



RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

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The following sequence is a simple yet effective restorative practice to soothe aching backs, deepen breathing, quieten the mind and restore mental focus. It is suitable for students with high blood pressure (note variation for uttanasana), or those who are menstruating, pregnant or recovering from illness or any who simply want a quieter practice. PLEASE CHECK WITH YOUR TEACHER IF YOU ARE UNSURE ABOUT THE TECHNIQUES OR SUITABILITY OF ANY POSTURES.

1 TADASANA & PARVATASANA Arm Stretch 1 minute
 Benefits: Eases tension and stiffness in neck, shoulders and back. Increases alertness. *Inhale up. Move shoulders down away from ears. Exhale down.*

2 ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA Downward facing dog 1 minute
 Benefits: Aligns the spine and limbs. Strengthens the body. *Be sure to align yourself correctly. Do not hold over-long. Focus on the breath.*

3 FORWARD VIRASANA 1 minute
 Benefits: Calms the mind. Brings alertness into the spine and upper torso. *Part the knees and work the buttocks back towards the heels.*

4 MAJRASANA Cat pose 2 minutes
 Benefits: Eases backache, improves breathing, strengthens pelvic floor. *Inhale up, exhale under. Be sure to activate the whole spine, keep the movement smooth & slow.*

5 GOMUKHASANA Cow head pose 1 minute
 Benefits: Mobilises shoulders, releases tension, eases headaches. *Try to relax the hips and allow the armpit to open. Do both sides. Var.: Extend lower leg and straighten foot.*

6 UTTANASANA Extension pose
 Benefits: Improves condition of spine, stretches hamstrings, brings blood to the face. *Straighten the legs. Come up carefully. N.B. Bend your knees and look upwards if you suffer from high blood pressure, back injuries or are heavily pregnant.*

7 PASCIMOTTANASANA Posterior extension
 Benefits: Increases flexibility in the hamstrings. Quietens the mind and restores focus. *Use a strap if toes can not be reached easily. Those with back problems bend the knees and do not draw the head too low.*

8 BHARADVAJASANA 1 minute each side
 Benefits: Increases flexibility in spine, stimulates abdominal organs. *Do both sides. Inhale lifting the chest, exhale draw the coccyx under a little as you twist. Draw the shoulder blades down and in towards the spine.*

9 VIPARITA KARANI 15 minutes
 Benefits: Rejuvenates the legs, cools the body, improves the breathing and quietens the mind. Preferably use rolled up blanket under lumbar. Keep buttocks close to the wall. Have arms bent (as illustrated) or along side the body palms facing up. Cross legs against wall before coming out.

10 SAVASANA Corpse pose 15 minutes
 Benefits: Lowers blood pressure, rests all the systems of the body, assists in recovery from stress and illness, boosts the immune system and allows muscles to recover after general practise of yoga. *Ensure you are lying straight and comfortably. Align the spine correctly.*