

## The Twenty-second Breathing Theme

This *Breathing Theme* is an excellent way to experience the center line of your body. It can ripple through to an emotional sense of centeredness as well. It's excellent for helping you develop better balance. It uses what you learned doing *The Fountain* and applies it specifically to the center of your body.

Before you begin, go back to Green Level and re-familiarize yourself with *The Fountain* and the ways it can be used.

## Working with the Twenty-second Breathing Theme

Start your routines with these exercises:

1. Begin your routine with warm up exercises to get your breathing going.
2. Be sure to do the Abdominal Lifts. When you do them, pay close attention to your belly button as it moves up and down the center of your body.
3. Now, from a standing position, do the Centering Exercise, visualizing it as part of *The Fountain*. Imagine that your hands are a pump. Imagine that the root of your body, the join between your legs, is the bottom part of *The Fountain*.
  - a. As you breathe in your hands begin moving upward, pumping water up through the center tube that is your body.
  - b. As you breathe out, the pump is returning to its starting point as the water sinks back down into your body, down through the center of your body, until it reaches a point just under and behind your navel.
4. Do this 5 – 10 times, or as much as you like.

For the rest of the poses in your routine:

- Go into the pose and hold it.
- As you breathe in, imagine water is coming up the center of your body.
- As you breathe out, the water is sinking back down the center line inside your body, pooling a little below and behind your belly button, at your Center Point.

### Tip

The more you keep your weight even between your feet, or hands, or knees, etc, the more you will experience the feeling of your center.

## Breathing Theme 22 & Balanced Movement

Here is a way to bump up the *Twenty-second Breathing Theme*. You can add this following step to your *Breathing Theme* or you can do this next exercise by itself. Throughout the exercise, don't worry too much about the details of your breathing:

As you move into and out of each pose in your routine, keep your movements centered along the center of your body. For example, if you are doing The Cat and are sweeping the floor with your chest, move your chest exactly down the middle between your arms and legs. If you're folding forward during a Wood Chopper, draw your hands directly down a line that matches the center of your body. If you do a Cobra, keep your weight even between your hands and move directly up and back, so that your left and right sides stay centered along an imaginary line running up your middle. And so on.

### Sun Salutation for Centering

You can experience this centering effect strongly during a Sun Salutation. It makes a good Centering Routine in itself. In this case, here's where to place your attention:

- Make sure your weight is even between your feet as you start.
- As you continue, make sure your weight stays even between your hands, feet, knees, whatever is in contact with the floor.
- Make each movement flow along an imaginary center line. For example, when coming forward with the Wood Chopper, 'chop' your hands straight down an imaginary line that runs along with the middle of your body. When lunging, keep your weight even on both feet and feel your hips sinking exactly in line with the middle of your body. And so on.
- If you like, you can, at the same time, use the *Twenty-second Breathing Theme* for discovering your center.