

WATER YOGA: RIDE THE WAVE OF TRANQUILITY - PART TWO

by Sigrid Igel and Monica Cordes

The first article written by Sigrid and Monica featured an introduction to the benefits of Water Yoga. They discussed how Water Yoga works for a wide variety of people and also described the type of environment that is suitable for Water Yoga classes.

Part Two:

Hello again. We hope you caught a few good waves this summer and had a chance to practice the "Butterfly" pose, as we suggested in our last article. Fall is now behind us and winter in the midst. Time to bring our Water Yoga indoors.

This article will feature two balancing poses called the "Mountain Pose" and the "Dancers' Pose".

Many of us strive for balance in our habits, physically and mentally. To achieve this balance is an immense challenge. In Water Yoga, we learn to balance with ease and grace, aided by the buoyancy of water.

Let us glide once again into the water (hopefully 86+ degrees Fahrenheit) and close our eyes, allowing the body, mind, spirit and breath to once again "yoke" or unite. We gently begin our warm-up routine (look for this in the next issue) and after a few minutes, we open our eyes and stand perfectly still.

MOUNTAIN POSE

How to: Place your feet together and anchor them well onto the pool floor (ideally wearing water shoes or simple cotton sneakers). Keep legs straight, but not stiff. Lift arms overhead to frame your head with your arms, hands and shoulders. Gaze softly at a distant point. Lift rib cage away from pelvis. Relax shoulders. If balancing is difficult, place feet 30 - 40

centimeters, (12-15 inches) apart. Breathe deeply and hold for 30 - 60 seconds. Lower arms. Repeat 3 times.

Caution: Contract both the abdominal and gluteal muscles to provide support for the low back.

Why to: An excellent pose to strengthen the heart muscle (according to Dean Ornish). This pose opens the ribcage, works the intercostal muscles and facilitates deep breathing.



DANCERS' POSE

How to: Stand facing pool wall, 'arms-length' away. Begin with legs straight, feet 15 centimeters (6 inches) apart and firmly grounded. Then bend right leg and reach behind for right ankle. Press foot into hand. Lean forward to touch edge of pool with left hand, while pulling right leg up behind you. Ahhhh. Hold 30-60 seconds, breathing

deeply and gazing softly forward. Repeat 3 times on each leg.

Caution: Do not lift knee out to the side, perform hip extension, with the leg lifting straight back. The hips are not in a neutral position - they are tilted forward. To avoid excessive hyperextension of the lumbar spine control the amount of forward tilt. Be aware of your body signals and stay in your zone of comfort. Keep the abs activated with the hips in a comfortable forward tilt. The abs will elongate. Feel a stretch in the anterior torso region. Follow this with a forward bend by lifting one bent leg at a time up to chest to compensate for the hyperextension in the low back.

Why to: Strengthens lower back and relieves upper back tension. Works the quadriceps muscles in an isometric muscle action. Improves balance and concentration.

Now bend knees, lower arms and immerse body to "chin in" water depth. Roll shoulders in both directions, breathing deeply.

Enjoy the feeling.

Following are some program highlights:

- * Basic Yogic Philosophy and History of Yoga
- * Instruction in the gentle art of movement on land and in the water
- * Benefits and precautions



Dancer's Pose

The Mountain and Dancer's Pose together with the Butterfly Pose will increase your water yoga movement repertoire. Please share them with your clients. Feedback from our classes has been very encouraging.

Learn these postures and much more at our Water Yoga Teacher Training Course offered in the near future.

- * Therapeutic value
- * Instilling mind/body awareness through imagery and proper breathing techniques
- * Sample program

Who to contact for more information about the next Teacher Training session:

Sigrid Igel(905) 642-5984 or
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An Apology: The wrong author was accredited for writing the first Water Yoga Article in the Summer 2000 - Wavelink Issue # 26. The authors were Sigrid and Monica.

