



January  
2014

Welcome to a new year. I began these newsletters in January 2013 with the intention of giving and sharing knowledge. Yoga is a tradition passed from teacher to pupil. The knowledge does not belong to anyone. If you have the knowledge you are a custodian with the responsibility of sharing that knowledge. I hope you enjoy these offerings.

**Workshops: Baddhas and Bandhas** is just a week away. Spaces are limited and there are only a few places still remaining. Book and pay now to reserve your place in the room for this fun and expressive session exploring stability through muscular toning as well as binding of arms and legs through spinal rotation, shoulder mobility and correct alignment of the limbs. On 23 February Margo Perpick will run the **Breath of Life** Workshop at Apollo Power Yoga Studio. This workshop will focus on enabling our full, natural breath by removing the restrictions which may be limiting it. We will do this through a number of inquiries into the quality of our breath, and the ways in which different movements can enable or restrict our breath. The workshop will incorporate a meditation as well as a full power vinyasa asana practice – we will break between the segments of the asana practice to carry out the breath inquiries. Be prepared to let your breath be the best it can be!

Each workshop costs \$40.00 (half price to annual members). Book at the studio or by emailing [hamish@apollopoweryoga.co.nz](mailto:hamish@apollopoweryoga.co.nz) or phoning 021 055 1884.

**Showers at Apollo:** They are in. Get energised and sweaty in class then get clean and head out to meet the world face to face.

### Healthy Dining Out

Part of the Baptiste method for healthy living is to eat clean, healthy food and avoid eating un-healthy substances. In the words of Thomas Edison: The doctor of the future will give no medicine, but will interest his patient in the care of the human frame, in diet and in the cause and prevention of disease.

We all like going out for a meal occasionally, so it's good that Christchurch has healthy restaurant and café options.

One of our favourites is **Dux Dine** in Riccarton Road. The menu is full of great vegetarian and seafood dishes. The pea + halloumi fritters are delicious, as is the Akaroa salmon with parsnip and carrot confit. No problem getting 5+ servings of veggies here, and the courtyard setting behind the carefully restored heritage building is a very pleasant place to hang out.

In the central city, it's wonderful to see **The Vespa Bar** up and going again, in a beautiful heritage building in High Street. The tapas menu includes lots of healthy options, such as wild mushroom tacos, avocado and green rice fritters, and grilled whitefish parcels in banana leaves. Don't eat the banana leaves, though!

The **Café at the Herb Centre** in Kilmore Street is another fantastic source of healthy food. Their Hunza Pie is extremely tasty, and comes with an assortment of salads using nutrient-rich ingredients that we don't commonly

encounter when dining out, such as quinoa and sprouted seeds.

### Wanderlust:



Tickets are available. Visit the website to check them out:

[www.akl.wanderlustfestival.com](http://www.akl.wanderlustfestival.com).

**Grab One Vouchers:** Take care yogis. These vouchers expire. You must use all five classes within 45 days after taking the first class under the voucher. Also, if you have not started using your voucher yet, the vouchers will expire unless the first class is taken by 5 April 2014. Finally, only one voucher per person please.

**Asana Spotlight:** From downward facing dog the next pose in Sun Salutation A is halfway lift at the front of the mat. There are two ways of getting from downward facing dog to halfway lift. One is to step forward, one foot at a time. For newer practitioners, people tight through the groin or people lacking strength this is a great option.

- From downward facing dog step one foot forward to the front of your mat between your hands then step the other foot forward, your two feet next to one another.
- The next time you take this transition reverse the order of your feet stepping forward.
- As you step forward seek to draw the knee of your stepping leg in towards your chest. It is perfectly acceptable – in fact desirable – to arch your back towards the sky as you take this action. Engage *uddiyana bandha* by drawing inwards and

upwards at your abdomen, creating a hollowing-out sensation at your belly.

- Some people may find it takes more than one step to get their foot all the way forward. Again, it is perfectly acceptable to step as far forward on one foot as you can then step again with that foot or wriggle it forward with your toes or catch the back of that knee with your hand to help it forward. Then move the opposite leg.
- When stepping the second leg forward, thrust away from the earth with that leg and let your weight rest over the foot at the front of your mat as you draw the knee of the back leg up into your chest and step the foot lightly between your hands at the front of your mat.
- If you typically step forward notice if you always lead with the same leg. Can you cultivate the habit of alternating which leg you first step with?
- If you typically step forward notice if you tend to swing the stepping leg out to the side as you bring it forward. Can you work towards keeping the leg below your torso as it moves straight forward? Keep your hips lifted and your belly in a gentle but firm concave attitude activating your hip flexors and creating space beneath your body.



Alternatively, you may choose to jump to the front of your mat. As you become more adept at this action you will feel a quality of lightness

and the action will be floating rather than jumping.

- To jump/float forward you must use your arms like a pole vaulter's pole. Brace your hands and arms against the floor.
- Be fluid and mobile in your shoulders. In order to successfully jump/float you need your shoulders to move slightly forward of your fingers. Your shoulders are a long way behind your fingers in downward facing dog. Embrace the notion that they need to move forward and give them the freedom to do so.
- As much as moving forward you need to go up to complete this action. Just as steppers need to hollow out beneath themselves, so floaters need to create a lot of space beneath their bodies.
- In downward facing dog look to a point between your hands, press your thigh bones back, rise onto the balls of your feet, draw your abdomen in and up, dip your knees to create springs of your legs and thrust your hips upward as you straighten your legs.
- Keep your legs straight if you can and land on the balls of your feet, letting your heels come softly and silently to the floor.
- While learning and making progress with this action you may need to use your knees as shock absorbers as you land. You will notice, however, that doing so leaves you squatting in a crouch at the front of your mat rather than having your hips upright over your feet with your chest waiting to extend forward into halfway lift.
- Let your weight reside in the full spread of your hands with your fingers, from first knuckle to finger tip, actively involved in bracing at the floor. If you have too much weight in your wrists you will not come forward. Trust the sensitivity of your fingers to tell you where the balance is between not far enough forward and too far forward. Your fingers and hands will

grow stronger as you place this trust in them.



- The mental rope that holds us back from floating forward is a fear of going too far forward and falling flat on our faces. This fear shows up in crow and many other similar poses. The fear is not without justification but I am yet to see anyone hit their face on the floor floating forward. I have seen many people topple or fall forward but we are remarkably adept at

finding a way to land on something other than our faces. Our hands will come forward or we'll get a foot forward or we'll tuck a shoulder in and roll forward. Play the edge and trust yourself.

- You will try and try many times over to get the floating sensation and imperceptibly you will grow into the action. One day you will capture that moment of lightness and inertia as your hips hover way above your firmly braced hands and your feet lightly come forward between those hands. When you do – AWESOME!

**Chakra Theory:** In our discussion of the chakras we shall move from the base to the apex. In this series of items I have drawn from a variety of sources but am particularly indebted to the helpful material contained in *Wheels of Life – A User's Guide to the Chakra System*, Judith, A. ©1987, 1999.

At the base of the chakras is *Muladhara*, the root chakra located at the perineum, the base of the spine, in the coccygeal plexus.

*Muladhara* concerns earth, safety and security. This chakra gives us a sense of stability, of being rooted and secure. Energetically, this chakra is very dense, as if many rivers of energy converge directly upon it producing a solidifying, stabilising force.

This chakra is connected with our fight/flight response. Our security and survival depend upon it. Fear is the nemesis of *Muladhara* as it destabilises our sense of security. Sometimes when we are flighty and fearful we are insufficiently grounded in *Muladhara*. Bringing our consciousness down into the root chakra to access a sense of safety may be required. To do so we may need to face our fears. Courage is a root chakra quality and involves grounding. Grounding requires us to connect with the earth, merge with gravity and descend deeply into the vehicle of the body. When we do so we find humility, a

sense of satisfaction with what we have and we enhance the vitality of our life force.

Think of the language used in our society to describe certain perceptions of success: Getting *ahead*, being valued *above* someone else, climbing the ladder of success, going *up* in the hierarchy. Meanwhile there is a degradation of natural bodily processes: waste elimination, nudity, sexuality or even breastfeeding are considered impolite and are to be hidden away. We are, as a society, not well-grounded in the root chakra.

A strong sense of health and self-worth requires a connection with the root chakra. Grounding implies that we descend out of the chaos of infinite possibility and come into a life of purpose and direction. To that extent, grounding is a simplifying process, refining our choices and giving us a vocation and a way of serving.

Grounding helps us cope with stress and also gives us clarity. If we turn our head fast from side to side our vision is blurred. If we still our head and still our eyes our vision clears. If we shake a fluid with sediment in it, it becomes cloudy. If we leave the vessel still the sediment settles to the earth and the fluid becomes clear.

The chakras require us to engage in a close connection with our body – to really feel what we feel at all levels. This includes diet – what we hunger for and what effects certain foods have upon us. Meats and other foods high in protein are earthing foods. In too great abundance they can make us sluggish and listless. In too little quantities we can feel weak, disoriented or disconnected from our body.

*Muladhara* is represented by the colour red, by four petals around a yellow square with a downward pointing triangle. Deities

associated with this chakra are Brahma, Dakini, Ganesh, Lakshmi and Uma.



Yoga poses that may be used to connect with this chakra are *tadasana*, ragdoll, waterfall, bridge, locust, knee-to-chest pose, seated forward fold and single-legged seated forward fold. Meditating with your consciousness drawing down into your seat and your foundation at the floor or chair and the earthward flow of gravity on your body can bring you into connection with this chakra.

Namaste

©Hamish Kenworthy 2014

