

Yoga support for low mood

A gentle 8-pose reset for days when motivation, energy or emotional capacity feels reduced.

Low mood can affect the whole body. You may feel heavy, tired, disconnected, slowed down, restless or unable to begin things that would normally feel manageable. Gentle movement will not remove the causes of low mood, but for some people it can provide a small point of connection with the body and a manageable way to introduce movement without demanding a full workout.

How to use this guide

There is no requirement to complete all eight poses. You might choose one standing pose, one floor pose and a rest. Keep the practice small enough that starting does not feel overwhelming. Use a wall, chair, cushions or blankets whenever they make the movement easier.

The 5-10 minute gentle reset

1	Mountain pose	30-60 sec
2	Half sun flow	3-5 slow rounds
3	Warrior II	20-30 sec each side
4	Supported squat	20-40 sec
5	Cobra	3-5 gentle lifts
6	Bridge	3-5 gentle holds
7	Knees to chest	30-60 sec
8	Resting pose	1-3 min

Safety

Move gently and stop if you feel pain, dizziness, unusual breathlessness or feel unwell. If you are pregnant, returning after illness or injury, or have a health condition that affects exercise, ask an appropriately qualified health professional about suitable movement.

The eight poses

The purpose is gentle activation and connection, not perfect form.

1. Mountain pose

Stand with feet comfortably apart, knees soft and shoulders relaxed. Notice the contact between your feet and the floor. Hold a chair or wall if you want extra stability.

2. Half sun flow

From standing, gently reach the arms upward if comfortable, then lower them as you soften the knees and hinge slightly forward. Return slowly. Keep the range small and easy.

3. Warrior II

Step the feet apart, turn one foot outward and bend the front knee a comfortable amount. Extend the arms or keep hands on hips. Repeat on the other side.

4. Supported squat

Hold a stable chair or counter and lower only a little, as though beginning to sit. Press gently through the feet to return to standing.

5. Cobra

Lie on the front with hands near the ribs. Keeping the movement small, gently lift the upper chest using the back muscles and light hand support. Skip if lying on the front is uncomfortable.

6. Bridge

Lie on the back with knees bent. Lift the hips a comfortable amount, pause briefly and lower slowly. A small lift is enough.

7. Knees to chest

Lie on the back and bring one or both knees toward the body. Hold behind the thighs if preferred. Breathe naturally and let the back soften.

8. Resting pose

Lie down or recline with cushions supporting the knees and head. Let the body be supported without trying to make yourself feel different.

When low mood makes everything feel harder

Small actions can count, especially when capacity is low.

Lower the starting point

When motivation is reduced, even helpful activities can feel too large. Instead of aiming for ten minutes, begin with thirty seconds. Put the mat out, stand in Mountain Pose, or sit and notice one breath. If that is enough for today, it still counts.

Movement is not a test

You do not have to feel happier after yoga for the practice to have been worthwhile. The immediate outcome might simply be that you changed position, stretched a stiff area or spent a few minutes away from demands. Avoid using the practice as another measure of whether you are coping 'well enough'.

Notice energy rather than force it

Some low-mood days come with agitation; others with exhaustion. A more active pose may suit one day and a supported resting pose another. Matching the practice to your current capacity can make it more sustainable.

Connection and routine

If isolation is part of your low mood, movement alongside another person, an online class or a predictable routine may help with connection and structure. Choose support that feels safe rather than pressuring.

A simple check-in

Before: What is my energy from 0-10? What feels hardest right now? What is the smallest amount of movement I can manage?

After: Has anything shifted physically or emotionally? What felt supportive? What would I make easier next time?

Reflection & further support

Use this page to notice patterns without judging them.

Day	What I tried	Mood before	After	What helped / what I noticed
Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thu				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

When more support is needed

Low mood that persists, worsens or significantly affects daily life deserves support. Speak with your GP or another qualified mental-health professional if you are struggling. Psychological therapy, social support, practical changes, medication where appropriate, sleep support and physical activity can all form part of an individual plan.

If you feel unsafe

If low mood includes thoughts of harming yourself, feeling unable to keep yourself safe, or an immediate mental-health crisis, seek urgent help rather than relying on this resource. In the UK, contact NHS 111 and select the mental-health option where available, contact your local urgent mental-health service, or call 999 / attend A&E; if there is immediate danger.

Sources and further reading

This resource is informed by NHS guidance on low mood, depression and physical activity, NICE guidance on depression in adults, and broader evidence examining exercise and mind-body approaches as supportive interventions for mental wellbeing. Yoga may help some people, but it is not a replacement for assessment or treatment when low mood is persistent or severe.

A message from Maggie

Low mood can make even small things feel far away. This practice is not asking you to be positive or to push yourself into feeling better. It is simply somewhere to begin. One pose can be enough. A minute can be enough. Rest can be enough. Meet yourself at the level of energy you actually have today.

Space to Breathe Therapy - Educational wellbeing resource; not medical treatment.