



***strength \* spirit \* solace***

## **Newsletter**

December 2005

Dear friend...

Even the most mundane job or the simplest task, can become surprisingly engaging and rewarding when we challenge ourselves to give it our very best in terms of our skills, creativity, and attention. Perhaps more important, when we give it our conscious *intention*. As obvious as this may sound, we sometimes forget that doing our best requires first *deciding* to do our best — overcoming our own apathy. The fact is, resistance and apathy tend to dissolve from the very moment we decide to apply our best selves completely.

As we wind up 2005 and prepare for the year ahead, let's take a look at the places in life (successful or not) where we may have been holding something back. What would happen if we gave those same areas our true personal best? I think, in place of boredom and dissatisfaction, we'll experience a rising level of enthusiasm and self-respect. In place of frustration and apathy, we'll find passion and creativity awakening. And as result, we'll find both our current definition of success and our future horizons expanding.

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

Namasté,

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**Meditation**

*There are times when we may feel disconnected from the world. Our actions can seem like they are of no major consequence, and we may feel like we exist in our own vacuum. Yet, the truth is that our simplest thought or action - the decisions we make each day, and how we see and relate to the world - can be incredibly significant and have a profound impact on the lives of those around us, as well as the world at large. The earth and everything on it is bound by an invisible connection between people, animals, plants, the air, the water, and the soil. Insignificant actions on your part, whether positive or negative, can have an impact on people and the environment that seem entirely separate from your personal realm of existence. Staying conscious of the interconnection between all things can help you think of your choices and your life in terms of the broader effect you may be creating.*

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

### **Bharadvajasana I (Bharadvaja's Twist)**

This gentle twist is a tonic for the spine and the abdominal organs.



### **Benefits**

- Stretches the spine, shoulders, and hips
- Massages the abdominal organs
- Relieves lower backache, neck pain, and sciatica
- Helps relieve stress
- Improves digestion
- Especially good in the second trimester of pregnancy for strengthening the lower back
- Therapeutic for carpal tunnel syndrome

### **Contraindications/Cautions**

- Diarrhea
- Headache
- High blood pressure
- Insomnia
- Low blood pressure
- Menstruation

### **Step by Step**

1. Sit on the floor with your legs straight out in front of you. Shift over onto your right buttock, bend your knees, and swing your legs to the left. Lay your feet on the floor outside your left hip, with the left ankle resting in the right arch.
2. Inhale and lift through the top of the sternum to lengthen the front torso. Then exhale and twist your torso to the right, keeping the left buttock on or very close to the floor. Lengthen your tailbone toward the floor to keep the lower back long. Soften the belly.
3. Tuck your left hand under your right knee and bring your right hand to the floor just beside your right buttock. Pull your left shoulder back slightly, pressing your shoulder blades firmly against your back even as you continue to twist the chest to the right.
4. You can turn your head in one of two directions: continue the twist of the torso by turning it to the right; or counter the twist of the torso by turning it left and looking over the left shoulder at your feet.
5. With every inhalation lift a little more through the sternum, using the push of the fingers on the floor to help; with every exhalation twist a little more. Stay for 30 seconds to 1 minute, then release with an exhalation, return to the starting position, and repeat to the left for the same length of time.

### **Modifications & Props**

For an easier variation of this pose, sit sideways on a chair with the chair back to your right. Bring your knees together and your heels directly below your knees. Exhale and twist toward the chair back. Hold onto the sides of the chair back and lift your elbows up and out to the sides, as if you were pulling the chair back apart. Use the arms to help widen the upper back and move the twist into the space between the shoulder blades.

### **Beginners Tip**

If you tilt onto the twisting-side buttock (which compresses the lower back), raise it up on a thickly folded blanket. Consciously sink both sitting bones toward the floor.

### **Deepen the Pose**

You can increase the challenge in this pose by slightly varying the position of the arms and hands. First, exhale and swing your right arm around behind your back as you twist to the right. If you can, grip the left arm just at the elbow with the right hand; if you can't, hold a strap looped around the left elbow. Then turn your left arm outward (so the palm faces away from the knees) and slip the hand under the right knee, palm on the floor.

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

### **Nutrition – A Survival Guide to Holiday Eating**

Here's some food for thought – to gain five pounds between now to the end of January, all you have to do is eat an average of 200 calories per day more than you need – an

ounce of fudge here, an ounce of gravy there, some pecan pie. The holidays typically encourage people to indulge in high-fat, high-calorie foods that are low in nutrients, and this is also the time we're most likely to make excuses for skipping exercise.

Here are some holiday survival tips:

- Exercise an hour a day during the holidays. Exercise to burn calories, relieve stress, and elevate your endorphins and mood such as a brisk walk, run, or bike-ride.
- Don't skip meals. Hunger and low blood sugar lead to overeating.
- Don't pass up favorite foods or deprive yourself completely. Moderate consumption is the key.
- Don't go to a party starving. Before you leave home, eat something light or drink a protein shake.
- Drink a great deal of water EVERY DAY!
- When you attend holiday festivities, don't station yourself near the buffet table.
- Alcoholic beverages pack on the calories so if you're drinking alcohol, stick to light beer or a champagne spritzer.
- Take a meditative moment at least one time every day to breathe deeply, and clear your mind of all the clutter.
- Enjoy the season, not just the food!

### **Your Questions Answered!**

Do you have a question? Email it to me at [sara@saradelaney.com](mailto:sara@saradelaney.com).

**Q:** *I have to bring a side dish to my aunt's house for Christmas dinner. I want to make a vegetable that not only tastes good but is good for you too! Do you have any recipes?*

**A:**

Most of us are used to seeing a holiday table or buffet spread with some of the most indulgent of foods – from the gigantic stuffed turkey and gravy to mashed potatoes, from corn bread to eggnog, from jellied cranberries to the pumpkin pie! Often, one of the key nutrients missing is fresh green vegetables! An asparagus dish that infuses the fresh flavors of ginger and orange will have even the pickiest of vegetable eaters coming back for seconds!

### **Asparagus with Ginger-Orange Vinaigrette**

Serves 4

- 1 TB minced fresh ginger
- 1/2 tsp minced orange peel
- 2 TB orange juice
- 2 tsp white wine vinegar
- 1/4 tsp soy sauce
- 1/4 tsp salt

- 1/4 tsp fresh-cracked black pepper
- 3 TB organic extra virgin olive oil
- 1 lb asparagus, washed, tough ends removed

Whisk together ginger, orange peel, orange juice, vinegar, soy sauce, salt and pepper. Slowly whisk in olive oil; let rest one hour. Steam asparagus, covered, in boiling water (1/4-inch deep) till tender yet still a bit crisp, about 5 minutes. Drizzle vinaigrette over asparagus.

### **Nutrition Info**

Per Serving (137g-wt.): 130 calories (90 from fat), 11g total fat, 1.5g saturated fat, 3g dietary fiber, 3g protein, 6g carbohydrate, 0mg cholesterol, 170mg sodium

### **Contemplate...**

By focusing on what's truly important – whether that's time with family and friends, or a volunteering for a favorite cause – it *is* possible to spend far less money on short-lived luxuries and gifts, *and* wind up feeling much more satisfied this holiday season. ☺



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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."*