

THE SADHAKA

the seeker

A Monthly Newsletter from the Seattle Holistic Center

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Keep Your Balance

As we move into the busy days of Fall, it's easy to forget the joy of simplicity. Summer makes it so easy to spend lazy mornings sitting in the sun, afternoons kicking around the pool with your kids, or to enjoy an evening where a cup of tea and a spectacular sunset is all you need.

With autumn unfolding around us, the challenge is to hold on to the magic of summer's energy as long as you can. In other words, to stay balanced in your work and play, your movement and stillness.

This month's Sadhaka will help you keep that balance, with a reflection on the practice of yoga, some tips for fighting leg cramps, and advice for boosting your immune system during pregnancy and the postpartum period.

We've also got some tips for helping tots eat healthy when you're on the go.

We hope you will move into September with balance and joy!

Dear Friends,

I recently heard a beautiful story. Is it fact or fiction? Some say it is a hoax but regardless of it's truth one can use it as a tale to inspire courage to change. It goes like this:

The Eagle has the longest life span of its species. It can live up to 70 years, but to reach this age, the eagle must make a hard decision. In it's 40th year its long and flexible talons can no longer grab prey, which serves as food. Its long and sharp beak becomes bent. Its old-aged and heavy wings, due to their thick feathers, stick to its chest & make it difficult to fly. Then, the eagle is left with only two options: die or go through a painful process of change, which lasts 150 days.

The process requires that the eagle fly to a mountaintop and sit on its nest. There the eagle knocks it's beak against a rock until it plucks it out. Then the eagle will wait for a new beak to grow back and then it will pluck out its talons. When it's new talons grow back, the eagle starts plucking its old-aged feathers. After 5 months, the eagle takes its famous flight of rebirth and lives for 30 more years.

Why is change needed? Many times, in order to survive we have to start a change process. We will need to get rid of old habits and past memories. When we are freed from past burdens we can live in the present, which helps us to respond more positively to life. All of us at some point experience pain and suffering.

What can we do to help us on this journey? Meditate.

Start with 15 minutes at the same time everyday. A simple meditation is *Ma-Om*. As you inhale in your mind hear the sound *Ma*, exhale hear the sound *Om*. *Ma* means mother in many languages, which is divine love. *Om* is the primordial sound of consciousness or divine light. *Ma-Om* is like the sound of the ocean's waves. Make a commitment to do this everyday for 21 days to anchor this practice. You will experience more peace, calm and clarity in your life. Challenges come and go. Meditation is the key to riding the turbulent waves of life's ups and downs with equanimity.

By the way, September 21st is International Peace Day. Let's all take a minute to meditate on peace for the Earth and Her children.

Blessings of love,

Colette

The Practice of Yoga

By Chris Saudek

"Kriyayoga, the yoga of action, has three tiers: tapas, svadhyaya and isvara pranidhana."

--From The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali by B.K.S Iyengar





Tapas means burning desire to practice yoga, and intense effort applied to practice. *Svadhya* has two aspects: the study of scriptures to gain sacred wisdom and knowledge of moral and spiritual values; and the study of one's own self, from the body to the inner self.

Isvara pranidhana is faith in God and surrender to God. This act of surrender teaches humility. When these three aspects of Kriyayoga are followed with zeal and earnestness, life's sufferings are overcome, and [Samadhi](#) is experienced.

The question that comes to mind, however, is do most of us who practice yoga have a "burning desire" or "make an intense effort" to practice? Probably most students practice simply because they feel better when they do. Perhaps it is something physical or physiological that happens to make us feel better. Or, for some they may feel that a practice makes their life less agitated and more spiritual.

Maybe you have a desire to practice but haven't yet found the time. Practice comes when the benefits are felt more profoundly so that the desire becomes strong enough to make it a priority. But do not practice out of guilt. Practice out of pleasure.

Practice is a discipline, so start by disciplining yourself to spend five minutes doing *Adho Mukha Svanasana* (downward facing dog) a few times every day. Then add a few standing poses when you have extra time. When you start to practice regularly, standing poses should be done every day. Eventually add an inversion such as *Viparita Karani* or *Sarvangasana*.

As you are able to add more time to your practice, you can gear your daily practice toward forward bends, twists, backbends and restoratives. It is a good idea to practice what you learn in class. The teachers know good sequencing and though you may not be able to practice the entire class you did with a teacher, you can practice a skeleton of that class. Here is a possible sequence to get you started:

Standing Pose

[Adho Mukha Svanasana](#) (downward facing dog)

[Sirsana](#) (supported headstand)

[Virasana](#) Forward (hero pose)

[Tadasana](#) (mountain pose)

[Vrksasana](#) (tree pose)

[Utthita Trikonasana](#) (extended triangle pose)

[Utthita Parsvakonasana](#)

[Virabhadrasana II](#) (Warrior II)

[Virabhadrasana I](#) (Warrior I)

[Uttanasana](#) (standing forward bend)

[Ardha Chandrasana](#) (half-moon pose)

[Virabhadrasana III](#) (Warrior III)

[Uttanasana](#) (standing forward bend)

[Parivritta Trikonasana](#) (revolved triangle pose)

[Prasarita Padottanasana](#) (wide-legged forward bend)

[Uttanasana](#) (standing forward bend)

[Parsvakonasana](#) (extended side angle pose)

[Prasarita Padottanasana](#) (wide-legged forward bend)

[Uttanasana](#) (standing forward bend)

[Sarvangasana](#) (supported shoulderstand)

[Halasana](#) (plow pose)

[Setu Bandha Sarvangasana](#) (bridge pose)

[Viparita Karani](#) (legs up the wall pose) or [Savasana](#) (corpse pose)

Some Possible Shorter Sequences:

Adho Mukha Svanasana
 Sirsarsana
 Tadasana
 Trikonasana
 Uttanasana
 Sarvangasana
 Viparita Karani

Chris Saudek is the director of The Yoga Place in La Crosse WI. She is an intermediate senior Iyengar Instructor. This piece was reprinted from The Sadhaka Vol. 3 No. 2.

Boosting Immunity During and After Pregnancy

By Dr Kim Kelly, ND, RN, LM

Pregnancy is wonderful in that it primes our bodies to be prepared to deal with any infection that might come our way, especially bacterial infections.



However, pregnancy is also a stressor. It can bring out any sensitivities or weakness that we might have and not have been properly aware of, be that digestive, musculoskeletal, allergic or our immune system.

This can be looked at as a blessing as these are issues we should work on even when we are not pregnant, and be fully aware of them. With regards to our immune system, there are many things we can do to boost our immunity to prevent and treat infections naturally.

There are many internal factors that maintain our immune system:

Protein- Adequate protein is not only essential for growth and repair of our own body and that of our baby, but also vital for our immune system to form the antibodies we need. It is generally recommended that pregnant and nursing women get 70 grams of protein per day. Some good sources are meat, eggs, soy, dairy, nuts / seeds, and grains with bean. Many vegans have a hard time with their increased needs and do well with a good protein powder shake in the morning.

Essential Fatty acids- EFAs are probably one of the most deficient materials in our diet. They are core to many aspects of our immune system. We must look at decreasing our saturated fats and fried foods and increasing our Omega 3 and Omega 6 oils. In general, our Omega 6 oils are derived from vegetables and our Omega 3 oils are from fish, flax, black currant and evening primrose. A good dose is 1 tbs. or four capsules a day.

Sugar- Studies show a direct correlation with the amount of sugar ingested and the decreased effectiveness of the immune system. What most people do not realize is that this relates to "healthy sugars" also. Honey, Molasses, fruit and fruit juices are sugars too. You should keep your daily intake to less than 50 grams/day.

Vitamins and Minerals- Basic to our immune function. Hopefully we get our minimum needs met with our diets, but a good prenatal vitamin is added insurance that our needs are being met. If you do have an acute infection, it is helpful to use increased amounts to cover the heightened utilization. Listed below are some supplement doses and daily food sources.

Vitamin A- Keep to less than 5,000 total/day with supplements in pregnancy. Sources: Fish oils, egg yolk, organ meat.

Beta Carotenes- 5,000 iu/day. Sources: dark greens, carrots, red pepper.

Vitamin C- 500 mg every 2 hours. Not to exceed 3,000 mg/day in the first trimester. Sources: Citrus, rose hips, apples, banana, apricot, veggies.

Vitamin E- 400 iu/day sources: cold pressed oils, whole grains, wheat germ, nuts, avocado

Zinc- 30 mg/day. Sources: Shellfish, grains, pumpkin seeds, brewer's yeast.

Selenium- 100 micrograms daily. Sources: Whole grains, wheat germ, brazil

nuts, garlic.

Botanicals- There are countless herbs used to treat infections, however many are not recommended in pregnancy unless advised by your healthcare provider. The safest immune herb to use is Echinacea. Unlike many herbs, it is even safe to use in the first trimester. Other helpful herbs are garlic, astragalus and licorice root (if there are no problems with high blood pressure). In general, rest, increased fluids, Echinacea every 2-4 hours and Vitamin C (1,000 MG three times a day) while decreasing dairy and sugar is a safe and effective way to treat most colds.

Postpartum immunity can also be affected by several factors; loss of blood during delivery; fatigue both from the delivery and from sleepless nights caring for a newborn; and increased nutritional requirements with breast feeding and no time to prepare nutritious foods. These can all contribute to a susceptibility to infection.

The general rule is to stay in bed for at least three days postpartum, and focus only on eating and breastfeeding your baby. Thereafter, sleep when the baby sleeps, buy and prepare nutritious "easy to grab from the fridge" foods, maintain your water intake, and continue your prenatal vitamin.

If you do get sick, remember that everything you take in will get into your breast milk. Again, Echinacea, Vitamin C and the other vitamins and minerals listed are very helpful to both you and the baby via the breast milk. Be careful with goldenseal, garlic and glandular as they can cause colic, especially during the first three months of breastfeeding.

Also, some women can experience problems with postpartum depression as their hormones shift. This affects their immune system by increasing stress and decreasing appetite. Vitamin B12 supplementation and herbal hormone balancing can be helpful, but it is very important to discuss this with your caregiver. Best wishes and stay healthy for you and your baby!

Reprinted from The Sadhaka, Vol. 3, No. 2

Give Leg Cramps the Boot!

By Colette Crawford, RN, BSN

Many pregnant women in our classes talk about experiencing leg cramps, especially during the second trimester. They can be surprisingly painful, with muscle aches lasting for days. The rest of us can also get leg cramps this time of year, with our increased activities, and the dehydration that sometimes comes with it!



To help avoid leg cramps, make sure you are getting potassium, sodium, calcium and magnesium - in the right ratio.

Foods that are high in these minerals are: bananas, oranges, grapefruit, yogurt, cottage cheese, dark green leafy vegetables, like kale, salmon, sardines, almonds and others. Eat plenty of these foods to help prevent leg cramps.

Carbonated beverages are also known to interfere with your body's calcium uptake, so do your best to avoid drinking these and sodas on a regular basis. Instead, brew a pot of raspberry leaf and nettle tea. Mix half of the tea with orange juice and you'll have a wonderful supply of these minerals to discourage leg cramps.

Another benefit for pregnant women is that these herbs tone the uterus, which can

help during labor and birth. Sometimes pregnant women experience restless legs, when legs ache or jerk, especially at night. This may indicate anemia or low iron. Nettles are high in iron so it is beneficial to drink nettle tea.

My husband is a martial artist and athlete so you can imagine how much he sweats during a workout. To prevent muscle cramps due to dehydration I give him green coconut water (not coconut milk). It is a better alternative to the artificially colored and flavored sports drinks and it has 10 times more potassium. I have also seen green coconut water turn labors around. It prevents dehydration while giving the woman a boost of energy.

If you get a leg cramp: flex your foot - bring the toes toward the ankle - and extend through the ball of the foot and heel. Do not point your toes as this can increase the cramp.

If you have varicose veins, do not massage your leg or apply heat until a clot is ruled out.

Also try these poses:

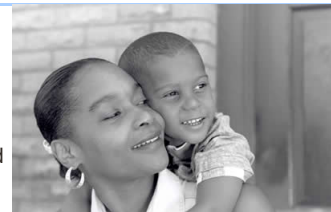
Runner's stretch - Stand with your hands supported, about 3 feet from a wall or table. Bring your right foot forward and step your left foot back. Bend the right knee and straighten your left leg. Breathe steadily and deeply. Soften into the left calf muscle as you exhale. Change sides.

Pyramid pose - Place your hands on a wall or table with the right foot about 2 feet away from the wall. Step your left leg back with the toes turned in about 60 degrees, front heel in line with back heel. Square your hips, firm your legs and as you exhale bend forward at the hips. Walk the hands up the wall to extend your spine. Root strongly through the feet. Breathe easily as you soften into the stretch. Change sides. This pose can also help reduce pain related to sciatica and hip pain.

Healthy Foods for Little Ones on the Move

By Shawna Gamache

When my daughter first started eating solid foods, it was so easy to keep her diet full of whole, healthy foods. I just bought organic fruits, veggies, beans and fish and mashed and pureed them and added some herbs. Often, I grabbed from the healthy meals we grownups were already eating and just ran them through the baby food grinder.



Now, with a very active 14-month-old who eats six or seven times a day (often away from the table), I find I have to be a lot more creative to keep the right foods going in to her mouth. I see now how easy and tempting it is to just carry packaged foods around. But I believe the way my daughter eats now will set the way she eats for life, so I've developed some strategies for keeping her snack and meal choices healthy when we're on the go.

More than just bananas

Not all fruits and veggies travel or keep well, but some are great for carrying with you. Bananas and oranges are classic foods for on the go, but why not bring an avocado and a butter knife with you? Avocados do not need to be refrigerated, and cut easily. You can cut them in to small pieces when it's snack time, or slice the avocado in half and give your little one a spoon and let her scoop out bites. Don't want to bring a knife? Cut the avocado at home, but leave the pit in with the pieces. That will keep the fruit from browning for a few hours (and a little lime juice helps, too!)

Berries, cherries, grapes and watermelon are also great traveling fruits. I like to

mix a few of these in a glass travel container and let my daughter reach in and "pick." For some reason, toddlers love getting to choose; If I just bring grapes or watermelon, she won't touch them, but with a little variety, she will finish off the whole container! Peeled apples are also fun to add in to the mix, and little ones love peaches, pears and nectarines (just peel them if the skin doesn't dissolve fairly easily).

Don't forget the veggies!

Veggies can also be great for on the go. You can steam veggies like broccoli, carrots, kale and cauliflower and then let them chill in their containers.

I also like to keep some frozen organic veggies on hand, like peas and corn, and just throw those in to our travel containers frozen when I'm in a hurry. They thaw out quite a bit by the time my daughter eats them (though, bizarrely, she also really loves to eat them frozen!).

As for raw veggies, cucumbers, peas and green beans are good picks (raw broccoli and cauliflower can be hard for little bellies to digest, and raw carrots can be a choking hazard for some little ones).

Give dried a try

Dried fruits and veggies are also very convenient. Just make sure you choose a brand with no added sugar, no sulfur dioxide...actually nothing but fruits and veggies! I love the "Just Tomatoes" brand. You can get "Just Peaches," "Just Apples," "Just Raspberries," etc. My toddler loves the "Just Veggies" mix of tomatoes, spinach, peas, carrots and bell peppers. And the pieces are sized just right for little hands!

Keep it cool

Cut up cheese cubes and organic, all natural turkey and chicken slices are great protein sources for your baby, but you may be worried about them spoiling while out and about. I find that a frozen teether ring makes a great ice pack and is the perfect size to fit around many of the baby storage containers I use. Just toss your container and your teether into a canvas bag and you should be good to go for several hours!

Pass the dip, mama!

It is amazing how much toddlers like dunking foods into sauces and dips! But forget the barbecue sauce and ketchup. Hummus, plain yogurt, mashed up guacomole or refried black beans (Amy's makes a great low sodium, organic version) make great dipping sauces, and cucumbers and green beans are great to dip. Or try dipping peeled apple slices into almond butter. Yum!

Go beyond the Cheerios

Cereal can be a great finger food for little movers. I like to use cereals as a way to add diverse grains into my daughters diet. It's amazing how many cereals you can get now made with Kamut, Quinoa and Amaranth. Kashi makes some great ones: just check to make sure no pieces will pose a choking hazard to your little one and make sure your cereal is made of whole grains and has minimal sugar.

Some packaged foods worth picking

A packaged food I love to keep on hand is that pureed fruit and veggie mix that kids can suck right out of the container (think juice pack, but the consistency of applesauce). I don't love the packaging, but I love that I can always have a healthy option in my bag that doesn't need to be refrigerated (until it's opened). Plum Organics, Ella's Kitchen and Peter Rabbit Organics make some great mixes. Just remember to take off the cap all of the way and keep it away from your little one! I like to pick one that has a veggie as well as fruits mixed in.

I also always have a few Larabars in my diaper bag. A typical ingredient list for a Larabar is: almonds, dates and lime juice. That's it! They are a convenient way to get some more nuts and fruits into baby's diet. My daughter loves the Key Lime Pie and the Lemon Bar Larabars. Just make sure your little one can eat the nuts

included (some bars have peanuts). Pack a few for yourself as well!

[Gamache](#) is co-founder of [Moms Alive](#), a blog and website that aims to inspire and inform new Seattle-area mamas. She is also editor of *The Sadhaka*.

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