

APPENDIX E

YOGA for ATHLETES® 20-minute
Workout

By Kimberly Fowler, founder of YAS Yoga And Spinning Center located in Venice, Calif.

1. Standing Forward Bend Pose: Stand with your feet hip distance apart with toes pointed forward. Take a deep breath in and then slowly bend forward, hinging from your hips. Now once you are down, if your hamstrings or your lower back is tight, then bend your knees. As your hamstrings start to get more flexible, straighten your legs and then place your hands on the opposite elbows and just hang, trying to relax your neck. No bouncing!



2. Chair Pose: Slowly roll up, one vertebrae at a time, to standing. Once you are up, bring your legs together, feet touching, and then reach up as high as you can, your palms facing each other, shoulders relaxed. (If you want to, you can reach up with one hand and then the other, just stretch out the sides of your body). You should feel a nice stretch all along your body. Take a deep breath in, keep your arms in the air and squat down as if you are just about to sit in a chair. Keep your hips down and your chest up and look between your hands. As you get more flexible, you will be able to sink deeper into this pose. Try to keep your hips back and try to shift most of your weight onto your heels. If that's easy for you, lift your toes to challenge your balance a little.



3. Diamond Pose (advance variation: Hero): Drop down to your knees. (If you have a towel, grab it and put it on the ground). With your knees, legs and feet together, just sit back on your feet. This is a great pose for athletes because it opens your quads, hips, feet and ankles. Sit up straight, rest your hands on your thighs and remember to breathe. Now if this is easy for you, then you can take it to the next level and do Hero's Pose: keep your knees together but bring your feet wide enough apart to allow your butt to hit the ground. If your butt is not hitting the ground, stay with Diamond pose.



4. Foot to Knee Pose: From Diamond (or Hero's pose), roll onto your hip and swing your legs out in front of you and shake them out. Keeping your left leg straight, bring your right foot to the inside of your thigh, sit up straight with your arms reaching up and take a deep breath in. As you exhale lean forward from your hips, not from your lower back. Try to reach your foot; if you can't reach your foot then grab your shin. If you can reach your foot, then try to bring your toes towards you; this will open up the whole back of your leg. Try to keep you back flat and your shoulders squared and make sure your hamstring (back of the leg) is on the ground. Switch legs.

After you stretch each leg, bring both legs out in front of you and shake them out. With your legs together, reach up take a deep breath in and on your exhale hinge forward. See how deep into this pose you can go; try to grab your toes.



5. Cobbler Pose: Put the soles of your feet together, knees wide apart, bringing your feet close to your body. Sit up straight, take a deep breath in and slowly, on your exhale, bend forward from your hips. Now the great thing about this pose is you are opening up your lower back, your hips and your inner thighs. If your knees are way up in the air, either bring your feet a little further from your body or use your elbows to push your knees down (gently!). If this is fairly easy for you, then walk your hands out in front of you and let your head drop, using the weight of your head to sink you into the pose and stretch you out even more.



6. Reclining Pigeon: From Cobbler, sit up and bring your knees together, then roll down onto your back and hug your knees into your chest. Gently rock from side to side to release your lower back. Bring your feet to the ground with your knees bent, then bring your right foot on top of your left thigh. Now grab the back of your right thigh by bringing your left hand through your leg and then pull your thigh towards you. Make sure your neck is relaxed. Now switch sides, with your left foot on top of your right thigh, and pull your thigh towards you. Notice if there was a difference between one side and the other; don't be surprised if there is a big difference.



7. Easy Spinal Twist: Keep your right knee into your chest and let the left leg go straight on the ground. Bring your right knee across your body, trying to keep your shoulder blades on the ground. Look over your right shoulder and try to relax. Switch sides, so your left knee comes in, the right leg goes straight, bring the right knee across your body, this time looking over your left shoulder.



8. Relaxation Pose: Bring your knees together and hug them in nice and tight to release your back one last time. From here take a deep breath in and, on your exhale, let everything go to the ground, lying on your back. Let your feet fall out to either side. Bring your arms alongside, but slightly away from your body, and turn the palms to face upwards. Relax your whole body, including your face. Let your body feel heavy. Take a deep breath in and just let it go. Stay here for a few minutes, so try not to fall asleep.

After 2 minutes, bend your knees slightly and roll onto your right side then push yourself up to a seated cross-leg position. Take one more deep breath in and let it go. Take a few seconds to feel and changes in your body before you “run” off.

Namaste! (Pronounced Na-Ma-Stay, this is commonly said after yoga and means “the light in me honors the light in you.”)

