FREE GUIDE

15-Minute Morning Yoga Practice

A gentle sequence to begin the day

Ten postures · Exact timings · A one-page practice card · An 8-minute version

Yoga Wisdom — Styles, Postures & Practice

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> **The short version:** read the introduction once, print the practice card on page 4, and keep it beside your mat. The detailed pages explain each step when you need them.

INTRODUCTION

Fifteen minutes, every morning

A short practice you actually do is worth more than a long one you only plan. Fifteen minutes is enough to move the spine in every direction, wake up the legs, collect the attention and rest.

Mornings have their own character. The body is often stiffer after a night's rest, the mind may already be running ahead to the day, and time is short. This sequence is designed for exactly those conditions: it starts sitting and on all fours, builds gradually to standing postures and a balance, and ends lying down, so that you finish calm rather than rushed. Every posture is suitable for healthy beginners, and each has an easier option.

The timings add up to exactly fifteen minutes, including transitions. You do not need a timer — counting breaths works well, and a slightly shorter or longer hold does not matter. What matters is a slow pace, a smooth breath and the habit of turning up.

Learning objectives

- ✓ practise a complete, balanced 15-minute morning sequence on your own;
- ✓ move safely from sitting to kneeling, standing and lying, with logical transitions;
- ✓ use the breath to set the pace and to judge your effort;
- ✓ adapt the sequence for a stiff body, and shorten it to 8 minutes on busy days;
- ✓ recognise the morning-specific precautions, such as rising slowly from forward bends.

Before you start

- Practise before breakfast, or at least an hour after a light snack. A glass of water first is fine.
- Lay out a non-slip mat, a folded blanket and, if you have one, a block or firm cushion.
- Wear clothing you can move in; practise barefoot.
- If you have just woken up, walk around for a few minutes first.

The morning body

- Expect less range than in the evening — that is normal, not a step backwards.
- Bend the knees in folds and in Downward-Facing Dog.
- Rise slowly from folded and lying positions; blood pressure can drop briefly on standing.
- Stop if you feel pain or dizziness, and rest.

PRINT ME · KEEP BESIDE YOUR MAT

The practice card

Ten postures · 15 minutes · slow nasal breathing throughout. Where a posture has two sides, the time shown covers both.

01

Easy Pose with breath

Sukhasana

2 min

Arrive, three-part breath

02

Cat–Cow

Marjaryasana–Bitilasana

1½ min

8–10 slow rounds

03

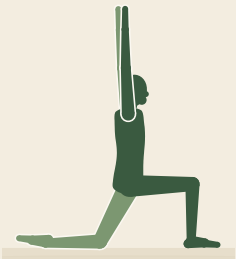
Downward-Facing Dog

Adho Mukha Svanasana

1 min

Knees bent, 6–8 breaths

04



Low Lunge

Anjaneyasana

2 min

1 minute each side

05

Standing Forward Bend

Uttanasana

1 min

Knees soft, then roll up

06

Mountain Pose

Tadasana

½ min

4–5 breaths

07

Warrior II

Virabhadrasana II

2 min

1 minute each side

08

Tree Pose

Vrikshasana

1½ min

45 seconds each side

09

Bridge Pose

Setu Bandha

1½ min

2 rounds, knees to chest

10

Rest

Savasana

2 min

Stillness, natural breath

Flow: sit › hands and knees › Dog › lunge (each side) › fold › stand › Warrior II (each side) › Tree (each side) › lie down › Bridge › rest.

Remember: knees bent in folds, rise slowly, foot never on the knee in Tree, head still in Bridge. Pain or dizziness means stop.

THE SEQUENCE STEP BY STEP · WHERE A POSTURE HAS TWO SIDES, THE ILLUSTRATION SHOWS ONE

Seated cross-legged, spine upright, hands on the knees.

2 MIN

SAFETY

With knee or hip discomfort, sit higher, stretch the legs out, or sit on a chair with both feet on the floor.

STEP 1 OF 10 · SUKHĀSANA · SEATED

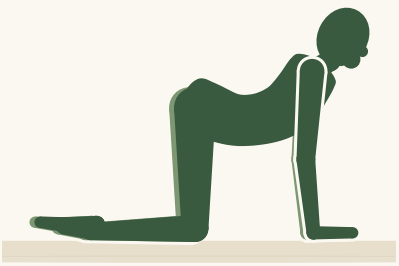
Sukhasana · *Easy Pose with breath*

Begin by simply arriving. Sitting comfortably with an upright spine, you give the body and mind a couple of minutes to wake up before asking anything of them.

1. Sit on a folded blanket or cushion so that the hips are a little higher than the knees, and cross the shins.
2. Rest the hands on the knees or thighs. Lengthen the spine and soften the shoulders.
3. Close the eyes or lower the gaze. Breathe naturally through the nose for a few breaths.
4. Then practise the three-part breath: let each inhalation fill the belly, then the ribs, then the upper chest; exhale slowly and completely. 6–8 rounds, then let the breath return to normal.

Breath. Never force the breath: about three-quarters full is plenty. If you feel light-headed, return to natural breathing.

Transition. Uncross the legs and come onto hands and knees.



Cow (shown): belly softening, chest forward. In Cat the spine rounds upwards.

1½ MIN

SAFETY

Keep the movement small with neck or back problems. For sensitive wrists, rest on the fists or forearms.

STEP 2 OF 10 · MĀRJĀRYĀSANA–BITILĀSANA · KNEELING

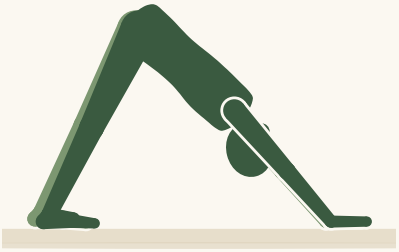
Marjaryasana–Bitilasana · *Cat–Cow*

The gentlest way to wake up the spine. Moving slowly between an arched and a rounded back, you warm the whole length of it in time with the breath.

1. Hands under the shoulders, knees under the hips; a blanket under the knees if needed.
2. Inhale into Cow: let the belly soften down, draw the chest forward and lift the gaze slightly.
3. Exhale into Cat: press the floor away and round the spine up, head relaxed.
4. Continue for 8–10 rounds, starting small and letting the range grow as the back warms.

Breath. Inhale into Cow, exhale into Cat; let each movement last as long as the breath.

Transition. Return to a neutral spine and tuck the toes under.



Hips high, back long, heels reaching towards the floor.

1 MIN

SAFETY

The head is below the heart: avoid or replace with Child's Pose if you have uncontrolled high blood pressure, glaucoma or other eye conditions. Use forearms or a wall with wrist problems.

STEP 3 OF 10 · ADHO MUKHA ŚVĀNĀSANA · MILD INVERSION

Adho Mukha Svanasana · *Downward-Facing Dog*

A whole-body stretch that lengthens the back and the backs of the legs. In the morning the hamstrings are often tight, so keep the knees bent and prioritise a long spine.

1. From hands and knees, place the hands a little in front of the shoulders, fingers spread.
2. Exhale and lift the knees, sending the hips up and back.
3. Keep the knees generously bent. You may "walk the dog", bending one knee and then the other.
4. Let the head hang between the upper arms. Stay for 6–8 breaths.

Breath. Steady and smooth. Each exhalation lets the hips lift a little more.

Transition. Lower the knees to the mat, ready for the lunge.

Low lunge with the arms raised — the full version, once you are steady.

2 MIN (TOTAL, BOTH SIDES)

SAFETY

Pad the back knee well. Keep the front knee over the ankle. With balance difficulties keep the hands on the thigh or on blocks; avoid sinking into the lower back.

STEP 4 OF 10 · ĀÑJANEYĀSANA · KNEELING LUNGE

Anjaneyasana · *Low Lunge*

Hours lying in bed or sitting at a desk tend to leave the front of the hips feeling tight. The low lunge offers a gentle, steady stretch there, while the front leg wakes up.

1. From hands and knees, step one foot forward between the hands. Place a blanket under the back knee.
2. Slide the back knee back until the front knee is above the front ankle. Rest the top of the back foot on the mat.
3. Bring the hands to the front thigh and lift the torso upright. Draw the lower belly in gently.
4. Let the hips move forward until you feel a stretch at the front of the back hip. When steady, raise the arms overhead.
5. After 30 seconds to 1 minute, return the hands to the floor, step back to hands and knees, and repeat with the other foot forward.

Breath. Inhale to lift the chest; exhale to let the hips settle.

Transition. After the second side, tuck the back toes and step the back foot forward beside the front foot.

Folding forward from the hips. In the morning, bend the knees as much as you need.

1 MIN

SAFETY

Come up slowly to avoid dizziness. With high blood pressure, glaucoma or eye conditions, keep the fold shallow, hands on the thighs, head above the heart. With back problems keep the knees well bent.

STEP 5 OF 10 · UTTĀNĀSANA · STANDING FORWARD BEND

Uttanasana · *Standing Forward Bend*

A relaxed standing forward bend that lets the spine hang and the backs of the legs lengthen. Early in the day, bent knees are not a compromise but the sensible choice.

1. Stand with the feet hip-width apart, knees generously bent.
2. Fold forward from the hips and let the torso hang. Rest the hands on the shins, blocks or the floor.
3. Let the head and neck relax completely. Sway gently or hold opposite elbows.
4. To come up, bend the knees more, bring the hands to the thighs and roll up slowly, head last.

Breath. Calm breathing into the back of the ribs. Feel the spine lengthen as you exhale.

Transition. Roll up slowly to standing.

Standing evenly, arms relaxed by the sides.

½ MIN

SAFETY

If you feel light-headed after the forward bend, bend the knees and wait until it passes, or sit down.

STEP 6 OF 10 · TĀḌĀSANA · STANDING

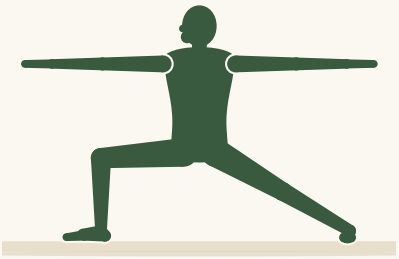
Tadasana · *Mountain Pose*

A short pause to stand well. After rolling up, Mountain Pose lets the blood pressure settle and gives you a moment to notice the body upright and awake.

1. Stand with the feet hip-width apart, weight even across heels and balls of the feet.
2. Engage the thighs lightly; let the pelvis rest level and the spine lengthen.
3. Shoulders soft, arms by the sides, head balanced. Stay for 4–5 breaths.

Breath. Slow and even, feeling the ribs widen with each inhalation.

Transition. Step the feet wide apart for Warrior II.



Right side shown: right knee bent over the ankle, gaze over the right hand.

2 MIN (TOTAL, BOTH SIDES)

SAFETY

Bend the knee less with knee problems. With high blood pressure, keep the hold short and the hands on the hips. With neck problems, look straight ahead.

STEP 7 OF 10 · VĪRABHADRĀSANA II · STANDING

Virabhadrasana II · *Warrior II*

A strong, open standing posture that warms the legs and builds steady energy for the day. Hold it with an easy breath rather than maximum depth.

1. Step the feet about 1–1.2 m apart and stretch the arms out at shoulder height.
2. Turn the right foot out 90° and the left foot in slightly. Hips and chest face the long side of the mat.
3. Exhale and bend the right knee over the ankle, pointing over the second and third toes. Left leg straight, outer edge of the left foot grounded.
4. Keep the trunk upright and look over the right hand. After about 1 minute, straighten the leg, turn the feet and repeat on the left.

Breath. Inhale to lengthen through the arms; exhale to settle into the front leg.

Transition. Straighten the legs and step the feet together into Tadasana.

Balancing on the left leg, right sole on the inner left thigh, palms together overhead.

1½ MIN (TOTAL, BOTH SIDES)

SAFETY

Practise beside a wall or chair if you feel unsteady or dizzy. With high blood pressure, keep the hands at the chest.

STEP 8 OF 10 · VṚKṢĀSANA · STANDING BALANCE

Vrikshasana · *Tree Pose*

A balance to collect the attention before the day begins. Morning balance can be wobbly; that is part of the practice. The illustration shows the left leg standing — start on that side.

1. Stand in Tadasana and fix your gaze on a still point.
2. Shift the weight onto the left foot. Place the right sole on the left ankle, calf or inner thigh — never on the knee.
3. Hands at the chest, or raised overhead with palms together when steady.
4. After about 45 seconds, lower slowly and repeat standing on the right leg.

Breath. Keep the breath slow and soft; a held breath makes balancing harder.

Transition. Come down to the floor and lie on your back.

Hips lifted, shoulders and head on the mat, arms along the floor.

1½ MIN

SAFETY

Never turn the head while the hips are lifted. With neck or back problems lift only a little, or rest a block under the sacrum. In later pregnancy, lying on the back may be unsuitable — consult your midwife or doctor.

STEP 9 OF 10 · SETU BANDHA SARVĀṄGĀSANA · SUPINE BACKBEND

Setu Bandha · *Bridge Pose*

A gentle backbend that opens the chest and the front of the hips and strengthens the back of the legs. Practised low and slow, it suits most beginners.

1. Lie on your back, knees bent, feet flat and hip-width apart, heels below the knees. Arms by your sides.
2. Inhale and lift the hips, peeling the spine up from the pelvis. Keep the knees pointing forward.
3. Hold for 4–5 breaths with the head still, then exhale and lower slowly.
4. Repeat once. Then hug the knees gently to the chest for a few breaths to release the lower back.

Breath. Inhale to lift, exhale to lower; calm breathing while you hold.

Transition. Release the knees and extend the legs for Savasana.

Lying flat, arms alongside the body, feet falling outwards.

2 MIN

SAFETY

With lower-back discomfort, keep the knees bent. In later pregnancy, rest on your left side instead.

STEP 10 OF 10 · ŚAVĀSANA · RELAXATION

Savasana · *Rest*

Two minutes of stillness let the practice settle. Even a short rest makes the transition into the day calmer and more deliberate.

1. Lie on your back, legs extended and feet falling apart, arms a little away from the body, palms up.
2. Close the eyes. Let the body become heavy, from the feet to the face.
3. Rest with natural breathing. If you like, set a simple intention for the day.
4. To finish, move the fingers and toes, roll onto your right side and come up slowly to sitting.

Breath. Completely natural. Simply observe it.

Transition. Sit for a moment before you stand and begin your day.

VARIATIONS

Adapting the practice

For a stiff morning body

Some mornings everything feels tight — after poor sleep, a long journey, or simply with age. Keep the same order and timings, but choose the gentler option at each step:

Easy Pose	Sit on a chair or on a higher cushion; add a few slow shoulder rolls and gentle neck movements (look right, left, up and down) before the breathing.
Cat–Cow	Start with very small movements and let them grow. Add a few circles of the hips on all fours.
Downward-Facing Dog	Knees well bent, or hands on a chair seat. Or stay in Child's Pose for the same time.
Low Lunge	Hands on blocks either side of the front foot, hips higher, extra padding under the back knee.
Forward Bend	Hands on the thighs, knees deeply bent, a half fold with a flat back.
Warrior II	Shorter stance, smaller knee bend, hands on the hips.
Tree Pose	Heel against the ankle, toes on the floor, one hand on a wall.
Bridge Pose	Lift and lower slowly with the breath instead of holding, or rest on a block under the sacrum.
Savasana	Cushion under the knees, blanket over you.

The 8-minute version

On busy mornings, keep the arc — sit, warm up, stand, rest — and drop Warrior II and Bridge.

		POSTURE	TIME
1		**Easy Pose** — *settle, 4–5 three-part breaths*	**1 min**
2		**Cat–Cow** — *6 rounds*	**1 min**
3		**Downward-Facing Dog** — *knees bent*	**1 min**
4		**Low Lunge** — *45 seconds each side*	**1½ min**
5		**Standing Forward Bend** — *roll up slowly*	**½ min**
6		**Mountain Pose** — *4 breaths*	**½ min**
7		**Tree Pose** — *30 seconds each side*	**1 min**
8		**Savasana** — *rest, then rise via the side*	**1½ min**
		Total	**8 min**

PRACTISING SAFELY

Safety, benefits and limits

MORNING SAFETY NOTES

- **Rise slowly.** Roll up from the forward bend with bent knees, head last, and come up from lying via your side. Pause if you feel light-headed.
- **Head below the heart.** Downward-Facing Dog and the forward bend place the head below the heart. With uncontrolled high blood pressure, glaucoma or other eye conditions, replace Dog with Child's Pose (head supported) and keep the fold shallow — and check with your doctor.
- **Knees.** Pad the back knee in the lunge, keep the front knee over the ankle in the lunge and Warrior II, and never place the foot on the knee in Tree.
- **Neck.** Keep the head still in Bridge; look forward rather than over the hand in Warrior II if your neck is sensitive.
- **Balance.** Use a wall or chair in Tree Pose, particularly if you take medication that can affect balance or blood pressure.
- **Pregnancy.** This sequence is not designed for pregnancy. Seek a specialist pregnancy class and your midwife's or doctor's advice.
- **Pain or dizziness** — at any point — means stop, rest, and seek medical advice if it persists.

What many people find

- ✓ Gentle morning movement may help the body feel less stiff and more ready for the day.
- ✓ Slow breathing at the start and rest at the end are experienced by many as calming and focusing.
- ✓ Practised regularly, the standing postures and balance may contribute to leg strength and steadiness.
- ✓ A fixed morning routine can make a regular practice easier to keep.

Experiences vary, develop gradually, and no result is guaranteed.

What it cannot do

- It is not a treatment for any condition and does not replace medical care or physiotherapy.
- Fifteen gentle minutes are not a complete exercise programme; regular walking or other activity still matters.
- It cannot adapt itself to your history. If you have an injury or health condition, ask a qualified teacher for individual guidance.

MAKING IT A HABIT

Practice recommendations

Building the routine

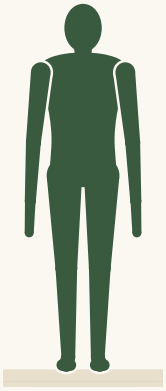
- **Same time, same place.** Leave the mat out the evening before. Fewer decisions make the habit easier.
- **Start with five days a week** and let the remaining days be rest or a walk.
- **Keep the order for the first month.** Familiarity lets the attention move from “what next?” to the breath.
- **Use the 8-minute version** rather than skipping a day.

After the first month

- Hold the standing postures for a few breaths longer.
- Extend Savasana, or add a few minutes of quiet sitting at the end.
- Explore related postures one at a time — for example Chair Pose or Warrior I — in the Asana Library at yoga.spiritualland.com.
- Consider a class with a qualified teacher to refine your alignment.

Closing summary

- ✓ Ten postures, 15 minutes, in a fixed and logical order.
- ✓ Sit and breathe › warm the spine › stand and balance › Bridge › rest.
- ✓ Slow nasal breathing sets the pace.
- ✓ Morning bodies are stiffer: bend the knees and rise slowly.
- ✓ On a stiff day choose the gentler options; on a busy day, the 8-minute version.
- ✓ Pain or dizziness means stop.



Begin the day as you would like to live it: steadily, attentively and without hurry.

PLEASE READ

Safety disclaimer

This guide is for general education. It is not medical advice and does not replace individual instruction from a qualified yoga teacher or the advice of your doctor.

Yoga is a physical practice, and every body is different. The postures, breathing exercises and sequences described here are intended for healthy adults practising at a gentle, beginner-friendly level. Nothing in this guide is intended to diagnose, treat or prevent any illness or condition, and no particular result is promised.

BEFORE YOU PRACTISE

- Consult your doctor before starting if you are pregnant or have recently given birth, have an injury, have had recent surgery, or live with a medical condition — for example high or low blood pressure, a heart condition, glaucoma or another eye condition, osteoporosis, a spinal or joint problem, or a balance disorder.
- If you are under medical or physiotherapy care, show this guide to the professional treating you and follow their advice.
- Tell any teacher you practise with about injuries or health conditions so that they can suggest suitable modifications.

WHILE YOU PRACTISE

- Stop immediately if you feel pain — particularly sharp, sudden or joint pain — or if you feel dizzy, faint, short of breath, numb or unwell. Rest, and seek medical advice if the symptoms persist.
- Never force a posture or hold your breath under strain. A steady, comfortable breath is the most reliable sign that you are working at the right intensity.
- Practise on a non-slip surface with enough space around you, and use a wall or chair for support in balancing postures if you are unsteady.
- Practise on an empty or light stomach, and come up slowly from lying or folded positions.

You practise at your own risk and remain responsible for your own wellbeing. The author and publisher accept no liability for any injury or loss arising from the use or misuse of the information in this guide. Information is believed to be accurate at the time of publication, but yoga instruction varies between traditions and teachers, and you may meet other valid ways of practising these postures.

YOGA WISDOM — STYLES, POSTURES & PRACTICE

15-Minute Morning Yoga Practice

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More guides, posture pages and articles on yoga styles, breathing and meditation: **yoga.spiritualland.com**

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