

Be Like Water: by Erin Shawgo **Kūrmāsana Preparation**

Kūrmāsana is a hard asana for me. It has been teaching me a lot about how to sit with myself in the midst of struggle. I have learned I cannot simply push harder to achieve this asana. Bringing the element of water (áp) very intentionally into my kurmasana preparation, has allowed me to explore how to approach challenges with fluidity, firmness and compassion. The pranayama at the beginning of this sequence sets the tone for the asanas to follow. I think of how Geetaji would remind us that it is not our body's stiffness, but our mind's stiffness that limits our ásana. This sequence reminds me of the suppleness required to face the challenges this world offers us and the work I get to do within myself to face them.

Focus: Use head support when applicable to support the mind in being quiet. Work on strong internal rotation of thighs and firmly press thighs back in standing poses. Reflect in each asana how the breath may inspire the experience of water.

1. Supta Swastikāsana with support
2. Ujjayi I - perform in sets of three, first breath moving from groin to navel, second breath from groin to center of chest, third breath from groin to collar bones. Imagine the breath like waves lapping to shore, the inhalations the flow and the exhalations the ebb.
3. Viloma I - inhale and pause first at the navel, continue the inhalation and then pause at the center of the chest continued to a final pause at the collarbones. Imagine each inhalation like water flowing as an incoming wave. Each kumbhaka acts like water pooling and spreading, saturating the width of the trunk and chest, as water saturates sand in tidal pools at the beach. Imagine the exhalation as a smoothly ebbing tide.
4. Adho Mukha Śvanāsana with rope support if available and head support and heels at wall
5. Pārśvottānāsana, concave back
6. Parivṛtta Trikoṇāsana
7. Parivṛtta Pārśvakoṇāsana, start with knee down, lift back leg once in twist)
8. Prasārita Pādottānāsana I, concave back then head down with support
9. Śīrṣāsana
10. Marīchyāsana I, focus on twist for the first round, second round forward extension holding foot
11. Upaviṣṭha Koṇāsana with support
12. Upaviṣṭha Koṇāsana 3-4 times, each iteration narrowing the legs slightly until arriving at hip-width
13. Kūrmāsana, use support under hips as needed, support under forehead

14. Paśchimottanāsana
15. Chatush Pādāsana
16. Halāsana
17. Sālamba sarvāṅgāsana
18. Śavāsana

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Erin **Shawgo**

Erin Shawgo has been studying yoga since 2004 and Iyengar Yoga since 2012. Yoga has become an integrated practice in her daily life, offering her a tool for finding equanimity and working on constant self-examination and growth. Erin began teaching Iyengar Yoga in 2013 and holds an Intermediate Junior certification with the Iyengar Yoga National Association of the United States. Her teaching style is

compassionate and creative, with a focus on making Iyengar Yoga accessible to individuals of all identities and experiences. She believes in the power of yoga to heal and connect individuals and communities and is excited to share the gift of yoga with the Detroit community. Erin also holds her Masters of Social Work with a focus on psychodynamic therapy. Her yoga and therapy practice greatly inform one another and enrich her capacity as both a teacher and a therapist.