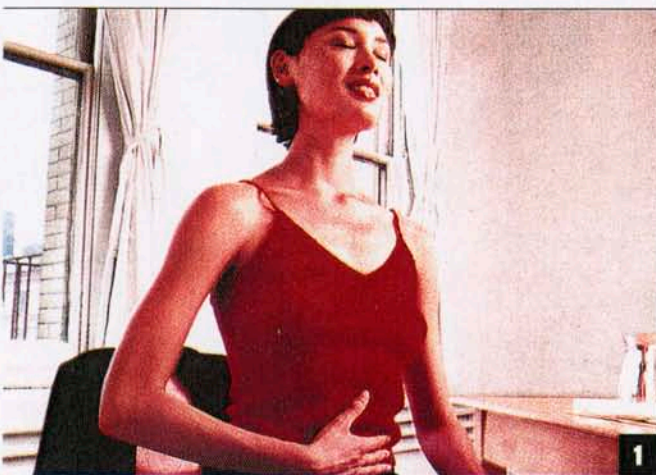


Yoga at your desk

Bring your workout to work. Here are four simple ways to say ahhh (without ever leaving your office). By Rachel Grumman

THE PHONE IS RINGING OFF THE HOOK, the printer's down, and you have a project due in three hours. What you need is instant calm—and we have the answer. Four yoga-inspired moves, created with the help of New York City yoga instructor Joseph Caraccilo, that will let you de-stress without contorting yourself into a pretzel—or, for that matter, even leaving your desk. Could you ask for more convenience than that?

Before you begin, close your door (if you have one), turn off the lights, and turn off the ringer on your phone. If your office is a (very) relaxed one, light an aromatherapy candle on your desk to help zip you into the Zen zone.

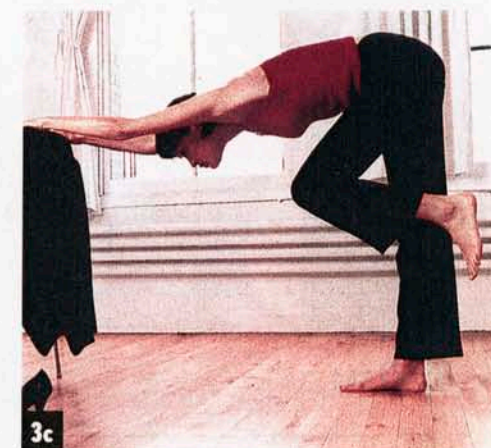
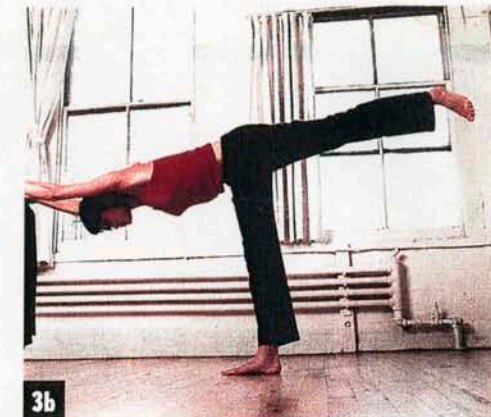


▲ Take a breather. Deep belly breathing—filling your lungs with air until your chest and stomach fully expand—is an integral part of yoga. It helps you relax and block out distractions while you do the asanas (Sanskrit for *postures*). “Yoga without breathing is just stretching,” Caraccilo says. “Breath is a tool to help you stay focused.” Here’s how to use your tool: Sit up straight in your chair with your feet flat on the floor. Place your hand on your belly, take in a deep breath through your nose for two (or three) seconds. Exhale through your mouth or nose for two seconds again. Do this 20 to 25 times.



▲ Fly like an eagle. The first asana is a variation on the eagle posture. This will help open up your shoulders, forearms, neck, and lower back. First, sit up straight in your chair with your feet flat on the floor. Then, extend your arms out to your sides, in line with your shoulders (2a), and bring your arms in like you were about to hug yourself. Then cross your forearms and touch your palms together (2b). You can either keep your fingers pressed together or interlace them. Holding this position, lift your arms up as high as they will stretch and slowly tilt your head back slightly (2c).

WALTER SMITH; HAIR AND MAKEUP: GITA BASS FOR PRICE INC.; SITTINGS: EDITOR: RANDY SMITH FOR BRADLEY CURRY MANAGEMENT.



▲ Let it all hang out. The second asana will help elongate your spine—great for days when you’ve been glued to your chair. Stand about two feet from your chair, keeping your feet shoulder-width apart. Bend at the waist and grab the back of the chair with both hands. Keep your back flat and your head slightly lower than your arms. Then press your chest toward the floor without bending your arms (3a). Hold for five breaths. Next, extend your left leg behind you until it’s parallel with the floor (3b). Switch legs. Then bend your left knee to your chest (3c). Switch legs and repeat.



◀ Do the twist. The third asana is a spinal twist in a chair. Sitting straight in your chair, extend your right arm and turn your chest—not your hips—to the right, until your right hand is holding onto the back of your chair. Then extend your left hand to your desk and gently push off for resistance. Turn your head and look over your right shoulder (4a). Hold for five breaths.

Next, take off your shoes, bend your right knee, and place your right foot on the edge of the seat. Again, turn your chest to the right and grab onto the back of the chair with your right hand. To deepen the stretch, place your left elbow against your right knee and gently push off the outside of the right knee for resistance (4b). Hold for five breaths. Change sides.



TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Want to do more than dabble? Check out the following yoga resources:

Basic Yoga for Everybody by Gertrud Hirschi (Weiser, \$29.95) comes with 84 illustrated cards that let you mix and match easy-to-follow yoga moves. To order, call (800) 423-7087.

Power Yoga by Beryl Bender Birch (Simon & Schuster, \$15) offers descriptions and illustrations of yoga postures and proper breathing techniques. Available in bookstores.

Water Yoga by Jill Coleman (Eglantine Press, \$17.95) contains postures and stretches you can do in the pool, hot tub, beach, even the shower! Available in bookstores.