

CHAIR YOGA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

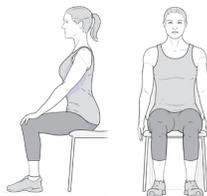


Yoga is for everyone; any age, or state of fitness. Yoga can calm your mind and strengthen your body. These chair poses can be done at work or at home.

DIRECTIONS

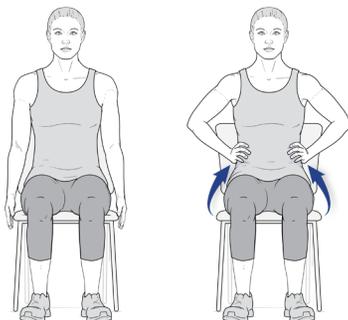
Most positions begin using the same seated position (called "Sit tall"):

- Sit in a chair with feet planted firmly on the floor
- Back straight (to elongate your spine)
- Hands may be at your sides or on your legs



1 SEATED BREATHING

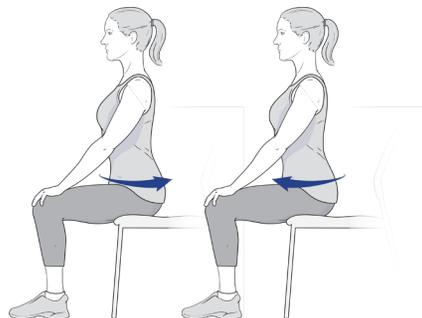
- Sit tall at the edge of the chair. Place your hands on your waist.
- Inhale** (take a deep breath in through the nose), expanding through your sides and abdomen.
- Exhale** slowly.
- Repeat for 3-5 breaths.



2 HIP CIRCLES

Helps release and relax hip muscles.

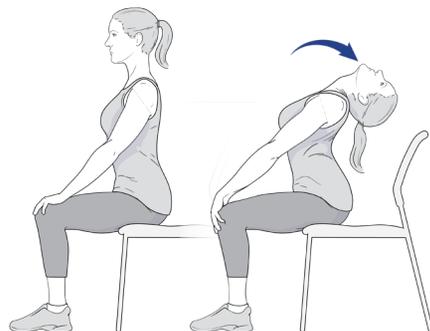
- Sit tall.
- Without moving your upper body, circle your hips clockwise five times.
- Repeat, rotating counterclockwise five times.



3 COW POSE

- Sit tall with your palms on your knees.
- Inhale** and drop your head back, pulling your chest up and forward for a slight backbend.
If you have arthritis in your spine or neck, keep your neck straight.

From Cow Pose, go directly into Cat Pose.



TIPS

- Move slowly through each pose, holding each pose for 3 to 5 slow breaths.
- If a pose is challenging, pause and start again when your breathing returns to normal.
- Be cautious if you have arthritis in your spine or neck, or a low-back injury.

4 CAT POSE

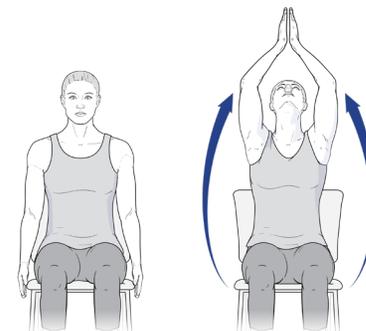
- Exhale** and round your back, pulling in your belly towards your spine. Gently tuck your chin in your chest and expand the area between your shoulder blades.
- Repeat Cow Pose and Cat Pose 3-5 times.



5 SEATED SUN SALUTATIONS

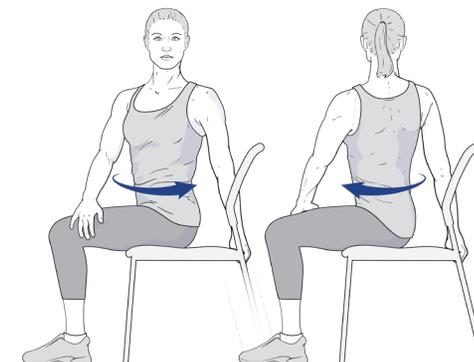
Helps to strengthen and increase shoulder flexibility. If you have shoulder discomfort, lift to shoulder level only.

- Sit tall and lift your arms overhead with your palms facing each other but not touching.
- Look up between your hands, towards the ceiling.
- Exhale** and allow your arms to float down to your sides.
- Repeat for 3-5 breaths.



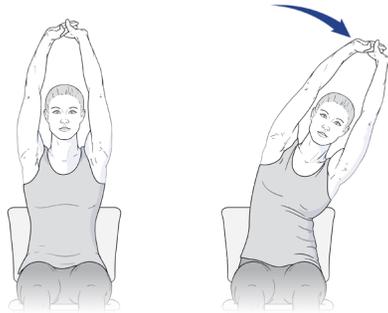
6 SIDE TWIST

- Sit tall in the chair. Place your left hand on the seat behind you and your right hand on the outside of your left knee.
- Inhale** and reach your head up with energy toward the ceiling.
- As you **exhale**, gently turn your shoulders to the left. *To help deepen your twist, gently press your left hand against your right knee.*
- Hold the twist for 2-3 complete breaths.
- Repeat, rotating to the right side.



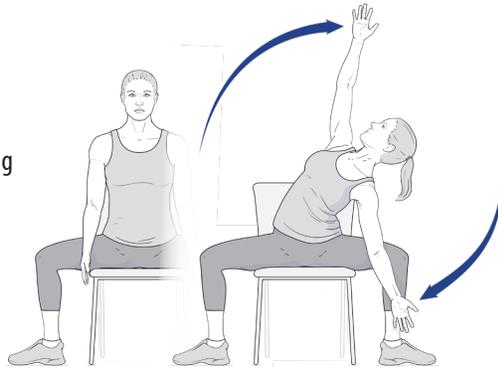
7 HIGH ALTAR SIDE LEANS

- Sit tall. Lift your arms and interlace fingers.
- Turn your palms toward the ceiling and straighten your arms above your head.
If you have sore wrists, gently grasp one hand with the other.
- Lean to the left side.
- Hold for 2-3 breaths.
- Repeat, leaning to the right side.



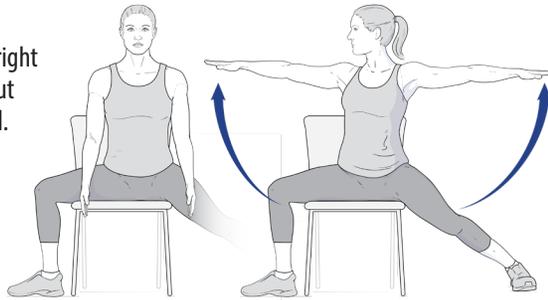
8 SEATED GODDESS WITH A TWIST

- Sit tall with your legs open wide and your toes pointed out.
- Place your left arm inside your left leg, pointing at the floor. Lift your right arm toward the ceiling and gaze toward the right hand.
- Hold for 2-3 breaths.
- Repeat on other side.



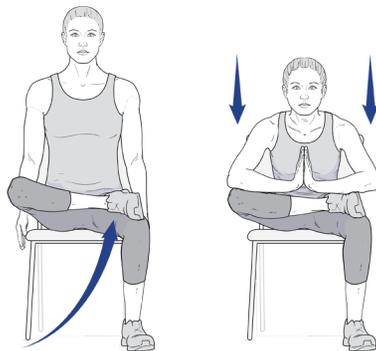
9 WARRIOR TWO

- Sit tall at the edge of the chair. Bend your right knee to the side and stretch your left leg out behind you, as you press through your heel.
- Raise your arms to the sides and turn your head to the right.
- Hold for 2-3 complete breaths.
- Repeat, adjusting for the left side.



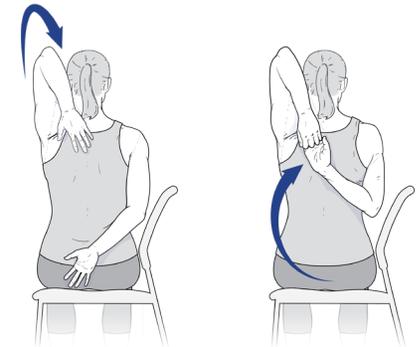
10 FIGURE FOUR

- Sit tall and place your right ankle on your left knee. Flex your toes. Pull your belly towards your spine, heart reaching forward, and gaze straight ahead.
- Put your palms together.
- Exhale** and slowly lean forward at the hips. Gently push your right knee down towards the floor with your palm or right elbow.
- Hold for 2-3 breaths.
- Repeat, adjusting for the other side.



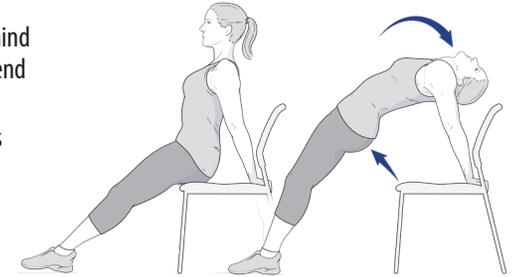
11 COW HANDS

- Sit tall with your feet hip distance apart.
- Inhale** and lift your left hand toward the ceiling.
- Exhale**, bend your arm at the elbow and place your arm on your upper back.
- Inhale** and reach your right hand behind and clasp both palms together.
- Hold for 2-3 breaths.
- Repeat, adjusting for the other side.



12 UPWARD PLANK

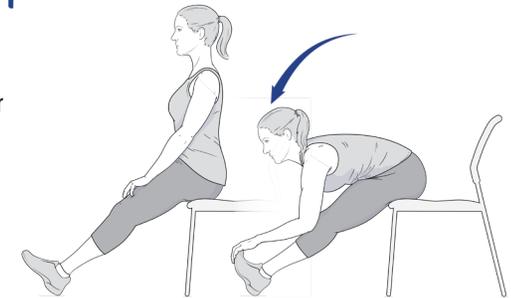
- Sit tall and place both hands on the seat behind you. Hold the sides of the chair seat and extend your feet in front of you on the floor.
- Inhale** and lift your butt and press your hips strongly toward the ceiling.
If comfortable, allow your head to drop back, close your eyes, and relax.
- Exhale** and set your butt on the chair.



13 FORWARD FOLD STRETCH

Stretches hamstring muscles and lower back.

- Sit tall on the edge of the chair. Extend your legs in front of you with your heels on the floor and your toes pointing up.
- Exhale**, flex your quad muscles (try to lift kneecaps), and lean forward at the hips.
- Place your hands on your knees, shins or toes (whatever is comfortable). Keep your chest toward your feet and your gaze straight ahead.



14 FORWARD FOLD

Finish with a calming forward bend, which lets blood flow to the brain.

- Sit tall. Fold your upper body over your legs, letting your head, neck and body hang limp.
- Hold for as long as you want before rolling back up to a sitting position.

