

A woman with dark hair, wearing a white short-sleeved crop top and teal leggings, is sitting on a blue yoga mat. She is in a meditative pose with her legs crossed and her arms raised straight up, with her hands clasped together. She has a joyful expression, smiling with her eyes closed. The background shows a window with white blinds and a wooden trim.

MORNING MOVEMENT & MEDITATION

created by Ashley Hagen

Good Morning!

I'm not naturally a morning person. Shocker, I know! But it's true. I, like many others, would rather hit the snooze button for a few more minutes or even, a few more hours.

But I also like to feel good when I'm awake, and not have to depend so much on caffeine or substances to keep me awake or numb discomfort. A few minutes of movement right away in the morning allows me to feel better and to be better.

Nowadays, I LOVE my morning yoga practice and I love sharing it with others. I'm more patient. My body doesn't ache. I can breathe easier. I make healthier choices. I smile more.

It takes as little as 5 minutes, but done consistently over the course of time helps you to become the person that you really want to be.

It's true – You set the foundation of your day within the first hour.

If you can spend just 5-30 minutes of that time to get your body moving and set your mind on positivity, you'll live a longer and healthier life because of it.

I'm not talking about “exercising”, but rather a simple and basic movement routine.

I simplify it into 3 phases for your morning movement practice – movement, flow and meditation. It's simple, but powerful. If you want to start feeling better and more energized, reading this guide is the best way to get started.

To join me on Zoom for morning movement and meditation classes every weekday at 6:00am PST, sign up at ashesyoga.com/morning.

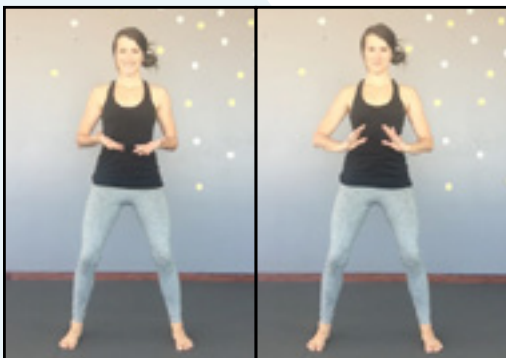
If you want a better way to start your day, then Morning Movement & Meditation is what you need. I look forward to seeing you in a class soon.

Ashley Hagen
Owner, Ashes Yoga LLC



MORNING MOVES GUIDE

As soon as you wake up, get your body moving. You don't have to do strenuous exercises, or even break a sweat. Just move and stretch. Every day will be different. If you are thinking that you don't feel like moving when you wake up, you are not alone. However, a body in motion stays in motion and a body at rest stays at rest. So, every morning we need to move, as we are designed to do. You will notice change after a few minutes.



1. BASE BREATHING

Stand in a horse stance with bent knees. Keep the feet a little wider than hip distance and toes facing forward. Float the hands up gathering energy as you inhale. Float the hands down to the thighs as you exhale. Deep breaths.



2. NECK ROTATIONS

Look up, down and side-to-side, working out any tension in the neck. Hold anywhere that feels like you need some extra time. Full rotations with the neck if that's comfortable.



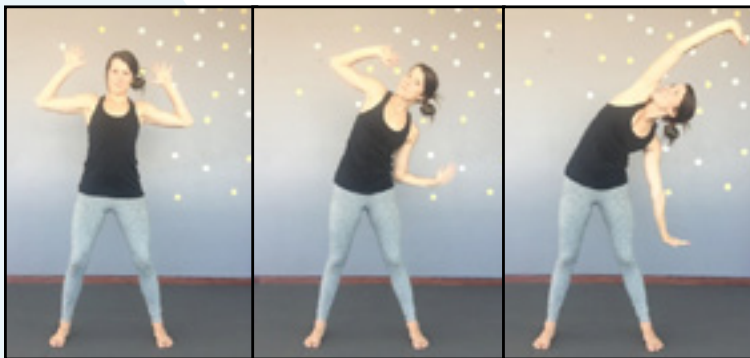
3. ARM ROTATIONS

Make a fist with both hands and keep your arms straight. Rotate through the shoulders with your arms flat to your body like arms on a clock. Do this both directions, one or both arms at a time.



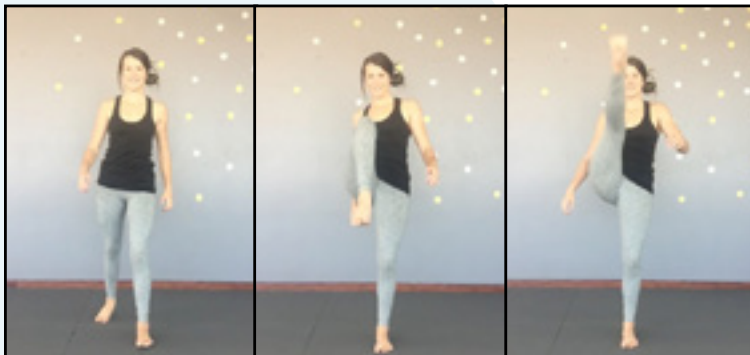
4. WAIST TWISTS

Put your hands on your hips to set up the position, then take your hands off your hips about 1-2 inches. Keeping the hips and gaze forward with knees bent, send one elbow and shoulder forward and other to the back. This should be done quickly, like a hummingbird.



5. SIDE STRETCHES

With straight legs, take a large breath sending your arms to goal posts. Press one hand over and one hand down like you're moving through quick stand and bend to the side. Full exhale as you press. Do both sides.



6. HIGH KNEES OR HIGH KICKS

Keeping the arms by your side, step one foot back. Draw your knee or foot up towards the sky. Keep your eyes looking up as your body will follow your gaze. Do both legs.

OPTIONAL: SUN SALUTATIONS OR OTHER POSES



7. MEDITATION

Sit comfortably for a few minutes to allow all of your morning movements to absorb. There are many different ways you can meditate (see attached pages). We keep it pretty simple. Sit quietly and let your thoughts pass one by one. Smile and breathe.

MEDITATION TECHNIQUES

Meditation can often be intimidating and a little confusing. Just sit? Then what? In today's fast-paced life, sitting and doing nothing doesn't sound appealing when our to-do lists are miles long. However, the most productive and successful people will rave about some form of personal meditation practice. Meditation is a state of deep peace that occurs when the mind is calm and silent.

Use the following meditation techniques as a guide to start your own meditation practice. Sit in a comfortable position and set a timer for 5-20 minutes. Start with 5 minutes once a day and work your way up in time. The recommended meditation frequency is 20 minutes twice per day. Take your time and be proud of yourself for whatever duration you complete. I use *Insight Timer* app on iPhone. Close your eyes and breathe naturally in and out through your nose with good posture.

1. WATCH YOUR BREATH

Focus on the quality of your breath. Deep belly breaths into your diaphragm. Notice how the inhale happens. How it cools the tip of your nose. Notice the pause at the end of each inhale and exhale.

2. SINGLE MINDED FOCUS

Choose one word. A simple one or two syllable word that has no emotional attachment. A word like "tree" or "purple." Not words like "love" or "compassion." As your mind wanders in your meditation, bring your awareness back to your word. Don't repeat the word on a rhythm. Instead, use it when you need it.

3. COUNTDOWN

This is good for a short meditation or if you don't have a timer. Choose a number, and each full breath countdown from that number. Inhale 10, exhale 10, inhale 9, exhale 9, etc. You can repeat the countdown as much as you'd like.

4. MANTRA OR AFFIRMATIONS

A mantra is a phrase, word or quote that you say on repeat. “Om” is a mantra. These can be in Sanskrit or in English. While you meditate, repeat your mantra over and over. An affirmation is a type of mantra that is affirming yourself in a positive way. These are often “I am” statements.

5. SENSATIONS

As you sit, notice the sensations of your body. Start with noticing your breath in and out through your nose. Then notice each toe, working your way up your body to your arms and then your head. Notice the areas where you are feeling tension. In time, your body will loosen. If it helps you can (in your mind) call out each body part. Inhale, big toe, exhale, big toe. Inhale, second toe, exhale, second toe. And so on.

6. COLORS

Different colors have an affect on our emotions and state-of-mind. As you inhale, think of drawing in a beautiful sky blue into your body. As you exhale, think of a vibrant sun gold projecting out the center of your forehead.

7. WHITE LIGHT

As you inhale, imagine a white light coursing through your body, healing those places that need extra love and attention. Each exhale, imagine gray smoke coming out from those areas needing healing.

8. MANIFEST

Daydream. Imagine all of the things you want to bring into your life. Less about the things you want to have, and more about how you want to be, how you want to feel, and what you want to do to make a difference.

9. MOVEMENT

You can feel meditative through movement. Practicing yoga, Tai Chi or Qi Gong are great moving meditation options. Walking meditation also works as you bring your focus on the breath and awareness to your steps.