

# Urology and Yoga:

## 4 Poses to Strengthen Against Urinary Incontinence

Whether you're a new mom, an active senior, or anyone else who struggles with incontinence, you may find some relief in Yoga poses. For centuries, yoga has been shown to strengthen core muscles, help provide mental focus and clarity, and ease aches and pains that come from compressed muscles. Since Yoga is such a valued part of many people's wellness routines, it may come as no surprise that certain poses can also alleviate urinary incontinence by simultaneously relaxing and strengthening the pelvic muscles that support the bladder.

Because Yoga's difficulty level can be dialed up or down, it's an excellent exercise for all ages and levels of health. Here are five poses we recommend for building pelvic strength to reduce urinary incontinence.

### 1. Malasana (Squat Pose)



Begin with your feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart. Press your palms together, fingers facing the ceiling, as if you were praying. Keep your hands angled roughly in front of your sternum. Keeping your back straight, slowly bend at the knees until your thighs are parallel to the floor (or as far as you can comfortably go). Try to place your elbows to your thighs. Hold for 15 seconds, then rise back to normal position. Repeat 5 times.

#### *How Does This Help?*

Holding this crouch keeps your thighs, abdominal, and pelvic muscles engaged. This strengthens your pelvic wall, as well as the other muscles that support your bladder. It also trains your bladder not to release when your legs are spread wide and stress is placed on it.

### 2. Supine Twists



Twists and inversions are cleansing stretches that release built up tension and force your body to experience a new perspective. Lay on your back, with both legs stretched out. Then bend one leg, and twist it over the other leg, keeping your knee bent. Turn your head to face away from your bent knee, and stretch your opposite arm out. So one knee should be thrusting one direction, with your arm thrusts another; this creates a glorious twist in your spine, sacrum, and pelvic region.

### *How Does This Help?*

Twists literally wring out your body, helping your internal organs flush toxins away. Think of it as a massage for your liver, gallbladder, bowels, and bladder.

### **3. Happy Baby**



This is a favored Yoga pose among many! Simply lay on your back and close your eyes. Then lift your legs and bend your knees, grabbing your big toe in each hand. Rock and sway from side to side, grasping your feet as you provide a gentle massage to your lower back and give your pelvis, hips, and thighs a good stretch.

### *How Does This Help?*

Happy Baby massages your lower back and sacrum, which supports the muscles that protect your bladder and bowels. This wide stretch opens the pelvis and hip muscles, relaxing tension that can lead to tightness and discomfort in your pelvis, hips, and urinary tract.

### **4. Table Pose**



Lie down on your back, with your feet flat on the floor and knees bent. Slowly, use your legs and pelvis to slowly lift your trunk into the air, unfurling your spine inch by inch. When your pelvis is fully lifted, your abdominals should be engaged, your arms flat on the floor beside you, creating the look of a flat-top table. Hold this pose for 15 seconds, then slowly lower, vertebrae by vertebrae, until your spine is on the floor once again. Repeat 5 times

### *How Does This Help?*

By engaging your abdominal muscles, pelvic muscles, thighs, and lower back, you strengthen your pelvic wall and all surrounding muscle systems that provide bladder and bowel support. Plus, you stretch your pelvic area to relieve tension.

## Nervous About Urinary Incontinence and Yoga?

While it's true that many Yoga poses can increase your overall wellness, including easing urinary incontinence, you may be worried that some of these poses will cause you to have an accident. Don't let that stop you! Pad technology has advanced so that wearing one while performing yoga is virtually undetectable to those around you. So break out those cute yoga pants and feel good about yourself!

