

4 Minute Fitness

Even a few minutes of movement each day can change the way we feel mentally and physically. The following series takes less than five minutes, and is a great way to start each day, promoting physical health and mental well-being with movement, breath, and visualization.

1. Now

Stand tall, shoulders rolled down (literally roll the shoulders backward and leave them there). Feet hip-width apart, knees slightly bent, spine in neutral alignment. Let the body settle and relax. The head, neck and shoulders align with the hips. Feel the crown of the head extending (you can pull it up to get the sensation).

Inhale, drawing hands to waist, palms up. Squat down (a little or a lot) on the exhale, sweeping arms forward, palms facing inward as if you're holding a basketball at waist level. As you breathe in, come back up, drawing palms up beside the waist. Repeat the pattern five times, saying aloud or silently, "Now is the only time," then float arms down to your sides.

Seated: Sit tall in the chair. Inhale, pull arms back; exhale, push forward.

2. Love

As you inhale, cross arms over chest (in a hugging motion), and draw the right leg to the left. Exhale, returning the right foot to the right, and opening your arms wide. Repeat with left leg. Complete five cycles on each side, saying phrases like, "I am love," "I am loving," or "I am loved," then stand with feet hip-width apart, arms at sides.

Seated: Sit tall in the chair. Scoop hands up, lifting leg if you can, then lower foot, exhale and lower arms.

3. Vibrancy

With the inhale, circle the right arm behind and over head. Shoulders twist, but hips and head stay facing front. With the exhale, bring the hand down the center line of your head and body, palm facing left. Repeat with the left hand, and alternate sides for five rounds. Suggested phrases: "I am vibrant," "I am energized," or "I am alive." You could imagine a pool of white light, universal healing energy, just above your head and visualize drawing that energy into yourself as your hand lowers.

Seated: Hips are already still, so hold head still and turn shoulders. Sit tall so shoulder can rotate.

4. Gratitude

Inhale, turning the hips right and shifting the weight. Bend right knee, straightening the left, turning the torso to the right as the left hand comes across, palm up, in a serving motion, as right hand moves palm up behind. Exhale, draw the left arm back, and return body to front facing, palms facing up at waist-level. Repeat to left. Complete five cycles, expressing phrases of gratitude like, "Thank you," "I am so grateful," "I am blessed," or simply "Thanks."

Seated: Turn shoulders and transfer weight right, reaching across body with left hand, right hand reaches behind.

5. All is Well

Squat, drawing backs of hands together near knees. Inhale the hands overhead. Look up, arch upper back (not dropping head), release hands, allow arms to open and float down on the exhale, as you return to the squat with hands together. Repeat five times, along with the phrase, "All is well."

Seated: Backs of hands rest between knees. Inhale, drawing arms up the center, then open arms, look up and arch chest over chair. Exhale, floating hands down.

Go forward into the rest of your day, from a centered, calm place of well-being. ☺



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