

Daily Practice Journal

0928 Sunday Practice 9.30a Mixed Levels Primary Series with Katie

This is my first practice during teacher training. I'm anxious and nervous but calm. Suryanamaskara A & B are both strong but I find myself distracted by other students in the class, wondering who else may be training this month. As we move into the standing series, the asanas come to me easily. Pavritta Trikonasana, usually difficult especially in the morning, is strong and there is no usual tightness in my lower back. Could it be because the heater was on? Even in the balancing poses I feel strong. Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana is solid. I don't lose balance like I usually do. Moving into the seated poses, I'm not feeling any fatigue. Maybe it's because I ate well on Saturday? Perhaps it's the energy in the room. Purvottanasana is also strong. I feel light. The pose is unusually easy for me today. I modify Janu Sirasana C - I'll try the traditional version next time. I am convinced I have above average tightness in the shoulders and lower back. Kia once said it was due to muscle development but I am no body builder. I still modify Marichyasana C, I'll try the binding after more practice. Finishing postures feel good. Still some weakness in Urdhva Danurasana - I'm tired after the second one. Savasana is not as restful as I'd like. The bright light bothers me. I should've brought my eye pillow.

This is the kind of practice I truly enjoy. It's when I'm at ease with the asanas, allowing my breath to flow right through them. I only wish that Savasana was more restful.

0929 Monday Practice 4.30p Mixed Levels Rocket I with Larry

Class is full. This is the first time the teacher training students will be practicing together as a whole. It's a bit exciting, plus Larry is leading the class. He stops me on my way into the room to compliment my practice. I'm honored.

As we move through Suryanamaskara A & B, I am not as strong as I was yesterday. (Nutrition? I don't think I ate enough.) I play with hand placement, noticing the shifting stretches. Larry adds another Chaturanga after downward dog. I pass, wanting to conserve my energy. After the third Suryanamaskara B, I am feeling tired. My breath is labored but I recover once we move into standing poses. My standing poses are strong but not as light as they were yesterday. Balancing poses are steady. Larry skips Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana, replacing it with Vrksasana. Good, more rest for me. I am fearful of what he'll throw in next, better to save my energy for that.

We move into seated poses. Navasana is difficult for me especially since Larry is focusing on abs. I try my best. I know it will surely benefit me during tomorrow's practice. My jump throughs from downward dog to seated are strong at first but get weaker. I think it's because the sweat is making my pants stick to the mat. Finishing poses are strong. I'm feeling lighter in Savangasana, straighter than ever before. I am able to move my chin away from my chest with ease. Headstand feels good but I'm unusually wobbly. Savasana is much better this time with the eye pillow.

I will have to build up my strength to truly feel comfortable with all of the asanas practiced in the Rocket series. I am mindful that unfamiliarity may have affected my ability to fully give to each of the poses. I look forward to seeing the changes in me and my practice as I become more familiar with the It's Yoga system.

0930 Tuesday Practice 9.30a Mixed Levels Primary Series with Katie

My moon must be on its way because it seemed everything during this morning's practice was irritating me. Too much instruction. Too slow pace. The heater was blowing on me. It was too hot. I was sweating more than I'd like. I was hungry. I was thirsty. So many things. Too many things. I was so distracted, I lost focus many times during practice. I couldn't hear my

breath. I think I even lost it a few times even. It made the asanas difficult, actually difficult. It's been a long time since I had that much difficulty.

Suryanamaskara A & B are still strong. Moving into standing poses, I notice difficulty in Pavritta Trikonasana. I can't seem to take my mind off how hungry I am. I keep thinking about how I need to eat more this month to support my practice. I've already stopped focusing on my breath work and it's only the third standing asana! I think this basically sets the mood for the rest of my practice this morning. Balancing poses: I have some difficulty in Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana A - C. I find it difficult to fully extend my leg. (Sore from all the walking I've been doing?) I take it easy during seated poses. The heater starts to kick in. It's blowing directly on me and I can't stop being distracted by it. I move but the hot air still hits me. Purvottanasana feels tight. I feel as if I cannot fully bring my chest up. I try Janu Sirasana C but back off. My hips are not ready for this, nor are my feet (the turn feels very strange). I do the modification, balancing nicely until we move into the next asana. I have some success in Marichyasana B. Though my bent knee does not touch the floor, I am able to bind. We move into the more advanced Primary Series poses. My Bakasana is stronger than past attempts. Kurmasana feels tighter in the legs but there is not pain in the back knees - this probably is due to all the walking I've been doing.

Finishing Postures are good. I go up for all three Urdhva Danurasanas though don't hold the last one for five breaths. I notice even Savangasana is not as strong as usual though I came very close to Karnapidansana. I think I will try Chakrasana next time. Sirasana feels good, as it always does. Savasana is not restful, even with the eye pillow. I hope next time is nothing like this time was.

I'll choose not to dwell on this day. I know practice the next day can only be better. I also must be mindful that my body is probably preparing to be on its moon, so I will have to be more patient and not over exert my efforts.

1001 Wednesday Practice 4.30p Mixed Levels Rocket II with Larry

Many of the trainees were apprehensive about the Rocket II class, wondering how much more advanced it would be. I was nervous, too, on Monday but after my not-so-great session Tuesday morning I decided to clear my mind and focus on having a good practice Wednesday afternoon regardless of how challenging it would be. I think it did me and my practice a lot of good.

Class was pretty full again. I could feel the energy in the room this time. Many of Larry's regular Rocket II students were there. Miami It's Yoga would also be practicing with us. Larry brought many of his advanced students to the front of the class. They are amazing to watch in action.

We move through Suryanamaskara A & B. I'm feeling strong in my poses. I practice different feet positions in Adho Mukha Svanasana and the Chaturanga Dandasana jump back. (My feet further back in Adho Muko Svanasana brings the stretch into my calves. I still prefer the traditional stance - I think the stretch in my hamstrings is where I need to focus on a regular basis. In Chaturanga Dandasana, feet further back moves the energy further into my shoulders. I still prefer it in my biceps. I'll stick with the traditional distance for now.) My arms have been aching in Adho Muko Svanasana lately. This time I feel the heat in my shoulders. Instead of fidgeting like I had yesterday, I focus on my breathing, increasing the sound like Kia taught me. It drowns out the discomfort.

I am strong again through the Standing Asanas. Utthita Trikonasana feels strong. I am able to bend back, opening my chest further. It feels good. The Prasarita Series feels strong. My feet are well grounded. I pay attention to engaging my inner heel. As we move into the Balancing Asanas, I find my poses steady until I peak at Gretchen then lose my balance. She is amazing to watch. Her strength, as a woman, is something to strive for.

The Navasana sequence Larry throws in is still brutal for my abs. More evidence that I must practice that more often. Navasana is still my most un-favorite asana. I find I can hold Handstand for a few seconds, even if it's only by the wall. Another thing to work at.

The Seated Asanas. I've been feeling a tightness in my legs since we've been practicing regularly (plus all the walking). I am unable to reach as far as I usually am in Pachimottanasana. Marichyasana D feels tight in both the stretch and the legs although I am able to get the leg in Half Lotus. Again, I feel tightness in Upavistha Konasana A and even B. I don't push it. Better not to pull any leg muscles so early in teacher training. I back off.

As we move into the Finishing Asanas, I am too tired to attempt the last Urdhva Danurasana. Forget about Vinyasa in between at this point. I backed off a long while ago. My neck or shoulders are not as flexible today in Savangasana. I don't feel completely vertical, though I am even closer to Karnapidansana than even yesterday. (There was no Chakrasana today. Maybe tomorrow.) Sirasana is solid. Savasana is restful but I still cannot relax as much as in other classes. I am convinced it is because of the skylights.

I enjoy these Rocket classes because I find them challenging in that I do not know the order of the poses - Larry mixes them around. He also throws in advanced poses in the middle of the practice which I find challenging, as well. I find the energy of these classes to be very inspirational. I've also learned not to push myself too hard. I am always fearful of injury or spent energy - these classes are harder than the ones I usually take. However, I still think the Primary Series is still my preference for regular practice. I still enjoy losing myself in the poses which can only be done when my body knows what's coming next.

1002 Thursday Practice 9.30a Mixed Levels Primary Series with Samantha

I am really looking forward to practice this morning. My body has gotten used to a daily practice. Although I feel tight in my legs and slightly in my lower back and sides, my energy is strong. It really does feel good to practice every day. Emily was right.

We have a new instructor leading us today. I like her style. She begins with the chant that I'm still struggling to memorize. As we go into Suryanamaskara A & B, I'm feeling strong with by breath. My movements through the asanas are fluid and strong. I feel good. I've noticed that when I move my feet closer in Adho Mukha Svanasana, I do not get the shoulder strain I've been feeling lately. Perhaps it's not because I don't have the strength to hold myself up. Perhaps it is because my foot distance is too far back for me. I have to remember that I'm much smaller than most. The position feels better with a shorter distance.

I've also moved away from the heaters blowing path so I'm not distracted this time. Perhaps because of the heat in the room, I've noticed that I'm starting to sweat much, much more than I ever have before in these recent practices. Already through Suryanamaskara A, I am sweating profusely. The sweat is starting to drip from my face. It doesn't bother me though. I think it's a good thing.

My Standing Series is strong but when we move into Balancing Asanas I begin to lose balance again. I felt grounded when I came in to class but can't seem to hold Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana. I am shaky. I move on.

Again, my jump through to seated is sticking to the mat. I think I'll have to purchase a rug. I think it's the sweat that makes me stick. I'm having trouble getting through to seated with out making contact with my sit bones first - I don't usually have this problem. Perhaps, I should lift up more as the solution instead of purchasing a rug...

Seated Postures feel good. I am cautious in Upavistha Konasana because of the slight strain I've started feeling in my right hamstring. I will let it rest until I feel stronger. I feel strong again in Purvottanasana. Much better than yesterday. My stretch in all the forward bending asanas is also back. I am able to bind once again - it feels good in my back and sides to get the stretch, also the legs. Navasana is problematic for me again. I must work harder at his pose.

Finishing Poses are also much better than yesterdays. In Savangasana, I am able to feel fully perpendicular to the floor. I am feeling grounded in my shoulders and elbows – this is the way it should feel. I am also able to pull my chin off my sternum. I know my form is good here. I attempt supported Savangasana – I haven't in a while. It feels good but I do not feel a stretch anywhere. It's almost effortless. Perhaps I'll try the classical version next time. Sirasana is strong again but I am just a little shaky – I am distracted by Richard behind me. I must breathe louder next time. Savasana is wonderful. For the first time, I lose consciousness a few times. I am truly at rest. It feels good to have that feeling once again.

It is true what Larry says about Primary Series. It does make me feel more calm and grounded the rest of the day. It's still my preferred version of practice.

1003 Friday Practice 4.30p MKRK Special (aka the "Happy Hour" class) with Larry

I have let go of my fear of a daily practice. At the start of Teacher Training, I was fearful that I would become too tired to practice yoga daily. It is now the end of the first week of training, instead of fatigue I am experiencing something completely different. I woke up this morning with the sensation that there was a calming energy surrounding me. It's been with me for the past few days. I am always aware of my breath, my movements and my thoughts. It has been an incredible feeling.

There is a lot of energy in the packed yoga room. I am looking forward to practice especially after sitting for 3 hours. I'm worried though. My right second toe is badly bruised from Isa's falling on it the night before. It's actually turning partially black. I'm concerned how this will affect my leg – since all things are connected. Even worse, I've started feeling a slight strain in my right hamstring. Re-aggravation of an old issue. Perhaps it has never fully healed? I'm always aware of it and worry that it will effect my practice.

As we move through Suryanamaskara A & B, I am still feeling strong. I play with foot placement in the Chaturanga jump back. I see that I've become much stronger than even a year ago. Placing my feet closer to my hands in the jump back, activates more of my back and sides. I feel very strong every time I hit it – I wouldn't have a year ago. I'm also feeling a new "lightness" in the transition from Upward Dog to Downward Dog. This "lightness" has only started the past few days. I find the movements effortless. It feels good every time I move through them. I also play with the one foot vs. two feet placement in Chaturanga. The weight seems lighter with one foot, though that makes no sense – perhaps I've just become accustomed to one foot? I will need to play around with that. I've also started playing with hands together and apart in Tandasana and Virabhadrasana I – mostly because I see David alternating his hands. It's much easier to lift my ribs out of my hips when hands are parted but I do notice I pay more attention to relaxing my shoulders when hands are connected.

I feel the strain in my hamstring in most of the Standing Asanas. I am mindful not to overexert my efforts – always fearing a bad injury – but can't help but feel disappointed that I'm not at 100%. I wanted to give full effort to my practice throughout training. Better safe. Instead of the usual modifications, I tend to back off on poses when I feel the pull in my hamstring. Otherwise, Standing Asanas are strong and solid. Balancing Asanas are also strong.

As we move into Seated Postures, I notice I am "babying" my right leg more. I feel the strain more in the forward bends. My new most-hated pose has become the split series. I think that was where the strain came from. I am fearful during these poses. I must try to relax and approach them positively.

As we move into Finishing Asanas, I am stronger in Urdhva Danurasana than yesterday. I am able to do all three with much effort but I am definitely feeling stronger. I do not finish the five Larry requested. Another time. I feel strong, again, in Sarvangasana and Sirasana. Savasana is not a peaceful but the overall practice was good. I come out of class feeling strong and full of energy.

Shiva is crying at the end of Savasana. She says it's a good cry and that she always cries at the end of class. I'm happy for her. Happy that yoga brings those emotions out of her. It's a powerful thing.