#Letsstartyoga 2.0

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Prepared exclusively for Katarina Jelic

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I strongly recommend that you consult with your physician before beginning any exercise program. You should be in good physical condition and be able to participate in the exercise. You should understand that when participating in any exercise or exercise program there is the possibility of physical injury. If you engage in this program you agree that you do so at your own risk, of voluntarily participating in these activities, assume all risk of injury to yourself, and agree to release and discharge Jessica Olie from any and all claims or causes of action, known or unknown arising out of my negligence. This e-book is not individually tailored, rather a guideline to help you begin your yoga journey.

Let your practice be a celebration of life.

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About Me

Most of you will already know that I started my yoga journey in February 2014. I came from an athletic background, swimming for almost 10 years of my life, I was probably the most inflexible person you'd ever meet. It's quite ironic that I now love stretching and yoga so much when I used to do everything in my power to skip the stretching sessions after training. Some one asked me to sum up what I wanted to achieve in as few words as possible so I want to share this with you...

"I want people to realise that we are capable of so much more than we believe. It's never too late to start something new."

You don't have to have a gymnastic, ballet or dance background to be flexible, SO, If I can do it, so can you.

Jess X

> **Be who you were created to be and you will set the world on fire.**

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What to Expect

As you work your way through this guide you'll find some of my favourite quotes, yoga poses, tips, tricks, guidance and flows.

Unlike #letsstartyoga 1.0, this e-book will push your body and your mind to do things that you didn't think you could. Now that you have the solid foundations of your practice it's time to start building. But be aware, I will not be repeating too many things from the first e-book so please make sure that you are confident and comfortable in your yoga practice before trying the poses in this book.

I'll help you structure your yoga week, deepen your backbends and your splits while helping you get strong for handstands and forearmstands. I'll even give you a few of my "go-to" yoga workouts so you can really feel the burn.

So before you begin to flick through the pages here are a few things to keep in mind:

- This e-book is NOT for beginners. If you're just starting out, please read my first e-book which can be found on my website. You should be secure in your yoga practice.
- You should be working on your splits or already have them.
- You should be comfortable with your camel and wheel pose.
- You should be comfortable in crow.
- You should be able to hold a headstand away from the wall with ease.

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The beauty of yoga is that it not only works your muscles, it also allows you to get to know yourself better. This journey is about you and your practice and as time goes on you will learn more about yourself and the way your own body moves. We call this 'body awareness'. It is so important to start listening to your body. If a yoga pose doesn't feel like it's doing you any good, it probably isn't helping you. This is where the technique cues I will give become even more important.

A lot of people tell me that they are not 'good' at yoga or they are too inflexible to start yoga. If you think like that, you will never start yoga. I believe that there is no perfect pose, we all have different body types and shapes so we will all look different in them and be at different stages. As long as you are safe and you can feel the stretch, I am happy. I was inflexible too. I couldn't touch my toes in February 2014. It is possible and it can be done as long as you are safe, consistent and smart about your practice.

FAQ

How often should I practice?

The more often the better. It is important to vary your yoga sessions in terms of intensity and duration. The minimum I would say you should practice is 3 times a week for 30-60 minutes per session (even up to 90 minutes) to see progress.

How long should I hold the poses for?

Typically books will say between 15-30 seconds (about 5 deep inhales and exhales). I don't believe in a one-size fits all approach, I want you to hold the stretch until you feel like it eases off or releases. Try to reach that 'comfortable edge' in your poses. Repetition is key in opening up the body, so you should aim to repeat the poses at least 3 times throughout your session, if not more.

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Can I hurt myself?

Getting injured is always a possibility in any form of exercise, this is why it's so important to start listening to your body so that you know when to push yourself in a pose and when to hold back. It is normal to feel discomfort during poses because you are putting your body in positions it's never been in before! A little discomfort is good to make sure you are making the most of the pose, but too much and you could get hurt.

What happens if I hurt myself?

Rest! Don't do anything that aggravates the injury. If it persists, be sure to consult a doctor or physiotherapist.

Does yoga make you sore?

Contrary to popular belief, yoga does actually make you sore. Don't freak out, these poses are working your muscles just like you do when you workout. It's normal to feel sore the next day. As long as you don't have any shooting pains or numbness, you aren't doing any damage.

What if I am pregnant?

This e-book is not designed for prenatal yoga. If you are pregnant and want to start yoga please consult with your doctor first to ensure the safety of you and your baby.

What if my wrists hurt?

If you have never done yoga before, when you start it is normal to experience wrist pain or discomfort. This is because you are not used to bearing much weight on this part of your body. In the "just joints" section you will find exercises to warm up the wrists. The most important thing is that you don't rush into any pose without warming up.

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What if I fall?

This is probably the most common question people ask me when I start teaching them. Falling is something that is a part of life, not just in yoga. When you learn how to fall out of a pose, there is nothing holding you back from trying to get into it. Of course it's a little scary, I've been where you are and I promise falling will do so much more for your practice than anything else will. You will learn when to push and when to hold back; you will learn what not to do and what to do in a pose to keep you there. And if all of the above doesn't ease your mind, don't worry, I have a few tricks up my sleeve so keep a look out!

Should I use a wall?

A lot of people have mixed opinions about using a wall to facilitate their practice. The way I teach people, I do not believe in using the wall and that's why learning to fall is even more important. You want to headstand in the middle of the room? Then that's where we will start. By moving away from the wall your body learns very early on what it needs to do to keep you upside down. All the stabilizing muscles are engaged to support the movement, and you don't get that when you use the wall – your muscles get complacent and lazy. More importantly, you then become dependent on the wall rather than your own confidence and strength.

If you have any questions please email me at
info@jessicaolie.com

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Your Yoga Week

Sometimes it can be tricky to know how it's best to split your yoga week, but it's also good to know that there really is no ideal way to do it because your body is different everyday. I often feel a little overwhelmed sometimes in my practice because I feel there is so much that I want to work on. So here are few ways you can divide your yoga week. Keep in mind, it's just a guide...

6-Day Yoga Week

Monday	Splits Stretches & Backbends
Tuesday	Arm Balances & Flexibility Fundamentals
Wednesday	Inversions & Splits Stretches
Thursday	Backbends & Stretch For Strength
Friday	Full Body Stretch
Saturday	Inversions & Arm Balances
Sunday	Rest

5-Day Yoga Week

Monday	Inversions & Splits Stretches
Tuesday	Arm Balances & Stretch For Strength
Wednesday	Rest
Thursday	Splits: Hips Hamstrings & Backbends
Friday	Full Body Stretch
Saturday	Inversions & Backbends
Sunday	Rest

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4-Day Yoga Week

Monday	Backbends & Arm Balances
Tuesday	Rest
Wednesday	Splits: Hips and Hamstrings
Thursday	Rest
Friday	Inversions & Stretch For Strength
Saturday	Full Body Stretch
Sunday	Rest

3-Day Yoga Week

Monday	Inversions & Arm Balances
Tuesday	Rest
Wednesday	Splits: Hips and Hamstrings
Thursday	Rest
Friday	Backbends
Saturday	Rest
Sunday	Rest

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Your Practice

Here you will find a few different ways to structure your yoga practice. Spend as much time on each section as you want!

Just Joints
↓
Sun Salutations
↓
Flexibility Fundamentals
↓
Push to Progress

Just Joints
↓
Sun Salutations
↓
Stretch for Strength
↓
Flexibility Fundamentals

Just Joints
↓
Sun Salutations
↓
Stretch for Strength
↓
Flexibility Fundamentals
↓
Push to Progress

> *My Yoga: It doesn't matter if things aren't perfect. My practice is my time to feel alive, loved and free.*

Just Joints

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Wrists

Warming up your wrists will be crucial to avoid injuring yourself during your practice, so you will need these exercises for any arm balance or inversions. Happy wrists are strong wrists!

Forward

Place the hands directly underneath the shoulders, gently rock forwards so that your shoulders go past your wrists. You should feel this on the inside of the wrist.

Reverse

Externally rotate your hands 180 degrees so that your fingers are facing towards you. Slowly begin to rock backwards and forwards warming into the wrists.

Side-to-side

Move your hands so that the fingertips are facing towards the side, from here you want to move from one side to the other.

Reverse

Notice how only one hand is flipped so that the palm is facing upwards, this is quite an intense stretch so please do one side at a time to avoid straining your wrist. Minimal weight on the hand is needed here.

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Hips & Hamstrings

Wide Leg Groin Lunge

This is one of my favourites to work into the inner thighs and adductors. Start in a wide leg stance and lower to one side. Try to focus on keeping the foot flat while pushing the knee out to the side. Use your arms to help you maintain balance. Flow from one side to the other a few times. Try for 10 each side!

Half Lotus

Begin seated, carefully lift one leg up and place it as close to your hips as possible making sure that you have no pain in the knee. Once your foot is on the thigh, wrap your toes around the thigh to help protect your knees a little more!

Make sure to do both sides...

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Lunge

"Hip Vinyasa"

You may remember this little flow from my first e-book, well it's my favourite so here it is again. Flow between these two poses to work your way into warming up your hips and hamstrings! This is a great little flow to do if you're planning on a deep splits practice or if you want to loosen up those hips for your backbends.

Head-to-knee

> The mind is like a parachute, it doesn't work if it isn't open.

Spine

Extra Poses: Plough Pose & Scorpion Stretch.

Downward Dog

Hands should be shoulder width apart, fingers pressing into the mat as you melt your chest towards the floor. Think about sending your hamstrings to the back of the room. Don't worry too much about your heels touching the mat, as long as you're feeling the stretch in either the shoulders, spine or hamstrings.

Upward Dog

Hands should be shoulder width apart, fingers pressing into the mat as you lift your chest and pull your shoulder blades towards each other. Notice that my thighs are off the floor, activate your inner thighs as you feel your back opening.

Flow between Downward Dog and Upward Dog a few times!

3-Legged Downward Dog Twist

Begin in Downward Dog, lift one leg up and bend it over the body. Push the foot towards the floor and allow the spine to open.

Core

3-Legged Downward Dog

Flow between 3-Legged Downward Dog and plank knee to elbow to fire up and create heat in the core.

These are examples of a mini flow you can use to kickstart your abs. Feel free to add a few static plank holds for an added challenge!

Plank Knee to Elbow

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Shoulders

Arms Straight

Walk your hands away from the body making sure you keep them shoulder width apart. You should begin to feel a stretch in the front of the shoulder.

Arms Bent

Slowly walk your hands in slightly and begin to bend the arms. This should deepen the stretch in the shoulders!

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Chicken Pose

One of my go-to poses to open up the back of the shoulders, which can be difficult. Place the back of the hands at the base of the rib cage and feed your arms in between your legs. Push your legs towards each other. It should feel intense!

Puppy Pose

Start on your hands and knees – you don't have to use a block, this is just an option to deepen the stretch!

Bring your hands out in front of you and push your chest towards the floor, keeping your hips directly in line with your knees.

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Flexibility Fundamentals:

HIPS & HAMSTRINGS

... Don't forget to work both sides of your body equally!

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Hips & Hamstrings

In order to get the most out of this section having your splits or nearly having your splits will help you a lot. Don't worry too much if you're not quite there yet, these poses will help you get those last few inches down!

Throughout this section you'll find some of my favourite stretches to release tension in the hips and hamstrings. These poses will help you build the flexibility necessary to help you advance your splits and try some more challenging poses in the "Push To Progress" section!

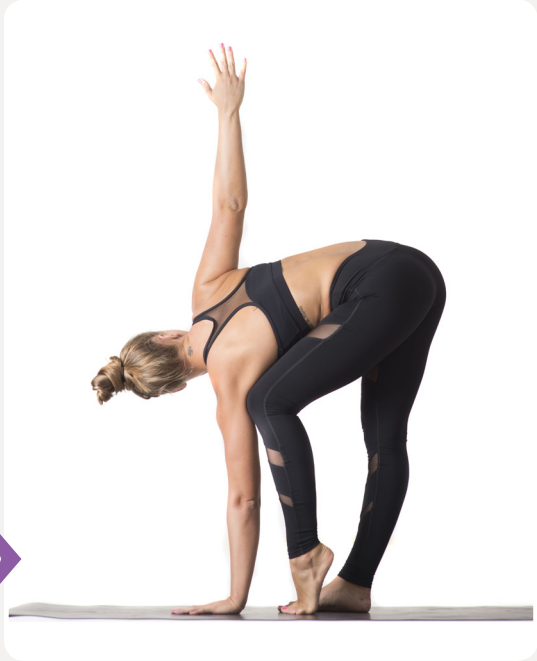
Forward Fold Variations

Isolating one muscle at a time enables you to figure out which side of the body holds more tension. Hold these poses until you feel the muscle relaxing.

TIP: Think about melting your chest towards your legs and try to keep your leg as straight as you can. Every exhale try to get deeper into the pose. Aim to hold for 30-60 seconds each side and feel free to repeat!

One-Legged Forward Fold

TIP: Right side example: Place your left hand on the floor directly in front of the left foot. Slowly begin to bend the left leg and open up the body to the right side as you extend the arm up. You should feel an intense stretch in the hamstrings and side of the thigh.



Forward Fold With A Twist

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Pyramid Pose

Start off in forward fold, step one leg back just a little bit. The wider you go, the more intense the stretch. Again, think about pulling your chest to your front leg. The front leg should be pulling towards the back leg and the back leg should be pulling towards the front leg to help activate the correct muscles.

TIP: I like to flow between the right and left side to help open my hamstrings. Feel free to flow through a few times and mix in some static holds!

Lizard Pose

Once your hamstrings are feeling a little warmer, lizard is a great pose that targets both the hips and hamstrings. You can choose to keep the back knee off the mat or lower it down. See how low you can get your hip to the floor!

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Wide-angle Seated Forward Bend

These two straddle variations are designed to open up the groin and adductor muscles which are crucial to preparing the body for middle splits. The most important thing to remember in these postures is to make sure you are sitting on your sitting bones to ensure that your back is not arched. As you lean forwards you want to keep your chest as open as you can and your spine nice and flat.

TIP: Before you do this you might want to do a few yogi squats & side lunges from the Just Joints Section!

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Pancake Pose

Begin in your straddle position, make sure you are on your sitting bones and start to walk your hands away from your body.

"It hurts" Yes, it's a nasty one, sometimes I find it useful to place yoga blocks under my chest to make sure I don't overstretch the muscles.

Frog Pose

Frog Pose is one of those poses that really tests your ability to zone out of the discomfort you experience. You can place something soft under the knees if it hurts.

Try to focus on making sure that the feet stay flexed, your butt and hips are in line with your legs and your chest is melting to the floor.

Again, to help ease the pain you can always place a pillow or a yoga block under your chest for safety.

P.S the longer you stay in the pose the better, aim to work your way up to 3-5 minutes. Make sure to come out of it slowly and controlled to avoid injury.

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Pssst... This is one of my favourite poses to help me prepare for full lotus!

Reclined Hero

Start from kneeling, keep your knees and legs hip width or just outside hip width apart. Slowly begin to lower your butt to the mat using your hands for support. From here you walk your hands back until you feel like you can lay flat on the mat.

MY TIPS

- Make sure you don't have any pain in the knees.
- You might feel a big stretch in the ankles, this is very normal!
- Tuck your tailbone under, notice that there is a natural curve in the spine however there is no arching of the spine.
- Push your hips towards the floor and try to relax into the pose.
- You should be feeling this in the hips and front of the thighs!

Full Lotus

Begin seated with your legs out in front. Bring the right leg up and cradle it rocking from left to right. Place the outside of the foot as close to the left hip as you can, wrapping your toes around the outside of the thigh. Lean back a little and bring the left leg up and place it gently over the right leg, tucking it into the right hip just as you did on the other side.

NOTE: Make sure there is no knee pain, do not push your body into this posture!

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Double Pigeon

In your seated position, sit up nice and straight as you bend one leg into the body approximately 90 degrees. Keep both feet flexed, this is important in protecting the knees from injury. Lift the other leg up and stack it directly on top of the leg below, aligning your shins. Try to avoid pushing the knee down – as long as you are feeling the stretch it's working it's magic!

STEP 1

STEP 2

STEP 3

The perfect pose to open both of the hips at the same time as well as the glutes, groin and lower back!

TIP: To deepen the stretch, fold forwards and place your hands out in front of your body.

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Hand-To-Big-Toe Pose

A standing pose designed to help you build strong foundations for more advanced single leg postures. Oh and the awesome hamstring stretch is a bonus too!

From standing make sure that your base leg is active before you lift your leg up. Root your foot into the floor, making sure all four corners of your foot are on the floor. Pull the knee-cap up to activate the thigh.

Begin to lift one leg up and wrap your fingers around the big toe on the inside of the leg as you inhale and elongate your spine. Try to make yourself as tall as possible.

From here you want to extend the leg directly out in front of you or out to the side and up – as you can see me do in the picture.

TIP: If your foundation is weak, your pose will be weak.

Want to take this to the next level?

Try out Standing Compass pose in the Push to Progress section!

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Monkey Pose (Splits)

Since this e-book focuses on advancing postures covered in the last e-book, I hope you've been working hard on your splits!

Remember with the splits it's always hips before hamstrings. Make sure that you are really warm before going into this posture. Even if you have your splits, warming up is really important to avoid any injuries.

PREPARATION POSES

- Hip Vinyasa
- Forward Fold and ALL the variations
- Pigeon
- King Pigeon
- Lizard
- Crescent Pose

COUNTERPOSES

- Wide Legged Forward Fold
- Frog Pose
- Wide Leg Groin Lunge
- Pancake Pose
- Wide-angle Seated Forward Bend

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Assisted Over-Split

Using a yoga block or a stack of books if you're feeling creative, gently place the front heel on the block and lower yourself into a full split. The stretch will intensify in both the hip and the hamstring. The higher the block, the more intense the stretch!

TIP: Make sure that your hip and hamstring stay as close to the floor as possible!

Funky Over-Split

I always like to start in Lizard Pose before getting into this. Try to get your hip and butt on the floor while keeping the front leg as bent as you can. You should feel this a lot in your hip and at the top of your hamstring. Try to sit up as straight as you can!

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Push to Progress

HIPS & HAMSTRINGS

During this section you will have access to a whole new range of poses to play with to take your hip & hamstring stretches to the next level. These Asanas will test your balance, strength and flexibility. They are hard but not impossible so keep practicing and finding out which way works best for your body to get into the posture.

I have created a step-by-step guide of how to enter each pose with my top tips and tricks to help make it a little easier to understand. Please make sure that before you attempt any of these poses that you are feeling very warm. These poses are not for the beginning of your practice!

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King Pigeon Splits

STEP 1

Begin in a split, slowly lift the back leg up as you flex the foot. Notice how I am grabbing my foot, this is key in preparing you for flipping your grip.

Once you have hold of the foot it's now time to rotate your shoulder by bringing your elbow away from you, this is very similar to how you get into king pigeon. As you rotate make sure you keep lifting the chest and sinking into the hip!

STEP 2

STEP 3

Now you are in the full posture, sit, relax and enjoy the intense stretch that comes with it. If you want a little extra challenge try lifting the other hand up and placing it on the foot too!

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Seated Compass

STEP 1

Begin seated, lifting one leg up and placing it over the arm as close to the back of the shoulder as possible. This is where your arm becomes a shelf – in a sense your arm helps keep the leg in place. Grip your foot on the outside with the opposite hand. Now you are in the right position to rotate your shoulder and lift your chest.

STEP 2

Slowly try to straighten the leg as you lengthen through your spine and lift your chest. This will help create space when you start to rotate your shoulders and body away from the leg.

TIP: Make sure both legs are active. Pull the knee-cap up to activate the thigh, which will help the hamstring relax.

STEP 3

Once you've reached your maximum in this pose its important to listen to your body and not push past your range of motion or you will hurt yourself. Instead, try to focus your attention on your breath. When the breath is still, the mind becomes still. Focus on each inhale and exhale, finding the space and energy to see if you can go a little deeper.

NOTE: You can place your hand on the floor as I have done and use it to help you sit up straight OR you can choose to place it on the leg, and really extend the leg as much as you can while maintaining good posture.

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Standing Compass

Standing Compass will really challenge your balance, strength and flexibility more than most poses. You want to make sure that your base leg is strong and all four corners of the foot are pressing into the floor to lift you higher., notice here I am micro-bending to allow my top leg to be placed in the correct place on the back of my shoulder. You really want to make sure you're focusing your gaze on something consistent and that isn't moving.

TIP: Warm up your hips, hamstring and shoulders for this pose. I always like to work on my splits before trying this pose.

As you make your way into the final posture you should be thinking about these things:

- Straighten your base leg a much as you can. This is where your strength will be tested!
- Both thighs need to be active and working to keep the pose strong and stable.
- Continue to keep your core nice and strong by pulling your belly button up as you lengthen your spine.
- Lift your chest.
- You can place the inside hand around the foot or you can bring it out to the side.

> *Don't beat yourself up, you are a work in progress which means you'll get there a little at a time, not all at once.*

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Sugar Cane Pose

You can enter this posture from Half Moon Pose OR you can enter it from a forward fold. Place one hand on the mat, spreading the fingers to help your balance. You want to place the hand in front of the foot and slightly away from the body.

Lift one hand and one leg away from the floor and begin to prepare yourself to grab the foot from the inside.

STEP 1

STEP 2

STEP 3

MY TIPS

- Push your hand into the floor to make yourself as tall as possible.
- Push your hamstring away from you.
- Lift your chest as much as you can.
- Think about pushing the foot against the hand and the hand against the foot. This is really important to get the most out of the posture.
- As you do this try to also pull the foot over the body which will deepen the stretch in the hamstring.

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Standing Splits

This pose will challenge not only your balance but also what we call "active" or "dynamic" flexibility. Essentially it requires flexibility without the use of gravity or weight to push you down, so it can be a little tricky to figure out how to push that leg into a split.

STEP 1

You can begin this pose in a forward fold or pyramid pose. There are a lot of different ways to get into this posture but here is my favourite way to introduce you to the pose – then you can get fancy with the hand placement.

- Notice that I bring my shoulder underneath the leg, gripping my ankle from behind. This will help act as a lever to help give you a little added push into the posture.
- My other arm is extended out in front of my body. Again, this is there to help you push against the floor to get a little deeper AND to help.

STEP 2

Once you're happy with your set up, you can now begin to lift the leg towards the sky.

- Use your levers i.e. your hands to help stabilize the body.
- Extend the leg nice and slowly.
- Notice my base leg is not straight, YET, you can straighten everything out as the top leg goes higher.
- Keep your gaze consistent.

Step 3 on next page >

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STEP 3

Don't worry if your leg isn't quite this straight. I remember the first time I tried this posture, even though I had my splits on the floor, my leg was only just past 90 degrees even though it felt a lot higher. This is so normal!

Here are a few tips on how to get the most out of this posture:

- Keep all four corners of the base foot on the floor, root your foot into the floor to help make yourself as tall as possible in the posture.
- Pull your belly button up and towards your spine to activate your core.
- You want to use the front hand and push back as the top leg pushes forwards. This will counteract the two forces and help you get the leg higher.
- Notice how my spine is not rounded or hunched, this is to allow the pelvis to tilt and the hip to open.
- To get your leg high you NEED to activate your butt/glutes and the entire leg. EVERYTHING should be working to keep your leg up there.

Like a wildflower, you must allow yourself to grow in all the places people never thought you would.

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Full Side Plank Pose

Full side plank is one of those poses that is deceptively hard. It requires a lot of core strength especially your obliques (the core muscles located on the sides of the body). This pose will strengthen your arms, core, legs and wrists. It will stretch the hamstrings, hip and the wrists so please make sure your wrists are warm.

Begin in a regular side plank and bend the top leg. Activate your core and make sure you are breathing normally.

- Push your fingers into the mat to take the pressure off the wrists.
- Maintain your gaze – if you move your head too much it will throw you off balance.

PREPARATION POSES

- Plank/High Plank
- Downward Dog
- Wide Legged Forward Bend
- Hand To Big Toe
- Reclined Hero
- Half Moon OR Sugar Cane
- The splits or any splits stretches

Step 2 on next page >

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- Begin to draw the thigh into the torso and reach inside the bent leg using the index and middle fingers of the top hand to grab the big toe and wrap them around your thumb. This will secure your grip.
- Notice how my hips are lifting quite high, this is important for preparing the body for the full posture. You want to keep your hips as high as possible.
- The way to do this is to use the arm on the floor and push away from the floor. Activate the glutes to help lift your hips even higher. You will be sore in the legs and core the following day if you are engaging in the right place.

- Once you have hold of the toe, begin to extend the leg towards the sky as you inhale. You should feel an intense stretch throughout the hamstring.
- Use the top arm to pull the leg up higher as you continue to push through the hips keeping them high and your core engaged. Try to hold for 15-30 seconds and repeat on the other side.
- One side will always feel better than the other but keep working on both!

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Flying Warrior

STEP 1

- Begin in Lizard, placing the inside arm on the outside of the foot with your fingers facing forwards.
- Make sure your wrist is in line with your shoulder.
- The back foot needs to be firmly pressing into the mat with the knee-cap pulled up to activate the thighs.

STEP 2

- You should feel stable enough to lift the leg off the floor and wrap your hand around the outside of the foot. The placing of the hand is really important.
- Keep the arm bent and the leg close to the body.

Step 3 on next page >

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STEP 3

MY TIPS

- As you begin to straighten the leg you want to bring the head through and your arm up and over. This is to allow the shoulder to rotate which enables you to lift the chest and extend the leg fully.
- Activate both legs to help get the leg as straight as possible.
- You should feel a huge stretch throughout the side of the body and the shoulder.
- Use the arm at the top to pull the leg up, pushing yourself into a split.
- Make sure that your base arm is pressing firmly into the mat lifting you higher.
- You can choose where to look. In the final posture I am looking down, this is much easier for maintaining balance. If you can work your way up to looking towards the sky this will really challenge your balance and trust in your body!

Challenge Flow

Full Side Plank > Splits > Lizard > Flying Warrior

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Firefly

Be prepared to fall a few times before you fly!

STEP 1

PREPARATION POSES

- Splits
- Crow
- Yogi Squat

Begin in your yogi squat, lifting your butt, place your hands behind your feet. Your thumb comes round the inside of the foot and the rest of your fingers outside the foot.

Keep your arms bent, you should feel your upper thighs on the side of the shoulder.

STEP 2

- Keep your legs in contact with your upper arms as you begin to lower your butt and squeeze your inner thighs to lock your legs in place. Just as you would do in Crow or Crane.
- Note: make sure you don't drop your butt too low or you will fall backwards.
- Begin to feel the weight move from the feet into the arms.

REMEMBER: You are not lifting your weight, you are shifting your weight and your centre of gravity.

Step 3 on next page >

Transaction: 5619

- As your feet lift off the floor, continue to squeeze your inner thighs. If you don't do this, your legs will slide.
- Your core should be working like crazy, pull your belly button to your spine and allow your back to round or curve. This will help the legs go higher and make the posture stronger.
- Once you've found your balance, begin to lift your butt and drop your head. If you don't lift your butt it will drag you down, if you lift it too much you will fall forwards, so shift your weight carefully and slowly. Don't rush.
- You can keep your arms bent which will help you keep your legs up as if they are on a 'shelf' OR you can try to straighten your arms.
  - If you decide to straighten your arms like I have done here, notice how my shoulders are over my wrists. This is really important in maintaining your center of gravity so make sure your wrists are prepared for this added pressure.
  - Learning how to move your weight over your wrists will really help you when you are wanting to advance your inversion practice, so this is a great place to start.

> *When a flower doesn't bloom, you change the environment in which it grows not the flower.*

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EPK 2

- Start in 3-Legged Downward Dog. Come forwards into plank and bring the inside of the knee on the outside of your upper arm.
- Draw your core in and bend your arms slightly to create your shelf.

- Slowly extend your front leg, this will make it heavy and facilitate a 'see-saw' effect. When the front leg goes down the back leg goes up and visa versa.
- Your front leg needs to be active and strong, just as your back leg should be too.
- Both of my arms are beginning to bend towards that 90 degree angle. The inside arm should be pressing into the stomach just above the hip bone. (See last picture on next page for a better view)

Step 3 on next page >

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STEP 3

Front View

Back View

- In order to get lift off, your back and front legs need to work together to create balance. The back leg should be lifting towards the sky and the front leg should be doing the same.
- Once you figure out where to place everything it will all click into place.

Challenge Flow

Crow > Firefly > EPK 2 > Chaturanga > Up Dog > Down Dog

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Dancers Pose... Without Flipped Grip

Start in Mountain Pose, with any standing posture you want to make sure that your foundation is strong. Press all four corners of the foot into the mat, rooting into the floor.

Pull your knee-cap up to activate the thigh. You can micro bend rather than completely locking out.

Since I hyperextend I try to avoid locking out completely to avoid injury and instability in the joint.

STEP 1

STEP 2

Once your foundation is strong, the pose is more likely to be strong and stable.

Bring one leg up and grab inside the leg, anywhere between the knee and ankle on the inside of the leg.

> *Before you can change the world around you, you must learn to change the worlds within you.*

Step 3 on next page >

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Steps 2 & 3 are both dancers pose, however step 3 is much deeper. Feel free to hang out in whichever variation feels the best. To push yourself into a split here are a few things to remember:

- Lift your chest to allow a slight backbend. This will help your hip open.
- Activate the top leg, trying to make it as straight as possible.
- At the same time you want to pull the leg using the arm so that the leg stays at 180 degrees.
- Lean forward and up, not down. If you send your chest down to the floor you won't have enough lift to push the leg into a split.
- Keep your gaze consistent.
- You can keep your 'free' arm extended out in front as I have done or you can rest it on the bottom leg.

Challenge Flow

Hand to Big Toe > Dancers > Sugar Cane > Standing Split

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Flexibility Fundamentals:

BACKBENDS & INVERSIONS

Transaction: 5619

Backbends & Inversions... Preparation Poses

Before we get into the intense backbends, here are some of my warm up poses before going into the deeper postures. These are fundamental poses which should already be in your practice, so if you are confident and comfortable in these poses below, your body will enjoy the challenge ahead.

King Pigeon

Cobra

ADDITIONAL POSES:

- All the shoulder stretches in the Just Joints section, these are really nice to add in while you rest between poses.
- Wrist Stretches
- Reclined Hero
- Lizard Pose
- Upward Dog

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Camel

- Backbends are progressive. Camel pose is a great way to help open up your spine and get used to that extension again.
- Try flowing between Camel and Childs pose holding each for 3-5 breaths. Repeat 3 times.
- Relax your head completely to avoid straining the neck muscles.

Wheel

- Wheel is a backbend that is by no means an easy posture, it requires every single part of the body to work in order to carry out the posture.
- Each time you get into this backbend, play around with the positioning of the feet – either flat footed or up on your tip toes. You will notice that the deeper the backbend, the more tempted you'll be to come onto your tip toes. This will release some pressure from the spine.
- Squeeze your thighs towards each other to protect the lower back.
- ALWAYS lift your chest, in any backbend. Push your chest up and away from your body, you should start to feel a big stretch in the shoulders.

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Downward Dog

You may be wondering why Downward Dog is in the inversion section too. Well typically it can be considered to be an inversion, so being able to hold this posture for an extended amount of time will help prepare your body for the increased blood flow and pressure to the head.

3-Legged Downward Dog

As well as stretching those hamstrings, this variation of Downward Dog is actually a way to enter handstands, so get used to this pose and make sure you're engaging your core.

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High Plank Knee To Elbow

- This pose will help you to shape your handstands. Remember, core is everything.
- Pull your belly button up and towards your spine.
- Shoulder blades gravitating away from each other to allow a slight curvature of the spine.
- Shoulders should be slightly over the wrists.
- Fingers pushing into the mat.
- Thighs active as you bring the leg in.

Challenge Flow

30s Downward Dog > 30s Dolphin >
30s High Plank > 30s Plank knee to elbow

...Repeat 3-4 times

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Push to Progress

BACKBENDS & INVERSIONS

Transaction: 5619

What You Need to Know...

BACKBENDS

- Backbends are progressive in nature, the first backbend will always feel worse than the third one. Generally when practicing a pose you want to find the happy balance between opening enough and not opening too much and hurting yourself. Aim for around 3 attempts during each backbend.
- Apart from opening the spine, when you backbend you'll need to open your hips and shoulders to ensure the bend is not purely coming from the lower spine.
- The reason for opening the shoulders is that the thoracic (middle) and cervical (top) areas of the spine are very limited in range of movement compared to the lower or lumbar spine. This is why a lot of people suffer from lower back pain. In order to protect the lower back, opening the shoulders will help shift the pressure, allowing you to build muscle in all the right places.
- Counterposes: After we extend the spine, it's important to do a movement which requires flexion or rounding of the spine. This maintains balance and a happy spine. Between backbends you may rest in any of these:
  - Child's Pose
  - Downward Dog
  - Plough Pose
- Twists: If your spine is feeling tight, twists are a great way to decompress or release pressure in the back.

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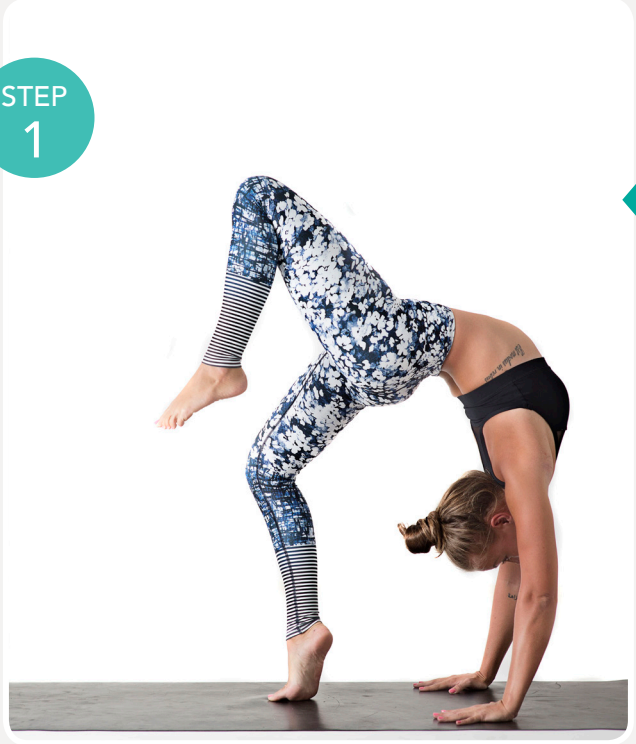
INVERSIONS

- I was a little reluctant to include inversions in any of the sections because they are incredibly individual and unfortunately I cannot give you a magic key to help you hold the posture. What I will do is give you ALL my tips and tricks on how to effectively prepare for the inverted posture. There will be a lot of trial and error so be patient with yourself.
- How you set up or prepare for an inversion will determine the likelihood of whether or not you will 'catch' the handstand. The process is key!
- Make sure you are warming up your wrists before any inversion work, they will be taking a lot of strain so look after them.
- Everyone is different, so please feel free to slightly tweak any of the techniques I suggest and explore!
- One thing that really helped me to understand inversions is that you are not lifting anything as such, it's all about shifting your centre of gravity using your hips. IF your hips are in the right place then it will feel much easier.
- Inversions are probably the least consistent poses to hold, some days you'll have it and other days you will feel as though you're back to square one. These postures will really test you mentally more than physically. Your body is different everyday.

Time to backbend...

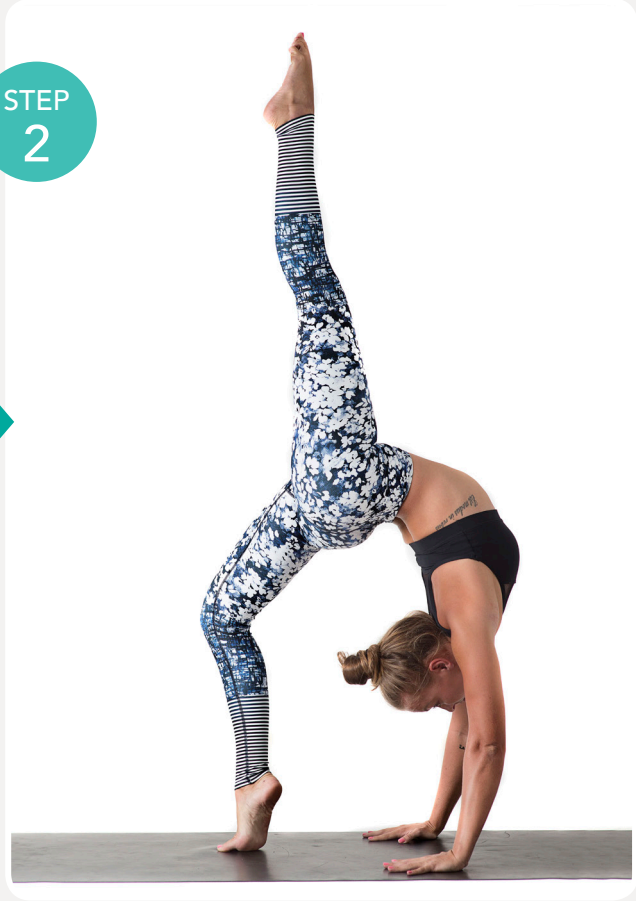
Wheel ...With One Leg Up

STEP 1



- Once you are in Wheel and you feel stable, walk your hands and feet close to each other.
- Try to make sure you're lifting your chest and making yourself as tall as possible into the backbend.
- Move your feet closer together and begin to lift your foot off the mat.
- As you do this don't be tempted to collapse through the shoulders, if you do this will make the posture even harder. Continue to shift your weight towards your hands and away from your legs.

STEP 2



- Keeping the leg bent is a little easier, you will feel more in control as there is less weight.
- For an extra challenge extend the leg up towards the sky keeping it strong and active.

Transaction: 5619

Straight Leg Wheel

STEP 1

Notice that I am not in a deep wheel to start this posture. You want to come into a backbend that is not too deep. You can always adjust when you're getting into the posture. The closer your hands and feet are to each other the harder and more intense the backbend will be.

STEP 2

Everyone's spine bends in different ways due to our bone structure, our muscles and our flexibility so please don't worry too much if yours doesn't look EXACTLY like mine, it's not supposed to! Here are a few tips:

- Bring your legs and feet together and activate your inner thighs to protect your lower spine.
- Push through the shoulders, using your feet to push up and towards your hands.
- Adjust by walking the feet closer to the hands and keeping your legs as straight as you can – don't let your knees gravitate outwards.

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Forearm Wheel

STEP 1

- Begin in Wheel Pose.
- You can come onto your tip toes or keep your feet flat.
- Shuffle one arm closer to your feet and begin to reach your forearm for the mat.
- Keep your weight evenly distributed.

TIPS: Keep your legs strong – your inner thighs should be working. Your other arm should be pushing into the mat.

STEP 2

- Once one forearm is on the mat you can now bring the other arm down slowly.
- Keep pushing your feet towards your torso. Push through the shoulders to avoid collapsing through them.

Step 3 on next page >

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STEP 3

- You should be feeling this a lot in your shoulders and back.
- Now that both forearms are on the mat, it's really important to make sure your elbows don't go wide. You can bring your hands towards each other OR you can bind them.
  - Why? Going outside of the line of the shoulders creates less stability within the joint. If you feel like your elbows are sliding away it might be because you need a bit more flexibility training.
- Walk your feet to your hands as much as you can without collapsing through your shoulders, keep pushing the floor away from you and lifting your chest.
- Squeeze your legs together and look towards your feet.

Up For A Challenge?

Try lifting one leg off the mat and extending it towards the sky
OR
Try straightening your legs just as you would do in a straight leg wheel

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Full Camel

STEP 1

- Make sure you have done a few Camel poses before going into this intense backbend.
- Once you're in Camel, inhale to extend the spine, lift your chest and begin to drop back as you exhale, keeping your hips in line with your knees. If your hips collapse all of the pressure will be on the lower spine so keep everything active and engaged, squeezing the inner thighs towards each other while maintaining hip distance apart.
- Look for the floor and slowly lower your palms to your mat as close to your feet as you can.
- Make sure to breathe in and out through your nose.
- Now your hands are in place try to find your heel and grip on one hand at a time.

TIPS: Slow & Steady breathing is important to maintain stillness in the body and the mind. It's also important for making sure that you don't strain any of the intercostal muscles (breathing muscles) between the ribs.

STEP 2

Step 3 on next page >

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STEP 3

- Don't rush into this pose.
- Hold for around 3-5 breaths.
- Try to make sure that you are consciously lifting your chest throughout the entire pose to avoid compressing the lower spine.
- Squeeze your elbows towards each other pulling your shoulders away from your ears.

She threw away all of her masks and put on her soul.

Transaction: 5619

Full Low Lunge

STEP 1

Prepare your body with these poses before attempting this:
✓ Camel or Full Camel
✓ Wheel
✓ King Pigeon
✓ King Pigeon Splits

OK, now it's time to get your spine bendy!

- Begin in a low lunge making sure that your hip is as low as you can get it to the floor.
- Knee in line with your ankle.
- Begin to inhale as you lift your chest and tuck your tailbone.
- Place your hands on the ilium (bony bit on your lower back) and begin to bend backwards as you exhale.
- Inhale back up and repeat a few times.

TIP: You can do this with your arms extended above the body if that is more comfortable.

STEP 2

Step 3 on next page >

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STEPS 2 & 3

- Inhale and extend your arms towards the sky, exhale and begin to bend back, lifting your chest.
- Look for your foot or the mat, once you see either of these you can lift the hip a little and place the hands on the toes or ankle.

TOO HARD? Grab your yoga strap and place it on the foot, grab hold of the strap and then you can try steps 2 & 3.

- Grabbing your foot is the hardest part, so now you're in the clear.
- Try to find space within the body wherever you can.
  - Lift your chest
  - Push into your hip
  - Straighten your arms as much as you can – Relax your neck
  - BREATHE!

When you come out of the pose, inhale and extend your arms up towards the sky, using your core muscles instead of your spine. Slowly begin to curve the body over the front leg and push back to Downward Dog.

> *Set a goal so big that you can't achieve it until you grow into the person who can.*

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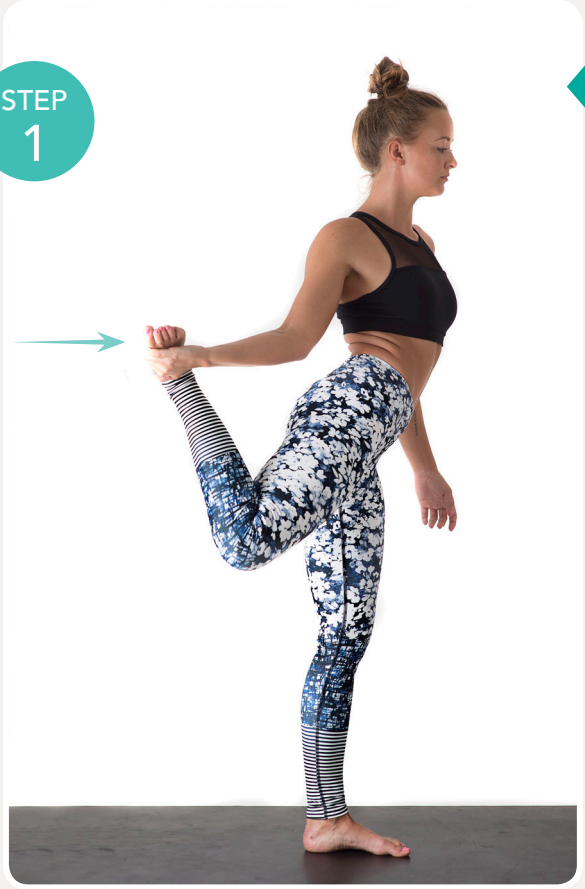
Dancer's Pose... Time to Flip Your Grip

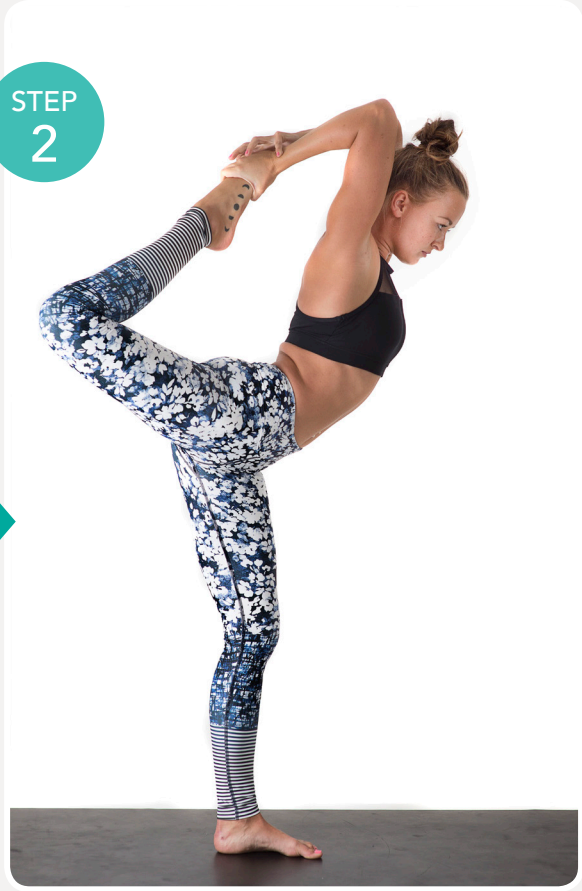


TOP TIPS:

- Keep your gaze consistent.
- All four corners of the foot should be pressing into the mat.
- Your base leg should be active and strong... You don't have to lock it out completely.
- Lift your chest.

This picture is to show you how to grab your foot when you want to flip your grip in dancer.

Once you have flipped your grip and rotated your arm away from your body so that your elbow is facing the sky it's time to bring your other hand to your foot.



Step 3 on next page >

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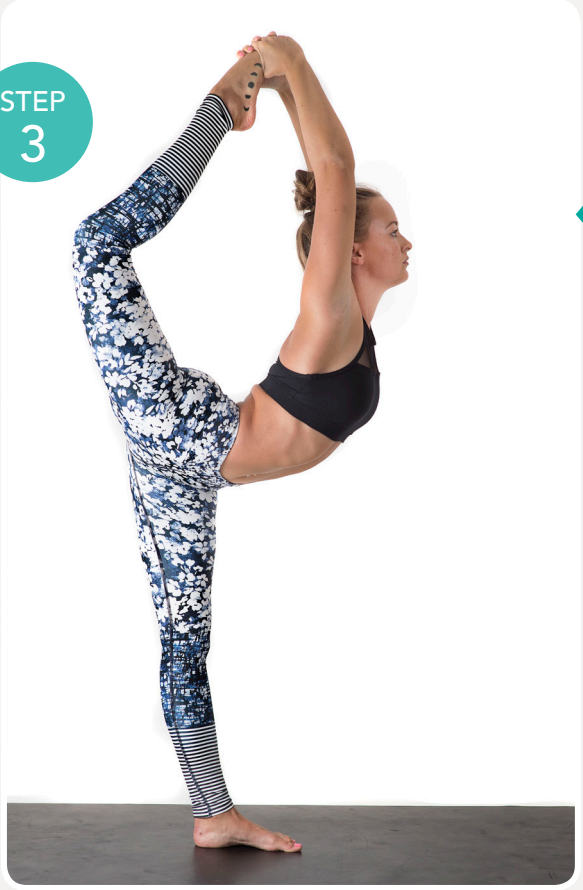
NOT QUITE THERE YET?
Don't worry, this pose is really tough on the flexibility and balance side of things. Your balance will improve with practice as will your flexibility.
If you're struggling don't be too proud to grab that yoga strap to help get both hands on the foot.

P.S A little tip: put some running shoes on and try it again, shoes give us a little more to grip onto so it will make it a little easier and stop your foot from slipping!

STEP 3



GET THE MOST OUT OF THE POSE:

- Push the top foot against the hands and pull the foot up using your hands. This will help you become taller in the posture and allow your back to bend more.
- Keep your hips square.
- Push your feet into the mat trying to make yourself as tall as possible.
- Lift your chest up and slightly lean forwards.

CHALLENGE:
Once you're feeling comfortable in the posture, try to walk your hands towards your ankle!

Transaction: 5619

Fallen Dancer... Like Dancer Pose But On The Floor!

STEP 1

In Step 1 & 2 you can see the process of how I flip my grip in this pose. Here are a few things that you need to pay attention to which will make this a little easier:

- My 'free' arm is resting on the floor, supporting me while I grab the foot.
- My back foot is curled under, this gives me something to push from and shift my weight forwards.

STEP 2

Step 3 on next page >

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STEP 3

STEP 3: Notice how my hips are OFF of the mat. Use your back foot to shift your weight forwards. At this point your other arm can grab either the foot or the wrist. Continue to lift your chest and keep your weight centred. If your weight is not equally distributed, you will fall to one side.

STEP 4: Now it's time to get the most out of the posture. Pull your foot as far over the body as you possibly can while you push your foot against the hand exactly as you would in dancers pose. Keep lifting your chest and your hips.

STEP 4

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Let's Go Upside Down...

Transaction: 5619

Why I Won't Tell You To Use A Wall...

Everyone has a different method of teaching. Personally I never used a wall for my inversion practice so I am not about to encourage you to! For me, using a wall is like walking with crutches when you don't need to. This is something I will never endorse or encourage!

Yoga is about developing body awareness, getting to know your body inside out on the most intimate level. When you use a wall to facilitate your inversion practice, yes it is easier and yes you may get up and hold it and YES it's a nice comfort blanket to have... BUT, here's why it will hinder you in the long run:

- You don't develop as much body awareness as you would away from the wall. Your muscles and your mind get lazy because they know the wall is there to catch you.
- You are less aware of the small movements going on in the body because there is no need to focus on them, because if you fall... the wall WILL catch you.
- You learn more from falling out of a posture than you do when you hold it. Being against the wall takes away that valuable feedback from your muscles to your brain. **You need to understand WHY you are not holding it.**
- You don't have to worry about if you move your leg this way or lean that way and what could happen if you do that.
- The stabilizing muscles are less likely to engage and you're more likely to use the major muscle groups to find your balance against the wall.
- You will have a very very hard time moving away from the wall because you wouldn't have got over the fear of falling.

COME AWAY FROM THE WALL AND YOU WILL

- End up progressing faster because your body is pushed out of its comfort zone and is forced to adapt.
- Be able to invert anywhere without restriction.
- Learn to trust your body and the process.

Once you learn how to fall there is nothing holding you back from the posture.

Transaction: 5619

Headstand Press

STEP 1

Pressing into a headstand or any inversion requires the use of the core once your hips are stacked above your shoulders.

These exercises will make you ***STRONG***.

Here you have step 1 & 2 of how to get into a straddle press (legs apart). You can choose to keep your legs together and enter the headstand in what is called a pike press. This way is much harder and requires more activation from the core.

MY TIPS

- Your legs will not lift if your hips are not high enough.
- Do the full range of motion, from floor to a straight headstand.
- No jumping into these, lifting nice and slow to feel the burn.
- If you can't lift off the floor work on controlling the down phase instead from a straight headstand. This will build strength.
- Pull your belly button up and in towards your spine keeping your legs switched on and engaged.

STEP 2

Transaction: 5619

Forearmstand

Preparation...
Setting up for a pose is more important than thinking about holding the posture. If you focus on the process of how to do something, it's more likely to happen.

- Arms shoulder width apart.
- Wrists, Elbows and Shoulders are ALL aligned with each other – you can bring your hands towards each other as long as your elbows don't move outwards.
- Shoulders pulled back and down.
- Fingers pushing into the mat.

STEP 1

MY TIP
You have to find the balance of not pushing too much so you fall over and not pushing enough so you come back down.

P.S: REMEMBER, NO WALL!

Step 2 on next page >

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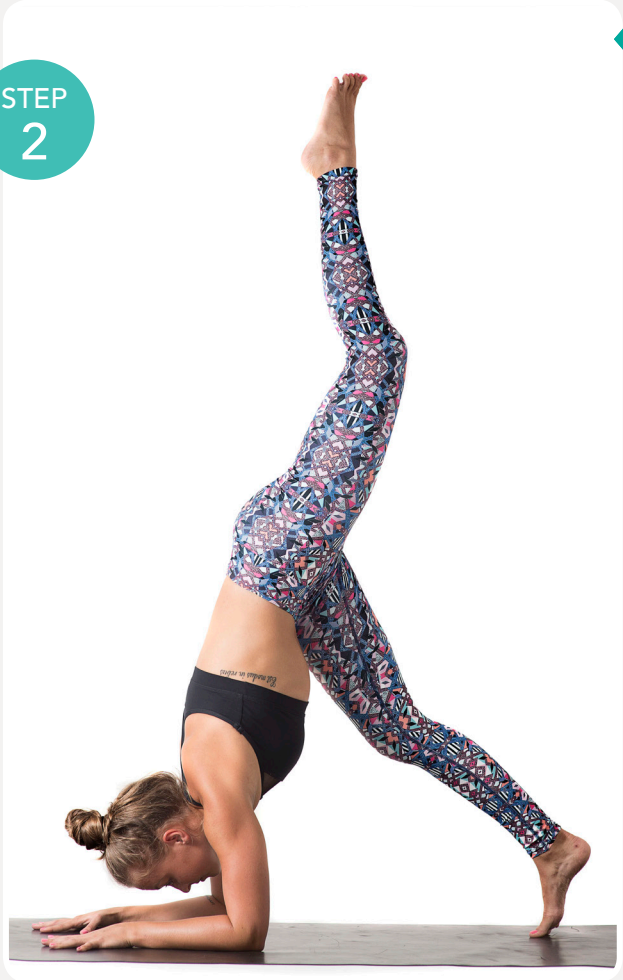
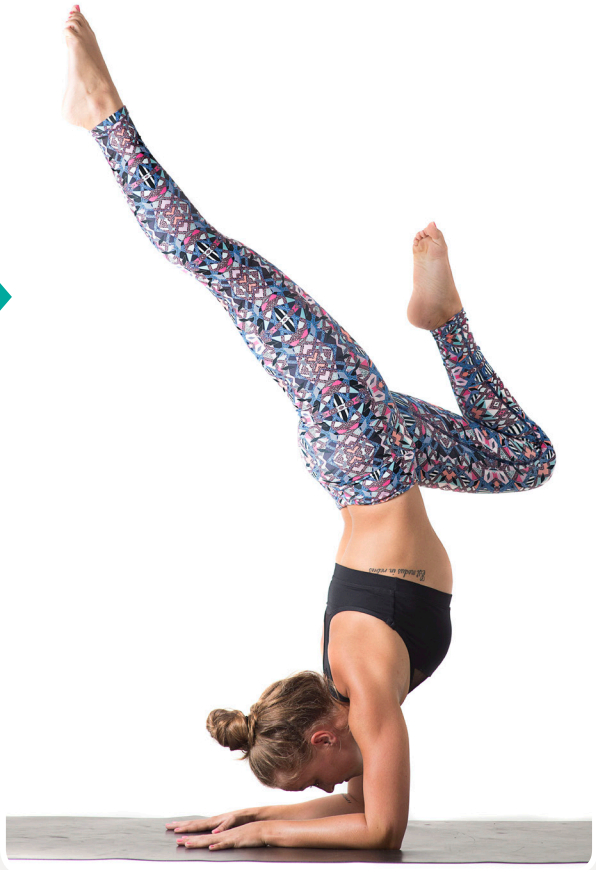
STEP 2



STEP 2:

- Once you're comfortable in dolphin, decide which leg will be the one pushing and which one will be lifting.
- Bring your "pushing" leg a little closer to your body to get your hips higher.
- Extend your lifting leg up and push it over the body. Your legs need to be active and your butt working to push that leg over.
- Allow your hips to move with the leg.
- Keep pushing through the shoulders.

STEP 3



Now it is a matter of 'catching' the forearmstand. This will happen when your hips are stacked over your shoulders.

STEP 3: This is my favourite way to catch my forearmstand because you can use your legs as levers. Imagine a see-saw, the top leg is pushing back and the bottom leg is pulling to the floor creating equal forces. Spend some time getting comfortable in this variation before trying straight legs.

Step 4 on next page >

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STEP 4: Holding a straight forearmstand is a lot trickier than a variation, so move slowly from step 3; keeping your core engaged, squeezing your butt, pulling your shoulders away from your ears and your toes reaching for the sky. If your core is weak you'll end up with a banana back so keep everything strong and tight!

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Handstands

A handstand has the same principles as a forearmstand, it's just that you have more freedom to move and you're a little higher off of the floor.

- Hands shoulder width apart.
- Fingers pushing into the matt to take the pressure off the wrists and to evenly distribute your weight in the hands. Doing this will also really help you balance and almost grip the mat.
- Look in between your hands and keep your gaze consistent.
- Belly button pulled up and towards the spine to tuck your tailbone. This will help avoid a banana back (arching of the spine).
- Push the floor away from you to make yourself as tall as you can.

Handstands... Strength Building

Grab a chair, a box, a bench or a table to help you learn how to shape your handstand and build strength. You're getting all the shoulder and core activation whilst at the same time getting used to being on your hands! These are great exercises to build confidence and strength but remember: Keep your hips high.

TIPS: The less weight on the feet the better!

STEP 1

Step 2 on next page >

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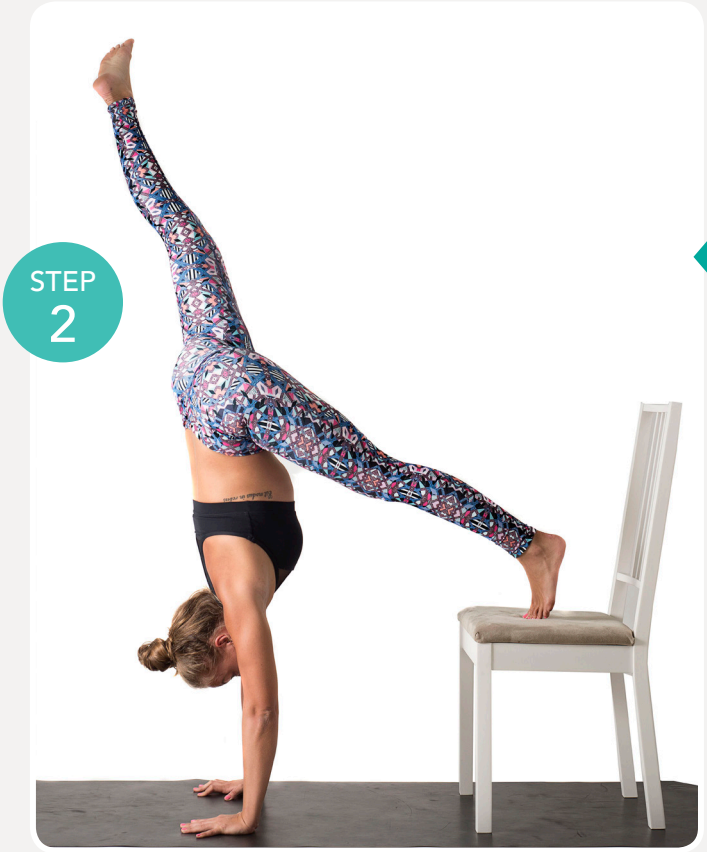

Begin to lift one leg up and over the body. You should start to feel less weight in your legs and more on your shoulders.

If you're feeling stable, try to push the top leg far enough back by activating the thigh and butt so that your other leg lifts up from the chair.

Notice how much my fingers are pushing into the mat.

If the words you spoke about yourself appeared on your skin, would you still be beautiful?

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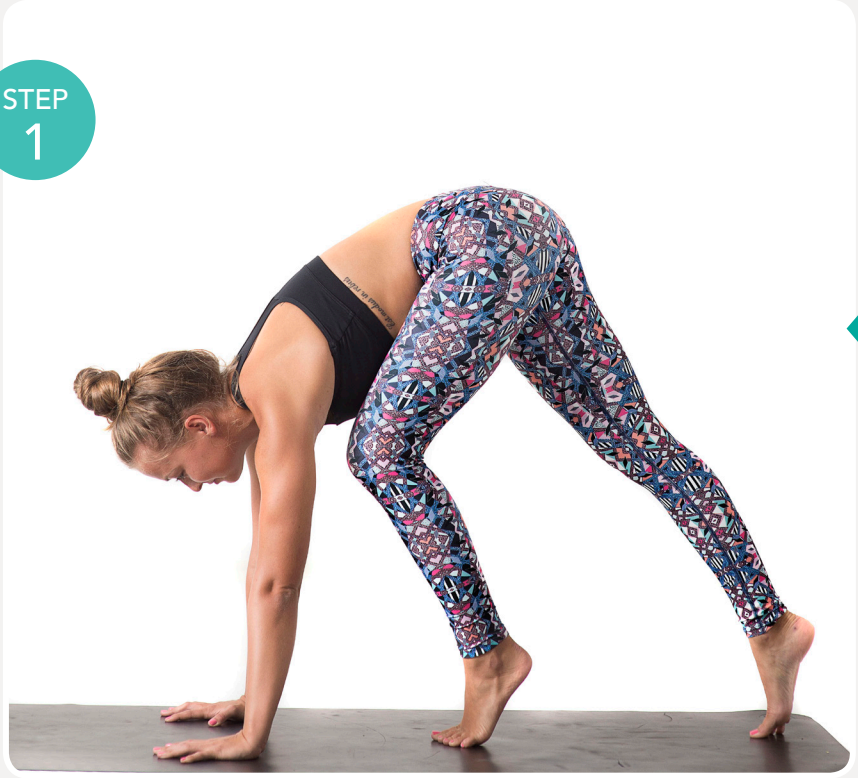
Handstands... One Step At a Time

STEP 1



Begin in Downward Dog, bring one leg in half way between your hands and feet. This leg will be the one that pushes.

STEP 2

Bring the other leg in and tuck it into your chest getting ready to extend it up and over the body.

Step 3 on next page >

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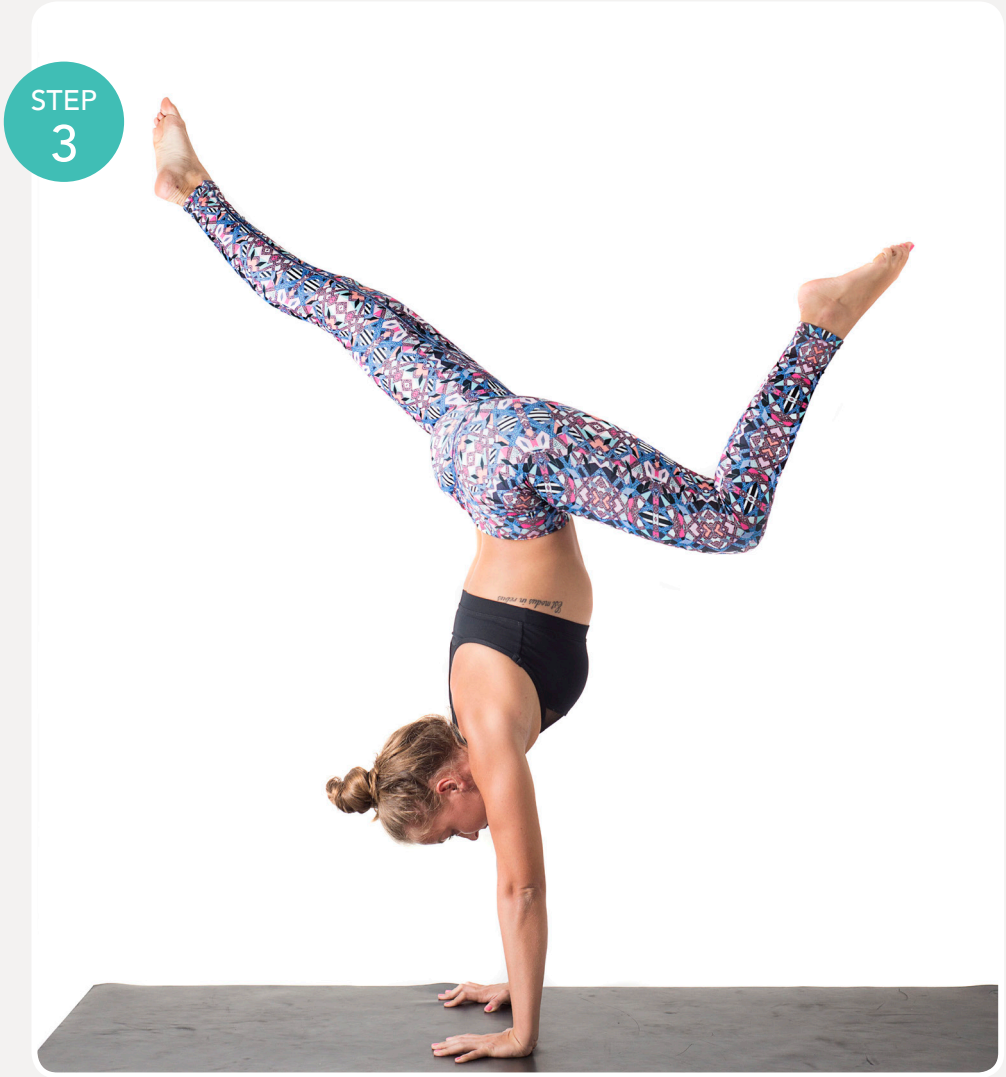

Here's the tricky part, catching the handstand. I chose this variation of the handstand similar to the forearmstand section because it will really help you understand where your center of gravity is, teach you how to shift and move your weight and help stabilize your body without sacrificing your technique.

There's a lot to think about in a handstand so each time you don't hold it, come down, reset and ask yourself why you didn't hold it or why you fell. Then, change a few things and try again. Try 5 attempts and then rest, you don't want your shoulders to burn out.

FALLING
It can be a little scary to fall for the first time but it's not as bad as you think it is. It helps if you're practicing on grass or something with a bit of cushion when you fall. There are a few ways to fall out of a handstand, personally I exit to the side. This is the safest way to get out of the handstand. If your back is warm you may find it easier to drop into Wheel pose.

Transaction: 5619

Bonus Section: Arm Balances

Flying Crow

Flying crow is one of those poses that is tricky to know where to place the knee on the arm. It is completely normal to get bruises just make sure that your weight is evenly distributed throughout the body.

MY TIPS

- Make sure that the arm is bent before you place the knee on your triceps. This creates a shelf so your knee doesn't roll on and off the arm.
- Arms shoulder width apart.
- Use your fingers.
- Activate your core and begin to lean forwards so that more weight is on your arms not your back leg. This is a really good way to familiarise yourself with the posture.

Step 2 on next page >

Transaction: 5619

STEP 2

Once your knee is stable on your triceps, wherever it feels more comfortable, you can begin to lift the back leg by tucking it first and lifting it high.

NOTICE: My arms are not at 90 degrees, if you lean too far forwards you will end up falling that way. You want to make sure that the arms are squeezing towards the body and not away from you – If you don't do this you will lose strength in the pose.

STEP 3

STEP 3 is just a matter of straightening that top leg, in order to do this you need to use your core to stabilize while the muscles in the legs are working hard to lift the leg as high as you can.

Try to tuck your tailbone to flatten your spine as much as you can to allow your hip to open, doing this will help get your leg higher!

Transaction: 5619

Flying Pigeon

STEP 1

- Begin in mountain pose, bring one leg up and place it across the body at a 90 degree angle so that the foot is on the outside of the opposite leg.
- Flex the foot to protect your knee.
- Slowly begin to bend the leg as you place your hands on the mat in front of you shoulder width apart.
- Your shin and your body should now be in contact with your foot. Ensure your leg is as high up on your arms as you can get it.

IMPORTANT
Wrap your toes around the outside of the arm. This will lock your arms and your leg in place, keep the pose strong and stop you from collapsing.

- Keep your hips high. The higher your hips, the less work you have to do when you are wanting to lift the other leg off of the floor.

Step 2 on next page >

Transaction: 5619

STEP 2

- Slowly begin to shift your weight forwards onto your hands pressing your fingers into the mat.
- Keep wrapping your toes around the outside of the arm.
- Squeeze your arms towards each other to stop them going outwards.
- Keep your hips nice and high.
- The back leg should start to feel lighter and lighter the more you lean into the pose.

STEP 3

- As you feel less weight in the back leg you can now try to lift the leg off of the mat slowly.
- Keep it tucked into the body with your thigh in contact with the leg underneath.
- Every part of the body should be actively engaged to ensure that the pose remains stable and strong.

Step 4 on next page >

Transaction: 5619

- As you push your leg up towards the sky, use the ball of the foot to press into the air to keep your leg strong.
- Make sure that your toes are constantly wrapping around your arm.

Challenge Flow

Mountain Pose > Hand to Big Toe > Flying Pigeon > Pigeon > King Pigeon

> *She woke up every morning with the option of being anyone she wished. How beautiful it was that she always chose herself.*

Transaction: 5619

Eight Angle

Eight angle is one of the first arm balances I taught myself, along with crow. This pose looks harder than it is and if you set up wrong, it becomes almost impossible. So make sure that your set up is thought through, that your foundation is strong and the rest will come before you know it!

- I've zoomed into this picture so you can see exactly where I am placing what:
  - My arms are about shoulder width apart or slightly outside.
  - One leg comes up and you place it on the back of the arm keeping both your arm and your leg bent. Here you have your shelf. The leg shouldn't slide or fall off, if this doesn't happen, you know you are ready to progress to step 2!

Step 2 on next page >

Transaction: 5619

STEP 2

- Wrap the bottom foot underneath the top one; keeping both feet flexed will help lock your legs into place.
- Using your core as you press your hands into the mat, lift yourself up.
- Make sure you get super comfortable in this position.

STEP 3

- Slowly begin to bend both arms in towards the side of your body; your elbow should be gravitating towards your hips.
- Keep your butt off of the floor.

Step 4 on next page >

Transaction: 5619

STEP 4

- Keep shifting your weight forwards and down as you extend the legs out to the side.
- Make sure you are squeezing your other arm into the side of your body.

MY TIPS

- Move slowly and controlled. Feeling each movement will help you understand the pose better.
- If you're feeling confused, try getting comfortable with steps 1 & 2... Once you understand how to set up the pose, steps 3 & 4 are a matter of learning how and where to shift your weight.

You may see me struggle, but you'll never see me quit.

Transaction: 5619

Stretch for Strength

Throughout this chapter you will find “mini-flows” or “mini- workouts” to include throughout your practice. For each of these you may choose how many repetitions you do of each but I will give you a few examples.

These are the kinds of movements I include in my own practice almost everyday to help combine my flexibility and strength to make my practice a little more challenging and fun!

Transaction: 5619

L-Sit

STEP 1

Place your hands beside the middle of your thighs sitting up straight. Pull your belly button to your spine and draw everything up and in. You should feel this burning in your lower core muscles. Begin to lift one leg off of the mat and alternate a few times.

TIP: If this is too much, grab your yoga blocks or a stack of books and place them under your hands to give you some height!

STEP 2

Step 3 on next page >

Transaction: 5619

- Try lifting both legs at the same time and hold it for as long as you can. At first it might not even be a second but as you get stronger you'll be able to hold it longer and longer!

Challenge Flow

Repeat 3-4 times: Hold for as long as you can > 1 minute rest

> *To the mind that is still, the whole universe surrenders.*

Transaction: 5619

Downward Dog > Plank

Flow between Downward Dog and plank to heat up your core and hamstrings. Try doing 10 repetitions of each for a total of 3-4 rounds. I want you to really focus your attention on feeling the engagement in your lower abdominal muscles.

STEP 1

Inhale

STEP 2

Exhale

Downward Dog > Upward Dog

A great way to open up your spine and warm up your hamstrings. Flow between both of these poses 10 times and repeat twice!

STEP 1

Exhale

STEP 2

Inhale

Transaction: 5619

Chaturanga > Upward Dog

Aim for 5 repetitions of each, working your way up to 10 as you get stronger! I'd rather you did less repetitions but did them well than doing 10 and doing them poorly. Make sure your technique stays strong even when you're getting tired or you wont get the benefits!

STEP 1

Exhale

STEP 2

Inhale

Transaction: 5619

Dolphin > Downward Dog

TIP: Make sure that when you push from dolphin to Downward Dog you lift both elbows at the same time. Try to avoid straightening one arm and then the other. Your hands should not need to move from their place!

Let the triceps burn begin... Try for 3 rounds of 5-10 repetitions

STEP 1

Inhale

STEP 2

Exhale

Transaction: 5619

Side Plank > Splits

Psst... Make sure you do both sides!!

STEP 1

STEP 2

Step 3 on next page >

Transaction: 5619

STEP 3

KEEP IT GOING
This flow is a little tricky to move in and out of easily so here's a little extra to help you...

SIDE PLANK WITH THE LEG UP > SPLITS > PLANK > SIDE PLANK

I hope there are days when you fall in love with being alive.

Transaction: 5619

Crow Push-Ups

STEP 1

TIP: Keep squeezing your legs into your arms as you lower down and push back up!

STEP 2

Aim to work your way up to 5 repetitions and more!

Backbend Push-Ups

STEP 1

Inhale

STEP 2

Exhale

Find Your Flow

Transaction: 5619

Sun Salutations

In my first e-book, I gave you 3 of my favourite sun salutations. In this flow section you'll find 4 completely new Sun Salutations to add into your practice.

Flowing is a great way to help open up your body which will allow you to get into more advanced and deeper poses later on in your practice. Since the poses in the e-book are advanced, I want you to spend longer flowing.

In case you forgot the fundamentals of flowing, here are some key things to remember:

- You can choose to stay in each pose for as long as you like, I have included the breathing sequence with each pose to indicate whether to inhale or exhale into the posture.
- Any pose which requires energy or heats the body i.e. plank will be a pose you inhale into.
- Any pose which is restorative or cooling will require you to exhale into it i.e. downward dog or child's pose.
- During backbends, when you want to get deeper into the posture, exhale and push a little more.
- With flows that open up one side of the body first, you will start with your right side and then move onto your left side. Completing R & L sides will mean you have completed 1 full round.
- Feel free to mix and match the flows from this book and the previous book, aim to complete a total of 8-10 sun salutations before going into any deeper poses or flows.

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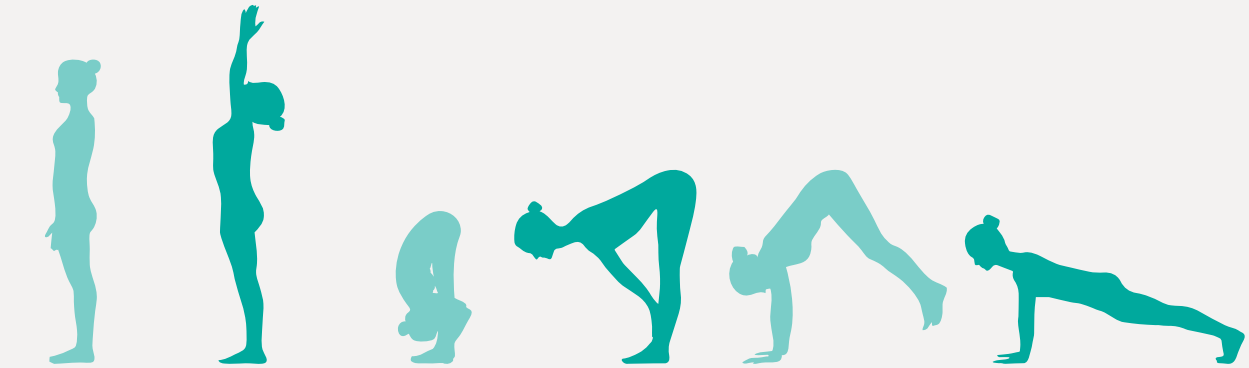
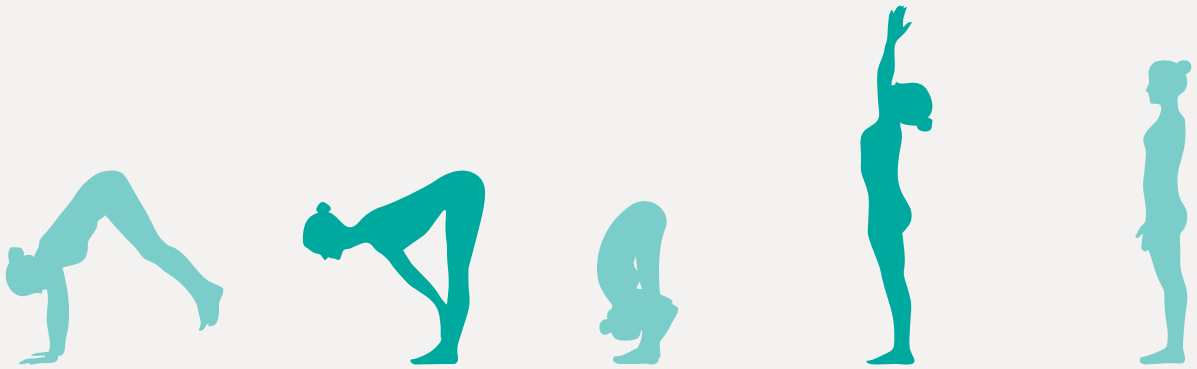
Sun Salutation A



Mountain Pose **(E)** | Extended Mountain Pose **(I)** | Forward Fold **(E)** | Half Forward Fold **(I)** | Jump Back **(E)** | Plank **(I)**

Knees, Chest, Chin **(E)** | Upward Dog **(I)** | 3-Legged Downward Dog **(I)** | Plank Knee to Elbow **(E)**



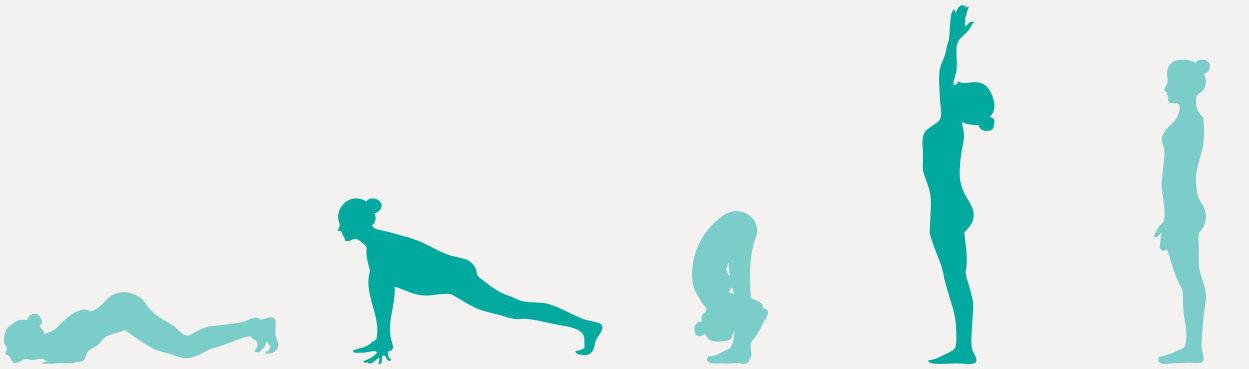
Jump Forwards **(E)** | Half Forward Fold **(I)** | Forward Fold **(E)** | Extended Mountain Pose **(I)** | Mountain Pose **(E)**

Transaction: 5619

Sun Salutation B

Mountain Pose **(E)** | Extended Mountain Pose **(I)** | Forward Fold **(E)** | Warrior 1 **(I)** | Pyramid Pose **(E)** | Plank **(I)**

Downward Dog **(E)** | 3-Legged Downward Dog **(I)** | Pigeon **(E)** | Plank **(I)**



Knees, Chest, Chin **(E)** | Lunge **(I)** | Forward Fold **(E)** | Extended Mountain Pose **(I)** | Mountain Pose **(E)**

Transaction: 5619

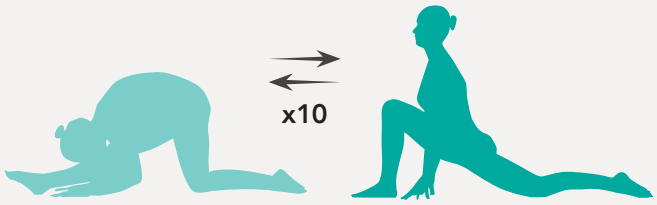
Sun Salutation C

Mountain Pose **(E)**

Extended Mountain Pose **(I)**

Forward Fold **(E)**

Crescent Pose **(I)**



Hip Vinyasa

(E) **(I)**

Chaturanga **(E)**

Upward Dog **(I)**

Downward Dog with a Twist **(E)**

Lunge **(I)**

Forward Fold **(E)**

Extended Mountain Pose **(I)**

Mountain Pose **(E)**

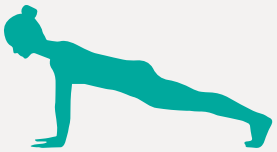
Transaction: 5619

Sun Salutation D

Mountain Pose
(E)

Extended Mountain Pose
(I)

Forward Fold
(E)

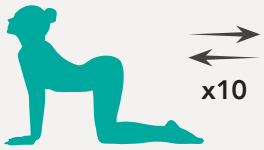


Plank
(I)

Chaturanga
(E)

Cobra Pose
(I)

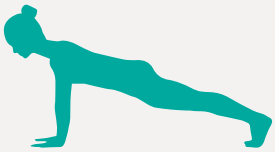
Childs Pose
(E)



Cow Pose
(I)

Cat Pose
(E)

Reclined Hero Pose
(E)



Plank
(I)

Downward Dog with a Twist
(E)

Jump Forwards
(I)

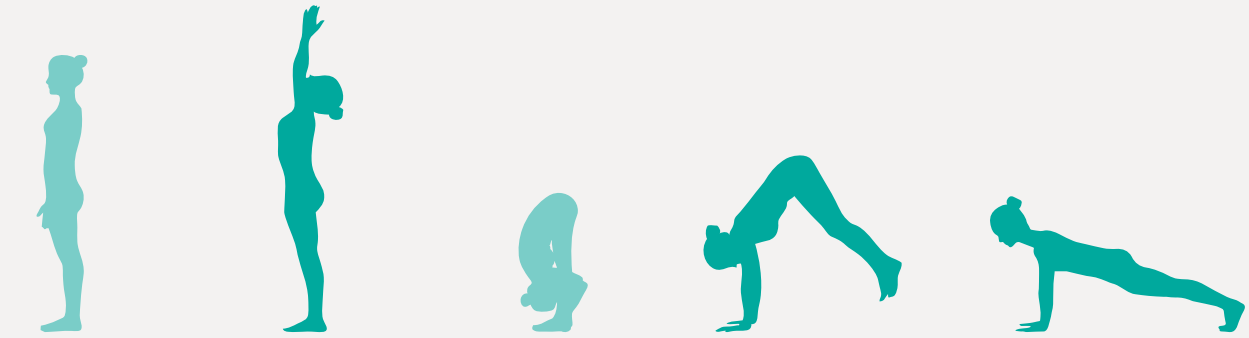
Forward Fold
(E)

Extended Mountain Pose
(I)

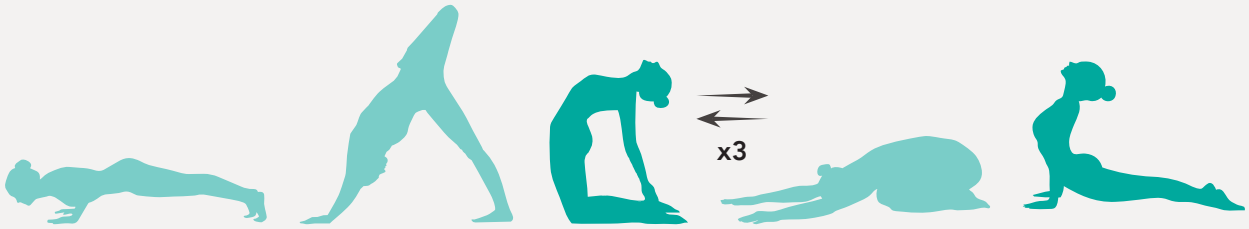
Mountain Pose
(E)

Transaction: 5619

Backbend Flow 1

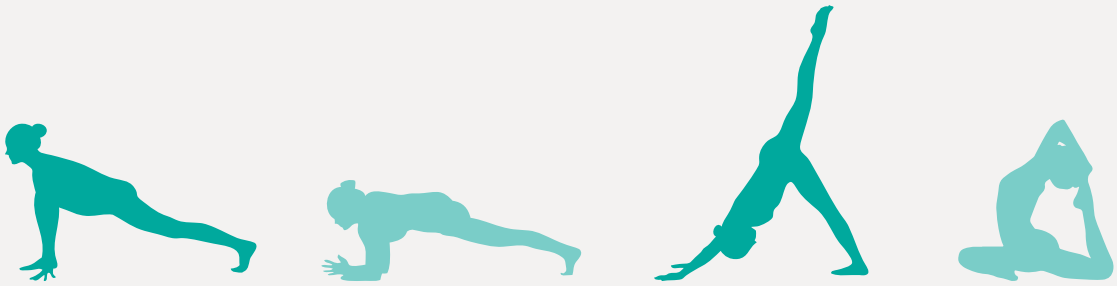


Mountain Pose **(E)** | Extended Mountain Pose **(I)** | Forward Fold **(E)** | Jump Back **(I)** | Plank **(I)**



Chaturanga **(E)** | Downward Dog with a Twist **(E)** | Camel Pose **(I)** | Childs Pose **(E)** | Upward Dog **(I)**

Downward Dog **(E)** | Lunge (R) **(I)** | Lizard Pose (R) **(E)** | Downward Dog **(E)**



Lunge (L) **(I)** | Lizard Pose (L) **(E)** | 3-Legged Downward Dog (R) **(I)** | King Pigeon (R) **(E)**

Continues on next page >

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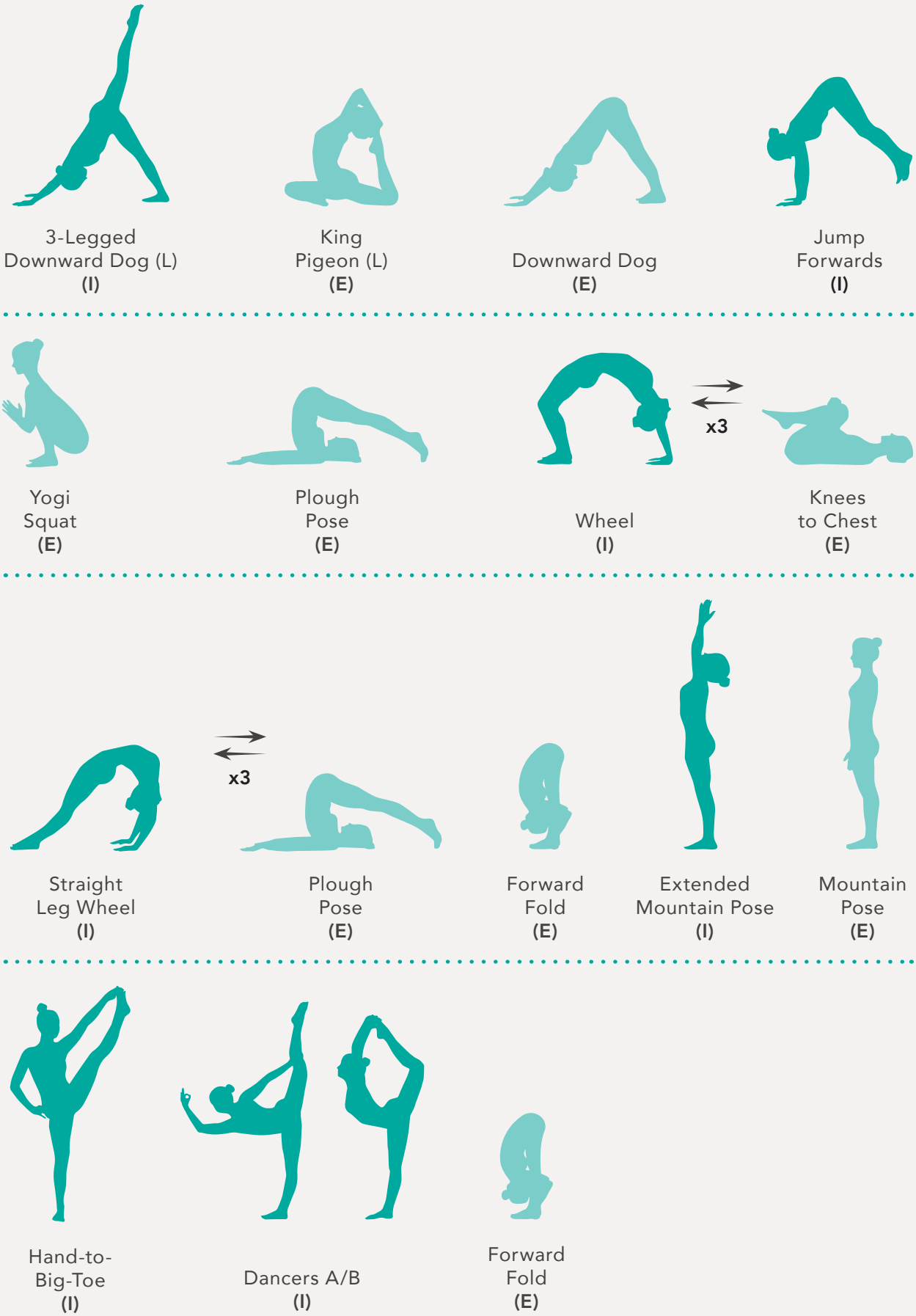
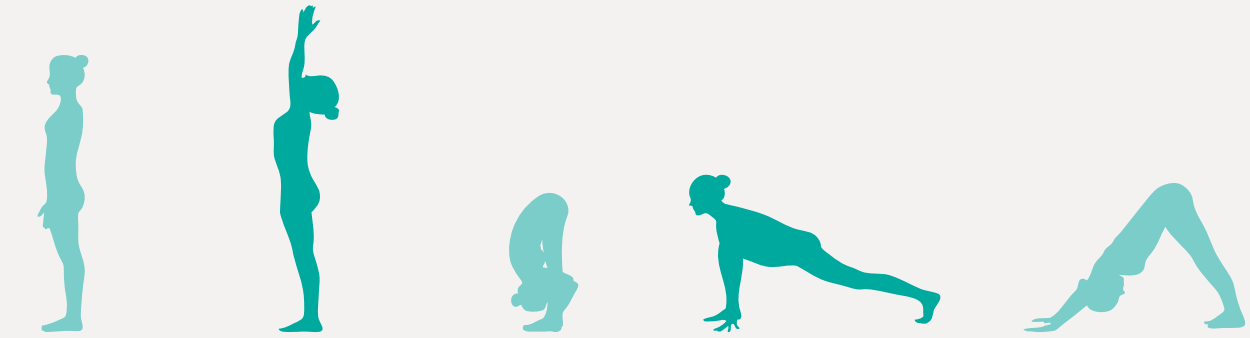


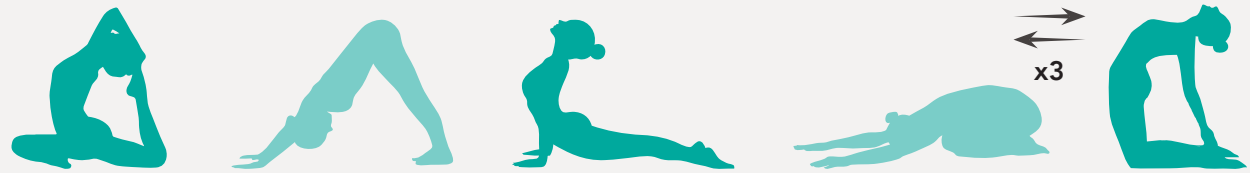
Backbend Flow 2



Mountain Pose **(E)** | Extended Mountain Pose **(I)** | Forward Fold **(E)** | Lunge (R) **(I)** | Downward Dog **(E)**

Plank **(I)** | Cat Pose **(E)** | Cow Pose **(I)** | Knees, Chest, Chin **(E)** | Cobra Pose **(I)**

Childs Pose **(E)** | Straight Leg Wheel **(I)** | Downward Dog **(E)** | King Pigeon (R) **(I)** | Downward Dog **(E)**



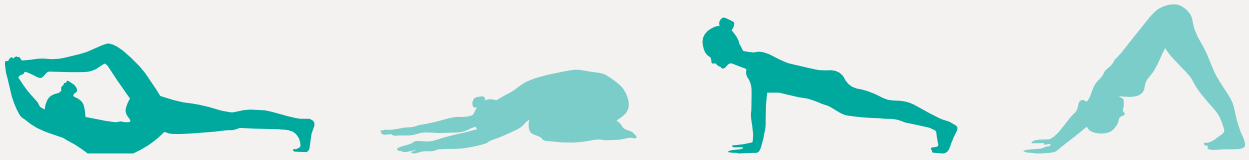
King Pigeon (R) **(I)** | Downward Dog **(E)** | Upward Dog **(I)** | Childs Pose **(E)** | Camel Pose **(I)**

Continues on next page >

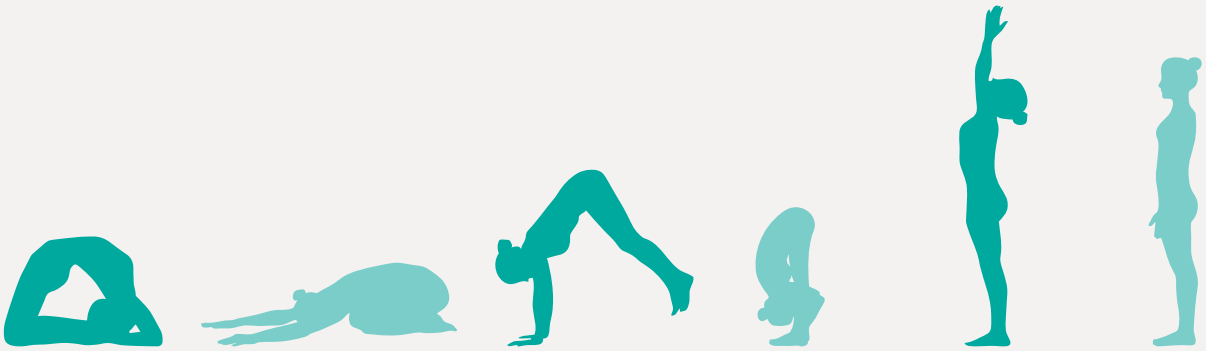
Transaction: 5619

Downward Dog **(E)** | Jump Forwards **(I)** | Plough Pose **(E)** | Wheel **(I)** | Knees to Chest **(E)**

Wheel One Leg Up **(I)** | Forward Fold **(E)** | Jump Back **(I)** | Downward Dog **(E)** | Plank **(I)**



Fallen Dancer Pose **(I)** | Childs Pose **(E)** | Plank **(I)** | Downward Dog **(E)**



Full Camel Pose **(I)** | Childs Pose **(E)** | Jump Forwards **(I)** | Forward Fold **(E)** | Extended Mountain Pose **(I)** | Mountain Pose **(E)**

Transaction: 5619

Splits Flow

Mountain Pose **(E)**

Extended Mountain Pose **(I)**

Forward Fold **(E)**

Jump Back **(I)**

Downward Dog **(E)**

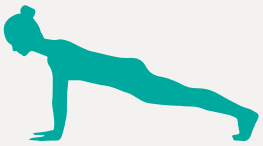
x10

Hip Vinyasa

(I) **(E)**

3-Legged Downward Dog **(I)**

Pigeon Pose **(E)**



Plank **(I)**

Downward Dog **(E)**

Jump Forwards **(I)**

One-Legged Forward Fold **(E)**

Half Forward Fold **(I)**

Pyramid Pose **(E)**

x10

Lizard Pose **(I)**

Downward Dog **(E)**

Continues on next page >

Transaction: 5619

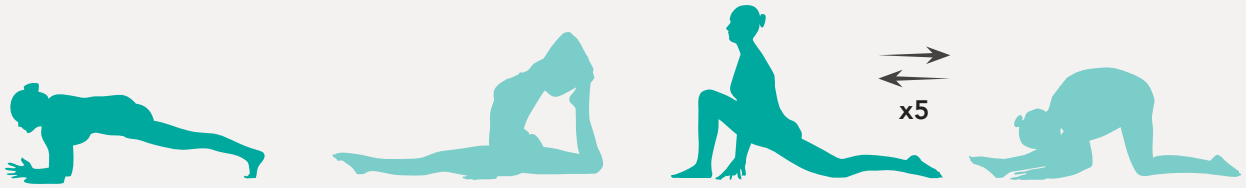
Hip Vinyasa
(I) (E)

Splits
(E)

Hip Vinyasa
(I) (E)

Plank
(I)

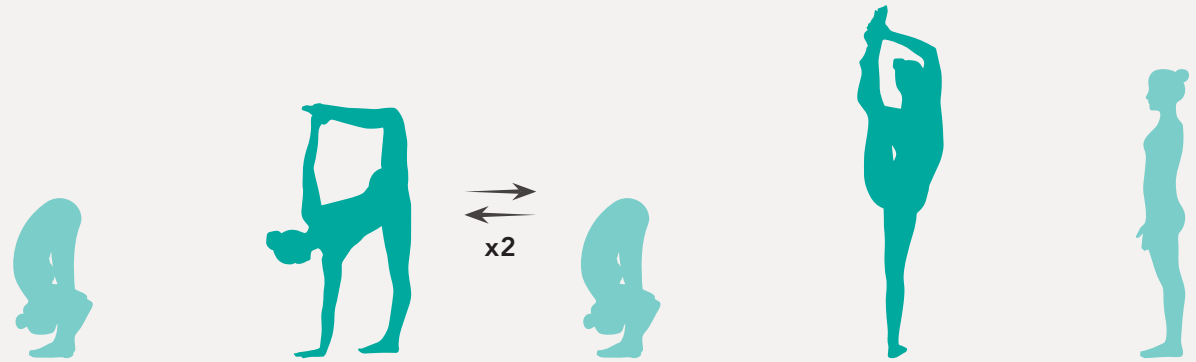
Downward Dog
(E)



Lizard Pose
(I)

King Pigeon Splits
(E)

Hip Vinyasa
(I) (E)



Forward Fold
(E)

Sugar Cane Pose
(I)

Forward Fold
(E)

Standing Compass
(I)

Mountain Pose
(E)

Transaction: 5619

Challenge Flows

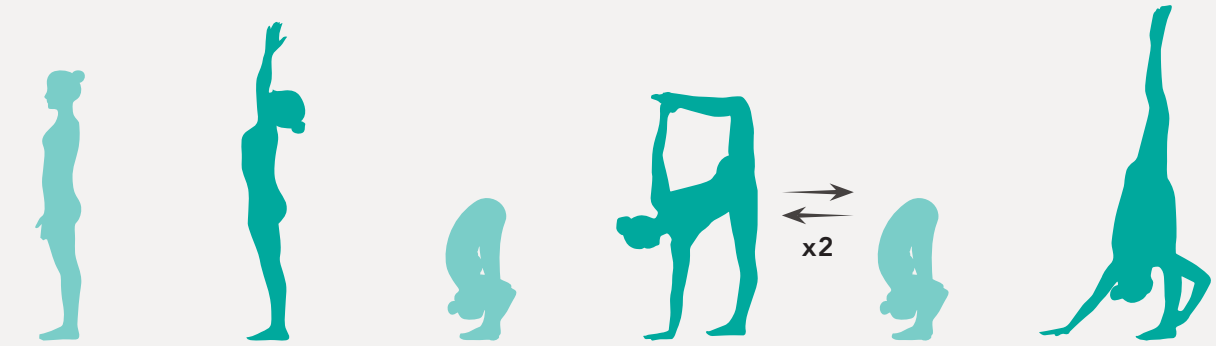
So now you're learning all of these new poses, it's time to put them into action. These flows are short and sweet but should come at a point in your practice when you are very warm but not too tired, you'll need your strength. You will see that I'll get you straight into the splits or a handstand so make sure you've warmed up your entire body for these dynamic flows or you could risk getting injured.

You can choose to take your time with these flows, holding the poses for a few breaths at a time or you can choose to move in and out of the poses using your breath. Again, the breaths indicate how you should enter the pose, so once you're in the pose, please breathe normally.

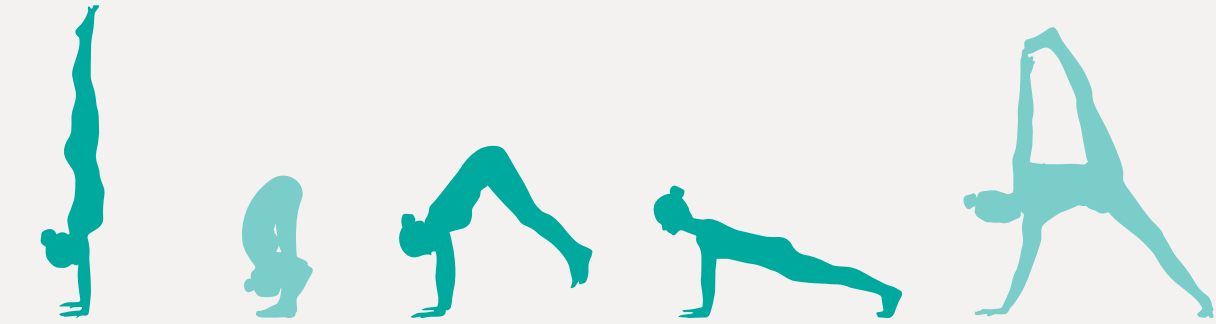
These flows will test your ability to transition from pose to pose smoothly and efficiently, while being fun and challenging at the same time. Once you know the structure of the flows, don't be afraid to get creative and make some of your own up to keep your body on it's toes!

Transaction: 5619

Challenge Flow 1

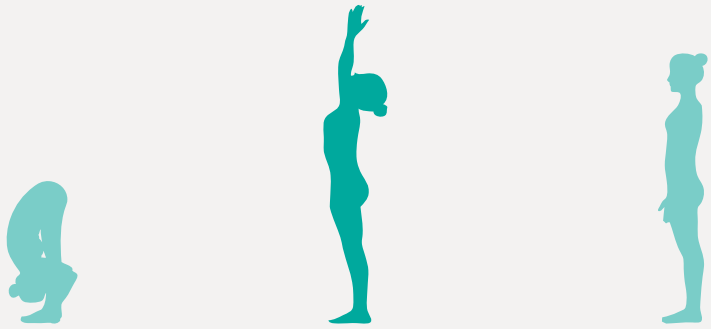


Mountain Pose **(E)** · Extended Mountain Pose **(I)** · Forward Fold **(E)** · Sugar Cane Pose **(I)** · Forward Fold **(E)** · Standing Splits **(I)**



Handstand **(I)** · Forward Fold **(E)** · Jump Back **(I)** · Plank **(I)** · Side Plank Leg Up **(I)**

Splits **(E)** · King Pigeon Splits **(I)** · Downward Dog **(E)** · Jump Forwards **(I)**



Forward Fold **(E)** · Extended Mountain Pose **(I)** · Mountain Pose **(E)**

Transaction: 5619

Challenge Flow 2

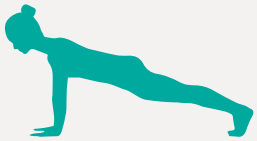
Mountain Pose **(E)**

Extended Mountain Pose **(I)**

Forward Fold **(E)**

Jump Back **(I)**

Downward Dog **(E)**



Plank **(I)**

Jump Forwards **(I)**

Plough Pose **(E)**

Wheel Pose **(I)**

Plough Pose **(E)**

Straight Leg Wheel **(I)**

Plough Pose **(E)**

Forearm Wheel **(I)**

Continues on next page >

Transaction: 5619

Downward Dog
(E)

Dolphin Pose
(I)

Forearm
Stand
(I)

Dolphin Pose
(I)

Downward Dog
(E)

Jump
Back
(I)

Forward
Fold
(E)

Extended
Mountain Pose
(I)

Mountain
Pose
(E)

Transaction: 5619

Challenge Flow 3

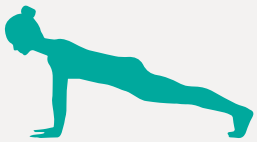
Mountain Pose
(E)

Extended Mountain Pose
(I)

Forward Fold
(E)

Flying Pigeon
(I)

Downward Dog
(E)



Plank
(I)

Knees, Chest, Chin
(E)

Upward Dog
(I)

Downward Dog
(E)

Jump Forwards
(I)

Forward Fold
(E)

Yogi Squat
(E)

Flying Crow Pose
(I)

Downward Dog
(E)

Jump Forwards
(I)

Forward Fold
(E)

Extended Mountain Pose
(I)

Mountain Pose
(E)

Transaction: 5619

Thank You...

First things first, thank you for believing in me and purchasing my e-book. Your support means a lot. I hope that you love your copy of my #letsstartyoga 2.0 e-book and that it helps you progress in your yoga journey. Just because you have my e-book doesn't mean that's the end of our relationship. If you have any questions, any issues or you just want to check in and show me how you're progressing, please send me an email!

Family & Friends

I'd like to thank my friends and family for believing in me and helping turn my dreams into reality. I couldn't have done any of this without them. A big thank you to Noora Sharafi for contributing to the design of the flows section in the e-book.

sharafi.noora@gmail.com

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