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Connect to your TRUE SELF

Get Optimal Energy and Build Strength by Connecting to your Hara

By Janie Lamour

IMAGINE IF YOU were deeply connected to your true inner-self, had great posture, a strong bladder and pelvic floor, were free of back pain, had confidence and an intuitive “knowing” what the next steps were in your life for the most positive outcome?

This is all achievable through building strength, getting optimal energy flow through your pelvis and connecting to the centre of your etheric, or energy body, called the lower tan tien or hara. The hara is often referred to in martial arts and by Taoists to be the

‘seat of our soul’ and is thought to house every answer to everything you ever need to know. This is where your truth already lives and the stronger this area becomes, the more energy that flows through it and the more you are able to connect your mind to the hara, the more effective your innate healing power becomes.

Our modern lives have meant that even the most dedicated yogis have too much energy in the upper

body and not enough energy in the lower body: the core and lower back. With the increase of daily stress, use of smart phones, computers, tablets etc, coupled with sugar and alcohol consumption, the energy in our bodies accumulates in the chest, upper back and the head, causing a higher incidence of neck and shoulder pain, headaches, worry, anxiety, panic attacks and also results in a loss of connection to ourselves, the earth and the universe. Building power in the lower belly and back will help alleviate many of these issues and will allow for us to more deeply connect to our truth: in the hara.

CONNECT

You can either sit or lie down and place 3 fingers together at the base of your navel. Keeping your third finger in place on the belly, bring your attention to this area a little deeper within. Try to breathe down to expand this area on the inhalation and feel the area descend toward the spine on the exhalation. If you have trouble breathing deeply, just breathe out more than usual, then breathe in through your nose so the breath moves into the lower parts of the lungs. This will push down your diaphragm and therefore expand your belly outward slightly. Try to bring your mind to this area. If you don’t know what that means, just begin by sensing the skin and the energy deeper within – even if you just feel the belly movement to begin with. With practice you will be able to connect your mind to the hara and you will be able to actually think from there. We have similar cells in our gut as we do in our brain.

Our gut thoughts come from the hara and as you probably know, your gut thoughts are always correct.

STRENGTHEN

For strength in the hara, the bladder and the pelvic floor you can practice legs lifts from a seated or supine position and do boat pose. Single supine leg lifts with your legs wide will especially target the bladder.

In regard to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), the bladder has a psychological connection to confidence and gives you a stronger sense of yourself (who you are), allowing you to make our own decisions and stay in your own power. Physically, the meridian rules your spine, nervous system, sacrum, ankles and the shape of your gluteal muscles. On top of all of that, the stronger your bladder, the stronger your sex drive and orgasms!

Strengthening the hara will also make your bowels and your small intestine work more efficiently, further adding to your deep connection and internal power.

ENERGY FLOW

To have a healthy pelvis, you need good quality blood and a healthy blood and energy flow through the front, back and sides. This is essential not just for menstruating women but for every woman on this planet to help us stay sane, grounded and calm. Too much strength in the belly is like a car accident in the middle of an intersection: nothing flows. You need a balance of strength and flow.

Lengthening and releasing your psoas muscle, your major hip flexor, will give huge relief to period pain as it has an influence on pelvic cramping and the ability for energy to flow through your pelvis. You can do this

“On top of all of that, the stronger your bladder, the stronger your sex drive and orgasms!”

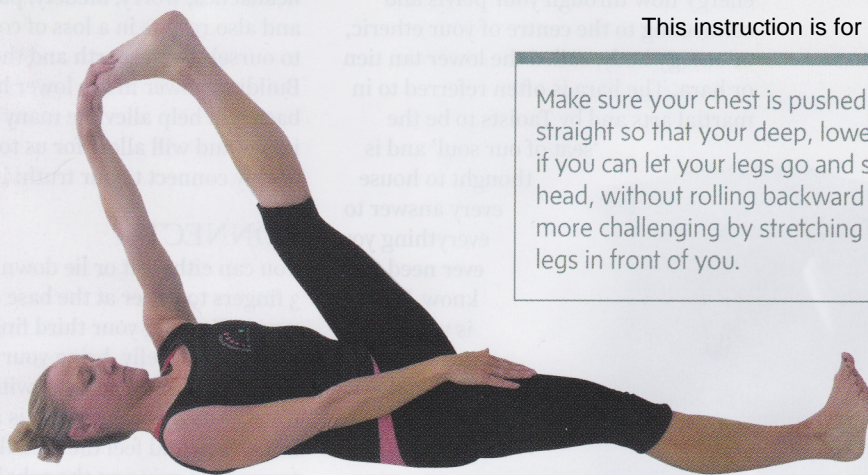
with crescent lunge and other lung variations. Regularly opening the psoas allows better hormone flow throughout your entire body, aligns your spine and also lessens PMT symptoms over time.

Releasing your outer hips and particularly the piriformis muscle (with Eye of the Needle or Pigeon pose) will allow for the energy to flow through your outer lower body and the lower back alleviating pain from those areas.

Optimal energy flow through your pelvis and hips allows your blood to effectively nourish your reproductive system and lower back and will give you the deep connection to your self so you can step into your true power as an amazing, sexy and connected woman.

This instruction is for boat pose

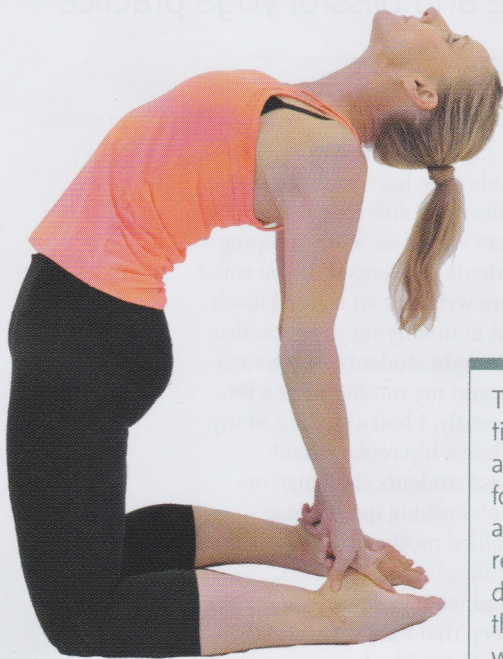
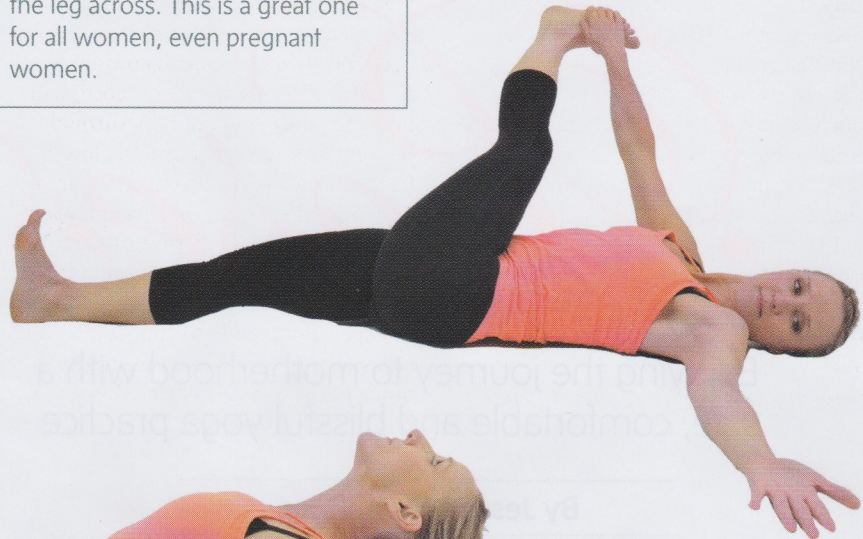
Make sure your chest is pushed forward to make your spine straight so that your deep, lower belly is doing the work. See if you can let your legs go and stretch your arms above your head, without rolling backward onto your sacrum. Make it more challenging by stretching your arms either side of your legs in front of you.



This is a great psoas stretch. When your right knee is on the floor you are attempting to pull your right waist downward to pull the psoas open more deeply. You can either pull your left knee toward your chest or keep that foot on the floor under your left bottom and stretch your hands over your head, keeping your ribs pulled down. It's important to be mindful of your knee and not push it to the point where there is any sharp knee pain.



The liver/gall bladder stretch is amazing for opening up through the back of the pelvis. Keep the leg on the floor pointing to the ceiling and don't roll the pelvis. Try to keep both buttocks low to the floor. If you roll the pelvis, you are twisting at the spine. We want to open the back of the hip by taking the leg across. This is a great one for all women, even pregnant women.



Try this pose with some repetitions. Start sitting on your heels and exhale to push your hips forward while you hold your ankles. Inhale to come down. Try repeating 8-10 times. Ensure you don't sway your hips sideways through the movement and this will build some power in your thighs where we store minerals. It opens the entire front of the body and squeezes out some tension from the sacrum.



Janie Lamour specialises in Zen Ki Yoga and runs a yoga studio in Sydney and two online yoga studios as well as popular teacher training programs. She has been teaching yoga since 1999, personal training since 1994, clocking up 24 years of experience in health, fitness and training clients with 19 of those years teaching yoga.