



# Yoga is for Everyone Newsletter



## March 2020 Newsletter

### My New Yoga Studio!



Yoga at the Renaissance Centre / Michele's Yoga Sanctuary.  
More details next month.

### It's Springtime

All our limitations and problems exist solely in the mind and are entirely based upon past events or future concerns, something we cover in class regularly. If, however, we have an overwhelming intense experience of the present moment, the mind is lulled into silence and this becomes increasing ecstatic as we are freed from everything that ever held us back. Moments of great beauty in nature, intense love or overwhelming pleasure can have this effect. Staying in the present, keeping the mind focused and controlling your mind will keep you grounded, happier and less stressed.

It's is also SPRINGTIME!!! 🌞🌻 so let's guide our practice by the growing, developing environments around us and allowing the body to be to awaken from hibernation as the days start to grow longer. Its a great time of the year for Yoga!

## **Class and Workshop News**

### **New Class**

“Yoga Chill Fridays” at the Renaissance Centre. Watch this space for dates.

### **Other Class News**

Tuesday evening Classes at Billingley will continue as usual. However, **on the 17<sup>th</sup> March there will be no 6.15pm Class**. The 7.30pm Class will go ahead, as usual (but please book your place asap because I expect it to be over-subscribed).

### **Other Class Dates;**

Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March (9.30am) – Spring Workshop (2 ½ hours)

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May (9.30am) – Yoga Hub (1½ hours)

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July (9.30am) – Yoga Hub (1½ hours)

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September (9.30am) – Autumn Workshop (2 ½ hours)

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December (9.30am) – Christmas Workshop (2 ½ hours)

Don't forget, Private One-to-One Sessions are also available.

## **Yoga Therapy Sessions**

Are you or do you know anybody struggling with aches, pains or medical conditions? If so, I could help. I am now offering tailored sessions to meet specific health conditions. Yoga therapy can and does work. Please contact me for more details. Please have a look at my website for more information;

<http://ukyogatherapy.com>

## **Asana of the Month – Dandasana/Staff Pose**



There is more to it than you think!

Caution if you have lower back or wrist issues.

In India, accomplished renunciates traditionally carry a staff (danda), indicating that they've earned the title danda swami. The straight, strong staff is symbolic of the spinal column and the energy of self-awakening that resides in each human being. Unfortunately for most of us, however, our spinal columns are neither straight nor strong. Habitual slouching, chronic tension, stiff lower backs, weak lumbar spines, and hunched shoulders leave us unable to sit or stand with the effortless ease of a balanced spine.

Dandasana is a simple seated pose that strengthens the deep muscles of the lower back, the abdomen, and the muscles deep in the pelvis. This improves overall posture and builds a solid foundation for the healthy alignment of the rest of the spine. Improved posture helps prevent the overworking or overstretching of any one muscle group and contributes to stability and comfort in all activities. On the other hand, a habit of poor posture can lead to serious back problems, including a greater chance of muscle strain and herniated discs. So a key element of the practice of dandasana is to cultivate awareness of the spine's alignment from the tailbone all the way to the crown of the head and to use the strength developed by the practice to transform your habitual posture.

Although it may sound easy, creating this "staff" will take time. The spine reflects not only postural habits and muscular weakness or stiffness but also the flow of energy in the body. Be patient. With practice you'll find yourself sitting tall all day long.

1. Begin by sitting on the floor with the legs together and straight out in front of you. Flex the feet and point the toes toward the ceiling. Walk the sit bones back to lengthen the backs of the legs. Place the hands on the floor slightly behind the hips with the fingers pointing forward.
2. Inhale as you press down through the hands and lift the lower back while reaching up through the crown of the head. Draw the shoulders back and down. Exhale and pull the lower abdominal muscles in. This activates the lower abdominals (which stabilise and support the lower back so that it does not collapse), draws the lower rib cage down to counter the forward thrusting tendency of the rib cage, and grounds the sit bones evenly into the floor. Breathe smoothly as you maintain the strength in the deep lower back and abdomen. Look straight ahead and hold the posture for 5–10 breaths.

Weakness in the lower torso or tightness in the hamstrings may make sitting up straight difficult or impossible. If your lower back (lumbar spine) collapses, simplify the pose by sitting on a folded blanket or cushion. If the hamstrings are tight and tugging the pelvis and lower back, try bending the knees slightly. These simple adjustments will significantly reduce the effort required to sit up straight.

When the muscles of the deep lower back and abdomen are strong, you'll require less support from the arms, and for a more challenging version of dandasana, place the hands directly next to the hips. Press the hands straight down and lift through the deep lower abdomen (as before), to straighten the spine. If the lower back and abdomen are strongly engaged, you may be able to lift through the back without the help of the arms, and rest the hands on the thighs.

### **Recipe of the Month – Mushroom and Guinness Pot Pies**



#### **Ingredients**

For the filling:

- 1 tbsp Olive Oil
- 200g (2 cups) Chestnut Mushrooms, halved or quartered
- 1 Large Brown Onion, peeled and sliced
- 3 Cloves Garlic, peeled and sliced
- 1 tbsp Tomato Purée
- 1 tbsp Plain Flour
- 1 tbsp Soy Sauce
- 1 tbsp Vegan Worcestershire Sauce
- 1 tsp Dried Tarragon
- 2 Bay Leaves
- 1 tbsp Wholegrain Mustard
- 240ml (1 cup) Guinness, or any dark stout
- 1 Mushroom or Vegetable Stock Cube
- 120ml (1/2 cup) Water
- Sea Salt and Black Pepper, to taste
- 2 tbsp Fresh Parsley, finely chopped

To make the pies:

- 4 Ramekins
- 1 sheet Ready-Rolled Dairy Free Puff Pastry
- Soya milk, a little for glazing

### Method

1. Preheat oven to 180°C (Gas Mark 4, 350°F). Heat the olive oil in a large frying pan and add the onions and mushrooms. Cook over a high heat until starting to soften and caramelize before adding the garlic. Cook, stirring, for 2 minutes further
2. When the mushrooms and onions have softened, add the flour to the pan and cook for another couple of minutes before adding the rest of the filling ingredients and stirring until bubbling and thickened.
3. Check the seasoning of the gravy, adjust if necessary and divide the filling between the ramekins.
4. Cut discs from the sheet of puff pastry to fit the ramekins and pop them on top of the filling.
5. Decorate with any leftover pastry, place the pies in a roasting tin and transfer to the oven to bake for 30 minutes. When cooked, the pastry should be golden and risen and the filling bubbling hot.
6. Serve immediately, with mashed potatoes and green vegetables.

### March Key Dates:

1st Start of meteorological spring  
1st St David's Day  
5th St Piran's Day - patron saint of Cornwall  
9th Commonwealth Day  
17th St Patrick's Day  
20th Vernal equinox - start of astronomical spring  
22nd Mother's Day  
29th British Summertime starts 😊

### Aromatherapy of the Month - Rose Geranium

As spring approaches, we can cleanse and purify the mind, soul and heart. One of my favourite oils to do this is *rose geranium*, made from the leaves and stems of the rose-geranium plant. Sweet and floral with a rose aroma which helps to promote ease and grace. It is also good to balance the mood and body. Place a couple of drops in a tissue, and inhale deeply, a good pick me up! Good massage oil helping reduce inflammation. You can also add a couple of drops to rose facial I'll for a great facial treatment. Rose geranium is generally safe and non-toxic oil.

**Quote of the month**

*'There is no need of any competition with anybody. You are yourself, and as you are, you are perfectly good. Accept yourself.'*

Osho

Michele

