



TOPIC OF THE MONTH JULY 2006

JUMPING

Jumping back, jumping forward, picking up and jumping through

Jumping in yoga?? Who would have ‘thunk’ we would be jumping in yoga! Actually the jumps serve a purpose; they produce agility in the body and mind. In the standing poses the jumping of your feet apart and together is one of the best ways to build hip, thigh, and spine bone density. They also help to break loose some of the blockages in our body (be the blockages physical or emotional), such as moving matter in the colon, sinuses, or arteries. They teach us to be light on our feet, to land lightly and be nimble :) The jump backs in the sun salutes will strengthen our core and increase our energy levels; also the transfer of weight that is required from the feet to the hands will build bone density in the upper body.

If you have no chronic pain, working into jumping after the first few months of practicing is generally safe for most people (although this varies and is very individual). However before you jump, there are some preliminaries:

☪ Wrists--you need strong and flexible wrists. When you jump back or forward you are transferring your body weight from your feet to your hands, your wrists must be able to handle this. It is common to experience some wrist discomfort when you start practice--work intelligently--meaning find the right balance between working through the discomfort and resting. In time the wrists do become more strong and flexible.

- A thinner surface is best for your wrists meaning avoid thick mats and carpeting.
- Spreading your fingers wide and gripping the floor gently with your fingertips helps to disperse body weight out of the wrists and into the entire hand.
- Also slightly lifting the heel of your palm to make a little tunnel will help take body weight out of the wrists.

☪ Bandhas! Your bandhas will give you a feeling of lightness and they will protect your back on the landings. If you have any lower back pain jumping is not recommended.

Below are the techniques for the various jumps, aside from knowing the techniques, to feel light and in control with your jumps takes practice, **consistent practice over a long period of time.**

Jumping your feet apart in the standing poses

☪ Exhaling, bend your knees and lift your bandhas ****EXHALE and SQUAT****

☪ Inhaling jump apart put extra mental effort to the inner lift of your bandhas

☪ Exhale, Land by bending your knees and “rebounding” (squatting down as you land). This little bounce will take the shock out of your landing.



ॐ As you jump your feet apart and turn to the right (as in Trikonasana and Parsvakonasana) try to land on both feet at the same time, landing with your feet square. Then turn your right foot out after you land.

Jumping Back in the Sun Salutes

- ॐ From the third position of the sun salute, place your hands on the floor on either side of your feet -- most people will need to have their hands slightly forward of their toes, bend your knees and lean forward shifting your body weight from your feet to hands pressing your palms into the floor gently (some practice this position by lifting their hands off the floor or sliding their hands up their shins—this does not prepare you to jump).
- ॐ It is important to lean your weight out of your feet and into your hands—this requires a forward motion of your upper body and hips. Grip the floor with your fingertips (this gives you control of the movement).
- ॐ Exhaling, jump your hips up (not back) still maintaining the forward motion of your upper body, begin to straighten your legs to prepare for landing (the straightening of your legs is what takes you back).
- ॐ Land with bent elbows in the Chaturanga Dandasana position. It may seem easier to land on straight arms and then lower to Chaturanga—however most people “bounce” in their lower back when landing this way. To facilitate landing with bent elbows, hop back “short” so when you land your body is almost in the “pose of eight points”—but not quite—your knees and chin should be off the floor). You should land with your forearms close to your waist, if you are landing with your elbows flared and your fingertips in front of your shoulders than you have hopped back too far. Land softly, a forward movement of your body while airborne helps to control your landing.

Jumping Forward in the Sun Salutes

- ॐ From Downward Facing dog lean your weight forward into your hands, keeping your hips high, gripping with your fingertips —look forward. (Many do the opposite from down dog when preparing to hop, they bend their knees and push their hips up and back—this is actually counter productive)
- ॐ Hop your hips up and carry yourself forward with the shoulder girdle muscles, specifically the latissimus dorsi. We do not actually propel forward with the hop, it is the shoulder joint that carries us forward—the action is similar to pulling your arms downward.
- ॐ Land softly . . . The trick to landing softly is to carry yourself forward enough to have your hips above your shoulders, this gives you control on the landing. If your hips are too far behind your shoulders you will land with a “thud” as there is no support there. If you are tight in your hamstrings, hips, or lower back bending your knees is best. Trying to do it with straight legs will not allow you to come forward enough. If flexibility allows, you can keep your legs straight and land softly.



Picking up for the jump back and jumping through

Picking up and jumping back:

Inhales have a natural upward lifting function; the inhalations inspire lift with the help of the bandhas—the inhales reach down and hook the bandhas and the bandhas reach down and hook you by the seat of your pants to pick yourself up . . . Breath and bandhas are key!

- ☯ With crossed legs, exhaling lean forward and ground your hands, gripping the floor with your fingertips
- ☯ Inhaling pick up your feet and knees tucking them in tight lifting your entire body off the floor (yes it is possible!) Push down with your hands **tuck** up with your legs
- ☯ Exhaling lean forward (as if you were going to do a 'face plant') bending your elbows—this pulls your body through your arms effortlessly--extend your legs and land in the Chaturanga Dandasana position for vinyasa.

Build strength with lollasana

- ☯ Sitting on your heels, knees close together, ankles crossed, feet pointing backwards
- ☯ Ground your hands between your hips and knees; lift your knees and then your feet off the floor. Try to hold for ten breaths, when you can begin to lean forward bending your elbows preparing to shoot your legs back.



Jumping through from down dog starts off similar to the hop forward in the sun salutes:

- ☯ Lean your body weight forward into your hands, gripping the floor with your fingertips, pulling inward and upward with your bandhas—INHALE and jump your hips UP into an arm balance getting your shoulders above your wrists, your hips up high and legs tucked in tight
- ☯ Carry yourself through your arms slowly using your shoulders as the axis. As you swing through you need to keep your knees into your chest and suck your feet up into your abdomen (**tuck!**) to clear the floor. Once you are through you can straighten your legs while still hovering . . .
- ☯ Exhale lower down and take a seat for Dandasana.

**Vinyasa is the way to go, jump on back and feel the flow
Upward dog and downward too, Pick it up and jump on through**