JOANNE GREENE: Hi, everybody. Welcome to From Warrior to Warrior. My name's Joanne. I'm a registered yoga teacher, and I work at WSU Pullman in the recreation department. And joining me are Amy and John, and we'll be taking you through about a 25 to 30 minute yoga practice this evening.

So we'll start in easy Seated Pose. And this pose is often more comfortable with a bolster—something to raise your hips. And so I'm using a folded up blanket. And so you can grab a towel or a blanket, or even roll up the end of your mat and grab a seat on the edge of it. So you kind of sit off the edge and it makes it a little more comfortable to sit tall.

So once we get seated, let's roll our shoulders back a few times. Relax arms. And when we feel comfortable, let's close our eyes. Let's sit tall and let's inhale deeply, bringing our breath all the way down into our bellies. Closing our eyes can be really helpful here, as can bringing a hand to our belly so that we can feel the movement of our bellies with our breath.

The next time we inhale, let's feel our bellies expand with our breath. We'll feel our bellies deflate as we exhale. And most often in a yoga practice, we inhale and exhale through our noses. It helps us to build and retain heat in our bodies. But if it's more comfortable to breathe through our mouths instead, we're welcome to do that.

It's important to remember that nothing in our practice should hurt or be uncomfortable. And so we should choose an option in every pose and every movement that allows us to be safe and pain-free. And if I'm not providing that option, choosing a totally different pose is perfectly OK.

Now today we'll spend most of our time practicing the third limb of yoga, which are the postures, the asana. We're ready to follow a more traditional path. As yoga's a few thousand years old and originated in India, we would actually practice eight limbs of yoga. But today we'll spend most of our time working on postures and our breathing.

Let's release our hands to our side. And on our next inhale, let's sweep our hands out and up toward the ceiling. As we exhale, we'll press our palms together and bring our hands into heart center.

As we inhale, we'll release, reach out and up. And as we exhale, we'll bring hands into heart center. Let's do this a few more times following our breath. We don't have to do this at the
same pace as any of us.

This is a good time to check in with our shoulders. And if this range of motion doesn't feel good for our shoulders, let's pick something else. So maybe reaching straight up would feel better for shoulders, or just leaving hands at heart center might feel best. All of these options are great. All right, one more time and then we'll meet with hands at heart center.

OK, let's place our hands on the mat and let's meet in our all fours. We call this Quadruped or Tabletop Pose. We can move our bolster out of the way.

Let's point our index fingers at the end of our mat and walk our hands out so our wrists are just in front of our shoulders, hips stacked over our knees. And now let's arch our backs up toward the ceiling like a cat does when it startled. When we breathe in next, let's lift our tail bones, our belly buttons, our chests and our chins. This is Cow Pose.

On our next out breath, let's meet in Cat Pose. Pull belly button up, shift our weight back slightly, and we'll inhale into Cow. We can close our eyes here if we'd like. Let's breath through a few more Cats and a few more Cows.

This gives us a chance to breath slowly and breathe deeply, which is a nice change from how we typically breathe throughout the day. If we're stressed or anxious, we tend to take shorter breaths. These long, slow breaths can help relieve anxiety and reduce our stress.

The next time that we find Cat Pose, let's stay here for a breath or two. Tuck our chins in, pull our shoulders away from our ears. And let's release our Cat Pose, sit back towards our heels, and walk our hands toward the end of our mat into Child's Pose. Our knees can be as wide as we need to so this is a comfortable pose. We might feel a bit of a stretch through our backs, maybe in our shoulders.

On our next inhale, let's shift forward into Plank. This looks like a bent knee push up pose. We stack our shoulders over our wrists.

At our exhale, let's sit back into our Child's Pose. And again, we'll inhale forward into our Plank. It helps to lift our belly buttons to stabilize. And exhale, sit back into Child’s Pose. Let's breathe through three more Planks and Child's Pose, and we'll meet back in Child's Pose after the third.

Now, you might notice that in some of the postures Amy and John are showing different
options. In this sequence. Amy's showing a bent knee Plank which is less intense than what
John's showing, which is a straight leg, or Plank from the toes. And we're welcome to choose
either option.

Now we're moving to Downward Dog. Let's tuck our toes under, and we'll lift our hips up
toward the ceiling. Shift them back toward the wall behind us. And in this pose, we focus more
on lengthening through our backs, finding long spine, pressing away from the mat.

Then we worry about straightening our legs. So notice that we all have a bend in our knees.
Some of us have a big bend, some of us have a little bit straighter leg. What we're looking for
here is a place where we feel a bit of a stretch in the backs of our legs and some work in
upper back and shoulders.

Let's inhale forward into our Plank one more time. And we can release our knees and let's
exhale back into our Downward Dog. Let's release our knees to the mat here, sit back towards
our heels into Child's Pose. Let's step our left foot forward into lunge. And we can move our
hands to the side if we'd like so it's easier to bring our foot forward.

Once we plant our foot, we'll walk it underneath our front knee. This helps to protect our knee
joint. And now let's tuck our back toes under, step into Forward Fold so our feet are about hip
width apart. Our knees are bent a little bit or a lot. And our hands can rest on the floor, our
shins or on our quads, whatever's most comfortable here.

Let's take a really big bend in their knees, lift our belly buttons and sweep our hands out for
the side walls, up for the ceiling. This is our Extended Mountain. Let's bring our hands to heart
center, and let's sit back into a Chair Pose. So this looks like a squat that you might practice in
other fitness classes.

Let's inhale, sweep our hands up into Extended Mountain. Swan dive into Forward Fold. We'll
take a big bend in our knees. We'll lead with our chest and release our hands to the floor.

Let's step our left foot back to lunge on our next inhale. Right foot back so we can meet in
Child's Pose or Downward Dog on our next exhale. We'll inhale forward into our Plank from
our knees or from our toes. And let's lower halfway down, leading with our chest. This is
Crocodile.

Releasing our hips when we need to, and let's lighten our hands, lift our hearts. Here's Cobra
Pose. Squeeze a lemon between our shoulder blades. We'll lower our chest. Press into hands
and knees. Press up to our plank, and all the way back to our Child's Pose or our Downward Dog.

Step left foot forward to Lunge as we breathe in. Step right foot in to our Forward Fold as we breathe out. And let's bend our knees a lot, sweep our hands out and up, meet in Extended Mountain. Sit back into our Chair Pose as we bring hands to heart center, weight moves back to the heels here.

Let's inhale, sweep our hands up. Exhale, Swan Dive into our Forward Fold. We'll step right foot back to lunge this time and our left leg back so we meet in Child's Pose or Downward Dog.

Let's inhale forward into our Plank and we'll lower halfway to our Crocodile, elbows and ribs meet. Release our hips, lift our hearts. We're strengthening lower back and upper back, especially if we squeeze our shoulder blades. Lower our chest, press into hands and knees up to Plank back to our Child's Pose or Down Dog.

Let's step right foot forward to lunge on our inhale. Left foot in to Forward Fold on our exhale. Bend our knees, sweep our hands out and up. Bigger reach for the sky in our Mountain. Sit back into our Chair Pose on our exhale. Inhale to the top, and we'll do one more on each side.

Forward Fold as we exhale. Left leg back to lunge as we inhale. And right leg back, Child's Pose or our Downward Dog as we exhale, inhaling forward into our Plank. Exhale, lowering halfway to Crocodile.

Inhale to our Cobra Pose, hands are light, and exhale back into Plank and Child's Pose or Down Dog. We'll step left foot to lunge on our inhale. Right foot into Forward Fold on our exhale. Bend our knees so we can sweep hands up. Big reach for the sky.

Sit back to our Chair Pose on our exhale. Inhale to the top, Extended Mountain. Last time through.

Forward fold on our exhale. Right foot back to Lunge on our inhale, landing softly. Step back to Child's Pose or Down Dog on our exhale. Plank on our inhale.

Lower halfway to Crocodile, exhale. And we Cobra Pose on our inhale, pressing lightly into the tops of our feet. Plank, then Child's Pose or Down Dog on our exhale.
Right foot forward to Lunge, inhale. Left foot into Forward Fold on our exhale. And let's bend our knees, sweep our hands up, sit back into our Chair, exhale.

We'll inhale, sweep our hands up. Big reach up and let's bring our hands to heart center. We can close our eyes for a few breaths here in our Mountain Pose.

So we'll move next into what's called our work section of our practice, and we'll move into some of our Warrior Poses. On our next inhale, let's sweep our hands up into our Extended Mountain. We'll Swan Dive into our Forward Fold on our exhale, left foot back into Lunge.

Now let's place our feet at about hip width apart. Let's keep our back heel lifted, and we can add a little bend in our back knee if we'd like. And then we can either leave back knee on the floor like Amy's showing, or back knee can stay off like John and I are showing. And our hands can rest on our quad at heart center, or we can lift hands toward the ceiling. This is our Crescent Lunge.

As we inhale, let's lift through the tops of our heads. And as we exhale, let's bring our shoulders away from our ears. Let's take a few more breaths here into our Crescent Lunge. You'll be noticing a stretch in back hip flexor from hamstring, deepening our lunge if we need more.

Let's move next to Warrior Two. So we'll take our back heel down to the mat, and then we'll take our hands out to about shoulder height. Here our front knee points over our second toe, and then we reach one hand over our front foot and the other hand back over our back foot.

Now, in this pose we'd like to keep our front knee pointed over our toes and our knee behind our toes like in our other lunge, because this puts less strain on our knee joint as we work through these lunges and Warriors. As we inhale, you might reach a little further through front and back fingertips. And as we exhale, we can open our front knee, maybe add a bit to our lunge. This is also a nice place to close our eyes if we'd like. And we'll notice that when we close our eyes it's a little tougher to feel balanced.

Let's reach over our front toes, and then we'll hinge to the side into Side Angle. Now, if we have yoga blocks, this is a nice pose to use a block for. We could reach down for our block. But we don't necessarily have to use props. We can use our front leg for support.

And in our Side Angle, we'd like to reach up toward the ceiling as an option. A little more work for our shoulder here. And we'll see Amy showing an option, or we can release our hand onto
our hip-- gives our shoulder a bit of a break. Let's take one more breath in our Side Angle.

Now let's meet back in our Warrior II, and then we're going to turn to the long edge of our mats. So we're going to point our toes out toward the corners and then we're going to reach out toward the ceiling into a pose called Star. From our Star, we can bring hands to heart center and then we can shift our weight back into a Wide-Leg Chair. So in this pose, we'd like to be able to lift or wiggle our toes. And we'd like our knees behind our toes.

OK, let's inhale and reach up into Star. And let's exhale, sit back into our Wide Leg Chair. Let's follow our breaths through Star and Wide-Leg Chair a few times on our own pace.

The next time we find our way to our Wide-Leg Chair, let's stay here for a few breaths. Let's relax our shoulders away from our ears. Check to see that our knees point over our toes.

And we'll inhale up into our Star, and we're going to turn toward the opposite side of the room, toward the opposite end of our mat. Lifting our back heel, maybe even placing our hands on the mat for a moment so we can adjust our feet. Feet can be about hip width apart; wider will make us more stable.

Now, let's just find a place in our Crescent Lunge again where we feel a bit of stretch through our back hip flexor, maybe front hamstring. Open up our front knee. Let's take a few breaths here, eyes open or eyes closed.

Let's transition to our Warrior II. We'll plant our back heel down onto the mat. We'll reach one arm over our front foot, one arm over our back foot. And in this pose, our back foot, we'd like it to be parallel to the end of our mat, or maybe our heel can be a little further away from us than our toes are. This helps to put our knee in a safer spot for this lunge.

However, in this pose, we also want to think about drawing our belly buttons in. Think about pulling bottoms of ribs in. And this helps to relieve strain on our lower back.

Let's transition to our Side Angle. So we'll reach out over our front knee and then hinge to the side, supporting our backs with our front hand on our front leg. Let's take our shoulders away from our ears, either reaching our top hand up, or we can take our top hand onto our hip to give our shoulder a break. This is also a great place to close our eyes. Take one more big breath in this pose.

Let's move back in our Warrior II. And then we're going to bring our hands to the floor, lifting
our back foot. We'll step into our Forward Fold. Let's bend our knees a lot, and we're going to sweep our hands up into our Extended Mountain. And now let's bring our hands into our heart center and we can close our eyes, take a few breaths here.

Now we advance our yoga practice by staying focused on our breath and on our bodies. We'll find that it's a little harder to do that than it is to say we're going to do it. So whenever we find ourselves distracted, we just take a deep breath and we can notice where our feet are touching the floor. We'll notice the movement of our belly with our breath, and it will help us to refocus on our mats.

All right, let's open our eyes if we need to. Let's step to the center of our mats facing the long edge, and we're going to practice a balancing pose called Tree. And we'll start with our left leg. So we're going to turn our left knee out, and we'll stand tall.

Now if we'd like, we can keep our toes on the floor. Or, we can bring our foot up onto the side of our leg. And we'll see that we've got some different options shown by Amy and John. The higher we lift our foot, the more challenging this pose will become.

What's important in this pose is that we don't press into our knee joint. So if we have our foot lifted high, we just want to have feather weight against our standing leg. This also allows us to develop greater strength in our lifted leg. One more option is to lift our hands up toward the ceiling. And if we'd really like to add some challenge to our balance pose, we can shift our gaze around the room or we could close one or both eyes.

And one more breath in our Tree Pose. Let's bring our hands back to heart center and we'll turn our knee forward, step back to our Mountain Pose. Maybe shake our legs out a little bit and we'll switch to the other side-- right side this time.

We'll start by turning our right knee out, adding a slight bend in our left leg so we don't lock out our knee joint. And then we'll lift our right foot as high as we'd like here, keeping very little pressure with our right leg against our left and remembering to use our long, slow breaths. We can add the option to lift one or both hands if we'd like. And then we can add some extra excitement if we need it by closing our eyes or looking around the room.

One more breath here in our balancing pose, and let's bring our hands in to heart center. Release our foot. Maybe shake our legs out a little bit.
We're going to do one more standing pose, a chest expansion. So let's take our hands behind us and we can pretend that we've got a beach ball in between our hands. So we're going to squeeze our beach ball, press down into four corners of our feet so we really feel grounded.

Let's squeeze our beach ball, pull our belly buttons in slightly. And then maybe lift ourselves up and over the beach ball a bit, with our attention really on pressing the beach ball between our hands. Let's move our shoulders away from our ears.

This is a really great pose for our posture. We spend a lot of our time with our shoulders rounded forward when we drive or we type on our computers. So this helps to open up our chest, strengthen our upper backs, and it helps us to stand tall which can give us more confidence.

And let's release. So let's release, shake our arms out a little bit. And we are going to sweep our hands up toward the ceiling, and we're going to Swan Dive one last time. Release our hands to our legs or the floor for our Forward Fold.

And let's just relax for a few breaths here in our Forward Fold. Maybe shake our arms out a little bit to relax our shoulders. Gently shake our heads to relax our necks. So notice that this Forward Fold probably feels more comfortable than it did when we started.

Let's take a big bend in our knees as our hands touch the floor, and let's step into a kneeling position. And then we're just going to lean off onto our hips so we can swing our feet around. Take a seat facing the front, and this is where our blanket or towel or bolster will come in handy for our Seated Spinal Twist.

So we'll start with our left knee bent, and we'll straighten our right leg out. And we'd like to sit really tall in this pose. The farther away from us our left foot is, the easier it is to sit tall.

Now let's take our right hand around in front of us. We're going to take our left hand thumb down behind us, and we're just going to add a little bit of a twist towards our left knee. So we'll inhale, sit tall.

And as we exhale, we can reach our hands across our torso and then take our right shoulder towards left knee. This is also a nice time to close our eyes. Start to slow down our breathing even more.

Let's untwist on our next inhale. We can lean back so we can switch feet. This time our right
knee is bent, left leg is straight. Sitting up tall, let's take our right hand thumb down behind us, left hand reach across. And the next time we breathe out, we can start to twist towards our right knee.

And we'll notice that we're reaching across our body instead of reaching and holding onto our top leg. And this is to help to keep us from pulling ourselves into a twist which can put a strain on our backs. So in this version we use core strength to lift us up to sit tall as we get a nice stretch in our Seated Spinal Twist.

Let's untwist for Pigeon Pose. So we'll lean back and we're going to straighten our right leg a little bit or a lot, bend our left knee and cross it over our right leg. We want to keep our left foot flexed. This helps to keep our knee in alignment.

And then we sit tall, rolling our shoulders back slightly, lifting our chest towards our left shin. For more stretch, we can slide our right foot in. And we'd like to think about opening up our knee at the hip. So we keep our foot flexed to help us to keep from twisting the bottom half of our left leg. And Pigeon Pose is in the series of hip openers, so we're looking for a stretch around our left hip.

And let's relax. Let's release and let's switch to the other side. So we lean back, cross our right foot over our left, flexing our right foot. Sit tall and roll our shoulders back. And then we can slide our left foot in a little bit or a lot.

There's different variations of this Pigeon Pose. We could also practice this pose lying on our backs. And the important thing in this posture is that we don't feel any strain in our knee. If we do, we should release the pose and look for a different option for Pigeon.

And let's release our Pigeon Pose. Let's bring the soles of our feet together for Butterfly Pose and we'll sit tall. The closer feet are to us, the harder it is to sit up tall. And we really like to sit tall here to avoid putting strain on our backs.

And we can hold on to our shins and lightly put some pressure on the insides of our legs with our elbows if we need more stretch. We also can use muscles in the outsides of our legs to pull our knees open. So we get strength work and flexibility work in the same pose.

We spend more time in these poses at the cool down section of our class, and in these we can notice the muscles that we are stretching on our inhales. And as we exhale, we can think about relaxing that group of muscles. So right now it's more of a stretch for our adductors--
our inner thigh.

And let's release. So let's move back to our easy seated pose here, sitting cross-legged and sitting up tall. Let's take our right arm across our chest, relaxing our shoulders away from our ears. Applying a little pressure either above our elbow or below our elbow, staying off the elbow joint. And we'd like to feel a gentle stretch on the outside of our arm and on the outside of our shoulder. And in this pose we relax our shoulders away from our ears, keep our shoulders down and back.

Now let's release. And before we switch arms, let's switch our easy seated pose. So let's put our other foot on the bottom, that's the opposite foot above, and then let's reach across with our left arm. We might notice that switching our easy seated pose, which foot's in front and which foot's behind, feels a little strange. We tend to sit the same way in our easy seated pose, so shaking things up with every once in a while can really help us with our flexibility and really bring awareness into a pose.

And let's release. So we're moving into our final relaxation, or shavasana, part of our practice here, so we'll move off of our bolster. And an option for our bolster in our final relaxation is to actually place it underneath our legs so that when we lie back on our mats we have the blanket under our legs. And this helps to relieve some strain that we may feel in our lower backs when we lie back.

Now this is traditionally called Corpse Pose. And in this pose, we can also bend our knees and let them touch, feet out wide like Amy is showing. Also a really nice option to relieve lower back. Or a straight leg Corpse Pose with or without a blanket underneath our knees.

So what we're going to do, if you'd like to follow along with me, is work through a guided progressive muscle relaxation. And this will take about five minutes and we'll start in a moment. I'll cue us through, tightening up all of our muscles from toe to head, and then we'll notice what that feels like. And then we're going to release all of our tension in a breath and then we'll work on relaxing even more. And just after five minutes we'll probably notice a difference in how relaxed we feel.

So let's begin by bringing our attention to our feet. On our next inhale, let's curl our toes in towards our feet, feeling tension in our feet. Breathing deeply, let's pull our toes towards our shins so we feel tension moving up into our lower legs. Let's activate the muscles above our
knees, feeling tension in our upper legs.

With a deep breath, let's activate the muscles around our hips, squeezing our glutes so we feel tense from the tops of our hips to the bottoms of our feet. On our next inhale, let's draw our belly buttons in and activate the muscles of our abdominals. We'll notice that as we do that we'll probably feel our lower backs tighten up as well.

As we breathe in, we might find that engaging our abdominals really impacts our breath. So if we feel uncomfortable, we can adjust how much we are tensing up. Let's bring attention to our hands, and let's curl our hands into fists and we'll notice tension in our forearms.

Still breathing, let's activate muscles in our upper arms, feeling biceps and triceps hug their bones. And we'll notice that this tension in our arms is causing our shoulders to move up. And let's let our shoulders move up even more, feeling some tension in our shoulders, in our chests, our backs, and probably a little bit in our necks as well.

Let's bring attention to our faces, and let's press our lips together tightly. Let's squeeze our eyes shut and let's wrinkle our foreheads. Still breathing, let's notice what it feels like when we're tense. Notice how our muscles and joints feel. Notice what our breathing is like, and notice how that impacts us emotionally as well. You might feel a little bit more stressed or anxious when we're tense.

Now in a moment we're going to take a deep breath and we're going to let all that tension go. So when we're ready, let's breathe in as deeply as we can. And then let's breathe out as deeply as we can, relaxing, letting all the tension go in our muscles.

Let's bring our attention to our feet. Let's wiggle our toes a few times on our next exhale, letting any remaining tension in our feet go. Let's breathe deeply, and let's relax the muscles in our lower legs. Let's relax the muscles in our upper legs.

Now let's release the muscles around our hips. Let's allow our feet to turn out to the side slightly. As we breathe out, let's let go of any remaining tension in our legs and our feet. Let's let our feet and our legs sink down into the mat or the floor with each exhale.

Now let's bring our attention to our bellies. And for the next few breaths let's use each exhale to make our bellies softer and softer, letting go of any tension that we find in our bellies. Let's wiggle our fingers a few times. Relax the muscles in our fingers and our hands, turning our palms up toward the ceiling. And let's reach our fingertips towards our feet slightly to make
some space between our shoulders and our ears.

And now let's let our shoulders relax toward the floor. Sometimes it helps to slide our hands away from us, just enough so our chests can open and shoulder blades can move down toward the mat. With each exhale, let's let our hands and our arms sink down into the mat or the floor.

Let's relax our necks. And let's soften the muscles around our jaw. Let's soften the muscles around our eyes and let's smooth out our foreheads.

Now let's notice what it feels like to be relaxed. Notice what our muscles and joints feel like. Notice how deep our breath is. And notice that we might be feeling less stressed than we were before.

The great thing about this shavasana, this guided relaxation, is that we can practice this on our own off of our mats. And the more often we practice it, the more effective it will be. This is especially helpful for having trouble getting to sleep.

And now we can start to wiggle our fingers and our toes so we can finish up our practice, maybe stretching if that feels good. And one leg at a time, let's bring our knees into our chest. We call this Knees to Chest Pose. And while we're here, we can rock side to side a few times. It might feel like an nice back massage.

And when we’re ready, we can rock up or push up to easy seated pose, sitting tall one more time just for a few moments. Typically, practice will end with hands at heart center and bowing and saying namaste, which is a salutation. And loosely translated, it means "the divine" or "the good in me recognizes and honors the good in you," which matches really nicely with yoga philosophy.

So I'd like to thank you for practicing with us today. And if you’d like to join us, namaste.