



*strength * spirit * solace*

Newsletter

November 2005

Dear friend...

Our bodies want to be treated with respect. When they get that, they tend to maintain (or rapidly return to) their natural state of good health and vitality. And when they don't, even the most sophisticated fitness or nutritional regimens can fail to perform as promised: The weight just won't drop. The muscle won't grow. The illness won't heal. The depression won't lift. It may even seem that our best efforts are working against us.

But like most things, respecting one's body is often easier said than done — in part because that effort begins with accepting and loving our body the way it is. We must first accept that our bodies typically reflect the level of care we've been showing them. So if we don't like what we're feeling and seeing, that's probably a very accurate sign, from a very intelligent body, that something in our lives is a little (or a lot) out of whack. Are we getting enough whole foods and clean water? Enough sleep? Enough movement? Enough time for relaxation, recovery and pleasure? Are we living in integrity with our values?

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

Namasté,

Sara

My Denver Studio Schedule

- **Thursdays, 5:30 – 7:00 pm:** Vinyasa Yoga at Golden Yoga (www.breatheyogacolorado.com for more info)

➤ Private lessons are available! Email yoga@saradelaney.com for more information!

Meditation

Life is full of little wonders that can make us happy. These "little things" are easily accessible to us and can be sources for finding happiness. A key to doing so is taking the time to put those rose colored glasses from childhood back on so you can easily find the joy in all the "little things" that life has to offer. When we begin rediscovering that the little things in life can make us happy, we naturally want to share this joy with others. We may gush over a friend when we run into them unexpectedly, praise a street musician for their talents, or blow bubbles for the neighborhood kids to chase. We may even start to think of the little things we can do to make other people happy, which in turn makes us happy all over again. There is an endless supply of little things and little moments that can make us happy. All we have to do is look for them, and they'll magically start to appear.

Poses You Can Do at Home

Vasisthasana (Side Plank Pose)

This pose is a powerful arm and wrist strengthener and might also be called the One-Arm Balance. Here you're balanced on the same-side hand and outer foot, with your torso and legs aligned at a 45-degree angle with the floor.



Benefits

- Strengthens the arms, belly, and legs
- Stretches and strengthens the wrists
- Stretches the backs of the legs
- Improves sense of balance

Contraindications/Cautions

Students with serious wrist, elbow, or shoulder injuries should avoid this pose.

Step by Step

1. Perform Downward Facing Dog. Shift onto the outside edge of your left foot, and stack your right foot on top of the left. Now swing your right hand onto your right hip, turn your torso to the right as you do, and support the weight of your body on the outer left foot and left hand.
2. Make sure that the supporting hand isn't directly below its shoulder; position the hand slightly in front of its shoulder, so the supporting arm is angled a bit relative to the floor. Straighten the arm by firming the triceps muscle, and press the base of the index finger firmly against the floor.
3. Firm the scapulas and sacrum against the back torso. Strengthen the thighs, and press through the heels toward the floor. Align your entire body into one long diagonal line from the heels to the crown.
4. If you'd like you can stretch the top arm toward the ceiling, parallel to the line of the shoulders. Keep the head in a neutral position, or turn it to gaze up at the top hand.
5. Stay in this position for 15 to 30 seconds. Come back to Downward Facing Dog, take a few breaths, and repeat to the right side for the same length of time. Then return to Downward Facing Dog for a few more breaths, and finally release into Balasana.

Anatomical Focus

- Wrists
- Arms
- Shoulders
- Belly
- Buttocks
- Thighs

Modifications & Props

In order to increase the strength and stability of this pose, it's helpful to work it with your soles pressing against a wall. Perform Downward Facing Dog with your heels up on a wall, the balls of your feet on the floor. When you shift onto the outside of your left foot, press the sole against the wall. Similarly, when you stack your right foot on top of the left, press that sole to the wall. Then in the pose, push your heels actively into the wall.

Beginners Tip

Beginners often have a difficult time sustaining this pose, even with the soles pressed to a wall. Perform Downward Facing Dog with your heels up on a wall. Measure the distance between your right foot and right hand, then step the foot halfway to the hand. Keep the right foot on the floor for support and turn the toes out to the right. Then shift onto the outside of the left foot, press the sole against the wall, and turn onto the left hand as described above. In this position the bent leg will provide some extra support. Step back to Downward Facing Dog at the end of your stay, then repeat to the other side.

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

Nutrition – Acid/Alkaline Imbalance

Over acidity can become a dangerous condition that weakens all body systems and is very common today. It gives rise to an internal environment conducive to disease, as opposed to a pH-balanced environment which allows normal body function necessary for the body to resist disease. A healthy body maintains adequate alkaline reserves to meet emergency demands. When excess acids must be neutralized, our alkaline reserves are depleted leaving the body in a weakened condition.

Understanding pH

pH (which stands for “potential of Hydrogen”) is a measure of the acidity or alkalinity of a solution. It is measured on a scale of 0 to 14 – the lower the pH the more acidic the solution, the higher the pH the more alkaline (or base) the solution. When a solution is neither acid nor alkaline it has a pH of 7 which is neutral.

Water is the most abundant compound in the human body, comprising 70% of the body. The body has an acid-alkaline (or acid-base) ratio called the pH which is a balance between positively charged ions (acid-forming) and negatively charged ions (alkaline-forming.) The body continually strives to balance pH. When this balance is compromised many problems can occur.



It is important to understand that we are not talking about stomach acid or the pH of the stomach. We are talking about the pH of the body's fluids and tissues which is an entirely different matter. Most people who suffer from unbalanced pH are acidic. This condition forces the body to borrow minerals – including calcium, sodium, potassium and magnesium – from vital organs and bones to buffer (neutralize) the acid and safely remove it from the body. Because of this strain, the body can suffer severe and prolonged damage due to high acidity – a condition that may go undetected for years.

Mild acidosis can cause such problems as:

- Cardiovascular damage, including the constriction of blood vessels and the reduction of oxygen
- Weight gain, obesity and diabetes
- Bladder and kidney conditions, including kidney stones
- Immune deficiency
- Acceleration of free radical damage, possibly contributing to cancerous mutations
- Hormone concerns
- Premature aging
- Osteoporosis; weak, brittle bones, hip fractures and bone spurs
- Joint pain, aching muscles and lactic acid buildup
- Low energy and chronic fatigue
- Slow digestion and elimination

- Yeast/fungal overgrowth

pH and Bone Loss

A recent seven-year study conducted at the University of California, San Francisco, on 9,000 women showed that those who have chronic acidosis are at greater risk for bone loss than those who have normal pH levels. The scientists who carried out this experiment believe that many of the hip fractures prevalent among middle-aged women are connected to high acidity caused by a diet rich in animal foods and low in vegetables. This is because the body borrows calcium from the bones in order to balance pH. — American Journal of Clinical Nutrition

Keeping the Balance Right for Excellent Health

Your body is able to assimilate minerals and nutrients properly only when its pH is balanced. It is therefore possible for you to be taking healthy nutrients and yet be unable to absorb or use them. If you are not getting the results you expected from your diet or nutritional or herbal program, it maybe time for you to examine the possibility that you have an acid-alkaline imbalance.

What if I'm Acidic?

By far the most common imbalance seen in our society is over acidity. Here are some simple suggestions for increasing your alkaline level:

1. Consuming more leafy greens and darkly colored raw or cooked fruits and vegetables, and even taking a “green food” supplement, can help reduce acidity.
2. Take a Magnesium supplement with each meal which provides highly absorbable magnesium to help build necessary buffers. Magnesium is often lost in urine as a consequence of too much acid in the body.
3. Taking Vitamins A & D will help the body buffer acid; Vitamin A & D also help to hold calcium in the body.
4. Cleanse the colon as needed by taking a psyllium supplement at bedtime to maintain regular bowel movements and remove impurities from the digestive system.

Your Questions Answered!

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

Q: *Why do I need to eat breakfast?*

A:

Breakfast is the first time we nourish the body, so we need to choose our food carefully. It sets the tone for the rest of the day. We've all heard the old adage that you are what you eat. Well, it's true. Food is the fuel that makes us run. And you're doing yourself a favor if what you eat has nutritional content.

Your breakfast meal should include protein and essential fats. Protein is very important in the morning. Essential fats, particularly omega-3 fats found in foods such as

flaxseeds, oats, certain nuts and seeds, and coldwater fish like salmon, are anti-inflammatory and reduce the risk of both heart disease and cancer. Eating foods rich in protein and high-quality fats helps stabilize blood sugar, mood swings, depression, PMS, anxiety, and irritability. If you eat a savory breakfast containing high-quality fats and protein, you'll feel more grounded and centered and have much less of a desire to reach for sweets later on in the day.

From a nutritional standpoint, the ideal breakfast includes complex carbohydrates along with proteins and high-quality fats such as: Salmon with miso, brown rice and vegetables; a handful of nuts with mashed avocado on whole grain toast; or an omelet made with omega-3-rich eggs, filled with sautéed spinach, mushrooms, and onions.

Contemplate...

Embracing nutritional cooking doesn't mean you have to give up modern conveniences and pleasures. In many cases, having access to modern technology, such as blenders, crock pots and conventional ovens, makes the healthy cook's job easier. A wide range of food choices and preparation methods lets you choose how and when you want to spend your time in the kitchen — and how you want to fuel your body with the healthiest nutrition available to you on any given day.



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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."*