

Single leg lifts

All levels

Single leg lifts improve the flexibility of the hamstring and calf muscles, which in turn helps prepare for the stretching of the back muscles in the various forward-bending asanas.

Single leg lift Beginner

1 Lie flat on your back with your legs together, arms next to your body, and palms face down.



2 Inhale and raise your left leg, keeping your knee straight, toes towards your head. Exhale and lower your leg to the starting position. Repeat up to 5 times on each side, then continue with Head to knee raise or Deep stretch single leg lift.



Head to knee raise Beginner

1 Starting from Single leg lift Step 2 (see above), with an exhalation, bend your left leg, and clasp your hands around your left knee, pushing your left thigh firmly against your abdomen.



2 With an inhalation, lift your head and try to bring your forehead against your left knee. With an exhalation, lower your head, arms, and leg. Repeat on the opposite side. Practise up to three Head to knee raises on each side.



Deep stretch single leg lift Intermediate

1 Starting from Single leg lift Step 2 (see opposite), with an exhalation, take hold of your left leg or foot with both hands, lift your back off the mat, and try to bring your chest and head close to the raised leg.



2 Inhale and lower your head and back to the mat as you take your left leg over your head. Then exhale and lower your leg and arms back to the starting position. To increase the stretch further, hold for up to one minute as you practise rhythmical abdominal breathing, then release with an exhalation. Repeat on the other side.

