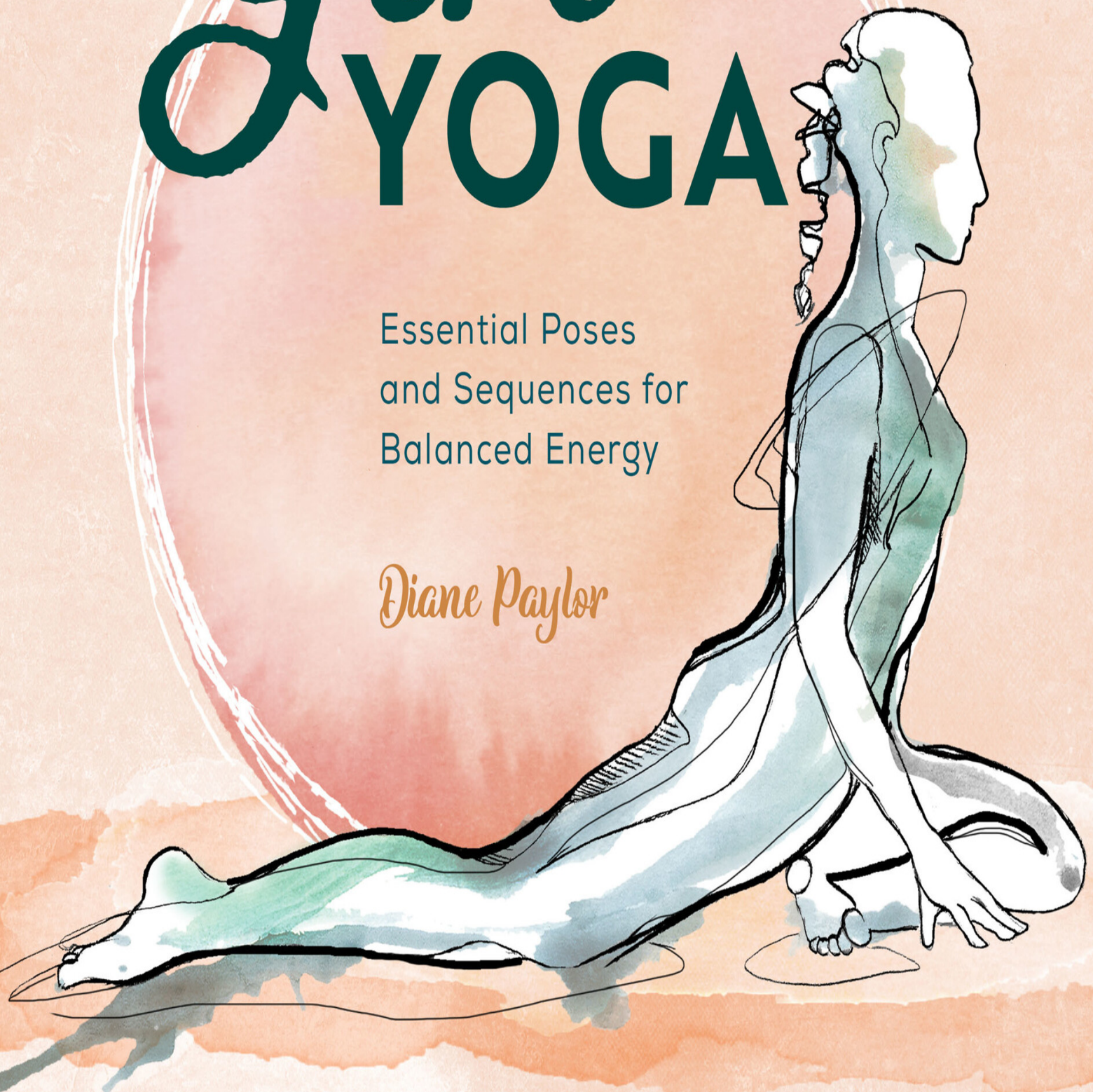


Yin YOGA

Essential Poses
and Sequences for
Balanced Energy

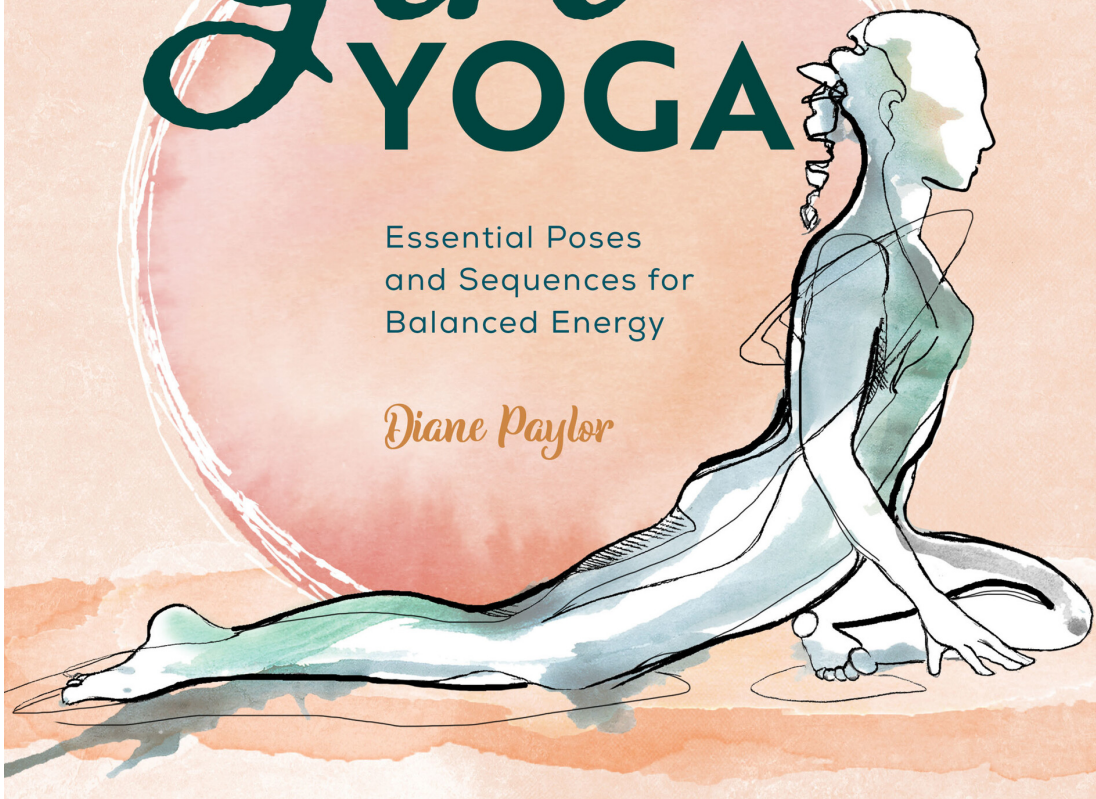
Diane Paylor



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Diane R. Paylor

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For Johnnie Mae.

You are my greatest love and inspiration.
Thank you for never giving up hope that I would someday
write a book.

CONTENTS

Introduction

Part One: YIN YOGA'S INNER WORKINGS

CHAPTER 1: A Different Kind of Yoga

CHAPTER 2: Preparing for Practice

Part Two: YIN AND YANG POSES

CHAPTER 3: Yin Asanas

Caterpillar

Butterfly

Half Butterfly

Frog

Child's Pose

Dragon

Happy Baby

Cat Pulling Its Tail

Bananasana

Melting Heart

Deer

Reclining Twist

Square

Straddle

Swan

Shoelace

Saddle

Toe Squat

Squat

Savasana

CHAPTER 4: Yang Asanas

Camel

Down Dog

Crocodile

Windshield Wipers

Leg Raises

Part Three: BALANCED SEQUENCES

CHAPTER 5: Energy Rising

Morning Flex

Stamina Builder

Energy Boost

Clear Focus

Attitude Adjustment

The Anxiety Fix

Energetic Cooldown

CHAPTER 6: Grounding

Whole Self-Care

Restore and Repair

Deep Relaxation

Peacefully Content

Strong and Sound

Belly Balanced

Root Chakra

CHAPTER 7: Body Matters

Happy Hips

Leg Lengthener

Heart Opener

Shoulder Tension Reliever

Kidney Care

Digestion Soother

Knee Protector

Spine Saver

CHAPTER 8: Seasonal Practices

Winter Warmer

New Year Revitalizer

Spring to Life

Spring Detox

Summer Solstice

Summer Cooler

Fall Flow

Fall Inward

Resources

Acknowledgments

About the Author

INTRODUCTION

As I sit peacefully on my mat and let out a deep breath, my mind drifts back to my first yoga class—the one I took 20 years ago in Park Slope, Brooklyn. I'd felt so uncomfortable in that demanding class in such a hot, dim studio that I never went back. I reflect on how different my yoga experience is now—and also how different I am.

After leaving Park Slope, I had become a woman over 40, struggling with aches and pains that would not go away. Leg edema, insomnia, gastrointestinal issues, hip bursitis, and sciatica all caused frequent trips to the hospital. My weight had ballooned to more than 240 pounds. With numerous family members living with diabetes, I had feared I was next. I had been carrying the emotional weight of mounting debt, a vexing living situation, and unfulfilling jobs. All that led me to finally get back to a yoga studio and sign up for a different kind of class: yin yoga.

That yin yoga class started me on a journey of tremendous self-discovery. I committed to practicing yin at a popular yoga studio every day. In the years since, I've learned how to “take it slow” on and off the mat, to breathe during difficult moments, to be still, and to be fearless in the exploration of any sensations of physical discomfort that arise when taking on a challenging pose or when faced with a tough life situation. My hope is that you, too, will learn these things as you gain a deeper understanding of yin (and yourself) after reading this book.

If you're new to yoga or are interested in adding a different type of yoga to your practice, this book will be a wonderful introduction to yin. You'll learn 20 of my favorite yin asanas, how to get into them, and how they affect the body, including mobilizing and strengthening the joints. The book also includes plenty of yin yoga sequences to try at home or in a studio environment.

Yin poses often look similar to poses used in other styles of yoga, but in yin they have different names. For instance, the popular pose *Baddha Konasana* is simply called Butterfly in

yin. Throughout the book I've included the Sanskrit name of the pose or a similar yoga pose, along with notes on any notable differences about how the pose is done in a yin practice.

The book also includes images of poses for reference. However, remember that every body is different, and the way your body takes the shape of the pose may not look exactly like what you see in the picture. Please do not too get hung up on trying to match these images. The important thing is to allow your body to experience the passive stretch in the targeted area for each pose.

I encourage you to grab your mat, take a breath, turn the page, and dive into a world that will take you deep inside yourself.

I'll see you on the yin side.

part one

Yin Yoga's Inner Workings

A DIFFERENT KIND OF YOGA

Like life, yoga is an ongoing quest to find balance. Compared with other forms of yoga and physical activity that strengthen muscles, yin yoga stretches and stimulates what's deeper beneath the surface: the connective tissues in the body. Yin is a slower-paced practice, with an emphasis on spending a long time in postures and cultivating stillness.

Practicing with Yin and Yang

The wisdom of ancient Chinese philosophy states that all things in the universe have opposing energies: yin and yang. The common symbol taijitu illustrates this concept with a black-and-white circle with a spiral pattern inside, representing how these contrasting energies are always intertwined and flowing into each other. The yang, or white side of the symbol, often represents brightness, masculinity, rigidity, and mobility, while the yin, or black side, represents darkness, femininity, softness, and immobility. In applying this context to the physical body, our muscles are considered yang, and the connective tissues that make up our tendons, ligaments, and bones are considered yin.

Our muscles respond well to dynamic, repetitive movements. Think about your last visit to the gym. Though you may have been exhausted after your workout with weights or your run on the treadmill, your muscles were able to withstand the activity. In fact, a big reason why you continue to work out may be because you can see the benefits it has on your body as your muscles grow bigger and become stronger.

On the other hand, the connective tissues do not respond well to being stressed in the same active, repetitive manner. But all too often we engage the entire body in high-intensity, dynamic movements while neglecting to explore the benefits of gentler, passive stretching. This is where yin yoga comes in.

Yin yoga draws on the concepts that yin and yang energies form a whole and that the interaction and coexistence of the opposites are essential to creating a mind and body in balance. It is a highly beneficial practice of long-held passive stretches that intentionally target the deep connective tissues in the body that other dynamic forms of yoga and exercise do not reach.

THE BENEFITS OF YIN YOGA

Teaches the mind and body to be still: The long holds and contemplative nature of yin yoga are great training for a meditation practice. With stillness and surrender as

objectives, you will learn to quiet the chatter in your mind and focus on the sensations in your body while remaining calm.

Reduces stress and anxiety: As a slower practice, yin activates the parasympathetic nervous system—also known as the body’s rest and digest response—which lowers your heart rate, increases circulation, and stabilizes breathing for a more relaxed demeanor.

Strengthens connective tissue and joints: While a more active yoga practice targets the movement and contraction of our muscles (yang), the yin practice gently exercises our joints and surrounding connective tissues. Through the practice of holding postures for a longer time, yin yoga strengthens the connective tissue and increases the flexibility of the joints.

Improves mobility: Yin yoga postures primarily target the hips, low back, and pelvic areas—all areas that become less mobile with age. The gentle stretches of yin yoga help loosen fascia to bring more mobility around the muscles and ligaments in the body.

Promotes healthier organ function: Yin yoga fosters a still body and mindful breath, which enables blood to circulate more easily. Increased circulation nourishes and stimulates the organs.

What’s Yoga Got to Do with Taoism?

It’s no secret that yoga’s origins are in India, so it may seem odd that yin yoga is heavily influenced by the Chinese philosophy of Taoism. But, in fact, Taoism and yoga share very similar principles.

Hatha is the type of yoga that is meant to calm your thoughts and align the mind and body (as opposed to vinyasa, which has a faster pace and is designed to build heat and strengthen muscles). In the word “hatha,” *ha* refers to the energy of the sun while *tha* reflects the energy of the moon. Furthermore, the root of the word “yoga” is *yuj*, which means “yoke” or “union.” Like the Taoist theory of yin and yang, the

practice of hatha yoga is based on the union of the opposing energies of the sun and moon to bring balance. Therefore, the integration of yin and yang with hatha yoga is spot-on.

The yin yoga shared in this book is based on concepts explored and developed by several master teachers, including Paul Grilley (influenced by Paulie Zink and Dr. Hiroshi Motoyama), Bernie Clark, and Sarah Powers. They fuse elements of Taoism, traditional Chinese medicine, anatomy, and hatha yoga to create a style of yin yoga that is therapeutic, stimulating, and strengthening for the body.

QI THEORY

In yin yoga, poses are held in stillness for a long time in order to stimulate and stretch the deeper connective tissues. This action of holding postures helps move energy through the body. This energy is known as qi (or chi) in the tradition of Chinese medicine and as prana (or “life force”) in the Indian yogic and Ayurvedic traditions, and it moves along a set of pathways in the body called meridians.

There are 12 main meridians that form a network connecting to the body’s major organs. Yin yoga postures stretch the connective tissue along these meridian lines. As a result, the organs they serve are revitalized and rejuvenated by the flow of qi, leading to improved well-being in body, mind, and spirit.

Poses (Asanas)

Yin yoga poses generally aren’t so different from the poses practiced in other forms of yoga, but there are a few special considerations to keep in mind.

Yin postures are generally done seated, while other yoga styles like Power Vinyasa or Bikram involve many standing sequences. Since yin poses often focus on the lower body (mainly the low back, hips, and legs), it’s easier to hold the poses for an extended period while seated.

The alignment of a pose should not cause stress or pain to any area of the body. For example, if the intention of the pose is to stress the connective tissues of the hip joint, and the manner in which you take the pose causes pain in the knee area, you should modify the pose based on your personal anatomy to alleviate any pain.

In order to stress the deep connective tissues around a joint, you must keep those muscles relaxed while you hold a pose. If the muscles are tense, then the stretch won't target the connective tissues. It's important to note that the only muscles you need to relax while in a yin pose are the muscles specific to the focus area. For instance, if the pose focuses on the hips, it's not necessary to engage your arm muscles.

Yin poses involve long hold times. Once you've come into a pose and have arrived at your edge, it's time to become still and settle in to the pose. You want to hold each pose for a challenging amount of time; you can hold them for as long as 20 minutes if you'd like. The long hold time not only allows the deep connective tissues (fascia, ligament, and bone) to be stressed and stretched to build deep inner strength but also promotes the therapeutic clearing of injuries, traumas, and repetitive movement patterns (such as sitting a certain way in a chair or always carrying a bag over the same shoulder) stored in the body.

In some cases, holding a yin pose can cause energy (qi) or blood to be restricted in certain areas. A yang pose is then provided as a follow-up to help get things moving again before the next long yin pose.

JOINT, TISSUE, AND LIGAMENT HEALTH

The idea of holding a yoga posture for a long time in order to stretch deep connective tissues may sound intimidating (or even unsafe) at first, but the truth is that yin yoga can improve the health of your joints, ligaments, and bones.

While we hold the posture in stillness, the deep stretching occurs from the stress, or tension, placed on the tissues. Although the most popular styles of exercise are yang-like and train the muscles through quick repetitive

movements, yin yoga is often called the “quiet practice” because the results don’t happen right away. However, over time the deeper connective tissues do become thicker, longer, and stronger.

Why is this beneficial to our health? As we age we lose stability and mobility in our joints, and our bodies become stiffer. Cultivating stronger and elongated tissues through yin yoga helps us with mobility and flexibility as we age.

The Breath

As with other styles of yoga, breathing is a vital part of yin practice. The purpose of the breathing is to elicit calm and relaxation and to activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which signals to the body that you are okay and not in danger.

When you are in a stressful situation, the sympathetic nervous system (or the body’s fight, flight, or freeze response) automatically kicks in because your body is concerned about keeping you safe. When this system is activated, stress hormones are released, your heart rate increases, your muscles become tense, your blood pressure rises, and your breathing becomes rapid. This is the opposite of what you want to experience when practicing yin yoga. The parasympathetic nervous system, on the other hand, allows us to be calm and present in body and mind.

A yogic breathing style that is tremendously helpful for relaxation and calmness is the *Ujjayi* breath. Translated as “victorious breath,” and often called the Ocean Breath, the Ujjayi technique involves guttural breathing during which you contract the glottis in the back of the throat to produce a soft, hissing sound for the exhalation. In more rigorous yang-like yoga practices, the expelling of the breath in Ujjayi can be harsh or loud. In yin, the objective is to keep the breath soft, rhythmic, and quiet. If that is not achievable for you with Ujjayi breathing, you can always use a calm, quiet breath with long inhalations and exhalations instead.

Though they are often linked together, yin yoga is not the same as restorative yoga. The intent of restorative yoga is full

relaxation and surrender. To the contrary, the nature of the yin practice is stillness and presence. In yin practice, you are tuning in instead of tuning out.

WHEN TIME SLOWS DOWN

Yin poses are typically held for 3 to 5 minutes, but you can hold them for as long as 20 minutes.

Your experience of time in a pose can vary from day to day depending on how you are feeling physically or emotionally. If you find it hard to stay in a pose once you've found your edge, it's best to come out of it. Stillness—not pain—is what's required.

Try setting a timer so you can stay focused in the practice. If your timer goes off and you want to hold the pose longer, go for it. Just be mindful of not overdoing it. Some signs that may indicate you have pushed your body too far are physical pain, spasms, tightness, or feeling out of alignment. If these appear, try backing off in the poses. Instead of taking a full expression of the pose, try a more moderate version and decrease the hold time. Gradually work your way back to longer holds. If it's altogether too difficult to practice at all, take care of yourself and give your body a break from practice for as long as is necessary.

The Mind

Tuning in to what is happening in the body during a yin practice will likely trigger a multitude of fluctuations in the mind. You may experience feelings like boredom, discomfort, or even anxiety. Try to stay with those feelings and remember everything's okay. There's no need to chastise yourself for the various thoughts and feelings that arise as you engage in this practice.

Part of maintaining stillness is accepting the impermanent nature of the thoughts that come up during the long holds. To help regulate mind chatter, return to your breath. As you slow

down and deepen your breathing, you will likely discover that your mind quiets down as well.

Additionally, your relationship to your thoughts about yourself and how they relate to your yoga practice may change the more you engage in yin. You may learn that you actually have the fortitude to handle a challenging pose. You may also learn that staying present and listening to the messages your body communicates during the practice leads you to become more in tune with your body off the mat as well. Yin yoga does wonders for opening up the body—and it also helps us open up our mind and how we view ourselves.

PREPARING FOR PRACTICE

Your yin practice is solely for you. I encourage you to adapt the sequences to suit your personal needs and body type. Your primary goal in starting your practice is to create a safe environment where you can sit in stillness and inwardly explore the edges of your comfort zone. Before embarking on any yoga practice, please consult your doctor.

Your Body, Your Practice

We all have a personal body story. It is the narrative we tell ourselves about what our body is and does based on our past experiences.

Our personal body story also influences how we interact with the world and how we experience our yoga practice. Given your personal body story, only you know what works for you, and it's okay for that to change day by day. To get the most out of your yin yoga practice, remember that you can modify any sequence or pose to suit you and how your body feels in that moment.

PROPS

Using props in your yin practice can be tremendously helpful in making poses more accessible. In order for the work of stressing the deeper connective tissues to occur, the muscles in the target area must be relaxed. The following props can help support the body so the right muscles are able to relax:

MAT – A yoga mat provides a great base, but you can also sit on the floor or the carpet for your practice.

BOLSTER – Bolsters are large pillows that can help you relax deeper into a pose so the muscles aren't engaged. Leaning on a bolster helps take stress off the body during a pose.

STRAP – A strap can help you modify a pose to find a suitable edge. For example, you can use a strap to keep your legs apart if it's too difficult or painful to hold the position on your own.

BLANKET – In addition to providing warmth, a blanket can be used in place of a yoga mat. You can also use a blanket for additional cushioning under your knees, hips, or the backs of your thighs.

BLOCK – A block can provide height—it can essentially “bring the floor to you”—to make a pose more accessible if

necessary.

MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

All the poses in this book can be practiced with modifications and props. There is no need to strain to make a pose look like the picture if your body is not able to do it without pain. The objective of the yin practice is to stimulate the flow of qi while holding postures for a length of time in stillness. Modifying poses whenever needed allows you to keep your body safe so you can do the inside work of yin.

You'll also notice that there are variations of poses in [part 2](#) to practice with before you attempt the sequences offered in [part 3](#). For example, you might take [Saddle](#) one leg at a time, practice [Down Dog](#) at a wall, or add a spinal twist to [Half Butterfly](#). It's completely up to you how you'd like to take the poses. Variations like these will either help you go deeper into a pose if the body allows or simply bring some variety to your practice.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Yin yoga is a gentler practice, but there are some things to keep in mind before you begin:

- { Please consult a doctor before beginning your practice.
- { Visit the restroom. It's best to empty your bladder and move your bowels first to avoid having to interrupt your practice.
- { Wear loose, comfortable clothing to avoid feeling restricted.
- { Make sure all your props are within reach.
- { Turn off, disconnect, and remove all potential distractions.
- { Refrain from eating for at least 1 hour before you start your practice, and avoid huge meals for at least 3 hours before you begin.

- { If you are tired, keep your practice brief. Yin yoga is not restorative.
- { Yin is a passive practice, so if you are prone to feeling cold, wear extra layers.
- { Avoid wearing perfume or colognes. Deep breathing is integral to the yin practice, and inhaling fumes from perfume and colognes can be disturbing to you or to those practicing around you.
- { Set a personal intention. Get clear on what you want to accomplish in your practice so you can focus your energy there throughout your practice.

Finding Stillness at the Edge

While there are times in our lives when we may want to tune things out, yin yoga requires that we tune *in*. In other words, with yin the goal is to PAY ATTENTION. As you take on the poses, you must listen to the feedback your body offers so you can understand more about who you are and what your body is capable of.

When you first come into a pose, take your body to the point where you feel resistance. This is your stretch zone. Although you may be eager to push beyond this limit, resist the urge. Allow your body to reveal when (or if) it's ready to go further. If you feel pain when taking a pose, do not push through it. Come out of the pose immediately.

Your stretch zone should feel like a challenge. You may feel a little discomfort, but it's manageable. Now settle in to the pose. Be still. Breathe comfortably, but stay present and alert. As the body begins to adjust to the posture, you may discover you can delve a little deeper into the pose. If you're able and willing, give it a try. Again, if you're met with pain, pull back and search for the depth of the pose that's more challenging than where you were before but not painful.

Yin is a dance of exploring the edges of your comfort zone. The more tuned in to how your body is experiencing the poses, the more you can explore when and whether the edge can

move. Depending on how you feel on any given day, you may be able to withstand being right at the edge or somewhere in the middle. As you continue to practice, you'll get a stronger sense of what feels right.

Sequences to Suit You

Though our purpose here is to explore the benefits of yin specifically, it's important to note that your yin yoga practice will contain some yang energy as well. The interaction of yin-yang polarities is how we endeavor to find balance. In [part 3](#) of this book you'll find yang poses to follow your yin poses to help stimulate the flow of energy in the body.

Some sequences in this book are designed to target specific areas of the body. There are also sequences to help with mood or improve feelings of well-being, and sequences that are suitable for certain times of the day and even certain seasons. Determining which sequence is best for you depends on how you're feeling, the time of day or year, and your intention for your practice.

Before selecting your sequence, take some time to familiarize yourself with each of the poses in [part 2](#), as well as with their modifications and variations. You may be eager to focus your practice on a certain problematic part of the body, but if you're feeling pain in a particular area, trying to hold some poses may not be good for you. If this is the case, select a sequence that targets another part of the body or one that will uplift your spirit or mood instead. You may also find that you want to play with one of the variations or modifications suggested for each pose—whether that involves going deeper into a pose or taking a half version or a modified version. Experiment and tune in to what you're feeling in your body. Making decisions based on your personal body story is key.

YIN ASANAS

You may be wondering: What are the qualities of the poses that enable yin yoga to stress the deep connective tissues in the body? The objective of yin poses is to keep the muscles

relaxed while guiding the body into a shape or pose that will gently load weight onto the targeted tissues. By holding that shape for an extended period, appropriate tension is placed on the tissues. This allows the tissues to be exercised so that, over time, they become more flexible. Having stronger, more flexible tissues around our muscles will result in an increased range of mobility because our muscles have more room to lengthen during dynamic (yang) physical activity. Another benefit of yin poses is that they prepare, open, and strengthen the body to sit in meditation for longer periods.

YANG ASANAS

As you've learned, there is no yin without yang. During your practice, you'll counter each yin shape or pose with a yang pose before embarking on another yin posture. The yang poses help move and release qi through areas of the body where it may have been restricted during the previous pose. Yang poses get the blood circulating and activate the muscles, which, during yin poses, are relaxed. Yang poses, like yang practices, can also be performed in repetition and require stimulation of the muscles. Yang poses can be performed seated or supine, but some require more active movement on the mat, and these include arm balances.

AFTER YOUR PRACTICE

Yin yoga heightens your awareness of sensations in your body, and this experience of being tuned in doesn't end once your practice is complete. As you move off your mat, you may feel more present and mindful of your feelings, sounds, other people, and all things around you. Try to maintain this awareness throughout your day. Just as you did in your practice, take time to breathe, observe, and feel. It may be challenging at times, but you'll get the most out of your practice when you try to stay connected to your awareness and apply yin-like aspects to your everyday activities. Counter the busyness around you by moving slowly. Engage in deep breathing exercises to

calm the nerves, especially during stressful moments. Take time to be still.

If, after your practice, you feel super relaxed or a bit drowsy and you're not able to get some rest, you may want a counterbalance in yang energy. This simple energizing breathing exercise is a quick way to increase your energy:

- 1 . Take a breath in through the nose and simultaneously lift your arms overhead.
- 2 . Exhale the breath out through the nose as you lower your arms down.
- 3 . Repeat this multiple times for approximately 30 seconds for an immediate energy boost (but try not to lose the mindfulness of presence brought on by your yin practice).

part two

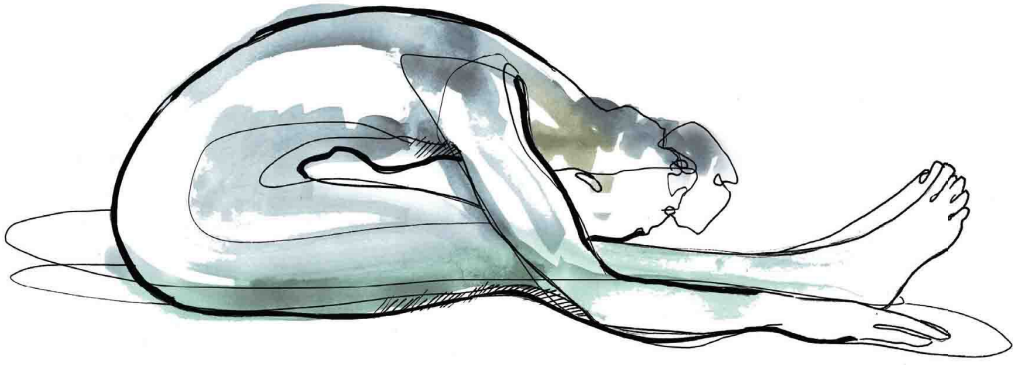
Yin and Yang Poses



CHAPTER 3

YIN ASANAS

In this chapter, you'll find 20 of my favorite adaptable yin yoga asanas to build a practice around. I've included contraindications that suggest a particular pose may be one to modify or skip, instructions for safely getting in and out of the pose, and tips for modifying the asanas to match your unique body and practice.



Caterpillar

Caterpillar is a calming pose that stretches the spine and the backs of the legs. Caterpillar is similar to the yoga pose *Paschimottanasana* . But in yin, you keep the legs straight and relaxed and do not engage the hamstring muscles.

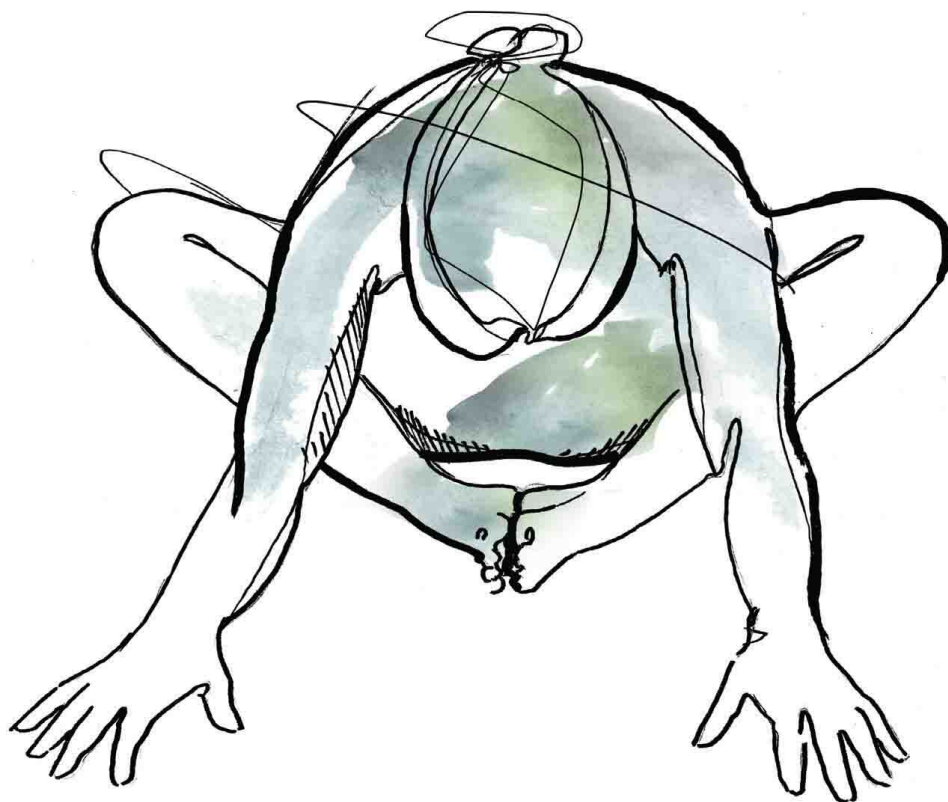
- 1 . Sit on the floor with your legs stretched in front of you about hip-width apart. Lower your torso down toward your legs, letting your spine round.
- 2 . If possible, try to grasp your ankles or feet. If you cannot reach, rest your hands and arms beside your legs.
- 3 . Relax your thighs.
- 4 . Feel the stretch from the backs of the legs, up through the hips and the spine.
- 5 . To come out of the pose, bring your hands by your sides and slowly roll your body back up to seated.
- 6 . Once your torso is upright, place your hands behind you and shake out your legs.

MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- { You can place a blanket or a cushion under your seat for more comfort.
- { If you're experiencing strain in your neck, place a block between your thighs at the height that allows you to rest your head on top of the block.
- { You can place a bolster or a couple of blankets on top of your thighs and allow your torso to rest on them for added support.
- { For tight hamstrings, place a bolster or a rolled-up blanket underneath the knees.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- { Low back pain or injury
- { Hamstrings tightness or injury
- { Abdominal surgery



Butterfly

Butterfly is a great pose for your groin, low back, and hamstrings. It is similar to *Baddha Konasana* , except in yin there is no active pulling of the feet toward the groin with the arms.

- 1 . From a seated position, bring the soles of your feet together. If you want to focus on the low back, place your feet farther away from the groin. If you want to target the groin muscles, draw your feet in closer to the body.
- 2 . Fold your torso forward, allowing your back to round.
- 3 . Rest your hands around the feet or place them on the floor.
- 4 . To come out of the pose, bring your hands by your sides and press on the floor to slowly roll your body back up. Then straighten each leg.

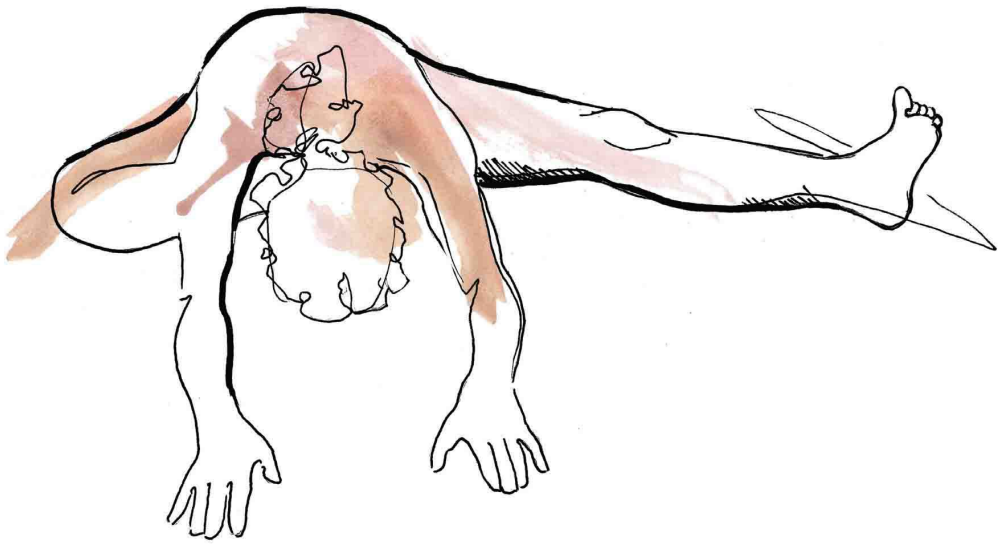
MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- { This pose may intensify sciatica pain—if you feel any discomfort, elevate the hips with a blanket, cushion, or bolster.
- { If the rounding of the back is too intense, try lying on your back for the supine version of the pose. With your legs straight out in front of you on the ground, slowly bend your knees and draw the soles of the feet together.
- { Too much tension in the neck? Rest your head on a block.
- { You can place a bolster or a couple of blankets on top of your thighs and rest your torso on top of the blankets.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- { Low back pain or any injuries exacerbated by spinal flexion

{ Neck injury that causes pain when lowering the head



Half Butterfly

This pose is a variation of [Butterfly](#) . Instead of placing the soles of the feet together, you'll bring in one heel toward your groin and extend the other leg. Half Butterfly stretches the back of the extended leg and the spine when the torso is folded forward. The pose is very similar to *Janu Sirsasana* , but in yin yoga you lower the head to the knee instead of actively reaching your head to your foot.

1. From a seated position, bring one foot in toward the opposite thigh with the heel resting against the groin. Stretch the opposite leg out to the side as far as it can comfortably go.
2. Round your back and fold your torso forward with your arms stretched out in front of you.
3. To come out of the pose, slowly bring your torso back upright. Lean back on the hands to release your hips, then slowly straighten both legs.

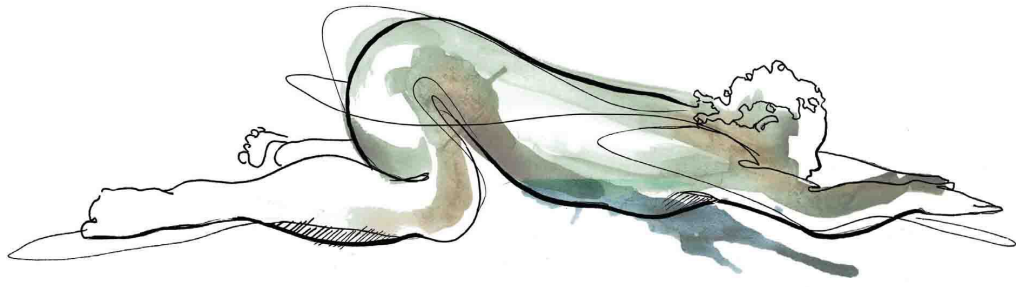
MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- { If you feel discomfort in your groin from the forward fold, then fold over the straight leg.
- { To add a spinal twist, place the elbow of the arm on the same side as the straight leg inside the thigh. Take your opposite arm overhead, turning your torso up slightly toward the sky.
- { If you experience pain in the hips, sit on a cushion to elevate the hips.
- { If you feel pain in the bent knee, take your foot farther away from the groin or add support under the knee. If you feel discomfort in the hamstrings of the straight leg, bend the knee slightly and place extra support under your thigh.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

{ Knee injury

{ Groin pain



Frog

Frog is a deep hip and groin opener. This pose can be especially intense for those with tight hips or knee issues. Modify to suit your needs.

1. Come to the floor on your hands and knees, with the knees in line with the hips, shoulders over wrists. Start to move the inner edges of the knees, shins, and feet outward, sinking your hips toward the floor.
2. Lower the torso down to the floor and rest on your forearms or stretch out one arm in front of you and then the other.
3. If the pressure on your inner thighs is not too severe, take the feet out to the side so the toes face out. If this is too much, keep the toes together, allowing the hips to go back slightly.
4. To come out of the pose, send your hips back into [Child's Pose](#). You can also stretch your legs out behind you and lie on your belly to rest.

MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

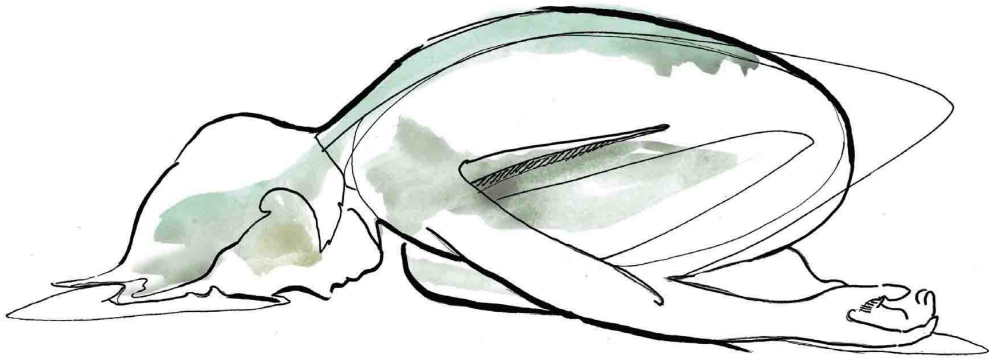
- { One modification to ease pressure on the groin, knees, and inner thighs is Tadpole. From [Child's Pose](#), stretch your arms in front of you and slowly take your knees out to the side, but keep sitting on your heels.
- { For a tight groin or knee pain, try Half Frog: Let the feet and toes face in, toward the body. Lift your hips up higher so they are in line with the knees.
- { Send the hips back for deeper sensations or forward for less intensity.
- { If you find it difficult to place pressure on them, place a blanket under your knees for extra padding.

{ To ease intensity, rest your torso on a bolster instead of the floor.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

{ Back pain

{ Weak or bad knees



Child's Pose

Child's Pose, or *Balāsana*, is a resting pose that provides a gentle stretch to the spine with some mild compression of the stomach and chest.

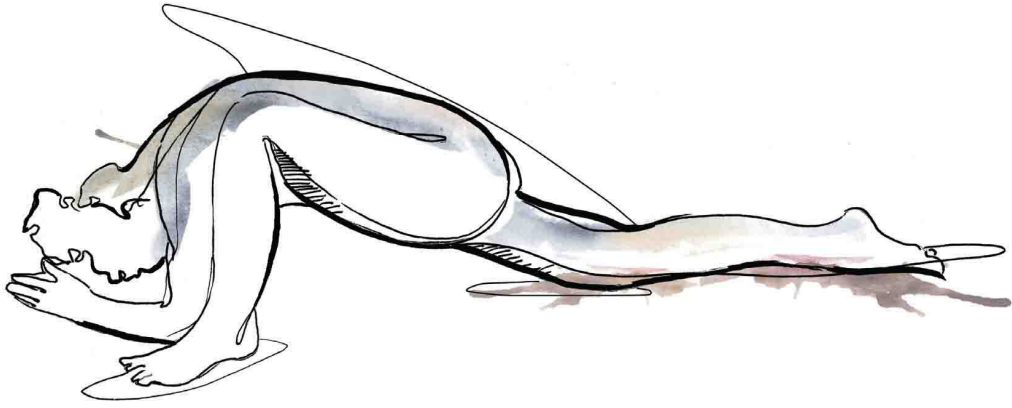
1. With your knees together as much as is comfortable and your weight resting on your heels, slowly fold your torso forward until your torso meets your thighs and your forehead rests on the ground.
2. Place your arms by your sides or stretch them out in front of you.
3. To come out of the pose, press your hands into the floor and lift your body back up to hands and knees or sit back on your heels.

MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- { To make more space for your midsection, take your knees out wide with the big toes touching and lower your torso between your legs.
- { If you have trouble lowering your seat to your heels, place a rolled-up blanket between your seat and calves.
- { If you feel neck tension, rest your forehead on your hands or on a bolster or block.
- { If you feel low back strain, widen your knees and place a bolster under your torso.
- { If you feel knee pain, place a cushion between the thighs.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- { Knee injury



Dragon

Dragon is a lunging pose that opens the hips and groin and works the ankles. It is similar to *Anjaneyasana*, which is often practiced in vinyasa yoga classes.

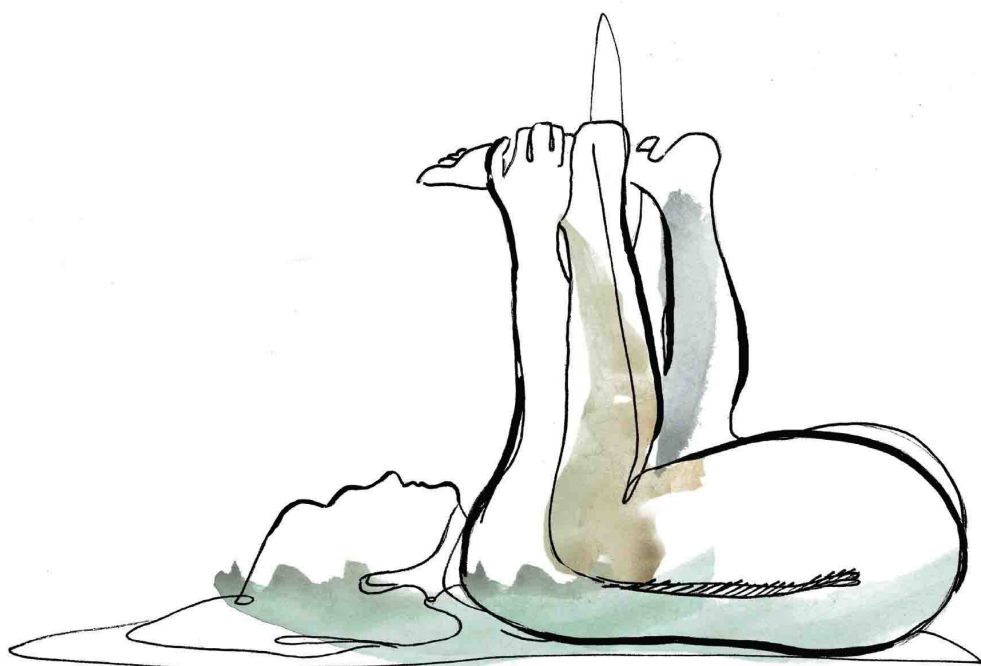
1. Come to the floor on your hands and knees, with the knees in line with the hips, wrists under your shoulders. Step one foot forward on the outside of your hand so your knee is in line with your ankle.
2. If the back knee is lifted, lower it to the ground and slide the knee back as far as you can. Press the top of your back foot into the ground.
3. Sink your hips so you feel a stretch in the top of your back leg.
4. Come down to your forearms, or rest your hands on either side of your front foot or on blocks.
5. To come out of the pose, place your hands on the floor in front of you, slide your front leg beside your back leg, and come onto your hands and knees.

MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- { If you have sensitive knees, you can place a blanket under them for added padding. You can also tuck the toes of the back foot in order to lift the leg off the floor, which is a more advanced pose but may alleviate intense pain in the knee.
- { If you feel discomfort in the ankle, place a blanket or towel underneath it.
- { For a deeper stretch, you can place both hands inside the front leg (rather than on either side of the front foot) and drop your front knee outward and down toward the floor, rolling over the outer edge of the front foot. This variation is called Winged Dragon.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

{ Knee injuries



Happy Baby

Happy Baby is a deep hip opener that also helps release the sacroiliac joint. You can do this pose with the soles of your feet facing upward or by bringing the inner arches of your feet together.

1. Lying on your back, bring your knees to your chest. Reach for the outsides of your feet, your ankles, or the backs of your calves.
2. Separate your feet so they are about hip-width apart and pull the feet and knees down toward the floor.
3. Keep your hips, head, and shoulders on the floor.
4. To come out of the pose, lower your feet down to the floor, keeping the knees bent. Take a few moments to rest.

MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- { If your hips are very tight, place a strap around the soles of the feet and use the strap to guide your knees down toward the floor.
- { If it's difficult to reach the feet, ankles, or calves, you can also hold the backs of your thighs.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- { Sacroiliac joint pain or dysfunction



Cat Pulling Its Tail

Cat Pulling Its Tail offers a mild compression of the low back while also stretching the quadriceps and thighs. The pose is similar to *Jathara Parivartanasana* .

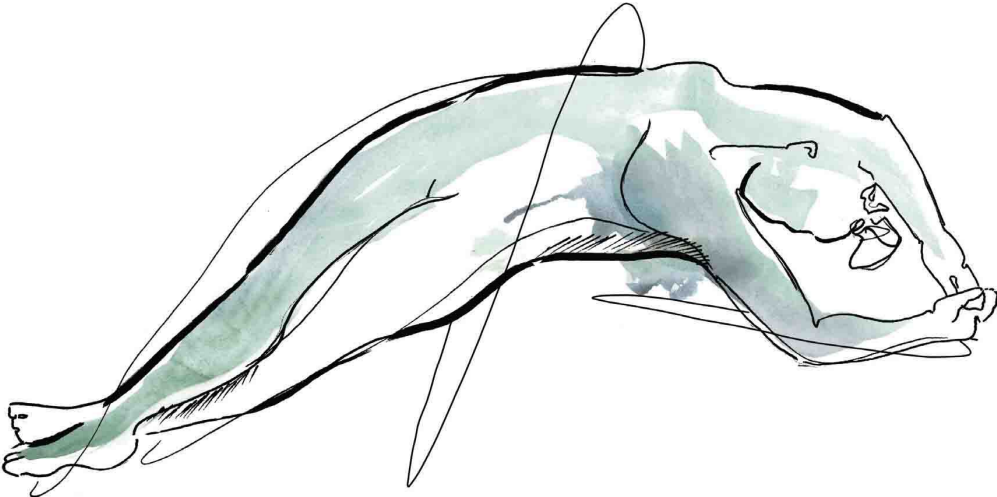
1. From a seated position with your legs out in front of you, twist your torso to the left side until you can place your left forearm on the floor.
2. Keep your left leg straight, and swing your right leg over the top and place it straight out in front of you.
3. Bend your left leg and bring your heel toward your seat.
4. Take your right hand and reach for your left foot. Press the top of the foot into your hand and pull the foot away from you.
5. Repeat on the other side.
6. To come out of the pose, release your foot, roll onto your stomach, and straighten both legs. You can take a few moments to pause and then rest on your back.

MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- { The posture is slightly more challenging when done lying down.
- { Move slowly to get in and out of this pose if you have problems with your low back.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- { Low back issues



Bananasana

This wonderful side stretch coaxes the body into a crescent shape. This posture works the spine, ribs, stomach, and iliotibial (IT) band.

1. Lie on your back with your legs together and extended in front of you.
2. Keeping your shoulder blades on the floor, bring your arms above your head. You can grab opposite elbows if that's possible for you.
3. With your hips and buttocks firmly rooted into the floor, move your legs toward one side. Be sure not to twist or roll your hips off the floor. You can cross your legs at the ankles if it's comfortable.
4. Bend your torso toward the same side as your legs to make an arch with your body.
5. To come out of the pose, uncross the ankles and slowly move your legs back to center. Bring the torso back to center and release your arms by your sides.

MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- { Once the legs have gone as far to the side as they are able, experiment with crossing the outside ankle over the inside ankle and vice versa to see where you feel a greater stretch in the IT band. Most practitioners experience more intense feelings when the outside ankle is on top, but see what works for you.
- { If grasping the elbows is uncomfortable, extend the arms above the head with the backs of the hands on the floor.
- { If you have low back issues, try not to take the legs and torso over too far. A gentle arch on the side body is sufficient.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- { Shoulder impingement issues or frozen shoulder
- { Low back pain



Melting Heart

Melting Heart is a forward fold done on the knees. The heart is lowered toward the floor with the arms outstretched in front of you. This pose works both as a backbend and a shoulder opener.

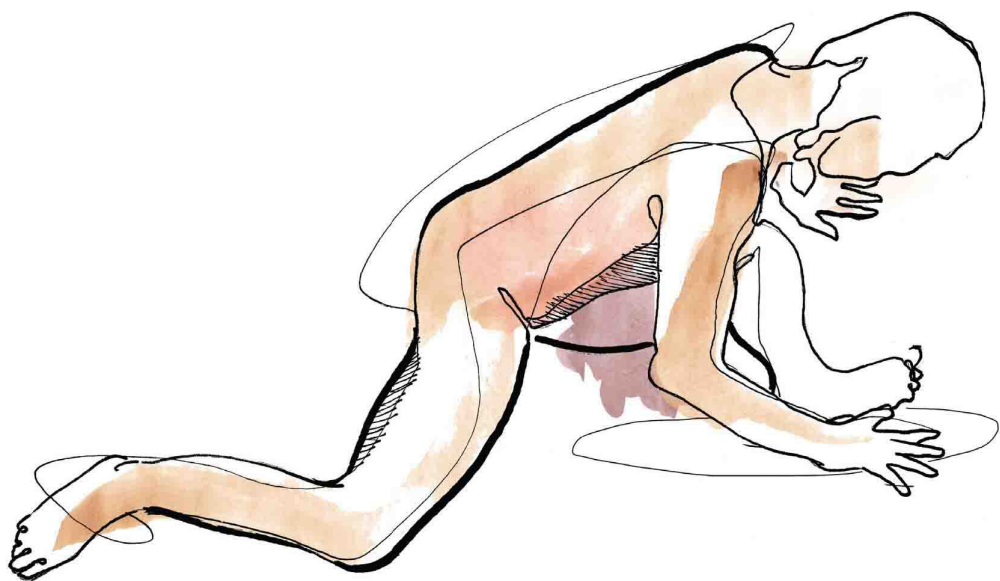
1. Come to the floor on your hands and knees, with the knees in line with the hips, wrists under your shoulders. Walk your hands forward so your chest lowers toward the ground, keeping the arms shoulder-width apart.
2. You can tuck your toes or press the tops of the feet into the ground.
3. Keep your hips in line with your knees and rest your forehead on the ground.
4. To come out of the pose, send your hips back to come into [Child's Pose](#) or slide your legs out behind you to come onto your belly.

MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- { If you feel discomfort in the shoulders, take your arms wider apart.
- { If kneeling becomes uncomfortable, place a blanket or cushion under the knees.
- { Place a bolster or blankets under the chest if needed.
- { You can drop the chin to the floor if you're able, but be mindful that this modification may cause a strain in the neck.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- { Neck issues
- { Knee pain and sensitivity



Deer

Deer is a balanced way to work the internal and external rotation of the hips. This pose is done seated and can be used as a counter pose to other more intense hip opening poses, such as [Dragon](#) .

- 1 . Starting in [Butterfly](#) , twist the right leg to bring the right foot behind the right hip. Internally rotate your leg so the inside of your right thigh rests on the floor.
- 2 . Move your left foot out in front of you until your leg forms a 90-degree angle at the knee.
- 3 . Move your right foot a little farther away from the right hip.
- 4 . Root your sit bones firmly into the floor. Sit upright, and try not to lean away from the back leg.
- 5 . To come out of the pose, lean slightly back and slowly bring the back leg back around to return to Butterfly position. Take the pose on the opposite side or straighten both legs.

MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- { For a side body stretch, twist toward the front knee. Remain upright or try to rest your elbow on the ground. If you're able, try to bring the torso down to the floor, as well. You can rest your chest on a blanket for added support.
- { If you have knee issues, forming a 90-degree angle with the front knee may not feel good. Instead, bring the front foot in to the groin. You can also support the knees by placing a blanket or bolster beneath them.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- { Knee pain or injuries

{ Hip pain



Reclining Twist

Reclining Twist is a supine posture that helps release any tension in the spine. It is often done at the end of the practice because it is a very calming and relaxing posture.

1. Lie on your back and hug the right knee into the chest.
2. Take the right arm out to the side, and then guide the bent knee across the body with the left hand. Try to keep the shoulder blades on the mat. If the bent knee does not come to the floor, place a block underneath the knee for more comfort.
3. Turn your head to the right.
4. To come out of the pose, lift the knee to bring it back to center. Then hug both knees into the chest and lower the feet down to the floor with your knees bent. Pause for a few moments before doing the opposite side.

MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- { For a variation, take your arms out to the side, and then slowly lower your knees down to one side so the spine twists to that side. Try to keep your shoulder blades on the ground.
- { If it's difficult to lower the knees to the floor, grab a block or bolster and place it under the knees for support.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- { Shoulder or rotator cuff issues



Square

Similar to *Agnistambhasana* , or Fire Log pose, this is a deep hip opener in which both legs are in external rotation at the hip socket.

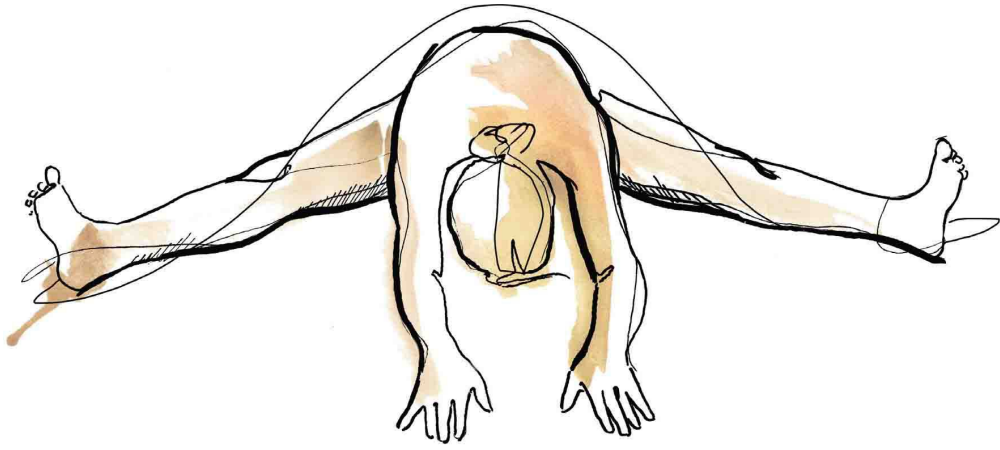
1. Begin in a seated position with the legs out in front of you. If your hips are very tight, sit on a bolster or block to raise your hips above the knees.
2. Bring your right shin parallel to the front edge of your mat. Then stack the left ankle and edge of the left foot on top of your right knee. To protect the knees, slightly flex the ankles of both feet.
3. You can sit upright with your fingertips on the mat by your sides or fold forward.
4. To come out of the pose, take your hands behind you, lean back, and then slowly straighten both legs out in front of you.

MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- { Depending on your hip flexibility, you may not be able to stack your legs on top of each other. It's okay if the knee of the top leg is slightly up in the air and not resting on the other ankle. If needed, place blocks or blankets under the knees for support.
- { If you feel any tweaking of the knee, bring the feet closer to the groin. You can also do one leg at a time or sit with the shins crossed.
- { You can take this pose with the torso folded onto the legs for an additional stretch in the low back.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- { Knee pain or injuries
- { Sciatica



Straddle

Like *Upavistha Konasana* , Straddle is a wide-legged, seated forward fold that opens the hips and groin. Also known as Dragonfly, it stretches the backs of the thighs and low back.

- 1 . In a seated position, take the legs as far apart as they can go.
- 2 . Tilt your hips forward and lower your torso over your right leg. Keep your feet relaxed and hands resting on the floor on either side of the leg.
- 3 . Slowly roll up, and then lower over your left leg.
- 4 . Slowly roll up, and then lower your torso between the legs toward the floor. Rest your hands or your forearms on the floor, or come all the way down.
- 5 . To come out of the pose, press your hands into the floor and slowly roll up. Slowly draw the legs in together and shake them out to release the tension in the inner thighs, hips, and groin.

MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

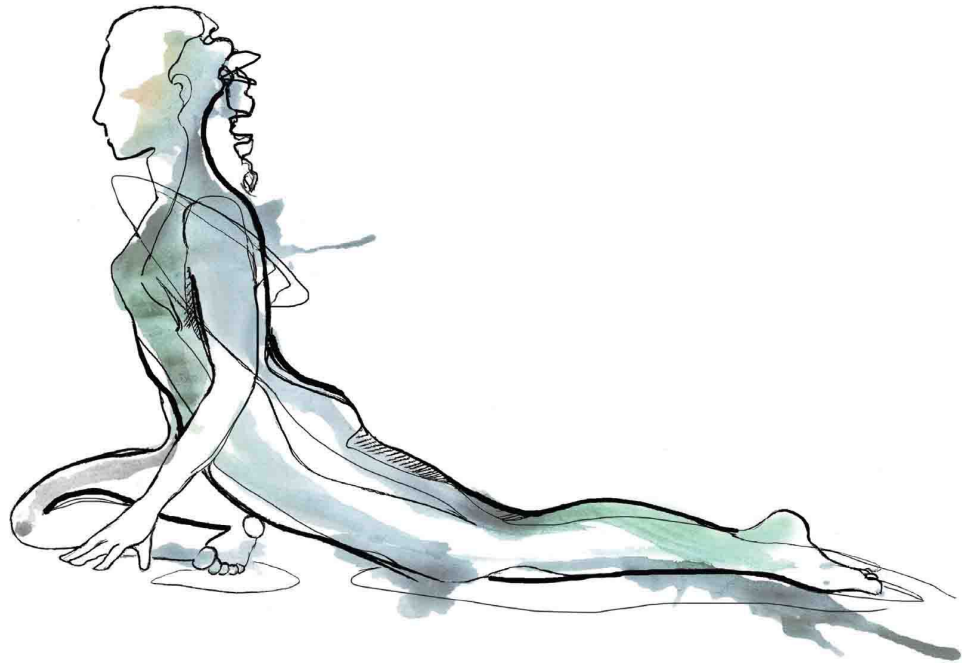
- { To ease tightness in the hips, sit on top of a cushion or bolster to elevate the hips.
- { If you experience pain in the back of the knees or too much tension in the inner thighs or groin, bring your legs together a bit.
- { If you have tight hamstrings, you can place cushions under your thighs for comfort.
- { If your torso does not reach the floor, lower the chest down to a bolster or rest on your forearms.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- { Low back pain or injury

{ Hamstrings injury

{ Groin injury



Swan

Swan is another deep hip-opening pose that also targets the buttocks and thighs. It is similar to *Rajakapotasana* (also known as Pigeon).

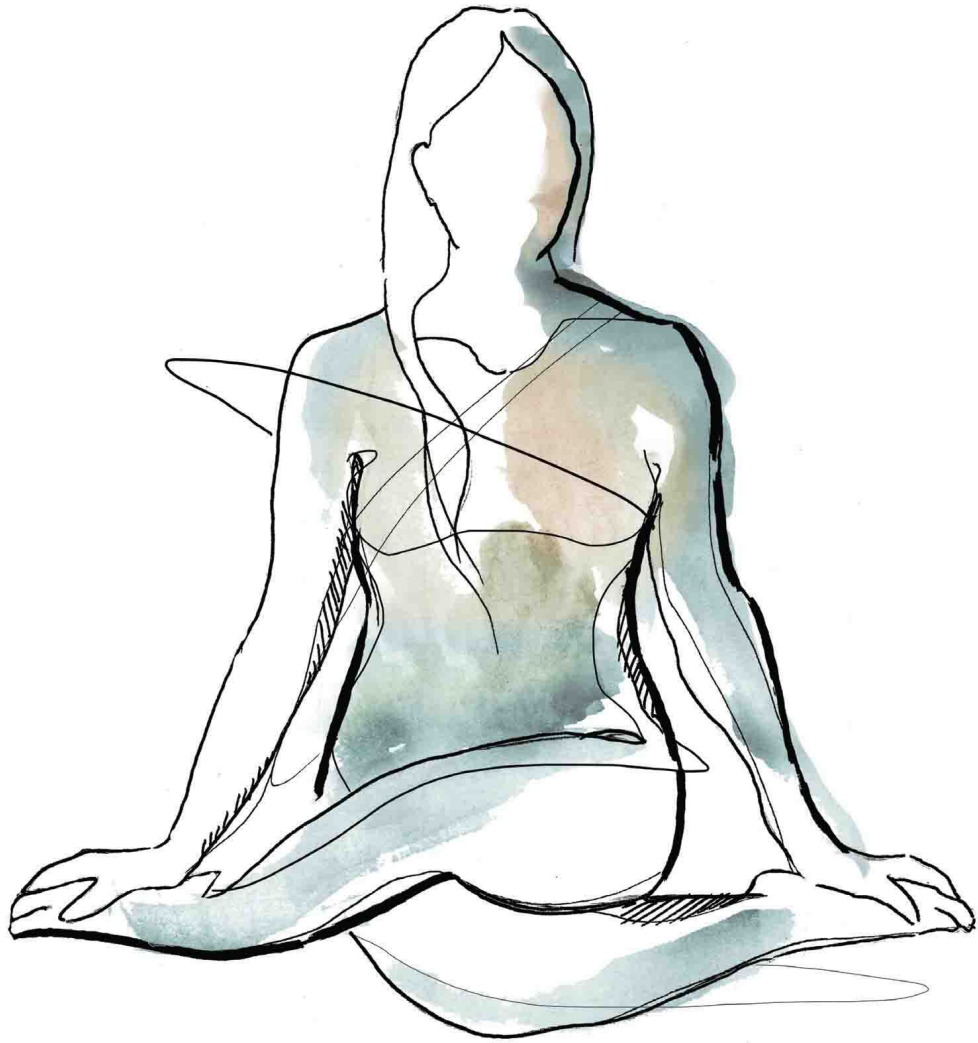
1. Come to the floor on your hands and knees. Slide your right knee forward and extend your left leg behind you. The top of the left foot will rest on the floor, and the front left hip will face the floor.
2. Shift your weight to the right hip. Externally rotate the right thigh bone so the right knee and shin are on the floor in front of you. Flex the right foot slightly. If there is tension, bring the right foot closer in toward the groin.
3. Bring your body weight underneath you to distribute your weight evenly and center your hips.
4. Sit upright and rest your weight on your hands.
5. To come out of the pose, press your hands into the floor and lift the torso. Shift your body weight to one side again and bring the back leg forward.

MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- { To keep the hips level, place a blanket or bolster under the seat on the same side as your front leg.
- { If you have the flexibility, move into the Sleeping Swan variation by folding your torso over and lower down onto your elbows.
- { If you have tight hips, slide the front foot in toward the groin.
- { For a gentler stretch, you can do this pose seated. Sit with both knees bent with the feet on the floor. Keeping one foot on the floor, take the ankle of the opposite foot on top of the thigh of the bottom leg. Place your hands behind you and lift your heart to the sky.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

{ Knee pain or injury



Shoelace

Shoelace is a variation of [Square](#) . It's an intense hip opener with an accompanying forward fold to stretch the lower spine. Shoelace is similar to *Gomukhasana* .

- 1 . Begin in a seated position with the legs crossed. Slide both knees toward the center of the body, stacking one knee on top of the other.
- 2 . Pull your calves close to the hips and try to keep both sit bones grounded on the floor.
- 3 . You can sit upright or fold forward with the arms stretched in front of you, keeping both sit bones on the ground.
- 4 . To come out of the pose, take your hands behind the body, lean back, and slowly straighten the legs.

MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

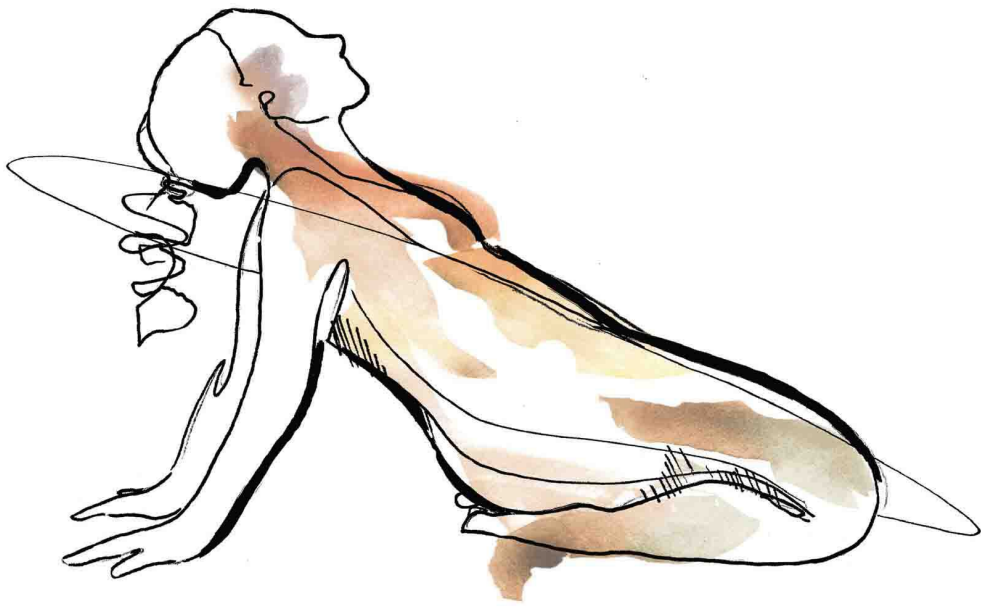
- { For tight hips, sit on a bolster to help bring them forward.
- { If it is difficult to stack the knees, straighten one leg and take the opposite knee over the straight leg. Bring the foot of the bent leg in toward the hip if possible. Take your hands out to the side or fold forward to rest on your forearms.
- { To work the heart and lung meridians, incorporate Eagle arms: Extend both arms in front of you. Cross one elbow on top of the other and wrap your forearms to bring the palms or backs of the hands together. If crossing the elbows on top of one another is not an option, give yourself a hug with your elbows crossed at the chest.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- { Sciatica

{ Low back pain

{ Knee injury



Saddle

You can do the pose by sitting on your feet or in a full extension with your back on the floor. It is similar to *Supta Virasana* and can be modified to accommodate any discomfort.

1. Sit on your heels with the tops of your feet facing down, toes pointing straight back, and knees hip-width apart. If this is your edge, go no further.
2. If you're able to go deeper into the pose, use your hands for support to lean back.
3. To go even further, you can lower down to your forearms, arch your back, and drop the head to rest the crown of the head on the mat.
4. If your body is flexible and open, rest the upper back on the floor, keeping a slight arch in the low back.
5. Always take your time getting out of this pose. If you're able to, lift up onto your elbows, press into your hands, and roll over onto one side or onto your belly to straighten the legs. Or roll over to one side and straighten one leg, then roll to the other side and straighten the other.

MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

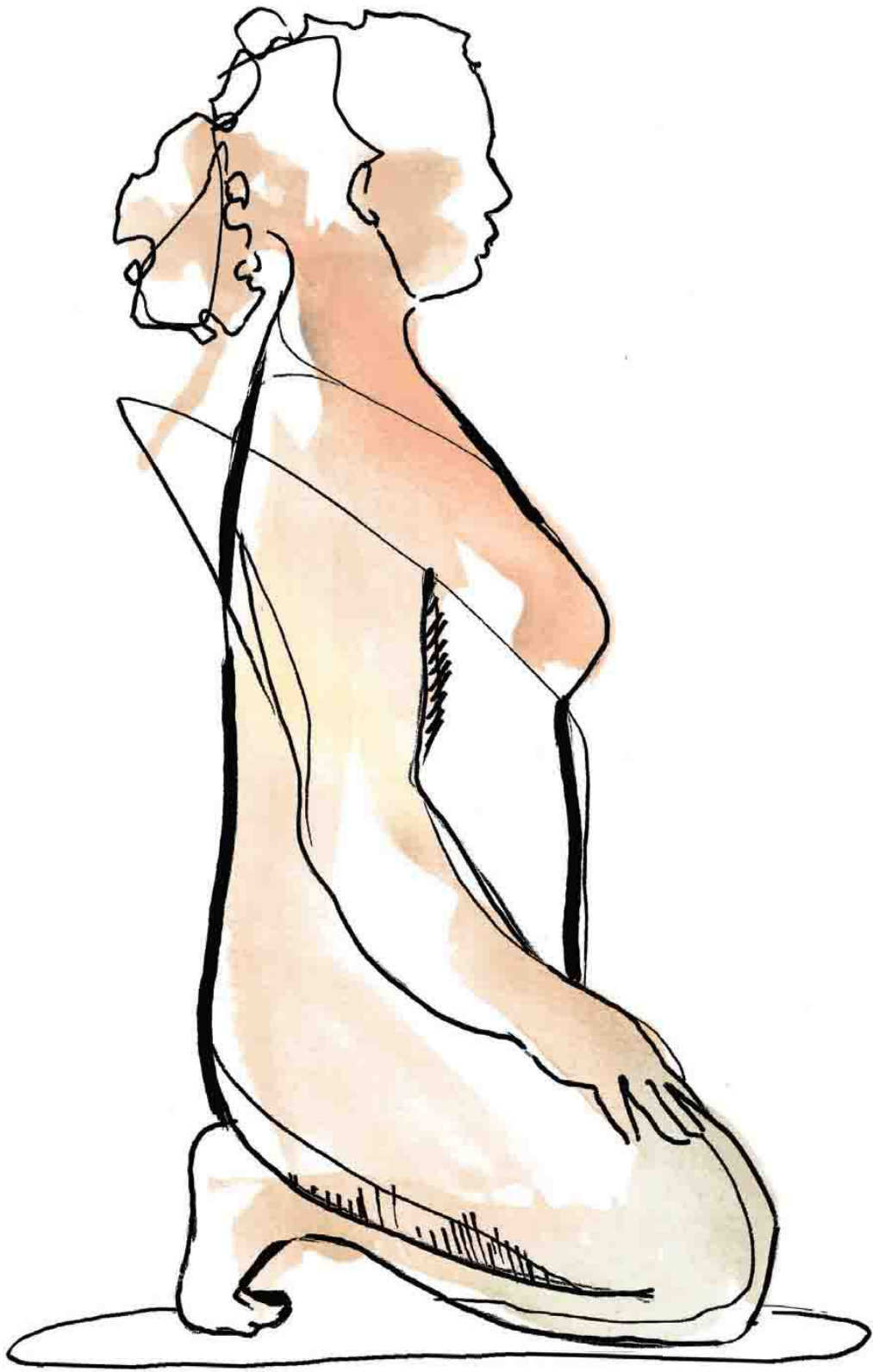
- { If it's too intense to place your weight on both knees, lengthen one leg out in front of you. You can also bend the outstretched leg.
- { If leaning back onto your forearms is too intense, place a bolster behind your feet to support your back.
- { If you feel any pressure in the ankles or tops of the feet, place a blanket under the ankles.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- { Ankle pain

{ Knee pain

{ Knee injuries



Toe Squat

Toe Squat stretches the feet, strengthens the ankles, and stimulates all the lower body meridians. It is similar to *Vajrasana* , except the toes are tucked under.

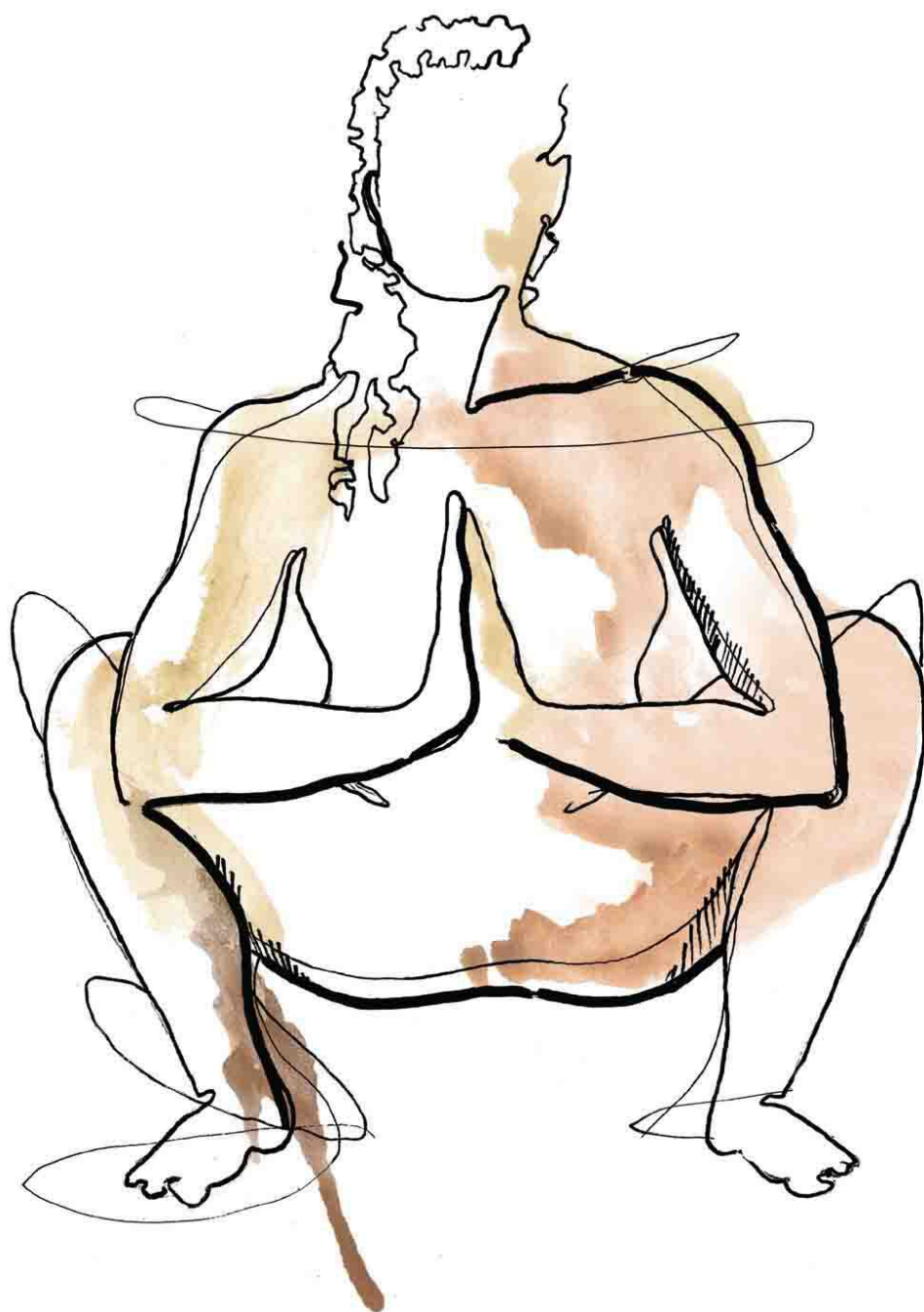
- 1 . Start in a kneeling position. Tuck your toes so you're on the balls of the feet. Lower your body weight onto your heels. Reach down to tuck the small toes in, as they have a tendency to splay out.
- 2 . Keep the spine straight.
- 3 . Rest your hands on your thighs.
- 4 . To come out of the pose, bring your hands in front of you and lean forward. Lift your body up off the floor to provide room to bring your feet out from underneath you.

MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- { To relieve the pressure on the heels and ankles, return to a kneeling position. If you're ready and able to take the posture again, sit back down, resting your weight on the heels.
- { Place a blanket or cushion underneath achy knees for more comfort.
- { Come out of the pose immediately if it becomes too intense at any time.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- { Knee injury or pain
- { Ankle strain or pain that cannot withstand direct pressure



Squat

Like *Malasana*, Squat is a hip opener that also strengthens the ankles. The knees are bent deeply, and the hips lower down toward the floor.

1. Stand with your feet hip-width apart.
2. Bend your knees and squat down. Be sure your knees and feet are pointing forward.
3. Bring your elbows inside the knees and your palms together at the heart center.
4. Press your elbows slightly against the knees. Keep your spine straight and chest up.
5. The easiest way to come out of this pose is to bring your body down to the floor to a seated position and bring your legs out in front of you.

MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- { If the entire foot is not able to rest on the floor and your heels are raised, place a blanket or wedge under the heels to help ground the feet—or rest the heels against a wall for more stability.
- { You can also widen the legs to help bring the heels closer to the ground.
- { If squatting is too much on the legs, place a block underneath your seat.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- { Knee pain or injury



Savasana

Savasana is the ultimate resting pose. It may be taken with the legs hip-width apart and the arms by the side or the legs and arms stretched out wide.

1. Lie down on your back.
2. Rest your arms and legs comfortably on the mat. An external rotation of the leg at the hip socket is okay.
3. Allow your body to melt into the floor. Relax the jaw. Close your eyes or find a soft gaze on the ceiling.
4. To come out of the pose, roll over onto your right side and rest in fetal position for a moment.

MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- { If you experience pain in the knees or hips, place a blanket under the knees.
- { For added neck and head support, place a bolster or rolled-up blanket under your neck.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- { Back injury



CHAPTER 4

YANG ASANAS

Yang asanas are counterposes to the yin asanas. They help move and release energy in the body that may have been temporarily restricted while holding a yin pose. Yang poses engage the muscles and can be performed in repetition. In this section, you will find five yang asanas to counterbalance the body after your yin poses.



Camel

Camel (*Ustrasana*) is a deep heart-opening backbend that stretches the tops of the thighs and hip flexors. It is considered a yang pose because the legs are active in the pose.

1. Start by standing on your knees with your knees hip-width apart and the tops of the feet pressing into the floor.
2. Internally rotate your thighs and press your shins into the floor.
3. Elongate the spine, take your hands behind you, and push your hips up and forward to create an arch in the back.
4. Lift the lower abdomen but keep the pelvis neutral. If there's no neck pain, allow the head to drop back.
5. To come out of the pose, slowly bring your torso back upright. If the head is dropped back, slowly lower your chin to the chest once your shoulders are in line with your hips. Pause for a moment and then come to a seated position.

MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- { You can also do this pose by standing on your knees with your hands on your hips. Push your hips forward, lift your chest, and arch your back.
- { If you are flexible, you can grab the ankles or heels when you take your hands behind you.
- { If you have back issues, be careful not to overextend the spine. A slight back-bend will suffice.
- { If you have a neck injury or issues, do not drop the head all the way back. Instead, tuck the chin to the chest or stay upright.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- { Back pain or injury

{ Neck pain or injury

{ High or low blood pressure



Down Dog

Down Dog, or *Adho Mukha Svanasana* , is an active inversion that can be used as a yang pose between postures.

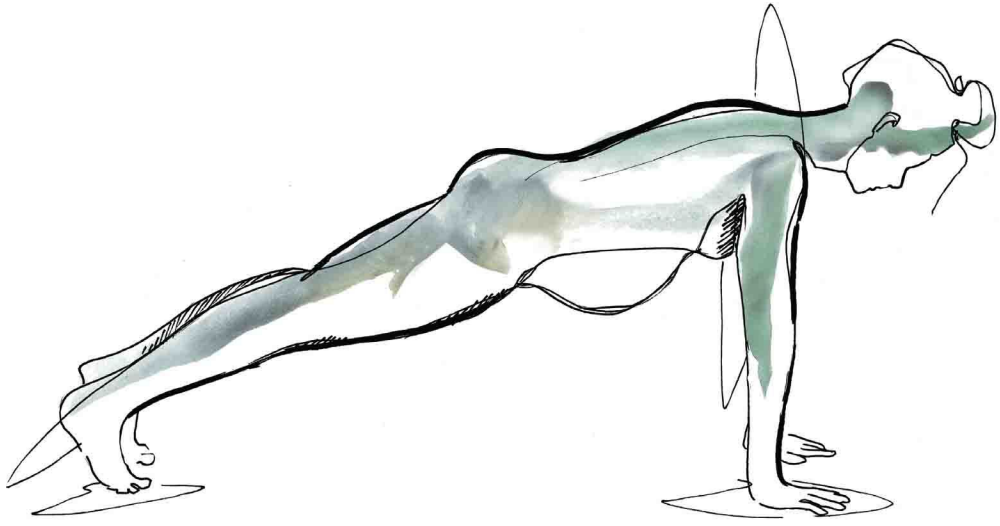
- 1 . Come to the floor on your hands and knees, with the knees in line with the hips, wrists under your shoulders. Place your hands shoulder-width apart and spread your fingers wide.
- 2 . Tuck your toes and lift the hips to create an upside-down V. Engage the quadriceps so the hamstrings lengthen. Be mindful not to lock the elbows.
- 3 . Keep your head in a neutral position. Your biceps should be by your ears.
- 4 . Draw your heels toward the ground. Drop the shoulder blades down the back.
- 5 . Use the legs to keep much of the weight off the arms and hands.
- 6 . To come out of the pose, bring your knees down to the mat. Send the hips back to [Child's Pose](#) .

MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- { If you have trouble dropping the heels to the floor, bend the knees.
- { If you feel strain on the wrists or shoulders, place your hands on blocks.
- { Taking Down Dog at the wall is a great option. To do this, place your hands shoulder-width apart on a wall. Lower your torso and walk your feet back so your head is between your arms and your body creates a 90-degree angle.
- { If you have blood pressure issues, avoid letting the head go below the heart.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- { Shoulder pain or injuries
- { Wrist pain or injuries



Crocodile

Chaturanga Dandasana —the pose yin yogis call Crocodile—is also known as the “yogi’s push-up.” As a counterbalancing yang pose, it engages the arms and legs and helps build upper body strength.

1. Begin on the hands and knees. Tuck the toes under and straighten the legs out behind you so your knees are lifted up off the floor. Keep your arms straight for a high plank position.
2. Lower your torso toward the floor as if you are doing a push-up. Hug the elbows in toward the rib cage.
3. Push the body up to come back to high plank position. Repeat two or three times.
4. When you are finished, lower the body down to the ground to rest on your belly.

MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- { Crocodile can also be done with the knees on the floor.
- { If your wrists cannot bear the weight of your body, try a standing push-up at the wall. Place your hands shoulder-width apart at the wall. Hug the elbows in toward the ribs and lower the chest to the wall.
- { If you’re pregnant, simply hold high plank position, and practice pinching your shoulder blades together and expanding your chest.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- { Shoulder injuries
- { Carpal tunnel syndrome or other wrist injuries
- { Back pain or injuries



Windshield Wipers

Windshield Wipers is a posture that gets blood and energy moving in the body after a long yin posture. It involves alternating the knees left and right like windshield wipers.

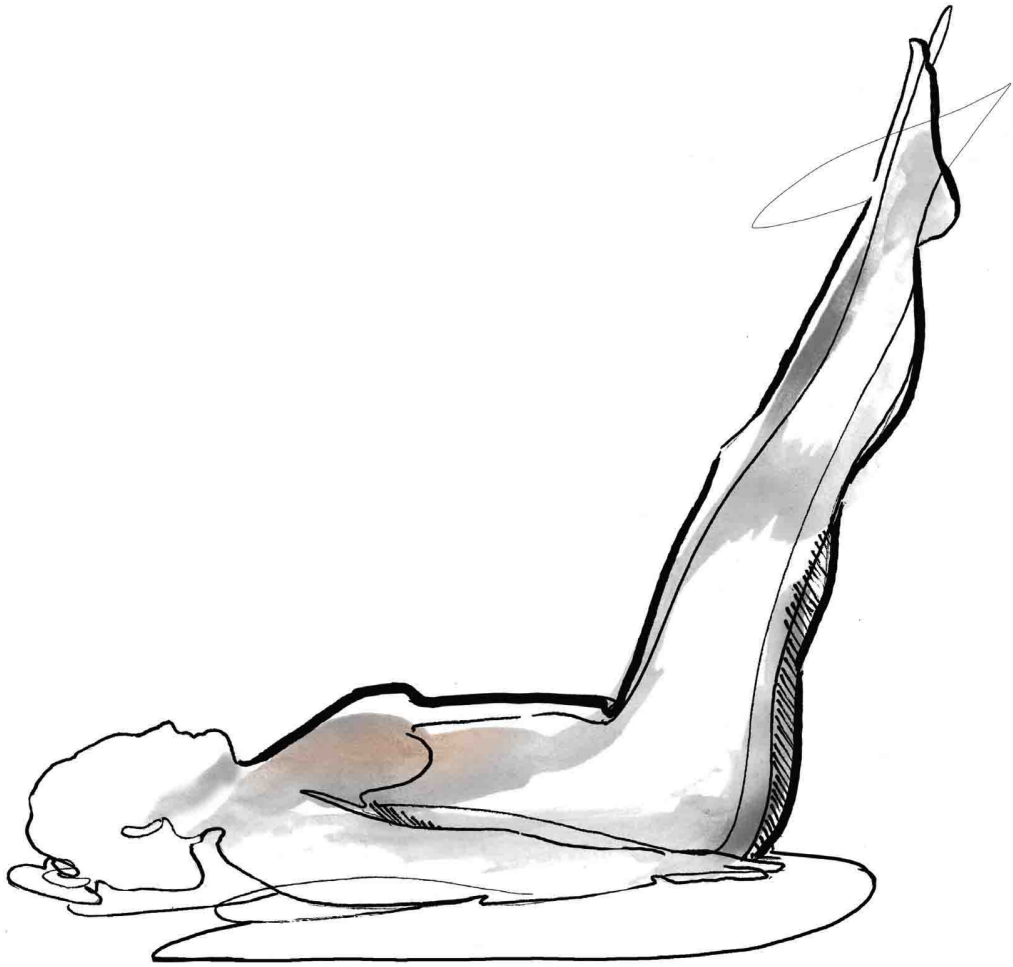
1. Come to a seated position.
2. Bend the knees so the soles of the feet are on the floor. Drop the knees to the right side, then take them over to the left side. Repeat.
3. When you're finished, bring the knees back to center. Lower the legs to the floor to relax or lie down and rest on your back.

MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

{ This posture can be done from a supine position. Lie on your back and bend the knees so the soles of the feet are on the floor. With your arms at your sides, drop the knees over to one side and then take them over to the opposite side. Repeat.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- { Hip pain or injuries
- { Knee pain or injuries
- { Low back pain or injuries



Leg Raises

Leg Raises are a yang counterpose done in a supine position. Leg Raises strengthen the abdominals, low back, and hip flexors.

1. Lying on your back on the floor, bring your knees in to your chest. Place your hands under your seat.
2. Straighten your legs so the soles of your feet face the ceiling. Bring your knees together and slowly lower both legs toward the floor, taking your chin to your chest.
3. Let the legs hover above the floor without touching it.
4. Engage your core and lift the legs back to the starting position. Repeat the cycle.
5. When you are finished, lower your legs down to the floor and rest on your back.

MODIFICATIONS AND VARIATIONS

- { Lower each leg individually. Or lift and lower the legs with the knees bent.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- { Stomach pain

part three

Balanced Sequences

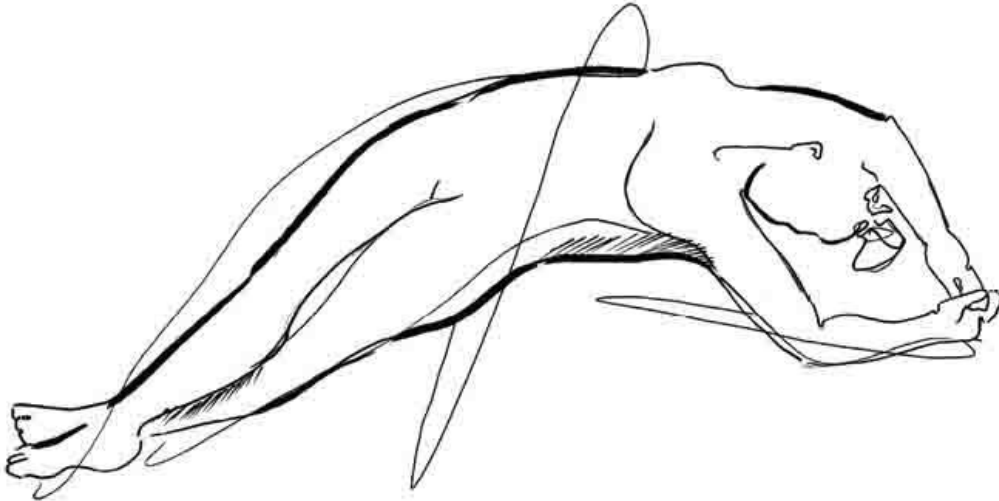
ENERGY RISING

Although you're "taking it slow" with yin yoga, the postures can be used to stimulate the flow of qi throughout the body to help improve your mood and overall well-being. This chapter offers energy-boosting sequences that will get the blood moving and lift your spirits. Note that the suggested total practice times for each sequence include time for transitioning between these energizing poses.

Morning Flex

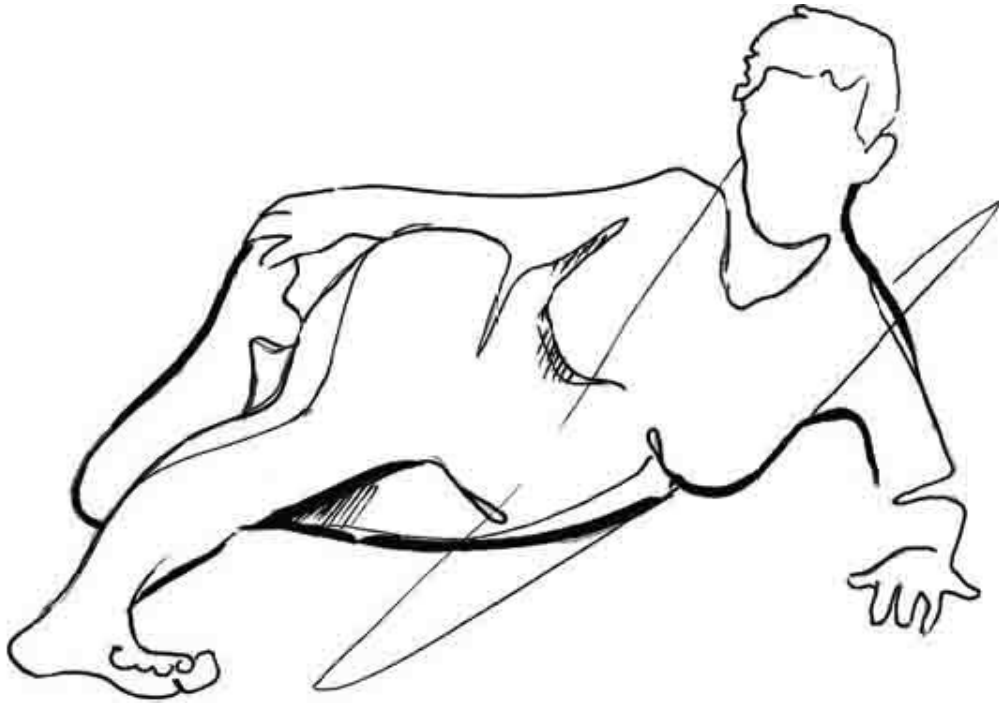
TIME: 13 minutes

If you experience fatigue or stiffness when you wake up in the mornings, this super-easy and short sequence is a great way to work out the kinks and energize the body. You can also do these poses while still in bed to help you generate the momentum needed to get moving and start your day. Although this is ideal for beginners, advanced practitioners can convert this sequence into a 30-minute morning flexibility routine by extending each of the hold times to 5 minutes or longer.



1. Bananasana

2 minutes each side



2. [Cat Pulling Its Tail](#)

2 minutes each side



3. [Swan](#)

2 minutes each side



4. **Melting Heart**

1 minute

Stamina Builder

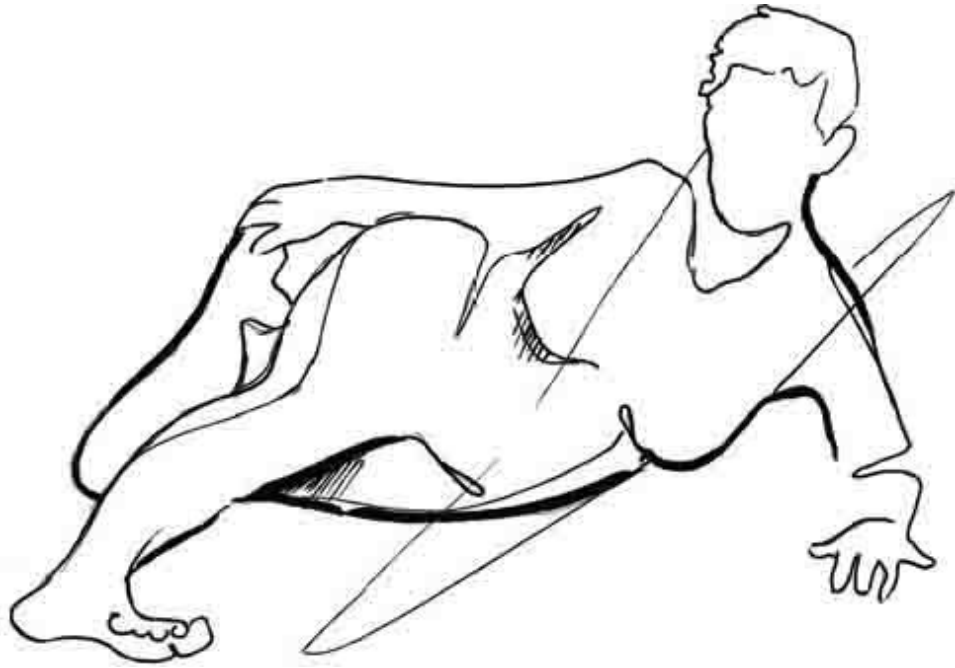
TIME: 45 minutes

Other styles of yoga, like Power Vinyasa and ashtanga, build stamina through the repetition of high-intensity postures that primarily recruit the larger muscles in the body. In this stamina-building sequence, the yin asanas target the entire lower body—legs, ankles, hips, feet, and knees—in order to strengthen the connective tissues. This sequence helps the muscles endure more strenuous activity and improves the range of motion in the joints. If any pose in the sequence is too challenging, shorten the hold time, take a modification, use props, or skip the pose.



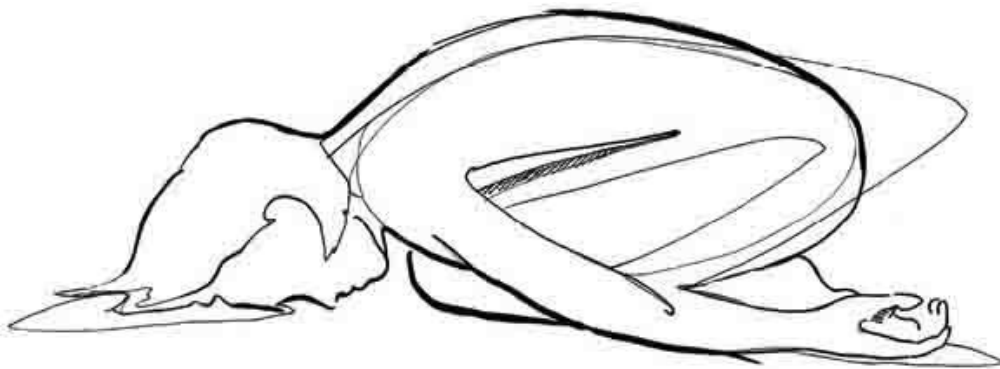
1. Toe Squat

3 minutes



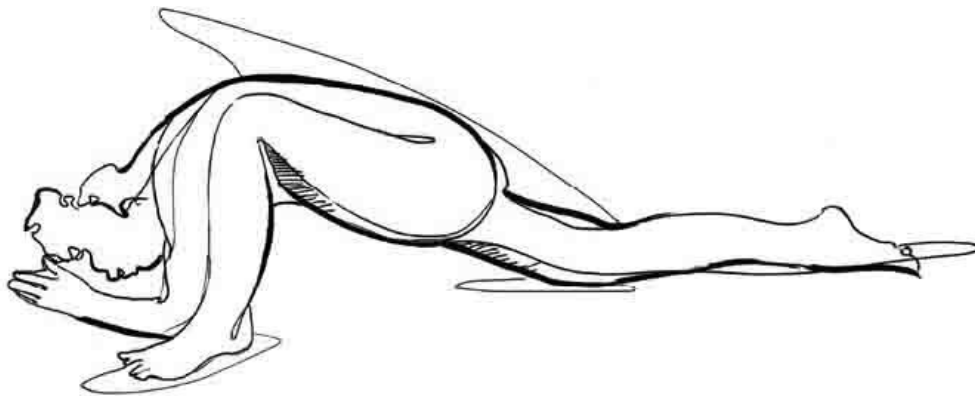
2. [Cat Pulling Its Tail](#)

3 minutes each side



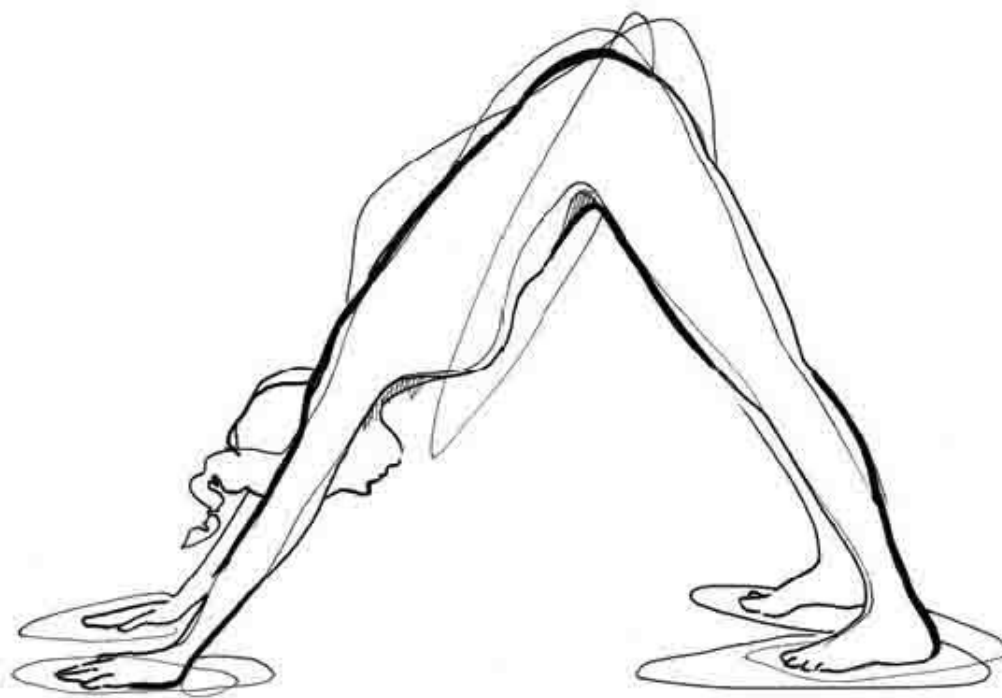
3. [Child's Pose](#)

1 minute



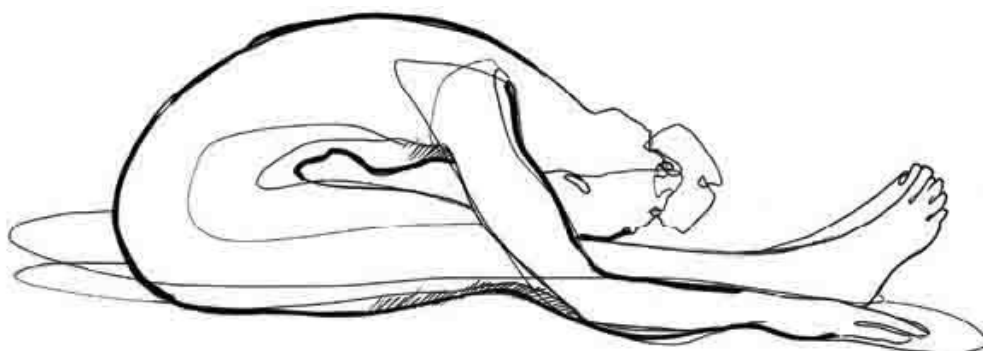
4. [Dragon](#)

5 minutes each side



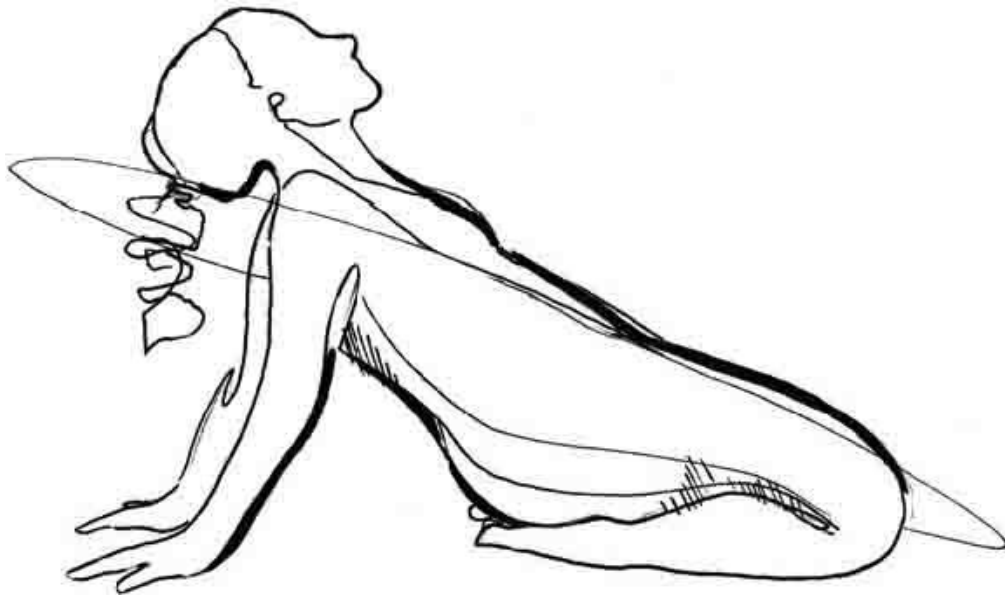
5. [Down Dog](#)

1 minute



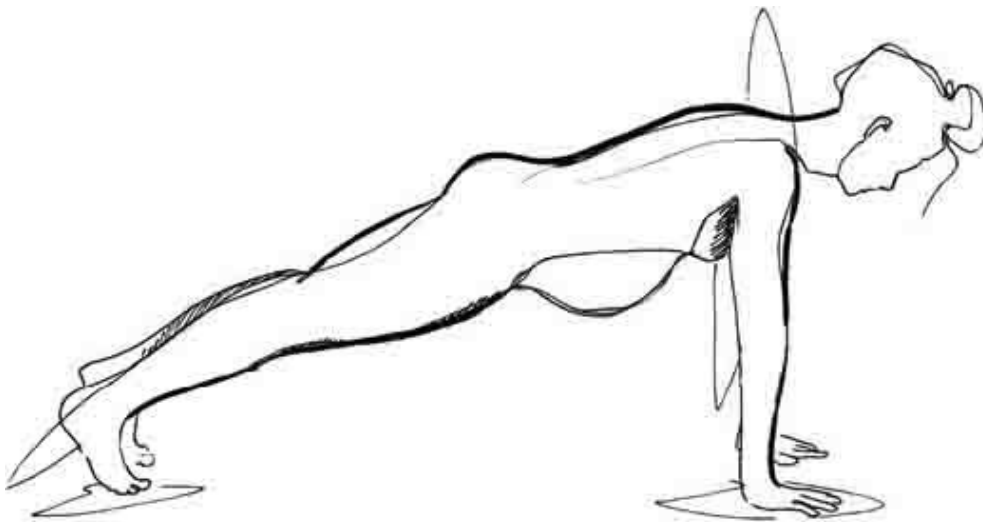
6. [Caterpillar](#)

3 minutes



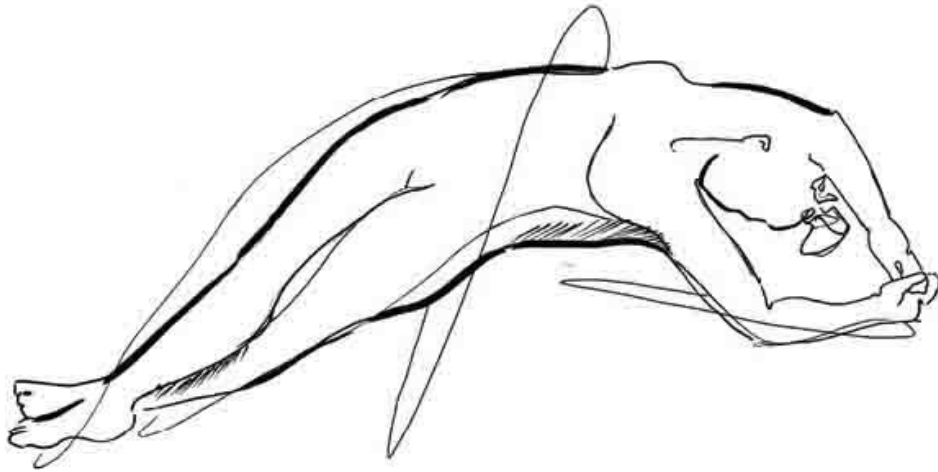
7. [Saddle](#)

5 minutes



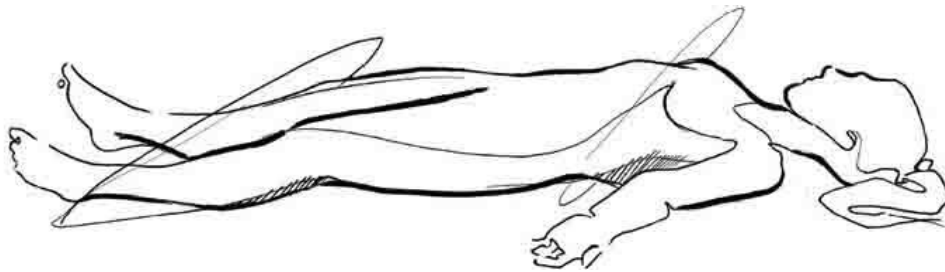
8. [Crocodile](#)

1 minute or 3 repetitions



9. [Bananasana](#)

3 minutes each side



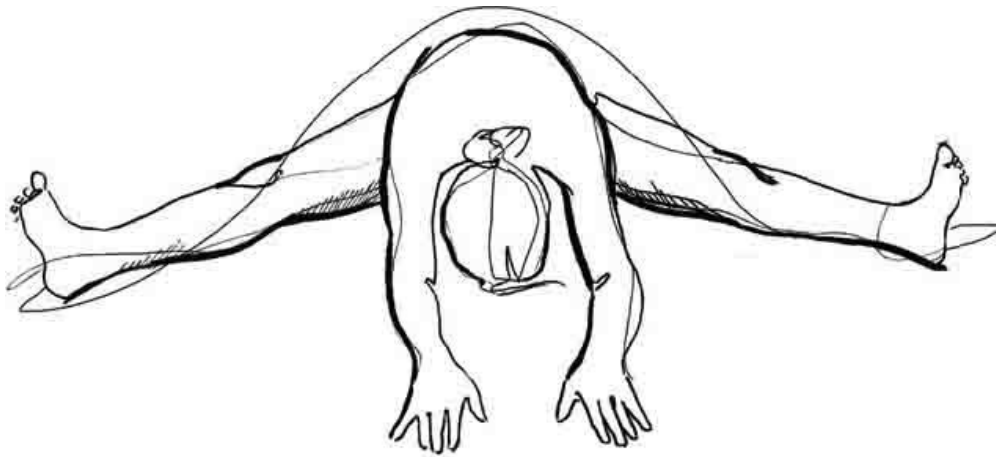
10. [Savasana](#)

5 minutes

Energy Boost

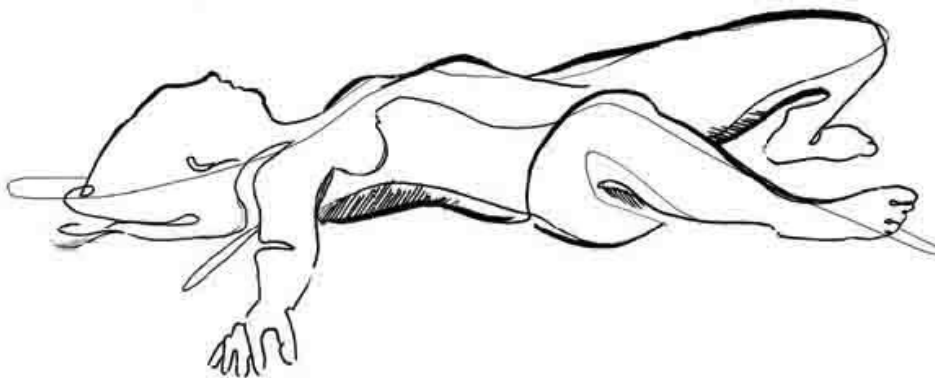
TIME: 45 minutes

In traditional Chinese medicine, the kidneys are regarded as the purveyors of energy. The kidneys are responsible for controlling the balance of fluids in the body, and poorly functioning kidneys are often the cause of diminished vitality. The primary goal of this 45-minute sequence is to stimulate and enhance the flow of energy to these important organs. Consisting of poses that target the spine and add compression to the urinary bladder meridian line, these poses will nourish the kidneys with qi so they are able to effectively move water throughout the body and filter waste.



1. Straddle

3 minutes



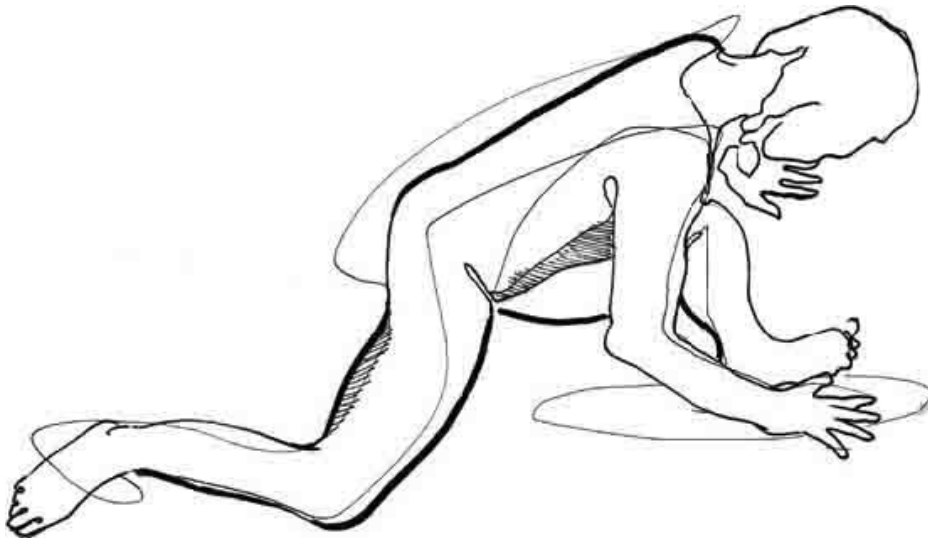
2. Windshield Wipers

1 minute



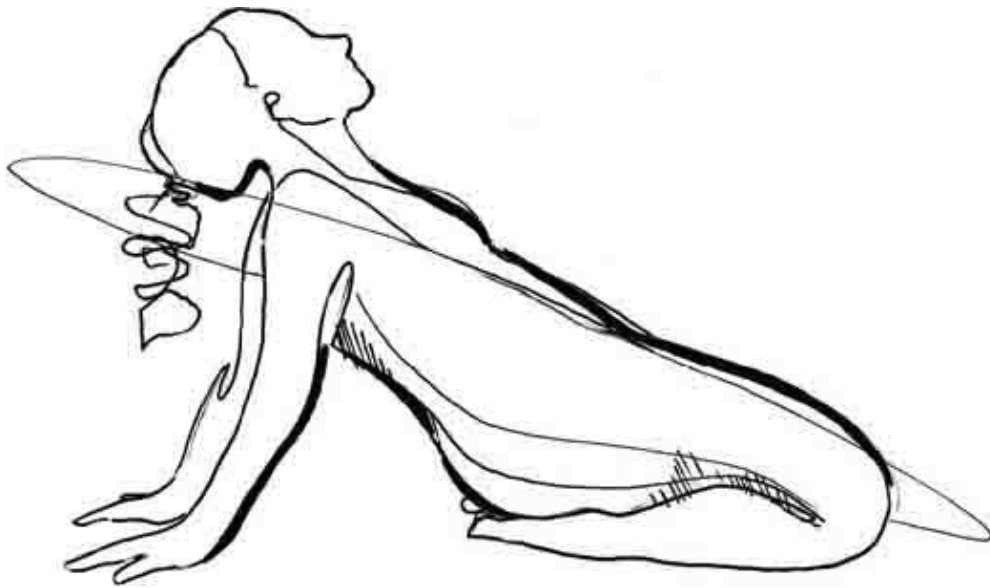
3. [Shoelace](#)

3 minutes each side



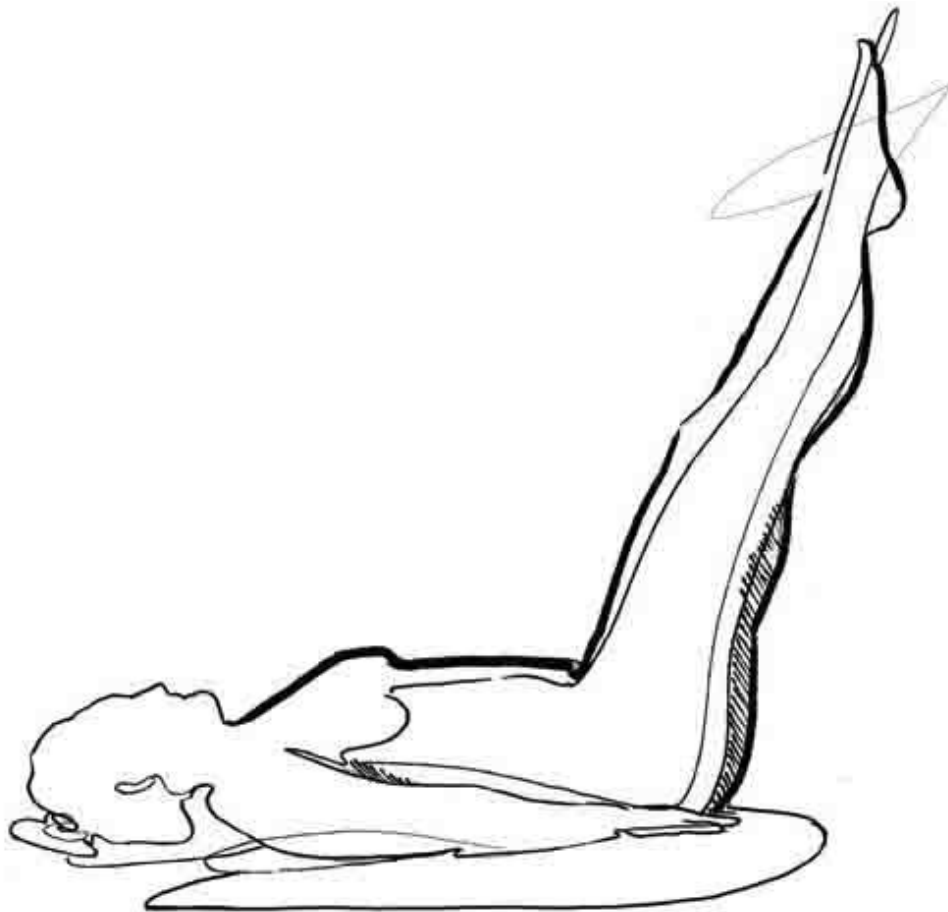
4. [Deer](#)

2 minutes each side



5. [Saddle](#)

5 minutes



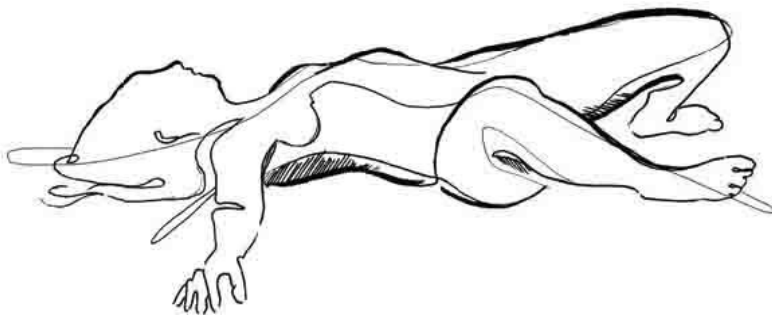
6. [Leg Raises](#)

1 minute or 5 repetitions



7. **Butterfly**

5 minutes



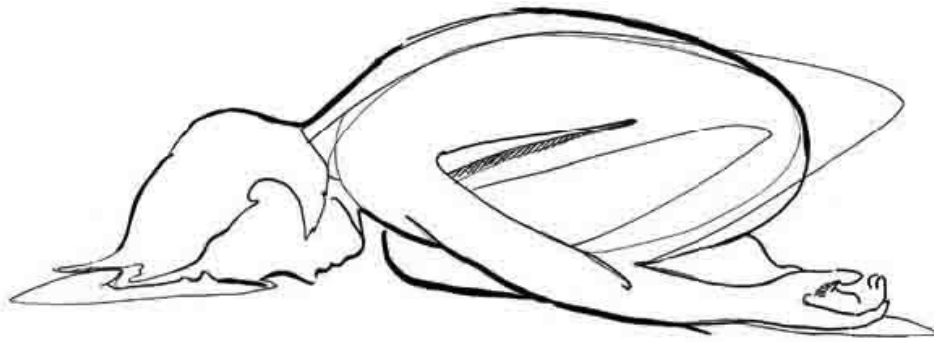
8. **Windshield Wipers**

1 minute



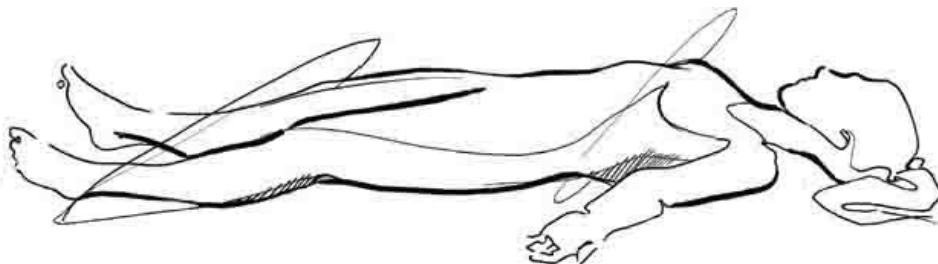
9. [Camel](#)

2 minutes



10. [Child's Pose](#)

1 minute



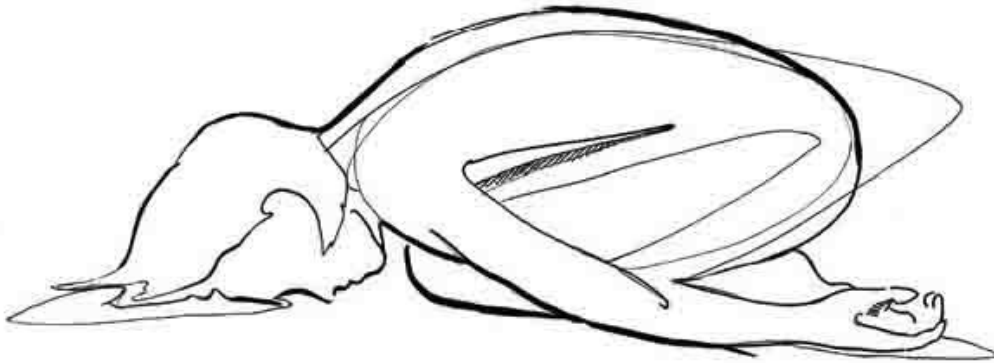
11. [Savasana](#)

7-10 minutes

Clear Focus

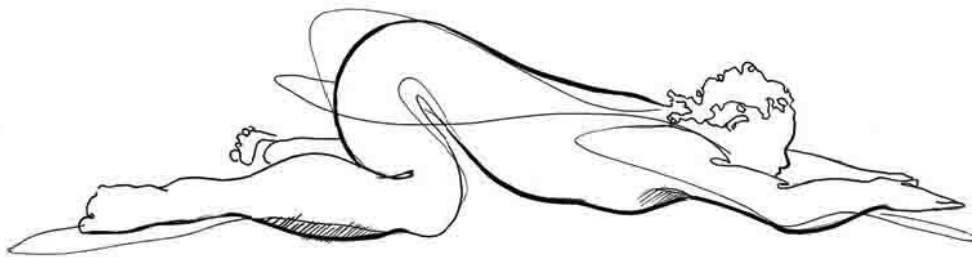
TIME: 45 minutes

If you're feeling forgetful or indecisive, or are just simply having a hard time processing your thoughts, this sequence will help center you. With an emphasis on the meridian line that affects the small intestine, these poses engage the arms, neck, shoulders, and back and release energy into these areas to dissolve mental and emotional cobwebs. Like after a light afternoon rain on a hot day, you'll feel refreshed, filled with vitality, and empowered by a clear focus.



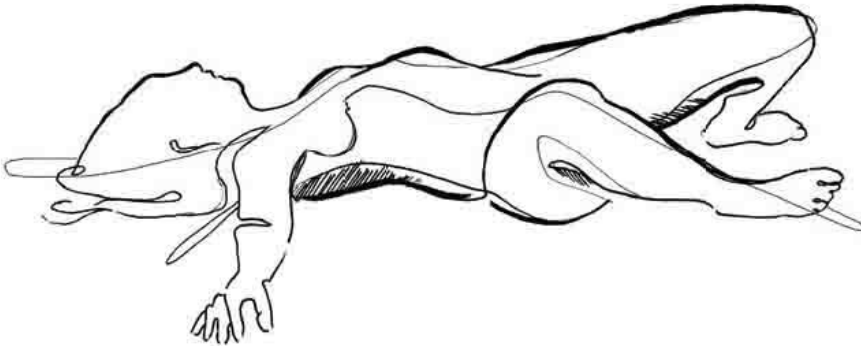
1. Child's Pose

5 minutes



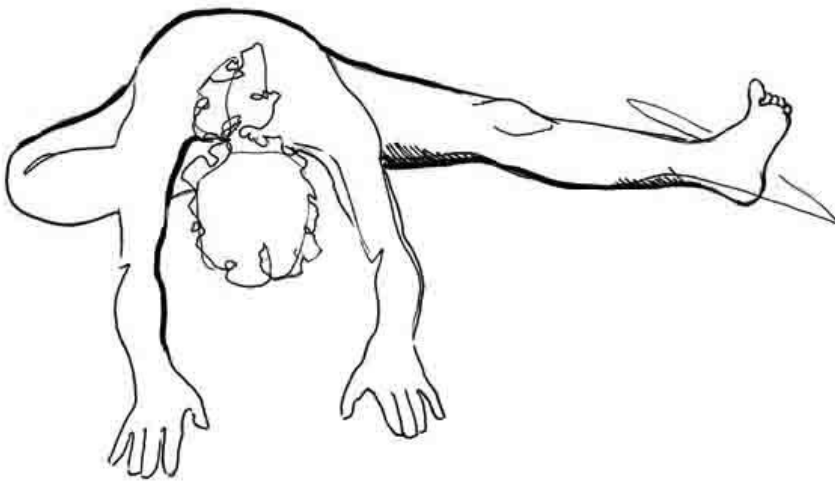
2. Frog

5 minutes



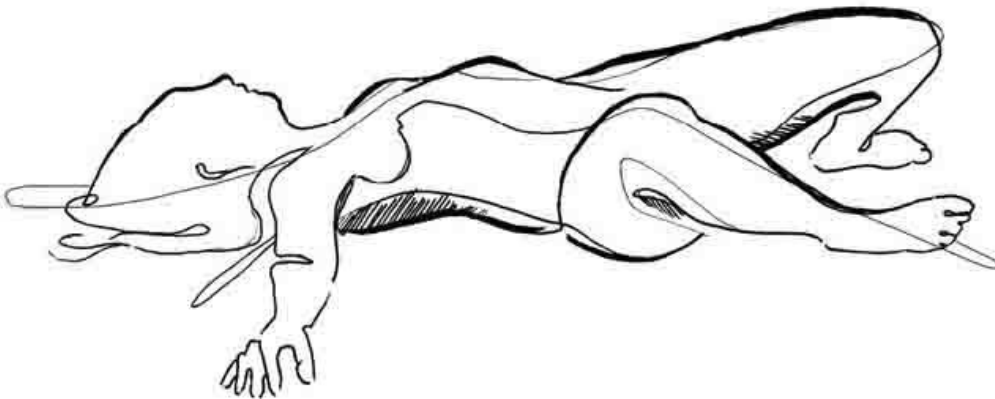
3. Windshield Wipers

1 minute



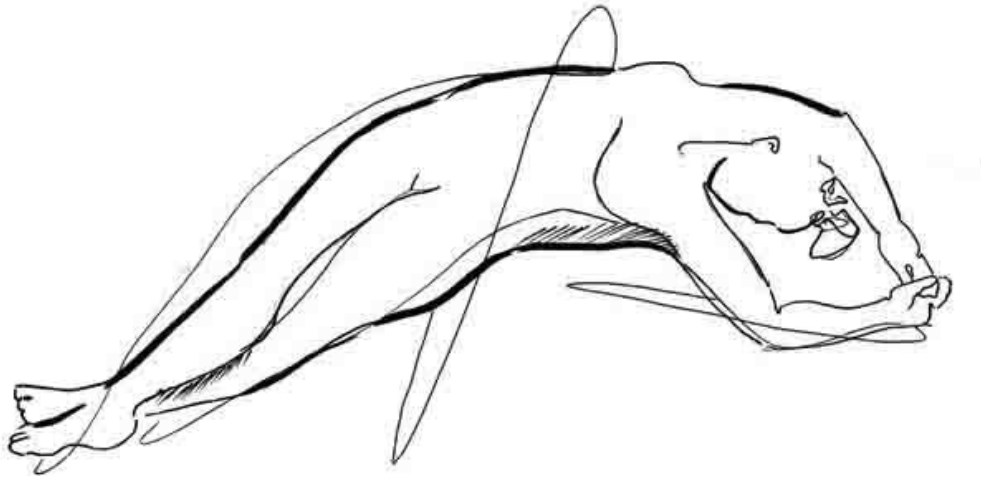
4. Half Butterfly

3 minutes each side



5. Windshield Wipers

1 minute



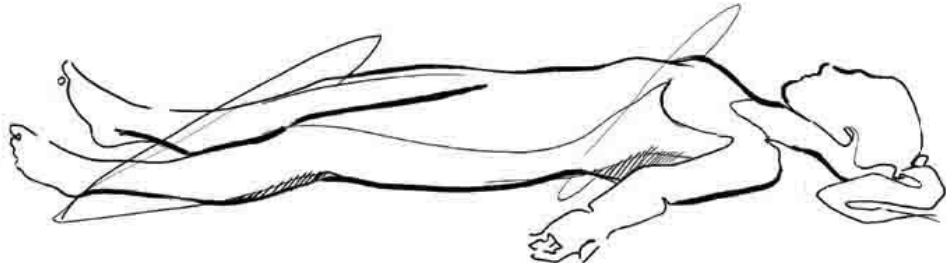
6. [Bananasana](#)

3 minutes each side



7. [Reclining Twist](#)

5 minutes each side



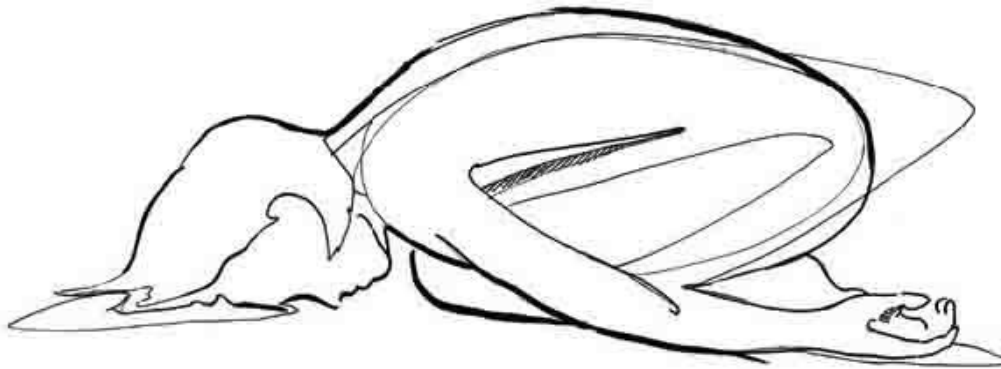
8. Savasana

8 minutes

Attitude Adjustment

TIME: 45 minutes

This yin sequence is what you need when you're irritable and in need of a positive energy shift. With the groin as the primary target area, these poses will open up any blocked energy in the liver meridian. The liver is responsible for filtering, detoxifying, and nourishing blood in the body, so if energy is not flowing effectively through that area, intense feelings will develop. These yin asanas will stimulate the groin, release any built-up tension in and around the liver, and calm your emotions.



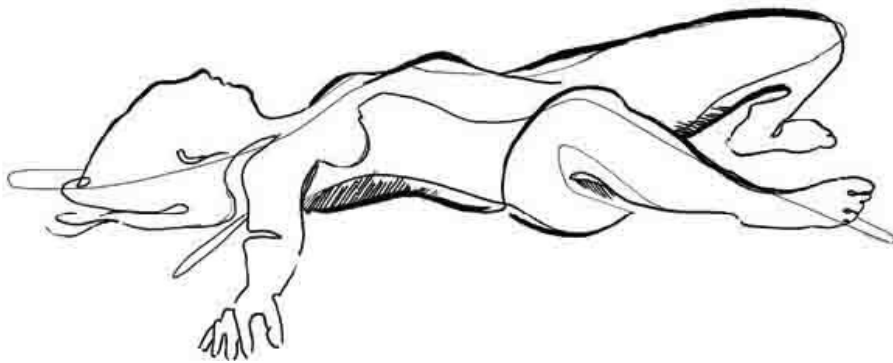
1. Child's Pose

1 minute



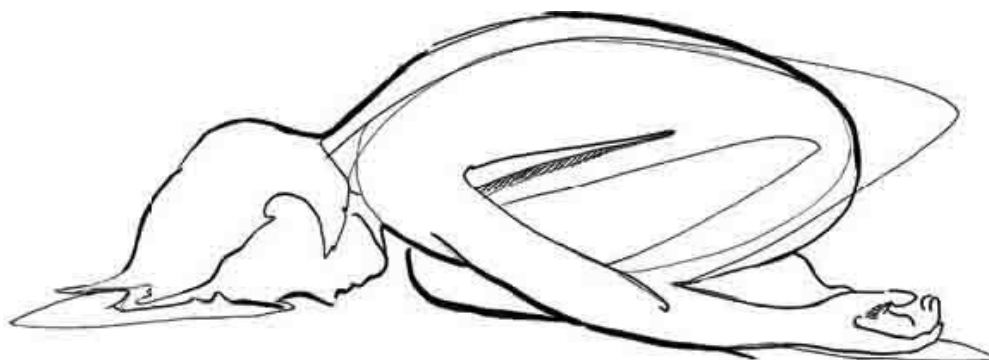
2. [Shoelace](#)

5 minutes each side



3. [Windshield Wipers](#)

1 minute



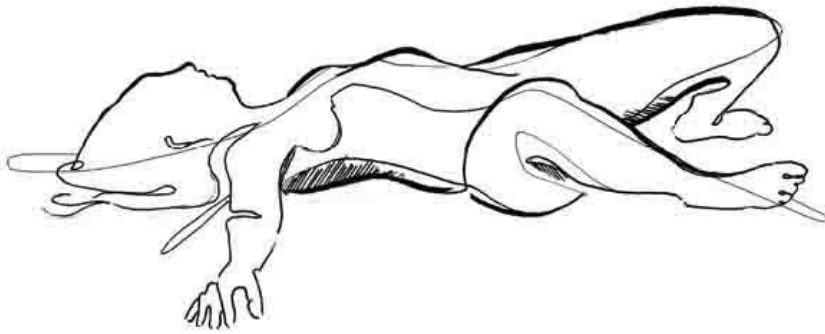
4. [Child's Pose](#)

3 minutes



5. [Square](#)

4 minutes each side



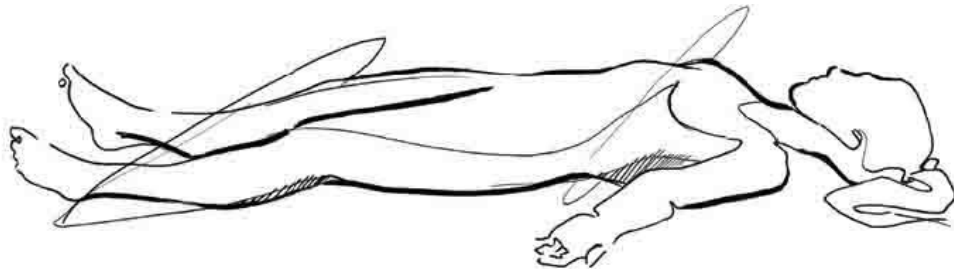
6. Windshield Wipers

1 minute



7. Reclining Twist

5 minutes each side



8. **Savasana**

7 minutes

The Anxiety Fix

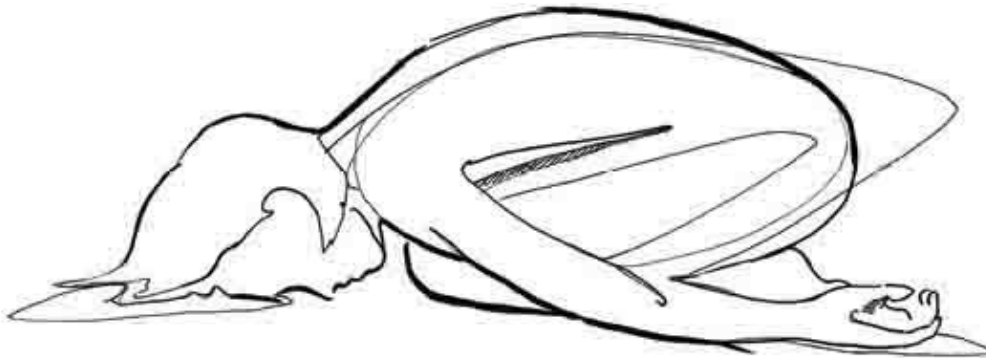
TIME: 45 minutes

This sequence is a wonderful remedy for anyone struggling with stress and anxiety. The yin poses in this sequence target the stomach meridian, which plays a vital role in managing our mental state. The long holds release energy through the legs, thighs, knees, and stomach so you'll feel nourished, supported, and energized enough to tackle everything that's on your to-do list. If you're not feeling too anxious at the end, enjoy a few minutes in [Savasana](#).



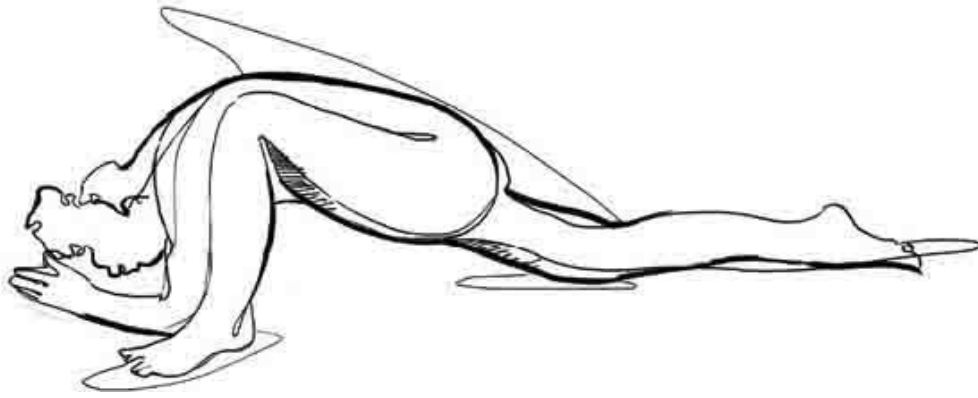
1. Melting Heart

3 minutes



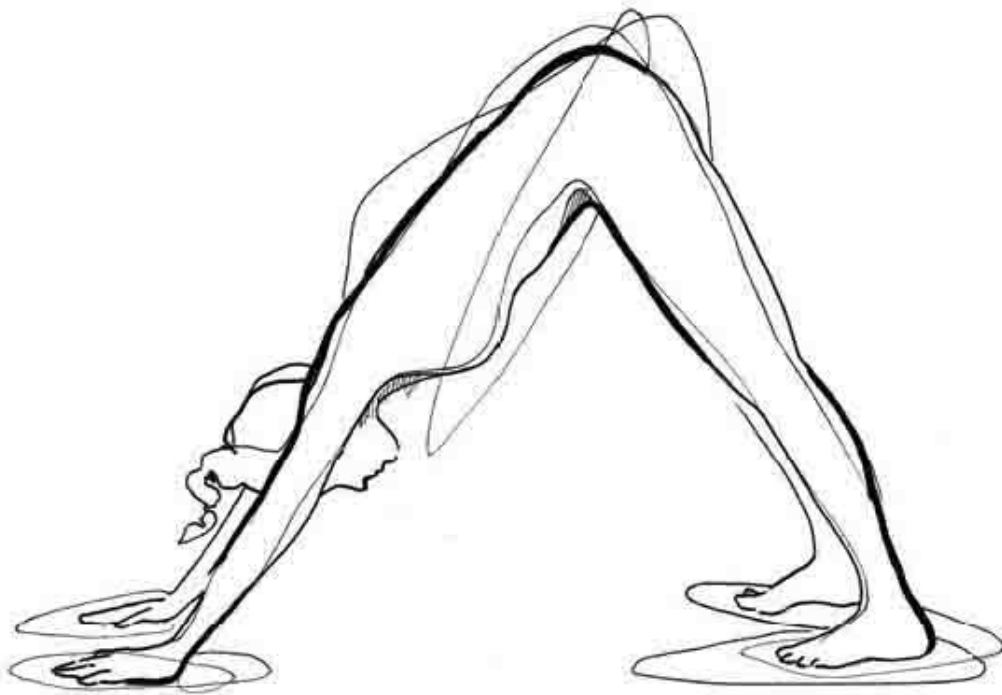
2. Child's Pose

2 minutes



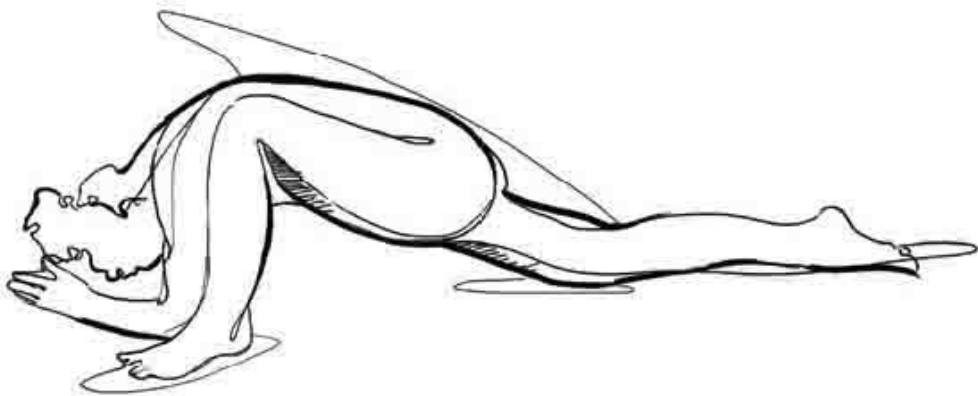
3. [Dragon](#)

5 minutes one side



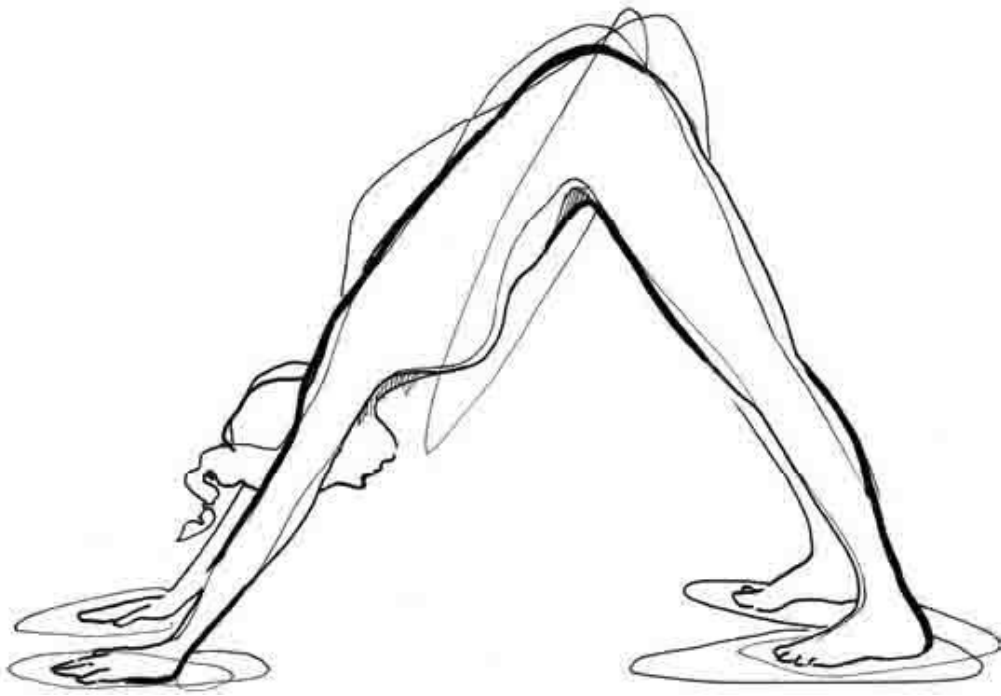
4. [Down Dog](#)

1 minute



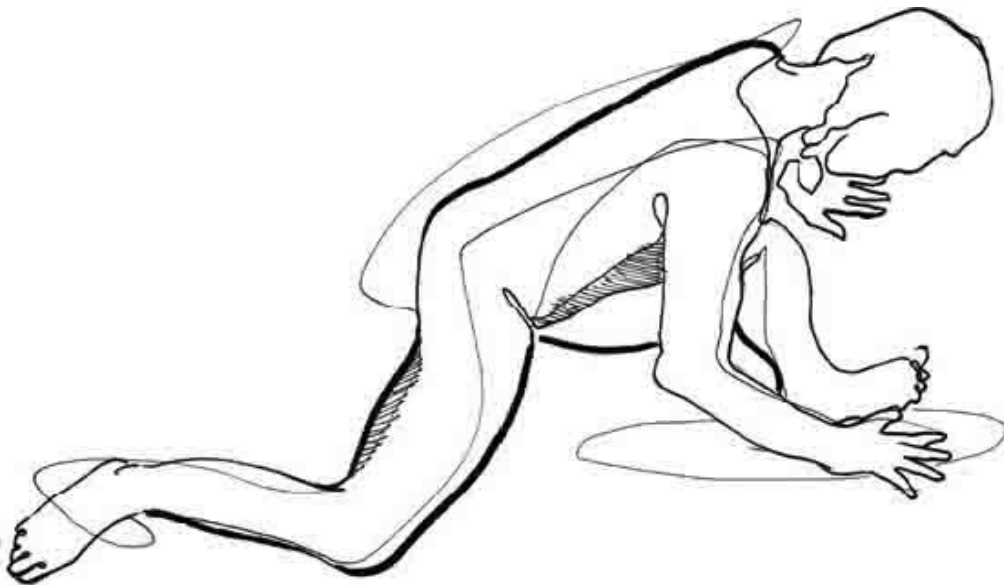
5. [Dragon](#)

5 minutes other side



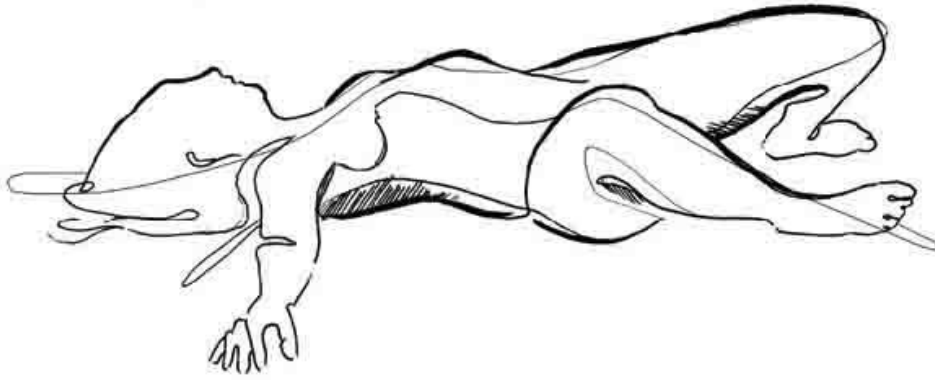
6. [Down Dog](#)

1 minute



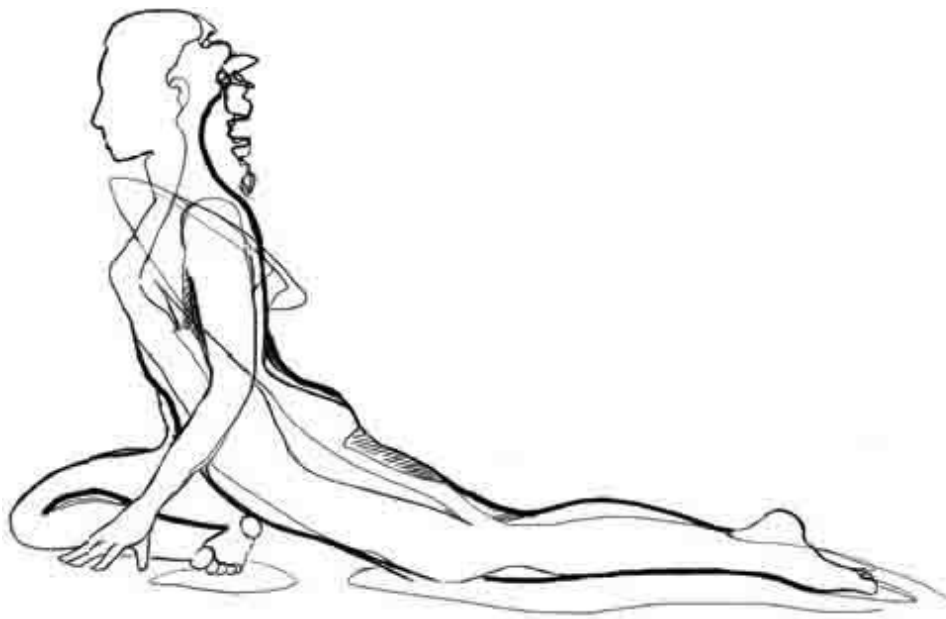
7. [Deer](#)

3 minutes each side



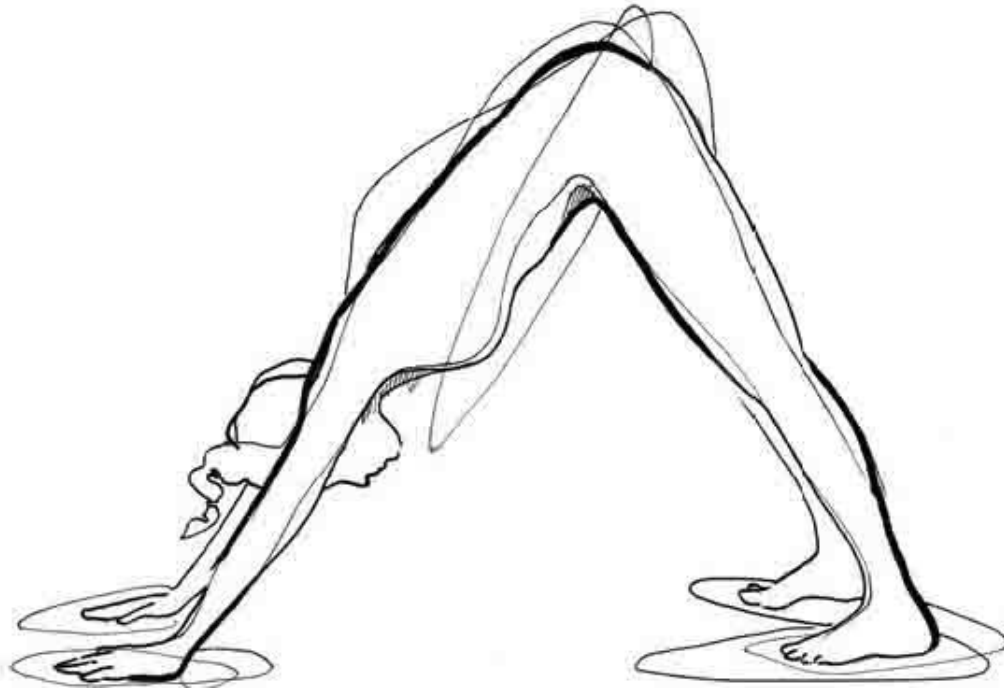
8. Windshield Wipers

1 minute



9. Swan

4 minutes one side



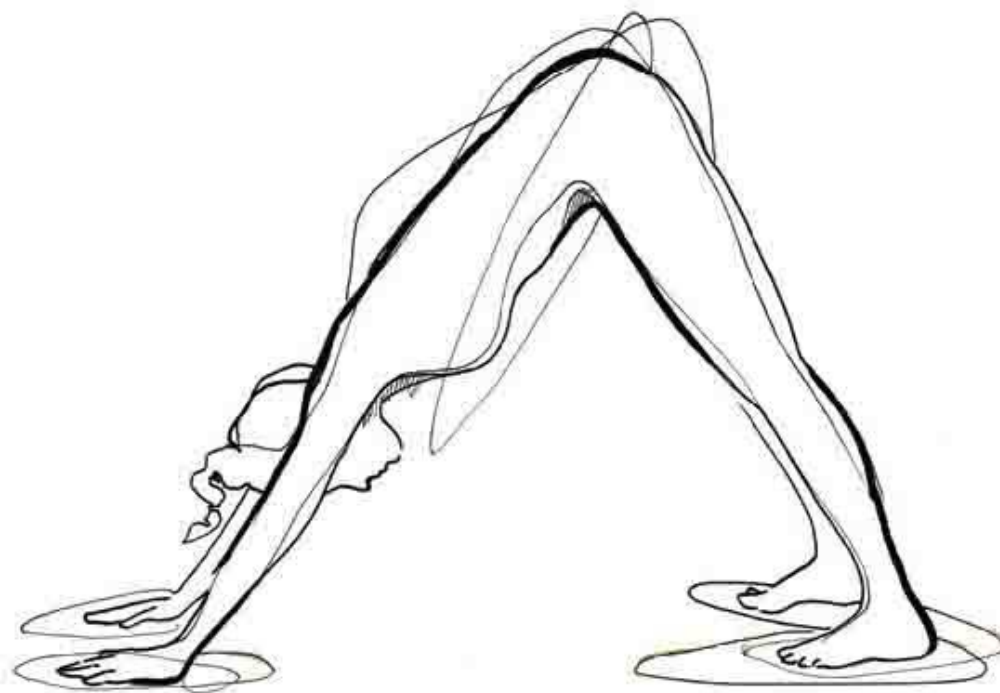
10. [Down Dog](#)

1 minute



11. [Swan](#)

4 minutes other side



12. [Down Dog](#)

1 minute

Energetic Cooldown

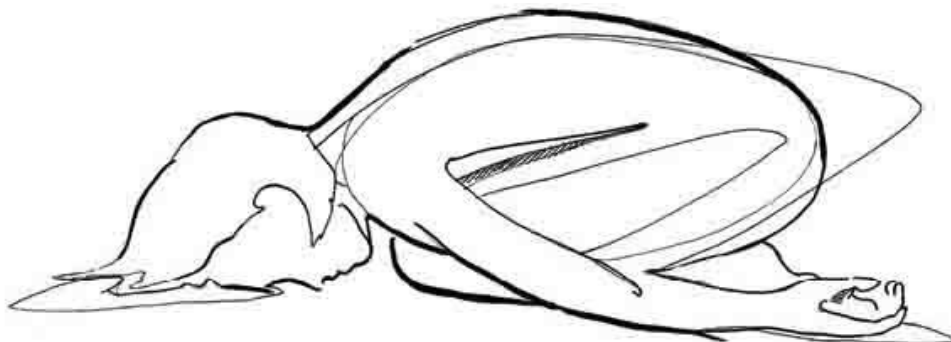
TIME: 20 minutes

This quick energy-boosting sequence works the spine and the hips. It's an easy practice that is great for beginner yin yoga practitioners learning to play with their edges. It also works well as a cooldown from a high-intensity workout at the gym or a power yoga sequence.



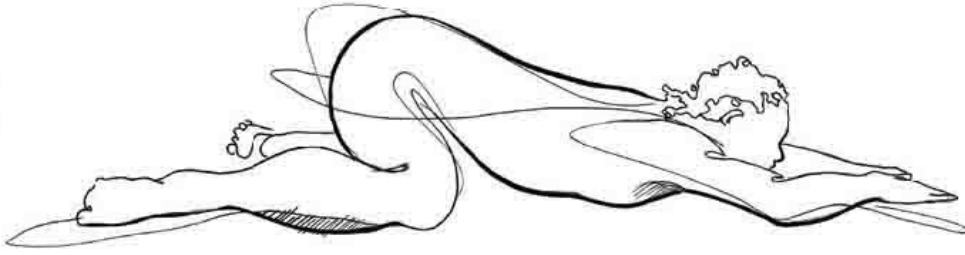
1. Toe Squat

2 minutes



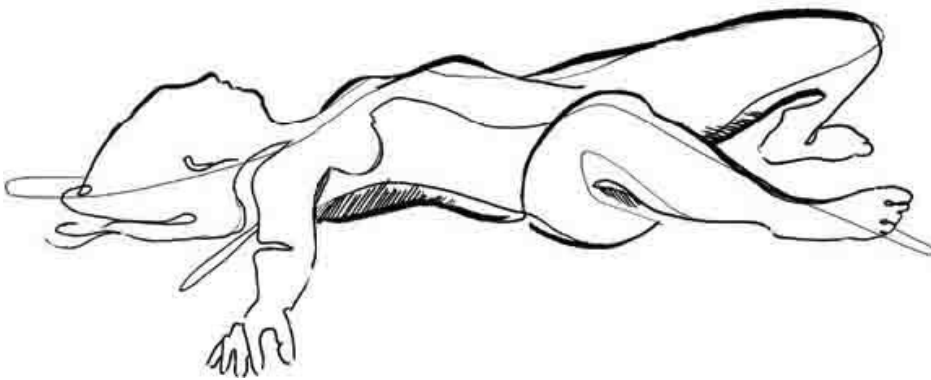
2. [Child's Pose](#)

3 minutes



3. [Frog](#)

4 minutes



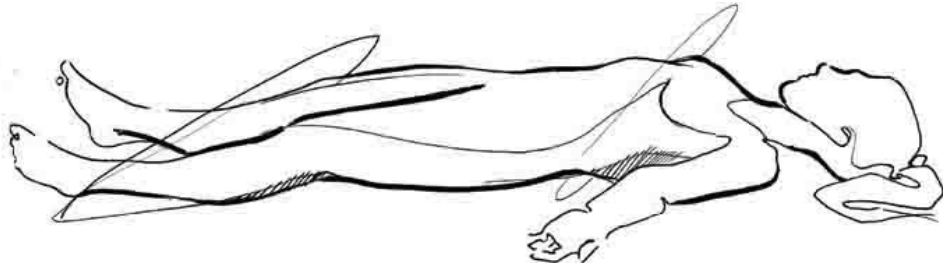
4. [Windshield Wipers](#)

1 minute



5. [Happy Baby](#)

3 minutes



6. Savasana

5 minutes

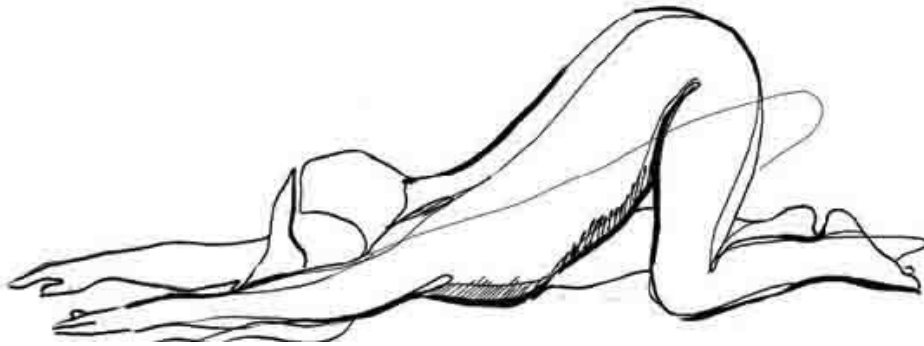
GROUNDING

As our lives get busier and busier, it is important to replenish our energy stores in order to foster a sense of harmony within ourselves and with the world around us. The sequences in this chapter will help you use your yin yoga practice to nourish the body while also nurturing the mind. The suggested total practice times for each sequence include time for transitioning between these grounding poses.

Whole Self-Care

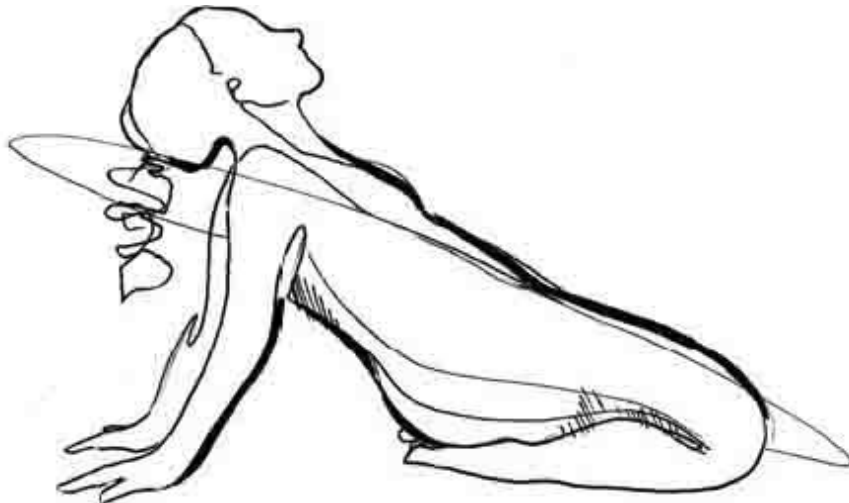
TIME: 40 minutes

This sequence targets the entire body and affects each of the 12 meridians and the organs they supply. You'll explore your edges while engaging in total body care as you stress the connective tissues surrounding all your muscles, releasing qi from the bottoms of your feet to the top of your head. To work the heart and lung meridians in Saddle, take the arms overhead.



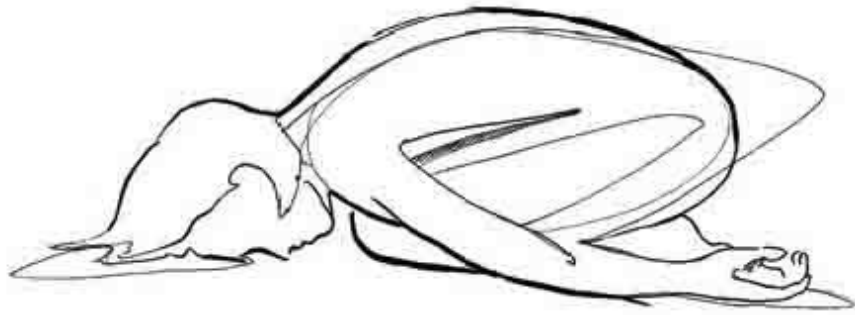
1. Melting Heart

2 minutes



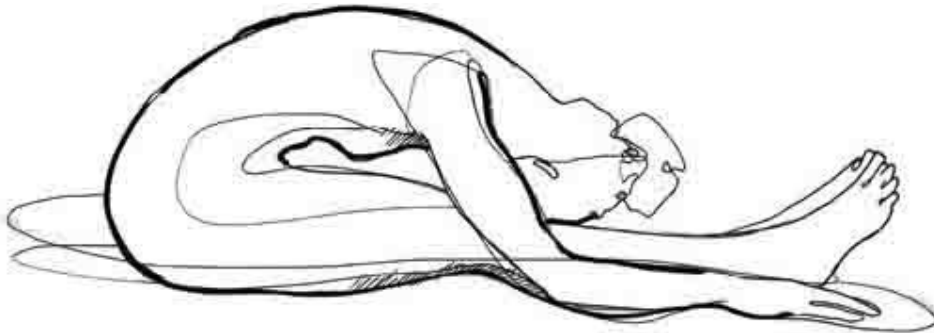
2. Saddle

6 minutes



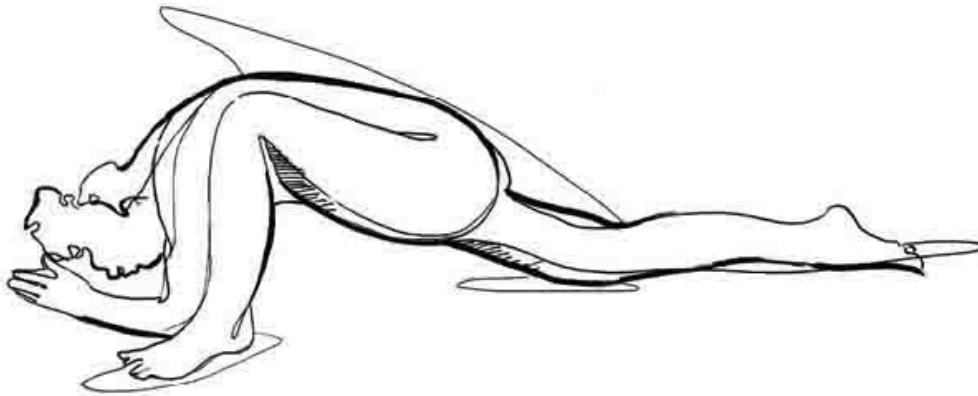
3. [Child's Pose](#)

1 minute



4. [Caterpillar](#)

4 minutes



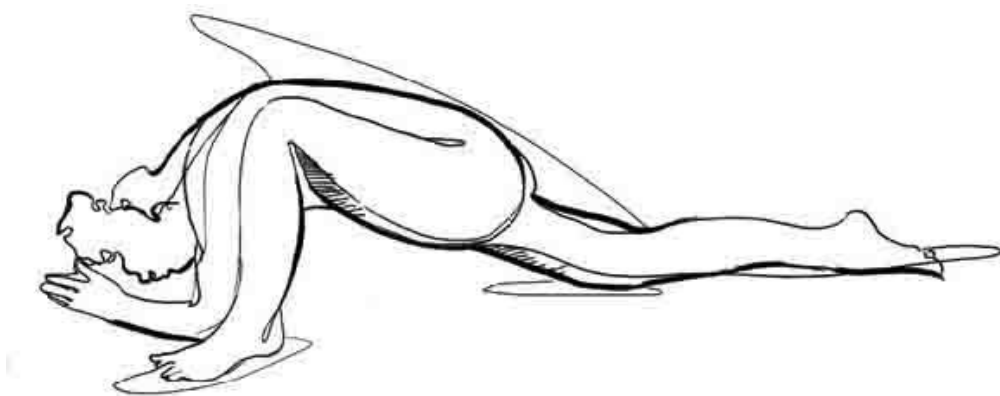
5. [Dragon](#)

3 minutes one side



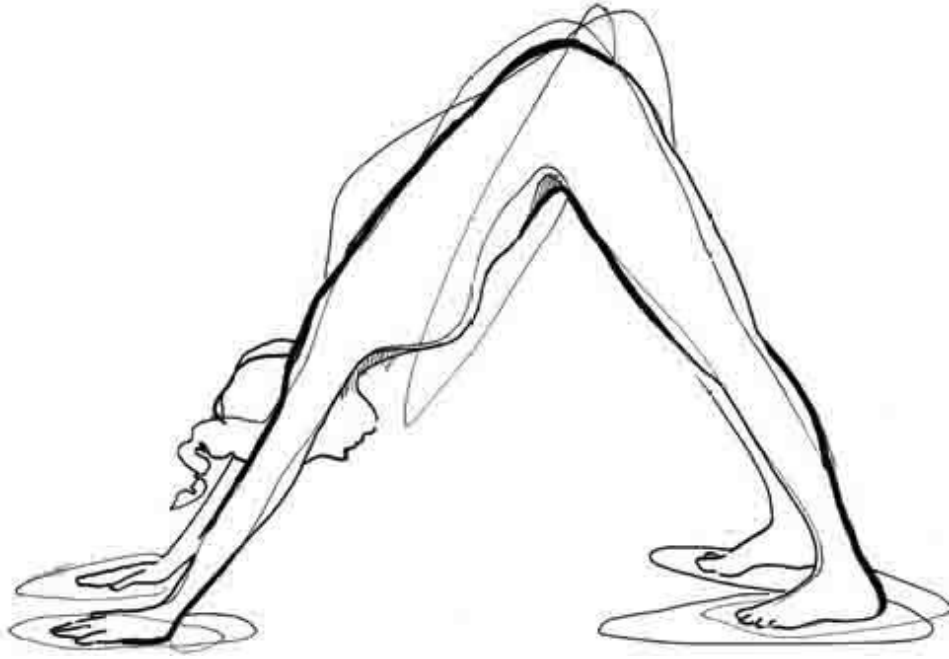
6. [Down Dog](#)

1 minute



7. [Dragon](#)

3 minutes other side



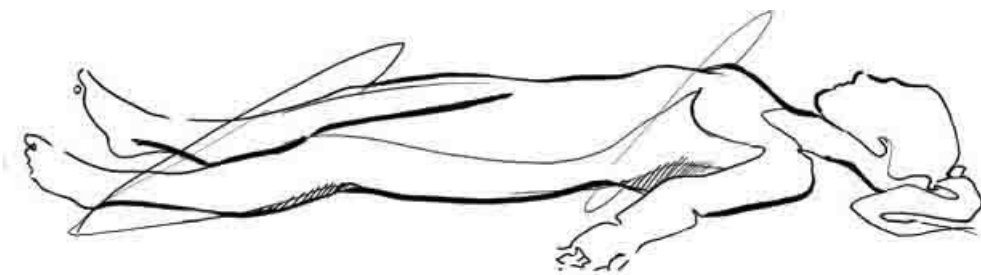
8. **Down Dog**

1 minute



9. [Reclining Twist](#)

3 minutes each side



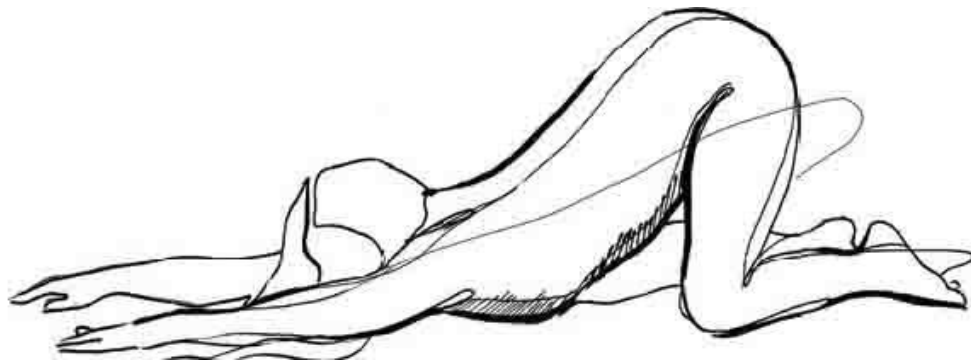
10. [Savasana](#)

7 minutes

Restore and Repair

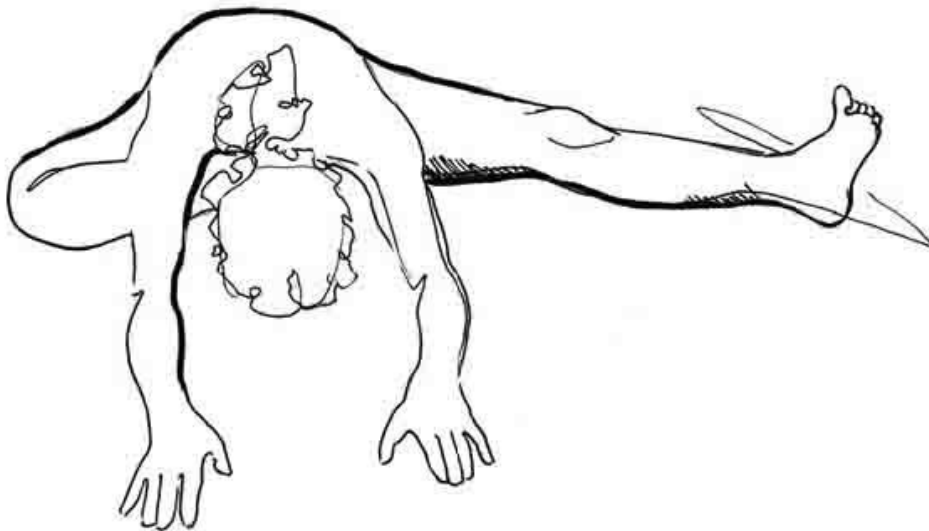
TIME: 45 minutes

This sequence is an opportunity to go deeper inward as your body indulges in restorative yin poses. Your spirit will be calmed and grounded, while the long holds stress the connective tissues and begin the process of resting overtaxed muscles and restoring an overburdened spirit.



1. Melting Heart

5 minutes



2. Half Butterfly

3 minutes each side



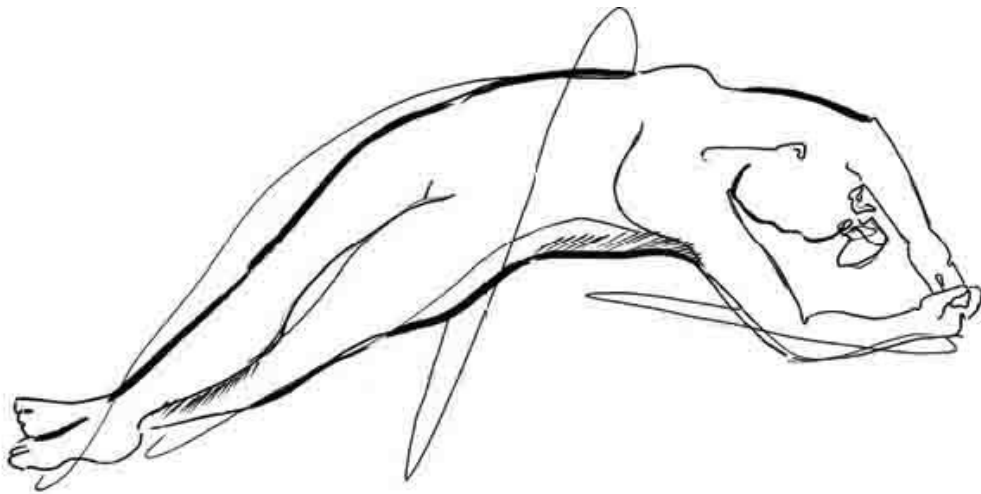
3. [Deer](#)

5 minutes each side



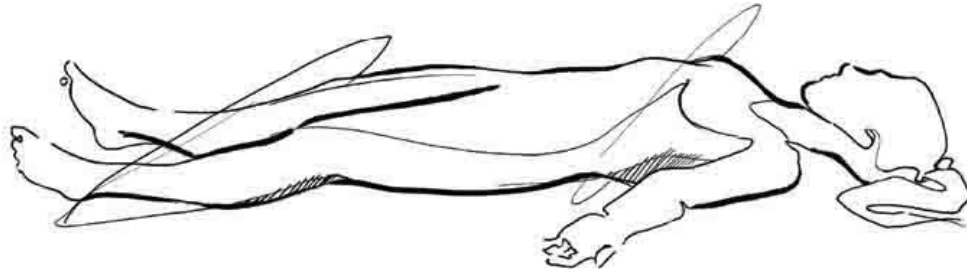
4. [Child's Pose](#)

3 minutes



5. [Bananasana](#)

4 minutes each side



6. Savasana

10 minutes

Deep Relaxation

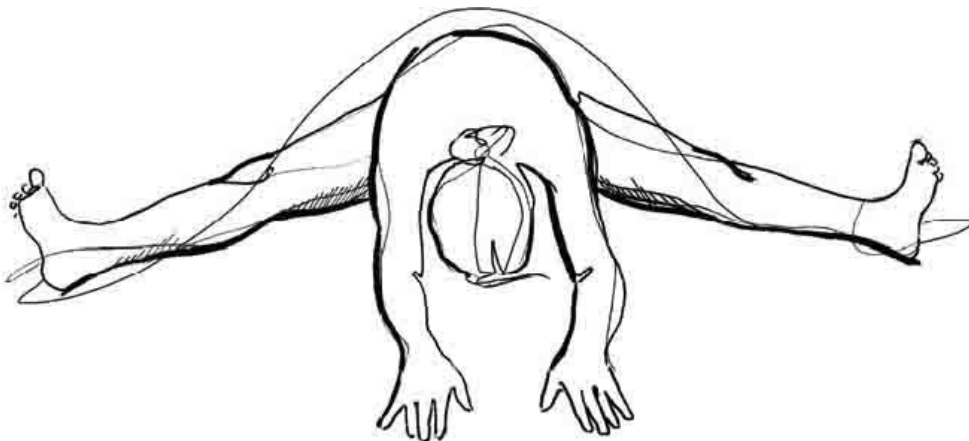
TIME: 20+ minutes

There's only one prop you'll need in order to maximize the pleasure of this amazingly relaxing sequence: a spacious wall. Explore a different perspective on these yin postures by turning them and yourself upside down. With no predetermined hold times, you can decide how long you want your holds to be. For each posture, come down to the floor. Bring the lower body as close to the wall as possible, then take your legs up the wall, changing their position depending on which pose you do. You can add to the atmosphere by listening to some of your favorite tunes. Try this sequence before bed and notice how easy it is to drift off to sleep afterward.



1. Caterpillar

Yogi's choice



2. Straddle

Yogi's choice



3. [Butterfly](#)

Yogi's choice

Peacefully Content

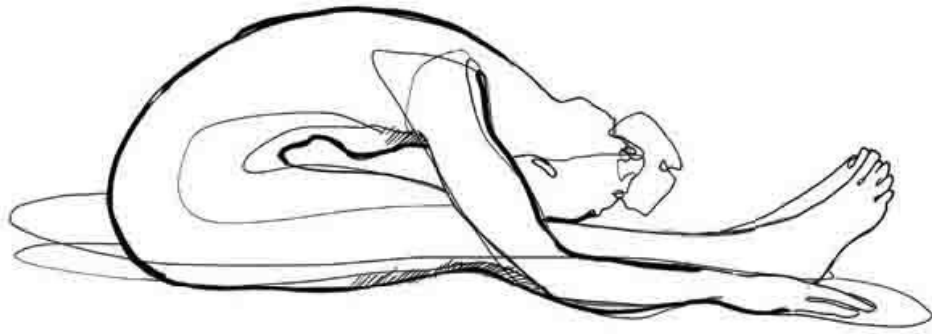
TIME: 40 minutes

You will feel hopeful, calm, and peaceful after you do this satisfyingly grounding yin sequence. With poses that affect the urinary bladder meridian, you'll spend your practice stimulating and nourishing the kidneys and the bladder by moving the spine into forward and backward bends. The flexion and extension of the spine induces a relaxation response, encouraging your autonomic nervous system to switch to the rest and digest mode of the parasympathetic nervous system. Enhance the calming aspects of this sequence by engaging in your *Ujjayi*, or Ocean Breath.



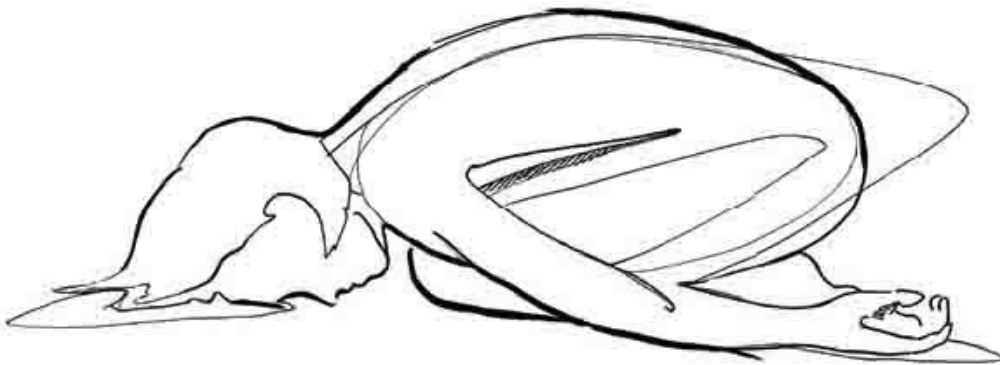
1. Squat

2 minutes



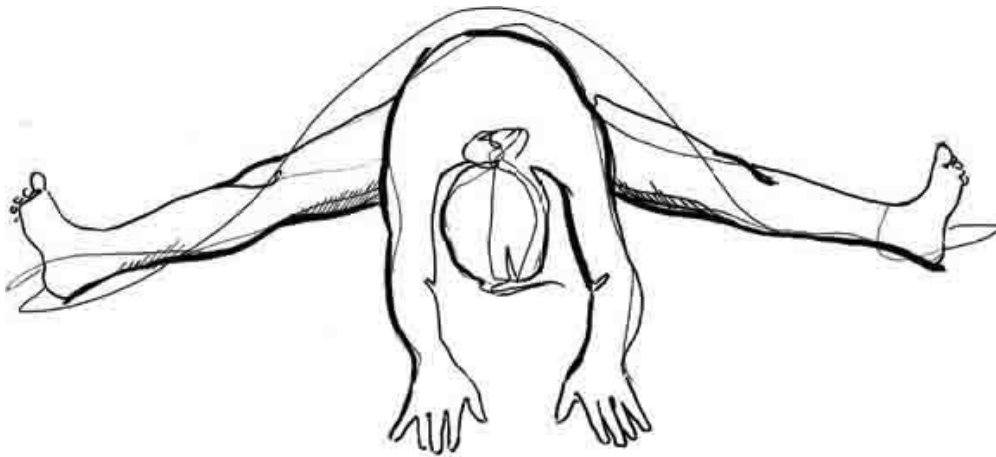
2. [Caterpillar](#)

5 minutes



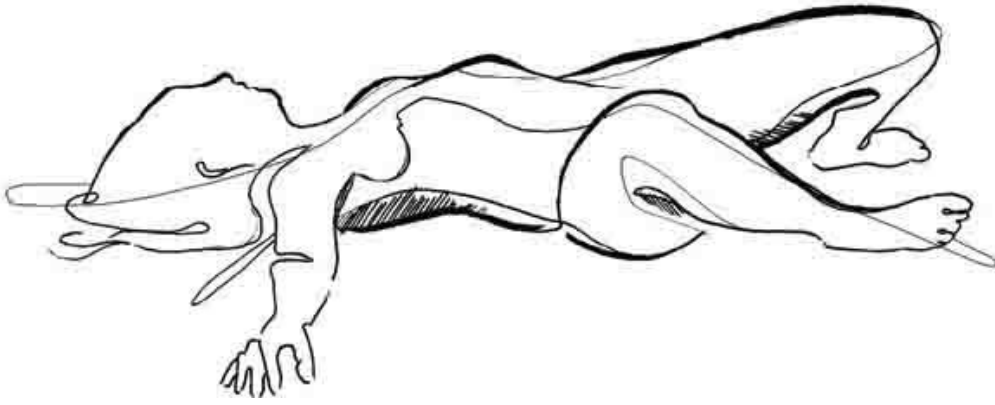
3. [Child's Pose](#)

3 minutes



4. [Straddle](#)

5 minutes



5. [Windshield Wipers](#)

1 minute



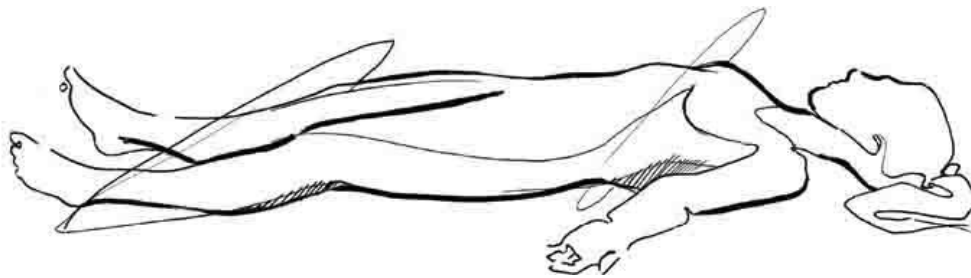
6. [Happy Baby](#)

3 minutes



7. **Reclining Twist**

4 minutes each side



8. **Savasana**

10 minutes

Strong and Sound

TIME: 45 minutes

This yin sequence stimulates the gallbladder and liver meridian lines with poses that target the outer legs, hips, and torso. The smooth flow of qi to the gallbladder and liver helps regulate blood flow and digestion and boosts decision-making ability. Several of these poses involve the external rotation of the femur in the hip socket, so if you have knee issues, be mindful of bringing the foot of the externally rotated leg closer to the groin, or add a block, cushion, or blanket under your knees for more support.



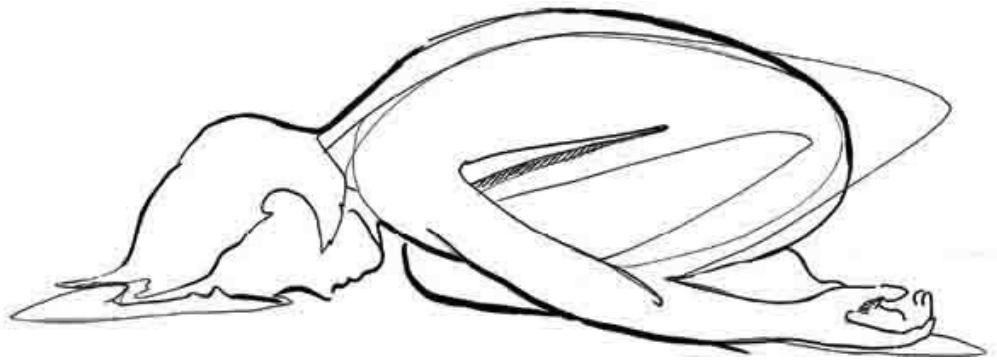
1. Butterfly

3 minutes



2. [Swan](#)

3 minutes one side



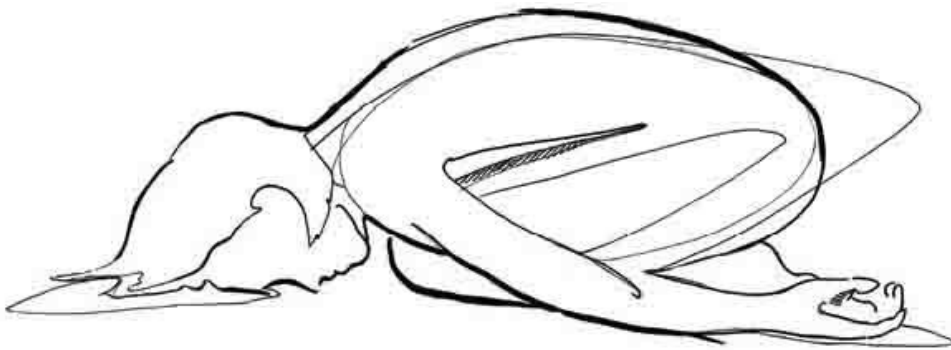
3. [Child's Pose](#)

1 minute



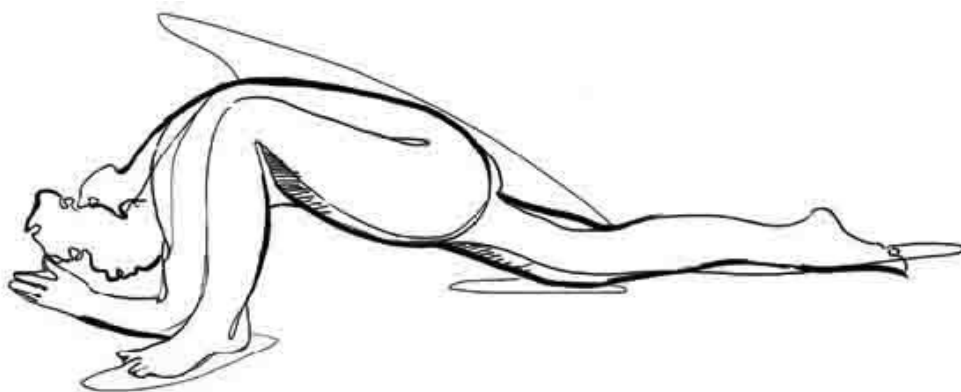
4. [Swan](#)

3 minutes other side



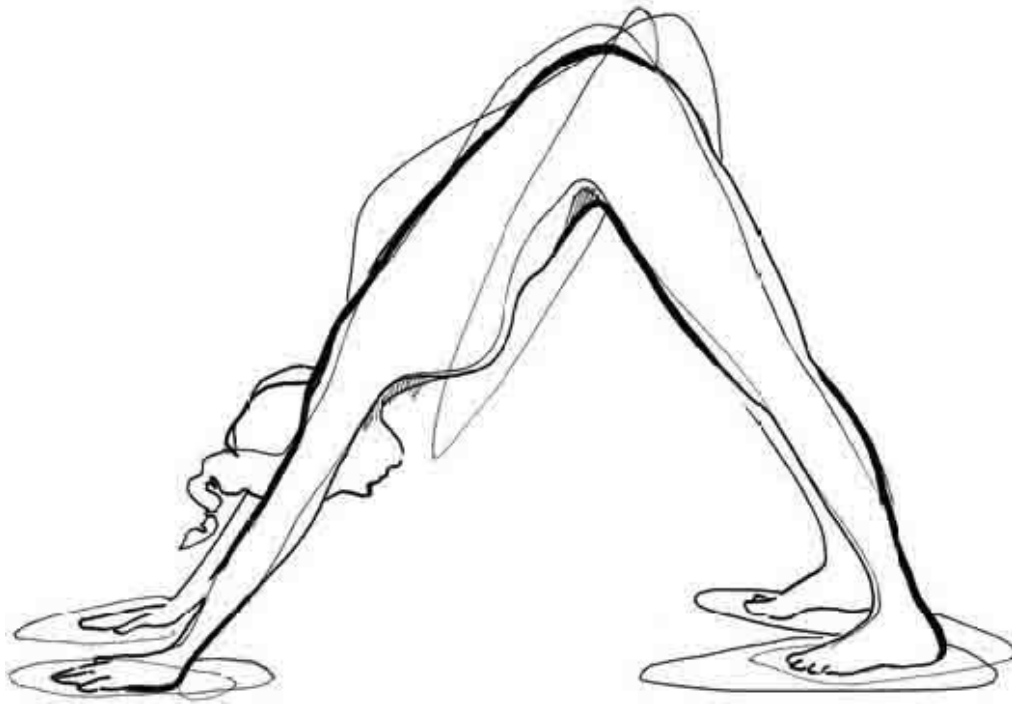
5. [Child's Pose](#)

1 minute



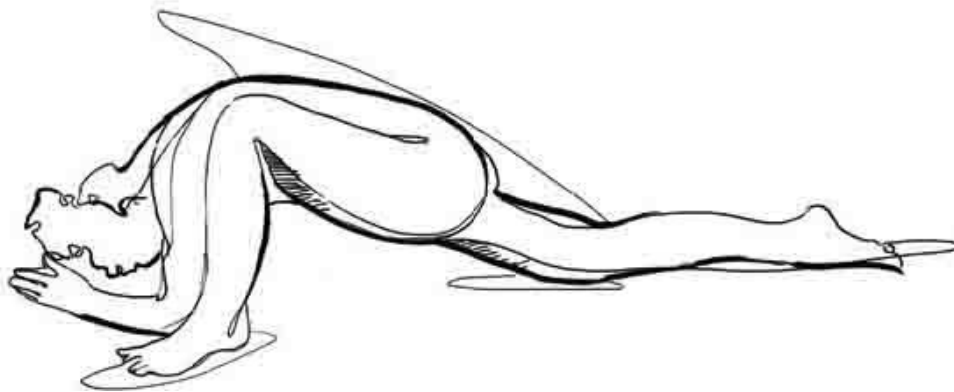
6. [Dragon](#)

3 minutes one side



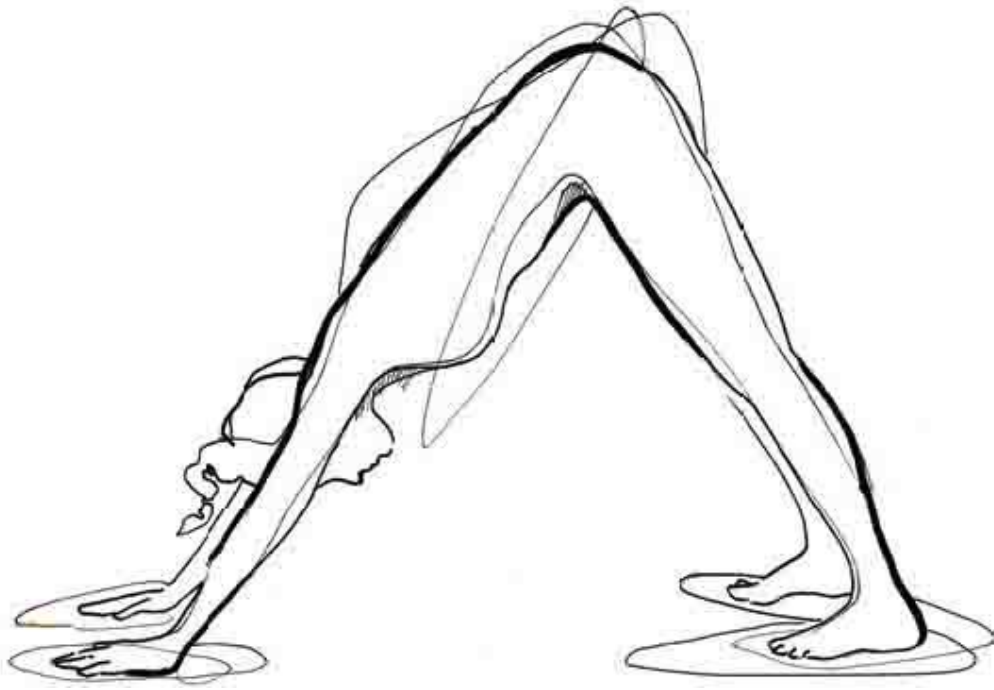
7. **Down Dog**

1 minute



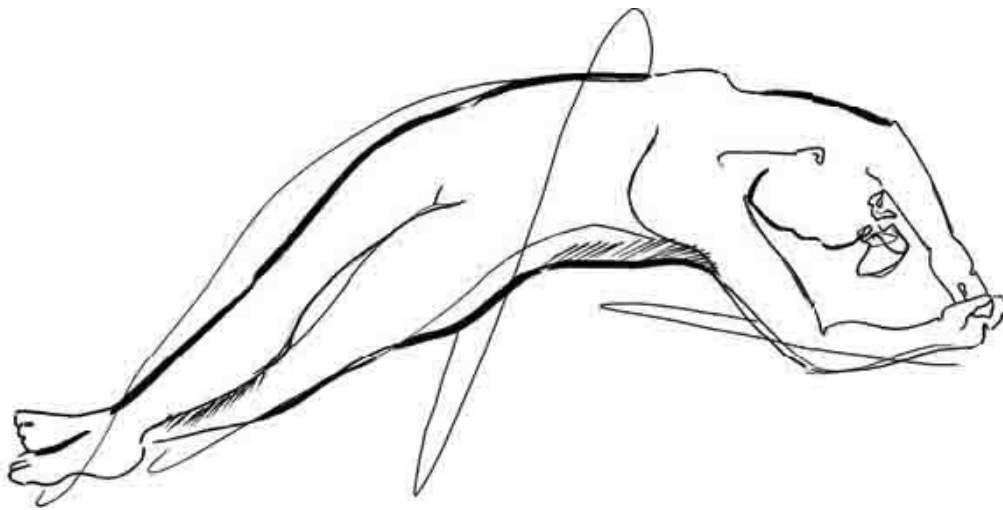
8. **Dragon**

3 minutes other side



9. [Down Dog](#)

1 minute



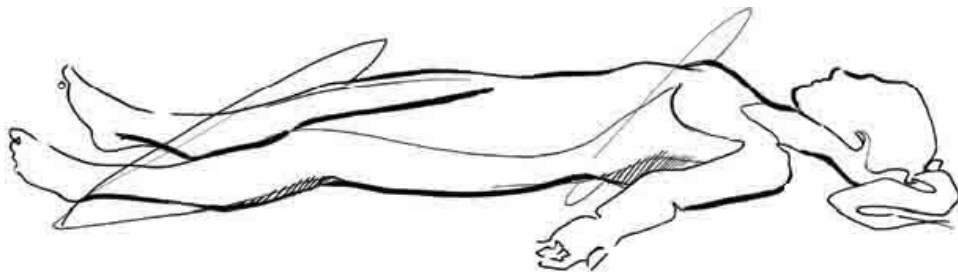
10. [Bananasana](#)

3 minutes each side



11 . [Reclining Twist](#)

3 minutes each side



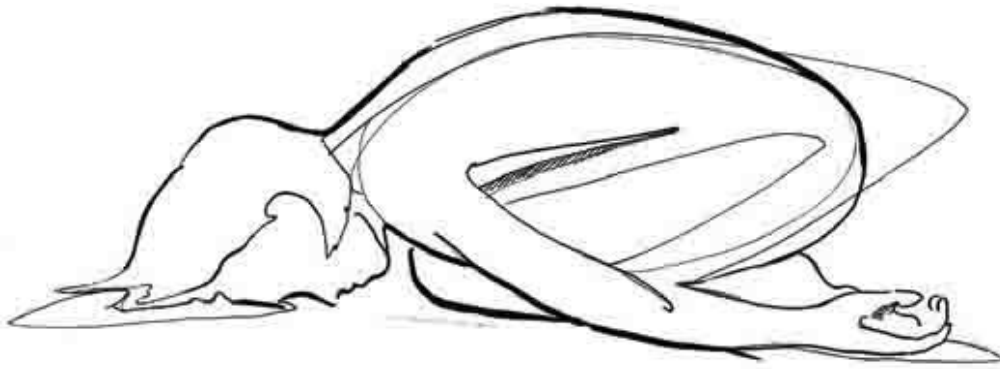
12 . [Savasana](#)

7 minutes

Belly Balanced

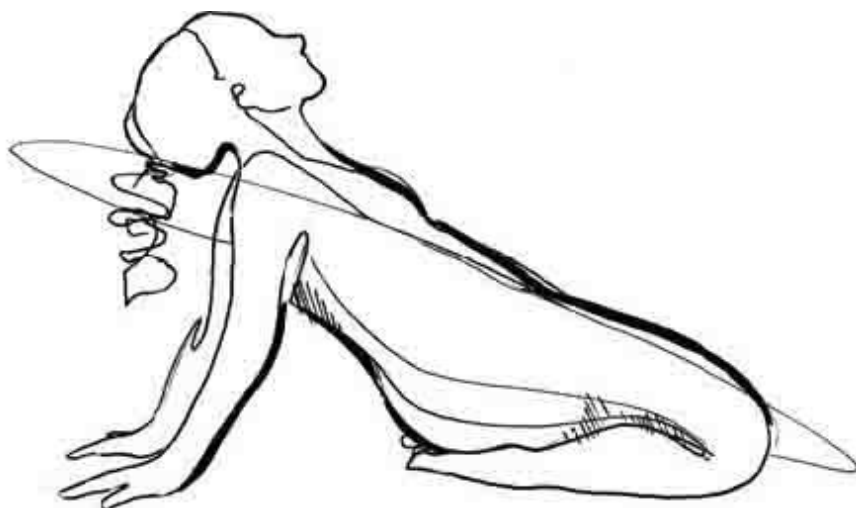
TIME: 45 minutes

This grounding yin sequence includes poses that target the legs, inner thighs, and knees. These poses stress the connective tissue in the tops of the legs and inside the knees, as well as stretch and compress the stomach. This sequence also includes hip and spinal extensions, which release qi through the stomach meridian line to the spleen. This organ cleanses and nourishes your blood and aids in feelings of balance, trust, acceptance, and impartiality.



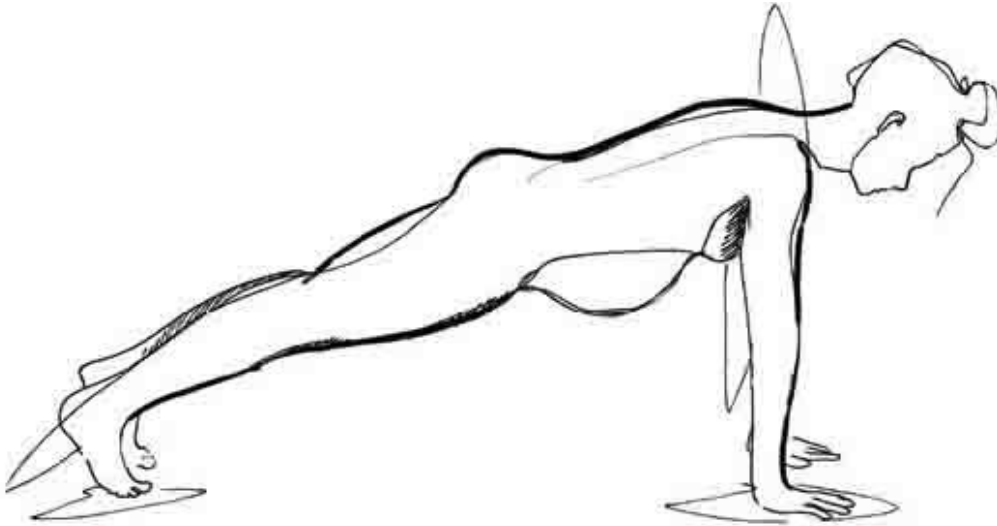
1. Child's Pose

3 minutes



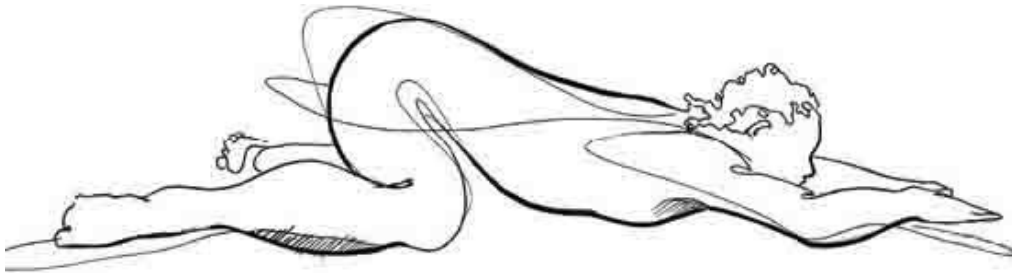
2. Saddle

4 minutes



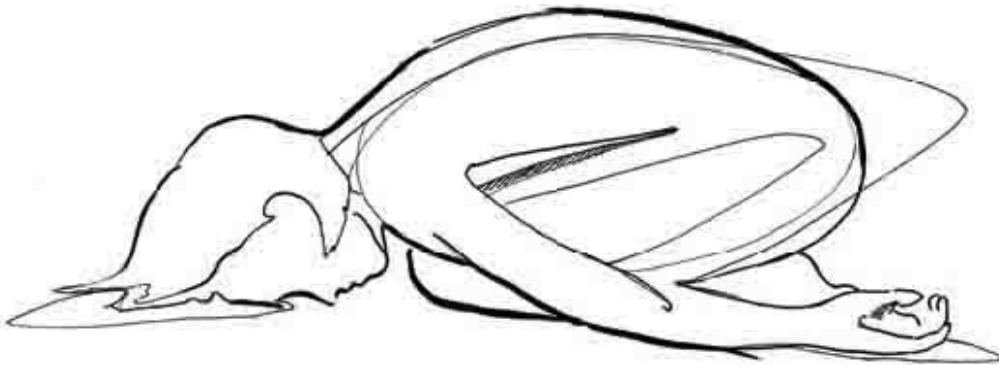
3. [Crocodile](#)

1 minute or 3 repetitions



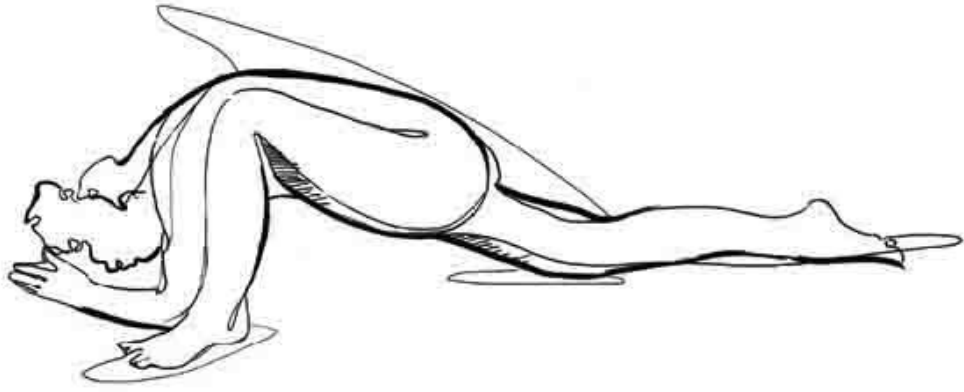
4. [Frog](#)

5 minutes



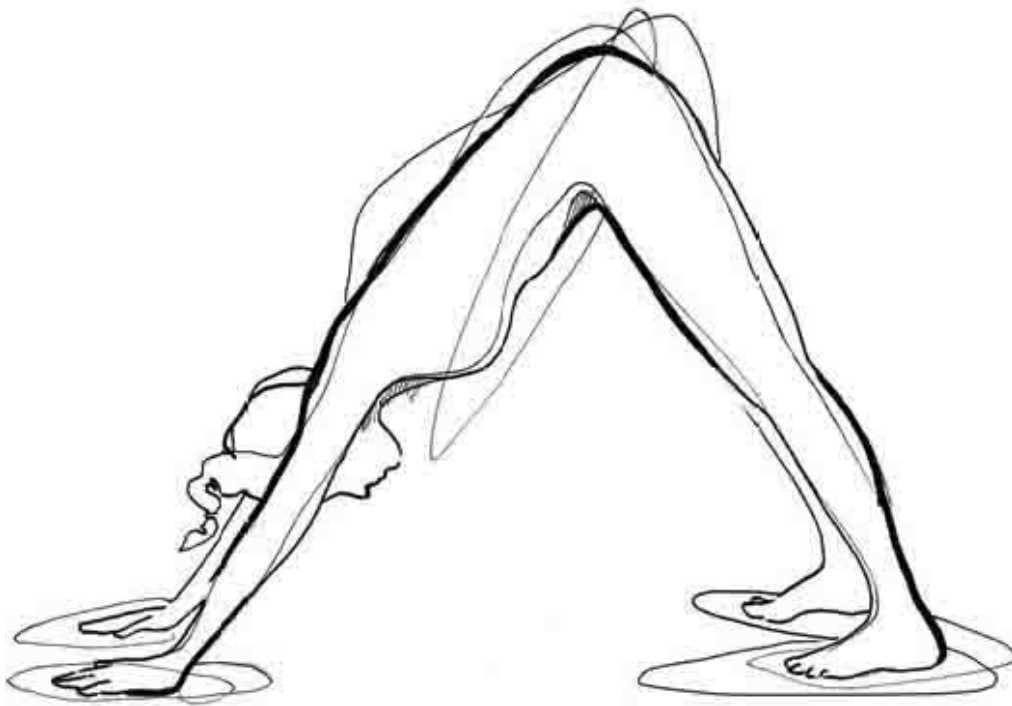
5. [Child's Pose](#)

2 minutes



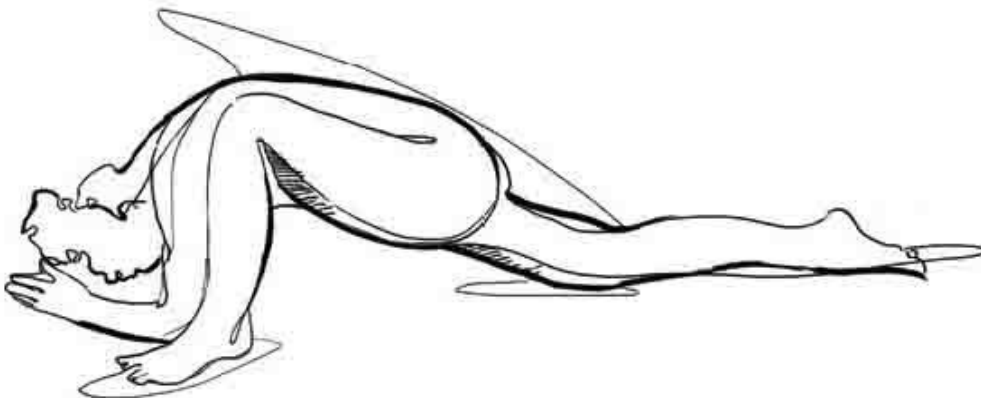
6. Dragon

4 minutes one side



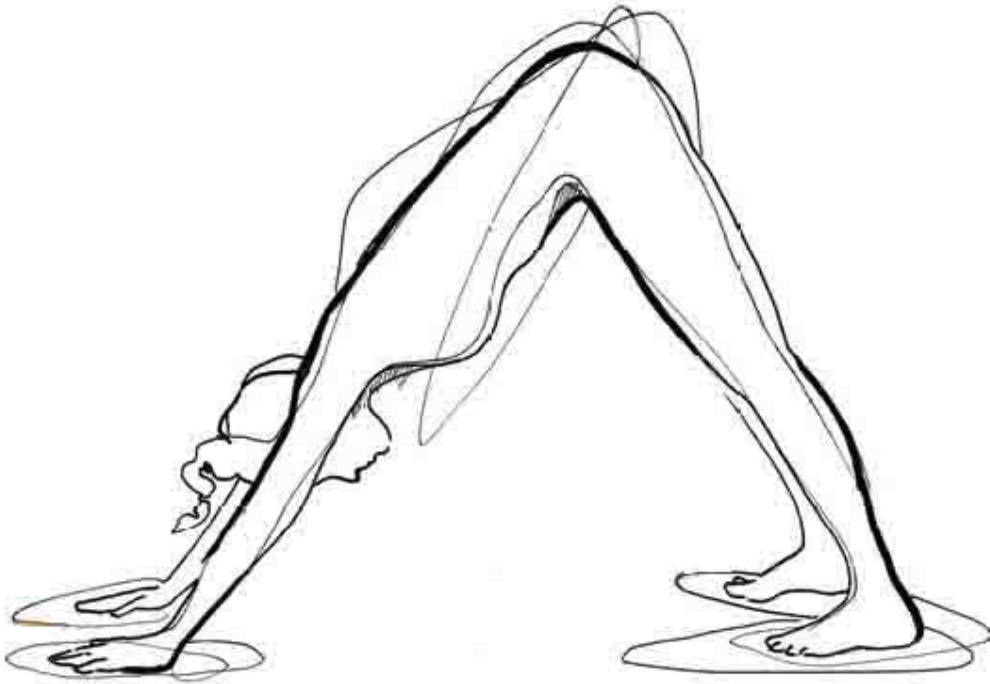
7. Down Dog

1 minute



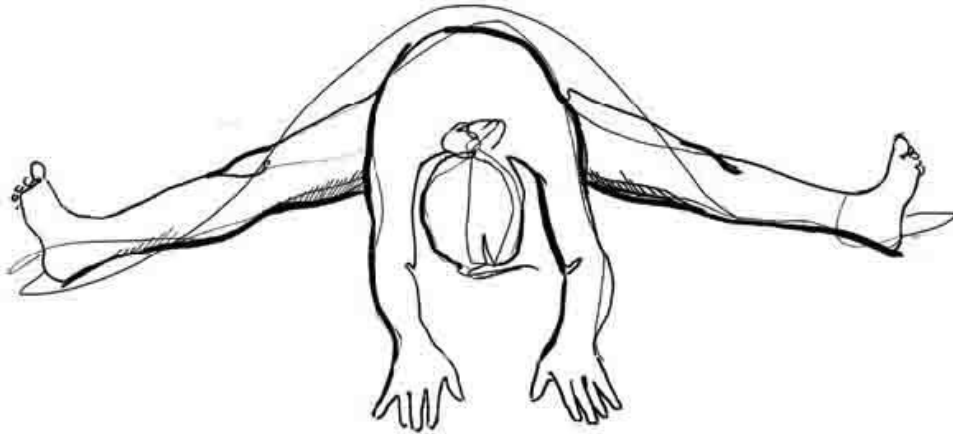
8. [Dragon](#)

4 minutes other side



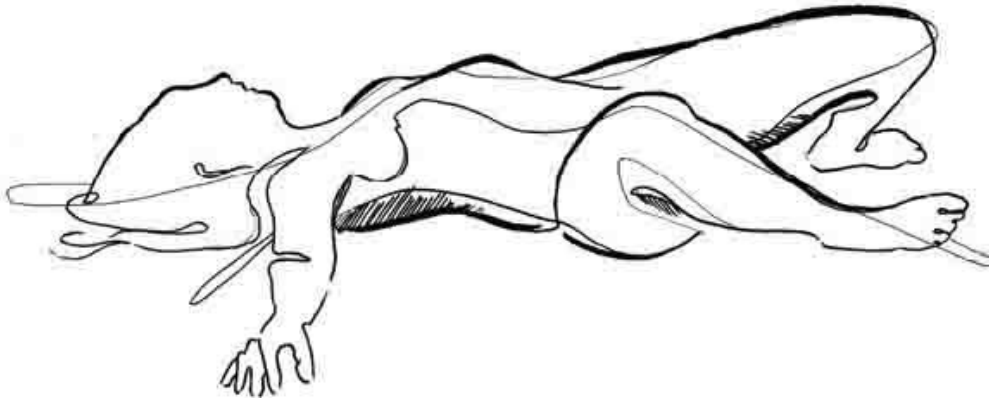
9. [Down Dog](#)

1 minute



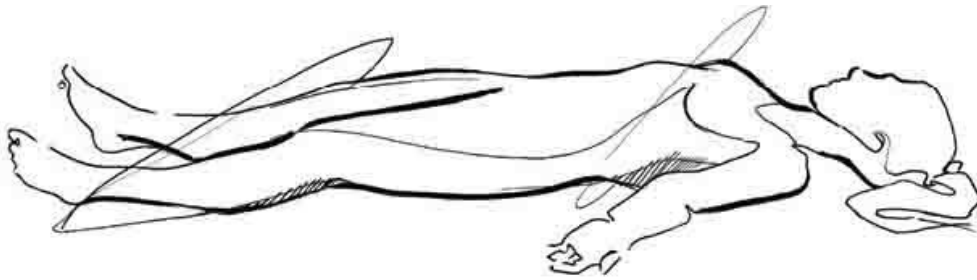
10. [Straddle](#)

4 minutes



11 . [Windshield Wipers](#)

1 minute



12 . [Savasana](#)

8 minutes

Root Chakra

TIME: 45 minutes

There is no greater balancing sequence than one that targets the root (first) chakra, also known as the muladhara. Located at the coccyx, or the base of the spine, this foundational chakra is associated with groundedness, stability, and security. This yin sequence engages the root chakra with holds that stress the feet, legs, and pelvis, with an emphasis on surrendering to the earth.



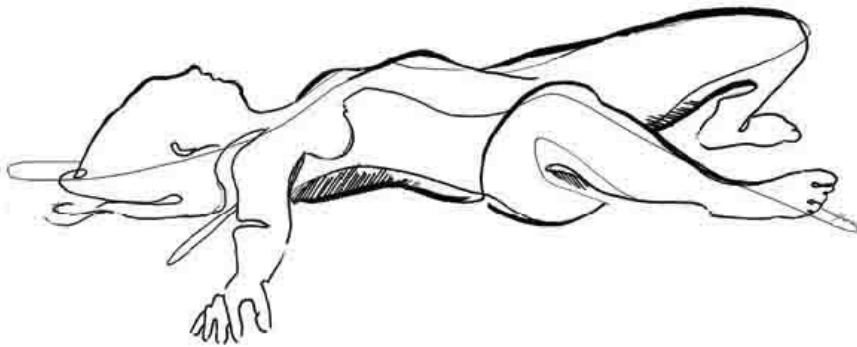
1. Toe Squat

2 minutes



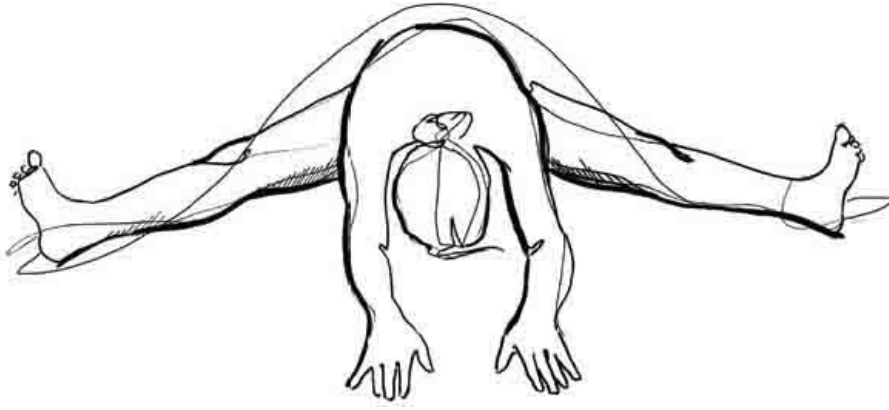
2. [Shoelace](#)

3 minutes each side

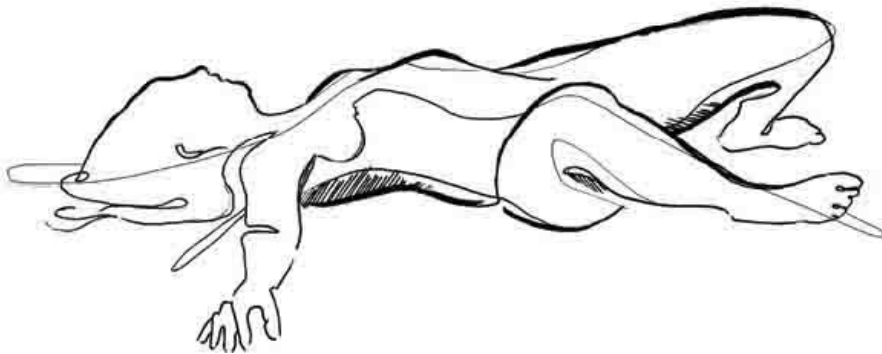


3. [Windshield Wipers](#)

1 minute



4. [Straddle](#)
5 minutes

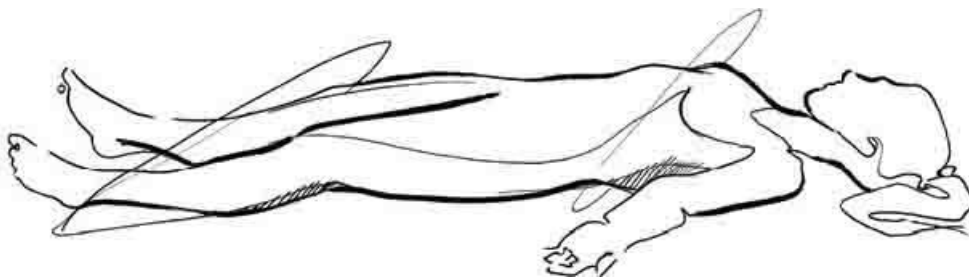


5. [Windshield Wipers](#)
1 minute



6. Reclining Twist

5 minutes each side



7. Savasana

10 minutes

BODY MATTERS

One of the amazing benefits of a yin yoga practice is that you can use the poses to target specific body parts, as well as their related meridians. In this chapter, you'll find sequences specialized for the parts of the body that are wonderfully affected by the slow engagement of yin. As with the previous chapters, the suggested total practice times for each of these healing sequences include time for transitioning between poses.

Happy Hips

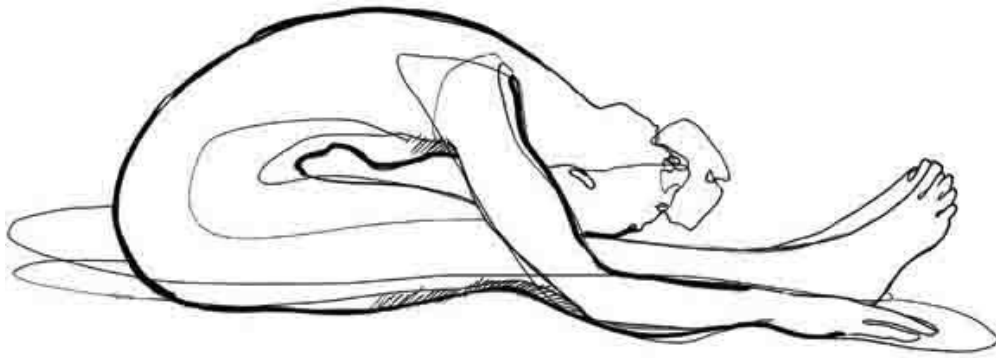
TIME: 60 minutes

The hip joint has the greatest range of motion in the body and enables a variety of actions such as walking, running, and jumping. This sequence cultivates mobility for hips that are stiff or frequently inflamed by strenuous activity, age, structural disposition, or prolonged sitting. These poses invite you to explore your edges within the six ways the hip joint moves: flexion, extension, adduction, abduction, and internal and external rotation. If you feel intense pain at any point, come out of the pose immediately. It's also fine to skip any pose in this sequence, depending on your body's needs.



1. Squat

2 minutes



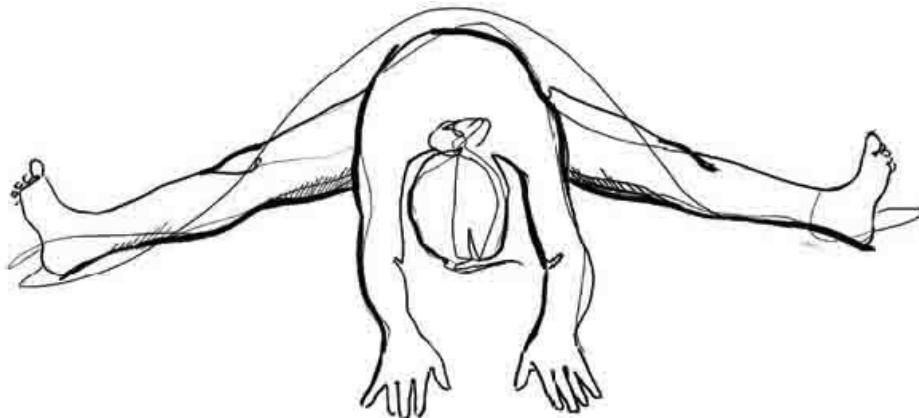
2. [Caterpillar](#)

5 minutes



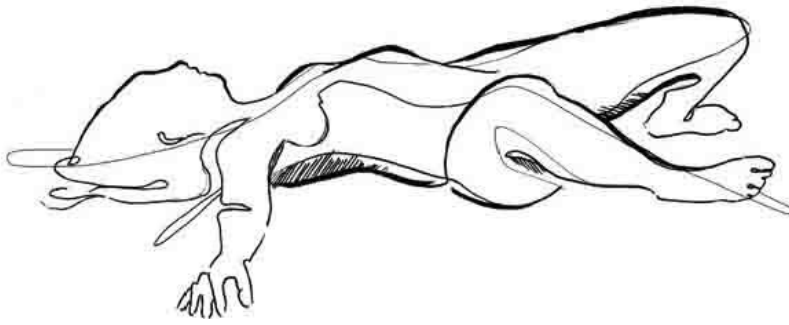
3. [Butterfly](#)

3 minutes



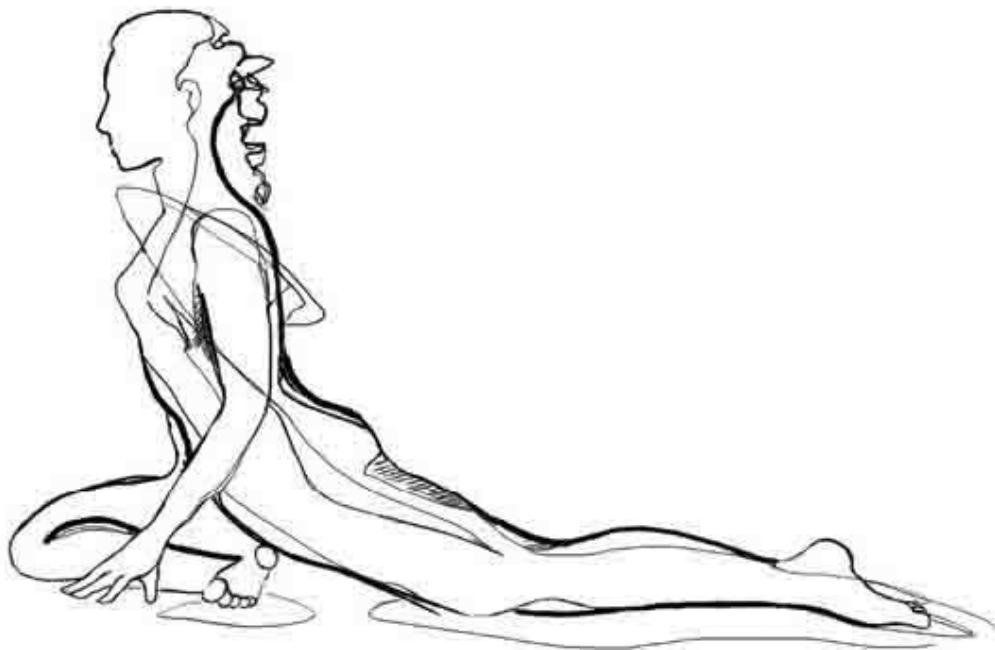
4. [Straddle](#)

7 minutes



5. Windshield Wipers

1 minute



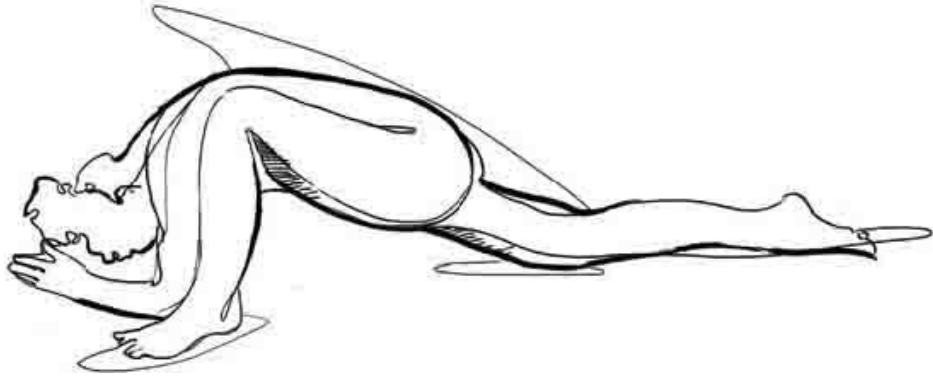
6. Swan

5 minutes each side



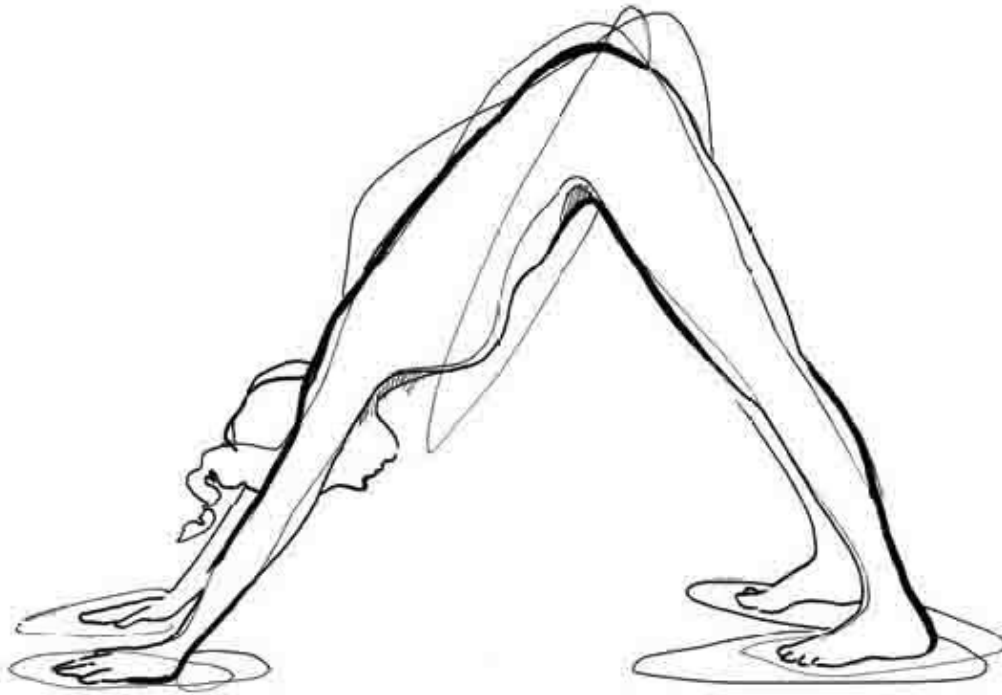
7. Deer

1 minute each side



8. Dragon

3 minutes each side



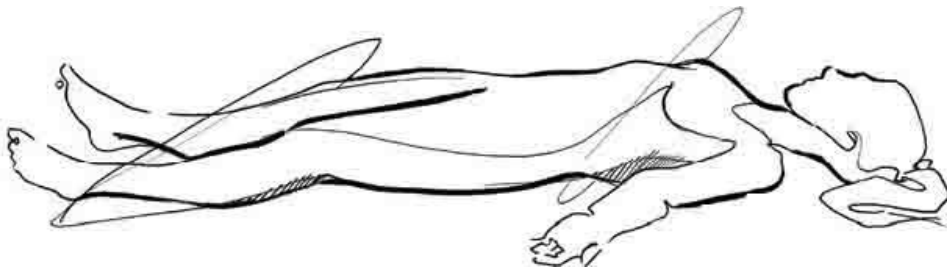
9. Down Dog

1 minute



10. [Reclining Twist](#)

5 minutes each side



11. [Savasana](#)

8 minutes

Leg Lengthener

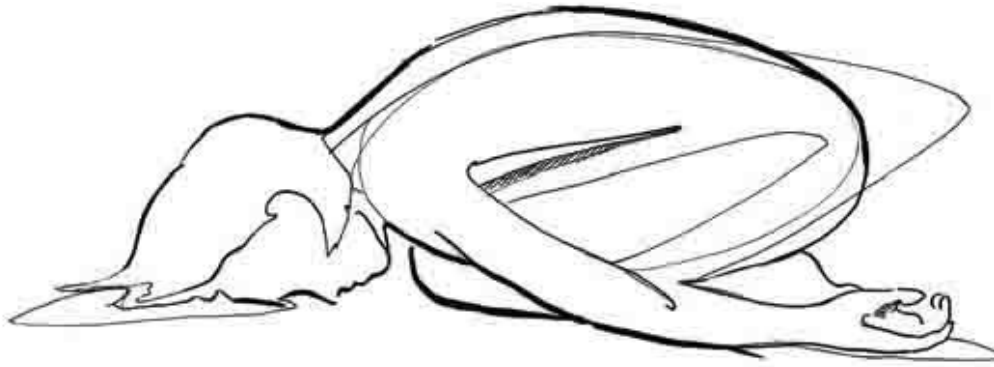
TIME: 45 minutes

Although in a yin yoga practice the hips and low back are often engaged, the legs generally receive minimal attention. In this sequence we turn the focus onto what Bernie Clark, one of yin yoga's leading experts, calls "the four quadrants of the leg": the top (quadriceps), back (hamstrings), inner leg (adductors/groin), and outer leg (iliotibial band and abductors). Each pose specifically targets one or more of the quadrants with the intent of working the fascia in each leg to make them healthier and stronger.



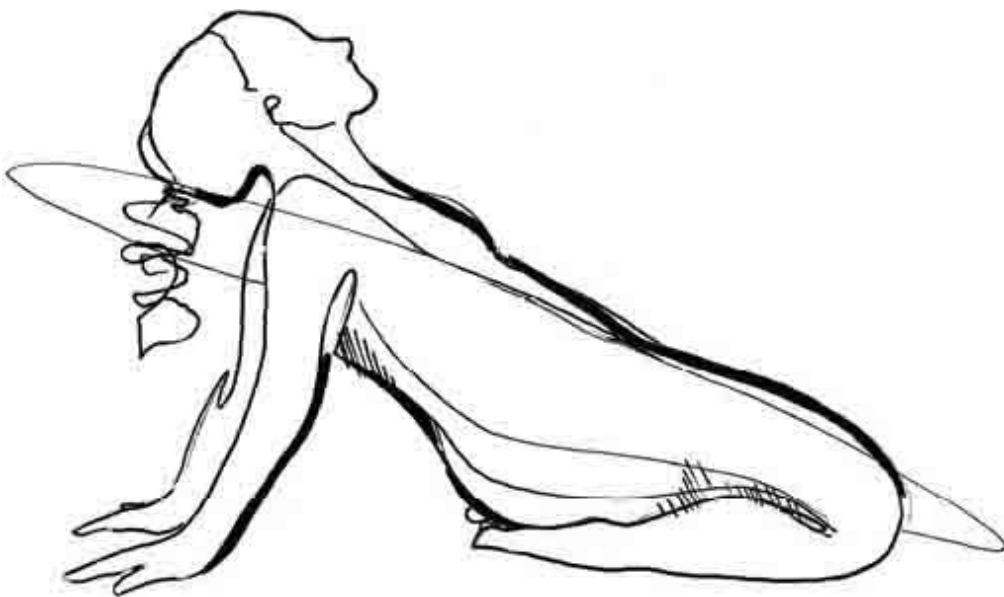
1. Squat

2 minutes



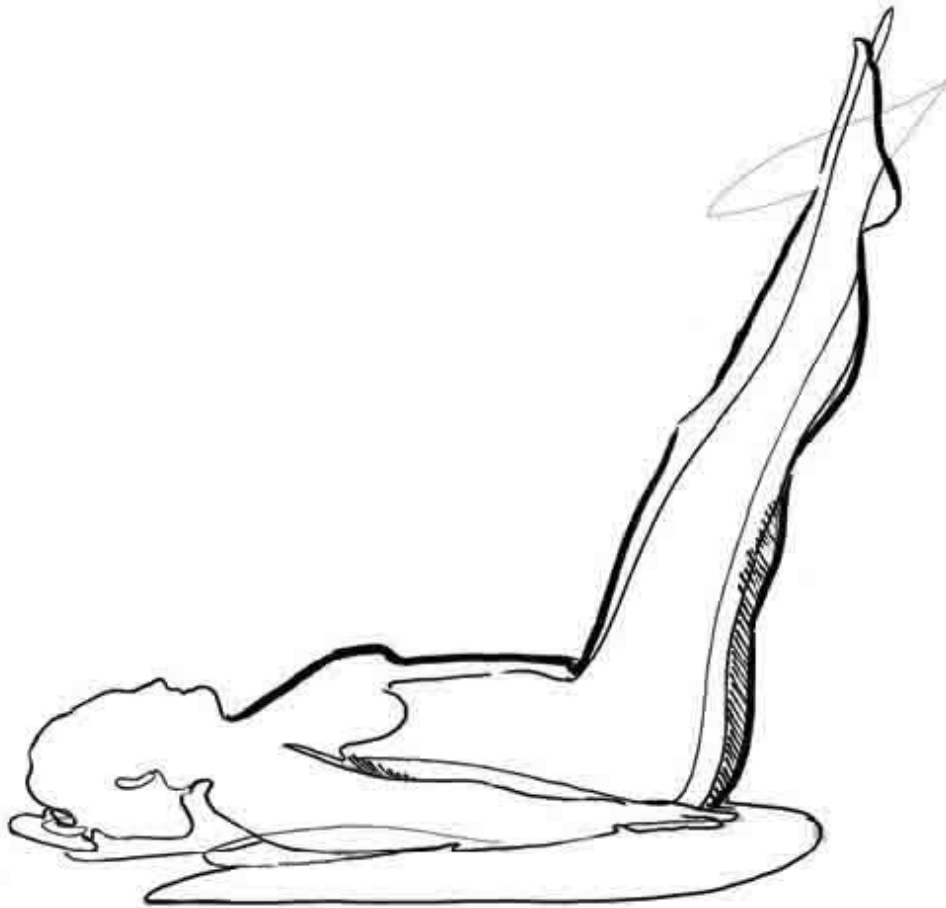
2. [Child's Pose](#)

1 minute



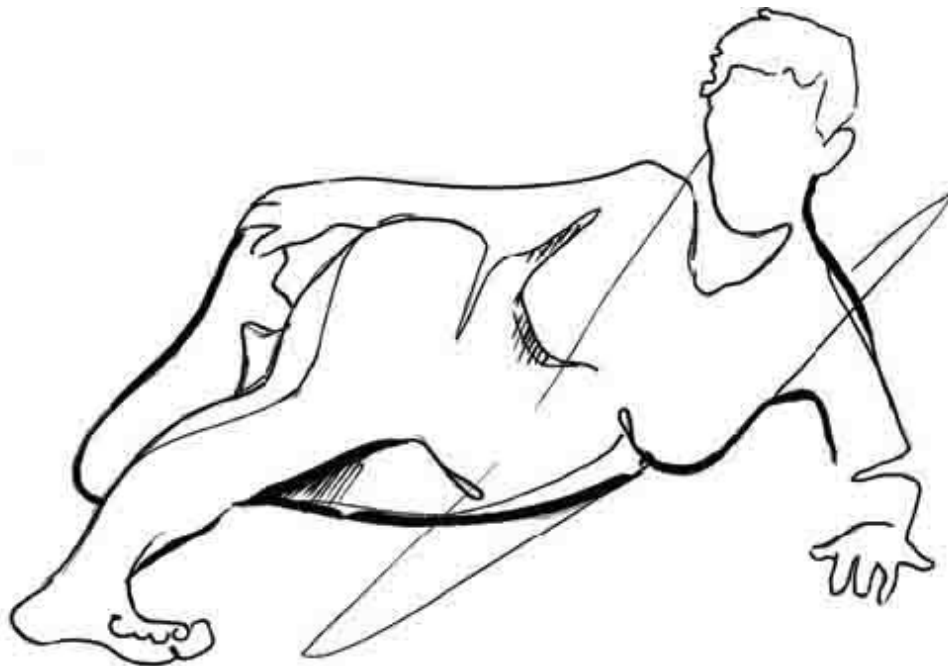
3. [Saddle](#)

5 minutes



4. [Leg Raises](#)

1 minute



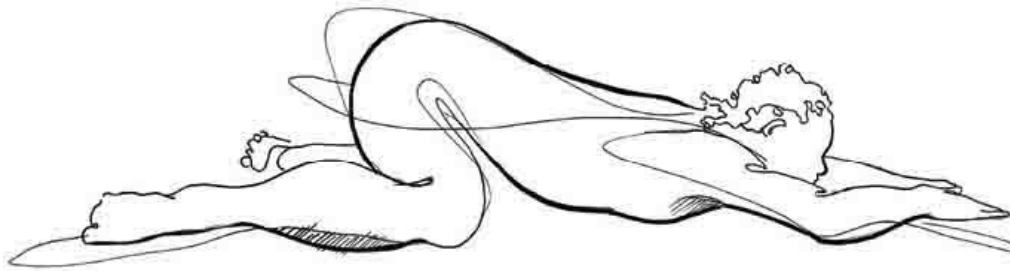
5. [Cat Pulling Its Tail](#)

3 minutes each side



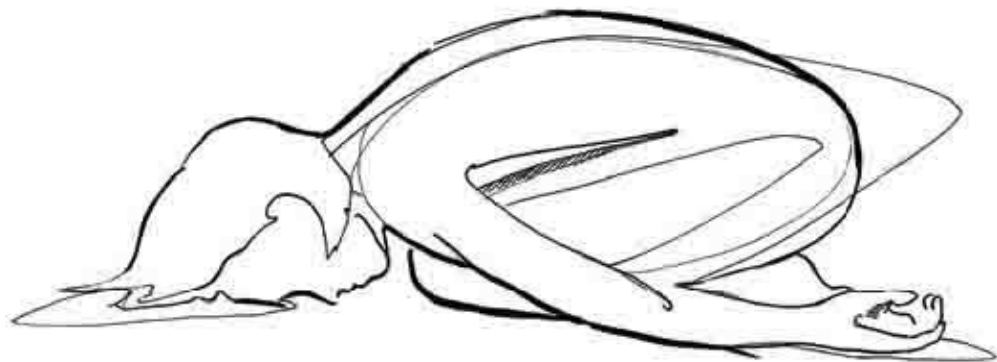
6. [Happy Baby](#)

1 minute



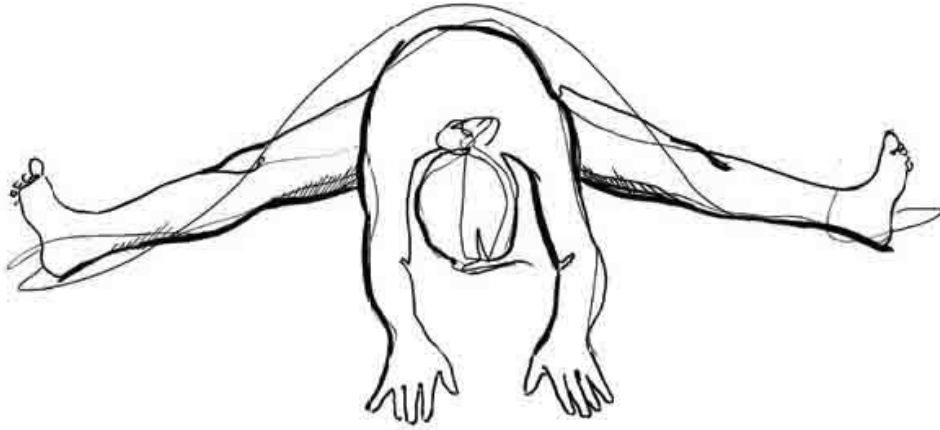
7. [Frog](#)

3 minutes



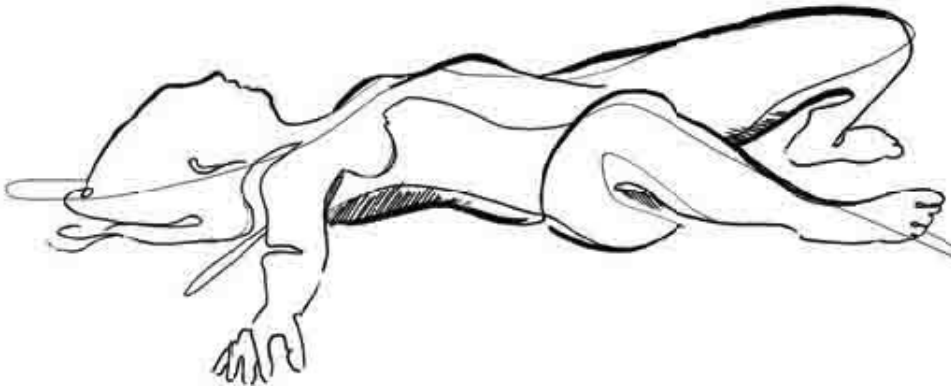
8. [Child's Pose](#)

1 minute



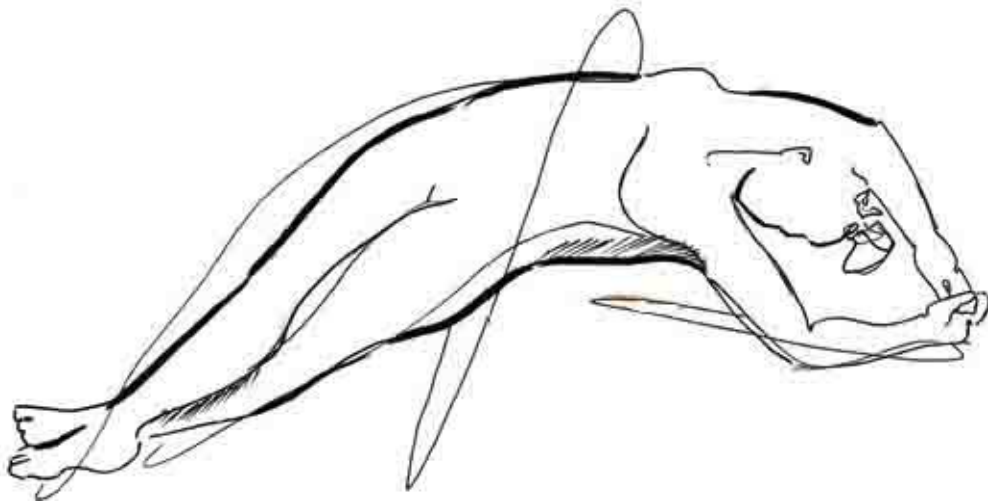
9. [Straddle](#)

5 minutes



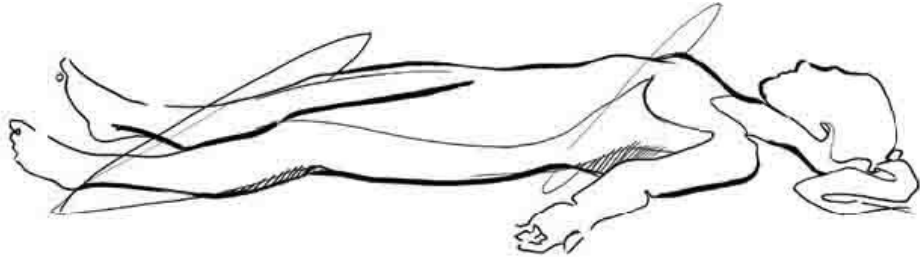
10. [Windshield Wipers](#)

1 minute



11. [Bananasana](#)

4 minutes each side



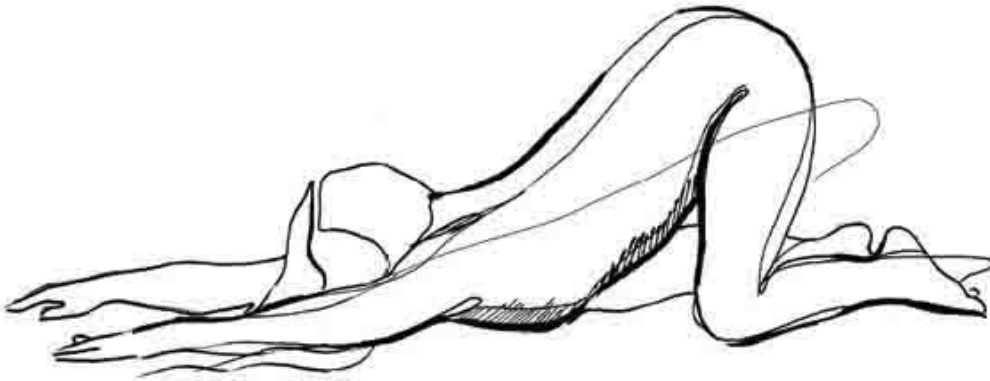
12. [Savasana](#)

7 minutes

Heart Opener

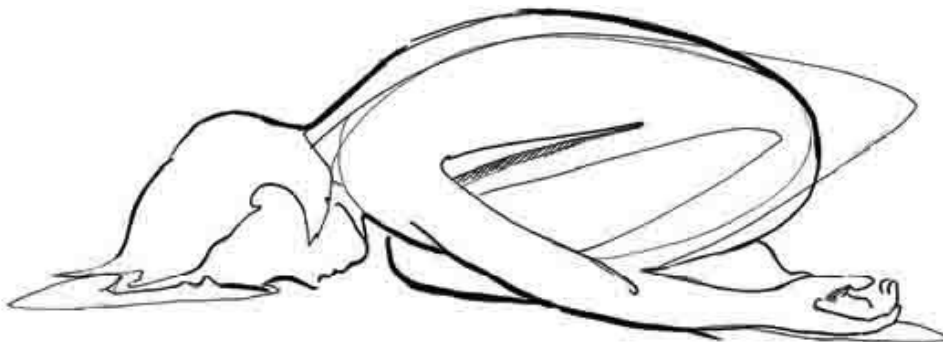
TIME: 45 minutes

The heart is the command center for all the organs in the body. It controls the circulation and distribution of blood to the organs. In traditional Chinese medicine, the heart is also called “the Emperor” and stores the body’s spirit. The poses in the following sequence are an outward expression of opening the heart. This sequence stimulates the heart meridian and its yang partner, the small intestine meridian, to help move qi through the heart and increase feelings of love, peace, contentment, forgiveness, warmth, and clarity of thought.



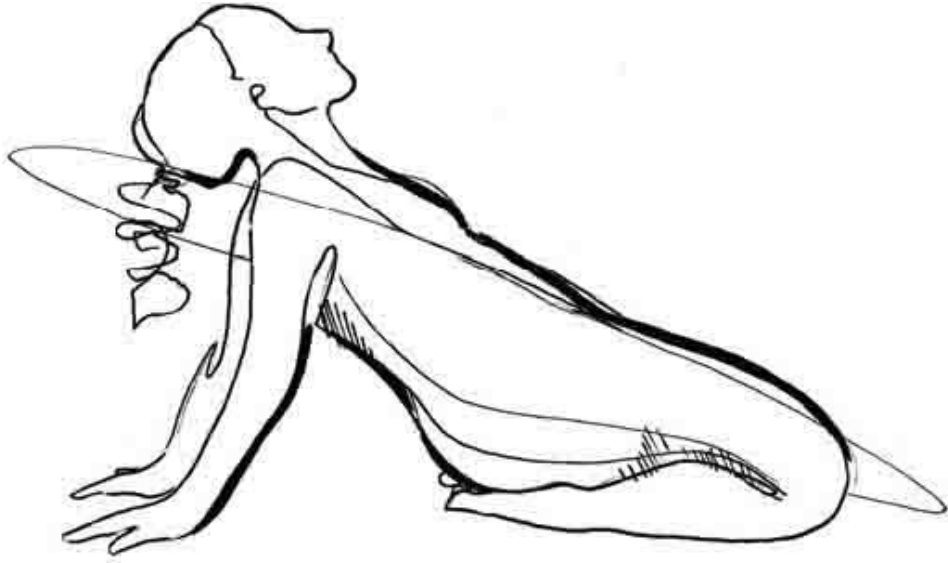
1. Melting Heart

3 minutes



2. Child's Pose

1 minute



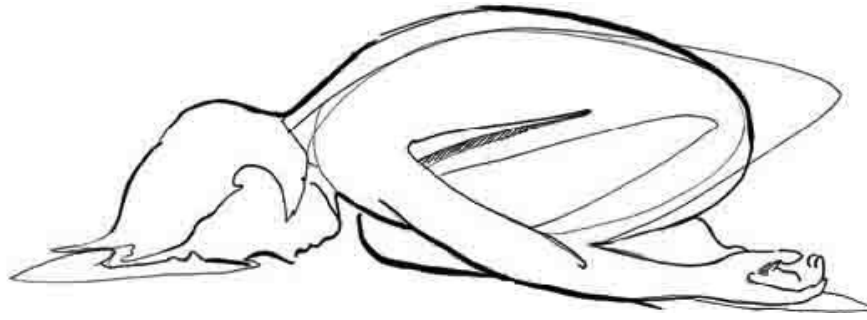
3. [Saddle](#)

5 minutes



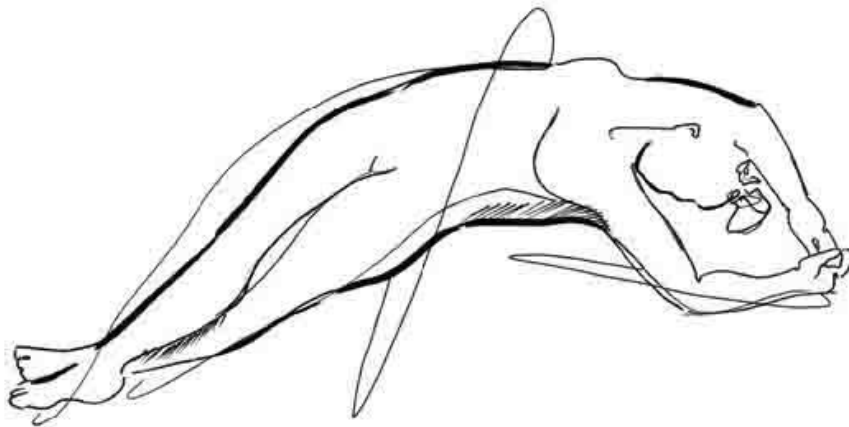
4. [Camel](#)

1-2 minutes



5. [Child's Pose](#)

1 minute

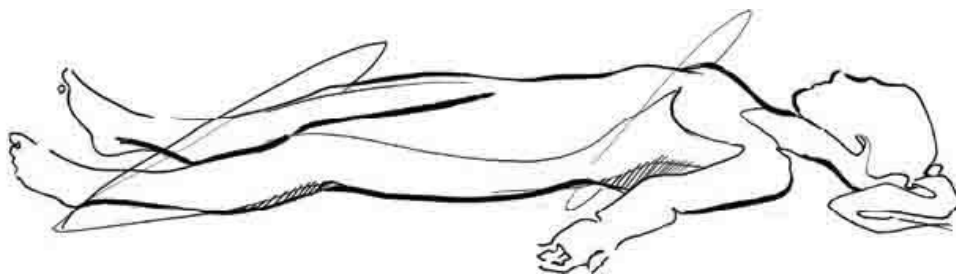


6. [Bananasana](#)

5 minutes each side



7. [Reclining Twist](#)
3 minutes each side

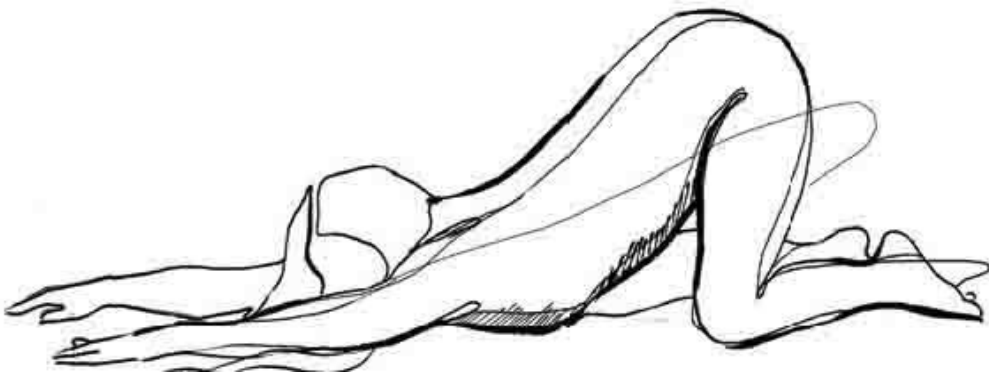


8. [Savasana](#)
6 minutes

Shoulder Tension Reliever

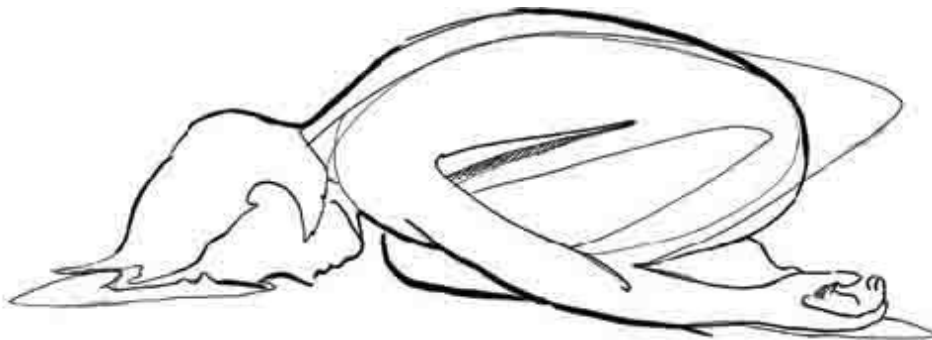
TIME: 30 minutes

The shoulder is a ball-and-socket joint, like the hips, and one of the most mobile regions of the body. In addition to being prone to injury, the shoulders often become tight or stiff because of stress, tension, or poor posture. There aren't many yin postures that specifically open the shoulders, but a great way to alleviate shoulder tension in this practice is to include upper body or arm variations of the poses. The poses affecting the arms also stimulate the small intestine meridian (which extends along the back of the pinkie finger, up the wrist and forearm to the upper arm and shoulder) and help move qi through the shoulder. The following sequence also works well as part of a warm-up to a more yang yoga practice.



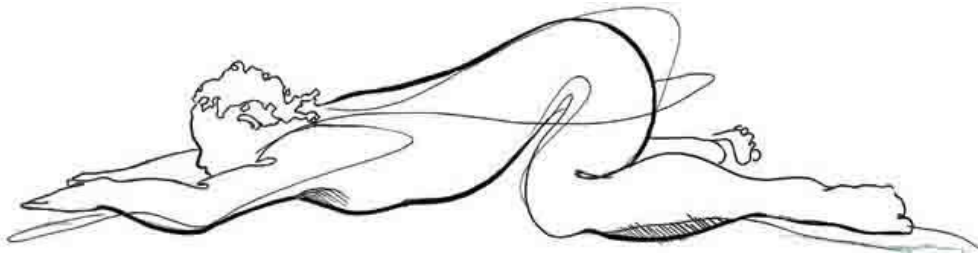
1. [Melting Heart](#)

3 minutes



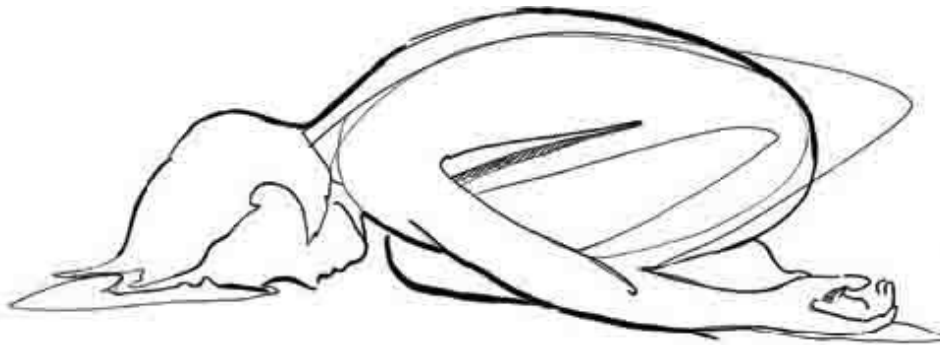
2. [Child's Pose](#)

1 minute



3. [Frog](#)

4 minutes



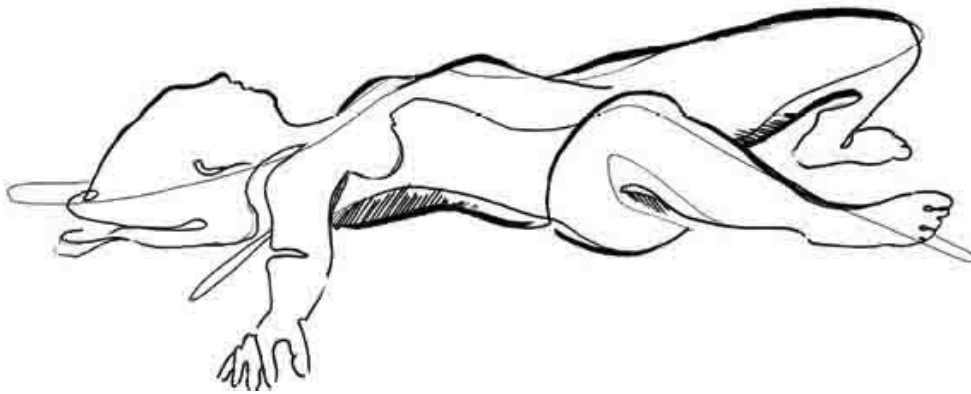
4. [Child's Pose](#)

1 minute



5. [Shoelace](#)

2 minutes each side



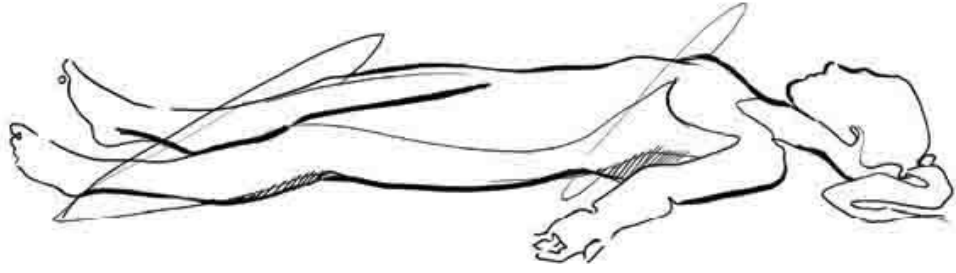
6. Windshield Wipers

1 minute



7. Reclining Twist

4 minutes each side



8. **Savasana**

8 minutes

Kidney Care

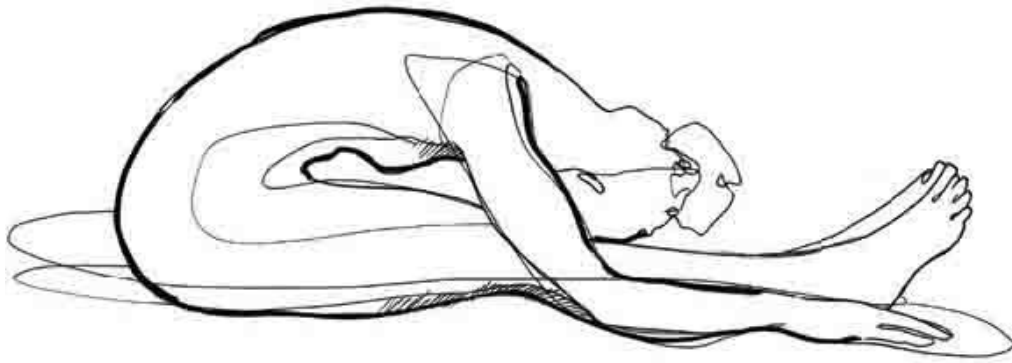
TIME: 30 minutes

The kidneys are the body's filtration system. The two bean-shaped organs, which are located on each side of the spine just below the rib cage, clean all the body's fluids and move waste into the bladder to be excreted in the urine. When the kidneys are not functioning properly, bodily fluids can become stagnant, and cellular waste can build up in the body. This sequence stimulates the kidneys and the kidney meridian by compressing the spine and stimulating the inner groin to help the kidneys move fluids, blood, and lymph through the body to keep your metabolism functioning optimally.



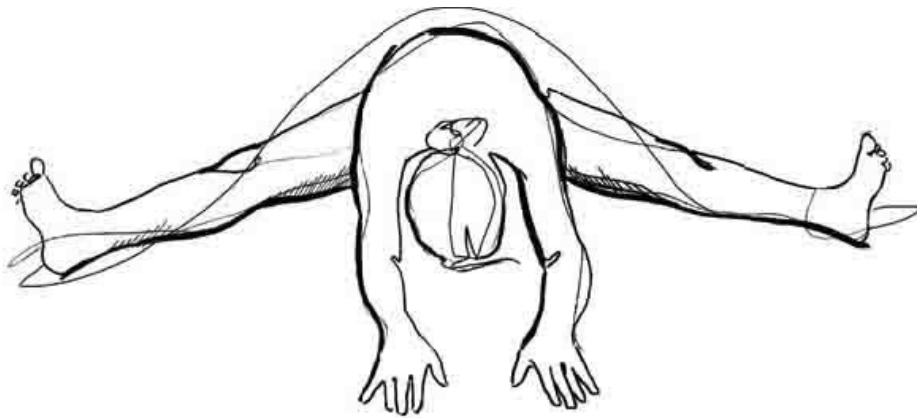
1. Squat

1 minute



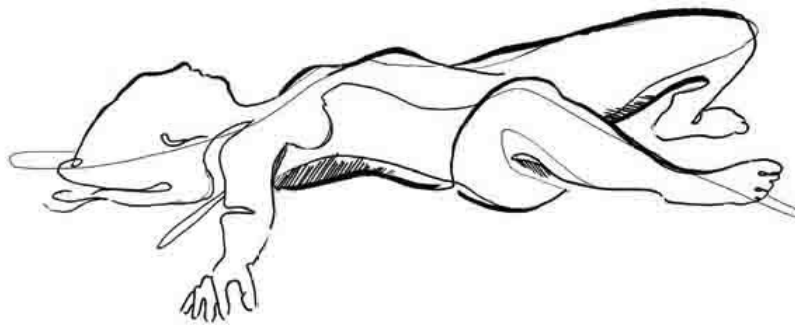
2. [Caterpillar](#)

2 minutes



3. [Straddle](#)

3 minutes



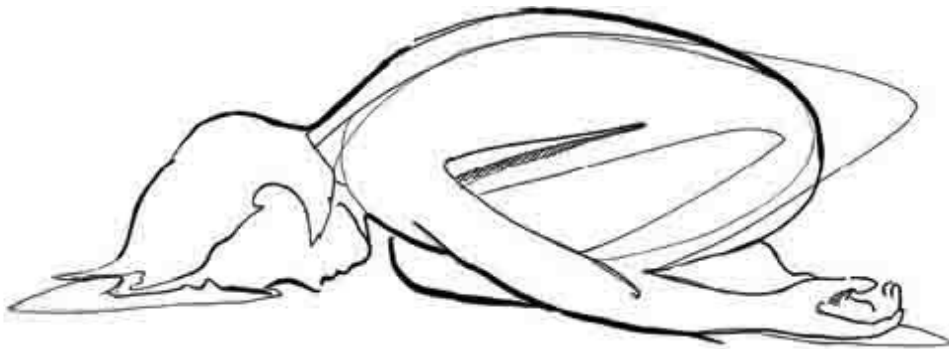
4. [Windshield Wipers](#)

1 minute



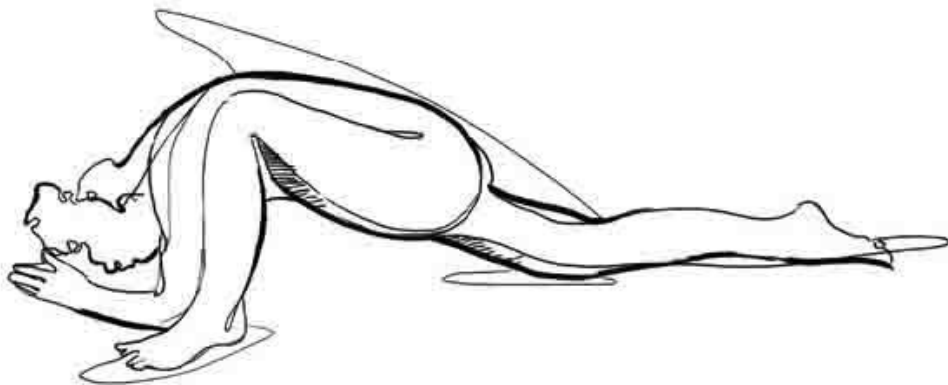
5. [Camel](#)

1 minute



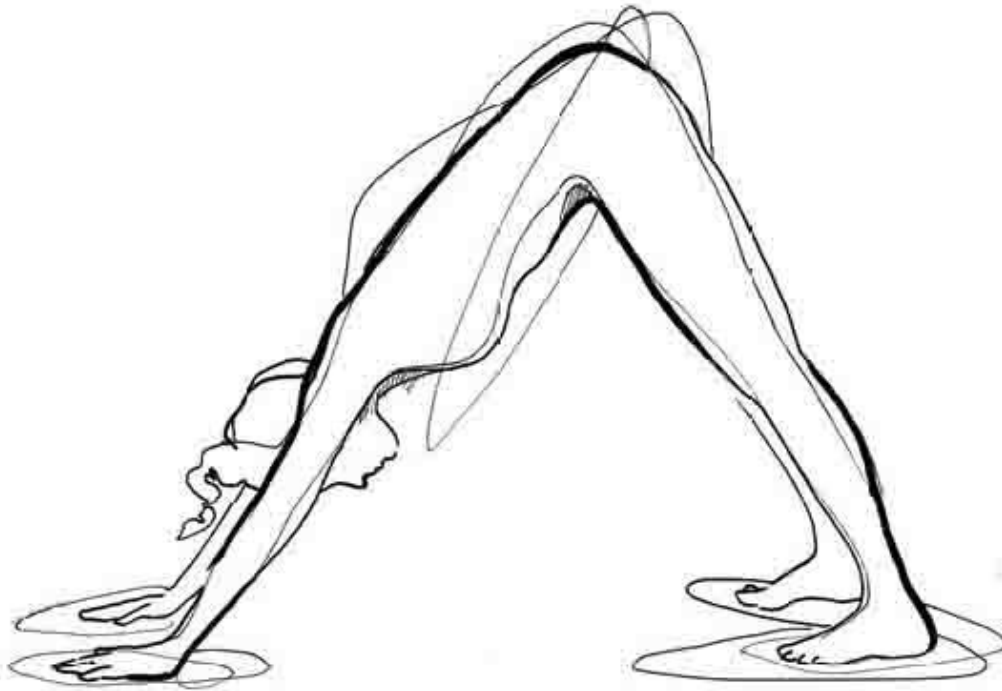
6. [Child's Pose](#)

1 minute



7. Dragon

3 minutes each side



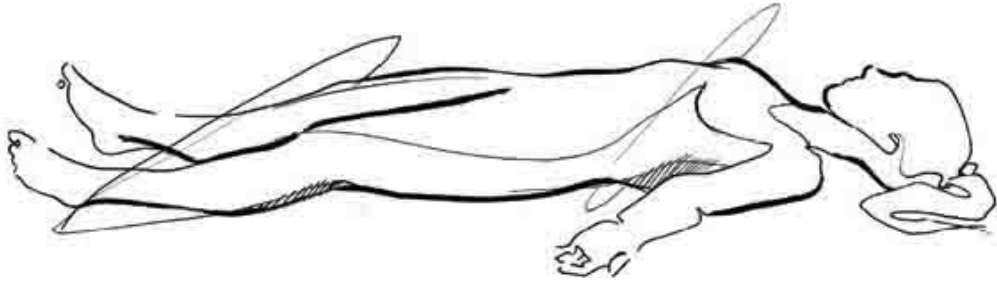
8. Down Dog

1 minute



9. Swan

3 minutes each side



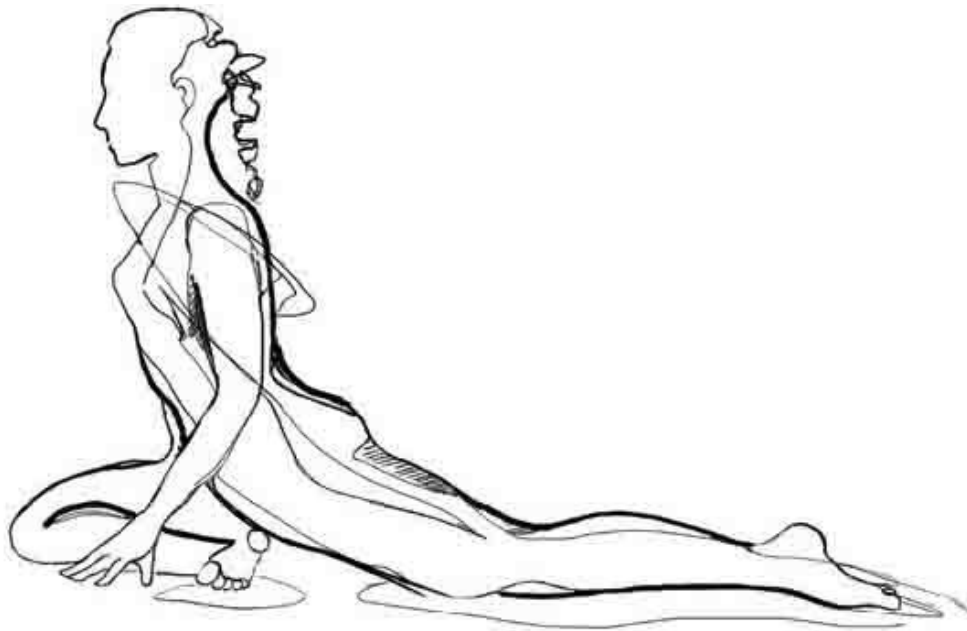
10. [Savasana](#)

5 minutes

Digestion Soother

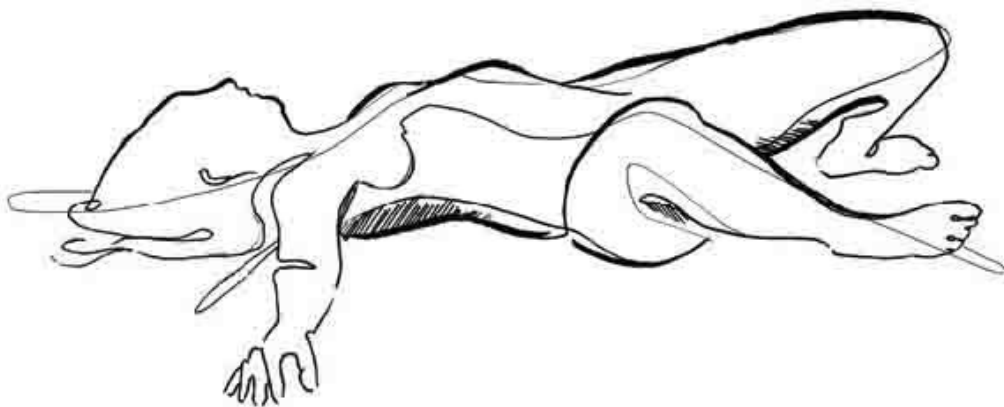
TIME: 45 minutes

The stomach and spleen are essential components of our digestive system. Their job is to break down the food we eat into smaller pieces, which then move into the small intestine for the assimilation of nutrients into body. Chronic stress and anxiety can negatively affect digestive health. The poses in this sequence massage the internal organs and stimulate the flow of qi to support proper digestive health and metabolic function.



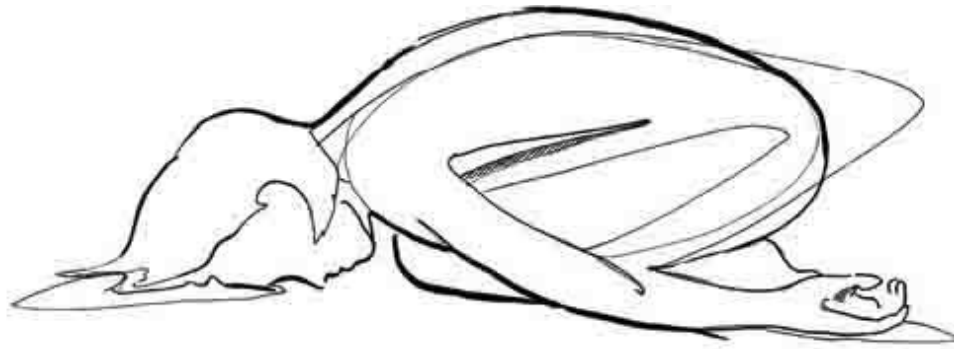
1. Swan

1 minute each side



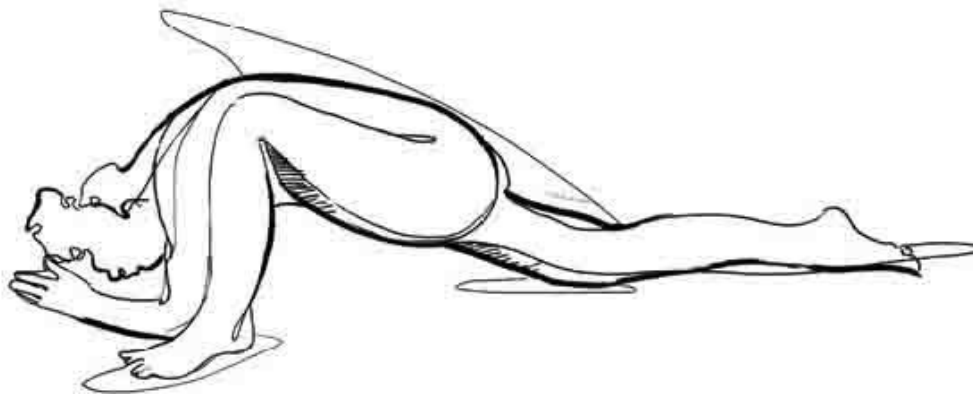
2. Windshield Wipers

1 minute



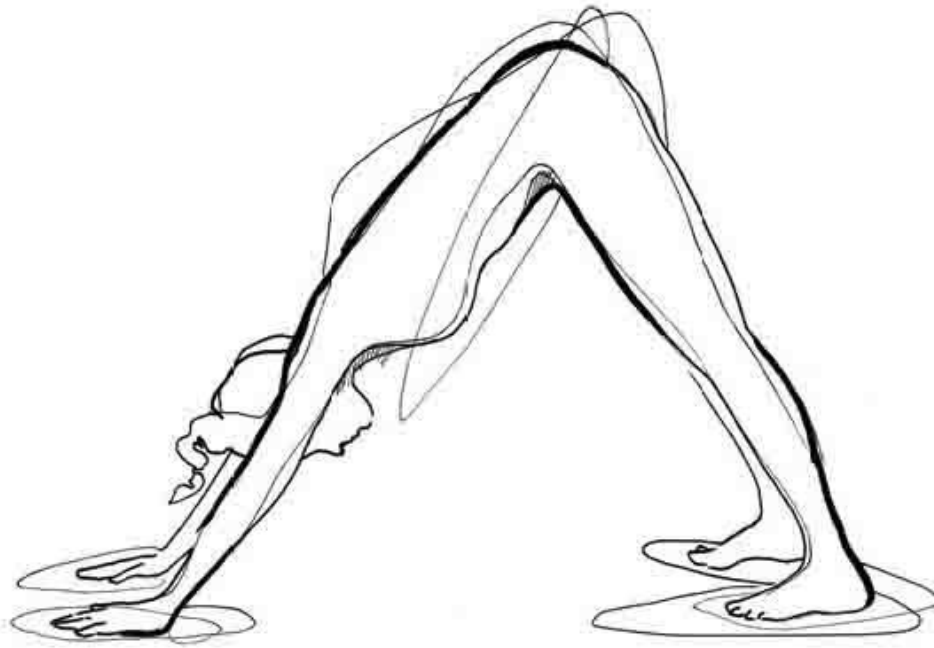
3. Child's Pose

1 minute



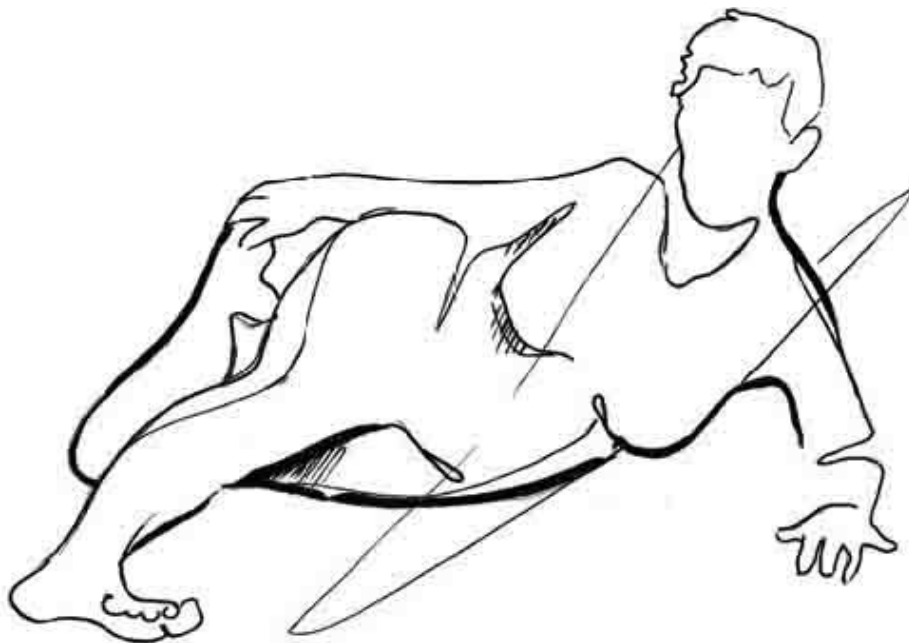
4. Dragon

4 minutes each side



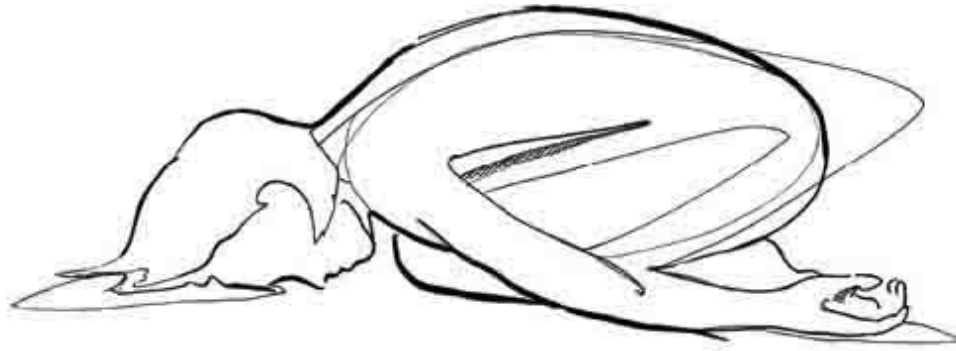
5. [Down Dog](#)

1 minute



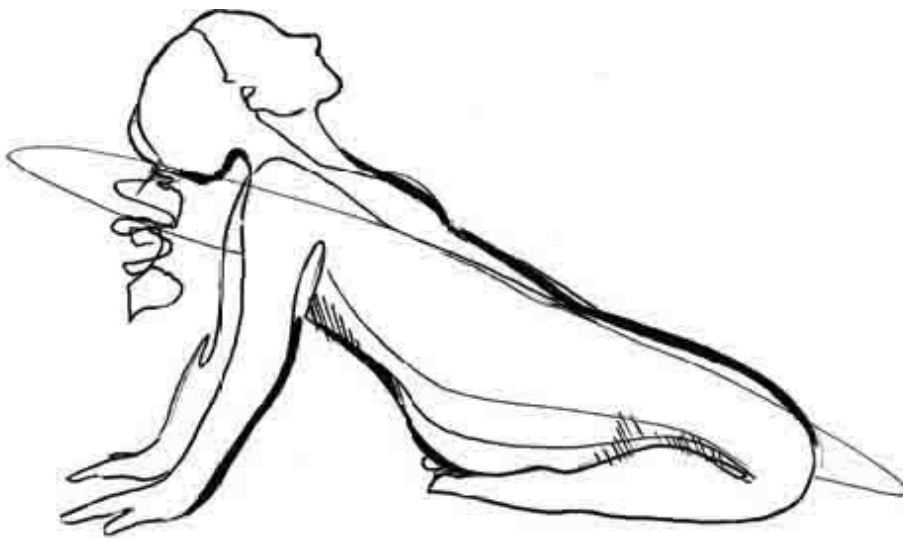
6. [Cat Pulling Its Tail](#)

3 minutes each side



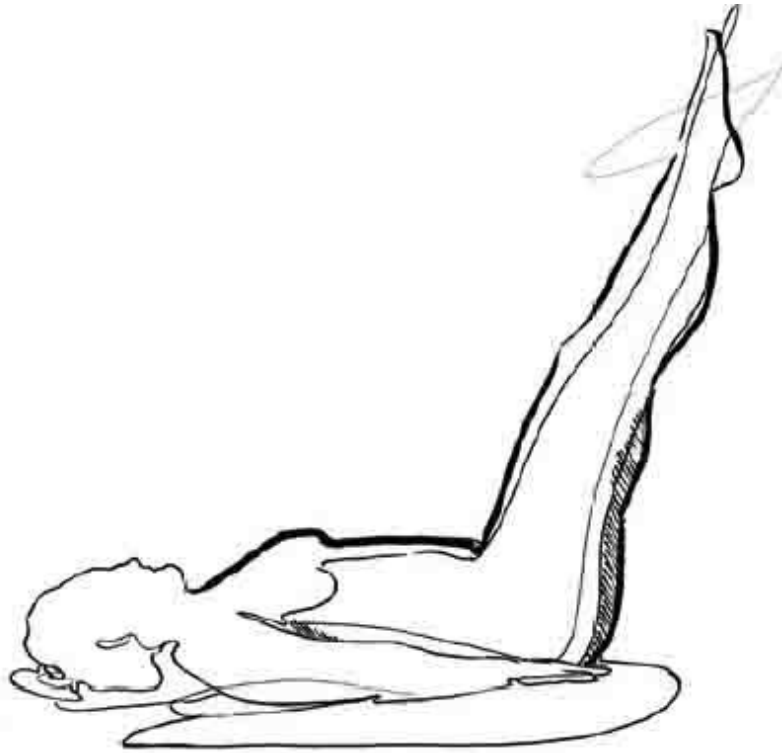
7. [Child's Pose](#)

1 minute



8. [Saddle](#)

5 minutes



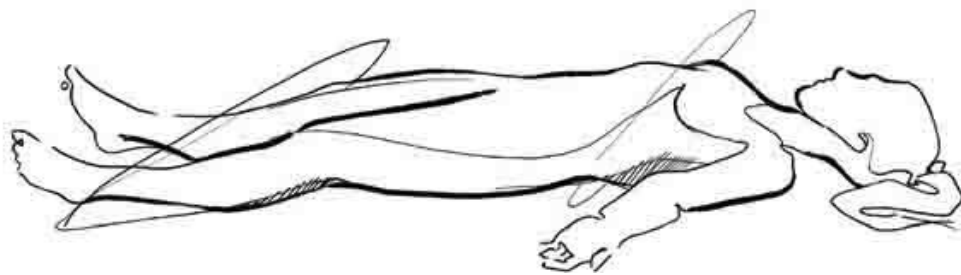
9. [Leg Raises](#)

1 minute



10. [Reclining Twist](#)

3 minutes each side



11. [Savasana](#)

7 minutes

Knee Protector

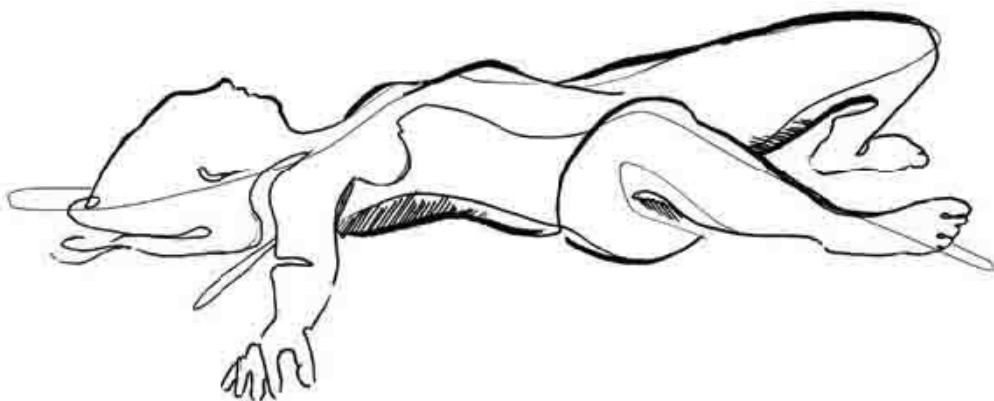
TIME: 45 minutes

Knee pain or discomfort is one of the most common complaints among yoga practitioners. Unfortunately, yin yoga doesn't afford any knee-opening poses. But one of the ways your yin practice can benefit the knees is by focusing on poses that open the hips. When the hips are more open, less stress is put on the knee joints. This sequence is made up of great hip-opening poses that will help reduce the stress on your knees.



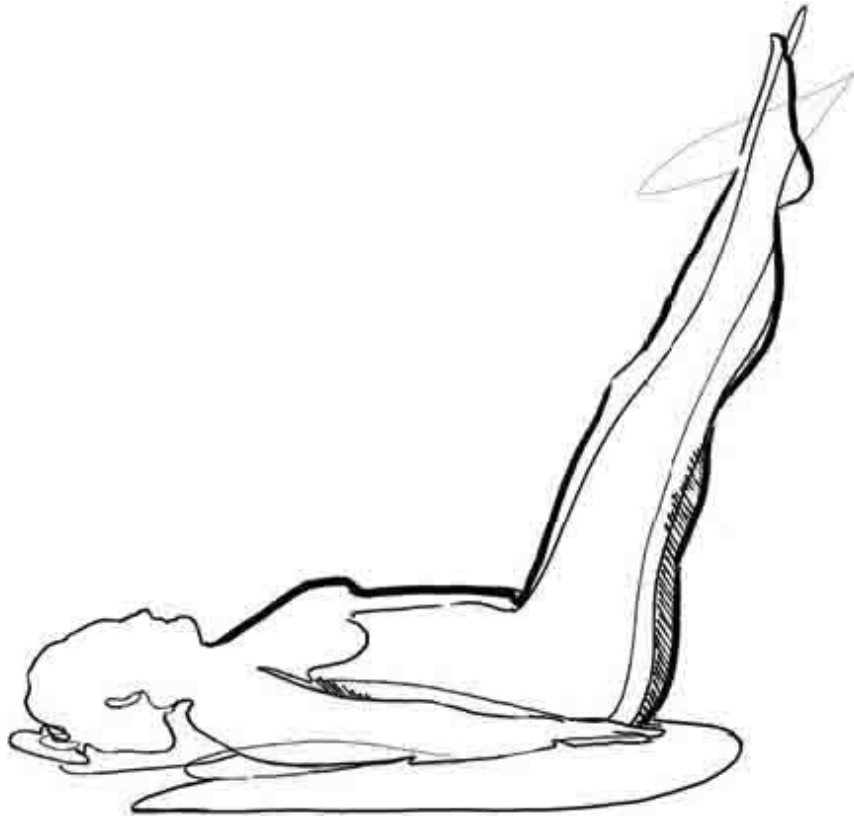
1. Butterfly

4 minutes



2. Windshield Wipers

1 minute



3. Leg Raises

1 minute or 5 repetitions



4. [Shoelace](#)

3 minutes each side



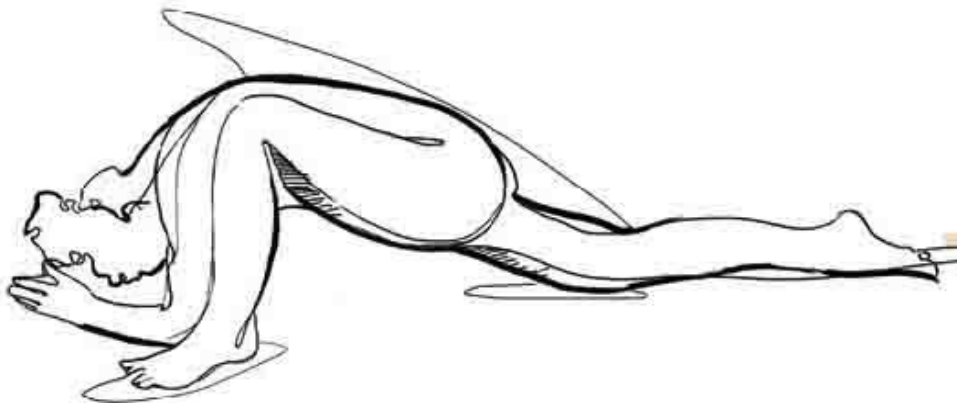
5. [Windshield Wipers](#)

1 minute



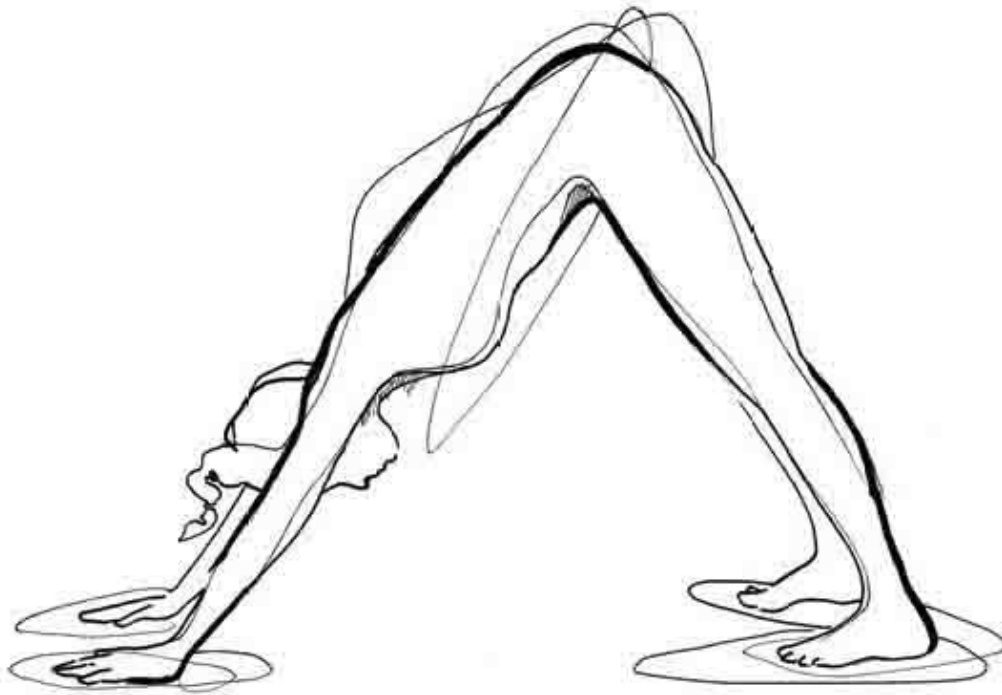
6. [Swan](#)

4 minutes each side



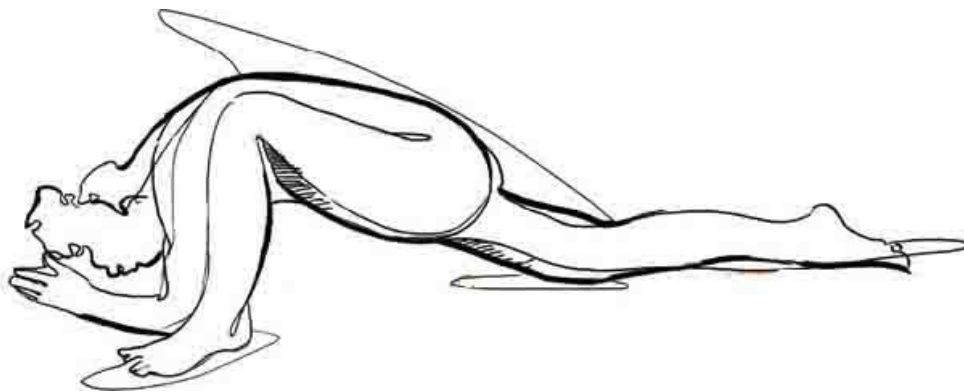
7. [Dragon](#)

3 minutes one side



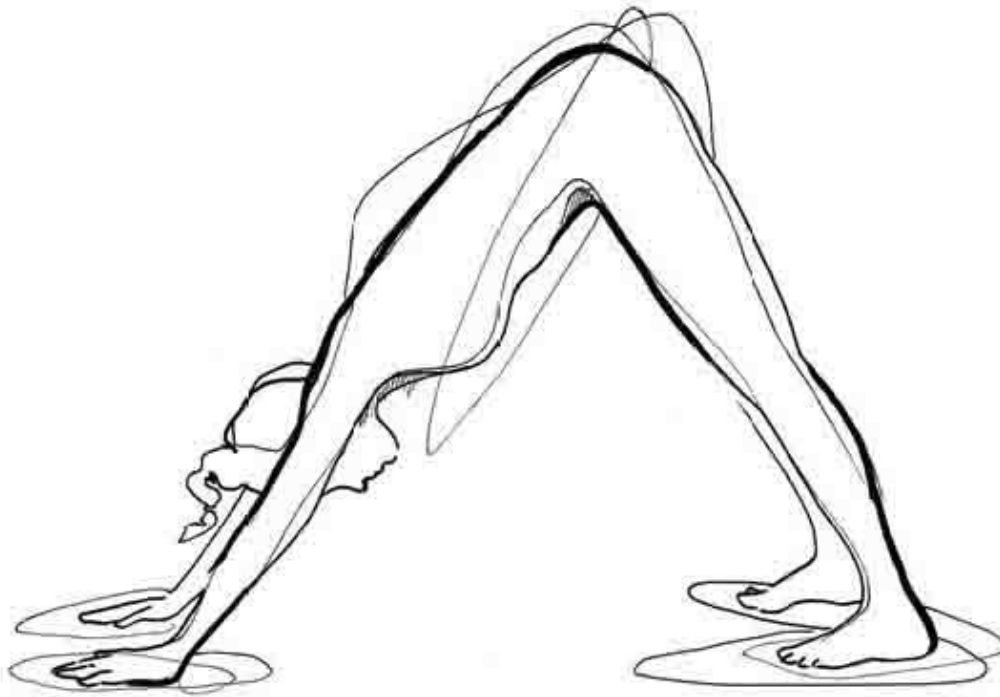
8. [Down Dog](#)

1 minute



9. [Dragon](#)

3 minutes on the other side



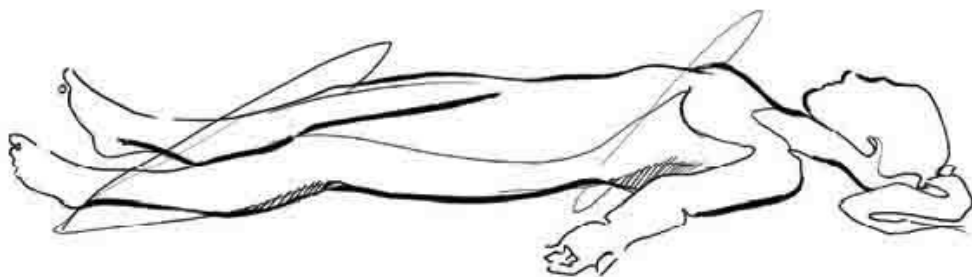
10. [Down Dog](#)

1 minute



11 . [Reclining Twist](#)

2 minutes each side



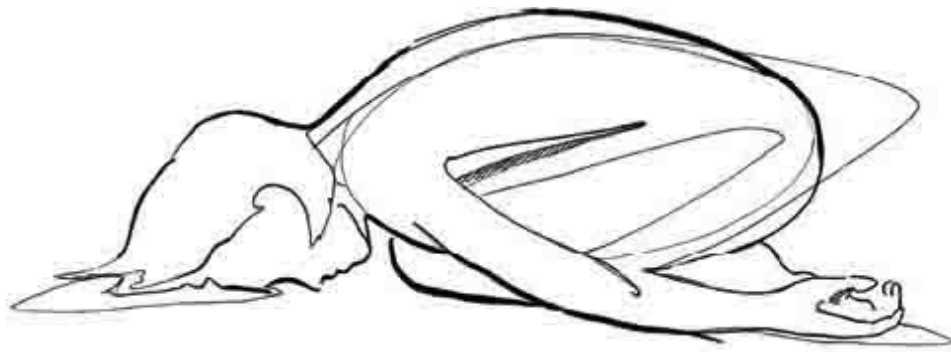
12 . [Savasana](#)

10 minutes

Spine Saver

TIME: 45 minutes

It is quite common as we age to experience more stiffness in the joints (among other aches and pains!). The spine loses flexibility over time as the bones and the intervertebral disks start deteriorating with age. One of the ways to retain flexibility in the spine as we get older is through movement. The following sequence consists of yin poses that promote spinal flexibility by moving it in all its possible directions: flexion (forward fold), extension (back bend), lateral flexion (side bend), and rotation.



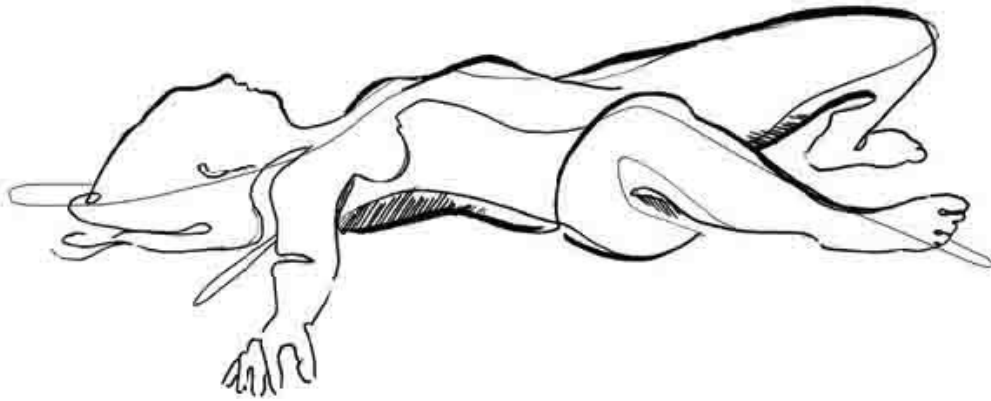
1. Child's Pose

3 minutes



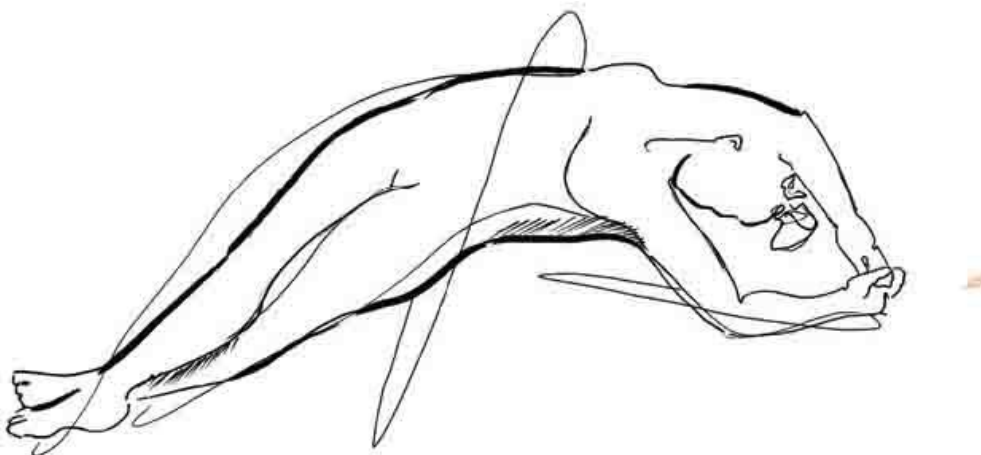
2. [Butterfly](#)

5 minutes



3. [Windshield Wipers](#)

1 minute



4. [Bananasana](#)

5 minutes each side



5. [Reclining Twist](#)

3 minutes each side



6. [Savasana](#)

10 minutes

SEASONAL PRACTICES

In traditional Chinese medicine, there are five seasons, and each season has an energetic element—autumn’s element is metal, spring’s is wood, summer’s is fire, late summer’s is earth, and winter’s is water. Each energetic element affects specific organs in our bodies and influences our emotions during each season. The following sequences will help stimulate qi and increase vitality in the body based on the season.

Winter Warmer

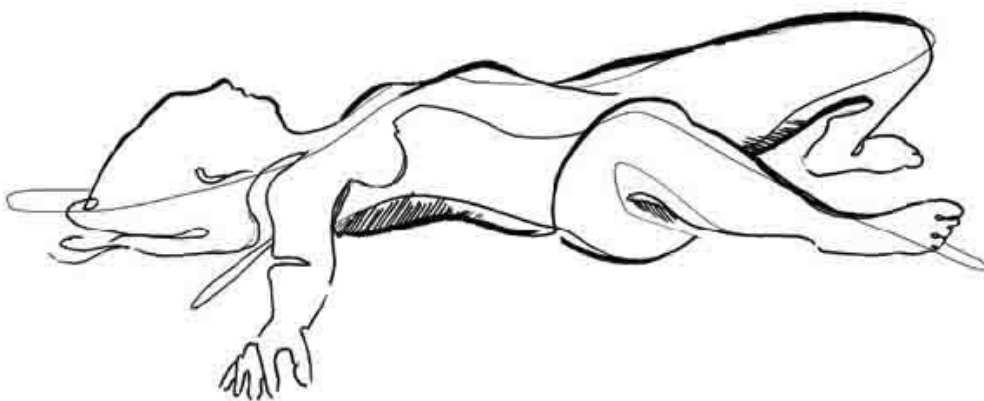
TIME: 40 minutes

In traditional Chinese medicine, winter is associated with the element of water. The following sequence stimulates the kidney meridian to supply energy to organs running low on qi and supports the conservation of energy and warmth in the body during the long, cold nights. The poses also encourage rest and reflection, as winter is the time to nourish your spirit so it can blossom in the spring.



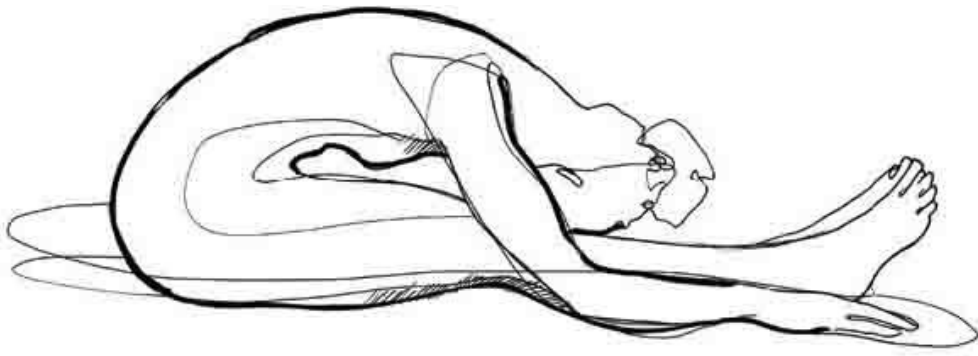
1. Swan

5 minutes each side



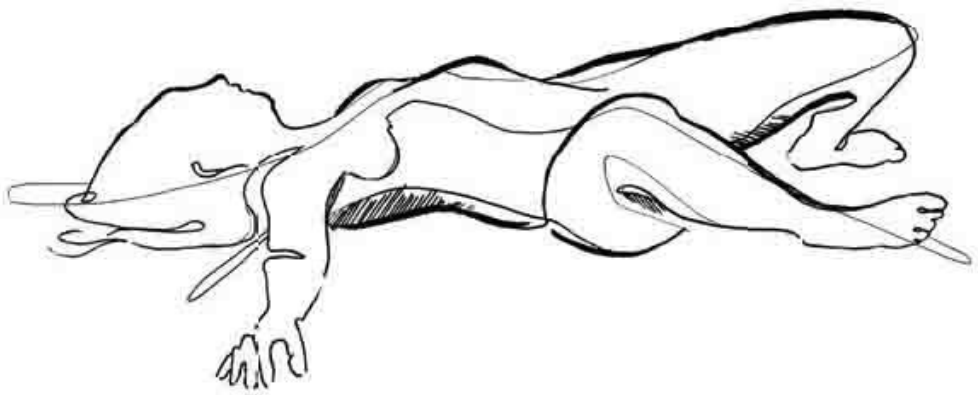
2. Windshield Wipers

1 minute



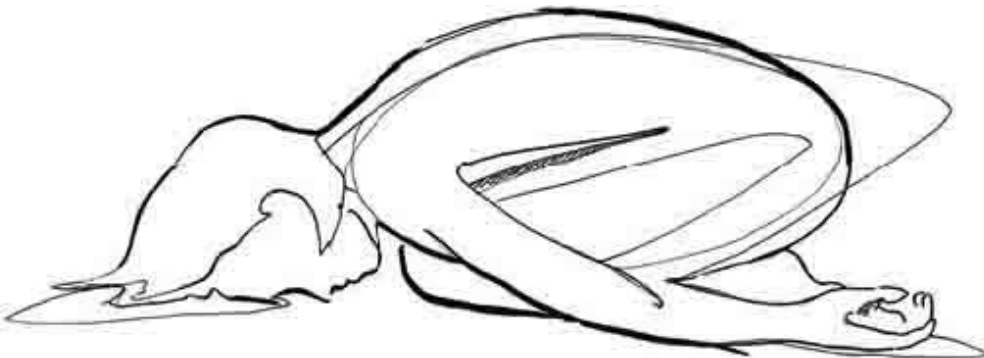
3. Caterpillar

5 minutes



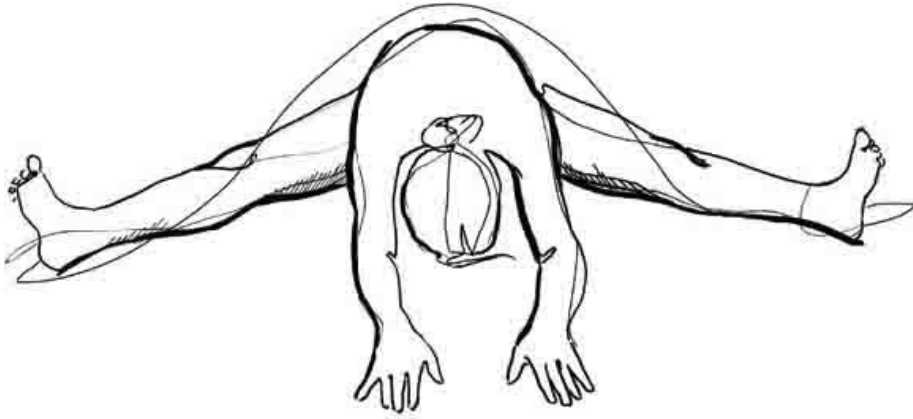
4. Windshield Wipers

1 minute



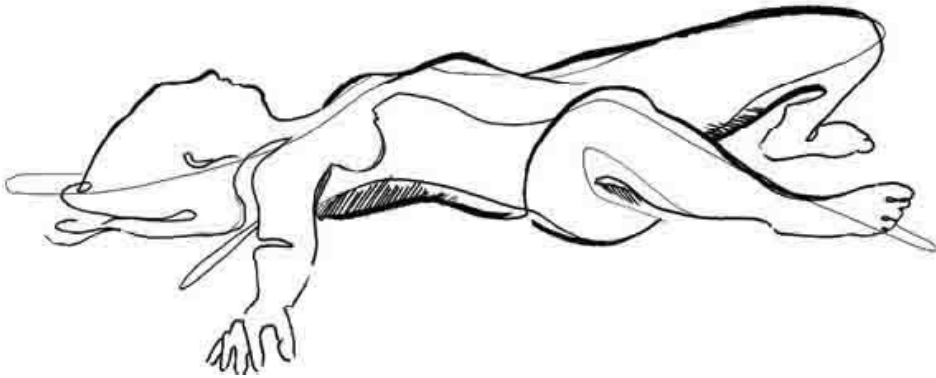
5. Child's Pose

2 minutes



6. [Straddle](#)

6 minutes



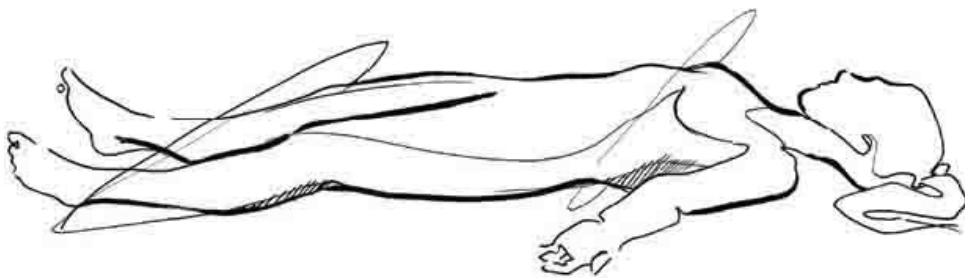
7. [Windshield Wipers](#)

1 minute



8. [Reclining Twist](#)

3 minutes each side



9. [Savasana](#)

5-7 minutes

New Year Revitalizer

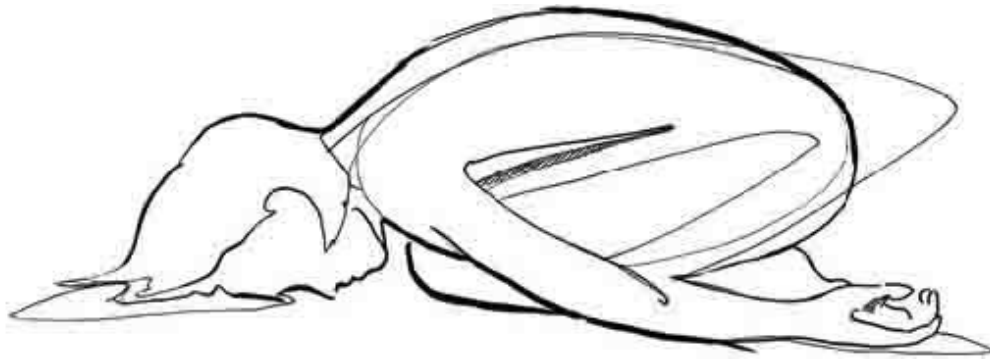
TIME: 30 minutes

The New Year can stir up feelings of anxiety, especially if you make New Year's resolutions and then quickly become frustrated if you're not able to stick to them. The following short and simple yin sequence can help ease these anxious feelings—especially if you try Caterpillar at the wall. These poses target the root chakra and will ground you so you're able to focus on achieving all your dreams for the New Year.



1. Toe Squat

1 minute



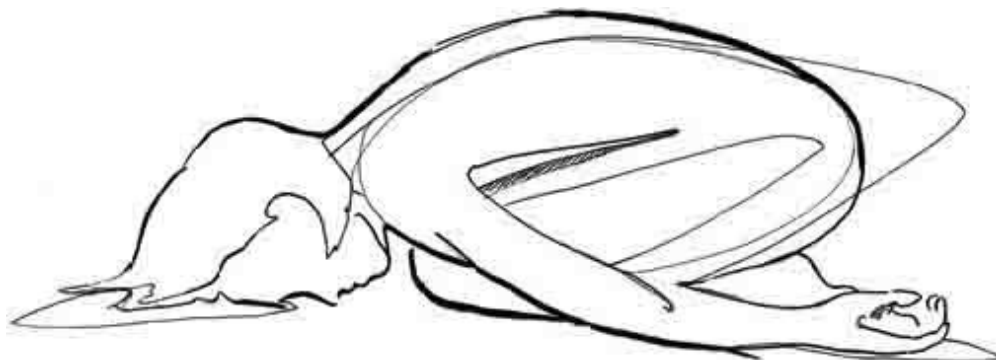
2. [Child's Pose](#)

2 minutes



3. [Toe Squat](#)

1 minute



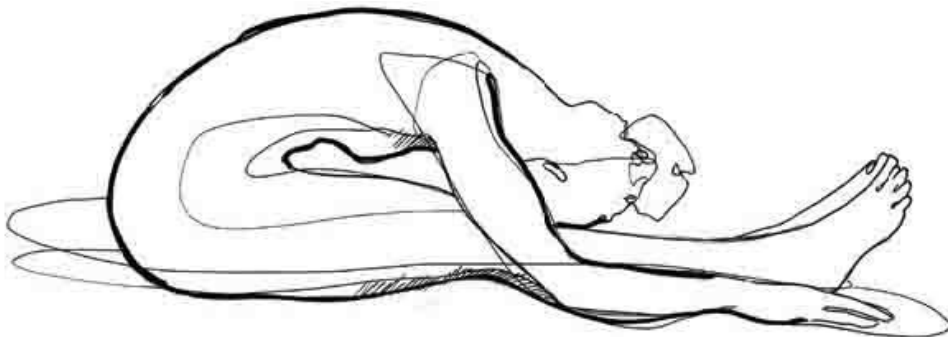
4. Child's Pose

2 minutes



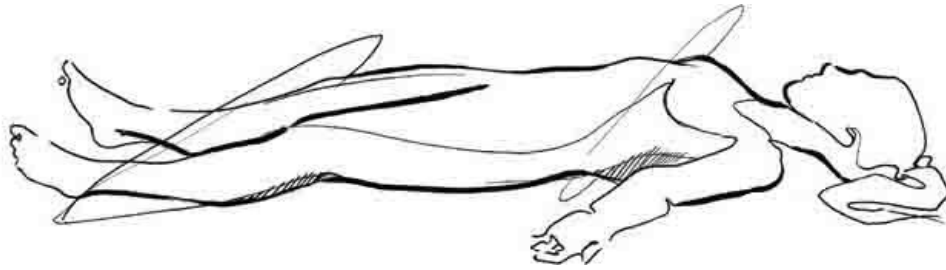
5. Reclining Twist

3 minutes each side



6. Caterpillar

5 minutes



7. Savasana

10 minutes

Spring to Life

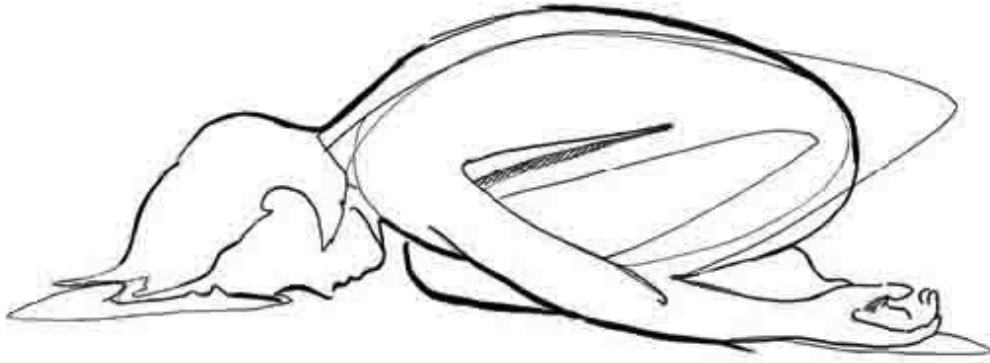
TIME: 45 minutes

This is another sequence that targets the liver and gallbladder meridians. In moving through these deep hip openers, you'll stimulate the smooth flow of qi to the organs to remove any stagnant energy left over from the winter season of introspection. You'll feel more alive and ready to spring forth into the newness of the season.



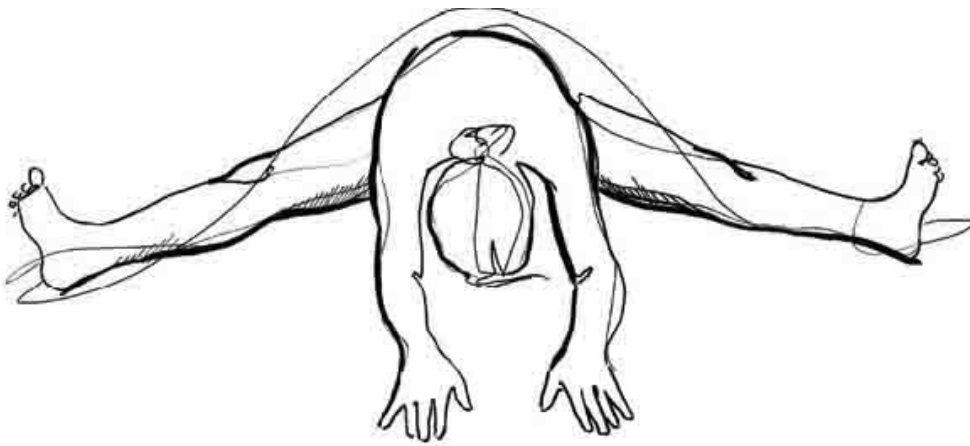
1. Toe Squat

2 minutes



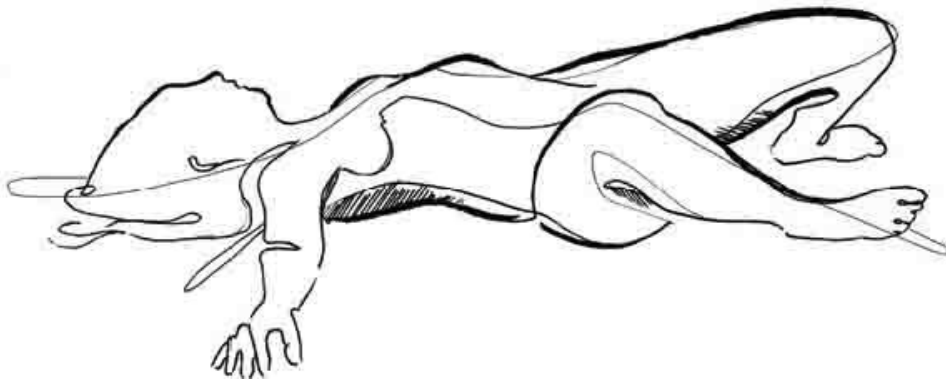
2. [Child's Pose](#)

1 minute



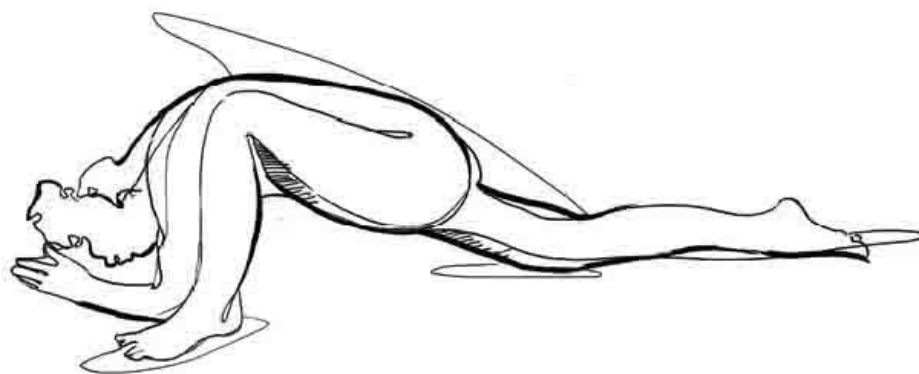
3. [Straddle](#)

3 minutes



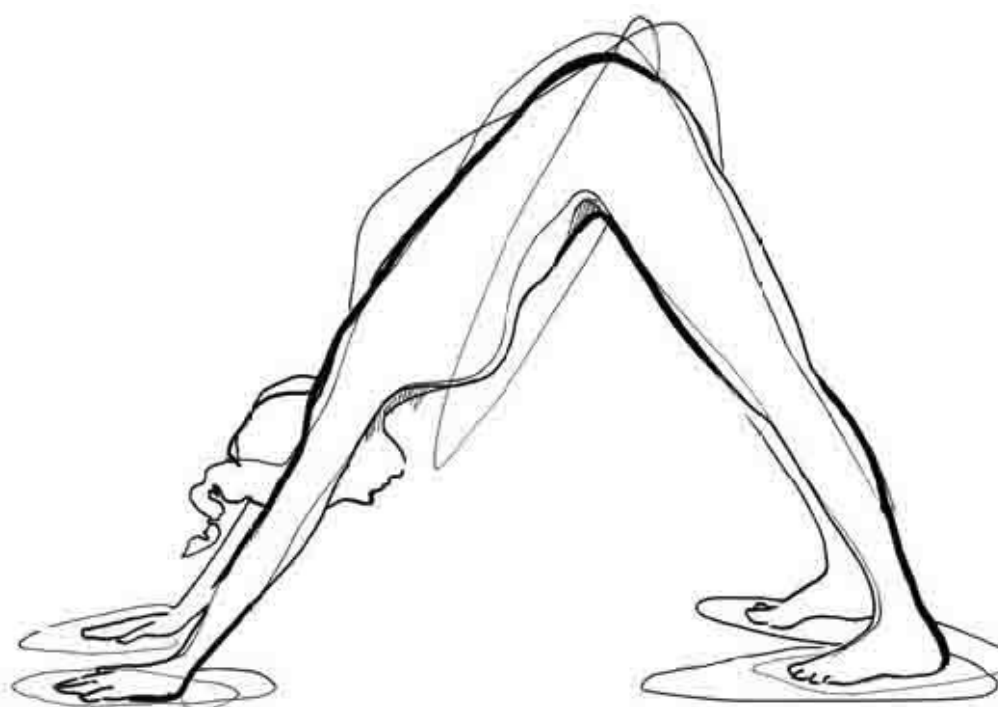
4. [Windshield Wipers](#)

1 minute



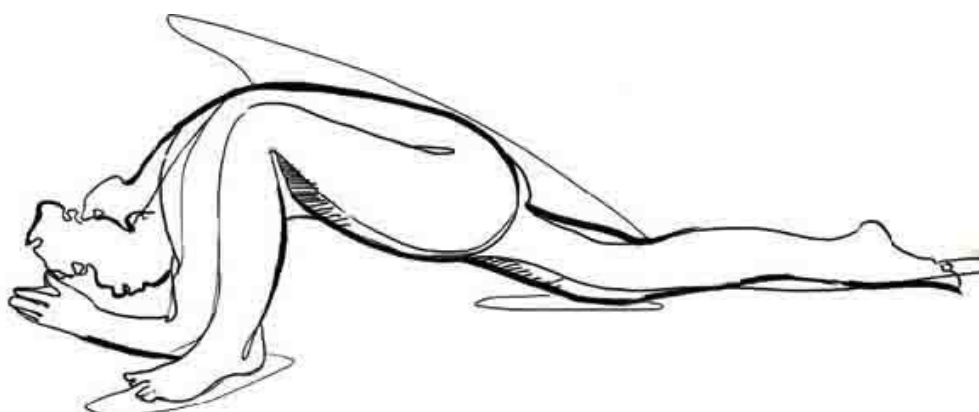
5. Dragon

3 minutes one side



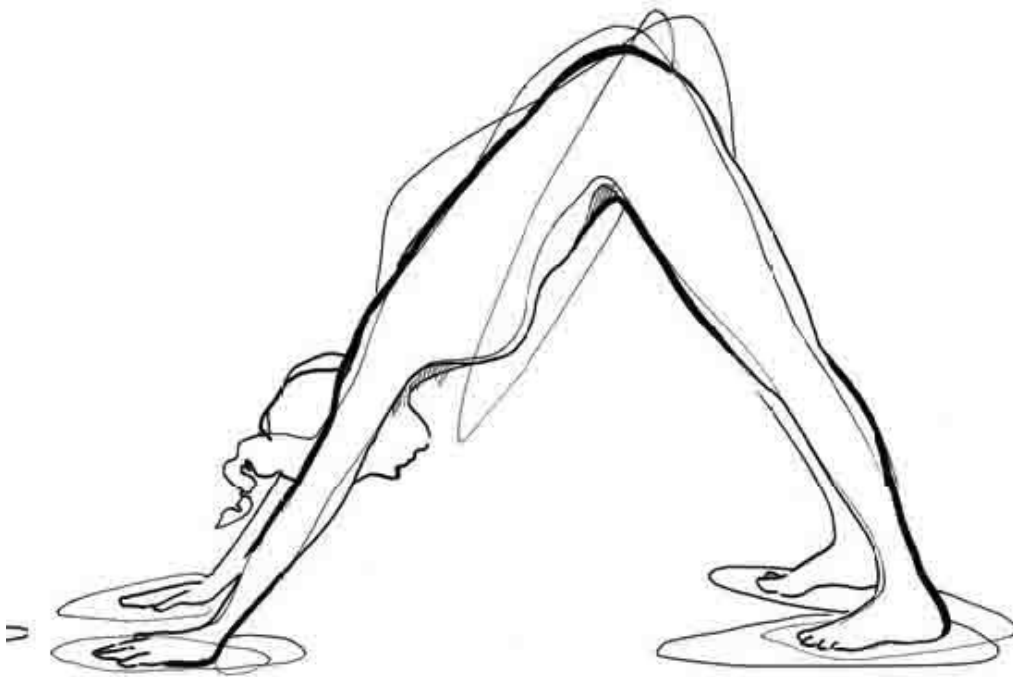
6. Down Dog

1 minute



7. Dragon

3 minutes other side



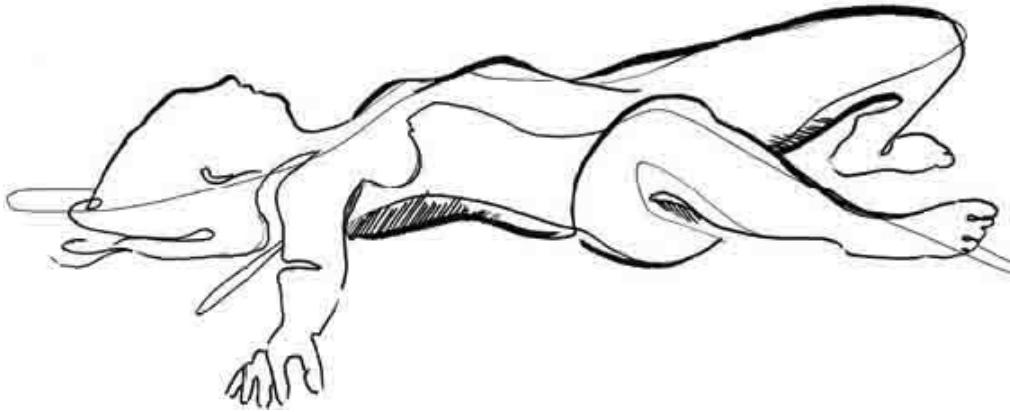
8. Down Dog

1 minute



9. Square

4 minutes each side



10. [Windshield Wipers](#)

1 minute



11. [Reclining Twist](#)

3 minutes each side



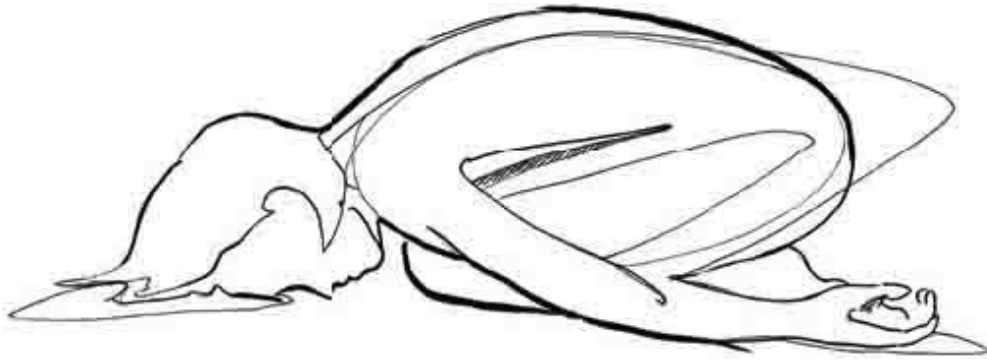
12. [Savasana](#)

7 minutes

Spring Detox

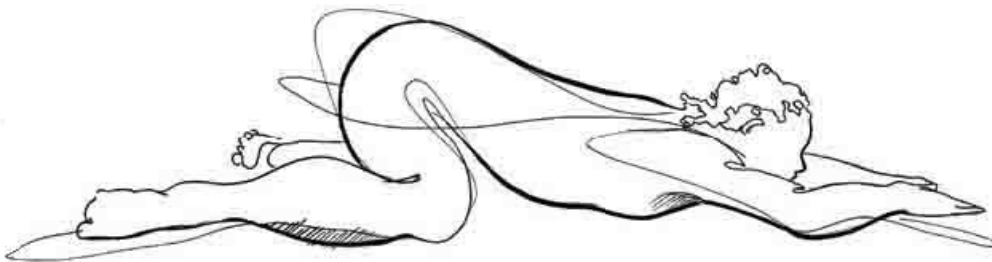
TIME: 45 minutes

Spring is the time for new beginnings and growth. In traditional Chinese medicine, spring is associated with the element of wood and with the liver and gallbladder meridians. The liver is not only responsible for filtering, detoxifying, and nourishing blood but also for controlling the flow of emotions. This yin sequence stimulates the liver and gallbladder lines to help you detox the body and eliminate stressful situations, experiences, and thoughts.



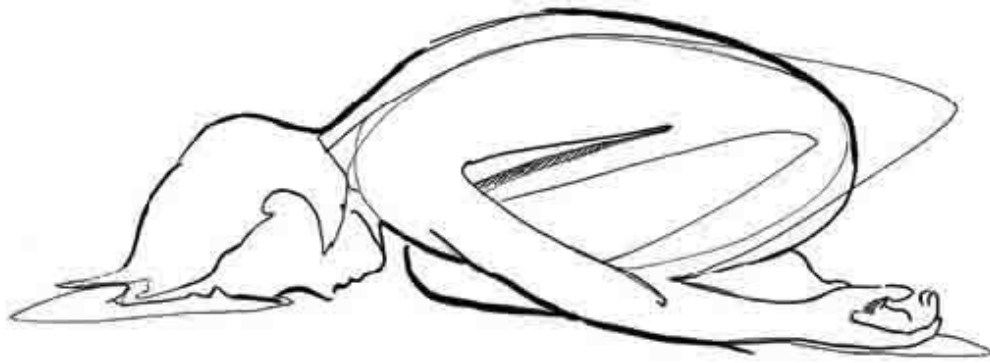
1. Child's Pose

3 minutes



2. Frog

5 minutes



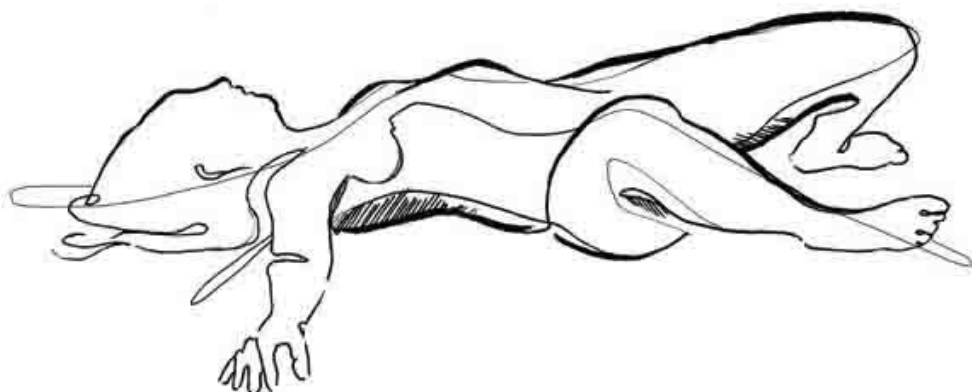
3. [Child's Pose](#)

1 minute



4. [Shoelace](#)

5 minutes each side



5. Windshield Wipers

1 minute



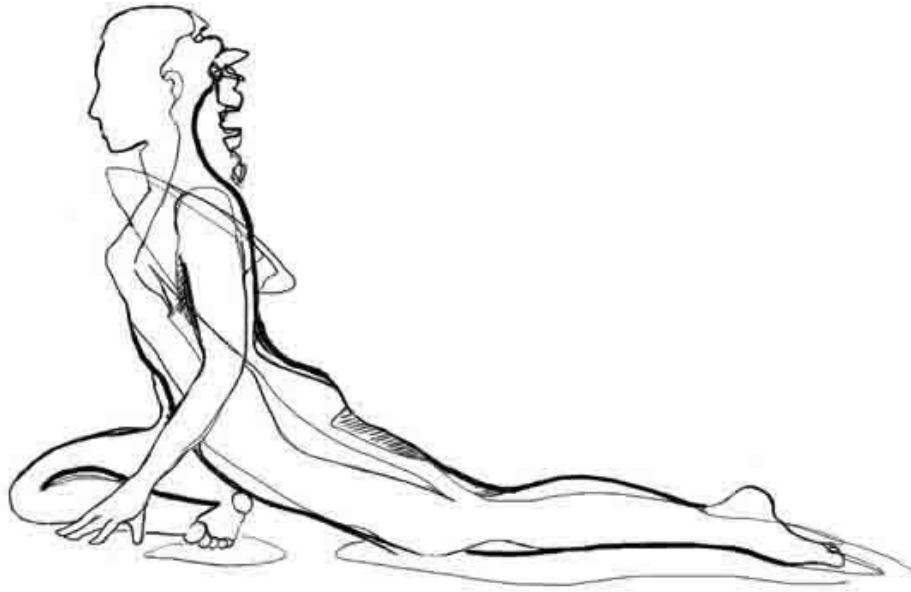
6. Swan

4 minutes one side



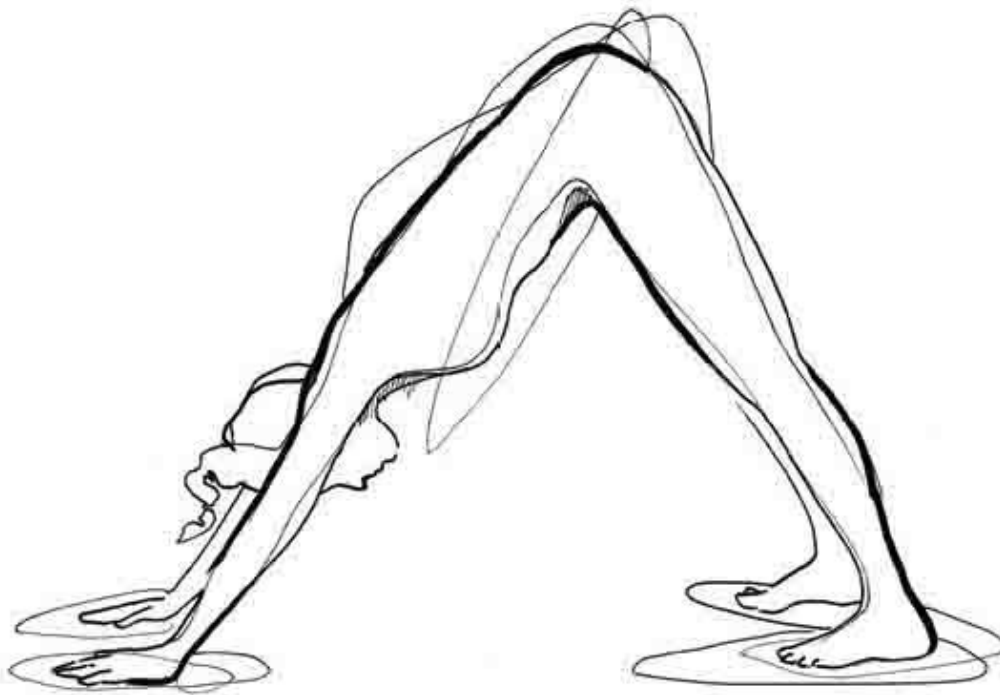
7. Down Dog

1 minute



8. [Swan](#)

4 minutes other side



9. [Down Dog](#)

1 minute



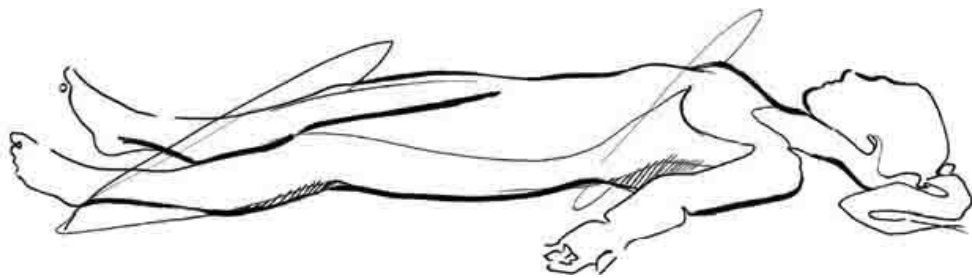
10. [Happy Baby.](#)

3 minutes



11 . [Reclining Twist](#)

3 minutes each side



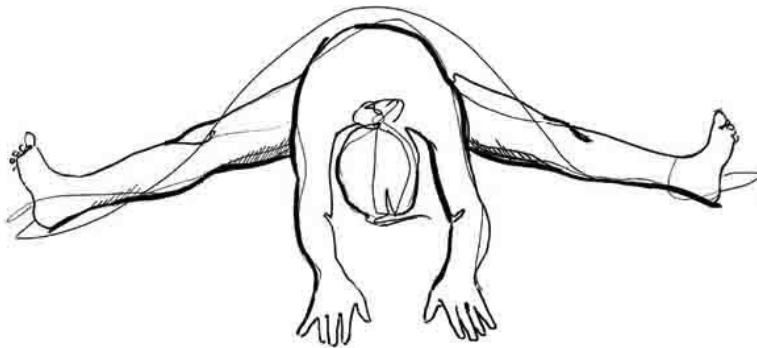
12 . [Savasana](#)

5 minutes

Summer Solstice

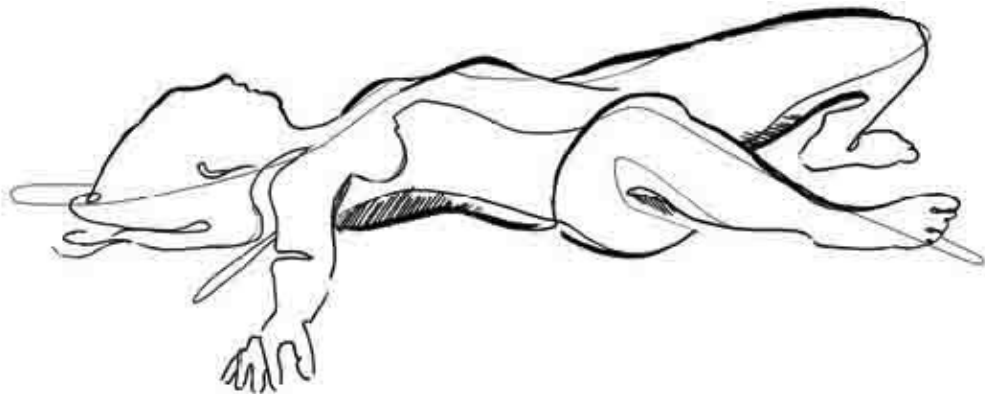
TIME: 45 minutes

Summer is the time for warmth. In traditional Chinese medicine, summer corresponds with the element of fire and the heart meridian, which runs along the chest and the inner and outer arms. In the following yin sequence, you'll explore heart-opening poses to cultivate feelings of peacefulness, happiness, and love to keep that internal thermostat cool.



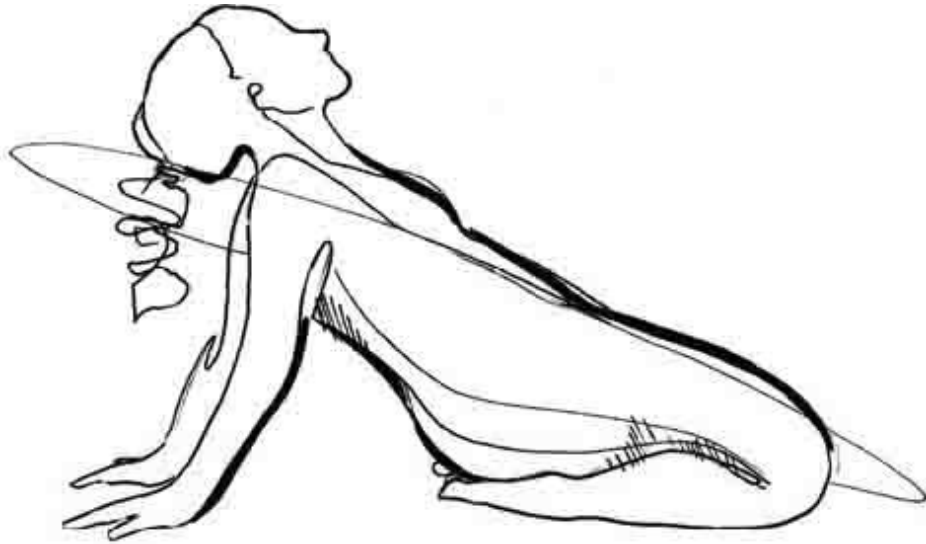
1. Straddle

3 minutes



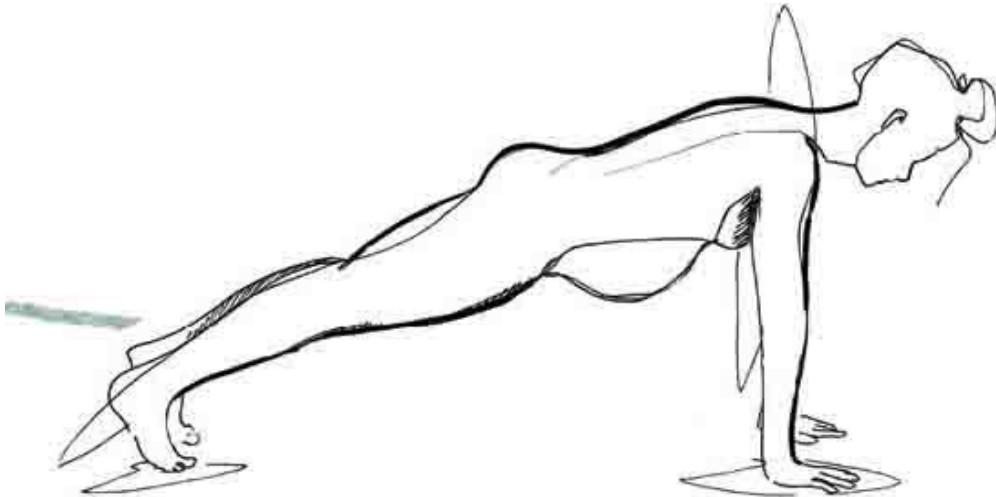
2. Windshield Wipers

1 minute



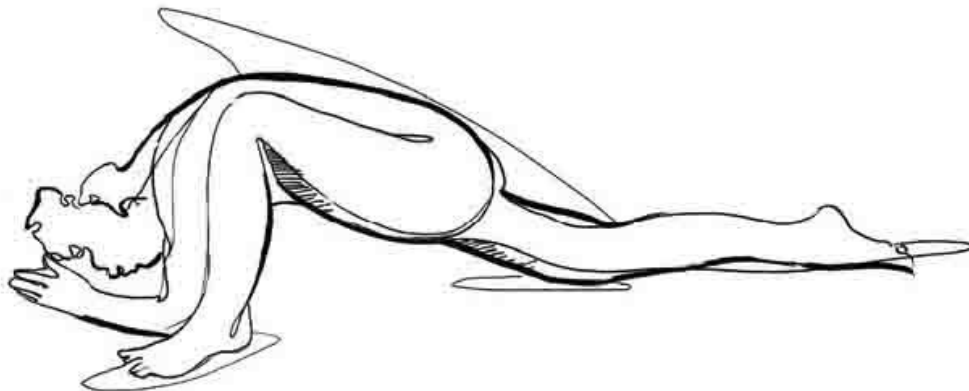
3. [Saddle](#)

2 minutes



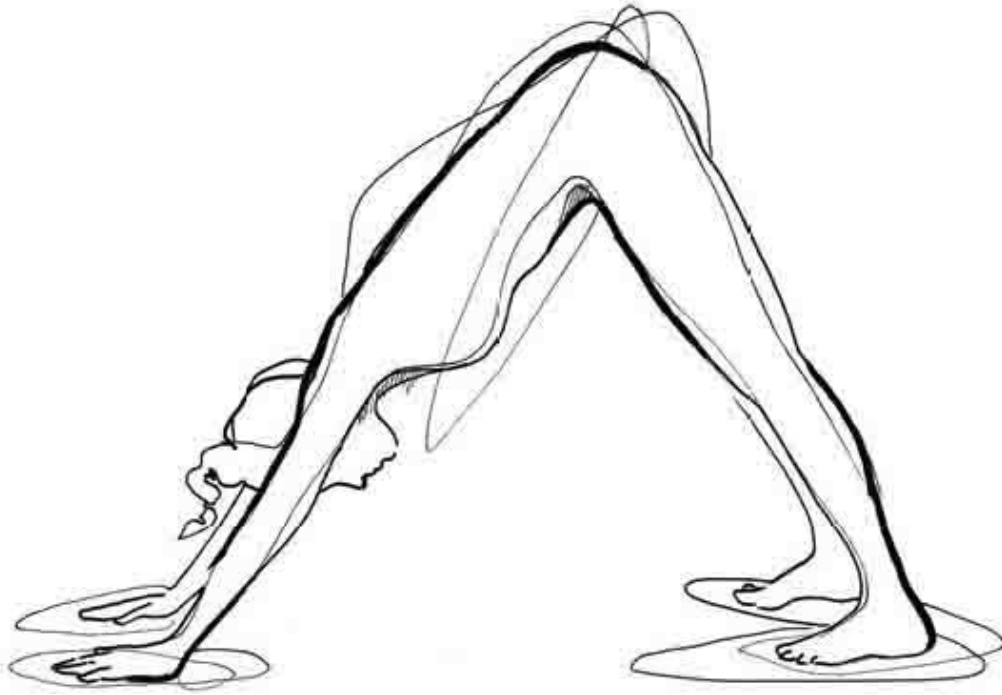
4. [Crocodile](#)

1 minute or 3 repetitions



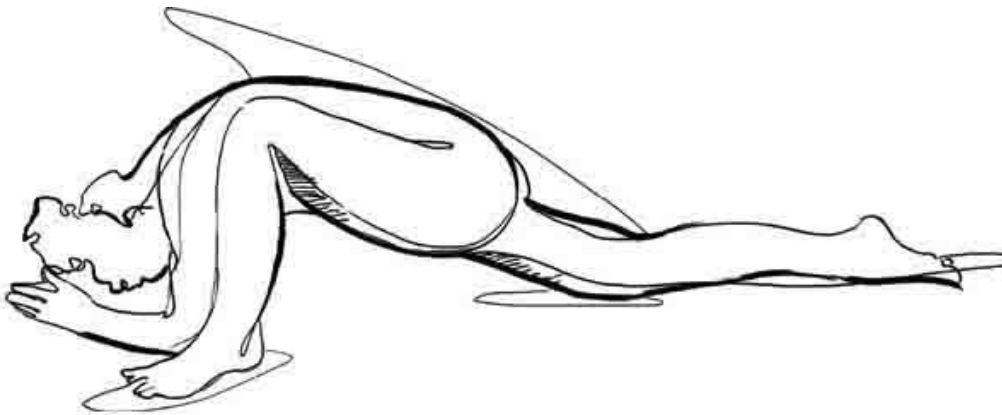
5. [Dragon](#)

3 minutes one side



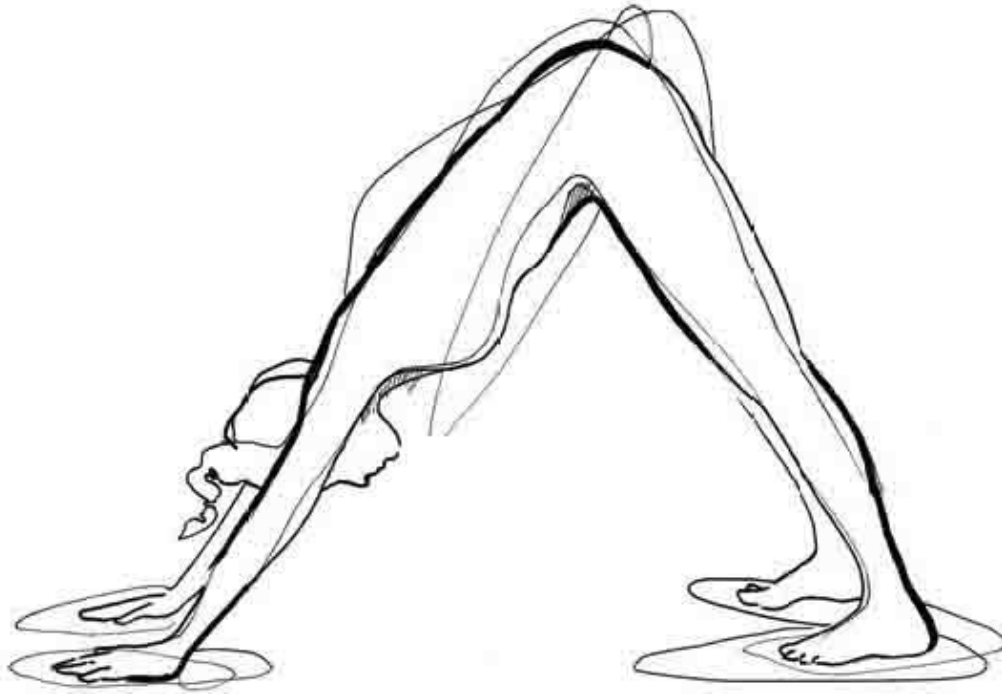
6. [Down Dog](#)

1 minute



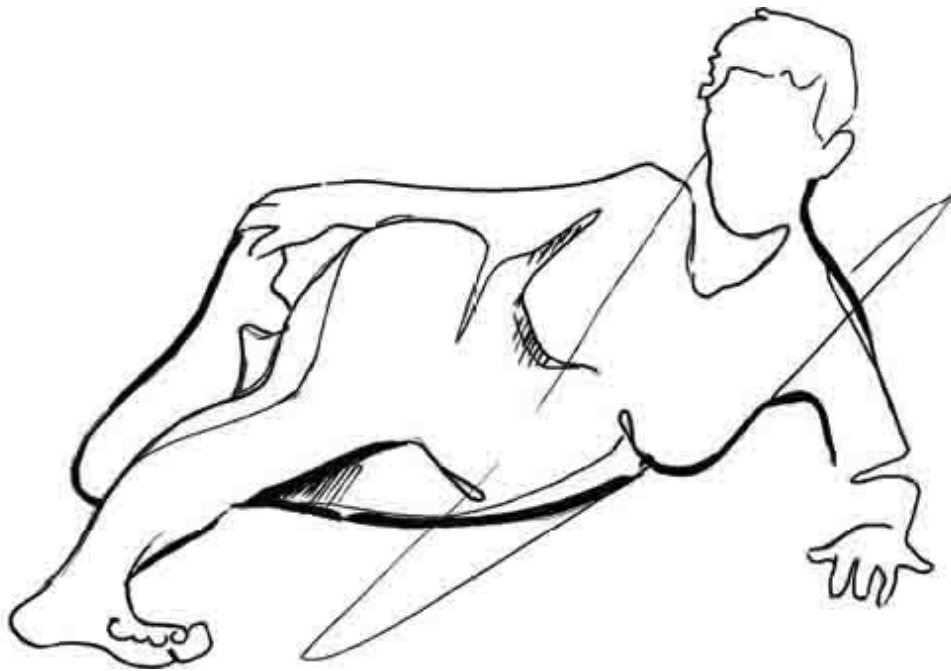
7. [Dragon](#)

3 minutes other side



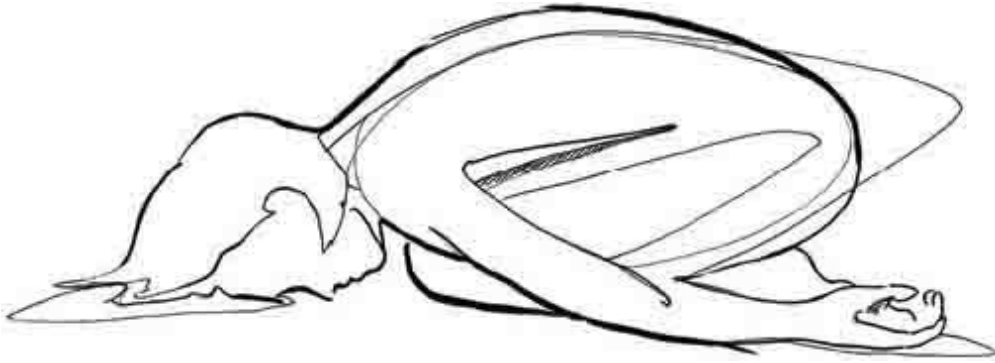
8. [Down Dog](#)

1 minute



9. [Cat Pulling Its Tail](#)

3 minutes each side



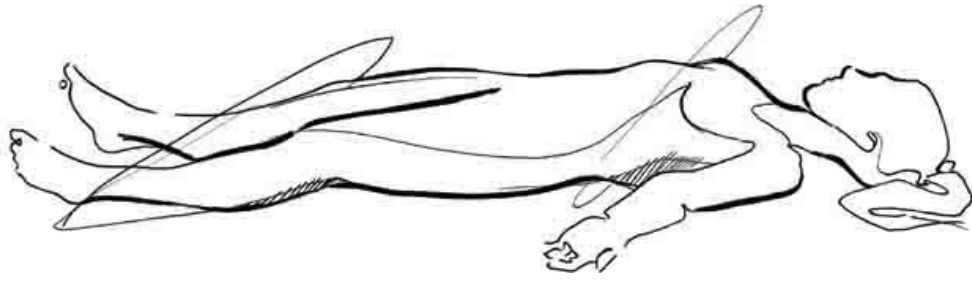
10. [Child's Pose](#)

1 minute



11. [Reclining Twist](#)

3 minutes each side



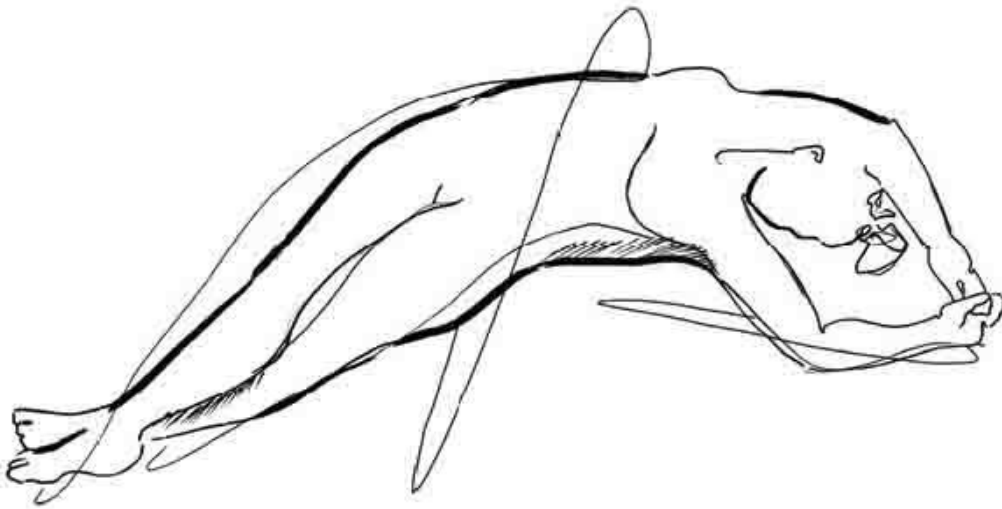
12. [Savasana](#)

7 minutes

Summer Cooler

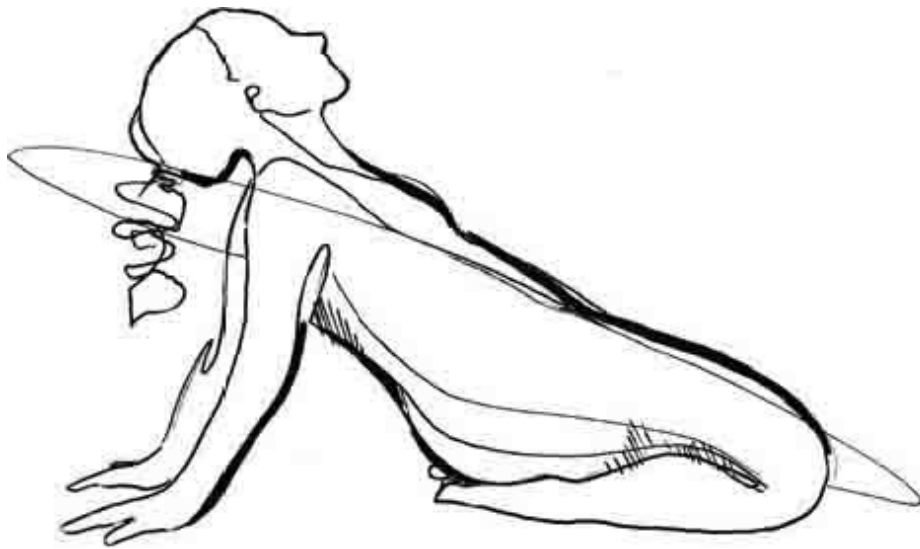
TIME: 45 minutes

Traditional Chinese medicine includes a fifth season: late summer. It lasts between four and six weeks, and its corresponding energetic element is earth. This season is also associated with the stomach and spleen meridians. Just as the earth provides nourishment to all its inhabitants, the stomach and spleen provide nourishment to the body. In the following yin sequence, you will take time to relish postures that decrease chronic stress and anxiety and increase feelings of stability.



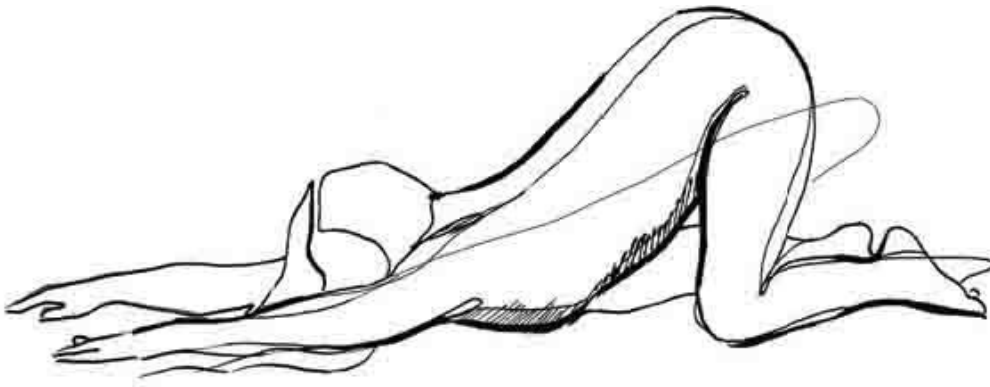
1. Bananasana

3 minutes each side



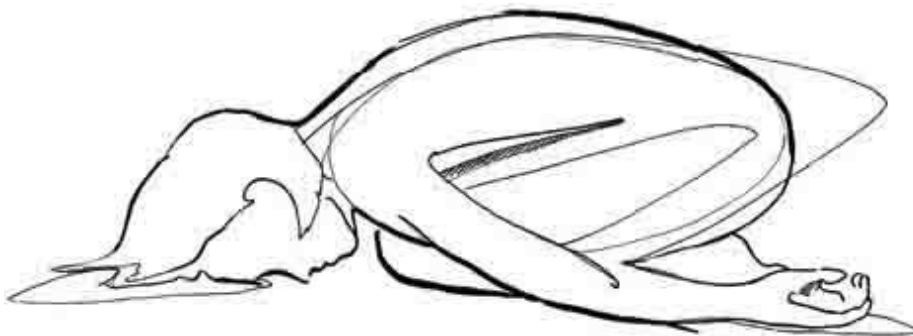
2. [Saddle](#)

5 minutes



3. [Melting Heart](#)

5 minutes



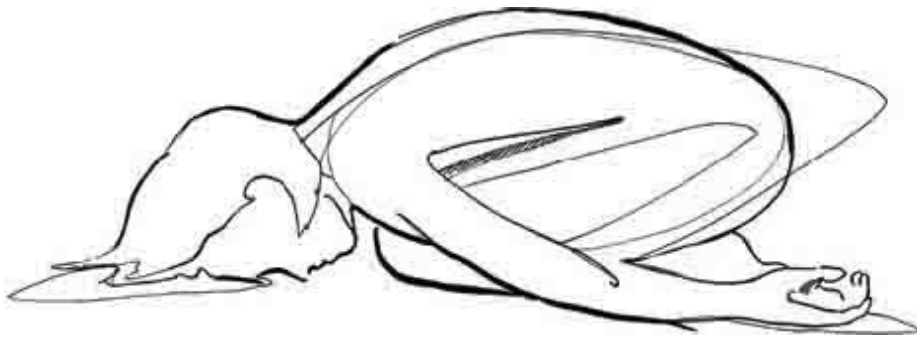
4. [Child's Pose](#)

1 minute



5. [Camel](#)

1-2 minutes



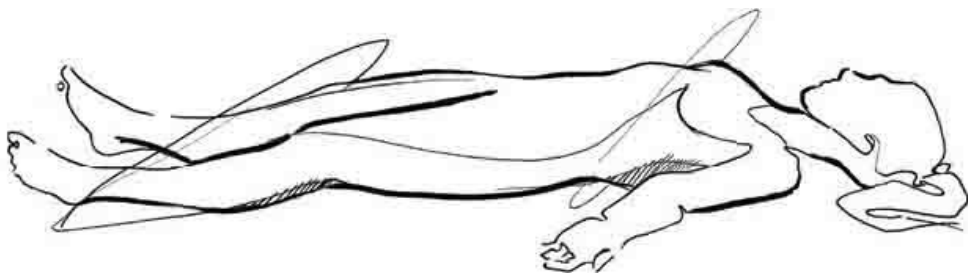
6. [Child's Pose](#)

1 minute



7. [Reclining Twist](#)

3 minutes each side



8. [Savasana](#)

10 minutes

Fall Flow

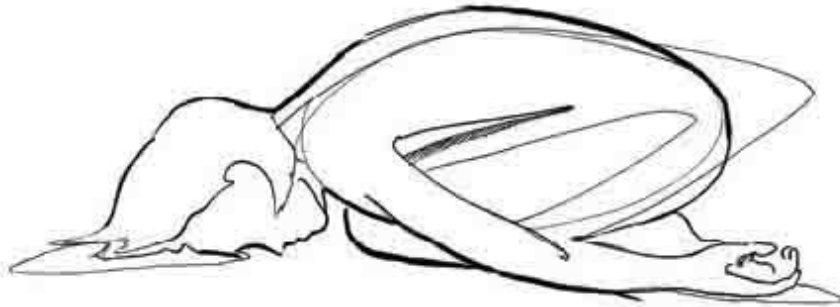
TIME: 30 minutes

According to traditional Chinese medicine, autumn holds the energy of metal and corresponds to the lung meridian. Just as the lungs facilitate breathing in and breathing out, the following yin yoga sequence stimulates the lungs and the chest cavity to allow us to take in transformation and send out what is no longer needed in our lives.



1. Melting Heart

2 minutes

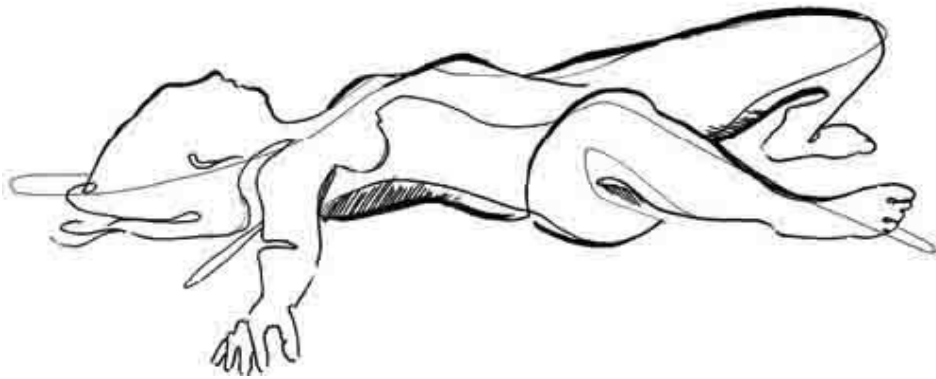


2. Child's Pose

1 minute



3. [Swan](#)
3 minutes each side

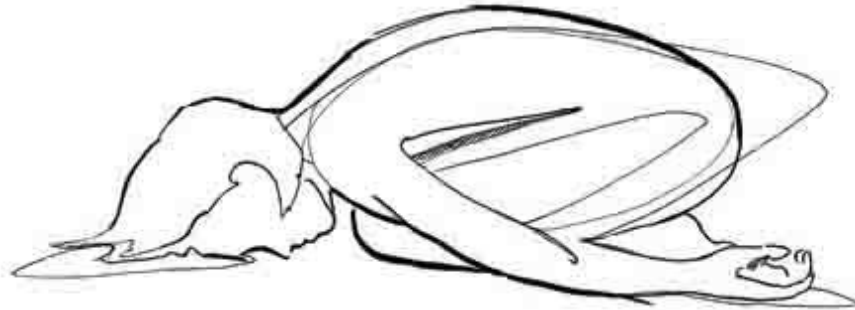


4. [Windshield Wipers](#)
1 minute



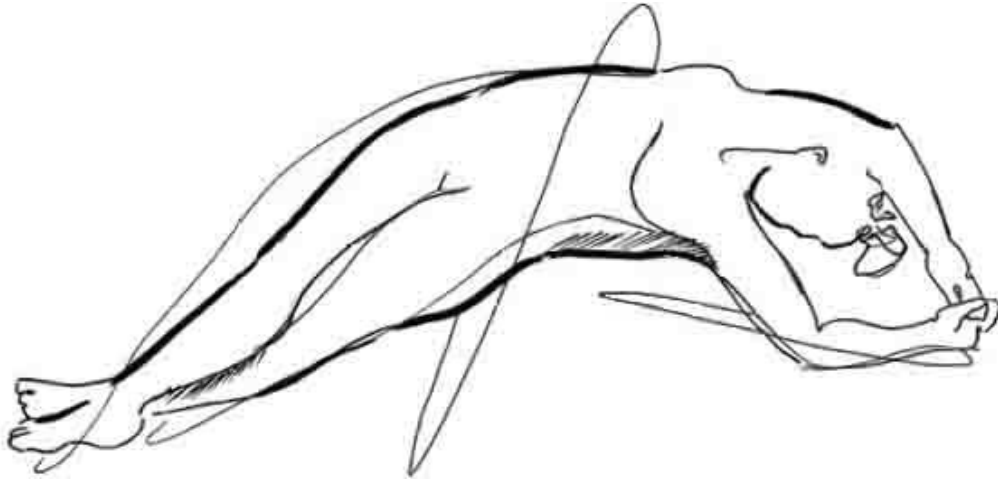
5. [Camel](#)

1-2 minutes



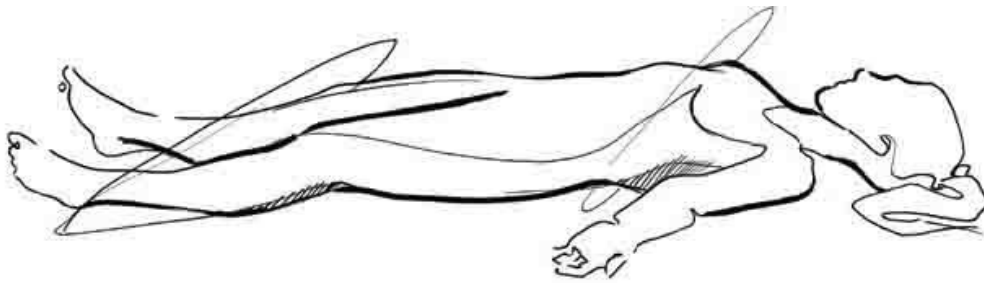
6. [Child's Pose](#)

1 minute



7. [Bananasana](#)

3 minutes each side



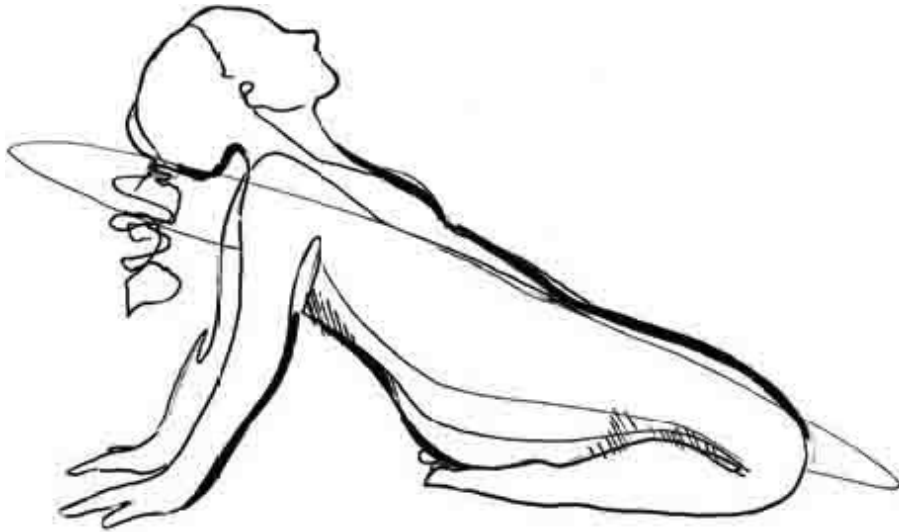
8. [Savasana](#)

7 minutes

Fall Inward

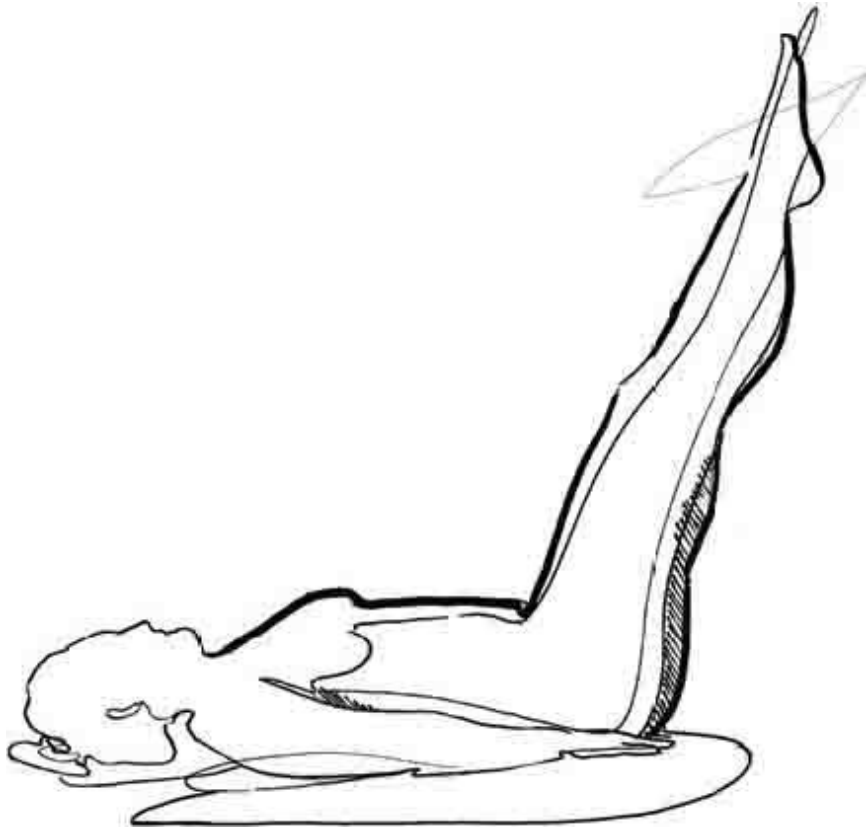
TIME: 45 minutes

After the long, warm days of summer when we tend to spend hours outside, fall is when we begin to go inward and prepare for the upcoming winter season. In addition to the lungs, the large intestine is also associated with the autumnal season in traditional Chinese medicine. One of the primary functions of the large intestine is to transport digestive waste to the rectum. When there is an imbalance in qi flowing through the large intestine, it can cause feelings of irritability and depression. The following sequence stimulates the large intestine and lungs to support the elimination of waste, the preservation of energy, and the improvement of respiration.



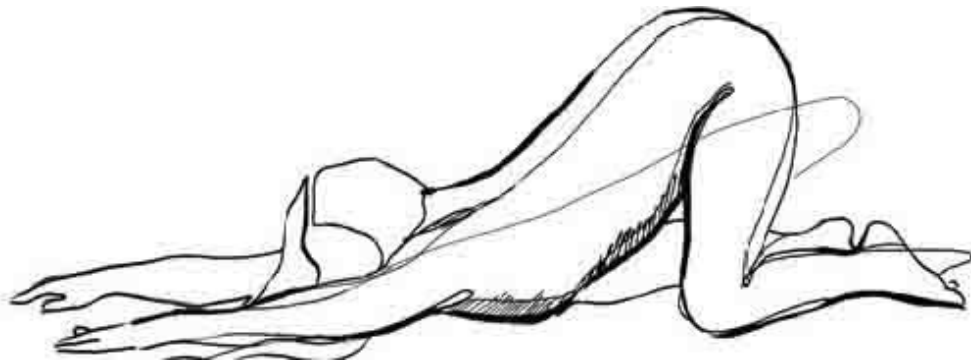
1. Saddle

3 minutes



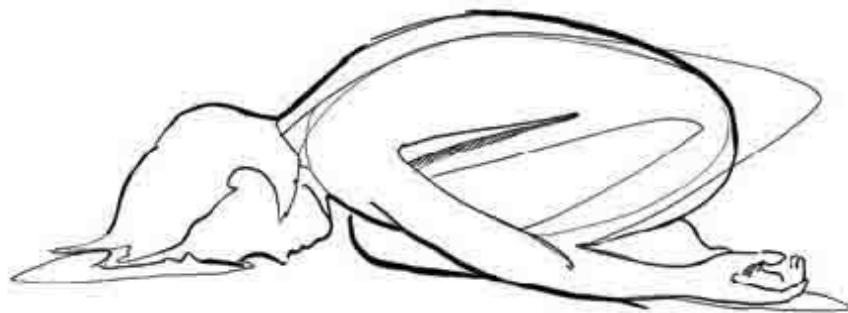
2. **Leg Raises**

1 minute or 5 repetitions



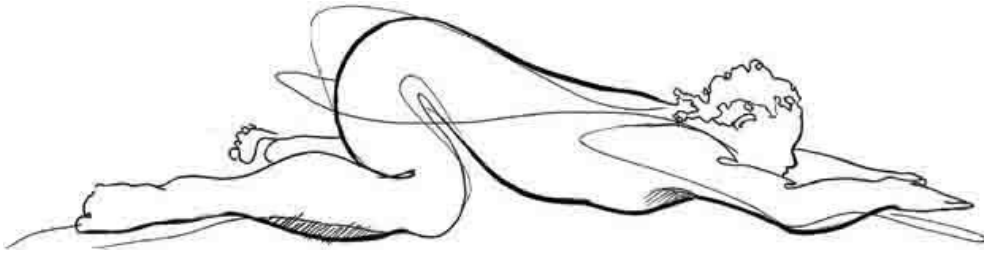
3. **Melting Heart**

3 minutes



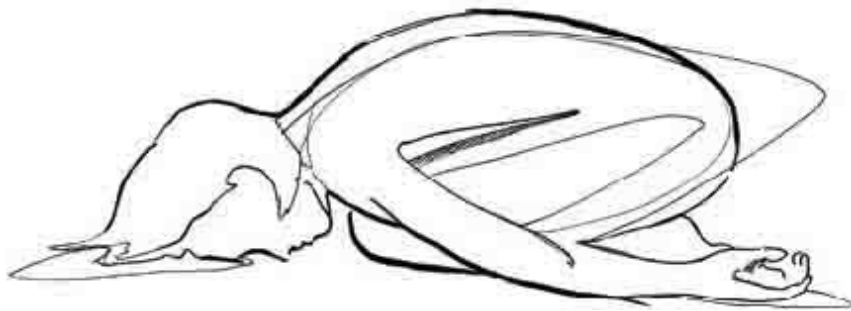
4. [Child's Pose](#)

1 minute



5. [Frog](#)

4 minutes



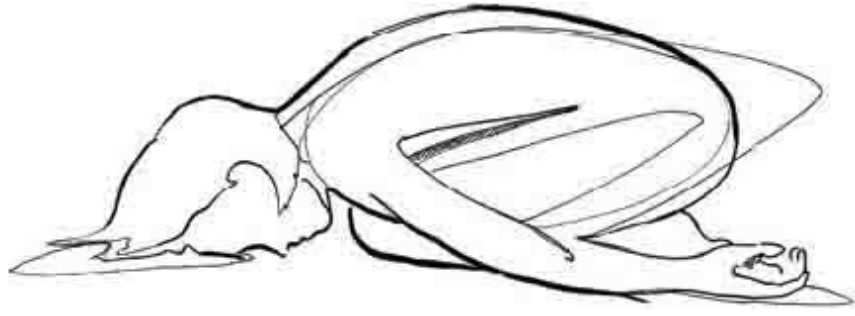
6. [Child's Pose](#)

1 minute



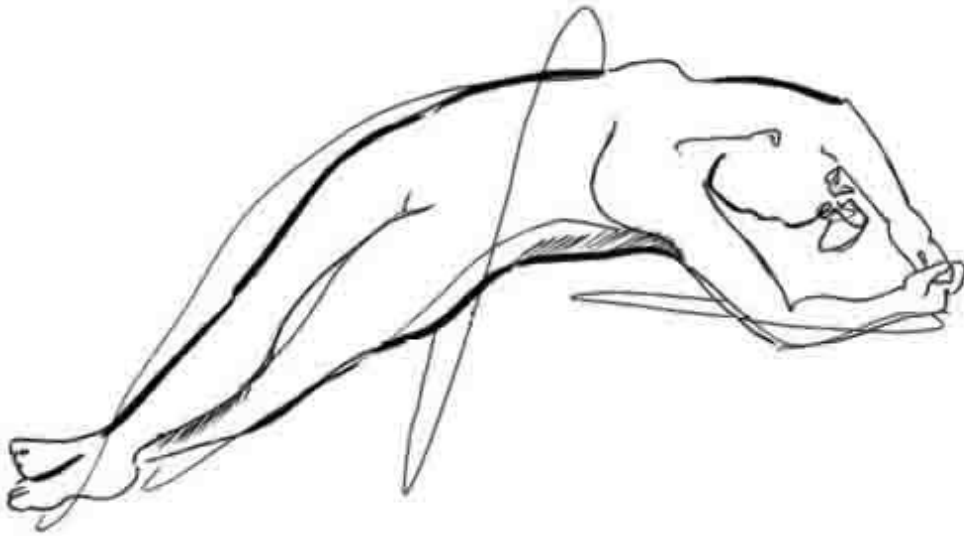
7. [Camel](#)

1 minute



8. [Child's Pose](#)

1 minute



9. [Bananasana](#)

5 minutes each side



10. [Reclining Twist](#)

3 minutes each side



11. [Savasana](#)

7 minutes

RESOURCES

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DIANE R. PAYLOR is a 500-hour Yoga Alliance registered yoga teacher. She teaches weekly hatha, yin, and vinyasa classes in South Los Angeles. She is also a volunteer yoga teacher for Youth Yoga LA, as well as for Prison Yoga + Meditation, where she teaches yoga in a federal prison. Diane is currently pursuing her yoga therapist certification via Loyola Marymount University's Yoga Therapy Rx program. Diane is committed to helping people in underserved communities discover how the practices of yoga and meditation can reduce stress and anxiety, build strength, and promote body positivity and acceptance. For more information about Diane, please visit www.mybodyandsoulyoga.com.