

YOGA WAKE UP

In the New Year we can feel overwhelmed with many options regarding getting fit and healthy. New Year resolutions and quick fixes can make us feel better for a brief time and are often followed by a dispirited feeling. Through yoga we can make small changes in our daily routine over a prolonged period of time that can make a sustained change to our wellbeing. Here is Reva's guide to a healthy, feel good start to the day, try adding a couple of steps into your usual routine and then when established introduce a few more.

1. **Apple Cider Vinegar-** a glass of warm water with a teaspoon of apple cider vinegar (unpasteurised with the 'mother') helps to awaken and cleanse the body's system. The vinegar can help to break down unwanted bacteria and uric acid and is known to have many health benefits including reducing inflammation and blood pressure.
2. **Dry Skin Brush-** using a firm brush, brush your skin in sections from the feet up to the entire body, the strokes moving towards the heart. This rejuvenates the skin and supports the lymphatic system and reduces toxins. Follow with a warm shower, if you're feeling brave alternate between hot and cold water to further stimulate lymph, immunity and blood circulation.
3. **Oil Pulling-** use a large teaspoon of coconut oil to swish around your mouth for 10-20 minutes. You can do this while you're in the shower. Coconut oil is anti-fungal and anti-bacterial so excellent to maintain healthy teeth and gums.
4. **Tongue scrape-** Use a copper tongue scraper to clean the tongue, a traditional ayurvedic practice to remove bacteria from the mouth.
5. **Neti-** a traditional yoga cleansing practice can help with mucous, sinus and respiratory problems. Can help alleviate anxiety and tamasic states such as depression and awakens ajna chakra. Using a neti pot dilute salt in warm water and pour through nostrils one at a time. Best to have someone show you to begin with. It's important to ensure salt water is fully drained from the head and nasal cavities.
6. **Herbal tea-** re-hydrate and awaken the digestive system with a warm herbal tea. My favourite is from common indigenous plants that you may have in nature near you. Nettle and horsetail for its anti-fungal, anti-inflammatory qualities and silica to support teeth and bone density.
7. **Movement-** awaken the physical body with movement through asana, dance or shaking. As you move allow a sense of yawning, stretching and creating space into the physical body. My favourites include somatic movement, fascia release

(bringing increased awareness to contracting and releasing muscles) and free style intuitive movement.

8. **Breath-** the traditional practice of Pranayama can help connect with present moment awareness and bring steady, slow breath which can support us having a spacious, clear mind and cleansing our whole system. As with neti it is advisable to have someone teach you the different techniques such as nadi shodhana and kapalbati. The most basic is that of abdominal breath.
9. **Meditation-** allowing the body to become still and bring awareness to the breath. Witness the natural mind, observing and returning to the breath. We can label a thought or emotion as simply that, a thought or emotion without following a story. Rest in the space of the heart. Through practice we can become less identified with the body and egoic self and more identified with Consciousness or Self. Returning to a still, spacious place inside helps us feel anchored to the Self during our day.
10. **Intention-** begin your day with a clear intention about what sort of day you wish to create and manifest, what are you grateful for? Some of my favourites are; 'I am grateful for my day being easeful, joyful and abundant' and 'May all Beings be free from suffering and abide in the light of the Heart'.
11. **Chanting-** creating sound is uplifting, bring joyful feelings and bring us into the present moment. You may wish to chant traditional Sanskrit chants or mantras or any song that brings positive energy to your being. Sound stimulates different regions in the brain both on an energetic and physical level. Experiment with free style sound or 'sound doodles'.
12. **Oats-** bring nourishment and warmth to the body after its fast overnight with a bowl of porridge oats, adding coconut, ghee, ground pumpkin, sunflower, flax , hemp seeds and a little cinnamon or nutmeg. This starts the day with a sustaining whole grain and the extras are a source of omega 3, protein, vitamin B and good oils which is excellent for balancing the body and mind.

