



October 2015

Step into Your Power:

Registrations are coming in for our teacher training programme in 2016. You may elect to do the first 8-day intensive in Methven on its own as an immersion. You may do the entire training as a means to learn about yoga, to learn about this great power vinyasa practice and, most importantly, to learn about yourself.

Register NOW and **Step into Your Power**.

Building Blocks Workshop:

Our first **Building Blocks workshop** will run on **Saturday 7 November at midday** for about 75 minutes. In this workshop we will slow things down, take the vinyasa step by step, offer variations at each stage for those that need them and give you the tools to flow with grace and power as you practice.

The cost is just \$10 (or free as part of your starter fortnight if you are new to Apollo).

Asana Spotlight:

Straddle leg forward fold (*prasarita padattonasana*) is a highly beneficial pose with a great many variations. We take this pose in the grounding series. It is grounding in the sense that it takes our emotions and nervous system out of

imbalance to a point of calmness. It brings us into our feet, feeling our physical balance in our foundation at the earth. It lowers our centre of gravity and, while there are elements of upward lift, there is a greater sense of downward, earthing flow in this pose after the equanimity series of standing balancing poses that precedes it.

- Begin where you left off in triangle pose (featured in last month's magazine). Rise up from triangle, turn your right toes, (if you had your right foot forward in triangle) towards the left side of your mat bringing your feet to a parallel position. Place your hands at your hips.
- Ground down through the outer edges of your feet and distribute your weight evenly through the length and breadth of your feet. Ideally, your feet will be parallel (a line drawn through the centre of your heel and through your middle toe on each foot should be parallel) or perhaps slightly pigeon-toed.
- Inhale and elongate the front side of your torso, firm your abdomen (*uddiyana bandha*) and hinge forward from the hips. Avoid rounding your spine forward. There is much more to

be gained by folding at the hips than by rounding your low- and mid-back regions.

- Folding rather than rounding may mean your head does not come so close to the floor. Give up any ego notion that this pose is about touching your head to the floor. The essence of this pose is the alteration of the angle between your upper legs and your spine through the mechanism of your hips.
- Turn your inner thighs inwards and towards the wall behind you.
- Lift through the inner arches of your feet and right up through your inner thighs to your pelvic floor (*mula bandha*) and abdomen (*uddiyana bandha*).
- Bring your hands to the floor at shoulder width. If you cannot reach the floor, bring your hands to blocks. If you struggle with tight hamstrings, bend your knees.
- Be conscious as you fold forward of the attitude of your pelvis. In this pose the pelvis is in an anterior tilt – the front of the pelvis drops away from your ribs and your coccyx tilts upwards towards the sky. Tightness in your hamstrings can restrict the ability of your pelvis to stay in an anterior tilt as you fold forward. Allow your knees to bend as you fold forward to maintain the anterior tilt of your pelvis. If you are in any doubt – this is important.
- Wrap your elbows in to shoulder width and draw your shoulder blades towards one another. Avoid your shoulders collapsing towards your ears. Notice in the image for this pose how square and well-set the woman's

shoulders are and how free and spacious her neck is.



Variations on this pose include:

- Binding your big toes with the index finger and middle finger of each hand and turning your elbows up towards the sky and out to right and left.
- Binding your hands behind your back and releasing your arms over your head towards the floor for a strong shoulder-opening action. For those with limited shoulder mobility you may need to hold a strap/belt/towel between your hands and separate your hands by 30 to 60cm to free up shoulder space.
- Reaching to the outside edges of your feet and tucking your hands under your heels with your hands wrapping as far as possible behind the heel rather than simply from the side.
- Not folding all the way forward but, rather, stopping halfway down, setting your hands directly beneath your throat. Then reach one arm out to the side and from the spine outwards through the shoulder and arm, twist until the extended arm is as high to the ceiling as possible. This focuses on twisting the whole torso around the axis of the spine rather than simply twisting your shoulder to take the arm up.
- Binding the outside of one ankle with the opposite hand and wrapping the free arm around your back as you fold

and twist. Draw the upper shoulder blade in towards your spine and turn your outer deltoids in the shoulder towards the ceiling.

- Straddle your feet as wide apart as possible while still feeling the outer edges of the feet grounding firmly to the floor. This will take the stretch more into the adductor muscles of the inner thigh and less into the hamstrings at the back of the upper legs. In this variation you may press your hips out behind you somewhat as you reach your chest forward and hug your shoulder blades in towards your spine. Keep *uddiyana bandha* firm. Optionally, reach your arms out either side of you like wings at the height of your shoulders. Play with your weight distribution and shift weight away from your heels so that you feel the balls of your feet well-grounded and the pads of your toes pressing (but not gripping or clutching) at the mat.

There are many strengthening and stretching actions in *prasarita padattonasana* but the key is to allow the lowering of your head beneath your heart and your hips to flood your skull with fresh blood and create a soothing sense of calm for your mind. Like sand running through the waist of an hour glass, feel healing energy run into your mind, heart and spirit and be renewed.

An Interview with Sia Svendsen:

Sia Svendsen is a Danish national who has lived in New Zealand since 2002. She is well-known and respected as an adventure racer and cyclist. She has spoken out about depression and has used her personal experiences to help others find hope and gain inspiration. Sia has

taken on many challenges in her life and has had many hardships with which to contend. She practices at Apollo Power Yoga and finds the practice to give her a physical challenge, which speaks to the athlete in her, and positive philosophy, that helps nurture her spirit.



Sia comes from a farm on a small Danish island near the coast of Sweden. At around 10 years of age she became very ill, lost a lot of weight and had very little energy. Her illness could not be managed from home and she spent some time in an institution where she received specialist care. Her health recovered but her home life was difficult. At age 17 she went to the United States for a year to study as an exchange student. Prior to this time her principal sports had been handball (not well-known here in New Zealand but this is an Olympic sport that is very popular in Europe) and horse riding. In the States these options were not available to Sia, and she joined the cross country running team at her school.

Sia quickly improved as a runner and, when she returned to Denmark, she carried on with the sport. Initially she was a 3000m runner but enjoyed taking on new things and ran her first marathon as an 18 year old. The endurance aspect of

the sport attracted her and she was open to new avenues. She was invited to join a team in the Irish Adrenaline Rush adventure race when she was 21 and the following year completed her first Ironman triathlon (5km swim, 180km bike ride and 42.2km run). For the Ironman, Sia had to learn and train for the swim and cycle legs as these were disciplines she had not participated in before. Time was short – she had just 6 months from the decision to enter to prepare for the race – but she readily accepted the work load and brought both strong discipline and a sense of fun and enjoyment to her training. Taking on something she was not (yet) good at was a prime motivation for her.

She enjoyed her early experiences in adventure racing and was told by a friend that New Zealand was the place to come for immersion in adventure racing. During global travels when she was aged around 20 years, Sia had visited New Zealand. What she knew of the country from her visits and what she was told by her friend of where she needed to be to take her adventure racing to a higher level, persuaded her to move to New Zealand in 2002. She has lived here ever since.

Sia found that the difficulties she experienced during her childhood and teenage years had given her a mental strength and resoluteness that stood her in good stead for the demands of training for and participating in endurance races. Whether an endurance race is an individual or a team one, it places demands upon the body and the mind that call for tremendous determination and strength of will. Sia found that, in addition to the strength of body to

compete over long distances and the skill to run, ride and paddle well, she has reserves of mental fortitude that she could draw on in the darkest times of endurance racing.

After arriving in New Zealand, Sia began studying Polytech's degree course in outdoor education. She began flatting with John Howard. Howard is a pioneer in the world of adventure racing, has had enormous success in that field and now designs courses for events and provides technical advice. Through Howard Sia met many other prominent figures in the adventure racing world, including her next flatmate, Steve Gurney.

Sia began competing in many events including the Mt. Cook to Christchurch race which she competed in five years in a row and formed good relationships with Sarah Prince, Kathy Lynch, Elena Usher and Jill Westera who have all featured on the leader boards of New Zealand's toughest adventure race challenges. Sia also competed in Rogaines, orienteering and 24-hour events. As her cycling developed, Sia participated in the Elite Cycling Nationals and other NZCT events to prepare for other events. She used her connections with sponsors for her adventure racing to establish a team (Thule/Orbea) in 2011. Incidentally, this team included another practitioner at Apollo Power Yoga, Amanda Barton.

Some of Sia's significant results include 3rd placings in the Graperide event and Around Brunner race, Queen of the Mountain in the Tour de Lakes, a win in the two-day Red Bull Defiance event, a win with Joanna Williams in the tandem section of the Coast to Coast, and a win in the two-day teams section of the Coast to

Coast partnering Fleur Pawsey (their time placing them fourth overall). Sia has also featured in the Godzone Adventure Race, competing for charity partnered with some high profile rugby players. Most recently, Sia returned to Europe for the first time in five years to compete in two individual events. The first was a gruelling mountain bike race where the race of non-finishers was extremely high but where Sia dug deep to drag both her bike and herself over the course. The following weekend – yes just a one-week turn-around – she ran in the Eiger Ultratrail, a 100km footrace around the base of the Eiger in Switzerland. This race included over 7000m of vertical climbing. Sia completed the course in less than 20 hours and was 38th woman home.



Sia and Fleur Pawsey with Robin Judkins, race organiser, after their epic teams performance.

We could go on and on and highlight the many events and achievements that Sia has to her credit. However, there is another aspect that is striking about Sia. She has encountered many demons in her life and these came to the fore in 2011/12. 2010 had been a great year for her in terms of her competing and her life but in 2011 the break-up of her relationship, a consequent change in job and the pressure she came under started to take a toll on her sense of well-being. In the Coast to Coast event in February 2012 she

suffered an anxiety attack. The pressure became too much and her soul cried out. She found great support from her friends Christina and Nat Anglem who told her she could not manage alone and that they would help her.

They were, indeed, instrumental in helping Sia back to a state of normalcy. Sia was a long way from her home in Denmark. She did not have family around her and the support of close and good friends was instrumental in her recovery. Sia found she could feel better in herself by helping others. She worked as a guide for participants in the 2013 Coast to Coast, showing them the mountain run course. Running with these people, listening to their stories and teaching them the course and the techniques for successful mountain running brought her enjoyment and fulfilment.

Sia has since provided hope and inspiration for others who have suffered trauma or who have experienced severe anxiety or depression. She has used her experiences as a way to show others that there is a way through, that good days will return and that there need be no despair. Her message is very much the same as that of Sir John Kirwan whose book *All Blacks Don't Cry* carries a strong message of hope coupled with the importance of speaking about what you are going through and seeking the support and encouragement of those who are close to you.

It is really in this connection that Sia came to practice yoga at Apollo Power Yoga. She had heard that we teach a strong class and Sia wanted something that would be a physical challenge for her already strong body. She had also heard that we have a

positive environment in our studio and that we speak positively to spirit in our classes. Sia has found that she can come to class after a tough day or week at work and find solace. She has a chance in class to focus on her breath and herself for 60 or 90 minutes and re-set her spiritual focus. She finds respite from the challenges of daily life when she is in yoga class but also gains reinforcement from our positive teaching messages that she is a good person and that she has it within herself to prevail over challenges.

These are distinguishing features of the Baptiste-style power vinyasa yoga that we teach at Apollo: it is a transformative physical practice adaptable to the capabilities of the many, but it is taught against a backdrop of philosophical truths drawn from the wisdom of the ages and these truths allow each student to find a peace within themselves and with the world around them.

Sia feels like her body has been worked but has been energised during her practice but also that she has had positivity returned to her outlook. What more could one ask for? Thank you, Sia, for sharing your story with us. We practice this form of yoga for the same reasons: it makes our bodies strong and healthy and it makes our minds calm, clear and positive.

Annual Memberships:

Everyone has been lapping up our October/November special pricing for monthly unlimited passes at \$100. Purchasing an unlimited month gives you an incentive to practice more frequently, because the more practices you get in, the

cheaper each class is. More frequent practice makes you stronger and more mobile. The classes become even more enjoyable as you go deeper into your poses and become capable of things you used to think were impossible for you.

You can keep all that great stuff going and flowing by purchasing an annual membership.

The benefits of annual membership include:

- Unlimited yoga practice for a year from the date of purchase.
- Mat storage at Apollo Power Yoga in one of the racks in reception.
- Half price for workshops and 40 Days to Personal Revolution programmes run through Apollo Power Yoga (this does not include workshops where we host an outside teacher and does not include Apollo Power Yoga's teacher training programme).

Our annual memberships are increasing in price as of 1 December 2015. The regular price will increase to \$1400.00, but throughout December 2015 and January 2016 you may purchase an annual membership for the special price of \$1200.00. At just \$100 per month averaged over the year, this is great value.

We are also introducing an annual membership that allows for payment over time. This membership will be available from 1 December 2015 and costs \$1560.00 for a year. It may be paid by instalments of \$30 per week, \$60 per fortnight or \$130 per month. These payments are to be made by automatic payment. A contract must be signed in which you commit to making these payments for a full year. In the event that

any payments are stopped or are missed you will remain liable for the full amount of \$1560.

Some conditions attach to annual membership, as follows:

- Annual memberships may be extended in the event of illness, injury or travel that prevents you from practicing with us, but only in unusual circumstances. A year is taken to include all the normal vicissitudes of life. So, extensions are not meant to apply if you are away for a weekend, or if you have a cold for a few days, or if you get busy at work and choose not to practice. If you are out of the country for a month, or have a serious illness that prevents you from practicing for that period of time, tell us and we will extend the duration of your membership.
- Annual memberships are non-transferable and non-refundable. You may not sell your membership to another person and should you, for any reason, not be able to complete a year's practice with us following the purchase of an annual membership no portion of the membership will be refunded.

Why You Should Practice Budokon® Yoga:

Budokon® Yoga is a transition-based yoga practice influenced by movements used in martial arts.

It is a practice that does not focus on being in a pose. Rather, it centres on motion and you learn how to manipulate your pelvis and your shoulders to articulate your spine. You grow in core

and upper body strength. You learn about holding the weight of your body on your hands.

There are those who, for their own purposes, assert that vinyasa-style yoga practices are not alignment-based. The contrary is true of our practices at Apollo – both power vinyasa and Budokon® practices are highly alignment oriented.



Cameron Shane, Budokon® founder, performing Warrior's Bridge.

Alignment is concerned with moving naturally and channelling energy efficiently in your body. *Vinyasa* connotes an absence of resistance so that energy flows smoothly in your body and in your life. The martial origins of the Budokon practice also call for clean transmission of energy to create effective, powerful strikes, kicks and whole body movements such as rolls and spins.

What do you get from Budokon® Yoga?

- **Strength** in your core, upper back, chest and arms.
- **Mobility in your spine** and enhanced appreciation of the articulators of your spine.
- **Mobility through your hips and thighs** as the practice has many dynamic and more passive hip-opening actions.
- **Spatial awareness** as you encounter a full range of body motion.

- What you learn in this practice you can implement in your power vinyasa practice. If you are stuck on a threshold in your power vinyasa practice, try Budokon® as **a means to initiate growth**.
- You will have **great, energising fun**. One student said during class that they felt like they had just had sex!

Although the Budokon® practice is based on martial arts, there is no violence involved. It is entirely non-contact – your opponent is completely imaginary.

Some people think a 90 minute class is too long for them. It is not. 90 minute practices evolve more slowly and offer a more complete practice. Try one this week.

Don't be afraid that the practice will be too hard for you. It may be that you cannot do everything offered in the practice. If you could, it would be too easy! Use the experiences in the practice to learn and to grow.

Budokon® Yoga classes are only taught here at Apollo Power Yoga in Christchurch (and quite possibly in New Zealand) at **4:30pm on Saturday afternoons. They are for you. Give it a go!**

Apollo Power Yoga Students Up to Big Things:

Helen Crick is an unassuming person. She runs and practices yoga and is active but

does not engage in fanfare. She has, however, recently been to Africa where she got up to big things.

She went to Tanzania, home of the Serengeti plains and bordering on Lake Victoria and Lake Nyasa. Tanzania is a home to some of the most remarkable life forms on the planets, is an ancient land and a cradle of early human life.



As well as the plains, there are striking mountains, one of the most famous of which is Kilimanjaro (pictured). Helen travelled by herself and climbed two of Tanzania's mountains, including Kilimanjaro. Now that is getting up to something big! Fantastic work Helen.

Namaste

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