

Posture & flexibility

Loosening

Start by shaking out the wrists; get them loose and floppy. Then shaking from the elbows; then the whole arm.

Shake out one foot; then from the knee; then the whole leg. Shake out the other foot; then from the knee; then from the whole leg.

Standing

Stand with the feet shoulder-length apart, the outside of the feet parallel. This will feel strange; but just go with it. Maximise the spread of the foot on the floor by lifting the outside of the foot and spreading it out, creating space between the toes. The toes are relaxed, and you are gripping the floor with the ball of the foot. The grip is centred behind the big toes.

From there lift up through the legs, the inner legs especially. Don't lock the knees. Lift up from the pelvic floor through the centre of the spine, creating space between each vertebra. The chest opens, and the shoulders roll back. Lift up between the shoulders through the centre of the neck to the top of the head, and beyond. Tuck the chin in; eyes are looking down. Feel the whole body, from the floor to the top of the head.

Send awareness to the contact with the floor, looking for the central point of balance. Drift to the left, so the weight is on the left foot. Drift to the right, so the weight is on the right foot. Drifting left and right, right and left, and coming in to the centre like a pendulum. Drift forward, so the weight is on the ball of the foot. Drift back, so the weight is on the heel. Drifting forwards and back, back and forwards, and coming in to the centre. Then renew your sense of grip on the floor, and lift up through the centre of the body to the top of the head, and beyond.

So the three elements of the standing are grip, lift and balance.

Head roll

From the standing, drop the head and let it hang, feeling its weight. Then roll the head (about 5 times). Return to the centre, with the head hanging, feeling its weight, and roll the other way (about 5 times). Return to the centre with the head hanging, and roll up, back into the standing.

Check if this movement has compromised balance. Renew the posture from the ground up — grip, lift and balance.

Shoulder rolls

Roll the shoulders (about 5 times); then the other way. Then roll one shoulder up, the other shoulder down (about 5 times), so the whole of the upper body is involved; then the other way.

Return to the standing.

Arm movements

Extend the arms out, stretching out from between the shoulders, through the inner arm and inner elbow, out through the palms of the hands, pushing the walls away with the palms of the hands. Relax the shoulders, and extend out. And breathe into the stretch.

Palms facing down, extending out. Palms facing up, extending up. Then circle the arms up, lifting the arms straight up. Drop the head, drop the shoulders, open up the chest, and lift. And breathe into the stretch.

Circle the arms down; circle the arms up; then circling up and down, opening up the shoulders. Let the arms be loose.

Then drop the arms, letting them hand completely relaxed and loose.

And return to the standing.

Side swings

Lower the centre of gravity by bending the knees. Keeping awareness on the contact with the floor, allowing the weight of the body to shift from one foot to the other, keeping shoulders and arms completely passive, swing from side to side.

Maintain a sense of contact with the floor, where one foot is heavy, the other foot is light. Incorporate the light foot by turning on the light heel.

And return to the standing.

Forward bends

Renewing the standing, the grip, lift and balance. Then drop forward, and hang. Come up by bending the knees and rolling up. Return to the standing.

Take a wide stance. Construct the standing from the ground up, the grip, lift, and balance. Lift up in particular through the inner leg and the inner knees. Circle the pelvis (about 5 times), and then the other way (about 5 times).

And from there, drop forward and hang. To come up, walk the feet together, bend the knees, and roll up, back into standing.

Renew the standing, the grip, lift and balance.

Downward dog

From the standing, drop forward and hang. Then drop down further so you are supported on the floor by the hands; walk your hands forward, until the heels begin to come up off the floor. Then move into the full stretch: head to the floor, buttocks to the ceiling, heels to the floor.

Walk the hands back, and hang. Bend the knees, and roll up, back into the standing.

Renew the standing, the grip, lift and balance.

Drop forward and hang. Then drop down further so you are supported by the hands; walk your hands forward, until the heels begin to come up off the floor. Then move into the full stretch: head to the floor, buttocks to the ceiling, heels to the floor.

Come forward, over the hands; then all the way forward, so you are resting face down on the floor, head supported by your arms.

Floor movements

Place hands under or beside the shoulders. Supported by hands or elbows, arch up.

Come down to the floor. Then bring the buttocks back to the heels, resting forward.

Come up onto hands and knees, and arch the back up and down. As the back comes up, the head goes down. As the back goes down, the head comes up. As the back comes up, exhale. As the back goes down, inhale.

Then sit back on the heels, upright.

Come up onto the knees. Make a big step forward with one foot. Then drop the torso straight down.

The purpose is to stretch the quadricep muscle, at the front of the upper leg. To do this, don't lean forward, which makes the movement easier, but does not stretch the quadricep so much. And have the forward leg vertical, so the knee does not extend in front of your foot — this can put too much pressure on the knee.

Come back onto both knees, then step forward with the other foot, and drop down.

Come back onto both knees, then sitting upright on the heels. Then rest forward.

Sitting

Sit on the floor with the legs straight out in front. Construct the posture from the ground up, utilising grip, lift and balance. Looking to make contact with the front of the buttock bones, lift the buttocks up and push them back. Even them out by lifting up one buttock and spreading it out; and the same with the other. Feeling the two points of contact with the floor provided by the two buttock bones, and the space in between. This is the centre of your posture. From there, lift up through the centre of the body, and extend out through the heels. As with the standing, the three elements of the posture are grip, lift and balance.

Keeping awareness of the points of contact at the base of the body, and lifting up through the centre of the body, go forward. Have the hands grounded on the floor; or holding the legs; or holding the feet, if you can reach them without difficulty. Breathe into the stretch. Then come back into the sitting.

Open up the legs, and check how this movement has influenced balance. Again, lift up, thrust back, and come down. Reach under, and pull out. Finding the central place of balance, and lifting up from there.

Then circle the pelvis (about 5 times), first in one direction, and then in the other.

Come back into centre, then rock the pelvis backwards and forwards. Rocking towards one foot, and back to centre. Rocking towards the other foot, and back to centre.

Return to the sitting, the grip, lift and balance. Then, go forward. Again, having a clear sense of the contact with the ground, and from there lifting up through the centre of the body, and extending out through the heels. Come back to the centre, with the body upright. Then go forward towards one foot. Return to the centre, and go forward towards the other foot. Return to the centre, sitting upright.

Shake the legs out, and bring them together.

Spine twists

Roll back onto the floor, bringing knees to the chest. Ease the lower back and sacrum against the floor. Then circle the knees (about 5 times), first in one direction and then the other. Return to centre, easing the lower back and sacrum against the floor.

Then extend the legs, pushing the heels up through the ceiling. Lift up especially through the back of the knees. Then return to centre.

Extend the arms. Roll pelvis and legs to one side, head to another (about 10 seconds). Then to the other side. Then from side to side at your own pace.

Return to centre, easing lower back and sacrum against the floor. Roll to one side, and come up.