

## OMbody Mini Practice

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In [Be An OMbody](#) we focused on sun salutations as the cornerstone for a home practice. Now that you're feeling comfortable saluting the sun at home, the next step is to build a well-rounded practice. As a yoga teacher, my main criteria for creating a class is to make the sequence well-rounded. This means that the poses I choose to put together address as much of the body as possible, and the work from each pose gets balanced properly. For example, if there is a deep forward bend, it is followed by a backbend as a counterpose. Forward + back = balance. Makes sense, right? I also make sure to draw from each of the following major pose categories:

- Warm-ups
- Sun salutations
- Standing poses
- Balancing poses
- Floor work
- Backbends
- Inversions

And don't skip savasana (final relaxation)! Often this is the hardest pose of all. How many times do we see people rolling up their mats and bolting from the yoga room as soon as it's time for savasana? Don't skip it, whether you're at class or at home. Skipping savasana negates the benefits of all the asana work done before it, and you'll feel raw and edgy (just like if you did a forward bend without the backbend to balance it out). Give your body and mind a chance to synthesize everything you did in your practice with a proper savasana. 3-5 minutes works fine; 5-15 minutes is ideal.

Many wanna-be at-home practitioners have the misconception that, in order to make their practice well-rounded, they need a huge chunk of time to dedicate to yoga. Not so. The sequence that follows should only take 20-25 minutes and the only props you'll need are a yoga mat and a block.

## CAT-COW

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### INSTRUCTION

1. Come to your hands and knees.
2. Spread your fingers wide, line your wrists up under your shoulders and your knees under your hips.
3. On your inhale, drop your belly and look up.
4. On your exhale, pull your navel in towards your spine and arch your back.
5. Repeat 5 times with 5 deep breaths.

## UTTANASANA (FORWARD FOLD)

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### INSTRUCTION

1. From the hands and knees position, tuck your toes and lift your hips into downward facing dog.
2. In down dog, bend your knees and keeping your gaze towards your feet, take baby steps up to your hands.
3. Make sure your feet are hip width apart, and take hold of your elbows.
4. Completely relax your head and neck, and straighten your legs as much as possible.
5. Hold for 10 breaths, then roll to standing.

**SURYA NAMASKAR A (SUN SALUTATION)****INSTRUCTION**

1. Read [Be an OMbody](#) for full instructions. Repeat 3 times.

## TRIKONASANA (TRIANGLE)

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### INSTRUCTION

1. Stand tall with your feet together. Step your right foot back about 4 feet, turning the back heel down. If you drew a line from your front heel, it would intersect the arch of your back foot.
2. Take your arms out to the sides at shoulder height; reach the fingertips away from one another. Take a deep inhale, and on your exhale shift forward from your hips (important: do not bend your front leg!) and reach forward with your front hand, allowing it to drop to your shin. Eventually you'll be able to take your ankle.
3. Line your top thumb up over your nose, and take your gaze towards it. Hold for 5 deep breaths and repeat on the other side.

**PRASARITA PADOTANASANA C (WIDE-LEGGED FORWARD BEND)**

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**INSTRUCTION**

1. Take your feet wide apart; if you outstretch your arms, your heels should line up under your wrists. Turn your toes in slightly. Keep your quads engaged and press down through your heels.
2. Take your hands behind you and interlace your fingers, working to press the palms together.
3. Lean back as you inhale; on your exhale, fold forward, allowing the arms to come up and over. Try to maintain the connection between your palms; if you keep them pressed into one another, you will work deeper into the tight spots in your shoulders. Let the crown of your head release towards the floor.
4. Hold for 5-10 deep breaths. Come up on an inhale, releasing your hands to your hips once you are standing.

## VRKSASANA (TREE)

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### INSTRUCTION

1. Stand tall with your feet slightly apart. Shift your weight into your left leg, firmly grounding down through your left foot.
2. Take hold of your right ankle with your right hand, and place your right foot on the inside of your left thigh, above the knee. Press your foot into your thigh as you press your leg back into your foot; think of creating equal pressure between the two.
3. If you're having trouble getting your foot to stay, hold onto the right ankle with your right hand as you bring the left hand up to heart center; otherwise, bring your hands together at heart center.
4. Keep your gaze soft, with your eyes focused on a point in front of you on the ground. Hold for 5 deep breaths and repeat on the other side.

**SETU BANDHASANA (SUPPORTED BRIDGE) INTO URDHVA DHANURASANA (WHEEL)****INSTRUCTION**

1. Have your yoga block next to your mat within reach. Lie on your back with your knees bent. Your feet and knees should be hip distance apart.
2. Extend your arms by your sides; your fingertips should touch or almost touch your heels (but make sure your feet and knees stay hip width apart here).
3. Move your shoulders in towards one another underneath you, so that you feel a slight lift in your chest.
4. On an inhale lift your hips up, keeping your feet grounded and your knees over your ankles. Grab your block and carefully put in under your sacrum; block can be any height so experiment to find what works best. Make sure the block isn't tilted and that all four bottom edges are firmly on the floor. The block should feel good and supportive, not like it is digging into your low back; it is very important that it supports the sacrum, just above where your rear begins.
5. Release entirely into the support of the block for 5 breaths.
6. You can stay here for another 10-15 breaths, or take your hands back into position for wheel. Push off your hands and feet to come to the top of your head first; keep the elbows drawing in as you straighten your arms into full wheel. Hold for 5 breaths, and then lower onto the block (you may have to readjust the block position under you).
7. Repeat the supported bridge to wheel sequence two more times.

## SIRSANA (HEADSTAND)

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**Note:** Please do not attempt full headstand if you've never done it under the supervision of an instructor. Stick with the first option, and be sure to ask your yoga teacher if you have any concerns or questions.



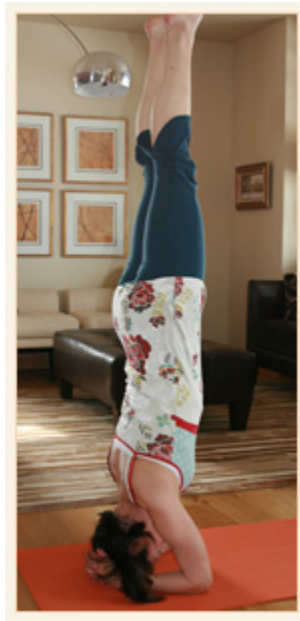
### OPTION 1: HALF HEADSTAND INSTRUCTION

1. Come onto hands and knees. Come down onto your elbows, and wrap your fingers around your elbows. **IMPORTANT:** this is the distance you want to maintain between your elbows in order to have a stable foundation for headstand. **DO NOT** let your elbows widen!
2. Keeping your elbows exactly where they are, bring your hands together and interlace your fingers, forming a cup with your hands.
3. Drop your head into the cup you've made with your hands; you should have the crown of your head on the floor, and the back of your head pressing into your palms.
4. Press down through your forearms as you tuck your toes and lift your hips. Play with coming onto tip toes and shifting the weight forward, keeping your core engaged and working to get a feeling of lightness in your hips.
5. Hold for 20-25 deep breaths. Move into child's pose from here (don't sit up).

## SIRSANA (HEADSTAND) - CONTINUED

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### OPTION 2: FULL HEADSTAND INSTRUCTION



1. Come onto hands and knees. Come down onto your elbows, and wrap your fingers around your elbows. **IMPORTANT:** this is the distance you want to maintain between your elbows in order to have a stable foundation for headstand. **DO NOT** let your elbows widen!
2. Keeping your elbows exactly where they are, bring your hands together and interlace your fingers, forming a cup with your hands.
3. Drop your head into the cup you've made with your hands; you should have the crown of your head on the floor, and the back of your head pressing into your palms.
4. Press down through your forearms as you tuck your toes and lift your hips. Play with coming onto tip toes and shifting the weight forward, keeping your core engaged and working to get a feeling of lightness in your hips.
5. Bend your knees toward your chest and use your core to float your feet up. Hold here for a breath or two before slowly straightening your legs into full headstand.
6. Hold for 20-25 deep breaths. Move into child's pose from here (don't sit up).

## BALASANA (CHILD'S POSE)

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### INSTRUCTION

1. Following either version of headstand, come right into child's pose without sitting up by coming down to your knees and taking your seat to your heels.
2. Extend your arms with palms flat and forehead resting on the floor. If you prefer, take your arms back by your sides.
3. Hold for 10 deep breaths.

## RECLINING TWIST

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### INSTRUCTION

1. Lie on your back. Hug your right knee into your chest.
2. Take hold of your right knee with your left hand, while the right arm reaches out on the floor.
3. Bring your right knee across your body (to the left) as you look right.
4. Hold for 5 breaths. Repeat on the other side.

## SAVASANA

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### INSTRUCTION

1. Don't skip it! Lie flat on your back. Take your arms away from your body and your feet apart. If this position hurts your low back, you can roll up a towel or blanket and put it under your knees.
2. Let your head rock from side to side a few times and close your eyes.
3. Breathe normally and let the floor completely support you. Rest here for at least 3-5 minutes, longer if you have more time.

Namaste.