

Yoga Sequence for Mild Depression



1. Cow Pose

An easy, gentle way to warm up the spine.

On your hands and knees, place your hands shoulder-width apart and directly under your shoulders. Place your knees hip-width apart underneath your hips. On an inhale, lift your tailbone and drop your belly, open your chest, and look up.



2. Cat Pose

Provides a gentle massage to the spine and belly organs.

As you exhale, point your feet and press your shins and tops of feet down as you round your spine. As you press in, push middle back toward ceiling.



3. Extended Puppy Pose (Uttana Shishosana)

Useful for lengthening the spine and calming the mind.

On hands and knees, place your hips over your knees and walk your hands forward, resting your forehead on the floor. If your forehead does not reach the floor, use padding. Energize your hands and forearms so your elbows stay lifted. Inhale and exhale as you ground into your hands and relax your head and forehead.



4. Downward Facing Dog Pose (Adho Mukha Svanasana)

From the Extended Puppy Pose, begin to apply pressure to your hands. Raise your head, gradually lift your hips and straighten your legs, with your heels energetically reaching toward the floor, allowing your spine to extend. If your hamstrings are tight, bend your knees. Gradually inhale and exhale as you settle into the pose.



5. Standing Forward Bend (Uttanasana)

Inhale, with a slight bend in your knees, and exhale as you allow your torso and spine to drip forward over your legs. Depending on the flexibility of your hamstrings, straighten your legs (if your hamstrings are tight, bend your knees). Remember to continue to relax your neck and head. Place hands on the floor or wrap them behind your calves. If your hands do not rest comfortably on the floor, use a prop (i.e., cushion) to rest your hands on. Then continue breathing.



6. Wide-Legged Forward Bend (Prasarita Padottanasana I)

Stand with your feet a little wider than hips width apart. With your feet parallel to each other, place your hands on your hips. On an inhale, lift your chest and extend your torso. As you exhale, from your hips tip your torso forward, moving your torso from being extended parallel to the floor to moving in toward your legs. Place your hands directly below your shoulders and allow your head to relax. Continue to breath. As you are coming out place your hand on your hips for additional support.



7. Bridge Pose (Setu Bandha Sarvangasana)

Lie down on your back. Bend your knees and place your feet hips-distance apart, with feet parallel to each other facing the top of the mat, and your heels close to the sitting bones of your butt. Inhale, press into your feet and raise your hips, move your arms in underneath your body and clasp your hands, interlacing your fingers, pressing your hands and upper arms into the floor. Exhale. Remember to keep your knees over your toes and move your inner thighs toward each other. If the clasping of the hands is too much pressure on your shoulders, release the hold and allow your hands to rest at your side. You can also place a block, cushion, or blanket beneath your sacrum (the spot on your lower back above the tailbone). Continue with the pattern of inhalations and exhalations.



8. Easy Pose (Sukhasana)

Take a seated, cross-legged position that is comfortable for you, typically with the shin of one leg crossing the other. Place your hands on your thighs with your elbows directly underneath your shoulders. Sit up on a blanket to allow your spine to extend upward with more ease. As you inhale, allow your chest to rise as the spine extends, and exhale firming in your seat. Continue breathing and then switch the crossing of the legs, placing the leg that was on the bottom on top.



9. Half Lord of the Fishes (Ardha Matsyendrasana)

Extend both legs in front of you while seated. Bend your right knee and place your right foot to the outside of your left leg. Take your left arm and hug your right knee into your chest. Extend your right arm in front of you and gradually revolve your arm to the right and behind you, placing it behind your back. Bend your left leg (so that your left knee is almost underneath your right knee) and place your left foot near your right buttock. Make sure your grounding evenly through both sides of your buttock - if not, keep your left leg extended straight. Inhale, grounding into your seat and hugging your right knee into the chest. Exhale, twisting toward the right. Continue breathing, extending, and twisting as far as is comfortable. Remember to do the other side.



10. Head-to-Knee Forward Bend (Janu Sirsasana)

Extend both legs in front of you while seated. Bend your right knee back to a 90 degree angle and square your torso over the extended leg. The sole of your right foot is resting in your upper left thigh. Your extended leg is active with foot flexed and quadriceps active. Begin to bend forward by tipping the pelvis, leading with your chest, not your arms. Take hold of your extended foot or ankle, if it is available. After several breaths, do the other side.



11. Legs-Up-The-Wall (Viparita Karani)

Place your right hip against a wall, then lean back with spine grounded into the floor. Now extend your legs up the wall. If your hamstrings are tight, move further away from the wall and/or bend your knees at the wall. Your arms can rest at your side, above your head, or place your hands on your stomach. Breathe into the pose.



12. Corpse Pose (Savasana)

Sit on the floor with your knees bent, lower your legs, and gradually roll your back down to the floor. Extend your arms down by your side, a few inches away from your upper body, spread your legs a bit wider than hips-distance and allow your feet to flap open. Rest the center of your head into the floor, and allow the floor to support the full weight of your body. Inhale and exhale as your body is supported by the floor.