



April 2020

BEST WISHES AND GRATITUDE

We are conscious of those of you who have lost work and income temporarily or permanently. We are aware of a great sense of uncertainty about what the future will look like for us all. To those adversely affected in any way – emotional, financial, social - by the COVID-19 lockdown we extend our best wishes and our trust and confidence that we will all be OK given time and a commitment to growth.

Thank you to everyone who has attended our live streamed classes, purchased or hired our On Demand classes or expressed your best wishes for Apollo power Yoga. We appreciate all your expressions of goodwill and your offers of support and encouragement. Here are some samples of your feedback on our live streamed classes:

- *Just a quick THANK YOU for offering the live-streamed classes. These are difficult times and it can't be easy experiencing lock-down as a business that relies on people walking through the door and coming together as a group. You/Hamish spoke very well about change and adapting to whatever life brings in one of the classes I attended. The live-streamed classes are probably much more difficult for the teacher (less cues from the group, etc) than for us yogis. I have found them great and the instructions translate very well into the home environment coupled with your subtle observations/guidance, and humour.*
- *Thanks guys. The zoom classes are a life saver!*
- *Thank you for... the great class this morning! I am very grateful for the work that you and Margo do to get the classes going online...*
- *I am so grateful that you have found a way to bring your classes back into my world, it was so cool to see my friends who also practice at Apollo rock into the class today. I felt like part of my community was wrapped around me again and much of my stress and anxiety has dissipated this evening. I know I can do self practice, and in some ways I won't be as isolated as many will (because I'm a health worker) but I know your classes are going to help me and many others.*
- *Even though we are physically separated it definitely felt like we were all together. Margo you did a great job sharing all the fun things that were happening in our big virtual studio. Who thought children and dogs could be so much fun.*
- *That worked really well and I needed it - thanks to you both!! A lifesaver.*

Some of you have asked **how you can help**.

Come to our classes. We are running three classes for adults five days a week and two classes each day of the weekend along with two kids' yoga sessions during the week (Monday for young ones from 4-8 years and Wednesday for 8-14 year olds).

Spread the word. We are continuing our classes, our live streamed classes are easily accessible and we can provide you with a link to a recording of the class if you are not able to attend at the scheduled time. Hundreds of students have been using this service. It works well and for those feeling the pressure of the times and the state of lockdown it is a means of letting go, clearing your head and being at peace.

Even for those new to practice our restore classes are highly accessible and we have a video on our Facebook page giving a **tutorial on sun salutations** for anyone who needs cues on the essential fundamentals of vinyasa practice:
<https://www.facebook.com/ApolloPowerYoga/videos/1094351404251846/>

PRACTICE AT APOLLO POWER YOGA – COVID-19 ALERT LEVEL 3

For our purposes there will be no difference between practice under Alert Level 3 from what there has been under Alert Level 4. Our physical studios will not be open, our live streamed classes will continue and our On Demand classes will continue to be available for hire (as a library month by month) or purchase (by individual practice).

If you have a current pass with us (an annual membership, monthly pass, or a 10- or 30-class pass) please join in our classes. The system is simple.

- To participate in these sessions you need to **download Zoom** onto your computer or device. It is free to do so. The website to visit is <https://zoom.us/>
- Visit the Timetables page of our website and sign up to participate in a class (<https://apollopoweryoga.com/central-city-studio-timetable/>).
- You will receive two emails. The first is an automatically generated message confirming your booking. The second email is generated by us and contains the details of how to join in class on the Zoom platform (an 11-digit “meeting” number, a 6-digit password and a direct link URL). To ensure that you get this second email on time before class, it is helpful if you can book for class at least 30 minutes before class begins. We send out the email providing the class details about 25 minutes before class. If it comes to our attention that someone has registered for class after we’ve sent out the email with class details, we will do our best to send you the contact information before the start of the session, but you might end up missing out.
- Prior to the due start time for class, follow the link information in the second email and join the Zoom “meeting”. We will greet you and we will all practice together.
- During class we will mute all the participants from our end. It is your choice as to whether you have your video enabled. If you do, we can see you and offer guidance where we see it is necessary. Others in the class may be able to see you from time to time in a side bar on their screen. If you prefer that no-one be able to see you, you

may disable your video. We recommend, however, that you have your video on as it adds to the sense of connection and community and enhances the teaching that we can offer you.

- We record the classes – you'll notice the word "Recording" in the top left hand corner of your screen. We are not recording you. We are only recording what's going on in Margo/Hamish's living room, that is, one of us teaching and usually the other one of us practicing. We use these recordings for those people who can't make our scheduled class times. If you're not able to attend at scheduled times, just register for a class and email hamish@apollopoweryoga.com to let us know that you won't attend and that you want the recording. After the class has finished, we'll email you a link to the recording so that you can practice at a time that suits you in the next 24 hours.
- Some students have been taking advantage of the pleasant autumn days we have been having to practice outside. If you leave your device in direct sunlight it may overheat and shut down. If practicing outside, set your device in the shade.

Zoom Yoga Classes are not Like Zoom Work Meetings:

One or two people have said they have not wanted to join in the live streamed classes because they are in Zoom meetings all day. The class is not a meeting where you need to sit staring at your screen. It is a yoga class. Get on your mat, listen in, check the screen if you need to for guidance and flow with the cues of your teacher. It is not the same as being in the studio but it is a good substitute and it most definitely is NOT like being in a work meeting over Zoom.

Early Morning Classes during Level 3?

We have had some inquiries about earlier class times on working days under Level 3. We canvassed those who have been regulars of 6:15 am, 6:30 am and 7:30 am classes prior to the lockdown and who are essential workers to ascertain their need for early morning classes. From that survey there is not the demand to justify running an extra session daily or moving the popular 9:30 am session to an earlier time. We are sorry if that is not ideal for you if you are already working or will be going back to work under Level 3. The option to **register for a class and receive a link to the class recording** that you can practice with at your preferred time of the day is your best option and we encourage you to do that.

PRACTICE AT APOLLO POWER YOGA – COVID-19 ALERT LEVEL 2

Once the country reaches Alert Level 2 we will re-open our physical studios and will operate similarly to the way we did in the weeks leading up to the lockdown but with some slightly tighter restrictions.

1. We will **limit class numbers** so as to ensure adequate social distancing. It will be necessary to book for class and class numbers will be limited at both Salisbury Street and Ferrymead. Please only book for classes you intend to participate in.
2. The full range of classes that we offered prior to the lockdown will not be offered straight away. Given the drastic reduction in revenue that Apollo has experienced

during lockdown, we have to cut our cloth carefully for a time. We will **offer a plentiful array of classes across our two venues** but there will not be competing classes at the two venues (e.g. just one 9:30 am class daily, not one at each venue daily). As numbers in classes build we will add extra classes as necessary.

3. Before attending any classes at our studios you will need to **update your email and phone contacts** with us for the purposes of contact tracing.
4. Upon arrival at either studio, before you touch anything in the studio, please **wash your hands** (at the kitchen sinks, not the bathroom sinks). Even if you washed your hands before coming out to practice yoga, please comply with this request, for the fact of hygiene and the appearance of hygiene and the building of trust and confidence. Please do not ask to be exempted.
5. As was the case prior to the lockdown **we will regularly clean and sanitise areas touched frequently** such as door handles, hand rails and so forth.
6. We highly **recommend you have your own mat** and bring it to the studio to use. We do what we can to disinfect the rental mats between uses, but in the interests of the health of the whole community at Apollo Power Yoga and wider afield, please use your own mat where at all possible.
7. During Level 2 we **will not offer any hands-on assists** in classes at our studios, to maintain social distancing. When we reach Level 1 we will resume hands-on assists but will continue the disc system introduced earlier this year where you can indicate your preference not to receive assists or your willingness to receive them.
8. We are having PayWave enabled on our eft-pos terminals and ask that you use this **contactless form of payment** or payments direct to Apollo Power Yoga's bank account when making purchases.
9. For a period of time we will **run one live streamed class per day** in the event that you cannot attend at our studios or are unwilling to attend communal classes in studios or if you wish to have access to a recording of a class where our in-studio timetable is inconsistent with your own.

THE GREAT NEWS IS THAT WE KNOW OF NO ONE IN THE APOLLO POWER YOGA COMMUNITY WHO HAS, HAS HAD OR WHO IS OR HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH ANY CLUSTER OR OCCURRENCE OF COVID-19.

WE BELIEVE OUR STUDIOS WILL BE A SAFE PLACE FOR YOU TO ATTEND AND WE WILL DO ALL WE CAN TO ENSURE THAT YOUR EXPERIENCE IN OUR STUDIOS IS A HEALTHY ONE.

APOLLO POWER YOGA ON DEMAND

Wow! Our On Demand classes have had over 2500 views! People from 11 different countries have used these classes.

While you are unable to attend studios due to COVID-19, or if you no longer live in Christchurch and miss Apollo Power Yoga's classes, or if straightened financial circumstances mean you prefer



a lower cost yoga option, our online classes will let you carry on enjoying our style of practice.

Access a range of our classes of varying lengths through our online service on our website: <https://apollopoweryoga.com/apollo-power-yoga-on-demand/> or go direct to the on demand page: <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/apollopoweryoga>.

Practice with all the joy, power, strength, mobility and inspiration that you know and love from classes at Apollo Power Yoga anytime!

POWER IN PARADISE RAROTONGA RETREAT – STILL PROCEEDING

Our yoga retreat to Rarotonga in August is proceeding. The good news is that the only restriction on travelling to the Cook Islands, at present, is to have your temperature taken at the airport prior to departure. As of today:

- **There is NO two week isolation period required upon return from the Cook Islands.**
- **Air New Zealand are still flying to the Cook Islands in August.**
- **There are no COVID-19 cases in the Cook Islands.**
- **There are still spaces open for you to join us.**

Join Margo and Hamish for seven nights and six days at the Ikurangi Eco Retreat in Rarotonga from 7 – 14 August 2020. The Cook Islands may just be the world's best holiday venue in 2020 and we are booked to be there. We would love for you to join us!

The retreat gives you 7 nights and 6 days at the Ikurangi Eco Retreat, "where luxury meets sustainability" <https://www.ikurangi.com/index.php>

On each of your 6 days, Hamish and Margo will lead you in 2 yoga practices, including power vinyasa, power restore, meditation, yoga philosophy and pranayama (breathing

techniques). Ikurangi is currently constructing a covered yoga platform which we'll use for our practices.



You'll have plenty of time between morning and late afternoon yoga practices to explore Rarotonga's other great things to do. Your package includes your choice of 2 from the following other activities:

- * Stand up paddle board and snorkel and/or night SUP lagoon tour
- * Glass bottom lagoon cruise and snorkel (includes lunch)
- * Cross island trek and/or nature walk (includes lunch)
- * Eco cycle tour (includes lunch)
- * Cultural island show (includes dinner)
- * Electric tuk tuk island tour and/or sunset cocktail tour
- * 60 min traditional Polynesian massage

The package includes free use of the Resort's bicycles and snorkelling equipment, as well as 7 breakfasts, 3 lunches and 3 dinners at Ikurangi.

All meals are vegetarian or seafood using the freshest, locally grown, seasonal produce. Ikurangi supports three highly rated local caterers who will provide you with tropical breakfasts delivered to your room, lunches, packaged for you to enjoy on site or take away to eat elsewhere, and dinners served as either a delicious shared Island Platter for you and your room partner, or Bowls of Goodness served buffet style to the group.

On days when Ikurangi isn't supplying your meals as part of the package (and if lunch or dinner isn't included as one of your activities), there are lots of great nearby options. A Saturday morning outing to the local Punanga Nui Market for lunch, as well as the Muri Night Markets open several nights a week for dinner are easy options. There are also excellent restaurants to cater to everyone's tastes and budgets.

By making a group booking, we've been able to get a great discount on Ikurangi's regular rates. You will get all this for just \$NZ2250 per person (twin share). A deposit of \$550 secures your place on the retreat (only 12 places are available), with the remainder to be paid by 7 May 2020.

The package price doesn't include airfares, but there are still really good prices on airfares available for this period. Get your airfares sorted, pay your deposit to confirm your place on the retreat, and you're on your way to Power in Paradise.

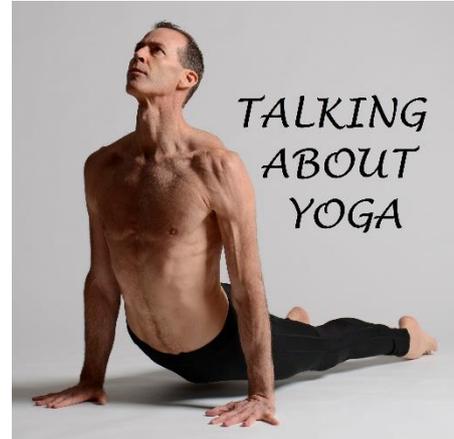
PODCASTS

We have started a collection of podcasts. These can be accessed on our website in the same place that you find our monthly magazines: <https://apollopoweryoga.com/draft-magazines/>

For a start, these podcasts just feature Hamish speaking to yoga principles and sharing of his experiences on his yoga mat and in life.

These talks come at no charge to you. Feel free to open the links and listen at your leisure. There are now five talks on-line for you to listen to and the collection will continue to grow.

Our latest podcast is a 12-minute guided meditation on the theme of Presence. Take the time to sit, be still and be grounded in the beautiful peace of a clear, tranquil mind now.



KIDS YOGA AT APOLLO FERRYMEAD

We are currently running live streamed classes for children. Margo is teaching a class for 4 – 8 year olds on Mondays at 2:30 pm, and for 8 -12 year olds on Wednesdays at 2:30 pm. Book in via the website and give your children the head-start with respect to yoga that you wish you had. Margo and Hamish were in their 40s before they started practicing yoga and we both wish we had been introduced to and had derived the rewards of the practice from a much earlier age.

Margo (and possibly one or two of our other teachers) will run these classes from our Ferrymead studio, after school hours, once all children return to school.



Yoga is a great way for children to build their strength, mobility, equanimity and vitality.



Children's 10 class passes are \$100 – discounted to \$80 for Apollo annual members. Contact margo@apollopoweryoga.com or 027 227 2026 for further details.

FIVE STATES OF MIND

I regularly experience a variety of different states of mind, but so immersed am I in each one that I do not stop to register what state of mind I am experiencing. When I do become conscious of the state of my mind, it is a salutary lesson. It teaches me what it is like to be in different states of mind and whether it is beneficial or not. It also teaches me that I, the identity within me, my true self, is something different from my state of mind.

There are times when I feel idle and unmotivated. Accompanying this state of mind is a lack of empathy and understanding of others. In this state of mind I am disengaged from my purpose, I am disengaged from others and I feel as if I am becalmed in the Doldrums while the great currents of life and the winds of Grace are outside my reach. In others this may be the state of mind of depression or inconsolable grief.

In Sanskrit this dull state of mind is called *mudha*. I can find myself in this state when I feel like I have insurmountable obstacles in my way, when I feel as if fortune is against me or when I feel powerless to make something happen that is important to me. In this state of mind I experience feelings of frustration, I perceive my actions as being futile, I experience self-pity and, along with that, self-loathing. It is in this state of mind that I am most likely to seek out comfort foods, sugar fixes and alcohol to create a temporary sense of uplift in me.

This state of mind is not too common for me and I have strategies, when I become present to it, to re-align myself. My strategies are to meditate, to practice asana, to have good routines and get active in one way or another. Meditation always helps me disengage from an unhelpful state of mind. Being still, breathing and grounding myself in a sense of self, distinct from what I am thinking, is valuable to me.

Asana always leave some feeling relaxed but energised. My preference is for a more yang style of practice and power vinyasa yoga speaks to me most powerfully. The sun salutations charge energy through my whole body. Twists rid me of any stagnant energy. Hand balances and strength poses leave me feeling vital and enthused. One-legged balancing poses claim my attention and call for me to focus my mind and give it constructive work to do. If the *mudha* state of mind causes me to collapse inwards upon myself somewhat, back bends create the opposite experience of lift, openness and projection. The closing portions of the practice create balance and evenness in my physical, emotional and mental state such that when I rise from my mat I am more present, more connected and more in tune with those around me.

Routines are important to me when I am in a dull state of mind and applying myself to tasks, even minor ones, helps re-set me in a process of action and contribution. I find it valuable to have regular classes to teach and my routine means I need to be in certain places at certain times. I follow a routine to prepare the studio for the arrival of students. If a previous group of students has left the blocks and straps untidily and this has not been remedied by the teacher of that class, I roll the straps and stack the blocks and cushions and re-fill the mat spray bottles such that these details create a welcoming appearance and environment.

If I am behaving sluggishly, caught in a dull state of mind, mowing the lawn or sweeping up leaves or taking out the rubbish bins can persuade me of the benefits of contribution and being of service rather than waiting for others to do that which needs to be done. If I have been complaining to myself about something, a commitment to action helps lift me from the lethargy of my mind into the movement of myself to be constructive.

Another state of mind that I experience is that of distraction. In this state of mind, my focus is not on what it needs to be on, but is tangential or consumed with irrelevancies. In this state of mind I can lose a grasp upon what I need to be doing and expend time and energy upon things that are not productive or necessary. This state of mind is called *ksipta*. In this state of mind, my thoughts, feelings and emotions swirl without landing effectively anywhere.

In this condition of *ksipta* I feel ungrounded, uncertain and, again, I feel that I am powerless or that my efforts are futile. When I notice myself in this state I again resort to meditation, asana and routine to bring presence, focus and a feeling of purpose and drive to my way of being. In this state I find it helpful to have goals and intentions and by applying myself to those goals and intentions I create alignment in myself. It is as if, in a distracted state of mind, I have been trying to bring the two negative poles of two magnets together. Then, by concentrating upon something that I want to create, I bring the negative and positive poles together and everything starts to flow powerfully.

A third state of mind that I encounter is a scattered state of mind called *viksipta*. In this state of mind my doubts and uncertainties, my fears and apprehensions are to the fore. I vacillate between decisive action and the inertia of doubt. In this state I will get partway through projects. I will start out with resolve only to quail at the thought of failure or be easily deterred in the face of difficulty or negative feedback.

Meditation is a powerful tool to employ with respect to *viksipta*. Baron Baptiste says with respect to the sort of feelings that I have described, "Doubt your doubts". Meditation helps me

perceive my thoughts as just imaginings and not reality. Meditation helps me acquire the sense of separation between myself, the observer of my thoughts, and the thoughts that I have.

Six days into the first yoga training intensive that Margo and I ran, I found we had moved more quickly than I had anticipated through the prepared material (the group was small and that meant a number of sessions took a shorter period of time than would be the case with a larger group in which everyone needed to take a turn). At that point, I found myself experiencing doubt and I was fearful that I would have nothing to offer the group. I went for a walk, breathed calmly and relaxed my mind. I observed for myself that I was six days into a seven-and-a-half day programme, that I just needed to supplement a little extra material for one session and all would be well. I went back to my room, read a chapter of a book pertinent to the theme of the week, drew from it inspiration for the supplementary material I needed and everything turned out well. My worst fears did not eventuate. Of the four people who were with us training that day, two went on to teach for us in our studios, one teaches in Wellington and another has been teaching yoga in Ashburton. I did not fail to train teachers. I was successful in training teachers and my doubts and scattered mind had no place in my process.

It is important when experiencing a scattered mind, fluctuating between commitment, action and trust on the one hand and doubt, fear and inertia on the other, to be aware of the mental process at play, filter out the thoughts that deny you power and to create a positive frame of mind coupled with the wisdom of knowing that not everything will come easily. If you make that acknowledgement then you can meet difficulties and set-backs with equilibrium in your mind.

Ekagra is a fourth state of mind. *Ekagra* means single-pointed or focused. If you try to balance on one foot in asana but your eyes are restless and will not be still, it will be hard to achieve a centre and be still. So, when practicing asana I endeavour to steady my eyes to a point, *drishti*, and from that single-pointed focus I gain steadiness in my whole body. So it is with my mind and my life as a whole. When I am focused I feel confident, capable and as if I am in pursuit of my true purpose.

In this state of mind I experience a certain urgency of action about myself. Rather than dithering or procrastinating or justifying inaction, I get on with tasks forthrightly and with a determination to see them through and to make things happen. This is what happened when I was doubtful on day six of the training we were running. I separated myself from doubt, galvanised myself to action and created the outcome that I sought. So it was when Margo and I first signed a lease for the premises in Hereford Street in which we opened Apollo Power Yoga. Leading up to the signing of the lease I was anxious, I saw lots of pitfalls and dangers in our way and I was stuck in *viksipta*. Once the lease was signed there was no purpose to be served in second-guessing that action. We were committed. I organised phones, heaters, lockers, furniture, rental mats, blocks and straps, a cash register, an eft-pos machine, signage and so forth and took the steps to get the studio open by the date of the commencement of the lease so as to waste no time.

My mind was concentrated, in *ekagra*. It did not mean there were no problems. But the focus of my mind did mean that for every problem there was a solution, a way forward and an opportunity to make things happen. Things that were conceptual were made real. Stultification was replaced with a sense of momentum and flow. It was a great experience.

The fifth and highest state of mind is described by the wise people as *niruddha*, which is a controlled and restrained mind. I do not know whether I have experienced this state of mind or not. If so, perhaps I have just had glimpses of it, like seeing the flash of a striped tail in the jungle and thinking, "That was a tiger!"

The greatest sense of control of my mind and restraint in my mind that I have experienced has been in the context of meditation. In these moments I have the clearest appreciation of a distinction between myself and my thoughts. These moments allow me to experience myself in stillness without any sense of lack, inadequacy, guilt, fear, obligation or whatever. These moments, precious and short-lived, leave me wanting more. I want more of that experience, not in the same way I want more chocolate biscuits or more salty cashews, but because in the state of *niruddha* I am free from the desires and cravings that sweet foods and salty foods present. I am free from aversion to tasks and feelings that are difficult or uncomfortable.

A theme running through all these states of mind is the powerful role yoga practices can have in elevating and enhancing your state of mind. Meditate. Practice asana. Engage in focused breathing practices (pranayama). Yoga is unique in the comprehensiveness of its practices to help you be your best and to feel content, whole, worthwhile and purposeful in your life. Engage with awareness in the practices of yoga. Bring your conscious awareness to the state of your mind. Use the practices of yoga to transform and heighten the state of your mind.

ASANA SPOTLIGHT

This month's focus pose is camel pose (Ustrasana). In this profound back bend, stretch the front of your body and flow healing energy through your entire being. Form and alignment are critical in camel. Follow these steps:

- Start by kneeling on your mat. Set your feet and knees at hip width distance. Align your hips straight up and down over your knees.
- Draw your tailbone gently down towards the floor, lift the front of your pelvis towards your navel to neutral and firm your lower belly in towards your spine.
- Draw your shoulders up towards your ears, expand your chest and upper back, draw your shoulders straight back and press your thoracic spine into your chest.
- Rest your hands for a start either side of your spine just above your hips on the back of your body. If you can, place the palms of your hands on your back with your fingers facing upwards and your thumbs closest to your spine. If you cannot manage that, point your fingers straight down on your back with your pinkie fingers closest to your spine.
- Sometimes students hunch their shoulders or wing their elbows outwards and wrap their shoulders towards their chest. Do not do this. Instead, draw your shoulders back, point your elbows towards the back of your room and lift your sternum up towards the sky.
- If your neck feels OK, draw your chin in towards your throat, gently tip your head backwards and open your throat. If you experience any light-headedness as a result of doing this, lift your head. If you feel nauseous doing this, lift your head. The rule is, look up unless you are going to throw up 😊.
- Many students report feeling overwhelmed at some level with camel pose. For some, they describe bad pain in their back. That is typically due to collapsing into their low back. It is

essential that, as preparation for camel, you align your pelvis neutrally and engage your lower belly inwards to stabilise your low back from the front side.

- Others speak of feeling nauseous or light-headed. These responses typically occur when the student drops their head back, causing the blood and nervous stimuli through their cervical spine to be interrupted. To avoid this, move your neck last when coming into camel. Start with *jalandhara bandha*. Stretch the back of your neck long and draw your chin and lower jaw in towards your throat (not down towards your chest). After taking your shoulders back and your chest up and after easing into any mobility you can access in your low back, then you may consider relaxing your head back. If there is any adverse reaction to that for you, practice camel without your head tilted backwards.
- Others still experience a strong emotional release in camel pose. This is not a bad thing. The powerful stretch and opening to the front of your pelvis in camel and the opening of areas of vulnerability in your body (your abdomen, chest and throat) can create an emotional response. Relax with whatever comes up. Acknowledge the old wounds, grief, loss, pain as they move through you and let them go to emerge from camel lighter, renewed and free from old suffering.
- This is a pose where the expression “Don’t try hard, try easy” applies. Align yourself consciously, move into the pose carefully and respectfully and drop all ego surrounding the question of depth. Practice camel so as to flush your adrenals and be lit up with energy, rather than so as to be left seeing stars and feeling sick or overcome.



- If you sense there is room to move further into this back bend, tuck your toes under and one by one reach your hands back to your heels. Do not collapse your weight into your

heels. Rather, stabilise yourself on your hands, press your pelvis forward so your hips stack over your knees and lift your chest to the sky. It is a common default for people to over-reach and suppose that holding their heels is better but they collapse their hips backwards, close the angle at the back of their knees and do not extend their spine. If you cannot keep your thigh bones upright and your hips straight over your knees with your hands at your heels you are better to take the first variation with your hands at your hips.



- A fuller variation to camel is to have the tops of your feet flat to the floor and your hands at your heels.
- To come out of camel, access the strength and tensile forces of the front of your body. Do not lurch or snap release out of camel! Engage your abdominal muscles to draw your ribcage towards your pubic bone. Presence yourself to the stretch of the anterior longitudinal ligament that covers the length of your spine on the front side of your spine. When in a back bend, this ligament is stretched and provides resistance in a back bend. Flow with the shortening of this ligament to lift smoothly out of camel.
- You may need to come out with a slight twist and lead your way out with one side of your torso (just as you reached your hands back to your heels one at a time to get into the pose) but it is preferable to come out evenly and neutrally.
- If you have the last variation of camel, there is a nice transition into camel out of embryo pose (simple child's pose). The transition is called "Flowering lotus". Begin in embryo with the tops of your feet flat to the floor and your feet and knees hip-width apart. Relax your

torso down over your thighs and trail your arms back alongside your body. Hang your head down towards the floor in front of your knees.

- Catch your hands to your heels or ankles. Shift your hips towards your heels and hollow out your belly and the front of your torso.
- Slowly begin to lift your head and upper torso away from your thighs but keep your belly drawn in and your upper back rounded forwards.
- As you feel the resistance of your hands bound to your heels or ankles start to lift your hips up off your heels and fluidly press your pelvis forward to align your hips over your knees.
- As your hips move forward, draw your shoulders to your back and lift your chest up towards the sky.
- Last of all, ease your head back and open your throat to the sky.
- Generate the actions described in the last four bullet points in one sinuous stream of movement. Move from the downward facing position, flexion and rounding of embryo pose to the upward facing extension and expression of camel in a fluid and seamless way. Catch the light!
- The “extra for experts” variation is to lower your forearms to the floor behind your feet, rest your hands at your feet and hang your head down to the floor behind you. In order to do so you must shift your hips back behind the line of your knees and close the angle at the back of your knees. This is the only camel variation where you should do so and constitutes an exception to the rule that, otherwise, you should stack your hips straight up over your knees. This called *paripurna ustrasana* or full camel pose.



Life brings us to our knees. This is not a cause for dismay or gloom. Be humbled by the forces outside of your control, surrender to the power of the moment and open your heart. In camel give up your need to control. Let go the accumulated care and burdens of your life. Open to a new experience of vitality, connection and trust in yourself and the world around you.

FROM BARON BAPTISTE

#BAPTISTEYOGA

Close your
eyes, let
go and **be**
awake.

Baron

 BAPTISTE
INSTITUTE



Close your eyes, let go and be awake.

Namaste

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power yoga