

## Introduction

Thank you for choosing this book. I know there are a wealth of yoga lessons available, and I am thrilled you have chosen mine.

This was written with you in mind, someone who is way too busy to stop and take a yoga class.

I want to show you how you can make time for stretching, in just a few minutes a day, before you get out of bed, or possibly when you return to bed before sleep.

Each of the lessons takes only a minute or two. You can do them in 5-minute sequences. They are the result of years of my yoga practice and teaching.

You do not need months of practice to benefit from the lessons here. You need just a few minutes a day and, in very short order, you will feel the difference that these exercises make to your well-being.

Before you begin, read this section.

*For bonuses go to ...*

## **Getting Started**

- Stretching Like a Dog or Cat
- What? Yoga Stretches in Bed?
- Imbalances in Back, Hips, Knees and What that Costs You
- How to Get the Most from These Exercises
- You Decide
- The Pain-Free Way: 60-80% vs 100% Effort

Watch a dog or cat right when they awaken, whether from a full night's sleep or even just a nap. What do they do?



They stretch. They stretch their entire spine and all four legs. It looks like it feels so good. Your dog or cat acts out of instinct for what its body needs. Our furry critters do not need to “undo” the effects of sitting all day like most of us do, so it does not take them long to stretch after being curled up for a while.

What if you did the same, just like a dog or cat? Begin stretching immediately after awakening...before you get up and get on the move.

I will show you 10 “feel-good stretches” and movement sequences that you can do from bed. Discover how easy it is to wake up your body and create a great start to the day.

What stops you from exercising if you are not one to do it? Are you unsure of what to do? If so, you are holding terrific instructions to start you on your way.

Or do you plan to work out sometime later in the day...and find that you seldom get around to it? Maybe, for you, life gets busy the moment your feet touch the ground. If so, stretch before you begin your busy day, or at last resort, when you climb back into bed for sleep.

Here is how:

When you awaken, do this quick stretch: Bring your arms over your head and press your heels away from you. Stretch your entire body, reaching your hands and arms overhead and your legs and feet as far as you can in the other direction. Then if you need to, throw the bed covers back, make a quick trip to the bathroom, return to bed, and lie down on your back to stretch a bit more.

Back in bed, stretch more on the right side of your body, then switch and stretch the left side. One arm and leg as far as you can, then the opposite side. Next, stretch both sides equally again. After stretching like that, relax your whole body. There. Your dog/cat stretch is complete.

*For bonuses go to ...*

Exercise 1 is no more complicated than that. It will do wonders for your feet and ankles, which affect your balance and your mobility, and it takes only a minute. Who ordinarily thinks about ankle exercise?

All the following poses and exercises are easy to do and easy to learn. They will tone and balance the muscles of your front, back, and sides. The repetitive sequences will lubricate your joints, especially your hips and lower back. The movement increases oxygen and blood flow to your muscles and tissues. Best of all, you will begin the day truly renewed.

Without stretching, many of your muscles may be stuck in an out-of-balance condition, most likely from sitting too long at your desk, or in front of the computer or TV. Or maybe you suffer from neck strain from repeatedly moving your head and neck too far forward over your torso when you use your phone to text, read, or play games.

Many aches and pains throughout the body originate from muscle imbalance—some muscles get tight with tension, while others become weak from being repeatedly overstretched. If you live with muscle imbalance month after month and year after year, an unfortunate condition sets in and your body starts to wear out unevenly. This leads to back, hip, or knee problems...Like the tires on a car wear unevenly when the front end is out of alignment.

If you have chronic back pain, knee, hip, or foot pain, it is likely that your hip muscles are out of alignment, resulting in strain and pain.

The good news is that the imbalances are not difficult to fix, using the simple stretches I show you here. They work, and they will work for you, even if you have let the condition persist for so long that you can hardly

remember living pain-free. I will literally show you how to get back the feeling of a younger, pain-free body.

Think back to your high school physical science class; you may remember that it is the bones of the body that create our structure and give us our form. The bones connect to each other through joints. Your bones cannot move on their own. It is the muscles in your body that move your bones. And all muscles that move your bones are paired. To move a bone, one muscle contracts while another gets pulled long.

As you move through the day, many movements you make are repetitive ones. For example, your ankle flexes with every step you take. Step after step, you lead with your heel. Seldom do you stretch the top of your foot and lead with your toe. That would be called a “dance walk.” It would look and feel weird to go around that way unless you were on the stage.



*For bonuses go to ...*

As a result, the muscles on the tops of your feet may become shorter and tighter. That can result in painful conditions like plantar fasciitis or arthritis. I know this from experience because of pain I had in my left big toe. When the pain first developed, I thought there was nothing I could do about it, except live with it. I figured the arthritis was a result of an injury many decades ago, way back when I was in fifth grade. I stumbled during a “potato sack” relay race and broke my big toe. The arthritis, decades later, was a result of that long-ago event.

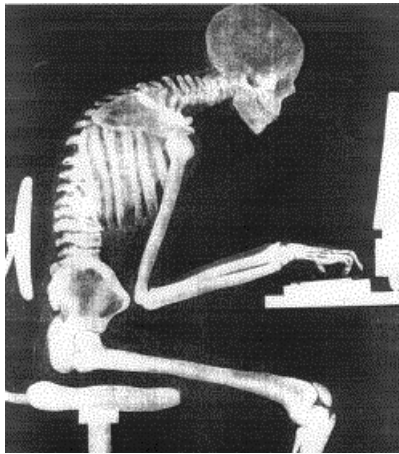
Then I learned that I could get rid of the pain simply by stretching the top of my foot. With a gentle foot stretch held for two minutes, all the pain went away! Even better, the arthritis pain never came back. Why? Because I regularly add a “muscle-balancing” foot stretch to my daily stretches.

Think about how often, and how long, you sit during a day. Your body is not designed for long periods of sitting in a chair, especially when sitting without good support for the lumbar spine, the lower back. The natural curve in the low back is designed to move inward; yet, when we sit in most chairs, that part of the spine rounds outward.

If you slump, your chest muscles become short and tight, which causes your shoulders to round forward. Your back rounds too, overstretching your back muscles. Over time, the back muscles become weak and chronically overstretched.

A muscle imbalance may not be noticeable as a young adult. But decade after decade, those patterns register and often become painfully obvious in our later years.

When your spine stays in a C-shape, your lower back feels the pinch of lots of pressure, ultimately causing lower back pain. Sitting for long periods continues the imbalance in your hips. The muscles in your front groin contract, tighten, and pull on your pelvis as well. Over and over, throughout your body, the same muscles contract while the opposing muscles are pulled long. The muscles that are pulled long become over-stretched, weak, and tight. One muscle is contracted and tight; the other is over-stretched and tight.



There is a remedy for both. If contracted and tight, you put the muscle in a slack position and hold the pose for a minute or two to re-set it. You also need to stretch that muscle. Conversely, muscles that have repeatedly been over-stretched need to be strengthened, not stretched, to come into balance. You will find a good and simple way to strengthen your back muscles in Exercise 5.

Out-of-balance muscles pull the bones out of alignment. The muscles become painful, and the joints get repeatedly strained, resulting in joint pain, or arthritis or bursitis. You may develop a limited range of motion in the joint as well.

*For bonuses go to ...*

The next time that you sit at your desk, or on your couch, notice if your head juts forward of your chest. This head-forward position puts strain on your neck and shoulder muscles. Unsupported or strained posture can make the muscles of your neck and back hurt, your shoulders ache, or give you a headache by the end of the day.

If you cannot picture your usual posture, get a friend or family member to take a photo of you when you are sitting down and not trying to hold yourself in good posture. Look at how you stand without trying to stand up straight. And observe your colleagues, friends, and neighbors.

To undo the effects of bad sitting or poor standing posture, and to rebalance the muscles in your body, start the day stretched and strong. This book will help you learn how to stretch. Your dilemma may simply be how to fit stretching exercises into a busy life when it feels like you have no time to spare.

One way is simply to decide to do a few stretching exercises every day. Make an agreement with yourself to do daily exercises in bed for one week. Notice how you feel after several consecutive days. If you do the exercises daily, you will feel better and you will not mind taking the couple minutes to start your day stronger.

Repeat the next week, adding a new or additional exercise to the mix.

Experts say it takes about 30 days to instill a new habit. If you want to feel better, give yourself at least 10 minutes of stretching for 30 days. If you think that you do not have a couple of minutes to spare once you open your eyes, then set your alarm for ten minutes earlier than your usual time for getting up. The benefits will outweigh the missed ten minutes of sleep; I promise. You will have to try this to know for yourself.



The first set of exercises starts in the next chapter. They take only one or two minutes. Exercise 1 is the place to begin. Over time, try each of the 10 stretching-in-bed exercises. See which ones work best for you and bring needed relief. The entire set of reclining exercises in this book may take you 30 minutes or more. If 30 minutes seems too long to commit to every day, go ahead and choose the exercises that feel most beneficial, always starting with your feet. You may wish to do the whole set of exercises on a day off from work or when you have more time in the morning.

If all else fails, take your 10 minutes when you are back in bed at the end of the day. Doing an exercise or two at the end of the day will help relax your body for a good night's sleep.

Here is a surprise: 10 minutes out of your day is only 1% of your waking time. You can afford to spend 10 minutes, or 1% of your time, on the self-care of stretching.

Oh, and one other important thing to help you: Many people follow the dictum: "No pain, no gain." That is **not** the case here. My exercises are no pain, all gain.

Instead of doing each set of movements at 100% capacity, make your range of movement only about 60–80% of your maximum to bring a greater sense of ease to the exercises.

I warn you: It will be difficult to remember not to give it "your all." If/when you notice that you are stretching to your max, back off a little. You will find greater comfort and ease, and your stretch will be more effective and easier to hold than when done at 100% capacity.

*For bonuses go to [www.DontGetOutOfBedYet.com](http://www.DontGetOutOfBedYet.com)*

Why? Because at 60–80% of your range of movement, you are stretching the belly of the muscle. At 100%, you put tension and strain on the tendons, the places where the muscles attach to the bones. You want these exercises to benefit the muscles, not strain the tendons. And believe me, it is going to feel better to do less than your maximum.

Turn the page to see the perfect way to begin. I promise you that your gain will be greater than the loss of a couple minutes of your time.