

THE SWEETEST YOGA ON 124 STREET



Happy Autumn Sweet Kula Friends!

This newsletter is packed full of interesting items, including yoga related stuff. Couldn't help but include this photo of the snow fall in Lethbridge last weekend.

As always, if you do not want to receive this communication, please let us know with a reply email.

Thank you for taking the time to read!

Economic Argument for Regular Practice and Studio Passes

“Economic argument”? What the ...

Here's the thing. With a regular practice of two to three times weekly, the body quickly becomes stronger and more flexible. The body's core and joints take on a new stability that not only helps you MOVE better, but you will FEEL better. The breath is no longer complacent, but an ally, especially when you're feeling stress. As for the mind, it can learn to tune out the chatter, tune into the present moment and reduce tension. These are valuable aspects to living a healthier and happier life and they become efficient and highly effective the more often you get to your mat (that's the economic part).

Sweet Kula studio passes are priced to encourage regular practice. That's good for the student and good for the studio. If you come to class two or more times each week, the Monthly Unlimited is your best choice. At \$80 you can take as many classes as you like, bring a guest for a free class once a month and receive a 5% discount on intensives and workshops. The 10 and 5 Class passes are also great options, particularly because they are transferable. At a cost of \$12 and \$13 respectively per class, they are a tremendous economic value for a really great yoga experience.

Last, but not least, we are always happy to see you. There is no economic argument here, just a reminder that your **kula** is here for you.

Persnickety Posture Tips

I often feel like a broken record – as a parent and as a yoga instructor. However, if something is important, there is no choice but to rinse and repeat. So, with that (and your patience) in mind, I’m launching this segment. Hope you enjoy it! Feedback is appreciated.

Ardha Uttanasana (Half Intense stretch) aka “halfway lift” or “throwaway” pose

Part of the Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutation) sequence, *Ardha Uttanasana* is often executed as an inconsequential movement rather than yoga posture. For this reason, I call it the “throwaway” pose and I am on a mission to change that.

This presentation includes two images. The first image (Image 1) is a pretty good depiction of proper alignment which requires muscular engagement to achieve a safe and strong posture. The second image (Image 2) is just awful (actually makes me nauseous).

Image 1



(are-dah oot-tan-AHS-anna) ardha = half uttana = intense stretch

What I like about this image is illustrated with the four arrows:

- The forward fold coming from the hips with the chest lifted forward and broad
- Shoulder blades firmly on the back body
- Shoulder heads are drawn away from the ears for a loooong neck
- Gaze forward to bring the back of the neck into its natural extension (curve).

The core muscles must engage to create this version. So must the legs and feet. That's what we want!

What I don't like about this image is found in the vertical red line. Ideally, the hips should be mostly OVER the ankles, not behind as shown here. To achieve this alignment, knees are bent (as shown) and the body weight is shifted forward while maintaining full contact of the heel to the ground. Increased muscle engagement is required to hold the standing balance (lift that low belly!). Remember, the bend in the knees is necessary to protect and deepen the stretch in the hamstrings and low back.

Image 2 (yikes!!!)



Now, here's an accurate depiction of the "throwaway" version that makes me CRINGE!!!! Note the gaze down, rounded low back and locked knees. The forward fold is coming from the waist and not the hips. **Forward folding is always from the hip joint.** Bending at the waist puts the spine at risk, especially because there's very little core engagement and the weight of the torso is literally pulling on the everything associated with the low back. Further, with the knees locked, there is likely extreme stress placed on the hamstrings.

Remember, this pose is part of a common sequence that, when practised incorrectly over and over again, can cause real harm.

Please don't do this. EVER. Please ask for help. ALWAYS. Don't be shy.

Unique and Important Benefits of Restorative and Yin Yoga

When students are asked why they think they should practice yoga it's typically because they want to gain a) flexibility, b) strength, and c) reduce stress. The beauty of the Restorative and Yin styles is they can help achieve all three in a relaxed and quiet atmosphere. Both are true yin practices, meaning they activate our yin energy rather than yang energy. By incorporating a regular yin class we find time to be quiet and just breathe, engage the parasympathetic nervous system and be fully present to ourselves. This is particularly important to counter the hectic, even stressful, lives we lead and the often inappropriate physical demands we expect of our bodies. More about these practices will be

shared in upcoming newsletters. In the meantime, Sweet Kula offers two classes to bookend your weekend:

- Deep Exhale on Friday at 5:30 – 6:30 pm (Restorative with meditation)
- Yin on Sunday at 1:00 – 2:00 pm

Happy Thanksgiving from Sweet Kula Yoga

There is so much research showing the impact of a gratitude practice. People are happier and may even live longer when they genuinely feel thankful every day for both the small and grand gifts life brings. Starting a practice of gratitude coincides nicely with Thanksgiving. What would that look like for you? How could you use this ritual to not only bring yourself more happiness, but those around you? Please email Sweet Kula if you have something you want to share.

Studio hours on Thanksgiving weekend are:

- Open – Friday, October 11 for Deep Exhale and Saturday, October 12 for Sunrise Vinyasa
- Closed – Sunday, October 13 for Yin and Monday, October 14 for Yoga Fundamentals

Sweet Kula Yoga wishes you and yours a Happy Thanksgiving and many blessings.

Namaste

