

POSE OF THE MONTH

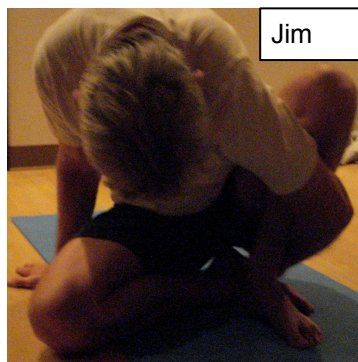
December 2006

Marichyasana B – This pose takes Marichyasana A a step further—you now go from working externally to open and prepare the body as we do in Marichyasana A to working internally on the organs of the body — using your heel. Marichyasana B requires the half lotus position which can be difficult to attain if you have knee instabilities, tightness in your hips, or are athletic. Patience must reign as you wait for your hip joint to slowly open up to allow the deep inner work of this posture. Do not push yourself into this posture, you will learn the hard way the body will open and move in its own time.

Method:

ॐ From Downward dog hop through to Dandasana.

ॐ Inhaling place your LEFT leg in half lotus, turning the sole of your foot upward and if your hip allows, moving your heel in line with the inner lip of your hip bone aiming your heel up under your ribs toward the “corners” of the colon where matter is more likely to get trapped (see pictures on next page). If you are unable to get your leg safely in half lotus you can drop the foot out of the lotus position and place it by your right buttock (see picture of Jim).



Jim

ॐ With your left leg in half lotus or under your thigh, bend your right knee sliding your foot in toward your hip, allow your right hip to lift off the floor as you roll forward onto sitting mostly on your left thigh, lean forward sliding your right arm inside your leg and forward (see picture of Abby). You can stay here if you are unable to complete the final step.



Abby

ॐ Leaning forward to lengthen the right waist, keep your right knee in tight to your ribs, get your body as low as possible—

ideally hooking your shoulder half way down between your knee and ankle, if your shoulder is close to your shin turn your right palm upward internally rotating the shoulder and reach your right arm behind you, wrap your left arm around your waist and see if your right hand can clasp your left wrist or hook fingers (keeping your right palm turned upward). When and if bound take an inhale and extend your spine, exhale forward eventually touching your forehead or your nose to the floor by your right foot (see picture of Misty). (As an interim position you can touch your head to your left knee.)



Misty

ॐ Drishti is toward the nose. Stay here for 5 deep breaths, releasing the posture with an inhale, take vinyasa or switch sides.

Benefits:

The half-lotus-forward-bending position of Marichyasana B has direct influence on the colon. The left leg is placed into half lotus first to

stimulate the ascending colon, the right foot in half lotus stimulates the descending colon, this process aids our body in removal of waste and toxins.

The entire Marichyasana series cures gaseous movements in the stomach and intestines, with that flatulence, indigestion, and constipation are eliminated and digestive power is restored.

The Manipura chakra (third chakra) is purified and strengthened with these asana.

INTERNAL CLEANSING

One of the main benefits of the entire Marichyasana series is to the colon. We use our heel in our gut to stimulate movement of matter through our colon to help our body rid itself of toxins in a more timely manner. Knowing where your ascending colon and descending colon are can help you know where to place your heel as your body allows. Sometimes we get a bit carried away and as our body gets more flexible we think we need to keep moving our heel or foot up higher, as you can see this is not in our best interest when we keep in mind the internal workings of a posture.

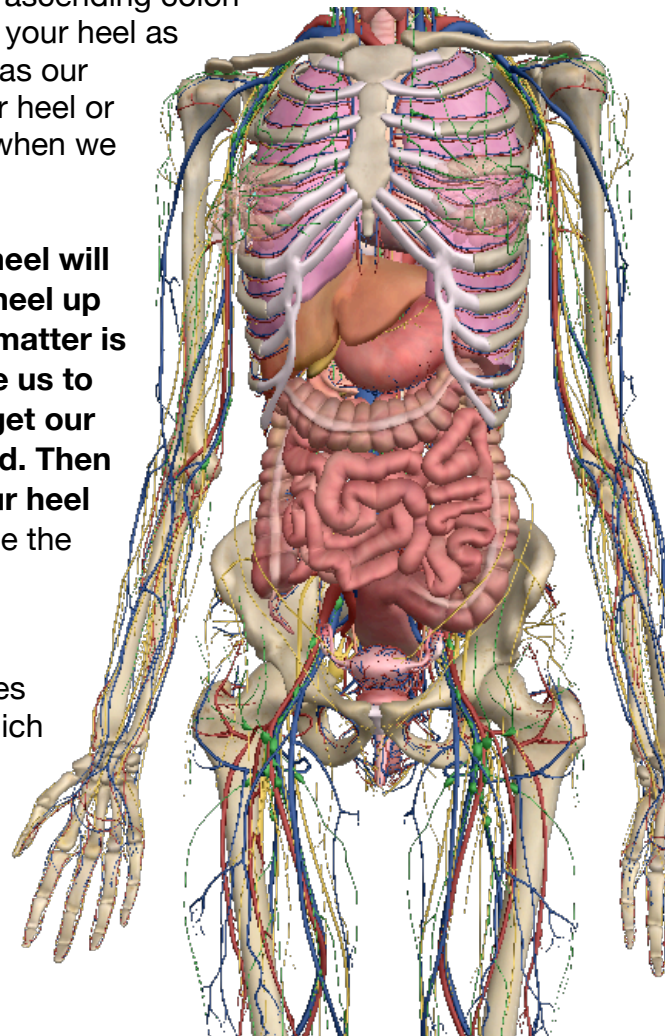
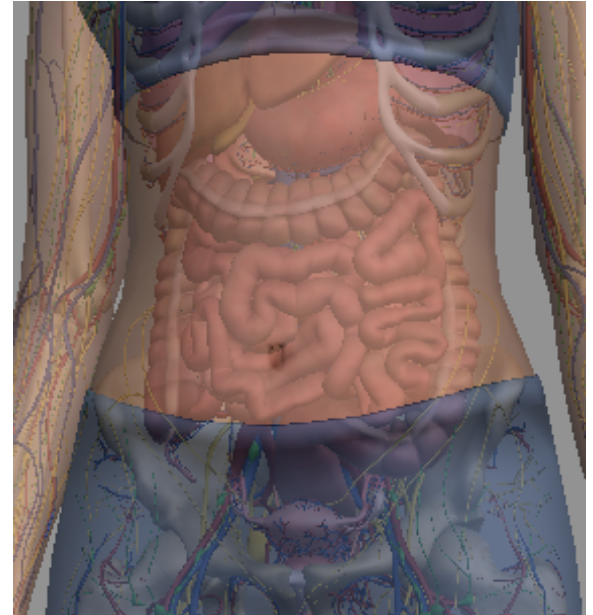
As your body allows the most effective position for your heel will be in line with the inner lip of your hip bone aiming your heel up under your ribs toward the “corners” of the colon where matter is more likely to get trapped. For most of us this will require us to bring our lotus knee closer to the midline of our body to get our heel further across our torso to where our colon is located. Then as we bend the 2nd leg into position, it further presses our heel in deeper and up toward the “corners” of our colon. Notice the pictures and the placement of the colon in our bodies.

The colon is the last part of the digestive system. It extracts water and salt and some fat soluble vitamins from solid wastes before they are eliminated from the body and is the site in which good bacteria -- our gut bacteria fermentation -- or digestion of unabsorbed material occurs. Unlike the small intestine, the colon does not play a major role in absorption of foods and nutrients.

The colons main function is removing waste from our body, the 2nd important function is the body hydrates itself through the colon.

Some fun colon facts:

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ॐ Our colon is as long as we are tall

ॐ The diameter of the colon is equal to that of our wrist . . .

ॐ For every foot of our colon we can store approx. 5-10 lbs. of fecal matter.

ॐ In extreme cases the colon can back up into the small intestines . . . in this case you could be holding as much as 45# of fecal matter in your body! When the fecal matter backs up to the small intestine you will reabsorb the toxins into your system. The colon does NOT absorb many nutrients except for water and fat soluble vitamins, it is in the small intestine where we absorb our nutrients so when fecal matter gets into the intestine there is a higher likelihood of putting toxins back into our system. Now we know where the saying “someone is full of shit” comes from.

The colon consists of four sections: the ascending colon, the transverse colon, the descending colon, and the sigmoid colon (the part of the large intestine that is closest to the rectum and anus).

The colon forms a loop that averages about 40 cm in length, and normally lies within the pelvis, but on account of its freedom of movement it is liable to be displaced into the abdominal cavity.

Regardless of how healthy you live, if you have sluggish bowels your body builds up toxins. Fecal matter builds up along your colon walls (and may not leave for months or years!), this build up interferes with nutrient absorption at a low level and on a major level leads to issues such as diverticulosis and colon cancer. The feces that remain in

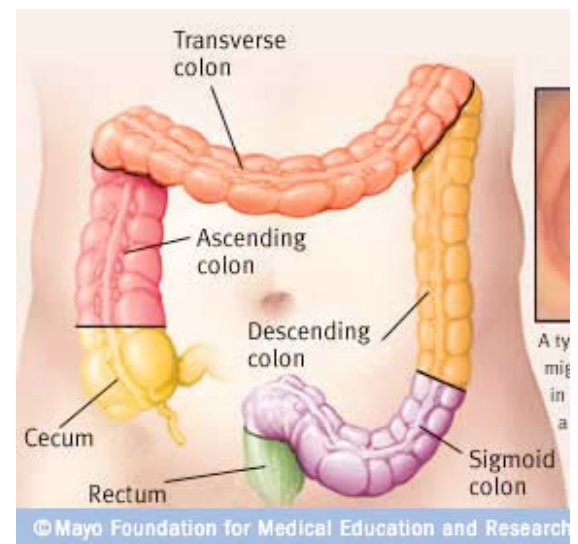
one's system begin to decay, releasing toxins and poisonous gases that seep out into the bloodstream and poison the organs and tissues. The blood stream itself gets polluted, preventing it from removing the cells' wastes. So our whole system gets poisoned.

The colon controls the aging process in our body, toxins in the body lead to pre-mature aging. Going to the bathroom regularly is important. If you have a build up of matter in your colon you generally feel heavy, bloated, and full of wind.

You can help your colon do its job:

ॐ Massage (with our heel in a yoga pose, or hand by massage -- your own or by a therapist). Start massage on your lower right, just inside your hip bone. Massage up the right, around the corner and under your ribs, spending a little extra time on the “corners” of the square our colon makes, in these corners is where matter is most easily trapped, then across the top, and down the left to the hip bone then center toward your navel and downward.

ॐ Inversions - Gravity helps move matter in our colons.





ॐ Jumping — as on a rebounder, running, athletics, exercise, or in an ashtanga class ;) can shift the matter and re-strengthen the bowel. One of the natural prescriptions for constipation is jumping on a rebounder.

ॐ Deep squats help to move matter in the colon downward

How Marichyasana effects your colon

Your colon is so important you get four postures dedicated just to it in primary series.

Marichyasana A & C are preparatory poses for Marichyasana B & D, respectively, where the deeper inner cleansing is done. In Marichyasana B & D we place our left leg in half lotus first, this is for a good reason; our left heel puts pressure on the ascending colon, and our right heel puts pressure on our descending colon . . . if you mix this up you'll end up talking shit all day ;)

Our heel is like a massage for the colon. helping to stimulate the movement of matter so our body can rid itself of toxins. In the research it shows the areas most in need of this stimulation are the “corners” of the colon, this is the area we are aiming our heel for.

As your body allows, the most effective position for your heel will be in line with the inner-lip of your hip bone aiming your heel up under your ribs toward the “corners” of the colon where matter is more likely to get trapped. Then as we bend the 2nd leg into position, it further presses our heel in deeper and up toward the “corners” of our colon. Notice the pictures and the placement of the colon in our bodies.

In my own practice I have noticed to get my heel closer to my colon I need to place my leg further over -- knee towards the midline of my body -- so I am feeling a different stretch in my hip as I work to get my heel closer to my colon.

A common misguided cue I hear often regarding the marichyasana series is as your body gets more flexible to keep pulling your heel up higher toward your sternum . . . your colon lies on the outer edges of abdomen, so knowledge of your internal body will help you get more benefit from your yoga postures.

The binding (clasping your hands behind your back) in the Marichyasana Series helps to pull our torso in tighter to our heel increasing the pressure on the colon. It is also therapeutic for the shoulders, but this is only a side effect of the binding ;) If you are unable to bind, don't worry! Don't lose the posture over the bind.

If you can bind easily, as you are able you can “choke up” on your binds -- meaning first you get your fingertips, then as you get more flexible you catch your hand, or sometimes you can catch your wrist.

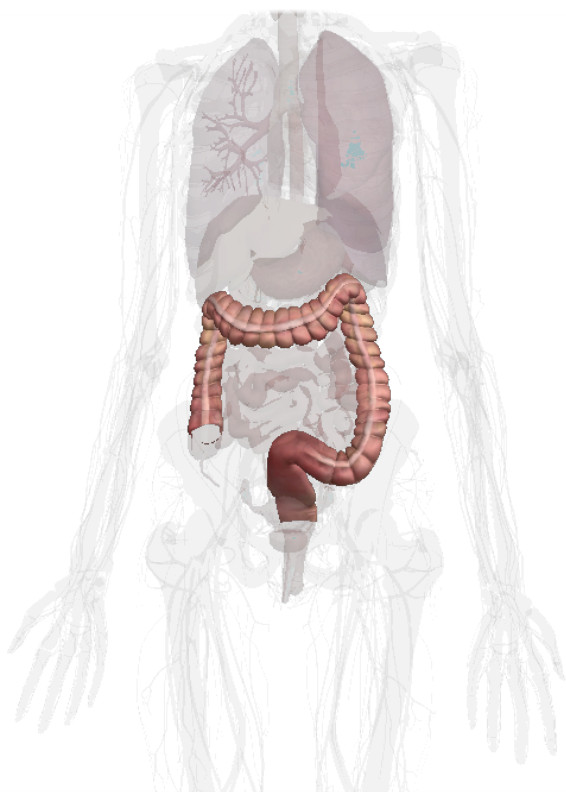
ॐ Sometimes we get too wrapped up in catching the bind and we will lean away from or out of the posture to catch our hands . . . Better to not worry about the bind in this case and lean your gut into your heel.



During your practice of the marichyasana series while you are putting your mind on breathing and bandhas you can also direct some of this energy toward your colon — helping your colon to keep your body clean and healthy. Putting your mind energy to work for you :)

IN THE EMOTIONAL BODY

Our colon represents holding on to the past, or the fear of letting go (as in constipation).



Disorders of the colon, specifically constipation are linked with our inability to let go of old ideas or belief systems that no longer serve us. Are you holding onto societal beliefs that are not serving you? Sometimes we need to check in with our gut on our feelings, does your belief feel good in your gut? Or maybe you are holding onto an old hurt that its time let go of?

Sometimes constipation is from lack of expression of your ideas or feelings, usually due to a fear of displeasing others or being wrong, or losing someone/something. Try going out on a limb and expressing your true self, more often than not you will find people attracted to your openness and willingness to be vulnerable.

In the case of diarrhea, you reject ideas too quickly. You may be easily perturbed and find it impossible to digest disagreeable concepts, or even a situation you have to deal with. Since you think what is happening is not good or useful for you - you expel it quickly.

Or sometimes with diarrhea maybe you feel rejected.

Are you extremely sensitive emotionally? This sometimes makes us feel rejected even when we are not — or keeps us from experiencing good and new situations. If this is your case, realize that it is most likely the monkeys in your mind holding you back ~ to find out for sure try talking with or asking the person you feel rejected by. You might be surprised at the response and find yourself feeling comfortable in situations that used to send you running for the bathroom.

If you are experiencing symptoms such as constipation, irritable bowel syndrome, or other colon issues; your body is telling you to re-educate yourself about feeding and nourishment -- not just with food for our physical bodies -- but with our attitudes and ideas for our emotional, psychological, and spiritual bodies. There is no spiritual nutrition in fear and self-deprecating thoughts.