

YOGA FOR RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS

YOGA ORIGINATED IN ANCIENT INDIA OVER 5,000 YEARS AGO AND IS A BLEND OF PHYSICAL EXERCISES, BREATH, AND MEDITATION THAT HAS GIVEN COUNTLESS PEOPLE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH. YOGA POWERFULLY CONTRIBUTES TO TOTAL WELLNESS OF THE BODY, MIND, AND INNER SELF. IT BUILDS STRENGTH IN THE BODY, CLARITY OF THOUGHT, AND CREATES INTERNAL PEACE AND AWARENESS. SOME OF THE MANY PHYSICAL BENEFITS THAT PRACTICING YOGA CAN GIVE ARTHRITIS SUFFERERS INCLUDE REDUCTION IN PAIN AND INFLAMMATION OF THE JOINTS, IMPROVED JOINT FLEXIBILITY AND MOVEMENT, CULTIVATES STRENGTH IN THE BODY, AND LOWERS STRESS. PERSONALLY, I WAS ABLE TO WATCH THE REDUCTION IN PAIN AND SWELLING IN CLINT'S JOINTS AS HE BEGAN TO INCORPORATE YOGA INTO HIS DAILY LIFE.

BENEFITS OF YOGA FOR RA:

- ✔ MOVEMENT & EXERCISE
- ✔ BUILDING STRENGTH
- ✔ REDUCE INFLAMMATION
- ✔ RENEWAL & RELAXATION
- ✔ FLEXIBILITY
- ✔ BALANCE
- ✔ STRENGTHENS IMMUNE SYSTEM
- ✔ TOTAL WELLNESS



SETTING THE SPACE FOR YOGA AT HOME

I recommend finding a clean, bright, and open space in your home to practice in. It helps to use the same space on a regular basis as it will give a consistency to your practice and a great energy to the space. Playing soft and gentle music really helps me to sink into my practice and helps me drift throughout the poses without too many distracting thoughts from the mind. Light a candle if you wish and set up your yoga mat and yoga props.

PROPS MAY INCLUDE:

- ✔ **YOGA MAT**
- ✔ **YOGA BOLSTER** You may use a pillow if you wish
- ✔ **BLANKET** Helps in providing support
- ✔ **WALL** Aids in support in yoga poses
- ✔ **CHAIR** Aids in support in yoga poses
- ✔ **EYE PILLOW** Beautiful to use in savasana at the end of your practice for relaxation.
- ✔ **BLOCK**
- ✔ **STRAP**

BREATH

Throughout your yoga practice begin to focus on your breath and close your mouth, breathing through the nose. Focus on deep inhales and nourishing exhales which will aid in calming the body and leave you feeling refreshed. Always come back to the breath once you are set up in your posture.

10 YOGA POSES

01



BEAUTIFUL RESTING POSITION, AIDS IN STRETCHING THE GROIN AND GREAT FLEXION IN THE HIP JOINTS, STRETCHES THE LOWER BACK.

**Please be mindful of the knees*

ADHO MUKHA VIRASANA

(DOWN-FACE WARRIOR POSE)

INSTRUCTION

- ✔ Sitting towards the back of your mat, big toes touching together, open your knees apart to the outer edges of your mat.
- ✔ Rest your buttocks on your heels (if needed please use your blanket between your buttocks and calf muscles for support).
- ✔ Inhale looking forward and opening the chest, Exhale keeping your buttocks on your heels and walk your hands forward, hinging from the hips and rest your chest and head towards the floor.
- ✔ Remembering to breath, gently roll the forehead from side to side on the mat.
- ✔ To release, inhale looking forward and exhale walking the hands back by your side and sitting upright.

02



INCREDIBLE STRENGTHENING FOR THE SPINE. PROVIDES A STRETCH THROUGH THE CHEST, SHOULDERS, AND ABDOMEN.

** Pregnancy avoid*

** Spondylolisthesis avoid*

BHUJANGASANA

(COBRA POSE)

INSTRUCTION

- ✔ Lay down prone on the mat (front side to the mat), with legs stretching behind you, tops of feet on the floor, feet together
- ✔ Place the palms of your hands to the mat on either side of your shoulders, with your fingertips just under the shoulders. Draw your shoulder blades down your spine and keep your elbow bent and shoulder width apart
- ✔ Press the tops of your feet, thighs, and legs firmly into the floor
- ✔ Activate your core (draw the navel to the spine), inhale and lift your chest off the floor
- ✔ Keep your gaze in front of you on the floor, elongating the spine and neck, keeping the navel down on the floor, and drawing the shoulder blades back towards the kidneys
- ✔ Hold for a few breaths, exhale and release, You may sit back in Down face Warrior Pose to release the lower back

10 YOGA POSES

03



UTTANASANA

(STANDING FORWARD BEND)

STRETCHES THE HAMSTRINGS, CALVES, LOWER BACK, AND BUTTOCKS. PROVIDES FRESH OXYGENATED BLOOD AND AIDS IN REDUCING FATIGUE. RELIEVES PRESSURE ON THE SPINE.

**Disc injury or tight hamstrings - ensure to do pose with slightly bent knees*

INSTRUCTION

- ✓ Stand with feet together at the top of your mat.
- ✓ Inhale lifting the torso tall and lengthening the spine, place your hands on your hips.
- ✓ Exhale, bend the knees slightly and hinge forward from the hips. Bring your shoulders to hip height and extend your fingers to the floor in line with the feet.
- ✓ Slowly release the neck, and slowly straighten the legs without hyperextending the knees. Feel the deep stretch down the back side of the body and keep lifting the sitting bones tall and lengthen your body down towards the earth.
- ✓ Keep equal weight on the feet. To release, inhale, bend the knees and gently roll one vertebrae at a time to a standing position, head coming up last.

VARIATION

A gentle variation is to keep the feet hip distance apart and folding forward, hook your forearms together hands to elbows, and gently sway from side to side. Option to also use the wall as support and complete the pose with the hips and buttocks against the wall, with the feet about a foot and a half away from the wall (creates a slight angle). Then hinging from the hips, fold down towards the ground and use the support of the wall behind you,

Yoga allows us to breathe in nourishment to the body, cultivate strength, and find inner peace. Creating awareness and a balanced state of being, yoga illumines a path of happiness and allows us to evolve into our optimal self.

-Melissa Paddison



10 YOGA POSES



04



VIRABHADRASANA II
(WARRIOR II)

STRENGTHENS THE LEGS AND ARMS, BUILDS STAMINA, STRETCHES YOUR HIPS, AIDS IN BALANCE AND STABILITY, AND AIDS IN ENERGIZING THE BODY

** Be mindful of any sensitive knees, and with neck issues keep the head looking straight forward and do not turn the head to look over the front finger tips*

INSTRUCTION

- ✓ Stand in the center of the mat and turn to the side, with feet together and
- ✓ Step your legs apart about 1.5 leg lengths. Turn your right foot to the right 90 degrees and line up the heel of your right foot with the center arch of your left foot
- ✓ Turn your left toes in slightly to ensure that the side of the foot is parallel with the end of your mat.
- ✓ Lifting and activating your quadriceps, slowly raise your arms to shoulder height and extend energy all the way through your finger tips.
- ✓ Switch on your core and pull your navel to your spine
- ✓ Slowly bend the right knee into a lunge, ensuring that the knee stays directly over the ankle. Keep the center of your body over your hips and elongate through your spine
- ✓ If you do not have any neck injuries, slowly turn your head and focus past your right finger tips.
- ✓ Be mindful of your breath and take 3 long inhales and exhales. Energize through the legs and lengthen through your arms and finger tips.
- ✓ To release, gently straighten the right knee and step back together. Repeat on the other side.

05



TREE POSE
(VRKSASANA)

BEAUTIFUL FOR CREATING BALANCE IN THE BODY AND MIND. CREATES STABILITY AND STRENGTH IN THE ANKLES AND LEGS, WHILST OPENING THE HIPS.

INSTRUCTION

- ✓ Stand at the top of your mat, feet together, and place your hands on your hips
- ✓ Find your drishti (a focus point) directly in front of you to concentrate on
- ✓ Take your weight to your left foot
- ✓ Option 1: Gentle variation, turn the right foot to the side and place the ball of the foot on the mat and rest the right heel on the left ankle.
- ✓ Option 2: Engage your core (navel to spine) and pulling up through the standing left leg, pick up the right ankle and place the right foot flat against the upper inner thigh. Keep your hip bones square towards the front of the mat and gently turn out your right knee. Inhale and float your hands together at your heart center. Relax the shoulders down and lift and lengthen up through the crown of your head, whilst keeping your strong foundation in the standing leg.
- ✓ Switch legs and repeat on the other side

VARIATION

Use the wall as a prop and aid in balancing. Stand in front of the wall with your backside to the wall and keep your gaze on a focal point in front of you. Use the support of the wall to help with your balance in either of the 2 options.

10 YOGA POSES

06



ANANDA BALASANA (HAPPY BABY)

GREAT POSE FOR OPENING THE HIP JOINTS, RELEASING THE LOWER BACK, AND STRETCHES THE HAMSTRINGS. IT HELPS TO RELIEVE STRESS AND CALMS THE BODY AND THE MIND.

**Pregnancy avoid*

**Please be mindful if you have a knee injury*

**Please be mindful if you have a neck injury and roll a blanket to place underneath your head for support if needed*

**Ensure to keep a straight spine*

INSTRUCTION

- ✔ Lay down supine (back to mat) on the mat
- ✔ Bend your legs, knees to chest, and open the knees wide and down towards the armpits
- ✔ Ensure to stack the ankles over the knees and take your hands to gently hold onto the outer edges of your feet
- ✔ Pull your feet gently towards the floor as you feel this juicy stretch. Remember to breath and aim to release your lower back towards the floor so the entire spine is resting on the floor.
- ✔ Hold for 1 minute and then release your feet to the mat, and take a few deep breaths. Repeat if you wish!

07



UPAVISTHA KONASANA (SUPPORTED WIDE-ANGLE FORWARD FOLD)

EXCELLENT POSTURE FOR THE GROIN AND REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM, ALLOWS BLOOD AND ENERGY TO FLOW IN THE PELVIC AREA, IMPROVES FLEXIBILITY, AND STRETCH THE HAMSTRINGS

**Avoid with any inner groin strains, be mindful of any sacroiliac injuries*

INSTRUCTION

- ✔ Fold blanket in half and come to sit on the buttocks on the folded edge of the blanket. This will assist in a forward pelvic tilt and relieve lower back tension.
- ✔ Open legs into a wide 'V' shape with the toes and knee caps pointing towards the sky
- ✔ Place your bolster lengthwise in between your legs(or even a chair in front of you for more of a relaxed stretch) Keep a small micro bend in the knees and activate the thighs, inhale and lengthen up the spine and draw the navel to the spine
- ✔ After you have lengthened the spine, hinge from the hips and exhale walking the hands forward. Rest your chest on either the bolster or the base of a chair.
- ✔ Continue to breath and hold for 3 minutes. To release, inhale looking forward and exhale lifting the chest and walking the hands back to your side.

10 YOGA POSES

08



VIPARITA KARANI (FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH OR LEGS UP THE WALL POSE)

A RELAXING AND RESTORATIVE POSE THAT CALMS THE NERVOUS SYSTEM, EASES MUSCLE TENSION, RELIEVES FATIGUE AND STRESS, HELPS WITH LOWER BACK PAIN, AND IS A COOLING POSTURE THAT LOWERS THE BLOOD PRESSURE. I HIGHLY RECOMMEND ADDING THIS POSE TO YOUR DAY TO ALLOW THE DAYS STRESSES TO MELT AWAY.

**Pregnancy – raise the torso on a bolster and avoid lying flat*

INSTRUCTION

- ✓ Move your yoga mat to the wall
- ✓ Sit facing the left side of your mat with your right hip to the wall.
- ✓ Pivot around and lie down on the mat flat, and raise your legs up the wall
- ✓ Ensure that your buttocks is resting on the mat and touching the wall if possible
- ✓ Keep your feet and heels together, with the feet flexed back and the legs active
- ✓ Allow your arms to lay by your sides with the palms facing up or rest your hands on your tummy
- ✓ Melt your shoulders down to the earth, and tilt your chin towards your chest to lengthen the spine
- ✓ Close your eyes and if you like place your eye pillow gently over your eyes.
- ✓ Focus on your breath with a deep inhale and nourishing exhale
- ✓ Hold for 5 minutes and release by tucking your knees down towards your chest and slowly rolling to your right hand side, your left hand can help push you to a seated position.

09



LORD OF THE FISH POSE (ARDHA MATSYENDRASANA III)

RELEASES TOXINS, NOURISHES THE SPINE, AND MASSAGES THE INTERNAL ORGANS

**If you are pregnant, have a sore back, or prefer a gentle variation do the open variation*

INSTRUCTION

- ✓ Sit with legs in front of you on the mat. Keep your left leg extended with foot flexed back.
- ✓ Take your right foot to the left shin and over the left leg. Keep the right foot resting against the left leg.
- ✓ Open Twist - Place the left hand on the floor behind the body, place the right elbow on the inside of the right knee. Inhale, lift and lengthen the spine.
- ✓ Exhale slowly twist and look over your left shoulder.
- ✓ Closed Twist - Place the right hand on the floor behind the body, place the left elbow to the outside of the right knee. Inhale, lift and lengthen the spine.
- ✓ Exhale, slowly twist and look over your right shoulder.
- ✓ To release both twist variations - inhale looking back towards the centre of the room, exhale and release.
- ✓ Repeat on the other side.

10 YOGA POSES

10



SAVASANA (CORPSE POSE)

INSTRUCTION

- ✔ Lay down back flat on the mat, have your bolster handy to slide horizontal underneath your knees. This will help ease any tension in the lower back.
- ✔ Place your eye pillow gently over your eyes and rest your arms by your side, palms facing towards the sky
- ✔ Allow your feet & hands to relax, fingers & toes to relax, and take a deep inhale and nourishing exhale to release any lingering tension
- ✔ Allow the floor to support your body and relax the whole body on the mat
- ✔ Give yourself as much time as possible in savasana (approx 5 – 10 minutes)
- ✔ When you are ready to release, gently bring awareness back to the body, and allow the fingers and toes to wiggle, bringing gentle movement back to the body
- ✔ Take a deep stretch bringing the arms along the floor and over your head, lengthening the body, then roll to the right hand side and gently come to a seated position

IDEAL FOR SEALING YOUR YOGA PRACTICE AND ALLOWING THE FULL BENEFITS OF ALL OF THE POSES YOU HAVE JUST DONE FLOW THROUGH YOUR BODY. REST YOUR BODY, STILL THE MIND, AND ALLOW ANY REMAINING TENSIONS TO MELT AWAY. SAVASANA HELPS TO BALANCE AND CALM THE NERVOUS SYSTEM AND MOST IMPORTANTLY HELPS TO CREATE INNER PEACE.

**Pregnancy raise your head and chest on a bolster*

ENJOY THESE **10 YOGA POSES** AND I HOPE THEY BRING YOU SWEET RELEASE OF DAILY TENSION, BUILD STRENGTH AND FLEXIBILITY IN THE BODY, AND CULTIVATE INNER PEACE.

For further information on yoga and arthritis visit

<http://www.paddisonprogram.com> or

<http://www.risinglightyoga.com>

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