

Cold and Flu rescue remedies

As we head into winter hopefully regular yoga and pranayama can help keep the bugs away. I thought some timely reminders of good old common sense and keeping things simple and natural might help. Getting fresh air, a brisk walk to get the body moving and catch the sun's best efforts at vitamin D as days begin to lengthen again. Air the house daily rather than thick smog of warm stale air locked in. Cheer the table up with a flower in a bowl of water to dispel the drying feel of central heating.



Water is so vital and yet with cold weather all too easy to forget to keep as hydrated as possible. Maybe a squeeze of lemon or fruit juice to keep it interesting?

To calm and relax create a big bolster to lie over in **modified Balasana** /child's pose. Lengthen the spine and hands under forehead so not restricted.

With colder weather the tendency is to do sedentary jobs and also hunch a little with the chill it's good to remember to open the heart area, lifting the heart centre, draw up sternum and roll the shoulders back and over, melting your shoulders blades downwards. Exaggerate your breath lifting your arms to breath in and drop down & out.

When feeling the initial niggles of a cold soften your yoga practice to be more nurturing. Maybe try **Supported Fish** illustrated ably here by my students!

Supported Fish



Roll the blanket into a sausage (or bolster) to lie along with spine, tail on floor but lifting the chest to open the heart and breath, your shoulders relax back. Keep head raised if uncomfortable or drop back as fish.

Rather than strain and struggle with Sun salutations use the softer **Animal sequence**: Start inhaling with child bring arms forward to create a Rabbit; lift into Arched Cat with exhalation; open the heart forward breathing in with Hollow Cat; lift up into Ardo mukasana/ downward facing dog as exhale; hold and lengthen with inhalation; kneel back on heels breathing out; then lift heart again into half camel opening heart as breath in the lower for resting breath; and repeat.

Nadi Shodana or alternate nostril breathing can ease first signs of sniffles, if one nostril is blocked just cheat and only partially close other side, encouraging the blockage to clear but allowing enough breath in! Avoid any pranayama if cold develops as will trigger headaches and discomfort. Just invite your breath to deepen if possible but always don't strain.

If colds or flu get the better of you then the best place is bed for lots of healing sleep and warm drinks. My morning favourite twist is to grate fresh ginger :

Honey ~ best healing medicine, soothes sore throat

Ginger ~ warming and stimulating

Cinnamon ~ natural antiseptic

Lemon ~ of course loaded with Vitamin C

Take care and get well asap Hazel