



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

## **Newsletter**

September 2005

Dear friend...

I believe the key to satisfaction, like most other things, lies in balance. It comes out of finding the truths that exist deep inside each of us. To that end, it's important for us to ask ourselves on a regular basis: *Am I pleased with where my life is headed? Am I clear about what I really want, and why? Are my expenditures of energy in sync with my priorities? And perhaps most important: Am I taking time to appreciate and enjoy what I already have?*

Fall is such a great time to look around and see how much bounty and beauty surrounds us. There are so many satisfying experiences to be pulled seemingly out of thin air: from the sound of leaves crunching underfoot to the taste of warm soup, from the feeling of the cool breeze on our skin to the enjoyment of watching football. The days are growing shorter, so now more than at any other time of the year, we can slow down and appreciate the pleasures of being alive.

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

Namasté,

*Sara*

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### **My Denver Studio Schedule**

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

➤ Private lessons are available! Email [yoga@saradelaney.com](mailto:yoga@saradelaney.com) for more information!

## **Meditation**

*The human psyche is almost infinitely complex, made up of layers upon layers of thoughts, experiences, emotions, fears, loves, and goals. Those who seek to find the true essence of being or to move past a fear find that there are many intermediate steps along the way. When we first look inward, we look at ourselves as a whole, when in fact we are only seeing the surface. Like an onion, if we move past the surface, we will find another layer. Moving past that, we find yet another layer. These layers are barriers and everyone has them. You may work past one fear only to be confronted with a deeper, underlying fear. Or you may fully assimilate a revelation only to find other aspects of that revelation that you had not discovered. How many layers you will confront before finding a resolution is unknown. This is the journey, this is life.*

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

### **Paschimottanasana (Seated Forward Bend)**



Literally translated as "intense stretch of the west," Paschimottanasana can help a distracted mind unwind.

### **Benefits**

- Calms the brain and helps relieve stress and mild depression
- Stretches the spine, shoulders, hamstrings
- Stimulates the liver, kidneys, ovaries, and uterus
- Improves digestion
- Helps relieve the symptoms of menopause and menstrual discomfort
- Soothes headache and anxiety and reduces fatigue
- Therapeutic for high blood pressure, infertility, insomnia, and sinusitis
- Traditional texts say that Paschimottanasana increases appetite, reduces obesity, and cures diseases.

### **Contraindications/Cautions**

- Asthma
- Diarrhea
- Back injury: Only perform this pose under the supervision of an experienced teacher.

## **Step by Step**

1. Sit on the floor with your buttocks supported on a folded blanket and your legs straight in front of you. Press actively through your heels. Rock slightly onto your left buttock, and pull your right sitting bone away from the heel with your right hand. Repeat on the other side. Turn the top thighs in slightly and press them down into the floor. Press through your palms or finger tips on the floor beside your hips and lift the top of the sternum toward the ceiling as the top thighs descend.
2. Draw the inner groins deep into the pelvis. Inhale, and keeping the front torso long, lean forward from the hip joints, not the waist. Lengthen the tailbone away from the back of your pelvis. If possible take the sides of the feet with your hands, thumbs on the soles, elbows fully extended; if this isn't possible, loop a strap around the foot soles, and hold the strap firmly. Be sure your elbows are straight, not bent.
3. When you are ready to go further, don't forcefully pull yourself into the forward bend, whether your hands are on the feet or holding the strap. Always lengthen the front torso into the pose, keeping your head raised. If you are holding the feet, bend the elbows out to the sides and lift them away from the floor; if holding the strap, lighten your grip and walk the hands forward, keeping the arms long. The lower belly should touch the thighs first, then the upper belly, then the ribs, and the head last.
4. With each inhalation, lift and lengthen the front torso just slightly; with each exhalation release a little more fully into the forward bend. In this way the torso oscillates and lengthens almost imperceptibly with the breath. Eventually you may be able to stretch the arms out beyond the feet on the floor.
5. Stay in the pose anywhere from 1 to 3 minutes. To come up, first lift the torso away from the thighs and straighten the elbows again if they are bent. Then inhale and lift the torso up by pulling the tailbone down and into the pelvis.

## **Modifications & Props**

Most students should sit up on a folded blanket in this pose, and most beginners need to hold a strap around the feet. Extremely stiff students can place a rolled up blanket under their knees.

## **Beginners Tip**

Never force yourself into a forward bend, especially when sitting on the floor. Coming forward, as soon as you feel the space between your pubis and navel shortening, stop, lift up slightly, and lengthen again. Often, because of tightness in the backs of the legs, a beginner's forward bend doesn't go very far forward and might look more like sitting up straight.

## **Deepen the Pose**

Once you are fully in the forward bend you can re-extend the elbows. There are several ways to do this. You can clasp your hands around the soles of the feet, or turn the back of one hand to the soles and grip its wrist with the other hand. You can also place a block against the soles of your feet and grip its sides with your hands.

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

## **Nutrition – Whole Grain Goodness!**

What exactly is it that makes whole grains so good for us? Consider what's in them:

- **Antioxidants** — compounds, such as vitamin E, lignans and selenium, that slow the rate of damage caused by oxygen byproducts. Antioxidants capture free radicals, which are produced when the body burns energy. Free radicals can wreak havoc on our cells, tissues, even DNA.
- **Phytoestrogens** — naturally occurring plant compounds that can change estrogen metabolism and may help protect women against breast cancer and men against prostate cancer.
- **Phenolic and phytic acids** — chemicals that have been shown to reduce the formation and presence of tumors in animals.
- **Flavonoids** — complex molecules that prevent cancer.
- **Fiber** — indigestible carbohydrates shown to reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, diverticular disease (a condition of the large intestine) and constipation.

### **Your Questions Answered!**

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

**Q:** *I want to lose weight and “detox” my body – is there anything I need to know before I begin?*

**A:**

Unfortunately, we live in a fairly toxic world, and even those of us who are committed to living clean and eating healthy are very likely to ingest, inhale, absorb or produce our own fair share of disruptive substances - substances that our body would be better off without and may need help in unloading. All of the following may be signs of a body in toxic distress:

- Acne, blemishes, hives
- Discoloration in whites of eyes or red, swollen, teary eyes
- Hormonal imbalances, PMS
- Heat in the upper body, such as warm face or hot eyes
- Difficulty perspiring
- Bad breath or offensive body odor
- Gas, bloating, belching and nausea
- Constipation or loose stools
- Multiple food allergies, sensitivities to fragrances, odors and fumes
- Weight gain, even when controlling food intake
- Feelings of tiredness or sleeplessness after eating
- Frequent coughs, stuffy or runny nose

There are some times when you should definitely not fast:

- If you are pregnant, nursing, recovering from an illness or injury, or are malnourished
- If you have cardiac arrhythmia, type 1 diabetes, congestive heart failure, ulcers, or liver or kidney disease

- If you are struggling with mental illness (including anxiety, clinical depression, bipolar disorder)
- If you are more than 10 pounds underweight or prone to eating disorders

Keep in mind that many of the symptoms above may also be signs of a serious health or medical condition, some of which require professional care. When in doubt, or in the case of chronic conditions, please consult your doctor or health professional before beginning a detox program. It is especially important to consult your physician prior to detoxing if you are diabetic, hypoglycemic, prone to migraines or are taking regular medications, including antidepressants, blood-pressure medications and birth control pills.

I personally recommend reading the book *The Fast Track One-Day Detox Diet* by Ann Louise Gittleman, PhD, CNS, to learn about a comprehensive and safe detox regimen.

### **Contemplate...**

Did you know that our country's first president, George Washington, lobbied for a National Peace Academy? Did you know that one Declaration of Independence signer, Benjamin Rush, called upon congress to establish a cabinet level Department of Peace? Hmm...



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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."*