

Sit-Ups in Ryoho Yoga

teachings from the work of Andzej Gospodarczyk

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Where to start with sit-ups

In order to do sit-ups a person needs to be able to distinguish between the upper body and the lower body.

To “feel yourself *in* your body”. The mind in the body.

How?

1) separate (isolate) mind and body, to be able to 2) combine them

We can do 1) by...

... breathing IN and feeling what happens... and by breathing OUT and feeling what happens.

Which area in the body do you feel it in? Where does it create pressure?

This is the first bit of being able to focus.

The philosophical aspect of this

You are not your body – but you are!

You are defined by your body but it’s not you.

If the body is a sharpening stone, you are the knife being defined by it.

Once you are defined by it, then even when the sharpening stone (body) falls away, you remain. That’s the goal, at least.

Correct vs. Incorrect method of sitting up

Trying to exhaust the incorrect behaviour in sit-ups (using the upper body to try to sit-up) as a strategy to arriving at using the correct part of the body to sit up doesn’t really work in practice in a yoga class.

In a retreat, with fasting, yes, you can do that. But in a class, no.

So in class we have to be clever: Do some neck and shoulder release work first – to take away the upper body tensions and create lightness in the upper body. This could include pounding the chest, or twisting the arms.

There is no value in practicing trying to sit up the incorrect way. You’ll just create more upper body tension. Maybe in partners as a way to get some blood in the belly as an early stage of the process, but otherwise there is no point in keeping on getting them to sit up if they are just using the chest, trying to throw (‘hoik’) themselves up with their arms or shoulders, tightening the neck and so on. If you see that, you need to stop.

Sit-ups in a class

Sit-ups can be at any stage of the class... depending on the people in front of you.

Can they pull their toes back?

Can they pull their chin down?

Can they breathe out?

You have to fix those things first before you do the sit-ups. These pre-requisites might take 10 minutes - or they might end up being the goal of your whole class.

Obstacles to sit-ups include:

Are the sides tight?

Is the neck jammed?

Are they stressy in the chest?

The HT regulates fire. The only way to fix the SI in the neck and shoulders is through the HT and HC to regulate the fire.

SI excess → hot diarrhoea, madness, heat, pressure, can't metabolise starches.
The person with SI excess has *obsessiveness* instead of *focus*.

When to use sit-ups in a class

1) as soon as the students start to get a bit bugged → sit-ups → become happy, glad and relaxed! Just as when you are about to do something you like! Now you have the energy to do stuff again.

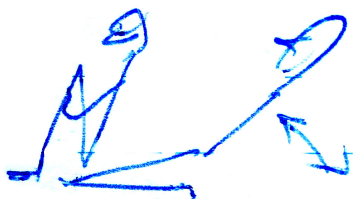
2) sit-ups at the end of class – to pull people back together if they're a bit wobbly.

Sit-ups can be at any stage of the class... but you can't *start* the class with sit-ups because you need to fix the upper-lower problem first (as explained above).

But sometimes, for example, you might:

- only need a few minutes warm-up first
- then you can get into the sit-ups
- perhaps as a lead-up to shoulderstand

Sit-ups in pairs where the student sits on their heels with their fingers interlaced behind their head, and another person sits on their knees, *forces* you not to use the upper body (because you can't collapse your chest).



Sit-ups create Upper-Lower which you can use for other things, eg. Left-Right... but then again, you might need to do Left-Right first in order to do sit-ups.

First, we: 1) build a very powerful core (sit-ups = raw material)
then 2) we refine that.

Difference between pelvic floor and hara

Pelvic floor / Base chakra = Body (BL), CV1 – spine, fertility.

Sacral chakra (below navel) = life force.

Two reasons for sit-ups (this info builds on what was said earlier)

1) about $\frac{3}{4}$ way through the class – use sit-ups to **consolidate functioning** = bring back into hara. eg. in a LI class, do LI sit-ups at this stage to bring the new improved LI functioning into the hara.

Then follow that with an asana or a spinal adjustment.

2) or you can use sit-ups to give an energy boost when flagging (as mentioned above)

The other option, 3) is near the start of class – to give them *something* – to be able to do *anything* – because nowadays people often start with nothing in them.

Focusing on others

People need to focus on others to keep growing past a certain point.

In our yoga journey as teachers we were supposed to focus on our own health for the first part of the process, and then shift to serving something outside ourselves for the second part of the process.

Leg lifts vs Sit-ups – if you were doing both which would you do first?

These days, do leg lifts before sit-ups in class (rather than afterwards) because people are so stressed you need to release the neck and shoulders a bit before sit-ups.

Safety

Sit-ups are safe to do – as long as you do them properly, ie. with the chest up, not contracted.

There are no other contraindications.

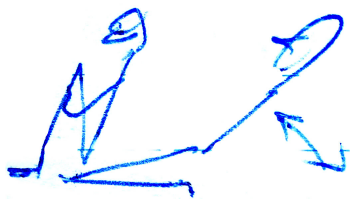
Diet

If you ↑ salt (Water) in the diet, you will ↓ Fire (via the control cycle). This is good if the HT is excess, but not if it's deficient.

Sit-ups for different organs

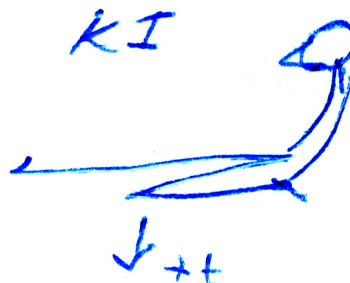
KIDNEY SIT-UPS

The KI is so deep, hard to access from the front, but...



will access the KI

Also, if you push the knee down ++



And...

knees in and out

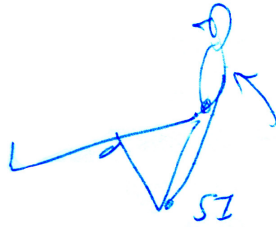


LIVER SIT-UPS

twist waist as sit up



SI SIT-UPS



LI SIT-UPS - feet mat width apart



BL SIT-UPS - legs wide

