

Yoga and Meditation
exercises for busy
minds and tense bodies
by Nicola Harpin

Artelt **ANY
WHERE**



Simple yoga exercises to help you stretch and unwind.

Sequence 1

Ensure you only move to your own ability and comfort.

Sit on the floor in a comfortable position.

1. Begin (x10)

Breathe deeply into your lower ribs.

2. Neck Stretches (x10)

Exhale and move your ear to one shoulder.

Inhale. Return head to centre.

Exhale and move opposite ear to opposite shoulder.

Inhale. Return head to centre.

3. Neck Twists (x10)

Exhale and turn your head to the left.

Inhale. Return head to centre.

Exhale and turn your head to the right.

Inhale. Return head to centre.

4. Neck Circles (x6 in alternate directions)

Inhale and roll your head.

Exhale at the mid-point. Return head to centre.

5. Shoulder Squeezes (x10)

Inhale. Shrug your shoulders up.

Exhale. Lower your shoulders down.

6. Shoulder Circles (x10)

Inhale and roll your shoulders backwards.

Exhale and roll your shoulders forwards.

7. Hand Stretches (x10)

Inhale. Raise your hand upwards from your wrist and spread your fingers.

Exhale and point your hand down.

8. Wrist Circles (x10)

Circle your wrists in alternate directions.

9. Mini Camel (x6)

Inhale and tilt your head backwards, pushing your chest forwards.

Exhale and tip your chin to your chest. Pushing your chest into your back.

10



Side Stretches (x6 each side)

Place one hand on your hip.

Inhale and raise your other arm.

Exhale stretching it over your head.

Inhale and bring your arm back to straight up position. **Exhale** and lower your arm back down.

11



Side Twists (x6 each side)

Place right hand on your hip.

Inhale and raise your other arm up. **Exhale** and twist from the waist to face to your left, stretching your raised arm back behind you.

Inhale and return to centre. **Exhale** and lower your arm back down.

⚠ *Deep side twists are not suited to pregnancy. In this case, the navel must stay facing forward when the twist is taken.*

12. Hip Circles (x10 in each direction)

Place your hands on both hips. **Inhale** and circle your upper body from the hips.

Exhale from half-way and return to centre.

13



Knees to Chest (x10 per leg)

Sit with your legs out in front of you.

Exhale and bring one knee to your chest.

Inhale and return leg to floor.

14. Ankle Circles (x10 per leg)

Lift one leg slightly off the floor and rotate your ankle.

15. Pointing Toes (x10 per foot)

Point your toes on one foot, then return to centre.

16. Butterfly Pose

Sit with your knees bent and the soles of your feet together. Use support under thighs if needed.

Breathe in and out 10 times.

17



Happy Baby Pose

Lie on your back, bring knees to chest and grab hold of the bottom of your feet. Ensure your back is comfortable.

Breathe in and out 10 times.

18



Child Pose

Sit on your heels and lean forwards, extending your arms onto the floor. Padding may be required for the knees or between the bottom and heels.

Breath in and out 10 times.

⚠ *Knees should be wide during pregnancy.*

Sequence 2

Ensure you only move to your own ability and comfort.

Lie on your back with your knees bent.

1. Begin (x10)

Breathe deeply into your lower ribs.

❗ *In pregnancy, remain seated for this exercise.*

2. Diagonal Stretches (x10 each side)

Straighten your legs and put your arms above your head. Lift your right leg and raise your left arm. Stretch away from each other then switch sides.



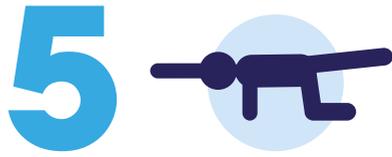
Cat and Cow (x10)

Roll over onto all fours. **Inhale.** Draw your belly to your spine and round your back. **Exhale** and drop your belly towards the mat, creating a concave shape with your spine. Use support for wrists and knees if needed.

4. Spinal Twists

Stay on all fours. **Inhale. Exhale** and drop your hip to one side. **Inhale** and return to centre. **Exhale** and drop your hip to the other side. Use support for wrists and knees if needed.

❗ *If pregnant, the navel must stay facing forward and down so the twist becomes a stretching of the hip to the side, rather than down towards floor.*



Opposite Arm and Leg Stretch (x10 each side)

Inhale. Exhale and straighten your left arm out in front of you. At the same time, straighten your right leg out behind you. **Inhale** and return to all fours. Use support for wrists and knees if needed.

❗ *If there is instability in lower back or pelvis, just adopt arm movements.*

6. Frog Stretch (x10)

Inhale. Exhale and push your bottom in the air, leaving your legs bent. **Inhale** and return to all fours. **Exhale.**

❗ *Do not attempt if you have glaucoma or serious eye issues. Those with heart conditions should seek advice before attempting.*



Dog Pose (x10)

As above, but straighten your legs.

❗ *Do not attempt if there are any issues such as glaucoma or serious eye issues. Those with heart conditions should seek advice about practicing this posture in advance of attempting.*

8. Rest

Lie on your front and rest your head on your hands. **Breath in and out 10 times.**

❗ *In pregnancy, lie on your left hand side and use arm to support the head.*

9



Cobra Pose (x10)

Remain lying on your front. Place your hands by your shoulders. **Inhale** and push your chest off the floor. **Exhale** and relax back down again.

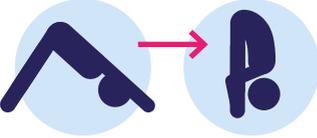
⚠ *In pregnancy, repeat Cat and Cow.*

10. Child Pose

See Step 18 in Sequence 1.

Breathe in and out 10 times.

11



Dog Pose to Forward Fold

From Child Pose walk your hands in and lift your bottom to return to Dog Pose. Bend your knees and walk your hands back towards your feet. Pause in forward fold and **breath in and out 10 times**.

⚠ *Do not attempt if you have glaucoma or serious eye issues. Those with heart conditions should seek advice before attempting.*

12. Mexican Wave (x10)

From your folded position above, bend your knees, stretch up fully and throw your hands in the air. Bend and return to folded position.

13



Tree Pose

Place your palms together in front of your chest. Lift one foot and place the sole against the calf of the other leg where comfortable. Lean on a wall if needed. **Breathe in and out 10 times and switch sides.**

14



Warrior Lunges (x10 each side)

Stand with both feet together on the floor. **Inhale** and lunge forward with one leg. Raise arms above your head and place palms together. **Exhale** and return to standing with both feet together.

15. Hip Circles (x10)

Stand with both feet on the floor. Rotate your hips in a circle. Change direction occasionally.

16



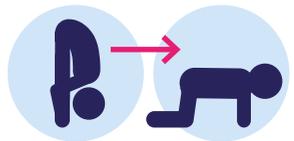
Malasana Squats (x10)

Place your palms together and feet wide apart. **Inhale**. **Exhale** and lower to a squat. **Inhale** and return to standing.

17. Swaying Palms (x10)

Raise both arms in the air. **Inhale**. **Exhale** and lean to your left. **Inhale** and return to centre. **Exhale** and lean to your right.

18



Uttanasana

From standing, bend forwards to place your hands on the floor and come down onto all fours. Sit back onto your heels and lean forwards into Child Pose (See Step 18 in Sequence 1).

Meditation is used to gain a mentally clear and emotionally calm state.

If you can find a quiet moment, try these simple exercises to give you space within your day.

Heart Chakras Meditation (10 mins)

1. Sit in a comfortable, relaxed, upright position. Allow your breathing to settle into a natural pattern. Draw awareness to the environment around you using hearing, sight and feeling (outwardly and inwardly). Draw awareness to the here and now and the body. Be conscious of how the body feels.

2 mins

2. Mentally channel the breath to the heart. Chant 'YAM' three times. Allow the sound to resonate inwardly. Slowly repeat chant in your mind and imagine sound coming from the heart.

2 mins

3. Refocus towards the heart centre, let go of the YAM mantra. Mentally channel the breath to the heart. Visualise a green light emanating from the heart. Visualise the light surrounding the body.

4 mins

4. Let go of visualisation. Draw awareness back to your breathing and environment. Using hearing, sight and feeling. Draw awareness to the here and now and the body. Be conscious of how the body feels. Enjoy the subtle experiences of the body.

1 min

5. Take time coming out of the meditation. Let go of all thoughts and refocus on the here and now.

1 min

Mindfulness of Breath Meditation (15 mins)

1. Sit in a comfortable, relaxed, upright position. Allow your breathing to settle into a natural pattern. Draw awareness to the environment around you using hearing, sight and feeling (outwardly and inwardly). Draw awareness to the here and now and the body. Be conscious of emotions.

2 mins

2. Breathing naturally, count after each out breath:

- Breath in, then out, and count to 1
- Breath in, then out, and count to 2
- Breath in, then out, and count to 3 and so on until 10. Repeat.

3 mins

3. Breathing naturally, count after each in breath:

- Count 1, breath in, then out
- Count 2, breath in, then out
- Count 3, breath in, then out and so on until 10. Repeat.

3 mins

4. Let go of the counting and explore with attention the sensations of the whole breath in the body. Use visualisation with the breath to deepen sensation.

3 mins

5. Gather focus of attention to the point where the breath enters and leaves the body. Enjoy the subtle experience of those sensations.

2 mins

6. Take time coming out of the meditation by letting go of all the thoughts and focusing back on breath, body and the room.

2 mins



These yoga and meditation exercises are designed to help you relax and unwind in a break at work or at home.

Don't feel you need to do all the exercises; perhaps just start with a few simple yoga moves or some light meditative breathing.

All the exercises are aimed at beginners. You will find the meditation and early yoga sequences are possible to do whilst sat at a desk, but you might want to try the floor-based yoga at home or in an outdoor space.

The content in this booklet has been kindly provided by Nicola Harpin, a yoga teacher with over 20 years of experience, who frequently works with NHS staff. You can enjoy more yoga with Nicola online and at her studios —

www.yogaatthereachsheffield.com

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