

# Yoga for Low Back Health

with Kristine Kaoverii Weber, MA, c-IAYT, ERYT500 [www.subtleyoga.com](http://www.subtleyoga.com)

This is a short practice for your lower back. It will take less than 20 minutes. Practice on the floor on a towel or mat. Move slowly and mindfully. Please skip any poses that create pain. If a pose is painful, try breathing and visualizing that you are doing the pose without actually moving. Before starting any exercise program, seek the permission of a licensed health care provider.

## 1. Breath Awareness/Constructive Rest

Lie on the floor on your back with your feet up flat. Place your hands on your belly and notice the sensations of your breath. Let your breath be soft and smooth, perhaps deepen it a bit. Notice the sensations in your lower back, can you soften any tension? Set an intention to be mindful during your practice – to move slowly, breathe deeply, and stop if you feel any pain. (2 min)



## 2. Knee to Chest pose

Next take your right foot up off the floor and hold it with both hands (it may be helpful to place a folded blanket under the back of your head for this). Take a breath, and as you exhale, gently draw your right knee in toward your chest. When you inhale, straighten your arms as you move your knee away. Repeat 4-6 times. Then place your right foot back on the floor and notice sensations and the difference between the right side and the left side of your lower back. Repeat with your left leg. Then take both feet off the floor and hold your knees. Straighten your arms and inhale, as you exhale draw your knees toward your chest. Repeat 4-6 times. Then place both feet back flat on the floor, pause and notice sensations for a few breaths. (3 mins)



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### 3. Sunbird

Next come up to your hands and knees. Take a deep breath as you lift your chest away from your hips and stretch the front of your body. As you exhale, lower your elbows mindfully down to the floor, draw your belly in, and lower your hips back toward your heels. You don't have to go all the way back, stop if it feels uncomfortable. Then inhale forward again. Repeat 4-6 times. (2 mins)



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### 4. Cobra

Next lie down on your stomach. Place your hands next to your ribs. Begin by exhaling and drawing your lower belly in slightly. Keep some strength in your abdomen for your inhale and lift your face and chest. Be careful not to push up forcefully or hyperextend your neck. Exhale as you slowly lower down. Repeat 4-6 times. (2 mins)



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## 5. Sunbird

Next come up to your hands and knees. Take a deep breath as you lift your chest away from your hips and lengthen the front of your body, exhale as you draw your belly in, lower your elbows, and then lower your hips back toward your heels. Repeat 4-6 times. Notice how your back feels different in Sunbird this time after doing Cobra. (2 mins)



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## 6. Two-Legged Table

Next lie down on your back. Bring your feet up flat and your arms by your sides. As you inhale, lift both arms up toward the ceiling and then to the floor behind you. As you exhale, allow your arms to float back down by your sides. Repeat 2 more times. Breathe slowly and deeply. Next as you inhale, continue the same motion with your arms, but also lift your hips up off of the floor. As you exhale, lower your arms and your hips back down. Repeat 2 more times. On the last one, you may choose to stay in the pose for 3-5 breaths. (3 mins)



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## 7. Reclining Cobblers pose

Next walk your feet together and take your arms out to the sides. Inhale as you take your knees away from each other toward the floor on either side, notice how your lower back gently lifts away from the floor. Exhale as you bring your knees toward each other about half way and gently press your lower back toward the floor. Repeat 8 times. (2 mins)



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## 8. Knee to Chest pose

Next, take both feet off the floor and hold one knee with each hand. Straighten your arms and inhale and move your knees away from your body. As you exhale draw your lower belly in and your knees toward your chest. Repeat 4-6 times. Then place both feet back flat on the floor and notice sensations. (1 min)



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## 9. Relaxation

Take some time to relax with your feet up flat or rest your calves on a chair. Place your hands on your belly and notice how your back feels after these simple practices. While you are resting, notice if you can let go of any feelings of holding, gripping or tension in your low back. (3-5 mins)

