

My weekly ponderings...

Good morning everyone!

'Avengers assemble'! (Sorry, bad joke to last week's ironman/woman reference!) I hope you have enjoyed the tips and pointers for getting you into your Virabhadrasna mindset and managed to use a wall to fine tune the grounding of the outer edge of the back foot. The mental benefits are energetic and very empowering. This week we will be profiling...

MALASANA No 3. (Mala-garland Asana - pose)

Muscles working:

Legs - Stretches and lengthens thighs.

Trunk - Has a stretching or toning effect on the core and abdominals, depending on position.

Arms - Contracts the arms isometrically (without changing muscle length!) when pushing prayer hands.

Torso - Some toning of chest and shoulder muscles, depending on arm variation, binding or not.

Back/spine - Lengthens and relieves the spine, especially after intense backbends.

Ankles/knees - Increases flexibility in both joints with gentle practice and patience.

Benefits - Great and interesting pose to increase general flexibility in the hips, thus helping the spine release. Also good for keeping that 'core' toned.

Modifications - Knees can be close together or further apart depending on your sensation and flexibility. When the practice becomes regular you may attempt lowering the head to the ground for a deeper experience, and maybe binding the arms in various ways. Be sensible good luck!!

This is a favourite of mine, but not necessarily everyone's cup of tea! During our classes we always try to incorporate it at least once every couple of weeks to develop and coax the hips into opening gently. It can be challenging, but it all depends on how you approach it. You will see children squatting like this when they play.

When I visited India, I couldn't help noticing how wonderfully flexible the older people are who have kept up this practice to the point where it has become second nature. Us westerners though, our ankles and knees have become tight.

You may experience one or the other or both if you're really stiff. Therefore, see the pictures above for variations. The feet closer together should feel easier on



the ankles, further apart easier on the knees, experiment and see what feels good for you. Getting into the pose can be tricky and a little nerve wracking at first. I suggest you try starting with the legs about shoulder width apart and adjust accordingly as you lower down carefully into a squat. Keep the spine as straight and long as you can and do not worry if your heels do not reach the ground... don't force it! You may wish to put a block underneath for your bottom to land on, to ease you in gently. From here maintain a long spine and neck and perhaps try bringing the hands into prayer, depending on which position you have adopted see pictures above pushing them together firmly. Close the eyes and enjoy the sensation (no pain though please!), breathe long, deep, slow breaths and start to visualise the joints yielding. Any lower back issues or tightness, refrain from this until you can release the hips more, first in a figure of four pose laying on your back crossing the leg over the knee and stretching. In Malasana you could try doing your emails from this pose and kill two birds with one stone... Enjoy!

'Excessive avoidance of unpleasant experiences (Dvesa) causes disdain.' - Yoga sutras 11.8

Namaste, Vincent & Kate.

NEW and current classes...

Location; The Studio, Earlham House Clinic, Unit15, Earlham House, Norwich, NR2 3PD.

MONDAYS & TUESDAYS - weekly mixed ability yoga class - 6pm.

Hatha / Vinyasa Flow Yoga A step up from the complete beginners' class at an intermediate level.

We will be working through some of the more challenging poses at a reasonable pace to really feel like you are working the body and achieving a good workout. We will put into practice; posture, breathing exercises, relaxation and meditation.

THURSDAYS - 6-week beginners yoga course - 6pm - STARTING THURSDAY 8th SEPTEMBER 2022.

Suitable for complete beginners, or those who are wishing to refresh themselves on some of the fundamental postures of yoga before joining or re-joining a mixed ability yoga class. The class will be kept to a small size and paced to allow the participants to learn each pose in a safe, friendly, supportive and unrushed environment. We will cover; posture, breathing exercises, philosophy, relaxation and meditation.

SATURDAYS - Outdoor weekly guided meditation sessions, The Plantation Gardens - 9am.

Starting from 21st May... They are back... A one-hour outdoor guided meditation session in the relaxed & beautiful setting of 'The Plantation Gardens'. Reflecting on philosophy, whilst enjoying some peace and tranquillity.