



strength * spirit * solace

Newsletter

May 2006

Dear friend...

Aah, spring is finally here. Now is the perfect time to consider how you can best harness the enthusiasm and clarity you feel now in order to create real, lasting changes in your life. Spring is a time for making choices and taking inspired action.

How can you best take advantage of spring's boundless energy? Sometimes "spring fever" fills you with such enthusiasm that you don't know what to do with yourself. This is a great time to begin new physical activities. Trail running, bicycling, rock climbing, hiking and even fly-fishing – you may be drawn to endeavors that help you to become stronger, more disciplined and more focused. And, all physical activities will benefit greatly from the continued practice of yoga one or two times per week.

In fact, expanding into new areas of physical and emotional space in the spring helps you live better all year round. So when you step off your yoga mat this month and fill your lungs with the heady aromas of spring, let nature inspire you. Point your energy in the direction of all the sweetness and satisfaction that is waiting for you – and then go!

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

Namasté,

Sara

Meditation

In a world where we have routines for nearly everything – our route to work, our physical fitness regimen, and our weekday schedule – it's amazing how many people forget to create a routine for meeting their spiritual needs. We run around in an

attempt to be at our many appointments on time and meet our many obligations. In our efforts to be as productive as possible, however, our spiritual needs tend to take a backseat. After all, taking care of our spiritual needs doesn't directly pay the bills or tone our abdominal muscles. We may even wonder who has time to meditate or write in their journal when there are more pressing matters to see to. The truth is that nurturing ourselves spiritually is what gives us the energy and grounding that we need to make sure that our lives stay on track.

Sign up for a free daily inspirational message at www.dailyom.com.

Poses You Can Do at Home



Dhanurasana (Bow Pose)

This pose is so called because it looks like an archer's bow, the torso and legs representing the body of the bow, and the arms the string.

Benefits

- Stretches the entire front of the body, ankles, thighs and groins, abdomen and chest, and throat, and deep hip flexors (psoas)
- Strengthens the back muscles
- Improves posture
- Stimulates the organs of the abdomen and neck

Contraindications/Cautions

- High or low blood pressure
- Migraine
- Insomnia
- Serious lower-back or neck injury

Step by Step

1. Lie on your belly with your hands alongside your torso, palms up. (You can lie on a folded blanket to pad the front of your torso and legs.) Exhale and bend your knees, bringing your heels as close as you can to your buttocks. Reach back with your hands and take hold of your ankles (but not the tops of the feet). Make sure your knees aren't wider than the width of your hips, and keep your knees hip width for the duration of the pose.

2. Inhale and strongly lift your heels away from your buttocks and, at the same time, lift your thighs away from the floor. This will have the effect of pulling your upper torso and head off the floor. Burrow the tailbone down toward the floor, and keep your back muscles soft. As you continue lifting the heels and thighs higher, press your shoulder blades firmly against your back to open your heart. Draw the tops of the shoulders away from your ears. Gaze forward.
3. With the belly pressed against the floor, breathing will be difficult. Breathe more into the back of your torso, and be sure not to stop breathing.
4. Stay in this pose anywhere from 20 to 30 seconds. Release as you exhale, and lie quietly for a few breaths. You can repeat the pose once or twice more.

Anatomical Focus

- Thighs
- Groins
- Belly
- Chest
- Spine
- Shoulders
- Neck

Therapeutic Applications

- Constipation
- Respiratory ailments
- Mild backache
- Fatigue
- Anxiety
- Menstrual discomfort

Modifications & Props

If it isn't possible for you to hold your ankles directly, wrap a strap around the fronts of your ankles and hold the free ends of the strap, keeping your arms fully extended.

Beginners Tip

Sometimes beginners find it difficult to lift their thighs away from the floor. You can give your legs a little upward boost by lying with your thighs supported on a rolled-up blanket.

Deepen the Pose

You can increase the challenge of Dhanurasana by performing the pose with your thighs, calves, and inner feet touching.

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

Nutrition – Go for the Green!

Many of us are introduced to greens via the salad bowl. Of course, some salads can be

real yawners, but dark greens offer plenty of creative ways to jazz them up. Try mixing several types, like spinach, cress, arugula, escarole or dandelion. One of my favorite combinations is baby spinach and arugula dressed with three parts olive oil to one part lemon juice and garnished with shaved Parmesan Reggiano cheese and toasted pine nuts. YUM!

Dark greens really shine when cooked. Try these ideas:

- For a great side dish, try braising collards, kale, cabbage and chards with sliced garlic, olive oil and pancetta.
- Sorrel, mustards, pea tips, beet greens, cress, and other tender greens don't take well to long-term cooking but are great for fast sauté-steaming. Just preheat a large sauté pan over medium heat and add a teaspoon of butter or olive oil. Follow that with several thick handfuls of tender greens and let them wilt in their own juices, tossing every 30 seconds or so until tender.
- You can also season the greens with dill, lemon, shallots and garlic when they go in the pan or toss with some high-quality Chinese oyster sauce (see recipe) at the last second before serving.

Gai Lan with Oyster Sauce

2 lbs. gai lan (Chinese broccoli)
2 tsp. peanut oil
2 tbs. minced ginger
1 tbs. minced garlic
1/4 cup chopped scallions
1/4 cup oyster sauce
3 dried red-hot chilies, whole

Trim, wash and dry the gai lan. Discard large central stems. Steam gai lan for three to five minutes until crisp and tender. Plunge into ice water to stop it from cooking and retain color. Drain and store in refrigerator for any use. Try preheating a wok or sauté pan over high heat for five minutes. Add peanut oil, swirl and add garlic, ginger, chilies and scallions. Toss and add the gai lan. Sauté to heat the gai lan through (three minutes). Add the oyster sauce, toss for a minute more, and serve immediately. Garnish with toasted sesame seeds.

Your Questions Answered!

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

Q: *I am training for the Courage Classic bike ride this summer and I need some tips on healthy training nutrition.*

A:

Funny you should ask – I just authored an article for the Courage Classic website regarding that very topic. You can check it out online at:

<http://www.couragetours.com/site/pp.asp?c=huIWLdMTJtE&b=1579551>

Enjoy the ride!

Contemplate...

Superficial chatter is going to take you only so far. Sure, recapping last night's American Idol guarantees you some gab time with your pals. But experts agree that moving beyond small talk is essential to meaningful relationships. If you're interested in truly knowing and being known, focus on revealing your real self and the things that matter to you — and encourage your friends to do the same.



Sara Delaney
Certified Yoga Instructor
Nutrition Therapist In-Training
720.810.7027
sara@saradelaney.com

*"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."*