



winter's deep sleep



As winter's frost settles, nature's hibernation heals and re-energises. **Sacha Knop** reconnects us to our inner rhythm.

Winter is perfect for taking the time to be with yourself, to be in the moment and heal by seeing, feeling and hearing what is going on inside. In winter, everything slows down naturally and comes to what looks like a standstill. But nothing is less true. Deep inside the earth the energy stirs to recharge her. When our environment is making such an effort to guide us, why not use this time to walk in sync and follow the flow? Winter is defined the right time to rest and unwind, so as to re-energize ourselves, just like the earth.

It is clear that we need nature. We simply cannot survive without it. Everything that exists comes from nature, but the earth provides us not only with food, oxygen and materials, she also provides us with the rhythm that our body and soul need to feel aligned, energized and in balance. The balance between plants, minerals and animals is not enough. The whole universe - air and water, the rhythm of day and night, the sun and the moon, the stars and all the other things, visible and invisible, in and around us - are all vital and necessary powers for our whole being to be balanced, strong and complete.

Humankind seems to be drifting further and further from this natural balance. All the wisdom, intelligence and strength we naturally need are present right here, around us. But, because we are living in more and more unnatural ways, we lose the sense of unity with this incredible wise power, and the result is that we also move further away from our own natural source inside. The high paced world we live in can hollow us inside, and eat up our inner resources. Sadly we are doing exactly the same to our earth. To fill the gap this leaves us with, inside and outside, many of us use more unnatural products and resources.

time and space

The beauty however, is that there is a fantastic mechanism that heals naturally and effortlessly; that heals us and the earth itself. We do not even have to do anything active for this to occur. This mechanism is called 'time and space'. Time and space are always available, and they heal that which needs healing. We use this wonderful natural mechanism all the time, but mostly we use it while we sleep. When we sleep we re-energize ourselves and our life-force energy on all levels, but we do not always get enough real rest to return to our own clarity and inner core at night. To keep our inner source crisp and clear as well, we need to use time and space throughout the day too. We need to implement this into our lives.

Nature reminds us that, in winter time especially, it is easier to come to that 'standstill' where we can recharge. There are many ways to come to that slowed down pace: sleep and hibernation, simply relaxing, walking in nature, meditating or sitting in silence. We can connect with ourselves and turn inward to clear out the old stresses and rubble that we've gained over the year. Creating that still space in which we can come back to ourself knowing it will revitalize us tremendously, is incredibly important for our joy, our abundant energy and balance. As winter revitalizes the earth, this revitalizes us.

It takes courage to slow down, tune in and connect with all of our truth, especially in this world so full of constant distractions and demands. It is hard for humankind to do nothing much, but we cannot come to this deep feeling of connection with ourselves without being able to be comfortable with ourselves. If we never take time and space to hibernate, reflect and rest, we become depleted or we find ourselves clogged with stresses or unsolved traumas. This can all take its toll on our life-force too. Stress costs us

Sacha's simple tips to enhance your sleep:

Time and space are essential to sleep. When you use the tips below, give yourself time and space to really slow down. Do everything twice as slowly and with twice the awareness. This way you bring yourself 'into the moment', which naturally releases built up pressure, stress and anxiety.

- Allow your awareness to drop into your heart, and to follow the natural rhythm of your breath. Then close your eyes and really feel that rhythm. When you feel it, gently start to slow down your breath, making each breath just a tiny bit deeper and slower than the last. Notice how you become quieter & more peaceful. Make sure you keep your awareness in your heart and keep going until you feel ready to fall asleep.

- An hour before you go to bed, turn off all devices like the TV, radio, phone and computer. Run yourself a warm bath and add a few drops of lavender oil to the water. Ensure the water is not too hot, as this can cause extra stress or irritation. Light candles if you wish, or dim the lights to make sure the atmosphere is gentle and relaxing. Spend no longer than 20 minutes in the bath and go to bed shortly afterwards. You can also use some drops of lavender oil to your pillow. Lavender helps to relax and unwind along with the soothing warmth of the bath.

- Sacha's relaxing music choice: 'Reiki: Hands of Light' by Deuter.

a lot of extra energy and it ages us. There is no better beauty and health treatment than to hibernate, rest and clear out the rubble so we can connect with who we really are. Of course being able to relax and connect doesn't mean we will never have stress, trauma or worries, but we will be able to deal with them much quicker and better because we know ourselves. We will be able to come back to balance and make the right decisions for us, so that we can return to enjoying life. Our inner foundation will be stable; we'll be less vulnerable once we have integrated.

deep sleep

Besides taking conscious action to relax and reflect, having a healthy sleeping pattern is of great importance to feel clear and focused, healthy and in touch. Really resting well while sleeping is vital for us on all levels. Winter allows us to slow down and therefore sleep more deeply, regenerating layers inside that do not normally get rested. Connecting deeper with ourselves gives us inner peace and balance, and a softness to the eyes and face.

Sleep happens when we surrender and let go of the outside world as well as that which we have absorbed during the day. Unfortunately we are not taught how to cleanse our energy; the result is that we clutter up energetically. If this happens, our sleep often becomes disturbed and less energizing, leaving us to wake up feeling tired. Our energy circulation slows down and we lose the ability to sleep, because our source tries to clear up this clutter as soon as we go to bed. When we give ourselves the command: 'I want to sleep', everything that is in the way of that sleep will drift up to be released. This release allows us to actually fall asleep. If

we were to focus on relaxation and give ourselves an hour to unwind before we go to bed, it most likely would be easier to fall asleep. Of course, if we've built up clutter over years, it takes us longer to come to this level of inner clarity which allows us to sleep more deeply and therefore wake up more energized.

Deep sleep is like a muscle that needs to be exercised. Instead of going to the gym, we practice relaxation and pay attention to our inner selves. With a clear conscience and a good connection to ourselves, we often have no trouble sleeping. Achieving deep sleep is a matter of 'refining' the sleep that we normally get. In my opinion and experience, this can only happen if our energy can flow, in and around us, without problems. So it's not so much about focusing on the sleep itself but on making sure our inner and outer worlds are clutter free. It's a little bit like practicing Feng Shui, but then not just for our bedroom, but also for our energy, our mind, our heart and soul.

Any clutter that needs our attention can be dealt with right away when we keep our energy and ourselves healthy. When clear and balanced, we have prepared ourselves to handle the new phase without stress or worry. Winter's deep sleep brings healing and rejuvenation. Give yourself some time and space during these colder, darker months to reflect, rest and relax. Come springtime, you will have all the energy you need to wholeheartedly blossom with abundance!

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