



support; notice any resistance to this help.

Create small, gentle movements at the hips to circulate current, and shoulders to facilitate relaxation and remove stagnancy. Work with the existing range of movement for each joint, limb or extremity and how they move through flexion, extension, inward and outward rotation. Progress with larger movements of the limbs and study the results of your actions. The spine bends forward, backward, sideways and twists. Add to this balance stances, like the tree and inversions like the downward dog, plough or legs up the wall pose, (if the student feels these are realistic) and this covers all possibilities through which the body moves.

Practice educates us how to carry and transfer force through the spine and how this relates to the movement of fresh oxygenated blood which rinses vitality throughout the system. Organs remain nourished, tissues springy and joints oiled. Work towards the extremities and back inwards to the spine. Whole body movements like standing hip width apart, rotating the torso from side to side and allowing the arms to swing at the sides, encourage tremendous blood and lymphatic flow throughout. Use the breath-mind to locate/generate and direct warm current with steady awareness.

Poses like the serpent, locust and bow, (countered with a nice forward bend), trigger the spinal energy easily and so can be attempted gently within one's capacity. Whether supine, prone, standing, or sitting, all classical yoga postures reduce muscle atrophy, maintain elasticity and tone. As isolation and sensitivity skills improve, all facets evolve.

Stretch and contract the neck, wrists, hands, ankles and feet attentively. Where there is little or no movement, remain still and observe the breath and mind arising. Exercise the eyes (meridians), tongue (tendons) and gently clench and release the teeth (bones).

Mudras (gestures) such as 'reverse prayer' (prayer position behind the back or hold the hands, wrists, forearms of elbows together), combined with Bandhas (diaphragmatic breathing) and Kriyas (incorporating the movement or concentration of breath and mind) isolate and manipulate the pranic force, promoting balance.

All asanas and mudras produce a fabulous relaxation response in connective tissue which has stiffened and lost tacity. Regular self-acupressure massage and the use of props both help rebalance vital current.

PRANAYAM

Lengthen exhalations gracefully and become aware of the pause after the breath. Lengthen pauses comfortably by regulating a refined tension in the throat, which enables a smooth and effortless inhalation, below and behind the

navel. Exhale to prepare, pause and inhale; spiralling, flexing and extending the joints, limbs and digits, even adding a little tension to the movement to intensify. Direct the movement-breath-wave into the bone marrow. When exhaling, release and relax. This flushes out impurities and discharges stagnancy as oxygenated blood rinses in.

Then reverse; prepare with 'inhale' and do the exercises on 'exhale'. Ujjayi (Towards Victory) and Nadi Shodana (Nerve Purification) for balancing, stability, energy and relaxation, Kapal Bhati (Shining Skull) – very gently, for toxic purging, strengthening and relaxing and Sitali for cooling.

RELAXATION AND MEDITATION

Relax in Corpse Pose regularly, focusing on breath, body and all-inclusive mind. Inhale from tailbone to crown, exhale from crown through forehead, to palate and tongue down the front body to the tail. Repeat comfortably to stimulate the body's primary meridians. Pain is our teacher and may be unavoidable. My experience is that suffering is optional. Practice can trigger the symptoms of an illness. Rather than pray for a cure, pray for wisdom to accept the reality at hand. Illness is opportunity for growth, whereby we learn the meaning of detachment, from our effort as the doer and with the identification with the body as the Self. This awareness lifts the yogi to the heights of immortality.

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