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Guide to Poses

Beginning the practice of yoga is an exciting journey that combines physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Originating from ancient India, yoga has become a popular form of exercise and meditation all around the world. The word 'yoga' is derived from the Sanskrit word 'yuj', which means to unite or join. Hence, the practice aims to create a harmonious connection between the body, mind, and spirit.

Standing Poses



Upward Salute

Stand tall with feet hip-distance apart, grounding firmly into the earth. Breathe in, raising your arms overhead, palms facing each other. Keep your shoulders relaxed and away from your ears. Try to lengthen your spine, slightly tilting your pelvis inwards. Engage your core, and maintain balance without leaning backwards. Look straight ahead or slightly upwards, if comfortable.



Garland Pose

Start by standing with feet slightly wider than hip-width apart, toes pointing outward. Slowly lower your body into a squat, keeping your heels on the ground if possible. Press your elbows against your inner knees, joining your palms in a prayer position at your chest. This pushes your knees wider, opening your hips. Keep your spine straight, chest lifted. Don't lean forward or let your knees cave in.



Warrior Pose

Start with feet hip-width apart. Step your right foot forward about a stride's length, turning your left foot 45 degrees out. Bend your right knee until it aligns over your ankle, but don't let it pass your toes. Keep your left leg straight. Raise your arms overhead, palms facing each other. Draw your shoulder blades down your back, lifting your chest. Your hips and shoulders should face forward.

Bending Poses



Intense Side Stretch Pose

Start in mountain pose. Step your right foot forward, keeping both feet flat on the ground. Your back foot should be turned slightly outward. Keeping your hips square to the front of the mat, hinge forward from your hips over your front leg, maintaining a straight spine. Place your hands on your hips or, for a deeper stretch, extend them forward parallel to the floor.



Lord of the Dance Pose

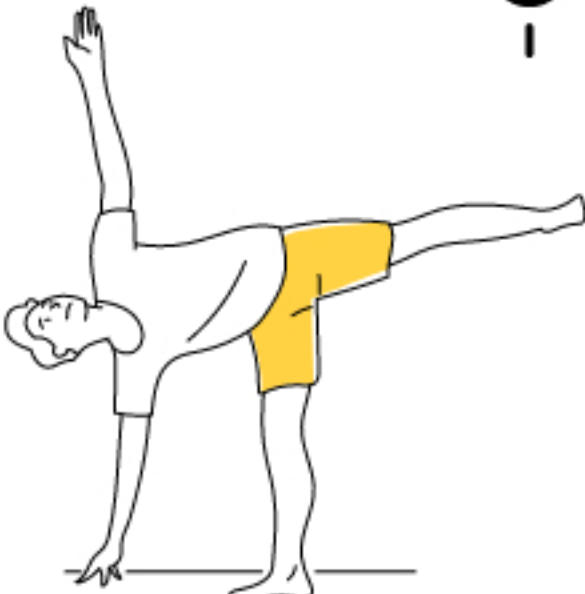
Start in a standing position. Shift your weight onto your right foot and bend your left knee, bringing your heel towards your buttock. Reach back with your left hand to grab the outside of your left foot. Extend your right arm forward, palm facing up. Slowly, start to push your left foot into your hand, tilting your torso forward while maintaining balance.



Standing Split Pose

Begin in a forward bend. Plant your hands on the floor and step back with your right foot. Shift your weight onto your left foot, then lift your right leg towards the ceiling as high as your flexibility allows, keeping it straight. Try to keep your hips square to the floor, resisting the urge to open them out to the side. Your head should hang relaxed, eyes looking back between your legs.

Balancing Poses



Half Moon Pose

Start from a standing forward bend. Plant your right hand on the floor or on a block, about a foot ahead of your right foot. Shift your weight onto your right leg and slowly lift your left leg off the ground until it's parallel to the floor. Open your hips and torso to the left, extending your left arm towards the ceiling. Your gaze can be down, forward, or up towards your left hand.



Eagle Pose

Start in a standing position. Bend your knees slightly, then lift your right foot and cross it over your left knee, hooking your right foot behind your left calf, if possible. Extend your arms in front of you, cross your left arm over your right, then bend your elbows, and wrap your forearms, bringing palms together. Sink deeper into the knee bend and draw your elbows towards your belly button.



Hand-to-big-toe Pose

Begin standing. Shift your weight onto your left foot and bring your right knee up towards your chest. Reach your right hand to the inside of your right foot and wrap your fingers around your big toe. If possible, straighten your right leg out in front of you, keeping the left leg grounded and strong. If balance allows, you can extend your right leg to the side. Keep your spine straight and your gaze focused to help maintain balance.

Sitting Poses



Staff Pose

Start by sitting on the floor with your legs extended straight in front of you. Keep your back straight - use a wall for support if needed. Place your hands next to your hips, fingers pointing forward, pressing down to lift your chest. Engage your thigh muscles and flex your feet, drawing your toes towards you. Your body should form a right angle, similar to the way it aligns when you are standing.



Head to Knee Pose

Begin seated. Extend your left leg straight and bend your right knee, resting the right foot against the left inner thigh. Inhale and raise your arms overhead, then exhale as you lean forward from your hips, reaching towards your left foot. If accessible, hold your foot or rest hands on the floor. Don't force your head onto your knee; aim instead for a long, straight spine.



Thunderbolt pose

Begin by kneeling on the floor with your legs together, feet directly under your buttocks. Rest your buttocks on your heels, which are separated enough to fit your hips. Keep your spine straight, place your hands on your knees, and relax your shoulders.



Seated Forward Pose

Begin seated with legs extended in front of you. Inhale, sit up tall and reach your arms overhead. As you exhale, lean forward from your hips, not your waist, reaching your hands towards your feet. Keep your spine long and avoid rounding your back. You may hold onto your shins, ankles, or feet depending on your flexibility. The aim isn't to touch your knees with your forehead but to feel a stretch in your hamstrings and back.



Lotus Pose

Start by sitting on the floor, legs extended. Bend your right knee and gently place it on your left thigh, right foot sole-up. Similarly, bend your left knee and place it on your right thigh. Both knees should ideally rest on the floor. Place your hands on the corresponding knees, palms facing up. Keep your spine erect and relax your shoulders.



Half Lords of the Fishes

Begin seated. Bend your knees, placing both feet on the floor. Slide your right foot under your left leg to the outside of your left hip. Lay the outside of the right leg on the floor. Step the left foot over the right leg and stand it on the floor outside your right hip. Turn your torso to the left, place your right elbow against your left knee, and rest your left hand on the floor behind you.