

HOME YOGA RETREAT BACK TO LIFE

workbook & journal



Welcome to Movement for Modern Life's Home Yoga Retreat 3

Back to Life

About the Home Yoga Retreat Series

I decided to run the Home Yoga retreat series because we need more than our individual practices, in our individual homes, to get us through tough times such as lockdown.

There's No Place Like Home

In our first home yoga retreat, we explored: Homecoming. A feeling of 'coming home to our true self' is an essential tenet of yoga philosophy. Home is the place where we should permanently, and happily reside. Yet often our home is just the place we eat and sleep. And so it is with our bodies. We can numb ourselves with alcohol or sugary and processed foods. Similarly, our brains are numbed by distractions like scrolling through social media. It is often a struggle to find home within ourselves; to feel a real sense of ease and comfort in our bodies and minds. Our first retreat sought to offer us all a 'homecoming' to fully inhabit the belief that 'There's No Place Like Home'.

Be Here, Now

Our second Home Yoga Retreat invited us to feel a sense of ease during the middle phase of the lockdown when many people struggled with feelings of resentment, anger, frustration and discomfort. The normal human feelings of upset and wanting to know an unknowable future; of anxiety and fear were heightened by the lack of distraction. We had no option but to 'Be Here, Now'¹ and explore what it is like to sit with discomfort, to simply reside in the present moment with no knowable future and a past which is long gone. With support from daily live meditations, yoga philosophy discussions and intention setting; we moved together as a community unreservedly, with courage and a sense of adventure, right into the here and now.

Back to Life

The third Home Yoga Retreat from Movement for Modern Life is perhaps the one which is closest to my heart. The journey of lockdown over the last couple of months has been a real retreat for me. It has also called so many norms and assumptions into question. I

¹ Be Here Now is the title of a book by Ram Dass

think that most people have had a period of reflection during lockdown. We have had the opportunity to question the way we live and to examine our values. As a community, I believe it is important to collectively explore the lessons we've learnt and make sense of the experiences we've had, using our yoga practices and philosophy to light our path. In this way, we can learn from what we have lived and reimagine life after lockdown together.

What to expect on the Third Home Yoga Retreat:

This retreat offers classes that can fit into every schedule, a series of talks, meditations and reflections from MFML teachers that offer practical ways to incorporate lessons learned into daily life.

- Launching 8 June
- 10 daily yoga classes under 45 mins for all levels *** ²
- 5 talks and discussions taking place in the movers group. Further details are found on the schedule.
- Daily journaling prompts
- Community Support in the Movers group

What to expect and how to practice

This Home Yoga Retreat is very much a practice of self-enquiry. We will be encouraging each other, within our Movers group, and inspiring each other to live a more healthy, happy and sustainable life as we get 'Back to Life'. Each day we suggest a class of 45 minutes or less. We recommend you practice a second class each day. In the spirit of self-enquiry, we invite you to check in with yourself and ask yourself what it is you really need in terms of your physical and mental wellbeing, and then to select a class for yourself. Each day in our movers' group, we are also offering additional inspiration including additional meditations, discussions as we unpick our themes with our teachers;

Our Movers Group will also feature additional meditations, tips, videos and it is where you can post your journaling breakthroughs. We will be your accountability partner for the challenge! Having an accountability partner simplifies your journey so that you can focus on your journey inwards. Our daily extras including discussions, tips and practices will also be available on our [YouTube channel](#) by 22 June, 2020 so you can catch up on any you miss.

² Although a yoga studio would classify these as 'all-levels' classes, each of our bodies are very different in terms of physiology, psychology and history. Please be mindful and only practice classes which are appropriate for your body and mind at this time. The beauty of an online platform is that you can easily find an alternative class, either a movement or seated practice, to suit your body. It is more important to do the right practice for you than to do the suggested practice by us!

What Is Normal?

It is so interesting that the very definition of 'normal' life has been called into question. So many of us want to return to normal, after a period which has perhaps caused loneliness, isolation, fear, anxiety, frustration and perhaps grief over lost income or the lives of loved ones. These feelings are indeed 'normal'. Fear is a really perfectly justifiable response to the uncertainties of the present moment, and to the worries that our loved ones and way of life may never recover.

But it is also interesting that 'normal' has been called into question by the changes which we have had forced upon us. What this retreat offers you is the space, community and support to go on a journey of self-enquiry to reflect on the lessons you have learned about your health, happiness and sustainability over the months of lockdown. The retreat will give you the opportunity to reimagine and refashion your life over the coming months and carve your path towards your future. You will have the support of others to really dive deep into the things you may have learnt and will give you the space to reflect on whether you have learned any lessons from lockdown which you would want to continue into the rest of your life. You may find that, because time moves so fast, that if you're not careful, the period of lockdown will be over and you will have resumed your 'normal' life without having had the opportunity to take this amazing, sacred pause. This truly is a once in a lifetime opportunity to see your life, and the life our society has created all around us, with fresh eyes. How will you use this opportunity?

Reimagining the world

“Just when the worried caterpillar thought that the world was going to end, he turned into a butterfly”

Why is it that lockdown has had anything to do with a reimagining?

Well, I don't know about you but during the period of lockdown, I've been struck by the takeover of nature. The noise of the birds has overpowered the noise of cars. The sky isn't full of aeroplanes. It seems to me that it has given nature an opportunity to get back on her feet, if just for a brief moment.

It was really wonderful that, here in the UK, the first weeks of lockdown were at the very start of spring. Just the time when nature comes back to life after winter's break. It seemed as if nature really did take the opportunity of less human activity to come back wilder, noisier and in more places than we've seen in the past few decades.

The nightingale sang in Berkeley Square. Well, it may well have done in Victorian Times. And just possibly, we could reimagine that it could well sing in the middle of London again.

But to do this would take a collective will, a collective reimagining of what is important in our lives and whether we wish birdsong to be a thing of the past, or the future.

It seems that it really is quite simple. We all just need to slow down. Stop moving around, shopping and travelling in our cars and planes as if our lives depended on it. But do we want that? Is that a future we'd value for ourselves for our children and our grandchildren? Or would we like to continue down the road of continuously busy and travelling around? Lockdown has made it more than clear that the choice is ours.

As part of our process of collective reimagining of the kind of lives we want to live, the kind of society we want to live in, I think that we can reimagine in a bigger way than we ever imagined. Rather than even thinking 'what is normal' can we imagine, what is better than normal?

For many of us, our livelihoods, our lives, the structure of our lives have disappeared. This is truly terrifying. But this is a real transformation, it is the biggest opportunity that perhaps any of us will have our whole lives. The key question is - what can be imagined which would be stronger, more powerful and make for a happier, healthier and more sustainable world for us all?

"I hope that when this is all over, we are more willing to consider embracing changes that we want and that our planet needs with the same openness that we have embraced these changes which have been forced on us."

Guy Watson, Riverford Organic Farmers

Observation: a key to yoga practice

One key aspect of our yoga practice is the power of observation. The ability to see things clearly is, in yogic philosophy, called Vidya. The practice of observing, of seeing what is real and what is unreal is really, the whole practice of yoga. Before every practice we turn inward and ask ourselves how we are in this body, in our mind, on this day. And after every practice we ask ourselves the same question. The power of observation is something that we hone within our meditation practices. We start to notice, to observe the quality of our breath, our thoughts. Being aware, being conscious and consciously observing and being aware is perhaps the cornerstone to waking up. When we are aware, we are awake. We become conscious of the power of our thoughts, of our words, of our actions and we become more aligned to our true path in our decision making.

But none of this can happen without self-observation/self-awareness.

As important as the power of self-observation is the importance of observing the world around us. We all have our own stories in our minds which cause us to focus on one thing or ignore another. But there is no birdsong to appreciate without us taking the time to hear it. One of the key learnings which I learned from lockdown was the power of observation, and appreciation of the world. We cannot appreciate it if we do not take notice. We cannot notice unless we slow down and consciously decide to do so.

As part of your daily, and moment-by-moment observations, I would encourage you to start to observe the rhythm of your life, of your body, and of the aspects of life which society has required you to fit in with.

Perhaps you can take a look at, each day - what is it that is bringing you joy? What have you been resistant to? How is your relationship to home changing?

Discernment: Pick your own class

Discernment is a key quality of the Buddhi. It is the ability to discern how we are feeling, for real. The ability to pick your own class may just seem like one small benefit of a home yoga practice, of having the 'Netflix of Yoga' at your fingertips. But in actuality, it can be seen as a really important part of your yoga journey. It is the ability to discern that, just because the 7.30 class is convenient, in a nice location and with a teacher who you enjoy, that may not be the right class for your body for this day. The ability to be able to discern the right practice for the day, for that moment, for your body and mind is absolutely key. We highly recommend that each day on the Home Yoga Retreat you

do a second class towards the end of the day. We recommend that this class is more 'Yin' in quality - is calmer, more reflective - is perhaps from our [Yin/Restorative](#), [Yoga Nidra](#), [Meditation](#) or [Mindfulness](#) selections. Or perhaps it's a [Before Bed](#) class?

Use this time to learn how to discern what would best serve your body on this day.

So during these eleven days, I really encourage you to become a keen observer of your life, inwards and outwards, and see what you see, feel what you feel and become intimate with all that is going on in your own life. That is the starting point of our self-reflection.

"This is a chance for visioning and re-valuing. There is the saying "If we can't see it, we can't be it." How about fewer things, less striving, more ease? More simplicity, less superficialities, more meaning. Rather than corporate bailouts and rescuing of the extractive industries that have done enormous environmental damage, a more equitable distribution of resources. Instead of this dig and gig economy, a moral economy that is grounded in ecological sustainability and personal needs in contrast to short-term destruction and individual greed."

Norman Blair [Listening to the Coronavirus](#)

Our Choices:

During lockdown, like me, you may have discovered the power of your own conscious choices.

During the first few weeks of lockdown, like many, I was locked onto the news. I was hungry for information, verification, for an understanding. Then I started to understand that my listening to the news three times a day, and especially before bed, wasn't helping my state of mind, and was causing me anxiety. So I started to limit myself to one 'dose' of news, in the morning, each day, after my practice. This time worked for me, it kept my head and heart clear for my morning practice and nightly rest.

So I became more conscious, more aware of the choices I made with regards to my intake of news. In the same way as my inner observations have made me notice more clearly and discern the thoughts that I'm having and decisions I'm making, I'm becoming more aware of the suitability of my practice, and whether the classes I choose are really, truly the right choice for the day. Not for the body I used to have yesterday, or the way I felt or want to feel - but how I really am, right here and now.

We also have a choice about the way that we react to others. To others who may be feeling fear, anxiety, confusion and depression. We can actively look for ways to practice patience, kindness and understanding towards one another.

Equally, we have a choice about the approach we take, both to the fear and anxiety, and about the circumstances which have brought us, as a society, to this place.

“We have a choice. Epidemics, like earthquakes, tornadoes and floods are part of the cycle of life on planet earth. How will we respond? With greed, hatred, fear and ignorance? This only brings more suffering. Or with generosity, clarity, steadiness and love?”

Jack Kornfield [*The Bodhisattva Response to Coronavirus*](#)

Your Key Tools: Journaling & Intention Setting

Journaling:

Why journal?

Writing can help to boost your mental, emotional and physical health. A [study](#) published in the British Journal of Health Psychology reveals how physical wounds can heal quicker in those that write about traumatic events. Exploring our feelings during this time of coronavirus offers a tool not only to help us to process and reflect on a fast-changing environment but also with a tool to help us to overcome the effects on our bodies, psyche and spirit.

How to journal?

Journaling can seem daunting when you are presented with a blank page, and sometimes what we write can seem superficial. That's normal. Start small. Write down three things you are grateful for. This can be as simple as having water to drink or a bed to sleep in. This practice will develop with time. Consciously practicing gratitude really does help you to sharpen your awareness and exercise the muscle of happiness, gratitude and can lead to becoming kinder and more compassionate with others.

Or you can write a daily three pages as a stream of consciousness first thing in the morning. These are known as 'morning pages' and offer a great way of tapping into your subconscious. Think of it as a writing meditation almost. Don't worry if nothing flows at first, just keep going with it. If you're really stuck, write that: 'I feel stuck. I don't know what to write, this is silly....' You'll be surprised how quickly the words will come tumbling out.

What to journal?

Working with prompts is a great way to start journaling and to focus your mind. So you might want to write about specific qualities you would like to cultivate or that you wish to focus on during your week. In this workbook, we offer you daily prompts to help you progress your practice and explore how you want to step forward.

Day 1: Starting Self-Enquiry

Daily Class: [Salutations to this Day](#)

Today I am grateful for:

Today I will practice kindness, patience and understanding by:

Today my second, more calming practice is:

Before my practice I felt:

After my afternoon practice I felt:

Today is an opportunity to just check-in with yourself. Read the introduction above. It is an opportunity to learn and practice the skills of observation.

In today's live chat on the Movers group Kat will be talking about the things that she has learned during lockdown and her inspiration for creating this final retreat of this three part series.

Or perhaps during lockdown you've experienced the opposite. Perhaps your healthier routines have been forfeited and you've found yourself struggling physically or psychologically. Whichever it is, just make a note of the things that are coming up for you, the good and the bad, and try not to judge them or yourself too harshly - remember to cultivate compassion, patience and kindness in yourself as well as in others.

Was there anything that you'd like to let go of? Was there anything that happened for you during lockdown or before, that you'd like to drop? Or perhaps you can see an upside, a positive and you'd like to hold onto the positive that you've found?

Kat's Lockdown Learnings on Observations:

I've found that, during lockdown, I was really concerned about the small, local businesses which I was worried would not be able to weather the storm. So I made much more of an effort to do the things that I had 'meant' to do for ages. I changed my organic veg box to the local organic farm, moving from the bigger company which I knew would do just fine. I also joined a collective ownership scheme of a local Micro-Dairy. I have been reducing my dairy consumption and don't drink milk, eat cheese etc - but I was worried about this tiny, Ahimsa dairy, so I joined the share scheme in the Stroud Micro-Dairy, where I get a pint of Kefir once a week and I visit the community farm. As a result of that I've got more involved in other small projects ongoing at the farm, and have been buying my vegetable plants from their allotment scheme, and able to get eggs from their small number of very happy chickens. This has enabled me to get closer to different people who I'd never had the time or chance to meet before, and support good local people who are doing good things for the land and the community. Creating some space in my life has really helped me to feel like I'm able to make a small difference.

I also found that all the panic buying in supermarkets made me realise that I must steer clear of the supermarkets and, even though it is less convenient, I have been making a big effort to only shop local. I've been stocking up from my local plastic-free organic shop. It helps them to get through tricky times. And it helps me to live the more sustainable life, which I've been hankering after, whilst getting to know the wonderful shop owners and volunteers who have been helping out. It really does feel good to be supporting smaller ventures which are making a difference.

Remember to join us in the movers' group at 5.00pm today when Kat will be encouraging you all to reflect on the last few months today and to journal on the things that you have enjoyed about lockdown and the things that you have found tricky. How is it that you can incorporate some of those things that have helped you to live a happy, healthy, more sustainable life, into your everyday routines?

Day 2: The power of intention-settings

Intention setting can sometimes seem like a complicated or mystical process. It doesn't need to be. It is simply bringing attention to the qualities you want to cultivate or a path you want to journey along with purpose. So, to set an intention is to move with purpose rather than be carried along by the current. Quite often an intention will require you to step outside of your comfort zone. This can be challenging, but when we push ourselves in the knowledge that this is part of our higher purpose, then the challenge becomes more manageable. An intention works most powerfully when articulated in the first person. So for example you might come up with a simple phrase such as: 'I am focused' or 'I move with my breath' at the start of a yoga practice and keep returning to this when your mind wanders. You might make your intention broader such as 'I am kind' and this can be something that you focus on when making choices in life. So as you make purchases, you can ask yourself how they sit with your intention and you can begin to choose a kinder path for yourself.

Daily Class: [Quick Fix Hatha](#)

Today I am grateful for:

Today I will practice kindness, patience and understanding by:

Today my second, more calming practice is:

Before my practice I felt:

After my afternoon practice I felt:

Kat's Lockdown Observations:

I've always found intention-setting to be so powerful for enabling me to consciously choose the feeling, the next action which I want to take. But I've found intention-setting during lockdown even more crucial. Intention setting really helps to envision the day, the mood, and ultimately, the life which I want. I've found that, during lockdown, my intention of focusing on the positive changes that I see, of exercising my muscles of kindness and compassion. Of seeing more clearly what it is that my local community needs right now, what my body and mind need right now.

At the beginning of 2020 I set an intention which, as luck would have it, really has come to pass. I set the intention to simplify my life, because I was getting increasingly torn between my very busy work-life (which as a single founder is ludicrously busy), my friends and personal life and my dogs and hobbies. It was leaving little time for the things I really loved in my life - yoga, going out in nature - and no time for any relationship at all (I haven't had a real relationship since my divorce, now 10 years ago). Simply because life was too busy, too complicated! Well, funny how things turned out - since I set the intention, and since the lockdown helped me to achieve the practice of simplifying, I am now in the committed, happy relationship which I'd never dared to dream of. Making the intention to make space really did make the difference to me!

[Read more about how I started 2020 with intention](#)

Today's Extra at 5pm: Today you'll hear [Andrea Kwiatkowski](#)'s thoughts about the importance of intention-setting. How have affirmations changed her mind and her mindset?

Day 3: Our bodies, living a healthy, sustainable life

Daily Class: [Functional Back Care: Slinky Spine](#)

Today I am grateful for:

Today I will practice kindness, patience and understanding by:

Today my second, more calming practice is:

Before my practice I felt:

After my afternoon practice I felt:

What has lockdown taught me about how to look after my body better?

Our Bodies and Sustainability

Have you found that your relationship to your body has changed at all since lockdown? Many folks have turned to comfort or boredom eating, if that's you, can you lovingly and with self-compassion, very gently encourage yourself to take better care of the beautiful body which you've been blessed with?

Have you found that, with no need for your body to be 'on show', you've had a more internal, a less external view of your own body?

Have you found that your yoga practice has changed at all? Has it slowed down? Has your body been demanding different practices at all? Have you been able to take advantage of more time with longer, quieter practices? Or perhaps you're parenting whilst working and you've found you've less time than usual and you're wanting to go back to your pre-lockdown healthy routines? If so, what have you noticed about the changes in your body? Has there been anything you have particularly missed, or perhaps you've been enjoying giving yourself a break! Our practice is for our own health and wellbeing, nobody else's, is so important to know that our practice is sustaining us and also is sustainable. Perhaps you need a quieter practice to help to nourish, support and sustain you. It's so interesting to notice, to observe, how we can live an embodied, sustainable practice and life.

As we think about the sustainability of our bodies, of our practice, perhaps we can think about how we use our bodies on a day to day basis? How can we incorporate more movement into our lives? I have friends who live in cities who normally commute via train and bus, but now are looking at walking or cycling to work. Perhaps our lockdown can encourage us to walk or cycle around more and leave the cars, helping our bodies, our purse and the planet!

Today at 5.00 [Mollie McLelland Morris](#) will be chatting with Kat about how we can serve our bodies better and our bodies can serve us and how moving our bodies daily can be both joyful and sustainable.

Day 4: Unwind and Unclutter: ways to simplify our lives

Daily Class: [Unwind & Declutter](#)

Today I am grateful for:

Today I will practice kindness, patience and understanding by:

Today my second, more calming practice is:

Before my practice I felt:

After my afternoon practice I felt:

What ways can I simplify, unwind and declutter my life?

Ways to Declutter our Life.

I've found that lockdown has shown me that my life is way too over-complicated. My life is scheduled to the brink. I have back to back appointments and meetings, and whenever there's a gap in my diary I automatically fill it. With meetings. With appointments, with going for coffee with friends. Part of the lockdown lifestyle has been a reconnection with friends via Apps and the internet. The downside of this is that, like many folks, I'm spending even more time on devices. But there is a big upside for me. I've found that I've been able to re-connect with people more than I usually would, and I've found that I have a lot more time because I'm not spending my time getting to meetings, and I'm not filling any spare moments with coffees. This, of course, is due to necessity. Nobody is having face to face meetings right now. But is this a bad thing? Perhaps we can cut down on the time we spend travelling to appointments? Perhaps, when we do have that rare coffee or meet up with that treasured friend, we'll appreciate it all the more, because it will be a rare and treasured thing? I travel a lot usually. I see my family, I travel to meetings and I have a hobby (competing in obedience trials with my dogs) which also takes a lot of travel. But I've not been doing this. And I've found that I've actually been a lot happier.

So what have I been doing?

1. Long walks in nature which I'm really lucky to live in. I've been stopping to appreciate the natural world, the beauty of the colours of the leaves and blossom on the trees, the running rivers, the wild flowers. Nature reminds us of the importance of simplifying.
2. I'm resisting working out future schedules. For now, all schedules are to be put to one side. Anxiety and worry about the future and how future life will look is a key part of the stress of modern life. I'm really trying to live much more in the present and learn to Be here, now. Not very easy as a small business owner, but I think the mental health benefits will really be their own reward.
3. I've been cooking more, and spending more time cooking. Really prioritising creating healthy food and enjoying the process of preparation, which before I've found to be a chore, and haven't really had the time for, I'm now using as a mindfulness practice. As I wash the vegetables, I'm aware of the soil, the sunshine, the water, needed to grow them. The people involved in the growing. I've become better acquainted with the land, the farms they're growing on, and this is making my practice of simplification and mindfulness more satisfying.
4. I've been growing my own salads on windowsills (rocket, different kinds of lettuce and cress) and growing vegetables in the garden. I've

gained a really simple, beautiful pleasure from putting my hands in the soil, from nourishing the soil to planting the crops out, from handling the precious, beautiful earth. This really is the most simple, 'grounding' practice that there can be.

5. I've actually started to let go of the prevailing cultural norm that we have to be busy, and we have to do all the things which are on our 'things to do' list. How would it be if we let some of these things go? The world can be so full of 'productivity hacks', of Apps tracking our performance. We always want to be as efficient, as productive as possible. But how would it be if we let go of some of these things? If we simply decided that we're not going to achieve everything, do everything? That's a pretty liberating, and surprisingly radical view! What is it that you might wish to let go of?

In our complicated, modern lives, many of us have many more connections with many people. But this makes for a complicated life, and perhaps over-scheduling. Are our lives over-scheduled? How can we simplify our lives?

Today's extra: Kat will be sharing her tips for decluttering and simplifying her life

Day 5: Learning how to relax the body's nervous system

"In an age of speed, nothing could be more invigorating than going slow. In an age of distraction, nothing can feel more luxurious than paying attention. And in an age of constant movement, nothing is more urgent than sitting still."

Pico Iyer

Lockdown has been a time of intense worry, anxiety and fear for many of us. We may have found that our nervous system is strained, the effects we might find from a compromised nervous system are immunity issues, feelings of stress. How can we learn to go slow?

Daily Class: [Relax into the Feeling Body](#)

Today I am grateful for:

Today I will practice kindness, patience and understanding by:

Today my second, more calming practice is:

Before my practice I felt:

After my afternoon practice I felt:

How can I go slow today?

There's absolutely nothing more luxurious than taking our time

Jessica's Lockdown Learnings

Jess is MFML's Operations Director. These are her reflections on how lockdown has helped her to slow down, take more rest and given her the clarity to decide on how to step forward.

I have learned to make more space in my day. As a result of the lockdown, I now go to bed earlier and get up earlier so my husband and I can walk our dog and have a morning cuppa together before he goes to work. It's so great to be out before the world wakes up; we see and hear so many birds, my dog gets to watch squirrels jump through the trees and we can have a little chat! As a result of getting up so early, I am also able to take time to meditate, to do movement practice and have breakfast all before I start work.

The other thing that this situation has compelled me to do is to apply for yoga teacher training. Before lockdown, I knew I wanted to do my YTT and where, but lockdown enabled me to attend a taster session online which really gave me the push I needed to apply (and be accepted!) onto my dream YTT course.

Today at 5.00pm [Kirsty Norton](#) will be joining Kat to talk about how we can truly relax and release anxiety and how this is fundamental to our future wellbeing.

Day 6: Finding Inspiration by flowing slowly

Daily Class: [Go Slow Floor Flow](#)

Today I am grateful for:

Today I will practice kindness, patience and understanding by:

Today my second, more calming practice is:

Before my practice I felt:

After my afternoon practice I felt:

What is it that you are letting go of? What has helped you to let go? How does the process of letting go help you to find space and inspiration for what you want to take into the future?

Laura's Lockdown Learnings

Laura is MFML's Social Media Manager. She has been thinking back to how the lockdown has helped her to live her values consciously.

Waste: since getting hold of things has been so difficult, even though I considered myself thrifty before, and someone who recycles a lot, it has really changed my outlook on what I can make a meal out of and what I can reuse

Slowing down: I thought I had a pretty good handle on good work life balance - I work from home with the online stuff, and I love my teaching - but I'm definitely wanting to cut back on my schedule if I can. I've learned that I actually love teaching online - that it fits much better into mine and my students' schedule, and I love being able to reach people all across the world rather than just who can beat the traffic to the studio.

Driving less: To add to the above point, really, I spend a lot of time driving. I would never have said it bothered me that much - I enjoy just sticking a podcast on - but spending more time doing things I like has been such a relief.

Outside space: I have always been an outdoorsy person even as a kid. But I have realised what a lifeline the outdoors is - whether it's sunny, rainy, or cold. I need to get outside, and I need to feel air on my face and feel space around me.

Neighbours: We have always been on good terms with our neighbours, but until they became our only regular social interaction we didn't realise how much we had in common and how well we get on. We have been sitting in our respective gardens enjoying the sunshine, barbecuing and just generally enjoying our new friendship!

Look out today in the movers' group for stories of the lessons learned by our community from the lockdown and what is inspiring our next steps

Day 7: Yoga and Listening

Daily Class: [Issues and Tissues](#)

Today I am grateful for:

Today I will practice kindness, patience and understanding by:

Today my second, more calming practice is:

Before my practice I felt:

After my afternoon practice I felt:

Rakhee's Lockdown Learnings

Rakhee is MFML's wordsmith and content creator, editing the blog and curating the courses and challenges.

Spontaneity: I'm a real planner but I have found myself being more spontaneous which was crucial during the early days of lockdown. When planning is not really possible, it's a wonderful thing to take the path less trodden. I've discovered all sorts of things on my doorstep. I've walked in a different direction and marvelled at lambs at a city farm; explored paths I've not walked down, completed creative projects and learned that it is good not to procrastinate.

Being Present and resting in presence: I've become my own best friend again. Not having to travel has given me more time to meditate and I've also learned to take the heat out of trying to 'do the right thing'; consequently I've remembered to do more things I enjoy; whether that is a cup of tea in the sunshine, indulging in a guilty pleasure or getting the rest I need.

Creativity and connection: Like so many other yoga teachers, I found myself teaching online in ways that were unexpected and yet, the challenges and constraints that have been imposed on me have allowed me to try things in different ways. I've discovered lots about myself and my students and best of all we've all tried new things in a kind and compassionate way. I've also really enjoyed being in closer touch with friends. Zoom isn't the same as being in the same room, but it beats a very rare meet-up.

Our movers' stories continue today. If you haven't shared your lockdown learnings yet, please share your stories of what you have learned, what you've (re) discovered.

Day 8: Radical Creativity

Daily Class: [Radical Creativity](#)

Today I am grateful for:

Today I will practice kindness, patience and understanding by:

Today my second, more calming practice is:

Before my practice I felt:

After my afternoon practice I felt:

How can you feel freer in your life? How can we reimagine outside of society's structures to feel more free?

What is creativity? Have you felt your creative life changed at all by lockdown?

Although we are taught as children that creativity is just 'art class' and if we don't draw, we're not creative, we learn as we grow through life that creativity is a key part of so many aspects of life, and is so important as a tool to develop to think, to reimagine a different world. Instead of just taking on the structures which are imposed on us by our families, our schools, our culture and the world around us, can we take radical creativity as a practice to take a deep observation and enquiry into the roles we play, the life that we live. Sometimes the structures are very helpful - they can help us to formulate plans and ways of being. They make the world organised, it can make sense to us from the structures which are imposed on us. But often the structures say that our whole value as a citizen in this society is based upon power, wealth or accomplishment of some kind. In our lockdown worlds, where our structures have been largely taken down, is it possible to reimagine a different kind of life? How creative can we be with the type of world we want to create for ourselves, our community and our loved ones? What in your life fills you with a sense of creativity? Does your practice harness your powers of creativity? How can you bring more into your life which will fill you with a sense of creative venturing beyond the 'normal' that we have been given, to adventure fearlessly to a new, exciting world.

Listen to Kat and [Leila Sadeghee](#) discussing the importance of leading a creative life and of creating a life we value at 5.00pm in the movers' group.

Day 9: Happiness

Daily Class: [Liberate Your Hips: A Yin/Yang Flow](#)

Today I am grateful for:

Today I will practice kindness, patience and understanding by:

Today my second, more calming practice is:

Before my practice I felt:

After my afternoon practice I felt:

What happiness have you found during lockdown? Has it been hard to find, amidst anxiety, fear or grief, or has happiness come easily to you?

Learning to do less

Lockdown has taught me, most of all, and above anything, that happiness does not come from the usual places. It does not come from external accomplishment or success. It does not come from money. It does not come from power. But it does come from taking my time. From taking things really slowly, slowing everything right down, and starting to look at life a little deeper, a little longer than I did before. I've found that when I've got no meetings to rush to, I spend more time observing, I'm able to look for every small bit of beauty. It's been an amazing time of year to be able to do so. I'm in my garden watching nature everywhere. The loud hum of the bees. The incessant chirping of fledglings. Nature really is everywhere and it's so special to have had the chance to really stop and look around, to appreciate the real wonder of the world around us. I'm really lucky and live rurally, but nature is everywhere, even in inner cities. It just takes a little bit of time and space to be able to appreciate the abundance of the world.

Look out in the [movers' group](#) for Kat's tips on happiness and sustainability.

Day 10: How to do Less

Daily Class: [Yoga Nidra with Dan](#)

Today I am grateful for:

Today I will practice kindness, patience and understanding by:

Today my second, more calming practice is:

Before my practice I felt:

After my afternoon practice I felt:

Have you found that you've been able to do less? Or perhaps you've been home-schooling whilst keeping a full-time job, in which case lockdown perhaps spelled a period of doing more. So you're looking forward to opportunities to do less. But was there anything which created a different kind of space, was there anything you found to give you that feeling? Did you find that without travelling around you felt freer and more spacious? Are there any trips you would like to cut out of your life in your new version of normal? Can you take a break from social media, or your phone?

Doing Less

It seems to be that one of my lockdown breakthroughs is the power of doing less. Way less. Less tabs open on the computer. Less noise. Less appointments. Less planning, less organisation. Less multi-tasking. Less late nights. What I've really enjoyed though is the space that less has opened up for me. I've felt that I've had more time, more space to get to know myself. Not the version of myself which is always running around trying to achieve, accomplish or do. But to get to know the true, real version of me - the self which we are uncovering in our reading of yoga philosophy. So I've found, it turns out that she's not been so far from the surface, just covered over and hiding in a whole world of distraction.

One other thing which has really helped me to do less, when I'm in a culture which always encouraged me to do more - is keeping in mind that I can surrender control. What lockdown has really taught us all is that none of us are in control. The control which we have over our lives is just illusory. There was no warning about lockdown, no way each of us could control it - it just happened. And that's the way it is in life. We spend our whole lives stressing and getting anxious about possibilities of things which could happen. Then something very real comes along, and it's nothing that any of us could ever have dreamt of. It's something which blindsided us all. Any so-called control that we have over our lives is really just a thin veil we all have to make ourselves feel better. There is no control over the big things. With lockdown upon us, there was a real wish to 'know'. Everyone wanted to 'know' the numbers, know the risk, know how to get on top of it, and most of all, everyone wanted to know when it would be over. Of course, it's definitely the job of scientists to know, and to learn. But for the rest of us, there is nothing knowable. Like in life, we just need to learn to relinquish control. And how much better is the here and now when we're not focusing on the future, not worrying about what could be. It's all just in the present-moment, and perfect, exactly as is.

Working with Life's Rhythms

I don't know about you, but working from home has enabled me to work according to my own body's timetable, not the strict 9-5 that society has imposed on us all. It's been really interesting to really notice, to check in with myself on how I feel. As someone who has the freedom to create my own timetables, I have always enjoyed being able to work when my body and mind are feeling creative, not when I'm 'supposed' to be working. But with lockdown, I'm a lot free-er. There are no meetings, very few structures in place, and these all mean that I can listen to my body better and work out when my body wants to work. I've found that in fact I can be very creative in the morning, and later afternoon. I work best in around 90 minute blocks.

And I intersperse my 90 minutes of work with time spent outdoors, maybe tending to the veggies, maybe taking a little walk, or doing a little 10 minute stretch. But I make sure that I get up and do something different.

There is no way that sitting chained to a desk from 9-5 would be constructive for my work patterns, as I work in cycles. But the interesting thing is that, doing just around 4 x 90 minute spates of hard work has actually been more productive than sitting at a desk for much longer. It's freed me up. Freed me up to have really good, constructive breaks where I can spend time with my partner, my dogs, my vegetables. And made the day shorter, whilst increasing the amount I've actually done.

Join Kat in the [movers' group](#) at 5.00pm when she discusses how to do less with [Dan Peppiatt](#)

Further reading and Listening

Books

The Artist's Way by Julia Cameron

The Art of Rest by Claudia Hammond

In the Shadow of Crows by David Charles Manners

Limitless Sky by David Charles Manners

Be Here Now by Ram Dass

The Therapeutic Potential of Creative Writing by Gillie Bolton

Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain by Betty Edwards

Buddha's Brain by Rick Hanson

Self Compassion by Kristin Neff

The Way of the Bodhisattva by Shantideva

A New Earth: Awakening to your Life's Purpose by Eckhart Tolle

No One is too Small to Make a Difference by Greta Thunberg

Xiu Yang by Mimi Kuo-Deemer

Blogs

[Norman Blair](#)

Podcasts

[Movement for Modern Life Podcasts](#)

[Bewildered / On Top of Things?](#)

With love and thanks to:

Thanks to MFML teacher Norman Blair for his [thoughts on Coronavirus](#), for inspiring the yoga community to think bigger and to grow from this

Thanks to [our teachers](#) for inspiring and supporting us, to enable us to continue this venture

Thanks to our community for being so supportive and so bold, encouraging and inspiring us to continue our journeys to inspire our Movers to live a happy, healthy, sustainable life

With love

Kat Farrants with Rakhee Jasani

