

Why Final Relaxation?

In our crazy and hectic world, we are constantly on the go! This is why many people are hesitant about the last few minutes of a yoga class being dedicated to Final Relaxation but it is also why Final Relaxation is so very important. I was once asked why do we “waste” the end of our workout time “taking a nap”? To answer this question, please know that the point of Final Relaxation is not to take a nap - it is to allow time for the body and mind to relax. We know it is very important to work both our body and brain - it is equally important to allow them to rest. Just like you take rest periods during a workout, it’s vital to give your brain time to recover. Allowing the body and mind to relax after working hard results in a mind-body relationship that has unbelievably positive results for our overall health.

When we fully participate in Final Relaxation, our brain waves slow down and exhibit a pattern different from both an ordinary waking state and sleep. Research shows incredible benefits to spending time in this state of consciousness. When we are in this unique brain state, our body slows down the production of Cortisol (our stress hormone) and our brain releases dopamine, gamma aminobutyric acid (GABA) and serotonin (our happy chemicals). The body is also able to more closely balance the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. This leads to:

- Improved circulation
- Management of chronic pain
- Strengthened immune system
- Lowered Blood Pressure
- Relieved Indigestion
- Improved Sleep Patterns
- Decreased effects of mood disorders (i.e. depression, anxiety, addiction, etc.)
- Improved Productivity / Mental Focus
- And SO MUCH more!

If you are interested in learning more about the benefits of final relaxation and mindfulness, here are a few resources:

- Your Body Speaks Your Mind by Deb Shapiro (I HIGHLY recommend this one!)
- Relax and Renew by Judith Lasater
- The Complete Yoga Book by James Hewitt
- You Must Relax by Edmund Jacobson
- The MindUp Curriculum

Namaste,
Leah Juenger