

Default Chair Yoga Practice

Context: Make an intention for your practice, recite a prayer or poem...

Centering/Meditation: Still Eyes or OM

Pranayama: Three Part Yoga Breath or Ocean Sounding Breath

Warm Ups: Contrast effort and relaxation with each movement

- 1) Rotate wrists and arms and shoulders to the front and sides. Relax.
- 2) Circle shoulders in both directions. Relax.
- 3) Neck stretches - Tilt head side to side, forward and back, and twist.
Make micro movements in each position and release slowly after each stretch.
- 4) Extend arms to the sides, making a fist and opening fingers several times starting with the thumb. Reverse, starting with the pinkie. Relax.
- 5) Rock forward and back on sits bones > figure eights
- 6) Massage your thighs, knees, and shins. Hinge forward from the hips letting your head sink between your knees. Lift and lower your heels, coordinating the movement with your breath. Press your hands against your thighs to come up.
- 7) Row - This is a three part movement. Notice your breathing. One set you will be inhaling as you reach forward and feeling your back body expand with breath. On the following set, focus your attention on your belly pressing back towards your spine. As you pull back you will be exhaling on one set, squeezing the breath out from between your shoulder blades. The following set you will be breathing in as you perform the same movement, expanding your chest. Be curious and notice how different the same gesture may feel, depending on your breath. There isn't always a "correct" way to breath for a particular movement, but the sensations will be different. Noticing the difference transforms an exercise into a meditation in motion.
 - a. Extend your arms towards your knees with your hands in fists. This is the neutral starting posture.
 - b. Lift your arms and extend forward from your hips as though reaching forward to set your oars.
 - c. Pull your arms into your chest, bending your elbows out to the side.
Repeat a,b, & c several times.

- 8) Side stretches - Lift your left arm high on an inhalation. Take another deep breath, lifting your shoulder and stretching your intercostal muscles. Release the shoulder as you exhale. Take another breath in, drawing breath into the left side of the rib cage without raising the shoulder. Then exhale, reaching over to the right. Hold the chair seat or arm rest with your right hand for balance. Press the left sits bone on the chair to feel the stretch from the left hip, through the waist and ribs, up to the arm pit. After a few breaths return to center on an inhalation. << Repeat on the other side
- 9) Open arms wide > hug yourself. Notice which arm is over the other. Reverse. Continue, adding a little back bend as you open your arms. Finally, place your hands behind you and hold a gentle back bend.
- 10) Twist, walking your hands around the chair arms or backrest to look behind yourself. Hold for a few breaths. Before you unwind, turn your head in the opposite direction and hold for a breath. Release your torso back to center. << other side

Asanas:

Seated Balances: Press standing foot into the floor for stability and leg strength, maintaining its alignment with the ankle directly below the knee.

- 1) Tap toes on the floor, then dig heels. Flop knees in and out like windshield wipers to relax the legs and hips. Repeat after each of the following postures.
- 2) Stork - Lift one knee > flop & circle the raised foot > bend & extend the knee and hold > relax << (Keep your back as straight as possible)
- 3) Tree - Cross your ankle over the opposite knee, sit tall, and lift your arms overhead. Drop your shoulders and breathe. Relax. <<
- 4) Seated Warrior I - Turn left on the chair. With your weight on your left thigh and buttock, reach the right leg behind you and press back through the right heel, keeping the ankle straight. (Your heel shouldn't reach the floor.) Twist slightly towards the back of your chair to encourage the right hip to drop and move forward, even with the left. Untwist and raise your right arm. Feel the stretch through the right groin area. Can you reverse you arms, reaching back to hold your right foot with your right arm and lifting the left arm? <<

Shivasana - Nothing to do. Nothing to change. Enjoy a moment of peace. Breathe, Relax, Feel, Observe, and Allow. Who is noticing? Observe the Witness.