



TOPIC OF THE MONTH

August 2013

INSIDE OUT POSTURING, continued.

Marichyasana Series

The Marichyasana series is about the colon. The colon is the “sewer” of our body, if it is not functioning properly the toxins our body is working so hard to eliminate can not get out. Before we learn how the Marichyasana series affects the colon, lets learn a bit about our colons.

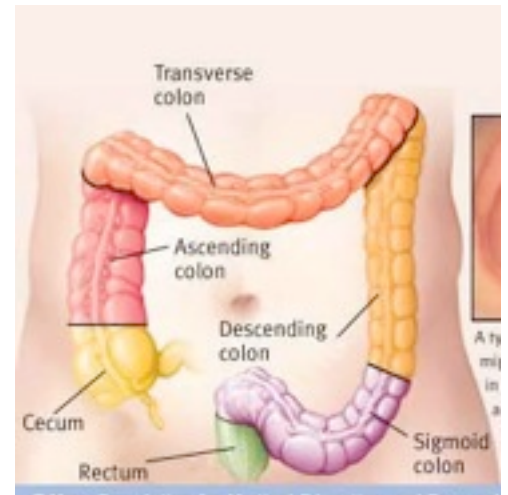
The colon is the last part of our digestive system. Unlike the small intestine, the colon does not play a major role in absorption of foods and nutrients. However, the colon does absorb water, sodium and some fat soluble vitamins --

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

The colon consists of four sections: the ascending colon, the transverse colon, the descending colon, and the sigmoid colon. The cecum, colon, rectum, and anal canal form the large intestine.

Some fun colon facts:

- 🌀 Our colon is as long as we are tall
- 🌀 The diameter of the colon is equal to that of our wrist . . .
- 🌀 For every foot of our colon we can store approx. 5-10 lbs. of fecal matter . . .
- 🌀 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 backs up into the small intestine there is a higher likelihood of putting toxins back into our system. Ever heard of the saying “someone is full of shit”?



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. This is one of the ways the colon controls the aging process in our body, toxins in the body lead to premature 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.**



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You can help your colon do its job

Massage (ex. with our heel or hand -- your own or by a therapist), inversions (using gravity), and jumping (as on a rebounder 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. When massaging, spend a little extra time on the "corners" of the square our colon makes, in these corners is where matter is most easily trapped.

Diet is better than having a colonic . . .

Eating to Clean

- ☯ Eat foods high in fibre, which sweeps debris from the colon. Such as vegetables, fruits, beans, seeds, nuts . . . getting a mix of soluble and insoluble fiber.
- ☯ EAT YOUR GREENS, not only do greens help to detoxify your body they also clean and heal your digestive tract. Leafy greens are especially important; going beyond spinach and lettuce you will get even more nutrients from greens such as arugula, mustard greens, kale, swiss chard, spring mixes.
- ☯ Chlorophyll found in green foods like wheatgrass, alfalfa, spirulina, etc. are potent greens not only enhancing the healing of your colon; they help the body to obtain more oxygen and draw out toxins. For this reason, chlorophyll is called "the internal deodorant."
Cilantro also is useful as it is a good chelator of mercury.
- ☯ Water . . . Another job of the colon is to absorb the fluids out of the matter in the colon along with sodium and the fat soluble vitamins that maybe left in the digestive waste before it leaves your body. Your colon reabsorbs water and these nutrients 8 to 10 times every 30 minutes. The colon takes the waste and breaks it down, then reabsorbs water through the intestinal tract to provide the proper consistency for the waste to pass from our body. The colon stores the food waste until our body is ready to get rid of it.
- ☯ **Probiotics! Fermented foods such as yogurt, kefir, miso and sauerkraut replenish the friendly bacteria needed for a healthy colon.** Pro biotic (living organisms) = Pro Living organisms . . .
- ☯ Billions of bacteria reside in our large intestine. I have read that our cells are 90% bacteria and only 10% human . . . Don't freak out though, these bowel bugs in return for a warm place to live do a lot of good for our gut. These bowel bugs are known as intestinal flora because like plant life they give fertile soil for our colon and the health of our whole body. **We also have harmful bacteria that can invade our body, colon health is basically helping the good bacteria outnumber the bad bacteria.**
- ☯ Probiotics increase the thickness of intestinal mucus, which act like a protective paint to keep harmful bacteria from getting through. Probiotics (good "bowel bugs") compete with pathogenic bacteria (bad "bowel bugs"), thereby discouraging the growth and harmful effects of bad bowel bugs. **These good bugs stick to the intestinal lining, effectively crowding out the bad bugs and preventing them from getting a foot-hold on the intestinal lining.**



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- ॐ **The most important benefit of the good bowel bugs is they enhance your intestinal immune defenses.** Probiotics enhance the immune function by increasing antibodies in our blood. Antibodies are proteins made by the immune system to fight antigens, such as bacteria, viruses, and toxins. Probiotics help to increase Immunoglobulin A (IgA), which is found in high concentrations in the mucous membranes, particularly those lining the respiratory passages and gastrointestinal tract, as well as in saliva and tears.
- ॐ The body makes different immunoglobulins to combat different antigens. For example, the antibody for chickenpox isn't the same as the antibody for mononucleosis.
- ॐ In researching for my sister's cancer we discovered that in the presence of probiotics cancer cells cannibalize themselves -- they literally eat themselves to death.
- ॐ Probiotics produce healthful nutrients by fermenting some of the fiber in food to form short-chain fatty acids (SCFA's) which nourish the cells lining the colon, stimulate healing of these cells, and reduce the likelihood of colon cancer. These short-chain fatty acids are also absorbed into the bloodstream and travel to the liver where they lessen the liver's production of cholesterol. These SCFA's also inhibit the growth of yeast and harmful bacteria in the gut.
- ॐ There is a lot of new and exciting research about these bowel bugs and how they effect everything from your mood to your weight to your blood sugar level.
- ॐ Increased amounts of beneficial bacteria were found in the digestive tract of thin mice vs. that of overweight mice.
- ॐ Good bowel bugs balance the absorption of unhealthy sugars improving blood sugar levels
- ॐ People with more beneficial bacteria have lower rates of depression.
- ॐ Research is pointing to the fact that the good bowel bugs are environmental and emotional feelers that help us cope, adapt and genetically evolve to our ever-changing world.
- ॐ Research has been citing about how we manage stress by making 95% of the body's mood balancing hormone serotonin, along with other neurotransmitters, in the lining of the gut. I am fascinated by the correlation between digestion and mood and cognitive health.
- ॐ Ayurveda says 85% of your overall health depends on your digestive tract.
- ॐ Have you noticed when you eat something probiotic you go to the bathroom :) This is good . . .

Good sources of probiotics (better than a pill!) are yogurt -- plain and whole (no yogurt cups that are more sugar than probiotics), cottage cheese, miso, sauerkraut, raw cheeses, olives from an olive bar, kefir, kimchee, cultured vegetables (other societies and their use of



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"pickle"). A nice place to buy some fermented cabbage and veggies is www.culturednutrition.com

How Marichyasana effects your colon

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

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 ;)

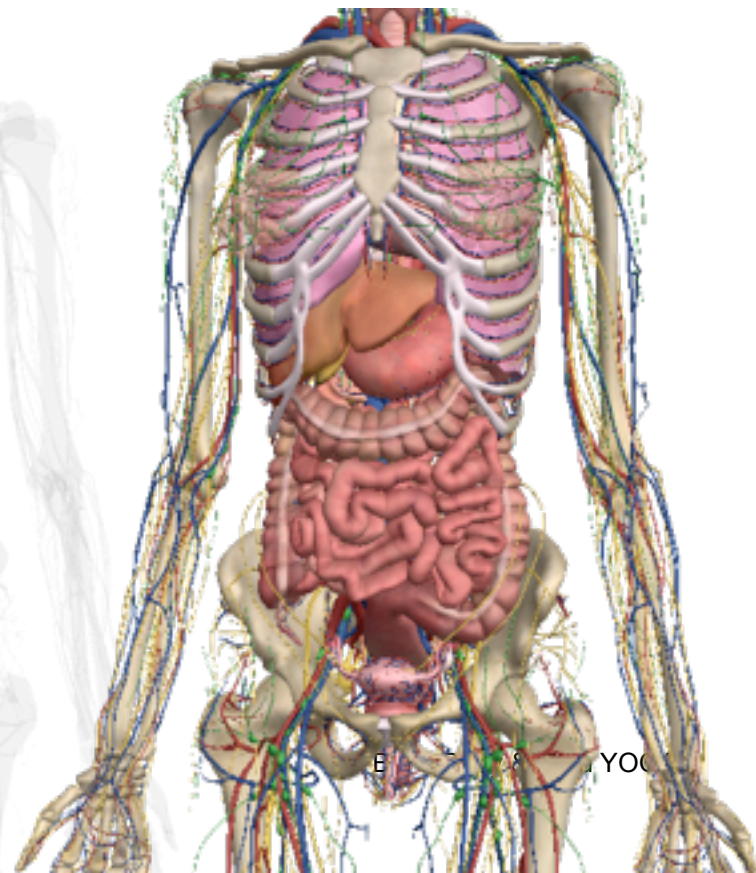
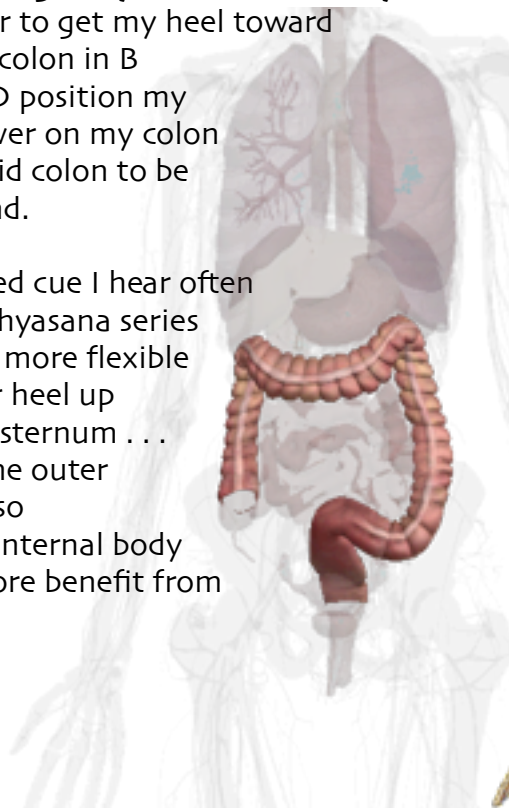
Our heel is like a massage for the colon. helping to stimulate the movement of matter so our body can rid itself of toxins. In the research it shows the areas most in need of this stimulation are the "corners" of the colon, this is the area we are aiming our heel for.



As your body allows, the most effective position for your heel will be in line with the innerlip 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 -- than I have been doing, so I am feeling a different stretch in my hip as I work to get my heel closer to my colon. I find it easier to get my heel toward the "corners" of my colon in B position than D, in D position my heel needs to be lower on my colon -- around the sigmoid colon to be able to catch my bind.

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.





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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 ;)

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, then you can catch your wrist, then you just keep catching up higher on your forearm . . .

☪ 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.

For more information on how to do the Marichyasana series in your practice please visit the link below and scroll down to Marichyasana A, B, C, or D: <http://www.befityoga.com/philosophy-lifestyle/ashtanga-yoga-poses/>

IN THE EMOTIONAL BODY

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

Just as a reminder, the small intestines play an essential role in the absorption of nutrients from our foods. The colon takes the waste and breaks it down, then reabsorbs water through the intestinal tract to provide the proper consistency for the waste to pass from our body. The colon stores the food waste until our body is ready to get rid of it.

Disorders of the small intestine are linked with an inability to absorb or retain information and/or habits that are beneficial to us and our homeostasis. You tend to get hung up on details missing the point of the situation.

Disorders of the colon are linked with our inability to let go of old ideas or belief systems that no longer serve us. In the case of diarrhea, you reject ideas too quickly. You may be easily perturbed and find it impossible to digest disagreeable concepts.

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.