

## Help Your Health - The Weekly Review - Summer Session - 2017 - #2

### 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.

## Asana this week:

Kneeling Sun Salutations

10- Key Asanas from Dr. Fishman for Bone Health

Seated Twists and Stretches

**Name:** Kneeling Sun Salutations (Yogi Snack #4)

**Description:**

Begin in Hero Pose (sitting on your heels if possible) hands at the heart, Inhale reaching the arms out and up coming up off your heels, exhale and come to Childs' pose, inhale to Up-dog, exhale to Cobra, inhale to Up-dog, exhale to Down-dog, inhale to prone on all fours than with the knees on the floor reaching out and up with the arms, exhale to Hero Pose (if this does not work for your knees than begin and end off your heels in a more upright pose). Hands at the heart.

**Physical Benefits:**

Multiple as you will feel from doing a dozen or so, suitable for an evening stretch, moving with the breath.

**Adaptations/Variations:**

Begin by sitting on a block and not the heels, gradually most will be able to release lower as the thighs stretch. Be very careful if you have a knee issue, do not do 'Hero pose' if there is any pain.

**Name:** 10- Key Asanas from Dr. Fishman for Bone Health

**Description:**

See PDF x2

**Name:** Seated Twists/Stretches

**Description:**

Sitting on your mat, possible with a blanket under the buttocks. Throughout this series move slower and carefully if you have a knee condition, possibly not bending the knee but rather keeping it straighter. Often this series is used to release a tight Piriformis (often referred as Sciatica or Piriformis Syndrom).

Begin with legs straight in Staff Pose (Dandasana), we will do everything on the right side and you will then transform each movement to the left side.

1. Simple Spinal Twist (Marichyasana I): Slide the right foot along the left leg until it is comfortable close to the mid thigh.

\*Press your sitting bones into the floor and point the crown of the head toward the ceiling. Place your right hand on the floor behind you, close to your body, fingers pointing away from the body. Wrap your left arm or hand around your right knee and hug your thigh to your torso. Exhale and turn your body to the right, turning your head to look over your right shoulder, do not strain any part of the body during this twist. Pressing the sitting bones into the floor and point the crown of your head toward the ceiling. Make sure your best is lifted and your shoulder are relaxed and parallel to the floor. Hold the pose for 30-60 seconds.

2. Simple Half Spinal Twist (Ardha Matsyendrasana): Begin as above but this time place your right foot on the floor outside your left thigh as close to your hip as is comfortable, your knee should point toward the ceiling. Repeat from \* as stated above.

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3. Simple Spinal Twist II (Marichyasana II): This is the more difficult twist and is not for everyone, especially if you have a knee issue. I would prefer if everyone did this first in class so the modifications are clear. This twist is a very strong Piriformis muscle stretch if done properly.

4. Simple Wide Open Legs (Upavista Konasana): rocking back and forth over the sitting bones. For this stretch to happen I would suggest a daily practice, maybe instead of sitting in a comfy chair or sofa while watching TV, getting down on the floor and leaning forward on a foot stool/blankets/chair seat/block etc. Be patient and eventually you will see progress, always remembering not to lose your natural curves of the spine. The head and shoulders are not the instruments coming forward they must follow the lower torso and the heart, be patient and consistent.

5. Seated Half Spinal Twist with Forward Fold (Janu Sirasana): Begin in Staff/Dandasana, turning right leg/foot out and sliding to the top of the left inner thigh. Placing the sole of your right foot against the inside of your left leg. Let the right knee top toward the floor and then perform the twist with the left hand behind on the floor and the right hand sliding down the outside of the left leg, keep the back in neutral/flat. If you feel a tug If your right knee is off the floor you can support it with a block/blanket.

### **Physical Benefits:**

Besides this series massaging the abdominal organs, these movements will help to increase the flexibility/strength of your spine and upper back while stretching the shoulders and upper chest and tone the abdominal muscles. Helping with posture while opening the shoulders and chest.

Twists are also known to stimulate/improve the digestive system, help circulatory and lymphatic systems (especially the kidneys and liver) while also promoting healthy function to the pituitary gland.

The Forward Fold from above lengthens the spine, opens the hips, groin and shoulders, stretches the hamstring, calves and inner thighs as well as stimulating and increasing circulation. Known to soothe the nervous system while relieving stress, anxiety and mild depression.

Give this series a try instead of sitting on the sofa and snacking while watching TV. Take it slow with nice long hold as you lengthen in the inhale and release into the movement on the exhale.

**Contraindications** can be low blood pressure, low back/groin/hamstring/knee injury, asthma, pregnancy

## Pranayama: Fountain Breathing

Either in a chair/on the floor/standing/supine. Close your eyes.

Take a few normal breaths inhaling and exhaling all the way.

Now Inhale in three even stages, with a pause after each one.

Inhale, pause, inhale, pause; inhale, pause)

From the bottom up see if you can direct the breath:

1. into your lower belly and back
2. into your mid-chest and back
3. final all the way up to your collarbones

When you come to the end of the last pause, hold and feel the prana revitalizing each and every cell - then let all of the air out of yourself in one smooth exhalation. Pause and then repeat.

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Practice 10-15x taking in more and releasing more with every breath (if in supine you may fall asleep before that point).

If you feel out of control, take a few normal breaths after each round to readjust. Don't fret if it does not work the first time. You have all the time in the world.

If you find this difficult consider counting the breaths: breathing in for a 2-3 with each segment, don't forget the pause, then exhale for an equal amount of counts 6-9. Adding if so desired eventually with practice and patience.

As you become more comfortable with this breathing exercise you will not have to count any longer but just feel the breath.

We should think of the Fountain as it rises through you and flushes away fears of passing time -letting go of thinking of time as finite and something there is never enough of.

Let the breath guide you back to the natural and true. Yoga encourages all kinds of contrary thinking, even the word 'guru' which is often used in the meaning of teacher is composed of two words the are opposites of each other: gu/darkness and ru/light. A guru leads you from darkness into light away from tires used-up thinking toward fresh and helpful ideas.

A teacher once said. "A successful life should live each day as if it were your first!" He explained that to live it as if it were your last you would be trying to remedy all the mistakes you thought you had made in your life, all the regrets, all the things undone and unsaid. Whereas if you live each day as if it was your first, you are freed from all obligations, all guilt and all regret. And that is why the great is such a potent tool - it clears away the accumulated confusion of the years and allow us to begin again. And again.....

From: "Breathing Space -Twelve Lessons for the Modern Woman" by Katrina Repka & Alan Finger

### **Essential Oil:**

**Elevation:** Lavender, Hawaiian Sandalwood, Melissa Leaf, Ylang Ylang, Osmanthus, Eleni, Tangerine, Lemon Myrtle

**Music:** George Winston "Summer" Barbara Thompson "Center of the Earth" and Steve Halpern "Music for Yoga"

### **Quote:**

If you can't handle me at my worst the you sure don't deserve me at my best.  
-Marilyn Monroe

### **Miscellaneous:**

**TUMERIC/CURCUMIN**

**INFORMATION from myAyurvedic studies:**

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Before you start sprinkling turmeric on everything you eat, you need to know what most people don't: turmeric is poorly absorbed in the body and has minimal impact on blood levels when taken alone. The good news is that there are ways you can enhance its absorption. Here are four things you can do:

1. **Sprinkle Black Pepper:** piperine, a compound found in black pepper that's responsible for its pungency, can greatly improve absorption of turmeric in the body. In one study, when taken with 20 mg of piperine per 2.2 pounds of body weight, piperine improved the bioavailability of turmeric by 2000% !
2. **Add Some Fat:** turmeric is fat-soluble and thus much better absorbed when taken with fat, such as coconut or almond milk .
3. **Heat It Up:** heat is said to increase the solubility of curcumin (the primary active constituent in turmeric) by 12 times, which may also increase its bioavailability in the body.
4. **Eat Quercetin-Rich Foods:** quercetin is a flavonoid found in many plant foods such as onions, capers, and Serrano peppers, and is known to inhibit an enzyme that inactivates curcumin. Adding turmeric to quercetin-rich foods can increase the absorbability of turmeric in the body.

A hot coconut curry made with coconut milk, black pepper, turmeric and onions is a great option for maximizing your body's ability to absorb turmeric. Golden milk is also another delicious way to help you reap the benefits of turmeric. Here's my go to Golden Milk recipe:

### ***Golden Milk***

#### **Ingredients:**

1. 2 cups coconut milk or almond milk)
2. 1 Tbsp each of coconut oil, ghee, turmeric powder, and Ceylon cinnamon powder
3. 2 tsp fresh grated ginger
4. 1 pinch black pepper
5. Stevia drops to taste if necessary, I prefer xylitol powder.

**Directions:** Blend all ingredients in Vitamix or other blender on high for 3 minutes. If not hot when finished, add to stove over low heat until hot. Enjoy! Serves 2.

#### **Another option: Tumeric Paste**

Use organic tumeric power (fresh tumeric root which is shredded/pulverized can also work) and in a small saucepan with water, stir and heat but not to boiling, remove from the heat and stir to let it thicken. Then add the black pepper, honey to taste if necessary and a little coconut oil and or ghee. When it is completely cool, transfer to a glass container which has a lid so you can store it in the refrigerator, it will keep for at least a week.

Every day just take a nice large tablespoon of the mixture and swallow, it's not so bad!