



Karuna Yoga Newsletter

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YOGA THERAPY

12-MINUTE YOGA SESSIONS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR BONES

I recently read this article posted on Face Book and decided to share it with you in my newsletter. I often write about ways to increase bone density so this article is very appropriate.

“Osteoporosis is the most common cause for a broken bone among the elderly. If you practise yoga postures for just twelve minutes every day, it could improve your bone quality. Dr Loren M. Fishman followed 741 people over ten years. 227 of the participants who were moderately or fully compliant with the researchers’ prescribed yoga daily regimen showed improved bone density in the spine, hips and femur as well as improved bone quality. No matter what style of yoga you choose, in general yoga has fitness and health benefits. The study also found no reported or x-ray detected serious injuries or fractures from the yoga. Most of the participants had osteoporosis or its precursor osteopenia.”

The twelve yoga asanas (postures) used in this study are shown on page two of this newsletter. You are familiar with these asanas as I include them in our classes on a regular basis. Achieving the full asana can sometimes take months or even years of regular yoga practice. Remember that a yoga teacher will help you to achieve these asanas using a modified form of the asana. Using props can also help you to move further into the asana. Don’t overextend yourself and learn the modifications from a qualified teacher. Always enjoy what you can do at any given time. Use your breath to move deeper into an asana and slowly your muscles will stretch and lengthen and also improve the quality of your bones.

Relaxation

The final asana in any yoga session is Savasana (corpse posture). This is said to be the hardest asana of them all as you try to relax your body and your mind. When we practise yoga on our own, we often skip the relaxation as our mind is constantly telling us of all the jobs that need to be done.

Savasana helps to recover the breath and cool the body and the mind. In this asana, the body is kept as motionless as a corpse and the mind is alert, yet calm. Savasana removes fatigue and soothes the mind. Each part of the body is positioned properly to achieve total relaxation. The steady, smooth breathing in the asana allows energy to flow into the body, invigorating it, and reducing the stress of everyday life. When you practise this posture, your organs of perception – the eyes, ears, and tongue – withdraw from the outside world. The body and the mind become one, and you experience inner silence. This asana is the first step in the practice of meditation.

Give yourself permission to relax

If you have a respiratory illness or experience anxiety, practise Savasana with your head and chest supported on a bolster. If you have backache, lie with your back on the floor, and rest your calves on the seat of a chair, with your thighs perpendicular to the floor. This asana enhances recovery from all long-term or serious illnesses.

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12 YOGA POSTURES TO PRACTISE DAILY FOR BONE HEALTH

Hold each posture for 30 seconds

<p>VRKSASANA (tree)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens thighs, calves, ankles and spine • Stretches the groins and inner thighs • Improves sense of balance 	
<p>TRIKONASANA (triangle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretches and strengthens the thighs, knees, ankles • Stretches the hips, groins, hamstrings and calves • Stimulates the abdominal organs 	
<p>VIRABHADRASANA II (warrior II)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens and stretches the legs and ankles • Stretches the groins, chest and lungs, shoulders • Increases stamina 	
<p>PARSVAKONASANA (extended side stretch)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens and stretches the legs, knees, ankles • Stretches the groins, spine, waist, chest and lungs • Stimulates abdominal organs 	
<p>PARIVRITTA TRIKONASANA (revolved triangle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens and stretches the legs • Stretches the hips and spine • Opens the chest to improve breathing 	
<p>SALABHASANA (locust)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens muscles of spine, buttocks, backs of arms and legs • Stretches the shoulders, chest, belly and thighs • Improves posture 	
<p>SETU BANDHA (bridge)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretches the chest, neck and spine • Stimulates abdominal organs, lungs and thyroid • Therapeutic for asthma, hypertension, osteoporosis 	
<p>SUPTA PADANGUSTHASANA I AND II (hand to toe)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretches hips, thighs, hamstrings, groins, calves • Strengthens the knees • Stimulates the prostate gland 	
<p>MARICHYASANA III (Marichi's Posture)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massages abdominal organs, liver and kidneys • Relieves mild backache and hip pain • Strengthens and stretches the spine 	
<p>ARDHA MATSYENDRASANA (half lord of the fishes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulates the liver and kidneys • Stretches the shoulders, hips and neck • Energises the spine 	
<p>SAVASANA (corpse)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calms the brain and helps relieve stress • Relaxes the body 	