

the physical benefits that come naturally with the stretching and strengthening.

## HOW TO GET STARTED

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1. Lie on your back on a mat or pad that cushions you from the floor. If you can't lie on your back, do it some other way.
2. Become aware of the flow of your breathing and feel the abdomen rising and falling with each inbreath and outbreath.
3. Take a few moments to feel your body as a whole, from head to toe, the "envelope" of your skin, and the sensations associated with touch in the places your body is in contact with the floor.
4. As with the sitting meditation and the body scan, keep your attention focused in the present moment and bring it back when it wanders, noting what drew it away before letting go of it.
5. Position your body as best you can in the various postures illustrated below and try to stay in each one while you focus on your breathing at the abdomen. Figures 6 and 7 give you the sequences of postures we do on the yoga sides of the two mindfulness practice tapes: "Guided Yoga 1" and "Guided Yoga 2." On the tapes some of the postures are repeated at various points. These repeats are not included in the drawings. When a posture is pictured as being on either the right side or the left side, do both, as indicated.
6. While in each posture, be aware of the sensations that you are experiencing in various parts of your body, and if you like, direct your breath in to and out from the region of greatest intensity in a particular stretch or posture. The idea is to relax into each posture as best you can and breathe with what you are feeling.
7. Feel free to skip any of the postures that you know will exacerbate a problem you may have. *Check with your doctor or physical therapist about particular postures if you have a neck problem or a back problem. This is an area in which you have to use your judgment and take responsibility for your own body.* Many of the people in the stress clinic who have back and neck problems report that they can do at least some of these postures, but they do them *very carefully*, not pushing or forcing or pulling. Although these exercises are very gentle and can be healing, they are also deceptively powerful and can lead to muscle pulls

and more serious setbacks if they are not done slowly, mindfully, and gradually over time.

8. Do not get into competing with yourself, and if you do, notice it and let go of it. The spirit of yoga is the spirit of self-acceptance in the present moment. The idea is to explore your limits gently, lovingly, with respect for your body. It is not to try to break through your body's limits because you want to look better or fit into your bathing suit better next summer. That may happen naturally if you keep up the practice, but if you tend to push beyond your limits of the moment instead of relaxing into them, you may wind up injuring yourself. This would just set you back and discourage you about keeping up the practice, in which case you might find yourself blaming the yoga instead of seeing that it was the striving attitude that led to your overdoing it. Certain people tend to get into a vicious cycle of overdoing it when they are feeling good and enthusiastic and then not being able to do anything for a time and becoming discouraged. So it is worth paying careful attention if you have this tendency and erring on the side of being conservative.
9. Although it is not shown in the sequences of postures illustrated in Figures 6 and 7 simply in the interests of space, *you should rest between postures*. Depending on what you are doing, you can do this either lying on your back or in another comfortable posture. At these times be aware of the flow of your breathing from moment to moment, feeling your belly as it gently moves in and out. If you are lying on the floor, feel your muscles let go as you sink more deeply into your mat or pad on each outbreath. Ride the waves of your breathing as you relax and sink more deeply into the floor. You can relax in a similar way as you rest standing up between standing postures; feel the contact your feet make with the floor and let your shoulders drop as you breathe out. In both cases, as your muscles let go and relax, allow yourself to let go of any thoughts you might be having and continue to ride the waves of the breath.
10. There are two general rules that will help you if you keep them in mind as you do the yoga. The first is that you breathe *out* as you do any movements that contract the belly and the front side of your body and you breathe *in* as you do any movements that expand the front side of your body and contract the back. For example, if you are lifting one leg while lying on your back

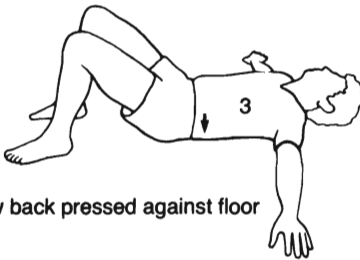
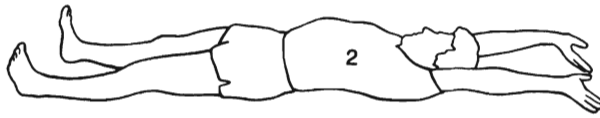
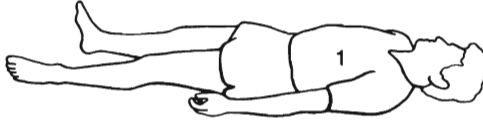
(see Figure 6, posture 14), you would breathe *out* as you lift it. But if you are lying on your belly and lifting the leg (Figure 6, posture 19), you would breathe *in*. This applies just for the movement itself. Once the leg is up, you just continue observing the natural flow of your breath.

The other rule is to dwell in each posture long enough to let go into it. The idea is to relax into each one. If you find yourself struggling and fighting with it, remind yourself to let go into your breathing. In the beginning you may find that you are unconsciously bracing yourself in many areas while you are in a particular position. After a while your body will realize this in some way, and you will find yourself relaxing and sinking farther into it. Let each inbreath expand the posture out *slightly* in all directions. On each outbreath sink a little more deeply into it, allowing gravity to be your friend and help you to explore your limits. Try not to use any muscles that don't need to be involved in what you are doing. For instance, you might practice relaxing your face when you notice that it is tense.

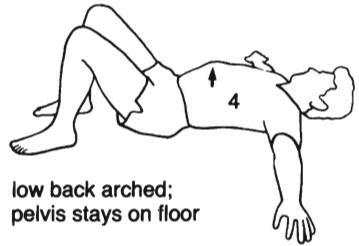
11. Work at or within your body's limits at all times, with the intention of observing and exploring the boundary between what your body can do and where it says, "Stop for now." Never stretch beyond this limit to the point of pain. Some discomfort is inevitable when you are working at your limits, but you will need to learn how to enter this healthy "stretching zone" slowly and mindfully so that you are nourishing your body, not damaging it as you explore your limits.
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FIGURE 6

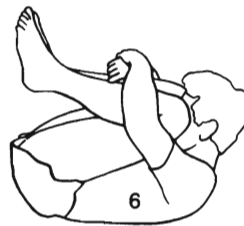
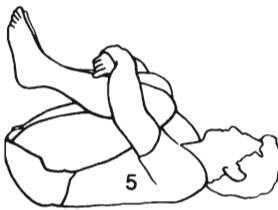
**SEQUENCE OF YOGA POSTURES  
(TAPE 1, SIDE 2)**



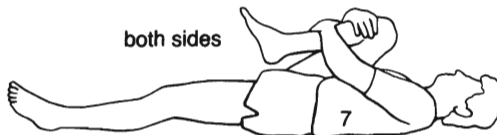
low back pressed against floor

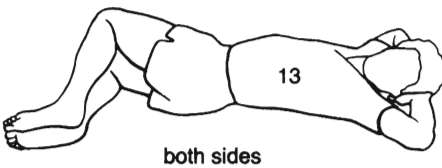
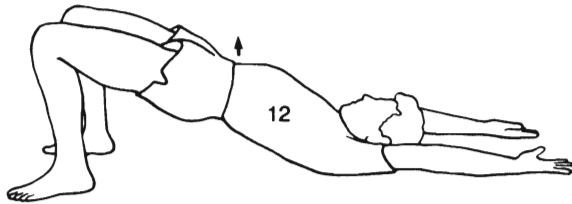
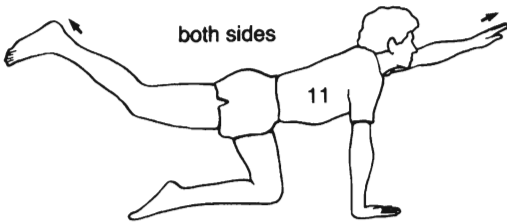
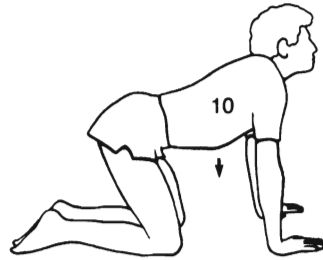
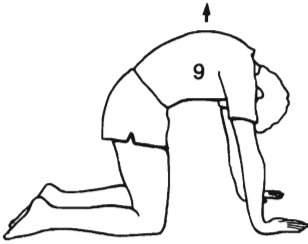
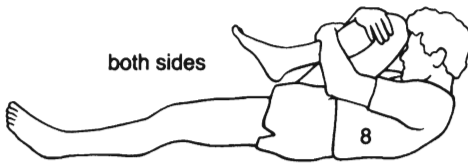


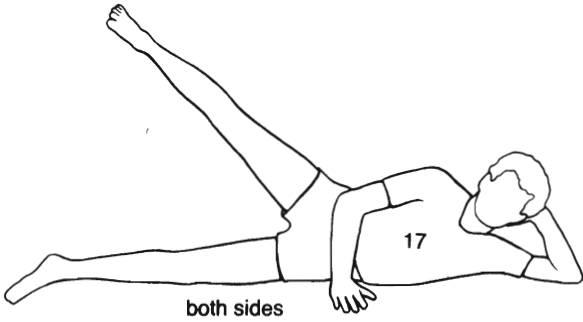
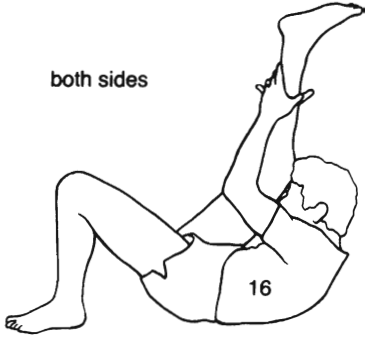
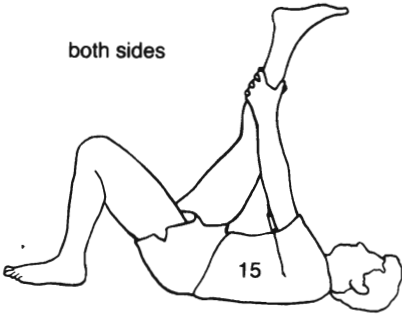
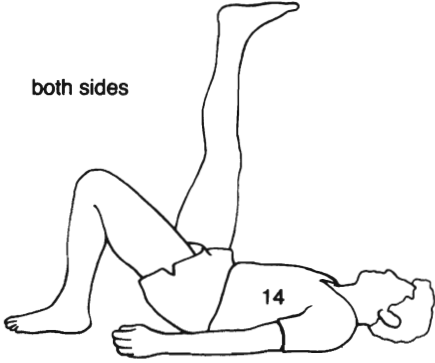
low back arched;  
pelvis stays on floor



both sides







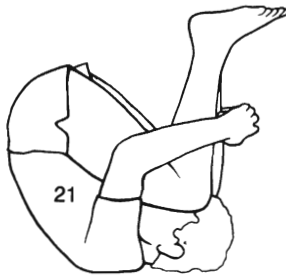
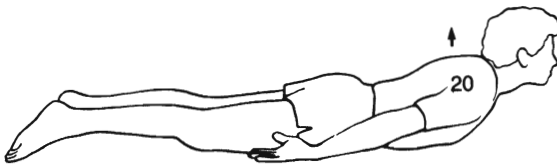
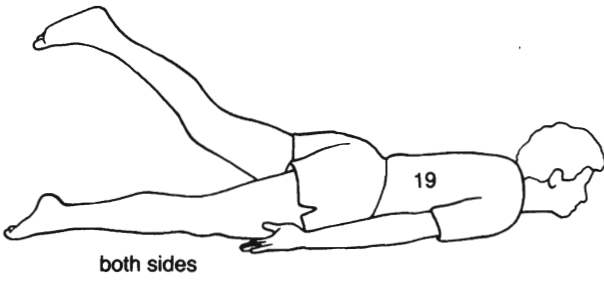
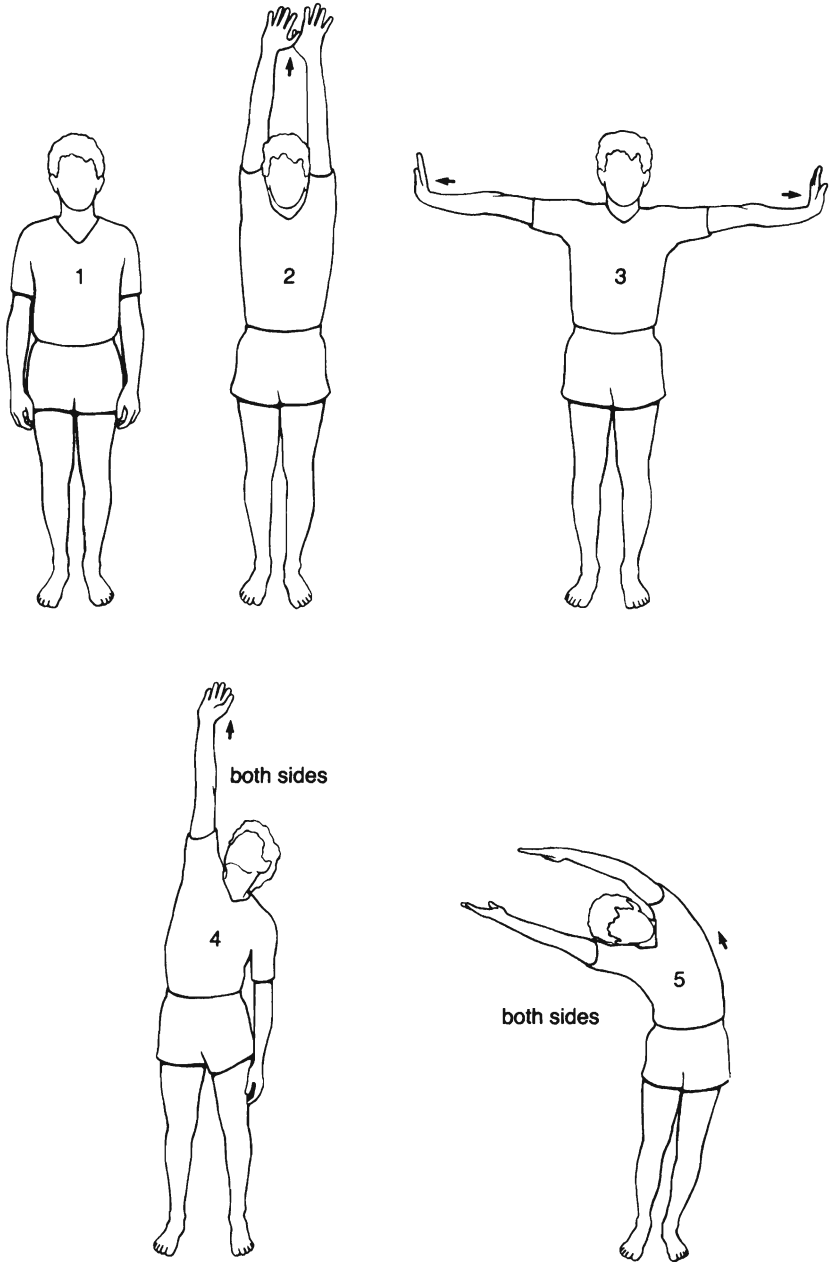


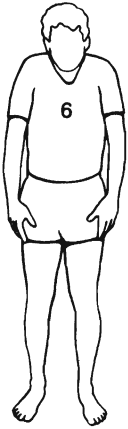
FIGURE 7

**SEQUENCE OF YOGA POSTURES  
(TAPE 2, SIDE 2)**

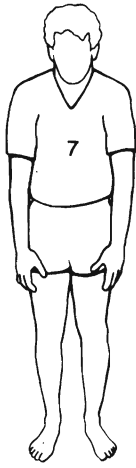




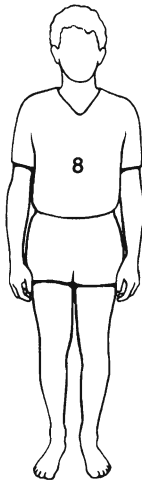
shoulder rolls: do in forward, then backward directions



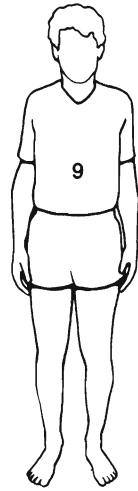
raise up



squeeze together  
in front

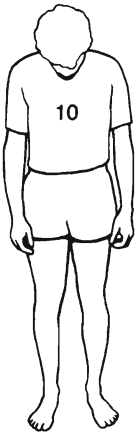


let drop



squeeze together  
in back

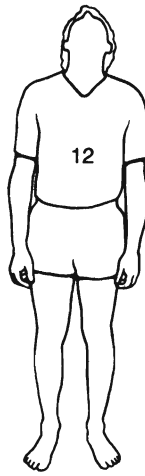
neck rolls: do in one direction, then the other



10



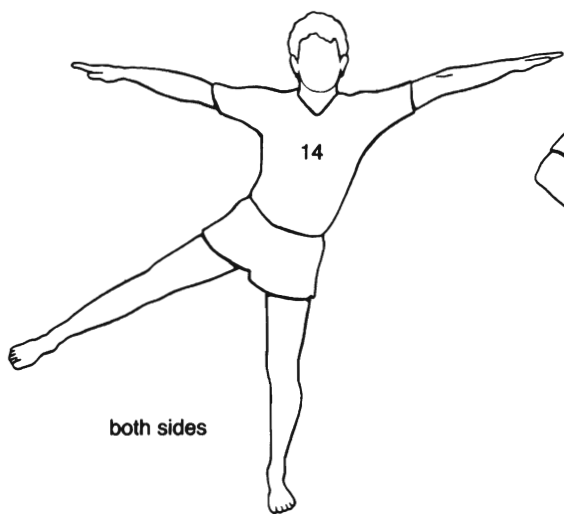
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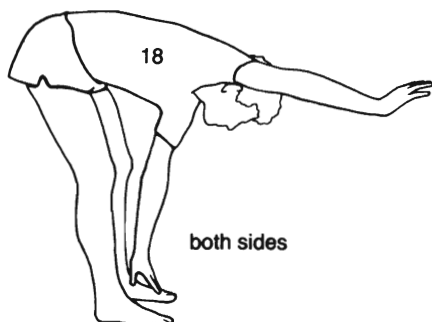
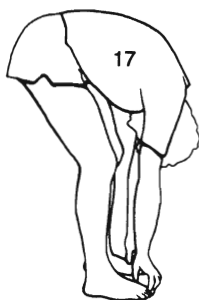
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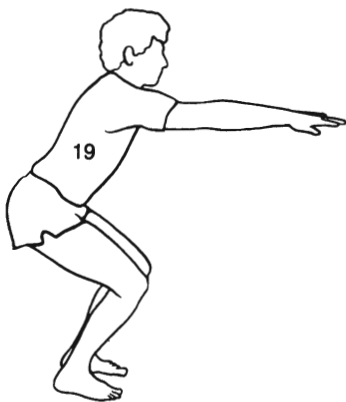
both sides

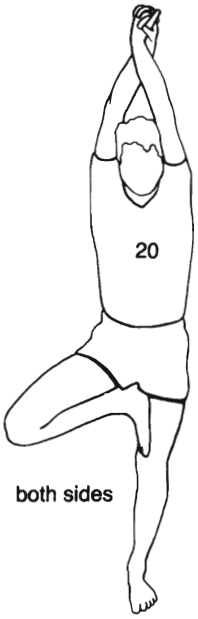


both sides

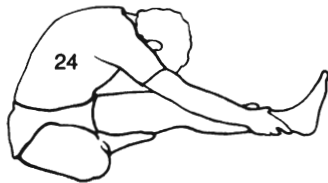
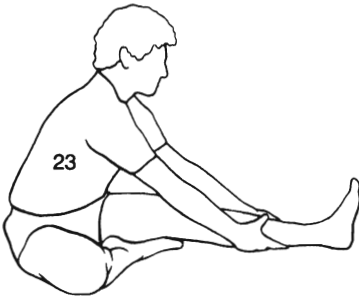
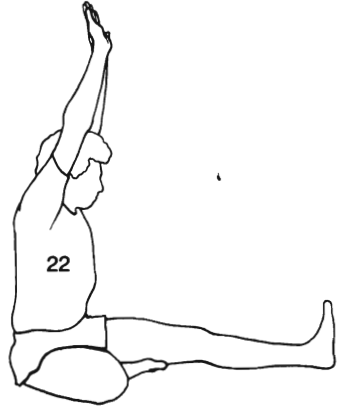


both sides





both sides



repeat 22 to 24 on other side

