

Yoga for Period Pain

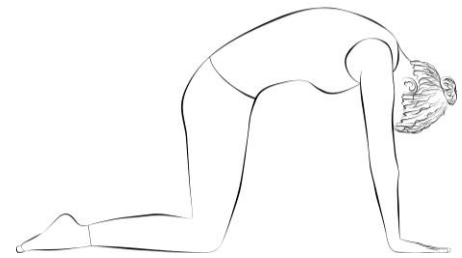
Pain in your belly (abdomen), lower back, or thighs is common during your period (menstrual cycle). You may have very painful cramps before or during the first days of your period. This is called dysmenorrhea. Yoga and breathing exercises may help reduce pain, cramping, inflammation, bloating, and stress.

Yoga Poses

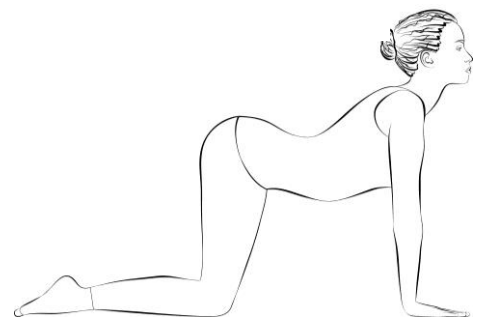
Below are some yoga poses that may help with pain and cramps. Try doing them after a walk or bath. It's easier to stretch when your body is warm. You can do some or all of these poses. We recommend doing them in the order listed below.

Cat/Cow

1. Start in a tabletop position with your hands and knees on the floor.
2. Keep your hands under your shoulders and your knees under your hips.
3. Breathe in (inhale). Drop your belly and lift your chin and hips.
4. Breathe out (exhale). Press into your palms, drop your chin to your chest, and round your back all in one motion. Make sure to tuck your hips.
5. Repeat this cycle 5 to 10 times.



Cat pose



Cow pose

Cobra

1. Lie on your stomach with your legs straight and hip-width apart.
2. Keep your hands under your shoulders and your knees under your hips.
3. Relax your shoulders so they roll down your back. It might feel like you are gently squeezing your shoulder blades together.
4. Keep your elbows close to your body and inhale while pushing yourself up until your elbows are straight. Press into the tops of your feet. The top half of your body and hips will be off the ground.
5. Lift through your chest, neck, and top of your head. Imagine a string pulling you up by the top of your head.
6. Hold this pose for 5 big belly breaths and slowly lower back down to the floor. This is a big stretch on your lower back so lower yourself down slowly. You may want to do Child's Pose after (page 6).



Downward Dog

1. Start in a tabletop position with your hands and knees on the floor.
2. Keep your hands under your shoulders and your knees under your hips.
3. Inhale and roll your shoulders down your back.
4. Curl your toes under and bend your knees.
5. Exhale and press into your fingertips, hands, and feet.
6. Move your hips up and back while straightening the legs. Always keep your knees slightly bent.
7. Push through your heels. Your ears should be in line with your shoulders.
8. Hold this pose for 5 big belly breaths before lowering back down to tabletop position.



Reverse Warrior

1. Stand with your feet wide apart with your toes facing the long edge of the yoga mat.
2. Turn your front foot out 90 degrees to face the short end (front) of the yoga mat.
3. Bend your front leg, keeping your knee over your ankle. Turn to look straight ahead over your front knee.
4. Press into your back foot and inhale while reaching your front arm up and over your head, toward your ear.
5. Keep your palm facing the top of your head and look up at your palm.
6. Place your back fingertips down the outside of your back thigh.
7. Hold this pose for 5 big belly breaths. Return to wide-legged position facing the long edge of your mat.
8. Repeat on the other side.



Triangle

1. Stand with your feet wide apart with your toes facing the long edge of the yoga mat.
2. Turn your front foot out 90 degrees and your back foot 45 degrees.
3. Inhale and reach your front arm out in line with your front foot.
4. Shift your hips to the back of the room.
5. Lower your front arm down your leg and touch your knee, shin, or the floor.
6. Rotate while you lift your back arm towards the sky and your fingers spread wide. Reach tall.
7. Hold this pose for 5 big belly breaths. Release.
8. Repeat on the other side.



Seated Forward Fold

1. Sit with your legs straight out in front of you. You can also do this with your legs spread wide.
2. Flex your feet so your toes face upward.
3. Inhale, reach both arms to the sky. Grow tall.
4. Exhale while bending as far as you can so your back stays straight.
5. Keep bending forward at your hips so your belly is over your legs.
6. Place your hands wherever they fall, like your knees, shins, or toes.
7. Hold this pose for 5 big belly breaths. Rise back up to sitting.



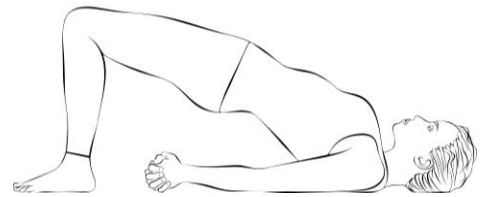
Seated Spinal Twist

1. Sit with your legs straight out in front of you.
2. Cross your right leg over your left leg.
3. Place the bottom of your right foot on the outside of your left knee.
4. Place your right hand on the floor behind your back.
5. Inhale and grow tall.
6. Wrap your left hand or arm around your shin.
7. Exhale while twisting your spine to the right.
8. Look over your right shoulder and keep a tall, stretched spine. Twist deeper with each breath out.
9. Hold this pose for 5 big belly breaths. Release.
10. Repeat on the other side.



Bridge

1. Lie on your back.
2. Bend your knees and place your feet hips-width apart.
3. Bring your heels as close to your bottom as you can.
4. Inhale and press into your feet, hands, and shoulders to lift your belly up.
5. Leave your arms straight beside you with your palms facing the floor or you can squeeze your shoulder blades together and clasp your hands together underneath you. Try to keep space between your chin and your neck.
6. Hold this pose for 5 big belly breaths and **slowly** lower back down to the floor.



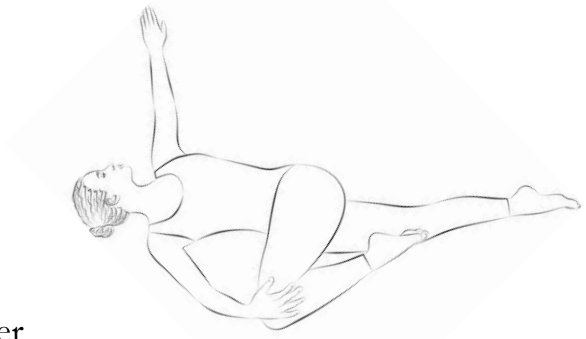
Happy Baby

1. Lie on your back.
2. Hug your knees to your chest.
3. Separate your knees wider than your torso and pull them toward your armpits. Grab your shins, ankles, or feet.
4. Flex your feet so the bottoms face the ceiling.
5. Gently pull your feet down with your hands like you're trying to bring your knees towards the floor. Keep your tailbone on the floor and avoid lifting your hips. Keep your shoulders, neck, and head relaxed on the mat.
6. Hold this pose for 5 big belly breaths. You can rock back and forth or side to side.
7. Let go of your feet. Bring your knees up away from your chest. Lower your feet on the floor.



Spinal Twist

1. Lie on your back.
2. Inhale and pull your right knee into your chest and straighten your left leg out in front.
3. Exhale and guide your right leg across your body to the left. Try to keep your right shoulder on the ground.
4. Scoot your hips slightly to the right. If it feels okay, you can stretch your right arm out to the side and look over your right shoulder.
5. Hold this pose for 5 big belly breaths and slowly release back to a normal lying position.
6. Repeat on the other side.



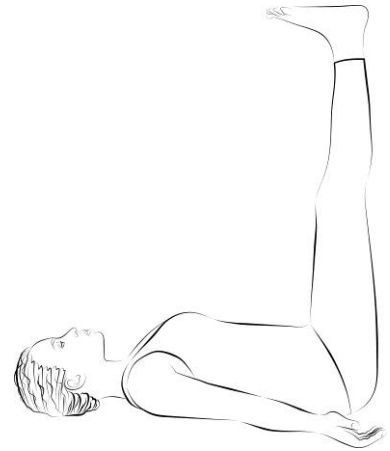
Wide-Legged Child's Pose

1. Start in a tabletop position with your hands and knees on the floor.
2. Keep your hands under your shoulders and your knees under your hips.
3. Inhale and bring your feet together and open your knees wide.
4. Exhale and lower your hips back towards your heels.
5. Move your forehead towards the ground.
6. Press your arms out in front of you or relax them by your side.
7. Hold this pose for 5 big belly breaths, then slowly come back to tabletop position.



Legs Up the Wall

1. Lie on your back and put your bottom close to a wall.
2. Lift your legs up so your heels can be supported by the wall.
3. Rest in this position for up to 5 minutes.
4. Breathe deeply.
5. Drop your legs slowly to your side and come to a lying position. Lay on your back for 1 minute.
6. Slowly sit up. Doing this right before bed can help with relaxation.



When to Call the Doctor

Call your doctor or health care provider if:

- You're in a lot of pain that doesn't get better with pain medicine or stretching.
- Your pain gets severely worse after stretching.
- You change a pad every hour for multiple hours.