

Take Home Flow 5-2-09

Yoga for Your Spine

The spine moves in six directions – forward bending, backbending, twisting left, twisting right, sidebending left and sidebending right. In this flow you will you're your spine in all 6 directions, and also enjoy feeling the movement of your back and spine. It is said "you are only as young as the flexibility of your spine" – so enjoy feeling younger with a healthier spine.

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. *May I be present to sensation and allow my body to heal.*

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 all fours for your flow. For ease in your knees, you may want to take a fold in your mat, or grab a blanket to place under the knees.

Flow

1. From all fours – wrists under shoulders, knees under hips, touching – just feel your back in a neutral position for a few breaths.
2. Then, with an inhale, look up to cow pose – making the back like a smile.
3. With your exhale, pull belly to the sky in cat pose – making your back like a dome. Flow with your breath through several rounds of cat and cow. Notice how your back moves. Some parts move easily, some parts are a little stiffer. Flow with awareness of how you move.
4. Come back to neutral. Inhale and reach the right arm to the sky. Exhale and slip the right arm under the left arm, resting on the right shoulder. Relax and breathe as your spine twists. Feel the spiraling in your back as you lubricate your spine. Gently unwind the twist and take the other side.
5. Come back to neutral. Next inhale, stretch the right arm and left leg out as far as they go (not pictured). Find balance in this unbalanced base. Feel the stabilizing muscles in your body helping you find steadiness. Continue to reach, or reach back and grab the foot in your hand. Breathe here for several breaths. When ready, return the right hand to the mat and stretch the left leg out to the left side of your body. Hold it there a moment or two, then set the foot on the floor to the left of your body.
6. Standing up onto the right knee, lay the left hand along the left leg, inhale and reach the right arm to the sky. Take a nice arching side bend to the left, lengthening the side waist, ribcage, shoulder and arm. Breathe here, then repeat steps 5 and 6 on the other side.
7. Step up on both knees. Take your knees as wide as your hips. Tuck toes under and feel anchored through the lower body. Hands come to the low back in fists to prepare for the backbend – camel pose. Float the ribcage higher, then begin to take a nice even backbend as you lift your heart toward the sky. Go only as far as you feel safe in the backbend – know your body. Enjoy the invigorating energy of the backbend, then slowly release.
8. Turn your backbend into a forward bend now as you come to child's pose to relax your back.

Receive

Close your practice with a few moments in final relaxation, receiving the benefits of this healing flow for your back.

I feel young again! . namaste

