



Twisting it out

The twisting poses we practice in yoga have a number of great benefits. Not only do they flex and tone our abdominal muscles, twists massage the abdominal organs and aid digestion. Twists also help us to focus mentally. When we are focused, we let our minds quiet and we can let stress go. Stress is also closely tied to your digestive system. This is why we often get stomach aches when we are stressed out or nervous.

Begin with a few flowing Cat/Cow postures on all fours to get some movement in the spine and to fire up your digestive system. Hold each twist for five to ten slow, smooth breaths. Come out of each twist by reversing the steps, then repeat on the other side. Try to spend an equal amount of time on each side to create balance in your body. Take a Childs pose to finish to gently stretch out the back, realign the spine, and allow your breathing to return to normal. Get twisting and enjoy!



Chair twist. Start standing nice and tall, feet hip distance apart. From this standing position, inhale and raise your arms. Exhale and bend your knees as if you are sitting down on a chair. Press your hands together in front of your chest. Finally turn to one side, lean forward, and hook your front elbow over the outside of your knee. Press your elbow against your knee to twist. As you twist, sit down in order to keep your weight in your heels. Take some smooth steady breaths here.



Low Lunge, with two twists. These twisted lunges challenge your balance while working your thighs and arms as well as your belly.

- 1) Begin in a low lunge with the left leg stretched out behind, right leg bent with the knee stacked on top of the ankle. Inhale and reach the arms up overhead. Take a few deep breaths.
- 2) Exhale and bring the arms straight out at shoulder height, then twist round to the bent knee. If you feel balanced, turn your head to face in the same direction as your twist.
- 3) Place the left hand on the ground inside your front foot, below your shoulder. Place the other hand on your bent knee to get your balance, then lift your hand up to the sky, and look up to increase the twist if this feels good for your neck. Alternatively take your gaze down, or out to the side. Repeat on the other side.