



Optimal Health & Performance YOGA Program

Philosophy: As part of our strategy in being a Life Warrior we encourage regular time of retreat. During our Yoga classes we focus on mobility, postural correction, pain management and relaxation with three or four different formats. We have a format for everyone depending on your needs.

Current formats include:

Vinyasa: This format uses up to 12 different activities that are used in a flowing direction after appropriate warm ups are completed. As always, ending with relaxation and focus on returning to the day or evening.

Restorative: This format overall has less activities and each position is held for a longer period of time allowing the body to release and open/lengthen your muscles and joints. Often times the room is kept a little warmer, but not hot like some other formats.

Yoga with Weights: Weights are included in the various poses or activities to increase tension and strength. Poses are not held as long and often times flow like Vinyasa.

Chair Format (being introduced in 2015)

Below we offer picture and description of various positions for your practice at home and we highly encourage coming to one of our classes offered right now 3-4 days per week. **(please check our class schedule on home page)**



Warrior II

{Virabhadrasana

(veer-ah-bah-DRAHS-anna) II

Virabhadra = the name of a fierce warrior}

This powerful posture reminds yogis to take from their past (rear arm/hand & rear foot positioning) and to reach for their future (gaze, front arm/hand and leg bend) while staying firmly ground in their present (center stacked legs, hips and shoulders).

Benefits:

- *Strengthens and stretches the legs and ankles
 - *Stretches the groins, chest and lungs, shoulders
 - *Stimulates abdominal organs
 - *Increases stamina
 - *Relieves backaches, especially through second trimester of pregnancy
 - *Therapeutic for carpal tunnel syndrome, flat feet, infertility, osteoporosis, and sciatica
- Important modifications: keep gaze straight ahead if neck issues; use a chair under front leg to support weight if unstable.



Extended Child's Pose

{Utthita Balāsana

utthita = extended
 bala = child
 āsana = posture}

This posture allows yogis to breathe into their back area. Often used for centering, it is also an effective transition posture.

Benefits:

- *Gently stretches the hips, thighs, and ankles
- *Calms the brain and helps relieve stress and fatigue
- *Relieves back and neck pain when done with head and torso supported
- *Helps to release the pressure on the spine while providing an entire stretch through the upper body to the fingertips
- *Aids in strengthening and stretching the insides of the legs while massaging the internal organs

Important modifications: If knees slight concern, use bolster or blanket between calves and thighs; if neck a concern, change to traditional child's pose with arms alongside body and knees drawn together.



Extended Side Angle Pose {Utthita Parsvakonasana (oo-TEE-tah parsh-vah-cone-AHS-anna)}

utthita = extended
 parsva = side, flank
 kona = angle}

While there are many expressions of this pose, its purpose is to stretch out both sides of the body.

Benefits:

- *Strengthens and stretches the legs, knees, and ankles
- *Stretches the groins, spine, waist, chest and lungs, and shoulders
- *Stimulates abdominal organs
- *Increases stamina

*Therapeutic for: constipation, infertility, low backache, osteoporosis, sciatica & menstrual discomfort

Important modifications: keep gaze straight ahead if neck issues; use a block to support weight if unstable.



Chair Pose {Utkatasana (OOT-kah-TAHS-anna)}

utkata = powerful, fierce}

Often a feature of Sun Salutation B, chair pose is an active standing posture that increases stamina and leg strength.

Benefits:

- *Strengthens the ankles, thighs, calves, and spine
- *Stretches shoulders and chest
- *Stimulates the abdominal organs, diaphragm, and heart
- *Reduces flat feet

Important modifications: squeeze a block or book between legs or stand with feet hip-width apart to support low back and to increase stamina.



**Eagle Pose {Garudasana (gah-rue-
DAHS-anna)}**

Garuda = the mythic “king of the birds,” “eagle,” “devourer,” “all-consuming fire of the sun’s rays.”}

This balancing posture creates a tourniquet-effect in the body allowing for fresh, oxygenated blood to reinvigorate all of the major joints and muscles.

Benefits:

- *Increased circulation
- *Increased balance
- *Improved concentration and focus
- *Rinses internal organs
- *Strengthens and stretches the ankles and calves
- *Stretches the thighs, hips, shoulders, and upper back
- *Rinses digestive organs
- *Therapeutic Applications: asthma, low backache & sciatica

Important modifications: If shoulder discomfort or limited mobility, cross arms across chest; if balance is challenged, begin with opposite leg on floor; use wall for back support as a beginner.



Upward Facing Dog {Urdhva Mukha Svansana (OORD-vah MOO-kah shvon-AHS-anna)

urdhva mukha = face upward (urdhva = upward
mukha = face)
svana = dog}

Upward Facing Dog is usually used in traditional Sun Salutations and as a transition between postures.

Benefits

- *Improves posture
- *Strengthens the spine, arms, wrists
- *Stretches chest and lungs, shoulders, and abdomen
- *Firms the buttocks
- *Stimulates abdominal organs
- *Helps relieve mild depression, fatigue, and sciatica
- *Therapeutic for asthma

Important modifications: If building strength, lower knees to mat; if holding this posture, use a bolster or blanket to support legs by placing beneath shins and allowing knees to rest; if low back is compromised, move into cobra.



Hands at Heart Center/Samasthiti

(Equal Standing) is a command to attention, to stand in balanced stillness. It is the practice of standing with equal, steady, and still attention. Tadasana (Mountain Pose) is the posture that invokes Samasthiti.

This is a starting position for many postures. It is good for the mental preparation for upcoming positions.

Benefits: *Increases awareness and focus *Calms the mind, *Promotes awareness & practice of a healthy posture



Tree Pose {Vrksasana (vrik-SHAHS-anna)}

vrksa = tree}

This is a balancing posture that energizes the body and increases blood flow to the heart.

Benefits:

- *Strengthens thighs, calves, ankles, and spine
- *Stretches the groins and inner thighs, chest and shoulders
- *Improves sense of balance
- *Relieves sciatica and reduces flat feet

Important modifications: if developing balance, stand against a wall or use a partner; raised leg can be in one of several positions from the floor to the calf to the upper inner thigh to the front part of the groin depending upon flexibility and balance; if developing balance, hands can stay at heart center; if neck issues, keep gaze straight ahead.



Supine Spinal Twist {Supta Jaṭhara Parivartānāsana

supta = supine

jaṭhara = stomach

parivartāna = revolving

āsana = posture}

Used during floor practice, often toward the end, Supine Spinal Twist is an active stretch

Benefits:

*Stretches the glutes

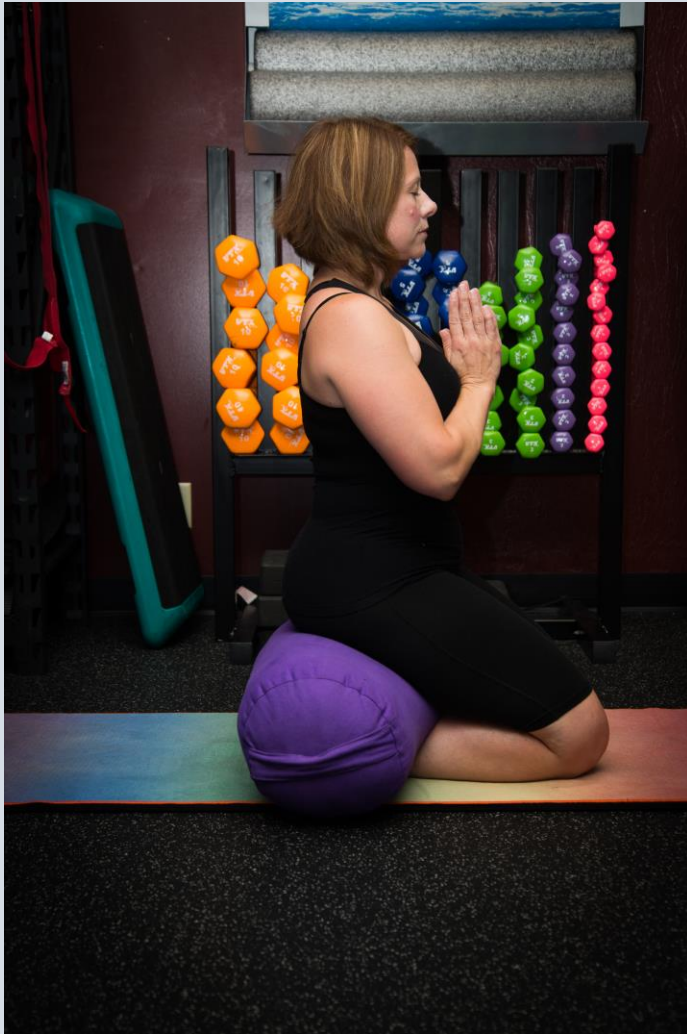
*Stretches and relaxes the spine and back muscles

*Rinses and stimulates the kidneys, abdominal organs, urinary bladders and intestines

*Releases stress.

*Therapeutic Benefit: can help relieve back pain

Important Modifications: if the knee is straightened, it stretches the hamstrings and strengthens the legs.



(Supported) Hero Pose {Virasana (veer-AHS-anna) vira = man, hero, chief}

This is a seated posture that can be used either within a sequence or as a transition.

Benefits:

- *Stretches the thighs, knees, and ankles
- *Strengthens the arches
- *Improves digestion and relieves gas
- *Helps relieve the symptoms of menopause
- *Reduces swelling of the legs during pregnancy (through second trimester)
- *Therapeutic for high blood pressure and asthma

Important modifications: as shown: reduces pressure on knees; if ankles a problem, place a blanket or bolster beneath ankles for support



Seated Forward Fold (with strap)
{Paschimottanasana (POSH-ee-moh-tan-AHS-anna)}

paschimottana = intense stretch of the west (pashima = west
 uttana = intense stretch))

Forward folds cool the body and signal the brain to relax. Never force any forward bend. Use one of the many modifications.

Benefits:

- *Calms the brain and helps relieve stress and mild depression
- *Stretches the spine, shoulders, hamstrings
- *Stimulates the liver, kidneys, ovaries, and uterus
- *Improves digestion
- *Helps relieve the symptoms of menopause and menstrual discomfort
- *Soothes headache and anxiety and reduces fatigue
- *Therapeutic for high blood pressure, infertility, insomnia, and sinusitis
- *Traditional texts say that Paschimottanasana increases appetite, reduces obesity, and cures diseases

Modifications: if flexibility is limited, place a blanket or bolster under knees; for a deeper stretch, lay arms alongside legs on the floor while bent forward; for tight hamstrings, use a strap around ball mounds of feet (shown)



High Lunge with Release/Runner's Lunge

This is a hip-opener that strengthens the arms and legs.

Benefits: *Stretches the groins

*Strengthens the legs and arms

*Therapeutic Applications: indigestion, constipation & sciatica

Important modifications: if not using release and neck is an issue, stare straight ahead; use block or bolster to support legs; release back leg and foot to mat for support/use with or without additional bolster.