

CHAIR YOGA FOR SENIORS

The benefits of Yoga are becoming better known. Chair yoga has become quite popular. The definition of Yoga is a combination of breathing exercises, physical postures, and meditation that has been practiced for more than 5,000 years. People all over the world and of all ages have discovered how Yoga can help discipline both the body and mind. Recently, Yoga has been modified to assist the senior population. This new movement has been called "Chair Yoga." Chair yoga replaces a yoga mat with a chair. The workout involves modified yoga exercises and sometimes uses two chairs for stretching. The chair is used both as a tool and as a safety measure.

Muscles and joints were designed to move and basic yoga stretches will do just that, get you moving again in a gentle stress-free way. The gentle bending and moving of yoga is important for relieving stiff joints. As they say, you have to **"move it or lose it!"**

Getting Started

Chair yoga is meant as a form of exercise and also a form of meditation and relaxation. Therefore, it is important you do not push yourself past the point of discomfort. A few seconds of discomfort is acceptable but more than that is not needed to achieve benefit. All you need is a chair and comfortable clothes and shoes. The chair is not only used for the seated exercises but can also serve as support for many of the standing yoga postures as well.

1. Forward Bend - *eases tension in upper back and neck.* Breathe in and breathe out as you bend forward. Let your head and arms hang over your knees. Relax into the position and hold for a few seconds and keep breathing. Breathe in as you slowly come back up to seated position.

2. Spinal Twist - *increases circulation and flexibility in the spine.* Sit facing forward and place your left hand on the outside of your right knee. Place your right arm over the back of the chair. Breathe in and breathe out as you twist to the right. Turn your head as well. Push against your right knee. Breathe normally and hold that position. Release slowly and

come back to facing forward and repeat on the opposite side.

3. Side Stretch - *increases flexibility of the spinal column, improves respiration, and reduces waistline.* Sit facing forward with feet slightly apart, breathe in, and raise your arms out to the sides. Breathe out and bend to the left, reaching toward the floor with your left hand and your right hand pointing toward the ceiling. Breathe in come back to starting position. Repeat with your right side.

4. Knee Squeeze - *relaxes lower back, improves digestion and respiration.* Breathe out and breathe in and put both hands around the front of your knee, pull your left knee to your chest, while holding the in breath. Lower your head to your knee, hold for a few seconds and release slowly while breathing out. Repeat on your right side.

5. Leg Lifts - *strengthens legs and lower back, and improves circulation to your legs and feet.* Sit and hold each side of the chair for balance. Breathe out and breathe in as you lift your straightened left leg and flex your foot. Hold for a few seconds and then slowly breathe out while lowering your leg. Repeat the same with your right leg.

6. Sun Pose - *improves circulation to your head, massages internal organs, and limbers your spine and hips.* Sit back in the chair with legs apart and arms by your side. Breathe out completely then breathe in and with a sweeping motion bring your arms up over your head. Look up and stretch. Breathe out while bending forward between your legs and if you can, put your palms on the floor.

Complete these exercises daily to revitalize both body and mind. Your strength and flexibility will also increase allowing more ease in your daily activities!

As always, happy exercising and stay consistent!

FROM THE DIETITIAN: 5 Health Choices YOU Can Make this Winter

1. Eat your colors
2. Move your body
3. Consider taking a Vitamin D supplement and a Multivitamin
4. Stay hydrated
5. Maintain a Healthy Weight

Eat Your Colors

RED - Apple, chili, strawberries, watermelon, tomatoes

WHITE - cauliflower, onion, potatoes, garlic

BLUE/PURPLE - blueberries, red cabbage, eggplant, plums, raisins

GREEN - broccoli, cabbage, celery, green pepper, asparagus, green beans, green grapes, pear, honeydew melon

YELLOW / ORANGE - carrots, oranges, cantaloupe, mangoes, sweet potatoes, corn, bananas

Move Your Body

- Get moving! Any exercise is better than no exercise.
- Start slowly and increase your time weekly
- Take advantage of programs
- Try walking, chair exercise, or stretching

Vitamin D and Multivitamins

- We can get Vitamin D from the sun; however, those of us who live "up north" get limited sun exposure especially in the winter.
- Low vitamin D can cause depression, MS, Diabetes, Certain Cancers and more

- Multivitamins provide any vitamins missing from your diet
- Many medications (for diabetes and gastric reflux for example) can cause our body not to absorb B12 from our food

Stay Hydrated

- Often, we do not realize we are thirsty until we are already dehydrated
- One in three older adults are dehydrated
- Drink water!

Maintain a Healthy Weight

- Being overweight or underweight can cause health problems
- If you want to lose weight, start slowly and reduce your portions
- If you need to gain weight, talk to a medical professional on how to add healthy calories

DECEMBER 2010

• Merry Christmas!

We will be closed on Friday, Dec. 24th and Saturday, Dec 25th (Retail)

• Happy New Year!

We will be closed on Saturday, Jan. 1st. (Retail) We hope everyone has a nice holiday! Thank you for another great year!