

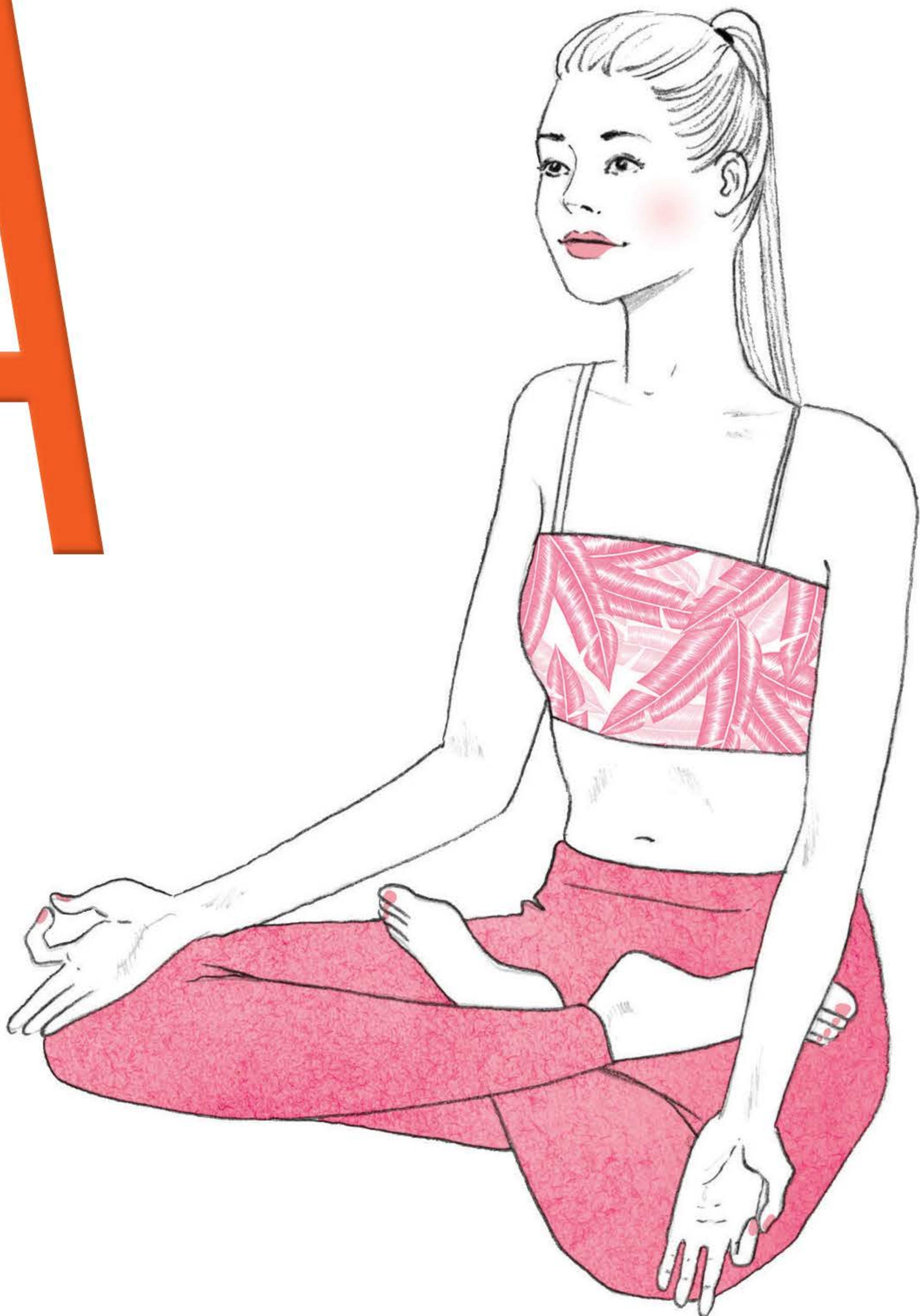


30-DAY
EXERCISE PLAN

YOGA

Live longer, feel better

Includes routines for daily workouts
and specific issues such as digestion,
headaches, tension and correcting
computer slouch





COLLECTION OF VARIOUS
→ HINDUISM SCRIPTURES
→ HINDU COMICS
→ AYURVEDA
→ MAGZINES

FIND ALL AT [HTTPS://DSC.GG/DHARMA](https://dsc.gg/dharma)

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YOGA

30-DAY
EXERCISE PLAN



nextqu_{isite}

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30-DAY Exercise Plan

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YOGA

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In the same series:

- Pilates

- Stretching

- Total fitness

- Core training

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

You are strongly advised to discuss any new exercise regime including this one with your healthcare professional before you begin. Neither the author nor the copyright holder shall be responsible or liable for any loss or damage allegedly arising from any information, ideas or procedures in this book.

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Introduction



The Three Graces
Women make up more than 75 per cent of those who practise yoga. We have dedicated this book to them and to keep them in the forefront we chose three women of different ages to demonstrate the asanas: Meet Alice, Becky and Chloe.

4

Interest in yoga just seems to grow and grow, and people are more aware than ever before of the benefits it can bring in terms of physical and mental health. In some cases, physicians are prescribing yoga to their unfit, overweight and depression- or anxiety-prone patients, often with astonishing results. There are yoga classes and retreats, websites and videos online, and books and magazines galore. If you are interested in yoga you have probably looked at some of these, but without ever getting started. You may be too busy for courses, baffled by the sheer quantity of information available online and dismayed by publications that teach a large number of yoga poses but without ever putting it all together for you. Where do you begin, if you have never done yoga before, or have been away from it for a number of years?

Our book offers a 30-day introductory course for people who want to get started. In a little

over four weeks we will teach you 50 basic yoga asanas (poses) and show you how to build your physical strength and flexibility day by day. You won't need to add more appointments to your busy schedule because you can practise in your own home, or in the garden, or at the park or beach, if you prefer. Nor will you need to buy a lot of expensive props or clothing, although you may be tempted by some of the really hot yoga gear that is now available.

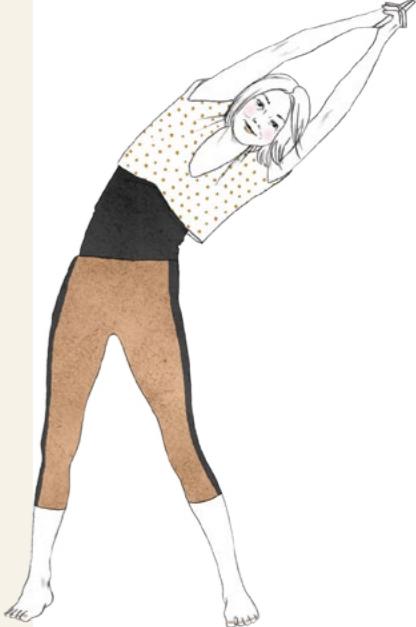
Here's what you will need:

- The curiosity to discover a centuries-old philosophy of health and exercise that will change your life;
- The determination and commitment to learn the asanas and breathing techniques that will improve your health in so many different ways;
- About 30 minutes every day for a month to dedicate to your practise;
- A quiet, well-ventilated space with a flat surface large enough for you to spread your

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS YOUR BREATH. POOR BREATHING CONTRIBUTES TO THE STRESS SO MANY PEOPLE FEEL.

limbs out in all directions and a large clean yoga mat or special towel or piece of cloth to cover it.

- Clothing that allows you to move your body freely. You do not need footwear.



Reap the benefits

For each of the asanas we provide you with a brief list of the main benefits. For example, the Side Bend (above), or to give it its Sanskrit name, Nitambasana, promises the following:

- Lengthens spine
- Targets "love handles"
- Tones arms

5



Meditation

Yoga has its origins in texts and traditions from ancient India that stretch back over 5,000 years. In the West, we tend to see it as a set of physical exercises that tone the body and help relieve stress and anxiety. In its fullness, yoga is much more than this, and it includes a strong spiritual element. It is not a religion, although it was developed as a path to enlightenment. You can take as much or as little of this aspect of yoga as you desire. On page 130 you will find the instructions to begin the practise of meditation.

- A watch or clock within reach to check timings for some of the poses;
- A couple of towels or blankets that can be folded and used to support your body if some of the poses are too extreme. We will show you how to use them.

The daily routines are arranged so that we start with poses that are performed while standing, then sitting and then supine or inverted. Most days finish with 5–10 minutes in the deeply relaxing Corpse Pose.

In the first two weeks the learning curve is steep with many new asanas to memorize and practise each time, so we have broken each session in two. During the first part we introduce the poses and you do them once, then we ask you to perform them all again several times in a single graceful routine. From Day 15 onwards we only

**YOGA IS 99 PER CENT PRACTISE AND ONE PER CENT THEORY.
DO YOUR PRACTISE AND ALL IS POSSIBLE.**

introduce one or two new asanas each day, so we do all the asanas several times but in a single routine. Every seventh day there is a Catch-up session which is an overview of a lot of poses. You should allow 45 minutes for the Catch-up sessions, but only 15 minutes for the following day as these sessions are much lighter with the



Posture

Improved posture not only makes you look younger and more attractive, but it also brings real health benefits. Poor posture can cause back, neck and other muscle and joint problems, leading to pain and even degenerative arthritis of the spine.

focus on relaxation, breathing and meditation. We strongly advise you to practise every day as the exercises are designed to build your fitness and flexibility day after day. However, if you miss a day don't worry, just pick up where you left off and move ahead. Now begin!

A WORD ABOUT SAFETY

This book teaches a generic style of hatha yoga, with the poses performed slowly and mindfully. Even so, you will be stretching and manipulating muscles and parts of your body that may not have been challenged for years. To avoid any possibility of injury, read the instructions for each asana carefully and memorise them before you begin. Moving in and out of poses in an abrupt or awkward manner, for example to check what you should be doing, can lead to injury. In our instructions for each pose, we tell you not to strain and not to push your body any further than is comfortable for you. If your body is saying "ow!" that means stop. Don't worry, your flexibility will increase every day, and you will see that what was impossible at the beginning is soon within your reach.

MODIFICATION

If you struggle to keep your balance, move your feet slightly wider apart, ensuring that they remain parallel to each other (to protect your knees).

Do not tilt your head backwards any further than shown as you could damage your neck.



Advanced poses

Towards the end of the course we learn some more advanced asanas, such as the Supported Headstand and the Plough (above). These are wonderfully invigorating poses, but you should wait until you feel completely confident before attempting them.

Safety

If you have any pre-existing medical conditions, are very unfit or overweight, or are over the age of 40, you should check with a healthcare professional before you start any new programme of physical exercise, including this one.

The poses in this book are not designed for women who are pregnant. It is not a good idea to start a new exercise regime during pregnancy but if you do want to do some yoga while expecting, there are many very good books and courses available.

WHAT THE COLOURED BOXES MEAN

This book is designed for people of all ages who have not practised yoga before, or not for some time. Depending on your age and physical condition, some asanas will be difficult for you, at least initially. Every time we introduce a new asana that may be hard for some, we provide modifications to help you. These are given in the blue boxes. For each new pose that might be problematic generally or may be contraindicated if you have a specific medical condition, such as high blood pressure, a back injury or a hip replacement, these indications are given in the red boxes.

Wellness, grace & peace

DAY

1

On this first day we will learn five simple asanas, or poses, that focus on two central themes in the practise of yoga: breathing correctly through the nose and promoting the strength and flexibility of the spine. Most people breathe too shallowly from the uppermost part of their chests. Learning the deep, regular breath of the yogi brings a range of health benefits, from increased energy to better blood pressure and reduced levels of stress and anxiety. The rewards of working towards a healthier, more flexible spine include a more erect and graceful posture, a reduced susceptibility to back strain and pain, and the release of accumulated tension in the neck and shoulders.

MOUNTAIN POSE

1

The Mountain Pose, or *Tadasana*, is the foundation of all the standing poses. To begin, stand still, and start to slow and deepen your breath. Allow your mind to quieten as you become aware of yourself and your surroundings.

- Improves posture & balance
- Tones legs
- Strengthens & lengthens spine



Focus on your breathing as you begin to inhale and exhale through your nose. Your stomach expands with each inhalation, and draws back in with each exhalation. Close your eyes if you are comfortable and take 5–8 deep breaths in this position.

MODIFICATIONS

If you struggle to keep your balance during the Complete Breath, move your feet slightly wider apart, ensuring that they remain parallel to each other (to protect your knees).

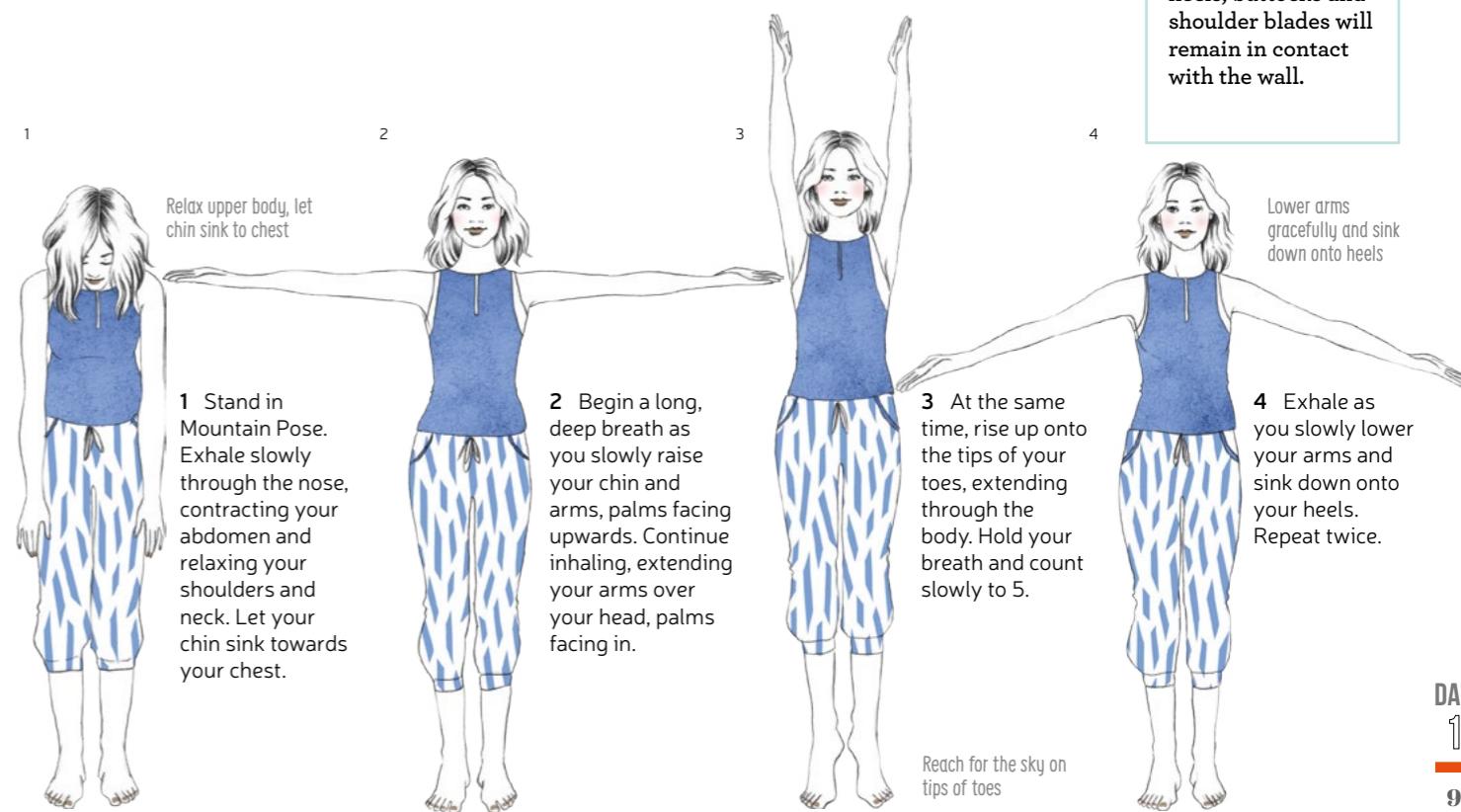
You can also choose to stand against a wall if you struggle to hold your posture correctly. Your heels, buttocks and shoulder blades will remain in contact with the wall.

COMPLETE BREATH STANDING

2

In this gentle stretch we connect breathing with movement.

- Increases energy & focus
- Strengthens spine
- Tones arms & upper body
- Improves balance & posture

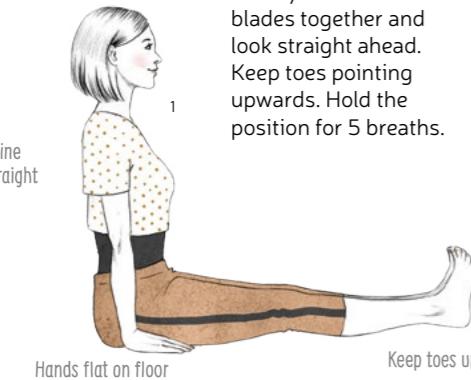


DAY
1
9

STAFF POSE

- Strengthens spine
- Stretches thighs, lower back & abdominal muscles

3
The Staff Pose, or *Dandasana*, is the basis of many seated poses. *Danda* means "staff" (walking stick) in Sanskrit, and refers to the straight, strong spine.



Arms parallel above head

1 Sit on the floor, legs extended. Place your hands on the floor next to your hips, fingers forwards. Inhale as you lengthen your spine. Draw your shoulder blades together and look straight ahead. Keep toes pointing upwards. Hold for 3–5 breaths.

2

Inhale and lift your arms overhead, palms inward. If you feel your upper back rounding with your arms all the way up, lower your arms slightly until you can maintain the length in the upper back again. Hold for 3–5 breaths.

Keep toes up

Arms parallel above head

MODIFICATIONS

If you have tight hamstrings or a weak lower back you may find it difficult to sit on the floor with a very straight back. If necessary, bend your knees a little, until your hamstrings become more flexible. Alternatively, place a folded blanket, towel or yoga block under your bottom.



SEATED FORWARD BEND

4
This Seated Forward Bend, or *Paschimottanasana* in Sanskrit, is an intense back stretch. We will begin practising it in a gentle version.

- Strengthens spine
- Improves digestion
- Can help with infertility, high blood pressure & insomnia
- Relieves menstrual discomfort & menopause symptoms



1 Sit on the floor, feet together, legs extended in front of you and hands on the floor beside your hips.

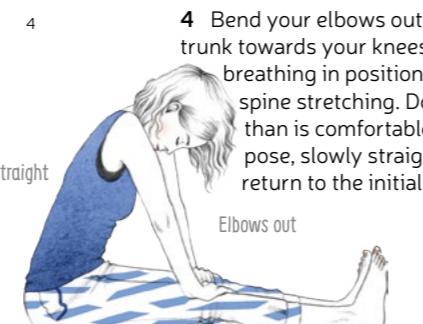


2 Inhale as you gracefully raise your arms above your head. Raise your gaze and gradually arch your body backwards. Hold for 2–3 breaths.

Do not perform with back injury. This pose puts pressure on the abdomen. Practise with care if you have intestinal discomfort, or wait until you are better.



3 Exhale as you slowly lower your arms and lean forwards to grasp your knees.



4 Bend your elbows outwards as you fold your trunk towards your knees. Hold for a count of 10, breathing in position. You should feel your spine stretching. Do not bend any further than is comfortable. To come out of the pose, slowly straighten your spine and return to the initial position.

Aim your forehead towards your knees until you feel a gentle stretch in your back

COBRA POSE

1 Lie flat on your stomach, head turned to the side, arms extended along your sides.



5

The Cobra Pose, or *Bhujangasana*, is named for the way the snake raises its head. This backward bend strengthens the back and increases flexibility.

- Stretches & strengthens spine
- Stimulates brain
- Tones respiratory & digestive systems
- Energizes legs

2 Turn your head and rest your forehead on the floor. Place your hands, palms downwards, at shoulder level. Relax your thighs.



3 As you exhale, press into your hands and slowly raise your trunk to the position illustrated. Do not go any further than this today. Hold for a count of 15, breathing in position.



As you practise, some other members of the family may like to join in. While it's fun to share yoga sessions with domestic pets or young children, you may find that they are a distraction. Try to set aside your yoga practise as a special time just for yourself.



TODAY'S ROUTINE
Now that you have learned these five basic positions, we would like you to practise them all in a single, graceful flow of movement.

- 1 MOUNTAIN POSE
- 2 COMPLETE BREATH STANDING
- 3 STAFF POSE
- 4 SEATED FORWARD BEND
- 5 COBRA POSE

Stand for 8–10 breaths
Repeat 3 times
Repeat 3 times
Repeat 3 times
Repeat 3 times

Stress management

DAY
2

In the next 30 days you will discover one of the main reasons yoga is so popular: put simply, it makes you feel good! Many of the poses have a deeply calming effect on the body. The Child's Pose (see page 65), the Seated Forward Bend (see page 10) or the Cat-Cow Pose (see page 58), along with many of the inverted postures, are especially good in this sense. The breathing techniques you learn will enable you to use your full lung capacity, while combining breathing with movement will teach you to listen to your body and become more sensitive to its moods. The deeply relaxing Corpse Pose with which we complete most sessions will help you to relax and focus your mind, promoting a feeling of harmony and well-being that carries over into the rest of your life.

COMPLETE BREATH STANDING

1

This gentle stretch is a great warm-up pose. You can also use it throughout the day at any time you feel the need to calm and centre yourself.

- Increases energy & focus
- Strengthens spine
- Tones arms & upper body
- Improves balance & posture

SIDE BEND

SIDE BEND

1

This Side Bend, also known as *Nitambasana*, will help reduce flabbiness at the waist and hips.

- Lengthens spine
- Targets "love handles"
- Tones arms

COMPLETE BREATH STANDING

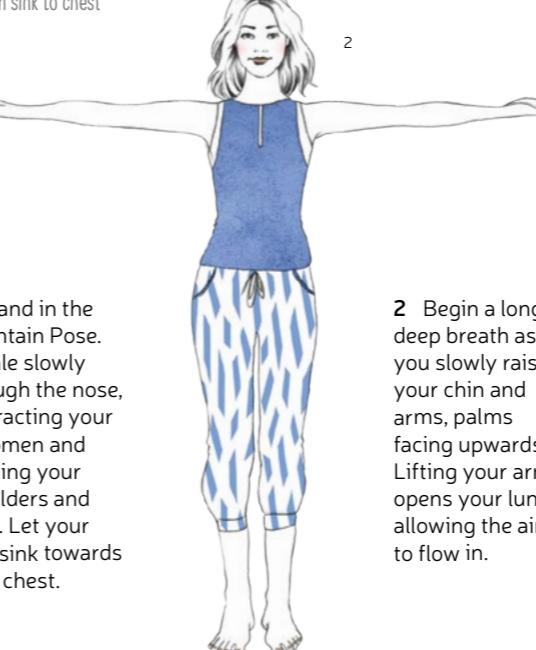
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Relax upper body, let chin sink to chest



SIDE BEND

2



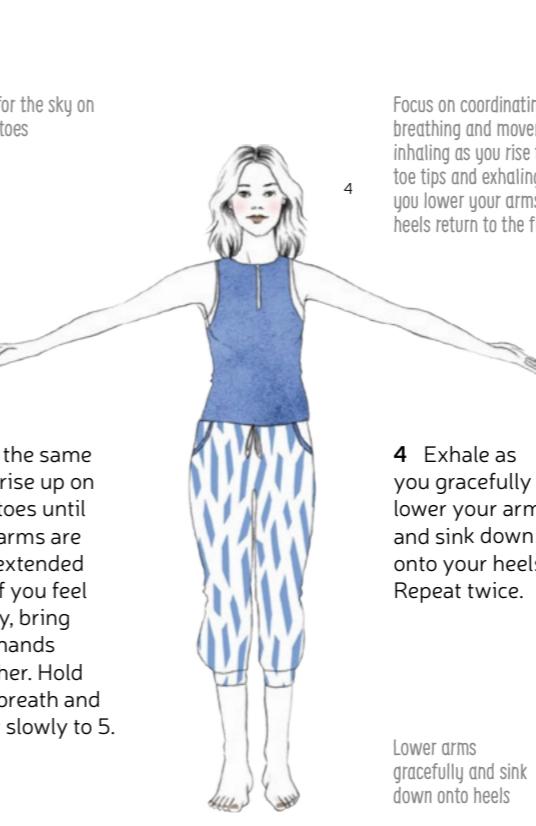
1 Stand in the Mountain Pose. Exhale slowly through the nose, contracting your abdomen and relaxing your shoulders and neck. Let your chin sink towards your chest.

2 Begin a long, deep breath as you slowly raise your chin and arms, palms facing upwards. Lifting your arms opens your lungs allowing the air to flow in.



Reach for the sky on tips of toes

3



Focus on coordinating your breathing and movement, inhaling as you rise to your toe tips and exhaling as you lower your arms and heels return to the floor.

4

3 At the same time, rise up on your toes until your arms are fully extended and, if you feel steady, bring your hands together. Hold your breath and count slowly to 5.

4 Exhale as you gracefully lower your arms and sink down onto your heels. Repeat twice.

Lower arms gracefully and sink down onto heels

2 Exhale and bend slowly to the right. If you feel yourself leaning slightly forwards or backwards, it means you are taking the stretch too far. Hold for the count of 5, then exhale to centre. Repeat on the other side.



MODIFICATIONS

Try performing this asana with your back against a wall to ensure that your body keeps its correct alignment. Your heels, buttocks and shoulders should remain in contact with the wall.

Adaptions to this pose include: resting your arms down by your sides, and placing your hands behind your head, elbows out to the sides.

CHEST OPENER

3

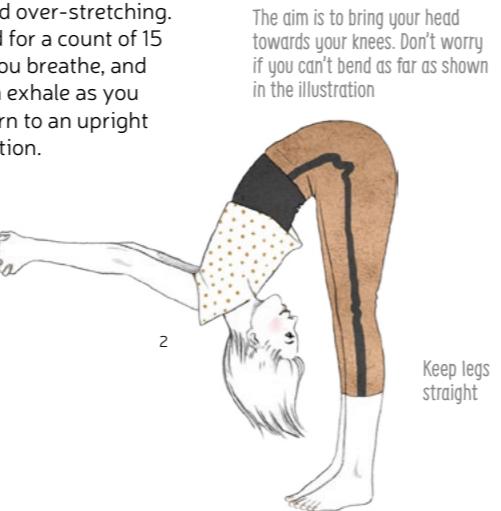
This intense forward bend stretches the spine and hamstrings. Today we will learn a less extreme version of the classic pose.

- Tones & firms arms
- Tones & firms bust
- Relieves tension in neck & shoulders
- Realigns spine

1 Stand in Mountain Pose with feet slightly apart. Raise your arms to shoulder height in front of you, then bring them round behind your back and clasp your hands. Arch backwards to open the chest. Hold for a count of 10, breathing in position.



2 Gently bend forwards, raising your arms behind your back. Don't worry how far you are bending, just feel the stretch, and listen to your body to avoid over-stretching. Hold for a count of 15 as you breathe, and then exhale as you return to an upright position.



The aim is to bring your head towards your knees. Don't worry if you can't bend as far as shown in the illustration

STANDING FORWARD BEND

4

The Standing Forward Bend, or *Uttanasana*, stretches the spine and hamstrings. Today we will practise a less extreme version of the classic pose.

- Strengthens back muscles
- Stretches hamstrings
- Tones digestive organs
- Can relieve headaches

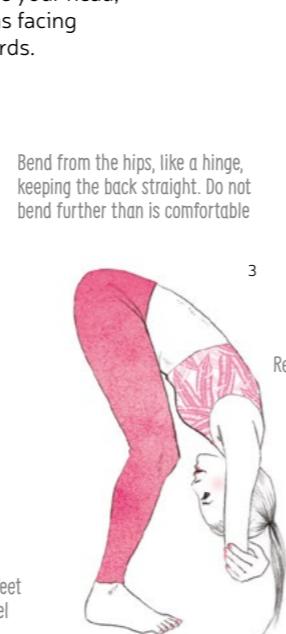
1 Stand in Mountain Pose, with your feet just slightly apart.



2 Inhale as you gracefully raise your arms parallel above your head, palms facing inwards.



3 Exhale as you fold forwards from the hips. Bending your knees slightly, grasp your elbows, and bring your nose as close to your knees as is comfortable. Hold for a count of 15, breathing in position.



This pose is not recommended for people with high blood pressure or glaucoma. If you have lower back concerns, practise with care or wait until you are better.

To come out of the pose, place your hands on your hips, and exhale as you slowly raise your upper body to standing position.

DAY

2

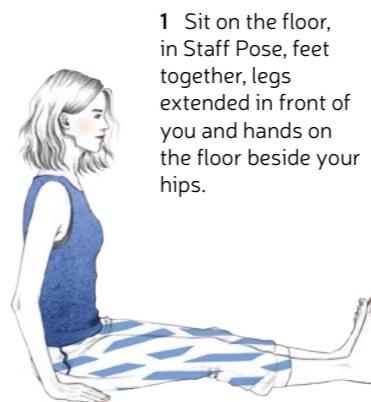
14

SEATED FORWARD BEND

5

Today we will build on yesterday's work, gently intensifying the stretch a little.

- Strengthens spine
- Improves digestion
- Can help with infertility, high blood pressure & insomnia
- Relieves menstrual discomfort & menopause symptoms



2 Inhale as you gracefully raise your arms above your head. Raise your gaze to gradually arch your body back, and hold for 2–3 breaths.

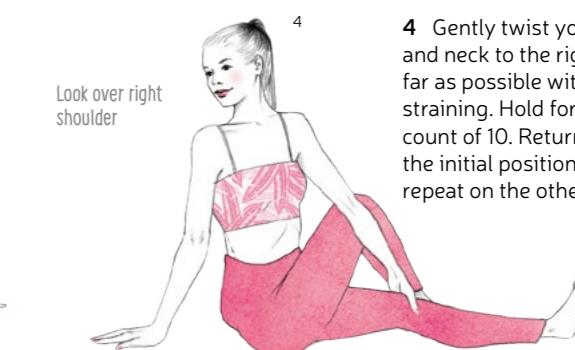
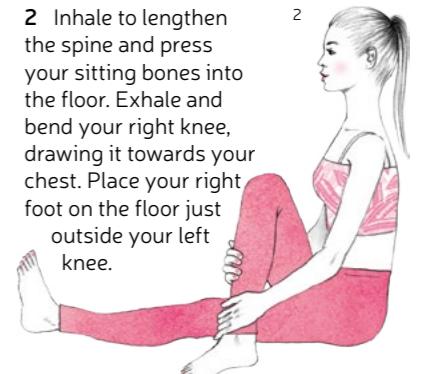
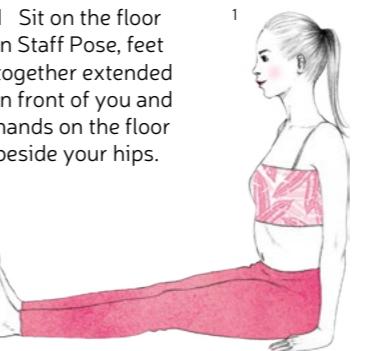
4 Bend your elbows out as you fold your trunk towards your knees. Hold for a count of 15. If you can, bend a little further forward today than yesterday, but don't strain. Slowly straighten up and return to initial pose.

HALF TWIST

6

This gentle Half Twist, or *Ardha Matsyendrasana*, massages your internal organs and helps realign the spine.

- Massages digestive organs, aiding elimination
- Stimulates lymph flow
- Strengthens immune system
- Calms nervous system



If you have had a hip replacement, do not cross the foot of the bent knee over the straight leg. Practise with care or skip if you have back injuries.

DAY

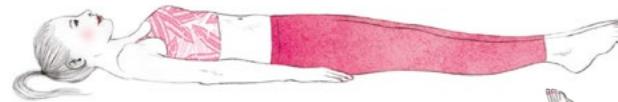
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15

RAISED LEG POSE

7

The Raised Leg Pose, or *Uttanpadasana*, strengthens your abdominal muscles as well as your lower back.



- 1 Lie on your back with your legs and arms straight. Your feet should be together and your hands on the floor next to your body, palms facing downwards.



MODIFICATIONS

If your lower back lifts or hurts when moving both legs, then feel free to bend the knees slightly to support the lower back, or continue lifting and lowering one leg at a time until you are stronger.



- Tightens abs
- Improves digestion
- Strengthens back & hip & thigh muscles
- Energizes reproductive organs

COBRA POSE

8

Today we will build on this back stretch, gradually increasing the intensity.



- 1 Lie flat on the floor, head turned to the side, arms extended along your sides.



- Stretches & strengthens spine
- Stimulates brain
- Tones respiratory & digestive systems
- Energizes legs



- 3 Press down on your hands and slowly raise your trunk to the position illustrated. If you feel completely comfortable, continue the stretch.



Do not tilt your head backwards any further than shown as you could damage your neck.

DAY

2

16

CORPSE POSE

9

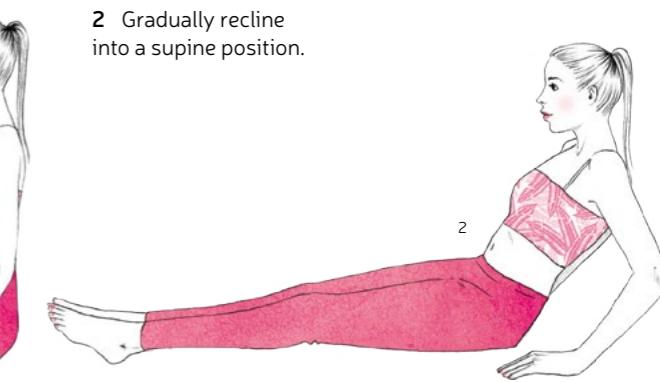
Shavasana, or Corpse Pose, is the classic way to end a yoga practise session. The aim is to completely release tension in the mind and body and reach a state of deep relaxation.

- Relaxes mind & body after physical exercise
- Promotes deep relaxation
- Reduces fatigue

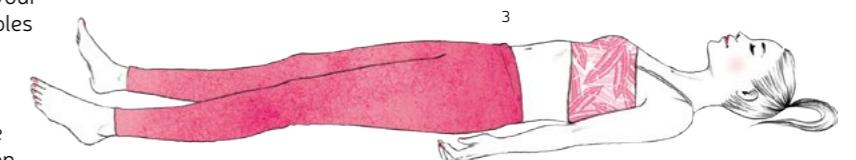
- 1 Sit on the floor, feet together extended in front of you and hands on the floor beside your hips.



- 2 Gradually recline into a supine position.



- 3 Lie on your back with your arms relaxed at your sides, palms up. Let your feet drop open. Close your eyes. Starting at the soles of your feet, mentally scan up the body, releasing tension in every joint and muscle along the way. Focus on your breathing as you move the awareness up your body. This helps to keep your mind from wandering, and encourages you to remain present. Invite peace and silence into your mind, body and soul. Rest for 5–10 minutes.



MODIFICATIONS

If liked, cover your eyes with a cloth.

If you have discomfort in your lower back, place a pillow or bolster under your knees

(or simply raise your knees slightly with feet apart).

If you feel chilly, cover your body with a light blanket.



TODAY'S ROUTINE

WE have added six new positions to our repertoire today. Practise them all, except the last one, in a single graceful flow of movement. Practise the Corpse Pose just once at the end of the routine.

1 COMPLETE BREATH STANDING

Repeat 3 times

2 SIDE BEND

Repeat 5 times

3 CHEST OPENER

Repeat 3 times

4 STANDING FORWARD BEND

Repeat 3 times

5 SEATED FORWARD BEND

Repeat 3 times

6 HALF TWIST

Repeat 3 times

7 RAISED LEG POSE

Repeat 3 times

8 COBRA POSE

Repeat 3 times

9 CORPSE POSE

5–10 minutes

DAY
2

17

DAY 3

Poise

There is a lot to learn in this first week of our 30-day course and this is why we break each session into two parts. During the first part we ask you to learn new asanas and to focus on perfecting recently learned poses. In the second part of each session we have set a routine, or sequence of the poses to be repeated in a single flowing movement. As you move through the asanas in each routine, remember to turn your thoughts inwards, setting the cares of daily life aside. Quiet your mind, focus on your body and your breathing, and perform each of the poses with gentle rhythm and purposeful grace. As the days go by, you will notice that you begin to carry this attitude into other areas of your life, gradually acquiring more grace and poise in your movements and posture.

SIDE BEND

1

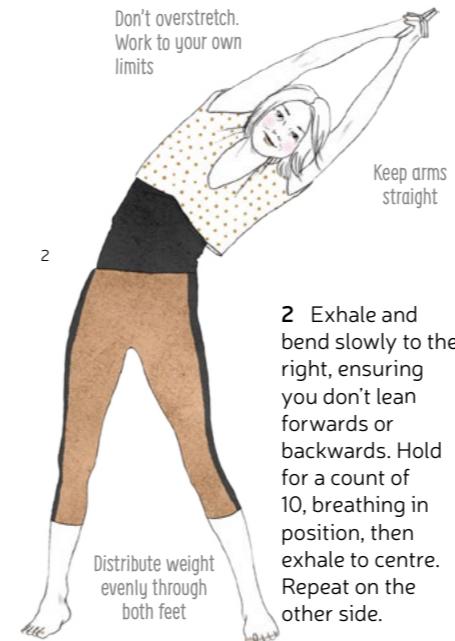
This hip stretch is a great warm up exercise. Try to increase your bend to the side a little more than yesterday.

- Lengthens spine
- Targets “love handles”
- Tones arms



Jump, or step, feet apart

1 Stand in Mountain Pose, hands by your sides. Jump, or step, your feet to about 2 feet apart and inhale as you gracefully raise your arms. Clasp your hands above your head, hugging your head with your biceps. Keep your index fingers straight in a “steeple” position.



2 Distribute weight evenly through both feet

2 Exhale and bend slowly to the right, ensuring you don't lean forwards or backwards. Hold for a count of 10, breathing in position, then exhale to centre. Repeat on the other side.

TRIANGLE POSE

2

The Triangle Pose, or *Trikosana*, is a powerful asana that tones the whole body and builds strength and stamina. We begin today with a gentle version.

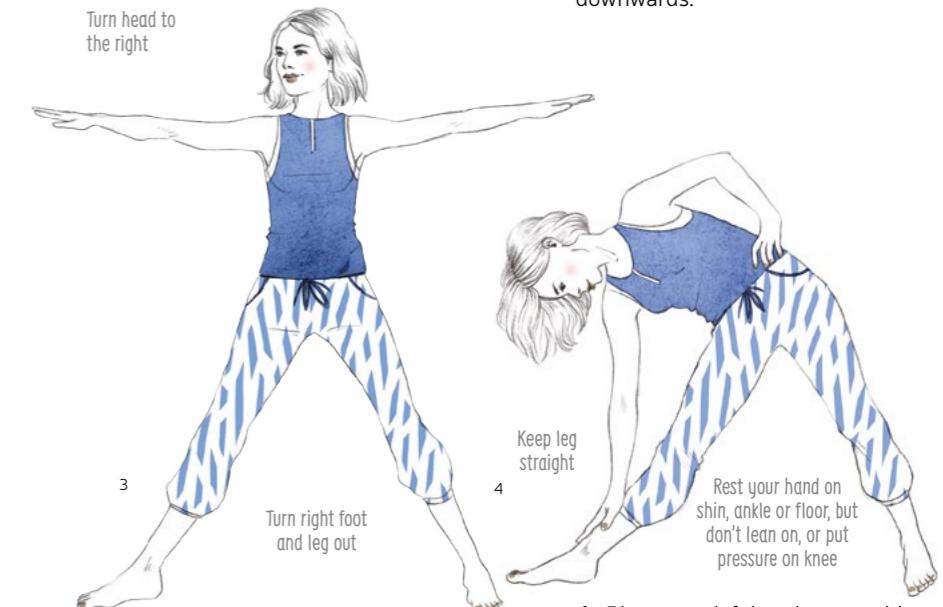
- Elongates & strengthens spine
- Tones legs
- Stimulates liver, spleen & kidneys
- Builds strength & determination



The wider your legs are, the more intense the stretch will be

1 Stand in Mountain Pose, palms pressed together in front of your chest.

Turn head to the right



3 Turn right foot and leg out to the side to 90 degrees. Turn your left foot slightly towards your right heel.

4 Keep leg straight Rest your hand on shin, ankle or floor, but don't lean on, or put pressure on knee

4 Place your left hand on your hip. Exhale as you slide your right arm down your right leg as far as it will go without straining. Keep your chest open. Hold for 3–5 breaths. Repeat on the other side.

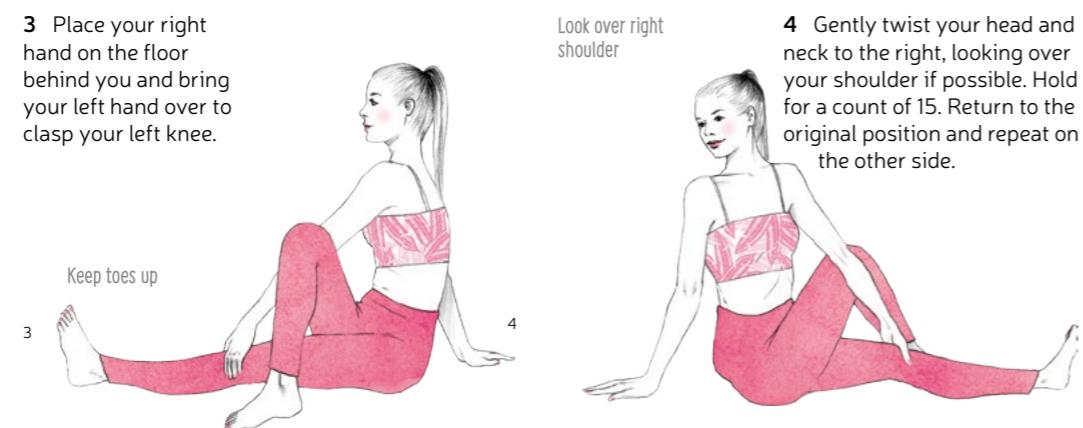
HALF TWIST

7

Practise this gentle Half Twist again today, holding the final position a little longer if possible.



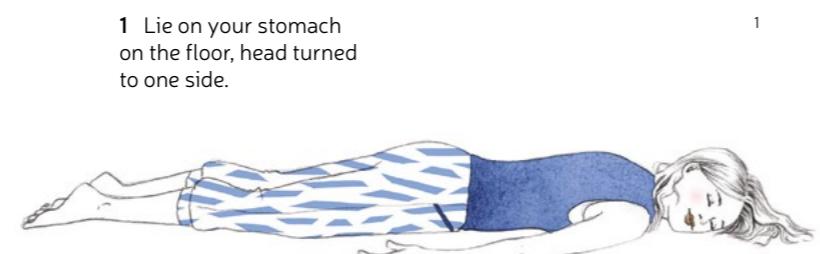
- Massages digestive organs, aiding elimination
- Stimulates lymph flow
- Strengthens immune system
- Calms nervous system



BOW POSE

8

The Bow Pose, or *Dhanurasana*, is a powerful backbend. Today we will begin with a less intense adaptation of the full pose.



This pose should not be practised if you have high blood pressure, heart concerns or lower back pain or injury.

- Strengthens spine
- Tones whole body
- Opens lungs
- Improves circulation

DAY

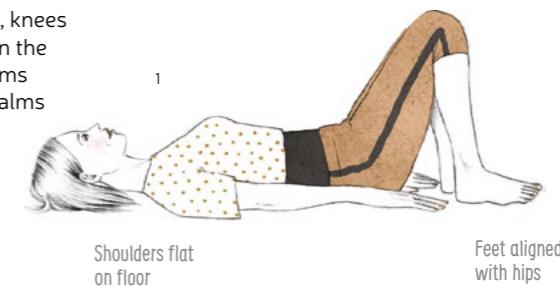
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22

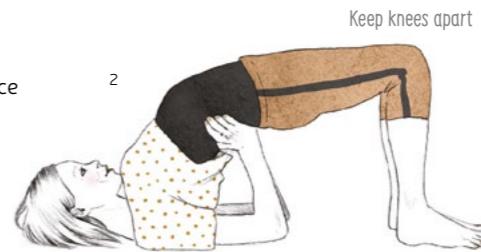
HALF BRIDGE POSE

9

The Half Bridge Pose, or *Setu Bandhasana*, is a relatively easy backbend. Today we will learn a gentle version of the classic pose.



- 1 Lie on your back, knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Place your arms along your sides, palms facing downwards.
- 2 Gently lift your hips and lower back off the floor, as you exhale. Place your hands just above your hips for support, if you wish.

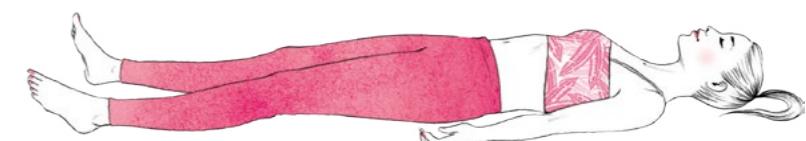


CORPSE POSE

10

After you have been through all the poses in today's session and repeated them as set out below, set aside 5–10 minutes to enjoy the complete relaxation of the Corpse Pose.

of your feet, scan up to the crown of your head, releasing tension in your joints and muscles along the way. Close your eyes. Starting from the soles and body. Use your breath as your focus to clear your mind and keep yourself present. Rest for 5–10 minutes.



- Relaxes mind & body after physical exertion
- Promotes deep relaxation
- Reduces fatigue

TODAY'S ROUTINE

AFTER you have learned the poses for today, perform them all in a flowing dance-like sequence. Practise the Corpse Pose just once at the end of your routine.

1 SIDE BEND	Repeat 3 times
2 TRIANGLE POSE	Repeat 3 times
3 STANDING FORWARD BEND	Repeat 3 times
4 WARRIOR II	Repeat 3 times
5 NECK STRETCH	Repeat 3 times
6 BOUND ANGLE POSE	Repeat 5 times
7 HALF TWIST	Repeat 3 times
8 BOW POSE	Repeat 3 times
9 HALF BRIDGE POSE	Repeat 3 times
10 CORPSE POSE	5–10 minutes

DAY
3
23

Sleep

DAY
4

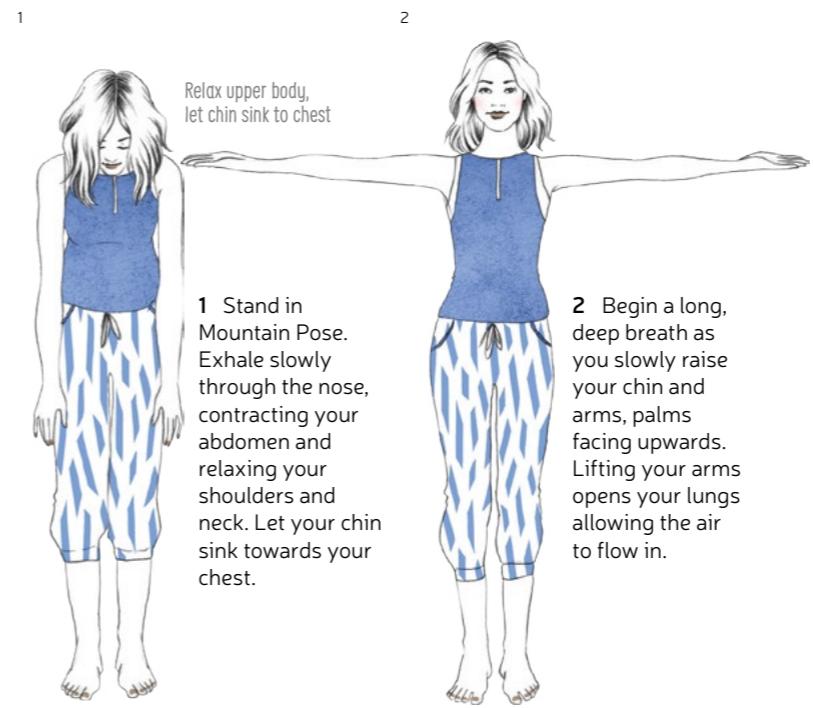
As you progress through this 30-day course you will notice another of yoga's most important benefits: improved quality of sleep. Sleep experts recommend that adults get seven to nine hours a night, but many of us lie awake or sleep badly because our daily lives leave us feeling stressed and anxious and unable to relax sufficiently to sleep well. Research shows that yoga is an effective treatment for insomnia because it addresses both the physical and psychological concerns that are the bane of restful sleep. As the days go by, you will notice that you have less trouble falling asleep, sleep for longer without interruption, and wake up feeling more refreshed. A restful night's sleep leaves you feeling calm yet alert, more able to deal with problems and open to the joys of daily life.

COMPLETE BREATH STANDING

1

We begin again today with this simple stretch that unites breathing and movement.

- Increases energy & focus
- Strengthens spine
- Tones arms & upper body
- Improves balance & posture



CHEST OPENER

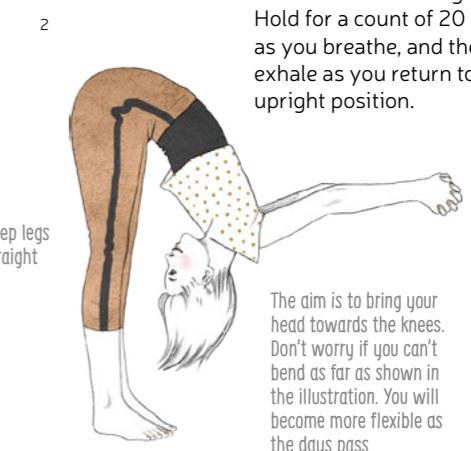
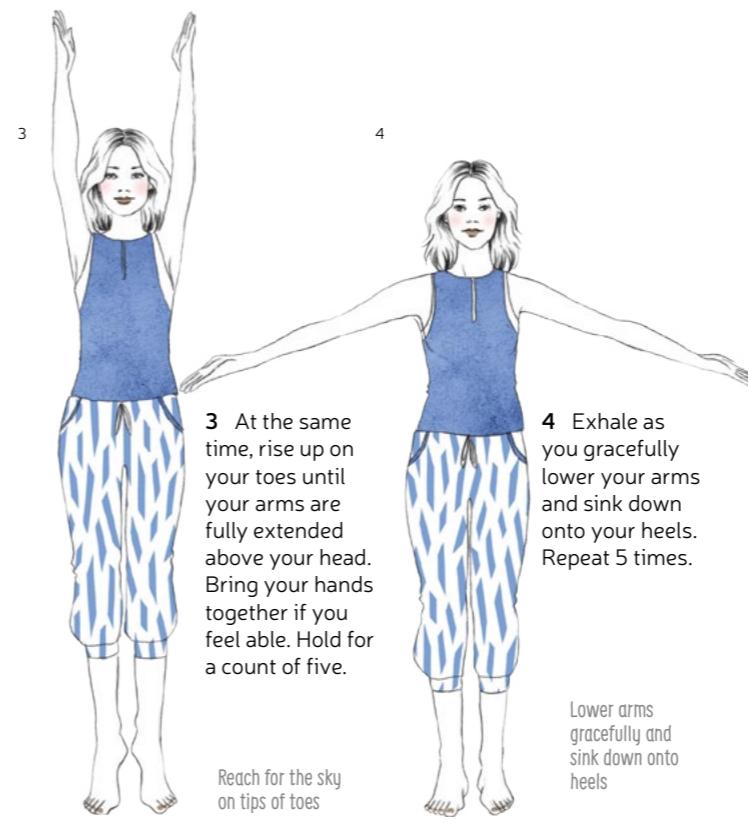
2

Try to move a little deeper into the stretch both as you arch backwards and bend forwards toward your knees.

Raise chin, gently arch backwards

- Tones & firms arms
- Tones & firms bust
- Relieves tension in neck & shoulders
- Realigns spine

1 Stand in Mountain Pose with feet slightly apart. Raise your arms to shoulder height in front of you, then bring them round behind your back and clasp your hands. Arch backwards to open the chest. Hold for a count of 10, breathing in position.



DAY
4

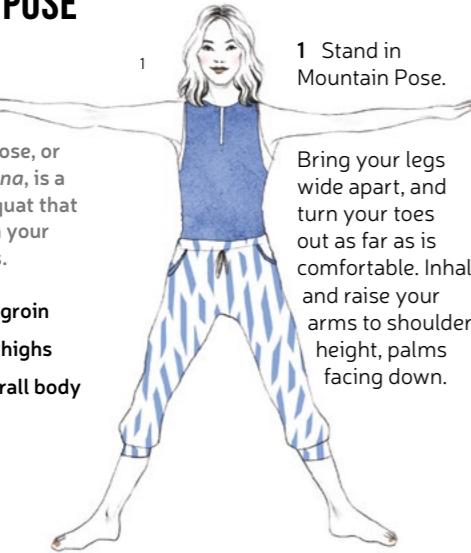
25

GODDESS POSE

3

The Goddess Pose, or *Utkata Konasana*, is a wide-legged squat that will strengthen your hips and thighs.

- Opens hips & groin
- Strengthens thighs
- Increases overall body strength

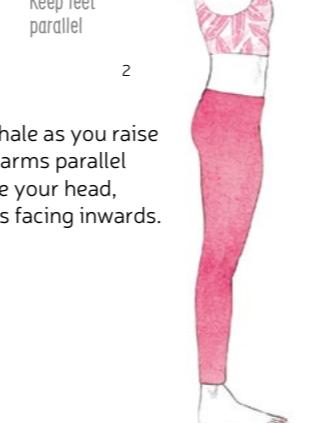


STANDING FORWARD BEND

4

We return to this intensive stretch. Without straining, try to bring your nose a little closer to your knees than yesterday.

- Strengthens back muscles
- Stretches hamstrings
- Tones digestive organs
- Can relieve headaches



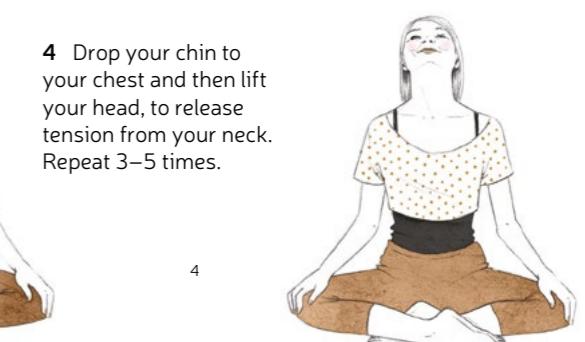
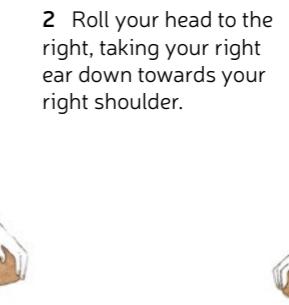
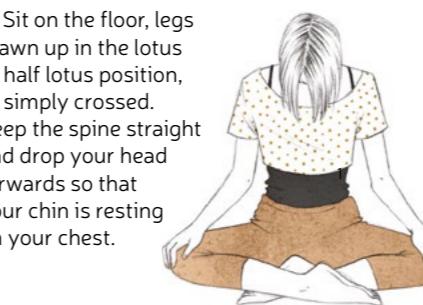
3 Exhale as you fold forwards from the hips. Grasp your elbows, and bring your nose as close to your knees as is comfortable. You may bend your knees slightly if the stretch is too intense. Hold for a count of 20, breathing in position.

To come out of the pose, place your hands on hips, and slowly raise your upper body to standing position as you exhale.

NECK STRETCH

5

Remember to move slowly and gently in this pose, as you remove built-up tension from the neck and shoulders.

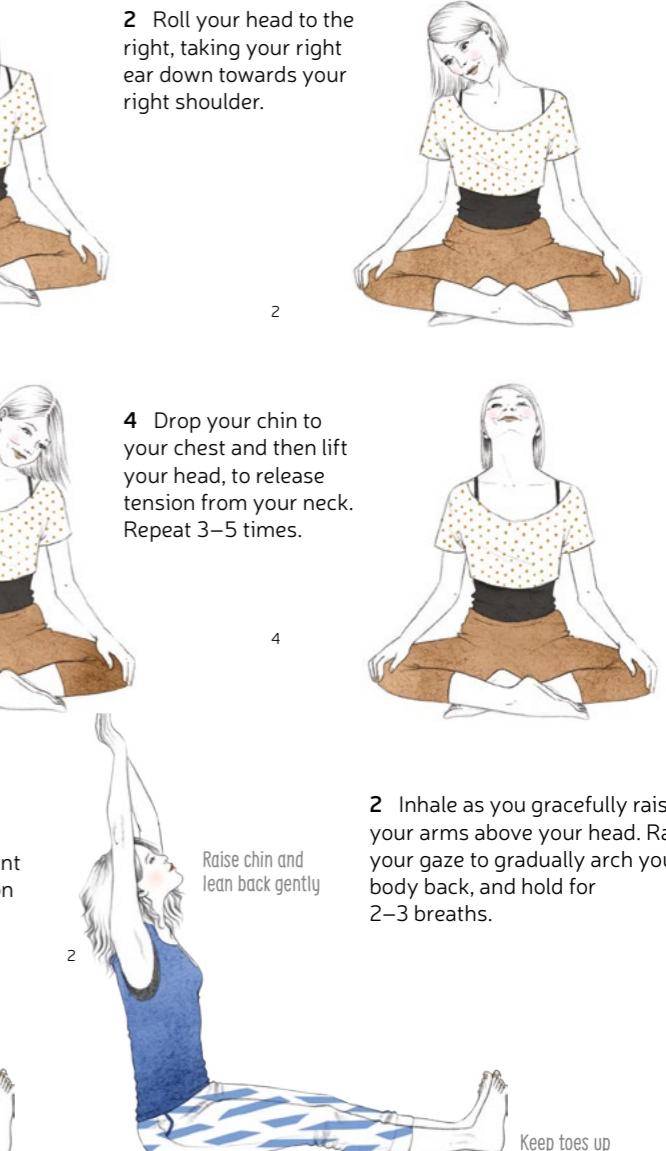
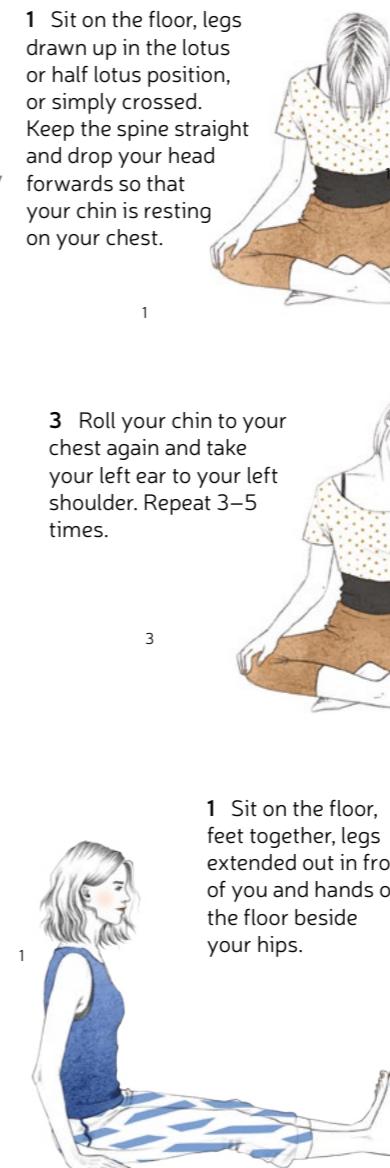


- Releases tension in neck & shoulders
- Relieves headaches
- Promotes relaxation

SEATED FORWARD BEND

6

We return to this Seated Forward Bend with the aim of deepening the stretch a little further. Gently bend your head as far as comfortable towards your knees.



RAISED LEG POSE

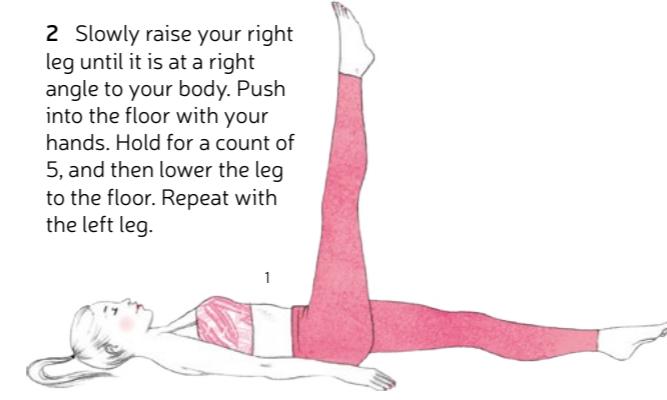
7

This gentle pose works wonders on your abs while strengthening your lower back.

1



- Tightens stomach muscles
- Improves digestion
- Strengthens back & hip & thigh muscles
- Energizes reproductive organs



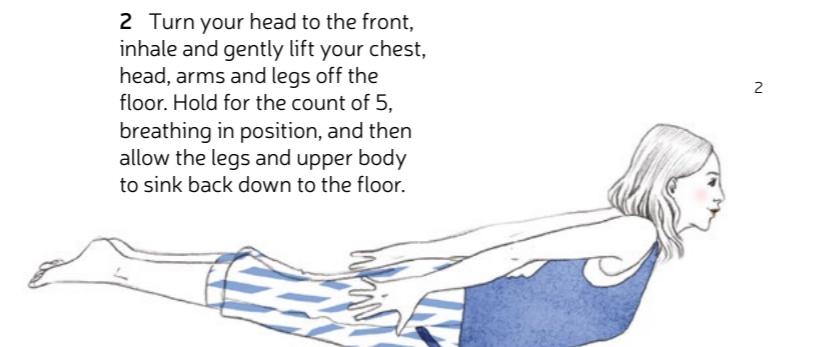
BOW POSE

8

This less intense adaption of the Bow will prepare your back for the full pose which we will learn on Day 9.



- 1 Lie on your stomach on the floor, head turned to one side.



- Strengthens spine
- Tones whole body
- Opens lungs
- Improves circulation

DAY

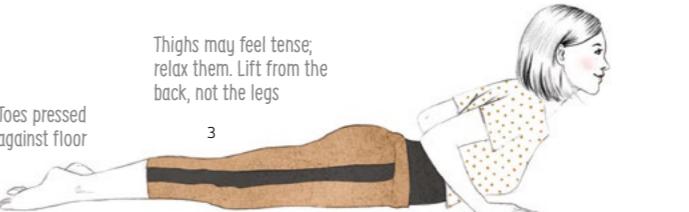
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28

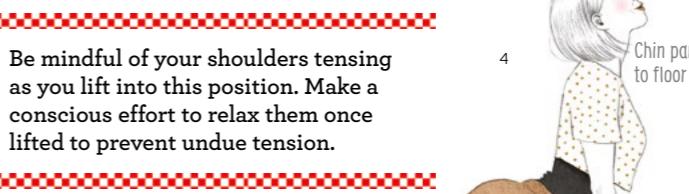
COBRA POSE

9

Today we will build on this back stretch, gradually increasing the intensity.



- Stretches & strengthens spine
- Stimulates brain
- Tones respiratory & digestive systems
- Energizes legs



Thighs may feel tense, relax them. Lift from the back, not the legs

Toes pressed against floor

3

4

Chin parallel to floor

Do not bend your head back further than shown in the illustration

CORPSE POSE

10

After you have been through all the poses in today's session and repeated them as set out below, set aside 5–10 minutes to enjoy the complete relaxation of the Corpse Pose.

1 Lie on your back with your arms at your sides, palms up. Let your feet drop open. Close your eyes. Starting from the soles of your feet, scan up to the crown of your head, releasing tension in your joints and muscles along the way. Invite peace into your mind and body. Use your breath as your focus to clear your mind and keep yourself present. Rest for 5–10 minutes.



- Relaxes mind & body after physical exertion
- Promotes deep relaxation
- Reduces fatigue

TODAY'S ROUTINE

AFTER you have learned the poses for today, perform them all in a dance-like sequence. Pause between poses if you need to rest. Practise the Corpse Pose just once at the end of the routine.

- 1 COMPLETE BREATH STANDING
- 2 CHEST OPENER
- 3 GODDESS POSE
- 4 STANDING FORWARD BEND
- 5 NECK STRETCH
- 6 SEATED FORWARD BEND
- 7 RAISED LEG POSE
- 8 BOW POSE
- 9 COBRA POSE
- 10 CORPSE POSE

Repeat 3 times
Repeat 3 times
Repeat 5 times
Repeat 3 times
Repeat 3 times
Repeat 3 times
Repeat 3 times
Repeat 5 times
Repeat 3 times
5–10 minutes

DAY

4

29

Mindful focus

Unlike the kind of workout you get at the gym, where the focus is on the physical body and goals are often achieved through gruelling tests of endurance, the exercises you perform in this book are designed to be practised in a calm and mindful way. As you begin each session, empty your mind of your daily thoughts and preoccupations and focus instead on the asanas as you work through them. Try to feel each stretch in all its detail, focusing on your muscles as they lengthen and extend to perform the poses. Train your mind to recognise the release of tension and experience the energy that emerges as you exercise. Remind yourself before each practise that in yoga mind and body work together to achieve a lean, toned and flexible body and a calm yet focused mind.

MOUNTAIN POSE

1

As we have seen, the Mountain Pose is the starting point of all the standing poses. Let's take time again today to focus on getting it right.

- Improves balance
- Tones legs
- Strengthens spine & abdominal muscles

1 Stand tall with your feet parallel, big toes together. Firm and lengthen your thigh muscles and allow your arms to relax by your sides, palms facing inwards. Push into all four corners of your feet, distributing your weight evenly. Draw your shoulder blades gently back. Your head is lifted, your spine long, tail bone tucked under, chin parallel to the floor. Focus on your breathing as you begin to inhale and exhale through your nose. Your stomach expands with each inhalation, and draws back in with each exhalation. Close your eyes if you are comfortable to, and take 5–8 deep breaths in this position.



MODIFICATION

Press your hands together in front of your chest in the *Anjali Mudra*, or Prayer Pose. Press the heels of your hands and all ten finger pads together while you draw your hands down towards your waist. Take 5–8 deep breaths in this position.



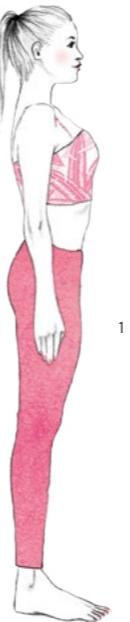
WARRIOR I

2

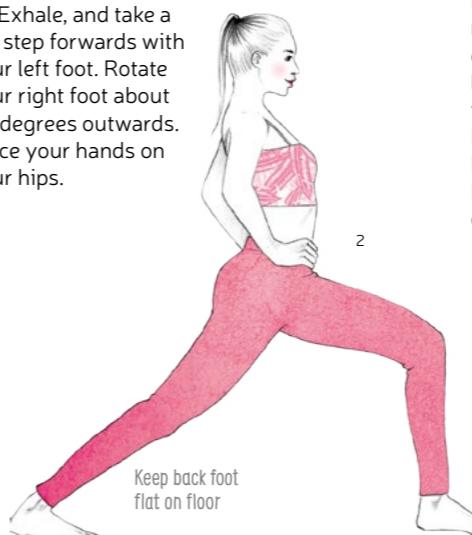
Warrior I, or *Virabhadrasana*, is a standing forward lunge. It will firm and strengthen your legs and open your chest and heart.

- Strengthens the legs, especially thighs
- Strengthens spine
- Stabilises hips, knees & ankles
- Increases lung capacity

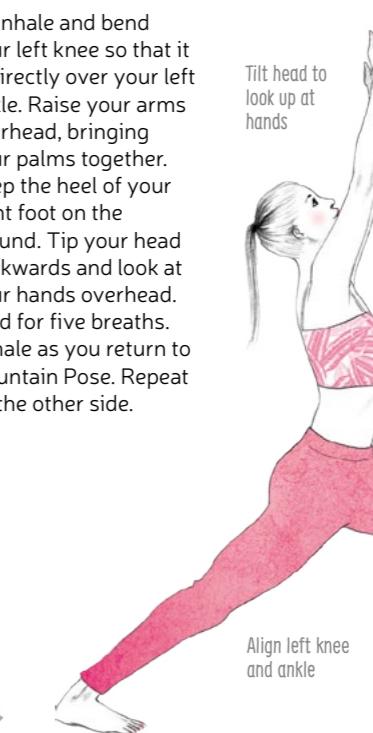
1 Stand in Mountain Pose, arms by your sides.



2 Exhale, and take a big step forwards with your left foot. Rotate your right foot about 45 degrees outwards. Place your hands on your hips.



3 Inhale and bend your left knee so that it is directly over your left ankle. Raise your arms overhead, bringing your palms together. Keep the heel of your right foot on the ground. Tip your head backwards and look at your hands overhead. Hold for five breaths. Exhale as you return to Mountain Pose. Repeat on the other side.



If you have shoulder injury or pain, high blood pressure or heart concerns, keep your arms parallel to the ground.

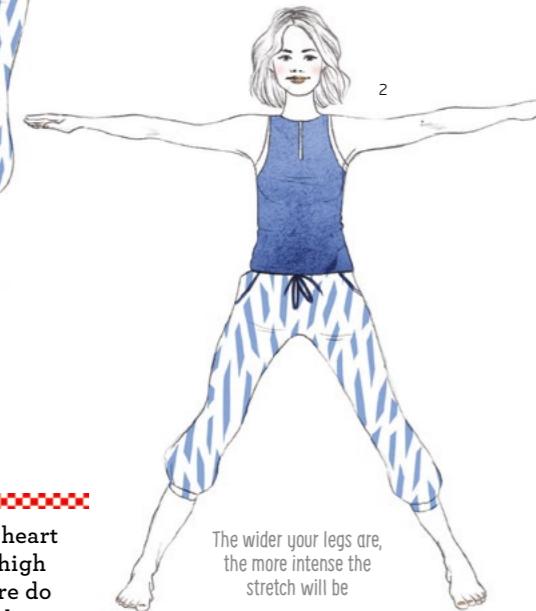
Skip this pose if you have knee pain or injury until better.

TRIANGLE POSE

Today we move a step further in the practise of this intense stretch.



- 1 Stand in Mountain Pose, palms pressed together in front of your chest.



The wider your legs are, the more intense the stretch will be

- Elongates & strengthens spine
- Tones legs

- Stimulates liver, spleen & kidneys
- Builds strength & determination

- 2 Step your feet to about 2–3 feet apart. Raise your arms to shoulder level as you inhale, palms facing down.



- 3 Turn your right foot and leg out to the side to 90 degrees. Turn your left foot slightly towards right heel.

If you have a heart condition or high blood pressure do not go beyond Step 4. Repeat on both sides.



- 4 Place your left hand on your hip. Exhale as you slide your right arm down your right leg as far as it will go without straining. Keep your chest open.

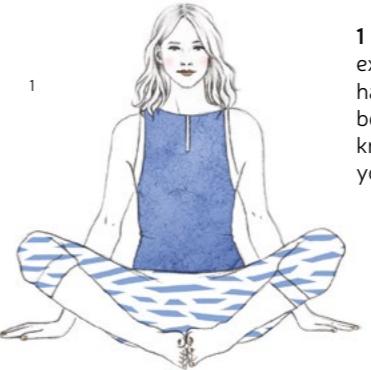


Rest hand on shin, ankle or the floor, but don't lean on, or put pressure on knee

DAY
5
32

BOUNDED ANGLE POSE

Press your knees down slightly further today than before, without straining.



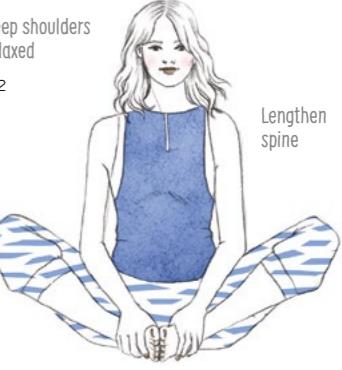
1 Sit with your legs extended in front of you, hands resting on floor behind. Gently bend your knees and press the soles of your feet together.

- 2 Bring your hands to the front and clasp your feet.



3 Exhale, and gently ease your knees down towards the floor. Hold the most extreme position for a count of 20, breathing in position.

- 4 Release the pose by raising your knees up to your chest and sliding your hands up to the knees.



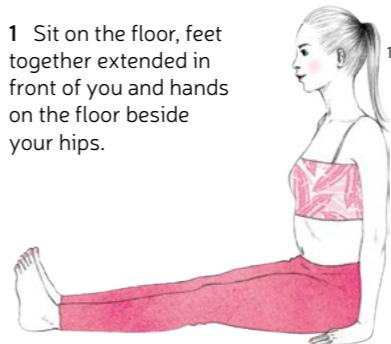
Keep shoulders relaxed
Lengthen spine



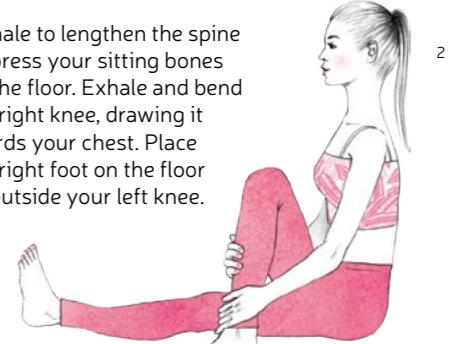
- Benefits urinary and reproductive organs
- Relieves menstrual discomfort
- Stretches thigh muscles
- Relieves mild depression

HALF TWIST

This gentle twist not only realigns the spine but will also firm your waistline.



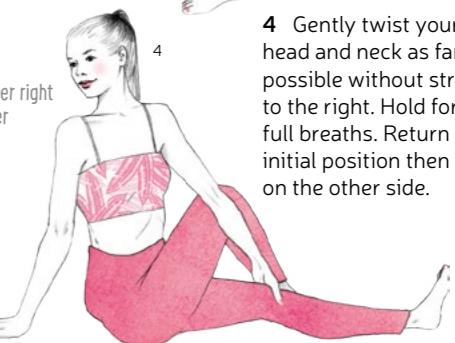
- 1 Sit on the floor, feet together extended in front of you and hands on the floor beside your hips.



- 2 Inhale to lengthen the spine and press your sitting bones into the floor. Exhale and bend your right knee, drawing it towards your chest. Place your right foot on the floor just outside your left knee.



- 3 Place your right hand on the floor behind you and bring your left hand over to clasp your left knee.



- 4 Gently twist your head and neck as far as possible without straining to the right. Hold for 5 full breaths. Return to the initial position then repeat on the other side.

- Massages digestive organs, aiding elimination
- Stimulates lymph flow
- Strengthens immune system
- Calms nervous system

DAY
5
33

RAISED LEG POSE

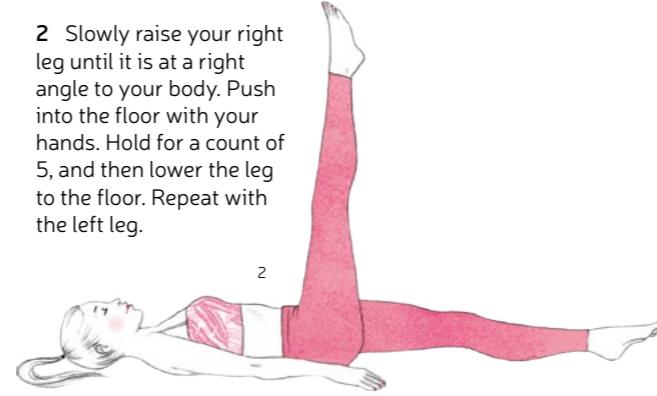
6

This pose will strengthen and firm your abs, as well as your lower back, hips and thighs.

1



- Strengthens spine
- Stimulates brain
- Tones respiratory & digestive systems
- Energizes legs

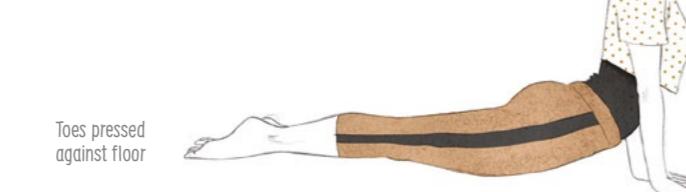


COBRA POSE

7

Today we return to this back stretch, gradually increasing the intensity.

- Stretches & strengthens spine
- Stimulates brain
- Tones respiratory & digestive systems
- Energizes legs



DAY

5

34

1 Lie on your back with legs and arms straight. Your feet should be together and palms facing downwards on the floor next to the body.

2 Slowly raise your right leg until it is at a right angle to your body. Push into the floor with your hands. Hold for a count of 5, and then lower the leg to the floor. Repeat with the left leg.

1 Lie flat on your stomach, head turned to the side, arms extended along your sides.

2 Turn your head and rest your forehead on the floor. Place your hands palms downwards at shoulder level. Relax your thighs.

3 As you exhale, press into your hands and slowly raise your trunk.

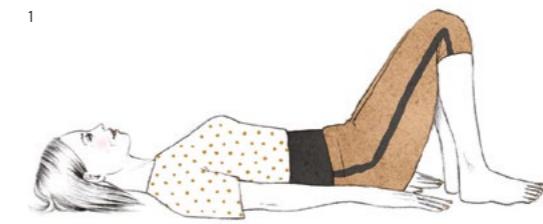
Do not tilt head any further than shown

4 Keep lifting your trunk as far as is comfortable. Gently tilt your head backwards until your chin is parallel with the floor. Hold for a count of 15, breathing in position. Gradually lower your trunk to the floor, one vertebra at a time.

HALF BRIDGE POSE

8

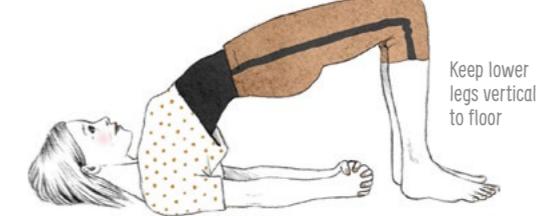
The Half Bridge Pose stretches the spine, but also reduces feelings of stress and fatigue.



2



3



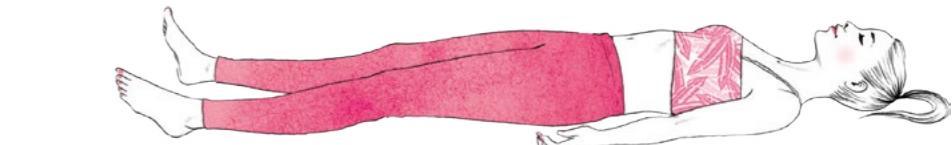
CORPSE POSE

9

After you have been through all the poses in today's session and repeated them as set out below, set aside 5–10 minutes to enjoy the complete relaxation of the Corpse Pose.

- Relaxes mind & body after physical exertion
- Promotes deep relaxation
- Reduces fatigue

1 Lie on your back with your arms at your sides, palms up. Let your feet drop open. Close your eyes. Starting from the soles of your feet, scan up to the crown of your head, releasing tension in your joints and muscles along the way. Invite peace into your mind and body. Use your breath as your focus to clear



TODAY'S ROUTINE

REPEAT the poses in a flowing dance-like sequence. Practise the Corpse Pose just once at the end of the routine.

- 1 MOUNTAIN POSE
- 2 WARRIOR I
- 3 TRIANGLE POSE
- 4 BOUND ANGLE POSE
- 5 HALF TWIST
- 6 RAISED LEG POSE
- 7 COBRA POSE
- 8 HALF BRIDGE
- 9 CORPSE POSE

1 Lie on your back, knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Place your arms along your sides, palms facing down.

2 Exhale as you gently lift your hips and lower back off the floor. Place your hands just above your hips and lift your body.

3 Link your arms under your body and hold for a count of 5, breathing in position. To exit the pose, return your hands to your sides and lower your spine to the floor, one vertebra at a time.

your mind and keep yourself present. Rest for 5–10 minutes.

Hold for 2–3 minutes
Repeat 3 times
Repeat 3 times
Repeat 5 times
Repeat 3 times
Repeat 3 times
Repeat 3 times
5–10 minutes

DAY
5
35

DAY 6

A yoga diet

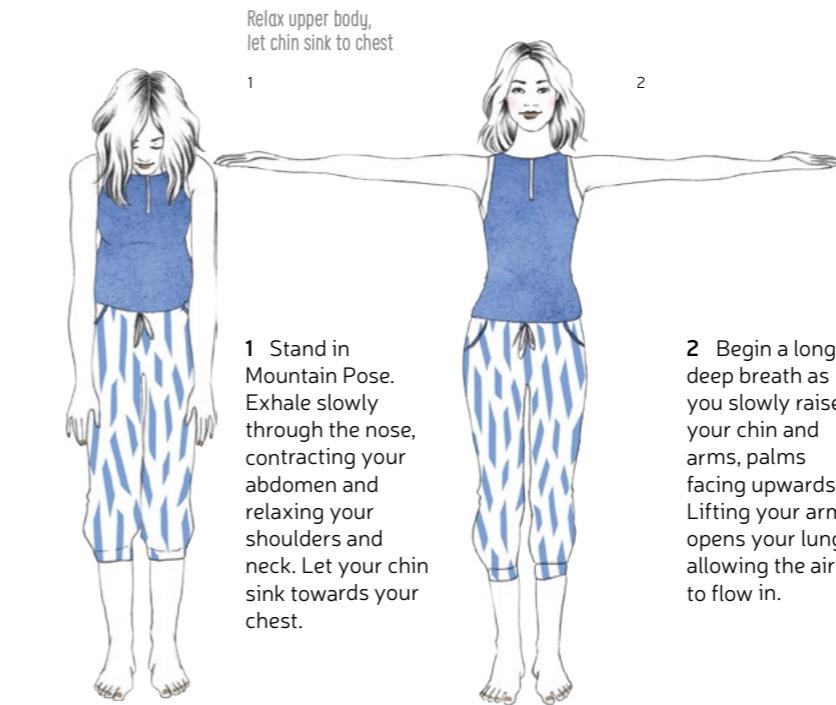
Along with the air we breath, water, sunshine and sleep, food is an important creator of *prana*, or “life force.” The food we choose to eat not only influences our physical and mental health, but also reflects our level of development and affects the way we interact with the world. The classic yogic diet is pure (ethical) and vegan, avoiding any foods that involve killing or harming animals. Adhering to this diet facilitates the development of *sattva* (or “purity,” in Sanskrit), and not only nourishes our bodies but also our minds and souls. Sattvic foods are grown naturally, in harmony with nature, and promote a sense of awareness, love, peace and connection with all other sentient beings. We will discuss the sattvic diet in greater detail on Day Nine.

COMPLETE BREATH STANDING

1

We begin again today with this energising breath. Focus on coordinating your breathing and movement, inhaling as you rise onto your toe tips and exhaling as you lower your arms and heels to the floor.

- Increases energy & focus
- Strengthens spine
- Tones arms & upper body
- Improves balance & posture



Relax upper body, let chin sink to chest

1

- 1 Stand in Mountain Pose. Exhale slowly through the nose, contracting your abdomen and relaxing your shoulders and neck. Let your chin sink towards your chest.
- 2 Begin a long, deep breath as you slowly raise your chin and arms, palms facing upwards. Lifting your arms opens your lungs allowing the air to flow in.

SIDE BEND

2

As flexibility increases, change the position of your hands to namaste, with palms pressed together.

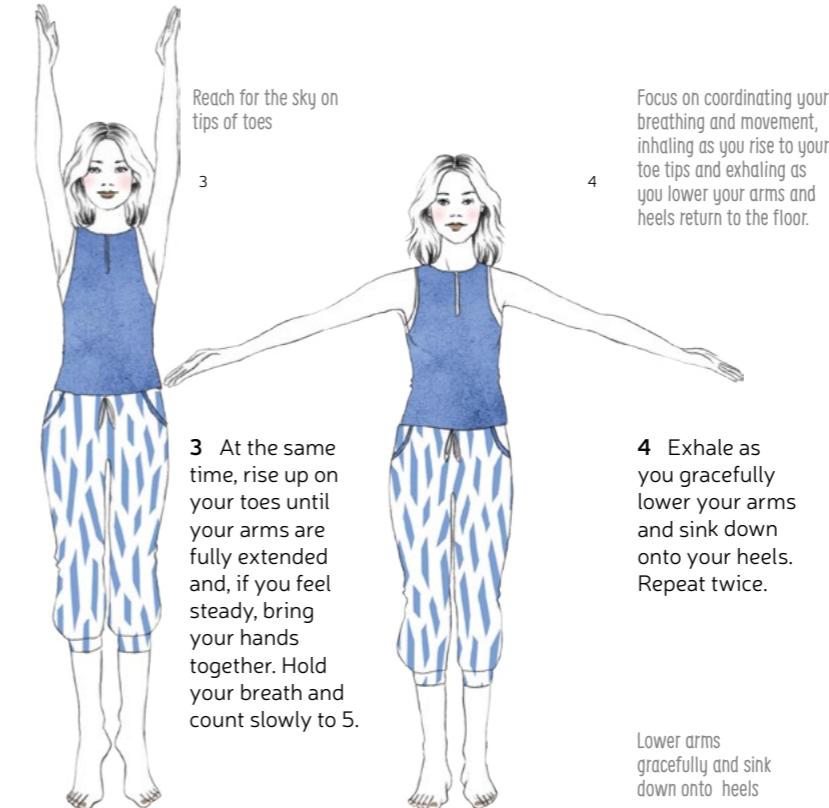
- Lengthens spine
- Targets “love handles”
- Tones arms



Steeple or namaste hands

1 Stand in Mountain Pose, hands by your sides. Jump, or step, your feet to about 2 feet apart and inhale as you gracefully raise your arms. Clasp your hands above your head, keeping index fingers straight in a “steeple” position, or pressing the palms together in the “namaste” position. This will increase the stretch a little.

Jump or step feet about two feet apart

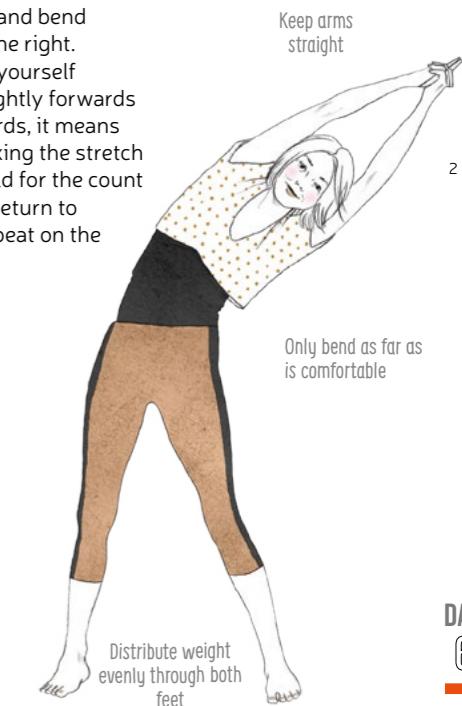


Reach for the sky on tips of toes

3

- 3 At the same time, rise up on your toes until your arms are fully extended and, if you feel steady, bring your hands together. Hold your breath and count slowly to 5.
- 4 Exhale as you gracefully lower your arms and sink down onto your heels. Repeat twice.

Lower arms gracefully and sink down onto heels



Only bend as far as is comfortable

DAY
6

37

CHEST OPENER

3

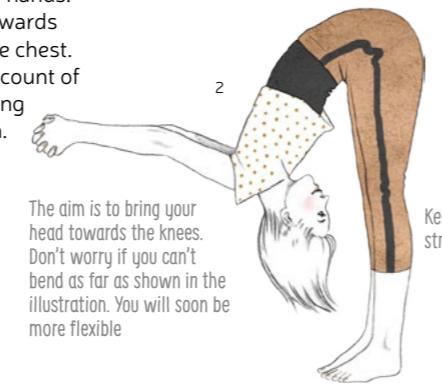
Move a little deeper into the stretch today, both as you arch backwards and bend forwards towards your knees.

- Tones & firms arms
- Tones & firms bust
- Relieves tension in neck & shoulders
- Realigns spine



1 Stand in Mountain Pose with feet slightly apart. Raise your arms to shoulder height in front of you, then bring them round behind your back and clasp your hands. Arch backwards to open the chest. Hold for a count of 10, breathing in position.

The aim is to bring your head towards the knees. Don't worry if you can't bend as far as shown in the illustration. You will soon be more flexible



2 Gently bend forwards, raising your arms behind your back. Don't worry about how far you are bending, just feel the stretch, and listen to your body to avoid over-stretching. Hold for a count of 20 as you breathe, and then exhale as you return to an upright position.

Keep legs straight

STANDING FORWARD BEND

4

We return to this intensive stretch. Without straining, try to bring your nose a little closer to your knees than previously.

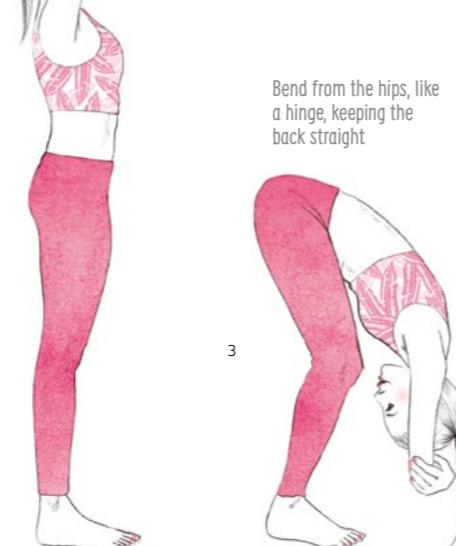
- Strengthens back muscles
- Stretches hamstrings
- Tones digestive organs
- Can relieve headaches



1 Stand in Mountain Pose, with your feet just slightly apart.



2 Inhale as you raise your arms parallel above your head, palms facing inwards.



Bend from the hips, like a hinge, keeping the back straight

3 Exhale as you fold forwards from the hips. Grasp your elbows, and bring your nose as close to your knees as is comfortable. You may bend your knees slightly if the stretch is too intense. Hold for a count of 20, breathing in position.

In the full pose the legs are straight. In the meantime you can bend them a little

To come out of the pose, place your hands on hips, and slowly raise your upper body to standing position as you exhale.

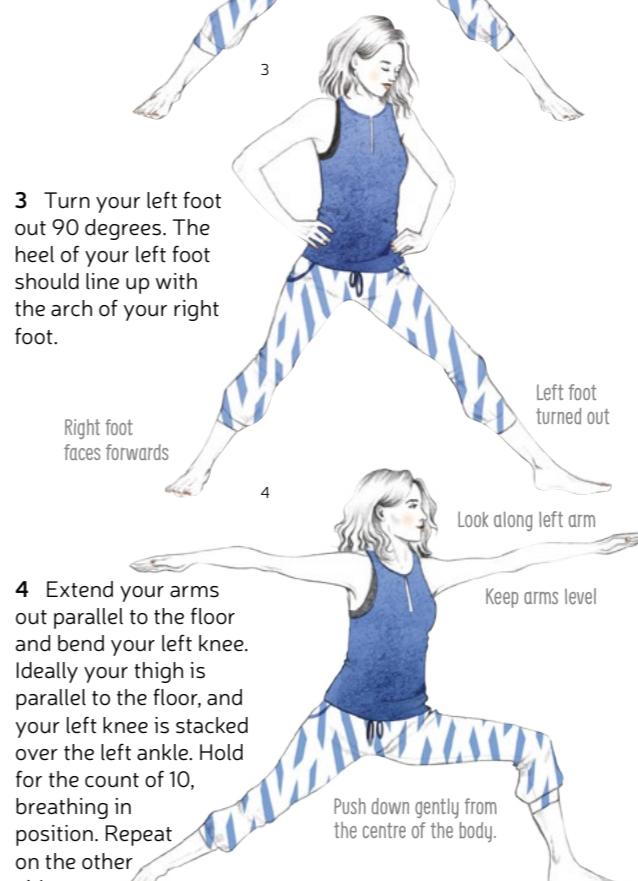
WARRIOR II

5

Warrior II is a gentle lunge that opens the chest, shoulders and hips and tones the legs.

- Strengthens hips
- Tones legs
- Opens & strengthens chest & shoulders
- Tones abs

2 Step your feet widely apart. Place your hands on your hips.



3 Turn your left foot out 90 degrees. The heel of your left foot should line up with the arch of your right foot.



4 Extend your arms out parallel to the floor and bend your left knee. Ideally your thigh is parallel to the floor, and your left knee is stacked over the left ankle. Hold for the count of 10, breathing in position. Repeat on the other side.



NECK STRETCH

6

This pose relieves stiffness in the neck and shoulders.

- Releases tension in neck & shoulders
- Relieves headaches
- Promotes relaxation



1 Sit on the floor, legs drawn up. Keep the spine straight and drop your head gently forwards so that your chin is resting on your chest.



2 Roll your head to the right, taking your right ear down towards your right shoulder.



3 Roll your chin to your chest again and take your left ear to your left shoulder. Repeat 3–5 times.



4 Drop your chin to your chest and then lift your head, to release tension from your neck. Repeat 3–5 times.

DAY

6

38

DAY

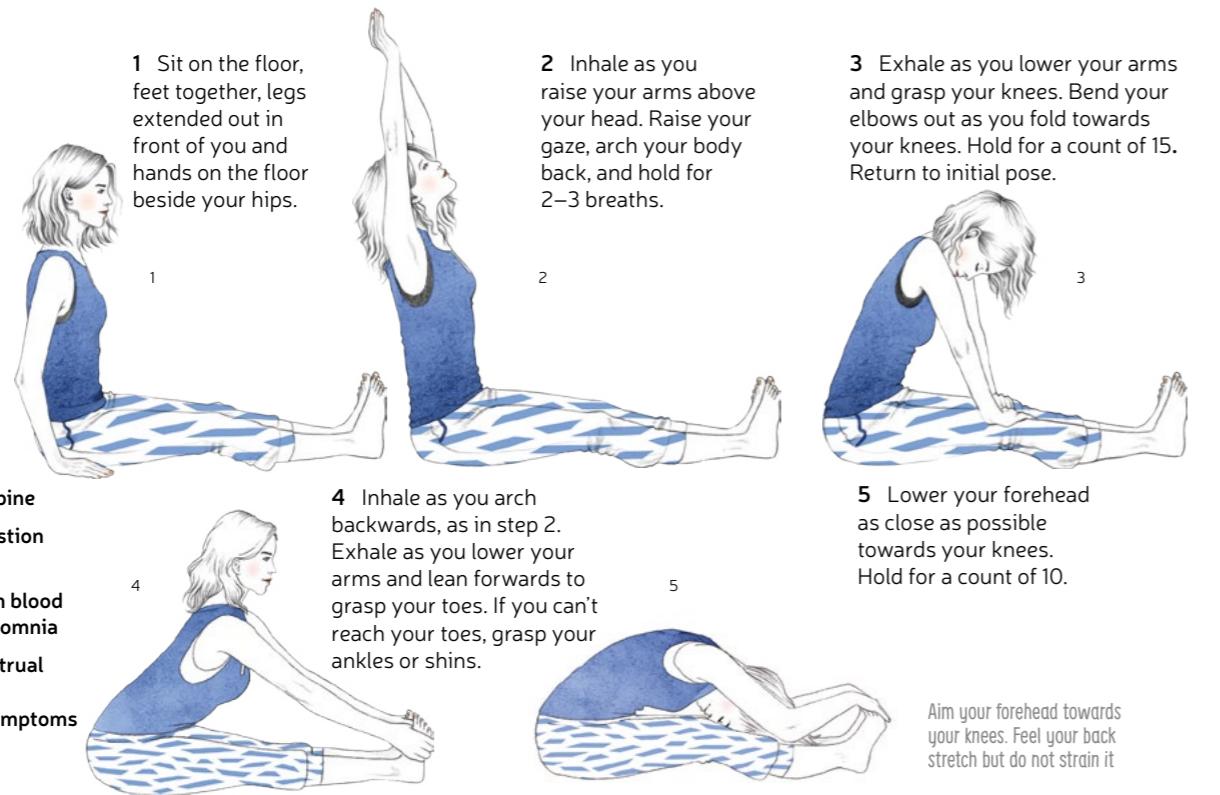
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39

SEATED FORWARD BEND

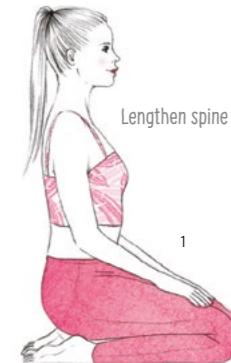
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Today we will take this intense forward bend a step further.



PLANK POSE

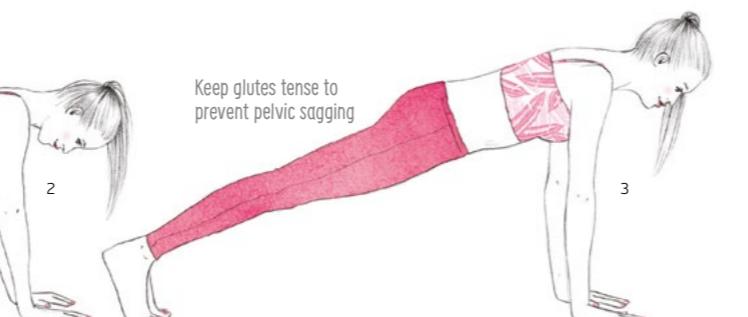
8



1 Kneel on the floor. Place your hands on your thighs and lengthen your spine.



2 Move onto all fours, and tuck your hips, as though bringing your pelvis up towards your ribs. Keep your shoulders and knees aligned with your hips.



3 Inhale and extend your legs, rise onto your toes, locking your knees and elbows and keeping your body as straight as possible. Hold for the count of 15, breathing in position.

If you have weakened or painful wrists, use the forearms instead of the palms as your front grounding point.

DAY

6

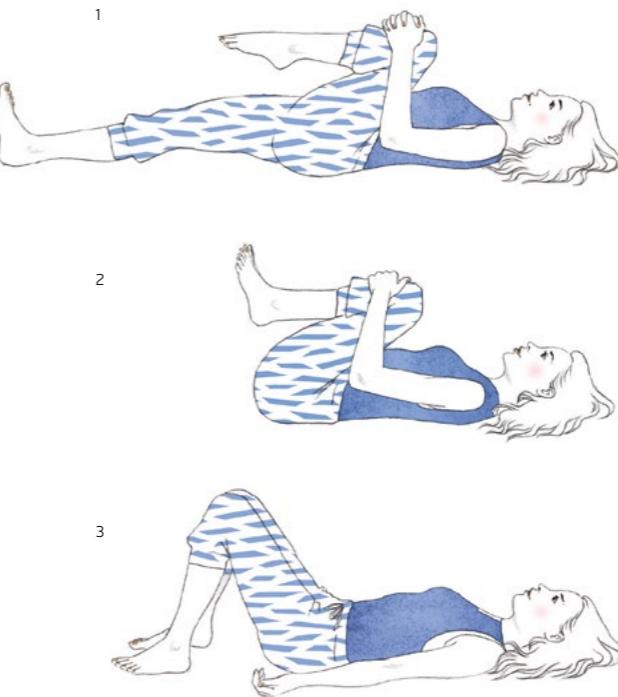
40

KNEES-TO-CHEST POSE

9

The Sanskrit name for this pose, *Apanasana*, explains its purpose: *apana* means “downward-flowing life force” and refers to the body’s ability to eliminate impurities through the lungs and excretory systems.

- Provides relief from indigestion, bloating, acid reflux, flatulence & constipation
- Improves symptoms of IBS



1 Lie on your back with your legs extended. Draw your left knee up towards your chest. Clasp your hands around the knee. Gently squeeze your leg towards you. Repeat with the other leg.

2 Return to the first position on your back. Now draw both knees up towards your chest. Clasp your hands around the knees. Gently squeeze your legs towards you.

3 Let your legs drop down gently to the floor. Leave your knees bent about 45 cm (18 inches) apart. Relax into the floor and take 2–3 complete breaths.

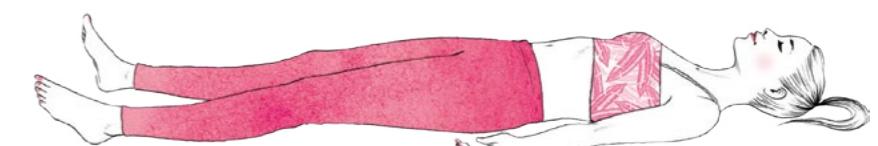
CORPSE POSE

10

After you have been through all the poses in today's session and repeated them as set out below, set aside 5–10 minutes to enjoy the complete relaxation of the Corpse Pose.

- Relaxes mind & body after physical exertion
- Promotes deep relaxation
- Reduces fatigue

1 Lie on your back with your arms at your sides, palms up. Let your feet drop open. Close your eyes. Starting from the soles of your feet, scan up to the crown of your head, releasing tension in your joints and muscles along the way. Invite peace into your mind and body.



TODAY'S ROUTINE

REPEAT today's poses in a flowing dance-like sequence. Practise the Corpse Pose just once at the end of the routine.

- 1 COMPLETE STANDING BREATH
- 2 SIDE BEND
- 3 STANDING FORWARD BEND
- 4 CHEST OPENER
- 5 WARRIOR II
- 6 NECK STRETCH
- 7 SEATED FORWARD BEND
- 8 PLANK POSE
- 9 KNEES-TO-CHEST POSE
- 10 CORPSE POSE

Repeat 3 times
Repeat twice
Repeat 3 times
Repeat 3 times
5–10 minutes

DAY

6

41

Catch-Up

Our catch-up session includes all the asanas learned in the last seven days. Today you will practise them all again, repeating each one two or three times. Over the last week, you have learned an impressive 21 fundamental asanas, many of which involve the use of muscles that you may not have exercised in years, or that manipulate the body in ways that are totally new for you. Take time today to consider the progress you have made. No two bodies are alike and you may find that some poses are still quite difficult. You may also have discovered that some days you are more supple than others so that an exercise that went well yesterday is harder again today. This is perfectly normal. The important thing is that you have made progress and that our gentle day-by-day approach is bringing results that you can feel and appreciate.

MOUNTAIN POSE

1

The Mountain Pose is performed at the start of a practise session because it focuses your attention inward. It also highlights the importance of a strong, balanced posture.



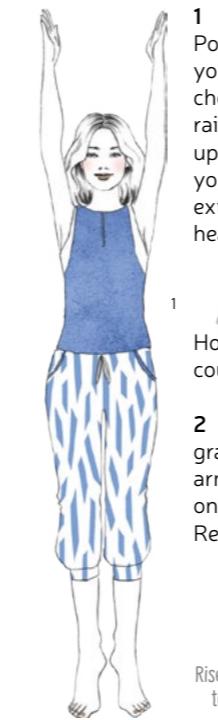
Draw shoulder blades back, opening chest

1 Stand with your feet parallel, as close together as is comfortable. Breathe slowly and deeply through the nose. Firm and lengthen your thigh muscles. Draw your shoulder blades together slightly. Hold your chin parallel to the ground. Breathe slowly and deeply five times.

COMPLETE BREATH STANDING

3

This energising warm-up pose combines movement with breathing.



1 Stand in Mountain Pose. Exhale and let your chin sink to your chest. Inhale as you raise your arms. Rise up on your toes until your arms are fully extended above your head.

1 Hold your breath and count slowly to 5.

2 Exhale as you gracefully lower your arms and sink down onto your heels. Repeat 5 times.

Rise up onto toe tips

- Increases energy & focus
- Strengthens spine
- Tones arms & upper body
- Improves balance & posture

SIDE BEND

2

This hip stretch will help reduce flabbiness at the waist and hips.



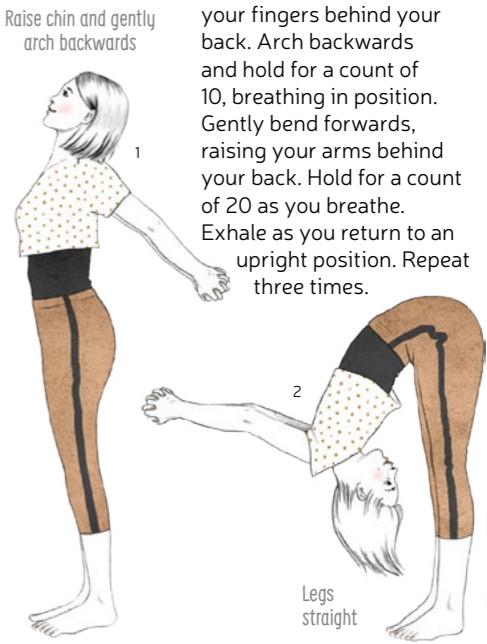
Arms straight

1 Stand in Mountain Pose. Step your feet about 2 feet apart and inhale as you raise your arms. Clasp your hands above your head, in either the "steeple" or "namaste" positions. Exhale and bend slowly to the right. Hold for the count of 5, then return to centre. Repeat on the other side. Repeat on both sides twice.

CHEST OPENER

4

This intense forward bend stretches the spine and hamstrings.



1 Stand in Mountain Pose, feet slightly apart. Interlock your fingers behind your back. Arch backwards and hold for a count of 10, breathing in position. Gently bend forwards, raising your arms behind your back. Hold for a count of 20 as you breathe. Exhale as you return to an upright position. Repeat three times.

Legs straight

DAY
7

43

WARRIOR II

5

Warrior II is a gentle lunge that strengthens your whole body.



3 Turn your left foot out 90 degrees. The heel of your left foot should line up with the arch of your right foot.

- Strengthens hips
 - Tones legs
 - Opens & strengthens chest & shoulders
 - Tones abs
- Right foot faces forwards
Look along left arm
Keep arms level
Push down gently from the centre of the body

DAY

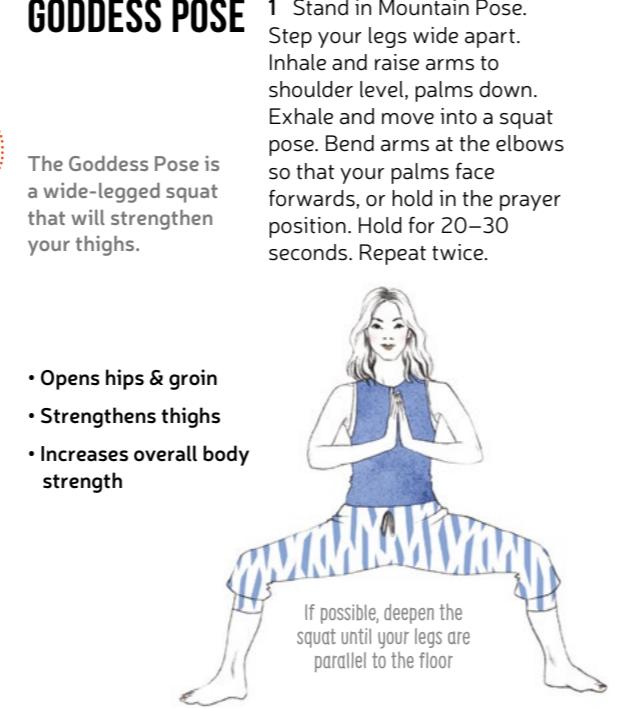
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44

GODDESS POSE

6

The Goddess Pose is a wide-legged squat that will strengthen your thighs.



- Opens hips & groin
 - Strengthens thighs
 - Increases overall body strength
- If possible, deepen the squat until your legs are parallel to the floor

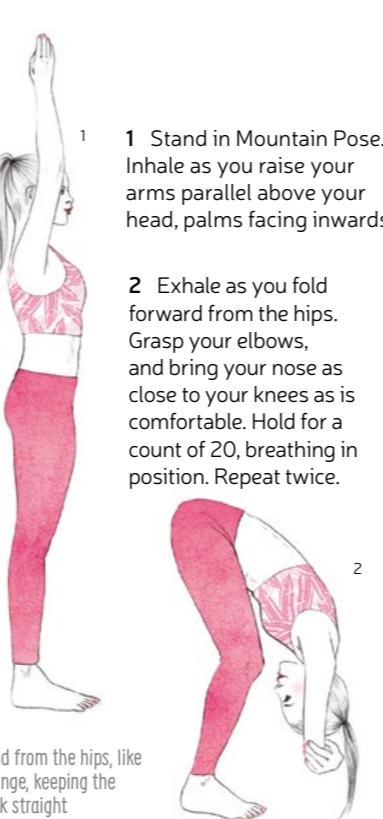
STANDING FORWARD BEND

7

We return to this intensive stretch. Without straining, bring your nose as close to your knees as possible.

- Strengthens back muscles
- Stretches hamstrings
- Tones digestive organs
- Can relieve headaches

1 Stand in Mountain Pose. Step your legs wide apart. Inhale and raise arms to shoulder level, palms down. Exhale and move into a squat pose. Bend arms at the elbows so that your palms face forwards, or hold in the prayer position. Hold for 20–30 seconds. Repeat twice.



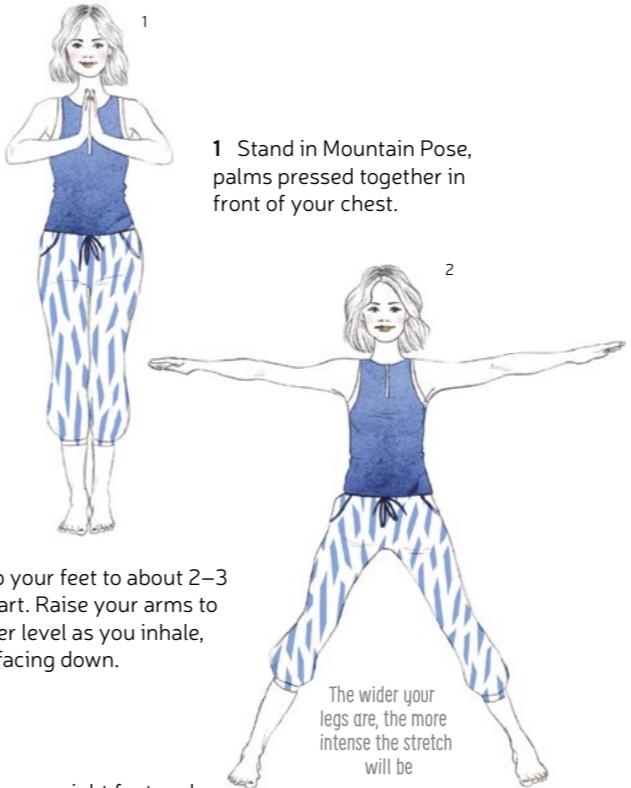
Bend from the hips, like a hinge, keeping the back straight

TRIANGLE POSE

8

We return to this intense stretch.

- Elongates & strengthens spine
- Tones legs
- Stimulates liver, spleen & kidneys
- Builds strength & determination



2 Step your feet to about 2–3 feet apart. Raise your arms to shoulder level as you inhale, palms facing down.

The wider your legs are, the more intense the stretch will be

3 Turn your right foot and leg out to the side to 90 degrees. Turn your left foot slightly towards right heel.

4 Place your left hand on your hip. Exhale as you slide your right arm down your right leg as far as it will go without straining. Keep your chest open.

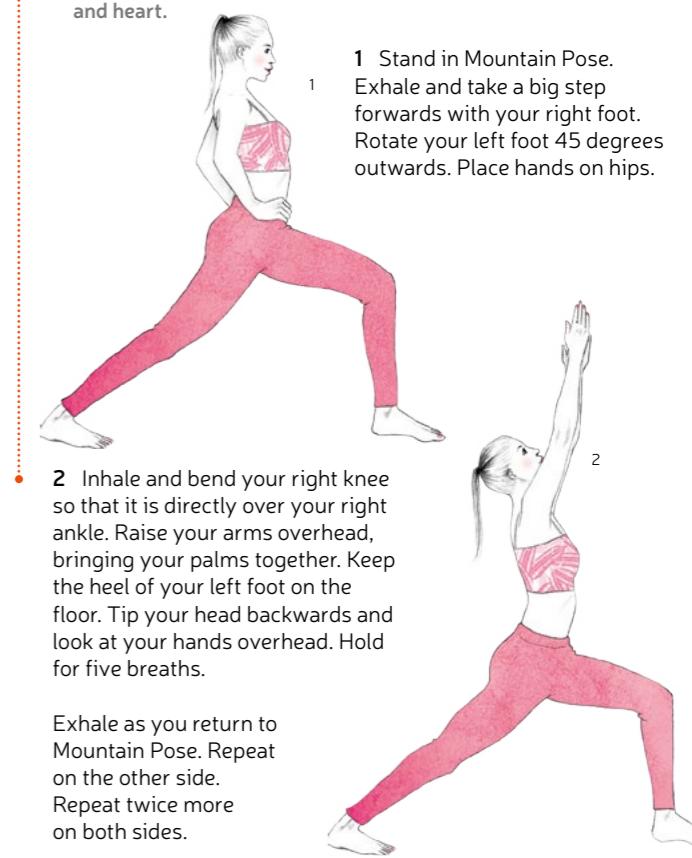
5 Extend your left arm close to your ear, keeping your elbow straight. Look straight ahead. Hold for a count of 15, breathing in position. Repeat on both sides twice.



WARRIOR I

9

This standing forward lunge will strengthen your legs and open your chest and heart.



Exhale as you return to Mountain Pose. Repeat on the other side. Repeat twice more on both sides.

- Strengthens the legs, especially thighs
- Strengthens spine
- Stabilises hips, knees & ankles
- Increases lung capacity

DAY

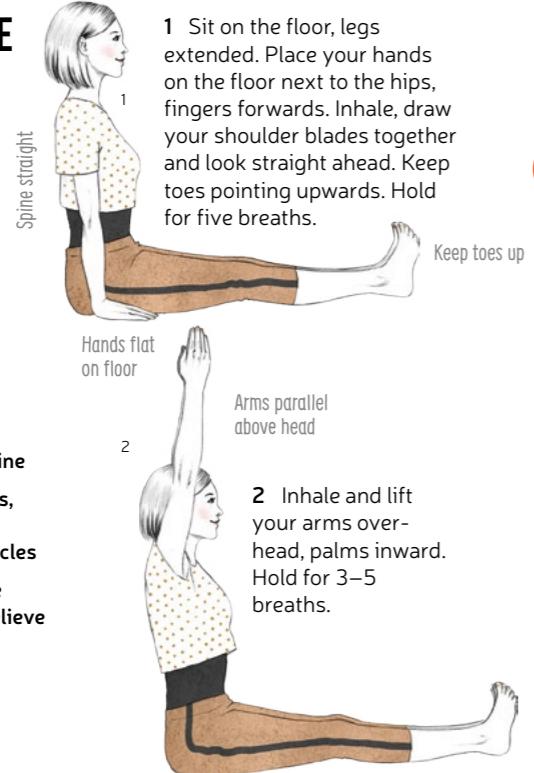
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45

STAFF POSE

10

The Staff Pose is the basis of many seated poses.



- Strengthens spine
- Stretches thighs, lower back & abdominal muscles
- Tones digestive organs & can relieve heartburn

NECK STRETCH

12

This pose relieves tension and stiffness in the neck and shoulders.

Don't roll your head in a full circle as this will put unnecessary strain on your spine and nervous system.



- Releases tension in neck & shoulders
- Relieves headaches
- Promotes relaxation

DAY

7

46

BOUND ANGLE POSE

11

1 Sit on the floor, legs extended. Place your hands on the floor next to the hips, fingers forwards. Inhale, draw your shoulder blades together and look straight ahead. Keep toes pointing upwards. Hold for five breaths.



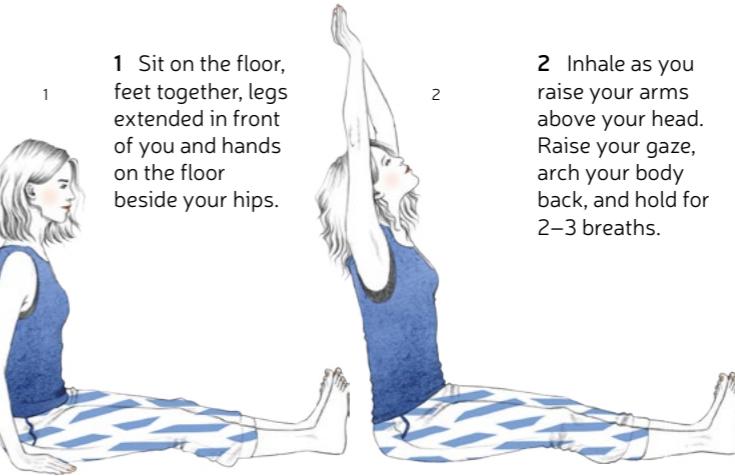
This stretch opens the hips and lengthens the muscles in the inner thighs.

- Benefits urinary and reproductive organs
 - Relieves menstrual discomfort
 - Stretches thigh muscles
 - Relieves mild depression
- 2 Exhale, and ease your knees down towards the floor. Hold for a count of 20, breathing in position. Repeat three times.
Press knees towards floor

SEATED FORWARD BEND

13

Try to bend a little further forwards each time you practise this stretch.



1

2

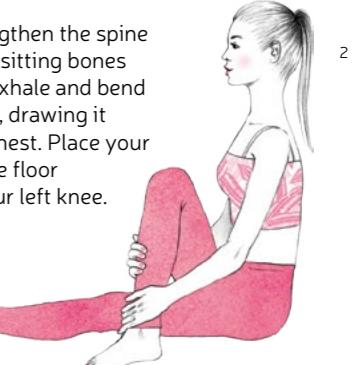
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- Strengthens spine
- Improves digestion
- Can help with infertility, high blood pressure & insomnia
- Relieves menstrual discomfort & menopause symptoms



4 Inhale as you arch backwards, as in step 2. Exhale as you lower your arms and lean forwards to grasp your toes. If you can't reach your toes, grasp your ankles or shins.

5 Lower your forehead as close as possible towards your knees. Hold for a count of 10. Repeat both positions twice more.



4 Gently twist your head and neck as far as possible without straining to the right. Hold for 5 full breaths. Return to the initial position then repeat twice more on each side.

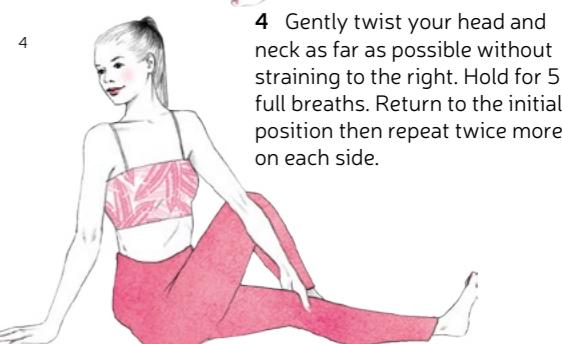
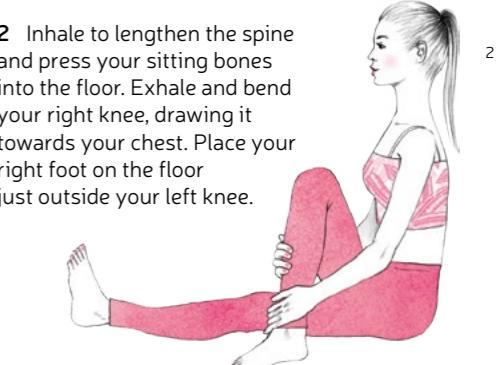
HALF TWIST

14

This gentle twist not only realigns the spine but will also firm your waistline.



- Massages digestive organs, aiding elimination
- Stimulates lymph flow
- Strengthens immune system
- Calms nervous system



DAY

7

47

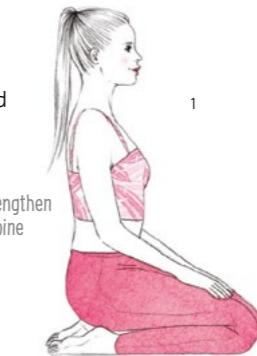
PLANK POSE

15

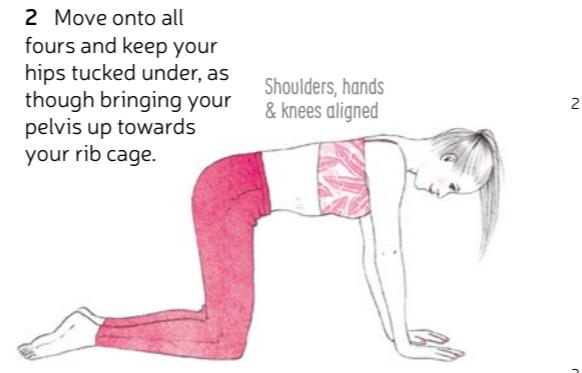
The Plank Pose strengthens core muscles, as well as arms, back and buttocks.

- Strengthens arms, shoulders, back & legs
- Tones abs & glutes

1 Kneel on the floor. Place your hands on your thighs and lengthen your spine.

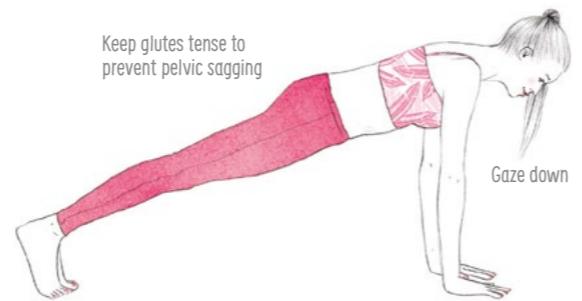


2 Move onto all fours and keep your hips tucked under, as though bringing your pelvis up towards your rib cage.



2

3 Inhale and extend your legs, rise onto your toes, locking your knees and elbows and keeping your body as straight as possible. Hold for the count of 20, breathing in position. Repeat twice.



3

RAISED LEG POSE

16

This pose is great for firming abs, hips and thighs.

- Tightens abs
- Improves digestion
- Strengthens back & hip & thigh muscles
- Energizes reproductive organs

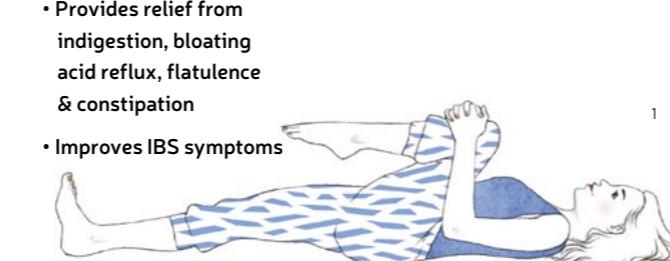


1 Lie on your back with legs and arms straight. Raise your right leg until it is at a right angle to your body. Hold for a count of 5, then lower the leg to the floor. Repeat with the left leg.

KNEES-TO-CHEST POSE

This pose helps relieve digestive problems.

- Provides relief from indigestion, bloating, acid reflux, flatulence & constipation
- Improves IBS symptoms



1

1 Lie on your back with your legs extended. Draw your left knee up towards your chest. Clasp your hands around the knee. Gently squeeze your leg towards you. Repeat with the other leg.

2 Now draw both knees up towards your chest and clasp your knees. Squeeze your legs towards you. Repeat steps 1 and 2 twice.



2

DAY

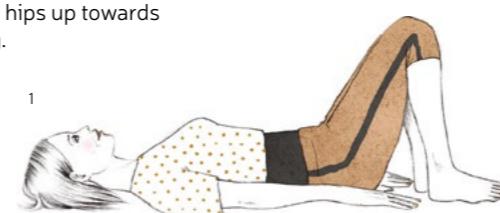
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48

HALF BRIDGE POSE

18

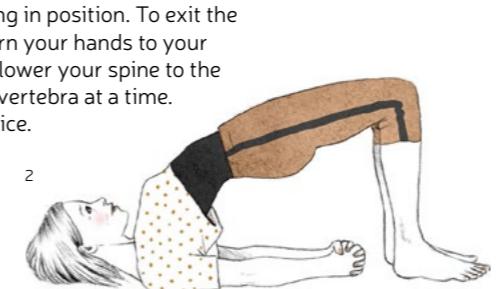
The Half Bridge Pose stretches the spine, but also reduces feelings of stress and fatigue.

- Opens chest
- Relieves menstrual pain
- Stimulates thyroid gland
- Energises, tones & strengthens glutes & legs



1

1 Lie on your back, knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Place your arms along your sides, facing down, and push your hips up towards the ceiling.



2

2 Link your arms under your body and hold for a count of 5, breathing in position. To exit the pose, return your hands to your sides and lower your spine to the floor, one vertebra at a time. Repeat twice.

CORPSE POSE

20

Set aside 5–10 minutes at the end of the session to enjoy the complete relaxation of the corpse pose.



1 Lie on your back with your arms at your sides, palms up. Let your feet drop open. Close your eyes. Starting from the soles of your feet,

scan up to the crown of your head, releasing tension in your joints and muscles along the way. Invite peace into your mind and body.

DAY
7
49

- Stretches & strengthens spine
- Stimulates brain
- Tones respiratory & digestive systems
- Energizes legs

COBRA POSE

19

Today we will build on this back stretch, gradually increasing the intensity.



1 Lie flat on your stomach, head to the side, arms by your sides. Turn your head and rest your forehead on the floor. Place your hands palms down at shoulder level.

2 As you exhale, press into your hands and slowly raise your trunk.



Toes pressed against floor
3 Keep lifting your trunk as far as is comfortable. Gently tilt your head backwards until your chin is parallel with the floor. Hold for a count of 15, continuing to breathe. Gradually lower your trunk to the floor. Repeat twice.



Chin parallel with floor
Do not bend your head back further than shown in the illustration

Use your breath as your focus to clear your mind and keep yourself present. Rest for 5–10 minutes.

DAY
7
49

DAY

7
48

Breathing

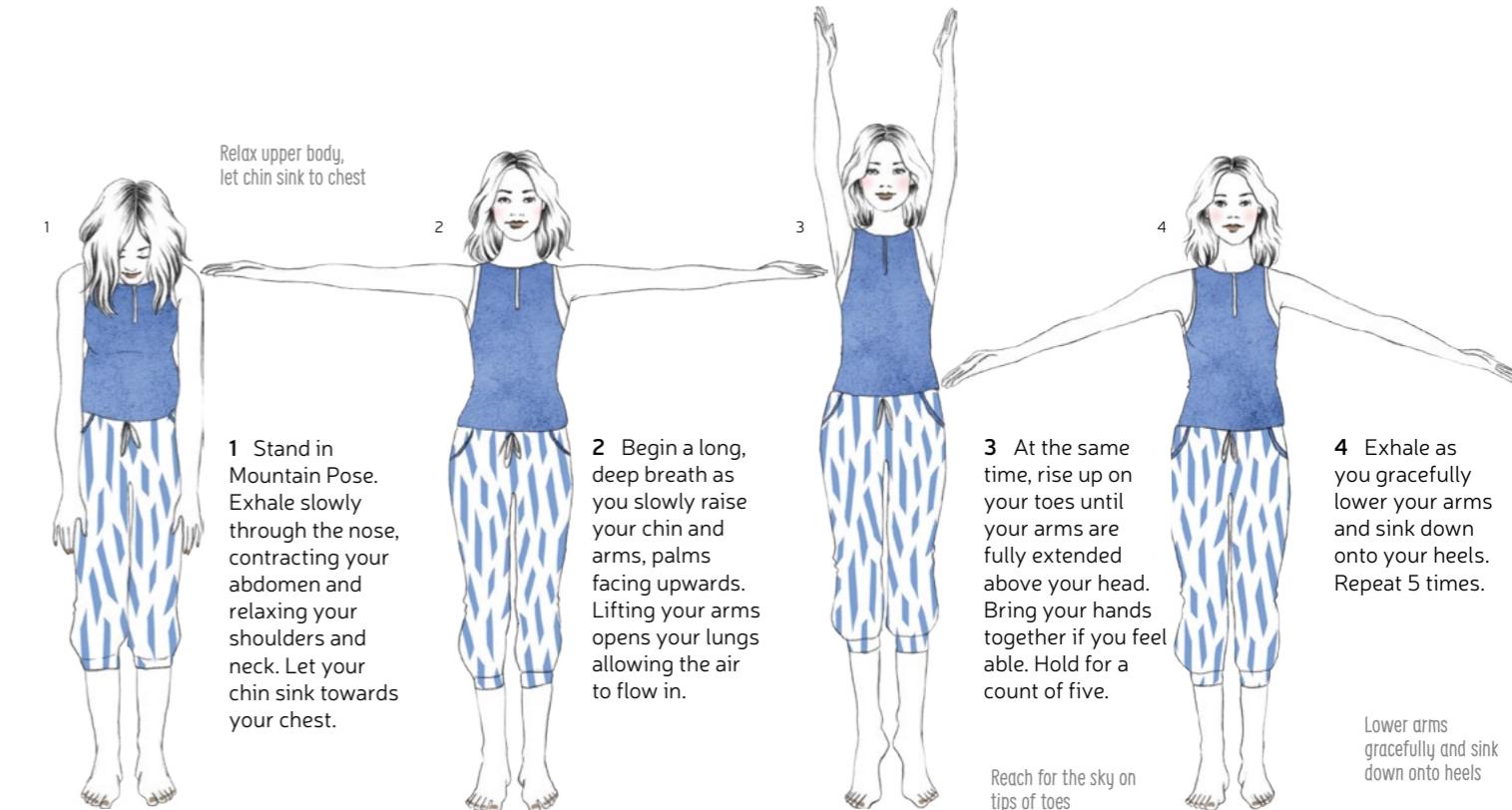
After yesterday's strenuous "catch-up" session, today will be less demanding physically, but no less important as we focus on breathing techniques. Breathing correctly is very important, not just during your yoga practise but in every moment of your life. A slow breath that draws the air deep into your lungs delivers more oxygen to the blood, fuelling your muscles and enhancing concentration. It improves all-round cardiovascular function, lessening stress on the heart. It also calms the mind, relieving stress and anxiety in an entirely natural way. Yogis refer to the practise of improving their breathing as *Pranayama*. In Sanskrit *Prana* means "life force," while *ayama* means "control," which underlines how central correct breathing is to the yogic way of life.

COMPLETE BREATH STANDING

1

Learning to breath correctly, in step with the asanas as you practise them, will greatly enhance the benefits you draw from the poses.

- Increases energy & focus
- Strengthens spine
- Tones arms & upper body
- Improves balance & posture

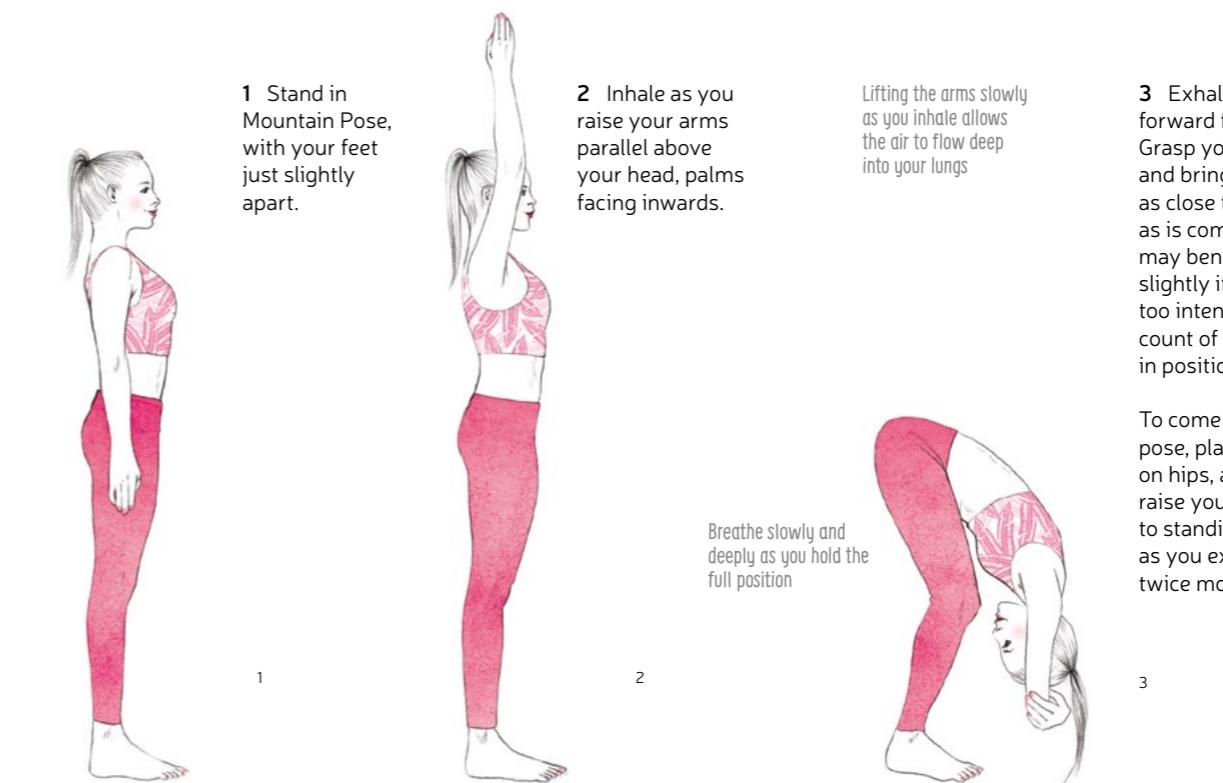


STANDING FORWARD BEND

2

Today we will combine slow, deep breathing with the movements in this forward bend. By breathing deeply and correctly through the asana, you will be able to take the stretch further.

- Strengthens back muscles
- Stretches hamstrings
- Tones digestive organs
- Can relieve headaches



HALF LOTUS POSE

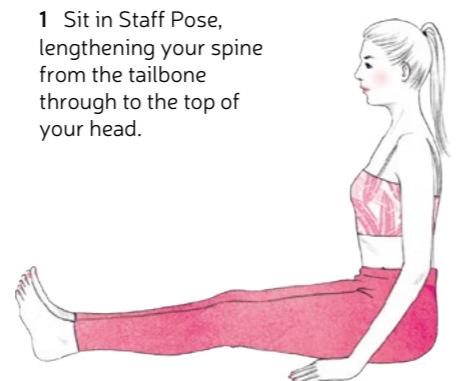
3

The Half Lotus, or *Ardha Padmasana*, is a classic seated pose that opens the hips and stretches the knees and ankles.

- Builds flexibility in hips, knees & ankles
- Strengthens spine & abs
- Improves posture
- Increases energy



Skip this pose, or consult your medical advisor before attempting it, if you have acute knee injury or if you have had a knee or hip replacement.



MODIFICATIONS

Initially you may find that the Half Lotus is not easy. In that case, move from the Staff Pose to a simple cross-legged position with hands on knees, and fingers in the *chin mudra*.

If your knees are higher than your hips, or if you feel any discomfort in your knees or hips, sit on a folded blanket. Lengthen your spine, relax your shoulders and focus on your breathing.



ALTERNATE-NOSTRIL BREATHING

4

Alternate-Nostril Breathing, or *Nadi Shodhana*, clears the nasal passages, increasing the flow of prana, or "life force" through the body.

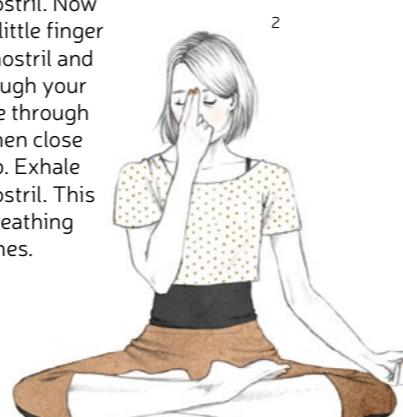
- Relieves stress
- Enhances mental function
- Soothes nervous system
- Promotes calmness & sleep
- Boosts energy

1 Sit in the Half Lotus Pose, or in a simpler cross-legged position if the Half Lotus is not comfortable for you yet. Place your hands on your knees in the *shuni mudra*, or "seal of patience".



In the *shuni mudra*, or "seal of patience", the thumb and second finger are lightly touching at the tips.

2 Exhale through your left nostril as you use your thumb to close your right nostril. Inhale slowly and deeply through the left nostril. Now use your ring and little finger to close your left nostril and slowly exhale through your right nostril. Inhale through the right nostril, then close it with your thumb. Exhale through the left nostril. This is one complete breathing cycle. Repeat 7 times.



BELLY BREATHING

5

Also known as Deep Abdominal Breathing or Diaphragmatic Breathing, this exercise will help strengthen your diaphragm leading to more efficient breathing throughout the day.

- Brings more oxygen into the blood
- Massages abdominal organs, improving digestion & lymphatic drainage
- Calms nervous system, reducing heart rate



1 Lie on the floor face up in the Corpse Pose. Place your hands palms downwards over your belly just below the ribcage and



2 You should be able to feel your belly expand with the breath. Now gently breathe out through your partly closed mouth, tightening

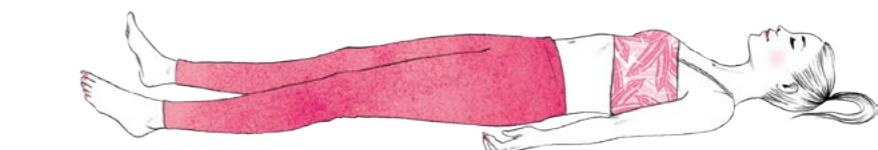
inhale slowly and deeply through your nose. Inhale calmly until you cannot take in more air comfortably.

your stomach muscles as you exhale to push the air out of the stomach. Repeat slowly and calmly for 2–3 minutes.

CORPSE POSE

6

Corpse Pose, or *Shavasana*, is the ideal moment to focus on your breathing.



- Relaxes mind & body after physical exertion
- Promotes deep relaxation
- Reduces fatigue

1 Lie on your back with your arms at your sides, palms up. Let your feet drop open. Close your eyes. Starting from the soles of your feet, scan up to the crown of your head, releasing tension in your joints and muscles along the

way. Invite peace into your mind and body. Use your breath as your focus to clear your mind and keep yourself present. Rest for 5–10 minutes.

DAY

8

52

DAY

8

53

Eating well

The yoga diet is not about weight loss, although if you are too heavy you will lose weight if you follow its precepts. It is a vegan diet based on fresh, in-season and preferably locally-grown foods that are prepared with care and attention to colour, texture and flavour. A yoga meal is not gobbled down in front of the TV, but consumed, preferably in the company of friends or family around a communal table, in a relaxed atmosphere. A typical day might start with hot water and lemon juice, a green or ginger tea, or another herbal or yerba mate tea. Breakfast could be a porridge made with oats, quinoa, rice or millet and topped with fresh berries. Ideally, lunch will be the main meal of the day, and should feature vegan proteins, such as sprouted grains, beans (chickpeas, cannellini, etc) or tofu, accompanied by raw or cooked vegetables. Cooking fats should be plant-based, such as olive oil. We will continue our discussion on Day Ten.

COMPLETE BREATH STANDING

1

We begin our practise again today with this energising breath.

SIDE BEND

SIDE BEND

2

This is a great warm-up pose that will do wonders for your waistline.



Steeple or namaste hands

1 Stand in Mountain Pose, hands by your sides. Jump, or step, your feet to about 2 feet apart and inhale as you gracefully raise your arms. Clasp your hands above your head, keeping index fingers straight in a "steeple" position, or pressing the palms together in the "namaste" position. The latter will increase the stretch a little.



DAY
9

55

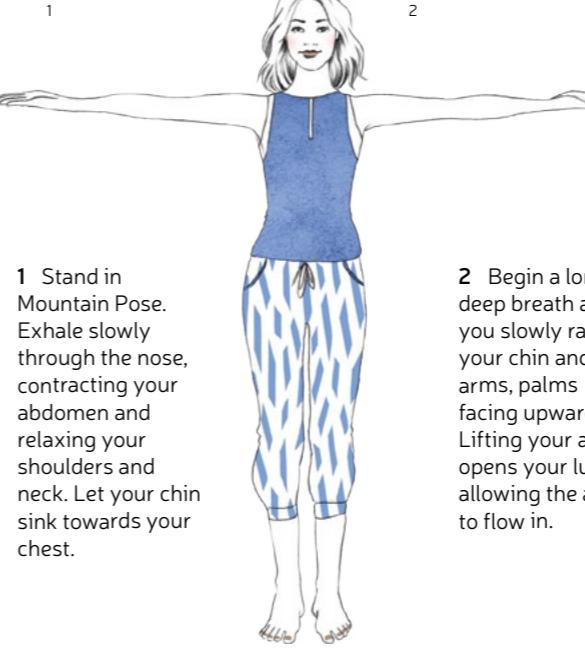
Relax upper body, let chin sink to chest

1



1 Stand in Mountain Pose. Exhale slowly through the nose, contracting your abdomen and relaxing your shoulders and neck. Let your chin sink towards your chest.

2



2 Begin a long, deep breath as you slowly raise your chin and arms, palms facing upwards. Lifting your arms opens your lungs allowing the air to flow in.

3



Reach for the sky on tips of toes

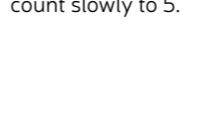
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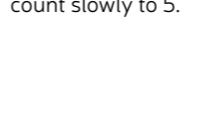
Focus on coordinating your breathing and movement, inhaling as you rise to your toe tips and exhaling as you lower your arms and heels return to the floor.

- Increases energy & focus
- Strengthens spine
- Tones arms & upper body
- Improves balance & posture

3 At the same time, rise up on your toes until your arms are fully extended and, if you feel steady, bring your hands together. Hold your breath and count slowly to 5.



4 Exhale as you gracefully lower your arms and sink down onto your heels. Repeat.



Lower arms gracefully and sink down onto heels

DAY
9

55

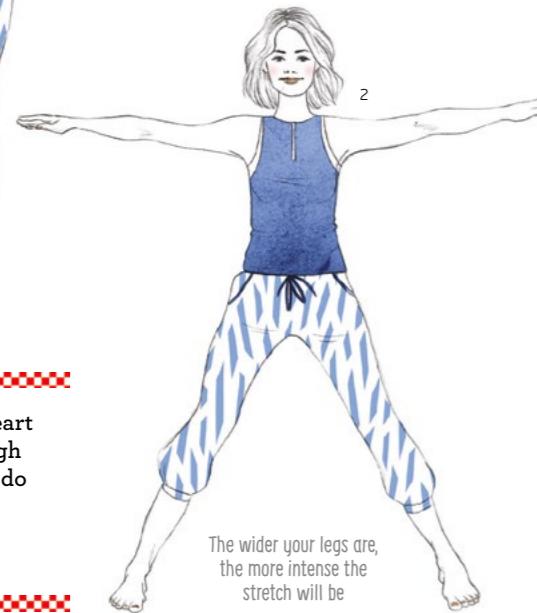
TRIANGLE POSE



We return again to the Triangle Pose, an asana that delivers a great workout to your core muscles.

- Elongates & strengthens spine
- Tones legs
- Opens the heart

1 Stand in Mountain Pose, palms pressed together in front of your chest



2 Step your feet to about 2-3 feet apart. Raise your arms to shoulder level as you inhale, palms facing down.



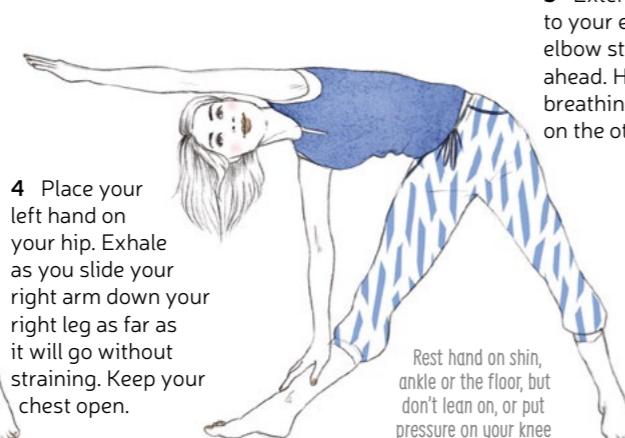
3 Turn your right foot and leg out to the side to 90 degrees. Turn your left foot slightly towards the right heel.

- Stimulates liver, spleen & kidneys
- Builds strength & determination

4 Extend your left arm close to your ear, keeping your elbow straight. Look straight ahead. Hold for a count of 15, breathing in position. Repeat on the other side.



5 Place your left hand on your hip. Exhale as you slide your right arm down your right leg as far as it will go without straining. Keep your chest open.



Rest hand on shin, ankle or the floor, but don't lean on, or put pressure on your knee.

DAY

9

56

4

BOUNDED ANGLE POSE



1 Press your knees down slightly further today than before, without straining.

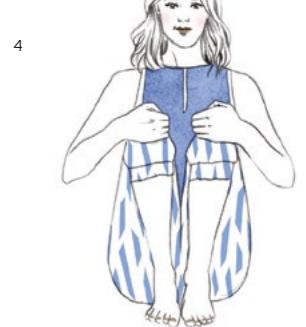
- Benefits urinary and reproductive organs
- Relieves menstrual discomfort
- Stretches thigh muscles
- Relieves mild depression



Press knees towards floor

2 Sit with your legs extended in front of you, hands resting on floor behind. Gently bend your knees and press the soles of your feet together.

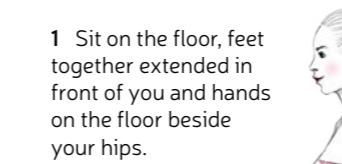
3 Bring your hands to the front and clasp your feet.



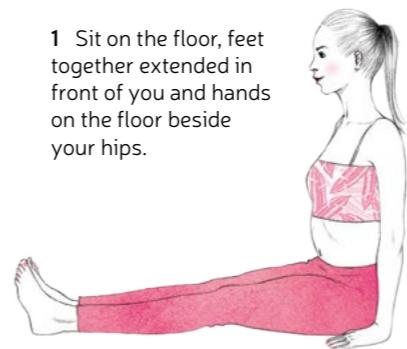
4 Exhale, and gently ease your knees down towards the floor. Hold the most extreme position for a count of 20, breathing in position.

5 Release the pose by raising your knees up to your chest and sliding your hands up to the knees.

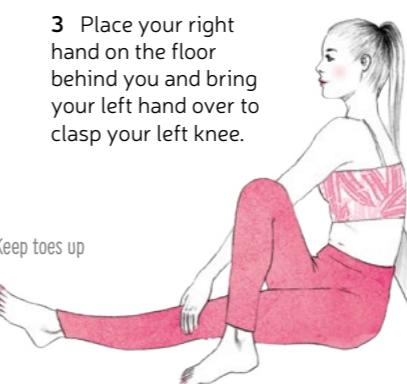
HALF TWIST



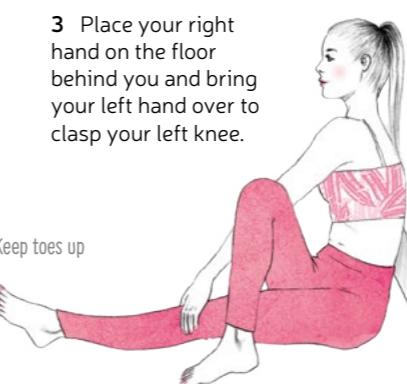
1 Sit on the floor, feet together extended in front of you and hands on the floor beside your hips.



2 Inhale to lengthen the spine and press your sitting bones into the floor. Exhale and bend your right knee, drawing it towards your chest. Place your right foot on the floor just outside your left knee.



3 Place your right hand on the floor behind you and bring your left hand over to clasp your left knee.



4 Gently twist your head and neck as far as possible without straining to the right. Hold for 5 full breaths. Return to the initial position then repeat on the other side.

DAY

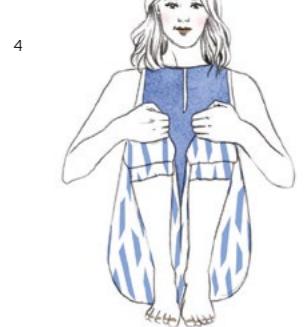
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56

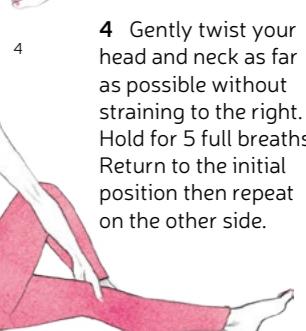
DAY

9

57



Keep toes up

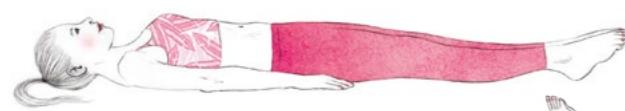


5 Look over right shoulder

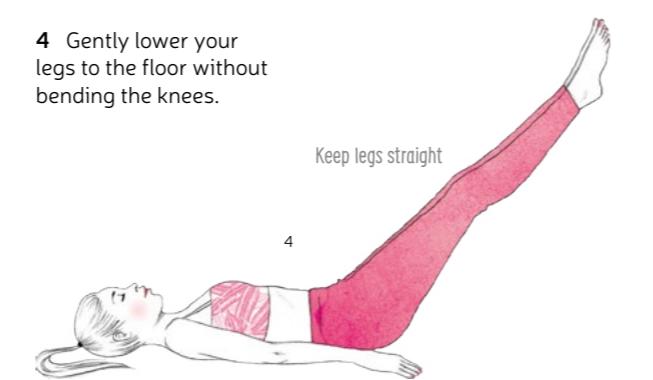
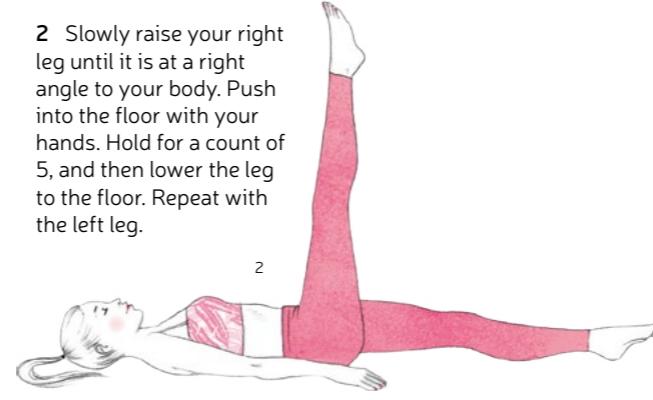
RAISED LEG POSE

6

This gentle pose also helps resolve stomach disorders such as acidity, indigestion and constipation.



- Tightens stomach muscles
- Improves digestion
- Strengthens back & hip & thigh muscles
- Energizes reproductive organs



CAT-COW POSE

7

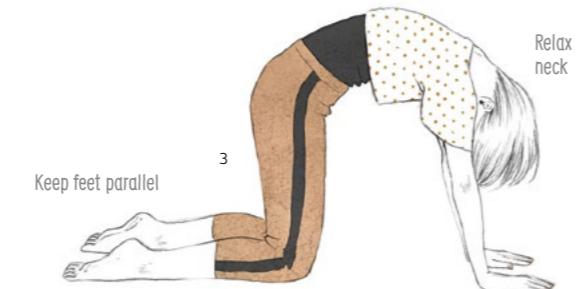
The Cat-Cow Pose, or *Viralasana*, is a simple pose which is great for relieving tension through the spine. Match your breath with your movement to maximise the benefits it offers.

- 1 Start on your hands and knees, eyes looking down at the floor. Align your wrists with your shoulders and your knees with your hips. Flatten your back by lifting your stomach up towards your spine. Ensure your toes are untucked.



- Relieves tension in back, neck & shoulders
- Reduces symptoms of PMS
- Improves digestion
- Improves flexibility of spine

- 3 Exhale as you lower your head and tailbone, raising your abdomen and arching your spine upwards. Let your head drop gently between your shoulders without forcing your chin towards your chest. Repeat three times.



DAY

9

58

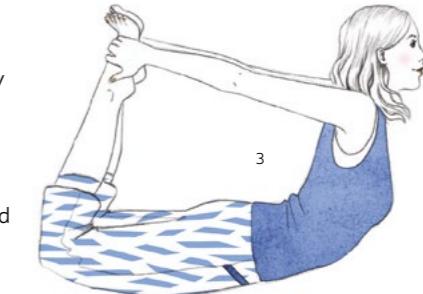
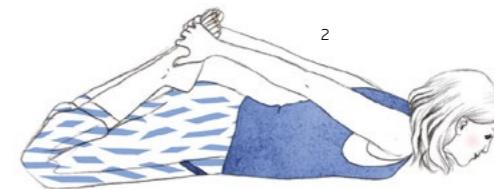
BOW POSE

8

Today we will practise the full Bow Pose.

- Strengthens spine
- Tones whole body
- Opens lungs
- Improves circulation

This pose should not be practised if you have high blood pressure, heart concerns or lower back pain or injury.



- 1 Lie on your stomach on the floor, head turned to one side.

- 2 Turn your head to the front. Inhale and reach behind you to clasp the tops of your feet with your hands as you raise your chest off the floor.

MODIFICATION

If you can't grasp both feet at the same time, start with one foot and lift one leg at a time.

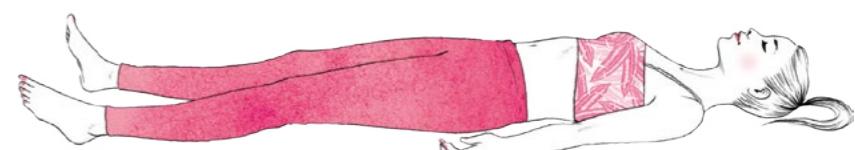
CORPSE POSE

9

After you have been through all the poses in today's session and repeated them as set out below, set aside 5–10 minutes to enjoy the complete relaxation of the corpse pose.

- Relaxes mind & body after physical exertion
- Promotes deep relaxation
- Reduces fatigue

- 1 Lie on your back with your arms at your sides, palms up. Let your feet drop open. Close your eyes. Starting from the soles



of your feet, scan up to the crown of your head, releasing tension in your joints and muscles along the way. Invite peace into your mind

and body. Use your breath as your focus to clear your mind and keep yourself present. Rest for 5–10 minutes.

TODAY'S ROUTINE

AFTER you have practised all the poses for today, perform them all again in a dance-like sequence. Pause between poses if you need to rest. Practise the Corpse Pose just once at the end of the routine.

- 1 COMPLETE STANDING BREATH
- 2 SIDE BEND
- 3 TRIANGLE POSE
- 4 BOUND ANGLE POSE
- 5 HALF TWIST
- 6 CAT-COW POSE
- 7 BOW POSE
- 8 CORPSE POSE

Repeat 5 times
Repeat 5 times
Repeat 3 times
Repeat 5 times
Repeat 3 times
Repeat 3 times
Repeat 3 times
5–10 minutes

DAY

9

59

Eating well 2

According to the yoga diet you should really only eat when you are truly hungry. The delicious healthy meals you consume will keep you feeling satiated and full of energy, allowing your body the time it needs to absorb and assimilate nutrients. This means you probably won't need to snack between meals. If you feel the need to snack in the afternoons, we would remind you that this may only be habit, or even thirst, rather than hunger. During the afternoon and early evening we suggest you drink plenty of fresh water or herbal tea. At dinner time it is important to eat cooked vegetables, including at least one root vegetable, such as beets, sweet potatoes, yams or carrots. You can finish your meal with some soothing hot soup or broth. It is important that the evening meal is lighter than lunch and consumed at least two to three hours before you go to bed.

CHEST OPENER

1

Today we will take this pose a step further, deepening both the forwards and backwards stretches.

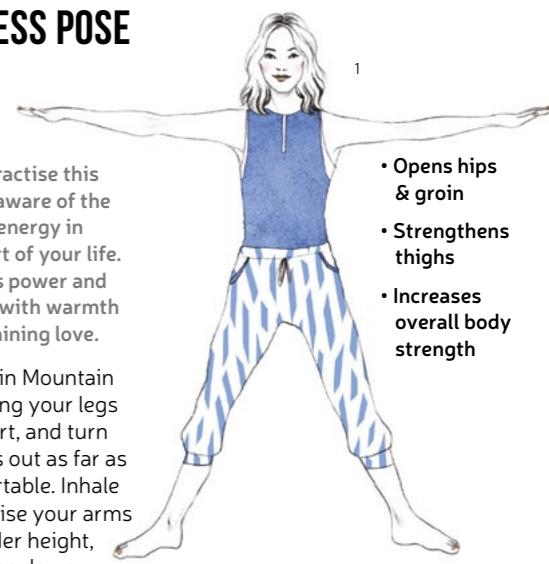


GODDESS POSE

2

As you practise this pose, be aware of the goddess energy in every part of your life. It marries power and strength with warmth and sustaining love.

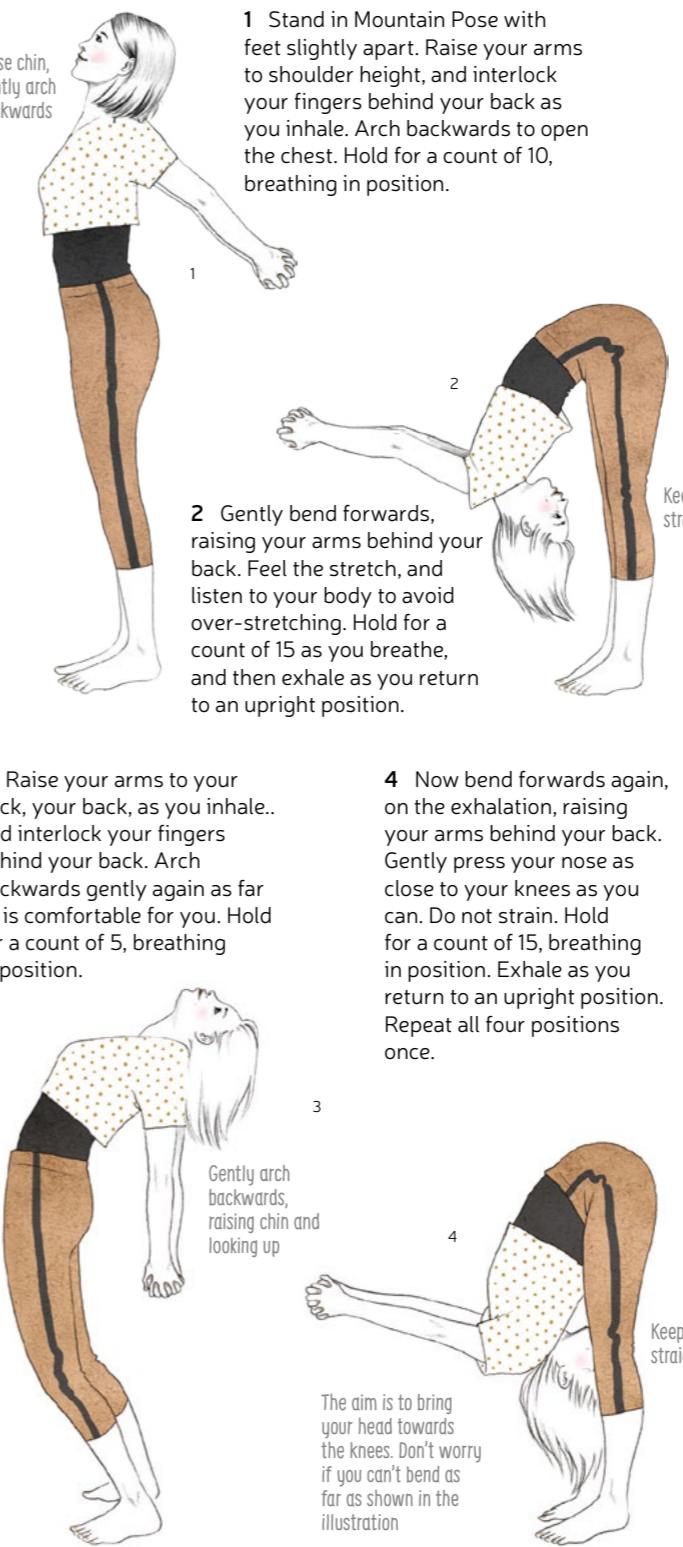
- 1 Stand in Mountain Pose. Bring your legs wide apart, and turn your toes out as far as is comfortable. Inhale as you raise your arms to shoulder height, palms face down.

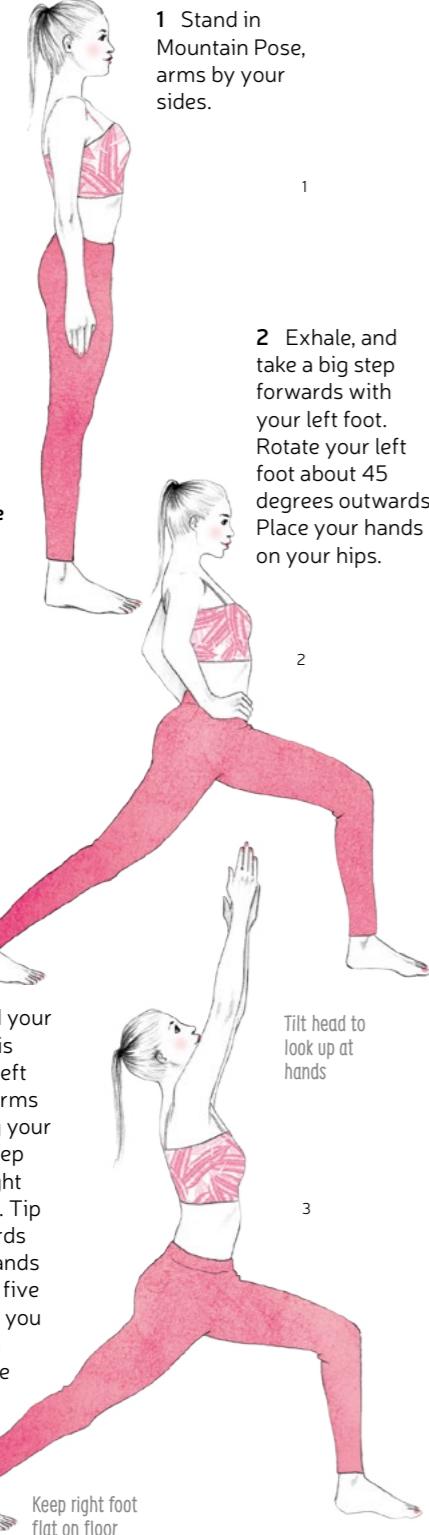


- 2 Exhale and lower yourself into a squat position. Bend your arms to 90 degrees, palms facing forwards.



- 3 Now bend forwards again, on the exhalation, raising your arms behind your back. Gently press your nose as close to your knees as you can. Do not strain. Hold for a count of 15, breathing in position. Exhale as you return to an upright position. Repeat all four positions once.



WARRIOR I**NECK STRETCH**

3 This pose can be really helpful in dealing with tension headaches.



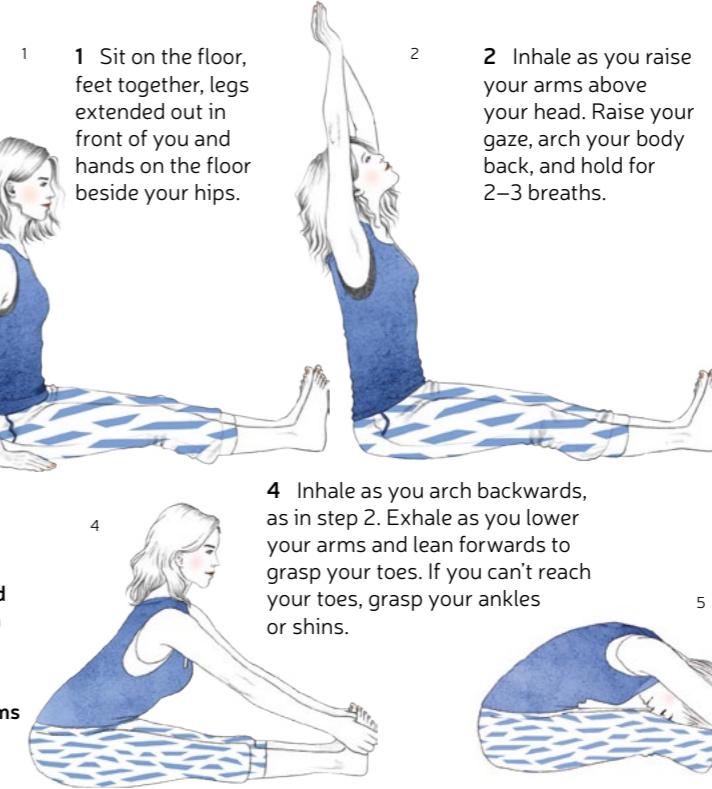
- Releases tension in neck & shoulders
- Relieves headaches
- Promotes relaxation

1 Sit on the floor, legs drawn up in the lotus or half lotus position, or simply crossed. Keep the spine straight and drop your head forwards so that your chin is resting on your chest.

**SEATED FORWARD BEND**

4 Avoid the tendency to collapse the chest and round the spine as you deepen the fold. Keep the spine straight.

- Strengthens spine
- Improves digestion
- Can help with infertility, high blood pressure & insomnia
- Relieves menstrual discomfort & menopause symptoms

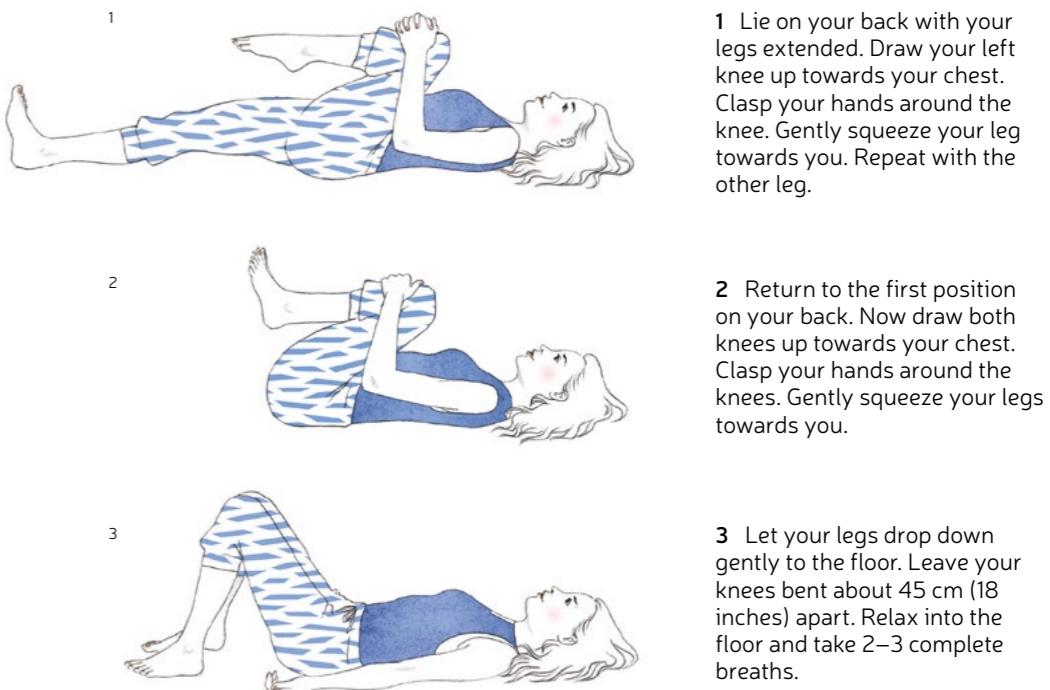


5 Lower your forehead as close as possible towards your shins. Hold for a count of 15.

Aim your forehead towards your shins. Feel your back stretch but do not strain it

KNEES-TO-CHEST POSE

6 This pose stretches and stabilises the pelvis and lower back and can help reduce lower back pain.

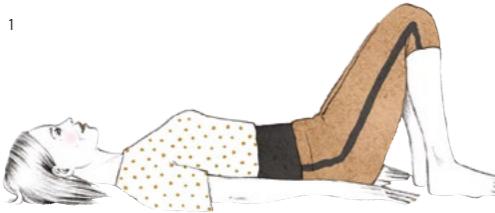


HALF BRIDGE POSE

7

The Half Bridge Pose stretches the spine, but also reduces feelings of stress and fatigue.

1



- Opens chest
- Relieves menstrual pain
- Stimulates thyroid gland
- Energises, tones & strengthens glutes & legs

2 Gently lift your hips and lower back off the floor as you exhale. Link your arms under your body and hold for a count of 5, breathing in position. To exit the pose, return your hands to your sides and lower your spine to the floor, one vertebra at a time.

2



BOW POSE

8

The Bow Pose is a powerful back bend. Remember that you can start with one leg at a time if two legs together makes the stretch too intense.

- Strengthens spine
- Tones whole body
- Opens lungs
- Improves circulation



1



2



3

1 Lie on your stomach on the floor, head turned to one side.

2 Turn your head to the front. Inhale and reach behind you to clasp the tops of your feet with your hands as you raise your chest off the floor.

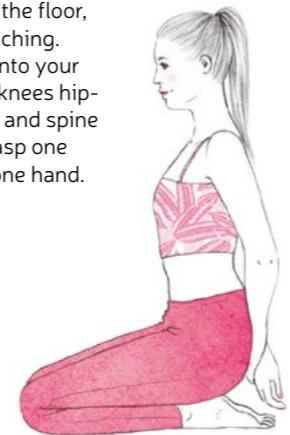
3 As you exhale, push your feet into the palms of your hands. As you push, your body will naturally lift, but focus on pushing your feet as opposed to lifting to prevent injury. Hold for 3–5 breaths. Exit by lowering yourself to the ground and releasing your feet from your grasp.

CHILD'S POSE

9

The Child's Pose, or *Balasana*, is a gentle, restorative asana used to calm the body after more challenging poses. Today we will use it to complete our session.

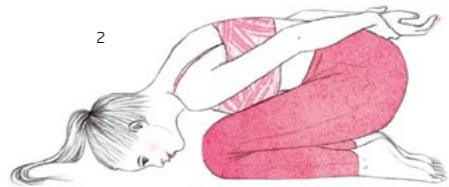
- Relieves fatigue
- Relaxes neck & shoulders
- Stimulates digestion
- Stretches lower back



1

2 Exhale as you fold forward from the hips, bringing your head and chest down gently as far as you can towards the floor. If possible, touch your forehead on the floor.

2



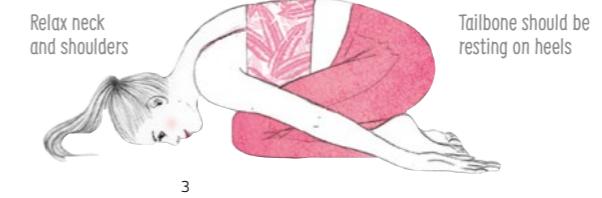
Keep knees apart if necessary so that your body sinks down between them towards the floor

MODIFICATIONS

If you feel uncomfortable with your head on the floor, place a cushion, bolster or folded towel on the floor in front of you, and rest your forehead on that.

Some people find it more comfortable to extend their arms out in front of them in the position known as the "Ancient prayer pose."

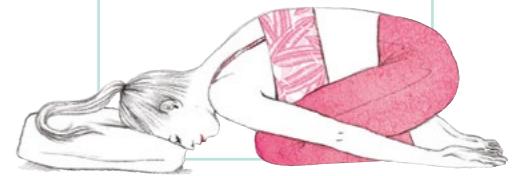
3 Unclasp your hands, resting the backs on the floor. Draw your tailbone gently down towards your heels. Feel the stretch in your lower back. Hold the pose for 2–3 minutes and take deep, slow breaths.



Relax neck and shoulders

Tailbone should be resting on heels

3



TODAY'S ROUTINE

AFTER you have practised the poses for today, perform them all again in a flowing dance-like sequence. Pause between each pose if you need to rest.

- CHEST OPENER
- GODDESS POSE
- WARRIOR I
- NECK STRETCH
- SEATED FORWARD BEND
- KNEES-TO-CHEST POSE
- HALF BRIDGE POSE
- BOW POSE
- CHILD'S POSE

Repeat 3 times
Repeat 3 times
Repeat 3 times
Repeat 5 times
Repeat 3 times
Repeat 3 times
Repeat 3 times
Repeat 3 times
2–3 minutes

DAY 10

65

Hectic lifestyles

Most of us are experienced multi-taskers. We work full-time while raising a young family, or we study while holding down a job. We entertain a circle of friends and travel the world for work and pleasure. Later in life, we may find ourselves in the classic “sandwich” situation, caring for teenage children and elderly parents at the same, all the while holding down a demanding job. It’s easy to see how we can get frazzled and anxious and tired! In many ways yoga is the ideal antidote to all this busy-ness: your daily 30-minute practise grounds you in yourself, reminding you that you still exist as an individual beyond all the roles you play. It gives you some quality time alone and helps relieve stress while improving your physical health and making you look and feel more attractive.

SIDE BEND

1

This side bend is a great warm up exercise. Try to increase your bend to the side a little more than yesterday.

- Lengthens spine
- Targets “love handles”
- Tones arms

Steeple fingers

**1**

1 Stand in Mountain Pose, hands by your sides. Jump, or step, your feet to about 2 feet apart and inhale as you gracefully raise your arms. Clasp your hands above your head, hugging your head with your biceps. Keep your index fingers straight in a ‘steeple’ position.

2

The Standing Bow, or *Dandayamana Dhanurasana*, requires focus, strength and balance. Kick your foot back gently today, and focus on keeping your balance.

- Improves circulation to heart & lungs
- Increases elasticity of spine
- Activates digestive system
- Improves balance & focus



1 Stand in Mountain Pose, hands by your sides. Raise your right foot up behind you and catch the top in the palm of your right hand.



Keep arm straight

STANDING BOW POSE

MODIFICATION

If you have difficulty keeping your balance, begin by standing next to a wall.

**2**

2 Exhale and bend slowly to the left, ensuring you don’t lean forwards or back. Hold for a count of 10, breathing in position, then exhale to centre. Repeat on the other side.

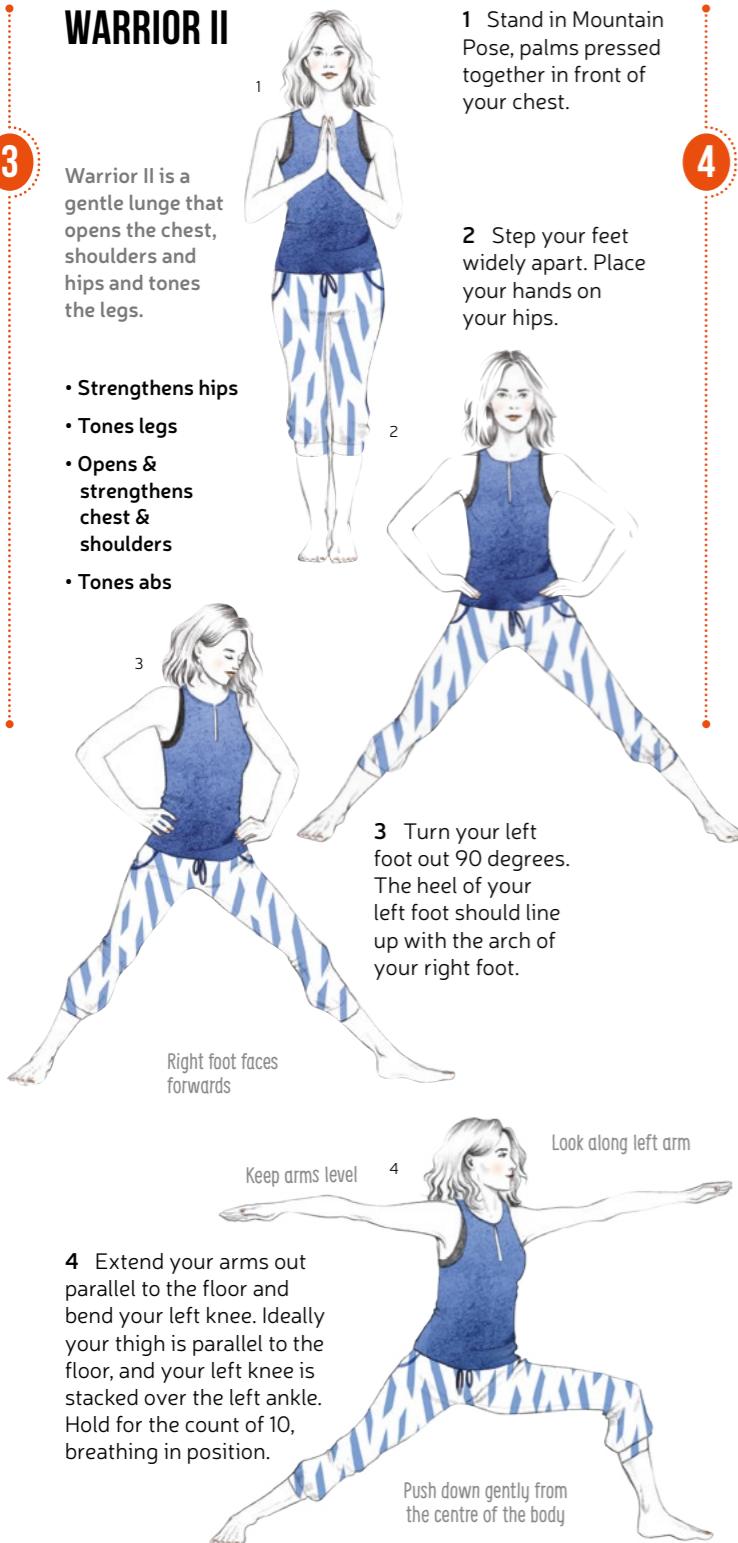


3 As you exhale, push your back foot into the palm of your hand.

Focus on something directly in front of you to improve balance.



2 Inhale and raise your left arm straight up, palm facing forwards.

WARRIOR II

1 Stand in Mountain Pose, palms pressed together in front of your chest.

2 Step your feet widely apart. Place your hands on your hips.



3 Turn your left foot out 90 degrees. The heel of your left foot should line up with the arch of your right foot.



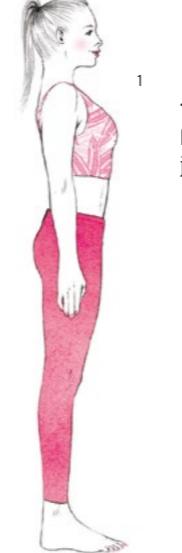
3 Warrior II is a gentle lunge that opens the chest, shoulders and hips and tones the legs.

- Strengthens hips
- Tones legs
- Opens & strengthens chest & shoulders
- Tones abs

STANDING FORWARD BEND

4 We return to this intensive stretch. Today we show you the full position, with legs straight and hands on the floor beside your feet.

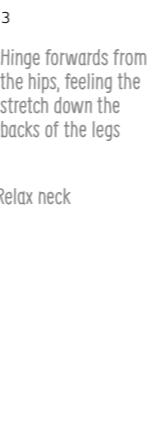
- Strengthens back muscles
- Stretches hamstrings
- Tones digestive organs
- Can relieve headaches



1 Stand in Mountain Pose, with your feet just slightly apart.



2 Inhale as you raise your arms parallel above your head, palms facing inwards.



3 Exhale as you fold forward from the hips. Keeping the legs straight, run your hands down your legs as far as they will go.

If you can reach the floor, place them palms down by your feet. If you can't reach the floor, grasp your shins, ankles or feet, and gently bring your nose as close to your knees as is comfortable. Hold for a count of 10, breathing in position. To exit the pose, place hands on hips, and slowly raise your upper body to standing position as you exhale.

Feet remain parallel

Relax neck

3

Hinge forwards from the hips, feeling the stretch down the backs of the legs

BOUNDED ANGLE POSE

5 Press your knees down slightly further today than before, without straining.

- Benefits urinary and reproductive organs
- Relieves menstrual discomfort
- Stretches thigh muscles
- Relieves mild depression



1



2

1 Sit with your legs extended in front of you, hands resting on floor behind. Gently bend your knees and press the soles of your feet together.

2 Bring your hands to the front and clasp your feet.

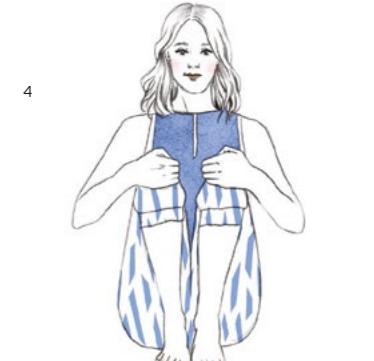


Keep shoulders relaxed

2



Lengthen spine

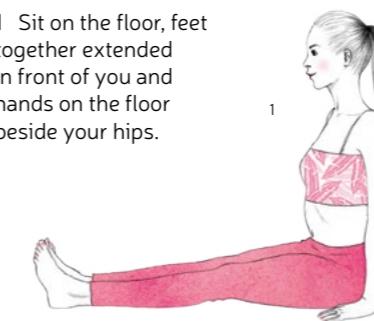


3 Exhale, and gently ease your knees down towards the floor. Hold the most extreme position for a count of 20, breathing in position.

4 Release the pose by raising your knees up to your chest and sliding your hands up to the knees.

HALF TWIST

6 This gentle twist not only realigns the spine but will also firm your waistline.



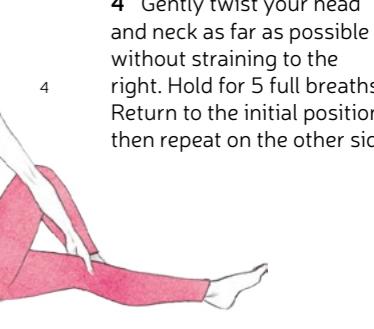
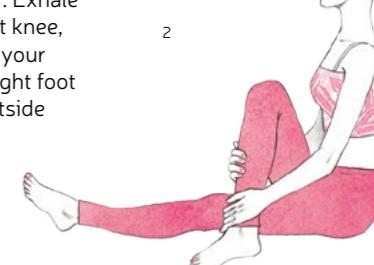
1



3

Place your right hand on the floor behind you and bring your left hand over to clasp your left knee.

2 Inhale to lengthen the spine and press your sitting bones into the floor. Exhale and bend your right knee, drawing it towards your chest. Place your right foot on the floor just outside your left knee.



4 Gently twist your head and neck as far as possible without straining to the right. Hold for 5 full breaths. Return to the initial position then repeat on the other side.

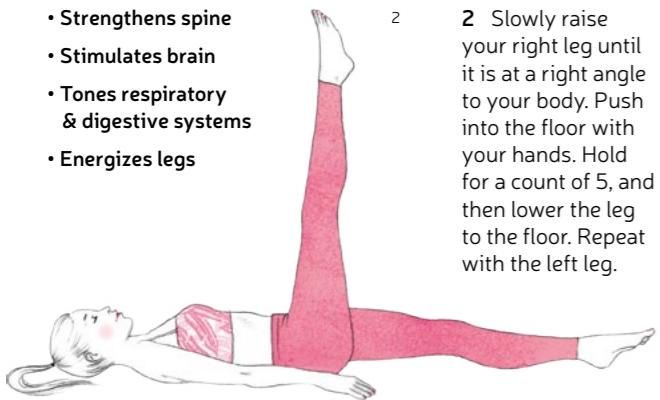
RAISED LEG POSE

7

This pose can help resolve problems with digestion, improving indigestion, acid reflux and constipation.

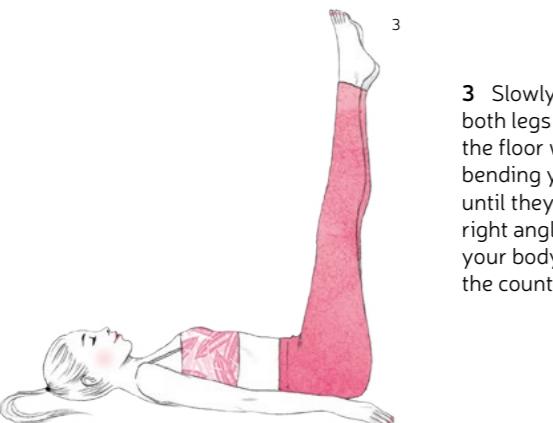


- Strengthens spine
- Stimulates brain
- Tones respiratory & digestive systems
- Energizes legs



1 Lie on your back with legs and arms straight. Your feet should be together and palms facing downwards on the floor next to the body.

1



4 You can increase this stretch by holding your legs about 2 feet off the ground, hovering just above your mat. Gently lower your legs to the floor.

4

Legs straight

DAY

11

70

COBRA POSE

8

Today we will build on this back stretch, gradually increasing the intensity.

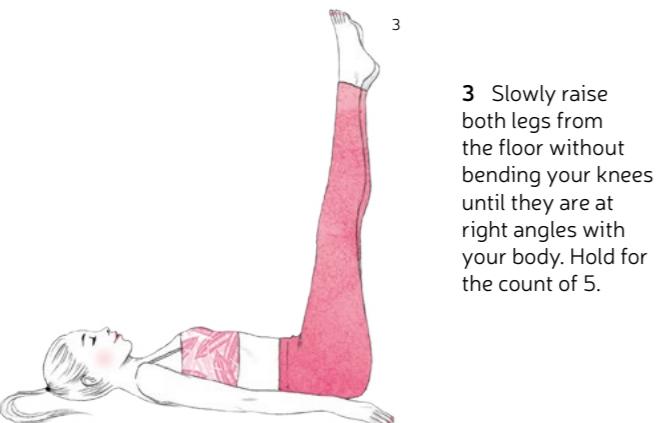


- Stretches & strengthens spine
- Stimulates brain
- Tones respiratory & digestive systems
- Energizes legs



1 Lie flat on your stomach, head turned to the side, arms extended along your sides.

1



3 Slowly raise both legs from the floor without bending your knees until they are at right angles with your body. Hold for the count of 5.

Thighs may feel tense; relax them. Lift from the back, not the legs

4 Keep lifting your trunk as far as is comfortable. Gently tilt your head backwards until your chin is parallel with the floor. Hold for a count of 15, breathing in position. Gradually lower your trunk to the floor, one vertebra at a time.

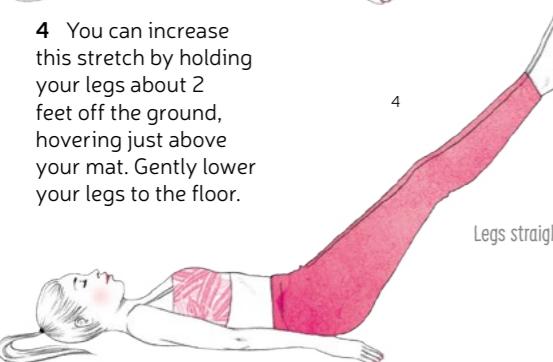
Toes pressed against floor

Keep your shoulders down and relaxed throughout. If the stretch is too intense, you can keep your hands and forearms on the floor throughout

3

Do not tilt head any further than shown

4



BOW POSE

9

The Bow Pose stretches the entire front of the body, from ankles, thighs and groin to abdomen, chest and throat.



1 Lie on your stomach on the floor, head turned to one side.



2 Turn your head to the front. Inhale and reach behind you to clasp the tops of your feet with your hands as you raise your chest off the floor.



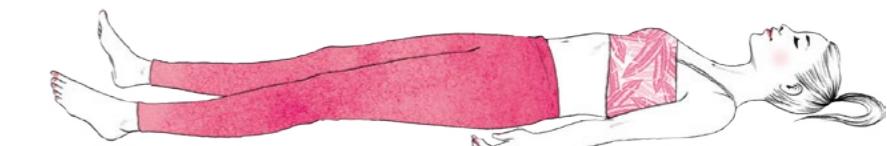
3 As you exhale, push your feet into the palms of your hands. As you push, your body will naturally lift, but focus on pushing your feet as opposed to lifting to prevent injury. Hold for 3–5 breaths. Exit by lowering yourself to the ground and releasing your feet from your grasp.

- Strengthens spine
- Tones whole body
- Opens lungs
- Improves circulation

CORPSE POSE

10

Set aside 5–10 minutes at the end of the session to enjoy the complete relaxation of the Corpse Pose.



1 Lie on your back with your arms at your sides, palms up. Let your feet drop open. Close your eyes. Starting from the soles of your feet,

scan up to the crown of your head, releasing tension in your joints and muscles along the way. Invite peace into your mind and body.

Use your breath as your focus to clear your mind and keep yourself present. Rest for 5–10 minutes.

TODAY'S ROUTINE

REPEAT today's poses in a flowing dance-like sequence.

- 1 SIDE BEND
- 2 STANDING BOW POSE
- 3 WARRIOR II
- 4 STANDING FORWARD BEND
- 5 BOUND ANGLE POSE
- 6 HALF TWIST
- 7 RAISED LEG POSE
- 8 COBRA POSE
- 9 BOW POSE
- 10 CORPSE POSE

Repeat 3 times
5–10 minutes

DAY

11

71

Yoga as strength training

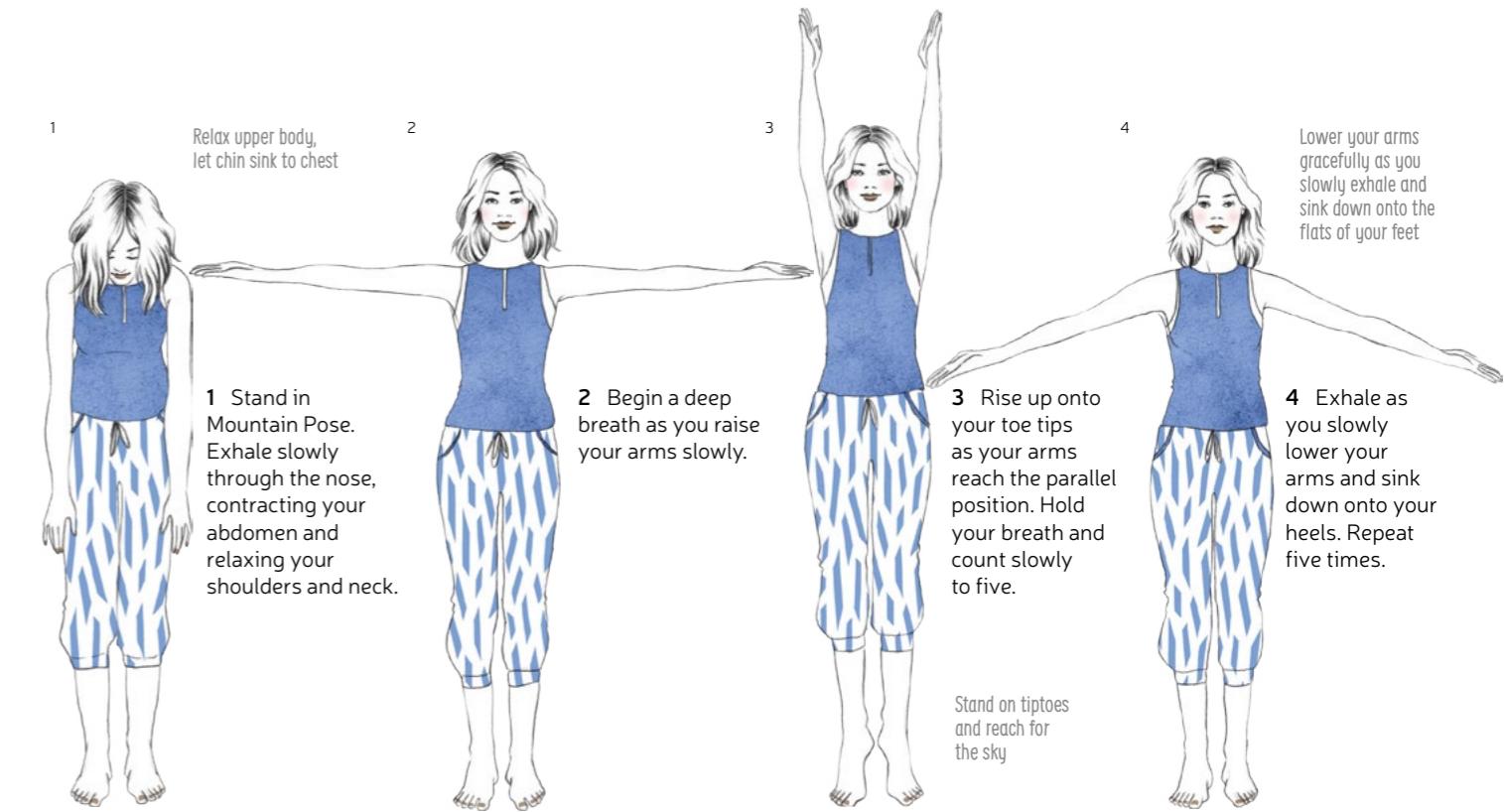
Health experts advise that we combine aerobic exercise, such as brisk walking, jogging or swimming, with weight or strength training, which establishes and maintains muscle tone. If your heart sinks at the thought of lifting dumbbells, don't worry, because a regular yoga routine can easily replace more traditional strength training sessions. The advantage of yoga, especially for women who don't want to bulk up with unsightly muscles, is that yoga tones your whole body, replacing fat with muscles but keeping you lean. Furthermore, yoga tones muscles all over your body, in balance with each other, so that you achieve a natural silhouette. The asanas in this book are all ideal for building muscle strength and maintaining it as you age. It's important to know that from your 30s onwards your body loses muscle tone and you need strength training to keep it in place.

COMPLETE BREATH STANDING

We begin again today with our invigorating warm-up breathing asana.

1

- Increases energy & focus
- Strengthens spine
- Tones arms & upper body
- Improves balance & posture

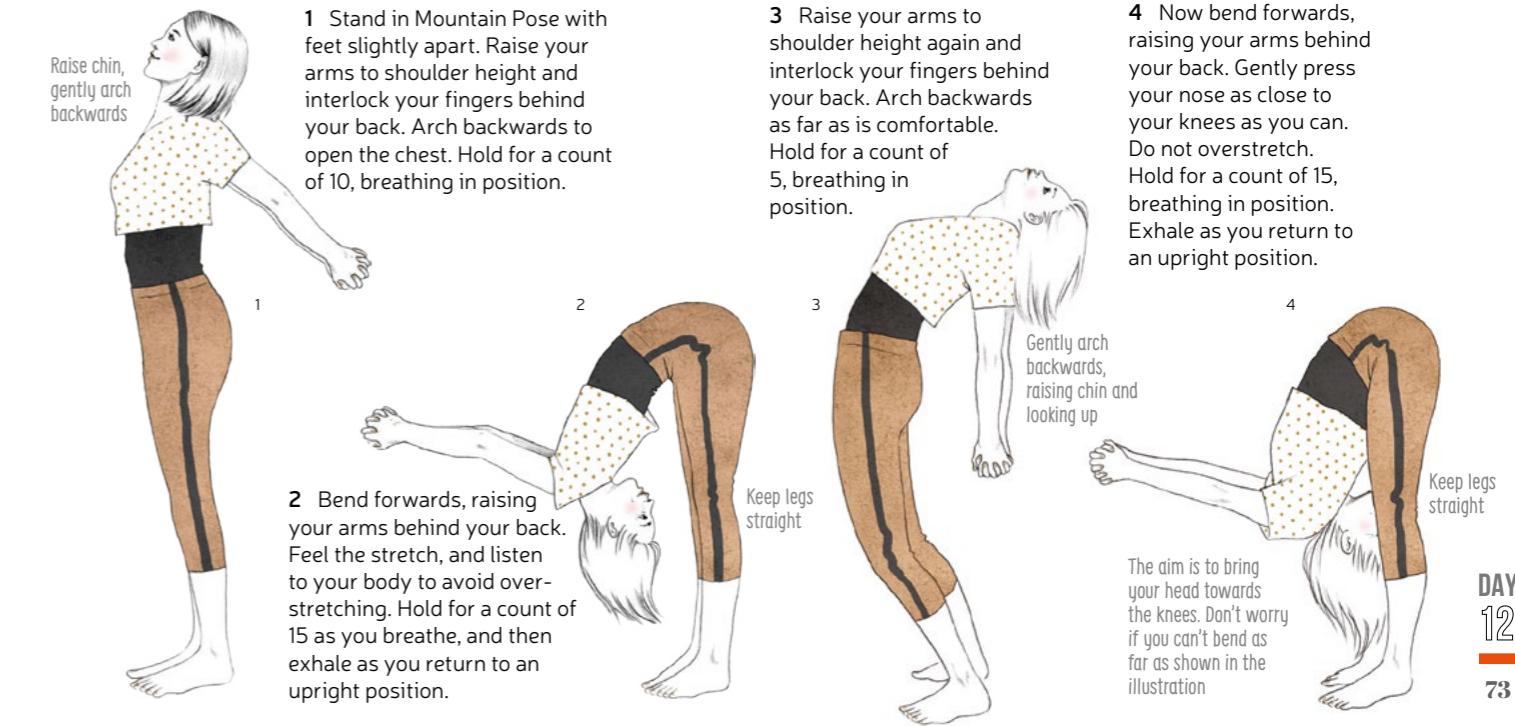


CHEST OPENER

Today we repeat the chest opener in the two full positions learned.

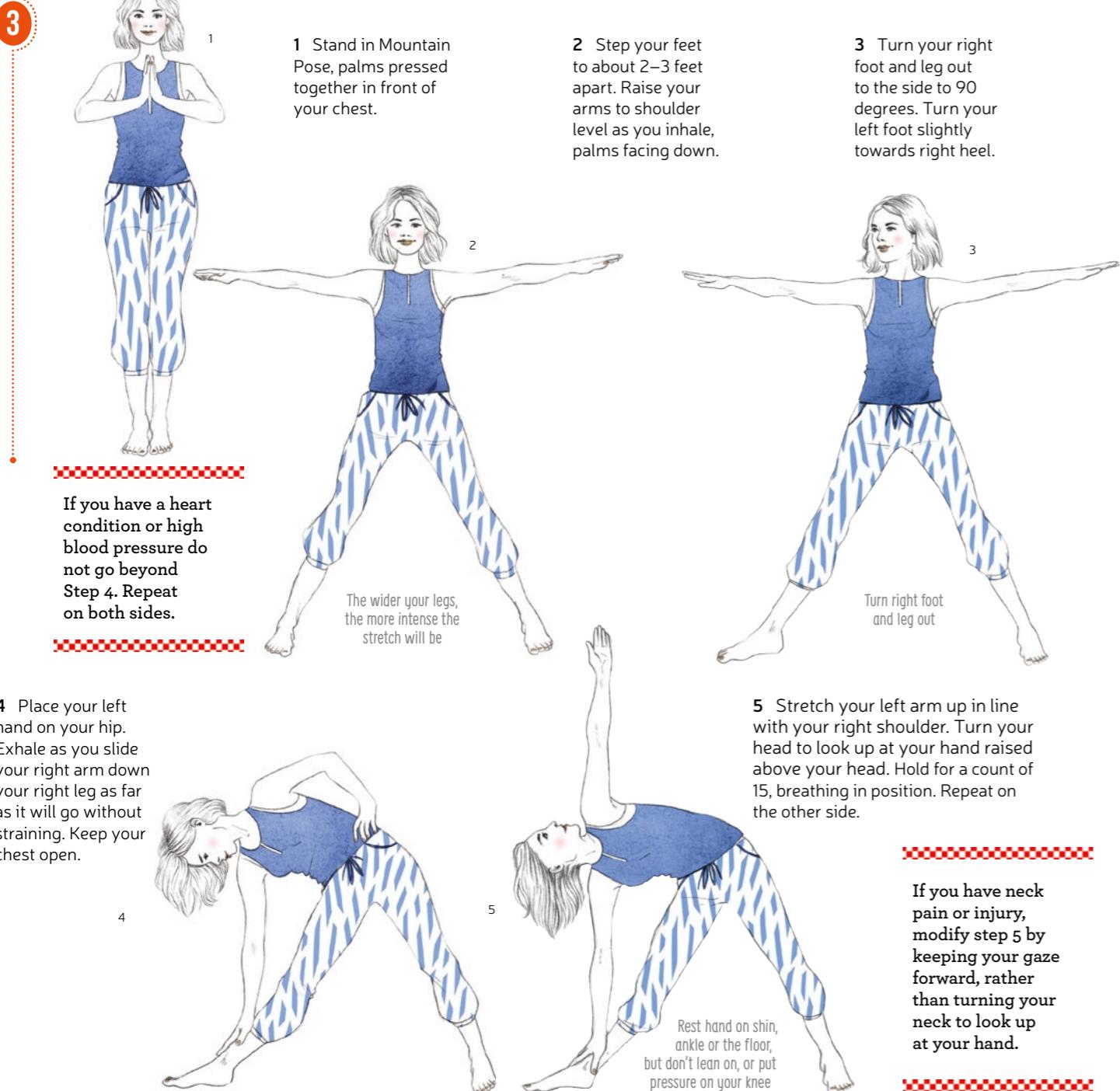
2

- Tones & firms arms
- Tones & firms bust
- Relieves tension in neck & shoulders
- Realigns spine



TRIANGLE POSE

Today we move to the full pose of this intense stretch.



- Elongates & strengthens spine
- Tones legs
- Opens the heart
- Stimulates liver, spleen & kidneys
- Builds strength & determination

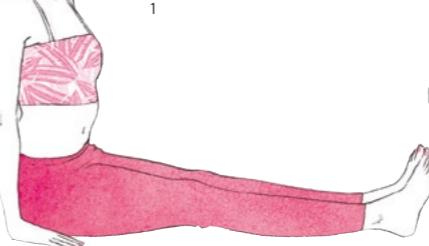
BOAT POSE

4

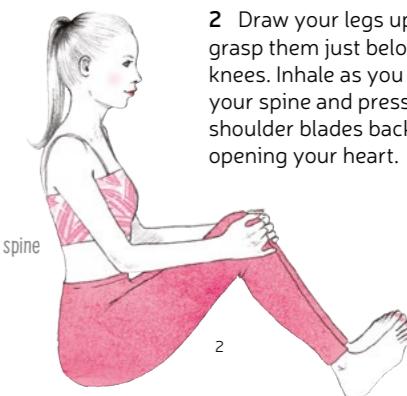
The Boat Pose, or *Paripurna Navasana*, is a balancing position in which the body resembles a boat in the water.

- Strengthens hips, thighs & back
- Tones abs
- Improves digestion
- Improves balance

1 Sit on the floor in Staff Pose, legs extended in front of you and hands on the floor with fingers facing forwards.



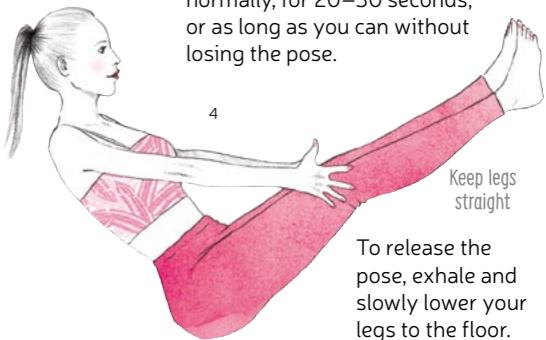
2 Draw your legs up and grasp them just below the knees. Inhale as you lengthen your spine and press your shoulder blades back, opening your heart.



3 Exhale as you lean back, slipping your hands under your lower thighs. Balance on your sitting bones.



4 Exhale as you straighten your legs at an upward angle, stretching your arms forwards. Balance in position, breathing normally, for 20–30 seconds, or as long as you can without losing the pose.



Keep legs straight

To release the pose, exhale and slowly lower your legs to the floor.

MODIFICATIONS

If you find it difficult to straighten your raised legs, bend your knees and loop a strap or belt around the soles of your feet, gripping it firmly in both hands. Inhale, lean back, then exhale and lift and straighten your legs, adjusting the strap to keep it taut. Push your feet firmly against the strap.



Alternatively, if you need to remain with your knees slightly bent while you build up to the full position, then you are welcome to do so.

This pose places quite a lot of pressure on the abdomen, so if you have any kind of intestinal discomfort wait until you are better before attempting it.

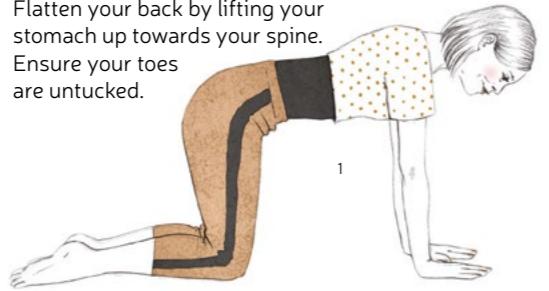
CAT-COW POSE

5

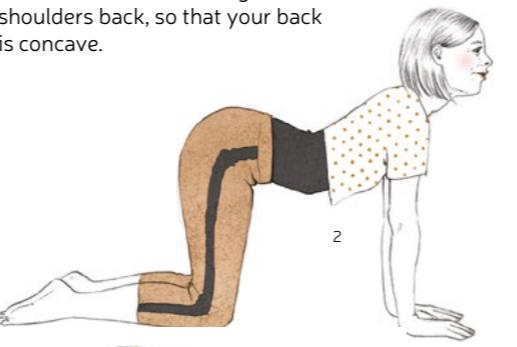
The Cat-Cow Pose is a simple asana and is great for relieving tension through the spine. Move with your breath to maximise the benefits it offers.

- Relieves tension in back, neck & shoulders
- Reduces symptoms of PMS
- Improves digestion
- Improves flexibility of spine

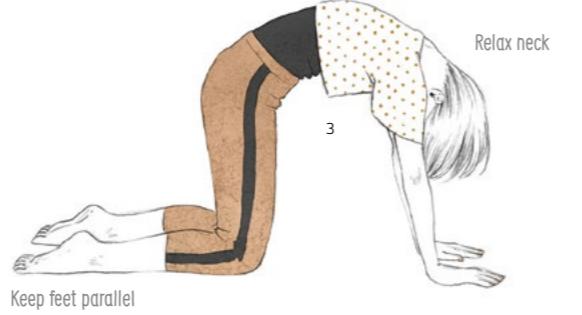
1 Start on your hands and knees, gazing down at the floor. Align your wrists with your shoulders and your knees with your hips. Flatten your back by lifting your stomach up towards your spine. Ensure your toes are untucked.



2 Inhale as you slowly lift your head and tail bone, moving the chest forwards and taking the shoulders back, so that your back is concave.



3 Exhale as you lower your head and tailbone, raising your abdomen and arching your spine upwards. Let your head drop gently between your shoulders without forcing your chin towards your chest. Repeat three times.



PLANK POSE

6

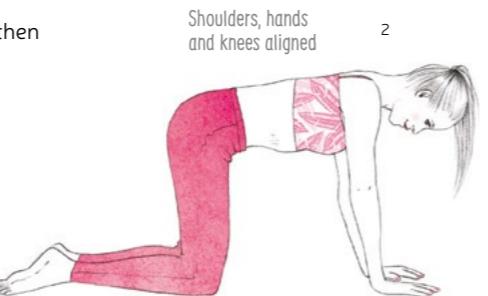
The Plank Pose strengthens core muscles, as well as arms, back and buttocks. Remember that if you have wrist pain or injury you can use your forearms as a front grounding point.

- Strengthens arms, shoulders, back & legs
- Tones abdominal muscles & glutes

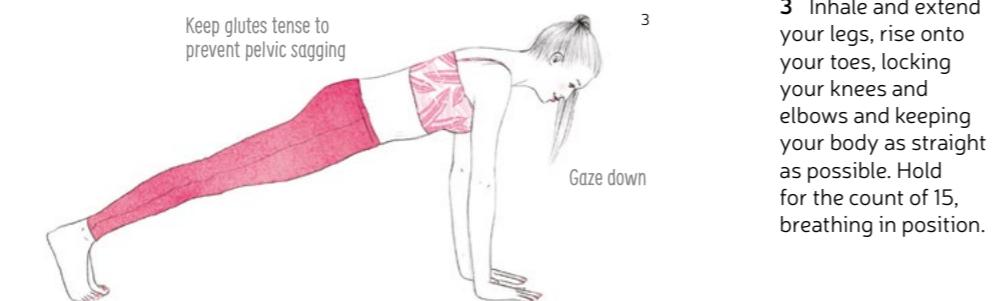
1 Kneel on the floor. Place your hands on your thighs and lengthen your spine.



Shoulders, hands and knees aligned



2 Move onto all fours, and tuck your hips, as though bringing your pelvis up towards your ribs. Keep your shoulders and knees aligned with your hips



3 Inhale and extend your legs, rise onto your toes, locking your knees and elbows and keeping your body as straight as possible. Hold for the count of 15, breathing in position.

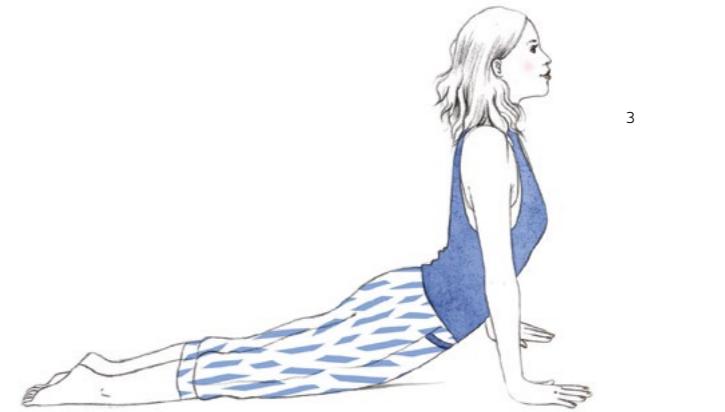
UPWARD FACING DOG POSE

7

The Upward Facing Dog Pose, or *Urdhva Mukha Shvanasana*, is a powerful back stretch.



- Strengthens spine, torso & arms
- Tones abs & hips
- Opens lungs
- Improves circulation & posture
- Stimulates abdominal area



1 Lie on your stomach on the floor, head turned to one side.

2 Turn your head to the front. Inhale and place the palms of your hands on the floor just below shoulder level. Bring your shoulders towards your ears while pressing your shoulder blades inwards towards each other.

3 Exhale, push down on your hands and lift your head, chest, trunk and hips off the floor. Feet, knees, shins and thighs should stay on the floor. Hold for 5 complete breaths.

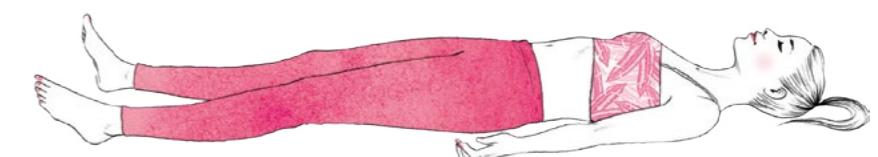
CORPSE POSE

8

Set aside 5–10 minutes at the end of the session to enjoy the complete relaxation of the corpse pose.

1 Lie on your back with your arms at your sides, palms up. Let your feet drop open. Close your eyes. Starting from the soles of your feet, scan up to the crown of your head, releasing tension in your joints and muscles along the way. Invite peace into your mind

and body. Use your breath as your focus to clear your mind and keep yourself present. Rest for 5–10 minutes.



TODAY'S ROUTINE

AFTER you have practised the poses for today, perform them all again in a flowing dance-like sequence. Practise the Corpse Pose just once at the end of the routine.

- 1 COMPLETE BREATH STANDING
- 2 CHEST OPENER
- 3 TRIANGLE POSE
- 4 BOAT POSE
- 5 CAT-COW POSE
- 6 PLANK POSE
- 7 UPWARD FACING DOG POSE
- 8 CORPSE POSE

Repeat 5 times
Repeat 3 times
5–10 minutes

Yoga & PMS

On the days leading up to menstruation many women experience mood swings, fatigue and a variety of other warning signals. You may suffer from headaches, outbreaks of acne, bloating or breast tenderness, and experience cravings for unhealthy sugar-laden dishes or overly salty food. The list of symptoms associated with premenstrual syndrome (PMS) is long, but physicians agree that the cause is usually an imbalance of hormones and a sluggish liver. The regular practise of yoga can alleviate PMS in a number of ways. Physically, it will help balance your endocrine system and purify your liver. Many of the asanas are designed to stimulate your pituitary, thyroid and hypothalamus, all of which control your hormones. Psychologically, yoga relieves stress, allowing you to relax and sleep well, leaving you better able to cope even if your hormones are playing up.

GODDESS POSE

1

Today we begin with this wide-legged squat that will strengthen your thighs.

- Opens hips & groin
- Strengthens thighs
- Increases overall body strength

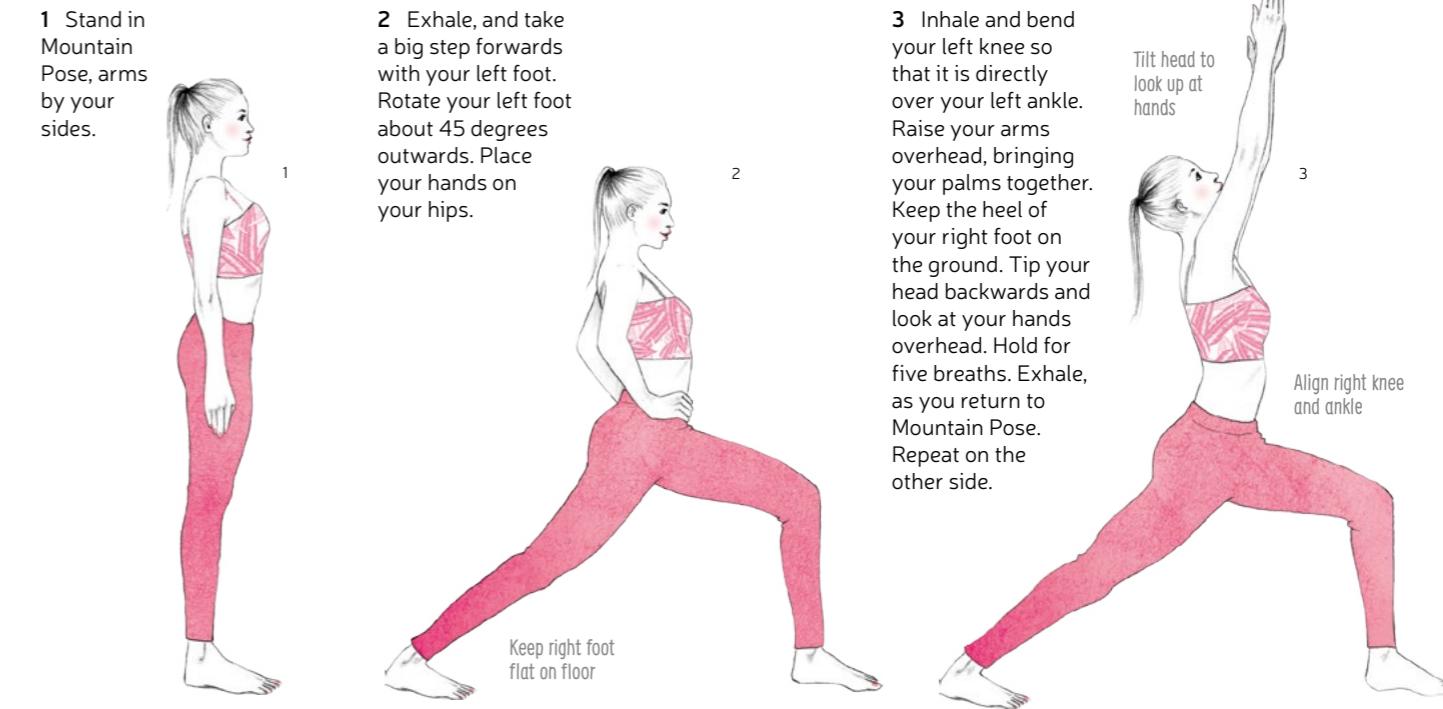


WARRIOR I

2

This standing forward lunge will improve your focus, balance and stability.

- Strengthens the legs, especially thighs
- Strengthens spine
- Stabilises hips, knees & ankles
- Increases lung capacity

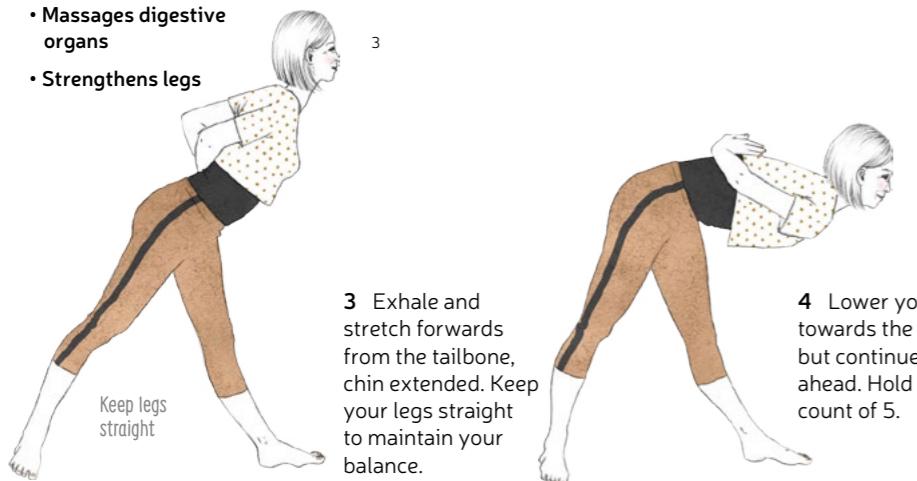
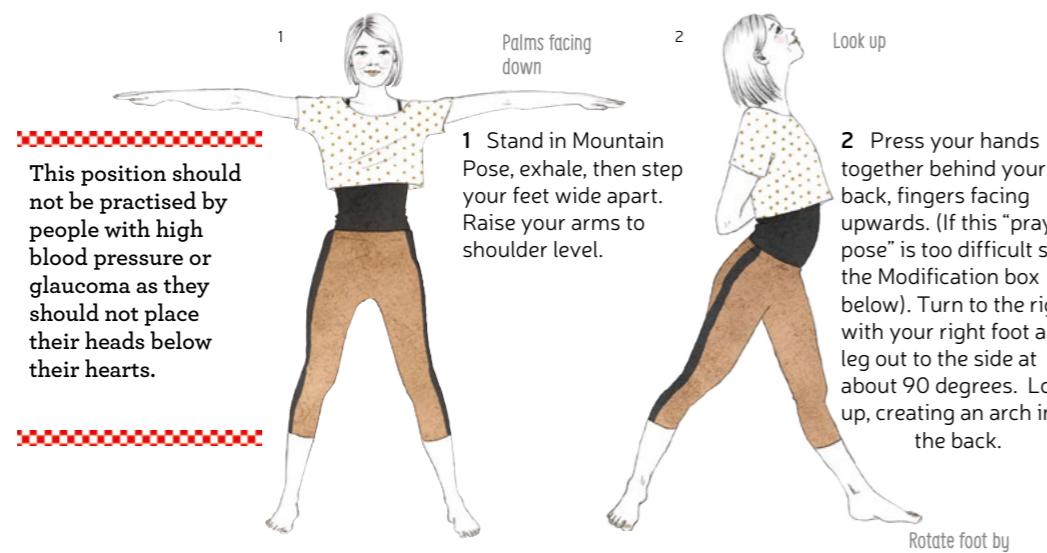


INTENSE SIDE STRETCH

3

This Intense Side Stretch, known as *Parshvottanasana*, develops balance and strength. Ideally, your hands should be in the *Anjali Mudra*, or prayer pose, behind your back.

- Improves balance
- Relieves stiffness in shoulders, neck & wrists
- Opens chest
- Massages digestive organs
- Strengthens legs



DAY
13
80

MODIFICATION

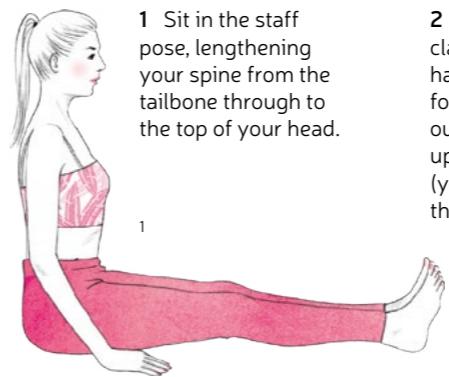
If you feel discomfort in the hamstrings and can't bring your head near your knee, bend your right leg a little. Do not bend forward any further than is comfortable.



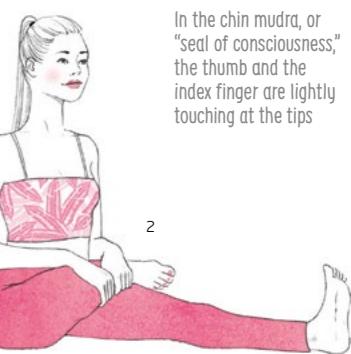
HALF LOTUS

4

We return to the Half Lotus Pose. If the stretch is still too intense for you, return to the variation shown on page 52.



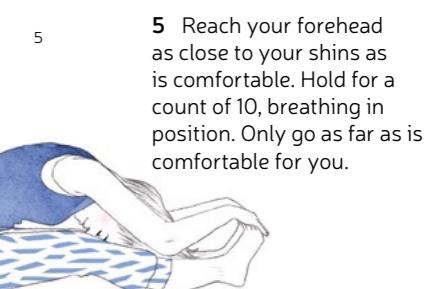
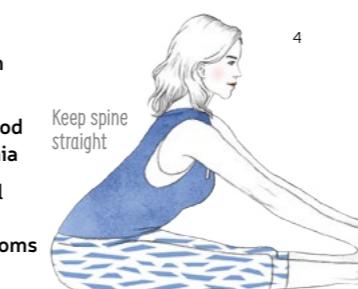
2 Bend the right knee, clasp the foot with both hands, and place your foot on top of your still out-stretched leg as far up your thigh as possible (your goal is to place it in the hip crease).



SEATED FORWARD BEND

5

This pose provides a deep stretch for the entire back side of the body, from the heels to the neck.



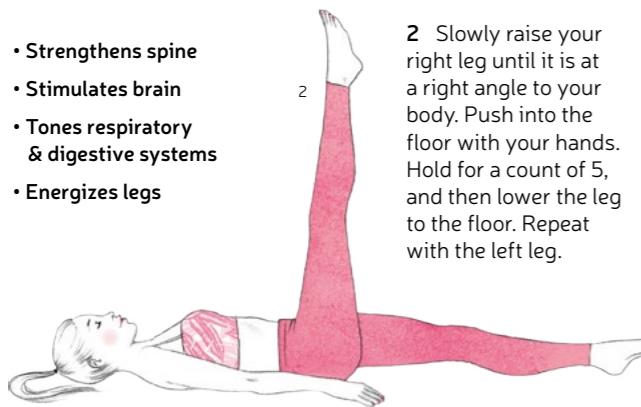
DAY
13
81

RAISED LEG POSE

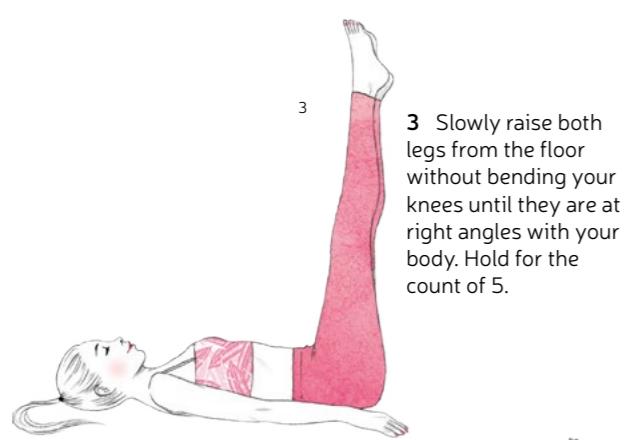
This pose also helps to release intestinal gas. Practise daily if you have this problem.



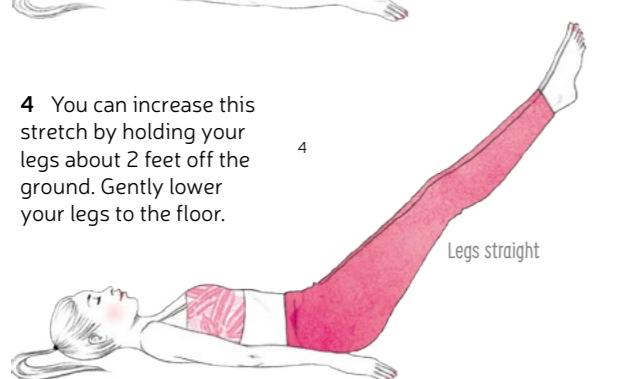
- Strengthens spine
- Stimulates brain
- Tones respiratory & digestive systems
- Energizes legs



- 1 Lie on your back with legs and arms straight. Your feet should be together and palms facing downwards on the floor next to the body.
- 2 Slowly raise your right leg until it is at a right angle to your body. Push into the floor with your hands. Hold for a count of 5, and then lower the leg to the floor. Repeat with the left leg.



- 3 Slowly raise both legs from the floor without bending your knees until they are at right angles with your body. Hold for the count of 5.
- 4 You can increase this stretch by holding your legs about 2 feet off the ground. Gently lower your legs to the floor.



Legs straight

KNEES-TO-CHEST POSE

This pose helps to reduce anger and anxiety and can help with high blood pressure.

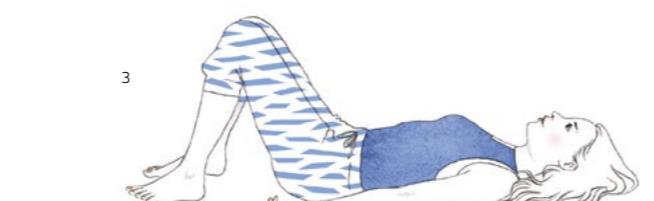


- Provides relief from indigestion, bloating, acid reflux, flatulence & constipation
- Improves symptoms of IBS

- 1 Lie on your back with your legs extended. Draw your left knee up towards your chest. Clasp your hands around the knee. Gently squeeze your leg towards you. Repeat with the other leg.
- 2 Return to the first position on your back. Now draw both knees up towards your chest. Clasp your hands around the knees. Gently squeeze your legs towards you.



- 3 Let your legs drop down gently to the floor. Leave your knees bent about 45 cm (18 inches) apart. Relax into the floor and take 2–3 complete breaths.
- 4



BELLY TWIST

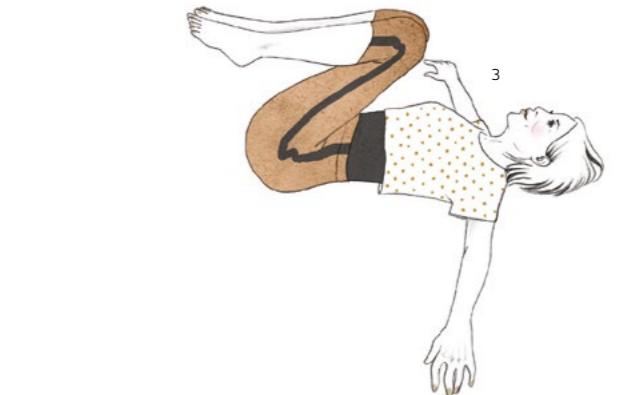
The Belly Twist, or *Jathara Parivartanasana*, is a restorative pose, often used to finish a practise session.

- Stretches entire spine
- Relaxes the neck
- Promotes digestion
- Relaxes whole body



TODAY'S ROUTINE

REPEAT all the poses learned today in a flowing dance-like sequence.



- 1 Lie on your back on the floor, feet together and arms along the sides of your body, palms facing downwards.
- 2 Inhale and bring your knees up towards your chest. Wrap your arms around them.
- 3 Stretch your arms out at right angles to your body, palms facing downwards. Relax your neck and shoulders.
- 4 Exhale, and keeping both knees together, turn them to the left, pressing them as close to the floor as you can. At the same time turn your head to the right. Keep both shoulders on the floor. Hold for the count of 5. Inhale and raise your knees and head back to the central position. Repeat on the other side.

- Repeat 3 times
- Repeat 5 times
- Repeat 5 times
- Repeat 3 times

- 1 GODDESS POSE
- 2 WARRIOR I
- 3 INTENSE SIDE STRETCH
- 4 HALF LOTUS
- 5 SEATED FORWARD BEND
- 6 RAISED LEG POSE
- 7 KNEES-TO-CHEST POSE
- 8 BELLY TWIST

DAY 14

We are now almost halfway through our course and you have probably noticed some real changes in your body, as well as in your ability to focus when required, and to relax and sleep. It is common at this point for friends to start making comments like "You're looking well!" or "Have you lost weight?" Unless you have modified your diet you probably have not lost any weight but your body will definitely be looking leaner and more toned and your posture will have improved, giving you a more elegant and graceful silhouette. You may also have lost a centimetre or two from your waist and hips, as your muscles tighten. Being able to relax and sleep better will make you look so much better, with bright eyes and a glowing skin. Today's catch-up session is quite intense as we will practise 18 different asanas.

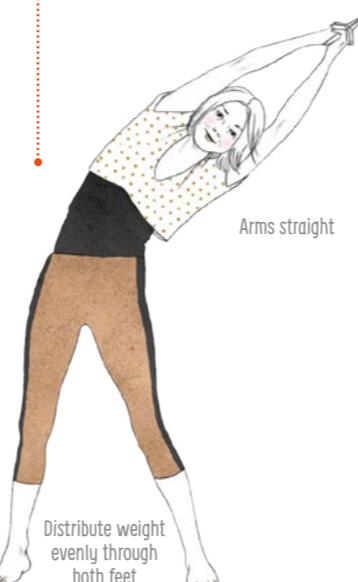
Catch-Up 2

SIDE BEND

1

Side bends facilitate deeper breathing by stretching intercostal muscles and expanding the rib cage.

- Lengthens spine
- Targets "love handles"
- Tones arms



Distribute weight evenly through both feet

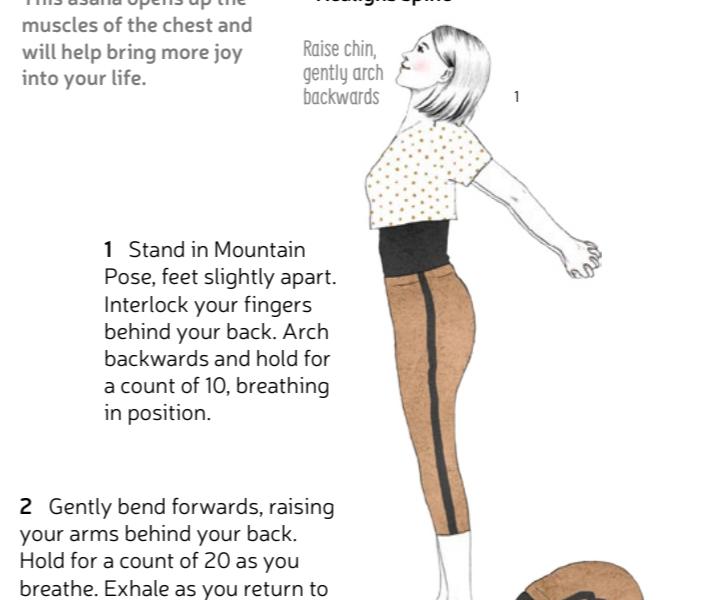
1 Stand in Mountain Pose. Step your feet to about 2 feet apart and inhale as you raise your arms. Clasp your hands above your head, in either the "steeple" or "namaste" positions. Exhale and bend slowly to the left. Hold for a count of 5, then inhale to centre. Repeat on the other side. Repeat on both sides twice.

CHEST OPENER

2

This asana opens up the muscles of the chest and will help bring more joy into your life.

- Tones & firms arms
- Tones & firms bust
- Relieves tension in neck & shoulders
- Realigns spine



Raise chin, gently arch backwards

1 Stand in Mountain Pose, feet slightly apart. Interlock your fingers behind your back. Arch backwards and hold for a count of 10, breathing in position.

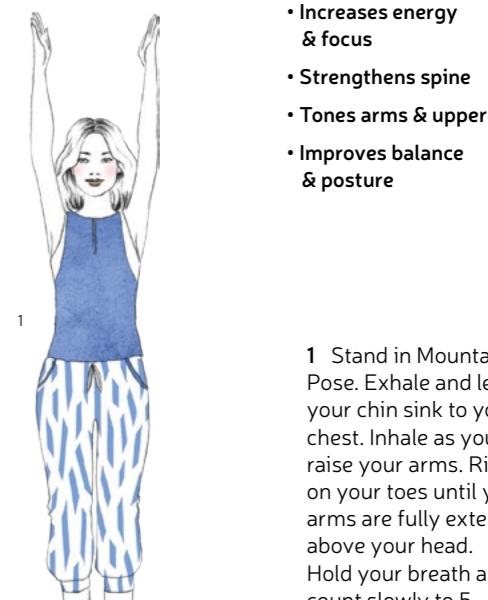
2 Gently bend forwards, raising your arms behind your back. Hold for a count of 20 as you breathe. Exhale as you return to an upright position.

3 Raise your arms to shoulder height, and interlock your fingers behind your back. Arch backwards again as far as is comfortable for you. Hold for a count of 5, breathing in position.

4 Now bend forwards again, raising your arms behind your back. Gently press your nose as close to your knees as you can. Do not overstretch. Hold for a count of 15 as you breathe. Exhale as you return to an upright position. Repeat all four positions once.

COMPLETE BREATH STANDING

3



1 Stand in Mountain Pose. Exhale and let your chin sink to your chest. Inhale as you raise your arms. Rise up on your toes until your arms are fully extended above your head. Hold your breath and count slowly to 5.



Rise up onto toe tips

Lower arms gracefully and sink down onto heels

2 Exhale as you gracefully lower your arms and sink down onto your heels. Repeat 5 times.

This simple pose can help prevent shortness of breath, asthma, bronchitis and emphysema.

- Increases energy & focus
- Strengthens spine
- Tones arms & upper body
- Improves balance & posture

DAY
14

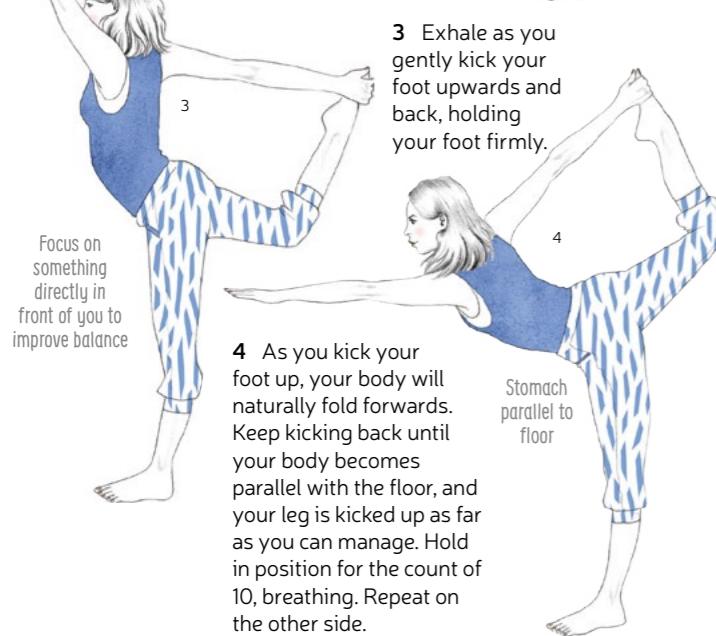
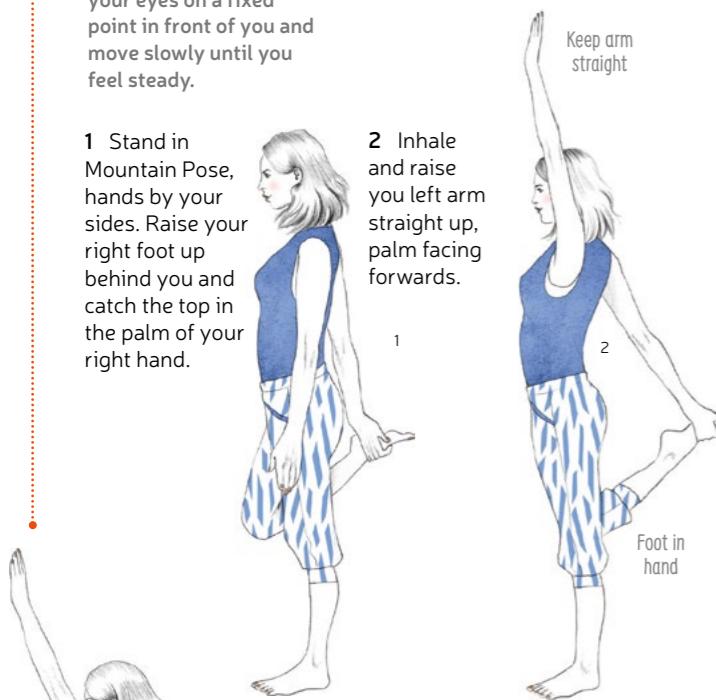
85

STANDING BOW POSE

4

The Standing Bow is all about balance. Keep your eyes on a fixed point in front of you and move slowly until you feel steady.

- 1 Stand in Mountain Pose, hands by your sides. Raise your right foot up behind you and catch the top in the palm of your right hand.



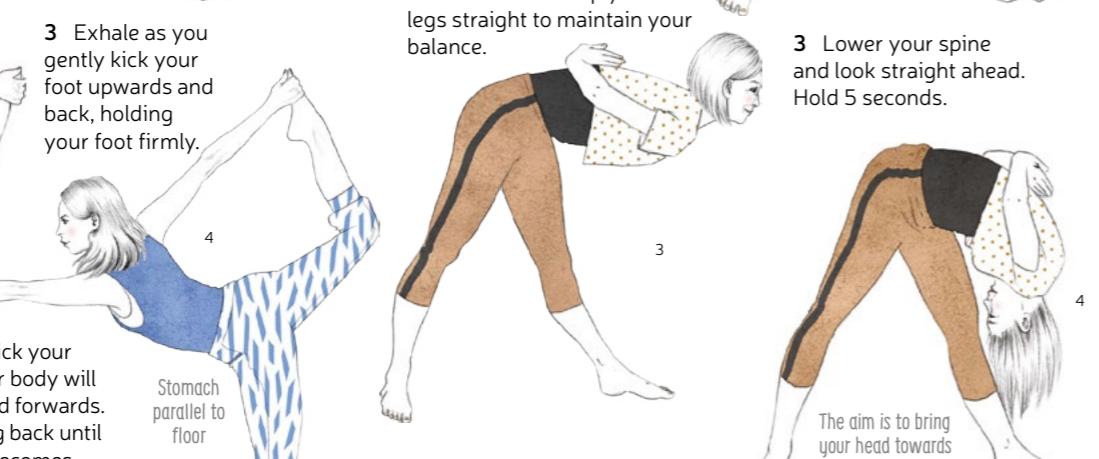
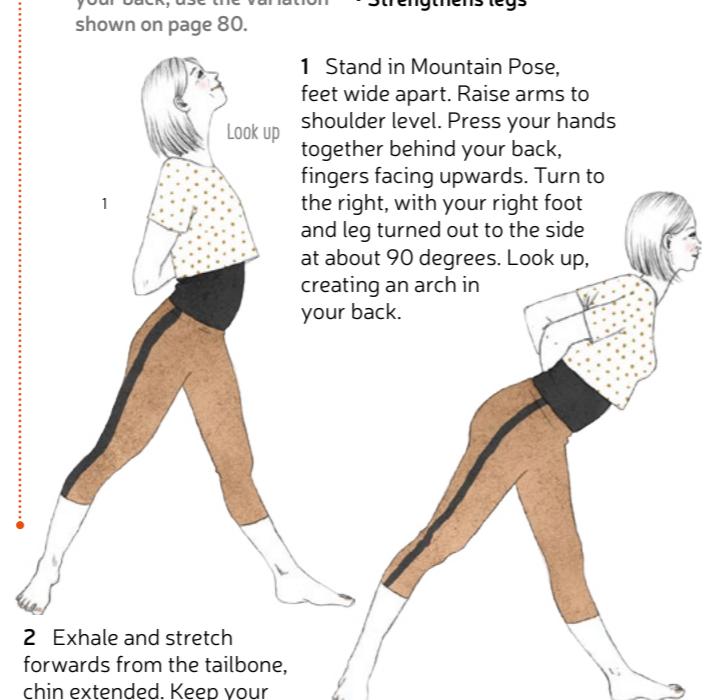
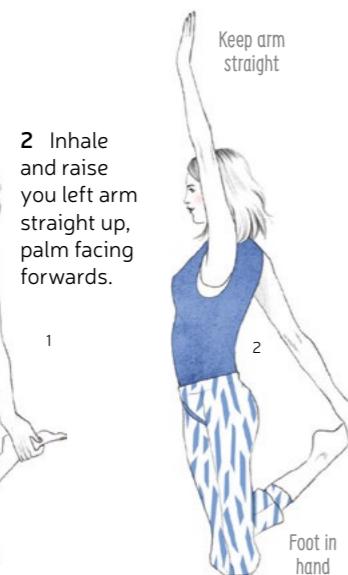
Focus on something directly in front of you to improve balance

- Improves circulation to heart & lungs
- Increases elasticity of spine
- Activates digestive system
- Improves balance & focus

INTENSE SIDE STRETCH

5

If you can't hold your hands in the prayer pose behind your back, use the variation shown on page 80.



- 4 As you kick your foot up, your body will naturally fold forwards. Keep kicking back until your body becomes parallel with the floor, and your leg is kicked up as far as you can manage. Hold in position for the count of 10, breathing. Repeat on the other side.

- Improves balance
- Relieves stiffness in shoulders, neck & wrists
- Opens chest
- Massages digestive organs
- Strengthens legs

STANDING FORWARD BEND

6

This intensive stretch can help reduce stress, anxiety and fatigue by relieving tension in the spine, neck and back.

- Strengthens back muscles
- Stretches hamstrings
- Tones digestive organs
- Can relieve headaches

- 1 Stand in Mountain Pose, with your feet just slightly apart.



1



2



3



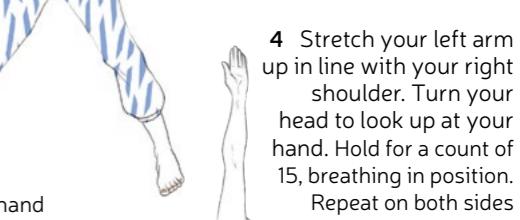
4

TRIANGLE POSE

7

We return to this intensive stretch. Practise the modified versions if you have heart concerns or neck pain or injury (see page 74).

- Elongates & strengthens spine
- Tones legs
- Stimulates liver, spleen & kidneys
- Builds strength & determination



DAY
14

87

NECK STRETCH

8

This pose relieves stiffness in the neck and shoulders.



- Releases tension in neck & shoulders
- Relieves headaches
- Promotes relaxation

1 Sit on the floor, legs drawn up. Keep the spine straight and drop your head forwards so that your chin is resting on your chest.

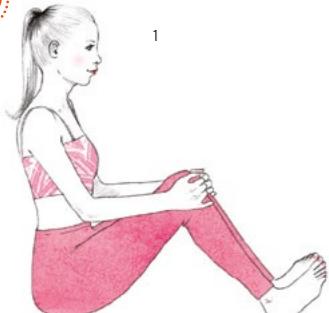
2 Roll your head to the right, taking right ear down towards right shoulder. Roll your chin to chest again and take your left ear to your left shoulder. Repeat 3–5 times.



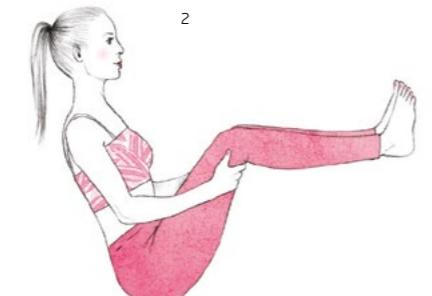
BOAT POSE

10

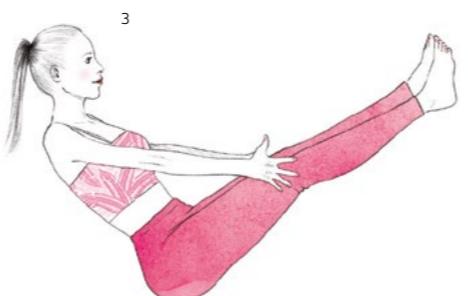
The Boat Pose is a balancing position in which the body resembles a boat in the water.



1 Sit in staff pose. Draw your knees up and grasp your legs just below the knees. Inhale as you lengthen your spine and press your shoulder blades back, opening your heart.



2 Exhale as you lean back, slipping your hands under your lower thighs. Balance on your sitting bones.



3 Exhale as you straighten your legs at an upward angle, stretching your arms forwards. Balance in position, breathing normally, for 20–30 seconds, or as long as you can without losing the pose. Repeat three times.

BOUND ANGLE POSE

9

This stretch opens the hips and lengthens the muscles in the inner thighs.



- Benefits urinary & reproductive organs
- Relieves menstrual discomfort
- Stretches thigh muscles
- Relieves mild depression

1 Exhale, and ease your knees down towards the floor. Hold for a count of 20, breathing in position. Repeat five times.

Press knees towards floor

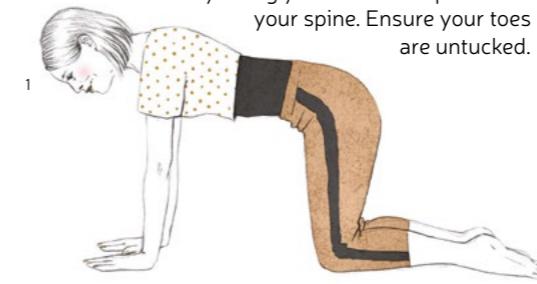


CAT-COW POSE

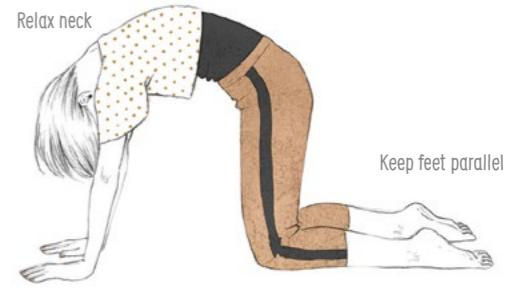
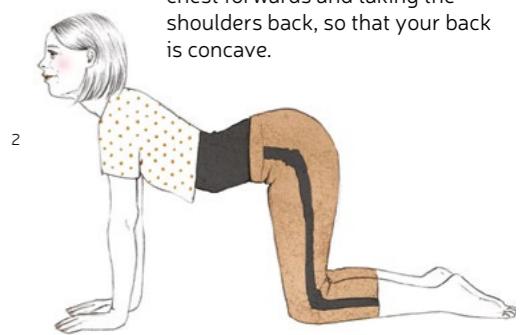
11

This asana can help relieve pain associated with menstrual cramps, lower back pain and sciatica.

1 Start on your hands and knees, eyes looking down at the floor. Align your wrists with your shoulders and your knees with your hips. Flatten your back by lifting your stomach up towards your spine. Ensure your toes are untucked.



2 Inhale as you slowly lift your head and tail bone, moving the chest forwards and taking the shoulders back, so that your back is concave.



Keep feet parallel

Relax neck

BELLY TWIST

12

The Belly Twist is a restorative pose and can be used as a "breather" between asanas in an intense practise session.

1 Lie on your back on the floor, feet together and arms along the sides of your body, palms facing downwards.

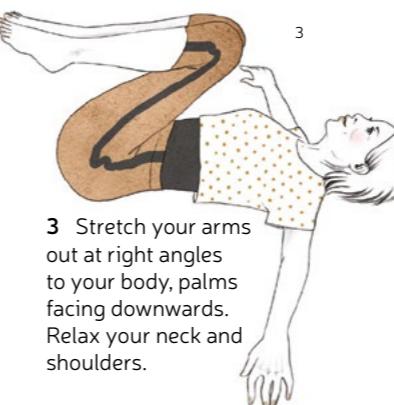


2 Inhale and bring your knees up towards your chest. Wrap your arms around them.

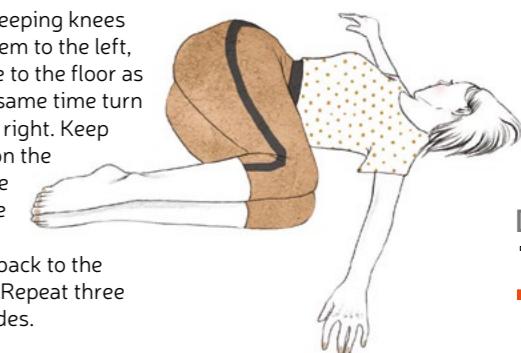


- Strengthens hips, thighs & back
- Tones abs
- Improves digestion
- Improves balance

- Stretches entire spine
- Relaxes neck
- Promotes digestion
- Relaxes whole body



3 Stretch your arms out at right angles to your body, palms facing downwards. Relax your neck and shoulders.



DAY
14

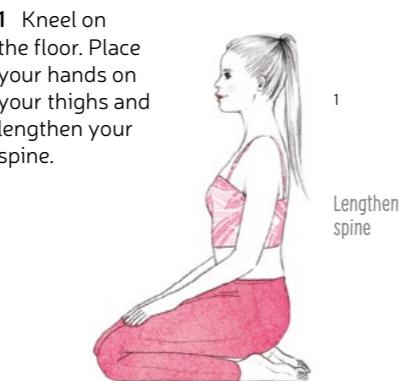
89

PLANK POSE

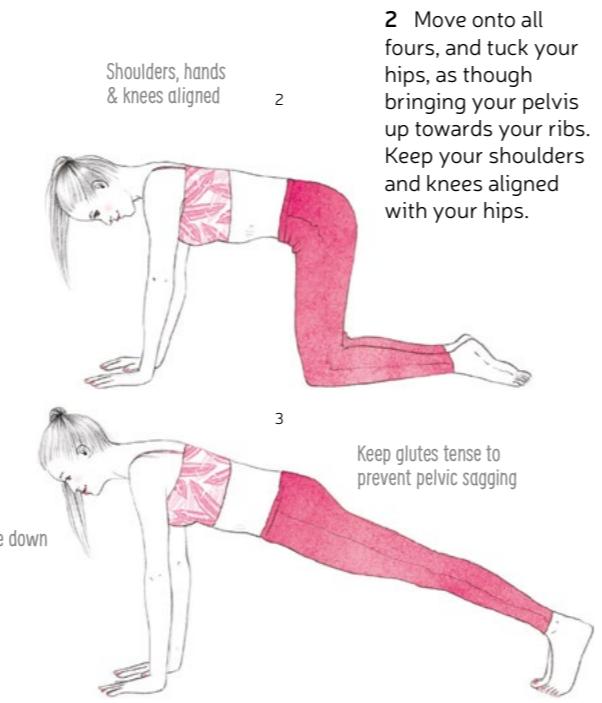
13

The Plank Pose will tone and strengthen your arms, among other things.

- Strengthens arms, shoulders, back & legs
- Tones abdominal muscles & glutes



1



2

3

- 3 Inhale and extend your legs, rise onto your toes, locking your knees and elbows and keeping your body as straight as possible. Hold for the count of 20, breathing in position. Repeat three times.

RAISED LEG POSE

14

This pose works wonders on your abs while strengthening your back, hips and thighs.



- Tightens stomach muscles
- Improves digestion
- Strengthens back & hip & thigh muscles
- Energizes reproductive organs

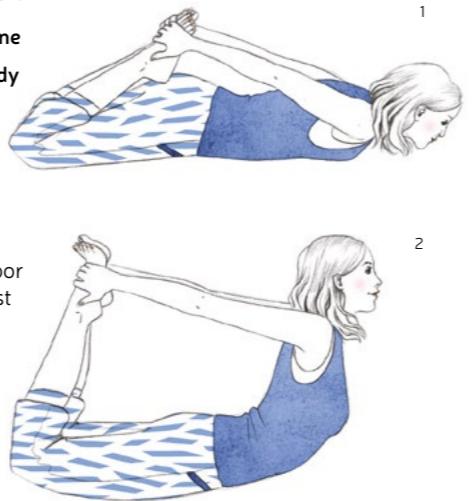


15

BOW POSE

The Bow Pose massages organs in the abdomen as well as stretching the back.

- Strengthens spine
- Tones whole body
- Opens lungs
- Improves circulation



DAY

14

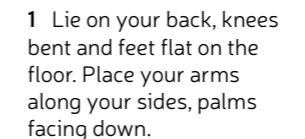
90

HALF BRIDGE POSE

16

The Half Bridge pose stretches the spine, but also reduces feelings of stress and fatigue.

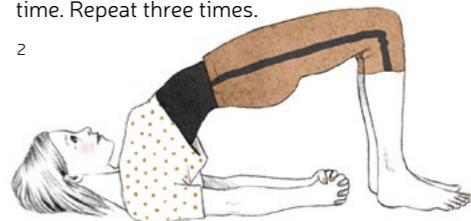
- Opens chest
- Relieves menstrual pain
- Stimulates thyroid gland
- Energises, tones & strengthens glutes & legs



1

- 2 Gently lift your hips and lower back off the floor as you exhale. Link your arms under your body and hold for a count of 10, breathing in position. To exit the pose, return your hands to your sides and lower your spine to the floor, one vertebra at a time. Repeat three times.

2

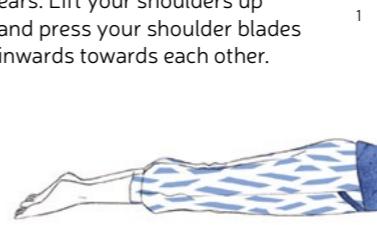


UPWARD FACING DOG POSE

17

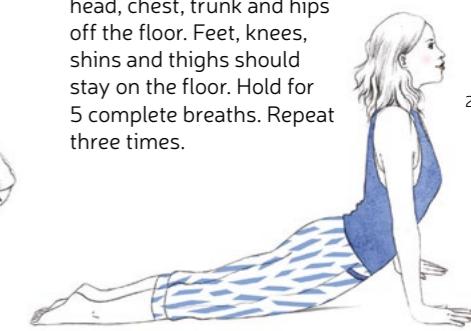
This asana's chest-opening action is the perfect antidote to the "office slump".

- Strengthens spine, torso & arms
- Tones abs & hips
- Opens lungs
- Improves circulation
- Stimulates abdominal area



1

- 2 Exhale, push down on your hands and lift your head, chest, trunk and hips off the floor. Feet, knees, shins and thighs should stay on the floor. Hold for 5 complete breaths. Repeat three times.

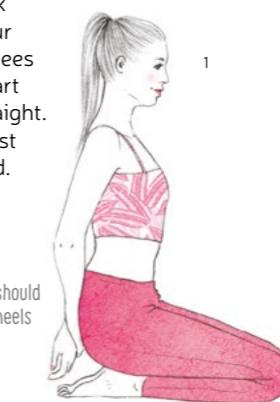


CHILD'S POSE

18

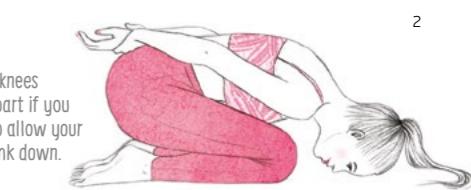
The Child's Pose is a gentle, restorative position. It helps to stretch the hips, thighs and ankles while reducing feelings of stress and fatigue.

- Relieves fatigue
- Relaxes neck & shoulders
- Stimulates digestion
- Stretches lower back



1

- 2 Exhale as you fold forward from the hips, bringing your head and chest down towards the floor. Unclasp your hands, resting the backs on the floor. Draw your tailbone gently down towards your heels. Feel the stretch in your lower back. Hold the pose and take deep, slow breaths for 2–3 minutes.



DAY

14

91

Getting into & out of the poses

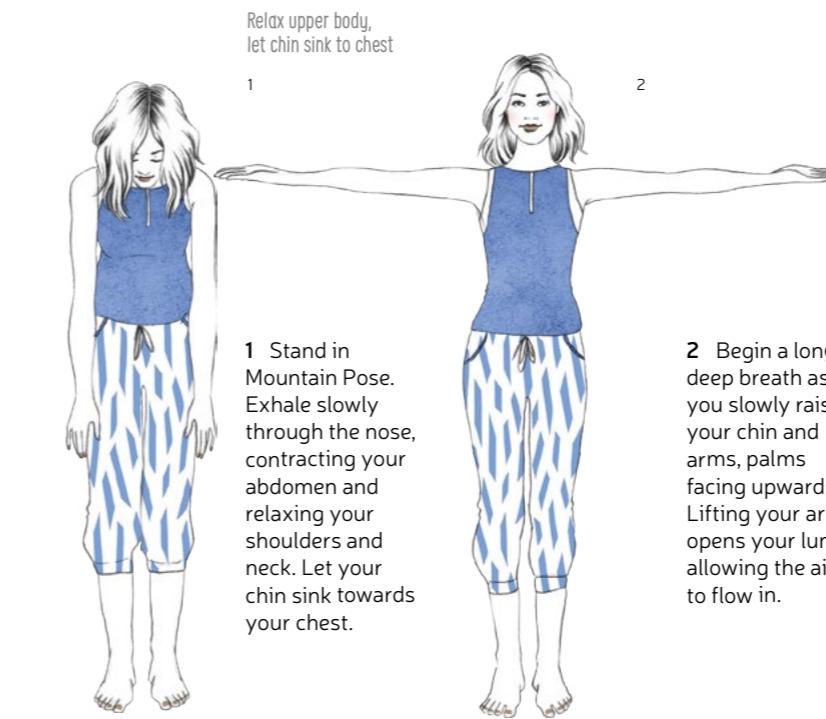
Following yesterday's demanding catch-up session, today we focus on some gentle stretching and breathing. We would also like you to focus on getting into and out of the asanas. This is just as important as being in the poses themselves. Safety and comfort should be your first concerns. If you don't know the asana, memorize the instructions thoroughly before you start. Move carefully into and out of each pose. Come up out of standing or seated bends slowly and raise your head at the end. Unless there are specific instructions, come out of reclining poses by rolling over onto one side. Take a couple of deep breathes then carefully push yourself up with your hands. After inverted poses you may want to stay in the Child's Pose (see page 65) for a few minutes.

COMPLETE BREATH STANDING

1

This gentle stretch is a great warm up pose. You can also use it throughout the day at any time you feel the need to calm and centre yourself.

- Increases energy & focus
- Strengthens spine
- Tones arms & upper body
- Improves balance & posture



Relax upper body,
let chin sink to chest

1

- 1 Stand in Mountain Pose. Exhale slowly through the nose, contracting your abdomen and relaxing your shoulders and neck. Let your chin sink towards your chest.

**2**

- 2 Begin a long, deep breath as you slowly raise your chin and arms, palms facing upwards. Lifting your arms opens your lungs allowing the air to flow in.

SIDE BEND

2

Among its many benefits, the side stretch gently stimulates the liver as you bend.

- Lengthens spine
- Targets "love handles"
- Tones arms

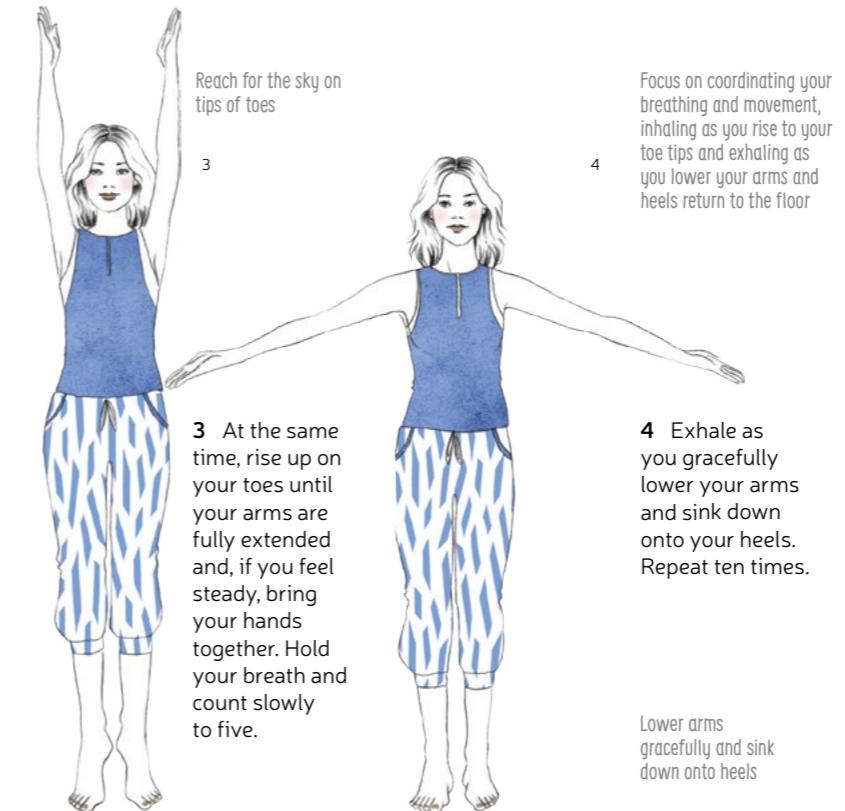


Steeple or namaste hands

1 Stand in Mountain Pose, hands by your sides. Jump, or step, your feet to about 2 feet apart and inhale as you gracefully raise your arms. Clasp your hands above your head, keeping index fingers straight in a "steeple" position.

Hug your head tightly with your biceps to lock your torso into position.

Jump or step feet about 2 feet apart



Reach for the sky on tips of toes

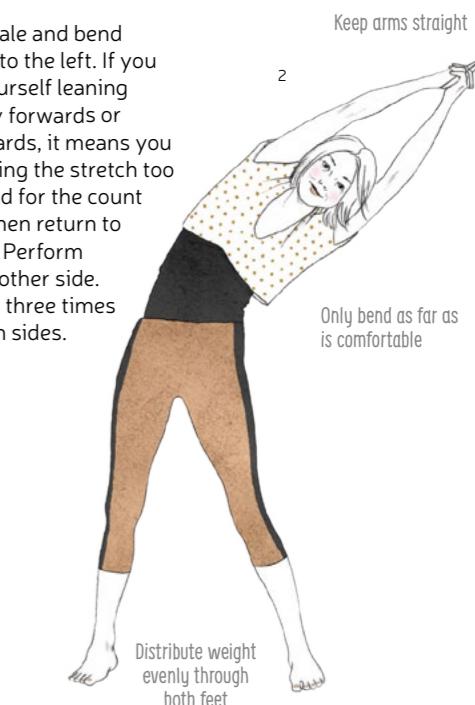
3

- 3 At the same time, rise up on your toes until your arms are fully extended and, if you feel steady, bring your hands together. Hold your breath and count slowly to five.

4

- 4 Exhale as you gracefully lower your arms and sink down onto your heels. Repeat ten times.

Lower arms gracefully and sink down onto heels



Keep arms straight

2

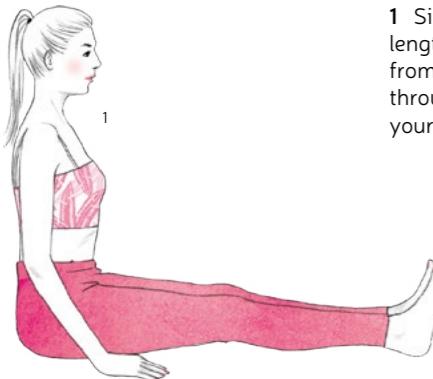
- 2 Exhale and bend slowly to the left. If you feel yourself leaning slightly forwards or backwards, it means you are taking the stretch too far. Hold for the count of 10, then return to centre. Perform on the other side. Repeat three times on both sides.

Only bend as far as is comfortable

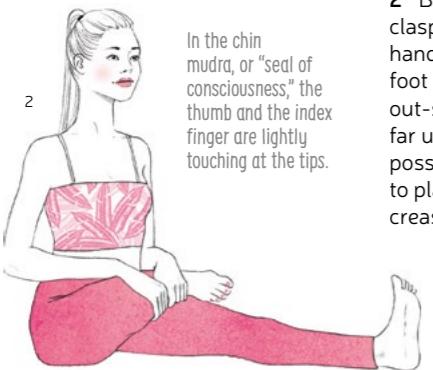
HALF LOTUS POSE

This asana strengthens the back. It also stretches the hips, knees, ankles and thighs.

3



- 1 Sit in Staff Pose, lengthening your spine from the tailbone through to the top of your head.



In the chin mudra, or "Seal of consciousness," the thumb and the index finger are lightly touching at the tips.

- 2 Bend the right knee, clasp the foot with both hands, and place your foot on top of your still out-stretched leg as far up your thigh as possible (your goal is to place it in the hip crease).



3 Bend your left knee and pull the leg in and tuck the heel under your right leg with the heel up against your groin. Place your hands on your knees, with fingers in the chin mudra. Breath in position for 10 complete breaths.

ALTERNATE-NOSTRIL BREATHING

- Builds flexibility in hips, knees & ankles
- Strengthens spine & abs
- Improves posture
- Increases energy

4

- Decreases stress
- Enhances mental function
- Soothes nervous system
- Promotes calmness & sleep
- Boosts energy

- 1 Sit in the Half Lotus pose, or in a simpler cross-legged position if the Half Lotus is too difficult. Place your hands comfortably on your knees in the *shuni mudra*, or seal of patience.



- 2 Exhale through your left nostril as you use your thumb to close your right nostril. Inhale slowly and deeply through the left nostril. Now use your ring and little finger to close your left nostril and slowly exhale through your right nostril. Inhale through the right nostril, then close it with your thumb. Exhale through the left nostril. This is one complete breathing cycle. Repeat 10 times.



In the *shuni mudra*, or "seal of patience," the thumb and the second finger are lightly touching at the tips.

2

Alternate-nose breathing is a simple yet powerful way to relieve stress and calm the mind while boosting energy levels.

BELLY BREATHING

If you watch a baby sleeping, you will see that this is how they breathe naturally. As we age and stress enters our life and body, we begin to breathe in a more shallow way. Retraining ourselves to breathe deeply offers huge benefits to mind and body.

5

- Brings more oxygen into the blood
- Massages abdominal organs, improving digestion & lymphatic drainage
- Calms nervous system, reducing heart rate



- 1 Lie on the floor face up in corpse pose. Place your hands palms downwards over your belly just below the ribcage and



- 2 You should be able to feel your belly expand with the breath. Now gently breathe out through your partly closed mouth, tightening

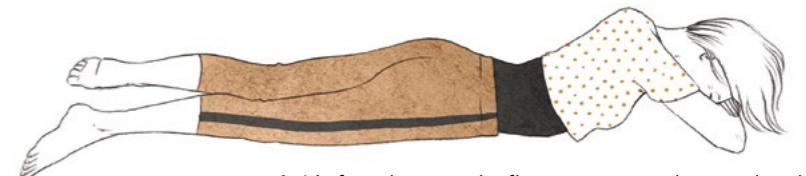
breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose. Inhale calmly until you cannot take in more air comfortably.

your stomach muscles as you exhale to push the air out of the stomach. Repeat slowly and calmly for 2–3 minutes.

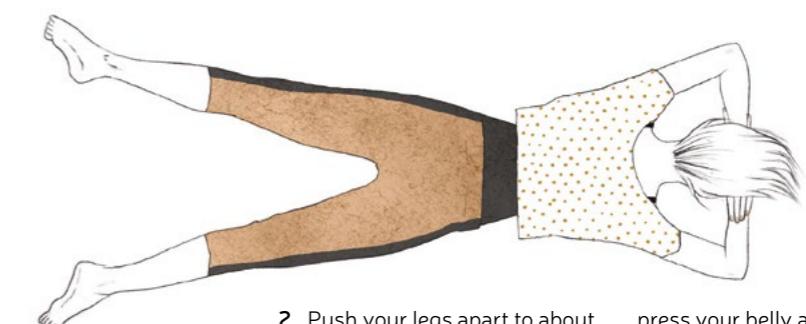
CROCODILE POSE

The Crocodile Pose, or *Makarasana*, releases the strain caused by more challenging poses and promotes deep relaxation.

- Relieves stiffness in neck & back
- Reduces anxiety
- Regulates blood pressure
- Promotes sleep



- 1 Lie face down on the floor. Inhale, raise your head, bring your arms up and slip your forearms



under your head. Rest your forehead on the backs of your stacked hands.

1

To exit the pose, bring your palms under your shoulders and roll over onto your back

2

- 2 Push your legs apart to about the same width as your shoulders, rolling the heels inwards. Gently squeeze the buttocks together and

press your belly against the floor. Relax your entire body and focus on breathing slowly and deeply for several minutes.

Osteoporosis

**DAY
16**

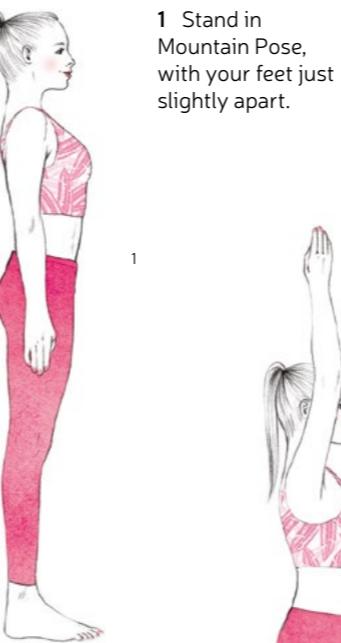
We all reach peak bone density at about the age of 35. After that it begins to decline. Women, who generally have lighter frames to start with, tend to lose more bone mass as they age than men, especially during the five to ten years after menopause. This is why women make up 80 per cent of those with osteoporosis, or fragile bones. Clearly the more bone mass you start with, the better off you will be. Along with a healthy diet, regular exercise is key in building and maintaining bones. Yoga is especially recommended because of its gentle weight-bearing poses that strengthen the whole body, from the neck and spine all the way down to the wrists and ankles. Yoga corrects posture, lessening stress on the bones, and improves balance so that you are less likely to fall. It boosts digestion helping your body to absorb all the nutrients it needs for healthy bones. Yoga also balances hormones, keeping more estrogen in your system for longer.

STANDING FORWARD BEND

1

We return to this intense forward bend. Try to bring your nose a little closer to your knees than you have in the past.

- Strengthens back muscles
- Stretches hamstrings
- Tones digestive organs
- Can relieve headaches



1 Stand in Mountain Pose, with your feet just slightly apart.

1

Lifting the arms slowly as you inhale allows the air to flow deep into your lungs

2 Inhale as you raise your arms parallel above your head, palms facing inwards.

2

Legs straight (if possible)

3

3 Exhale as you fold forward from the hips. Keeping the knees straight, run your hands down your legs as far as they will go. If you can reach the floor, place your palms alongside your feet. If you can't reach the floor, grasp your shins, ankles or feet, and gently bring your nose as close to your knees as is comfortable. Hold for a count of 15, breathing in position. To exit the pose, place hands on hips, and slowly raise your upper body to standing position as you exhale. Repeat three times.



Bend from the hips, like a hinge, keeping the back straight

Relax neck

Keep feet aligned

WARRIOR III

This is the third of the three Warrior pose. It is known in Sanskrit as Virabhadrasana III.

- Strengthens spine, shoulder & hip muscles
- Opens chest
- Improves balance
- Tones abs



1

1 Stand in Mountain Pose, arms by your sides. Fix your gaze on something in front of you and focus on it throughout the asana. This will help you keep your balance.

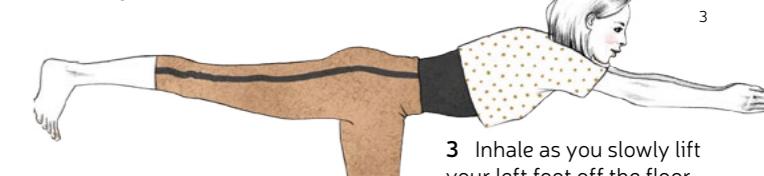
2

2 Exhale as you lunge your right foot forwards, bending your knee to 90 degrees. Raise your arms and extend them forwards. Fold your torso forwards over your right thigh.

2



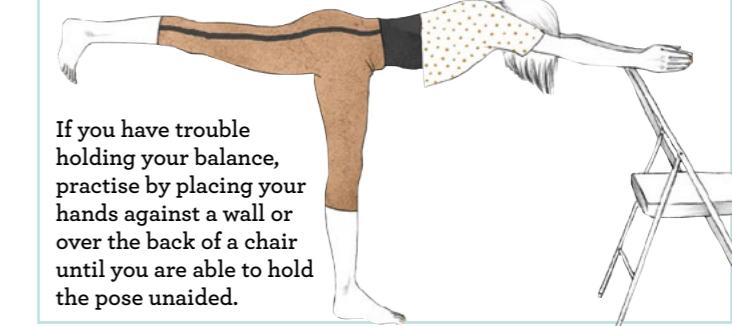
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3

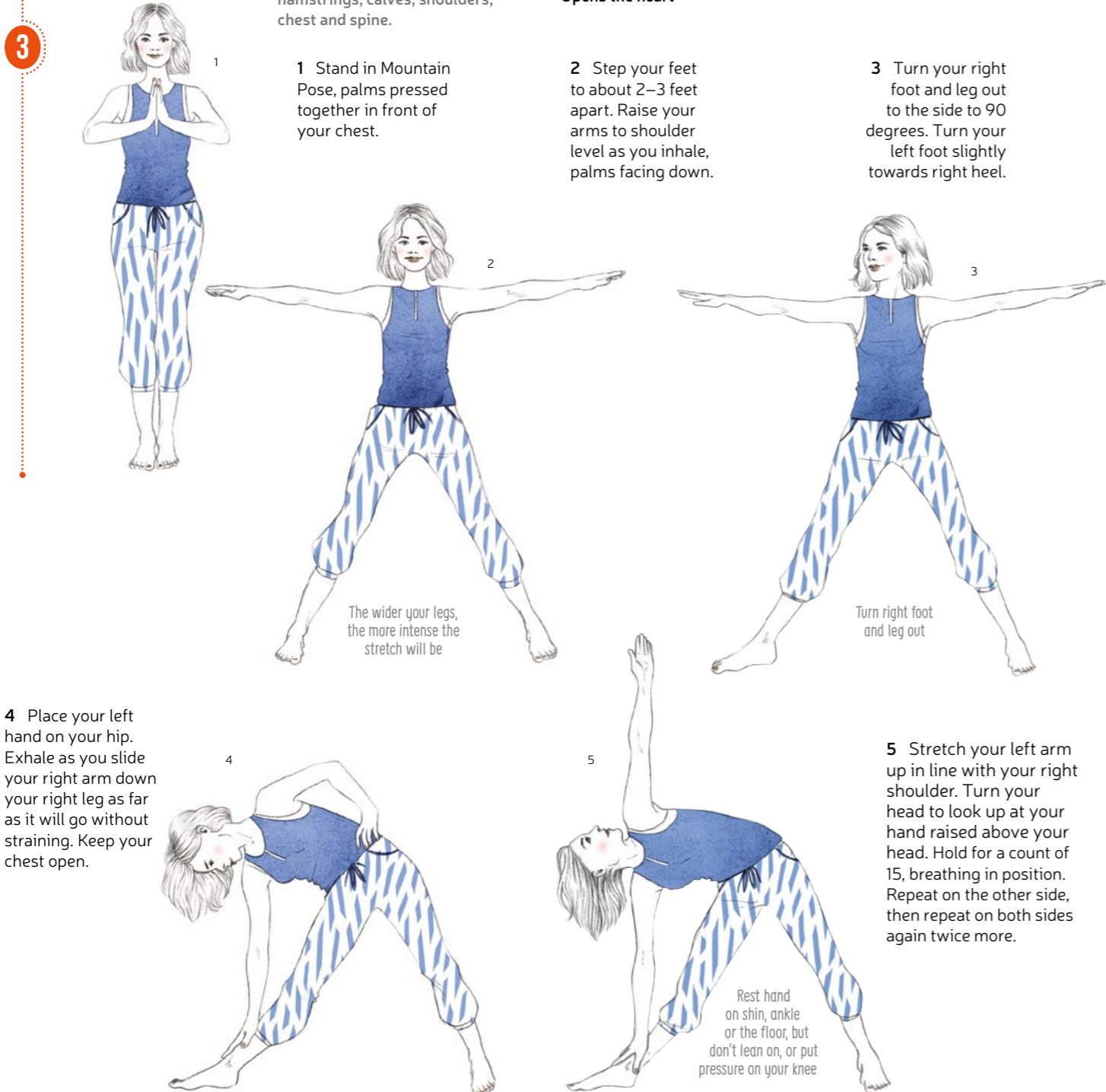
3 Inhale as you slowly lift your left foot off the floor, extending it out behind you so that it is parallel to the floor. Straighten your right leg and stay in the pose for five complete breaths. Perform on the other side. Repeat three times on both sides.

MODIFICATION



If you have trouble holding your balance, practise by placing your hands against a wall or over the back of a chair until you are able to hold the pose unaided.

TRIANGLE POSE



This stretch strengthens the legs, muscles around the knee, ankle joints, hips, groin muscles, hamstrings, calves, shoulders, chest and spine.

- Elongates & strengthens spine
- Tones legs
- Opens the heart

- Stimulates liver, spleen & kidneys
- Builds strength & determination

HALF TWIST

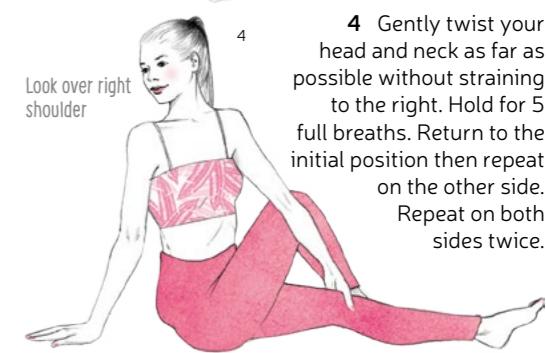
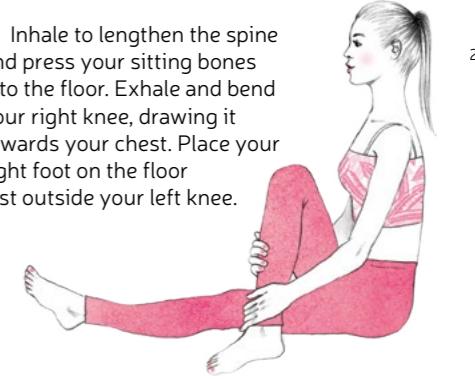
4

This gentle twist energises the spine and improves digestion.

- Massages digestive organs, aiding elimination
- Stimulates lymph flow
- Strengthens immune system
- Calms nervous system



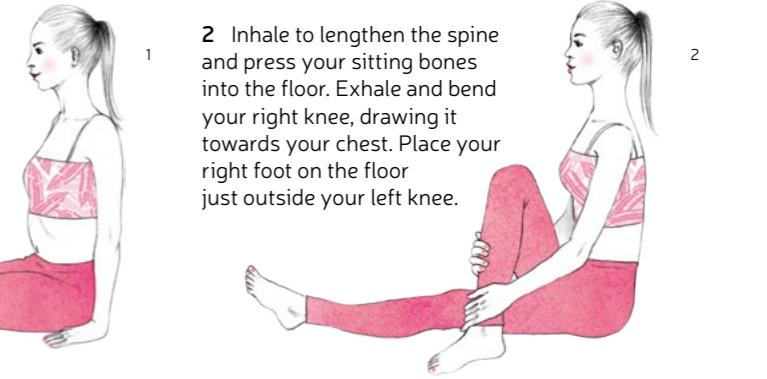
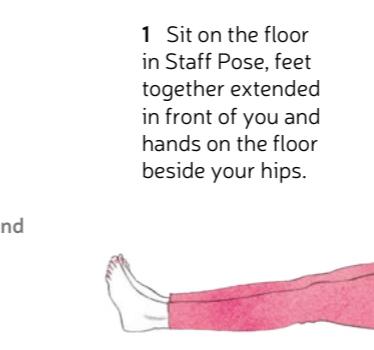
2 Inhale to lengthen the spine and press your sitting bones into the floor. Exhale and bend your right knee, drawing it towards your chest. Place your right foot on the floor just outside your left knee.



SEATED FORWARD BEND

5

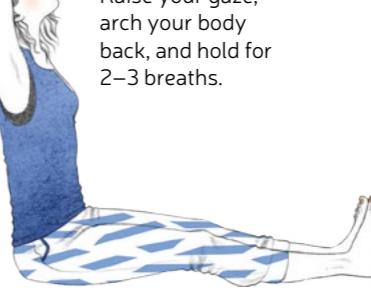
Today we return to this intense forward bend. Keep your shoulders back and relaxed, and reach your sternum forwards towards your toes.



3



4

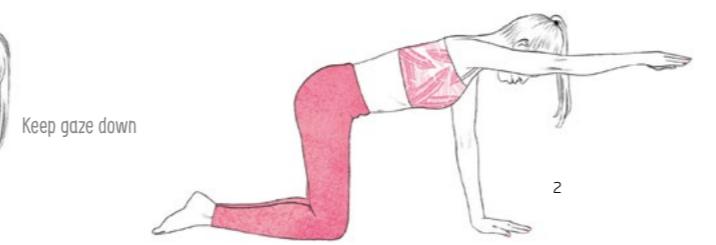
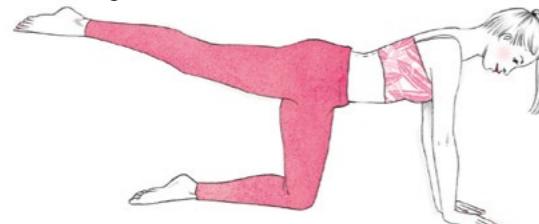


5

BALANCING CAT POSE

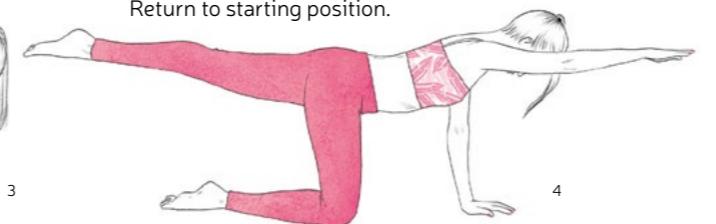
6
The Balancing Cat Pose, or *Dandayamna Bharmanasana*, develops coordination and strength.

- Improves balance & coordination
- Lengthens spine
- Builds core strength



- 1 Begin on all fours, hands aligned with your shoulders and knees aligned with your hips.

- 2 Inhale, pull in your abs and extend your right arm in front of you, palm downwards. Keep your shoulders level. Exhale as you return your arm to the floor. Repeat with the left arm. Repeat 5 times with each arm. Return to starting position.



- 3 Return to starting position. Inhale, pull in your abs, and extend your right leg out behind you, keeping your ankle aligned with your shoulders. Exhale and return your leg to the floor. Repeat with the left leg. Repeat 5 times with each leg. Return to starting position.

BELLY TWIST

7
This asana opens your lower back and releases tension. It can help with back and leg discomfort and pain.

- Stretches entire spine
- Relaxes the neck
- Promotes digestion
- Relaxes whole body



- 1 Lie on your back on the floor, feet together and arms along the sides of your body, palms facing downwards.

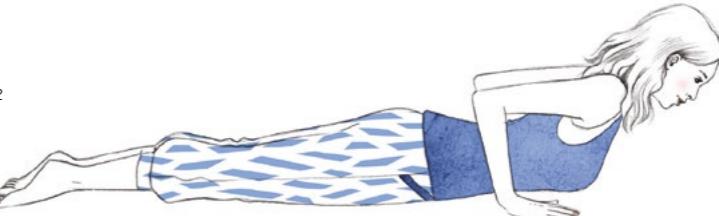
- 2 Inhale and bring your knees up towards your chest. Wrap your arms around them.

- 3 Stretch your arms out at right angles to your body, palms facing downwards. Relax your neck and shoulders.
- 4 Exhale, and keeping both knees together, turn them to the left, pressing them as close to the floor as you can. At the same time turn your head to the right. Keep both shoulders on the floor. Hold for the count of 5. Inhale and bring your knees and head back to the central position. Perform on the other side. Repeat three times on both sides.

UPWARD FACING DOG POSE

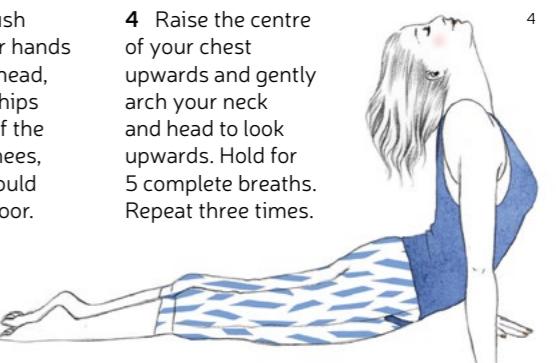
8
The Upward Facing Dog is a powerful back stretch. Today we take it to the full position.

- Strengthens spine, torso & arms
- Tones abs & hips
- Opens lungs
- Improves circulation & posture
- Stimulates abdominal area



- 1 Lie on your stomach on the floor, head turned to one side.
- 2 Turn your head to the front. Inhale and place the palms of your hands on the floor just below shoulder level. Bring your shoulders towards your ears while pressing your shoulder blades inwards towards each other.

- 3 Exhale, push down on your hands and lift your head, chest, trunk, hips and thighs off the floor. Feet, knees, and shins should stay on the floor.

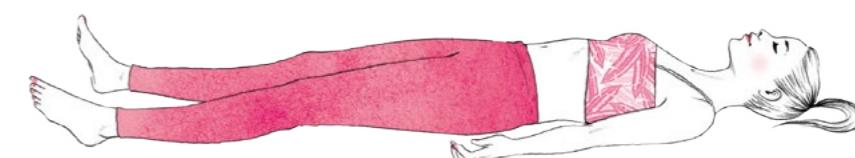


- 4 Raise the centre of your chest upwards and gently arch your neck and head to look upwards. Hold for 5 complete breaths. Repeat three times.

CORPSE POSE

9
Set aside 5–10 minutes at the end of the session to enjoy the complete relaxation of the Corpse Pose.

- Relaxes mind & body after physical exertion
- Promotes deep relaxation
- Reduces fatigue



- 1 Lie on your back with your arms at your sides, palms up. Let your feet drop open. Close your eyes. Starting from the soles of your feet, scan up to the crown of your head, releasing tension in your joints and muscles along the way. Invite peace into your mind and

body. Use your breath as your focus to clear your mind and keep yourself present. Rest for 5–10 minutes.

Weight loss

You will notice, especially in the first 2–3 weeks of this course, that your waist, hips, thighs and upper arms will be firmer and slimmer. This is not weight loss, but the result of firmer muscles. In the long run, yoga will help you to achieve and keep a healthy weight, but it is not a quick-fix, sweat-it-off approach. Let's look at the numbers: if you weigh about 68 kg (150 lb) and you practise the asanas in this book for 30 minutes you will use about 150 calories. If you do that every day, after a week you will have burned an extra 1050 calories. To lose 500 g (1 lb) of bodyweight, you need to burn 3500 calories. The weight will come off, but slowly. It will also stay off. If you follow the yoga diet we outlined in Days Nine and Ten you will lose weight more quickly. Many women also find that being able to relax and sleep better makes it easier to stick to a healthy diet and to avoid the pitfalls of "comfort eating."

STANDING HALF LOTUS

1

The Standing Half Lotus, or Ardha Padmasana Vrksasana, opens the hips and improves balance and concentration.

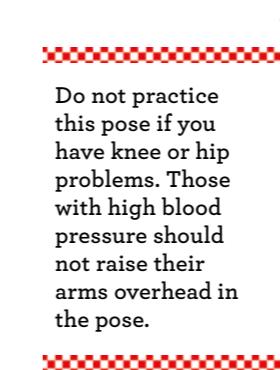
- Improves balance
- Increases flexibility in hips, knees & ankles
- Regulates nervous & lymphatic systems

Look straight ahead, focusing on an object

1 Stand in Mountain Pose, with hands by your sides. To help maintain your balance, focus on an object in front of you.



2 Move your body weight to your right foot. Bend your left knee, raise your left foot and use your right hand to gently position your foot as far up your right thigh as is comfortable.



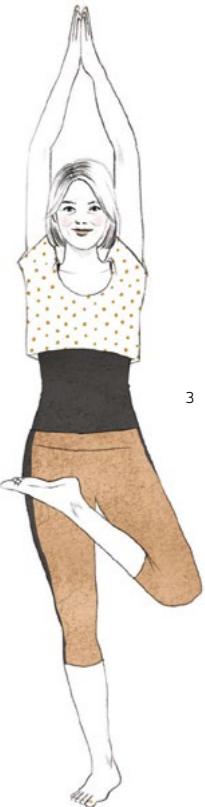
Do not practice this pose if you have knee or hip problems. Those with high blood pressure should not raise their arms overhead in the pose.



Activate leg muscles to help keep balance

3 Inhale, and raise your arms above your head, pressing your palms together. Straighten your arms and stand tall. Hold the position for five complete breaths, then gently lower your arms and release your foot. Repeat on the other leg. Repeat on both sides twice more.

Press foot against standing leg to help keep balance



WARRIOR I

2

This standing forward lunge will strengthen your legs and open your chest and heart.

- Strengthens the legs, especially thighs
- Strengthens spine
- Stabilises hips, knees & ankles
- Increases lung capacity

1 Stand in Mountain Pose, arms by your sides.



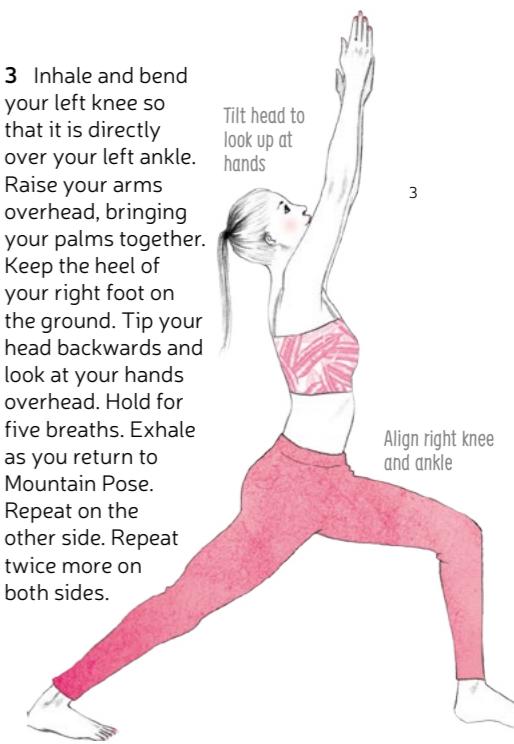
2 Exhale, and take a big step forwards with your left foot. Rotate your left foot about 45 degrees outwards. Place your hands on your hips.



Keep right foot flat on floor

3 Inhale and bend your left knee so that it is directly over your left ankle. Raise your arms overhead, bringing your palms together. Keep the heel of your right foot on the ground. Tip your head backwards and look at your hands overhead. Hold for five breaths. Exhale as you return to Mountain Pose. Repeat on the other side. Repeat twice more on both sides.

Tilt head to look up at hands



STANDING FORWARD BEND

3

This intensive stretch will help to strengthen your thighs and knees, among other things.

- Strengthens back muscles
- Stretches hamstrings
- Tones digestive organs
- Can relieve headaches



1 Stand in Mountain Pose, with your feet just slightly apart.



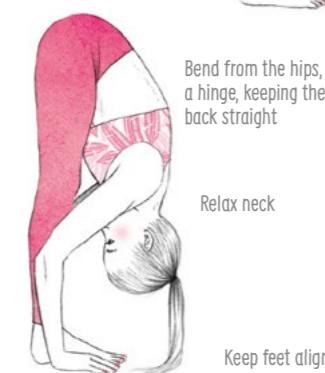
2 Inhale as you raise your arms parallel above your head, palms facing inwards.

3

Exhale as you fold forward from the hips. Keeping the knees straight, run your hands down your legs as far as they will go.

If you can reach the floor, place them palms down by your feet. If you can't reach the floor, grasp your shins, ankles or feet, and gently bring your nose as close to your knees as is comfortable. Hold for a count of 10, breathing in position.

To exit the pose, place hands on hips, and slowly raise your upper body to standing position as you exhale. Repeat three times.



Bend from the hips, like a hinge, keeping the back straight

Relax neck

Keep feet aligned

DAY

17

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CHEST OPENER

4

This intense forward bend stretches the spine and hamstrings.

- Tones & firms arms
- Tones & firms bust
- Relieves tension in neck & shoulders
- Realigns spine



Raise chin, gently arch backwards

1 Stand in Mountain Pose, feet slightly apart. Interlock your fingers behind your back. Arch backwards and hold for a count of 10, breathing in position.



2 Gently bend forwards, raising your arms behind your back. Hold for a count of 20 as you breathe.

Exhale as you return to an upright position.



3 Raise your arms to shoulder height, and interlock your fingers behind your back. Arch backwards again as far as is comfortable for you. Hold for a count of 5, breathing in position.



The aim is to bring your head towards the knees

Keep legs straight

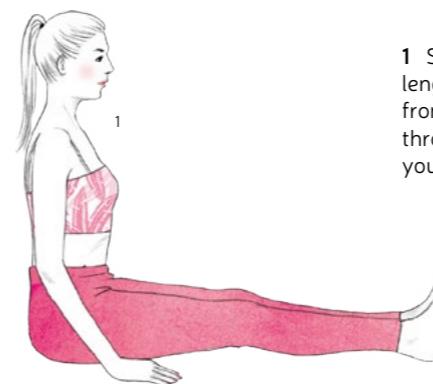
4 Now bend forwards again, raising your arms behind your back. Gently press your nose as close to your knees as you can. Do not overstretch. Hold for a count of 15 as you breathe. Exhale as you return to an upright position. Repeat twice more.

HALF LOTUS

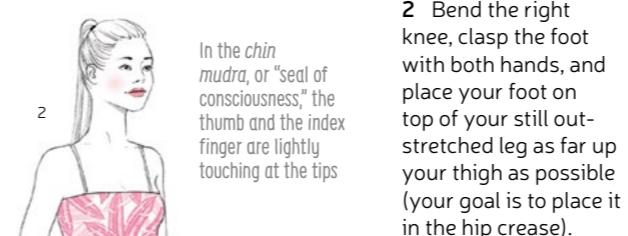
5

Sitting upright with your spine aligned calms the mind, reducing stress, anxiety, and mild depression.

- Builds flexibility in hips, knees & ankles
- Strengthens spine & abs
- Improves posture
- Increases energy



1 Sit in Staff Pose, lengthening your spine from the tailbone through to the top of your head.



In the *chin mudra*, or "seal of consciousness," the thumb and the index finger are lightly touching at the tips



3 Bend your left knee and pull the leg in and tuck the heel under your right leg with the heel up against your groin. Place your hands on your knees, with fingers in the *chin mudra*. Breathe in position for 10 complete breaths.

NECK STRETCH

6

Stretching the neck muscles defuses stress and helps the whole body to relax.



- Releases tension in neck & shoulders
- Relieves headaches
- Promotes relaxation

1 Sit on the floor, legs drawn up in the Lotus or Half Lotus position, or simply crossed. Keep the spine straight and drop your head forwards so that your chin is resting on your chest.



2 Roll your head to the right, taking your right ear down towards your right shoulder.



3 Roll your chin to your chest again and take your left ear to your left shoulder. Repeat 3–5 times.



4 Drop your chin to your chest and then lift your head, to release tension from your neck. Repeat 3–5 times.

DAY
17
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CAMEL POSE

7

The Camel Pose, or *Ushtrasana*, is a kneeling backward bend. It helps to open your hips and shoulders.

- Opens chest & shoulders
- Strengthens mid-back
- Stretches abs & thighs
- Relieves menstrual discomfort & mild back pain



Hips & knees aligned

1 Kneel on the floor with your knees hip-width apart. Inhale and raise your hands above your head, palms facing inwards.

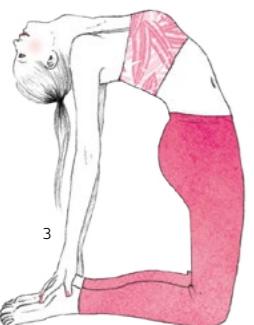
Do not practise this pose if you suffer from high or low blood pressure.

Skip this pose if you have serious neck or back injury.



Look down towards heel

2 Lift your ribs and chest and press your pelvis forwards. Reach behind you and place your right hand on your right heel. Look down towards your right heel. Hold for the count of 10, breathing in position. Return to an upright position and repeat on the other side.



3 Return to upright position. Now take both hands back to grasp both heels. Open your chest, elongate your spine and relax your neck, allowing your head to tilt backwards. Hold for the count of 15, breathing in position.

MODIFICATION

If you can't reach your heels, or if you feel you are straining your back or neck, try raising your heels a little by tucking your toes under. If this is still not comfortable, then place blocks just outside each heel at their highest (usually about 23 cm/9 inches) and place your hands on those.



If the neck feels uncomfortable, draw your chin towards your chest



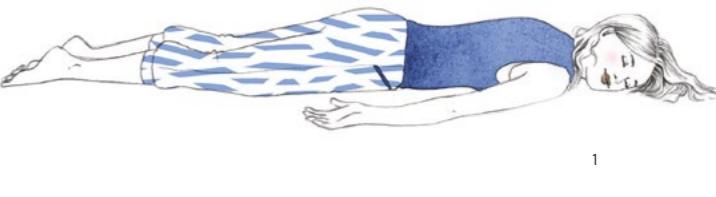
4 To exit the position, exhale and release your arms, letting your sitting bones sink down on to your heels.

5 Lower your forehead gently to the floor, with your hands out behind you, palm facing upwards. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat the pose once more from start to finish.

BOW POSE

8

The Bow is a powerful back bend that will strengthen your back.

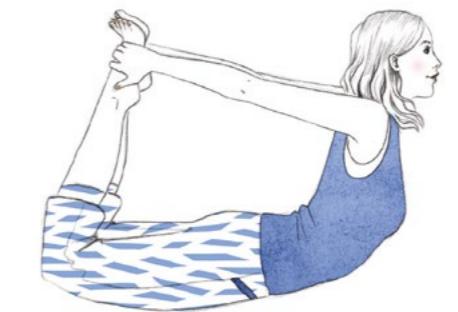


1



2

- Strengthens spine
- Tones whole body
- Opens lungs
- Improves circulation



3

1 Lie on your stomach on the floor, head turned to one side.

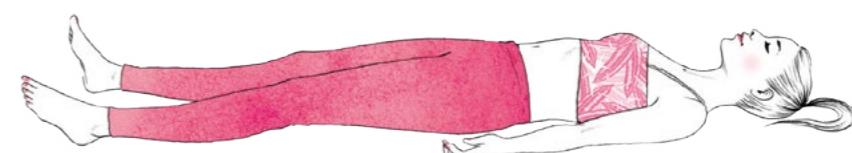
2 Turn your head to the front. Inhale and reach behind you to clasp the tops of your feet with your hands as you raise your chest off the floor.

3 As you exhale, push your feet into the palms of your hands. As you push, your body will naturally lift, but focus on pushing your feet as opposed to lifting to prevent injury. Hold for 3–5 breaths. Exit by lowering yourself to the ground and releasing your feet from your grasp. Repeat three times.

CORPSE POSE

9

Set aside 5–10 minutes at the end of the session to enjoy the complete relaxation of the Corpse Pose.



1 Lie on your back with your arms at your sides, palms up. Let your feet drop open. Close your eyes. Starting from the soles of your feet, scan up to the crown of your head, releasing tension in your joints and muscles along the way. Invite peace into your mind and

body. Use your breath as your focus to clear your mind and keep yourself present. Rest for 5–10 minutes.

Fertility

Yoga is a great way to prepare for pregnancy, physically, emotionally and spiritually. A strong and flexible body will see you through the physical challenges associated with carrying a child to term, while a well-functioning endocrine system will help you to cope with the hormonal changes. In some cases, yoga can even overcome fertility issues and improve a woman's chances of conceiving. Surprisingly, experts think that one of the most common reasons that women can't become pregnant is stress, especially if day to day concerns are compounded by anxiety about being able to conceive. Yoga breathing techniques and asanas release tension and relieve anxiety, leaving you less vulnerable to stress and more able to relax, sleep and renew your energy. We suggest you try yoga before using fertility drugs. See our fertility boosting routine on page 190.

Fertility

SIDE BEND

- 1 This gentle stretch increases the flexibility of the spine.

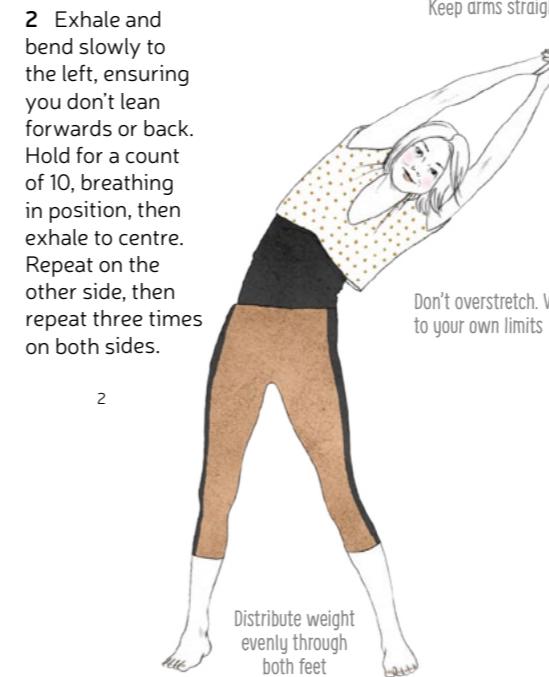
- Lengthens spine
- Targets "love handles"
- Tones arms



1

Steeple or namaste hands

Jump, or step, feet apart



2

2 Exhale and bend slowly to the left, ensuring you don't lean forwards or back. Hold for a count of 10, breathing in position, then exhale to centre. Repeat on the other side, then repeat three times on both sides.

Keep arms straight

Don't overstretch. Work to your own limits

Distribute weight evenly through both feet

STANDING BOW POSE

- 2 The Standing Bow is all about balance. Kick back slowly and gently until you feel completely steady.



1

- 1 Stand in Mountain Pose, hands by your sides. Raise your right foot up behind you and catch the top in the palm of your right hand.

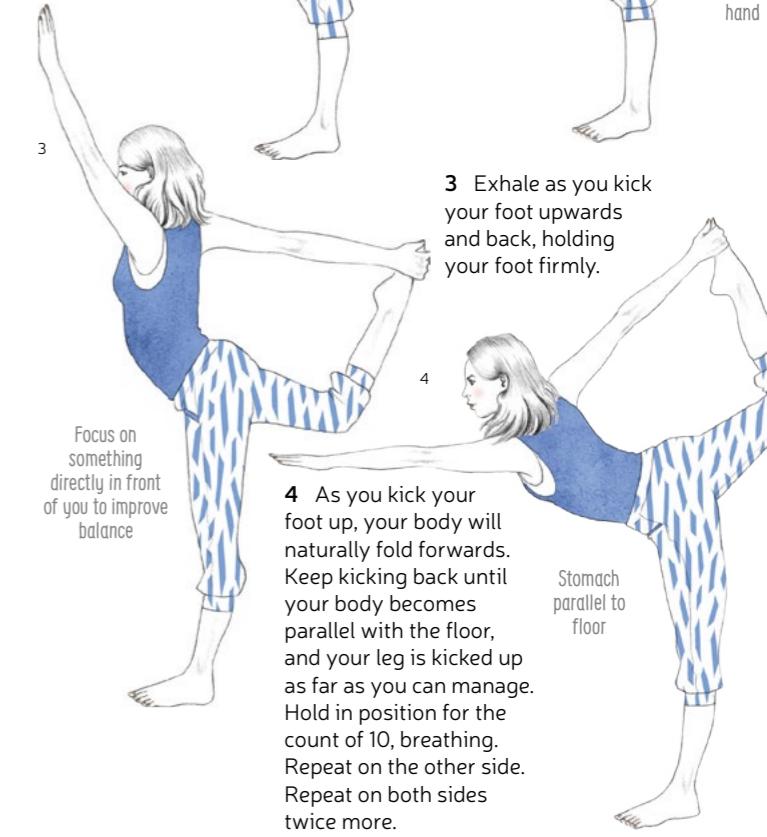
- Improves circulation to heart & lungs
- Increases elasticity of spine
- Activates digestive system
- Improves balance & focus

- 2 Inhale and raise your left arm straight up, palm facing forwards.



2

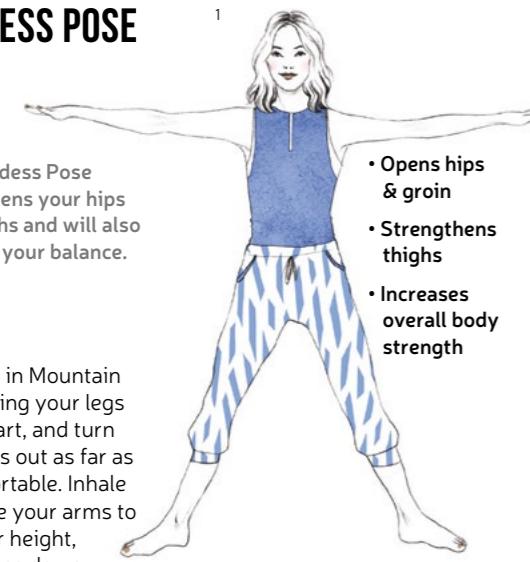
Keep arm straight



GODDESS POSE

3

The Goddess Pose strengthens your hips and thighs and will also improve your balance.



- 1 Stand in Mountain Pose. Bring your legs wide apart, and turn your toes out as far as is comfortable. Inhale and raise your arms to shoulder height, palms face down.



- 2 Exhale and lower yourself into a squat position. Bend your arms to 90 degrees, palms facing forwards.



- 3 Keep your knees pulled back, to prevent injury. Your hips will open as you lengthen your spine. If you need to rest your arms, bring your palms together in prayer position. Hold this position for 20–30 seconds. Repeat three times.

INTENSE SIDE STRETCH

This stretch is similar to the Standing Forward Bend (first learned on page 14), but the positioning of the legs (one forward, one back), creates a deeper stretch.

4

- 1 Stand in Mountain Pose. Raise your arms to shoulder level. Press your hands together behind your back, fingers facing upwards. Turn to the right, with your right foot and leg turned out to the side at about 90 degrees. Look up, creating an arch in your back.
 - 2 Exhale and stretch forwards from the tailbone, chin extended. Keep your legs straight to maintain your balance.
 - 3 Lower your spine and look straight ahead. Hold 5 seconds.
 - 4 Drop your forehead towards your left knee, until your nose is as close as is comfortable to your kneecap. Hold for the count of 5, breathing normally. Bend the right knee slightly if the stretch is too intense. Return to an upright position and repeat on the other side. Repeat on both sides twice more.
- The aim is to bring your head towards your knee*

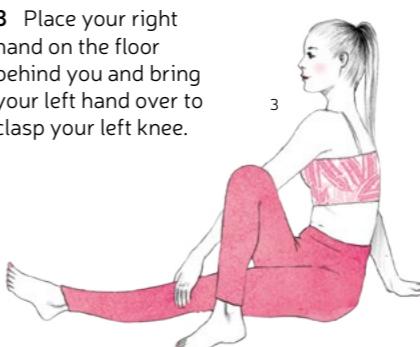
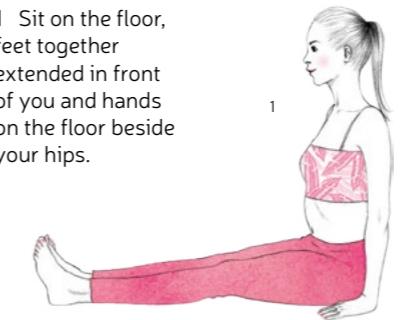


HALF TWIST

5

This Half Twist has the power to transform your spine. It boosts blood flow to the disks, and builds strength and flexibility in the tiny muscles that support the spine.

- Massages digestive organs, aiding elimination
- Stimulates lymph flow
- Strengthens immune system
- Calms nervous system



- 1 Sit on the floor, feet together extended in front of you and hands on the floor beside your hips.
- 2 Inhale to lengthen the spine and press your sitting bones into the floor. Exhale and bend your right knee, drawing it towards your chest. Place your right foot on the floor just outside your left knee.



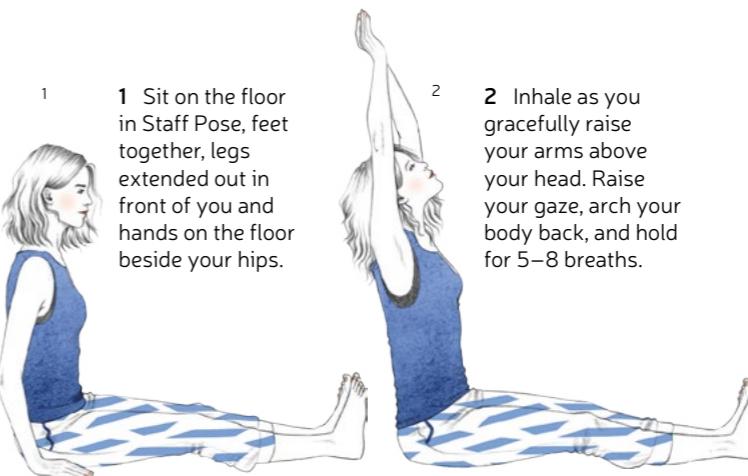
- 3 Gently twist your head and neck as far as possible without straining to the right. Hold for 5 full breaths. Return to the initial position then repeat on the other side. Repeat on both sides twice more.

SEATED FORWARD BEND

6

Among other things, this forward bend stimulates the liver, kidneys, ovaries and uterus.

- Strengthens spine
- Improves digestion
- Can help with infertility, high blood pressure & insomnia
- Relieves menstrual discomfort & menopause symptoms



- 1 Sit on the floor in Staff Pose, feet together, legs extended out in front of you and hands on the floor beside your hips.
- 2 Inhale as you gracefully raise your arms above your head. Raise your gaze, arch your body back, and hold for 5–8 breaths.
- 3 Exhale as you lower your arms and lean forwards to grasp your knees. Hold for a count of 15. Return to the initial staff pose



- 4 Inhale as you reach up and backwards, as in Step 2 above. Exhale as you lower your arms and lean forwards to grasp your toes. If you can't reach your toes, grasp your ankles or shins.
- 5 Reach your forehead as close to your shins as is comfortable. Hold for a count of 10, breathing in position. Only go as far as is comfortable for you. Repeat in both positions twice more.



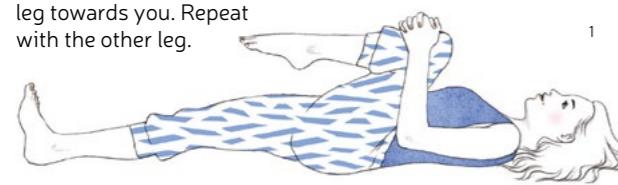
KNEES-TO-CHEST POSE

This asana releases tension in the lower back. It can also be helpful for sciatic nerve pain.

7

- Provides relief from indigestion, bloating, acid reflux, flatulence & constipation
- Improves symptoms of IBS

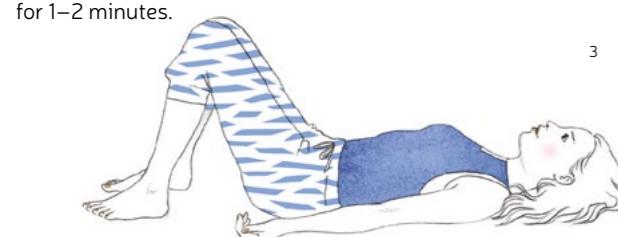
1 Lie on your back with your legs extended. Draw your right knee up towards your chest. Clasp your hands around the knee. Gently squeeze your leg towards you. Repeat with the other leg.



2 Return to the first position on your back. Now draw both knees up towards your chest. Clasp your hands around the knees. Gently squeeze your legs towards you. Repeat with one and two legs at a time twice more.



3 Let your legs drop down gently to the floor. Leave your knees bent about 18 inches apart. Relax into the floor and focus on your breathing for 1–2 minutes.



DAY

18

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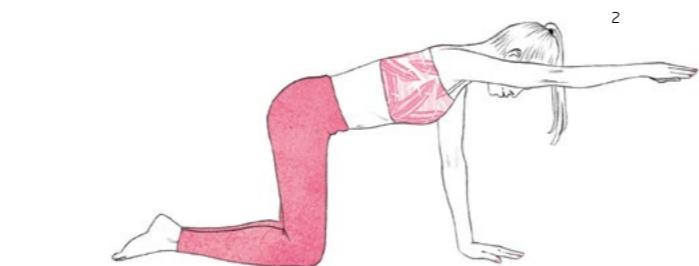
BALANCING CAT POSE

The Balancing Cat Pose helps build core strength and coordination.

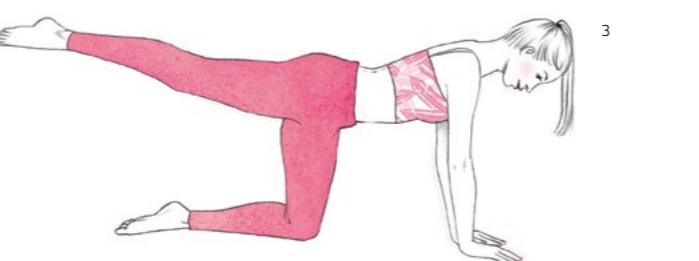
8

- Improves balance & coordination
- Lengthens spine
- Builds core strength

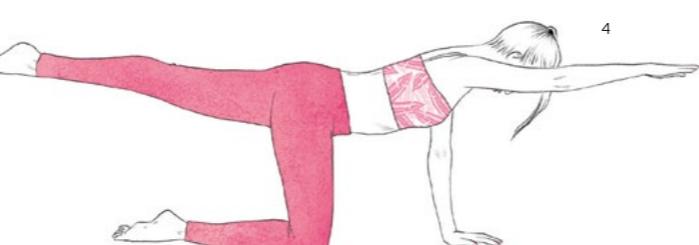
1 Begin on all fours, hands aligned with your shoulders and knees aligned with your hips.



2 Inhale, pull in your abs and extend your right arm in front of you, palm downwards. Keep your shoulders level. Exhale as you return your arm to the floor. Repeat with the left arm. Repeat 5 times with each arm. Return to starting position.



3 Inhale, pull in your abs, and extend your right leg out behind you, keeping your ankle aligned with your shoulders. Exhale and return your leg to the floor. Repeat with the left leg. Repeat 5 times with each leg. Return to starting position.



4 Inhale, pull in your abs, and extend your left leg and right arm at the same time. Hold for a count of five, then repeat on the other side. Repeat five times, alternating limbs.

DAY

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COBRA POSE

By opening your chest cavity, this asana opens up space for your lungs, easing asthma and allergy symptoms.

9

1 Lie flat on your stomach, head turned to the side, arms extended along your sides.

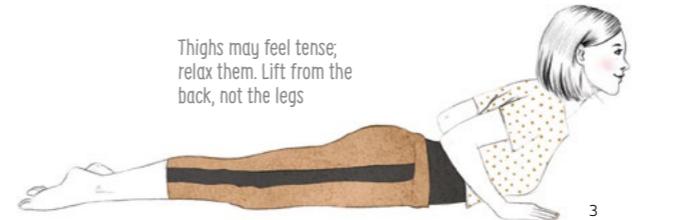


- Stretches & strengthens spine
- Stimulates brain
- Tones respiratory & digestive systems
- Energizes legs

2 Turn your head and rest your forehead on the floor. Place your hands palms downwards at shoulder level. Relax your thighs.



3 As you exhale, press into your hands and slowly raise your trunk. Ensure shoulders remain down and relaxed.



4 Keep lifting your trunk as far as is comfortable. Gently tilt your head backwards until your chin is parallel with the floor. Hold for a count of 15, breathing in position. Gradually lower your trunk to the floor, one vertebra at a time. Repeat three times.



CHILD'S POSE

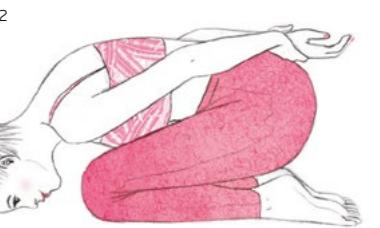
This restful pose is a great way to end a practise session. It lengthens the back, releasing tension and calming the mind.

10

1

- Relieves fatigue
- Relaxes neck & shoulders
- Stimulates digestion
- Stretches lower back

1 Kneel on the floor, big toes touching. Sink back onto your heels with knees hip-width apart and spine straight. Clasp one wrist with one hand.



2 Exhale as you fold forward from your hips, bringing your head and chest down gently as far as you can towards the floor. If possible, touch your forehead on the floor.

3 Unclasp your hands, resting the backs on the floor. Draw your tailbone gently down towards your heels. Feel the stretch in your lower back. Hold the pose 2–3 minutes, taking deep, slow breaths.

Tailbone should be resting on heels



DAY

18

113

Menopause

The transition from the childbearing years to the years of wisdom treats everyone differently. Most women experience some symptoms and a few have quite a difficult time. As your reproductive years wind down, your body no longer requires so much estrogen and progesterone and your ovaries produce less of them. It takes time for your body to adjust and the withdrawal symptoms can include hot flashes, mood swings and insomnia, among other things. This is a natural process, a “coming of age,” that leads to serenity and well being. Unless you have severe symptoms or specific medical issues, there is no need to reach for a cocktail of pharmaceuticals. Yoga is very effective at this stage of life because it regulates your endocrine system and improves your ability to relax and sleep, while increasing your body strength and stamina. See our routine for menopause symptoms on page 190.

STANDING HALF LOTUS

1

We return to the Standing Half Lotus. As with any balancing pose, come into the position slowly and with awareness. If you enter the pose too quickly, you are more likely to lose your balance.

- Improves balance
- Increases flexibility in hips, knees & ankles
- Regulates nervous & lymphatic systems

Look straight ahead, focusing on an object

1 Stand in Mountain Pose, with hands by your sides. To help maintain your balance, focus on an object in front of you.



2 Move your body weight to your left foot. Bend your right knee, raise your right foot and use your left hand to gently position your foot as far up your left thigh as is comfortable.



3 Inhale, and raise your arms above your head, pressing your palms together. Straighten your arms and stand tall. Hold the position for five complete breaths, then gently lower your arms and release your foot. Repeat on the other side. Repeat twice on both sides.

Press foot against standing leg to help keep balance



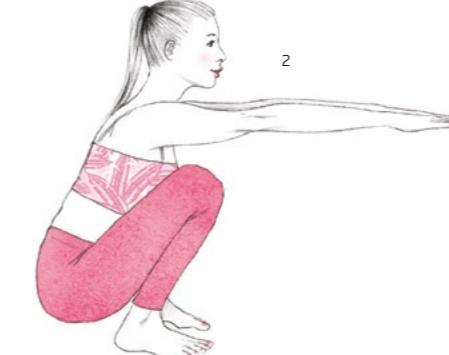
GARLAND POSE

2

The Garland Pose, or *Malasana*, is a great way to increase strength and flexibility in your groin, hips, knees and ankles.

- Strengthens back & abs
- Improves balance
- Opens groin area
- Builds strength in ankles & feet

1 Start in Mountain Pose with your feet slightly wider than hip distance apart. Turn your toes out slightly so that they are a little wider than your heels.



3 Open your knees and press your elbows against them. Bring your palms together in front of your chest. Stay here for 30–60 seconds. To exit the pose, either sit back onto your buttocks, or push back up to standing. Repeat.



MODIFICATION

If your calf muscles are tight you may not be able to keep your balance. In that case place a folded towel or blanket under your heels. As your calf muscles become more supple, you will be able to eliminate the blanket or towel.

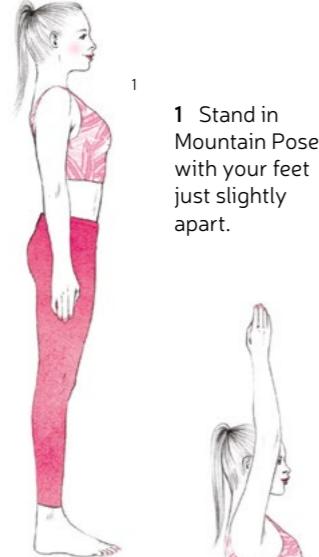


STANDING FORWARD BEND

3

We return to this intensive stretch which will help keep your spine strong and flexible.

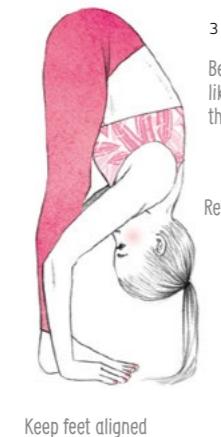
- Strengthens back muscles
- Stretches hamstrings
- Tones digestive organs
- Can relieve headaches



2 Inhale as you raise your arms parallel above your head, palms facing inwards.

3 Exhale as you fold forward from the hips. Keeping the knees straight, run your hands down your legs as far as they will go.

If you can reach the floor, place them palms down by your feet. If you can't reach the floor, grasp your shins, ankles or feet, and gently bring your nose as close to your knees as is comfortable. Hold for a count of 10, breathing in position. To exit the pose, place hands on hips, and slowly raise your upper body to standing position as you exhale. Repeat twice more.



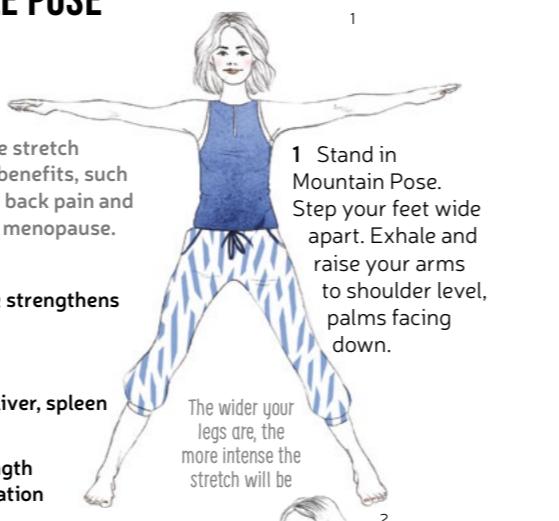
Keep feet aligned

TRIANGLE POSE

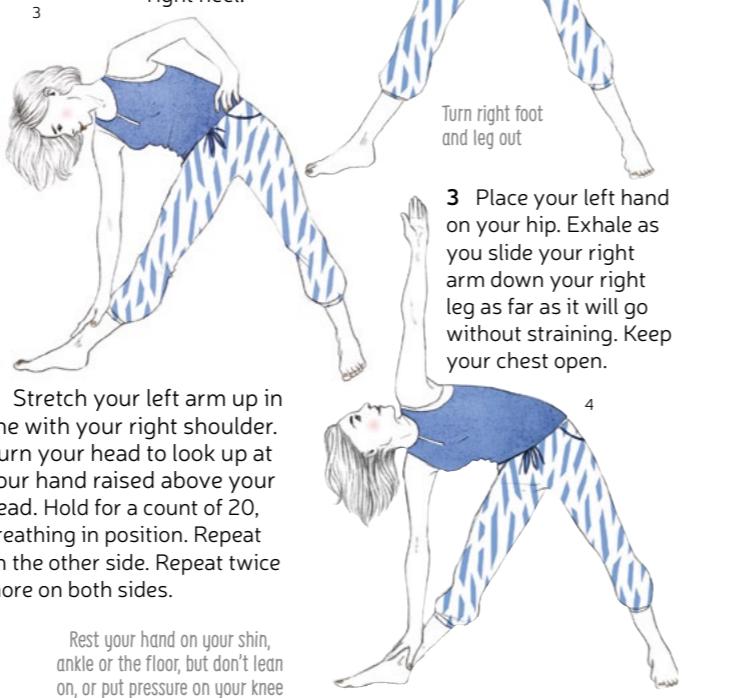
4

This intensive stretch brings many benefits, such as alleviating back pain and symptoms of menopause.

- Elongates & strengthens spine
- Tones legs
- Stimulates liver, spleen & kidneys
- Builds strength & determination



2 Turn your right foot and leg out to the side to 90 degrees. Turn your left foot slightly towards right heel.



Rest your hand on your shin, ankle or the floor, but don't lean on, or put pressure on your knee

ALTERNATE-NOSTRIL BREATHING

5

You may find that you can practice this breath without using your finger and thumb.

- Decreases stress
- Enhances mental function
- Soothes nervous system
- Promotes calmness & sleep
- Boosts energy

1 Sit in the half-lotus pose, or in a simpler cross-legged position if the half-lotus is too difficult. Place your hands comfortably on your knees in the *shuni mudra*, or seal of patience.

In the *shuni mudra*, or "seal of patience," the thumb and the second finger are lightly touching at the tips



2 Exhale through your left nostril as you use your thumb to close your right nostril. Inhale slowly and deeply through the left nostril. Now use your ring and little finger to close your left nostril and slowly exhale through your right nostril. Inhale through the right nostril, then close it with your thumb. Exhale through the left nostril. This is one complete breathing cycle. Repeat 7 times.



BOAT POSE

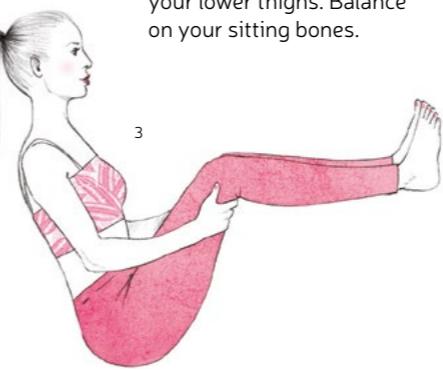
6

The Boat Pose strengthens the core muscles of your body. You may shake in position, this is fine. However, if you find you are holding your breath or feeling discomfort in your lower back, then take a break.

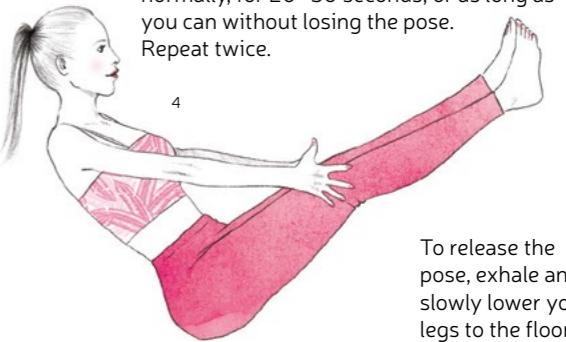
- Strengthens hips, thighs & back
- Tones abs
- Improves digestion
- Improves balance



3 Exhale as you lean back, slipping your hands under your lower thighs. Balance on your sitting bones.



4 Exhale as you straighten your legs at an upward angle, stretching your arms forwards. Balance in position, breathing normally, for 20–30 seconds, or as long as you can without losing the pose. Repeat twice.



To release the pose, exhale and slowly lower your legs to the floor.

DOWNTWARD FACING DOG

7 Downward Facing Dog, or *Adho Mukha Svanasana*, is a rejuvenating pose that should be practised often.

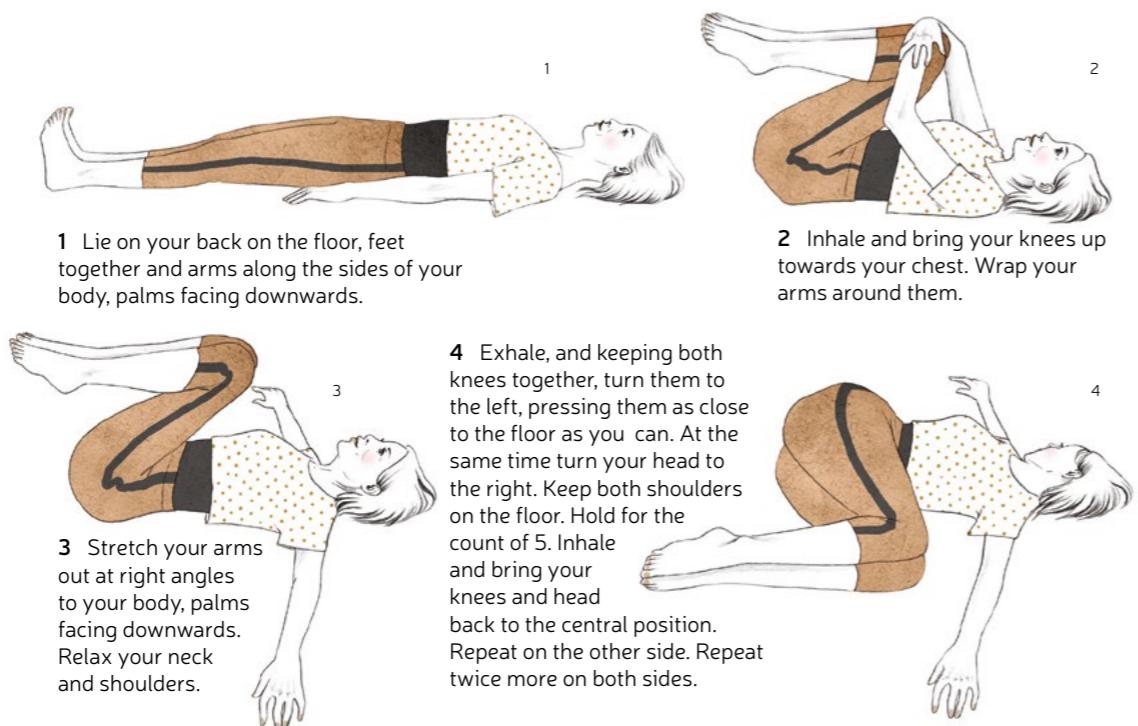
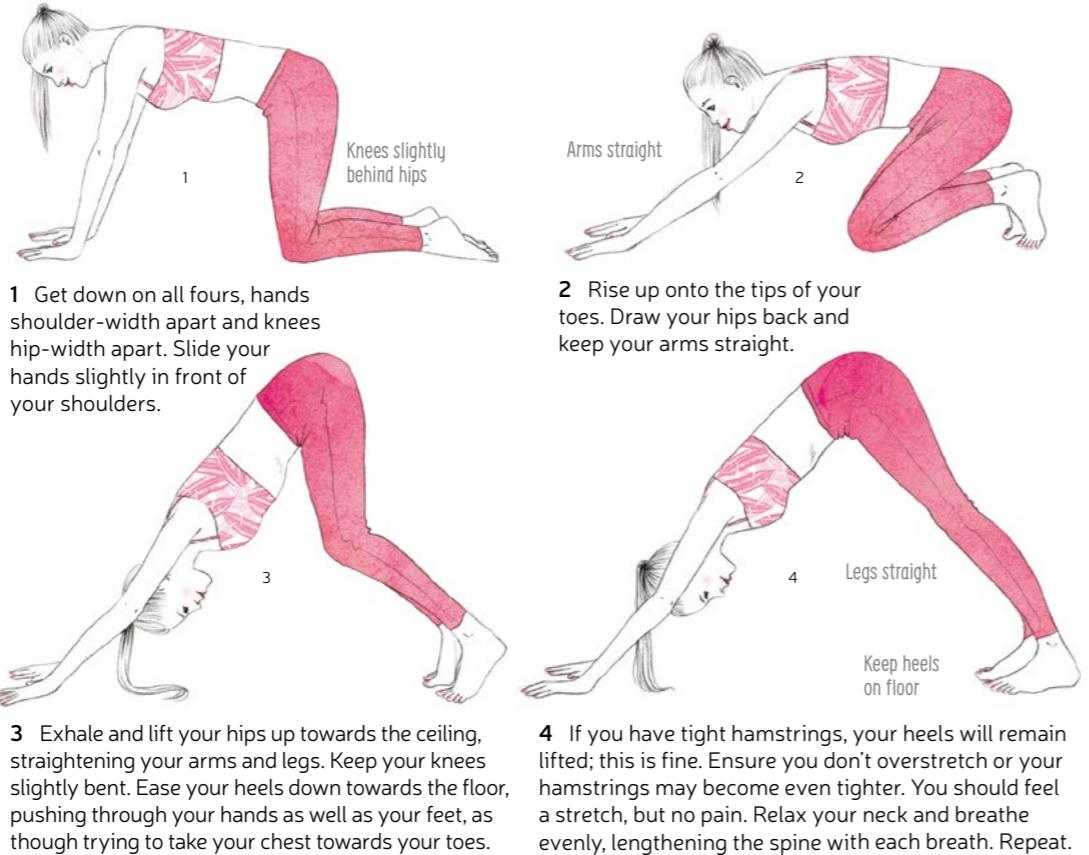
- Strengthens shoulders
- Stretches hamstrings and calves
- Energises the whole body
- Increases blood flow to head
- Relieves menstrual & menopausal symptoms

This asana is contraindicated for those with high or low blood pressure, acid reflux or shoulder or wrist pain or injury.

BELLY TWIST

8 The Belly Twist can help resolve tight or hunched shoulders. Be sure to keep both shoulders pressed to the ground throughout the asana.

- Stretches entire spine
- Relaxes the neck
- Promotes digestion
- Relaxes whole body

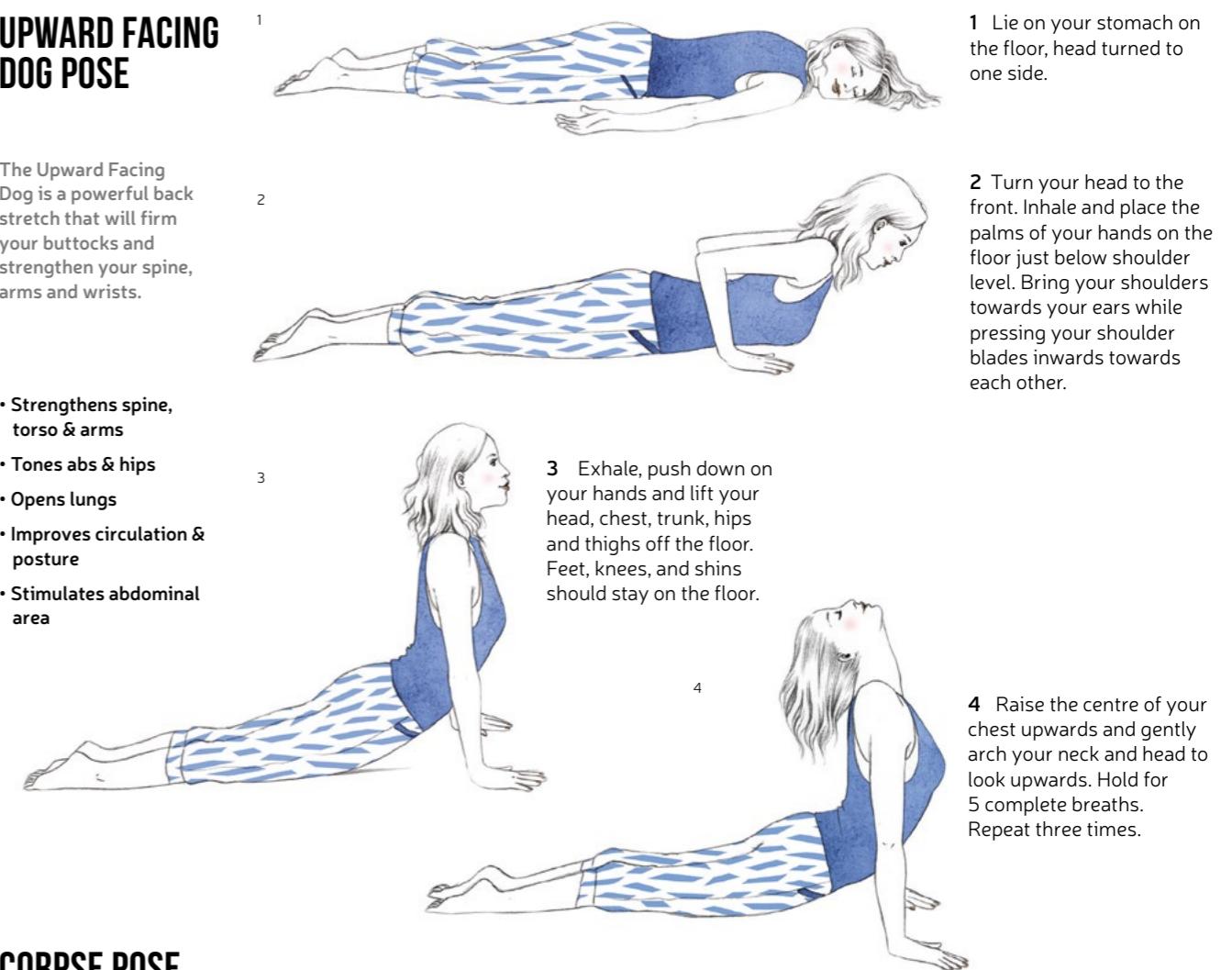


UPWARD FACING DOG POSE

9

The Upward Facing Dog is a powerful back stretch that will firm your buttocks and strengthen your spine, arms and wrists.

- Strengthens spine, torso & arms
- Tones abs & hips
- Opens lungs
- Improves circulation & posture
- Stimulates abdominal area

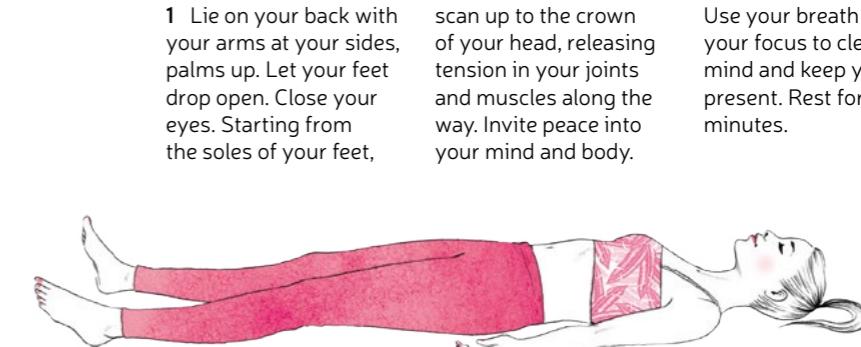


CORPSE POSE

10

Set aside 5–10 minutes at the end of the session to enjoy the complete relaxation of the Corpse Pose.

- Relaxes mind & body after physical exertion
- Promotes deep relaxation
- Reduces fatigue



1 Lie on your stomach on the floor, head turned to one side.

2 Turn your head to the front. Inhale and place the palms of your hands on the floor just below shoulder level. Bring your shoulders towards your ears while pressing your shoulder blades inwards towards each other.

3 Exhale, push down on your hands and lift your head, chest, trunk, hips and thighs off the floor. Feet, knees, and shins should stay on the floor.

Use your breath as your focus to clear your mind and keep yourself present. Rest for 5–10 minutes.

DAY 20

Carrying a baby to term and giving birth is an exciting and fulfilling moment in a woman's life, but it is also physically and emotionally demanding. After the baby is born your body needs time to re-adjust. Your uterus must slough off extra cells and your hormones need to stabilize. You also have a tiny human being to take care of 24/7, so don't rush straight into an exhausting exercise routine too soon. If yours was a natural birth, we recommend that you wait at least 2–3 weeks, or until the bleeding has stopped, before taking up yoga again. If you had a cesarean you should wait 6–8 weeks, or until the wound has healed. Then, start slowly, with gentle breathing and relaxation asanas, such as Corpse Pose (see page 17) and Belly Breathing (see page 53). When your body is completely healed, usually at about three months, you can resume full yoga practise. See our postpartum routine on page 189.

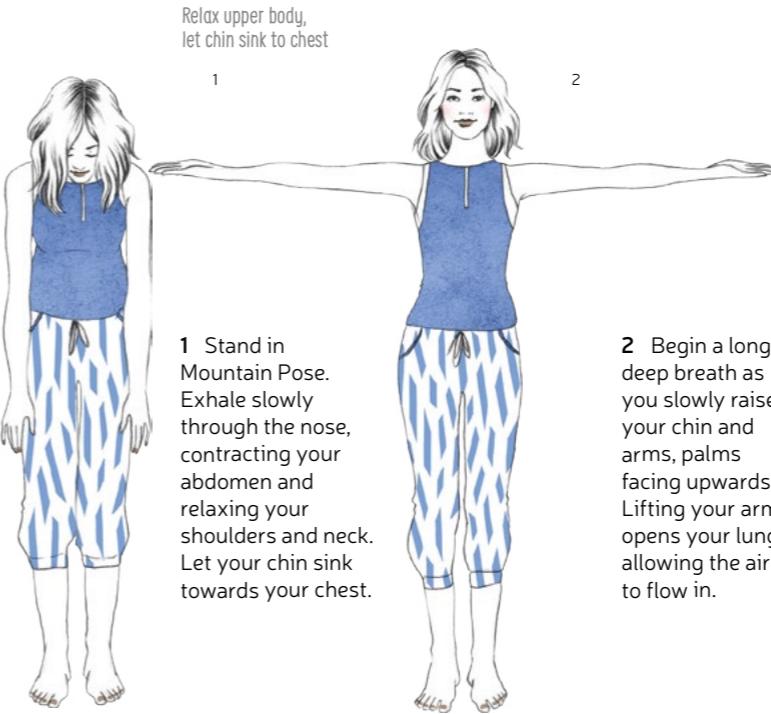
Postpartum

COMPLETE BREATH STANDING

We begin again today with our classic warm-up asana.

1

- Increases energy & focus
- Strengthens spine
- Tones arms & upper body
- Improves balance & posture



Relax upper body,
let chin sink to chest

1

2

SIDE BEND

1 Steeple or namaste hands

2

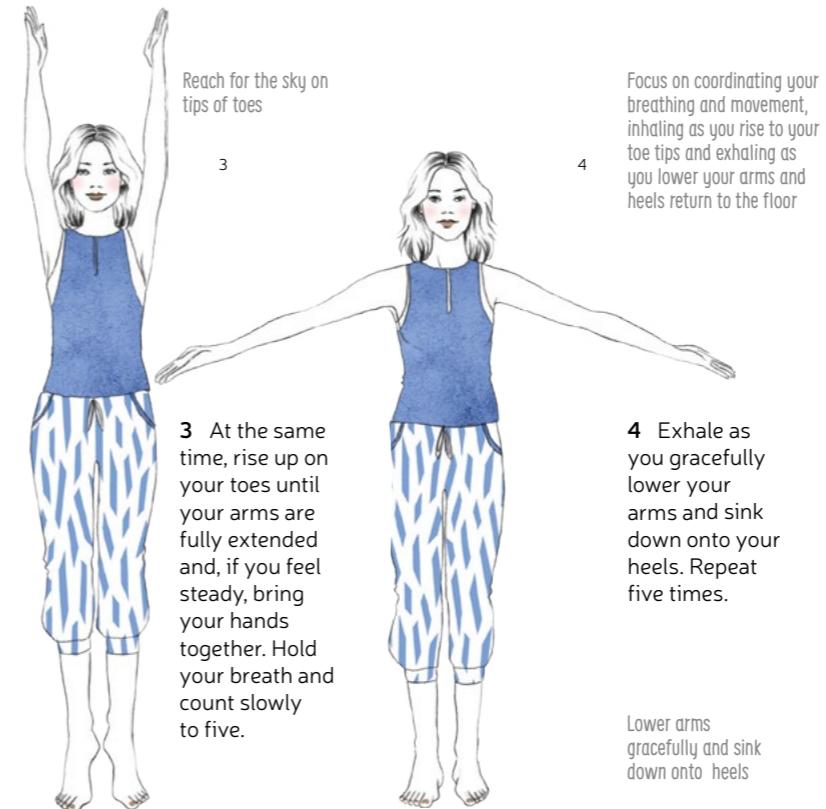
Whittle your hips and waist with this gentle side bend.



1 Stand in Mountain Pose, hands by your sides. Jump, or step, your feet to about 2 feet apart and inhale as you gracefully raise your arms. Clasp your hands above your head, keeping index fingers straight in a "steeple" position.

2 Hug your head tightly with your biceps to lock your torso into position.

Jump or step feet about 2 feet apart



Reach for the sky on tips of toes

3

Focus on coordinating your breathing and movement, inhaling as you rise to your toe tips and exhaling as you lower your arms and heels return to the floor

4

3 At the same time, rise up on your toes until your arms are fully extended and, if you feel steady, bring your hands together. Hold your breath and count slowly to five.

Lower arms gracefully and sink down onto heels



2 Keep arms straight

2

Only bend as far as is comfortable

TREE POSE

3

The Tree Pose, or *Vrikshasana*, is named after the Sanskrit word *Vrksha* for “tree.” The leg you balance on represents the roots, while your body and outstretched arms represent the branches as they reach for the sun.

- Improves concentration & balance
- Reduces stress
- Strengthens ankles, calves, thighs & hips
- Improves overall body strength

If you have high blood pressure, skip Step 5 where you raise your arms above your head.



1

- 1 Stand in Mountain Pose, hands by your sides and legs slightly apart.

Focus gaze on a fixed point for balance



2

- 2 Inhale and raise your right knee to your chest, clasping it with your hands. Focus on an object in front of you to help keep your balance.
- Raising hands above head is an advanced position



3

- Firmly press foot against leg
- 3 Use your right hand to place the sole of your right foot on your left inner thigh. If this is too difficult, place it on your inner calf or ankle. Avoid placing it on the inner knee. Raise your arms.



4

- Keep standing leg straight & firm
- 4 Bring your hands together in front of your chest in the *anjali mudra* (prayer pose). Hold for several complete breaths.



5

- 5 If you have no difficulty keeping your balance, inhale and raise your arms above your head, bending them at the elbows so that your palms are pointing upwards from your head. Hold for 5 complete breaths. Repeat on the other side. Repeat once on both sides.

HALF TWIST

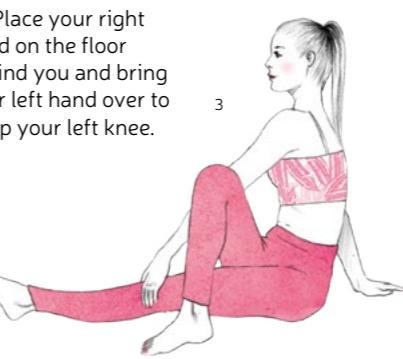
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This gentle twist not only realigns the spine but will also firm your waistline.

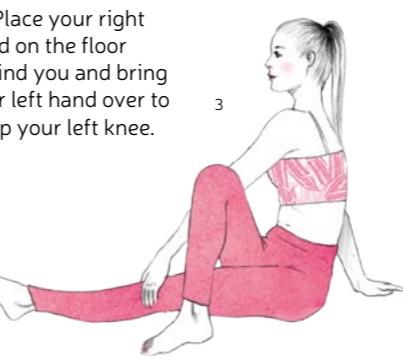
- Massages digestive organs, aiding elimination
- Stimulates lymph flow
- Strengthens immune system
- Calms nervous system



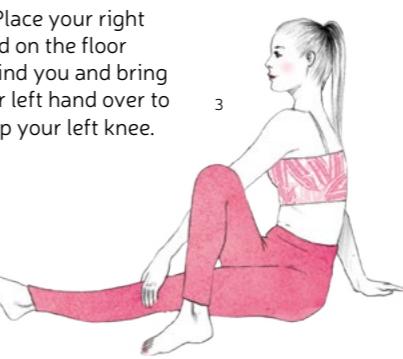
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2



3



4

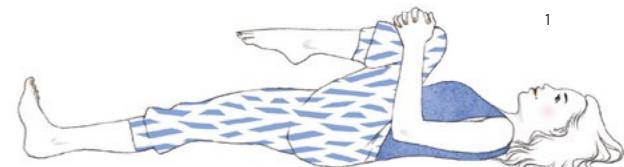
- 4 Gently twist your head and neck as far as possible without straining to the right. Hold for 5 full breaths. Return to the initial position then repeat on the other side. Repeat twice more on both sides.

KNEES-TO-CHEST POSE

5

The Knees-To-Chest Pose is a gentle asana that helps relieve digestive problems.

- Provides relief from indigestion, bloating, acid reflux, flatulence & constipation
- Improves symptoms of IBS



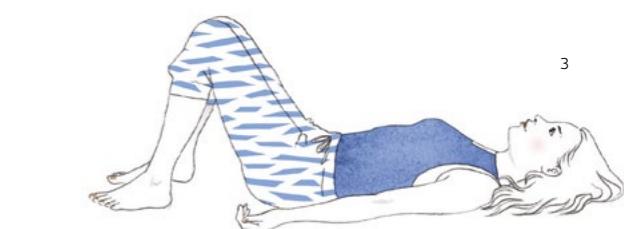
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- 1 Lie on your back with your legs extended. Draw your right knee up towards your chest. Clasp your hands around the knee. Gently squeeze your leg towards you. Repeat with the other leg.



2

- 2 Return to the first position on your back. Now draw both knees up towards your chest. Clasp your hands around the knees. Gently squeeze your legs towards you.



3

- 3 Let your legs drop down gently to the floor. Leave your knees bent about 18 inches apart. Relax into the floor and focus on your breathing for 1–2 minutes.

HALF LOCUST

6

The Half Locust, or *Ardha Shalabhasana*, prepares the body for the Full Locust back bend.

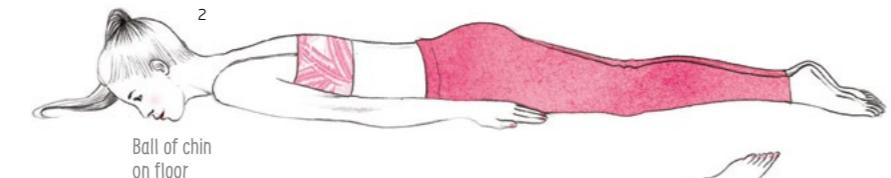
- Relieves stress & mild depression
- Stimulates thyroid
- Promotes sleep & youthfulness
- Improves digestion
- Benefits infertility, asthma & sinusitis
- Relieves menopausal symptoms

People with high blood pressure, heart disease or who have suffered a stroke may need to avoid this pose as it increases pressure in the neck.

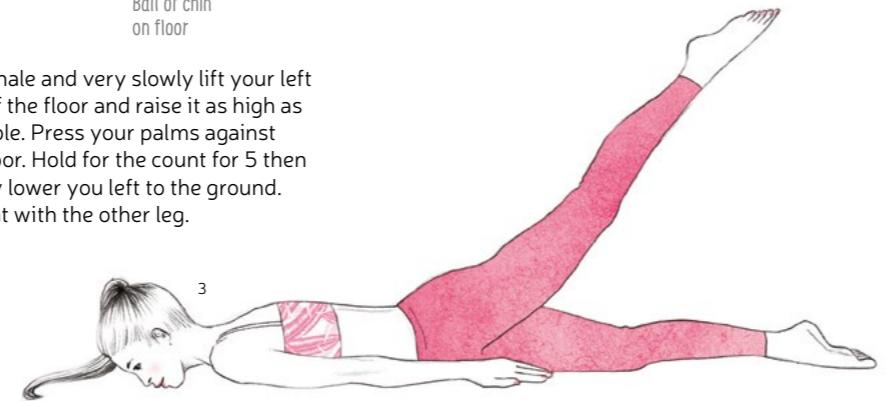


1 Lie flat on the floor, legs and big toes touching. Rest your arms on the floor, palms facing downwards.

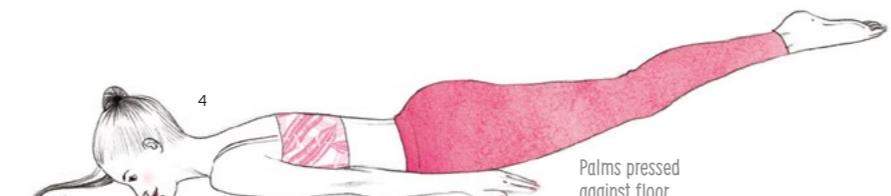
2 Turn your head towards the front and rest the ball of your chin on the floor.



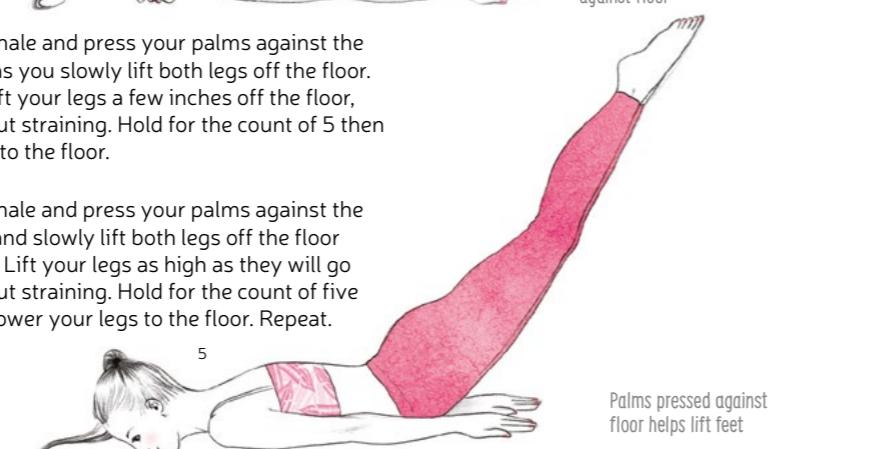
3 Exhale and very slowly lift your left leg off the floor and raise it as high as possible. Press your palms against the floor. Hold for the count for 5 then slowly lower you left to the ground. Repeat with the other leg.



4 Exhale and press your palms against the floor as you slowly lift both legs off the floor. Just lift your legs a few inches off the floor, without straining. Hold for the count of 5 then lower to the floor.



5 Exhale and press your palms against the floor and slowly lift both legs off the floor again. Lift your legs as high as they will go without straining. Hold for the count of five then lower your legs to the floor. Repeat.



5

Palms pressed against floor helps lift feet

DAY

20

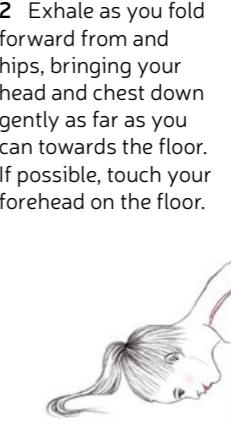
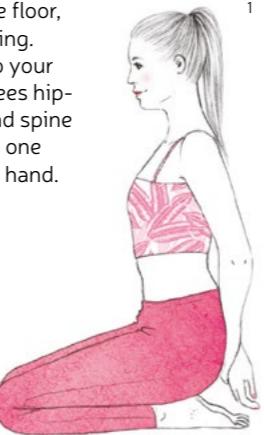
124

CHILD'S POSE

7

The Child's Pose is a gentle, restorative position often used to calm the body after more challenging poses.

- Relieves fatigue
- Relaxes neck & shoulders
- Stimulates digestion
- Stretches lower back



Keep knees apart so that your body sinks down between them towards the floor

Tailbone should be resting on heels



2

3

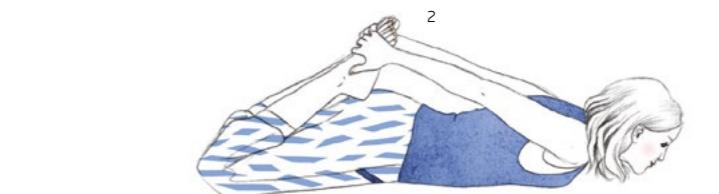
3 Unclasp your hands, resting the backs on the floor. Draw your tailbone gently down towards your heels. Feel the stretch in your lower back. Hold the pose 1–2 minutes, taking deep, slow breaths.

BOW POSE

8

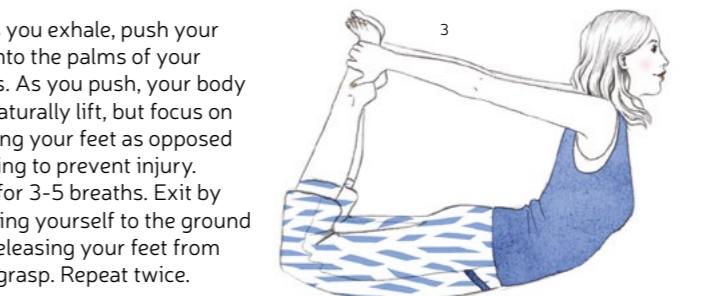
The bow pose is a powerful back bend.

- Strengthens spine
- Tones whole body
- Opens lungs
- Improves circulation



1 Lie on your stomach on the floor, head turned to one side.

2 Turn your head to the front. Inhale and reach behind you to clasp the tops of your feet with your hands as you raise your chest off the floor.



DAY

20

125

Catch-Up 3

Today we will run through 17 of the 39 asanas you have learned over the past three weeks.

Take a moment to reflect on how far you have come in a relatively short period of time. You have worked hard and done well! We believe that you will be feeling so much healthier and calmer than when you started this course.

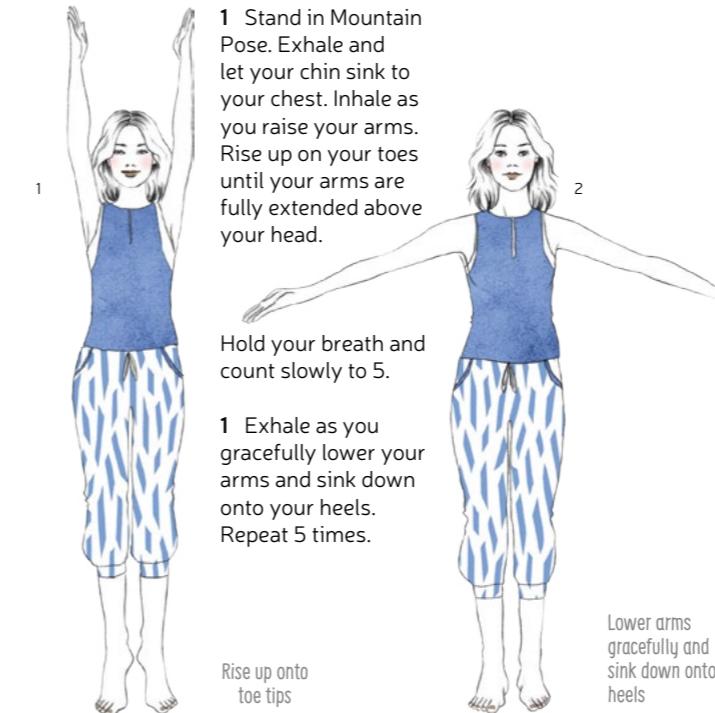
Depending on your age and fitness level, you may still be struggling with some of the asanas. Don't worry about this; just keep practising and remember not to force your body. It may take you a little longer with some of the poses, but it doesn't matter. As we head into the final stage of our course, we will be introducing some more advanced poses.

If you don't feel ready for these, you could repeat the last seven days. Proceed at the pace that feels best for you.

COMPLETE BREATH STANDING

1 This energising warm-up pose combines movement with breathing.

- Increases energy & focus
- Strengthens spine
- Tones arms & upper body
- Improves balance & posture



SIDE BEND

2 This hip stretch will help reduce flabbiness at the waist and hips.

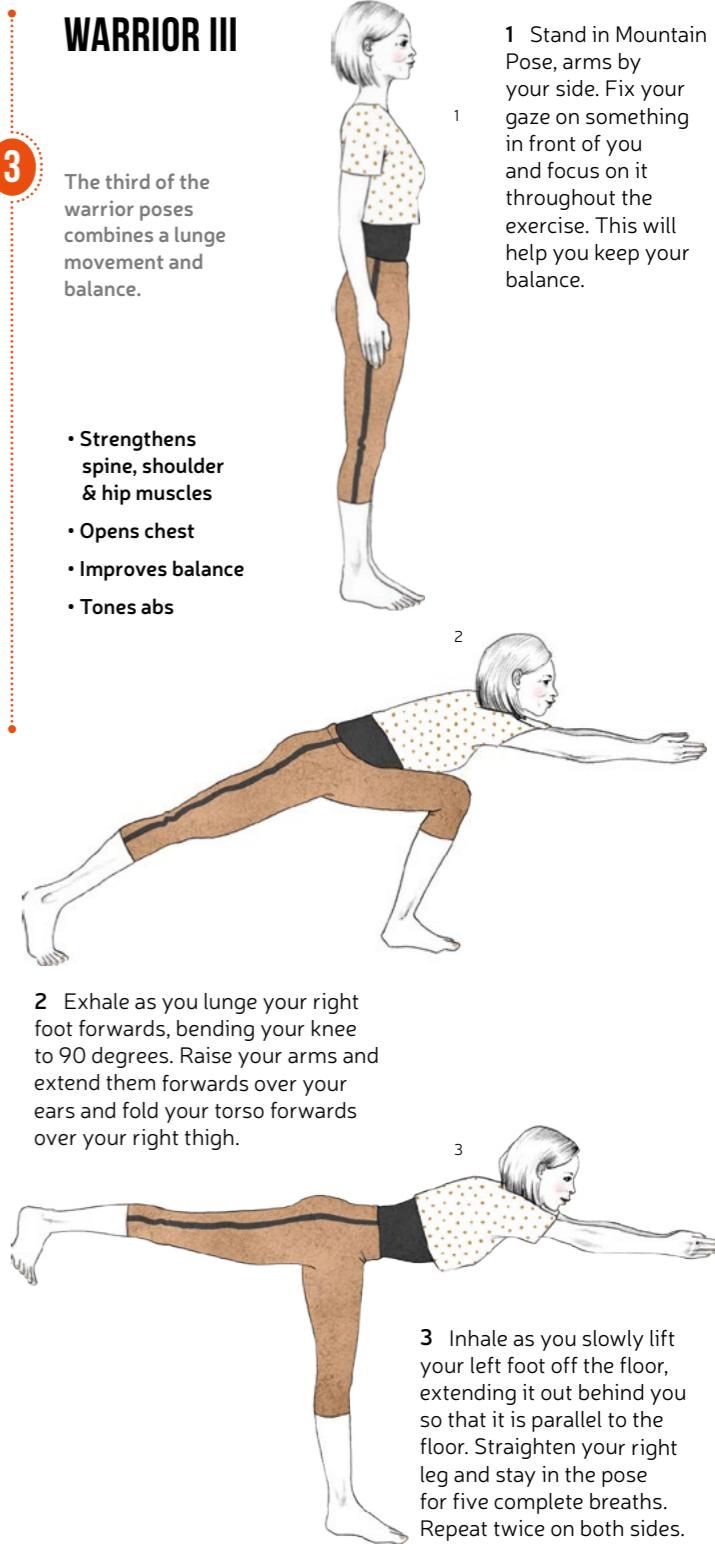
- Lengthens spine
- Targets "love handles"
- Tones arms



WARRIOR III

3 The third of the warrior poses combines a lunge movement and balance.

- Strengthens spine, shoulder & hip muscles
- Opens chest
- Improves balance
- Tones abs



STANDING BOW POSE

4

The Standing Bow Pose is all about balance. Kick back slowly and gently until you feel steady.

- Improves circulation to heart & lungs
- Increases elasticity of spine
- Activates digestive system
- Improves balance & focus

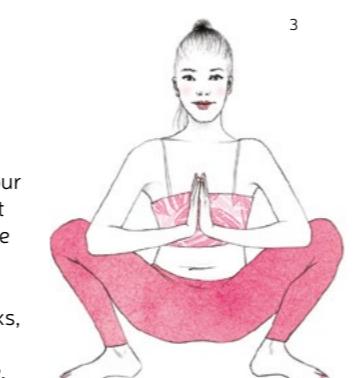
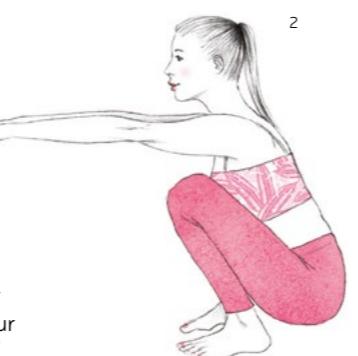
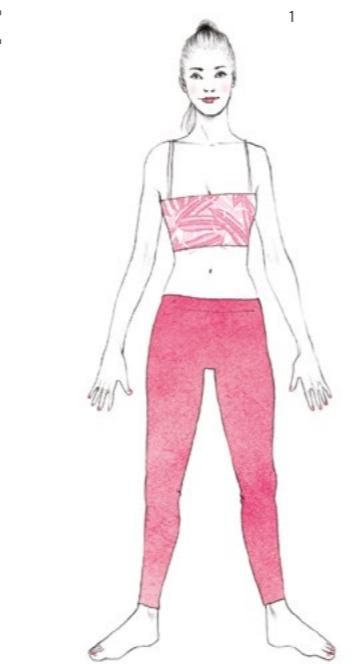


GARLAND POSE

5

The Garland Pose is a great way to increase strength and flexibility in your groin, hips, knees and ankles.

- Strengthens back & abs
- Improves balance
- Opens groin area
- Builds strength in ankles & feet

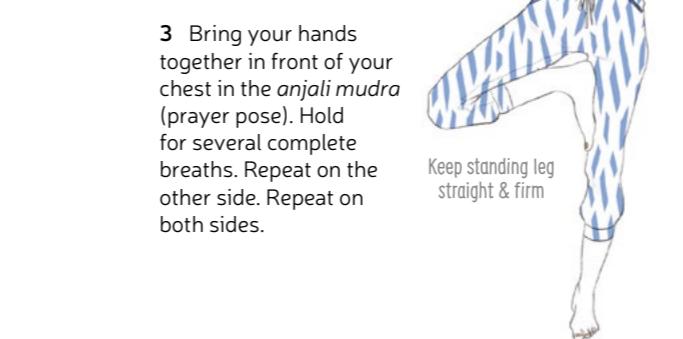
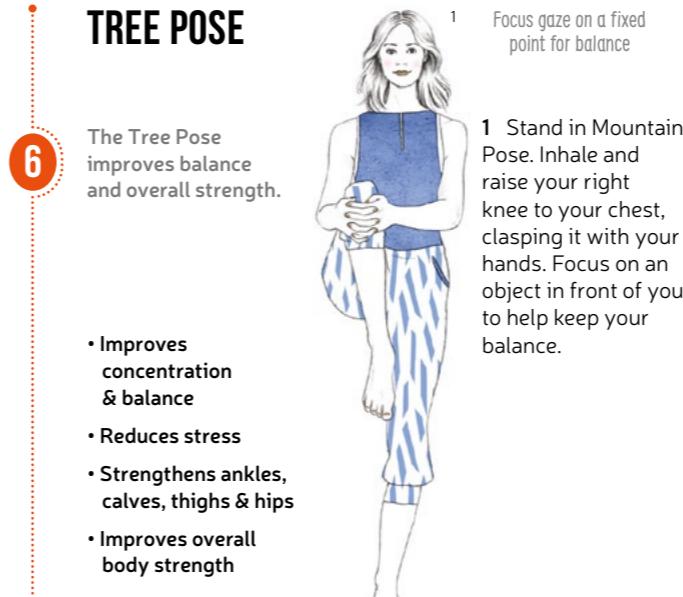


TREE POSE

6

The Tree Pose improves balance and overall strength.

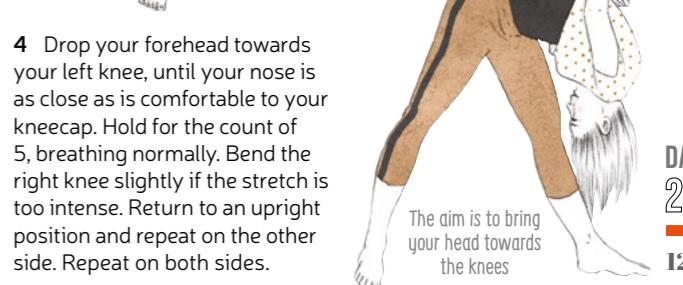
- Improves concentration & balance
- Reduces stress
- Strengthens ankles, calves, thighs & hips
- Improves overall body strength



INTENSE SIDE STRETCH

7

This pose is part forward bend, part balancing pose.



ALTERNATE- NOSTRIL BREATHING

8

Alternate-nostir breathing is a simple way to relieve stress and calm the mind.

- Decreases stress
- Enhances mental function
- Soothes nervous system
- Promotes calmness & sleep
- Boosts energy

2 Exhale through your left nostril as you use your thumb to close your right nostril. Inhale slowly and deeply through the left nostril. Now use your ring and little finger to close your left nostril and slowly exhale through your right nostril. Inhale through the right nostril, then close it with your thumb. Exhale through the left nostril. This is one complete breathing cycle. Repeat 7 times.



HALF LOTUS POSE

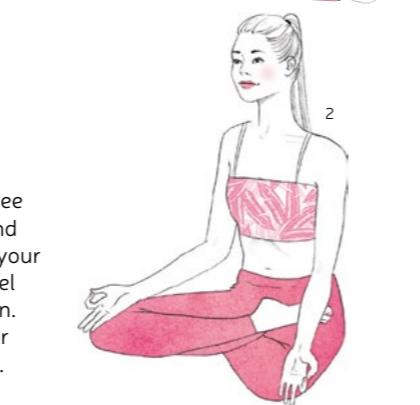
This pose improves blood flow in the pelvis and can ease menstrual discomfort.

- Builds flexibility in hips, knees & ankles
- Strengthens spine & abs
- Improves posture
- Increases energy

1 Sit in the half-lotus pose, or in a simpler cross-legged position if the half-lotus is too difficult. Place your hands comfortably on your knees in the *shuni mudra*, or seal of patience.



1 Sit in Staff Pose. Bend the right knee, clasp the foot with both hands, and place your foot on top of your still out-stretched leg as far up your thigh as possible (your goal is to place it in the hip crease).

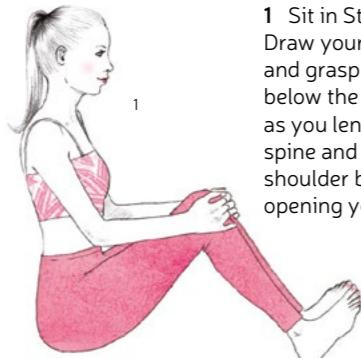


BOAT POSE

10

The Boat Pose is a balancing position in which the body resembles a boat in the water.

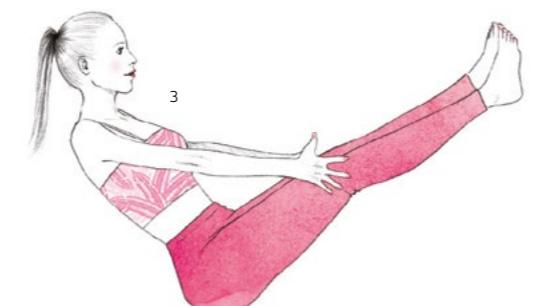
- Strengthens hips, thighs & back
- Tones abs
- Improves digestion
- Improves balance



1 Sit in Staff Pose. Draw your knees up and grasp your legs just below the knees. Inhale as you lengthen your spine and press your shoulder blades back, opening your heart.



2 Exhale as you lean back, slipping your hands under your lower thighs. Balance on your sitting bones.



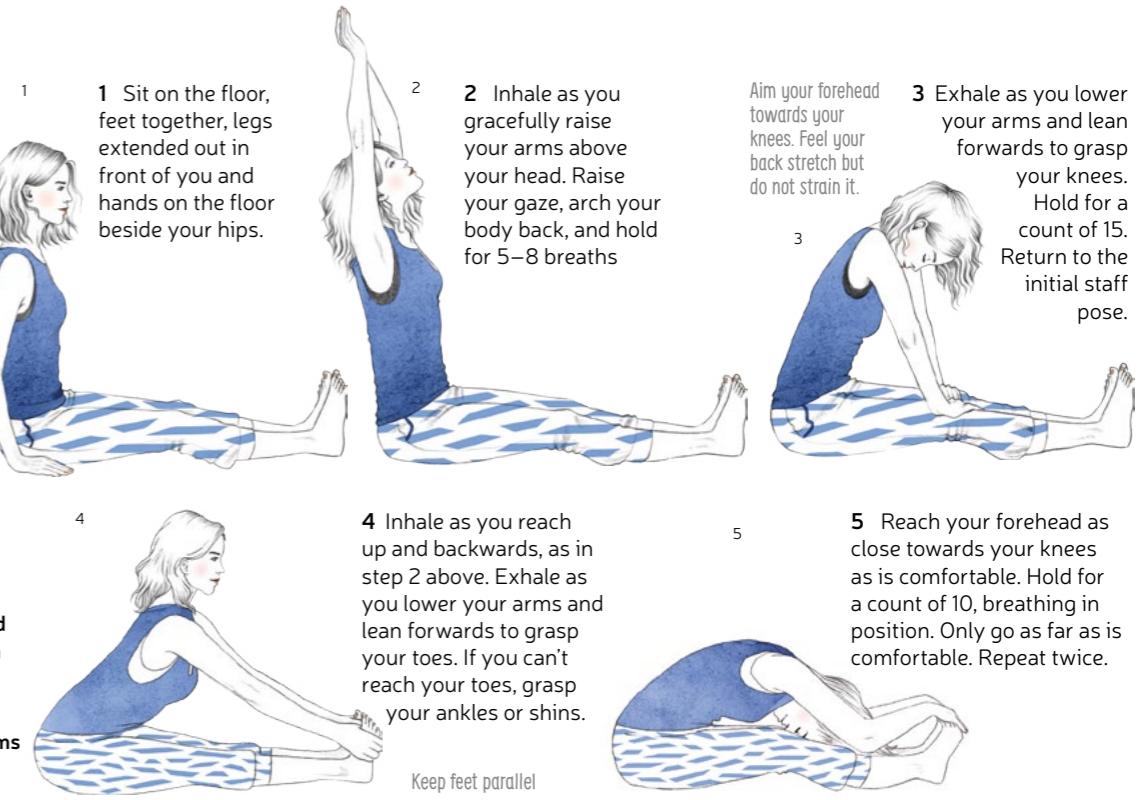
3 Exhale as you straighten your legs at an upward angle, stretching your arms forwards. Balance in position, breathing normally, for 20–30 seconds, or as long as you can without losing the pose. Repeat twice.

SEATED FORWARD BEND

11

This stretch helps soothe headaches and anxiety and reduces fatigue.

- Strengthens spine
- Improves digestion
- Can help with infertility, high blood pressure & insomnia
- Relieves menstrual discomfort & menopause symptoms



Aim your forehead towards your knees. Feel your back stretch but do not strain it.
Hold for a count of 15. Return to the initial staff pose.

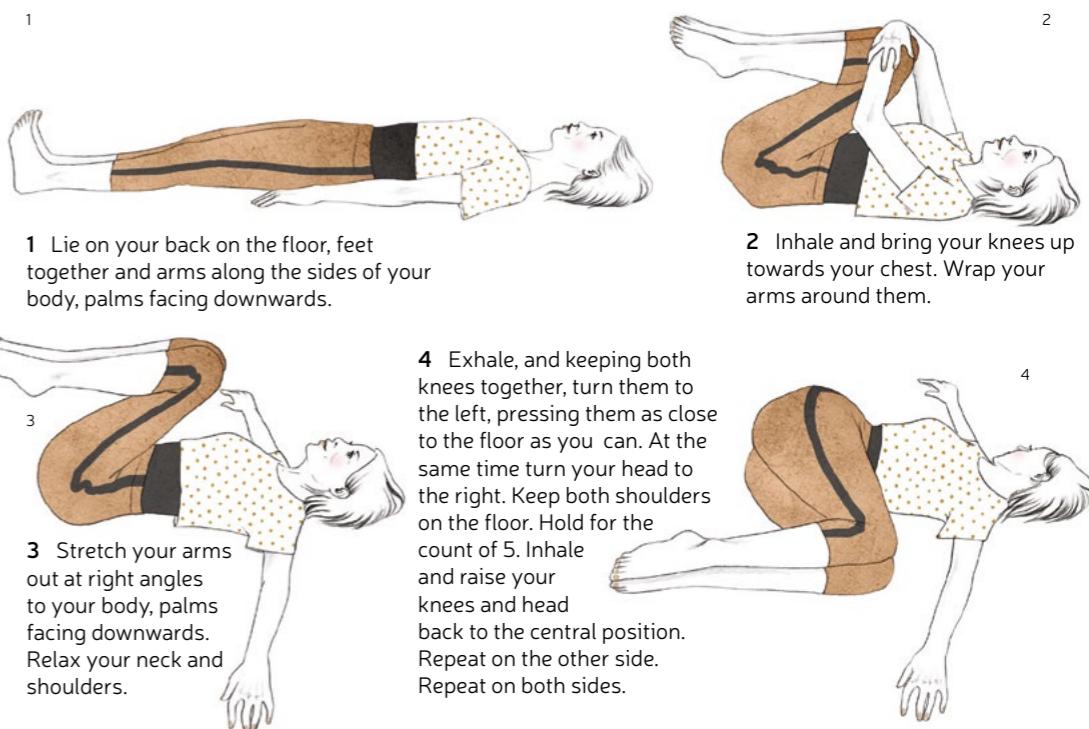
3 Exhale as you lower your arms and lean forwards to grasp your knees.

5 Reach your forehead as close towards your knees as is comfortable. Hold for a count of 10, breathing in position. Only go as far as is comfortable. Repeat twice.

BELLY TWIST

12

Like the Half Twist, this asana will also help with poor digestion.



- Stretches entire spine
- Relaxes neck
- Promotes digestion
- Relaxes whole body

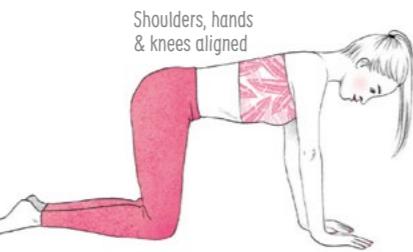
3 Stretch your arms out at right angles to your body, palms facing downwards. Relax your neck and shoulders.

4 Exhale, and keeping both knees together, turn them to the left, pressing them as close to the floor as you can. At the same time turn your head to the right. Keep both shoulders on the floor. Hold for the count of 5. Inhale and raise your knees and head back to the central position. Repeat on the other side. Repeat on both sides.

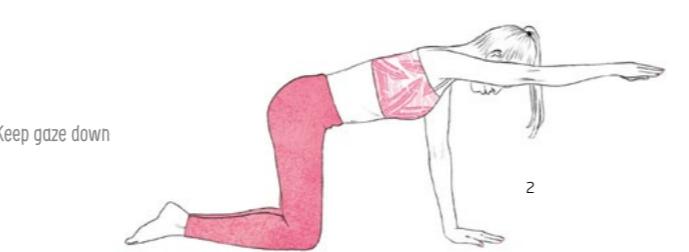
BALANCING CAT POSE

The Balancing Cat Pose helps build core strength and coordination.

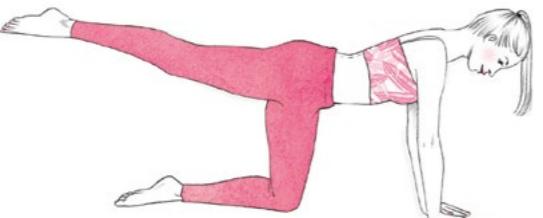
- Improves balance & coordination
- Lengthens spine
- Builds core strength



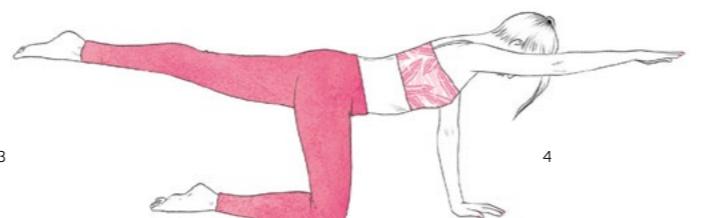
- 1 Begin on all fours, hands aligned with your shoulders and knees aligned with your hips.



- 2 Inhale, pull in your abs and extend your right arm in front of you, palm downwards. Keep your shoulders level. Exhale as you return your arm to the floor. Repeat with the left arm. Repeat 5 times with each arm. Return to starting position.



- 3 Inhale, pull in your abs, and extend your right leg out behind you. Exhale and return leg to the floor. Repeat with the left leg. Repeat 5 times with each leg. Return to starting position.



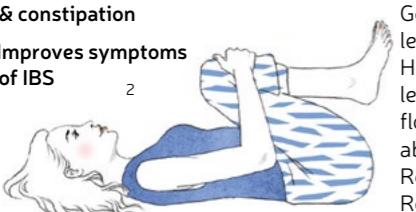
- 4 Inhale, pull in your abs, and extend your left leg and right arm at the same time. hold for a count of five, then repeat on the other side. Repeat five times, alternating limbs.

KNEES-TO-CHEST POSE

This pose helps eliminate impurities through the lungs and excretory systems.

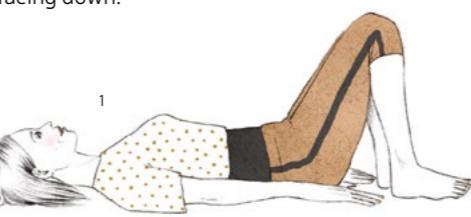


- 1 Lie on your back with your legs extended. Draw your right knee up towards your chest. Clasp your hands around the knee. Gently squeeze your leg towards you. Repeat with the other leg.
- 2 Now draw both knees up to your chest. Clasp your knees. Gently squeeze your legs towards you. Hold for 5 breaths. Let legs drop down to the floor. Leave knees bent about 18 inches apart. Relax into the floor. Repeat twice.



HALF BRIDGE POSE

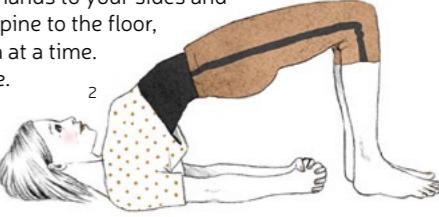
1 Lie on your back, knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Place your arms along your sides, palms facing down.



The Half Bridge pose stretches the spine, but also reduces feelings of stress and fatigue.

- Opens chest
- Relieves menstrual pain
- Stimulates thyroid gland
- Energises, tones & strengthens glutes & legs

2 Gently lift your hips and lower back off the floor, as you exhale. Link your arms under your body and hold for a count of 10, breathing in position. To exit the pose, return your hands to your sides and lower your spine to the floor, one vertebra at a time. Repeat twice.

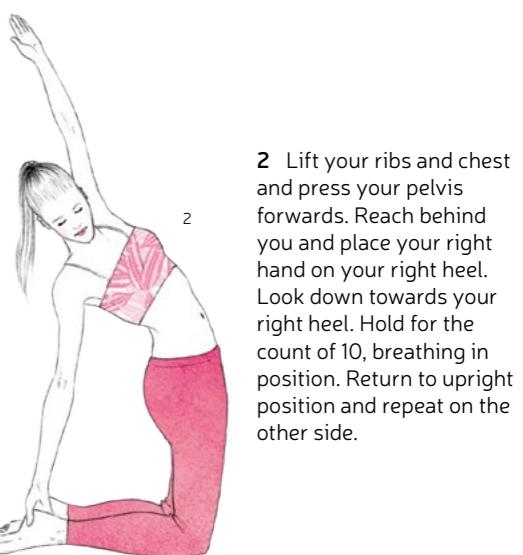


CAMEL POSE



The Camel Pose is a kneeling backwards bend. It opens your hips and shoulders.

- Opens chest & shoulders
- Strengthens mid-back
- Stretches abs & thighs
- Relieves menstrual discomfort & mild back pain



3 Return to upright position. Now take both hands back to grasp both heels. Open your chest, elongate your spine and relax your neck, allowing your head to tilt backwards. Hold for the count of 15, breathing in position.



4 To exit the position, exhale and release your arms, letting your sitting bones sink down on to your heels.



5 Lower your forehead gently to the floor, with your hands our behind you, palms facing upwards. Hold for 1–2 minutes.

Meditation

We will end today's practise session by learning the Lotus Pose. Don't worry if you can't achieve the full asana, go as far as you can, then find a comfortable cross-legged position on the floor and prepare yourself for the delightful inner journey that is meditation. Many yogis consider *dhyana*, or meditation, as the seventh stage of an eight-stage path to Enlightenment. There are many ways to meditate and we suggest you find the one that suits you best. With your eyes open or closed, begin by focusing on a specific sound or vision. If you prefer a sound, or mantra, you might chose the classic *OM*. Silently repeat it to yourself as you clear your mind of all thoughts. If you prefer a vision, focus on an object or place that makes you feel peaceful and happy. Some people prefer to focus on the rhythm of their own breath. Spend 5–10 minutes in silent contemplation.

STANDING HALF LOTUS

1
This pose stretches and strengthens the hips, hamstrings, shoulders and knees.

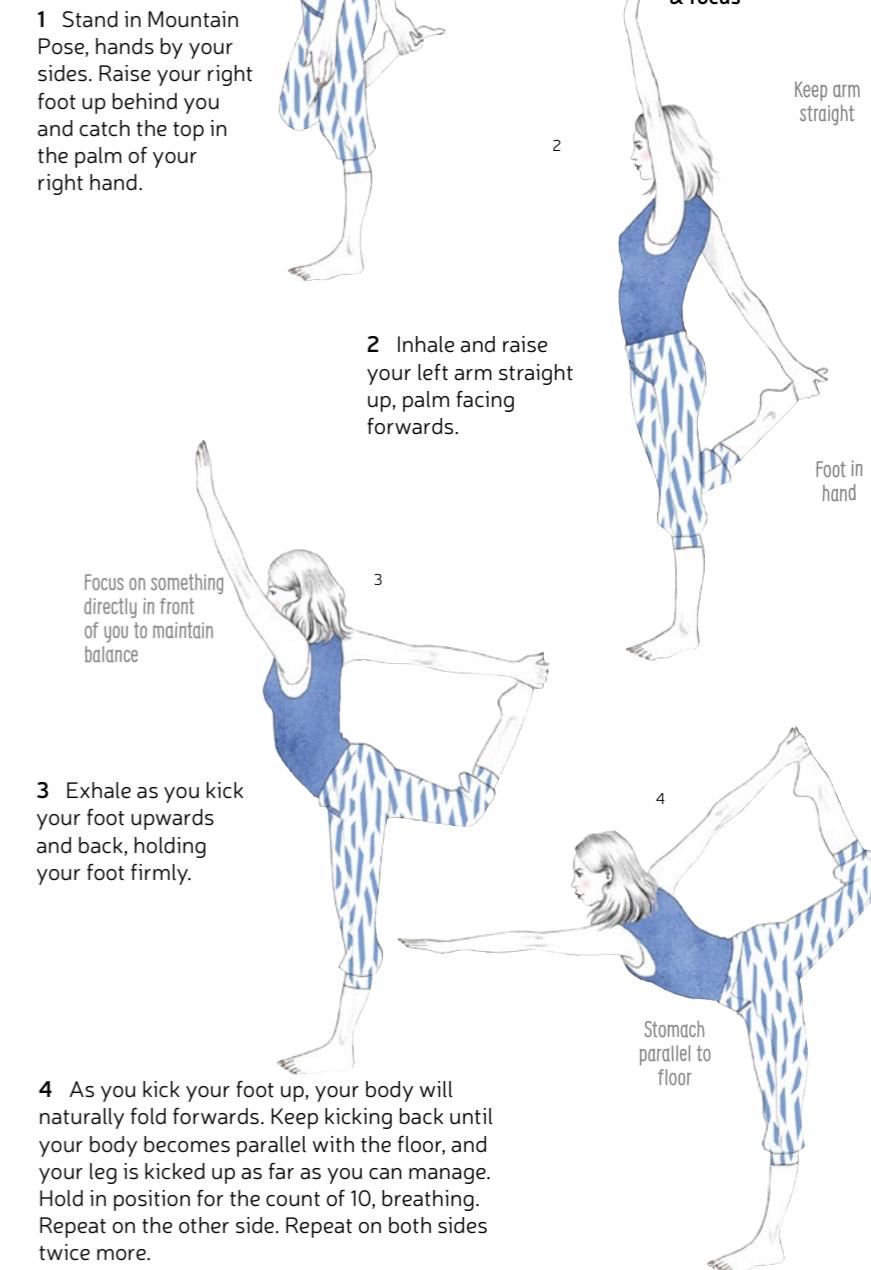
- Improves balance
- Increases flexibility in hips, knees & ankles
- Regulates nervous & lymphatic systems



STANDING BOW POSE

1
1 Stand in Mountain Pose, hands by your sides.

2 Stand in Mountain Pose, hands by your sides. Raise your right foot up behind you and catch the top in the palm of your right hand.



- Improves circulation to heart & lungs
- Increases elasticity of spine
- Activates digestive system
- Improves balance & focus

Keep arm straight

Foot in hand

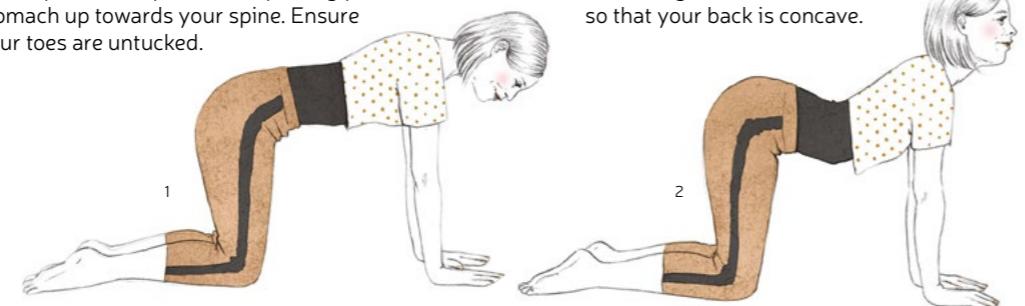
CAT-COW POSE

3

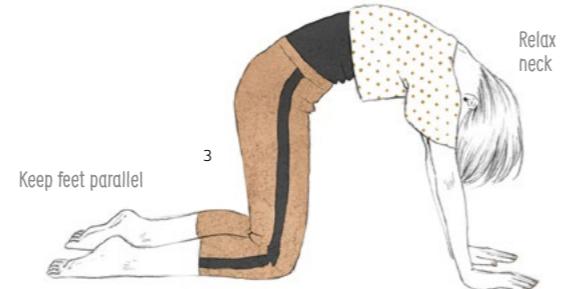
The Cat-Cow pose massages and stimulates internal organs, such as the kidneys and adrenal glands.

- Relieves tension in back, neck & shoulders
- Reduces symptoms of PMS
- Improves digestion
- Improves flexibility of spine

1 Start on your hands and knees, eyes looking down at the floor. Align your wrists with your shoulders and your knees with your hips. Flatten your back by lifting your stomach up towards your spine. Ensure your toes are untucked.



2 Inhale as you slowly lift your head and tail bone, moving the chest forwards and taking the shoulders back, so that your back is concave.



KNEES-TO-CHEST POSE

4

This pose reduces bloating, improves circulation and helps rebalance your energy.

- Provides relief from indigestion, bloating, acid reflux, flatulence & constipation
- Improves symptoms of IBS

1 Lie on your back with your legs extended. Draw your right knee up towards your chest. Clasp your hands around the knee. Gently squeeze your leg towards you. Repeat with the other leg.



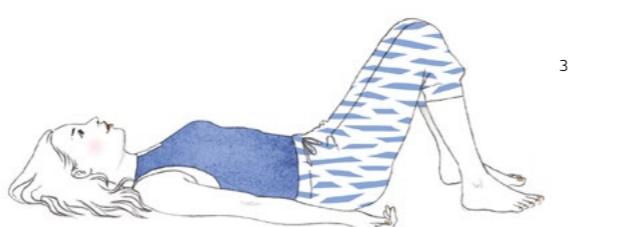
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2 Return to the first position on your back. Now draw both knees up towards your chest. Clasp your hands around the knees. Gently squeeze your legs towards you.



2

3 Let your legs drop down gently to the floor. Leave your knees bent about 18 inches apart. Relax into the floor and concentrate on your breathing. Repeat three times.



3

DAY
22

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ALTERNATE-NOSTRIL BREATHING

5

This pose harmonises the two hemispheres of the brain, resulting in balanced physical, mental and emotional well-being.

- Relieves stress
- Enhances mental function
- Soothes nervous system
- Promotes calmness & sleep
- Boosts energy



1



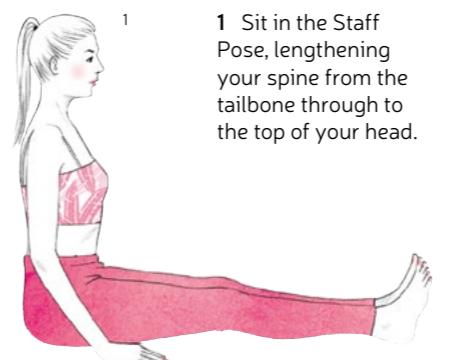
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1 Sit in the Lotus Pose, or in a simpler cross-legged position such as the Half Lotus. Place your hands on your knees in the *shuni mudra*, or seal of patience.

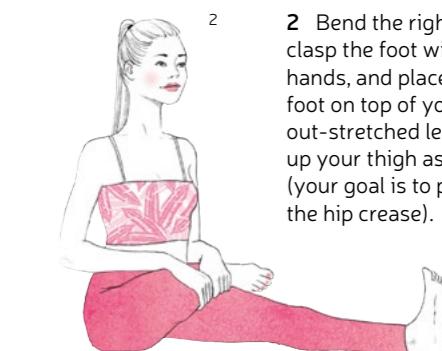
LOTUS POSE

6

Today we will learn the full Lotus Pose, or Padmasana. If your hips and thighs are still not flexible enough, don't worry. Sit in the Half Lotus pose, or whatever variation is comfortable for you.

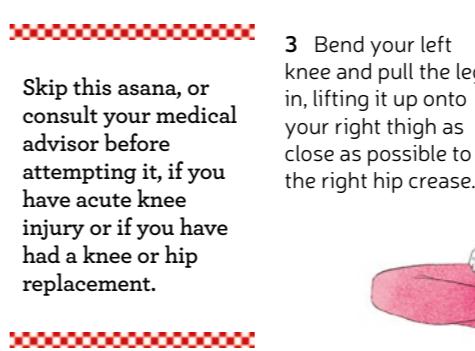


1



2

- Builds flexibility in hips, knees & ankles
- Strengthens spine & abs
- Improves posture
- Increases energy



3 Skip this asana, or consult your medical advisor before attempting it, if you have acute knee injury or if you have had a knee or hip replacement.



4 Rest your hands on your knees and lengthen your spine. Relax, close your eyes, and concentrate on breathing calmly. Now begin your meditation, as discussed in the introduction for Day 22.

DAY
22

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DAY 23

Heart disease

Once viewed as a male illness, we now know that cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death among older women. Younger women have fewer heart attacks and strokes than men, but within a few years of menopause they are just as likely to have cardiovascular disease. Happily, there is a lot you can do to prevent or delay the onset of heart disease. A healthy Mediterranean-style diet based around vegetables, fruit, wholegrains, fish, nuts and monounsaturated fats, combined with moderate levels of exercise can significantly reduce your risk. Yoga fits in perfectly with a heart-healthy lifestyle. On a physical level, the breathing techniques and asanas help lower blood pressure and improve circulation while strengthening your entire body. Emotionally, yoga releases tension, relieves anxiety and helps with depression, creating a sense of calm and a flexible, open view on the world.

TREE POSE

1

This pose stretches the thighs, groin and shoulders. It builds strength in the ankles and calves, and tones the abs.

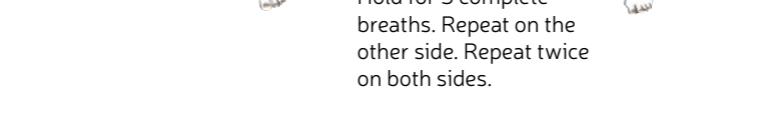
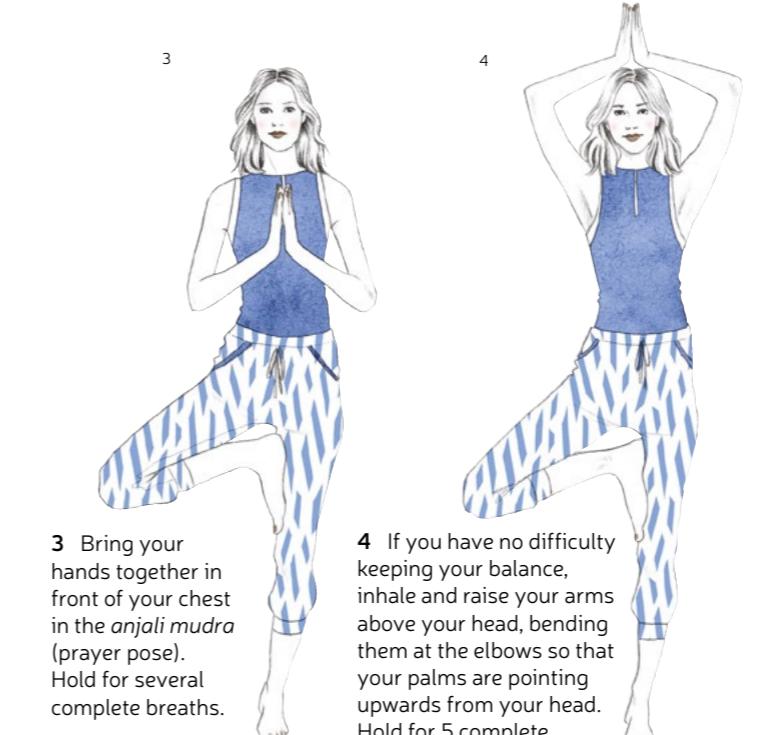
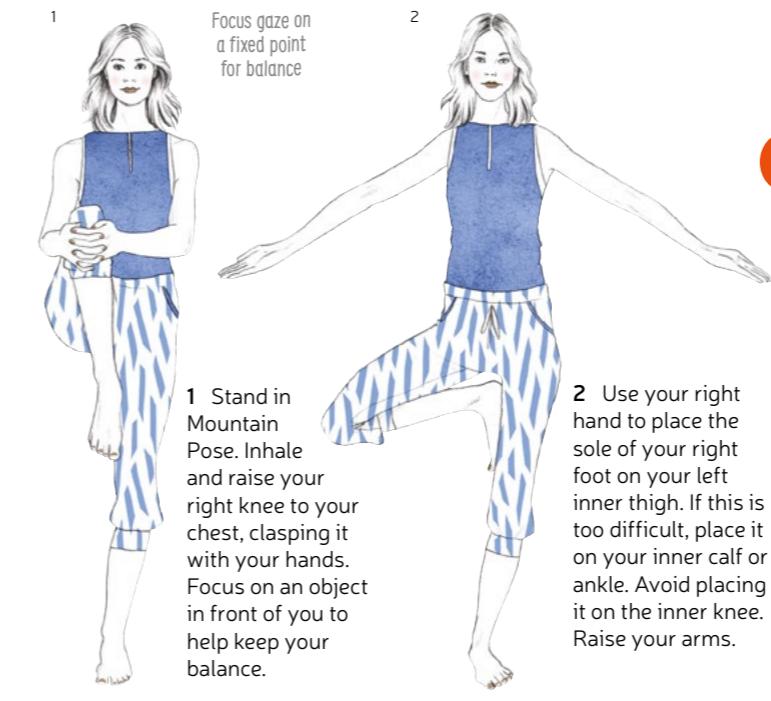
- Improves concentration & balance
- Reduces stress
- Strengthens ankles, calves, thighs & hips
- Improves overall body strength

CHEST OPENER

2

This pose will also help with digestion.

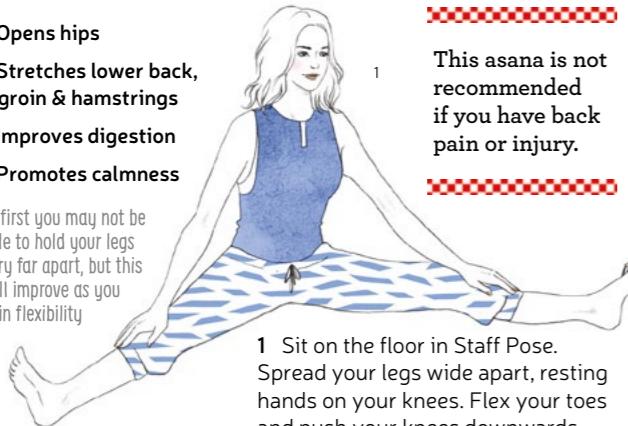
- Tones & firms arms
- Tones & firms bust
- Relieves tension in neck & shoulders
- Realigns spine



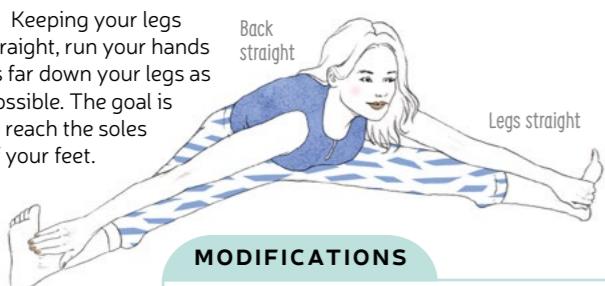
WIDE-ANGLED SEATED FORWARD BEND

- Opens hips
- Stretches lower back, groin & hamstrings
- Improves digestion
- Promotes calmness

At first you may not be able to hold your legs very far apart, but this will improve as you gain flexibility



- 1 Sit on the floor in Staff Pose. Spread your legs wide apart, resting hands on your knees. Flex your toes and push your knees downwards.



MODIFICATIONS

If this stretch is too intense at first, at step 2 you are welcome to bend one foot in towards your groin to begin with and then build up to the full stretch. Alternatively, place a folded blanket beneath your sitting bones.



- 3 Move your hands to the floor in front of you, palms facing down. Fold forwards gently from the hips. Stop at the first point of resistance, relax, breathe normally, and hold for a few seconds. Keep

your sitting bones on the floor at all times. Return to Staff Pose, then repeat twice.

BOAT POSE

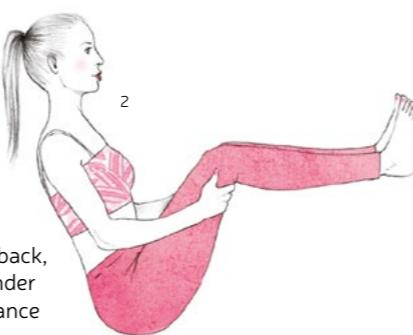
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This asana is not recommended if you have back pain or injury.

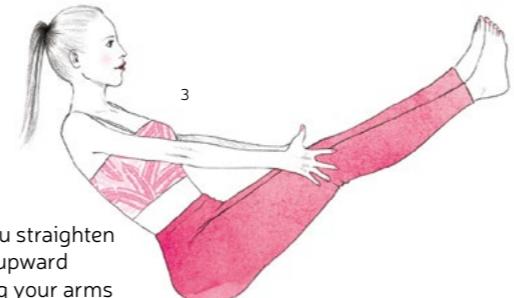


- 1 Sit in Staff Pose. Draw your knees up and grasp your legs just below the knees. Inhale as you lengthen your spine and press your shoulder blades back, opening your heart.

- Strengthens hips, thighs & back
- Tones abs
- Improves digestion
- Improves balance



- 2 Exhale as you lean back, slipping your hands under your lower thighs. Balance on your sitting bones.

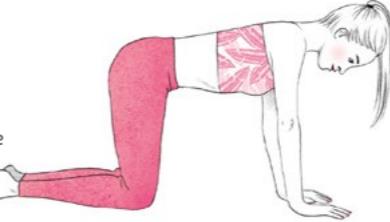


- 3 Exhale as you straighten your legs at an upward angle, stretching your arms forwards. Balance in position, breathing normally, for 20–30 seconds, or as long as you can without losing the pose. Repeat three times.

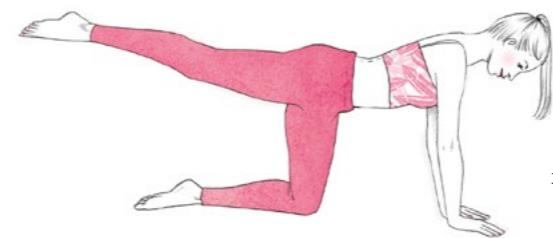
BALANCING CAT POSE

5

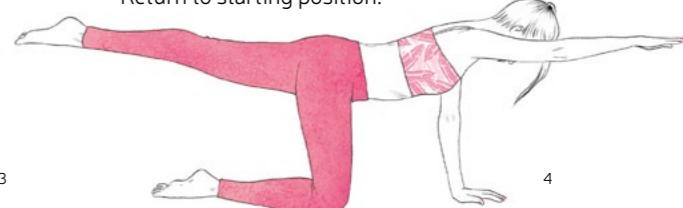
This asana helps relieve menstrual cramps and lower back pain.



- Improves balance & coordination
- Lengthens spine
- Builds core strength



- 1 Begin on all fours, hands aligned with your shoulders and knees aligned with your hips.



- 3 Return to starting position. Inhale, pull in your abs, and extend your right leg out behind you, keeping your ankle aligned with your shoulders. Exhale and return your leg to the floor. Repeat with the left leg. Repeat 5 times with each leg. Return to starting position.

BELLY TWIST

6

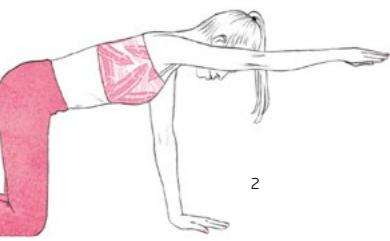
This pose stretches the back muscles, realigns and lengthens the spine, and hydrates the spinal disks.



- Stretches entire spine
- Relaxes the neck
- Promotes digestion
- Relaxes whole body



- 3 Stretch your arms out at right angles to your body, palms facing downwards. Relax your neck and shoulders.



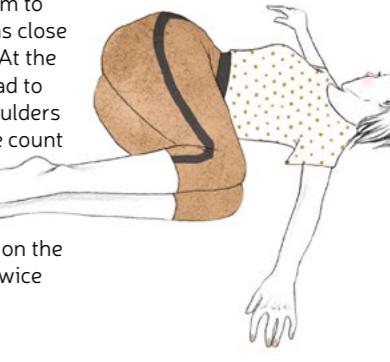
- 2 Inhale, pull in your abs and extend your right arm in front of you, palm downwards. Keep your shoulders level. Exhale as you return your arm to the floor. Repeat with the left arm. Repeat 5 times with each arm. Return to starting position.



- 4 Inhale, pull in your abs, and extend your left leg and right arm at the same time. Hold for a count of five, then repeat on the other side. Repeat five times, alternating limbs.



- 2 Inhale and bring your knees up towards your chest. Wrap your arms around them.



- 4 Exhale, and keeping both knees together, turn them to the left, pressing them as close to the floor as you can. At the same time turn your head to the right. Keep both shoulders on the floor. Hold for the count of 5. Inhale and bring your knees and head back to the central position. Repeat on the other side, then repeat twice more on each side.

DOLPHIN POSE

7



- 1 Begin in a kneeling position, legs slightly apart and with your sitting bones resting on your heels. Rest your hands on your thighs.

Activate core muscles

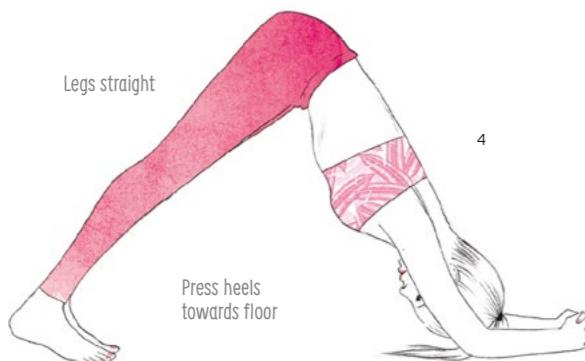


- 2 Lean forwards, lifting your sitting bones off your heels, and place your forearms on the floor in front of you. Align your knees and hips and grasp your inner elbows with each hand.

Elbows aligned with knees



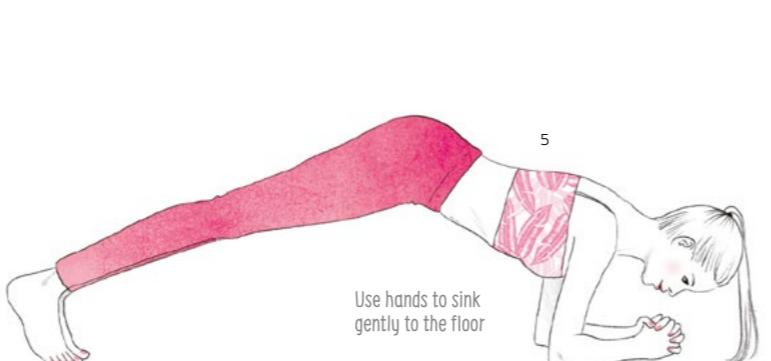
- 3 Keeping your elbows where they are (they should be aligned with your knees), extend your forearms out in front of you and clasp your hands together. Push your shoulders back and down.



Legs straight

Press heels towards floor

- 4 Tuck your toes under and straighten your legs, pushing your hips up towards the ceiling. Ease your heels towards the floor, and rest your forehead on the floor, if possible.



Use hands to sink gently to the floor

- 5 As you exhale, bring your body weight forwards, without moving your feet. Then return to the previous position. Repeat 5 times, before relaxing onto the floor. Repeat the whole asana from the beginning.

UPWARD FACING DOG POSE

8



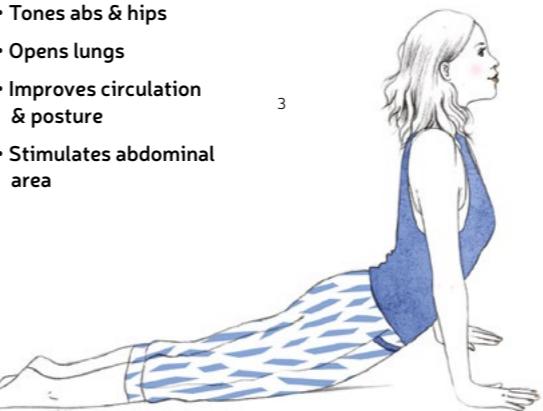
- 1 Lie on your stomach on the floor, head turned to one side.



2

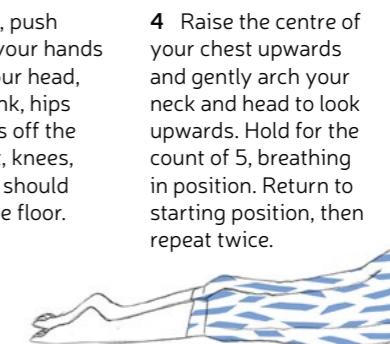
- 2 Turn your head to the front. Inhale and place the palms of your hands on the floor just below shoulder level. Inhale and bring your shoulders towards your ears. Lift your shoulders up and press your shoulder blades inwards towards each other.

- Strengthens spine, torso & arms
- Tones abs & hips
- Opens lungs
- Improves circulation & posture
- Stimulates abdominal area



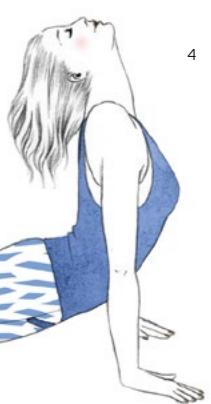
3

- 3 Exhale, push down on your hands and lift your head, chest, trunk, hips and thighs off the floor. Feet, knees, and shins should stay on the floor.



4

- 4 Raise the centre of your chest upwards and gently arch your neck and head to look upwards. Hold for the count of 5, breathing in position. Return to starting position, then repeat twice.



CROCODILE POSE

9

- 1 Lie face down on the floor. Inhale, raise your head, bring your arms up to head height, and slip your forearms under your head. Rest your forehead on the backs of your stacked hands.

Today we finish with the deeply relaxing Crocodile Pose.



To exit the pose, bring your palms under your shoulders and roll over onto your back

- Relieves stiffness in neck & back
- Reduces anxiety
- Regulates blood pressure
- Promotes sleep

DAY 24

Back pain

Back pain, from the tailbone and lower back all the way up to the neck, is very common. Sometimes it is caused by specific medical conditions, such as a slipped disc or ankylosing spondylitis (rheumatoid arthritis), but often there is no obvious cause. Yoga is often recommended for back pain and this is how many people first come to it. If you have severe back pain, always see your doctor before undertaking any new exercise regime. For lesser pain, stiffness and discomfort, the poses in this book can provide immediate and ongoing relief. If you have back pain while doing yoga, take special care not to strain in any position. As we have seen, many asanas focus on strengthening the back, improving its flexibility and realigning the spine. Others strengthen muscles in the core, neck and shoulders, which provide support for the back. The release of tension also improves spinal health.

COMPLETE BREATH STANDING

1

We return to our basic warm up and breathing exercise again today. Feel the oxygen flooding into your chest as you breath in deeply.

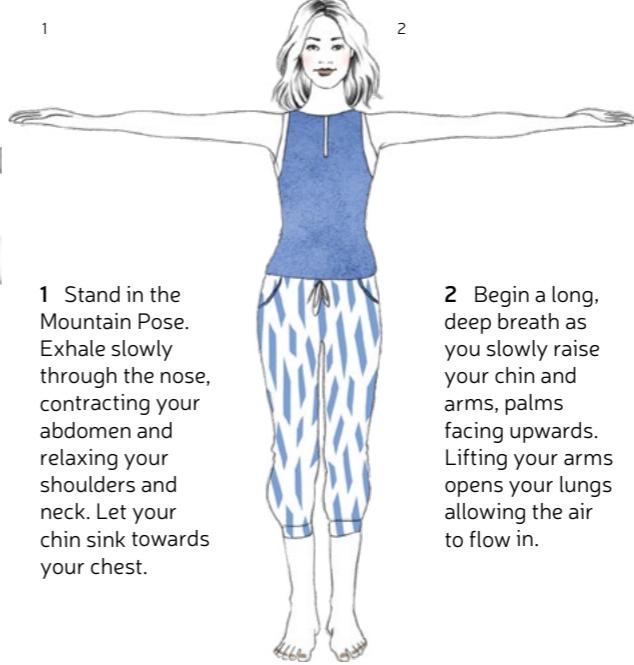
- Increases energy & focus
- Strengthens spine
- Tones arms & upper body
- Improves balance & posture

Relax upper body, let chin sink to chest

1



2



- 1 Stand in the Mountain Pose. Exhale slowly through the nose, contracting your abdomen and relaxing your shoulders and neck. Let your chin sink towards your chest.

- 2 Begin a long, deep breath as you slowly raise your chin and arms, palms facing upwards. Lifting your arms opens your lungs allowing the air to flow in.

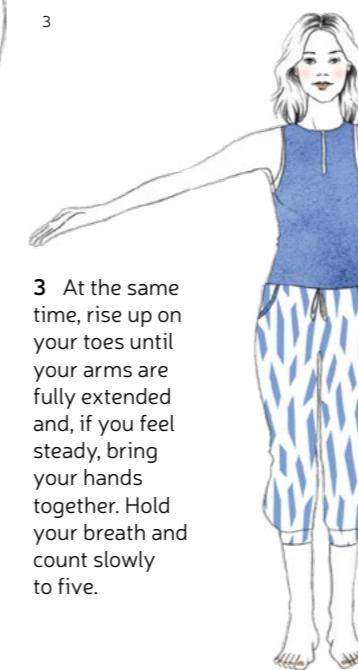


3

Reach for the sky on tips of toes

4

Focus on coordinating your breathing and movement, inhaling as you rise to your toe tips and exhaling as you lower your arms and heels return to the floor



- 3 At the same time, rise up on your toes until your arms are fully extended and, if you feel steady, bring your hands together. Hold your breath and count slowly to five.

- 4 Exhale as you gracefully lower your arms and sink down onto your heels. Repeat five times.

Lower arms gracefully and sink down onto heels

EAGLE POSE

2

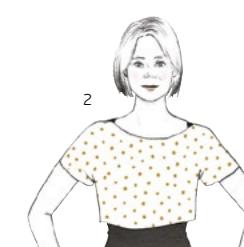
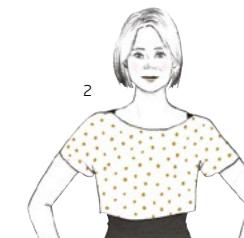
The Eagle Pose, or *Garudasana*, is a one-legged balancing asana that will help you with concentration and calmness.

- Strengthens ankles & wrists
- Stretches mid back
- Improves balance & concentration
- Promotes calmness



Fix gaze on a spot directly in front of you

1 Stand in Mountain Pose, hands by your sides. Find a fixed point somewhere in front of you. Keep your gaze on it throughout the exercise. This will help your balance.



2 Place your hands on your hips, bend your knees slightly and move your body weight to your left foot. Cross your right thigh over your left and, if possible, hook the top of your right foot behind your left calf. Hold your balance and breathe calmly.

Wrap right foot & toes around left calf

3 Extend your arms out parallel to the floor, then bring your right arm under the left, crossing at the elbow. If you can, press your palms together in front of your face. Keep your shoulder blades down and evenly positioned. Hold for five complete breathes. Exit the pose and repeat on the other side. Repeat three times on both sides.



MODIFICATION
At first, you may find that one palm is lower than the other. This will improve as your wrists become more flexible.



DAY
24

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GARLAND POSE

Today we will add an extra step to this pose. Take care not to strain.

- Strengthens back & abs
- Improves balance
- Opens groin area
- Builds strength in ankles & feet

1 Start in Mountain Pose with your feet slightly wider than hip distance apart. Turn your toes out slightly so that they are a little wider than your heels.



2 Raise your arms so that they are parallel to the floor. Bend your knees deeply, sinking down slowly until your hips are lower than your knees, a few inches off the floor. Keep your heels flat on the floor.



3 Open your knees and press your elbows against them. Bring your palms together in front of your chest. Stay here for 30–60 seconds. To exit the pose, either sit back onto your buttocks, or push back up to standing.

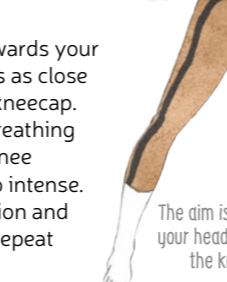


3

4

INTENSE SIDE STRETCH

The further you bend in this pose, the more difficult it can be to keep your balance. Don't go too deep if you feel unsteady.



1

2

3

4

The aim is to bring your head towards the knees

EXTENDED HALF TWIST

This Extended Twist is a more extreme version of the Half Twist we first learned on page 15.



5

3

5

MODIFICATION

If grasping your waist makes the twist too extreme, just hold the pose with your right arm on the floor behind you.

1 Sit in the Staff Pose with legs extended in front of you. Draw your right leg up and place the sole against your left thigh.



2 Grasp your left ankle and pull your knee up towards your body.

2

3 Place the left foot over the right knee with the sole resting flat on the floor.

4

4 Place your left hand on the floor behind you.

6

5 Bring your right arm over your left leg and take a firm grip on your right knee.

6 Gently twist your head and upper body as far to the left as possible without straining. If this feels comfortable, reach your left hand around your back and clasp the right side of your waist. Hold for 5 complete breaths. Repeat on the other side. Repeat twice more on both sides.

Gently twist upper body as far as possible to the left

DAY

24

146

DAY

24

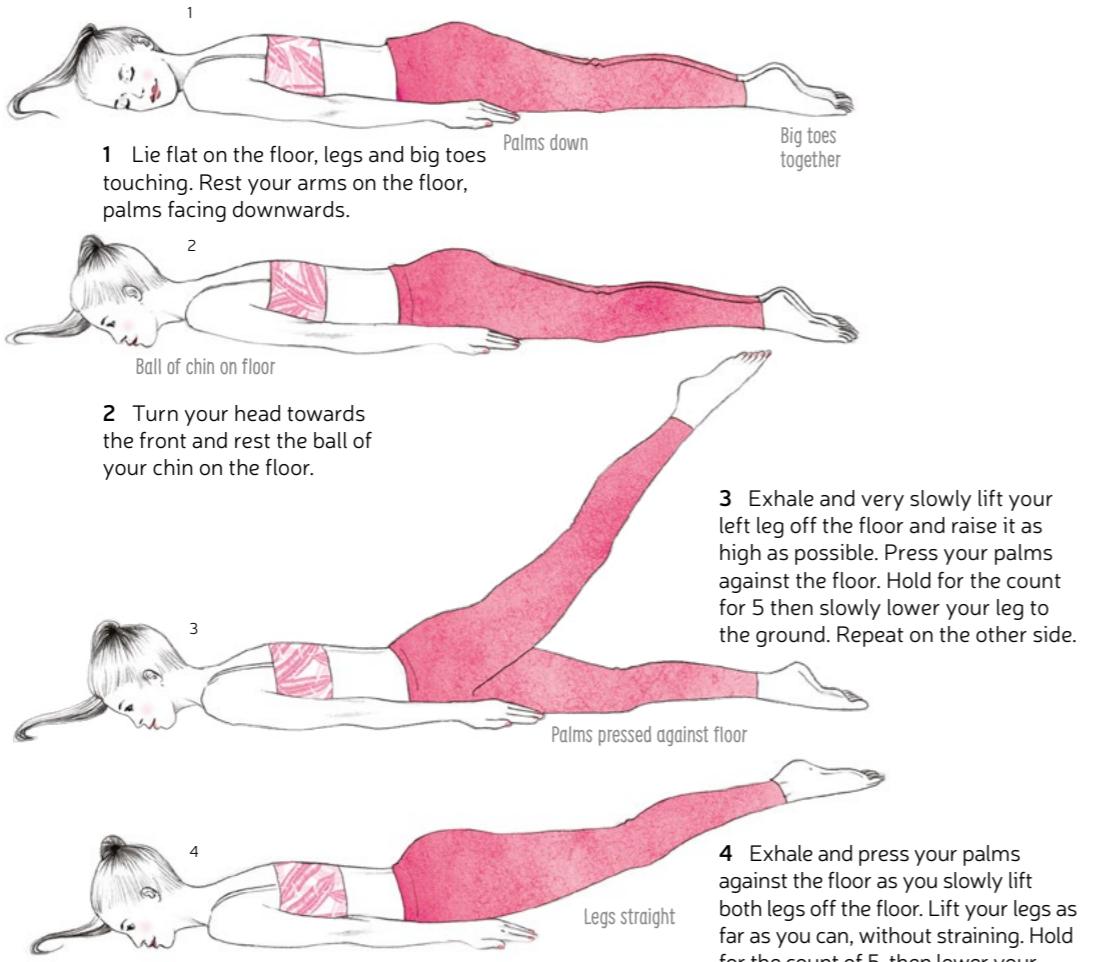
147

HALF LOCUST

6

The Half Locust pose strengthens your core and lower back muscles.

- Relieves stress & mild depression
- Stimulates thyroid
- Promotes sleep & youthfulness
- Improves digestion
- Benefits infertility, asthma & sinusitis
- Relieves menopausal symptoms

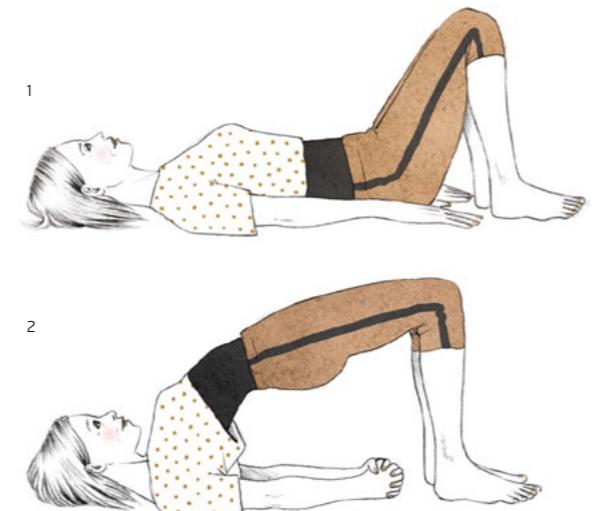


HALF BRIDGE POSE

7

This pose helps relieve feelings of stress and fatigue.

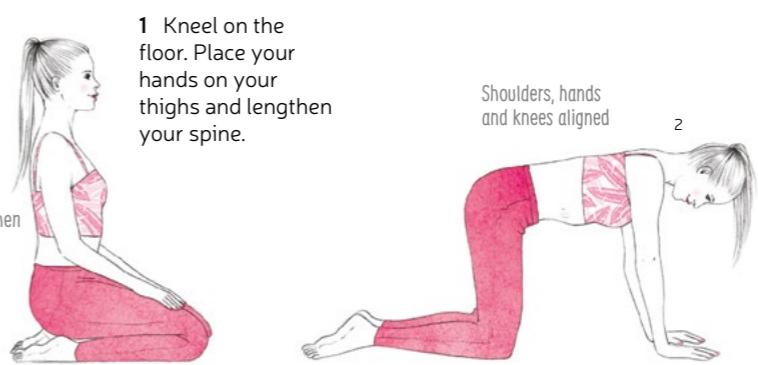
- Opens chest & shoulders
- Relieves menstrual pain
- Stimulates thyroid gland
- Energises, tones & strengthens glutes & legs



PLANK POSE

8

This pose strengthens arms and shoulders, but it also works on the muscles surrounding the spine, improving posture.



- Strengthens arms, shoulders, back & legs
- Tones abdominal muscles & glutes

CAMEL POSE

9

This pose strengthens the shoulders and back and can relieve lower back pain.



- Opens chest & shoulders
- Strengthens mid-back
- Stretches abs & thighs
- Relieves menstrual discomfort & mild back pain

Improving digestion

Many people are plagued by digestive issues and women seem to be particularly prone to them, especially as they grow older. Bloating, indigestion, IBS, acid reflux, constipation and diarrhoea are daily problems for a large number of people. Doctors often dismiss these issues as minor, yet they can significantly disrupt your life. A healthy diet based on unprocessed, “real” food, combined with a daily yoga session does wonders for overall digestive health. Furthermore, certain asanas can be done for specific problems. If you are bloated, constipated or “gassy,” forward bends will help, while indigestion and reflux can be relieved by gentle back bends. Twists will tone and massage your liver, gallbladder and intestines, helping you to digest fatty foods. Inverted poses can relieve a range of problems just by reversing gravity, although they should not be attempted too soon after eating. See the routine on page 191 for digestive issues.

CHEST OPENER

1

This simple pose will open your heart and energise your spine.

- Tones & firms arms
- Tones & firms bust
- Relieves tension in neck & shoulders
- Realigns spine

1 Stand in Mountain Pose, feet slightly apart. Interlock your fingers behind your back. Arch backwards and hold for a count of 10, breathing in position.



2 Gently bend forwards, raising your arms behind your back. Hold for a count of 20 as you breathe. Exhale as you return to an upright position.



3 Raise your arms to shoulder height, and interlock your fingers behind your back. Arch backwards again as far as is comfortable for you. Hold for a count of 5, breathing in position.



4 Now bend forwards again, raising your arms behind your back. Gently press your nose as close to your knees as you can. Do not overstretch. Hold for a count of 15 as you breathe. Exhale as you return to an upright position. Repeat all four positions twice.



WARRIOR I

2

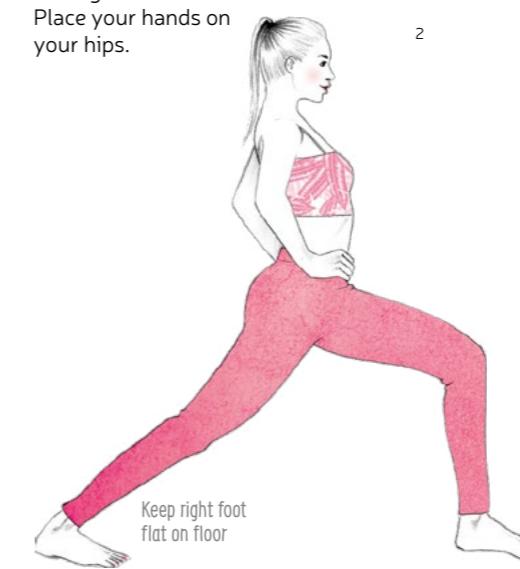
If you are wondering why some yoga asanas are called “warrior” poses, it is because they encourage you to become a “spiritual warrior” who wages war on *avidya*, or self-ignorance, which yogis believe is the cause of all our suffering.

- Strengthens the legs, especially thighs
- Strengthens spine
- Stabilises hips, knees & ankles
- Increases lung capacity

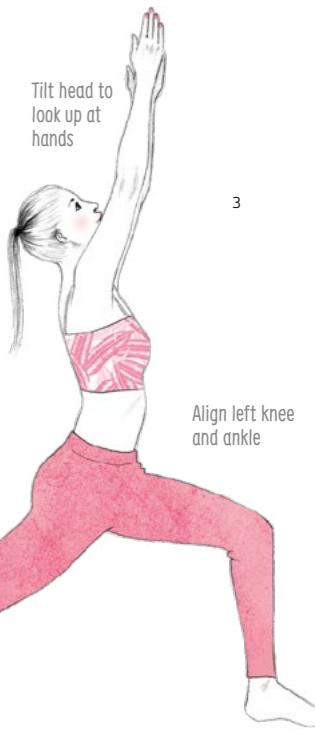
1 Stand in Mountain Pose, arms by your sides.



2 Exhale, and take a big step forwards with your left foot. Rotate your left foot about 45 degrees outwards. Place your hands on your hips.



3 Inhale and bend your left knee so that it is directly over your left ankle. Raise your arms overhead, bringing your palms together. Keep the heel of your right foot on the ground. Tip your head backwards and look at your hands overhead. Hold for five breaths. Exhale as you return to Mountain Pose. Repeat on the other side. Repeat three times on both sides.



STANDING HALF LOTUS

3

This pose regulates the central nervous and lymphatic systems, which brings a clear, calm and peaceful mind.

- Improves balance
- Increases flexibility in hips, knees & ankles
- Regulates nervous & lymphatic systems



1 Stand in Mountain Pose, with hands by your sides. To help maintain your balance, focus on an object in front of you.



2 Move your body weight to your left foot. Bend your right knee, raise your right foot and use your left hand to gently position your foot as far up your left thigh as is comfortable.



3 Inhale, and raise your arms above your head, pressing your palms together. Straighten your arms and stand tall. Hold the position for five complete breathes, then gently lower your arms and release your foot. Repeat on the other side. Repeat on both sides twice more.

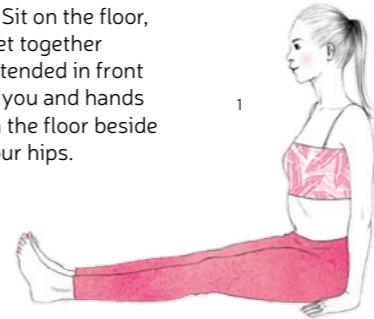
Activate leg muscles to help keep balance

HALF TWIST

5

This twist massages your liver and other internal organs, gently improving digestion.

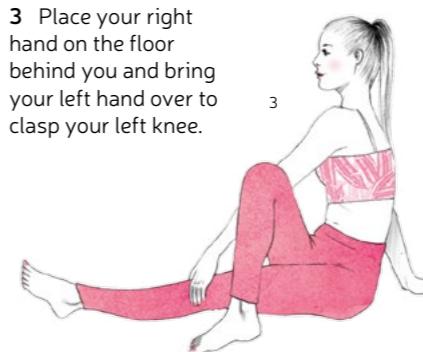
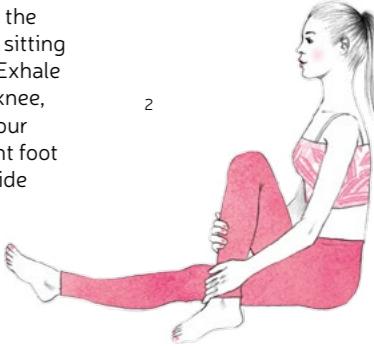
- Massages digestive organs, aiding elimination
- Stimulates lymph flow
- Strengthens immune system
- Calms nervous system



1 Sit on the floor, feet together extended in front of you and hands on the floor beside your hips.

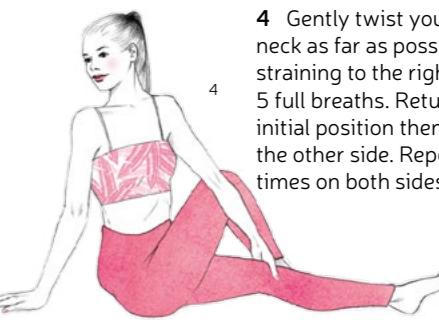
2

Inhale to lengthen the spine and press your sitting bones into the floor. Exhale and bend your right knee, drawing it towards your chest. Place your right foot on the floor just outside your left knee.



3

Place your right hand on the floor behind you and bring your left hand over to clasp your left knee.



4 Gently twist your head and neck as far as possible without straining to the right. Hold for 5 full breaths. Return to the initial position then repeat on the other side. Repeat three times on both sides.

WIDE-ANGLED SEATED FORWARD BEND

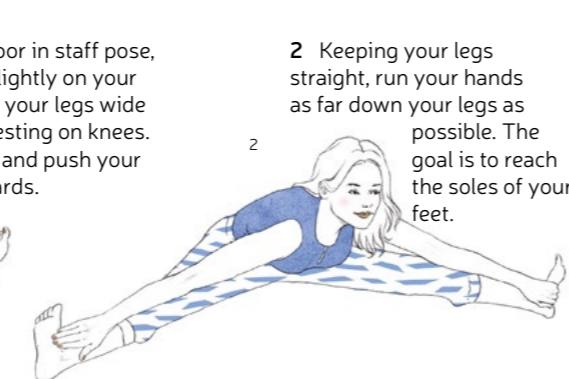
4

Today we will make this stretch slightly more intense. Only bend as far forward as is comfortable for you.

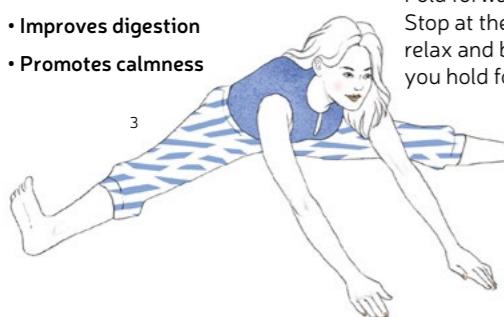
- Opens hips
- Stretches lower back, groin & hamstrings
- Improves digestion
- Promotes calmness



1 Sit on the floor in staff pose, hands resting lightly on your thighs. Spread your legs wide apart, hands resting on knees. Flex your toes and push your knees downwards.



2 Keeping your legs straight, run your hands as far down your legs as possible. The goal is to reach the soles of your feet.



3 Move your hands to the floor in front of you, palms facing down. Fold forwards gently from the hips. Stop at the first point of resistance, relax and breathe normally while you hold for a few seconds. Ensure your sitting bones remain on the floor at all times.



4 Inhale and fold as far forwards as possible. Do not stretch further than is comfortable. The goal is to rest your forehead against the floor. Rest in your most extended position for 5–10 breaths. Repeat twice.

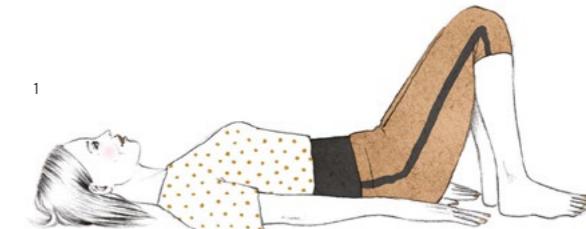
Gently press kneecaps to the floor

HALF BRIDGE POSE

6

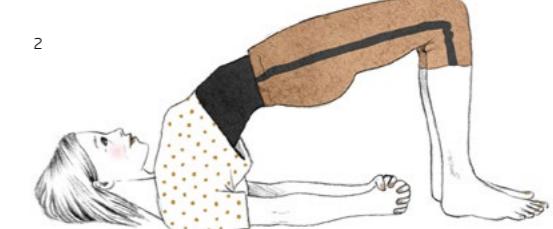
The Half Bridge pose stimulates the abdominal organs and improves digestion.

- Opens chest
- Relieves menstrual pain
- Stimulates thyroid gland
- Energises, tones & strengthens glutes & legs



1

Lie on your back, knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Place your arms along your sides, palms facing down.



2

Gently lift your hips and lower back off the floor, as you exhale. Link your arms under your body and hold for a count of 15, breathing in position. To exit the pose, return your hands to your sides and lower your spine to the floor, one vertebra at a time. Repeat twice.

SUPPORTED SHOULDER STAND

7

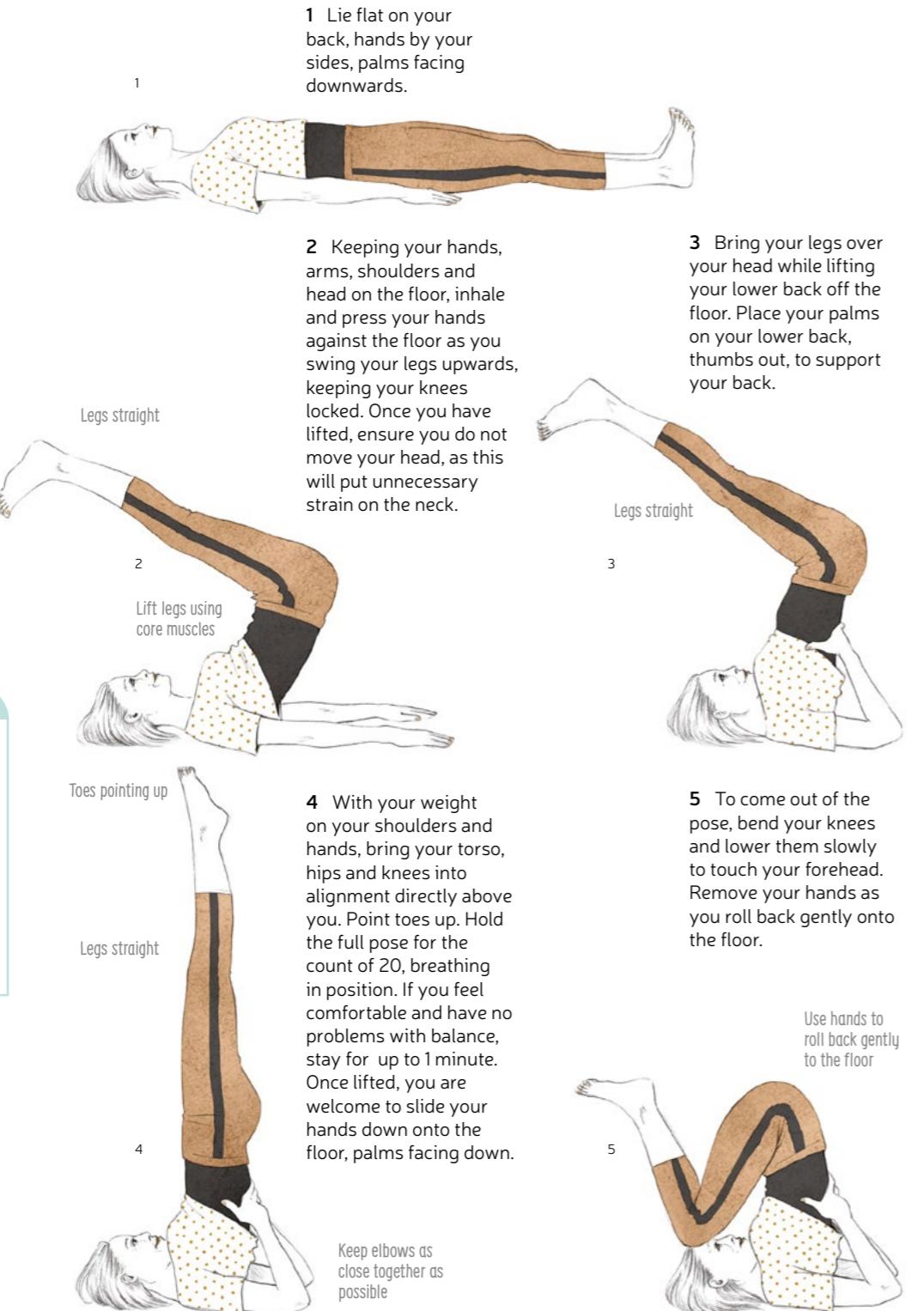
The Supported Shoulder Stand, or *Salamba Sarvangasana*, is a deeply restorative pose. It is a fairly advanced asana and should only be attempted if you feel confident.

- Relieves stress & mild depression
- Stimulates thyroid
- Promotes sleep & youthfulness
- Improves digestion
- Benefits infertility, asthma & sinusitis
- Relieves menopausal symptoms

MODIFICATION

You can relieve pressure on the neck by placing one or two folded blankets under your shoulders and torso. The back of the head should rest on the floor. If balance is a problem, perform next to a wall.

The asana is contraindicated for high blood pressure, whiplash, menstruation, angina and spinal weakness caused by conditions such as arthritis or osteoporosis.

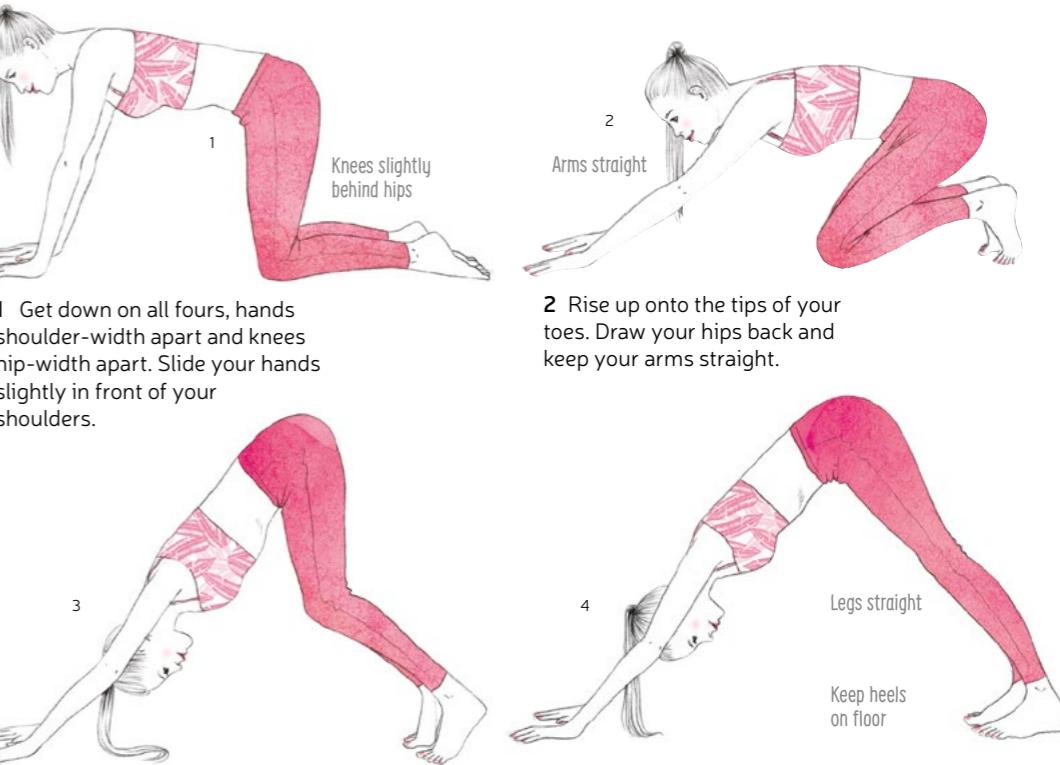


DOWNTWARD FACING DOG

8

This position energises the entire body. It also relieves stress, headaches and fatigue.

- Strengthens shoulders
- Stretches hamstrings and calves
- Energises the whole body
- Increases blood flow to head
- Relieves menstrual & menopausal symptoms

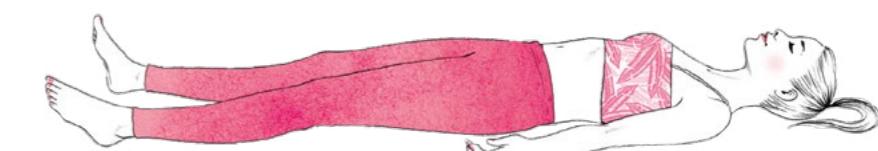


CORPSE POSE

9

Set aside 5–10 minutes at the end of the session to enjoy the complete relaxation of the Corpse Pose.

- Relaxes mind & body after physical exertion
- Promotes deep relaxation
- Reduces fatigue



Use your breath as your focus to clear your mind and keep yourself present. Rest for 5–10 minutes.

Depression

If you suspect you are depressed, the first thing to do is to see your doctor for a checkup. Make sure that your thyroid and blood sugar are checked. Once you know that you are physically well, why not try yoga before reaching for antidepressants? Yoga offers a holistic approach to depression, with the breathing exercises and asanas increasing your physical and spiritual well-being at the same time. Meditation and relaxation asanas, such as the Corpse Pose (see page 17), allow your sympathetic nervous system (aka your fight and flight response) to rest and heal. Specific asanas can help. Seated forward bends quieten your nervous system, while many inverted poses flood your brain with well-oxygenated blood, soothing and energizing your mind. Yoga teaches you to observe and understand yourself better, which will help you to let go of negative feelings. Increasingly, some doctors are prescribing yoga for their depressed patients as a completely healthy way of regaining their zest for life.

GODDESS POSE

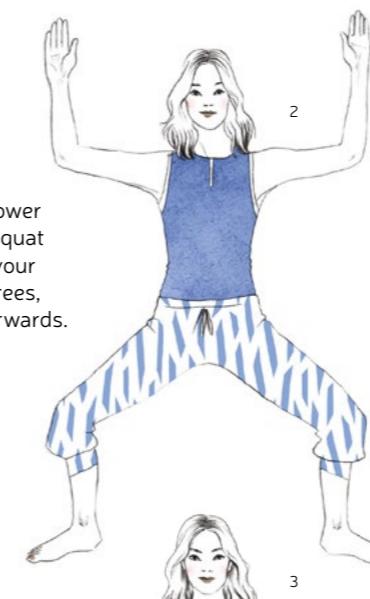
1

The Goddess Pose stimulates the urogenital, respiratory and cardiovascular systems.

- Opens hips & groin
- Strengthens thighs
- Increases overall body strength



1 Stand in Mountain Pose. Bring your legs wide apart, and turn your toes out as far as is comfortable. Inhale and raise your arms to shoulder height, palms facing down.



2 Exhale and lower yourself into a squat position. Bend your arms to 90 degrees, palms facing forwards.



3 Keep your knees pulled back, to prevent injury. Your hips will open as you lengthen your spine. If you need to rest your arms, bring your palms together in prayer position. Hold this position for 20–30 seconds. Repeat twice more.

EAGLE POSE

2

This pose increases circulation to the joints and helps develop your sense of balance.

- Strengthens ankles & wrists
- Stretches mid back
- Improves balance & concentration
- Promotes calmness



Fix gaze on a spot directly in front of you



2 Place your hands on your hips, bend your knees slightly and move your body weight to your left foot. Cross your right thigh over your left and, if possible, hook the top of your right foot behind your left calf. Hold your balance and breathe calmly.



Wrap right foot & toes around left calf

3 Extend your arms out parallel to the ground, then bring your right arm under the left, crossing at the elbow. If you can, press your palms together in front of your face. Keep your shoulder blades down and evenly positioned. Hold for five complete breathes. Exit the pose and repeat on the other side. Repeat twice more on both sides.

STANDING FORWARD BEND

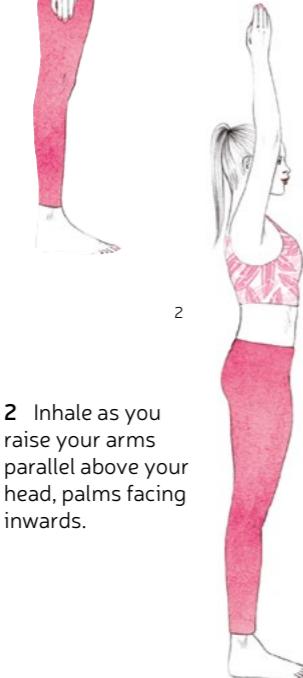
3

Like all forward stretches, this one will help with bloating and gas.

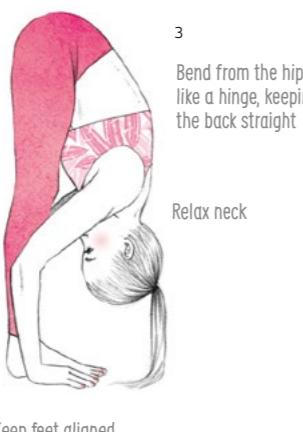


- 1 Stand in Mountain Pose, with your feet just slightly apart.

- Strengthens back muscles
- Stretches hamstrings
- Tones digestive organs
- Can relieve headaches



- 2 Inhale as you raise your arms parallel above your head, palms facing inwards.



- 3 Exhale as you fold forward from the hips. Keeping the knees straight, run your hands down your legs as far as they will go. If you can reach the floor, place them palms down by your feet. If you can't reach the floor, grasp your shins, ankles or feet, and gently bring your nose as close to your knees as is comfortable. Hold for a count of 15, breathing in position. To exit the pose, place hands on hips, and slowly raise your upper body to standing position as you exhale. Repeat twice more.

DAY

26

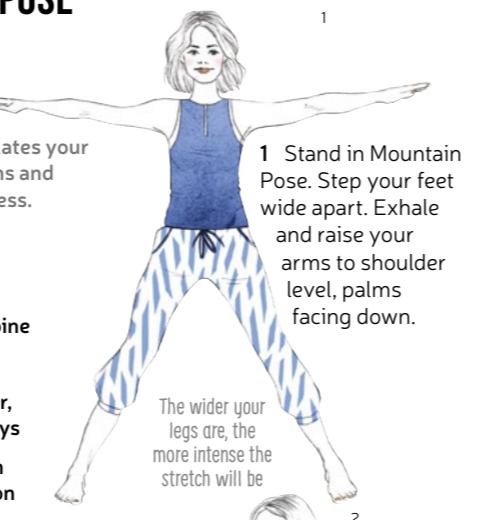
158

TRIANGLE POSE

4

This pose stimulates your abdominal organs and helps relieve stress.

- Elongates & strengthens spine
- Tones legs
- Stimulates liver, spleen & kidneys
- Builds strength & determination



- 1 Stand in Mountain Pose. Step your feet wide apart. Exhale and raise your arms to shoulder level, palms facing down.

The wider your legs are, the more intense the stretch will be



- 2 Turn your right foot and leg out to the side to 90 degrees. Turn your left foot slightly towards right heel.



- 3 Place your left hand on your hip. Exhale as you slide your right arm down your right leg as far as it will go without straining. Keep your chest open.



- 4 Extend your left arm close to your ear, keeping your elbow straight. Look straight ahead. Hold for a count of 20, breathing in position. Repeat on the other side. Repeat twice more on both sides.

Rest your hand on your shin, ankle or the floor, but don't lean on, or put pressure on your knee

EXTENDED HALF TWIST

5

Twists massage your digestive organs, restricting and then refreshing blood flow to them. This helps you to excrete waste while boosting your immune system.

- Stimulates internal organs
- Promotes sleep
- Opens shoulders & chest
- Aligns the spine



1

Leg straight



2

- 1 Begin in the staff pose with legs extended in front of you. Draw your right leg up and place the sole against your left thigh.



2

- 2 Grasp your left ankle and pull your knee up towards your body.



3

- 3 Place the left foot over right knee with sole resting flat on the floor.



At first, you may prefer not to try to grasp your waist, but just hold the twist with your left hand on the floor behind you.



4

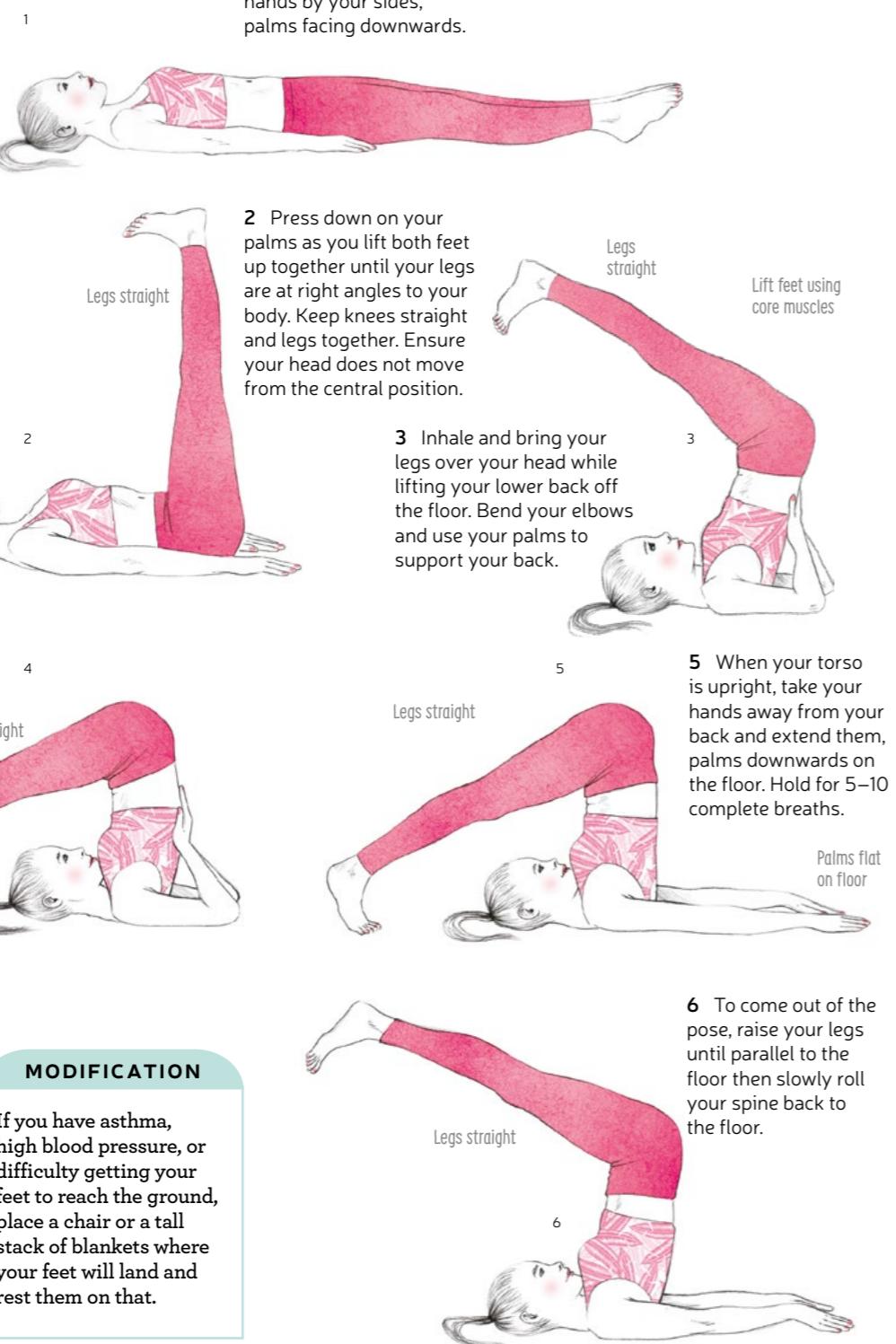
- 5 Bring your right arm over your left leg and take a firm hold on the right knee.

DAY

26

159

PLough POSE



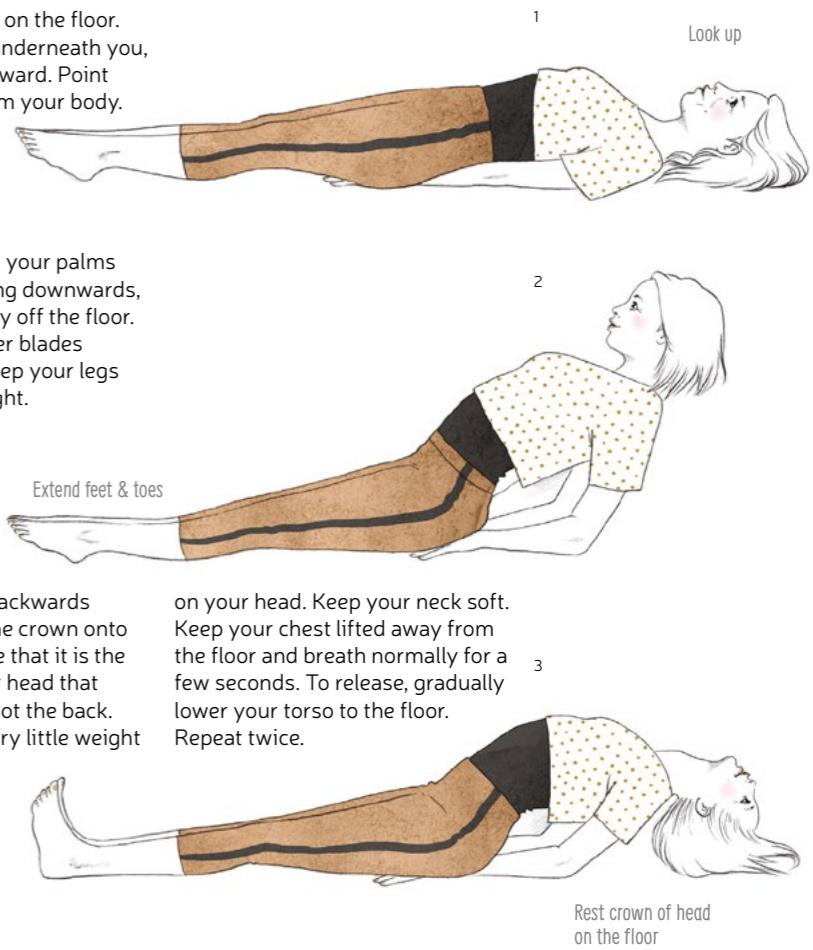
1 Lie flat on your back, hands by your sides, palms facing downwards.

6
The Plough Pose, or *Halasana*, is named for the way the body resembles an old-fashioned plough when in the full position.

- Stretches neck, shoulders & back
- Promotes sleep
- Improves digestion
- Stimulates thyroid & abdominal organs
- Relieves menopausal symptoms

FISH POSE

1 Lie on your back on the floor. Bring your hands underneath you, palms facing downward. Point your toes away from your body.



- Strengthens neck & back
- Relieves tension in neck & shoulders
- Relieves respiratory disorders
- Tones the thyroid, pituitary & pineal glands
- Improves digestion

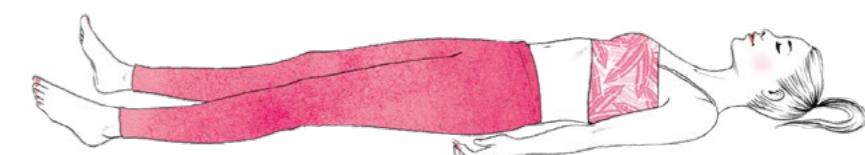
This pose is not recommended if you have high blood pressure. It is also contraindicated if you have neck or lower back pain or injury.

body. Use your breath as your focus to clear your mind and keep yourself present. Rest for 5–10 minutes.

CORPSE POSE

8 Set aside 5–10 minutes at the end of the session to enjoy the complete relaxation of the Corpse Pose.

- Relaxes mind & body after physical exertion
- Promotes deep relaxation
- Reduces fatigue



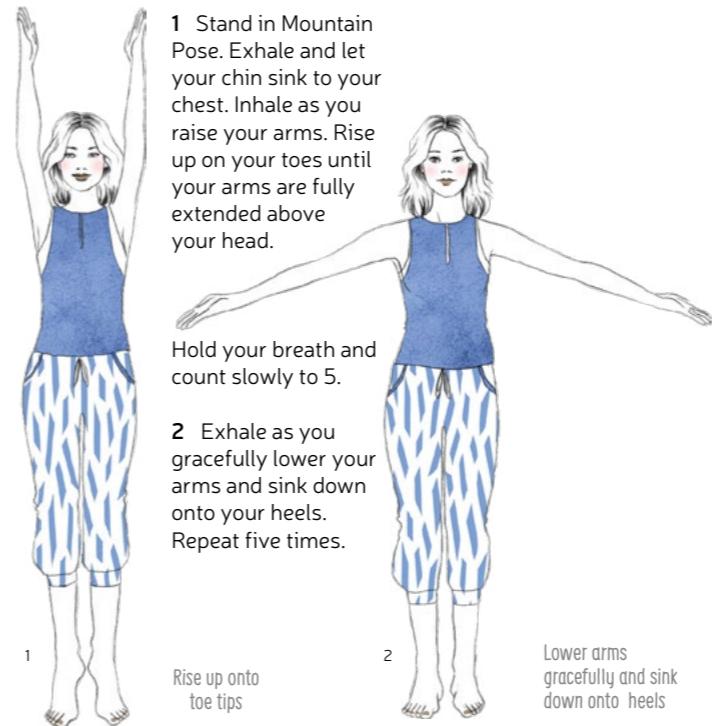
Headaches

We all suffer from headaches from time to time, but for many people they are frequent and painful enough to interfere with their daily lives. Experts divide headaches into many categories, although they disagree about the types and causes. We believe that the vast majority can be divided into two main types: tension headaches and migraines. Regular yoga practise will help you to deal with both. The asanas and breathing techniques in this book are designed to relieve pent-up tension, and this will certainly help if you suffer from tension headaches. More than two-thirds of regular migraine sufferers are women and experts believe that fluctuating hormone levels are often the cause. Yoga helps in this case by stabilising hormone levels. Certain poses can help in a more direct way. Try the Child's Pose (see page 65), but place a bolster or two pillows in front of you to rest your head on. The Seated Forwards Bend (see page 10) is also good, but use a bolster to rest your head. The Corpse Pose (see page 17) often helps with stress headaches.

COMPLETE BREATH STANDING

1 You can practise this energising warm-up pose at any time of the day.

- Increases energy & focus
- Strengthens spine
- Tones arms & upper body
- Improves balance & posture



STANDING HALF LOTUS

3 The Standing Half Lotus strengthens your core, especially the oblique muscles in your abs.

- Improves balance
- Increases flexibility in hips, knees & ankles
- Regulates nervous & lymphatic systems

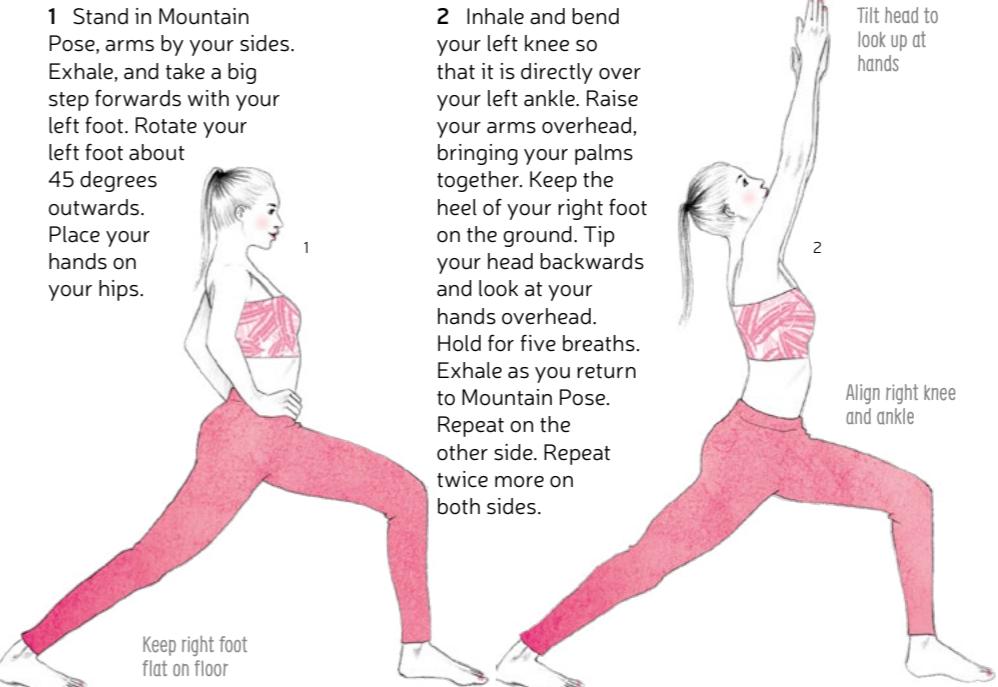
2 Move your body weight to your left foot. Bend your right knee, raise your right foot and use your left hand to gently position your foot as far up your left thigh as is comfortable.



WARRIOR I

2 This standing forward lunge will strengthen your legs and open your chest and heart.

- Strengthens the legs, especially thighs
- Strengthens spine
- Stabilises hips, knees & ankles
- Increases lung capacity



CHEST OPENER

4 This bend strengthens the spine and hamstrings.

- Tones & firms arms
- Tones & firms bust
- Relieves tension in neck & shoulders
- Realigns spine

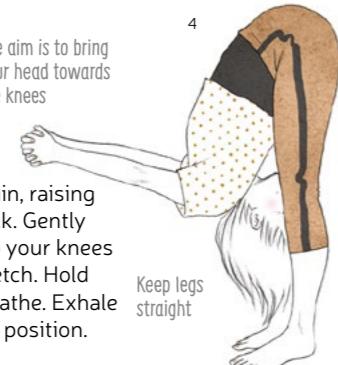
1 Stand in Mountain Pose, feet slightly apart. Interlock your fingers behind your back. Arch backwards and hold for a count of 10, breathing in position.

2 Gently bend forwards, raising your arms behind your back. Hold for a count of 20 as you breathe. Exhale as you return to an upright position.

3 Raise your arms to shoulder height, and interlock your fingers behind your back. Arch backwards again as far as is comfortable for you. Hold for a count of 5, breathing in position.

The aim is to bring your head towards the knees

4 Now bend forwards again, raising your arms behind your back. Gently press your nose as close to your knees as you can. Do not overstretch. Hold for a count of 15 as you breathe. Exhale as you return to an upright position. Repeat twice more.

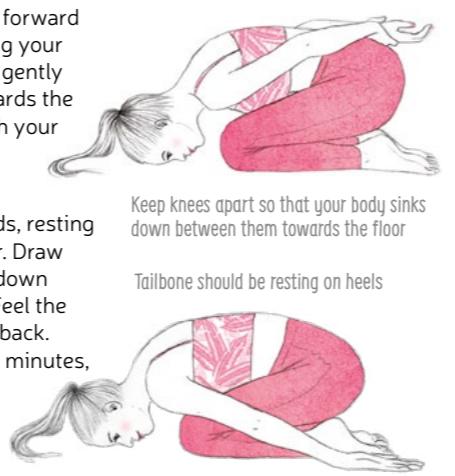


CHILD'S POSE

5 The Child's Pose is a gentle, restorative pose.

- Relieves fatigue
- Relaxes neck & shoulders
- Stimulates digestion
- Stretches lower back

2 Exhale as you fold forward from the hips, bringing your head and chest down gently as far as you can towards the floor. If possible, touch your forehead on the floor.



Tailbone should be resting on heels

3 Unclasp your hands, resting the backs on the floor. Draw your tailbone gently down towards your heels. Feel the stretch in your lower back. Hold the pose for 1–2 minutes, breathing in position.



DOLPHIN POSE

7 This pose strengthens your arms and legs and helps regulate digestion.

- Strengthens shoulders & mid & upper back
- Tones abs
- Elongates spine
- Relieves stress
- Relieves menstrual & menopausal symptoms

1 Kneel on the floor, big toes touching. Sink back onto your heels, with knees hip-width apart and spine straight. Clasp one wrist with one hand.



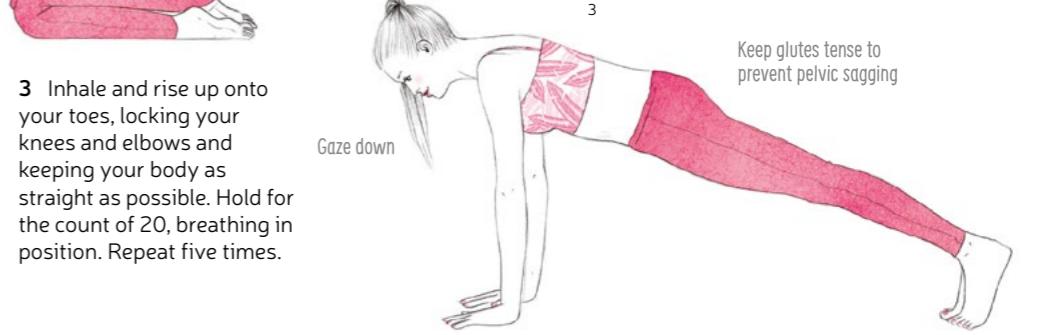
1 Begin in a kneeling position, legs slightly apart and with sitting bones resting on heels. Rest your hands on your thighs.

PLANK POSE

6 This pose tones all the core muscles, as well as your arms and legs.

- Strengthens arms, shoulders, back & legs
- Tones abdominal muscles & glutes

3 Inhale and rise up onto your toes, locking your knees and elbows and keeping your body as straight as possible. Hold for the count of 20, breathing in position. Repeat five times.



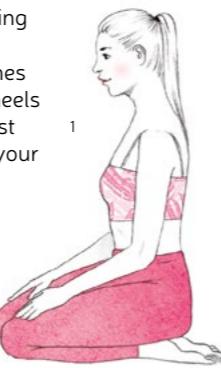
SUPPORTED HEAD STAND

8

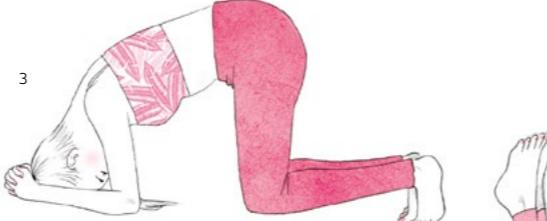
The Supported Headstand, or *Salamba Shirshasana*, provides all the benefits of the full headstand but with less stress on the head and neck since most of the body weight is borne by the arms and shoulders.

- Strengthens neck, arms, shoulders, abs & back
- Increases energy
- Improves circulation
- Builds resistance to illness
- Improves balance

1 Sit in a kneeling position with your sitting bones resting on the heels of your feet. Rest your hands on your thighs.



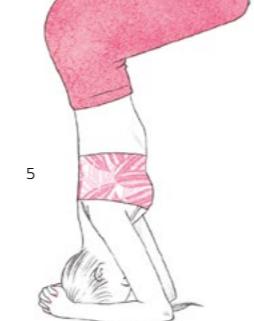
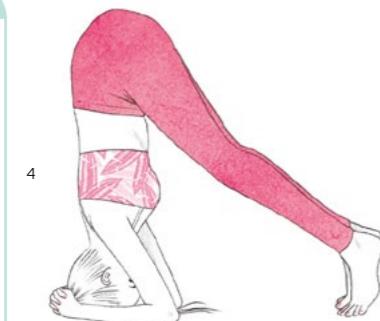
2 Fingers loosely interlaced.
Lean forward and place your forearms on the floor in front of you while keeping your elbows about shoulder distance apart. Loosely interlace your fingers.



3 Place the top of your head flat on the floor with the back of the head pressed against the inside of your interlaced fingers.



After you have practised a few times, you will be able to lift both legs at the same time



4 Inhale and lift your knees off the floor. Leave your forearms on the floor. Pause for a few breaths, then lift your heels off the floor and slowly walk your feet towards your head. If you feel uncertain about the pose, this is a good place to stop. Hold the pose for 5 complete breaths, then lower yourself to your knees and rest for a few breaths.

5 If you feel confident enough to continue, do this: When your hips are above your shoulders, bend one knee and draw it in towards your chest. The other leg will naturally follow suit. If you don't feel strong or balanced enough to raise your legs, stay in this position for 5 breaths, then return to a kneeling position.

6 To complete the pose: Slowly straighten your legs one at a time above your head. Breath in the full position and align your body as though you were making an upside-down Mountain Pose. Hold the pose for 5 complete breaths. To exit the pose, exhale and slowly bring your legs to the floor with as much control as you can manage. Fold into the Child's Pose and rest for a few breaths.

MODIFICATIONS

This is an advanced position and you should only attempt it if you feel ready for it.

You may like to begin by doing the headstand in the corner of a room. Don't lean against the walls, just use them to provide a sense of security.

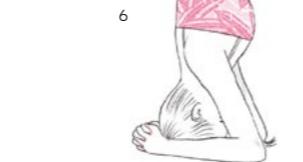
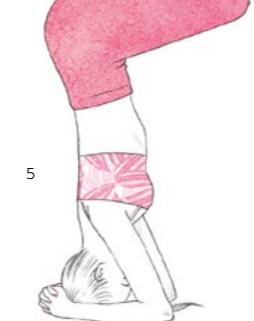
Place a thinly folded blanket or yoga mat under your head if you feel you need some padding. Don't use a cushion.

If you reach a point where you are not comfortable to go any further, then continue to practice up to this point, until you are ready to develop the pose.

4



5



6



NECK STRETCH

9

This gentle stretch releases tension in the neck and shoulders. Remember never to roll your head in a full circle, as this can compress delicate cervical nerves.



1 Sit on the floor, legs drawn up in the Lotus or Half Lotus position, or simply crossed. Keep the spine straight and drop your head forwards so that your chin is resting on your chest.



- Releases tension in neck & shoulders
- Relieves headaches
- Promotes relaxation

3 Roll your chin to your chest again and take your left ear to your left shoulder. Repeat 3–5 times.



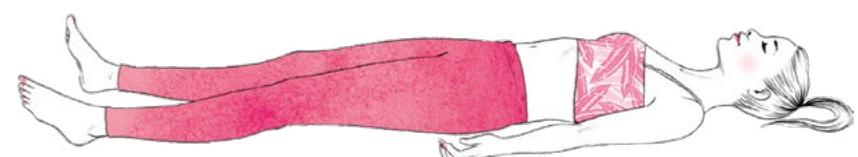
2 Roll your head to the right, taking your right ear down towards your right shoulder.

4 Drop your chin to your chest and then lift your head, to release tension from your neck. Repeat 3–5 times.

CORPSE POSE

10

Set aside 5–10 minutes at the end of the session to enjoy the complete relaxation of the Corpse Pose.



1 Lie on your back with your arms at your sides, palms up. Let your feet drop open. Close your eyes. Starting from the soles of your feet, scan up to the crown

of your head, releasing tension in your joints and muscles along the way. Invite peace into your mind and body. Use your breath as your focus to clear

your mind and keep yourself present. Rest for 5–10 minutes.

Catch-up 4

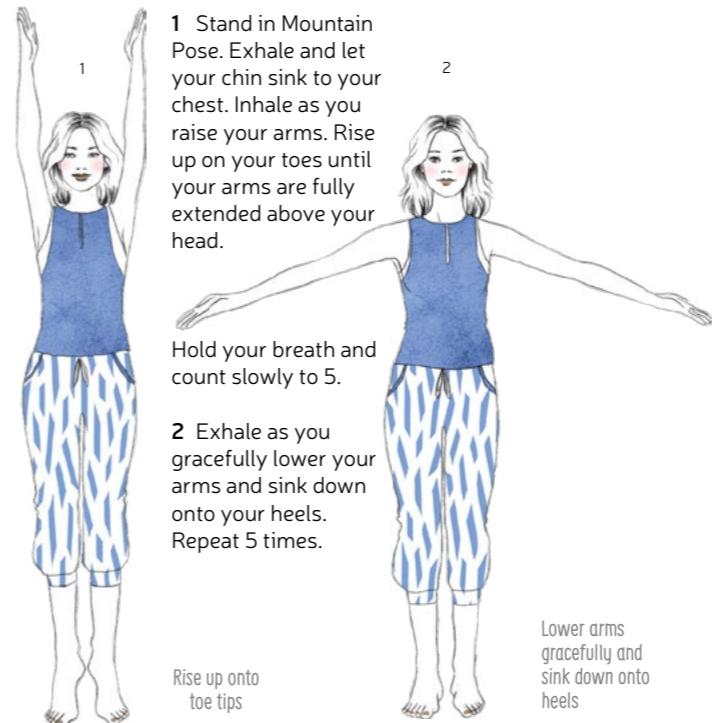
**DAY
28**

You have now learned 49 classic yoga poses, and today we will run through 16 of them. You may have noticed that while most of the asanas leave you feeling calm and energised, one or two may not. Not everyone feels this, but a pose that works well for you may be unsettling for someone else. If you do think that some poses don't work for you, there is an explanation to be found in Ayurveda, the medicine of ancient India. Like yoga, Ayurveda derives from the ancient Sanskrit texts known as the *Vedas*, and the two paths are closely related. Just as modern medical science has recently discovered that we all respond differently to treatments, and that to be most effective they need to be tailored for each individual, the ancient Indians knew that we each have our own unique balance of energy. Now that you have a basic proficiency in yoga, listen to your body as you practise each asana, and find what works best for you.

COMPLETE BREATH STANDING

As usual we begin our catch-up with this basic warm-up asana.

- Increases energy & focus
- Strengthens spine
- Tones arms & upper body
- Improves balance & posture



SIDE BEND

This gentle hip stretch is perfect for firming up your waistline and hips.

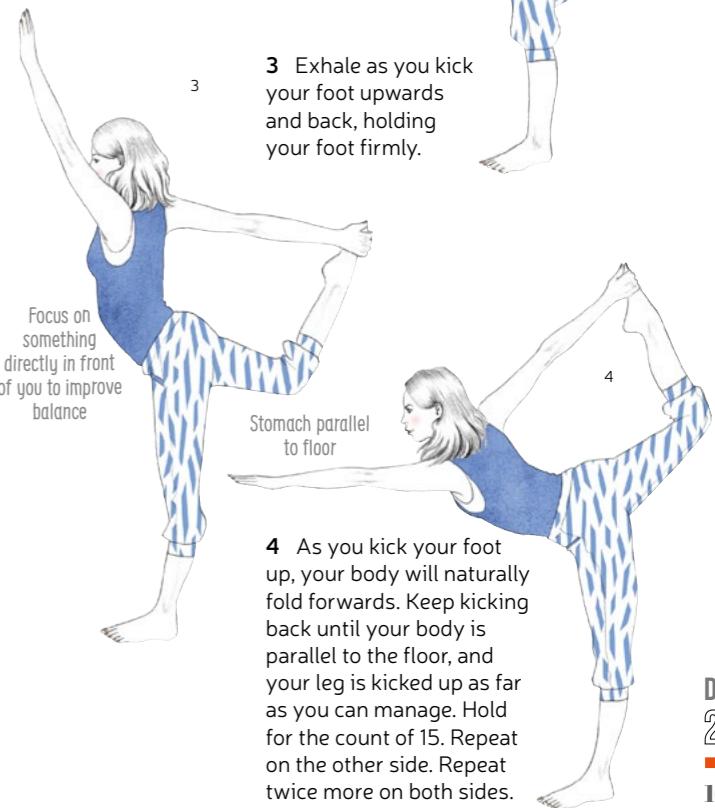
- Lengthens spine
- Targets "love handles"
- Tones arms



STANDING BOW POSE

This pose strengthens the thighs, arms and hips, and increases the flexibility and strength of the lower spine.

- Improves circulation to heart & lungs
- Increases elasticity of spine
- Activates digestive system
- Improves balance & focus

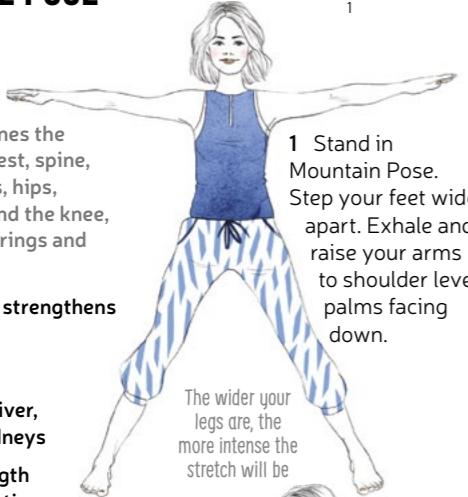


TRIANGLE POSE

4

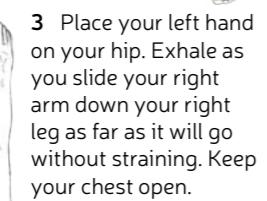
This asana tones the shoulders, chest, spine, groin muscles, hips, muscles around the knee, calves, hamstrings and ankle joints.

- Elongates & strengthens spine
- Tones legs
- Stimulates liver, spleen & kidneys
- Builds strength & determination



3

2 Turn your right foot and leg out to the side to 90 degrees. Turn your left foot slightly towards right heel.



4 Stretch your left arm up in line with your right shoulder. Turn your head to look up at your hand raised above your head. Hold for a count of 20, breathing in position. Repeat on the other side. Repeat twice more on both sides.

Rest your hand on your shin, ankle or the floor, but don't lean on, or put pressure on your knee

DAY

20

170

TREE POSE

5

The Tree Pose improves balance and overall strength.

- Improves concentration & balance
- Reduces stress
- Strengthens ankles, calves, thighs & hips
- Improves overall body strength



1 Stand in Mountain Pose. Inhale and raise your right knee to your chest, clasping it with your hands. Focus on an object in front of you to help keep your balance.



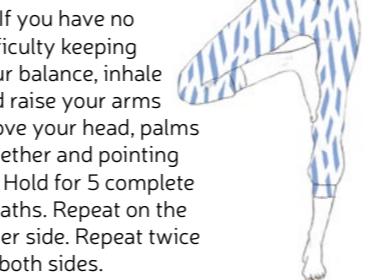
Firmly press foot against leg

2 Use your right hand to place the sole of your right foot on your left inner thigh. If this is too difficult, place it on your inner calf or ankle. Avoid placing it on the inner knee. Raise your arms.



3 Bring your hands together in front of your chest in the *anjali mudra* (prayer pose). Hold for several complete breaths. If you have difficulty keeping your balance, stop here. Repeat on the other side, then repeat all steps twice.

Keep standing leg straight & firm



4 If you have no difficulty keeping your balance, inhale and raise your arms above your head, palms together and pointing up. Hold for 5 complete breaths. Repeat on the other side. Repeat twice on both sides.

STANDING FORWARD BEND

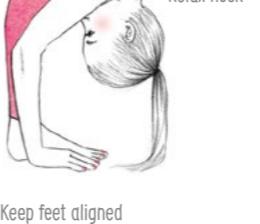
6

We return to this intensive stretch which will help keep your spine strong and flexible.

- Strengthens back muscles
- Stretches hamstrings
- Tones digestive organs
- Can relieve headaches



1 Stand in Mountain Pose, with your feet just slightly apart.



2 Inhale as you raise your arms parallel above your head, palms facing inwards.

3 Exhale as you fold forward from the hips. Keeping the knees straight, run your hands down your legs as far as they will go. If you can reach the floor, place them palms down by your feet. If you can't reach the floor, grasp your shins, ankles or feet, and gently bring your nose as close to your knees as is comfortable. Hold for a count of 10, breathing in position. To exit the pose, place hands on hips, and slowly raise your upper body to standing position as you exhale. Repeat three times.

Keep feet aligned



Relax neck

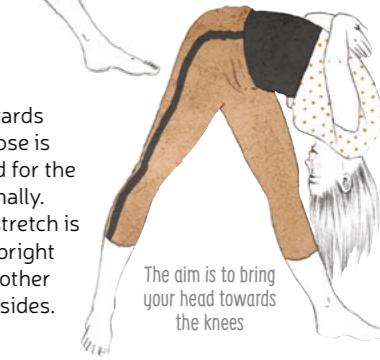
INTENSE SIDE STRETCH

7

This pose strengthens the legs, improves balance, and stimulates the abdominal organs, which can assist with digestion.



1 Stand in Mountain Pose, feet wide apart. Raise your arms to shoulder level. Press your hands together behind your back, fingers facing upwards. Turn to the right, with your right foot and leg turned out to the side at about 90 degrees. Look up, creating an arch in your back.



The aim is to bring your head towards the knees

DAY

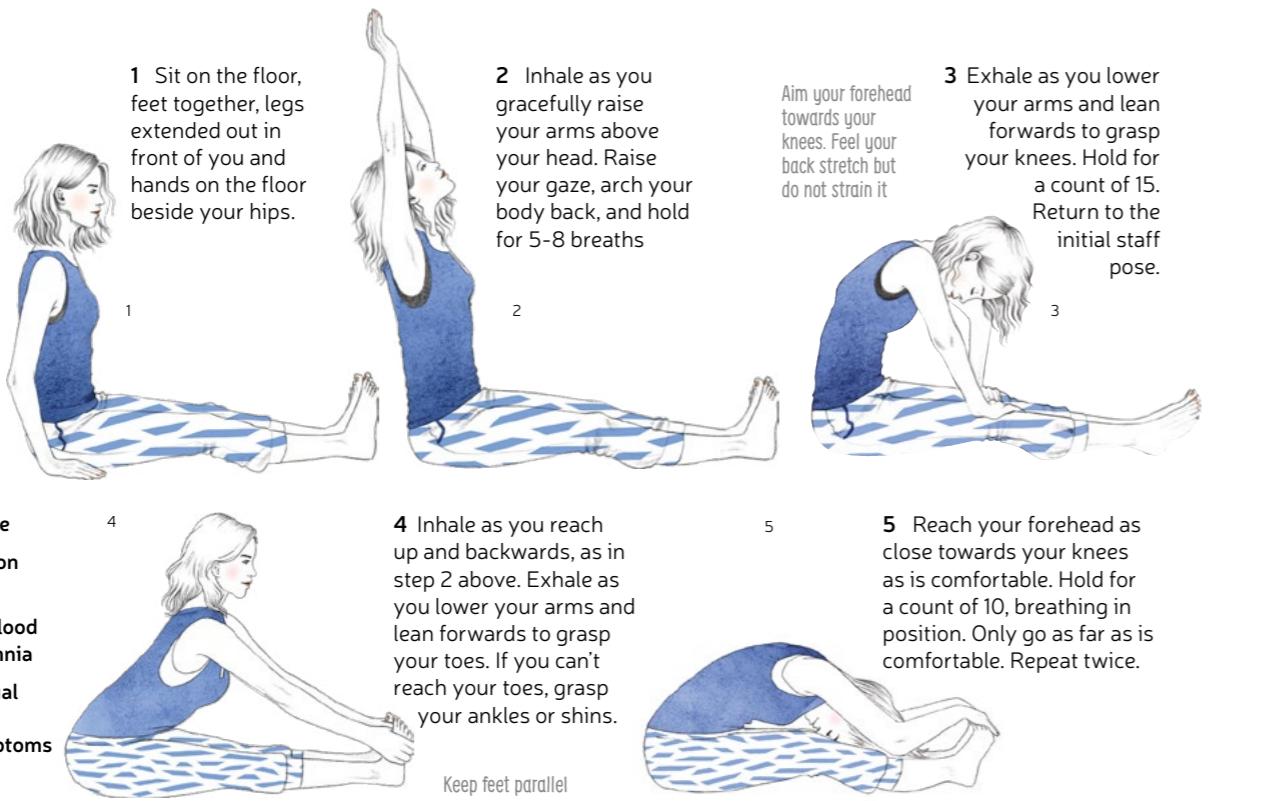
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171

SEATED FORWARD BEND

8

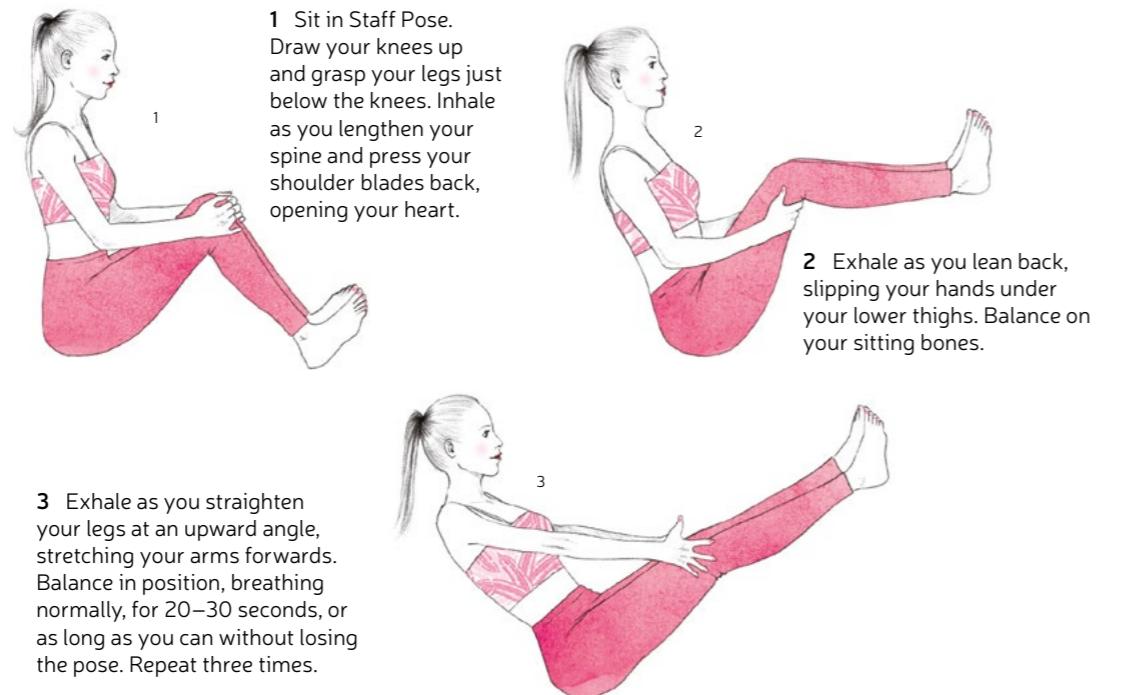
This classic stretch is therapeutic for high blood pressure, infertility, insomnia and sinusitis.



BOAT POSE

9

This pose stimulates the kidneys, thyroid and intestines, and helps relieve stress.

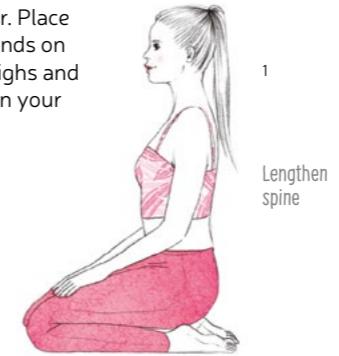


PLANK POSE

10

The Plank Pose tones core muscles, as well as arms, back and buttocks.

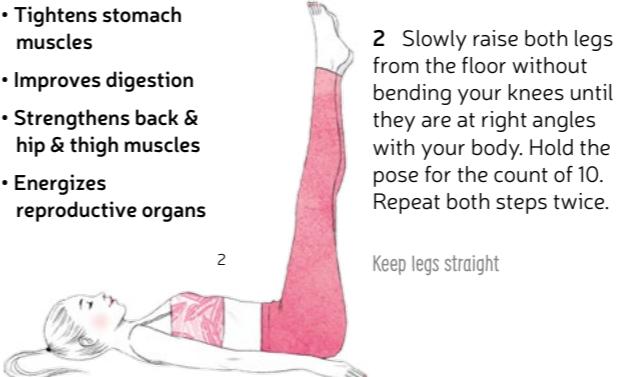
- Strengthens arms, shoulders, back & legs
- Tones abdominal muscles & glutes



RAISED LEG POSE

11

This pose tones your abs and strengthens your back, hips and thighs.

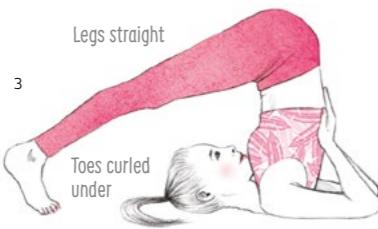
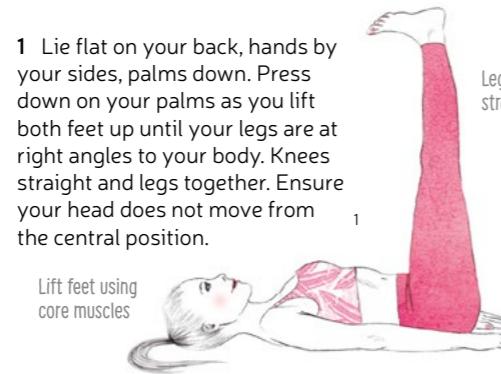


PLough POSE

This pose reduces stress and fatigue and helps relieve backache, headache, insomnia and sinusitis.

13

- Stretches neck, shoulders & back
- Promotes sleep
- Improves digestion
- Stimulates thyroid & abdominal organs
- Relieves menopausal symptoms



3 Exhale as you lower your legs over your head. Keep your legs straight and lift your upper back off the floor. Curl your toes under as they touch the floor.



4 When your torso is upright, take your hands away from your back and extend them, palms downwards on the floor. Hold for 5–10 complete breaths.

To come out of the pose, raise your legs until parallel to the floor then slowly roll your spine back to the floor.

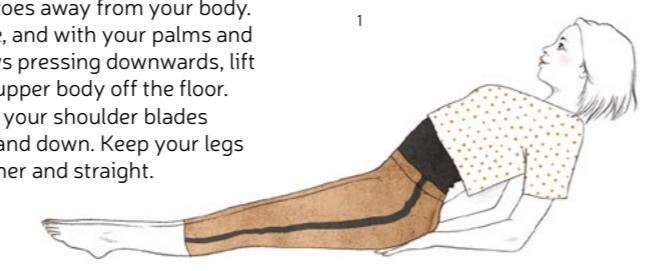
FISH POSE

The Fish Pose relieves anxiety, fatigue, mild backache, constipation and menstrual pain.

14

- Strengthens neck & back
- Relieves tension in neck & shoulders
- Relieves respiratory disorders
- Tones the thyroid, pituitary & pineal glands
- Improves digestion

1 Lie on your back on the floor. Bring your hands underneath you, palms facing downward. Point your toes away from your body. Inhale, and with your palms and elbows pressing downwards, lift your upper body off the floor. Press your shoulder blades back and down. Keep your legs together and straight.



2 Tilt your head backwards and gently lower the crown onto the floor. Make sure that it is the crown (top) of your head that touches the floor, not the back. There should be very little weight on your head. Keep your neck soft. Keep your chest lifted away from the floor and breath normally for a few seconds. To release, gradually lower your torso to the floor. Repeat twice.



DAY

20

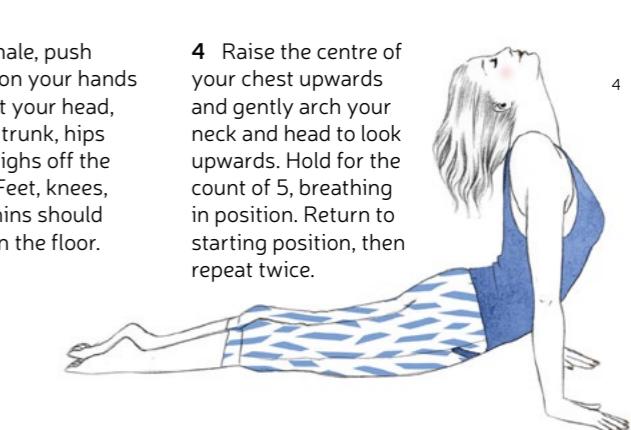
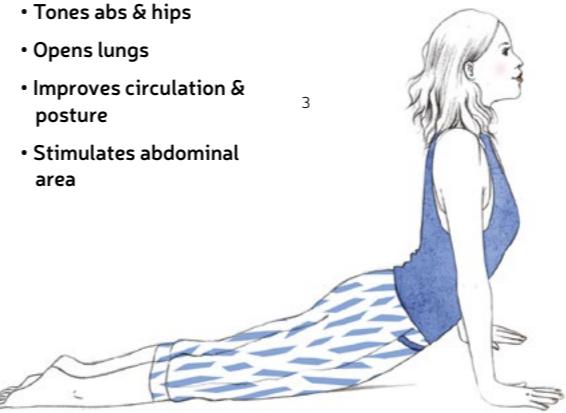
174

UPWARD FACING DOG POSE

The Upward Facing Dog Pose is a powerful back stretch. Today we take it to the full position.

15

- Strengthens spine, torso & arms
- Tones abs & hips
- Opens lungs
- Improves circulation & posture
- Stimulates abdominal area



3 Exhale, push down on your hands and lift your head, chest, trunk, hips and thighs off the floor. Feet, knees, and shins should stay on the floor.

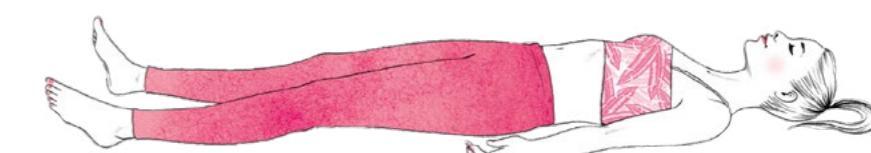
1 Lie on your stomach on the floor, head turned to one side.

2 Turn your head to the front. Inhale and place the palms of your hands on the floor just below shoulder level. Inhale and bring your shoulders towards your ears. Lift your shoulders up and press your shoulder blades inwards towards each other.

CORPSE POSE

Set aside 5–10 minutes at the end of the session to enjoy the complete relaxation of the Corpse Pose.

- Relaxes mind & body after physical exertion
- Promotes deep relaxation
- Reduces fatigue



body. Use your breath as your focus to clear your mind and keep yourself present. Rest for 5–10 minutes.

DAY

20

175

Sun salutation

DAY
29

After our demanding catch-up session yesterday, today we will begin with some gentle stretching and breathing. We will then move on to learn the Sun Salutation, or *Surya Namaskara*. There are several versions of the Sun Salutation but we will focus on the classic sequence which comprises gentle backbends and lunges as well as asanas that you now know well, such as Mountain Pose, Plank Pose, Downward-Facing Dog and Standing Forward Bend. The flow of poses can be performed more or less slowly, and the sequence makes a wonderful warm-up before you begin a session, or can be repeated as many times as you like as a routine in itself. The origins of the Sun Salutation are believed to be very ancient and may be derived from a form of early sun worship. Traditionally, *Surya Namaskara* is performed while facing the rising sun.

LOTUS POSE

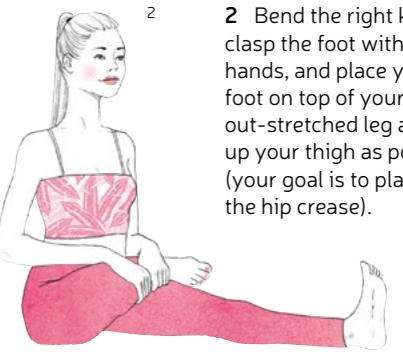
1

We return to the full Lotus Pose. If your hips and thighs are still not flexible enough, don't worry. Sit in the Half Lotus pose, or whatever variation is comfortable for you.

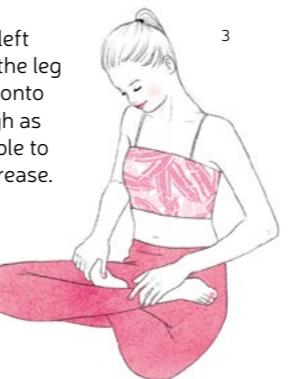
- Builds flexibility in hips, knees & ankles
- Strengthens spine & abs
- Improves posture
- Increases energy



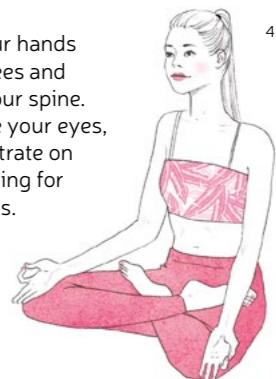
1 Sit in the Staff Pose, lengthening your spine from the tailbone through to the top of your head.



2 Bend the right knee, clasp the foot with both hands, and place your foot on top of your still out-stretched leg as far up your thigh as possible (your goal is to place it in the hip crease).



3 Bend your left knee and pull the leg in, lifting it up onto your right thigh as close as possible to the right hip crease.



4 Rest your hands on your knees and lengthen your spine. Relax, close your eyes, and concentrate on your breathing for 2–3 minutes.

ALTERNATE-NOSTRIL BREATHING

2

Alternate-Nostril Breathing clears the nasal passages, increasing the flow of *prana*, or "life force" through the body.

- Relieves stress
- Enhances mental function
- Soothes nervous system
- Promotes calmness & sleep
- Boosts energy



In the *shuni mudra*, or "seal of patience," the thumb and second finger are lightly touching at the tips



1 Sit in the Lotus Pose, or in a simpler cross-legged position such as the Half Lotus. Place your hands on your knees in the *shuni mudra*, or seal of patience.

2 Exhale through your left nostril as you use your thumb to close your right nostril. Inhale slowly and deeply through the left nostril. Now use your ring and little finger to close your left nostril and slowly exhale through your right nostril. Inhale through the right nostril, then close it with your thumb. Exhale through the left nostril. This is one complete breathing cycle. Repeat 7 times.

DAY
29

SUN SALUTATION

3

The Sun Salutation, or *Surya Namaskara*, is a graceful sequence of linked asanas performed as one continuous exercise. It is important to link the physical movements with your breathing so try to follow the instructions for that here.

- Warms up body for further asanas
- Links body, breath and mind
- Builds grace and strength



1 Stand in Mountain Pose with your hands in the prayer position. Slowly exhale.

1

1



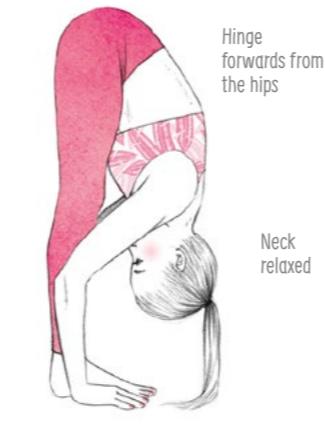
2 As you inhale, raise your arms up over your head. Arch your back gently from the waist, pushing your hips out.

2

3 As you exhale, fold forwards from the hips as in the Standing Forwards Bend. Run your hands down your legs to the floor. If you can't reach the floor, grasp your shins, ankles or feet, and gently bring your nose as close to your knees as is comfortable. Bend your knees a little, if necessary.

3

3



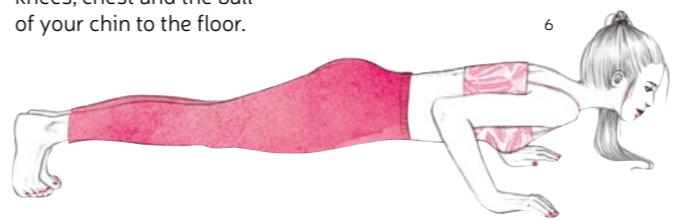
Hinge forwards from the hips
Neck relaxed



4

4 As you inhale, bend your left knee and take a long step backwards with your right leg. Sink your hips lower than your front knee. Open your chest and shoulders by pressing on your hands and left foot.

Forward lunge

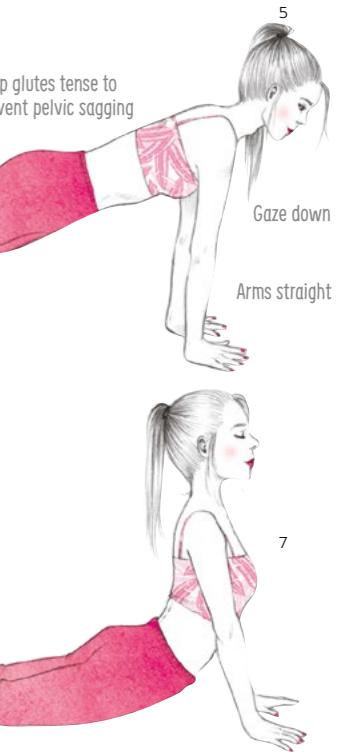


6

6

5 As you exhale, place your hands flat on the floor shoulder-width apart. Step the other leg back and support your weight on your hands and toes, as in the Plank Pose.

Legs straight



5

Gaze down

Arms straight

7

7 As you inhale, raise your chest forward and up as in the Cobra Pose. Keep your chest and shoulders open.



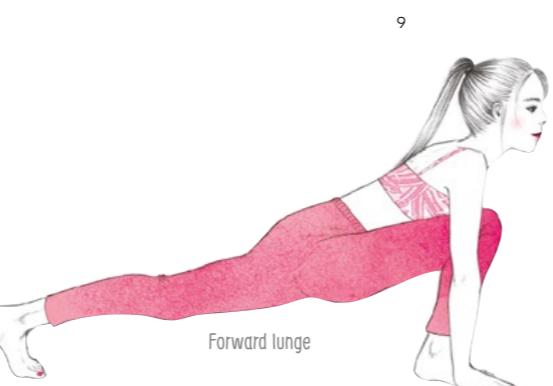
8

Back straight

Knees locked

Feet flat on floor

8 As you exhale, curl your toes under, raise your hips and move into an inverted "V" shape as in the Downwards Facing Dog Pose. Hold the pose for 5 complete breaths.

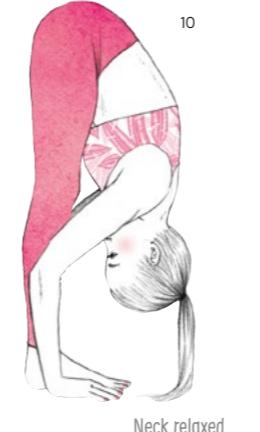


9

9 As you inhale, step your right foot forward between your hands. Open your chest and shoulders by pressing on your hands and right foot.

9

Forward lunge

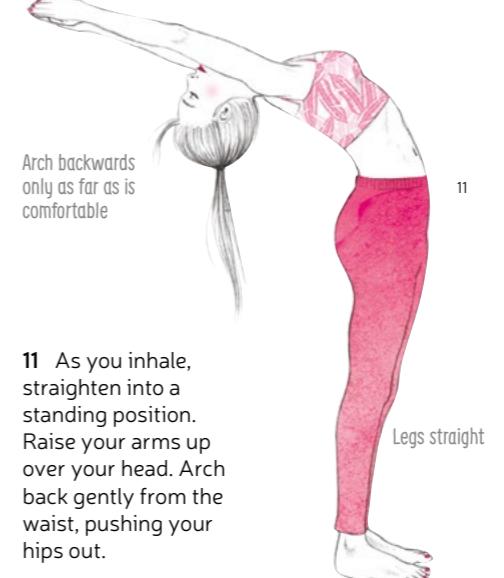


10

10 As you exhale, step your left foot forward and straighten your legs as far as possible. Fold into the Standing Forwards Bend again (as in step 3).

Arch backwards only as far as is comfortable

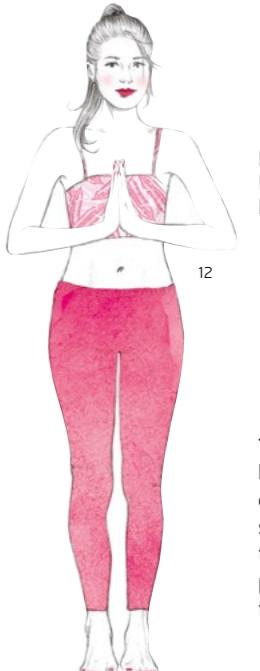
Neck relaxed



11

11 As you inhale, straighten into a standing position. Raise your arms up over your head. Arch back gently from the waist, pushing your hips out.

Legs straight



Return to Mountain Pose

12

12 As you exhale, bring your arms down by your sides, then fold them into the prayer position in front of your chest.

DAY 30

You made it!

Congratulations! You have reached the final day of our course. You now have an overview of the basic positions in hatha yoga and you are aware of how radically well the regular practise of yoga can make you feel. What next? We suggest that you try a few one-on-one lessons with a good teacher who can check your poses and make sure you are performing them as intended. Unless you practise in front of a large, floor-length mirror (not a bad idea if you have one), you won't always know if you are following our instructions perfectly. You could also reward yourself with a yoga holiday where you can immerse yourself from morning until night, and meet like-minded souls. A quick look online will show you that yoga retreats come in an incredible variety, from a weekend away close to home to a six-month stay in an ashram in India. At the back of this book you will find a series of routines that you can practise every day to stay happy and limber.

MOUNTAIN POSE

1

As we have seen, the Mountain Pose is the starting point of all the standing poses. Let's take time again today to focus on getting it right.

- Improves balance
- Tones legs
- Strengthens spine & abdominal muscles

1 Stand tall with your feet parallel, big toes together. Firm and lengthen your thigh muscles and let arms relax by your sides, palms facing inwards. Push into all four corners of your feet, distributing your weight evenly. Draw your shoulder blades back. Your head is lifted, your spine long, tail bone tucked under, chin parallel to the floor.

Focus on your breathing as you begin to inhale and exhale through your nose. Your stomach expands with each inhalation, and draws back in with each exhalation. Close your eyes and take 5–8 deep breaths.



2 2 Press your hands together in front of your chest in the Prayer Pose. Take 5–8 deep breaths.



3 Raise your arms directly above your head. Take 5–8 deep breaths.

WARRIOR II

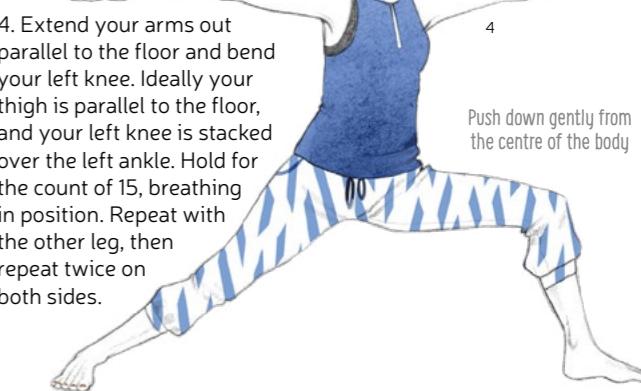
2

Warrior II is a gentle lunge that opens the chest, shoulders and hips and tones the legs.

- Strengthens hips
- Tones legs
- Opens & strengthens chest & shoulders
- Tones abs



3 Turn your left foot out 90 degrees. The heel of your left foot should line up with the arch of your right foot.



2. Step your feet widely apart. Place your hands on your hips.

EAGLE POSE

3

The Eagle Pose will strengthen your arms, legs, knees and ankles.

- Strengthens ankles & wrists
- Stretches mid back
- Improves balance & concentration
- Promotes calmness



Fix gaze on a spot directly in front of you

1 Stand in Mountain Pose, hands by your sides. Find a fixed point somewhere in front of you. Keep your gaze on this point throughout the exercise. This will help your balance.



2 Place your hands on your hips, bend your knees slightly and move your body weight to your left foot. Cross your right thigh over your left and, if possible, hook the top of your right foot behind your left calf. Hold your balance and breathe calmly.



Wrap right foot & toes around left calf

3 Extend your arms out parallel to the ground, then bring your right arm under the left, crossing at the elbow. If you can, press your palms together in front of your face. Keep your shoulder blades down and evenly positioned. Hold for five complete breathes. Exit the pose and repeat on the other side. Repeat twice more on both sides.

GARLAND POSE

This pose tones the abs and improves the function of the colon to help with elimination.

- Strengthens back & abs
- Improves balance
- Opens groin area
- Builds strength in ankles & feet



1 Start in Mountain Pose with your feet slightly wider than hip distance apart. Turn your toes out slightly so that they are a little wider than your heels.



2 Raise your arms so that they are parallel to the floor. Bend your knees deeply, sinking down slowly until your hips are lower than your knees, a few inches off the floor. Keep your heels flat on the floor.



3 Open your knees and press your elbows against them. Bring your palms together in front of your chest. Stay here for 30-60 seconds. To exit the pose, either sit back onto your buttocks, or push back up to standing.



4 Reach back and grasp your heels from behind. Press your body gently between your knees, leaning your forehead towards the floor. Don't strain or go any further than is comfortable. Hold for 3-5 complete breaths. Repeat twice.

4

EXTENDED HALF TWIST

This twist increases the blood supply to the pelvic region and improves the function of your reproductive organs.



1 Begin in the Staff Pose. Draw your right leg up and place the sole against your left thigh. Grasp your left ankle and pull your knee up towards your body.

Leg straight



3 Bring your right arm over your left leg and take a firm hold on your right knee.

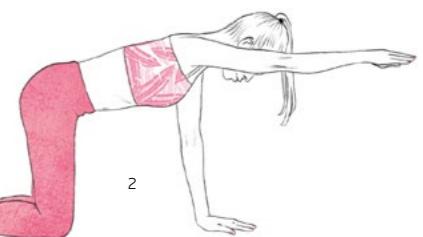
5

- Stimulates internal organs
- Promotes sleep
- Opens shoulders & chest
- Aligns the spine

2 Place the left foot over your right knee with the sole resting flat on the floor. Place your left hand on the floor behind you.



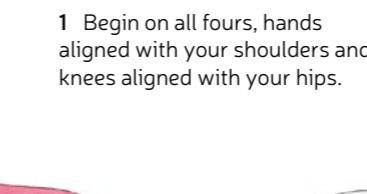
4 Gently twist your head and upper body as far left as possible without straining. If this feels comfortable, reach your left hand around your back and clasp the right side of your waist. Hold for 5 complete breaths. Repeat on the other side. Repeat twice more on both sides.



Keep gaze down

BALANCING CAT POSE

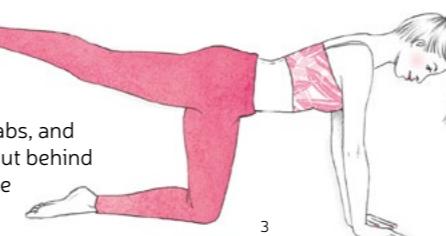
This pose creates a strong and flexible spine and teaches balance and focus.



1 Begin on all fours, hands aligned with your shoulders and knees aligned with your hips.

6

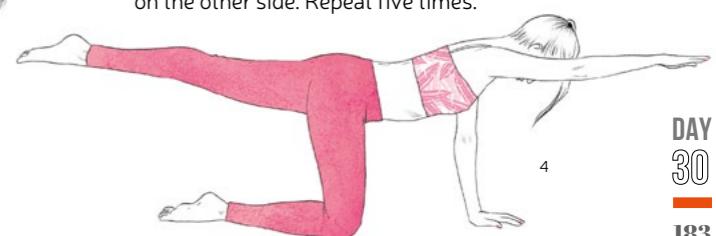
- Improves balance & coordination
- Lengthens spine
- Builds core strength



3 Inhale, pull in your abs, and extend your right leg out behind you, keeping your ankle aligned with your shoulders. Exhale and return your leg to the floor. Repeat with the left leg. Repeat 5 times with each leg. Return to starting position.

2 Inhale, pull in your abs and extend your right arm in front of you, palm downwards. Keep your shoulders level. Exhale as you return your arm to the floor. Repeat with the left arm. Repeat 5 times with each arm. Return to starting position.

4 Inhale, pull in your abs, and extend your left leg and right arm at the same time. Hold for a count of 5, then repeat on the other side. Repeat five times.



WHEEL POSE

7

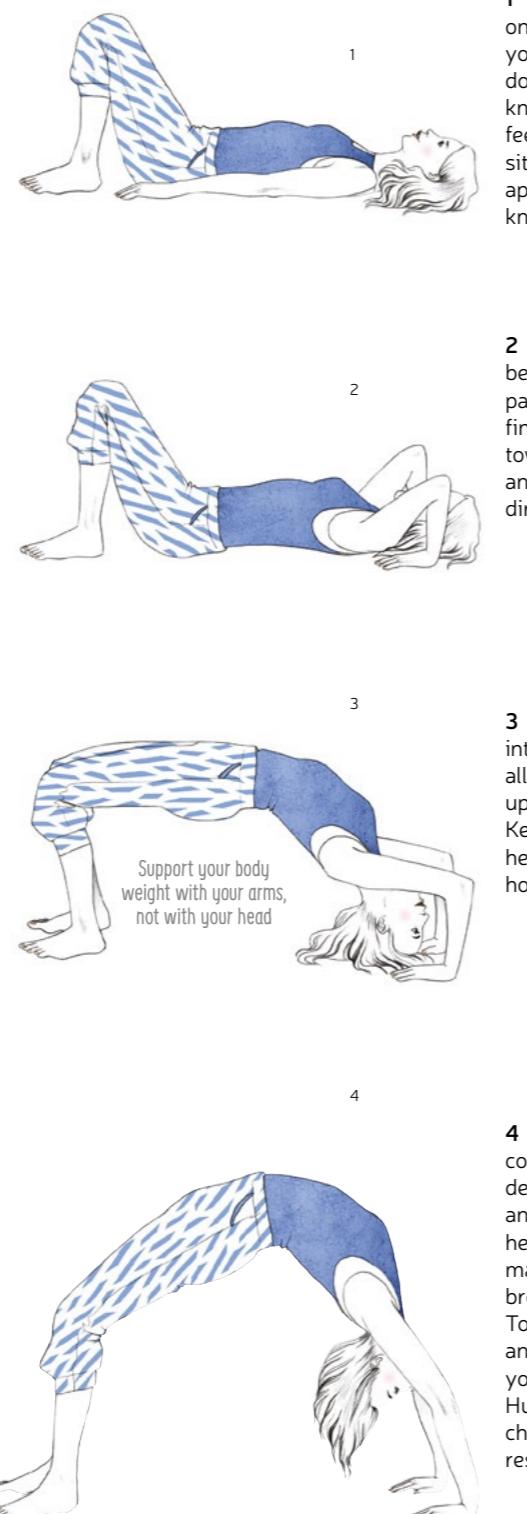
The Wheel, or *Urdva Dhanurasana*, is also known as the Upward Bow Pose. This is a full back bend with hands and feet supporting the body. If it feels too intense, start with the modified version set out below.

- Strengthens shoulders & mid & upper back
- Tones abs
- Elongates spine
- Relieves stress
- Relieves menstrual & menopausal symptoms

This pose is not recommended if you have shoulder, wrist or lower back pain or injury. It is also contraindicated for those with high blood pressure.

MODIFICATION

Place a soft bolster lengthwise down the centre of your yoga mat or towel. Lie on the bolster with your head resting on the floor at one end. Bend your knees and place your feet flat on the floor. Place your hands palms down by your ears with fingertips pointing towards your shoulders. Press firmly into your feet and lift your hips up and down a few times. Press some weight into your hands, inhaling as you lift your hips, and exhaling as you lower them. Repeat a few times. To exit the pose, roll onto your side and off the bolster, then sit up.



1 Lie flat on your back on the floor, hands along your sides, palms facing downwards. Bend your knees and bring your feet in towards your sitting bone, feet slightly apart, to protect the knees.

2 Place your hands beside your head, with palms facing down, fingertips pointing towards your shoulders, and elbows pointing directly upwards.

3 As you exhale, push into your palms and feet, allowing your body to lift up towards the ceiling. Keep the crown of your head on the floor, and hold for the count of 5.

4 If you feel comfortable to, push deeper into your palms and feet, allowing your head to lift from your mat. Hold this position, breathing comfortably. To exit, bend your arms and legs, and lower yourself to the ground. Hug your knees to your chest once you are resting on your back.

SUPPORTED SHOULDER STAND

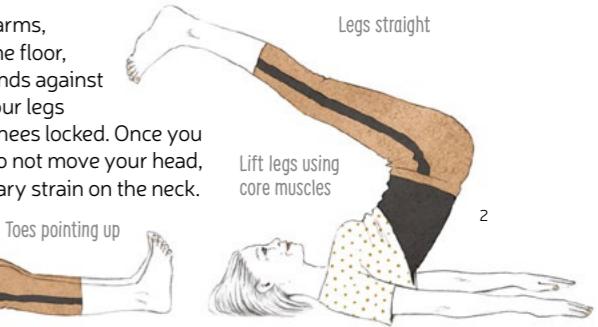
8

We return to the Supported Shoulder Stand. This pose is sometimes called the Queen of all poses, because it is both active and restorative.

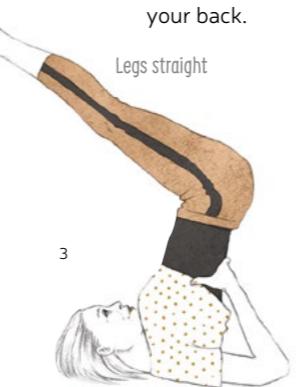
- Relieves stress & mild depression
- Stimulates thyroid
- Promotes sleep & youthfulness
- Improves digestion
- Benefits infertility, asthma & sinusitis
- Relieves menopausal symptoms

1 Lie flat on your back, hands by your sides, palms facing downwards.

2 Keeping your hands, arms, shoulders and head on the floor, inhale and press your hands against the floor as you swing your legs upwards, keeping your knees locked. Once you have lifted, ensure you do not move your head, as this will put unnecessary strain on the neck.



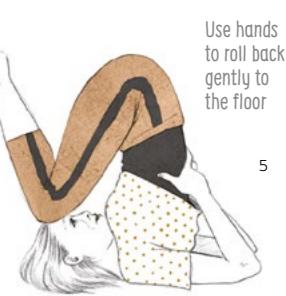
3 Bring your legs over your head while lifting your lower back off the floor. Place your palms on your lower back, thumbs out, to support your back.



4 With your weight on your shoulders and hands, bring your torso, hips and knees into alignment directly above you. Point toes up. Hold the full pose for the count of 20, breathing in position. If you feel comfortable and have no problems with balance, stay for up to 1 minute. Once lifted, you are welcome to slide your hands down onto the floor, palms facing down.



5 To come out of the pose, bend your knees and lower them slowly to touch your forehead. Remove your hands as you roll back gently onto the floor.



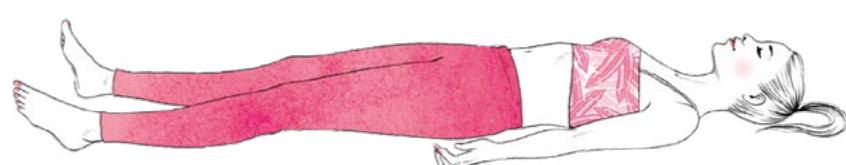
body. Use your breath as your focus to clear your mind and keep yourself present. Rest for 5–10 minutes.

CORPSE POSE

9

Set aside 5–10 minutes at the end of the session to enjoy the complete relaxation of the Corpse Pose.

- Relaxes mind & body after physical exertion
- Promotes deep relaxation
- Reduces fatigue

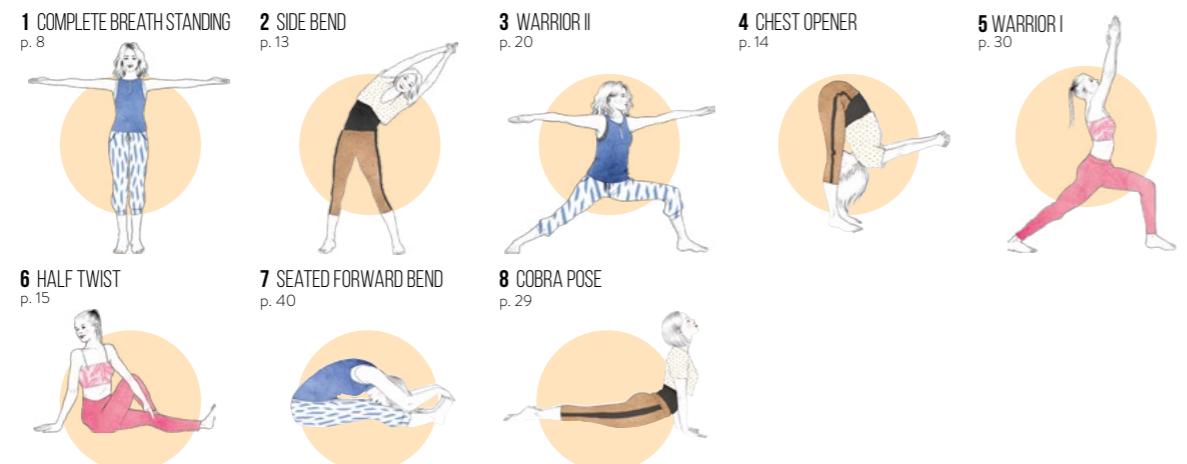


1 Lie on your back with your arms at your sides, palms up. Let your feet drop open. Close your eyes. Starting from the soles of your feet,

scan up to the crown of your head, releasing tension in your joints and muscles along the way. Invite peace into your mind and

10-MINUTE WAKE UP

Repeat Complete Breath Standing 5 times and all the other asanas once.



Routines

Now that you have finished the course we hope that you will keep up your yoga practise. Here we have suggested thirteen routines for various purposes, from a 10-minute morning warm-up to a 45-minute full on workout. We have

also included routines for specific health and body issues, such as insomnia, poor posture deriving from long hours in front of the computer, and tension release. Remember too that the Sun Salutation (see pages 176–177) makes an excellent short routine and that all of the daily practise sessions in the book can be used as routines.

15-MINUTE STANDING ROUTINE

Perform all the asanas once in a single flowing sequence.



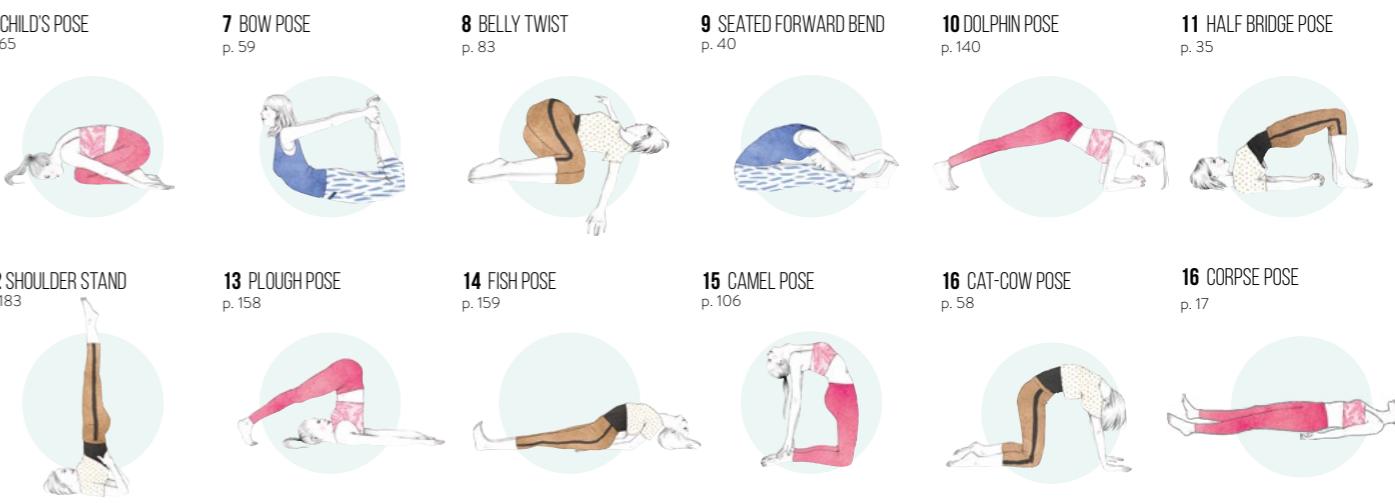
30-MINUTE ENERGISER

Perform all the asanas once, then relax in the Corpse Pose for 5–10 minutes.



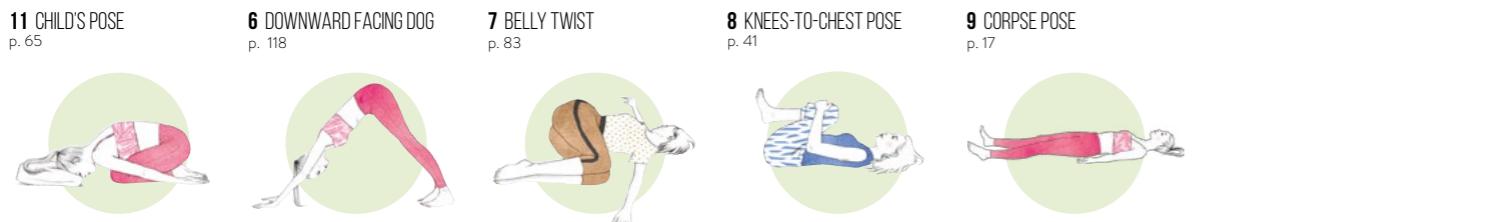
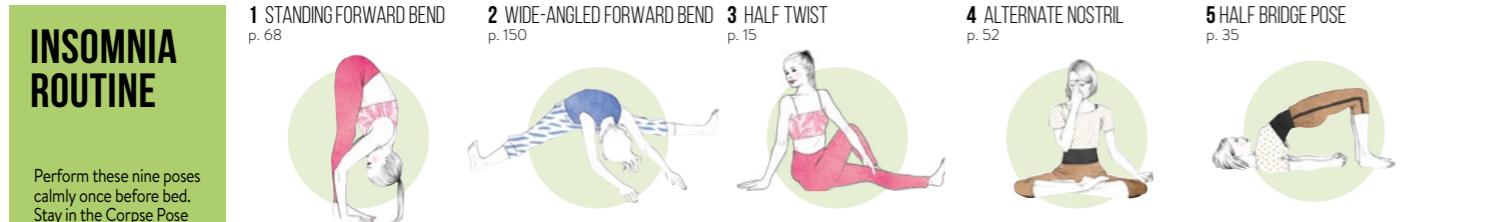
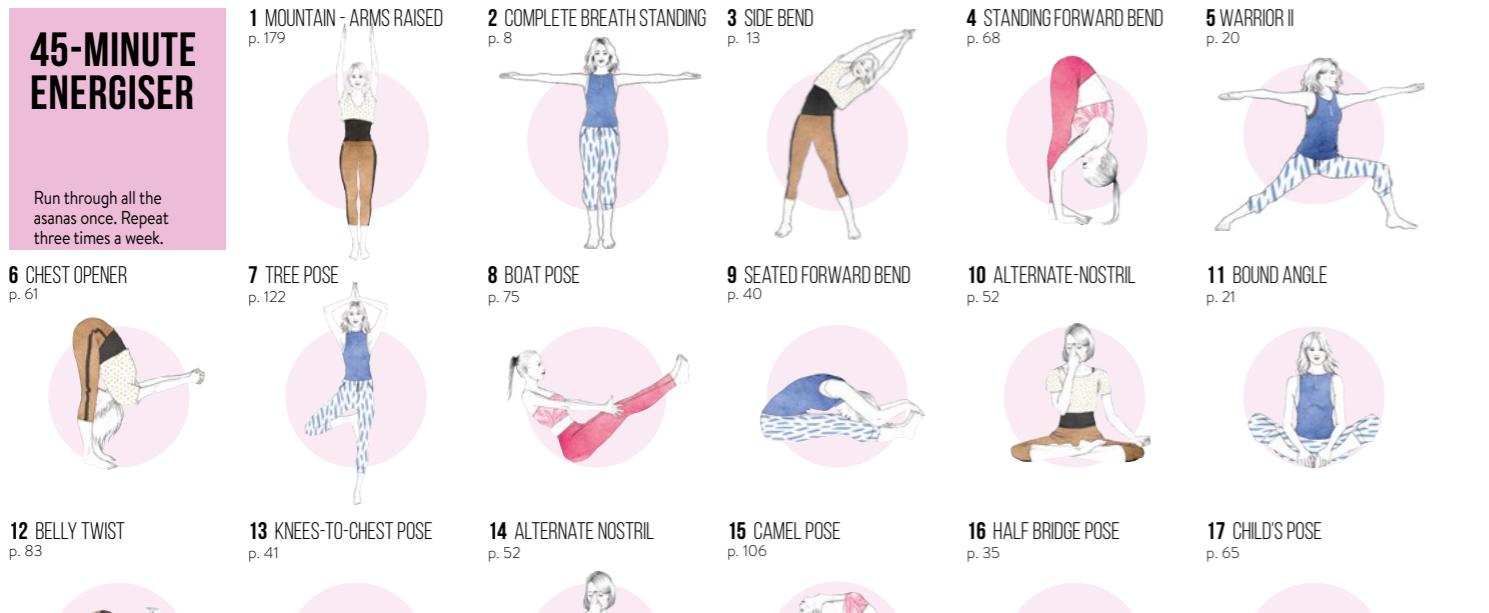
40-MINUTE WORK OUT

Do all the asanas twice. Practise Corpse Pose for 5–10 minutes at the end.



45-MINUTE ENERGISER

Run through all the asanas once. Repeat three times a week.



INSOMNIA ROUTINE

Perform these nine poses calmly once before bed. Stay in the Corpse Pose for at least 8–10 minutes.

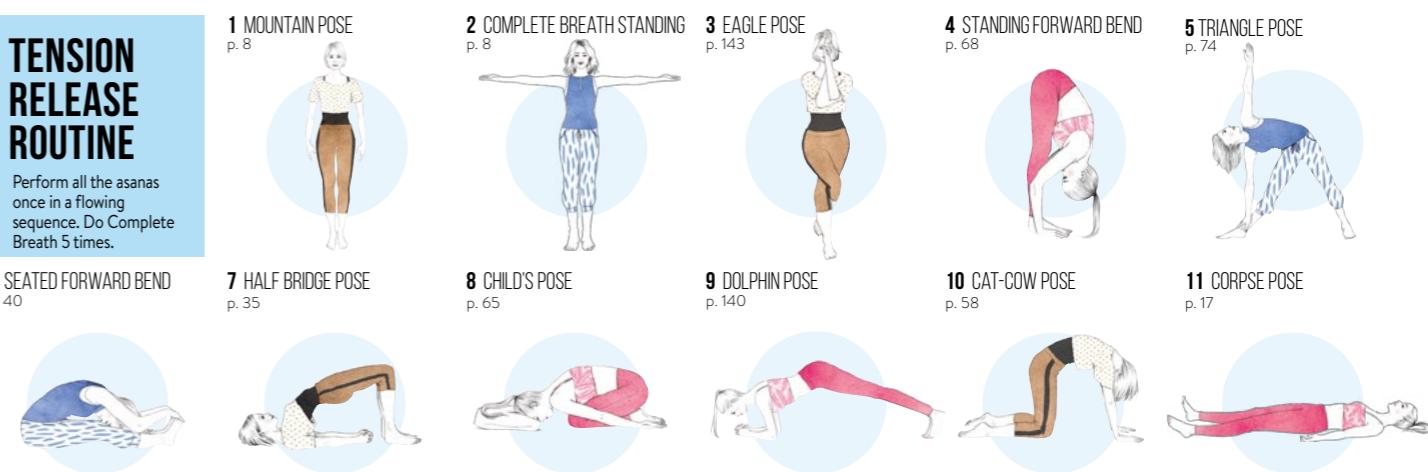
POST-PARTUM ROUTINE

Wait 3 months after giving birth before practising, or when your medical advisor approves.



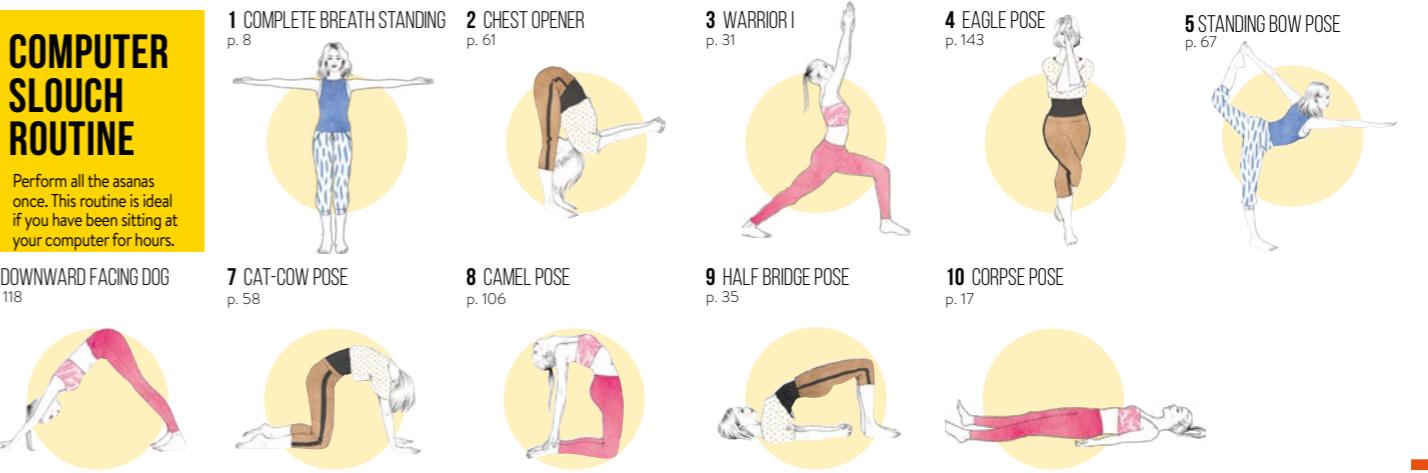
TENSION RELEASE ROUTINE

Perform all the asanas once in a flowing sequence. Do Complete Breath 5 times.



COMPUTER SLOUCH ROUTINE

Perform all the asanas once. This routine is ideal if you have been sitting at your computer for hours.



FERTILITY BOOSTING ROUTINE

Run through all the asanas once. Repeat three times a week.



MENOPAUSE ROUTINE

Perform all the asanas once. Stay in the Corpse Pose for at least 8–10 minutes.



PMS ROUTINE

Perform all the asanas once, then relax in the Corpse Pose for 5–10 minutes.



DIGESTION ROUTINE

Do all the asanas twice. Practise Corpse Pose for 5–10 minutes at the end.





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The Sanskrit name for each asana is shown in bold italic.

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