

# Balanced Concepts News

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## OUR STAFF

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## What is the Psoas ?

The psoas major is a large muscle that attaches at the bottom of the thoracic spine (T12) and along the lumbar spine (through L4), then runs through the pelvic bowl, down over the front of the hip joint, and attaches at the top of the femur (thigh bone). It is the muscle that connects the spine to the leg.

## Why is the Psoas important ?

The psoas is a hip flexor ( bringing the trunk and leg closer together), a posture stabilizing muscle ( straitening the lower spine), and aids side-bending ( where one side contracts and the other side lengthens). Since the psoas is a muscle of flexion, exercises that incorporate those kinds of moves like the Pilates roll up would be an example of the psoas acting as a hip flexor. When the torso is fixed, the psoas helps bring the thigh to the torso, as in Pilates knee folds exercise. However, for most of us, our psoas muscles are tight and overworked. This often leads to back pain, particularly low back pain in the area where the psoas has so many attachments.

## Psoas Stretches

Poor postural habits create muscle imbalances and can create conditions where the psoas is required to stabilize us constantly. The psoas is unable to return to a neutral position from which it could respond with flexibility to the shifts of spine, pelvis, and leg. Lunge exercises are the most popular exercises to stretch the psoas..

By focusing on good posture and proper alignment in movement, as we do in Pilates, we give the psoas the opportunity to be the flexible, responsive, bridge between the spine and lower body that it can be.

## Summer reading recommendations:

[Gardens of Water](#), Alan Drew

This story is set in Turkey following the 1999 earthquake. A tale of two families, one American the other Kurdish, with extremely different perspectives of their world.

The characters face centuries of old misunderstandings, the disparity of women in a Muslim culture, refugee camps and love between cultures. An excruciatingly sad yet painfully beautiful story.

[Me Talk Pretty One Day](#), David Sedaris

Mr. Sedaris wrote an entertaining book about his family. Short anecdotes, clever language and hilarious visuals that I couldn't help but laugh out-loud. \*\*\*\*\*

(These books are available in the Studio's lending library.)

## Grilled Caesar Salad (the best ever)

### Ingredients:

- 1 head romaine lettuce
- . 3/4 c extra virgin olive oil
- . 3 T red wine vinegar
- . 1 t Worcestershire sauce
- . 1/2 t salt
- . 1/4 t ground mustard
- . 2 clove garlic minced
- . 1 egg
- . 1 lemon juiced
- . freshly ground pepper
- . 1/4 c grated Parmesan cheese
- . 1 1/2 c garlic croutons
- . 1 (2 ounce ) can anchovy fillets
- . quartered tomatoes, optional

### Vacation, here I come.....

Your body starts to loose conditioning within three days. If that isn't enough to light a fire under you then tell yourself you don't want to return back to where you started from.

While on vacation it's easy to let go of all routine, after all isn't that the point? Unfortunately your body will only rebel. Stay in shape while on vacation with a simple routine.

I recommend 1 hour of walking followed by a stretching and strengthening mat workout that can be done anywhere, (even in the smallest of hotel rooms)

### Directions

1. In a bowl or jar combine oil, vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, salt, mustard, garlic and lemon juice. Whisk until well blended.
2. Coddle egg by heating 3 cups of water to boiling. Drop in egg (still in shell) and let stand for 1 minute. Remove egg from water and let cool. Once cooled crack open and whisk egg into dressing. Whisk until thoroughly blended.
3. Mash desired amount of anchovies and whisk them into the dressing. If desired set aside a few for garnish.
4. Slice lettuce diagonally, leaving core attached. Heat olive oil in a skillet until hot. Place the lettuce into the skillet, it will grill very quickly. Turn once and then remove from skillet.
5. Trim off core and arrange romaine wedges on plates. Garnish with dressing, cheese, croutons, anchovy fillets and pepper. Serve immediately. Yummmmm!

1. Start with imprinting, feel your body, relax and be present
2. 5 pelvic presses
3. 8 roll-up sit-ups, or more, (i.e. crunches, scissors)
4. side-lying leg lift series
5. side planks
6. push-ups
7. neck stretches, hamstrings stretches and don't forget lunges to stretch your **psoas**.