

A Routine to Develop Being Centered, in Body and Mind Level 7-8

Suggested Breathing Theme: *Breathing Theme 11 – Moving with the Breath.* Your experience of centering with this routine will be deepest if you are already well familiar with the poses and are very comfortable with *Breathing Theme Number 11.* That is, make your movements and breathing start and end together, matching their pace.

Abdominal Lifts

Pay close attention to feeling the very center of your body, the middle of your diaphragm, as it moves up and down during the Lifts. You will most easily experience this if you do not do the Lifts too quickly or too slowly, making sure the Lifts are strong, but not extreme.

Core Breathing Do this lying down in “Puddle of Sunlight” (Corpse) Pose. Feel the core, the center of your body moving up and down your spine, into and out of your chest cavity, as your chest opens and closes. This can feel like the very middle (core) of your body is going for an elevator ride as you breathe in and

Centering Exercise 1 Do this lying down. Return to this exercise any time during the routine that you lose your sense of being centered.

Pelvic Lift

Paying close attention to the middle line of your body moving up and down as you breathe in and out. If this is difficult, try paying particular attention to the middle of your chest, or belly button, or ‘root’.



Do as many repetitions of this combination of poses as you like, flowing from cobra, into puppy and into cat, and back down into cobra again. Stay aware of moving along your center line, not swaying off center. If it helps, pay particular attention to the movements of your heart, shoulder blades and spine.

Cobra



Puppy



Cat



End this sequence in The Cat, then relax into table stance, (that is, on all fours, not stretching), so that you can go straight into the next pose – The Downward Dog.

To make this routine gentler, you can omit the cobra from the above sequence and omit the next sequence of Downward Dog and Lunges. Then do the Sun Salutation at your own level.

Alternate Downward Dog with Lunge in continuous motion. Stay aware of moving along your center line, not swaying off center. If it helps, pay particular attention to the movements of your heart, shoulder blades and 'root'. Be sure to alternate which leg you lunge back – and do the same number of times on each leg.

Downward Dog



Lunge



Finish this sequence with Downward Dog. Then curl down onto the floor into the Child Pose for a moment of meditation.



Come to a standing position, coming up like a rag doll. Stay aware of keeping your movements up the center line.



Dancer's Posture
Use this exercise to focus on moving straight up and down along your center line.

Balance Posture
Focus on making your movements go directly back or forward, not straying to the side.



Sun Salutation
making your movements follow the center line forward and back.
Eg: When you stretch into the wood chopper, stretch directly back, feeling your chest move directly back. When you move, say, your leg back into the lunge, have it go straight back, not a little to the side. And so on.