

Help Your Health – The Weekly Review Fall Session 2019– #6

This weekly review will include the opening ‘Attunement’ part of each class. I have added and made a few changes after “Morning Wake Up Stretch”.

Attunement:

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

Warm-Up/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/

Hip Openers with Bent Legs(Small Circles Together/a massage of the lower back, Circles Apart and Large, In/Out Together)

New:

Supine Hip Flexor/Opener Series

A series of movements which can be done (in bed) directly after MW-upS. This series is especially good for anyone with: tight hamstrings or Sciatica(Piriformis Syndrom):

Place left foot on the mat behind the buttocks, bend the right leg bringing the thigh towards the chest. Place both hands on the back of the right thigh and feel the shape and movement of the three hamstrings as you proceed with the following movement.

1. **Holding the thigh close to the chest**, slowly and with resistance begin to straighten the right leg, slowly through the extension of the arms allowing the leg to/especially the heel, reach towards the ceiling. Repeat 6 x on both the R/L sides.

2. **Place the left foot on the mat behind the buttocks/knee bent and cross** the right ankle over the left thigh. Place the right hand on the right thigh and the left arm in airplane, turning the head and looking to the left hand.

Feel the energy channel between the right knee and the left hand. Try to keep both shoulders on the mat if possible and do not arch the back. Gently ease the right thigh/knee away from the body as you extend the left arm. Hold for 6 long breaths, at least.

3. **Keeping the position of #2, release the legs to the right**, keep the shoulders in contact with the mat if you can. Exhale long with each release, letting go and opening the lower torso, stay for six breaths. Turning the head in the opposite direction.

4. Bring the legs back to neutral with the same cross and **release to the left side**, the arms can be in airplane and the head turned to the opposite direction as the stretch or take the left hand on the right knee and ease the legs towards the mat.

5. **Come back to neutral with the same cross over and wrap the hands around the left thigh** (eventually this wrap will include the shin also)as you bring both legs in towards the torso on the

exhale. The right elbow will help to keep the right leg at bay. Hold in position for a series of breaths.

Repeat #2 thru #5 on the left side.

Warm-Up/Prone: Child's Pose, Walk to the Right/Left and/or look over the shoulder R/L, Thread the Needle, Cat n' Cow, Balancing Cat R/L @ Finding the still point for 6 breaths/switching sides.

Prone to Standing:

Down-Dog Short and Narrow/Back and Forth

The first step of the challenging nose to knee exercise:

1. Begin in a short Down-Dog with the feet centered and together.
2. Inhale and come up high on the toes, continue by bringing the shoulders forward over the wrists, keep the buttocks pointed up. If you can't lift the torso then the DD is probably too long, just step the feet and hands a little closer to each other. The lift should be felt in the belly core.
3. Exhale bringing the heels down towards the mat and the shoulders back for a long stretch on the back side of the body. Don't be concerned if the heels do not touch the mat, they may with time.

Continue 2-6x or as many as you feel comfortable doing, no pain just a slow flowing stretch with strength building combined. I am not asking you yet to bring the nose to the knee as you lift the torso, that is the next step.

On Belly:

Sphinx to Forearm Plank and Back Again -please read all possibilities before beginning.

General Set up:

1. Begin on your belly, legs hip width apart.
2. Place your elbows under your shoulders and your forearms on the floor parallel to each other.
– Your head should remain in line with the shoulders as you are looking down onto your mat.
3. On an inhale, draw your chin up and back, and engage while push your forearms/hands on the mat — coming into Sphinx.
4. Push the heels back, broaden the shoulder and upper chest.

Hold in full position and work up to 2 minutes by gradually increasing in 5 second intervals. It takes time, patience and continual practice as this is a full body engagement.

As you tire you will notice that the core of the torso will gradually sink or rise, these are both easier positions but not proper. To protect the back, the belly area needs to be engaged on a continual basis, as if you are trying to zip up a pair of tight jeans. Consciously feel the expansion and the lifting of the upper chest area.

Sequence broken down for introduction in steps where you decide when to stop and hold:

- Inhale: Lift only the front ribs off the floor. Exhale to maintain.
 - Inhale: Lift the belly off the floor. Exhale to maintain.
 - Inhale: Lift your front hip points and pubic bone off the floor. Exhale to maintain.
 - Inhale: Lift your upper thighs off the floor. Exhale to maintain.
 - Move into the Forearm Plank. Inhale: Tuck your toes under, lift your knees off the floor and push your heels back. Exhale to maintain forearm plank.
 - Hold for 3 breaths.
 - Then exit by reversing the above sequence. You should end up in sphinx with your forehead to the floor.
- Complete two rounds.

plus

Place a block between your thighs to activate your inner thighs (this is the beginning of Mulabanda) while repeating this sequence until you've reached your edge.

plus

Place a block between your ankles as well to activate the drawing in and up of the ankles. This begins the zipping of the legs all the way up.

Standing:

Series of three movements for building strength in the legs. Try not to count numbers but rather work in reference to time 1-2 + minutes, feeling the tree trunk/standing leg getting tired as you are working on stamina and strength building.

Set Up: Standing sideways to a chair or wall to touch for balance support. Left hand near the back of a chair/or wall with left leg being the tree trunk. Straight but not locked.

1. Bend the right leg keep the toes on the ground. Flex the ankle and begin **circles** with the right foot, both directions.

2. Point the right leg forward with power, slowly sliding the foot back, flexing, until the heel is in alignment with the left heel. With force straighten and point forward with toes touching or almost touching the floor. Continue with the movement engaging with the extension and flexion.

3. Taking the right left directly behind and as straight as possible. The toes should feel as if you are smudging the polish on the toe nails. Engage, stretching and **slightly lifting** the left a few inches to move between flexion and extension.

Before continuing to the other side, I would like you to **stretch the hip** a little as it may feel tight due to the pressure required of the standing leg.

4. Bend the left leg and take the right ankle placing it on the left thigh. Place the right hand on the right thigh pushing down gently as you bend the left leg more. You can bend forward at the 'hip cradle' not at the waist. You should feel the hip releasing if it was feeling any tightness. This should be done on both sides.

REPEAT #1 thru #4 on the opposite side.

If at any time you begin to lose your balance please touch the chair or wall to regain balance and then continue.

Knee Slaps:

Either on a walk or walking in place bring the knees/thighs up to the palms with each step.

If this is too high for you than begin with less lift and instead of the forearms/hands being perpendicular to the body take the arms down so the thighs don't have as far to raise for the slap. Work on endurance.

Sumo Squats at a Door:

You should be familiar with this from previous classes. These are mostly done free standing or with your hands on a chair or wall but I believe using the door directly addresses what we are looking for and takes most postures and tracking mistakes out of the equation.

1. Find a secure door, face the edge holding on with both hands.
2. Opening the legs wide, equating so the knees remain over the ankles (tracking is most important).
3. Release down until the thighs are parallel to the floor, arms straight and shoulders over buttocks, back straight.

plus

For more work you can slowly move the buttocks up and down just an inch or so. Feel the heat build in the thighs and notice the lack of pressure in the knees, if you are doing this properly.

Please let me know if you have any problem with this move and I can observe and/or correct you in class if necessary.

HAND EXERCISE

Working to control the movement of the palm, proximal knuckles and the direction of the digits.

Savasana

Essential Oil: Peppermint

Music: Various

Quote: Less is More -from my experience in Africa over the past three weeks.

Do we really need so much? I am still purging and it feels so good.