



# Karuna Yoga Newsletter

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## YOGA THERAPY STRENGTHENING THE CORE

Our modern lifestyle creates weak abdominals as most people sit and stand with their backs rounded, which makes the abdominal muscles become weak. People are not using their core muscles to stand up straight and this results in the belly protruding forward which often creates weak back muscles and back pain. When the abdominals aren't strong enough to do a posture, such as a leg lift while lying on our backs, it is possible to compensate by pulling from the lower back, which can cause injury.

Our core strength holds us strong in the asanas, keeps us upright in our standing postures, gives us vitality in backbends and enables us to maintain balance.

Yoga teachers have long understood the importance of strong abdominals. This is not just about developing the surface muscles, or "six-pack abs". Yoga also focuses on the underlying muscles to build abdominals that are both strong as well as flexible.

Abdominal muscles assist breathing, align the pelvis, flex and rotate the trunk, keep the torso erect, support the lumbar spine, and hold in the organs of digestion. Strong, toned muscles at the core of your body support good health.

Which postures can help you to develop stronger abdominal muscles? The Plank Posture is an excellent all-around toner that develops strength in the upper and lower abdominals. Navasana (Boat Posture) trains all four abdominal layers, particularly the lower abdominals, which often tend to be overlooked.

### **The Wave**

This is a movement you use in the body along with the breath. You start by inhaling and pulling up the mula bandha and then drawing up the front of the body as you pull in the core and widen the kidneys. As you exhale you can either move further into forward bends or lift the chest even further into back bends. Think of the underside of a wave as it draws in and up and then rolls over in an arch.

You can use **The Wave** in all postures. Use the breath and movement to lift up and over in postures such as Paschimottanasana and Janu Sirsasana. Do it three or four times as you move deeper into the posture. You are keeping your spine straight but the front of your body is lifting and lengthening. Use **The Wave** in Paripurna Navasana (boat) to lift the front of the body as you keep your spine straight. The possibilities are endless.

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## STRENGTHENING THE CORE MUSCLES

### **JATHARA PARIVARTANASANA (revolved abdomen)**

- Strengthens the back and the spine and all the muscles of the abdomen, particularly the oblique muscles (side abdominals).
- The compression of the abdominal organs releases metabolic waste and toxins. The organs then get fresh oxygenated blood.
- When the spine twists and stretches, the spinal discs will be hydrated and it will also realign, relax and lengthen the spine.

**Do this posture with knees bent until you build up the necessary abdominal strength.**



### **DOLPHIN PLANK**

- Calms the brain and helps relieve stress and mild depression.
- Stretches the shoulders, hamstrings, calves, and arches.
- Strengthens the arms and legs, and core muscles.
- Helps prevent osteoporosis.



DAVID MARTINEZ

### **FULL PLANK**

- Strengthens the arms, wrists, and spine.
- Tones the abdomen.

If you are experienced I will take you into Side Plank in the classes.



DAVID MARTINEZ

### **PARIPURNA NAVASANA (boat)**

- Strengthens the abdomen, hip flexors, and spine.
- Stimulates the kidneys, thyroid and prostate glands, and intestines.
- Helps relieve stress.
- Improves digestion.

We will also practise side boat in the classes.



CHRIS ANDRE

### **PASCHIMOTTANASANA (seated forward bend)**

- Stretches the spine, shoulders and hamstrings
- Stimulates the liver and kidneys
- Improves digestion

**Use the core muscles with the wave breath to move further into this forward bend.**



MARTIN SCONDUTO

### **JANU SIRSASANA (head to knee forward bend)**

- Stretches the spine, shoulders, hamstrings and groins
- Strengthens the back muscles
- Calms the brain and relieves anxiety and fatigue

**Use the core muscles with the wave breath to move further into this forward bend.**



MARTIN SCONDUTO