kidneys and adrenals; supports the inner organs; relieves menstrual cramps; quietens the mind

3 Sleeping Mermaid - Bolster Twist

Position the blanket/pillows as for Supported Child's pose.

Sit with your left hip directly against the short end of the blanket/pillow (but not sitting on it) with your knees bent. Begin to rotate your torso to the left to face the blanket/pillow, knees stacked, right on top of left (picture 1)

Place your hands one on each side of the blanket/pillow – about midway up. Take a moment to lengthen through your spine. Walk your hands forward, laying your torso down with your head on the blanket/pillow. Rest your elbows on the floor with forearms parallel to the blanket/pillow.

Rest on your **left cheek** briefly, so you are facing the same way as your knees (picture 1). Slowly lift your head and chest, keeping your neck long, and turn your head to the left, to come onto your **right cheek** (picture 2).

If you feel any strain or discomfort in your neck, go back to the pose in picture 1.

Let your body surrender into the support underneath you. Relax your shoulders away from your ears. Close your eyes and rest. Stay in this position for 3-10 minutes.

If your mind is still busy, turn your attention to your breath and just **allow** yourself to follow the natural flow of your breath. Don't try too hard – just let it happen.

To come out of the pose, first turn your head to face in the same direction as your knees (*moving from picture 2 to picture 1*) and rest briefly here with your neck in neutral position.

Then bring your hands under your shoulders, push down into your hands to lift up your head and torso to original sitting position.

Then repeat the pose on the other side, starting with your right hip to the blanket/pillow.

Benefits: relieves fatigue; digestive issues; improves bowel function; mild twist beneficial for the spine; improves blood flow to the organs





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For any advice, feedback or a private virtual session, tailored to your specific needs, contact Katya at SleepabilityTM.



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