



Q&A
Yoga Secrets
 By Baron Baptiste

Finish Strong

I signed up for a marathon. How much yoga should I work into my training?

—Kori K., Chicago, IL

Take a yoga class in a heated studio once a week to help loosen your muscles (find a location at iyogalife.com). And don't ignore the deep breathing—it will boost oxygen capacity, so your lungs will be ready to hang with you for the entire 26.2. Also, after each of your training runs, give your whole lower body a much-needed stretch by doing an extended side angle pose (shown). Hold for five slow breaths, then repeat on the opposite side.



Dread over Heels

Backbends make me nervous—I'm sure I'll break my neck. How do I get over that?

—Ann F., Pueblo, CO

Practice and patience. To build arm strength, flexibility, and confidence, spend 2 weeks doing bridges. (Lie on your back with your arms at your sides and palms on the floor, knees bent, and feet hip-width apart. Push your hips toward the ceiling and interlace your fingers on the floor beneath your butt.) Do four every day, holding each one for 30 seconds. Then move on to assisted backbends: With a spotter, practice bending back onto a couch. Stick with this for as long as you need to feel in control. When you're ready, attend a class and ask a trained yoga instructor to guide you through the full backbend.



Womenshealthmag.com/
yogasecrets Submit your questions for yoga guru Baron Baptiste today. Then visit his site at baronbaptiste.com.

read it and reap

» Four books that will get you up and running

IT'S FINALLY WARM ENOUGH OUTSIDE that breathing doesn't cause freezer burn. And with thousands of 5-Ks and other races scheduled across the country to lure you out of hibernation, now is peak season for launching a new running program. Need more motivation? Spin through these books. Filled with training plans, inspirational stories, and tips from the pros, they'll get you stoked for your best year of running yet.

► **Best for Finishing Your First 26.2** *The Marathon Method: The 16-Week Training Program that Prepares You to Finish a Full or Half Marathon in Your Best Time* by Tom Holland (Fair Winds)

Why we like It's so upbeat, it's almost like having your own personal coach. Holland, a veteran of 50-plus marathons and 12 Ironman triathlons, offers up a plan for your first marathon (full or half) that makes crossing the finish line seem totally doable. Using a combo of anecdotes, tips, and motivational stats (40 percent of 2005 marathon finishers were female!), this book will have you looking forward to your Sunday 20-miler. **Useful tidbit** Smile when you feel like keeling over—grimacing zaps energy.

► **Best for Starting from Scratch** *The Nonrunner's Marathon Guide for Women: Get Off Your Butt and On with Your Training* by Dawn Dais (Seal Press)

Why we like Because Dais's journey from slug to marathon finisher is the funniest thing we've read since Mel Gibson's latest apology. Part training guide, part memoir, this book will become your partner in bitch as you pound the pavement.

Useful tidbit Splurge for BodyGlide or Vaseline to ward off chafing. "You probably don't want to be asking your fellow runners if you can borrow theirs after they're done applying it to their nether regions."

► **Best for Posting a Personal Record** *Runner's World Run Less, Run Faster—Become a Faster, Stronger Runner with the Revolutionary FIRST Training Program* by Bill Pierce, Scott Murr, and Ray Moss (Rodale)

Why we like What's not to like about a book that promises better results in less time? Focusing on quality over quantity, you'll ditch your "junk miles" by running just 3 days a week and supplementing with twice weekly cross-training like swimming or cycling. Stick with the program and you'll be cheering the pack at your next race while you rock a foil cape at the finish.

Useful tidbit Streakers aren't just naked half-time entertainment, they're people who don't believe in resting from running. Don't be a streaker.

► **Best for Instant Inspiration** *Sole Sisters: Stories of Women and Running* by Jennifer Lin and Susan Warner (Andrews McMeel)

Why we like Makes us feel all warm inside. When you dig into this sure-to-be classic, keep your running shoes nearby—you'll want to lace up and head out asap. This collection of 21 feel-good profiles of women who run—including a nun, a 9/11 widow, and a 7-year-old girl who leaves boys in the dust—will have you racing for the starting line.

Useful tidbit Run with friends and off-load your worries—and let your friends vent. "It's like a girls' night out every time we run," says Koreen Billman, mother of three and member of an informal neighborhood running group.

Excuse Buster of the Month

The excuse Exercise bands are convenient, but they're so uncomfortable!

Spare us, sister These new **Nike Long Bands** are the quadruple-ply Charmin of resistance bands. They're made from a woven fabric (as opposed to typical arm-hair-plucking rubber) that won't pinch if it rubs up against you during your in-room routine. We love the handles too: The curvy shape fits nicely in your palm, and the soft grips make calluses a nonissue. \$50, nikestore.com

Word to your runner.

