Awakening the Inner Warrior

Virabhadra was a great and noble warrior sage of pre-ancient times, said to have been borne form a single hair of Shiva’s head. The birth of this powerful hero heralded a new light in the world, as under the command of Lord Shiva himself, Virabhadra set about destroying all that was unjust, weak, slothful and proud among the nature of men.

- The warrior postures are dedicated to this powerful Kshatriya, for in these postures that bear his name we too are called into battle
- Yet this battle that we are fighting is an inner battle and this warrior that we are awakening is an inner warrior.
- A warrior within ourselves that has the mental and physical strength, endurance and faith, to enter the fire of practice without getting burnt.
- A warrior forged in the inner fire of spiritual discipline and yet a warrior with the wisdom to understand that the true hero is the one who surrenders to the joy within the intensity of the pose, not the one who fights the pain within the intensity of the pose.

The scope of the warrior group of postures is great.

- Warrior 1 strengthens the heart and prepares the back for deeper back bending.
- Warrior 2 opens the groin and inspires poise teaching us to work energy through the arm lines by releasing tension in the shoulders.
- Reverse Warrior 2 reminds us the importance of and to take greater weight into the back leg to balance out our foundation.
- Side angle pose draws the incredible line of energy along the side of the body, and teaches us to surrender into our lunge.
- Bowing Warrior provides intense stretch through the front hamstring, but also teaches us the value of core strength and support
- Warrior 3 reminds us of the importance of firm uncompromising extension as in all our balancing poses.

All the warriors generate a deep even strength through the legs and openness through the hips and the heart. This strength helps to balance out our growing flexibility.

Playing the Edge in Warrior Postures

The art of the practice is to be able to deliberately centre the degree of edge we are experiencing within the pose, so it feels just right. To be able to turn the heat and intensity up or down according to

- Our inner feeling
- The ease and flow of the breath
- Our ability to smile inwardly within the pose.
- The question is always ‘am I loving what I am doing’?

Deepening the Stretch

Learn to patiently flirt with the edge in such a way that the body remains relaxed. If we force into the posture too quickly the muscles will naturally contract in order to protect themselves from over-stretch. So the skill is to approach the stretch in such a way that the body doesn’t resist you coming.


**No Hurry**

Letting go of hurry is one of the keys to success. Try having a direction without getting caught up in the destination. Spend the first couple of breaths exploring the pose find out where the edge is but give it lots of room, establish your breath rhythm, set yourself up, see how it feels. Then deliberately fill your shape out with inhalation before beginning to play more intimately with the resistance. The feeling is one of growing into the posture rather than simply imposing a shape on the body.

**The Foundation**

Try increasing the current of stretch running through the back leg line, so that the distribution of weight evens out between the two legs. This will reduce the intensity in the front thigh and allow you to explore a greater feeling of ease and poise within the postures.

**The Warrior Breath**

Understanding the breath in intense and challenging postures is a vital part of our practice. Each breath has a very distinct quality.

**The Inhalation**

Grounds the feet and draws power into the back leg so that the foundation becomes strong enough to draw the abdominals back and lift the wave of inhalation up through the front of the body, expanding the rib cage and travelling outwards through the lines of the arms.

**The Exhalation**

Whilst maintaining the stretch and pace created by the inhalation – use the exhalation to let go into the hip or hamstring. In this way we find the balance between the will of the inhalation and the surrender of the exhalation.