

## Yoga for Back Health

The course I have put together is divided into topics so that you can concentrate on a particular aspect of your back health - or related topic. For example, if you have very stiff and immobile hips, this will impact on your back health and one of the topics is "hips". The Yoga for Back Health course can serve as a general yoga course.



My approach is as follows:

**I work from neutral spine** and move out from how the body is at rest. If a pose puts the body into an alignment very different from that of every day moving, it is important to take care. It is not appropriate to, for example, have the head poking forwards in



triangle pose - the body should be 'in one plane' and this may entail staying higher up in the pose. Too often, practitioners aim to put their hand on to the floor with the result that the tummy overhangs, the knees are hyper-extended, etc. etc. Not every one is ready for the pose to the left!

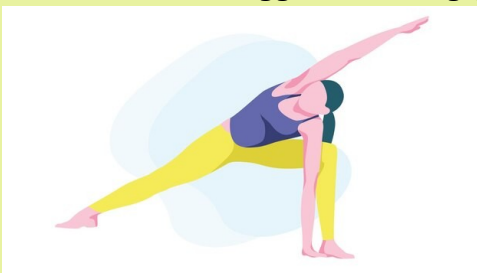
**When lying with the soles of the feet together**, tight hips must not be forced open and left in free space as this can cause strain. Instead, support can be used each side such as two bricks or identical-sized blankets and if more opening starts to come, the props can be lessened. It is not about pushing the body but opening with the exhalations.

I return to neutral spine in between moves as a 50+ year old spine is different from that of a 20 year one. Sun Salutations are best made up of moves that naturally follow each other e.g. if you arch the spine down you may want to follow



that move with arching the spine up. However, the move to the right - from cobra to downward dog - is not a natural one. It is better to put **extra moves** in in order to bring the spine into a neutral position in between the more extreme moves such as cobra. For this reason, I advocate taking 'face down pose' in between the more extreme positions so that the spine can be re-aligned before the next move.

The SI Joints (one each side of the sacrum) are joints of stability and not mobility! Too often the wide-legged standing yoga poses strain the SI Joints and ligaments.



Sometimes in yoga, the aim appears to be to get the front leg as low to the ground as possible. If the pose to the left is done incorrectly, not only the SI joints but also the knees may be strained. I aim to teach a safe practice.