Mindfulness – Based Stress Reduction and Cancer Recovery

Department of Psychosocial Resources
Helping You Live Well with Cancer

Alberta Health Services

Facilitated by:
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Mindfulness – Based Stress Reduction and Cancer Recovery

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Mindfulness – Based Stress Reduction
and Cancer Recovery
Department of Psychosocial Resources
Tom Baker Cancer Centre

Materials Policy

- the CDs and manual are provided for you to use free of charge for the duration of the program.

- if you wish to keep these materials after the program is completed, there is a $15 charge to cover the reproduction costs ($5 for the manual and $5 for each CD).

- you can submit your payment to the group leaders or the departmental secretary at any time during the program or mail a cheque.

  Please make cheques payable to:
  University of Calgary
  Department of Oncology, Psychosocial Oncology

- if you do not wish to keep the materials please return your unmarked booklet and CDs after program completion.

- if you have any questions, or if this payment would be a hardship, please let us know.
Program Description

Each class consists of discussion, teaching, and practice. The experience of and challenges with home practice will be discussed and background material regarding maintenance of mindbody health will be presented each week. Yoga and meditation practices will be introduced sequentially during the program. Specific homework practice will be assigned each session.

Week 1: Introduction to mindfulness
- focus on body and breath
- introduction of participants
- group principles and procedures

Week 2: Mindfulness attitudes
- “beginner’s mind” exercise and discussion
- mindfulness attitudes

Week 3: Mindbody wisdom and healing
- experiencing the “mindbody” connection
- reacting vs. responding to life events

Week 4: Balance in the autonomic nervous system
- using the breath to balance the nervous system
- mini breathing exercises
- sleep techniques

Week 5: Mindful coping
- thoughts, beliefs and personal narratives and how they create our experience of stress

Week 6: Cultivating beneficial states of heart and mind
- creative use of imagination in meditation
- embodying compassion for self and others

Saturday Retreat: A day of silence
- weaving together practices learned
- dedicating time for self-healing

Week 7: Deepening and expanding
- beyond the breath: expanded awareness

Week 8: Moving into the world
- taking stock of insights gained and challenges that remain
- preparing to integrate practice into day-to-day living
Until one is committed there is always hesitancy,
The chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness.
Concerning all acts of initiative and creation,
There is one elementary truth,
The ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans:
The moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too.
All sorts of things occur to help that would never otherwise have occurred.
A whole stream of events issues from the decision,
Raising to one's favour all manner of unforeseen accidents and meetings
And material assistance which no one could have dreamed
Would come their way
Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it.
Boldness has genius, power and magic in it.

- Unknown -
GROUP PRINCIPLES

To be sure that the group is a safe and respectful place for all members, we ask that you follow these principles and procedures:

• **Attendance:** Please be present and on time for meetings. If you are unable to do so, please contact TBCC psychosocial resources at 355-3207 or another group member.

• **Commitment:** This program represents a commitment to your own health and healing as well as to the other group members. Early difficulties are usually overcome with consistent practice which is essential for meaningful benefit. If you must discontinue, please contact the facilitators.

• **Confidentiality:** While you may share your experience in the group with those outside the group, please do not disclose information about other group members. This increases the feeling of group safety.

• **Self-responsibility:** We encourage you to participate as fully as possible in a way that feels right to you. You are the best judge about how much personal information you wish to share.

• **Safety:** We ask that you be aware of your own physical limitations throughout the program. Please modify all instructions to suit your present capabilities. Consult your physician to identify any limitations on participation if you are uncertain.

• **What to wear:** Wear comfortable clothing suitable for doing the gentle stretching exercises. If you wish, you can bring your own supplies for support during the program such as a yoga mat, meditation cushion, blanket, and/or pillow.
WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness refers to the practice of being aware of what is actually happening in the present moment without judging or evaluating your experience. Often we spend much of our lives reliving the past, planning for the future, or judging and analyzing our experience and miss the only time that we actually do our living – the present.

Mindfulness meditation uses the practice of moment-to-moment awareness to help us simply to BE where we are. The technique of directing attention to the ongoing flow of breath serves to anchor awareness in present moment experience and promotes clarity of perception and calmness of body and mind.

DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

Most of the time, we are unaware of the quality of the breath and how it interacts with our thoughts and emotions. Diaphragmatic breathing is a way to deepen and lengthen the breath resulting in deep relaxation and tension reduction. It is a useful first step in the practice of yoga and meditation.
THE CROCODILE POSE

- the crocodile pose releases abdominal tension and facilitates diaphragmatic breathing

THE REST POSE

- the rest pose is deeply relaxing and excellent for practicing breath awareness
YOGA EXERCISES

• “Yoga” means union – union between the mind, body, and spirit; between the individual and the greater whole.

• Yoga IS meditation. Focus on being mindful during yoga practice.

• Gentle stretching strengthens the nervous, muscular, and glandular systems and improves flexibility in both mind and body.

• Take responsibility for reading your own body’s signals. Err on the side of gentleness and caution. Listen to your body mindfully and don’t push beyond your limits.

• Have patience. For people with health problems, it is especially important not to push beyond their own limits.

• Your body will be different each day, on each side of the body, and will change from moment-to-moment during the practice. Be aware of these differences.

• With continued practice, boundaries and limits recede over time.

YOGA EXERCISES - PRONE POSTURES

Begin in rest pose.
Stretch arms overhead and push feet away from the body, lengthening and stretching the entire body.

**Pelvic rocks.** On an out breath, press the lower back into the floor and rock the tailbone, tucking the pelvis in towards the belly.

On an in breath, rock the tailbone towards the feet, lifting the lower back and belly off the floor.
**Thigh to chest stretch.** Pull the knees in towards the chest. Try rolling the knees around slightly to release the back muscles.

To intensify the stretch, lift the head on the exhale. Breathe in and lower the head.

**Stretch out the hip flexors, the muscles that move the hip.** First lift the right knee toward the chest, keeping the left leg on the floor. Next, stretch out the right leg, and lift the left knee toward the chest.

To intensify the stretch, lift the head on the exhale. Breathe in and lower the head.
Cat-Cow Stretch. Start in a neutral position on all fours with the back flat.

Breathe out, arching your back upward and dropping your head like a cat.

On an in breath, allow your spine and belly to relax downward and lift your head like a swaybacked cow. Feel the movement beginning at the tailbone and moving up the spine in a wave to the neck and head.
**Balancing pose.** Lift your right arm and left leg. Breathe deeply with the movement, letting the breath support the lift. Exhale and change so that you are using your left arm and right leg.

**Little Bridge.** Lift your pelvis off the floor using your thigh, back, and abdominal muscles on an inhale. You may also wish to do this with your hands on the floor by your sides.

**Spinal Twist.** You may also do this stretch with the arms out by the sides in a “T” position. Drop the knees to each side on an exhale. Look away from the side the knees are pointing.
**Leg lift.** Do one side then the other. Rotate your foot around the ankle.

Hold the back of your calf or thigh, and gently ease your leg toward your head.

If your body allows it, try lifting your head toward your knee as you exhale. Inhale as you lower the head.
Lie on one side supporting your head with one hand. Lift the top leg into the air as you inhale. Lower slowly on the exhalation. Repeat on the other side.

**Lower Cobra.** Start lying on front, resting on your cheek or chin.

Bring your feet together and tighten your buttocks and the muscles of your abdomen. On an in breath, look upward and slowly raise the head and upper trunk off the floor. Continue to breathe while you hold the pose. Breathe out while you lower.
For an added challenge raise both legs off the floor at the same time.

**Beginning Locust Pose.** Bring your feet together and tighten your buttocks and the muscles of your abdomen. Slowly lift your right leg, breathing in on the lift up, and out when lowering the leg. Repeat with the left leg.

End in rest pose for 5 to 10 minutes. Center your awareness on your breathing, observing the rise of your belly with the in breath. Move your awareness through your body, sending the breath to any areas that are tight or sore.
YOGA EXERCISES - STANDING POSTURES

Begin in standing mountain pose.

Breathe in as you lift the arms.

Breathe out into the stretch.
Stretch the top hand up, and the lower hand downward. Repeat both sides.

**Half moon pose.** Repeat both sides.
**Shoulder rolls.** Do in forward then backward directions.

- **Raise up**
- **Squeeze together in front and exhale**
- **Let drop**
- **Squeeze together in back and inhale**
Neck rolls. Do one direction then the other.
**Star pose.** Breathe in as you enter the pose. Breathe to fill the entire shape of the pose. Breathe out as you leave the pose.

![Star pose diagram](image)

**Twist.** Lengthen the spine upwards, then turn the body at the waist. Next, deepen the stretch by turning your head. Repeat both sides.

![Twist diagrams](image)
Standing forward bend. Bend your knees to enter and leave the pose. Exhale as you bend forwards. Use your hands on your thighs for support if you have back problems. Repeat both sides.

Inhale as you come up to the flat back pose.
**Tree pose.** Begin with hands in prayer position in front of the body. When stable, reach the arms up. Repeat on both sides.

![Tree pose illustration](image)

**Butterfly pose.** Keep your back upright. Relax your knees and thighs into the pose. Don’t force them.

![Butterfly pose illustration](image)
**Forward bend.** Bend from the waist. Try not to hunch forward.

[Diagram of forward bend]

**Rest pose.** Rest for at least 5 to 10 minutes after yoga practice.

[Diagram of rest pose]
Tea Ceremony

They serve tea at the cancer centre
in fine china cups
with scalloped edges
and delicate pink flowers
like the cups your grandmother used
long ago
when you were just
starting out
on your life

This long dark hallway of cancer
feels like the end
of everything
you wait
keep your eyes down
tuck into the ache of your self
wrap your body
in the cold comfort
of fear

You will hear the tea trolley before
you see it
the fine gentle music
of tea cups and silver spoons
rattling on saucers

Take the offered cup
taste the tea as if
for the first time

This is your new life

Drink it in

- Shaun Hunter -
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The Journey

One day you finally knew
What you had to do, and began,
Though the voices around you
Kept shouting
Their bad advice –
Though the whole house
Began to tremble
And you felt the old tug
At your ankles.
“Mend my life!”
Each voice cried
But you didn’t stop.
You knew what you had to do,
Though the wind pried
With its stiff fingers
At the very foundations,
Though their melancholy
Was terrible.
it was already late
enough, and a wild night,
and the road full of fallen branches and stones.
But little by little,
As you left their voices behind,
The stars began to burn
Through the sheets of clouds,
And there was a new voice
Which you slowly
Recognized as your own,
That kept you company
As you strode deeper and deeper
Into the world,
Determined to do
The only thing you could do –
Determined to save
The only life you could save.

- Mary Oliver -
ATTITUDES OF MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

Mindfulness meditation practice is based upon foundations of:

**Non-judging:** Mindfulness is cultivated by assuming a stance of impartial witness to our own experience. This requires that we become aware of the constant stream of evaluative and judging thoughts that we have… and then try to step back. With a non-judging mind, things are neither “good” nor “bad” but simply the way they are.

**Patience:** Patience demonstrates that we understand and accept that things have their own schedule for unfolding. We tend to be particularly impatient with ourselves, expecting that we should be able to calm the mind, stop the thoughts, or get over whatever is upsetting us. Nature has a “mind of its own” and patience allows us to simply observe the unfolding of the mind and body over time.

**Beginner’s mind:** In order to see the richness of the present moment, it helps to cultivate a mind that is willing and able to see everything as if for the very first time. If we think we know it all then there is nothing left to discover. With a beginner’s mind, the joys of the world as it unfolds around us become new again, as if we are all children freed from our old expectations.

**Trust:** Living in a world of experts can lead us to begin doubting ourselves. Innately you are the best expert on you. For matters of personal growth it is far better to open to your own feelings and intuition than to get caught up in outside authorities. In meditation practice, if something doesn’t feel right to you, pay attention and examine your feelings. Trust in your intuition and your own basic wisdom, goodness, and ability to work through challenges.
Non-striving: Mindfulness meditation is different from other human activity: we do it not with a goal or destination in mind, but rather with a mind towards simply being, not doing. There is no goal other than for you to be conscious of yourself as you are.

Acceptance: Acceptance involves seeing things as they actually are. We may not like it, but if that’s the way things are, so they are. Acknowledging the truth of our lives is the first step in any genuine process of change. Through acceptance, we cease struggling to change things that are beyond our ability to control, and free ourselves from the weight of denial.

Letting go: Letting go, also known as “non-attachment” is fundamental to mindfulness practice. It involves recognizing and welcoming the ever-changing nature of experience. Our tendency to hold on to some parts of our experience and reject others is a root cause of suffering. Letting go allows us to live in greater harmony with inevitable change.

BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

• calms the body, mind, and spirit
• trains us to let go of past regrets and future worries and to live more fully in the present moment
• reminds us of our fundamental connection to others and the world outside of ourselves
• helps us find peacefulness and clarity within a hectic world
• decreases levels of stress, anxiety, anger, and confusion
• enhances ability to cope with pain
• balances the autonomic nervous system
• slows the heart rate, decreases blood pressure
• strengthens the body’s immune system
• decreases levels of stress hormones
BASIC MINDFULNESS MEDITATION PRACTICE INSTRUCTIONS

Initial Practice:
Sitting with full awareness of breathing

1) Make this commitment to yourself with gratitude that you have the opportunity to simply be. Recognize the importance of this practice for transforming yourself and the world.

2) Choose a suitable space. At first it is helpful to have a place with as few distractions as possible. You may wish to create a special place that is conducive to your practice.

3) Find a posture on your cushion, bench or chair in which you feel balanced and erect so that your breathing is not restricted, and that you can maintain for some time in relative stillness without strain.

4) Bring awareness to your body and release any obvious muscular tension.

5) Bring awareness to the sensations of your breathing. To begin, you may wish to take a couple of deep breaths to facilitate relaxation and to mark the beginning of your practice, but thereafter allow your breath to find its own rhythm.

6) Focus on the sensation of breathing at a distinct point in your body such as the tip of the nostrils, the sinuses, or the belly. Allow your awareness to be saturated with the sensation of your breath as it flows out and in.

7) As soon as you become aware of your mind drifting (e.g. daydreaming, judging, planning, strong emotion) note that this has happened, acknowledge where your mind has gone, and bring awareness gently back to the breath.

8) If you note discomfort in your body that fails to resolve with patience, you may choose to adjust your body, but do so with full awareness; awareness of your intention to move, then awareness of the movement itself, and the ensuing change in sensations.

9) After a time, you may find that your posture begins to sag. Similarly restore your balanced, alert posture mindfully.

10) Arising thoughts, feelings, and discomforts do not indicate failure. Accept them simply because they are as they are.

11) Resume attending to breathing.

Over time, your capacity for calm, concentrated awareness will strengthen, become more accessible at each moment of your life, and bear fruit.
## Awareness of Pleasant Events Log

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>What was the experience?</th>
<th>Were you aware of the pleasant feelings while the event was happening?</th>
<th>How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience? Describe the sensations you felt.</th>
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### Awareness of Pleasant Events Log

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<th>What moods, feelings, and thoughts accompanied this event at the time?</th>
<th>What thoughts are in your mind now as you write this down?</th>
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Seas

I have a feeling that my boat
Has struck, down there in the depths,
Against a great thing.

And nothing
Happens! Nothing...silence...waves

Nothing happens? Or has everything happened,
And are we standing now, quietly, in the new life?

- Jimenez -
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Little Gidding

We shall not cease from exploration
   And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
   And know the place for the first time.
Through the unknown, remembered gate
When the last of earth left to discover
   Is that which was the beginning:
At the source of the longest river
The voice of the hidden waterfall
And the children in the apple-tree
Not known, because not looked for
But heard, half-heard, in the stillness
   Between two waves of the sea.
Quick now, here, now, always –
A condition of complete simplicity
   (costing not less than everything)
   And all shall be well and
All manner of things shall be well
When the tongues of flame are in-folded
   Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one.

- T. S. Eliot -
### Week Three: Mindbody Wisdom and Healing

#### Symptoms of Stress – Self Assessment

Check off any of the following symptoms of stress that you have experienced in the last week:

**Physical Symptoms**
- Headaches
- Indigestion
- Stomach aches
- Sweaty palms
- Headaches
- Sleep difficulties
- Racing heart
- Indigestion
- Dizziness
- Restlessness
- Stomach aches
- Back pain
- Tiredness
- Sweaty palms
- Tight neck, shoulders
- Ringing in ears

**Behavioural Symptoms**
- Smoking
- Bossiness
- Compulsive gum chewing
- Critical attitude
- Smoking
- Grinding teeth at night
- Overuse of alcohol
- Bossiness
- Compulsive eating
- Critical attitude
- Inability to get things done

**Emotional Symptoms**
- Crying
- Nervousness, anxiety
- Boredom, no meaning to things
- Edginess, ready to explode
- Feeling powerless to change things
- Crying
- Overwhelming feeling of pressure
- Anger
- Nervousness, anxiety
- Loneliness
- Boredom, no meaning to things
- Unhappiness for no reason
- Edginess, ready to explode
- Easily upset

**Cognitive Symptoms**
- Trouble thinking clearly
- Forgetfulness
- Lack of creativity
- Memory loss
- Trouble thinking clearly
- Indecisiveness
- Thoughts of running away
- Forgetfulness
- Constant worry
- Memory loss
- Loss of sense of humor

**Spiritual Symptoms**
- Emptiness
- Loss of meaning
- Doubt
- Unforgiving
- Emptiness
- Martyrdom
- Cynicism
- Loss of meaning
- Looking for magic
- Apathy
- Doubt
- Loss of direction
- Need to prove self
- Unforgiving

**Relational Symptoms**
- Isolation
- Intolerance
- Resentment
- Loneliness
- Distrust
- Isolation
- Hiding
- Lack of intimacy
- Intolerance
- Clamming up
- Using people
- Resentment
- Lowered sex drive
- Fewer contacts with friends
- Loneliness
- Nagging
- Lashing out
- Distrust

---
REACTING TO STRESS

External Stress Events

Internal Stress Events

Perception
Appraisal

Stress Reaction
hypothalamus
pituitary
adrenals

Acute Hyperarousal
increased blood pressure
pulse rate elevated

Internalization
inhibition of the
stress reaction

Disregulation
chronic hyperarousal
high blood pressure
arrhythmias
sleep disorders
chronic head and/or backaches
anxiety

Breakdown
physical/psychological exhaustion
loss of drive/enthusiasm
depression
genetic predispositions
heart attack
cancer

Substance Dependency
drugs
alcohol
cigarettes
caffeine
food

Self-destructive Behaviours
overworking
hyperactivity
overeating

Maladaptive Coping

fight or flight alarm reactivity

cardiovascular system
musculoskeletal system
nervous system
immune system

RESPONDING TO STRESS

External Stress Events

Internal Stress Events

mindfulness
  appraisal of thoughts, feelings and perceived threats
  awareness
  relaxation

Stress Response
  hypothalamus
  pituitary
  adrenals

Possible Arousal
  but also awareness of:
  muscle tension
  breathing

Awareness of the Full Context
  emotion-focused strategies
  problem-focused strategies
  seeing new options
  quicker recovery of mental equilibrium and homeostasis

Calmness and Balance of Mind
PSYCHONEUROIMMUNOLOGY

Psychoneuroimmunology looks at the links between the central nervous system, the immune system, and the endocrine system which are all integrated. Communication is interconnected and multidirectional among all systems. Stress triggers responses throughout the body.

Short term stress causes:
- arousal in the nervous system
- secretion of stress hormones (e.g. cortisol, adrenalin)
- fight or flight reaction:
  - increased heart rate
  - increased blood pressure
  - sweaty hands
  - shakiness
  - shortness of breath
  - muscular tension

Longer term stress causes:
- chronic elevation of stress hormones and disruption in regulatory feedback
- suppression of the immune system (action of cortisol on some parts of the immune system)
- impaired digestive and sexual functioning, sleep disruption, impaired memory & learning, and depression

The communication between these systems is multidirectional and complex:
- travels through both chemical and neural channels
- both brain-to-body (e.g. perception of stress leading to arousal) and body-to-brain (e.g. infection causing fatigue and depression)
THE HYPOTHALAMUS-PITUITARY-ADRENAL (HPA) AXIS

1. ANATOMY
2. FUNCTION
WEEK THREE: MINDBODY WISDOM AND HEALING

Endocrine System

- hypothalamus
- pituitary
- adrenal glands
- ACTH
- cortisone
- catecholamines

Immune System

- thymus
- bone marrow
- spleen
- lymph nodes
- immune cells

Nervous System

- spinal cord
- nerve cell

stressors

not drawn to scale
# Awareness of Unpleasant Events Log

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>What was the experience?</strong></th>
<th><strong>Were you aware of the unpleasant feelings while the event was happening?</strong></th>
<th><strong>How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience? Describe the sensations you felt.</strong></th>
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## Awareness of Unpleasant Events Log

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<th>What moods, feelings, and thoughts accompanied this event at the time?</th>
<th>What thoughts are in your mind now as you write this down?</th>
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I said to the wanting-creature inside me:
What is this river you want to cross?
There are no travelers on the river-road, and no road.
Do you see anyone moving about on that bank, or resting?
There is no river at all, and no boat, and no boatman.
There is no towrope either, and no one to pull it.
There is no ground, no sky, no time to bank, no ford!

And there is no body, and no mind!
Do you believe there is some place that will make the soul less thirsty?
In that great absence you will find nothing.

Be strong then, and enter into your own body;
There you have a solid place for your feet.
Think about it carefully!
Don’t go off somewhere else!

Just throw away all thoughts of imaginary things,
And stand firm in that which you are.

- Kabir -
Week Four:
Balance in the Autonomic Nervous System

Autonomic Nervous System

**Sympathetic**
- fight or flight
- arousal
- activity

**Parasympathetic**
- rest phase
- possum
- relaxation

BREATH AND AUTONOMIC BALANCE
MINI RELAXATION EXERCISES

• mini relaxation exercises are focused breathing techniques that help reduce anxiety and tension immediately!

• you can do them with your eyes open or closed (but make sure that your eyes are open when you are driving!)

• you can do them in any place, at any time, and no one will know that you are doing them

GOOD TIMES TO “DO A MINI”

• when stuck in traffic

• when put on “hold”

• while waiting in the doctor’s office

• when someone says something that bothers you

• at all red lights

• when waiting for a phone call

• in the dentist’s chair

• when you feel overwhelmed by what you need to accomplish in the near future

• while standing in line

• when in pain

• anytime!
WAYS TO “DO A MINI”
Become mindful of slow, deep diaphragmatic breathing. Return to breathing naturally if you start feeling light-headed or dizzy.

BALANCED MINI 1
Count from ten down to zero – one number for each in and out breath. With the first diaphragmatic breath say “ten” to yourself; with the next breath say “nine”; -8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1-0.

BALANCED MINI 2
As you inhale, count very slowly up to four. As you exhale, count slowly back down to one. As you inhale, you say to yourself “one, two, three, four”. As you exhale, you say to yourself, “four, three, two, one”. Do this several times.

BALANCED MINI 3
After each inhalation pause for a few seconds. After you exhale, pause again for a few seconds. Do this for several breaths.
RELAXING MINI
Triangular breath. Breathe in fully, then out fully. Pause and hold after the out breath.

AROUSING MINI
Inverted triangular breath. Breathe out fully, then in fully. Pause and hold after the in breath.

The only time that minis do not work is when you forget to do them!
So go do a mini...
ALTERNATE NOSTRIL BREATHING

Ancient yogic masters discovered that:
• At any given time, we are breathing through one nostril more than the other. That is, one nostril is active while the other is passive.

• The active (or dominant) nostril changes cyclically about every 90-120 minutes.

• When the right nostril is dominant, activity is warmed and intensified. Right nostril dominance is good for eating, conducting business, or hard physical work.

• When the left nostril is dominant, it has a cooling and receptive influence. Left nostril dominance is good for listening, studying, resting, and renewing the body and mind.

• By purposely regulating the flow of air through the nostrils, we can achieve a state of balance between the effects of the two nostrils. This practice is called Nadi Shodhanam.

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<th>Steps</th>
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<th>Passive Nostril</th>
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WEEK FOUR: BALANCE IN THE AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

STEPS IN ALTERNATE NOSTRIL BREATHING

1) Determine which nostril is more active at the present moment.

2) Bring the right hand to the nose. Place the thumb of the hand over the right nostril, and the ring and little fingers of the hand over the left nostril. Either tuck in the middle two fingers, or rest them on the forehead between the eyes.

3) Close the passive nostril at the end of an inhalation, and exhale through the active nostril.

4) Close the active nostril, and inhale through the passive nostril.

5) Follow the pattern shown below alternating back and forth until the third breath, when the rhythm is reversed for three more breaths.

Repeat for three rounds.

SLEEP EXERCISE

This elegant little technique will put you to sleep and will help you to sleep more peacefully. It uses an effortless 2-to-1 breath (breathing out for twice the length of time you breathe in).

1) Get into bed and pay close attention to your breath.
   • allow the breath to become smooth and deep
   • eliminate even the pause between inhalation and exhalation

2) Take:
   • 8 breaths lying on your back
   • 16 breaths lying on your left side
   • 32 breaths lying on your right side

3) Repeat if you are still awake

   Very few people complete this exercise… sweet dreams!
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Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
For a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body love what it loves.
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.

Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
Are moving across the landscapes,
Over the prairies and the deep trees,
The mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
Are heading home again.

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
The world offers itself to your imagination,
Calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting –
Over and over announcing your place
In the family of things.

- Mary Oliver -
Week Five:
Mindful Coping

STORIES WE TELL OURSELVES

Often people strongly identify with their thoughts. We believe we purposefully create our thoughts – as if we have a say in the matter. In reality, thoughts are habitual and automatic, almost like digestion – most people are at the mercy of their thoughts. We can begin to mistake our thoughts for reality.

In truth, thoughts are often:

- Involuntary
- Repetitive
- Limiting
- Distorted
- Only one side of the story

Our body believes and reacts to the stories told by the voice in our head.

- These interpretations shape our emotional experience.

Sometimes the thoughts we have lead to fear, self-blame and depression.

- Often this happens very quickly and automatically.

The same life event can lead to very different emotions depending on the meaning we attribute to it. These attributions are often influenced by past experiences that may no longer be relevant.

There are also characteristic ways in which we distort reality. Here are examples of the most common categories of troublesome automatic thoughts that are woven into our story lines:
Labeling or stereotyping: An extreme form of over generalizing in which people or situations are seen as fixed and unchanging and other aspects or possibilities are ignored.

Examples: “My doctor is uncaring” “Women are the weaker sex”

Jumping to Conclusions: Making an interpretation in the absence of clear evidence to support it.

Example: Doctor doesn’t mention result of a test – “I must not be doing well.”

Magnification (Catastrophizing) and Minimization: Exaggerating the importance or likelihood of something seen as negative or minimizing the importance or likelihood of something seen as positive.

Examples: “It’s terrible and unbearable that my doctor recommends another treatment.” or “My accomplishments don’t amount to much.”

Emotional Reasoning: Because you feel it or fear it, you believe it must be true.

Examples: The oncologist only spends a few moments with you during a clinic visit: “I feel uncared for – My oncologist doesn’t like me.” or “If I have negative thoughts my disease will return.”

Mental Filters: Picking out a limited aspect of a situation or experience and allowing it to color your perception of the whole event.

Example: You see ill people at the hospital – “the hospital is a terrible place”.

All or Nothing Thinking: Seeing everything in black and white categories.

Example: Your spouse doesn’t help clean up after dinner – “I do everything around here – You don’t care about me at all!”

Personalization: Interpreting an event as being about you when there are many other plausible causes or interpretations.

Example: Person you know is walking in your direction and as they get closer they suddenly turn and walk in a different direction – “They were trying to avoid me – they don’t like me.”

Musterbation: Thinking that you “must” or “should” behave in a certain way – or else! Often combined with an unrealistic conclusion regarding the consequences of failing to do it.

Example: “I must keep up appearances or others will see my imperfections and reject me”
Mindfulness allows us to recognize when we are having these types of thoughts and see the limitations they impose on our lives.

- This gives us the possibility of choice, whereas previously we may have reacted automatically.

- It can be helpful to identify and challenge assumptions and distortions in our thinking in order to obtain a more balanced understanding of a situation.

- This may allow new solutions, possibilities, or feelings to emerge.

When you become aware of engaging in these forms of thinking:

- Realize that thoughts are just thoughts – they are not reality: “the map is not the territory” and “the finger pointing at the moon is not the moon”.

- Remember that you are not your thoughts – they arise and pass away like waves on the ocean. You are more like the ocean than the waves.

Some questions you might ask yourself:

- How do I know that my assumption is true – what is the evidence?

- Are there any other possible explanations or ways of seeing it?

- Even if it is true – are the consequences necessarily as horrible as I feel they are?

- Is this really the most helpful interpretation or are there other possible explanations that would be more acceptable and allow further courses of action?

- Just because something may be true at one time or in one situation, does that mean it always will be true?

- Look for exceptions to the rule and new possibilities to guide your behavior rather than self-limiting beliefs.
Challenging our Assumptions

<table>
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<tr>
<th>SITUATION</th>
<th>Describe event surrounding the unpleasant emotion (just the facts)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EMOTIONS</td>
<td>Describe the emotion aroused (angry, sad, anxious,… )</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS</td>
<td>What thoughts preceded the negative emotion?</td>
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<tr>
<td>DISTORTIONS OF THOUGHT</td>
<td>Identify the distortions or limitations in each automatic thought</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE</td>
<td>How could you think or behave differently in the situation?</td>
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<tr>
<td>OUTCOME</td>
<td>How would you feel or behave if you substitute the alternative for the automatic thought?</td>
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Adapted from (Burns, D. D., 1999).
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My life is not this steeply sloping hour,
In which you see me hurrying.
Much stands behind me; I stand before it like a tree;
I am only one of my many mouths
And at that, the one that will be still the soonest.

I am the rest between two notes,
Which are somehow always in discord
Because death’s note wants to climb over –
But in the dark interval, reconciled,
They stay there trembling.

And the song goes on, beautiful

- Rilke -
Week Six:
Cultivating Beneficial States of Heart and Mind

USE OF IMAGINATION

Our imagination provides a powerful tool we can use to remind us of qualities we possess that are beneficial and empowering and also to strengthen them. For example, attitudes such as patience, letting go and non-striving can be cultivated using imagery. Other qualities such as loving kindness and compassion towards yourself and others can also be developed.

Imaginal experience has a very real effect on our bodymind. It can be used to support healing and enhance performance. Working with mental images in a relaxed state brings us closer to the unconscious mind. It tends to bypass the edited and reconstructed versions of our lives and to work at an embodied level. Imagery can help to alleviate stress, fears, isolation, depression and anxiety.

SOME PRINCIPLES OF IMAGERY USE

1) Our bodies don’t fully discriminate between sensory images in the mind and reality – that is, images elicit the same quality of body experience. For example, read a recipe and you may salivate as if you are hungry. Imagine yourself at the beach and your body may relax.

2) In a relaxed state we are capable of more rapid, intense healing, growth, learning and change. This calm and energized alertness is often used by athletes to attain peak performance. Sometimes called being in the “zone” or in the “flow” - it is a state in which we can intensely focus on the task at hand without distracting thoughts.

3) Imagery is not only visual, but becomes more powerful when all the senses are involved – including smell, taste, touch and hearing.
LOVINGKINDNESS MEDITATION

Lovingkindness is one of four heart qualities often cultivated in meditation practice. The other three are compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity.

Lovingkindness can be cultivated by evoking inner feelings of caring and compassion for oneself and others. The process usually begins with calling to mind the image of another for whom kind and loving feelings are strong and easily accessible. This person is used as a touchstone for kindling warm and loving feelings. Over time, lovingkindness is directed in turn to oneself, to others for whom feelings are initially more neutral, to acquaintances, and eventually those we don’t even know or may dislike.

This practice is beneficial for overcoming destructive emotions and provides a new basis for relating to self and others. It can help to:

- Remind us that suffering is universal
- Remind us that others wish to be happy just as we do
- Reduce our sense of being exceptional or different from others
- Reduce feelings of being alone or isolated
- Increase feelings of connectedness and shared humanity
- Allow forgiveness and arrest the chain reaction of destructive emotions

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately,
To front only the essential facts of life.
And see if I could not learn
What it had to teach,
And not, when I came to die,
Discover that I had not lived

- Thoreau -
INSTRUCTIONS

1) Sit in a comfortable position, allow the attention to come to the breath, coming and going all by itself.

2) Bring to mind the image of a person dear to you.

3) As you breathe, allow a softening and expanding of the heart space as you feel kindness and care for your loved one.

4) Repeat inwardly to yourself:
   • with each breath in: “May you be free from suffering”
   • with each breath out: “May you be at peace”

5) Continue with each breath breathing compassion into the heart, extending it across time or space to reach your loved one. Though at first these may only feel like words echoing in the mind, persist in accordance with your intention.

6) After a few minutes allow the focus of your care and kindness to shift inwardly towards yourself. Consider yourself like a child in need of comforting, recognizing and having compassion for your own suffering. Allow yourself to be comforted by the wish for your own well-being.

7) Repeat inwardly to yourself:
   • with each breath in: “May I be free from suffering”
   • with each breath out: “May I be at peace”

   Notice whatever arises that may limit your willingness to accept these wishes; to be whole and to be healed.

8) In like manner continue extending wishes of lovingkindness to an expanding circle of others. This may include:
   • Friends
   • Acquaintances
   • Strangers
   • People who have hurt us or who we may dislike
   • All sentient beings

   Eventually it may be possible to feel the same type of compassion and love for all beings that we instinctively feel for those closest to us. Through this practice we strengthen our capacity to access wholesome mental states in our everyday life.
Name:________________________________    ID number:_____________

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**TOTAL WEEKLY MINUTES:**
Love After Love

The time will come
When, with elation,
You will greet yourself arriving
At your own door, in your own mirror,
And each will smile at the other’s welcome
And say, sit here. Eat
You will love again the stranger who was yourself.
Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart
To itself, to the stranger who has loved you
All your life, whom you have ignored
For another, who knows you by heart.
Take down the love letters from the bookshelf,
The photographs, the desperate notes,
Peel your own image from the mirror.
Sit. Feast on your life.

- Derek Walcott -
RATIONALE FOR SILENT RETREAT

• Choosing to set aside an extended period of time represents a commitment to yourself and the healing process; it reinforces the importance of mindful practice in your life.

• A chance to become more intimate and familiar with the comings and goings of our own bodymind.

• Time for quiet individual reflection and slowing down.

• Simplifies life at a time that is usually busy and rushed.

• Strengthens the ability to be mindful and concentrate for prolonged periods of time.

• Language (symbolic representation of experience) relates to thoughts, beliefs, and ideas and tends to remove us from present-centred awareness.

• Silence allows focused concentration and conservation of energy for the work of mindfulness.

• Time to practice just being with things as they are, and accepting these things without the outlet of communicating with others.

• Silence and length of time allows for deep personal exploration and development of insight.

The day weaves together practices that have been learned over the course of the program, including yoga, body scan, sitting and walking meditation, poetry and a few surprises!
The Guest-House

This being human is a guesthouse
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
Some momentary awareness comes
As an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they’re a crowd of sorrows,
Who violently sweep your house
Empty of its furniture.

Still, treat each guest honourably.
They may be clearing you out
For some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
Meet them at the door laughing,
And invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,
Because each has been sent
As a guide from beyond.

- Rumi -
Week Seven:
Deepening and Expanding

To this point, the focus of our meditation practice has primarily been on developing mindfulness of breath. With experience, one-pointed focus on the breath becomes more stable.

At this point, it is often useful to allow the focus to expand to encompass other elements of experience, such as awareness of sensations, emotions, sounds or thoughts as they arise and fall away.

It is through this process of cultivating mindfulness of all elements of our experience with openness and curiosity that insight may develop. We can observe, for example, the relationships between grasping at desired outcomes and the subsequent suffering this may cause. We may also gain insight into the causal chain of events that motivate our behavior. That which we take to be our “self” can be appreciated as an aggregate of constantly changing causes and phenomena.

“A human being is part of a whole, called by us ‘universe’, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest... a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.”

- Albert Einstein -
SUN SALUTATION (SURYA NAMASKAR)

The Sun Salutation is a series of 12 postures performed in a single, graceful flow. Each movement is coordinated with the breath. Often used as a warm up, the Sun Salutation builds strength and increases flexibility. A single round consists of two complete sequences – one for the right side of the body and the other for the left. One round a day is plenty if you’re doing it as part of a longer routine, although some schools teach that you should do up to 12 rounds. On days when you think you have no time for yoga, try to do at least one or two rounds of the Sun Salutation – you’ll feel the difference!

1) **Mountain:** Begin by standing in mountain pose, feet hip width apart, hands either by your sides or in prayer position. Take several deep breaths.

2) **Hands up:** On your next inhale, in one sweeping movement, raise your arms up overhead and gently arch back as far as feels comfortable and safe.

3) **Head to knees:** As you exhale, bend forward, bending the knees if necessary, and bring your hands to rest beside your feet.
4) **Lunge**: Inhale and step the right leg back.

5) **Plank**: Exhale and step the left leg back into plank position. Hold the position and inhale.

6) **Stick**: Exhale and lower yourself as if coming down from a pushup. Only your hands and feet should touch the floor.

7) **Upward dog**: Inhale and stretch forward and up, bending at the waist. Use your arms to lift your torso, but only bend back as far as feels comfortable and safe. It’s okay to keep your arms bent at the elbow.

8) **Downward dog**: Exhale, lift from the hips and push back and up.
9) **Lunge:** Inhale and step the right foot forward.

![Lunge Diagram]

10) **Head to knees:** Exhale, bring the left foot forward and step into head-to-knee position.

![Head to Knees Diagram]

11) **Hands up:** Inhale and rise slowly while keeping arms extended.

![Hands Up Diagram]

12) **Mountain:** Exhale, and in a slow, sweeping motion, lower your arms to the sides. End by bringing your hands up into prayer position.

![Mountain Diagram]

*Repeat the sequence, stepping with the left leg.*
SUN SALUTATION - STANDING VERSION WITH CHAIR

1) **Mountain**: Begin by standing in mountain pose, feet hip width apart, hands either by your sides or in prayer position. Take several deep breaths.

2) **Hands up**: On your next inhale, in one sweeping movement, raise your arms up overhead.

3) **Head to knees**: As you exhale, bend forward, bending the knees if necessary, and bring your hands to rest on the chair.

4) **Lunge**: Inhale and step the right leg back.
5) **Stick:** Exhale and lower yourself as if coming down from a pushup.

6) **Upward dog:** Inhale and stretch forward and up, bending at the waist. Use your arms to lift your torso, but only bend back as far as feels comfortable and safe. It’s okay to keep your arms bent at the elbow.

7) **Downward dog:** Exhale, lift from the hips and push gently back and up.

8) **Lunge:** Inhale and step the right foot forward.
9) **Head to knees:** Exhale, bring the left foot forward and step into head-to-knee position.

![](image1)

11) **Hands up:** Inhale and rise slowly while keeping arms extended.

![](image2)

12) **Mountain:** Exhale, and in a slow, sweeping motion, lower your arms to the sides. End by bringing your hands up into prayer position.

![](image3)

Repeat the sequence, stepping with the left leg.
# WEEK SEVEN HOMEWORK LOG

Name: ___________________________  ID number: ______________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>TOTAL MINUTES IN YOGA</th>
<th>TOTAL MINUTES IN MEDITATION</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
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<td>TOTAL WEEKLY MINUTES:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Summer Day

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean — the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
The one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
Who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down —
Who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don’t know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
Into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
How to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
Which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn’t everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
With your one wild and precious life?

- Mary Oliver -
Week Eight: 
Moving into the World

WHAT DO I DO NOW?

The 8th week is the rest of your life.

There are many ways you can build upon this beginning, from the personal to the political. Suggestions:

- Form a practice group
- Join a yoga class
- Volunteer service to others
- Spend time with others who share your values
- Relate to others from a place of compassion
- Practice mindful speech
- Practice non-harming
- Find work that is consistent with your values
- Work to counter social inequities
- Be mindful about what you put into your body
- Respect the environment that sustains us
- Appreciate your place in the natural world
- Express yourself with creative pursuits
- Leave the world better than when you found it

This list could be endless. 
Find your own way to embody principles of mindfulness that have been beneficial to you over the last eight weeks.
Mindfulness Meditation and Yoga
Follow-up Groups

RESOURCES AND READING LIST REVIEW

1. General Information: http://mindfulnesscalgary.ca
   Website includes details of local MBSR programs, links to other programs and poetry.

2. TBCC Department of Psychosocial Resources
   Mindfulness Meditation and Yoga Drop-In Groups. All groups held from 1:30-3 PM Thursdays. Discussion, yoga and meditation.
   Groups are open to graduates of the Mindfulness Meditation class and the Tapestry Retreat Program at no cost. For information call 403-355-3219 or email: calgarypsychosocial@albertahealthservices.ca for details and locations.

3. Yoga Classes and Websites
   Structured yoga classes of different levels, primarily Hatha or Iyengar, are available at each of these facilities. The Yoga Studio and Yoga in Stillness also have meditation classes. Call for information about dates and costs.
   • Yoga Association of Alberta: http://yoga.ca
     Has a detailed listing of events for both North and South regions as well as listings of certified teachers.
   • YMCA Eau Claire: 403-269-6701
   • YMCA Crowfoot: 403-547-6576
   • Calgary Parks and Recreation (all centres) registration and information: 403-268-3800
   • Yoga Gateway (Mardaloop) website: http://www.yogagateway.com
     403-289-9121
• Yoga Haven (Southland and Fairmont)  
  website: http://www.yogahavencalgary.com  
  tel: 403-225-0580

• The Yoga Studio (14th St. and 15th Ave. SW)  
  website: http://www.yogastudiocalgary.com/  
  tel: 403-228-5808

• Functional Synergy  
  Yoga therapy.  
  website: http://www.functionalsynergy.com  
  tel: 403-229-2617

• Yoga in Stillness (1130-12th Street SW)  
  website: http://yogainstillness.com  
  tel: 403-818-7967  
  email: shirleymcmillan@yogainstillness.com

4. Shirley Jayanta Johannesen’s Stretch-Awareness:  
  website: http://www.stretchawareness.com/classes.htm  
  email: jayanta@stretchawareness.com  
  Local hatha yoga and meditation teacher with experience in the mindfulness tradition. Provides workshops and retreats.

5. Other Meditation Groups  
• Calgary Theravada Meditation Group (#3, 1922 – 9 Ave S.E.)  
  website: http://www.bringingawarenesstolife.ca/  
  contact: Anne Mahoney  
  tel: 403-270-8450  
  Meets monthly on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays from 7-9 PM.

• Loving Kindness Study Group (#3, 1922 – 9 Ave S.E.)  
  website: http://www.bringingawarenesstolife.ca/  
  contact: Anne Mahoney  
  tel: 403-270-8450  
  Meets on the 2nd and 4th Mondays from 7:30-9:00. Open to all meditators. Cost by donation.

• Vipassana Meditation Alberta  
  website: http://www.ab.ca.dhamma.org/  
  tel: 403-233-2031  
  Listing of Vipassana retreats around Alberta and Western Canada.
• Marpa Gompa Meditation Society  
  website: http://www.marpa-gompa.org/  
  tel: 403-240-9836  
  Tibetan mediation group. Holds weekly meetings that include instruction in Shamatha (tranquility) meditation. Newcomers, beginners, and non-Buddhists welcome. Also more advanced meetings for experienced meditators. Please call before attending first time.

5. Retreat Centres

• Hollyhock Retreat Centre  
  website: http://www.hollyhock.bc.ca/  
  Hollyhock offers several silent meditation retreats from May to October in a beautiful setting on Cortez Island just off the coast of Campbell River on Vancouver Island.

• Omega Institute for Holistic Studies  
  website: http://www.eomega.org/  
  Check out their faculty line-up at the Rhinebeck, New York campus or their weekend conferences in cities around the USA. Choose from workshops at the Mount Madonna Center in California and one-day programs in Boston. Take an Omega journey to destinations around the world.
MEDITATION INSTRUCTION

Books:

Audio:
MEDITATION - INSPIRATION


MINDBODY HEALTH


FAITH-BASED APPROACHES:

Buddhist:


Jewish:

Christian:


VISUALIZATION/IMAGERY


YOGA/STRETCHING
Books:


Video:
STRETCH BREATHE RELAX. Shirley Johannesen. 30 minute video tape $15.00 (includes GST).
www.stretchawareness.com

Insight Yoga with Sarah Powers.
www.pranamaya.com

Yin yoga. The foundations of a quiet practice with Paul Grilley.
www.pranamaya.com