

SUE NASH YOGA

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2009



Happy New Year! Hope all your festivities went well and that you had a good time.

After the hectic time you've just been through, what do you feel you need now - a holiday? Well I hope to help you take a little 'holiday' from stress in this month's newsletter which is all about relaxation and slowing down.

Posture of the month is Shavasana (the lying down one we do during relaxation). It is an actual yoga posture and not just the heap you collapse into on your mat at the end of your session! Most people admit that this is their favourite posture of all time which seems to indicate that we are all pretty stressed out and too busy to relax on our own, at home. Some of you may be surprised to hear that in each class, there is always at least one person who struggles with Shavasana and is more at home thrashing quickly through countless sun salutations. They just can't lie still; they fidget, shuffle and generally have their eyes open the whole time. These are the people who would actually benefit the most from relaxation and stillness, so hopefully the tips below will help to make 2009 your most relaxed year yet!

We are also looking at:-

- Class update - start back dates after Christmas
- Tip of the month - Bee Breath
- Question and Answer Section
- Resolutions and Intentions
- Posture of the month - Shavasana

Class Update

Classes are all starting back week commencing 5th January. I'll be gentle with you!!

Bredon (day & night) - starts back on Monday 5th Jan

Gotherington - starts back on Tuesday 6th Jan

Broadway - starts back on Thursday 8th January.

Tip of the Month - Bee Breath

When we are anxious we tend to breathe very shallowly (i.e. upper-chest breathing). By lengthening our exhalations, we begin to relax and reduce our 'flight or fight' reactions as well as maintaining a healthy level of carbon dioxide in the blood.

One way of doing this is by using the Bee Breath. It is a soothing practice which lengthens the exhalation naturally but needs to be done in private as it involves making a humming noise like a bee!!

Sit comfortably with a long back and relaxed shoulders. Close your eyes and observe your breath as it naturally is. Then inhale through your nostrils and exhale (also through your nostrils) but make the sound of the letter 'M' - a humming sound. Keep the hum going until you need to inhale - don't strain as this causes more stress.

Practice for as long as you can. When you've finished, sit quietly for a few breaths before allowing the family back into the house!

Question & Answer Section

I need your help with this one! If anyone has any questions (along a yogic theme) that they would like me to answer in this newsletter, please email them in. I will then publish the question & answer in the next newsletter (I won't put your name in if you don't want me to - you can be Mrs X from Gloucester if you like!).

For example, you might want to know what the best postures are for promoting good digestion; what is the best breathing exercise to do to help insomnia etc.

Email me with your questions (or suggestions) at sue@suenash.co.uk.

Resolutions & Intentions

How many of us make the traditional list of resolutions every January and how many of us traditionally abandon them by February?? And we then end up feeling guilty for failing to keep them.

How about working with an intention instead of a resolution. A resolution is about achieving something in the future whereas an intention is more about the present moment. So your intention is about the path you take now rather than a future outcome. You can set your intention based on what matters to you most in life so it will be in line with your inner values. Unlike a resolution, you can set your intention and then live it every day, rather than just forgetting about it. For example, a resolution would be "I am going to lose weight in 2009" whilst an intention would be "I am going to eat more healthily today".

Chances are, if you are considering making a New Year resolution, there is some aspect of you/your life that you want to change. Focus on what it is you would like to change; visualise your intention and then imagine it happening - now.

You can also set an intention at the beginning of your yoga practice and then keep bringing your inner focus back to it during your posture work. It could be something as simple as the word 'calm'. Continually bring your focus to the word 'calm' during your yoga session and make it happen.

Posture of the Month - Shavasana

In Shavasana, we need to learn to totally let go and surrender to relaxation. The benefits of the physical part of your yoga session are then completely absorbed. Your muscles don't need to do anything now. It's a resting pose but it's slightly active in that your body is now 'digesting' the benefits from the posture work you have done previously.

When you relax deeply, your muscles release, your blood pressure falls, your stress hormone levels decrease and your heart rate, breathing and brain waves slow down.

Lie on your back, legs straight, feet flopped out to the sides, arms down by your sides, slightly away from your body, palms turned upwards. Close your eyes.

If your lower back feels uncomfortable, either place a rolled up blanket or towel under your knees, or bend your knees and place your feet flat on the floor. You should be able to feel your lower back spreading onto the floor and feel comfortable enough to be able to lie completely still. Cover yourself with a blanket to stay warm.

See if you can let your thoughts float away. Imagine they are like clouds, drifting away. Consciously let your muscles relax; even when you think they're relaxed, see if you can relax them even more. Focus on how your body feels. Recognise tense areas in your body. Practice releasing stress with each exhalation. You might not be able to let it all go at once - release it a bit at a time.

Now is a good time to re-visit your 'intention' (see above paragraph on Resolutions and Intentions). Your sub-conscious mind is more likely to respond to it when you are in a relaxed state.

Stay here for at least 10 to 15 minutes if you can.

Shavasana may seem boring to some people but it really is a valuable and essential posture. Remember that a high percentage of illnesses are caused by stress so mastering Shavasana will go a long way to keeping you healthy in mind and body.

Stay relaxed & bendy

Susie