

Yoga for Athletes (Runners, Bikers, Weekend Warriors... anyone who is active really)

Finding the time to add yoga to your already hectic schedule can be a challenge. This practice takes about 20-25 minutes and will allow you to enjoy your favorite activities for many years to come. Yoga is the reason I am able to do triathlons, hike with my teenagers and generally act like an active, healthy 20 something.

I promise you will notice the difference; do this practice 2-5 times per week for a month and then email your story so we can publish it here.

I always recommend you hold each pose for at least 5-10 breaths (where appropriate) and remember to lengthen with the inhale and surrender with each exhale.

Supta Padangustasana (Reclining Big Toe Pose)



There are two parts to this pose - practice each one for 5-10 breaths.

1. Lying on back left knee bent, foot resting near left buttock, hold right big toe (or use strap around sole of foot) inhale lengthen foot to ceiling.

Keep the right waist long and draw the right buttock towards the left ankle. When your hamstrings are looser, you can straighten the left leg to deepen the stretch.

2. Take foot or strap in left hand and allow the right big toe come to the line of the left shoulder. This one you will feel in the IT band are along the outside of the right leg. Breathe.

Repeat with other leg.

Jathara Parivartanasana (Reclining Twist)



Lying on the back with the knees pulled to the chest, arms open to the sides, shoulders tucked under.

Let both knees drop to the floor at the right, keeping left knee on top of right, if possible.

If you have low back concerns, roll fully onto your right side and then open the left arm to the side.

Let your gaze come to your left hand, as your left shoulder works its way to the floor.

Breathe. Repeat to other side.

Cat/Cow



Move to hands and knees, inhale, heart moves forward, head lifts, shoulder blades pull together and work towards the hips.

On the exhale, head drops, stomach lifts towards spine, back rounds.

Repeat with the breath._

Bhaktasana (Devotional Pose)



From hands and knees, open knees to the width of the mat and push back to rest hips on heels, hands outstretched.

On exhale, walk fingers to left, rest here several breaths, inhale to return to center.

Repeat on other side.

Eka Pada Kapotasana (Pigeon Pose)



Inhale and bring right knee to between the hands, allowing the foot to come towards the center.

Slide left leg back so both hips face the floor. Use a block under the left buttock if necessary.

Bend left knee and hold ankle for quad release. Use strap as shown, if needed. Hold 5-10 breaths.

Release left ankle, lengthen the spine and rest over the bent right knee. Breathe.

Repeat on other side.

Janu Sirsasana (Head of the Knee Pose)



Sit tall with the right leg stretched out in front, left foot on the right thigh (or groin). Rotate to face right foot.

Use a strap (as shown) held in both hands, and bend from the hips as you exhale into a forward bend. Keep the shoulders on the back and the spine long.

The goal is not to touch the head to the knee but rather reach the heart to the shin.

As your hips and hamstrings lengthen you will use your hands to gently clasp the foot.

Repeat to other side.

Eka Pada Paschimottanasana (One Foot West Facing Pose)



I made this pose up out of necessity... it has made a huge difference to my running and biking abilities.

Sit tall with the left leg stretched out in front, right foot crossed over, reaching to the left hip.

Use a strap (as shown) held in just the left hand, rest some weight on the right hand on the floor. Bend from the hips as you exhale. Keep the spine long and the left toes drawn back towards the knee.

This is a deep calf and IT band release; use the breath to stay present with the discomfort.

Repeat to other side.

Windshield Wipers



Lie on your back, feet mat-width apart.

As you exhale, let both knees fall to left.

When ready, inhale and lift back to center and exhale over to the right.

Savasana (Corpse or Relaxation Pose)

It is important to be warm during Savasana - use a blanket and perhaps even an eye pillow.

Lie on your back, shoulders tucked under, arms 6-12 inches from the sides, palms facing up. Use a bolster under the knees if you have low back concerns. Lengthen each leg from its respective hip and rest it on the floor (or bolster).

Spend a few moments scanning the body to release any clenched muscles.

Allow the mind to rest on the breath. When you notice your mind wandering (and it will), gently bring it back to the breath.

Savasana is the most important pose in any practice - it is the time when the body integrates and assimilates all the work you have just done.