

Your Home Yoga Practice.

Having a daily home yoga practice is something that many of us aspire to but often fail to accomplish. Surprisingly many yoga teachers may not even have a daily home practice!! So what hope is there for the rest of us?

Balance is born of consciousness.

Getting balanced is not something that we can place on our to-do list! The bottom-line in Ayurveda is increasing the flow of our own innate intelligence, the pure consciousness that enlivens us and the world around us.

Balance is born out of this. It is not something we accomplish by 'getting everything right.' Whew!

All of us can relax and reframe our goals for our daily practice with the above information. Our goal is to get into our bodies, get out of our heads, calm our nervous systems and release the tension that keeps us locked in a stress response and inhibits the free-flow of prana (our life juice).

Yoga classes are GOOD! Great in fact. They do all of the above for you and more. They encourage you to push your limits, you stretch and strengthen parts you didn't even know you had, you relax more deeply than you thought you could, you learn new things, and much more!

Your home practices DOES NOT have to look like a yoga class. It does not have to accomplish all of the same things (but it will, just more slowly, over time). It DOES have to happen every (okay, most) days. It DOES need to get you breathing, help you toss off tension and strain and create an attitude of love toward yourself. It DOES need to be something you can do by yourself, for yourself.

Keep it simple - Basic Breathing.

Breathing in and out through the nose is crucial for creating the relaxation response. Start with simply making your breath more smooth, more even, more uniform in length, duration and quality. Breath out ALL THE WAY.

When you have gotten comfortable with this 'same-action' breath, try toning at the back of your throat to make the ujjayi sound. This may be new to you - focus on the characteristics of the same-action breath above. If ujjayi is old-hat to you, your assignment, should you choose to accept it, is to make your breath more and more *subtle*. As if you are turning the 'volume' down on the breath. Not just sound-wise but all the qualities.

KEEP BREATHING. Make this the ground of your practice.

Know yourself, and start from there.

When you have a routine that you practice everyday, then you are the changing component. You get to observe your own differences from day to day. Sometimes lighter, sometimes heavier, happier, more subdued, tighter or looser. You can make subtle changes to accommodate but this routine helps to shine a light on YOU.

A simple (sample) daily practice

I recommend morning cleansing and then heading right to your mat.

- cat/cow pose
- child's pose
- downward dog
- repeat!
- uttanasana (forward fold)
- malasana (squat pose)
- enjoy! take several breaths to move into your body in each pose!
- 'up and down pose' (squat to forward fold and back)
- from squat pose place your hands behind you, lift your chest and stretch your palms and wrists
- reclining - knees to chest
- apanasana (one knee to chest) w/ankle rolls
- straight-leg stretch (supta hasta padhugastasana (hand to big toe pose variation))
- figure four stretch
- twist (for hips -with feet flat on the floor)
- supta baddha konasana (soles of the feet together, knees open)
- core strengtheners
 - knees over hips, low back pressed into the floor, place your hands behind your head, elbows in, curl your torso up and breathe out to press your belly into the floor. repeat.
 - low back pressed into the floor, hug one knee in while extending the opposite leg, switch, exhaling to press the low belly down into the floor. repeat.
- supta baddha konasana
- knees to chest and then twist
- bridge pose
- bridge pose with support
- neck stretch
- standing stretch
- sun salutations
- standing poses (optional)
- backbends (optional)
- inversions (optional)
- pigeon pose
- seated postures (optional)
- savasana with nasya oil
- nadi shodhana (alternate nostril breathing)*
- meditation*
- rest

*see resource page about each