



Relax, Stretch, Breathe

Legs Up the Wall Pose is a gentle restorative yoga pose that allows the mind and the body to relax, reducing stress and tension. It is one of the gentlest yoga poses, and it doesn't require a great deal of flexibility or strength. However, don't be fooled - just because it's a passive pose, its benefits are still pretty amazing.

For example, Legs Up the Wall is an excellent, calming pose for your morning or bedtime meditations.



How to do it: Start by setting up a cosy space around a wall-- my personal favourite is to just lie in bed with my legs up the headboard, but adding warm blankets and cushions will help you to chill out without getting cold or uncomfortable.

Next, move your hips as close to the wall as possible, then start walking your feet up the wall until your body is roughly in an L-shaped position. Make any adjustments you need to gain a more relaxing space -- maybe place a pillow under your head, or let your arms rest on your belly or out to the sides.

At this point, move your focus on your breath-- try taking a deep, slow breath in and a deep, slow breath out. Try to stay in the pose and breathe deeply for at least 5 minutes for maximum benefits.



Some benefits of Legs Up the Wall Pose:

Relaxation

The angle of the spine created in this pose combined with controlled breathing leads to a slowing down within your body. This translates itself in a lowered heart rate which leads a relaxation response and, in turn, helps lower anxiety, stress and insomnia.

Facilitates drainage and increases circulation

Elevating the legs promotes drainage from any excess fluid build-up. Also, gravity assists flow by facilitating the return of blood back to the heart.

Soothes swollen or cramped feet and legs

Raising the legs/feet has long been known as an effective treatment for reducing swelling and pain in the lower body. This can be therapeutic after flying, physical activity or from the effects of sitting/standing during the day.

Stretches the hamstrings and lower back

The angle of the body reduces the curve of the lumbar spine, which will elongate and stretch the back muscles. The closer your hips are to the wall, the more stretch you'll create in your hamstrings.

Relieves lower back tension

The pressure is released from the spine in this position (especially on a bed or cushion), relieving the back from mild strain.

Pelvic Floor Relaxation

The pelvic muscles naturally release and relax in this position (more so with a pillow under the pelvis) resulting in an effective exercise for a tense pelvic floor.

Plus:

Studies have shown that restorative yoga poses (specifically, Legs Up the Wall) can be beneficial for those suffering from the adverse effects of:

- Fibromyalgia (e.g., chronic pain)
- Venous Disease (e.g., varicose veins)
- Menopause (e.g., hot flashes), and
 - Restless Leg Syndrome