

getting & staying **FIT**

YOGA for maintaining core strength

Stretch slowly and never do any exercise that causes pain.

Excerpted Anna Prato, Liftoptia / Photos by Steph Wells

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Mountain Pose

Mountain pose is a great way to start your practice. It may not seem physically challenging but it will help you take a moment to stand strong and just breath. Mountain pose is the foundation for standing poses.



Place your feet parallel and hip distance apart with your arms by your sides and palms facing forward.

Ground down through your feet and engage your quadriceps as you lift both knee caps up.

Spin your inner thighs toward the wall behind you as you draw your tailbone toward the floor.

Stand tall and relax the tops of your shoulders as you expand across your collar bones and broaden through your shoulder blades.

Imagine yourself as a sturdy and powerful mountain.

Tree Pose

Tree pose is a perfect complement for the balance needed when skiing or snowboarding and strengthens your legs while stretching your groin and inner thigh area.



Stand in Mountain Pose. Bring all of your weight on to your left leg. Bend your right knee and slowly lift your right leg up only as far as you can while still remaining steady. Rotate your right leg so your knee points toward the right.

Place your right foot on your left leg (either above or below the knee but directly on the side of your knee) with your toes point toward the floor. Bring your hands together at your heart and find one spot in front of you to gaze at for stability.

If you feel stable enough, raise your arms up over head and reach your fingertips toward the ceiling. When you are ready to come out of the pose slowly lower your arms then remove your foot from your leg and slowly lower your foot to the ground. Repeat on the other side.

Chair Pose

Chair pose is an excellent pose mimicking a ski stance. It strengthens the legs as well has helps with balance.



Stand in Mountain Pose. Inhale as you bend your knees and sweep your arms out and overhead with the palm facing each other. Sit back as if you were going to sit down in a chair.

For tight shoulders keep your arms wide. Soften your shoulders away from your ears. If your front ribs start to puff out, soften them in towards the body and broaden between the bottom of your shoulders blades.

Maintain a neutral pelvis, draw your sit bones toward the floor and release your inner thighs toward the floor. Press firmly into your feet and extend all the way through your fingertips.

On an inhale straighten your legs and exhale as you release your arms back to your sides.

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Plank

Plank is a great pose for building core strength as well as upper arm strength. You can always modify the pose by bringing your knees to the floor at first and working your way up to the full pose.



Start on all fours and place your hands on the floor shoulder distance apart with your fingertips pointing forward.

Step your feet back into a high pushup position.

Adjust your shoulders so they are directly over your wrists and straighten your arms.

Imagine a line of energy from the crown of your head, through your shoulders, hips and then extending through your heels.

Start with the traditional plank and move your self up. Keep track of how long or how many reps you can do of the variations and track your progress! Remember, have fun with it, rest when your body needs rest, and progress at your own speed and for you ability! It's not about the 6-pack, it is about strength, stabilization, and balance!

Ardha Matsyendrasana

Twists are great for keeping the spine long and supple. This seated twist also stretches your side hips and butt.



Sit on the floor with both legs extend straight in front of you. Bend your left leg and place your left foot on the outside of your right leg (your left foot is flat on the floor and knee pointed toward the ceiling).

Bend your right leg and slide your right heel so that it is next to the outside of your left hip (your right knee is now on the floor pointing straight in front of you). Place your left fingertips on the floor behind you and use your arm like a little kickstand to lengthen up through your spine.

Inhale reach your right arm straight up as you lengthen your spine. Exhale as you twist to the left, bend your right arm and hook your elbow on the outside of your left knee (palm facing away from you and fingers pointing toward the ceiling).

Gaze your left shoulder. On an exhale slowly come back to center. Repeat on the other side.

Warrior II Pose

This is a great pose to strengthen your legs and open your hips, plus its foundation is reminiscent of a snowboard stance.



Step wide along the long side of a yoga mat. Check your stance by holding your arms out in a T shape.

The general guide is that your ankles are under your wrists. From deep within your right hip socket rotate your right leg 90 degrees so your toes point toward the right short side of your mat.

Slip your left heel back so that your left toes are now slightly turned in. Inhale raise your arms shoulder height and exhale bend your right knee until it is directly over your right ankle.

Turn your head, without turning your torso, and gaze over your right fingertips. Keep your legs strong and active, lengthen up through the torso and avoid collapsing over the right thigh.

Stretch out vigorously through all of your fingers and soften your shoulders away from your ears. On an inhale come up out of the pose and then repeat on the other side. ■