

Week One:

## Full Yogic breathing

First inhale by filling the abdomen and then CONTINUE inhaling as you expand and fill the chest. Then exhale first from the chest as it empties and falls and then CONTINUE exhaling from the abdomen as it draws inwards completely. This is one round of the full yogic breath. Remember the pattern... Inhaling - abdomen then chest; Exhaling – chest then abdomen.

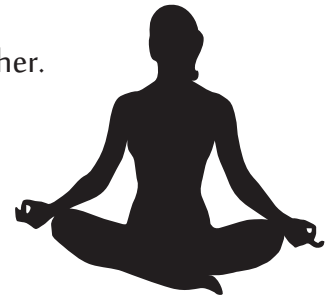
All of the above steps should be done WITHOUT strain. Go slow and easy.

Initially you will experience unevenness or bumps in this breathing process – as if there are separate parts to the full yogic breath. Instead, try to picture this breath as a continuous wave like pattern – as if the breath moves up from the navel to the throat with every inhalation and then, down from the throat to the navel with each exhalation. It may take a few weeks of practice to perfect a smooth flowing breath.

## Sukasana - Easy Pose

A seated pose that allows our body and mind to become quiet and meditative. By balancing the body and aligning the spine, prana (energy) flows freely, the breath comes naturally, and the mind can settle.

- Sit cross-legged
- Place the palms of the hands on the legs so that the elbows are beneath the shoulders.
- Draw the tailbone in, pull the navel toward the spine and lift the ribs.
- Let the shoulders relax and drop the shoulder blades down toward each other.
- Relax your neck.
- Encourage the breath to fill the space within the chest.
- Soften your eyes and let thoughts settle down.
- Keep the body upright and awareness on the breath.
- Repeat with opposite leg in front.
- Remain in asana for 5 to 10 breaths on each side.



If this is uncomfortable and your knees are high or you have knee pain, sit on a yoga block or two with a blanket underneath your shins to support your knees. Both sides should be supported equally. Hips should be higher than knees, so raise your seat if necessary.

## Warm-ups:

### Cat/Cow

Increases flexibility of spine.

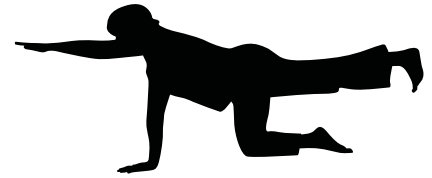
- Start on your hands and knees with your wrists under your shoulders and knees under your hips, spread the fingers out wide
- As you inhale, tilt the tailbone and pelvis up, and let the spine curve downward, drop your belly and lift your head, gaze up, this is cow
- As you exhale, move into cat by tilting the pelvis down, rounding your back, draw your belly up and in, drop your head and gaze between your knees
- Repeat several times, flowing smoothly from cow into cat, and cat back into cow



## Balancing Table

Builds core strength and stretches the back body

- Start in table pose
- Lift the right leg straight behind you, aligning the leg with the body
- Lift the left arm, palm faces down
- Keep the gaze down and the spine neutral
- Draw the belly up and in to engage the core
- Stretch the heel toward the wall behind you and reach the fingers forward to straighten the back body



## Tadasana - Mountain Pose

A standing pose good for developing body awareness.

- Bring yourself to a standing position with your toes together.
- Make sure your weight is even across your feet from the toes to the heels and side to side.
- Stand with your arms by your side, palms of the hands facing forward.
- Keep your head up and chest lifted.
- Lift the knee caps as you draw the heels down.
- Allow foot arches to rise.
- Activate the muscles in your legs.
- Tuck your tail bone.
- Shoulders down, arms back, ribs lifted.
- Keep the hips aligned with the ankles, the shoulders over the hips and the crown of the head in line with the center of the body.

Close your eyes and stand for 5-10 breaths.



## Balāsana - Child's Pose

A restful pose that gently stretches the hips, thighs and ankles; calms the mind and helps relieve tiredness.

- Start on your hands and knees.
- Move your knees towards the edge of the mat and your toes together
- Slowly sink your hips back to rest on your heels
- Step your hands forward and place your forehead on the mat
- Focus on your breath, relax your jaw and soften your face.

Stay in the pose for 10-20 breaths.



## Savasana

This is a classic relaxation posture.

- Lay down on your back.
- Place your heels towards the corners of your mat and let the feet drop off to the outside.
- Turn the palms of the hands up with your hands away from your hips
- Tuck the shoulder blades so they feel like they are resting flat on the floor

If lower back pain prevents you from lying flat on your back, then bend your knees. You can tuck a blanket or bolster under the knees for support if you like. Mentally scan the body starting at the feet, consciously relaxing the body parts as you progress towards your head. Then return the breath to a natural rhythm and relax. Stay in the pose for several minutes.

## Uttanasana - Standing Forward Fold

Stretches the legs and spine.

- Begin standing in Mountain Pose
- Inhale and lift your arms up over head
- Exhale and bend forward from the hips, not the waist
- Come forward as far as you can without rounding your back
- Let your hands rest on your shins, a block or on the floor
- Bend your knees if you have to in order to keep your spine straight

Stay in the pose for 3-5 breaths.

To come out of the pose, curl upward as if pulling yourself up one vertebrae at a time, stacking one on top of another, and leaving the head hanging down until last.



## Adho Mukha Svanasana - Down Dog

Stretches the shoulders, legs, and spine, builds strength throughout the body, provides an overall body stretch, and increases blood flow to the sinuses.

- Start on your hands and knees
- Exhale and push the hips up toward the ceiling so that your body forms an inverted V-shape
- Keep your arms straight but not locked, shoulders are wide and relaxed
- Pull your belly in and slowly lower your heels toward the floor (they do not have to touch)
- Focus on your breath, relax your neck and let your head hang naturally

Stay in the pose for 5-10 breaths.

Come out of the pose by coming back to your hands and knees.

This posture is not recommended if the wrists are injured.

If the hamstrings are very strong and tight, bend your knees to allow your spine to lengthen fully.

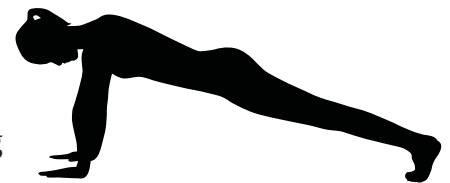


## Plank / Table

From Downward Facing Dog lower your hips so they line up with your shoulders and heels.

- Engage your core, push down with your hands and back with your heels
- Gaze down to keep your neck in-line with your back
- If you feel too much strain on your wrists, shoulders or back, bring your knees to the floor.

Stay for 3-5 breaths

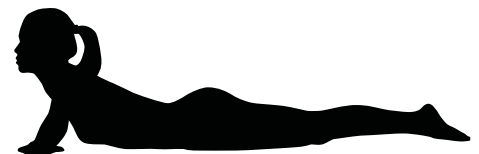


## Cobra – Bhujangasana OR Upward-Facing Dog - Urdhva Mukha Svanasana

From Plank lower your torso all the way down to the floor.

- Keep your hands under your shoulders and elbows tucked in.
- Push your hands into the floor as you lift your head and shoulders up.
- Keep your legs engaged and hips pressed into the floor.
- If you feel too much strain on your back, do not come up as high.

Stay for 3-5 breaths



## Sun Salute - Surya Namaskara

- Start in Mountain pose with feet about hip width apart
- Inhale bring your arms up overhead
- Exhale fold forward, hinge from the hips, lead with the chest, let your hands land on your shins or on the floor
- Inhale and lift your head, gaze forward
- Exhale, bend your knees, place your hands on the floor if they are not already there and step your right leg then your left leg back into plank pose
- Inhale in plank pose
- Exhale and bring your knees to the floor, then with your elbows tucked in tight to the rib cage lower your chest and chin to the mat
- Inhale and drop your hips, scooping the chest forward into a low cobra
- Exhale and lift your hips up to down dog
- Stay in down dog for 5 breaths
- Inhale step your right foot then your left foot forward so they are up as close to your hands as you can get them. You can drop your back knee if that helps get the feet closer to your hands
- Exhale fold, lower the crown of your head towards the floor, bend your knees as much as you need to in order to keep your back straight
- Inhale and lift to standing, bring the arms up overhead as you come up
- Exhale and lower your hands to heart center

Return to mountain pose for a few breaths and repeat on the other side

