**HOLISTIC HEALING A**

**KNEES**

Knees are hard-working shock absorbers. Yoga helps keep them healthy by lengthening and strengthening the muscles that surround the joints and support your weight. These poses also help mobilze your knee joints by correcting the misalignment that occurs if your muscles are too tight.

**1: Mountain Pose**

Work towards feeling the correct alignment in the legs, including the knees. Use co-contraction of both the lower leg and upper leg to support the knee joint.

Pada Bandha is essential to correctly align the knees and support the body.

**2: Mountain Pose** – place a purple brick between the upper legs/inner thighs and squeeze firmly.

**3: Half Wide Leg Forward Bend** with heels and buttocks against wall and hands on chair. Emphasize co-contraction and balanced knees.

**4: Downward Facing Dog Pose** with brick – place a purple brick between the upper legs/inner thighs and squeeze firmly.

**5: Supported Squat Sequence** with belt around door handle.

**6: Warrior 1** with wall/brick support.

**7: Staff Pose**

**8: Head of the Knee Pose** – rolled tea towel behind bent leg knee.

**9: Easy Crossed Legs** – dorsi flexed feet.

**10: Bound Angle Pose**

**11: Hero Pose** – sitting on appropriate support and placing a rolled tea towel behind knees.

**12: Bridge Pose** with brick – place a purple brick between the feet and squeeze firmly.

**13: One Leg Frog Pose**

**14: Bolster Supported Backbend** – keeping legs and buttocks/sacrum activated

**15: Shoulderstand** with brick between legs/inner thighs and squeeze firmly. Lift out of both the hip and knee joints.

**16: Relaxation** – place large bolster behind thighs.

**Important Information**

Most common risk factors for knee pain are old age, obesity, knee injuries because of hyperextension, misalignment of knee, inappropriate way of doing exercise, tight muscles or because of a combination of above factors etc.

Hyperextension at the knee joint occurs when the joints are overly flexible. In this case legs extend too far and move past the point of being straight. Some people may be born with this condition however most people develop it by habitually locking their knee.

Knee injuries can also occur because the way we stand and walk. For example when we stand straight we need to be aware whether our body weight is distributed evenly on both feet. It is not uncommon to observe that one side of heals of people shoes is wearing out more than the other side creating imbalance at the knee joint.

Imbalance at knee joint also occurs because of underdeveloped inner quadriceps and strong outer quadriceps. In this case the tendency of strong quadriceps is to pull the kneecap towards the outside of legs i.e. result in imbalance.

Knee joints in our body can be healthy if the muscles that support them are healthy I.e. both strong and supple. Tight outer hips and hamstrings put undue pressure on knee joints. Athletic activity causes these muscles to tighten up and along with the aging process can cause the condition to become worse (unless proper stretching is done after each workout when the body is warm).

Yoga is excellent for increasing strength and flexibility in the knees. More and more doctors are recommending yoga to their patients who are rehabilitating after a ligament injury.

The benefit with yoga is that it helps to strengthen both the inner and outer quadriceps, which helps to keep the kneecap in alignment. It strengthens the quadriceps, the hamstrings, the calves and the ankles. Strength in these areas all help to support a weak knee.

Another benefit that yoga gives for the knees is the increase in blood flow and nourishment that it sends to the joint and ligaments. As with most poses in yoga, the action of squeezing a body part and then releasing it sends nutrient rich blood to the area that was affected in the posture. Many postures do this for the knees in yoga.

Yoga postures like Staff Pose (Dandasana), Downward Facing Dog Pose (Adho Mukha Svanasana), Squat Sequence, One Leg Frog Pose (Eka Pada Bhekasana) etc. can be very helpful for rejuvenating knee joints.

Practiced with care, yoga postures can contribute to the long-term health of your knees by strengthening your quadriceps, opening your stiff hips, and teaching your body improved alignment and movement patterns that transfer into your everyday activities.

**Note:** It is important to practice yoga with care and caution. Remember the most important rule while practicing yoga postures – pain is a message from your body that something needs your attention. Stop, look, listen and correct the alignment before proceeding further