

# WELKIN WORDS

## Namaste,

Is everyone welcoming Spring? Although yoga teaches us to welcome all experiences with equanimity, there is a certain special joy that comes from celebrating the Vernal Equinox, feeling the chill leave our bones, and seeing the first robin of the season. Spring carries its own personal meaning to each of us. I see it as evidence of hope: that we can count on changes and shifts in our lives, that life will continue to bloom, that the Light does return. I will refrain from quoting Ecclesiastes...

Close to that hope sits a stone of fear. Every year I have seen the Earth a little more ravaged as we continue to violate and pillage her. When I was young, I believed that eventually our situation would become so unlivable that those with the power would be forced to make the necessary changes so that the world would become safe for us all. The older I got, the more amazed I became as study after study was released: don't eat the food, don't drink the water, don't breathe the air. Still governments allow companies to irradiate our cereals, dump toxins into our water, and limit the clean-burning, renewable sources of energy. At the age of eight, it was easy to hold faith that society would change. At the age of 31, I realize that individual responsibility is key in keeping our planet and ourselves healthy.

The first point in the first rule of yoga is (I know you know this; we've been discussing it all month!) *ahimsa*, nonharm. This means approach all life, including your own, with nonviolence. Hold compassion in the heart, speak kindness, respect all life. This newsletter is not meant as a political tirade, rather, an elucidation of EcoYoga. EcoYoga is a modern branch of practice that empowers us all to make conscious, healing decisions. The path of EcoYoga leads us to enlightenment by directing our thoughts, actions, and intentions in a pure and loving way towards the Earth. We can't all join Greenpeace or wash oil-slicked birds in the Galapagos, but we can use environmentally responsible products, eat organically grown foods, and take our own bags to the store. It is within our own power to walk or ride a bike rather than drive a gasoline-fueled automobile. Each of us can reduce our consumption, reuse materials, and recycle/compost our waste.

Earth Day falls on April 22 every year. This is a day to heighten awareness. This newsletter holds an Earth Day theme and includes a special article, edited from her submission to the Brantford Expositor, by Judy Zik. May we each become more responsible and let *every day* be Earth Day.

Blessings,  
Erin

There's so much pollution in the air now that if it weren't for our lungs there'd be no place to put it all.

~Robert Orben

## Recipe – Friendly, Powerful Silver Polish

For every expensive, brand-name cleaning product there is a safe, effective alternative.

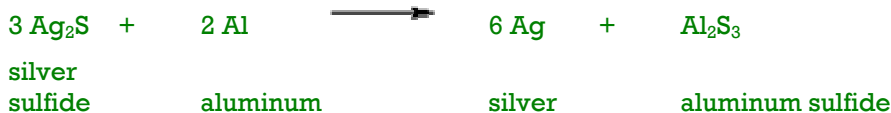
Line the sink with aluminum foil and lay silverware upon it

Boil enough water to completely cover silverware

Use 60mL baking soda for every liter of water (1/4c baking soda: 1 quart water)

Combine boiling water and baking soda in large bowl/measuring cup—BE CAREFUL it may spill over

Pour over silverware and watch tarnish disappear. Repeat for very tarnished pieces.



We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children. ~Native American Proverb

**Featured Asana**



The goddess pose opens the hips and chest while strengthening and toning the lower body. Goddess pose stimulates the uro-genital, respiratory and cardiovascular systems.

**Utkata konasana Goddess Pose**

Begin in Five-pointed Star: a wide stance with both feet turning slightly outward as your arms extend directly out from the shoulders  
 Inhale, raising your arms overhead.  
 Exhale, bend your knees and elbows  
 Keep your knees over your toes and enter the Goddess Pose  
 Feel yourself grounding into the support of Mother Earth  
 To release inhale up return to the Five-pointed Star  
 Step feet together

**On Empowerment and Equanimity**

When we begin to consider all of the environmental implications in our lives, it can be very overwhelming. Often we feel helpless, believing that any small action we as individuals take cannot possibly outweigh the effects of multinational corporations. When in this despondent place it is important to remember that *every* action we take has an impact. Support ethical companies, be responsible with your waste, choose. Use the same consciousness here as you do in your yoga practice. Many individuals making the same choices will inevitably raise awareness and create positive change.

The One Tonne Challenge currently posed to Canadians is an example of how powerful a group of individuals can be. This challenge is to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by one tonne over the next year. The website includes tips on how to do so. Greenpeace, World Wildlife Fund, and Ducks Unlimited are partners in this conservation effort. If we are too busy to recycle, too tired to bicycle, too depressed to call Mr. St. Amand or Mr. Levac, it is easy to set up a pre-authorized monthly donation to support an environmental cause. *The Bhagavad Gita* teaches that we need only act and release the results to the Universe. Control what we can.

Remember that the choices you make DO have an impact. Choose your own course of action and release attachment to the results. This will keep the heart peaceful as you hold the intention of healing.

When we heal the earth, we heal ourselves. ~David Orr

**Yoga Retreat June 24-June 26**

Enjoy a weekend away at the lovely Five Oaks Retreat Centre. The theme this year is **Life's Purpose and Passion.**  
**Early Bird Special \$375** if paid before May 1 (includes meals, seminars, accommodation, and yoga classes)

**Recommended Reading**

*The Bhagavad Gita,*  
*The Yoga Sutras,* Sri Swami Satchidananda  
 (trans.)  
*Diet for a Small Planet,*  
*EcoYoga Practice and Mediations,* Henryk Skolimowski  
*The Deeper Dimension of Yoga,* Georg Feuerstein  
*Meditations from the Mat,* Rolf Gates

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 The Fitness Centre 519-751-2500  
[www.thenaturalhealthcentre.com](http://www.thenaturalhealthcentre.com)  
<http://www.climatechange.gc.ca/onetonne/english/index.asp>  
[www.greenpeace.ca](http://www.greenpeace.ca)  
[www.wwf.ca](http://www.wwf.ca)  
[www.ducks.ca](http://www.ducks.ca)

Summer's coming. The snow is still on the ground but already we have seen our first smog days of the season. All across Ontario another generation of children will be diagnosed with asthma due to air pollution. Over the coming years our ever more dirty air will eventually kill many of them before their time. Debate the merits of climate change all you want. The proof is here today that air pollution does kill people every year. Today is the day to start making changes that will save lives. Here are 10 easy tips to save money, help clean the air and save lives.

1. Hybrid vehicles are here and now. My brother's new Ford Escape gets the fuel economy of a little Ford Focus while providing the space and utility of a 4x4 SUV. On top of the fuel savings instead of paying a gas guzzler tax the government is giving him \$1000 back! When you factor this in the cost difference for a Hybrid is pretty small. Have you driven a Hybrid lately?

2. Cute little 2 seat Smarts are starting to show up around Brantford. Perfect for a city run about, second car for 2 car households or student's first car. You get Mercedes-Benz technology, 5 Star Safety and the option of a convertible for between \$16-20 thousand. Not to mention the fact that they run on diesel which is cheaper than gas. Now that is what I call smart!

3. Compact fluorescent bulbs are showing up in dollar stores. Forget sitting in the dark or using dim bulbs to save money. Now we can chase away the blues with well lit households while still saving money and being good to the environment for a investment of a dollar each. Not to mention the fact that these bulbs last about 5 years so you can stop climbing ladders to change bulbs every few weeks.

4. Save even more money by being a star! Every new appliance has to come with information on it's energy rating. To make things easier the most efficient are allowed to display the Energy Star logo. You could throw out that old 1970's fridge and replace it with 2 new fridges and still save money. Want to really be amazed. Compare the ratings on new Front Load Clothes Washers versus traditional top load models. Not only are Front Loaders so efficient that Top Loaders are considered obsolete in Europe but they are easier on your clothes and require less soap. Look or small appliances that shut themselves off when you forget and save even more money.

5. Plant a tree. Trees shade our homes in the summer reducing the costs of a/c. Not to mention the pollutants they remove from the air. Imagine how much cleaner we could make the air if we each planted a new tree in our yards this year.

6. Want to really save money? Install a Solar or Wind Power system in your home. This is especially easy if you are having a new home built. A green energy system is a barely noticeable addition in cost on a new house that will pay monthly dividends from the day you move in.

7. Be water smart. Tap water takes energy to purify and treat. Using less saves money and energy and is simple to do. Running the water to get it hot? Why not put that water in a pitcher and use it to water your plants? Save even more by being Garden Smart. Create drainage ditches in your flower beds to collect and hold rain water. Rechannel downspouts from your roof to your flower beds to maximize the benefits.

Avoid running the cold water to get a glass to drink by keeping a pitcher in the fridge. Forget the cheap low flow shower heads invest in a high End Conserving shower head that provides all the luxury of pulsating and massaging functions while still using less water. Get a pressure washer that does a better job washing your car while using only a fraction of the water.

8. Carpool more. Not only is it a great way to socialize more it saves money and gives you a break from driving and road rage. An easy way to carpool is family gatherings. How many separate vehicles do you need to arrive at Aunt So and So's in? Catch up with your clan on the way by planning to car pool.

9. Planning a move? Reduce your stress level and spend more time with the people you love and less time in traffic by moving closer to your job. Just moving closer to a highway interchange alone can reduce your stress level and wasted gas.

10. Turn off your computer when you are not using it. Modern computers are far from energy efficient. They can use as much as 500watts of power! That's like having 5 100watt light bulbs on all the time! With Sleep and Hibernate features your computer can be back on and running in seconds. You can even set it and your monitor to turn themselves off when you forget.

Ten simple steps that could make a real difference and save lives. How many of your children, nieces and nephews could live a full childhood without the restrictions of asthma if we all did our bit to clean up the air they breathe? How many more Parents, Aunts, Uncles Grandparents and Great Grandparents might still be around to watch these children graduate from High School? Many of the people who read this article today will have that opportunity stolen from them too soon by the effects of the poisons in the air you are breathing today. That person could be you or someone you love. The future is in your hands. Choose wisely.

~Judy Zik