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### Fundamentals of Sleeping on the Cloud of Yoga

Refer to Appendix: \_\_\_\_ “61 Points”

- **Yoga Nidra defined:**
  - yoga means awareness, intelligence, merging.
  - *nidra* (*nih-draa*) means sleep.
- In *Yoga Nidra* we are aware and, at the same time, in a state of complete effortlessness.
- Similar to the state of deep sleep, the mind is completely at rest.
- Dissimilar to sleep: we are not in a state of non-being—there is awareness.
- The objective is to remain awake, while riding on a wave of effortless awareness, to abide in the highest state of effortless being.
  - A state that is neither waking, sleeping, nor dreaming, but is the intersection of these three states and yet, transcendent of all three.
- *Yoga Nidra* gives you access to the most recuperative stage of the sleep cycle, that we normally only experience for about 20 minutes per eight hours of sleep.
- The practice can be integrated with *sankalpa* or resolve.
- In this way, you can effectively plant positive intentions into your unconscious.
- In the practice of “61 points” you bring awareness to thirty-nine distinct *marma* points.



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- These energetic points act like circuits for the flow of *prana*.
- By consciously healing these 39 points, the entire system of 108 *marma* points will be vitalized and *prana* will flow more efficiently, nurturing the entire body and mind.
- Don't try. During the practice it is critical to be effortless, avoid trying to concentrate.
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### Introduction of Maha Mudra

- *Mudra* means gesture, seal or attitude.
- There are five different kinds of *mudras*: gestural, postural, those that involved the face or the pelvic floor and finally, *bandha mudras*.
- *Maha Mudra* (supreme seal) is an example of a “*bandha mudra*,” a practice that combines *asana*, breath control and *bandha*.
- During *Maha Mudra* it is preferable to use a strap so that the spine is elongating and so that you can emphasize extension.
- Definition of a Yogi—“one whose spine is full of energy.”
- *Maha mudra* is one of the most meaningful techniques in all of *hatha yoga* to move energy toward the spine, moreover to the energetic channel corresponding to the spine (*sushmna*—“the sacred stream”).



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### The Power of Deep Backbends

- One of the unique features of the tantric approach to meditation relates to strategy around mind.
  - instead of trying to still the mind, we give the mind a practice (meditation) that requires it “to do” something.
  - as the mind continues to engage the specific action/ intention of the meditation, it has a beneficial effect on the mind.
  - another feature is the intention of imbuing the mind, giving it something to become engaged with that leaves a positive imprint/legacy on the mind
- In the tantric meditation technique of the Heart Kriya we accomplish both of the above.
- We access the light of the heart (*vishoka jyotir*), the light that is beyond all sorrow.
- This is the light of the Self.
- A backbend practice provides a pathway to increased sensitivity to the heart, a means to gather a direct awareness to the hidden intelligence of the soul.
- This is one more effective way to use asana to access what might normally be blocked or too subtle to otherwise perceive.
- Remember: this light, the soul's abode—and all its most uplifting and inspirational qualities—is already within you.





- don't try to imagine it.
- trust that your being is lit by this timeless light, the same light that lights the world as well as your intellect, feelings, thoughts and capacity to act.
- this light is the source for all teachers and timeless spiritual truths.
- it is your very essence; your essence is this light.

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