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## **Fallen Down Standing Poses**

Some of my favorite yoga sessions are when I get to the end and realize that I haven't gotten off the ground. Working with the ground gives you the opportunity for more than one or two points of contact. By definition, three points of contact is the minimum for making a pose restorative, changing the muscle response in the pose. As we stand on two feet, we incorporate muscle activation to balance, posture muscle activation and gravity defying muscle activation so we don't take the pose too deep. By taking the a pose and laying it on the ground, we can experience a whole new dimension in our poses.

A common standing posture that is done on the ground is crescent moon (also called standing side stretch and new moon). While standing we can feel the intense side stretch as we lean to the side with the arms over the head. Part of this stretch is the muscles eccentrically contracting and resisting from falling over to the side. By taking the pose on the floor and laying on our back, we can walk the legs over to the right, and then reach the arms overhead to the right to mimic the standing pose. In Yin yoga this pose is commonly practiced as "bananasana".

We can take this same principle into many challenging standing poses to explore the lengthening, reaching, twisting or opening aspects of the pose without the balance component coming into play. Revolved 1/2 moon is an advanced standing balance pose. By laying on your back, placing a strap around your right foot, and reaching your right foot into the air, you can lower your straight right leg across your body to move into a reclined revolved 1/2 moon position. By keeping your right shoulder on the ground and reaching through both feet, you can feel the deep rotation of the spine, the hip and shoulder opening without trying to work on balance. This same principle can be applied to poses such as warrior II, extended side angle, triangle, 1/2 moon, dancer and many more. Use the wall to ground the base of the feet and move your body into the pose from your feet upwards to your hands and crown of your head.

By exploring standing poses while laying on the floor, we delve deeply into new aspects of a pose. We discover stable lines of energy, our breath flows to the ends of our fingers and toes and we connect to blockages, opportunities and openness. So next time you roll out your mat and lay down to begin...stay down and explore.

Namaste,

## **Suzette O'Byrne**

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