

30 Day Challenge

Sujata Cowlagi

Day 1

We will begin slowly and step up pace, gently making our way towards sustainable changes. Small steps to make a BIG difference. If you find something useful continue with it. If it doesn't work for you leave it - but not without giving it a fair chance!

TODAY: Start with a pure, positive motivation. Determine to do the best you can, to the best of your ability. Well begun is half done! :-)

DIET: Drink warm water (no need to drink hot water) instead of cold water. We will continue this through the month.

Keep your SOS in check - SALT, OIL and SUGAR intake.

For example if you are in the habit of starting your day with tea/coffee try it with a little less sugar. Better still avoid SOS heavy foods completely.

EXERCISE: Follow the video link and do four sets of sun salutation.

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=168168756717314&set=vb.156418021225721&type=2&theater>

If you prefer, you could also print out the attached file, stick it on your fridge door or in your home/office.

If for any reason you cannot then start by taking a brisk walk or jog anywhere between 15-20 minutes at a medium pace.

Avoid sitting for more than 20 mins at a time through the day.

MIND/BODY:

Take five mins to listen in: no frills guided seated practice.

https://soundcloud.com/sujata-cowlagi/breath-meditation-five-minutes?utm_source=soundcloud&utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=email

BONUS: I encourage you to either maintain a journal or keep some sort of a record so that you can track your progress and chart changes -physical, mental, emotional ...In this and most other cases the KISS formula seems to work best - Keep It Simple and Straight.

I invite you to write to me anytime during the program, with your questions, comments and feedback.

Good Luck, and Enjoy Today!

Day 2

FOR TODAY:

DIET: If you are bored of drinking warm water, add a dash of lime/lemon or a piece of your favourite fruit let the water get infused with some flavour and continue to have plenty of water.

Keep healthy snacks and drinks accessible - on the table or where you can easily see them- so you will reach for them first. Out of sight, out of mind.

For example keep fresh apples, oranges or a bunch of bananas, dried fruit, vegetable platters with home made dips, nuts or decaf drinks visible. Have these around and you won't binge on unhealthy foods.

EXERCISE : Increase the number of sun salutations by two.

Or walk for 5 mins longer.

This week take stairs when possible. Skip taking elevators and escalators when possible.

Also hold plank pose for 20 seconds. This is position number 5 in the 12 step sun salutation. You have a copy of this from yesterday's mail. Do this separate from the Sun salutation practice.

SLEEP: When it comes to rest and relaxation most of us fall far short. Research shows we need QUANTITY and QUALITY.

Try to power down before bed. If an hour earlier is possible then that's great. If not then at least 15-20 mins ahead of sleep time.

Create a ritual before going to bed -perhaps shower, or read.

I will send you a sound file on deep relaxation tomorrow.

MIND & BODY:

Do some activity that makes you truly happy. Pick up an old hobby like solving the Sunday Time's Crossword puzzle or join or sign up to take a course in a topic that interests you or learn a new language.

Day 3

TODAY: Celebrate your first two days! If you are still here there is a good chance you will complete the challenge. Stay motivated and keep adding these life hacks to your day.

DIET: Try to eat foods that do not come from a can or freezer. For example: Skip opening a can of soda, opt instead to drink water or tea or coffee or juice - try to add less sugar or creamers to all of these. For this month, shift to a largely plant based diet. (email me if you need research backed evidence) Create a happy space while eating a meal - focus on what is in front of you, who you share the meal with and what thoughts cross your mind. Enjoy the meal.

EXERCISE: We are now up to 8 sets of sun salutations. If you are already quite familiar with these, then step up the pace to a point that you feel like you are "in a zone" with your practice. Hold the plank pose for 20 seconds just as you did before.

MIND/BODY:

Get some quality rest -

<https://soundcloud.com/sujata-cowlagi/relax-and-rejuvenate-guided-deep-relaxation>

Under 20 minutes! (not recorded in a studio so do excuse the poor quality of the recording.)

Play each day/night when you need a break, need some rest or need time out.

Day 4

TODAY: Find someone who keeps you motivated - if you have friend or buddy to check in every once in a while that would be just fantastic. If not, find your sweet spot you can turn to for motivation.

DIET:

Trash out something in your pantry/ Kitchen that has been sitting on the shelf for a LONG time.
Keep up with SOS - The 'O' in the SOS is OIL - while we are looking to minimise this not all "oil" is bad.
Include those that are local oils - better if cold pressed and virgin oils such as coconut, sesame, mustard, olive, peanut or avocado.

Avoid deep fried foods. Don't serve them to friends either.

At a restaurant choose healthier options. Every meal you have is a choice. Pick wisely.

Some oils such as sweet almond oil, coconut and Moroccan Argan oil are wonderful for body, hair and skin massage.

EXERCISE:

Keep up 8 rounds of sun salutations. Do more fast paced exercise such as walking, running or cycling if you like.

Ten cycles of three part breathing:

Sit comfortably or lie down on your back and keep your knees bent.

inhale into the pit of the abdomen, fill up the lungs and finally roll back the shoulders and get your entire torso filled with oxygen.

Exhale release the breath sequentially upper body, middle and finally compress the abdomen toward the spine.

MIND/BODY:

Continue the seated practice and deep relaxation.

Day 5

TODAY: Sleep early by about 15 mins so that you wake up looking beautiful and ready to meet the day.

MIND:

Continue with the seated 5 minute practice.

Add mindful walking to your daily routine. Walk at your normal pace but be attentive to the way you place your feet on the floor. Heel - toe - heel - toe.

Smile as you breathe in and smile as you breathe out. Walk bare feet on th the grass for best results.

BODY: Hold plank pose to 30 seconds

Practice sun salutations for an optimal 10 rounds.

Include deep slow and gentle inhalations and exhalations as you practice.

NOURISH:

Avoid junk food completely. Instead choose meals/snacks that leave you feeling energetic - like a positive hangover from eating good foods and drinking healthy drinks.

BONUS: In response to a question I got regarding exercise during menstruation, I would recommend you take at least a couple of days to honour your body. Not push it where you feel fatigue and tiredness.for details, on the practice check my Facebook post for today.

Day 6

FOR TODAY:

MIND:

Continue with the five minute seated meditation practice.

Make time for your friends or family. Think of concrete ways to reach out

BODY :

Stick to 10 rounds of sun salutations. Hold plank post for 30 seconds. Do not give up.

Avoid sitting in a place for more than twenty minutes. If you have a desk job try to stand or walk in between.

NOURISH:

A major cause of serious illnesses are metals like aluminium and mercury that sneak their way into our systems. A smart way to deal with this is to throw out ALL aluminium cooking ware or other aluminium utensils you may have. Ideal would be cast iron cooking pots, or stainless steel or ceramic pots and pans.

Minimise the use of a microwave.

Also a lot of fish contain mercury due to water contamination so replace omega oils by turning to plant based foods such as flaxseed.

Day 7

MIND:

Today think of something that is precious to you, and find someone to share it with. For some of us this is time - for others it is material things, or some it could be sharing what you know... whatever it is for you think of a way to give to someone. It may be as tiny as sending out an email, that you had planned on sending, or a phone call to a friend, or volunteering at a place near you... doesn't matter how small or tiny it is, just do it.

Having done it, truly rejoice that you have been able to do so. Enjoy the happiness that this giving gives you.

BODY :

Start with the 5 min seated meditation, then add the attached mindful movement practice and then practice 8 salutations, rest in corpse pose (shavasana) for at least 3 mins - , simply lie down on your back and rest here with eyes closed. In a state of complete deep relaxation.

Continue the plank pose for 30 seconds.

NOURISH:

Wash and soak 5 almonds in clean drinking water, overnight. The next morning, peel and eat them before breakfast.

Get dry green beans (also known as Mung beans). Pick through them to ensure that there are no stones in them.

Take 1/2 cup of these protein power houses and wash them. Cover them completely in water and soak overnight.

If you live in a cooler climate, please leave these overnight in a warm place like a (turned off) oven, or near a radiator.

The next morning they will be ready to eat. If you want to eat them sprouted, take them out of the water, wash them again and place them in a damp towel, for one more day.

Eat them raw at breakfast or add them to salads.

Zero oil, zero salt and zero cooking time!

Soon you will get into the habit of keeping this on the breakfast table as part of your daily routine...

REMEMBER TO HAVE A BIG BRIGHT SMILE

Day 8

FOR TODAY:

MIND:

Limit Television shows/ digital time to two or less than two hours each day if you are in the habit of having non work related screen time. Instead read a book, take a walk, call a friend or do some yoga.

BODY :

Our first weekend is here! So we get to add another lovely component to our practice. Practice these BEFORE sun salutations and continue them each day.

PRACTICE EACH OF THESE FIVE TIMES (Do follow the same order)

1. Spin clockwise with your arms spread out .
2. Lie down on your back and lift the legs up 90 degrees as well as the head and neck. Rest them back to the floor.
3. Kneel and place your hands on your thighs as you inhale and tilt the pelvis forward and draw the head back. Exhale and return the head and pelvis back to the original position.
4. Sit with your legs extended forward and place your hands beside you. Breathe in and lift the back parallel to the floor , breath out and return to the same position that you started out with.
5. Exhale downward facing dog, Inhale upward facing dog pose.

Do look at the attached videos for reference. If you need more information on these do write in.

NOURISH:

At every lunch/ dinner have a at least one cup of greens or leaves. It could be anything from edamame, raw cabbage, stir fried spinach, beans to cooked green s or raw salad greens.

Day 9

FOR TODAY:

MIND: Identify one habit or repetitive behaviour you want to change within yourself and replace it with something else that you have been wanting to do. For example you could replace being on the phone with going for a walk with your best friend/ partner/ pet or spend time on the yoga mat.

BODY :

Lets kick it up a notch today. Along with 10 Sun Salutations, 5 sets of tibetan rites, we are going to add a short asana practice. if you have the time and energy, keep up with the walking/jogging too

Hold plank pose for 40 seconds today. You can do it.

NOURISH: Along with eliminating fried, sugary, and processed foods from your diet, think of ways to replace them with healthier alternatives.

Include foods like Broccoli, Berries, Beetroot, Papaya, Turmeric, Green tea, Coconut water, Lemons, and Garlic and Onions for their healing properties.

Day 10

FOR TODAY: If this project is a personal priority then take charge of your health and life, make time for it.

MIND:

Be attentive to the thoughts that come up in your mind. If you can be both relaxed and alert in lying down meditation, you can bring the same quality of mind to every moment.

Remember, wisdom never believes, it always investigates.

Don't hurry, keep an open mind that way you keep learning.

You can begin to extend the seated meditation practice by a few minutes. If you can start to practice by yourself then please do so.

BODY :

Same schedule as yesterday

10 rounds of sun salutation

5 rounds of tibetan rites

Asana practice (as per yesterday's email)

Optional practice - walking or jogging.

NOURISH:

If you are a non-vegetarian, try to cut down on red meats better still shift to a plant based diet.

If you are prone to allergies or other food related imbalances then try to keep away from dairy or egg options.

https://sharan-india.org/dairy_meat_alternatives/ is a wonderful resource for recipes - suggestions for meat/dairy alternatives as well as vegan recipes.

Day 11

FOR TODAY:

MIND:

Walking meditation. Go barefoot and walk on the floor, grass or in your apartment. Walk at your normal pace and pay attention to the way your feet fall on the ground. Smile as you breathe in and smile as you breathe out. Three steps as you breathe in and three steps as you breathe out. Walk as though you are the happiest person on the planet. Walk with your focus on the breath and the movement. Walk for as long as it feels comfortable for you. 2~5 minutes to start with.

BODY :

All else as per yesterday's schedule. Simply add two more rounds of sun salutation (so now upto the optimal 12 rounds)

and the asana schedule remains the same - just hold all poses for 12 breaths instead of 10.

Hold plank pose for 40 seconds.

NOURISH:

"Ati sarvatraa varyayet" goes the saying in Sanskrit.

In this context it means a sense of moderation when thinking about balanced diet and nourishment.

For example having a smoothie for breakfast is great but if you add ice-cream or sweetened yogurt you may be adding more calories and sugar to your "healthy" drink unconsciously.

Day 12

FOR TODAY: Start your day with a big bright smile.

MIND:

Declutter your desk and make a list of things you have been meaning to do and have been putting off. Now that you have a list - it is easy to put them in an order of priority and just start doing them. Be it picking up laundry or booking for your next holiday.

BODY:

Our skin is the largest organ from which we absorb so much toxin -chemical based make up, lotions or other soaps. Our liver has to work hard to get rid of these toxins - absorbed from the air, environment and what we eat.

A healthy dose of early morning sunlight on your skin gives you all the Vitamin D it needs you could combine this with a beautiful sun salutation practice - We are up to doing 12 rounds daily now.

3 keys for the skin and body:

1. Use your loofah - To get your skin breathing again, exfoliate the dead skin, specially elbows, feet and knees - also called "dry brushing" this method helps reduce cellulite better than creams loaded with chemicals. This can be done daily for best results. Rub the loofah on the skin when the skin is dry, use gentle strokes to help improve blood circulation and break up cellulite. "
2. Add 2 table spoons of Epsom salts - (available at any pharmacy, non-prescription) into a warm water bath, gently massage yourself and soak in this bath. This one the most effective ways to deal with swelling in the limbs, and is helpful to soothe the body after playing sports or due to muscle soreness. Do this about once a month or whenever your body is tired or needs a little extra kindness. "
3. Magnesium oil massage - A gentle massage with magnesium oil after the night shower before going to sleep helps to manage joint pain - particularly around the knees or if you have had frozen shoulders or such injuries. Dilute the oil in distilled water or purified water before applying it on.

NOURISH

Make reading food labels when you go out to the market a habit.

For example food producers sneak in sugars under various names: Fructose, sucrose, agave nectar, cane sugar, stevia, all contain sugars .

Emulsifiers, additives, and artificial colours and flavours can be avoided to a large extent if we only read food labels.

Day 13

TODAY: The antidote to feeling low could be as simple as a smile.

MIND: We all experience heartache, pain, rejection and to some degree we may become dejected, as well we may feel excited when things go our way, or when we feel joy. While both these qualities of the mind merely reflect emotions, we tend to be swayed by them. Mediation (any of the techniques shared on the challenge so far) and breath control (we will be introducing these today onward) help to bring the mind to an equilibrium.

BODY : Breath Control is a huge part of our training to get a grip on our emotional swings and change patterns of the body and mind. To start out we will practice Bumble Bee breath or Bhramari Pranayaam this has a profound quality to calm the nerves and help the unquiet mind. Practice this slowly, and gently.

Sit on the floor with your legs crossed, if you find this difficult then sit on a chair and keep your spine straight. Keep your eyes closed. In the classic version your thumbs block the ears so as to minimise any external stimuli.

Breathe in through the nose. As you breathe out make the sound of a bumble bee (slightly nasal sound) keeping your mouth closed. Repeat this 5 times. If you are already familiar with this then you can practice for longer. After your practice sit with your eyes closed.

Keep the rest of format - including sun salutations, tibetan rites and all other practices as per yesterday. Hold plank pose for 30 seconds.

NOURISH: The Gut is often referred to as the second brain - and this is because of the way it influences our overall health and of course our emotional wellbeing. To help the gut remain healthy include fermented foods such as yogurt (with active Lacto bacillus),, kombucha, kimchi, natto,tempeh or kefir in your diet. These are the good guys you want to help keep your gut healthy.

Day 14

FOR TODAY: Life life in the slow lane.

MIND: 5 minute Rule: Think of something you can get done in five minutes or under such as folding laundry, calling a friend/family on his/her birthday, giving your child, parent or pet a hug... and DO IT!

BODY :Invite yourself to be more attentive to what is happening in and around you. We are often in such a "hurry" to get things done that we lose the big picture.

Be with yourself today - if you are brushing your teeth just do that. If you are with someone be present and attentive to them, completely in the moment.

The rest of the practice remains the same.

Also identify one activity - kayaking, go camping, hanging out with your best friend, spinning, yogaing, getting a massage...that you truly love to do and something that gets you in the "zone" or is your positive wellspring and make arrangements to do it this weekend.

(If any of these activities need to be booked in advance, make them today)

NOURISH:

While you are leaning towards an SOS diet plan, you could fall in traps such as binge eating, or getting anxious about eating and then feeling grumpy or grouchy.

To avoid this, eat LOTS of clean foods such as whole grains, fresh fruits, greens, vegetables of all colours, a handful of nuts, sprouted beans.

Drink pure clean water - gift yourself the best water purifying system that you can afford this holiday season. If you can, use fresh coconut water or keep using water spiked with lime or mint, and gradually replace fizzy drinks, sugary juices, canned drinks and alcoholic or caffeinated drinks.

Day 15

TODAY: Take a bow and give yourself a pat on the back. We are half way through our month! Yaay!

MIND:

TRATAKA OR QUICK FIX TO IMPROVE EYESIGHT & HELP THE MIND TO STAY ALERT & BRIGHT!

Gaze at a candle flame placed at your eye level without blinking. After a while your eyes might start to tear. This is normal. You could also gaze at a flower or a shoal of koi fish. Alternately you could pick a point in your room which does not move and keep your gaze fixed on it.

Practice without straining the eyes. After this practice, lightly close the eyes and rub the hands and cup them with the hollow of your palms placed on, but not touching the closed eyes. Feel the warmth of the hands going through your hands into your eyes. Practice with a happy heart.

BODY:

Stay with the seated mediation, Tibetan rites x 7 rounds, Bumble bee breathing : 3 sets of 30 each, sun salutations x 12 rounds , asanas 12 breaths each side , deep relaxation and if you still think you need more “physical” challenge then add in the 20 min walking/ jogging or running.

NOURISH:

Spice up the weekend.

Use spices for therapeutic and overall health benefits. Some of my favourites are coriander, cinnamon, peppercorn, turmeric, fennel, cumin, mustard, saffron, nutmeg, asafoetida, ginger, garlic~use fresh when available. If not store the powdered spices in a spice box or a spice rack away from heat and light. Remember a little goes a long way: a dash of turmeric to the curry or a pinch of cinnamon to your soup is enough to give you an enormous boost.

Mix and match and see what combinations work best for you. Be creative and enjoy the adventure in the kitchen.

Some ideas at : <http://www.myyogakitchen.com/recipes/?cat=5&title=Sattvic>

Have a bright weekend ahead and a nice green smoothie to celebrate the halfway mark! !

Day 16

MIND:

Create your personal "happy space" or sanctuary or oasis. Your very own sweet spot in your home or work place. This could be a corner for you to stop your mind chatter and return "home".

Perhaps an indoor plant, or a rock or shell you picked up, or a picture of someone you care about ... or a candle and a colourful cushion on the floor. Scrawl a positive message to yourself, hang a picture...anything that invites you to a moment of calm.

BODY : Keep moving. Just don't call it exercise. :-)

10 minutes playing the lawn or playground with the kids, digging in the garden, or walking around the neighbourhood.... whatever floats your boat. Do it.

And the rest of yesterday's schedule - seated meditation practice,,brahmari pranayaam or bumble bee breath, 10 rounds of tibetan rites ,14 rounds of sun salutation , the yoga page and you are set! The bonus would be holding plank pose for 45 seconds. Good job !

NOURISH:

Limit alcohol to the weekends (best if you don't have any at all replace with beverages like lemonade, coconut water, decaf green tea) Nothing from a can or plastic bottle.

Do have a big breakfast. Have a light lunch and skip dinner if you must but don't skimp on breakfast. All all meals include some protein. Lentils, daals, sprouted beans, tofu are high in protein.

Have healthy snacks handy. A bag of carrots, pistachios or even old fashioned oats. Purge all high fat and tempting foods out from your home. If you don't have these around you are less likely to go out and get some.

Day 17

TODAY: We all have a distinct need to feel loved, without this we tend to feel lonely, lost, upset and frustrated. Our immunity levels, physical health and well being in general, improve greatly when we have happy relationships. Break ups, troubles in personal relationships cause upheaval in our day to day functioning and chip away our resilience and ability to cope with situations. Some of today's hacks are from Dr Gary Chapman's book - The five languages of love.

MIND: Words of Positive Affirmation. All beings feel loved and cared for when they hear appreciation, positive words of acknowledgement, encouragement.

Start to remind the people in your life, that you care - be it your spouse or child or co-worker or family or pet. One kind word sincerely meant from the heart goes a long way!

Sharing gifts : Need not be material gifts at all. People thrive on the thought behind the gift particularly on their special occasions ...a thank you note, something to say you care, an email make a huge difference. Make that effort to handwrite a note.

Acts of Service / random acts of kindness: Sometimes, even the slightest help rendered could mean a lot - it may seem trivial or insignificant to you but it could turn the life of the recipient around completely.

Do something without expecting anything in return. The joy you might find will far outrun the effort you put in. Sometimes defining it to say spending 10% of your time into a side project you feel passionate about might be a great way to make a commitment.

BODY : Physical touch - One of the most important ways to show and receive affection is through physical touch. As with babies and older people, just holding their hand and being with them is intensely meaningful.

Stick to your schedule from yesterday for practice.

NOURISH: Chew and eat your food mindfully, enjoying the taste, texture and flavours in each bite, giving it your full undivided attention. Similarly every interaction , every phone call or lunch meeting or conversation you are having can become your platform to practice. When you are with someone, in that moment, just be there for that person.

Day 18

TODAY: Stay fully present to yourself.

MIND:

Sit in a comfortable position . Once you are comfortable, seated on a chair or the floor,make a strong determination to keep your body still - to not move your body, scratch or blink for just five minutes.

Close your eyes. Begin by observing the breath.

Be open to whatever experience of pain , fear or pleasure or neutral feeling that comes up for you without judgement.

You are not avoiding anything, simply honestly staying present to what is coming up in the current moment for you

Break it down further... keep examining minutely as if zooming in with a camera into what appears on your mind screen.

Stay curious, stay present. That is all.

End the practice by extending a sense of health,happiness , safety and joy to all beings every where - your loved ones, you , complete strangers everyone - even those beings who seem to push your buttons and get on your nerves.

Gently return to the awareness of your breath. Open your eyes. Do this practice at the start of the day.

BODY : Increase the tibetan rites by 2 more rounds. Sun Salutations at 12 rounds. Asana sequence changes today. Please follow the attachment. Bumble bee breath 10 rounds Hold plank pose 50 seconds.

NOURISH: Add more fibre to your diet to help digest your food better. Whole grains, nuts and bran are some examples.

Buy what is in season and what is local so that you eat fresh fruits and vegetables.

Avoid trans fat foods - deep fried chips and most commercially available cookies fall in this category.

Bonus: Relax you jaw. Move your jaw in front and to the back like a piranha fish. We tend to hold a lot of stress here so allow yourself to release tension physically and emotionally.

Day 19

Today: We are ready to practice the MASTER KEY or the practice that really shifts the balance toward better health. Sometimes called Nadi shodhana or anuloma viloma, this practice cleanses the internal energy pathways to allow us to harness the true potential of our body and mind. It develops strength and willpower increases stability and determination and helps with mood swings.

MIND: Sit comfortably in any position where the spine is straight. Sitting cross legged (sukhasana) sitting on your heels (vajrasana) or Half or full lotus (padmasana)

Block the left nostril with the left thumb and inhale through the right nostril. After a full inhalation, block the right nostril and exhale through the left nostril now inhale through the left nostril, after a full inhalation block the left nostril and exhale through the right nostril. This is one breath cycle or one round.

BODY :

Five rounds of Alternate nostril breathing. Increase the tibetan rites by 2 more rounds. Sun Salutations at 12 rounds. Asana sequence as per yesterday's note. Plank pose 55 seconds.

NOURISH: When out at a party or during festive occasions, we tend to lack discipline with eating. A simple trick is to take food cooked by the host in small portions. (take second helpings so your hosts know you enjoy the food) But avoid chips and other salty finger foods.

Bonus: <http://www.bakadesuyo.com/2013/07/make-your-life-better/>

Have a honey coloured day!

Day 20

TODAY: Celebrate we are one third of the way home! :-)

Focus on being positive

MIND: Make a list of the most powerful positive anchors in your life. This could be your friends who give you a sense of joy and enhance your self worth, feel good movies or time walking with your pet.

Keep away from those influences that leave you feeling depleted and waste your time and energy.

Before you go to bed think of three important things you would like to deal with the next day. Write them if you need to. When you are ready tackle your priority list first and then get on with other stuff.

BODY : Visualise your body as you wish it to be. Happy, healthy and safe.

7 rounds of Alternate nostril breathing.

13 rounds of Tibetan rites.

Sun Salutations at 12 rounds.

Asana sequence from yesterday.

Plank pose 55 seconds.

Deep relaxation

If all this is a bit much - continue walking for 15 mins everyday - you will have walked for more than 100 minutes in seven days.

NOURISH:

Celebrate being positive but not through rewarding yourself with food. Often we use food as a “filler” to substitute for emotionally tough times and even if are not hungry we end up bingeing. Eat in moderation.

Positive or sattvic foods are those which leave a good feeling - or the opposite of a hangover. Foods like fresh fruit, vegetables, whole grains and greens all leave a positive residue in the body.

Bonus: www.eatmovesleep.com

Day 21

TODAY: Let us look at the spaces that scare you and how to negotiate them.

MIND: Fear can be conquered step by step, not by hiding like an ostrich but by embracing it like a friend. When faced with a challenge that seems to overwhelm you, break it down into smaller bits and start chipping away.

If practice is taking too much time, break it down to morning and evening sessions that way you will continue to maintain your practice and stay with the last part of the program.

Just don't give up!

BODY :

Seated meditation practice(5 minutes)

Alternate nostril breathing 5 rounds. 13 rounds of tibetan rites, and 12 sets of sun salutations.

At the end of the yoga sequence you are currently practicing , do Legs up the wall (lie down on the floor and rest your legs along the wall at 90 degrees. This would look like the letter "L") Stay here for 21 breath cycles. If you are familiar with head stand then practice that followed by shoulder stand (sarvangasana) and fish pose (matsyasana) Close your practice with deep relaxation.

NOURISH:

Give the body rest - by not having a full meal. Instead eat fruits and vegetables or stick to a light meal with home made soup and salad. If this works for you plan to fast once in fifteen days like this. Drink lots of fluids to help your body get rid of toxins.

Day 22

Today:

We are going to work on a four step plan to work with emotions which may be difficult and tend to throw us off balance. We focus on how to build resilience.

Mind:

Accept our emotions:

Avoid playing the blame game .

Here is a simple exercise : think of a time when you got really got upset with someone- now look at it objectively and acknowledge your role in the situation - perhaps you were responsible. Try not play victim or blame the other person.

Choose: You are free to dwell in negative thoughts or free yourself from them ... the choice is entirely yours. Choose to be happier. Make a deliberate conscious choice.

Wait: Every emotion or thought has the quality of arising and passing away, so let time heal.

For example : if you are angry: recognise that anger is not permanent it cannot always manifest the way it is right now, observe the intensity of the anger and distract your mind with a purposeful positive activity - a hobby or volunteering or something that breaks the pattern of anger.

Contemplate : Antidotes are weapons we have to neutralize situations. Here are some that you can deploy when you find yourself getting worked up:

Loving kindness/ friendliness is the antidote to hatred.

Celebrating your own good or the good that someone does is an antidote for greed/envy.

Patience is the antidote to anger

Humility is the antidote to pride.

Body: YOU CAN TOTALLY DO THIS!

Just a few more days to the finish line.

Seated meditation practice(5 minutes) We are introducing a new component to the breathing practice.
BHASTRIKA PRANAYAM or BELLOW BREATH

Sit comfortably in any of the following - Sukhasana, Vajrasana, Ardhapadmasana, Padmasana, Baddhakonasana. If sitting on the floor is difficult then sit comfortably on a chair.

Force the breath through the nose with equal time for inhalations and exhalations in rapid succession contract the abdomen towards the spine as you breath outPractice this in quick successions for 20 times breaths and rest in child's pose or balaasana for five breath cycles or until you feel relaxed.

Continue the rest of the practice with 9 round of alternate nostril breathing. Increase tibetan rites by two more rounds, and stay with 12 sets of sun salutations. Yoga asana or postures practice : in your given practice sequence before you practice final relaxation, do legs up the wall pose for 5~7 mins or shirshana / head stand just for about 10 seconds (modified shoulder stand) viparita karani for about 30 seconds followed by matsyaasana (fish pose) . Finish with shavasana or deep relaxation.

Nourish:

Portion sizes: try to use smaller bowls and plates at meals - this could reduce the amount of food you consume. Research suggests that we tend to eat much more when we eat in bigger plates, in front of a TV or when we have company.

Bonus: <http://www.forksoverknives.com/recipes/>

Day 23

Today:

Our focus is to live healthy, yet not deny ourselves joy of living:-)

Mind:

Give up the poverty mindset.

Simply put; this means being comfortable in your own skin. Not craving a better body, a better car or more of what someone else has. It creates a negative spiral and you need to then work doubly hard to get rid of it.

Be Zen: Cut out useless chatter by creating a steady meditation practice. Sit until it feels right but don't overdo it. Steadily increase pace. Whenever you need to, listen to the guided meditation sound file sent to you earlier in the program.

Body:

Keep yesterday's schedule

Add A MINUTE - woohoooo!!! A minute of holding plank pose

If you have been following the program this should not be challenging.

Do close your day with deep relaxation practice.

Nourish:

Add a tablespoon of turmeric - the yellow spice powder used in Indian curries, to your diet. It seems to have incredible benefits from reducing inflammation in the body to, maintaining heart health and warding off neurological illnesses like dementia.

<http://www.care2.com/greenliving/turmeric-and-exercise-are-a-magic-combination-for-heart-health.html>

Bonus:

I enjoy your comments and love reading about how the program is working for you. Send in your bouquets and brickbats, suggestions and questions to me anytime.

Day 24

Today: Stay the course! You are doing great.

Mind:The first hour after waking up and the last before going to bed are key in setting the tone for the rest of the day. You could get a lot done if you plan right. Try to get through your seated practice either in the morning or just before you go to bed.

Body:Seated meditation practice(5 minutes) Then begin with 30 quick breaths - bellow's breathing for three rounds, wait for th breath to settle and relax for five normal breath cycles and practice Alternate nostril breathing 5 rounds. Practice tibetan rites, and 12 sets of sun salutations. Yoga asana or postures practice as before and a minute of plank pose. Of course close your day with deep relaxation/yoga nidra practice.

Nourish: Invest in the best water purifying system you can afford. Particularly important is to stay away from fluoride - in dental care products such as toothpastes. Fluoride is also added to water in some countries so do check and ensure that you keep yourself and your families safe by purifying drinking water. More on this at <http://fluoridealert.org/articles/50-reasons/>

Glad that you are continuing and making small changes work for you!

Day 25

FOR TODAY: Have a hearty laugh. Either call someone who tickles your funny bone or watch your favourite comedy show or movie.

MIND:

With a relaxed mind start your seated meditation practice.

Befriend yourself and end the practice by extending this thought: May I be happy, healthy and safe. May all other beings be happy, healthy and safe. May I be free from suffering. May all other beings be free from suffering. May I enjoy complete happiness free from sorrow. May all beings enjoy complete happiness free from sorrow.

BODY :

Continue the same breathing patterns, tibetan rites, sun salutations and holding plank pose for a minute as you did yesterday.

Relax with a deep long shavasana.

NOURISH:

Include omega 3 and 6 to your diet, either in the form of flax seeds, walnuts, black beans, kidney beans, edamame, chia seeds and squash.

<http://www.pcrm.org/factsheets/resources/health-and-nutrition-fact-sheets>

Day 26

TODAY:

Yield to grace and draw into the inner spring of joy that is always accessible to you.

MIND: Seated meditation practice(5 minutes)

The practice of reflection, contemplation in solitude has been long known as the ultimate key to opening the doors to access internal joy. Spend sometime through the day in solitude.

BODY : 40 quick breaths - bellow's breathing for three rounds

Relax for 3 breath cycles between each round

Alternate nostril breathing 5 rounds.

15 tibetan rites, and 12 sets of sun salutations.

Yoga asana or postures practice : including inversion - basic legs up the wall counts as an inversion.

15 minute deep relaxation

NOURISH:

Ayurvedic cooking is based on sound health principles, keeping seasons, availability of produce and methods of cooking. Ayurveda recommends that you include a combination of six tastes in your diet: sweet, sour, pungent, salty, bitter, astringent at each meal to balance the elements in your body.

BONUS:

<http://www.chopra.com/articles/the-6-tastes-of-ayurveda>

Day 27

FOR TODAY: Enjoy one thing that gives you joy. It could be enjoying a cup of tea, hugging your child, or working in your garden...fully immerse yourself in that activity.

MIND:

Sit. Check your motivation. Adjust your body posture and simply be attentive to the breath. It is so simple! Consistency is key.

Practice for at least five minutes.

BODY : Quick shallow breathing out through the nostril 3 rounds of 30 reps each. (rest between each round)

Alternate nostril breathing 10 rounds.

17 tibetan rites

12 sets of sun salutations.

Yoga asana or postures practice : a balanced practice includes dynamic and static postures and one that has opening the body, forward bends, back bends and twists.. Include an inversion and a deep relaxation at the end. Complete the practice with a 15 minute deep relaxation practice. If you find it difficult to complete everything at one go, break up the practice in multiple small doable sessions.

NOURISH:

According to Ayurveda each person is composed of three doshas or energies that govern all physical and mental processes. The doshas - are Vata, Pitta and Kapha and they derive from five Elements and their related properties. *Vata* is associated with Space and Air, *Pitta* with Fire and Water, and *Kapha* with Earth and Water. Eating according to one's individual constitution promotes health and vigour.

Bonus Take a quiz to find out your dosha or predominant constitutional characteristic. (FYI: I do not endorse any products on this website)

<https://www.banyanbotanicals.com/info/prakriti-quiz/#quiz>

Day 28

TODAY: Please send me an email. In it, tell me what you think of this program, personally what did you draw from it, what was most relevant, practical to use and what would you like to see done differently in future such offerings. Thank you.

MIND: Seated meditation practice(5 minutes)

Follow the seated practice with yoga of the breath,

Begin with 30 quick breaths - bellow's breathing for three rounds, wait for th breath to settle and relax for five normal breath cycles.

Next practice alternate nostril breathing 5 rounds.

Today we will introduce one more breath pattern:

SHEETALI/ SHEETAKARI or COOLING BREATH

To practice this, inhale through the mouth either by curling the tongue like a straw or keeping the teeth together , making sound as if slurping noodles. After a complete inhalation close the mouth and exhale through your nose. Repeat this practice five times. Avoid practice if you have sinusitis or flu or are feeling cold. If you live in a very cold climate do not practice this breathing pattern.

BODY :

After the seated practice, try 19 tibetan rites, and 12 sets of sun salutations and yoga asana practice as before.

Practice plank pose for a minute and 10 seconds.

Close the day with deep relaxation/yoga nidra practice.

NOURISH: Abhyanga or a daily massage is DIY prescription to pamper your body and nourish all systems.

It improves blood circulation and helps the body feel radiant, light and supple. Use warm oil - preferably almond, sesame, coconut or olive, rub it between your palms and then massage your body.

<http://www.mapi.com/ayurvedic-knowledge/massage/benefits-of-an-ayurvedic-abhyanga-massage.html#gsc.tab=0>

Day 29

FOR TODAY: Be happy

MIND:

Seated meditation practice 5 minutes

Walking meditation 5 minutes

http://www.successconsciousness.com/peace_mind.htm

BODY :

Bhastrika pranayaam or bellows breath 30 breaths

Anuloma Viloma or alternate nostril breathing 5 rounds

Bhramari pranaayaam or bumble bee breath 5 rounds

Sheetali pranayaam or cooling breathe 5 rounds

Relax - quick shavaasana for 5 breaths

Warm up

21 rounds tibetan rites. This is optimal - do not exceed this.

12 rounds sun salutations

ASANA SEQUENCE:

Standing 5 breaths each

Trikonasana - on each side

Forward bend - prasarita padottanasana or uttanasana

Balance : tree pose - vrikshasana on each leg

Seated:

Cat-cow - on all fours - arch and round the back X 3

Butterfly pose - dynamic baddhakonasana

Paschimottanasana 5 breaths

Vajrasana 5 breaths

balansana 5 breaths

Prone: 5 breaths each

Cobra pose : bhujangasana

Shalabhasana - locust pose

Dhanuraasana - Bow pose

Supine:5 breaths each

Leg lifts - uttana padaasana both legs together if you do not have back ache.

Hug your knees in towards your chest

happy baby pose - ananda balasana

Lying down twist on each side

Shavaasana - as long as you feel comfortable 3~5 minutes.

NOURISH:

Have a meal with someone you care about care about.

Eat mindfully, enjoy the meal and relish the flavours.

Day 30

Today:

Examine the five areas of focus through this month and how you could continue to grow and flourish in a positive way:

Diet

Pharmacology / medicines or supplements you may be taking

Rest

Exercise

Relationships

Mind:

See what exercises work for you and continue to maintain a seated practice. Gradually increase the duration of practice.

Body:

Continue with Breathing practices and Yoga asana or postures practice : a balanced practice includes dynamic and static postures and one that has opening the body, forward bends, back bends and twists..

A proper warm up and cool down are also essential.

Close the practice with 15 minute deep relaxation.

Nourish

Let foods you consume heal and nourish you not just to sustain the body but to help it remain radiant and in an optimal form, that helps support everything else.