

Energy

Let's start by coming to the front of our mats, feet parallel and a few inches apart. Reach up through the top of your head to lengthen your spine. Drawing your shoulders back then relaxing them down. Closing your eyes and closing your mouth, begin breathing through your nose, if possible. This will help keep your body warm and your breathing fluid. Focus in on your breath, making it rhythmic and deep, letting go of any other thoughts. Feel your belly and rib cage expanding as you inhale () and contracting as you fully exhale. Feel that energy entering your body, as you completely fill your lungs with each breath, knowing that by the time we end this short practice, your energy will be overflowing. Keep your awareness on your breath throughout this practice, keeping it full and deep. () On your next exhalation, open your eyes.

Inhaling, sweep your arms overhead. Exhale, dropping your right arm and stretching to the right. Inhaling, reaching up. Exhaling, dropping to the left. Continue stretching deeply from side to side. Inhaling as you reach up, exhaling as you stretch to the side. Keep your chest raised and open as you move. Feeling that wonderful stretch as you wake up your sides. One last time. That's it. ()

Then, inhale reaching up, exhaling dropping your arms down.

Stepping out wider, turn your feet out and, inhaling, sweep your arms overhead. Exhale, squatting, sweeping your hands down. Inhale, reaching up and exhale squatting down. Do your best to keep your head and chest lifted when you squat down. This brings more energy to your legs, and yes, it is more difficult, but it will make that body of yours that much stronger. So keep going for it.

On your next inhale, reach up, keeping your arms out. () Exhaling, squat down, drawing your elbows down and back. Inhale, reaching up. Exhale squat down, squeezing your shoulder blades. Reach up. You're doing great. Last one. (pause)

Squat, and, inhale turn to side reaching up, bending both knees. Exhale back to center. Inhale turn to the other side, bending your knees. Then, back to center pulling your arms down. One more time on each side. Stretching through your arms. Excellent. Reaching your arms up, drop them down.

Turn your toes forward and interlace your fingers behind your back. Inhaling, expand your chest, raising your hands away from your tailbone. Exhale, press your tailbone back and fold forward. Raise your hands away from your tailbone as much as you can. And, breathe deeply. When I'm in this position, which I often am... I like to inhale through my nose and exhale through my mouth, allowing my neck and shoulders to relax more. See how this works for you. (pause)

Dropping your hands back to your tailbone, lower your hands to the floor in front of you. Look up to lengthen your spine. Place your right hand in the middle. Inhaling, sweep your left hand up. Exhale, lower it down. Inhale, sweep your right hand up, and lower it down. Move back and forth, feeling that great twist, waking up your spine. Do one more on each side, really lengthening through your arms. Excellent. (pause)

Come back to center. Turn your feet out and begin lunging to the left, up to center, lunge to the right. Inhale, coming up, exhale as you lunge. Keep moving back and forth. Getting that energy flowing through your legs and hips.

Coming back to center, walk your hands toward your foot. Spread your fingers wide and step back, pressing your hips up and back coming into down dog. Check that your hands are about shoulder width apart and feet are hip width apart. Pump your heels one at a time to stretch your calves. Shake your head from side to side, letting your neck relax. Shake that butt from side to side, letting yourself get totally loose. Okay, maybe not totally loose, but you get the idea. Breathe deeply into your back, getting your energy moving. Feel your chest open as you press it back.

Walk your feet forward bringing your feet a few inches apart and parallel and fold forward. Bend your knees if you need to, to take any strain out of your back. Spread your toes wide and drop your head a little more. (pause)

Bring your hands to the floor in front of you or to your shins. Inhale, lift your head and chest, lengthen through your spine. Exhale, fold forward. Again, inhaling, lift and lengthen. Exhale, fold forward.

Bend your knees a lot, lift your head and chest, and inhaling sweep your arms up. Exhale, bringing your hands to your heart.

Inhale, reaching up. Exhale, fold forward leading with your heart. Inhale, lift your head and chest, lengthen your spine. Exhale, fold forward. Bend your knees a lot and sweep your arms all the way up, exhaling, fold forward. Inhale, lift your head, lengthen your spine. Exhale, fold forward. Bend your knees and use the strength of your legs to come all the way up, exhale, fold forward, last time. Inhale, lift and lengthen, exhale, fold forward. Bend your knees and reach your arms all the way up. Exhale, bringing your hands to your heart. Fantastic!

Step your feet out a little wider, keeping them parallel. Clasp your hands behind your back. Raise your hands away from your tailbone, drawing your shoulders back. Press your tailbone back and fold forward, allowing your hands to come away from your tailbone. Inhale, coming up, arching back, dropping your hands back. Exhale, fold forward, bringing your hands away from your tailbone. Continue moving back and forth, connecting your breath with your movement and energizing your body. Have fun, enjoying the movement. This exercise really helps me when I need a quick boost of energy...which, honestly, happens more often than I like to admit. You're doing great! (pause)

Come back to standing. Bring your feet back to hip width apart.

Inhale, sweeping your arm up overhead, reaching back. Exhaling, sit down like your sitting in a chair. Inhale, reaching up, arching back. Exhaling, sitting down. Reach up one more time, then exhale, sit down and stay here. Tuck your tailbone under and reach your arms up overhead. Breathe deeply. You can do it. That's it. This is Utkatasana. Although you may not care about the name, it's a great way to strengthen your back and your legs. () Then straighten your legs and fold forward. Great job. Breathe deeply here, still breathing through your nose and allowing your body to relax and release in this forward fold. (pause)

Inhale, sweeping your arms up, exhale, drop your hands to your sides. Bring your hands or fists to your low back. Drawing your elbows back, inhale reaching up with your chest. Exhale, pressing your hips forward as you lean back. Breathe deeply as you keep pressing your chest up towards the ceiling. Feel the energy entering your body. Backbends are a great way to quickly energize your body by increasing the circulation to your heart and lungs.

On your next inhale, come up reaching your arms up overhead. Exhale, folding forward, relaxing here. One of the great things about yoga, is you always get to rest after you do something more strenuous. Try to add small breaks into your daily life, as you do in your yoga practice, and see what difference it makes. (pause)

Sweep your arms back up to standing. Clasp your hands together, bringing your arms next to your ears. Inhale, reaching up. Exhaling, press your hips forward as you lean back. Keep your arms next to your ears, as best you can. This will keep your neck from becoming overly strained. Take one more deep breath. You can do it. Great. Then, come back up and exhaling, fold forward. Breathe deeply, allowing your back to completely release, and shake your head from side to side letting your neck feel loose. (pause)

Step your left foot back, turning your foot out, dropping your heel to the floor. Inhale, lift your head and chest, lengthen your spine. Exhale, bring your hands to your hips. Inhale, coming all the way up, looking up, drawing your shoulders back. Exhale, fold forward, leading with your heart. Inhale, coming back up, arching back. Exhale, fold forward, getting long. One last time, coming back up, and exhale, folding forward. Breathe deeply here, keeping your back flat and your chest open, bending your knee if you need to, and drawing your shoulders away from your ears. Excellent!

Drop your hands to either side of your front foot and step forward, folding forward. Shake your head, loosen your neck. (pause)

Step your right foot back and turn your foot out, dropping your heel to the floor. Inhale, lifting your head and chest, getting long. Exhale, bringing your hands to your hips. Inhale, coming all the way up, looking up. Exhale, fold forward, leading with your heart. Again, inhaling, coming up arching back. Exhale, folding forward. One last time, coming up. Exhale, getting long, folding forward. Breathe deeply here, drawing your left hip back to square your hips if you can and drawing your shoulders away from your ears. (pause) Drop your hands to either side of your front foot and step forward, folding forward. Breathe into your back and shake your head. Excellent! (pause)

Bend your knees, sweeping your arms up. Exhaling, drop your left hand down. Keep reaching up with your right hand as you bring your left foot towards your left hand. Try holding onto your foot if you can. Stay here, bringing your knees together, drawing your left shoulder back. Try kicking your foot up and back while holding it, still standing tall. Draw your shoulder blades together, really open through your heart. Press down through your standing foot. (pause) Drop your foot back down, inhaling, reach your arms up. Exhaling, fold forward, releasing your back. (pause).

Bend your knees, inhaling, sweep your arms overhead. Exhaling, drop your right arm down. Keep reaching up through your left hand, as you bring your right foot to your right hand, holding it if you can. You can stay here, simply bringing your knees together and lifting through your extended arm. Or, kick your foot up and back, while holding it. Keep standing tall and reaching up with your hand. Breathe deeply into your chest. This is a great way to improve your balance while strengthening and energizing your legs. (pause).

Drop your foot back down and, inhaling, reaching your arms up. Exhaling, fold forward. Breathe deeply into your back, feeling the energy flowing through you. Placing your hands in front of your feet, spread your fingers wide and step back into down dog. Stretch up through your hips, getting long. Press down through your whole hand. Shake your head. ()

On your next inhale, lift your left leg up. Exhale, lowering it down. Inhale, lifting your other leg up, and exhale lowering it down. Continue lifting one leg at a time, moving with your breath and extending fully through each leg, moving with control and focus. Lifting each leg one more time. That's it. ()

Then bring both legs back down. On your next inhale, raise your left leg and hold it there. Stretching out from your hands to your extended leg, getting long, breathing full and deep through your nose. Pressing down through your right heel. On your next exhale, bend your left knee, bringing your left heel towards your butt and opening your chest towards the left. Really open the front of your body and breathe into that space. Turn back to center. Inhale, stretching your leg up and exhaling, lowering it back down. Inhaling, raise your right leg, extending completely, dropping your head down. Breathe deeply through your nose, expanding your ribs. Stretching long.

On your next exhale, bend your right knee, bringing your heel towards your butt and opening your chest to the right. Breathe deeply into the front of your body, increasing the circulation to your heart and lungs. Turn back to center. Inhale, stretching your leg up and exhaling, lower it back down. ()

From here, dropping your knees, come into a kneeling position, with your knees about hip width apart. Place your hands or fists behind your back. Inhaling, expanding your chest, reaching up, exhaling, pressing your hips forward, leaning back as far as is comfortable for you. Listen to your body, only going to the point where you feel a stretch, but can still breathe comfortably. Breathe deeply into your chest, reaching up through your heart. Take one more breath. (pause)

Then roll your shoulders forward coming back up and onto all fours. Curl your toes under, stepping back and press your hips up into down dog. Breathing deeply into your back, allowing your muscles to release. Fabulous. (pause)

Come back to kneeling. This time you can place your hands on your back again, or, if it's comfortable, you can bring your hands back to your heels, but only if you can keep your hips pressed forward. Then, in either position, inhale, reaching up through your chest, exhale, pressing your hips forward and arching back, for full camel, ustrasana, or the modification we just did. Expanding your chest, breathe deeply through your nose. Feeling the energy flowing through your heart and lungs. That's it. I love the way camel pose opens my chest and quickly increases my energy. So, notice your energy right now, allowing yourself to feel more powerful with each breath. ()

On your next inhale, come back up and to all fours. Step back, pressing your hips up and back, coming into down dog. Breathing into your back, allowing your muscles to release from that intense backbend. ()

Walking your feet forward towards your hands, fold forward, allowing your back to stretch. Whenever you do any type of back bend, try to follow up with some type of forward bend to allow the muscles in your back to release after being contracted. Take one more full breath here. Excellent. ()

Bend your knees a lot, and, inhaling, sweep your arms overhead. Exhaling, bringing your hands to your heart.

Breathe deeply, feeling the energy running through your body as you get ready to go on with your day. Thank you so much for sharing your time with me today. May you have a wonderful day! Namaste