

Letting Go of the Hips and Shoulders

Take a few moments just to settle onto our mat. Feel the substance and quality of the floor beneath your feet. Is the floor hard? Is it welcoming? Can I easily surrender and settle, or am I holding back certain parts of my body?

Awaken the sensitivity of the body. I'm not seeking to feel something specific at all costs—just what is there. How does the body appear in this moment? If possible, make no internal comments.

Observe how your legs are crossed. Take the leg that is in front. With the same-side hand, lift the foot—the most accessible one. Place the hand under the knee on that same side. Lift the leg and gently rock it left to right, like a baby.

Feel what is mobilized; it's about gently mobilizing the hip. If you have limited mobility, just be with what is there—perhaps doing nothing but listening. Redeposit the foot and leg. Feel the reactions, perhaps on the side you just worked—the shoulder, the hip, the knee.

Now, bring the other foot to the front. Take the foot with the opposite hand (depending on which side you started with) and place the same-side hand under the knee. Lift the foot and leg, and rock it gently. Feel the soft mobilization of the hip. Notice if one side can release more completely than the other. I return.

Observe what happens—what was solicited in this movement. Let the back relax; ask for no effort in the back. We don't need a perfect posture; let the earth carry us.

With the foot that is in front, place the same-side hand on the sole of the foot. Lift the foot slightly—be sure to truly release the shoulder. You can let the fingers roll slightly toward the back. Gently lift the arm and the leg.

The goal here is not full extension; stop as soon as you feel resistance. Be careful to keep the hip and shoulder well relaxed. Feel the stretch in the calf and thigh. The entire opposite side remains well released. You can make small movements from left to right, feeling an opening in the hip. You don't need the leg completely straight; stop before you constrain the hip and shoulder.

I return. Observe the reactions without judgment. Same hand, same foot: place the palm of the hand on the sole of the foot. Deposit the hand there without gripping. Lift the leg and arm. Keep the shoulder and hip relaxed.

Notice if there's an easy progression. Perhaps open slightly from left to right as the hip gently loosens. If possible, return slightly to the front of the sit-bones when the leg is extended.

I return. Plant both sit-bones firmly into the floor. Settle the feet and legs; feel the sit-bones wide and grounded. Verticalize the pelvis. The chest gently clears from the digestive tract. Chin slightly tucked, as if the back of the skull were lightly touching a wall behind you.

Keeping the hands and arms very passive, roll the shoulders forward, up, and back—drawing slow circles. Remember: arms and hands remain passive. Forward, up, back... don't block the breath. Then change direction: back, up, forward. Do this two or three times, as if "oiling" the shoulders. I release.

Sit-bones well planted, chest rising and opening gently. The back of the skull rises, chin tucked. Turn the head to the right, "sweeping" the space with your gaze. Hold the head to the right, and let the gaze continue toward the back as if looking behind you. Feel the reactions in the neck—don't force. The breath flows.

Then turn the head and sweep the space with your gaze to the left. Stop the head when the neck becomes sensitive, and let the gaze continue toward the back. Return to the center. Observe the coming and going of the breath; let it be fluid without manufacturing it.

Sit-bones planted, chest high. Keeping the chest lifted, move the chin and head forward and backward. Be careful: don't go too far, don't force anything in the neck. I return.

Now, let the right ear "say hello" to the right shoulder. Feel the opening and heat in the ear. Then the left ear to the left shoulder. Openness, heat, perhaps other sensations in the ear. Stay with the breath.

I return. Feel the whole body, the space around you. You don't have to do anything for this; be completely passive, letting the body and space be active within you. The breath is active within you.

Good. Lie down on the right side of the body. Construct a beautiful straight line with the right arm, palm flat. You can rest the right ear on the right arm. Heels should be in line with the pelvis—draw a beautiful line. Discover the floor here. What is

pleasant? What is less so? If you have difficulty balancing, you can bend the knees, but keep the heels aligned with the sacrum.

Left hand on the left thigh. If you have no issues with the neck, shoulder, or wrist, you can place the hand under the head at the temple. Keep the chin tucked, gaze straight ahead.

Let the left hand slide toward the back. No matter where or how the hand lands.

Do not pull or push the shoulder. Let the arm surrender, the shoulder opening gently. With the left foot, the inner edge of the foot slides forward along the floor into a diagonal. Release here—release the left hip, left shoulder, and right shoulder. Do nothing; let the body settle.

Yes. And...

Make small circles with the left foot. Keep the inner edge of the foot on the floor so the joints can remain easy. The foot slides in slow, small circles in one direction—you can bend the knee slightly if needed. Then in the other direction. The whole leg remains passive; it is the hip that receives the movement. Feel the hip.

Now, move the foot toward the back—you may need to flex the leg. Inner edge of the foot on the floor. Again, make small circles. Be careful not to let the pelvis roll toward the floor; keep it vertical. Change direction. Gently. Feel the hip being solicited in a passive way.

Place the left hand back on the left thigh. Free the head from the hand and rest it on the right arm. Observe the reactions. Globality. Notice the parts that settle more willingly—the hip, the shoulder.

If it's still comfortable, place the hand back under the temple, chin tucked. The left hand/arm slides back again. Feel the opening of the shoulder, facilitated by the opening of the chest. It's passive. Now, lift the left knee, letting the left foot slide along the other leg. The knee rises, and eventually, the foot and calf lift as well. Keep the foot and calf relaxed. Don't let the pelvis rock backward; push the pubis and sacrum slightly forward.

Feel what is sensitive, what is vacant, what is more free in the body. If you lose balance, you can slightly bend the supporting leg. Place the left hand on the left knee, arm extended. Release the shoulder and the hip.

Slide the hand down the calf, the shin, and if you can, place the palm on the sole of the foot. If not, you can hook the big toe. Gently lift the arm and leg. You don't need to reach full extension; stop as soon as you feel resistance. Constantly maintain the release of the left shoulder and left hip. See how far the body stretches, regardless of the distance. Two or three breathing cycles. I am sensitive, I am relaxed. Release the leg and restack the legs.

Release the hand from under the head. Left hand on the left thigh. Return to globality: body, floor, space.

Now, bring the left heel toward the left buttock. Take the foot, the instep, or the toes with the left hand. Left arm is extended. Knees are stacked.

Now place the left foot on the floor behind you, perhaps moving it a bit further back. Feel the stretch in the quadriceps. If you have sensitive knees, notice the solicitation. Inhale, exhale.

With control, gently roll onto your belly without "falling." Lift the right arm and the left leg. Gaze straight ahead. Perhaps lift a bit more. Inhale, exhale. Release.

Come into the Crocodile pose: legs wider than usual, feet turned outward with inner edges on floor. Elbows far forward, hands stacked, forehead resting on the hands. Feel the abdominal massage of the breath and surrender into this pose. Let the body completely abandon itself.

Now, lie down on the left side. Create a beautiful line. Left hand... left sacrum and heels aligned. Two long left sides.

See if you have balance or if you need to bend the knees slightly. Keep the heels in alignment with the sacrum. Discover what is pleasant and what is less so in this position.

If your neck, wrist, and shoulder permit, place the left hand under the temple. Chin tucked, gaze straight ahead. Let the right hand slide toward the back. Observe the opening of the right shoulder.

Facilitate this opening by opening the chest; the breasts move slightly away from each other. The inner edge of the right foot slides forward. The leg is on a diagonal, a bit higher than knee height. Feel the entire leg settling into the points of contact with the floor.

Feel the opening in the right shoulder and right hip. Keeping the leg and foot passive, make small circles slowly with the inner edge of the foot. One way, then

the other. Keep the leg relaxed; the hip is stimulated and receiving the movement. Slide the leg back past the supporting leg, well to the back. You may need to flex the leg. Inner edge of the foot in contact with the floor. Small circles toward the back. Don't block the breath while concentrating on the movement. Change direction. Can you feel what's happening in the hip? Keep the shoulder relaxed. Release the hand from the head and return to the starting position.

Let yourself be. What's alive, what's present. Globality: body, floor, space. What the body says after the proposal.

If it's okay for you, place the hand back under the temple. Don't project the chin forward; gaze ahead. The hand slides back, the arm is completely abandoned. The opening happens passively. You don't have to do anything for it to happen.

Now the right knee rises. The right foot slides along the other leg. Foot and calf remain passive as you lift the knee. The foot comes off the ground, but keep the foot and calf relaxed. Keep the pelvis vertical; push it slightly forward.

Place the right hand on the right knee, arm extended. Release the right shoulder and the hip. What is sensitive? What is free?

Breath flows. Slide the hand along the calf or shin to place the palm on the foot, or hook the big toe. Lift the arm and leg. Again, the goal is not extension; stop at resistance. Maintain the release of the shoulder and hip.

Don't seek an exploit; keep the joints relaxed. Stop before creating additional tension. Release the foot and the head. Return to a beautiful straight line on the left side. Feel the right side.

Bring the right heel toward the right buttock. Place the hand on the instep or toes. Stack the knees. Now place the right foot on the floor behind you, moving the knee back to stretch the quadriceps. Don't force. Two or three breathing cycles. Roll onto the belly with control. Lift the left arm and right leg. Gaze straight ahead. A bit more... and release.

Crocodile pose. Feet apart and turned out, inner edges on floor. Elbows far forward, forehead on hands. Let yourself be moved by the abdominal massage of the breath, especially in the lower back. It expands on the inhale. That's it.

Fin.