

Introduction to Dr. Suzy's

Zoga



Your Simple, Safe, & Effective Daily Stretching Routine

What can Zoga do for you?

- *Decrease muscle spasm, pain, and stiffness*
- *Reduce stress and increase energy*
- *Increase range of motion*
- *Elongate and lengthen muscles*
- *Decompress Joints*
- *Improve posture*
- *Enhance Athletic Performance*



What is Zoga?

The Zoga Method is a simple, safe, and effective daily stretching program developed by Dr. Suzanne Osborne, President of Pure Life Inc. Dr. Suzy is a Retired Chiropractor and an early pioneer in the current Holistic Health and Fitness Movement.

Why? When performed on a daily basis, this powerful, flowing series of exercises will increase joint flexibility and muscle strength, as well as tone muscles, relieve joint pain, improve posture, and reduce stress. In addition, these low-impact stretches elongate muscles and decompress joints while taking them through their normal ranges of motion.

Zoga is easy to learn and takes only 8-10 minutes a day. All you need is a thick, cushioned mat. You can use a thin yoga mat if the surface you are lying on is thickly padded. Take off your shoes and wear comfortable clothing that allows you to move and stretch easily.

The routine is divided into two parts: Part One (Sets 1-6) is the Standing Portion. Part Two (Sets 7-10) is the Mat Portion (Floor exercises).

When? You should perform the routine at least once a day, any time of day. Some people find that doing Zoga twice a day, in the morning and evening works best for them. You can also do specific exercises throughout your day if you choose. Be sure to listen to your body and

take your time. Don't forget to breathe!

How? You will achieve optimal results if you do the routine in front of a full length mirror, but it isn't absolutely necessary to have one. When you first learn the routine, it helps to watch yourself moving in a mirror to monitor your progress. As you become more familiar with the exercises you may choose to close your eyes to increase your focus during some of the easier stretches.

Hints: Take the time to create a peaceful area to do your daily stretches. You don't need a great deal of floor space so you can do your routine just about anywhere, even when you are traveling. Try to minimize interruptions. This is your time. Turn off the phone ringer and lock the door if possible.

Listen to relaxing and soothing music if you wish. You may obtain better results if you listen to the same music each time you do your Zoga routine. Repeating the same routine daily helps reinforce neural pathways and signals your body to relax even more deeply.

Practicing deep breathing while performing the exercises is crucial. You'll see faster results when you breathe deeply from your stomach and you will be decreasing the negative effects of stress on your body as well.

Important Notes:

Every exercise in the routine should be performed 2 times in a row. Once you master the routine, however, you may choose to do extra repetitions if you feel you need to concentrate on some of the stretches more than others.

If there is a left and right portion of an exercise, always go to the left side first. For example: **left, right, left, right** (abbreviated as **LR/LR** in the **overview section that follows**). If there isn't a left and right portion of the stretch, simply do the exercise twice and move on to the next stretch.

Hold stretches for as long as you are comfortable, the slower the better. Once you have learned the routine, try to remember what exercise comes next, so one exercise flows smoothly into the next. Don't give up. You can memorize this routine and make it your own. The more you do it, the easier it gets and the more comfortable your body becomes going through the ranges of motion.

The section that follows the Overview below is the Long Version with detailed explanations and photos to assure that you understand how to do the exercises properly.

Once you have mastered the exercises and remembered the names of each stretch, you can refer back to the short, bulleted list version that follows.

ZOGA OVERVIEW

PART ONE: STANDING STRETCHES

SET 1: WARMUP

- Breath of Life / ready position
- Heaven Stretch
- Rope Climbs (LR/LR)
- Triceps Stretch (LR/LR)
- Spinal Rolls

SET 2: LOW BACK RANGE OF MOTION SERIES

- Lumbar Flexion
- Extension
- Rotation (LR/LR)
- Lateral Flexion (LR/LR)

SET 3: NECK RANGE OF MOTION SERIES

- Neck Flexion
- Extension
- Rotation (LR/LR)
- Lateral Flexion (LR/LR)

SET 4: SHOULDER ROLLS

- Shoulder Circles forward
- Shoulder Circles backward

SET 5: SWIMMING

- Forward Swimming (LR/LR)
- Backstroke (LR/LR)

SET 6: FENCING AND CHOPPING WOOD

- Fencing
- Chopping Wood

PART TWO: MAT STRETCHES

SET 7: LOW BACK MAT

- The Rack
- Single Knee to chest (LR/LR)
- Double knee to chest (LR/LR)
- Hamstring Stretch (LR/LR)

SET 8: LOW BACK RAISE AND TWIST

- Pelvic Raises
- Twists (Back Cracker) (LR/LR)

SET 9: RUNNER'S STRETCHES

- Butterfly stretch
- Toe Touches (LR/LR)
- Reach Through legs

SET 10: COOL DOWN

- 3 Part Cat Stretch
- Child's Pose

Set 1: Warmup: Breath of Life, Heaven Stretch, Rope Climb, Triceps, Spinal Roll

Breath of Life / Ready Position



Breath of Life is a powerful deep breathing exercise which helps you to concentrate and focus on performing the upcoming stretches correctly. Ready Position is the position that you often return to while performing the standing stretches in the Zoga routine.

Start in standing ready position: knees relaxed and soft (slightly bent), feet shoulder width apart, and arms relaxed at your sides. Close your eyes and slowly breathe in through your nose. Put your hands on your stomach so that you can tell if you are performing the deep breathing exercise correctly.

Concentrate on trying to fill your stomach with air when breathing in. You should be able to feel your stomach expand as you breathe in as deeply as possible. Hold your breath for as long as you are comfortable.

When you are ready to breathe out, contract your stomach muscles while forcibly exhaling through your mouth. You should be able to hear yourself exhaling through your mouth. Repeat deep breathing exercise, at least 2 times, more if you like.

Heaven Stretch



Heaven Stretch is an important decompressing exercise that is extremely helpful for preventing and reducing low back pain and improving posture.

Start in a standing position with your feet shoulder width apart and your palms together in front of your chest. Take a moment to concentrate on your breathing. Take a deep breath in and slowly reach toward the sky with fingertips pointing up and in.

Breathe in through your nose and keep reaching while holding your breath at the top of the exercise. Hold the stretch at the top for as long as you are comfortable.

Then, breathe out through your mouth while slowly bringing your arms down to your sides with your palms facing downward. Make a large circle with your fingertips as you bring your arms down. Return to ready position and relax before repeating exercise.

Rope Climbs

(Left, right, left, right)



While looking toward the sky, reach left arm slowly above head as if climbing a gym rope. Reach straight above head with left arm and hold at top.

Do not bend your torso to the side. Reach for as long as you are comfortable and then bring your left arm back to your side.

Then repeat the stretch with the right arm. Left, right, left, right.

You should feel a gentle stretch in the lat region (side of torso). You are elongating your spinal muscles and decompressing your joints with this stretch.

Tricep (Back of the arm) Stretch

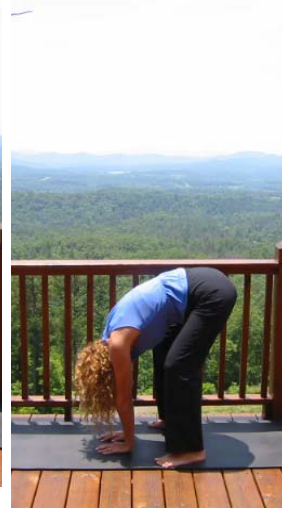
(Left, right, left, right)



Stand in ready position. Bend left arm at the elbow and reach backward with your left hand as if grabbing your shoulder blade. Grab left elbow with right hand. Pull left elbow backward and slightly toward your head.

You should feel a gentle stretch in the back of your upper arm. Hold stretch for as long as you are comfortable and then drop arm back to side in ready position. Repeat stretch on right side. Left, right, left, right.

Spinal Roll



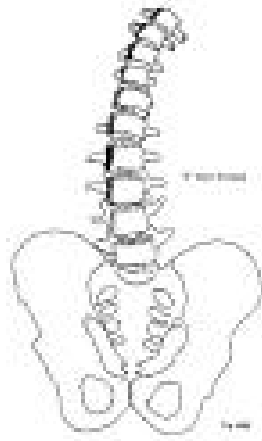
Spinal Rolls are an excellent exercise designed for increasing range of motion in every area of the spine, from the neck all the way to the lower back. Start by taking a wide stance on your mat with your knees soft and relaxed. Then, slowly bend your head, with arms and shoulders hanging loosely. Try to imagine rolling one vertebrae at a time as you reach toward the mat in front of your feet.

Go as far as you can comfortably with knees in squatting type position. Ideal position at bottom of exercise is placing palms on ground while letting head hang loosely to traction shoulders. If you are not able to put your hands on the mat in front of you, simply roll down as far as you are comfortable with arms hanging loosely in front of you.

Reverse order on way up. Concentrate on rolling up the spine, one vertebra at a time. Round your lower back, then the area between your shoulders and then your neck. End in ready position looking straight ahead. Repeat exercise by bending your neck and rolling down again.



Set 2: Low Back Range of Motion Series



- Flexion
- Extension
- Rotation
- Lateral Flexion

The Range of Motion stretches for the low back and neck are very similar and involve the same order of stretches for each part of the spine.

The range of motion stretches simply take those two parts of the spine through their normal ranges of motion, which keeps the spinal joints more flexible and less prone to pain, stiffness, and arthritis.

In these exercises Flexion basically means bending forward, Extension means bending backward. Rotation is twisting or rotating to the side, and Lateral flexion is bending to the side.

Low Back Flexion



Low Back flexion is basically bending forward. Stand with your feet as far apart as comfortable and slowly bend forward, reaching straight back through legs if possible. Hold stretch.

You should feel a stretch in the back of your thighs as you reach through your legs. This is also a great hamstring stretch. Do not force or overstretch on the range of motion stretches. Return to starting position and repeat the exercise.

Low Back Extension



Start in ready position with your feet apart and your hands at your sides. Slowly bend backward at the waist with your hands on your hips supporting your back, keeping your knees soft. Be very careful not to overextend your lower back. Repeat stretch remembering to breathe throughout.

Low Back Rotation

(left, right, left, right)



Start in ready position. While standing with your feet shoulder width apart and your knees bent, make a fist with your hands and put your knuckles together in front of your chest with your elbows parallel to the floor. Your feet remain flat on the mat throughout this stretch.

Slowly begin twisting your body to the left side, with your arms still parallel to the floor. Hold the twist, feeling a stretch in your low back. Then, slowly return to the center and begin twisting to the right side. Come back to ready position. Left, right, left, right.

Low Back Lateral Flexion

(left, right, left, right)



You will finish the low back range of motion series with two sets of lateral flexion or side bends. Start in ready position. Slowly raise your right arm over your head and reach to the left side with your right arm while bending at the waist. Do not rotate your torso. Keep your knees soft and relaxed. Stretch and hold.

Then, slowly bend to the right side while reaching with the left arm. Bend (Laterally flex) to Left side first, then the right side. The order is Left, right, left, right. Don't forget to breathe.

**This stretch completes the
low back range of motion series.**

Set 3: Neck Range of Motion Series



- **Flexion**
- **Extension**
- **Rotation**
- **Lateral Flexion**

This series consists of the same type of range of motion stretches as the low back series: 2 sets each of flexion and extension, followed by 2 sets of rotation and lateral flexion (with left and right portions).

Please use caution and listen to your body while performing all range of motion stretches. Do not push your spine past its normal limits or use bouncing type motions. Let the weight of your head help traction out your neck muscles on the following stretches.

You may want to perform these exercises in front of a mirror so that you can measure your progress and note any imbalances in the two sides.

Neck flexion



Start in ready position. Slowly begin by bringing your chin toward your chest to a point that is comfortable for you.

Hold for a few seconds. Then, bring your head back up to ready position and repeat stretch.

Neck Extension



Start in a neutral ready position, then gradually bring your head backward into to a point that is comfortable.

Hold for a few seconds. Return to ready position and repeat. Do not force this stretch. Slow and careful.

Neck rotation

(Left, right, left, right)



Return to ready position and then look over left shoulder (left rotation) as far as you can comfortably. Keep upper torso still. Return to ready position and then look over the right shoulder (right rotation).

Return to ready position looking straight ahead and then look over the left shoulder. Left, right, left, right.

Neck Lateral Flexion (Left, right, left, right)



Just as you did with the low back series, you will now finish the neck range of motion series with two sets of lateral flexion or side bends of the neck.

Start in ready position looking straight ahead. With shoulders fixed, bring your left ear to your left shoulder. Hold for a few seconds and then bring your right ear to your right shoulder. Let the weight of your head help traction out your neck. Left, right, left, right.

This stretch completes the neck range of motion series.

Set 4: Shoulder Rolls (Forward and Backward)

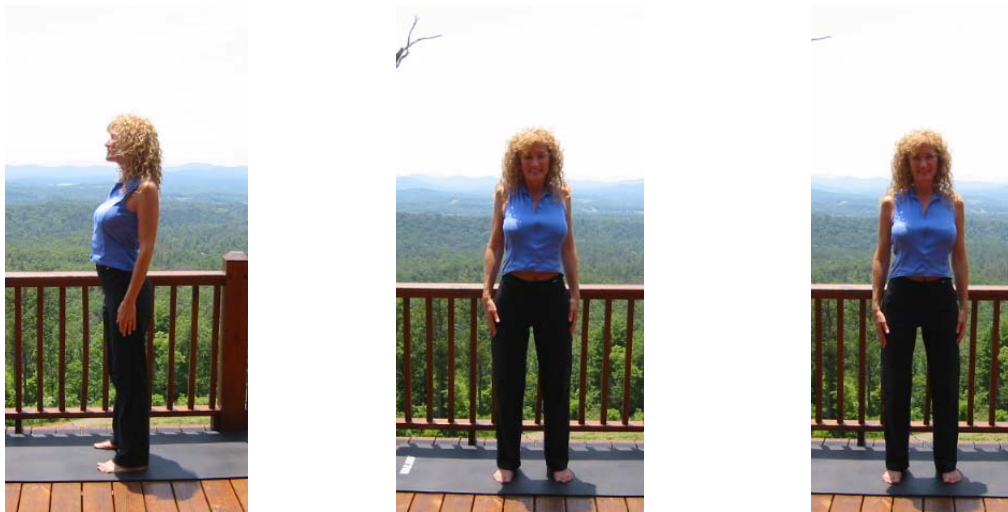
Forward Shoulder Rolls



Starting in ready position, raise both shoulders to your ears in a rolling type motion and do 2 forward shoulder rolls. Roll slowly while moving only your shoulder joints and try to imagine them moving in a small, complete circle as you go.

Now, reverse the order and do 2 backward shoulder rolls . Start in ready position and begin slowly rolling your shoulders backward, visualizing a complete circle as you go.

Backward Shoulder Rolls



Set 5: Swimming Stretches

Forward Swimming

(Left, right, left, right)



Start in ready position. Straighten your left arm and bring it behind your body with your palm facing forward. Reach forward over in a freestyle swimming type motion. Try to make a circular motion with your entire shoulder joint as you go.

Reach forward with your fingertips and bend slightly forward at the waist. First circle with the left arm and then the right arm. Left, Right, Left, Right.

Backward Swimming

(Left, right, left, right)



Now you are ready to swim backstroke. Start in ready position. Straighten your left arm and bring your left hand back with palm facing forward as if swimming the backstroke. Keep knees loose and do not hyperextend lower back. Reach back with your fingertips and try to imagine a circular motion in your shoulder joint as you swim backward. Then repeat backward swimming with your right arm. Left, right, left, right.

Set 6: Fencing and Chopping Wood

Fencer's Stretch (Lunges)

(Left, right, left, right)



This exercise helps stretch out the insides of the thighs and the knee joints. Start in ready position and then turn your body to the left side while taking a wide step to the left. When viewed from the side, your knee should not extend past your toe on this stretch.

You should feel a gentle stretch mostly in the back of your right thigh. If you don't feel a stretch, you may need to take a larger step forward. Hold stretch to the left with hands either resting on thighs or pointing parallel with the floor. Return to ready position and then lunge to the right side repeating the same motions as before. Left, right, left, right.

Chop Wood



Start by bringing your hands together above your head as if you were grasping an ax. Slowly bring your hands down in a chopping type motion and reach through your legs as far as comfortably possible. Do two reps of this stretch very slowly concentrating on your breathing the entire time.

END OF STANDING STRETCHES

MAT STRETCHES

Set 7: Low Back Mat

(Rack, Single knee, Double knee, Hamstring)

The Rack



This is an excellent stretch for anyone suffering from lower back pain. It also helps reduce stress and encourage deep breathing. Lie on your mat flat on your back, with your arms reaching above your head. Take a deep breath while reaching with your fingertips and pointing your toes downward.

Your entire body should be in a straight line, as if you were being pulled on a rack. Hold this position as long as comfortable and then relax, letting your arms bend and pushing your breath out with your stomach muscles.

Repeat exercise when you are ready, reaching above your head with your hands and pointing your toes downward. While you are stretching and extending your body, you should feel a stretch in the back of your arms, your stomach and the front of your feet with this exercise.

Single Knee to Chest

(Left, right, left, right)



Lie on your back on your mat with your arms to the sides, your knees bent, and your feet flat on the floor. Take a deep breath in and grab your left knee with both hands. Hug your left leg toward your chest as far as you are comfortable. Make sure that your right leg is bent and relaxed while you are hugging your left knee to your chest. Release the left knee and repeat the stretch with the right knee. Left , right, left, right.

Double Knee to chest



Lie on your back on your mat with your arms to the sides, your knees bent, and your feet flat on the floor. Take a deep breath and grab both knees with your hands while pulling knees back toward your chest, curling your body up in a ball.

Hold that position for as long as you are comfortable, concentrating on rounding and stretching the lower back muscles. When you are ready, relax and return to starting position. Repeat stretch.

Hamstring stretch

(Left, right, left, right)



Lie on your back on your mat with your arms to the sides, your knees bent, and your feet flat on the floor. While raising your left leg up in the air, place your hands behind your left calf and pull your leg backward toward your chest.

Keep your right knee bent and relaxed while pulling on your left leg. Pull left leg back as far as you are comfortable, while keeping the knee slightly bent. It is not necessary to try to straighten your leg on this stretch.

Hold the stretch and then allow left leg to return to starting position with both feet on the floor and both knees bent. Then grab the right leg and repeat stretch with right side. Left, right, left, right.

Set 8: Low Back Raise and Twist

Pelvic Raise



Lie on your back on your mat with your arms to the sides, your knees bent, and your feet flat on the floor. With hands pressing down to the floor, gradually raise your body up off the mat, keeping the knees bent and raising the pelvic area upward as far as possible.

You should feel a gentle stretch in the front of your thighs on this exercise when performed correctly. This is also a strengthening exercise.

Hold this position as long as you are comfortable and then lower your buttocks back to the mat to starting position. Breathe deeply throughout exercise.

Twists / Backcrackers

(Twist to Left Side, right side, left, right)



Sit on your mat with your legs outstretched and your hands on the floor by your sides. Cross your left leg over your right leg with your foot resting to the right of your right knee. Place your right elbow on the outer part of your left knee. Plant your left hand behind you on the mat directly behind you as far as comfortable possible.

Twist your upper body while pressing against your left knee with your right elbow. Hold this position as long as possible. Sometimes your back will crack in this position, hence the name of the exercise.

Remember to breathe deeply throughout this stretch. Release the stretch and return to starting position with both legs outstretched in front of you and hands on the floor by your side.

Twists / Backcrackers

(Twist to Right Side)



Then repeat stretch by placing your right leg over your outstretched left leg and putting your left elbow on the outer side of your right knee. Hold stretch and repeat. To the left, right, left, right.

Set 9: Runner's Stretches (Butterfly, Toe Touch, Reach through legs)

Butterfly Stretch



To begin this stretch, sit on the floor with your legs stretched out to either side comfortably in front of you and your knees slightly bent. Sit up on the mat with your back fairly straight and begin bringing the soles of your feet together in front of you as far as you are comfortable.

Place your elbows on the inner part of your knees and begin pushing them downward toward the floor. You should feel a gentle stretch in your inner thigh while performing this stretch. Push your knees down as far toward the floor as is comfortably possible and hold for a few seconds. Relax and return to starting position. Repeat Stretch.

Toe Touch

(Left, right, left, right)



To begin this stretch, sit on the floor with your legs stretched out to either side comfortably in front of you and your knees slightly bent. Bend forward at the waist and reach toward your left ankle, grasping it with your hands if possible. Do not overstretch or bounce and remember to keep both knees comfortable bent. Return to starting position and repeat stretch by reaching toward the right ankle. Left, right, left, right.

Reach through Legs



To begin this stretch, sit on the floor with your legs stretched out to either side comfortably in front of you and your knees slightly bent as before. Then simply bend forward at the waist and reach with your fingertips straight in front of your body toward the ground. Hold stretch while breathing deeply. Then, return to starting position and repeat stretch.

Set 10: Cool Down (3 Part Cat Stretch / Child's Pose)

3 Part Cat Stretch (Cat, Camel, Shell)

1.



Cat

When performed correctly, the 3 part cat stretch is one of the most effective exercises for preventing and reducing lower back pain and stiffness. Start the stretch on all fours like a cat with your hands directly under your shoulders and your knees directly under your hips. Slowly drop your stomach down while raising your head and chin upward, arching your back like a cat stretching. Try to keep your arms and legs straight under you as you stretch and hold this position.

Then, gradually drop your forehead down and round your lower back into a position resembling the hump of a camel (this position is sometimes called the camel stretch). Hold the rounded back camel position as long as comfortable while letting your head hang loosely downward.

2.



Camel

3.



Then, begin reaching forward with your fingertips while collapsing your upper body onto the front of your thighs as much as comfortably possible. Keep reaching in front of you with your buttocks resting on your heels and your forehead pressed on the mat. Allow your bodyweight to relax into the mat in this position while breathing deeply. This position is known as the shell stretch and can be quite relaxing.

Then, place your hands back in starting position and return slowly to the arched cat position. These three stretches should flow smoothly into each other. Repeat the 3 part series by moving next into the camel position and then into the shell stretch.

Review of Cat, Camel, Shell Stretch



Wind Down:

Child's Pose



The Child's pose is a relaxing decompressing type stretch and is a natural progression from the shell stretch. There are no repetitions of this pose. It is designed to wind your body down and help reduce stress. Simply kneel on the mat with your shins against the floor and your buttocks resting on your calves curling your body into a ball.

Place your forehead on the mat and let the weight of your head and upper shoulders sink into the mat. Place your arms by your sides with your palms facing upward. Breathe deeply and continuously throughout this stretch, and try to clear your mind. This exercise is both the end of the mat stretches and the end of the entire Zoga routine.

END OF MAT STRETCHES



END OF ZOGA ROUTINE