

Take Home Flow 8-22-09

Yoga for Headaches

Many headaches are caused by stress and tension, so yoga is a great therapy for headaches. Any gentle yoga flow will help you feel better, especially when you don't push, but look to yoga as a letting go. Forward bends and gentle inversions help relieve headaches and restorative poses give you a chance to relax and breathe your headache away. Try this flow to help you manage headache pain.

Come to your center

Sit comfortably. Begin with a few moments to listen to your breath, becoming quietly centered. As you connect with your breath, begin to let your arms flow up and down with each wave of breath. *With each breath, I invite calm and peace to my mind.*

Awaken your body

For a few breaths, play with a few poses to awaken your body and your connection to your movement. Release the neck, open the spine with cat/cow flows, stretch into downward facing dog, release into a standing forward bend. When you are ready, make your way to seated for your flow.

Flow

1. Slowly rock your head from side to side. Dropping the head down, roll it gently around to stretch your neck and release built up neck and upper back tension.
2. Lengthen through the spine gently tip the hips forward to fold softly into a forward bend. Let this forward bend be relaxing, releasing, restorative.
3. After the long, slow forward bend, cross the legs, slip over the hips over the feet and settle into a wide knee child's pose. With wide knees, you can really settle in for a long relaxation. Breathe long, slow, deep breaths.
4. Grab a firm pillow or firmly rolled blanket to act as a bolster for legs up the wall restorative pose. Here, your head can relax more and more. In this pose, and the next one, you can also use an eye bag over your eyes to give a gentle pressure and block light which can aggravate a headache.
5. Finally, another restorative pose. Use your bolster to create a gently restorative backbend. Use the eye bag again to relax your eyes. Take the time you need to really let go and relax. As you relax, let your breath deepen to breathe away your headache pain.

Receive

Close your practice with a few moments in final relaxation, receiving the benefits of this pain relieving flow.

I let go of my day, I let go of my stress, I let go of anything that I don't need.

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