

The Body: Partner in Healing

Our bodies carry the physical toll of our painful life experiences. Often subtle, or stuffed for years, they can eventually become chronic pain or disease. Physical self-care is essential to recovery. Bringing awareness and attention to the connection of your body with your mental and emotional states facilitates peace within.

The simplest, best, most powerful way to take care of yourself is to feed your body lots of BREATH and water.

Even one deep, full, slow belly breath creates instant relief from stress. Upper respiratory breathing (what most of us do most of the time) is actually **creating** stress in you. Every mindful breath makes it better.

Yoga practices for grief recovery

Meditation & Focused Breathing Techniques

Try a few minutes of alternate nostril breathing to clear your sinuses and your mind. Sit comfortably, with your spine straight and shoulders back a bit to open the chest, place your right thumb on your right nostril and any other finger that feels comfortable on your left nostril. Simply open and close each side of your nose as your breath in and out. Try to count to 3 or 4 as the breath comes in and 6 – 8 as the breath goes out. As you advance, add 2 – 4 seconds of holding between the in and out breaths. Be gentle on yourself – don't create a struggle with your breath – a relaxed exploration is best.



Finding Strength and Courage in Mountain Pose



Take a comfortable standing position with your feet together or a few inches apart. Connect with your whole foot to the ground, relaxing in the toes and balancing the weight evenly throughout both feet. Squeeze your whole legs gradually and steadily, front and back and sides and inner thighs. Squeeze the buttocks and pull the tailbone gently down; flatten the stomach. Lengthen your spine and the back of the neck and press your shoulders gently down the back, opening the front of the chest. Soften the muscles of your face. And breathe deeply in and out.

Continue to stand in that spot for as long as you are comfortable. Build toward a 20 minute standing meditation. Move your arms, knees, hips, neck or spine whenever you need to release tension or discomfort, but keep your feet grounded in place.

Standing poses to use with the Mountain Practice:

- ~ Big deep breathing, sweep your arms up overhead and down with each breath.
- ~ Side bends: lift your arms overhead; gently stretch up and over to open the ribs and spine.
- ~ Gentle back bends: with arms overhead, or interlaced behind your back, lift the spine and chest and tilt it back a little bit.
- ~ Forward folds: bend your knees as you round or swan dive down and up.
- ~ Chair pose: instant energy as you begin to fatigue, press the knees forward and lift the heart.
- ~ Finish up with a good stretch, and a long relaxation.

				
Breathing	Side Bends	Forward Fold	Chair Pose	Relaxation

Finding Peace, Comfort and Security in Child's Pose

Many of the soft, restorative poses of yoga can facilitate a more peaceful state. Use pillows, blankets and bolsters to make you comfortable in these poses for a few minutes at a time.

				
Child's Pose	Praying Heart	Knees to Chest	Legs up the Wall	Reclining Cobbler

Finding Balance and Equilibrium in the Warrior Poses

When struggling with anger, restlessness, or agitation, choose the strong warrior and balancing poses to focus the mind and channel or soothe that raw energy. It is always best to practice the more challenging poses with a qualified teacher, and getting out to a yoga class is another good remedy when you are restless and uncomfortable.

				
Warrior 2	Warrior 1	Crescent Lunge	Warrior 3	Tree Pose