

POSE OF THE MONTH

February 2007

Marichyasana D – The final pose of the Marichyasana series—at least in Primary series (the advanced series has a Marichyasana E,F,G, and H). This twist is a challenging pose to get into and may require years of practice. Patience and diligent practice will bring forth the benefits of this posture. The main function of the Marichyasana series is to cleanse the colon; however twisting offers other benefits as well. Twists are important asanas for spinal health; they keep the spine flexible (a rigid spine is more prone to injury as it can not absorb shock) and bring fresh blood supply to the spinal nerves. Marichyasana C and D help relieve pain in the back and hips while opening the shoulders and strengthening the neck.

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, put your heel close to your navel, guiding your heel towards the sigmoid colon (see pictures on next page).

ॐ Bend your right knee and ground your right foot, heel close to your right sitz bone. If the lotus position is a challenge for you or puts stress in your knee you can drop your leg out of lotus and place it under the right thigh for the time being (see picture of Frank).

- o Spending extra time in Baddha Konasana and requesting assists will help open and prepare the hips for Marichyasana D.

ॐ Place your right hand behind you and close to your sacrum with your fingers pointing away from your body. Slide your left lotus leg forward and your right hip back so your hips are not square and your left knee is forward of your right foot. Lean into your left leg grounding it, your right hip will most likely lift off the floor—you now have a tripod of support consisting of your left thigh and hip and your right foot.

ॐ Twisting to the right, slide your left arm around your right knee, inhaling as you lift your spine up and out of your pelvis and exhaling as you twist the thorax. Keep your knee upright, neither allowing it to flare out or collapse across your body. Many will need to stay in this position until the hips, lower back, and/or shoulder allows deeper twisting. See picture of Krista.

ॐ To go to the next level in the pose continue sliding your underarm toward your right thigh, if your shoulder can come in alignment with your knee you are ready to internally rotate your left arm and reach around your leg and eventually around your back. Leaning into your left thigh lift your right hand off the floor and reach around your back clasping your hands for the bind. Look over your right shoulder, gazing out the right corners of your eyes.





ॐ Sit up tall while you sit down, inhaling to get length in your spine lifting your heart as you ground through the tripod of support you created, exhaling as you deepen the twist. Flex your left heel into your abdomen for further de-toxifying of the internal organs. Hold here for 5-8 deep breaths.

ॐ With an inhale turn your gaze to the front and on exhale release the posture, take vinyasa and/or repeat on the other side.

Benefits:

Marichyasana D is one of the three main creators of strength and support in the primary series; it is in the heart of the series and one of the core postures. The entire Marichyasana series puts pressure on the colon helping to move toxins and

waste out of our body while it cures gaseous movements in the stomach and intestines, with that flatulence, indigestion, and constipation are eliminated and digestive power is restored. These asana also benefit the kidneys.



INTERNAL CLEANSING

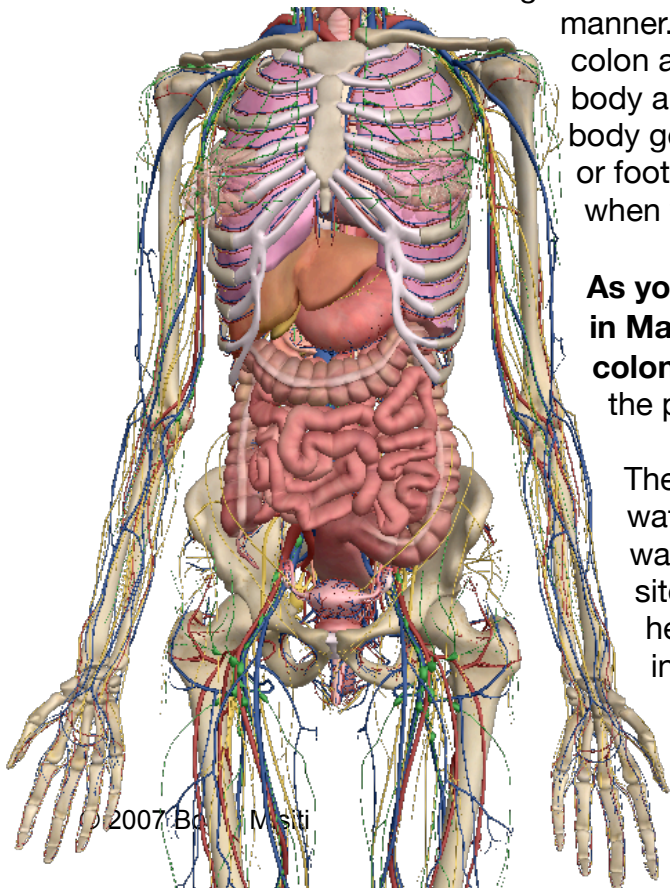
One of the main benefits of the entire Marichyasana series is to the colon. We use our heel in our gut to stimulate movement of matter

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 in Marichyasana D is close to your navel where the sigmoid colon attaches to the rectum. Take notice to 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 but bacteria ferment and help with digestion of unabsorbed materials. 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



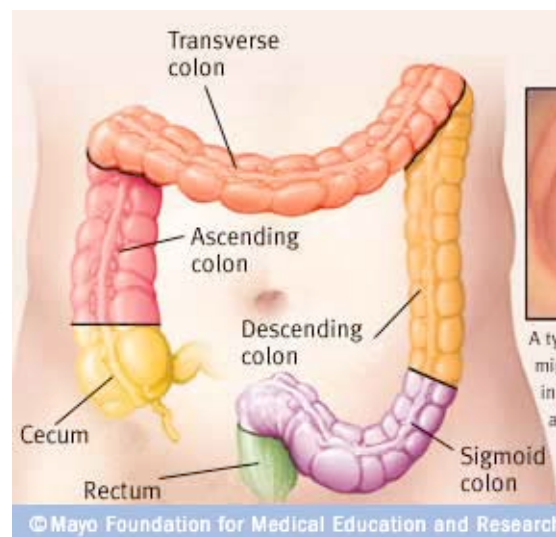


itself through the colon.

Some fun colon facts:

- ॐ Our colon is as long as we are tall
- ॐ And 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 . . . you ever heard of the saying “someone is full of shit”?
- 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.

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). It 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.



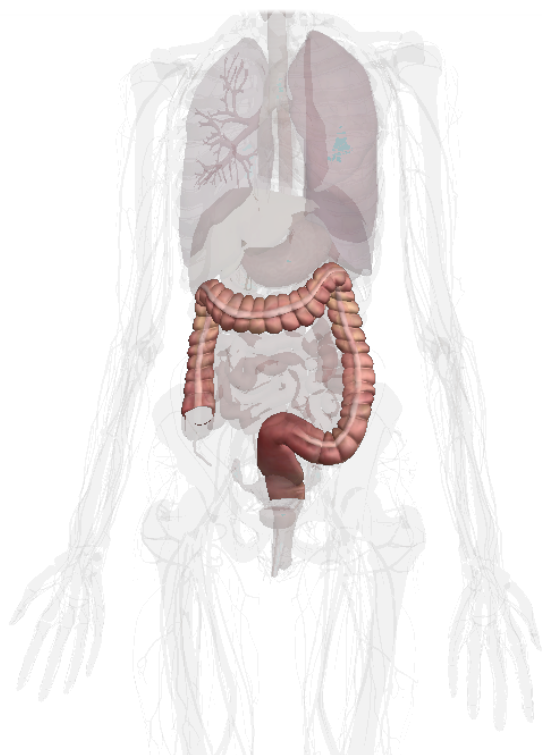
Regardless of how healthy you live, if you have sluggish bowels your body builds up toxins. Fecal matter builds up along your colon walls (and may not leave for months or years), this build up interferes with nutrient absorption at a low level and on a major level leads to issues such as diverticulosis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

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. 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.