

# Week 1: Desk Yoga



## What is Yoga?

**Yoga = moving and stationary poses + deep breathing**

## Benefits of Yoga

- ▶ Reduces anxiety and stress
- ▶ Improves flexibility, strength, balance, and stamina
- ▶ Strengthens relaxation response



## Desk Yoga

**Yes, it is possible to perform yoga at your desk!** In fact, depending on your desk setup, clothing, and level of comfort with your co-workers, you can do almost an entire yoga practice in your workspace.

Here are *six* yoga poses that are achievable, even for beginners. The poses will allow you to **stretch** and **de-stress** without interrupting your productivity.

### Instructions

Perform the poses individually or all six in a row for a complete desk yoga session. Use the photo as a guide. **Try them today!**

### Pose 1: The Beginning Pose

1. Sit on the edge of a chair. Sit tall, feet flat on floor (hip width).
2. Place your palms on your thighs.
3. Feel length in your spine with head balanced over heart and heart balanced over hips.
4. Inhale and exhale evenly for 5 counts each.
5. Repeat as desired.



### Pose 2: Side Stretch

After sitting for long periods of time you may feel the urge to reach up and stretch your back, chest, and shoulders. Your body is telling you to *lengthen* and *open up*

1. Sit on the edge of a chair. Sit tall, feet flat on floor (hip width).
2. Inhale and lift arms overhead. Take hold of your left wrist with your right hand.
3. Exhale and bend gently to the right. Hold for 3 breaths.
4. Return to vertical and switch wrists.
5. Exhale and bend gently to the left. Hold for 3 breaths.
6. Exhale and release arms.



### Pose 3: The High Back Bend

Your shoulders are not meant to be worn as earrings. Yet, we often hunch while working at a desk – often without noticing. This exercise will help loosen your *neck* and *shoulders* preventing strain.

1. Sit on the edge of a chair. Sit tall, feet flat on floor (hip width).
2. Circle your shoulders (3X) – roll up, back, and down.
3. Interlock fingers behind your back.
4. Exhale. Lift your chest to form a high back bend.
5. Open up your chest and enjoy the stretch.
6. Maintain position. Take 3 full breathes.

*Options:* Hold on to back outside edge of your chair.



### Pose 4: The Seated Cat

This pose is the opposite of Pose 3. You may perform directly after Pose 3, or in isolation.

1. Sit on the edge of a chair. Sit tall, feet flat on floor (hip width).
2. Inhale deeply. Exhale, place hands on knees, and round spine.
3. Tuck your pelvis and pull navel away from your knees.
4. Breathe deeply. Let your head dangle to open back of neck.
5. Continue to breathe slowly and allow yourself to feel the stretch.

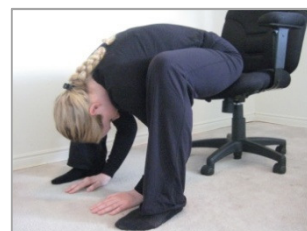


### Pose 5: The Forward Bend (Inversion)

This stretch begins the same way as The Seated Cat, but moves deeper towards floor into inversion.

*Note:* You will need to move away from your desk in order to give yourself the room needed for this stretch.

1. Sit on the edge of chair. Sit tall, feet flat on floor (hip width).
2. Slowly fold forward. Let your upper body fall through your hips.
3. Hold on to ankles or shins. If possible, place palms on floor.
4. Maintain gently breathing.
5. Feel a slight stretch on the backside of your thighs.



### Pose 6: The Twist

This pose is a great stretch for your *back*, *chest*, and *neck*. Move into this pose **gently** to ensure each section of your upper body is engaged. You may perform Pose 6 as a continuation of Pose 5.

1. Sit on the edge of chair. Sit tall, feet flat on floor (hip width).
2. Find length in your spine. Exhale. Twist to the left.
3. Place right hand on outside of left thigh and left hand on chair.
4. Move eyes to upper right corner and then lower right corner.
5. Repeat the eye exercise (2X). Close eyes and untwist to center.
6. Repeat on opposite side.

*Note:* Include head in the twist to prevent unwanted strain.

