



Karuna Yoga Newsletter

Issue no: 51

February 2012

YOGA THERAPY

How Yoga Can Heal Your Body

A regular yoga practice will increase strength and flexibility in the body. You have probably noticed this in your own body. Yoga can also heal parts of our bodies that have been injured, traumatised or simply ignored and neglected. Yoga postures involve movements that stimulate injured parts of the body by increasing the blood supply to them.

You must take care when practising yoga. Never move into pain or tension. It is always important to listen to your own body and enjoy the moment of the yoga posture rather than try to force yourself into a position that could be damaging for your body. Always ask yourself “am I comfortable or am I in tension?” Come out of postures when you feel ready. Don’t wait to be told.

The beauty of yoga is to work slowly and patiently, and with awareness at a level appropriate to your own practice. This is how we heal our bodies and revitalise our joints. Not every yoga posture is suitable for everyone so don’t strive to do a posture that isn’t right for you. Just enjoy your own practice and never force yourself into a posture that you feel is demanding too much of you.

Correct Alignment

Always keep correct alignment in the yoga postures. We especially need to take care of our knees in standing postures. The way to remember correct alignment in a standing posture is to say this simple mantra –

Feet, Legs, Bandhas, Breath.

Feet: Feel your feet connecting with the mat. Press down into the base of the big toe, little toe, and the inside and outside of the heel. As you press down, you feel your arches lifting, your ankles slightly separating and your knees coming into alignment with your feet.

Legs: Now pull up your kneecaps and the quadriceps muscles on the front of your thighs. Feel your legs strengthening.

Bandhas: Gently engage the mula bandha and the uddiyana bandha. This action will support your internal organs, give stability to your pelvis, strengthen your abdominal muscles and strengthen your back.

Breath: Always bring awareness to your breath in every yoga posture. Breathe slowly and steadily. If you find your breath becoming faster, then you have probably stayed in the posture too long and should slowly come out of the posture.

Correct alignment is also important in sitting postures and this mantra can be used in many of the sitting postures.

Contact Lynne on 00302892042356 or email lynne.gully@iremia.net

YOGA POSTURES TO HELP STRENGTHEN AND PROTECT THE KNEES

<p>Supta Padangusthasana Benefits – Stretches the hips, thighs, hamstrings, groins and calves. Strengthens the knees. Stimulates the prostate gland. Improves digestion. Relieves backache and sciatica, Make sure there is no tension in the knee and keep the hips level so that the pelvis does not go out of alignment.</p>	
<p>Adho Mukha Svanasana (downward dog). Benefits: Reverses damage to cartilage of the knee and increases flexibility in the hips, knees and ankles. Energizes the body. Stretches the shoulders, hamstrings, calves, arches, and hands. Strengthens the arms and legs. Helps prevent osteoporosis. Improves digestion.</p>	
<p>Dandasana (staff posture) Benefits: Strengthens the quads in the thighs and so protects the knees. Strengthens the back muscles. Stretches the shoulders and chest. Improves posture. Lift each leg in turn to activate the quads holding for three breaths and increasing the number of breaths over time. Lift each leg three times.</p>	
<p>Tadasana (mountain posture) Benefits: Reduces lower back pain. Strengthens knee joints. Corrects flat feet. Also practice Tadasana Urdhva Hastasana (stretching arms up) and Tadasana Urdhva Baddha Hastasana (Arms stretched up with fingers interlocked). Remember to connect with the feet, pulling up kneecaps, quads and working the bandhas.</p>	
<p>Uttanasana (forward bend) Benefits: Strengthens the knee joint and its surrounding tissue and muscle. Place your hands on blocks or some other support such as books or low stools. Remember to connect with the feet, pulling up kneecaps, quads and holding the bandhas when you go forward and when you come up.</p>	
<p>Prasarita Padottanasana (intense leg stretch) Benefits: Strengthens the knee joint and makes the hip joint supple. Do not take your legs too wide. Connect with the feet, pulling up kneecaps and quads and rotate your thighs outwards keeping your knees in line with your feet. Hold the bandhas when you go forward and come up.</p>	
<p>Trikonasana (triangle posture) Benefits: Reduces stiffness in the neck, shoulders and knees. Tones the ligaments of the arms and legs. Keep the body open as if you are against a wall. Rotate both thighs outwards and connect with the feet as you pull up kneecaps and quads. Hold the bandhas gently.</p>	
<p>Virasana (hero posture) Benefits: Alleviates pain in the knees, and tones knee cartilage. Place padding under the knees if floor is hard. Use rolled up blankets on your shins to raise you higher. Do not come into pain but feel a stretch in the quad muscles. Stay for a few breaths. Do this posture every time you practise yoga.</p>	