

YOGA ^{10 poses}

From *Cooking Light*, By Cindi Lee



Cat Pose

On hands and knees, exhale as you make a curve in your spine by tucking your pelvis under and dropping your head (you'll look like an angry cat). Pull your navel in as much as you can.

Cow Pose

As you inhale, reverse the curve in your back by dropping your stomach toward the floor as you lift your pelvis, chest, and face toward the ceiling. Let your spine be absorbed into your body.

Downward-Facing Dog Pose

Maintaining the same tilt in your pelvis as in the Cow Pose, exhale as you press your hands firmly into the ground, and straighten your legs, raising your pelvis toward the ceiling. Your heels do not have to touch the ground but should move in that direction. If your hamstrings are very tight, bend your knees slightly so you can maintain proper alignment in your back.

plank

Plank Pose

On an inhalation, straighten your body into the top of a push-up position; you'll be supported by your hands and toes. Feel the strength of your legs, arms, and abdominal muscles. Beginners can place their knees on the ground.



Cyndi Lee is director of OM Yoga Center in New York City. She is author of *OM YOGA: A Guide to Daily Practice* (Chronicle, 2002) and *Yoga Body, Buddha Mind*.

5 knees-chest-chin

Knees-Chest-Chin Pose

Exhale and gently lower your knees to the floor. Reach up and back with your pelvis as you begin to bend your elbows up and back. Shift your chest forward and place it on the floor between your palms with your chin on the floor. Think of yourself as an inchworm.



A



B



C

6 baby cobra

Baby Cobra Pose

Inhale, straighten your torso, and scoop your chest forward and off the floor; arms should be bent with hands on floor at midchest, providing support. Raise only as far as you can with your bottom ribs still touching the floor. Keep your shoulders dropped away from your ears. For a gentler variation, place your forearms on the ground, with elbows directly under the shoulders.

6



(variation)





Child's Pose

Exhale and press your bottom back onto your heels, stretching arms forward and resting forehead on the floor. This pose calms the mind, opens the hips, and massages the abdomen. It is also a good place to rest for a few breaths, if need be.



A

side bending 9

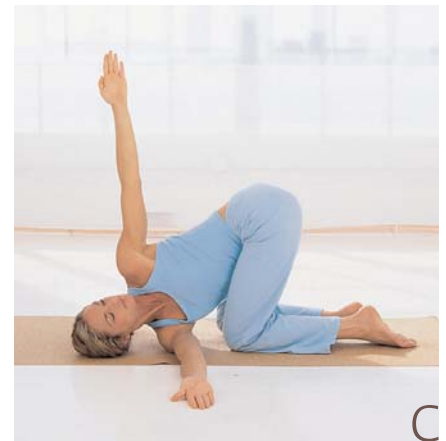
Side Bending Easy Pose

Exhale as you cross your ankles behind you and shift your weight back until you are sitting in a cross-legged position.

Inhale and lift your right arm. Exhale and bend to the left. Inhale as you return to center, dropping your right arm and lifting your left. Exhale and bend to the right. Try to keep both hips firmly on the floor as you bend to each side. Inhale and return to center, sitting up tall.



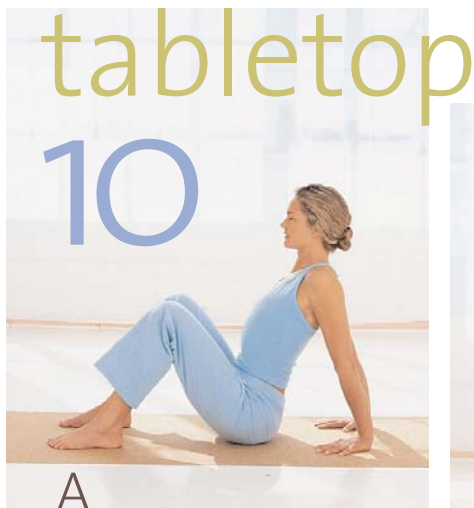
B



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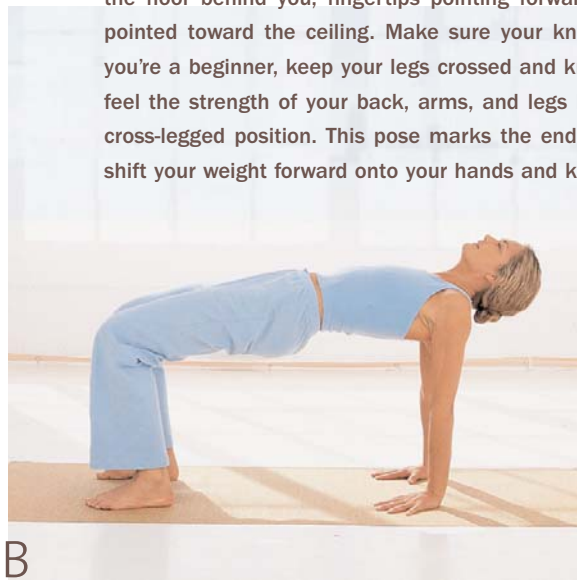
Threading the Needle Pose

Inhale and return to your hands and knees. As you exhale, scoop your right arm past the inside of your left wrist, placing your right shoulder on the floor. Let your belly slide around the left, opening your chest and left arm to the sky. Inhale as you return to hands and knees, then exhale as you scoop your left arm under, twisting to the right. Inhale and return to hands and knees.



Tabletop Pose

As you exhale, place your feet on the floor, hip-distance apart, and put your hands on the floor behind you, fingertips pointing forward. Inhale and lift your torso, stomach pointed toward the ceiling. Make sure your knees are aligned above your ankles. (If you're a beginner, keep your legs crossed and knees on the floor.) Relax your belly and feel the strength of your back, arms, and legs holding you up. Exhale and return to a cross-legged position. This pose marks the end of the sequence. On your next inhale, shift your weight forward onto your hands and knees, and begin again with Cat Pose.



relaxation

Relaxation Pose

Always end your yoga practice with the Relaxation Pose (also called the Corpse Pose). Relaxation Pose is considered the most valuable pose in yoga because it allows your body to assimilate the benefits of all the other poses.



Here's how to do it: Lie on your back. If you'd like, place a thin pillow under your head and a bigger one under your knees. Relax your legs; let your feet fall apart and your toes point away from each other naturally. Your feet should rest slightly wider apart than your hips. Your arms should be at your sides with the palms facing up—this is the position that best opens the heart and lungs. Think about relaxing your skin. Relax your muscles and bones. Relax your breath. And, finally, relax your mind. Observe your thoughts coming and going, as if you were watching birds in the sky. Hold the pose for 10 minutes if you can, and come out of it slowly, rolling onto your right side and pushing up to a sitting position.

gear guide

Cyndi Recommends

- Invest in a sticky yoga mat, which will help you keep your footing in the postures.
- Good books on the subject include my own, *OM Yoga: A Guide to Daily Practice*, as well as *Yoga: The Spirit and Practice of Moving into Stillness* by Erich Schiffmann. If you're interested in restorative yoga, *Relax and Renew* by Judith Lasater is a good resource. For more on the breath, read *The Yoga of Breath* by Richard Rosen.
- I like to hear music as I practice. My favorite CD is *Drala*, by the band of the same name. It's perfect—hip and inspiring.

We Recommend

- Yoga videos are a great way to start—or extend—your practice. Some good ones: *Yoga Mind and Body* with Ali MacGraw and Erich Schiffmann, *AM/PM Yoga* with Rodney Yee and Patricia Walden, and—for a more vigorous workout—*Total Yoga* with Tracey Rich and Ganga White.
- To find a class in your area, check the yellow pages under Yoga, or turn to a Web directory, such as www.yogajournal.com or www.yogonet.org.

