

Water Yoga

The fluid movements of yoga adapt naturally to the aquatic environment. Practice in the yoga tradition, with a focus on breathing and a light, loving heart.

Purpose

Water yoga techniques enhance flexibility, balance, and strength in a soothing series of moves that calm your mind. With regular practice, the mind-body-spirit integration of water yoga can bring you relaxation, improved posture and breathing, and an enhanced sense of body awareness.

Safety and Technique Tips

Perform these movements in water at the depth of the middle of your rib cage or in more shallow water if you have trouble keeping your feet in contact with the floor. Wear aqua shoes to gain greater control and stability. Keep your breathing active, inhaling and exhaling through your nose. Deep breathing is central to yoga practice.

All yoga moves and positions require maintaining a strong core by bracing your body in neutral position, with your back neither arched nor rounded.

Water Yoga Sequence

First, warm up with water walking by using gradually lengthening forward and back strides, followed by side steps. Follow with these yoga poses and movements that have been specially modified to work well in the water. End with stretches that cool your torso, legs, and arms in a relaxed, lengthened position (Stretches #1 through 19).

MOVE
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SALUTATION TO THE SUN

Purpose: Traditionally, the Salutation to the Sun communicates that the divine light in each of us honors the divine light in you. This move can warm up your body as if you were standing in the rays of the sun and enhance your range of motion. It opens your mind, body, and spiritual awareness to the universe.

Starting Position: Perform this exercise in chest- to shoulder-deep water. Stand with one foot in front of the other at a comfortable distance apart that provides good stability. Contract your abdominal and buttocks muscles to brace your spine in neutral position. Keep your chest lifted and your shoulder blades down and back. Your shoulders should be partly submerged.

Action:

1. Contract your abdominal muscles to keep your lower back from arching.
2. Press one leg behind you as you bend your front knee as in a lunge, and bring both arms overhead.
3. Hold the pose for several seconds.
4. Bring your arms down.
5. Step together.
6. Repeat with your other leg.
7. Repeat the sequence for 8 to 16 repetitions.



Safety Tip: Make a particular effort to keep your shoulder blades squeezed together and down.

BOW AND ARROW IN WARRIOR POSE

MOVE
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Purpose: The Warrior Pose teaches you how to bring wisdom, courage, and unwavering focus into the actions of your everyday life. It is a powerful pose, but, as you explore the alignment and inner attitude of the pose, the heart of the peaceful warrior begins to reveal itself. Like a Zen archer focusing on a bull's-eye—who practices just holding a bow for two years before ever releasing an arrow—find balance within your focus by becoming inwardly observant and calm. Enhance the integrated strength and range of motion in your chest, your upper back, your middle and lower torso, and your hips and buttocks.

Starting Position: Stand with your legs wide apart and your right knee bent. Align your front knee directly over your ankle. Turn your back foot out. The heel of your front leg is in a straight line with the arch of your back foot.

Action:

1. Reach straight out with your left arm.
2. Reach your right hand toward your left hand and then pull back as if you are drawing an arrow back against a bowstring.
3. Repeat the sequence for 8 to 16 repetitions.

