

happy days

Find your inner smile and delight in these playful poses.



After 45 years of practice, Liliás Folan believes that proper alignment is important, but not if it causes overthinking or harsh self-judgments. First and foremost, she wants you to **connect with the joy** and “juiciness” of the present moment. To do this, the star of the long-running TV hit *Liliás! Yoga and You* keeps the movements simple and encourages smiles that lift the cheek muscles.

During a long hold of a difficult pose, Folan will ask, “Do you still love me?” which usually gets people smiling. “A genuine smile can help you connect to your bliss body,” she says. She also loves to suggest fun poses, like Victory Goddess Pose: Open your mouth, lift your eyebrows, stick out your tongue, and wiggle it around. This is one of Folan’s favorites.

But the practice isn’t all fun and games. Folan’s ultimate aim is to draw you out of the realm of your mind, with its discursive thought patterns, and into your heart. So, while paying attention to physical alignment, she asks you to observe your thoughts and cultivate gratitude and a sense of wonder throughout the practice. And if a posture’s uncomfortable, adjust it to honor your body. “Don’t omit—adapt,” she says, until you can softly smile while in a pose. As you work your physical body, become aware of your witness self: that ever-present inner friend. “You feel more and think less. We eventually come to a still, quiet, aware place that’s quite joyful,” she says. DIANE ANDERSON

to begin

Sit on a folded blanket Close your eyes and observe your breath for a minute. Check in with your witness self at the start of your practice. The witnessing part of yourself does not judge. It simply observes and accepts what is happening, like a best friend.

Resurrection breath Turn your head to the left. Forcibly exhale air through your mouth, in two or three short exhalations. Symbolically, you are letting go and “dying” to the past. As you inhale, slowly return your head to center and bring a sense of resurrection and renewal to this eternal present moment.

to finish

Twist Bring your knees to your chest and, as you exhale, drop them to the right. Gently turn your head to the left. Wringing out the torso quiets the body and mind. Repeat on the other side.

Take a one-minute vacation Enjoy Savasana (Corpse Pose) with your jaw soft and cheeks lifted. Find your inner smile. Ponder all the blessings in your life. Rest in this timeless moment.

1 Tadasana (Mountain Pose)

In a sense, you are coming home each time you do this pose. Feel a sense of relief, contentment, and smiling heart energy as you ground your feet, lengthen your spine, lower your shoulders, soften your eyes, and lift the corners of your lips. Bring your palms together at your heart and focus inward. Ask yourself, “What am I grateful for?” Let sweet memories and thoughts come to you. As you inhale, feel a warm, healing energy fill your chest. As you exhale, say to yourself, “Finally I return home to my heart.” Enjoy for 5 breaths.



1

2 Parsva Tadasana (Sidebending Mountain Pose)

Inhale and raise your hands to the ceiling. As you exhale, slide your hip and rib cage left as you lean your body to the right to form a standing sidebend. Root both feet into the floor. Relax your shoulders and enjoy the stretch for 3 breaths. Return to center. Repeat on the other side. Do each side 3 times, then return to Tadasana.

3 Five-Pointed Star

From Tadasana, bring your feet about 3 to 3½ feet apart. Inhale and lift both arms out to your sides and parallel to the floor. As you exhale, check your alignment. Keep your spine long and your tailbone down. Let your head float above your shoulders. When you exhale, extend the energy out the five points—feet, hands, and top of the head—for 3 full breaths.

4 Hug a Tree

Prepare your tight hips and legs for Triangle. From Five-Pointed Star, turn your left foot in and right foot out. Bend your right knee 90 degrees. Turn your torso to the right and fold forward over your right thigh. Place your left hand on the floor, close to your foot for balance. Wrap your right arm around your right thigh and “hug” your thigh. Start gentle resistance by pulling your chest away from your thigh, yet keep contact and hold for 6 breaths. Relax and breathe. As you exhale, turn your feet the other way. Bend and fold over your left knee for 6 breaths.



2

5 Utthita Trikonasana (Extended Triangle Pose)

Turn your feet to the right again, fold over your right leg, and place your right hand on your shin, on a block, or on the floor. Slowly straighten your right leg. As you inhale, slowly raise your left arm up to the ceiling. Gaze forward and don't strain your neck. Extend the sides of your torso parallel to the floor. Remember to breathe. Stay for 5 breaths. Repeat on the left side.

6 Parivrtta Trikonasana (Revolved Triangle Pose)

Take this challenging pose slowly and in pieces. Come back to Extended Triangle on the right side. Place a block near the inner edge of your right foot, then bring your left hand to the block. Gaze at your left hand. Rest your right arm on your low back. Breathing smoothly, open your chest and gently coax your belly to revolve right. Keep your inner thighs moving toward each other. Then, sweep your right arm to the ceiling. Hold the pose for 2 or 3 breaths. Repeat on the other side. Remove the block as you progress or move it to the outer edge of your front foot for more challenge. Return to Five-Pointed Star.



8



A video of this Home Practice sequence can be found online at yogajournal.com/livemag.



7 Ardha Chandrasana (Half Moon Pose)

From Five-Pointed Star, turn your right foot out, left heel in. Bend your right knee and lean over your right thigh. Place a block on the floor about a foot in front of your right pinkie toe. Lean onto the block with your right hand and lightly rest your left hand on your lower back. Inhale and lift your left leg up parallel to the floor, with your foot flexed. Gaze downward. Slowly straighten your standing leg and stack your hips. Steady yourself before you rotate your chest open and raise your left arm. Hold for 2 or 3 breaths. Come out of the pose as beautifully as you went into it. Return to Five-Pointed Star. Repeat on the other side.

8 Victory Goddess

This joyful pose will remind you not to take yourself too seriously. From Five-Pointed Star, turn both your feet out. Bend your knees into a comfortable squat. Then, bend your elbows, inhale, and stretch your palms open so your thumbs touch your shoulders. Release jaw, face, and neck tension: Open your mouth, lift your eyebrows, stretch out your tongue, and waggle it, as you exhale forcefully with a sound for 10 seconds. Release, stand tall, and observe your body and mind.

