

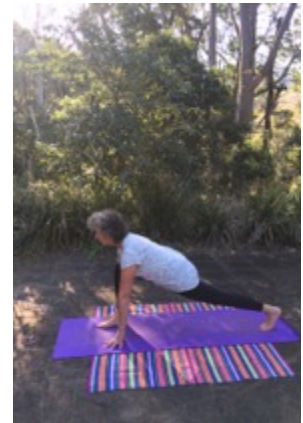
**A hip opening sequence which can be practiced on its own, in conjunction with other flowing sequences or in preparation to sit and meditate. It is designed to open the body, settle the mind and help you to focus, to stay centred.**



Come into downward facing dog (adho mukha svanasana). Lift sitting bones to ceiling, relax neck down and gradually work to straighten legs. Deep, slow breaths. Feel length coming into legs, arms and back. Grounding down through the hands and feet.



Bring right leg forward – right knee in line with right wrist, right foot to the left side of mat for pigeon pose (eka pada rajakapotasana). Stay with torso upright or extend arms out and bring chest toward the mat. A powerful hip-opener. Step back to down dog and repeat with left leg.



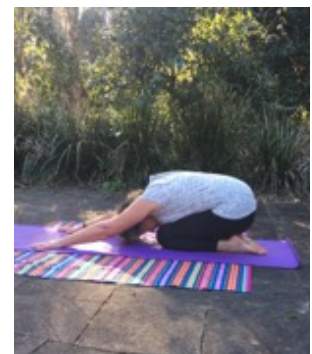
From down dog bring right leg forward for a high lunge (ashwa sanchalanasana) Hands either side of front foot, hips square to front of the mat and chest lifted. Eye gaze forward.



Step left foot forward, exhale and fold forward into standing forward bend (uttanasana). Hands can be on shins (flat back if lower back issues), on the mat or wrapped around the calves. Draw shoulders away from the ears. Ok to have a micro-bend in the knees.



Step right foot back for the lunge on the left side.



Step left foot back, knees to the mat, buttocks to heels with arms extended for child pose (balasana). Feel shoulders and chest open. Come onto all fours.



Come down onto belly. Hands under shoulders, inhale raise chest with elbows bent, pubic bone rests on floor for cobra (bhujangasana). The navel rests on the floor but draws back to spine. Lift chest, shoulders down.



Press back onto hands & knees, knees in line with hips, shoulders over wrists. Inhale lift sitting bones, chest forward, spine arched for cow pose (bitilasana). Gaze forward and up.



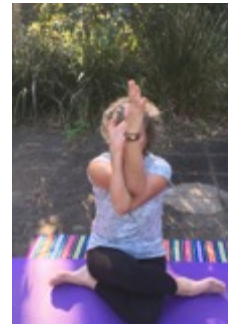
Exhale round the spine for cat pose (marjariasana). Draw chin to chest, crown of the head released towards the floor, navel to spine. Repeat cow/cat several times.



Bring right knee in front of left knee, right foot to the left side of mat, left foot to right side of mat and sit between heels or on a blanket. Sitting in cow face pose (gomukasana). If knees are an issue – straighten the left leg along mat.



Twist to the right side. Right hand behind for support and left arm on the outside of right thigh.



Release the twist. Come into eagle pose (garudasana). Bring left elbow on top of right, wrapping forearms and bringing palms together. Press elbows into each other and draw shoulders down. Release arms and repeat with left leg on top.



Lean back on hands and extend both legs along mat. Balance on sitting bones in boat pose (navasana). Begin with knees bent, holding back of knees. To progress release hands and extend arms out straight, shoulder height. If balance is ok, straighten both legs.



Release to sitting cross legged. Sit on a cushion or blanket. Begin alternate nostril breathing (nadi shodhana). Raise right hand & rest index and middle finger on the spot between the eyebrows. The thumb blocks off right nostril & ring finger (with the little finger resting on it) closes left nostril. Exhale both nostrils. Close the right nostril inhale through the left, release the right side while closing the left side and exhale through the right, inhale right side, close it and open the left side then exhale. This is one round. Continue for up to 8 cycles. It may be helpful to count the breath – even inhalation, even exhalation.



If time allows, sit quietly for 5 – 10 minutes. Slowing the breath down, watching the breath. You're not trying to change it, you're just observing it. Notice when thoughts arise, try not to engage with the story – think of your thoughts as clouds passing over the blue sky. Relax the shoulders, throat and jaw. It's good to set a timer, so you are not constantly looking at the time. There is no need for more distractions! You may like to rest in savasana to end, just gauge how you are feeling.