

MIND & BODY

Mindful Stretching Exercises Using Yoga Poses

What is it?

It's a form of stretching using breath work and easy yoga poses to generate awareness of body and mind and the connection between the two.

Why do it?

There are many benefits to mindful stretching using yoga poses. It can help:

- Calm and clear your mind
- Reduce stress
- Improve flexibility
- Bring your energy under control

- Ease your pain
- Improve your physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being

How do you do it?

- Set aside 15 minutes of uninterrupted time every day.
- Wear gym clothes without shoes.
- Spread out a yoga mat, blanket, or towel.
- Gather two exercise blocks or rolled-up towels or blankets.
- Start seated.

Follow the instructions and images below.

SIT on a yoga mat, towel, or blanket. Place blocks or other padding as needed under your knees or for help doing any of the exercises (such as the lunge). To prevent injury, it's important not to overstretch your body—knees, hips, back, or shoulders—until something hurts. Let your body be your guide.

When doing these exercises, instead of focusing on time, focus on your breathing and aim to take two deep breaths during each stretch.

SEATED SIDE STRETCH | stretches deep core muscles and opens your torso

1 Sit still and breathe, feeling your breath through your nose, mouth, and lungs.

2 Inhale and raise up your right arm.

3 Exhale as you lean to the left—feel the stretch on your right side.

4 Inhale and come back up.

5 Drop your arm down and notice the openness on your right side compared to your left.
6 Repeat on the other side.



SEATED SIDE TWIST | opens your torso and energizes you

1 Lengthen your spine from tailbone up through your crown by pressing your sitting bones into the floor.

2 Inhale deeply, exhale, and twist to the left from your tailbone up; reach with your hand to opposite knee or further.

3 Hold as you inhale, lengthen, and exhale.

4 Return to center.
5 Repeat on the other side.

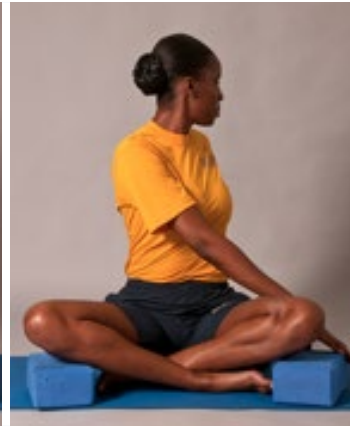


TABLE POSE | focuses on core strength

1 Place your arms directly beneath your shoulders, knees beneath hips, belly drawn into spine.
2 Inhale.

3 Exhale and lift up your mid-back as you drop your head and hips down.

4 Inhale and drop your belly down while lifting your tailbone and head, exploring sensations in your spine.

5 Come back to center.
6 Repeat one more time.



TABLE POSE, ARMS AND LEGS EXTENDED | builds stamina

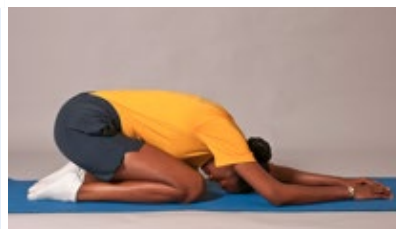
1 Place your arms directly beneath your shoulders, knees beneath hips, belly drawn into spine.
2 Draw your left arm forward and right leg back, pull your navel in toward your spine, and lengthen your body from fingers to toes.



4 Repeat on the other side.



3 Exhale and drop to rest your bottom on your heels or support your bottom on blankets or blocks.



5 Release all muscle control and enjoy the rest.



KNEELING LUNGE TO STANDING WARRIOR ONE

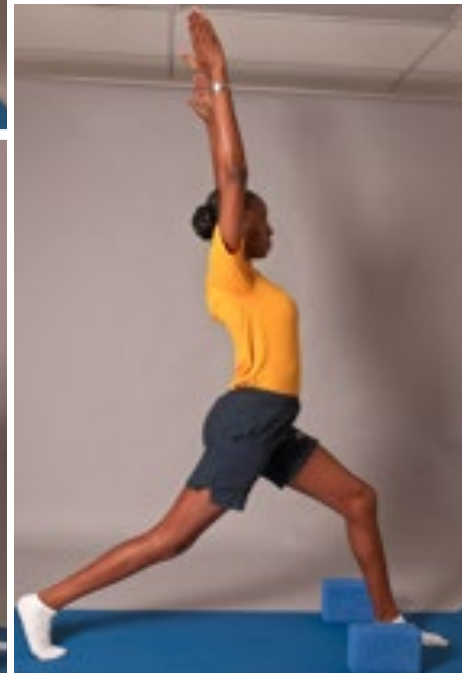
strengthens core and stretches psoas, hips, and thighs

- 1 From table position, lunge forward with your left leg, with your ankle in front of your knee, and keep your right knee back in a comfortable stretch.



- 3 Breathe and get comfortable.
- 4 Lift your arms overhead, shoulder blades together, and draw your legs closer together for comfort.

- 2 Curl the toes of your back foot under and lift your back knee off the floor.



BRIDGE | core strength

- 1 Lying with your back on the floor, arms palms down, inhale, bend your knees, and draw your heels toward your bottom.



- 2 Exhale and lift your hips off the floor, keeping your ankles directly under your knees and pressing your arms and feet into the floor.



- 3 Inhale and drop your hips and back to the floor.
- 4 Draw both knees into your chest to stretch your low back, and relax.



KNEE TO CHEST, BOTH SIDES

- 1** Inhale, then exhale and raise your right knee to your chest, keeping your left leg long, heel pressing away.
- 2** Inhale one more time, belly pressing into your thigh on the inhale.



- 3** Repeat with your other leg.



- 4** Exhale and drop your right leg back to floor. Notice differences between your right and left sides.



- 5** Exhale and drop your leg back to the floor, noticing the difference between before and after.



BOTH KNEES STRETCH TO RESTING POSE

- 1** Draw both knees into chest, rolling your spine side to side, releasing your spine.



- 2** Drop both legs to the floor. Place a blanket under your thighs if needed to relieve pressure on your low back.
- 3** Take a few moments here to feel the difference from when you started the stretches.
- 4** Relax in this position for at least five minutes, or as long as you like.

