

4 Yoga Poses to Lose Love Handles

By Laura Waite – For Active.com

Add these four yoga poses to your fitness routine to lose love handles quickly.

Utthita Trikonasana: Extended Triangle Pose



Stand tall with your feet about 3-feet apart. Turn the left foot slightly in toward the right and your right foot forward 90 degrees. Align the right heel with the left arch, raise your arms parallel to the floor, and reach them actively out to the sides with palms facing down.

As you inhale, gaze over right your fingertips. Then exhale; drop your torso over the right leg. Bend from the hip joint, not the waist. Rest your right hand on your shin, ankle or grab the big toe. Keep both legs straight, thighs engaged. Stretch the left arm up towards the sky, directly above the shoulder with your palm facing forward. Turn your head upwards, look at the left thumb or gaze towards the floor. Press the outer edge of left foot firmly to the floor. Rotate the torso open to the left to lengthen. Stay for five breath cycles, and then switch sides.

Benefits:

- Activates the lower obliques and lengthens the upper obliques.
- Stretches and strengthens the thighs, knees and ankles.
- Stretches the hips, groins, hamstrings, calves, shoulders, chest and spine.
- Relieves backache.

Prasarita Padottanasana A: Wide-Legged Forward Bend



Spread your feet about 4-feet apart. The inner feet are parallel to one another with toes slightly turned inward. Press the outer edges of your feet and big toes firmly into the floor. Engage your quads by lifting them up. Bring your hands to the hips.

As you inhale, lift the chest. Then exhale and bend forward keeping length through the torso. Release your hands to floor aligning them under the shoulders. Draw the head down towards the floor or rest your crown on the floor. Keep the wrists aligned under the elbows, spread the fingers, pull the belly in, and lift your quads. Stay for five breath cycles.

Benefits:

- Engages the rectus abdominis.
- Strengthens and stretches the inner and back legs and the spine.
- Tones the abdomen.
- Calms the mind.
- Relieves mild backache.

Plank Pose



Begin in a tabletop position. Align the knees under your hips and your shoulders over your wrists. Press your hands into the floor and step one foot back at a time, bringing your torso parallel to the floor. Allow the arms to remain perpendicular to the floor with the shoulders aligned over wrists. Press your outer arms inward and spread your shoulder blades wide. Spread the chest open, draw the tailbone down, lift the thighs, and reach back through the legs. Reach the head forward and gaze softly towards the floor. Stay for 5 to 10 breath cycles.

Benefits:

- Engages the rectus and transverse abdominis.
- Strengthens the arms, wrists and spine.
- Tones the abdomen.

Navasana: Boat Pose



Sit on the floor with your legs straight in front of you. Place your hands on the floor slightly behind your hips with your fingers pointing forward. Lift through the chest and lean back. Lengthen the spine; do not round the back. Sit back onto the sitting bones and tailbone. Bend the knees and lift the feet about 45 degrees off the floor. Straighten your knees allowing the toes to point towards the sky or keep the knees bent with the shins parallel to the floor. Reach the arms forward alongside the legs parallel to the floor. Palms face each other. Firm the lower abdomen, tuck the chin slightly, and gaze forward or up at your feet. Stay for five breath cycles. Rest for a breath and then repeat two more times.

Benefits:

- Activates the rectus and transverse abdominis.
- Strengthens the abdomen, hip flexors and spine.
- Helps relieve stress.
- Improves digestion.