

The Breath

Seated with legs crossed, without support under the buttocks. I can allow myself to modify the posture slightly if I find the seat is a bit tight and doesn't truly allow the body to settle. Let the points of support appear—under the feet, the legs, the buttocks.

Discover that the body needs time to completely settle into these supports. Not only can the pelvis settle, but perhaps the shoulders too. Without emerging... the sensitivity and heaviness of the arms. If I abandon them, the presence of the hands.

Discover the coming and going of the breath, as it takes place now. Notice that naturally, spontaneously, the inhalation follows the exhalation, like day follows night. Waves that come and go. I let it be.

Good. Imagine we are sitting in the middle of a large plate, and we make the seat very alive—truly underneath the sit-bones and the entire pelvis. It's as if we wanted to scrape the edges of the plate with the bottom part here.

So, begin to draw a circle with the pelvis; the movement starts from below. As if you wanted to scrape the edges of the plate. Perhaps you'll start in one direction, drawing circles clockwise, or perhaps the opposite—it doesn't matter. But observe, because often one side is easier. Perhaps you feel "snags" in certain places, a difficulty in making a fluid circle.

Now, go in the opposite direction or change sense. Our body often chooses ease first, so intuitively it does that—and it's right to do so. Now, it might "tickle" more in this direction. Just notice: what sensation does this awaken? Perhaps in the pelvis, the back, the legs, or the shoulders.

And we return to the center. Come into verticality with the pelvis, the two sit-bones well planted. Clear the chest from the digestive tract. The chin is slightly tucked. Is the breath fluid? Let the exhale flow. Let the inhale spring forth.

The crown of the head is very alive. Imagine a pencil lead at the crown of the head, and with this "pencil," trace spirals on the ceiling. Start tracing circles, but be careful: it's the entire spinal axis moving. The chin is slightly tucked, the front of the body is long.

Draw circles that become wider and wider. Careful—it's not just the head; it's the whole spinal axis tracing the circles. When you're tracing a large circle, you can change direction. Start with large circles and gradually move toward smaller ones, in a spiral.

Sense what is awakened here. I welcome the tensions. I welcome the relaxation. I stop at the center. Still slightly seated on the front of the sit-bones, chest open. The coming and going of the breath is very alive.

Leaving the hands and arms settled, let the shoulders rise toward the ears slowly. The hands and arms remain passive as the shoulders rise. How high they go, we don't know—let your shoulders tell you. Stay there a little. Don't block the breath.

Now, very slowly, let the shoulders descend. While the shoulders descend, the entire front of the body rises. We rise. Shoulders down, front of the body up.

Let's do it once more. Keep the hands and arms heavy and passive.

The shoulders rise. Even when the physical body stops, the movement continues, as if rising above the head. Stay in this position for a moment.

Then the shoulders descend. The breath remains fluid. Let it be. We don't interfere with this movement of the breath—the waves. The wave that rises, the wave that descends. On the exhale, feel it well.

Now, let the back collapse. The coccyx moves back, the sacrum and lumbar round, then the dorsals. Extend the legs forward. Feel the contact of the heels, the calves, the thighs. The legs flow into the back thigh. Both legs well settled, sinking in.

Roll onto the front of the sit-bones. If this is easy for you, you can move back and forth—rolling back and forward. If it's not so simple, you can bend the knees slightly, but keep the toes pointing toward the ceiling. Verticalize the pelvis. Do this several times tranquilly.

Don't let the ground harden under the legs; rather, bend the knees slightly if needed.

Come onto the front of the sit-bones. Vertical pelvis, sit-bones well planted. Spine cleared. Let the sensitivity of the fingers appear. The fingers, hands, and arms rise—careful, nothing in the shoulders. The arms rise, not the shoulders.

Continue until vertical. The thumbs meet and find each other. Palms are alive. Chest rising, but shoulders descending. The fingers can rise, but not the shoulders. Interlace the ten fingers, turn the palms toward the ceiling. Let the head come toward the chest—head leaning forward—and the arms move slightly back, behind the ears.

The coming and going of the breath. Long inhalation. During the time of plenitude, the hands seek the ceiling toward the back, and the feet seek the wall in front. Exhale. I release slightly. Inhale. During the plenitude, the body stretches toward the sky and the wall in front.

Continue for two or three breathing cycles: head forward, arms back. On the next exhalation, the pelvis rolls back, the arms return. Very slowly—it's not an abandonment. Feel the reactions. What was awakened? What tingles, what sparkles? Return quickly to the globality of the body.

Roll onto the front of the sit-bones. Did I let the ground harden? No need—let the legs sink into the floor. The navel moves away from the pubis, chest away from the navel, shoulders remain relaxed. Keeping the front of the body very long, lean forward from the pelvis. Careful!

Don't round the lumbar; keep them lengthened. The front of the body remains long, so don't go very far. If you are flexible, you might reach behind the toes, but it doesn't matter, as long as the front of the body is long. The chest "flies," shoulders are relaxed. Chin slightly tucked. The coming and going of the breath. You can always adjust and bend the knees.

And I return. Sense the space, the sensations—things that may be changing. Now, lying on the back. Legs more or less hip-width apart. Don't make too many corrections. Feet falling outward. Choose to place the palms on the floor. Shoulders wide and low. Chin slightly tucked, aligned with the spine.

Let the body discover its points of support. Settle into them. Let the weight of the support intensify. The caress of the breath. Inhale follows exhale... Good. Let the left hip appear.

Keeping the pelvis and both legs on the floor, the left hip moves toward the wall, away from the face. But the whole leg moves with it. Then I let go. We try to make it "straight" while keeping the leg and pelvis on the floor.

Now the right hip moves away from the face, detaching from the torso. And I let go. Let's do it again: left hip moves far forward; let go. Watch the breath; keep it free. Now the right hip far forward. Feel how we make the lower body "elastic." Let go.

And now, imagine there's an object in front of the left foot. The foot is more or less flexed. Push this object away. Well, there's nothing there, but pretend. And imagine being able to push that object forward. Then let go. Do the same with an imaginary object in front of the right foot. And the right foot pushes that object. And let go.

Feel what happens, feel the body becoming elastic. Once more on the left; push with a living foot. Let go. Once more on the right; push the imaginary object. Let go.

Good. Now the left leg bends, the foot slides. The left knee comes toward the chest. Then I return: the foot is placed, slides, and the leg extends. I push the object. Slightly tuck the abdominal muscles on the left. Release.

The right leg bends, the heel slides. The knee toward the chest. Inhale when the knee comes toward the chest, then exhale as the heel settles and slides. The leg extends at the end, push the object, slightly tuck the abdominal muscles on the right.

Let's do it again: Left leg bends, feel the caress of the foot on the floor. Knee toward the chest. Pause. Exhale, the foot settles and slides. Push the imaginary object forward. Tuck the abdominal muscles on the left during the pause after the exhale. Release.

Right leg bends, inhale. Knee toward me. Pause. Exhale, the foot settles and slides. Push the imaginary object, tuck the abdominal muscles on the right. Pause after exhaling. Release.

Very good. Now both feet slide, both legs bend. Both knees come toward me. At the end of the exhale, during the empty pause, lift the head, look at the feet, push the object in front of the feet. Tuck the abdominal muscles. Place the head back down.

Inhale, both legs bend, knees toward me. Pause. Exhale, feet are pushed away, legs extend. The feet push an imaginary object, tuck the abdominal muscles, lift the head, look at the feet. Place the head down.

Both legs bend. Lift the head slightly, a small impulse, and bring the pelvis back. If possible, bend and frame the head with both knees (Halasana). Lift the pelvis toward the face, you can place hands on the back, bring the elbows closer to support the back.

Inhale and exhale well. Don't go too far; we don't want to compress the eyes or the neck. Perhaps an Ujjayi. The exhale slows down, filtered at the back of the throat.

Maybe bring the pelvis a bit closer to the face.

Then raise the legs (Sarvangasana). Very alive feet reaching for the ceiling. Bring the elbows together if necessary. The feet are very alive, as if they were touching the ceiling.

The breath returns.

If these poses are complicated for you, you can imagine doing them—it's the same—or find a modification that suits you. Simply "L" shape perhaps.

And we return: the legs bend, framing the head again. We can place the hands on the floor and slowly return vertebra by vertebra. The head lifts to accompany the movement until the pelvis settles. The legs return, and once the pelvis is down, you can place the head. Extend the legs.

Let yourself be moved by the reactions. Careful, the reactions in the lower back may be very strong—perhaps even "delicious." But if it's very painful, you can bend the legs toward you, knees to chest, and rock the pelvis from left to right. If it's just uncomfortable or unpleasant, stay lying down and let it be.

Let the strong reactions dilute little by little into the whole body, then into space. Quickly return to globality: the whole body. The ground. Inhabit the room you are in.

The breath returns. Inhale like a wave rising to the head. Exhale like a wave descending from head to feet. Don't interfere with the breath. Let it be. How good it is to let the body do what it knows so well. Observe.