

Yoga Physical Therapist: You need this so **MUCH!**

Mindfulness, Understanding, Compassion, Healing

Stephanie Carter Kelley, PT, PhD

www.stephaniecarterkelley.com

info@stephaniecarterkelley.com

Building a Foundation: Neck and Scapular Core

Mindfulness:

In this class we are going to focus on the front of the neck and the shoulder blades. These areas are important for stability of the entire shoulder region. You need this stability to have painfree mobility of the shoulder and arm.

First we are going to use breath to bring awareness to the front of the neck with Ujjayi breath

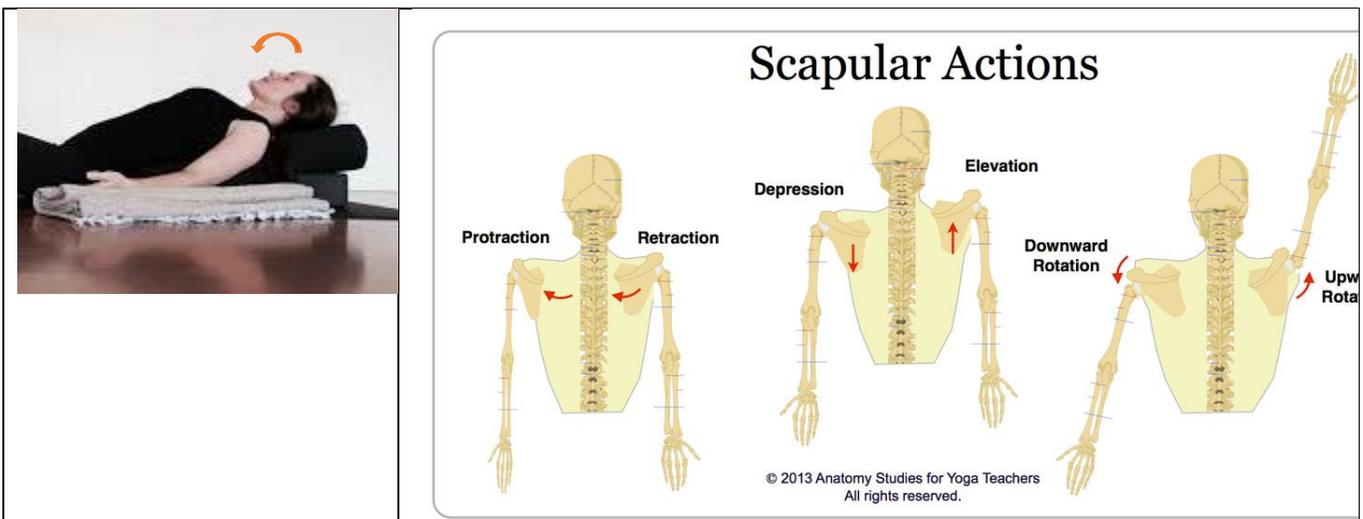
(<http://www.chopra.com/ccl/learn-the-ujjayi-breath-an-ancient-yogic-breathing-technique>). The link provides a nice explanation of Ujjayi, aka Victorious Breath. To perform, inhale fully and then exhale while constricting the back of your throat slightly so that you can hear the exhalation.

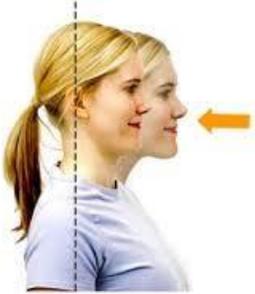
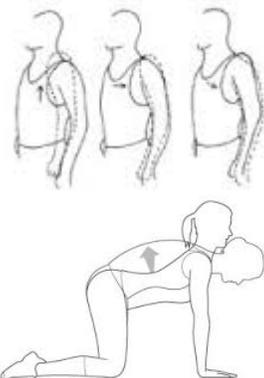
As we bring awareness to the throat, realize that this area relates to the 5th Chakra, the energetic center of expression. A balanced 5th chakra allows you to communicate freely with others but expressively and receptively. Expression is also expressed through creativity, i.e. art, music, writing, etc. Now as you breathe with Ujjayi breath, I want you to focus on your expression, both positive and negative aspects of your expression. Focus on both the good and also difficult conversations you have. Are there times when you feel you aren't being heard? Reflect on how your expression connects with others. How do you express your creativity? A few more breaths.

Understanding:

Neck Core: muscles of both the front and back of the neck provide stability. To test the front, recline on an inclined bolster, tuck your chin and then lift your forehead just enough to unload the back of your head. Count how many seconds you can hold this position. From a supine position (flat on the floor), you should be able to comfortably hold this position about 30 secs.

Scapular Core: The scapula moves 3 ways on the rib cage. In sitting, explore the motions shown below. Roll your shoulders forward and backward to produce protraction and retraction of the scapula. Raise your shoulders up and down to produce elevation and depression. Raising your arm overhead produces upward rotation of the scapula.



		
<p>Posture Correction in Sitting: Neck Retraction</p>	<p>Seated and Cat/Cow exploring movement of the Scapula</p>	<p>Progress the Plank position with a Plus</p>
		
<p>Neck Retraction and Scapular Retraction against gravity-hold for endurance</p>	<p>Scapular Depression</p>	<p>Start in Sitting with good posture, lean back until you feel tension in the front of your neck: hold and breathe</p>
		
<p>Bridge with Scapular Retraction and Stretch to Suboccipital area</p>	<p>Rest in Reclined Bound Angle Pose</p>	

Compassion:

As you recline and rest, reflect on the front of your neck and your throat. Feel the breath flowing in and out. The 5th chakra is about expressing yourself with authenticity and speaking and listening with compassion. Before speaking ask yourself the following:

1. "Is what I am about to say true?"
2. "Is what I am about to say necessary?"
3. "Is what I am about to say kind?"

Speaking your highest truth doesn't mean you're allowed to be hurtful or critical. The truth from your spiritual essence will come across as kind and compassionate. Listening is another aspect of the fifth chakra. The highest form of listening includes giving the other person your full attention. A regular practice of mindfulness will allow you to listen in this way.

Healing:

Allow this new awareness of neck and scapular stability, along with knowledge of the 5th chakra to create healing within you. A healing mantra is: Siddho Hum. Let's end with you saying it to yourself to bring healing in.

Namaste,