



Four great stretches to bring you Inner Calm

In the middle of your daily chaos, carve out a quiet moment to tune in and soothe your body, ease your mind and find your inner calm with these easy stretches.

Stress-busting Tip: Inhale and exhale deeply as you do these stretches, matching your breath to the movement.

You'll need 10 minutes, and you might want to use a mat. Find a comfortable spot indoors or a quiet space in the garden.

1. Extended Side Angle Pose



How to do it: Step into a wide stance. Open and stretch your arms to the sides at shoulder height. Turn your right foot out 90 degrees and your left toes in about 45 degrees. Engage your legs and tummy as you hinge to the side over your right leg. Place your right hand down on your ankle, shin or knee and lift your left arm to the ceiling. Turn your nose up to the ceiling hand and hold for 10 to 15 seconds. Return to standing and repeat on the opposite side. Do five sets.

Top Tip: Keep your shoulders back and down from your ears.

Beginners version: Reach toward opposite knee instead of your foot.

Make it harder: Breathe deeply and deepen the stretch.



2. Supine Twist



How to do it: Lie on your back and place your arms in a T-shape. Bring your knees to your chest. Slowly lower both knees to the left, keeping the neck neutral or turning the gaze away from the knees. Try to keep both shoulders on the floor. If the top knee lifts too much, you can place a block or a bolster between the knees. Hold, and repeat on the other side. Hold the position

for two or three breaths, then bring legs back up and over to the other side. Do five sets.

Top Tip: Aim to keep your upper back and arms on the floor.

Beginners version: Try the exercise with a ball under your legs.

Make it harder: Hold the stretch with straight legs.

3. Cat-cow stretch



How to do it: Start on your hands and knees. While inhaling, lift your chest and tailbone towards the ceiling (cat), and while exhaling, arch your back, pressing through the shoulder blades and dropping your head (cow). Continue according to the rhythm of your breath. Do 12 of each.

Top Tip: Keep arms and knees directly below your shoulders and hips.

Beginners version: Do the cat or cow part only.

Make it harder: In between poses, kick each leg up and back.



4. King Pigeon



How to do it: Start in a V Shape (Downward-Facing Dog) with your feet together. Then draw your left knee forward and turn it out to the left, so your left leg is bent and near perpendicular to your right one-lower both legs to the ground. You can simply keep your back right leg extended straight behind you. Hold the position for two minutes, then switch to the other side, and repeat.

Top Tip: Flex your front foot to protect your knee.
Beginners version: Place a towel under your bum.
Make it harder: Fully engage your back leg.