



Motion control

Improve your range of motion and reduce your risk of running, cycling and swimming-related injury with this yoga routine

THE COACH



Christine Felstead is a runner and yoga teacher who specialises in improving athletic performance through increased mobility, strength and balance. For more info visit yogaforrunners.com.

THE GOAL

'Whether you run, cycle or swim it's common to experience tightness,' says Felstead. 'Muscles tighten from repetitive use and if not addressed this can lead to longer-term aches and pains, cause muscle imbalances, restrict mobility and ultimately lead to serious injury. The yoga poses I've outlined here are beneficial for all athletes, regardless of your sport, because they target the key muscle groups needed for fluid movements while improving overall strength and balance.'

THE WORKOUT

'I suggest doing the poses four to five times a week and doing five reps of each pose, moving straight from one pose to the next,' says Felstead. 'The best time to do them is straight after your run, cycle or swim because you'll already be warmed up. Always breathe rhythmically through your nose while doing yoga because this will help to focus your mind and release tension in the body. You may find the poses hard at first but stick at it and you'll soon feel the benefits. Instead of a "no pain, no gain" philosophy, listen to your body and perform each move slowly, once on each side and hold for ten breaths. If you feel any discomfort, stop.'



1/Downward dog to child pose

- Start on your hands and knees.
- Lift your hips and straighten your legs to create a V-shape with your body.
- Hold, then bring your knees to the floor, lean forwards, lower your head and stretch your arms out behind you.

»Benefits

- Stretches** Hamstrings, calves, achilles, spine
- Strengthens** Adductors, quads, triceps, biceps
- Improves** Range of motion of the shoulder joint



2/High lunge

- From the child pose, go into downward dog again and bring your right foot forwards.
- Bend your front leg, keeping your knee over your ankle while straightening your back leg. Raise your arms overhead. Hold, then return to downward dog.

»Benefits

- Stretches** Hip flexors
- Strengthens** Hip flexors, hamstrings, calves
- Improves** Range of motion of the spine



3/Cow pose

- Sit with your legs crossed as pictured above. Extend your right arm, bend it at the elbow and slide your hand down your back.
- Bend your left arm and slide it up your back until you can interlock the fingers of both hands. Hold for five to ten breaths.

»Benefits

- Stretches** Triceps
- Strengthens** Rotator cuffs
- Improves** Range of motion of the shoulder and hip

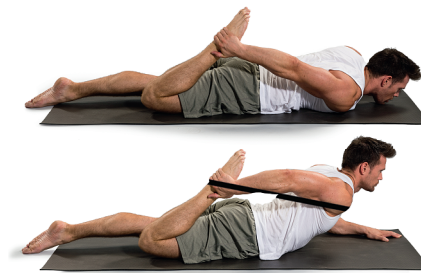


4/Supine hamstring stretch

- On your back, raise your right leg and place a resistance band around your foot. Pull your leg towards your face, keeping it straight. Then extend your leg to the right.
- Take the belt in your left hand and repeat the move with your left leg. Hold that position.

»Benefits

- Stretches** Hamstrings, adductors, iliotibial band
- Strengthens** Quads, adductors
- Improves** Range of motion of the legs



5/Half frog

- Lie on your front, bend your right leg, reach back with your right hand and hold your foot. Press the top of your foot towards your buttock, keeping your hips grounded.
- Press your left forearm into the floor, lift your chest and hold.

»Benefits

- Stretches** Quads
- Strengthens** Obliques, lats
- Improves** Range of motion of the legs



6/Standing pigeon

- Stand with your feet together and place your outer right ankle on your left lower just above the knee, while curling your foot.
- Bend your left leg and get as close to the floor as possible, then relax the muscles around your right hip joint. Hold the position.

»Benefits

- Stretches** Glutes
- Strengthens** Calves, hamstrings, ankles
- Improves** Balance