

Your First 10 Minutes on the Mat

Before you practice

These guides are general fitness and mindfulness content written by BLKMAT. They are not medical advice, therapy, or treatment, and they are not a substitute for a qualified yoga teacher or health professional.

- Check with a doctor or physical therapist before starting a new exercise routine, especially if you are pregnant, recovering from an injury or surgery, or managing a heart, blood-pressure, joint, or balance condition.
- Move within a comfortable range. Mild stretching sensation is fine; sharp, pinching, or electric pain, numbness, or dizziness means stop.
- If you feel faint, dizzy, short of breath, or unwell at any point, stop and rest. Get medical help if it doesn't pass quickly.
- Breathe through your nose if you can, and never hold your breath to force a pose.
- Use a wall, chair, folded blanket, or pillow for support whenever it helps. Props are not "cheating."
- Practice on a dry mat on a flat, non-slip floor. BLKMAT mats have a natural rubber base, which contains latex.

Zodiac and chakra themes in these guides are cultural and creative frameworks for choosing what to practice and what to pay attention to. They are not scientific or health claims.

A BLKMAT beginner routine. No experience, flexibility, or equipment needed beyond your mat. Read the safety note first.

How to use it: Read through once, then practice with a timer. Times are suggestions; stay longer anywhere that feels good and skip anything that doesn't. Do it three or four times in your first two weeks and it will start to feel familiar.

Breath for the whole routine: in and out through the nose, slow and even. If you are breathing hard, you are working too hard; ease off.

1. Arrive (1 minute) — Easy seat

Sit cross-legged on the mat, or on a folded blanket if your knees sit higher than your hips. Hands rest on your thighs. Let your shoulders drop away from your ears. Count ten slow breaths.

2. Wake up the spine (1½ minutes) — Cat and cow

Come to hands and knees: wrists under shoulders, knees under hips. Breathe in and let your belly lower and your gaze lift slightly (cow). Breathe out, press the floor away and round your back (cat). Move with your breath, about 8 rounds. Fold the mat end under your knees if they're tender.

3. Rest and reset (1 minute) — Child's pose

From hands and knees, bring your big toes together, widen your knees as much as is comfortable, and sit your hips back toward your heels. Arms forward or alongside you. Rest your forehead on the mat or on your stacked fists. Breathe into your back.

4. Lengthen (1½ minutes) — Downward-facing dog

Back to hands and knees. Tuck your toes, lift your hips up and back so your body makes an upside-down V. **Keep your knees bent;** a long spine matters more than straight legs. "Walk the dog": bend one knee, then the other, for 5 breaths, then hold still for 5. Lower your knees and rest when you need to.

5. Stand tall (1 minute) — Mountain pose

Walk your hands back to your feet and roll up slowly to standing, head last. Feet hip-width apart, weight even across both feet, arms by your sides. Breathe here for 5 breaths and notice how you feel.

6. Build strength (2 minutes) — Warrior II, both sides

Step your feet wide apart. Turn your right foot to point to the front of the mat and your left foot slightly in. Bend your right knee so it tracks over your middle toes (not past your ankle). Arms reach out at shoulder height, gaze over your right hand. Hold 5 breaths. Straighten the leg, turn the feet, and repeat on the left.

7. Balance (1 minute) — Tree pose, both sides

Stand in mountain. Shift weight into your left foot. Place the sole of your right foot on your left ankle, calf, or inner thigh (never on the side of the knee). Hands at your chest. Keep a toe on the floor or a hand on a wall if you wobble; wobbling is part of balancing. 4 breaths each side.

8. Unwind (1 minute) — Reclined twist

Lie on your back. Hug your knees in, then let both knees fall to the right while your arms open into a T. Look straight up or to the left. 4 breaths, then switch sides.

9. Rest (1 minute or longer) — Savasana

Lie flat, legs relaxed, arms a little away from your sides, palms up. Let your breath be natural. This last minute is part of the practice, not an extra. When you're ready, roll to one side and press yourself up to sit.

What next? Repeat this routine for a week, then try the flow for your sign or the chakra guide. If you'd like a teacher's eyes on your form, many studios run beginner classes and new-student offers; see our [Yoga Starter Guide](#).