



*strength * spirit * solace*

Newsletter

March 2005

Dear friend...

Spring, our natural season of renewal, is the ideal time to recapture any ground lost over the winter, especially when it comes to diet and nutritional needs. It's also an opportunity to build momentum for the farmers' markets of summer. Say "so long" to the hearty roasts of winter! It's time to step on the energetic gas pedal – you can do this by filling your diet with rich, dark greens such as spinach, collards, kale, chards, mustards, lettuces, dandelions and others that are erupting from local farms.

Not only are they versatile (they take well to all sorts of preparations), dark leafy, greens are also jam-packed with wonderful nutritional benefits – a terrific jump-start for anyone needing a gentle nudge out of the winter doldrums. 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!

Meditation

The road that we must walk to fulfill our goals can seem long and hard, leading to feelings of discouragement. But each of us, through nothing more than simple thoughts, has in the past attracted certain people, certain things, and certain blessings to ourselves. In this way, we have manifested our desires unconsciously. It is easy to feel undeserving, to feel there is no reason to believe the universe would grant your wishes, but this is simply untrue. You, like everything you see and experience, are made of vibrational energy, and this energy has the power to attract and repel other forms of energy. By asserting yourself to the universe, by visualizing what you want, thinking positively, setting goals, and being willing to accept what the universe will grant you, you can achieve your soul's desire through conscious manifestation.

Poses You Can Do at Home

Paripurna Navasana (Full Boat Pose)

An abdominal and deep hip flexor strengthener, Boat Pose requires you to balance on the tripod of your sitting bones and tailbone.



Benefits

- Strengthens the abdomen, hip flexors, and spine
- Stimulates the kidneys, thyroid and prostate glands, and intestines
- Helps relieve stress
- Improves digestion

Contraindications/Cautions

- Asthma
- Diarrhea
- Headache
- Heart Problems
- Insomnia
- Low blood pressure

- Menstruation
- Pregnancy
- Neck injury: Sit with your back near a wall to perform this pose. As you tilt your torso back rest the back of your head on the wall.

Step by Step

1. Sit on the floor with your legs straight in front of you. Press your hands on the floor a little behind your hips, fingers pointing toward the feet, and strengthen the arms. Lift through the top of the sternum and lean back slightly. As you do this make sure your back doesn't round; continue to lengthen the front of your torso between the pubis and top sternum. Sit on the "tripod" of your two sitting bones and tailbone.
2. Exhale and bend your knees, then lift your feet off the floor, so that the thighs are angled about 45-50 degrees relative to the floor. Lengthen your tailbone into the floor and lift your pubis toward your navel. If possible, slowly straighten your knees, raising the tips of your toes slightly above the level of your eyes. If this isn't possible remain with your knees bent, perhaps lifting the shins parallel to the floor.
3. Stretch your arms alongside the legs, parallel to each other and the floor. Spread the shoulder blades across your back and reach strongly out through the fingers. If this isn't possible, keep the hands on the floor beside your hips or hold on to the backs of your thighs.
4. While the lower belly should be firm, it shouldn't get hard and thick. Try to keep the lower belly relatively flat. Press the heads of the thigh bones toward the floor to help anchor the pose and lift the top sternum. Breathe easily. Tip the chin slightly toward the sternum so the base of the skull lifts lightly away from the back of the neck.
5. At first stay in the pose for 10-20 seconds. Gradually increase the time of your stay to 1 minute. Release the legs with an exhalation and sit upright on an inhalation.

Modifications & Props

Often it's difficult to straighten the raised legs. Bend your knees and loop a strap around the soles of your feet, gripping it firmly in your hands. Inhale, lean the torso back, then exhale and lift and straighten your legs, adjusting the strap to keep it taut. Push the feet firmly against the strap.

Beginners Tip

You can practice a preparation for this pose periodically throughout your day without even leaving your chair. Sit on the front edge of a seat with your knees at right angles. Grab onto the sides of the seat with your hands and lean slightly forward. Firm your arms and lift your buttocks slightly off the seat, then raise your heels slightly off the floor (but not the balls of your feet). Let the heads of your thigh bones sink into the pull of gravity and push the top of your sternum forward and up.

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

Nutrition – Benefits And Preparation Of Kale

Everyone has been, at one time or another, admonished to "eat more greens." In the

colder months, when it seems like there is a dearth of fresh veggies, beautiful, leafy kale is just attaining its peak of deliciousness. This hardy vegetable thrives in fall frosts and mild winters that give the leaves a high sugar content and rich flavor. The plant itself may be tall or short, with plain or delicately curled leaves of red, yellow, or blue- and emerald-green. Highly regarded for its potent health effects, kale remains a delight to the palette with a long history.

It is no doubt kale's unique health benefits guaranteed its place as a mainstay in nutritional history. Unusually rich in vitamins and minerals, its long open leaves are packed with potassium, calcium, zinc, iron, cancer-fighting chemicals, beta-carotenes, and other antioxidants. Kale also contains compounds known for their detoxifying properties, giving it the ability to cleanse the body holistically.

Kale's sweet and spicy flavor adds an uplifting note to raw salads, and makes a wonderful addition to soups, stews, and rice dishes. Unlike other leafy vegetables, kale doesn't lose its deep green color or its crunch when cooked, so it can be steamed or blanched on its own and eaten as a healthful side dish. Kale readily imparts its nutrients into cooking liquid. In the United States, kale and its cousin, the collard green, have been appreciated mainly in Southern cuisine, but in Europe, it is regularly used in recipes calling for spinach.

The three most common forms of kale are the crunchy curly kale, the colorful ornamental kale, and the mild dinosaur kale. Various forms of kale are widely available in both the United States and Europe, though if you are lucky enough to live in a locale touched by gentle frosts, you may want to try growing your own.

Healthy Kale Recipe

2 Cups Kale
3 Cloves Garlic
1 Teaspoon Ginger
1 Cup diced Red Bell Pepper
1 Tablespoon Sesame Oil
1 Tablespoon Sesame Seeds
Sea Salt if desired

Toast Sesame seeds until slightly golden. Stir fry kale with garlic, ginger and bell pepper. Sprinkle with toasted sesame seeds and top with sea salt if desired.

Your Questions Answered!

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

Q: *Mine is not a nutrition or yoga question...it's about stress. When I get home from work, I am usually more stressed out than when I left. How can I improve my transition from work to home?*

A:

For many Americans, the world of work feels a bit like an endless ride — one that's spinning too fast and feeling more than a little out of control. But just how and why did we get strapped into this craziness? Understand the machinery of our own workaholic tendencies and we'll be one step closer to switching gears — and maybe even putting on the brakes. The following tips can help us to better make that hectic transition from work to home, without all the extra stress.

Give Your Body What It's Missing: If you sit at a computer all day, a brisk walk or exercise class after work can help you restore energy and shift gears. Alternatively, if you have a physically demanding job, a relaxing yoga class or half an hour at a tea shop can help you settle down for the evening.

Get Some Air: Basic breathing exercises offer a fast and surprisingly effective way to renew yourself for the evening ahead. This deceptively simple technique helps reset your parasympathetic nervous system, which is responsible for helping you get calm and centered:

- Inhale through your nose for four counts.
- Exhale through your mouth for eight counts.
- Make sure you're inflating your lower abdomen when you breathe.
- Repeat four or five times, then breathe normally.

Another idea: Park your car 10 minutes away from your office building so that you're guaranteed a brief walk after work, or take a quick stroll around the block. Use this time to practice full-belly breathing.

Make a Quick Stop: Scout out a good location (maybe a city park, an overlook or a quiet residential street) where you can stop the car for even three minutes on your way home.

Visualize how you want your homecoming to be. Picture the faces of your family members or partner and let yourself well up with love for them. Or just take stock of the day and count your blessings. Don't start the car until you're feeling really ready to walk in the front door.

- Stress-relief tips are from *Experience Life Magazine*, March 2005.

Contemplate...

Being healthy at work, and having healthy attitudes about work, serves not just us but everyone around us. It helps us offer more of ourselves, and to see more of the best in other people. So, take better care of yourself in some way, no matter where you work or what you do. And if you think you are just way too busy and what you have to do today is just way too important...at least, stop and breathe.



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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."*