



**neurogym**<sup>®</sup>

EVIDENCE-BASED EXERCISES  
FOR BRAIN AND BODY

## BEGINNER YOGA FOR THE LOWER BACK

*Yoga is derived from an ancient Indian spiritual discipline created to bring the mind, body and soul into harmony and ultimately reach self-realisation or 'samadhi'. Asanas are static postures where the practitioner is to remain still. Asanas are primarily important in the way they discipline the mind.*

### MEDITATION



Find a quiet space and prepare your body to be comfortable and supported for meditation. You can either:

- Sit in a comfortable chair with the soles of your feet hip width apart and in contact with the floor. Gently rest the palms of your hands on your thighs.
- Sit in easy seated posture (see page 2).
- Lie in corpse posture (see page 6).

If you are sitting, it is important to maintain good posture while also entering a state of relaxation. Close your eyes and mentally scan through your body to ensure it is free from tension.

Start with your awareness at your toes, then journey through the body including the soles and front of the feet, ankles, shins, calf muscles, knees, thighs, pelvis, abdomen, lower back, chest, upper back, shoulder blades, shoulders, armpits, upper arms, forearms, wrists, palms of the hands, fingers, back of the neck, back of the head, crown of the head, forehead, temples, eyebrows, eyes, ears, nose, cheeks, jaw, lips, front of the neck and throat.

Then direct all attention to your breath. Find stillness and consciously avoid any desire to fidget. Breathe smoothly and evenly through the nostrils. Notice the quality of your breath. Concentrate on the coolness of the air as you breathe in, and on its warmth as you breathe out.

Use the breath as an 'anchor' for your mind. Watch as thoughts arise. Try to remain independent of them, observing your thoughts with a detached awareness. Anchor your mind back on to your breath. Notice how concentrating on your breath helps calm and relax your mind and body.

A helpful meditation tool is to use a 'mantra': a word or phrase, which resonates and relaxes you. For example, mentally say the word "let" on the inhalation and "go" on the exhalation. Repeat this mantra coordinated with your breath to remain focused and in control of your thoughts arising.

Meditate for about two minutes. Over time you can increase this to five minutes.

## EASY SEATED POSTURE (SUKHASANA)

### Step 1

Sit on a mat with your legs crossed.

### Step 2

Rest the back of your hands on your knees. Bring the tip of your index finger and thumb together so that they lightly touch.

### Step 3

Breathe smoothly and evenly as you settle into the posture for ten full breaths.



Change the cross of your legs and repeat step 3 ten times.

## CHILD'S POSTURE (BALASANA)

### Step 1

Kneel on the floor with your buttocks on your heels and hands by your side.

### Step 2

Lower your upper body to rest your chest on your thighs and your forehead on the floor.

If your forehead doesn't reach the mat you can place a block underneath it.



Breathe smoothly and evenly for 10 full breaths.

Did you know that yoga may increase circulating endorphins and serotonin?

## CAT POSTURE (CHAKRAVAKASANA)

### Step 1

On all fours, body in a square shape, elbows straight.

### Step 2

Inhale and slowly look up arching your back.



### Step 3

Exhale and slowly lower your head drawing your chin to your chest, pulling your abdominal muscles towards the spine and rounding your back.



Repeat steps 2 and 3 ten times.

## MOUNTAIN POSTURE (TADASANA)

### Step 1

Stand with your feet together, toes touching.

### Step 2

Stretch your arms down along your sides with your fingers pointing towards the floor. Your arms should be about 45 degrees away from your body.

### Step 3

Concentrate on distributing your weight evenly between your feet, lengthening the back of your neck and breathing smoothly and evenly.

Stay in the pose for about 45 seconds. Over time you can increase this to one minute.



If you find this position uncomfortable you can separate the feet to hip width apart.

Endorphins and serotonin can have an effect on your perception of pain.

## BENT-KNEES DOWNWARD-FACING DOG STRETCH (ADHOMUKHA SVANASANA)

### Step 1

On all fours with your hands shoulder width apart and knees hip width apart. Spread your fingers creating parallel V shapes with the middle and index fingers.



### Step 2

Tuck your toes under and lift your hips up to the ceiling, keeping your knees slightly bent.



### Step 3

Gradually stretch your legs from your heels to your buttocks.

Stay in the pose for about 30 seconds.

## LUNGE POSTURE (ASHVA SANCHALANASANA)

### Step 1

From standing, bend both your knees and place your hands on the floor.



### Step 2

Slide one leg behind you keeping your fingertips or hands touching the mat. Make sure both hips face forward evenly.



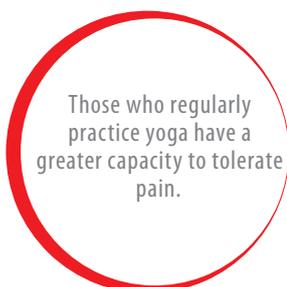
### Step 3

Inhale and lift your chest; keep the back of your neck elongated while drawing your shoulders down and away from your ears.

### Step 4

Exhale while maintaining the position for 10 seconds. Over time you can increase this to 30 seconds.

Repeat steps 3 and 4 ten times each side.



## COBRA POSTURE (BHUJANGASANA)

---

### Step 1

Lie on your stomach with elbows bent, palms flat on the floor. Ensure your feet are hip width apart.



### Step 2

Lift your chest by placing pressure through your hands, keeping your elbows bent. Press the front of your feet into the mat.



Those who regularly practise yoga have more white matter in areas of the brain related to the regulation of pain.

### Step 3

Inhale and draw your shoulders down away from the ears, keeping the back of your neck elongated. Keep your elbows squeezing in toward one another.

### Step 4

Exhale while maintaining the position for 10 seconds. Over time you can increase this to 30 seconds.

Repeat steps 3 and 4 five times.

Do not perform this position if it causes discomfort in your lower back.

---

This material is copyright © Neurogym®. Not for resale. Reproduction and distribution is only permitted under the practitioner subscription package terms as described at [www.neurogymfitness.com](http://www.neurogymfitness.com).

You should seek professional advice from a relevantly qualified person to discuss any personal circumstances which may affect your ability to undertake particular exercise. Neurogym® shall not be liable for any injury caused, whether due to negligence or otherwise arising from use of or reliance on this information.

---

## CORPSE POSTURE (SAVASANA)

### Step 1

Place a bolster under your knees and with the assistance of your hands slowly recline onto your back. Let your arms rest by your sides palms facing up.

### Step 2

Lengthen your torso away from your hips to stretch your spine. Relax your fingers and hands. Let your feet fall out to the sides naturally. Widen your collar bones. Relax your cheeks, chin, mouth and jaw. Allow the eyeballs to sink deep into their sockets.



When you practise yoga  
you're not just changing  
your body – you're also  
changing your brain!

### Step 3

Make final adjustments so you can remain motionless for five minutes in a state of relaxation. Observe your breathing.

### Step 4

When you feel ready to come out of the posture, slowly bring your awareness back into the physical body and your surroundings.

### Step 5

Bend your left knee and roll onto your right side. Stay on your side for three breaths before slowly rising to a sitting position. Stand when you are ready.