

Easy Yoga Routine

Foot Massage

1) Start with right foot crossed over left leg, work left fingers on between all toes of right foot. Fingers in between toes, rotate ankle. 2) Twist and pull each toe. 3) Bend toes down, stretch top of foot. 4) Change hands, bend toes up to stretch 'steel cable' (long plantar tendon), massage it. 5) Use both hands, massage whole foot. 6) 'Pink' the foot (clap). 7) Gently shake the ankle loose.

Hamstring Stretches

Both legs straight out in front, sit up tall, arms horizontal, shoulders up back and down:

Row boat: On each exhale hinge at hip sockets, tilting pelvis forward and reach past toes keeping arms horizontal.

Forward fold: End by reaching as far forward as possible but keep back straight, shoulders up back and down and back neck long as you stretch your hamstrings by pressing navel towards floor between legs; After a few seconds you can round your back and allow the stretch to proceed up the back through the extended back neck and out the crown.

Stretch lower back, middle back; Gently move head around to loosen neck; Stretch jaw and all the facial muscles.

Hips and Low Back

Sit with legs crossed, hands on knees:

The Grind: Rotate pelvis, like a tilted water bucket, from sit bone to tail bone to sit bone to front to rotate hip sockets over femur (thigh bone) heads.

Pelvis Rock with Breath Activation: Hold shins just above ankles; Inhale rock forward, tilting pelvis forward on sit bone 'rockers'; Exhale rock backward, tilting pelvis backward onto tailbone; Move from lower back, sacrum. On exhale, use abs to squeeze more air out to complete the exhale; On inhale press sit bones to lengthen spine; keep head level pressing up through crown.

End by inhaling deeply, hold breath briefly before exhaling (3x).

Middle Back

Lateral Spine Stretch:

Sit with legs crossed, right hand on floor beside right hip.

Press sit bones to lengthen up with a tall spine, engage core muscles to prevent lower spine from bending; Reach left arm overhead and curve torso over to the right from your heart, emphasizing the thoracic/middle spine (opening side ribs).

Chest and middle spine flex:

Sitting up tall, grasp underside (outer) knees.

Shoulders up, back and down, drawing inner shoulder blades together; Pull heart/breastbone forward on your inhale, opening front chest; On exhale, round backwards, chin to chest, opening back chest.

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Shoulders

Shoulder Loops:

Hands resting on knees, rotate your shoulders up, back and down several times, ending with shoulder blades hugging back ribs 'like refrigerator magnets.'

Washing Machine:

Hands on shoulders, fingers in front, thumbs on back.

Engage your core by toning the lower abdomen in. Press both sit bones down to lengthen spine up as if your crown is rising up to touch the sky. Keeping the sit bones firmly grounded, inhale and twist your torso to the right, exhale and twist to the left. Be sure to move from your sternum while keeping your sacrum, sit bones, pelvis- everything below the navel- stable and do not allow the sit bones to shift. Keep your chin and head turning in lock-step with the sternum. If the twisting makes you dizzy or nauseous, then you can keep your head straight. Repeat several times until your spine has warmed up. Now hold the twist to the right for at least three breaths and to the left for at least three breaths. Conclude by inhaling tall spine, return to the front and exhale relax.

Neck and Head

Hands resting on knees. GENTLY roll head in each direction 3x.

Sukhasana (Easy Seated Posture):

Locate neutral neck and head position by gently rocking head from chin up to chin down until chin is level or slightly lowered and your back neck is as tall as your front neck; Engage core muscles and gently press sit bones down. Extend taller as if you are being drawn taller by a string rising from the earth up through your crown.

Relax and Breathe

Now that you have completed this joint-freeing series from toes to crown, this is the perfect time to turn your attention to your breath.

Relax *around* your breath and allow it to flow naturally. Enjoy this calm, peaceful state of equipoise, balance, and tranquility.

Fifty-to-Infinity Breath Countdown Meditation

To take full advantage of the moment, practice this optional meditation. It takes only a few minutes. Begin by exhaling "50" mentally, then "49" on the inhale, "48" on the exhale, "47" inhaling, "46" exhaling, and so on until you reach "20." Count "20" as you exhale, but do not count the inhale. Count "19" as you exhale, but do not count the inhale. Continue counting only your exhales while you get familiar with the experience of inhaling with silent, rapt attention- yet without any mental counting or other narrative. When you conclude the breath countdown by exhaling "O," you are not finished. In fact, you have just begun! The countdown is simply one technique for cultivating one-pointed attention; once attention is focused and without mental commentary meditation- which by definition has no technique- has commenced. Bask in this pure awareness for as long as you like!