



Karuna Yoga Newsletter

Issue no: 130

March 2020

YOGA THERAPY

HELPING TO SOLVE LOW BACK PAIN

If you suffer with low back pain, it could be because you have a poor posture. Have a look at the position of your pelvis from the side using a mirror. Is your pelvis excessively tilted forward? Is it neutral? Or is it excessively tilted back? Often, those with back pain have a decrease in the contraction of their abdominal area. If you don't contract your abdominal muscles, the result could be tight muscles in your lower back. You may have a structural problem in the discs of the spine, and you need to seek professional advice to determine whether your problem is muscular or structural.

ASSESS THE FLEXIBILITY OF YOUR LOWER BACK

Come to a standing position. Bend forward through the hip and the spine. How far are you able to bring your hands down your legs towards the floor? Can you place your hands flat on the floor? If your back is sore, you might not go further than your knees. Do you feel tightness or stiffness when you bend forward?

Now try bending backwards with your hands on your hips. The normal range of motion is 25 degrees. If you have a limited ability, there are yoga postures that will help to increase your range of motion.

Now try bending to the side. Come to a standing position and keep a good alignment with the head, shoulders and hips. Bend to one side, return to the starting position and then bend to the other side. The normal range of motion is 25 degrees. If you feel stiffness or tightness as you move from side to side, this indicates a tightness in the low back muscles.

HAMSTRINGS

Often with back pain, there is tightness in the hamstrings that is causing the back pain. Stretching the hamstrings slowly and carefully will help to release any tightness in the low back muscles.

ABDOMINAL MUSCLES

You may have weak abdominal muscles that are causing a problem in your lower back. The stabilising muscles of the abdominal area may be turned off. They need to be activated to provide support to the spine and pelvis. Other things you need to ask yourself are, "What makes my back pain worse?" and "What makes my back pain better?". This provides a lot of information as to the things you should avoid or focus on.

YOGA POSTURES TO HELP WITH LOW BACK PAIN

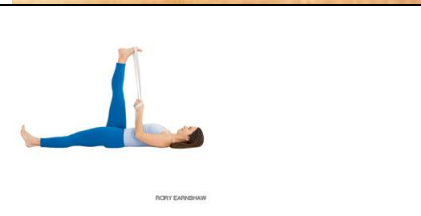
LEGS RESTING ON THE SEAT OF A CHAIR

Lie on your back on the floor and rest your lower legs on a chair. Relax your upper body and breathe slowly and deeply as you release the tension and tightness in your lower back. Hold this position for about 3-5 minutes. In this posture, the weight of your legs is taken away, allowing your back to rest.



SUPTA PADANGUSTHASANA (reclining leg and foot stretch)

The stretch to the legs increases flexibility in the pelvic area. The stretch should not hurt. Feel the muscles stretching and breathe into the stretch. This helps to relieve tightness in the lower back.



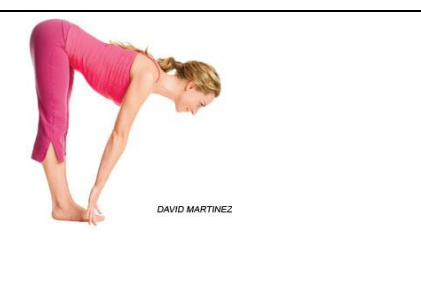
SETU BANDHA (bridge)

Before coming into this posture, imagine the face of a clock above you, 6 o'clock at your feet and 12 o'clock at your head. Inhale and move the top of the pelvis to 6 o'clock, creating an arch under your lower back. Exhale and move the pelvis to 12 o'clock, creating a flat lower back. Keep this flat back position, engage the muscles of the mula bandha and as you inhale, lift the hips and roll the spine off the mat. Tighten the lower abdominal muscles and take three long breaths. Exhale as you roll down feeling every part of the spine returning to a flat back. Release the muscles and relax.



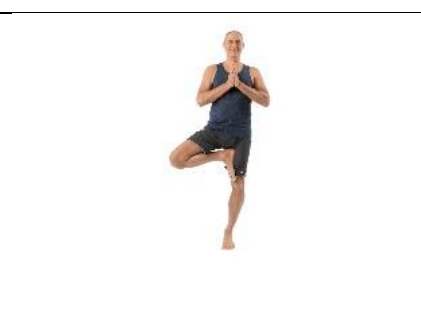
PASCHIMOTTANASA (standing forward bend)

Come to a standing position. Bend forward slowly through the hips and micro bend the knees. Keep your upper body parallel to the floor. Tighten the abdominal area. This is educating the body to work on the hip hinging movement and takes away the stress from the low back movement.



VRKSASANA (tree)

Stand in Tadasana. Lift your right knee and turn it out. Take hold of your right ankle without bending forward and place your foot on your inner left thigh. Hold the mula bandha and tighten the lower abdominal muscles to ease any tightness in the back. If balancing is a problem, stand with your back against the wall or place your knee sideways on the wall.



ARDHA MATSYENDRASANA (half lord of the fishes)

This posture energises the spine and works on the mobility or movement in the thoracic, mid-back or lower back area. Rotate to a point where you feel resistance but don't move into any pain. You can also do twisting postures sitting on a chair.

