

Spinal Twists (Part II)

Have an opening of the legs—not your maximum opening, so as not to constrain the hips, but still an opening that isn't completely "limp".

Discover the sensitivity of the heels; discover the quality of the floor under the heel. Is it hard, soft, rough, cold? A contact of the calves with the floor. You can let the calves melt into the floor. The legs, the thighs.

And the pelvis. Are you bracing the pelvis, or can you ask nothing of it—letting it do what it can for the moment, without effort? It might be slightly collapsed, as might the back.

The sensitivity of the shoulders. The sensitivity of the hands. And the face: the forehead, the eyes. The cheeks, the lips—the whole front of the body awakening.

We'll come with the hands behind the back and we'll take the right wrist in the left hand. For now, still ask nothing of your back; keep the dynamics of a back that is probably collapsed. If you have shoulder problems, adjust your arm position as needed.

Remaining with the back collapsed, and with the sensitivity of the entire front of the body, lean forward. We have no idea how far we'll go—it doesn't matter.

The limit should be the sensitivity of the legs. Don't let the ground harden under the legs. And the breath—can you feel the fluid breath? Inhale, Ujjayi. The exhale departing.

Don't hold the head; hold nothing. Notice that you're probably sitting on the front of the sit-bones.

Keeping this seat on the front of the sit-bones, the torso rises toward verticality. Don't roll back on the pelvis. Keep the seat on the front of the sit-bones and let the chest rise and open.

The chest is cleared, the lower ribs are cleared. Perhaps the head follows. The chest rises a bit more. The shoulder blades come closer together at the back. An immense chest. The coming and going of the breath—don't block it.

And I return. Let yourself be moved by the reactions. Feel the entire body, the space around you—space that you can inhabit. The breath returns.

At the next exhalation—after the exhale, during the "empty" pause —the belly remains tucked toward the spine, and the torso turns to the left. Sigo teniendo las manos atrás. el busto, el ombligo, el rostro hacia la izquierda.

Release the breath, but keep the abdominal core slightly engaged. The torso stays to the left, the head turns to the right. Keep the cradle of the breath very alive with the abdominal zone slightly supported.

At the next exhalation, as the belly tucks, turn the torso toward the right leg. The torso, chest, and face turn toward the right leg.

And the head turns to the left.

Don't go too far. The coming and going of the breath remains, even while keeping a certain tension in the abdominal core if possible. Two or three breathing cycles. Return to the center.

Release the hands, tranquilly caressing the floor. Cross the legs. The pelvis tilts forward; a natural verticality settles in. The body as a mass of sensations. Feel the whole body, the space around.

Are you permeable? Can you perceive the space around you easily? Completely passive, letting the body express itself. Let the body's activity express itself. And lie down on the back.

Feet slightly apart. Arms along the body, palms on the floor. Chin slightly tucked. Shoulders low and wide. Discover the ground.

Let the sensitivity of the left leg appear. Sensitivity of the left foot—the sole. Foot is flexed. Reach out to touch the wall far away, as if the leg were detaching from the pelvis. Soltá.

Now with the right leg. Feel the right leg, the right foot. Right foot flexed, sole reaching for the wall as if detaching from the pelvis. Soltá.

Bring the left heel in alignment with the coccyx and spine. The left leg comes to the center, foot flexed. With the right foot, place the heel between the big toe and the second toe. Or if it is too painful, you can simply place the heel behind all the toes.

Arms are at 30-40 degrees, spread slightly. And we'll do a few small twists from here, but careful: the instruction is to keep the shoulders fixed to the floor. Imagine that you have someone benevolent pressing on your shoulders so they don't lift, don't move at all.

Notice the coming and going of the breath. At the next exhalation, the feet turn to the right, head to the left. Inhale, return feet and face to the center. A moment of pause.

Exhale, feet to the left, head to the right. Careful—keep shoulders glued to the floor. Inhale, return to the middle. A moment of pause.

Continue this two or three times. The pelvis will lift more on one side than the other, depending on which foot is on top. Notice what is touched, what is mobilized.

Above all, keep the shoulders on the floor. No need to go far. Return to where the body can stay with the shoulders on the floor. Respect the pause after inhale and exhalation.

And I return. Now place the right heel in alignment with the spine. Foot flexed. Bring the left heel between the big toe and the second toe if possible.

At the next exhalation, feet turn left, face turns right. Inhale, return to center. Pause. And so on: feet to the right, face to the left.

Watch the shoulders. Notice what is mobilized—one side is not the other. The face... we won't tense the face. Return, and you can release the feet.

Feel the vibration—the vibration of the whole body or certain parts. The sensation of the whole body without fixing on anything. We've invented nothing. Completely passive, sensing the active body.

The right knee bends. The heel caresses the floor, moving toward the buttock. Then the left knee bends, heel caressing the floor.

It's not necessary for the feet to be very close to the pelvis; feel that the knees are directly above the heels. We'll come into a half-bridge to position ourselves well.

First, check the positioning: shoulders wide and low. The pelvis lifts—explore reaching toward the sky with the pelvis (Setu Bandhasana). Careful: the knees stay hip-width apart, no wider.

The knees want to "stick" to the wall over there. Perhaps the chest rises slightly. Do not block the breath. Perhaps a little higher with the pelvis.

Returning, lengthen the back... we lengthen on the back. When does the pelvis settle? Savor the moment the pelvis abandons itself. With the pelvis settled near the feet, join the feet together.

We'll come into another twist. Again, the rule is to keep the shoulders on the floor. No need to go far. While the shoulders stay still, look at what you can do.

Knees move to the right, head to the left on the exhalation. Inhalation, the right leg is carried, left leg to center, face to center. Pause.

And the knees, the legs to the left, head to the right. Your own slow rhythm, the rhythm of the slow coming and going of the breath. Pause after inhale, pause after exhale.

The body goes in the twist from one side to the other. Notice what is mobilized. Once or twice more. Return to center. The legs rise, the face... good.

Extend the legs for a moment. Feel the reaction, the vibration... in the whole body or parts. Both knees lift, feet lift—bring knees toward you (Apanasana).

More twists, but careful—these are more difficult. The shoulders will want to lift more easily, but keep them on the floor. Don't force anything.

Knees and feet together. Exhale: legs to the right, head to the left. Keep the shoulders solid. It doesn't matter how far you go; keep the shoulders on the ground.

Inhale, return. Other side: legs to the left, head to right. Watch the shoulders. Face relaxed. Slow rhythm.

Return to center. Use the leg underneath to help bring both legs back. Push a bit with the top leg. Do two or three more back-and-forth movements. Don't force and return to center.

Extend the legs. Feel the reaction, the vibration... in the whole body or parts. Invent nothing; it's perfect as it is. Completely easy. Sensing the active body.

Place the left foot in line with the left buttock. Bend the right knee, foot slides. Lift the foot, bring the right knee toward you. Chin stays tucked.

Slide the right arm inside the right leg. You can lift the head slightly to place the palm of the hand on the sole of the right foot (Ananda Balasana). Place the head back down.

Raise both arms: on one side just the left arm, on the other the right arm and right leg, vertically. You don't have to be in total extension with the right leg; see how far you can go.

Settle the left shoulder, settle the right shoulder. Draw a beautiful line along the left side from heel to hand. Just for a moment. Feel the left side well adhered to the floor.

Keeping the entire left side on the floor, slowly move the right leg and right arm to the right. Careful—without losing contact with the left side.

Again, it's not the exploit; it doesn't matter how far you go, as long as the left heel, left buttock, and left shoulder stay grounded. Keep the breath alive. Can you let yourself be done by what happens?

Both arms rise. Take the outside of the right foot with the left hand. Release the right hand. Right arm vertical above the shoulder. Settle the right shoulder; feel its relaxation and transpose that relaxation to the left shoulder.

Open both wings: the right leg goes to the left with the left hand, and the right hand goes to the right. Careful—don't let the leg fall.

Keep the right shoulder on the ground; don't go too far with the leg to the left. Two or three breathing cycles here. Sense the directions.

The head... it doesn't matter how it is as long as the chin is tucked. Touch the pose. Release the leg and lie on the back, both legs extended.

Feel the reaction. Sensations may be chaotic or asymmetrical—I have no idea how it will evolve. Just let it be.

Right heel in line with the right buttock. Bend the left knee, foot slides toward the left buttock. Lift the foot, bring the knee toward you.

Place the left hand on the sole of the left foot. You can lift the head if needed. Both arms rise. Place the head down, chin tucked. Relax the right shoulder, relax the left shoulder.

The right arm reaches back. A beautiful line on the right side from heel to hand. Keep the right side grounded.

And the left leg and left arm open toward the left. Attention not to go too far, maintain the right side. And the breath very alive.

Both arms rise. Take the outside of the left foot with the right hand. Release the left hand. Settle both shoulders.

Attention not to let the legs fall. Open both wings. The left arm toward the left, far away. Keep the right shoulder on the ground. Feel the fluid breath.

Two or three breathing cycles here. Attention: chin in protection. Eyes relaxed. Thank you. Completely passive in intention. Be active of presence.