



strength * spirit * solace

Newsletter

January 2005

Dear friend...

Are you ready to have your best year ever?

Each year, we make our New Year's Resolutions and then merely wait for a particular outcome (or some kind of miracle) to occur in order for us to be happy, fit, successful, or to achieve a new goal in life. At the same time, we are missing out on our right to have a life we love right *now*.

This year, deconstruct the fantasy of New Year's Resolutions, and identify how you think you are going to feel when your dreams come true, and then take action — right here, right now. This year, you are free to make your “Inner Resolutions!”

Take a look at the changes you'd like to make in your life and then figure out the qualities required to achieve them. Consider how strengthening those qualities would allow you to more fully express the best aspects of yourself.

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

Namasté,

Sara

My Denver Studio Schedule

- **Tuesdays, 6:30 – 8:00 pm:** Vinyasa Yoga at Highland's Yoga Studio (44th and Tennyson in the Highlands neighborhood)

- **Wednesdays, 5:45 – 7:15 pm:** Restorative Yoga at The Denver Ashtanga Yoga Center (32nd and Julian in the Highlands neighborhood)
- Private lessons are available! Email yoga@saradelaney.com for more information!

Healthy Products I Love!

Humm Foods, the creator of LÄRABAR, firmly believes that the foundation of a healthy mind, body and spirit is derived from what you eat. And what you eat is healthiest and most satisfying when it's in a whole, natural state. LÄRABAR is a delicious blend of unsweetened fruits, nuts and spices — energy in its purest form. Made from 100% whole, raw food, each flavor contains no more than 2 to 6 ingredients. LÄRABAR is available for approximately \$2.50 per bar at most health food stores.

Meditation

All humans are beings of energy, vibrating at unique and beautiful frequencies. As such, each of us possesses the ability to affect the world in a positive way, simply by using focused meditation to connect with our own environments, our fellow humans, and the Earth. Because it is intention that creates the connection, we all have the potential to act as and to create beacons of light - centers of positive, healing energy that radiates outward, dispelling negativity and spreading joy and wellbeing. It is more than choosing to maintain a positive attitude. Rather, becoming a beacon of light means embodying qualities of energy that can open up the potential of others and becoming a center of positive change by meditating outward.

Poses You Can Do at Home

Virabhadrasana II (Warrior II Pose)

Named for a fierce warrior, this version of Warrior Pose increases stamina.



Benefits

- Strengthens and stretches the legs and ankles
- Stretches the groins, chest and lungs, shoulders
- Stimulates abdominal organs
- Increases stamina
- Relieves backaches, especially through second trimester of pregnancy
- Therapeutic for carpal tunnel syndrome, flat feet, infertility, osteoporosis, and sciatica

Contraindications/Cautions

- Diarrhea
- High blood pressure
- Neck problems: Don't turn your head to look over the front hand; continue to look straight ahead with both sides of the neck lengthened evenly.

Step by Step

1. Stand in Tadasana. With an exhalation, step or lightly jump your feet 3 1/2 to 4 feet apart. Raise your arms parallel to the floor and reach them actively out to the sides, shoulder blades wide, palms down.
2. Turn your right foot in slightly to the right and your left foot out to the left 90 degrees. Align the left heel with the right heel. Firm your thighs and turn your left thigh outward so that the center of the left kneecap is in line with the center of the left ankle.
3. Exhale and bend your left knee over the left ankle, so that the shin is perpendicular to the floor. If possible, bring the left thigh parallel to the floor. Anchor this movement of the left knee by strengthening the right leg and pressing the outer right heel firmly to the floor.
4. Stretch the arms away from the space between the shoulder blades, parallel to the floor. Don't lean the torso over the left thigh: Keep the sides of the torso equally long and the shoulders directly over the pelvis. Press the tailbone slightly toward the pubis. Turn the head to the left and look out over the fingers.
5. Stay for 30 seconds to 1 minute. Inhale to come up. Reverse the feet and repeat for the same length of time to the left.

Beginners Tip

When you bend the left knee to a right angle, bend it very quickly with an expressive exhalation, and aim the inside of the left knee toward the little-toe side of the left foot.

Deepen the Pose

To increase the length and strength of the arms in the pose, turn the palms and inner elbow creases to face the ceiling while you draw the shoulder blades down the back. Then maintaining the rotation of the arms, turn the palms from the wrists to face the floor again.

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

Nutrition – Absorption Dynamics

In addition to your body's current nutritional status, there are many other factors that influence how well your body absorbs what you feed it. Here's a look at a few key variables:

1. **Stress:** A lot of people have digestive problems like indigestion and heartburn, and much of that is related to stress. These conditions are common byproducts of our body's biochemical response to being on constant, low-grade "fight or flight" status. Because this body-wide nervous-system response is antithetical to digestion (and most non-emergency bodily functions), it negatively affects absorption. Many people take antacids to reduce their symptoms, but antacids can also decrease absorption of some nutrients, so taking them can be counterproductive. A better plan, most integrative health experts agree, is to reduce your exposure to sources of stress — or adjust your attitudes and responses to better deal with the circumstances you can't change. This can relieve indigestion and heartburn and thus restore normal absorption.
2. **Alcohol:** Even when nutrient intake approaches the recommended daily amount, alcohol consumption can cause deficiencies. Alcohol damages the lining of the stomach and small intestines, altering or reducing absorption of vitamins and minerals. A 1993 report from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism confirms these findings and adds that alcohol also inhibits the breakdown of nutrients by decreasing secretion of digestive enzymes. The recommendation? Keep alcohol to a minimum.
3. **Caffeine:** You don't necessarily have to give up your morning coffee in order to absorb nutrients, but do wait at least an hour between consuming caffeine and meals or supplements. Iron is one nutrient particularly affected by caffeine, and its absorption can be reduced by up to 80 percent. Consider substituting non-caffeinated versions of coffee, tea and other drinks when you can. You can also soften caffeine's effect on absorption by simply adding a couple of tablespoons of milk or cream to coffee or tea.
4. **Exercise:** Intense exercise can be great for body and soul, but a tough workout can affect how efficiently you soak up nutrients. In the long run, working out improves intestinal motility, which is a major benefit for colon health. But when your body is busy trying to divert blood and nutrients to working muscles, it can't also stay focused on digesting and absorbing your food. That's why it's important to wait a couple of hours between consuming your meals and moving on to your workouts. Note that because intense exercise increases your need for fluid (after about 20 minutes) and electrolytes (after about an hour) to replace the vitamins and minerals lost by sweating, sports drinks are an exception to the don't-eat-and-exercise rule. And carbohydrate drinks may also be needed during endurance events to prevent fatigue.

Your Questions Answered!

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

Q: *Why should I meditate?*

A:

Your thoughts and feelings – the difficult, negative, and passionate ones as well as the peaceful and funny ones – are all made of the same subtle, invisible, highly dynamic “stuff.” The secret of meditation is that if you can recognize thoughts for what they are – if you can see that they are nothing but energy – they will stop troubling you.

Close your eyes and observe the thoughts going through your mind. When you first start meditating, your stream of consciousness might suddenly come to a halt. If that happens, you will need to create a thought. In the beginning, let it be a sweet thought, like the vision of the ocean, or being with someone you love. Hold the thought for a few seconds and focus on the thought's substance. Notice the energetic space the thought creates inside your mind.

Neutral and happy thoughts are easy to deal with in meditation. They are the ones that respond best to the classic directive to let thoughts go or allow them to float by. The charged thoughts, however, are more difficult. They are the ones that obstruct us. Certain thoughts are so intensely charged that in some cases, they take us right out of meditation. Often, we will avoid the practice of meditation because of the charged thoughts that come up when we sit still.

Try it again...Close your eyes and bring up a thought that creates anger or irritation in you. Now, let go of the object of your irritation and tune in to the pure feeling of it. You are moving your attention into the feeling space created by your irritation, letting yourself explore the energy inside it. Notice where you feel it in your body or mind. Where is it strongest? Go into the strongest sensation of feeling you can find and recognize it as pure energy. This is not good or bad energy; it's simply energy.

The next step in this process is to investigate the underlying energy, the feeling space created by the thought. Every single thought or particle of thought has its own energetic signature – the energy in thoughts is what gives them their power. The meaning of words in our mind is what engages us, but what causes thoughts to change our inner state is actually the energy inside those thoughts.

Approaching the mind with this awareness, we free it to expand. Then the mind that had previously seemed so dense and hostile begins to show us its real vastness, its brilliance, and its love. A mind that recognizes its own true substance becomes a giver of blessings – no longer a problem but a friend.

Contemplate...

These days, it seems many people are confused about the concept of commitment. For instance, sometimes people say that they would make the commitment to something if they knew how it was going to turn out. But that suggests they do not really understand what commitment means. In fact, if you know the outcome of an action in advance, it

does not require that much commitment. What makes yours a *commitment* to practice yoga is the fact that you don't know for certain how it will turn out each time you step onto your yoga mat...yet you still choose it as the best course of action. ☺



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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."*