

Beginner Yoga Quick Tips

When beginning a yoga practice take the time to focus on the breath. Breath is an important aspect in yoga and fuels our bodies with energy. These yoga poses will help strengthen and stretch the muscles while you get acquainted with your breath and movement. Take 10 - 15 minutes to start your practice and increase with 5 minute intervals as you gain more stability and confidence in each pose. This first series will start with: Child's pose, Downward Facing Dog, Long Lunge, Forward Fold, and Warrior 1 and 2.

1. Begin in **Child's Pose**, *balasana*, *take five slow breaths* inhaling and exhaling through the nose.
 1. Alignment:
 1. Heels sink toward the hips.
 2. Knees wide for more comfort
 3. Arms extended out with shoulders pulling away from ears
 4. Fingers spread wide
 5. Forehead connecting to mat (directly, double the fists, or use a block)



2. After this round of breath inhale to move to hands and knees, **Table Top**. *Take five breaths here*.
 1. Alignment:
 1. Shoulders over wrists and hips over knees.
 2. Fingers spread wide
 3. Full palm pressing into the mat
 4. Long spine, gaze is down toward short edge of mat
 5. Shoulders releasing down away from ears.



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3. Inhale to tuck toes under heels. Then exhale to lift your hips, coming into an upside-down V shape: **Downward Facing Dog**, *Adho Mukha Svanasana*. *Hold for five breaths.*

1. Alignment:

1. Spread fingers wide, creating a straight line between middle fingers and elbows.
2. Work toward straightening legs and lowering heels toward the ground
3. Head is relaxed between arms
4. Gaze is through your legs or toward your belly button
5. Shoulders pulling away from ears
6. Feet hips distance or wider apart



4. Inhale your **RIGHT** foot forward between the hands to come to a **Long Lunge** and *hold for five breaths.*

1. Alignment:

1. Knee is over ankle.
2. Back knee can stay lifted or lower down.
3. Lift chest, gazing toward front of room
4. Fingers may lift from ground to roll shoulders back and down
5. Use blocks under hands to help lift chest



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5. Inhale your LEFT foot to meet the right foot. Exhale, engaging your abs, for a **Standing Forward Fold, Uttanasana**. *Hold for five breaths.*

1. Alignment:

1. Create a long spine by tucking your chin and pointing the top of the head toward the floor.
2. This pose stretches the hamstrings. If you feel that this is too intense with straight legs, then create a bend in the knees to lessen the stretch in the hamstrings.
3. Arms reaching toward the feet. Clasp opposite elbows and release more in lower back. OR hands clasping behind back, then allow hands to move toward the front of room to open in the shoulders.



6. After this round of breath inhale to a **flat back, Ardha Uttanasana**. *Hold for five breaths.*

1. Alignment:

1. hands come to shins and head slightly lifts creating a long spine,
2. Belly button hugging in toward spine
3. Legs fully extended



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7. Take an inhale then exhale to a **forward fold, uttanasana**. Bend the knees placing hands on the floor to frame the feet. Inhale your **RIGHT** foot back to a **long lunge**. *Hold for five breaths.*

1. Alignment:

1. Knee is over ankle.
2. Back knee can stay lifted or lower down.
3. Lift chest, gazing toward front of room
4. Fingers may lift from ground to roll shoulders back and down
5. Use blocks under hands to help lift chest (Optional: Hands to thigh.)



8. From Downward Facing Dog, Adho Mukha Svanasana, inhale **RIGHT** foot forward into a Long Lunge while turning your **LEFT** heel down. Pressing equally through the feet lift the torso coming to **Warrior 1, Virabhadrasana I**. *Stay here for five breaths.*

1. Alignment:

1. Lifting the arms along the ears, facing each other, roll your shoulder blades back and down to relax the shoulders.
2. Front knee working toward a 90-degree angle over ankle
3. Press through the outside of the **LEFT** foot, which is at 45-degree angle
4. Hips are square to the short edge of the mat
5. Heels should be in a line, then work toward left heel to right arch.



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9. After this round of breath inhale to open to **Warrior 2**, Virabhadrasana II. a hip opener that stretches the quadriceps muscles. *Stay here for five breaths.*

1. Alignment:

1. Extend arms into a T position with the idea that they are being pulled away from each other, and turn your torso toward the left.
2. Bring gaze over right middle finger looking forward.
3. Tuck tailbone to engage the abdominal muscles
4. Press through the outside of the LEFT foot



10. Inhale to frame the RIGHT foot and exhale to push back into **downward facing dog**. *REPEAT 5 and 6 with LEFT foot leading.*

To bring the sequence to a close, come to Childs Pose, Balasana, and take 5 five breaths. Then slowly move to lying on the back for Corpse Pose, Savasana.



Take a few minutes here to rest with your legs relaxed, falling open, and arms are out by the sides with palms facing up. When you are ready, bring awareness back into your body and roll to one side to lift yourself up. Take your time and smile...you just completed a great beginner's yoga practice!