

SHEET 4 Positions for relaxation and meditation

Lots of people get the wrong idea about meditation and relaxation, thinking that it has to be done in an ideal perfect posture. Yet striving for the perfect posture or battling against discomfort can take away from the point of the practice. The Buddha himself said that meditation flows through all 'four postures' of walking, sitting, standing and lying down. Good meditation posture is the position in which you can happily stay still and steady.

Reclining postures

For many people lying down is a great position for being relaxed and open, making it easier for you to still your mind. You will need a soft flat surface to lie on. If a yoga mat feels too thin, fold a blanket or duvet underneath you. You can also use pillows for support in the different positions. See which of the reclining postures below is most comfortable for you.

Lying on your back

- Lie on a comfortable surface and, if you can, without a pillow under your head.
- **Savasana (corpse pose):** this is a traditional yoga relaxation posture. Lie on your back with your arms by your sides, palms facing up and your feet spread slightly apart from each other. Feel the floor taking your full weight. **See Figure S4.1**
- A pillow under your knees can also be helpful, especially if you have a bad back.

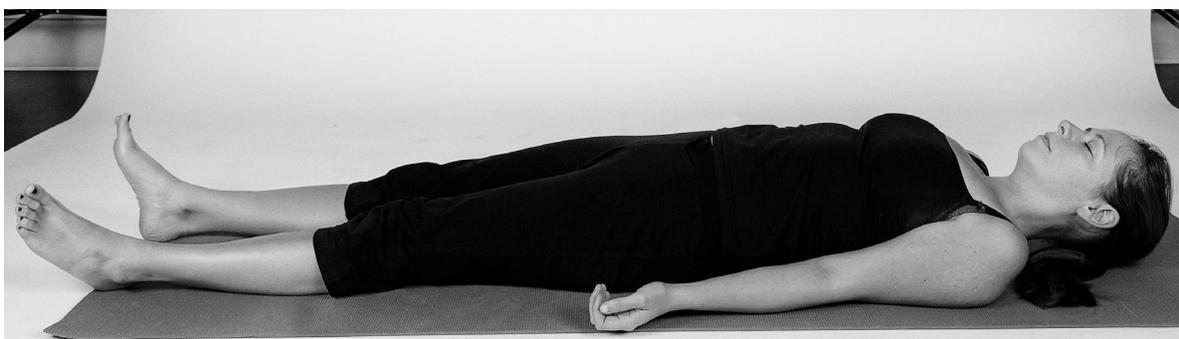


Figure S4.1



Figure S4.2

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Lying on your side

- When lying on your side use pillows as support under your head and between your knees.

Lying on your belly

- Lie face down with your head tilted to one side and a soft pillow under your ear if needed. Your palms can be under your body or face down on the floor. This can be a helpful position if you feel very stressed or anxious; imagine all your emotions draining out of your chest and body into the earth. **See Figure S4.2**