

# Wisdom Art: Mind, Body, Spirit



**Are you feeling slow and sluggish?** Now is the time to do something refreshing that will increase your energy levels and help restore your body.

In addition to improving sleep quality, relieving stress and anxiety and improving overall physical health, yoga can also be an excellent natural energy booster. Recent studies have shown that certain yoga poses reduce fatigue and increase the hormone cortisol. Low

levels of cortisol can zap your energy, leaving you feeling rundown. Enjoying a regular yoga practice will help you maintain healthy cortisol levels.

Active poses that stimulate the blood flow through the body – particularly those that gently stretch the spine – can help combat fatigue and boost feelings of vitality, and might also help to counter some of the effects of long periods of sitting. Instead of reaching for that cup of coffee, try these five yoga moves to increase levels naturally.

So again, prana is the life-force  
energy in the body,

**Half Sun Salutation**– Sun salutation sequences are traditionally performed as a way to awaken the body. Try this right when you wake up, even before you’ve had your first cup of coffee.

**Camel Pose**– The gentle heart-opening stretch of the camel pose performed either with the hands on the lower back or reaching down to touch the heels can be highly invigorating for the entire body.

**Warrior Pose II**– This pose combines leg strengthening and mild back bending, bringing energy into the body. The pose gets its name because it awakens the warrior within — power and strength, but with ease.

**Triangle Pose**– After Warrior II, try going into a restorative Triangle Pose. Straighten the front knee and extend the arm forward and then down to the shin, then to the floor next to the leg, or a block. Reach the other arm up and turn to face the sky, breathing deeply for five breaths. Then, repeat on the other side. This pose encourages fully expanding and contracting.

**Chair Pose**– For this pose, stand with feet together or hip-width apart, and bend the lower body down as if you were sitting on a chair. Raise the arms to the ears and raise the chest up to complete the pose. This pose literally translates as “powerful pose.” It actually resembles a lightning bolt. [www.drnewtons.com](http://www.drnewtons.com)

## What are the experts saying?

The study found that practicing just 25 minutes of Hatha yoga or mindfulness meditation per day can boost the brain's executive functions, cognitive abilities linked to goal-directed behavior and the ability to control emotional responses, habitual thinking patterns and actions.

"Hatha yoga and mindfulness meditation both focus the brain's conscious processing power on a limited number of targets like breathing and posing, and also reduce processing of nonessential information," said Peter Hall, associate professor in the School of Public Health & Health Systems. "These two functions might have some positive carryover effect in the near-term following the session, such that people are able to focus more easily on what they choose to attend to in everyday life."

Thirty-one study participants completed 25 minutes of Hatha yoga, 25 minutes of mindfulness meditation, and 25 minutes of quiet reading (a control task) in randomized order. Following both the yoga and meditation activities, participants performed significantly better on executive function tasks compared to the reading task.

"There are a number of theories about why physical exercises like yoga improve energy levels and cognitive test performance," said Luu. "These include the release of endorphins, increased blood flow to the brain, and reduced focus on ruminative thoughts. Though ultimately, it is still an open question." [www.sciencedaily.com](http://www.sciencedaily.com)

