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COntent / MARCH 2017

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- 16 Poses For Strong Arms and Core
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- Create A Yoga Sequence For Home Practice

COVER MODEL AND SAN FRANCISCO-BASED YOGA TEACHER LAURA BURKHART is in South East Asia in March to teach yoga enthusiasts in Singapore and Bali. Read more about Laura on Page 33.

cover credits. Model: Laura Burkhart | Photography: Samuel Henderson | Art Director: Anuja Bagade | Wardrobe: Top: Lululemon, Bottoms: Zobha | Location: Marin Headlands, Marin County, California

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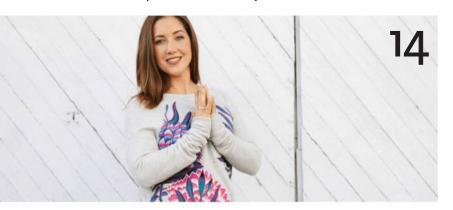
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Laura IN SINGAPORE

San Francisco based yoga teacher, writer & model **LAURA BURKHART** is coming to Singapore. Reserve your spot. Join one of the sessions, or sign up for both.

18.03.2017 | SATURDAY

Heart, Hips & Core Flow: 9am – 10am: \$\$60

Yoga Business Secrets: 11am - 1pm: \$\$90

Both sessions: \$\$125

* EARLY BIRD OFFER 15% OFF

SIGN UP BEFORE 05.03.2017

Laura will be at the Bali Spirit Festival (March 19-23), and will be teaching at a yoga retreat in Bali (March 23-30). www.LauraBurkhartYoga.com

The **HEART, HIP & CORE FLOW** is a one-hour yoga class where Laura will lead you into a vinyasa flow to open your heart and hips, and teach you basic tips to develop a strong core.

Sign up now at www.yogajournal.com.sg

The YOGA BUSINESS SECRETS session is for aspiring and existing yoga teachers (or entrepreneurs of yoga)—for those who are thinking of becoming yoga teachers, to those who are trained but still looking for clarity on the next steps, to veteran yoga teachers and studio owners who have been in the game for a long time (yet could benefit from simple tips for further success)—this is a unique workshop for everyone!

Laura is the co-creator of the "Yoga Business Secrets" course which has been taught worldwide, and teaches students everything from how to build resumes, classes, workshops & retreats to how to brand, market, plan your business, and make the most of social media campaigns.

yoga JOURNAL

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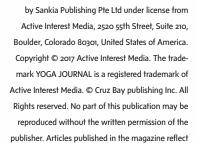
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Greetings and a very warm welcome to our first edition of 2017, the year of the Rooster. I am told many yoga studios will be teaching the Rooster pose (Kukkutasana) this year, a very advanced and meditative pose that should be attempted only if you are comfortable with the Lotus pose. For the record, I cannot do the Kukkutasana either, and hope to learn it this year. But, as Patanjali has emphasized in his Yoga Sutras, each body has its limitations: what is important is to always keep your mind steady. So, no pressure!

Keeping your "mind steady" also translates into being in a meditative state. As our mindfulness expert Vikas Malkani advises, meditation should be the biggest investment we make this year. Read about his seven strategies in this magazine (page 42)—while they seem easy, I have a funny feeling they may be just as challenging as attempting the Rooster pose. I have decided to include all seven in my list of new year resolutions.

Speaking of resolutions, I have made another one that I'd like to share with you. I plan on giving myself more "me time" this year. This means taking a break, at least once a quarter, to any place—far or near—where I can pause, reflect, practice and do some soul searching. For starters, I am heading to Bali in March for the Bali Spirit Festival, and then immersing myself in a yoga retreat that our cover model Laura Burkhart is hosting there.

Whatever your resolutions are for this year, I hope there is one that focuses on your health and wellness—be it mindful eating, meditation, yoga, pilates or any form of exercise. May we all also adhere to acts of kindness (read more about the Yamas, one of the eight limbs of Ashtanga (page 75), by embracing and respecting diversity, religion and peace around the world.

Enjoy the magazine!

Regards,



Kavita Chandran Editor in Chief kavita.chandran@yogajournal.com.sg





Thank you to Brandon Chong of 'Yoga Instillet', and his fellow teachers, Derris and Eleonora, for striking the Rooster Pose for Yoga Journal Singapore!

PHOTO : GARGI MAZUMDAR, DESIGN : ANUJA BAGADE, ILLUSTRATION : DESIGNED BY FREEPIK



the upside of doing NOTHING

There's something about the new year that inspires a go-go-go attitude in most of us. But if the urge to take a break and hibernate strikes, give in, says Stephanie Brown, PhD, author of Speed: Facing Our Addiction to Fast and Faster—and Overcoming Our Fear of Slowing Down. "In our society today, doing nothing is often associated with being lazy or wasting time," says Brown, yet there are big benefits to spending chunks of time being unproductive. Need convincing? Do nothing and you'll:

Get over the "tough stuff" faster.

"We stay busy because we don't want to think about certain things," says Brown. However, slowing down enough to face uncomfortable emotions rather than pushing them aside gives them less power, which in turn can help you disrupt your always-busy MO.

Inspire more empathy.

Experts suggest that taking time to reflect helps you stay in touch with your inner experiences, which translates to greater compassion for others and what they are experiencing.

Boost your creativity.

When you're not continuously scheduled, you give your thoughts a chance to wander—and a study from the journal *Psychological Science* shows we tend to develop more innovative ideas when we allow our thoughts to drift rather than focusing on one task. **MEGHAN RABBITT**

Refresh your complexion with these toxin-free masks made from botanical ingredients—no spendy spa trip required. By Elizabeth Marglin

1 REVIVE Made from breathable Ecoderma fabric, Orgaid's Vitamin C & Revitalizing Organic Sheet Mask allows potent antioxidants, such as orange peel and pomegranate, to deeply infuse your skin with minimal effort—no rinse needed (\$8 per mask or \$42 for a box of 6, orgaid.com, US dollars, shipping to Singapore extra).

2 EXFOLIATE Packed with exfoliating papaya and pineapple enzymes, **EO Products'** Moroccan Lava Clay Exfoliating Scrub is a clay-based powder that works as either a scrub or clarifying mask (\$22, eoproducts.com, US dollars, shipping to Singapore extra).

3 FIRM AND SMOOTH

Farmacy's New Dawn Mask Medley is a trifecta of biocellulose sheet masks: celery extract for firming, purple broccoli for brightening (shown), and rhubarb for antiaging. Plus, all 3 contain coconut gel for a surge of hydration (\$24, farmacybeauty.com, US dollars, shipping to Singapore extra).

4 HYDRATE Give your face a moisture upgrade with 100% Pure's Aqua Boost Hydrating Mask. Vegetarian hyaluronic acid hydrates as cucumber juice soothes any sensitivity, leaving a healthy glow (\$35, 100percentpure.com, US dollars, shipping to Singapore extra).

5 BRIGHTEN Acure's

Brightening Vegetable Peel contains green algae, kale, and spinach to soak in vitamins and moisture, as well as sugarcane and apple cider for toning (\$23, acureorganics.com, US dollars, shipping to Singapore extra).

6 PURIFY A must-have mask for oily skin, **Beautycounter's** Purifying Charcoal Mask absorbs excess oils as it smoothes and refines your skin (\$45, beautycounter.com, US dollars, shipping to Singapore extra).





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peel



Oure





108 - Bead Necklace

This hand knotted 108-bead necklace unites and activates the heart and the throat chakras. Peridot (Heart Healing and Stress Reducer), Amazonite (Truth and Higher Mind), Aquamarine (Soothing and Protection), White Howlite (Patience and Relaxation), Sacred Healing Rudraksha Seeds and Sterling Silver 92.5 (including Om charm) all come together with a pure silk tassel.

USD 178 (Use YJ20 for 20% discount) www.SattvaEarth.com



Tomato Ikat Shawl

This tomato red and beige lace shawl is quite a stunner, and a perfect wrap for an elegant evening. The fabric is 50% Merino and 50% Silk, and the size is 200cm X 70 cm. With beautiful designs handcrafted with great attention and care, this is a perfect gift. The shawls are available in Singapore.

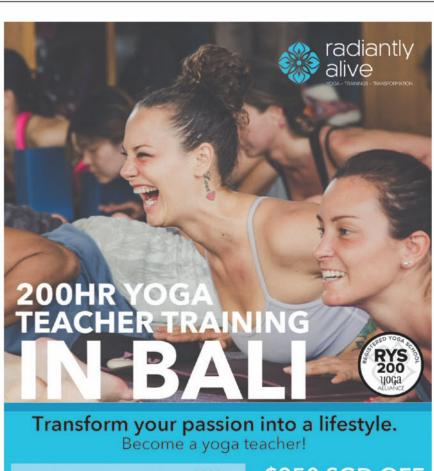
USD 375, www.queenmark.com



Chakra Artwork

If you're craving to buy something that symbolizes the cosmic world and healing, this Muladhara Chakra (Root chakra) artwork is just for you. It is depicted by a lotus with four petals in the chakra's red color. The square represents the earth—the four dimensions and the four directions. (Read more about Chakras in this magazine)

Size of the artwork- 70cm X 70cm; USD 7,000; www.rajulmehta.com



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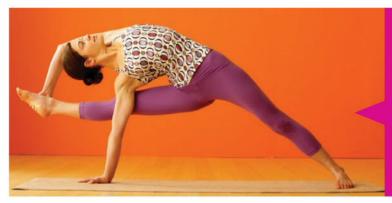


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WHAT'S THE BUZZ IN SG?

Workshops



Yoga with cover model Laura Burkhart on March 18

FLOW 9am – 10am: Heart, Hips & Core flow BUSINESS 11am-2pm: Yoga Business Secrets

Venue: Amara Sanctuary Resorts
(Ballroom), Sentosa
Visit yogajournal.com.sg or call 6521 3716 to reserve a spot. Stay at Amara that weekend at a special price and make a staycation out of it.

The next YOGA X BALANCE evening, YJSG's bimonthly yoga and meditation session in collaboration with Balanced Living Asia, is slated for Wed, April 5, at The Living Café in Bukit Timah. As always, you'll enjoy an evening of yoga, meditation and mindful eating. To book your spot, email editor@yogajournal.com.sg

WEEKEND WORKSHOPS with Beta Lisboa & Simon Calder

25-26 FEB 2017

Venue:

Lululemon Duxton 79 Duxton Road, 4th Floor Singapore 089538

WEEKEND IMMERSION with Jani Jaatinen

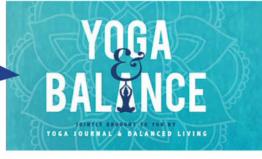
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21 Bukit Pasoh Road, 2nd Floor Singapore 089835 **Lululemon Duxton**

79 Duxton Road, 4th Floor Singapore 089538



Learn the SECRETS OF THE UPANISHADS

11-12 March 2017

Meditation Made Simple by Vikas Malkani 14/16/21/23 March 2017

Venue:

SoulCentre 91 Bencoolen St. #12-04 Sunshine Plaza Singapore 189652

Email:

info@soulcentre.org

february / march 2017 yogajournal.com.sg



WHAT'S THE BUZZ IN SG?

New Studios in Town!

YOGA INSTINCT (yes, with two "ii") is a new suave studio with a "lifestyle-centric concept and a design that caters to the epicurean crowd". Basically, it's a fun and energetic space with playful personalities who believe in exploring and liberating—you'll see musicians and DJs developing sound tracks for yoga practice as the studio offers fine acoustics and amenities. An interesting USP is their subtle focus on men—male teachers are in majority in their class schedule and there's also a #sgbrogis on Instagram by one of their founders.

Address: 13A Upper Circular Road; www.instiinct.com



SAGEHOUSE, a fresh new boutique studio opened this Feb in the Joo Chiat area in the East. The studio has two levels: pilates reformer and pilates apparatus on Level 1 and yoga, meditation & healing on Level 2. The studio also offers mindfulness and healing therapies, such as reiki and craniosacral therapy. www.sagehouse.sg

COCOON Studio has relocated to 50 Craig Road from its earlier spot at Tan Boon Liat building. The new studio has retained its teachers and continues to focus on lyengar and Hatha based yoga classes. The new space has wood floors and a rope wall, and the location is great, with access to nice restaurants and cafes nearby.

You can print a guest pass for a trial class here - http://www.cocoonstudio.com.sq/

CLUB YOGA opened recently on 28B Hong Kong Street. Affordable yoga classes, along with aerial and rope sessions.

Correction/Apologies from the YJSG editorial team for the Dec/Jan edition:

Meditation Page carried a wrong picture of the *Garuda mudra*. The right picture is below.



Garuda Mudra is named after the eagle that Vishnu—the lord of preservation—rides. It can help you cultivate the discipline you need to stick with your daily yoga practice when life gets busy. Turn your hands so that the palms face up, and cross your right hand over your left, interlacing your thumbs.

Museflower Retreats & Spa was incorrectly written as Museflower Resorts and Spa.



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INGUIRE WITHIN

In an ideal world, we'd always think and act from a place of wisdom and oneness. But in the real world, ingrained patterns and personality traits can get in the way. Enter the Enneagram, a personality assessment that can help you see what's keeping you from realizing your most authentic, highest self. Here's how to use it, along with your yoga practice, to change course.

Story by Elizabeth Marglin | Photography by Jeff Nelson

ORAL BROWN, a yoga teacher and licensed mental-health counselor in Rhode Island, uses the word "co-dependent" to describe her previous romantic relationship, which lasted more than a decade. But at the time, she didn't realize she was in such a pattern of over-giving that she was losing herself. While her yoga practice helped shine a light on this tendency, Brown says studying the Enneagram—a four-decadeold personality-assessment system—also revealed that it was time to move on from the relationship. "The Enneagram enabled me to really see my core patterns," says Brown, "ultimately helping me meet my needs in a healthier, more conscious way than ever before."

The name Enneagram stems from the Greek words ennea, a prefix for "nine," and gramma, meaning "to draw." The system's icon is a nine-pointed star, each point representing a distinct personality type. Most Enneagram experts agree we are all born with one dominant personality

type (or number), which largely determines how we learn to adapt to our environment and the people in it. The Enneagram surfaced in the United States in the 1970s, riding the tails of the human-potential movement (think therapy, encounter groups, and primal scream). Since then, therapists, spiritual teachers, coaches, and even businesses have used the Enneagram as a tool to stoke authenticity, expose core motivations, and ultimately reduce interpersonal conflict. How can a simple personality test do all this?

"There's resistance to change within all of us, and the Enneagram describes what that resistance is about for each of us," says Peter O'Hanrahan, a leading international Enneagram teacher and trainer. "As a result, this system gives you very clear information about what you need to work on." To wit, when Brown learned more about her Enneagram number—a Two—she was better able to see her core pattern of giving to others to feel good about herself, and

that realization gave her a choice: do something about her blind spots, or ignore them. She chose to act. "I left my partner, and I found more of my own identity in my yoga teaching," says Brown. "I was more aligned with my truer purpose and nature."

Susan Piver, author of the meditation primer Start Here Now and a meditation teacher who leads retreats on the Enneagram, says the kind of alignment Brown experienced is what yoga is about at its core. "The Enneagram will tell us what we cannot see about ourselves—our ways of being that stem from our most wounded selves, which create confusion as a result," says Piver. And if you're willing to look at these wounds, which are almost always rooted in unexamined pain, you can start to chart a new, more authentic course forward, she says. "At a certain point—especially if you're on a spiritual path—you have to do this," Piver says. Read on to find out how.

16

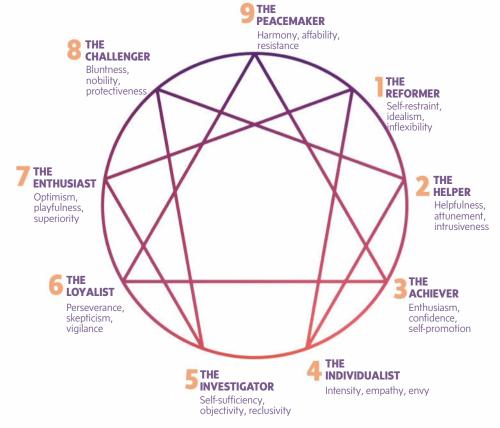
WHO AM I?

THE WORK OF THE ENNEAGRAM

begins with figuring out your number, which essentially represents how you present yourself to others, where your attention goes when you quiet down, and what triggers your behaviors. Piver, for example, is a Four, which means her chief issue is envy. "Before I knew I was a Four, I used to think that what I longed for would make me happy," she says. "Now, I'm able to see the longing itself as a sign that I'm unsettled, unhappy, or hurt, and that I can turn my attention within instead of looking for something outside. This helps me notice when I need to take better care of myself."

In addition to revealing negative patterns and deep wounds, the Enneagram also highlights your greatest strengths. For example, when Piver's envy is brought into balance, it becomes the more evolved version of itself: equanimity. "Envy and equanimity are on a continuum," she says. And these continuums exist for all of the numbers, which means that regularly trying to find balance between your strengths and blind spots is the key to living a more aligned, authentic life.

Even better, all of this selfreflection comes with improved communication with other people. That's why Piver calls the Enneagram an upaya, Sanskrit for "skillful means." While she cautions against using the system to label someone, she says it can be a helpful tool to navigate communication blocks. For example: "My partner is a One, and Ones are focused on right and wrong," says Piver. "I'm a Four, and Fours are focused on meaning. If we get into an argument, I want to talk and understand, but I can't do that with him until I acknowledge what went wrong—that I see where the



misstep happened. That is very useful to him because everything in him wants to get to the bottom of the right and wrong in order to fix it." Once Piver's partner's needs have been addressed, they can then have the kind of conversation that also works for her.

Ultimately, the Enneagram can help us release the tight hold we have on our version of things. "It's hard to understand a person's makeup when you are only looking at it through your own lens," says Piver. "But what if you were told, 'Here are nine lenses—which one do you think this person is looking through?' It gives you a way to let go of expectations so that a more genuine exchange can transpire. It generates compassion."

PUT THE ENNEAGRAM INTO PRACTICE

Yoga offers the perfect training ground to explore the nuances of your Enneagram type. When you know your number, you can start to use the Enneagram to let wash away what Patanjali called the "layers and imperfections concealing truth." "It's an incredible companion [to yoga] that covers territory yoga doesn't address," says Michael Cohen, founder of the Kirtan Leader Institute and a certified Enneagram practitioner. "Yoga talks in broad terms about how to transcend our limitations; the Enneagram gives incredible detail about what that means." For example, each number has a corresponding somatic pattern.

"For Fives, Sixes, and Sevens, poses that bring energy to the lower body and the feet are very important because these types tend to leave their bodies by going up into their heads," says O'Hanrahan. Once you know your type's patterns, he says, you can customize your yoga practice to support the work you're doing to escape your old grooves (or samskaras, in Sanskrit) and form new ones that serve you better.

To that end, Brown has paired a pose with each Enneagram number to accentuate both the challenges and the possibilities for that number. Determine your type, then use your pose and mantra to continue your self-inquiry so that how you do asana reflects how you do you—with awakened clarity and compassion.

The nine numbers, or personality types, of the Enneagram each have corresponding qualities. To determine your number, read about each one's defining traits and key motivations here, and then see which number resonates most strongly for you. (Keep in mind that we have aspects of all nine types inside us, though we tend to have more of one type than the others.) With an open mind and an investigative spirit, simply notice what resonates most.

THE REFORMER

DEFINING TRAITS: Principle, purpose, self-control, and perfectionism

KEY MOTIVATIONS: To be right; to strive for greater things

BASIC FEAR: Being corrupt, evil, defective AT THEIR BEST: Ones are conscientious and ethical, with a strong sense of right and wrong. They are teachers and advocates for change, always striving to improve things.

AT THEIR WORST: Ones are afraid of making a mistake; they can slip into being critical and perfectionistic, and tend to struggle with resentment and impatience.

THE HELPER

DEFINING TRAITS: Generosity, people pleasing, and possessiveness

KEY MOTIVATIONS: To be

loved, needed, and appreciated; to vindicate their claims about themselves

BASIC FEAR: Being unworthy of love AT THEIR BEST: Twos are empathetic, giving, and driven to be close to others.

AT THEIR WORST: Twos can slip into doing things for others simply to feel needed. They typically have problems with possessiveness and acknowledging their own peeds

THE ACHIEVER

DEFINING TRAITS: Adaptability, desire to excel, and imageconsciousness

KEY MOTIVATIONS: To distinguish themselves from others; to be admired; to impress others

BASIC FEAR: Being worthless

AT THEIR BEST: Threes are self-accepting, authentic, and role models who inspire.

AT THEIR WORST: Threes can be overly concerned with their image and what others think of them; they typically have problems with workaholism and competitiveness.

THE INDIVIDUALIST

DEFINING TRAITS:
Expressiveness, drama, selfabsorption
KEY MOTIVATIONS: To create
and surround themselves with beauty,
and to take care of emotional needs before
attending to anything else
BASIC FEAR: Having no identity
AT THEIR BEST: Fours are highly creative,
self-aware, sensitive, and reserved.
AT THEIR WORST: Fours can be moody
and self-conscious. They typically have
problems with melancholy, self-pity, and
self-indulgence.

THE INVESTIGATOR

DEFINING TRAITS: Perceptiveness, innovation, and isolation
KEY MOTIVATIONS: To possess knowledge; to have everything figured out as a way of defending against threats from their surroundings
BASIC FEAR: Being helpless or incapable AT THEIR BEST: Fives are visionary pioneers, often ahead of their time, and able to see the world in an entirely new way.

AT THEIR WORST: Fives can become detached. They typically have problems with eccentricity, piblism, and isolation

THE LOYALIST

DEFINING TRAITS:
Responsibility, anxiety, and suspicion
KEY MOTIVATIONS: To feel supported by others, to test the attitudes of others toward them
BASIC FEAR: Lack of security or guidance
AT THEIR BEST: Sixes tend to be stable, self-reliant, and trustworthy. They foresee problems and foster cooperation.
AT THEIR WORST: Sixes can be indecisive, reactive, and rebellious. They can also become defensive and evasive, and deal

THE ENTHUSIAST

DEFINING TRAITS: Spontaneity, versatility, and scatteredness
KEY MOTIVATIONS: To maintain their freedom and happiness; to avoid missing out on worthwhile experiences
BASIC FEAR: Being deprived and in pain AT THEIR BEST: Sevens are extroverted and practical. They focus their talents on becoming joyous and satisfied.
AT THEIR WORST: Sevens can become distracted and exhausted by staying on the go; they typically have problems with impatience and impulsivity.

THE CHALLENGER

DEFINING TRAITS: Decisiveness, self-confidence, willfulness
KEY MOTIVATIONS: To be self-reliant and important in the world
BASIC FEAR: Being controlled by others
AT THEIR BEST: Eights are self-mastering, and use their strength to improve others' lives. They are self-confident and decisive.
AT THEIR WORST: Eights can be egocentric and domineering. At times, they feel they must control the people around them, sometimes becoming confrontational.
They can have problems with their temper

THE PEACEMAKER

DEFINING TRAITS: Receptivity, reassuringness, complacency KEY MOTIVATIONS: To create harmony; to preserve things as they are BASIC FEAR: Loss and separation AT THEIR BEST: Nines are able to bring people together and heal conflicts. They are accepting, trusting, and stable; they are usually creative, optimistic, and supportive. AT THEIR WORST: Nines can be too willing to go along with others to keep the peace. They want everything to go smoothly, and so can also be complacent. They may have problems with inertia and stubbornness.

d february / march 2017 yogajournal.com.sg

POSE BY NUMBER

Your yoga mat is the perfect place to explore and reconcile the core dilemma your Enneagram number has revealed. Each of these poses closely corresponds with each type's physical manifestation of its inner predicament, says Brown. After warming up, practice the asana and repeat the mantra that matches your type. Experiment with all nine poses to become more discerning in all your relationships, from the ones you have with those around you to the one you have with yourself.



PRACTICE Dhanurasana (Bow Pose)

MANTRA I can lighten up, loosen my grip on perfection, and find pleasure in things just as they are.

Ones tend to repress their instincts and prefer to filter the world through their intelligence. Bow Pose provides a structured container for Ones to reengage with their more primal instincts, as well as soften around their limitations, as the posture puts pressure on the belly and stimulates the enteric nervous system (a.k.a. the "belly brain").

HOW TO Lying face-down on your mat, bend your knees and reach back to clasp the outside of your ankles. (If that's not possible, clasp your feet or use a strap.) Rest your forehead on the earth and take a deep, mindful breath. As you exhale, engage your core and simultaneously press your pubic bone into the earth while lifting your heels and reaching your legs strongly back and up. Combine these actions with activating the muscles in your upper back while relaxing your face and jaw muscles. Hold for 3 rounds of breath. Repeat 3 times, then rest in Balasana (Child's Pose) or a simple seated twist.



PRACTICE Paschimottanasana (Seated Forward Bend)

MANTRA I can have my own needs and still be loved.

Seated forward folds are grounding and insular, providing an opportunity to attune to your own wisdom. The symbolic gesture of bowing the heart forward offers Twos the visceral experience of self-reverence.

HOW TO From a seated position, extend your legs and scoot your sitting bones back. On an inhale, elongate your spine and lift your chest like you were in Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose). As you exhale, fold forward, leading with your heart. Stay for several rounds of breath.



PRACTICE Sasangasana (Rabbit Pose)

MANTRA I value deep heart contact.

In this pose, the crown chakra roots to the earth in a way that grounds Threes, whose dilemma is often how to modulate their hard-driving energy. This neutralizing, simple posture stimulates connection to the head (consciousness) and the wisdom body (intuition), and deflects the Threes' innate tendency to compete.

HOW TO Start in Child's Pose with your knees hip-distance apart, and rest your forehead on the mat. From here, place your hands under your shoulders and curl your toes under. On an inhale, hug your elbows inward and press into your hands as you lift your hips away from your heels. On an exhale, round your upper back to shift the weight from your forehead to your hairline and finally the crown of your head. Continue to press into your hands to distribute the weight and avoid putting too much pressure on your neck. If you feel comfortable here, bring your hands behind you to hold your ankles, heels, or toes. Stay in the posture for a rounds of breath.

THE INDIVIDUALIST



PRACTICE Virabhadrasana III (Warrior Pose III)

 $\mathbf{MANTRA}\ \ \mathbf{I}\ \mathrm{am}\ \mathrm{free}\ \mathrm{of}\ \mathrm{my}\ \mathrm{old}\ \mathrm{story}.\ \mathbf{I}\ \mathrm{stand}\ \mathrm{my}\ \mathrm{ground}$ and speak my truth.

This challenging balance pose moves energy away from the center and out into the limbs and crown, stimulating proprioception—awareness of one's body in space. As they extend in all directions and gaze down in this pose, Fours learn to calibrate their internal compass and let go of comparison.

HOW TO Come to High Crescent and place your hands on your hips. Take a centering breath; on the exhale, lengthen your spine as you lean your upper body forward. Begin to shorten your stance by walking your back foot in until you feel steady enough to lift your back leg. Without compromising the level structure of your hips, continue to lift your back leg until you reach your movement threshold or your leg is parallel to the earth. As you gaze down or directly in front of you, relax your face and jaw while simultaneously extending your spine and arms overhead; you can also keep your hands on or near your hips. Hold the pose for 3 rounds of breath, and then repeat on the second side.



PRACTICE Ustrasana (Camel Pose)

MANTRA I can engage with the world without holding back.

This backbend encourages opening the heart—critical for Fives, whose chief defense is disengagement and who tend to be happiest alone. Backbends help Fives connect to their feelings and receive energy freely. Camel Pose lets the practitioner modulate the intensity of the backbend, giving Fives an opportunity to explore trust and openness in small, safe increments.

HOW TO Kneel on your shins with your toes curled under and your hips over your knees; place your hands in Anjali Mudra (Salutation Seal, or prayer position), as if you were in Tadasana (Mountain Pose). Inhale and feel the safety and stability of the posture. Exhale and bring your hands to support you at your lower back. Wrap your elbows in toward one another. With every inhale, elongate your spine so that you grow taller and broader; with every exhale, soften your shoulders, neck, and jaw as you lift your gaze and maybe your chin. If you feel stable here, slide your hands to rest on your heels. Stay for 3 rounds of breath.



PRACTICE Matsyasana (Fish Pose)

MANTRA I have faith in myself and do not need to fear the unknown.

This backbend exposes the throat and chest, requires trust and commitment, and cultivates an expansive awareness—all appropriate actions for Sixes, whose nemesis is doubt. Sixes can learn to have faith and take action despite the uncertainty this asana often invokes.

HOW TO From a reclining position, prop yourself up on your elbows. Lengthen your legs and point your toes. Similar to Camel, hug your elbows in while lifting your gaze and chin. On an inhale, broaden your collarbones and squeeze your shoulder blades together; exhale and try to release your head back while relaxing your throat, face, and jaw. Breathe evenly here for 3 rounds, continuing to lift your heart and broaden your chest.



PRACTICE Malasana (Garland Pose)

MANTRA I have everything I need here and now.

Malasana concentrates energy downward, grounding one's awareness and literally bringing Sevens back to earth and challenging their fear that stability leads to stagnation.

HOW TO Stand with your feet at least mat distance apart, with your toes turned out slightly. On an exhale, lower your hips to a squatting position, and track your knees over your toes. Bring your hands together in Anjali Mudra while pressing your upper arms against your inner thighs. With each inhale, rise from your roots by lengthening your spine and pressing your arms to your legs. With each exhale, feel the natural state of contraction by bowing your head, releasing the pressure of your arms, and slightly rounding your spine. Stay here as long as you feel comfortable, letting each round of breath ground and center you.



PRACTICE Anjaneyasana (Low Lunge)

MANTRA I'm willing to be vulnerable.

This pose works the psoas—a muscle directly linked to our fight-or-flight response—which helps Eights learn the humility that comes from allowing oneself to be vulnerable.

HOW TO From Down Dog, exhale and step your right foot to your right hand, aligning your right knee over your heel. Lower your left knee to the floor and turn the top of your left foot downward. On an inhale, use the rooting action of your front foot to lift your torso upright. Inhale and extend your arms overhead; exhale and feel the grounding weight of your hips. Scissor your legs toward the midline to support the lift. Stay here for 3 rounds of breath, and then release and repeat on the second side.



PRACTICE Natarajasana (Lord of the Dance Pose)

MANTRA I can dance to my own drumbeat and still be part of my tribe.

The dual actions of this pose—the extendingout and the rooting-down—require Nines to find their core while being pulled in different directions.

HOW TO Stand at the top of the mat and shift your weight to your left side. Place your hands at your hips and draw your right knee toward

your navel. Feel your core engage as you lean forward and extend your right leg behind you, then catch your right ankle with your right hand. Slightly bend your standing left leg, simultaneously lifting your left sitting bone and extending strongly through your right leg. At the same time, reach your left arm forward, parallel to the floor. Inhale and exhale as you maintain a balance of stability (level hips and shoulders) with mobility (backbending and right-leg extension). Stay for 3 rounds of breath; repeat on the other side

ةٍ 20 and digest' mode. We often remain in a 'fight or flight' state, due to stress, emotional upheaval or fatique, which in turn can shut off digestion.

I've had an on-off relationship with insomnia, an old foe that rears its ugly head in my bed during difficult periods, and I now understand why this is accompanied by an upset tummy. The pieces of the puzzle were starting to come together, and I was starting to surrender to a slower pace, focusing on the present, rather than letting my mind wander into a list of to-dos. A friendly but no-nonsense healer told it to me straight: "Girl, you're in your head too much, get out of there and you'll be fine!" A chakra-balancing session coupled with abdominal massage to release trapped emotions yielded powerful results.

So what can be done to instill a feeling of calm in a busy city setting, far away from the fully-staffed serene villa surrounding in Bali complete with healing therapists on call? Work with the breath. Our breathing workshop

allowed me to drop deep into a state of relaxation I hadn't felt in years. What helped a lot to switch off at nights was also a "Daily Gratitude Diary" to put things into perspective. You can make your habits stick by making them simple and quick—I now write three bullet points, take ten deep breaths, and then it's lights out.

Yin Yoga is another powerful tool to demarcate day and night, and to get yourself ready for sleep. The yoga sessions were held at sunset in the peaceful garden yoga shala, with the crickets as background music. I began to understand why I needed to incorporate this type of practice into my routine. Yin is about being present with where you are physically and emotionally, as you ease your body into comforting poses. There is something so empowering about letting your neck and shoulders release through a simple forward bend over a bolster—the tension in your mind tends to evaporate too.

We also did sessions in Ki Yoga—a distinctly different practice and a fascinating amalgamation of yogic principles, married with Shiatsu and TCM pressure point touches to stimulate the meridians. This beautifully energizing class closed with guided partner massage, an opportunity to practice vulnerability and care for each other. This paved the way for opening up off the yoga mat too, and reminded me of the importance of communing with your tribe—some relationships are integral to our wellbeing.

Another key element of living well is to feed your brain and soul with knowledge, try new things and learn a skill—the sense of accomplishment in itself is a wonderful feeling. All of this occurred in abundance throughout the week. Each day began with sun rise and journaling before Ki Yoga in the garden shala. This was physically painful as I am not a morning person, and barely functional until my second coffee, but became easier by the third





day. Proving to myself that I could reset my circadian rhythm felt like a big win.

'Food as medicine' was a mantra at the retreat, and we learnt how to prepare Jody's famous Coconut Kale Moong Dhal from her latest cookbook, *Beautiful Food*, along with the science behind the healing properties of Ayurvedic cooking. Another highlight was a guided jungle walk with a local botanist, after which we were taught how to pound, grind, mix and produce our own natural skincare with Balinese flowers, herbs and spices. In between, there was always ample time to take it easy and enjoy the pool, or have a wander through the nearby boutiques.

Knowledgeable, kind and compassionate, Rachel and Jody had given me the gift of realistic tools for better living. Ayurveda is not a magic pill, nor is yoga. You are the master of your own body and mind, and you can heal yourself—sometimes you just need a little nudge in the right direction from the right people.

Rising Collective is a wellness retreat in Bali. For more details, go to www.risingcollective.com

Andrea Seifert is a freelance writer for Yoga Journal Singapore

BASIC AYURVEDA - 5 WAYS TO IMPROVE DIGESTION

- 1 Start the day with warm water mixed with lemon juice to stimulate digestive acids.
- 2 Make daily elimination a priority. Toxins build up unless you are regular, try freshly grated ginger in hot water.
- 3 To reduce gas and bloating, brew tea out of cumin, coriander and fennel seeds.
- 4 Incorporate more warm and cooked foods in your diet.
- 5 Slow down, chew your food properly and embrace mindfulness with each bite.

UPCOMING RETREATS AT RISING COLLECTIVE

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Mother & Daughter

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Deep Rest & Returning to Wellness

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Body of knowledge

How can I best strengthen and stretch my psoas?

By Ray Long, MD

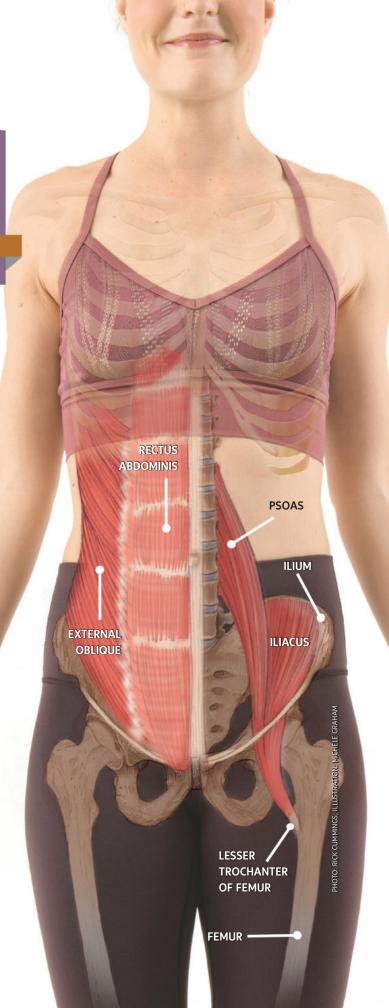
THE HUMAN BODY IS somewhat of a mad scientist. Case in point: the way our muscles work. Some muscles are easy to consciously access, meaning they take direction from us. For example, you can intentionally spread your toes in Tadasana (Mountain Pose). But other muscles work more autonomously, with no apparent direction from the conscious mind—like the muscles working in the background to maintain your posture. These muscles are more difficult to access intentionally because their function involves tasks we have long since relegated to the unconscious mind.

One such muscle that works mostly in the background (or unconsciously) is the psoas, a core muscle that's part of the all-important hip flexors and that helps to stabilize the spine. Why does such a big, important muscle have such minor representation in the motor cortex of the brain? It's all about energy efficiency: We use our psoas to sit down, stand up, and move from lying down to seated; we use it to walk, run, climb, and twist our torso. From a very early age, we use the psoas so much that the brain reassigns it to the level of "background function," where movement occurs without conscious thought.

From my experience, few people are able to engage their psoas voluntarily (like when you contract your biceps to "make a muscle"). This may be because its actions become habitual during infancy. Yet here's the good news: You can learn to consciously utilize muscles that tend to do their own thing, and when you do, it can transform your yoga practice. Take Utthita Trikonasana (Extended Triangle Pose) to the right side, for example. When flexing to the right, you could simply use gravity to move your torso over your leg. However, learning to "turn on" your psoas to consciously flex your trunk provides muscular stabilization for your spine, pelvis, and hip that ultimately helps you find the fullest expression of the pose.

To start to awaken your psoas, it helps to know where it is in the body. This muscle originates from the twelfth thoracic vertebra (T12) and the lumbar vertebrae (L1 through L4, with a deep layer originating from L1 through L5), and it runs along either side of the spine, behind the stomach, intestines, and female reproductive organs. From the spine, the psoas continues forward and down, crossing over the front of your sacroiliac joint and joining with the iliacus muscle (which originates on the inside of the pelvis, or the ilium). The psoas and iliacus work together so closely that they're often referred to as one: the iliopsoas. The iliopsoas then runs over the brim of the pelvis to insert into the lesser trochanter, a knoblike structure on the upper inside of the femur (thighbone).

It's because the psoas crosses multiple joints that it's able to move the body in so many ways. For starters, the psoas acts to flex the hip:



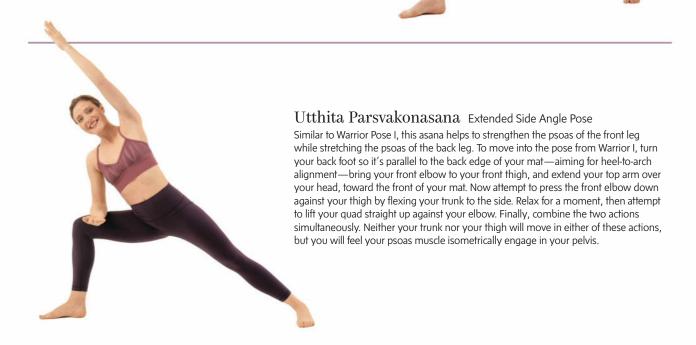


practice well

3 poses to awaken your psoas

Virabhadrasana I Warrior Pose I

Warrior I helps to strengthen the psoas of the front leg while stretching the psoas of the back leg. Come into the pose as you typically would: feet 3 to 4 feet apart, back toes turned to a 45-degree angle from the back edge of your mat, with heel-to-heel alignment, front knee tracking over your second toe, arms raised skyward. Then, imagine lifting your front knee straight up toward the sky, as if you were flexing your hip. You won't actually be able to lift your knee, but this action stimulates the psoas to contract, which should help you feel the pelvis stabilize. Hold this pose for 5 to 10 deep breaths on one side, and then repeat on the other side.



Paripurna Navasana Full Boat Pose

While most of us think this pose is all about the abs, quite a bit of the work also happens in the legs and the psoas. In fact, Navasana is a great way to strengthen the psoas isometrically. Sit tall on your yoga mat with your knees bent and feet flat on the mat. Place your fingers on the floor to either side of your hips and use that light traction to lift your chest. Exhale and lift your feet off the floor so that your thighs are angled about 45 to 50 degrees relative to the floor. Stretch your arms alongside your legs, parallel to each other. Press the heads of your thighbones toward the floor to help anchor the pose and lift your sternum. Stay here for 5–10 full, easy breaths.



...continued from page 24

Contracting the psoas either bends the trunk forward or draws the knee up. If you contract your psoas on one side, it laterally flexes the trunk, as in Extended Triangle Pose. Contract the psoas on both sides, and you'll be able to tilt the pelvis forward, bringing the thigh and the torso toward each other, as in Paschimottanasana (Seated Forward Bend).

The process of awakening your psoas begins with learning how to access it at will. You can use certain cues within your yoga poses to do this, even if you've never intentionally activated this muscle. Interestingly, what I've found with my students and in my own practice is that shortly after you start to engage the psoas intentionally in certain yoga asanas, you will find that the brain starts to engage it unconsciously, even in other poses. It's as if the brain is saying, "OK, so now we're using the

psoas in yoga poses," and starts to anticipate using this muscle. I call this "body clairvoyance," meaning that the unconscious mind sees clearly what to do and then does it automatically. So essentially, by awakening your psoas, you're trying to learn how to more readily access the muscle's unconscious actions, ultimately creating the ability to consciously—voluntarily—engage it.

Teacher **Ray Long, MD**, is an orthopedic surgeon in Detroit and the founder of Bandha Yoga, a website and book series dedicated to the anatomy and biomechanics of yoga.

Model **Caitlin Rose Kenney** is a yoga teacher based in Boulder, Colorado.



If you're flying to Bali, KLM is a great option. Here's why -

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• One session per person valid for redemption by 30th June 2017
• Singapore residents only (IC, PR, or Workpass holders)

· Must not have attended any classes & workshops with us, or

Poses of the month

How to move from Janu Sirsasana to Parivrtta Janu Sirsasana

By Aadil Palkhivala

Janu Sirsasana

janu = knee · sirsa = head · asana = pose

Head-of-the-Knee Pose



Benefit

Re-energizes the body and aids digestion by stretching the ascending and descending colon

Instruction

- 1 Sit in Dandasana (Staff Pose) with your legs extended in front of you, toes flexed, quadriceps contracted. Place your hands next to your buttocks on the floor and lift the bottom of your belly and the sides of your waist.
- 2 Bend your right knee, placing your right foot against your inner left thigh, and your right heel close to your perineum, just below your pubic bone. Gently swing your right knee away from your left foot so your thighs form an angle greater than 90 degrees—preferably an angle of 135 degrees.
- 3 Fold forward over your left leg from the left hip crease. Reach with your right arm first and hold your left foot from the inside. Contracting your left quadriceps powerfully, use your left hand to grasp the center of the hamstring muscles and—tipping your body to the right—pull toward your left sitting bone to release tension in the tendon that connects your hamstring muscles to your pelvis. Then, press your left hand into the floor near your left hip and push, lengthening the left waist. Keep twisting your body toward the left, working to bring your bellybutton over the center of your left thigh.
- 4 Hold your left foot with your left hand from the outside. Move deeper into the fold by holding your right wrist with your left hand. Make a fist with your right hand. Bending your elbows away



DON'T drop your sacrum backward (posteriorly) or round your spine.

from each other, pull your left foot with your arms, lengthening the sides of your waist. Rest your forehead on your shin. Breathe deeply for 9 or more breaths. Inhaling, lift your head and chest, then release your hands to push the floor away and come out of the pose. Change sides.

PHOTOS: JEFF NELSON; MODEL: VALERIE D'AMBROSIO; STYLIST: EMILY CHOJ; HAIR/MAKEUP: BETH WALKER; TOP: ANJALI; BRA: LULULEMON; BOTTOMS: NUX

Our Teacher Aadil Palkhivala (aadil.com) is a co-founder of Purna Yoga and trained one-on-one with B.K.S. Iyengar. A teacher's teacher, Palkhivala has practiced yoga since 1966; he was a naturopath for 10 years and has degrees in law, physics, and mathematics. Model Valerie D'Ambrosio (organictwist.com) is a life coach, interdisciplinary yoga teacher, and co-founder of the Hanuman Festival in Boulder, Colorado.

So february / march 2017 yogajournal.com.sg

Modify Janu Sirsasana if needed to find safe alignment for your body.



If your lower back rounds ...

TRY placing your sitting bones on folded blankets or a firm foam pad. (Avoid placing your hamstrings on the blankets or pad.) Take several deep breaths, inhaling and lengthening, exhaling and folding deeper.



If you have knee pain...

TRY moving your bent knee toward your straight leg. Having your knee out at a wider angle can create stress on the sartorius muscle, which runs the length of the thigh and connects to the knee.



If you have tight hamstrings...

TRY using a strap, placing it around the lower arch of your extended leg. Hold one side of the strap in each hand and use the strap to help you lift the sides of your waist. Remember to only fold as far forward as you can while keeping your spine concave and your chest lifted.

STAY HUMBLE

Illusions of grandeur, or the desire to get into complicated asanas, are as much asmita, or ego, as illusions of inability or meekness. In order to keep your ego at bay, approach Janu Sirsasana or its more intense brother, Parivrtta Janu Sirsasana, with humility and focus. Stay present, without trying to move too guickly. Try to experience what you are feeling in your body without getting wrapped up in achieving a goal. Just as these poses can heal an unquiet mind, they can also damage the spine when done with aggression or inattention, causing pain and discomfort near the sacroiliac (SI) joint—the connection between your sacrum and your pelvis. Ask yourself, is it worth it to attain a moment's gain for a long period of pain? In asana? In life?

Parivrtta Janu

Sirsasana,

page 32

Supta Padangusthasana Reclining Hand-to-Big-Toe Pose

Safely stretches the hamstrings and tones the legs when the quadriceps are contracted

Instruction

Lie on your back. Inhaling, lift your right leg and hold your right big toe with your right index and middle fingers, keeping both shoulder blades on the

ground. If you can't reach your lifted foot, use a strap around your lower arch and hold both ends in your right hand. Press down on your left thigh with your left hand. Contract the quadriceps of both legs fully. Move your outer right hip away from your head, lengthening your right waist. Press both heels away from your hips, pulling your toes back. Inhaling, bring your awareness into your right hamstring muscles, feeling them release and stretch. Exhaling, imagine the center of your right hamstring muscles moving toward the sitting bone, where it starts. Exhale to release and switch sides.

Janu Sirsasana, page 28 Janu Sirsasana modifications, page 29

Find length in the sides of your body and a deeper twist as you move step by step into Parivrtta Janu Sirsasana.

Benefit

This invigorating spinal twist and chest opener releases diaphragmatic tension and the intercostal muscles, enhancing breathing. It also removes tension along the spine and lengthens the sides of the waist, stretching the abdominal organs, especially the ascending and descending colon, liver, spleen, and pancreas, enhancing digestion and elimination.



Instruction

1 Sit in Janu Sirsasana with your left knee bent. Turn your chest toward your bent knee, with all fingertips on the floor—right hand in front between your legs and your left hand behind your left buttock. On an inhalation, press your fingertips into the floor and lift the bottom of your belly and the sides of your waist. Exhaling, twist left.

practice well YOGAPEDIA





Ardha Baddha Padmasana Bound Half Lotus Pose Benefit

Releases the muscles between the vertebrae, making the spine supple and relieving backaches, and opens the chest and shoulders

Instruction

Sit in Staff Pose. Exhaling, bring your left leg into Ardha Padmasana, or Half Lotus Pose. Inhaling, lift the sides of your waist and the bottom of your belly. Exhaling, sweep your left hand behind you to catch your left foot. Reach for your right leg and hold the big-toe mound with your right hand, using a strap if needed. Contract your right quadriceps and pull back with your upper body to sit up as much as possible. Inhaling, lift the sides of your waist; exhaling, twist to the left. Inhale to come out, then switch sides.

Parsva Upavistha Konasana Side Seated Wide Angle Pose Benefit

Stretches the sides of the body and the hamstrings

Instruction

Sit with your spine erect and your legs open to a 135-degree angle. Flex your feet and engage your quadriceps. Twist left, placing your right fingertips on the floor in front of you and your left fingertips behind you. Keeping your spine long, reach for your left foot with your right hand. Bring your torso toward your left shin, bellybutton centered over your left thigh. Then, clasp your left wrist with your right hand or use a strap. Lift your chest to stretch your abdomen, eventually resting your forehead on your left shin. Exhale and release your hands; inhale to come up. Switch sides.

Parivrtta Janu Sirsasana prep, Parivrtta Janu Sirsasana, page 32



2 Inhaling, lift your left arm up alongside your left ear. Slightly bend your right leg, then bend your torso sideways to the right and hold the outside of your right foot with your left hand. Slowly walk your right hand away from your pelvis, in between your legs, until the back of your right rib cage rests on the inside of your right inner thigh. Press your inner thigh into your rib cage.



3 Keeping your right leg bent, turn your right arm to hold your right foot from the inside, thumb down. Pull strongly with your hands, bending your elbows so that the sides of your waist lengthen. Start to bend your right elbow away from your right shin.

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Parivrtta Janu Sirsasana

parivrtta = revolved · janu = knee · sirsa = head · asana = pose

Revolved Head-of-the-Knee Pose



- 4 Slowly straighten your right leg, maintaining the pressure and contact of your right inner thigh against the back of your right rib cage, and pulling the foot with your arms. After your leg is straight, press your right outer elbow into the floor and press your left elbow toward the floor behind you, opening your chest and twisting your waist. Rest the back of your head on your right shinbone, looking at the ceiling. For a more advanced stretch, extend your left knee farther from your head. Do not try to press your left sitting bone into the floor; instead, let it rise without trying to lift it.
- 5 Stay in the pose for 10–30 seconds. To come out, release your left hand first. Untwist your spine, bringing your left hand to the floor in front of your chest. Then, release your right hand and use your left hand to push up. Change sides.

Stay safe

Parivrtta Janu Sirsasana makes the hamstrings vulnerable, especially near the sitting bones where the muscles attach. To protect yourself, contract the quadriceps powerfully, sending a message to the hamstrings to stop firing. Pulling the body down in any forward bend when the hamstrings have not released enough to free the spine may damage the lower vertebrae. Take time warming up in Supta Padangusthasana (page 30) and move slowly through all the poses. And stay humble: Remove the striving for accomplishment and instead go for the experience of whatever you can do in the moment.



LEARN MORE

For more step-bystep instructions, visit yogajournal.com/ yogapedia

COVER MODEL Laura Burkhart

Laura Burkhart is a San Francisco based yoga teacher, who also teaches online and at conferences and retreats. She has appeared in numerous Yoga Journal online video podcasts, is a writer and has been spotlighted in many magazines. She has written features for Yoga Journal U.S. and has been on the cover for Yoga Journal Italy.

Laura originally sought out yoga to help combat serious health problems related to years of stress and insomnia. She gravitated towards yoga because it reminded her of the similar movement and meditation she found in dance. The healing and grounding benefits she received from yoga were so profound that she decided to change the course of her work life to help others find the same relief and peace she had found through a fluid, meditative vinyasa practice.

Laura is teaching in Singapore on March 18 at Amara Sanctuary Resort, Sentosa. Don't miss her sessions. Check out yogajournal.com.sg for details.

Come say Hi to Laura and take a picture with her before she heads off to teach at the Bali Spirit Festival (March 19-26). Laura will also be teaching at a yoga retreat (March 23-30) to ring in the Balinese New Year.

Turn the page to learn a simple and effective sequence by Laura on how to build strong arms and a stronger core.



/ march 2017

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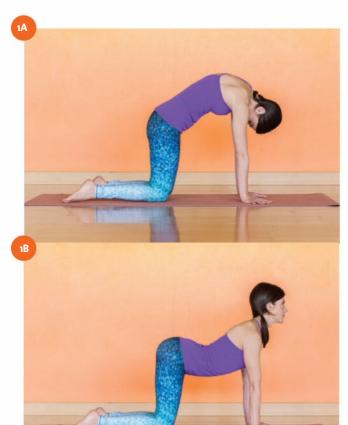
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PHOTOGRAPHER: SAMUEL HENDERSON, ART DIRECTOR: ANUJA BAGADE, TOP: BEYOND YOGA, LEGGINGS: OKIINO, MAKE-UP: PAUL XAYARATH

Strong Arms & Strong Core Strong Core By Cover Model Laura Burkhart Photos by Samuel Henderson

In yoga, we can benefit from arm and core strength beyond the aesthetic appeal of a slimmer waistline or toned arms. We need arm stability and strength for daily activities like carrying groceries, picking up children and moving furniture. Increased strength can lead to better bone health. Lifting, twisting, standing, bathing, dressing, housework, gardening, sitting in a chair, putting on our shoes all require using our core. A stable and strong core gives us better balance and good posture, which can help us prevent back injuries.

In the following sequence, we'll focus on yoga poses to help strengthen and stabilize the arms and the core. We'll start by coming to simple cross-legged position. Rest your hands on your thighs, sink your sit bones into your mat, and lift your chest to elongate both sides of your waist. Relax your shoulders away from your ears. Take a deep inhale all the way down toward your pelvis, pause for a couple of seconds at the end of your inhale, then slowly exhale from your chest all the way down toward your lower belly. Take a few more cycles of breath like this, then open your eyes and make your way onto your hands and knees.



Cat/Cow pose

Warm up the Core

Place your hands under your shoulders and knees underneath your hips. On an inhale, lift your sit bones, lift your chest toward the ceiling, head coming up last; keep your neck long. On your exhale, tuck your tailbone, lift your lower belly up, and let go of your head and neck. Repeat for 5 breaths, then come to a neutral spine.



Cobra Pose Variation (Bhujangasana)

Strong Abdominals & Strong Lower Back

From cat/cow, make your way to your stomach on the mat, extend your legs and bring them together. Place your fingertips in line with your chest and hug your elbows in so they make contact with your rib cage. Anchor the top of the feet, legs and pubic bone into the floor. Roll your shoulder blades down your back. As you inhale, raise your chest off the mat. As you exhale, lift your abdominals toward the ceiling, and lift your hands off the mat while keeping the back of your neck long rather than looking toward the ceiling. Hold for 3 cycles of breath and come back down to the mat. Repeat 3 more times.

Plank Pose

Strengthen Arms & Abdominals

Move from Cobra to Downward Facing Dog, rock forward, bringing your shoulders directly over your wrists; be sure not to move your shoulders beyond your wrists. Rotate your elbow creases so they point forward toward the top of your mat to spread your shoulder blades. At the same time press crown of your head forward and heels back so both are moving away from one another. Engage your belly and thighs and tuck your tailbone toward your heels. If you need more support, bring your knees to the floor while keeping your tailbone tucked, keep the arms engaged and crown of your head moving forward. Hold for 3 breaths.



Push Up Pose (Chaturanga Dandasana)

Work your Arms and Core

From the Plank, keep your elbow creases pointing forward, and as you exhale, slowly start to lower down, keep the crown of the head moving forward and your heels moving back and hug your elbows in toward either side of your ribcage. When the biceps are horizontal to the floor forming a 90 degree (right) angle, pause and hold for 3 breaths. After the third exhale, inhale into Upward Facing Dog (see below), and then back to Downward Facing Dog.



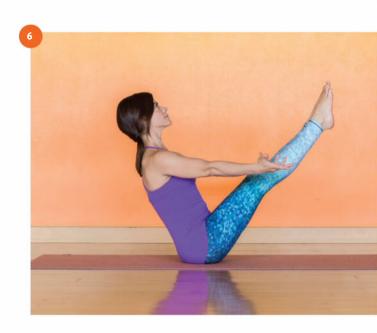
Upward Facing Dog (Urdhva Mukha Svanasana)

Lengthen your Abdominal Wall, Strengthen your Arms From Chaturanga, bring the top of your feet to the floor. Keep your pelvis at the same level as it was in Chaturanga, straighten your arms as you lift your chest and inner thighs. Roll your shoulder blades down your back as you press your chest forward. The only body parts touching the floor should be your hands and the top of your feet. Hold for 2 breaths, and make your way into Downward Facing Dog.

Boat Pose (Navasana)

Fire Up Your Core

Come to a seated position with you knees bent. Bring your feet together on the floor. Flex your feet and lift your toes off the floor, then with your hands catch hold of the back of your thighs, engage your core and lift your chest up, finding a tiny backbend in your upper back. Keep your torso elevated as you pull your thighs in toward your chest, and lift your shins so they are parallel with the floor. If you would like to go deeper, reach your fingertips forward toward your feet, palms facing in, arms shoulder distance apart. Lift your pinkies to keep your chest lifted and shoulder rolling down your back. Hold here for 3 breaths. Repeat three times alternating with Reverse Table Top (see below).



Reverse Table Top (Purvottanasana Variation)

Work your Triceps, Release your Abs

From a seated position, bend your knees, take your feet about a foot away from your sit bones and bring your hands behind you underneath the shoulders, fingers pointing toward your pelvis. Press your hands and feet down and lift your pelvis up toward the ceiling. Roll your shoulders away from your ears. Avoid collapsing your chest as you keep your shoulder blades wide. Either relax your head, gazing at the ceiling or wall behind you, or if that is too much on the neck, take your gaze toward your knees. Hold for two breaths and bring your pelvis back down. Repeat two more times.

Side Crow Core (Parsva Bakasana)

Work Your Obliques

Make your way onto your back. Pull your knees in toward your nose, legs together. Lift your arms up toward the ceiling, lift your upper back off the mat and twist to the right until your arms are outside of your legs, shoulder distance apart. Flex your hands, press your palms forward, and squeeze the right side of your body as if you're doing side crow, but on your back. Press the outside of your left arm into your right outer thigh. When you inhale take the arms overhead toward the top of your mat and extend your legs out in front of you toward the bottom of your mat, hovering your arms and legs a few inches over your mat. When you exhale, pull your knees back into your chest and take your arms to the outside of your left leg like side crow. Repeat 5 times on each side, then place you feet on the floor hip distance apart.



Side Plank (Vasisthasana)

Strong Arms and Core

Rock forward to plank position. Place the right hand a couple of inches toward the center of your mat, slightly out in front of your right shoulder, keep your right leg straight as you roll onto the outside of your right foot. Keep your right elbow crease pointed toward to top of your mat, while drawing your right shoulder blade down, press the heel of your right hand into your mat. Stack your left foot directly on top of your right foot and flex your feet, reaching your toes toward your chest. Take the left arm up toward the ceiling, reach through the fingertips, relax your shoulders away from your ears and take your gaze up toward your left thumb. Engage your core to lift your right hip away from the mat, tuck your tailbone and draw your lower ribs in. Hold here for 3 breaths and change to the opposite side.

Shoulder Opener

Counter Pose

Lower all the way down onto your stomach. Take your arms out to a "t" position and hug your legs in toward one another. Bend your left elbow and come up onto your left fingertips. Press your left fingertips into the floor and begin to roll into your right arm, stacking your left hip on top of your right hip. Stay as is, or bring the ball of your left foot onto floor behind your right calf muscle. Hold for 3 breaths and change to the opposite side.



Locust (Salabhasana)

Ignite your Back

Stay on your belly. Bring arms to your sides, palms facing your hips. Hug your legs in toward one another, rotating your thighs inward. Press the tops of you feet and pubic bone into the mat. When you inhale, lift your chest up off the mat and on an exhale, engage your core, lift your arms, tips of the pinkies reaching up. Press your upper arms toward the ceiling while keeping the back of your neck long. Stay as is or lift your thighs away from the mat and keep your legs hugging inward. Hold for 3 breaths and release.



Forearm Plank

Fire Up your Arms and Abdominals

From locust pose, bring your elbows under your shoulders, press your forearms down and lift your chest. Keep your heart reaching forward as you tuck your toes under, press through your heels and lift your pelvis and inner thighs up. Press the crown of your head forward as you reach back with your heels, trying to get as much distance as you can from your head to your feet. Engage your abdominal wall and tuck your tailbone toward your heels. Hold for 3 breaths and repeat 3 times.

Bridge Pose (Setu Bandha Sarvangasana)

Open your Chest, Shoulders and Abdominal Wall

Lay down on your back. Bend your knees and bring your heels toward your sit bones. If you feel any pressure in your lower back, slide your heels away from the sit bones, until the pressure subsides. Press your feet into the mat and lift your pelvis towards the ceiling. Tuck your shoulders underneath themselves, and rotate your palms so they face up toward the ceiling or interlace your fingers underneath your pelvis. Press the upper arms and feet into the mat, squeeze your thighs, tuck your tailbone toward your knees while keeping your chin away from your chest. Hold here for 5 breaths, then lower down from shoulders to hips. Rest for 2 breaths then repeat 2 more times. If you prefer more of a restorative version of this pose, place a block under your sacrum, perpendicular with your vertebrae.





Reclined Twist (Jathara Parivartanasana)

Counter Pose

Stay on your back, hug your knees into your chest, and take your arms out to a "T" position. Keep your left shoulder grounded as you drop your knees to the right towards the floor. If you want a more dynamic twist, bring your knees closer to your belly. You can keep both arms out to a "T" or place your right hand on the outside of your left thigh and take your gaze over toward your left hand. Hold for 5 breaths and change to the opposite side.

Reclined Hand-to-Big-Toe Pose (Supta Padangusthasana)

Cool down & balance the Practice by opening your hamstrings

Stay on your back. Keep you left leg bent, left foot to the floor. Draw you right knee into your chest. Take a belt below the ball of your right foot, one side of the belt in each hand, keep arms long and your shoulders connected with the floor as you extend the right heel toward the ceiling. On your exhales, gently lead the right leg toward the wall behind you. Hold for 5 breaths.

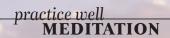


february / march 2017 yogajournal.com.sg

Corpse pose (Savasana)

Relaxation

Extend your legs out in front of you. Reach your arms over your head and bring as much length as you can from your fingertips all the way down to your toe tips. Release your arms to either side of your body, palms facing up, shoulders away from your ears. Close your eyes and scan your body from the crown of your head all the way down toward your toe tips. If you find tension in any area of your body, breathe into that area and let that tension go. Stay here for 5 – 10 minutes. Enjoy the peace!



Pause, Breathe & find YOUR QUIET

"Meditation is not a way of making your mind quiet. It is a way of entering into the quiet that is already there, buried under the 50,000 thoughts the average person thinks every day."

—DEEPAK CHOPRA, NEW AGE SPIRITUAL GURU



We must be aware of both these worlds if we wish to become joyful and experience happiness in our daily life. Awareness is the practice of staying awake moment to moment, to be fully present and available to every

Creating this state of awareness is the first step toward becoming stress free and living a life of happiness and freedom. Since the mind is the source of unhappiness or happiness, stress or calm, sickness or well-being, failure or success—it is only logical that we should direct our attention to the mind. "To be aware" is synonymous with meditation; and meditation is your road to a higher level of

Here are a few effective strategies to reclaim your happiness and freedom in 2017. By applying these strategies, you will experience less stress. Remember that the entire basis of meditation is to make you enjoy life more, partly by realizing that happiness is not dependent on external factors. With happiness comes freedom.

art drector : anuja bagade, photo : michael winokur, models, from left: stacie overby, wesleigh roeca, jeremy simon; stylist: Lyn Heineken; hair/makeup: Ramara brown/artist untied; blankets, from left: Yogaprops, com, barefoot Yoga co.; bolsters, from left: hugger mugger, barefoot Yoga co.

Apply these 7 strategies to your life and watch the benefits:

don't die a copy! Rushing through life to accumulate more and more, because that's what everyone else is doing, or because that's what is expected of you, seems to be a strange modern disease. Happiness and freedom cannot come where a mad race is being run, with a seemingly elusive goal. Dare to slow down and step out of this rush. Have the courage to turn away from a conditioned mind-set and superficial possessions; step out of the daily grind and stop the rat race to find your true life.

You were born an original,



Accept ownership of your life and everything in it

At the deepest level, everything occurring in your lifeexperience is the result of your own desires, choices, actions and reactions. Whatever you experience in your life is a direct expression of who you are. Good or bad, it's your life, and it happened with your participation, whether conscious or not. Therefore, accept full responsibility and control of your own life—not only what it is now, but what you want it to be. Resolve that just for today you will not get angry or worried, but will instead take some action to create what you want.

event and person who comes into your life. Remember that even when you judge, you do so from your own level of awareness—so if you want to raise that, you must turn your attention inwards, and not outwards towards others. Impugning blame elsewhere is an easy trap to fall into, and it ends up making you weaker and impotent. If you truly accept the responsibilities in your life, you spontaneously release all blame and resentments. It's important for you to see that holding onto some hurt or hatred that's caused by someone in the past will only make you their slave in the 'here and now'.

Let your passions lead your life You were born to share with the rest of the world what you love to do

of the world what you love to do and do best. So do so! Put what you love first, above all. Follow what you love and remember that love never considers fear. When you love what

you do, you naturally get better at it and eventually excel at the task. You are also happy doing it, which is more than can be said for the majority of people who work. With love as your guiding light, your success in life is assured because you will enjoy both happiness and success.

Be action oriented and take baby steps

Wisdom is meaningful only if it is followed up with action. To learn how to swim, you must get wet. Don't be too concerned about how much there is to do, or how big some of the tasks seem, just do what you can do. Take baby steps and get one thing done at

a time, again and again. Just do what's in your power, and brush aside all other concerns. Remember what the Chinese philosopher, Lao Tzu, said, 'The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step'. Wisdom lays the foundation, but it is action that finally creates a better life and future.

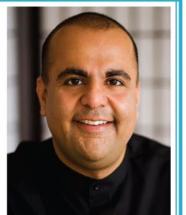
Look at the bright side

You have two choices in every situation—either curse the darkness, or light a candle. Choose the more positive attitude, always, regardless of the situation. It comes at the same expense as the negative thought or choice, but with extremely different consequences. One produces stress and the other releases it. Remember that if you keep your face to the sunshine, you cannot see the shadows.

Count your Blessings

We frequently tell ourselves the story of what we lack, what others have that we don't, what we missed, of opportunities that got away. But you can't be happy if you spend time focusing on what you should have, would have, or could have done in the past. Instead, begin every morning by consciously counting your blessings, and recognizing the fact that if you're reading this magazine, you are in a better position than the majority of our world. Stay focused on your full-ness, not your empty-ness. Stay focused on what's good in your life, and work to make the rest better.





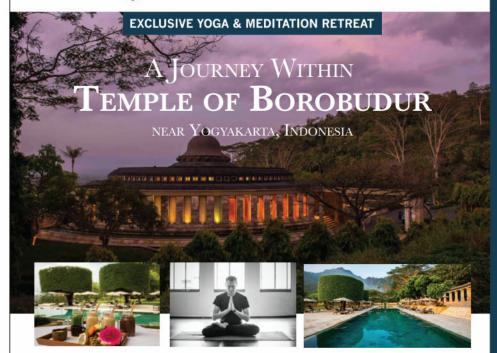
Meditation and wisdom are the foundations of the ancient wisdom of the Upanishads (also known as the Vedanta). Starting from the sages of the Upanishads and down through the centuries, the enlightened have spoken about the importance of meditation to live a happy and peaceful life.

Invest in meditation, joy and awareness—because those are truly the best gifts you can give yourself in 2017.

Vikas Malkani is one of Asia's leading teachers of meditation, a best-selling author and the founder of SoulCentre, a premier centre for Meditation, Mindfulness and Stress Management in Singapore, www.soulcentre.org







18 - 21 MAY 2017

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The retreat program will focus on the connection between the mind and our perception of reality. As we delve deeper into the essence of consciousness and mindfulness, Fabrice and Cathrin will guide the participants in daily meditations, silent times, and gentle yoga classes. We will visit our surroundings—including the site of Borobudur at sunrise and the quaint villages nestled in the lush Menoreh hills.

In addition, each participant will get one hour of personalized one-on-one coaching and to keep the experience unique and exclusive, we limit the size of the group to about 12 participants.

THE PROGRAM INCLUDES:

- Three nights' accommodation in luxury at the Amanjiwo resort and airport transfers
- Healthy breakfasts and gourmet dinners mixing Indonesian and Western traditions
- A 90-minute Aman signature Javanese massage
- Daily activities, visits, and treks including Borobudur temple at dawn
- Morning and evening Yoga, one-on-one coaching, meditation, group discussions, and lectures.

PARTICIPATION FEE:

Double occupancy US\$1,930 per person Single occupancy US\$2,560 per person

Pool villas available, rates upon request. Participants who confirm their booking before 28 Feb 2017 will be upgraded to a Borobudur View Villa.



Boost your breakfast

Sure, a steaming bowl of steel-cut oats is a great a.m. meal, but if oats are the only whole grain in your morning rotation, you're missing out, says Kat Brown, RD, RYT, a dietitian and yoga teacher in Menlo Park, California. "There are so many other surprising grains that you can turn into delicious breakfasts," she says. To avoid oatmeal burnout, try one of these simple, tasty recipes:

BARLEY In a bowl, top ½ cup cooked barley with nuts, seeds, and a drizzle of maple syrup—or whichever toppings you usually add to your oatmeal.

BROWN RICE In a bowl, combine 1 egg, ½ cup cooked brown rice, and ½ cup cauliflower "rice" (grated raw cauliflower). Form into pancakes and fry in olive or coconut oil.

FARRO In a frying pan over medium heat, add 1 tablespoon coconut oil, ½ cup cooked farro, ¼ cup each chopped onions and tomatoes, and a handful of scallions. Cook 10 minutes and top with a fried egg and half an avocado, sliced.

MILLET In a bowl, mix ½ cup cooked millet, 1 cubed apple, and a dash of cinnamon. For a creamier texture, cook the millet in almond milk instead of water. MEGHAN RABBITT



Taco time

Spice up your dinner time with creative tacos. By Karen Asp

OMNIVORE

chicken al carbon tacos

serves 6

Chicken can be grilled or roasted, too. Either way, you'll love the zing from the spicy citrus marinade.

- 1 cup chopped cilantro
- 2/3 cup fresh orange juice
- 1/3 cup fresh lime juice
- 8 cloves garlic
- 3 jalapeño peppers, chopped
- 1 lb boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 12 corn tortillas
- head white or purple cabbage, sliced thin

Lime wedges for garnish

In a blender, purée cilantro, orange juice, lime juice, garlic, and jalapeños until smooth. Place chicken in a glass container and pour juice mixture over chicken. Cover and refrigerate at least one hour—or preferably overnight. On a grill over mediumhigh heat, cook chicken, flipping once, until cooked through, about 8 minutes. Remove chicken and cover to keep warm. In a skillet over medium heat, toast each tortilla about 30 seconds per side. Slice chicken into half-inch strips and divide it equally among the tortillas; top with cabbage. Serve with pico de gallo (see recipe below) and lime.

NUTRITIONAL INFO 54 calories per two tacos, 4 g fat (1 g saturated), 38 g carbs, 8 g fiber, 21 g protein, 91 mg sodium

VEGETARIAN

sweet potato tacos with spicy black beans

serves 6

These hearty tacos feature a drizzle of maple syrup to balance the super-spicy habanero pepper.

- 2 large sweet potatoes, peeled
- 12 corn tortillas
- 1 15-oz can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1/2 cup grated cheese (Monterey Jack, cheddar, or Muenster)
- 1 habanero pepper, minced
- 1/4 cup pure maple syrup

In a pot, boil sweet potatoes for 10 minutes. When cool enough to handle, cut potatoes into ¼-inch-thick slices. On a grill over medium-high heat, cook potatoes, flipping once, 8 minutes. In a skillet over medium heat, toast each tortilla about 30 seconds per side. Divide potatoes, beans, and cheese among tortillas. In a bowl, combine habanero and maple syrup; drizzle over tacos. Season with salt to taste. Serve with pico de gallo (see recipe below).

NUTRITIONAL INFO og calories per two tacos, 5 g fat (2 g saturated), 60 g carbs, 10 g fiber, 11 g protein, 262 mg sodium

VEGAN

grilled avocado tacos

serves 6

Rich, smoky grilled avocado and creamy beans combine to create a satisfying meal.

- 2 ripe avocados, halved and pitted
- 12 asparagus
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 12 corn tortillas
- 2 serrano peppers, chopped
- 1 15-oz can vegan refried beans

Brush avocados and asparagus with olive oil; season with salt and black pepper. On a grill over mediumhigh heat, cook asparagus, flipping once, and avocados (in peel) with fresh side down, about 2 minutes. In a skillet over medium heat, toast each tortilla about 30 seconds per side. Peel and slice avocados. Divide avocado, asparagus, serranos, and beans among tortillas. Serve with pico de gallo (see recipe below).

NUTRITIONAL INFO 311 calories per two tacos, 14 g fat (2 g saturated), 43 g carbs, 14 g fiber, 9 g protein, 340 mg sodium

Spicy pico de gallo

serves

In a bowl, combine 5 finely diced plum tomatoes, 1 chopped white onion, 1 cup chopped cilantro, 1 minced jalapeño, 1 minced serrano pepper, and the juice of 1 lime; season to taste with salt and black pepper. Refrigerate for at least one hour before serving.



FOR VEGAN BAKING

ANIMAL-FRIENDLY SWEETENERS

Strict vegans often avoid white sugar because it's filtered through cow-bone charcoal. However, raw sugars aren't filtered that way and are considered vegan. Instead of honey, which vegans leave to the bees, you can use maple syrup, or a fruit-based honey replacement.

REPLACING EGGS

To bake without eggs, you need to replace the binding power of egg whites. Use binders made from ground flaxseeds or starches, such as arrowroot, potato starch, or tapioca. To replace 1 egg, whisk 1 tbsp of finely ground flaxseeds with 1/4 cup water. Or whisk together 1 tsp arrowroot, 1/2 tsp baking powder, 1/4 tsp guar gum, and 3 tbsp water. A store-bought egg-replacer powder, such as Ener-G brand, combines a few starches with some leavening. For moisture and body, use a purée of banana, pumpkin, or tofu. Silken-tofu purée is great in cheesecakes and can replace half the fat in cookies and muffins.

PANTRY STAPLES

Vegan sugar, ground flaxseeds, maple syrup, egg replacer, pumpkin purée, silken tofu, raw cashews.

FOR GLUTEN-FREE BAKING

FLOURS

Most grocery stores now carry at least a few gluten-free flour blends. They typically contain four kinds of flours, including starches like potato or tapioca to help bind and tenderize. If you are trying to go low-carb, seek out nut- or bean-based blends, which are generally higher in protein, fiber, and other nutrients; use them in recipes with chocolate, spices, or other strong flavors that mask the flour's slight beany notes. For lightly flavored cakes, such as angel food, choose a mild-flavored blend with white-rice flour at the top of the ingredients list. Single flours like almond, coconut, and quinoa work well, too, but be sure to add a binder.

BINDERS

When baking without wheat, you need to add a binding ingredient to re-create the gluten-based structure that forms when wheat flour is mixed with liquid and that serves to hold ingredients together. Otherwise, your goodie will fall flat or crumble. Replace 1/4 cup liquid with one egg. For a vegan alternative, mix 1 tablespoon ground flaxseeds with 1/4 cup water in place of one egg—or try xanthan or guar gum, powdered binding ingredients sold at health food stores. For bread, use 1 teaspoon of gum per cup of flour; for cakes and cookies, it's just half a teaspoon—any more and they turn out rubbery.

PANTRY STAPLES

Gluten-free flour blend, eggs or flaxseeds, xanthan and guar gums.





» vegan maple-pecan pie

Cashew cream combined with a hint of apple and cinnamon creates a luscious filling perfect for the holidays. A maple-pecan topping adds a sweet crunch.

- tbsp refined coconut oil, plus extra for greasing
- oz graham crackers
- cup maple syrup, divided
- tsp cinnamon
- 21/2 cups raw cashews, soaked overnight and drained
- cup unsweetened vanilla almond milk
- 3/4 cup raw cane sugar
- 1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce
- tbsp fresh lemon juice
- tbsp arrowroot
- tsp vanilla

11/2 cups pecan halves

Heat oven to 350°F. Grease a 10-inch springform pan with oil. In a food processor, grind crackers to fine crumbs. Drizzle in ¼ cup syrup and 3 tbsp oil; add cinnamon, and process to mix. Sprinkle crumb mixture into pan. With damp fingers, press firmly into pan, leaving slightly thicker edges. Bake, 10 minutes. Let cool.

In a food processor, grind cashews until they form a thick paste. Gradually add almond milk, processing until smooth and creamy. Add sugar, applesauce, lemon juice, arrowroot, vanilla, and a pinch of salt, and process to mix. Spoon cashew mixture into crust, spreading it smoothly. Bake 30 minutes.

In a saucepan, bring remaining 3/4 cup syrup to a boil. Reduce heat to simmer, stirring frequently, 5 minutes. Arrange pecans on top of pie in concentric circles to cover the surface. Drizzle hot syrup neatly over nuts.

Bake until pie is slightly puffed and a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean, 20 minutes. Let cool on a rack, then refrigerate to chill. Serve cold.

NUTRITIONAL INFO 465 calories per serving, 25 g fat (6 g saturated), 56 g carbs, 3 g fiber, 7 g protein, 161 mg sodium





gluten-free cranberry upside-down cake

SERVES 10

In this luscious dessert, tangy cranberries are encased in just enough buttery cake, while a blend of spices and orange zest adds exciting flavor.

- 8 tbsp unsalted butter, divided
- cup light-brown sugar
- 2 cups cranberries (thawed, if frozen)
- 11/2 cups gluten-free flour
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp ground cloves
- 1/2 tsp baking soda

- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp xanthan gum
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 3 large eggs
 Zest of 1 orange
- 1/2 cup buttermilk
- 1 tsp vanilla

Heat oven to 350°F. In an 11-inch springform pan, melt 4 tbsp butter in oven, 5 minutes. Sprinkle pan bottom evenly with brown sugar and cranberries.

In a bowl, combine flour, cinnamon, ginger, baking powder, cloves, baking soda, salt, and xanthan gum. In a stand mixer, cream remaining 4 tbsp butter.

Beat in sugar, stopping to scrape down sides as needed, until fluffy. Beat in

eggs one at a time. Set mixer on low; add flour mixture and orange zest, and process to mix. Scrape sides. Slowly mix in buttermilk and vanilla until smooth. Set mixer to high and beat, 2 minutes. Drop spoonfuls of batter evenly over cranberries; gently spread to cover berries.

Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cake comes out with moist crumbs, about 40 minutes. Let cool in pan on a rack, 5 minutes. Place a plate over the cake and, holding firmly, flip to invert the cake onto the plate. Let cool.

NUTRITIONAL INFO 307 calories per serving, 12 g fat (6 g saturated), 49 g carbs, 3 g fiber, 4 g protein, 219 mg sodium





dairy-free double chocolate chunk cookies

MAKES 14 COOKIES

Plentiful dark-chocolate chunks and vegetable oil make these chewy cookies rich and satisfying. No milk chocolate or butter is necessary.

1/2 oz unsweetened baking chocolate

- 2 tbsp olive or canola oil
- ı large egg
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 3/4 cup light-brown sugar
- 1/2 cup unbleached flour
- 1/4 cup whole-wheat pastry flour
- 1/4 cup cocoa
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 3/4 cup sweetened dark-chocolate chunks

Heat oven to 350°F. In a double boiler over

medium heat, combine baking chocolate and oil. Heat, stirring, until chocolate melts and mixture is smooth. Let cool to room temperature. Whisk in egg and vanilla.

In a bowl, whisk together sugar, flours, cocoa, baking soda, and salt. Stir in the chocolate mixture. It will be stiff, so use your hands to knead it all together. Mix in chocolate chunks.

Divide dough into 14 pieces and roll into balls. Place 3 inches apart on 2 parchment paper—lined baking sheets. Dampen hands with water and gently flatten the balls to 3/4-inch thick.

Bake cookies for 5 minutes. Exchange the position of the baking sheets and bake until cookies are slightly puffed and darker around the edges, 5 minutes. Cool on sheets, 5 minutes. Transfer to racks to cool completely. NUTRITIONAL INFO 141 calories per serving, 7 g fat (3 g saturated), 21 g carbs, 2 g fiber, 2 g protein, 137 mg sodium

FOR NONDAIRY BAKING

VEGETABLE OILS

Replace butter with liquid plant-based oil rather than using margarine, which contains processed or partially hydrogenated oils. It's an easy swap in buttery cookie recipes: Just use 10 tbsp oil for each cup of butter. Choose a heart-healthy option like extra-virgin olive oil (rest assured, the grassy flavor bakes off), or walnut or canola oil. For flaky results in pastries, such as pie crusts, scones, and biscuits, chill the oil first and drizzle it into the flour slowly, then quickly add any remaining liquid and shape the pastry. Or replace butter in pastries with equal parts chilled and solidified coconut oil. To use, simply grate oil into flakes and toss with the flour. Try raw-nut purées or nut butters to add richness in baked goods: Replace half the fats with peanut or almond butter in granola bars, cookies, and cakes.

CREAMINESS

Replace milk or cream with nondairy milks; almond and coconut are the most neutral tasting and have good body for baking fluffy cakes and muffins. Higher-fat canned coconut milk is more like cream, great for ganache or ice cream. To make "whipped cream", chill a can of coconut milk overnight. Pour off watery liquid and scoop solid cream into a chilled bowl. Add 1-2 tbsp confectioner's sugar and whip until fluffy. Chill until ready to serve. For a stand-in for cream cheese or sour cream, make cashew cream: Soak 2 cups raw cashews overnight, drain, then purée in a food processor, gradually adding water until creamy. This yields 2 1/2 cups thick or 3 1/2 cups "pourable" cream. Sweeten with agave or maple syrup.

PANTRY STAPLES

Olive or canola oil, nondairy milk, canned coconut milk.

Robin Asbell is a chef and author of eight cookbooks, including *Sweet & Easy Vegan*.

The new year is a good time to do an emotional-baggage check, to clear out what no longer serves you and make room for what will. And your chakras the seven energy centers that run along your central channel—are a tool to help you repack. Here, yoga teacher Giselle Mari shows you how to use your chakras to resolve any negativity holding you back so you become a lighter, brighter version of you.

WHEN GISELLE MARI graduated college with a degree in clinical and counseling psychology, she thought she'd done the work to resolve issues from her childhood. "It was just me and my mom-my dad wasn't really in my life-money was tight, and life felt unstable," says Mari. "I was convinced I had processed how growing up in that kind of challenging environment impacted my beliefs about myself and the world."

Then, Mari started doing chakra work and realized how deeply rooted some of those beliefs were—and how that old anger and resentment were keeping her from the ultimate goal of yoga: a feeling of oneness (versus otherness). "Working

with the chakras using asana, mantra, and observation is an efficient way to eliminate old hurt and bad patterns," she says. "When I looked atand let go of-my inner turmoil and pain, my life shifted for the better. I don't carry around that emotional baggage, and as a result, that old karma isn't driving how I operate in the world."

It's a bold promise, and working with your chakras is no easy task, says Mari, but the results are worth the effort. Read on as Mari shows you how to look at the karmic relationships associated with each chakra so you can examine any issues that surface and start to rewrite your old stories into new ones that serve you on your yogic path.

STORY BY MEGHAN RABBITT • SEQUENCE BY GISELLE MARI • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF NELSON

YOUR INNER LIGHT, BRIGHT

Meet the seven chakras. By looking at how these energy centers relate to our physical and emotional selves, we can shine a light on our deep, dark subconscious, bring any unresolved issues to the surface, and take the first steps toward healing ourselves.

SAHASRARA CHAKRA

Translation: "Thousand-petaled lotus"

Location: Hovering above your head

Related organ: Pituitary gland

Karmic relationship: God, the Divine

ANAHATA CHAKRA

Translation: "Unstruck"

Location: Center of the chest

Related organs: Heart, thymus

Karmic relationship:

Others who have hurt you

SVADHISTHANA CHAKRA

Translation: "Her favorite standing place"

Location: Below the navel, at the sacrum

Related organs: Reproductive organs

Karmic relationship: Romantic, sexual, creative,

or business partners; spouses, partners, or children

AJNA CHAKRA

Translation: "Command center"

Location: Between your eyebrows in the deep interior of your brain

Related organ: Pineal gland

Karmic relationship: Guru and teachers

VISUDDHA CHAKRA

Translation: "Pure"

Location: Throat at the base of the neck

Related organs: Thyroid gland, vocal chords, ears, skin

Karmic relationship:

How you see yourself

MANIPURA CHAKRA

Translation: "Jewel in the city"

Location: Solar plexus

region, above the navel

Related organs: Stomach, liver, spleen, pancreas, intestines

Karmic relationship: Others you have hurt

MULADHARA CHAKRA

Translation: "Root place"

Location: Base of your spine, or the coccyx

Related organs: Adrenal glands

Karmic relationship: Mother, father, family,

environment, home, workplace, money, job, career

THE TUNE-YOUR-CHAKRA

PRACTICE

READY TO RELEASE what's not serving you anymore and chart a new path forward? Get your journal and yoga mat handy. "As you answer the questions for each chakra on these pages, write down who and what come up for you and let yourself feel the range of emotions that may surface," says Mari. Then, chant the *bija mantra*—a seed sound that activates the energy of the chakra—as you practice the corresponding pose, and again note what's been revealed. "Each mantra

is like the passcode to the chakra," says Mari.
"Each sound helps awaken our consciousness to what we've packed away in the recesses of our body. The mantras combined with the poses and your awareness create these openings so that the things you haven't yet dealt with can emerge."
If you're working on a specific issue, you can go right to the related chakra; or, you can work through all of the chakras as a sequence, starting with a seated meditation.

MULADHARA CHAKRA

KEY WORD Stability

BIJA MANTRA Lam (pronounced lum)

ASANA Standing, balancing poses.
"How your beginnings began determines how you operate in the world," says Mari. "Working with this chakra can help you see if you're always in survival mode and on guard—and help you move into a more peaceful, balanced state."

ASK Did you have stability when you were growing up? What was your financial situation? When you think of your childhood, what comes up?

VIRABHADRASANA II Warrior Pose II

Stand on your mat with your feet 3 to 4 feet apart, your back foot turned in about 45 degrees and your front heel in line with your back arch. Raise your arms to shoulder height as you bend your front leg toward a 90-degree angle. As you stretch your hands away from your midline, feel the stability in your legs and feet. Stay here for 8 to 10 breaths, then repeat on the other side.



SVADHISTHANA CHAKRA

KEY WORD Creativity

BIJA MANTRA Vam (pronounced *vum*)

ASANA Forward bends and hip openers.

"This area of the body relates to any creative endeavor or partnership, including your sexual relationships," says Mari. "Forward bends and hip openers offer deep release, which can be particularly helpful when dealing with the resentment, anger, and blame that have a tendency to surface when we work with this chakra."

ASK Is there anyone—a current or former sexual partner or business associate—toward whom you harbor great resentment, anger, or blame? Is there anything inhibiting your ability to feel free and express yourself?

PASCHIMOTTANASANA

Seated Forward Bend

Sit on the floor, with your legs extended in front of you in Dandasana (Staff Pose). Inhale, and keeping your torso long, lean forward from your hip joints, lengthening your tailbone away from the back of your pelvis. Hold onto the sides of your feet with your elbows fully extended; if this isn't possible, hold onto a strap looped around your feet. With each inhalation, slightly lift and lengthen your torso; with each exhalation, release a little more fully into the forward bend. Stay in this pose anywhere from 1 to 3 minutes.



KEY WORD Confidence

BIJA MANTRA Ram (pronounced rum)

ASANA Twists.

An imbalanced solar-plexus chakra can manifest as fear and disempowerment, says Mari. It's also a space where people we have hurt reside. "In some, an imbalance in this chakra manifests as aggressive or controlling behavior, whereas in others it can lead to neediness and lack of direction or self-esteem to take action," she says. The goal? To feel comfortable with your own inherent power, so you can fully step into the ways you can positively impact the collective without harming others.

ASK Are there areas of your life in which you feel powerless? If so, how does this manifest? Who do you disempower in order to feel more powerful yourself?

ARDHA MATSYENDRASANA

Half Lord of the Fishes Pose, variation

Sit on the floor in Staff Pose. Bend your right leg and place your right foot outside your left knee. Press your right hand against the floor just behind your right sitting bone, and set your left elbow on the inside or outside of your right thigh near the knee (depending on how deeply you want to twist). On an exhale, twist toward the inside of your right thigh. Press your inner right foot into the mat as you lengthen your torso. With every inhalation, lift a little more through your sternum; with every exhalation, twist a little deeper. Stay for 30 seconds to 1 minute, then release with an exhalation, return to Staff Pose, and repeat on the other side.

ANAHATA CHAKRA

KEY WORDS Compassion, unconditional love, forgiveness

BIJA MANTRA Yam (pronounced yum)

ASANA Backbends.

When most yogis think of the heart chakra, they assume "opening" it is the goal. And while heart-opening poses can remind practitioners of the compassion and joy that's inherent in them, Mari says it can be just as beneficial to see this chakra as a bridge between the lower and upper chakras. "It's how we integrate the manifest with the spiritual," she says. "It's how we feel self-compassion and unconditional love toward ourselves, and then share it with others."

ASK What are the ways in which my pain or fear of being hurt by others has shut me down?

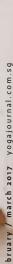
SETU BANDHA SARVANGASANA Bridge Pose

Lie on your back, bend your knees, and bring your heels toward your sitting bones. Then, press your feet into the mat and lift your pelvis toward the ceiling. Tuck your shoulders underneath themselves and rotate your palms so they face upward; you can also interlace your fingers underneath your pelvis. Press your upper arms and feet into the mat, isometrically squeeze your thighs toward one another, and lengthen your tailbone toward your knees while keeping your chin off your chest. Hold here for 5 breaths, and then lower back to your mat from shoulders to hips.

Rest for 2 breaths, and then repeat 2 more times.



Bay Area-based teacher and model Giselle Mari teaches at yoga studios, conferences, and festivals around the world. She has trained with Sharon Gannon, David Life, Sarah Powers, and Jai Uttal. Mari also received her advanced certification with Jivamukti Yoga and has served as a faculty member in their teacher training and as a mentor for new teachers. She is also a mom and wife, and has four dogs and two frogs.





AJNA CHAKRA KEY WORD Humility

BIJA MANTRA Om (pronounced aum)

ASANA Balasana (Child's Pose).

Commonly known as the home of the third eye, this chakra is associated with humility. "The teachers we have in our lives, who come in the form of parents, spiritual teachers, and even our children, are simply us—outside ourselves," says Mari. "We often think a teacher is one we love and adore, but sometimes the best teachers really give us the business."

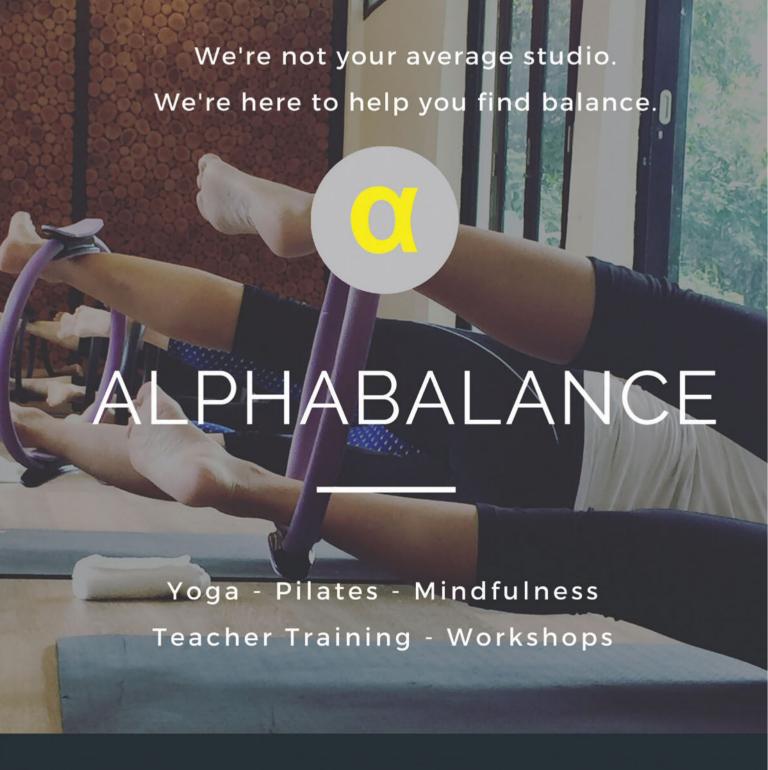
BALASANA Child's Pose

From Tabletop (on hands and knees, with your knees under your hips, and wrists under your shoulders), bring your big toes to touch and separate your knees to hip width; as you exhale, lay your torso down between your thighs. Lengthen your tailbone toward the back of your mat as you stretch your arms in front of you, or reach back and hold your heels. In this version, place the center of your forehead (home to your third eye, or ajna chakra) on the mat.

Stay anywhere from 30 seconds to a few minutes.







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The Art of Sequencing

WE GIVE YOU THE BUILDING BLOCKS FOR A WELL-ROUNDED SEQUENCE SO YOU HAVE THE FLEXIBILITY TO CREATE A HOME PRACTICE THAT MEETS YOUR NEEDS.

BY JASON CRANDELL | ILLUSTRATIONS BY MCKIBILLO

e've all attended classes that elevate our practice. When the class comes to a close, we walk away empowered, energized, centered. Such results are no coincidence—they're the result of intentional pose selection and sequencing.

Sequencing is one of the most nuanced and powerful tools that experienced teachers have at their disposal for teaching unique, transformative classes, and there are many ways of approaching sequencing in contemporary hatha yoga. Mastering the art of sequencing takes years of study, but you can learn some basic building blocks that will allow you to build a home practice with confidence.

Establishing an independent home practice is a rite of passage for yoga practitioners. It's the point at which you really learn to move at your own pace, listen and respond to your body, and develop greater consistency and frequency in your yoga practice. Like getting a driver's license, practicing on your own empowers you and gives you new freedom to explore.

While practicing yoga at home sounds easy enough, even experienced practitioners can be uncertain about which poses to choose and how to put them together. On the following pages, you'll find the building blocks for a well-rounded sequence made up of eight pose groups: opening poses, Sun Salutations, standing poses, inversions, backbends, twists, forward bends, and closing postures, ending with Savasana (Corpse Pose). Each pose—and each category of poses—prepares your body and mind for the next so that your practice feels like it has a beginning, middle, and end that flow seamlessly together. By following this methodology, you'll create a sequence that warms you up slowly and safely, builds in intensity before peaking with challenging postures, and then slowly brings you back down to a quiet, relaxed finish.

Consider the sample sequence on the following pages to be a starting place from which you can tailor a practice to suit your moods and needs. You can vary the poses within each of the categories. You can make your practice longer or shorter, as time permits. And once you have a basic understanding of the different postural categories and begin to notice the energetic effects they have on your body, you can start to experiment with creating sequences that suit your needs on a given day, be they focusing on a particular area of the body or working up to a challenging pose.

In this basic sequence, these categories progress according to their intensity and the amount of preparation they require.

Placing twists
between backbends
and forward bends
in a sequence helps
the spine to transition
between these
two extremes.

Get Started

Each pose in this basic sequence builds on the one before, preparing your mind and body for what comes next.

This sample sequence is designed to last about an hour. For a well-balanced practice, spend about the same amount of time on each category of poses. Or, if you're seeking the energetic benefits of a particular group of poses, you may choose to spend more time doing the poses in that specific category.

OPENING POSES

THE WHY The opening poses of a sequence wake up the major muscle groups and provide a transition from the busyness of your day to a more internally focused practice.

THE HOW Include some physical movement that gradually warms your body, a breath-awareness component, and a contemplative element that helps you direct your attention to what is happening inside your heart and mind. A simple way to do this is to start with a few minutes of seated meditation.

Next, take a few poses that slowly warm the major muscle groups of your body. Your practice puts a significant demand on your hips, shoulders, and spine, so it's a good idea to incorporate two to four postures that gently wake up one or more of these regions. Since abdominal stability and awareness are important for all of your poses, you could also choose to start with a few corestrengthening poses to wake up your center. As you become more experienced and intuitive, you may decide that you're going to focus on a specific area of your body in your practice, such as your outer hips, and let that influence your choice of opening poses. For example, in a hip-focused practice, you might choose to open with Pigeon Pose, Gomukhasana (Cow Face Pose), and Cross-Legged Forward Bend.

In this sample sequence, you'll focus on opening your shoulders while seated in Virasana (Hero Pose), which stretches the fronts of your thighs and provides you with a stable posture while you open your upper body. But even more important than preparing a specific part of the body at this stage is initiating an all-around transition to practice for your body and mind.

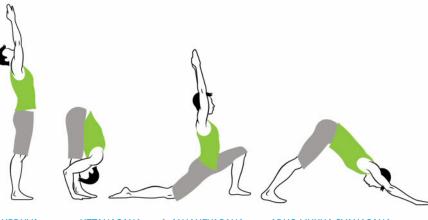
OPENING POSES

1 VIRASANA Hero Pose, variation (palms on thighs)

2 VIRASANA Hero Pose, variation (fingers interlaced, arms overhead)

3 VIRASANA Hero Pose, variation (with Garudasana arms)

SUN SALUTATIONS



4 URDHVA **HASTASANA Upward Salute**

5 UTTANASANA Standing Forward Bend

6 ANJANEYASANA Low Lunge

7 ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA Downward-Facing Dog Pose

SUN SALUTATIONS

THE WHY Surya Namaskar, or Sun Salutation, picks up where opening poses leave off, integrating breath and movement, generating warmth, and invigorating the entire body. Its hypnotic, thorough movements quiet the mind and prepare the body for the postures that follow.

THE HOW Tailor your practice by deciding which Sun Salutation you want to practice, the pace at which you want to move, and how many rounds you want to do. If you want to begin slowly and focus on stretching the front of your hips, start with a Sun Salutation that includes both High Lunge and Anjaneyasana (Low Lunge). If you want a more vigorous, heating practice, you might start with Surya Namaskar A and B, in which you jump through the transitions instead of stepping through them.

Each movement in the Salutation should last the duration of an inhalation or an exhalation. Depending on your time and energy, you can vary the number of Sun Salutations that you do—as few as 1 or 2, or as many as 15. It's a good idea to warm the body thoroughly with Sun Salutations before you do standing postures so that your legs and hips are ready.

STANDING POSES

THE WHY Standing poses create strength, stamina, and flexibility throughout the entire body. They work the major muscle groups, such as the quadriceps, gluteals, hamstrings, and core. Standing poses often precede backbends, twists, and forward bends in a sequence because they are so efficient at preparing your body for these poses.

THE HOW It's a good idea to include at least four standing postures in each sequence. There are various ways to organize the order of the postures you choose, but a tried-and-true method is to select poses whose actions complement each other. For example, Virabhadrasana I (Warrior Pose I) and Virabhadrasana II (Warrior Pose II) rotate the pelvis differently so that when they are combined, they create a balanced action. Similarly, Utthita Trikonasana (Extended Triangle Pose) and Parivrtta Trikonasana (Revolved Triangle Pose) complement each other by stretching opposing muscle groups.

Another method is to tailor the standing poses in relation to the postures you will be doing later. For example, if you want to focus on twists in your practice, you could choose to do standing postures that include twists, like Revolved Triangle Pose and Parivrtta Parsvakonasana (Revolved Side Angle Pose).

STANDING POSES



8 VIRABHADRASANA I Warrior Pose I



9 VIRABHADRASANA II Warrior Pose II



10 UTTHITA TRIKONASANA **Extended Triangle Pose**



11 PARIVRTTA TRIKONASANA Revolved Triangle Pose

INVERSIONS

THE WHY Getting upside down is a key element of a well-rounded practice. Handstand, Forearm Balance, and Headstand stretch and strengthen the upper body and facilitate circulation in the upper extremities. These poses are stimulating to the nervous system and are physically demanding; thus they can be the energetic peak of your practice. (While Shoulderstand is an inversion, it is a much less vigorous and less heating pose, so in this sequence it is practiced at the end with the closing postures.)

THE HOW If you're not familiar with these inversions, it's important to learn them under the guidance of an experienced teacher before practicing them at home. If you're not ready for Handstand, Forearm Balance, or Headstand, simply skip this category or take a long Downward-Facing Dog. Depending on your time, strength, and comfort level, you can repeat Handstand and Forearm Balance a few times. If you're practicing Headstand, do it once per practice and stay as long as you are comfortable.

BACKBENDS

THE WHY Along with inversions, backbends form the peak of the intensity curve in this sequence, since these are demanding postures that require a strong degree of effort. Backbends stretch the front of the body, strengthen the back of the body, and balance the effects of time spent sitting in chairs. Most people find backbending postures stimulating, so you might choose to emphasize backbends in your practice if you want a burst of physical and mental energy.

THE HOW Begin with prone (face-down) backbends like Salabhasana (Locust Pose) or Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose). Because prone postures strengthen and warm your spinal muscles, they are good preparation for supine (face-up) poses, such as Setu Bandha Sarvangasana (Bridge Pose), which create a greater range of movement in the shoulders, spine, and hips. It's a good idea to repeat each pose two or three times, since most bodies will require a few rounds to open completely.

TWISTS

THE WHY Twists relieve tension in the spine, hips, and shoulders, and they gently stretch your hips and shoulders. These poses usually produce a balanced energetic tone that is closer to the grounding quality of forward bends than the stimulating nature of backbends. Placing them between backbends and forward bends in a sequence helps the spine to transition between these two extremes.

THE HOW Twists encompass a broad spectrum of postures, including reclined, seated, standing, and inverted variations. In a well-balanced sequence like the one below, it is nice to include two to four twists.

If you include standing twists like Revolved Triangle Pose or Revolved Side Angle Pose, do them first; standing twists are good preparation for seated twists. When you practice seated twists, begin with a mild, accessible twist like Bharadvajasana (Bharadvaja's Twist) before proceeding to more intense twists like Ardha Matsyendrasana. If you're looking for a long, slow, soothing twist that will settle your energy and relax your nervous system, you might choose to practice a reclined twist here.

INVERSIONS

BACKBENDS

TWISTS



12 ADHO MUKHA VRKSASANA Handstand



13 SALABHASANA Locust Pose



14 SETU BANDHA SARVANGASANA Bridge Pose



15 BHARADVAJASANA Bharadvaja's Twist



16 ARDHA MATSYENDRASANA Half Lord of the Fishes Pose

FORWARD BENDS

THE WHY Forward bends typically have a calming effect on the mind, emotions, and nerves, which is why they're often practiced toward the end of a sequence. These postures facilitate deep relaxation by stretching the muscles of the back and decreasing the stimulation of the sensory organs.

THE HOW When choosing forward bends, it's ideal to pick at least one posture that stretches the hamstrings, such as Janu Sirsasana (Head-to-the-Knee Pose), and one that opens the outer hips, such as Cross-Legged Forward Bend. This will promote greater balance in your body by creating more range of movement in both regions. Settle in to both postures for 8 to 10 slow, smooth, relaxed breaths.

CLOSING POSTURES

THE WHY Closing postures complete a sequence by quieting the mind and relaxing the body. While opening postures focus on waking up the body and generating momentum for the practice to come, the closing postures help you surrender and absorb the practice.

THE HOW To get the full benefit, you'll want to spend at least 6 to 10 minutes total in these calming postures. There are four basic types of closing postures: Salamba Sarvangasana (Supported Shoulderstand), restorative poses, seated meditation, and Savasana (Corpse Pose). You don't have to include each type in a single sequence (though if you did Headstand earlier, it's a good idea to include Shoulderstand as a closing posture since the two poses complement each other). And whether you include any other closing postures in your sequence, ending your practice by lying quietly in Savasana is a must.

Jason Crandell teaches alignment-based vinyasa yoga workshops and teacher trainings around the world. For more information, visit him at jasonyoga.com.

FORWARD BENDS

CLOSING POSTURES



17 Cross-Legged Forward Bend

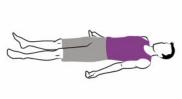
18 JANU SIRSASANA Head-to-the-Knee Pose



19 SALAMBA SARVANGASANA Supported Shoulderstand



20 Any simple seated posture for meditation



21 SAVASANA Corpse Pose

simple ways to find serenity this year.

STORY BY HILLARI DOWDLE

round this time every year, life has a way of spinning out of control. You come back from a break and before you know, work and family duties multiply once again and every day becomes a race to get things done. As a result, your own "me-time" and your practice takes a backseat because your schedule is so packed. You just don't have the time. But you do. Instead of scrolling through your Instagram feed a few times today, pause to reconnect with yourself with one of these seven simple ways to reset. The result? A calmer, more content you. Adopt a morning ritual that allows you to celebrate yesterday's successes and set a positive intention for today. "I've found that if I don't do my ritual first thing in the morning, my day consumes me," says Amy Ippoliti, a Boulder, Colorado-based yoga teacher. "If I do it, I remember that the point is to love my life. I can approach the day and its stresses with a positive attitude." Ippoliti's a.m. ritual: Sit on a meditation cushion **START** or even at the kitchen table with a pen, notebook, and a deck of inspiring cards. Be still for a minute **YOUR** and imagine breathing through your heart. With every inhalation, call to mind something you're deeply appreciative of. It could be anything—your DAY cat, your car, your job, your family. After a few breaths, jot down in your journal what came to **RIGHT** mind. Then, choose a card and take in the image or message. Finally, close with a few minutes of meditation. "I do some Ujjayi Pranayama and think about the kind of day I want to have," says Ippoliti.





crack a smile

Most of us think of asanas as poses that involve the precise placement of limbs, spine, head, and torso. What we don't typically consider in the practice is our faces, or how one simple exercise the smile—can be highly effective off the mat. "Smiling is one of the most powerful things you can do for personal transformation," says Mirka Kraftsow, co-founder of the American Vinivoga Institute. "Choose to smile and bring the same awareness to your smile that you would to any other pose. Even if you're not feeling particularly happy, this practice will pick you up because the brain doesn't know the difference between a spontaneous smile and an intentional one." Several studies back up Kraftsow's advice, with research citing an expression-emotion feedback loop that produces feelings of calm and pleasure when triggered by a smile. Try it, and notice how you begin to cultivate friendliness toward everyone around you, says Kraftsow. "You'll begin to notice all the sources of happiness that surround you, even on your worst days," she says.

CHANT AWAY YOUR CARES

At any point in the day when things feel overwhelming, try practicing this simple vinyasa taught by A.G. Mohan, a longtime student of Krishnamacharya and the author of *Yoga for Body, Breath, and Mind*: Stand in Tadasana (Mountain Pose), with your hands in prayer position in front of your heart. As you inhale, raise your arms overhead into Urdhva Hastasana (Upward Salute), silently chanting Om as you move. As you exhale, bring your hands to the earth in Uttanasana (Standing Forward Bend), silently chanting Namaha (roughly translated to "It is not about me"). Repeat this movement and message 10 times, breathing deeply throughout.

"When you chant Om, imagine connecting with your highest self and your ability to face any challenge or solve any problem," says Mohan. "When you chant Namaha, allow yourself to surrender to a higher power, realizing that it's not up to you to take care of everything." When you're done, take a moment to commit to being fully present for whatever life dishes up next.



"Music is medicine," says Frank Lipman, an integrative physician in New York City. "I prescribe it all the time."

Your body responds to the rhythms of your environment—a good thing if you live at the beach or in the country. But it can work against you if you're in a city, surrounded by sirens, screeches, and honking

Turn on some tunes

horns—or, say, the frenetic buzz at a crowded shopping mall. "Internal and external rhythms are linked," says Lipman. To synch up with a more relaxing rhythm, put on music that plays at about 60 beats per minute (Lipman suggests Bob Marley). "Close your eyes and stay very conscious of your listening, and the music will begin to affect the rhythms of your bodily processes," he says. Expect your breathing to slow, your heart rate to come down, and a sense of calm to take hold.







To reap the benefits of meditation—which include improved health, better focus, and inner calm—vou don't have to commit to a rigid 5 a.m. date with your meditation cushion. Instead, simply try paying more attention to what's around you, says Vasant Lad, founder of the Ayurvedic Institute in Albuquerque, New Mexico. "Pay attention to anything your ears are hearing and listen completely," says Lad, whether it's a barking dog, a crying child at the store, or the wind rustling the leaves. Rather than blocking out this noise, "allow these sounds and sights to penetrate you, and you'll begin to experience true inner peace and silence," he says.

YOURSELF TO SLEEP A short, soothing routine at bedtime can signal to your body and mind that it's time to let go of the day and rest. Renée Loux, yogi, organic chef, and author of Easy Green Living, suggests giving yourself a nightly facial massage with a homemade blend of organic oils, to end your day on a nurturing note. To a small bottle containing two ounces of almond oil, add two drops each of lavender, chamomile, and rose essential oils. Shake gently, and put six or eight drops in your palm. Rub your hands together to warm the oil, breathe in the relaxing scent, then apply it to your neck and face, using gentle, upward

strokes. Use your thumbs to draw the skin on your cheeks and forehead up toward your hairline, and to gently pull apart any visible facial lines, especially on your forehead, at the bridge of your nose, and around your mouth. Do this for 5 minutes (or longer, if you like), and finish by placing your palms over your eyes for a few seconds. "There is something profoundly healing about making the commitment to show up every day for self-care," says Loux.

Hillari Dowdle, a former Yoga Journal editor, is a freelance writer in Tennessee.



We know how much Singapore loves yoga! And we're looking for practitioners who believe yoga is not just about physical poses but about mindfulness and meditation too. If you are a regular practitioner and a yoga teacher who believes yoga involves the mind, breath and body, we would love to feature you on our cover.



This is what you will need to send us -

- A write-up about yourself (not more than 100 words)
- A write-up about why you do yoga (not more than 500 words)
- A copy of your Teachers Training Certificate (min 200 hours)
- Two photos one has to be a yoga pose



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Send nominations
to letters@
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Shine a light on

Lisa Low

YJSG meets Lisa Low, a young and fit grandma at 45, and a teacher-cum-healer for the elderly and rehab patients, with a deep seeded passion for yoga and pilates.



What kind of training do you provide and to who?

My classes are mostly anatomy focused. I am continuously learning under the direct tutelage of Tiffany Cruikshank (Founder, Yoga Medicine & Former YJ Cover Model). I typically work with the special population and the elderly in a one-on-one setting—a large percentage of them are undergoing post-surgery rehabilitation. I apply therapeutic yoga poses, pilates (on the mat or on a reformer) and also myofascial release techniques. My sessions include pranayama and meditation. I have personally witnessed my clients coming off antidepressants and insomnia after prolonged sessions. I have also seen improved posture, especially in the elderly. I work closely with healthcare practitioners in rehab programs, and often get clients referred by physiotherapists and traditional chinese medicine (TCM) doctors, as well as orthopaedics.

How has a combination of Pilates and Yoga helped you with your fitness?

I have been practicing yoga for over 24 years. I chanced upon pilates while living in Shanghai, at a point when I was starting to feel that my daily yoga practice had hit a plateau. A yogi friend invited me to a reformer pilates class, and I remember thinking during the hour-long class that 'this is my next level!' I had thought I had good strength control, but pilates showed me otherwise. Pilates gradually began to change and mould the way I practiced yoga. I love how in yoga, one is constantly encouraged to 'open' the body, whereas in pilates, one has to focus on the 'inner body core.' I maintain an equal dose of yoga and pilates daily as my practice. In the last couple of years, during my yoga teachings, I have included cues that I picked up during my pilates training to my yoga classes.

How do you bring mindfulness into your rehab sessions?

I am a big fan and firm believer of pranayama. The breath is our life force, and without it, everything comes to a standstill. Even if I have only have 5 minutes to spare, I urge my students to quieten their minds and meditate: it can be as simple as observing your breath, its quality, the length and depth of each inhalation and exhalation. I love to teach visualization meditation technique as well, and if time permits, at least one myofascial release (MFR) technique that is easy to follow and replicate at home.

What do you think of the yoga scene in Singapore?

Yogis in Singapore are spoilt for choice in selecting their yoga practice either in the comfort of their homes or attending classes in boutique studios or big chain studios. The yoga scene has become very competitive as various styles of yoga catch on here very quickly. Personally, I would love a space where Reiki, meditation, yoga and pilates are available under one roof.

Lisa can be reached at lisa.low@hotmail.com

in the DETAILS

Some of her favorite things...

Fav Pose Mandukasana or frog pose. **Fav Pastime**

Self myofascial release, meditation, reading up on human anatomy (not necessarily in that order)

Fav Yoga Teacher Tiffany Cruikshank, without a doubt. **Fav Restaurant**Basilico at The
Regent Singapore!

Fav mantra in life When it's time for change, let go.

february / march 2017 yogajournal.com.

in focus

Readers share pics of yoga poses on Singapore pathways



Amy Lee and Christina Chiok Tebby on the pathway at Gardens by the Bay East



Anant Ankur does a Mayurasana while his son watches him at a pathway in Ang Mo Kio



on the Orchard Road sidewalk



Fion Thay does a side-split along the walking path at the Botanic Gardens

MY STORY, MY CALLING

If you heard your calling, we would love to hear your story. Write to us at letters@yogajournal.com.sg

The Breakdown & The BREAKTHROUGH

By Ferina Natasya Aziz

I remember waking up one morning three years ago, shivering, with a tight knot in my throat and stomach...I held my mum's hand and told her about my frequent panic attacks. The fatigue and irrational fear were silently killing me. It was truly a crippling feeling.

After years of work-related stress, high cortisone levels and a failed operation (along with post-operative trauma), my body and mind had spiraled into a depressive state. I finally decided to see the doctor and was diagnosed with Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) and Depression. GAD is a clinical problem where one worries uncontrollably about common occurrences and situations.

Could I have prevented this mental breakdown if I had been more conscious about resting when my body signaled I should and put my mental health as a priority? Yes.

I was physically fit and eating well but what I couldn't see was how seriously my mental and emotional health was being neglected. As they say, if you can't see something, it doesn't mean it's not there.

There are signs that we shouldn't ignore—when you speak faster than you should, when you reply straight away without really listening to what others are saying, when you're on your phone all the time, incessantly scrolling without a purpose—these are all subtle signs of possible GAD and Depression that most of us ignore. For an entire year, my mind was on constant fire because of anxiety; and the fatigue would often detach me, as though I had left my own body. "But how did I get here?," I would often ask myself ever so often.

Yoga had always been a part of my workout routine, and I did hot yoga in the evenings. It was only after I was diagnosed with GAD that I underwent Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) where "deep breathing" was prescribed by the doctors. That's when I learnt to slow down.

I continued to go to Pranayama classes to understand various kinds of breathing patterns and was soon able to identify how my breath behaved under certain situations. Pranayama helped me understand the connection between breath and movement. Then I went deeper into Ashtanga yoga practice because I was looking for something that I could take with me everywhere: the repetitive sequence allowed me to see my progress and observe how I felt on a daily basis. Ashtanga has now become a self-introspective journey and is a good barometer for me.

My yoga practice deepened after an immersion course in Kuala Lumpur with David Robson, a Canadian Ashtanga yoga teacher, who taught me the importance of alignment and how to prevent injuries. Today I have two mats that I hold dear to my heart—my prayer mat and my yoga mat. While the prayer mat enables me to believe in the higher being, the yoga mat has taught me to have faith in the magic within me.

I no longer presume that yoga is about how long I can hold a Headstand. It is about spirituality, and how we interact with others with compassion. Therapy, meditation sessions or taking medication (do not turn a blind eye to science) are all tools to help us heal—but remember, these are mere tools. The true healer is within you: dig deep.

During therapy, I found respite in writing and photography, and that took me deeper into a world of sharing, and I wanted to become an oracle of holistic information. So I started 'The Wellness Report', my digital magazine, almost a year ago, where contributors and wellness experts encourage readers to hit the "pause" button.

As we slow down and inhale deeper, the sense of clarity allows us to live through our actions, reactions, intuitions and instincts—embracing our own likes and dislikes.

Allow yourself those daily pauses, to go deep within and rest.

Take a 15 minute pause with TWR's Guided Meditation - http://bit.ly/2ivE5hn Share your feedback at #pauseforwellness



Ferina Natasya Aziz is the founder of The Wellness Report (TWR), a multimedia rich digital platform of podcast, videos and online courses.

BY SHERRIANN MELWANI

This is the first part in a series of eight articles about what Ashtanga really means, as derived from Patanjali's ancient Yoga Sutras (not to be confused with Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga, which was a yoga style created by Sri Pattabhi Jois.)

Part 1

Yoga is being able to see yourself in others.

Ashtanga Yoga, first appearing in the ancient text, *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, translates to 'The Eight Limbs of Yoga'. Imagine a tree with eight different branches. Each branch is just as important as the other—yet they all bear their own fruit. Each connects to the tree trunk, making up a collective whole, which is then rooted deep connecting to something larger that we can only imagine. Most people nowadays associate yoga to be stretches and fancy poses, but it is so much more. While asanas, or yoga poses, are surely an integral part of yoga, they are in fact only one branch (the third) of the metaphorical tree.

Ashtanga incorporates holistic guidelines and practices that lead us towards self-realization, thereby bringing physical, mental and spiritual balance. The other day, while riding a crowded train in Singapore, I saw a young man unhesitatingly give up his regular, unreserved seat for an elderly man. A few days prior to that, a group of teenage schoolgirls helped tourists carry luggage up some steps without being asked. Once I forgot my wallet in a taxi and the driver somehow tracked me down to return it—without a dollar lost. While waiting in a long queue at the market, someone let me go ahead after seeing I had only a few items in my basket.

Millions of these stories happen every day across the globe. There is a special place in my heart for these small yet monumental acts amongst strangers. It is easy to be kind to people we know, or when we get compensation or attention. But how do we treat people we pass on the streets who we don't know and when no one is looking? It is this act of choosing to be kind, without expectation, that is the essence of the First Limb of Ashtanga: The Yama.

Yama deals with one's ethical standards and sense of integrity, focusing on our behavior and how we conduct ourselves in life. Yamas are universal practices



practice well ASHTANGA

that relate best to what we know as the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." My teacher, Sri Dharma Mittra, once said, "Yoga without the Yamas is like spaghetti without the sauce". It couldn't have been said better, although in Singapore, we can perhaps replace spaghetti by Kway Teow!

The Yamas comprise five essential principles, each addressing our interaction with the world around us.

- 1. Ahimsa: (non-violence) We treat others with compassion. By seeing ourselves in others, we would never hurt anyone.
- **2. Satya:** (truthfulness) We choose honesty in all our interactions.
- 3. Asteya: (non-stealing) We take only what is ours.
- **4. Brahmacharya:** (continence) We honour others as sacred beings by practicing balance in our physical relations.
- **5. Aparigraha:** (non-coveting) Content with what we have, we take only what we need and practice simple living and non-attachment.

Referring to the five points of Yama, together with the five points of Niyama (the second limb of Ashtanga that refers to discipline), the learned yoga guru Swami Satchidananda said that all spiritual life should be based on the principles held therein—as these are the foundation stones without which we can never build anything lasting.

Patanjali recorded the Yamas to offer wisdom, and help purify and liberate. Practising the Yamas prevents suffering and leads to a peaceful environment. As all the Yamas are interconnected, by following one, we would also be abiding by the principles of the others. For example, by being honest (satya) and not stealing (asetya), we are also practising ahimsa.

Sometimes I close my classes with a special mantra that perfectly embodies the overall theme of what it means to follow the Yamas

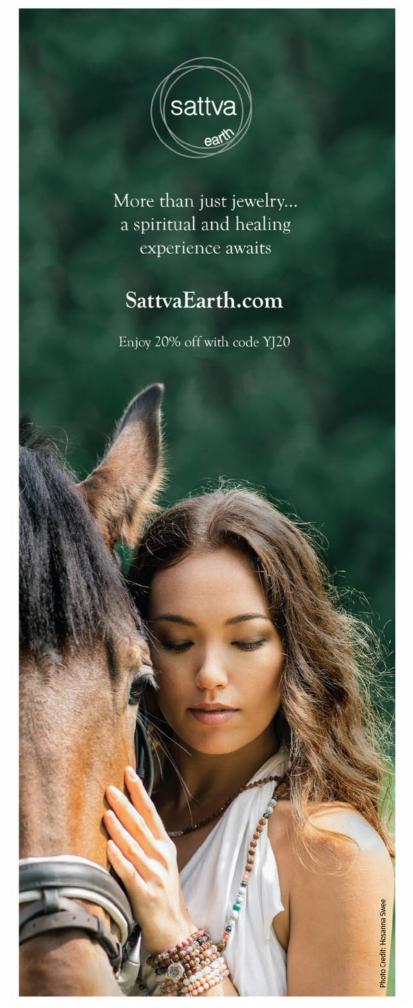
"Lokah Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu". May all beings be happy and free and may my actions somehow contribute to the happiness of all.

Live the life of a yogi; choose compassion always. See the many opportunities to be a yogi off the mat.

Practice of asana without the backing of yama and niyama is mere acrobatics.

– Yoga guru BKS Iyengar

Sherriann Melwani is a yoga teacher who shuttles between Hong Kong, Bali and Singapore, and is a freelance writer for Yoga Journal Singapore. Read about 'Niyama' in the next



- A HOME STUDIO IN SINGAPORE By YJ Editor

NESTLED WITHIN A CONDOMINIUM compound on the East Coast of Singapore is a boutique yoga studio that turned eight in January this year. Students are greeted by their names when they first step into the home-like studio, decorated with beautiful paintings, oriental rugs, cozy sofas and inviting lampshades. After each class, students get to enjoy home-brewed tea and essential oil-scented chilled towels.

This is the ambience at Kate Porter Yoga studio that carries a tagline 'Yoga for Normal People', because the teachers strongly believe that yoga is an approachable activity that can be adjusted to any person, regardless of their fitness level, size, age or shape.

WHO IS KATE PORTER?

The brainchild behind the studio, Kate Porter began her yoga journey in 2000 as a result



of a debilitating illness which wasn't diagnosed for many years. After finally learning that she was suffering from Systemic Lupus, an autoimmune disease, and Fibromyalgia which leads to acute musculoskeletal pain, Kate decided to heal herself holistically. Although moving was a painful ordeal, she was determined that her quality of life depended upon being active. She began doing a few simple yoga poses just from her bed.

As positive changes became evident, she began attending yoga classes, which eventually created the desire to attend a yoga teacher training. Although it was only meant to be a new learning experience,

Kate found that friends started to ask her to teach them a few poses. At the end of her teacher training, these friends continued to come back every week and insisted on paying her as she was now officially a qualified 'teacher'.

From four students, there were 150 that flocked to her apartment every week. Her husband, Tom Porter, encouraged her to start her own studio in the hall of their home that could accommodate about 16 students. It soon became apparent that a larger dedicated studio space was required, and so Kate Porter Yoga studio became a reality in 2011 at 5000G Marine Parade Road.

Sadly in 2015, Kate's health began to deteriorate after three very difficult pregnancies. Doctors advised she move to a drier climate and step away from the business in order to focus on her health and family. Kate and family moved back home to South Africa, leaving the management of the studio in the capable hands of fellow teacher, Li Ling Soon, a vibrant and calming Singaporean who subscribed to the same beliefs as Kate.

"We strive to keep a personal connection with our students, especially when dealing with injuries, illnesses or pregnancies," says Li Ling, who continues to run the studio. "If a pose doesn't work for an individual, it can be modified. Yoga is not a one-size-fits-all practice, otherwise students can often become discouraged or even injured."

To learn more about the studio, visit www.kateporteryoga.com, email MyMat@KatePorterYoga.com or call 97813403 for more information.

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"Yoga is first and foremost about the individual"

- Li Ling, Kate Porter Yoga



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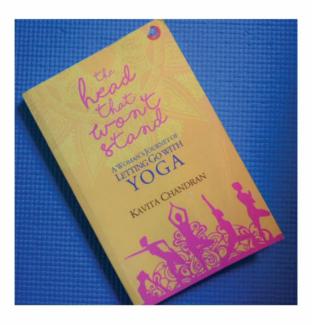
By Vikas Malkani & Sally Forrest

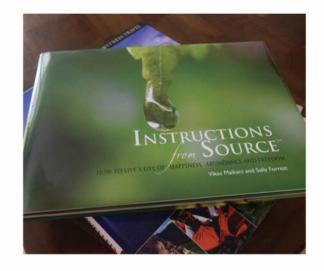
This new coffee table book is a visual delight! With beautiful pictures of flora, fauna and picturesque settings from around the world, this hard cover book contains 188 instructions from mindfulness guru, Vikas Malkani, in simple one or two lines per page, and serves as a gentle nudge on how to lead a fuller, finer and happier life. You can randomly open any page in the book and read instructions that Vikas says just came to him from a source, an inner voice, consuming him and compelling him to pen it all down overnight. "The instructions just kept flowing from my head to the paper," he told Yoga Journal SG.

Instruction 41, for example, next to a radiant and detailed picture of a single yellow flower—one of many beautiful photos clicked by life-coach Sally Forrest—reiterates a simple, yet profound point.

You are nothing but a product of how you think. To change your life, change your thoughts. It's that simple. As you think, so you become.

Instructions from Source is available at www.soulcentre.org/shop.html for S\$75.
-YJ Editor





THE HEAD THAT WON'T STAND

By Kavita Chandran

This book is a beautiful tapestry of stories about yoga, life journeys and finding one's balance in modern world's many obscurities. The author weaves into the narrative her own yoga journey and true stories of several other women she met in Mysore, India, moving from stress and unhappiness to a space of peace within. What ties all the women together in the narrative is their young, strict and scrupulous young guru.

The Head that Won't Stand is a gripping non-fiction that takes us far beyond the asanas of Hatha yoga to explain with great clarity, and a wonderful simplicity, various aspects of yoga—from the meaning of Om, the eight limbs (Ashtanga), pranayama, philosophy and lots more.

The author, who is also the editor and publisher of Yoga Journal Singapore and was a news editor at the time she wrote the book, weaves together a holistic view of yoga with humour, insight and a journalist's powers of observations.

"Unlike other yoga books that insist more on perfecting your asanas, this book reassures you that it's ok to fail. It tells you that in order to attain perfection, you will face struggles but your continuous efforts will help you conquer your fears and emerge as a winner."

- The Times of India

Published by Wisdom Tree Publications, the book has been receiving great reviews in India. 'The Head that won't Stand' is now available in Singapore for \$19.99 at Touch The Toes store on 14 Haji Lane in Singapore.
-Pamposh Dhar



Art and the early seeds of a yoga practice

were very much a part of me growing up. As a child, I was artistic, could draw easily and always made random things—from a toaster out of coat hangers to paper sandals. I kept painting and drawing all my life. I also had a mystical streak as a kid and really wanted to visit India, so I found my way to books on yoga and Eastern philosophy. Yoga took precedence over art in terms of my personal journey. But while practising yoga in Mysore, India, I did also take part in the occasional art exhibition in the city.

My yoga journey began, when after having traveled to India a few times already, I decided to take the plunge and headed there with a one-way ticket, enough funds to last a few years, and the intent to find a yoga practice that felt right to me. I

studied with a few teachers, also at the Iyengar Yoga Study Center in Rishikesh, but eventually was led to an Ashtanga class in Goa, which I felt was the right practice for me. That was in 1996. I then moved to Mysore and studied under the guidance of Pattabhi Jois, and received his blessings to teach in 1999.

When it was time for me to dive deeper

into the world of art, the reasons were just as compelling. I had been to 'Burning Man' for the first time in 2005 and was utterly blown away by everything about it. I felt a sense of reverence about the way the artists had worked so hard to manifest their expressions on such a large-scale. That impression took root, catalyzing the creative embers sparked during that first visit.

Art and yoga are not separate for me

because I feel I am the intersection for both these expressions, and they reflect the same thing—a deep, clear connection to a stream of inspiration that expresses many forms. With yoga, one experiences an internal reflection, while with art, it is externalizing objects—but the form of experience is within the same space as yoga. When I'm finished with my yoga practice, I see a bright place of forms and patterns of light that the body is a component of, and this is what I create.

My go-to healing pose is Halasana (Plow pose). I love the upward-moving quality of Pincha Mayurasana (Forearm balance), and the compressed, efficient feeling of Urdhva Kukkutasana (Lifting Rooster pose).

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Vidhya Shailesh



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