

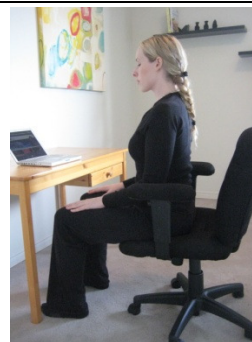
# Desk Yoga

Yes, it is possible to perform yoga while at your desk! In fact, depending on your desk setup, clothing, and the level of comfort with your co-workers, you can do almost an entire yoga practice right there in your workspace. Note: if you are wearing high-heels, consider removing them prior to beginning, as your feet are best placed flat on the floor. Also, if you do have an adjustable chair, make sure you are seated at comfortable height, knees in line with hips.

Here are six unique yoga poses that are achievable, even for a beginner to the practice of yoga. This will allow you to find your centre, stretch and de-stress without interrupting your productivity or cutting into your work schedule. It's convenient and easy to do, and also an effective way to reap the benefits of yoga on a tight time-line with limited resources. You may use these poses individually or use all 6 in a row for a complete desk yoga session.

## Pose #1: The Beginning Pose

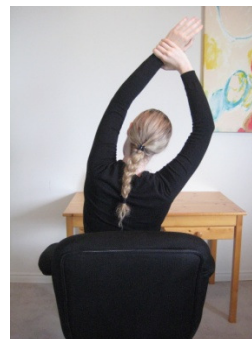
To begin, sit on the edge of a chair with your feet placed squarely on the floor, about hip distance apart. Place your palms flat on your thighs, and feel length in your spine with head balanced over heart, heart balanced over hips. Inhale and exhale evenly for five counts each. Repeat as many times as you'd like. Use the photo as a guide for this posture.



## Pose #2: Side Stretches

Carrying out this pose is something that our bodies often have the sense to do naturally. Sitting for long periods of time focused on a task, we often feel the urge to reach up and stretch out our backs, chest and shoulders. Our bodies are telling us we need to lengthen and open up. This stretch focuses on just that, while also lengthening our left and right sides.

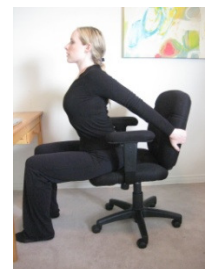
Similar to pose #1, you will begin by sitting up straight at your desk, feet flat on the floor approximately hip distance apart. Inhale and lift your arms overhead, taking hold of your left wrist with your right hand. As you exhale, bend gently to the right. Stay there for three breaths. With the exhale of each breath, try to sink slightly deeper into the stretch. Following the right side, come back up to vertical and change wrists. Exhale, and bend to the left. Stay there for three breaths again. Repeat the same on the left side by again, sinking deeper into the stretch with each exhale. Inhale back up to a tall spine. Exhale, and release your arms. Use the photo as a guide for this posture.



## Pose #3: The High Backbend

Our shoulders are not meant to be worn as earrings yet we tend to hunch while working at the desk – often without noticing. This exercise will help loosen up your neck and shoulders and prevent them from creeping up and causing strain. It is also a great chest stretch.

As with the first two poses, begin again by sitting straight up, shoulders back with your feet flat on the floor, hip distance apart. Circle your shoulders a few times, rolling them up, back and down. On the fourth roll, interlace your fingers behind your back with your arms as straight as you are able to make them. If you do not have room behind you, reach back and hold onto the outside edges of the back of your chair. Upon exhaling, lift your chest, making a high backbend. Open up your chest and enjoy the stretch. Stay here and draw three full, rich breaths into your body. Use the photo series as a guide (including options) for this posture.



### Pose #4: The Seated Cat

This pose is the reverse stretch from the high backbend. You may carry it out directly following pose #3, or in isolation. You may find a natural inclination to do them together as they are stretching opposing muscle groups.

Begin by sitting up tall, feet flat on the floor approximately hip distance apart. Be sure that you are balanced, sitting directly over your hips. Take a deep breath and as you exhale, place your hands on your knees and round your spine. Tuck your pelvis and pull your navel away from your knees, coming into what is called the seated cat pose. Breathe deeply and feel the broadness of the back body. Let your head dangle to open the back of the neck. Continue to breathe slowly, in and out, allowing yourself to really feel the stretch. Also, notice your shoulders and ensure that they are relaxed, not hunched up toward your ears. Use the photo as a guide for this posture.



### Pose #5: The Forward Bend - An Inversion

This stretch begins the same way as the Seated Cat, but then goes even deeper, toward the floor into what is called an inversion. This is adapted from the standing forward bend. Note: you will want to push your desk back, away from your desk slightly, in order to give yourself the necessary room to carry out this pose.

To begin, make sure you are seated over top of your hips with your feet flat on the floor, approximately hip distance apart. Slowly fold forward, letting your upper body fall through your thighs. You may be able to reach the floor with your palms flat or if not, try to hold onto your ankles or shins. The idea is to let your head drop lower than your hips as this is an inversion. Be sure to keep breathing gently. You should feel a slight stretch throughout the backside of your thighs. Use the photo series as a guide for this pose and modifications.



### Pose #6: The Twist

This pose serves as an excellent stretch for back, chest and neck. Be sure to move into this pose gently, to ensure each section of your upper body is adequately engaged in the posture.

Begin with the initial posture you have seen repeated throughout this series, sitting up straight, and feet flat on the floor - hip distance apart. You may also perform pose #6 as a continuation to the inversion pose, by inhaling and slowly rolling up. Find the length in your spine. As you exhale, twist to the right. You can place your left hand on the outside of your right thigh or alternatively, your right hand on the back of your chair. Keeping good posture in mind, check to make sure that your right armpit-chest area is lifted. Remember to include your head in the twist as well as to not cause any unwanted directional strain. As you look over your right shoulder, move your eyes to the upper right corner of your eyes and then the lower right corner. Repeat this eye exercise two times. Then close your eyes as you untwist back to center. Repeat to the other side. This pose is designed to take five minutes or less and you will find it to be quite revitalizing. Use the photo as a guide to help you carry out this pose.

