

## Help Your Health – The Weekly Review Spring Session 2019– #2

### General Class Sequencing

#### Attunement

**Restorative with the Breath:** *Legs on the chair(or up the wall) with blanket across and lengthwise. Arms in cactus.*

#### Supine

*Morning Wake-Up Stretch,*

*Printable Link to Morning Wake-Up Stretch on my website: [https://yogatherapyalacarte.com/2018/01/20/morning\\_wake\\_up\\_stretch/](https://yogatherapyalacarte.com/2018/01/20/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:

**Inhale** for Cow with added pointing toes and **Exhale** for Cat with curled toes -pressing down on each and feeling the work being done in the legs. Don't be surprised if the toes/feet cramp in the beginning this will eventually go away. With the added foot movement the actual asana of cat n' cow will move much slower which will emphasize and challenge the breath, creating more awareness.

#### Balancing Cat:

**Inhale:** reach with R leg back -flexing foot and L arm forward -reaching with wide fingers

**Exhale:** bring R leg bent/knee towards chest and L arm back bringing elbow to L hip -keeping hand engaged and facing midline

continue 3x on each side and do 2 sets ending with Child's Pose resting the wrists

Continue with Balancing Cat for 6 breaths in the 'still point' with nothing moving/hold.

After the 6 breaths you can reach back for the ankle if you would like or not.

Repeat on the other side

#### Prone

**Cobra to Up-Dog:** coming up as far as possible without allowing the shoulders to lift or the elbows to spread out.

**Yoga Snack:** just a short sequence which consists of 2 or more asana, concentrating the movement in tune with the breath.

**ex:** Child's Pose, Puppy (exhale) to Up-dog (Inhale) return and repeat x6 or more.

**Can add:** Cobra, Plank/Side-Plank, Down-Dog. Lunge R/L to make a longer vinyasa but add slowly as the body warms up and your time allows.

**Alternative:** Keeping knees down on the mat during Up-Dog, Plank and Down-Dog.

Additional ideas under General Short Flow Sequences (DVD Vol.2)

## **Standing: Posture.....**

**The following is a journey using visualization for your posture.**

**Think Taller** -it can actually make you taller.

Yogi's have been known to report an increase in height as they age, I have had students who have recorded almost up to 1 inch increase after subsequent years of yoga practice. Plus many who say their doctors are interested because they have not lost any height over the years. We do not have to shrink as the years pass....

**1. We will start first at the feet creating and being aware of a triangle of foundation in each foot.**

Standing with the feet hip width apart and the second toe of each foot facing forward.

Draw an imaginary triangle. Beginning with a point at the base of the big toe at the toe pad continuing to the little toe pad and from these two points directly to the heel where these two lines connect. Here you have your triangle, this is your base and foundation. Feel it! Place slightly more pressure on the outside line and feel the arch lift.

**2. Up to the Pelvic Area:** place your hands level on your waist/top of your hips/iliac crest with the thumbs forward. If that is not comfortable than turn the thumbs backward or close the hands and place the palm on the tip of the hips.

Tilt the pelvic girdle back and forth, this is a very important movement in your yoga practice. Easy and fluidness is necessary in order to achieve many yoga asanas but here we want to see if your pelvis is level, pretend your pelvis is a bucket and you must keep the bucket level since it is filled to the brim with water. Depending how you stand, you may have to tuck your tailbone under or stick it out slightly, most people need to tuck it under ever so slightly. One way of checking this out is by looking at yourself sideways in a mirror to help determine which movement is right for you in order to hold the bucket in a level position.

**3. You can add a blanket rolled between the top of the legs** and squeeze it with your thigh muscles, hold, do not bend the knees but lengthen your mid-section with your hands on the top of your hips at the waist and then to the bottom of your rib cage. Stretch, think taller!

How much space do you feel between these two points: hips and bottom rib? Can you find the space of four fingers or just one, inhale lengthen the torso, exhale and see where you come to but always think taller.

**4. Walk the hands up the inner/bottom side of the ribcage until they meet, at this point you may feel a little bone shaped like a marble, the zyphoid process. Imagine this little marble is a large round beacon of light.** When you are standing or sitting with good posture your beacon shines forever. When you are slouched your light goes out within a short distance in front of you. Which do you want? I would like to think that my light is shining forever.

**5. Let the fingers continue traveling along the sternum and the medial sides of the ribcage until you come to the vicinity of the collarbones.** You will feel a little valley between and slightly above and in this valley visualizing a jewel resting. The **jewel** of your choice, bright and multi-faceted. The location is called the manubrium. If your chin/head is held down and or forward your jewel will not find any light to reflect it's beauty.

**6. At this same location visualize a shelf** extending out from the manubrium and on this small shelf sits a cup of hot coffee. Movement of the body, maybe just walking, without spilling the coffee while keeping the shelf parallel to the floor.

**7. Fisherman in the Attic/Ceiling** -with a **fishing line** attached to my hair at the crown towards the rear. He is reeling me up as my spine lengthens and I gain that space which poor posture is trying to rob from me.

**8. Visualization.....to seeing by Observation.** Just watching others and seeing what poor postural habits look like in all sizes, shapes and ages.

### **Yogi Push-Ups at the Wall & Wall Squats w -4 x 1 minute @**

#### **Supine:**

#### **Decompression Series**

#### **Site-Specific Exercises on the Back/Supine**

**General Set Up:** Lie on your back, hips and knees bent, legs hip distance apart, feet flat on the floor with the foot triangle of support, toes pointed straight ahead.

Making sure your head is not tilted forward or backward, chin neither towards your neck or pointing up. Chin should be level with forehead. Use a blanket under the head or neck to achieve this level but do not place the blanket under your shoulders as this can throw off your postural alignment.

Arms at the sides, slightly away from body approx. 10 inches, palms up, back of hands on the floor. Elbows and shoulders should be about the same level. If not use a blanket to achieve this either on one side or possibly both.

Lie in this position 5-15 minutes, more if you like, often if you choose. Try to avoid becoming distracted with any extenuating activity: animals, TV, radio, reading, kids.

All the following are done in the above position unless when noted differently, please read each one completely before beginning. Once you are familiar with the individual series movements you can combine specific movement.

#### **1. Shoulder Press**

Pressing one shoulder downward toward the floor, begin on one side only.

Hold 3 (count slowly) seconds, then Release, Relax and Repeat 3-5x. Switch sides.

Continue to both shoulders pressing down at the same time. If it is difficult to press both shoulders at the same time, press one at a time.

If you can't press one down, just be there for a time/often and eventually it will happen.

Do 'not' do any of the following: hunch your shoulders toward your ears, arch your lower back, 'roll' your arms in/out or press your elbows into the floor.

#### **2. Head Press**

Feel the weight of your head on the floor.

Hold your chin in position (tilted or tucked) and press the back of your head into the floor or other support/blanket.

Hold 3 seconds, then Release, Relax. and Repeat 3-5x.

If you can not do this without any discomfort then just begin by doing the chin tuck/tilt without the press, touching the back of your neck and feeling the muscles which you contract in this movement.

#### **Additional:**

Keeping head in contact with blanket/floor do the following, each movement slowly co-ordinated with the breath: Tilting chin to chest on exhale/sliding chin to point to ceiling on inhale, rotating right on exhale/return to center on inhale/repeat left, lateral release of the ear right on exhale/return to center on inhale/repeat left.

These are the three movements which I suggest on a daily basis for the neck and the thoracic/lumbar spine (which can be done sitting or standing).

#### **3. Leg Lengthener**

Straighten one leg down on the floor, keep leg in alignment with hip, not rotated in/out, kneecap pointed toward ceiling.

Extend the heel but do not let it lift off the mat (this would be hyperextending the knee) and pull toes and forefoot toward the knee/hold.

“Lengthen” the leg by pulling your pelvis away from your ribs.

Hold 3 sec, Release, Relax, Repeat again 2-3x, then re-bend your knee and repeat with the other leg.

Repetitions: R/L, two rounds.

The lengthening movement should occur in the lower back. Do not lift opposite hip.

#### **4. Leg Press**

You should feel the muscles on the front of your thigh, buttocks and lower back contract during this exercise.

Imagine you are on the beach and want to make an indentation of your leg in the sand.

Set up the leg same as #3 except instead of lengthening, press the entire leg down into the floor.

Hold 3 sec, Release, Relax, Repeat again, then re-bend your knee and repeat with the other leg.

When you are comfortable working with one leg at a time, do the exercise also as follows: with both legs together, with legs parallel/hip distance apart and as wide as the mat.. Same hold and repetition.

#### **5. Arm Lengthener**

When you are able to rest your arms comfortably on the floor alongside your head, many activities that involve reaching will become easier.

In Supine with both knees bent and feet flat. Arms at side, palms down or facing body.

Keeping the elbows straight, bring one arm up and alongside your head.

“Lengthen” arm by pulling rib cage up and away from the pelvis.

Hold 3 seconds, Release, Relax, keeping arm straight and alongside your head, then Repeat.

Return to starting position still keeping elbow straight. Repeat with the other arm, alternating 4-6 times with each arm.

After you are comfortable moving one arm at a time, you can do the exercise with both arms at the same time.

## **6. Arm Press**

To receive the best benefit from this exercise, your arm **MUST** have something to press against, a blanket or pillow under the arm is usually necessary for most people. More is better than less. There should be no light/space visible under the arm when it is laying on the blanket. Do not set up the blanket(s) under the shoulder, they should start at mid-upper arm.

Set up same as #5 except instead of lengthening, you want to make an impression of your whole arm on the surface.

Hold 3 seconds, Release, Relax and Repeat before returning arm to side of body. Do with other arm on blanket/pillow. Can continue with multiple repetitions if desired.

Don't rush to do both arms together until you feel comfortable with individual work.

### **Pranayama:**

#### **Quick Stress Relief Breathing Technique**

Standing or sitting, take one hand and place it open and under the opposite arm pit, with the other hand on the opposite shoulder. Breath slowly and feel the torso expand with the inhale, try to extend the exhales a little longer than the inhales. Switch hands and repeat with the other side. Anywhere from 4+ breaths would be positive but more are perfectly okay! Enjoy a more relaxed state of mind and a little more awareness of our own bodies.

### **Savasana:** Supine and Relaxed

### **Essential Oil:** doTerra "Wild Orange" 15ml pure \$12.+tax.

### **Music:** Deuter "Space Endless Horizons"

### **Quote:**

A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions. O.W.Holmes