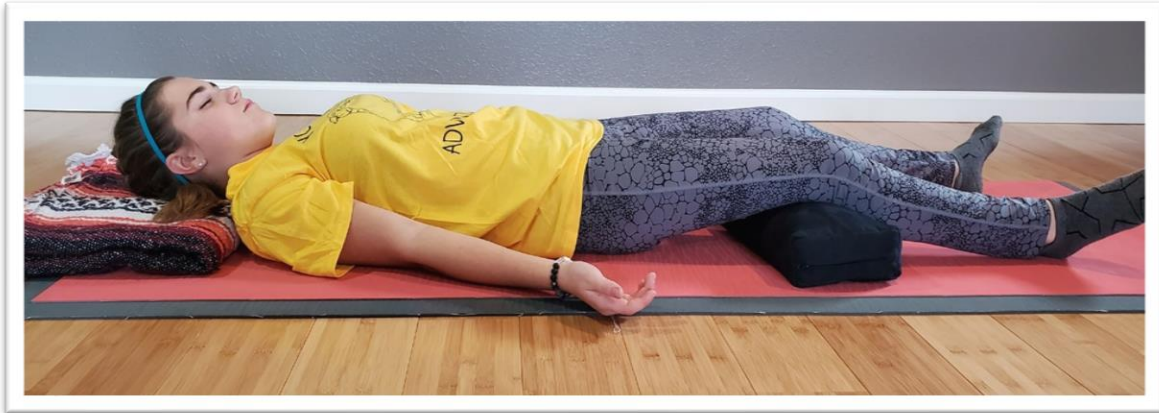




YOGA LEARNING ADVENTURES

Got Stress? iRest® Can Help

By Angie Swearingian



We all need time to rest, process our emotions, and integrate learning. iRest® Yoga Nidra Meditation is a modern, secular version of an ancient guided meditation practice that calms the mind and senses so that you can experience the part of you that is unchanging and always at peace. Richard Miller, founder of iRest®, is a clinical psychologist, author, researcher, scholar, and meditation teacher. This 10-step protocol has been extensively researched within the Veterans Administration and shown to be effective in scientific trials for chronic pain, sleep problems, stress, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). iRest® is a powerful tool to examine, undo, and eventually eliminate negative thought patterns and habits. With regular practice, practitioners can build resilience against the inevitable challenges they will face in life.

People of all ages enjoy and benefit from practicing iRest®. My little yogis love to listen to short guided relaxation while they chill out with beanie babies. After relaxation time recently, I asked how they felt. One fourth grader said, "I feel like everything bad that happened today was erased." Another said, "All of my worries have left my body." Adolescents and adults appreciate longer iRest® practices and most prefer using eye pillows to help them to relax. Some recent feedback includes:

Adolescent Feedback

- I felt unstoppable and like nothing could get in the way of my zone.
- I am calm and relaxed.
- I felt like I was floating in space.
- I was comfortable and didn't have to worry about anything.
- I felt chill.
- I was in the zone.
- I felt satisfied.
- When I am angry, I count down

Adult Feedback

- I was going to bail because I had a bad day, but I am glad I came because I felt very peaceful and could think clearly.
- I had more energy after the class than I usually have in the evenings.
- I felt rested.
- I learned how to notice my difficult emotions before they become unmanageable.
- I realized that I can feel joy and stress at the same time.
- I am whole and complete without changing anything about myself.
- I was surprised how much I destressed in one hour.



YOGA LEARNING ADVENTURES

iRest® 10-Step Protocol

- 1. Invite the Support of Your Inner Resource**
Find an inner sense of calm and safety to use an anchor during meditation and throughout your day.
- 2. Connect to your Heartfelt Desire**
Affirm your heartfelt wish for well-being and happiness in your life.
- 3. Set an Intention**
Identify your purpose for today's practice.
- 4. Body Sensing**
Notice sensations in your body.
- 5. Breath Sensing**
Learn breathing strategies to help calm and focus the mind.
- 6. Welcoming Feelings & Emotions**
Notice how you feel and where you notice related sensations in your body.
- 7. Welcoming Thoughts & Beliefs**
Observe your thoughts and engage in exploration of them.
- 8. Experiencing Joy**
Experience and engage feelings of joy and happiness.
- 9. Awareness**
Witness what is present and simply be an observer.
- 10. Integration**
Begin to integrate the tools of iRest® into your daily life.

If you want to learn a simple process for coping with your emotions and handling life's challenges, contact Angie Swearingian to schedule an appointment for individual or group instruction: angie@yogalearningadventures.com. Get more tips for mindful living by following us on Facebook www.facebook.com/yogalearningadventures. Learn more about upcoming Kids Yoga Classes & Camps and more by visiting www.yogalearningadventures.com.

About the Author

A certified schoolteacher and registered yoga instructor for children and adults, Angie Swearingian has been happily teaching yoga and mindfulness to children and families in Peoria, IL for 7 years. In 2017, she became a professional development provider for PreK-high school educators, specializing in yoga and mindfulness techniques to meet social emotional learning (SEL) standards. After a 17-year teaching career at Peoria Public Schools, Angie now travels to schools to train staff and to teach students, as well as hosts public yoga classes for kids and families and leads teacher trainings. To make yoga even more accessible to our youth, she created the first 95-Hour Children's Yoga Teacher Training Program in the Peoria area in 2019. In addition to a Master of Arts degree in education and leadership, Angie is a 200-hour experienced registered yoga teacher, 95-hour registered children's yoga teacher, and a Level 1 iRest® Meditation Teacher.