

# A GENTLE YOGA FLOW FOR WINTER MUSCLES

BY KAITLYN VITTOZZI

*“Winter is a season of recovery and preparation.” – Paul Theroux*

I appreciate winter; time for introspection, laziness rest, and belly warming foods. While I try to embrace the season, I find that Winter takes a toll on my body. I bundle up for snowshoeing or long Saturday dog walks and try to march proudly through the snow, chest open. What I do a lot more of this time of year is running to and from the car with hunched shoulders, neck buried into my chest trying to keep the cold out; this often leaves my neck, shoulders and back achy. This season’s extra indoor time may also result in more time on the phone and leave you with “text neck” or a tender low back from more couch time. Then there are the blizzards.

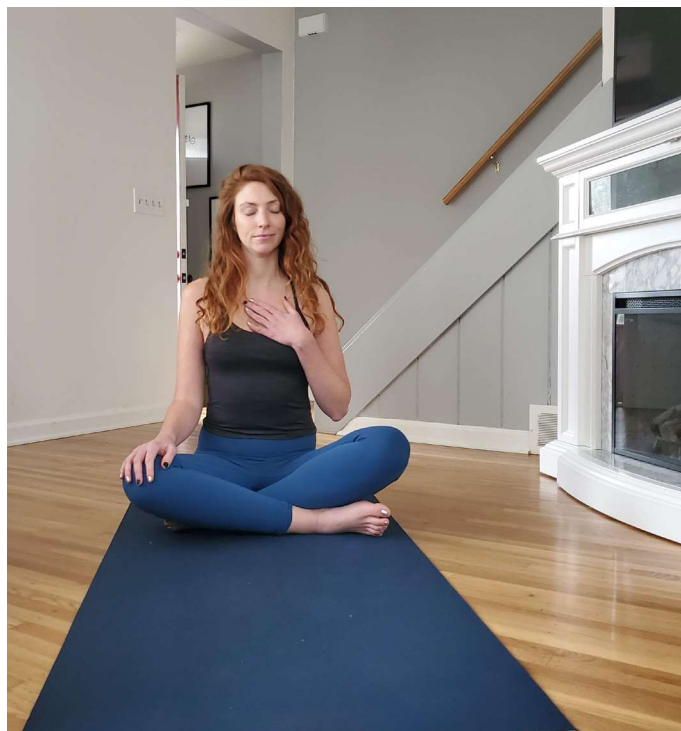
You are 30 days into your New Year’s Resolution – hitting your workouts hard every day after work. Then there is that random Wednesday storm and you can’t make it the studio so instead you spend the night cursing traffic and yourself for not moving to Florida when you had the chance. Before you open that bottle of wine and take to scrolling social media, try this yoga flow, no props or mat required. You can do it on your living room floor – as pictured here – or the first six postures you could even do in your bed first thing in the morning.

If you want to see these strung together, I’ve recorded them on my Instagram account [tozzi\\_yoga](#)

Remember to breathe easily as you do these postures. This isn’t a yoga prescription, just some poses I’ve learned from my

many amazing teachers over the years that work for my body this time of year. This is generally gentle on joints but adapt these moves as needed. This can be done in about 15 minutes if you do each pose for a minute per side, but if you have more time - repeat the sequence for a longer movement practice.

1. Hold hands with your feet: Odds are, your feet have been in boots and might



be tight and sore. Thread your fingers through your toes on one foot. If you like, you can gently roll your ankle in circles or spread your toes for a little extra resistance. If grabbing your foot isn’t accessible to you, you can purchase inexpensive toe separators online. (Do both sides.)

2. Mantra: Pause and take a few easeful breaths. Repeat to yourself: Winter is a

season of recovery and preparation. (If you have another resolution, intention or mantra you are working with – use that instead.) You are working with your body, not against it.

3. Reclining twist: Make a goal post with your arms, pressing backs of the forearms on the surface beneath you. Bend your knees and place your feet flat on the ground. Wiggle just your hips to the right, lift your shins up off the yoga mat and let them roll to the left, coming all the way to the ground, pillow or blanket. Your right shoulder may lift off the ground, that’s ok. Let your neck and head land wherever is comfortable. Feel your breath and notice if your chest muscles start to stretch and your back softens closer to the ground. (Bring hips back to center and repeat on the left side.)

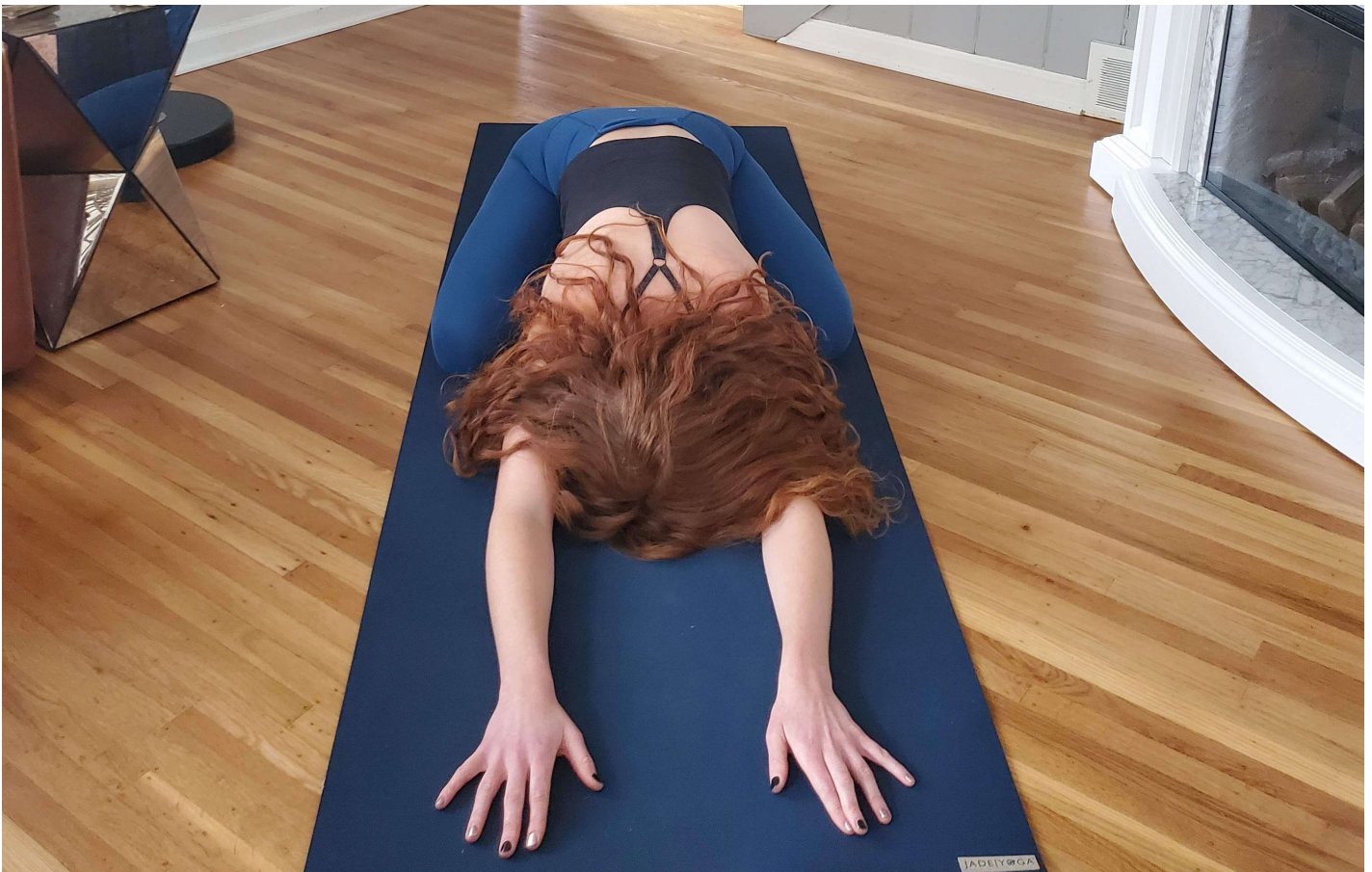
4. Reclining hand-to-big-toe pose: Lie flat on your back and extend your left leg straight up toward the ceiling, holding behind your left thigh if possible. Press your left thigh forward into your hands. Right knee can be bent or extended.

5. Let the left leg roll over your body to the floor or a pillow on your right side. If you feel a lot of sensation in your low back, use your hand to check in with your hips. Can you get the left hip on top of the right? Arms can open to the sides or over head. (Repeat #3 and #4 in on the right side.)

6. Seated cat and cow variation: Come to a comfortable seated position, sit up tall. If sitting flat on the floor isn’t comfortable, you can use a chair or sit on a pillow or



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blanket. Open your right arm out to the side and create that goal post shape again by bending your elbow. Breath in and open across the chest, squeeze your right shoulder blade in toward your spine. On your next breath round the spine and let the right elbow come toward your left knee (it doesn't have to touch!). Use your abdominal muscles and maintain your breath as you repeat the two motions. (Repeat on the left side.)

7. Low lunge: Come to your knees and then step your right foot forward by your right thumb, stacking the right knee over the right ankle. Connect the whole right foot including the heel to the ground and press down. Lift your torso up. As you

lunge forward into the right leg, keep hugging your legs in toward one another, so you feel some work between your two thighs. I think of this pose every time I catch myself from falling on ice! Squeeze the legs and the abs in to keep you up right. Place your right hand on your right thigh, stay here OR stretch your left arm over your head and lean to the right. (Repeat with the left leg forward.)

8. Cobra variation: Lie on your belly with your thighs close together. Make your goal post arms again. Brace the abdominals, squeeze the shoulder blades together and lift the chest, arms and head away from the ground any amount. Lower down easily.

9. Child's Pose: Press your hands by your waste. Bring your big toes together and let the knees widen, relaxing your chest toward the ground. Arms can extend out long or rest by your heels. Do you feel recovered from what came before this, or prepared for what comes next? If not that's ok, be with that feeling.

Do you have exercises that get you through cold months? Shoot me a note on Instagram and let me know!

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