

## ASANA of the MONTH

### Seated angel pose

This challenging pose stretches the groin and hamstrings and, as a forward bend, calms the mind.

- Begin sitting on a block or cushion with your legs out in front. Take your legs out to an appropriate angle: you should feel a stretch, but no strain.
- Sit tall on your prop, ensuring your pelvis is in a neutral position, and your sacrum is pointing backwards.



- Externally rotate your thighs, kneecaps pressing straight up. Flex your feet and energise your legs.
- Take a long inhale, and as you exhale, begin walking your hands forwards. Take another long inhale, lengthening and lifting up out of your sitting bones. Exhale and walk your hands forwards slowly again.
- Continue in this way with the breath, taking care not to strain, and to listen to your body. When you have reached a comfortable maximum, stay here, breathing, legs strong. The aim is not to grab the feet, but to soften into your edges, letting the breath guide you to your own individual maximum in this pose.
- To come out, walk the hands back slowly, and wriggle out the legs.

### DID YOU know?

Some yogis don't practise on the day of a full or new moon. This is because the moon affects the water held within our bodies, just as it affects the earth's tides, and therefore our emotions.



# YOGA news

Calm your mind and centre your body with this holistic ancient practice

**Countryside RETREAT** From May you can enjoy a Kaliyoga hill walking retreat in Le Grand Banc, a restored hamlet in Provence. You'll get two yoga classes a day plus guided walks through the gorgeous lavender hills. To book, email [bahmatow@inbox.ru](mailto:bahmatow@inbox.ru)



## CONFESSIONS OF A YOGA TEACHER

*Sally Parkes runs an international retreat company*

### How did you first become interested in yoga?

Yoga and spiritual practices have always appealed to me. When we introduced yoga to our timetable at the gym I worked at as a trainer fourteen years ago, it was the perfect opportunity to try it. I had been searching for something that was more philosophical and found loved yoga instantly. I was also amazed at how much happier I felt after my first class.

### How has yoga helped you in your life?

In so many ways. Physically, my lower back-ache and other sports injuries involving my knees and shoulders rectified themselves within a few months. But more importantly yoga has become the constant in my life that I can go back to at any time when things are a little crazy. I am healthier physically but I am also happier mentally, as I know by teaching and practising yoga I am doing



something worthwhile. I can't imagine ever doing anything else!

#### What is the greatest lesson yoga has taught you?

Acceptance, both of myself and the world around me. Good and bad stuff happens to everyone in their lifetime, but by cultivating a steady yoga practice you can manage your reactions more easily when the bad stuff happens, and be in the moment to enjoy the good stuff when that happens too.

#### How would you help someone to improve their practice?

Start with a gentle ten or twenty minutes of practice a day and build it from there. Regularity is the key and being kind to yourself throughout your practice is very important. Have faith that the benefits are worth the time and effort. With ongoing commitment your overall wellbeing will improve and you will have a new lease of life.

For more info on Sally Parkes Yoga retreats in the UK and abroad visit [sallyparkesyoga.com](http://sallyparkesyoga.com)

## Your body | YOGA NEWS

### EASTERN PROMISE

Head to Kerala in Southern India next month for flowing yoga with Ken Eymann at the Kailasam Yoga Centre, an oasis of calm. The retreat runs for a fortnight from 3 to 16 March and offers ayurvedic massages plus trips to a nearby elephant sanctuary. Visit [yogandia.co.uk](http://yogandia.co.uk)

### ASK THE INSTRUCTOR

I've been practising for a while now and I'm thinking of booking a retreat abroad. What can I expect?

**Alex says:** Going on a yoga holiday will immerse every waking breath you take into self-development, away from the usual obligation on your time and energy.

You will do yoga and learn every single day for a week, which will train your neuromuscular pathways to re-evalute and will improve your technique very quickly. Most people further their yoga practice on a yoga holiday equivalent to one year of practice if not more back at home.

You can relax into the sequences and really feel so much more when on a retreat. Usually the sun is shining too, giving you all the vitamin D you require for serotonin release. This will improve your mood, release positive hormones and you'll learn to relax more.

### Gems of WISDOM

"Meditation brings wisdom; lack of meditation leaves ignorance. Know well what leads you forward and what holds you back, and choose the path that leads to wisdom." *Buddha*

#### Got a yoga question?

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