

4 Yoga Moves to Try

Poses that stretch and strengthen your whole body

If you've been afraid to try yoga because you think you can't do it, let go of that thought. There are poses you can start with right away that will benefit your body and mind. They will help build strength, balance, and flexibility. Try these beginner-friendly poses from Alicia Cheung, an instructor at YogaWorks. As always, check with your doctor before beginning a new exercise program.

MOUNTAIN POSE

Strengthens spine and improves posture

Stand tall on mat or towel with feet together and weight evenly distributed on both feet. Let arms hang down at sides, pull belly in, and breathe steadily. With heels planted, lift toes upward. Lower toes and place them on floor one at a time, then stand tall on feet again.



TREE POSE

Stretches hips and improves balance

From Mountain Pose, shift weight to left foot, and bend right knee. With right hand, clasp right ankle and bring toward left leg. Rest right sole against left inner thigh or calf, if easier. Keep right knee pointed to right side. Bring hands together in front of chest. Hold for five breaths, then switch legs.



CAT-COW POSE

Stretches and strengthens core

1. Kneel on all fours with wrists under shoulders and knees under hips.
2. Exhale, and round spine up toward ceiling and gently curl head down. Inhale, and reverse the motion.
3. Lift chest and tailbone up toward ceiling, and let belly sink down toward floor so that back is gently arched. Lift head to look straight ahead. Do this rounding and arching sequence 10 to 20 times.

RESTING POSE

Calms nervous system

Lie on back with hands about six inches away from body and palms up toward ceiling. If you feel discomfort, place a rolled-up towel under your head or knees. Close eyes, and breathe naturally. Let whole body relax. Stay this way for 5 minutes, then



come out of pose gently. Roll to right side, press hands against floor, and lift torso to sit up.



Take Care of You

Simple remedies for stress

If you can't remember what it's like to feel relaxed and refreshed, then you're overdue for some "me time." Stress can weaken your immune system, and create sleep and digestive problems. A little downtime isn't selfish. It's necessary for good health. Manage stress with these strategies:

Meditate in the morning. "If you hit the ground running, you're going to start off the day stressed," says Barb Schmidt, author of *The Practice: Simple Tools for Managing Stress, Finding Inner Peace, and Uncovering Happiness*. Take 5 minutes in the morning to meditate, and you can respond more positively when stressful situations arise. Sit quietly, focus on breathing, and let thoughts come and go.

Eat regular, well-balanced meals. Even if you're crunched for time, try not to skip meals, which causes low blood sugar and irritability. If you are pregnant or have diabetes, it's especially important to eat regularly. Stash healthy snacks such as nuts, whole wheat crackers, or fruit at your desk so they are handy.

Be where you are. Multitasking sounds promising, but it can actually lower productivity and create stress. Focus on the present moment. When you spend quality time with family or friends, enjoy it without worrying about your to-do list.