

SUN SALUTATION

Surya Namaskar, the Sun Salutation, is a series of postures performed in a flowing sequence. Each movement is coordinated with the breath. Inhale as you extend or stretch, and exhale as you fold or contract. The Sun Salutation builds strength and increases flexibility. Different types of yoga have their own variation of the Sun Salutation; the one presented here avoids the jump back and lowering down to Chataranga, which can be hard on the lower back. If you perform that variation, be very careful to keep your hips in the line that extends from your shoulders down to your heels; if your hips begin to sink below that line, drop to your knees to protect the lower back.

On days when you think you have no time for yoga, do a few Sun Salutations. You'll feel the difference.

Mountain

Begin by standing in Mountain pose, feet about hip width apart, hands either by your sides or in prayer position. Take several deep breaths.

Hands Up

On your next inhale, in one sweeping movement, raise your arms up overhead, keeping your shoulders rolled down away from your ears.

Forward Fold

As you exhale, bend forward, bending the knees as much as necessary, and bring your hands to rest beside your feet.

Lunge

Inhale and step the right leg back.

Plank

Exhale and step the left leg back into plank position. Hold the position and inhale.

Caterpillar

Exhale and take chin and chest to the mat, hips high.

Cobra or Upward Facing Dog

Inhale and stretch forward and up, bending at the waist. Use your arms to lift your torso, but only bend back as far as feels comfortable and safe. Lift your legs up so that only the tops of your feet and your hands touch the floor for Up Dog, or keep your thighs and pelvis on the mat for Cobra; tops of feet press into the floor. It's okay to keep your arms bent at the elbow.

Downward Facing Dog

Exhale, lift from the hips and push back and up.

Lunge

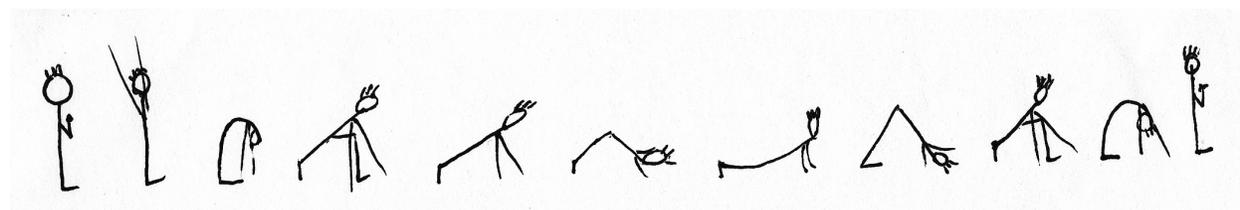
Inhale and step the right leg forward.

Forward Fold

Exhale and bring the left foot forward into a head-to-knee fold, bending the knees as much as necessary.

Mountain

Inhale back up to Mountain and repeat, leading with the left foot. One round of Sun Salutation consists of two flows: one leading with the right foot, and one leading with the left.



SUN SALUTATION B

This is another variation of the Sun Salutation. The sequence on the previous page is often referred to as "Sun A" and this sequence as "Sun B." While many of the postures are the same, Sun B adds Warrior 1 and 2, as well as Chair Pose. Sun Salutations are said to work every major muscle in your body.

Mountain

Begin by standing in Mountain pose, feet about hip width apart, hands either by your sides or in prayer position. Take several deep breaths.

Chair

Step feet together, and bend your knees, like you're sitting back onto the edge of a chair. Arms reach out and up.

Forward Fold

As you exhale, bend forward and bring your hands toward the floor beside your feet. Work toward straightening your legs.

Lunge

Inhale and step the right leg back.

Plank

Exhale and step the left leg back into plank position. Hold the position and inhale.

Caterpillar

Exhale and take chin and chest to the mat, hips high.

Cobra or Upward Facing Dog

Inhale and stretch forward and up, bending at the waist. Use your arms to lift your torso, but only bend back as far as feels comfortable and safe. Lift your legs up so that only the tops of your feet and your hands touch the floor for Up Dog, or keep your thighs and pelvis on the mat for Cobra; tops of feet press into the floor. It's okay to keep your arms bent at the elbow.

Downward Facing Dog

Exhale, lift from the hips and push back and up.

Warrior 1

Inhale and step your right foot forward, knee bent; set your left heel down. Bring your torso up, facing forward, and extend arms overhead, or rest hands at heart.

Warrior 2

Exhale and open your hips to the left; right hand reaches forward, left hand back, parallel to the floor, palms down. Look over your right middle finger.

Transition

Take an inhale. On the exhale, windmill your hands down to plank and move through Caterpillar. Inhale to Cobra, then exhale to Down Dog.

Warrior 1 and 2 on the other side plus Transition

Inhale, step forward to Warrior 1. Exhale and open to Warrior 2. Take an inhale. On the exhale, transition through to Down Dog.

Lunge

Inhale and step the right leg forward.

Forward Fold

Exhale and bring the left foot forward into a head-to-knee fold, bending the knees as much as necessary.

Chair

Inhale back up to Chair and repeat, leading with the left foot. Each round consists of two flows, leading with one foot then the other.

