



POSING AS A HOUSE SITTER

Have mat will travel!

by Andrew Redfern

Yoga is one exercise regime that you can definitely take on the road!

The benefits of yoga can certainly enhance the house sitting lifestyle, especially as you encounter long plane trips, extended sitting on buses or trains and sleeping in a variety of beds. Keeping your body mobile and joints and muscles in good shape enhances the nomadic lifestyle.

With a few yoga poses you can work through any aches and pains that you may encounter. A regular yoga practice can also help to quieten the mind and help you relax and sleep better. Below are some tips and suggestions for yoga on the road that I've found useful.

Find a space to do yoga

One component of getting setup in a new house is the setting up of my yoga space. I usually use a spare bedroom, or even our own bedroom if no other space is available. I opt for space away from the communal living areas and somewhere I can retreat to at some stage during the day to practice.

It's ideal if the mat and area can be set up permanently rather than having to pack it up each day. If the mat is lying there, you are more likely to get on it, and often getting on the mat is the hardest part of any yoga practice! Once you're there you get into the groove and start working through the poses.



I also look for some wall space but more often than not have used a door – just warn your traveling companion to knock before entering, in case you are in a pose up against the door.

Improvise and be inventive

My yoga equipment whilst traveling consists of a mat, two belts and two bricks. Coming from an [Iyengar Yoga](#) background, I'm used to using lots of props, but it's not practical to travel with blankets, bolsters, and wedges.

Part of the fun is learning to improvise and I've used various chairs, lounge, and other furniture to modify some of the poses.

Towels (especially beach towels) are a great alternative to blankets and can be used for head support. Or three stacked towels can be a bolster substitute. Don't use pillows or cushions as these are too soft and don't give enough resistance and support. Instead of bricks, use large books, which can usually be found around the home you are sitting in.

Start small and keep it regular

A regular practice is key to realizing the benefits of yoga. But don't think you have to do a long practice. Starting with ten to fifteen minutes each day is ideal and you can always build up to longer.

Fifteen minutes each day is better than one or two long sessions a week. Personally I find I naturally end up on the mat mid-late afternoon, but work out what is best for you and your routine. Early morning can sometimes be the best time to practice as then you won't be distracted by other things during the day.

In the house sitting lifestyle, establish a routine as part of your other activities such as walking the dog or feeding the cat. Wait at least two hours after eating before practicing. And of course, as you move from place to place, new routines have to be established – all part of the fun!

Find a local class or workshop

I attend Iyengar classes whenever possible, but I also explore other styles, and actively seek out local schools and classes. In our recent house sit in Palm Springs, the nearest Iyengar school was 35 minutes drive away so I opted for Aerial Yoga. It was a lot of fun and even helped me understand my usual practice in new ways.

I've also attended workshops that were being held during our stay in a particular location. These can range from focussing on particular poses to more general well-being workshops such as Yoga and Digestion and Essential Oils for Healthy Living.

Joining the local yoga school Facebook groups is a great way to quickly get connected with the local yoga community. [MindBody Online app](#) is used by many studios, so you can find local studios and view their timetables.

Research of this nature is all part of the fun of house sitting and once we have a sit confirmed, I start to explore which studio I will attend.



What to practice






There are many videos and downloadable resources online that can provide you with practice sequences. Apps are also available that will walk you through a series of postures with timings etc.

At all times you should practice within your capabilities and don't attempt anything that you haven't tried in a class or with a teacher.






It's not so much about achieving the perfect pose (do they even exist?), but rather about getting in touch with your body.

So take time and enjoy the process!






Sequence 1:

<p>ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA Downward Facing Dog Pose</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press equally into both hands and feet (even though heels may not touch the floor) • Keep width across the shoulders and elbows and legs straight 	<p>VRKSASANA Tree Pose</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be done with back to wall or facing wall to assist balance • Keep straight leg foot firmly planted into floor • Work towards having foot, knee & hip of standing foot aligned & vertical 	<p>UTKATASANA Chair Pose</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start from standing with hands above head and bend as if trying to sit on a chair • Can be done against wall too 	<p>TRIKONASANA Triangle Pose</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can place bottom hand on a brick or book or chair • Press down into feet before extending sideways • Repeat on other side • Keep neck relaxed 	<p>VIRABHADRASANA II Warrior 2 Pose</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep front ankle underneath knee (do not let it go past knee) • Press into back foot and keep back inner thigh lifted. • Repeat on other side
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Sequence 2:

<p>ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA Downward Facing Dog Pose</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't let your head drop too low • Press your index finger knuckle down into the mat • Don't let your elbows bend in - keep your arms straight 	<p>URDHVA MUKHA SVANASANA Upward Facing Dog Pose</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move shoulders back and down away from the ears • Head should be last thing to go backwards • Keep the thighs engaged and lifted off the floor 	<p>NAVASANA Boat Pose</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be done with feet against wall to build up abdominal muscles • Protect your lower back by not slumping • Keep neck and jaw relaxed 	<p>BADDHA KONASANA Bound Angle Pose</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit on some height if needed to prevent slumping in the lower back • Press the soles, toes and heels of your feet together equally 	<p>UPAVISTA KONASANA Legs up the Wall Pose</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit on height as needed to keep length in the spine • Use belts if you are unable to reach your toes • Keep toes pointing towards the ceiling and thighs rolling in • Alternate with Baddha Konasana 5 times
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Sequence 3:

<p>UTTHITA HASTA PADANGUSTHASANA I Hand to Big Toe Pose 1</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only go as high as you can with the leg straight – use a chair or low bench if needed • Can use a belt (or scarf) to wrap around foot if you cannot reach • Repeat for both legs 	<p>UTTHITA HASTA PADANGUSTHASANA II Hand to Big Toe Pose 2</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep standing leg straight with foot firmly planted into the floor • Can use a belt around foot of raised leg • Repeat on both sides • Standing leg arm can also be on hip 	<p>PARIVRITTA NATARAJASANA Standing Twist</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand alongside a wall and twist towards the wall • Twist from the base of your spine, not your shoulders • Keep shoulders down 	<p>UTTANASANA Forward Fold</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong hamstring stretch • Bend starts at the hips • Take height (eg chair under the head) as required to keep the legs straight • Can rest buttocks against wall as well 	<p>VIPARITA KARANI Legs up the Wall Pose</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heels should be against the wall and take the distance from the wall as required • Use blankets or towels to get chest above the head • Great for relaxation
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author bio

Andrew Redfern is one half of Global Wanderers. He and his partner Christopher have been full time house sitters since May 2016. Prior to becoming nomadic, Andrew attended at least three classes a week at his local yoga studio and in February 2017, whilst house sitting back in his home town of Sydney, started yoga teacher training which he continues to do whilst on the road.

Being able to explore the world as a yogi is great and he encourages everyone to get on the mat every day – even if it is only for 10-15 minutes.

You can read more about [Global Wanderers here](#) or follow [Andrew's yoga journey](#).

