

TIME TO SPLIT

Stretch your way to better flexibility with these simple exercises but don't forget to warm up your muscles first

PERSONAL TRAINER



PRADEEP PAUL

reduce the stresses of daily life. She pinpoints muscular tension (caused by

First things first: Do not, I repeat, do not attempt the pose in the main picture. Unless you are a gymnast, acrobat or yoga expert, it will hurt – badly.

Yvette Tee, who has been doing yoga for more than a decade, is now teaching Kryoga – a blend of yoga and martial arts fitness techniques which is especially good for those who suffer from sports injuries or back and neck pain – at Spaboutique (6 Nassim Road, tel: 6887-0760).

Asked for her secret to great flexibility, she says it comes from the regular practice of yoga and trying to

stress), tightness in the tendons or ligaments and toxic deposits in the joints as the three main causes of stiffness in the body, adding that one cannot achieve flexibility only in specific parts of the body: It has to be an overall suppleness that comes with time.

"There is no such thing as spot flexibility," says Tee, 37, who demonstrates three simple stretches on this page.

She points out: "All our bones, ligaments, tendons and muscles are interlinked." She stresses that you must warm up your muscles before launching into any stretches.

Here is her recommended warm-up routine: Start with some quick but light marching on the spot for about five minutes. While you are doing so, become aware of your breathing. Then, stand tall and take two to three breaths with your hands on your hips.

Now you are ready. Just don't try that split yet.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF YVETTE TEE

SHOULDER ROTATION

What it works: Increases flexibility in the shoulders.

How to do it: Stand tall and place your fingers on both sides of your shoulders. Inhale as you rotate your

shoulders, lifting your elbows up close to your ears (right).

Exhale as you lower your elbows in a backward motion till they touch the sides of your torso. Repeat 10 times, then do another 10 times in the opposite direction.



TORSO TWIST

What it works: Increases suppleness of the spine and also tones the waist, back and hips.

How to do it: Stand tall, legs hip-width apart and inhale as you raise your arms to the sides (above left). Exhale and twist your torso to the right – your left hand should be on your right shoulder and your right hand on your left hip – and look over your right shoulder (left).

Inhale as you return to the start position and repeat on the other side. Repeat 10 times on each side, holding the final twist for about 10 breaths.



BUTTERFLY FLAPS

What it works: Increases flexibility in the hips and groin as well as boosts blood circulation to the pelvic region.

How to do it: Sit with your knees bent, soles of the feet touching and heels pulled close to your groin.

Keeping your spine straight, relax your shoulders, hold your feet with your hands and spread your thighs wide as you lower your knees towards the floor (top). Gently flap your knees up and down 10 times.

From that position and keeping your knees as close to the floor as possible, inhale as you lengthen your spine and gaze upwards (middle). Then exhale and bend forward and try to touch your toes with your forehead (bottom).

Repeat 10 times. If you have stiff hips or a stiff back, move your feet further away from your groin.