

# The Preliminaries



The poses in this section are good for starting your yoga practice. They give you a chance to check in with the parts of your body that feel tight or stiff. As you practice them, your mind has time to settle into the practice.

## Reclined Leg Stretch

Supta Padangusthasana

30 seconds to 1 minute

Props: Strap

Instructions:

1. Lie on your back with your legs straight.
2. Bend your right leg and bring it into your chest. Loop a strap around the sole of your right foot. Hold one end of the strap in each hand as you press your left thigh strongly down into the ground.



3. Extend your right leg straight up toward the ceiling. Keep the toes of both feet drawn towards the ankles. Lengthen through the back of both heels. Stay for 30 seconds to 1 minute, breathing evenly. Lower the leg and repeat on the opposite side.



RECLINED LEG STRETCH

## Happy Baby Pose

Urdhva Mukha Upavista Konasana

30 seconds to 1 minute

Props: Strap (optional)

Instructions: Lie on your back and hold the outsides of your feet with your hands. Keep your feet directly over knees. Focus on your spine sinking into the ground as you gently pull your feet, knees, and thighs toward the floor. Hold for 30 seconds to 1 minute breathing evenly.



HAPPY BABY POSE

Modification: If you cannot reach your feet easily, place a strap around the bottoms of your feet or hold behind your knees.

## Reclined Twist

Jathara Parivartanasana (modified)

30 seconds to 1 minute

Props: One block or folded blanket (optional)

Instructions:

1. Start on your back with your legs bent, your feet on the ground, and your arms out to the sides in a "Big T" position, palms facing up.
2. Inhale, draw your bent knees toward your chest. Exhale and release your legs to the left dropping them toward the ground. Keep your right shoulder pressing into the ground.
3. Stay for 30 seconds to one minute, breathing evenly. Return your legs to center and practice on the opposite side.



RECLINED TWIST

Modifications: If the twist feels too intense, place a block or folded blanket under your knees and rest them on that support.

# The Preliminaries

## Figure-4

**15 to 30 seconds**

**Instructions:** Lie on your back with both feet on the floor. Place your right ankle on your left thigh above your left knee. Draw your legs toward your chest. Reach your right hand through the open space created by your right leg, and grab your left thigh that is reaching around the outside of your left thigh. You should feel a stretch on the outside of your right hip. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds, breathing evenly.



FIGURE-4

## Dead Bugs

**Build up to 10 repetitions**

**Instructions:** Lie on your back with your knees bent, feet flat on the floor, and arms by your side. Pull your shoulder blades down. Hollow your belly without moving your hips, ribcage or spine.

Lift both legs and arms off of the floor. The knees should be directly over the hips and bent ninety degrees and the arms directly over the shoulder joints with your fingers are pointed to the ceiling.



Keep the abdominals hollowing as you slowly lower the right foot and left hand toward the floor. The hand and heel should tap the floor lightly (but not rest). With the abdominals still engaged, slowly bring the leg and arm back to the starting position. Repeat with the left heel and right hand.



DEAD BUGS

## Cat Pose

Chakravakasana

**3 to 10 repetitions, with your breath**

**Instructions:** Start on all fours with your wrists under shoulders and your knees under your hips. As you inhale, curve your spine downward, dropping your stomach low, and lifting your head and chest up. As you exhale, reverse the spinal bend, lifting your spine up and pulling your stomach in. Repeat 3 to 10 times, moving with your breath.



STARTING POSITION



PURRING CAT



STARTING POSITION



ANGRY CAT

# The Preliminaries

## Downward-Facing Dog Pose

Adho Mukha Svanasara

**15 seconds to 1 minute**

**Instructions:**

1. Kneel on all fours with your arms shoulder-width apart and your feet hips-width apart. Make sure your wrists are under your shoulders and your knees are under you hips.



Flip your toes under so that your heels face the ceiling. Exhale and lift your sitting bones toward the ceiling as you straighten your legs.



2. Stretch through both heels. Press your thighbones back into your hamstrings.



DOWNWARD  
FACING DOG POSE

3. Hold for 15 seconds to 1 minute, breathing evenly. To come down, bend your knees and come back to all fours.

## Notes:

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