



Yoga Bytes

November
2009
December

A free column by Jinjer Stanton ©2009

Reach for the Sky!

by Jinjer Stanton

A body at rest tends to remain at rest — especially after a big meal. There can be a kind of satisfaction about that: like a pride of lions basking in the afterglow of a successful hunt. Less satisfying is the body forced to remain at rest by, say, a job that consists of sitting in front of a computer screen seven or eight (or more) hours a day, five or six days out of seven. Even if that job is satisfying on a deeply personal level and brings down the big bucks (or even if it isn't, and doesn't) the human body did not evolve to sit in chairs.

So maybe an acknowledgment of our hunter-gatherer forebears would be appropriate during the working day. I recommend that several times a day you at least *stand up*. It's simple; it's what our bodies are meant to do. *And even if your body cannot do that for reasons of injury or illness, you (most likely) can push away from the desk and sit up straight. If you can stand up, but it's become difficult, stand up anyway.* Set the reminder feature on your computer to remind you once an hour to *stand up* (or *sit up*) straight. Then, take it to the next level. Stand with your feet about shoulder width apart (or *sit upright with your hands hanging beside you*). As you inhale, raise your arms out to your sides and continue that upward arc until your fingertips are pointed at the ceiling. Imagine a helicopter crew is trying to rescue you from a flood and they've grabbed your hands and are trying to lift you up and pull you into the copter. The idea is that you feel the stretch all along the length of your body.

If you can't lift your arms, imagine that you can. The imagination is a powerful thing.

This easy move opens the chest so you can breathe more deeply and gets the blood moving. Take

advantage of it. Breathe deep. Fill your lungs up as completely as possible. Take several of these deep, full breaths.

The stretch eases tension in your body and brings your consciousness back to the here and now. Now, walk around for a few moments before you return to work. Say hi to your co-workers.

When you sit again, not only will your body be happier, but your mind will be refreshed as well and you'll be able to return to work with renewed energy.

Don't feel left out if the reason you sit still for such long periods is not the computer. Whatever reason you do it (sewing, proofreading, drawing, fantasizing) the net need is the same: Reach for the sky!

Keep in mind that there are a number of physical problems we develop through a lifetime of sitting in chairs (constipation is a big one). Many of them can be alleviated or eliminated by cultivating a preference for sitting on the floor or ground in your leisure hours.

There is a powerful yoga exercise you can practice as well: the squat. It has a direct impact on the less than romantic consequences of sitting in chairs. In countries where people don't sit in chairs, they spend a lot of time squatting. They squat to cook, to make pottery, to gossip in the evening — and they don't have constipation. If your dreams include travel to India or Japan, you might want to get started on your squatting skills now (gently working toward your goal). Many of their flushing toilets include no "throne."

The spirit in me salutes the spirit in you. We're all in bodies together.

Coming Soon...

To a yoga studio, park, library, bookstore near you!

Yoga for Every Room in Your House has been in the works for years and is going to the printer before the end of November. It may be available for purchase by mid-December and will certainly be available by early January 2010.

When so few of us have space at home to do yoga, why not do yoga in the space we already have? In the kitchen, in the bedroom, even in the bathroom!

Yoga for Every Room in Your House brings yoga home in a very practical way.

For those taking yoga classes this creative approach allows them to establish a practice at home.

For those without access to classes this book provides the means to get started with yoga and begin to experience its amazing benefits.

Many of these exercises are accessible for people with physical disabilities. Some of these exercises bring attention to areas of the body such as the face and hands which are often overlooked in exercise regimens.



Yoga
for every room
in your house

Jinjer Stanton

Yoga Classes:

7 to 8:30 Monday evenings
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church (2nd floor)
<http://www.htlcmpls.org>, for directions
612/722-9703 for class information



10:45 am to 11:45 pm
Saturday mornings
Lake Hiawatha Park
1 block west of 28th Ave. on 45th Street
(612/370-4930)

This gentle, mindful approach honors where your body is right now. These yoga classes are fun and beneficial. Wear easy-to-move-in clothes. If you have a mat, bring it. Also helpful are a bath towel and a woven fabric belt. We look forward to meeting you. FMI call Jinjer at 612/722-9703.



Nokomis Yoga.com

Yoga for every body

2722 East 50th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55417
(612) 770-2467

Wednesdays at noon take a mini-vacation at the "Hump Day Yoga Break." 45 minutes dedicated to easing away tension and finding your center so you can face the rest of the week. Cost: \$60/6 week package or \$12/class. Get to know your body better while putting it back together and growing younger on Thursday evenings at 7 pm. This class lasts 1 1/2 hours. Cost: \$75/6 week package or \$15/class. (612/370-4930).



Yoga Bytes is intended to bring yoga into your consciousness regularly by suggesting a little yoga you can work on right now. For more information and additional Yoga Bytes go to www.jinjerstanton.com. Yoga Bytes is published in cooperation with Lake Hiawatha Park.