

Practices of the
Himalayan Tradition
as taught by Swami Rama

Volume 2: Yoga Nidra
Recorded by Prakash Keshaviah, Ph.D.



Himalayan Institute Hospital Trust
Swami Ram Nagar, P.O. Jolly Grant
Dehradun 248016, Uttarakhand, India

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Editor: Prakash Keshaviah, Ph.D.
Voice Recording: Prakash Keshaviah, Ph.D.
Mastered by: Dan Harjung

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Himalayan Institute Hospital Trust
Swami Ram Nagar, P.O. Jolly Grant
Dehradun 248016
Uttarakhand, India
tel: 91-135-247-1233, fax: 91-135-247-1122
src@hihtindia.org, www.hihtindia.org

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Introduction

This is volume 2 of the audio CD series *Practices of the Himalayan Tradition*. In this CD you will be guided through 3 different practices, namely the 61 Points Exercise, the Shithali Karana Exercise, and the Yoga Nidra technique. Separate audio tracks have been prepared for these three exercises.

Also at the end of the CD we have merged the three tracks to facilitate the entire practice of yoga nidra without a break.

The practice of yoga nidra should be done systematically. You start by doing the 61 Points Exercise in the corpse posture. After completing the 61 Points Exercise, you then do the Shithali Karana Exercise. This is then followed by the actual Yoga Nidra Exercise.

Yoga nidra is conscious sleep. It expands your mind, deepens your intuition and magnifies your consciousness. Yoga nidra is best done before sunrise or around sunset, after your meditation.

Allow about 2 to 3 hours after a meal before you begin the practice. Empty your bladder before you begin. Try to find a place for your practice which is quiet and free from disturbances and interruptions. The room should be made dark. If the room cannot be darkened, use a dark colored handkerchief placed over the eyes.

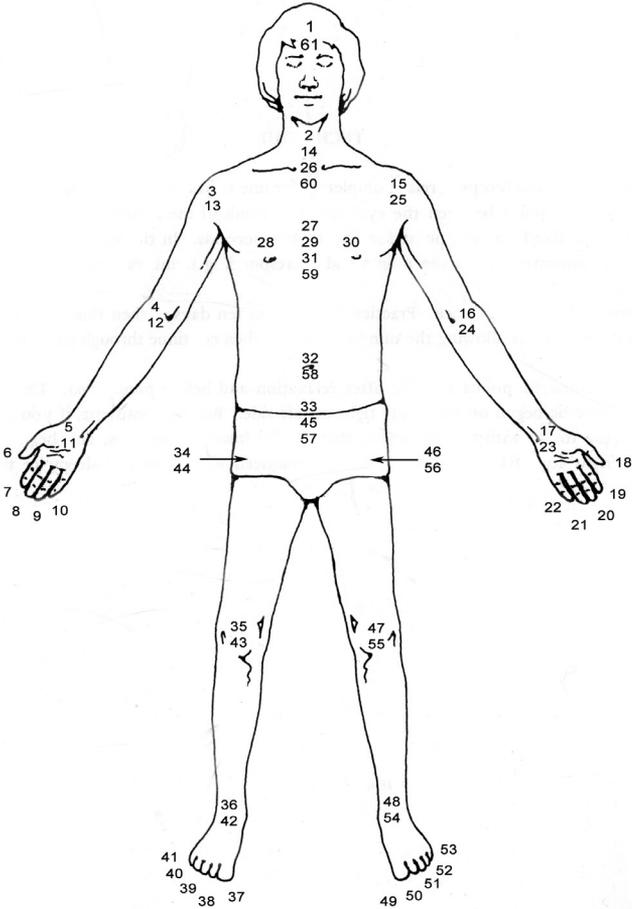
Spread a blanket or mat on the floor.

Use a small, soft pillow to support your head.

Cover yourself with a light blanket or shawl to shield your body from drafts.

During these exercises, try to keep your mind alert and focused on your breath as you progressively relax.

61 Points Exercise



Let us begin the 61 Points Exercise. This exercise is also known as shavayatra which means inner pilgrimage through the body. It is an extension of the 31 Points Exercise of Volume 1 of this CD series. In this exercise awareness is directed and focused on 61 sacred points of the body. This allows the student to closely inspect the body to discover where problems lie. The accompanying booklet has a diagram labeling the 61 sacred points.

Lie in the corpse posture or shavasana, with a pillow supporting your head.

Become aware of your breathing.

Breathe deeply, smoothly and evenly, without any pauses or noise.

Starting with the top of your head, relax your head and face.

Relax your neck and shoulders.

Relax the upper arms, lower arms, palms and fingers.

Relax your finger joints, wrists, elbows, shoulder joints and neck.

Relax your chest, navel, lower abdomen and hips.

Relax your thighs, calves, feet and toes.

Relax your toe joints, ankles, knees and hip joints.

Relax the whole pelvis.

Relax your navel, chest, shoulders and neck.

Relax the face and head.

Continue to breathe deeply, smoothly and evenly without pauses or noise.

In this exercise you will pay attention, sequentially to 61 special points of the body.

Bring your attention to the space between the eyebrows, the eyebrow center.

Keep your attention at this point and think of the number "1."

We will now proceed through the remaining 60 special points of the body.

Bring your awareness to the center of your throat, 2.

Right shoulder joint, 3.

Right elbow joint, 4.

Right wrist joint, 5.

Tip of the right thumb, 6.

Tip of the right index finger, 7.

Tip of the right middle finger, 8.

Tip of the right ring finger, 9.

Tip of the right little finger, 10.

Now come back up to the right wrist joint, 11.

Right elbow joint, 12.

Right shoulder joint, 13.

Bring your awareness to the center of your throat, 14.

Now go across to the left shoulder joint, 15.

Left elbow joint, 16.

Left wrist joint, 17.

Tip of the left thumb, 18.

Tip of the left index finger, 19.

Tip of the left middle finger, 20.

Tip of the left ring finger, 21.

Tip of the little finger of the left hand, 22.

Back up to the left wrist joint, 23.

Left elbow joint, 24.

Left shoulder joint, 25.

Bring your awareness to the center of the throat, 26.

Now bring your awareness down to the center between the two breasts, 27.

Now across to the right nipple, 28.

Back to the center between the two breasts, 29.

Across to the left nipple, 30.

Again back to the center between the two breasts, 31.

Now bring your awareness down to the navel center, 32.

Come down to the pelvic center, 33.

Go across with your awareness to the right hip joint, 34.

Down to the right knee joint, 35.

Right ankle joint, 36.

Now bring your awareness to the big toe of the right foot, 37.

Second toe, 38.

Middle toe, 39.

Fourth toe, 40.

Little toe of the right foot, 41.

Now come up to the right ankle joint, 42.
Right knee joint, 43.
Right hip joint, 44.
Back to the pelvic center, 45.
Now go across to the left hip joint, 46.
Left knee joint, 47.
Left ankle joint, 48.
Bring your awareness to the big toe of the left foot, 49.
Second toe, 50.
Middle toe, 51.
Fourth toe, 52.
Little toe of the left foot, 53.
Now, come up to the left ankle joint, 54.
Left knee joint, 55.
Left hip joint, 56.
Come back to the pelvic center, 57.
Up to the navel center, 58.
Up further to the heart center at the center of the chest, 59.
Bring your awareness to the throat center, 60.
Come up to the eyebrow center, 61.
Continue to breathe deeply, smoothly, evenly and without a pause or noise for a few minutes.
Feel as if you are breathing out and in through the eyebrow center.

This concludes the 61 Points Exercise.

After practicing this exercise for a few days, you can visualize a blue light, or a golden light at each of the 61 points, instead of numbers.

Om, shanti, shanti, shantihi.

Om, peace, peace, peace.

Shithali Karana

Shithali karana is an exercise that induces a very deep state of relaxation and is a preliminary exercise for the practice of yoga nidra. This exercise can improve the depth and quality of your sleep. This exercise will also help deepen your practice of meditation.

Choose a dark, quiet place for this exercise. Lie down in the corpse posture with a pillow to support your head. Close your eyes and become aware of your breathing. Breathe diaphragmatically, exhaling from the crown of the head to your toes and inhaling from your toes to the crown of your head. Let your breath be smooth, deep, quiet and without a pause between exhalation and inhalation. As you exhale, empty yourself of waste gases, toxins, fatigue, anxiety and stress. Inhale cosmic energy from your surroundings, inducing a relaxed state. Exhale and inhale in this manner 5 times.

Exhale from the crown of your head through the spinal column, hip joints, knees, ankles to your toes. Inhale from your toes, energizing your ankles, knees, hip joints, and spinal column up to the crown of your head. Do this 10 times.

Now, exhale and inhale 10 times from the crown of your head to your ankles, with the same path of your breath through the spinal column, hip joints, knees and ankles.

Now, exhale and inhale 10 times from the crown of your

head to your knees, breathing through the spinal column and hip joints to the knees and back up to the crown of your head.

Now, exhale from the crown of your head through the spinal column to your perineum. Inhale from your perineum through the spinal column to the crown of your head. Do this 5 times.

Now, exhale from the crown of your head through the spinal column to your navel center and inhale from the navel center through the spinal column to the crown of your head 5 times.

Now, exhale from the crown of your head through the spinal column to your heart center and inhale from the heart center through the spinal column to the crown of your head 5 times.

Now, exhale from the crown of your head through the spinal column to your throat center and inhale from the throat center through the spinal column to the crown of your head 5 times.

Now, exhale from the crown of your head to the bridge between your nostrils and inhale from the bridge between your nostrils to the crown of your head 5 times. Your breath will now be very fine and subtle.

Now, exhale from the eyebrow center to the bridge between your nostrils and inhale from the bridge between your nostrils to the eyebrow center. Do this ten times with your mind flowing with the breath.

Now, exhale from the crown of your head to the bridge between your nostrils and inhale from the bridge between your nostrils to the crown of your head 5 times.

Now, exhale from the crown of your head through the spinal column to your throat center and inhale from the throat center through the spinal column to the crown of your head 5 times.

Now, exhale from the crown of your head through the spinal column to your heart center and inhale from the heart center through the spinal column to the crown of your head 5 times.

Now, exhale from the crown of your head through the spinal column to your navel center and inhale from the navel center through the spinal column to the crown of your head 5 times.

Now, exhale from the crown of your head through the spinal column to your perineum and inhale from the perineum through the spinal column to the crown of your head 5 times.

Now, exhale and inhale 10 times from the crown of your head to your knees, breathing through the spinal column and hip joints to the knees and back up to the crown of your head.

Now, exhale and inhale 10 times from the crown of your head to your ankles, through the spinal column, hip joints and knees to your ankles.

Exhale from the crown of your head through the spinal column, hip joints, knees, and ankles to your toes. Inhale from your toes, energizing your ankles, knees, hip joints, and spinal column up to the crown of your head. Do this 10 times.

This concludes the shithali karana exercise. If you want to continue on to the yoga nidra practice remain in the corpse posture, breathing deeply and diaphragmatically, without jerks, noise or pauses.

Yoga Nidra

The yoga nidra exercise is done after completion of the Shithali Karana Exercise.

Slowly turn over from the corpse posture onto your left side and continue to breathe from the crown of the head to the toes. Do this 10 times, feeling as if the entire right side of your body is breathing in and out. This helps digest any undigested food, which may create gastric problems for you.

Now, turn over to the right side and continue to breathe from the crown of the head to the toes 10 times feeling as if the entire left side of the body is breathing in and out.

Now turn back to lie in shavasana, the corpse posture, and exhale and inhale 10 times from the crown of the head to the toes, feeling that the whole body is breathing in and out. Let your limbs feel that they are receiving energy from the nostrils and pores of the body. You are expelling all wastes and toxins and inhaling cosmic energy.

Now, bring your awareness to the eyebrow center and breathe deeply 3 times as if you are breathing in and out through the eyebrow center.

Now, shift your awareness to the throat center and breathe 3 times deeply at the throat center, while visualizing a full moon shining at the throat center. This will soothe you completely.

Now bring your awareness to the heart center between the 2 breasts. Rest your mind at the heart center, continuing to breathe deeply and diaphragmatically. Do not fall asleep here. If you are drifting off to sleep, come out of yoga nidra.

In the beginning, do not stay at the heart center longer than 10 minutes. You can use a gentle alarm to remind you to come out. When you come out, bring your awareness from the heart center to throat center, then from throat center to eyebrow center, and then to breath awareness at the bridge between the nostrils.

Rub your palms together and open your eyes to your warm palms. Get up slowly to come out of shavasana.

Om, shanti, shanti, shantihi.

Om peace, peace, peace.