

Yoga for Your Immune System

By Shannon McCall, Yoga Instructor

There is a wonderful and potent practice we often do at the end of yoga class for a few minutes. The benefits of this pose increase when we schedule an extended time to practice, and the quieting effects on our nervous systems have tremendous benefit to the health of our immune systems. The pose is: yogic relaxation or savasana. Aaaaah, savasana. Different than sleep, savasana is a conscious process of connecting to the earth energy, and gradually letting go mentally and physically so that our bodies can take in the message that all is well. This message is powerfully communicated to every cell in our body, and so we leave the practice, restored and at peace; rested and uplifted. So, rather than “relaxing” by turning on the T.V. and zoning out, or with too much food or drink, try adding savasana into your daily routine.

How to Practice:

Pick a 25 minute period where you can lie down undisturbed. Lie on your back on a yoga mat or blanket. If you like, place a folded blanket under your head. If you have an eye pillow and like to use it, place it over your eyes. Lie with your knees bent, and feet wide, knees resting together, hands resting comfortably on your lower belly. Wiggle around a little until you are really comfortable.

Begin by consciously feeling gravity, the pull of the earth underneath you. One teacher I know calls gravity the earth’s love for us, pulling us closer. Sense the energy of the earth, through the floor you are lying on. Feel all the parts of your body that are touching the floor and begin to relax there. Let your eyes relax, your ears, your mouth. If you have injuries in your body, or areas of chronic holding, give them a little extra attention and cue to let go now. Feel any tension in the body, and continue to invite it to let go into the earth below you. Allow your thoughts to settle. Pay attention to your breath. Feel the spaces between the breaths, and let your mind and body rest into those gaps. Let go completely. If you fall asleep, it is okay. You probably need the rest. Just continue to stay present to your breath, your body, allowing deeper and deeper layers of letting go. If you like, you can work with an affirmation such as: “all is well.” Let your body know you are safe and supported. Feel the support of the earth, the support of the moment. Simply be.

At the end of the time, take your time opening your eyes, stretching out, and feeling the good effects of your practice.

