

# Yoga at work is bit of a stretch for officials

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Bathed in the blue light of computer screens and surrounded by the hum of work, the office may not seem the most natural place to attempt inner enlightenment but “desk yoga” is to become the new coffee break for Indian civil servants.

The civil service personnel ministry has issued a note directing all departments to embrace the “Y-break”, involving a mini version of yoga for staff sitting at their desks.

A routine consisting of stretches, breathing and

meditation has been devised by a yoga centre which is part of a separate ministry that promotes traditional medicine such as homeopathy and ayurveda. Heads of departments and ministries have been asked to make sure their employees are aware of the Y-break.

Yoga is a cherished preoccupation of the prime minister, Narendra Modi, stemming as it does from ancient Hindu

**Narendra Modi has called yoga India’s “gift to the world”**

civilisation. He speaks of it highly, at every opportunity, as India’s greatest “gift to the world”. Modi has urged Indians to make it a part of their daily routine to mark international yoga day on June 21.

Some yoga instructors, however, oppose the Modi government’s promotion of yoga as part of its Hindu nationalist ideology. Among the country’s Muslim minority there has been a lack of enthusiasm for yoga, which is perceived as linked to the Hindu religion.

Muslims have become even more uncomfortable about yoga under Modi, who has elided it with nationalistic imagery.

