

Chair Yoga for Every Body

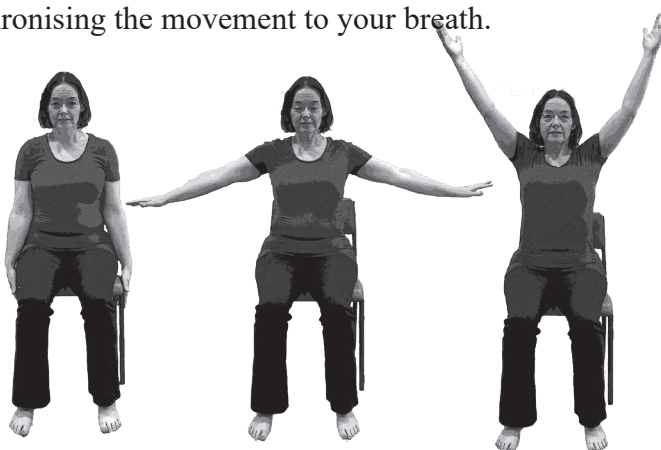
There are a variety of yoga styles to suit every body, all ages and fitness levels. You can even do yoga while staying in your chair. Below is a routine that works for anyone, regardless of your age, and can easily be done in your cell.

Starting position: Sit towards the front edge of the chair or bed, with your feet on the floor hip distance apart, toes facing forward. Sit up straight, with your spine away from the back of the chair. Rest your hands on your legs. Take a breath, growing slightly taller. Look straight ahead.



1. Warm up

Raise your arms as you breathe in through your nose. Lower your arms, and sigh out through your mouth. Do this five times, synchronising the movement to your breath.



2. Seated Cat

Hold the seat and straighten your arms. Breathe in and squeeze your shoulder blades together, lifting your chest and looking up. Breathe out and round your back, your shoulders forward, chin to chest and looking down. Repeat these moves four more times while taking slow, even breaths.



3. Side Stretch

Breathe in, raising your right arm, and breathe out, stretching to the left. Hold the position for five breaths. Repeat on the other side for five breaths.



4. Neck Releases

A: Breathe out, and turn slowly to look over your left shoulder. Breathe in, returning the head to centre. Breathe out, and turn slowly to look over your right shoulder. Breathe in, returning the head to centre. Repeat four more times.

B: Breathe out, and tuck your chin slowly towards the chest. Breathe in, returning your head to centre. Breathe out, looking up. Breathe in, returning the head to centre. Repeat four more times.

C: Breathe out, tilting your right ear slowly towards your right shoulder. Breathe in and return your head to centre. Breathe out and tilt your left ear gently towards your left shoulder. Breathe in and return your head to centre. Repeat four more times.



A



B



C



Chair Yoga for Every Body (cont)

5. Seated Eagle

Cross your right leg over the left. Raise your arms out to the sides. Bend the elbows and bring your palms and forearms together in front of you. Lift the elbows and relax the shoulders. Hold for five breaths. Repeat on the other side.



6. Seated Pigeon

Place your right ankle on your leg, above or below your left knee. Let your knee relax out to the side while keeping the foot flexed. Don't push or force the knee down. Take five easy breaths, then repeat on the left side.



7. Seated Twist

Have your legs hip distance apart, toes facing forward. Place your right hand on the back of the seat, breathe in and sit up straight. As you breathe out turn your upper body to the right and place your left hand on the outer right leg. Take five breaths here. Return to face forward on an in-breath. Repeat on the left.



8. Forward Bend

Forward bends have a calming effect on the mind and body. Start with your hands resting on top of your thighs. Breathe in and sit up taller. Breathe out, fold forward, gradually sliding your hands down your legs. Let your body rest on your legs, allowing your head and neck to relax. Take seven breaths here, and come back up slowly on an in-breath.



9. Relaxation

Sit back in your chair, take three sighing breaths, in through the nose and out through the mouth. Now close your eyes, and rest your hands in your lap, feeling your body supported by the chair. Let your attention be with your natural breath and rest for 3 minutes or 30 breaths.

If you prefer you can also rest with your back on the floor and your legs up on the chair. Many people find this comfortable and refreshing for the legs. Follow your body and your breath and you will find the perfect way to relax.

