

Body Mind Yoga

15 Minute Home Practice

This is a basic home routine that includes releases for the neck, shoulders, hips and lower back. It also incorporates strengthening exercises for the core muscles - abdominals and glutes. The sequence also takes the body in the four different directions – twisting, lateral bending, forward bending and backward bending.

Remember to: move gently and slowly; never push into pain; rest whenever you feel to and remain aware of your breath as much as possible.

Lying on the back

1. **Knees side to side:** Lie on your back, with the legs in semi supine (feet flat on the floor and shoulder width apart). Slowly take the knees side to side, allowing the head to roll in the opposite direction – breath out to the side and into the centre.....repeat 10 times or so.
2. **Neck and thoracic release:** interlace the hands at the back of the head. As you breathe out gently tighten the tummy muscles inward and use the hands to slowly lift the head; breathe in and rest the head down....after doing that a few times, use the hands to gently circle the head – first in one direction and then in the other.
3. **Opposite elbow to knee:** Keep the hands behind the head. Breathe out and draw one knee over the chest as you lift the head up and then direct the opposite elbow toward that knee; inhale down and swap sides....alternate from side to side a few more times.....(advanced option: keeping the abdominal muscles pulled in and slowly pistoning the legs).
4. **Circle knees over chest:** have both knees over the chest and hold onto them with the hands. Slowly guide them in circles, first one way and then back the other way. This releases the lower back and gently stretches out the glutes.
5. **Gentle sciatic, hamstring and glutes release:** Keep the left leg in semi supine and have the right knee over the chest and hold under the knee with the right hand. Slide the left hand behind the head. Breathe out gently straighten the right leg toward the ceiling as you lift the head; breathe in back down. Repeat a few more times and then swap sides.
6. **Alternate lifting hips up and down and lifting head and feet up and down:** Breathe out and press into the floor with the feet to lift the hips; inhale down; exhale and draw the knees over the chest as you roll the head up. Alternate like that, lifting the head and feet and then the hips. Be aware of the core muscles as you move.
7. **Knees side to side again a few times.....**

Standing

8. **Warrior pose 1 (Virabhadrasana):** this strengthens the core muscles and the leg muscles. Stand with the feet wide apart so the front foot points forward and the back foot angled out about 45 degrees. Have the hips facing forward. Breathe in and bend the front knee (do this slowly and carefully and don't push into any pain with the knee) as you float the arms up toward the ceiling. Breathe out as you straighten the leg and bring the arms down. Repeat a few times before swapping sides. Once you become stronger you can hold the position and breathe. Remember to work the feet into the floor for extra strength in the legs and core.

Lying on the front

9. **Locust Pose (Salabhasana):** this great for strengthening the core to support the lower back and is also wonderful for the abdominal organs as it increases blood flow into the area. Lie on your front with the legs hip width apart and arms out long in front of you. Breathe in and lift one arm and the opposite leg off the floor. Also lift the head slightly, but keep your face looking down at the floor so the neck is safe. Exhale down and swap sides. Alternate sides a few times and if that is easy then do both legs and both arms together. When that is easy you can hold the position and breathe.
10. **Rest in Yoga Mudra:** from a kneeling position, lean forward from the waist and rest your forehead on the floor or on your hands. The arms can either be stretched out in front on the floor or resting beside your body. Watch the breath here.
11. **Alternate yoga mudra and downward dog:** Come into the all fours position and from here tuck the toes under and as you breathe out lift the hips up into downward dog. Inhale back to all fours and then exhale into yoga mudra....continue like that, letting your breath guide you. Advanced option: alternate between upward dog and downward dog.
12. **Seated lateral bend:** sit with your legs either out long in front or legs crossed – whichever is more comfortable for you. Have your arms by your sides. Inhale as you float one arm up toward the ceiling; exhale as you lean/stretch to the opposite side – alternate from side to side like that.
13. **Seated forward bend (Pashimottanasana):** Sit up tall with the legs straight out in front. As you breathe out slide your hands down your legs and lean forward from the waist – allowing your knees to bend as much as you feel to here to soften the chest toward your thighs; inhale slowly back up.....When you are comfortable with the pose you can hold and breathe.
14. **Rest on your back:** breathe in and allow the belly to expand; breathe out and relax.