

Shavasana How-To

Shava - Corpse; *Asana* – Pose

This asana is pronounced as Shuh-vah-sana



This pose gets its name from the recumbent posture of a dead body. It is a position of rest and relaxation, and is traditionally practiced towards the end of a yoga session – a session that typically begins with activity and ends in rest; a space or pause when deep healing can take place. You may also do this anytime to reduce stress, balance the body and mind, or prepare for sleep.

How to do the Corpse Pose (Shavasana)

1. Lie flat on your back, preferably without any props or cushions. Use small pillow below your neck if absolutely required. Close your eyes.
2. Keep your legs comfortable apart and let your feet and knees relax completely, toes facing to the sides.
3. Place your arms alongside, yet a little spread apart from your body. Leave your palms open, facing upward.
4. Taking your attention to different body parts one by one, slowly relax your entire body. ("body scan")
5. Begin with bringing your awareness to the right foot, move on to the right knee (as you complete one leg, move your attention on to the other leg), and so on, and slowly move upwards to your head, relaxing each part of the body.

6. Keep breathing slowly, gently, deeply and allow your breath to relax you more and more. The incoming breath energizes the body while the outgoing breath brings relaxation. Drop all sense of hurry or urgency or any need to attend to anything else. Just be with the body and the breath. Surrender the whole body to the floor and let go. Make sure you don't fall asleep!

7. When thoughts come to distract you, notice them with "detached observation" or "nonjudgmental awareness" and redirect your attention to the breath – either the general rhythm of the breath or your breath anchor point (i.e., chest). (You may need to do this over and over!)



8. After some time, about 10-20 minutes when you feel fully relaxed, keeping your eyes closed, slowly roll onto your right side. Lie in that position for a minute or so. Then, taking the support of your right hand, gently sit up into a seated pose such as Sukhasana (Easy Pose).

9. Keep your eyes closed and take a few deep breaths in and out as you gradually become aware of your environment and the body. When you feel complete, slowly and gently open your eyes.

Benefits of the Corpse Pose (Shavasana)

- This posture brings a deep, meditative state of rest, which may help in the repair of tissues and cells, and in releasing stress. If done following any series of yoga poses, it also gives time for that work to sink in at a deeper level.
- This posture leaves you in a state of rejuvenation.
- It helps reduce blood pressure, anxiety, and insomnia.
- This is an excellent way to "ground" the body and reduce stress in the body.