

7 Days Of Chair Yoga Challenge

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Welcome to the 7 Days of Chair Yoga Challenge! This is taken from the blog post- **7 Days of Chair Yoga Challenge**. We have 3 poses each day with a different focus. The goal of the challenge is simply to get a bit of movement each day and bring some awareness to you breath and posture. Go at your own pace and listen to your body every day. The repetitions are simply suggestions- feel free to hold the poses as long as you like or complete them for the repetitions of your choice.

For some suggested modifications or an accompanying video, take a look at the full post. No stress or worries here, just a way to incorporate some exercise and breath awareness into our daily life. It does not need to be done 7 days in a row- you may practice it however you like. Always consult with you health care provider before starting this or any exercise program and stop immediately if you have pain or shortness of breath.

Day 1 - The Breath

Today we focus on three poses that serve to help deepen the breath. We begin all of our poses in **Mountain Pose** with a nice long spine. Do not force or strain in this position. Do not try to come into a shape that does not serve you. Sitting back in the chair is always available. Try to have your feet planted firmly on the ground. We begin with the **Chest Expansion Pose** to open up through the chest and counteract the natural tendency to round through the upper back. Next we open up the side body and the muscles between the ribs with the **Lateral Side Stretch**. Finally, we move with the breath as we further open through the chest and strengthen the upper back with **Cactus Arms**.

Mountain Pose

Sit tall with a long spine and your feet planted firmly on the ground. You may choose to sit forward in your seat, or sit back and have the support of the chair. You may need to place a yoga block or books under the feet if they do not touch the ground.

Thighs are hip distance apart. Knees are bent to 90 degrees and thighs and feet are parallel. Shoulders are down and away from the ears. Broaden through the chest and engage the core (try a forced exhalation to feel what it means to engage the core).

Lengthen from the base of the spine to the crown of the head.

Arms can be by your sides with palms facing forward or resting on your thighs. Take 3 deep breaths here.



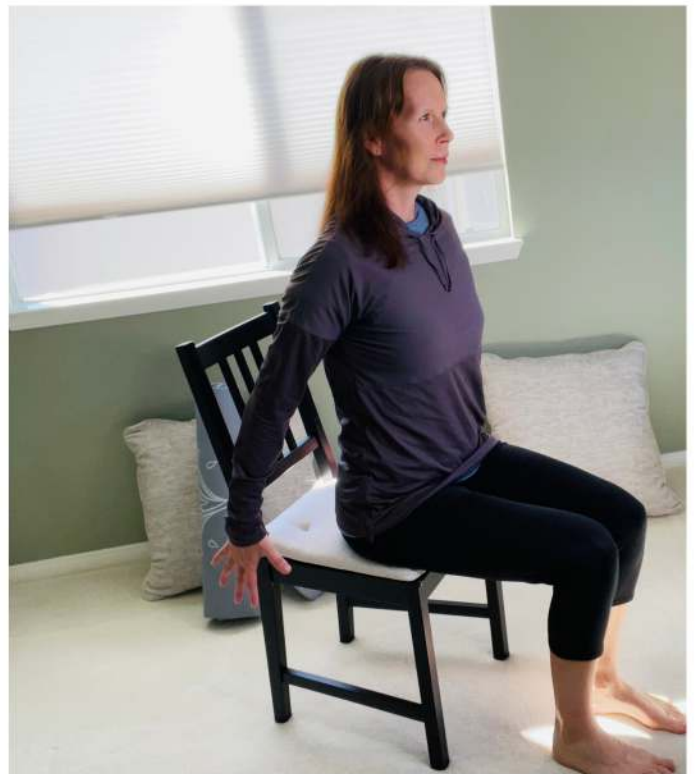
Chest Expansion

Bring your arms by your sides with the palms facing the body. Inhale as you gently arch the back and bring the arms behind the body-expand through the chest. Feel the shoulder blades gently come towards one another. Neck remains neutral- do not drop the head back.

You may choose to hold this position for a few breaths or to move with the breath.

Exhale to release back to center.

Repeat 3-5 times or as desired.



Lateral Side Stretch

Begin seated in Mountain Pose with a long spine. Bend one elbow and place your hand near your shoulder. Inhale as you raise your elbow up towards the sky. Stay here for a few breaths or inhale as you straighten your elbow and extend your hand toward the sky. Think of lifting up and over- not crunching.

Stay here for 2-3 breaths as able to stretch the side body and intercostal muscles. On an exhale, release the hand back down by your side. Repeat 2-3 times as desired and then repeat on the other side.



Option to raise the arm up

Cactus Arms

Return to your Mountain Pose and sit tall with a long spine. Place the hands by your sides with the palms facing forward. Inhale as you raise the arms out to the sides to shoulder height- thumbs are pointing up.

Exhale to bend the elbows.

Inhale to slightly arch the back and open the chest.

Exhale to bring the palms and elbows together.

Inhale to open the arms back out to the sides.

Ensure that the neck remains relaxed and the shoulders stay down away from the ears.

Repeat 3-5 times or as desired. On an exhale release the arms back by your sides.



Open and close the arms here

Day 2- Lower Body

Today we will practice three poses that focus on the lower body. The modified **Staff Pose** serves to stretch the hamstrings and calves while we bring some awareness to the quadriceps muscle and the core. Adding some arm movement in this pose further engages the core. The second pose is the **Lunge** with optional stretch. Here, we will engage the hip flexors on one side as we stabilize through the supporting leg. An option to add a low back stretch is available. Our third pose is the **Chair Pose**. We will engage the lower body as we hinge forward at the hips. Options here are to raise the arms, rise off the seat, or both.

Modified Staff Pose

Begin seated in your Mountain Pose with a long spine. You may choose to sit back in your chair and have the support on the spine. Inhale as you straighten one knee. Exhale as you bring awareness to the top of the thigh. Inhale as you straighten the opposite knee. Exhale as you bring awareness to the top of the thigh.

Inhale to lengthen the spine. Exhale as you stretch the toes back towards the face to further stretch the calves and the backs of the thighs. Hold the stretch for 2-5 breaths or as desired, making sure to keep the chest open and the spine long- breath evenly.

You may choose to raise the arms up in front of the body or up towards the sky. On an exhale, release the feet to the ground. Repeat 2-3 times or as desired.



Option to raise the arms

Lunge with Optional Stretch

Return to your Mountain Pose with a long spine. Ground down through one foot to engage the core. Inhale to raise the opposite knee up in the air. Exhale to slowly lower the foot back to the ground. Repeat on the other side.

Repeat 4-6 times or for the repetitions of your choice.

Option to wrap the hands around the knee and hold the position to stretch the low back. Maintain a long spine and an active core. Gently roll the ankle one way and then the other. Hold this position for 2-3 breaths if desired.

Exhale to gently release the foot to the ground and repeat on the other side.



Option to hold for a stretch

Chair Pose

Begin in Mountain Pose with a long spine. Inhale to lengthen the spine. Maintain your long spine as you exhale and hinge forward from the hip creases (where the trunk meets the lower body)- the chest stays broad.

In this position, gently put weight through the feet as if you were going to stand up. Hands can be on your thighs, by your sides, or you may choose to raise the arms forward toward the sky. Breath evenly. On an exhale, hinge at the hips and return to your Mountain Pose. Repeat 2-3 times or as desired.

- Option to rise up a few inches off the chair- spine stays long



Hip Hinge



Option to add arms



Option to rise off seat

Day 3-Upper Body

Today we will focus on the upper body. Our first pose is the **Mountain Pose with Arms Raised**. This pose serves to help us move with the breath as we engage the shoulders and the core. Our second pose is the **Overhead Stretch**. This pose provides a big stretch to the shoulders, so only go as far as is comfortable or take the modification. We also get some wrist and forearm stretching as well. Our third pose is the **5 Pointed star**. This pose opens the chest and stretches the shoulders and the sides of the body.

Mountain Pose with Arms Raised

Begin seated in Mountain Pose with a long spine, arms are by your sides with the palms facing the body. Chest is broad.

Inhale as you raise the arms up overhead in front of the body, reaching the thumbs toward the sky. Only raise the arms as high as is comfortable. Exhale as you gently release the arms back by your sides.

Or, you may choose to hold the arms up for a few breaths and feel the core engage and the shoulders stretch. Make sure to keep the shoulders relaxed down and away from the ears. Repeat 4-6 times or as desired.



Only raise the arms as high as is comfortable

Upward Hand Stretch

Begin seated in Mountain Pose with your palms together at heart center. Inhale to a long spine. On an exhale, clasp the hands together as you extend the elbows and reach the arms forward away from the body. Inhale as you rotate the shoulders and press the palms away from your face. Exhale as you feel the stretch in the shoulders and the forearms.

Stay here or inhale as you begin to raise the hands toward the sky—palms are facing up. When you have raised the arms as high as comfortable, you may choose to stay in this position for a few breaths or gently stretch side to side. On an exhale gently release the hands and float the arms back down by your sides. Repeat 2-3 times or as desired.

*Option to leave out the shoulder rotation and keep the palms towards the face or clasp opposite hand to opposite elbow and raise the elbows up toward the sky.



Only raise the arms up as high as is comfortable



Option to clasp opposite hand to opposite elbow

Five Pointed Star

Begin in your Mountain Pose with a long spine. Arms are by your sides with the palms facing forward.

Inhale as you raise the arms up and away from the body into a Y shape. Stretch the fingers gently here.

Stay here for a few breaths as desired. You may choose to gently open and close the hands.

On an exhale, gently release the hands back by your sides.

Repeat 4-5 times or as desired.



Option to open and close
the hands here

Day 4- The Core

Today we will practice three poses with a focus on the core. First, we will open up through the chest as we work the upper back with the **Cow Pose**. Next, we will engage our entire core as we perform a modified **Boat Pose**. This pose can be challenging. You can still perform this pose if you are sitting back in your seat by gently pressing the back into the chair. Our third pose of the day is a modified version of a **High Lunge to Pyramid Pose**. We will engage the core as we keep the thigh lifted as we slowly straighten and bend the knee.

Cow Pose

Begin seated in your Mountain Pose with a long spine.

Inhale to lengthen from the base of the spine to the crown of the head.

On an exhale gently arch the back and move the shoulder blades towards each other.

Broaden through the chest.

Exhale as you return to center.

Repeat 3-5 times or as desired.

You may choose to stay in the pose for 2-3 breaths and you broaden through the chest.



Sit tall with a long spine



Gently arch the back and open through the chest

Boat Pose

Begin in your Mountain Pose. Sit forward a few inches in the chair if able and broaden through the chest. Bring awareness to the core by doing a quiet cough or force exhalation. Inhale to a long spine.

Keep the spine long and exhale as you hinge back at the hips (think opposite of the chair pose).

Work to maintain a long spine- you may only move an inch or two. If you are seated back in your chair, gently stabilize through the feet and lightly push against the back of the chair. Stay her for 2-3 breaths as desired.

Inhale to lengthen the spine and on an exhale, hinge at the hips and return to center. Repeat 2-3 times or as desired.



Hinge at the hips and
keep the spine long

Lunge to Pyramid

Begin in your Mountain Pose. Ground down through one foot to engage the core.

Inhale as you raise the opposite knee up in the air.

Keep the knee up and on an exhale, straighten the knee.

Inhale to bend the knee. Repeat 3-6 times or as desired.

Exhale to gently release the foot to the ground.

Repeat on the opposite side.

*Option to lower the knee back down before extending the knee.



Try to keep the thigh lifted
as you extend the knee

Day 5- The Brain

On this day, we will perform three poses that stimulate the left and right sides of the brain by crossing the midline and using both sides of the body. Our first pose is a **Modified Bird Dog**. Here we will challenge our coordination as we move the upper and lower body on opposite sides. Our second pose is the **Hug**. Here, we will get some chest opening and upper back stretching as we cross the midline. Our third pose of the day is a modified **Lunge With Twist**. We will engage the upper and lower body, as well as cross over the center of the body.

Modified Bird Dog

Begin seated in your Mountain Pose. Arms are resting by your sides with the palms facing the body.

Ground down through the left foot to stabilize and engage the core.

Inhale as you straighten the right knee- and at the same time raise the left hand up towards the sky. Option to hold in this position for a few breaths. Only raise the arm as high as is comfortable.

Exhale as you release the foot to the ground and the hand back by your side. Repeat with the opposite sides.

Repeat 3-5 times each side or as desired.



Straighten opposite knee

The Hug

Begin seated in your Mountain Pose with the arms by your sides and palms facing forward.

Inhale as you raise the arms up to shoulder height.

Exhale as you cross the arms and bring opposite hand to opposite shoulder- if able see if you can reach to the inside border of the shoulder blade.

Inhale to open the arms out to the sides and open the chest.

Repeat 4-5 times or as desired, trying to place the opposite arm on top each time. Exhale to gently release the arms by your sides.



Lunge With Twist

Begin in your Mountain Pose. Arms are by your sides with the palms facing the body. Ground down through the left foot to stabilize and engage the core.

On an inhale, raise the right knee and both arms up toward the sky. On an exhale, bring the palms together as the hands come to touch the outside of the right knee. Maintain a long spine.

Inhale as you raise the hands overhead (Option to stay in any position as you breath into the stretch).

Exhale as you release the arms by your sides and the foot to the ground. Repeat on the other side. Repeat 3-5 times each side or as desired.



Raise both arms and one knee



Palms together at
outside of knee



Back up to center before
releasing foot and hands back
down

Day 6: Full Body Flow

On day 6, we will practice poses that utilize the upper and lower body as well as lend themselves to a flow. Our first pose is a modified **Warrior 2**. We can add some movement to this pose by raising and lowering the arms. Our second pose is the **Goddess Pose**. Here we will engage the entire body as we hold the stretch and open the hips and the chest. We can add some movement here by opening and closing the arms, legs, or both. Our last pose is the **Downward Facing Dog**. Here we will practice a modified version with the knees bent.

Modified Warrior 2

Begin seated in your Mountain Pose with a long spine and arms by your sides. Ground down through the left foot to stabilize and engage the spine. On an inhale, raise the right knee up towards the sky. Exhale as you bring the knee out to the side and place the foot on the ground- you may choose to further open the hip by rotating the hip so the toes are pointing to the right.

On an inhale, gently raise the arms up to shoulder height and rotate the neck to gaze over the right fingertips. Hold here for a few breaths as desired. You may choose to raise and lower the arms in this position. On an exhale, gently look forward as you relax the arms down and return the foot to center. Repeat on the other side. Repeat 3-5 times each side or as desired.



Option to raise and lower the arms in this position



Option to decrease the hip rotation and keep the hands at heart center

Goddess Pose

Return to your Mountain Pose with the arms by your sides, palms facing forward. Lengthen through the spine as you engage the core. On an inhale, raise the right knee up towards the sky. Exhale as you move the thigh out to the side and place the foot on the ground. Repeat on the left side.

On inhale, raise the arms away from the body to shoulder height. Exhale as you bend the elbows.

Hold this position for a few breaths as desired, further opening the chest as you inhale. You may choose to open and close the hands, the legs, or both.

On an exhale, gently release the arms back by the sides and the feet back to center. Repeat 3-4 times or as desired.



Option to open and close the arms, legs or both

Modified Downward Facing Dog

Begin seated in Mountain Pose with arms by your sides, palms facing toward the body. Inhale to lengthen the spine. Exhale as you hinge forward at the hips, engage the core as you maintain a long spine.

Inhale as you raise the arms forward in front of the body. Rotate the shoulders so the palms are facing down.

Exhale as you gently extend the wrists and bring the fingers back toward the body. Stay here for a few breaths as desired. You may choose to bend the elbows and bring the hands back by the ribs as you gently arch the back for Upward Facing Dog, flowing between the two poses with the breath.

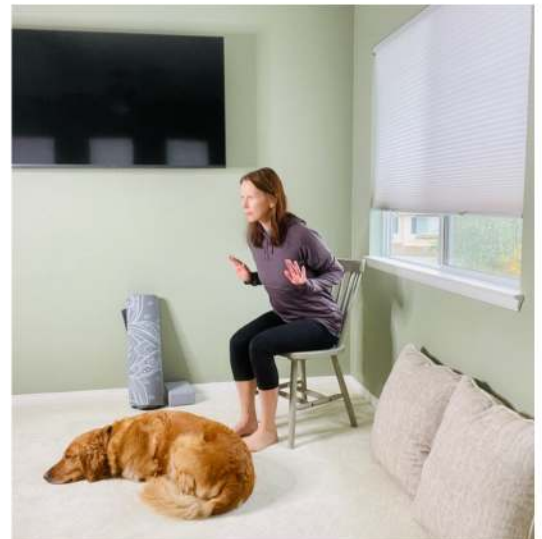
On an exhale, relax the wrists and gently release the arms back down as you hinge at the hips and return to center. Repeat 3-4 times or as desired.



Without arms



Modified Downward Facing Dog



Option to bring arms back and lightly arch the back for Upward Facing Dog

Day 7-Stretch

Today we will slow it down and focus on some specific stretches. Our first stretch is the **Lateral Neck Stretch** with optional Grounding. Our second stretch is the **Plantar Fascia Stretch** to focus on the bottom of the foot. If bending the knee is not an option, roll through the foot from heel to toe and notice the sensations in the bottom of the foot. Our last stretch is the modified **Spinal Twist**. It is important to lengthen spine as we turn and look over our shoulder.

Lateral Neck Stretch with Grounding

Begin seated in your Mountain Pose, sit all the way back in the chair to support the spine. Inhale to a long spine and keep the shoulders relaxed down. Exhale as you gently bring the right ear towards the right shoulder.

Do not force or strain. Stay here for a few breaths as desired. You may choose to place the right hand on top of the head to feel a sense of grounding - do not pull or force with the hand, just rest it there.

You may choose to gently gaze up towards the sky to feel how that changes the sensation. On an exhale, release the hand and gently return to the center. Repeat on the other side. Repeat as desired.



Option to place the hand on the head

Plantar Fascia Stretch

Return to your Mountain Pose. Bend the right knee and bring the foot underneath your chair. Lift the heel up as you feel the stretch in your toes and the bottom of your foot. Breathe evenly here for a few breaths and then repeat on the other side. Repeat as desired.

If that is not right for you, keep the feet where they are and gently roll through the foot as you slowly alternate lifting the heels and then the toes.

Try lifting just the big toe up and down. Then, lift the other toes up and down as you leave the big toe on the ground. Take your time here and repeat as desired.



Option to raise and lower
the heels and toes

Modified Spinal Twist

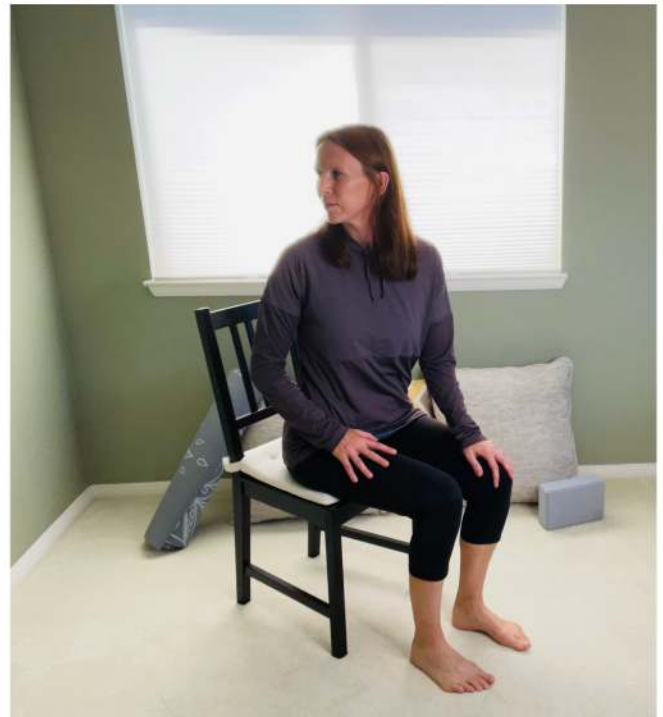
Begin seated in Mountain Pose with a long spine, hands are resting in the middle of the thighs. Inhale to a long spine.

As you exhale, slide the right hand toward the right knee and the left hand toward the left hip crease. Gently turn and look over the left shoulder- as if you were backing up your car in the parking lot.

Breathe evenly here for a few breaths as desired.

On an exhale, gently release back to center.

Repeat on the other side. Repeat as desired.



I hope that you enjoyed this 7 Days of
Chair Yoga Challenge.

Namaste!

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