

Pre-Meditation Limbering Exercise

Note: Regular practice and relaxation are the most important factors in stretching and exercising. Do not stretch too far, especially in the beginning. Do not stretch to a point where you cannot breathe normally.

SECTION I & II: Patting & Twisting (Illustrated and explained in *HY Journal Issue #10 (Summer05) & 12 (Winter05)*). Posted on website – <http://www.huayentoronto.com> - Huayen Journal section).

SECTION III: Stretching

Stretching in Standing Position:

Head:

Stand with feet at shoulder-width apart. Tuck in chin as close to chest as possible. Lift chin upward, forward and then downward, visualizing you are making a circle with your chin. (5 times)

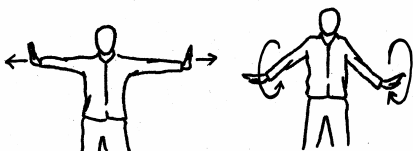
- Feel the stretch (or pull) in neck and shoulder muscles.



Shoulder:

Stand with feet at shoulder-width apart. Outstretch arms at sides with fingers pointing upward. You should feel the pull on undersides of arms and in the shoulders and back. Rotate arms 10 times in a forward motion; and 10 times, in backward motion.

- Feel the stretch (or pull) on arms and in shoulder muscles.



Waist:

Stand with feet apart. Slowly bend the upper body sideway to the left as much as possible. At the same time raise the right arm above the head, and the left arm reaching down along the

left leg as far as you can (if possible, touching the left ankle). Your body should not lean forward or backward, and both legs should be straight. Hold this position, relax, inhale and exhale slowly, and bend a little more. Slowly come upright. (10 times) Repeat the exercise on the right side. (10 times)

- Feel the stretch (or pull) on the waist:



Legs:

Stand with feet together. Bend down and hold the big toes with your thumbs and index fingers. Exhale as you move downward until you are in a squatting position. Inhale as you get up until both legs are straight. (10 times)



Stretching in Sitting Position:

Section I

1. Sit on the floor in an easy bent-leg position with soles joined together. Clasp hold of the joined feet with both hands and pull the feet in toward the crotch as close as possible. Bounce the knees up and down for about 45 seconds.

Release both hands and remain in an easy sitting position.

Bend forward with your body as close to the ground as possible. Hold it for a while before sitting up.



2. Continue from Step 1 with the left leg outstretched. Bring the right heel over the left thigh and bring it as close to the left groin as possible. Place the right hand on the right knee and left hand on right heel. Gently press the right knee down to the floor or as far as possible without straining. Hold for 5 seconds, release knee, and then press down again. Repeat this movement a few times to loosen up the muscles.

Keep the posture with the left leg outstretched and the right heel rested on the left groin. Grasp the left foot with the left hand. Inhale as you outstretch the right arm overhead. Then slowly exhale as you bend the torso forward, with the right arm reaching towards the left foot, and the head towards the knee (if possible). Relax, breathe slowly and concentrate on the stretch. Hold the stretch in a comfortable position and increase it after you feel yourself relaxed. Slowly raise the torso up with right arm overhead as you inhale. (3 times) Repeat the exercise another 3 times with the other leg.

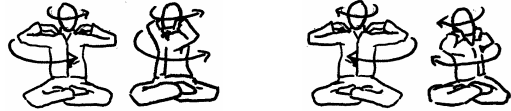


3. Sit with buttocks resting on the floor (if possible) and feet bent as close to the buttocks as possible. Otherwise, sit on your heels. Relax. Rotate upper body, starting from left (clockwise), using the waist to drive this movement (5 times). Repeat rotation starting from right (anti-clockwise) (5 times).



Section II: Sit in half or full lotus position, or free form.

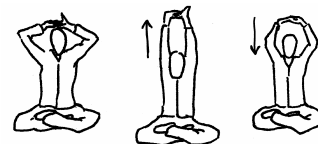
1. Bend both arms, and rest fingers on the shoulders. Slowly turn the torso to the left, back to the center, then right, and back to the center. Feel the stretch (or pull) in neck and spinal cord. (5 times)



2. Continue from Step 1. As you exhale, bend forward to the left knee with clasped hands on the left knee. Rest forehead on the left knee, if possible. Hold position for 10 seconds. Slowly inhale and raise the torso. Repeat forward bending on the right side (hands on the right knee), and center bending (hands on the floor, in front of the center of the body).



3. Put both hands forward, interlock fingers and place them above the head. While exhaling, raise hands and turn palms facing upward. Keep arms straight and stretch them as much as possible. The center of your hands should be in line with your spinal cord. Slowly inhale, with palms facing downward returning to the position above the head. (3 times)



Notes: The number of repetitions is just a suggestion; use your own discretion.

Disclaimer: Huayen Buddhist Community of North America will not be liable for any physical injuries or damages caused by doing the Pre-Meditation Limbering Exercise. Please be cautious & consult your physician if you have any doubts.