

# YOGAFLOW

*Five asana tips at your desk*

by Janine Claudia Nizza

Janine Claudia Nizza ([www.yogaflow.it](http://www.yogaflow.it)) has been teaching a very flexible programme of Yoga Flow for many years, which she adapted for students of different ages and with different skills.

This time she has designed a simple routine for people who work all day at their office desk.

The idea is, through adapted and simplified *asana*, to help a person who sits still for long hours to perform a short, daily practice by the computer. These are some keys that can help you to include an inner work along with improving your posture:

**1) ujjayi breathing:** Inhale and exhale through your nose involving the respiratory tree: chest, abdominal muscles, pelvic area. This kind of breathing helps to deeply oxygenate your cells and detox them at the same time, with each breathing

cycle cycle. Ujjayi is also called “ocean breathing”, since the sound of inhale and exhale recalls the sound of the waves.

**2) uddiyanabandha:** When you inhale deeply the body automatically responds with involving inner muscles. Try to keep your shoulders relaxed and your belly tucked in; this will strengthen your abdominal muscles at every breath and increase the space in your chest.

**3) mulhabandha:** When you exhale try to keep your perineal muscle tucked up so that more toxins will be eliminated and a stronger pelvic area will sustain your spine.

Now you can choose one of these postures to heal the area that feels stiff or sore and exercise for the length of 5 to 10 breaths in every posture. If you use the whole yoga flow routine before your lunch, it will only take nine minutes! And you will feel refreshed and energized for the rest of the day.



### 1. HALF LOTUS

**Areas involved:** chest, sinus and hips

**Action:** Sitting at your desk, simply turn your chair to one side and put your right ankle on top of your left thigh, long exhale. Inhale while stretching your arms with *chin mudra*. Exhale and relax your head and throat while bending your head backwards. Hold for five long complete breaths and then release the right leg and repeat with the left in the same order... Remember this is yoga, do not rush into the transition, be kind and gentle when you change *asana*!



### 2. THIRD EYE MUDRA

**Areas involved:** shoulder blades, quadriceps and calves.

**Action:** rotate your chair to use the top (to bend your elbows) and the seat (to rest your right shin). Exhale bending your chin towards your chest, put your hands in the pray position (thumb pressing into the space between your eyebrows), inhale and stretch your left leg down, pushing your heels into the ground. Hold the pose for at least five long ujjayi breaths. Remember to anchor your chair to the desk so you will pull and lift safely. Then repeat on the other side with slow movements.



### 3. SEATED TWIST

**Areas involved:** both sides of your body and spine

**Action:** sitting on your chair, simply exhale and rotate towards the right, laying your right elbow on top of the back; inhale and hold your hips and feet together and grounded; rotate your head slowly, following with the lateral gaze of your eyes; breathe for five long, deep breaths into the posture while you allow your spine to feel the kundalini energy flow as a spiral along your spinal cord. Then repeat on the left side with very slow movements.



#### 4. FORWARD BENDING

**Areas involved:** lower back and neck

**Action:** Use the steady desk to support your lower back and exhale bending the right knee towards your forehead; curve the spine as much as possible while inhaling and exhaling while bending forward. Hold this posture breathing deeply in and out for at least five breaths. Close your eyes and let go mentally of all your thoughts and judgments...enjoy the feeling of being as simple and round like a river stone!



#### 5. BALANCING POSE

**Areas involved:** alignment on one foot

**Action:** place the armchair next to you to gently support your left knee and inhale; put your hands in pray position and exhaling take the posture feeling steady on the ground on one foot. Hold the *asana* for 10 long breaths. Repeat with the right leg, acknowledging the real difference between right and left. This is the most important healing part of yoga: it makes you enjoy the moment, the *here and now*, and you can improve balance through every day practice even in a simple way, like trees do.

The beauty of this schedule is that you will not need to change your dress or sit on a yoga mat to practice this yoga flow routine!

Please remember you must always register at the FAO Staff Coop to attend a Yoga Flow class at Gym A every Thursday at 01.00pm.

Thanks to Paola Franceschelli as coordinator of the Yoga Flow group; you can send her an e-mail to know how to enroll in a free trial class: [paola.franceschelli@fao.org](mailto:paola.franceschelli@fao.org)

I wish to thank all staff at the FAO Staff Coop for their kindness over our many years of collaboration.

**Om shantih namaste! ■**