

RANJANA YOGA CLASS

Chair Yoga

A Beginner's Guide

Seated yoga for stiff days, desk breaks and limited mobility: poses, a 15-minute routine and safety

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General education only. Not medical advice. Speak with your doctor before starting any new practice.

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1. What Chair yoga is

Chair yoga adapts yoga poses so they can be done seated on a chair, or standing with the chair for support. It is useful for people with limited mobility, balance concerns, older adults, and anyone who sits at a desk for long hours.

It keeps the main ideas of yoga: gentle movement, steady breathing and attention to the body. You do not need to get on the floor, and you can do it in everyday clothes.

The short answer

Chair yoga is gentle yoga done sitting or with a chair for support. It is accessible to most people. It is not a treatment for any condition, and anyone with a health condition should check with their doctor.

2. Before you begin: safety first

General education only. Check with your doctor first if you are pregnant, have high blood pressure, a heart, lung, joint or spine condition, osteoporosis, an eye condition such as glaucoma, or have had recent surgery or injury.

Stop and rest if you feel:

- sharp, pinching or burning pain (a mild stretch is fine, pain is a stop sign);
- dizziness, nausea or breathlessness;
- numbness or tingling, or pressure in the head or neck.

Use a stable chair without wheels, placed against a wall if needed, with feet flat on the floor. Move within a pain-free range. If you have recent surgery, osteoporosis, a heart condition, dizziness or high or low blood pressure, ask your doctor which movements are right for you. Stop if you feel pain, dizziness or breathlessness.

3. Eight seated poses

Pose	How	Benefit to notice
Seated mountain	Sit tall, feet flat, hands on thighs.	Posture awareness.
Neck half-circles	Drop the chin and slowly roll ear to shoulder.	Gentle neck ease.
Shoulder rolls	Roll shoulders back and down.	Upper-body loosening.
Seated cat and cow	Hands on knees, arch and round the spine with the breath.	Spinal movement.
Seated twist	Turn gently, holding the chair back.	Mid-back mobility.
Seated forward fold	Slide the hands down the legs, hinge from the hips.	Back and hamstring stretch.
Ankle and knee lifts	Lift one foot and flex and point.	Leg circulation.
Seated side stretch	Reach one arm overhead and lean.	Side body stretch.

Breathe slowly through the nose. Hold each pose for 3-5 breaths and repeat on both sides.

4. A 15-minute routine

Time	Practice	Notes
2 min	Seated mountain with slow breathing	Feel the feet.
3 min	Neck and shoulder rolls	Small, slow movements.
3 min	Seated cat and cow, then a twist each side	Move with the breath.
3 min	Forward fold and side stretch	Do not strain.
2 min	Ankle and knee lifts	Keep it easy.
2 min	Rest with eyes closed	Breathe naturally.

5. Your four-week plan

Week	Focus	Length	What to notice
1	Mountain, shoulder rolls and breathing	5 min	How do your shoulders feel?
2	Add cat and cow and a twist	10 min	Is movement comfortable?
3	Add forward fold and side stretch	12 min	Which poses help the most?
4	Full 15-minute routine	15 min	Try it at a regular time, such as mid-morning.

6. Choosing a class or teacher

Chair yoga classes are offered in community centres, senior programmes and studios. Look for a teacher with training in gentle or adaptive yoga. They should demonstrate options, offer support and not rush.

- Tell the teacher about any injury, surgery, pregnancy or health condition before class.
- Ask which practices are optional; a good teacher says most are.
- If a teacher dismisses pain or distress as part of the process, find another class.

7. Practising at home

At home, place the chair on a non-slip floor, and keep water nearby. A cushion can help if your feet do not reach the floor. For desk breaks, do two or three poses every hour. You can practise without special clothing.

8. Honest expectations

Chair yoga can be a pleasant way to move more and relax. It will not fix a medical condition, and it does not replace physiotherapy or medical advice. Ask your doctor or physiotherapist before starting if you are recovering from surgery or an injury.

9. Common mistakes and fixes

Mistake	Fix
Using a wheeled chair	Choose a stable, sturdy chair.
Slouching during the poses	Sit tall, feet flat.
Forcing a twist	Move gently; turn from the middle back.
Holding the breath	Keep breathing slowly.
Doing too much on day one	Start with 5 minutes.

10. Questions people ask

Is chair yoga a real workout?

It is gentle exercise. It can build comfort in movement but is lighter than a standing practice.

Who can do chair yoga?

Most people, including older adults and those with limited mobility. Check with your doctor if you have a health condition.

Can I do it at my desk?

Yes, use a stable chair and move gently.

How often should I practise?

Short sessions most days are fine.

11. A pre-session checklist

- Have I eaten lightly, at least two hours ago, and had some water?
- Is my space clear, warm and free from interruptions?
- Do I know what I will practise, and how long I have?
- Is there anything in my body today (pain, tiredness, illness) that means I should do less?
- Do I know my stop signs: sharp pain, dizziness, breathlessness?

Running through these five questions takes less than a minute and prevents most beginner problems.

12. Your first week, day by day

Day	Suggestion
1	Read this guide. Try just the warm-up and the final rest.
2	Rest, or a five-minute walk.
3	Repeat day 1 and add one new pose or step.
4	Rest.
5	Practise a short version. Notice how you feel afterwards.
6	Write a few lines in the practice log.
7	Rest. Plan next week from what you noticed.

Three short sessions a week are a good start. Regular, gentle practice builds confidence, and rest days let the body adapt.

13. Glossary

Term	Plain meaning
Chair yoga	Yoga adapted to a chair.
Mountain pose	Standing or seated tall posture.
Hinge	Bending from the hips, not the waist.

Reminder

This guide is general education and not medical advice. It does not diagnose, treat or cure any condition. If you have a health concern, speak with your doctor before starting a new practice.

Practice log

Print this page and keep a short record. Notes help you see patterns over time.

Day	Minutes	Session done	How it felt	Notes
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				