

Relaxation Therapies for IBS

Combining a relaxation therapy with your new IBS Diet makes it much more effective.

Five separate parts of the autonomic nervous system (four brain controllers and the enteric nervous system) control the small intestine. This means that IBS symptoms are worse when the activity level of the autonomic nervous system rises, and they improve when it falls;

- *Barrier symptoms* (bloating, cramping); are at a maximum on eating breakfast (a high stress period), and then reduce overnight (a low stress period).
- *Diarrhoea symptoms*; mostly occur as 'the morning rush', in the high stress period early in the morning. They occur at other times only when IBS is severe.

The reason for this is that the level of activity in the autonomic nervous system is dependent on the level of adrenal hormones in your body. When we get up in the morning our bodies release adrenal hormones to start up our automatic systems quickly. During the day, when we come under stress, more adrenal hormones can be released. At night when we go to sleep, adrenal hormones fall to a baseline level.

- A *high level* of adrenal hormones means that the brain uses more force when creating the IBS barrier (bloating, cramping). The enteric nervous system uses more force to move food soup (cramping, borborygmi, diarrhoea), and the valve at the end of the small intestine is easy to open (diarrhoea).
- A *low level* of adrenal hormones means that the brain uses minimum force, and any IBS Barrier is weak or even disappears. Also the speed of the intestine is reduced, and the valve at the end of the small intestine becomes more firmly closed.

Most of us ignore the workings of our autonomic nervous system. It is after all, an automated system, designed to need no conscious control. BUT we can exercise some control over it! We can reduce the level of adrenal hormones in our bodies by training ourselves to RELAX and release less of them. This minimises our IBS symptoms.

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Relaxation (or stress relief) therapies come in many forms; Chi Gong, Hypnotherapy, Psychotherapy, Reiki, Tai Chi, Yoga, & many others. The one I know, and use with success is from Yoga.

Yoga Relaxation (Yoga Nidra)

This is a guided relaxation given live, or from an audio recording. Many Yoga schools teach a version of this technique and they may also be able to provide a CD/mp3 that you can use at home.

- [Ashram Yoga](#) supplies .mp3 files for download. I recommend; *Yoga Nidra Healing Relaxation*.
- Sometime in 2022 I will make available a Yoga Relaxation .mp3 file designed for IBS therapy. Probably I will make this available from the Facebook Group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ibsexplained>

Yoga Nidra goes like this. Choose a quiet, safe, warm place where you will not be interrupted. You need a firm surface such as a rug on the floor on which to practise. Lie down on your back with your hands by your sides, palms up and open. Your spine should be straight, your feet shoulder width apart and relaxed sideways. You may place a pillow under your head and one under the knees if necessary. If you need a rug to keep warm, use one. Once you are comfortable, start your Yoga Nidra audio and follow the instructions.

You will be given a series of awareness, breathing and visualization techniques that are designed to relax you. A session takes 20 to 45 minutes. If you find yourself going to sleep then hold one or both forearms erect during the practice (possibly with an object grasped in the hand), or even sit up against the wall. At first you will need to practise Yoga Nidra often and it can be practised at any time of the day.

After three months you will be able to reduce your practice to 3 times a week, and will have reduced your adrenal hormone levels & IBS symptoms. After many years of regular practice (approximately 10 to 12), all stress will be gone forever, and you will not have to do Yoga Nidra anymore.