

Invigorate Your Yoga Practice

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What does it mean to invigorate your yoga practice?



There are so many ways you can interpret what this means and how it applies to you as an individual.

The definition will not **most likely** change, but will **most definitely** change with the various seasons of your life.



It's vital to explore.

Let's look at it in the context of building strength/a resilient body.



No matter what, it's vital to explore. It can be very easy to get into a groove where you are doing the same postures all of the time, either because you know that they feel good, that is what you're familiar with, and/or you are hesitant to step into the fire aspect (the tapas) of the practice.

It's very human to resist challenge even though we know that when we do, we find beauty on the other side. Doing the postures in the same way all the time may feel good, even right, but we can always add to this.

Approaching your yoga practice with the intention of building **strength** is a great way to **Invigorate Your Yoga Practice** because this creates resilience and longevity on and off of the mat.

Strength & Flexibility Techniques for your Yoga Practice

Facilitated Stretch



A facilitated stretch is what happens when you contract the muscles you are lengthening/stretching. You do this by creating an isometric contraction (creating activation/contraction when no movement is present). A facilitated stretch may also be compared with PNF stretching (proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation). With PNF, you might typically add in a phase of relaxation into more static stretching after the activation, however with a facilitated stretch, this may not always be the case. A recommended amount of effort for engagement is about 15–20%. You can stay with this effort and continue with more dynamic movement in the context of a vinyasa practice for example.

Reciprocal Inhibition

Reciprocal Inhibition is doing the opposite of what a facilitated stretch asks you to do. In this case, you are activating the muscles that oppose the muscles that are stretching.

It is also recommended that the amount of engagement be roughly 15–20%, so as not to cause more harm than good.

Why are techniques like this important?

They are important in maintaining mind/body (neuromuscular connection).

Techniques like these are vital because when you create activations in your muscles, it means that you are maintaining their health and integrity.

When you don't engage your muscles, you may lose the ability to contract them, which may lead to imbalances, a decrease in range of motion, and/or injury and pain.

There are a number of different ways to stretch and activate muscles in your body. These two techniques are a great addition to your yoga practice to not only create strength, but also increase flexibility. This therefore opens up further possibilities within your yoga practice. It may lead to further access into postures, but more importantly, it offers further inquiry into your own body and your own individual needs.



Alignment Cues for these Foundational Postures

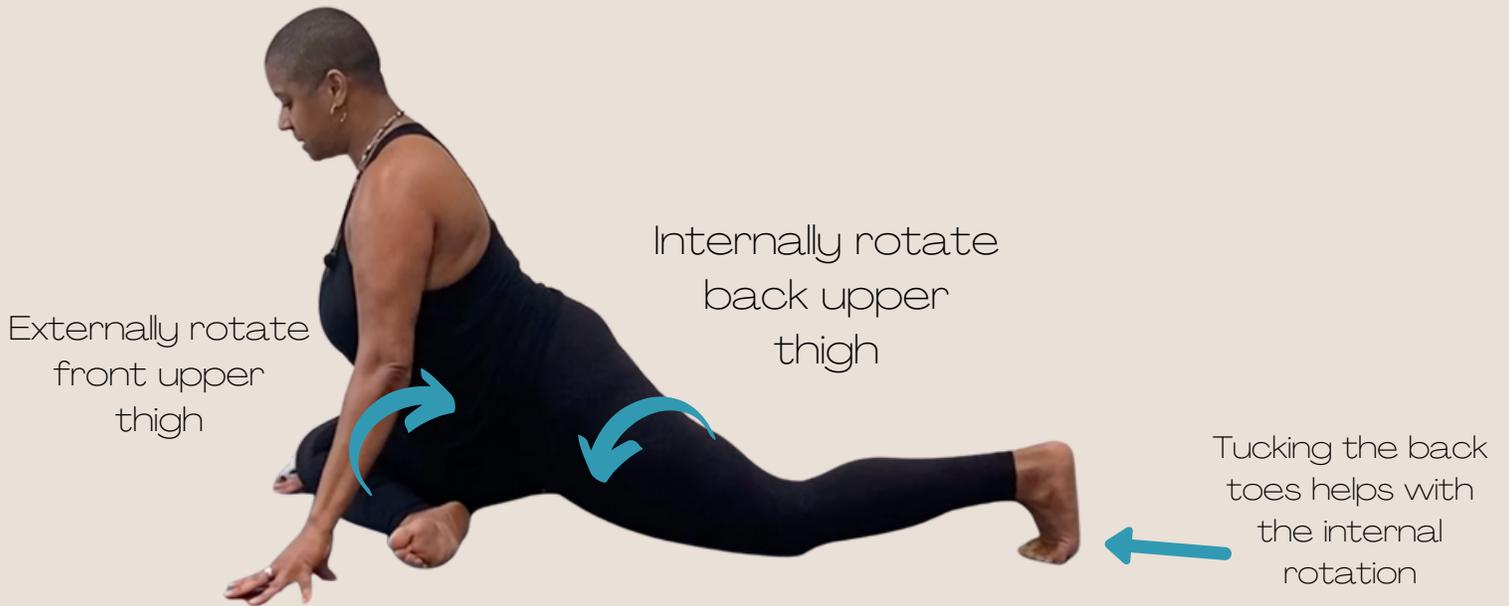


Downward Facing Dog

Warrior II



Pigeon Pose



Pigeon Pose Variations

(Figure 4)

Option 1



Gently press your thigh away from you with the palm of your hand

Option 2 (side view)



You may encourage a deeper opening by gently pressing your knee away



Exploration and Action are the keys to Invigorating Your Yoga Practice



Once you set the foundation with the alignment cues that help to stack your joints and support the experience of creating strength and flexibility in your yoga practice, you can start to add in techniques like a facilitated stretch and/or reciprocal inhibition.

It's actually quite exciting to think about all of the possibilities that are available to us in our physical yoga practice. These techniques only skim the surface, but starting out small and layering on more as you go along is not only a safe approach, but it also allows your body to more deeply connect with new sensations and/or new abilities.

Increasing awareness of what your body needs sends you along the path of self discovery, therefore unleashing your potential.

These techniques may challenge you, but they offer such wonderful opportunities on the other side.

I encourage you to incorporate these techniques into your yoga practice and see what unfolds!

Connect with me!

