

Kundalini Yoga News

From B.J. McNeillie, KRI Certified Instructor

The Yoga of Awareness

As Taught by Yogi Bhajan

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Where Has the Summer Gone?

New classes set to start in September . . .

Even for someone who likes to stay nice and warm, this summer has offered a bit more heat than I would prefer! I'm looking forward to the cooler, clearer days of fall, and I'm starting to gear up for a very full schedule of yoga classes.

The Central PA Youth Ballet (where I spent A LOT of time when I was growing up) is opening new studios in downtown Harrisburg, at Strawberry Square. I'll be teaching three classes a week there, so come check it out. A few of my classes that took a summer break will also be restarting in September.

If you – or someone you know – needs a gentle yoga class where we don't even sit on the floor, I now have two such classes to offer. The Wednesday morning class continues at Alta View in Colonial Park, and I am starting a new gentle class through West Shore Rec on Friday mornings in Lemoyne. If you can breathe, you can do yoga, so come give it a try.

I'm also offering a special 8-week class on the chakras beginning October 15 at Alta View. This class will involve a little yoga, a little meditation, and a lot of discussion about the energies of the various chakras, how to recognize when they are out of balance, and how to bring them into balance. There's a lot going on, so I hope to **see you in September!** As always, if you have any comments or questions, please feel free to contact me at bjmcneile@ezonline.net.

Sat Nam,
B.J.

THROAT OPENER

An Exercise to Open the Throat Center and Balance Your Fifth Chakra Energy

The fifth chakra, located at the throat center, is all about the impact of speech, the power of the word. This energy controls the ears/jaw/tongue area. Strong fifth chakra communication is very truthful, pure, direct, and to the point. With a balanced fifth chakra, you express your ideas clearly and feel that you are heard and understood. You are also able to listen effectively to others.

This simple exercise uses the chant "Wahe Guru." "Wahe" is an expression of ecstasy. "Guru" means wisdom. Use the tip of the tongue tapping the upper palate to make the "r" sound.



"Wahe" look left "Guru" look right

Stand with feet about hip width apart. Bend both knees and put your hands on the thighs to support your back. The chin stays lifted, parallel to the ground. Chant "Wahe," turning your head to the left as far as possible. Chant "Guru," turning your head to the right as far as possible. Continue for 2-3 minutes. To finish, inhale bringing the head to center, and tuck the chin in slightly to stretch the back of the neck. Exhale, stand up, and relax.

WORDS OF WISDOM

From Yogi Bhajan . . .

“Self-relaxation is the highest discipline. A relaxed person can communicate. An unrelaxed person cannot communicate.”

* * * *

“Reach people through compassion; don’t put them on the defense.”

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“Whatever can make you fail, that very energy can make you succeed. It takes the same time not to do a job as it takes to do the job. It takes exactly the same energy in thinking not to do a thing as it takes to do the thing.”

KARANI KRIYA

This meditation is designed to create a connection to meaningful work, solving the problem of how to make a lucrative living and satisfy the soul at the same time.



Sit comfortably with a straight spine. Arms are in front of you with forearms parallel to the ground at shoulder height. Index and middle fingers are extended, touching right and left, in front of the throat center. Eyes are 9/10 closed. Create the following breath pattern: inhale through the nose 2-3 seconds; hold the breath in 5 seconds; exhale completely through the nose 10-15 seconds. This meditation can be done for up to 31 minutes.

“Eating GOOD and Healthy”

STEWED TOMATOES, Indian Style (Tamaatar Bharthaa)

This is a spicy side dish, and a great way to use those glorious, ripe tomatoes! This recipe makes about 4 cups to serve 6 people.

Ingredients:

4 ripe tomatoes
1 large onion, chopped
2-3 green chiles, mild or hot, to taste,
chopped
1 teaspoon salt, or to taste
1 tablespoon honey, or to taste

Peel the tomatoes by immersing them briefly in boiling water; the skins will shrivel up. Remove the tomatoes from the water and peel. In a bowl, use a fork to mash the tomatoes, removing any hard parts. Add the onion and green chiles to the tomatoes. Add salt and honey and mix thoroughly.

LASSI (*Lasee*)

This cold yogurt shake is good for breakfast, snacktime, or anytime. It is a traditional Indian drink, usually taken with a little salt, a little honey, or just plain. This recipe makes 1 quart.

Ingredients:

2 cups yogurt
2 cups water
2-3 ice cubes

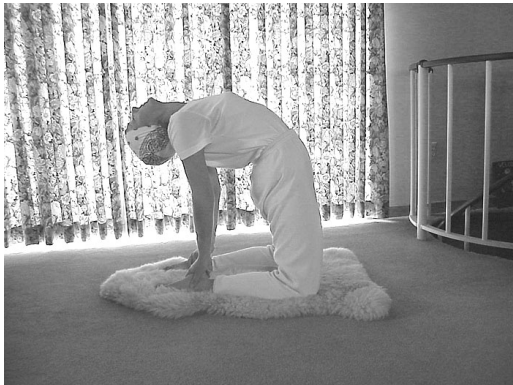
4 drops rose water
Juice of ½ lemon or ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
Pinch of salt (optional) or
1 tablespoon honey (optional) or to taste

In an electric blender, blend yogurt and water with a few ice cubes until bubbles form on top. Put in 4 drops of rose water. Add lemon juice or nutmeg. Add honey or salt to taste, or leave plain, and blend again. Serve very cold.

(These recipes are taken from “A Taste of India,” by Bibiji Inderjit Kaur.)

FEATURED YOGA POSTURE . . .

Camel Pose is a yoga posture that is excellent for the digestive system. If you overeat, this posture can help your digestive system handle the extra work. It is also very effective at opening up the fifth chakra – the throat center – which houses the energy that helps us to communicate clearly and concisely.



Camel Pose

Begin by kneeling on both knees with the knees hip width apart. Reach back and firmly grasp your heels or ankles. Arch the back, as if someone is pulling on your navel center, and let the head relax back to open the throat center. Breathe from the navel center for 1-2 minutes. You may need to build up your time.



Alternate Camel Pose

If this position doesn't work for you, place both hands on the backs of the thighs for support. Arch up and back as far as you can, and breathe from the navel center. To end, inhale and come up, and exhale forward into Baby Pose (sit on the heels and bring the head forward). Let your back stretch out and relax.

Value Your Breath

Value your breath . . . This is the first rule of Kundalini Yoga. Why? Yogi Bhanan has said, "If there is anything Divine in you, it is your breath." Breath is the precious thread that links each of us, finite creatures, to the Infinite. Each breath is a precious gift.

When you think about it, breath is quite amazing. From the moment you were born, something has been breathing in you. This happens whether you are awake or sleeping, happy or unhappy, even conscious or unconscious. The breath is on duty 24-7 with no time off for holidays or vacations. Could it really be you doing all that breathing?

In the Orient, it is said that the life span of a child has already been predetermined, not by a number of years, but by the number of breaths allotted. With this in mind, you can easily conclude that if you breathe slower, you will live longer. A slower rate of breathing is much easier on the nervous system, the metabolism, and the digestion. Slow breathing can also help us live healthier.

The breath is intimately connected to our emotional and mental states. When you are upset, the breath tends to be quick and shallow. When you are content and confident, the breath tends to be much slower and deeper. Just as the breath varies with our different states of mind, we can learn to use the breath to gain control of our mind and our emotions. When you are upset, try forcing yourself to breathe slowly and deeply. The mind will naturally follow the breath and begin to calm. As the mind calms, the body will naturally follow the mind and begin to relax. Remember these basic principles:

1. Your rate of breathing and your state of mind are inseparable.
2. The slower your rate of breathing, the more control you have over your mind.
3. The mind follows the breath, and the body follows the mind.

For more information on the breath, I recommend Kundalini Yoga: The Flow of Eternal Power by Shakti Parwha Kaur Khalsa. It's a great book!