

Back pains, it's over !

Esprit Yoga | May - June 2016 | Published in paper edition n°31

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Widespread and often disabling, back and lower back pains can be eliminated with proper and regular practice.

Valentine tells me his problem: "I feel rusty. In the morning I get out of bed with lower back pain, thinking I've become a little old lady. I used to be sporty, but now, with the kids, I don't have time anymore. Besides, every time I move, it hurts!". I look at the X-rays and examine Valentine: there is no doubt that she suffers from chronic lower back pain.

For the past few months," I tell her, "you've become stiff from lack of movement. Your thigh muscles have shortened, your pelvis can no longer move freely and your lower back is stiff. As soon as you move you feel pain, because it pulls on the joints, which have become very sensitive, and so you limit yourself even more for fear of pain. A vicious circle has set in: the less you move, the more pain you have and thus you move even less."

I explain to Valentine that we're going to have to break that circle. "You are going to start with some exercises to reinstaure movement of your pelvis." I show her the pelvic tilt movement. "Then you are going to relax the hamstring muscles behind the thighs that keep your pelvis from moving. Finally, you are going to relax your lower back by flexing, extending, and twisting and turning your spine. In a few days you will already feel better and in a month's time your pain will be gone."

How many people who have taken up yoga have seen their back pain heal when they didn't even expect it! "You will do the exercises four to six times a day and you will not hold the postures for more than 20 seconds." I stress this point because the classic mistake many beginners make is to overdo it. Three weeks later, Valentine was no longer suffering in the morning when she woke up. Of course she was careful in everyday life, but she could do it all again without any pain. Two months later, she enrolled in a yoga class. The back pain was now only a bad memory.



Lionel Coudron

Doctor and yoga professor for over 30 years, he runs the Institut de YogaThérapie in Paris (www.idyt.com) and has published several books on the subject with the Editions Odile Jacob. The latest book to be published is *Le vrai nom du bonheur est sérénité*, ed. Kéro.

The practice

Pelvic tilt and rotation

Stand with your feet apart, hands on your hips. Inhale and tilt the pelvis forward (anteversion). Your pubis rises up and gets closer to the navel (photo 1a). Then exhale by tilting the pelvis backwards (retroversion). Your pubis descends and moves away from the navel (photo 1b). Feel this tilting movement back and forth.



Now make the move to the side. Move your hips by gently placing the pelvis to the right (photo 1c) and then to the left (photo 1d). This time, breathing is free. Keep your legs supple during all these exercises. Now combine the four movements to make circles. Bring the pelvis into anteversion, tilt it to the left, then in retroversion and tilt it to the right. Repeat in the other direction.



2a



Spine flexion and stretching of the hamstrings

Sit down, legs outstretched and feet apart. Place the sole of your left foot against your right thigh, keeping your back straight (photo 2a). Stretch your arms out in front of you, breathe in and raise your arms up to the sky. Exhale, grasping your head from behind. Inhale by opening your elbows. Exhale by bending over to your right knee (photo 2b). Your right leg is straight and your back is well rounded. Do not force yourself. Hold for 20 seconds, breathing calmly. Inhale as you slowly straighten up with your arms dangling.



2b

Spine extension

Lie down on your back. Bring your feet apart near your buttocks. Arms straight and hands flat (photo 3a). As you exhale, push on your feet and raise the pelvis. Push the pelvis towards the sky (photo 3b). Breathe for about 20 seconds. Then exhale by placing your back on the floor vertebrae by vertebrae.



3a



3b

Spinal twist

Sit down, legs straight out in front of you. Bend your left leg and put your foot on the other side of your right knee. Place your left hand back and support yourself by straightening your back. With your right arm, clasp your left leg and place your right hand on your left thigh. Turn your left shoulder back and bring your thigh back against your stomach (photo 4). Breathe for about 20 seconds. Take one more breath. Repeat on the other side.

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