

Simple Yoga Poses for the Gardener

Lateral Stretch for back & shoulders

Stand with feet together and knees slightly bent. Begin with left hand on hip and extend right arm overhead in line with your ear. Lean to the left and slowly reach to the left with your right arm. Hold stomach in to keep the body in line. Repeat on right side.



Standing Forward Bend for back, shoulders, chest, & legs

Stand with feet together and knees slightly bent. Bend forward with arms behind back, fingers interlaced. Be sure your weight is evenly distributed between both feet. Relax the weight of your head, neck, and shoulders. Lift arms overhead, bringing them in line with shoulders. Breathe deeply.



Cat Pose for back, shoulders, & chest

Get down on all fours. Place your hands shoulder distance apart and your knees at hip distance. Gently tighten stomach muscles, pulling navel into spine and rounding the back from head to tailbone. Lower and relax head and neck as you exhale.



Cow Pose for back, shoulders, & chest

On all fours, drop your stomach toward the floor, arch your back and lift head upward as you inhale. Rotate between this position and the Cat Pose in a smooth fashion.



Supine Twist for back

Lie on back with knees bent and arms out, palms up. Lower your knees to your right side while keeping shoulders on floor. Turn your head in the opposite direction of your knees, looking out over the fingertips. Inhale. Return to center. Repeat on the opposite side, exhaling as you lower knees.



Goddess Pose for hips

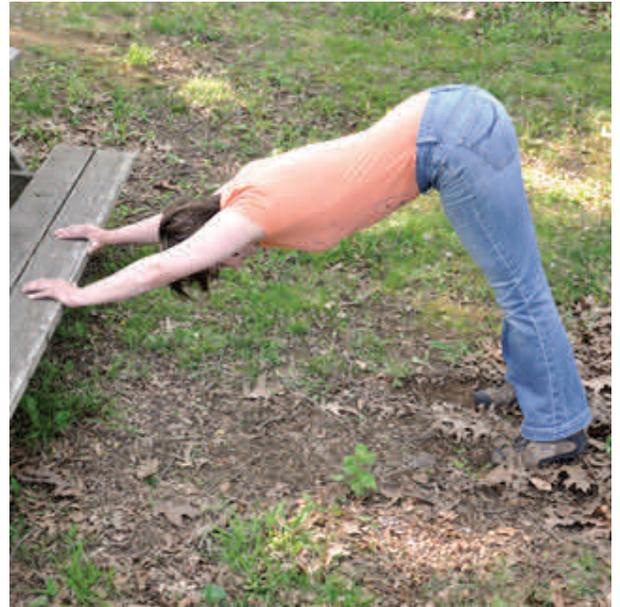
Lie flat on the floor with feet together and knees bent. Gently lower knees toward the floor in opposite directions. Inhale and reach arms overhead, resting backs of hands on the floor. Touch thumbs and index fingers.



Downward Facing Dog (Adho Mukha Svanasana)

This classic yoga pose will help open your shoulders and chest and the backs of your legs while strengthening your upper body. For people with stiffer joints, try using a bench for support, as shown.

To assume the pose, bend at the waist so your hands are flat on the ground or on a support. Your hands should be 6 to 12 inches apart. Keep your knees bent, about hip-width apart, and let your heels lift off the ground. Slowly start to straighten your knees—but don't lock them. Gently begin to move your upper body in toward your thighs until your ears are in line with your upper arms. Keep your hips up (don't let them sag) and at the same time push strongly into your hands. Lift your sit bones toward the sky so that your body makes an inverted "V."



Repeat this, and the following poses, three to five times.

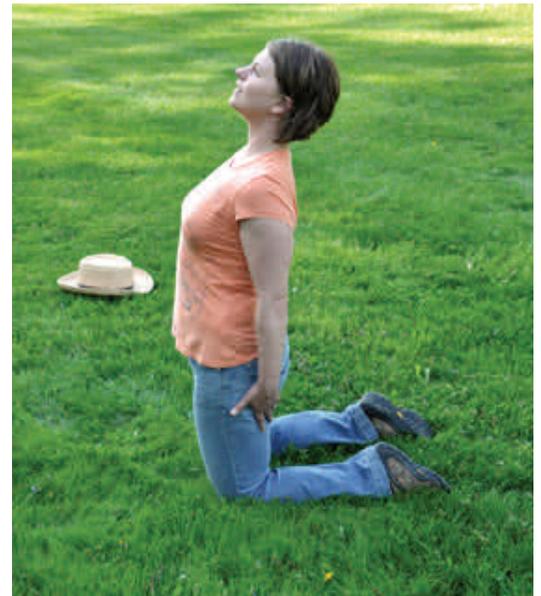
Extended Hand to Big Toe Pose (Utthita Hasta Padangustasana)

Stand facing a bench. Keeping your weight on your left leg, lift your right leg and place your heel on the bench. Keep your hips even. Slowly extend your torso over the right leg, bending at the waist, while reaching the hands toward the ankles (or shins) to gently stretch your hamstrings. Hold the position for 30 seconds, or less if that is not comfortable. Repeat and switch to the other leg.



Beginning Stage to Camel Pose (Ustrasana)

The camel pose can be a bit tricky for a tight-backed beginner, but a gardener can experience a beneficial stretch by performing just the first stage of the pose. Kneel in the grass, keeping your back straight, making sure your knees are directly beneath your hips. Keep your hips, knees, shoulders and ears all in line. Then place the palms of your hands on the small of your back or just below your buttocks. As you inhale, inflate your chest and feel your breastbone rise, floating the ribcage up and off the waist.



Wide Leg Forward Bend (Prasarita Padotanasana)

Stand up on your lawn and spread your legs wide, as shown in the photo. Bend at the hips and touch the grass. Hold the pose for 30 seconds.



Garland Pose (Malasana)

Stand with your feet together, 9 to 12 inches from a tree or wall. Lean back with your lower back against the tree, but keep your upper back tilted slightly forward so only your lower back touches the tree. Extend your arms straight in front of you as shown in the photo. Slowly slide down the tree as if sitting, bending your knees and going as far down as you can while keeping your back straight, but slightly away from the trunk, and your arms parallel to the ground. Hold for a few breaths. To come out of the pose, bend forward, place your hands on the ground, and stand up.



Upward Hands Pose Variation (Urdhva Hastasana)

Stand up straight, holding a garden rake horizontally over your head, palms facing forward. Keeping your arms extended, gently twist to the right and then to the left.

