

# Begin Where You Are: A Gentle Guide to Starting Yoga

An inclusive, beginner-friendly workbook to support your journey into yoga



Seated pose



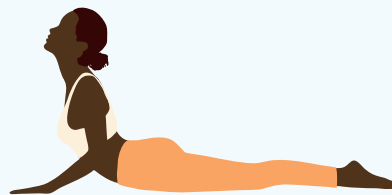
Seated Side Stretch



Seated Spinal Twist



Cat/Cow



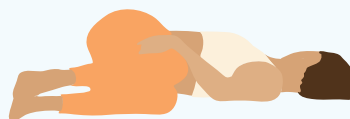
Cobra



Child's pose



Downward Facing  
Dog



Supine Spinal Twist



Corpse pose

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# Begin Where You Are: A Gentle Guide to Starting Yoga

An inclusive, beginner-friendly workbook to support your journey into yoga

## Welcome to your practice

Whether you're feeling anxious, overwhelmed or unsure where to start, this guide is for *you*.

Yoga isn't about being flexible or shrinking yourself to fit in, it's about coming home to yourself.

## Why Yoga?

Yoga has existed for thousands of years, originating in the Indus Valley region of South Asia. It is a holistic practice of physical poses (asanas), breathwork (pranayama), philosophy, and more to achieve a state of harmony and union in mind, body and spirit.

There are different styles of yoga e.g. dynamic styles like vinyasa or rocket and slower, restorative styles like yin.

There is also a lineage of yoga originating from Ancient Egypt known as Kemetic or African Yoga with an emphasis on breath and energy flow.

## How to Use This Guide

There is *no* pressure to be 'good at yoga' or 'do it right'.

Spend a few minutes reading the descriptions and familiarising yourself with the poses.

Listen to your body and follow your rhythm.

Set aside time to practise where you won't be disturbed.

Create a peaceful environment e.g. light a candle, incense, play soft music.

**Use props!**

*Set an intention - what does your body need?*

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## Asanas: Physical Poses



### 01 - Seated pose (Sukhasana)

Sit cross-legged with knees wide. Sit tall, relax your shoulders, and close the eyes. Rest your hands on your knees or lap, palms up or down. **Hold for 10–15 breaths.**

**Pro tip:** place a pillow, yoga block, or folded blanket under your seat. Or add extra padding under the knees/ankles with another blanket.

Switch the cross of your legs halfway through if holding longer.



### 02- Seated Side Stretch

From a seated position, place one hand beside you on the floor or on a block. **Inhale** to lift the opposite arm up overhead.

**Exhale**, as you gently lean to the side, keeping both sit bones grounded.

**Hold for 5–10 breaths**, breathing into the lifted side of your body.

Repeat on the other side.



### 03- Seated Spinal Twist

From a seated position, **inhale** to lengthen your spine, lifting through the crown of your head.

**Exhale**, gently twist to the right, bringing your right hand behind you and left hand to your right knee or thigh. Keep your shoulders relaxed and a soft gaze soft.

**Hold for 5–10 breaths**, deepening the twist gently with each exhale.

Come back to centre on an inhale, then repeat on the left side.

### 04 - Cat/Cow (Marjaryasana/Bitilasana)



Move with your breath to improve awareness and mindfulness. Arch the spine as you **inhale** deeply for cow pose. Try to move your shoulders back and away from your ears and relax your jaw. Round the spine as you **exhale** completely for cat pose.

**Repeat 5 - 10 times.**

**Pro tip:** Create fluidity through spinal waves by moving the spine and hips freely.

### 05 - Cobra pose (Bhujangasana)



Reduces tension in the back and creates a deep opening in the chest.

Lie on your belly with hands by your chest. Press into your hands to lift your chest as you **inhale**.

Relax your shoulders down away from your ears. And lower your chest down as you **exhale** tucking your chin.

**Repeat 3-5 times.**

## Intention Setting

*Ask yourself, what does my body or mind need right now?*

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## Asanas: Physical Poses

### 06 - Child's pose (Balasana)



Gentle stretch for the hips, thighs, and lower back. Also alleviates tension in the shoulders and neck. Kneel on the mat, big toes touching, knees wide or together. Sit your hips back toward your heels and fold your torso forward between or over your thighs. Hold for 10-15 breaths

**Pro tip:** Try using a pillow under the forehead and extra padding for the knees (with a towel/blanket).

### 07 -Downward Dog (Adho Mukha Svasana)



From a tabletop position, tuck your toes and lift your hips toward the ceiling, aiming to make an inverted "V" shape. Press through your palms and lengthen your spine.

Let your head hang heavy, pedal your feet or hold still, finding what feels good.

Hold for 5-10 breaths, resting in Child's Pose anytime.

**Pro tip:** Keep a gentle bend in the knees, especially if your hamstrings feel tight

### 08 - Supine spinal twist (Supta matsyendrasana)



You can draw both knees over to the left side (as pictured). Or draw the R knee into your chest and over to the left, gaze over the R shoulder. Focus on releasing deeper into the twist with each exhale.

Hold for 10-15 breaths. Repeat on the other side.

**Pro tip:** Try resting the knee(s) on pillows/blankets.

### 09 - Corpse pose (Savasana)



Lie flat on your back with legs extended and arms resting by your sides, palms facing up.

Let go of tension by releasing the weight of the body. Stay focussed on your breath.

With each exhale allow the body to melt further into the mat.

**Stay for at least 3-5 mins or longer.**

## Pranayama (Breathing Techniques)

Pranayama is the practice of conscious breathing. Our breath reflects our inner state. When we're stressed, it becomes shallow and quick. But through pranayama, we can shift into a place of balance, ease, and presence.

Try to keep a steady controlled breath when you practise yoga. This will help keep you focussed and calm.

For example,

try **1 to 1 breathing (Sama Vritti Pranayama)**

by matching the length of your inhale and exhale.


This can be to a count of 4 or count that suits you, what matters is the inhale and exhale are equal.

You can also use this during meditation or anytime you feel anxious or scattered.




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## Useful Reminders




Even 10 minutes a day can make a difference. Choose *consistency*, not perfection.



Find a like minded community that inspires and supports your progress. Visit the Seola class calendar for online and in person classes.



There's no 'right' way to do yoga. Focus on being kind to your body with non-judgement and acceptance.



Yoga props are your friends!  
Use pillows, blankets, blocks for extra support.



@seolawellness @seolachris\_\_



@seolayoga

*You deserve to feel seen and supported*