

## Yoga Week 23: Yoga for Lengthening & Stretching The Body

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Stretching is a fundamental way to improve your overall health .

Stretching goes beyond athletic training by minimizing chance of injury .

Yoga is built on stretching- which can bring mindfulness, & peace & everyone deserves to feel peace!

### Benefits of Stretching...

- Rejuvenation and blood flow to the brain.
- Endorphins in the brain get released .
- Activity in the parasympathetic nervous system activate.
- Relaxation throughout the body .
- Body awareness.
- Prevention of injury.
- Strengthening of muscles.
- Releases fascia (connective tissue that surrounds and holds every organ in the body).

### What happens if we don't stretch?

When you don't stretch, muscles will tend to shorten, which can lead to inflammation, muscle damage, joint pain, and strains.

### POSES TO STRETCH YOUR ENTIRE BODY:

#### Plantar Fascia (Feet) Stretch:

- Put one foot on your other knee. Hold the heel of your foot in one hand, grasp your toes with your other hand. Pull on your heel toward your body and pull your toes back with your hand. Feel a stretch along the bottom of your foot and hold for 30 seconds.
- Repeat on other side.

#### Pyramid Pose Calf & Leg Stretch:

- Step your right foot back about two feet and line your heel with your back foot
- Keep hips facing forward.
- Inhale and fold forward, bringing your arms down along the side of your front foot.
- Hinge your hips and bring chin toward the chest.
- Switch front and back foot several times after remaining in pose for at least 15 seconds.

#### Yogi Squat to Stretch the Hips:

- Stand with the feet hip distance apart with toes slightly turned out.
- Squat down and bring your hands to heart center.
- You can use your elbows to push the knees away from you, creating a deeper stretch.

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### Forward Fold to Stretch the Lower Back:

- Stand straight with feet shoulder-width apart.
- Keep your knees relaxed.
- Exhale and hinge at your waist, bending forward and reaching towards the floor.
- Stop wherever you feel comfortable and hold for 30 seconds.

### Seat Arm to Knee Pose to Stretch the Upper Back:

- Sitting in a comfortable seated position (preferably a crisscross position).
- Brings arm up overhead and clasp hands together, holding them above your head.
- Stretch arms up overhead, twisting the torso left and right.
- Bring the right arm across your body to the outside of your left knee.
- Bring the left arm behind your back and twist the torso.
- Bring the neck down to the right shoulder.
- Repeat on other side.

### Neck Stretch:

- Right hand to left ear.
- Left arm out and small circles.
- Pressing and creating resistance and then releasing.
- Repeat on other side.

### Wrist Stretch:

- Create circles with the wrist in one direction then repeat on the other side.

### Finger Stretch:

- Starting with the thumb, grab the thumb with your other hand and gently pull away from the hand.
- Hold the stretch and repeat on each finger.
- Repeat on the other hand.

### Total Body Stretch:

- Bring yourself onto your tip toes with arms overhead and reach arms as high as you can overhead, creating entire lengthening in your body.
- Feel this stretch from the bottom of your feet to the top of your head.
- Place feet fully on the ground and swing arms down.
- Shake out all the extra stress off your body hale and lift back to tabletop position, keeping legs upright and straight.

"He who has health, has hope.

And he who has hope, has everything."

– Benjamin Franklin

