

vinyasa

Knees and Inner Thigh Strength

Knees joints are more commonly injured in yoga than any other body part. A combination of tight hip flexors and over zealous attempts to move into Padmasana type postures can lead to stretching of the knee ligaments, causing pain and instability of the knee joint. Use this sequence to strengthen the supporting muscles around the knees, creating greater resilience and stability. Take care with any past injuries, and practise only within your pain-free range.

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one



Easy Cross-Legged Hip Stretch

Come into a cross-legged sitting position. Start with the right leg in front of the left. Come forwards only as far as you can with no sense of stretch in the inner knees, and without rounding the lower spine. Stay here for 5-10 breaths. Change sides.

two



Standing Hip Rotations

Stand with the feet about shoulder width apart, hands on hips. Start to slowly circle the hips, as if drawing a circle on the floor with the tailbone. Try to keep all toes on the floor. Practise 5 circles in each direction.

three



Standing Knee Rotations

Stand with the feet together, knees bent and together, hands resting on knees. Start to make slow, smooth circular movements with the knees. Try to keep all of the toes on the floor. Practise 5 circles in each direction.

four



Standing Wide Legged Twists

Stand with feet about shoulder width apart. Start to create a controlled twisting movement at the waist, to one side and then the other, wrapping the arms around the torso and lifting them out to the sides in between. Practise 5 rounds.

five (a)



Dynamic Standing Lunge

Start with the feet hip width apart, hands on hips. Step the right leg far back, and rest on the soles of the right toes. Align the left knee so that it is directly above the left ankle, and does not poke forwards or fall inwards.

five (b)



Inhale and as you exhale slowly bend the right knee towards the floor. Inhale as you straighten it. Keep the hips level, torso upright, and the front knee in line with the heel. Practise 5 rounds with each leg.

six



Dynamic Squats Stand with feet shoulder width apart. Clasp hands and lift the arms to shoulder height. As you exhale move the tailbone down and back, as if sitting back into a chair. Keep your weight back on the heels, and don't let the knees bend forwards over the feet. Inhale to come back up. Practise 10 rounds.

seven (a)



Elephant Pose

Take the feet wide apart and turn the feet slightly outwards. Inhale and as you exhale, slowly bend the knees out to the sides. Place palms in prayer position. Focus on rolling the thighs out and keeping the knees from falling in.

seven (b)



Inhale and as you exhale slowly extend the torso to the right. Rest the right elbow on the right knee, and take the left arm past the line of the ear. Inhale, come back to the centre. Exhale move into the left side. Practise 3 rounds. Rest in Uttanasana.

eight



Yogi's Armchair with block.

Stand with your back against the wall. Walk the feet forwards as you slide down. Make sure that the knees don't poke forwards. Shins should be vertical. Place a block between the thighs, feet close together. Press the back of the hips into the wall and squeeze

the block. Stay for 5-10 breaths then rest. Repeat 3 times.

nine (a)



Lying on the side leg raises

Lie on your side. Inhale as you raise the top leg. Exhale as you take the heel to the floor just in front of the other ankle. Inhale raise the leg back up.

nine (b)



Exhale as you take the heel to the floor just behind the other ankle. Practise 5 rounds, then repeat other side.

ten



Viparita Karani (Legs up the wall) with block or belt.

If your knees tend to roll inwards use a block between the thighs and inner knees. Use a belt tight around the thighs. If the knees tend to roll out use the belt only, tight around the mid thighs. Stay in the pose for 10-15 minutes.