

The IBS Expert presents...

### *Relaxation Therapies...*

...these techniques will help to reduce your symptoms...

Five divisions of the autonomic nervous system control the small intestine. These are the four brain controllers and the enteric nervous system. This means that your IBS symptoms show maxima as the autonomic nervous system rises in activity level and minima as it falls in activity level...

- Barrier symptoms (bloating, cramping), are worst on eating breakfast and then relax overnight.
- Diarrhoea symptoms. These mostly occur on arising with 'the morning rush'. Afternoons and nights they occur only in cases of severe IBS.

The reason for this is that the level of activity in the autonomic nervous system is dependent on the level of adrenal hormones. When we get up in the morning our body releases adrenal hormones to start up our automatic systems quickly. During the day, when we come under stress, additional 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 small intestine transport controllers work harder and use more force when creating the IBS barrier (bloating). The enteric nervous system works harder and uses more force to try and move food soup through the barrier (cramping). When the ileum controller is defective, the enteric nervous moves food soup faster (borborygmi, cramping), and the valve at the end of the small intestine is easy to open (diarrhoea).

A low level of adrenal hormones means that the transport controllers use minimum force, and the barrier is relaxed or even absent. The enteric nervous system goes slowly. The valve at the end of the small intestine is firmly closed.

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Now 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 them to relax and release less. This lowers our IBS symptoms.

Relaxation (or stress relief) therapies come in many forms.  
Here are some...

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Hypnotherapy</li><li>▪ Yoga</li><li>▪ Tai Chi</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Chi Gong</li><li>▪ Psychotherapy</li><li>▪ Many others...</li></ul>
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The one I know about is from Yoga, so here is a brief description...

### *Yoga Relaxation (Yoga Nidra)...*

Most Yoga schools will have a version of this technique that they can teach and they may also be able to provide a tape or CD that you can use at home. Yoga Nidra is a guided relaxation given live or on tape/CD. Your nearest Satyananda Yoga School has tapes available and offers live instruction. 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 and 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 tape/CD and follow the instructions. You will be given a series of awareness, breathing and visualization techniques that are designed to relax you. Each session generally lasts 30 to 45 minutes. If you find yourself going to sleep then hold one forearm erect during the practice or even sit up against the wall. You will need to practise Yoga Nidra daily to begin with. The best time to do it is late

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afternoon, but it can be done anytime. After a month or two you will have mastered the technique, will be able to reduce your practice to 2-3 times a week, and will have reduced your adrenal hormone levels & IBS symptoms.

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