

# INVERSIONS

for instant stress relief

## Yoga to Reduce Stress Using the Power of Gravity

### // WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is your body's **natural** reaction to a challenge or demand. Small amounts of stress can be useful, like when avoiding danger or meeting a deadline. However, chronic stress can have negative effects on your wellbeing by putting you at higher risk for health problems like high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, depression, anxiety, skin problems, and menstrual problems.

### // HOW DO INVERSIONS REDUCE STRESS?

When the head is below the heart, gravity forces oxygen-rich blood to flow to your brain. This helps to regulate neurotransmitters and nourish brain cells, quieting your internal "chatterbox" and triggering your autonomic nervous system to move from the sympathetic "flight or fight" stress response into the parasympathetic "rest and digest" response.

Similarly, when the legs are placed above the heart, gravity assists with blood circulation and drainage of lymphatic fluids from the legs.

\*\*Inversions are not recommend for those with high or low blood pressure, acid reflux, asthma, heart problems, or head, neck, or back injuries. Please consult your physician before beginning any exercise program.

### // CHECK-IN

Before doing any poses, close your eyes and scan your body. How are you feeling right now? Are you feeling stress or tension anywhere? What is your breath like? Are you breathing through your nose? How long is each inhale and exhale? What other sensations come up in your body? Is your mind calm or busy?

## STANDING FORWARD FOLD

### *Uttanasana*



#### HOW TO:

- Stand with your feet hip-width distance apart or wider.
- Ground down into your feet and hinge forward, folding over your legs.
- Bend your knees as much as needed to protect your lower back.
- Release your hands to the floor.
- Relax your head and neck.
- Shift your weight into the balls of your feet.
- Hold the pose for 30-60 seconds.

#### BENEFITS:

- Creates space in the spine, soothing the nervous system.
- Brings blood flow to the head and calms the mind.
- Reduces fatigue and insomnia.
- Stimulates digestion and elimination.
- Lengthens hamstrings and calves.
- Reduces low back strain.

## RABBIT POSE

*Sasangasana*



### HOW TO:

- From child's pose, bring your hands back and grab onto your heels.
- Draw your forehead towards your knees as close as possible.
- Inhale, lift your hips off your heels and roll onto the top of your head.
- Add a blanket under your head or knees to help reduce pressure while maintaining the stretch.
- Hold the pose for 30-60 seconds.

### BENEFITS:

- Creates space in the spine, soothing the nervous system.
- Brings blood flow to the head and calms the mind.
- Stimulates the thyroid gland and regulates hormonal balance.
- Reduces fatigue and insomnia.
- Stimulates digestion and elimination.
- Stretched the back and relieves tension in the upper body.

## LEGS UP THE WALL

*Viparita Karani*

The Anti-Aging Pose!!



### HOW TO:

- Sit with one side against the wall. Gently turn your body to bring your legs up onto the wall as you lower your back to the floor and lie down.
- Shift from side-to-side and scoot your glutes close to the wall.
- Open up your arms out to the sides.
- Place a bolster or blanket under the pelvis for additional support.
- For greater accessibility, do this pose with legs on a chair.
- Hold for 5-10 minutes.

### BENEFITS:

- Soothes the nervous system and relieves anxiety.
- Promotes deep relaxation, helping to release any tension or stress.
- Improves circulation and lymphatic drainage, helping to relieve tired legs/feet and reduce swelling and cramping.
- Promotes sleep and reduces fatigue.
- Stretched and lengthens hamstrings and glutes..
- Relaxes the pelvic floor and relieves menstrual cramps.
- Relaxes neck and shoulders.

**After doing any of these poses, do another check-in. How do you feel now?**

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