

Asana:

Feet Releases/Stretches (Chair and Mat versions)
Legs up the Wall (with sandbag)
Sitting against the Wall (with support under)
Sun Dance

Description:

Feet Releases/Stretches: While sitting in a chair there are various ways of stretching the feet in both directions, pointed/extension and toes curled back-up/flexed.

You can either sit towards the side of the chair and extend the outside leg backwards with the knee bent

This can also be done, chair permitting, using one foot and taking it under the chair and sliding it back.

Be mindful that you are firmly planted on the chair.

Physical Benefits: The more adaptable our feet are the more freedom we have in movement, the better our balance and stability. It begins from the ground up.

The joints/muscles/tendons etc. of the feet need to remain flexible just like any other part of our bodies but mostly we just slip them in shoes and forget about them except for the occasional pedicure. When was the last time you massaged and or oiled your feet including each and every toe and in between.

Adaptations/Variations:

If you would prefer to do a more challenging version than I would suggest beginning in Hero's Pose on your knees, on the mat and using additional support if necessary (blanket/block). You can do both the extension and flexion in this position.

Also can be done in Child's Pose or Puppy.

Description:

Legs up the Wall (with sandbag across feet): If you have tight hamstrings I would suggest that you place the buttocks at least a blocks width from the wall. As the hamstrings relax you may be able to come closer. If you can put the buttocks directly adjacent the wall do so but do not strain.

Be careful how you get the legs up the wall, scooting can be an endless process, it is best to lay on ones side with the shoulders and hips aligned and both part of the buttocks on the wall and then gently roll over until the legs are directly over the hips.

If you find this difficult than I would suggest beginning some inches away from the wall until you become familiar with the movement.

During the **Wall Series** we did many leg movements but we began with the legs directly overhead and placing a sandbag over the feet for a relaxing, beginning of class:

We then proceeded with:

1. Hip width apart tracking the knee directly to the hips and observing any pull inwards or out. Then adding the block between the knees and do the same slow sliding of the heel downwards.
2. Rolling the knee outwards with the bottom of one foot tracking down the inside of the opposite leg, do both sides individually and then together, this is a form of cobblers.
3. Placing one outside ankle over the opposite thigh and the same side hand on the inside of the knee. Easing but not pushing, the hips open and keeping the ankle and knee aligned. Both feet are flexed. If you would like more stretch (Piriformis stretch used by those prone to sciatic of this origin), you can bend the straight leg ever so slightly, don't expect too much, and feel the stretch into the buttocks. If one is very tight this

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can change over a period of time by doing this on a regular basic at some point if you don't see any change in the motion than it could be due to joint construction and accept that for your limits, this is honoring the body.

4. Opening the feet wide, be mindful not to over stretch the groin area.

Physical Benefits:

Strengthening/Stretching the feet/legs and lower torso.

Adaptations/Variations:

Prep for Shoulder Stand:

Sliding both feet down the wall to a comfortable and firm position, hip to shoulder width apart. The shins should be parallel to the floor.

Being careful that you do not have anything under your neck or head and do not turn the head to look right or left. Slowly push the feet into the wall as you begin to lift the buttocks, each lift a little more loosening the fear and gaining the courage that you can hold your buttocks/hips up. Once you have reached a comfortable position you can either slide a block under the buttocks or use the hands to support the mid-torso in this position, keeping the feet secure on the wall until you attempt to take one off and then eventually both off. You would now be in a shoulder stand.

Description:

Sitting against the Wall (with support under):

Take your buttocks as close to the wall as possible with as much support under as needed so the knees become level or slightly below your hips.

Sitting, straight against the wall, with the ankles either crossed or feet pointed. Find your feet position slowly and see which is more comfortable for the knees. If you have a knee issue you may want to just straightening that leg and not cross it at all.

In order to attain this position, as we did in class, you may need to use a number of pillows/blankets/a bolster/step stool etc. If you would like to have more support for the lower back, a neck pillow is sometimes just the perfect size for inserting behind the waist.

Find the height which feels comfortable enough that you could remain so, for a portion of the evening. It is necessary to have the hip/knees in this end position in order for the hips to open and relax.

Description:

Sun Dance:

Using using four of the dynamic poses we have practice over many sessions.

1. Begin in Mountain Pose/Tadasana at the top of your mat, feet hip to shoulder width apart, thumbs at the heart.

2. Inhale and bring your hands outward and upward and stretch them over your head, Imagine you are looking at the sun and feeling the warmth on your body.

3. Exhale and lower your hand forward, bending the knees as much as is necessary, and placing your fingers/eventually your hands on the mat in front of your feet with the fingers pointing forward (eventually the hands will lay outside the feet with the toes/fingers creating a straight line). Let the head and shoulders relax as you hinge forward from the hips.

4. Inhale and either come up on the fingertips or slide the hands towards the toes/feet and then up the legs as much as is necessary to attain a straight back while the legs are also straight and you have the ability to lift the head and look forward. Your fingers/hands may be anywhere from the floor to your thighs depending upon how tight your lower torso may be, especially the hamstrings. Do not push anything and do come up as needed, arms straight and feel the lift/opening of the chest and shoulders.

5. Exhale release, place the hands firmly on the mat with the knees bent and step back, one foot at a time, to a long position. Inhale and come into Plank so you can see if you are in a long enough stance to

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continue, if not adjust. (think about using Plank for teaching distance, eventually you may not continue with this asana in this place and go directly to DownDog.

6. Exhale and move into Down-dog. (you MAY want to add a Half-DD before and after)
7. Inhale to Up-Dog.
8. Exhale to Child's Pose.

Childs' Pose is your middle marker. You can now do the above in reverse. There is no right and wrong with this sequence you can customize as you like or dislike certain asanas but do consider that we usually delete what is more difficult and go with the familiar.

The return changes only with the step forward from your last DownDog back to the Mountain Pose/Forward Fold as you do not have to do a Plank for distance judgement on the return.

The step forward will probably be the most difficult movement as this take sheer core power to pick up that foot and bring the entire leg eventually to the hands, take it in little steps as necessary and then slide the hands back to the feet until at a point in the future they will meet.

After a Forward Fold, mindfully reach other and up leading with the heart and not the head, we do not want to become dizzy shutting off the oxygen flow to the head.

Sun Dance can be repeated as often as you like with the step back and forward initiating with different feet using both the right and left as they ask for different strengthening and muscle coordination depending upon with one goes first and which one follows.

Physical Benefits:

A strengthening and stretching of the entire torso. Can be done very slowly or quicker as desired, just don't compromise the asanas and be very familiar with the movements before you speed up the flow.

Pranayama: We did not do any specific breathing exercises but Sun Dance can be very beneficial to the body as one concentrates on letting the breath lead the movement and taking it slower for controlled breathing and faster for a stronger cardio effect. Flow with the breath.

Essential Oil: doTerra: **Balance the Grounding Blend**

Music: Deuter "Illumination"

Quote:

Taoist Meditation

Close your eyes and you will see clearly...Cease to listen and you will hear the truth...

Be silent and your heart will sing...Seek no contacts and you will find union...

Be still and you will move forward on the tide of the spirit.

Albert Einstein once wrote:

Science without religion is lame and Religion without science is blind.

Miscellaneous:

No classes this week from Monday, Feb. 20th-Presidents Day to Saturday, Feb. 25th.

For **Old World Village Intermediate/Gentle and Solution** class students, checks will be due by March 3rd, but held until the beginning of April. If you would like to make any changes, adding/switching class, now is the time to let me know. Space is guaranteed when I receive your check and in this order. Sometimes switching can take a few sessions depending upon who else may want to switch. New students and returning students (after surgery or an accident) please get in touch with me regarding placement.

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Monday and Friday classes in Spring will be 9 weeks/\$138. because of the Memorial Day weekend and my annual Joshua Tree Retreat.

Tuesday/Wednesday and Thursday will be 10 weeks/\$153. Please make checks payable to Help Your Health.

Rain: Flyers for Sandbags available FV and HB, where and how to use them.

Also, don't forget to replace your windshield wipers, Costco has been having a good deal and you can buy one or more as needed.

What is Yoga Therapy?

The flyer(condensed with a few highlights and the complete article.

Maybe your doctor would like to understand and know more or a friend or family member who may be contemplating beginning a practice, near or far.

Please feel free to circulate this information.

Feedback: Please feel free to comment and give suggestions as to what you are enjoying or maybe not. Are there aspect of class which you would like to see more of, specific asanas or working with specific parts of the body.

If I were to give some workshops in the Spring, what would you like to know more about, what are you interested in?

Important Disclaimer

The news, suggestions, information, exercises and other items in this list are intended for informational purposes only. Not all exercise is suitable for everyone. To reduce the risk of injury, please consult your Doctor before engaging in any physical and/or therapeutic exercise program. Nothing is intended to be a substitute for professional medical care.

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