



# ADAPTIVE CHAIR YOGA TOOLKIT

 YOGA CIRCLE



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# SPECIAL MESSAGE

FROM US

*Namaste.* This adaptive chair yoga toolkit was inspired by seniors and caregivers whom we have been working with in various settings over the past few years of volunteer teaching. Heartened to see many enjoy and benefit from adaptive chair yoga, we decided to create this toolkit to make yoga accessible to more people. We hope that this toolkit can help provide seniors, caregivers and program facilitators the support and guidance needed for a safe, effective and fun adaptive chair yoga session.

## THANKS!



TO ALL THE SENIORS  
IN OUR COMMUNITY WHO INSPIRED US TO  
CREATE THIS TOOLKIT.

### OUR CREATIVE TEAM

Program Developer & Writer: Wendy Chan  
Writer & Illustrator: Pierina Rivera

### VOLUNTEERS

Yoga Circle SG. & the Yoga Instructor's Team

with inputs from:

Agency For Integrated Care (AIC) Singapore  
HCA Hospice

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# - INTRODUCTION -

## YOGA AND MINDFULNESS

### YOGA

YOGA is a holistic practice that promotes wellness and integration of the body, mind and breath. The physical postures (*asana*) improve the body's strength and flexibility, while effective breathing techniques (*pranayama*) help to calm the mind and improve mental wellness. The aim of yoga is to achieve holistic health and wellness in both the body and mind through a consistent practice that can be customised for all.



### MINDFULNESS

To practice MINDFULNESS, we bring our attention and awareness to the present moment. Instead of having a busy mind filled with thoughts of the past and future, we can keep our focus on simple actions that are happening at the present moment. It can be something as simple as slow deep breathing, slow stretches or even a mindful walk in the park. Learning to pay attention to the body's sensations, one can observe thoughts that come and go in the mind and cultivate an overall sense of calm and clarity.

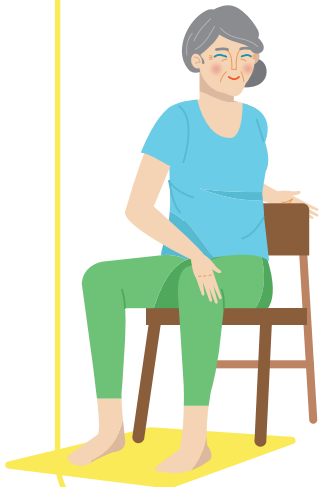


# WHAT IS ADAPTIVE CHAIR YOGA?

ADAPTIVE CHAIR YOGA is a safe and accessible form of yoga practice that caters to seniors, persons with disabilities, wheelchair-users, or anyone who is willing to join in!

This toolkit is designed for easy reference and practice either on your own or with a group. With the support of a sturdy chair, yoga postures and stretches are made safe and accessible to all. Each practice session includes an effective combination of breathing, mindful stretching, yoga poses and coordinated movements.

## BENEFITS OF ADAPTIVE CHAIR YOGA INCLUDE:



- REDUCTION OF STRESS AND ANXIETY
- IMPROVEMENTS IN FLEXIBILITY
- IMPROVEMENTS IN SENSE OF BALANCE AND COORDINATION
- MAKING MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY

- Reference article -

The Effect of Chair-Based Exercise on Physical Function in Older Adults: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18041902>

## RECOMMENDED SETUP FOR ADAPTIVE CHAIR YOGA

To begin an adaptive chair yoga session, you/your senior will need a sturdy chair with a backrest. Do ensure that both feet are placed on the ground (grounded) on a stable non-slip surface. Wear suitable footwear if not practising at home.

### HOW TO IDENTIFY A STURDY CHAIR:

- It has a backrest.
- It should not swivel, have wheels/rollers, or be able to turn.
- It should not be a foldable chair.
- It should not be made of a light-weight material, as that may cause the chair to tip back easily.



**RECOMMENDED TOTAL DURATION** to practice a combination of exercises in this toolkit: **30 MINUTES.**

\*SAMPLE CLASS SEQUENCE ON PG 22

# SAFETY TIPS

THIS ACTIVITY IS SUITABLE IF YOU/YOUR SENIOR CAN:

- Maintain balance while sitting on the edge of a chair, moving their hands, legs and body into various positions
- Follow 2-step instructions



- These movements are to be completed while seated. Sit upright on the edge of a sturdy chair with both feet placed firmly on the ground. Breathe slowly.
- Ensure that you/your senior does not bounce or overstretch during these movements. Do the practice slowly and mindfully.
- Only move the arm/leg that can be moved independently or as tolerated.
- Take required rest breaks or stop if there is any feelings of discomfort/pain. Seek appropriate medical assistance where required.

Where possible, synchronise your/your senior's breath with each movement, by following the symbols below to inhale/exhale.



- Most importantly, **HAVE FUN!**

# WARM-UP AND STRETCHES



SCAN FOR VIDEO

## 1. NECK

### SEQUENCE A

- Lift the chin, gaze up.
  - Bring the head back to the starting position
- Lower the chin, gaze down
  - Bring the head back to the starting point

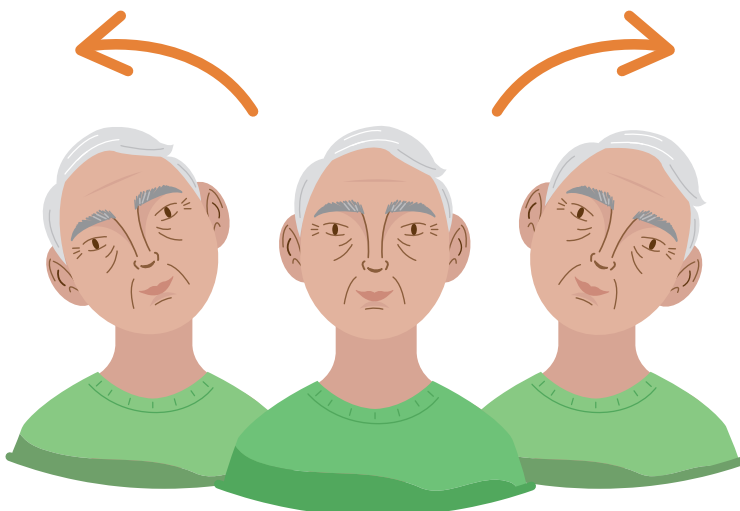


REPEAT 3 TIMES MOVING SLOWLY, NODDING "YES"

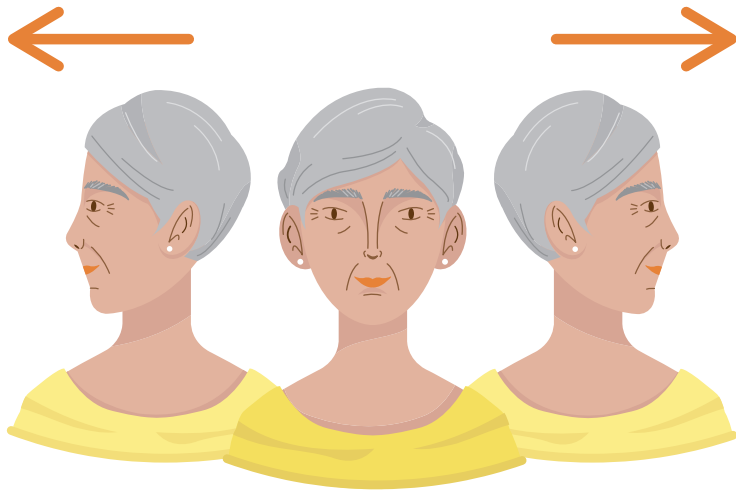
### SEQUENCE B

- Lean the head to right side / Right ear to right shoulder
- Bring the head back to the starting position
- Lean the head to left side / Left ear to left shoulder
- Bring the head back to the starting position

REPEAT 3 TIMES MOVING SLOWLY, ONE SIDE TO THE OTHER





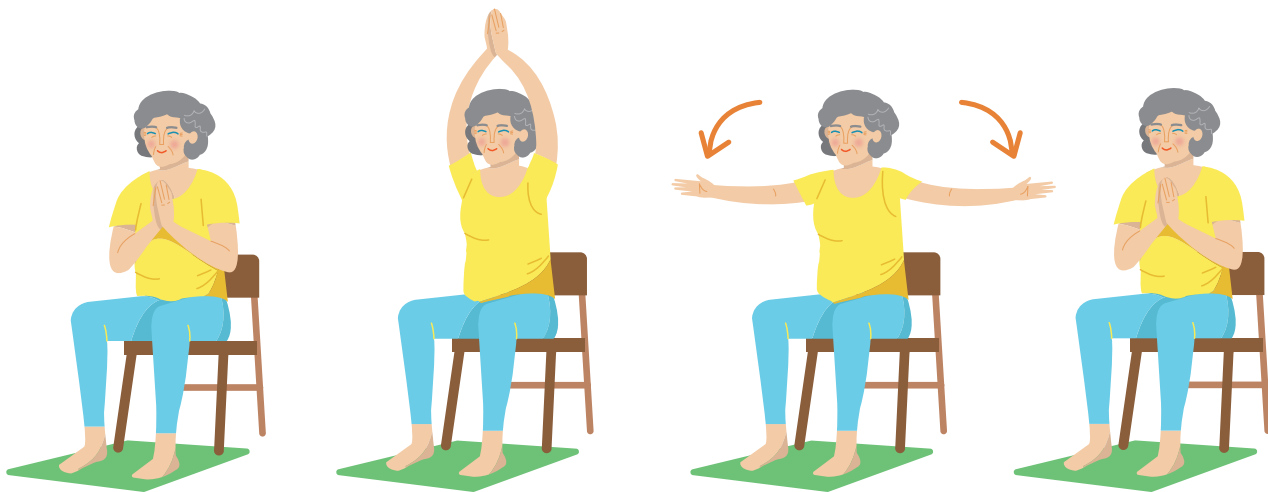


## SEQUENCE C

- Turn the head to the right, gaze follows
- Bring the head back to the starting position
- Turn the head to the left, gaze follows
- Bring the head back to the starting position

REPEAT 3 TIMES MOVING SLOWLY, HEAD SIDE TO SIDE LIKE SAYING "NO"

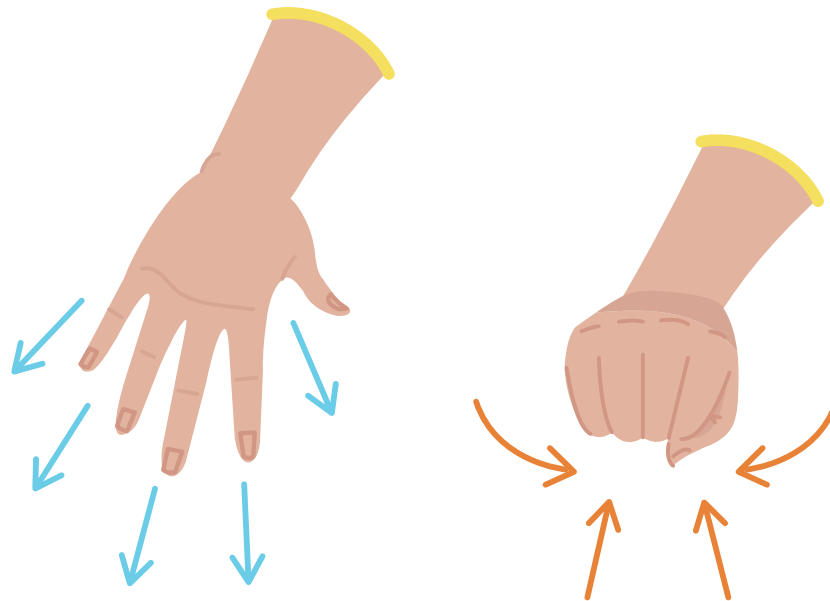
## 2.SUNRISE



- Start with the palms together, in front of the chest.
- Lift the arms overhead, palms touching.
- Open your arms, slowly lower them down the side, bring palms together once more.

REPEAT 3 TIMES, BREATHE DEEP AND SLOW.

### 3.FINGERS AND WRISTS

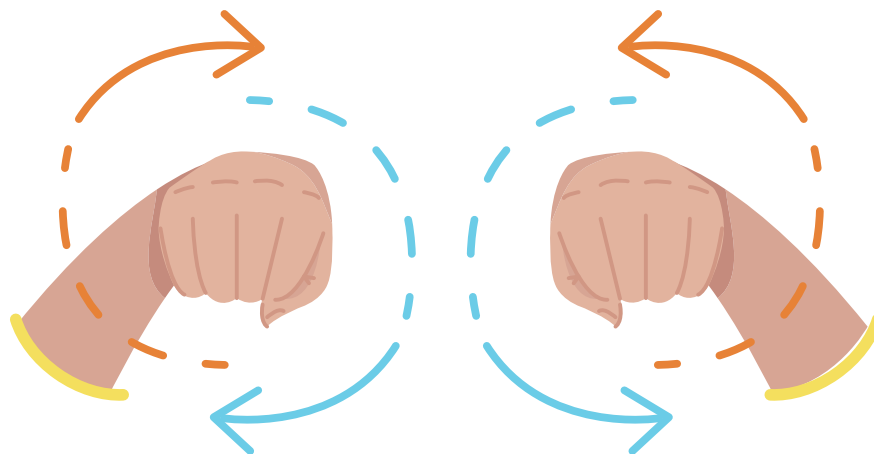


#### OPTION A

- Open and close the fingers. Spread the fingers wide when opening and make a tight fist when closing.

REPEAT 3 TIMES. NATURAL BREATHING AT YOUR OWN PACE.

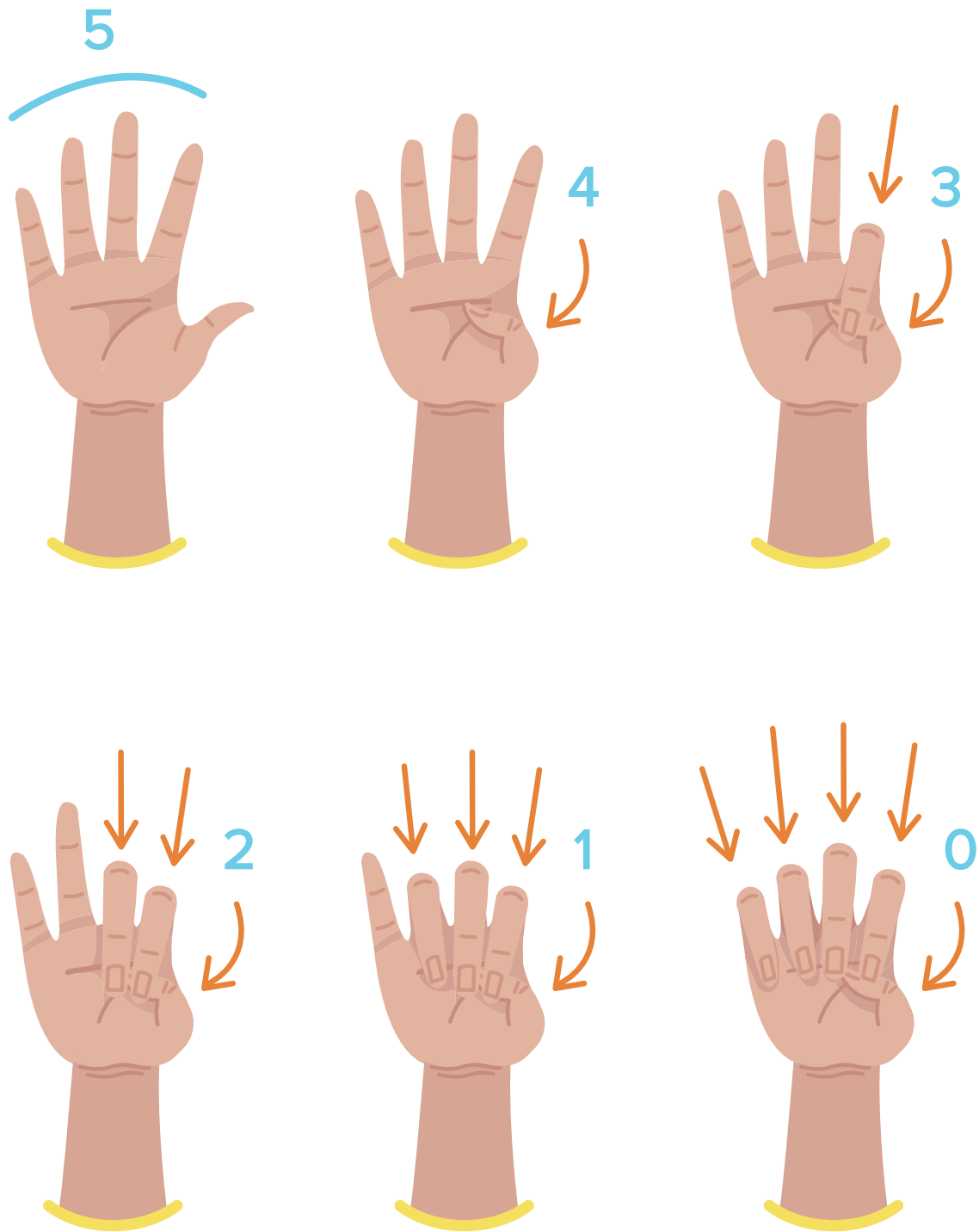
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#### OPTION B

- Make fists with both hands and rotate the wrists in a circular motion (clockwise and counter clockwise)

REPEAT 3 TIMES. NATURAL BREATHING AT YOUR OWN PACE.

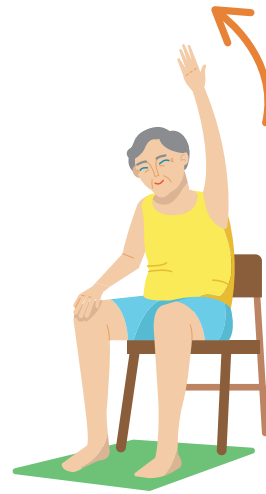
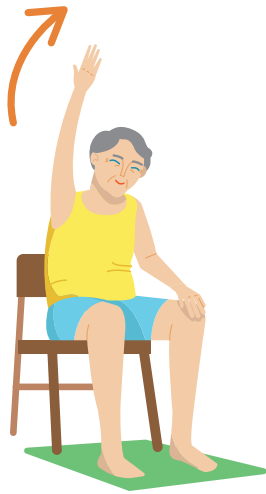


### SEQUENCE C

- Count slowly from 5-1 and vice versa, using your fingers, one by one.

REPEAT 3 TIMES. NATURAL BREATHING AT YOUR OWN PACE

## 4.SIDE BODY



- Raise the right arm straight up over head.
- Lean the body to the left side.
  - Stay for 3 deep breaths.
  - Come back to the starting position.

REPEAT ON THE OTHER SIDE.

## 5.TWISTING



- Turn your torso to the right side for a twist.
- Left hand on right knee, right hand on the backrest of the chair, twist.
  - Stay for 3 deep breaths.
  - Come back to the starting position.

REPEAT ON THE OTHER SIDE.

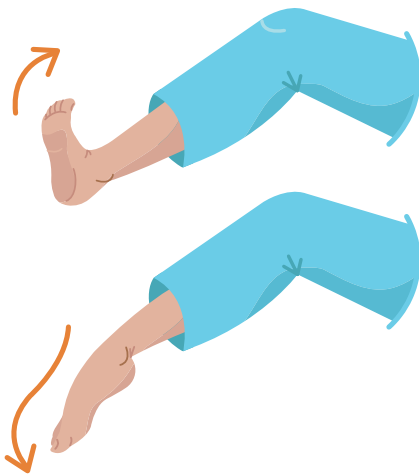
## 6.HIP



- Place the right ankle on top of the left ankle.
- Gently press the right thigh outwards and lean forward as tolerated.
  - Stay for 3 deep breaths.
  - Come back to the starting position.

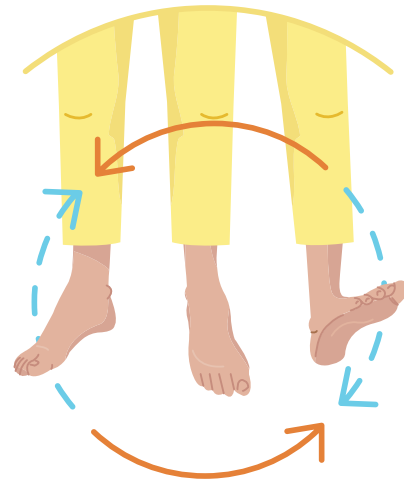
REPEAT ON THE OTHER SIDE.

## 7.ANKLE AND FEET



- Point the toes towards your head, bringing toes up and back gently.
- Point toes away from your head.

REPEAT 3 TIMES ON EACH SIDE.  
NATURAL BREATHING PACE.



- Draw a circle with your feet as you gently rotate your ankles clockwise and counter clockwise.

REPEAT 3 TIMES ON EACH SIDE.  
NATURAL BREATHING PACE.

# CHAIR YOGA SUN SALUTATION



SCAN FOR  
VIDEO

CHAIR YOGA SUN SALUTATIONS are a great way to enjoy yoga! Traditionally, they are done on the floor or yoga mat at sunrise, but this version is adapted for a seated practice that you can do on your chair at any time. Keep in mind to follow each pose as comfortably as you can.

Connect your breath and movements mindfully in this beautiful sequence of yoga postures and stretches.

**REMINDER: ALWAYS HAVE YOUR FEET PLACED ON THE GROUND ON A NON-SLIP SURFACE AND USE A STURDY CHAIR.**

## 1. LET'S BEGIN, MOUNTAIN POSE



Sit towards the edge of the chair while maintaining balance. Place the feet firmly on the ground with knees directly over the ankles and the thighs parallel to the floor. Sit up straight and place palms together in front of the chest.

## 2. BREATHE IN, UPWARD STRETCH ●



Lengthen the arms out in front at chest level, and stretch them up overhead as tolerated; look up gently.

### 3. BREATHE OUT, FORWARD FOLD ○



Lower the forearms on the thighs and bend forward at the hips as tolerated.

Ensure that the chair does not tip over when bending forward. Relax the neck.

### 4. BREATHE IN, MODIFIED LUNGE (RIGHT) ●



Slowly rise up. Hold the right thigh and lift it up towards the chest into a modified lunge.

Keep your body upright and look forward.

RELEASE THE LEG, HANDS ON THE KNEES.

### 5. BREATHE OUT, CAT STRETCH ○



Round the back and lower the head into a cat stretch.

## 6. BREATHE IN, COBRA STRETCH ●



Move the chest forward and look up, arch the back, coming into a seated cobra stretch.

## 7. BREATHE OUT, FORWARD FOLD ○



Lower the forearms on the thighs and bend forward at the hips as tolerated.

Ensure that the chair does not tip over when bending forward. Relax the neck.

## 8. BREATHE IN, MODIFIED LUNGE (LEFT) ●



Slowly rise up. Hold the left thigh and lift it up towards the chest into a modified lunge.

Keep the body upright and look forward.

RELEASE THE LEG, HANDS ON THE KNEES.



## 9. BREATHE OUT, FORWARD FOLD



Lower the forearms on the thighs and bend forward at the hips as tolerated.

Ensure that the chair does not tip over when bending forward. Relax the neck.

## 10. BREATH IN, UPWARD STRETCH



Raise the head first and sit upright. Lift the arms up overhead, and look up gently.

## 11. BREATHE OUT, MOUNTAIN POSE



Bring the palms together in front of your chest, back to Mountain Pose.

Reminder: Always move away from the pose slowly and rest for few deep breaths before moving on to the next pose

# ADAPTIVE CHAIR YOGA POSES



SCAN FOR  
VIDEO



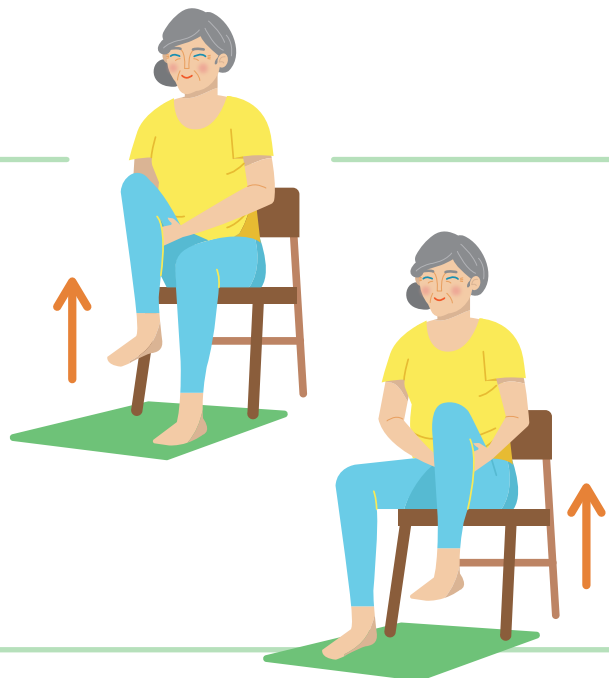
## BOAT POSE

- Firmly grab the sides of the chair.
- Inhale while leaning body backwards slightly and lifting both feet of the ground at the same time.
- Focus on using the strength of the back and abdominal muscles.
- Hold for a few deep breaths, or as you comfortably can.
- Exhale to release pose, bring both legs back down to starting position.

### EASIER OPTION:

- Inhale while leaning body backwards slightly. Hold the right thigh and lift the right foot off the ground.
- Stay for a few deep breaths.
- Exhale to release the arms down and bring the body and leg back to the starting position.

REPEAT ON THE OTHER SIDE.



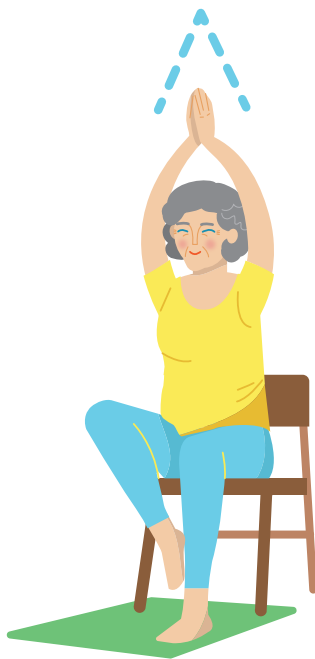
REPEAT AT LEAST 2 TIMES PER POSE

Reminder: Always move away from the pose slowly and rest for few deep breaths before moving on to the next pose



SCAN FOR VIDEO

## TREE POSE



### RIGHT SIDE

- Place the sole of the right foot on the inner left calf. Push down into the ground through your left foot.
- Slowly inhale, raise the arms up overhead, palms together.
- Exhale to maintain the pose.
- Stay for a few deep breaths.

REPEAT ON THE OTHER SIDE.



### EASIER OPTION:

- Inhale to raise arms up, keeping them apart.
  - Stay for a few deep breaths.
- Exhale to release the arms down and bring the body and legs back to the starting position.

REPEAT ON THE OTHER SIDE.

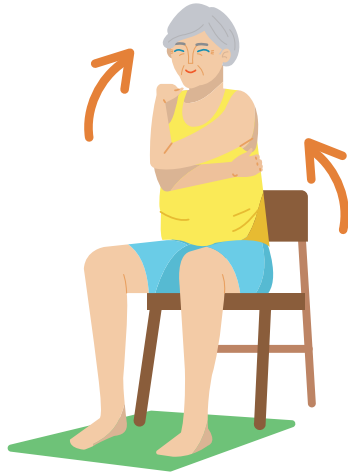
REPEAT AT LEAST 2 TIMES PER POSE

Reminder: Always move away from the pose slowly and rest for few deep breaths before moving on to the next pose



SCAN FOR VIDEO

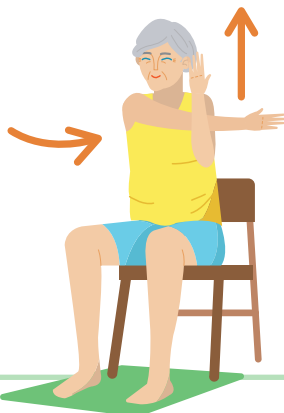
## EAGLE POSE



### RIGHT SIDE

- Inhale, bring the left hand on top of the right shoulder
- Exhale, bring the right arm under and place the palm outside of the armpit
- Gently lift the elbows for a stretch as tolerated.
  - Stay for a few breaths.
- Exhale to release arms down.

REPEAT ON THE OTHER SIDE.



### EASIER OPTION:

- Inhale, bring the right arm across the chest, left hand holding the right elbow.
  - Stay for a few deep breaths.
- Exhale to release the arms down.

REPEAT ON THE OTHER SIDE.

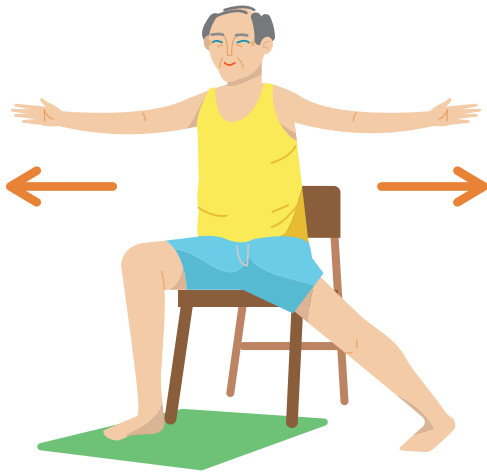
REPEAT AT LEAST 2 TIMES PER POSE

Reminder: Always move away from the pose slowly and rest for few deep breaths before moving on to the next pose



SCAN FOR VIDEO

## WARRIOR POSE



### RIGHT SIDE

- Bend the right leg and open it slightly to the right. Keep the right thigh on the chair, as you straighten the left leg in the opposite direction. Keep both feet grounded on a non-slip surface.

- Slowly inhale, open your arms to the sides, bring them to shoulder height.

Stay for a few deep breaths.

- Exhale to go back to the starting position.

REPEAT ON THE OTHER SIDE.



### CHALLENGING OPTION:

- Inhale, raise your right arm beyond your ear, stretch your upper body towards the left as tolerated.

- Stay for a few deep breaths.

- Exhale to release the arms down and bring the body and legs back to the starting position.

REPEAT ON THE OTHER SIDE.

REPEAT AT LEAST 2 TIMES PER POSE

Reminder: Always move away from the pose slowly and rest for few deep breaths before moving on to the next pose



SCAN FOR  
VIDEO

## CHAIR TWIST POSE



### RIGHT SIDE

- Inhale to turn your torso to the right side for a twist.
- Place left hand on right knee, right hand on the backrest of the chair.
- Stay for 3 deep breaths.
- Slowly exhale to release the pose and come back to the starting position.

REPEAT ON THE OTHER SIDE.



### CHALLENGING OPTION:

- Cross the right leg on top of the left.
- Inhale to turn your torso to the left side for a twist. Bring your palms together in front of your chest, place the right elbow on top of the left thigh.
- Stay for a few breaths.
- Slowly exhale to release the pose and come back to the starting position.

REPEAT ON THE OTHER SIDE.

REPEAT AT LEAST 2 TIMES PER POSE

Reminder: Always move away from the pose slowly and rest for a few deep breaths before moving on to the next pose



SCAN FOR VIDEO

## SIDE-ANGLE POSE



### RIGHT SIDE

- Place the right hand on top of the right knee.
- Inhale, raise your left arm beyond your ear, stretch your upper body towards the right as tolerated.
- Stay for a few deep breaths. Keep both feet grounded on a non-slip mat.
- Slowly exhale to release body back to the starting position.

REPEAT ON THE OTHER SIDE.



### CHALLENGING OPTION:

- Bend the right leg and open it slightly to the right. Keep the right thigh on the chair, as you straighten the left leg to the opposite direction.
- Place the right forearm on top of right thigh, inhale, raise your left arm beyond your ear, stretch your upper body towards the right as tolerated.
- Stay for a few deep breaths.
- Exhale to release the arms down and bring the body and legs back to the starting position.

REPEAT ON THE OTHER SIDE.

REPEAT AT LEAST 2 TIMES PER POSE

Reminder: Always move away from the pose slowly and rest for few deep breaths before moving on to the next pose

# MINDFULNESS AND RELAXATION



SCAN FOR  
VIDEO

A great way to end a yoga session is to find some calm and relaxation by slowing down the breath and closing the eyes to relax. Here are 2 activities you can do at the end of the session.



## 1. MINDFUL BREATHING WITH EYES CLOSED

- Relax your mind, focus on your breathing.
- Breathe in for a count of 3 seconds, breathe out for a count of 5 seconds.

REPEAT FOR AS MANY ROUNDS AS YOU LIKE, CREATING A SOOTHING SPACE.

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## 2. PALMING EYE MASSAGE

- Rub your palms to warm them up. Keeping your eyes closed, slowly place the palms on top of your eyes.
- Press and release your palms, softly, giving yourself a gentle massage, enjoying the warmth of your hands.





# SAMPLE CLASS SEQUENCE

## AND USEFUL PREPARATION TIPS

Before starting the practice, always do a check-in with the following questions:

1. REVIEW YOUR/YOUR SENIOR NEEDS BEFORE THE SESSION AND DETERMINE THE SESSION PLAN
2. CONSIDER THE SPACE, LIGHTING AND TEMPERATURE REQUIRED TO DETERMINE A SUITABLE VENUE FOR THE CLASS
3. ENSURE ALL ITEMS AND THE TOOLKIT/VIDEO REQUIRED ARE IN PLACE FOR EASY ACCESS
4. ENSURE THAT YOU/YOUR SENIOR ARE WELL TO JOIN THE CLASS BEFORE THE CLASS
5. ADDRESS ANY CONCERNS BEFORE STARTING THE SESSION






FOLLOW THE “FULL 30 MINUTES CLASS PLAN” ON THE NEXT PAGE.

KEEP IN MIND THAT YOU CAN REPLACE THE YOGA POSES GIVEN ON POINT NUMBER 3 OF THE CHART, TO MAKE THE PRACTICE SUITABLE FOR THE NEEDS OF THE PRACTITIONER.

# FULL 30 MINUTES CLASS PLAN

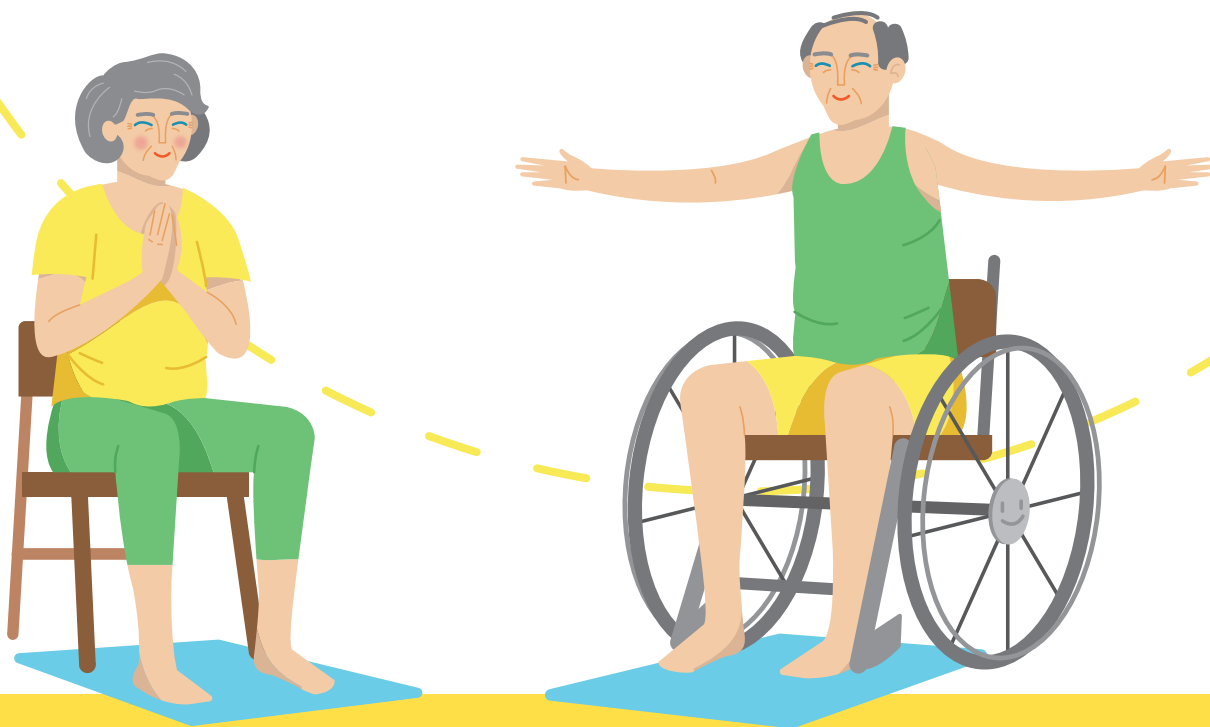
- example -

1	POSTURE CHECK AND CENTERING	<p>TIME: 2 MINUTES</p> 
2	WARM UPS	<p>TIME: 10 MINUTES</p> <p>Going over all the warm ups (pgs 5-10)</p>
3	YOGA POSES	 <p>TIME: 15 MINUTES</p> <p>Sun Salutation - 2 rounds (pgs 11-14)</p> <p>Boat pose + Tree pose + Warrior pose (pg 15) (pg 16) (pg 18)</p>
4	MINDFULNESS RELAXATION	<p>TIME: 3 MINUTES</p> <p>Mindful breathing</p> 

# ABOUT YOGA CIRCLE

YOGA CIRCLE is a non-profit organisation based in Singapore, dedicated to promoting inclusivity in yoga. The yoga community is brimming with love and compassion, and we hope to expand this circle of love and compassion to persons who find it otherwise challenging to gain access to yoga.

Yoga Circle is about embracing diversity and inclusion in yoga. We believe that everyone deserves access to the practice and benefits of yoga. We aim to reach out and share the benefits of yoga in a holistic manner, promoting wellness in physical, emotional, mental, social and spiritual aspects.



Website: [Yogacircle.sg](http://Yogacircle.sg)

IG: [@yogacirclesg](https://www.instagram.com/yogacirclesg) / FB: [Yoga Circle SG](https://www.facebook.com/YogaCircleSG) / Email: [hello@yogacircle.sg](mailto:hello@yogacircle.sg)

LET'S PRACTICE  
TOGETHER

**ADAPTIVE  
CHAIR YOGA**

with  
 **YOGA CIRCLE**



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