



# Break Time Yoga

By Zofia Karubin - certified yoga instructor

**G**ive yourself a break, anytime and anywhere. Keep your body fit, strong, relaxed, and ready to take on some waves at a moment's notice.

Find a peaceful and quiet place where ever you may be; take a few deep breaths, center yourself, and feel your body relaxing with each breath. Keep breathing deeply as you send your breath into your body and feel any tension melt away as you continue to relax every part of your body. With the inhalation expand the abdomen, then rib cage, and then chest. Next, as you exhale, release the chest, then the rib cage, and then abdomen gently contracts. Keep your spine straight and relaxed. This is one of the most powerful things you can do on your break – become aware of your breath and reconnect with yourself.

You may be able to do only one pose during a short break or ten poses during a longer break. Either way, keep it balanced and breathe deeply. If you bend or twist one way, always go the other way too. You may do any pose that feels right at that moment for your body.

Be sure to listen to your body, and allow your breath to move you forward. Be very gentle with each movement, and don't force anything, it's not worth it. Your body will tell you what it needs. Some days your body may need deep stretches, and other days it may need to build more strength, while other days all you will need is to breath very deeply and improve your balance and focus.

Whether you can stand or to sit is up to you during each break. You may also stay seated in your chair and do a pose or two right there without getting up at all. At other times you may be able to lay out a blanket or yoga mat and lay down to do some gentle poses.

**WANT MORE?** Check out the poses described in the last two issues of WSSM for more poses to do during your break time.

Photos by: On It Pro



1 >

**1 > BACK BEND & FORWARD BEND:** This is a good warm up pose. Sit comfortably with your back straight. As you inhale lift up and back, keep stretching gently. Then when you are ready gently fold yourself forward and slowly bring your body down, keeping your hands together over your head with arms straight. Engage your abdomen muscles and feel your inner power increasing. Repeat 3 – 5 times.

**Benefits:** Strengthens abdomen and back. Stretches the spine, torso and arms. Increases lung capacity and brings oxygen to the body.



2 >

**2 > SITTING POSE (Vajrasana – variation):** Sitting on your heels with toes curled under and with hands interlaced behind your back. Breathe deeply as you expand the chest, roll the shoulders down and back, and squeeze your shoulder blades together with each exhalation.

Then when you are ready, release the hands and fold forward, forehead down. Stretch the arms over your head on the floor for an added stretch. Keep breathing deeply as you rest and relax in this pose. Don't force anything. Repeat 2 – 3 times.

**Benefits:** Stretches the feet, shoulders, arms and chest. Improves posture and lung capacity.



3 >

**3 > SPINAL TWIST\* (Ardha Matsyendrasana - variation):** Sitting with the spine straight, both sitting bones are balanced on the floor, bring one leg over the other, and wrap your arm from the opposite side around the outside of your leg. The other arm is stretched out touching the floor for guidance as you twist back gently, don't put your weight on your hand. Be sure to keep both shoulders down and balanced. Be very steady, gentle, and slow as you begin the twist from your lower back and up into the neck. With each inhalation stretch



4 >



5 >



6 >



7 >



8 >

the spine straight up and with each exhalation keep twisting back gently. Don't force anything. Allow yourself to relax into the twist. Then do the same on the other side. Repeat 2 – 3 times.

*\*There are many variations of the spinal twist, check with your local yoga instructor for the most beneficial variation that is right for you.*

*Benefits: Increases flexibility in the spine. Strengthens the joints of vertebrae, shoulder and hips. Massages the internal organs. Calms the mind and the central nervous system. Energizes and balances the entire body.*

4 > Give yourself a well deserved hug. Bring your knees in, forehead down on your knees, and wrap your arms around the legs. Rest and relax for several breaths. This a good pose to do before and after each asana (yoga posture).

*Affirmation: "I love and appreciate myself. All is well."*

5 > **BOAT POSE (Navasana):** Sitting balanced on your sitting bones, bring your hands under your thighs, lift the legs up as you lean back gently with the spine elongated, but don't arch your back. Keep breathing for 5 – 10 breaths as you stay balanced for as long as you can. Shoulders stay down and relaxed. Engage your abdomen muscles, especially if you straighten the legs up, and you may bring the palms out and stretch them forward. Best to take it little by little with this pose and don't strain. Allow the energy to flow and keep breathing.

Release down gently and give yourself another hug (see figure #4)

*Benefits: Tones the back and abdominal muscles. Massages the internal organs. Releases stress and tension. Increases inner power and inner balance.*

6 > **CRAB (Kulirana) A:** Sitting with the knees bent, feet flat on the floor, hip-width apart. Bring the arms behind you with hand on the floor fingers point in or out, whichever is more comfortable. Take a few breaths here and keep your shoulders relaxed down. Extend the spine straight up.

7 > **CRAB (Kulirana) B:** This is also known as the Table Pose. Engage your abdomen and back muscles to lift your hips gently off the floor on the inhalation, and bring the hips to the same level as the knees and shoulders. Elongating the spine and holding the head up gently and look up, don't force it in any way. Hold the pose for 5 – 10 deep long breaths. When you are ready, gently release down and give yourself hug again(see figure #4).

8 > **INCLINE PLANE (Purvottanasana):** From a seated position, extend your legs and place the palms of your hands on the floor behind your hips. As you gently lean onto your hands, lift the whole body up to create straight line from the feet to the top of the head. Keep the shoulders away from the ears. Let the energy flow through your body and continue holding the pose for 5 – 10 deep breaths. When you are ready and release down to another big hug (see figure #4.)

*Benefits: Strengthens the entire body, especially the back and abdomen. Calms the mind and nervous system. Expands the shoulders, chest, and lung capacity.*

**NAMASTE:** *My inner Light bows to your inner Light.*

Zofia Karubin is a certified yoga instructor who resides in Los Angeles where she has been teaching yoga to adults, teens, and children for over 10 years. Zofia's lifelong yoga practice and passion for teaching yoga was passed down from her mother who is also yoga teacher. Currently Zofia is publishing a book for surfers, Surfboard Yoga Warm-Up, which will be out in the near future. Look for more yoga poses with Zofia Karubin in the next issue of WSSM.



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