

Building a Daily Practice.

Ground Rules

When beginning a home practice, remember that it is better to do a little bit every day, rather than a long session only once or twice a week. Aim to practise for an hour a day, but perhaps just start with 10 – 20 minutes, so that you ease yourself into it, and don't get put off.

Try to practise at the same time every day. Morning is a good time, as it helps to wake and loosen you up, leaving you feeling ready for the day's tasks.

An evening practice can also be good, as it helps you to unwind and relax after a busy day.

Always practise on an empty stomach or a least wait 2 hours after eating for Asana.

Practise bare foot, preferably on a yoga mat to avoid any slipping.

What to do

Start by tuning into the present moment.

Begin in a seated position and take time to observe your breath. Then when you are ready, chant OM three times. This helps to set up your frame of mind for the practise ahead.

Warm ups

Either:-

A) From lying position hug in knees to chest

Straighten right leg, interlock fingers behind knee, push heel up to ceiling, toes point down. Then circle foot around in one direction, then the other.

Take right ankle onto left bent knee, lift left foot off floor and draw left knee in towards you, holding the back of the left thigh.

Repeat on other side.

Then take hands behind head, tuck chin in and lift head off floor, pointing elbows towards knees.

B) From seated position, gently let chin drop to chest and roll head slowly from side to side.

Then breathe in, as you lift and squeeze shoulders up towards ears, hold and release.

Take fingers to shoulders and circle elbows around in one direction, then the other.

Then straighten and separate legs wide, taking arms straight out in front, interlock fingers and with arms straight, make big circles with arms, as though stirring a big pot of porridge, then circle the other way.

Cat pose (Bidalasana)

– on hands and knees, arch back, then take spine the other way

Half down dog (Ardha Adho Mukha Svanasana)

– stay on knees then bring elbows to floor and begin to walk hands away from you, taking forehead to floor.

Squat / Garland (Malasana)

-from previous, bring hands toward feet, roll back into squatting position, heels on or off floor

Downward facing dog (Adho Mukha Svanasana)

- back onto hands and knees, lift knees off floor, arms straight, take head toward floor between arms. Knees bent to begin with, tailbone lifting.
- walk feet toward hands, let upper body hang loosely forward as you slowly begin to straighten legs
-then bend knees and uncurl spine up to standing

Mountain (Tadasana) into Sweeping Clouds

-stand upright with feet hip width apart. Take arms out in front and lift up as you breathe in, then sweep arms out to side as you breathe out. Repeat 8 – 10 times.

Sun Salutation (Surya Namaskar)

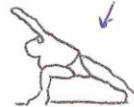
1 – 5 times each side.

Triangle (Trikonasana)



For standing poses keep whole front leg in line with middle toe.

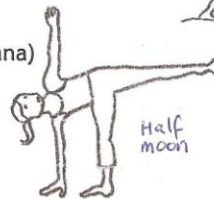
Bent knee side stretch (Parsvakonasana)



Warrior 2 (Virabhadrasana II)



Half Moon (Ardha Chandrasana) and/or Tree (Vrksasana)



One leg forward bend (Parsvottanasana)



Wide legged forward bend (Prasarita Padottanasana)



Tree

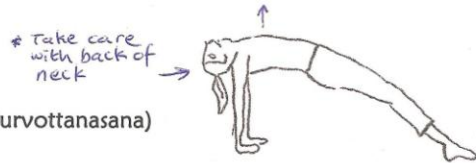


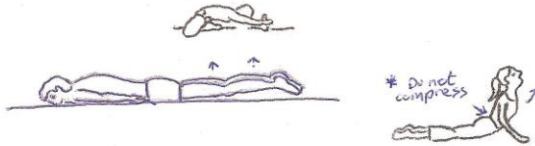
Table top (Purvottanasana)

Seated forward fold (Paschimottanasana)



Head to knee pose (Janu Sirsasana)

Locust (Salabhasana)



Cobra (Bhujangasana)

Child pose

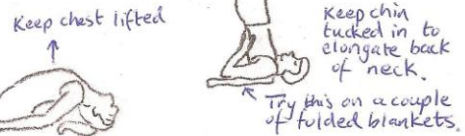


Easy noose twist or Sage pose (Mariciyasana)

Bridge (Setu Bandhasana)



Shoulder stand (Salamba Sarvangasana)



Fish (Matsyasana)



Supine twist

Lie on back, knees bent, feet on floor
tip knees over to right, hold and breath
then on other side.

Relaxation (Savasana) (5-10mins)

Lie on back, release and let go.

Seated meditation focusing on breath (5 mins)



OM OM OM

This practice will take roughly an hour. If you do not have enough time to do this, then miss out a couple of standing poses, shoulder stand and fish pose. Try to vary your practise and maybe add some other poses that you are familiar with. Do not practise mechanically, be aware of how you feel each day, and each moment. Be aware of the link between the body, breath and the mind. Listen to, and respect your body, it is your temple that houses your spirit.