

BASIC YOGIC POSTURES AND THEIR BENEFITS

Corpse: Lie down on a blanket or comfortable mat with your hands resting beside your body. Breathe deeply through your nose. Let your body be totally relaxed and calm. This is a good way to start daily yoga practice. Practice this posture for at least 2 minutes before going into next posture.

► **Benefits:** Induces relaxation, calmness and brings down blood pressure.

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Easy Sitting: This is a modified version of a full-lotus. Sit comfortably on floor with your palms cupping your knees. You may place a pillow as a seat. Ensure that the back of your neck and spine is comfortably in a straight line. Relax your breathing with your eyes gently closed or open depending upon choice. Then start raising your arms while inhaling in. Do it slowly while synchronizing the movement of arms with your breath. Bring down your arms while exhaling. Repeat this procedure 10 times.

► **Benefits:** Improves digestion and appetite. They have good effects on rheumatism and strengthen the nervous system. Research advocates that our cognitive functions work better while sitting in this posture. This posture can also be used as a starting point for meditation practice.

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Dog and Cat: Both of these postures flow into each other and can be practiced in succession. Get on your hands and knees, as illustrated in the accompanying posture. Let your hands be slightly in front of shoulders and legs comfortably hip-width apart. While inhaling tilt your tailbone and pelvis up. Let your spine curve downward and stomach fall low. Lift your head up. Do it slowly and gradually.

While exhaling tilt your tailbone down, drawing in chest and stomach and dropping your head between arms. This becomes the Cat pose. Repeat this five times while gently slipping into Cat from Dog pose and vice-versa.

► **Benefits:** It increases the flexibility of the spine, strengthens the stomach and tones the muscles of the back. Be gentle and patient while engaging in these exercises.

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Mountain: Stand with your feet together with hands hanging beside your body and eyes looking gently forward. Roll your shoulders up, back and sideways and let your arms fall back to the sides of your body. Determine your center of gravity. Let your spine be erect and weight evenly distributed. Spread your toes & press down evenly through the sole of your feet as you lift up through the top of head. You should feel a gentle stretch in your body. Hold yourself in this position for about 5 breaths and come back to standing position.



Now while standing, start raising your hands above your head. Use the same procedure which we followed while sitting. Raise arms while inhaling and lower while exhaling. Practice this for 10 times and then stand still for one minute. Let your breathing be natural and deep.

► **Benefits:** It establishes a neutral and balanced alignment of the body and provides an inner reference for standing. It also enhances mental and postural stability, body-awareness and control.

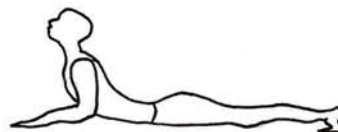
Forward Bend: Stand in the mountain pose with your arms raised over your head. Inhale while raising your arms. Start bending your body using your back as a pivot. Do it slowly so that you feel bending your spinal column gently. Exhale while doing so and touch your hands beside your feet. If you are not flexible enough, bend your knees to do so. Stay in this position for 3- 5 breaths and then start raising your body to return to mountain pose. While raising your arms, let your body follow a circle with your vertebral column acting as pivot. Do for 3-5 times.

► **Benefits:** This posture develops strength and flexibility in legs and hips and equilibrium in body. Stretches spine, joints and enhances blood supply to brain.



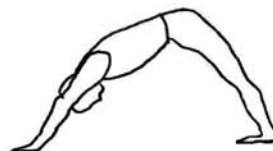
Cobra: Lie down on your back with palms on floor just beyond the head. Relax your breathing. While inhaling, start raising your upper body using the spinal muscles supported by upper arms. Lengthen the spine without putting undue pressure on back. Now, while exhaling brings your body down to floor once again. Let your spinal muscles do the work gently supported by arms.

► **Benefits:** Promotes chest expansion, dispels sluggishness, freshens mind and develops flexibility in spine and mobilizes circulation. Tones up muscles in buttocks and lower back.



Downward Facing Dog: Get on your hands and knees. Let your legs be hip-wide apart. Roll your elbows forward so that inner elbow faces forward. Inhale and curl your toes under, as if trying to stand on toes. Exhale and straighten your legs pushing upward with arms. The whole idea is to lengthen the spine with your feet flat on ground. It stretches the spine and hamstring. Also the heart is rested.

► **Benefits:** This posture opens the chest, stretches the spine, rests the heart and builds upper body strength. It also stimulates brain and nervous system improving awareness, memory, concentration and hearing capacity.



Corpse: After the completion of postures, lie down in corpse pose for about 2 minutes by following instructions from previous page.

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