

My weekly ponderings...

Good morning everyone!

From the dedicated effort and strengthening of your thigh muscles this week (through executing Utkatasana) I bet you don't even need a chair to sit down anymore! (Well, maybe not just yet...) Practice makes perfect, as they say! However, do not let perfection aspirations get in the way of your practice. Whatever presents itself moment to moment, is the practice that is far more important, arriving at the mat that's already perfect.

UTTHITA TRIKONASANA No 5.

(Utthita - extended Trikona - triangle Asana - pose)

Muscles working:

Legs - Thighs, stabilising hamstrings, hip flexors, groin stretching and calves engaging on the front leg.

Glutes - Stretching/lengthening.

Trunk - Core and abdominals engaging throughout for strength and support.

Torso - Chest opening, trapezius.

Back - All muscles supporting and giving the spine stability.

Arms - Middle part of shoulders, triceps (back of arms) contracting while arms lengthen.

Benefits - Legs become toned and flexibility increases also in the hips. Great for strengthening the back when alignment is safe and correct, opens the chest.

Modifications - The use of props e.g. a yoga brick/block for support, taking the higher arm behind the small of the back into a semi-bind or perhaps lifting the lower arm of the floor for intense core work. Variations of this pose include reverse and fallen triangle.

As we come to the last issue of these posture profiles (which we may revisit in the future), Trikonasana is a pose that requires particular attention to detail and bodily awareness. This is of course no different from the previous Asanas, but each one can present different challenges and experiences. Trikonasana is a perfect transition from warrior 2 as the legs are already in pretty much the right position. You may find you will want to narrow your stance slightly for less intensity on the hamstrings. The same principle goes for the feet regarding the outer edges pressed firmly down creating



a strong inner arch. With the knees (especially the front leg) make sure you have a micro bend to protect the joint and nerves, as with all poses locked knees constantly can cause aggravation in the joint to some degree and in fact more strength is gained from keeping the joint soft. Be aware that both hip joints should be slightly turning outwards and be mindful they are not turning inwardly, as again this will pain the knees and compromise the posture. From the picture above you can see that the side of the body nearest to the floor is kept long and engaged to avoid crunching and collapsing. If this happens you have extended too far to the ground, so it's good practice to use a block for the hand to maintain that length in the spine. Open the chest as your range of movement allows, to help this really bring the shoulder blades together on the back and (unlike my photo) refrain from twisting the head upwards, keeping drishti (gaze) in front. The other side of the body should remain long, as the arms both extend in one line of energy, firming the triceps on the backs of the arms. Embrace the sensations you experience, and concentrate on long slow inhales and exhales, whilst engaging your core. All the poses over the last few weeks are practiced regularly in our classes and you will find you will progress and develop through repetition. In the meantime, enjoy getting into the shapes!!

'With humility (an open heart and mind), we embrace the sacred study of Yoga.' - Yoga sutras 1.1

NEW and current classes...

Location; The Studio, Earham House Clinic, Unit15, Earham 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 TONIGHT - THURSDAY 8th SEPT.

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.