

5 BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR FLEXIBLE WARRIORS

The concept behind Flexible Warrior is the balance of opposites: stability with mobility, strength with flexibility, calmness with energy, and humility with power. You can apply these principles to your yoga practice and your life.

Intention: As soon as you step on your mat you are in a training session, and just like all your training to get results, you must stay committed. Take seated or standing mountain pose with hands in prayer at heart center. Set an Intention and stay focused. How do you want to feel?

Tip: Add “yoga” to your training schedule, write down your intentions and keep them posted with your training schedule to motivate and inspire you.

Breathing: It's not always about being the fastest or the strongest. It's also about being calm despite the chaos and enjoying the journey. You invest a lot of time and money in your sports. With yoga, all you need is your body, your focus, your breathing (and a mat is ideal). Breathing is a powerful tool to relax and focus your mind, creating a calm energy which can reduce race day anxiety. Survival of the calmest.

As an athlete, you are used to enduring discomfort for long durations of time. Staying calm during challenging moments is the key to your success. Save your energy for what's important.

Align, Balance, Connect: A strong core “center” means a stronger, more responsive athlete. An aligned, balanced body means less injury. The concept behind Flexible Warrior is the balance of opposites: stability and mobility, strength and flexibility, calm energy, and resilience.

Creating a more “balanced” body requires cross training and doing things we may not be good at ... balance poses, upper body strength, core conditioning and yes, flexibility. Get it all in a time efficient athletic yoga session for integrated, functional flexibility and strength.

The Edge: If you are looking for an edge to improve performance, finding “the edge” in your poses is essential. The edge is that fine line between pushing too hard, and taking it too easy... Where you are at the top of your ability to maximize your form and performance but where you can also stay relaxed. Instead of struggling and forcing, you feel calm and steady.

The Edge Principal applies to strength poses and stretches. The edge is like “the zone” where you feel calm, almost effortless, and are not wasting energy forcing beyond your limits. For anyone who has made the mistake of pushing too hard in mile one of a race, you know that working outside of your zone backfires in the long run. You want to feel the pose and know you're getting something out of it, but not feel shaky, frustrated or breathless.

Listen to your body, pace yourself, protect your injuries, and resist the temptation to be competitive in yoga. A warrior “protects” first ... a wounded or overtrained warrior isn't going to win any races.

Rest: Like hydration, nutrition, and all your endurance, strength and conditioning, recovery is a key component to your training and is essential to peak performance. Give your body time to recharge and rebuild and you will emerge a stronger, more energized, focused and motivated athlete.

