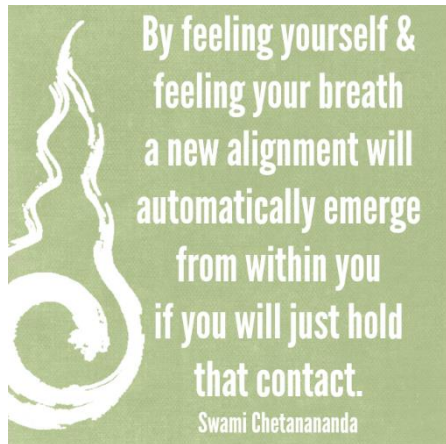




## Restorative Heart Chakra Yoga

By Cassidy Millar

I would like to invite you to take a moment to be with your heart. Release your day, your surroundings, and have a one on one with your golden compass. Notice your breath and begin to gently draw your breath in more deeply, exhaling slowly. Relaxing your body, become aware of what it feels like to breathe. Where ever you are right now, I invite you to close your eyes and bring your attention inside so that you may take this moment to truly *feel* your breath. Take a breath into your heart center after a little while of being with your breath. Bringing your attention to your heart center, feel your heart. Be patient, be kind and do your best to consciously soften into stillness.



As you bring your attention into your heart center, your heart may begin to speak to you. Your heart may not communicate with you in words. When we give ourselves the opportunity to become quiet, bringing our attention into our breath and body, a vast and miraculous opportunity manifests. We *feel*...and we feel more deeply. We get below the surface which so often captivates our attention. And whatever feeling we experience in this stillness, we have the choice to stuff it back down where it came from or to open to it and really listen. To really feel our Hearts takes great courage. Our hearts have been through so much with us...everything in fact. When we begin to practice feeling into our hearts we may notice how little time we really

spend visiting this place, how distractions and stresses keep us preoccupied elsewhere. Our minds may be so busy or the pain may be so great, that in the beginning it's hard for us to be still. We practice to peel away all the barriers between us and the love in our hearts.

Here is a restorative yoga pose you can do to get in touch with your heart. Set aside 15 to 30 minutes and find a place that you feel safe and comfortable. Take the time to make the space you choose peaceful and sacred for this practice. You can play music, dim the lights, burn incense, open the windows...choose elements that add peace and joy for you naturally.

You'll need:

2 blankets

1 Big bolster\*

\*If you don't have a bolster at home you can use pillows ☺

Take the time to arrange each prop so that it feels good for your body. Here are some basic instruction to get you started, please modify as you wish!

1. Roll or fold one blanket so that it can be placed below your neck at a comfortable height. Make sure your head rests comfortably on the ground, you may want to leave the end of the blanket slightly unrolled to achieve this. Place this rolled blanket at the top of your yoga mat.
2. Roll or fold another blanket and place this blanket at the bottom of your rib cage. You should find the natural curve of your lumbar spine is supported. Allow the height of this blanket to create a gentle opening in your body.
3. The bolster goes perpendicular to your yoga mat and under your knees.
4. Let your arms rest out away from your body or place one hand on your heart center and one hand on your abdomen.
5. Let your legs be hip distance apart or wider.



6. Finding stillness, make contact with your breath. Breathing high up through your nose, draw your breath deep down into your abdomen, allowing your belly to expand with each inhale.
7. Make contact with your body. Riding the energy of your breath awareness, feel into your body starting at your ankles and rising up your legs, torso, finger tips and arm, into your neck and head. Take your time. The key here is your breath energy and bringing that energy and your awareness into each part of your body.
8. Once you have made contact with your breath and body, bring your awareness and breath into your heart. As you inhale into your heart, you can try this mantra:

"I deeply wish to open my Heart"

9. Smile. Gently bring a smile to your lips as your breath awareness is within your heart. Notice the feeling. Think of a person, place or activity that you love, smile to this thought and feel again what happens. When your heart begins to soften and open (and this may take time and practice) you can expand this sweet feeling into your body.
10. Cultivate gratitude for your experience, whatever it was, and feeling a sense of gratitude let that feeling pour out from your heart and into every cell of your body.

*“Gratitude is the enzyme that digests everything” – Swami Chetanananda*

You can also add another layer to this practice whenever you like. While making contact with your heart, you can consciously send love to yourself and others. You can cultivate a compassionate heart by sending love to others who may be suffering or those people in your life that cause you difficulty, wishing for them to experience happiness. You can send this wish to yourself, those you love, those that you do not know, and those that cause you difficulty. Practicing to offer love to everyone helps us grow the love in our hearts – everyone benefits 😊

*May all sentient beings be free of suffering and the causes of suffering.*

*May all sentient beings know happiness and the causes of happiness.*



Cassidy Millar is a student of Swami Chetanananda's and a TMC community member. Cassidy graduated from the TMC Yoga Teacher Training in 2015 and now teaches Present Moment Yoga every Wednesday. An artist of many mediums, she feels passionately about human expression, creativity and the exploration of human potential.