

Going to the Wall

If you're new or returning to a home practice, yoga at the wall is a safe place to start. Most of us can find a wall or a door upon which to lean.

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Model: Jody Graves

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Photos: Allison Kleinsteuber



1. Tadasana (mountain pose)

Activate the legs and lift the lower abdomen and draw the flesh of the bum toward the hamstrings. Let your breath be your guide. If you find yourself breathing too fast or holding your breath, you might be over-efforting. Stand in Tadasana for 5-10 breaths.

2. Wall Dog (Down dog at the wall)

Facing the wall, place your hands at the height of your waist and walk your legs back until your arms are fully extended and the feet are directly beneath your hips. The



goal is to achieve a 90-degree angle. Keep the palms of your hands against the wall and the fingers spread wide with the middle finger pointing straight up. If your hamstrings are tight, bend the knees until the back feels straight. You can also bring the hands up higher upon the wall. Hold for 5-10 breaths.



3. Lunge at the Wall.

Place palms flat on the wall. Step the left foot back. The right knee should be 90-degree, but don't let the kneecap go past the front ankle. Activate the back leg. Bend the back leg and then bring the heel toward the floor as the leg straightens to stretch the calf. Hold for 3-5 breaths, and switch legs.

4. Wall Warriors: Warrior 2

Place back against the wall. Step right foot forward. Keep the left heel against the wall with the



toes angled forward. Keep the torso upright and extend the arms. If it is too easy to touch the wall, you need step the front foot forward a few inches. Hold for 15-30 seconds or a cycle of 5-10 full breaths. Switch legs.

5. Wall Warriors: Warrior 1 (below)

Pivot the hips forward so the right and left hip face forward. The stance is slightly shorter than in Warrior 2. Keep left heel against the wall. Angle back foot more forward. Lift lower abs. If your balance feels stable, lift your arms over your head. Hold for a cycle of 3-5 breaths when beginning. Strive to hold eventually for 1-2 minutes with an easy breath.



6. Return to Tadasana (see first photo)

Let breath return to easy and regular. Repeat the sequence until your can hold each pose for 2 minutes without becoming tired or out of breath. End with savasana (corpse pose) for 5 minutes.

I find this sequence helps me return to a strong practice after an injury or illness. The wall is available almost anywhere and can be done at home, at work, or while traveling. No yoga clothes or mat required.