



# Karuna Yoga Newsletter

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## YOGA THERAPY BENEFITS OF TWISTING POSTURES

Twisting postures will help restore your spine's natural range of motion, cleanse your internal organs, and stimulate circulation. Your yoga practice should include a variety of twists because they provide an abundance of benefits. There are physiological benefits to the circulatory system and internal organs and structural benefits to the musculoskeletal system.

### PHYSIOLOGICAL BENEFITS.

Yoga master B.K.S. Iyengar describes twists as a "squeeze-and-soak" action: The organs are compressed during a twist, pushing out blood filled with metabolic by-products and toxins. When we release the twist, fresh blood flows in, carrying oxygen and the building blocks for tissue healing. So the physiological benefit is that twists stimulate circulation and have a cleansing and refreshing effect on the internal organs and associated glands.

### STRUCTURAL BENEFITS

Yoga twists involve the spine, as well as several major joints, including the hips and shoulders. In fact, full range of motion in spinal rotation is essential to many yoga postures. Unfortunately, many people lose full spinal rotation in the course of living a sedentary lifestyle. Some losses can occur if joints fuse due to trauma, surgery, or arthritis, but most range of motion loss comes from the shortening of soft tissues. If you don't lengthen the muscles, tendons, ligaments, and connective tissues to their full length at least a few times a week, they will gradually shorten and limit mobility. If you regularly practice yoga twists, there are some clear benefits to these same joints and soft tissues. Not only do you maintain the normal length and resilience of the soft tissues, but you also help to maintain the health of the discs and facet joints (the small pair of joints on the back of the spine where each two vertebrae overlap).

### A TWIST A DAY






To maintain or restore normal spinal rotation, I recommend that you practice a simple spinal twist once or twice a day. Begin the twist from your lower back. Let the twist gradually unfold up your spine, as though you were walking up a spiral staircase, so that each vertebra participates in the twist.



Even though you may think this is an easy twist, there are a few points to keep in mind. Most important is to lengthen the spine; a slumped-over posture significantly limits spinal rotation. So begin by sitting sideways on an armless chair and draw your spine straight up toward the crown of your head. Also, make sure that your spine is perpendicular to the chair seat, neither leaning to the side nor to the front or back. Keep your head in line with your mid chest and don't force your neck around to look over your shoulder.

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## TWISTING POSTURES THAT HELP TO CLEANSE THE INTERNAL ORGANS AND TO REJUVENATE THE SPINE

<p><b>PARIVRTTA SUPTA PADANGUSTHASANA</b></p> <p><b>Benefits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stretches the hips, thighs, hamstrings, and calves.</li> <li>• Provides a gentle twisting of the spine and teaches you how to keep the hips in alignment, one above the other.</li> </ul> <p><b>Cautions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diarrhoea and headache.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>JATHARA PARIVARTANASANA VARIATION</b></p> <p><b>Benefits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases the blood supply to the lower spinal region and helps the spine and the muscles of the back to function properly.</li> <li>• Invigorates the abdominal organs and strengthens the hip muscles.</li> </ul> <p><b>Cautions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prolapsed disc or other spinal injury.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>PARIVRTTA TRIKONASANA (revolved triangle)</b></p> <p><b>Benefits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthens and stretches the legs.</li> <li>• Stretches the hips and spine and opens the chest to improve breathing.</li> <li>• Relieves mild back pain and stimulates the abdominal organs.</li> </ul> <p><b>Cautions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Back or spinal injury.</li> </ul>	 <p style="text-align: right;">RORY EARNshaw</p>
<p><b>PARIVRTTA PARsvAKONASANA</b></p> <p><b>Benefits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthens and stretches the legs, knees, and ankles.</li> <li>• Stretches the spine, chest and lungs, and shoulders.</li> <li>• Stimulates abdominal organs and increases stamina.</li> </ul> <p><b>Cautions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is difficult to place your hand on the floor so put both palms together with one elbow pointing down and the other pointing up. Look straight ahead with the sides of the neck lengthened evenly.</li> </ul>	 <p style="text-align: right;">DEBRA MCCLINTON</p>
<p><b>ARDHA MATSYENDRASANA (Half Lord of the Fishes)</b></p> <p><b>Benefits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stimulates the liver and kidneys.</li> <li>• Energises the spine and stimulates digestion.</li> </ul> <p><b>Cautions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Back or spinal injury.</li> </ul>	 <p style="text-align: right;">CHRIS ANDRE</p>