

Yoga with a Chair

Donna Freeman

Seated Mountain

Sit toward the front of the chair. Place feet flat on the ground, outside of the foot straight. Sit tall. Engage the abdomen by pulling in and up. Pull shoulder blades away from the ears. Breathe.



Half Moon

Begin in Seated Mountain Pose. Interlace fingers and stretch arms overhead, palms facing upwards. Roll shoulder blades down and back. Reach up through the hands while sinking the pelvis down into the chair. Inhale, extend. Exhale, bend to the right, keeping both sides of the torso long. Legs and core are active and engaged. Inhale, return to centre. Repeat on the other side.



Seated Twist

Begin in Seated Mountain Pose. Keeping both feet firmly grounded on the floor, inhale, reach tall. Exhale, twist to the right initiating the turn from your abdomen. Inhale, extend through your spine. Exhale, deepen the twist through your chest, trying to align the shoulders with the side of the chair. Inhale, extend. Exhale, look behind you. Release and repeat on the other side.



Twist with Namaste Hands

Begin in Seated Mountain Pose. Bring hands to Namaste or Prayer Position. Inhale, extend the spine & side body. Exhale, twist placing the left upper arm on the outside of the right thigh. Inhale, lengthen. Exhale, press the arm and leg together deepening the twist. Open the chest, lifting the right elbow. Gaze forward or up, whichever is comfortable. Come back to sitting tall on an inhale. Repeat on the other side.



Arm Twists

Begin in Seated Mountain Pose. Extend arms out in front of you at shoulder height. Cross arms at wrists placing palms together and intertwine fingers. Rotate arms down toward the chest and through the hole extending them in front of you again. Repeat 10 times. Switch which hand is on top and repeat the process again 10 times.



Seated Boat

Grab the chair seat beside or slightly behind your hips. Inhale and raise both feet off the floor. Complete one full breath then return feet to floor on the exhale. Repeat.

Advanced version: Inhale and raise both feet off the floor. Exhale while extending both legs in front of you. Inhale to return knees to bent position. Exhale and place feet back on the floor. Repeat.



One Legged Forward Fold

Begin in Seated Mountain Pose. Place your left ankle across your right knee. Inhale, extend through the crown of your head. *Step 1:* Exhale, gently press the left thigh toward the ground. Take a few breaths here. *Step 2:* Inhale, lengthen through the spine. Exhale, bend forward over your bent leg. Relax and allow the hip to open. Slowly return to upright and repeat on the other side.



Bow

Begin in Seated Mountain Pose. Reach both arms behind you to grasp the sides of the back of the chair. Inhale, lift your chest, open your heart. Look forward or upward, whichever is comfortable. Breathe deeply. With each inhale try to deepen the back bend.



Pigeon

Stand to the side of the chair. Place one foot on the chair seat. Inhale, ground your standing foot into the floor as you reach through the crown of your head. Exhale, bend forward bringing your torso toward the floor with the bent knee on the outside of your shoulder. Grab onto the chair and use it to actively stretch, pulling your torso lower with each exhale. Repeat on the other side.



Downward Facing Dog

Stand with feet hip distance apart a few feet in front of the chair. Bend over placing your hands on the back of the chair. Open the armpits while lowering your head to between your arms. Push into the ground with your feet and pull your hips back while pulling your shoulder blades toward your tailbone. Stay here for a few breaths. If you are very tight through the lower back/hamstrings bend your knees slightly to achieve a flat back then gently straighten them as your flexibility improves.



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Yoga In My School <http://yogainmyschool.com> PH: 780-903-6544 email: donna@yogainmyschool.com

