

## **Benefits of Yoga:**

### Blood Cells:

In a recent Harvard University study, researchers examined blood samples from one group that practiced mindful meditation and one group that did not.

After an eight-week period, 2,209 genes within those in the meditation group showed changes, which largely involved their cells' ability to use oxygen and nutrients and create energy.

The results revealed that the meditation aspect of yoga can improve cellular metabolism, which can yield major benefits such as blocking degenerative genetic disorders and lengthening the life of DNA cells.

## **Core Principles:**

The first step before beginning your practice is to form an **intention**. Setting an intention means focusing on a quality or theme that you would like to be at the center of your poses. Your intention can focus on enhancing virtues, such as patience, self-compassion, forgiveness or gratitude. You can choose to focus on accepting yourself or others and practice being nonjudgmental. Other intentions can be physical, such as deciding to foul on your breath, build strength and stability, or cultivate peacefulness and restfulness. You can form an intention whether in a comfortable seated pose or in Mountain Pose.

## **Asana this week:**

Squat/Frog/Garland/Malasana & Goddess Pose/Utkata Konasana

Lunge & Lizard Pose

### **Name: Squat/Frog & Goddess Pose**

#### **Description:**

Start in Mountain Pose with your back against the wall, feet wide/forty-five degrees to the side and wider than hip distance apart, heels in, toes out, knees pointing in same direction as little toes.

Bend your knees until your hips(sitz bones) are a few inches off the floor, keeping your back straight, Inhale and lift through the top of the head.

Place your hands on thighs with your fingers pointing outward or press your palms together in front of your chest. Bring your elbows inside your knees one at a time. Press your upper arms against your inner thighs and press your things back in return.

Life your sternum and relax your shoulders away from your ears.

Widen your shoulders as you pull the elbows to the sides.

Hold..hold...hold...with constant strength.

When ready, push down through your feet and straightened legs while releasing hands.

If you feel you are every stuck down in a squat, simply lean forward placing your hands/finger tips on the floor in front of you and slowly raise the buttocks up while straightening the legs, leading with the heart until you are standing again.

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**Goddess:** is very similar to a squat except the feet are very wide/ 2-3 feet apart and pointed out to the sides/45 degrees, the knees remain over the ankles being able to see the big toe inside the knee when they are bent and being the same height as the hips.

Draw the tailbone down, shoulders away from the ears, the back is straight with the alignment of ears/ shoulders/hips. I suggest to begin Goddess at the wall or at the door.

**Physical Benefits:** Strengthening various muscles in the body, especially

**Adaptations/Variations:**

**Version at door:** same placement of feet and thighs, facing the edge of a door and holding on to the two handles/one in front and one behind (which is secured) squatting until the thighs are parallel to the floor and then slowly going down an inch or two and returning to original position. The shoulders are stacked over the hips and open, the arms are long and chest lifted, follow previous directions.

**Goddess** at the door is the same as, at the wall or free standing, but you can better control your knee placement using the wall or door.

**Precautions: Any knee or hip issues, use caution going slow.**

Be mindful if you have any knees issues and never go down to the point of pain, please stop before. Building the strength in the thighs gradually by engaging and holding before the point of pain.

**Name: Crescent Lunge/Alanasana & Lizard Pose (the beginning of Pigeon)**

**Description:**

Begin in Table Pose (kneeling with one leg forward/bent and the back knee on the floor) step your left foot forward between your hands. Your left knee should be directly over your ankle and both hips should be facing forward.

With the back toes curled under, pressing the the fingers or palms into the floor lined up with the front foot, lift the torso upward and relax the shoulders back and down.

Feel the stretch in the front of your right thigh and feel your right hip gently moving forward and down.

Tuck your tailbone under to lengthen your spine.

Elongate the back of your neck and keep your head in alignment with your spine. Your head should not drop forward toward your chest.

Hold the pose for 20 seconds + and return to Table Pose and repeat on the other side/ R/L.

This basic Lunge is usually with the hands kept on the floor but you can intensify the stretch and add balance by taking the hands to the front thigh/hips/overhead.

Coming from Down Dog to Lunge and returning take considerable core strength to get the moving leg back or forward far enough. Do not sweep the leg out to the side instead take it as far as you can, drop the back knee and with corresponding hand pick up the forward foot and take it more forward to end position. You can also walk the hands back to meet the foot wherever it is and slide the back leg back more. Be patient, this welcome with practice.

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The Pose can either be helpful for building stamina and/or repeated for working on strength. Go slowly and work with control until the strength comes and with it the form.

**Physical Benefits:**

Strengthens the arches, ankles, knees and thighs. Stretches the hips and shoulders while opening the chest, the chest, stimulates digestion, increases muscular endurance. Can relieve symptoms of sciatica. Builds mental focus, develops will-power and stimulates the mind.

**Adaptations/Variations:** Low, Supported with hands, Full/High

You can intensify your Lunge by raising the back knee off the mat and holding, this is called Full/High-Lunge. The heel of the back leg should be in line with the toes and up, leaving space to stretch by pushing the heel back but not touching the mat.

You can again intensify either version and add balance by taking the hands to the front thigh, this is supported or to the hips or overhead while stretching backwards in steeple.

**Precautions: Any hip issues, use caution going slow.**

Be mindful if you have any knee issues using a block/blanket as padding for the down knee and never stretch back to the point of pain. Stay closer to Table pose if you are uncomfortable, you can still experience the High and Low version but without the Hip stretch.

Blocks can also be used under both hands.

**Lizard:**

Being in a long low lunge, place both hands inside the front leg on the floor.

Gentle release the front knee out to the side as your front foot slides toward and over its outer edge.

If able, your upper body can lower and you can lean on your forearms to come even lower to the floor as the leg/knee opens.

Go slowly and hold when you have reached your end point, this is a Half-Pigeon prep position.

**General Class:**

**Starting Pose:** *Morning Wake-Up Stretch, Hip Openers with Bent Legs(Small Circles Together, Circles Apart and Large, In/Out Together), Ankles/Wrists Flex-Extend*

**Warm-Up:** *Child's Pose, Cat n' Cow,*

**Arm Support:** *Balancing Cat,*

**Forward Bend:** *Pyramid Pose w. Posture Pole, Warrior 1(with VAM)*

**Standing:** *Squat/Goddess Pose*

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*Sun Salutations with and/or without the Chair*

Please find both PDF stick figure description [here on my website](#).

Find Sun Salutations with and without the chair also as video (first and last) on [my video page](#) or on my DVD's which you can purchase directly from me.

**Twisting:**

**Balancing:**      Warrior II + Reverse,

**Backbend:**      Bridge (Supported)

**Hip Opener:**      **Lizard Pose (Lunge), Yogi Squat, Goddess Pose**

**Cool Down:**      Supine with Strap, Reclining Bound Angle Pose/Cobblers,  
Reclining Pigeon Pose, Happy Baby

**Savasana:**      Mindfulness Body and Sound Meditation

**The Chakra System: #2 -**

this Chakra is located in the lower abdomen between the nail and the genitals at the sacral plexus and is counted with emotions, empathy and sexuality. Its element is water and has the theme of letting go and creating flow. The translations of its name is "sweetness" which corresponds to the healing aspect of the second chakra - to nurture, to create harmony and to soothe. This chakra is the center of identity, sexuality, emotions, pleasure, sensation and movement. When it is deficient, there is a loss of creativity, imagination , sex drive or empathy. An overactive chakra leads to excessive focus on sexuality. When this chakra is balanced, then you are able to be creative and have a balance sex life. Exercises for opening the second chakra focus on moving and relaxing the hips and lower abdomen.

**Sanskrit Name:**      Swadhisthana

**Function:**      Sexuality

**Physical Location:**      Sacrum

**Spinal Vertebrae:**      Thoracic 9-12 Sacral 1-5

**Nerve Plexus:**      Sacral

**Gland:**      Ovaries, Testicles

**Body Area:**      Hips, pelvis, genitals, kidney, bladder, lower back

**Theme/Motivation:**      Desire

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<b>Inner Sense:</b>	Emotion, Nurture, Pleasure
<b>Matter:</b>	Fluid
<b>Element:</b>	Water
<b>Problems:</b>	Sexual & Urinary Issues
<b>Color:</b>	Orange
<b>Seed Mantra:</b>	VAM
<b>Action:</b>	To Feel
<b>Animal Representation:</b>	Fish, Ocean creatures
<b>Yoga Asana:</b>	Goddess, Happy Baby, Reclining Bound Angle, Lizard, Half Pigeon, Half Moon
<b>Meditation:</b>	Water

## Breathing/Pranayama Exercise:

### Simple Breath Awareness, Ocean Breathing to Ratio Breathing

Sit in a comfortable position or lie down.

Close your eyes and let your body relax, summoning self-acceptance.

Start to notice your breath. What does your breath feel like?

Is it rushed or calm? Is your breath loud or soft? Does it feel warm or cool?

Ocean Breathing is your Ujjayi breath.

Ration Breathing is either equal parts or uneven breathing: pauses and/or lengthening.

Since using a mantra is usually easier than counting, the suggestion is as follows:

1:0:1 In 4s/ex 4s Var: 3s in/3s out or 6s in/6s out "I breath in, I breathe out."

1:0:1:5 In 4s/ex 6s Var: 3s in/4s out or 6s in/9s out "I Breath in, I breathe out and let go."

### Mudras/Hand Expressions:

Sacral Mudra called Bhairava or Dyana related to the creative energy force in each one of us, it is often interpreted as the feminine energy or Shakti.

Place your hands on your lap, palms up and on top of each other.

Keep the left hand underneath, with its palm touch the back of the fingers of the right hand.

The tips of the thumbs touch gentle.

Concentrate on the sacral chakra in the lower abdominal region of the body.

As on moves your attention upward towards this shake be mindful of the transition and the natural shift of energetic, emotional and mental experience. Allow your attention to naturally find the location of this chakra, often repeating the seed mantra 'vam'.

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**Meditation:** Mindfulness Body and Sound Meditation

Mindfulness Meditation also known as nonreactor awareness. Mindfulness has been defined as 'paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment and nonjudgmental.' Think of mindfulness meditation as a way of learning to stay on the sidewalk while you carefully watch traffic pass by.

This guided Meditation should take approx. 10-15 minutes but our time was limited in class so I suggest you try this inside or outside and take the extra time to enjoy.  
It focuses on the: body, mind, sounds.

Body:

Begin in a comfortable standing, seated or supine position.

Notice how you are in this position, where does your body make contact to the ground?  
What does it feel like? Notice the positioning of your head/neck, shoulders/chest, arms/legs!

Stay with the SENSATIONS of your body with curiosity and interest.

Notice the sensations: warm/cool, tingling or vibrating, pulsing or steady, soft , subtle or loud and clear, expanding or shrinking, moving or still?

Where do you feel tension? Continue observing for the next 5 minutes.

Then say, "I breath in, I breath out..and let go.." Letting go of any sensation which was drawing your attention.

Mind:

Now notice thoughts coming and going. Let them come and go like cars in traffic. You may observe them from afar but don't get carried away or rush after any one in particular.  
Repeating your mantra and relaxing for the next 5 minutes.

Sound:

Now bring your attention to the sounds, simply listen passively.

What do you hear?

Inside the room: Do you hear music, voices, electrical equipment humming etc.....

Outside the room: Do you hear traffic, birds, music, trees swaying?

Continue listening with curiosity and interest for the next 5 minutes.

If you have any particular sensation in your body or soul that is pulling away your attention, then allow yourself to focus on it. Bring all your attention to that sensation or sound and notice all the dimension of how it feels or sounds, then allow it to evaporate.....let it go.....

Let yourself relax your attention gradually and gently open your eyes.

**Essential Oil:**

doTerra: Citrus Bliss/Invigorating Blend

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Wild Orange Peel, Lemon Peel, Grapefruit Peel, Mandarin Peel, Bergamot Peel, Tangerine Peel, Clementine Peel essential oils and Vanilla Bean Absolute.

**Music:**

Goldmund: The Malady

**Quote:**

Waking up this morning, I smile. Twenty-four brand new hours are before me. I vow to live fully in each moment and to look at all beings with eyes of compassion. -Thich Nhat Hahn

**and I have added:**

**Smile to everyone who passes your way today....they do not have to acknowledge you or even notice your smile...just do it!**

**Miscellaneous:**

Link to Essential Oil Diffuser:

Link to Salt Lamp:

**From me to you!**

Dear Students,

Sorry for the confusion on the link for the initial Weekly Review for Winter 2018. I hope my skills improve.

Please keep giving our “Gratitude Bowl” your gratitudes, you can bring it with you to class or write in while you are at the studio. If you want to join just give it to me at the FV location and I will see it joins the others in the bowl. Just a word or two, no name necessary, just gratitude!

Monday we will pick again another ticket, looking for the lucky raffle winner for the private class, if I don't hear from anyone over the weekend.. the current winning number for the private class is...955.

Keep your tickets if you still have them and check them!

Until.....Namaste! RoxAnn

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