

QUEENS BIRTHDAY LONG
WEEKEND CLASSES

Saturday Jun 11 ~ 930am
Monday Jun 13 ~ 930am
Monday Jun 13 ~ 730pm

Boost Your Immunity with Yoga

As the seasons change, the chances of falling sick rise sharply. It's difficult for our body to keep the pathogens at bay when the immunity levels are down and people around us are sneezing and coughing. Though we cannot shun from being in contact with those who are ill, we can certainly work our way to strengthen our defence mechanism.

What is the Immune System?

A fully functional immune system is important for optimum health. Our immune system consists of cells, tissues, and organs that work together to protect the body and **fight off infections and diseases**. These defensive cells are located in our white blood cells and are transferred around the body by the lymphatic system. Unlike blood, which is pumped naturally by the heart, the lymph moves through the body by muscle contraction which is why **physical movement**, such as yoga, is a great way to get it flowing.

How can Yoga help to boost my Immune System?

Yoga, perhaps, is one of the most effective and time-tested natural immunity boosters that we can adopt for a healthier life. **Yoga helps lower stress hormones that can weaken the immune system, while conditioning the lungs and the respiratory tract stimulating the lymphatic system to release toxins from the body.** The asanas help provide fresh pure oxygenated blood to various systems of the body so that they can function optimally.

Different yoga poses will boost your immunity in different ways. Certain yoga postures, such as inversions (when your head is below your heart) work against gravity helping lymph move into your respiratory organs, where germs and infections often enter the body. When you return upright, gravity drains the lymph and cleanses out your system. They can also relieve bronchial congestion, stimulate the thymus, or open up the sinuses. Try these seven poses! As a sequence, they can **keep the body moving**, warming you up and loosening any tightness and stiffness. Five to twenty minutes every day can save you a lot of headache - literally!

1. Balasana (Child's pose)

Stretch out the back, shoulders & inner groins. Resting pose. Use this pose to come back to the breath.



2. Adho Mukha Svanasana (Down-face dog)

Stretch out the back, hamstrings and calves. Bend your knees if your hamstrings are tight or you feel like your rounding your back too much but keep pushing down through the heels.



3. Prasarita Padottanasana (Wide-legged forward bend)

Great pose for stretching on the hamstrings, inner groin muscles & outer lower legs. Press down on the outer heels (keep the toes slightly pointed inwards). Lift the rib cage off the belly to lengthen the front of the spine. Soften the shoulders. Use blocks or a chair under the palms if you feel too much discomfort in the lower back or legs to keep the back straight.



Boost Your Immunity with Yoga (cont...)

4. Bhujangasana (Cobra)

Lift the chest off the ground with your back muscles not your arms. Keep the tops of the legs and feet anchored down on to the ground. Try to keep the toes spread. Lengthen the tailbone down to the heels.



5. Ustrasana (Camel)

Lengthen your tailbone down to your heels and relax your buttocks as you lift up and out of your hips. Direct your sternum to the ceiling. Keep your shoulders down away from the ears and squeeze your shoulder blades in and downwards. Palms to the top of the buttocks for support.



6. Setu Bhandasana (Bridge)

Place the feet flat and parallel on the mat, knees pointed directly to the ceiling. Wiggle your shoulders away from your ears as much as possible. Lengthen your tailbone towards the back of your knees, push into your feet evenly as you lift your buttocks up.



7. Viparita Karani (Legs up the wall)

Great way to end the day especially if you've been sitting down or standing on your feet all day. Relax and let the wall support your legs and you completely surrender your back and your tired muscles to the ground.



How can I strengthen my Immune System?

There are many things that affect the immune system's efficiency. Poor diet, lack of nutrition, stress, anxiety, alcohol, drugs, and toxins in our environment are all factors that can weaken our immunity.

Your first line of defence is to choose a healthy lifestyle. Following general good-health guidelines is the single best step you can take toward keeping your immune system strong and healthy.

- Detoxify your body by drinking at least 6 to 8 L of water daily
- Get a sound sleep of 6 to 8 hours
- Eat a diet high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and low in saturated fat.
- Exercise regularly
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Don't smoke.
- If you drink alcohol, drink only in moderation.
- Take steps to avoid infection, such as washing your hands frequently and cooking meats thoroughly.
- Get regular medical screening tests for people in your age group and risk category

REFERENCES:

- 1) <http://www.abc.net.au/health/features/stories/2015/07/22/4277927.htm>
- 2) <http://www.livescience.com/26579-immune-system.html>
- 3) <http://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/how-to-boost-your-immune-system>
- 4) <http://www.bodyandsoul.com.au/nutrition/nutrition+tips/strengthen+your+immune+system+naturally,12957>
- 5) <http://www.prevention.com/immunity>
- 6) <http://pi.oregonstate.edu/mic/micronutrients-health/immunity>
- 7) Bioceuticals Vitamins Manual – Pharmacist Edition