

Hi James and Nicky.

I have a student in one of my classes and when we do Eka Pada Urdhva Prasarita Padasana (single leg lifts) she doesn't find that her abdominals engage and does not benefit from it. She has quite an arch in her spine. When she bends one knee up it helps with the engaging of the abdominals. Do you think that a bolster may help under her spine?

I also have an older lady who gets the wobbles when she comes down during her Sun Salutations - moving into or out of Downward dog. My heart skipped a beat when one day she lost her balance and came forward. Is there another routine to do instead of Sun Salutations 1?

James:

With the single leg lifts, I recommend taking the student to the wall. Standing with her back to the wall (heels 1 - 2 inches away from the wall), get her to activate Mula Bandha and Uddiyana Bandha (minor). You will be able to see her hips level (horizontal) as she lifts the ilium's up and as she pulls back the lower abdominal area she will feel her sacrum press into the wall. This pressing of the sacrum back will help her feel the muscular engagement and structural alignment. It may be that she is not stabilizing her pelvis during the leg lifts. If she is and it is easy for her, then start her using both legs at the same time, i.e. make it more challenging, but first ensure her technique is correct and that she is engaging the Bandhas.



Tadasana

I have been working with an older lady, who is in a bit of a sorry state and getting down onto the floor in a Sun Salutation is currently out of her reach. Instead, I get her to do the first part of a Sun Salutation, i.e. lift the arms overhead (inhale) and fold forward (exhale), but then to come back up (inhale) and bring the arms back to the side (exhale). Once she has done this 5 times, then I get her to face the wall, arms outstretched and hands (shoulder width apart) and do push-ups on the wall, timed to her breath. Then I get her to come back to her mat and re-do the first part again. By the time she has finished, she has caught up with the rest of the class and does not feel she has missed out. Importantly, she has worked to her capacity.

Let me know how this information works for your students.

Nicky:

We do not want to put a bolster under her spine, but she may like to bring her STRAIGHT arms under her back, her hands touch each other and the palms are down, or teach her the Discovery way, 1 leg bent in hook lying and the working and moving one straight, 30, 60, 90.



Can she manage the Discovery sun salutation, where from dog pose, where she is the right distance for her body proportions, she lifts her heels over her toes and keeps them there as she gently puts down her knees both at the same time and she will then find that when she puts her hands down, her wrists are ahead of her elbows, ahead of her shoulders, so that she has space to move her spine in Cow/Cat...



This lady needs to come often, balance is so important when we are old.