

ENERGY FLOW SEQUENCE

With Summer around the corner it's time to brush off the yoga mat and energise your mind and body with some big and powerful asanas. Effective for increased energy, strength and weight loss, follow this sequence to feel fantastic.

UTKATASANA Chair Pose

From Tadasana, bend the knees so you are in a squat position with the feet together. At the same time sweep the arms upwards so they are in-line with the ears. The hands are slightly wider than shoulder width distance apart. Press the thighs together firmly and lengthen the spine upwards by keeping the chest lifted and the chin parallel to the ground. Stretch into the hands and spread the fingers whilst contacting the abdominal muscles and drawing the shoulders down away from the ears. Hold for five breaths.



ANJANEKASANA Crescent Lunge

(Modified version)

From Utkatasana, slowly take a big step back (approximately 1.5m) with the right leg and at the same time bend the left knee to a ninety degree angle. With the arms still reaching up as in Utkatasana, slowly drop the right knee to the floor, untuck the right toes and allow the hips to sink forwards a little and lift the sternum upwards to create a slight back bend. Now draw the navel in towards the spine to help support the lower back. Breathe deeply and feel the rib cage expand. Hold for five breaths.



KUMBHAKASANA

Plank

From Anjaneyasana, lean forwards and place the hands either side of the left foot, tuck the right toes under and straighten the right leg. Now move into Plank by also extending the left leg backwards to join the right leg. Have the feet hip width apart and ensure the body feels strong by contracting the arms, legs and abdomen. Neutral alignment must be kept throughout to stabilise the lower back. Hold for five breaths.



UTTITA BALASANA

Extended Child's Pose

From a Plank position, drop the knees to the floor and keeping the hips lined up over the knees, extend the arms and upper body forwards so the chest sinks to the ground. Press the hands and arms into the ground to increase the stretch through the shoulders. Hold for five breaths before returning to a Plank position.



Runner's Lunge

From Plank position, lift the right foot and lunge the right leg forwards so the foot is in-between the hands. Align the right knee over the left ankle and really engage the back leg so it feels strong. Lift and extend the spine away from the right thigh slightly. Hold for five breaths.



ANJANEYASANA

Crescent Lunge

From Runner's Lunge return to Anjaneyasana (see above) but this time keep the right leg as straight as possible to increase the stretch in the hip flexors, and strongly contract the quadriceps, keeping the heel off the ground. Hold for five breaths.

VIRABHADRASANA II

Warrior 2

From Crescent Lunge, turn the left heel in and open the arms so they are parallel to the floor with the right arm reaching forwards, and the left arm reaching backwards. The feet should be aligned directly under the hands with the left foot turned in forty five degrees and the right foot turned out ninety degrees. Align the left heel with the right heel. Exhale and bend your right knee directly over the right ankle. Lower the right thigh parallel to the floor if possible. Hold for five breaths.



GARUDASANA

Eagle

From Virabhadrasana II return to Tadasana before sweeping the right arm under the left arm, and bend your elbows so the forearms are perpendicular to the floor. Now press the palms together and lift your elbows up towards the sky a little, keeping the shoulders down. Bend your knees so you are in a squat position. Lift your right leg up and cross your right thigh over the left. Point your right toes toward the floor then hook the top of the foot behind the lower left leg. Squeeze the thighs together and ensure the knees and elbows are in the centre line of the body. Hold for five breaths.



MATSYENDRASANA

Lord of the Fishes

From Garudasana, unwrap the right leg and start to tuck it behind the left leg. At the same time deeply bend the left knee and lower the hips all the way to the floor. The right leg is now under your left leg and the left foot is pressing firmly into the ground. The left knee will point directly upwards. Exhale and twist the torso toward the inside of the left thigh. Press the left hand against the floor just behind the sacrum and press your right upper arm on the outside of your left thigh. Lengthen the torso upwards and rotate more to the left as you exhale. Hold for five breaths.

NAVASANA

Boat Pose (With 'lift up')

From Matsyendrasana, bring the upper body back to centre and place both feet on the ground in-front of you. Lean back slightly so the body weight transfers to the back sitting bones. The spine will now be on a straight diagonal. Keeping the chin parallel to the floor, reach the arms forwards so they are also level to the floor. At the same time, lift and extend the legs upwards so the feet are level with your eye-line or slightly higher. Keep the abdomen strong and the chest lifted so the lumbar spine stays straight and does not round at all. Hold this for five breaths before crossing the shins and placing your hands onto a yoga brick either side of the hips. Tuck the pelvis under a little, press into the hands and extended the arms so the body lifts from the floor. Hold for five breaths and repeat the 'lift up' five times,

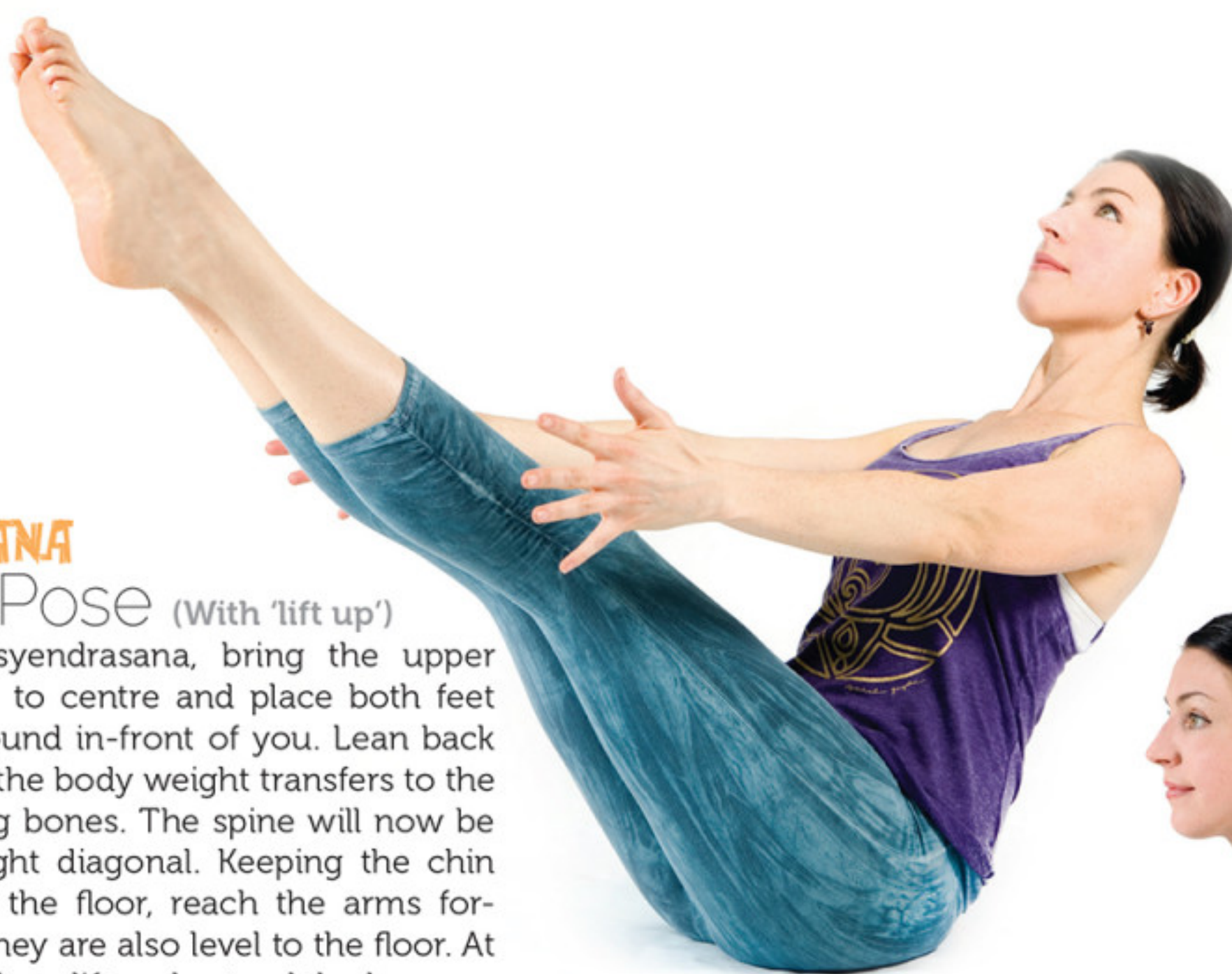
Now take a Vinyasa to standing and repeat the above sequence on the left side. Then move into Paschimottanasana for ten breaths.

PASCHIMOTTANASANA

Seated Forward Bend

Extend the legs in front of you and sit with the spine as straight as possible (sit on a yoga block if needed). Now exhale and lean the upper body forwards, extending from the lower back, so that the upper body moves towards the thighs. To maximise the stretch of the hamstrings and calf muscles, either hold the feet and gently pull the feet back towards you, or if you are unable to reach the feet, place a yoga belt or similar around the feet and gently pull the belt towards you. Hold for ten deep slow breaths.

Photography by Ali Wardle aliwphotography.co.uk
Clothes by Urban Lucy urbanlucy.com



WRITTEN BY

SALLY PARKES

SHE TEACHES AT INDABA YOGA STUDIO IN MARYLEBONE, LONDON AND IS THE FOUNDER OF 200HOUR LAXMI YOGA TEACHER TRAINING. SALLY ALSO RUNS YOGA RETREATS IN THE UK AND SPAIN. FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT sallyparkesyoga.com