

SCW

CHAIR YOGA

CERTIFICATION MANUAL



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Program Overview

SCW Chair Yoga is a chair yoga certification program that will prepare students to successfully teach private or group chair yoga classes. The training will assist yoga teachers in developing their own vision and mission of making yoga accessible and adaptable for all abilities.

Participants will work individually and in groups exploring the fundamental tools and techniques for teaching chair yoga for with an emphasis on its benefits that may be used when dealing with special populations.

The yoga instructor will learn techniques, practices, protocols and gain hands-on experience that can be applied in wellness/fitness settings.

Presenter

Gusti Ratliff, M.Ed. brings decades of fitness, business, and education experience to the SCW 8-hour Chair Yoga Certification. Gusti, a retired educator, has been a corporate trainer, a teacher-trainer in both the education and fitness fields. As well as a curriculum writer in education and yoga therapy. She is a registered E-RYT 500 with Yoga Alliance having met the highest level of training and experience in the field since 2003. She received one of her many yoga certifications at SCW in 2004 and 2005. She has facilitated and presented a variety of yoga topics in various yoga teacher training programs as an approved provider, with over a decade in chair yoga teacher training. She is also a Certified Yoga Therapist (C-IAYT) with the International Association of Yoga Therapy. She has taught yoga for over two decades and has trained and presented with the country's most renowned yoga teacher-trainers.



CHAIR YOGA

The Accessible Benefits of Yoga

The many ways that yoga promotes the body's own healing processes, and healthy lifestyle choices:

- Yoga can help to prevent and heal disorders/injuries of the muscular/skeletal systems. A primary mechanism for this is movement and posture re-education – helping individuals become aware of how they use their bodies.
- Yoga can help to prevent, postpone, slow down, or reverse stress-related diseases and suffering - which accounts for a huge proportion of human suffering. The primary yoga tool for this is the breath.
- Yoga can strengthen the heart (through asana) and improve general circulation (blood and lymph) through both breathing and movement. This can have a positive effect on the cardiovascular and immune systems.
- Yoga can help to keep the body and mind agile as we age, particularly by learning new skills, keeping the body active, and developing awareness through meditation.
- Yoga can influence health-related behaviors (i.e. diet, sleep, exercise) by increasing self-awareness and commitment to ethical behavior.
- Yoga can help us cope with the physical and psychological pain associated with illness. Pain is a complex mind-body experience that is well-suited to the use of mind-body practices, particularly breath, relaxation, and meditation.
- Yoga can influence how we think, feel about, and respond to our experiences – much like psychotherapy can, but through self-reflection rather than external guidance.
- Yoga can influence our social relationships and roles, and provide a supportive community. Social support and connection contribute hugely to both physical and emotional well-being.

What is Chair Yoga?

Chair yoga creates access for students who are unable to get down or up from the floor from traditional yoga poses. From the safety of the chair, exercises include range of movement for all the joints of the body, stretching and strengthening. Chair yoga is open to anyone, seniors/elderly, and disabled, including those recovering from joint replacements, injury, or surgery. Safety is the most important aspect of Chair Yoga.

Chair yoga postures involve simple movements and are limited to seated and standing poses. The number of chairs (1+) is dependent on the pose and the ability of the student. Chairs can be used to adapt poses by “bringing the floor up” as if to mimic sitting or lying on the floor. Chairs may also be

used as a prop for students who are unable to get onto floor without assistance as well as additional precautionary measures.

Who does Chair Yoga?

- Anyone who can breathe!
- Seniors/Elderly
- Those who are obese
- Those who are pregnant
- Those recovering from joint replacements or post surgery recovery
- Individuals with difficulty getting down and up from the floor unassisted
- The disabled with paralysis, spasticity or muscle weakness in the arms or legs
- People with vision, fatigue, and balance issues
- Those who practice in places where getting onto the floor is not appropriate, such as work places, conferences, seminars, etc. due to clothing, space limitations, or comfortability.

Student Abilities

Students will come to your class with a variety of health issues. Even when they sign the front desk's health liability waiver, you may not know what to do with them. You may worry that they will do something in class that is dangerous, and that you don't have the slightest idea what will actually help them. When this fear sets in, ask yourself, if I turn this person away, will they ever try yoga again? Is there anything I can offer them that is likely to be safe and will give them at least an introduction to the benefits of yoga?

When a Student Has a Medical Condition

For direction and insight reflect on Pantanjali's Yoga Sutras 2:46, states "Stiram sukham asanam," steady and comfortable should be the postures.

It is perfectly reasonable to let a student know that you are not sure what kind of practice is best-suited for their health condition. Let them know you are willing to explore what works with them, but they must be willing to take responsibility for listening to their body.

Ask them if they have been given any guidelines for movement from a doctor or physical therapist. Ask them what activities in daily life seem to exacerbate pain or symptoms, and use this information to think about poses or practices that might also exacerbate pain or symptoms. Start simple, with the breath and relaxation. Do not make any promises, and do not make any assumptions about what will be comfortable and possible for your students. Your students should make the final decision, but learn as much as you can about how yoga can be adapted for those individuals.

In these cases, fall back on the foundation of asana practice: a comfortable seat (using props to support the student), breathing, mindfulness, and relaxation. Help the student return to the comfortable basic seated position to breathe mindfully in, call it "home," and invite the student to return "home" whenever another posture is not comfortable or accessible.

Identifying Class Levels

- **Level 1**— Limited to seated poses only; no standing
 - Fragile seniors, frail elderly, disabled persons, post-surgery
 - The safety of those with functional impairments and individuals over 75 is primary.
- **Level 2** — Combined seated chair and standing with support an option
 - Less fragile seniors, mild disability / balance, post surgery
 - The class uses the chair(s) for standing poses for balance, sun salutations and warrior flows.
- **Level 3** — Mat / Chair for support and transitions
 - The student must be able to get down and up with little or no assistance, otherwise the risk outweighs the benefits.
 - The class uses the chair for standing poses for balance, sun salutations and warrior flows.
 - In addition to access to a chair, a combination of chair and wall poses create additional challenges and add variety to this group.
 - Advanced chair postures and restorative poses may be done on the floor.

Application - Teaching to Every Body

- When you begin to work with a student who has a serious health condition, learn as much as you can about how yoga can be adapted for that individual.
- Not all Level 1-3 poses are appropriate for every student. Even modified poses may require further modifications or omission as appropriate.
- Many poses that can be done in a chair can also be done in a wheelchair. Specialized wheelchairs that are fitted and adapted to the individual student may be restrictive in some poses.
- Teach modifications and preparatory poses FIRST and to ALL STUDENTS, not only after a student looks like they are struggling or in pain.
- Encourage all students (not just those with special health issues) to follow the principles of steady ease in each asana, resting when necessary, and modifying to honor their body's needs. This helps to make students with special conditions feel less singled out, and may help your other students prevent injuries.

Equipment and Props

- Chairs
- Sticky mats*
- Blocks**
- Straps
- Pillows
- Blankets
- Knee Pads
- Towels

- Dowels
- Tables
- Walls
- Tennis Balls

**Focus on spinal alignment - students sit toward the front of the chair except when the back of the chair will supply needed support.*

**Additional sticky mats placed between the spine and chair, either vertically or horizontally, can provide an added element for spinal alignment.*

**Special considerations: assistive devices, wheelchairs, walkers, canes, leg braces, etc. need additional support, i.e. additional chairs, their own personal assistant, ...*

***Props can be used to achieve better alignment - consider blocks under feet or between feet, ankles, thighs; knee pads under feet or buttocks.*

Safety First!

- Know your student's abilities, goals, and challenges - use health forms and "checking-in."
- Consider types of chairs - sturdy, folding chairs are preferred; however, any sturdy, firm seat will do.
- Sticky mats are not always needed for seated poses - when in use, all-four legs of chairs need to be securely placed on a sticky mat, especially when including standing poses and vinyasa-style flows.
- Bring the floor up for students who cannot safely get up and down from the floor unassisted.
- If a mat is not available or the floor is carpeted, place the chair against a wall for support.

Breath

There are three approaches to the breath in yoga practices:

1. (Awareness of the breath), as a way to connect to the present moment. This can be practiced in visualizations, meditation, relaxation, asana, and vinyasa. For example: Diaphragmatic breathing
2. ("Freeing" the breath), or retraining breathing habits. This can be done through relaxation, guided breathing practices, and joyful movement. There is no attempt to force a deep breath or breathe in any special way "on purpose." Instead, the breath becomes freeing. For example: "Breath of Joy"
3. (Regulating the breath). This can be done through asanas, pranayama and chanting. There are many ideas about how regulating these aspects of the breath influence the body and mind. For example: Anuloma Krama - segmented inhalation; 2 to 1 Breathing; Nadi Shodhana; Kapalabhati - the shining skull breath; Ujjayi

Everyone should begin with the basic practices of noticing and freeing the breath. Only then can students experience some of the effects of different kinds of breathing.

But when working with beginners, it is always best to stay with the most natural relationship between breath and movement. Other approaches are more advanced and take a considerable amount of breath and body awareness that cannot be duplicated properly in a chair.

Application - Influencing Breath

- You influence your students' breathing when talking about breathing.
- Be aware of pacing from "inhale" to "exhale."
- Invite students to breathe and move slowly enough to deepen the breath and fully express the posture.
- Consider paced breathing: Instead of just saying "inhale," try saying, "Inhale, 2...3....4," "Inhale, inhale, inhale, inhale," or "breathe in, breathe in, breathe in, breathe in".
- Maintain awareness in the quality and fluidity of your students' breathing.
- Breathing is flexible: Instruct students to send their breath to the most comfortable place in an asana.
- Having flexible breathing increases the comfort of all asanas. Breath restriction makes poses more challenging and less comfortable.
- Consider reversing the natural relationship of an inhale/exhale, or beginning the movement on the opposite part of the breath and finishing it with the part of the breath that naturally supports it to challenge the flexibility and strength of the respiratory system.

"Breath of Joy"

Level 1 - from a seated position

Level 2/3 - from a seated or standing position (knees soft bent)

1. Inhale both arms in front to shoulder height.
2. Add another inhale ("sip") as both arms sweep out to the sides to shoulder height.
3. Add another inhale ("sip") as both arms sweep up in front toward the sky.
4. As the body hinges from hips and the arms release coming down and behind, exhale completely, emptying the lungs with a "ha" breath.

The Importance of Alignment

The chair is the primary source of support in a chair yoga class. A foundation is whatever part of our body makes contact with the primary source of support, again, a chair.

The alignment of our bones over our "foundation" plays a direct role in the ease and safety of postures. Proper alignment allows for less stress on joints and stabilizes connective tissue.

There are 3 natural alignments of bones that support our weight:

1. (Vertical lines) support weight directly and efficiently.
Examples: knees to heels in a seated mountain; hips to heels in a standing mountain
2. (Arches) distribute weight and support transfer of weight.
Examples: the arches of the feet; the curves of the spine
3. (Triangles) distribute support around our center of gravity, promotes balance, and stability.
Examples: downward facing dog, wide angle stance

Application - Observing Alignment

- Observe your students "lines of bones" to identify the source of instability or discomfort in a posture.
- Rather than observing individual body parts, scan the whole body for a line of support around and over the foundation of a pose.
- Injuries are often caused by ignoring alignment.
- Each individual's body structure will determine which asanas are comfortable and which adaptations are necessary.

Activity - "Seated Mountain"

- Inner edges ("blades") of feet parallel, i.e. "the #11"; "ice skate alignment"
- Knees over ankles
- For seated postures, knees level with or below hip height
- Hips in line with knees
- Shoulders and elbows in line with hips
- Shoulder bones back and away from ears
- Ears lines up with shoulders
- Head and throat back
- Chin parallel to floor, "slightly back and in"



Types of Joints - A Review

From greatest to least ROM:

Ball and socket joints (hip/shoulder): These joints have a large ROM, in all planes of movement: flexion/extension, abduction/adduction, and rotation.

Ellipsoid joints (wrist, first knuckles). These joints allow for ROM in all directions EXCEPT rotation.

Condylloid joints (knee). The knee joint allows for full ROM in flexion/extension, and limited rotation when the joint is fully flexed.

Hinge joints (elbow, ankle, 2nd/3rd knuckles). These joints move freely, but in only one plane of movement (flexion/extension).

Pivot joints (radius/ulna crossing, atlas/axis rotation). These joints allow for only one range of motion: rotation.

Facet joints (vertebra to vertebra, carpal joints). The joints have a very small range of motion – bones glide across each other to slightly change the position of the bones. When many facet joints are incorporated, as in the spine, a much larger range of motion is possible. One vertebra may not be able to twist much, but the whole spine can rotate deeply when many vertebrae cooperate.

Cartilaginous joints (vertebral discs). These joints allow for movement by compression/changing the shape of the joint. This structure helps to absorb the shock of movement and the pressure of gravity.

“Immovable” joints (skull plates, sacroiliac joints). These joints hold two bones together with extremely high stability. Any movement is slight, and increased ROM is associated with pain.

The Qualities of Healthy Joints

Healthy joints reflect the complementary qualities of sthira (steady) and sukha (open), as described in Pantajali's Yoga Sutras, which includes respecting the natural limits of joints.

The basic structure of a joint is a "true" (non-negotiable) limit to ROM.

Stability is created by (muscular strength), (connective tissue health), and (joint structure).

Flexibility is created by (muscular flexibility), (connective tissue health), and (joint structure).

Keeping joints healthy involves three things:

(Mobility) - joint health is maintained primarily through the (synovial fluid) the joint produces during movement. Joints that are not regularly used deteriorate more rapidly than joints that are regularly and gently. Moving through a joints full ROM and including the proper counterposes can ensure joints move through a full ROM.

(Stability) - joints forced beyond their natural ROM are highly prone to injury of the stabilizing connective tissue or the muscles that pass through the joint. Enhanced muscular action can create stability in joints by simultaneously engaging multiple muscles that surround a joint, in particular, actions called (bandhas).

(Strength) - when joints are asked to bear loads greater than the muscles or bones can support, joint injuries are likely. When muscles on both sides of a joint are equally strong this is called (balanced strength). An example of balanced strength is: having both the quadriceps and hamstrings equally strong as both move the knee joint.

Limits of Range Of Motion

1. Muscle tension/inflexibility
2. Muscle weakness
3. Injury (to connective tissue, muscle, bone, or joint capsule)
4. Bone/joint structure

Chair yoga can easily address (muscle tension and weakness).

Common Joint Injuries

Three most common kinds of joint injuries:

1. (Loss of stability) - due to ligament injury from aggressive stretching or poor alignment.
2. (Inflammation) - due to joint/muscle overuse.
3. (Compression) typically due to excessive weight bearing or struggling beyond the joint structure's natural ROM.

Main Joint Classification

The body's main joints can be classified in 4 functional categories:

1. core orientation (spine/ribs): These joints have small independent ROM, but work together to allow for a large ROM. The structure of these joints also promotes core stability. The structure of these joints are small facet joints (between vertebrae and connecting vertebrae and ribs) and discs (between vertebrae). Each individual joint has a very small sliding ROM, and these facet joints have a tendency to get stuck, or "fixed", if they are not regularly moved.
2. contact and action (shoulders/hips): These joints have the largest ROM and most movement initiate from these joints. The structure of these joints is a ball-and-socket, which allows for movement in every plane - extension and flexion (moving back and front), abduction and adduction (moving out to the side and in to the middle), rotation, and circumduction (moving in big circles).
3. power and propulsion (elbows/ knees/ankles): These joints have ROM in only one plane and their main function is to provide more power to movements initiated from the core, shoulders, or hips. The joint structure is a hinge joint, where ROM is limited by strong ligaments around the joint.
4. articulation and control (wrists/hands/feet): These small joints cooperate to provide a high degree of refined movement and are controlled by many muscles. These joints may be ellipsoid joints (like the first knuckle), hinge joints (like the second knuckles), or facet joints (like the carpal joints).

Application - CY Research & Precautions

(A presentation of the latest research and education in yoga and its application to Chair yoga.)

RANGE OF MOTION	LIMITATIONS	CY POSES
THE SPINE		
Flexion (forward bend/ spine rounding) - greatest in lower spine	tight back spinal ligaments; body fat (large breasts/belly)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seated/standing forward fold with support; • 2-chair seated forward fold with knees bent with chest resting on thigh, or holding ankles, or back of calves; • seated cat; focus on distributing spine flexion throughout the spine; • seated flexion; rocking on sit bones forwards/backwards
Extension (backbend/ spine arching) - greatest in lower spine	tight abdominal muscles or spinal ligaments; weak back muscles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seated backbend/extension “cat-cow” ; focus on distributing spine extension throughout the spine • Seated extension; rocking on sit bones forwards/backwards
Rotation (spine twist) - greatest in upper spine (neck), almost non-existent in the lower spine	tight or weak back muscles; tight or weak abdominal muscles; tight spinal ligaments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • side seated spinal twist; • back seated spinal twist; • forward seated spinal twist; • a spine twist using only core
Sidebending	tight or weak abdominal and flank muscles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seated lateral side bend; • supported standing lateral bend
UPPER SPINE/NECK/HEAD		
The upper spine has the greatest overall ROM of any part of the spine;	tight deep muscles of the back neck	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chin to neck/chest “yes/no”; • frontal plane head circles
Flexion, both of cervical spine and of head on atlas (separate movements)		
Extension	largely determined by shape of vertebrae; tight neck flexors or weak supporting extensor muscles	
Rotation	tight side neck muscles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ear to shoulder stretch with chin lift; • frontal plane head circles

Sidebending	due to vertebrae shape, always accompanied by rotation; tight side neck muscles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ear to shoulder stretch with chin lift
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HIP JOINT

Flexion (forward bend)	tight hamstrings, gluteus, and external rotators; hip surgery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seated forward bend; • seated knee to chest; • seated pigeons; • standing supported runner; • seated hip rotation, "stirring the pot"
Extension (back bend/ lunge)	tight quadriceps and psoas/iliacus (hip flexors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one knee to chest, • basic lunge; • Warrior A
Abduction (legs apart, as in wide angle or warrior B)	weak abductors (outer thigh) or tight adductors (inner thigh)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supported wide angle with hand resting on chair or seated/standing supported Warrior B; • to build abductor strength, practice Warrior B at the wall, pressing a block to the wall with the outer thigh/knee with chair available for support; • for a passive stretch of the adductors, practice seated bound angle or seated tree pose
Adduction (legs cross midline)	tight abductors (outer thigh) or gluteus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with block press inward to activate the inner thighs; • seated or standing supported eagle
Rotation (common neutral alignment with legs together - helps forward bends/hip flexion)	awareness and habit; some individuals have structural limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create awareness through movement rehearsal; • consider a block between thighs in seated or standing tadasana
External Rotation	awareness and habit; some individuals have structural limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create awareness: movement rehearsal; • wide-angle seated pose

THE SACROILIAC JOINTS

Some ROM is possible, but not desirable. Greater ROM associated with pain.	Avoid strong counter-twisting of hips to spine, which strains ligaments and can create instability. Initiate twists from rib cage/core, for example, a supported wide leg rotating triangle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supported forward bend with ahimsa, particularly in wide angle forward bends (standing or seated)
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THE KNEE		
Flexion	tight quadriceps, injuries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seated knee bending; • bend and straighten one leg; • crossing legs; • lower leg circles
Extension	rare; hyperextension is more common	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retraining hyperextension: practice kneecap lifting with unlocked knee
THE ANKLE		
Flexion (flexing foot)	tight Achilles tendon/ calf muscles; structural limitations Accommodation: Blanket/rolled mat under heels in Chair pose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ankle presses, • standing or in down dog; • ankle bending; "writing the alphabet"; • "heel - toe" from a supported wide angle to a supported forward fold; • chair/fierce pose
Extension (pointing foot)	tight extensors; structural limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ankle stretches; • ankle bending; • "writing the alphabet"
Eversion/inversion (ankles rolling in or out)	Inversion can be useful in some asymmetrical standing poses (back leg of Warrior B). Eversion can be helpful in side plank. In most poses, though, neutral alignment is more supportive. Most individuals tend to one more than the other, as a habitual standing posture. Can be retrained toward balance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ankle stretches; • arch activation exercises; • ankle presses with ball or soft block between ankles; • standing poses with "pada bandha" for maximum stability
SHOULDER JOINT		
Flexion (arms forward and up, as in warrior A or down dog)	tight latissimus (back) or trying to keep the shoulder blades "down".	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seated shoulder circles; • shoulders forward and back; • therapeutic scapulo-humeral coordination (letting the shoulder blade move as the arm moves); • have students widen arms or bend arms
Extension (arms back and up, as in reverse namaste)	tight pectoralis (chest) or deltoids (shoulder)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shoulder circles; shoulders up and down; • one shoulder rotates forward and other back while looking over the forward shoulder

Abduction (arms out to side, as in warrior B, lifting arms out and up in sun salutations, or moving arms back in a twist, rotating triangle pose)	weak deltoids or shoulder/rotator cuff injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • movement rehearsal to build muscular endurance; if pain is present, rest is the best option.
Adduction (arms into midline)	tight rhomboids and trapezoids (muscles between shoulder blades) or deltoids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hug stretch with hug breath - hug your upper chest and breathe deeply between the shoulder blades; • seated moving eagle arms
Internal rotation	tight internal rotators (i.e., pectoralis or latissimus), weak external rotator;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rare in yoga; prep for reverse namaste hand position
External rotation (common alignment cue in most poses and arm positions)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple movement rehearsal, such as rotating the arms from shoulder to palms in tadasana

THE ELBOW

Flexion (arm bent)	Flexion (arm bent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strengthen triceps by practicing 1/2 down dog with slow elbow lowering; • overhead half of gomukhasana (cow's face) arms with strap; • eagle arms
Extension (arm straight) - Anatomic neutral		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • retraining hyperextension: encourage students to roll the inner elbows ("eyes") to face each other in poses like down dog, with triceps stabilizing the position.

FINGERS / THE WRIST / FOREARM

Flexion (very rare in yoga)	tight extensors; structural limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • forearm massage and stretch
Extension	tight flexors, weak extensors; structural limitations; injuries (i.e., carpal tunnel)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • forearm massage; • Finger and wrist stretches; • stretch for carpal tunnel; • wrist traction and neck stretch

Application - Class Design

- Use the framework of the four joint categories as a natural basis for guiding students in a CY pose.
- Practice a pose several times before choosing cues - pay close attention to your actual experience in the pose.
- Create cues for moving into the pose, holding the pose, and moving out a pose. Be sure the cues guide students' awareness to all four categories of joints.
- Describe how the joints relate to the actions, intentions, and sensations of the pose. Don't simply describe what a joint is doing... "the knee is bent over the ankle."
- Notice a tendency to cue (and focus) on certain joints. For example, in a modified Warrior B, it is very natural to focus on the spine and how it creates the primary orientation of pose, but difficult in Chair yoga to feel how the joints of the hands, knees, and ankles/feet express the full intention of the pose.
- Encourage students to express poses from the center of the spine. Cue the head and neck follow the line of the spine.
- Have students initiate a pose's orientation from the core and the breath... "Inhale, and lengthen the spine....exhale, and fold the spine forward."
- Encourage students to reflect on the emotional orientation of a pose by directing their awareness to their open heart (spine extension) or surrender (spinal flexion).
- Direct students to find the basic shape of the pose by moving through the shoulders and hips... "Step your legs one leg's distance apart (observe triangle alignment), lift your arms to shoulder height (observe line alignment)."
- Guide students towards the feeling of action in a pose by bringing their attention to the position of their arms and legs..."Arms stretching out as if reaching for something."
- Talk students through a refined use of muscular strength in the pose... "Bend the front knee, feeling the strength of the leg..."
- Encourage students to notice whether the main hinge joints (elbows and knees) are locked (jamming the joint into a false stability) or held stable through conscious muscular action.
- Encourage students to full express the energy and actions of a pose by engaging the hands and feet... "Lift and spread the toes to stabilize the ankle..." (Pada Bandha)
- Teach students muscular actions that create stability, for example, engaging outer or inner thigh in supported lunges or engaging front shin by flexing foot or ankle.
- Invite students to practice a hand mudra in a pose, especially if they tend to hold unconscious tension in the hands and fingers.
- Allow the shoulder blades to move as needed in a pose and emphasize gentle external upper arm rotation in most poses. Do not exhaust arm/shoulder muscles.

Your 1st Class - "From the Nose to the Toes"

One of the easiest yoga classes for new CY teachers to design is a class that moves every joint through its range of motion.

The CY class below provides a framework:

- A CY Joint Mobility Practice

All Levels*

1 mat / 1 - 2 chairs / blocks (as needed)

3 - 5 x cycles with a 5 count breath

- Set-up / Checking-in/ Safety check - "Home"; 1st class; sitting and chair position
- Lesson / Theme / Intention / Education
- Centering / Body Awareness
- Hands / Mudra
- Breath Awareness
- Seated Mountain - hands in lap palms up; introduce a mudra; observe alignment; blocks; rolled mat for assistance; back or front of seat

Nose "circles"

"Yes"

"No"

"Thinking about it"

Sun breaths

Shoulder presses / fingers interlaced / breath awareness

Shoulder - Wrists "circles" / fingers interlaced

Shoulder “wings” 2-options / breath awareness:

Shoulder rotations

Finger flexion / extension / bending

Spinal Extension* *(the movement begins by bringing awareness to the sit bones; rocking forward on the sit bones on the inhale and lifting the chest and chin while contracting back muscles; avoid lifting the chin too high due to possible necks issues, arthritis, or osteoporosis).*

Spinal Flexion* *(from extension, at the exhaling breath, abdominal muscles contracted toward the spine; the movement begins on the sit bones and rock back and chin is lower the chin toward the chest; for individuals with osteoporosis avoid spinal flexion in the upper back - focus on the pelvic movements only)*

Spinal Lateral Bend

Twist* (2-options)

Hip / Knee Flexion*

Knee Flexion / Extension / Circles*

Hip Cradle with Lateral Rock / Rotation*

Pigeon* (2-options)

Ankle Bending / Rotation / "Pada Bandha"

Toe Bending / Foot Massage

Closing:

Relaxation pose; Body Scan or Yoga Nidra/Guided Imagery/Breath Awareness; Meditation practice; Silent Chanting; Affirmation; Final sharing; Homework (optional)

Activity - Discovering Internal body awareness

How much do you have?

#1 Alignment check, eyes closed and open:

Stand facing a wall. Close your eyes, and come into a standing "wall square": hands on the wall, hinged at the hips in a forward bend. Try to make a 90-degree angle with your body (spine and arms parallel to the floor), keeping the arms, spine, and legs straight.

Open your eyes.

Ask for feedback.

How close to 90 degrees are you?

Did you have an intuitive sense of when you were in the posture?

What sensations did you use to judge whether you are in the posture?

#2 Alignment check, eyes closed and open:

Stand in tadasana. Close your eyes, and come into virabhadrasana 2 (Warrior B): arms shoulder height, front leg bent to almost 90 degrees, knee over heel.

Open your eyes.

Ask for feedback.

How is your alignment?

Did you have an intuitive sense of when you were in the posture?

What sensations and signals did you use to know that you were in the "right" pose?

Did you stop when it felt familiar? Was it the habitual way that you practice warrior pose?

How do habits influence our ability to feel alignment?

#3 Finding your edge:

Sit in a crossed-legged pose or dandasana (staff pose). Close your eyes. Begin to walk your hands forward until you are in a forward bend.

How do you know when you are in a forward bend?

Can you use the sensation of stretch in the hamstrings, hips, and back to tell you to pause where you are?

If your eyes were open, when do you think you would have “stopped” coming forward?

#4 Balance check, eyes open and closed:

Come into tree pose. Find a steady point to gaze at. Close your eyes in tree pose, and notice how it affects your balance.

Can you feel the sensory information coming from your foot, ankle, and hips?

#5 Balance check, eyes open and closed:

Try the following vinyasa with eyes open, and then closed:

From tadasana, exhale into chair pose. Inhale, lift back into tadasana and raise the heels (balancing in tadasana on the balls of your feet).

Can you feel the sensory information coming from your foot, ankle, and hips?

Postures and Movement

We rely on our five senses (sight, sound, touch, taste, smell); however, consider how yoga awakens our sixth sense – internal body awareness

Internal body awareness:

- helps us maintain stability.
- allows us to move with grace and efficiency.
- helps us avoid injury.
- increases joy of movement.
- connects us to intuition.

Proprioceptors are nerve endings located in the muscles, tendons, and joints Proprioceptors provide information to the spinal cord and brain about body positions and movements.

- Proprioceptors in muscles respond to muscle contraction and relaxation. The stretch reflex is a response to these receptors.
- Proprioceptors in tendons respond to tension in the tendon of a muscle, caused by either strong muscular contraction or stretching.
- Proprioceptors in joints respond to joint position and changes in position. Information from these receptors facilitates general coordination and body awareness.

All of these signals are sent to the brain, which integrates them and sends back commands to the muscles, to help us keep our balance or move gracefully. This is true mind-body integration: the body talks to the brain, the brain talks to the body, and neither is completely "in charge".

Application - Teaching Internal Awareness

- External feedback.
 - Using the mirror, partner work, and teacher feedback are all good ways to help students become conscious of unconscious patterns. When doing this, you need to make sure students have an “a-ha” moment – that they see the difference and feel the difference.
- Students need an opportunity to feel for themselves.
 - Bringing students' attention away from the mirror, and towards sensation, is helpful as a general teaching strategy.
- If you showed students a new way to do a pose, ask them to come out of the pose and enter it again, on their own.
- If you brought awareness to how they hold tension in some part of their bodies, bring them into a new posture and see if they can transfer what they learned to the new pose.
- Ask students to listen to directions for coming into a pose, rather than watching and copying a demonstration of a pose. This develops greater internal awareness.
- Not demonstrating a pose often frustrates beginners, so make sure that your verbal instructions are both precise (about action and alignment) and expressive (about quality of movement and sensation).

“Feeling From The Inside Out”

Beginners can often find greater awareness when entering a pose than when holding a pose.

- From standing mountain, using chair(s) for support, stepping back into a wide stance, raising arms and lunging the front leg forward as you inhale. This brings awareness to the stability and upward lift of the pose, as well as awareness to the front-body/inhalation quality of the pose.
- From a supported downward facing dog, lunging forward, planting the feet, and rising into the pose. This brings awareness to how the foundation of the pose (feet placement) influences the pose from the ground up. It also brings awareness to the backbending/back strength aspect of the pose.
- From standing mountain, lifting one leg forward (bent-knee) into a standing balance (using the 2nd chair for safety under lifted foot), then taking it back to pass through balancing stick/warrior C before softly landing in the lunge of Warrior A, using the chair(s) as needed. This approach increases overall body awareness by using challenging balancing transitions.

Body Learning

Proprioception is enhanced by simple practice of a movement or posture. Repetition creates body learning or muscle memory, also known as, neuromuscular facilitation. The more a movement or posture is practiced, the easier it is for the brain/spinal cord to recognize sensory information and

send the appropriate commands to the muscles needed. Neuromuscular facilitation allows a student to process all kinds of cues more efficiently – including language, sight, sequences, touch, and internal sensations.

Application - How to Strengthen Muscle Memory

- Have students practice coming into and out of poses.
- Repeat challenging poses in a class, and from class to class.
- Use vinyasa sequences to create opportunities for students to practice challenging transitions.
- Accelerate the process by having students close their eyes.

Activity - The Balancing Act

Practice Inquiry: Tree Pose

- Eyes open, gazing down; gazing up (no head position change).
- Eye rolls.
- Eyes closed.
- Tilting the head to the side – ear to shoulder.

What effects do you notice on your balance?

Balance is defined as:

“the process by which we control the body’s center of mass with respect to the base of support, whether it is stationary or moving” – Orthopedic Technology Review, 3, 2001

“mental and emotional steadiness” – 9th definition, Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Balancing poses in a yoga practice develop _____ and _____.

Balance

Physical balance is supported by three systems:

- Proprioception
- Vision
- Inner ear (vestibular system)

Vision

- Vision provides information about spatial orientation in the environment. Moving the eyes provides conflicting/rapidly changing visual information, and closing the eyes removes this information. Both will make balancing more difficult.
- The use of gazing at one spot (drishti) can be used both to support and challenge balance.

Gazing down, in the direction of your support, generally enhances balance. Taking the gaze away from your foundation generally challenges balance.

Vestibular System

The vestibular system, along with feedback from proprioceptors and blood vessels in the upper neck, provides sensory feedback about whether we are right side up, upside down, or spinning around.

Training the vestibular sense can reduce dizziness and disorientation in inversions, forward bends, and back bends, and improve balance in all poses and vinyasas.

Application - Vestibular Sense Training

- Move the head in asanas, in line with the spine. Example: turning the head to look up in triangle pose, or releasing the head down in a forward bend.
- Move the gaze (drishti) in asanas, with or without moving the head.

Vestibular-Visual Coordination Exercises

- Eye Exercises: Look up and down, slowly, then quickly. Look side to side, slowly, then quickly.
- Head Exercises: With eyes open, tilt head forwards and backwards. Try with eyes closed. With eyes open, turn head side to side. Try with eyes closed.
- Eye-Ear Coordination Exercises: Focus eyes on an object, and turn head side to side like saying 'No' (slowly, then quickly). Try again, lifting the head up and dropping it down, like shaking the head 'Yes'.
- Postural Change Exercises: Change from sitting to standing and back again with eyes open (up to 20 times). Repeat with eyes closed.

Activity - A Mountain to a Tree Pose

Transition from tadasana to tree pose, noticing the weight shift and adjustment the whole body makes.

In tree pose, lean the torso to the left and then right – and then notice the muscular stabilization that accommodates this shift.

Lift onto ball of foot in tree pose, and notice how the foot, ankle, hip, and core try to accommodate this shift.

What effects do you notice on your balance? What made each new transition more challenging than the one before?

Working with Balance

To improve balance, challenge these three systems independently and work with them as a functioning whole.

Challenge the visual system: Work with drishti (gaze). Gazing down at your support is easiest; moving the gaze up or to the side challenges visual integration; eyes closed takes away visual feedback.

Challenge the vestibular system: Change head position. The easiest position tends to be head in line with spine, unless this prevents you from gazing at your support, in which case lifting the head may help balance.

Challenge proprioception: Close eyes. This forces proprioceptors to provide more information/ take greater responsibility for your balance than usual. Choose less stable and smaller foundations (i.e. moving from chair to two feet to one; from chair, two feet on ball, one foot to ball of the foot, etc.).

Application - Teaching Balance

- Remind students that losing your balance is a key part of learning to balance and the chair is available for support and safety.
- Give them permission to wobble.
- Give them permission to use the support of their chair(s), even if it means a “home” posture.
- Acknowledge how balancing poses can threaten or frighten the part of us that wants to stay safe and in control.
- When a student has difficulty with a pose because of balance or strength, try changing the foundation of the pose to make it more accessible: Have the student take a wider or shorter stance in standing poses.
- Invite the student to work with straight arms or straight legs if the pose traditionally calls for bearing weight on bent arms or legs.
- Invite the student to add extra support to their foundation (more chairs, the wall, etc.) - making more physical contact with the support(s).

Balance Training

- Try maintaining the body's center of gravity over the base of support (chair), while moving the limbs, head, and gaze. This approach to balance training emphasizes working with a limited base of support (i.e. standing on one leg).
- Practice changing the base of support chair(s); the orientation of the chair(s); and/or the orientation of the body. For example, changing the direction of the chair, moving from an upright, foundation on two feet to moving to horizontal orientation of the core, and only one foot and extending the opposite arm (i. e. supported star).

Sensations

Many CY beginners cannot tell the difference between stretch, effort, and injury. In many cases, the chair masks these sensations.

A muscle stretch should feel like a gentle, distributed pull or heat along the whole muscle that may

be slightly more intense near the joint. This sensation gets more intense with a deeper stretch. Stretching sensation should dissolve as the muscle and fascia release in a pose. If the sensation gets more and more intense, you may be experiencing the stretch reflex or injuring yourself. One of the best ways to teach students sensitivity and awareness through sensation is to work with the stretch reflex.

The stretch reflex is a safety reflex that responds to changes in muscle length. The stretch reflex inhibits stretching too aggressively. This kind of reflex helps prevent sudden injury and it can also prevent a student from entering a deep stretch. Intense, painful stretching sensations indicate that a stretch reflex is kicking in, and trying to tell us when to back off.

Stretch receptors in muscle fibers monitor the muscle's state of contraction and rate of change in muscle length. Stretch receptors act as both proprioceptors and nociceptors.

Application - Patience is Key

- CY beginners dislike long holds, especially in poses that challenge their stamina and flexibility. Have them repeat a pose more than once instead of holding it for a long time.
- Layer several "different" poses that have the same primary action (for example, seated pigeons or seated twists variations). This has a similar effect to staying in a pose, but provides a more engaging experience.
- Feeding a sense of ambition in a stretch ("Stretch harder! Reach further!") will increase resistance of a stress-induced stretch reflex.
- Encourage a soft mental focus on the breath, or through use of steady gaze (drishti), without struggle.

Application - "Sensational" Cueing

- Cue actions connected to sensation (i.e. "bend forward until you feel a stretch in the back of your legs"), not landmarks (i.e. "reach for the toes").
- Ask students to notice how the breath changes what they feel in a pose. How does the pose feel when they inhale? When they exhale?
- Invite students to imagine sending the breath where they feel the sensation of stretch. Have them observe how this changes the feeling of stretch.
- Invite students to close their eyes once they understand a pose or vinyasa, and focus on what they feel.
- Describe muscular actions as something that can be felt as well as "done".
- Ask students to observe their attitude in a pose (or towards a pose). Invite an attitude of playfulness, devotion, surrender, friendliness, or adventure.
- Use creative imagery to communicate quality of movement and action.
- Know the difference between good (safe) sensation and bad (harmful) sensation. Use internal cues to adapt a pose and clear instructions for observing sensation.
- Beginners can often find greater awareness when entering a pose than when holding a pose.
- Don't overload beginners with cues (lift the toes, press down through the heel, turn in the thighs, drop the tailbone, draw the shoulder blades together...). Instead, give them an opportunity to explore

one particular cue or action.

Application - Sensational Design

- Create a simple sequence of flowing chair postures.
- Practice the seated vinyasa to find the flow of the movement with the breath.
- With each movement, each inhalation, and exhalation, bring the awareness to a different part of the body... "inhaling/exhaling...bring awareness to your _____"
- When you bring awareness to a body part, simply ask students to acknowledge what it is feeling.

A Sensational Supported Salutation

- Inhale (Stretch Arms Overhead): Feel hands
- Exhale (Forward Fold - arms extended out to sides): Feel arms
- Inhale (Lift the arms/chest to Chair pose): Feel shoulders
- Exhale (Sit in deeper in Chair): Feel thighs
- Inhale (Extend the legs straight to move back into forward fold): Feel legs
- Exhale (Forward Fold - arms extended forward): Feel belly
- Inhale (Step up to R/L Warrior 1, with chest lifted and open/hands on hip): Feel chest
- Exhale (Press back into modified Downward Facing Dog/"wag the tail"): Feel hips
- Inhale (Lean forward to modified plank): Feel back
- Exhale (Press back into modified Downward Facing Dog/"walk the dog}): Feel calves
- Inhale (Step up to R/L Warrior 1, with chest lift/lift the arms): Feel rib cage
- Exhale (Press back into modified Downward Facing Dog): Feel front
- Inhale (Step forward, Stand Up, Arms Overhead): Feel feet
- Exhale. Hands to heart. Feel whole body

Application - Make it Sensational

- It may take a few rounds of practice to get the hang of quickly shifting the awareness from one part of the body to another, while still moving with the breath.
- There is always something to notice - some action, some feeling... "traction in the ___", "length builds strength", "strong and long"
- Finish in a neutral pose - seated relaxation pose.
- Challenge students to close their eyes.
- Practice breath awareness before relaxation - notice the whole body and the breath.
- "Come into seated relaxation pose. Notice your breathing. Feel the sensations of your belly skin stretching as you inhale and relaxing as you exhale. Notice the "whole sensation" of your body, including the position of your body how it makes contact with your trusted support. "

A Sweet Sensation

- “To increase our flexibility and avoid injury, let’s move slowly and fluidly into poses...”
- “Let’s stay within the realm of a “sweet sensation”...the kind of stretch that feels good...”
- “Hold poses for longer than a few breaths to overcome the first stretch reflex. Wait until the sensation dissolves, inhale, then exhaling going deeper in the posture. Each new ‘sweet spot’ may take longer to let go, as the muscles relax and get used to the new position.”
- Stretch receptors will adapt to a new muscle length with regular stretching. Stretch reflexes will “trust” the stretch.
- Observe your “edge”... the point in a stretch where you feel sweet sensation but not pain in pose, and play the edge softly. An edge...how “far” you can go in a pose...will change just stay connected to the sensation.
- “reach, sweep, lengthen”; “linger here”; “invite”; “consider”; “humor me”; “just for today”; “moons level” (ex. hips in Warrior C); “Goldilocks principle - not too easy, not too hard, ahhh just right”; “sweet spot”: “you may stay here or...”
- Others:

Perceived Effort

Especially in Chair Yoga, it is important to give students the opportunity to feel the commitment of a SAFE and meaningful practice, without encouraging them to struggle in the practice.

We want to help CY students experience a challenging practice, while maintaining a sense of ease.

The brain integrates several sensations to perceive effort:

- Muscular contraction
- Increased heart rate
- Increased breathing rate and/or depth
- Elevated body temperature
- Hydration (or dehydration)

These sensations are interpreted by the part of the brain that recognizes pain, and are strongly influenced by emotions and environment:

Fill in the blanks (increases or decreases):

Feeling stressed, pressured, or judged _____ perceived effort.

Having fun _____ perceived effort.

External heat _____ perceived effort and decreases actual physical ability.

Enjoyable music _____ perceived effort.

A sense of devotion during a yoga practice _____ perceived effort.

Application - Cultivating Effort

- Using support. This can be in the form of additional chairs, props or hands-on support/touch. It can also be in the form of "moral" support and encouragement.
- Adapting poses to the individual, such as adding/removing chairs or moving to a wall.
- Cultivating an attitude of patience, persistence, curiosity and joy.
- Using the breath to support the practice and observe any strain and struggle.
- Accessing imagination to make the practice easier and more enjoyable.
- Sequencing poses skillfully, so that challenging poses become more accessible.
- Creating sequences that give students the opportunity to prepare, rehearse, and rest/recover.

Influencing Effort

1. Challenge the "Edge"

- Maintain comfortably and good form, i.e. the "Goldilocks" principle.
- Experiment with the next level of challenge, i.e. removing a chair.
- Extend how long a student can hold a pose by one breath.
- Change the foundation of the pose, i.e. lifting one leg in a supported standing pose.
- Resist gravity more by deepening the pose, i.e. sinking lower in chair or removing support.

2. Increase Effort with Comfort

- Encourage deep, steady breathing and focus on the breath.
- Use inspirational music.
- Learn what motivates your students: encouragement, humor, seriousness, linking their efforts to a higher purpose ("offer this downward facing dog to someone you love"), etc.

3. Rest and Recover

- Give students a rest/recovery pose before moving into a challenging pose for a sustained hold or long sequence.
- Encourage students to use the CY recovery pose ("home") when they need to, and return to the challenging pose when they are ready.
- Use group rest periods to recover.

4. Repeat

- Practice a pose or movement several times, inviting students to practice the version that keeps them at their challenge edge each time.
- Encourage students to notice when their edge shifts, and to adapt to what they are feeling in the moment, not what they think they should be able to do.

Imagery

There are many types of image experiences in yoga:

- Images based on a sensory experience (touch, taste, sound, temperature....)
- Images based on the name of a pose

- Images based on the shape of a pose
- Heart-based images that create an emotional connection or experience
- Story-based images that connect a complex psychological experience with a specific pose or movement
- Breath awareness: using imagery to connect to the sensations of the breath
- Body scan: imagining breathing in and out of each part of the body
- Stories and symbols to understand the meaning of postures
- Yoga Nidra: focused awareness of sensation throughout the body
- Chakra visualizations: connecting to the symbolic meaning of each center
- Conversation with the body: dialogue between the body and mind in a state of deep relaxation, through guided imagery or questions
- Tonglen meditation: imagining using the breath and body to transform pain and suffering into peace and compassion
- Metta meditation: using imagination to create a sense of social connectedness, gratitude, and joy.

Application - Imagination in Action

Seated Forward Fold - "Releasing from your seated mountain to a forward fold over the legs....Spill forward smoothly, like melted chocolate over a sundae..."

Seated Tree - "Imagine that the roots of your tree start at your navel, not your feet... and feel the strength and stability of your spine anchored and supported in the chair...your arms as strong branches..."

Seated Supported Warrior 1 - "Imagine that you are a candle, and your hands are the flames. Imagine the wax melting down your body - feeling the shoulders soften - the pelvis sink lower - the legs, a strong foundation, into the floor."

Seated Fish/Spinal Extension/Relaxation pose - "Leaning back into the chair...imagine that someone you care about has their hands on your shoulder blades/back, supporting you as you lean back into the support of the chair..."

Breathing - "Using the diaphragm to expand the belly...imagine there are ribbons tied around your belly, each representing one thing in your life that creates stress. With each inhalation, let the belly gently expand, letting one of the ribbons release and fall away..."

Activity - Using Your Imagination

Choose a seated CY pose - _____

Create five different images for it:

on the pose name or on the pose shape:

on pure sensation

on an emotion

on a story

Which resonated most strongly with you?

Why?

Seated Body Awareness

Bring your awareness to the toes of the left foot. Feel the sensations present in the toes of the left foot...imagine breathing in and out of the toes...relax your focus and return your awareness to the sensations of the breath. Move on to the left foot, and then the left leg, and then the pelvis, repeating this process of feeling sensation, imagining breathing in and out of each area of the body, and returning your awareness to the sensation of breathing. Move on to the right toes, right foot, and right leg, through the belly, back, and chest, through the shoulders, arms, hands, and fingers, and finishing with the neck, head, and face. Finish by imagining the breath moving through the whole body, from head to toes.

The Breath of Connection

“The breath connects us to all those who have come before us, all those who share this planet with us in this moment, and all those who will come after us. Use the simple act of breathing to remind yourself of this connection.

Bring to mind a person who is nearby, physically. Someone who is sharing this very room, or home, with you. As you inhale, take in their physical presence. As you exhale, send them awareness and appreciation.

Bring to mind a person who is close to your heart, but far from you. As you inhale, bring them to mind. As you exhale, send them love and support.

Bring to mind a person who is suffering. As you inhale, breathe in awareness of their suffering, and as you exhale, send them compassion and understanding.

Bring to mind an ancestor, a predecessor - someone whose very life has made your present experience possible. As you inhale, take in the meaning of their life, and as you exhale, send them gratitude.

Bring to mind all those who will come after you. As you inhale, experience the beauty of your own life. As you exhale, send them the fruits of your life, and hope for the future."

Restorative Chair Yoga

- Be intentional and design a class based on its purpose. In restorative Chair yoga, you assume the role of caregiver.
- Soft lights, quiet sounds, comfortable temperature, etc.
- Support - chair and gravity; with or without props
- Safe environment, including attitudes of the teacher and other students
- Music that supports a sense of well-being.
- General deep breathing, guided relaxation, etc.
- Breath awareness and mindful movement
- Gentle restorative poses and/or
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Meditations and/or imagery

Principles of the no-props practice:

- Gravity. Use the body's own weight on two chairs to create a sense of support.
- Release. Work through each joint's range of motion to release muscular tension, improve circulation, and nourish the body.
- Mindfulness. Use soft awareness of the breath and sensation to quiet the mind.

A Restorative Chair Series

- Opening Pose: Relaxation Pose - backs against the chair; legs on chair (relaxation pose) or legs over chair (supine)*
- Opening Practice: Guided Breath Awareness and Intention Setting
- ROM = gentle range of motion exercises with breath awareness
- Seated forward fold with head resting on another chair or table (legs wide for hip opener)
- Reclining bound angle
- Knees to chest
- Seated forward fold with legs on the second chair

- Closing Pose: Seated Relaxation Pose (or legs up wall*)
- Closing Practice: Yoga Nidra

Guided Relaxation

“As you settle into your relaxation pose, relax the weight of your body into your support. Notice how the back body makes contact with the support. Relax the back of your legs....the back of your hips.... your lower back, middle back, and upper back. Relax the back of your shoulders....the back of your arms....the back of your neck....and the back of your head. Make any adjustments you need to, to relax the back of your body more fully. Relax into the support of where you are, completely.

Now, notice the weight of your body. Notice the weight of your legs, as they rest. Let your legs be heavy. Let your feet and toes relax. Release them completely. Let go. Notice the weight of your hips and pelvis, as they rest. Let the weight of your pelvis sink. Notice the weight of your rib cage. Let the back ribs melt.

Let the belly expand with each inhalation. As you exhale, let the belly sink. Notice the weight of your shoulders and arms, as they rest. Let your arms be heavy. Let your hands and fingers relax. Release them completely. Let go. Notice the weight of your head, as it rests. Let the head be heavy. Release your neck and throat completely. Relax the muscles of your face....relax your eyes....your cheeks.... your forehead and eyebrows....relax your jaw....relax your whole face.”

Notice your breathing. Notice each inhalation as it enters the body, and each exhalation as it exits the body. Let your breathing be soft, full, and easy. Continue to observe the breath, letting the body sink deeper and deeper into relaxation. Let the body sink deeper and deeper into the place where you are.

[Let students relax]

Notice your breathing. Notice each inhalation as it enters the body, and each exhalation as it exits the body. Let your breathing be soft, full, and easy. Notice your whole body, including your hips...your legs.....and your feet, as they rest on the floor. Notice your belly and back, breathing easily. Notice your arms....your hands...your shoulders and chest. Notice your neck, your head, and the muscles of your face. Notice the whole body. Notice the whole body. Notice how easy it is to be in your body, in this moment. Feeling fully supported, in this pose, and in all areas of your life.

When you're ready to begin moving out of relaxation, begin to gently move the fingers and toes. Let some sensation spread into the hands and feet. Stretch or move in any way that feels good... Breathe easily.”

POSTURE INDEX

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Lateral Angle		X	X	
Triangle		X	X	
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Marichi Twist	X	X	X	
Rotated Head to Knee		X	X	
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Tree	X	X	X	
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POSTURE INDEX 2

CHAIR YOGA POSTURE	NOTES
	<p>LATERAL ANGLE</p>
	<p>BOUND ANGLE "BUTTERFLY"</p> <p>- Students with hip replacements are to avoid.</p>
	<p>CHAIR</p>
	<p>CHAIR</p>
	<p>CHILD'S POSE</p>



COBRA



DOWNDOG

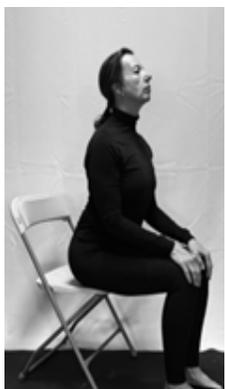


DOWNDOG



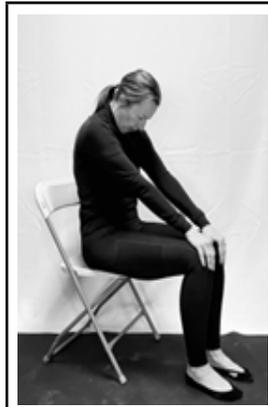
EAGLE

- Students with hip replacements are to avoid.



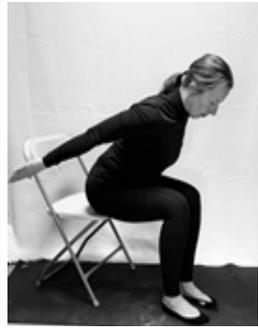
EXTENSION
"COW"

- Avoid lifting chin too high for students with neck issues, such as arthritis or osteoporosis.



FLEXION
"CAT"

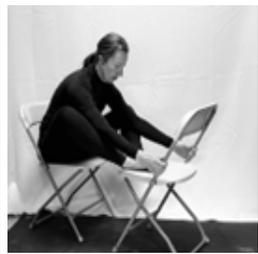
- Avoid spinal flexion in the upper back for individuals with osteoporosis. Focus on pelvic movements forward and back on the sitting bones.



FORWARD FOLD

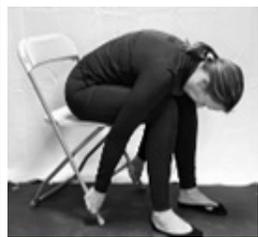


FORWARD FOLD



BOUND ANGLE
"BUTTERFLY"

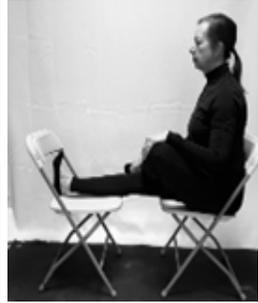
- Students with hip replacements are to avoid.



FORWARD FOLD
'HAPPY BABY'



GODDESS



BOUND ANGLE
"HALF BUTTERFLY"

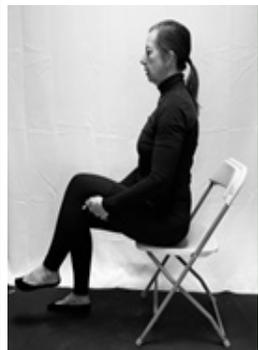
- Students with hip replacements on the one side are to avoid.

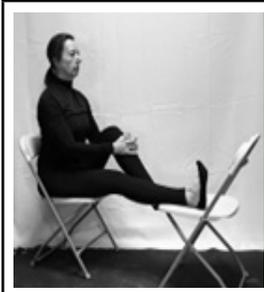


HALF MOON



HALF MOON





KNEE TO CHEST



KNEES TO CHEST



LATERAL TRIANGLE



LATERAL BEND
SEATED

- Avoid deep side bending with individuals with spinal stenosis, disc issues, scoliosis, or pain while side bending. Have students extend up through the arm to serve as traction.



HIP ROTATION
"ROCK THE BABY"

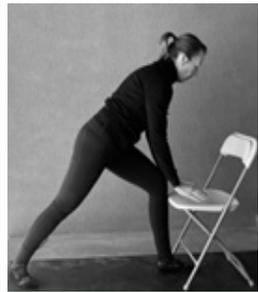
- Students with hip replacements are to avoid.



LATERAL TRIANGLE



LUNGE



LUNGE



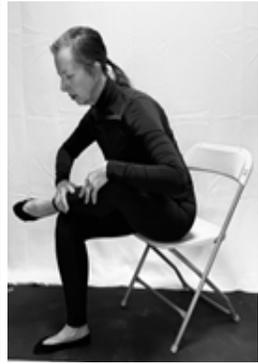
MARICHI TWIST



MOUNTAIN



ONE LEG
TWIST



PIGEON 1

- Students with hip replacements are to avoid.

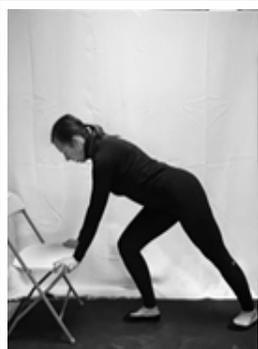


PIGEON 2

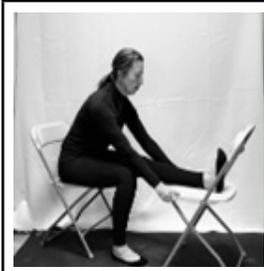
- Students with hip replacements are to avoid.



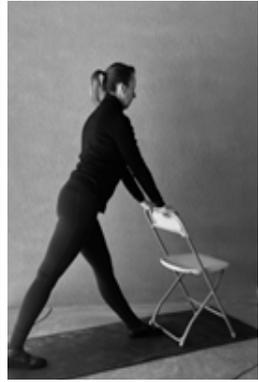
PLANK



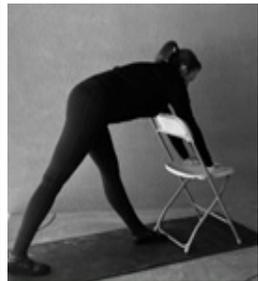
PLANK (MODIFIED)



SEPERATE LEG
HEAD TO KNEE



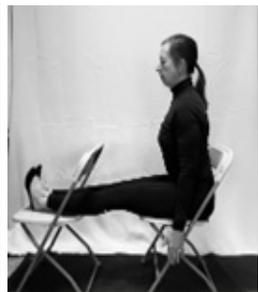
SEPERATE WIDE LEG



SEPERATE WIDE LEG



TWIST
SEATED
SPINAL



STAFF



STORK



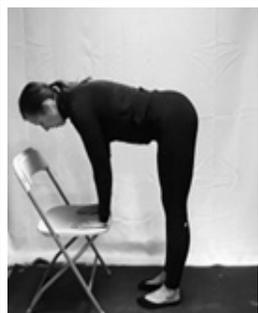
STORK



STORK (ROTATING)



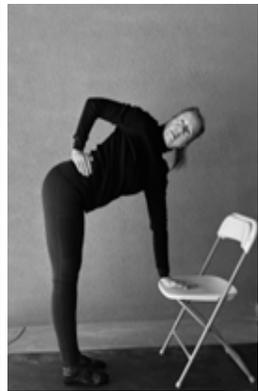
SUNBIRD



TABLE



TREE



WIDE ANGLE
SEPARATE LEG
TWIST



TWIST 1

- Press the back against the chair to prevent deep twisting. Avoid holding the pose and move with breath.
- For students with spinal conditions that may cause pain while twisting, lean the back into the chair with a slight, gentle twist.



TWIST 2

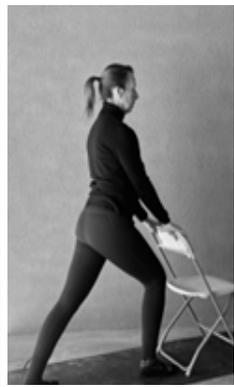
- Press the front against the back chair to prevent deep twisting.



UP DOG



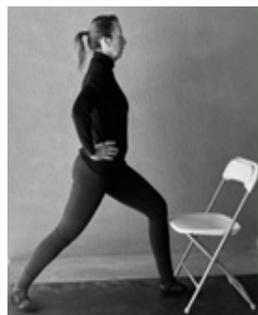
WARRIOR
SEATED
A - B - REVERSE



WARRIOR A



WARRIOR A



WARRIOR A



WARRIOR B



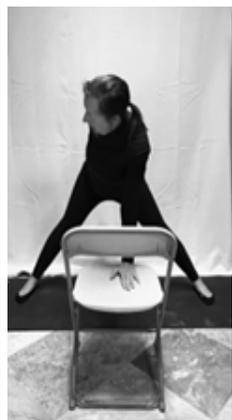
WARRIOR C



WIDE ANGLE
SEPARATE LEG



WIDE ANGLE
SEPARATE LEG
FORWARD FOLD



WIDE ANGLE
SEPARATE LEG
TWIST

Application: Adaptive Posture Sequencing

- Consider the intention of the posture then adapt according the student abilities and needs.
- Choose only postures students can do independently and safety.
- Organize the poses to students do not have to repeatedly get up and down or change orientation.
- Place energizing poses and seated sun salutations at the beginning of class.

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1. To take your exam click on the following link: www.scwfit.com/chairyogaexam After you click on the link above, you will be asked to create a log-in and password to access your exam, results, and certificate.
2. Keep your log-in and password in a safe place and do not lose it.
3. Begin your exam.
4. There is no time limit for the exam - you can even start and stop your exam with the ability to resume later. The exam will be available for 60 days after the date of your purchase.
5. You must obtain a score of 70% or greater to pass. You have two attempts to pass the exam.
6. Once you pass your exam, you can print your customized certificate by clicking on the certificate link on the bottom right-hand corner of the page.

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