

Flex those muscles

While fitness is everyone's goal, most of us forget to concentrate on flexibility, which is essential to ward off injuries like slipped disc and back pain

Aruna Gracias Rathod



So you think you are super fit, you can walk briskly for an hour, maybe run a marathon, but have you tried touching your toes? Lack of exercise and poor posture at home, at work and during recreation contributes to lack of flexibility. Slouching in bed or on the sofa, driving or sitting in a car for long hours, and sitting in front of your computer for hours lead to stiffness of the body," explains Dr Arun Mullaji (Orthopaedic surgeon). This stiffness can result in ligament sprains, muscle strains, tendonitis, neck and low back pain, and 'slipped disc'.

While being flexible is an important part of being fit, it also helps us to embrace certain hobbies. Contemporary dance choreographer Sumeet Nagdev believes that flexibility, strength and good nutrition is essential for the human body to perform at its best. "Flexibility is a gradual process. Simple stretches done daily with repetitions help in improving flexibility and increasing strength."

Flexibility, strength and good nutrition is essential for the human body to be at its best. "Flexibility grows over a period of time. I always give the example of an iron rod to explain how the body works. It is very difficult to bend an iron rod unless it is heated. Similarly the body needs to get warm to be moulded. Exercise heats the body and then

muscles take shape. One needs to cool down after exercise to help the muscle relax." One needs to start from the basics. He adds, "Flexibility is a gradual process. Some of us are gifted naturally and some are better moulded because of childhood activities. Others can learn how to mould their bodies."

Simple stretches done daily with repetitions help in improving flexibility. Flexibility also helps to protect our body from internal and external energy. Yoga acharya Sabir Shaikh adds that yoga is one of the best ways to make your body flexible and protect it from injury, and age-related stiffness.

Ageing issues on the body

As we age, the flexibility of the human body reduces. The tissues become less elastic and pliable and hence the person, over time, begins to have less range of movement in different directions. Dr Mullaji adds, "This manifests as stiffness and typically those joints or movements that are less frequently used or performed tend to be more affected - If you don't use it, you lose it!"

"It's not just to do stretching exercises four times a week. One needs to hold a position for 10-30 seconds, the idea being to put the joint through its range of motion and hold it at its maximum, (30 seconds) till such time that there is no significant discomfort. Those who

Bhujangasana (Cobra pose)

Lie on the floor on your stomach place your hands under your shoulder and push up your spine (Make a 'C' shape with your spine, keeping shoulders relaxed) Repeat exercise one and then arch your back backwards, hold for 10 seconds.

Repeat three times. In yoga, maintaining



the pose is more important than repetitions.

Benefits:

This asana helps to improve digestion and respiration. The spine becomes more flexible, and since the abdomen is pressed against the floor, the gentle pressure helps to massage the internal organs thus improving digestion. When we raise our chest, the ribs get expanded, improving the lung flexibility and allowing optimum intake of oxygen.

have problems with joints and some injuries must do these exercises under supervision."

Flexibility for legs and hands

Sumeet gives us simple exercises to improve hamstring muscles. "Stand with your feet parallel, drop your body down gradually, slowly touch the floor with your hands (try don't force) and keep your knees straight," he explains. However, take care to do it slowly if you are just starting.

- Drop your head first, vertebra by vertebra drop down.
- To come up, bend your knees and slowly roll up so that you come out of suspension. Your head should come up last.
- Do this eight times every day.
- For those who find it easy and comfortable and can do this exercise easily, go to the next level. You must put your head down, try to hold the ankles. Your head must go between the ankles and stretch from the tail bone.
- After this activity immediately do the Cobra pose (explained above by Sabir) To graduate from the Cobra pose, release palm from floor put in the air by the side. After you are comfortable with it, release both hands and stay up. This is very difficult and can take from two to three months.

Benefit: This exercise helps in tailbone flexibility and hamstring stretch. In case you give a sudden jerk to your legs, you will not be injured. In simple language you will not get a 'catch'.

Hands/finger stretch

- Stand/sit and keep your hand stretched out with palm in front.
- Pull all four fingers of the right hand back with the left hand.
- Don't bend elbows.
- Turn the palm down with fingers facing down. Repeat.
- Do with both hands.

Benefits: If you are reaching out for something, you will not strain your muscles, as this exercise works the triceps, biceps and forearms.

Neck

- Stand straight. Look up and down four times. Look sideways, let your ears touch shoulders and rotate head slowly.

Benefits: In case you are reaching out for something beyond your reach, your neck will not hurt.

To graduate from simple neck stretches, you can also drop your right ear to right shoulder, look straight. Lift your hand right hand and stretch it to place on your left ear. Press your head to the right shoulder. This exercise develops and flexes the muscles around the collar bone.

Asanas to become more flexible

Sabir Shaikh believes Kati Chakrasana (waist rotating pose) is one of the most beneficial asanas (for those who do not have much time).

- Stand with the feet slightly apart. Make sure that the body is balanced equally on both the legs.
- Spread the hands on



both sides of the body with palms down parallel to the shoulders.

- Hold the left shoulder with the right hand and move the left hand on back and try to touch the right waist from the back of the body.
- Rotate upper half of the body towards left side.
- Rotate the neck towards left and try to look back as much as possible.

Benefits: Removes stiffness of back, tones the lower back, shoulders and neck, reduces fat from the waist

Photo competition highlights the need for water conservation

O Herald, in association with the Department of Water Resources, Government of Goa, recently organised a photography competition on the theme 'Save Water, Save Life'. The competition aimed to highlight the importance of water conservation and invited creative interpretations of

the theme to promote environmental awareness through photography.

The contest was open to all photographers and was judged by Dhiraj Govekar and Ravindra Raut, based on creativity, composition, message, technical quality, and overall image impact.



Rohan Santosh Shetkar from Sainagar, Shirvori, Quepem, won first prize for his photograph depicting a young boy eagerly drinking from a tap — a powerful image symbolising the precious value of every drop of water. "Let's conserve water today for a better tomorrow. Save Water, Save Life," says Rohan.



Suraj Thomas secured second prize for his evocative photo taken in Kulasekhara, Tamil Nadu. He explains, "In this village, there is no access to clean water. Residents receive water only once a week through a single pipeline. This image of villagers waiting for water raises a thousand questions about the future."



Ramandeep Kaur was awarded third prize for her poignant photograph of a dried stump on cracked land. "This image shows the impact of water scarcity. Without water, life cannot survive," she says.



St Thérèse of Child Jesus: A century of love, a journey of hope

Br Malvino Alfonso

On 17 May 2025, the Church celebrates the centenary of the canonisation of St Thérèse of the Child Jesus, also known as the Little Flower—one of the most beloved and influential saints of the modern era. Born on January 2, 1873 in Alençon, France, Thérèse Martin was the youngest daughter of Louis and Zélie Martin, a devout couple who were themselves canonised in 2015—the first spouses in modern times to be canonised together. Raised in a home filled with faith and love, Thérèse absorbed from an early age the spirit of abandonment to God's will that would define her spirituality.

A Family of Saints and Religious Vocations

Thérèse of Lisieux was the youngest of nine children born to Louis and Zélie Martin; only five daughters survived, all of whom became nuns. Marie, Pauline, and Céline joined her in the Carmelite convent, while Léonie became a Visitation nun and is now a Servant of God.

At 15, Thérèse was allowed by Pope Leo XIII to enter the Carmelite cloister. There, she lived a hidden life of deep love and sacrifice, teaching her "Little Way" of trust and small acts of love. She said, "What matters in life is not great deeds, but great love."

She died of tuberculosis in 1897 at age 24, saying, "I am not dying, I am entering into life."



Her autobiography, Story of a Soul, revealed her profound faith. She was canonised in 1925 and named a Doctor of the Church in 1997.

The Jubilee and the Little Way

St. Thérèse's simple, trusting spirituality resonates deeply with the Jubilee Year 2025 theme, Pilgrims of Hope. In Spes non confundit, Pope Francis calls the Church to renewed trust in God's love and mercy — a message St Thérèse lived fully. St. Thérèse's spirituality echoes this message. "Jesus does not demand great actions," she wrote, "but simply surrender and gratitude."

Pope Francis' exhortation C'est la Confiance, inspired by her words, reflects on her joyful trust amid suffering. Orphaned young and burdened by illness and family trials, St. Thérèse believed

"Everything is grace," seeing life as a gift lived in love.

Her "Little Way" teaches holiness in ordinary acts — sweeping, forgiving, or loving difficult sisters — done with great love. "I want to be a little child... not frightened by the dark," she said, trusting God completely. Her message: sainthood is possible for all through faith, humility, and confidence in God's presence in daily life.

Living the Pilgrimage of Hope in 2025

As the Church marks 100 years since the canonisation of St Thérèse, her life and teachings continue to invite the faithful to walk a path of humble trust in God. The Jubilee Year encourages believers to offer every moment, every trial, and every act of love to God, following her example.

Herald Gaming Console

Dilbert



Garfield



Wizard of id



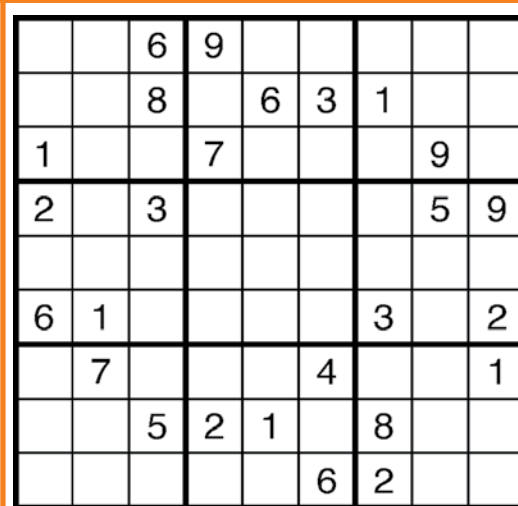
crossword 4847



ACROSS
1- Its capital is Khartoum; 6- Catalog; 10- Blueprint detail; 14- Stage whisper; 15- Bone: Prefix; 16- ___ want for Christmas...; 17- Columbus's birthplace; 18- Adolescent; 19- Parks on a bus; 20- Praying figure; 21- Spanish Miss; 23- Letters of credit?; 25- Prospector's find; 26- Friends; 29- Scottish refusals; 32- Clogs, e.g.; 37- Devoured; 38- Actress Bonet; 39- Body of work; 40- In spite of; 43- Car heart; 44- Toward sunrise; 45- Actress Peeples; 46- Sierra ___; 47- "The Time Machine" people; 48- Examine by touch; 49- Actress Charlotte; 51- Go downhill fast?; 53- Large percussion instrument; 58- Ford flop; 62- Belinda Carlisle's "Should ___ You In?"; 63- River to the Seine; 64- Abnormal plant swelling; 65- Oliver Twist's request; 66- Some wines; 67- Tartan; 68- On the peak of; 69- Chapters of history; 70- Vends;
DOWN
1- Palm starch; 2- Addict; 3- Actress Merrill; 4- Hunk; 5- Peachy keen; 6- Oodles; 7- Palmist's words; 8- Shorthand pros; 9- Barbershop quartet member; 10- Wraparound dress; 11- Storyline; 12- "Born Free" lion; 13- KGB counterpart; 22- Take offense at; 24- Bring together; 26- Discussion group; 27- Make up (for); 28- Release; 30- Fire proof?; 31- Flip-chart holder; 33- 1963 Paul Newman film; 34- Sheeplike; 35- Bert's buddy; 36- George of "Just Shoot Me"; 38- Passenger ships; 39- Fertile area in a desert; 41- Take the gold; 42- Chinese 'way'; 47- More spine-tingling; 48- Violin; 50- Think the world of; 52- Retains; 53- Ink spot; 54- Aviation prefix; 55- Dance move; 56- Meat-grading org.; 57- Untidy condition; 59- Marine mammal, secure something; 60- Runner Zatopek; 61- Scottish boys; 62- The Monkees' ___ Believer;



sudoku 4847



Instructions for Sudoku

9 x 9 letter: To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every number from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes

solution 4846

