



Invert!

The Why and How of Safe, Transformative,
Sustainable Inversions

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3 Reasons to Invert

1. Manage Stress

Inversions activate the “baroreflex” – a complex system that manages your heart rate and blood pressure. When you invert, you essentially trick your body into thinking your blood pressure has gone up. This activates a cascade of neurochemical responses to bring your body back to homeostasis – including activating the “relaxation response.” Research from the National Institute of Health has shown that people who practice yoga regularly, over time, have a more parasympathetically attuned nervous system. Of note, yogis have long believed that inversions delay the aging process.

2. Improve Immune Function

Lymph, which helps to clear toxins and dead cells from the body, is an important aspect of the immune system. But, unlike the circulatory system, it does not have a pump. It flows through your body because of muscle movement, including breathing. Lymph has to travel from interstitial tissue all over your body, all the way back up to the thoracic duct near your left collar bone to then flow back into the blood stream. When you invert, you give this process a bit of support. Inversions may benefit the lymphatic system and through it, have a positive effect on the immune system.

3. Soothe Joints and Strengthen Core Muscles

Inversions may help relieve joint pressure and strengthen core muscles. Because your joints are typically loaded in the direction of gravity, putting all the structures of your body in the opposite orientation to gravity may help relieve dysfunctional loading and pain. Many people find relief from low back pain from inverting. Some yoga traditions suggest that inversions may also benefit the respiratory, circulatory, and digestive systems.

When not to invert

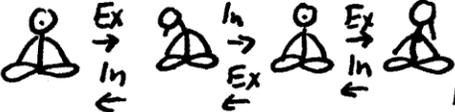
1. Heart disease and high blood pressure that’s uncontrolled by medication (and even if it is controlled, ask your physician first).
2. Eye problems including glaucoma or a history of detached retina, as well as some ear problems and vertigo.
3. Neck or back pain that is exacerbated by inverting.
4. Menstruation and pregnancy (there’s not a lot of research on this and some suggest inversions are fine, but please consult a physician first).

Inversion Sequence

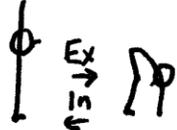
For a safe, transformative, sustainable practice

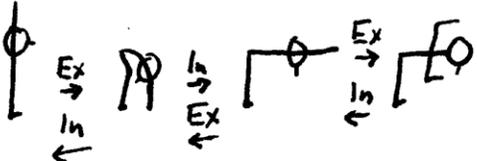
*For best results, pause for a breath or two between poses and notice sensations and breath.

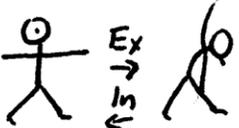
1.  - close or soften your eyes
 - notice your breath
 - notice sensations in your neck, shoulders, upper back
 - intention of kindness toward yourself.

2.  4x
 head looks down on Ex

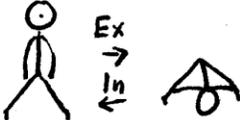
3.  4x
 chin in on Ex

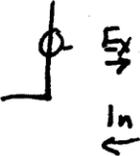
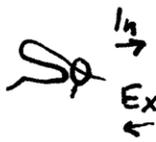
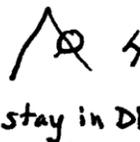
4. a.  4x
 eyes look to shins

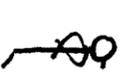
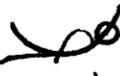
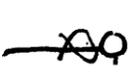
b.  4x

5. a.  4x
 eyes gaze down on Ex

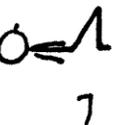
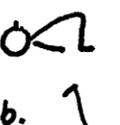
b.  4x
 - hand of upper arm sweeps behind back on Ex
 - eyes look up on In

6.  4x; stay 3br.
 relax head

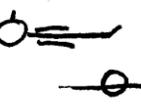
7.  Ex
 In
 In
 Ex
 Ex
 In
 4x
 stay in DD for 3 br.

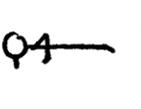
8.  (opposite arm + leg)

 4x
 (switch opposite arm + leg)

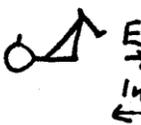
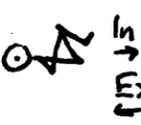
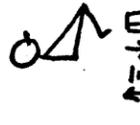
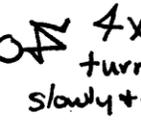
9.  In
 Ex
 4x; stay 3br.
 chin lowers on Ex,
 relaxes on In

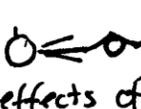
10.  In
 Ex
 4x; stay 3br.

11. a.  OR b.  stay 2-5 minutes
 NO neck discomfort!
 practice a. instead

12.  rest several breaths then
 stretch out.

13.  In
 Ex
 4x, gently lengthen neck. stay 3br.

14.  Ex
 In
 In
 Ex
 Ex
 In
 4x
 turn head slowly + gently

15. a.  OR b. 
 Rest + notice effects of inversion practice.