

THIS ANCIENT ART OFFERS A WAY FOR BOATERS TO STAY LIMBER, TONED, AND STRONG, ON THE BOAT OR OFF. DANIELLE BROWN HELPS YOU GET STARTED. PHOTOGRAPHY BY EDDIE BERMAN

YOGA On Board

As we know, the best boats are able to adapt to their surroundings and keep their crews content and feeling safe, even as wind, current, and the boater's choice of course can sometimes work against each other: Indeed, such vessels are able to remain centered and maintain poise and balance, even in the face of tricky and ever-changing conditions.

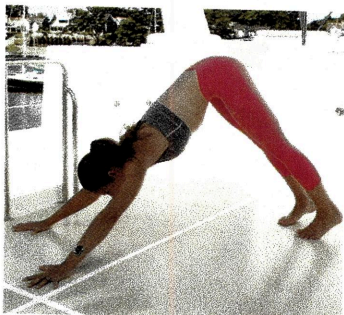
So should it be with your body, even when you're spending most of your time on board. The balance, strength, and flexibility that yoga can impart may help you to find your way through shifting winds, rough seas, and other challenges. And since all you need is a flat surface and a little room, it's an ideal form of exercise for boaters.

Yoga is a voyage of awareness that will help you find the flow of your life. The physical postures stretch and strengthen your muscles and joints. The still work of breathing and meditation helps you

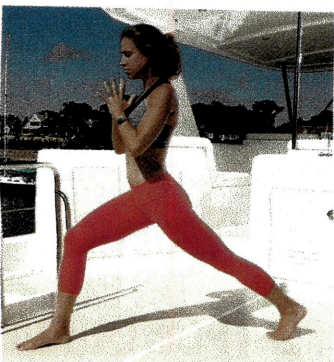
to acknowledge a relationship of balance: between self and nature, between body and mind, between intention and attention.

Stretching does not need to include four walls, incense, and a guru. Your boat can be your "studio." No allotted time is too little to enjoy the space between the rush of schedules. Relax, kick back, and stretch. The poses shown here are all simply suggestions and there are many more that may work for your needs.

The real teacher, the one that is inside you, will guide you to better balance. Take your time and remember that yoga is referred to as a "practice" because it's a constantly shifting, evolving thing. The body lengthens and contracts just as the sun rises and sets. Get tuned in with the currents, and you'll be on your way. If you don't have an existing yoga practice, why not make today the day to start? Here's where to begin.

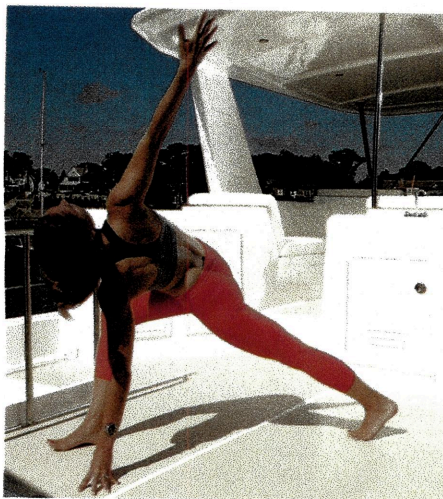


1. DOWNWARD FACING DOG — It's no wonder Adho Mukha Svanasana (downward facing dog) is often referred to as the one yoga pose you should choose, if you could choose only one daily. It stretches many major muscle groups and is grounding in its layers of contact with the deck. If your space is limited for this and all of the poses presented here, use the rails onboard, extra line, or whatever else you have on hand (or foot) for props. You'll be glad for additional support (particularly if you are cruising and the seas and wind are up) and perhaps you'll be inspired to continue to explore new stretches on your boat. Take your time in all transitions not just because you're balancing on the water, but because yoga should feel good. Place your hands on the rail or on the deck, at least shoulder distance apart. Walk your feet back so the arms are straight. Send the hips back to stretch the spine long and take stock of your hips and hamstrings too. Feel it: As part of the stretch, your upper chest should get closer to the deck. Now maintain this pose for a few breaths and, with your eyes turned down, reflect on the stretch: Where do you feel tight? Are you holding any tension unnecessarily? Perhaps in your neck and face? You may be surprised what you'll find.

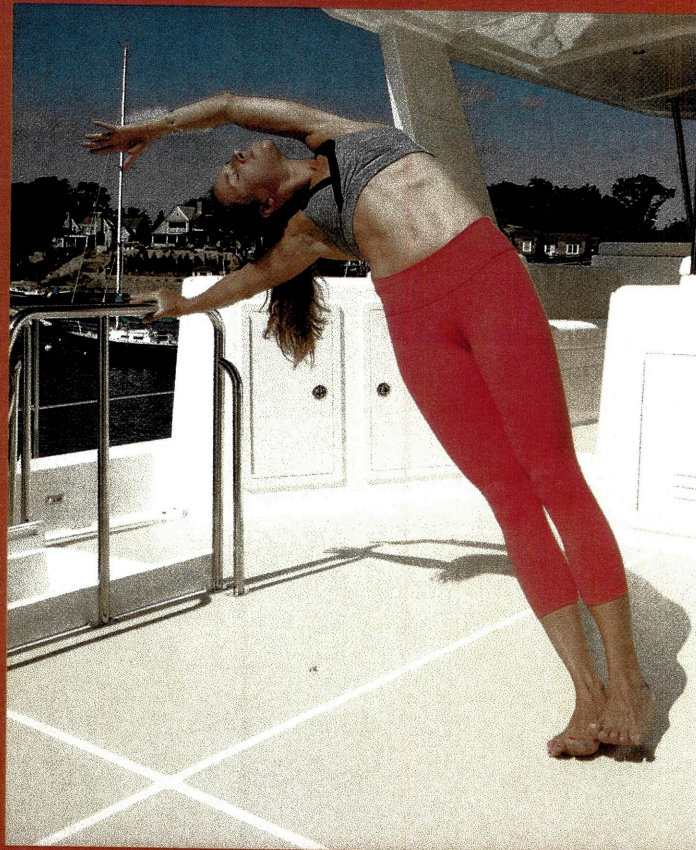


2. LUNGE — With your hands still on the rail or on the deck (from Downward Facing Dog), bring your right foot in front of you and scoot the other foot back. Stretch out through your forward knee until it finds its way over the heel. From the hip, lift the rear thigh way up and press

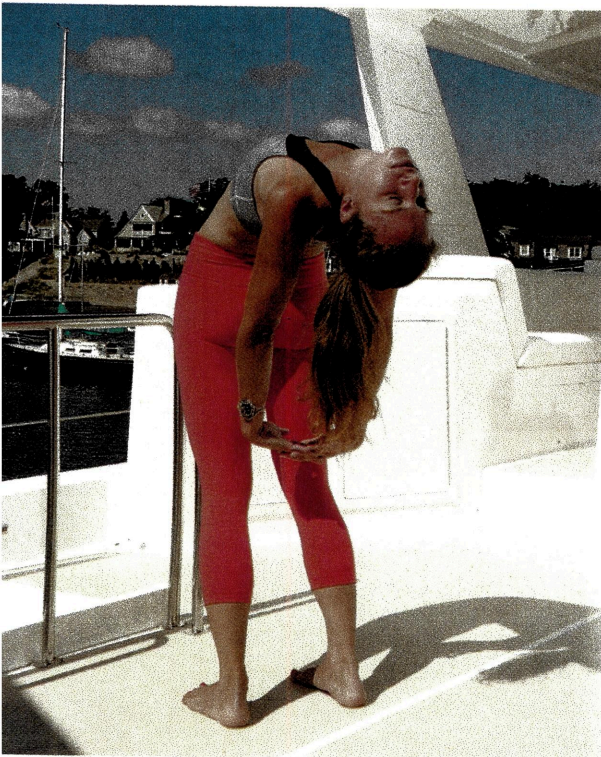
back through the heel, straightening the back leg. Hold it: Breathe in and out gently through your nose as you strengthen quad and stretch hip, calf, heel, and muscles between the toes that can stiffen after a long ride. Stay here and softly close your eyes for a beat.



3. TWIST — Keeping the shape of the legs (from the Lunge), reach the right arm up. Palm facing away from you. Stay with it: Your gaze may stay down or turn toward the horizon or up to the sky. Check in with the neck, as an extension of the spine, to help with that decision. The twist occurs here in the upper back and shoulder. The spine should feel refreshed. Look down and step the back leg forward and then the front leg back and repeat the lunge and twist on the other side. As a variation, drop the back knee down to the floor if your balance is challenged by the boat's movement.

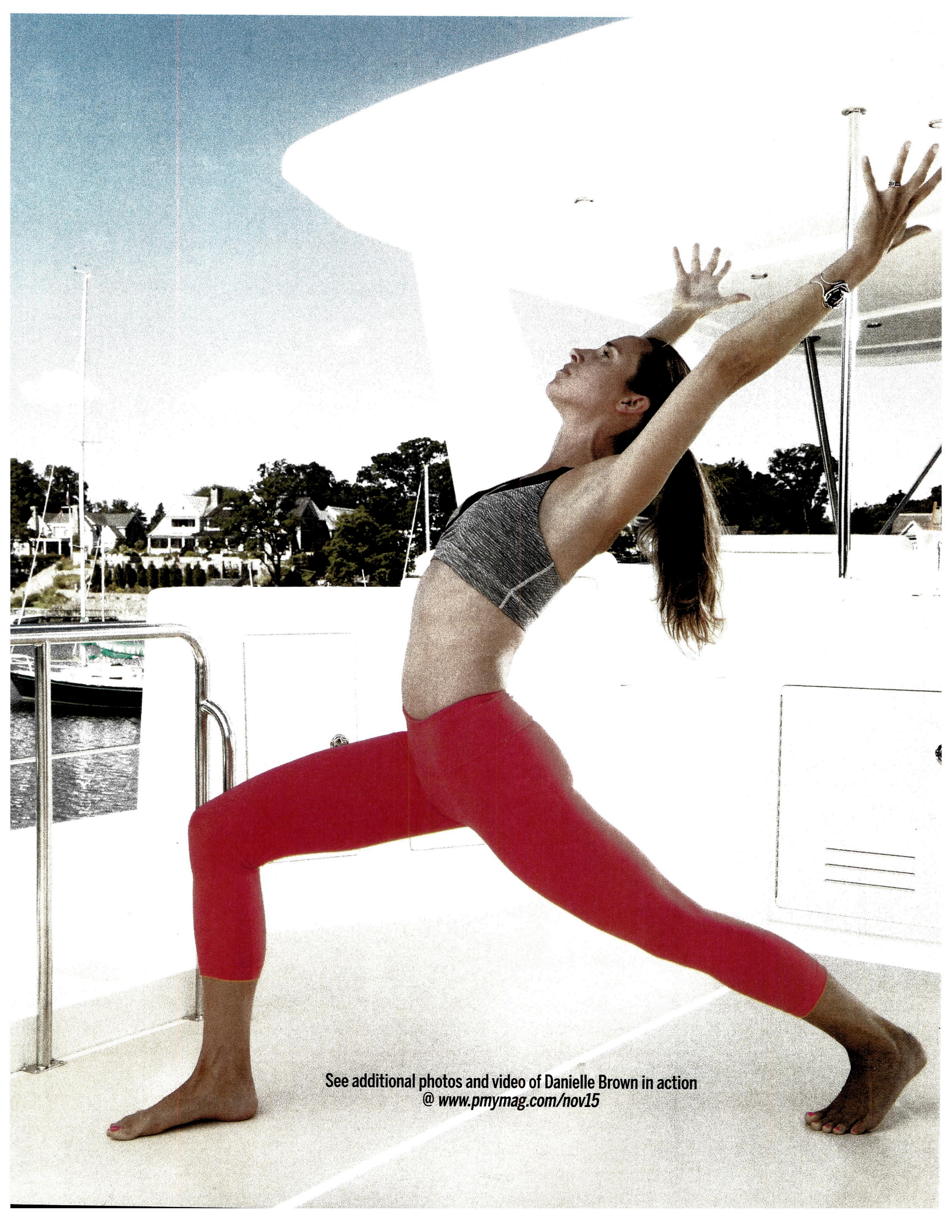


4. SIDE PLANK — Grab the rails of your boat, stack shoulders over the wrists, and turn to the outer rim on right foot, stacking hip over hip. The left foot may “drop anchor” in front of the right shin. Lift hips to maintain one long line from the feet to the crown of the head and engage the obliques, along the sides of your core. Keep breathing: Lift the left arm over the ear as side ribs decompress from all that time spent sitting at the helm, safely navigating unfamiliar, reef-strewn channels.

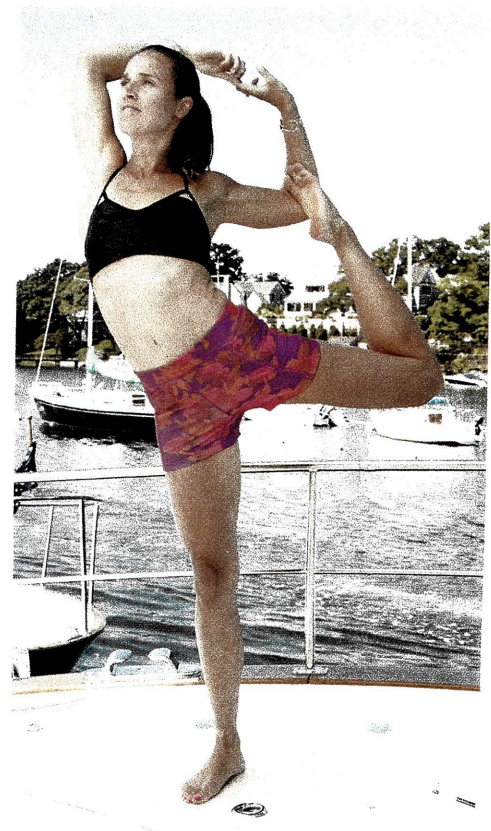


5. SHOULDER STRETCH — Hunched over a split-screen display all day or night, watching radar and AIS targets in conditions with reduced visibility, creates tension and cries out for a shoulder stretch. Reach hands, palms facing forward, behind back, checking in with any feedback from your rotator cuff. Turn palms to face one another and interlace your fingers behind your back. Reach your hands away from your lower back and peel open chest to the sky. Loosen up: Tight shoulders could lead to neck or back problems so consider adding a neck stretch like dropping ear to shoulder while hands are interlaced or gazing over one shoulder and then the other.

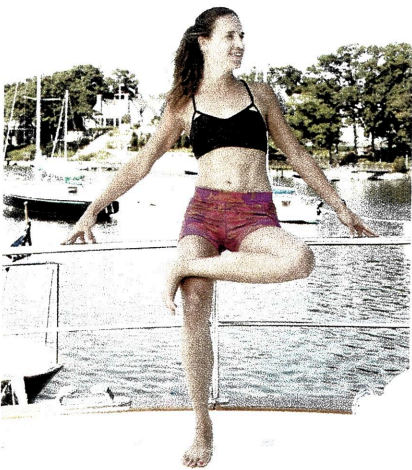




See additional photos and video of Danielle Brown in action
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6. QUAD STRENGTHEN AND STRETCH — While standing, bend your knees and send your hips back so you can see your toes. Keep glutes, quads, and core firm. One hand or two hands can stretch up or hold a railing for support. Press your feet down evenly to slowly stand up to full height. Take a quad stretch by reaching the right arm back to the right, lifted foot and gently pressing that foot back into the hand. Keep it up: Move back and forth between these two poses, pausing for a few breaths where you deem fit.



7. FIGURE FOUR — In a seated position on the rail or covering board, or on a chair, bring one ankle up and cross it over the opposite thigh. Flex your foot to engage the shin and protect the knee. A stretch occurs here in the inner thigh, outer hip, and lower back. Unwind: Stay where you are or hinge forward gently.

8. CAT COW / SEATED CRESCENT — Take a comfortable seated position. Place your hands on your thighs or use the end of a dockline to add an additional shoulder stretch or two. Work out the kinks: Slide your hands up your legs to round in the upper back and look down. Then slide your hands back towards your hips and look up and stretch back and shoulders. Or with line, reach the arms forward as the hands move away. Then reach the arms up overhead and back. Next, place the right hand next to the right hip, stretch the left arm overhead. Or using the line, elevate it overhead and hinge over to the right, hands moving away from each other. Gaze can turn up to the top arm. Repeat on the other side.

9. CONTINUED EXPLORATION — Your stretching may awaken a deeper knowledge of your body, and inspire you to continue to explore movement as a mechanism to greater harmony. ☐

Danielle Brown is Academy of Surfing Instructors SUP-certified and a Registered 200-hour Yoga Teacher. She has been teaching SUP Yoga since 2012 and loves the way it helps her go with the flow. She also teaches Core and Vinyasa Yoga onshore. Danielle will lead her second annual SUP & Yoga retreat at the Bitter End Yacht Club on Virgin Gorda, BVI, in February 2016. For more information, visit her Web site, and also say hello on Facebook and Instagram at ThumbSUP Yoga. www.thumbupyoga.com