

Anatomy Worksheet

Endocrine System

What is the Endocrine System? It is the body's system that is in charge of the hormones being released from specific glands, all for a variety of reasons from respiration to metabolism. It is the chemical messenger system and this network of glands produces, stores, and releases hormones targeted to tissues and organs.

How Does Meditation Aid this System? Meditation will calm the mind and as this sends messages throughout the body and inevitably puts our bodies in a resting/healing state which allows for the reduction of stress, helps maintain homeostatic balance in our body.

Why does upward facing Salute impact this system? Upward facing salute is a relatively calming yet engaging pose. It allows the body to calm down and find its place in a restful state. When we are in a calming state like this it impacts the hormones being secreted and therefore we are able to find a hormonal balance.

The Takeaway: The endocrine system are all the glands throughout the body that produce, store and release hormones to various organs, tissues, muscles, and parts of the body. As we meditate or practice asana it allows the mindful balance of these hormones and better controls our stress response.

How does Asana aid it? Asana, specifically upward facing salute, is a great way to trigger a calm state which leaves room for the glands to efficiently release hormones, this can lead to reduced stress, lower blood pressure, etc.

Anatomy of Asana:

In what ways does yoga change the muscular structure to improve health?

Although this is relatively restful and neutral pose, Upward facing salute is still an engaging one. Activating the core, shoulders, glutes and arms

How does it help to enhance connective tissues? It broadens and lengthens muscles, massages the internal organs during engagement as well as helps joints stay active and healthy.

How does yoga go so deep it affects the skeletal structure and how so? It is a relatively neutral position, close to our anatomical neutral, although a relaxing posture it still engages most of the body, helping the skeletal system with neutral/good posture

Go deeper! How does it penetrate on a cellular level? It is a neutral position so it allows the mind and body to relax into a healing state which can help the body function better physically but also reduce stress so that we may function better emotionally and mentally as well.

Primary Movers: erector spinae (back) and abs quads, shoulders and arches of feet also strengthen and lengthen in this standing posture

Consider the impact of hormones being released during asana versus meditation? Meditation focuses on secreting “feel good” and **relaxing** hormones like cortisol, serotonin, and epinephrine to name a few. Asanas like Upward facing salute will allow the glands of the body to release oxytocin, dopamine, and endorphins also feel good hormones.

Create a Class: Presence

Posture 1: Upward Facing Salute

Cues: Inhale Mountain pose, raise your arms high to the sky, ground down through the tree connecting points of your feet hip width distance apart connect to yourself in the here and now

Qualities: Engage your knees to activate your quads engage your core, press down through your shoulders to feel length in your spine

Modification: Option to bring hands to heart center

Posture 2: one legged mountain pose

Cues: Inhale raise your R/L leg hip height, flex through your foot and stay present in your strength

Qualities: Dip your raised hip down to keep your hip points aligned, Recommit to pressing your shoulders down and away from your ears to maintain the length in your spine, core is active

Modification: Option to have hands at heart center

Posture 3: Standing figure 4

Cues: Inhale/exhale cross your raised foot and latch it over the opposite knee, dip your tailbone back and down as you bend through your standing knee, press your hands to heart center

Qualities: press your shoulder blades together to open your chest, press your hip points back to engage your glutes

Modification: Option to take a tree, if you would like to go deeper, draw your elbows to connect with your shins

Posture 4: Chair

Cues: Inhale chair pose, bring your foot down alongside the other, maintain a generous bend in your knees as you press your sits bones back, energetically raise your arms to the sky

Qualities: Draw your gaze forward to stay present in your chair, isometrically draw the crown of your head and tailbone away from one another to find length in your spine

Modification: Option to keep your hands at heart center, Option to lessen the bend in your stance

Theme meditation: (Beginning of class during child's pose) As you ground down into your mat, find your breath and begin to connect your mind, body and breath. Notice what thoughts begin to roll in. As easily as they roll in allow them to flutter away as you keep your awareness here on your mat here on your breath. I invite you to come back to this space anytime that you feel yourself wandering and allow yourself to stay committed to what feels good at this moment.