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(Video plays)

SPEAKER:

What do you think of when you think of yoga? Poses

ANNA COSTALAS:

? Perfect alignment? Reaching far beyond your toes? The beauty of yoga is that it is much more than a sequence. Thank you so much for joining us. Yoga is a (unknown term). And also activism. (speaks alternative language).

Yoga is about a quiet internal journey. In the growing and powerful outward voice. Yoga is action, curiosity, empathy. Join us as we celebrate yoga. The diversity of the millions who practice it, and the power it gives us all. Because we are all for yoga. And yoga is all for us.

PATRICIA ANDERSON:

Good morning, good afternoon, good evening. Yoga Alliance members. My name is Patricia Anderson, my pronouns RC -- she's hers/her. (Land acknowledgment). You are going to see a location (indiscernible) pop-up shortly. Always love to know where you are joining us from. Which part of the world. Cybil Valentine. We also have another human who has very fast fingers and who will be providing live captioning for you today.

As many of you know, my role here is as a producer as a consultant and (indiscernible). I have been practicing (unknown term) for think 15 years back. I have been teaching for about two. Today I get to be your host and I get to welcome back one of our favorite presenters who is joining us from the great land of Scotland. Every once in a while when I talked to Maria, she says a word and I have no idea what she is saying, because there is a beautiful Scottish accent. I am sure my beautiful American accent is not well understood either. That is one of the great many beautiful things about this life, I think. Is that we can learn to understand each other just a little bit better.

All that said, today, a little hint I really gave you, our presenter is Maria Jones was a Maria is both a yoga teacher and health professional. She just has so many qualifications that I am not going to list them all for you. I will. Them into the chat. Along with a few other announcements. Today, we are going to learn a little bit more about Chair Yoga for Older Adults. Basically, Maria has a presentation, she is going to drop some knowledge for us. And then, we will take some questions and there will be a brief practice. Since we are practicing today, I always like to invite folks to remember that we cannot see you. If you are in a traditional yoga studio or on zoom, they can teach you and see you and help to make sure that you don't injure yourself a stop please just take good care of yourself today if you are

choosing to practice. If not, by watching as you would by doing.

Maria, we have folks from North, Central America and Europe. Some Australians who are up pretty early or in the middle the night. I don't know. Some folks from the Middle East, Western Asia, and Southeast Asia. Thanks everybody for joining us today for Maria, welcome back.

MARIA JONES:

Thank you so much for having me again here, for another Yoga Alliance (indiscernible) education webinar for the make sure that you register your hours for this. They all count. We have done that, you know, (indiscernible) free. The count for your training. I will share my screen because I have a presentation for you today. Instead of sharing my secrets of partly reading the notes and partly saying (Laughs) What I know, I will make sure I sure the right window. Hopefully you have a window that says Chair Yoga for Older Adults. It has a picture of my brand-new book, the The Chair Yoga Handbook for Yoga Teachers which you can find on Amazon and get at any point in time.

As I said, I am the founder of (Unknown name) yoga. I specialize in chair yoga and have been teaching chair yoga, mostly for all of my teaching... Pretty much all of my yoga teaching life. I have been practicing since 2001. It started out with body balance, (unknown term) and (unknown term). Completely the opposite end of the spectrum of chair yoga. Very active and intense practices. As an (indiscernible) person, I have been diagnosed with systemic lupus, my practice became more spiritual cool, more adopted and that is what drew me to actually going and deciding to specialize ensure yoga. Because I found that charge yoga was the gateway of teaching more and more meaningful practices. And having a positive impact in my community.

I have been involved with various community projects and charities, and they have provided me with numerous teaching opportunities. What I have seen is people who come regularly to the class benefit greatly from chair yoga. It becomes a positive intervention in their lives and in the greater community. It truly brings people together.

From a personal perspective, I have systemic lupus. I have found yoga to be the most rewarding part of my job, because I am helping people exactly like me who are chronically ill, less able, and of course, older. Which is what we will be talking about today.

The actual specialization can create loads and loads of well-being opportunities in your community, too. And we will discuss about those well-being opportunities and how you make your (indiscernible) positive intervention and a lot of older adults today.

So, as I said, or as the webinar title is, our topic is Chair Yoga for Older Adults, depending which part of the Atlantic you are. Our learning objectives are to understand the health challenges of older adults

and things are in the way of my screen... I will present you with the ways in which yoga can support older adults, and make it a positive health intervention in their lives.

Again, another US/UK thing, the aging part. It's not spelled wrong, that's how we do it over here. Sorry. So, what is aging? I don't know whether City Net can open the comments, but if she can open the comments for the attendees, maybe you can let me know what constitutes aging for you? What could it be? The World Health Organization defines it as the accumulation of a wide variety of molecular and cellular damage over time. That doesn't really mean very much unless you have probably a degree in biochemistry.

But for us, it could mean lower mobility, cognitive decline, may be, where hearing loss and other things. Let's see. All the comments. If any cells working less, working less, cognitive decline, capabilities, you are slowing down. All those things indeed are a part of the aging. Slower metabolism. Don't I know it. The whole stone later. Change in range of motion, loss of flux ability, medication reactions and impaired stability. Lots and lots of perspectives here.

I am in my early 60s and teach older adults. Working with different muscles, with Port of balance, working with small aging injuries. Body transitions are changing. They need to be slower of course. There is a pain threshold sometimes that increases, or the pain is there all the time. They are dealing with pain. They are not as able to heal as quickly. It is quite funny, when my son for example gets a injury from climbing or whatever, his bruises disappear within a couple of days was for me, it's like they are still there a week later. I'm not saying I'm a goalie, but I do hit myself from time to time. Hurt myself from time to time.

It is exactly the same. Things are just slower. There is a lot of stiffness and age-related slowing down in the comments. So, I'm gonna stop reading those comments now myself. It was the kind of answers that I was expecting to hear about lower mobility, lower stability, cognitive decline, aches and pains, sensory loss. Generally slowing down and feeling quite unwell over time.

There are contributors to the aging process. That could be genetics. The process is entirely natural, regardless how much we like it or don't probably. The process is natural. Aging is entirely natural. Very different for every individual. We have epi-genetics, which means, angry, after genetics. That means lifestyle choices, environment, things that contribute on top of our genetics. And each one of these contributions affect us differently and it is something very new in the health sciences sector and research. So, the easiest thing to say is that our environment has an impact on our genetics, our lifestyle has an impact on our genetics, and things change over long periods of time. So, that can affect the process of aging as well.

You can have disease contributing to the aging process, especially chronic related illness and chronic

inflammation. Of course, you have stress, which in some cases is good. Like exercise is a stressor, a stress factor, but a good one. But, the kind of stress that is prolonged and the kind of stress that is the kind of stress we feel in our everyday lives through our work, family or anything else that we do, those psychological stress that we experience in modern life for long periods of times can also result into quicker, faster aging.

And of course diet. Which can have a positive impact, but it can also have a negative impact if we focus on nutrient poor diets and fast foods. Processed foods. Because it also supports a multitude of functions in our body, therefore we want to be eating in order to support our body and the functions of the body.

Our lifestyle choices play a role in aging. My mom is a heavy smoker, so of course, that has had effect on her cardiovascular health. She doesn't believe it was the smoking, that is a different story. But, what I am trying to say is that there is lifestyle choices that we make. Smoking, drinking, eating. Sometimes, we can do nothing about it. Some people's jobs, like people who work night shifts for example, or work shifts, it has been scientifically proven that that has an impact on their lifespan. It becomes shorter because they do not follow their circadian rhythm, their natural rhythm of their bodies. But maybe we can do nothing about those lifestyle choices was to maybe it is part of our job. Maybe it is part of our lives. They do contribute also to the process of aging.

So, it is important to keep those in mind when we are coming across certain older adults. Older people. Because yoga can help, of course, for each one of those contributing factors there is something that we can do. Apart maybe from genetics. So of course, yoga can help. It is a system that is designed to, shall we say, tackle, to help us, support us through adversity in life. It can contribute to having a better quality of life, including social interactions, living with others, having more patients while working with others.

Especially in the way that yoga is practiced today, in groups. That is an excellent opportunity to be more sociable.

SPEAKER:

Maria? I thought maybe you were not may be advancing your slides. Are you advancing? We are just seeing the cover slide. Now I see the second one.

DR MARI ACEVES:

Oh! I don't know what is happening. --

MARIA JONES:

Thank you for telling me. How about that?

PATRICIA ANDERSON:

Now is the, "Yoga can help."

MARIA JONES:

If I were to change, is it changing?

PATRICIA ANDERSON:

No.

MARIA JONES:

Okay. I will make sure that it is changing.

PATRICIA ANDERSON:

We can also... We've got them. We can pull them up for you if you prefer.

MARIA JONES:

Let's pull them upward there. I am so sorry everybody.

PATRICIA ANDERSON:

I'm sorry I didn't stop you sooner. I thought maybe you were not changing them. So, can you just give Cybil a moment and she will get the slides up. Please go ahead and get talking for so we will get the slides up and you can just tell her when we want to advance the slides.

MARIA JONES:

Excellent. I can provide... I can provide a link again for

PATRICIA ANDERSON:

We will take care of it. Go ahead and get back to what you are single stop

DR MARI ACEVES:

Of course yoga can help --

MARIA JONES:

Can be a social intervention. We are looking also at promoting resilience and the ability to handle and recover from adversity and difficult situations. We are looking at promoting independence and the ability to look after one selves, because this also has impact in the health outcomes when we get older. And of course, we are looking at supporting students through their cognitive function. Acuity of the mind is primary at any age stop as we age, it is important to try and slow down that cognitive

decline. In that process of cognitive decline. Which it isn't directly related to aging, it does happen through later life, more than it does when we are younger.

One of the most obvious benefit of practicing yoga, of course, is supporting good physical health through older life, through the practice of (unknown term).

Let's see what really the health challenges are. We know that it can help. There we go. We know that there is a sense of reduced strength and mobility. We know that this is how they are experiencing those health challenges, but what does it actually mean? It means they have reduced strength, and reduced range of motion, reduced mobility. It means that they have memory loss, and there is a cognitive decline that we spoke about. They're feeling very lonely. As we get older, our kids move on, our lives move on. We retire for social interactions are not as natural as they used to be. They don't come as easily. We have to create social interactions with others. So, there is a greater risk when we get older to become lonely. That can have a really negative effect in our health and our lifestyle.

Other biological imbalances play a role in our lifespan. That would be poor immunity, cardiovascular health, people may gain weight. Obesity is one of the things that has been mentioned in (unknown term), where there is more readily... Storing fat more readily in the body and losing muscle.

People who are older may experience cancer or kidney disease, and they may also experience faster progression of chronic conditions they may have been diagnosed with when younger because of the chronic inflammation. It again, we have yoga that can help and there are yoga practice tools that can help, which is the next slide down. Sorry, it isn't as easy... I have to look at two screens now.

Can we use those yoga teachings and practices to help our older adults? Of course we have the asana which is excellent for improving strength and flexibility. For offering opportunities to balance as well and improve our standing strength and talents. We have pranayama... Of course inhabiting a calmer state. The breath in itself is a tool that we can use to manage stress. That doesn't change as we get older. We can still use our breath to manage stress. When you are retiring and getting older, there is a sense of identity loss. They are not doing the regular job with the regular things with the kids have moved away and so on. So, that can be really, really stressful in later life and we need to understand that. So, in order to deal with those changes and possible adversity and ill health, which can be thrown into this mix, we also have yoga philosophy, which provides insights and wisdom needed to deal with all sorts of adversity and cultivate attitude towards ourselves and others. We don't want to grow up to be grumpy old women or men. Grumpy old people.

There is a saying, and yoga can help us feel more at ease with ourselves and others through later life. And of course it can help us with acuity of the mind. Focus practices can help towards maintaining or even improving cognitive reserve. Our ability to process information efficiently still through later life.

And finally, we've got meditation, which is a way to cultivate resilience. Another word for resilience would be equanimity. But, I prefer resilience, because it allows us to still bounce back, regardless of the adversity that is thrown at us. In later life, that could also be lost. We could be losing our partners, our friends. Death is part of aging unfortunately. It is something that we really need to tackle. I have also had to deal with it in my own classes. I mostly work with people who have MS. But, there have been people who have passed in our classes, and it's been one of the hardest things we had to deal with. Meditation has been key in finding resolution and, I guess, peace in those events. It is an important part of the yoga classes. Even if you need resistance, especially going to sheltered housing or older people homes, care homes. They may say, "We sit around all day and are relaxing all day. We don't need meditation." But they do. That is something that can help them tackle adversity better, even later in life.

So, what is the role of chair yoga in this? We know that yoga can help, especially because most of the people here are probably yoga teachers, since it is the Yoga Alliance was we know that yoga can help. How can chair yoga help in particular?

Firstly, I would like to say that there is a wide range of abilities amongst older adults. For some adults, the agent well. For others, they have to deal with greater challenges in their lives. Beyond the abilities of the students, there is an element of accessibility which is heavily associated with the chair based yoga. Probably changing ideas and misconceptions portrayed in the media about yoga. We all know what that means. We know that what we see is young, slim females wearing expensive leggings. (Laughs).

So, we want to change that idea. We want to make sure that we put out into the world that yoga encompasses more. As a chronically ill person, I know that, you know that, because you probably done your teacher training and other things like that will stop at the chronically ill person, I know that as my condition deteriorated, I had to turn into a more spiritual aspect of yoga. That really, really helps. It provided the tools to manage. My practice looked nothing like what you see in the media.

So, it is important to appreciate that what is seen in the media about yoga can put yoga -- people off very, very quickly. We want to change that and offer a sense of our community and classes. This is why chair yoga is important. Because the classes are different and there is a social element in the practice. There is this mundane household object. It is not a yoga mat. They don't even have to take their shoes off. It offers this unique opportunity to bring people together. There is value in people sitting together. Simply connecting. This is valuable for everyone involved. Valuable for nervous systems, because it provides a sense of safety.

It continues on with a sense of inclusion. The practice is adapted for a wide range of mobility. The wide

range of abilities adults come in. It offers the opportunity to practice in many different ways, from seated on a chair to standing at the back of the chair, to even transitioning to the floor if they want to. So, through adaptation, it is really easy to help everyone feel included. It is an important aspect, again, of yoga, because inclusion... Our nervous system feels safest we will feel safe and can relax and stop yet again, just like being together in a group.

Chair yoga can provide the tools to manage. The practices don't focus on stretching or achieving sequences or apex poses. It is all about dynamic movement, which keeps the muscles and joints warm and supple. And that can make the asana very meaningful. It can resemble things that they do every day. Activities that they do in their daily lives which are essential in getting out and about and carrying out daily tasks.

And... Thing that really helps is independence. Which is vital in the life of older adults, just like the functional movement that can keep them independent, we are also looking at remaining independent in terms of getting out and about. Of tackling falls, maybe, which the majority in fact, the majority of older of older people will experience later in life.

Again, balance as I said, because this practice is very important. With the use of a chair, chair yoga, people can feel more stable. People can feel more able and secure. In fact, the NHS... The national health service here in the UK has a program called stable and able, which they have funded across the country for people to attend. I attended one of those, because I was thinking of doing the training. The practices resemble very much what we do in a chair yoga class. Where the movement is dynamic, static, dynamic full pay resembles what we do in real life. We have people, either recover from a fall, but also build the strength to not fall eventually.

A study that I was reading in fact when writing my book, said that yoga was significantly better in tackling how people felt after a fall, and returning back to regular activity and regular life, because... The paper was going on about and saying that it tackled more than just the physical aspect of the tackled fear. It gave them hope, security stop it helped people feel safe. They were able to return back into their daily lives a lot quicker with yoga than any of the fitness and lifestyle programs that any health service can provide.

Eventually, we have acuity, which is focus, and coordination. It is required to practice any kind of yoga. But, ensure you go, we try to include elements of bilateral symmetry, or bilateral coordination. Left and rights. Which activate different parts of the brain. We find the movement, and as you will see in the practice that is coming up, you will be able to practice some of these and feel confused. That is absolutely fine with one we get it, it feels great. You know that when you finally get it, you have created new connections which can support cognitive reserve. Maintain it or even improve it over the long run. So, that is how chair yoga can help.

So, coming to the end of this where we are going back to our learning objectives, which were to understand the health challenges and see how yoga can support older adults, making yoga a positive intervention. I think we achieve that. We understand that the health challenges have a lot to do with mobility, strength, range of motion, getting added about, remaining independent, dealing with disease of also it's as they get older. And of course, old age itself, which may mean sensory impairment, slowing down, aches and pains and that sort of thing.

So, we went through that. How we can make yoga a positive intervention by using the chair, making it a social opportunity, getting people to work on the things that challenge them through later life. And, we are going to practice those. That is another slight further down, which has the little stick man on it. If you click on the googling, you will be able to get. We will practice some of those in a little bit. So, you don't have to write anything down. I would kind of encourage you to maybe try things out as we do the practice today. But for now, I am going to take about five, maximum 10 minutes of questions before we go into our little practice. Thank you for sharing that screen. My dear Patricia.

PATRICIA ANDERSON:

You got it. Are you ready for a few questions Murray?

MARIA JONES:

Absolutely.

PATRICIA ANDERSON:

Maybe we should take a moment and breathe. Lots of comments and engagement. Let Cephas to where shall we start? I'm going to organize this by the most of votes. Mary was asking if there are any reticular (indiscernible) practices that you recommend for folks who are older?

MARIA JONES:

I would say that every (unknown term) practice starts with awareness. Observing the quality of your breath and teaching your students what that means is very important. So, we start with observation, and we are looking for depth. Maybe rhythm, (indiscernible), staggered, the balance between the inhalation and exhalation. We are looking at the speed of the breathing to stop your sitting there observing the breath and all of its qualities, whatever that might mean to you as a yoga teacher and your students. That in itself is a very calming effect. We can even practice it ourselves now. The moment you bring the attention to the breath, things slow down and become more natural. That in itself is a very useful tool, and the beginning of any of the (unknown term) practice.

PATRICIA ANDERSON:

So, start with the observation of the breath. We don't need to necessarily worry about retaining the

breath and all of those other things.

MARIA JONES:

I think it is really complicated. If you are jumping into complicated, say breathing ratios that can be challenging, maybe to improve acuity or something like that, it can actually trigger people and put them all. So, by giving them something to observe and focus is important. It leads to meditation as well.

That is beautiful advice, thank you. Marianne was asking for any particular poses that you recommend for folks who have arthritis in their hands. Which I am guessing sure yoga has a lot of options for this.

MARIA JONES:

Absolutely. Again, plug (Laughs). The The Chair Yoga Handbook for Yoga Teachers has hand yoga listed as part of it, and we are going to practice a little bit of it. There are several benefits of practicing, what I call hand yoga. One, is because it improves dexterity for an fact, Krista (Unknown name) and Marcel presented about hands, feet and shoulders one time. So, go back to those events and you will see that I talk a lot about hand yoga.

One, it keeps our fingers mobile, because they are important in getting dressed, feeding ourselves and keeping ourselves independent full stop washing and doing things. Also, there is a greater hand? Brain involvement in moving our hands. Not only because there are thousands and thousands of as we should say cells in our hands, but also because it is just harder to move our fingers. There's far more to think about. And all those things play a role in remaining independent, but will also help people with hand arthritis. It is important to keep them moving, especially if it is rheumatoid arthritis world movement is important. Even for us to arthritis, moving and keeping our joints litigated is important, provided you are not overdoing it or putting (indiscernible).

When you are working with shapes like the heart, that requires ordination for the Navy interlacing your fingers one way or another for stop or even working with (unknown term), that can blow their model it is amazing, and I highly recommend it. Anything full but, there is specific practices that are designed to not just improve hand mobility, but a cutie of the mind.

PATRICIA ANDERSON:

Wonderful. I am just going to give a plug here for Emily (indiscernible) training sessions that she offers. In the Yoga Alliance archive, there are 6 to 7 other classes that you have offered on this topic. So, if you are a Loca -- Yoga Alliance member and you have not seen Maria's others classes, I highly recommend checking them out. Questions you ask about music and other things are in their full we may not get to those today, but I highly encourage you go check those out.

MARIA JONES:

Patricia would normally send me a spreadsheet with the questions I did not answer was go on Instagram some week next time and I will insult -- answer all of your questions as well as top

PATRICIA ANDERSON:

Thanks Maria Kathleen is asking a great question which is about hearing loss. I have heard you talk about this a bit before full stop of course, hearing loss is something that a lot of folks experience as they get older. How do you manage that in your classes?

MARIA JONES:

It depends on whether they want to see me and read lips, and follow the body. Mirroring is incredible for those who have sensory loss for stops so, you have to know how to mirror. There right is your left, etc. for be aware that they need to see your mouth, which wasn't very good during COVID. If you are in line, there is automatic close captioning on Zoom, which actually is pretty accurate. Teach them how to activate that on their end.

The other thing I was going to say is always work with them facing you, so they can see you. They can read your lips and they can mirror your body.

PATRICIA ANDERSON:

I love that. Maria, let's do two more questions, then I want to get to your practice. I think a lot of these questions will be answered by that.

Paul was asking about long COVID folks... People who are particularly vulnerable. I believe you have some experience with this population. Do you want to speak a little bit about that?

MARIA JONES:

I know that we are in a yogic circle, and there are different opinions here, but I am one of the vulnerable. My advice is to get them to get their vaccine as a start, because it does work for stops science has shown that even if they do get COVID, it will last less time... It will take less time to recover.

But, people with chronic COVID and long COVID as they call it these days, may have challenges such as fatigue, dizziness, breathlessness. Definitely dizziness and breathlessness. Definitely fatigue, which is associated with the dizziness and breathlessness was stopped there's a lot of fear associated with that. In order to tackle fear, you have to look at meditation. You need to ask them what would feel safe for them in the class. It may mean that they still want to wear their mask. You can't force anyone else to do it, but you have to allow them to be agents and make the choices that they need in their class. They may even want to sit next to a window and have it open. I don't know. Fear is associated with that which can be tackled with meditation.

Fatigue, be aware of how it is. Observation plays a role when we are teaching. When teaching, offer them break. For the class, in fact, any class, we need to offer those breaks and not make them obvious that they are breaks. Just make them pauses for reflecting. Sometimes, the pose effect is felt when we observe what has happened. So, offer lots of rest throughout the session. Do not put them in a supine position or down on the floor. Just keep them seated on the class will stop chances are they might be disabled when they get down to the floor and lay flat, he will feel really breathless and claustrophobic full stop heavy on the chest.

Keep the cheerful given the option to feel safe in the environment you are delivering the class in. Address their fear with meditation. In terms of the fatigue and other things that are associated with that, they will slowly recover. As long as they have options to take part and rest, then you make everything an invitation, they will still be okay in your class.

PATRICIA ANDERSON:

wonderful, thank you. One last question before we get to your practice. What are some strategies that you have used to convince folks who are skeptical, particularly about meditation and/or yoga. How have you engaged them in the yoga practice? What are some of the ways you like to do that?

MARIA JONES:

To be honest, people are still quite skeptical about it. But, they have to try it. Don't knock it till you try it is the (indiscernible)... The phrase we are using here in the UK for but don't knock it till you try. Secondly, it is a slow process. Unfortunately, I have not been very successful. What I have done, though, is practice what I preach and advocate... Be an advocate for adapted movement.

In terms of the language you use in the classes, it is a slow and study process. If somebody is struggling and you want to put them on a chair, use the chair yourself. Those who can do the advanced poses, chances are, they will do them without your guidance, just as a clue. But use the chair yourself. Eliminate hierarchy of the classes.

In order to do that, one of the great tips of eliminating asana hierarchy as I call it, is to start with the basic form of movement which is body part direction, then layer things in. You could be layering the breath or (unknown term), focus. You could be layering in adaptation. What that adaptation looks like, you could not be lower or higher, it could be this or that. So, watch for your own language. Your practice can feed into what you teach as well. So, observe yourself, your students and practice what you preach.

PATRICIA ANDERSON:

Thanks, Maria full stop we have about 20 minutes love. I want to give you the opportunity to start your practice. While you are getting set up, I will let folks know. I want to say thank you for your

engagement in the Q&A in particular. As Maria mentioned, I will be sharing all these comments and questions with her after the session. If we don't address the question live, she will do your best to get it on Instagram.

MARIA JONES:

We were saying that we could have an whole hour of Q and A actually.

PATRICIA ANDERSON:

Many hours of Q and a about this. I want you to get to what you plan to do.

MARIA JONES:

I got the little stick man which are part of the presentation was you don't need to look at them, but I am going to make sure that you can see my chair. I am going to see if I can pin myself for second so I can see how I am. There we go. Move it to the side a little bit... There you go. You can see my bike, the bit with the bolsters were the Chihuahua goes analyzing.

PATRICIA ANDERSON:

Looks good. Watch your step.

DR MARI ACEVES:

She comes and joins me sometimes. I have two dogs now.

The first thing I want you to do is take a comfortable seat on your chair. I am not going to do the first part (indiscernible) contact. I invite you to sit with the front half of your chair. With your feet flat on the floor, ideally, will your shoulders back and down and set up tall. The first we will do is try to establish a neutral (indiscernible). The way we do that is establishing axial extension. Upwards we want to lengthen the spine. The best way to do this, if you were to carry a book on your head, (indiscernible) (away from mic), we are going to try and replicate that on the chirp of

Interlace your hands, place them on your head and gently press down and press your head upwards. Roll the shoulders back and down and release will stop this is neutral spine. Eve engaged your core and lifted the back. From that position, we will explore the full range of motion from your spine in terms of writing -- rounding and expanding with the seated (indiscernible).

The reason we do this is we allow students to explore their posture. What does it feel like to be oppressed and flexed and arched and expanded. What they will find is that this is probably quite strong, and this is quite... Although it is quite bouncy and comfortable, it is also compromising how they feel.

So, naturally they will find a position where they feel relatively comfortable by rolling the shoulders back and down. Gently observe how your posture feels in this stage. Take a breath in, forward and out. Take a gentle twist. Encourage your students to have their hands on their shoulders, especially when beginning the class, because they tend to push (indiscernible) than they should. We don't -- we want to use our hands. Inhale, exhale, twist one way and then the other. Move dynamically to encourage a more functional range of movement for your students. Let's do one more right and left.

Once we have done that, roll the shoulders back and down and release your hands down on your lap. Take a moment to notice your posture which is vital in your well-being. It encourages breath, improves balance and is one of the best things we can teach your yogis to do. Sorry, my microphone is still a long way away.

So, with that in mind, it is in the way... With that in mind, we are going to continue with a bit more mobilization. Working dynamically and continuously mobilizing the joints in another post is important. But, it offers lots of opportunity to include elements of bilateral coordination as we call it was topped the right and left side of the body.

The first thing we will do is work with in and out. I want you to lift the toes and heel toe out a couple of times. You want to turn your feet in and out. This mobilizes the hips, but also offers the opportunity to add arm movements full stop so, you are going to cross the arms as you cross the legs. You are going to get the right arm movement and (indiscernible). Maybe the left arm under, the left arm over. Then, put the two together. You can do it to some music in fact, or chanting.

(Sings)

MARIA JONES:

(Indiscernible) or you can just move. Music from the 50s if you want. To incorporate a bit of a beat and rhythm to this, which then will work towards cognitive reserve and acuity which will help you focus and activate a different part of the brain. So, that is another wonderful thing that you can incorporate in your classes. (Indiscernible)

You will be able to include elements of dynamic movement and focus. Then, there is a lot of this that you can do. You can use opposite arm and leg when you are mobilizing. Or, even working with a bit of a twist, mobilizing the shoulders. You can turn the head and the arm in different directions. Again, that will promote more brain engagement.

Then, we go into elements of independence in the class was I suggest that you offer some standing practices. Most of the older adults are not in wheelchairs. The majority are not full stop you don't have to worry about people not actually standing for stop you can offer seated poses for those that don't

want to stand. I would encourage them to do at least sit to stand. Bring the feet in and gently come up. Put the hands over the shoulders. Make sure the chair is secure and is not going to slide back when the person goes back down and sits.

When you do the chair post, traditional chair post, there is elements of hip mobility and shoulder mobility, elements of strong back. It is also a technique thing. Ultimately, what we are asking them to do is sit down and stand back up. As they progress, they can just tap the chair, go bit lower and do it with the chair or away with the chair. That is another thing I would suggest.

Then, get them standing. Using the chair may be for support, secure, excellent. The yoga mats are excellent for placing the chair on, because they are not going anywhere when on it. Once they are standing, you can have this feet awareness. Shifting away from the back, the same way that they would lifting the heels, which activates the arches of the feet and makes them retain more balanced and even, which helps with actual balance.

You can offer things like dynamic warrior one. And back. It is like taking a step forward, and taking a step back. Or, you can do (indiscernible), which... Offer seated options as well. Seated March. Then, let's take a treat for ourselves a stop often the different -- offer the different tree options. You can involve those who are seated with a bit of our movement. You can use your (unknown term), which is important, because it plays a big role in our balance. Moving the arm and following the arm as you move. Those who are seated are involved, and you also have some I exercises. You can do it without your hand moving which is superhard.

You can have elements of high exercises that you can use standing here, which again, works with quality of reserve. So, I'm going to do the other time -- side. What I am going to do is get you back down, and you can make them tight rope walking. (Indiscernible), or crossing leg. So, situations where you are replicating life in many ways. It doesn't really look like yoga. It is yoga, because you are bring the element of awareness and breath in it from dynamic movement.

Do a posture check again. Once you roll the shoulders back and down, (Indiscernible), get the feedback on the floor. Once you keep doing that in the class, people become more aware what it is to sit with a neutral spine. They adopt the posture over time, which basically becomes a positive health intervention in their lives. For breathing, tiredness, fatigue or all sorts of things.

And then we go to hand yoga. The hand yoga element plays two roles, three in fact. It is a great excuse to offer yogis arrest with hand yoga. Especially if you see they are fatigued and tired as we do the practices. It is a very useful for independence. Of course, there (indiscernible) his focus and coordination, about the (indiscernible) of reserve.

The things I like doing is finger tapping. I'm going to come a little bit close. Then, I will ask you to keep your thumb on the index, and the other on the little. InSync, work backwards. And again. You might find it easier to look, or you might find it easier to close your eyes will you do this was to of course I've had a lot of practice, so I'm done for this. There's loads of other tricks we can do, like holding things, holding the strap, working your hands around a towel. Doing different symbols with your hands and fingers, which is really good for people with dementia and Alzheimer's, because it helps them think and remember things about the past.

Then eventually, you can work with something that doesn't resemble natural meditation. Part of acuity and cognitive reserve has to do with singing and rhythm. And bilateral coordination. So, we know how to do bilateral coordination, especially because we see so many cemented poses that you can practice statically, like warrior two. Or dynamically. But also, you can include a fair bit of chanting or where them or things like that.

I want you to place your palms upwards, down in your lap, start finger tapping. And then, you can start by (indiscernible).

(Sings)

MARIA JONES:

Get quieter and quieter as you do this.

(Sings)

MARIA JONES:

May be slower.

(Sings)

MARIA JONES:

One more. Breathe in and out, stretch your fingers. Exhale, chin down, hands together and talk hard. Namaste. I hope I provided enough ideas to take to your classes. There is significantly more of where this came from. In this little The Chair Yoga Handbook for Yoga Teachers for you. I have included my very handy stick man in there.

Yes, I post a lot about those things on social media, because that is what I specialize in. That is what I teach in my classes. So, I really hope you found some inspiration and tricks that you can take to your classes today, tomorrow (indiscernible).

PATRICIA ANDERSON:

Thank you so much, Maria. We have a couple more minutes. Would you like to wrap it up?

MARIA JONES:

I might as well take a couple of questions.

PATRICIA ANDERSON:

This is not an official question, but something that has come up a lot and helpful for folks to understand. Would you share with us how you build your practice of teaching a yoga? Where did you gather the knowledge, what training did you participate in? That sort of thing.

MARIA JONES:

That is a great question. I started with (Unknown name) yoga therapy (indiscernible) was she is a (unknown term) graduate, and teaches basically the American (Unknown name) school practices.

It started... I advanced my practices there, but it initially started back in 2000 in 16 in rainbow yoga. What I discovered when I started teaching chair yoga with people with multiple sclerosis that same year, was the able-bodied yoga is a lot easier than somebody who has MS and can't stand for very long and do very much. So, I had to expand my training more and more as the years went by.

I ended up adopting you but for everybody with a yoga therapy (indiscernible) which is in the (unknown term) yoga tradition. Recently, I also enrolled in another teacher training, I have no idea why did this. Because it is quite intense. With the (unknown term) who are also in the (unknown term) tradition. So yes, I am from the adopted lineage, shall we say.

PATRICIA ANDERSON:

Love it. Thanks Maria. I appreciate that. When you offer chair yoga typically, do you have a typical length of time of duration for your class?

MARIA JONES:

I absolutely do. There is a sequencing framework that I follow which I have found to be useful. In fact, we have a Yoga Alliance event video talking about the sequencing framework. Which you can find from December through thousand -- 2021... I talk about the eight elements that I used to sequence my classes, which incorporates elements of mobility and of course asana and itsel strength and mobility (indiscernible) we have centering, mobilization, warm-up.

There is a focus, acuity and hand type of things in that part. I said eight, and I'm struggling. There is (unknown term) and meditation. I missed one part. The setup at the very beginning. So, there is a way to set up the classes, do the centering and all the rest. All that when you put it together, there is a

purpose to it. That purpose is to meet your student needs. Those who are less able.

It is also something in a way, something that Ganesh (Unknown name) is saying of a lot. You are offering short and sweet to the point classes. When offering a group class, there is an element of entertainment involved in delivering group classes. It is important to have tools in your teaching bag that can extend the duration of the classes. What you will find is people can't stand for very long, so what do you do? People can't move their arms a very high up, so what do you do? So, there is a lot of other challenges associated with teaching older and less abled adults. That is why I created the eight step sequencing framework that allows you to design chair base yoga classes with these.

Yet again, because people keep asking that question, I added it in my book.

PATRICIA ANDERSON:

So, 45 minutes, an hour, 30 minutes?

MARIA JONES:

It goes up to one hour easily.

PATRICIA ANDERSON:

Maria, we are pretty much a time. Any final words before we close it out?

MARIA JONES:

I feel that with the increase of age, basically there is an aging population we are dealing with the stop there isn't that many young people coming in. Older population, diabetes, osteoporosis, osteoarthritis. The rise of chronic disease, etc. So, I feel at this stage, chair yoga should be an essential element of your teaching skills. And I would like to take that away with you and maybe think about it a little bit. Be assured that if you do start teaching it, he will also be changing the attitudes of this whole world of what yoga actually is. Thank you very much for joining me today.

PATRICIA ANDERSON:

Thanks Maria. I appreciate you and your time and mental flexibility with our tech challenges today. Yoga Alliance members, thank you so much for joining us live today. If you are catching us on recording there as well, we hope that you stay well and keep moving. We hope to see you again soon.

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