

YOGA AT YOUR DESK

Presented by Teri Bladen, MS

Why Yoga?

PHYSICAL BENEFITS

Flexibility

Stretching your tight body in new ways will help it to become more flexible, bringing greater range of motion to muscles and joints. Over time, you can expect to gain flexibility in your hamstrings, back shoulders and hips.

Strength

Many yoga poses require you to support the weight of your own body in new ways, including balancing on one leg (such as in Tree Pose) or supporting yourself with your arms (such as in Downward Facing Dog). Some exercises require you to move slowly in and out of poses, which also increases strength.

Muscle Tone

Many yoga poses require you to support the weight of your own body in new ways, including balancing on one leg (such as in Tree Pose) or supporting yourself with your arms (such as in Downward Facing Dog). Some exercises require you to move slowly in and out of poses, which also increases strength.

Pain Prevention

Increased flexibility and strength can help prevent the causes of some types of back pain. Many people who suffer from back pain spend a lot of time sitting at a computer or driving a car. That can cause tightness and spinal compressions, which you can begin to address with yoga. Yoga also improves your alignment, both in and out of class, which helps prevent many other types of pain.

Better Breathing

Most of us breathe very shallowly into the lungs and don't give much thought to how we breathe. yoga breathing exercises, called Pranayama, focus the attention on the breath and teach us how to better use our lungs, which benefits the entire body. Certain types of breath can also help clear the nasal passages and even calm the central nervous system, which has both physical and mental benefits.



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Why Yoga?

MENTAL BENEFITS

Mental Calmness

Yoga asana practice is intensely physical. Concentrating so intently on what your body is doing has the effect of bringing a calmness to the mind. Yoga also introduces you to meditation techniques, such as watching how you breathe and disengagement from your thoughts, which help calm the mind.

Stress Reduction

Physical activity is good for relieving stress, and this is particularly true of yoga. Because of the concentration required, your daily troubles, both large and small, seem to melt away during the time you are doing yoga. This provides a much-needed break from your stressors, as well as helping put things into perspective. The emphasis yoga places on being in the moment can also help relieve stress, as you learn not to dwell on past events or anticipate the future. You will leave a yoga class feeling less stressed than when you started.

Body Awareness

Doing yoga will give you an increased awareness of your own body. You are often called upon to make small, subtle movements to improve your alignment. Over time, this will increase your level of comfort in your own body. This can lead to improved posture and greater self-confidence.



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Let's Practice!



Neck Rolls

- Take your shoes off before starting these stretches if you are wearing high heels.
- Close your eyes.
- Let your chin drop down to your chest.
- Begin to circle your neck slowly, taking the right ear to the right shoulder, the head back, and then the left ear to the left shoulder.
- Try to keep the shoulders relaxed and not to hurry through areas of tightness.
- Take 3-5 rolls and then switch directions and take another 3-5 rolls.



Cat-Cow Stretch

- Bring both feet flat on the floor.
- Bring your hands onto your knees.
- On an inhale, arch the back and look up toward the ceiling.
- On the exhale, round the spine and let your head drop forward.
- Repeat for 3-5 breaths.



Seated Forward Bend

- Push your chair back from your desk.
- Bring both feet flat on the floor.
- Interlace your fingers behind your back.
- Straighten your arms, drawing the interlaced fingers down.
- Fold at the waist, bringing your interlaced hands over your back.
- Rest your chest on your thighs and release your neck.



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Let's Practice!



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Eagle Arms

- Take your arms out to either side, parallel to the floor.
- Bring the arms forward, crossing the right arm over the left and bringing the palms to touch.
- Lift the elbows while keeping the shoulders sliding down your back.
- Repeat with the left arm over the right.



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Seated Spinal Twist

- Turn so you are sitting sideways in your chair.
- Bring both feet flat on the floor.
- Twist towards the back of the chair, holding the back with both hands.
- Turn the chair the other way and repeat.



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Wrist Stretch

- Stand up.
- Turn your hands so that the wrists face your computer and the fingers face the edge of the desk.
- Lean in to the wrists and flatten your palms as much as possible.
- Back off if you feel pain.



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Standing Pigeon

- Stand up.
- Bring the left knee up and the left shin onto your desk parallel to the edge of the desk.
- Take a forward bend over your left leg, bending from the waist.
- Repeat on the other leg.



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