

Help Your Health – The Weekly Review Spring Session 2018 – #7

Asana this week:

Side Angle Pose/Parsvakonasana

Name: Side Angle Pose/Parsvakonasana

Description:

Step by Step Full Version/Standing with Variations

1. Stand in Tadasana.

On an exhalation, step your feet wide apart. Raise your arms parallel to the floor and reach them actively out to the sides, shoulder blades wide, palms down, engage the arms from fingers to shoulder girdle.

Turn your right foot out 90 degrees to the right and your left/back foot/heel back/toes on an angle, align the heels.

Firm your thighs and turn your right thigh outward, so that the center of the kneecap is in line with the center of the right ankle.

Roll the left hip slightly forward, toward the right (same direction as your knee/toes), but rotate your upper torso back to the left.

2. Anchor the left (back) heel to the floor by lifting the inner left groin deep into the pelvis, feel the arch of the foot engage and lift.

Exhale and bend your right knee over the right ankle, so that the shin is perpendicular to the floor. As you bend the knee, aim the inner knee toward the little-toe side of the foot. Look down to be sure that you can see the big toe on the inside of your knee cap.

If possible, bring the right thigh parallel to the floor (this may be an accomplishment/goal for the future).

3. As you continue to ground your left heel to the floor, exhale and release the right side of your torso down or bring it as close as possible towards the top of the right thigh.

Advanced version: Press your right fingertips (or palm/can also use a block) on the floor just outside of your right foot. Actively push the right knee back against the inner arm; counter this by burrowing your tail-bone into the back of your pelvis, toward the pubis.

The inside of your right thigh should be parallel with the long edge of your sticky mat.

Gentle Version: Lay your elbow on your forearm, directly on the thigh above the knee with the palm facing up.

4. Firm your shoulder blades against the back ribs.

Extend your left arm straight up toward the ceiling, then turn the left palm to face toward your head and with an inhalation reach the arm over the back of your left ear, palm facing the floor.

Stretch from your left heel through your left fingertips, lengthening the entire left side of your body.

Turn your head to look past the inside of the left arm.

Release your right shoulder away from the ear.

Try to create as much length along the right side of your torso as you do along the left.

5. Stay for 30 seconds to 1 minute.

Inhale to come up.

Push both heels strongly into the floor and reach the left arm forcefully toward the ceiling to lighten the upward movement.

Reverse the feet and repeat for the same length of time to the left. Then come up and return to Tadasana.

Physical Benefits:

Strengthens the ankles, calves, knees and thighs. Relieves symptoms of sciatica. Opens the hips and groin. Increases lung capacity. Alleviates symptoms of arthritis. Lengthens the spine. Improve digestion. Stimulates abdominal organs. Increases stamina. Builds focus. Develops willpower, stimulate the mind and reduces stress.

Precautions:

If you have any neck problems don't turn your head to look at the top arm; instead look straight ahead with the sides of the neck lengthened evenly, or look down at the floor.

Variations:

You can also perform this pose with the lower arm in front of the bent-knee thigh. This will help create more stretch in the front groin. As you lower your torso to the side, bring the back of your right shoulder against the inner knee, and press your fingertips to the floor. Push the shoulder firmly into the knee and lean your torso back against the inner thigh. Lengthen your side ribs along the inner top thigh.

If you have a shoulder issue on the upper shoulder then instead of taking the arm overhead, bend the elbow and rest the hand on the corresponding hip but still open that side of the shoulder/chest.

Beginner's Tip:

Beginners often have two problems with this pose: they can't keep their back heel anchored to the floor as they bend their front knee into the pose, and then they can't easily touch the fingertips of their lower hand to the floor once they're in the pose. To solve the first problem, brace your back heel against a wall. As you bend the front knee and then lower your torso to the side, imagine that, with your heel, you're pushing the wall away from you. For the second problem either rest your forearm on the top of the bent-knee thigh (instead of trying to touch the hand to the floor), or use a block outside the front foot to support your hand.

Deepen the Pose:

Even for advanced students, the body's weight tends to shift forward onto the ball of the front foot, unbalancing the pose. Once in the pose, lift the ball of the front foot off the floor and re-affirm the anchor of the back heel by pressing the head of the back femur bone deep into its socket and lifting the inner back groin deep into the leg. Then soften the ball of the front foot onto the floor again.

General Class:

Restorative with the Breath: Legs on the chair with blanket across and lengthwise.

Attunement/Starting Pose/Supine: Morning Wake-Up Stretch, Hip Openers with Bent Legs (Small Circles Together, Circles Apart and Large, In/Out Together), Ankles/Wrists Flex-Extend

Warm-Up/Prone: Child's Pose, Walk to the Right/Left, Thread the Needle, Cat n' Cow, Balancing Cat, Child's Pose.... Updog/Plank/Down-Dog (your choice of four different asana in a flow)

Prone: Heart Lifts, A-Symmetrical Locust Lifts + Symmetrical,

Standing/Balance: Standing Side Angle Pose/Parsvakonasana

Chair: High Pitch Bhramari with Shanmukti Mudra, Seated Side Angle Pose/Parsvakonasana, Bridge

Savasana: Supine and Relaxed

Essential Oil: DO'Terra "Cheer" Wild Orange, Lemon Myrtle, Geranium, Clove, Star Anise, unmet, Vanilla Bean, Ginger, Cinnamon.

Music: Deuter “Atmospheres”

Quote: Han Suyin -Chinese born Eurasian, Physician, Author of “A Many Splendoured Thing” (Hollywood film 1955 called ‘Love is a Many Splendored Thing’ starring Jennifer Jones and William Holden.

(There are two different ways in which the word ‘splendored/splendoured’ is spelling according to Hollywood and Han Suyin)

Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Han_Suyin

“There is nothing stronger in the world than tenderness.”

Miscellaneous: “Ancient Secrets of Essential Oils” very interesting film offered for free viewing periodically at “The Living Temple” <http://www.thelivingtemple.com> or call Robin for information at (714) 891-5117. This film, not only explained the effects, but shows with brain mapping how specific essential oils effect the brain.