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## 12 Chair Yoga poses for older adults

### Making yoga accessible for everyone

Seniors with limited mobility can practice “chair” yoga, either from a seated position or standing behind the chair for support. Chair yoga was also shown in one study to reduce seniors’ fear of falling as well as to decrease their reliance on assistive devices for mobility.<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Ujjayi Breathing

A great starter pose: Sit up tall at the edge of your seat and place your hands on your waist. Take a deep breath in through the nose, expanding through your sides and abdomen, then exhale slowly.

Repeat for 10 breaths.



### 2. Cat/Cow

This pose helps to relieve back and neck tension. Inhale and arch your back to look up at the ceiling. Exhale, pulling your abdominals in and rounding your back as you bend forward.

Repeat this 5 times.



### 3. Circles

To release and relax the hip muscles, circle your hips clockwise 5 times while seated without moving your upper body, then counterclockwise 5 times.



### 4. Sun Salutation Arms

Lengthens the spine, releases tension in the shoulders and neck. Sitting tall, breathe in and lift your arms up, pressing your palms overhead. On an exhale, float the arms back down to your sides.

Repeat 5 times.



### 5. Sun Salutations with Twists

Repeat the previous exercise, adding a twist as you exhale.

Repeat 5 times on each side, holding the last twist for 5 seconds.



### 6. High Altar Side Leans

Stretches spine and shoulders. Lift your arms and interlace your fingers in front of you. Turn your palms to the ceiling as you straighten your arms above your head.

Lean to the right for 3 breaths, then to the left for 3 more.



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**NOTE:** Always consult with your healthcare professional before using the poses in this booklet.

The exercises in this booklet do not substitute for an exercise program provided by your health practitioner.

Stop if you experience any pain or discomfort while performing the poses in this booklet.

## 7. Eagle Arms

Banishes shoulder aches. Stretch your arms out to each side, bring one arm under the other at shoulder height and bend your arms at the elbows with palms together.

Hold for 5 breaths, unwind and repeat with opposite arms.



## 8. Assisted Neck Stretches

The neck is a major stress area. Take your right arm and drape it over your head until your palm reaches your left ear. Let your head fall to your right shoulder, and hold for 5 breaths.

Repeat on the opposite side.



## 9. Ankle to Knee

The hip area is also a stress spot. To loosen things up, sit up straight, bend your right knee and place your right ankle over your left knee. For a deeper stretch, lean forward.

Hold for 5 breaths, then repeat on the opposite side.



## 10. Goddess with a Twist

Another great hip stretch: Open legs wide and point toes out. Place your right arm inside your right leg, reaching for the floor. Lift your left arm toward the ceiling and look up to the palm.

Hold for 5 breaths, then repeat on the opposite side.



## 11. Warrior 2

This gives you a full-body stretch. Sit tall at the edge of your seat. Bend your right knee to the side and stretch your left leg out behind you as you press your outer heel down.

Hold for 5 breaths, then repeat on the opposite side.



## 12. Forward Fold

To finish, let blood flow to the brain. Sit tall and straight, then fold down 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.

