

## CHRONIC LOWER BACK PAIN

Physical - postural misalignment: computer, manual labor, lifting heavy objects incorrectly. Underuse: Kapha tendency (couch potato). Overuse: Pitta tendency (pushing beyond limitations in yoga postures etc.). Loose joints, L5/S1, vata tendency (muscles not strong enough to support).

Energy - improper breathing habits (shallow breathing). Lack of energy in low back (samana vayu), 2<sup>nd</sup> chakra (emotional and sexual), 3<sup>rd</sup> chakra (will power, ego), langhana (cooling practice).

Emotional - Stress and tension (pitta tendency), anxiety (vata), lethargy (kapha), feeling unsupported. Chronic stress (fight or flight) overworks the adrenal glands located/connected to the 3<sup>rd</sup> chakra/lower back...vicious cycle.

Witness – not being open or able to see connection between back pain and what’s going on in life. Inability to find connections and deeper meanings. Denial, victim mentality.

Bliss body – not trusting source, feeling unsupported.

### **Eight Week Back Pain Series:**

1. intro to low back pain
2. breath awareness
3. alignment
4. bio-mechanics/movement
5. energetics of back pain (charkas/pranayama)
6. healing journey for back (yoga nidra)
7. Yoga for your body type (doshas, diet)
8. bringing your yoga practice into your life (ADL)

PRANAYAMA– Lie on back, arms out to sides. Durga pranayama into the back body by pressing palms on belly. Back mudra-right hand: thumb, pinky, and middle fingers touching. Left hand-index finger and thumb touching. Let back of hands rest on ground (for samana vayu).

CAT/COW-emphasis on lengthening and not over use of L5/S1, use whole spine. Viniyoga variation-exhale gentle opening heart center through, abs engaged, do not collapse lower spine. Exhale round spine and allow chest to reach things before hips touch heels.

LOCUST-lie on belly, lengthen and lift one leg at a time, arms by side of body. Viniyoga variation: palms on ground under shoulders, inhale lifting chest and legs, spreading legs.

Exhale, stay up and bring legs together, inhale stay up legs apart, exhale lets together. Come down. Stabilizes pelvis, strengthens low back.

### **ASSISTED POSTURES FOR LOWER BACK (PRYT):**

Forward bend – have the student sit on end of pillow or blanket, legs can be slightly bent. Stand behind client and have them interlace fingers around your neck. Using strength from thighs, stretch them up. Then face them, and place your hands on their shoulders and their hands on your shoulders. Step back slowly and lengthen them up and forward. Keep student’s spine long. When you feel the student stop and start to bend, stop there. Place props under student on their legs and let them rest for a restorative effect. You can come behind and place hands on students thighs and spiral them toward each other or place hands on either side of hip and do the pelvic flip.

### **KNEES TO CHEST:**

Student lies on back with knees to chest. Kneel at base of student and place hands on back of things and press straight down. Or stand up and bring their foot at right angle and gently kneel on thighs. Or come around to

students head. Place hand on knees and press down and toward base of student. When straightening their legs, apply light traction until legs are about 1 foot to ground and push up on feet.

PRYT principles: verbally check-in with student. Support them by mirroring back to them. Let them know they have been heard by not judging or diagnosing. Let them feel what they feel-chronic lower back pain is deeply connected to the emotional body.

#### ASSISTED EXTENDED CHILD'S POSE:

Sit on heels with knees comfortably together. Relax belly and thighs with arms extended. Partner is at head of student in a lunge, pressing palms into sacrum, creating traction for spine.

#### SAVASANA:

Lie on back, cooling mantras (langhana). 2<sup>nd</sup> chakra (ooo as in blue), 3<sup>rd</sup> chakra (ahh as in father).