

# YOGA THERAPY EXERCISES FOR BUSY MOMS

BY KAITLYN VITTOZZI

Is there such a thing as a not-busy mom? I'm yet to meet one, so if you're always relaxed with a wide open schedule and nothing to worry about, please call me. I'd love to hear your secrets!

Whether you stay at home, work, breastfeed, pack lunches, live 50 miles from your adult children – most moms are always on call. I'm in my thirties and I still have my own mother on call – God bless her. The world asks mothers to give a lot. Time boundaries can get blurry, and if you find yourself thinking about five things at once, odds are you are tired.

Yoga therapy is all about practicing presence to bring more energy and ease to your life. I designed the list of the following yoga therapy exercises below so they can be done on their own or strung together into a longer practice when you have more time. Try to just focus on the task at hand. Even if you take just five minutes to try one of below, that time to yourself can provide mental and emotional clarity. Speaking of energy, this sequence roughly touches on the body's seven chakras (energy centers).

Of course, get cleared from your doctor before you add anything into your health and wellness routine. The below is designed to be a little bit uncomfortable but it should not be painful. If you're in pain, stop! If you get frustrated or feel like you can't stick to this, remember we're all practicing. The more you make time for self-care a part of your routine the more routinely it happens. Understandably, you might

need to schedule these around your kids' schedule, but you're worth scheduling!

**1. CALF RAISES:** Get some blood moving, to help you get grounded - even if you don't have time to sit down. Slowly lift onto the balls of your feet on your inhalation, and on an exhalation let your heels lower down to the floor. Squeeze the muscles around your ankles, calves and hips. At first it might be hard to hold yourself up for more than a second but start to lengthen these out.

**2. FORWARD FOLD:** Stand with your feet flat on the ground. Put a micro-bend in your knees and reach down to the floor. If your hands don't touch the floor you can let your hands rest on a chair, books, or whatever kids toys might be on the floor. Engage your abdominals, let your neck relax. Be sure to breathe while you are upside down.

**3. SEATED TWIST:** Mindfully make your way down to the floor – notice if the tendency is just to flop down. Take a moment and observe how your body finds the ground. If sitting on the floor makes your chest cave in, sit up on a pillow or a few blankets so you can sit up with a long, tall spine. Bend your right knee and let the sole of your right foot rest flat on the floor. Bring the right foot to the outside of the left thigh, still flat on the floor. If it feels ok, bend your left knee so your left foot rests by your right hip – but that's optional. Inhale sit up tall and hug your abdominals, and on the exhale twist to the right, hugging your right leg in as close to your abdomen as you can. Option to bring the left elbow outside

of the right leg. Breathe and notice what it's like to be here. Hold for 10 breaths (or longer) and then pause for a few breaths before switching sides.

**4. CHEST STRETCH:** If you're breastfeeding, holding little ones, or spending a lot of time on phones or laptops – this one is for you. Lie flat on your back with your arms in a goal post shape, feet flat on the floor. If this is already an intense stretch, you're welcome to stay here. If you want to explore a little bit more, wiggle your hips to the right side and lift your feet up – bringing them and your knees all the way to the left until they rest on the ground. If your right arms lifts, let it lift or support it with a pillow or blanket underneath. Feel what feels open or closed here. Hold for 20 breaths (or longer) and then pause for a few breaths before switching sides.

**5. LION'S BREATH:** Feel like your words are bound up or escaping you? Explore the throat chakra. Sit, stand, or kneel comfortably. Inhale fully through the nose and on the exhale sigh it out the mouth and stick your tongue out at the same time. Try at least 10 rounds. Notice the impact after. You might realize you've been deprived of your own silliness! If this feels ridiculous, do it more.

**6. MEDITATION:** Sit or lie down without external distraction. If you can ask someone to watch the kids for five, great. Focus on your inhalation and exhalation. Your mind might wander, acknowledge what you're thinking about and come back to your breath

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in and your breath out. Start with one minute, add on 30 seconds a day.

**7. SAVASANA:** Motherhood is so often filled with sleep deprivation – and even with the best exercise routines, doctors, life just seems harder when you're exhausted. Lie flat on the floor if you can, but lounging in bed, a chair or some yoga props is great too. Simply

let yourself rest for a few minutes. Nothing to do, nowhere to be. If you're on a schedule and you need to set an alarm, no problem. This is all about taking a few minutes to do nothing. As you come out of rest, notice what you notice about yourself and your relationship to rest.

Kaitlyn will be leading complimentary

therapeutic yoga classes at ROC & Soul in Webster at 7:15 PM (after the kids are in bed!). All levels are welcome for yoga, meditation and rest. Email Kaitlyn to register [Kaitlyn@tozziyoga.com](mailto:Kaitlyn@tozziyoga.com) or call (585) 200-7209 with questions.