



Get your om on!  
Enlighten your ride  
with the strength,  
flexibility, and feel-good  
benefits of yoga

BY LEAH FLICKINGER

# PERFECT **Flow**



Previous spread: Machines for Freedom GeoFloral Print Jersey, Endurance bib, and Machines cap; Tenspeed Hero Orange Pont du Gard socks. Opposite: Velocio Paint Jersey, Signature bibshort, and Signature wool socks. Right: Machines for Freedom Endurance bib

**S**an Francisco cyclist and yoga instructor Pat Bailey frequently can be found snapping selfies as she twists like a pretzel in surprising places, often with a bike. Those eye-catching poses have inspired a devoted and sizeable Instagram following—70K and counting—and helped Bailey, who pedals her road, mountain, and cruiser bikes all over the Bay Area, realize that yoga is a lot like cycling. “When you’re climbing slowly, breathing in that sweet pine air, and you’re focused on watching the trail and being on your bike,” she says, “that’s yoga.” Who knew the two had so much in common? Allow her to elaborate.

► **Most people think** that yoga is this esoteric thing. They associate it with being on your mat and believe that it has to do with certain poses in a sequence, or flow.

► **Cyclists would be** surprised to learn that they are doing yoga on their bike. Being aware of your breath and what your body is doing is yoga.

If you’re a cyclist, you’re already doing that.

► **I didn’t do traditional** yoga on a mat this morning, but I did it on my bike. On your bike you are aware that you have control over everything that happens there in that moment. You are in tune with the movement of your body and conscious of your breathing. It’s the same on a yoga mat.

ESSENTIAL YOGA FOR CYCLISTS

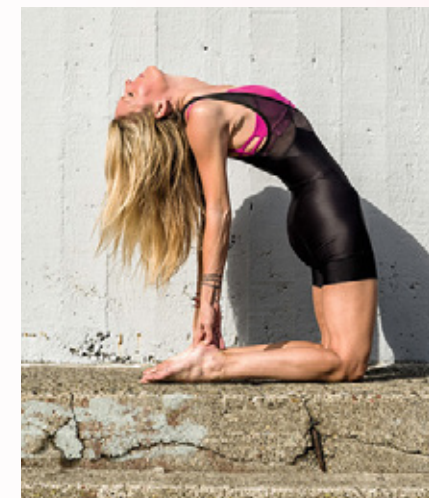


HEART OPENERS

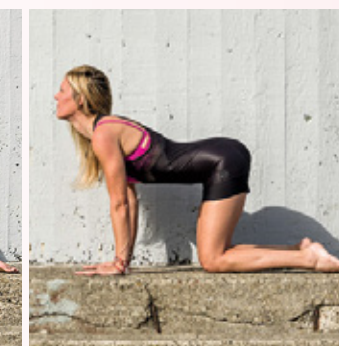
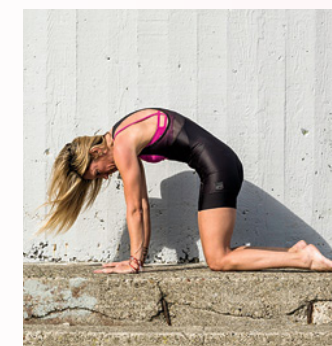
Counteract a leaned-over riding posture and improve breathing capacity by opening your chest and lungs. These poses also improve back strength and flexibility.



**Bridge /** Lie on your back with your knees bent. Position your feet about six inches away from your hips. Make sure that your feet are pointing straight ahead. On an inhale, press your feet into the floor and lift your pelvis as high as you comfortably can. Move your arms underneath your body and clasp your hands together between your feet. Hold for 30 to 60 seconds, breathing evenly. Slowly lower to start position, one vertebra at a time.



**Camel /** Kneel upright with your knees hip-distance apart. Press your shins and the top of your feet into the floor. Rest your hands on your lower back with your fingers pointing to the floor. Gently lean back. Beginners can hold this position. If you are comfortable here, reach down and hold on to each heel. Keep your head in a neutral position, or allow it to drop back. Hold for about 30 to 60 seconds. To release, bring your hands to the front of your hips. Inhale, lead with your heart, and lift your torso by pushing your hips down toward the floor. Your head should come up last.



**Cat-Cow /** Start on all fours, with your knees directly below your hips. Keep your wrists, elbows, and shoulders in line and perpendicular to the floor. Center your head in a neutral position, eyes looking at the floor. As you exhale, round your spine toward the ceiling. Allow your head to drop toward the floor, but don’t force your chin to your chest (left). As you inhale, arch your lower back and allow your belly to sink toward the floor. Lift your head to look straight forward (right). Repeat several times.

“THE YOGA-CYCLING CONNECTION IS SEAMLESS. PRACTICING YOGA HELPS PREPARE YOUR BODY TO BE ON YOUR BIKE.”





Previous spread and opposite: Tenspeed Hero Sous Les Pavés La Plage Jersey, Women's TSH Green bibshorts, and TSH White socks. Right: Machines for Freedom Endurance Bib.

► **Just like in the flow** of yoga there is a rhythm in cycling, and when you find it the ride becomes very Zen. I think this is why we get back on our bikes over and over again. And of course, both yoga and cycling have a natural flow—easy parts and hard parts.

► **In yoga we have a *drishti***, which is a gazing point. It's similar on a bike because you always want to be looking ahead to where you are going. So you have a *drishti* focused on the trail or road in front of you.

► **I picked up my first** road bike about seven years ago. My first ride was Paradise Loop in Marin County, which is about 24 miles, and I felt like I was riding in a postcard. Very quickly, as cycling does, it started to chip away at my belief barriers. That hill, which was huge when I just started, was getting easier.

► **I got hooked instantly.** A friend suggested I race. I thought I was too old. But I decided for my 40th birthday I would give myself a season of racing. I found a team and raced about 10 criteriums that year and did pretty decently for a first-timer.

► **I would find myself** smiling the whole time. I felt like I was living. It's the adrenaline. It's the camaraderie. It's going fast on your bike. It's the skill of it. It's the challenge of doing it better the next time.

► **There's a little bit of** spirituality in the yoga that I practice. It means

that you are offering your practice up to someone or something. For me, it's a lifestyle, it's a way that I live. It's a toolbox, a set of rules and guidelines for how I live my life.

► **Almost every day,** I do a little bit of meditation. Sometimes it's really active, sometimes it's a little bit less active, when I'm just taking a minute to pause and to think about my breath and be in the moment.

► **The side benefit of** yoga is that you stay in shape, and your body looks great, and you have lots of flexibility and open hips. Yoga helps me be more open and more flexible off the bike. But the number-one thing that I love is the core work. A strong mid-section helps with bike handling.

► **The yoga-cycling** connection is seamless in my mind. Practicing yoga helps prepare your body to be on your bike, and it's also especially important for recovery and undoing everything that the bike does. We are hunched over, we're pedaling, so our hips are really tight, the hamstrings are tight, quads are tight, everything is tightened up. Yoga gives you the ability or the reason to undo that.

► **A lot of yoga is a frame** of mind, a euphoria. Yogis believe in getting rid of all the distractions outside and looking within and focusing on their breath and their bodies to arrive at a place of enlightenment. I feel like you get that on the bike too. 🙏

## ESSENTIAL YOGA FOR CYCLISTS

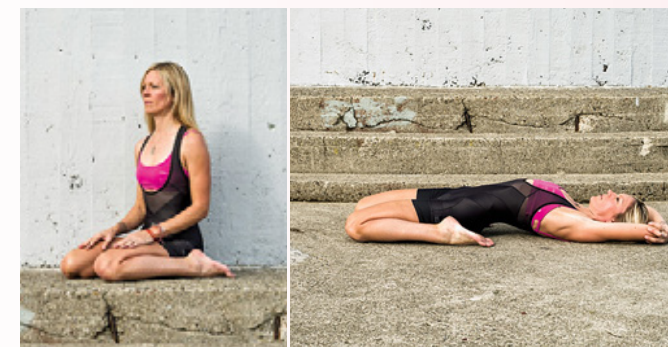


### HIP OPENERS

Prevent knee and leg pain by loosening your hip muscles, which can become tight after a lot of time in the saddle.



**Pigeon** / Start on all fours. Slide your right knee forward toward your right hand, then angle it at two o'clock. Next, slide your left leg back as far as your hips will allow. Keep your hips square to the floor (in other words, don't let them twist). If you're not feeling a deep stretch in your right glute, slide the right foot forward little by little toward your left hand. Walk your hands forward over your right leg. If you are not comfortable extending that far down, hold the pose with your arms or forearms on your mat or the floor in front of you, and let your hips sink forward and down. To get full release in the hips, breathe and release the belly. Stay in this position anywhere from 10 breaths to five minutes.



**Hero-Reclining Hero** / Kneel with your thighs perpendicular to the floor and the top of your feet facing down. Bring your knees together and slide your feet apart so they are on each side of your hips. Press the top of your feet evenly into your mat or the floor. Slowly sit down between your feet. Use your hands to turn the top of your thighs inward (left). Lean back onto your forearms and slowly lower your torso to the floor (right). Hold for at least 30 seconds.



**Reclining Bound Angle** / Lie on your mat with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Bring the soles of your feet together and let your knees fall out to each side. Place one hand on or near your heart and one hand on your belly. Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Hold for at least 30 seconds.