Mindful Flow

75 minute level 1/2 Vinyasa

Creating the space in one's daily routine for a mindful practice has the power not only to cultivate healing, strength and flexibility of body and mind, but also to reveal a steadiness in thought and actions beyond asana that can truly transform one's life.

written by Michelle Linane
INTRO

Begin by introducing the theme of class: **cultivating mindfulness**. Speak briefly about what it means to be mindful (a state of focusing one’s awareness on the present moment) and how cultivating mindfulness will benefit them.

PRANAYAMA

In Sukhasana teach **basic breath awareness**, guiding students into an initial awakening of the breath. Give them a few moments to simply observe and notice what is. From there, transition into teaching **Ujjayi pranayama**. Consider enlightening students with the mindful qualities that arise from using Ujjayi. For example, Ganga White explains:

“Ujjayi improves concentration because it keeps the breath smooth and even. Since this is the breathing pattern that naturally accompanies concentration, it can also be used to aid concentration. With smooth Ujjayi, you can become more absorbed in your practice, hold poses for longer, effectively regulate your heat, and relieve tension.”
INTENTION
Invite students to set an intention for class, encouraging them to provoke a sense of mindfulness into an area of their practice.

INITIAL WARMING

1. Bidalasana: Cat/Cow tilts
Teach linking one breath to one movement.

2. Anahatasana: Extended Puppy Pose
10 breaths. Explain hand foundations to prepare for Adho Mukha Svanasana.

3. Adho Mukha Svanasana: Downward Facing Dog
1 minute. Introduce basic alignment principals. Then walk forward and come to standing.

4. Samasthihi: Equal Standing Pose
5-10 breaths. Invite students to close eyes and reconnect with their intention.

SUN SALUTATIONS

5. Classical Surya Namaskara x 2
Urdhva Hastasana > Uttanasana > Ardha Uttanasana > Anjaneyasana > Plank > Ashtanga Pranam (Knees-Chest Chin) > Salabhasana B (Low Cobra) > Adho Mukha Svanasana > Anjaneyasana > Ardha Uttanasana > Uttanasana > Urdhva Hastasana > Samasthihi Encourage students to move slowly & with intention.
6. Surya Namaskara A x 2
Introduce Chaturanga-Updog-Downdog and basic alignment. Remind students to stay with Knees-Chest-Chin if they cannot maintain basic alignment of Chaturange-Updog-Downdog.

**STANDING ASANAS**

7. Virabhadrasana II: Warrior II
Setup from Prasarita stance and hold for 5-10 breaths. Emphasis on front knee directly over heel (it tends to splay in).

8. Viparita Virabhadrasana: Reverse Warrior
3-5 breaths. Focus on side stretch, as oppose to back bend.

9. Utthita Parsvakonasana: Extended Side Angle Pose
Hold 5-10 breaths. Remind students it’s not where we go in yoga, but how we go. It’s not about reaching the floor. Encourage students to use a block if they are unable to maintain length in the spine and spaciousness in the chest.

*Transition back to Prasarita stance and setup for the other side, repeating asanas 7 to 9.*

10. Prasarita Padottanasana C: Wide-Legged Forward Bend
10 breaths. Remind students to keep micro bend in the knees and relax neck. Invite advanced students to play with tripod headstand.

11. Surya Namaskara A
Emphasize that shoulders stay level with the elbows in Chaturanga. When shoulders drop lower then elbows it puts excessive pressure on the labrum in the shoulder joint.
12. Vrksasana: Tree Pose
5 breaths each side. Cover key alignments on first side, let students explore mindfully on the second side.

13. Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana A & B: Extended Hand To Big Toe Pose
5 breaths each side. Offer the option of a strap around foot or simply clasp bent knee. Encourage the use of a wall as needed.

*Transition* to Prasarita stance and setup for Trikonasana.

14. Utthita Trikonasana: Extended Triangle Pose
5-10 breaths. Avoid hyperextension of front knee, keep knee cap lifted. Minimize later flexion of spine. Offer a transition into Ardha Chandrasana for student who are able, otherwise further explore Trikonasana.

15. Ardha Chandrasana: Half Moon Pose (optional)

*Transition* back to Prasarita Stance and repeat asana 14 & 15.

16. Surya Namaskara A > Plank

**PEAK POSE**

17. Vasisthasana: Side Plank Pose
Offer modification of bottom knee down. Hold 5-10 breaths on both sides. Offer Vrksasana variation for advanced students and/or hand-to-toe extension.
18. Optional Surya Namaskara A > Balasana
Otherwise, Side Plank > Plank > Child's Pose

19. Utthita Balasana: Extended Child’s Pose
10-15 breaths. Consider sharing inspiring quote about mindfulness. Promote wrist therapy (gently rotate wrists in circular motion).

20. Parsva Balasana: Thread The Needle
5 breaths each side. Shoulder stretch & gentle twist to relieve core tension from Vasisthasana before back bending.

BACK BENDS

21. Salabhasana A: Locust Pose (arms extended behind)
Repeat 2-3 times, then rest.

22. Salabhasana C: Locust Pose (arms extended or bent in front)
Repeat 2-3 times, then rest.

23. Dhanurasana: Bow Pose (optional)
Offer to more advanced students if time permits.

24. Utthita Balasana: Extended Childs Pose
5 breaths.

TWIST

25. Ardha Matsyendrasana: Half Lord Of The Fishes
5 breaths each side. Keep both sit bones rooted, if one if lifting offer Marichyasana C.
FORWARD FOLDS & HIP OPENERS

26. Gomukhasana: Cow Face Pose
5-10 breaths each side. Offer straps to students with tight shoulders.

27. Uptavista Konasana: Wide-Legged Seated Forward Bend
1 minute. Ground sit bones, maximize anterior rotation of pelvis. Keep the spine long.

28. Dandasana: Staff Pose
5 breaths. Root sit bones, flex feet, firm thighs.

29. Paschimottanasana: Seated Forward Bend
5-10 breaths. Encourage students to root sit-bones and avoid rounding low back.

INVERSIONS

If time permits:

30. Halasana (Plow Pose) & Salamba Sarvangasana (Supported Shoulderstand) or Viparita Karani (Legs Up Wall)

CLOSING

31. Savasana
5-10 minutes.

32. Sukhasana
Invite students to give themselves a sense of mindful intention moving off their mat. Encourage them to think now about an area in their life where they can invoke more mindfulness.
Words Of Inspiration

Sprinkle these words of inspiration throughout class to promote mindfulness and transformation.

“Developing mental awareness, mental clarity, and insight are at the core of yoga. Although Hatha practice is very physical, it involves a great deal of mental conditioning and development. Concentration, mental fortitude, and endurance are developed by holding difficult asanas for long periods. Discipline and strength of character come from creating and maintaining a regular practice and all of these qualities are carried over into other areas of life.”
~ Ganga White

“When we are attentive to our actions we are not prisoners to our habits; we do not need to do something simply because we did it yesterday.”
~ T.K.V. Desikachar

“The present moment is filled with joy and happiness. If you are attentive, you will see it.”
~ Thich Nhat Hanh
“The key to cultivating a sustainable yoga practice begins with conscious intention to practice with intelligence and inner compassion.”
~ Mark Stephens

“Advancing our practice implies refining our ability to see and listen to our body on deeper and subtler levels. Cultivating this internal perception is more important than merely attaining more exotic postures.”
~ Ganga White

REFERENCES / SUGGESTED READING

Ganga White, Yoga Beyond Belief: Insights to Awaken and Deepen Your Practice

T.K.S. Desikachar, The Heart of Yoga: Developing A Personal Practice

Thich Nhat Hanh, Peace Is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life

Mark Stephens, Yoga Sequencing: Designing Transformative Yoga Classes
Playlist

All songs are available on Spotify and iTunes. Listed below by song title, then artist name.

1. Samhadhi, Shaman's Dream
2. Surya Namaskara, Benjy Wertheimer
3. Transform, TJ Rehmi
4. Awake, Tycho
5. Desert Phase, Kaya Project
6. Thunderclap, Dr. Toast
7. Blast Off, Random Rab
8. Mother Water, Shaman's Dream
9. Tilang Tantra, Chill Yoga Music
10. A Rising Wind (Instrumental), Helios
11. Horizon of Gold, Ben Leinbach

Track 1 is 11 minutes and can be played during intro and pranayayama. If you prefer silence during that time, start with track 2 when you begin initial warming or Sun Salutations.

Track 11 is 13 minutes long and perfect for Savasana, but can be shortened by fading out as needed.

All songs are instrumental and don't contain lyrics. For tips on creating your own playlist, check out our

free Playlist Guide!

This guide was produced by Love Teaching Yoga. To get more like it visit www.loveteachingyoga.com