

11 SIMPLE YOGA POSES

To help with stress & tackle anxiety

STRESS ZAPS OUR ENERGY—BOTH PHYSICAL AND MENTAL. WHEN OUR MENTAL ENERGY IS DEPLETED, WE SIMPLY CAN'T DEAL. BUT YOGA GIVES US TOOLS TO COPE. IF YOU'RE STRUGGLING TO FIND A LITTLE PEACE, MAYBE IT'S TIME TO TUNE MORE INTO YOUR BODY AS OPPOSED TO LESS. THIS SEQUENCE OF BEGINNER YOGA POSES (ASANAS) CAN HELP ADDRESS THE SYMPTOMS OF STRESS AND LEAVE YOU FEELING BOTH MORE PEACEFUL AND MORE ENERGIZED.

1

STANDING BACKBEND

Ardha Chakrasana



THIS HEAD-TO-TOE POSE HELPS YOU BALANCE YOURSELF AND REDUCE ANXIETY WHILE OPENING THE CHEST AND INCREASING SPINAL FLEXIBILITY.

HOW TO

- Stand on your yoga mat with your feet together, whether with toes touching or at shoulder-width depending on what feels right for you.
- Rest your hands on the lower back with fingers pointed towards your spine. Inhale.
- Exhale while you gently bend backward. The ideal level would be until you feel the tingle on the spine. Do not bend your knees. If you want to increase the difficulty, do the backbend with arms raised overhead.
- Breathing deeply, remain in the pose for a count of 10.
- Release the pose with a deep inhale and return to the starting position.
- This is one repetition. Repeat 3 to 5 times.

2

STANDING FORWARD FOLD

Padahasthasana



THIS SIMPLE POSE RELEASES TENSION IN YOUR SHOULDERS, NECK, AND BACK AND IMPROVES BLOOD FLOW TO THE BRAIN, HELPING TO UNCLOG THE MIND.

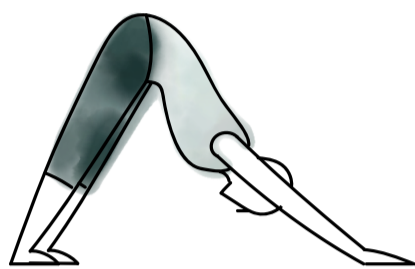
HOW TO

- Stand on the mat, letting your hands rest on either side of the body, feet together.
- Inhale deeply and lift the hands up over your head.
- Exhale slowly as you bend your body forward, and bring your arms down beside you.
- Bend at the hips as much as possible, as opposed to arching the spine. Better to bend your knees a little than strain your back.
- Let the palms rest flat on the floor or touch fingertips to your toes. If not, let arms hang and gently sway your hips.
- Breath deeply, tuck in your tummy, hold the position for a count of 20.
- Rise to standing with a straight spine as your arms rise beside you, ending up over your head, then back at your sides.
- This is one repetition. Repeat 3 to 5 times.

3

DOWNWARD FACING DOG

Adhomukha Svanasana



DOWNWARD DOG PROVIDES A MULTITUDE OF BENEFITS. AN ACTIVE RESTING POSE, IT TONES THE TUMMY, STRETCHES THE HAMSTRINGS, AND ENGAGES THE ARMS.

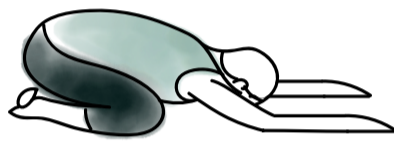
HOW TO

- Stand straight at the top of the mat with your hands resting alongside your body, palms facing the thighs.
- Inhale and as you exhale bend forward at the hips. Bring your hands to the floor at shoulder width with the fingers spread out. Bend your knees if you have to.
- One at a time, stretch each leg backward, also at shoulder width, so you're bent at about a 90° angle. Your hands and feet should be aligned.
- Go ahead and "walk the dog" a little to stretch get a feel for the pose (rhythmically bend your elbows and knees and sway your hips). Come to rest but do not bend the knees and elbows now. Your heels may not touch the ground and that's OK.
- Breath but keep your abdomen tucked inward. Let your head hang naturally. Breathing deeply, hold the pose for a count of 30 or 60 seconds.
- Gently exhale, walk your hands back to meet your feet, rise, and relax.

4

CHILD'S POSE

Balāsana



A COMPLETELY RELAXED POSE, THIS GENTLE FORWARD BEND ALLOWS BETTER FLOW OF BLOOD TO THE BRAIN. IT IS A RESTING AND RELAXATION POSE THAT YOU CAN USE IN BETWEEN CHALLENGING POSES—OR AS A QUICK CALM-DOWN.

HOW TO

- Kneel on mat with your hands and knees on the floor (Table Top Pose).
- Take a deep inhalation and as you exhale, both crouch back and lean down so your forehead can rest on the mat. You can keep your knees wide or bend over them.
- Stretch your hands forward. The palms can face the ceiling or floor.
- Do some deep breathing and remain in the pose for a count of 30 or 60 seconds.
- Inhale as you rise back to your hands and knees.

5

EASY SITTING POSE

Sukhasana



THIS IS A GREAT HIP OPENING AND SPINE STRENGTHENING POSE WHICH CAN HELP YOUR POSTURE. WITH THE RIGHT MINDSET, IT'S ALSO VERY RELAXING. IF THE POSITION IS HARD ON YOUR KNEES, SIT ON A FOLDED BLANKET, A PILLOW, OR A YOGA BLOCK TO RAISE YOUR HIPS A LITTLE.

HOW TO

- Sit on your yoga mat and cross your legs so your right foot is beneath the left thigh, and vice versa. Or use another accessible cross-legged seat. Keep the spine erect.
- Close your eyes and place your hands on the knees or thighs. Breath deeply and relax.
- Switch legs halfway through to open hips evenly.

6

SEATED FORWARD FOLD

Paschimottasana



WHILE THIS POSE IS QUITE BASIC, IT'S ALSO RATHER TOUGH. DON'T WORRY AT ALL IF YOU CAN'T TOUCH YOUR TOES. DONE RIGHT, THIS POSE HELPS DE-STRESS WHILE YOU RELAX YOUR BACK, MASSAGE YOUR BELLY, AND STRETCH YOUR HAMSTRINGS. IT CAN HELP IMPROVE DIGESTION AS WELL.

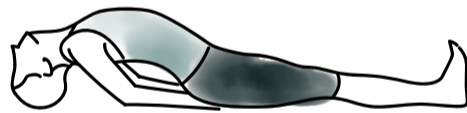
HOW TO

- Sit on the mat, spine straight, and stretch your legs out in front with your toes pointed to the ceiling.
- Inhale and lift your hands overhead. Gently look up at your fingertips while elongating the spine.
- Exhale, bend forward at the thighs and be careful to not strain the lower back.
- Simultaneously bring the hands down and touch your shins, ankles, or toes.
- Let your head drop, keeping toes pointed upward.
- Breath softly and hold the pose for a 30 count.
- Exhale, release gently, and repeat several times.

7

FISH POSE

Matsyasan



THIS MINI-INVERSION GETS THE BLOOD FLOWING TO YOUR BRAIN, AND CAN WORK YOUR ABS IF YOU LIFT YOUR LEGS.

HOW TO

- Lie on the mat on your back, legs together, toes pointing to the ceiling.
- Place your palms beneath your butt, back of hands against your body.
- Curl your tailbone, hug your elbows close.
- Inhale deeply, use your arms to lift your head and torso from the floor.
- Tilt the head back slowly, allowing the top back to rest on the mat. Do not turn your head!
- Keep your chest up by firmly pressing the elbows and hands on the mat. If you want, you can lift your straight legs and point the toes.
- Indulge in deep breaths and hold the pose for 10 seconds.
- Exhale, slowly release, and repeat 3–5 times.

8

BRIDGE POSE

Sethubhandasana



THIS POSE HELPS UNWIND YOUR BACK AND WORK MOST MAJOR MUSCLE GROUPS AS IT DE-STRESSES YOUR MIND.

HOW TO

- Lie on your back, bend both knees and place your feet flat on the floor hip width apart. Place the arms beside the body, palms facedown with your fingertips barely touching your heels.
- Press the feet into the floor, inhale and lift the straight hips up.
- Press down with your arms and shoulders to lift the chest a bit. Engage the legs, buttocks and mula bandha to lift the hips higher.
- If you can, clasp your hands on the floor underneath your raised hips.
- Breathe and hold for several breaths. To release, exhale and slowly roll the spine back to the floor. If you want, release your arms over your heads first, then roll the spine back down.
- Repeat 3–5 times.

9

LEGS UP THE WALL

Viparita Karani



THIS UNUSUAL POSE CREATES AWARENESS OF BODY AND BREATH. ANOTHER GREAT POSE FOR BLOOD CIRCULATION, WHICH IS BOTH RELAXING AND ENERGY-BOOSTING.

HOW TO

- Put one end of your mat against the wall then sit on your mat, close enough to the wall that one of your hips touches it.
- Lie back and pull knees to your chest and let your lower back rest on the floor.
- Using your arms, rotate so your butt faces the wall and your straightened legs can go up it. It can be difficult.
- You can lie with palms down, arms out to the sides, or with one hand on your belly and one on your chest.
- Breath deeply and hold the pose with your eyes closed.
- To exit, pull the knees back to your chest and roll on to your right.

10

ALTERNATE NOSTRIL BREATHING

Anuloma Viloma Pranayama



THIS IS A POWERFUL BREATHING TECHNIQUE THAT HELPS CALM THE NERVOUS SYSTEM. SURE, IT'S A LITTLE TRICKY AT FIRST BUT YOU'LL QUICKLY GET THE HANG OF IT. DO IT REGULARLY YOU'LL START NOTICING THE BENEFITS IN JUST A FEW DAYS. GREAT FOR OPENING AND CLOSING A YOGA SESSION.

HOW TO

- Sit on the yoga mat in easy sitting pose, and rest your hands on your thighs.
- Lift your right hand to your face. Put the right thumb on your right nostril, the right middle and ring fingers on your forehead, and the ring and pinky fingers on your left nostril.
- Press your thumb to close your right nostril.
- Inhale via the left nostril for five seconds.
- Close your left nostril and hold the breath for five seconds.
- Open the right nostril, and exhale for five seconds.
- Now, inhale back through the right nostril for five seconds then close it. Hold the breath again for five, then exhale via the left nostril.
- This completes one round. Do 20 total, or more if desired.

11

CORPSE POSE

Shavasana



RELAX YOURSELF COMPLETELY WITH THE SIMPLEST ASANA THERE IS. JUST DO THIS ONE IF YOU DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THE OTHER POSES LISTED ABOVE.

HOW TO

- Lie down on your back on your yoga mat and close your eyes.
- If comfortable, have your feet spread enough that they're off the mat. Spread out your arms as well, palms up.
- Put a pillow under your knees if you like and relax all the muscles in your body—remember your face!
- Focus on the sensation of simply lying there and breathing.
- Stay in this pose for at least five minutes—or as long as you like.