

Reset and Recharge



Welcome

How do we feel better? There are all sorts of suggestions in this issue. Celebrity chef, Levi Roots, pictured opposite, brings sunshine to our lives, by sharing how he learnt how to feel amazing in mind, body and spirit. It began with eating and breathing well, alongside around 8 yoga poses. Read his letter to us all on page 4.

Many people use this time of year, or their time inside, to focus on their health and to use the time positively. A writer from HMP La Moye, having lived a self-destructive life, is finding his dedicated yoga practice and lighter eating is helping him feel calmer, steadier and more determined not to slip back. Read more on page 4. Often people get started with yoga because of a sore back. Anyone who has hurt their back knows how debilitating it can be. Someone we support at HMP Low Newton started yoga to help her back and carried on because it also helped her to feel calmer and recharged.

When we feel recharged we have energy to feel more open to things, in charge of our choices and less reactive. We might also have the energy to help others too. This is where the spiritual dimension of our lives has breathing space to flourish. There are many perspectives about spirituality, and whilst it is personal to each of us, there is a universal idea that it is about an alive and connected life.

Continue reading on page 4

Love from us all

Selina, Amy, Chris, Emma, Hetty, Lou, Lucy, Padmakumara, Rebecca, Victoria and all our volunteers

The Prison Phoenix Trust supports prisoners in their spiritual lives through meditation, yoga, silence and the breath. It recommends breath-focused stretches and meditation sensitively tailored to students' needs. This safe practice offers students ultimate peace of mind. The PPT encourages prisoners and prison staff through correspondence, books, CDs, DVDs, newsletters, free taster workshops and weekly classes.

See inside:

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Letters

Thank you to those kindly sharing their experiences with us to help others.

From HMP La Moye

I am reaping the benefits of yoga. Harder than I thought. The poses and positions are challenging. They seem unassuming. Practice is the answer. It is doing exactly what it is supposed to do. I love it.

I feel I am much better prepared to deal with unavoidable downturns. Using what I have learned in mindfulness is key to conflict resolution. Being able to consider your reaction, being in control of how you react and the outcome you want. I would sabotage my life and self-destruct.

I incorporate meditation in to waking up, going to sleep, waiting around, banishing anxiety or negative thoughts, cooling down after yoga, my senses (a whole other subject I am getting used to). I recognise it as a gift to myself. I see past all the things that normally bothered me. I still do not fully understand why I feel so much stronger.

I looked at my mug shot today, I look drained and dead. I could not look at it for long. It broke my heart. Mindfulness is a great chance I have been given. My moods are calm and steady.

I feel a long way off, but from how I felt previously, I am also a million miles away. I know I will not slip back which is a bold statement, but **I just know I needed this reset and new outlook.** I know I will keep this with me because of how it makes me feel, I love it. The treasure of peace and calm is a beautiful gift.

If you would like help to read the newsletter, ask a member of staff about Shannon Trust.



From HMP Haverigg

Waking up at 5am
(each morning)
I wait for my day to begin...
I wake up before the start of daybreak
Listening to the quietness approach the silence within.

In tranquil contemplation,
I find a blend of my own serenity.
As I dive in the waters of the mystery of man,
The mysteries that are clearly in me.

The wildlife is peacefully sleeping,
And shadows are drinking their fill...
**I quieten my thinking through breathing,
Keeping within increasingly still.**

I breathe in...
Hold it there...
I exhale...
Let the body find its own pace...
A natural stage of 'Beingness' is where I am at,
It is where I find my own perfect space.

From HMP Altcourse

It helps a great deal - my mood and physically I am better. I feel a great lift. People who I met when I first arrived say that I look better. My mood and confidence is different, as I had been in a dark place. This will be better for when I am released as I feel I would be able to cope more. I just need to find a home.



From HMP Lowdham Grange

From time to time everything gets a little too much for me and it is hard to control. I've always been that way and that is probably why I am where I am. Learning everyday, **I got in to yoga and meditation because I wanted to better myself** and learn to focus more. I know when the day has been full of stress 5 minutes meditation calms me down and puts my body at ease.

From HMP Low Newton

I have been practising yoga and meditation for around 6 months now. I started yoga to help with a back problem I had at the time, and it has helped me heal. Then I started meditating and found it such a great benefit for mental health. It calms my nerves and helps my mind to be still. I feel recharged after my sessions.

From HMP Five Wells

I have found the yoga and relaxation video really helpful. I am an addict in recovery on the drug free wing. I am now 7 months clean and sober. Doing yoga every day has helped me and others on the wing, in our recovery journey to maintain our sobriety.

From HMP Wormwood Scrubs

I have been running a meditation club for 12 weeks now and have 2 Christians, a Muslim, Buddhist and an atheist who have eagerly and regularly attended each week. Sessions are between 30 minutes and 1 hour depending on officer support. I offer a guided preparation practice and then invite everyone to experience a silent meditation. We have built up to 20 minutes and everyone has been invited to make this a daily practice. Some of the feedback includes: '...this is the first time I have experience real calmness..' 'it has relaxed me and given me internal peace and calm, which has helped restore my energy.' 'A positive escape from the daily negativity. Helps me to quieten down when my thoughts are in turmoil.'
I have also introduced the importance of being of service to others and opening ourselves up to a greater compassion of all life and empathy for those who suffer.



Mental Health Awareness Week
12th to 18th May



Yoga Challenge

Experience how yoga can help relax your body and calm your mind
Give it 10 minutes a day for 7 days

To take part, please complete and return the slip below for your set of **Give it 10** practice sheets

JOIN US for a week of yoga and meditation for improved mental health



Give it 10 Yoga Challenge

Name _____

Prisoner Number (if in custody) _____

Job Title (if staff) _____

Name of prison or establishment _____

Return to: **The PPT, P.O. Box 328, Oxford OX2 7HF**



PPT Patron, Jeremy Irons

presents **The Prison Phoenix Trust Appeal**
Listen live on Radio 4. Friends and family can also hear on BBC Sounds.

Sunday 11 May at 7.54am and 9.25pm
Thursday 15 May at 3.27pm

Join our meditation retreat day

Feel recharged and strengthened by sitting in meditation alongside each other on Saturday 10 May. Send off for the timetable and practise sheet to guide you. By practising in the same way at the same time, we are all united by our breath and separateness dissolves.

Become a PPT trustee. Would you like to join our Board of trustees? We welcome people with lived experience of the criminal justice system. If you have left prison, hospital or other secure establishment, please get in touch for further information and how to apply.

I would like details to take part in the meditation retreat day

I am interested in what is involved in applying to be a PPT trustee.

Name _____

Prisoner number (if in custody) _____

Job title (if staff) _____

Name of prison or establishment _____

Return to: **The PPT, P.O. Box 328, Oxford OX2 7HF**

Levi Roots, Onward Life

“If you have ever wanted to look and feel amazing, both in mind, body and spirit, I am here to tell you that it is possible to achieve it.”

Perhaps you have had doubts, lack of confidence or simply unable to focus and maintain an exercise programme until you can see and feel the true benefits. Guys, I have been there, but thankfully I had managed to overcome my issues and now I am at that place that I had wanted to be with my body, mind and spirit.

And it was all completely natural, mainly through eating healthily and with a little floor exercise on an exercise mat in my room or garden. And boom, I was a new man.

Breathing properly and freeing up my hips were the two most important areas that I wanted to start with. My mental wellbeing was also very important to me and I discovered that simply breathing properly could be the best remedy for anxiety, high blood pressure and depression, and I could also use it to enhance my physical exercises as well. It became a major part of everything I did on my journey to the new, healthier me.

My hips, they were a problem. I needed a few Yoga moves, a routine to promote circulation and healing because if I cannot alleviate the pain and discomfort in that area then everything else becomes more difficult. I found out about the Lotus position and set myself to achieve it and became the supplest and most mobile I had ever been. Along with 6-10 other simpler Yoga exercises I can simply say my body is at the best it has ever been in 30 years.

I hope it will inspire you to a much healthier you.

Good luck.

More love LR



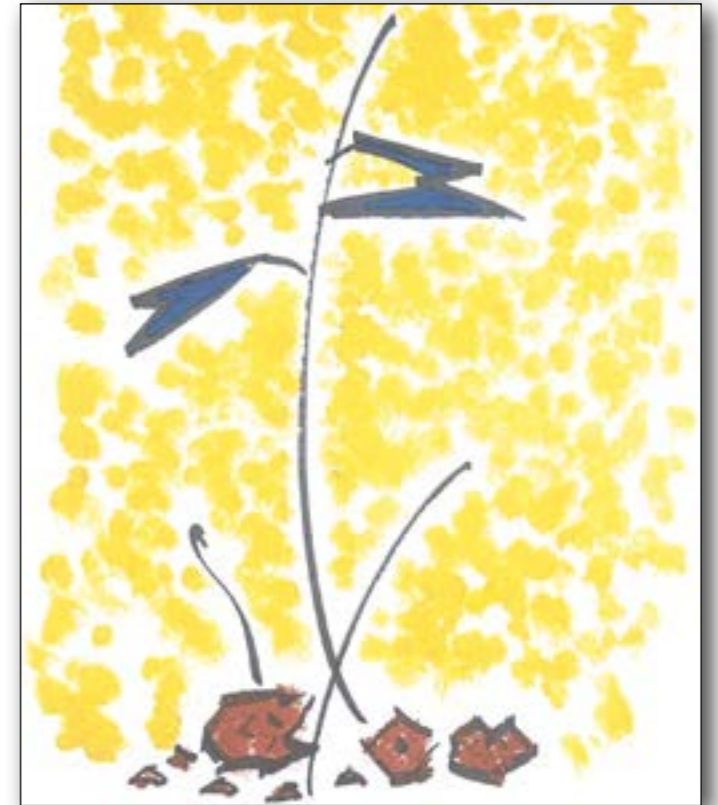
Reset and Recharge

Continued from page 1

Different traditions recognise how time in quiet, with inner reflection can open us up to our spiritual dimension. Peers writing on these pages often talk about how eating better, even within the limitations of institutional food, can be a springboard to a brighter engaged life. Also, how eating more lightly, whether through fasting, such as the experience of Ramadan for Muslims, or during Lent for Christians, can lift our awareness to this expansive part of ourselves. We might also notice how when we feel depleted we have no energy to feel hopeful or that engaged with others.

We can all get knocked off course. One way to get back on track is to focus on our health and allow the positive benefits to grow from there.

Perhaps take part in our **Give it 10 Yoga Challenge** as part of Mental Health Awareness Week this year (page 3) or sit in meditation alongside us on Saturday 10 May when we have a meditation retreat day to help all those in our community recharge and be strengthened by time together. By practising in the same way at the same time, we are all united by breath.



We can support each other by encouragement or just knowing we are not alone.

Be well.

Selina Editor
Director, The Prison Phoenix Trust

Top Tips Tuning in to our energy

Feeling bursting with energy or lethargic?
Try this exercise for energy shifting techniques:

1. Yoga postures can be calming or energising
Which suit you when?
Try the moves on pages 6, 7 and 8 and notice their effect
2. **Do you wake up refreshed or tired?**
Setting a regular sleep routine may help
3. After eating, do you feel heavy or light?
Discover what feels best for you
4. Our interactions can boost or drain
Who helps you feel energised or calmer?
5. **Feeling weighed down?**
Try clearing your space or writing things down
Write to a mentor at The PPT, PO Box 328, Oxford, OX2 7HF, if you would like someone to guide you

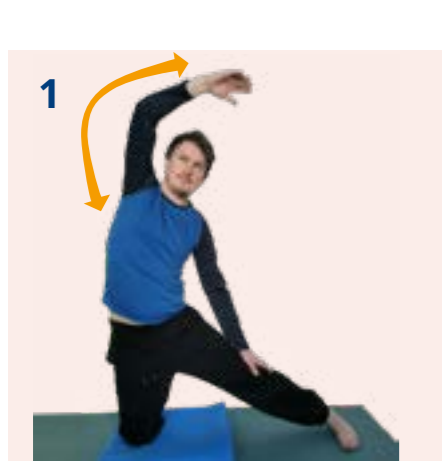


Image by wayhomestudio at Freepik

Yoga **Yoga for a Strong Core**

by Lou

- Stretches to ease tension in your body and mind
- Core strength eases strain in your back, neck & shoulders
- Gives your mind a rest



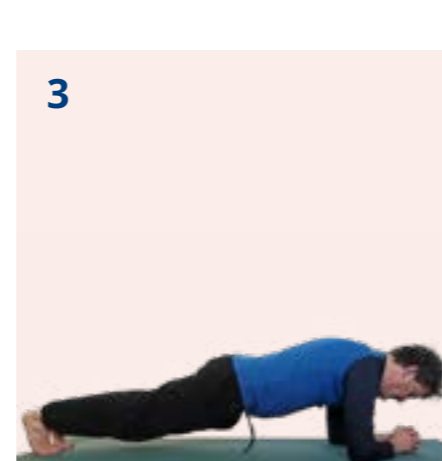
Gate

- Press foot into ground
- Reach arm overhead or hand on hip
- Take 3-5 breaths
- **Repeat other side**



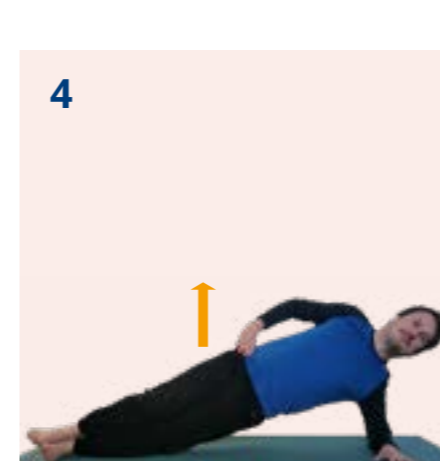
Knee lift

- Hands flat or on fists
- Engage stomach muscles
- Lift knees off ground
- Take 3 to 5 breaths



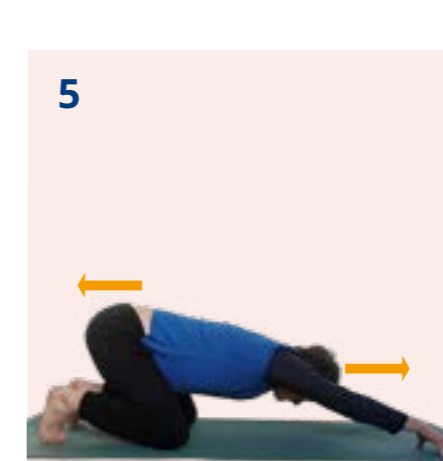
Forearm plank

- Option: keep knees on ground
- Engage stomach muscles
- Elbows under shoulders
- Take 3 to 5 breaths



Side plank

- Elbow under shoulder
- Legs strong, flex feet
- Lift hips
- Take 3 to 5 breaths
- **Repeat other side**



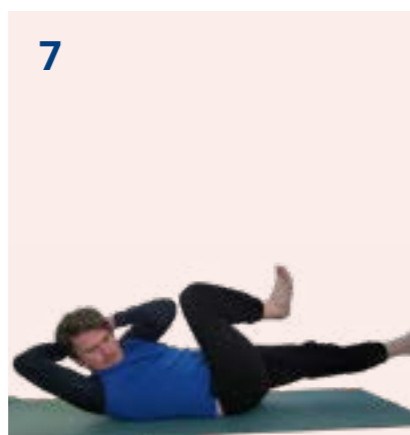
Extended home

- Ears in line with upper arms
- Reach hips back towards heels
- Breathe deeply into side ribs



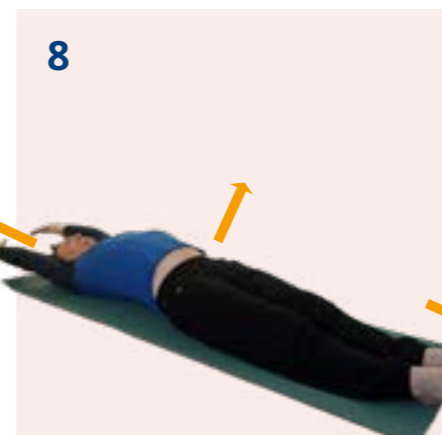
Arch & crunch

- Breath in: arch back
- Breathe out: press back into ground and bring elbows towards knees
- **Repeat 6 to 8 times**



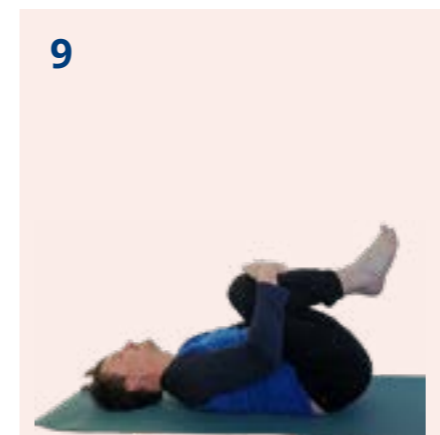
Cycling (optional)

- Elbow to opposite knee
- Alternate sides
- Slower is harder
- Breathe!



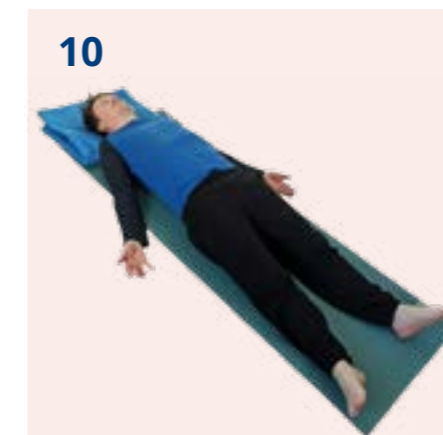
Pencil stretch

- Spread toes and fingers
- Reach out long
- Arch back to stretch stomach muscles



Hug knees to chest

- Support under head
- Option: Hands behind thighs
- Rock side to side
- Take a few rest breaths



Rest

- Support under head
- Legs outstretched or feet flat with knees bent
- Take at least 3 to 5 breaths
- Let go to rest

“All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us.”

Gandalf in JR Tolkien's The Fellowship of the Ring

Tips

- Warm up first
- Pad under knees and elbows
- Take 3-5 slow breaths in each posture
- Engage stomach muscles for postures 2, 3, 4 and 7
- Build up gradually for postures 2, 3, 4 and 7

Cautions

- Take care if you have back or shoulder injury or sciatica
- Don't do this practice with an abdominal or groin hernia
- Stop or skip anything that causes or worsens pain
- Steady breath throughout

insidetime
The National Newspaper for Prisoners & Offenders

For more of our yoga sequences, look out for our articles in *Inside Time* newspaper

Take a Change of Air

by Victoria

- A moment to refresh and reset
- Energise muscles and joints
- Let go of tension from mind and body

1



- Stand feet hip distance
- Knees slightly bent

2



- Breathe in through your nose
- Stand tall, palms facing

Tips:

- Steady lower body
- Let go of stress with each breath out
- Refresh with each breath in
- Keep your shoulders, neck and face relaxed

3



- Sigh out through your mouth
- Lower, palms down

4



- Repeat 3 to 5 times
- Move with your breath

Cautions:

- Check your practice space is clear of obstacles and you will not slip
- Move within your pain-free range
- Try breath and arm movements in a chair

Stars rise.

Moths flutter.

Apples sweeten in the dark.

Eavan Boland,
Irish poet and writer



P.O. Box328, Oxford OX2 7HF
www.theppt.org.uk

Registered charity no. 1163558

This newsletter goes to members of the prison community and to our many friends on the outside who continue to offer us their encouragement. The Prison Phoenix Trust is a small charity depending on supporters' kindness and financial generosity to help our friends inside. One way you can help is to consider remembering us in your will. Any sum, however small, is much appreciated.