

Carol Krucoff
Duke Integrative Medicine



Winter Wake-Up with Yoga

To start your day off right, indulge in a five-minute ritual of simple yoga moves, beginning while you're still in bed and gradually building in intensity. Do these moves in the order given, repeating each exercise three to five times, and always breathing slowly and deeply.

LYING IN BED

BELLY BREATHING. Lie on your back, eyes closed, palms resting on your abdomen just below your navel. Focusing on your breath, relax your belly and inhale deeply for a count of four, feeling your hands rise. Exhale fully, drawing your belly in toward your spine. Open eyes and repeat.

KNEE HUG. Lie on your back, knees bent and feet flat on the mattress. Raise your left leg and clasp your hands behind the thigh. Draw the leg toward your chest and hold for five slow breaths, feeling a stretch in your low back and hip joint. Repeat with the right leg.

WHOLE-BODY STRETCH. Lie flat on your back, legs straight, arms extended overhead and reaching toward the headboard. (Move toward the foot of the bed to allow arms to extend more fully.) Stretch your whole body, taking several deep breaths. Alternately flex and point your feet...flex and circle your wrists.

SITTING UP

NECK STRETCH. Sit tall on the edge of the bed, feet flat on the floor (or a footstool, if necessary). Inhaling, drape your right arm over the top of your head so that your right hand rests gently on the left side of your head, near your left ear. Exhaling, tilt your head to bring your right ear toward your right shoulder...then drop your left shoulder down, away from your left ear...and let



the weight of your right hand gently enhance the stretch along the left side of your neck. Repeat on the other side, using your left hand.

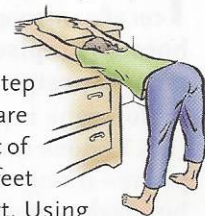
SEATED TWIST. With feet flat on the floor, place your right hand on the outside of your left knee... place your left hand on the bed a few inches behind you. Inhale and lengthen your spine...then exhale as you turn your upper body gently to the left, bringing your chin toward your left shoulder. To encourage the twist, press your right hand against your left knee, keeping your legs still. Hold for several breaths. Repeat on the other side.



STANDING

MOUNTAIN POSE. Rise to standing, feet shoulder-width apart, weight evenly distributed. Stand erect, chin parallel to the ground, shoulders down. Inhale as you raise your arms overhead...exhale as you return your arms to your sides.

DRESSER STRETCH. Place your palms on top of a dresser, so hands are slightly above waist height. Step back until your arms are fully extended in front of you, and stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Using your hands for balance, with legs straight and head in line with your spine, slowly hinge forward at the hips until your torso is parallel to the floor. Hold for several breaths, feeling the stretch through your back and legs. Return to standing.



Bottom Line/Women's Health interviewed Carol Krucoff, a registered yoga teacher with the Yoga Alliance and therapist with Duke Integrative Medicine, a service of Duke University Health Systems, Durham, North Carolina. She is the coauthor, with Mitchell Krucoff, MD, of *Healing Moves* (Writers' Collective).