



5 YOGA POSES

For Busy People

GET FIT TODAY

If you're short on time and appreciate the flexibility of being able to workout anywhere, then yoga should definitely be a regular part of your exercise routine. Doing yoga even for just about 20 minutes per day can help with improving strength, flexibility, range of motion, and building mind and body awareness.

There are dozens of different yoga poses, but certain ones have the advantage of engaging and strengthening just about every part of the body at all once (shoulders, back, core and hamstrings, for example). This saves you time and gives you an efficient full-body workout.

When performing the yoga poses below, keep in mind that yoga is all about linking movement with breath. Focus on taking steady controlled breaths even when holding difficult poses.





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CHAPTER 1

DOWNWARD DOG



Often just called “down dog,” this is a posture done throughout yoga classes to both stretch and challenge the body, while also providing a break to remain still and focus on breathing.

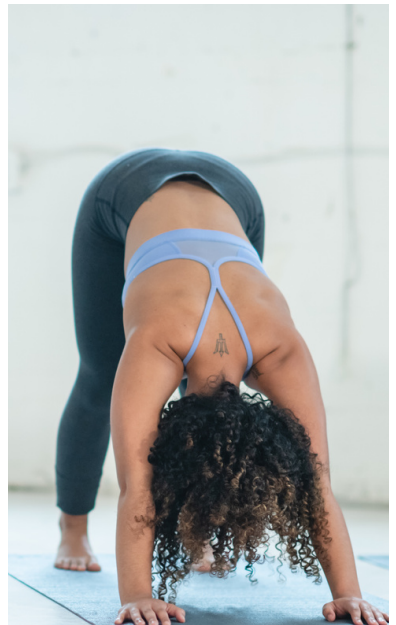
When you’re in down dog your body creates an upside-down “V” shape, with your hands spread on the floor, torso lifted with your hips high, and your toes touching the floor. It requires forward-bending and activation of your core/back muscles as you draw your belly up and in, while also targeting your shoulders and hamstrings (back of your legs).

Benefits of the down dog pose include:

- Relieving tension in your neck and spine, since you allow your head to hang down and relax.
- Stretching your back and leg muscles, making it a great warm-up pose before other exercises.
- Strengthening your lower back, shoulders and arms.
- Releasing stress as you take steady breaths (and close your eyes if you’d like).

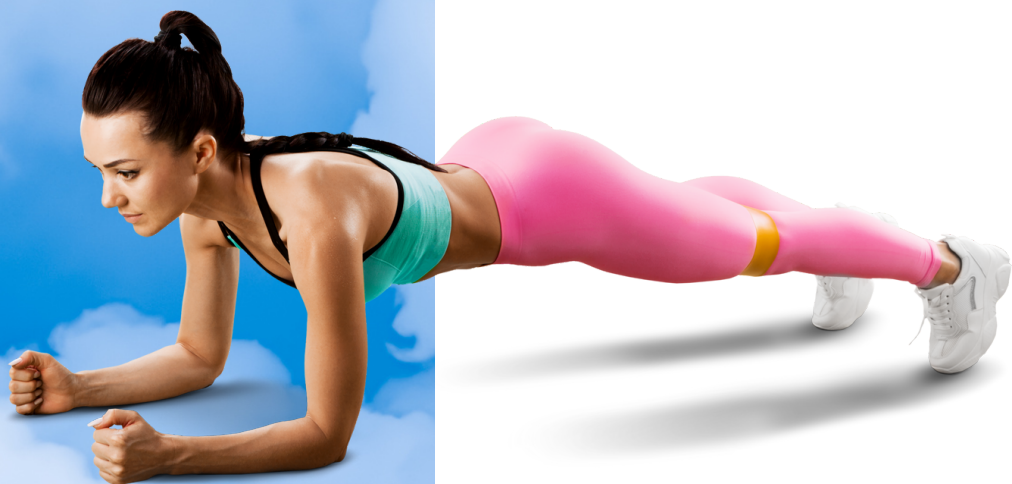
Here’s how to do a downward dog:

- Start on the floor on all fours. Then push into your hands and lift your hips up and back to form an upside V shape.
- Relax your neck and head and keep spreading your hands as you push away the floor, keeping your shoulders engaged.
- Push your heels towards the floor and keep your legs as straight as possible.
- To loosen up your legs, try alternating bending one knee at a time.
- Stay in the pose for 10+ breaths, or up to 2-3 minutes if you have the strength.



CHAPTER 2

PLANK



Like *down dog*, plank pose (also sometimes called “stick” pose) is a posture that’s included in yoga “sun salutations” (a traditional series of poses linked together), since it targets many different parts of the body and helps you transition from one pose to another.

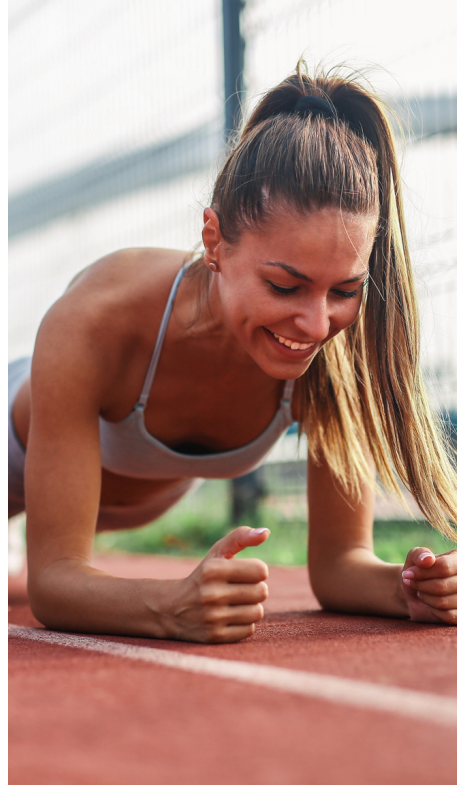
This exercise is about building core and shoulder strength since it forces you to hold up your own body weight while drawing your abs in.

Benefits of plank pose include:

- Building strength in your abs and back.
- Engaging your shoulders and arms.
- Building stamina and working on breathing through difficult sensations.

To do a plank pose:

- You can either move out to a plank pose from *down dog*, or begin by kneeling on all fours on the ground.
- Place your hands right below your shoulders and press your hands into the floor to engage your arms and lift your chest away from the ground.
- Keep your core engaged so your hips don’t sag down. Your legs should be straight behind you, with feet hip-distance apart.
- Try holding a plank for 1 to 2 minutes if possible while taking steady breaths. You can take a break by dropping your knees briefly, then repeat for a second or third time for even more of a core challenge.



CHAPTER 3

HIGH LUNGE



This standing pose engages just about every part of your body — especially your legs and back. It's a great pose to hold for an increasing length of time as you work on building more strength in your thighs and core, as well as more stamina.

High lunge pose is different than a low lunge because both knees are lifted off the ground, requiring some balance and also muscle strength. You can lift your hands straight up above your head to make it more challenging and to work on balance.

Benefits of high lunge pose include:

- Builds strength in your quadriceps (thigh muscles), lower back and hamstrings.
- Helps to stretch your legs in all places, plus your groin. This makes it an excellent pose for warming-up before exercises like running or doing sports.



To do a high lunge:

- Step forward so your front leg will be in a lunge position, with your knee bent and foot over your front ankle.
- Your back leg should be straight with your heel pushing back towards the floor.
- Keep your pelvis pointing straight forward, then lift your hands up over your head and engage your entire arms.
- Try holding for 10+ breaths at a time, or about 1-2 minutes before breaking. Repeat 2-3 times for more of a challenge.

CHAPTER 4

BOAT



Boat pose is one of the best yoga exercises for building core strength and targeting different abdominal muscles, including the difficult to reach lower belly muscles. In fact, this is a core pose you'll also find in Pilates classes, aimed at improving stability and posture.

Benefits of boat pose include:

- Engaging your core and legs.
- Building balance, stability and mobility in your pelvis, since it requires you to stabilize your body as you balance on your sitting bones with your legs lifted.
- Improving flexibility in your hip flexors since your legs are lifted out in front of you.

How to do a boat pose:

- Sit on the ground with knees bent and legs in front of you, then lean back slightly as you lift your feet off the floor and engage your abs.
- Remain sitting on your two sitting bones (your butt), keeping your legs and feet lifted.
- Try to keep your back from rounding, working on lengthening your spine.
- You can either keep your legs bent and your knees close together, or to make it harder, straighten your legs and reach for your toes.
- Try holding for 1-2 minutes as you breathe steadily. You can repeat 2-3 times if you like.



CHAPTER 5

BRIDGE



Bridge pose (also called a “glute bridge”) is a type of backbend that targets the lower back muscles, glutes and hips. It’s one of the best exercises for counteracting the effects of prolonged sitting, in which the back is rounded forward. It’s also a popular pose for building strength in your butt, thighs and back while also stretching the entire back area.

Benefits of bridge include:

- Improving stability and strength in the butt (gluteus).
- Helping to treat lower back pain by improving core flexibility and strength.
- Engaging the quads (thigh) muscles, making it great for runners.
- Stretching the shoulders, chest and muscles around the spine.

To do the bridge pose:

- Lay on the floor and bend your knees with your feet on the floor, hip-distance apart.
- Press your feet and arms into the floor as you lift your butt and hips off the floor.
- Keep squeezing in your core muscles and pressing your heels into the ground. Your thighs and feet should be parallel.
- To further stretch your upper body, clasp your hands below your pelvis and keep them on the ground.

Variations:



Bonus Pose: Savasana

Most yoga classes end with a “savasana” pose (also called a corpse pose), in which you lay flat on your back and breathe while meditating and relaxing.

Doing this for just 3-5 minutes after exercising is a great way to clear your mind and get focused for the day.



Thank you for reading!
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