

Help Your Health - The Weekly Review - #04 Summer 2017

Important Disclaimer

The news, suggestions, information, exercises and other items in this list are intended for informational purposes only. Not all exercise is suitable for everyone. To reduce the risk of injury, please consult your Doctor before engaging in any physical and/or therapeutic exercise program. Nothing is intended to be a substitute for professional medical care.

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Asana this week:

Standing Twist with Chair

Quad Sets

Name: Standing Twist with Chair/Standing Maricyasana

Description:

Place a chair near the wall facing you, standing in Tadasana with the wall on your right. Bend the right knee and place the foot on the chair keeping the right thigh and knee against the wall.

Second toes of both feet facing directly forward, bent knee perpendicular over ankle.

Inhale, stretch the left leg strongly up, while keeping both legs facing forward, reaching the torso towards the ceiling.

Exhale, turn the front body to face the wall and place the hands on the wall at shoulder level.

Inhale, extend the trunk further, exhale, press the hands into the wall to enable the trunk to turn more to the right.

Turn as far as you can, looking over the right shoulder. Holding 30-409 seconds, releasing and repeating on other side.

Using the breath to lift and turn. Relaxing the shoulders moving them away from the ears and into the body. The elbows can be either down or reaching back if you are comfortable and would like more stretch, see what this slight movement of the elbows creates around the torso including under the arm pits.

Physical Benefits: This posture reduces stiffness in the neck and shoulders. It improves the alignment of the spine and strengthens the spinal muscles while relieving lower back pain and sciatica. Teaching the knees directional alignment with the hips and feet.

Adaptations/Variations:

You can also exchange legs on the chair, proceed with the same movement and feel different an additional stretch on the inside of the bent leg.

Heed all the alignments instructions above, tracking is most important.

Hands: add If you would also like to work the fingers/hands/wrist.

place all ten finger tips, spread open, on the wall. Pulling on the fingers and the stretch in a concave form while pulling the palms upward.

Feel the work from the tips of the fingers to the wrists, building stretch and working on flexibility of all.

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This movement is very precise so if you have questions please feel free to ask me in class and I will show you the stretch.

Name: Quad Sets

Description:

Begin with a block between the knees if you have one. Feet are firmly planted in proper alignment with the knees and hips. Legs are straight.

Contract the knees, this happens when you engage and lift and also engage the quads. Continue the engagement around the legs and if you would like you can continue to the buttocks while engaging the gluts but this is not the primary work so don't let it weaken the thigh engagement.

Hold for a count of 10seconds, continuing with 10x for one set.

Do this daily and often during the day if you want to strengthen the patella (knee cap) tracking.

Physical Benefits:

Stretching and strengthening the quadriceps and hamstring muscle groups is critical for an effective and lasting rehabilitation of the knee. In particular this movement strengthens the inner portion of the quad muscle creating a straighter pathway for the patella to follow.

A foundational movement for proper tracking.

Adaptations/Variations:

Can be done sitting on the floor or supine. Watching the movement can be interesting.

Do not allow the heels to lift off the floor, this could be hyper-extending the knees.

In either of these positions the attention is on the thighs and not the buttocks.

Strengthening of the buttocks can be done separately.

General Class:

Supine:

Morning Wake-Up Stretch

Supine Leg/Arm Stretches with Flex/Extend/Circles for Wrists/Ankles

Prone:

Cat/Cow

Balancing Spine

The Five Tibetans

Standing:

Standing Twist with Chair

Quad Sets

Savasana

Essential Oil:

Elevation: Lavandin, Lavender, Hawaiian Sandalwood, Tangerine, Melissa, Ylang Ylang, Elemi Gum Oil (a relative of Frankincense and Myrrh)- Osmanthus, Lemon Myrtle

Music:

Barbara Thompson

Quote:

Two great spiritual friends - practice and non-attachment/dispassion. Yoga Sutra 1.12 -translation from Yoga International

The purely intellectual knowledge of yoga is of little value. In fact, intellectual knowledge of any spiritual path is of little value.

So many of us know what is the right thing to do, and yet fail to do it. It seems that we have no choice, as if there were an invisible yet powerful force motivating us to behave without regard to what we know is right or wrong.

That powerful force is embedded in the depths of our mind. Yogis call it "**samskara**" - the subtle impressions of our past deeds. And unless we gain access to those deep recesses of our mind, gain a direct understanding of the samskara deposits there, and learn the techniques that will nullify their effects or destroy them once and for all, we have no choice but to remain under their influence. The process of destroying our samskaras is called "**spirituality**"

Spirituality is composed of methodical practice and contemplation accompanied by dispassion/non-attachment.

Through systematic practice we gain stability of body and mind, we strengthen our power of will and determination. Persistent practice enables us to form new, spiritually enlivened habits, and as we do, unwanted, negative habits are gradually replaced by the newly formed habits.

The contemplative discipline of dispassion/non-attachment helps us avoid becoming entangled in the charms and temptations of the world. Non-attachment allows us to perform our actions skillfully so that we remain productive while living in the world; at the same time, it helps us cultivate a philosophy of life that enables us to avoid becoming a slave to the fruits of our own actions. Dispassion gives us the strength to discard these fruits when they are unpleasant, useless, and undesirable, as well as the strength to share them with others when they are pleasant, useful, and therefore desirable.

According to the yogis, the mind is like a river flowing between two banks. One bank is associated with worldly pleasure and its endless consequences; the other is associated with spiritual wisdom and spiritual freedom. Between these two banks there is a vast floodplain. Sometimes the river of mind flows more strongly toward the mundane realm, and sometimes more strongly toward the sacred. It is the quality of the water - the mental content of the mind - that determines whether the

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river flows toward the worldly realm or toward the spiritual. The more polluted it is, the closer it flows to the worldly bank; the clearer and purer it is, the closer it flows to the sacred bank.

Methodical practice gives us access to new springs of clear, pure water to nourish this river, while dispassion helps us clean up the pollutants already present.

Therefore, according to the yogis, a spiritual discipline must contain these two components - practice and dispassion. Only then will it bear long-lasting fruit.

I believe that our daily inner practice should always include three essential elements:

Being careful never to hurt others.

Learning to meditate.

A relentless exploration of the question of where things really come from.

Miscellaneous:

What are the Yoga Sutras from Wikipedia:

The *Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali* are 196 Indian sutras ([aphorisms](#)). The *Yoga Sutras* were compiled prior to 400 CE by Sage [Patanjali](#), taking materials about yoga from older traditions.^{[1][2][3]} The *Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali* was the most translated ancient Indian text in the medieval era, having been translated into about forty Indian languages and two non-Indian languages: [Old Javanese](#) and [Arabic](#).^[4] The text fell into obscurity for nearly 700 years from the 12th to 19th century, and made a comeback in late 19th century due to the efforts of [Swami Vivekananda](#), the [Theosophical Society](#) and others. It gained prominence again as a comeback classic in the 20th century.

Various interpretations/translations of the Yoga Sutras:

The Secret Power of Yoga by Nischala Joy Devi

A Woman's Guide to the Heart and Spirit of the Yoga Sutras

There are many other books on the subject of the Yoga Sutras. If you are interested in learning more I suggest looking at as many versions as you can and choosing what resonates with you. Some of my favorite authors are: T.K.S. Desikachar, B.K.S. Iyengar, Georg Feuerstein, Swami Satchidananda, Mukunda Stiles and Swami Vivekananda.