



Iyengar Yoga (UK)

RESTORATIVE YOGA SEQUENCE

To follow up our 'Yoga Space' exploration of restorative yoga, here is a simple sequence, all, or part of which, can be done at any time when you feel the need for quietness in your nervous system and a boost to your energy levels.

These are poses that are mostly supine/lying down, and/or supported in some way by yoga props. The aim is to be still, warm, comfortable and undisturbed. In this way, the pose itself will lightly stretch the body and will also signal to the nervous system to change from its normal mode of flight/fight to the parasympathetic mode of rest. 3-5 minutes in each of these poses will bring this benefit. Whilst you focus inside on resting the body, then the mind settles its activity.

1. SUPTA BADDHA KONASONA – 'Reclining bound angle pose'



This pose is among the poses that make exhalation longer and deeper, because the body remains in a tension-free state. You will find the tension around your diaphragm decreases and the pose gives you a feeling of vast space within. Pay attention to the changes and enjoy the inner freedom and peace. (p. 128 – Iyengar Yoga for Motherhood).

2. ADHO MUKHA VRASANA – ‘Kneeling forward bend’



This is recommended at the end of an active day, to keep the forehead rested. This posture cools the system after a long day. If the body feels stiff, rest the head on a few extra pillows (and put a blanket under the buttocks if needed). (p.163 – Yoga for Sports).

3. SETU BANDHA SARVANGASANA – ‘Bridge pose’



When our energy sources are depleted, the sides of our chest are storehouses of energy and need to be charged so that prana can be stored. One way to charge them is to keep them well-lifted. Energy reserves are built up so that they are available as and when needed. (p.95 and 254 in Yoga for Sports).

4. VIPARITA KARANI – ‘Legs up the wall’



As a deeply restorative posture, Viparita Karani is typically used during a restorative sequence or at the end of your practice. It helps shift the blood circulation down towards your pelvic and abdominal regions, making it good for soothing digestive issues or menstrual cramps.

5. SAVASANA – ‘Corpse posture’



Lying on one's back on the ground at full length like a corpse is called Savasana. This posture destroys fatigue and quiets the agitation of the mind. Steady, smooth, fine and deep breathing, without any jerky movements of the body, soothes the nerves and calms the mind. The stresses of modern civilisation are a strain on the nerves for which Savasana is the best antidote. (Light on Yoga p. 423)