

Asana for Pain Management

WARM-UPS

Practice these gentle movements to open the legs, hips and lower back as a stand-alone short practice or before the standing poses.

	<p>Floor Vinyasa</p> <p>Begin lying on the back with the legs straight Exhale draw right knee to chest Inhale draw right knee out to right Exhale cross right knee over to left Inhale to center and extend right leg up, holding behind thigh Exhale draw right knee to chest Inhale extend leg to floor and arms overhead Exhale repeat sequence with left leg <u>Benefits:</u> Opens the major joints of the lower body and stretches the legs, hips, low back and shoulders</p>
	<p>Windshield Wipers</p> <p>Lie on back with knees bent and feet on floor. On an inhalation lower knees to the left side. Exhale and engage belly as you bring knees back to the center. Inhale as you lower knees to the right side. Exhale and engage belly as you bring knees back to the center. You can either leave knees bent, or press feet out to straighten legs. Repeat alternately with the breath 5-10 times per side. <u>Benefits:</u> Broadens back of pelvis, stretches outside of legs, gently compresses the abdominal organs</p>

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	<p>Bridge Flow</p> <p>Begin lying on the back with the knees bent Inhale lift hips straight off floor into Bridge Pose Exhale release hips to floor as you Repeat 5 times <u>Benefits:</u> Stretches the hips, low back and shoulders</p>
	<p>Cat/Cow</p> <p>Cat: Exhale round the back and drop the head and tail bone towards the floor. Cow: Begin on the hands and knees, toes pointed. Inhale and lift the sternum forward and drop the pubic bone back between the legs to arch the spine. Repeat with your breath 10 times. <u>Benefits:</u> Massages the internal organs and warms-up the muscles along the spine.</p>
	<p>Child's Pose to Hero Pose</p> <p>Begin in Child's Pose sitting on the heels with the head released toward the floor Inhale and lift chest, raise arms overhead and press pelvis forward. Exhale sit back on heels and fold forward bringing hands beside feet. Repeat 5-10 times with the breath. <u>Benefits:</u> Alternately stretches and strengthens the muscles of the torso front to back.</p>

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SOMATICS FOR THE NECK & SHOULDERS

These warm-ups can be done sitting in a chair or sitting cross-legged on the floor. Use as a stand-alone practice to keep the neck and shoulders feeling loose or before the more difficult postures. Somatic movements should be practiced very slowly using only the muscles absolutely necessary for the movement paying particular attention to any compensatory muscle movements. Repeat each movement five times with the breath; inhale as you are contracting the muscle, exhale as you are relaxing the muscle.

	<p>Somatic Head Movements - No</p> <p>Begin sitting in a chair or in a cross-legged position on the floor Inhale as you turn head to the right, exhale head to center Inhale head to left, exhale head to center Repeat 5 times to each side</p>
	<p>Somatic Head Movements - Yes</p> <p>Inhale as you lift chin up keeping entire neck long Exhale and lift back of skull up as you tuck chin in towards throat Keep careful control of the head during the movements Repeat 5 times</p>
	<p>Somatic Head Movements – Tilt Side to Side</p> <p>Inhale as you lift right ear towards ceiling Exhale and return head to center Repeat 5 times with the breath</p>
	<p>Somatic Shoulder Elevation & Depression</p> <p>Inhale and shrug the shoulders towards the ears Exhale relax shoulders down the back Repeat each movement 5 times</p>
	<p>Somatic Shoulder Retraction & Protraction</p> <p>Inhale and draw shoulder blades toward the spine Exhale draw the shoulder blades away from the spine Repeat each movement 5 times</p>

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	<p>Somatic Shoulder Circles</p> <p>Inhale as you draw shoulders up then back Exhale as you draw shoulders down then forward Repeat 5 times with the breath Inhale as you pull shoulders back then up Exhale as you move shoulders forward then down Repeat 5 times with the breath</p>
	<p>Somatic Opposite Shoulder Circles</p> <p>Circle one shoulder forward and one shoulder back Right shoulder forward and left shoulder back Right shoulder up and left shoulder down Right shoulder back and left shoulder forward Right shoulder down and left shoulder up Repeat 5 times to each direction</p>
	<p>Somatic Shoulder Shimmy</p> <p>Place hands on thighs and inhale turn the shoulders to the right sliding the right hand back to the hip, turn the head over the left shoulder Exhale back to the center Inhale turn the shoulders to the left sliding the left hand back to the hip, turn the head over the right shoulder Exhale back to the center Repeat 5-10 times each direction</p>
	<p>Somatic Scapula Release</p> <p>Turn head to the left Inhale and raise right shoulder blade up as you tilt head back to the right to meet it Exhale and press shoulder blade down as you drop the chin towards the left shoulder</p>

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Z-POSE SERIES

This asymmetrical seated series helps to re-balance the pelvis.

	<p>Z-Pose Hip Press</p> <p>Sit with left leg externally rotated, right leg internally rotated with right toes in line with left knee. Place left hand on floor beside hip and right hand on hip.</p> <p>Inhale press right hip forward (you can also reach right hand diagonally up toward ceiling).</p> <p>Exhale release hips back to center (releasing right hand towards right toes).</p> <p>Repeat 5-10 times per side with the breath.</p> <p>Benefits: Strengthens the gluteus medius muscle, brings movement and fluidity into the pelvis.</p>
	<p>Z-Pose Dolphin Dives</p> <p>Sit with left leg externally rotated, right leg internally rotated with right toes in line with left knee.</p> <p>Turn the torso to the left and place hands on either side of left knee.</p> <p>As you exhale curl tail bone under lean slightly back, bend elbows and drop torso forward.</p> <p>As you inhale scoop chin, chest and belly forward and up.</p> <p>Repeat 5-10 times per side with the breath.</p> <p>Benefits: Brings movement and fluidity into pelvis. low back and abdomen.</p>
	<p>Z-Pose Pigeon</p> <p>Sit with left leg externally rotated, right leg internally rotated with right toes in line with left knee. Turn the torso to the left and line up the navel to the left knee. Walk hands out on either side of left knee. Lay forward supporting on arms on floor, rest head on hands or blocks.</p> <p>Hold for 10-20 breaths.</p> <p>Benefits: Opens the outer hip and stretches the lower back.</p>

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RESTORATIVE

Two restorative poses to release the spine.

	<p>Reclining Bharadvaja's Pose</p> <p>Sit with legs bent to the left and right hip against end of bolster. Turn to right and place one hand on either side of bolster. Lift up through front of torso and twist body to right until chest faces bolster. Exhale and lengthen torso over bolster. If this hurts the breasts, please angle the far end of bolster to the left so sternum can be on top of bolster. Rest arms on floor and turn head to either side or face down on backs of hands. Rest up to 3 minutes per side, then release.</p>
	<p>Instant Maui</p> <p>Lie on back with legs in the seat of a chair. Lift pelvis off floor and place block or a folded blanket under pelvis. Place arms away from sides and palms up. Rest 15 minutes.</p>