

YOGA FOR HEARTACHE

Grab a blanket, some blocks, and follow along with this quiet, reflective, restorative sequence to help heal your heart — no matter what caused its suffering.



1. Belly Breathing

(a) Lie on the back, covered with a blanket if preferred. (b) Place a bean bag on the belly. The feet roll out to the sides and the palms turn up to face the ceiling. Take a deep breath and feel the bean bag lift toward the ceiling, on the exhale feel the bean bag lower toward the spine. Repeat 5 times.

2. Easy Pose Sit in a crossed-legged position, with blocks under the knees for support. Option to place blanket around shoulders for comfort. Take 5 deep breaths.



3. Easy Twist From Easy Pose, place the left hand on the right knee and the right hand around the back with the palm facing outward. Take an inhale and on the exhale look over the right shoulder. Repeat, twisting to the left this time.



6. Crescent Moon From a kneeling position, step the right foot between the hands. Pressing in through the top of the left foot and the sole of the right foot, lift the hands toward the ceiling. If this is difficult for the shoulders, rest the hands on the bent right knee. Hold for 5 breaths. Repeat on the left side. Return to kneeling.



5. Cat/Cow (a) From a kneeling position, place both hands on the floor, shoulder-width apart. Place a block between the thighs and squeeze. Press through the palms. Inhale and look toward the ceiling. (b) Exhale and arch the back upward, tucking the chin. Repeat both poses 9 more times.



8. Twisted Crescent Lunge From a kneeling position, step the right foot between the hands. Curl the left toes under and lift the left knee off the ground. (a) Reach the left arm over the right knee, hooking the elbow and twisting toward the right. Bring hands to prayer position at heart center. Hold for 5 breaths. Repeat on left side. (b) For more of a challenge, lower the left hand toward the ground and reach the right arm toward the ceiling.



9. Mountain Pose From standing, lift the toes and lower them slowly, feeling the floor solid underfoot. Lift heart toward the ceiling. Relax the shoulders. Relax the jaw. Keep the pelvis neutral. Take 5 breaths.

10. Arm Swings From a standing position, plant the feet on the outer edges of the mat and bend the knees slightly. Start gently swinging the arms back and forth across the body. Slowly increase the speed, keeping the arms loose in their sockets. Keep the heels planted. Decrease the speed until coming to a stop in Mountain Pose.



4. Lion's Breath From a kneeling position, curl the toes under. Rotate the palms so the fingertips are pointing toward the toes. If this is too uncomfortable, face the fingers forward. Raise the chin toward the ceiling. Take a large inhale through the nostrils and exhale loudly through the mouth, sticking out the tongue. Take 3 normal breaths and repeat.



7. Crescent Lunge From a kneeling position, step the right foot between the hands. Curl the left toes under and lift the left knee off the ground. Bring the hands overhead, or to the right knee. Hold for 5 breaths. Repeat on the left side. Return to kneeling.



11. Halfmoon Pose (a) From a standing position, place a block on the highest edge in front of the right foot. Reach down with the right hand and hold on to the block. Lift the left leg in the air, the same height as the torso. Reach the left arm overhead and rotate the torso to the left. Hold for 5 breaths. Repeat on the left leg. (b) For more of a challenge, grasp the left foot in the left hand and arch the back.



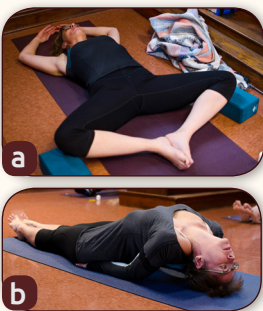


12. Lumberjack Swings (a) From a standing position, plant the feet on the outer edges of the mat and bend the knees, coming into a high squat. Clasp the hands together as if holding an ax. (b) Inhaling sharply through the nose, reach the arms over head. Keeping the arms overhead, exhale lightly. (c) Repeat inhale/exhale three more times but on the last exhale yell "ARGHHH!" while exhaling loudly through the mouth. (d) Bring the hands down between the feet as if chopping a large log. Repeat entire sequence 2 more times.



14. Yoga Squat (a) From a standing position, plant the feet on the outer edges of the mat and bend the knees, coming into a high squat. Place a block on the mat and sit on the block (on whatever height feels most comfortable). Bring the hands to prayer position at the chest and press the palms together. Take 5 breaths and return to standing. (b) For more of a challenge, remove the block and lower your hips toward the mat, keeping the heels planted.

16. Fish Pose (a) Lie on the mat and bring the soles of the feet together, the knees draping open to the sides. For added support place blocks under the knees. Reach the arms overhead, creating a halo shape. Hold for 5 breaths. (b) For a more challenging version, lie on the mat with the legs out long. Tuck the thumbs under the hips and press the elbows into the mat, lifting the chest toward the ceiling. Arch the back and rest the crown of the head on the mat, chin stretching away from the torso.



17. Savasana (a) Lie on the mat, covered with a blanket, if that feels comfortable. Place a bean bag on the belly. Roll the feet to the side and the palms toward the ceiling. (b) Consented teacher assists can include a gentle squeeze to the Marma points of the feet. (c) A gentle alignment of the neck vertebrae. (d) A gentle ear pull. (e) A gentle shoulder press. Close the eyes and continue with Belly Breathing for at least 5 minutes. The teacher rings the bell to bring everyone out.



Yoga Consent Cards These double-sided paper cards are meant to be displayed next to the mat, so the teacher can tell if the student would like to be touched or not. The student can change their mind mid-way through class and simply flip their card over with no need to draw attention to themselves. This gives the student a sense of freedom and empowerment.

13. Standing Split

(a) From a standing position, reach down and place both hands on the mat, bending the knees as needed. Walk the hands closer to the foot while lifting the right leg in the air. If possible, hold the standing leg's ankle with one hand. Hold for 5 breaths. Repeat on the other side. (b) For more of a challenge, hold the standing leg's ankle with both hands and bring the chin toward the standing leg.



15. Shoulder Stand (a) Place a folded blanket across the middle of the mat and lie on the blanket with shoulders touching its edge, the head resting on the mat. Walk the feet in close to the sit bones and press into the feet, lifting the hips. Place a block underneath the sacrum in a comfortable position. Lift the legs in the air and bring the hands to the lower back, the elbows resting on the mat. Have a teacher or partner offer support for the legs, if preferred. Hold for 10 breaths. Do not look from side to side; keep the chin tucked. Lower the legs. (b) For a more challenging version, do not use a block and support the lumbar spine with the hands. Bring the elbows in as close to the spine as possible. Reach the balls of the feet toward the ceiling. Have a teacher or partner support the legs, if preferred.

18. Heart Meditation

Sit in Easy Pose, with blanket, if preferred. Place the right hand to the heart and the left hand on the belly. Close the eyes and repeat the mantra (silently or out loud): "I am safe. I am loved. I am enough." Sit quietly for a few moments together in silence.

