

Anatomy Worksheet

Cardiovascular System

What is the cardiovascular system? This system consists of the heart and is a network of arteries and vessels that pump blood throughout the body. The heart is the main powerhouse (the heart contracts and squeezes, picks up blood to the lungs and contracts and pumps oxygenated blood to different parts of the body?)

How Does Meditation Aid this System? Controlled breath helps to relax the body, slowing the body down and allowing it to be in a resting state which allows the heart to rest and therefore work more efficiently.

How Does Downward Facing Dog Aid the cardiovascular system? It enhances circulation, stretching helps move blood throughout the body so as the heart pumps the blood it is able to send oxygenated blood throughout all parts of the body.

The Takeaway/How does Asana aid it?: Asana, meditation, and downward facing dog are all actions that will help improve circulation which in turn affects the efficiency of how well the heart pumps faster or slows down.

Anatomy of Asana:

In what ways does yoga change the muscular structure to improve health? A Downward Facing Dog strengthens the backs of the legs which improves circulation, which helps the heart. The arms and core are actively engaged. Because the hips are above the heart and the heart is above the head (Inversion!) It helps blood pumping from the heart throughout the body and to the head.

How does it help to enhance connective tissues? It opens the chest and stretching of the side bodies and the underarm muscles (Increase in shoulder flexion) all of which improves posture and strengthens and lengthens the arms, legs and core.

How does yoga go so deep it affects the skeletal structure and how so? Downward facing dog creates hip flexion, wrist and ankle dorsiflexion, elbow extension and shoulder rotation. Downward Dog helps to strengthen the entire body straight down to the bone! It also lengthens the spine while pushing the shoulder blades or scapula back and down.

Go deeper! How does it penetrate on a cellular level? In a downward facing dog, the muscles in the chest and armpit area open, so all the concentrated lymph nodes (which boost immune health) allow healthy white blood cells that the lymph nodes consist of, to circulate the bloodstream throughout the entire body. Also a long neck results in the calming of your nervous system

Primary Movers: Strengthens your quads, ankles, arms, legs and core, stretches the chest, hamstring

Create a Class: Name: Letting Go

Posture 1: Downward facing dog

Cues: (from plank) Exhale, downward facing dog, let it go. Lift your hips to the sky. Place your feet and hands hip width distance apart. Press your palms firmly into your mat.

Qualities: Magnetize your navel to your spine to engage your core, lift your knee caps to engage your quads

Modification: Option to shorten your stance, raise your heels or put a slight bend in the knees

Posture 2: Warrior I

Cues: Inhale, Downdog kick your right leg up. Exhale step your foot between your hands, inhale warrior I, breathe here. Rotate your back foot to 45 degrees. Raise your arms, shoulder width apart

Qualities: Tuck your tailbone to stabilize the hips, press your shoulder blades down and away from your ears to elongate your neck

Modification: Option to shorten your stance and/or bring your hands to your heart or hips

Posture 3: Warrior II

Cues: (from warrior I) big inhale, Exhale. Warrior II Let it go. Cartwheel your arm to the back. Open your hip points to the long side of your mat. Recommit to the bend in your knee.

Qualities: Align your front knee over your middle toe and draw your gaze forward. Melt your shoulders away from your ears to elongate your neck. Tuck your bottom ribs in to engage your core, Isometrically draw your thighs together to appreciate their strength

Modification: Option to shorten your stance, less bend in the knee, hands to heart center or hips

Posture 4: Reverse triangle

Cues: Inhale, straighten your front knee. Bring Your front arm over your ear. Allow your other to glide down your thigh.

Qualities Activate your core to open your chest. Pull up on your knee caps to engage your thighs

Modification: Option to shorten your stance or move your hands to your hips

Theme a meditation: (savasana) As you allow your body to rest, take time to tank it for showing up today. That with each inhale and exhale you take, you are open and willing to welcome change. Now with a giant inhale breathe in "I CAN" and the biggest exhale yet, "LET GO". Let go of anything that does not serve you in this moment, anything that will not serve you as you leave your mat and step into the day. Any frustrations, runaway thoughts, Let. IT. GO. Gently remind yourself of the gratitude you hold for yourself for showing up today and carry that appreciation with you. When you're ready, make your way back. As a community let's inhale one more big breath in and welcoming in change, exhale whatever does not serve you....Namaste