



strength * spirit * solace

Newsletter

April 2005

Dear friend...

One of the best mottos I've heard lately is: "Think Big. Start Small." This is how I'd like to see all of us approach our health and wellness initiatives this spring and summer. We're all able to take an informed, big-picture approach and make well-paced, steady progress in the right direction with our own lives.

This newsletter focuses on inviting you to consider some perhaps *new* information that may inspire you to live better, with more pleasure and confidence in your choices. I encourage you to make the changes in your own life that you feel inspired to make. Share your successes and good experiences with others. The seeds of influence you plant gently will take root and flourish.

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

Namasté,

Sara

My Denver Studio Schedule

- **Wednesdays, 5:45 – 7:15 pm:** Restorative Yoga at The Denver Ashtanga Yoga Center (www.denverashtanga.com)
- **Thursdays, 5:30 – 7:00 pm:** Vinyasa Yoga at Golden Yoga (www.breatheyogacolorado.com for more info)

➤ Private lessons are available! Email yoga@saradelaney.com for more information!

Meditation

Self-love is about fully embracing oneself, realizing one's strengths and accepting one's flaws. Self-love is not about being self-centered or self-absorbed, which is based on insecurity and not knowing oneself. True self-love is a guarantee that we will not succumb to such selfish pursuits. For if we truly love ourselves we know that we do not need to be the best looking, most talented, or have the most possessions. When we love ourselves, we are able to give love freely to others without fear of being hurt or used. We love ourselves enough to not allow others to take advantage of us. And, when we are secure in our love of self, we attract the love of others.

Poses You Can Do at Home

Urdhva Dhanurasana (Upward Bow Pose, Backbend, or Wheel)

This full backbend strengthens the arms, legs, abdomen, and spine, and gives a boost of energy.



Benefits

- Stretches the chest and lungs
- Strengthens the arms and wrists, legs, buttocks, abdomen, and spine
- Stimulates the thyroid and pituitary
- Increases energy and counteracts depression
- Therapeutic for asthma, back pain, infertility, and osteoporosis

Contraindications

- Back injury
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Diarrhea
- Headache
- Heart problems
- High or low blood pressure

Step by Step

1. Lie supine on the floor. Bend your knees and set your feet on the floor, heels as close to the sitting bones as possible. Bend your elbows and spread your palms on

- the floor beside your head, forearms relatively perpendicular to the floor, fingers pointing toward your shoulders.
2. Pressing your inner feet actively into the floor, exhale and push your tailbone up toward the pubis, firming (but not hardening) the buttocks, and lift the buttocks off the floor. Keep your thighs and inner feet parallel. Take 2 or 3 breaths. Then firmly press the inner hands into the floor and your shoulder blades against the back and lift up onto the crown of your head. Keep your arms parallel. Take 2 or 3 breaths.
 3. Press your feet and hands into the floor, tailbone and shoulder blades against your back, and with an exhalation, lift your head off the floor and straighten your arms. Turn the upper thighs slightly inward and firm the outer thighs. Narrow the hip points and lengthen the tailbone toward the backs of the knees, lifting the pubis toward the navel.
 4. Turn the upper arms outward but keep the weight on the bases of the index fingers. Spread the shoulder blades across the back and let the head hang, or lift it slightly to look down at the floor.
 5. Stay in the pose anywhere from 5 to 10 seconds or more, breathing easily. Repeat anywhere from 3 to 10 times.

Beginners Tip

The knees and feet tend to splay as you lift into this pose, which compresses the lower back. In the beginning position, loop and secure a strap around your thighs, just above the knees, to hold the thighs at hip width and parallel to each other. To keep the feet from turning out, place a block between them, with the bases of the big toes pressing the ends of the block. As you go up, press the feet into the block.

Deepen the Pose

Once in the pose, lift your heels away from the floor and press your tailbone toward the ceiling. Walk the feet a little closer to the hands. Then, from the height of the tailbone, press the heels into the floor again. This will increase the depth of the backbend.

** Poses You Can Do at Home are from Yoga Journal.*

Nutrition – Why Buy Organic?

“Organic food is a great bargain. While the shelf price is often more than similar-appearing food grown in the chemical intensive method, many hidden bonuses come along with the purchase price. The method of growing organic food builds our precious soil instead of depleting it, results in clear instead of polluted runoff water, employs more people in small-scale farming, preserves the health of farm workers and their children, contributes to the health of the people who eat the food instead of threatening that health with dangerous synthetic chemicals, and helps keep alive the traditional see varieties that are the foundation of all humanity’s food supply. To receive all of this extra benefit for a few pennies more is one of the greatest bargains of the century!”

- *Genetically Engineered Food: Changing the Nature of Nature*, Martin Teitel, Ph.D., and Kimberly A. Wilson

10 Reasons to Buy Organic

1. Protect Future Generations

Children receive four times the exposure than an adult to at least eight widely used cancer-causing pesticides in food. The food choice you make now will impact your child's health in the future.

2. Prevent Soil Erosion

The Soil Conservation Service estimates that more than three billion tons of topsoil is eroded from the United States croplands each year. That means soil is eroding seven times faster than it is built up naturally. Soil is the foundation of the food chain in organic farming. But in conventional farming the soil is used more as a medium for holding plants in a vertical position so they can be chemically fertilized. As a result, American farms are suffering from the worst soil erosion in history.

3. Protect Water Quality

Water makes up two-thirds of our body mass and covers three-fourths of the planet. Despite its importance, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), estimates pesticides (some cancer causing) contaminate the ground water in 38 states, polluting the primary source of drinking water for more than half the country's population.

4. Save Energy

American farms have changed drastically in the last three generations, from the family-based small businesses dependent on human energy to the large-scale factory farms highly dependent on fossil fuels. Modern farming uses more petroleum than any other single industry, consuming 12 percent of the country's total energy supply. More energy is now used to produce synthetic fertilizers than to till, cultivate, and harvest all the crops in the United States. Organic farming is still mainly based on labor-intensive practices such as weeding by hand and using green manures and crop covers rather than synthetic. Organic produce also tends to travel a shorter distance from the farm to your plate.

5. Keep Chemicals Off Your Plate

Many pesticides approved for use by the EPA were registered before extensive research linking these chemicals to cancer and other diseases was established. Now the EPA considers that 60 percent of all herbicides, 90 percent of all fungicides and 30 percent of all insecticides are carcinogenic. A 1987 National Academy of Sciences report estimated that pesticides might cause an extra 1.4 million cancer cases among Americans over their lifetimes. The bottom line is – pesticides are poisons designed to kill or damage living organisms, including humans. In addition to cancer, pesticides are implicated in birth defects, nerve damage and genetic mutation.

6. Protect Farm Workers' Health

A National Cancer Institute study found that farmers exposed to herbicides had six times greater risk than non-farmers of contracting cancer. In California, reported pesticide poisonings among farm workers have risen an average of 14 percent a year

since 1973, and doubled between 1975 and 1985. Field workers suffer the highest rates of occupational illness in the state. Farm workers' health is a serious problem in developing nations, where pesticide use can be poorly regulated. An estimated 1 million people are poisoned annually by pesticides.

7. Help Small Farmers

Most organic farms are small independently owned and operated family farms of less than 100 acres. It's estimated that the United States has lost more than 650,000 family farms in the past decade. The US Department of Agriculture estimates that half of this country's farm production comes from one percent of farms, so organic farming could be one of the few survival tactics left for family farms.

8. Support a True Economy

Although organic foods might seem more expensive than conventional foods, conventional food prices do not reflect hidden costs borne by taxpayers, including nearly \$74 billion in federal subsidies in 1988. Other hidden costs include pesticide regulation and testing, hazardous waste disposal and clean up, and environmental damage.

9. Promote Biodiversity

Mono-cropping is the practice of planting large plots of land with the same crop year after year. While this approach tripled farm production between 1950 and 1970, the lack of natural diversity of plant life has left the soil lacking in natural minerals and nutrients. To replace the nutrients, chemical fertilizers are used, often in staggering amounts.

10. Taste Better Flavor

There's a good reason many chefs use organic foods in their recipes. They taste better. Organic farming starts with the nutrients of the soil, which eventually leads to the nourishment of the plant and ultimately our palates.

Your Questions Answered!

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

Q: *I cannot seem to get motivated to exercise anymore. I used to love to run...but, now it hurts my knees. What should I do?*

A:

Given our busy lifestyles of balancing work, family, social and many other responsibilities, getting (and staying) motivated for regular exercise can be a tricky mental and physical task. First, ask yourself what you like to do. Some people think, "All I can do to get in shape is run — but I hate running." At a minimum exercise should be something you don't hate doing. In other words, if you don't like to run, then don't. And, if an exercise program hurts you in any way, don't do that either.

While it happens to be a highly efficient form of aerobic exercise (which is why so many trainers advocate it), running is hardly the only form of aerobic exercise. Walking, hiking, cycling, swimming, wall climbing, stair stepping, elliptical training, rowing, jumping rope, yoga and mat classes, and light active sports can all help lower your resting heart rate and improve your oxygen consumption. The heart has no preferences or prejudices about how you work it, just that you do.

If lack of a gym membership seems to be the problem, don't let that hold you back either. Chin-ups, pushups, Pilates, yoga, sit-ups, medicine balls and every other variation of lifting or holding in place the weight of your own body can substitute for weight training in the comfort of your own home.

Are you just trying to get started after a long period of little activity? Perhaps a 10-minute walk after each meal makes more sense. Then there is the matter of your personal style. You want to pick things to do that are fun! I know it sounds simple, but a lot of people don't consider it. They just pick out the workout that burns the most calories. You want to try to find something that works with your attention span and psychology. The main lesson here: The people who stick to a training plan aren't necessarily any more disciplined than the rest of us. What they are, it seems, is more attuned to what they most enjoy.

Contemplate...

Keep a healthy perspective. For some, that means spending time in nature, focusing on gratitude, connecting to purpose, maintaining a spiritual life, having a positive attitude, not getting stuck in conflicts and grudges, etc. For others, it means making time to play (like a kid) at least a couple of times a week, and connecting with the people and places we love. Our mental, emotional and spiritual health is what helps us to keep a healthy perspective. When we're miserable and depleted, it's pretty hard to focus on anything else. Also, the body responds, chemically and structurally, to the energy of our emotions. So when we're not happy, our body is not happy. And who wants to spend decades in an unhappy body?



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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."*