

DAY 11 - STRONG TO THE CORE

Transcript

Hi everyone! Welcome to Day 11 of *The 12 Days of Yoga*.

Ready for a stronger workout? These poses help to strengthen the core muscles particularly the abdominals and the back, which is so important for posture, balance, stability, and doing many everyday tasks.

For this session, choose whether you want to work on the floor or from a chair.

- If you're working from the floor, have blankets or cushions nearby for padding and support.
- If you're working from a chair, ensure that the chair is sturdy and your feet are resting on the ground or supported by rolled up mat, blanket or other foot rest.

(1:01) BALANCING CAT/SINGLE LEG LIFT

The first poses are *balancing cat* (if you're on the floor) and *single knee or leg lift* (if you're seated in the chair). If you're familiar with these poses, come into them at any time.

BALANCING CAT –RIGHT LEG EXTENDED

For balancing cat:

- Come down onto the floor onto your hands and knees.
- If you need padding for your knees, roll up the mat or use a blanket.

Have the knees about hip width apart.

- Ensure that your wrists, elbows and shoulders are all stacked on top of each other, and the fingers are spread wide.

If this is uncomfortable for your wrists, try one of the following:

- Either roll up the mat and place the palms of your hands on the mat with the fingers over the side, or
- Make fists and come up onto your knuckles, and have the palms facing towards each other

If these two modification don't work for you, try the other pose, the single leg lift, from the floor.

For those working with the balancing cat:

- Feel the spine is straight, the back of the head is towards the ceiling, the tail bone and the crown are extending away from each other.

Feel how the hips are level, and the pelvis is facing towards the floor.

- Extend the right leg to the back, keeping the foot on the floor.
- Then squeeze into that right glute and raise the foot off the floor.

Make sure that the hips remain level. There is a tendency when we lift that right leg to want to lift the right hip.

Feel balanced?

If you do, walk the left fingers out in front and then the lift the hand off the floor.

Keep a little bend in the right elbow so you're not locking out the joint.

Need something stronger? Start to bring the left foot into the buttock so you're balanced on the knee.

And then breathe!

(3:48) SINGLE LEG LIFT – RIGHT LEG

For those doing the single leg lift ...

If you're on the floor:

- Sit with the legs extended out in front.
- If you find you are rounding your back to keep upright or leaning back to keep the spine straight, sit on a folded blanket or rolled up mat
- Put a little bend in the right knee and place the foot on the floor.

Whether you're seated in the chair or on the floor:

- Start by lengthening up through the spine.
- Breathe in ...
- And on an exhalation, raise the right knee up as high as you can, and hold it there.
- Breathe!

Don't lean back too far and don't round through the back. Use your abdominals to hold that leg up.

Need something stronger?

Straighten the leg.

Wobbling is fine, a bit of shaking is fine. It means that muscles are starting to switch on.

But if it becomes too much, come out of the pose whenever you need to.

If you're doing balancing cat on the floor:

- Release the position
- Push your buttocks back onto your heels, let the chest come to the ground, and stretch out through the spine – *extended pose of the child*

If you're seated:

- Lower the leg:
- Make some soft fists, and give that right thigh and hip a massage.

(5:53) BALANCING CAT – LEFT LEG EXTENDED

Ready for the other side?

If you're on the floor:

- Come back onto your hands and knees.
- Ensure that the spine is long, back of the head towards the ceiling, the hips level.
- Extend the left leg to the back keeping the foot on the floor.

Check that those hips are still level.

- Squeeze into that left glute and raise the left leg off the floor.

If that's enough of a balance for you, stay here.

But if you want a bit more:

- Put a little bend in your left elbow.
- Walk those right fingers out along the ground, and then lift the hand.

Need more? Bring that right foot in towards the buttock.

(7:07) SINGLE LEG LIFT – LEFT LEG

If you're seated, on the floor:

- Extend the legs out in front,
- And then bend the left knee and place the foot on the floor.

Whether you're seated on the floor or in the chair:

- Inhale, straighten up.
- And as you exhale raise the left knee up as high as you can.

Don't lean back too far and don't round through the back.

And if you want that stronger pose, straighten that left leg.

(7:51) BREATHING CHECK!

Whether you're doing balancing cat or single leg lift, check that you're breathing?

Sometimes, if a pose is hard for us, we hold our breath. So make sure you are breathing!

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If you're in balancing cat, push back into pose of the child and stretch through the back.
If you're seated, lower the left leg, and massage that left thigh and hip.

(8:38) CHURNING THE MILL

The next seated pose, *churning the mill*, can be done from the floor or in the chair.

If you're on the floor:

- Come to a seated position in the middle of your mat.
- Ensure there is plenty of space behind you to lean back, or even to lay down.
- Extend the legs out in front and have the feet about hip width apart.
- Push through the heels to brace through the back of the legs.
- If you feel you're rounding your back or leaning back, sit on a folded blanket or cushion.

If you're seated in the chair:

- Come towards the front of your seat so you have room to lean back.
- Place the feet about hip width apart on the floor, and ensure that they are flat on the floor or supported.

Whether you're on the floor or in the chair:

- Extend the arms out in front at about shoulder height, and interlock the fingers.
- Breathe in, and on an exhalation, bend forward from your hips, keeping the back straight.
- As you breathe in, rotate from your waist towards the right.

At the same time, starting to lean back.

At the end of the inhalation, your arms are out in front and you're leaning back.

Keep the length in the back, don't let the lower back round.

- As you breathe out, rotate to the left and start to lean forward.

Continue moving with your breath:

- Breathing in as you rotate to the right and lean back.
- Exhale as you rotate to the left and come forward.

The arms remain straight out in front, they don't bend. You're tracing a large circle with the hands. Imagine that you're stirring a huge pot of chunky soup or churning butter by hand!

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When you next come forward, reverse the direction:

- Breathing in as you rotate to the left and lean back.
- Breathing out as you rotate to the right and come forward.

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Make this your last round.

And then:

- Bring the legs together.
- Let the hands come back onto the thighs.
- Close the eyes and take a moment to feel into the body.

(12:44) REST

If you're on the floor:

- Remove any blankets or cushions and lay down on your back.
- Draw the knees into the chest and rock a little from side to side, massaging into the back
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- ... before extending the legs, bringing the hands beside you with the palms face up, coming into *shavasana*.

If you're seated in a chair:

- Perform a little *cat* to loosen up through the back:
 - Push the tailbone out, arch up through the spine, and open the chest.
 - And then tuck the tailbone under, round through the back, dropping the head.
- Do a couple of rounds before coming back to a seated position, arms resting in the lap or on the thighs.

Whether you're on the floor or in the chair, close the eyes.

Rest here. Let the effects of the poses be absorbed into the body.

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Take as much time as you need.

Then when you are ready, slowly release your position, open the eyes, and continue with your day.

Aum shanti!