

Yoga for over 50s surfers



Most of us over 50s have got either a bad lower back, bad neck, bad knees, a combination of the above, or like me all of the above. We're not in the majority who give up surfing because age gets to them. I'm glad most of them give up and keep the crowds down. But we want to be survivors. Yoga will definitely help us surf longer. I know most of you already have good stretches you work on. I'm letting you know my basic routine just to add options.

This **short 10 minute routine** can be done before a surf (and after a surf). Do every pose slowly and hold for 30-45 seconds.

Wherever possible, consciously hold your stomach up and in slightly, while doing the routine.

- 1. Start with core work doing slow crunches.** Stomach work is essential for keeping your back strong, but if done wrongly will aggravate it. Keep your lower back flat on the ground while doing them. Do 20 - 30 slowly while pulling your lower stomach up. Point your arms out in a straight line across your knees for 10. Aim your arms out to the right of your knees for 10. Then to the left for 10.
- 2. Lay totally flat** and draw one knee at a time into your chest holding your shin. Bend your opposite knee a bit if needed. Lift your other leg in the air slightly for extra core work if you want. Hold your knee against your chest. This releases your lower back and stretches your knee joints.
- 3. Do a lunge on each leg.** Left knee on the ground back foot pointing, Right leg bent with foot in front of knee. With your back straight and your hands on your right knee lunge forward slowly. As with all these poses hold for 30 seconds. Swap legs. For the arms and shoulders do the variation in picture 3b. This stretches the psoas muscle, which is one of the most important muscles in your body and is the key muscle to do with back pain.

4. **Down dog.** This is the pyramid pose. It is one of the key yoga poses. It is great for legs, back and neck. Start with heels up and lower them as far as you can. Don't worry if you can't put them flat. Keep your shoulders relaxed and let your head hang. Hands and feet should be shoulder width pointing forward, or slightly turned in.
5. **Roll your shoulders** forward 10 times. Then back 10 times.
6. **Knee rotations.** Standing with your feet together and knees slightly bent. Hands firmly on the outside of your knee caps pressuring them towards each. Do 20 full rotations clockwise then 20 anticlockwise. Great for general knee looseness, strength and making your patella track properly.
7. **Hip rotations.** Standing straight. Let your hands rest on on your legs. Knees hip width. Rotate your hips 10x clockwise and 10x anticlockwise.
8. **Spinal twist.** Stand hip width, knees slightly bent. Swing your arms around your body looking over each shoulder. Do this as a continual steady movement back and forth for 30 seconds. It's great for getting your body ready for powerful turns. Surfing manoeuvres like martial Arts kicks come from the hips. It's all about body torque from your core.

If you have time, do the poses as shown in pictures 9 10 11.

I don't do this routine as soon as I wake. I only do the lunges to release the psoas muscles for my back. Your body needs time to mobilise for at least half an hour in the morning. The best time for the routine is just before you surf. I do the lunges and down dog again after I surf.

I've got some ideas on old bloke paddling and jumping up, I'll share with you later.

Cheers, Mal