



Yoga Nidra (Body Scan): This is an ancient practice of full-body deep relaxation that cultivates a state of consciousness between being awake and asleep, a state where we become increasingly aware of our inner body awareness. It can help promote healthy sleeping, enhance our general wellbeing, and helps us tame our ego, all while gaining access to deeper wisdom.

First, we find a warm and comfortable space where we are able to lie down undisturbed for at least fifteen minutes. This exercise can be done in bed, and as it helps promote sleeping, it can be practiced just before going to sleep, but also during the day too, as a way of helping get ourselves into a creative more soulful space (John Cleese's 'open mode') rather than sending us to sleep.

We lie down on the ground with a rug over us, or in bed, and we settle ourselves comfortably. Feel our body resting and the sensation of the floor or bed beneath. Feel the sensation our clothes against our skin, and feel our lungs rising up and down as we breathe. Bring our awareness to our breathing, notice our lungs filling and emptying, and take a couple of deep breaths in and out, and feel the body starting to relax. Notice any tensions and sensations, becoming intimately aware of how the body is feeling overall. We then scan through the body from toe to head swiftly with our awareness. We can take a couple more deep breaths and then bring our attention into our left foot, with specific focus. Let's really feel the left foot with our awareness, feel the sensations. We imagine what it's like to be inside our left foot.

Now we are going to move through our different body parts with our awareness starting with the big toe on our left foot, then moving to each individual toe, then to the sole of the foot, the arch and then the ankle. We move our attention to our shin on our left leg, then to the back calf, up to the front of the knee, and the back of the knee, up our thigh to our left hip, and then up the left side of our body to our armpit. Next, we sense our left shoulder, our biceps, then triceps, our elbow and then our left forearm, wrist, palm, back of the hand, thumb, first finger, second finger, third finger, fourth finger, and fifth finger.

Now, we bring our attention to our right foot and start with the big toe and move along the toes, the sole, arch and ankle, up the leg, thigh, hip, side, armpit, arm, hand and fingers as per the left side, ensuring we touch each part with our conscious awareness catching ourselves when we drift off, always bringing our attention back to the body.

When we have finished the right side, ending with the right fingers, we then bring our awareness into the base of our spine and our buttocks, and then we move our awareness all the way up the spine, sensing all over our back as we move up the spine, up to the neck. Then we focus on the neck, back of the head, top of the head, forehead, left eye-brow, right eye-brow, nose, tip of the nose, left cheek, right cheek, left ear, right ear, lips, tongue, chin, throat, collar bone, left side of the chest, right side of the chest, diaphragm, feel it moving up and down with our breathing. We bring awareness to our heart area, to our stomach, to the organs in our stomach region, then lower abdomen, down to our sex glands and base of the spine.

Then we feel our whole body, we feel its aliveness as we breathe into every part of our body. We do a quick body scan to feel all around the body, notice the subtle energy flowing freely, and feel every



**Leading by Nature
by Giles Hutchins**



part of our body alive with this energy; then we take a few deep breaths and simply relax into this feeling for as long as time allows us.

It is quite normal to fall asleep while doing this exercise, and if our schedule allows, that's fine as it is rejuvenating. The more we practice it, the more proficient we will become at remaining in a conscious yet deeply relaxed, spacious state without falling asleep. This stimulates changes in our brain wave patterns and also our entire bodymind vibrations so that general coherence, greater intuition and wiser soulful awareness are cultivated. It's a powerful practice to get used to, and has profound benefits for us while costing nothing.