



Yoga Poses and Your Constitution

YOGA POSES AND YOUR CONSTITUTION

POSE	VATA	PITTA	KAPHA
Sun Salutation (Surya Namaskar)	Helpful for excess Vata. Perform slowly with steady breathing.	Good for Pitta deficiency-not helpful when Pitta is in excess	Helpful for energizing Kapha. Hold the strengthening poses
Cat (Bidhalasana)	Helpful	Helpful	Helpful for excess Kapha
Sun Bird (Chakravakasana)	Helpful	Helpful but do moderately in excess Pitta	Good for energizing Kapha
Child Pose (Gharbasana)	Helpful for grounding	Relaxing and cooling when Pitta is excessive	May not be helpful when Kapha is excessive
Mountain Pose (Tadasana)	Grounding aspect is helpful	Helpful when done in a comfortable, relaxed way	Needs to be done energetically and with full awareness
Half Moon Series	Helpful but do not do too strenuously	Helpful because it is relaxing and energizing without being too heating	Good for energizing Kapha
Warrior II (Virabhadrasana)	Good for grounding	Good but not in excess	Great for Kapha
Triangle (Trikonasana)	Good-provides grounding	Good-builds digestive fire while at the same time providing a cooling effect	Good – provides grounding and energizes
Tree (Vrksasana)	Good – provides grounding	Good for grounding the mind	Good for Kapha because they learn to exist without both feet on the ground
Chair (Utkatasana)	Good for excess Vata	Builds fire – good for Pitta deficiency, not helpful for Pitta excess	Not helpful when Kapha is excessive
Locust (Salabhasana)	Good – provides grounding	A natural for Pitta. Use breath and movement to avoid generating excessive heat	Good for Kapha
Cobra (Bhujangasana) or Sphinx	Good-provides grounding	Good-combines heating, relaxing and grounding	Good-combines heating, relaxing, and grounding
Knee to Chest (Apanasana)	Good-soothing and relaxing	Good-builds digestive fire without being excessively heating	Good- a natural for Kapha. Excess Kapha may require more energetic movement.
Pelvic lifts and Bridge	Good-grounding,	Good if not done	Good-a natural for



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(Setubhandasana)	warming, and expansive	excessively. Builds heat. Focus on the pelvic lifts before holding	Kapha because it is both grounded and energizing.
Half Shoulderstand (Viparita Karani)	Good-grounds the upper body	Good-can be very tranquilizing. High blood pressure needs to approach with caution.	Helpful because it develops strength and cleanses the lungs during longer holding
Fish (Matsyasana)	Grounding, warming and energizing, therefore, good for Vata if not done too vigorously.	Good- Mildly heating good if not done in excess.	Grounding and Energizing, good for Kapha
Seated Forward Bend (Paschimottanasana)	Grounding but may be too cooling if held too long	Cooling effects are helpful for Pitta in excess	Maybe too cooling for Kapha
Knee Down Twist (Jathara Parivriti)	Sedating and tranquilizing, good for Vata	Cooling effects may be good for Pitta	Maybe too cooling for Kapha
Butterfly (Baddha Konasana)	Helpful	Good for calming Pitta but may not be helpful when Pitta is in excess	Good for removing tightness and stiffness that can accompany Kapha
Relaxation (Savasana)	Balances Vata when relaxation is for a long period of time	Balances Pitta when done for a moderate length of time	Balances Kapha when done for a brief period of time.

References:

The Ayurvedic Cookbook by Amadea Morningstar
 Integrative Yoga Therapy Manual 2001, Joseph LePage