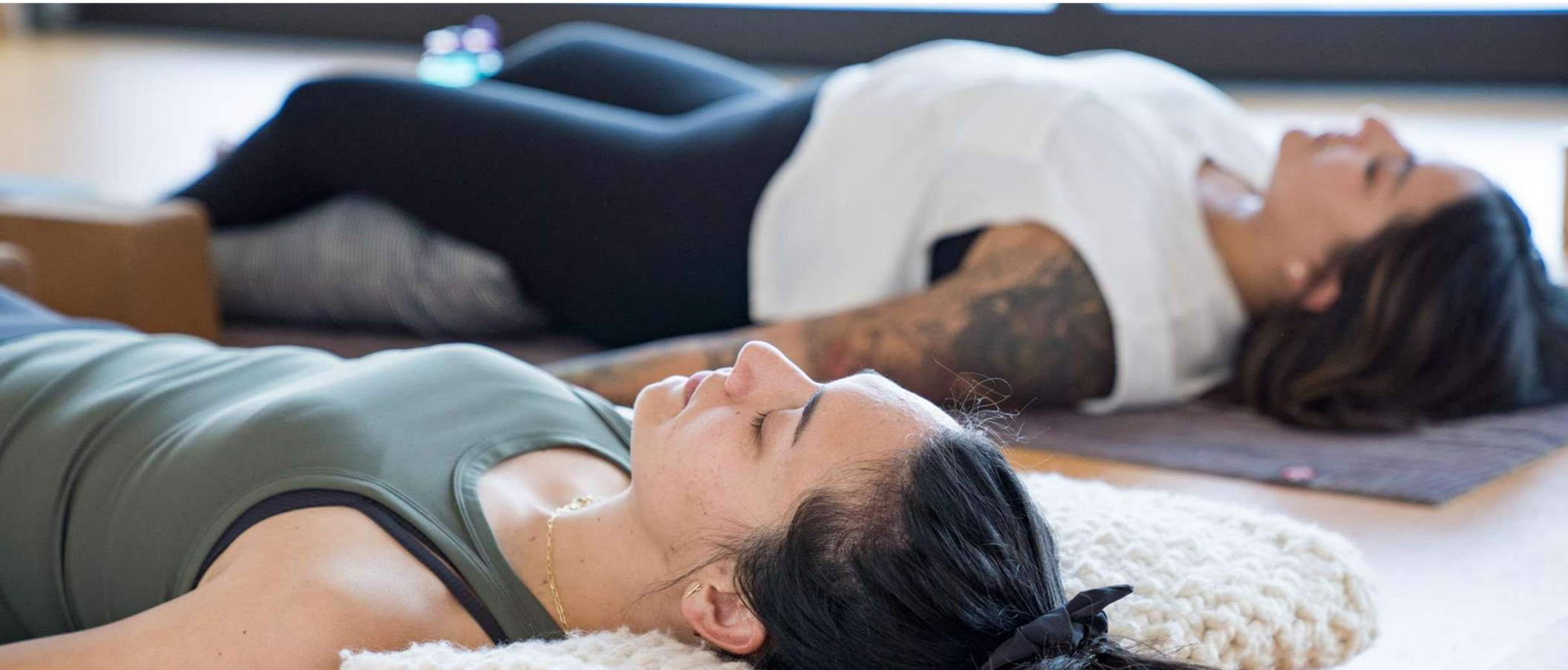


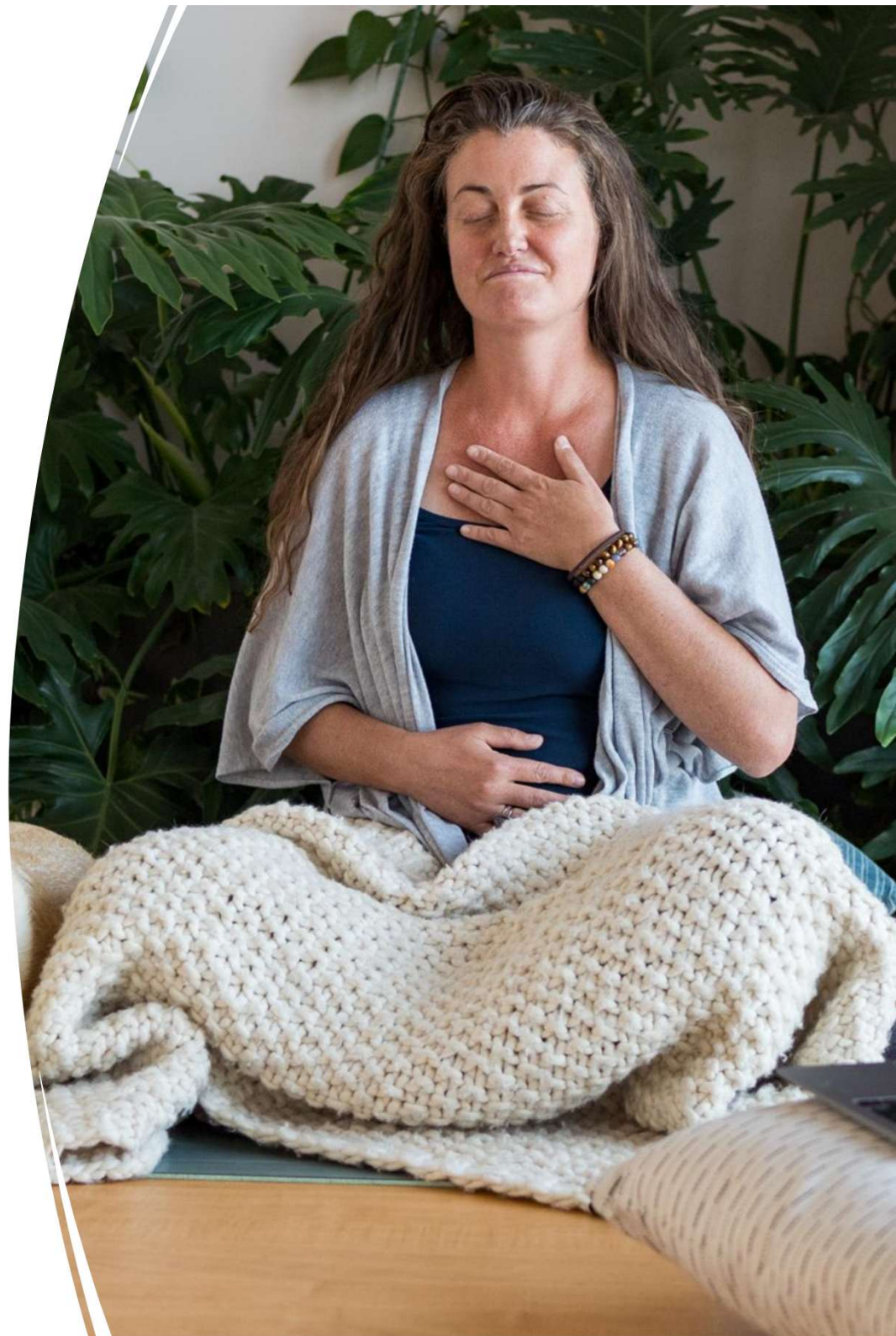
Restoring Sleep and Mental Health after Brain Injury with Yoga Nidra

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Learning Objectives

- **Describe** yoga nidra & benefits for brain injury
- **Discuss** best practices for adapting yoga nidra for brain injury
- **Experience** a full practice



Mental Health & Sleep

48% receive psychiatric diagnosis after TBI

- Anxiety: 36% people with TBI (18% general pop)
- Depression: 43% people with TBI (3-6% general pop)

30-85% of people with TBI sleep disturbance: insomnia, fatigue, difficulty maintaining sleep

- Poor sleep quality undermines recovery
- Mental health (and other) symptoms exacerbated by sleep dysfunction

Yoga Nidra

Evidence-based guided meditation technique shown to improve sleep, PTSD, headaches, and anxiety after brain injury

“Yogic sleep” or conscious sleep

- Hypnagogic State: awareness between waking & sleeping

Yoga Nidra vs. Mindfulness Meditation

- Practice of dis-identifying with negative thoughts/emotions

Highly accessible > laying down, wheelchair

Yoga Nidra Protocol

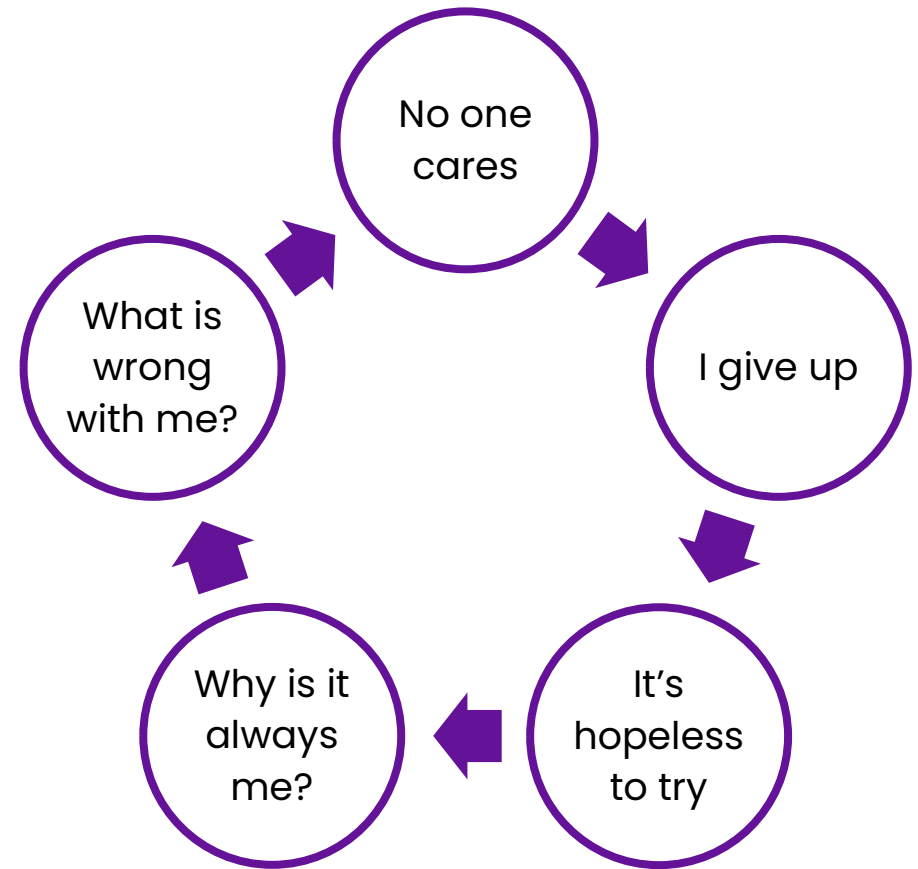


Technique: *Pair of Opposites*



Benefits of Yoga Nidra for Brain Injury

- Interrupts negative, ruminating thought patterns
- Neuroplasticity – Every time we have an experience, a groove (samskara) is cut out. Each time we return to this groove, it strengthens the corresponding neural pathways of the brain, enforcing that groove.



Intention: planting new seeds



Benefits of Yoga Nidra

- **Decreases anxiety and stress**

Releases Gaba, Melatonin, Serotonin

Releases muscular tension (PRM) which interrupts states of anxiety

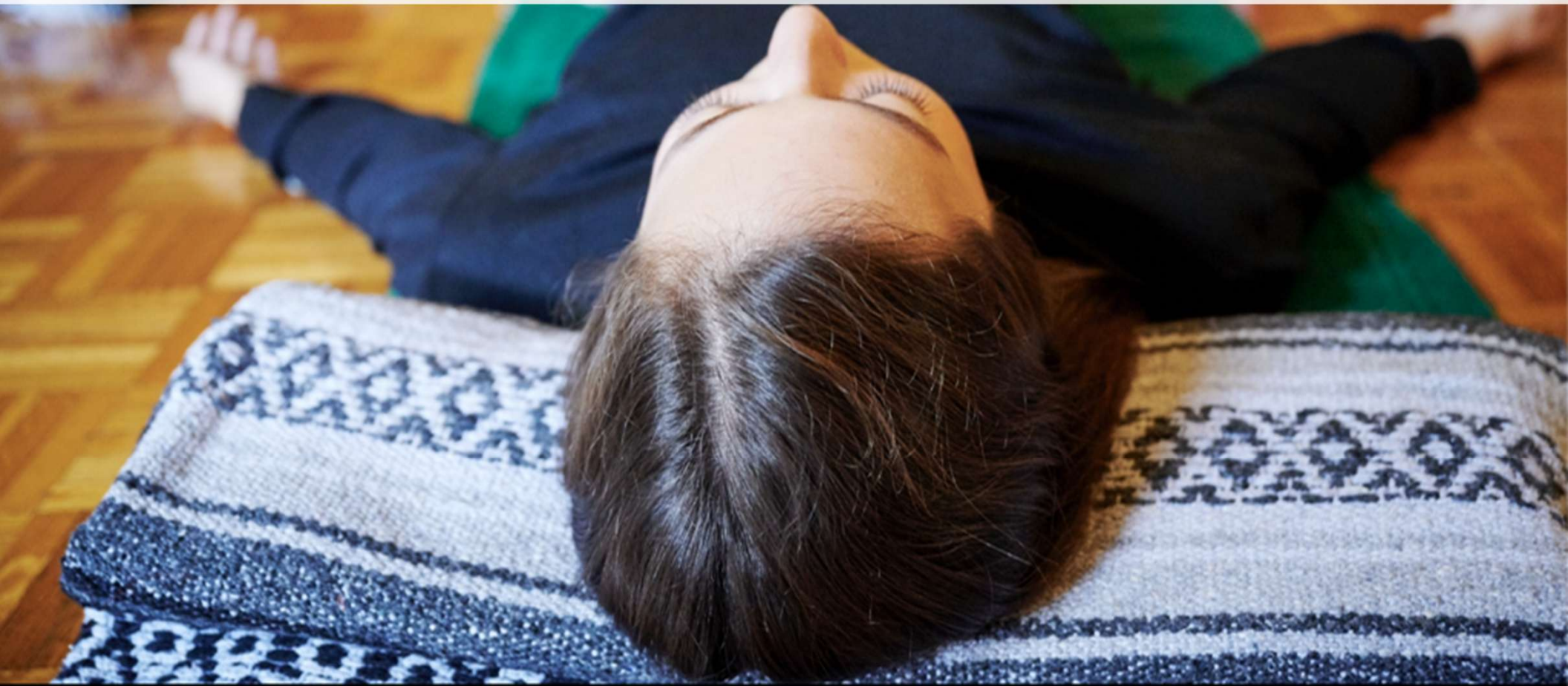
- **Relieves symptoms of depression**

Reduces cortisol

Releases serotonin, Dopamine, DHEA, melatonin

Builds interoceptive awareness which reduces depressive symptoms

Technique:
Progressive Muscle Relaxation
(PRM)



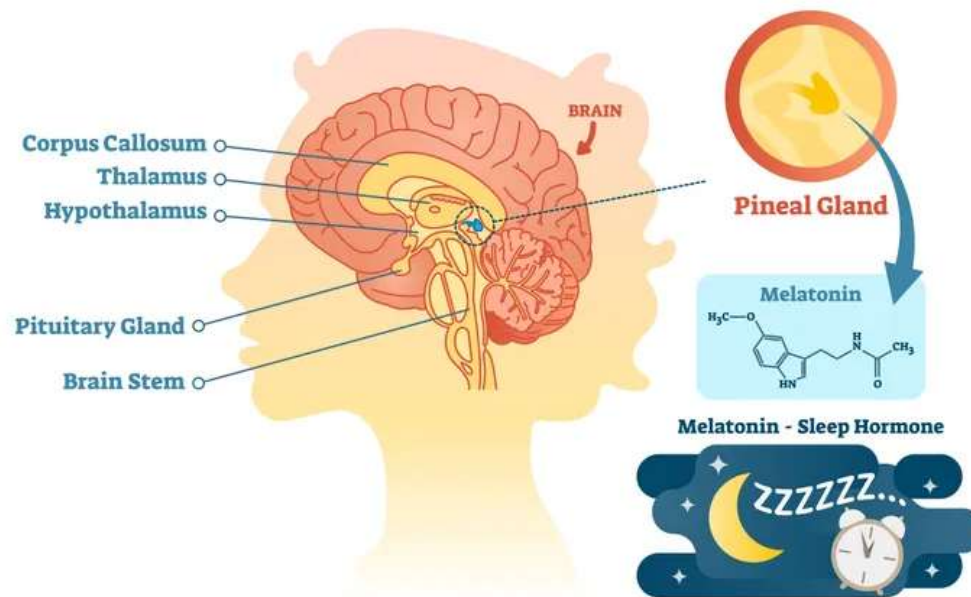
Benefits of Yoga Nidra

- Enhances sleep quality

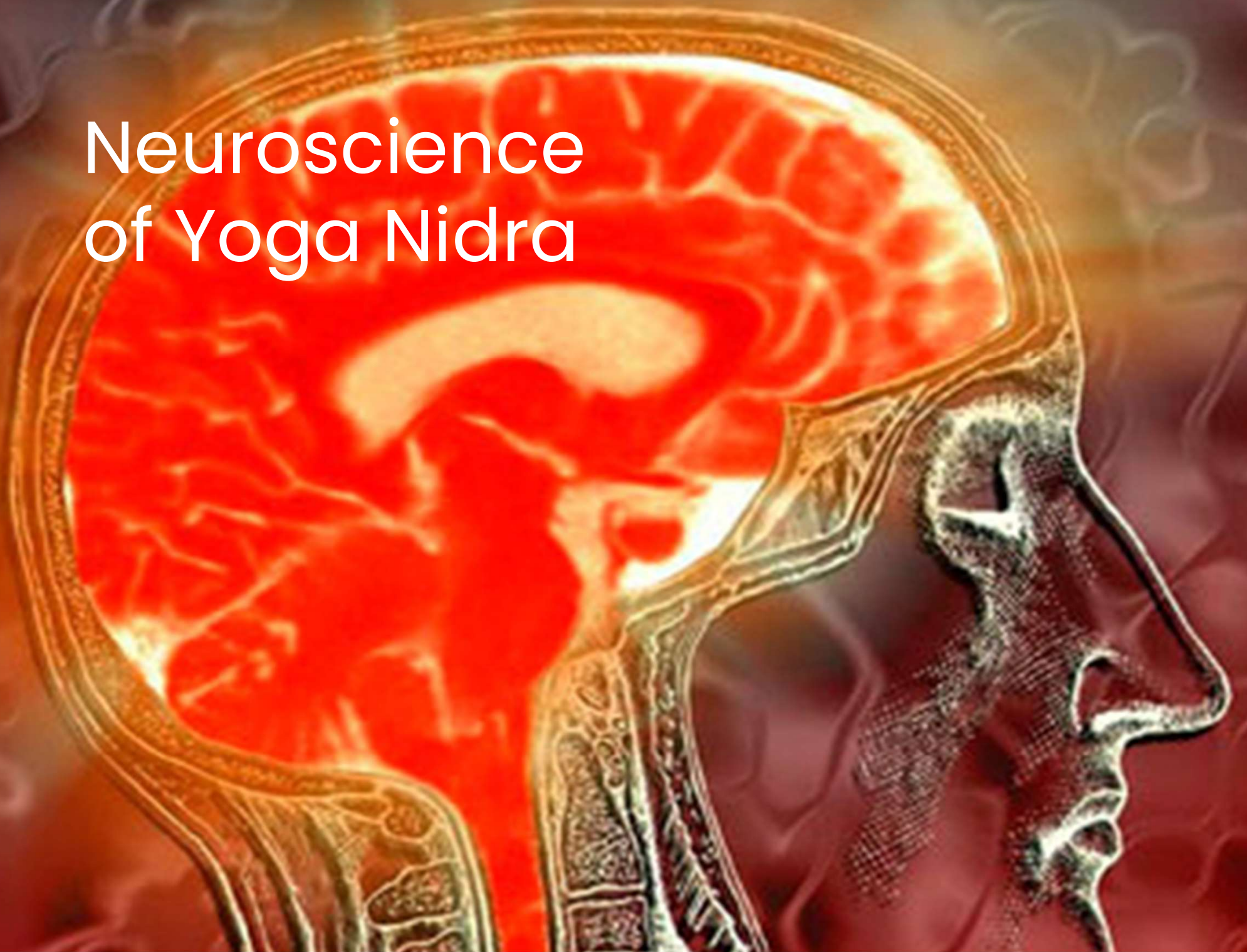
Helps re-set circadian rhythm

Releases melatonin via pineal gland simulation

By enhancing melatonin release, fall asleep faster and experience more restful sleep

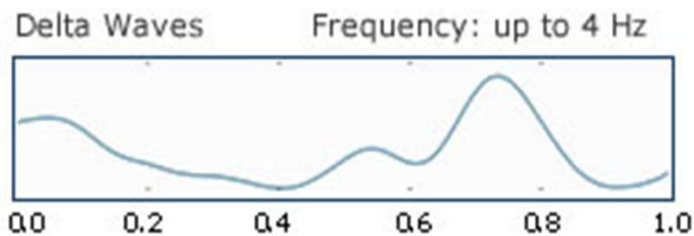
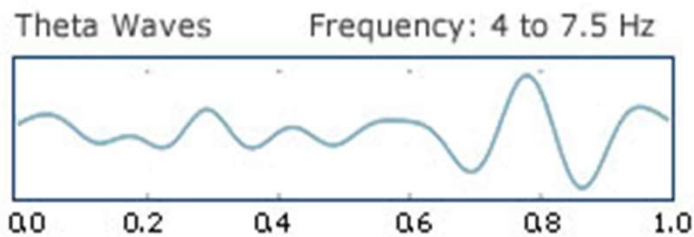
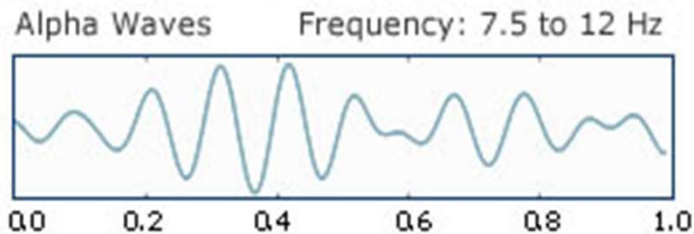
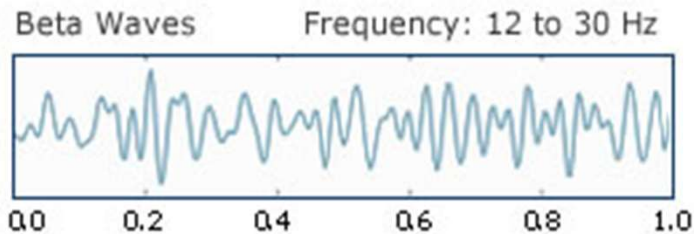


Neuroscience of Yoga Nidra



Brainwave states

EEG Brain Frequency Chart



depth of mind



Conscious Mind

Normal waking state of consciousness. Alertness, concentration, focus, cognition and the five physical senses.

Gateway to the Subconscious Mind

Deep relaxation and light meditation usually with eyes closed. Relaxation, visualization, creativity & super learning.

Subconscious Mind

Usually light sleep, including REM dream state. Deep meditation, intuition, memory and vivid visual imagery.

Unconscious Mind / Collective Consciousness

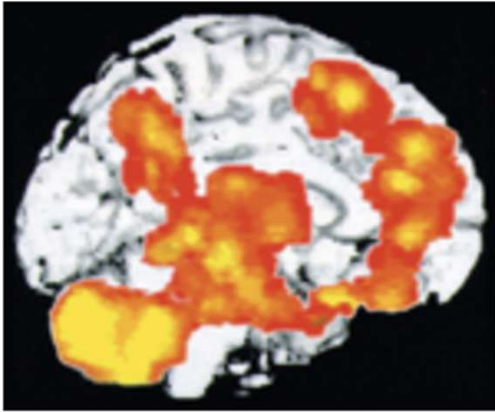
Usually deep sleep. Dreamless state. Automatic self-healing, immune system function. Collective Consciousness

What's happening in the brain?



Study shows significant changes

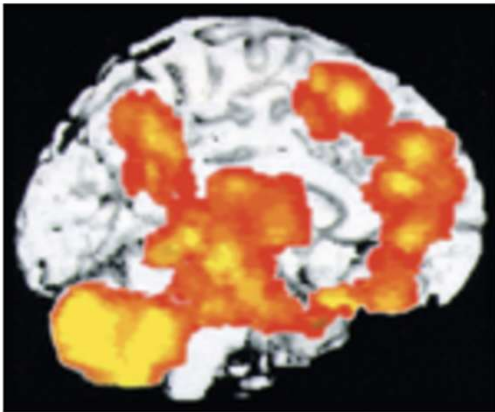
Normal Waking
Consciousness



Frontal lobe: problem solving social behavior
Brain Stem / Cerebellum: Sensory Perception
Limbic system: Emotions, instincts

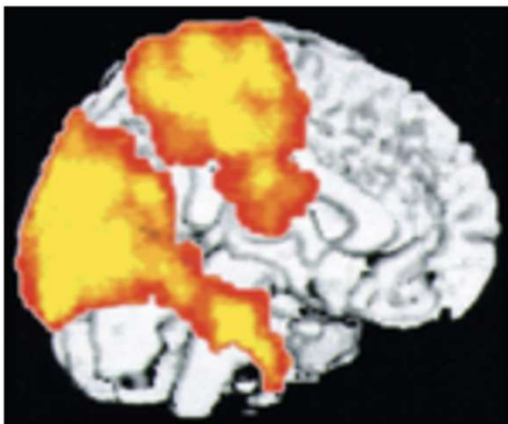
Study shows significant changes

Normal Waking
Consciousness



Frontal lobe: problem solving social behavior
Brain Stem / Cerebellum: Sensory Perception
Limbic system: Emotions, instincts

During Yoga Nidra



Occipital lobe: visual center
Parietal lobe: tactile sense
Limbic system: Emotions, instincts

Study shows significant changes

Visualizations &
Body Rotations



Occipital and Parietal lobes: Vision / Tactile

Activated when attention was directed through the body (especially the face) and also when individuals experienced a pleasant summer day in the country.

Study shows significant changes

Visualizations &
Body Rotations



Occipital and Parietal lobes: Vision / Tactile
Activated when attention was directed through the body (especially the face) and also when individuals experienced a pleasant summer day in the country.

Resting in Awareness/
Abstract Experiences



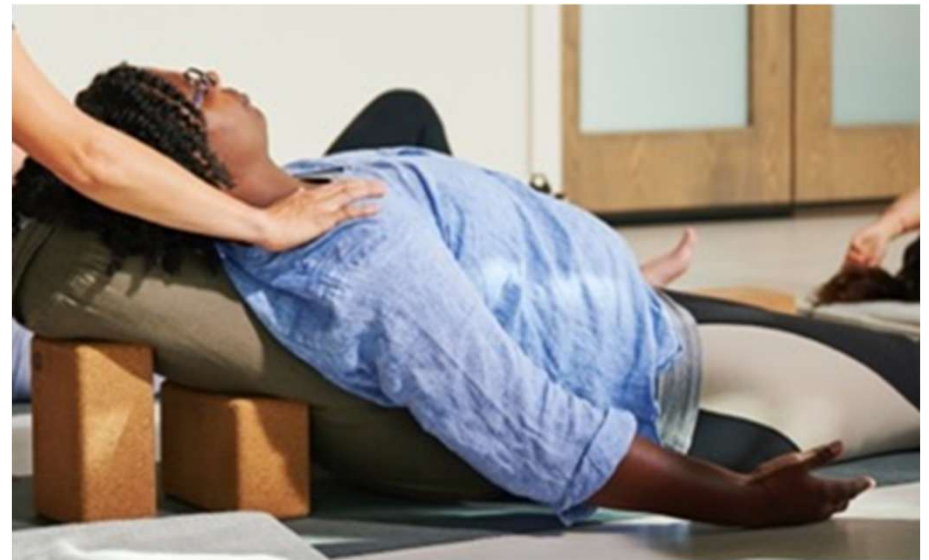
Temporal lobe: Hearing & Memory

Activated during feeling of happiness, and at the end of the relaxation during the experience of identity, of being centered.

Best practices for brain injury

COMFORT: “I often would fall asleep while listening. I have a hard time doing yoga nidra on my back and not in my bed, so doing it for the first time in my bed was a game changer!”

TIP: Yoga Nidra can be practiced anywhere, in any position. In bed, on the couch or wheelchair. Normalize setting up in a way that’s most supportive and accessible.



TIP: Normalize feeling ‘no sensation’ and that it’s okay to shift positions if feeling discomfort/chronic pain.

Best practices for brain injury

TIMING: “Yoga nidra is amazing – it’s been such a great tool and having such a positive impact to creating calmness. I enjoy doing yoga nidra when I get home from work. It doesn't work for me at night.”

TIP: Yoga nidra can be practiced any time of day. Some people prefer to use it at night to sleep. Others benefit from a mid-day practice, especially to support cognitive fatigue.

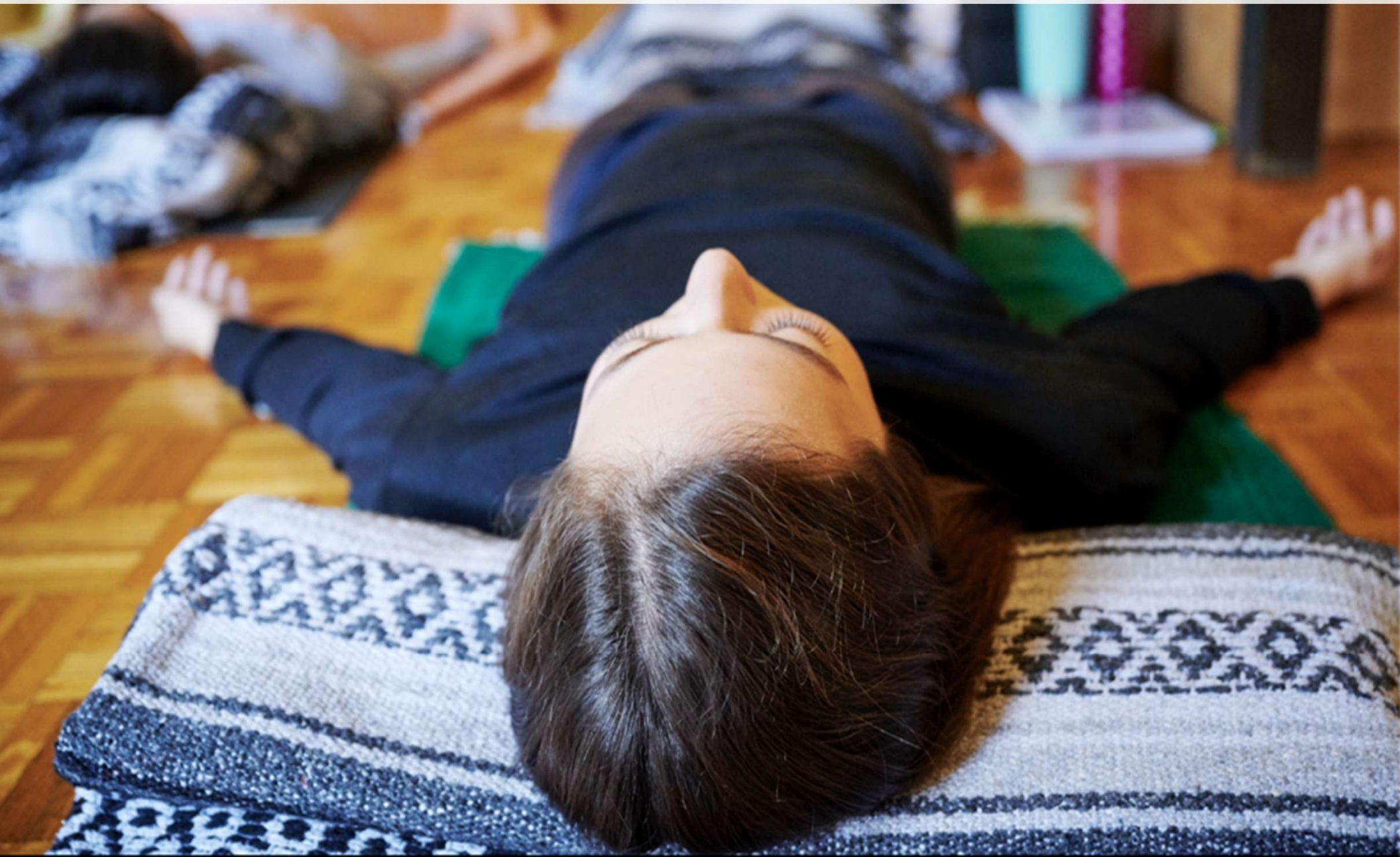


TIP: For attention regulation, can shorten practice to 15 mins.

“Now, go within, into a state which you may compare to a state of waking sleep, in which you are aware of yourself, but not of the world. In that state you will know, without the least trace of doubt, that at the root of your being you are free and happy.”

– **Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj**

Practice



Yoga nidra resources

- **LoveYourBrain** FREE Meditation Library offers yoga nidra practices for awareness, connection, resilience, and rest after brain injury
- **iRest** offers yoga nidra practices specifically for PTSD
- **Insight Timer** – FREE guided meditations



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