

Take Home Flow 8-29-09

Yoga for Yoga Month

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 for your flow.

Flow

1. Begin your flow with side bending. You can keep hands together as pictured, or drop one arm to your side. Take deep breaths as you open up your side body.
2. Next, sit down into chair. Feel the strength at your center.
3. Rise up out of the chair and reach arms behind the back. Clasp hands, begin to slowly open your heart. Open more and more with each breath.
4. With hands still clasped and heart still open, tip your hips and melt into a forward bend.
5. From the forward bend, step the right foot back into lunge or kneeling lunge.
6. Bringing hands to a prayer, hook the right elbow over the left thigh and lengthen into a nice cleansing twist. Back knee can be on or off the mat. Unwinding the twist, lay the back knee down and shift your hips back into a hamstring stretch for the left leg (not pictured)
7. Stepping back onto the left foot, heel-toe your left foot across the mat and slowly enter pigeon to open your hip.
8. Stepping out of the pigeon, begin the poses of the vinyasa, but instead of the one breath pace of the typical vinyasa, take a few breaths in each pose – beginning with plank or kneeling plank.
9. Lower to the low plank.
10. Flow through to either cobra or upward facing dog
11. Push back to downward facing dog.
12. Walking feet to meet the hands, come to stand at the front of your mat. Take tree pose to each side to play with balance, then repeat 1-11 for the other side.
13. 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 allow myself to come to the state of being that is yoga. My mind clear, my body happy and feeling connected with my true self.

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