



Sara Ivanhoe teaches at Yogaworks in Santa Monica, California. Download her tips at saraivanhoe.com

stretch your way stronger

A top yoga instructor shows you how to take your poses out of the studio and put them to work during your strength routine.

BY SARA IVANHOE

WHAT DO YOU DO BETWEEN SETS when you're strength-training? Sure, you could watch TV or daydream about your vacation—or you could try this new strategy, which will give your body an extra toning boost. Recent research in the *Clinical Journal of Sports Medicine* found that regularly stretching a muscle also strengthens it. In addition, there have been plenty of studies showing that yoga can fight stress, depression, high blood pressure, and more. So we designed a series of yoga poses that limber up the exact muscles you're working during your resistance routine. Slide one between each set of weight moves and you'll maximize your gym time, speed up sculpting, and feel calmer, healthier, and more focused—all from one workout. No "ohm"-ing or tricky handstands required!

THE PLAN

HOW IT WORKS Do each yoga pose after 1 set of the strength exercise it's paired with. For example, if you do 3 sets of squats, you'll do dancer 3 times.

YOU'LL NEED Not a thing for the stretches. (But if you're doing them at home on a hard floor, you'll probably want to use a mat.)

AFTER squats do dancer

STRETCHES CHEST, SHOULDERS, ABS, HIPS, AND QUADS

Stand on left foot, bend right knee, and grasp inner edge of foot with right hand behind you. Draw your abs in and your tailbone down (so your back doesn't overarch) as you extend your left arm in front of you. Slowly lean forward from the hips, lifting your right leg [shown]. Find a fixed spot to stare at to help you balance. Hold for up to 8 breaths (grab on to something for balance if necessary); switch legs.



AFTER side leg raises do half chair

STRETCHES HIPS AND BUTT

Stand and extend your arms out to the sides for balance as you bend your left knee and place left ankle on top of right thigh, just above the knee. Flex your left foot, then bend your right knee as if you were sitting in a chair. Draw your abs in and, once you've found your balance, bring your palms together in front of your chest [A] or extend them up at an angle [B]. Hold for up to 8 breaths (grab on to something for balance if necessary), then switch legs.

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AFTER back extensions do garland squat

STRETCHES BACK, BUTT, AND CHEST

Stand with feet a little wider than hips, toes turned out slightly. Squat until your hips are close to floor. Inhale as you walk your hands forward, fingers spread wide; exhale and let your head hang down [A]. Feel the stretch along your spine. Hold for 5 breaths, then reach your left arm overhead and look up [B]; hold for 5 breaths, then switch sides.

AFTER hamstring curls do triangle

STRETCHES HAMSTRINGS, ABS, HIPS, AND CHEST

Stand with your feet about 4 feet apart, left toes turned out 90 degrees from right foot; turn right toes in 45 degrees. On an inhale, extend your arms out to each side at shoulder height, palms facing down. With your shoulders and hips squared in the same direction, bend over from the hips, keeping your spine as long as possible (don't hunch), and rest your left hand on your left shin, ankle, or on the floor next to left foot. Extend your right arm up, in line with shoulder; fingers straight, and look up at your right hand [shown]. Bend your left knee slightly if you need to. Hold for up to 8 breaths, then slowly release and switch sides.



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AFTER push-ups do reverse prayer

STRETCHES CHEST AND SHOULDERS

Stand with feet together, abs in, and tailbone down so your back doesn't overarch. Extend your arms out to the sides, palms facing down, then bring your palms together against the bottom of your spine. Pause and squeeze your elbows and shoulders together behind you. Hold here or turn your fingertips in and then up so they point toward your head and the outer edges of your hands rest against your back [shown]. Wiggle your hands up a little, if possible, but don't round forward; keep your chest lifted. Hold for 5 breaths.



AFTER crunches do cobra

STRETCHES ABS AND CHEST

Lie facedown and place your hands on the floor on either side of your chest, fingers spread wide and facing forward. Press the tops of your feet and your tailbone down and gently squeeze elbows against sides. On an inhale, press your hands into the floor and lift your head, chest, and hips [shown]. Hold for up to 10 breaths.

AFTER triceps kickbacks do happy cow

STRETCHES TRICEPS AND SHOULDERS

Stand with feet hip-width apart and reach your right arm straight up with palm facing left. Bend your right elbow and place your right palm against your upper middle back so elbow points up. Bring your left arm out to the side, palm facing down. Bend your left elbow and place the back of your hand against your middle back so your palm faces out. Reach your hands toward each other until they touch, then try to clasp fingers without letting back arch [shown]. If your shoulders aren't very flexible, hold an end of a towel in each hand. Hold for 5 breaths, then switch sides.

