

Horse Yoga

Yoga to Strengthen your Horseback Riding Skills

Breathing

Sit cross legged on the floor with your hands on your knees. Make sure you are sitting up tall with good posture. Inhale deeply through your nose, filling your stomach with air first, and then your lungs. Hold for 3 seconds. Exhale through your mouth releasing the air from your lungs first and then your stomach. Repeat for 10 deep breaths.

Stretches

Couch Stretch

This stretch is one of the most beneficial stretches you can do. If you were to do just one stretch, I would suggest this one. Start with your back foot on the ground and place a cushion under your knee if needed. Then as your range of motion improves, place your back foot up on a couch, chair or table. Be sure to tuck in your pelvis and brace your core so you are not arching through your back. Hold this for a minimum of 2 minutes each side.



Swan Pose

This is also great for getting into your ITB as well as your hips. More gentler than the one above, so begin here if need be. Great to help loosen up your glutes and bring more mobility through your hips and lower back too.

Hold for 2 minutes at least each side.



ITB

Most runners will know where their ITB is because this is often a problem area and can affect your knee alignment and often leads to knee problems when it gets too tight. Hold this stretch for 2 minutes each side and notice how it frees up your knee as well as your hips.



Internal Hip Stretch

These muscles get incredibly tight from sitting down for long periods. [Keeping your hips healthy and mobile is super important for dressage riders.](#) They play a crucial role when you are dressage riding and keeping everything aligned, so you want to work on this stretch also. This stretch will also help improve your Hindu Squat.

You may notice to one side tighter than the other. Start by keeping your foot flat on the floor and push your knee out and your hips down. As you improve let your foot move onto its side and you can come down onto your elbows and hold.



Hindu Squat

This stretch is amazing for mobility through your hip joints. The Hindu Squat is also great for your digestion and detoxification pathways. Often runners don't put their limbs through a full range of motion which can cause their achilles tendon, hamstrings and lower back to tighten up. It's important to ensure your body keeps it's full range of motion to help improve your running. If you can't get down low, hold onto a table edge. Then do it daily for at least 2-5 minutes and notice how much you improve.



Strength and Balance

Triangle Pose And Its Benefits

Overall – Fantastic for lengthening your ITBs and lower back. Plus a great strengthening exercise for your core as well as your legs.

- ✔ Also stretches and strengthens the thighs, knees, and ankles
- ✔ Stretches the hips, groins, hamstrings, and calves; shoulders, chest, and spine
- ✔ Stimulates the abdominal organs and improves digestion



Warrior II And Its Benefits

Overall – Great for opening up your hips, strengthening your legs and learning to relax your shoulders and breathe.

- ✔ Also strengthens and stretches the legs and ankles
- ✔ Stretches the groins, chest and lungs, shoulders
- ✔ Relieves backaches, especially through the lower back



Dolphin Pose And Its Benefits

Overall – Great for strengthen your shoulder girdle and all the muscles of your upper back.

- ✔ Also helps calm the mind and bring in focus.
- ✔ Stretches the shoulders, hamstrings, calves, and arches of your feet
- ✔ Strengthens the arms, shoulders, upper back and legs



Overall – Fantastic for strengthening your glutes as well as your stabilizer muscles that support your spine and hips.

- ✔ Strengthens the ankles and legs
- ✔ Strengthens the shoulders and muscles of the back
- ✔ Tones the abdomen and improves core strength and stability.
- ✔ Improves balance and posture



Pigeon And Its Benefits

Overall – Great for loosening up your glutes, ITB and can help with tight lower backs.

- ✓ Stretch deep glutes
- ✓ Stretch groins and psoas
- ✓ Relieve impinged piriformis and alleviate sciatic pain



Balance and Core

Single leg bridges

This is much harder than you would think. Start with both legs down and then work up to lifting one leg off the ground. It's a really powerful exercise to realise which side is weaker, even if you can just do one or two reps. Build up to 10 each side.



Oblique lifts

Often an exercise that will really highlight which side is stronger. Aim to keep your hips open by having your knees in line with your body ie no bend in the hips. Lift the hips off the ground and lower back down again. To make this harder, don't have the bottom knee on the ground and lift the entire side of your body off the ground. Lower and lift at the rate of your breath. Start with just a few reps each side and build up to 10-15 each side.



Lunges

Lunges are a great way to see how stable we are through our legs. Start by stepping one leg back and lower your back knee towards the ground. If you have knee issues, don't go to low. The aim being that you are trying to take your knee to the ground. Keep your body upright and don't tip forward. Start with just a few reps each leg and build up to 10-15 each side.



Toe Taps

This is a great test of your balance and coordination. Something so important for riders. Keep your back leg on the ground if you find your balance isn't there. Take it slowly and start with just a few reps each leg and build up to 10-15 each side.



Cool Down

Lay flat on your back and relax your muscles starting in your face and moving down into your neck, shoulders, back, hips, legs, and ankles. Take 10 deep breaths while doing this and try to make your body feel heavy. Let all of the tension from your body release.

Remember to stay strong but not tense!

All exercises came from www.dressageridertraining.com