

Be strong+fit

discover what you can achieve

BODY SHOP

TURN UP YOUR YOGA

The latest science and evolutions in this go-to mat workout may change the way you approach your practice. Here, the techniques and tools.

By Lauren Mazzo

MANY THINK YOGA requires a trade-off: Go with the classic variety for a mental cleanse, or do a souped-up version with weights and boot camp moves folded in to bring real body results. But new research shows that the regular poses and flow routine can be just as intense. A review in *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise* found that certain common poses—like triangle, standing bow, and warrior III—meet the requirements for moderate-intensity exercise, thanks to the energy it takes your body to hold such significant contractions. Plus, sun salutations—which burned up to eight calories per minute (for a 140-pound woman), the equivalent of a moderate-intensity Spinning class—were classified as aerobically intense when done by regular yogis. In other words, you don't have to dilute the om factor to get at the body changing.

“Incorporate poses that have higher energy expenditure, or hold them for longer,” suggests lead study author D. Enette Larson-Meyer, Ph.D. You can also modify poses to demand more from your muscles (try the variations by CrossFlow X creator Heidi Kristoffer on the next page), or increase the speed or advance the type of transitions between asanas: Jumping to and from plank during sun salutations and doing a full push-up will be a higher intensity than stepping back and forth and dropping your knees for chaturanga, Larson-Meyer says. You'll know you've crossed over into that moderate-to-intense range, she says, when you start to breathe harder. *(Continued on page 72)*



Fierce Triangle

Stand with feet wide and arms at sides. Rotate right foot 90 degrees to right and left foot 45 degrees to right. Extend arms overhead, lean torso to right, and press hips toward left. Bend right elbow to drop right hand between shoulder blades, and bend left elbow to reach left hand up your midback to clasp right hand [shown]. Reach elbows back to open chest and hold for 30 seconds. Switch sides; repeat.

Dancer Roll-Up

Stand with feet hip-width apart and arms at sides. Shift weight onto left leg as you bend right leg back and up to grab outer edge of foot with right hand (lightly press the foot away from you). **A** Keep chest lifted and reach left arm forward and up to start. **B** Slowly bend forward, reaching left hand to the floor, slightly arching your spine. Slowly reverse to start position for 1 rep. Do 10 reps. Switch sides; repeat.



Peaceful Half-Moon

Lunge with left leg forward, right leg straight, and toes turned out. **A** Reach left arm back and up, gaze up, slide right arm down your leg to start. Shift weight onto left leg and straighten it, reaching left arm to touch floor. Float right leg up and reach arm back and up. **B** Gaze at your hand. Reverse to start position for 1 rep. Do 10 reps. Switch sides; repeat. **Scale it down:** Bend your standing leg or reach to a yoga block.



QUICK TIP

Tweak Your Gaze

"Where you position your neck, head, and eyes has major impact on your alignment," says Claire Grieve, a yoga pro in Los Angeles. During chaturanga, rather than look back at your feet—which throws off your alignment—gaze slightly forward with your neck in a straight line with your spine.



Hover your phone's camera over this smart code to unlock the best yoga-based workouts.

The Yoga Evolution

These approaches seek to optimize your mat time in innovative ways.

Prescription Yoga

Instructors certified by Yoga Medicine (find one at yogamedicine.com) are trained to use yoga therapeutically to address issues like chronic pain. "You can't refer patients to just go do yoga," founder Tiffany Cruikshank says. "That's not specific enough—there are too many options." Her pros tailor Eastern and Western methods to each ailment.

Comfy Yoga

Tara Stiles, the founder of Strala Yoga, is on a mission with her "ease" practice to replace the notion of competitiveness with comfort. "Even within a challenging movement or pose, you can still find as much relaxation as possible," she says. Go in to yoga with the mind-set of reaching a feel-good set point to reap more mental clarity from each pose, she says.

"Biohacking" Yoga

Humming Puppy studio in New York City gets its name from the hum emitted during class—audio frequencies (recorded from a singing bowl tuned down to 40 hertz) that have a vibrational, grounding effect on the body, cofounder Jackie Alexander says. (Search "gamma meditation" on YouTube to get a taste of the audio effect.)

DIAL IN YOUR

Breathing Technique

There's more to yoga breathing than using your inhale-exhale as a count for how long to hold a pose. For example, using a breath like ujjayi—a common deep-throat breathing—“helps slow and regulate your breath and focus your mind, and it creates a soothing sound for meditation,”

Kristoffer says. To do it, inhale through your nose and slightly constrict the back of your throat. When you exhale, keep your mouth closed, but imagine you're making a *ha* sound. Try to breathe this way throughout your practice.

UPGRADE YOUR

Yoga Gear

These pieces will help elevate your practice—and studio dash.



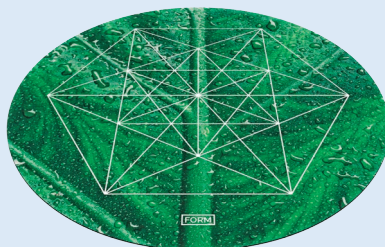
ERGONOMIC BLOCK

Manduka's Unblok (\$24, manduka.com) has a curved side, so wrists rest more comfortably in standing poses and your back rests easier in supine poses. It's also made mostly of recycled material.



ON-THE-GO GRIP

These Allegro Grip socks (\$16, tucketts.com) will lock in your downward dog on sweaty mats or any floor space while letting your feet breathe.



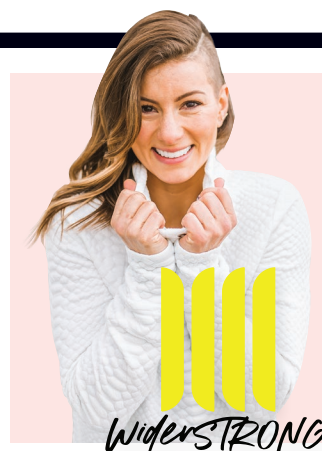
ROOMIER MAT THAT ALIGNS

Yoga brand Form's recycled Pro Round Yoga Mat (\$109, theform.co.uk) is roomy, so you don't have to stop your flow to shift its positioning during class. Also, the grid lines act as form guides to help improve alignment in your asanas.



A BODY-FRIENDLY SLING

This backpack-style leather Hustler Sling (\$75, yogahustle.com) holds your mat in place vertically behind you like a nudge to stand tall.



WiderSTRONG

How can I quit tipping over in warrior III?

—@suanwalk via Instagram

In split-leg-stance poses—and especially in warrior III, where you're poised on one leg with your outstretched body parallel to the floor—you'd be surprised how the strength required to create balance comes more from your core and inner thighs versus the legs and butt.

Working the pose itself will help you build strength exactly where you need it. Start with the feet: Actively grip the mat with your toes, creating a wrinkling sensation beneath both arches. Then, with a gentle exhale, draw in your deep abs like a corset, and contract your inner thighs, pulling them toward your midline. Your effort should not be a one-off squeeze but a crescendo of muscle recruitment building the longer you're in the pose. From here, square your hips and shoulders with the floor, then transfer your weight onto your front leg. As you lift your rear leg up and back and reach your clasped hands forward, energetically extend the limbs in opposition: This should help prevent the bobble in your balance.

JEN WIDERSTROM, founder of the WiderStrong method and training tribe, is your monthly get-fit motivator, *Shape*'s consulting fitness director, a member of the *Shape* Brain Trust, a FitPro expert, and the author of *Diet Right for Your Personality Type*.