

Yoga for Sleep

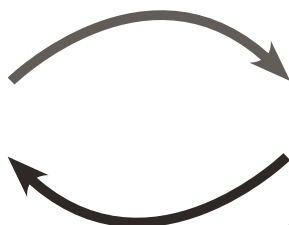
Trouble sleeping is incredibly common, both in prison and on the outside, and can be frustrating and miserable. Luckily, there are steps you can take to help yourself drop off. One of the things people most often say after starting yoga and meditation is that their sleep improves.

Try this routine just before you go to sleep. You may be able to do most of it on your bed. Keep your attention on your breath as you move through these postures and movements. Let us know if they help!

1. Happy Cat *Breathe In*



2. Angry Cat *Breathe Out*



3. Child pose



Move between these two postures in time with your breath. Repeat 10 times.

Stay for 5 breaths, or longer if you'd like.

4. Shoulder Circles



Draw big circles with your elbows, slowly and in time with your breath. 10 times each way.

5. Cross legged side bends



5 breaths each side. Feel the stretch along your side.

6. Cross legged twist



5 breaths each side.

7. Cross legged forward bend



Cross your legs and lean forward. 5 slow breaths, then repeat with legs crossed the other way.

8. Supported bridge



Use a pillow or some rolled up jumpers under your hips. Relax for 10 slow breaths.

9. Legs up the wall



Get your bum as close to a wall or door as possible, then put your legs up it. Stay for 30 breaths, or longer if you like.

... and now for sleep.



Lie on your bed like this, or with your hands on your belly, and bring your attention to your breathing. Count your breaths as they flow in and out of you. When you get to 10 breaths, start again from 1. If you get distracted or lose count, bring your attention back to the breath and start again from 1. Do this for 5 minutes, or until you fall asleep.

This breath counting is an effective way of helping you relax and fall asleep, rather than being kept awake by repetitive or worrying thoughts. Even if this doesn't work, remember that you are still resting and nourishing your body and your mind, even though you are awake. Sweet dreams!

