



YOGA FOR ALL SEASONS

Core Strengthening Yoga Routine

This write-up summarizes some of the main poses we did in our first Monday class. If you can, it is recommended that you do this core strengthening routine 5-10 min. each morning to gently begin to build your core strength over the next six weeks.

Dead Bug Pose

1. Lie on your back, and raise your legs and arms, so they are pointing towards the ceiling. Rotate your ankles and wrists a few times to get the synovial fluid (lubricates the joints) moving. Then slowly begin to lower your legs 3-6" towards the floor, just enough to feel the muscles in your abdomen engage. Next bring your arms slowly overhead, again moving just 3-6" until you feel the belly muscles engage.

Hold for 5-6 breaths, breathing deeply and slowly into your abdomen.

2. Move your legs and arms back to center. Take a deep breath, and slowly move your legs and arms sideways towards floor, until you feel your leg and arm muscles comfortably engage. Again hold for 5-6 breaths, then repeat 1. End by hugging both your knees to your chest, breathing into your lower back and allowing the sacrum to sink towards the floor.

Cat-Cow Stretch

Come into a table position with your hands aligned under your shoulders, your knees under your hips. As you exhale, engage your lower abdominal muscles to pull your navel towards your spine and at the same time hunching your back towards the ceiling. As you inhale, allow the air to move the spine in the opposite direction, coming into a cow stretch with your tail bone pointing towards the ceiling, your head tilted slightly back, without overextending your neck backwards. Repeat 8-10 times in tune with your breath.

(If you have lower back issues, be particularly careful in the cow stretch, which is a mild backbend. Go very slowly, and only allow your spine to arch into the cow stretch an inch or two (or less, if it doesn't feel right). Keep checking in with your body and don't do anything that doesn't feel comfortable.)

Sun Bird and Sun Bird Twist

1. In table, lift your right leg out behind you, making it strong and firm like a stick. Hold for 3-4 breaths, then repeat with the other leg.

2. Repeat this exercise on each side, or for more of a challenge, add the arms, lifting the opposite arm from leg into a full sunbird position. Hold for 2-3 breaths.

3. From table, stretch your right leg out behind you with the foot touching the floor. Inhale your right arm towards the ceiling coming into a twist. Hold for 3-4 breaths, then do the other side. Repeat.