

## *Hip Mandala: Class Notes*

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## *Thank You for Practicing*

Thank you for joining me in this exploration of the Hip Mandala. I hope this practice offered you new ways to listen inward, release tension, and connect with your own resilience.

To stay connected, explore more classes and offerings at [lakesideyin.com](https://lakesideyin.com) or reach out with questions or reflections anytime.

Kathryn

# *Hip Mandala: Class Notes*

## *Intro: Why Hips?*

In yogic tradition, a mandala symbolizes wholeness, cyclical flow, and the interconnected nature of life—principles mirrored in the way our bodies move, sense, and adapt.

The Hip Mandala is a dynamic crossroads of movement, stability, and sensation. In this session, we explored five key myofascial groups through floor-based Yin postures and somatic inquiry to support balance, adaptability, and nervous system ease.

## *Yin Yoga: A Functional & Energetic Approach*

Yin yoga involves long-held, floor-based postures that emphasize stillness, time, and sensation over outward form. We practiced using middle effort—staying within 50–70% of our available range—to invite opening without strain.

Rebounds, or short periods of rest between postures, help integrate the effects of each shape. These pauses support the circulation of fluids and Qi (energy) through both fascial pathways and energetic systems.

## *A Somatic Lens on the Hips*

In this class, we focused on five myofascial groups:

- Quadriceps
- Hip Flexors
- Glutes & IT Band
- Hamstrings
- Inner Thighs / Groin

This wasn't just about stretching—it was about listening, adapting, and giving the body time and space to speak. Through slow movement, breath, and stillness, we invited both grounded support and fluid adaptability.

## *How I Teach Yin*

My approach to Yin draws from the teachings of Paul and Suzee Grilley, and incorporates insights from Chinese Medicine, Taoist philosophy, and fascial science.

The emphasis is not on achieving a shape, but on sensing within it—learning to feel and respond in a way that supports sustainable change over time.



## *Hip Mandala: Class Notes*

### *What This Practice Can Offer*

Yin yoga is a subtle yet powerful practice that supports the body and mind in a variety of ways. With time, consistency, and curiosity, students often experience:

- Improved mobility and range of motion
- Release of muscle tension and lingering soreness
- Better sleep, digestion, and emotional ease
- Enhanced circulation of blood, interstitial fluids, and Qi (energy)
- Nervous system calming and a deeper connection to the inner landscape

### *Practice Tips for Yin & Somatic Movement*

- There's no hierarchy in poses—adapt, use props, and honor your structure and sensation.
- Avoid sharp pain or numbness. If something doesn't feel right, ease out or ask for a variation.
- Rebounds (neutral pauses between shapes) support integration. These moments are just as essential as the poses themselves.
- Wear what feels good. Yoga leggings are optional. Keep a blanket or socks nearby—your temperature may shift as you settle.
- Emotions may arise—or not. Yin invites us to soften and turn inward. What you feel is valid, whether it's peaceful, unexpected, or somewhere in between.

### *The Role of Rebounds in the Grilley Tradition*

Rebounds are short moments of stillness and sensing between postures. Rather than moving directly into a counterpose or trying to “undo” sensation, we pause in a neutral shape—often lying on the back or belly—and simply notice what arises. It's common to feel a sense of vulnerability or fragility as you exit a pose. The tissues and energy systems are shifting, and your body is responding to the invitation you just offered it. Rather than rushing through or overriding these sensations, I encourage you to stay with the rebound—to enter it with curiosity rather than urgency.

Notice how discomfort may quickly shift or dissolve. The body is incredibly adaptive, and Yin practice gives us space to witness that resilience in real time.

Rebounds are not counterposes. They are moments of integration, restoration, and quiet insight. In a culture that prizes constant movement, the simple act of staying still becomes a powerful part of the practice itself.

## *Hip Mandala: Class Notes*

### *Glutes & IT Band (Outer Hip and Thigh)*

#### *Shoelace – Lower Half of Gomukhasana*

Primary Targets: Glutes & IT Band (outer hip and thigh)

Shape Variations:

- Square – ankle over opposite knee
- Open Shoelace – top leg more open across the body
- Tight Shoelace – knees stacked
- Can also be practiced supine or against a wall

Yin Practice Notes:

- Cross one knee over the other, feet out to the sides
- Sit on a folded blanket if knees lift or spine rounds
- Keep spine tall or gently fold forward for added sensation

Props & Variations:

- Blanket or bolster under hips
- Block or bolster to rest arms on while folding
- Supine version: lie back and hug knees to chest

#### *Figure 4 – Supta Kapotasana / Reclined Pigeon*

Primary Targets: Glutes & IT Band (outer hip and thigh)

Secondary: Low back (gentle decompression)

- Yin Practice Notes: Lie on your back and cross one ankle over the opposite thigh, keeping the foot flexed. Thread your hands behind the opposite thigh to draw the legs in, or keep the foot on the floor for less intensity.
- Props & Variations: Strap around the back of the thigh if shoulders are tight. A block under the grounded foot offers a gentler variation. Can also be done against a wall.

#### *Banana (Crescent) – Supta Parsva Tadasana / Supine Side Bend*

Primary Targets: Side body (bliques, upper body, glutes & IT Band (outer hip and thigh)

Secondary: Rectus abdominis, spine

- Yin Practice Notes: Lie on your back and walk feet and arms to the same side, creating a crescent shape. Cross ankles or clasp wrists if desired. Keep hips grounded.
- Props & Variations: Support the side bend with a rolled blanket under the side body. Use a block under wrists or knees if needed.



## *Hip Mandala: Class Notes*

### *Glutes & IT Band (Outer Hip and Thigh) cont.*

#### *Sleeping Swan – Kapotasana / Passive Pigeon*

Primary Targets: Glutes & IT Band (outer hip and thigh)

Secondary Targets: Hip flexors and psoas of the back leg, lumbar spine

- Yin Practice Notes: Start in a tabletop position and slide one knee forward toward the same-side wrist. The back leg extends long behind you. Keep the front foot flexed. Allow your torso to drape forward or rest it on a bolster for support.
- Props & Variations: Use a blanket or bolster under the front hip or chest. A block under the forehead or hands can offer additional support. This pose can be practiced supine as a gentler option.

#### *Deer – Virasana-Based Hip Twist*

Primary Targets: Glutes & IT Band (outer hip and thigh)

Secondary Targets: Lumbar spine, hip flexors

- Yin Practice Notes: Sit with the front leg bent at approximately 90°, shin forward like Shoelace. The back leg folds behind you in a modified Virasana. Stay upright for a twist or fold forward for more sensation.
- Props & Variations: Sit on a blanket to support the hips. A bolster across the front thigh can support forward folding. Great alternative to Sleeping Swan or a complement to it.

#### *Spinal Twist – Supta Matsyendrasana / Twisted Roots*

Primary Targets: Glutes & IT Band (outer hip and thigh)

Secondary Targets: Spine, upper body, rectus abdominis, obliques, groin

- Yin Practice Notes: Lying on your back, drop knees to one side while twisting the upper body in the opposite direction. Arms can extend wide or rest on the body.
- Props & Variations: Blanket under knees, or floating shoulder, for support. Block between knees to reduce torque. Bolster behind the back for a gentler rotation.

# *Hip Mandala: Class Notes*

## *Hamstrings (Back of Thighs and Calves)*

### *Caterpillar – Paschimottasana / Seated Forward Fold*

Primary Targets: Spine

Secondary: Hamstrings (back of thighs) and calves

- Yin Practice Notes: Sit with legs extended straight in front. Let the spine round naturally as you fold forward, allowing the weight of the head and arms to release down. Knees can be slightly bent for comfort.
- Props & Variations: Sit on a blanket to tilt the pelvis forward. Use a bolster or rolled blanket under the knees or across the thighs for support. Practice standing as Dangling (Uttanasana) as an alternative.

### *Half Butterfly – Janu Sirsasana*

Primary Targets: Hamstrings (back of thighs) and calves of extended leg

Secondary: Glute and outer thigh of bent leg, spine

- Shape Variations: Half-Frog, Half-Squat, Half-Shoelace (Figure 4)
- Yin Practice Notes: From a seated position, extend one leg and bring the sole of the other foot to the inner thigh. Fold forward over the extended leg with relaxed arms and head.
- Props & Variations: Support the bent knee with a block or blanket. Sit on a folded blanket or bolster to ease into the fold.

### *Hammock – Supta Upavistha Konasana with Strap*

Primary Targets: Hamstring of extended leg (in strap)

Secondary: Spine (gentle traction), hip flexor of opposite leg

- Yin Practice Notes: Lie on your back with one leg extended toward the ceiling. Loop a long strap around the arch of the foot and the back of the head. Adjust tension for desired stretch and traction. Let shoulders soften and spine lengthen.
- Props & Variations: Strap required (10-foot recommended\*). Opposite leg can be bent, foot on floor, or extended long for added hip flexor release. Optional: blanket under hips or head.

\* I use the Manduka 10' Align Yoga Strap. It's 100% cotton and I love the ease of its buckle. You can purchase directly from [Manduka.com](https://www.manduka.com). I'm not an affiliate, just a fan.



# Hip Mandala: Class Notes

## Groin and Inner Thighs

### Butterfly – Baddha Konasana

Primary Targets: Groin and Inner thighs (Adductors)

Secondary: Spine

- Yin Practice Notes: Sit with soles of the feet together and knees dropped open. Let the spine round naturally or gently fold forward. Can be practiced upright or reclining.
- Props & Variations: Blocks under the knees for support. Fold forward over a bolster. Try a half-butterfly version: one leg bent, the other extended outward.

### Frog – Mandukasana

Primary Targets: Inner thighs and groin

Secondary: Inner knees, low spine

- Yin Practice Notes: From hands and knees, walk knees wide with feet in line, inner edges down. Lower hips and drape the torso forward.
- Props & Variations: Fold the mat or use blankets under the knees. Support the torso lengthwise with a bolster for greater comfort.

### Happy Baby – Ananda Balasana

Primary Targets: Inner thighs and groin

Secondary: Low back, hamstrings (if legs are slightly extended)

- Yin Practice Notes: Lie on your back and draw knees toward the armpits, holding the feet or ankles. Keep the spine and head grounded. Rock gently if desired.
- Props & Variations: Hold behind the thighs if needed. Blanket under the head or hips. Block under sacrum for a more restorative version.

### Squat – Malasana

Primary Targets: Adductors (inner thighs), hip flexors, ankles

Secondary: Calves, Achilles, low back (if spine rounds)

- Yin Practice Notes: From standing, lower into a deep squat with feet slightly turned out. Elbows can press into knees to encourage opening.
- Props & Variations: Sit on a block or bolster for support. Roll blanket under heels if they lift. Back can rest against a wall.



# Hip Mandala: Class Notes

## Groin and Inner Thighs cont.

### Dragonfly – Upavistha Konasana

Primary Targets: Adductors (inner thighs), hamstrings, calves

Secondary: Spine

- Yin Practice Notes: Sit with legs wide and extended. Let the spine round and fold forward to a comfortable depth. Avoid overreaching.
- Props & Variations: Sit on a blanket for pelvic tilt. Bolster between legs for folding support. Block under hands or head.

### HeartBed with Legs in Butterfly – Supported Matsyasana

Primary Targets: Chest, rectus abdominis, inner thighs, and groin

Secondary: Spine

- Yin Practice Notes: Lie back over a long bolster or blocks: one at mid-back (between shoulder blades), one under the head. Let arms open in a T or cactus shape. Legs rest in reclined Butterfly.
- Props & Variations: Use blocks under thighs or outer knees for leg support. Add blanket under hips or bolster height if needed. Optional: additional blocks under arms.

Questions? Curiosities? Let's connect!

Email [kathryn@lakesideyin.com](mailto:kathryn@lakesideyin.com) or reach out on IG @lakesideyin.com

# Hip Mandala: Class Notes

## Hip Flexors and Quadriceps

### Baby Dragon – Anjaneyasana / Low Lunge

Primary Targets: Hip flexors and quads of back leg

Secondary: Glute of front leg

- Yin Practice Notes: Step one foot forward into a lunge, lowering the back knee to the floor. Hips gently descend as you remain upright or drape over a bolster.
- Props & Variations: Blanket under the back knee. Blocks under hands or bolster under torso for support. Can flow into Twisting Dragon or Gecko variations.

### Gecko – Uththan Pristhasana

Primary Targets: Hip flexors and quads of back leg, and adductors (inner thigh) of front leg

Secondary: Glute and outer thigh of bent leg, spine

- Yin Practice Notes: From lunge, walk both hands inside front foot and lower forearms to the ground or a prop. Outer edge of front foot can peel up for deeper opening.
- Props & Variations: Block or bolster under forearms. Blanket under back knee. Wall variation possible for grounding.

### Twisting Dragon – Parivrtta Anjaneyasana

Primary Targets: Hip flexors and quads of back leg, and adductors (inner thigh) of front leg, spine

Secondary: Obliques

Yin Practice Notes: From Baby Dragon, twist torso toward the front leg, placing one hand on the ground and the other on thigh or reaching upward.

Props & Variations: Block under grounding hand. Bolster across thigh to support twist if folding forward. Strap for deeper rotation if desired.

### Saddle Pose – Supta Virasana / Reclined Hero Pose

Primary Targets: Quadriceps of bent leg(s)

Secondary: Hip flexors, knees, ankles, rectus abdominis, upper body (if arms extend)

Yin Practice Notes: Kneel and sit back between the heels. Lean backward to recline. Use Half Saddle for one-leg variation.

Props & Variations: Blankets under hips or back. Bolster behind for reclining support. Avoid if knee sensitivity is present. Seiza is a gentle alternative shape.



# Hip Mandala: Class Notes

## Hip Flexors and Quadriceps cont.

### Seiza – Kneeling Pose / Vajrasana

Primary Targets: Ankles, tops of the feet

Secondary: Knees, thighs, spine

- Yin Practice Notes: Kneel on the floor with knees together and sit back onto the heels. Spine is upright and hands rest on the thighs.
- Props & Variations: Sit on a block (any height). Place a folded blanket or block between the heels and sit bones to reduce pressure on knees or ankles. Optional support under shins or a bolster behind the knees.
- Seiza is a gentle alternative to Saddle, if you seek more sensation in the front of thighs (quads), lean back until you feel a comfortable pull or stretch.

### Supported Bridge – Setu Bandha Sarvangasana (Supported)

Primary Targets: Hip flexors and quads

Secondary: Rectus abdominis, upper body (if arms extend)

- Yin Practice Notes: Lie on back, knees bent, feet hip-width. Slide a block under the sacrum (not lower back). Arms by sides or overhead.
- Props & Variations: Block at sacrum (low, medium, or high height). Legs can remain bent or extend long for deeper release. Optional blanket under head.

### Mermaid – Eka Pada Rajakapotasana (Bound Variation)

Primary Targets: Hip flexors and quadriceps of back leg

Secondary: Glute of front leg, spine, side body, shoulder (in bound version)

- Yin Practice Notes: From Sleeping Swan, reach back with the same-side hand to hold or strap the back foot. Optional twist or backbend variation.
- Props & Variations: Bolster under torso. Strap for foot. Blanket under front hip or under back knee if needed.

### CatTail – Hybrid of Half Bow + Reclined Twist

Primary Targets: Quadriceps and hip flexors (of back, bent leg), side body

Secondary: Hamstring of front, extended leg, Spine, upper body

- Yin Practice Notes: Lie on one side. Bend the top leg and reach back to hold the foot, drawing it toward the glute. Bottom leg extends long. Spine may gently twist.
- Props & Variations: Strap around foot if needed. Blanket under head or behind back for spinal support. Optional bolster at torso.

## *Hip Mandala: Class Notes*

### *Somatics & the Hips: A Path to Embodied Awareness and Growth*

Somatics is a therapeutic, experiential approach that bridges the body and mind. It focuses on your internal experience to foster healing, self-awareness, and growth. Derived from the Greek word soma (meaning “the living body”), somatics honors the deep interconnectedness between your physical body, emotions, thoughts, and energy.

At its core, somatics invites you to listen to your body’s innate wisdom. It’s not about fixing or striving for external goals—but about exploring sensation, emotion, and movement patterns with curiosity and compassion. Through somatic practice, you can reconnect with your body as a source of resilience, balance, and ease, aligning with your natural rhythms.

*Try This:*

### *Pelvic Rocking + Somatic Body Scan*

#### Pelvic Rocking (Mini Tilts)

- Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat. Allow your arms to rest.
- On an inhale, slowly tilt the pelvis forward to gently arch the lower back.
- On an exhale, curl your tailbone under to soften the low back into the floor.
- Continue slowly for 6–8 breaths, matching movement with breath. Let this be exploratory. There’s no right or wrong—just awareness.

#### Stillness + Body Scan

- After rocking, settle into stillness. Let your breath be natural.
- Bring attention to your pelvis, hips, and low belly.
- Ask: Where do I feel sensation? What feels quiet, soft, or neutral? Can I observe without needing to change anything?
- Slowly scan from feet to crown, noticing what arises without judgment.