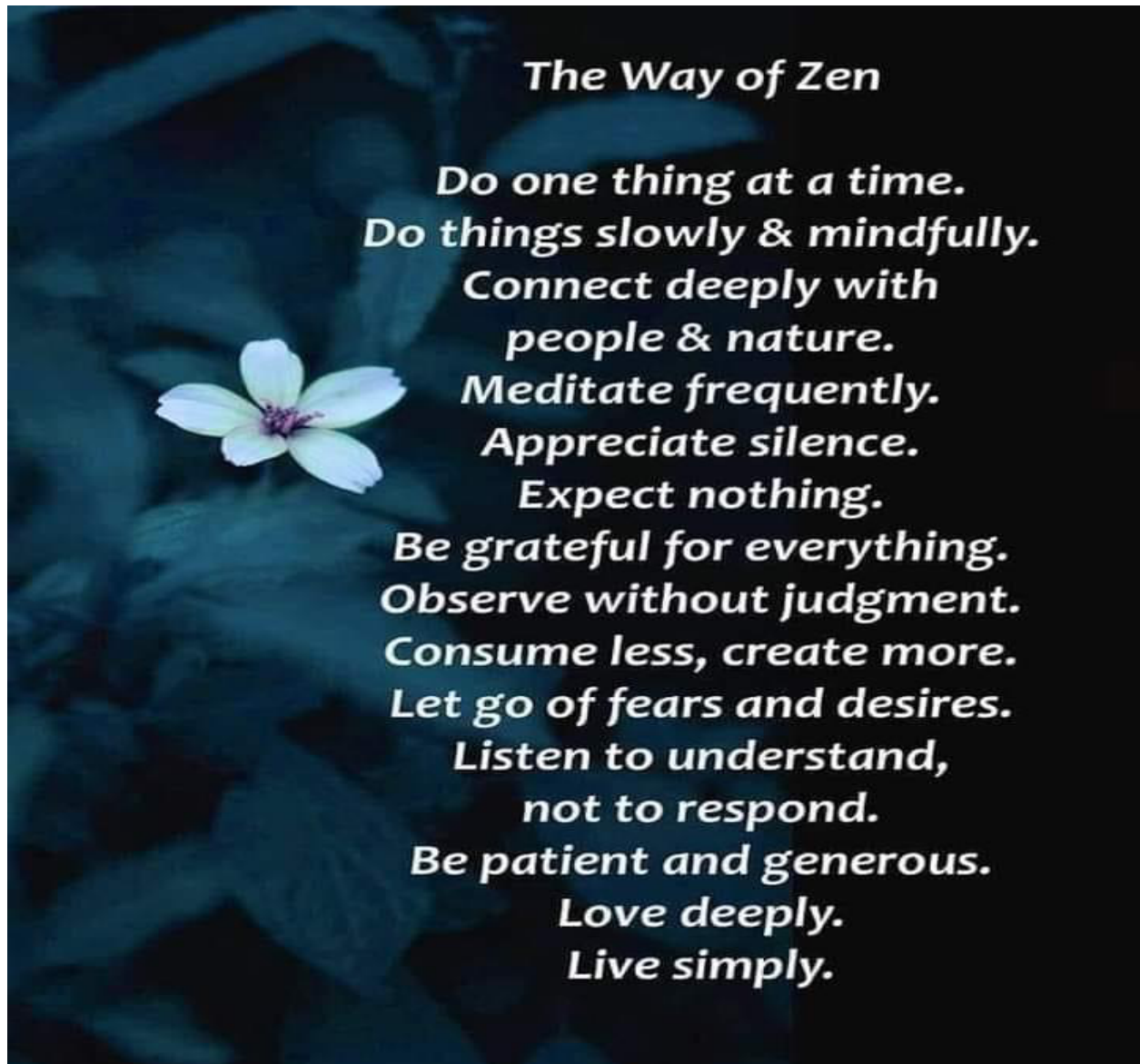




Yoga is for Everyone Newsletter

July and August 2022 Newsletter



Welcome to the July/August newsletter - where is the year going? Over halfway through the year already and it's obvious that you have to make the most of every single day and every single minute of that day. You will see later in this newsletter, that making time for yourself sometime during each day is essential. So, therefore, start the latter half of the year off with a new you. Make a resolution - to make time for yourself, to feel spaciousness and maybe even practice some of the eight limbs of yoga if not them all!

Enjoy the newsletter please as always please let me have any comments and I'll see you on the mat soon.

CLASS NEWS

Pop-Up Classes – Watch the Website!

Tuesday Night Yoga - 7pm Billingley Village Hall

Classes will remain fully Covid secure, please don't come along if you feel unwell. I will still be sticking with the recent measures to help keep us all safe. Please do NOT attend if you have any signs of Covid - please respect your fellow yogis.

Classes are filling up so if you need to cancel your booking, please let me know.

Classes will stay at £4 on Zoom and £7 face -to-face.

Costs are for the zoom licence/hall fees and to support charity. This can be paid via PayPal (when you book online) or via bank transfer (please email me for details).

If you are struggling financially, there is no need to pay, we appreciate that times are tough.

Gift Vouchers, Yoga Mats, Blocks and Netties are all available for sale.

You can book your place on the Online Class via the website.

www.yogaisforeveryone.net

www.ukyogatherapy.co.uk

This Month's Asana - Upward-Facing Dog



Upward-Facing Dog Pose — Urdhva Mukha Svanasana is a back-bending yoga posture that lengthens and strengthens the spine, torso, and arms. Its name comes from four Sanskrit words;

- "Urdhva" — meaning "upward"
- "Mukha" — meaning "face"
- "Svana" — meaning "dog"
- "Asana" — meaning "pose"

Upward-Facing Dog (also sometimes called "Upward Dog" or just "Up Dog") is an important part of sun salutations and is often practiced many times during astanga and power yoga classes. It can be used as a strength-builder and also as a step toward deeper backbends.

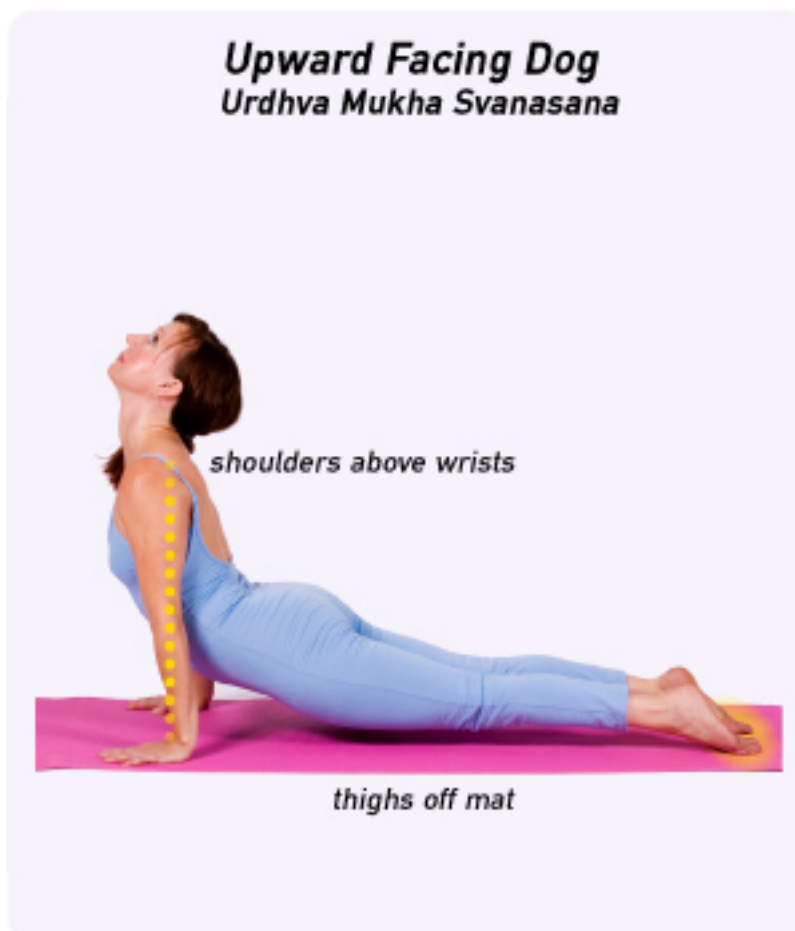
Benefits of Upward-Facing Dog

Upward-Facing Dog stretches the chest and spine, while strengthening the wrists, arms, and shoulders. By strengthening and opening the upper body and chest, it improves posture and can be therapeutic for asthma. Upward Dog creates suppleness in the back torso and abdomen, which stimulates the abdominal organs and improves digestion. It also firms the buttocks and thighs, helping to relieve sciatica. The backbend energizes and rejuvenates the body, providing relief from fatigue and mild depression.

Cautions

It is best to avoid Upward-Facing Dog if you have carpal tunnel syndrome, or a recent back or wrist injury. Also if pregnant it is better to avoid practicing this pose until after the first trimester, as it can create too much strain on the round ligaments and lower back. Always work within your own range of limits and abilities. Check anything out with a medical practitioner.

Instructions



- Begin by lying face-down on the floor with your legs extended behind you, spread a few inches apart. The tops of your feet should rest on the mat — do not tuck your toes, as this can crunch your spine.
- Place your hands on the floor alongside your body, next to your lower ribs. Point your fingers to the top of the mat and hug your elbows in close to your ribcage.
- Inhale as you press through your hands firmly into the floor. Straighten your arms, lifting your torso and your legs a few inches off the floor.
- Press down firmly through the tops of your feet. Strongly engage your leg muscles to keep your thighs lifted off the floor.

- Keep your elbows pressed alongside your body. Drop your shoulders away from your ears and lift your chest toward the ceiling.
- Draw your shoulders back and your heart forward, but do not crunch your neck. If your neck is flexible, tilt your head to gaze toward the sky. Otherwise, keep your head neutral and your gaze directly forward.
- Your thighs should be firm and turned slightly inward. Your arms should also be firm, slightly turned so that each elbow crease faces forward.
- Only straighten your arms as much as your body allows. Deepen the stretch as your practice advances, but avoid straining to achieve a deeper backbend.
- Actively press your shoulder blades into your upper back. Keep your elbows hugged in to your sides. Broaden across your collarbones and lift your heart. Glide the tops of your shoulders away from your ears. Distribute the length of the backbend evenly through your entire spine.
- Hold the pose for up to 30 seconds. To release, exhale as you slowly lower your torso and forehead to the mat. Turn your head to the right, resting your left ear on the mat. Relax your arms alongside your body. Repeat the pose up to five times.

Follow up with Child's pose or on the back, knees to chest.

Modifications & Variations

Upward-Facing Dog provides a deep stretch to the entire spine and front torso. Be careful not to force your body into the pose, seeking a deeper backbend. Instead, take it slowly and back off if you feel any pain or pinching sensations. Try these simple changes to modify the pose as needed:

- It takes time to build the flexibility and strength needed for Upward-Facing Dog. Practice cobra pose (previous newsletter) as an alternative pose if Upward-Facing Dog is not yet possible for you.
- If your feet and ankles are stiff, it might be difficult to roll over your toes, let your thighs come to the floor, then turn your feet over one at a time.
- If it is difficult to keep your legs lifted above your mat, roll a firm blanket and place it below your top thighs.
- When you move into Upward-Facing Dog, rest your thighs lightly on the roll.

Tips

Upward-Facing Dog can benefit the whole body, when done correctly. Keep the following information in mind when practicing this pose:

1. Actively draw your shoulders away from the ears — do not hunch in the pose or collapse into your shoulders. Instead, glide your shoulder blades down toward your tailbone, drawing your side ribs forward. Broaden across your collarbones, press the tops of your shoulders away from your ears, and then lift through your sternum.
2. Keep your buttocks firm, but not hard. Instead, actively engage the muscles of your abdomen and back to lengthen and lift through the pose, while also supporting your low back.
3. Press firmly down through the tops of your feet, pushing from the backs of your knees all the way through your heels. This will help lighten the pose. As you press through your feet, lift your sternum up and forward.
4. There are two main differences to note between cobra pose and Upward-Facing Dog:
 1. In Cobra, your hands are placed under your shoulders before you press up. In Upward Dog, your hands are placed along the lower ribs.
 2. In Cobra, your pubis (the front of your pelvis) and the top of your thighs maintain contact with the floor. In Upward Dog, both the pelvis and thighs are lifted off the floor.

Spaciousness

How many of us make our mobile phones the first thing that we touch in the morning and the last thing we check in the evening?

We are crowded out, we need to make time and space - spaciousness

Spaciousness is the factor that is opposite of stress and a key factor in relieving distress that we feel stress makes you feel contractors in tight spaciousness is loose and expensive the bottom line is spacious just makes you feel better

Yoga postures enable the body to feel spacious inside the counter stress by simply mind-body connection it feels good but what is even better is to close and start every practice with relaxation. As we do in class.

Relaxation on its own it's fantastic results - practice daily whether it's just sitting for a minute - laying for a minute or simply standing for a minute, rest in the space around you and then build your time getting into a deeper state when you have time and never feel guilty about making this time.

If you have no time or are too tired to do a yoga pose at least make time for 10 minute relaxation each day. Time away from your thoughts and time to experience the qualities of emptiness and spaciousness.

This is vital remember looking after yourself allows you to look after others.

Summer Foods

We change our wardrobe during the summer to stay cool, but did you know that you should also change your diet? Being outside exposed to the sun and sweating from the heat can put you at risk for dehydration and vitamin deficiencies. But the solution is fairly simple and tasty too.

Eat local seasonal fruits and vegetables during the summer. The nutrients are at their peak, and the food is tastiest when it is fresh. There are other foods that will also keep you hydrated and healthy for all the fun activities that summer has to offer.

Lots of salads, try something different, experiment. I personally love raw food and now is the time to give it a go!

Suggestions;

Zucchini

Watermelon

Oranges

Yogurt

Celery

Fennel

Cantaloupe

Honeydew

Blackberries

Raspberries
Apples
Pears

Practice - Gratitude Meditations

Gratitude meditation is simply the practice of focusing on all the things in life that we are grateful for. Gratitude meditation is about experiencing that feeling of appreciation, whether it is for a loving family member or friend, a beautiful sunny day, or the pleasure of a good cup of coffee.

Gratitude;

- Strengthens friendships
- Encourages humility
- Reduces envy and jealousy
- Increases fulfilment
- Reduces selfishness
- Improves physical and emotional wellbeing
- Increases empathy
- Strengthens self-esteem
-

1. Grateful Mantra Meditation

Too often we find ourselves caught up in the difficulties of our lives. We get bogged down with the many challenges we face, and sometimes find it easier to focus on the negative than on the positive.

This is perfectly natural. But if you find yourself wanting to steer your thoughts in a more positive direction, then a gratitude meditation may do the trick.

We take a lot of things for granted without realising it. When we focus on the things that go wrong, we often overlook the great multitude of things that are actually going right in our lives.

It is somehow easier to focus our attention on the less positive/issues/problem areas.

Gratitude meditation will help you remember the small blessings you may take for granted in your day to day life.

How to do

1. First, find a comfortable position to rest in, either in a chair, or on a comfortable flat surface.
2. Take a moment to centre yourself. Turn off the ringer on your phone to ensure you won't be disturbed. If you're able, close the door to the room you're in.
3. Now, take a deep breath through your nose. Fill your lungs entirely with air. Let your breath out through your mouth.
4. Take a few more deep breaths this way. In through the nose, filling the lungs with air, and out through the mouth.
5. Now, we'll practice a gratitude mantra.

The mantra is: *I am grateful for* _____.

6. It's pretty simple. All you need to do is fill in the blank with something you're grateful for.
7. Repeat this mantra 10 times. Each time you repeat the mantra, try to come up with something different that you're thankful for. If you're having trouble coming up with things, start small, focusing on your immediate environment.

You could be thankful for the breeze coming through the window, cooling your face. Or you could be grateful for the soft, plush surface you're resting on. Here are some suggestions to help you get started:

I am grateful for the air in my lungs.

I am grateful for my heart that beats and keeps me alive.

I am grateful for my senses that help me perceive the world.

I am grateful for my comfortable bed.

I am grateful for my clothes that protect me and keep me warm.

I am grateful for the tree in my garden that is beautiful to look at.

I am grateful for the sun that shines through my window and brightens the room.

I am grateful for the food in my fridge.

I am grateful for my job that enables me to provide for myself and/or my loved ones.

I am grateful for my family that cares for me.

I am grateful for my pets that cheer me up.

2. The Yin Yang Gratitude Practice

It's not easy to focus on the positive when you feel overwhelmed by how difficult your present circumstances may be. This meditation will help you understand that in any challenge, there also exists a lesson. Without darkness, we would not be able to perceive the light.

1. Seat yourself in a comfortable position and take a few grounding breaths.
2. Draw your attention to something that's currently troubling you. It's best to start small with this practice. Draw on a minor annoyance or irritation that's been bothering you.
3. Identify something unpleasant you're currently faced with, and then see if you can flip the negative circumstance to find a positive aspect. For example, perhaps the room you're in is cold and drafty, but it has a large, beautiful window that lets in plenty of light.
4. As you continue to identify things you're unhappy with in your life, do your best to find a positive opportunity that the circumstance provides. Perhaps you have a long commute to work that you find stressful. A positive spin on this situation could be that your commute gives you the opportunity to enjoy some great music, listen to a cool podcast, or even practice some mindfulness on the way to work.

Seeking the positive within the negative won't be easy at first, but this is a skill that will spill over into many other areas of your life.

3. Guided Gratitude Meditation

If you're short on time and would like some guidance in learning to practice gratitude, why not give this guided meditation a try? It's only 5 minutes long, and is sure to provide some helpful insight into the life-transforming power of the practice of gratitude. Let yourself sit quietly and at ease. Allow your body to be relaxed and open, your breath natural, your heart easy. Begin the practice of gratitude by feeling how year after year you have cared for your own life. Now let yourself begin to acknowledge all that has supported you in this care:

With gratitude I remember the people, animals, plants, insects, creatures of the sky and sea, air and water, fire and earth, all whose joyful exertion blesses my life every day.

With gratitude I remember the care and labor of a thousand generations of elders and ancestors who came before me.

I offer my gratitude for the blessing of this earth I have been given.

I offer my gratitude for the measure of health I have been given.

I offer my gratitude for the family and friends I have been given.

I offer my gratitude for the community I have been given.

I offer my gratitude for the teachings and lessons I have been given.

I offer my gratitude for the life I have been given.

Just as we are grateful for our blessings, so we can be grateful for the blessings of others. Now shift your practice to the cultivation of joy. Continue to breathe gently. Bring to mind someone you care about, someone it is easy to rejoice for. Picture them and feel the natural joy you have for their well-being, happiness, and success. With each breath, offer them your grateful, heartfelt wishes:

May you be joyful.

May your happiness increase.

May you not be separated from great happiness.

May your good fortune and the causes for your joy and happiness increase.

Sense the sympathetic joy and caring in each phrase. When you feel some degree of natural gratitude for the happiness of this loved one, extend this practice to another person you care about. Recite the same simple phrases that express your heart's intention.

Then gradually open the meditation to other loved ones. After the joy for them grows strong, turn back to include yourself. Let the feelings of joy more fully fill your body and mind. Continue repeating the intentions of joy over and over, through whatever resistances and difficulties arise, until you feel stabilized in joy. Next begin to systematically include the categories of neutral people, then difficult people and even enemies until you extend sympathetic joy to all beings everywhere, young and old, near and far.

Quotes

'Let go of negative habits' - Anon

'What we think, we become' - Anon

Finally, have a great, restful but mindful summer - be kind to yourself.

See you all on the mat. Stay safe out there.

Namaste

Michele 🙏

