

Rising Sun Yoga



Hip Opener Series for Runners/Walkers and Cross Country Skiers

With Barb Pierce

After warming up your body, hold the lunges for 3 minutes each side and the remainder of the poses for 5 minutes each. Take your time to slowly settle into each pose, gradually relaxing the muscles and connective tissue surrounding the joint being stressed. Do these carefully and slowly with intention of opening up the joints gradually over the next month of practice (not all at once!). Tight for time? Do half of the sequence one night and the other half later in the week.



1a. Horse pose lunge: safest version. Place forward foot between hands, allowing weight to go onto hands and forward foot. Back knee will go on the ground, back toe points to the back of the mat. Lean forward enough that you feel the opening on the achilles tendon. It is ok to feel it in the psoas of the back leg (groin/in front of hip bone), but the focus is on the forward leg.



1b. Horse pose lunge - alternate: place hands on blocks, open chest, sink into the forward leg. If this is too much for your ankle or psoas, place hands on the ground and take some of the weight off the forward leg. Double up the mat or place something under your knee if it is sore.



1c. Horse pose lunge - advanced alternate: place one hand on your hip and the opposite hand in the air OR place both hands on your hips, sinking into the forward leg. If this is too much for your psoas or ankle, move back to one of the other options.



2a. Gecko/dragon: safest version. place forward foot to the outside of your hands, allowing weight to go onto hands and forward foot. Back knee will go on the ground, toe pointed to the back of the mat. You should feel this in the hip of the forward leg and the psoas of the back leg. If you can do it safely, put your forearms on the floor.



2b. Twisting Gecko/dragon - advanced alternate: allow weight to go on the arm opposite the forward leg. Place hand on hip of the forward leg as you twist your torso, sinking into your forward leg.

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3a. Hamstring Stretch: allow weight to go to the back leg, straightening the forward leg, with weight on hands. Place blocks under your hands if you can't relax your forward leg.



3b. Hamstring Stretch - advanced alternate: allow weight to go to the forward leg as you gradually extend the forward leg towards the splits. Weight is on hands. If it is too intense, go back to the hamstring stretch.



4. Swan - From plank, bend your leg, allowing your foot to come forward in front of your body, placing outside of foot, knee and hip on the mat. Hips are intended to be parallel to the ground. Allow yourself to sink into your hip and your torso to surrender forward. You should not feel pain or discomfort in your knee. **Alternate:** if this causes pain, try placing one or more blocks under your hip or lean towards your hip to reduce the pressure on your knee.



5. Eye of the Needle: lying on your back, place one ankle over the other knee. Pull the knee to your chest & hold shin with clasped hands. If this is difficult for you, place your supporting foot against a wall & adjust your distance from the wall so you feel a nice stretch

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6a. Happy Baby: lying on your back, pull legs up, holding on to the bottom of your feet. Allow legs/knees to sink down, relaxing hips.



6b. Half Happy Baby - alternate: lying on your back, pull one leg up, holding on to the bottom of your foot. Allow leg/knee to sink down, relaxing hip. Switch sides.



7a. Wide leg forward bend/firefly: sitting tall, open your legs as wide as comfortable. Bending from the pelvis, allow yourself to gently fall forward to a place of ease where you can feel the stretch in your groin. If your head does not touch the floor, you can place a block under your forehead if you want to relax more fully.



7b. Half Frog - alternate: If firefly is too difficult for you, start on your hands and knees, place your toes together and open your knees comfortably wide. Then relax forward either on forearms or stretch out fully. You should feel this in your groin.



7c. Frog - advanced alternate: Full frog can be very intense - so do this carefully. From table (on hands and knees), place forearms on the ground and start opening the knees nice and wide, with buttocks remaining the same plane as your knees. Let gravity gently pull you down.