

GENTLE STRETCHES • YOGA • CHAIR MOVEMENT • RELAXATION • WELLNESS

Stretch, Breathe & Restore

Move
Better.
Feel Better.
Live Better.

A GENTLE GUIDE TO
MOBILITY, FLEXIBILITY
& FUNCTIONAL
WELLNESS



Improve
Mobility



Reduce Pain
& Tension



Relax
Your Mind



Feel Stronger
Every Day

BY
KELSEY RODERICK



Table of Contents



Introduction 2



The Most Effective Yoga Stretches to Alleviate Chronic Pain & Improve Range of Movement 3–15



Calming Relaxation Techniques 16–17



Chair Stretches 18



The Path to Improved Emotional Health 19



Thank You for Being Here 20



About the Author 21





Introduction



For many people, yoga is a path to physical health. While all the benefits are appealing, it may be challenging to know how and where to begin.

This guide will help you understand the benefits of stretching and provide you with gentle yoga stretches, relaxation techniques, and chair stretches you can use to improve mobility, increase flexibility, and reduce pain.

Take your time, be kind to yourself, and enjoy the journey to feeling better in your body and mind.



Improve
Mobility



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& Tension



Relax
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Feel Stronger
Every Day



Move gently. Breathe deeply. Live well. 





The 19 Most Effective Yoga Stretches and Techniques to Help Manage **Chronic Pain**, Relieve **Muscular Tension** and Improve Range of Movement



The following yoga stretches and techniques are carefully selected to reduce pain, release tension, calm the nervous system and restore mobility—supporting your body’s natural ability to heal and move with greater ease.



Small movements today
create a stronger, more
mobile you for tomorrow.



Move gently. Breathe deeply. Live well. ♥

BY KELSEY RODERICK



1

Downward Dog

(or Downward Dog Variation)



This posture is one of the most common in yoga and is a great moving stretch to open the chest, hamstrings, lower legs, and feet while strengthening your shoulders and upper back.



When the head is lower than the heart, this will increase blood flow to the brain and boost mental awareness.



You can adapt this with 'chair yoga', so the head is below the heart while seated, lowering the torso forward to the floor and holding the posture for time.



Tip

Focus on lengthening your spine and pressing your hands evenly into the floor.



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2

Cat–Cow Stretch

(Marjaryasana–Bitilasana)



This gentle flow between two poses warms up your spine, increases flexibility, and relieves tension in your neck, back, and shoulders. It also helps improve posture and supports a healthy spine.



Improves Spinal Mobility

Gently stretches and strengthens the entire spine.



Relieves Tension

Helps release tightness in the back, neck, and shoulders.



Supports Breath

Encourages deep, steady breathing and relaxes the body.



Calms the Mind

Promotes mindfulness and reduces stress and anxiety.



Tip

Move with your breath:

- Inhale as you arch your back and lift your chest (Cow).
- Exhale as you round your spine and tuck your chin (Cat).



Small movements today create a stronger, more mobile you for tomorrow.



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3

Bridge Pose



The benefits of lifting the hips lying down to open the quadriceps and reduce back pain.



Bridge Pose helps gently strengthen the glutes, hamstrings, and lower back while opening through the front of the hips and quadriceps. Lifting the hips encourages better spinal support and can help relieve lower back discomfort and tension.



Keeping the knees inline with the ankles helps maintain safe alignment and improves hip stability, posture, and core engagement. This posture can also support mobility through the pelvis and improve circulation through the spine.

Tip



Press evenly through the feet and slowly lift the hips.



Keep the knees hip-width apart and aligned directly over the ankles.



Breathe deeply and avoid over-arching the lower back.



Move gently. Breathe deeply. Live well. ♥

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4

Sleeping Swan Pose

Sleeping Swan Pose is a gentle hip opener that helps release tension in the hips, glutes, and lower back. It promotes relaxation, improves mobility, and supports a sense of calm in both body and mind.



HOW TO DO THE POSTURE:

-  Start on your hands and knees with your wrists under your shoulders and knees under your hips.
-  Bring your right knee forward and place it outside your right wrist. Keep your shin angled diagonally.
-  Slide your left leg back behind you, extending it straight with the top of the foot resting on the mat.
-  Lower your forearms or fold forward, resting your forehead on your arms or a cushion.
-  Breathe deeply and relax your hips and shoulders.
-  Hold for 1 to 3 minutes. Repeat on the other side.

IMPORTANT NOTE



The foot does not need to come close and horizontal to the top edge of the mat. Always work within your own capability and range of movement.

MODIFICATIONS:



Use Support

Place a bolster, pillow, or folded blanket under your chest and forehead for extra comfort.



Stay Upright

If folding forward doesn't feel right, keep your torso upright and rest on your forearms.



Be gentle with your body.
It's doing the best it can. ♥

Move gently. Breathe deeply. Live well. ♥
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5

Seated Forward Fold



Seated Forward Fold
(also known as “Caterpillar”)
stretches the hamstrings
and lower back. This floor
posture takes the pressure
off the spine and allows
the hamstrings to find a
deeper stretch without
pressure on the
sacroiliac joint.

HOW TO DO THE POSTURE:

1



Begin seated on the floor with your legs stretched out in front of you, and the spine extended well upward.

2



Inhale as you reach overhead with your arms straight and exhale reaching your middle and index fingers forward to grab the big toes.

3



Begin to bring your body over the top of your legs and lower until you feel a gentle stretch in your hamstrings and lower back.

4



Hold 1 – 3 minutes. Breathe as you continue to lengthen your spine.

5



You can also do this posture seated on a chair with the legs extended in front of you and holding for time.

MODIFICATIONS:



1 Bend Your Knees

If you have tight hamstrings, bend your knees slightly to reduce the intensity and protect your lower back.



2 Use a Strap

Loop a strap or towel around your feet and hold the ends to help you reach forward comfortably.



TIP

Move slowly and breathe deeply. Allow your body to soften with each exhale.

Honor your body today for the better you tomorrow.

Move gently. Breathe deeply. Live well. ♥

BY KELSEY RODERICK

6

Head to Knee Forward Fold



This stretch targets the hamstrings, calves, and lower back while promoting relaxation and calm. It helps lengthen the spine and can improve posture and flexibility over time.

HOW TO DO THE POSTURE:

1



Sit on the floor with one leg extended straight in front of you and the other foot placed on the inside of your thigh or knee.

2



Inhale and lengthen your spine, lifting your chest and placing your hands on your thighs or shins.

3



Exhale and hinge forward from your hips, reaching toward your foot or shin. Keep your back long.

4



Hold the stretch for 5 to 10 breaths. Keep your shoulders relaxed.

5



Inhale to lengthen your spine and exhale to release a little deeper. Repeat on the other side.

MODIFICATIONS:

1

Use a Strap or Towel



Loop a strap or towel around your foot and hold the ends to help maintain a long spine and ease into the stretch.

2

Bend Your Knee



If your hamstrings are tight, bend your knee slightly to reduce intensity and protect your lower back.



TIP

Move slowly and honor where your body is today.

With each breath, soften and let go.

Move gently. Breathe deeply. Live well. ♥

BY KELSEY RODERICK

7

Supine Twist



Supine Twist is a gentle spinal twist that helps release tension in the lower back, hips, and shoulders. It improves spinal mobility, aids digestion, and promotes relaxation and better sleep.

HOW TO DO THE POSTURE:

1



Lie on your back with your arms extended out to the sides in a T-shape and your knees bent, feet flat on the floor.

2



Inhale, and as you exhale, slowly drop both knees to one side, keeping your shoulders grounded.

3



Turn your head to the opposite side and relax your gaze.

4



Breathe deeply and allow your body to soften with each exhale.

5



Hold for 5 to 10 breaths.

6



Inhale to bring your knees back to center, and repeat on the other side.

MODIFICATIONS:



Supported Twist

Place a bolster, pillow, or folded blanket under your knees for extra support and comfort.



Gentle Twist

Keep your feet on the floor and knees stacked on top of each other if that feels better for your body.



LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

Move with ease and never force the twist. If something doesn't feel right, ease out of it.



TIP

Use your breath as a guide. The longer your exhale, the deeper your body can relax into the stretch.



Move gently. Breathe deeply. Live well. ♥

BY KELSEY RODERICK

10

8

Child's Pose



Child's Pose is a restorative posture that gently stretches the lower back, hips, and ankles while calming the mind. It's the perfect way to **pause, breathe, and reset.**

HOW TO DO THE POSTURE:

-  Start on your hands and knees with your big toes touching and knees hip-width apart.
-  Inhale and lift your hips slightly as you lengthen your spine.
-  Exhale and slowly sit your hips back toward your heels as you walk your hands forward, lowering your forehead to the floor.
-  Relax your shoulders and let your arms extend in front of you, palms down or together.
-  Breathe deeply and hold for 5 to 10 breaths.

MODIFICATIONS:



Wide Knees

Separate your knees wider for a deeper release in the hips and lower back.



Arms by Sides

Rest your arms alongside your body if you need a more passive stretch.

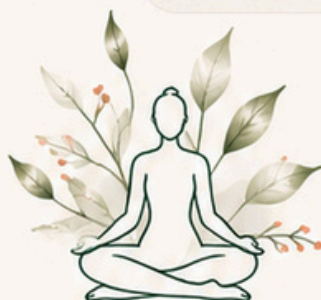


Support

Place a pillow or bolster under your forehead for extra comfort.



*In stillness, we find
space to **breathe, heal,**
and simply be.*



BENEFITS:

- ✓ Releases tension in the lower back
- ✓ Stretches hips, thighs & ankles
- ✓ Calms the mind & reduces stress
- ✓ Encourages deep, mindful breathing
- ✓ Restores energy & promotes relaxation



Move gently. Breathe deeply. Live well. ♥

BY KELSEY RODERICK



Head, Neck & Shoulder Relief Stretches

Gentle movement and mindful stretching can help melt away tension held in the head, neck, and shoulders. These simple stretches are perfect for any time you need a reset.

9

Neck Release Stretch



Gently tilt your head to one side, bringing your ear toward your shoulder. Use your hand to deepen the stretch if comfortable. Hold for 20–30 seconds. Repeat on the other side.

10

Shoulder Rolls



Inhale as you roll your shoulders up toward your ears. Exhale as you roll them back and down. Continue for 6–8 slow, mindful rolls.

11

Ear to Shoulder Stretch



Tilt your head toward your shoulder, keeping your shoulders relaxed. Hold for 20–30 seconds, feeling a gentle stretch along the side of your neck. Repeat on the other side.

12

Seated Chest Opener



Clasp your hands behind you and gently straighten your arms as you lift your chest and draw your shoulders back. Hold for 20–30 seconds, breathing deeply.

Release tension slowly.

Your body responds best to kindness. ♥

Move gently. Breathe deeply. Live well. ♥

BY KELSEY RODERICK

13 Butterfly Pose



Butterfly Pose gently opens the hips, groin, and inner thighs while promoting relaxation and calm. It's a wonderful pose to release tension and invite stillness.



HOW TO DO THE POSTURE:

- 1 Sit on the floor with your back straight and legs extended in front of you.
- 2 Bring the soles of your feet together, letting your knees fall open to the sides.
- 3 Hold your feet or ankles with your hands, keeping your spine tall.
- 4 Inhale to lengthen your spine.
- 5 Exhale and gently hinge forward from your hips, keeping your back long.
- 6 Breathe deeply and hold for 5 to 10 breaths.
- 7 Inhale, sit up tall, and gently release your legs.

MODIFICATIONS:



Sit Tall

If you feel discomfort in your knees, keep your spine tall and avoid pressing your knees down.



Support

Place a pillow or bolster under your chest or forehead to support your upper body.



Blocks

Place yoga blocks under your knees for extra support and comfort.

“When we soften our body, we quiet our mind and open our heart.”



BENEFITS:

- ✓ Stretches inner thighs, hips & knees
- ✓ Improves hip flexibility
- ✓ Encourages relaxation and stress relief
- ✓ Supports better posture and circulation
- ✓ Promotes a sense of calm and balance



Move gently. Breathe deeply. Live well. ♥

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14

Prone Frog Stretch

A SOOTHING STRETCH FOR YOUR LOWER BACK & HIPS



Prone Frog Stretch is a gentle lower-back and hip-opening posture that encourages release through the pelvis, inner thighs, and lumbar spine.

Lying on the tummy instead of always lying on the back can help decompress the spine differently by encouraging gentle spinal extension and improving awareness through the front of the body. Changing body positions regularly can help reduce stiffness, improve circulation, and create more balance throughout the nervous system.

This posture is especially soothing for people who spend long periods sitting or curled forward during the day.

HOW TO DO THE POSTURE:



-  Lie on your tummy on your mat.
-  Slide your knees out wide to each side, keeping shins angled out and feet in line with your knees.
-  Lower your torso down and rest your forehead on your hands or a cushion.
-  Allow your hips to relax toward the floor. Breathe deeply and let go of tension.
-  Stay for 1–3 minutes, breathing slowly and enjoying the release in your lower back and hips.
-  To come out, walk your knees together and rest your forehead down for a few breaths.

BENEFITS:



- ✓ Helps relieve lower-back tension
- ✓ Encourages hip mobility
- ✓ Opens the inner thighs and pelvis
- ✓ Promotes gentle spinal extension
- ✓ Encourages nervous system relaxation
- ✓ Helps balance body positioning patterns



MODIFICATIONS:



Place a folded blanket under the hips for extra support.



Keep knees wider or narrower depending on what feels comfortable.



Rest your forehead on stacked hands or a cushion for neck comfort.



Stay upright on your forearms if lying fully down feels uncomfortable.



LYING ON YOUR TUMMY vs. LYING ON YOUR BACK



LYING ON YOUR TUMMY



- Encourages gentle spinal extension
- Decompresses the spine differently
- Engages muscles along the front body
- Supports better posture and mobility
- Ideal for countering long periods of sitting

*Both
are valuable.*



LYING ON YOUR BACK

- Encourages spinal flexion
- May increase pressure on low back
- Less engagement of postural muscles
- Can feel less supportive for some
- Best for relaxation and rest



Balance comes from variety. Listen to your body and choose what feels best.



Move gently. Breathe deeply. Live well. ♥

— BY KELSEY RODERICK —



15

Reclined Bound Angle Pose

(Supta Baddha Konasana)



Restorative poses like this one remind us that slowing down is not slacking off—it's self-respect. Give yourself permission to pause, breathe, and receive the rest you deserve.



HOW TO DO THE POSTURE:



- 1  Place a bolster or pillow on your mat and lie back on it so it supports your spine and head.
- 2  Bring the soles of your feet together, letting your knees drop out to the sides.
- 3  Place pillows or blankets under your knees for support if needed.
- 4  Let your arms rest by your sides, palms up, or on your belly.
- 5  Close your eyes and take slow, deep breaths.
- 6  Hold for 3–10 minutes, or for as long as it feels good.
- 7  When ready, gently bring your knees together and roll to one side to sit up.



Tip:

Use props to support your body fully and allow yourself to let go.

BENEFITS:

- ⊕ Opens hips, groin, and inner thighs
- ⊕ Calms the nervous system
- ⊕ Relieves stress and anxiety
- ⊕ Improves circulation
- ⊕ Encourages deep relaxation and restful sleep



MODIFICATIONS:



Use a Bolster

Place a bolster under your back to support your spine and help you relax more deeply.



Add Blankets

Use blankets under your knees or thighs for extra comfort and support.



“Rest is not a luxury, it's a necessity.”



Kelsey Roderick

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15

16

Calming Relaxation Techniques

TO EASE STRESS AND
TENSION IN THE BODY



These simple practices can help you slow down, release tension, and restore a sense of calm in both your body and mind.



1



Breath Focus

This simple technique allows you to take slow, deep breaths concentrating on the diaphragm. This technique is also known as abdominal or belly breathing. As you breathe in and out your nose, you gently disengage your mind from any distracting thoughts so you can concentrate on the even flow of breath, bringing your awareness to the rising and falling of the belly, with every inhale and exhale. Consciously being aware of using your diaphragm to take deep breaths.

2



Body Scan

This technique blends breath focus, with muscle relaxation. After a few minutes of deep breathing, focus on one part of the body or a group of muscles at a time, releasing any physical tension that you may be feeling. A body scan can help boost your awareness of the mind/body connection and bring you into a more present state.

3



Guided Imagery

For this technique, you can conjure up soothing scenes, places, or experiences in your mind to help you relax and focus. There are many free apps online plus various recordings of calming scenery to choose from, so it's advisable to select imagery you find soothing and restful, to help reinforce a positive vision of yourself. This can really help with feeling grounded.

BENEFITS:

- ✓ Opens hips, groin, and inner thighs
- ✓ Calms the nervous system
- ✓ Relieves stress and anxiety
- ✓ Improves circulation
- ✓ Encourages deep relaxation and restful sleep



MODIFICATIONS:



Use a bolster or pillow to support your back, neck, or knees.



Add blankets under your knees or hips for extra comfort.



Create a calm environment with soft lighting, soothing sounds, and a comfortable temperature.

17

Calming Relaxation

*Techniques to Ease Stress
and Tension in the Body*

4

MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

This quiet technique involves sitting comfortably while focusing on breathing, bringing your attention to the present moment without thinking about the past or the future.



Research suggests this technique may be helpful for people with anxiety, to **ease stress, calm the mind, improve mood and energy levels.**



Eases stress
and anxiety



Calms
the mind



Improves mood
and outlook



Boosts energy
and focus

5

YOGA, TAI CHI, AND QIGONG

These ancient arts combine rhythmic breathing with a series of postures and movements that are often practiced to music.



YOGA



TAI CHI



QIGONG

The many physical benefits of these three individual practices are transforming as they offer a more internal balancing for the mind and the nervous system, enhancing mental focus, which can also help distract your mind from racing thoughts, so you are more in control of that *'monkey mind'*.

These various practices can also enhance your cognitive function, overall flexibility and coordination, strength and balance.



Improves flexibility
and mobility



Enhances balance
and coordination



Builds strength
and stamina



Enhances mental
focus and clarity



Supports mind-body
connection and balance



More gently. Breathe deeply. Live well. ♥

BY KELSEY RODERICK

18

Chair Stretches

Follow these postures below and hold each one
30 seconds – 1 min each side then repeat.

It is also soothing to put some mellow music on
 in the background to calm your mind and body,
 and your nervous system.



1. Side Reach

Sit tall on the edge of the chair.
 Reach one arm up and over,
 lengthening through the side body.
 Keep your chest open and
 shoulders relaxed.
 Hold, then switch sides.

2. Seated Forward Stretch

Sit tall on the chair.
 Hinge forward from your hips
 and gently reach your hands
 toward the floor.
 Relax your neck and shoulders.
 Hold, then slowly sit up.



3. Chest Opener

Sit tall with your hands
 gently behind your head.
 Lift your chest and open your heart,
 gazing slightly upward.
 Breathe deeply and relax your shoulders.



19

The Path to Improved

Emotional Health



There are many ways you can improve your emotional health. Establishing the causes of sadness, stress, and anxiety in your life can help with managing your emotions. The following tips can help with understanding how you can retrain your brain to make positive changes and improve your mental health.



1

Express your feelings



If feelings of stress, sadness, or anxiety are causing physical problems, keeping these feelings inside can make you feel even worse. It's important to let your loved ones know if or when something is bothering you.

However, keep in mind that your family and friends may not always help you deal with difficult feelings appropriately. At these times, it might be good to seek professional guidance and talk to someone who can assist you further.

2

Live a balanced life



Focus on all the things you are grateful for in your life. Try not to obsess about problems at work, school, or home, that may be contributing to unhelpful negative feelings. It is essential to deal with negative emotions by focusing on the positive things in your life.

You may want to use a journal to keep track of thoughts or any situations that make you feel happy and peaceful. This can give new insight and validation about how you are feeling. Research has proven that 'journaling' and having a positive mindset on life, can improve your wellbeing, and reduce pain or discomfort in the body, boosting your physical and mental health.

3

Develop resilience



People with resilience can cope with stressful situations more easily. Resilience can also be strengthened using strategies such as reading or reciting positive affirmations, surrounding yourself with supportive, optimistic people, and increasing social contact to keep your life in perspective.

4

Calm your mind and body



Poor emotional health can weaken your immune system. This makes you more likely to get colds and other infections during emotionally difficult times.

Relaxation methods such as quiet meditation, listening to music, listening to guided imagery tracks, yoga, or slow, mindful movement like Tai Chi, are useful ways to bring your emotions into balance.



Thank You

FOR BEING HERE



I created this guide to help you slow down, reconnect with your body, and find moments of calm in your everyday life.

You don't have to be perfect.

You just have to begin.

Every stretch, every breath, every small moment of care is an act of love—for your body, your mind, and your heart.

You are worth that. 



Take what you need. Leave what you don't.

Return to these practices whenever you need to reset and recharge.



KEEP GOING

Consistency is more powerful than intensity.
Keep showing up for yourself, one breath at a time.



BE KIND

Some days will feel easy.
Some days will be hard.
Be gentle with yourself through it all.



TRUST YOUR JOURNEY

Your body knows.
Your pace is perfect.
Trust that you're exactly where you need to be.



About the Author



Kelsey Roderick

MOVEMENT EDUCATOR
YOGA TEACHER
GROUP FITNESS
WELLNESS



Kelsey Roderick is a highly experienced and qualified teacher of movement, group fitness, yoga and personal training with over 35 years' experience in the fitness industry.

Kelsey is an approved ACC Community Group Strength and Balance Provider (TAG) and over the years has helped hundreds of people regain their movement and vitality through functional exercise, and gentle stretching.



My mission is simple:

*to help you move with ease,
breathe with intention, and
live with more joy every day.*



“

Small movements today
create a **stronger, more** mobile you for tomorrow.



KEEP GOING

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Keep showing up for yourself, one breath at a time.



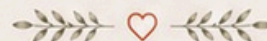
BE KIND

Some days will feel easy.
Some days will be hard.
Be gentle with yourself through it all.



TRUST YOUR JOURNEY

Your body knows.
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