



## Yoga for Depression and Increased Energy

Here are a few short practices that have been helpful for people who are experiencing low energy, depression, and having difficulty with mood swings. They are intended help come into a balanced state so that you feel more energized and able to have more control over your moods.

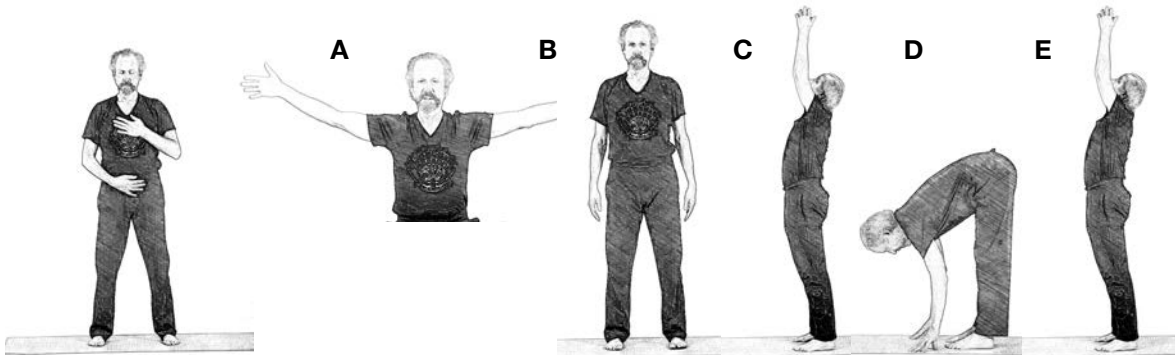
### Why I Practice Yoga?

"Being bipolar I believe that my yoga practice has everything to do with helping to create a sense of balance that has been the support I needed to reduce my medicine to one prescript." B.M.

"I feel much more stable emotionally with regular yoga practice. I'm able to clear my mind of chatter and not let every passing thought take root in my head." A.D.

### How Yoga Can Shift Energy and Mood?

Accumulated stress, uncertainty and feeling hopeless can cause depression making you feel shutdown with very low energy, and stuck on thoughts in your head. To change that it's important to move your body and breathe with focused awareness. A dynamic yoga practice that uses large movements and powerful poses can increase energy in your body and greatly help to change your mood. These practices allow you to come into a balanced state so that you feel more energized, strong, and able to relax.



#### 1. Shoulder Rolls - Standing Centering

Standing, lift your shoulders to your ears as you inhale, then roll the shoulders backward and down with a long exhale out your mouth. Do this 5-10 times. Then stop, and standing still with hands on your belly and chest, take 10 full breaths. Feel your belly and chest rising and falling under your hands as you breathe. Try inhaling through your nose and exhaling longer out your mouth whispering a *haaa* sound (like fogging up a mirror with your breath).

#### 2. Movement Flow

**A.** Inhale and raise your arms out to the side at shoulder-height. Take 5 full breaths as you squeeze your shoulder blades together opening your chest. **B.** On an exhale lower your arms to the side of your body. **C.** Inhale raising your arms high overhead. **D.** Exhale and fold forward. You can place your hands on your lower legs or thighs; knees can be bent. **E.** Inhale come all the way back up again trying to keep a flat back, raising your arms overhead. **B.** As you slowly exhale, lower your arms and hands to the side of your body.

Repeat these poses in a flowing motion at least 5 times or until you begin to notice heat building in your body.

Then pause, be still, and feel what you feel in your body. Before you move on you can try "Shaking things off", Shake your legs, your arms, your hands, your shoulders, create big movements. Make any sounds that feel natural to release tension in your body.



#### 4. Warrior 3

##### **Practice 4, 5 & 6 together**

Lean forward on your right leg lifting the left leg up behind you as high as you can. If necessary you can support yourself leaning against a wall, or placing your right hand on it. Feel the energy activating in your body as you take 5-10 full breaths.



#### 5. Warrior 1- Flow

Step back with your left leg planting your foot, keeping your feet hip width apart. Inhale as you bend your right leg (knee over ankle) and raise your arms to shoulder height. Then exhale and straighten your front leg and lower your arms to your side. Repeat these 5 times moving on inhale and exhale with a rhythm that keeps your breath flowing.. End with legs straight and arms at your side.



#### 6. Powerful Warrior

Inhale bending your right leg (knee over ankle), raising your arms overhead, shoulder width apart. As you keep your leg bent try to lengthen your spine and lift your chest. Feel the energy building in your body and consciously calm your breathing. Take 5-10 full breaths. Then come to standing with hands on your belly and chest (see 1). Take a few breaths and notice how you feel. Then repeat 4, 5 & 6 on other leg.



#### 8. Boat Pose

From a seated position lean back, lift your legs, and reach your arms out to the side. Keep your feet and legs together. Try to lift your lower legs parallel to the floor. Feel the core strength of your body engaging. Take 5 full breaths. Then rest for 5 breaths. Repeat 2 more times.



#### 9. Back Strength

Lying on your belly, relax and feel the front body relaxing for a few breaths. Then inhale and lift your legs (straight) and upper body while reaching your arms and hands back. Feel the muscles of your lower belly and back engaging. Stay for 5 full breaths. Then rest for 5 breaths. Repeat 2 more times.



#### 10. Reclining Twist

Lying on your back, bend your left leg (knee over your waist) and move it over to the right. Keep your upper back against the floor and reach your left arm out to the left at shoulder height. You can look up or turn your head to the left. Take 10 full breaths feeling your ribs and belly expand. Then switch to the other side. When done, draw both knees into your chest. You might want to rock side-to-side or make small circles with your knees to release tension in your lower



#### 11. Centering

Sit or lie down in a comfortable position. Relax your forehead and muscles of your face. Soften your eyes and jaw. Feel the weight of your head, your arms, your legs. Let your hands rest wherever they feel comfortable. Feel the weight of your whole body on the floor. Bring your awareness to feeling your body breathing. Let your body breathe itself feeling the rhythm of you breathing. Stay for at least 3 minutes. You can stay longer or move onto the Closing Meditation (see 12).

#### 12. Closing Meditation

Lying on your back or seated you can close your eyes if that feels good. Begin by slowly moving your awareness from feeling your feet all the way to the crown of your head. Relax each part of your body as you go, particularly as you exhale. As you relax, let your body breathe itself without controlling your inhale and exhale. Take a few moments, 10 minutes if possible, in stillness. See if you can focus on feeling your body naturally breathing. You may choose to feel the movement of your belly as you breathe, or the feeling of your breath as it moves in-and-out of your nose. If thoughts arise, see if you can let them go and concentrate on the feeling of your body breathing. *When you are ready to complete, bring your hands together in front of your chest, and bowing your forehead toward your fingertips, take a moment to acknowledge your own guiding light.*