

Water

There are five elements: earth, water, fire, air, and ether. Each of the toes represent an element. Start from the little toe side and go toward the center (following the sequence above) to identify the element associated with each of the five toes. When I think of the water element in my poses I am drawn to the fluidity of movement, such as the ease that water flows over rocks in a mountain stream. The calmness in the undulations of water also draws me in to poses that remind me of water. Just as in the hatha yoga movements, we can incorporate the element of water into our lives in other actions. Just as the element of water shows malleability, water also represents great force in its actions, such as carving rocks, or even more jarring environmental effects such as flooding or the effects of tidal waves. When we take those traits of the water element into our practice, we are able to affect our attitude in our practice and in our actions.

Asanas



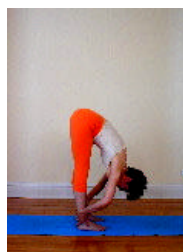
Ardha Jathara
Parivartanasana
Side angle twist



Bhujangasana
Cobra



Vrksasana
Tree



Uttanasana
Standing Forward
Bend



Ardha Chandrasana
Half Moon Pose



Natarajasana
Dancer



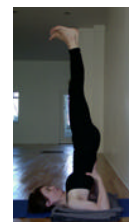
Ustrasana
Camel



Dhanurasana
Bow



Ardha
Matsyendrasana
Seated Twist



Sarvangasana
Shoulder stand

Application. You will find the yoga poses represented in each of the five elements. Of course, the element that we identify the pose with may vary with each student. For me the poses that have the water quality remind me of flow – incorporating the movement and breath in vinyasa, for example is a good reminder for me of the actions in water flowing freely. Cooling poses for the mind, and poses that allow me to move easily, such as the waves in the ocean immediately come to mind.

Photos by Alyce Henson. Archive: Elements 8.1.01