



Winter Wonderland Back Relief



Snow shoveling season is certainly here and even for those of us that exercise regularly, all of that shoveling can be quite stressful on the back. If you feel stiff in your lower back area, here's a short yoga practice to help with the rigors of snow shoveling:

Single Arm Raises -- Stand with your feet a comfortable distance apart. On an inhale, raise one arm up from the front above your head. On an exhale, lower the arm back down to your side. Do the same for the other arm (raising on an inhale, lowering on an exhale). Repeat 3x each side.

Downward Dog Vinyasa -- Come down to Child's Pose (sitting on heels, forehead to the floor, arms resting in front of you on the floor with the elbows soft). On an inhale, come up onto all fours (gently raise your chin at the top of the inhale, feeling a slight arch in your back) and on an exhale, come into Downward Dog. Inhale back to all fours and exhale back into Child's Pose. Repeat 6x.

Chakravakasana -- From Child's Pose, inhale up to all fours (raising your chin gently at the top of the inhale) and exhale back down to Child's Pose. Repeat 3x. NOTE: At the top of the inhale, your chin should be comfortably raised and you'll feel an arching in your back. As soon as you start to inhale, lower your head and gradually come back to Child's Pose (ending with your forehead on the ground as you complete your exhale). This isn't a Cat/Cow movement -- rather than the upper part of your back feeling the stretch, this movement works the lower back.

Lying Alternate Knee to Chest -- Lie on your back and take a few deep breaths. Inhale and then on an exhale, bring one knee to your chest (the other leg stays straight on the ground) and bring your forehead to that knee. Repeat with the other leg. Do each leg 6x.

Urdhva Prasrta Padasana to Apanasana to Dvi Pada Pitham -- From a lying position bend your knees and rest your feet flat on the floor. Now take your feet off the floor and rest your hands on your knees. On an inhale, raise your feet to the ceiling and your arms up and back to rest overhead on the floor (Urdhva Prasrta Padasana). On an exhale, bend your knees while simultaneously lifting your arms off the ground bringing your hands back onto your knees (essentially, you're returning to the starting position) and bringing your knees into your chest (you do this with your core strength rather than pull your knees in with your hands) [Apanasana]. NOTE: By the time your knees are in toward your chest, you should have exhaled all of the air out. As you do this feel your shoulders on the floor. Inhale your feet (your knees stay bent) and arms down to the floor and raise your hips towards the sky (Dvi Pada Pitham). Exhale and bring your knees towards your chest (hands resting on the knees). Repeat this sequence 4x.

Savasana -- Lie with legs straight or with knees bent feet flat on the floor and rest for 3-5 minutes. Feel your body melt into the floor. Relax in knowing that you've completed your snow shoveling for the day. Whether you're playing in the snow or working to clear it away, your back will thank you for a little extra care. And for those of you lucky folks who are in a part of the world in which you aren't getting snow -- that's no excuse to neglect your back. They say that you're only as young as your spine is flexible.

For more back strengthening and flexibility training, join me on the yoga mat for Ladies Only classes. (See attached schedule.) I also specialize in personal training with therapeutics for physical issues such as back pain and stressed joints. Love your Winter!...Jackie ❄️

