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# Free Yourself in 15

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## Why Yoga?

Yoga is more than simply exercise. It's different because the science behind physical alignment, breath work, and mudras (hand poses) regulate emotions like stress and anxiety while also relieving physical aches and pains. Yoga effects all parts of our human experience from our physical body to our emotions and to our deep seeded challenges we deal with every day. By using our body, mind and breath together we feel better to our core.

Coordinating breath with movement also sets yoga apart. Synchronizing the breath with each movement improves mindfulness which stops our obsession with our thoughts and brings us into our bodies and the present moment. Using special beathing techniques also has the most profound and immediate effect on mood. These techniques work by triggering the parasympathetic nervous system or the "rest and digest" reflex and helps elevate how we feel when we are tired or even depressed and brings us back down to earth when anxiety is spiking.

## The Breath

Using the breath in yoga encourages deep breaths into all compartments of the lungs. Typically, most people breath shallow breaths into the upper chest. Taking deep breaths and consciously directing the breath in backs of the lungs allows for deeper breaths and increased oxygen.

Each movement in a yoga routine begins with an inhale, giving you the ability to slow down and be able to do what is needed. Each breath helps complete the movement or posture and piece-by-piece our body and mind come into alignment helping us feel better and more complete. Being aware of the breath helps the mind focuses preventing it from chasing our to-do list.

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## Routine

### Breathing

Balanced Breath: Inhale 4 counts and Exhale 4 counts

Box Breath: Inhale 4 counts, hold the breath in for 4 counts, exhale 4 counts, hold the breath out for 4 counts

### Releasing the Neck & Shoulders

Only moving the neck, exhale the chin down to the chest and then inhale lifting the chin up (repeat 6 times)

Only moving the neck, exhale the chin down and inhale moving the chin to the left shoulder and then up and over to the right. Repeat 3-6 times slowly and then reverse.

Placing fingers on the shoulders, bring elbows forward to touch. Inhale lift the elbows up and circle back with the exhale. Repeat 3-6 times slowly and then reverse.

Interlace fingers behind the back and bring them over to the right waist. Pull without forcing left arm as far over to the right as possible. Take a deep breath and exhale the slowly stretch the head over to the right shoulder. Hold for 5 deep breaths and then reverse.

Eagle Hug: Inhale take the arms out to the side at shoulder level. Exhale bring the left arm underneath the right and give yourself a hug. Inhale and lift elbows up without moving the rib cage. Hold for 5 deep breaths and then reverse.

Down-Dog at a desk: Slide your chair back until you can straighten your elbows with your hands on the desk. Inhale and round your back as you engage your arm and core muscles. Exhale bring your head down between your arms without dropping your shoulders. Take 5 deep breaths and maintain core and arm engagement and make sure to keep the rib cage lifted.

### Releasing the Hips and Low back

Stand with hands on hips and march, bringing knees as high as possible without bending the standing knee. Engage core and focus on standing tall while looking straight forward. Repeat with hands interlaced and palms up above the head and elbows as straight as possible. Approximately 20-40 marches

Static Stretch: Hold one knee into chest while balancing. Hold for about 5-10 deep breaths

### Moving Chair:

1. Hakini Mudra
2. Inhale reach arms up
3. Exhale sit back into an imaginary chair
4. Inhale hold posture
5. Exhale bring belly toward legs and drops arms to the floor or shins
6. Inhale lift the spine and look forward (maintain neutral spine)
7. Exhale hold posture
8. Inhale stand-up, reach-up and stretch-up
9. Repeat 3-5 times

### Lunge Sequence

1. Stand to the side with legs wide, feet parallel and toe slightly turned-in
2. Inhale and reach arms up, exhale bend knees and touch your shins or the floor (Keep back straight)
3. Inhale lift up half way and look forward, exhale fold forward again
4. Step right leg back and turn the heel to the flow (align legs so that heels are lined up). Engage legs by drawing feet inwards each other and pressing feet down
5. Inhale to come up and hold pose
  - a. Holding the Hakini mudra in front of the belly, flow with the breath by inhaling arms up
  - b. Exhale and lean forward and swim arms back
  - c. Inhale lift arms and torso back up
  - d. Exhale Hakini mudra
6. Release hands to the flow and step forward. Repeat with left leg.
7. After completing left side, inhale and stand up lifting arms up over head,
8. Exhale bring hands back into Hakini mudra and take 3-5 even breaths.

### Sun Salutation:

1. Beginning: Combine Moving Chair and Lunge Sequence
2. Next Steps: Complete one (1) round of Moving Chair and end in a forward fold. Then step into plank and press back into Downward Facing Dog. Step legs forward for Lunge Sequence. Repeat on both sides
3. Another option: from plank lower down and with an inhale lift chest and shoulders back and elbows slightly bend. After the backbend press back into Downward Facing Dog



Downward Facing Dog