



# Karuna Yoga Newsletter

Issue no: 54

May 2012

## YOGA THERAPY TWISTING POSTURES

It's that time of year again when we'll feel better if we release some of the toxins that have built up over the winter months. The postures to concentrate on this month are the twists, which help our bodies eliminate toxins, especially through the liver and the kidneys. Twisting Postures also help to restore your spine's natural range of motion, cleanse your organs, and stimulate circulation. A sequence of twisting postures will rejuvenate your spine and give you a boost of energy.

In every twisting posture, focus on keeping your pelvis level and stable so that you create the twist from your mid and upper back. By working in this way, you'll get the desired opening in your upper back, and you'll reduce potential strain on your sacrum. I'll explain this in more detail in the yoga classes.

### Benefits Of Twisting Postures

- Twisting postures take us deep into the spine – rotating, squeezing and strengthening.
- Regular practice of twisting postures helps to increase the flexibility of the back and hips and can ease a painful, stiff or fused lumbar spine.
- Twisting postures also massage, tone and rejuvenate the abdominal organs. The twists squeeze the liver and kidneys and then encourage fresh blood to flow into these organs.

### A Twist a Day

To maintain or restore normal spinal rotation, I recommend that you practice a simple spinal twist once or twice a day. (Please take care if you have a spinal disc injury and check with your doctor before practicing twists of any kind). Try practising the twist **Bharadvajasana** sitting on a chair because this is easy to integrate into everyday life.







Even though you may think this is an easy twist, there are a few points to keep in mind. Most important is to lengthen the spine; a slumped-over posture significantly limits spinal rotation. So begin by sitting sideways on an armless chair and draw your spine straight up toward the crown of your head. Also, make sure that your spine is perpendicular to the chair seat, neither leaning to the side nor to the front or back. Keep your head in line with your mid chest and don't force your neck around to look over your shoulder.

Begin the twist from your lower back. Let the twist gradually unfold up your spine, as though you were walking up a spiral staircase, so that each vertebra participates in the twist. I would recommend keeping your head positioned in line with your mid chest and not twisting your neck around. The neck is the most mobile in twisting and it may be that your neck will do most of the twisting, and other sections of your spine will remain "stuck".

Hold the twist on each side for a minute or so, and use your breathing to help deepen the twist: On one exhalation, draw yourself taller; on the next exhalation, twist a bit more. With regular practice of this and other simple twists, your spine will regain its full potential for twisting.

Contact Lynne on 00302892042356 or email [lynne.gully@iremia.net](mailto:lynne.gully@iremia.net)

## TWISTING POSTURES THAT HELP REJUVENATE THE SPINE AND GIVE YOU A BOOST OF ENERGY

<p><b>Parivrtta Supta Padangusthasana</b>  <b>Benefits</b> – Stretches the hips, thighs, hamstrings, and calves. Provides a gentle twisting of the spine and teaches you how to keep the hips in alignment, one above the other.</p> <p><b>Contraindications</b> – Diarrhoea. Headache. High blood pressure: raise your head and neck on a folded blanket.</p>	
<p><b>Jathara Parivartanasana Variation</b>  <b>Benefits</b> - Increases the blood supply to the lower spinal region and helps the spine and the muscles of the back to function properly. Invigorates the abdominal organs and strengthens the hip muscles</p> <p><b>Contraindications</b> – Prolapsed disc or other spinal injury.</p>	
<p><b>Bharadvajasana (torso stretch)</b>  <b>Benefits:</b> Relieves pain in the neck, shoulders and back. Helps to keep the spine and shoulders supple. Increases the flexibility of the back and hips. Eases a painful, stiff or fused lumbar spine.</p> <p><b>Contraindications</b> - Avoid this posture if you have diarrhoea or a stress-related headache.</p>	 <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">MICHAEL VENERA</p>
<p><b>Parivrtta Trikonasana (revolved triangle)</b>  <b>Benefits</b> - Strengthens and stretches the legs. Stretches the hips and spine and opens the chest to improve breathing. Relieves mild back pain and stimulates the abdominal organs.</p> <p><b>Contraindications</b> - Back or spine injury. Perform this posture only with the supervision of an experienced teacher.</p>	 <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">RORY EARNSHAW</p>
<p><b>Parivrtta Parsvakonasana</b>  <b>Benefits</b> - Strengthens and stretches the legs, knees, and ankles. Stretches the spine, chest and lungs, and shoulders. Stimulates abdominal organs and increases stamina.</p> <p><b>Contraindications</b> – It is difficult to place your hand on the floor so put both palms together with one elbow pointing down and the other pointing up. Don't turn your head to look up but instead look straight ahead with the sides of the neck lengthened evenly.</p>	 <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">DEBRA MCCLINTON</p>
<p><b>Ardha Matsyendrasana (Half Lord of the Fishes)</b>  <b>Benefits</b> - Stimulates the liver and kidneys. Energises the spine and stimulates digestion.</p> <p><b>Contraindications</b> - Back or spine injury: Perform this posture only with the supervision of an experienced teacher.</p>	 <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">CHRIS AHERE</p>
<p><b>Parivrtta Janu Sirsasana (revolved head to knee)</b>  <b>Benefits</b> - Stretches the spine, shoulders, and hamstrings. Stimulates abdominal organs such as the liver and kidneys and improves digestion.</p> <p><b>Contraindications</b> – Avoid forcing your arm over to reach the foot. You may want to keep your hand on your hip and gently work at twisting and stretching the upper body.</p>	 <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">MARTY SCODUTO</p>
<p><b>Viparita Karani (legs up the wall)</b>          Finish your practice with this posture to rest the body.</p> <p><b>Benefits</b> - Relieves tired or cramped legs and feet. Gently stretches the back legs, front torso, and the back of the neck. Relieves mild backache and calms the mind.</p> <p><b>Contraindications</b> - If your feet begin to tingle during this posture, bend your knees, touch the soles of your feet together, and slide the outer edges of your feet down the wall, bringing your heels close to your pelvis.</p>	 <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">MICHAEL VENERA</p>