“In yoga nidra we experience a state of harmony between body, brain and mind. Then the unconscious barriers and blockages within the personality, which exist due to our negativity, are removed and the healing power of the mind begins to manifest.”

—Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati
*Yoga*, September 1999, p. 21

“A resolve or sankalpa is made during the practice of yoga nidra. It should be something of immense importance to you. Resolves are short sentences of moral significance to be embedded in the subconscious such as ‘I resolve to stop smoking.’ In the state of yoga nidra passivity, this autosuggestion is very powerful. Such resolves can change your whole life. They will certainly come true if you repeat your resolve with enough conviction. By this method you can change old habits and cure certain mental illnesses. Sankalpas can have a spiritual objective like ‘I shall become more aware.’ Your sankalpa or resolve should be repeated several times during the practice.”

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati
*Meditations from the Tantras*, Bihar School of Yoga, 1983


“The sankalpa is a chosen resolution made during the practice of yoga nidra. It could be said that the main purpose of yoga nidra is to realize one’s sankalpa. Whether this is true or not, sankalpa has the potential to release tremendous power by clearly defining and focusing on a chosen goal . . .”


Bhaktipoornananda Saraswati, Swami. *Creating Change: Evolution Through Yoga* 2-CD set. CD #1 covers the meditation practices of Kaya Sthairyam, Antar Mouna, and Ajapa Japa. CD #2 provides two 30-minute Yoga Nidra practices.


Includes explanation of the stages of Yoga nidra (preparation, sankalpa, rotation of consciousness, breath awareness, opposite feelings and sensations, visualization, sankalpa, ending the practice), the benefits of Yoga nidra (minimizes tensions, trains the mind, relaxes the mind, clears up the unconscious, awakens creativity, enhances memory and learning capacity, counteracts stress, manages psychological disorders, manages
psychosomatic diseases, and the benefits of Yoga nidra for cancer (by releasing repressed matter, by pranic healing, by mental healing, and by promoting willpower).


**Campbell, Morag.** Polarity and the state of yoga nidra—yogic sleep. Article available online: http://www.masterworksinternational.com/polarity/polarch/pola98jul.htm.


**Damelio, Tarika Diana.** *Discover Yoga Nidra* audiotape.


**Dharmanidhi.** *Yoganidra* CD. Berkeley, Calif.: Tantric College of America, 2001. 72 minutes. URL: www.tantriccollege.org (this link is not currently functional).


**Gilmore, Ruth.** Answers the question: “I was interested in your recent answer about yoga nidra (March 2004 issue), as I had been wondering about what this practice was based on. Why does it work? Also, you write that it was devised by Swami Satyananda last century; does this mean it is not an ancient practice? Does it have any scientific validity?” *Yoga & Health*, May 2004, p. 24.


The author refers to yoga-nidrâ as “Scientific Sleep,” and indicates that it is a way of sleeping while still being aware.

**Hillegas, Joseph.** [Yoga nidra helpful for a schizoaffective disorder.] Personal communication to Richard Miller, Ph.D., 28 Oct 2000. Richard Miller’s email address: rmiller@nondual.com.

**Janakananda, Swami.** *Experience Yoga Nidra* CD and 20-page booklet. Available from Scandinavian Yoga and Meditation School, Hâå Course Center, 340 13 Hamneda, Sweden, email: haa@scand-yoga.org, URL: www.scand-yoga.org.
“The deep relaxation Yoga Nidra from the Nyasa Tantra is guided by Swami Janakananda.”

Contents: The Wholeness of Your Nature (short deep relaxation, 21 minutes), Travel through the Space of Experience (music, 7 minutes), Discover Your Self (the deep Yoga Nidra, 45 minutes)


Contents: To meditate or philosophize, Intentional language in Tantra and elsewhere, The aspirant is tested, Theory or practise, Concept or experience, The ritual in meditation helps you bypass the limitations of the mind, The purpose of the sexual ritual, An uninterrupted experience, A timeless and living tradition, Nyasa (the dimensions, the five sheaths), Chakra: the psychic centers (energy whirls and flows, the major chakras, the various dimensions of a chakra, awakening, tools for raising consciousness, chakras in Yoga Nidra, Consciousness (relaxation or cleansing), You make a resolution, but . . ., Yoga Nidra


Excellent.


From the publisher: “The practices on this CD will gently train your ability to direct your own attention, which is the primary skill in the art of meditation. You will find that you are gradually able to use these methods on your own, without the CD, and the benefits will be with you not only during your practice time, but also during the activities of daily life.

“The Yoga Nidra CD has five tracks. The first track is an introduction (8:02 minutes), describing the state of Yoga Nidra and the practices on the CD. The next four tracks move through four sequential practices that are listened to together, so as to form a complete practice of 57:24 minutes . . . These four tracks can also be listened to individually, as complete practices unto themselves, which allows you to have the benefits of practice when less time is available.”

Abstract: This is the first in vivo demonstration of an association between endogenous neurotransmitter release and conscious experience. Using 11C-raclopride PET we demonstrated increased endogenous dopamine release in the ventral striatum during Yoga Nidra meditation. Yoga Nidra is characterized by a depressed level of desire for action, associated with decreased blood flow in prefrontal, cerebellar and sub-cortical regions, structures thought to be organized in open loops sub-serving executive control. In the striatum, dopamine modulates excitatory glutamatergic synapses of the projections from the frontal cortex to striatal neurons, which in turn project back to the frontal cortex via the pallidum and ventral thalamus. The present study was designed to investigate whether endogenous dopamine release increases during loss of executive control in meditation. Participants underwent two 11C-raclopride PET scans: one while attending to speech with eyes closed, and one during active meditation. The tracer competes with endogenous dopamine for access to dopamine D2 receptors predominantly found in the basal ganglia. During meditation, 11C-raclopride binding in ventral striatum decreased by 7.9%. This corresponds to a 65% increase in endogenous dopamine release. The reduced raclopride binding correlated significantly with a concomitant increase in EEG theta activity, a characteristic feature of meditation. All participants reported a decreased desire for action during meditation, along with heightened sensory imagery. The level of gratification and the depth of relaxation did not differ between the attention and meditation conditions. Here we show increased striatal dopamine release during meditation associated with the experience of reduced readiness for action. It is suggested that being in the conscious state of meditation causes a suppression of cortico-striatal glutamatergic transmission. To our knowledge this is the first time in vivo evidence has been provided for regulation of conscious states at a synaptic level.


Abstract: The aim of the present study was to examine whether the neural structures sub-serving meditation can be reproducibly measured, and, if so, whether they are different from those supporting the resting state of normal consciousness. Cerebral blood flow distribution was investigated with the 15O-H2O PET technique in nine young adults, who were highly experienced yoga teachers, during the relaxation meditation (Yoga Nidra), and during the resting state of normal consciousness. In addition, global CBF was measured in two of the subjects. Spectral EEG analysis was performed throughout the investigations. In meditation, differential activity was seen, with the noticeable exception of V1, in the posterior sensory and associative cortices known to participate in imagery tasks. In the resting state of normal consciousness (compared with meditation as a baseline), differential activity was found in dorso-lateral and orbital frontal cortex, anterior cingulate gyri, left temporal gyri, left inferior parietal lobule, striatal and thalamic regions, pons and cerebellar vermis and hemispheres, structures thought to support an executive attentional network. The mean global flow remained unchanged for both subjects throughout the investigation (39+/-5 and 38+/-4 ml/100 g/min, uncorrected
for partial volume effects). It is concluded that the (H2)15O PET method may measure CBF distribution in the meditative state as well as during the resting state of normal consciousness, and that characteristic patterns of neural activity support each state. These findings enhance our understanding of the neural basis of different aspects of consciousness.

Lusk, Julie T. How to Effectively Lead Deep Relaxation (Yoga Nidra) and Guided Imagery Sessions workshop. Kripalu Yoga Teachers Association Conference 2003.

Mandlik, Vishwas, Premchand Jain, and Kiran Jain. Effect of yoga nidra on EEG. Yoga Vidya Dham. Article available online: http://www.yogapoint.com/info/research5.htm#.


Murray, Muz. Yoga Nidra: The Sleep of the Yogis audiocassette.

From the publisher:

Side A: (in supine position) A profound method of deep relaxation and body mastery, by the step by step withdrawal of consciousness from the toes to the crown of the head (as
taught by the Himalayan yogis). The tranquilizing effect is heightened by the classic Dhrupad style sitar music by Sri Ramchandra Mistry. (45 minutes)

Side B: (in sitting or lotus position) Visualizing oneself as The Cosmic Candle leads one into mystical contemplation of the inner cosmos expanding into the outer cosmos. (30 minutes + 15 minutes silence and sitar)


Using PET scans of regular practitioners of Kriya Yoga who were practicing Yoga Nidra from a tape or CD guided by Swami Janakananda, researchers found that subjects were “in a deeply relaxed state the whole time, similar to that of sleep. The theta activity rose significantly on all the twenty-one electrodes (11%p). The reduction of the alpha activity (2% NS) was not significant; this shows that this meditative state is altogether different from that of the sleeping state and comprises conscious awareness . . . the state was constant and evenly distributed over the entire brain for the forty-five minutes the relaxation lasted . . . There was a surprisingly significant similarity between the pictures [of the brains] of the seven yoga teachers who were measured.

“Something that may seem paradoxical to those who have no experience of meditation is perhaps the fact that these clear results, which reveal a high degree of concentration, are brought about entirely without effort. While you are lying in Yoga Nidra, you are not trying to force the various things that you experience. On the contrary. The EEG shows that you are completely relaxed from start to finish. You just listen to the instructions and experience clearly what happens, as a child listening to a fairy tale—active and participating, but without effort.

“The results confirm the experience of the yogi: Concentration is a spontaneous state, which comes of its own accord when a method is used that removes whatever is hindering it.

“And as the doctors said, ‘It proves that the 1.5 kg (brain mass) with the unknown content can control its own activity in an astonishingly precise manner. From a holistic point of view, it indicates that the soul and body act in unity.”

__________. Yoga Nidra in relation to relaxation based on suggestion. Bindu, no. 11, p. 7.

Researchers at a university clinic in Cologne, Germany, in the early 1980s found that Yoga Nidra had a more thorough effect than the relaxations based on suggestion or hypnosis. During Yoga Nidra the alpha waves covered the whole brain, whereas they occurred only here and there during the other relaxations. Furthermore, the level of Alpha waves was constant throughout the entire Yoga Nidra, while they came and went during the other relaxations. The balance between the EEG in the two brain halves was better in Yoga Nidra, which means that the two brain halves communicated better. These results
were confirmed in 1997 in the research described above under “Pictures of the brain’s activity during Yoga Nidra.”


**Pushpa (David Cosmo).** *Yoga Nidra Relaxation* audiotape. Cosmic Temple Creations. 60 minutes.


**Ratnam, Bala.** *Yoga Nidra for Teenagers* audiotape. URL: www.vbt.com.au.

**Rea, Shiva.** *Drops of Nectar* CD set.

Includes: Yoga-nidra, a relaxation method that works with 36 areas of the body; Tension release through the five koshas (layers) of the body; A special meditation for healing areas of pain and blockage; Lunar shavasana, a means to rest the sense organs and induce deep and restful sleep; “Awakening the Lotus,” a chakra-based meditation, and more.

**Rupcic, Yuri.** Yoga nidra. Available online: http://www.yogalinks.net/Articles/Yoga%20Nidra.htm.

**Satyananda Saraswati, Swami.** Answers the questions: What are the different techniques for the practice of Yoga Nidra? What are the precautions to be taken and the benefits which accrue? In Ma Yogabhakti, ed., *Yoga Discussed in Relation to Other Thoughts & A Dialogue on Practical Yoga.* Bihar, India: The Bihar School of Yoga, 1968, pp. 87-90.


Contents: The art of relaxation, Training the mind, Experiences in yoga nidra, Process of pratyahara, Yoga nidra and the brain, Symbols of the unconscious, Beyond the body and mind, Emerging into samadhi, Outline of the practice, General suggestions, Yoga nidra 1, Yoga nidra 2, Yoga nidra 3, Yoga nidra 4, Yoga nidra 5, Complete scheme of practices 1-5, Short class transcription, Long class transcription, Chakra visualization, Yoga nidra for children; Sleep, dreams and yoga nidra; Educating the whole mind, Counteracting stress, Controlling centers of the brain, Therapeutic applications, Psychosomatic diseases, Cardiovascular diseases, Stress and heart disease, Yoga nidra and biofeedback, Diagram of the chakras, Diagram of internal organs
Shankardevananda Saraswati, Dr. Swami. Sankalpa and yoga therapy. Yoga (Sivananda Math), Sep 1999, pp. 43-48. (“A resolve or sankalpa is made during the practice of yoga nidra.”)

___________, Yoga Nidra therapy. Article available online; http://www.bigshakti.com/yoganidra-therapy.html.


**Vishnuswaroop, Sannyasi.** *Yoga Nidra: The Psychic Sleep* CD. Kathmandu, Nepal: Satyananda Yoga Center. To order, email: rajyogkuti@hotmail.com.

Includes 10-, 20-, and 30-minute yoga-nidrâ sessions.

**What on earth do they use it for . . . different people’s experiences of Yoga Nidra.** *Bindu*, no. 11, pp. 24-25. Available online: Available online: http://www.scand-yoga.org/english/bindu/bindu11/index.html (click on “What on earth do they use it for” in the menu at the left side of the page).

Contents: Yoga Nidra and adverse side effects from medicine [for schizophrenia], The wedding of my younger sister [taking a stress break], Yoga Nidra and sleep, How Yoga helped me overcome shingles


**Ziji.** The psychology of yoga instructions [for yoga-nidrâ]. Article available online: http://www.yogagoa.com/psyyi.htm.