

## Help Your Health – The Weekly Review Summer Session 2018 – #1

This week of class, due to the nature of the content, I am hoping brought some different experiences and awareness to your mat.

**Inquiry** is at the heart of what is possible in a yoga therapy practice, offering a safe framework from which you can explore, learning more about who you are and how you move, consciously and subconsciously.

Be patient and kind to yourself as you practice. It will take some time for you to become aware of the movements you do subconsciously. Give yourself the time, space, attention and rest that you need to develop this skill, spend time getting a sense of how you are doing what you are being asked to do.

The object is to Integrate what you are leaning and continuing to apply what you learn to enhance your experience of life's activities. Take your yoga out the front door of the studio and make it a part of your life.

I will now, walk you through, our first week of class.

### Part I

We begin with the **Exploration** and **Identification** phase of 'just standing there'.

Closing you eyes, and as you just stand there, noticing what you can sense about your posture from the inside out.

#### **Suggestions/Pay attention to the following:**

- 1. Feet** = What part are in more or less contact with the ground?
- 2. Center of Gravity** = How are you finding your balance?
- 3. Muscular Effort** = What muscles are you using to hold yourself up?
- 4. Tension/Relaxation** = What part of the body feel tense, at ease/soft?
- 5. Emotional State** = Are you happy, sad, frustrated, confident, confused, ashamed, overwhelmed, or excited in some way? What emotions are you feeling? How are these emotions related in your experience of your standing posture?
- 6. Quality of Mind** = Is your mind busy or still? Agitated or lethargic? Sharp or dull? How many thoughts do you have and how quickly or slowly are they coming? How is your quality of mind reflected in your standing posture?
- 7. Breath** = How are you breathing while you are standing? How does your breath related to the other areas that you have noticed?

Now come into "**Mountain Pose/ Tadasana**" (guided below in detail and above as audio) and as you explore this asana, identify the seven suggestions/to pay attention to, listed above.

How do the two differ: 'just standing there' and "Mountain Pose", what does this mean to you?

### Part 2

Now we will move on to the **Differentiating** Phase with the physical intentions and experiences of Mountain Pose using different body positions.

#### **Stance Options:**

1. Try standing with your feet and legs together, toes and heels touching, if possible, Mountain Pose. Slowly go through the 7 questions, give yourself time and patience. How does this feel?

2. Now try standing with your feet between hip and shoulder width apart, but please not closer than if you put a block between your feet/6 inches, feel free to add a few inches if you would like. Be in Mountain Pose.

Do you feel the difference between the two options after asking yourself the seven questions. Which do you prefer and which feel healthier?

**Feet Options:** For each of these, take the moment to review the questions each time. Do not move the feet.

1. Place the weight of your body towards the balls of your feet. Place the weight of your body towards the heels. Feel the difference, especially in your leg muscles.

2. Press into the outer edges of the feet. Then try lifting the arches.

3. Visualize a triangle on the bottom of each foot -the base is under the first and fifth toe and the point is in the center of the heel, draw a line between the three(or four if you prefer two points in your heel). You can also use the toe pad behind the first and fifth toes. Press equally into the points of the triangle.

4. Grip the toes. Then after some moments relax the toes and pick them up, spread them wide.

What changes for you during each foot choice? Pay attention to the relationships between the feet, knees and hips.

**Hip-Activity Options:** Bring the feet parallel, hip..so..distance apart and firmly connect the points of both feet to the ground.

1. Activate the legs by attempting to pull the feet toward each other without moving them, as if you were going to pull the mat together. The mat and feet don't actually move, but you activate the muscles with the action of pulling the legs toward each other.

2. Now activate the legs by attempting to pull the feet away from each other without actually moving them, as if you were going to rip your mat apart.

3. Now activate the legs by trying to turn your feet out like a duck without actually doing so, as if you were going to spiral the legs outward. Forward part of the feet out and the heels pulling inward.

4. Now attempt to turn your forward part of the feet in towards your mid-line, heels outward, without actually doing so, as if you were going to spiral the legs inward.

What changes for you during the different muscle activation? Pay attention to the changes in the relationships between the hips, knees, and feet. Review the seven questions with each change of position.

**Shoulder and Arm Options:**

1. Draw your shoulders back and down. Now let your shoulder blades spread apart. Place your arms by your sides in a relaxed fashion with your palms facing the sides of your legs. Imagine you are sending your fingers down toward the earth.

2. Press your palms into your legs, near the side seams of your pants. Now turn your palms forward. With the palms forward try the same options, pressing the fingers first down towards the ground and then the pinky finger side of the hands into the legs. Try this again with the palms facing backwards.

As you combine these various activations see what is interesting to you, or not. Pay attention to the relationship between the arms shoulders, spine and core.

### **Part 3**

**Differentiating Phase using Props** -still using the 7 questions of inquiry.

#### **Wall:**

1. Bring your buttocks gently to the wall, keeping the feet under the hips.
2. Press the back of your head lightly into the wall. What changes? How does the rest of your body organize itself differently from this feedback?
3. Now try different shoulder positions with the arms at the sides of the body, first pressing the hands only, then the forearms: palms facing into the body, palms facing the wall and palms facing forward.  
What changes with each shoulder positioning and the feedback of pressing the hand and then the arms into the wall?
4. Now do the same with the arms reaching up by the ears.  
During this series at the wall, the shoulders are not touch the wall, only the buttocks and head slightly.

#### **Block:**

1. Place a block between the thighs and squeeze it gently.  
How does this new feedback change your muscle awareness? How does it change the relationship between the feet, knees and pelvis?
2. Now stand on two blocks using the lower and flat setting, with the blocks hip width apart.  
How does introducing this elevation and change in texture and feedback change your sense of Mountain Pose/ Tadasana?
3. Block balanced on the head: Place a block on your head and if it is too difficult than begin with a book.
4. Standing in strong Mountain Pose balance the block with the feet shoulder width apart and begin working on your balance. Shifting the weight to one side and picking up the opposite heel, do not bend the knees. Shifting from side to side and eventually lifting the toes also, pause, place the toes down, then the heel and shift.
5. From hip width apart in Mountain Pose, begin to take a step forward but stop before lifting the back toes and return to original position. Do the same taking a step back. Continue with alternating feet. As if each step is hesitated and reversed before finishing. Knees are soft and can be slightly bent.
6. Continue now by walking around the room balancing the block/book on your head. Check yourself in the mirror, how are you holding your chin? With the block placed properly the chin should be in neutral, slightly down and not reaching forward or up, head well balanced over shoulders.

#### **Asana this week:**

**Name: Mountain Pose/Tadasana (see audio guided version above)**

Mountain pose is a basic standing pose. Establishing a sense of poise by creating a contemplative moment on being centered and grounded while slowing and carefully, modulating your breathing.

Do not be tempted too rush through the pose, instead take time to relax, remain still and breathe evenly, receiving the full benefits of the pose.

If you think you are not doing enough, don't worry you most definitely are!

#### **Description:**

1. Come to a comfortable standing position with feet hip-width apart, second toes parallel to each other.
2. Slowly rocking side to side..... and back and forth, passing over your center.

3. Lift your toes and try to spread them out, creating space between each and every one of them. Try not to grip the floor with any of your toes.
4. Feel the floor under your feet with the three/four corners of each foot anchored into the ground. Feel the imaginary lines from the big toes to the heels and from the pinkies to the heels with a slightly stronger contact on the outsides of your feet.  
  
.....Now find your center and remain there.
5. Slowly being aware that your legs are straight but not locked, bringing the knees directly over the ankles and hips directly over the knees.
6. Without activating the stomach muscles, feel the thighs contract and the lift of the kneecaps towards your hips.  
Your legs and feet should feel grounded and stable and equal.
7. When you are feeling power in your feet and legs, the muscles of the pelvic floor will automatically, without effort, draw inward and upward in your body. Feel this action while engaging the belly button slightly inward towards the spine along with a lift upwards.
8. Continue lifting and lengthening through the spine, broadening the sides of the chest as you reach from the sternum then wrapping around to the to that place on your back where the shoulder blades slip down into their pockets by gently releasing the shoulders down, taking them away from your ears, without creating any tension in the neck muscles.
9. Keeping the torso long, chest forward, feeling the flare of the collarbones while leveling the shoulders and keeping them parallel to the pelvic girdle.
10. Arms should be relaxed with palms facing inward towards the body and thumbs forward. Fingers should not be either straight, nor curled to the palms, but in that space between, just relaxed and slightly bent.
11. Let the head rest on top of the spine with the chin neither tilting up nor tucked down too much towards the throat...think of that fishing line from the crown of the head to the ceiling, reeling in as you lengthen and stack the body into good posture.
12. Keeping the face soft. Relax the forehead.
13. Breathing through the nose and feeling the coolness of the breath as it passes through the rims of the nostrils on the inhale.....now feel the warmth as you exhale, having let the body warm and filter the breath on its journey.
14. Keeping the teeth slightly ajar, not touching.  
The tip of the tongue gently touching the roof of the mouth where it meets the teeth, but not touching the teeth.
15. While keeping the lips lightly closed, begin relaxing the chin and feel the lower lip spread while keeping contact.
16. Visualize your torso and head rising away from your legs and feet, feeling light and relaxed as your lower body should feel stable and grounded.
17. Feel the energy circulating throughout your body, with both the qualities of softness and inner strength.

Breath six full breaths.....

18. Bring your hands up over your head with palms facing forward and thumbs hooked as you bend gently backwards and breathe deeply.  
Slowly lowering arms to your side.

You have completed your Guided Mountain Pose/Tadasana.

**Physical Benefits:**

Aligns the spine, tones the abdominal muscles and buttocks, opens the chest, improves posture, stability, balance, strengthens the arches, ankles, knees and thighs.

**Mental Benefits:**

Improves focus, develops willpower, reduces mild anxiety.  
Counter a long day of contracting the back with this powerful back and chest-opening posture.

**Adaptations/Variations:**

Use a chair/wall for balancing if necessary.

**General Class Sequencing:**

**Restorative with the Breath:** *Legs on the chair(or up the wall) with blanket across and lengthwise.*

**Attunement/Starting Pose/Supine:** *Morning Wake-Up Stretch,*

*Printable Link to Morning Wake-Up Stretch on my website: [https://yogatherapyalacarte.com/2018/01/20/morning\\_wake\\_up\\_stretch/](https://yogatherapyalacarte.com/2018/01/20/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....*

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

**Standing/Balance:** **See Above in detail.**

**Savasana:** *Supine and Relaxed*

**Essential Oil:** doTerra "On Guard" Wild Orange, Clove, Cinnamon Leaf & Bark, Eucalyptus, Rosemary

**Music:** Land of Forever

Real Music

Published on Nov 25, 2013

Real Music Album Sampler: Land of Forever by 2002 Enjoy clips of all the songs on the album in the order they appear. Legend tells that a person visiting the mysterious northern isle of "Tir Na Noc" for a day may discover, upon returning, that 300 years have passed. Glistening guitar adds a new depth to the familiar array of 2002's angelic strings, keyboard, flutes and harp, transporting you into that mysterious other realm. listen and buy: <https://www.realmusic.com/artists/200&#8230;>

**Quote:**

**Whatever you can do or dream you can do, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it now."** -Goethe

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe – Wikipedia

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann\\_Wolfgang\\_von\\_Goethe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Wolfgang_von_Goethe)

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was a German writer and statesman. His works include four novels; epic and lyric poetry; prose and verse dramas; memoirs; ...  
Literary movement: Sturm und Drang; Weimar ...  
Children: 5 (4 died young): Julius August Walter ...  
Nationality: German

**“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom”.** -Viktor Frankl

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Man%27s\\_Search\\_for\\_Meaning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Man%27s_Search_for_Meaning)

Man's Search for Meaning: Viktor E. Frankl, William J. Winslade ...