



Karuna Yoga Newsletter

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YOGA THERAPY Helping The Digestive System

In last month's newsletter I wrote how sitting with a rounded upper back can have a detrimental effect on your digestion as you press down on your stomach possibly causing acid reflux or bloating.

The Probiotics and Diet Connection

A shortage of "good" bacteria in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract can affect nearly every system in the body, from your respiratory system to your digestion.

Trillions of microorganisms reside in the GI tract, from the stomach to the colon. This is also where the immune system is based. An imbalance in your GI flora occurs when the bad bacteria outnumber the good bacteria. Beneficial bacteria, introduced in the form of probiotic supplements, can help correct an imbalanced bacterial environment and may help treat illnesses such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), urinary tract infections, depression and diabetes.

If you've ever tried to practice yoga right after a meal, then you know how uncomfortable your Downward Dogs and spinal twists can feel with a full or bloated belly. Even if you've finished eating several hours before yoga, your body may still be working to digest your last meal, which means less available energy for your practice. The basic rule is: the simpler the meal, the easier digestion will be. Mixing too many foods at one time can cause poor digestion.

Fruits are the easiest and fastest foods to digest, and for that reason should always be eaten separately from proteins, grains, and vegetables. Digestion time: 20 minutes to one hour.






All vegetables can be combined with one another as well as with proteins. It's best to combine only nonstarchy and low-starch vegetables with grains. Digestion time: 30 minutes to two hours.

Grains can be combined with nonstarchy and low-starch vegetables. Do not combine grains with protein. It's best to have only one type of grain at a meal, so try not to eat bread with rice or other grains. Digestion time: two to three hours.

Proteins can be eaten alone or combined with nonstarchy, low-starch, and starchy vegetables. It's best to have only one type of protein at a meal. Digestion time: two to four hours.

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POSTURES TO IMPROVE YOUR DIGESTION

<p>Tadasana (mountain)</p> <p>Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ³⁵/₁₇ Improves posture and digestion ³⁵/₁₇ Strengthens thighs, knees, and ankles ³⁵/₁₇ Firms abdomen and buttocks ³⁵/₁₇ Relieves sciatica ³⁵/₁₇ Reduces flat feet 	
<p>Setu Bandha (bridge)</p> <p>Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ³⁵/₁₇ Stretches the chest, neck, and spine ³⁵/₁₇ Stimulates abdominal organs, lungs, and thyroid ³⁵/₁₇ Improves digestion ³⁵/₁₇ Helps relieve the symptoms of menopause ³⁵/₁₇ Reduces anxiety, fatigue, backache, headache, and insomnia ³⁵/₁₇ Therapeutic for asthma, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, and sinusitis. 	
<p>Trikonasana (triangle)</p> <p>Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ³⁵/₁₇ Stretches and strengthens the thighs, knees, and ankles ³⁵/₁₇ Stretches the hips, groins, hamstrings, and calves; shoulders, chest, and spine ³⁵/₁₇ Stimulates the abdominal organs ³⁵/₁₇ Improves digestion ³⁵/₁₇ Helps relieve the symptoms of menopause ³⁵/₁₇ Relieves backache 	
<p>Ardha Chandrasana (Half-moon)</p> <p>Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ³⁵/₁₇ Strengthens the abdomen, thighs, buttocks, and spine ³⁵/₁₇ Stretches the groins, hamstrings and calves, shoulders, chest, and spine ³⁵/₁₇ Improves coordination and sense of balance ³⁵/₁₇ Helps relieve stress ³⁵/₁₇ Improves digestion 	
<p>Virasana (hero)</p> <p>Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ³⁵/₁₇ Stretches the thighs, knees, and ankles ³⁵/₁₇ Strengthens the arches ³⁵/₁₇ Improves digestion and relieves gas ³⁵/₁₇ Helps relieve the symptoms of menopause ³⁵/₁₇ Therapeutic for high blood pressure and asthma 	
<p>Bharadvajasana</p> <p>Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ³⁵/₁₇ Stretches the spine, shoulders, and hips ³⁵/₁₇ Massages the abdominal organs ³⁵/₁₇ Relieves lower backache, neck pain, and sciatica ³⁵/₁₇ Helps relieve stress ³⁵/₁₇ Improves digestion 	