

Invested in Wellness - July 12, 2021

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Jessie Sarafian: Good afternoon and welcome to The Upside's Invested in Wellness. I'm your host, Jesse Sarafian, event manager here at Fidelity and certified yoga instructor. So, what an extraordinary year we've had. While we try to navigate the new digital world and working from home, it's important more than ever to take care of our health, both physically and mentally. So, I'm super excited to lead the series with Fidelity. So, most of us are working from home. And I want to go through a sequence of movements that we can do at the comfort of our own home, with our desk and with our chair. So, before we begin any exercise, please consult a medical practitioner before you begin. The most important thing is you're listening to your body. And I'm just here to guide you, so I hope you enjoy it. And let's get started. So, we're all sitting. I'm here in my office and we sit for the most part of our day, depending on where you are in your home. We sit while we work. We sit while we eat. We sit while we watch TV. We sit when we drive as well. So, we want to break that habit. I want to start off with a really nice, strong standing sequence to wake up our tired legs and then we'll make our way back down on our chair. So, let's all stand up and we're going to come towards the back of our chair, reach your arms out in front of you, start to walk your feet back and then ensure your arms are straight. And then you're just going to start to melt your heart down. Look down towards the floor, so your neck is in line with your spine, and you can put a little bend in your knees here to start. And start to take deep breaths in and out through your nose. So right away, this should feel really nice into the side of your body, getting a nice stretch in your back.

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Jessie Sarafian: You are opening up into your ribcage. And remember to stay with your breath at all times. And as we move, as we go through our poses, you want to engage every part of your body. So, you're not just reaching your arms forward. You're extending and you're activating through your fingertips, through your wrist, through your upper arms, as well as your legs. So, root down through your feet, continuing to breathe.

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Jessie Sarafian: And bring your attention to your core. So, draw that navel in, lengthen out through your spine, making sure you have a nice flat back. So, a few more breaths here. So, you can put little reminders in your calendar; top of the hour to get up and do the simple stretch, a nice little recharge. Recharge to focus your mind, and then you can make your way back down. So, take one more deep breath in and then very slowly you're going to roll up and then walk your feet up nice and slow. So, you're standing up nice and tall here. Arms are by your side. Take an inhale. Lift your shoulders up towards your ears. And then as you exhale, roll them down and back. Nice and slow, inhale, shoulders come up towards your ears, and then exhale down and back. We'll do that three more times altogether. Inhale up, exhale down, inhaling up, and exhale down. One more time, inhale, shoulders come up towards your ears, and then exhale down and back.

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Jessie Sarafian: So, we're going to reverse the direction now. Inhale, shoulders come back and up, and then exhale, forward and down. Four more times like that. Inhale, back and up. Exhale, forward and down. Again, go nice and slow; two more, inhale, back and up, exhale, forward and down. One more time, inhale, and exhale. Good, from here, you're going to bring your right ear to your right shoulder. So, right away, you can feel that stretch into the side of the left side of your neck. Make sure you're rooting down through both of your feet, engaging your thighs, standing up nice and tall. If you want to go deeper, you can extend that left arm out to the side and then flex your fingers. So, your fingers are starting to come up and then rotate. So, your fingers are now pointing behind you. So, you can feel a little bit more of a deeper

stretch to that left side of the body, left side of your upper arm. Breathing deeply and you can close the eyes, if you like. You can really tune into your breath, to your body, how you're feeling at this moment. Take one more deep breath in. And then release and then we'll switch sides. Bring your left ear to your left shoulder. Again, feeling the difference between sides. For those of you that want to go deeper, extend that right arm out to the side, reaching your fingertips, activate and energize that hand and then start to rotate that wrist. Now, your fingers are starting to point to the wall behind you.

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Jessie Sarafian: And staying with your breath, and tuning into your space. Again, thank you all for showing up, taking the time to practice. One more deep breath in, and then slowly release, and then come back to centre. Again, still keeping your feet hip-width apart, standing up tall, inhale, reach your arms up, palms come together, and then exhale, bring your hands back down to your heart; two times like that. Inhale, arms reach up, palms come together, exhale, hands come down. One more time, inhale, sweep the arms up and over your head, and then exhale, hands come together in front of your heart, and then release. You're going to bring your hands now onto your hips, or onto your desk, or onto your chair. So, this is what helps when you have a little small space – using what's around you for support to help with your balance. So, hands are on your hips, your chair, or on your desk. You're going to inhale, come high into your tippy toes, lifting your heels off of the mat. And then as you exhale, bring your heels back down, nice and slow. Again, using your support if you need to. Inhale, lifting your heels off of the mat, and then exhale, come down. So, just giving a little bit of love to our feet. Inhale, heels come up, exhale down. Three more like that. Inhale. Exhale. Inhale, come up.

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Jessie Sarafian: Exhale, come down. Inhale, and exhale. One more time for good luck; inhale up, and exhale, come down; very nice. You're going to shift your weight now to your left foot and you going to lift your right knee up into your chest, interlace both hands around that right knee, or again, using your desk, or your chair, or a wall for support. Stand up nice and tall, reach up through the crown of the head, take an inhale in through the nose. And then as you exhale, pull that right knee in closer, and you want to soften your shoulder blades down your back as you do that. Notice your standing leg and gauge that standing leg. Stand up nice and tall, and then you're going to start to rotate into that right ankle. So, even though we're working from home, I'm sure a lot of us aren't wearing shoes. But when we start to commute and walk to our car, walk to the subway, or walk to work... our shoes, our feet are in shoes and they're not breathing. So, you want to make sure that you're stretching out your feet, stretching out your ankle, spread out through your toes and giving some love to our feet as well. Switch directions. And one more round like this. And then release, and then we're going to switch sides. Shifting your weight over now to your right foot, bend your left knee into your chest, interlace your hands around that left knee. Again, you can do one hand at a time. One hand can rest on your chair for support. Lift off from that right thigh, stand up tall, and then start to rotate into that left ankle. And ask yourself, are you breathing? Are you holding your breath?

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Jessie Sarafian: Nice long, deep inhales in and out through the nose. And then switching directions. And then release. So, now, we're going to get into our hips. So a very common area where we hold a lot of tension. So, you're going to shift your weight over onto that left foot again and you're going to raise that right knee up. And make sure that right knee is in line with that right hip. Right hand comes on to that right knee. I'll turn this way. So, again, you can use your desk, your chair, or a wall for support. And you're going to be in this position right here. From here, now, you're going to start to open up into that right knee. You can go nice and slow, depending on how open or tight you are in your hips.

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Jessie Sarafian: You can make small circles, big circles, starting to open up into that right side of the body. And staying with your breath. Opening up into the right. Try not to dump all your weight into that left hip. Stand up nice and tall. One more round like this, and then release. Right foot comes down, and then we'll switch, other side. Shift your weight over onto that right foot, bend the left knee, and then bring it up. So that left knee is in line with that left hip; using your chair, your desk or a wall for support, left hand on that left knee, and then start to open up into that left knee. Get nice and slow. And deep breaths, strong standing leg. Again, you'll notice one side may feel easier than the other, and that's totally normal. A few more rounds like this, again, moving at your own pace with your own breath, and we're all at different levels here, so really listen to your body. One more round, and then release. Bring that left foot down and just shake it out for a moment. Now, you're going to come back to the back of your chair now, and you're going to step your right foot forward, and then step your left foot all the way back. We're going to come into a deep lunge, and be sure that right knee is stacked right over that right ankle. And you're going to start to push back through that left heel. Gaze is slightly forward. Lift up from that left thigh. So, this is strong standing legs here. For modification, you can always drop that left knee down onto the floor. You can place a pillow or a blanket underneath that left knee if you need to.

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Jessie Sarafian: So, from your lunge here, bring your attention to your centre, your core. So, draw the belly in, lengthen out through the spine, and reach up through the crown of the head. Start to bend into that front knee a little bit more. So, I'm going to offer a few variations with our hands. So, you can keep your hands onto your chair. If you want to challenge your balance a bit, bring your hands onto your hips. Stay here for a few breaths. Another variation with your hands - maybe you can interlace them behind your back, draw your knuckles down, straighten the arms. You can start to lift through your heart. Again, try not to lose that lunge into your front knee. Another variation you can do with your hands - maybe sweep the arms up and over your head. But as you're reaching your arms up, you want to drop the shoulders away from the ears, continuing to breathe. Maybe you can start to bend the elbows out to the side and start to lift the heart. So again, you choose the version that's right for you. Hands can stay on your chair, on your hips, interlace behind you, over your head, or bending at the elbows.

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Jessie Sarafian: Let's take five deep breaths altogether. Choose that version that's right for you. Focus on a point. And let's hold here for one... deep breaths. Two... Three... Four... And five. Bring your hands to your chair, put a soft bend in that back knee, and step your left foot forward to meet your right, and step your right foot back. So, we got to do the other side now. Bend into that left knee, pushing back through that right heel. Again, there's no need to rush into the pose, again find your stance, find your stability, and find that strength within the body. Start to bend into that left knee; hands can stay on your chair, they can be on your hips, maybe interlace behind you.

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Jessie Sarafian: You can sweep the arms up. Remember to drop the shoulders, but engaged, and activate out through your fingertips, or you can start to bend the elbows out to the side, lifting the heart up. Again, you choose the version that's right for you. Try not to lose that lunge into your front knee. For those of you that had that right knee down on the ground, you can do that on this side if you'd like. It's already five breaths here. Focus on a point and hold for one. Two... Three... Four... And five. Bring your hands back to your chair, step your right foot forward to meet your left, and shake it out. We'll do one balancing pose before we make our way back down onto our chair. So, shift your weight over now to

your left foot, hug your right knee into your chest, and using your chair, your desk, or the wall for support, and we're going to move into tree pose now. So, you're going to bring the sole of that right foot. You can bring it to your inner left thigh, you can bring it to your shin, or you can just rest your big toe on the ground. So, any variation here. You want to make sure it's not putting direct pressure on your knee. It's either below or above.

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Jessie Sarafian: Once you found your position, bring your palms together in front of your heart, or you can keep your hands on your chair if you need to. Lengthen out through the spine, strong standing left leg, reach up through the crown of the head, and hold. So, it helps with balancing poses, you want to make sure you're looking at a point either on the floor or in front of you that's not moving. You want to challenge your balance a bit, maybe reach the arms up, but drop the shoulders. Stay with your core, breathe into your front, your side, your back body. And let's hold here for five breaths.

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Jessie Sarafian: One... Two... Three... Four... And five. Palms come together, back down to your heart, and then release that right foot down. Release the hands and shake it out. So, we're going to do the other side now. Shift your weight over now to your right foot and hug your left knee into your chest. Focus on a point, and then when you're ready, moving into tree pose on the left side. So, bring in the sole of that left foot to your inner thigh, your shin, or resting your big toe on the mat.

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Jessie Sarafian: So, we want to try not to dump the weight into that right hip, reach up and lengthen that right side of the body, finding the version that's right for you. And when you're ready, palms together in front of your heart. Deep breaths in and out through the nose. If you feel stable here and you want to go deeper, reaching the arms up, and soften your shoulders, five breaths, here all together. One... Two... Three... Four... And five. Palms come together, back down to your heart, and then release. Left foot comes down, release the hands, shake it out. So, now, we're going to make our way back onto our chair. So, we're not going to come all the way back. Just come a little. I would say midway, to the point of your chair here. And then from here, you're going to inhale, sweep the arms up, and then as you exhale, you're going to start to turn your torso towards the right, bring your left hand to the outside of your right knee and bring your right arm behind you. So, we're going to come into a twist. So, if you don't have a back of your chair, or if it's too high or too low, you can just simply grab underneath your chair. So, on an inhale, you're going to lengthen the spine, sit up tall, and as you exhale, slowly start to twist towards the right.

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Jessie Sarafian: So, we're twisting from our belly. Our head turns last, gazing over our right shoulder. Five breaths altogether; one..., two..., you can close the eyes, if you'd like, tuning in, three..., four..., and five. Slowly unwind, come back to centre, inhale, sweep the arms up, and then exhale, twisting to the left. Right hand to the outside of your left knee, bring that left hand behind your chair or underneath. Sit up tall, and then start to twist to the left, gazing over your left shoulder. Deep breathing, one..., two..., three..., four..., and five. Slowly unwind, and come back to centre. So, keeping your stance midway onto your chair, both feet are flat here, sit up tall. Now, you're going to bring your right ankle and you're going to cross it over that left knee, and then flex your foot here to protect your knee. With your right hand, bring that right hand to your right knee and then gentle pressure bringing that right knee down. So, we're feeling that stretch into that right side of your hip. This can be your pose right here.

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Jessie Sarafian: If you want to go deeper, you're going to start to lean forward. So, you're leading with your heart. Make sure you're not rounding into your back. You have a nice flat back and you're just folding over that front leg. Breathe here, one... for two..., three..., four..., and five. Very slowly, make your way up, release that right foot down, and then we'll switch and we'll do the other leg. Bend your left knee, crossed your left ankle just above your right knee, and flex your foot here. Use that left hand, gentle pressure to draw that left knee down, again, ever so slightly. You can stay upright here or start to lean forward. Again, leading with your chest, breathing into that left side of your hip. For one... Two... Three... Four... And five. Very slowly, make your way up, and then release your left foot down.

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Jessie Sarafian: Now, you're going to come into a comfortable seat, come all the way back onto your chair. Both feet are flat and gauge your core. You're protecting your low back and rest your hands on your thighs. You're going to just start to work the neck a little bit before we do and end with our meditation. So, take an inhale in through the nose. And as you exhale, turning your head towards the right; chin towards your shoulder. Inhale to centre. And then exhale, turning your head to the left. Inhale, come back to centre. Exhale, now bring your right ear to your right shoulder. Inhale, centre. Exhale, left your left shoulder. Inhale, centre. Exhale, tuck your chin into your chest, stretching the back of the neck.

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Jessie Sarafian: And then slowly lifting the head up, you can keep your hands on your thighs and gently close the eyes. Bring your attention to your space, bring your attention to your breath. Notice how your body is feeling at this moment. And clearing the mind, release all of your thoughts and really stay present here. On your chair, wherever you are, in this space. So, of all the things you could have done today, you chose to be here, to do something good for yourself, your mind, your body, your soul. So, let's continue with that throughout the day and throughout our work week. So, all together, let's inhale for a count of one. And exhale for a count of one. Inhale for a count of two... One. Exhale for two... One. Inhale for a count of three..., two..., one. Exhale for three..., two..., one. Inhaling for a count of four..., three..., two..., one. Exhale for four..., three..., two..., one. Inhaling for a count of five..., four..., three..., two..., one. Hold the breath at the top... Hold. And exhale for five..., four..., three..., two..., one. Come back to the natural rhythm of your breath, in and out through the nose.

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Jessie Sarafian: Gently opening the eyes, bring your palms together in front of your heart, and taking this opportunity to thank your body for the work that you did today. So, even though we're not physically all together, hopefully you can feel the energy that's around you. So, at the end of class, we say the word Namaste. Namaste means the light in me recognizes the light in you. So, hopefully you enjoyed that. Have a wonderful day. Namaste.

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Jessie Sarafian: Thank you. So, I know I want to be mindful of time here. So, I can take a few questions or comments if you'd like. There's a Q&A button at the bottom of your screen and feel free to write any comments there, if you'd like. There's a few thank you's, you're welcome, so hopefully you all enjoyed that. And next week, we're going to be taking it to our mat. So, I'll be showing you some moves that will help to ease tension in our neck, our shoulders, and our wrists. Again, a very common area where we feel strain in our body. So, stay tuned in your inbox for those registration details. And thank you so much. So, the goal is how many sessions will you be doing? We're going to be doing this weekly, every

Monday at 12:30 p.m. It's live. So, if you or someone you know is in the health and wellness industry, and you'd like to be a part of this show, send an email to: theupside@fidelity.ca. We'll be taking any suggestions or comments. We'll be focusing on movement, primarily, but also on nutrition and anything that's health related. So, hopefully, you'll enjoy that. Again, we can continue the conversation through our email address. Thank you so much. Lots of thank you's. You're very welcome. Hopefully you all enjoyed that. And I'm Jessie Sarafian and have a wonderful day. Thank you.

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