

Yoga for a beautiful YOU

If you've tried yoga, you've already experienced some of its beauty benefits: the rosy afterglow, the elongated limbs, the graceful poise. But there's more. Yoga fights wrinkles by combatting the free radicals and stress that cause them, says Hema Sundaram, MD, a Washington, D.C.-area dermatologist and cosmetic surgeon. Plus it stretches and tones your muscles, giving you that lengthened, leaner look—and better posture, too. "If you stand and walk tall, you can look years younger," Sundaram says. Ready for a more beautiful you? Just turn the page.

By Leslie Goldman

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
DAVID MARTINEZ

Work out with
Sara Ivanhoe (left)
at Health's 2nd annual
Here Comes the Sun yoga
festival on Sept. 27, 2008,
in New York's Central Park.
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Health

One beautiful workout

Do this routine from Sara Ivanhoe, *Health's* yoga columnist (pictured below), four times a week, moving straight from one pose to the next. It will take from 5 to 20 minutes, depending on how much time you have.



« 1. Cat-and-Cow

(for flexibility)

Begin on hands and knees with hands directly under shoulders, fingers spread and pointing forward, and knees directly under hips. Inhale; lift chest and sitting bones, while letting belly drop. Exhale to drop tailbone, chest, and head while pulling belly up toward spine, creating a rounded shape; that's 1 rep. Do up to 3 sets of 10 reps.

2. Dolphin

(for increased blood flow and upper-body strength)

From Cat-and-Cow, place elbows on floor shoulder-distance apart and interlace fingers. Press forearms and hands into floor. Curl toes under, and lift hips up and back to create a long line between elbows and sitting bones. Press heels toward floor, using thigh muscles to draw body backward. Relax your head, and hold for 5–15 breaths. Repeat up to 3 times.



» 3. Extended Side Angle

(for posture, limb-lengthening, all-over toning)

Stand with feet 4 feet apart, positioned as shown below. Inhale; lift arms out to sides. Exhale as front knee bends to 90 degrees. Place right fingertips on floor by inside of right foot, while reaching left fingertips toward ceiling and rotating chest up. Hold for 5–15 breaths; repeat up to 3 times.



4. Boat

(for core strength, posture)

Sit with knees bent and feet flat. Keeping chest lifted, place hands beneath knees, squeeze legs together, and use core strength to lift and straighten legs so body is in the shape of a boat's prow, toes and eyes on same level. Extend arms out straight; hold for 5–15 breaths. Repeat up to 3 times.



» 5. Camel

(for posture)

Kneel upright with knees hip-distance apart, abs firm, and tailbone dropped. Place hands on either side of base of spine, fingers pointing up. Draw elbows and shoulders together behind you, then lift chest and slowly bend backward. (For more of a challenge, reach back and grab heels, as shown.) The bend should happen in your upper back, not your lower back. Hold for 5–15 breaths; repeat up to 3 times.

6. Child's Pose

(for de-stressing, renewal, energy)

From Camel, sit back on your heels as you bring your feet together. Keep your knees hip-distance apart as you relax your body forward and down. Rest your forehead on the floor and close your eyes, arms at your sides or stretched forward (shoulder-width apart). Hold for 20-30 breaths.



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