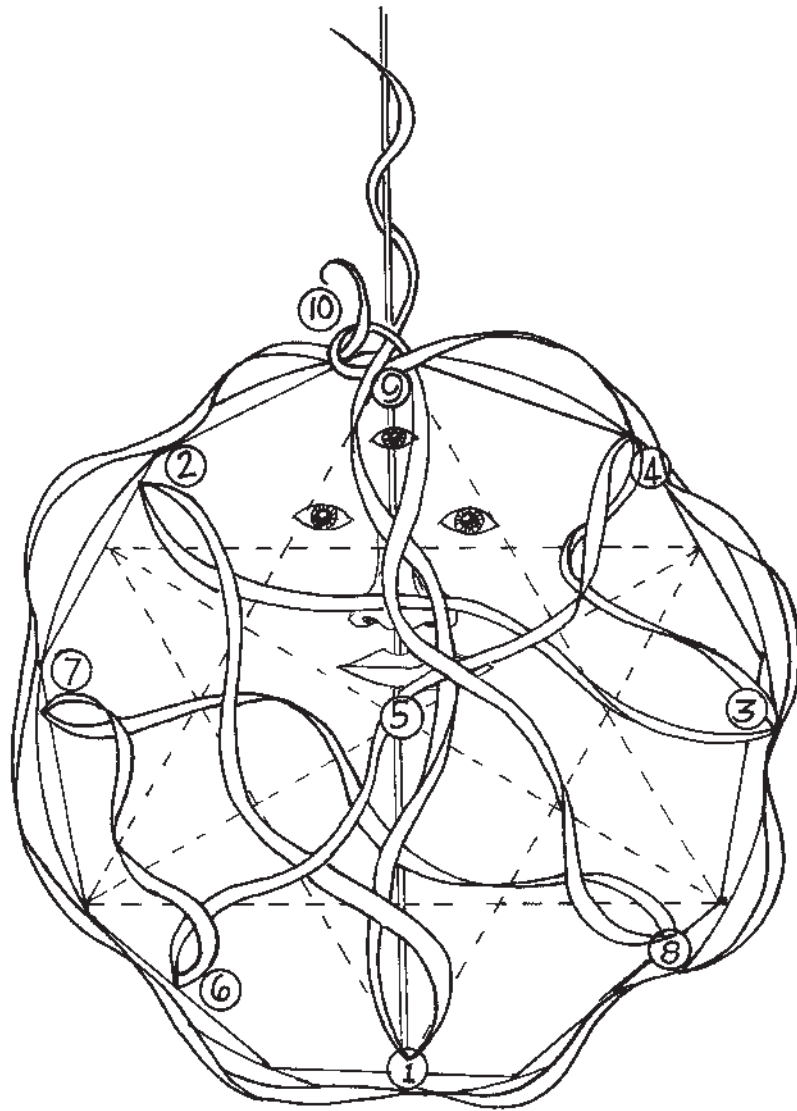


KATONAH YOGA HOME PRACTICE
2017



katonah
yoga®

NEVINE MICHAAN
ILLUSTRATOR SUSAN FIERRO

39 Main Street, Bedford Hills, NY 10507 www.katonahyoga.com

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KATONAH YOGA HOME PRACTICE

Determined by intention;
organized by mind, body, & breath
by Nevine Michaan
2017

A Home Practice is based on personal time management, a ritualization of time and space; a willfulness and willingness to develop a personal discipline; a way to live within the body through the manipulation of asana, pranayama and meditation.

Be kind and generous to yourself.

Using the metaphor of the body as the Magic House, one learns to develop skills and personal techniques for “housecleaning” efficiently, “organizing” effectively and joyfully.

Using the metaphor of “body as instrument.”

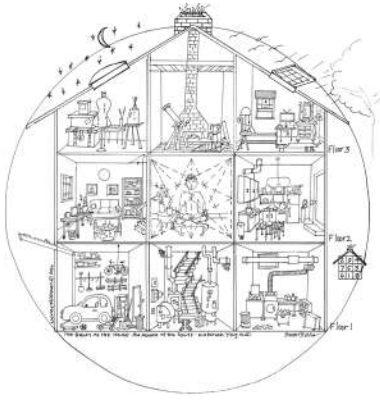
Learn how to tune, play, time; soothe the soul and feed the spirit.

A Home Practice

- A home practice allows one to organize the body, mind and breath reflectively in time. Pacing time, pacing breath and pacing needs.
- A home practice allows one to tune and play one’s own instrument: the body; adjusting the timing and tempering spirit through the manipulated breath.
- A home practice allows one to soothe the soul, feed the spirit and make self a more efficient practitioner in the world while finding joy in learning and being alone.
- A home practice enhances one’s capability in the orchestrated General class.

A General Class/Communal Practice

- A general class practice allows for one to be communal, social and participate with others.
- A communal practice is an orchestrated piece of music.
- A general class practice allows one to be part of the orchestra.
- A general class practice allows one to be a better neighbor.
- A general class inspires, informs and transforms the home practice.



A Home Practice allows you to set goals, follow through, repeat techniques and develop “good habits” for personal insight. Make it easy and convenient, joyful and effective. Develop personal techniques in a personal space.

Setting an intention for what type of practice you will participate in depends upon the goal of the practice and how much time you are playing with.

What is the goal of the practice? Think of self.

Goal

What do I need?

Do I need to rest?

Do I need to be alert?

What do I want?

Do I need to stretch or tighten up?

How do I become sensible? Catch my breath...

Time and Space

Ritualize use of time. How much time do you have? Use time to measure experience.

Use a breath count to manipulate time.

Ritualize use of space. Light a candle. Put flowers in the room. Make it nice.

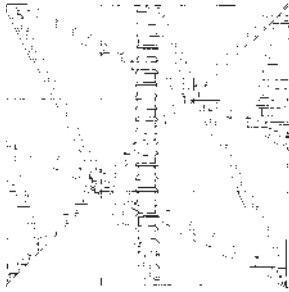
Place a nice mat on the floor. Have some props if possible.

Use time to your advantage.

Katonah Yoga® Home Practice

- Establish a ritualized space, quiet, clean, equipped with props and love.
- Set a ritual.
- Know how long you have for the practice.
- Set breath counts for each pose, establishing a formula with a beginning, middle and end.
- Be practical.
- Be sensible.
- Be efficient.
- Be effective.
- Develop good techniques.

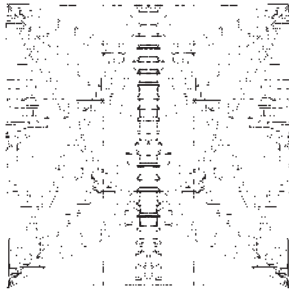
Tune one's instrument, orienting. Move breath like the tide. Hear personal breath. Count one's pace.



BEGINNING

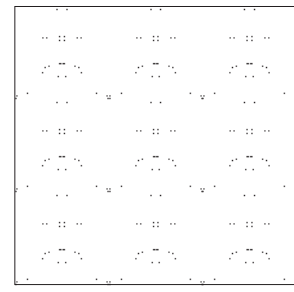
The beginning of the Home Practice, one organizes oneself, and starts with “positioning,” by putting oneself in the center of one’s circumstances: occupy center, mediate circumference.

At Katonah Yoga, we organize the body on a template of the 3 x 3 Magic Square, with the body being the Magic Cube. We reference a compass rose that positions one in time and space, our map of orientation.



MIDDLE

The middle of the Home Practice requires attention and demands sustained effort. It is easy to be distracted. Stay vigilant. Keep organizing yourself in the asana to the breath and count.



END

The end of a practice completes the endeavor of graceful effort. Time well spent. Personal practices promote personal health and well-being. When one is well, one can help others.

Be grateful. Be graceful.

What you will need to set up your home practice: props and ritualized space.

Our favorite props:

- 4 blocks
- 2 blankets
- 2 sandbags
- a mat
- couch, chair, bench or a piece of furniture

Why Count the Breath?

To connect the mind with the breath.

To keep the mind trained and focused.

To make a deal and follow through establishing a beginning, middle and end.

There is reason in determination.

When the goal is achieved there is satisfaction.

Trains the mind and body to use the breath to succeed, to complete.

Counting the flow of the breath allows one to adjust time by counting fast or counting slow.

Don't stop things when agitated, stop when you have achieved your goals.

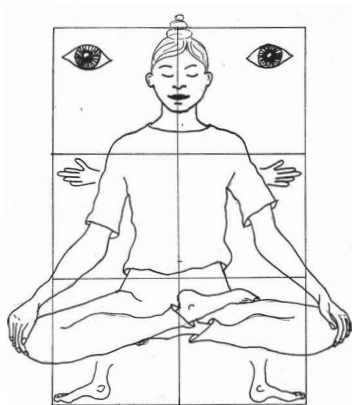
PREPARING ONESELF TO SIT

Each meditation begins with establishing one's body in a formal, functional position. Be relaxed, but alert—maintaining a posture that is organized in dimensional space—referencing oneself within 9 directions of space. Consciousness centered in one's body.

Use eyes to see. Add lots of angles: acute, obtuse, right (90 degrees).

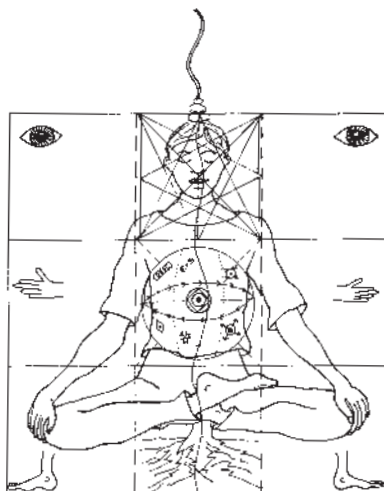
Use ears for listening. Hearing oceanic breath, connection to universe; hearing external sounds, hearing internal dialogues.

Hone skills. Find center, smelling the environment, hearing the environment.

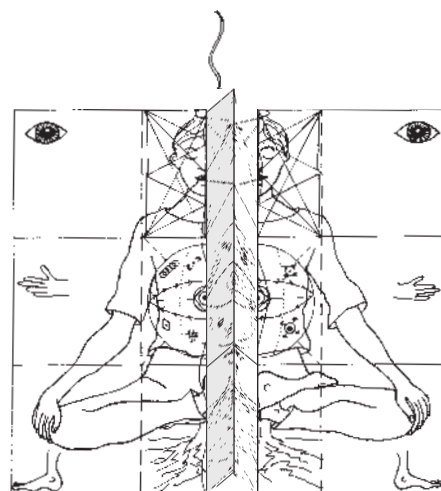


1. Ritualize your environment.
Find a quiet space. Position oneself. Sit in a chair or sit in virasana, lotus, or siddhasana. Sit on a slight down hill slope. In your mind, don't be static. Be still and dynamic.

Organize yourself to occupy the center of your circumference—the center of your embodied sphere. Orient yourself like “the driver in the driver's seat.”



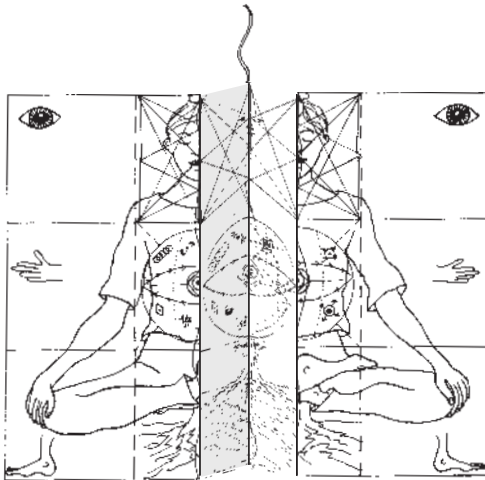
2. Close your eyes 9/10 of the way.
Organize your vision to mediate perception being aware of internal space, external space, and expansive vision between the two. Connect your hearing to your breathing. Be present. Manipulate the breath so that it is rhythmic and oceanic. Put the tip of the tongue lightly on the middle upper pallet allowing the imagination to open the primary channel.



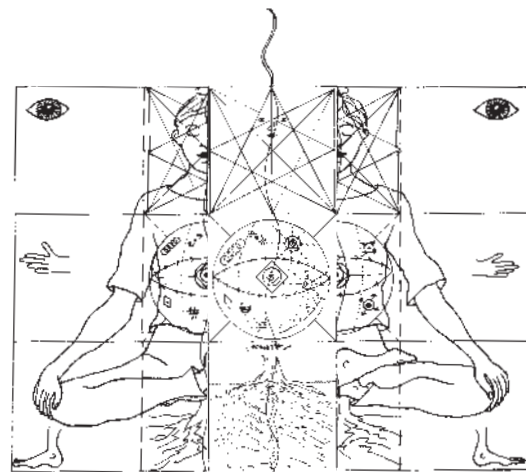
3. Open your imagination.
Use your mind and breath. Imagine a golden thread descending from above to below from the universal into the depths of the personal along the center channel, the column of 9-5-1.

KNOW TIME SPINS,
THE SUN IS ELECTRIC, THE MOON IS MAGNETIC,
THE STELLAR IS RADIANT.

ORGANIZE YOURSELF
TO MEDIATE YOUR STABILITY, YOUR ABILITY,
AND YOUR IMAGINATION.



4.
Use the thread of imagination.
Occupy center and organize circumference and mediate the space between.



5.
**Connect with your internal vision,
your sense of perception.**
Imagine your future in front, your memories behind and be present as the meditator.
In front of you is potential. Behind you is memory.
Be in the present by mediating the middle.
Connect hearing to breathing.

HOME PRACTICES

by Nevine Michaan
2017

Breathing/Meditation Practice:

A Sitting Practice

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Fluency and Pliancy Practice:

Open Vision and Break Habits

•

Longevity Practice

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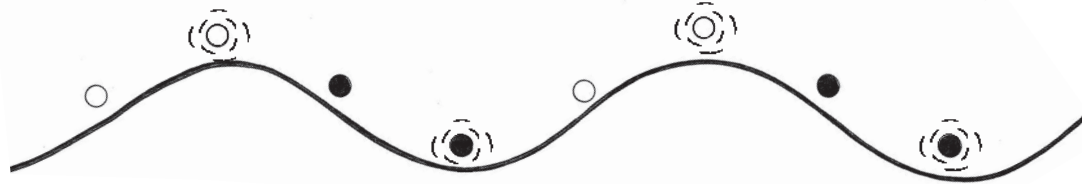
Restorative Moments:

Taking Advantage of Props at Home

•



THE BREATH HOLDS PRANA AND UNIVERSAL SPIRIT.
 PRANA IS SPACE DUST:
 IRON, ORES, AND MINERALS IN THE UNIVERSE
 THAT FEED THE MIND AND BODY.



BREATHING MEDITATION CIRCUIT: A SITTING PRACTICE

1. Kapalabhati Breath Work

Sitting in hero/virasana or lotus or siddhasana, position yourself where you are on a down-hill slope so your hips are titled downward and your knees are below your hips. Have your eyes 9/10 closed. Place your tongue lightly on the center of your upper palette, formalize form. Establish an internal drishti of trinity: eye - eye - third eye.

Open up the imagination.

Organize yourself on the axis mundi,
 the sutra atman, the Golden Thread.

Connect the personal to the universal.

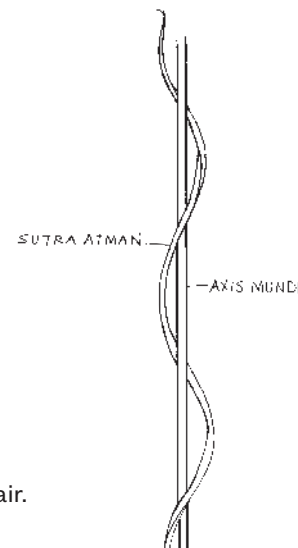
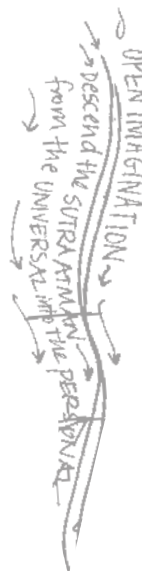
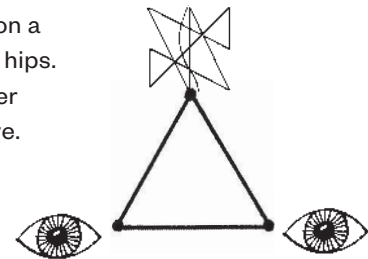
Place arms up in "V" —symbol of equilateral triangle:
 Strength, Structure, and Stability.

Set a standard breath count for all the pranayamas:
 25/50/100

Begin your Kapalabhati Breath.

By counting, the pose is subject to a beginning, middle, and end—
 setting an intention. Following through and completing. Open windows, cleaning air.

Pause in between asanas to allow oneself to replete and complete.



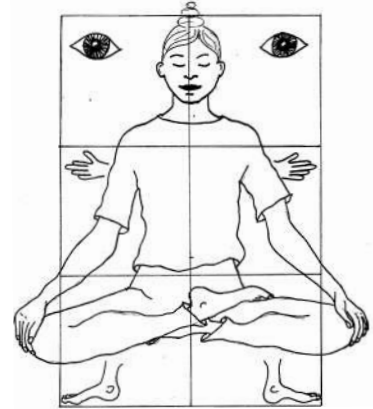
2. "CAT and COW"

Maintain sitting posture whether it be in hero/virasana, lotus or siddhasana.
Make fit of hands on knees like a ball in a mitt. Make the fit fitting.
Maintain your measured count.

Establish a rhythmic breath; inhaling drawing breath in and rounding back, then, exhaling breath, back bending...repeating and increasing speed as if you riding a 3-speed bicycle, then a 10-speed, ...going faster and faster, igniting the pilot light and building primal heat. By nature, if you generally go slow, speed it up. By nature, if you generally go fast, do these slowly.

Experiment with both speeds. Generate heat in the pelvic floor using the heat to make the bones pliant.

When you have reached your count, transition to the next pose.

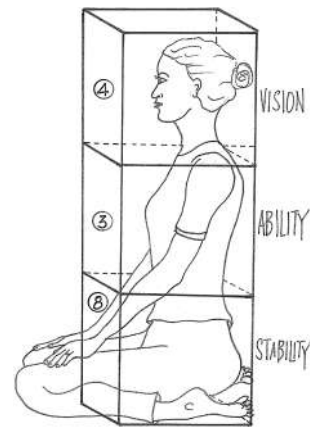


3. "STIRRING the POT"

Maintain sitting posture whether it be in hero/virasana, lotus or siddhasana.
Keep fit of hands on knees like a ball and a mitt.
Maintain your measured count.

Begin to "stir" your torso in circles clockwise and then counter clockwise.
Inhale as you move your torso in front of you and exhale as you stir your torso behind you. Make the breath circulatory as if moving your water, like the breath.

Circulatory breath, moving your water.



4. "PLAYING the THIRD HAND"

Webbed Hands Behind Your Back, Flapping Arms, Bastrika Breath

Maintain sitting posture whether it be in hero/virasana, lotus or siddhasana with hands and fingers "webbed" behind your back. ("Webbed" means fingers interlaced like that of a tennis racquet, back of the hands touching your back, elbows out, and clasped hands/fingers between shoulder blades.)

Maintain your measured count for your breath.

Start a bastrika breath (a "bellows" breath of in, out, in, out, in, out...) while "flapping" your wings (your arms) while your hands are webbed behind. Here you are stoking the breath, heating the fire, ventilating, and rising and circulating the heat.



5. TIME—EAST TO WEST
Movement from Dawn to Dusk

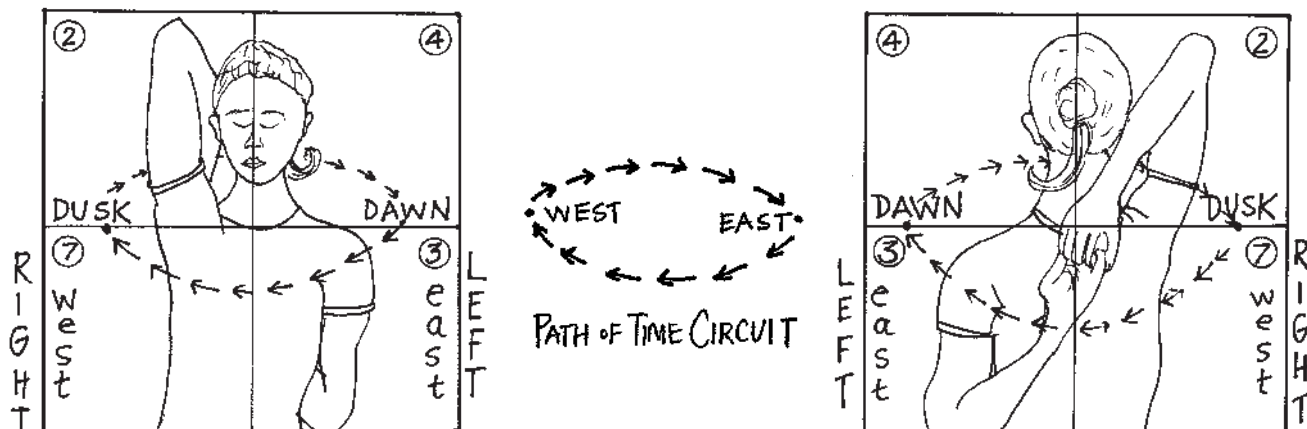
The sun doesn't rise, the sun doesn't set; you rise, you set, and the planet spins.

Maintain sitting posture whether it be in hero/virasana, lotus or siddhasana.

Place hands on shoulders as the fit of "ball and mitt" with shoulders being the ball and your hands being mitts. Have elbows out and upper arms parallel to the floor. Use them as a level tool of structure.

Maintain your measured breath count.

With hands on shoulders, begin spinning. Inhale as you turn your torso to the left (side of the heart). Exhale as you turn your torso to the right (side of the liver). Imagine Dawn in the East on your left, where you inhale and Dusk in the West on your right where you will exhale. The movement is from Dawn to Dusk, inhaling and exhaling, counting the breath on the exhale.



MOVING INTO CIRCUIT MEDITATIONS

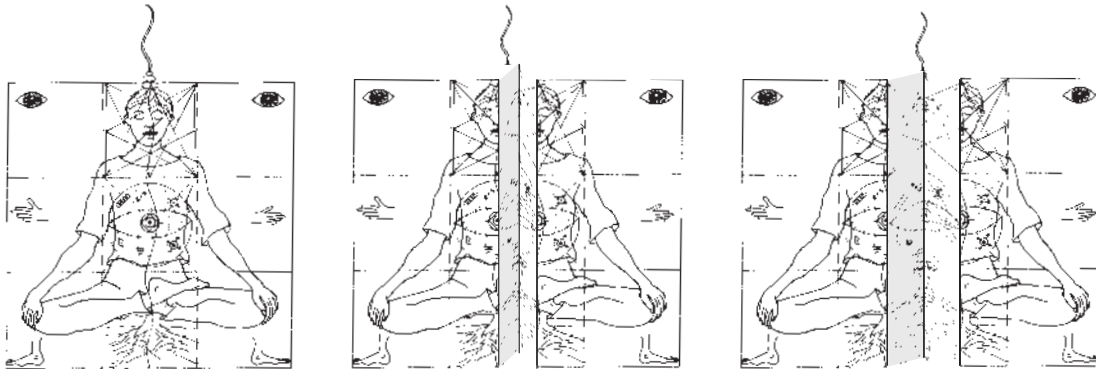
OCEAN BREATH Tides moving in and out

THE MOMENT Grace and Effort: Water and Fire. Inhaling up the back as fire, exhaling down the front as water (9—1)

TIME East and West: Dawn and Dusk. Left to right, around back from right, back to left (3—7)

THE SEASONS Rising from the depths of the east/descending from the apex of the west. (2—8)

Maintain sitting posture whether it be in hero/virasana, lotus or siddhasana
Maintain breath count.



6. OCEAN BREATH

Tides moving in and out, breath of ocean. Connect hearing to the breathing, kidneys to lungs.

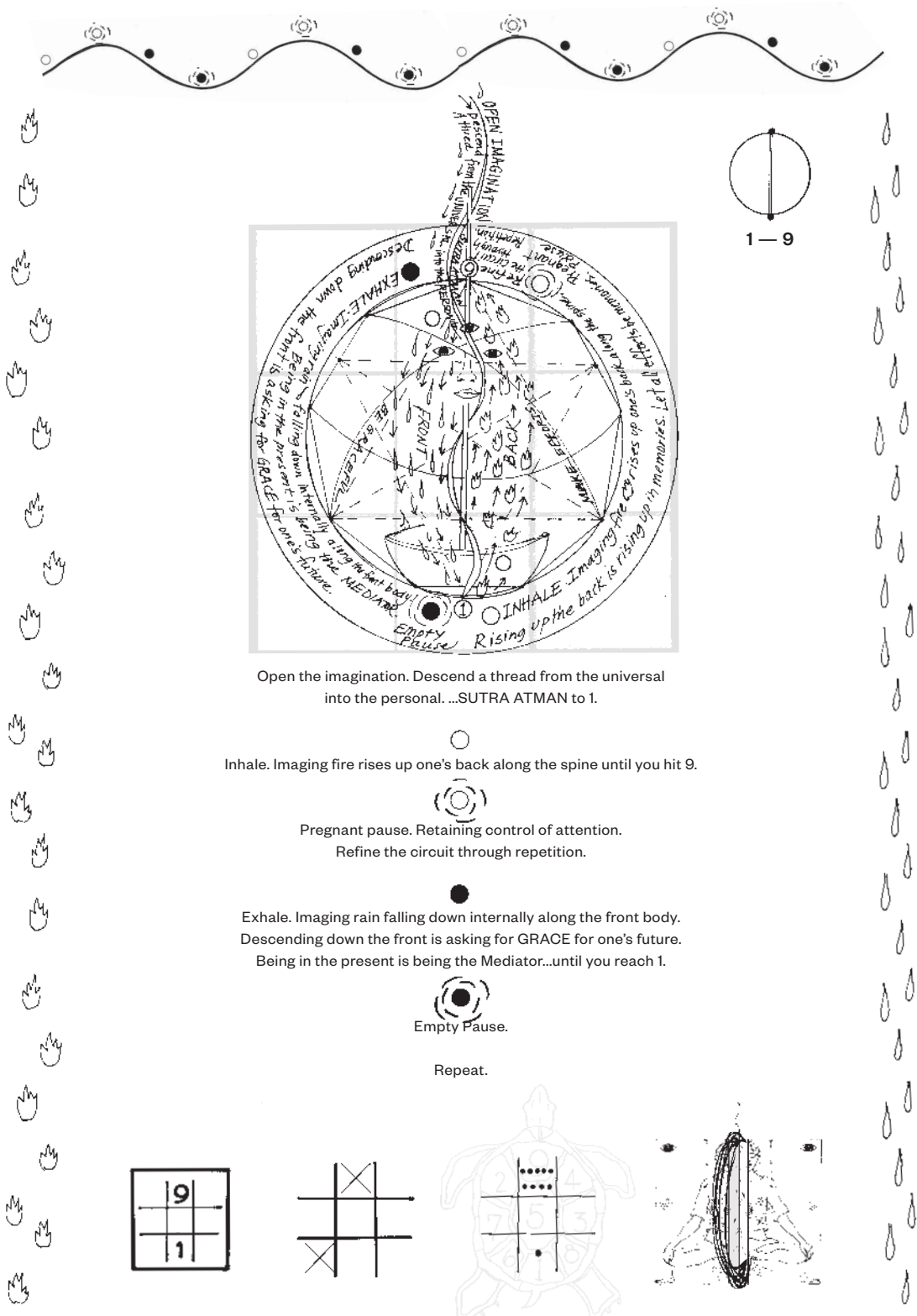
The sound that soothes the soul is the oceanic sound of the breath. The tide moving in and out.

The personal breath connecting to the breath of the planet.



7. THE MOMENT Breath of Grace and Effort (9—1)

Image fire rising up the back on inhalations.
 Fire's character is effort, vigilance, attention.
 Image water raining down the front on the exhalations.
 Water's character is grace, freely given, make oneself available.



Open the imagination. Descend a thread from the universal into the personal. ...SUTRA ATMAN to 1.

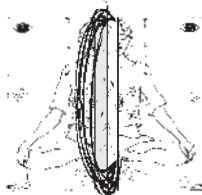
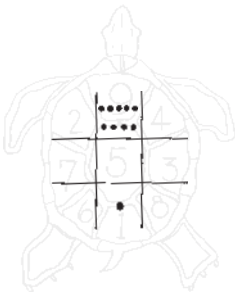
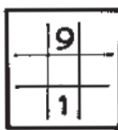
Inhale. Imagining fire rises up one's back along the spine until you hit 9.

Pregnant pause. Retaining control of attention.
 Refine the circuit through repetition.

Exhale. Imagining rain falling down internally along the front body.
 Descending down the front is asking for GRACE for one's future.
 Being in the present is being the Mediator...until you reach 1.

Empty Pause.

Repeat.



8. Breath of TIME (7—3)

East to West moving from left to right, from sunrise to sunset and continuing after the sun sets in the west circularly behind your back to the moonrise traveling behind you and then the moon setting as it approaches the east (the left) and then at the point of East on the left, the sun begins to rise. Time is revolving. Through revolutions there is potential for revelations.

Imagine the movement of hours. Everyone has the same amount of time—24 hours in a day, 60 minutes in an hour, 60 seconds in a minute. Moving from east to west, traveling back from west to east.

3 — 7

WEST RIGHT EAST LEFT

Open the imagination.
Descend a thread from the universal into the personal along the
...SUTRA ATMAN to 1, rise to 2, cross over, behind, to 3.

Inhale at 3. Hear the birds sing, see the light of the day. Heart hunts for the vision.
Vision feeds the heart. Use time, nature, seasons to personal advantage. EAST on
the left... moving in front toward the WEST on the right...

Pregnant pause at 7. WEST. The right.

Exhale. See the setting sun. Be reflective. Integrate the dusk and the dawn.
Organize self in time and space. Know where you are. The sun does not rise,
the sun does not set. You rise, you set, and the planet spins. moving behind
the back toward the EAST...

Empty pause. 3. EAST. The left.

Repeat.

9. Breath of SEASONS (8—2)

Image the inhalation as spring rising, nature sprouting, growing; beginning in the depths of the east (8), rising to the heights in the west (2). Holding breath above as summer ripens overhead with the image of fruit ripening with the sun overhead; then exhale, imaging as autumn descends down your back, leaves falling; then being fully empty, pause in winter beneath you. Repeat with an inhalation, with spring rising up your front and exhaling with autumn descending down the back.

Rest. Be graceful. Be grateful.

2 — 8

Open the imagination. Descend a thread from the universal into the personal. ...SUTRA ATMAN to 1. Rise to 2.

○

Inhale. Imaging sprouts ripening on a vine. Fire rising up the front in the direction of 2.
Be willing to make efforts in the potential. Participate in the sprouting of spring.
Develop willingness to make graceful effort. Rise to 2 and be willing. Stability. Patience.
Willingness to potential.

◎

Pregnant pause. At 2 hold the fullness of the breath, the fullness of summer. Ripen the Vision.
Reflect. 2: Memories. Set goals in the back of the mind.

●

Descend from 2 to 8. Recollect. Reflect. Image leaves falling; water descending down the back.
Set goals in the back of one's mind. Remember, the movement of memory in time.
Digest the memories. Here is the support of potential.

◎

At 8. Empty Pause. Be insightful. Use experiences to nurture growth. Empty in winter. Will Power.

Repeat.

2		
		8

FLUENCY & PLIANCY PRACTICE: BREAKING HABITS

Develop a pliant back that supports a potentiating present.

Set breath count. 25/50/100

Orient oneself on all fours, establishing a frame that is formal and functional—a “table.” Right angles at the wrist and joints.

1. “CAT and COW”

Establish a rhythmic breath; pulling in, pushing out—setting up a pump. Inhaling, pulling breath in and rounding back, then, exhaling breath, back-bending and pushing the breath out, repeating and increasing speed as if you riding a 3-speed bicycle, then a 10-speed, ...going faster and faster, igniting the pilot light and building primal heat. By nature, if you generally go slow, speed it up. By nature, if you generally go fast, do these slower. Experiment with speeds: suck it up, let it out....

2. “STIR the POT”

Variation: Flip hands.



Variation: Criss-cross legs as leading into Gomakasana (Cow Pose).

On all fours, like cat/cow position, look out (the drishti of trinity is in front of you on the floor), chest out, and begin to “stir your pot.”
Maintain the breath count and table top position.

“Stir” only your hips moving them in circles clockwise and then counterclockwise. Stir your hips rhythmically in one direction and then the other. Stir quickly. Stir slowly. Look out. Move just your hips. Stir them as if scraping the sides of a bowl. Be spherical. Be aware of center and circumference. Follow your breath and keep your count. (Be efficient and effective.)

3. Repeat both alternating between “CAT and COW” and “STIR the POT.”

Pumping up and down, spinning around.

4. Sit in HERO/VIRASANA POSE with arms over head in a “V,”

Establish an equilateral triangle: the archetype of strength, structure and stability.

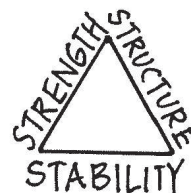
a.) Using kapalabhati breath, choose a count and breath out keeping arms over head.

b.) Place arms in Cow Pose (gomakasana) out in front of you with the bottom hand grasping wrist of top arm. Make top arm hand either into a fist to be “punchy” or in the shape of a cup if you need to be more “receptive.”

i Then move both arms still in gomakasana towards the side of your head of the bottom arm and flipping your chin over the top arm shoulder making a fit, massaging the thyroid, and maintain four to five breaths on one side.

ii With arms in gomakasana with hands positioned, place chin in crux of the elbows and use the elbows to bring your head back, lightly placing the back of the bottom arm on the forehead. Maintain four to five breaths on one side.

c.) Reverse which arm is on top and reverse the twist of the arms and flip of the chin over shoulder.



Repeat steps **i** and **ii** above in 4b.

5. FISH from Virasana with Arms in COW Pose/Gomakasana

Place the block, low side down, on your mat. Sit in Virasana without the block under you, lie back on your mat so your back touches the block and the top of your head touches the mat in Fish Pose. Place your arms in Cow Pose (Gomakasana) and extend them over your head so the palm of the hand of the top arm is flat on the mat and the hand of the bottom arm is grabbing the wrist of the top arm. (As in the previous sequence.)

Explore the pose by moving your arms—still in cow pose—to the left and then to the right. Each time wrapping your chin over your shoulder. This opens up the windows, the thyroid.

Maintain four to five breaths on each side.



6. SUPTA VIRASANA

Remove block from the mat and go into Supta Virasana. Set a breath count. The breath should be rhythmic, oceanic.



7. WHEELS

While in Supta Virasana, roll over the tops of your feet so your knees are bent and your toes are supporting you.



Then place your hands by your head and roll onto the top of your head.



Then use feet and hands and press into a wheel. Hold the wheel for 'x' number of breaths.





Set a determination for a number of wheels and try to follow through.

End the practice in a Forward Bend, Twist or Seed Pose.

LONGEVITY PRACTICE

Setting up breathing and hearing in an enclosed, self-defined circuitry.

1.

Rounded plough with knees in contact with ears,
allowing breath to echo oceanic.

2.

Forward Bend

3.

Inverted Rabbit

4.

Sleeping Buddha

5.

Flipped Virasana

6.

Supta Virasana / Fish with block

7.

Wheels

8.

Seed





The emphasis of this practice
is sustaining time in a dynamic/still pose.

Time calibrated on the breath moving through an energetic circulatory system.

This sequence is designed to feed and flush organs, balance glands,
and prolong physical and mental longevity.

This practice combines the ocean and the air,
fluency and mineral through the breath; connecting hearing and breathing.

The sustained count of the breath,
tracking the breath throughout the spherical form.

The asana is the sustainable container....

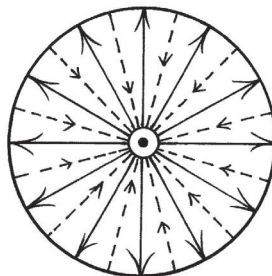
Choose a consistent breath count in all variations.

Find center, mediate circumference.

Be concentrated (concentric).

Be radiant.

Self-soothing.



RESTORATIVE MOMENTS

Blocks

Pose: Place blocks under lower back, legs suspended.

Pose: Place blocks upper back, opening up lungs, heart, and liver.

Sandbags

Use sandbags by holding them for squats.

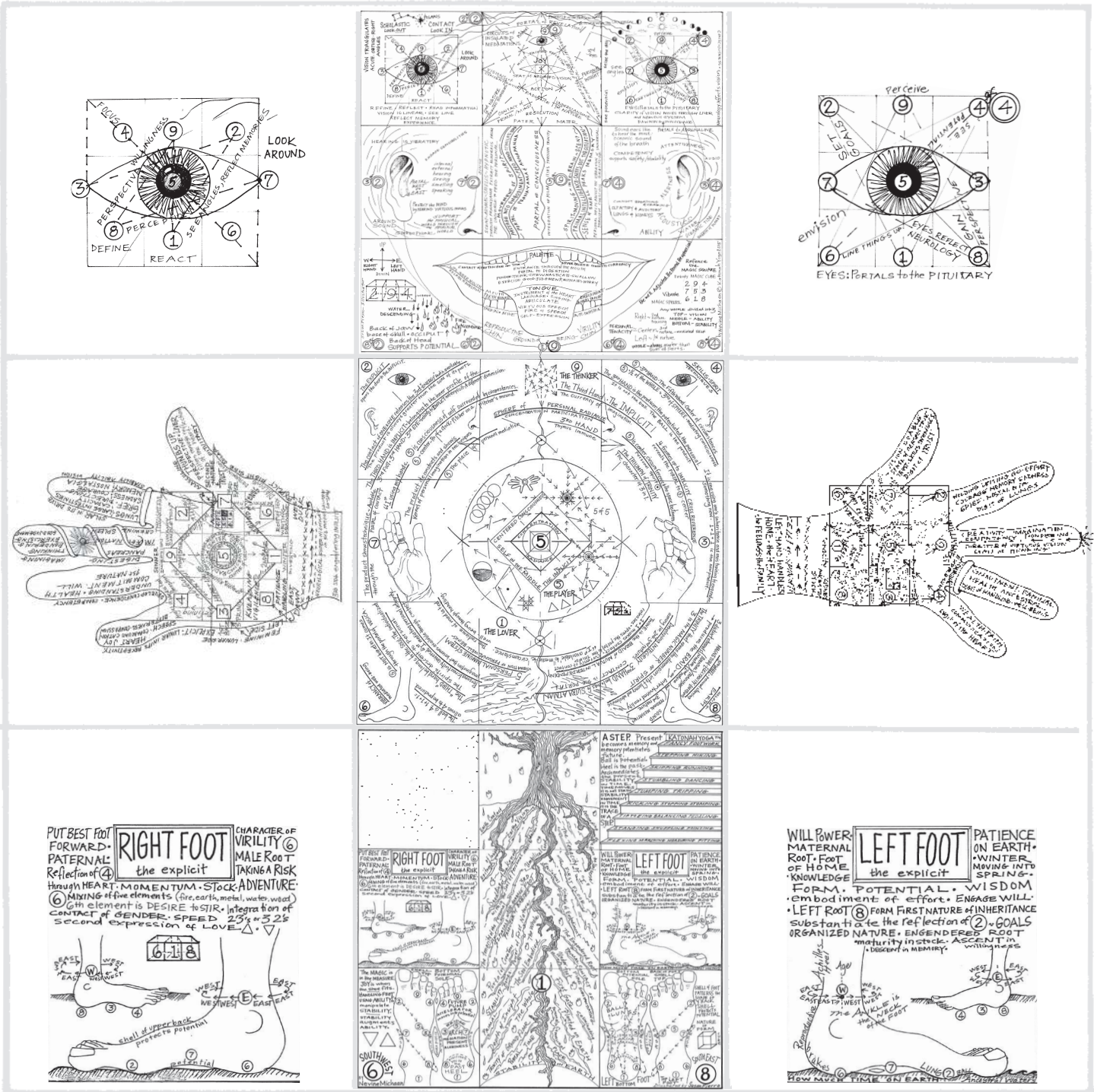
Use sandbags in plough, over feet.

Chairs

From sitting on chairs, transition to hangs.

Using chair as a boundary during Ukatasana (chair pose).

Lay on back and put both feet up on a chair with a block under lower back.



Maps by Nevine Michaan

Illustrations by Susan Fierro

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