

Tap the Reservoir of Unending Bliss

A Gentle Twist to Awaken the Spine

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Lasting, ever-new joy is God. Finding this joy within, you will find it in everything. In God you will tap the reservoir of perennial, unending bliss.

—Paramahansa Yogananda



Fall is a time of change as we let go and invite new beginnings, in all areas of life. Each year, in an attempt to lighten my load and make way for something new and fresh, I take inventory of my personal belongings, diet, and daily routines. I remove things that are no longer useful for my highest purposes, making way for what is vital and alive. A little change can support us to feel our best, inside and out. When we get rid of clutter, or material possessions that keep us in the past, we make space to experience ever-new joy and unlimited freedom in the moment.

There is no denying that a thorough cleansing like this creates a sense of spaciousness and vitality within our home. So why not extend that practice to the mind and body? We can do so by including a simple twist in our hatha yoga routine.

Twisting poses rotate the spine and stretch the back muscles, allowing us to feel clean, clear, and refreshed. They're considered to stoke the digestive fire, known as agni. They also open the front body and energize the spine, preparing us for deep meditation.

Energize your yoga and meditation practice with twists and tap into the reservoir of unending bliss.

PRACTICE

Seated Twist (Ardha Matsyendrasana)

Ardha Matsyendrasana, a grounding and cleansing twist, can help us to find a moment of peace and stillness while enlivening the spine in preparation for meditation.

Benefits

- Stretches the spine, shoulders, and hips
- Helps relieve stress and improves digestion
- Relieves lower backache, neck pain, and sciatica
- Energizes the spine

Steps to Practice

1. Sit on the floor and stretch both legs straight out in front of you. Bend your right knee and place the sole of your right foot flat on the floor, near the outside of your left thigh. (To deepen the pose you can bend your extended leg and bring that foot to the outside of the opposite buttocks.)
2. Inhale and extend up through the top of the sternum to lengthen the front of the body. As you exhale, twist to the right.
3. Gently grasp your right knee with your left hand and place your right hand on the floor beside your right buttock. Pull your left shoulder back slightly, bringing your shoulder blades together as you continue to twist to the right.
4. You can turn your head in one of two directions: continue the twist of the upper body by turning it to the right; or counter the twist by turning it left and looking over the left shoulder toward your feet.
5. With each inhalation lift a little more through the sternum, pushing the fingers on the floor to assist; with each exhalation deepen into the twist a little more. Stay for 30 seconds to 1 minute, then release with an exhalation, return to the starting position, and repeat on the left for the same length of time. 🙏

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Note: Always use your best judgment about which practices are useful for your unique situation. Consult with your physician if needed. Study with a hatha yoga instructor for more detailed practices.