


Students take Shavasana at South Hills Power Yoga.

# TIME OUT

DEVOTE TIME IN EACH DAY FOR REST AND RELAXATION

EDITED BY NICOLE BARLEY



**W**e asked three of our favorite yoga studios to offer their ideas for restorative yoga poses, and each of our experts suggested Viparita Karani, or “legs up the wall” pose. Says Kate Kill, director of the Himalayan Institute of Pittsburgh, “After the holidays, restorative poses are extremely helpful because they counter the stress response. Resting in these poses gives your body and mind time to heal and renew.” We’ve gathered suggestions for a few do-at-home poses, along with yoga workshops, and a collection of natural and holistic remedies for healing body and mind. It’s time for some R-and-R! 

## VIPARITA KARANI

“Legs up the wall” instructions by Stacey Vespaziani, owner of South Hills Power Yoga

### INSTRUCTIONS:

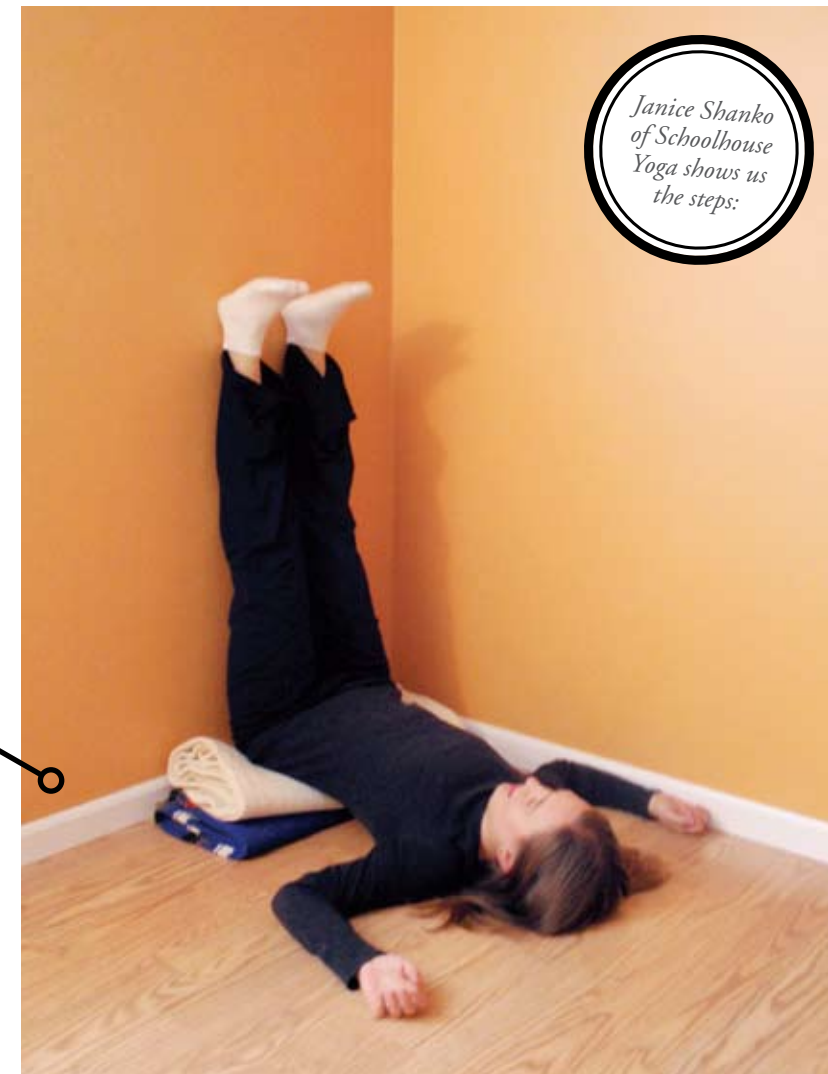
- Lie on your back with knees bent and flat feet on the floor.
- Press into feet and lift hips just enough to slide a block (or pillow) under the pelvis.
- Lift both legs into the air allowing the block to support the hips (pillows or a stack of blankets works, too).
- Close your eyes and allow the arms to rest at your side. (“Palms facing up for a little inspiration.”)
- Stay in the pose for 2-8 minutes.

**FUNCTION:** “Inversions change the flow of blood and energy in the body, creating a calming sensation in the nervous system.”

**BENEFITS:** “Anytime your hips are held higher than your heart, the body begins to relax. This pose is nice right before bed to prepare the body for a good night’s rest. It is also a great one to do at the office or at home when you need a new perspective on things.”

*“Whenever the legs and/or hips are elevated so that they are higher than the heart and head, a calming effect is created in the body. When the legs are elevated, blood pools into the neck, chest, and head. Receptors in these areas send a message to the brain encouraging it to slow the beating of the heart and to release tension on the blood vessels to return blood pressure levels back to normal. This action in turn creates a feeling of relaxation throughout the entire body and in the mind. Don’t be fooled by these seemingly simple-looking poses — they are very healing!” — Leta Koontz, Owner, Schoolhouse Yoga*

*Janice Shanko of Schoolhouse Yoga shows us the steps:*



### ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR MAKING THE MOST OF VIPARITA KARANI:

Once you are in the position, allow your body to rest. Start to become aware of your breath in your body. At first, you may want to exaggerate your breath so that you have a strong connection to it. Once your attention is anchored on your breath, allow your breath to become effortless. Feel the soft touch of the breath in your body. Allow your breath to be soothing to your mind.

Bring your attention to your toes. Soften your toes, and release through the tops and bottoms of your feet. Relax around the bones of your ankles and down through your legs. Soften your hip joints and lower belly. Rest and breathe.

Become aware of the tissue around your heart and let go of any tension in the tissue. Let your heart rest.

Soften the back of your neck and the front of your throat. Release any tension in the muscles in your face and around your skull. Come back to your breath and watch your breath for another 5-10 minutes or whenever it feels right to come out of the pose.

Bend your knees and put your feet on the wall. Slowly, roll to your side and find your breath. As you feel ready, push yourself up to a seated position. — Kate Kill, Director, Himalayan Institute of Pittsburgh



*“This pose is a nice option for people who have very tight hamstrings and might find the first pose challenging or uncomfortable. It’s also nice to rest your hands on your belly to encourage your body to breath using your diaphragm, which enhances the calming and healing effect of the pose,” Koontz says.*

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# MARJARISANA

Cat-Cow flow instructions by Stacey Vespaziani

## INSTRUCTIONS:

- Start on your hands and knees with a flat spine.
- As you inhale, pull your chest through your arms while lifting your head and tailbone into Cow Pose.
- As you exhale, arch your back and drop your head and tailbone into Cat Pose.
- Repeat 5-8 times.

**FUNCTION:** "Warms up the spine while taking it through the full range of motion."

**BENEFITS:** "Stimulates and tones the muscles of the torso while rinsing tension from the shoulders and lower back."

When attending a yoga class, especially in a heated studio, remember to bring water and a towel.



Leta Koontz shows us the steps:



## CALMING CLASSES!



### SOUTH HILLS POWER YOGA

Fridays from 4:30-5:30 p.m.

Unwind and recharge during this non-heated, gentle/restorative class. Says Vespaziani, "We have found that it is the perfect way to end the week and get ready for the weekend." *South Hills Power Yoga, 3045 West Liberty Ave., Dormont. 412.207.9535. southhillspoweryoga.com.*

### SCHOOLHOUSE YOGA, STRIP DISTRICT LOCATION

Moon Salutes with Kendell Romanelli Friday, December 9, 6-8pm

Moon Salutations are a flowing yoga practice designed to draw the energy of the body, mind and heart, inward to a more reflective nature honoring the energy of the full moon. This workshop combines the Moon Salutation sequence with mantras, meditations, and restorative postures. *Schoolhouse Yoga, 2401 Smallman St., Strip District. schoolhouseyoga.com.*

### SCHOOLHOUSE YOGA, SOUTH SIDE LOCATION

Post-Holiday Yoga Workshop with Richard Gartner Wednesday, December 28, 9:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Richard Gartner will lead two yoga workshops (one for beginners and another for more advanced practitioners) to boost energy, aid digestion, and calm nerves, ideal antidotes to the stressors of this holiday season. *Schoolhouse Yoga, 2737 E. Carson St., South Side. schoolhouseyoga.com.*

### HIMALAYAN INSTITUTE OF PITTSBURGH

January 14, 1-4 p.m. Restorative Yoga Workshop

Make a resolution in the new year to dedicate time to you body and mind! *Himalayan Institute of Pittsburgh, 300 Beverly Road, Mt. Lebanon. 412.344.7434. hipyyoga.com.*

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## NATURAL REMEDIES

Try these ideas to prepare for and recover from yoga. Plus, consider supplements to boost energy, naturally!

"Prepare for your class with Badger Organic Yoga & Meditation Balm. This delicious ointment has essential oils of cedar wood, citrus, and sandalwood and inspires a mood of quiet reverence and calm-centeredness. If you're fighting sore muscles after yoga, try Traumeel. A topical homeopathic complex that relieves sore muscles, with 14 remedies, it's available as a cream or an ointment." — *Patti Renter, Body Care Buyer, Whole Foods Market*

"For sore muscles, try Zyflamend, by New Chapter. The No. 1 selling, truly all-natural supplements promote a healthy inflammation response with food ingredients that your body understands — like ginger, rosemary and turmeric — and uses to keep you moving." — *Darren Meyers, Supplements Buyer, Whole Foods Market*



Gaiam Yoga Mats, in assorted colors, \$21.99 each, available at Whole Foods Market, 5880 Centre Ave., East End. 412.441.7960. [wholefoodsmarket.com](http://wholefoodsmarket.com).

"Two great supplements for coping with holiday stress are maca and a B-complex supplement. Not only do they give you sustained energy, not jittery energy like coffee, but they also help to reduce the effects of stress and keep you feeling balanced. B-complex vitamins are a great way to help boost energy and many people are deficient in B vitamins, particularly B-12, so they really notice a boost in energy soon after beginning to supplement with them. Maca is native to Peru and is actually the root of the plant. Maca reduces stress and increases energy. It's also been known to elevate mood and enhance libido." — *Kara Krawczykiewicz, Nature's Way Market, 796 Highland Ave., Greensburg. 724.836.3524. natureswaymarket.net.*



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