

Chair Yoga Sequence of Postures and Flow Movements *

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Opening: Sitting Mountain Pose--Place heels under knees, feet forward, knees forward, legs hip distance apart, navel pulled in towards spine, chest lifted. Open and close mouth, then eyes. Move jaw side to side. Massage cheeks, temples, and forehead. Place fist, pinky side up, against neck and rest chin onto the pinky side. Sit tall and lengthen spine upward. Align torso so seated right on top of sit bones. Tuck tail bone slightly. Rest hands comfortably in lap.

Tuning Inward to the Breath: Breathe normally. Notice as you breathe, your chest will rise and fall and your belly will expand and contract. Come into the present moment. Any thoughts that come to your mind, kindly acknowledge the thought and let it pass on through. Resume your attention to your normal breath pace.

Meditation: May you be protected and may you be nourished. May our yoga practice be filled with brilliance and light. May we have compassion for one another and for those in need. Ommmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm...peace, peace, peace.

Side Arm Extension Flow: Turn body to the right from lowest part of abdomen; Inhale while extending rt arm upward with palm up and gaze towards fingers. Look forward; exhale while turning rt palm downward and float arm down as you tilt body toward the rt. Repeat 3 times. Then continue this flowing movement on your left side.

Gentle Neck Movement: Come into alignment in Sitting Mountain Pose. Inhale as you face forward. Exhale as you slowly turn your head to rt. Repeat 3 times on rt side and 3 times on lt side. Inhale as you face forward. Exhale as you release your head downward while keeping your shoulders still. Repeat 3 times. Inhale as you bring your head up. Exhale as you release your head downwards; inhale as you roll head to rt so ear faces that shoulder; exhale to roll head downward; repeat 2 times. Then do same head roll movements on the lt side.

Meditative Palm Circles: Bring palms together at heart center. With gaze forward, slowly circle toward the right for a minute; then slowly circle to the left for a minute. Repeat to the right, but this time following your fingertips with your gaze; then repeat to the left following fingertips with gaze.

Seated Chair Twist: Right hand on right thigh near torso (or on side of chair) and left hand in front on thigh. Slowly twist from lower abdomen to the right. (If you have back challenges, it is only a tiny twist.) As you inhale try to lengthen spine. As you exhale, you can twist a bit more, **only if you have no back issues**. Continue for 3 more breath cycles. Repeat on the other side with left hand on left thigh and right hand in front of that hand...

Wrist Stretch: Right elbow touching your side and fingertips facing upward with palm facing forward. Hold hand and gently stretch hand downward, giving a gentle stretch toward your body; repeat with hand upward; Do this wrist stretch twice. Continue this cycle on the left side.

Orchestra Instruments: Sit up tall and on top of sit bones; shoulders relaxed. Simulate playing piano, clarinet, flute, violin, and any other instruments you wish to "play."

Stir the Pot: Come into sitting mountain pose alignment. With sit bones as your fulcrum, Move torso, neck and head all as one unit in a complete circle—4 times to rt and 4 times to lt. Remember to engage strong abdominal muscles; move slowly; and be sure to complete the back part of the circle.

Sun Salutation: Move feet outward to each side about one inch. Palms together to heart center. Inhale as you bring palms upward; Exhale as you Swan dive, arms to sides, palms downward, then place hands on lap with head released; Inhale as you lift up halfway focusing on engaging your belly muscles; Exhale with a long back extending forward as your torso floats downward; Inhale with arms extending out to each side and palms facing up as you bring together over your head (or in front of face); Exhale as you bring back to heart center. Repeat two or three times.

-cont'd on back-

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Heart Opening (Cat-Cow Pose): Sit tall and on top of sit bones. Fingertips touching your heart center. Take deep inhalation and Open your heart (spread arms wide) to send out love; Exhale slowly and Give yourself a hug (cross arms in front of you as you pull navel in toward spine and move center of back toward back of chair, while dropping your head downward). Repeat 5 times.

Heel Lifts: Alternate lifting heels very slowly 4 times; alternate lifting toes slowly 4 times; Repeat this sequence two more times with slight increase in speed each time.

Leg Extension Flow Movement: Place strap under right foot arch. Hold each side of strap lightly in both hands. Lift knee up; extend leg; point and flex foot; hold both sides of strap in rt hand and move leg slightly to right; hold while intentionally breathing; bring leg back to center and then bend knee; bring foot slightly upward and then place foot on floor. Repeat two more times on rt side. Do the same sequence on lt side.

Arm Raises with Strap: Sit tall in sitting mountain alignment. Hold strap lightly in palm of each hand. With belly in towards your spine and sitting right on top of sit bones, raise arms to your sides at a 30 degree angle, with palms facing upward. Inhale as you float your arms upward until they are parallel to the floor. Exhale as you lower your arms, with palms remaining in an upward facing position. Try to keep shoulder blades moving toward one another. Repeat 4-6 times.

Side Angle Lunge: With legs in a V-sit position and hands resting palms up on your lap, turn body (using lower abdominal muscles) to right side, lean torso slightly to the left. Bring right arm upward, with palm facing up and arm fairly straight, at your comfort level—this can be parallel to the floor (earth), at an angle toward the ceiling (sky), or reaching up toward your right ear. Be sure to sit firmly on both sit bones. Take 4 nice long breaths in this position. Repeat this on the left side.

Leg Massage: Throughout the massage, be sure to keep a nice long, extended spine. Try not to curve your upper back. Start with right leg and massage starting above the knee towards the pelvis. The massage can be gentle or more of a deep tissue massage, depending on preference. Massage both the quadriceps and hamstring muscles. Then place on hand on top of the other and circle around your kneecap (not on the kneecap). Then reverse direction of this circular massage bringing healing energy to this joint. Finally, lean forward with a long spine and massage from the ankle upward toward the knee joint, being sure to bring attention to muscles around shin bone and the calf muscle. If it is difficult to reach your ankle, then bring ankle on top of other leg so it is easier to access the lower leg.

Sivasana (final resting pose): Bring yourself into sitting mountain pose. Be grateful for being able to join one another in this practice. Close your eyes, focus on your breathing, and release any thoughts you might have so you can remain in the present moment. Relax.

Final Yoga Greeting at Close of the Yoga Practice: Palms together at your heart center. I wish you the greeting of kind thoughts, kind words, and a kind heart. May the light in me shine within your light and may your light shine within me, bringing a brightness to our day and our life. Namaste! [Note: yoga transcends language and culture—connecting the mind and body helps us look more deeply into ourselves and at our world.]

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