



*strength * spirit * solace*

Newsletter

April 2004

Dear friend...

In many cultures, light has long been a symbol of consciousness and self-illumination. Our primary source of light is, of course, the sun. For thousands of years, the Hindus have revered the sun as both the physical and spiritual heart of our world and the creator of all life itself. One way of honoring the sun is through the dynamic yoga sequence called "Sun Salutation."

Spring is a wonderful season to focus on Sun Salutations! As each day grows a little bit longer, the practice of paying homage to the sun begins to feel like a beautiful call and response between the two of you. It is also a time of new beginnings and can be a great time to introduce new poses into your practice.

Keep up the great work and let your light shine on!

Namasté,

Spring/Summer 2004 Class Schedule

I have decided to take the spring and summer off from teaching yoga at [The Denver Ashtanga Yoga Center](#) due to my increasingly busy schedule as well as a shoulder injury. However, I am still teaching yoga classes to The Children's Hospital employees. View the current [schedule](#).

Etiquette

A friendly little reminder about practicing good karma at any yoga studio:

- Please remove your shoes before entering yoga room.
- Please be on time to class – or show up a little early!
- Please turn cell phones and pagers off.
- Please observe silence once class begins.
- If you must leave class early, please do so before the final relaxation pose.

Spiritual Readings

I embrace the darkness within me. What I deny about myself grows in strength and power. Just as I feared the darkness in my room as a child, today I fear the darkness in the depths of my own being. If I can learn to embrace this part of myself and even love it, I am giving it the opportunity to transform into another state - to change its level of vibration. I will befriend and love that about me, which I have designated unlovable. I can do more to alter my experience of life by loving the unlovable in myself than by finding reasons to keep hiding from it. When I do not run from the fear within me, others will not run away either. The inner strength I gain from self-knowledge and acceptance allows me to live in an authentic, energized way...wonder and despair are two sides of a spinning coin. When you open yourself to one, you open yourself to the other. You discover a capacity for joy that wasn't in you before. Wonder is the promise of restoration; as deeply as you dive, so may you rise.

Poses You Can Do at Home

Uttanasana (Standing Forward Bend)

Despite its name, which means "intense stretch" pose, Uttanasana will wake up your hamstrings and soothe your mind.



Benefits

- Calms the brain and helps relieve stress and mild depression
- Stimulates the liver and kidneys
- Stretches the hamstrings, calves, and hips
- Strengthens the thighs and knees
- Improves digestion

- Helps relieve the symptoms of menopause
- Reduces fatigue and anxiety
- Relieves headache and insomnia
- Therapeutic for asthma, high blood pressure, infertility, osteoporosis, and sinusitis

Contraindications/Cautions

Back injury: Do this pose with bent knees.

Step by Step

1. Stand in Tadasana, hands on hips. Exhale and bend forward from the hip joints, not from the waist. As you descend draw the front torso out of the groins and open the space between the pubis and top sternum. As in all the forward bends, the emphasis is on lengthening the front torso as you move more fully into the position.
2. If possible, with your knees straight, bring your palms or fingertips to the floor slightly in front of or beside your feet, or bring your palms to the backs of your ankles. If this isn't possible, cross your forearms and hold your elbows. Press the heels firmly into the floor and lift the sitting bones toward the ceiling. Turn the top thighs slightly inward.
3. With each inhalation in the pose, lift and lengthen the front torso just slightly; with each exhalation release a little more fully into the forward bend. In this way the torso oscillates almost imperceptibly with the breath. Let your head hang from the root of the neck, which is deep in the upper back, between the shoulder blades.
4. Uttanasana can be used as a resting position between the standing poses. Stay in the pose for 30 seconds to 1 minute. It can also be practiced as a pose in itself.
5. Don't roll the spine to come up. Instead bring your hands back onto your hips and reaffirm the length of the front torso. Then press your tailbone down and into the pelvis and come up on an inhalation with a long front torso.

Modifications & Props

To increase the stretch on the backs of the legs, stand in the forward bend with the balls of your feet elevated an inch or more off the floor on a sand bag or thick book.

Beginners Tip

To increase the stretch in the backs of your legs, bend your knees slightly. Imagine that the sacrum is sinking deeper into the back of your pelvis and bring the tailbone closer to the pubis. Then against this resistance, push the top thighs back and the heels down and straighten the knees again. Be careful not to straighten the knees by locking them back (you can press your hands against the back of each knee to provide some resistance); instead let them straighten as the two ends of each leg move farther apart.

Deepen the Pose

To increase the stretch in the backs of your legs, lean slightly forward and lift up onto the balls of your feet, pulling your heels a half-inch or so away from the floor. Draw your inner groins deep into the pelvis, and then, from the height of the groins, lengthen your heels back onto the floor.

** Poses you can do at home are from Yoga Journal.*

Nutrition – How Eating Makes You Hungry

Good Carbs vs. Bad Carbs

- Does eating always satisfy hunger?
It depends on what you eat – some foods actually create new cravings!
- Dr. David Ludwig – head of the Obesity Program at Boston Children’s Hospital (and also teaches at Harvard Medical School) conducted a fascinating study:
Three groups of overweight adolescents were given a breakfast of identical calorie counts:
 - 1st Group – 20% fat, 16% protein and 2/3 good carbs = steel cut oatmeal
 - 2nd Group – 20% fat, 16% protein and 2/3 bad carbs = instant oatmeal
 - 3rd Group – Vegetable Omelets

After breakfast, each group was allowed to eat anything they wanted for the next five hours.

The Results: the kids in Group 2 (the “bad carb” group) ate the most and suffered the greatest hunger pangs. They were followed by the kids in Group 1. Those who had veggie omelets ate the least and had lowest hunger pangs following breakfast.

- Eating “bad” (i.e., highly processed) carbs makes you hungrier because the sugars are so readily available. This causes a rapid spike in the blood insulin level, followed shortly by a drop in blood sugar level, therefore causing more hunger. This vicious cycle is called Reactive Hypoglycemia.
- Two ways to easily stop ourselves from overeating:
 1. Eat the foods (& combinations of foods) that cause gradual rather than sharp increases in blood sugar.
 2. Learn to anticipate hypoglycemia and avert it with the timely consumption of snacks. It takes much less food to prevent hypoglycemia than it does to resolve it.
- Know The Glycemic Index of Foods You Eat – The Glycemic Index ranks carbohydrates based on their immediate effect on blood glucose levels. Carbs that breakdown quickly have the highest glycemic index and should be avoided. A healthy diet encourages eating foods with low glycemic indexes. For more details, go to www.glycemicindex.com

Questions about nutrition? Email me at sara@saradelaney.com.

Your Questions Answered!

Do you have a question? Email it to me at sara@saradelaney.com.

Q:

Sara, I am actually wondering if you have any good recipes for a vegetarian brunch? I am hosting my sister’s baby shower in May and she doesn’t eat meat or eggs. Help!

A:

What a fun question! I love breakfast foods, so I chose for you just a few of the vegetarian recipes I have made before. They are easy, yummy AND nutritious! All of your shower guests, especially your sister, will love them!

Breakfast Polenta

- 1 cup polenta
- 4 cups water
- 1/2 tsp salt, or to taste
- 1/2 cup currants or dried cherries
- 6 pitted dates, coarsely chopped
- 1 and 1/2 TB honey
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon
- pinch nutmeg
- 1 tsp minced fresh ginger
- 1/2 cup sliced almonds, toasted

Bring water and salt to a boil. Cook the polenta according to package directions. When the polenta is ready, remove the pan from the heat and stir in the remaining ingredients. Polenta can be served immediately with honey, or allowed to set up in a pan to be either baked or pan fried in butter later.

Baked Stuffed Fruit

This recipe can conform to the season. The same basic filling can be used to stuff apples, peaches, nectarines or pears.

- 6 pieces of favorite fruit (apples, peaches, nectarines or pears)
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1/2 cup walnuts or pecans
- 1/2 tsp vanilla
- dash of cinnamon (optional)
- apple juice

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Prepare the fruit: apples, core and peel a 1" strip around the center of the apple; peaches and nectarines, cut in half and remove the pit; and pears, cut in half lengthwise and remove seeds. Place fruit in baking dish. Combine raisins, nuts, vanilla and cinnamon in a blender or food processor with just enough apple juice to facilitate blending to a coarse texture. Stuff mixture in center of the apple or in pit/seed area of the other fruit. Pour apple juice into the baking dish at a depth of 1/2". Cover with foil. Bake at 375°F for 30 minutes or until just tender. Serve plain or with a dollop of yogurt.

These two dishes are matched perfectly with the following salad! Serve brunch with an assortment of fresh organic juices and herbal teas. Voila!

Mixed Greens Salad & Strawberry Vinaigrette

For the vinaigrette:

- 1/2 cup organic extra virgin olive oil
- 3 TB raspberry vinegar
- 1/4 cup fresh strawberries
- 1 tsp freshly ground pepper
- 1 TB yogurt

Combine all ingredients above in a food processor or blender until smooth.

For the salad:

- 6–8 cups mixed young salad greens, washed well
- 1 cup edible flowers, (pansies, nasturtiums, geraniums or a mix – can be purchased at Whole Foods)
- ½ cup oven-toasted pecans or walnuts
- ½ cup feta cheese

Toss together mixed greens, flowers (reserve a few flowers to garnish), toasted pecans, and feta with the tangy vinaigrette.

Contemplate...

In addition to the physical and energetic impact of yoga practice, it is also an awareness discipline that is not merely focused on moving the body with a physical goal in mind. In yoga, we have a precious opportunity to welcome in all states, uncensored and free of expectations or analysis. For this reason, you may notice a release of emotional energy seemingly unrelated to the specific moment at hand. As you become mindful of your emotions, you will be able to include a broader range of feelings as they are happening. Depending on the shade of the emotion, you might experience sensations like a change in breath rhythm, tightness in the belly or restrictions in the chest. You might also feel waves of chills through the spine, contraction in the shoulders, or a heaviness of heart with tears in the eyes. There is nothing wrong with emotional release during yoga poses – this is healing.



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*"When you come to the edge of all that you know, you must believe one of two things:
There will be earth upon which to stand, or you will be given wings to fly."*