

David Fuller

1/11/18 Suggested Yoga Stretches: Shoulder, Hips, and Hamstrings

General suggestions:

- Make use of support props, like blocks and straps. Blocks will be excellent when in lunges below the hands and a strap should be utilized when stretching the hamstrings reclined.
- Hold most poses for 3-5 breaths (1 breath equaling the entire inhale and exhale matched together).

Seated Breathing



- Calms the brain and helps relieve stress and mild depression
- Legs can be crossed or extended depending on comfort level.
- Hips can be propped on a block depending on comfort level.
- Lengthen your inhale by inhaling the word “so”; lengthen your exhale by exhaling out “hum”.
- Weight is in your sit bones as you draw shoulders down and back; tuck your chin to your chest.
- Draw your gaze to the floor or close your eyes.

Standing Forward Bend



- Stretches the hamstrings, calves, and hips.
- Deeply bend in your knees to release the spine and bring the torso onto the thighs.
- Be careful not to straighten the knees by locking them back and hyperextending; instead let them straighten as the two ends of each leg move farther apart.
- NOTE: Add in a twist by placing right foot on outside of the left foot on the mat, which will increase the stretch you feel in your back left leg. Then switch sides.

Lunge



- Inhale; bend forward at the hips on an exhale; place both hands on either side of your left foot, step your right foot back.
- Palms or fingertips come to the mat.
- Choose to rest the right knee on the floor or for an added challenge stay up on the ball of the right toes.
- Keep your knee aligned directly above your ankle.
- Attempt to hold position for 3 to 5 full breaths.

Lunge Twist



- From the lunge pose, ground in your right hand (either on a block or directly on the floor).
- Inhale and lift your left arm into the air.
- Keep your spine long.
- Look down at the floor for balance or look up at your left hand in the air for a challenge.
- Attempt to hold position for 3 to 5 full breaths.

Lizard



- From the lunge twist pose, bring both hands inside the forward foot as you exhale.
- Keep your palms planted on the mat with arms straight or for a deeper stretch rest your forearms on the mat.
- Choose to rest the right knee on the floor or for an added challenge stay up on the ball of the right toes.
- Relax your shoulders as you evenly lower your hips to the floor.
- Attempt to hold position for 3 to 5 full breaths.



Downdog

- Stretches the Achilles, calves, hamstrings, back, shoulders, and arms.
- Fingers spread wide, shoulder-width apart.
- Send your hips towards the ceiling.
- Press your palms down and back. (Pressing firmly in your hands will help support the weight of your body and protect your wrists.)
- The inside crease of each elbow points to the opposite corner of the mat.
- Draw your navel into your spine.
- For tight hamstrings, bend at your knees and press your torso towards your thighs.

THEN SWITCH SIDES, REPEATING ABOVE SEQUENCE ON OPPOSITE SIDE.

ROLL DOWN ON YOUR BACK. Support your lower back by placing your hands behind your thighs as you roll down.



Reclined Pigeon/Figure 4

- Stretches the hips.
- Place one ankle on your opposite thigh, use a strap or interlace your fingers and place them behind your thigh, and pull your thigh towards your chest.
- As you draw your bent leg in toward you (making sure to aim it toward your same shoulder), simultaneously press your opposite knee away from you.
- Flex your feet to deepen the stretch.
- Press your elbow against that bent knee to feel an inner thigh stretch.



Hamstring Stretches with a Strap

- Lie on the floor and place the strap around the ball of your right toes, flexing in your right foot, holding the strap with your right hand.
- Straighten your right leg as much as you comfortably; although not shown in this picture, bend at the knee planting the left foot on the mat to protect the lower back. Hold for a few breaths.



- Outer Thigh/Hamstring Stretch: Inhale switch hands with the strap and draw your leg over to the left side of your mat. Hold for a few breaths.
- Inhale to come back to center.



- Inner Thigh/Hamstring Stretch: Exhale take the strap in your right hand and draw your leg open to the right side of your mat. Hold for a few breaths.
- The more you pull your toes towards your forehead the deeper the stretch will be on your hamstring.

THEN SWITCH SIDES, REPEATING ABOVE SEQUENCE ON OPPOSITE SIDE.

These stretches can be combined for a 5 minute session (ideally in the morning or evening) or used individually.

Thank you! If you ever have questions, concerns or comments please do not hesitate to contact to me. It is always my pleasure to work with you.

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