



MIND+BODY



THE BODY SHOP

UNKNOT YOURSELF

A simple yoga routine loosens tight spots, strengthens weak spots, and makes you a better, less injury-prone runner.

FOR REBECCA PACHECO, yoga and running have always been intertwined—much like her legs in the photograph below. “I started running when I was 14 and doing yoga when I was 16, so I really don’t know one without the other,” says the yoga instructor and two-time marathoner. Recognizing the benefits the ancient practice can have on both the runner’s body (improved flexibility, range of motion, muscular strength) and mind (more focus, less stress), Pacheco developed Om Athlete, a class she teaches in Boston to help runners improve performance and prevent injury. “Yoga is the perfect recovery activity for runners,” Pacheco says. “It relieves soreness and

tension in your hardworking muscles and restores range of motion so you can run better the next time you hit the road.” The poses on page 58 are a preview of Pacheco’s full routine on her new DVD, *Runner’s World Yoga for Runners*. Pacheco recommends doing these moves following a run and/or on a rest day. She cautions that they might feel a little uncomfortable at first, especially if you are brand-new to yoga and have been running with tight muscles for a long time. Ease into each position, and never push to the point of pain. As you continue to do this routine, you’ll notice improvement—on and off the mat. —KATIE NEITZ

Pacheco recommends Reclining Cow Face pose to stretch tight glutes and hamstrings.



HAIR & MAKEUP BY COLLEEN KUBRICK



DOWNWARD DOG

Stretches hamstrings, calves, and foot arches; strengthens shoulders
TO DO Begin on your hands and knees. Align your wrists under your shoulders and your knees under your hips. Spread your fingers and press into your palms. Tuck your toes and lift your knees off the floor. Gently try to straighten your legs and raise your hips into an inverted V. Breathe deeply for 10 breaths. As your muscles loosen, try to straighten your legs more and sink your heels toward your mat.



LOW LUNGE

Stretches hip flexors; strengthens hamstrings and quads
TO DO From Downward Dog, step your right foot forward between your hands. Lower your left knee and, keeping the right knee in place, slide the left one back. Turn the top of your left foot to the floor and lift your torso upright. Then sweep your arms out to the sides and up overhead. Drop your tailbone toward the floor and look up. Hold for 10 breaths, release, and repeat on the other side.



TOES POSE

Helps prevent plantar fasciitis by stretching the shins and arches of the feet
TO DO Kneel on your mat with your toes curled under. Sit back on your heels (you can place a yoga block or pillow between your heels and glutes). Breathe deeply for 10 counts. Then, point your toes, place your hands on the mat behind you, and lean back as you attempt to lift your knees off the mat. If your knees don't come far up, don't worry. You'll still feel a nice stretch in your shins and arches.



RECLINING HAND TO BIG TOE

Stretches hamstrings
TO DO Lie on your back with both legs extended. Bend your right knee, loop a yoga strap (or dog leash or towel) around the arch of the right foot, and hold both ends of the strap with your right hand. Try to straighten your right knee. As your hamstring loosens, try to gently pull it farther back. But don't strain—you should feel a good stretch down the back of the thigh. Hold for 10 breaths and repeat on the other leg.



RECLINING PIGEON

Releases tension and tightness in the hips
TO DO Lie on your back with your knees bent and your thighs parallel and hip-distance apart. Cross your left ankle over your right thigh. Reach your left arm through the space between your thighs and reach your right arm around the outside of your right thigh. Clasp your hands below your right knee and flex your left foot. If your head comes off your mat, place a pillow or block behind your head. Hold for 10 breaths and repeat on the other leg.



RECLINING COW FACE

Improves range of motion in the hips; loosens tight glutes and hamstrings
TO DO Lie on your back and cross your knees, sending your feet out to your sides. Hold onto your right foot with your left hand and your left foot with your right hand. Or if it's more comfortable, hold your shins. Pull your heels in toward your body, then out to the sides and slightly up. Hold for 10 breaths, then reverse leg position and repeat.



RECLINING SPINAL TWIST

Relaxes the lower back and stretches the glutes
TO DO From Reclining Cow Face, lower your legs and twist to your left while keeping your legs intertwined. Extend both arms out to your sides. Turn your head to the right and relax for 10 breaths. Switch sides.



LEGS UP THE WALL

Relieves tension in legs, feet, and back; stretches hamstrings and glutes
TO DO Sidle up beside an open wall space, with your hips as close to the base of the wall as is comfortable. Swing your legs up the wall and lie back. Rest here anywhere from 10 breaths to 10 minutes. Some people even nod off—sleep is the most essential recovery pose. **AW**



This has been adapted from the *Runner's World Yoga for Runners* DVD, which includes a 50-minute active-recovery routine plus three 30-minute bonus routines specifically designed for runners. For more information, visit runnersworldyogadvd.com.

