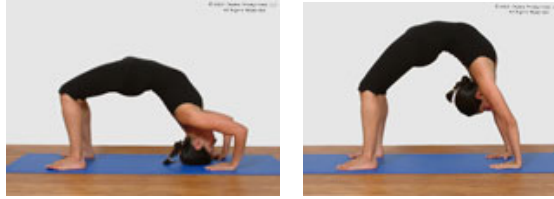


Pose of the Week 9-6-08

Wheel



Urdhva Dhanurasana

(OORD-vah don-your-AHS-anna)

urdhva = upward

dhanu = bow

Wheel pose is a deep, strong backbend. It may take some time to develop the strength and flexibility to come into this pose – or it may never be an option for you. No worries – there are many other less intense backbends that will give you the same benefits. As with other backbends, wheel releases negative energy, invigorates, stretches the front of the body, and strengthens the back of the body. Wheel is a deeply emotional opening as we overcome fear of the pose, and as we open the heart and pelvis – areas of our body that we tend to protect and which may hold blocked energy. As we overcome fear and open our vulnerable heart and pelvis, we experience an energizing and exhilarating feeling.

- Opens heart and front body
- Strengthens back body
- Tones and strengthens shoulders, arms and legs
- Increases flexibility in the spine

Primary Muscles – Serratus Anterior, Triceps, Glutes, Hamstrings, Back muscles, Piriformis, Psoas, Deltoids.

Variations – Less intense backbends (bridge is a good alternative). Coming only as far as onto the top of the head instead of straightening arms. Wheel can be softened by practicing over an exercise ball. There are also more intense variations – one leg up to the air, etc.

Tips –

- Warm up the back and shoulders first
- Stay relaxed and softened into the pose
- After placing hands by shoulders, take a breath to invited calm
- Keep feet and knees facing forward – not allowing legs to bow out to sides
- Arms straight in full wheel
- Weight even between arms and legs
- Lift chin to chest first before coming down to protect neck
- Counter the pose by bringing knees to chest on back

It is OK to let go of what I have been holding on to.



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