

Help Your Health – The Weekly Review Spring Session 2018 – #2

Reading from the Introduction of “Yoga for Arthritis” by Dr. Loren Fishman and Ellen Saltonstall

Serendipitously or not, arthritis and yoga fit: the lock and the key, the illness and the antidote. Arthritis restricts movement, yoga increases range of motion – these two were made for each other. The inevitable pounding, flexing, and grinding the human body experiences during life have pressured it to evolve many anatomical cushions, but alas, they too inevitably suffer from life’s buffeting. The incessant minor traumas add up, damaging the cushioning apparatus and eventually the structures they protect, increasing pain and instability, and reducing flexibility at the only places we can bend: **the joints**. Yoga has been shown to improve the microenvironment of the cartilage and elastic parts of the joint and add no trauma. And for thousand of years it has been known to increase flexibility. In this book we provide a scientific justification for using yoga to treat arthritis.

Asana this week:

Name: The Cloud Salutation

Any movement of the body releases energy. On some days, the world is shrouded in a damp fog of yin energy: vigorous movement just isn’t in the cards. On some days you just want to be a cloud and float. Floating is still moving and even while floating you can practice awareness and balance. Cloud Salutation is a wonderful way to move with the flow of life when it is quiet, or when you need to build some quiet in your life.

When you flow in the Cloud Salutation, move slowly, gracefully, like a cloud floating upon the wind of your breath. Once you have leaned the graceful movements of the clouds, you can challenge yourself even more: move like the clouds move, with their eyes closed. Clouds don’t look where they are going: they don’t even care where they are going – they just go. Keep your breath calm, even if you begin to wobble. If the wobbling becomes too dramatic, open your eyes; come back to the original flow for a few cycles. This flow can become addicting. Enjoy it.

Description:

Consisting of three breaths on each side, begin with the right, continue with the left. This is one round.

Begin by stand in a firm, grounded mountain pose, arms at the side. Hugging/engaging the legs and lifting the crown of the head, strong Tadasana.

Inhale and lift the arms overhead. Exhale and bring the knee up to hip level, always with foot flexed when lifted.

Inhale take the arms out to the sides. Exhale move the knee out to the side.

Inhale bringing the arms overhead and the knee back to center. Exhale and slowly return both back to original position.

Do multiple rounds.

Keep repeating the flow, alternating sides and when you are done return to your mountain, close your eyes and feel the flow still moving inside you.

You can also close your eyes during the flow when you feel comfortable doing so.

Physical Benefits: Working on your balance and lengthening the breath. Strengthening the leg, opening the hips. Maintaining good posture.

Precautions/Adaptations/Variations: Instead of lifting the knee to the front and side, bend the knee and rest on the toes touching the floor, to the front and sides.

You can begin this flow by leaning against the wall for support, eventually free standing. It is a slow process to

do with the eyes closed. If you can use a ‘drishti’ fairly close to the face it will make the balance easier, a point of focus. I would suggest lifting the knee, as often as possible, while standing on one leg, with a pause. Working on this until the knee is hip height forward and out, notice how taking the knee out to the side will interfere with your balance.

Name: Hands Movements: Finger Push-Ups, Digital Roly-Poly, Prayer Position.

Finger Push-Ups: Can be done either sitting/standing at a table/desk or standing facing a wall. Placing the hands flat and spread wide on a surface, with good body posture/shoulders back and wide. Push your fingers into the surface, pulling them together as the knuckles and palms lift. Drawing the fingers down and inward as they slide to meet. Spread flat again and repeat 5-10x’s. This movement will strengthen the muscles that flex the fingers, and increase range of motion for flexion.

Digital Roly-Poly: Sitting or standing, hold your hands at a comfortable height in front of you. Interlace the fingers. make fluid figure-of-eight shapes with your wrists, moving at a comfortable speed and with as little tension as possible in your fingers. Keep the elbows close to the body. Do 10x’s. Reverse the direction of the figure-of-eight and repeat.

This movement will coordinate and mobilize all the finger and wrist joint with multi-directional movement. Start slowly and stay loose!

Prayer Position:

Sitting or standing, join your palms together in front of the chest pressing the four corners together. Inhale while moving them straight up and overhead trying to bring the upper arms near the ears. Retain the strong connection of the palms. Slowly on the exhale, lower them until they are in front of your chest again. Pause there.

Then continue moving them downward as the heel of the palm and then the palms will slowly part, eventually only a few fingers on each hand will be touching at the tips. Pause. Slowly moving upward and bringing all together until the hands are back to the beginning position.

Then begin to angle the hands pointing away from the body and eventually down towards the floor. You may then be able to bring them up but only slightly, being mindful that you do not lift the shoulders at any time.

This movement will improve wrist extension at varying angles, which will stretch the wrist flexor muscles and increase mobility of the carpal and metacarpal bones.

General Class:

Restorative with the Breath: with blanket across and lengthwise, legs on a chair.

Attunement/Starting Pose/Supine: 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/Prone: Child’s Pose, Walk to the Right/Left, Thread the Needle, Cat n’ Cow, Balancing Cat, Child’s Pose.... Updog/Plank/Down-Dog (your choice of four different asana in a flow)

Supine: Tibetan #2/Leg Lifts, Bridge

Standing/Balance: The Cloud Salutation, reviewed Forward Folding/Making an Avocado Sandwich, Breath of Joy

Chair: Hand movements x3 (can do standing), Alternative Pigeon with hips higher than knees/FF, Stretching toes on floor in both directions, moving them backwards.

Savasana:

Essential Oil: doTerra “Peace” (a good choice for tax week)
Vetiver, Lavender, Ylang, Ylang, Clary Sage, Marjoram, Spearmint

Music: Deuter: “East of the Moon”

Quote:

“Everybody get so much information all day long that they lose their common sense.” -Gertrude Stein

My thoughts: What would she say now, 100 years later, to this present time of what is often referred to as ‘information overload’. She could say that we not only lose our common sense but our mind’s as well.