

yoga

BASICS FOR MEN

An Intro to Man Flow Yoga

Unrivalled Definition
Core Strength
Balance and
Flexibility



By Dean Pohlman
CEO & Founder, Man Flow Yoga

Yoga Basics for Men

An Intro to Man Flow Yoga

By Dean Pohlman

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Intro to Man Flow™ Yoga

Man Flow™ Yoga focuses on the physical benefits of yoga as they relate to physical fitness. Emphasis is placed on building endurance, body control, balance, core strength, and flexibility through the exercises found in yoga, while ignoring the more esoteric spiritual and meditative aspects that are commonly found in traditional yoga. All of the physical benefits, and none of the frills. Man Flow™ Yoga is internationally recognized as one of the leading experts on yoga for men.

Man Flow™ Yoga was founded by the current CEO and Yoga Beast of Man Flow™ Yoga, Dean Pohlman. Man Flow™ Yoga is based in Austin, Texas.

Accolades:

- Man Flow™ Yoga has been featured by the Huffington Post on multiple occasions, and its founder and CEO, Dean Pohlman, is a frequent guest on Huff Post Live.
- Man Flow™ Yoga is the most popular brand of yoga for men on Facebook. As of September 2014, the page has over 20,000 ‘likes’ and is growing at a weekly rate of over 500 ‘likes’.
- Man Flow™ Yoga is also one of the most popular YouTube channels for yoga for men, with over 5,000 subscribers as of June 2014.
- In January of 2014, Man Flow™ Yoga was listed on nerve.com’s list of 10 YouTube Fitness Gurus Sexier Than a Chippendale’s Dancer.

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The best way to stay up-to-date with Man Flow™ Yoga is to join our email list.

Visit: <http://eepurl.com/Wolbz>

Message from the Author

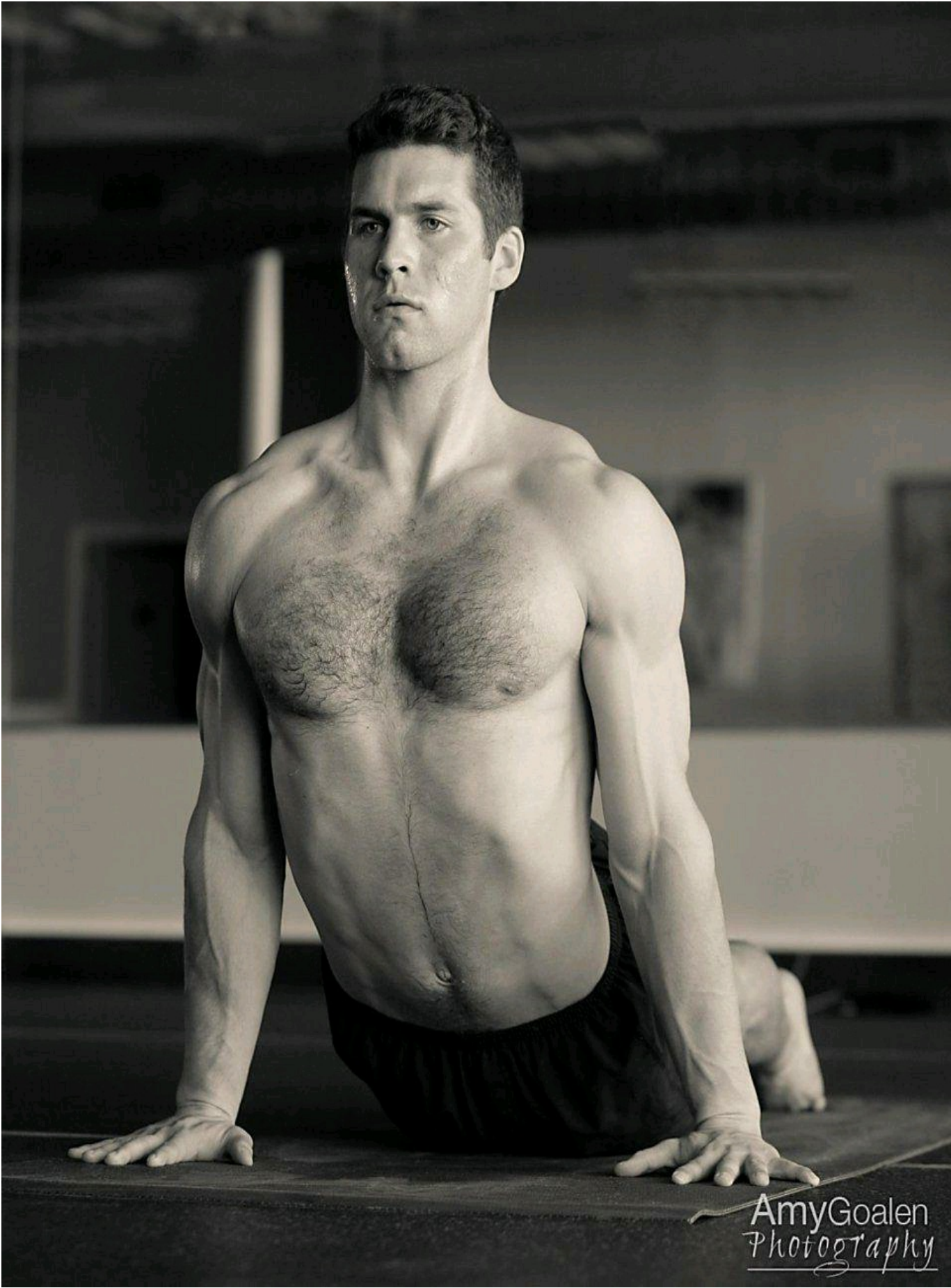
Welcome to Man Flow™ Yoga Basics. I am writing this to help bring you the physical benefits of yoga from the perspective of an athlete who has used yoga to improve his physical fitness. The Man Flow™ Yoga Basics eBook will teach you how to properly execute yoga exercises (poses) in an easy-to follow fashion. It will also explain which muscles are being targeted, list practical benefits, and give concrete examples of how each exercise will help improve your physical performance. This eBook will also cover the benefits of consistent yoga in a physical fitness regimen, explain key concepts to help you safely progress, explain and give examples of proper sequencing (the order in which the poses or exercises are performed), and explain the services and additional content that Man Flow™ Yoga provides.



My Personal Story:

My first yoga class was entirely on accident. I was looking for the tailor and stumbled into a Bikram Yoga studio. I had always been interested in yoga but had never taken a yoga class before that day. I asked the yoga instructor if this class would help my athletic performance. (At the time I was a lacrosse player for the University of Wisconsin.) She told me that it would help me tone my muscles and make me much more flexible. That was exactly what I was looking for. Then she said that I didn't even have to wear my shirt for the workout. Two hours later, drenched in sweat from head to toe, feeling like I had just exited the pool, and utterly exhausted, I had just completed my first yoga class. It was, and probably will remain, the hardest workout that I have ever done. From that point on, I was sold.

After two months of doing yoga consistently, I realized that the benefits of yoga extended far beyond flexibility. My level of limberness skyrocketed, and so did my endurance, body control, core strength, and balance, just to name a few of the benefits I was experiencing. More than that, it made me even stronger in the weight room. I first began instructing yoga as the conditioning coach of my lacrosse team in 2011. That success encouraged me to take my knowledge and passion to a larger audience.



AmyGoalen
Photography

I started Man Flow™ Yoga in January of 2013 to bring the physical benefits of yoga to as many people as possible. Since then, I have been teaching at gyms, parks, workshops, international retreats, and online. I am a certified 200HR Registered Yoga Teacher through Yoga Alliance.

I should also mention that the physique I now have is maintained ENTIRELY through yoga and pull-ups. I do not lift weights, do cardio, spinning, or any other form of fitness. You can get the body that you want just by doing yoga effectively, and I have created that with Man Flow™ Yoga

Physical Benefits

Making Man Flow™ Yoga a consistent part of your fitness routine will improve every aspect of your physical fitness. Although the word “flexibility” is the one word that most often comes to mind when you think of yoga, a yoga workout (and a Man Flow™ Yoga workout in particular) actually focuses on much more than this. Here are the main physical benefits that you will experience:

Endurance - make it through your whole workout with fewer breaks, play harder in the last few minutes of the fourth quarter, and have more overall energy.

Body control - become aware of every muscle in your body, facilitate a better connection between the muscular and skeletal systems and the brain that controls them, and make your body as efficient as possible.

Balance - develop balance by learning to actively engage your muscles and improve your ability to respond to perturbations or unbalanced situations.

Core strength - learn to properly engage your core and strengthen the main source of power and stability in your body, while improving your posture and taking pressure off of your lower back to improve spinal health.

Flexibility - reduced risk of injury, reduced recovery time, and more range of motion to increase your overall strength and power.

Some other benefits:

- Increase blood flow
- Alleviate anxiety and depression
- Boost metabolism

Many people are also turning to yoga as a form of physical therapy or physical fitness to prevent or reduce injuries.. Here is a list of common physical ailments whose side effects can be reduced or altogether eliminated by Man Flow™ Yoga:

- Lower back pain
- Tendonitis
- Shoulder/neck pain/tightness
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Rotator cuff/shoulder issues
- Sciatica
- Muscle cramps
- Disc herniation
- Weak ankles (reduce the risk of ankle sprains)
- SI instability
- Unstable knees (help MCL, ACL, or subluxation of the knee)
- And many more...

Key Concepts

Here are the key concepts that you should keep in mind while performing the exercises in this eBook to help protect yourself from injury. This includes physical concepts such as keeping a slight bend to your knee, but also mental concepts like listening to your body, knowing when to continue, when to stop, when to push, when to pull back, and, more importantly, when NOT to push.

1. The most important thing that you can do while doing the exercises involved in yoga is to listen to your body. Listen to what feels good, what feels slightly uncomfortable, and what feels very uncomfortable. Sharp pain or pinching should be avoided, while moderate discomfort is usually your body becoming accustomed to deeper range of motion or stretching.
2. Man Flow™ Yoga workouts almost always start with full-body exercises to warm up the muscles and properly prepare the body before moving into static poses that push flexibility boundaries. The only exception is if the muscles are already warm (Ex: If the Man Flow™ Yoga session is done immediately post-workout).
3. For exercises focusing on the hip flexors, this means shortening the distance between your feet.
4. For exercises focusing on the hamstrings, this means taking a deeper bend to your knee, and/or shortening the distance between your feet.
5. For exercises that involve back-bending, this means minimizing the arch in your lower back by squeezing your lower abdominal muscles tight in order to form a straight line from your pubic bone to shoulders, thereby protecting your lower spine.
6. Do not attempt to force your flexibility levels. With time, your body will adjust to these exercises, and your level of flexibility and control will increase. Pushing beyond your flexibility limits is similar to attempting to reach a new level in strength by adding an extra 50 pounds to your current one repetition maximum without proper preparation (which is not something that you would attempt).
7. Breathing -Last but not least is the breath. In yoga, you want to focus on linking your breath with your movements. When you inhale, you lengthen or rise. When you exhale, you deepen the stretch, sitting down lower, bending more, or reaching further. Concentrate on breathing in and out of the nose as slowly as possible to help you control your breathing rate. Control your breath; control your body.

Exercise Guide

The exercise guide includes 32 exercises (poses) which were carefully selected to ensure that you are given all the tools necessary to reap the physical benefits of yoga without being overwhelmed by a large number of exercises. The exercise guide will briefly and effectively:

1. List target muscles or muscle groups of each exercise.
2. Provide specific examples of physical benefits (i.e. increased range of motion for more power in shots, or more flexible hamstrings to reduce tightness in the lower back).
3. Explain proper execution of exercises using concise language and high-quality visual aids.
4. Include modifications and variations for people who are unable to perform the exercise as it is described.

List of Exercises (Poses)

Mountain

Cat-cow

Bird-dog

Squat Hold

Forward Fold

Half Lift

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Child's Pose

Superman

Bridge

Dolphin

Pigeon

Sequencing

Sequencing is the order in which the exercises (poses) are performed. It is extremely important for poses to be properly sequenced, or the yoga workout can be ineffective or even dangerous. This eBook provides several sample sequences that you may use as a basis for your own sequencing. It also provides several different sequencing approaches used in Man Flow™ Yoga so that you can develop your own understanding of how to properly sequence a yoga session, and one day be able to sequence a workout yourself. This will be an invaluable tool for coaches, captains, doctors, or physical therapists who would like to design a workout tailored specifically to their personal, team, or client needs.

Services Additional Content

This section offers details on how to obtain additional Man Flow™ Yoga content, or even work directly with CEO and Founder, Dean, either through personal training online via web conference software (Google Hangouts or Skype), or in person for private or group classes in Austin, Texas. Dean also does weekend seminars in the location of your choice if you wish to instruct a group, team, or professional staff. See the [full services section](#) for details.



Mountain

Basic standing pose. Aspects of mountain pose are found in every pose in Man Flow™ Yoga Basics. This is a great pose to start your workout with in order to get your body accustomed to the proper posture required in yoga.

Target Area: Full body

Practical Benefits: Improve posture, release shoulder tension, properly engage the core, and increase body awareness.

Technique:

1. Stand with big toes touching and heels an inch apart.
2. Slightly bend the knees to prevent locking out, and engage the thigh muscles. Relax the glutes.
3. Reach the tailbone down to the ground, tilting the pelvis slightly upward to take the arch out of the lower back and engage the abdominal muscles.
4. Lift the chest, draw the ribs in towards one another, and relax the shoulders.
5. Actively reach hands down toward the ground with palms facing forward.
6. Hold this pose for 30 - 60 seconds.

Tips: Form a straight line from your pubic bone to shoulders to properly engage your core.





Cat-cow

Target Area: Spine

Practical Benefits: Relieving back pain, improving spine mobility, preparing the spine for physical activity.

Technique:

1. Start in a six-point (tabletop) position, knees and hands on the ground with feet untucked, knees under hips, and hands under shoulders.
2. Inhale and arch the back, pulling the chest forward while reaching the butt upward.
3. Exhale and round the back, bringing the butt and head towards one another under the body, pressing into the hands to press the back upwards and separate the shoulder blades.
4. Repeat 5 - 10 times..

Tips: Make this movement as slow and consistent as possible. Deepen your breath. The length of your inhale should match the time it takes you to move from cat (rounded back) to cow (arched back). Limit the arch if you have lower back pain.





Bird-dog

Target Areas: Spine, core

Practical Benefits: Warming up the core and legs while working on balance, improving ability of the core to contract to help improve core strength, increasing the ability of the legs to lift off the ground in vertical jumps.

Technique:

1. Start in a six-point stance (tabletop) with toes untucked, hips under knees, and hands under shoulders.
2. Inhale and extend the (left) arm forward and (right) leg back so that there is a straight line from back heel to extended fingertips.
3. Exhale and squeeze the elbow of the outstretched arm to the knee of the extended leg under the chest, rounding the back.
4. Repeat 3-6 times.

Tips: Draw out your breath as much as possible. Move at a slow, even pace. Keep your belly button lifted to take the arch out of your lower back.



Squat Hold

Target Areas: Hamstrings, quads, core

Practical Benefits: Improve the depth and weight involved in your squats and build lower body endurance and core stability.

Technique:

1. Start with feet six inches apart and middle toes lined up with the heels.
2. Sit hips down low in a squat position, ensuring that the core is engaged and the back is flat.
3. Weight in the heels, knees to the back.
4. Extend arms straight out, parallel to the ground with shoulders relaxed.
5. Hold for 30 seconds to 3 minutes.

Tips: Maintain a straight line with your torso so that your chest is not puffed out. You want to keep your ribs drawn in towards one another so that your core stays engaged and your chest does not splay out.





Forward Fold

Target Areas: Lower back, spine

Practical Benefits: Reduce tightness and improve flexibility in your lower back (especially effective for after lots of walking, running, or exercises that focus on the lower back, like dead-lift.)

Technique:

1. Feet together or hip-width distant.
2. Bend the knees as much as possible to rest your chest on your thighs.
3. Head and neck relaxed, gaze focused backwards or up at the belly button.
4. Hold for 5 seconds - 1 minute.

Tips: Standing forward fold is focused on lengthening the spine. Don't shift the focus to the hamstrings by trying to straighten your legs. There are plenty of other poses that will target your hamstrings.





Half Lift

Target Areas: Hamstrings, spine, core

Practical Benefits: Warm up the hamstrings, reduce the risk of injury from sudden movements, and reset the spine.

Technique:

1. Feet together, back flat, and (option 1) hands pressing into shins or (option 2, for more flexible individuals) fingertips on the ground.
2. Pull chest forward while pressing abdomen toward the ground.
3. Keep neck in line with the back; parallel to the ground.
4. Hold for 5 - 15 seconds. It is usually employed as a transition.

Tips: Generously bend your knees to flatten your back. Use a mirror to figure out what it feels and looks like to have a flat back.



Plank

Target Areas: Chest, arms, core, thighs

Practical Benefits: Increase core strength and endurance to improve posture, which helps take the pressure out of the lower back and reduce lower back pain. This also helps to increase your cardiovascular endurance and your body's ability to stabilize itself.

Technique:

1. Balance on hands and toes with shoulders over hands, forming a straight line with your body from heels to head.
2. Arm muscles engaged with a slight bend to the elbows to prevent locking out.
3. Squeeze the base of the palms toward the feet to engage the core.
4. Toes four inches apart, squeezing toward one another to engage inner thighs.
5. Shoulders away from the head, neck straight and long, and gaze straight down.
6. Hold for 30 seconds - 3 minutes

Tips: If you start to feel your core failing and your lower back begins to arch, take your knees down. You risk injury to your lower back by continuing plank with an arched back.



Cobra

Target Areas: Lower back, core

Practical Benefits: Increase your lung capacity, increase lower back strength for lifts like dead-lift and squat, and increase spine flexibility to improve range of motion for movements like shooting or throwing.

Technique:

1. Lie down in prone position on your chest with hands under shoulders.
2. Reach feet back as far as possible and press the tops of all ten toes into the ground. Keep the toes on the ground throughout the entire exercise.
3. Squeeze thigh muscles and press the hips and abdominal muscles into the ground.
4. Without pressing hands into the ground, use the lower body to lift your chest off the ground.
5. Hold for 20 - 45 seconds.

Tips: No wrinkles in the back of your neck. You can use your hands to PULL your body

forward and create length, but not to push your chest upward.



Downward Facing Dog (Downdog)

Target Areas: Hamstrings, lower back, shoulders, upper back, calves

Practical Benefits: Stretch out the entire back side, open the shoulders to help reduce rotator cuff pain, improve range of motion, and increase shoulder press strength, and increase forearm strength, reducing the risk of carpal tunnel and tendonitis.

Technique:

1. Hands slightly wider than shoulder-width distant, feet four to six inches apart, balls of the feet on the ground.
2. Press hips up and back and reach chest toward the thighs.
3. Press heels toward the ground.
4. Hold for 30 - 60 seconds.

Tips: If you feel too much pressure in your shoulders, shorten the distance between your hands and feet, or allow your knees to bend until you feel an even stretch throughout your entire back. The goal of this exercise is to form a pyramid shape with your body. Spread your fingers wide and press down through the base of your fingers (where your fingers meet your palms) rather than your wrists.



Low Lunge

Target Areas: Hip flexors, shoulders

Practical Benefits: Increase the range of motion in your hips to improve all aspects of lower body performance and reduce the risk of hip injury.

Technique:

1. Front foot planted on the ball and heel of the foot, knee over ankle.
2. Back knee down, foot untucked, about a foot and a half behind the front foot.
3. Straight line from pubic bone to shoulders in the torso, core engaged.
4. Arms extended straight overhead, internally rotated so that palms face towards one another.
5. Shoulders relaxed so that there is space between your head, shoulders, and arms.
6. Hold for 30 - 60 seconds.

Tips: Press your hips forward for a deeper stretch, but make sure that you are maintaining proper core engagement (pelvis tilted slightly upward, straight line from pubic bone to shoulders) to prevent arching in the low back.





Runner's Lunge

Target Areas: Hip flexors, core, hamstrings

Practical Benefits: Increase endurance in your lower body (especially hamstrings) while working into hip flexibility, which helps increase the length of your stride and help prepare your body to strongly make sharp cutting motions.

Technique:

1. Start from low lunge (see previous pose) with hands planted on either side of the front foot.
2. Straighten back leg, reaching the back of the knee skyward.
3. Reach your chest off your thighs and rise to balance on the fingertips (or take your hands entirely off the ground).
4. Make a straight line from your back heel to your head.
5. Hold for 30 - 90 seconds.

Tips: Dig down through your front heel to focus on endurance, and pull legs toward one another to engage inner thighs and increase the effectiveness of this exercise. Keep neck in line with spine, gazing about one and a half feet ahead of the front foot.



Half Split

Target Areas: Hamstrings, lower back, calves

Practical Benefits: Improve your running and squat ability while reducing the risk of injury to your hamstrings and lower back.

Technique:

1. From a low lunge, front leg extends forward, toes flex toward the face and back of heel on the ground.
2. Hips directly over back knee.
3. Front quad engages, knee slightly bent.
4. Front hip pulls back while back hip pushes slightly forward so that both hips face straight forward.
5. Reach chest toward the front foot, keeping back as flat as possible.
6. Hold for 30 - 60 seconds.

Tips: Pull your head away from your shoulders and focus on pulling your chest forward, instead of thinking of bringing your head to your knees, so that you target your lower back with this stretch, in addition to hamstrings and calves.





High Lunge (Crescent Lunge)

Target Areas: Hip flexors, core, shoulders

Practical Benefits: Increase flexibility in your hip flexors and endurance in your thighs while focusing on balance to improve your sprinting ability and strength in single leg squats or lunges.

Technique:

1. Back foot three to three and a half feet behind and four inches to the side of front foot.
2. Toes, hips, and shoulders face forward.
3. Back leg straight, thigh muscles engaged.
4. Shoulders stack directly over hips.
5. Core engages and back flattens to form a straight line from pubic bone to shoulders.
6. Arms extend straight up, arms internally rotate so that palms face one another, and shoulders relaxed.
7. Bend forward into the front leg until the knee is directly over the ankle.
8. Hold for 30 - 60 seconds.

Tips: Start with a closer stance if your back is arching (i.e. you feel pinching in your lower back). Keep hips even, facing forward. Ribs draw in towards one another to prevent puffing of the chest and arching of the back.





Standing Side Stretch (Crescent Moon)

Target Areas: Upper back, core, shoulders

Practical Benefits: Increase range of motion of your upper back, shoulders and core to increase power in twisting movements, such as throwing a ball with a lacrosse stick, swinging a baseball bat, or performing a slap shot in hockey.

Technique:

1. Stand in mountain pose with toes touching, knees slightly bent, core engaged to prevent arching in the low back. Chest raised, and shoulders relaxed.
2. Extend arms overhead, interlace fingers and point index fingers.
3. Reach arms up and over to the side.
4. Press hips in opposite direction.
5. Keep arms straight, biceps by the ears, and chin lifted away from chest.
6. Come back to center and switch sides.
7. Hold for 30 - 60 seconds.

Tips: Keep both sides of the body long. Lift your chest, press your palms together, and press your arms away from your body to maximize the effectiveness of this exercise.



Chair

Target Areas: Hamstrings, upper back, shoulders, quads, hip flexors, core

Practical Benefits: Increase range of motion in squats while maintaining core strength in order to improve squats, build lower body strength, and increase endurance in core and lower body while opening the shoulders.

Technique:

1. Big toes touch, knees squeeze together. Weight is in the heels.
2. Hips lower, anywhere from four inches lower to as low as knee level, depending on strength and flexibility (just like a squat).
3. Core engages to keep spine long and straight.
4. Arms extend, biceps in line with ears, and palms face towards one another.
5. Ribs draw in toward one another, chin away from chest, shoulders relaxed, and neck long.
6. Hold for 30 - 90 seconds.

Tips: Do not allow your chest to splay open. Keep a straight line through your spine. The weight of your body should be in your heels, so that you can pick your toes off the ground. You should be able to see your toes if you look down.





Lizard

Target Areas: Hamstrings, hip flexors

Practical Benefits: Relieve soreness in the inner thighs, lengthen your stride, increase your power and agility in changing directions, and reduce the risk of injury to your hamstrings.

Technique:

1. From [runner's lunge](#), bring front foot to the outside of the corresponding hand.
2. Press both palms firmly into the ground.
3. Reach chest up and forward, lengthening the spine as much as possible.
4. Bring hips as close to the ground as possible while keeping back flat.
5. Hold for 30 - 60 seconds.

Tips: Press your core toward the space between your hands to deepen the stretch while maintaining a straight spine. As much as possible, prevent your back from rounding.



Modifications:

Knee down - restorative focus

1. From lizard pose, lower back knee to the ground and untuck the back foot.
2. Relax the upper body toward the ground after first lengthening the spine as much as possible.
3. Hold for 1 - 2 minutes.



Warrior 1

Target Areas: Hip flexors, core, calves, shoulders, upper back

Practical Benefits: Increase hip flexibility, improve posture, and teach your body to properly use your core to protect your lower back while running, lifting, and while simply standing.

Technique:

1. Back foot pointed forty five degrees away from the front foot, planted about two feet behind the front heel, and four inches to the inside of the front foot.
2. Press into the outside of the back foot to keep the entire sole of the foot on the ground, and straighten the leg.
3. Hips and shoulders face as straight forward as possible. Front hip pulls back, back hip pushes forward.
4. Tilt the pelvis upwards to lengthen the lower spine and engage the core.
5. Extend arms overhead, palms facing one another, and relax the shoulders.
6. Hold for 30 - 60 seconds.

Tips: Make sure that you keep the back heel on the ground. Draw your ribs toward one another to prevent your back from arching. Use a mirror to help with this pose - it's tricky.





Pyramid

Target Areas: Hamstrings, IT band, lower back

Practical Benefits: Greatly reduce the risk of injury in your knee by stretching the IT band, and significantly improve your hamstring strength and flexibility to improve lifts such as dead-lift while reducing the risk of injury to your hamstrings from sports involving sprinting.

Technique:

1. Front foot faces forward. Keep a slight bend to the knee at all times.
2. Back foot points forty five degrees outside the front foot and is planted one and a half to two feet behind the front heel. (Similar to Warrior 1.)
3. Press into the outside of the back foot to keep the entire sole of the foot on the ground and back leg straight.
4. Front hip pulls up and back and back hip pulls down and forward so that hips and shoulders face straight forward.
5. Reach chest as far forward as possible to maintain a flat back.
6. Plant fingertips on the ground and pull your chest forward to create length in the spine and deepen the stretch in the hamstrings.
7. Hold for 30 - 60 seconds.

Tips: Bend your front knee if you find yourself unable to keep your back flat.





Warrior 2

Target Areas: Hip flexors, quads, core

Practical Benefits: Improve the power in your hips for twisting movements such as swinging a baseball bat, shooting a lacrosse ball, or quickly changing directions.

Technique:

1. Front heel points to the arch in back foot.
2. Back foot about three feet behind front foot, back foot at an eighty degree angle to the front foot (slightly turned in).
3. Back leg straight, thigh muscles engaged.
4. Hips, chest, and shoulders facing sideways, shoulders stacked directly over hips.
5. Bend into your front knee until the knee is directly over the ankle.
6. Back flat and core engaged so that there is a straight line from pubic bone to shoulders. If you cannot complete this step, shorten your stance.
7. Arms flexed, reaching in opposite directions at shoulder level, fingers spread wide.
8. Shoulders relaxed, gaze focused over front hand.
9. Hold for 30 - 90 seconds.

Tips: Squeeze your legs toward one another to draw your hips under your torso and tilt your pelvis slightly upward to protect your lower back and engage your core. Keep your arms active by engaging the muscles in your arms.





Side Angle

Target Areas: Hip flexors, core, shoulders, upper back, quads, lower back

Practical Benefits: Helps to open up tight shoulders and reduce pain or tightness in the rotator cuff, which will help prevent chronic, long-term injuries to your shoulders, while improving the range of motion in your chest, which will improve your pushing power.

Technique:

1. Start from [Warrior 2](#).
2. Bring the outside of the front wrist to the inside of the front knee.
3. Extend the back hand upwards with palm facing in the same direction as your hips.
4. Press the abdominal muscles in the direction that the hips are facing.
5. Lengthen the spine and stretch the upper body by reaching the sternum up and forward, creating a straight line with the body from back foot to head.
6. Pull the rear shoulder back, squeeze the shoulder blades toward one another, and expose the chest upwards to further open the upper body.
7. Hold for 30 - 60 seconds.

Tips: Keep the weight of your body in your core, rather than allowing your forearm to rest on the thigh. Press your front knee into the back of your wrist, wrist into knee, and front shin forward for a deeper stretch.





Reverse Warrior

Target Areas: Upper back, shoulders

Practical Benefits: Create more length and flexibility in your torso to increase the power of pulling motions such as pull-ups and twisting motions such as shooting a lacrosse ball or swinging a baseball bat.

Technique:

1. Start from [Warrior 2](#).
2. Flip the front hand and reach it up and back over your head with the palm facing backwards.
3. Slide the back hand down the back leg.
4. Hold for 20 - 30 seconds.

Tips: Maintain proper technique in your lower body (knee over ankle) while reaching your arm up and back, and keep the back leg straight by engaging your thigh muscles and pressing the outside of your back foot into the ground.



Triangle

Target Areas: Hamstrings, upper back, shoulders

Practical Benefits: Reduce the risk of tearing or pulling a hamstring, increase the range of motion of your legs to improve kicking power and increase speed.

Technique:

1. Front foot facing forward, front leg muscles flexed, knee slightly bent.
2. Back foot about two and a half feet behind front foot, toes facing diagonally sideways at an eighty degree angle (just acute of ninety degrees) to the front foot.
3. Back leg locked out, thigh engaged.
4. Hips, chest, and shoulders facing sideways, shoulders stacked directly over hips.
5. Shift the hips backwards, pressing the front hip into the back hip.
6. Extend your arms in opposite directions, forward and backward, parallel to the ground.
7. Shift your upper body and arms as far forward as possible while keeping your arms parallel to the ground.
8. Bring the outside of the front hand to the inside of the front ankle.
9. Extend the back hand straight up, forming a straight line from fingertips to fingertips.
10. Hold for 30 - 60 seconds.

Tips: Bend your front knee as much as necessary to allow you to reach your ankle. Squeeze your legs toward one another to prevent your leg muscles from relaxing. Do NOT lock out your front knee.





Wide-legged Forward Fold

Target Areas: Hamstrings, calves, core, lower back, upper back, shoulders

Practical Benefits: Improve your running ability and reduce chronic pain in your lower back. This can also help alleviate the symptoms of shin splints.

Technique:

1. Legs spread wide, toes slightly turned in, and feet separated about 4 - 5 feet.
2. Squeeze thighs towards one another. 3. Extend your arms sideways in opposite directions at shoulder level, palms facing down.
3. Reach chest forward as far as possible while maintaining a flat back.
4. Plant fingertips on the ground and pull chest forward. Bend knees if necessary.
5. Hold for 30 - 60 seconds.

Tips: Relax your neck. Transfer the weight toward the fronts of your feet and engage your core to reach your head closer to the ground.



For a modification of wide-legged forward fold that adds a shoulder and upper back opening component, take the following modification.

Modifications:

Interlaced fingers (Adds a shoulder and upper back opening benefit to the exercise)

1. Instead of arms at shoulder level, interlace fingers behind the small of the back and press the palms together.
2. Reach the chest forward while maintaining a flat back. Once you reach the halfway point, relax your chest and neck, and look between your legs.
3. With palms pressed together, lift the hands off the small of the back. Bend the elbows if necessary to keep the palms pressing together.

4. Reach the hands as far forward over the head as possible.
5. Hold for 30 - 60 seconds.

Tips: Use your arm strength to open your shoulders by engaging your arm muscles and reaching more and more forward.



Haka (Horse or Goddess)

Target Areas: Hip flexors, core, quads

Practical Benefits: Improve your ability to react defensively in sports like baseball, basketball, football and lacrosse.

Technique:

1. Feet about 3 - 3.5 feet apart with toes facing out and heels facing in.
2. Pelvis is tilted forward to draw the butt slightly under the body, and core engages to lengthen the lower spine.
3. Ribs draw in towards one another, chest lifts.
4. Keep your shoulders over your hips.
5. Lower the hips down toward the ground while keeping knees over ankles and weight evenly distributed throughout the entire foot.
6. Hold for 30 - 90 seconds.

Tips: Keep your knees tracking over your middle toes. If this is too difficult, turn your toes more inward. Keep your shoulders over your hips and engage your core to prevent arching in the lower back.





Eagle

Target Areas: Shoulders, upper back, core

Practical benefits: Increase shoulder flexibility to help take pressure out of the chest muscles, increase upper back strength and range of motion, and increase pulling power.

Technique:

1. Start in a standing position with feet together.
2. Swing your (right) arm under your (left) arm, and interlace your fingers. (If you cannot interlace your fingers completely, interlace whatever fingers you can. If you cannot interlace your fingers, press your (right) forearm into the (left) arm just below the elbow.
3. Lift your elbows to shoulder level and press your forearms forward. Keep your hands away from your face. Turn your shoulders to face straight forward.
4. Sit the hips down as low as possible while keeping feet flat on the ground, weight toward the heels.
5. Pick up the (right) leg and wrap it around the (left) leg, wrapping the legs as tightly as possible. Turn the hips so that they face straight forward.
6. Hold for 30 - 60 seconds.

Modifications: To skip the balance aspect of this pose and focus solely on opening the shoulders, keep both feet on the ground. You can lower the hips (as you would in chair pose) or stay upright in mountain pose.

Tips: Relax your shoulders, and press your elbows as far forward as possible. It should feel like your shoulder blades are coming apart. This pose is all about stacking: shoulders over hips and elbows over knees.





Warrior 3

Target Areas: Hamstrings, shoulders, arms, quads, core, upper back

Practical Benefits: Greatly increase your balancing ability, develop your lower body strength, and help improve the range of motion in your shoulders to increase torque and power in shots, throwing, and pushing motions.

Technique:

1. Start with both feet facing forward, back foot about six inches behind the front foot with heel lifted off the ground.
2. Butt slightly under body and core engaged to keep back flat.
3. Chin away from chest, and arms extended over head with (option 1) palms facing one another, shoulder-width distant, or (option 2) fingers interlaced, index fingers pointing up, palms pressing together.
4. Lift the back leg off the ground, point your toes backwards, and reach the body forward.
5. Strive to bring the body to be parallel to the ground while keeping the hips level and maintaining a straight line from your toes to your fingertips.
6. Hold for 20 - 30 seconds.

Tips: Lower the hip of the raised leg and press down harder into your front foot to raise the front hip and keep your hips even. Relax the glute of the raised leg to prevent your toes from turning out. Reach forward as far as possible with your fingers while pressing your toes back as far as possible for maximum results. The biceps should stay in line with your ears, so that you cannot see your arms while doing this exercise.



Standing Quad Stretch (Dancer)

Target Areas: Quads, hip flexors, upper back, spine, core, shoulders

Practical Benefits: Reduce the risk of pulling or straining your quadriceps while improving balance, core strength, and back strength.

Technique:

1. Balance on one leg, and bring the heel of the opposite foot toward the butt.
2. Grab the inside (big toe side) of the lifted foot with the corresponding hand (bicep facing out), and reach the opposite hand straight up in the air, palm facing forward.
3. Tilt the pelvis forward to engage the abdominal muscles and protect the lower spine.
4. Press into the back hand with the lifted foot and reach your chest forward while extending your back leg backward.
5. Allow the back to arch as the back foot gets higher.
6. Hold for 30 - 45 seconds.

Tips: Allow your back hand to be pulled back while pulling the corresponding shoulder forward to help open the shoulder. Keep your core engaged as your back arches so that you do not end up compressing the lower spine. Do not lock out your standing leg.





Child's Pose

Target Areas: Lower back, hip flexors, shoulders, upper back, spine

Practical Benefits: Relieve lower back pain and tightness after cardio, practice, or a game.

Technique:

1. Allow the knees to rest about two feet apart from one another and touch your big toes to one another.
2. Sit your hips down on your heels.
3. Rest your forehead on the ground and extend the arms out from the shoulders so that they are parallel to one another.
4. Press your hands into the ground to bring your hips closer to your heels.
5. Hold for 30 seconds to 5 minutes.

Tips: Without moving your arms, squeeze your hands towards or away from one another to facilitate a stretch in the upper back, shoulders, and biceps.



Superman

Target Areas: Lower back, chest, upper back, shoulders, core

Practical Benefits: Increase your respiratory ability and maintain greater control over your body when you become out of breath. Strengthen your lower back for more power in twisting motions such as shooting, throwing, or swinging.

Technique:

1. Lay down flat with arms extended as far forward as possible and legs as far back as possible.
2. Press hips and abdominal muscles into the ground.
3. Lift arms and legs off the ground.
4. Reach fingers forward and up with palms facing down and extend toes as far backwards as possible.
5. Hold for 30 seconds.

Tips: Keep your hips pressing into the ground and extend as if your body is being pulled in two directions.



Bridge

Target Areas: Lower back, core

Practical Benefits: Increase range of motion and strength in your back to reduce risk of injury to and protect your spine.

Technique:

1. Lie on back and bring the heels two inches away from the butt, feet facing straight forward and six inches apart.
2. Rest arms alongside the body.
3. Press into the feet and lift the hips off the ground as high as possible, keeping the knees hip-width distant by squeezing inner thighs toward one another.
4. Lift the chest towards the chin, and reach the chin away from the chest.
5. Hold for 30 - 45 seconds.

Tips: The weight of your body in this pose rests in the shoulders, not the neck. Do not allow the knees to splay out to the side OR the insides of the feet to come off the ground. Keep your core engaged by flexing the abdominal muscles, slightly tilting your pelvis to prevent pinching in the lower back.



Dolphin

Target Areas: Shoulders, hamstrings, core, upper back

Practical Benefits: Improve your pushing power and range of motion in your shoulders for more torque and power in any pressing motion of the upper body, build up the strength for forearm stand and handstands, and reduce the risk of chronic, long-term injuries to your rotator cuff.

Technique:

1. Lower the forearms to the ground so that they are shoulder-width distant and lie parallel to one another.
2. Press the forearms into the ground and stack the shoulders directly on top of the elbows.
3. Straighten the back, and then attempt to straighten the legs as much as possible and press the heels toward the ground (just like down dog).
4. Inch the toes forward toward the hands.
5. Hold for 30 - 45 seconds.

Tips: Keep your elbows over your shoulders, and press down firmly into your forearms to lift your shoulders as high as possible. If your hamstrings are too tight for this, bend your knees.



Pigeon

Target Areas: Glutes, TFL, external hip rotators

Practical benefits: Improve the flexibility and range of motion of your body's most powerful muscle - your glutes. This improves your running and squatting ability and reduces tension in the hips and lower back.

Technique:

1. Start in a six-point (tabletop) position with hands under shoulders and knees under hips.
2. Bring the (right) knee just behind the (right) wrist, and bring the (right) foot as close as possible to the (left) hand (somewhere between the (left) knee and (left) hand).
3. Edge the toes in the back foot as far back as possible, ensuring that the back foot is pointing straight back with toes untucked.
4. Walk the hands outside the hips and puff the chest out. Pull the butt forward under the torso to engage the core and protect the lower spine.
5. Ease the forearms down in front of the outstretched (right) leg, and allow the hips to relax as close as possible to the ground.
6. Hold for 1 - 2 minutes.

Tips: Even your hips out by pulling your front hip up and back while pressing your back hip down and forward. Minimize fidgeting and muscle engagement.







If pigeon is too intense, take this modification.

Modification:

1. Lie down on the back and bring the (right) ankle on top of the (left) thigh to form a “4” with your legs.
2. Flex the toes toward the shin so that the sole of the foot faces directly outward (to the left).
3. Pull the back of the (left) thigh in towards the chest.
4. Press the opposite (right) knee forward.
5. Hold for 45 - 60 seconds.



Sequencing

Sequencing is the order in which the exercises and poses are performed. Sequencing is important because certain poses are much more intense than others, and warm-up (doing less intense exercises) is necessary before attempting these types of poses. This section will explain the various techniques which Man Flow™ Yoga uses to sequence a workout. It will also provide some sample sequences as a basis for you to create your own sequences, should you decide to do so once you become more familiar with the exercises and begin to understand how they affect the body. Here are some methods for sequencing:

1. **Balance** - Exercise followed by counter exercise to facilitate a comprehensive and balanced full-body workout. This typically means that an agonist exercise is followed by an antagonist exercise.
2. **Focus** - Choosing a target muscle group and performing the exercises in progressively increasing difficulty to reach the full extent of flexibility in the target focus.
3. **R & R** -Low-intensity session to facilitate recovery and muscle relief.



Balance Sequences

A balance sequence is one in which pose is followed by counterpose; agonist exercise followed by antagonist exercise. This means that a pose that focuses on the arching of the back is followed by a pose in which the back is flat or rounded. An exercise that focuses on hamstrings is followed by an exercise that focuses on the hip flexors, or an exercise in which the knee is bent. This method is very good as an overall, full-body Man Flow™ Yoga workout.

Sample balance sequence 1 (long):

- [Mountain](#)
- [Cat-cow](#)
- [Bird-dog](#)
- [Squat Hold](#)
- [Forward Fold](#)
- [Half Lift](#)
- [Plank](#)
- [Cobra](#)
- [Downward Facing Dog \(Downdog\)](#)
- [Low Lunge](#)
- [Runner's Lunge](#)
- [Half Split](#)
- [High Lunge \(Crescent Lunge\)](#)
- [Standing Side Stretch \(Crescent Moon\)](#)
- [Chair](#)
- [Lizard](#)
- [Warrior 1](#)
- [Pyramid](#)
- [Warrior 2](#)
- [Side Angle](#)
- [Reverse Warrior](#)
- [Triangle](#)
- [Wide-legged Forward Fold](#)
- [Haka \(Horse or Goddess\)](#)
- [Eagle](#)
- [Warrior 3](#)

- [Standing Quad Stretch \(Dancer\)](#)
- [Child's Pose](#)
- [Superman](#)
- [Dolphin](#)
- [Pigeon](#)

Sample balance sequence 2(short):

- [Plank](#)
- [Squat Hold](#)
- [Low Lunge](#) -> [Half Split](#) -> [Runner's Lunge](#)
- [Standing Side Stretch](#)
- [Warrior 1](#) -> [Pyramid](#) -> [Revolved Pyramid](#)
- [Dolphin](#)
- [Standing Quad Stretch](#)
- [Eagle](#)
- [Warrior 3](#)
- [Warrior 2](#) -> [Side Angle](#) -> [Reverse Warrior](#)
- [Triangle](#)
- [Haka](#)
- [Wide-legged Forward Fold](#)
- [Cobra](#) / [Superman](#) (2 sets)
- [Child's Pose](#)
- [Lizard](#) (knee down)
- [Pigeon](#)

Focus Sequences

This method is ideal when you want to focus on a certain part of the body. A Man Flow™ Yoga session focusing on one group of muscles does not have to last as long as a full-body session, so if you have limited time then a focus sequence is ideal. When using the focus method, you will still activate the antagonist muscles of the muscles that you are targeting, but the focus will be on the agonist muscle group.

Sample focus sequence 1: (Hamstrings)

- [Bird-dog](#)
- [Squat hold](#)
- [Forward fold](#)
- [Runner's lunge](#) -> [Half split](#)
- [Plank](#) -> [Downdog](#)
- [High lunge](#) -> [Warrior 3](#)
- [Dolphin](#)
- [Warrior 2](#) -> [Triangle](#)
- [Haka](#)
- [Wide-legged Forward Fold](#)
- [Lizard](#)

Sample focus sequence 2: (Hip flexors)

- [Squat Hold](#)
- [Low Lunge](#) -> [Runner's Lunge](#)
- [Chair](#)
- [Warrior 2](#) -> [Side Angle](#) -> [Reverse Warrior](#)
- [Wide-legged Forward Fold](#) -> [Haka](#)
- [Standing Quad Stretch](#)
- [Pigeon](#)

Sample focus sequence 3: (Shoulders / Back)

- [Cat-cow](#)

- [Bird-dog](#)
- [Plank](#)
- [Squat Hold](#) (60 - 120 seconds)
- [Low Lunge](#)
- [Downdog](#)
- [Standing Side Stretch](#)
- [Warrior 1](#)
- [Eagle](#)
- [Warrior 2](#) -> [Side Angle](#) -> [Reverse Warrior](#)
- [Wide-legged Forward Fold](#) (with interlaced fingers)
- [Haka](#)
- [Dolphin](#)
- [Cobra](#)
- [Superman](#)
- [Child's Pose](#)

Sample focus sequence 4: (Lower Back / Core)

- [Cat-cow](#)
- [Bird-dog](#)
- [Plank](#)
- [Child's Pose](#)
- [Squat Hold](#)
- [Forward Fold](#) -> [Half Lift](#)
- [Runner's Lunge](#) -> [Half Split](#)
- [Downdog](#)
- [Warrior 2](#) -> [Side Angle](#) -> [Reverse Warrior](#) -> [Triangle](#)
- [Wide-legged Forward Fold](#)
- [Cobra](#) (2 sets)
- [Superman](#) (2 sets)
- [Child's Pose](#)
- [Plank](#)
- [Wide-legged Forward Fold](#)

R & R (Rest and Recovery) Sequences

This is a low-intensity Man Flow™ Yoga session to help stretch out sore muscles and facilitate faster recovery. It is ideal as a cool-down following a workout, practice, or game, and on days after strenuous exercise when muscles are sore and need repairing.

Sample R & R:

- [Forward Fold](#)
- [Standing Side Stretch](#)
- [Low Lunge](#) -> [Half Splits](#)
- [Warrior 1](#) -> [Pyramid](#)
- [Warrior 2](#) -> [Triangle](#)
- [Haka](#) -> [Wide-legged Forward Fold](#)
- [Lizard](#) (knee down)
- [Pigeon](#)

Services / Additional Content

Want more? There are many ways that you can continue to expand your knowledge of yoga and exercise through Man Flow™ Yoga.

Social Media

You can sign-up for the e-mail list to hear about our latest and upcoming events, ‘like’ us on Facebook to engage with us and the Man Flow™ Yoga community, subscribe to us on YouTube for great video workouts and tips, or follow us on Twitter and Instagram for pose descriptions, explanations, and more!

The Website

The most basic way to follow Man Flow™ Yoga is through the continuously-updated website, which hosts its pose guide, editorials, videos, tips, forums, and more. The website offers free and premium content, much of which you will be unable to find on social media. You can also view and purchase premium video workouts, Man Flow™ Yoga apparel, and more from the website.

Personal Training via webcam

CEO and Founder, Dean, offers private instruction via webcam to individuals who are serious about improving their physical health and fitness through Man Flow™ Yoga. The trainee will meet with Dean once or twice weekly to work together in order to achieve the trainee’s physical goals, whether they be aesthetic or physical performance goals. Lessons are offered in packages of ten to signify a commitment on the part of the trainee to the program. For more information or to inquire about availability, send an email to dean@manflowyoga.com with a brief description of your physical fitness history, your goals, and your desired times. Check out testimonials at the Man Flow Stories section on the Man Flow™ Yoga website to read about the success stories of others who have participated in Man Flow™ Yoga’s personal training program.

Workout Vacations

Dean hosts several workout vacations (retreats) annually. In August of 2014 he traveled to Roatan, Honduras with 18 people for a full week of Man Flow™ Yoga in order for participants to better understand the principles, techniques, and philosophy involved in Man Flow™ Yoga and to connect with other individuals passionate about the physical practice of yoga. For information on these, visit the events section of the Man Flow™ Yoga website, or send an email to events@manflowyoga.com.

Training Seminars

Did your team have too many injuries last year? Do you want to help bring your team's physical performance to the next level? Dean is also available to travel to the location of your school or club's athletic program and work with your athletes directly through weekend or week-long seminars, in which we cover the poses listed above in addition to a huge number of other poses and exercises not listed. We'll also teach you exercises and techniques not traditionally associated with yoga that will help with range of motion, recovery, and ultimately help make your athletes stronger, recover faster, and be less prone to injury. Send an email to training@manflowyoga.com to plan your Man Flow™ Yoga seminar.

Contact Info:

CEO & Founder of Man Flow™ Yoga, Dean Pohlman

Email: dean@manflowyoga.com

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