

Take Home Flow 9-26-09

Yoga for Yoga Month Part 5

September is National Yoga Month. Let's challenge ourselves to practice yoga every day – 30 days of yoga! On days when you can't make it to class, here is a flow that will move your body in all directions – forward bending, back bending, side bending, twisting, heart opening, hip opening, hamstring stretching, abdominal strengthening, balance and an inversion. These are all of the components I include in my classes. Remember, though, yoga is not about the poses, but about coming to a state of being that brings you peace and clarity. Let's take on the Yoga Month challenge!

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. *I allow my breath to bring me to a calm, centered place.*

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 standing with legs wide on the long side of your mat for your flow.

Flow

1. Start with a few sun breaths – sweeping arms to the sky, then to the earth.
2. After a few sunbreaths, take side bends to each side. Feel the lengthening all the way up to your fingers. After side bends, take a few more sunbreaths.
3. Turn feet to point to the corners of your mat. Exhale and sink down to goddess pose. Pull the elbows back to open the front body. After several breaths, rise up, turn feet back to the long side of the mat and take a few more sunbreaths.
4. Take hands behind your back and lace fingers together. Begin to lift and open your heart. When your heart feels nice and open, fold into a forward bend. Relax and breathe. Then take hands to the thighs to lift up for more sunbreaths
5. On the last sunbreath, take hands to the floor. With right hand below the face, take left hand to the low back. Lengthen the spine, then twist heart to the left. You can raise the left hand, or keep it at your back. Untwist, then twist to the right. Finish by rising up for sunbreaths.
6. Take hands to the low back, make fists. Allowing your heart to rise, slowly explore a backbend. Find where you feel safe and comfortable in this backbend. Slowly come back up and fold your backbend into a forward bend.
7. Step to the top of your mat. Take right fingertips in front of the right foot and begin to open into half moon balance. Be where you can in the pose. After a few breaths, repeat half moon to the other side.
8. Walk your feet back to lower down onto the mat. With legs extended, lengthen upward with an inhale, and tip the hips forward with an exhale to relax in a forward bend.
9. Roll down onto the back. Cross the right ankle over the left thigh. Begin with abdominal strengthening by resting your head in hands laced together, Using the strength at your center, lift up and twist to the right. Lower down and repeat slowly a few times. Then move hands behind the left thigh to open the hips in the reclining variation of pigeon pose. Repeat on the other side.
10. Finish this flow with a nice shoulderstand inversion.

Receive

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

I breathe in and out and receive the gifts of my practice. नमोऽस्ते

