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The power of a prehuddle morning yoga flow

How to implement a prehuddle yoga flow to reduce stress and increase daily productivity

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Abstract

The prehuddle yoga flow is a five-to-10-minute sequence of breathing and movements designed to help release physical and mental tension in order to optimize movement and focus throughout the workday. The goal of this practice is to strengthen overall health and prevent chronic stress. This course will break down each component of the five-to-10-minute prehuddle yoga flow and discuss the purpose and application of each individual exercise. One healthy decision will lead to the next. This sequence is designed to reduce stress and increase physical mobility while facilitating a constructive bond between coworkers.

Educational objectives

At the conclusion of this educational activity, participants will be able to:

1. Self-regulate energy and focus
2. Prevent chronic pains
3. Prevent chronic stress

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Introduction

Yoga provides great benefits, but only you know your own body and limits. Like any exercise, *consult your health-care professional with any questions or concerns before starting an exercise program.* When participating in any exercise or exercise program, there is the possibility of physical injury. Not all exercises are suitable for all persons.

Almost one third of the US population has visited a doctor for a stress-related issue.¹ Chronic stress activates the immune system in a way that leads to persistent inflammation and has negative impacts on blood pressure, depression, diabetes, and heart disease.² Seventy-five percent of all doctor visits are stress-related.³ To state it simply, chronic stress causes or contributes to chronic diseases, and according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “6 in 10 adults have a chronic disease.”⁴

A 2010 study published in the European Journal of Social Psychology states that it takes an average of 66 days of repetition before a practice becomes habitual.⁵ Every decision has the potential to impact the next; therefore, morning implementation of this yoga sequence can positively impact the successive decisions of participants throughout the day. In other words, beginning the day with a healthy practice can lead to an overall healthier lifestyle over time. In this course, the prehuddle yoga flow (PHYF) sequence will be dissected in order to understand the significance of each component and the best means of personal implementation.

I suggest learning and practicing the PHYF in the comfort of your home, and once comfortable, the sequence can be introduced as a voluntary practice with your dental team prior to the start of your daily morning huddle. Along with intrinsic individual benefits, practicing this sequence with others provides an opportunity to develop a stronger bond among coworkers.

Like most activities, learning the PHYF requires practice and perseverance. The American Dental Association states, “Motivation is a mindset. You can find it in knowing that moving your body can be fun, exhilarating, and age defying ... and a sedentary lifestyle will actually hurt you.”⁶

The PHYF sequence is designed to

strengthen physical mobility and mental health over time. It can be customized to best fit individual goals; however, a firm understanding of each component is suggested prior to customizing the sequence. Here is a detailed explanation of each component of the PHYF.

The prehuddle yoga flow is broken down into five parts:

1. Six deep breaths
2. Jelly jumping
3. Seven movements of the spine
4. Controlled articular rotations
5. Intention

1. Six deep breaths

The PHYF starts by activating the parasympathetic nervous system. In yoga, breathing is called prana, which is Sanskrit for life force.⁷

Lung capacity predicts health and longevity.⁸ A 29-year study published in *Chest* concluded that lung capacity is a long-term predictor of respiratory mortality and can be used as a tool for general health assessment.⁸ Deep breathing, also known as diaphragmatic breathing, has the ability to increase the vital lung capacity.⁹ At the age of 25, vital lung capacity begins to decline. Diaphragmatic breathing has the ability to slow the rate of decline and help preserve optimal lung capacity.¹⁰

Taking deep breaths also has a strong influence on blood pressure regulation.¹¹ Chronic stress is a major threat, and it is prevalent in part because it is insidious. Chronic stress is difficult to recognize because the human body is good at adapting. If an individual becomes accustomed to reacting with a stress response, the body will adapt and the stress response will become normalized. Paying attention to breathing patterns is a useful way to gauge stress levels. In addition, the quickest way to alter the stress response is by changing the depth of breathing.¹¹

A study published in *Hypertension Research* recorded the blood pressure of 21,563 randomly selected hospital patients before and after taking six deep breaths. The study concluded that the simple act of taking six deep breaths created a significant reduction in blood pressure.¹¹ Physiologically, this can be explained via direct stimulation of the vagus nerve through

deep diaphragmatic breathing, as well as a change in the O₂/CO₂ saturation in the bloodstream from a change in oxygen uptake. The vagus nerve stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system, and it has a primary branch that travels just posterior to the respiratory system. When we take a deep breath, our bronchi expand and put pressure on the vagus nerve, thus triggering a response that initiates a cascade of signals ultimately leading to a decrease in blood pressure.¹² This is especially important since “heart disease is the leading cause of death for men, women, and people of most racial and ethnic groups in the United States,” according to the CDC.¹³

There has never been a time for greater demand of our attention and alertness. According to a study published in 2017, having constant access to news and media results in information overload. Every single test subject reported struggling with task efficiency after checking news updates on their smartphones.¹⁴ Being constantly overstimulated is not only taking a toll on our cardiovascular system; it is also draining our ability to focus and be productive. Slowing and deepening our breathing helps to calm our thoughts as well, and this ironically makes us more productive because it allows us to think more clearly and make better decisions. In 2014, a systematic meta-analysis of 18,000 citations and 47 trials concluded that meditation helped reduce anxiety, depression, and increase overall productivity.¹⁵ Meditation is essentially taking deep breaths and sitting still. Beginning your day with six deep breaths is likely to foster a sense of tranquility and focus throughout the day.

Six deep breaths guidance: Gather your team in a circle and cue them to stand tall with feet hips-width apart. Close your eyes, and roll the shoulders up, then back and down to broaden through the chest. From there, cue to exhale all air out through the mouth, then inhale deeply and slowly through the nostrils while counting to four seconds, hold your air in for two seconds, then exhale through the mouth for a count of four seconds, and finally, hold your air out for two seconds. Then repeat the 4-2-4-2 breathing five more times. After the last breath, allow a short pause in order to feel a moment of stillness. Take a moment to

try this breathing technique right now and notice how you feel after six deep breaths.

2. Jelly jumping

The somatic nervous system is responsible for voluntarily controlling skeletal muscle movements in the human body. The brain sends signals to skeletal muscles through the cerebellum (the brain stem) to coordinate a movement in response to a thought. It's important to recognize that human bodies store memory, and physical postures and movements are closely tied to memories. The more often they are repeated, the more they get consolidated into unconscious processes.¹⁶

"Although the cerebellum's role in motor (memory is by far the best understood, evidence has also accumulated suggesting that the cerebellum is perhaps involved in cognitive and emotional perceptual processing. Because the cellular architecture of the cerebellum is highly repetitive, cerebellar tissue is consequently hypothesized to perform similar neural processing on the various inputs it receives across its expanse, including inputs from motor areas as well as areas involved in higher order cognition or emotional processing. This suggests the advances made in understanding the cerebellar processes in the context of motor memory can translate in the near future to nonmotor cerebellar domains."¹⁷ Physical postures are closely tied to specific release of hormones and chemicals that are triggered from the limbic system, which is the emotional center of the brain. This is especially evident in trauma. A study published in 2010 demonstrated a high correlation between depression and the level of dissociation to the body. In other words, subjects who were more disconnected or unaware of their body movements were on average more depressed.¹⁸

To demonstrate emotional somatic memory, try raising your arms up high in the air and then frowning. Frowning in this posture likely feels strange because this posture is culturally the product of mostly positive outcomes such as winning a game or celebrating and cheering. Therefore, frowning with this posture would feel irregular, similar to smiling with your arms crossed and head hunched forward.

A stress response in the body gets immediately processed in a global way—the brain

jumps to conclusions based on rough similarities of what was previously a threat and then elicits a full-body stress cascade.¹⁹ Anything from traffic, bills, to a screaming baby can elicit this response. Shaking the body in rapid movements helps to disrupt any programmed emotional somatic response that could be negative in order to create opportunities for more desirable emotional reactions to develop.

Jelly jumping guidance: Upon completing six deep breaths, the PHYF segues into shaking the body like a jellyfish. Begin by shaking the hands vigorously. After about 30 seconds, spread the shaking to the entire arms, then legs, and then full body. Place emphasis on letting go of coordination and wiggling loosely with no specific intention on what it should look like. This exercise often elicits giggling, and that is part of the point—to release tension. After approximately 60 seconds of wiggling and giggling, cease all movement and notice any buzzing in arms and legs. Notice any shift in energy and prepare to stretch the spine.

You can use this technique when you are faced with a traumatized patient in the dental operator. It's important to shake it off so this tension isn't carried on to the following patients and then all the way home.

3. Seven movements of the spine

"You're only as young as your spine is mobile."
Bob Harper²⁰

A systematic review published in 2016 examined every valid study for the utilization of yoga to treat back pain, and it concluded that "yoga can reduce pain and disability, can be practiced safely, and is well received by participants."²¹

Yoga focuses on mobility in the spine. The human spine moves in forward flexion and extension along the sagittal plane, lateral flexion and extension along the coronal plane, rotation—both clockwise and counterclockwise—along the transverse plane, and traction (lengthening in the superior direction). The goal of this segment of the PHYF is to move the spine in all seven movement ranges in order to prevent and alleviate chronic back pain. Keeping each vertebra mobile helps prevent chronic pains, arthritis, and injury.²¹

Seven movements of the spine guidance: Begin by raising arms overhead as

you inhale, palms facing each other, and taking three deep breaths in this position (figure 1). Deepening cues: ensure that feet are hip-width distance, shoulders are down and back in their sockets, and that core muscles, leg muscles, and arm muscles are engaged at 50% isometric strength. Upon the third exhale, hinge the torso forward and lower the upper body forward with a slight bend in the knees, allowing the arms to dangle toward the ground, and hold for three breaths (figure 2). Deepening cues: Shift weight forward into the toes, relax the head and neck, grab for opposite elbows, and gently release control of back muscles. After the third breath, lift up halfway and lengthen the spine forward as you inhale, looking straight down and with a slight bend in the knees to relieve the hamstrings (figure 3). Hold for only one breath, then exhale and fold forward again and rise up to mountain pose as you inhale. Lower the hands together in front of the sternum as you exhale (figure 4), then sweep the hands back up to mountain pose on the inhale to restart the sequence. Repeat this sequence twice more, holding each pose for only a single breath.

From mountain pose, exhale and twist the torso to the right side, extending your right fingertips back and left fingertips forward (figure 5). Hold for three breaths while cueing the hips to stay facing forward so the twist is achieved in the thoracic spine. Then inhale back to mountain pose and complete the same twist to the left for three breaths (figure 6). Return to mountain pose and grab the left wrist with your right hand, then stretch to the right as you exhale and reach for the top right corner of the room with your left finger tips (figure 7). Inhale back to center and grab the right wrist with left hand, and exhale stretch to the left (figure 8).

Try these movements on your own, and once you're comfortable with how they feel, focus on connecting your breath to the movements. You can refer to our YouTube link for a demonstration of this sequence at youtu.be/n5yY2aOMtrs.

4. Controlled articular rotations

Each joint in the body dictates the development of the surrounding muscles, ligaments, fascia, and tissues. For example,

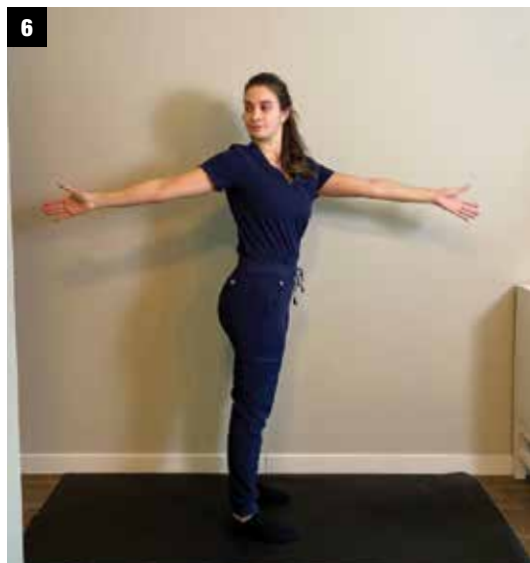
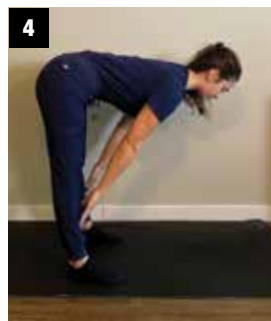
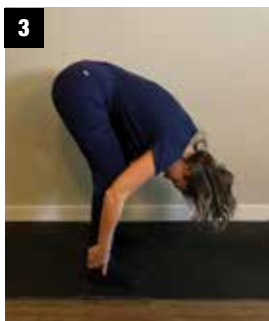
a study published in 2011 showed that changes in the soft tissue anatomy surrounding each vertebra were dependent on the specific movements and load in each direction. In essence, the surrounding tissues of vertebral disks that were exposed to less movement also degenerated faster.²²

There is a direct neural feedback embedded in each joint capsule, and controlled articular rotations are mobile movements designed to isolate every major joint through its full range of movement. Moving joints through their full range of motion leads to an increase in functional strength and mobility, and this offers a tool to combat stiffness and joint function degradation over time.²³

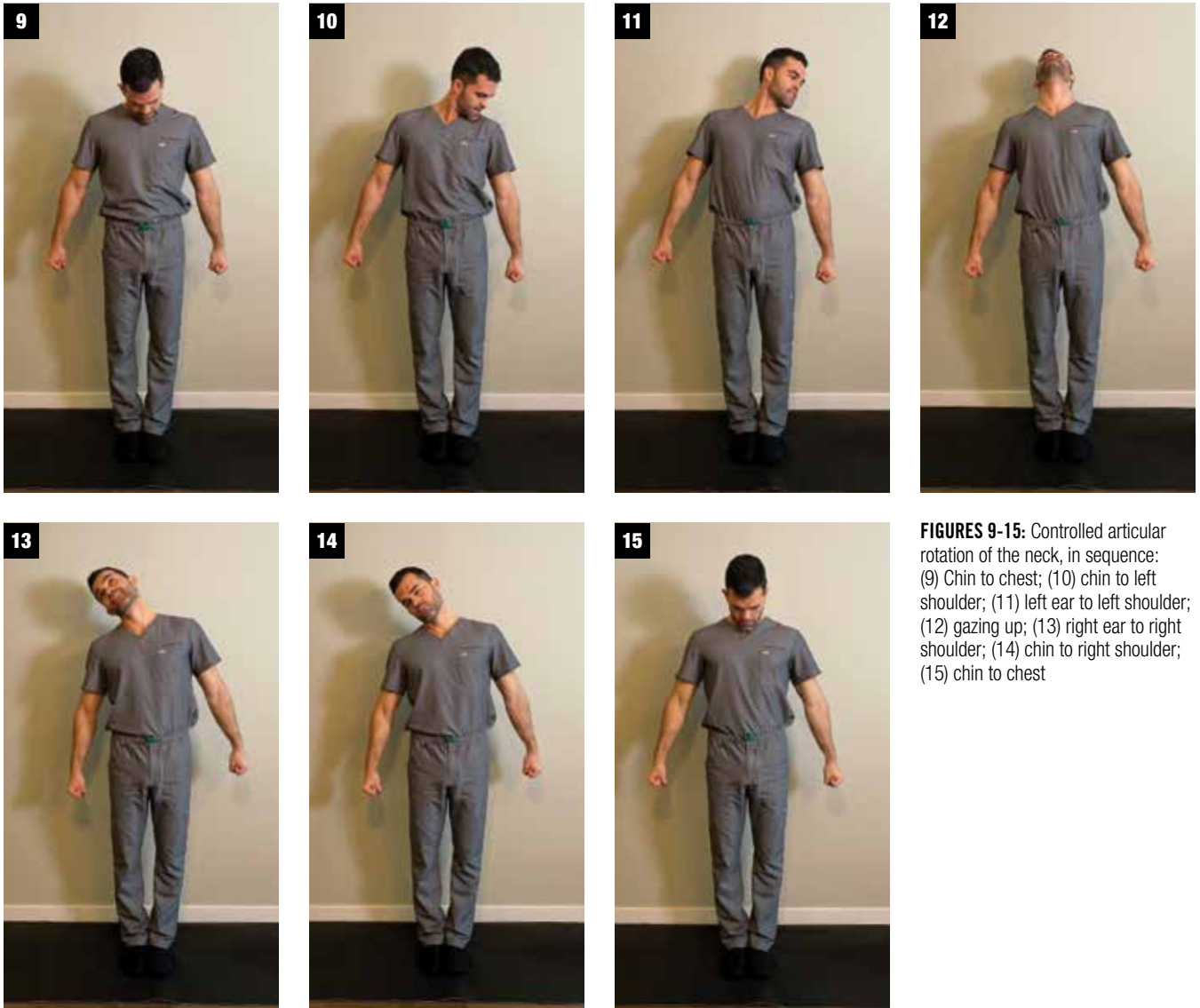
According to the American Dental Association, the most common chronic pains in dentistry are in the neck and lower back.²⁴ Lack of mobility in the joints of the cervical and lumbar spine leads to muscle aches and stiffness. While massages can help alleviate the pain and tension in the muscles, the underlying source is the position of the spine. Exercising joint mobility is more successful at pain prevention than massages. A meta-analysis published in 2008 concluded that there is no evidence that massages can prevent chronic pain.²⁵ Chronic pain is best prevented by taking breaks every two hours each day and moving joints through their full range of motion.²⁶ In a survey of dentists, 23%

more dentists reported pain relief from movement and exercise than dentists who reported pain relief from massage.²⁷

Dentists and dental hygienists are prone to developing trapezius myalgia: chronic tension in the upper trapezius muscles as a result of the nonergonomic working posture.²⁸ The average human head weighs 10 pounds, and when it is tilted forward, it can put more than 60 pounds of tension on the neck and trapezius muscles. Just two inches of tilt equates to twice as much tension on the stabilizing muscles.²⁹ Moving the cervical spine through its full range of motion every morning helps to strengthen the supporting muscles of the neck in order to prevent trapezius myalgia.



FIGURES 1-8: (1) Mountain pose; (2) forward fold; halfway lift; (3) hands to heart center; (4) side twist to the right; (5) side twist to the left; (6) side stretch right; (7) side stretch left



FIGURES 9-15: Controlled articular rotation of the neck, in sequence: (9) Chin to chest; (10) chin to left shoulder; (11) left ear to left shoulder; (12) gazing up; (13) right ear to right shoulder; (14) chin to right shoulder; (15) chin to chest

Controlled articular rotation of the neck guidance: Standing tall, squeeze hands into fists and keep arms at your sides. Contract the muscles of the forearms, biceps, triceps, shoulders, and core muscles in order to isolate the neck. Holding these isometric contractions, tilt the chin down to the chest, then roll the chin across the right collarbone toward the right shoulder. Then tilt your head back and bring the right ear toward the right shoulder. Lift the chin upward and send your gaze to the ceiling. Keeping the crown of the head back, trace a horizontal line with your gaze across the ceiling from right to left, bringing the left ear to the left shoulder, rolling your chin up the left collarbone toward the sternum, and then tilting the chin back to center. Repeat

this sequence in the opposite direction. Refer to figures 9-15 for demonstrations and watch our video demonstration at youtu.be/6X3CcriwJYw.

Low back pain is a common side effect from being overly sedentary.³⁰ It can be remedied by moving the spine throughout the workday, utilizing the seven movements of the spine.

5. Setting an intention

“Where your attention goes, energy flows.”
Dr. Joe Dispenza³¹

The PHYF concludes with standing tall and placing the palms together against the sternum with eyes closed for visualization. Then, choose one goal or desire to focus on for the day. It is important that the intention

is something positive, something desired to attain rather than something to avoid. It’s analogous to learning how to drive a car: focus your gaze and attention on where you want the car to go rather than on what you want it to avoid. Setting a daily intention helps train the mind to focus on desired outcomes and become more aware of opportunities throughout the day that could help attain the outcome. This combats the common mindset of focusing on what is wrong. Research indicates that a negative focused mindset leads to higher stress and poor decision-making.³²

Once an intention is formulated, take in one more deep breath, and release with an open mouth sigh. Open your eyes and go seize the day!

Implementing the PHYF

We recommend gradual implementation of the PHYF. Begin practicing the sequence at home for two weeks. Once comfortable, proceed with gradual implementation in the workplace. Begin by arriving early to your workplace and leading yourself through the sequence. Inform your colleagues and invite them to voluntarily join you. After several weeks, offer other consistent participants the opportunity to lead the flow. Above all, have fun with it!

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QUESTIONS

1. What does PHYF stand for?
 - A. Pro huddle yoga form
 - B. Prehuddle yoga flow
 - C. Predictable huddled yoga flow
 - D. Patient habit yoga function
2. What is the point of the PHYF?
 - A. Strengthen overall health
 - B. Enhance staff cohesion
 - C. Prevent chronic stress
 - D. All of the above
3. Which of the following is not a component of the PHYF?
 - A. Controlled articular rotations
 - B. Calf stretches
 - C. Setting an intention
 - D. Spine stretches
4. At what age does the average person's lung capacity begin to decline?
 - A. 25
 - B. 60
 - C. 55
 - D. 40
5. Taking six deep breaths can:
 - A. Decrease your blood pressure
 - B. Make you stronger
 - C. Help you lose weight
 - D. Increase your memory
6. What is the role of the vagus nerve?
 - A. Stimulate multiple parasympathetic nervous system responses
 - B. Stimulate multiple sympathetic nervous system responses
 - C. Contract the muscles of the lungs
 - D. Contract the muscles of the legs
7. Diaphragmatic (deep) breathing can:
 - A. Increase blood pressure
 - B. Help maintain a vital lung capacity
 - C. Decrease life span
 - D. Make you more stressed
8. What is the minimum number of deep breaths required to decrease blood pressure (proven in a 2005 research study)?
 - A. 3
 - B. 6
 - C. 12
 - D. 24
9. What disease is the leading cause of death in the US?
 - A. Lung disease
 - B. Diabetes
 - C. Heart disease
 - D. Cancer
10. The limbic system is the brain's:
 - A. Logical center
 - B. Alert center
 - C. Emotional center
 - D. Movement center
11. Keeping vertebrae mobile helps prevent:
 - A. Chronic pains
 - B. Arthritis
 - C. Injury
 - D. All of the above
12. Which of the following is not a movement of the spine?
 - A. Flexion
 - B. Extension
 - C. Torsion
 - D. Traction
13. Meditation can help reduce which of the following?
 - A. Depression
 - B. Anxiety
 - C. Lack of productivity
 - D. All of the above
14. What is the ideal breathing duration for diaphragmatic breaths?
 - A. 5 seconds inhale, 2 seconds hold, 5 seconds exhale, 2 seconds hold
 - B. 4 seconds inhale, 4 seconds hold, 4 seconds exhale, 4 seconds hold
 - C. 4 seconds inhale, 2 seconds hold, 4 seconds exhale, 2 seconds hold
 - D. 6 seconds inhale, 3 seconds hold, 6 seconds exhale, 3 seconds hold
15. What is the primary function of the cerebellum (brain stem)?
 - A. Motor function
 - B. Emotional processing
 - C. Logic and reasoning
 - D. Memory
16. Being dissociated from your body can lead to:
 - A. Hunger
 - B. Happiness
 - C. Depression
 - D. Dementia

Use this page to review questions and answers. Visit dentalacademyofce.com and sign in. If you have not previously purchased the course, select it from the Online Courses listing and complete your online purchase. Once purchased, the exam will be added to your Archives page, where a Take Exam link will be provided. Click on the Take Exam link, complete all the program questions, and submit your answers. An immediate grade report will be provided. Upon receiving a grade of 70% or higher, your verification form will be provided immediately for viewing and printing. Verification forms can be viewed and printed at any time in the future by visiting the site and returning to your Archives page.

QUESTIONS

17. The point of the jelly jumping technique is to:
- A. Help release tension in tight areas
 - B. Help release negative memories or traumas linked to certain postures
 - C. Help you soften and laugh a little
 - D. All the above
18. Practicing yoga can help:
- A. Reduce chronic pain
 - B. Reduce disability
 - C. Reduce irritability
 - D. All of the above
19. In the mountain pose, the hands are placed:
- A. At heart center
 - B. Over the head with the palms facing each other
 - C. At the hips
 - D. On the sacrum (low back)
20. In a side twist, the hips are facing:
- A. Toward the side you're twisting
 - B. Forward
 - C. Toward the opposite side you're twisting
 - D. Toward the back of the room
21. In a halfway lift, the spine should be:
- A. Hunched forward
 - B. Curved upward
 - C. Flat and parallel to the floor
 - D. Twisted
22. What are the most common chronic pains among dentists?
- A. Neck and low back
 - B. Mid back and wrists
 - C. Neck and jaw
 - D. Hips and low back
23. For how many breaths is each posture held in the first round of spine movements?
- A. 3
 - B. 2
 - C. 6
 - D. 1
24. What are the most important structures in the body to keep mobile?
- A. Muscles
 - B. Joints
 - C. Organs
 - D. Ligaments
25. Controlled articular rotations are:
- A. Mobile movements designed to isolate every major joint through its full range of movement
 - B. A sequence of spine movements
 - C. A breathing technique
 - D. A weight-loss exercise
26. What is the best way to prevent chronic pain?
- A. Frequent massages
 - B. Frequently moving joints through their full range of motion
 - C. Frequent exercise
 - D. Sleeping a lot
27. Low back pain is a common side effect of:
- A. Being overly sedentary
 - B. Exercising too much
 - C. Not breathing enough
 - D. Working with loupes
28. Low back pain can be remedied through all of the following except:
- A. Moving the spine more often throughout the day
 - B. Practicing the seven movements of the spine
 - C. Sitting/resting frequently
 - D. Working with loupes
29. Negative focused mindset leads to:
- A. Being more productive
 - B. Earning more money
 - C. Making better decisions
 - D. Poor decision-making and high stress
30. The PHYF is for:
- A. Dental hygienists only
 - B. Dentists only
 - C. All members of the dental team as well as friends and family members
 - D. Yoga practitioners only

The power of a prehuddle morning yoga flow

NAME: _____ TITLE: _____ SPECIALTY: _____

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REQUIREMENTS FOR OBTAINING CE CREDITS BY MAIL/FAX: 1) Read entire course. 2) Complete info above. 3) Complete test by marking one answer per question. 4) Complete course evaluation. 5) Complete credit card info or write check payable to Endeavor Business Media. 6) Mail/fax this page to DACE. A score of 70% or higher is required for CE credit. **FOR QUESTIONS, CALL (800) 633-1681. COURSE MAY ALSO BE COMPLETED AT DENTALACADEMYOFCE.COM.**

Educational Objectives

1. Self-regulate energy and focus
2. Prevent chronic pains
3. Prevent chronic stress

Course Evaluation

1. Were the individual course objectives met?

Objective #1: Yes No Objective #2: Yes No Objective #3: Yes No

Please evaluate this course by responding to the following statements, using a scale of Excellent = 5 to Poor = 0.

- | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|----|---|---|---|---|
| 2. To what extent were the course objectives accomplished overall? | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 3. Please rate your personal mastery of the course objectives. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 4. How would you rate the objectives and educational methods? | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 5. How do you rate the author's grasp of the topic? | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 6. Please rate the author's effectiveness. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 7. Was the overall administration of the course effective? | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 8. Please rate the usefulness and clinical applicability of this course. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 9. Please rate the usefulness of the references. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 10. Do you feel that the references were adequate? | Yes | No | | | | |
| 11. Would you take a similar course on a different topic? | Yes | No | | | | |
| 12. If any of the continuing education questions were unclear or ambiguous, please list them. | _____ | | | | | |

13. Was there any subject matter you found confusing? Please describe.

14. How long did it take you to complete this course?

15. What additional dental continuing education topics would you like to see?

Mail/fax completed answer sheet to:

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| 1. (A) (B) (C) (D) | 16. (A) (B) (C) (D) |
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| 3. (A) (B) (C) (D) | 18. (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 4. (A) (B) (C) (D) | 19. (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 5. (A) (B) (C) (D) | 20. (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 6. (A) (B) (C) (D) | 21. (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 7. (A) (B) (C) (D) | 22. (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 8. (A) (B) (C) (D) | 23. (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 9. (A) (B) (C) (D) | 24. (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 10. (A) (B) (C) (D) | 25. (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 11. (A) (B) (C) (D) | 26. (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 12. (A) (B) (C) (D) | 27. (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 13. (A) (B) (C) (D) | 28. (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 14. (A) (B) (C) (D) | 29. (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 15. (A) (B) (C) (D) | 30. (A) (B) (C) (D) |

AGD Code 770

EXAM INSTRUCTIONS

All questions have only one answer. If mailed or faxed, grading of this examination is done manually. Participants will receive confirmation of passing by receipt of a Verification of Participation form. The form will be mailed within two weeks after receipt of an examination.

COURSE EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

We encourage participant feedback. Complete the evaluation above and e-mail additional feedback to Allen Gunter (agunter@endavorsb2b.com) and Laura Winfield (lwinfield@endavorsb2b.com).

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