

#YOGA

Best Yoga Poses To Do Every Day

Looking for the best of the best? Here, we share some of the most beneficial yoga poses to do every day.



If you like the idea of an hour-long yoga flow but simply don't have that much time, you can zero in on the most beneficial yoga poses and focus on them instead. By whittling down the yoga roster to a few choice postures, it's possible to reap all the same benefits with no major commitment required. If you want to stretch all your major muscles, simply pick a variety of multi-beneficial poses and drop into them throughout your day. As long as you do them regularly, you'll feel the perks.

Supine Spinal Twist

- Lie on your back.
- Bring your knees in towards your chest.
- Let your knees drop to one side.
- Keep both shoulders relaxed on the ground.
- Hold for five to eight breaths, then switch sides.

Since yoga is a mind-body practice, the benefits of doing yoga every day will not only result in physical adaptations like strength and flexibility, but will also help improve your mental health and ability to regulate your thoughts and emotions.

"A little can definitely help and add up over time, so really, the best time to stretch is whenever you can make it happen."

Downward Dog



Downward dog is one of the foundational yoga poses. Not only is it grounding, but it also serves as a way to check in with yourself and see where you're at in your practice.

As a bonus, the pose stretches your entire back body, including your hamstrings and calves and it provides a boost of energy by increasing your circulation.

- Start on your hands and knees.
- Lift your hips up and back.
- Keep a micro bend in your knees.
- Lower your head to create an inverted V-shape with your body.
- Press your hands firmly into the mat and actively engage your core.
- Focus on lengthening your spine.
- Relax your neck and shoulders.
- Pump your heels up and down if you like.
- Hold the pose for five to 10 breaths.

Garland Pose

The infamous low yogi squat, or garland pose, is an ideal way to open up tight hips. Try it mid-afternoon for the ultimate stretch break.

- Stand with your feet mat-width apart.
- Point your toes out.
- Lower your hips and bum as close to the mat as you can.
- Use your elbows to press into your knees to help widen your legs.



Cobra Pose

Cobra pose is a one-stop shop for all your yoga needs. It



opens your heart chakra, eases lower back pain, and helps improve your posture thanks to the way it pushes your shoulders back and down.

- Do it regularly and you'll stand up a little straighter.
- Lie face-down on your mat.
- Place your palms under your shoulders.
- Inhale as you press into your hips and the tops of your feet.
- Lift your upper body off your mat.
- Place your elbows in at your sides.
- Keep your neck and shoulders neutral.
- Hold for five to eight breaths.

Triangle Pose



This standing pose stretches the legs, hips, and side body. It also helps to improve balance and strengthens the legs and core.

- Step your feet wide apart.
- Turn your front foot so it points forward.
- Extend your arms out to your sides, parallel to the floor.
- Plant your torso to the side, keeping your legs straight.
- Reach your front hand towards the front foot.
- Extend your other arm up to the ceiling.
- Look up.
- Hold the pose for 30 seconds to one minute.
- Repeat on the other side.



Lt Gen Aditya Singh (Retd)
Deccan Horse
Veteran

Breaching Ghengis Khan Line (...2)

As the Germans were reeling under the Allied onslaught in 1944, 1/2 Punjab was a part of 10th Indian Division with 8th Army in north-central Italy and constantly engaged in battle.

These continued after my father took command in November 1944, with brief periods of respite and his Battalion fought notable actions at Pideura, Faenza and Albereto all listed in the Official History.

It was in early spring of 1945 that the final thrust was undertaken North-westwards from River Lamone to secure the German held line of Idice River that was christened by them as the 'Ghengis Khan Line'.

The major battle was from 17 to 21 April 1945, as depicted on Map 1. The objective was to break through the Ghengis Khan Line and secure the plains of River Po and then advance towards Padua and Venice.

The Idice River was a part of this defensive line and strongly held by the Germans. The 10th Indian Division was tasked to secure crossings across the river. This attack commenced at 22:30 hours on 19 April 1945, with 1/2 Punjab in the vanguard.

The start line was Florentine and the Battalion was first tasked to advance and capture the village of Il Cassino. Thereafter, it was to go North and secure a crossing over the Idice River at Lupara. 1/2 Punjab fought through the night and captured Il Cassino by 06:00 hours on 20 April 1945.

While consolidating after battle at Il Cassino, 1/2 Punjab received new orders at 09:20 hours that the objective was changed and the Battalion was now to capture the rail and road bridges south of Mezzolara at the earliest and at any cost. No plan survives the first shot is an old military adage, but to suddenly be told that the objective has been shifted from a relatively obscure site to two very strongly held bridges must have come as a shocker.

The order 'earliest and at all



Satellite image of the river crossing today. The rail bridge is intact. The road bridge to its West as shown on map does not exist. Its approach roads are visible.

#BATTLEFIELD

costs' from higher HQ implied that the objectives were vital for furtherance of operations in the theatre. Against this were factors that:

- The Battalion was confronted with a formidable obstacle, the details of which were not known.
- The two bridges were likely to be strongly held with strength and dispositions unknown.
- There was no time for preparation or reconnaissance.
- Orders directed that the attack was to be earliest, i.e. from the line of march.
- This implied a frontal, daylight assault in open country.
- All this when the Battalion had been advancing and fighting for the past 12 hours.
- For a military mind, each factor mentioned above, individually constitutes an element for failure; all combined, it was a recipe for disaster.

It is here that aspects of leadership, battle experience, boldness, determination to confront the unexpected, faith and fate come into play. As CO and being fully aware of the importance of the crossings and urgency in their capture, he would have spoken to his officers and men and motivated them for the task ahead. In such cases, it is personal example and commitment which inspires men to go beyond the call of duty.

For the task, 1/2 Punjab was allotted one Machine Gun Platoon, one Heavy Mortar Platoon and C Squadron 6th Battalion Royal Tank Regiment (RTG) less two troops. The Battalion was to attack with A and

D Companies up, with B and C Companies in reserve. The attack commenced in the evening of 20th April 1945, supported and covered by artillery, tank and machine gun fire. It was daylight and open country.

The operation involved capture of the near bank bund, crossing a deep river with steep banks, clamoring up and securing the far bank bund. In addition, there would have been mines and wire entanglements, all effectively covered by machinegun fire. The two bridges would have been strongly defended and possibly, wired for demolition. All told, it was a very complex undertaking.

Official History

The Germans held their fire till the Companies were within 400m and then opened up from all sides. The two leading Companies continued to advance and fought their way to the near bank of the river where they were pinned down. Some men of D Company made it to the far bank. Withdrawal was out of the question and the reserve Companies were sent to break the stalemate.

It was a grim struggle with hand-to-hand fighting and severe casualties for the next three-and-a-half hours before both the banks of the river and the bridges were secured. Two out of the four Company Commanders were killed, and the other two severely wounded. It was a remarkable action and an example of gallantry, spirit, leadership, and true grit.

The Official History has a detailed record of the Battle and the last paragraph is indicative of the mayhem it must have been:

"The two platoons of D Company



Creme Brûlée Day

Rich, creamy custard topped with a layer of crunchy caramelized sugar; try making your own creme brûlée or treat yourself to a dessert after a nice dinner out. Creme Brûlée is decadence incarnate; a rich creamy custard topped with a layer of hard caramel, combining the best of crunchy and creamy together into a single bite. It is seen as a mark of elegance, as one of the hallmark desserts of Paris, and National Creme Brûlée Day is here to celebrate it!

The Idice River battle was a grim struggle with hand-to-hand fighting and severe casualties for three-and-a-half hours before both the banks of the river and the bridges were secured. Two out of the four Company Commanders were killed, and the other two severely wounded. It was a remarkable action and an example of gallantry, spirit, leadership, and true grit. The captured prisoners of war later revealed that the position had been held by about 150 to 180 Germans of the elite Parachute Division. The significance of this attack and breakthrough of the Ghengis Khan Line elsewhere is that it shattered German resistance in Italy, and they surrendered on 2 May 1945



Hats off and a Salute to the Fallen

difficulty coordinated the Coy's efforts most ably and admirably, directed the arty fire which later in the night broke up another counter-attack and knocked out two men S.P.s and one armoured vehicle within 350 yards of the far bank. The efforts of this officer will always be cherished with great memory in the Bn."

Dr Narendar Yadav kindly permitted copies to be made of some documents for my record. One which I think is relevant to this write-up is a photograph of the page of the War Diary of the Battle.

The War in Italy ended on 2 May 1945. The award of the DSO was announced in the London Gazette on 13 December 1945, and the investiture took place at a parade on the Battalion's return to Meerut in 1946.

Epilogue

After commanding his Battalion, my father was the Chief Instructor at the Indian Military Academy and took over as its first Indian Commandant in 1947. He was also the first Commandant of the Joint Services Wing, the forerunner to National Defence Academy (NDA). He retired as the Adjutant General in 1956 at the age of 49 and passed away in 1963, the day I left to join the NDA. I was very young and never had a chance to speak about his experiences.

This pilgrimage therefore, has allowed me to fill this important void, and more importantly, transcribe a record of his deeds.

Unit command is the ultimate for any soldier; and to do so successfully you would have been the acme of his military service.

In 2019, his alma mater - Rashtriya Indian Military College (RIMC) - honoured him in a calendar of WWII heroes. Coincidentally, the agency was on a large portion of the obstacle system across our western border is similar to that of the Ghengis Khan Line. Study and relevance of this action in the current scenario is thus necessary and justified.

For me, personally the river crossing site and railway bridge was a shrine and fulfilment my pilgrimage in every way, I paid homage to the fallen heroes and saluted in their memory - it was indeed one of the finest days of my life.

On my return to India I was determined to gather more details. I visited the History Division of the Ministry of Defence and met its Director, Dr Narendar Yadav. He was most forthcoming and readily produced an eight-inch high pile of files of the WW II records of 1/2 Punjab.

Every page of the War Diary, patrol reports, strength returns, messages, and notes were available. It was a pleasure to see details of operations recorded in my father's hand and in particular, a three-page cyclostyled account of the Idice River Battle with names of those involved. Two extracts wherein he has written about the Artillery Observation Post Officer are interesting:

"The Arty O.P. Offr Lt Spiro describing the action said that he had read of similar accounts in books but had never seen them. When one man fell, other came forward to take his place and the advance continued under most withering fire."

Lt Spiro, R.A. FOO of a Coy, on Sub Sainchi Khan being wounded, though handicapped by language



Lt Col T Mahadeo Singh being invested with the DSO in 1946 by Fd Mshi Sr Claude Auchinleck, Commander-in-Chief Indian Army.

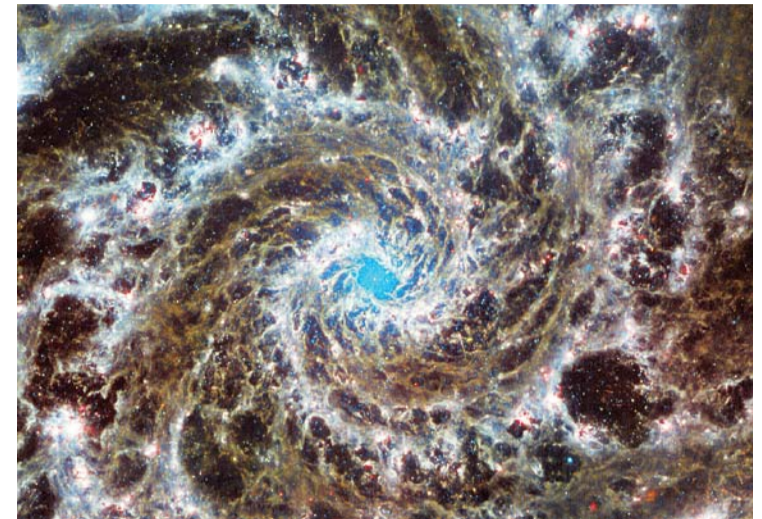
on the far bank (of Idice River) had fought to the last man and the last round. They had stuck to their posts and died fighting bravely against heavy odds. Bodies collected later showed many bayonet wounds, their own bayonets were covered with blood. Thus ended the heroic struggle to establish a bridgehead over the Idice River. It was the Battalion's finest effort and a glorious hour of trial."

The river was secured by 06:15 hours on 21 April 1945, and the advance carried on to Mezzolara, which was captured by 09:15 hours. The captured prisoners of war later revealed that the position had been held by about 150 to 180 Germans of the elite Parachute Division.

#SPACE

James Webb Telescope

The observatory has yielded jaw-dropping shots-and surprising facts-about our universe



The James Webb Space Telescope, the largest and most sophisticated space observatory ever built, has been sending back images and data for almost a full year now-and in that time it has delivered a treasure trove of information about everything from stars and planetary systems in our own galactic neighbourhood to distant galaxies that formed when the universe was a tiny fraction of its current age.

Webb has also sent back stunning images that surpass those garnered by its famous predecessor, the Hubble Space Telescope.

Webb and Hubble are quite different instruments. For starters, while Hubble is primarily sensitive to visible light, Webb records infrared light that's invisible to the unaided eye.

These longer wavelengths of light pass through clouds of gas and dust that block visible light, letting the telescope peer past such obstacles.

It also has a size advantage: While Hubble's main mirror is 8 feet across, Webb employs an array of 18 small hexagonal mirrors that function like a single mirror 21 feet across.

Webb has yielded many more illuminating images, and we've picked our favourites and detailed their importance below.

An Ironic Image
You've almost certainly seen the iconic Hubble Space Telescope image dubbed "The Pillars of Creation." It shows billowing clouds of dark gas-part of the Eagle Nebula-against a bright, colorful background, with hundreds of stars twinkling in front of and behind the structure.

But as stunning as the Hubble image was, Webb has revealed even more of this scene.

For starters, it has brought into view the young red stars that are sprinkled throughout the nebulous clouds.

Astronomers call them "protostars," because they're not yet massive enough and not enough to burn hydrogen in their cores.

These young stars were obscured behind the dust and gas in the original Hubble image, explains Anton Koekemoer, an

astronomer at the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore.

"Because these clouds are so dense and full of dust, when Hubble looked at them it only saw their outer surface," he says. "We couldn't really look inside them."

Now, thanks to the dust-penetrating power of Webb, astronomers can glimpse these star-forming regions deep inside the nebula, which is located some 7,000 light-years from Earth.

One of those is a gas giant planet dubbed WASP-39 b, which is roughly as massive as Saturn but revolves around its host star in a much tighter orbit than Mercury's orbit around the sun.

Astronomers used instruments on board Webb to record the spectrum of the planet's atmosphere, which in turn provides clues as to what chemicals are found there.

And they've turned up a whole slew of atomic and molecular gases, including water vapor, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, sodium and potassium.

"Cosmic Cliffs"
One of the most striking images to come from Webb so far is the so-called "Cosmic Cliffs," a cloud of gas and dust in the Carina Nebula, located about 7,500 light-years from Earth.

The region got its nickname because the gaseous "cliffs" seem to resemble a mountain range, though the structures are actually dust clouds being eroded by blasts of ultraviolet light from newly formed stars.

What looks like steam rising from the celestial "mountains" is actually ionized gas and hot dust being blown by the radiation.

As with many of Webb's targets, this nebular region was previously known to astronomers, but it takes on a whole new appearance thanks to the observatory's ability to see in the infrared, allowing it to penetrate clouds of dust that would have stymied the Hubble Space Telescope as well as ground-based telescopes.

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Koekemoer describes it as a "laboratory" for studying star formation.

Capturing An Exoplanet
By now, astronomers have inferred the existence of thousands of exoplanets-orbiting stars beyond our own solar system.

But actually photographing these distant worlds is a challenge-primarily because their dim light is overwhelmed by the light of their host star.

Nonetheless, the new telescope has pulled it off, imaging a planet called HIP 65426 b using an instrument called a coronagraph that blocks out the light



from the star.

Probing a Planetary Atmosphere
One of Webb's most remarkable achievements is its ability to garner information about the atmospheres of planets orbiting stars hundreds of light-years from Earth.

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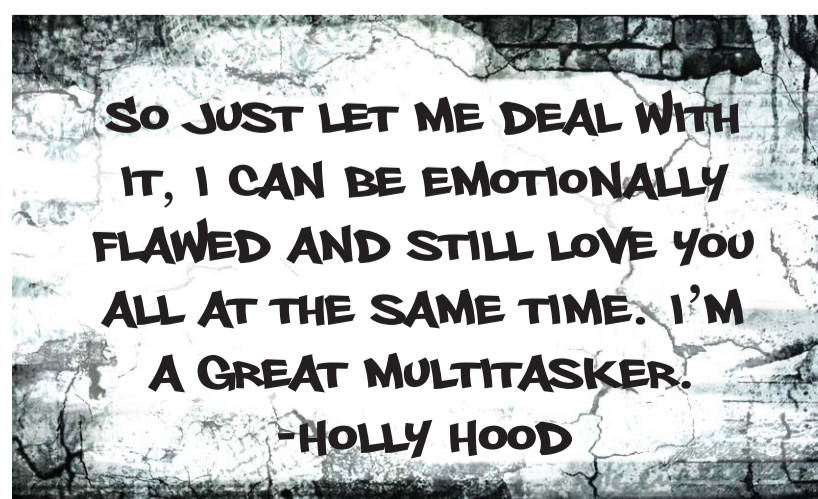
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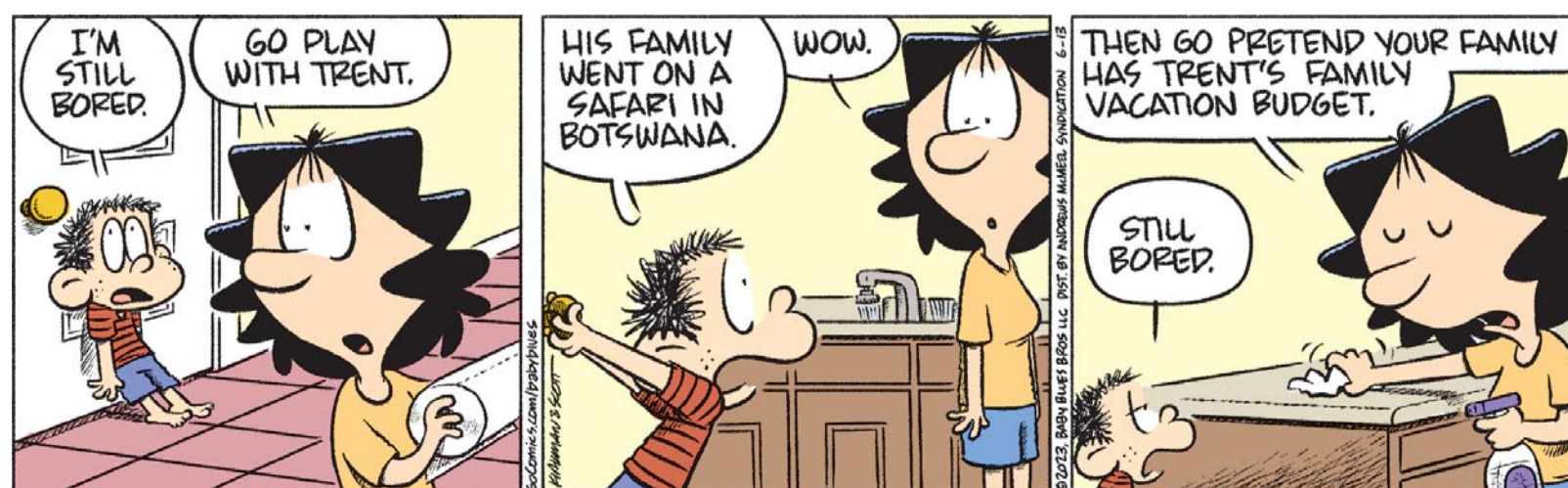
A Family of Galaxies
Interact
One of Webb's first images was of a tightly clustered group of galaxies known as Stephan's Quintet. Four of the five galaxies in the image are interacting with each other gravitationally; the fifth is actually in the foreground and merely appears to be a part of the group.

Clusters like Stephan's Quintet offer a chance to study how galaxies interact and sometimes merge. Physicists believe galaxy mergers would have been common in the early universe and that such mergers were one of the principal ways in which large galaxies, like those we observe today, came into existence. These inter-galaxy interactions can also trigger star formation and the formation of black holes.

THE WALL

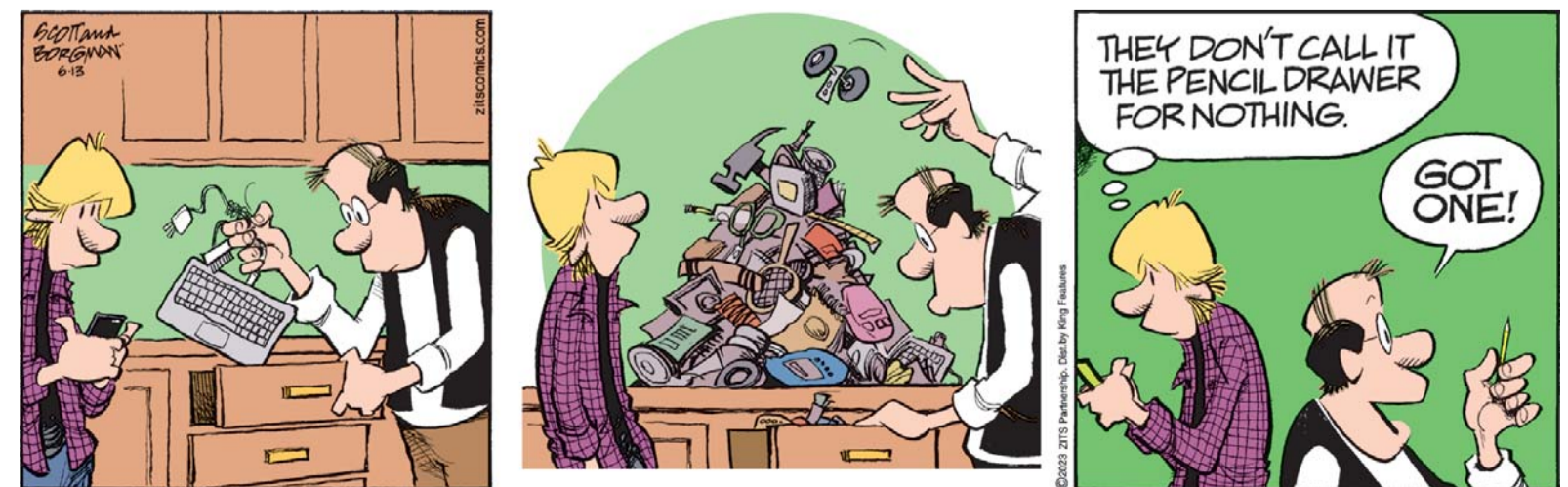


BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman