

Proposal Yoga

By Lisa Pafe, CPP APMP & PMP



Yoga is a great way to reduce stress, increase flexibility and regain composure – all highly beneficial to the harried proposal professional. You don't need to roll out a yoga mat in order to relax. Just take 10 minutes at your desk and try these six proposal yoga poses. Remember to ease into these poses and stop immediately if you feel any pain or discomfort.

Sun Salutation - Kickoff

Greet the day (or the sunset). Stand up beside your desk, shoes off. Slowly raise your arms above your head breathing in through your nose until your palms touch.

Then, slowly swan dive down to the floor breathing out

through your nose, and letting your head, neck and arms dangle. You can shake your head yes and no to further relieve tension. If hamstrings are too tight, bend your knees slightly. Then slowly rise, breathing in, one vertebrae at a time, and raise your hands until palms touch above your head. Finally, slowly bring your palms together in front of your heart breathing out. Repeat as many times as needed.

Neck Stretch – Blue Team

Perfect when the proposal team is a pain in the neck! Continue to stand or sit back down in your chair. Slowly move your head to the left and let your gaze follow upward, and then the right. Follow with the Yes pose, in which you tilt your head as far back as comfortable and then tilt forward with your chin near your chest, relaxing into the pose each time and breathing slowly. Repeat the positions two more times.

Wrist Stretch – Pink Team

You've been up all night writing and reviewing, and now your wrists hurt. Sit up straight in your chair and press your hands down on the chair, fingers pointing outward. Raise your shoulders up and down slowly. Repeat several times. You can also do this pose standing by placing your hands on your desk.

Hip Stretch – Red Team

You have been chained to your desk, and your hips are tight. Bring your right ankle to rest on your left thigh, keeping the knee in line with your ankle as much as possible. Push gently down on your thigh. Hold three to five breaths. You may forward bend to intensify the stretch if you like. Repeat with the left leg up.

Back Twist – Gold Team

Relieve the pressure and tension of impending deadlines. Sit in your chair, cross one leg over the other and grasp your top knee with your opposite hand. Hold the back of your chair with your free hand and slowly twist your upper body and head towards that arm. Hold for 10 counts. Switch your legs and arms and twist in the opposite direction.

Meditation Pose – Home Stretch

Useful when you can't figure out how to cut 5 more pages to get the proposal within page count and still remain compliant. Sit down in your chair with your feet on the floor. Relax your hands on your lap, palms facing upward. Close your eyes and relax your face and jaw. Focus inward on your third eye (between your eyebrows). Slowly take a deep breath in through your nose for 5 counts, hold briefly, and then breath out of your mouth for 8-10 counts. Repeat several times.

Remember, even if you only have 10 minutes free, you can regain a little bit of sanity through these poses. Namaste!



Proposal Meditation

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Maybe you don't have the time or energy for yoga, but you do want to relax with some meditation. During this breathing meditation, you will focus on your breath. Meditation will calm your mind and relax your body. There is no right or wrong way to meditate. Whatever you experience during this breathing meditation is right for you. Don't try to make anything happen, just observe.

Begin by finding a comfortable position, but one in which you will not fall asleep! Sitting with your hands resting lightly in your lap is a good position to try. Let your fingers curl naturally inward, or make a circle by pressing your forefinger and thumb lightly together.

Close your eyes or focus on one spot in the room, your Dristi. Dristi is a soft gaze, focus or awareness that keeps you attentive to what your body is doing in relation to your breath and your mind. Set your intention for the day ahead. Set it as a positive affirmation. For example, if you want to learn today, think: "I am learning." If you want to be productive, think: "I am productive."

Now, roll your shoulders slowly forward and then slowly back.

Lean your head from side to side, lowering your left ear toward your left shoulder, and then your right ear toward your right shoulder.

Relax your muscles. Unclench your jaw.

Observe your breathing. Notice how your breath flows in and out. At first, make no effort to change your breathing in any way, simply notice how your body breathes. Sit quietly, seeing in your mind's eye your breath flowing gently in and out of your body.

When your attention wanders, as it will, just focus back again on your breathing. If you can't focus easily, you can think to yourself, "I breathe in... I breathe out..."

Notice any stray thoughts, but don't dwell on them. Simply let the thoughts pass.

See how your breath continues to flow...deeply... calmly.

Notice the stages of a complete breath... from the in breath... to the pause that follows... the exhale... and the pause before taking another breath...

See the slight breaks between each breath.

Feel the air entering through your nose...picture the breath flowing through the cavities in your sinuses and then down to your lungs...

As thoughts intrude, allow them to pass, and return your attention to your breathing.

Feel your chest and stomach gently rise and fall with each breath.

Now as you inhale, count silently... one two three.

Hold for a moment.

As you exhale, count...one two three.

Hold for a moment, and repeat two to eight more times.

Notice now how your body feels. Now it is time to gently reawaken your body and mind. Keeping your eyes closed, notice the sounds around you. Feel the floor beneath you. Feel your clothes against your body. Remember your positive affirmation for the day.

Wiggle your fingers and toes. Shrug your shoulders. Open your eyes, and remain sitting for a few moments longer. Then, straighten out your legs, and stretch your arms and legs gently.

Sit for a few moments more, enjoying how relaxed you feel, and experiencing your body reawaken and your mind returning to a renewed level of alertness. Feel the increased energy for the tasks ahead. By calming your mind and body, you can clear your head to make way for maximum productivity! Namaste!

