



HeartFelt Yoga

AUSTIN, TEXAS

OFFICE YOGA

To the surprise of many, yoga can be done just about anywhere, by anyone of any size and mobility. While it's wonderful to have a traditional yoga practice on the mat, it's also beneficial to sprinkle yoga off the mat throughout your day. Since we spend so much time at work here are some ways to practice yoga in the office. Yoga will improve your productivity and make you more focused and aware of all that you do.

AT YOUR DESK

Deep Belly Breathing: Breath work is the most important part of yoga. Your whole body can be revitalized from cells to systems by improving your breathing pattern. This three part breath starts by softening the diaphragm, breathing deep while sending the breath down to the belly, then out to the rib cage and up to the collarbone. The exhale releases from top, middle to bottom. This breath is easy to link into other times and activities — while your computer refreshes, when you're on hold with the phone, or at the copy machine. Deep Belly Breathing will expand your lung capacity and improve your cardio-vascular exchange.

Neck Rolls: Seated tall, without your back away from the back of the chair, ground yourself with both feet to the floor. Hold each position for several breaths.

- To begin drop your chin to chest to stretch the back of the neck
- Roll right ear to right shoulder, bring your left arm out, turn palm up, down and around to repeat a gentle twist of your arm from fingertips to shoulder, keep your shoulders soft and down
- Bring your hand back to your leg, roll your chin back to the chest
- Repeat other side
- Roll chin back to your chest
- Inhale your head up to center or go into Neck Twists

Neck Twist: This is like drawing a big smile on your chest if you had a crayon on your chin. It's a gentle pivoting of the face from side to side.

- Start by dropping the chin to chest
- Bring chin towards right shoulder
- Roll back down to center and move towards left shoulder
- This movement should create a squeeze at the base of the neck in the back where the shoulder and neck muscles meet
- Repeat several times, each upsweep going a little higher to improve your range of mobility
- Bring your chin back to the chest and lift your head up
- Interlace your fingertips, placing your hands behind your head to support the weight of the head, lift your chin to the ceiling to stretch out your throat for several breaths
- Exhale and release

Foot Stretch: Seated tall without your back away from the back of the chair, ground yourself with one foot then stretch and lift the other leg. Point, demi-point and flex your foot (ballet slipper, high heel and earth shoe). Warm up your ankles by rotating the foot — making O's with your toes — in both directions. Repeat other foot.

Seated Twist: Sit tall in the middle of the chair with your feet grounded.

- On an exhale take your right hand to your left knee and twist gently to the left
- Your left hand goes behind you to the back leg or edge of the chair
- Use the hand to the knee to deepen the twist
- The hand on the chair supports the spine and helps lift the heart center and crown of the head
- Look into the right corners of your eyes as you twist
- Inhale back to center, repeat other side

Side Stretch: Sit tall in the middle of the seat with your feet wide.

- Right hand reaches down to the right side of the chair to keep the left hip from lifting
- Inhale the left arm out to the side, up and over
- Stretch out from hip with the arm overhead by the ear; the palm faces down
- Feel the stretch from the waist to the fingertips
- Inhale back to center, repeat other side

Seated Dog/Cat Stretch: Sit tall in the middle of the seat with your feet grounded.

- Bring hands together in front, interlace fingertips
- Exhale as you stretch your hands forward, rotate your palms out as you arch your back towards the back of the chair, drop your chin to chest
- Inhale as you rotate the palms up towards the ceiling; press your heart center forward creating a small backbend arch
- Exhale the hands down as the palms lower, rotate palms forward repeating in a circular motion

Hip Opener: Sit tall in the middle of the seat with your feet grounded.

- Place right ankle on left thigh
- Hold the right knee with the right hand
- Hold right foot with the left hand
- Exhale with a flat back as you hinge your torso forward to stretch out the right hip. do other side

STANDING POSTURES

Mountain Pose: Stand feet hip-width apart, below your true hipbones, not the hip of your flesh.

- Outsides of your feet are parallel, giving you a slight pigeon-toed feeling
- Bring your attention to your body from the ground up: feet, knees, hips — core front and back — heart center, shoulders, arms, hands and top of the head
- A slight press together of the shoulder blades to lift your heart center
- Keep your chin level as you lift the crown of your head high
- Raise the arms out and up, turning palms up at shoulder high, frame your head at your ears
- No congestion around the head and neck by the shoulders
- Hold for several breaths
- Exhale your arms down to your sides, turning palms down at shoulder high to release

Half Moon Series: Start from the arms up position in Mountain pose to add soft side-stretches and a backbend.

- With your arms up, palms facing not touching, stretch on an exhale to one side and reach out
- Keep the hips and shoulders in alignment to avoid rolling forward
- Keep your weight distributed evenly on each foot
- Inhale back to center, repeat other side
- Next, for the backbend, start from the center arms up position
- Tighten the buttocks and lift your heart center to the ceiling
- Create the backbend from this lift with the arms and head staying in alignment; don't try to deepen the appearance of the backbend by hyper-extending the neck or waving the arms back
- Hold and inhale back to center. Release the arms as in Mountain.

Moon Salutation: This is a wonderful way to learn how to link the breath with large body movements. It's also a great way to wake up when you hit an afternoon slump.

Start with Tadasana feet arms at your side:

- INHALE: Radiate the arms out to shoulder high, T-position
- EXHALE: Bring the hands together at the heart center
- INHALE: Arms overhead, palms facing not touching
- EXHALE: Foreword bend with arms down, fingers to feet
- INHALE: Flat back up half way so the head is level with the hips; hands slide up the legs to the shins
- EXHALE: Slide hands back down to your feet
- INHALE: With a flat back lift to standing with arms out shoulder high
- EXHALE: Palms together
- INHALE: Arms overhead
- EXHALE: Fingers to feet
- INHALE: Half back
- EXHALE: Fingers to feet
- INHALE: Arms up
- EXHALE: Palms together

(Continue the flow ending with palms together. Do as many as you have time for and practice often, as this salutation is easy to sprinkle into your day off the mat in street clothes.)

Tree: This basic balance starts with the same foot position as Mountain pose.

- Shift your weight to one leg and find a focus point
- Keep your gaze on that point and bring the opposite foot to the straight leg
- Rest this foot with the heel above the ankle, or on the calf or up into the thigh — do not rest the foot by pressing on a joint
- Bring your hands to your heart center, draw the arms down around and up overhead
- Find your optimal hand position — your tree top — and hold
- Release your arms down, around and back to your heart center, exhale down your hands and foot
- Check your feet for alignment, then repeat the other side

Whatever yoga you can do, remember to have fun and enjoy!

**For more information please contact Abby Lentz at
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**Abby is available for Corporate Presentations,
Private Classes and Yoga Parties!
Don't miss Abby's HeavyWeight Yoga**

**Abby's DVD named to Fitness Magazine's Fit 50 List! —
HeavyWeight Yoga: Yoga for the Body You Have Today
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