

Yoga poses have been recognized as a powerful tool for easing menstrual pain and discomfort. Through gentle stretches, deep breathing, and mindful movements, yoga helps to improve circulation, relax tense muscles, and reduce stress, all of which contribute to alleviating menstrual cramps. Certain poses specifically target the pelvic area and lower abdomen, providing relief from pain and promoting relaxation. Asanas like child's pose, cat-cow pose, and supine twist gently stretch the lower back and release tension in the pelvic region, offering soothing effects. Additionally, yoga encourages a connection between the mind and body, fostering a sense of calm and balance, which can positively impact menstrual symptoms. Regular practice of yoga poses during menstruation can bring significant relief and enhance overall well-being during this time.

1. Bound Angle Pose - Baddha Konasana

Diarrhoea and constipation can be an issue when it comes to periods, not super fun but, thankfully, bound angle pose can help. Not only does it soothe your digestive system but it can also provide relief from painful menstrual cramps. Oh, and it stimulates your ovaries making it a reproductive health power pose. If you're feeling fatigued, spend some time in a bound angle pose.

How: From a seated position, bring the bottoms of the feet together with the knees bent out to the sides, and interlace the fingers around the toes. 2. Inhale and press the hips down and reach the crown of the head up towards the ceiling. Drop the shoulders down and back and press the chest towards the front.

2 Cat/Cow

Cat cow is often done in yoga classes as a way to mobilize your spine and get ready for backbends but this pose is equally as good for releasing tension in your hips, back and abdomen if you're experiencing painful cramps.

How: Come to a tabletop position, with your hips directly over your knees and your shoulders stacked over your wrists. As you inhale, drop your belly towards the ground and shine your chest forwards, then as you exhale, round your shoulders and draw your belly button in towards your spine, mimicking a cat. Move through these two positions as many times as feels good.

3 Ardha Matsyendrasana (Half Lord of the Fishes Pose)

This twisting posture can generate movement throughout your midsection—and offer you some relief from painful period cramps. By contracting through your midsection with this seated twist, Remember to only twist as far as feels comfortable for you and your body.

How: Sit with your legs outstretched in front of you in Staff Pose / Dandasana. Lift your right leg and place your right foot on the outside of your left knee. Bend your left leg and place the left foot on the outside of your right hip. As you inhale, press your sitting bones down and lengthen your spine. Repeat on the other side.

OR

3A Supta Matsyendrasana (Supine Spinal Twist)

If you would prefer not to do a seated twisting posture, I recommend trying Supine Spinal Twist on your back. With this gentle twist, you generate movement in your pelvic region—without being too strenuous on your physical body. If your cramping is less severe, you can twist a little deeper in this pose. However, if you're feeling more pain or discomfort in your midsection, a slight twist will still offer your body relief.

How: Lying on your back, bring your arms out to the sides with the palms facing down in a T position. Bend the right knee and place the right foot on the left knee. Exhale drop the right knee over to the left side of your body, twisting the spine and low back. Look at the right fingertips. Keep the shoulders flat on the floor, close your eyes, and relax into the posture. Let gravity pull the knee down, so you do not have to use any effort in this posture. Breathe and hold for 6-10 breaths. To release: inhale and roll the hips back to the floor, and exhale the leg back down to the floor. Repeat on the other side. If your knees don't touch the ground, place a block or pillow under your knees to support you. If your top knee doesn't meet your bottom knee, place a block or pillow between your thighs. Even if your knees can touch each other or the ground, placing a pillow between them can make you even more comfortable and allow you to fully relax into the pose.

4 Child's Pose - Balasana

Yoga isn't just about external flexibility. The impact of many poses also benefits your organs, acting as a sort of internal massage. Child's pose does this by flexing your reproductive organs, as well as releasing tension in your back, shoulders, and neck. If you're among the masses of uterus owners who feel achy in the muscles and joints during menstruation, you'll love this simple pose. Stay in it as long as you want—the calming effects it has on your mind are just as beneficial as the relaxation your body will feel.

How: In this pose, kneel and sit on your knees. Lean forward, keeping your buttocks on your heels (or for wide leg child's pose bring your big toes together and your knees out wide) If this position hurts your ankles, you can roll a towel up underneath each ankle.

Bring your head to the floor and relax your arms down to the floor in front of you. Your head might reach the floor, or you may find it's more comfortable to stack your hands or even fists and then rest your forehead on them. Change the hand that is on top after a few moments. Take a few slow breaths. They don't need to be big breaths, try instead to slow down your inhale and exhale and then just relax. If your arms are extended, you'll find a greater stretch for your chest and shoulders

5 Apanasana (Knees-to-Chest Pose)

This is one of my favourite yoga poses for period cramps, especially if the cramps you're experiencing are particularly intense. If you're at the beginning of your period, this is a great pose to offer some relief—without requiring too much active movement.

How: Lying on the back, draw the knees gently in toward the chest. Inhaling, release the knees slightly away from the chest; exhaling, hug them in. As simple as this appears, take it easy on the lower back. Play with rocking side to side or moving the knees around in circles to explore releasing tension in the lower back.

6 Inverted leg pose - Viparita Karani

Physical, mental, and emotional benefits abound in this pose. Like with many of the other poses we've talked about. Inverted leg pose improves circulation and digestion, lowers blood pressure, boosts energy levels, and soothes the nervous system. It's also said to increase creative thinking and problem-solving (super helpful if you're in the stage of menstruation where you feel like you can't focus!). Emotionally, inverted leg pose can help you keep your chill

How: Lie down on a flat surface. Position yourself in a way that your tailbone is pointed at the base of the wall. Shimmy your hips as close as possible to the wall, then start walking your feet up the wall until your body forms an L shape. Make adjustments so that the posture feels relaxing, use a pillow under your head or a towel at the base of your back

Listening to your body is of utmost importance when practising yoga. Each individual's body is unique, and it communicates its needs and limitations in various ways. By paying attention to sensations, discomfort, and even subtle cues during a yoga session, you can prevent injuries and ensure a safe and effective practice. Your body knows its limits, and it's essential to honour and respect them. If a pose feels uncomfortable or painful, it's crucial to modify or ease off rather than pushing through it. Similarly, if you feel fatigued or in need of rest, allowing yourself to take breaks or choose a more gentle practice is essential. By cultivating body awareness and practising self-compassion, you can adapt your yoga practice to suit your body's needs, enhance your physical and mental well-being, and foster a deeper connection between your mind and body.