

Help Your Health – The Weekly Review Fall Session 2017 – #07 & 08

Asana this week:

Langhana Series (Repeated from last week of class before holiday week)
Joint Freeing Series “Pavanmuktasana”

Butterfly and Clock

Name & Benefits: Joint Freeing Series by Mukunda Stiles

This series systematically moves each joint gently and through its full and natural range of motion beginning at the feet/ankles, moving up to the knees, hips, torso and spine while finishing with the neck.

Representing all the basic motions of the body, which according to kinesiology (the science of the analysis of motion), defines as 45 specific directions of possible body movements. Becoming the normal minimal range of mobility for each joint. If you follow these standards for joint mobility during your yoga practices, you will be less likely to strain or injure muscles and joints. Students with injuries or chronic pain benefit immensely from adjusting their practice to these standards.

This week we spent most of each class as we did a self evaluation of our own joint suppleness. This series can also be performed to serve several other purposes as follows:

1. To tighten awareness and distinction between stretching and contraction muscles. Grounding, your awareness into your physical body.
2. To move each joint through specific anatomical directional ranges of motion, which can enhance joint mobility and often relieve joint pain and stiffness. If a joint is stiff, it lacks full mobility. The feelings will tell you that the muscles involved in creating the motion are weak and/or that the contrasting antagonist muscles are tight. By practicing with an awareness of the specific imbalance you have, you can apply more force to develop muscle strength and joint mobility.
3. To observe and diagnose area for comparative freedom. By maintaining mindfulness as you do the series you can discover, for instance, that when you flex your right wrist, the joint moves smoothly, while the left wrist creates a rotation with flexion. This comparison may reveal an underlying chronic tension in the rotator muscles, which may be a factor in the early phases of carpal tunnel syndrome due to excessive keyboarding.
4. To isolate muscles and test for comparative strength and stamina.
5. To alleviate conditions associated with poor circulation. By focusing on making the complete motions of each joint systematically, this series moves synovial fluid within the joint capsule and enhances vascular circulation.
6. To allow you to (as well as me) to see what basic movements are at the root of difficulties that may arise in asana practice as your practice is composed of combinations of individual joint motions.

7. To follow the guidelines of “Classical Yoga” (which is what we practice and I teach) where yoga poses should be ‘comfortable and steady’.

8. To provide a series which is especially beneficial for those with limited mobility due to injuries and arthritis. While not necessary a cure for arthritis, it can be often relieve symptoms when combined with a proper diet.

9. To uncover motion that are boring. Often, these motions indicate a movement in which the student ‘spaces out’. This may reveal a site of unconscious chronic tension or weakness. The specific posture at the point of trauma or injury often holds a chronic trigger for the mind to go unconscious. By bringing to consciousness the feeling held in the body posture, the subconscious patterns can be released.

When this series is coordinated with the proper breathing it is referred to as “energy-freeing series”. As it releases energy hidden within the breath to flow into the region being exercised.

General Descriptions:

Contained in the PDF #1 & #2

For more detail information please consider the source of this series:

“Structural Yoga Therapy: Adapting to the Individual” by Mukunda Stiles

Name: Butterfly and Clock (please read the alternatives if you are currently having any shoulder issues or limitations)

General Descriptions:

Butterfly:

Begin on your right side with shoulder and hips stacked, right leg directly in line with the spine, left leg bent with knee resting on mat/heel in front of right knee, right arm extended in airplane with palm facing up. Head resting on the mat or a long rolled blanket. This is your beginning and ending position for both Butterfly and Clock.

With an inhale let the left arm raise up and fly over the body until the left shoulder to the fingers are resting on the mat behind your body.

During this movement allow the left knee to raise as much as is necessary to accomplish this arm movement but try to keep the foot in contact with the mat allowing it to roll from side to bottom.

Let the head and eyes following the moving arm for a good neck rotation.

On the exhale return the arm/hand/body to its beginning position. Repeat 6+.

Clock:

Begin in the same position but this time take the left hand/arm up and over the head, keeping as much contact with the mat/body as possible, as it circles over/behind and down/over forward and back to starting position. The knee is raising as much as is necessary. The moving arm will open and close/rotate as necessary and of course lift if necessary during the circle.

This arm movement, making a complete circle, is done 3x clockwise and 3x counterclockwise on each side after Butterfly.

Alternatives:

Sliding Butterfly arm/hand:

Begin as described above but instead of flying the arm over to the opposite side, just slide the hand up the extended arm over the chest to the opposite shoulder and then if possible open the arm for full release on to the floor.

This version gives you control as you maintain contact of the sliding hand with the body and so it supports any movement in the shoulder. As good place to being if you are currently dealing with a shoulder limitation or issue. Listen to your body and go slow.

1/2 Clock Variation:

Supine on your back, roll to the right side (shoulders stacked) with the knees bent and feet together on top of each other. Bring the left palm to the right palm which is extended on the floor at shoulder height. Keeping the arm straight and clocking it from 9 to 3, letting it come directly on to the head/ear and releasing the shoulder down with floor contact as soon as the head rolls to the other side. The arm continues to 3 and then goes back with the same intention. Attempting to keep the moving arm straight with as much floor contact as possible, it will roll with palm moving up over and up.

The knees can roll up and over as the feet also roll from the side to flat to the other side, the amount the knees need to roll has to do with the need of the shoulder to maintain normal contact rotation.

You may find that your knees hardly roll at all, staying down and keeping contact. This is fine if it does not compromise the shoulder rotation. This creates a very powerful twist in the back, do take it slow if you have any back issues.

Eventually you may even be able to lift the legs off the floor and have them (as in windshield wipers) go from side to side with the arm. The closer the knees are to the body the easier.

Be mindful that you have your abdominals engaged if you decide to lift the legs, this is core work. But again, do not compromise the shoulder rotation.

Clock on the Wall

Standing, a foot or so away from the wall, with the right side of the body parallel to the wall, taking both feet/hip width apart and slightly rotating them away from the wall, have the hips follow and stay as much as possible in alignment with the feet.

Take the right arm to the wall in front of right thigh, place fingertips on wall/fingers facing down.

Make circles on the wall but do not come through on the circle, stop when the hand is behind and facing down and reverse circle to come back to beginning.

If your circles are not easy and complete and if the elbow bends you can then adjust by stepping farther away from the wall.

If your circles are easy, than please step closer to wall, eventually having the right hip on the wall and at some point, more of the inside the the body also.

Do Not force any movement, always adjust your distance.

Do a few circles on this side and then switch to the left side.

This movement can be done often during the week in order to help and teach the shoulder normal rotation.

Physical Benefits:

Teaching the shoulder normal shoulder rotation with gentle movement. I have had many reports over the last decade how these two movements have been greatly appreciated in the recovery of shoulder ailments and a return to normal range of motion.

Essential Oil: by doTerra

Motivate: Peppermint, Clementine, Corender, Basil, Yuzu, Melissa, Rosemary & Vanilla

Music:

Goldmund: Sometimes and/or A Malady of Elegance

Quote & Miscellaneous:

Two weeks ago I came unprepared without a quote to share in the Monday Chair class. Upon leaving class, one of my students leant down and whispered in my ear the follow:

“Don’t dwell on what you can’t do, instead enjoy what you can do.”

Thank You Ken!

This past week I mentioned an article in the Los Angeles Time titled: **Why gratitude is so good! by Arlene Dawson (click for full article)** Listing 10 ways in which you can foster gratitude and how important it can be in life. Studies show that practicing gratitude can help lower blood pressure, stop smoking and reduce stress.

A quote from Robert A. Emmons, Professor Of Psychology at UC Davis: **“Gratitude is good medicine”**.

Reading more of his writings I came across a suggestion of how to deal with the current unrest in this world, both near and far. It was suggested to take our attention to the community where you live and make a difference is helping where you are receiving gratitude. A place which gives you pleasure and work towards preserving it for others to receive and appreciate. See more #6 in the article.

From Me to You:

Dear Students,

This coming week, beginning tomorrow Monday December 11 and ending Saturday December 16, will be the last week of classes for 2017. I hope to see all of you in class this coming week.

If you come, there will be empty papers by the sign-in desk for you to write your name on and put in the jar, to **participate in a raffle**.

I hope it's an incentive to come to class plus a little thank you.

When this session is finished, **Rolf will draw 6 of them out of the jar**.

There will be 6 gifts, the first will be a complimentary private session and the other 5 will be an additional class, you can take on top of your winter session, for which you are already signed up.

The catch is that you need to attend class this coming week, which often seems hard, as it is the last one and as we are all caught up with holiday prepping, it is easy to say *“oh I will just make it up next year,”* which I trust you will, but I would still like to see you.

Thank You and Namaste.

