

Help Your Health – The Weekly Review Summer Session 2018 – #5

Asanas:

Bridge/Pigeon Alternatives (explained in previous reviews)

Dead Bug Static and Flowing Series

Balance poses on one-leg at wall.

Palm Tree

Name: Dead Bug Static and Flowing Series

Description:

This short core-awakening series pairs pelvis stability with hip and shoulder mobility. Always keeping the core engaged.

1. Start the explorations with the knees bent at 90 degrees. Once you are able to maintain pelvis stability in the movements with the legs bent, you can make this series more challenging with the alternative, but begin with the **Static Hold** and work up to 2 minutes.

Start in a reclined position with the knees bent and feet on the mat.

Reach the arms toward the ceiling.

Pick one foot off the floor at a time.

Align the thighbones over the pelvis (perpendicular to the mat) and the shins lined up with the knees (parallel to the mat).

Hold for 30-60 seconds working up to 2 minutes.

2. Start in the basic position: **Bent Knees and Straight legs.**

Inhale to bring the left leg down toward the floor without touching and the right arm up toward the right ear.

This is a hovering position but I suggest to begin with the big toe touching the floor and the thumb, on the overhead arm/palming facing toward mid-line, touching the floor.

Exhale to bring the arm and leg back to the starting position.

Repeat, alternating from side to side 5-10 times.

3. Start in the basic position with straight legs: **Side Reaching**

Inhale to bring the right arm out to the right side and left leg out to the left side.

Keep the abdomen engaged and extend only as far out and down as you can while maintaining equal weight in the pelvic.

Exhale touring the arm and leg back to the starting position.

Repeat, moving from side to side 5-10 times.

4. Start in the basic position with straight legs: **Circles-Same side and opposite.**

Circle the right arm and the left hip at the same time, drawing circles on the ceiling, focusing on keeping the movement small and in the shoulder and hip sockets.

Repeat 5-10 times, moving the opposite arm and leg at the same time, and then move in the opposite direction.

Next move the arm and leg in the opposite directions (arm circles to the right and leg circles to the left).

Repeat on the opposite partnered sides.

Name: Balance Poses – Elements of Balance

Balance is important in your everyday activities, not only in your yoga class. Whenever you lose your balance, the quicker you can regain it, the safer your movement will be.

Every year 2.8 million older Americans are treated in emergency rooms for fall-related injuries. It is unclear exactly how many of those falls lead to death, but the loss of quality life or potential for diminished capacity of movement after recovery is significant for many people. That means that proactively improving your balance and increasing your proprioception may actually improve your overall quality of life along with prolonging life itself.

To successfully practice balance, you also have to explore falling. I suggest that you play with falling indifferent ways out of balance poses so the balancing becomes a practice of embracing the knowledge that you can fall skillfully and then develop the ability to actually do so.

Additional benefits of a balance practice include developing focus and concentrating along with a quieter mind. The self-awareness brought about through a regular balance practice is invaluable, especially as you translate your understanding into daily activities.

Balancing poses offer immediate feedback of how the mind-body connection works. If the mind-body complex is disturbed at any level, the instability of that disturbance is immediately reflected back to you in your experience of the pose. When these types of disturbances arise, the practices of identifying, differentiating, and integrating become important components.

Apply what you learn about yourself to enhancing your overall life balance. Be compassionate with yourself as you continue to explore new challenges in – your balancing and falling – practice in daily life.

Description:

From standing (legs hip width apart is important) in mountain pose (in front of a wall with arms outstretched or next to a wall) bend the right knee, be on your right toes and slide the toes forward a few inches, lift the toes off the mat. Keeping your arms by your side or if you need to secure yourself place the fingertips on the wall. Pay attention to the ankle and foot of the standing leg as you begin to explore your balance.

What parts of the foot are more or less connected to the ground?

How much does the ankle move or not move?

Do you find your ‘foundation/triangle’ on the bottom of your foot?

Is the foot and ankle rigid and tight or fluid and responsive?

Switch sides and repeat.....

2. Next **exaggerate the movement of the ankle and foot** of the standing leg, let them wobble from side to side a bit. Pay attention to the muscles on both sides of the ankle and lower legs.

Can you sense how they adapt with a quick-fire response to this challenge?

Now try to make the ankle and foot completely rigid and still, what changes?

Try to establish an equilibrium between rigidity and fluidity.

Switch side and repeat....

3. Now play with **falling out** of the one-footed balance, bent leg only first then torso.

Try falling **forward, backward and sideways**.

Return to holding the balance.

Now play with **circling the torso**.

How far can you lose your balance and still bring yourself back to upright?

How does having strategies of falling affect your experience of holding the pose?

4. Start to play with the **arm positions** as you balance on one foot.

Hands **6 inches from the hips**, palms facing forward.

Palms together at heart center.

Reaching up with forgiving limbs above the head.

What information do these arm positions give you about where your body is in space?

Do certain positions find your balance more or less easily than others?

5. Shift the balance **exploring with your eyes.**

Find your drishti, a single spot at the level of the horizon to softly gaze at.

Shift the eyes only, do not move the head, up to the ceiling, down to the floor and right to left.

Now do the same with the head also moving with the eyes.

How does introducing these focal points change your experience of balancing?

Do you notice that with each head movement your balance is challenged?

6. Now **close the eyes completely.** Notice how the body overs as it loses the sense of sight to tell it where it is in space.

Eventually start to use the arms and legs instead of the eyes of help gather your balancing information.

It may seem impossible at the beginning, but with practice you can develop or refine your ability to balance, even with your eyes closed.

Name: Palm Tree

Description:

Start standing with the feet hip-width apart, arms straight out in front of the body at shoulder height and spine in active neutral.

You can put the finger tips on the wall, but refrain from leaning forward or backwards.

1. **Start:** Lift the heels of both feet off the floor and balance on the balls of the feet. Hold for 30-60 seconds. To exit the pose, slowly lower the heels back to the floor.

2. **Narrow base:** bring the feet and legs together to touch before lifting the heels off the ground.

3. **Hips externally rotated:** start at a narrow base with the feet on the ground. Move the hips to rotate the heels toward the midline and bring the toes slightly pointing out before lifting the heels off of the ground.

4. **Block or ball:** Hold a small exercise ball or yoga block between the upper thighs, squeezing it through the movement and hold. Also squeeze the buttocks.

5. Additional options which we did NOT do in class:

Twisting, Side Bending, Backbending....

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, Cat n' Cow, Balancing Cat,

Child's Pose.... Up-dog/Plank/Down-Dog (your choice of four different asana in a flow)

Supine: Dead Bug Series Static and Flowing, Bridge and Pigeon Alternative Series

Prone: Heart Lifts, A-Symmetrical Locust Lifts + Symmetrical
Standing/Balance: Elements of Balance, Palm Tree

Savasana: Supine and Relaxed

Miscellaneous:

Essential Oil: doTerra “Peppermint”

Music: Relaxing Piano by Billy McLaughlin

Quote:

3 Rules of Work: Out of clutter find simplicity, from discord find harmony, in the middle of difficulty lies opportunity. -Albert Einstein

1. Printable Link to **Morning Wake-Up Stretch** on my website:
https://yogatherapyalacarte.com/2018/01/20/morning_wake_up_stretch/