

Getting Started with Yoga

We at GoFit feel the best way to learn yoga is from an experienced yoga teacher. There are many types of yoga and many styles of teaching. Classes generally fall into three categories: strengthening poses, breathing, and flexibility. Look for a class that fits your needs and for a teacher who is patient, educated in how the body works and how each pose affects the body and mind. The most important quality of a good instructor is one who takes the time during class to give individual instruction on proper technique and form.

A good instructor can make a huge difference in your practice. One of the most important ways that an instructor can help is by adjusting your body when you practice each pose. With guidance you will start to learn what it feels like to be in proper alignment. Once you begin taking a class, you can use this poster to help you remember the poses for your home practice.

When practicing yoga, have patience. It takes years of daily practice to become proficient in some yoga poses. If you practice regularly and take classes, you will begin to feel the benefits almost immediately. Don't force your body into any pose, or make any movements that cause pain. If you have difficulty achieving a pose use the block and straps provided in the Yoga Kit to help get you into position. As you progress you will slowly become less dependant on the props. Always wear comfortable clothing, remove shoes and socks, and practice yoga in a quiet, warm place.

SEATED & KNEELING POSES

Easy Pose (Sukhasana)

Calms the mind and relaxes the body in preparation for meditation. Helps open the hips and is a comfortable sitting position for meditation and breathing exercises.



Start by sitting on the mat with legs crossed. Your feet should come to rest directly below the knees. Relax your hands on both knees with palms facing up.

While pressing your hipbones down towards the floor, reach the crown of your head up to lengthen the spine. Drop your shoulders down and back, then press your chest outwards.

Relax the muscles in your face, jaw and belly. Your tongue should rest on the roof of the mouth, just behind the front teeth. Take a long, deep breathe through your nose. Hold for comfortable amount of time and then exhale.

Bound Angle (Baddha Konasana)



Opens the chest and hips allowing for deeper breathing patterns.

Start by sitting on the mat and touching the soles of your feet together. In this position, your knees will be bent out to the sides. Interlace your fingers around the toes.

Inhale. Press your hips down and reach the crown of your head upwards. Drop your shoulders down and back, then press your chest outwards. To open the hips, press your knees down towards the floor. While keeping your back straight and chest open, exhale and pull your upper body towards the floor, flexing at the hips.

Inhale and hold for 5-10 seconds, then exhale. Achieving pose too difficult? Use the strap as shown in Figure B.

Seated Head to Knee (Janu Sirsasana)

Stretches the back and is ideal for the back of the legs. Head to knee in a sitting position starts the 6th Chakra.

Start from the easy pose or bound angle position. Extend your right leg straight out from your body with your left foot against the inner thigh. Your right leg should be perpendicular to the hips.

Inhale. With your arms up, reach out from the waist to lengthen the spine.

Exhale. Leaning forward with your right knee slightly bent, interlace your fingers around the foot and place your head to the knee.

With your head positioned on the knee, work the posture by pushing your right heel outward to lengthen your leg. As the leg lengthens, slowly pull your toes towards your body. Remember, try to keep the head-to-knee position while maximizing the stretch.

With shoulder parallel to the floor, relax the shoulder, neck and face muscles. Use arms only to help in the head-to-knee position.

Inhale, hold for 5-10 seconds, then exhale. Repeat for your left leg. To release from this exercise, inhale and bring your arms above your head then lower them to the floor while exhaling.

Achieving pose too difficult? Use the strap as shown in Figure B.

Half Circle (Ardha Mandalasana)

Opens and stretches the entire side of the body allowing for deeper breathing patterns.

Start in the bound angle position. Extend your left leg outward and place your right hand on the surface next to your hip.

Inhale. Extend your left hand upward and lift up onto your right knee, keeping your left leg straight.

Slowly push your hips forward while arching your back. Gently let your head drop backwards.

With your left foot pressed to the surface, reach upwards with your left hand stretching the fingers. A half circle shape will be formed with the left side of your body.

Inhale, hold for 5-10 seconds, then exhale. Repeat on other side. To release, slowly exhale and lower your hips downward.

Achieving pose too difficult? Use the block as shown in Figure B.

Cat (Marjariasana)

Cat pose flattens the stomach. Massages the muscles of the back, improving spinal flexibility and relieving lower back tension.

1. Starting in a kneeling position, lean forward and place hands facing down on floor directly under your shoulders with fingers spread apart.

2. Inhale and slowly extend the tailbone upward.

3. Exhale and reverse pose arching your back upward. Tuck chin into your chest and round spine, tucking the tailbone downward.

4. Repeat pose two or three times.

Downward Facing Dog (Adho Mukha Svanasana)

Stretches back, legs, and back of ankles, opens chest, massages abdominal muscles, and increases circulation to head and face.

1. In a kneeling position, place hands facing downward on floor underneath your shoulders.

2. Turn toes under, flexing them against the floor. Inhale.

3. Exhale, raising hips into the air forming an inverted "V"

4. While in the inverted "V" position try to press your chest toward the floor and let your head drop toward the floor as well.

5. Try and lower heels to floor. Hold Pose for three to six breaths. Release pose by coming down on all fours. Repeat pose two to three times.



Half Upward Boat (Ardha Urdhva Navasana)

Strengthens the core body, abdominal and legs.

Start from the easy pose or bound angle position. Extend your right leg straight out from your body with your left foot against the inner thigh.

Inhale. Place your arms parallel to the surface and over the extended leg. With your palms facing inwards, slowly bring the right leg up, stretching the heel. Focus on the top of your foot.

Lower your shoulders down and back. Push chest outwards and up. Inhale, hold for 5-10 seconds, then exhale. Repeat on other side. To release, slowly exhale and lower your leg and arms.



Revolved Head to Knee (Parivrtta Janu Sirsasana)

Opens the hips and stretches the entire side of the body.

Start from the easy pose or bound angle position. Extend your right leg out 45 degrees with your left foot close to the hips. Bring your right arm over the right leg with the palm of your right hand upwards.

Inhale. Stretch the fingers of your left hand upwards, stretching out from the hips.

Exhale. Bend over to the right. Move the fingers of your left hand towards your right foot positioning your left arm over the left ear.

Keeping your left shoulder pressed back, leave your chest open and facing forward. You should be looking forward or upward with your chin off of your chest.

Inhale, for 5-10 seconds, then exhale. Repeat for the other side. To release from this exercise, inhale and stretch your fingers upwards then lower your arms while exhaling.

Achieving pose too difficult? Use the strap as shown in Figure B.

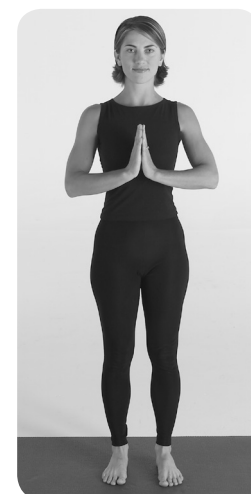
STANDING POSES

Mountain (Tadasana)

The basis for all of the standing postures it strengthens confidence, improves posture and balance.

Start from a standing position. With your feet about hip width apart, lift your toes, spread them apart and then lower them to the original position. Maintain your balance with the bottom of your feet.

Lift up from the knee caps, squeeze your thighs with your tailbone tucked under. Keep



your legs straight and your knees unlocked.

Inhale. Lift outwards from your waist, stretching the crown of your head upwards. The spine is extended and straight.

Exhale. Lower your back and shoulders down and back and gently extend your chest outwards. Stretch your fingers downward to extend the arms.

Inhale. Lift your arms upwards. Turning the palms at shoulder height will bring your arms into a "H" position.

Exhale. Relax. Lower your shoulders down while still stretching the crown of your head and fingers upward.

Inhale and hold for 5-10 seconds, then exhale.

To release from this exercise, exhale and lower your arms down by your side or bring your palms together at your chest.

Half Moon (Ardha Chandrasana)

Opens the sides of the body and provides ideal stretches for the side. Improves the core body strength.

Start in the mountain position. Interlace your fingers, index fingers pointed, and bring them up over your head. Push down on the surface with your feet. Inhale. Then stretch your fingers and crown upwards while lowering your shoulders down and back.

Exhale. Move your right hip to the side and arch over to the left. Keep your feet on the ground with your feet and buttocks engaged. Stretch your fingers and crown up and outwards.

Inhale, hold for 5-10 seconds, then exhale. Repeat on other side.

To release from this exercise, inhale and push down on your feet while stretching your fingers upwards.



Standing Backbend (Anuvittasana)

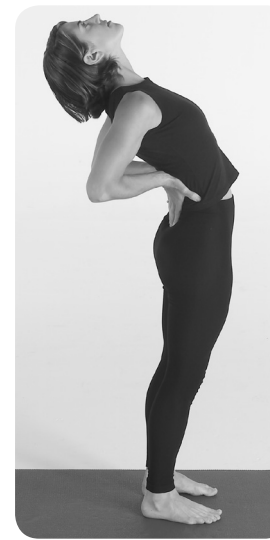
Opens the front of the body and provides ideal stretches for the lower back.

Start in the mountain position. Place your palms on your lower back with your fingers pointed down. Push down on the surface with your feet and lift up from your knees while squeezing your thighs and buttocks.

Move your hips forward and slowly arch your upper body backwards. With your head looking forward or slightly back, support the weight with your arms and keep your legs and buttocks engaged.

Inhale and hold for 5-10 seconds, then exhale.

To release from this exercise, your legs, buttocks and arms should remain engaged. Inhale, back up and allow your head and neck to be the last to become vertical.



Five-Pointed Star

Opens, stretches and inspires the entire body.

Start in the mountain position. Place your feet apart and move your arms straight out to the side. Face forward with your feet aligned under the elbows or slightly wider.

Push down on the surface with your feet and lift from your knees while squeezing your thighs and tucking your tailbone. Feel the strength in your legs when pushing down with your feet.

Stretch your fingertips as far as possible and relax your shoulders down and back while gently pushing your chest outwards.

Inhale, keeping your chin off of your chest. Stretch the crown of your head upwards while looking straight ahead.

While inhaling, push your stomach out. While exhaling, push the stretches into your feet, fingers and crown. Feel your body stretch in 5 separate directions.

Inhale and hold for 5-10 seconds, then exhale.

To release from this exercise, bend one knee and return to the mountain position.



Warrior II (Virabhadrasana)

Strengthens the arms, lower body and concentration.

Start in the five-pointed star position. Move your right foot to the right and bend your right knee perpendicular to your ankle. Rotate your hips and shoulders forwards and stretch your

fingers. As you turn concentrate on the middle finger of your right hand.

Push down on the surface with your feet, lower your hips downward and stretch the crown of your head upwards. Relax, lowering the shoulders down and back while gently pushing your chest outwards.

Inhale, hold for 5-10 seconds, then exhale. Repeat on other side.

To release from this exercise, straighten your legs with your feet forward into the five-pointed star position.



Triangle (Trikonasana)

Opens the hips and shoulders and inspires the entire body.

Start in the five-pointed star position. Rotate your right foot outwards and your left foot slightly inwards. Inhale. Push your left hips outwards to the left while moving both arms to the right and parallel to the surface.

Exhale. While rotating only your arms, raise your left arm upwards and place your right hand softly to your right leg or the block if you have difficulty achieving this position.

Push down on the surface with your feet, stretch up from your knees. Spread your fingers apart and stretch them while moving both arms perpendicular to the surface. Stretch your left hip forward and your right hip backward.

Inhale, hold for 5-10 seconds, then exhale. Repeat on other side.

To release, inhale and stretch your top hand upwards as you push down on the surface with your feet into the five-pointed star position.



Standing Yoga Mudra (Dandayamana Yoga Mudra)

Opens the shoulders and stretches the legs and upper back. Improves mental functions and the heart-and-mind connection.

Start in the five-pointed star position. Inhale. Gently move both arms behind you and interlace your fingers.

Exhale. Push your chest outwards and bend at the waist. Stretch your arms upwards and keep your head hanging towards the surface.

Push down on the surface with your feet. Keeping your legs straight, stretch your arms forward.

Inhale and hold for 5-10 seconds, then exhale.

To release from this exercise, keep shoulder blades squeezed together and inhale while stepping back. Breathe deeply into your chest and exhale while relaxing your arms.

LYING-DOWN POSES (SUPINE AND PRONE)

Half Wind Relieving (Ardha Pavana Muktasana)

Gently stretches the lower back and improves digestion.

Start by lying on your back. Inhale. Bring your right knee towards your chest. Position your interlaced fingers just below your kneecap.

With your head on the surface and chin tucked in, slowly bring your right knee to the chest using your arms. Keep your arms slightly out to avoid your ribs.



Push your shoulders and neck down on the surface, keeping your elbows close to the sides of your body. Relax the legs, feet and hips. Inhale, hold for 5-10 seconds, then exhale. Repeat on other side. To release, exhale then gently lower arms and legs to the surface. For greater comfort rest your head on the block as shown in Figure B.

Knee Down Twist (Supta Matsyendrasana)

Stretches the lower back and spinal column. Helps align the spine and hydrate the spinal disks.



Start by lying on your back. Position your arms in a "T" position with the palms of your hands facing down. With your right knee bent, place your right foot on your left knee.

Exhale. Bring your right knee over the left side of your body, slowly twisting your lower back and spine.

Keep your shoulders on the surface, relax and place your left hand on your right knee. Let the weight of your hand and gravity slowly bring right knee down.

Inhale, hold for 5-10 seconds, then exhale. Repeat on other side.

To release from this exercise, inhale and rotate your hip back to the surface. Exhale and lower your leg to the surface.

Hand to Toe (Hasta Padangusthasana)

Opens the hips and provides ideal stretches for the back.

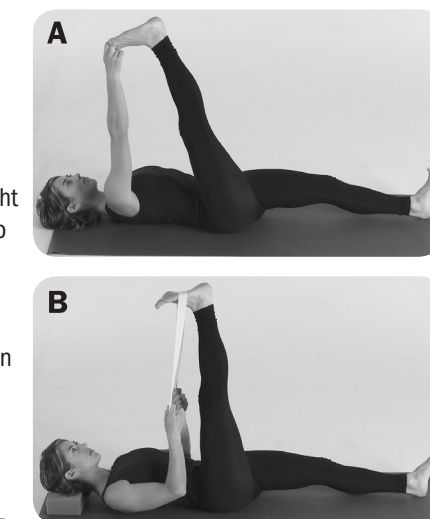
Start by lying on your back. Inhale. Bring your right knee to your chest and grip your big toe with the index and middle finger of your right hand.

Inhale. Slowly straighten your right leg upwards and stretch your heel outwards while pulling your toes towards your head.

Gently push your shoulders to the surface with your chin tucked into your chest.

Inhale, hold for 5-10 seconds, then exhale. Repeat on other side.

To release, exhale then lower your arm and leg to the surface. Achieving pose too difficult? Use the strap as shown in Figure B.



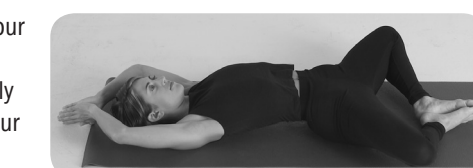
Rocket Ship (Supta Baddha Konasana)

Gently opens the hips and shoulders.

Start by lying on your back. With your knees bent to the sides slowly bring the bottom of your feet together.

Inhale. Slide your arms along the surface to a position above your head. Bring the palms of your hands together interlacing your thumbs. Inhale and hold for 5-10 seconds, then exhale.

Exhale then gently relax your arms and legs.



Relaxation Posture/Corpse Pose (Savasana)

Essential at the end of every session and can be used briefly in the middle of every session.

Start by lying on your back. Relax your arms and legs on the surface (arms about 45 degrees from your sides). You will need

to be warm and comfortable (use blankets under and/or over your body). With your eyes closed, start to deepen your breathing (dirga pranayama). Relax your entire body, feeling each inhale and exhale. Review your entire body for signs of tension and relax any muscles that are tense, tight or contracted. A wiggling or rocking motion can be used to help relax your muscles. Strive for total relaxation by releasing control of your mind and body. Stay in the relaxation posture (savasana) for 5-15 minutes. To release from this exercise, slowly deepen your breathing, move your fingers and toes, bring your arms over your head and stretch your entire body. Exhale. Bring your knees to your chest and rotate to one side until you are in a fetal position. When ready, slowly inhale and finish in a seated position.

