

YOGA NOTES

January 2018

"Karma
chameleon:
we come and
go, we come
and go ... "

- Boy George



Adapt ...

.. not to fit in but to fit yourself!

First day of 2018 ..

.. and I find myself going through my albums noticing this colourful capture of the Cape dwarf chameleon. It was the centre of attention for the dogs on the farm some years ago. I grabbed my camera and sat with it for quite some time. The little fellow did not change in colour while I was watching but it and its eyes moved curiously, yet cautiously, with determination as it made its way along our white wall. Considering its size it was a huge wall, our dogs must have seemed gignormuos. And their barking around him must have been stressful? I was engulfed by the grace with which this beautiful little creature peacefully continued its journey. And I feel a resemblance. Reflecting over the past year, and years, it has been an inspirational journey in so many ways and on so many levels. And I am equally engulfed by how amazingly well we, most of the time, move from one phase in life to another. Sometimes unnoticeably with no intention or even attention, it just kind of happens. Then at other times it becomes overwhelming and we try to resist, move away from, or find other ways to face changes we cannot control. Whether we want it or not, it happens to us and we manage and survive. I know there are different levels in survival mode and the outcome of uncontrollable change. Hence, I don't want to offend or patronise anyone, but my point is that we are incredible beings able to adapt to almost anything we are exposed to. Like Chameleons we change and we move on.

With this empty, white sheet in front of me, where the cover says 2018, I am going to make a twist to my principles. Many of you know that I am not a friend of resolutions simply because I don't know of anyone ever having made a resolution to worsen things in life. So, really, do we need resolutions to make things better for ourselves? Anyway, principles can also be adapted, so this year I promise to grant myself the time it takes to make conscious decisions! This should be obvious, yet, to me it is not. I consider myself very present in daily life and still I struggle to take that split second to avoid reacting with the reptile part of my brain. In order not to stay under the the spell of my reactions, responses, thoughts and judgements stored in my body, I will give myself the opportunity to alter the way I exist. I am now upgrading myself to version 2.0.18

As for changes already in place since December, yoga on Mondays in Wellington is facilitated by Tara and on Wednesdays by me. In Paarl we are left with Tuesdays until we figure out a time on Fridays in the weeks I am not working in Cape Town. The same applies to mornings in Wellington, Tuesdays as usual and then Fridays again when I am off Cape Town. Confusing, I know, but we will get there and until then, let us be present, make conscious decisions and write good memories, I look forward to sharing this next chapter with you,

Namaste



UTTHAN PRISTHASANA

the lizard pose

Utthan Pristhasana, also known as the Lizard Pose, is a mild versatile exercise that strengthens the groin and inner hamstrings while preparing the body for deeper hip openers. During each exercise, make sure to maintain a focus on your breathing.

This intense hip opener stretches the hips and groin. While this can help with relief from discomfort and prevent strain, exercise caution. Go slowly and don't push your body beyond its limits.

PHYSICAL BENEFITS:

- Opens the hips, hamstrings, groins and hip flexors
- Strengthens the inner thigh muscles on the front leg

ENERGETIC BENEFITS:

- Opens and releases the chest, shoulders and neck
- Prepares the body for deeper hip openers such as Pigeon Pose and Hanuman Pose

PREPARATORY POSES:

- Tadasana
- Vasisthasana
- Standing Poses (Warrior 1 & 2)

FOLLOW-UP POSES:

- Utkatasana
- Eka Pada Rajakapotasana
- Krounchasana
- Parivrtta Surya Yantrasana
- Parivrtta Janu Sirsasana
- Eka Pada Setu Bandha Sarvangasana
- Savasana
- Pigeon Pose
- Hanuman Pose

CONTRAINDICATIONS AND CAUTIONS:

This pose is an intense hip stretch and you should check with a doctor before performing the pose if you have any of the following conditions:

- Sciatica
- Lower back injuries

ADJUSTMENTS/MODIFICATIONS:

- You may use a block or a bolster to rest your forearms on
- You may need a strap to grab hold of your foot in the quad stretch variation

STEP-BY-STEP:

1 From Downward Facing Dog Pose, step your right foot forwards between your hands. Heel-toe your foot towards the edge of your mat, so that your foot is slightly wider than your shoulders.

2 Let your hips grow heavy, so that they settle forwards and down. Begin to walk your hands forwards until you are able to come down on to your forearms. You may place your forearms on the ground, or on a block.

3 Extend your heart forward, lengthening the spine. Try to soften the heart and draw the shoulder blades together, taking the rounding out of your back.

4 Keep your right knee hugging towards your midline to get into the inner hip and thigh area of your right leg. You can keep your left knee lifted with your leg active, or for a more restorative version, you can lower your left knee.

Outer hip variation:

With your forearms on the ground, flex your right foot, drawing your toes towards your shin. Begin to let your right knee draw outwards toward the right, rolling to the outside edge of your right foot. Make sure to keep your foot flexed to protect the ankle and the knee.

Quad stretch variation:

1. From the outer hip variation, with your left knee lowered, reach back with your right hand and take hold of your left foot. Begin to draw your foot towards your buttocks as your hips continue to draw forwards.
2. Open your heart towards the sky and lean back towards the left.
3. Breathe at any stage or variation of the pose for 5-10 breaths, then step back to Downward Facing Dog Pose. Repeat with the left leg forwards.

HOW TO DO LIZARD POSE

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UTTHAN PRISTHASANA

