

Advent Yoga

December 2017

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BE KIND TO YOURSELF

NAMASTE

Words of Introduction



The Goal of Yoga

The Yoga pose is not the goal. Becoming flexible, strong or standing on your head is not the goal.

The goal is to create space where you were once stuck; to release layers of protection you've built around your heart; to appreciate your body and become aware of the mind and the noise it creates; to make peace with who you are. The goal is to love...first your beautiful self and then everyone else.

What's included here:

- Notes and ideas from my journey into the centering practice of yoga
- Thoughts on being a Christian Yogi/Yogini
- Suggestions for your Advent practice

Yoga, Well-being and a Spiritual Journey



I practice yoga with a deep appreciation for and a sense of respect for its ancient traditions and history. I have come to understand yoga as a vocabulary with which I express my journey to God and my True Self, the Self God made me to be. Yoga has become – to me – a universal human practice; a way of being in the world. There are no dictates, requirements, dogmas or restrictions that I find incompatible with my faith journey in Christianity. If you wonder about this, may I recommend the website: [Christians Practicing Yoga \(www.christianspracticingyoga.org\)](http://www.christianspracticingyoga.org) or the book, Prayer of Heart & Body: Meditation and Yoga as Christian Spiritual Practice by Thomas Ryan, CSP.

Yoga – from the word union or yoking – teaches me to honor and explore my body and mind in a profoundly meaningful way. Each day, I am obliged to notice and observe the way my mind and body move and behave as I walk through my life. I have come to see yoga as a way to calm the fluctuations of my mind and to prepare for going deep inside, beneath the incessant chatter of my ego-driven brain to find what I find about who I really am.

To me, yoga is a way to come to know and appreciate myself as a unique part of creation. Yoga can be a kind of worship; a way to prepare for meditative prayer, a way of cultivating spiritual values like patience, humility and non-judgment and, finally, a healthy and wholesome way of life.

The eight-limbed yogic path – of which only one limb is a physical postural (asana) practice – can become a life's work and I recommend further study to those interested.

Before you begin



- Identify 20-30 minutes (or more) of free time.
- Put on comfy clothes (that are form-fitting enough to stay out of your way)
- Find a quiet spot where you will not be interrupted.
- Select some music or a soundtrack that you enjoy as background.
- Light a candle.
- Set an intention for your practice:
 - May I remember to breathe
 - May my heart be open
 - May I listen to my body
 - May I accept myself
 - May I make space
 - May I remember loved ones
 - May this practice be a prayer
 - Whatever you can imagine.....
- Remember to explore and balance ease, effort and stability in your mind and body
- Use a timer and forget about the time until savasana

Beginning



Our Father
Who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name
Thy Kingdom come
Thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven
Give us this day our daily
bread
And forgive us our
trespasses as we forgive those
who trespass against us
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil
For thine is the kingdom and
power and the glory forever
Amen

Hands at heart center
Arms sweep up to heaven
Hands return to heart center
Arms sweep up to heaven
Swan dive, forward fold to earth

Roll up, step out to goddess
pose
Arms up, straighten knees 5-pt
star Lean to right; lean to left
Turn to right for Warrior 1
Cartwheel arms to Warrior 2
Step to mountain pose; Arms
sweep up to heavens, hands
return to heart center

Advent Yoga: Week 1

HOPE



Highlighted postures: Bhujangasana (Cobra), Navasana (Boat), Trikonasana (Triangle)

Physiological Benefits:

- Cobra: Back bend; modification – Purushamigasana (Sphinx). Opens lungs, stimulates abdominals; reduces stress and fatigue
- Boat: Tones and strengthens abdominals; stretches hamstrings and improves confidence
- Triangle: Hip-opening – strengthens and stretches ankles, legs, knees, hips, groin, calves, shoulders, chest. Aids in stress relief

Words to remember: Grounded, I open my heart and rise up to receive the energy of the Divine within me. My breath naturally flows into my heart center, allowing me to hold this pose with lightness and ease. I find a point of balance and equanimity; I sail smoothly even through rough waters. My body in triangle is the expression of perfection: perhaps the trinity, perhaps the balance of mind, body and spirit.

Suggested Sequence 1



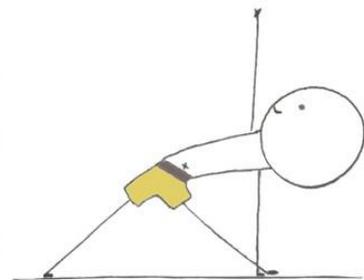
1. Mountain
2. Lateral Bend x 2 sides
3. Forward Fold/spine ext
4. Plank/Kneeling Plank
5. **Cobra**/Child's Pose
6. Plank/Kneeling Plank
7. **Cobra**/Downward Dog
8. 3-legged Dog/Runner's lunge

9. **Triangle**
10. Downward Dog
11. Repeat 8-10 on 2nd side
12. Chair
13. Easy Seated
14. **Boat**
15. Supine Twist
16. Savasana



DON'T HOLD ONTO THE PAIN
PARIPURNA NAVASANA

www.beenynyom.com

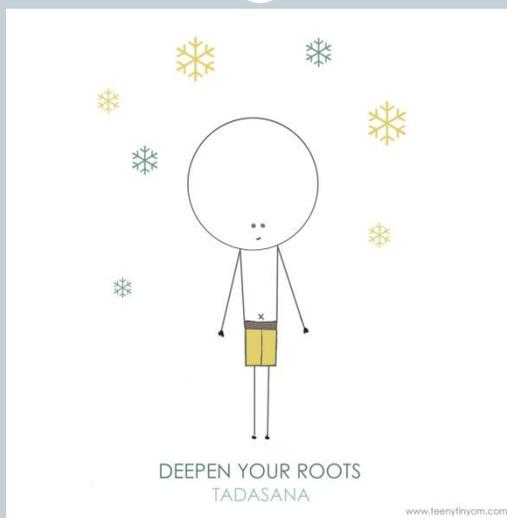


TRIKONASANA

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Advent Yoga: Week 2

LOVE



Highlighted postures: Tadasana (Mountain), Virabhadrasana II (Warrior II), Savasana (Corpse)

Physiological Benefits:

- Mountain: Steadies breathing, improves posture; increases strength and mobility of legs, feet and hips; increases awareness
- Warrior II: Works every muscle you have! Helps one find ease within effort – peace within difficulty
- Savasana: Unlocks intrinsic energy by fully relaxing muscles often contracted unconsciously; restores and revitalizes

Words to remember: With a stable foundation, your awareness rises and you are able to witness what is occurring in your mind and body without judging, cultivating a deep sense of equanimity. Sense your ability to reach out to life courageously. Bring your awareness to conscious relaxation.

Suggested Sequence 2



1. Mountain	
2. Lateral Bend x 2 sides	
3. Forward Fold/spine ext	
4. Table	
5. Runner's Lunge	
6. Warrior II	
7. Triangle	
8. Forward Fold/spine ext	

9. Repeat 4-8 on 2 nd side	
10. Plank/Kneeling Plank	
11. Cobra	
12. Child's pose	
13. East Seated	
14. Boat	
15. Supine Twist	
16. Savasana	



Advent Yoga: Week 3

JOY



Highlighted Postures: Ustrasana (Camel), Vrksasana (Tree), Sukhasana (Easy Seated)

Physiological Benefits:

- **Camel:** Increases flexibility in the spine, stimulates the nervous system, opens the chest and shoulders, improves circulation and digestion, and stimulates the thyroid. It's said to rejuvenate/increase energy levels, and lower blood pressure. You are open and vulnerable – emotions may well up
- **Tree:** Improves posture, balance and self-esteem
- **Easy Seated:** Promotes groundedness, opens knees and ankles; helps you find stillness and tranquility

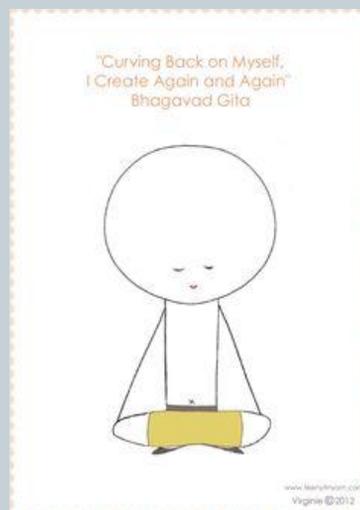
Words to remember: Wisdom and compassion meet and allow you to move confidently through your spiritual journey; rooted to the earth, I reach upward with clear awakening to possibility; Aligned and centered, I experience tranquility.

Suggested Sequence 3



1. Mountain	
2. Lateral Bend x 2 sides	
3. Forward Fold/spine ext	
4. Plank/Kneeling Plank	
5. Cobra	
6. Child's pose	
7. Camel	
8. Child's pose	

9. Plank/Kneeling Plank	
10. Table	
11. Forward Fold/spine ext	
12. Tree x 2 sides	
13. Chair	
14. Easy Seated	
15. Boat	
16. Savasana	



Advent Yoga: Week 4

PEACE



Highlighted Postures: Ananda Balasana (Happy Baby), Marjaryasana/Bitilasana (Cat/Cow), Upavistha Konasana (wide-legged forward fold)

Physiological Benefits:

- Happy Baby: Opens hips – relieves tension; releases spine and relaxes sacroiliac (SI) joint ; can release emotions and memories
- Cat/Cow: Promotes spine flexibility; coordination of breath and movement; Increases emotional balance and stability of the mind.
- Wide-legged forward fold: Stretches the groin and opens hips; elongates the spine; stimulates the abdominals

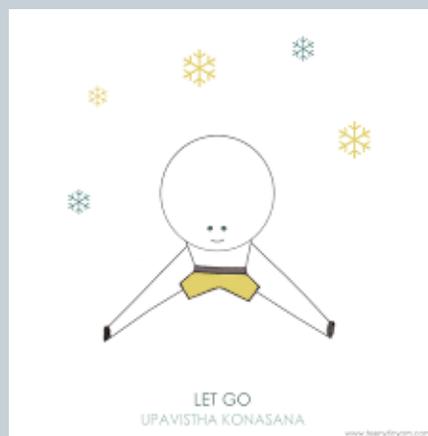
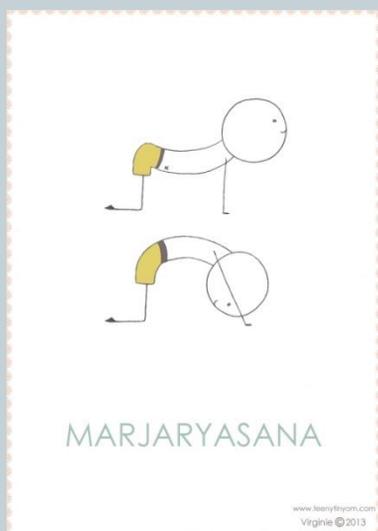
Words to remember: Rediscover the pure joy and carefree energy of a baby; find the balance of flexibility and stability to flow through your days; soothe the mind and eliminate stress.

Suggested Sequence 4



1. Mountain
2. Lateral Bend x 2 sides
3. Forward Fold/spine ext
4. Table
5. Cat/Cow
6. Camel
7. Downward Dog
8. Runner's Lunge
9. Triangle

10. Runner's Lunge
11. Table
12. Easy Seated
13. Wide-leg Forward
14. Boat
15. Bridge
16. Supine Twist
17. Happy Baby
18. Savasana



May you live at ease...Namaste

