

ANNA ASHBY:

I quite like the angle. I can angle it to support the angle of my hip. I do not want to feel pulling in the joints. That is not the point of restorative. You want to feel neutral, comfortable, and neutral.

Thank you, whoever wrote that. Now, extended the tail down when lying back. Notice this brick is back there. I will talk about that a little bit. It is a strong adjustment, but I like it initially.

I put it at the base of my skull, I will talk about that, about what I am doing that in a minute. Smooth the skin of the butt down, and that the back is resting evenly on the support.

Length and out through the base of the skull, I might push the brick out a little bit. It is quite deep, it is a restorative style. I am not holding, I am resting. The throat is soft and I am stretching the back of the neck. And I do a turning of the head to release the muscles of the occipital base. I will talk about that.

At a certain point, after we have been there for a while, I will take the brick and move it, swap it out for a nice, soft, lovely blanket.

So you do this firm, then soft, then rest kind of a thing. It depends on the props that you have today. Maybe you want to go straight to the blanket.

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SPEAKER:

Hello everyone, it looks like Anna's stream has frozen. We will wait here for a moment until she is able to reconnect. Thank you for your patience.

SPEAKER:

It seems like a perfect moment to get to rest in a restorative pose as well. Right? (Laughs) Isn't this how the nature of life is. We have all of these things going on.

Restorative is the call back to having a moment of rest. I'm sure if she were here, she would have us all rest in a restorative pose. Making sure our bodies feel comfortable, supportive, and stable.

How about we will continue to rest, and have a moment in a restorative pose.

ANNA ASHBY:

OK... I think I am back. Did I get some thumbs up? Oh good! OK, sorry about that. I am not sure what happened. Let me just turn off that screen. Yay!

So I hope that you remained in a deeply restorative state. (Laughs)

KEVIN KARAS:

We had everyone just rest in the pose. It was perfect for restorative, right? A moment to pause.

ANNA ASHBY:

Amazing. I just shifted to my phone. Maybe there is some sort of UK problems...

So, hopefully you have been resting there. And I think the last thing I said, I hope you heard was... Having the hands on the front, so you can feel the diaphragm.

So, the thing is, because restorative is about nervous system health, right? One of the primary ways that we have to adjust our physiological state is through our breath. You guys know this as yoga teachers, 100%.

In the restorative practice, it is not that you cannot do pranayama, but, you can do... I think it is more effective to do breath awareness. Do not get into anything that is too elaborate, or that there is an intensity to how you work with alternate nostrils, and that kind of thing.

I think for most people, when you live that, you can feel how you are in this current state. You just want to rest, and begin to feel what is going on.

What is happening at the deeper levels, you know? Starting with the physical sense, and going deeper. What is happening at the level of the psyche? At the level of the soul? It is just being able to feel, and brief.

Now we know that the inhale has a more activating impact on the nervous system. And the exhale is quieting. It is just kind of a basic nervous system 101. So, as you rest here, hopefully with the feeling of support.

And if you have not yet shifted your brick to be a blanket, you might want to do that now. And go to the softness of it.

And then, with each exhale, see how the breath moves the body. Can you perceive, can you sense, how the diaphragm is actually moving? We have our intellectual understanding, our concepts about the diaphragm. But to feel, and I think that is an important shift to work with here.

Is that you are not trying to think. Restorative is quite different, your eyes are not open, you are not looking around, you are not looking at the teacher. You are in, with yourself. Sometimes that can be challenging, because there may be feelings and things at deeper levels that are making themselves known. That is the challenge of the practice.

But ultimately, to be released. Whatever is caught in the body, to be... The whole restorative process is like... Yes, it is a process of release. So whatever is stuck in the body, physical tension, emotional tension... Eventually over time, not necessarily immediately, there is a sense of softening, and merging into a sense of space.

Space is not of a quality that is empty, or void, that traditional definition of space that is used. But it is the sense of space, space that is not empty, but space that is full.

There is another verse that goes something like... Empty within, empty without. Empty like a pot in space. It carries on and goes... Full within, without, full like a pot in the ocean.

So the sense of releasing into the experience of space is a sense of releasing self limiting thoughts, or constructs. Tension that creates you know, hardness in the body. So this is a very important shift.

Not only in the more modern sense, as we attend to stress, and the relationship with our own self, and essence... You know, the nervous system does indeed need to shift gears, it needs to downshift, or down regulate.

I think that the yogis of old understood that. They were doing all kinds of things to adjust their physical state to be able to perceive the highest reality. That is the part that I want to amplify. Because a lot of tremendous work has been done in restorative. But let's come back to the heart of the practice. The heart of restorative is a stillness practice, for investigating and being in an inquiry with, you know...

That which was beyond words. Think that is funny that I lost the words there. That which cannot actually be contained within a word. What are the texts pointing us toward? I encourage you as yoga teachers to draw upon the wisdom of our tradition, to find a text that inspires you, and work with it. And let it lead you in an investigation of your own self, and being.

Restorative lets you do that in a really beautiful way, which is one of the reasons I love it. OK, if you have not yet done it, change the cross of your legs. I meant to show that to you, but I think we got distracted with our connection.

So, presumably you were with patients crossed, change the crossed legs for a short while. What I would like for you to do, with the blanket underneath your head, is take hold of your elbows, and stretch the arms over your head. Let's do a little bit of a stretcher, through the shoulders, through the side of the trunk. Beautiful, Kevin.

Notice how that changes the breath pattern. You are attending to your own experience. Noticing what is going on. Breathing, enjoying the feeling of the breath. Encouraging a softening on the exhale, where the exhale becomes nice and long.

Change the cross of the arms, with the other forearm on top, and reached the arms overhead. Amazing. And as the breath comes in through the nose, it softly flows down into the lungs. There is a nice sense of expansion. On the exhale, just you know...

The ribs will release, there will be a nice, beautiful softening. You can release her arms down now. And reach down with your hands, and draw the knees together. And structural legs down to the floor. Yes! Very nice.

And to a whole body stretch. You might want to re-smooth the skin of the buttocks down. Lengthen the tail of the spine down. Stretch your arms and legs, and maybe move your feet a little bit. That is releasing of the tension that binds. That is the first step, that is why asana is so important. That is why the physical practices are so important.

Release the arms down, and bend of the knees. And then, gently, you might want to move the prop you are using to support your leg, out of the way.

And just roll to the side, here. All the way like that. And gently press up from the side, it is particular. When you're moving from down to up, you do not want to move too quickly. If we are attending to the quieting of our nervous system, you would not just throw yourself up out of a pose. You move slowly, with awareness, and a nice even coming out.

Feel what is going on. And you can start to feel the physiological sense of what quieting is. We are pretty good at knowing what the stress... What being stressed is feeling like. We are good at that. (Laughs)

There is something about restorative, that is realigning with what it feels like to be at rest, or ease, or soft, or quiet.

Now what I will do here next, is I'm going to take my bolster, and you may want to turn your blankets, if that is what you are doing. I will turn it horizontally. I will tiptoe through this, I often take more time, but we will do it a bit more quickly so we can get to the Shavasana part. Which is the goal.

The blanket, some sort of blanket, I tend to use the brick as the (Indiscernible) of a pillow. I will put my blanket on top.

I do not really need this little guy anymore... Sometimes, some of you might have longer torsos, and you might like that. If you have a shorter torso, you do not need this extra prop. Now, we use the foam blocks, because it is what I have. You could easily use a rolled blanket, or another bolster. I just want a spacer in between the thighs. So the hips remain fairly neutral. And I am going to lie across the right side of my ribs.

The arm will come into the gap, and released down into it. And I will rest the head. In this nice little draped moment. It could even just be this. Maybe, you know... This might be all you want to do.

But what I like to do is move this. This is a slight little tiptoeing into you in territory. I want to do what I call swooping. Open And roll across... I am rolling across the lift in the ribs, two or three times. To get an opening in the trunk, in the ribs themselves. In order to free the breath.

I talked about the breath in the main way to adjust the theological state. And I tend not to choose elaborate pranayama's, because I keep it simple for most folks, because they need to undo tension, not create more. So to find what is a free and easy breath, is a focus of the work.

So roll across like that, you might want to carry on with that, AB really enjoyed it. I am going to do this. I will do a downward rotation across the bolster, or stack of blocks. The belly goes across... If you're pregnant or have had surgery, you do not want to do a deep twist across your belly. You can lay on your side. And you go up and over.

Push the brick forward, for your forehead. Your face is in the gap. And take one arm forward, and when arm back.

If it is a downward rotation over the bolster, it is quite a quieting pose. It is a deep rotation, releasing tension in the spine, the muscles that run along the spine in the lower back area. And take several deep breaths. But you are not forcing the breath. You're experiencing the breath filter in, slows down, and back. It expands. On the exhale, the body softens and rotates, dives a bit more deeply into the pose.

So do two or three cycles of breath that way. This is about releasing tension, and freeing the breath. The downward tone of it is quieting for the brain.

You have the senses of perception localized in your face, they are down. It is dark a little bit, as you look down. Did that in itself will create a quieting. The head is supported, hopefully the back of your neck is nice and long.

One more breath here. I think I said three, but we probably have done more. OK. And from here, just very gently, slowly inhale, and come up and out again.

One of the reasons I do this one quite a lot is, well, I notice for myself that there is a lot... I think this happens for a lot of people. A lot of tension is embedded in that gut, the solar plexus. What do you do when you're scared? You harden, and put up barriers. Much of this practice is about undoing those survival responses that get embedded in the structure of the body.

Sometimes it feels all to come out of it. I am like... Well, there is space in my belly. You're just going to turn around and go the other way. Again, foam blocks or whatever you have there, maybe a pillow, the bolster. And readjust the support for the head.

And rest on the side. And we do some swooping. For me, this is my right side is a bit tighter because it is the dominant side. So I am like... Oh, hello! The rolling helps me to release the -- fascia that gets stuck across the muscles. I do it gently within the range of my body. If you have a shoulder injury, you might want to take your hand across the front so you are not tweaking your shoulder. That is perfectly fine. Three sweeps, and then inhale, rotate, go up and over, and rest the head again.

You can always take one arm and folded it back. That is quite nice, where it drapes across the bolster. You might need to tap the bolster down, so it is not so pressing into the chest.

And again, come back to the breath here. So the thing about the breath, which you may or may not know, when I learned I was like... Wow, I did not realize that. But your lungs are quite further down in

your back. And they are quite short in the front.

So you actually get a deeper breath by breathing back and breathing down. The exhale becomes this beautiful wave that flows back out into the sea. And on the exhale is when you soften and merge.

It is the releasing, of the separating thoughts. Releasing of the tension. It is the releasing of concepts, and you just come into a state of being.

OK. One more breath cycle there. Enjoy the release of the posture.

Very good. And then gently, undo. Inhale, and come on up. That's you come up and out, go slow. Feel, that is the interesting part, shifting into less what is seen, and more of what is felt.

The nervous system likes that. All of a sudden it is like... I am just simply where I am in this moment, and the fulfilled sense of here, now. There is not a complexity to it, it just is. So I take a moment and sit, before I shift into the next thing. Feel the tone of the breath here, sit in whatever way is comfortable for you. On your bolster, legs stretched out, whatever is good on your knees.

Feel the pulse of the breath in the center of the body. From the point of view of the diaphragm. You can feel, the diaphragm flattens, and descends a little bit when you breathe in. On the exhale it releases and domes up again.

I tend to work with the breath, the sense of inhaling down, and grounding in the body. Through the felt sense of the breath coming in. And on the exhale, elongating the spine, lifting through the back of the skull, where there is an infinite field through the spine on the exhale.

Inhale descends, comes into the body. I like to think of it from above. On the exhale, the breath spirals upwards and outwards, and through beyond the crown of the head. Another breath just like that. Reading in, reading down. -- Breathing in, breathing down. Exhale softly. The exhalation comes softly from release, rather than pushing up. It is different.

Nice. OK. And this final little bit is you will shift the bolster little further down on the mat. I'm just going to preset. I am thinking about my blankets again. I'm going to push my brick out of the way.

I am thinking, I probably would pick the warm fuzzy blanket to be a cover, because that has the nicest effect for me.

And I will probably use the firm cotton blanket for my head. But... Before that, you just present these blankets, this is for Shavasana. I will put the blankets on the side so it is not in the way. You do not need your foam blocks now. You just need you, a bolster, and a couple of blankets. To be a pillow.

We will move from this one into Shavasana. If you happen to have a belt, I did not mention it... But if you have a belt, I want to mention that props have a long history in yoga.

It is not like... All of a sudden you know, props were made... He innovated and made prof, at the same time he looked back at the history and tradition. And there were props, left, right, and center. The most ubiquitous prop, was the belt.

There is a great article by Seth power (?) and he talks about that. It was considered a sign of attainment. The props were considered a sign of progress, or attainment. It is such a different shift. Modern day as you know, you have your students... They do not want to use a prop because they think it is like failure or something. No, it is a sign of attainment, I like that!

If you want to use a belt, you put it around mid thigh to hold your thighs and hips. A little bit of a slide for an elevated bridge pose. I slide my tail down to the edge of the poster. Lie back, and make sure your pelvis is square on top of your poster or blanket, or your block if you want to.

You just have a moment here. We are just upside down. I like to have at least one Inversion in the practice. Because, it really helps shift the physiology. You turn upside down, it changes the internal dynamics of pressure in the body. And the receptors that pick up that you are upside down, and they kicked the nervous system into a quieting response.

See how you get on with that. I like to rest my arms above the head, like this. Equally, you could put the hands on the front, or by your side, what works for you.

Have a moment here where you sense the movement of the breath, breath comes in from the nose. It is the most efficient way to breathe. Since -- send the breath towards the direction of the navel. The exhale is amplified. The exhale is quieting, it flows back out like a wave into the sea.

So it goes, two or three rounds of breathing. Send the inhale into the body, towards the pelvis in this case, moves with the Diaphragm movement. In the exhale is almost like a hollowing, a release. You haul out, and the wave of the breath joins the spaciousness of the breath outside the body.

And so it goes... Another breath in. And exhale long. Here, if we were to do more, you could add taking your legs up, if you wanted more of an inversion. What I like to do now, is just shift the bolster down to the back of the knee.

Just talk it down there. Make sure that you are on your Mac, not half on and half off. Pulled the blanket underneath your head, get your other blankets that you preset. And do this wonderful kind of throw of your blanket, because you are your teacher. Her assistant, and your student, all at once. (Laughs)

Get yourself in. You have to learn how to talk yourself in. If you want I pillows, you can take an eye pillow. I tend to put it for my forehead not on my eyes. If you have lenses in your eyes, you do not necessarily want something on your eyes.

So, we are shifting into Shavasana. Remember that lying flat on the back on the ground, like a corpse, is Shavasana.

It removes fatigue. And gives rest to the mind. So, every sequence should culminate in a nice Shavasana.

And this is where you can just go in now. Relax the root of the tongue. Relax, you will notice that the abdomen will soften. This in turn, freeze the breathing. There is a freedom to the breath. Do not have to control it. The breath is free. Flowing through you.

The body responds. There is a softness. Relax the eyes, the skin of the face, lips, tongue, throat. The base of the skull. All of these cues that we have learned to teach.

As we guide people into Shavasana, it's what? They are directly related to our parasympathetic nervous system. They directly communicate with cranial nerves that oversee quieting. It is so interesting. The yogis discovered that subjectively, science has confirmed that.

So, soften the eyes. Let them rest back in the skull. Relax the skin of the face, particularly the brow, the eyebrows are soft, the cheeks, the lips. Hinge of the jaw, throat... Yes?

Every exhale is a deep release of the form. And so, it is like this... Sometimes I like to think of the breath you know, like the waves of the sea. The inhale is like the wave that comes into the shore of the body. And you can feel, the landscape of the body. In different shapes, textures, and tensions.

In the exhale is like that wave that just dissolves back out into the wider ocean. And there is a sense of release. At least for a moment.

Releasing one's sense of containment. The sense of identification with who, and what we are. You know... It is just a releasing moment. And then what you will notice, as the breath oscillates like this, is the inhale comes in. It flows into the body, there is a fullness. The exhale goes back out again. There is an emptying out.

You might begin to make that shift that happens, of perception, that is so central to yoga practice. That shift of perception from movement and form, to space and stillness.

The points to either side of the breath resonate with stillness. And you can't just go right to the mind, where it touches that space it kind of goes... Oh, yes... Just for a second.

So this is the practice. Touching the stillpoint, between the movement of the breath. It is a traditional practice with yoga. Allowing that shift of perception from the form to the form less. And experiencing you know...

Depth of being. Each one of you will have a unique and profound experience of what that is. And we can take inspiration from the text to understand better. What that is.

And I'm just going to give you a few moments in silence. To actually experience the stillness. Even if there is ambient sounds in your environments, that is just part of the nature of an unfolding movement.

Try to perceive the space around yourselves. We will just rest here. For a little longer.

Stay with your breath.

OK... Now, just gently, gently begin to expand the physical breath. As a way to emerge from a quieter, inner spaciousness. And retain the connection to it. In this term, gently, gently is a term used in Sanskrit by the teachers during the time of 1450.

It was meant to say, go carefully. Because, when you dive into the depths of these practices, and begin to explore essence, or being, it is a powerful thing. So, gently, gently deepened the breath. Move slowly the fingers and toes.

Consider bringing the hands to the front of the body. Perhaps breathing into the hands. If you would like to, do a nice reach through. Stretch through the whole body.

Good. And then release the arms down, panned up the knees, hug the thighs into the torso. A little raw, and gradually make your way up to sitting. Take your time with this, and in this final minute or two. It was brought to my attention about questions during the session.

One of them was, how long do you hold poses? Well... The longer, the better. Some poses have more longevity than others. Obviously, should also not you can hold for quite a long time, as long as you are comfortable. In that case, you may want to place more cushion, like a blanket under the back of the body. You start to think, what helps enable you to stay longer and be in comfort?

Rotations, not quite as long. You will be working with a range depending on the posture, the shade, and joints that are being impacted. Anywhere from 5-20 minutes depending on the nature of the post. My book speaks to that. If you want to get into that, get the book, it is quite specific about how the poses, why they do what they do...

And there are some sequences in there, and so on. Thank you all for coming today. I really wish I could see you, but I feel you. Thank you for the emoji's, those were very cute. I hope this has inspired you to explore the practice further.

There are some wonderful links that Sarah has put in the thing. So check that out. You can always check out my website, there it is at the bottom, if you want to find out more information. And I wish you well!

Explore the practice, and take care of your nervous system. Remember, the state of your nervous system is how you see the world. So if you are in a state of fight or flight, that is what you see. It is almost incumbent upon us, particularly as yoga teachers, to go in and sort ourselves out. Take care of ourselves that we can be steady in a world that is not very steady right now.

Again, thank you, thank you Kevin for your beautiful body and practice. And you know, being here with me in this space. And thank you Yoga Alliance, and Sarah who has been sorting us out. I apologize for

the technical issue.

KEVIN KARAS:

We are just so grateful for getting to have you here. On this digital event. In our organization, on this planet. This really means a lot to us. I know I had a wonderful practice today, and I think we are all very excited to get a copy of your book.

So, just such a joy. There it is!

ANNA ASHBY:

I even consult my own book... Like, what did I say?

KEVIN KARAS:

(Laughs) Wonderful, wonderful. And for everyone who was able to join live, and for the recording. Just so grateful, and hope that you enjoyed it. And will join us for future educational programs. Have a lovely day.

ANNA ASHBY:

Thank you so much, everybody.

Live Captioning by Ai-Media