

Yoga for *Sound Sleep!*

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Routine for the Restless

Yoga has a huge impact on sleep helping replenish and energizing the body.

In general exercising 3-4 hours before bed invigorates the body with the exception of specific yoga poses which promote relaxation.

Supported fish pose: Take 2 blocks - put one under your thoracic spine - long ways on the medium height - and put the other block on the highest height and under your head. legs straight. eyes closed. Shoulders will drop open. This is a very relaxing & restorative pose - a great way to end the day.



Supta Baddha Konasana (reclined cobbler's pose): From a seated position - bring the soles of your feet together and open your knees out. Get your heels as close to your perineum as possible and slowly make your way onto your back. Take your hands to either your heart & belly, or your thighs to help open the hips. Lie here for 3 minutes.



Jathara parivartanasana (abdominal twist): Lie on your back and extend your arms out to form a "T". Then bend your knees into your chest and take knees over to one side. Look the other way, relaxing the neck. Let go of any unnecessary tension. Do this 2 or 3 times on each side, holding anywhere from 30-60 seconds each side. It relieves stress, low back pain, relaxes shoulders, neck and digestive organs.



Viparita Karani (supported legs-up-the wall pose): Place a bolster or pillow, or block against the corner where the wall and floor meet. Slide your sacrum on to the bolster and send your legs straight up the wall (lying on your back so your buttocks are up against the wall.) Close your eyes. Arms can come out to the sides, onto your belly, or into a W shape. If your legs become uncomfortable - bring them into baddha konasana (cobbler's pose) with the soles of the feet together and knees out to the sides. Stay 5 minutes.

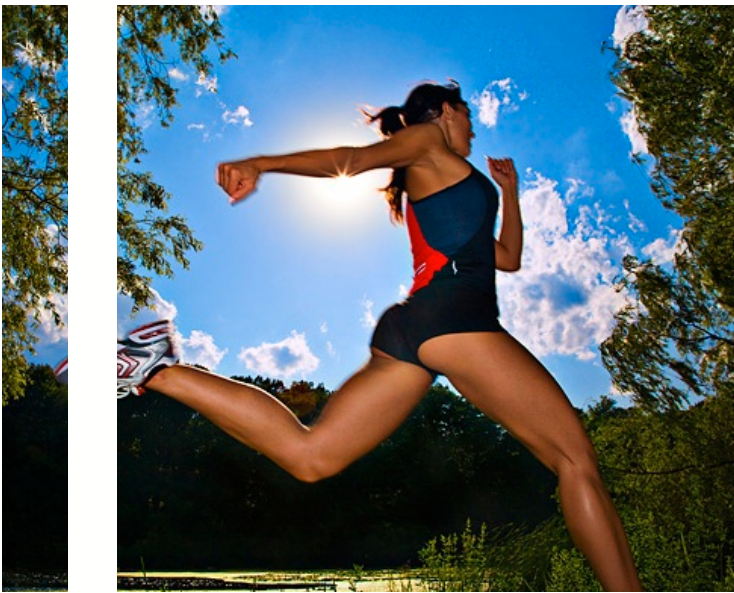
Any variation of a gentle forward fold should promote a feeling of peace, shutting down, unwinding. For example: Child's pose on a bolster with your knees outside the bolster, head resting on the bolster to one side, or Janushirshasana on a bolster - start seated, one knee bent with the sole of the foot pressed against the inner thigh of the other leg and just fold forward over the extended leg and rest your head on the bolster. Stay 2-3 minutes.

Meditation is key - it's so restorative: A 5 minute meditation using a mantra, or just making the sound OM, or sitting and looking at a candle flicker, but clearing the mind of all the chatter that keeps us awake is key - followed by 5 minutes of Savasana (corpse pose). This will help people get better, deeper sleep. We need to relax the body and quiet the mind to promote healthy sleep.

Yoga promotes slow, deep breathing, which can raise levels of carbon dioxide, a natural sedative that helps you sleep," (Yoga As Medicine, by Timothy McCall, MD, p. 414).

Yoga to Rise!

Yoga helps energize the mind and body.



Routine to Reenergize

Yoga to Rise: Extend the benefits of serenity for sound sleep by incorporating energizing moves to start your day.

Getting Out of Bed the Yoga Way: Lie on your back - and slide your head, shoulder blades and thoracic spine off the bed - till your hands touch the floor and you're upside down basically, with just your pelvis and legs on the bed facing the sky - and just lie there for a few minutes. It feels so good - and it's a great way to wake up and get the energy moving before you've even gotten out of bed to get some coffee! Like 2-5 minutes is plenty.

Samasthiti (mountain pose): With feet together, standing tall, with your hands at your sides.

Inhale- raise your arms to the sky and bring palms together, look up at your thumbs and feel your spine lengthen. **Exhale-** fold forward into **Uttanasana (intense forward bending pose)**, hands to the floor outside your feet (for those with tight hamstrings, bend your knees you want to keep your spine long. Neck should be relaxed and allow your head to feel heavy.

Inhale- to **Ardha Uttanasana (half-intense forward fold)** but lifting your head and chest and lengthening your head away from your body. Feel the stretch in your hamstrings and activate your core by lifting your belly in toward your spine. **Exhale-** fold forward into **Uttanasana** as pictured in the sequence above.

Inhale- reach your arms out away from each other and lift your back look up as you stand tall and bring your palms together over your head. Look up at your thumbs. Feel the stretch in the front of your body. **Exhale-** hands to your side in **Samasthithi**.

Repeat this anywhere from 3-10 times each morning. It will get you your blood flowing, body energized, the little extension of raising your arms and looking up is enough to activate the prana. In general - extension, such as back-bends, cobra pose, wheel pose even shoulder bridge, upward facing dog - increase energy.

Warning- if someone has anxiety issues these types of poses may not be best for them as they can increase hypertension. Also, they should not be done within a few hours of going to bed. Vinyasa style exercises move pretty quickly and should be done during the day or very early evening for those who go to bed early.

Another good morning move is cat/cow: On all fours - starting in a neutral pelvis - and articulate your spine from tail to head into flexion, then from tail to head into extension. I can send pics of this too if you need. But - it gets the body moving into extension. I do not recommend hopping out of bed and doing a wheel pose! Our bodies have to warm up, but these three things are good.

Unlock the intuitive instincts of your body practicing Yoga with Mel: www.melisadeane.com

