Yoga Home Practice
For Inactive Seniors
Yoga Intervention Study

Conducted by
Health Services Research Center,
University of California, San Diego
And
Silver Age Yoga Community Outreach, Inc
A 501 c (3) Corporations

Health Services Research Center
University of California San Diego

Silver Age Yoga Community Outreach
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Silver Age Yoga Home Practice Sequences

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General information the Yoga classes and home practice

Yoga classes in the current program

As part of the current program you will be attending two Yoga classes a week. During these classes you will be learning a series of physical postures, which will include seated postures, standing postures and some floor postures. All classes will be led by a teacher who will give you precise instructions about both the bodily alignment and the breathing pattern that are specific to each posture. That will ensure that all postures are executed safely and bring you the maximum benefit. In addition, during some of the classes the teacher will also introduce you to some basic aspects of Yoga philosophy.

Home practice

We strongly recommend that, in addition of the weekly Yoga classes, you also do a regular home practice for the whole duration of the program. A regular home practice is invaluable for solidifying the work that you do in class, and will undoubtedly increase the benefits you will gain from the program. Each week you will receive a handout which will be your “home practice friend” and guide you through it step by step.

The home practice sequences will take about 15 minutes to complete, and will always be based on poses that you have previously performed during the Yoga classes. The specific instructions that are provided for each pose will also correspond to the ones that were given to you in class. If you do find any of the instructions unclear however, please don’t hesitate to ask the instructor to clarify them for you at any time.

In order for you to gain the maximum benefit from the program we recommend the following Yoga practice regime:

- Two days a week: Yoga classes
- Four days a week: Do the home practice
- One day a week: No Yoga practice – enjoy a day off!

And lastly, in terms of organizing your home practice we recommend that you put aside a set time every day, which will make it easier to build up a routine. Many people find it convenient to do their practice first thing in the morning before breakfast, while others prefer to practice in the evening before going to bed. Either way works well so just choose whatever time suits you best given your daily commitments. An important thing to remember though is not to practice on a full stomach, so try to allow at least two hours after a full meal or one hour after a snack.

We hope you will enjoy embarking on your Yoga journey 😊
Week 1 & 2 – Flexibility

Opening

Simple Breathing (Floor / Chair)
• Close your eyes
• Turn your awareness inward and focus on your breath
• Take slow and even inhales and exhales

Floor
• Separate the legs
• Let the hips release into the floor
• Relax the belly
• Release the arms out to the side
• Keep the neck long
• Relax the facial muscles

Chair
• Press the soles of the feet into the ground
• Sit evenly on both sitting bones
• Rest the hands on your lap
• Elongate through the spine
• Keep the shoulders away from the ears
• Extend through the crown of the head

Do this exercise for about 3-5 minutes

Postures

1. **Head Rolls**
• Sit on the chair with the hands resting on your lap
• Elongate through the spine
• Drop the chin to the sternum without collapsing the chest
• On an *inhale* turn the head to one side
• On an *exhale* release the chin back to the center
• Repeat on the other side

*Repeat 5 times on each side*
2. **Eye Exercises**

- Sit on the chair with the hands resting on your lap
- Elongate through the spine
- Turn the head to one side keeping the chin parallel to the floor
- Turn the gaze in the same direction as far as possible
- Bring the head and gaze back to center
- Repeat on the other side

_Hold for 3 even breaths_

_Repeat 3-5 times on each side_

3. **Shoulder Rolls**

- Sit on the chair with the hands resting on your lap
- Sit evenly on both sitting bones
- Elongate through the spine
- On an *inhale* draw the shoulders up towards the ears
- *Hold your breath* as you draw the elbows back and squeeze the shoulder blades together
- On an *exhale* drop the shoulders and soften them away from the ears

_Repeat 5 times (keep moving with the breath)_
4. **Climb a Rope**
- Sit on the chair
- Sit evenly on both sitting bones
- On an *inhale* reach one arm overhead and imagine taking hold of a rope
- On an *exhale* “pull” the rope down
- Repeat with the other arm
- Continue to alternate the arms in a continuous motion

*Repeat 10 times (keep moving with the breathe)*

5. **Seated Cat & Cow**
- Sit on the chair (spine away from the back of the chair)
- Press the soles of the feet into the ground
- Sit evenly on both sitting bones
- Elongate through the spine
- On an *inhale* arch the spine (keep the arms on the thighs)
  - On an *exhale* round the spine (bring the arms out in front and clasp the hands)

*Repeat 5 times (keep moving with the breath)*
6. **Seated Side Bend**

- Sit on the chair (spine away from the back of the chair)
- On an *inhale* reach one arm straight up from the shoulder (place the other hand on the chair)
- On an *exhale* lean to the side of the hand that is on the chair
- On an *inhale* return to the center
- On an *exhale* lower the arm
- Repeat on the other side

*Repeat 5 times on each side (keep moving with the breath)*

7. **Final Resting Pose - Savasana (Floor / Chair)**

- Close your eyes
- Relax and release control of the breath
- Feel yourself melt into the floor / chair

**Floor**
- Separate the legs
- Let the hips release into the floor
- Relax the belly
- Release the arms out to the side
- Keep the neck long
- Relax the facial muscles

**Chair**
- Press the soles of the feet into the ground
- Sit evenly on both sitting bones
- Rest the hands on your lap
- Elongate through the spine
- Keep the shoulders away from the ears
- Extend through the crown of the head

*Stay for about 5 minutes*
Week 3 & 4 – Balance

Opening

Simple Breathing (Floor / Chair)
• Close your eyes
• Turn your awareness inward and focus on your breath
• Take slow and even inhales and exhales

Floor
• Separate the legs
• Let the hips release into the floor
• Relax the belly
• Release the arms out to the side
• Keep the neck long
• Relax the facial muscles

Chair
• Press the soles of the feet into the ground
• Sit evenly on both sitting bones
• Rest the hands on your lap
• Elongate through the spine
• Keep the shoulders away from the ears
• Extend through the crown of the head

*Do this exercise for about 3-5 minutes*

Postures

1. **Head Rolls**

• Sit on the chair with the hands resting on your lap
• Elongate through the spine
• Drop the chin to the sternum without collapsing the chest
• On an *inhale* turn the head to one side
• On an *exhale* release the chin back to the center
• Repeat on the other side

*Repeat 5 times on each side*
2. **Shoulder Rolls**

- Sit on the chair with the hands resting on your lap
- Sit evenly on both sitting bones
- Elongate through the spine
- On an *inhale* draw the shoulders up towards the ears
- *Hold your breath* as you draw the elbows back and squeeze the shoulder blades together
- On an *exhale* drop the shoulders and soften them away from the ears

*Repeat 5 times (keep moving with the breath)*

3. **Read the Paper**

- Sit on the chair (spine away from the back of the chair)
- Sit evenly on both sitting bones
- Elongate through the spine
- Bend the arms to a 90 degree angle and keep them shoulder width apart
- On an *inhale* open the arms out to the side and lift the chest (keep the 90 degree angle)
- On an *exhale* draw the forearms towards each other in front of the chest (keep the 90 degree angle)

*Repeat 5 times (keep moving with the breath)*
4. **Heel Lift**

- Stand tall facing the back of the chair
- Feet are parallel and hip width apart
- Hold the back of the chair for support (palms or finger tips)
- On an *inhale* rise up to the toes
- On an *exhale* lower the heels back to the floor
- Repeat

*Hold each rise for 3 even breaths*
*Repeat 5 times (keep moving with the breath)*

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5. **Balance Quad Stretch**

- Stand tall facing the back of the chair
- Feet are parallel and hip width apart
- Hold the back of the chair for support (palms or finger tips)
- Point one toe back and gently lift the leg behind you
- Bring the leg back down
- Repeat on the other side

*Hold for 3 even breaths*
*Repeat 3 times on each side*
6. **Supported Tree**

- Stand with your side to the back of the chair
- Hold the back of the chair with one had for support (palm or finger tips)
- Elongate through the spine
- Slowly shift the weight onto the leg that is close to the chair
- Bend the other knee and rest the sole of the foot on the standing leg
- Extend the free hand above the head

*Hold for 10 even breaths*
*Repeat 1 time on each side*

Note: You can place the foot either on the ankle, below the knee or above the knee of the straight leg – avoid putting it on the knee

7. **Final Resting Pose - Savasana (Floor / Chair)**

- Close your eyes
- Relax and release control of the breath
- Feel yourself melt into the floor / chair

**Floor**
- Separate the legs
- Let the hips release into the floor
- Relax the belly
- Release the arms out to the side
- Keep the neck long
- Relax the facial muscles

**Chair**
- Press the soles of the feet into the ground
- Sit evenly on both sitting bones
- Rest the hands on your lap
- Elongate through the spine
- Keep the shoulders away from the ears
- Extend through the crown of the head

*Stay for about 5 minutes*
Week 5 – Flexibility & Balance

Opening

Simple Breathing (Floor / Chair)
- Close your eyes
- Turn your awareness inward and focus on your breath
- Take slow and even inhales and exhales

Floor
- Separate the legs
- Let the hips release into the floor
- Relax the belly
- Release the arms out to the side
- Keep the neck long
- Relax the facial muscles

Chair
- Press the soles of the feet into the ground
- Sit evenly on both sitting bones
- Rest the hands on your lap
- Elongate through the spine
- Keep the shoulders away from the ears
- Extend through the crown of the head

Do this exercise for about 3-5 minutes

Postures

1. Head Rolls
- Sit on the chair with the hands resting on your lap
- Elongate through the spine
- Drop the chin to the sternum without collapsing the chest
- On an *inhale* turn the head to one side
- On an *exhale* release the chin back to the center
- Repeat on the other side

Repeat 5 times on each side
2. **Read the Paper**

- Sit on the chair (spine away from the back of the chair)
- Sit evenly on both sitting bones
- Elongate through the spine
- Bend the arms to a 90 degree angle and keep them shoulder width apart
- On an *inhale* open the arms out to the side and lift the chest (keep the 90 degree angle)
- On an *exhale* draw the forearms towards each other in front of the chest (keep the 90 degree angle)

*Repeat 5 times (keep moving with the breath)*

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3. **Knee Circles**

- Sit on the chair (spine away from the back of the chair)
- Sit evenly on both sitting bones
- Root one foot firmly into the floor and interlace the hands around the opposite knee
- Carefully draw the knee towards the chest
- Gently make circular movements with the knee (first in one and then in the other direction)
- Repeat on the other side

*Make 5 circles in each direction with each knee (keep breathing smoothly)*
4. **Eye of the Needle**

- Sit on the chair (towards the front of the chair)
- Draw one knee into the chest
- Place the ankle or shin on top of the opposite thigh
- Gently move the torso forward from the hips
- Keep elongating through the spine
- Bring the foot back to the ground and repeat on the other side

*Hold for 5 even breaths*
*Repeat 1 time on each side*

5. **Down Dog Easy**

- Stand facing the back of the chair with the feet hip width apart
- Press the palms down on the chair for support (do not push the chair forward)
- Slowly walk backward until the hips are over the heels and the torso is parallel to the floor
- Draw the belly in
- Keep the neck long and gaze towards the floor
- To come out of the pose slowly walk the feet back to the chair

*Hold for 10 even breaths*
6. **Supported Tree**

- Stand with your side to the back of the chair
- Hold the back of the chair with one hand for support (palm or finger tips)
- Elongate through the spine
- Slowly shift the weight onto the leg that is close to the chair
- Bend the other knee and rest the sole of the foot on the standing leg
- Extend the free hand above the head

Note: You can place the foot either on the ankle, below the knee or above the knee of the straight leg – avoid putting it on the knee

*Hold for 10 even breaths
Repeat 1 time on each side*

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7. **Final Resting Pose - Savasana (Floor / Chair)**

- Close your eyes
- Relax and release control of the breath
- Feel yourself melt into the floor / chair

**Floor**
- Separate the legs
- Let the hips release into the floor
- Relax the belly
- Release the arms out to the side
- Keep the neck long
- Relax the facial muscles

**Chair**
- Press the soles of the feet into the ground
- Sit evenly on both sitting bones
- Rest the hands on your lap
- Elongate through the spine
- Keep the shoulders away from the ears
- Extend through the crown of the head

*Stay for about 5 minutes*

**Week 6 & 7 – Strength**
Opening

Simple Breathing (Floor / Chair)

- Close your eyes
- Turn your awareness inward and focus on your breath
- Take slow and even inhales and exhales

Floor
- Separate the legs
- Let the hips release into the floor
- Relax the belly
- Release the arms out to the side
- Keep the neck long
- Relax the facial muscles

Chair
- Press the soles of the feet into the ground
- Sit evenly on both sitting bones
- Rest the hands on your lap
- Elongate through the spine
- Keep the shoulders away from the ears
- Extend through the crown of the head

Do this exercise for about 3-5 minutes

Postures

1. **Head Rolls**

- Sit on the chair with the hands resting on your lap
- Elongate through the spine
- Drop the chin to the sternum without collapsing the chest
- On an *inhale* turn the head to one side
- On an *exhale* release the chin back to the center
- Repeat on the other side

* Repeat 5 times on each side
Shoulder Rolls

- Sit on the chair with the hands resting on your lap
- Sit evenly on both sitting bones
- Elongate through the spine
- On an *inhale* draw the shoulders up towards the ears
- *Hold your breath* as you draw the elbows back and squeeze the shoulder blades together
- On an *exhale* drop the shoulders and soften them away from the ears

*Repeat 5 times (keep moving with the breath)*

2. Rowing

- Sit on the chair (spine away from the back of the chair)
- Root both feet into the ground
- Elongate through the spine
- Extend the arms forwards with the palms facing up
- On an *inhale* make fists, draw the elbows back and press the chest forward
- On an *exhale* release the hands, straighten the arms forward and round the spine

*Repeat 10 times (keep moving with the breath)*
4. **Inner Thigh Stretch**

- Sit on the chair (towards the front of the chair)
- Sit evenly on both sitting bones
- Elongate through the spine
- Feet are a few inches wider than hip width apart
- Straighten the arms and place the back of the hands on the inner thighs
- Press the hands against the thighs while pressing the knees towards the center (create resistance)

_Hold for 10 even breaths_

5. **Seated Squat**

- Sit on the chair (towards the front of the chair)
- Separate the feet as far as it is comfortable
- Slide one arm towards the respective leg and rest the elbow on the thigh
- Reach the other arm behind the body to clasp the back of the chair
- Gently twist the torso
- Slowly return to the center and repeat on the other side

_Hold for 5 even breaths_

_Repeat 1 time on each side_
6. **Sunflower**

- Sit on the chair (towards the front of the chair)
- Separate the legs into a V shape and have the feet pointing out at 45 degrees
- Extend the arms towards the floor and slowly relax the torso forward
- On an *inhale* raise the upper body by moving the arms out and up above the head
- On an *exhale* fold forward again by moving the arms out and down
- Keep the sitting bones anchored all the time

*Repeat for 5 circles (keep moving with the breath)*

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7. **Final Resting Pose - Savasana (Floor / Chair)**

- Close your eyes
- Relax and release control of the breath
- Feel yourself melt into the floor / chair

**Floor**

- Separate the legs
- Let the hips release into the floor
- Relax the belly
- Release the arms out to the side
- Keep the neck long
- Relax the facial muscles

**Chair**

- Press the soles of the feet into the ground
- Sit evenly on both sitting bones
- Rest the hands on your lap
- Elongate through the spine
- Keep the shoulders away from the ears
- Extend through the crown of the head

*Stay for about 5 minutes*
Week 8 & 9 – Endurance

Opening

Simple Breathing (Floor / Chair)

• Close your eyes
• Turn your awareness inward and focus on your breath
• Take slow and even inhales and exhales

Floor
• Separate the legs
• Let the hips release into the floor
• Relax the belly
• Release the arms out to the side
• Keep the neck long
• Relax the facial muscles

Chair
• Press the soles of the feet into the ground
• Sit evenly on both sitting bones
• Rest the hands on your lap
• Elongate through the spine
• Keep the shoulders away from the ears
• Extend through the crown of the head

Do this exercise for about 3-5 minutes

Postures

1. **Head Rolls**

• Sit on the chair with the hands resting on your lap
• Elongate through the spine
• Drop the chin to the sternum without collapsing the chest
• On an *inhale* turn the head to one side
• On an *exhale* release the chin back to the center
• Repeat on the other side

*Repeat 5 times on each side*
2. **Shoulder Rolls**

- Sit on the chair with the hands resting on your lap
- Sit evenly on both sitting bones
- Elongate through the spine
- On an *inhale* draw the shoulders up towards the ears
- *Hold your breath* as you draw the elbows back and squeeze the shoulder blades together
- On an *exhale* drop the shoulders and soften them away from the ears

*Repeat 5 times (keep moving with the breath)*

3. **Seated Leg Raises**

- Sit on the chair (spine away from the back of the chair)
- Feet are hip width apart
- Hands are either on the thighs or on the side of the chair for support
- Root one foot into the ground and lift the other foot by straightening the leg
- Release the foot back to the ground
- Repeat on the other side

*Hold for 5 even breaths*  
*Repeat 1 time on each side*
4. **Supported Warrior I**

- Stand facing the back of the chair
- Place hands on the back of the chair for support
- Gently bend one knee and step the other leg back about two feet
- Rotate the back foot out 45 degrees and root through the outer edge
- Engage the belly and do not over-arch the lower back
- Step the back foot forward and repeat on the other side

*Hold for 5 even breaths*
*Repeat 1 time on each side*

5. **Open Legged or Standing Squat**

- Stand facing the back of the chair
- Place hands on the back of the chair for support
- Feet are a few inches wider than hip width apart and the toes are turned out slightly
- Engage the belly and elongate through the spine
- Slowly bend both knees (keep the knees in line with the toes)
- Press through the feet and come back up to standing

*Hold for 3 even breaths*
*Repeat 3 times*
6. **Sunflower**

- Sit on the chair (towards the front of the chair)
- Separate the legs into a V shape and have the feet pointing out at 45 degrees
- Extend the arms towards the floor and slowly relax the torso forward
- On an *inhale* raise the upper body by moving the arms out and up above the head
- On an *exhale* fold forward again by moving the arms out and down
- Keep the sitting bones anchored all the time

*Repeat for 5 circles (keep moving with the breath)*

7. **Final Resting Pose - Savasana (Floor / Chair)**

- Close your eyes
- Relax and release control of the breath
- Feel yourself melt into the floor / chair

**Floor**
- Separate the legs
- Let the hips release into the floor
- Relax the belly
- Release the arms out to the side
- Keep the neck long
- Relax the facial muscles

**Chair**
- Press the soles of the feet into the ground
- Sit evenly on both sitting bones
- Rest the hands on your lap
- Elongate through the spine
- Keep the shoulders away from the ears
- Extend through the crown of the head

*Stay for about 5 minutes*
Opening

Simple Breathing (Floor / Chair)

- Close your eyes
- Turn your awareness inward and focus on your breath
- Take slow and even inhales and exhales

Floor
- Separate the legs
- Let the hips release into the floor
- Relax the belly
- Release the arms out to the side
- Keep the neck long
- Relax the facial muscles

Chair
- Press the soles of the feet into the ground
- Sit evenly on both sitting bones
- Rest the hands on your lap
- Elongate through the spine
- Keep the shoulders away from the ears
- Extend through the crown of the head

Do this exercise for about 3-5 minutes

Postures

1. Head Rolls

- Sit on the chair with the hands resting on your lap
- Elongate through the spine
- Drop the chin to the sternum without collapsing the chest
- On an *inhale* turn the head to one side
- On an *exhale* release the chin back to the center
- Repeat on the other side

Repeat 5 times on each side
2. **Shoulder Rolls**

- Sit on the chair with the hands resting on your lap
- Sit evenly on both sitting bones
- Elongate through the spine
- On an *inhale* draw the shoulders up towards the ears
- *Hold your breath* as you draw the elbows back and squeeze the shoulder blades together
- On an *exhale* drop the shoulders and soften them away from the ears

*Repeat 5 times (keep moving with the breath)*

3. **Forward Bend (Chair)**

- Sit on the chair (spine away from the back of the chair)
- Feet are hip width apart
- Reach back and grab the sides of the chair
- Ground through both sitting bones
- Gently lean forwards by hinging from the hips
- Draw the belly in and keep the spine long

*Hold for 5 even breaths*
*Repeat 3 times*
4. **Down Dog Advanced**

- Stand facing the front of the chair
- Press the palms down on the chair for support (do not push the chair forward)
- Align the hips over the feet and root through the heels
- Draw the shoulder blades away from the ears
- Keep the neck long and gaze at the floor
- To come out of the pose slowly walk the feet back to the chair

*Hold for 10 even breaths*

NOTE: You have the option of practicing Down Dog Easy in Week 5 Handout.

5. **Seated Twist**

- Sit towards the front of the chair
- Root through both sitting bones and elongate through the spine
- Move one hand to the opposite thigh
- Reach the other arm behind and grab the side or back of the chair
- Gently twist as far as it is comfortable keeping a long spine
- Return to the center and repeat on the other side

*Hold for 5 even breaths*

*Repeat 1 time on each side*
6. **Sunflower**

- Sit on the chair (towards the front of the chair)
- Separate the legs into a V shape and have the feet pointing out at 45 degrees
- Extend the arms towards the floor and slowly relax the torso forward
- On an *inhale* raise the upper body by moving the arms out and up above the head
- On an *exhale* fold forward again by moving the arms out and down
- Keep the sitting bones anchored all the time

*Repeat for 5 circles (keep moving with the breath)*

7. **Final Resting Pose - Savasana (Floor / Chair)**

- Close your eyes
- Relax and release control of the breath
- Feel yourself melt into the floor / chair

**Floor**
- Separate the legs
- Let the hips release into the floor
- Relax the belly
- Release the arms out to the side
- Keep the neck long
- Relax the facial muscles

**Chair**
- Press the soles of the feet into the ground
- Sit evenly on both sitting bones
- Rest the hands on your lap
- Elongate through the spine
- Keep the shoulders away from the ears
- Extend through the crown of the head

*Stay for about 5 minutes*