



Tools for Trauma

Mindful Activities for Youth

Link to slides



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Tools for Trauma (STI 2025)
Candice Swee 200-RYT
Stacey Throckmorton 200-RYT

Introductions



Candice Swee

Health and Physical Education
Department chair & Teacher at Rock
Bridge High School, Certified Athletic
Trainer & 200-hour RYT



Stacey Throckmorton

Health and Physical Education
Department chair & Teacher at
Hickman High School & 200-hour RYT



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Affirmation Cards



I can do hard things



Challenges help me
learn & grow



Yoga is a gift!

Icebreaker

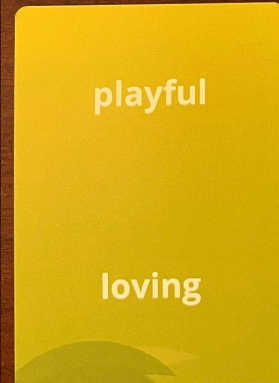
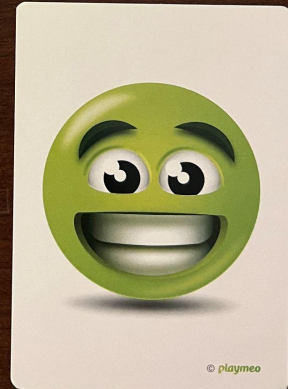
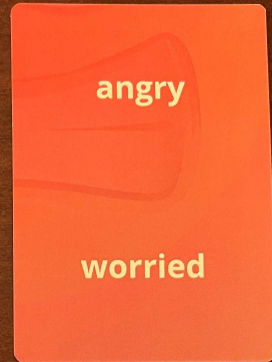
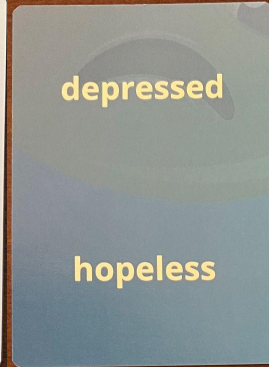
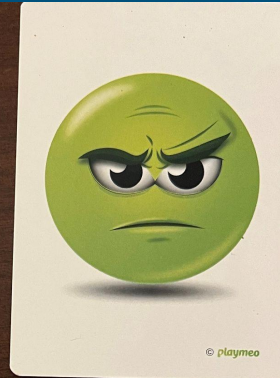
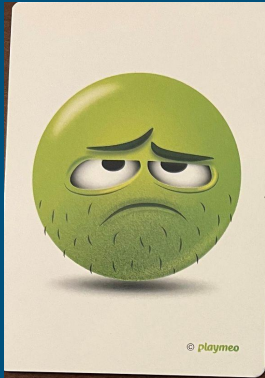
2:00 timer

**Explore 100 words
describing emotions**

**A colorful emotional
matrix awaits!**



enraged	panicked	stressed	jittery	shocked	surprised	calm	bliss	contentment	ecstatic
livid	furios	frustrated	tense	stunned	hyper	cheerful	motivated	inspired	elated
fuming	frightened	angry	nervous	restless	energized	lively	enthusiastic	optimistic	excited
anxious	apprehensive	worried	irritated	annoyed	pleased	happy	focused	proud	thrilled
repulsed	troubled	concerned	uncasy	peevd	pickanin	joyful	hopeful	playful	blissful
disgusted	glum	disappointed	down	apathetic	at ease	easy going	content	loving	fulfilled
pessimistic	morose	discouraged	sad	bored	calm	secure	satisfied	grateful	touched
alienated	miserable	lonely	disheartened	tired	relaxed	chill	restful	blessed	balanced
despondent	depressed	sullen	exhausted	fatigued	melancholy	thoughtful	peaceful	comfy	carefree
despair	hopeless	desolate	spent	drained	sleepy	complacent	tranquil	cozy	serene



Emoji cards

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Yoga in Columbia Public Schools



- Purpose

- Connections to [Trauma-Informed Schools Initiative](#) (SB638)
- Changes to Health State Standards

- Enrollment Data

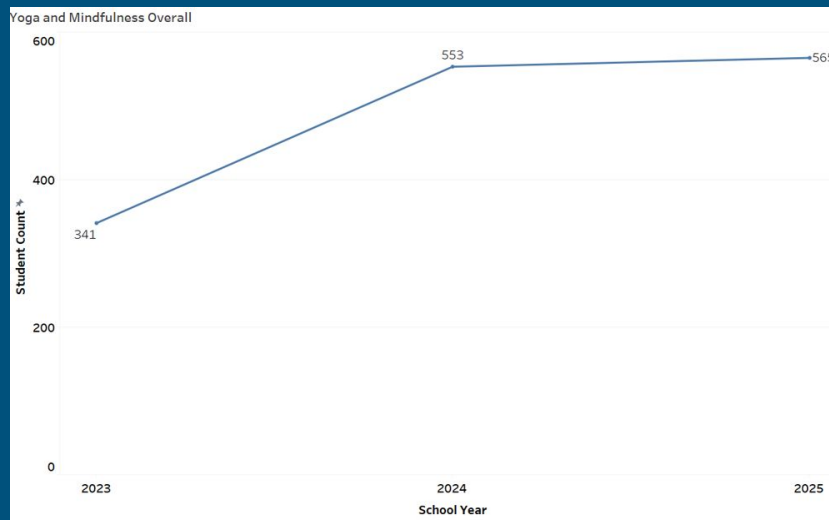
- Year 1: 341 students enrolled
- Year 2: 553 students enrolled
- Year 3: 565 students enrolled
- Year 4: 660 (projection)

- Reflections

- Teacher Transformations
 - Trauma informed 200-RYT
- Student Transformations

- Future Plans

- Restorative Yoga



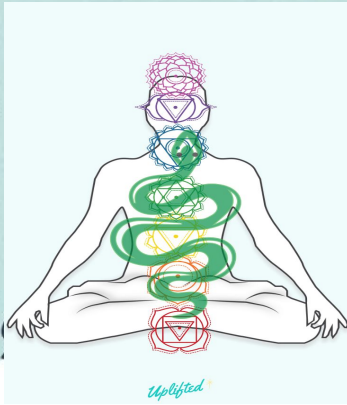
What Is YOGA

Mind
Breathing

Spirit
Meditation

Yuj
Union

Body
Exercise



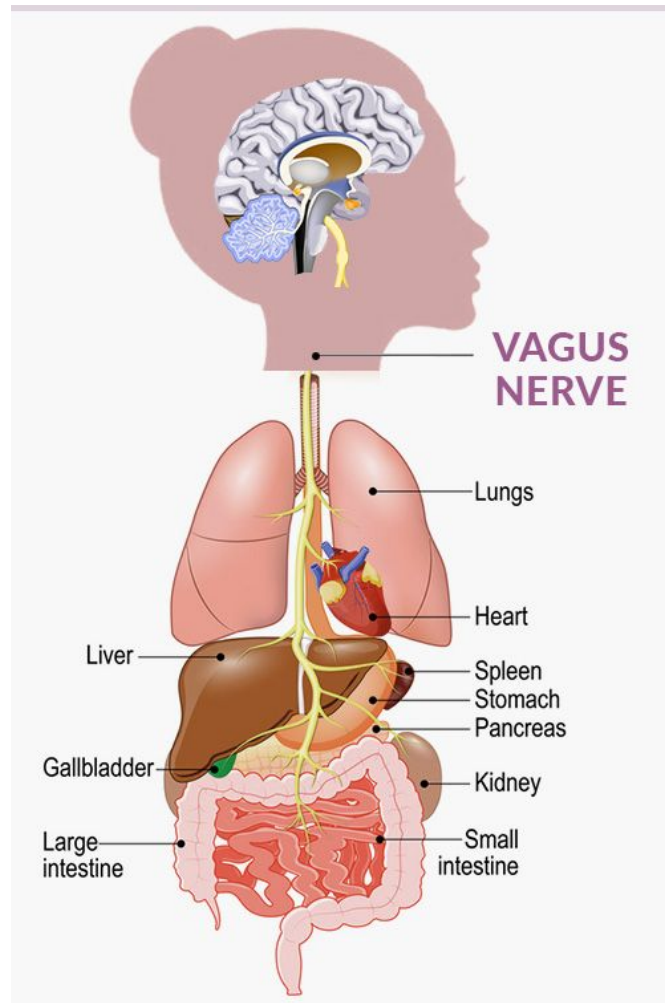
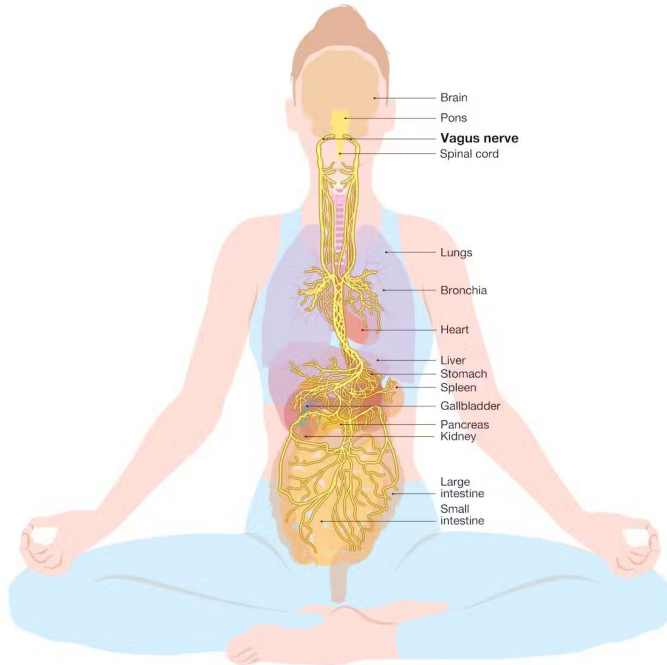
“Yoga is the state in which the churning fluctuations of thought & emotion have come to rest & we abide in what we fundamentally are — awareness”

Yoga sutra 1.2-3
Translation: Christopher Wallis

Kundalini

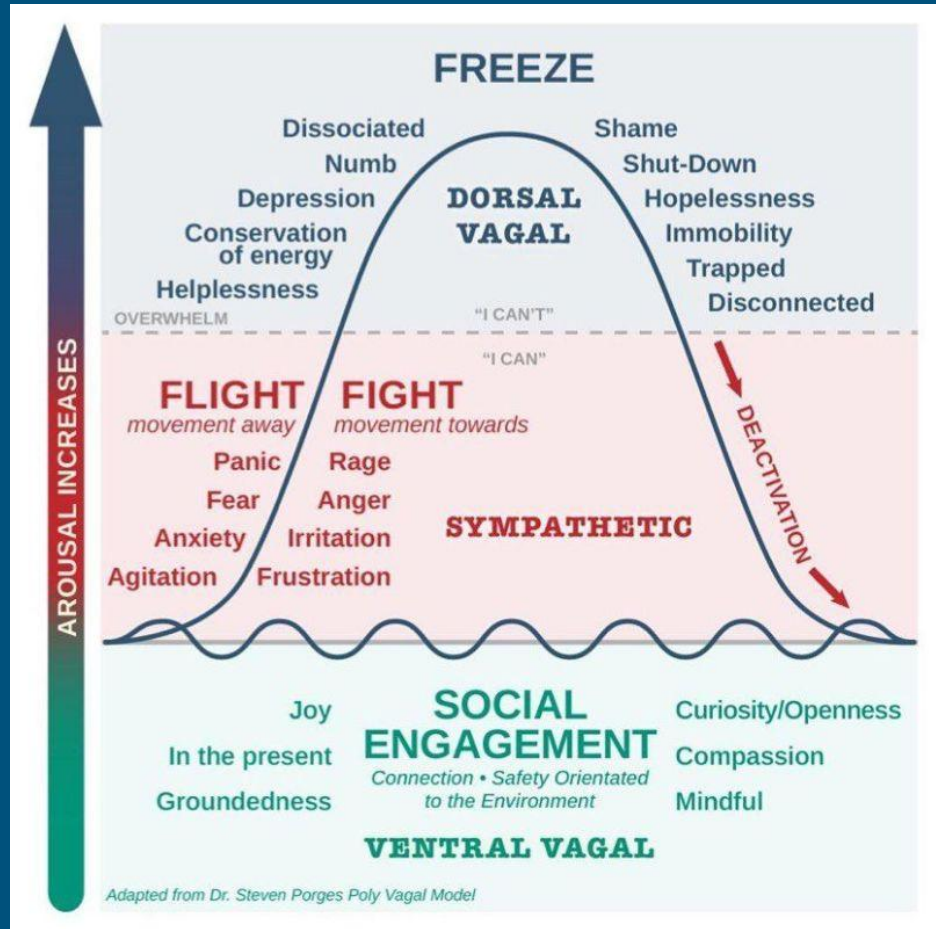
- Sanskrit: “coiled serpent”
- Energy in the body originating at the base of the spine
- Through physical movement, breathwork, vibration & meditation energy moves
- Creating movement of energy clears blockages supporting mental clarity, emotional wellbeing and inner balance

Vagus Nerve



Polyvagal theory

- Continuum
- Ventral Vagal
 - Social engagement
 - Safe & connected
 - Optimal state
- Sympathetic
 - Fight or flight
 - Mobilization
- Dorsal Vagal
 - Immobilization
 - Body shuts down



Polyvagal theory

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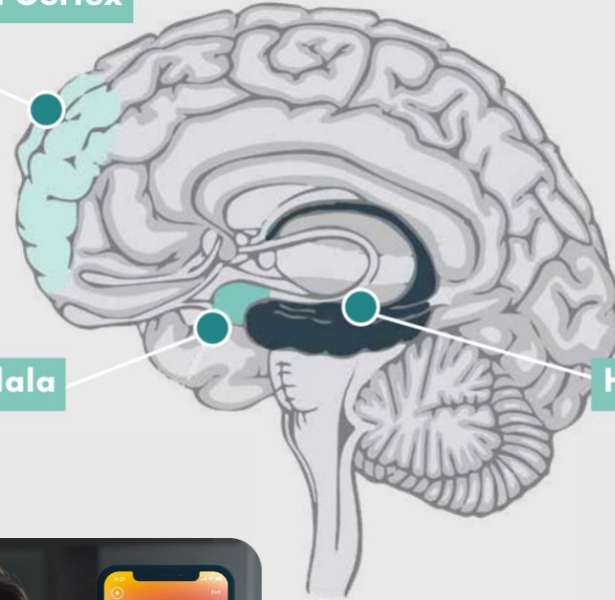
Brain on Trauma

- Hippocampus
 - Memory (organizing/storing)
 - Shrinks/Underactive
- Prefrontal Cortex
 - Regulating emotions, organizing, planning, focus
 - Reduced volume/underactive
- Amygdala
 - “Fire alarm”
 - Overactive
- Heart Rate Variability
 - Indication of well-being
 - Time between heartbeats
 - ANS function
 - Higher number indicates parasympathetic (relaxed)
 - Lower number indicates sympathetic (fight or flight)

Prefrontal Cortex

Amygdala

Hippocampus



Your Beautiful Brain on YOGA



Pill-Free Pain Relief

Yoga = Pain-Blocking Effect in the Brain

Yoga counteracts neuroanatomical effects of chronic pain



PARIETAL LOBE

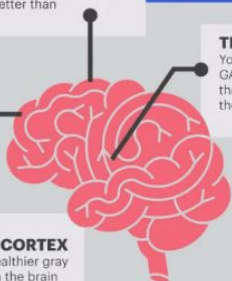
Brain scans show meditation associated with yoga reduce pain sensitivity better than morphine

THALAMUS

Yoga boosts GABA in the thalamus part of the brain

CEREBRAL CORTEX

More yoga = healthier gray matter levels in the brain



CONCENTRATION

HOW? Yoga can improve your ability to focus and multitask by improving communication between parts of the brain that involve...



Memory



Language Skills



Attention

THE BRAIN!

HOW? Researchers discovered a 12 week yoga program is more effective than 12 weeks of brain training!



Reduces stress.



Reduces anxiety.



Increases levels of biochemicals associated with improved brain health.

MEMORY

HOW? Studies have shown yoga improves visuospatial memory. Visuospatial memory is a person's ability to identify visual and spatial relationships between objects.

What is it important for?



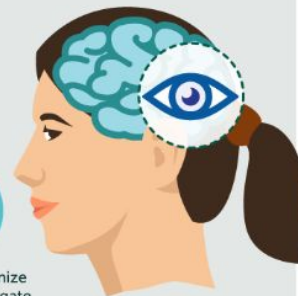
Balance



Depth perception



Ability to recognize objects and navigate the world



PUMPED UP GRAY MATTER

Gray matter, a major part of central nervous system

The gray matter includes regions of the brain involved in:

Muscle control

Vision & hearing

Memory

Emotions

Speech

Decision making

Pain tolerance

Self-control

GABA:

Gamma-aminobutyric acid, your calming neurotransmitter.



1 hour of yoga can increase GABA levels by 27% and help:

- ✓ Improve mood
- ✓ Decrease anxiety
- ✓ Calm nerves
- ✓ Promote restful sleep



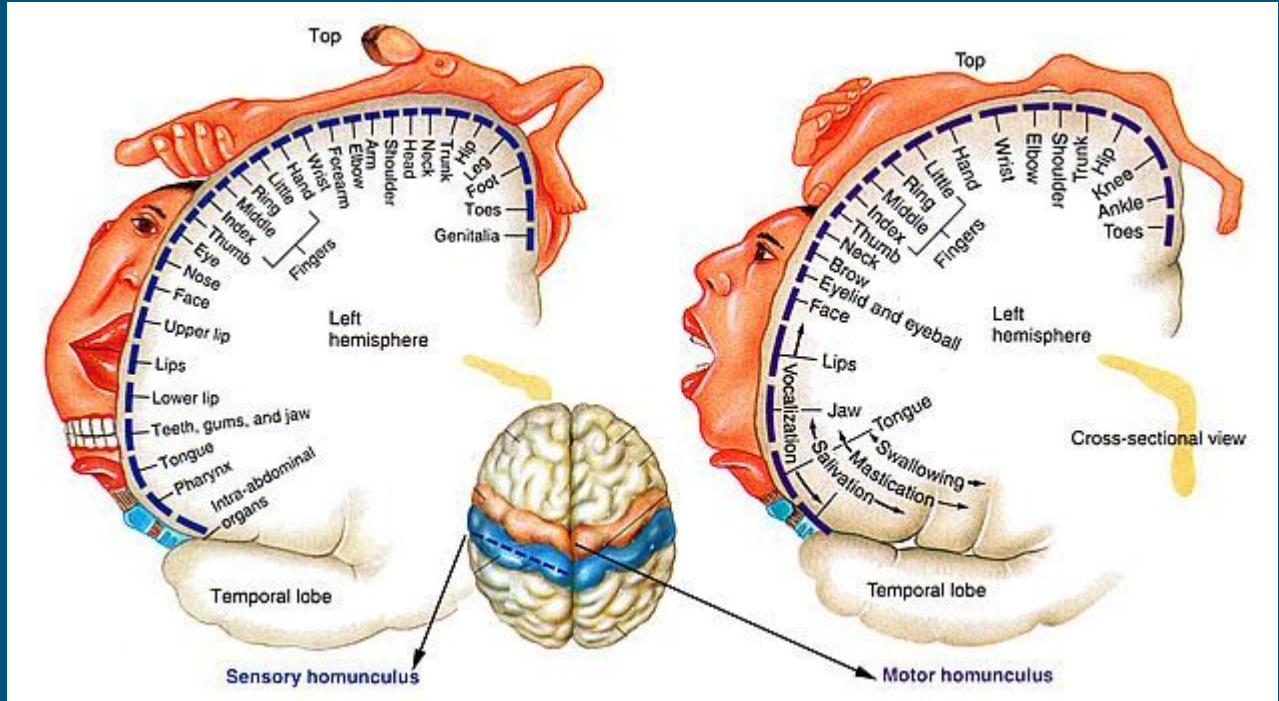
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MINDFUL MOVEMENT



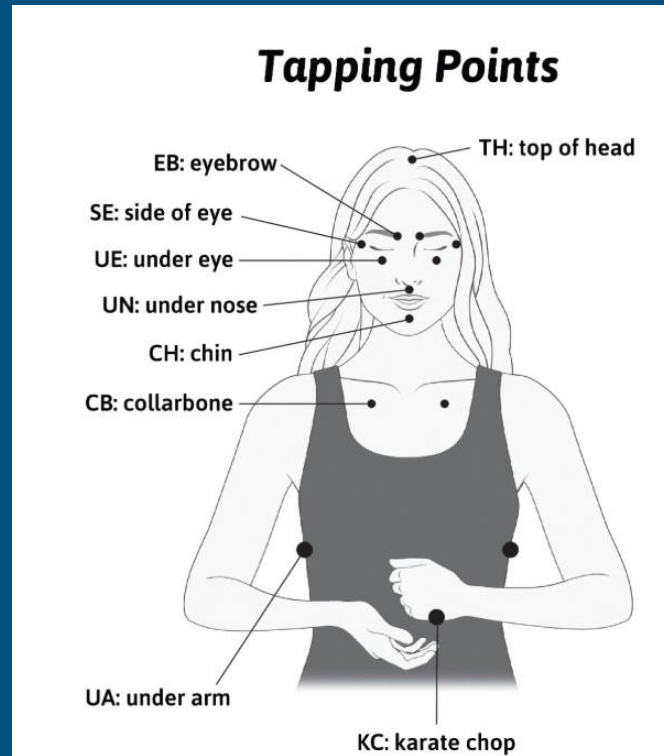
Homunculus Man

Neuroanatomy to illustrate the relative amount of brain tissue dedicated to body parts



Emotional Freedom Technique

- Activity:
 - [Emotional Freedom Technique \(EFT\) Tapping](#)
- Benefits
 - [Tapping Points PDF](#)



Emotional Freedom Technique

1. Identify the emotion
2. Rate intensity (1-10, 10 being most intense)
3. Set up statement: "Even though I have (this stress/situation) I still love and accept myself"
4. Tap while repeating the set up statement
5. Suggested 4-10 rounds
6. Reidentify the emotion and intensity

1. Side of the Hand (Karate Chop – KC)

Location:

The Karate Chop point is found along the fleshy, narrow side of the hand on the side of the pinky finger. It is found on both the left and right hands, between the base of the pinky finger and the wrist. It is often referred to as the Karate Chop point, because this is the part of the hand that you would use to deliver a karate chop.

Corresponding meridian:

Small intestine

Why we use it:

Releases feeling stuck and promotes ease in moving forward, letting go, healing from grief, and becoming happy in the present moment.

Tips for Tapping:

You can tap on either hand, using the opposite hand to do the tapping. Try using several fingers from the opposite hand to tap on this point. I personally like to use all four fingers to tap along the length of the side of my hand to stimulate the Karate Chop point.



Mudras



ANJALI MUDRA

A gesture of honour and respect toward yourself, your teacher, and the universe. This mudra expresses love and gratitude.



CHIN MUDRA

This mudra calms your mind, improves your concentration, sharpens your memory, and brightens your overall mood.



PADMA MUDRA

Padma means "lotus" in Sanskrit. Use this mudra to calm your mind and help you rise above the negative energy around you.



GANESHA MUDRA

This mudra can help relieve you of all types of obstructions in your life, and give you positivity and courage when dealing with challenging times.



PRANA MUDRA

Prana means "life force" in Sanskrit. This mudra can help you feel energised and strong. Practice it whenever you feel tired, low in energy, or drained.



ABHAYA MUDRA

Abhaya means "fearlessness" in Sanskrit. This mudra is used to dispel fear and develop courage. Practice it when you are facing challenging times.

Meaning "seal" or "gesture" in Sanskrit. Used to guide body's energy flow by using traditional chinese medicine meridians to bring body into balance.

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Breathwork

- [Box Breath](#)
- [Equal Ratio Breath](#)
- [4-7-8](#)
- [Single nostril*](#)
- [Bee breath*](#)
 - [With Shanmukhi mudra](#)
- [Breath of Joy](#)
- [Lion's Breath](#)
- [Dynamic Breathwork](#)

“The more you stay focused on your breathing, the more you will benefit, particularly if you pay attention until the very end of the out breath and then wait a moment before you inhale again.” -[The Body Keeps the Score](#) by Bessel Van Der Kolk, M.D.



Kriya is a practice of clearing. Intention of Kriya is releasing, shifting and creating capacity to move energy within the body. Each one has three parts: body, focus & emotion

Sa Ta Na Ma is a mantra used in **Kundalini Yoga** and **meditation practices**. It originates from the Sanskrit mantra "**Sat Nam**", which means "truth is my identity" or "I am truth." The extended form — **Sa Ta Na Ma** — is used in a specific meditation technique called **Kirtan Kriya**.

Meaning of Syllables

- **Sa** – Birth or beginning (infinity, cosmos)
- **Ta** – Life or existence (experiencing life)
- **Na** – Death or transformation
- **Ma** – Rebirth or regeneration

These represent the **cycle of life**.

<https://alzheimersprevention.org/new-cutting-edge-breakthroughs-in-alzheimers-disease-prevention/>

https://www.alzheimersprevention.org/downloadables/White_Paper.pdf



BENEFITS OF KIRTAN KRIYA MEDITATION

12 Minutes a Day

Effects

1. Increased Energetics
2. Improved Epigenetics
3. Increased Synaptic Function
4. Increased Gray Matter Volume
5. Upregulation of Immune Function
6. Reduces Multiple Risk Factors for AD
7. Increased Telomerase/Telomere Length
8. Down Regulation of Inflammatory Genes
9. Increased Cerebral Blood Flow to Significant Brain Areas

Outcomes

1. Less Stress
2. Better Sleep
3. Less Inflammation
4. Increased Well Being
5. Reversal of Memory Loss
6. Increased Spiritual Fitness
7. Enhanced Executive Function
8. Improved Memory in SCD, MCI, early AD
9. Enhanced Mood with Less Anxiety and Depression



ALZHEIMER'S
RESEARCH & PREVENTION
FOUNDATION™

a 501(c)(3) charitable organization

AlzheimersPrevention.org

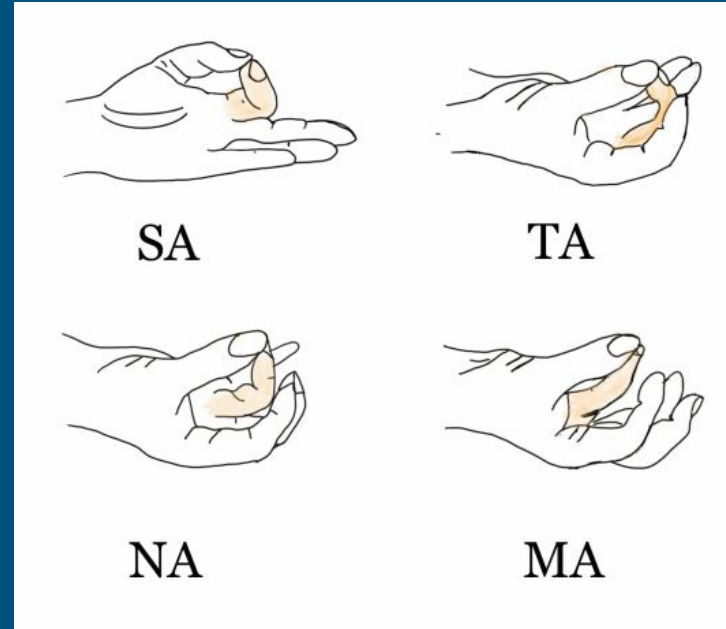
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Practice Kirtan Kriya



1. **Posture:** Sit comfortably with a straight spine.
2. **Mantra Chanting:** Sa Ta Na Ma in a steady rhythm in the tune of “Mary had a little lamb.”
3. **Mudras (Finger Movements):**
 - **Sa** – Touch thumb to index finger
 - **Ta** – Touch thumb to middle finger
 - **Na** – Touch thumb to ring finger
 - **Ma** – Touch thumb to little finger
4. **12 minute cycle:** Chant aloud (2 minutes) → whisper (2 minutes) → silently (4 minutes) → whisper (2 minutes) → aloud (2 minutes)



[Click here for a Free YouTube Practice demonstration.](#)

Spiritual Warrior

- Kriya
 - Focus: Taking action towards freedom of suffering. Freeing our old stories that bind us to our past
 - Right/Left Brain
 - Gaze/concentration
 - Spinal twist (cleansing)
 - Grounding
 - Energizing
 - Awakening
- Song
 - [The isolated self does not exist by Anand Mehrotra](#)
- [Video for reference](#)





YOGA NIDRA BASICS

- Known as "yogic sleep" (savasana pose is used for this practice)
 - Powerful, ancient meditation technique
 - Creates highly relaxed but alert state
 - Easy yoga practice to develop & maintain
 - Creates greater awareness of the body & mind
 - Helps you gain control of the autonomic nervous system

YOGA NIDRA BENEFITS

PMS Mood Balancer

Lowers Anxiety +
Depression Symptoms

Hello, Dopamine!

A Yoga Nidra session increases dopamine release by 65%

Improves Back Pain

Back Osteoarthritis Sufferers
Yoga Poses +
Breathing Exercises +
Yoga Nidra =
Pain Relief

Improves Work Stress Levels

Study of Stressed Out Nurses

6 Weekly Yoga Nidra Sessions

Results:

Lower levels of
Perceived Stress
Muscle Fatigue

Recommended to:

- Improve Stress
- Ease Muscle Tension
- Improve Self Care

Tinnitus-Induced Stress Relief

Yoga +
Yoga Nidra =
Reduced Life Stress

Caused by long-term ringing in the ears

Insomnia Fighter

Improves:
Sleep Quality
Insomnia Severity
Depression
Anxiety
Stress Scores

Results Last Up to 3 Months

PTSD Fighter

Combat Military Veterans Practicing Yoga Nidra Report Reduced Feelings of:

Rage
Anxiety

Emotional Reactivity

Increased Feelings of:

Relaxation
Peace

Self-Awareness

Self-Efficacy

Women Surviving Sexual Assault Report:

Decrease in PTSD
Negative Thoughts
of Self Blame
Depression
Body Tension

Improve Ability to:
Sleep

Handle Intrusive Thoughts
Manage Stress
Experience Joy

4

Blood Sugar Regulator

Yoga Nidra +
Type 2 Diabetes Medication =
Better Blood Sugar Control
compared to
Just taking the Pills Alone

5

Healthy Reset for College Students

1.5-hour sessions weekly
for 8 weeks

Reductions in:
Perceived Stress
Worry
Depression

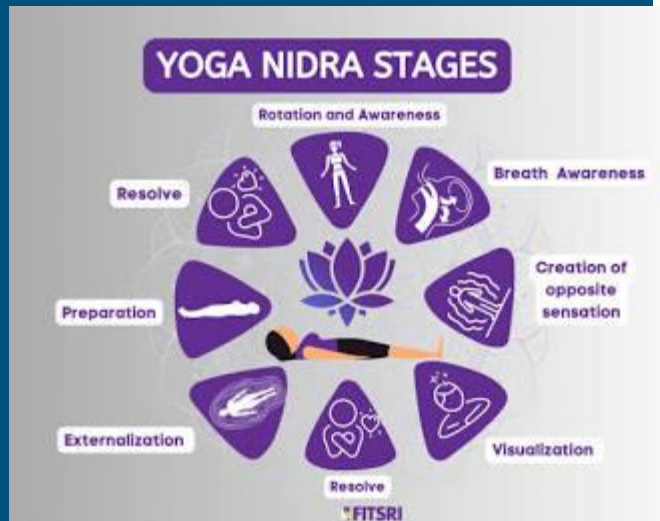
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More on Yoga Nidra

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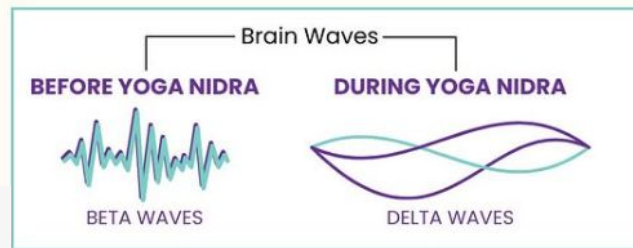
Yoga Nidra

- Swami Satyanada Saraswati (1976) → Richard Miller
- Position & Nidra Nest
- Brainwaves
- Deep Rest
(30 minutes = 2-2.5 hours sleep)
- Stages
- Yoga Nidra Scripts
 - By Tamara Verma ([Book 1](#) & [Book 2](#))



What happens in the brain?

We shift from beta to alpha, theta, and eventually delta brain waves, associated with emotional balance, stress reduction, and restorative sleep.



20 minute irest yoga nidra

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Visualization Meditation



Eye of the storm

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Why is feeling grounded so important?

The Earth's atmosphere has a basic frequency of 7.83 Hz. The Schumann Resonances are a band of frequencies between 7 – 50 Hz that pulse between the Earth and the ionosphere and are important in maintaining human health. This is so important that NASA constructed a machine to replicate the Schumann Resonance (7.8 Hz) up in space for the astronauts when they noticed decline in health after being away from the earth. The Schumann Resonance is at the top of theta and is associated with deep meditative states.



[Science of walking barefoot](#)

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The Science Behind Sound Therapy

Sound healing can come from many sources. Shifting brainwaves to alpha and theta states promoting calmness and mental clarity. It can help stabilize emotions and energy. When in resonance, it can reduce cortisol levels by 25% lowering heart rate and enhance relaxation.

Ways to add sound and vibration into your life...

- Attend a [sound bath](#)
- Having a trained professional use bowls and tuning forks on or around the body
- Humming ([Humming Effect by Jonathon Goldman](#))
- [Chanting](#)
- Listen to or attend music/concerts
- Placing a purring [cat](#) on your chest.
- Listen to different frequencies and sound on platforms like Apple Music and Amazon Music

FREQUENCY + INTENTION = HEALING
-Jonathon Goldman

[YogaFit Sound Healing Certification](#)

Mental and Physical Health Benefits of Sound Baths



Mental Health	Physical Health
May help with stress-related disorders	Can reduce the risk of chronic disease
Reduces symptoms of PTSD	Supports the body's natural healing process
Eases symptoms of depression and anxiety	May improve digestion and metabolism
Enhances focus and concentration	Improves the functioning of the nervous system

 Reframe

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Social Emotional Learning



- Yale School of Medicine meta-analysis (July 2023)
 - 424 experiential studies of SEL
 - 50 countries
 - More than half million K-12 graders
 - Studies all took place in schools, lasted at least 4 months
 - Confirmed correlation between academic achievement and SEL programs
 - Increase sense of belonging and safety
 - Increase attendance and engagement in school
 - Shift of attitudes and behaviors such as self efficacy, self-esteem, perseverance and optimism
 - Decreased anxiety, stress, depression and suicidal thoughts

Social Emotional Skills & Yoga



Quotes taken from The Body keeps the Score by Bessel Van Der Kolk, M.D.

- Self-Awareness
 - *“Movement therapy, like yoga, can help people get back into their bodies while also processing trauma”*
 - Asanas, Mudras, EFT, Kriya
- Self-Management
 - *“Trauma literally reshapes both body and brain, compromising sufferers’ capacities for pleasure, engagement, self control and trust”*
 - Breathwork and sound therapy to calm nervous system and think clearly
- Social Awareness
 - *“Healing from trauma involves (re)connecting with our fellow human beings”*
 - Mat symbolizes a personal space in which we learn to be kind to ourselves eventually leading to being kind to others.

Social Emotional Skills & Yoga



Quotes taken from The Body keeps the Score by
Bessel Van Der Kolk, M.D.

- Relationship Skills
 - *"Our capacity to destroy one another is matched by our capacity to heal one another"*
 - Letting go of judgement, competition or expectations allowing room for growth & staying in the present moment
- Responsible decision making
 - *"The brain's alarm system, the amygdala, is responsible for detecting fear and preparing for emergency events, but trauma can keep it activated"*
 - Meditation to clear mind and get out of a consistent state of fight or flight.

Free resources:

Frequency/Sound

- [Youtube \(Schumann's Frequency\)](#)
- [Youtube \(Crystal bowl - Root Chakra\)](#)

Affirmations/Positive Talk

- [TPT - Affirmation cards](#)
- [TPT - Compliment bookmarks](#)

Meditations/Journaling

- [LovingKindness Meditation Script & Worksheet](#)
- [Grounding meditation in Mountain Pose](#)

Connect with nature

- [Mindful Walk Meditation](#)
- [Yoga Nidra to Connect with Nature](#)

Creative Expression

- [TPT - Coloring Pages](#)

Useful apps:

Breathwork & Meditation

- [iBreathe](#) – Relax and Breathe
- [Breathe: Sleep & Meditation](#)
- [Headspace](#)
- [Youtube \(Kid specific - Belly Breath\)](#)
- [Insight Timer](#) (free version is awesome)
- [7 Meditation Apps](#)

Affirmations

- [I AM](#)
- [Best Affirmations Apps article](#)

Yoga Asanas/Mindful movement

- [Mindful movement with Maggie](#)
-

Thank You!!

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Link to presentation slides



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