



Karuna Yoga Newsletter

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YOGA THERAPY CALMING THE MIND

One of the reasons I always love going to yoga classes is the feeling of calmness at the end of the class. In a world where everyone is rushing around trying to do so many things at once we all need that time for ourselves just to stop and breathe.

Including forward bends in your yoga practice helps to draw your attention inside and away from the worries of the world. When you feel stressed, move slowly into a forward bend and notice how much calmer you feel. When you become calm, you bring balance into your life.

Hamstrings

Forward bends also help to stretch the hamstrings, the muscles in the back of your thighs. Many activities tighten the hamstrings such as sitting for hours at a desk, cycling and running. Many yoga postures stretch the hamstrings but if your hamstrings are tight, you will feel restricted when first practising these postures. The hamstrings need to be stretched slowly and carefully. If you force a stretch you will create tension in the muscle. A tense muscle then refuses to stretch.

Quadriceps

The quadriceps are the muscles on the front of your thighs. These are the muscles that work in opposition to the hamstrings. When you want to stretch and release the hamstrings, pull up and tighten the quadriceps and this will help to release the hamstrings.

Creating Balance

In addition to practising forward bends, we will also include postures this month that stretch the front of the thighs and postures that open the front of the body. Including these in your practice will result in a more balanced forward bend.

Smiling

Smiling is one of the most powerful things you can do for personal transformation. Even if you're not feeling happy, smiling will make you feel good because the brain doesn't know the difference between a spontaneous smile and an intentional smile. Smiling brings feelings of calm and pleasure and you'll begin to cultivate friendliness toward everyone around you. You might even get a smile in return.

POSTURES TO CALM THE MIND AND STRETCH THE HAMSTRINGS

<p>Prasarita Padottanasana (wide legged standing forward bend)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ³⁵₁₇ Strengthens and stretches the inner and back legs and the spine ³⁵₁₇ Tones the abdominal organs ³⁵₁₇ Calms the brain ³⁵₁₇ Relieves mild backache 	 RORY EARNSHAW
<p>Uttita Hasta Padangusthasana (extended hand to big toe)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ³⁵₁₇ Strengthens the legs and ankles ³⁵₁₇ Stretches the backs of the legs ³⁵₁₇ Improves sense of balance 	 MARIN SCONDUTO
<p>Parsvottanasana (intense side stretch)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ³⁵₁₇ Calms the brain ³⁵₁₇ Stretches the spine, hips, and hamstrings ³⁵₁₇ Strengthens the legs ³⁵₁₇ Stimulates the abdominal organs ³⁵₁₇ Improves posture and sense of balance ³⁵₁₇ Improves digestion 	 RORY EARNSHAW
<p>Anjaneyasana (low lunge)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ³⁵₁₇ Stretches the front of the body ³⁵₁₇ Strengthens the legs ³⁵₁₇ Improves balance 	 MARTY SCONDUTO
<p>Adho Mukha Svanasana (downward facing dog)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ³⁵₁₇ Calms the brain and helps relieve stress and mild depression ³⁵₁₇ Stretches the shoulders, hamstrings, calves, and hands ³⁵₁₇ Strengthens the arms and legs ³⁵₁₇ Improves digestion ³⁵₁₇ Relieves headache, insomnia, back pain, and fatigue 	 MARTY SCONDUTO
<p>Upavista Konasana (wide angle seated forward bend)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ³⁵₁₇ Stretches the insides and backs of the legs ³⁵₁₇ Strengthens the spine ³⁵₁₇ Calms the brain ³⁵₁₇ Releases groins 	 RORY EARNSHAW
<p>Supta Baddha Konasana (reclining bound angle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ³⁵₁₇ Stimulates abdominal organs like the ovaries and prostate gland, bladder, and kidneys ³⁵₁₇ Stimulates the heart and improves general circulation ³⁵₁₇ Stretches the inner thighs, groins, and knees ³⁵₁₇ Helps relieve the symptoms of stress, mild depression, menstruation and menopause 	 CHRIS ANDRE