

Mindful Yoga

Here's a series of simple postures and movements you can use as part of a sitting meditation session—or anytime.

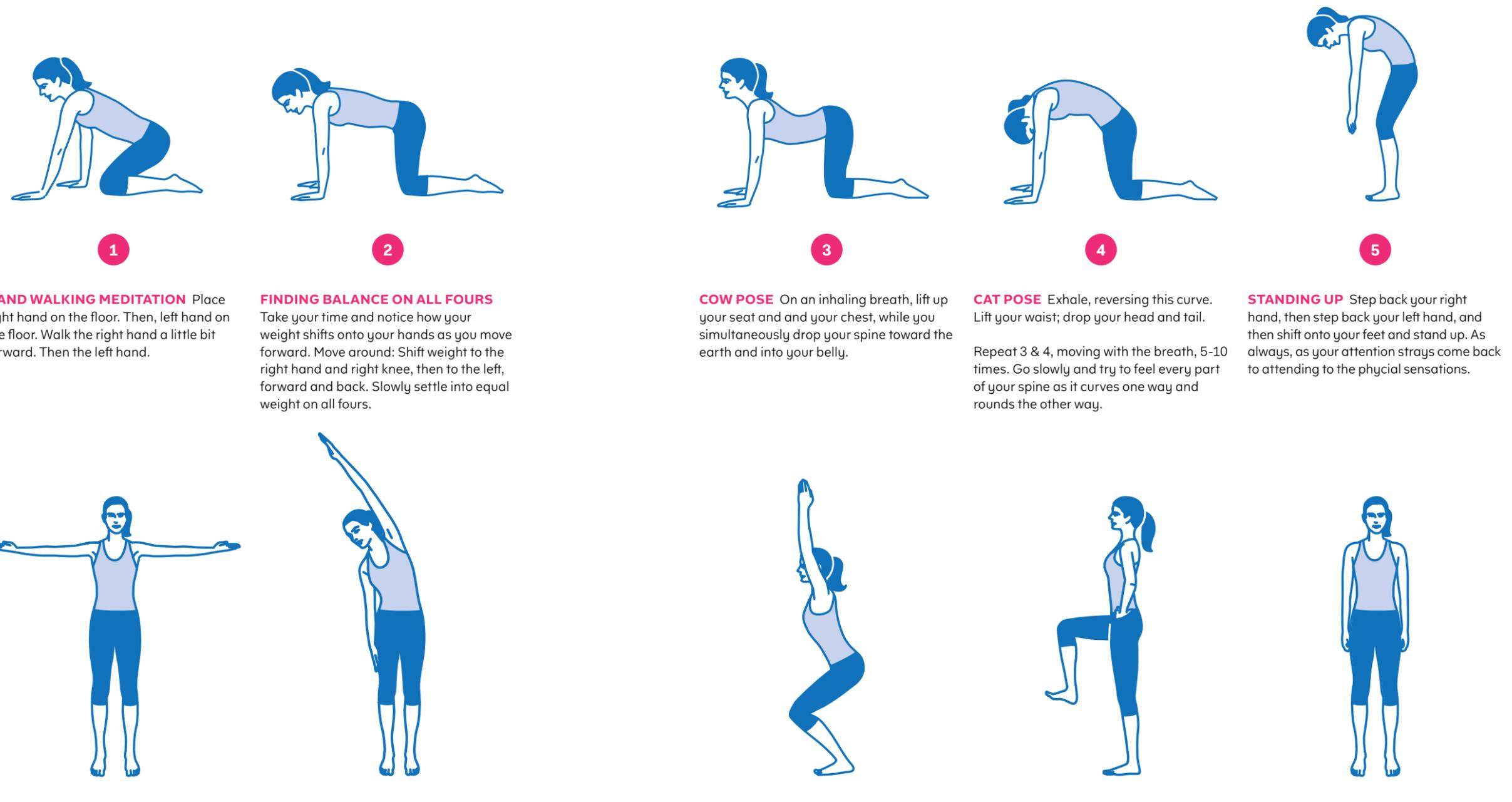
By Cyndi Lee

This sequence emphasizes balance: on your hands, hands and knees, and standing on one leg, as well as when moving the spine in all directions—forward, backward, and sideways. It's great to do whenever you want to cultivate balance and presence in your body/mind: first thing in the morning or last thing before going to bed or anytime in between. It takes about five minutes, but feel free to repeat the entire sequence or any section as much as you like.

As you move through it, notice when your mind strays, and return to the sensation of the breath or any other physical sensation, such as stretching, quivering, or your muscles tiring. That's how you'll know when to push and when to back off.

It's particularly useful to do this sequence before meditation practice as it will create both strength, flexibility, and stamina that will support the physical effort required for sitting.

 For a selection of video and other resources on mindful movement practice, go to mindful.org/gettingstarted



1

HAND WALKING MEDITATION Place right hand on the floor. Then, left hand on the floor. Walk the right hand a little bit forward. Then the left hand.

2

FINDING BALANCE ON ALL FOURS Take your time and notice how your weight shifts onto your hands as you move forward. Move around: Shift weight to the right hand and right knee, then to the left, forward and back. Slowly settle into equal weight on all fours.

3

COW POSE On an inhaling breath, lift up your seat and and your chest, while you simultaneously drop your spine toward the earth and into your belly.

4

CAT POSE Exhale, reversing this curve. Lift your waist; drop your head and tail. Repeat 3 & 4, moving with the breath, 5-10 times. Go slowly and try to feel every part of your spine as it curves one way and rounds the other way.

5

STANDING UP Step back your right hand, then step back your left hand, and then shift onto your feet and stand up. As always, as your attention strays come back to attending to the physical sensations.

6

SHOULDER ROTATIONS Extend your arms out to the side. Inhale and roll your arms so your palms face up. Exhale and roll arms in, palms back. Begin this action from the shoulders, letting your pinky fingers be the last part to roll up and down.

7

SIDE BENDS Inhale arms up. Exhale, bend to the right. Inhale up and exhale bend to the left. Pay attention to the movements from side to side, as well as the position of your head.

8

CHAIR POSE Inhale arms up and bend your knees into a chair pose—two movements at the same time!

Is your mind still in your body? In the room? Gently let it come back.

9

LEG BENDS As you exhale, stand up on your left leg, right leg bent. Return to chair pose and repeat on the other side. Go right and left, 5-10 times.

10

STAND QUIETLY Remain still, keeping your eyes open. Notice what you are seeing. Ground yourself in your environment. Feel your feet on the floor. Observe your breath moving.

You can repeat this entire sequence. Feel free to do it as often as you like.