

New Year: New You - start with daily simple stretches

New year is always a great opportunity to try something new and change our bad habits by taking up a healthier lifestyle. Why not make the resolution to do some exercise or stretch every day. Just a few stretches before you get in the shower or even when in the shower as the warm water will help soften tight muscles. These two are great to ease driving or desk bound shoulders! First interlink your fingers and straighten arms upwards over head, with palms up towards the ceiling. Then attempt to catch your hands behind your back, one elbow up and one arm down - hold a flannel if hands are too far apart, and day by day notice how it becomes less difficult.

Don't be too ambitious just try to do something every morning, if you have only 5 minutes then just stretch. Please check first with your GP if you have any conditions that might affect you exercising, to make ensure a level suitable for you. If you have a little longer why not try the Animal sequence moving with your breath from Child into Cat, raise into Downward facing Dog and then sit back on your heels with hands on hips or behind on floor, and life heart in half camel, return to Child. Once moving easily then move onto the Sun Salutation sequence, which is harder but a great to warm up and chance to burn some calories. If you decide to do a pose a day, then make sure you have warmed up and take it easy, following a book or magazine with instructions. For bad backs strengthen your core (to support your lumbar spine, or lower back) with plank pose: Starting all fours, either on straight arms or harder on bent elbows, step your feet back with toes curled under so you are a straight line from shoulders to ankles.

Having got used to doing something every morning why not try doing nothing? Being able to sit for a few moments in stillness is a great energy charge. Don't think of it as meditation just think of watching your breath while finding a comfortable sitting position, creating space and encouraging your breath to be smooth and full. Enjoy your 'daily doing' new year's resolution.

This Bird of prey stayed in perfect stillness New year 2009 Photo
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“Sometimes one creates a dynamic impression by saying something
Sometimes one creates as significant impression by remaining
silent “ Quoted from Dalai Lama's Book of Daily Meditations

I hope to see you in a class soon. You are welcome to drop in and
try a class before committing to a term. www.hazelfaithfull.co.uk

