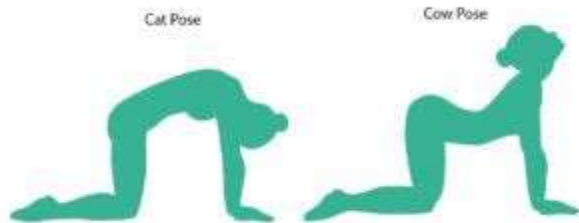


# Yoga Flow to Help with Menopause

## Cat/cow (*chakravakasana*)



1. Come to all fours with your shoulders stacked over your wrists and your hips stacked over your knees.
2. Ground down through your palms.
3. As you inhale, tilt your tailbone up, drop your belly, and lift your gaze slightly up without bunching the back of the neck. (This is the “cow” half.)
4. As you exhale, tuck your tailbone, curl and round your spine, and bring your gaze toward your belly button. (This is the “cat” half.)
5. Repeat for at least three breaths.

### **Benefits**

Cat-cow is a great warm-up stretch. It involves flexing and extending the spine, which helps get all those spinal vertebrae loosened up. This can help improve posture, as you open up the chest and shoulders.

It is also a good pose to help relieve back pain and tension

## Crescent Lunge Pose (*Anjaneyasana*)

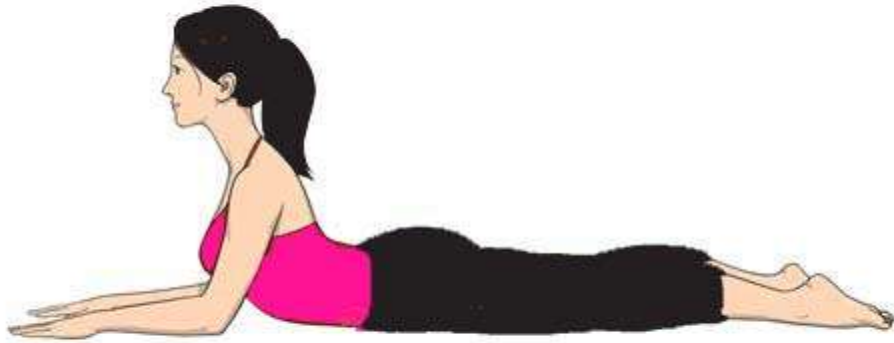


1. From cat cow come back to all fours. Step your right foot forward and drop your left knee to the mat.
2. Bring your hands onto your right knee and your right knee directly over your right ankle.
3. Inhale and raise your arms above your head, keeping the arms in line with your ears.
4. To deepen into the lunge press firmly into your feet as you allow your hips to shift forward. You may take the upper spine into a backbend if that feels comfortable.
5. Exhale to release the hands down, reframe the front foot, and release the pose.
6. Repeat on the left side.
7. Come back to all fours slide forward onto the stomach for Sphinx Pose

### **Benefits**

Crescent Lunge Pose stretches the hip flexors and quadriceps. It is also a heart-opening pose and is considered to be energizing

## Sphinx Pose (*Salamba Bhujangasana*)



Lie on your stomach on your yoga mat and push your pubic bone towards the earth. Place your elbows directly underneath your shoulder blades.

2. Press the tops of your feet onto the mat and engage your kneecaps and quadriceps.

3. On an inhalation, press firmly into the palms of your hands and forearms and lift your upper body. Create space between your neck and shoulders and reach forward through the heart. Keep your gaze neutral and press yourself up to your comfort level.

4. Breathe deeply and consistently, sending your breath to any part of your body that feels tight. Let your forearms support you and hold the pose for up to one minute. Focus on your alignment and breath quality rather than the depth of your backbend. After practicing sphinx pose, you move into child's pose to counter the backbend

### **Benefits**

- Strengthens the spine
- Stretches the back and relieves back pain
- Expands the lungs
- Stimulates digestion
- Soothes the nervous system

## Child's Pose (*Balāsana*)



1. Come to your hands and knees
2. Spread your knees as wide as your mat, keeping the tops of your feet on the floor with the big toes touching.
3. Rest your belly between your thighs and root your forehead to the floor. Relax the shoulders, jaw, and eyes. If it is not comfortable to place the forehead on the floor, rest it on a block or two stacked fists.
4. Stretch your arms in front of you with the palms toward the floor or bring your arms back alongside your thighs with the palms facing upwards.
5. Stay as long as you like, eventually reconnecting with the steady inhales and exhales of your breath.

### **Benefits**

Child's Pose is a gentle stretch for the shoulders, back, hips, thighs, neck, and ankles. It can help relieve back pain. It can promote deep breathing, mindfulness, and relaxation.

## Downward Facing Dog (*Adho Mukha Svānāsana*)



1. Come to your hands and knees with your wrists underneath the shoulders and your knees underneath the hips.
2. Curl your toes under and push back through your hands to lift your hips and straighten your legs.

3. Spread your fingers and ground down from the forearms into the fingertips.
4. Outwardly rotate your upper arms to broaden the collarbones.
5. Let your head hang and move your shoulder blades away from your ears towards your hips.
6. Engage your quadriceps strongly to take the burden of your body's weight off your arms.
7. Rotate your thighs inward, keep your tail high, and sink your heels towards the floor.
8. Exhale and bend your knees to release and come back to your hands and knees.

## Benefits

This pose stretches the hamstrings and calves, and it strengthens the arms and legs. The pose also helps increase the strength of the external oblique abdominal muscles. It can also help to relieve back pain

## Warrior II (*Virabhadrasana II*)



From down dog come to tip toes and tip toe to the top of the mat. Bend the knees deeply and slowly roll up vertebrae by vertebrae coming to stand in Mountain Pose

1. Standing with your feet hip-distance apart and your arms at your sides. Let go of distractions. Notice the quality of your breath. Draw your awareness inward, to the center of your body. Turn to the left.
2. Exhale as you step your feet wide apart, about 4 to 5 feet. Check to ensure that your heels are aligned with each other.
3. Turn your right foot out 90 degrees, so your toes are pointing to the top of the mat.
4. Pivot your left foot slightly inwards. Your back toes should be at a 45-degree angle.
5. Lift through the arches of your feet, while rooting down through your ankles.
6. Raise your arms to the side to shoulder height, so they're parallel to the floor. Your arms should be aligned directly over your legs. With your palms facing down, reach actively from fingertip to fingertip.
7. On an exhalation, bend your front knee. Align your knee directly over the ankle of your front foot. Your front shin should be perpendicular to the floor. Sink your hips

- low, eventually bringing your front thigh parallel to the floor. Make sure your front shin stays vertical. Widen your stance as needed to make sure that your knee does not move forward past your ankle.
8. Press down through the outer edge of your back foot, and keep your back leg straight.
  9. Keep your torso perpendicular to the floor, with your head directly over your tailbone. Do not lean towards your front leg.
  10. Turn your head to gaze out across the tip of your right middle finger. Broaden across your collarbones and lengthen the space between your shoulder blades. Engage your triceps. Drop your shoulders and lift your chest.
  11. Draw your belly in toward your spine. Keep your torso open, not turned toward the front leg.
  12. Hold for up to one minute.
  13. To release, inhale as you press down through your back foot and straighten your front leg. Lower your arms. Turn to the left, reversing the position of your feet, and repeat for the same length of time on the opposite side.

## Benefits

A powerful stretch for the legs, groins, and chest, *it* also increases stamina. It helps to relieve backaches and stimulates healthy digestion.

### Wide leg forward fold (*Prasarita Padottanasana*)



1. Begin facing the long side of your mat in Mountain Pose (Tadasana).
2. Step your feet 3 to 4 feet apart, with your hands on your hips.
3. Lift tall through your whole torso and fold slowly over your legs. Bend from your hip joints instead of rounding your lower back. If your back starts to round, stop folding forward.
4. Place your hands flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart; begin to stretch your torso forward.
5. Fold deeper, bringing your head toward the floor. Anchor your feet, firm your leg muscles and activate your inner thigh muscles. Lengthen your entire spine from your sitting bones to the crown of your head.

6. After several breaths, ground into your feet, straighten your arms, and lengthen your spine forward.
7. Inhale as you slowly lift up to standing. Step your feet together, come into Mountain Pose at the front of the mat, and pause.

### Benefits

This pose is good for stretching your hamstrings, calves, and hips; strengthening your feet, ankles, and legs; and building awareness of protecting your lower back. It also calms and relaxes the mind

### Shoulderstand (Salamba Sarvangasana)



1. Lay down on your yoga mat, aligning your body with the blankets as suggested above. With legs bent and feet on the floor (as if setting up for Bridge pose), begin to walk your shoulders underneath your upper back, feeling the chest rise gently.
2. Lift your hips off the mat coming into Bridge pose and extend your arms onto the ground, palms facing down as if your hands could touch your heels.
3. Press firmly into the palms, using them as leverage to lift onto the balls of the feet and extend one leg up.
4. Bend at the elbows, place your hands on your low back (creating a shelf), then extend the next leg up. Once you raise the legs, don't turn your head to the side to look around the room as this can injure your neck. Instead, keep your gaze upward and your neck straight.
5. Lift up through the balls of your feet, walking your hands further up the back for more stability. Feel the chest reaching toward the chin to support opening the upper back.
6. Move your hips toward the front of the room and your feet toward the back of the room to straighten the body. This helps you get into the correct alignment, which is the hips over the shoulders and feet over the hips. (If you don't use blankets or other supports, do not bring your body fully vertical.)

7. Stay in the pose for up to 10 breaths.
8. Come out of Shoulderstand by bringing your feet back over your head to come through Plow pose, rolling out from Plow slowly.

## Benefits

Stretches the muscles in the shoulder and neck. Can bring sensations of calmness and relaxation and can lessen anxiety

## Plow Pose (Halasana)



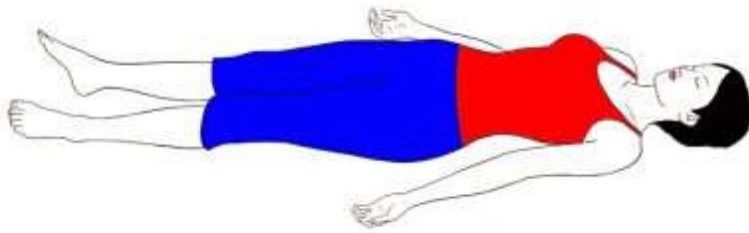
1. Bring your arms onto the ground and extend them toward the front of your mat with your palms facing down. Press into your palms and forearms for leverage to lift your legs to 90 degrees and pause there. Then lift your butt and use your abs to bring your feet up and over your head until your toes touch the floor behind your head. Keep your legs straight.
2. Bring your palms together and interlace your fingers, keeping your arms straight. Reach the knuckles toward the front of the mat while rooting into shoulders but lifting the chest for length.
3. If your shoulders have moved, carefully rock your shoulders back underneath of you one at a time. Your hips should be aligned over your shoulders. Press into the feet for support and stability.
4. Once you are in position, do not turn your head to look around the room, as this can be dangerous for your neck. Keep your neck in its neutral alignment and your gaze upward.
5. Since the diaphragm is compressed, it's hard to breathe in this position. Try to stay for 5 deep breaths.
6. To come out, first return your arms onto the ground, palms facing down. Release your arms, lift your feet, and roll the spine one vertebra at a time slowly down to your mat. Keep your legs straight and feet together.



## Benefits

Plow Pose stretches the shoulders, back, neck, hamstrings, and calves. It is a pose that will stretch the paraspinal muscles of the lower back, which are often not targeted in other poses, and may help relieve a backache. In general, plow is considered to be a relaxing and calming pose.

## Savasana



Lie down on your back.

1. Separate your legs. Let go of holding your legs straight so that your feet can fall open to either side.
2. Bring your arms alongside your body, but slightly separated from your torso. Turn your palms to face upwards but don't try to keep them open. Let the fingers curl in.
3. Tuck your shoulder blades onto your back for support.
4. Once you have set up your limbs, release any effort from holding them in position. Relax your whole body, including your face. Let your body feel heavy.
5. Let your breathing occur naturally. If your mind wanders, you can bring your attention to your breath but try to just notice it, not deepen it.
6. Stay for a minimum of five minutes. Ten minutes is better. If you are practising at home, set an alarm so that you are not compelled to keep checking the time.
7. To come out, first begin to deepen your breath. Then begin to wiggle your fingers and toes, slowly reawakening your body.
8. Stretch your arms overhead for a full body stretch from hands to feet.
9. Bring your knees into your chest and roll over to one side, keeping your eyes closed. Use your bottom arm as a pillow while you rest in a foetal position for a few breaths.
10. Using your hands for support, bring yourself back up into a sitting position.

## Benefits

Savasana allows your body and mind time to process what has happened during a yoga class, helping you wind down and relax.

You may also practice Savasana at home before sleeping as a way to quiet your mind and get more restful sleep.