

# Stress

Stressed-out. Stress queen. Stressed to the max. Just mention stress these days and everyone groans. With technology speeding up the pace of life, many things produce stress. For most of us, however, our primary source of stress does not lie in the external realm, but internally within our emotions, thoughts, and perceptions.

When faced with difficult situations, our bodies respond with a series of physical reactions called "fight or flight." Primitive humans, who were constantly escaping from or fighting predators, needed this instinctive response to survive. Modern stress, however, is of a different nature. We end up pumping high energy chemicals for low-energy needs much of the time. The price on our bodies and minds is high.

While we can't control all that happens to us in life, we can get relief from stress through yoga. Practice the following poses as an antidote to daily stress.

## Yoga Solutions

**Downward Facing Dog**, head supported  
Adho Mukha Svanasana, head supported

**Reclined Twist**  
Jathara Parivartanasana (modified)

**Seated Forward Bend**  
Paschimottanasana

**Legs up the Wall Pose**  
Viparita Karani

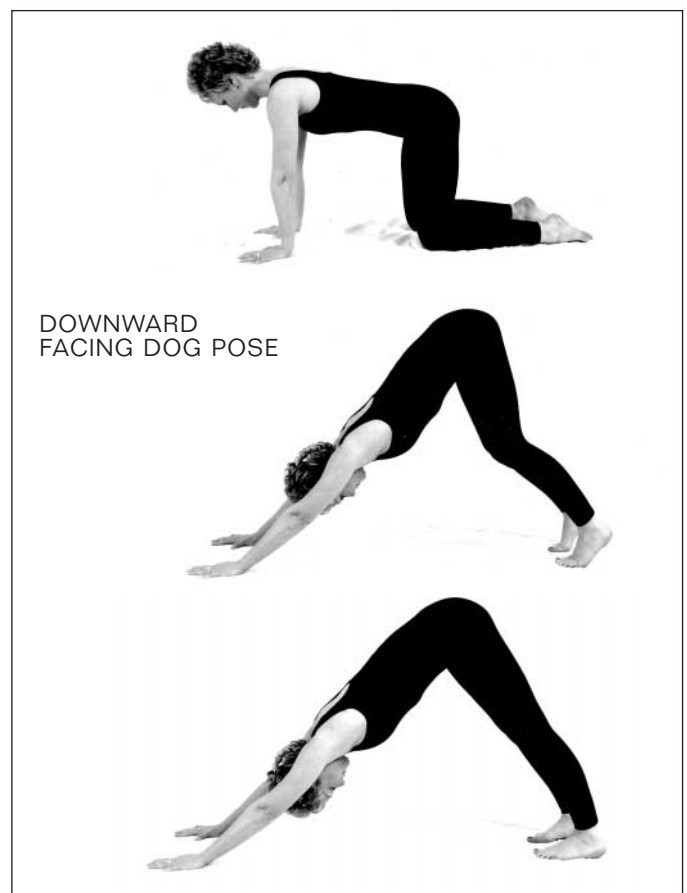
## Downward Facing Dog Pose

Adho Mukha Svanasara

**15 seconds to 1 minute**

**Instructions:**

1. Kneel on all fours with your arms shoulder-width apart and your feet hips-width apart. Flip your toes under so that your heels face the ceiling. Exhale and lift your sitting bones as you straighten your legs. Keep the weight balanced between your hands as you stretch through both arms. Keep the feet parallel and press to the heels off the floor. Press your thighbones back into your hamstrings.
2. Hold for 15 seconds to 1 minute, breathing evenly. Gradually increase your time in the pose to one minute.
3. To come down, bend your knees and come back to all fours.



DOWNWARD  
FACING DOG POSE

# Stress



RECLINED TWIST

SEATED FORWARD BEND

LEGS UP THE WALL POSE

## Reclined Twist

Jathara Parivartanasana (modified)

30 seconds to 1 minute

**Props**

- ✓ One block or folded blanket

**Instructions:**

1. Start by lying on your back with your knees bent, your feet on the ground, and your arms out to the sides. Move your arms in a "Big T" position, palms facing up.
2. Exhale and release your legs to the left dropping them to the ground. Keep your right shoulder on the floor as much as possible. Turn your head toward the right and gaze softly at your right hand.
3. Stay for 30 seconds to one minute, breathing evenly. Return your legs to center and practice on the opposite side.

**Modification:** If the twist feels too intense, place a block or folded blanket under your knees.

## Seated Forward Bend

Pascimottanasana

15 to 45 seconds

**Props**

- ✓ One blanket or block
- ✓ One strap

**Instructions:**

Sit with your legs extended out in front of you holding onto your feet with your hands. If you can't reach your feet, place a strap around them. Sit up straight and slowly release forward. Hold for 15 to 45 seconds.

**Modification:** If you have tight hamstrings that prevent you from bending forward with ease, sit on the edge of a folded blanket or block

## Legs up the Wall Pose

Viparita Karani

1 to 10 minutes

**Props**

- ✓ One bolster
- ✓ A wall

**Instructions:**

1. Place a folded bolster a few inches away from a wall. Sit sideways on the edge of the bolster, with the right side of your body touching the wall.
2. Slowly lower yourself down to the bolster so that your legs swing up the wall and your back body rests on the bolster. Once your legs are up the wall, make sure you are as close to the wall as possible. The bolster should support your lower ribs. If the backs of your legs feel uncomfortable in this position, scoot the buttocks away from the wall. Make any other small adjustments to bring relaxation including not using a bolster at all.
3. Bring your hands to your sides, palms facing up. Relax your throat and the sides of your neck. Descend your chin slightly. The most important thing to do in this pose is "nothing" - just relax. Stay, breathing evenly, for 1 to 10 minutes. To come out of the pose, bend your knees, roll onto your right side and sit up slowly.