

Yoga during pregnancy



These yoga exercises are good for many people

Take good care of yourself during the exercises and only go as far as you feel comfortable (with your baby bump). Listen to what feels right for you. Also, make sure you don't hold your breath, but let it flow freely at all times. Even though pregnancy is not an illness, you should check with your gynaecologist beforehand to see whether pregnancy yoga is permitted or whether it is not recommended.

Full yogic breathing



Starting position: Relaxed seated position with closed eyes

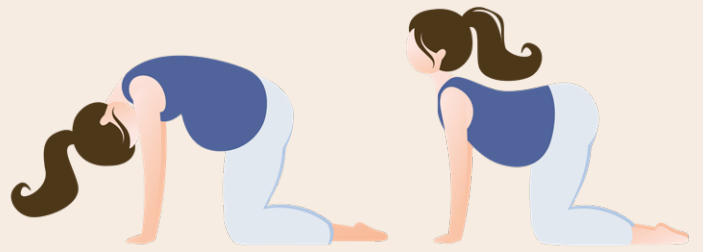
- Place both hands on your tummy and notice whether your baby is moving gently or vigorously, or is currently asleep.
- Deepen your breathing and mentally direct each breath into your tummy and towards your baby. Feel how your abdominal wall gently rises with each inhalation and falls with your exhalation. Stay in this position for several breaths.
- Then place your hands on either side of your chest and mentally breathe into this area. Observe how your ribs fan out as you inhale and draw in as you exhale. Stay here for several breaths as well.
- Place your hands on your décolletage, just below your collarbones. Notice how much your upper chest rises and falls with each breath. Continue doing this for a while, completely relaxed.
- Then place your hands in your lap or on your knees.
- Let your breath flow into all three breathing spaces: first into the abdomen, then into the chest, and finally into the collarbones.
- Exhale in the reverse order. Stay with this breathing technique for several deep breaths.
- Then finish the yogic full breathing and remain connected to your natural breath for a little while longer.

Effect

Breathing is particularly important during pregnancy. On the one hand, because shortness of breath occurs more frequently as your baby bump grows, and on the other, because long, conscious breathing is very important and helpful during childbirth. Full yogic breathing can help you deepen your breath.

Chakraka- kasana

Cat-Cow



Starting position: On all fours

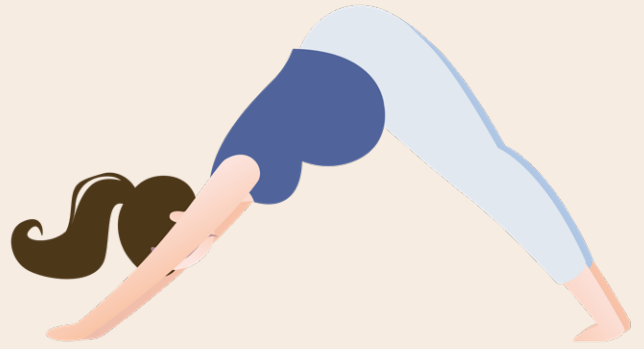
- Spread your hands wide directly beneath your shoulders; your knees should be positioned directly beneath your hips, and your back should be engaged and straight.
- Now move into the 'Cow' pose: as you inhale, roll your shoulders back, open your chest and look gently upwards. The movement should come primarily from the thoracic spine, not the pelvis.
- As you exhale, arch your back like a cat: round your upper body from head to tail-bone. This lengthens your spine, and the shoulder area in particular is stretched deeply.
- Repeat the sequence several times in time with your breath.

Effect

The cat-cow exercise expands the chest, loosens the neck and shoulder area, and keeps the upper body flexible.

Adho Mukha Svanasana

Downward-Facing Dog



Starting position: On all fours

- The Downward-Facing Dog is every yogi's best friend. The relief it brings to the back and the stretch it provides for the hamstrings is a real delight for many yogis.
- Start on all fours – hands shoulder-width apart, fingers spread. Press your hands firmly into the floor and push your bottom upwards. Then actively push your heels down and back, trying to bring them towards the floor.
- If the stretch in the back of your legs is too intense or your lower back feels uncomfortable, bend your knees.
- Make sure your shoulders are relaxed, i.e. well away from your ears. Actively pull your shoulder blades apart. Your neck is relaxed, and your gaze is directed between your feet.
- In Downward-Facing Dog, the focus is more on lengthening the back than on bringing the heels to the floor.
- Hold the pose for a moment and consciously focus on your breath.

Effect

Downward-Facing Dog relieves pressure on the lumbar spine and lengthens the thoracic spine. The exercise also strengthens the arms and shoulders and boosts energy.

Virabhadra-sana II

Warrior 2



Starting position: Mountain Pose

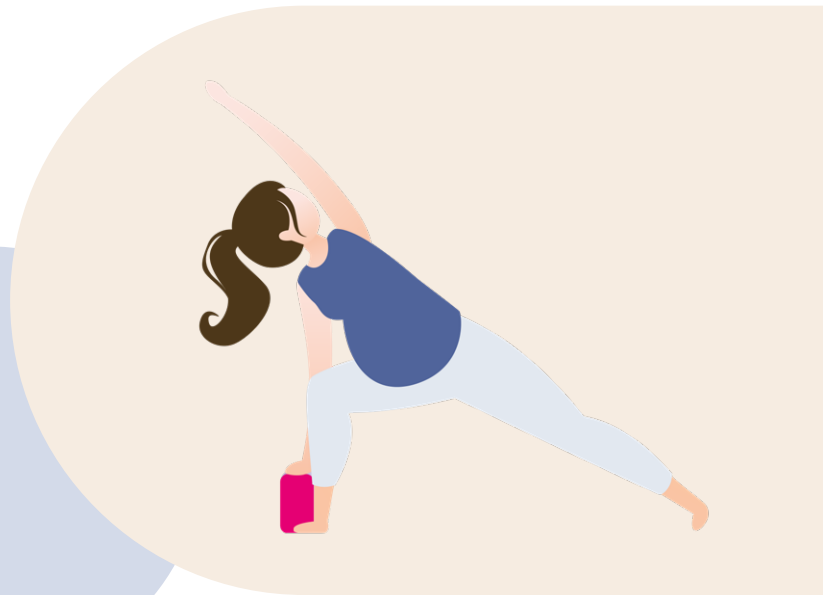
- Inhale and step your right foot back. Turn the back foot outwards by 45 degrees. Make sure that the front heel and the arch of the back foot are in line.
- Exhale and bend your left leg. Your knee should be directly above your ankle. Engage your core and tilt your pelvis slightly inwards so that you do not arch your lower back. Also ensure that your hips remain parallel to the long side of the mat.
- Extend both arms out to the sides and look forward over your left arm. Let your shoulders drop relaxed.
- If you have good balance and want to challenge yourself further, rise onto the balls of your left foot.
- Then repeat the asana on the other side.

Effect

This asana represents steadfastness and determination. As a standing pose, it requires balance, stability and concentration. It opens the hips and strengthens the back, abdomen and arms.

Utthita Parsva-konasana

Extended Side Angle Pose



Starting position: Stand with your left leg in a wide lunge

- Now engage the thigh muscles of your back leg so that your kneecap lifts slightly. Then bend your right knee until your thigh is parallel to the floor and your knee forms a right angle. Make sure your knee is directly above your ankle and does not extend beyond your foot.
- Lengthen your spine and open your chest forward. The tips of your shoulder blades should point towards your hips to create space between your shoulders and ears. Press your right knee gently against your right arm to prevent your knee from collapsing inwards.
- Extend your arms out to the side and lower your upper body from the hips to the right, so that you can place your right hand on the mat next to your right foot. Extend your left hand towards the ceiling. Ensure your shoulders are aligned vertically one above the other.
- Turn your gaze towards your left thumb and hold the pose for several breaths. Then practise the other side.

Effect

In this pose, you open and stretch your entire body and cultivate good balance and coordination. It activates your core and strengthens your legs.

Utthita Trikonasana

Triangle Pose



Starting position: Lunge, with your feet about a leg's length apart

- Extend your arms out to shoulder height, parallel to the floor, with your palms facing downwards. Now turn your right foot 90 degrees to the right towards the front edge of the mat; your left foot is also turned slightly to the right.
- As you exhale, lower yourself in a wind-mill-like motion and bend your torso sideways to the right.
- Your right hand is on your shin. You can press the outer edge of your hand lightly against your shin for more stability. You can also use a yoga block for support.
- Both legs are straight and engaged; do not lock your knees. Ensure your legs, pelvis and upper body are aligned. Your sternum is lifted, your back is straight. Tighten your glutes.
- Your left arm is stretched upwards so that your left shoulder is in line with your right shoulder. Look towards the thumb of your left hand. Keep your neck straight, in line with your spine.
- Hold this position for a few deep breaths, then switch sides.

Effect

This standing pose strengthens and stretches virtually your entire body. You bring energetic harmony to your whole system. The pose also has a positive effect on your digestive system.

Vrksasana

Tree Pose



Starting position: Standing on the mat

- You should stand firmly but relaxed. Now slowly lift your right leg until your foot rests against the inside of your left thigh. If you find this difficult, you can also place your foot against the inside of your knee or calf.
- Try to find and maintain your balance.
- Bring your hands together in front of your chest. If you like, try raising them above your head.
- Hold this position for a few breaths. It helps you find your balance and relax.
- Once you're back in the starting position, repeat the exercise on the other side.

Effect

The Tree Pose supports your grounding and connection with the world. This yoga exercise has a particularly positive effect on your balance and concentration. It also strengthens the muscles throughout your body.

Upavistha Konasana

Wide-Angle Pose



Starting position: Sitting upright

- Begin your yoga exercise sitting upright on your bottom. Spread your legs as wide as possible without letting your back slump. Sit upright. If your spine rounds, place a yoga cushion under your bottom.
- Place your heels on the floor, toes pointing towards the ceiling, with your feet flat. Grasp your buttocks and pull your hips back so that you can sit more comfortably. Breathe in, stretch your upper body and arms upwards, and align your spine upright.
- Make sure you feel a stretch on the inside of your thighs, but that you don't experience any pain whilst sitting. If you find it difficult to sit upright, you can also push your bottom against the wall and lean your upper body loosely against it whilst practising.
- Deepen your breathing and hold the position for a few breaths.

Effect

The seated straddle stretches the hamstrings and opens the groin and hips. It stretches the leg and back muscles. The spine is lengthened in the process.

Parivrtta Janu Shirshasana

Seated Side Bend



Starting position: Wide-legged pose

- Bend your right leg and use your hands to pull your heel as close as possible to your right groin. Place your fingertips behind your body and straighten your upper body.
- As you exhale, bend your left side as straight as possible towards your left leg and let your left hand slide slowly down the inside of your leg towards your foot. At the same time, bring your right hand over your head towards your left leg.
- Hold the pose for about 1 minute and then slowly release. Then switch sides.

Effect

This pose mobilises the spine and stretches the shoulders, sides and legs.

Setu Bandha Sarvangasana

Shoulder Stand



Starting position: Lying on your back

- Lie on your back. Place your feet hip-width apart close to your buttocks and rest your arms at your sides.
- Press your feet into the mat and, as you exhale, lift your pelvis upwards. Clasp your hands beneath your buttocks and stretch your arms out.
- Continue to press your feet, hands and shoulders into the floor. This pressure may help you lift your pelvis even higher.
- Relax your buttocks and keep your neck long. Consciously press the balls of your big toes into the mat so that your knees do not splay outwards.
- Stay here for ten breaths and continue to breathe calmly. Lift your heels and release your clasped arms. Then roll your back down to the floor, vertebra by vertebra. Let your legs slide out and check in with how you feel whilst lying on your back.

Effect

The shoulder bridge not only strengthens the pelvic floor, but also gently stretches and strengthens the front leg and hip muscles. This exercise is also particularly suitable if your baby has not yet turned head-down shortly before birth.

Ustrasana

Camel Pose



Starting position: Seated on your heels

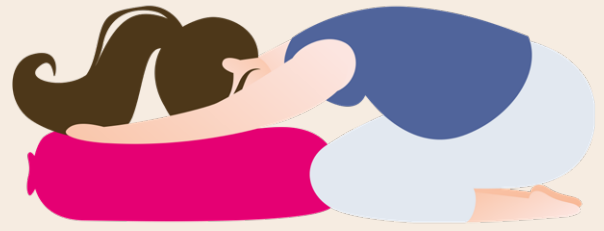
- Place your palms on your lower back and push your hips forwards. Keep your abdominal muscles engaged to protect your lower back.
- Lengthen your spine as you inhale, and as you exhale, gently lean your upper body back, opening it upwards. Continue to maintain length in your upper body.
- If you can reach your feet, place your hands on your heels. If you cannot reach your heels, you can point your toes so that your heels lift. Of course, you can also use blocks to help you, which will shorten the distance.
- Keep your head in line with your spine or, if it feels comfortable, let it sink into the back of your neck. Keep your knees bent at a 90-degree angle.
- Listen to your body. Pay attention to your lower back, stabilise it and find the variation that suits you. In practical terms, this means: you can still enjoy the benefits of this asana even if your hands do not reach your heels.
- Hold this asana for a few breaths and then release slowly and in a controlled manner.

Effect

This intense backbend activates many systems in the body. The Yoga Camel particularly strengthens the pelvic floor and stimulates circulation.

Balasana

Child's Pose



Starting position: Seated with heels together

- For pregnant women in their third trimester, the Child's Pose with a bolster is recommended.
- Kneel down for the exercise and sit on your feet, with your heels pointing outwards.
- Then touch your forehead to the floor or the bolster, keeping your arms relaxed at your sides. Your palms should face upwards. If your baby bump needs a bit of space, you can also open your thighs slightly.
- Now engage your pelvic floor and draw your navel towards your spine. Imagine your navel gliding up and down your spine. Then you can relax again.

Effect

The Child's Pose relaxes the whole body and normalises circulation. The position strengthens and stabilises the pelvic floor muscles and prepares the entire pelvic floor for childbirth.