

**Asana:**

**Gate Balancing**

**Hamstring Releases**

**Sideways Hip Strengthening**

**Description:**

**Gate Balancing:** Come to the middle of your mat on both knees facing the side of your mat. Extend the right leg into a normal gate position. Then when you feel balanced, continue by pivoting the foot so you are on the heel, with the toes flexed and pointing towards the ceiling.

Engage the knee cap continuing up the thigh also include the other thigh.

Continue to engage the abdominal area by pulling the belly button towards the spine and drawing upwards.

Broaden the chest area, shoulder blades in their pockets and shoulders down.

Reaching the arms to the sides, slightly lower than shoulder height with forgiving limbs (elbows slightly bent). You can gently press the tips of the index and thumbs together with the other fingers slightly bent and palms facing upward, Jnana Mudra.

Reaching with the crown of the head and creating good posture from the head to the tailbone as if someone is reeling you in on a fishing line from the ceiling, feel the body lengthen.

Find a fixed point, your Drishti and focus.

If you want to work harder on your balance then close the eyes. A slight movement is normal when you first try to balance with the eyes closed, don't worry. If you feel, as if you are going to fall, then, by all means, open the eyes.

Practice often on both sides.

**Physical Benefits:**

Balancing, concentration, strengthening and posture improvement.

**Adaptations:**

#1. Instead of straightening the extended leg you can bend the knee and place the ankle under the knee being flat on your foot.

**Variations:** This same positioning can also be done sitting forward in a chair but you won't attain the same benefit of balancing.

Additional stretch while you are in this position:

Curling the back toes under, placing the hands on the floor in front of you, slowly and gently see if you can release the buttocks until you are sitting on the heel.

If you find your heel, then while using the hands for balance, see if you can lift that knee off the mat. Your other leg is still extending with toes pointing up and flexed.

If you are a Puppy person this will be difficult but if you can do Childs Pose it should happen.

Do not attempt this sit back if you have knee issues.

**Description:** We did various hamstring releases, helping them with a more side-to-side wiggle, supine on the mat.

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Taking one leg up and straighten it, as close to 90degree as possible and the other bent and foot placed directly on the mat behind the buttocks.

See at which angle your leg is completely straight and if it is bent at 90 then let it go slightly towards the floor until it is straight.

Keeping this leg straight reach for the thigh and hold the leg in place with both hands giving it a gentle pull but not to the point of it bending.

If you are not sure if your leg is straight just put one hand on the knee and the other on the thigh and see if the knee releases backward as the thigh remains in place, be careful not to hyperextend the knee.

Pushing with the heel towards the ceiling, the leg engaged, hold for some breaths.

Can flex and extend but be mindful of the tracking of the foot as it moves with the knee.

Repeat on the other side.

### **Physical Benefits:**

Providing healthy alignment so the hamstrings can find their grooves where they are able to slide and glide freely, widening and spreading from side to side.

They have a tendency to accumulate knotty micro-entanglements in the fascia which are clumping your hamstrings together which is preventing any lateral play.

It is necessary to release these three muscles on a regular basis since then can be the cause of other issues in the body such as lower back pain/spinal disc injury.

They are also involved as being responsible for the knee to bend and the hip to extend.

We will work more next week on some contributing factors: skeletal alignment, rooting the feet, knee placement, weight distribution in the feet.

Sitting is a primary culprit of tight-feeling hamstrings. While sitting, your hamstrings are both inactive and in their shortest position.

**Adaptations:** In some classes, I also did this, using the strap, with one leg up and the other straight. With the strap, you can also open both legs wide for a different stretch.

### **Variations:**

#1. Using the strap over one foot with the other straight on the mat. Engaging the leg, flexing the foot and pushing the heel towards the ceiling. Crossing over midline 4-5 inches both to the right and the left, holding the strap with the same side arm. Pausing after the stretch before returning.

#2. This is the most relaxing of all hamstring releases I am familiar with so far.

Laying in an open doorway with one leg up on the wall and the other through the opening on the floor. Come as close to the wall with your buttocks as the tight hamstrings will allow.

Keeping the leg straight pushing into the wall with the heel, you may want to place a hand on the knee at the beginning to see if the leg is straight. Be mindful of your leg alignment and you can add a sandbag on top of the foot.

Stay in this position for 5-10 minutes, relaxing, multitasking if you must!

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### Description:

#### **Sideways Hip Strengthening**

**Outer Thigh:** Lie on your side and support your head and neck comfortable on your hand or on a blanket/pillow.

Place your top arm in front to keep you from rolling forward or backward off your side.

Taking the top leg straight in alignment with the spine, lifting it up slowly but no higher than the hip and reaching a pause before lowering smoothly. Repeat 10-20x.

The bottom leg is bent laying on the mat with the knee forward and heel slightly behind the line of the spine.

**Inner Thigh:** Remaining on the same side but this time with the top leg bent and resting forward.

Lift the bottom leg straight up towards the ceiling so that at least the lower portion of the leg lifts up from the mat. Try to keep the leg straight and foot flexed and lift as much as possible and as straight as possible.

Repeat 10-30x

Then turn over and lay on your other side repeating the same sequence.

### Physical Benefits:

The muscles that these exercises strengthen provide stability for the hip, pelvis and low back. If weakened, these muscles will allow increased side-to-side wobbling during standing and walking, resulting in increased strain.

### Essential Oil: doTerra: Lavender

Available here in OWV at The Living Temple, a retail shop specializing in products for healthy living, ask for Robin. <http://www.thelivingtemple.com/>

### Music: Deuter "Flowers of Silence"

### Quote:

If you believe you can, you probably can, if you believe you can't, you most assuredly won't. Belief is the ignition switch that gets you off the launching pad. -Denis Waitley

### Miscellaneous:

Float Therapy Spa: <http://www.floattherapyspa.com/>

This is where I found complete silence for one hour, less than a mile from home, except for my own heartbeat.

I-Spa a Korean Day Spa: <http://www.irvinespa.com/>

Besides the entrance fee of \$25.00 which gives you unlimited time, the scrub and oil massage was most enjoyable and successful, costing an additional \$60. for 80 minutes.

The Fuzz Speech by Dr. Gil Hedley on U-Tube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BdRqLrCF\\_YsI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BdRqLrCF_YsI)

### 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.