

If Only...

I was recently listening to a videotape of Jack Kornfield, a teacher of meditation, as he explained some of the common concerns that students describe to him as they begin a meditation practice. Kornfield described how we often have all sorts of thoughts about our needs in order to create the perfect environment for meditation. It is interesting how much chatter our minds put us through as we work on ways to stop thinking. Kornfield said that he hears people talk most frequently of the “if only” stage of their practice – “if only I had some water, if only my knee didn’t hurt, if only my house was quieter, if only I wasn’t waiting for the telephone call.” We use all of the “if only” ideas to justify our obstacles to sitting down to meditate. And so it is with yoga. Our minds create so many obstacles to the practice that it becomes easier to attend to the “if only” ideas, and avoid the practice.

Asanas



Virasana
Hero Pose



Anjaneyasana
Lunge



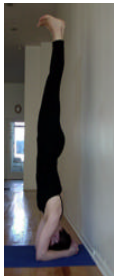
Garudasana
Eagle



Natarajasana
Dancer



Supta Padangusthasana
Reclined Wide Angle



Sirsasana
Headstand



Bekasana
Frog - variation



Paschimotanasana
Seated Forward Bend



Sarvangasana
Shoulderstand



Halasana
Plow

Application. Many spiritual practitioners work on the discipline of renunciation – giving up everything – as a way to stop the mind’s chatter. You often hear that you have to completely give up attachment to everything before you can have anything you want. As you practice notice all of the desires that come up—whether it be about all the conditions and things that are needed for your hatha yoga practice, or thoughts of food, money, or other seductions. Hatha yoga practice requires renunciation of those thoughts – to be an observer of what comes and goes, and to give up our thoughts of control.