



KRISTIN MCGEE is a celebrity yoga and Pilates instructor in New York City. Find her favorite moves and latest inspiration at health.com/kristin.

Yoga Moves We All Get Wrong

Score more benefits from your flow and prevent injury by avoiding these form mistakes.

By KRISTIN MCGEE



✗
AVOID
Leading with head instead of lower torso.

Hold each pose for four to six breaths, making sure to breathe deeply and evenly.

Seated Spinal Twist

GREAT FOR: Strengthening obliques, chest, and shoulders; improving spine flexibility.

DO IT RIGHT: Sit with legs extended. Bend left knee, placing left heel on floor outside right thigh. Bend right knee in front of you. Place right elbow on outside of left thigh and left palm or fingertips on floor. Keeping hips anchored, inhale as you twist torso to the left. Release and switch sides.

✗
AVOID
Rounding your lower back.



✗
AVOID
Sinking into supporting leg.



Yoga Fights the Blues
▶ You know doing yoga can make you feel calmer—now research says it may help stave off depression. A new study found that people with depression who took 90-minute yoga and breathing classes two or three times weekly for 12 weeks (as well as practicing at home) reported a decrease in symptoms.

Downward Dog

GREAT FOR: Strengthening arms, legs, and core; stretching hamstrings, shoulders, and back.
DO IT RIGHT: Begin on all fours, palms wider than shoulder-width apart. Press into hands and feet to lift hips, forming an inverted V with body. Continue lifting through tailbone, keeping spine straight and head between arms. If hamstrings are tight, bend knees.

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AVOID
Letting knees fall in or out to the sides.



Tree Pose

GREAT FOR: Building focus and improving balance.
DO IT RIGHT: Stand with feet hip-width apart and arms at sides. Place left sole, with toes relaxed, against right inner thigh or calf; turn left knee out to the side. Bring palms together at heart. Release; switch sides.

Bridge Pose

GREAT FOR: Strengthening core, glutes, and hamstrings; lengthening spine.
DO IT RIGHT: Lie faceup with knees bent, heels flat, and arms at sides. Press into feet, lift hips, and roll spine up off floor. Clasp hands together under body and lift chest. Keep feet parallel, rooting down through big toes.

✗
AVOID
Leaning forward from the waist.



Forward Bend

GREAT FOR: Stretching hamstrings and back; helping release stress.
DO IT RIGHT: Stand with feet about hip-width apart, arms at sides. Hinge forward, bending knees slightly as you lower head toward floor. Think of your body as a crisply folded piece of paper—the fold should come from your hips. Lengthen spine as you come forward, letting head hang down. It's OK to keep knees slightly bent.

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The number of calories you could burn in one hour of moderate-intensity yoga—about the same as in a light jog
SOURCE: *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*