

USA
TRIATHLON



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Art & SCIENCE

OF TRIATHLON

2012 INTERNATIONAL COACHING SYMPOSIUM

Yoga for Triathletes

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and more



What Is Yoga?

- In the twenty-first-century West, yoga can mean many things: stretching, spirituality, something gimmicky.
- Yoga means “union.” It’s the connection of two apparent opposites: body and spirit, hard and soft, aggressive and passive, yang and yin, into a unified whole.
- The Yoga Sutras say, “Yoga is the cessation of the fluctuations of the mind. Then the seer rests in his true self.” Do you ever feel this in training and competition?

Why Yoga?

- Physical
 - Flexibility and range of motion, multiplanar movement
 - Strength
 - Holistic strength, using body weight
 - Core strength
 - Injury prevention
 - Balance in the body
 - Side to side, front to back
 - Recovery from training
 - Breathing

Why Yoga?

- Mental/Spiritual
 - Focus
 - Flow state
 - Endurance
 - Riding the edge of intensity

Styles of Yoga in America

- *Hatha yoga* refers to any yoga focusing on the practice of *asana*, or poses. It can also be a name for an all-levels class.
- Set sequences
 - Ashtanga (originally “power yoga”)
 - Bikram (aka “hot yoga”)

Styles of Yoga in America

- Movement-based styles
 - Flow, vinyasa flow, power, power flow, and other variations on the name
 - Branded styles: Baptiste Power Yoga, Jivamukti Yoga, and more
 - Kundalini yoga
- Alignment-based styles
 - Iyengar, after B. K. S. Iyengar, author of *Light on Yoga*
 - Anusara, begun by American John Friend

Styles of Yoga in America

- Therapeutic styles
 - Restorative
 - Yin
 - Phoenix Rising Yoga Therapy

How Should Yoga Fit in Training?

- It should be periodized, with the goal of working as a complement to training.
- Generally, yoga practice should be in inverse proportion to training intensity.
- Take care not to simply load on more stress to an already tired athlete.

Focus of Yoga in the Training Cycle

- Yoga in the base period should focus on strength. This is the time for power yoga and similar styles.
- Yoga in the build should work to maintain core strength and flexibility. Athletes should seek gentler classes and practice at home to target their needs.
- Yoga in race season and the peak period should garner focus and maximize recovery. This is the time for restorative classes and an easy home practice.

Yoga in the Training Week

- Where yoga goes in the week depends on what else is going on, and what kind of yoga it is.
- During the base period, for example, a strong power flow class might replace a strength workout.
- During the build period, a restorative or gentle class can go on a rest or recovery day.
- Think outside the studio: home practice is a great way to include yoga without committing to a 90-minute class

Yoga in the Training Day

- Use yoga as a dynamic warmup: sun salutations are especially useful here, as is Warrior III
- Save the flexibility work for after workouts
- Include core work right off the bike
- Separate breath exercises and meditation can go anytime

Getting Athletes into Yoga

- Yoga often seems too hard, too easy, or out of sync. Choose a class wisely to avoid this problem.
- Let go of preconceptions about yoga: too easy, cultish, woo-woo. If you don't like the first class, keep looking. Choosing a teacher is like choosing a wetsuit.
- Leave competition outside the studio.

Athletes' Special Needs in Class

- Teachers should address specific physical needs of athletes
 - Need for longer warmup
 - Sport-specific tightnesses
 - Psychology of suffering through discomfort
- Athletes should let teachers know what is going on: experience, injuries, etc.

Dancer (*Natarajasana*)

- Works balance
- Stretches chest, quads, and hip flexors



Warrior III

(*Virabhadrasana III*)

- Works balance
- Strengthens core
- Engages gluteus medius
- Stretches outer hip and high hamstring



Standing Forward Fold (*Uttanasana*)

- Stretches the back of the body, especially hamstrings
- Releases the spine
- Be careful in inversions after a hard or long workout



Downward-Facing Dog (*Adho Mukha Svanasana*)

- Strengthens arms, opens chest
- Stretches back, hamstrings, and calves



Reverse Table (*Ardha Purvottasana*)

- Stretches front of body
- Strengthens back of body



Low Lunge (*Anjaneasana*)

- Opens back and outer hip on front leg, front hip on back leg
- Strengthens muscles supporting knee, cultivates balance
- Improves ROM for running
- Opens chest (this is one variation)



Camel Prep (*Ustrasana* prep)

- Lateral stretch for shoulder and ribcage
- Gentle backbend
- Quad and hip flexor stretch



Camel (*Ustrasana*)

- Opens front of body: legs, hips, core, chest
- Gives an opportunity to breathe in the face of intensity!

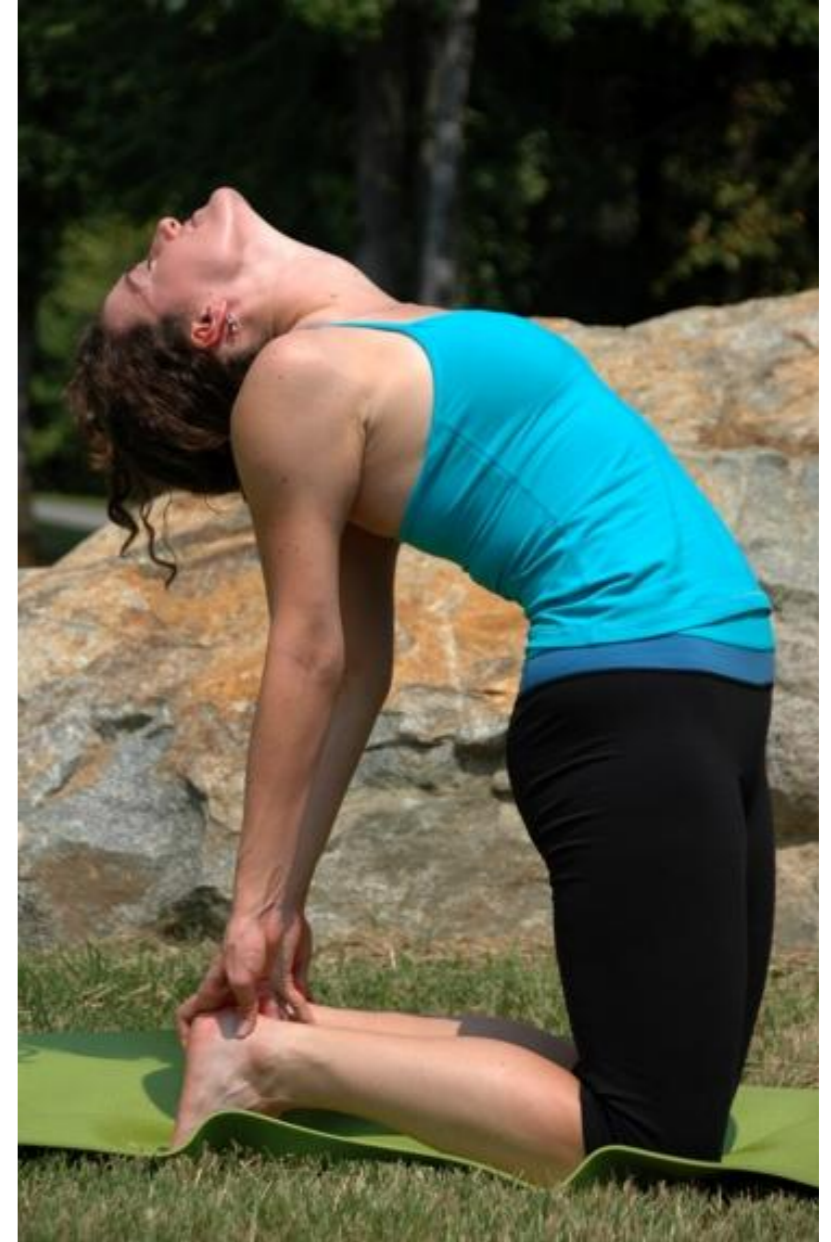
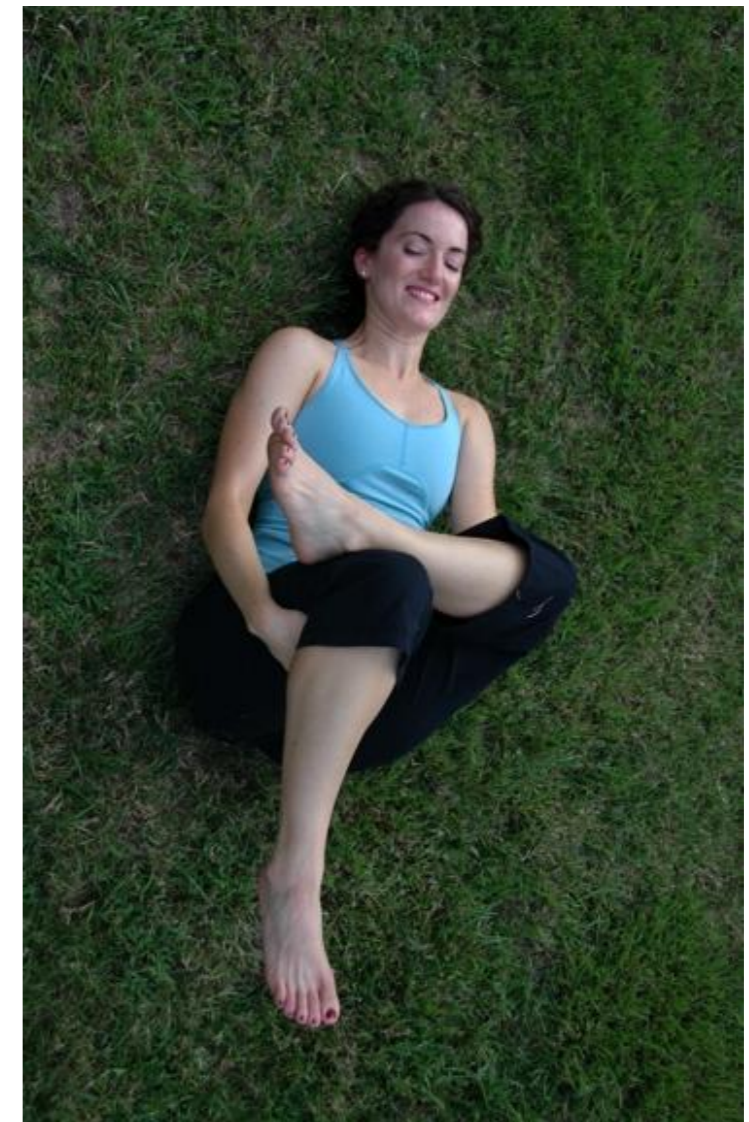


Figure 4

(Supta Eka Pada Rajakapotasana)

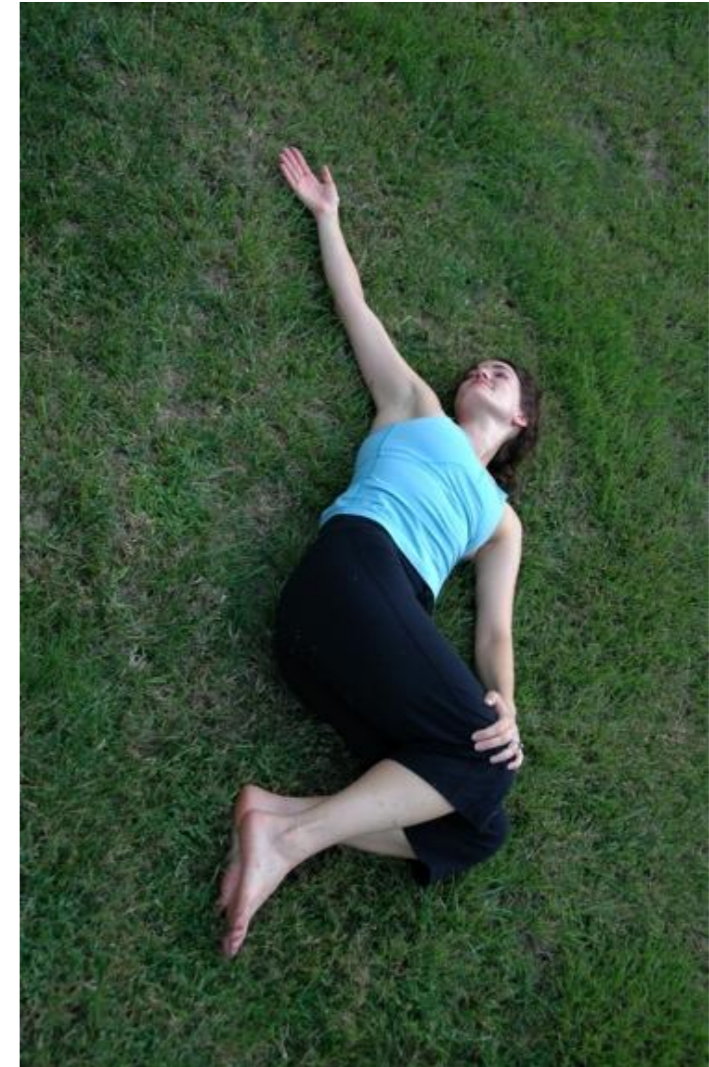
- Stretches outer hip and high hamstring
- Holds back in safe, neutral alignment



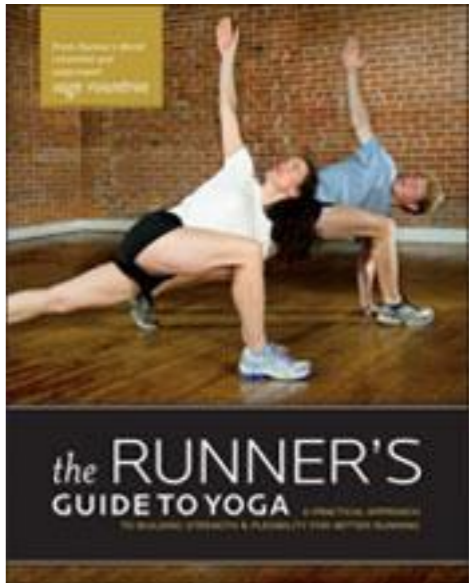
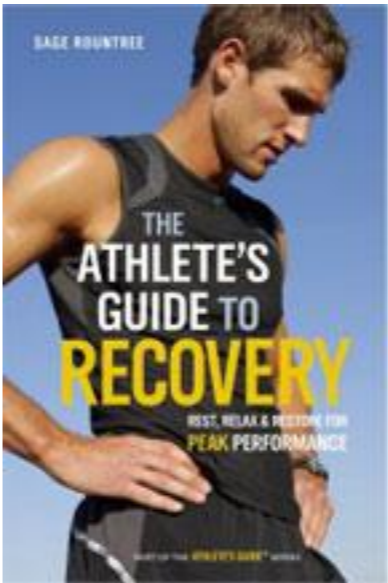
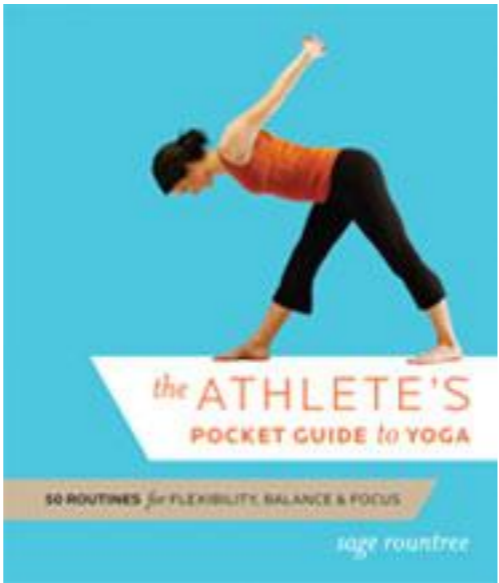
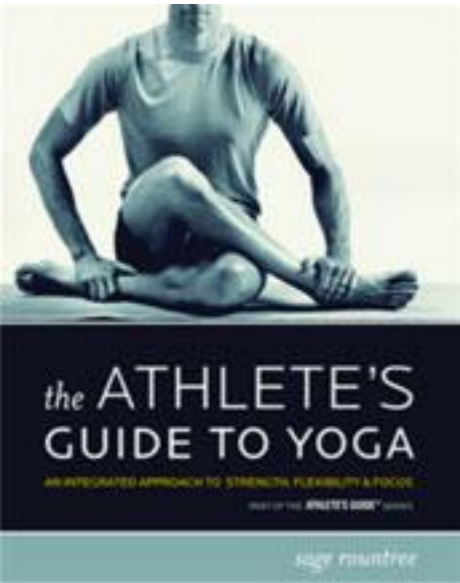
Reclining Twist

(Jathara Parivartanasana)

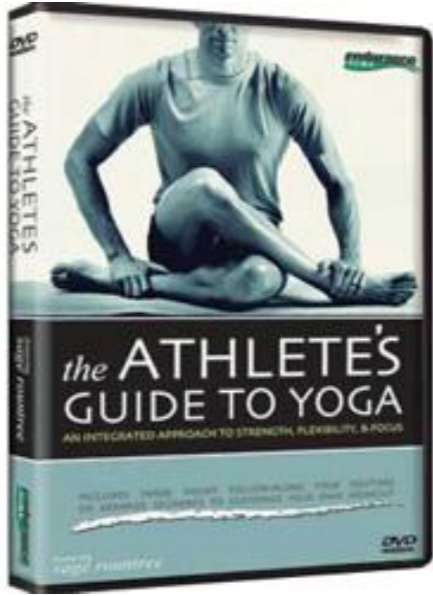
- Stretches chest, spine, and hips
- Establishes balance side to side
- Feels relaxing!



Resources



Yoga for Athletes online at YogaVibes.com



Contact Sage

- sagerountree.com (with many more resources)
- facebook.com/sagerountree
- twitter.com/sagetree
- sage@sagerountree.com



Namaste!