












30 Minute Mat Challenge: Balance And Bathe In Equanimity




Time	Image	Pose	Description
		Shoulder Bridge	<p>Lie on back with knees bent. Feet hip distance apart. Peel tailbone and spine off the mat. Extend right leg to ceiling with foot pointed. Lower right leg towards the ground, flex foot and bring leg back to the ceiling. Repeat. Place right foot down onto mat. Repeat with left leg. To finish, roll spine and tailbone down to the mat.</p> <p>Benefits: Strengthen hamstrings and glutes.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/QFv_Fex3Mko</p> <p>Modifications: A) Place a small ball under your pelvis. B) Standard Bridge (no leg raising). C) Raise your leg only halfway (bent leg). D) Bridge (with arm raises). E) Bridge on a block. F) Bridge spine curls. G) Bridge with legs up a wall.</p> <p>Precautions : Neck and shoulder pain.</p>
		Bicycle	<p>Lie on back. Arms at side. Straighten legs to ceiling. Peel spine off floor one vertebrae at a time. Hands at top of pelvis (fingers point towards knees). Split legs with knees straight and toes pointed (legs like scissors). Bend front knee towards face. Exhale, pedal front foot away from face, straighten knee as you bring back leg towards face. Switch directions. To release: both legs together, roll to start position.</p> <p>Benefits: Increases spine mobility. Core control.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/snkWegOrsI8</p> <p>Modifications: Use foam roller to prop pelvis off ground.</p> <p>Precautions : Osteoporosis. Glaucoma. Neck or shoulder injuries.</p>


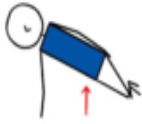
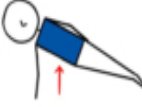
Time	Image	Pose	Description
		Boomerang	<p>Sit tall. Extend legs. Right ankle crossed over left. Palms by hips. Lift both legs. Roll over to 90 degree angle. Open and close legs, switching cross of ankles. Backs of arms press into mat for stability. Roll down through spine without dropping legs to balance in Teaser with arms parallel to legs. Clasp hands behind tailbone and, while abs drawn in and close to thighs, maintain Teaser position as you lower legs to mat. Circle arms overhead. Bring hands to ankles. Roll to sitting position.</p> <p>Alternatives: Teaser. Roll Over.</p> <p>Benefits: Strengthen abs. Stabilise hips. Massage spine.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/SRonJI25raE</p> <p>Precautions : Neck and spine injuries.</p>
		Control Balance	<p>Lay on back with arms by side. Extend both legs to ceiling. Roll over and place balls of feet into mat. Circle arms around and place both hands on right foot. Extend left leg up. Without changing position of hips or torso, place ball of left foot onto mat and extend right leg to ceiling.</p> <p>Alternatives: Teaser. Roll Over.</p> <p>Benefits: Strengthens hip extensors, core. Improves hip flexibility.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/00_Tay-g3NY</p> <p>Modifications: Omit scissoring.</p> <p>Precautions : Neck and spine injuries.</p>




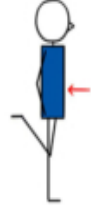
Time	Image	Pose	Description
		Scissors	<p>Lie on back. Bend both knees in, and roll through spine, reaching both legs straight and parallel to the floor, and bend knees towards chest. Place hands high on back. Reach both legs to ceiling. Lower one straight leg to mat as you draw opposite straight leg towards your chest. Pulse the top leg towards you two times. Switch legs.</p> <p>Benefits: Abdominal, shoulder, and hip flexibility.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/CO9_19vCf4</p> <p>Modifications: A) Folded towel under your hips and lower back. B) Bolster under your hips and lower back. C) Place hands behind your thigh. D) Keep your hands supporting your head. E) Lower the leg halfway down. F) Keep your head on the mat.</p> <p>Precautions : Low back pain. Tight hip flexors. Neck injury. Pregnancy.</p>
		Leg Pull	<p>Sit with legs crossed. Bring hands behind back. Fingers point towards buttocks. Extend legs long and lift hips. All weight is supported by wrists. Lift right leg up and down. Lift left leg up and down. When lifting legs, engage inner thighs and lower abs.</p> <p>Benefits: Core strength builder.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/BTvniic_B9M</p> <p>Modifications: A) Add a balance disc (or a BOSU) under your feet for instability. B) Leg Pull Front (same exercise but facing the mat instead of the ceiling).</p> <p>Precautions : Neck and shoulder injury.</p>


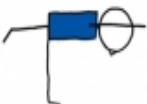

Time	Image	Pose	Description
		Jack Knife	<p>Lie on back. Arms by sides. Palms down. Press backs of arms into mat. Legs together. Extend both legs to ceiling. Draw abs in. Roll over through spine to take both legs almost parallel to floor. While maintaining lift of pelvis and tailbone to ceiling, reach both legs straight to ceiling. Keeping feet over hips, articulate through spine to roll down to the mat, returning legs to start position. Repeat.</p> <p>Benefits: Strengthens abs, back, arms, legs and shoulders.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/vWK2oJI90VA</p> <p>Modifications: A) Use your hands to help lift your hips up as you begin the Jack Knife exercise. B) Raise the legs 45 degrees from the Roll Over position (instead of 90). C) Take the feet to the mat behind your head, then lift the legs up to the perpendicular.</p> <p>Precautions : Neck or shoulder injury.</p>
0:10		End Of Sequence	
		Rocking	<p>Lay on stomach. Arms by side. Head to one side. Bend knees. Hold onto both ankles. Press ankles into hands. Lift chest and knees away from mat by engaging backs of legs and back extensors. Maintain shape as you rock forward and back.</p> <p>Benefits: Strengthen back extensors, glutes, hams. Increase spinal mobility.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/KQWHWl7yV9g</p> <p>Modifications: Exaggerate the rocking motion to get a high lift of the legs as you rock forward, and a high, open chest as you rock back.</p> <p>Precautions : Shoulder, back or neck injury.</p>




Time	Image	Pose	Description
		<p>Leg Pull Front</p>	<p>Start on knees. Place hands on floor in front of you. Keep arms straight and elbows unlocked. Engage abs. Lean forward to put weight on hands. Shoulders over wrists. Keep a lot of space between shoulders and ears. With abs lifted, extend legs back so that they are straight and together. Toes curled under. Ears, shoulders, hips and heels in one long line. Extend one leg up as far as you can without rotating hips. Return foot to mat and extend other leg.</p> <p>Benefits: Core strength builder.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/fLYsUbi_f-A</p> <p>Modifications: A) Stay on your hands and knees and lift one leg up, no further than the hip, at a time. B) Raise the knees only slightly as you extend alternating legs. C) Work on your elbows with palms flat on the ground. D) Place your hands on a step.</p> <p>Precautions : Arm, neck or shoulder injury.</p>
		<p>Swan Dive</p>	<p>Lie on stomach with legs together. Hands by head. Lift abs away from floor while sending tailbone to the floor. Press through hands into Swan, maintaining a long spine and lengthened neck. Release arms to side as body rocks forward. Maintaining the arc position of the body, the legs will lift up. Rock back onto thighs, lifting chest, and maintaining extension and arc position of body. Repeat.</p> <p>Benefits: Strengthen back and hip extensors.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/mjZZ22GLcDc</p> <p>Cues: repeat x5</p> <p>Modifications: Swan Dive For Prenatal: If you're expecting, practice a modified Swan Dive. Begin on all fours with hands under shoulders and knees under hips. Raise one arm and opposite leg to shoulder height. Hold briefly. Come back to starting position. Alternate and repeat.</p>


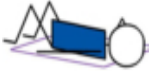
Time	Image	Pose	Description
		Swimming	<p>Lie flat on your belly with your arms stretched out in front. Legs outstretched behind. Squeeze inner thighs and heels together. Pull navel up off the mat. Raise the upper back and head off the mat slightly and simultaneously lift the right arm and left leg off the mat. Squeeze buttocks and press pubic bone down into the mat. Switch arms and legs and begin swimming, alternating arms and legs. Extend the body as much as possible.</p> <p>Benefits: Strengthens muscles on back of body: buttocks, thighs, back.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/bY6ZyiO_7ek</p> <p>Modifications: A) Swimming On a pilates Arc. B) Swimming on a Wobble Board.</p> <p>Precautions : Neck injury.</p>
		Side Bend	<p>Sit sideways with legs bent to one side. Top foot in front of the bottom foot (or stacked one on the other). Place supporting hand in line with seated hip a few inches in front of shoulder. Press into supporting hand, straighten legs to lift pelvis away from mat, making rainbow shape with body.</p> <p>Benefits: Abdominal strength. Shoulder stabilisation.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/zprsJDjeONM</p> <p>Precautions : Shoulder or neck tightness.</p>
		Teaser	<p>Lie on your back. Elevate legs so thighs are perpendicular to the body and knees are bent and parallel with the body. Extend arms behind you. Inhale, lift arms towards legs, while lifting head for max reach; at the same time, straighten legs in the air. Exhale, make the body a V shape. Inhale, return to start by rolling the body back.</p> <p>Benefits: Abdominal and back extensor strength. Trunk stabilization.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/UJ5gZQSqlXo</p> <p>Modifications: A) One Leg Teaser. B) Use a wedge under your lower back. C) Try with bent knees. D) Roll-Ups. E) Place your hands on the floor behind you. F) Double Leg Lifts.</p> <p>Precautions : Spine injury.</p>

Time	Image	Pose	Description
0:10		End Of Sequence	
		Side Plank On Knees	<p>Lie on right side. Prop yourself up on right forearm. Bend knees so calves are at a right angle. Right elbow under shoulder and in alignment with hips. Rest left arm along side of body. Engage core. Push down on right elbow to raise hips up. Hold. Switch sides.</p> <p>Benefits: Core strengthener.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/pVZ2WibQsvg</p> <p>Modifications: Extend arm overhead.</p>
		Side Plank	<p>Start in Plank (top of a push-up). Extend body. Step feet together. Press weight down through right hand and forearm. Roll body to right, balancing on outer edge of right foot. Stack left foot on top of right foot. Keep legs straight. Press through heels into floor. Bring body into one straight line. Gaze at top thumb. Press down through your bottom index finger. Hold. Repeat on other side.</p> <p>Benefits: Core strengthener.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/vzGZbJq5gg0</p> <p>Modifications: Extend arm overhead.</p>

Time	Image	Pose	Description
		Lunge Twist	Stand in a lunge with left leg in front and right knee raised off the floor. Gently twist to left side. Keep right elbow on left thigh. Place hands in prayer. Root back foot into the ground. Gaze up. Hold. Repeat on other side. Alternatives: Don't look up. Benefits: Uses all muscles. Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/tfQ3CWUlozQ Precautions : Headache. High or low blood pressure.
0:10		End Of Sequence	
		Single Leg Stand	Gaze at a spot on the wall in front of you. Stand on one leg while tightening buttocks and thighs. Benefits: Balance. Strengthens buttocks. Pelvic stability. Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/TKVhKVdrrAo Modifications: Balance on wobble board.
		Quad Stretch	Stand tall. Bend the left leg and grab the left foot with the left hand. Rotate pelvis under. Knee points to the floor. Both knees are glued together. Chest open. Feel stretch in front of the thigh. Hold. Repeat with the right leg. Benefits: Helps improve posture and balance. Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/CZBKSOtyssM

Time	Image	Pose	Description
		Hamstring Stretch	<p>Stand tall. Bend left leg and grab left foot with left hand. Rotate pelvis under. Knee points to the floor. Both knees are glued together. Chest open. Feel stretch in front of thigh. Hold. Repeat with right leg.</p> <p>Benefits: Stretches quads and hamstrings. Helps balance.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/CZBKSOtyssM</p> <p>Modifications: A) Standing posture without quad stretch. B) Quad stretch on a table</p>
		Standing Superman	<p>Stand tall. Take a big step forward with the right foot. Shift weight onto the right leg. Raise arms overhead. Interlace fingers. Lift left leg. Gaze at a point on the floor. Repeat on the other side.</p> <p>Benefits: Strengthens legs, shoulders, and back. Tones abs. Balance.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/4PjcQJjOvBc?rel=0</p> <p>Modifications: Arms out to sides. Arms behind you.</p> <p>Precautions : High blood pressure.</p>
		Lunge Twist	<p>Stand in a lunge with left leg in front and right knee raised off the floor. Gently twist to left side. Keep right elbow on left thigh. Place hands in prayer. Root back foot into the ground. Gaze up. Hold. Repeat on other side.</p> <p>Alternatives: Don't look up.</p> <p>Benefits: Uses all muscles.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/tfQ3CWUlozQ</p> <p>Precautions : Headache. High or low blood pressure.</p>

Time	Image	Pose	Description
		Lunge	<p>Stand tall. Bend right knee. Step back onto ball of foot. Go as far as you are comfortable. Don't let right knee bend past toes. Keep hips even. Think of hip bones as headlights that have to point forward. Chest open. Gaze straight ahead. Rest hands above right knee for stability. Straighten back leg. Don't lock knee. Let lift come from hamstring (back of leg). Hold. Repeat on other side.</p> <p>Benefits: Stretches legs, groin & hip flexors. Strengthens thighs & buttocks.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/OrC0gFdw9r8</p> <p>Modifications: A) Move between forward leg being bent and straight. B) Lower back knee to the mat.-C) Face a wall (press big toe of front foot against a wall and bring fingertips to the wall). D) Low lunge twist (bend back knee and reach for foot or ankle with opposite hand). E) Side lunge.</p> <p>Precautions : Knee injury.</p>
		High Lunge Twist	<p>Stand in a lunge with left leg in front and right knee raised off the floor. Twist upper body to left side over front bent knee. Return to start. Twist upper body to right side over front bent knee.</p> <p>Benefits: Stretches hip flexors. Engages core.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/8AT_ORRv3wM</p>
		Single Leg Stand	<p>Gaze at a spot on the wall in front of you. Stand on one leg while tightening buttocks and thighs.</p> <p>Benefits: Balance. Strengthens buttocks. Pelvic stability.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/TKVhKVdrrAo</p> <p>Modifications: Balance on wobble board.</p>

Time	Image	Pose	Description
0:10		End Of Sequence	
10:00		Relaxing Position	<p>Lie on back. Bend knees so soles of feet are on the mat. Arms by sides (or places hands on abdomen). Release lower back to floor. Close eyes. Release neck and thighs. Notice any tension and let it melt into the mat.</p> <p>Benefits: Tune into body. Calm. Tranquil. Inner Peace. Clarity.</p> <p>Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/csadyqalqBA</p> <p>Modifications: Blanket under knees. Blanket under head.</p>

Lesson Plan Description:

In this session, you'll have fun with matwork balancing exercises, and also give your body and mind an amazing workout. Each balance exercise can be used to build strength in different body parts, muscles and joints.

Benefits Of Balance

- Release value for built-up stress
- Improve focus
- Improves memory
- Remain calm on the inside when chaos rages on the outside
- Improves peak performance (if you're an athlete)
- Find your centre of gravity and dance around its edges
- Create a sense of fluid stability
- Bathe in a calm equanimity
- Builds coordination
- Improves how your stand, walk and run-
- Help avoid falls (especially for the elderly)

Body And Mind

The main benefit of practising balance exercises is finding balance in body and mind. When we balance, we align our body's centre of gravity with the earth's gravitational field. We place ourselves in physical equilibrium with a fundamental force of nature. But we can't achieve this harmony by remaining absolutely still. We need to refresh our balance from moment to moment. The sustained effort to centre and recenter brings the entire body (nerve impulses, thoughts, emotions, and consciousness) into a calm balance. Balance brings equanimity. With each moment that you struggle in a balance exercise, you are training yourself to remain calm in the chaos.

Physics Of Balance

The three essential elements of balance are alignment, strength, and attention. Alignment of the body with gravity is crucial; it makes balance physically possible. Strength gives us the power to create, hold, and adjust alignment. And attention continually monitors alignment so we know how to correct it from one moment to the next.

Tightrope Walker

Every time you use your arms to balance by holding them out to the sides like a tightrope walker, you're intuitively taking advantage of the fact that as the weight moves away from your centre of gravity, it has a greater effect on your equilibrium. If you have difficulty in any balance exercises (especially one-legged balances), use your arms to help stabilise yourself.

Spread Your Toes

You can enhance your equilibrium in standing balance poses by spreading your toes. The broader your base, the more stable you are, and even the slightest widening of the sole of the foot is helpful.-

Brain Versus Brawn

The better you get at balances, the less muscular effort you need to maintain them. This is because you become more skilled at using your bone structure to support your weight, rather than wasting muscle energy to do so. You also waver less, so you need to make fewer and smaller muscular corrections. It is important not to try to muscle your way through balancing poses. Don't replace good alignment with brute force. If you find yourself clenching the floor with your toes, white-knuckled, there's a good chance you are using too much brawn and not enough brain.

Plumb Line

Since the brain compares your actual position with an image of where you want to be, it helps to have a pretty precise internal image. One very useful image is to imagine a plumb line running down the point of balance. If you can develop a strong internal sense of this line, it will help your nervous system calibrate movements

that maintain equilibrium along the line.

Humour - Patience - Curiosity

At a higher level of the nervous system, your attitude toward practising balancing poses has a huge effect on your success. Approach them seriously and with determination, but also with good humour, patience, and curiosity. Be like a child learning to stand. If you can laugh when you wobble or fall yet be ready to try the exercise again, you have found true balance in your practice.-