

**strength \* spirit \* solace**

## **Newsletter**

December 2003

Dear friend...

Some people approach their yoga practice as a break from the world, a separate space where they can recover from life's stresses and strains. Once they've pulled themselves back together, they return to their families and jobs renewed. What about approaching yoga from a new perspective: "I'm learning something that can be integrated into my life." Life itself is an opportunity to practice yoga!

Think about this: is your life any different than your yoga practice? Is it possible to relax once you have become tense in any given moment of your life? My experience is "yes." For example, you can be tense when starting to make a presentation at work, and then relax as you get more comfortable with your audience. Also, you can get tense in the middle of an argument with your wife or husband, and then let it go when you reach an agreement.

However, if you are not open to change and acceptance, you cannot get rid of tension without relinquishing your position and starting over. Letting go of tension in life is a lot harder to do than relaxing in, say, Triangle Pose. One more good reason to appreciate your yoga practice!

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

Namasté,  
Sara Delaney

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### **Spiritual Readings**

#### *Enjoying the Process*

*I will learn to enjoy the journey. Once I have set my life goals and created a structure to follow day by day, I will remember to take pleasure in each stage along the path. I understand that my happiness does not lie so much in the achievement of a goal but in the thousand tiny transformations along the way; the stretching, resolving conflicts, mastering small tasks, and daily showing up – meeting myself along the road in my kaleidoscopic variety. The payoff is what a commitment to a goal actualizes in me; the sense of inner awakening, purpose and direction that it brings to my life. Without goals I can remain superficial – with goals I am called upon to dive deeper and deeper into what appears to be a subject but is truly my own psyche, heart and will.*

## **Poses You Can Do at Home**

Legs Up the Wall Pose is perfect for “de-stressing” during the holidays!



### **Viparita Karani (Legs-Up-the-Wall Pose)**

Said to reverse the normal downward flow of precious fluids and blood, modern yogis agree that Legs-Up-the-Wall Pose may have the power to cure whatever ails you.

### **Benefits**

- Relieves tired or cramped legs and feet
- Gently stretches the back legs, front torso, and the back of the neck
- Relieves mild backache
- Calms the mind

### **Contraindications**

Many teachers maintain that Legs-Up-the-Wall Pose is an inversion, and as such should be avoided if you have serious eye problems, such as glaucoma. Do not perform this posture if you have serious neck or back problems. If your feet begin to tingle during this pose, you may bend your knees, touch your soles together, and slide the outer edges of your feet down the wall, bringing your heels close to your pelvis. But, don't worry – tingling is normal and means the pose is working!

### **Step by Step**

For support you might want one or two thickly folded blankets or a firm round bolster. You'll also need to rest your legs vertically (or nearly so) on a wall or other upright support.

1. Exhale and, with one smooth movement, swing your legs up onto the wall and your shoulders and head lightly down onto the floor.
2. Your sitting bones don't need to be right against the wall, but they should close enough that your legs are nearly vertical – too wide an angle puts pressure on the legs, instead of relieving it.
3. Lift and release the base of your skull away from the back of your neck and soften your throat. Don't push your chin against your sternum. Take a small pillow (made from a towel for example) under your neck if the

cervical spine feels flat. Open your shoulder blades away from the spine and release your hands and arms out to your sides, palms up.

4. Keep your legs relatively firm, just enough to hold them vertically in place. Release the weight of your belly deeply into your torso, toward the back of the pelvis. Soften your eyes and turn them down to look into your heart.
5. Stay in this pose anywhere from 5 to 15 minutes. To release, you can bend your knees and push your feet against the wall to lift your pelvis, then slide to one side, lower your pelvis to the floor, and turn to the side. Stay on your side for a few breaths, and come up to sitting with an exhalation.

### **Anatomical Focus**

- Legs
- Abdomen
- Chest
- Neck

### **Therapeutic Applications**

Modern teachers believe that Legs-Up-the-Wall Pose is good for most everything that ails you, including:

- Anxiety
- Arthritis
- Digestive problems
- Headache
- High and low blood pressure
- Insomnia
- Migraine
- Mild depression
- Respiratory ailments
- Urinary disorders
- Varicose veins
- Menstrual cramps
- Premenstrual syndrome
- Menopause

### **Modifications & Props**

A bolster or blanket for support.

### **Variations**

If you have enough wall space, you can slide your legs apart into a wide "V" to stretch your inner thighs and groins. You also can bend your knees, touch the soles of your feet together, and slide the outer edges of your feet down the wall, bringing your heels toward the pelvis. Then you can push your hands against the top inner thighs to stretch the groins. Remember, however, never push on your knees to open the groins.

## **Nutrition**

It's cold and flu season! What can you do to help maintain a healthy immune system? Good nutrition is vital for a healthy immune system and certain nutrients play a key role in optimizing the body's resistance to infection.

- **Vitamin C** - High doses of vitamin C at the beginning of a cold has been shown in some cases to reduce the severity of the symptoms.
- **Garlic** has been used to prevent infection for thousands of years

- **Zinc** helps build energetic white blood cells (which eliminate bacterial infections)
- **B-vitamin complex**, especially B6 (pyridoxine), is critical to immune system health. Best sources are potato skins, broccoli, prunes, and lentils.
- **Water!** Around two thirds of our body is fluid, so keep well hydrated to allow the body to work at its best. Drink at least 6 to 8 glasses of water per day!
- **Get plenty of rest this holiday season!**

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS & BEST WISHES FOR  
A WONDERFUL NEW YEAR!**



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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."*