

Chair Yoga

FOR LIFELONG
HEALTH

Chair yoga can be done by people of all ages and abilities. This routine is a great way to stay active while seated at the office, in front of the TV, on an airplane, or at the library! Grab a friend for some relaxing partner-work.

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1. Proper Chair Posture Sit on the edge of your chair with your feet flat on the floor. If it is more comfortable, put a pillow behind your lower back or blocks under your feet. Roll your shoulders away from your ears and drop your breath into your belly. Inhale, belly goes out. Exhale, belly pulls in. Relax your jaw. Palms can roll up toward the ceiling or rest downward on your thighs.



2. Block Between Knees Place a block between your knees and squeeze gently with your thighs. This will help engage your pelvic floor muscles. Take 5 deep belly breaths.



3. Neck Stretches Place your right hand over your head and onto your left ear. Gently pull your head to the right shoulder. Take 5 breaths. Repeat on the other side.



4. Neck, Shoulder, and Ear Assists (a) Have a partner gently squeeze the trapezius muscle on either side of your neck. (b) Hold to the count of 5 and then release. Repeat 5 times. (c) Pull gently on the edges of the ears with the tips of the fingers, starting at the top of the ears and working down to the lobes. Switch and give your partner a turn.



5. Hand Stretches

(a) With arms out straight in front of you, point fingers toward the floor. (b) Raise fingers toward the ceiling. (c) Rotate fingers toward each other. (d) Rotate fingers away from each other. Repeat entire sequence 10 times.



6. Hand Stretch Assists (a) Have a partner reach their pinky fingers in between your middle and index finger and your pinky and ring finger. (b) They will reach their fingers around the back of your hand and press their thumbs into the palm of your hand, (c) making gentle strokes toward your wrist and fingers. This releases the connective tissue in the hands. Massage for a few minutes and then switch hands. Then give your partner a hand massage.



7. Foot Stretches (a) Lift one foot, point and flex foot 10 times. (b) Rotate ankle in clockwise circles 5 times, then counterclockwise 5 times. Lower foot and repeat on the other side.

Jenn Carson is a physical literacy expert, yoga instructor, librarian, and author of *Get Your Community Moving: Physical Literacy Programs for All Ages*.

Chair Yoga for Lifelong Health



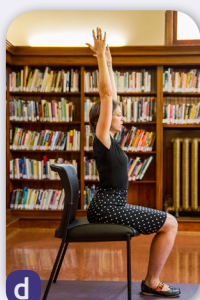
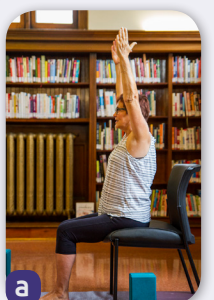
8. Eagle Arms (a) Raise bent elbows with palms facing each other. Swim right arm under the left arm. Hold for 5 breaths. Repeat on other side, swimming left arm under right arm. (b) Advanced version: bring palms to touch and lift elbows to 90°, so they are in line with your shoulders.



9. Seated Back Bend (a) Sit on the edge of your chair with feet planted on the floor. Place your hands next to your hips and push into the chair's surface (or grab the edge of the chair). (b) Lift chin and chest gently toward the ceiling. Take 5 deep belly breaths.

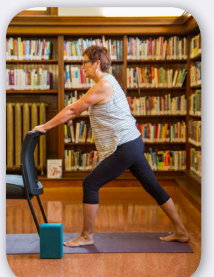


10. Seated Twist (a) Sit on the edge of your chair. Place your right hand on your left knee or on the outside left edge of the chair. Place your left hand on the seat behind you or, (b) if you have the shoulder mobility, on the back of the chair. Inhale and sit up tall. Exhale and look over your left shoulder. Take 5 deep breaths. Repeat on the other side.



11. Seated Sun Salutation (a) Sit on the edge of your chair and inhale, lifting arms overhead. (b) Exhale, bend over and reach toward your toes. (c) Inhale, straighten your back and look up. Exhale, bend over and reach toward your toes again. (d) Inhale, reach your arms overhead. Exhale, bring your hands to your lap. Repeat entire sequence 5 times.

12. Twist Inhale and reach your hands toward the ceiling. Exhale and fold over your legs. Place both hands on the floor or on a block. Inhale, reach your right arm in the air, twisting your torso gently to the right. Exhale and lower arm. Repeat on the left side and then repeat both sides 5 times each.



13. Warrior One with Chair Stand behind your chair (preferably with a mat under your feet). Holding on to the chair back, step your left leg back about 3 feet, positioning your left foot at a 45° and bend your right knee. Hold for 5 breaths. Repeat on the other side.



14. Down Dog Holding on to the back of the chair, walk your feet back and pivot at your waist until your back is parallel to the floor. Press down through your armpits and relax your jaw. Hold for 5 breaths. Come up slowly to prevent dizziness.



15. Meditation Come into proper seated position (pose #1) with your hands resting in your lap. Drop your breath down into your belly. Breathing in, belly goes away from the body. Breathing out, belly pulls in toward the back of the chair. Follow the breath in and out, counting 1 on the inhale and 2 on the exhale, then 3 on the inhale, 4 on the exhale. Go all the way to 10 and then start again. If your mind wanders off mid-count, start again at 1. Continue for at least 5-10 minutes.

16. Savasana with Legs on Chair Lie on the floor with your lower legs resting on the chair. Spread the arms out to your sides with palms facing up. Relax your forehead and jaw. If you'd like, place a beanbag on your belly to help focus your breathing. Inhale, beanbag lifts toward the ceiling, exhale beanbag lowers down. Stay as long as you'd like. Come out slowly and mindfully.

