

## Bring On The Spring!

*Tips and ideas how to adapt your yoga asana practice and diet to accommodate the beauty unfolding in spring.*

*--By Melina Meza*

Although the weather can really be hit or miss these days, there is enough proof in nature to confirm that spring is just around the corner, close enough to consider shifting your diet and yoga practice to compliment the season.

### *Lighten your load*

It makes sense that many of us are drawn to the idea of cleansing and purging this time of year—it's time to lighten our load. Spring is really a time to THRIVE and it's difficult to thrive if you feel weighted down by your inner or outer world. In order to feel your best, perhaps a little cleanse is in order to get rid of any extra winter weight, household clutter, or material possessions that keep you in the past or limit your freedom in the moment.

Here are a few diet adaptations that will help prepare your body and mind for spring:

- Decrease heavy, oily, cold, fatty foods.
- Increase spicy, bitter, and astringent foods (arugula, mustard greens, kale, strawberries, blueberries, and sprouts).
- Increase your vitamin, nutrient and chlorophyll intake with early dark green vegetables and sprouts.
- In general, eat light and eat local.

### *Spring cleaning through asana*

Over the winter months, we recommend practicing yoga sequences that emphasize Sun Salutations to promote circulation, extra twists to strengthen metabolic fire, and dynamic forward and backbends to tonify the kidneys and urinary bladder, which regulate water in the body as well as our emotions.

Now that winter has passed, it's time to start sending some TLC to the liver and gallbladder, which may have been working overtime during the winter with diets heavy in fat, protein, caffeine, alcohol or sugar. Springtime invites cleansing the liver and gallbladder, which do many helpful things for our health including: filtering toxins from the external environment and food, aiding in the metabolism of carbohydrates, fat, and protein, helping to break down fats in the body, and processing our anger. These organs tend to get overloaded in the winter with extra socializing, large meals, decreased exercise, and not enough rest.

In regards to asana, the inner legs and outer leg lines correlate to the meridian lines that feed into the liver (inner legs) and gallbladder (outer legs). Spring is a great time to deepen your relationship to poses such as Eka Pada Rajakapotasana (pigeon), Garudasana (eagle), Prasaritta Padottanasana (wide leg forward bends) and Gomukasana (cow face), as these poses help you connect to and activate the liver and gallbladder meridians.

Following are two asana sequences specifically geared for spring.

**Yin/restorative class sequence for spring:**

*Lying on your back:*

Supta Baddha Konasana, Happy Baby Pose, Wide Leg Splits (while supported by the floor)  
Easy Twist with bent legs, "Thread the Needle"

*On the knees or seated:*

Wide Leg Child's Pose, Sphinx, Pigeon, Ardha Matsyendrasana, Gomukasana, Upavista  
Konasana, Padmasana

**Seasonal Vinyasa Yoga Spring class sequence:**

Supta Baddha Konasana, Happy Baby Pose, Wide Leg Split, Supta Padangusthasana  
(standard and twist), Abdominal work with Twists, Abdominal work with legs in  
Garudasana, Lion's Breath, Fire Hydrant, Spinal Rolls, Uddiyana Bandha, Agni Sara  
Sun Salutes with Salabhasana, Squats, Surya Namaskar B, Garudasana, Prasaritta  
Padottanasana Series, Sirsasana, Bakasana, Eka Pada Rajakapotasana (pigeon),  
Gomukasana, Double Pigeon, Pursvottanasana, Mayurasana (peacock), Bharadvajasana,  
Maha Mudra, Janu Sirsasana, Setu Bandha, Halasana with Padmasana...finishing poses.

*Melina Meza, BS Nutrition, 500-RYT, has been exploring the art and science of yoga and nutrition for over 16 years. She combines her knowledge of Hatha Yoga, Ayurveda, whole foods nutrition and healthy living into a unique style called **Seasonal Vinyasa Yoga**. Seasonal Vinyasa Yoga emphasizes the healing teachings of the ancient yogis and inspires students to adapt their asana practice, diet and lifestyle routines to better harmonize with the seasonal changes occurring in nature. Melina is the lead teacher at Seattle's 8 Limbs Yoga Centers and is also the author of **Art of Sequencing** an innovative book that includes 34 unique yoga sequences and over 1,500 photos offering creative inspiration for experienced yoga teachers as well as fresh instructional ideas to jump start a home practice. More information about Melina and her offerings can be found at [www.melinameza.com](http://www.melinameza.com).*