

Namaste, *Lorraine*

**Many of US**, throughout our lives have enjoyed Yang activity such as yang yoga and regular yang exercises like weight training, biking and running. Yang exercise is always accompanied by compression of the joints. Compression is good for joints and stimulates the bones to healthy growth. However, yang exercise doesn't allow the full range of motion. Yang exercise develops strong muscles and bones but can leave the joints contracted and stiff resulting in a lack of blood, elimination of toxins and range of motion.

Conversely, Yin yoga safely, even pleasantly develops the full range of motion of a joint. This type of practice leaves the practitioner feeling relaxed, light and free. A Yin sequence of long-held poses anywhere from 3-5 minutes, nurtures our flow of Chi, the meridian and organ systems.

In almost every moment, we have opportunity to experience the importance of balance, whether it is experienced through the simple workings of a thermostat in our home, the more complex working of our body's homeostatic mechanisms. In part, a balance of Yin and Yang Yoga assists in creating balance in our life.

**Achieving BALANCE** is a key ingredient in living a physically, emotionally, relationally and spiritually healthy, empowered and fulfilling life. Balance creates empowerment, a position each of us has been given the opportunity to experience and is capable of.

I am a very grateful and inspired woman who feels it is my life's work to assist others in living their best life. I have a BS in Nutrition and Human Development, Master Degree in Psychology, am a Certified Whole Food, Plant-Based Nutritionist, Certified Yin Yoga Instructor, 8-time Marathon finisher, avid cross-trained athlete, Realtor, Life and Wellness Coach and Consultant, and a Mother of 2 great sons, one an International, Gold Medal Gymnast.

It is my hopes that my writings within will offer reinforcement to our wonderful experience together of offering nourishment, enlightenment and a resulting balance to each of us and our experience of life bringing us a sense of purpose, joy & gratitude.

Please feel free to contact me at [Lorraine@AttainYourVision.com](mailto:Lorraine@AttainYourVision.com) or call me at 609-502-0880. Thank you for this opportunity.

## ACHIEVING BALANCE



## YIN YOGA





ENERGY, as we defined it in Western terms, is the ability to do work. In Eastern terms, energy is that which provides breath and life. In India, yogis called this energy *prana* and its pathways *nadis*; in China, the Taoists called it *qi* (pronounced chee) and founded the science of acupuncture, which describes the flow of qi through pathways called MERIDIANS.

The six meridians that begin or end in the lower body are of most interest to Yin Yoga practitioners. These are the lines affected the most by the yin asanas. They are the Liver, Gall Bladder, Kidney, Urinary Bladder, Spleen, and Stomach meridians. The six upper body meridians are the Heart, Small Intestine, Large Intestine, Lung, Pericardium, and San Jiao. The meridians themselves do not begin or end on the outside of the body, but originate deep within the organs and vital energetic centers (Chakras) of the body.

Our energy flows through all tissues, bones and moistens our joints. As such, our energy flows through our connective tissue, the material inside our body that supports many of its parts, the "cellular glue" that gives your tissues their shape and helps keep them strong. Connective tissue makes up a variety of physical structures, including tendons and the connective framework of fibers in muscles, capsules and ligaments around joints, cartilage, bone, adipose tissue, blood, and lymphatic tissue.

If someone has deficient chi a weakness or lack of vibrancy results. If someone has stagnant chi that means the energy is flowing in a distorted pattern. If someone has healthy chi, the energy is stable, strong and moves with ease throughout the body.

There are three ways that YIN YOGA helps this flow of energy to create healthy chi flow. First, as we relax our habitually tightened muscles, yin yoga places the body in a yoga pose for a longer amount of time to pull on and pressurize the tissues. This coaxes chi and blood into these sites making them stronger and better lubricated. Second, lengthening and deepening the breath (pranayama) oxygenates the blood while increasing the flow of prana throughout the body. Third, mindfulness practices in yin practice, allows chi

to flow smoothly. Where the attention goes, the chi follows." Quieting the mind allows the chi flow to be uninhibited as it travels through the body, heart and mind.

### SHAVASANA:



Today, we scanned your body slowly. We started with your toes and feet, allowing your feet to relax, becoming heavy on the floor. Next we felt our ankles, calves, and shins melt into the earth; space developing in our knee joints and thighs. Next, we experienced your buttocks, hips, and groin relaxing; feeling your sacrum and lower back release into the floor; lower back and stomach muscles relaxing allowing the upper back muscles and the shoulder blades to sink into the floor as your chest and all the muscles between your ribs relax. Your shoulders released as you relaxed your upper arms, your elbows, and forearms feeling the space in your wrist joints and around each finger and the energy in the palm of each hand. Next, you relaxed your neck and throat, jaw, lips and tongue as you relaxed your cheeks and eyes and all the muscles around your eyes and deep in your eye sockets; relaxing your forehead and your scalp allowing your head to rest heavily on the floor.

Next, you relaxed your inner organs, you either felt or imagined them relaxing; softening your diaphragm and lungs, relaxing your heart. You relaxed your intestines, and kidneys, imagining your liver, stomach, and spleen being filled with healing energies. Next, you released your breath totally: letting it be whatever it wanted to be, noticing the breath. You enjoyed moments of complete silence and peace and felt the sense of peace growing deeper, filling the space around you, filling our practice room and beyond, touching everyone and everything.

**LOKAH SAMASTA SUKHINO BHAVANTU**

*May all beings everywhere be happy and free  
and may the thoughts, words and actions of my own life  
contribute in some way to that happiness and to that freedom for all.*

## LYING SPINAL TWIST



### Benefits:

- Twisting at the end of the practice helps to restore equilibrium in the nervous system and release tension in the spine
- Bringing the bent knee more to the chest can relieve sciatica
- Tones the stomach and cures gastritis

### Contra-indications:

- If the Yogi has shoulder issues (such as rotator cuff injuries), she may not want to raise arm to beside the ear or let it float. Arm can be bent or supported by a bolster.

### Alternatives & Options:

- Directing the knees lower, or higher, will affect where in the spine the stretch is felt. Knees high moves the twist to upper back, knees low moves twist more to lumbar/sacrum
- Twisted Roots - knees can also be crossed as in eagle pose
- Top leg straight out to the side applies the most leverage, which helps to keep the hips fully turned.

### Meridians & Organs Affected: Liver, spleen and pancreas.

- Twisting the spine stimulates the **Urinary Bladder** lines
- If arm is overhead, three meridians in the arms are stimulated - the **Heart, Lung, and Small Intestines**
- Twists always compress the stomach and **Gall Bladder** meridians.

**Joints Affected:** The **shoulder joint**, the tissues in the upper chest,

breast, and shoulder are nurtured, the lower spine and the sacrum, if knee is at ninety degrees to the torso, or lower.

## *Our Practice and the Physical, Mental and Spiritual Benefits of this Balancing Practice Begins with our Breath and a*

### *Heart Bench*



## CHILD'S POSE

### Benefits:

- A healing, restful pose - useful any time a break is needed
- Gently stretches the spine - nice counter-pose for back bends
- Gentle compression of the stomach and chest beneficial for digestion organs
- Psychologically soothing when feeling anxious, or vulnerable
- Rocking gently side to side can help stimulate the flow of blood and lymph fluids in the upper chest and breast tissues

### Contra-indications:

- Diarrhea or pregnancy
- If knee issues exist, the Yogi may need to place towel or blanket between thighs and calves, or avoid the pose altogether
- While this is a gentle opener of the ankles, the Yogi may need a blanket or other padding under her ankles to reduce discomfort on the top of the feet

### Alternatives & Options:

- Could be done with arms stretched forward
- Support the neck by placing the forehead on hands/bolster
- Allow knees to be as wide apart as is comfortable

**Meridians & Organs Affected:** The **Spleen, Stomach, Kidneys,** and **Urinary Bladder**

**Joints Affected:** The **spine** and **ankles**  
**BUTTERFLY**



**Benefits:**



- A nice way to stretch the lower back without requiring loose hamstrings
- If the legs are straighter and the feet are farther away from the groin, the hamstrings will get more of a stretch. If the feet are in closer to the groin, the adductor muscles get stretched more

**Contra-indications:**

- Seated forward bends are the hard on the pelvis and knees - they can aggravate sciatica. If a Yogi has this condition, elevate the hips so the knees are below the hips. Beware of hips rotating backward while seated - we want the hips to rotate forward
- Ok for pregnant women, as the legs are abducted, providing space for the belly
- Avoid if the neck has suffered whiplash or has reverse curvature

**Alternatives & Options:**

- Elevate the hips with a bolster or cushion
- If neck is tired, support the head in the hands, resting elbows on knees or thighs
- Could rest chest on a bolster
- Various hand/arm positions are possible: hold feet, hands on floor in front of Yogi, or arms relaxed behind the body
- Can do this lying down, keeping legs in butterfly

**Meridians & Organs Affected:** The **Gall Bladder** lines on the outside of the legs as well as the **Urinary Bladder** lines running along the spine in the lower back

**Joints Affected:** **Hips** and **lower back**

**CROCODILE, SPHINX and SEAL**



Stages to the full expression (1) Crocodile; (2) Sphinx; (3) Seal

**Benefits:**

- This can be a very deep compression and stimulation of the sacral-lumbar arch
- The spine is toned
- If the neck is dropped back, the thyroid is also stimulated

**Contra-indications:**

- Bad back, tight sacrum
- Any sharp pain here, you must come out
- If the Yogi is pregnant use Seal
- Avoid if the Yogi has a headache.

**Alternatives & Options:**

- For a gentle Sphinx, fold arms in front and rest forehead on hands to reduce compression in lower back
- Seal with straight, locked arms is the deepest pose let the hands rotate outward and sliding hands away to lessen the intensity
- Move hands slightly forward and/or dial fingers outward in Seal to reduce lower back compression.
- Spread legs apart to deepen the sensations in the lower back
- Other Yogis prefer the legs together, to release the sacrum or make the sensations more evenly along the spine
- Can place a blanket under pubic bone, to soften the pressure

**Meridians & Organs Affected:** the **Urinary Bladder** and **Kidney** lines as they run through the lower back and sacrum, the **Stomach** and **Spleen Meridians** along top of legs, stimulating the kidneys and adrenals through compression.

**Joints Affected:** Lower spine and the neck (if dropped back).

### FULL SADDLE



#### Benefits:

- A deep opening in the sacral-lumbar arch;
- Also stretches hips flexors and quadriceps
- If the foot is, or the feet are, beside the hips, this becomes a good internal rotation of the hip.

#### Contra-indications:

- Bad back, tight sacrum;
- Knees can be tested too much here;
- Ankles can protest as well;
- Any sharp or burning pain here, you must come out!

#### Alternatives & Options:

- If this is too deep for the lower back, do the Seal or Sphinx, or;
- Straighten one leg - "Half Saddle."
- If the thighs protest too much, bend one knee and place that foot on the floor.
- Optionally, lean back on the hands, or on the elbows;
- Resting top of head on floor opens the neck;
- Arms overhead can open shoulders too;
- There are various places you may use bolsters - stack two crossways under the shoulders, or use just one, or place one lengthways under spine; a blanket or rolled up towel under the ankles can relieve pressure there;

- Play with sitting *on* heels and *between* heels; the first emphasizes the lumbar more, and the second works the quads and hip flexors more.

### Meridians & Organs Affected:

- Affects Stomach, Spleen, Urinary Bladder, and Kidney lines.

**Joints Affected:** Lower spine, knees, and ankles.

### CATERPILLAR



#### Benefits:

- Stresses the ligaments along the back of the spine
- Compresses the stomach organs, which helps strengthen the organs of digestion
- Stimulates the kidneys
- Since the heart is below the spine, the heart is massaged

#### Contra-indications:

- Forward bends are the hard on the pelvis and knees - they can aggravate sciatica. If a Yogi has this condition, elevate the hips so the knees are below the hips. Beware of hips rotating backward while seated - we want the hips to rotate forward
- If the hamstrings are very tight, the knees should be bent and supported by a bolster, allowing the spine to round

#### Alternatives & Options:

- Bend knees, and support them with a bolster, to allow the back to round fully
- If neck feels strained by the weight of the head, Yogis can support their heads in their hands, resting their elbows on the legs or a bolster
- The Yogi can rest the chest on a bolster, relaxing into the pose

- Can also rest the legs up the wall (bend the knees and allow the feet to be flat against the wall)
- If knees are strained or weak, activate the quadriceps

**Meridians & Organs Affected:** The Urinary Bladder

**Joints Affected:** The full spine.

## SNAIL



### Benefits:

- One of the deepest releases of the whole spine;
- Compresses the internal organs, giving them a great massage

### Contra-indications:

- This pose puts a lot of pressure on the neck; be cautious! Avoid if you have any neck problems;
- Because this is an inverted posture, this is not recommended for anyone with high blood pressure, upper body infection, vertigo, glaucoma, or suffering from a cold, or for women during their moon cycle;
- Do not do this posture if you have recently eaten or are pregnant.

### Alternatives & Options:

- Legs Up the Wall
- Stages moving into fullest expression
  1. Support the back with the palms;
  2. Knees on your forehead;
  3. Place palms under the feet, lowering feet to the floor, or rest the feet on a bolster;
  4. Toes touching the floor with legs straight
  5. Most challenging is to have the knees bent toward the floor

**Meridians & Organs Affected:** All internal organs are massaged and compressed. Each breath adds to the massage; Urinary Bladder lines are deeply stretched.

**Joints Affected:** The full spine.



## CAT PULLING IT'S TAIL

### Benefits:

- This back-bending twist is useful as a nice counter-pose to strong forward bends (such as the Snail);
- Decompresses the lower back;
- Opens the quadriceps and upper thighs.

### Contra-indications:

- If student has lower back issues, this can still be performed, but go gently. Most students, in this case, will not be able to pull the foot away at all.

### Alternatives & Options:

- Easiest version is to be propped up on one arm, as shown;
- The more challenging version is to recline, and look over shoulder to the bottom foot. This version becomes a reclining twist with a back bend. Emphasize pulling the foot away from the buttock (most students will not be able to do this).
- Utilize Seiza instead to assist in opening the quadriceps and upper thighs. Place hands on knees or behind back.

**Meridians & Organs Affected:**

- Stimulates the Stomach and Spleen meridians (if the top of the thigh is activated) and the Urinary Bladder and Kidney lines (when the back is arched and twisted);

**Joints Affected:**

- Mostly opens the lumbar/sacrum.