

Encinitas Yoga

March Newsletter

Feeling Younger Already?

As last month's newsletter suggested, increasing the flexibility of your spine can translate into feeling younger, and remember you are only as old as your spine is inflexible. And perhaps you have noticed that after practicing and being more aware of your backward bends and forward bends, you do feel energized and rejuvenated. This month we will continue along those same lines; backward and forward bending of the spine.

You may have experienced a struggle in a backbend one time or another in your practice, you can relax, we all have. At times it can be anatomical, but often it is an insight to an emotional blockage, resulting in limited range of motion in your spine. In the ways of yoga, the backbend can be a key to unlocking underlying mental/emotional patterns and hang-ups. You can utilize the anatomical and technical yogic approach of mastering the subtleties of a backbend to overcome some of those blockages, healing from the inside out. Yoga practiced with honest awareness can be your best therapy.



A backbend is very much the opposite of what we do in our daily activities, hence it is at times a challenge. Expanding your lung capacity, stretching out your diaphragm – what brings this about, is the opening of your ribcage, the intercostals muscles between your ribs, in a backbend. Without a backbend, these muscles are rarely stretched and worked out. The expansion in the respiratory system is exhilarating, and can be surprising at first! If you are suffering from respiratory illness or recovering from one, you will benefit greatly, but do proceed

slowly and with patience. In a backbend you physically massage many important organs and glands. In the upper body, as you open across your chest, you enable pressure on your thymus gland, an important part of your immune system – boosting its function by drawing circulation to the area. In the lower back you exert pressure on your kidneys and the small but powerful adrenal glands that are most likely in need of a little boost. Adrenal glands are responsible for our fight or flight responses, and in many cases of exhaustion weakened adrenal function is a culprit because of prolonged stress on our bodies. Therefore, remember that the backbends are a key therapy to relieve stress from your body. And as you are stretching the front of your body, you will stimulate your abdominal organs and improve digestion. I would have to conclude that this is a pretty great deal; all you need to do is practice.

The forward bending postures are the natural opposite to the backward postures. Backbends open your heart and chest, strengthen the organs that support your response to stress and fear and as you trust yourself in a backbend you will raise your mood and spirit. A forward bend on the other hand, is protective of the heart and vital organs, balances and calms the central nervous system and allows gravity to lengthen your spine. There are various backward and forward bends. But the essence and the objective is the same. During any forward bend you are stretching the backside of the body while contracting the front, which is the exact opposite of

what you would in the backbend. You might have picked up on the complementary rhythm of back bending vs. forward bending in class. This is all done on purpose, always balancing the postures and in turn the resulting effects on the entire body.



We are now moving into spring and with your daily yoga practice you can ensure a healthy transition: in most healing traditions and modalities, a seasonal cleanse is suggested. Perhaps stepping up your yoga practice is a way for you to integrate a cleansing aspect into this time of traditional seasonal transition; give your organs and body, mind and soul a boost of energy. Through pranayama and your attention to the cleansing and detoxifying potential of your breath, moving your spine in all the directions keeping it supple and being sure to sweat on a daily or regular basis you're on your way to a happy, healthy and inspirational spring.

Best of health,
Namaste, Outi.

Yoganomic Stimulus Plan

It's Back! As part of our Yoganomic Stimulus Plan, we are bringing back the \$100 for 1 month of unlimited yoga pricing. As new years resolutions wear off and the uncertainty in the news takes its toll, it is important to take care of oneself. We're making this easier by bringing back the pricing program that

proved so popular in January.

Yoga Workshop—April 18th
We are also planning a yoga workshop for Saturday, April 18th. The focus for the workshop will be the spine, the subject of this month's column by Outi. More details will be made available in the coming weeks