

Yoga for Workplace Stress

Pause. Breathe. Reset. Gentle ways to reduce physical tension and create small moments of recovery during the working day.

Workplace stress can build gradually through deadlines, meetings, responsibility, conflict, sensory demands, long periods at a desk and the pressure to keep going. Yoga cannot remove an unreasonable workload or fix a harmful workplace, but brief movement and grounding practices can offer moments of physical relief and help you notice when you need a pause.

Stress is not simply an individual problem

If the source of stress is workload, bullying, discrimination, lack of control or inadequate support, the answer should not be to make the individual more resilient to unacceptable conditions.

Wellbeing practices can sit alongside reasonable adjustments, boundaries, management support and organisational change.

Six gentle workplace-friendly movements

1	Child's Pose / Desk Rest	Release
2	Cat-Cow / Seated Cat-Cow	Move
3	Seated Twist	Reset
4	Neck Stretch	Ease tension
5	Seated Reach	Create space
6	Legs Up the Wall / Rest	Recover

Micro-pauses count

A useful pause does not need to be a full yoga session. Thirty seconds to uncurl your hands, drop your shoulders, look away from a screen, stand up or feel your feet can interrupt long periods of holding tension.

Safety

Keep movements comfortable and stop for pain, dizziness, faintness or feeling unwell. Adapt positions to your mobility, clothing and environment. This resource is educational wellbeing support, not medical treatment.

Six movements for the working day

Choose one or two rather than feeling you need to complete the whole sequence.

1. Child's Pose or Desk Rest

If you have privacy and floor space, use a supported Child's Pose. At a desk, place forearms on the desk and let the head rest on folded arms or a cushion. Keep breathing natural.

2. Cat-Cow or Seated Cat-Cow

On hands and knees, or seated with hands on thighs, gently round and lengthen the spine. Keep the range small and comfortable.

3. Seated Twist

Sit with both feet supported and rotate gently through the upper body. Avoid pulling yourself deeper. Return to centre before changing sides.

4. Neck Stretch

Let one ear move slightly towards one shoulder without forcing it. Keep the opposite shoulder relaxed. A tiny range may be enough.

5. Seated Reach

Reach one or both arms upward or slightly to the side. Keep the ribs and shoulders comfortable and avoid straining.

6. Legs Up the Wall or Supported Rest

At home after work, rest the legs on a wall, sofa or chair. If this is not comfortable, simply lie or recline with the legs supported.

A simple reset between tasks

Finish one task. Feel both feet. Let the exhale soften rather than forcing a deep breath. Look at something farther away than your screen. Roll the shoulders once or twice. Then decide what actually needs your attention next.

Workplace stress needs workplace support too

Movement can help with symptoms, but it should not hide the cause.

Workload and boundaries

Notice whether work regularly exceeds the time and capacity available. Clarifying priorities, renegotiating deadlines, taking breaks and protecting non-working time may be more important than adding another wellbeing task.

Reasonable adjustments

Disabled and neurodivergent employees may benefit from adjustments such as reduced sensory load, clearer written instructions, predictable schedules, flexible working, quiet space or changes to communication. Individual needs vary.

Conflict, bullying and exclusion

If stress is connected to bullying, harassment, discrimination or unsafe behaviour, seek appropriate organisational, HR, union, legal or specialist support rather than relying on self-care alone.

Transitions after work

The body may still feel 'at work' after the working day ends. A short walk, changing clothes, stretching, showering, music, quiet time or a few minutes without decisions can mark the transition.

When to seek further help

Persistent anxiety, low mood, sleep disruption, panic, significant physical symptoms or difficulty functioning deserve support. A GP, therapist or appropriate occupational-health professional can help identify what is needed.

Workplace stress check-in

Use this tracker to notice patterns and identify what may need to change.

Day	Stress /10	Main pressure	Body signs	What helped / needs changing?
Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thu				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

Reflection prompts

What repeatedly raises my stress? What is within my control and what is organisational? Am I taking the breaks I am entitled to? What adjustment or conversation could make work more manageable? What am I carrying after the working day has ended?

A message from Maggie

You should not have to earn a pause by reaching breaking point. Small moments of movement and breathing can help you reconnect with yourself, but they are not a substitute for the support, boundaries and working conditions you need. Your wellbeing matters during the working day, not only after it.

Evidence-informed note

Yoga and brief movement practices may support perceived stress and physical comfort for some people. They should be presented as optional wellbeing tools, not as a solution to structural workplace problems or a replacement for medical, psychological or occupational support.

Space to Breathe Therapy — educational wellbeing resource; not medical treatment.