

Yoga Toolkit

Yoga encompasses a variety of practices – it becomes more than a form of exercise for many people. Yoga is:

- A strength practice because it uses body weight as resistance.
- A flexibility practice because it mobilises joints and improves your range of motion.
- An energising practice because it helps to expand your lung capacity using breath awareness.
- A calming practice because the relaxation exercises help you manage stress.

When combined with a regular meditation practise, these techniques can become a toolkit for negotiating daily life. You'll probably notice the physical benefits first. But yoga doesn't stop there, because the physical benefits over time expand into your emotional and mental landscape. Strength in the body translates to a mental resilience. The flexibility in the muscles and joints translates into a more adaptable approach to life. As you learn to transform energy with breathing and relaxation, you can control and change your moods.

As you work today, be curious rather than critical. Focus on enjoying the journey. Listen to your body. Modify or opt out of anything that doesn't suit you. Think of these exercises as tools in your toolkit – you will know the best ones to use today.

1. Mountain Stretches



Flow between these two. Repeat five times with the breath.

2. Hip Circles



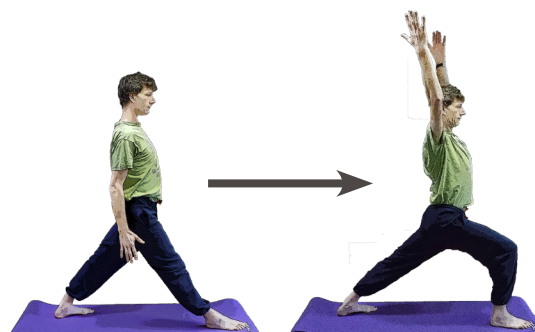
Gently circle your hips clockwise five times, then back the other way.

3. Tree in the Wind



Breathe out, stretching to the left. Breathe in and return to the centre. Then breathe out and lean to the right. Flow with the breath five times each side.

4. Moving Warrior



Flow between these two, bending your knee and lifting your arms. Try this five times with the breath then repeat . five times on the other side.

5. Forward Bend



Relax here for five breaths.

6. Garland



5 breaths.

7a. Lunge



5 breaths, then move into...

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7b. Lunge Twist



5 breaths and then repeat 7a and 7b on the other side.

8. Puppy Dog



5 breaths.

9. Threading the Needle



5 breaths each side.

10. Reclining Twist



5 breaths each side.

11. Rest



30 slow, deep breaths. Let your body relax.

12. Sitting



Sit upright, either on a pillow or on a chair or the edge of your bed. Focus on the smoothness and feel of your natural breath, and count each breath. Count ten breaths, on the out-breath, and then start again. Don't worry if you lose count. Just start again at one. Do this for five minutes, gently bringing your attention back to your breath if it wanders off, which is normal. Over time you may wish to build up to 25 minutes.

