

10-Minute Desk Yoga Flow

Boost Productivity and Reduce Stress at Work



Your nervous system toggles between fight-or-flight and rest-and-digest modes throughout the day. If you are balanced, this shift naturally occurs every couple of hours, but in our modern world, it's common to get stuck in a stress response. This often shows up as feelings of overwhelm, anxiety, and distraction.

All types of mind-body practices can help, but it's very hard to break your pattern. Yoga at your desk can be a simple, low friction way to fix this. Below, you'll find a 10-minute sequence of poses in your chair that down regulate your stress response, normalize your breathing, and release muscle tension.

Pump / Dump Breathing Practice

This practice is based on John West's research around what he calls a physiological sigh, and the idea is to hyperinflate and then hyper deflate your lungs.

- Inhale through your nose to the count of 1-2-3-4, feeling your chest cavity expand
- Exhale with force through your mouth to the count of 8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1
- Repeat for three rounds, you'll breathe only through your nose from now on



Seated Sun Salute

- Reach your arms out and up above your head, touch your hands at the top
- Look up, exhale through your nose
- Hinge at your hips, fold forward over your legs
- Place your hands on your knees and bend your elbows
- Inhale, lift your chest and your chin, keeping your elbows back and tucked in
- Exhale, straighten your arms, drop your chin towards your chest
- Sit up straight and repeat the sequence twice more



Sun Salute Twist

- Inhale, reach your arms out and up to touch
- Exhale, hinge forward, fold out over your legs
- Inhale, lift your chin, turn, and twist to the right
- Reach back behind you, use your left hand to press off your left knee, use your right hand to twist – either holding the back or bottom of your chair – as you turn and look over your shoulder
- Pause here for a moment, then slowly lower back down and release your arms
- Switch sides, then repeat once more on both sides



Nerve Glide

This simple technique is designed to encourage your nerves to slide freely between the muscles and other soft tissues they pass through. It works on the nerves in your arms and neck, as well as your sciatic nerve, and feels a little unusual, because you have to coordinate the movements.

- Inhale, straighten your right leg, bend your right arm
- Create a stop sign with your hand
- Rotate your hand, place your palm on your chin and use it to gently press your head back
- Keep your other arm straight, hand flat on your knee
- Exhale, drop your leg down, straighten your arm
- Repeat for five rounds on each side



Seated Pigeon

- Keeping your left leg bent and still, carefully lift your right leg and place your right ankle on top of your left knee
- If you're a little twisted, that's OK, stay here
- If you're not twisted, try placing one hand on your ankle and one hand on your knee. If that feels OK, lean forward and place your elbow on your ankle
- Drop your head and breathe here
- Slowly release your right leg, punch out any tension above and below your knee
- Switch sides and repeat
- Slowly make your way back up to sit, release and shake out your legs



Arrow Pose

- Reach back behind you and attempt to interlace your hands behind your back
- If you can, straighten your arms
- If you can, press the palms of your hands together
- If you can, gently look up towards the ceiling and breathe here
- Release your hands, release your head, and slowly come forward



Head Rolls

- Reach down and grab the bottom of your chair – if your arms are long, you might even reach down and grab the legs of your chair for more lift
- Pull your shoulders away from your ears and sit up tall
- Very slowly move your head in a clockwise direction
- Very slowly reverse in a counterclockwise direction, all the way back to centre
- Neutralize your head and neck, gently lift your chin
- Drop your head, puff your chest.
- Slowly lower your chin towards your chest
- Release your head and neck



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