



Cow & Cat Sequence

Cat - Marjaryasana - (mahr-jahr-ee-AHS-uh-nuh)

Cow - Bitilasana - (bee-tee-LAHS-uh-nuh)

Whether it's before a ball game, aerobics class or even at the start of your yoga practice, it's important to warm up your muscles and get the blood circulating. Cat & Cow Sequence helps loosen the spine so use it as a break from sitting too long or when you first get up in the morning. Coordinating this movement with your breathing relieves stress and calms the mind. Alternate between them in a smooth, vinyasa flow.

Cat & Cow share benefits and cautions.

Benefits

- Stretches the torso and neck. Cow pose stretches the front of your body; Cat pose stretches the back.
- Provides a gentle massage to the spine and belly organs

Contraindications

- If you have a neck injury, keep your head in line with your torso.

How to do it

1. Start on your hands and knees with your wrists and hands directly under your shoulders and your knees directly under your hips. Keep your back flat and your neck in a neutral position.
2. Move into Cow pose. As you inhale, tilt your sitz bones to the ceiling, dropping your belly to the floor and lifting your chest to the ceiling. Lift your head, looking forward.
3. As you exhale, move into Cat pose, rounding your back and drop the crown of your to the floor.
4. Repeat the sequence.

Do:

Start the movement in your tailbone and progress in a smooth motion between the poses.
Keep your shoulders down away from your ears

Don't:

Force your chin to your chest in Cow pose.

Bonus sequence:

After performing the sequence, you can warm up your spine in the other direction. Kneel on your hands and knees, keeping your back flat and your neck in a neutral position. Inhale. As you exhale, twist to your right. Inhale, moving back to a forward position. Exhale, then inhale, twisting to your left. Inhale, then return to facing forward. Continue inhaling and exhaling, twisting to each side to loosen the hips and spine.