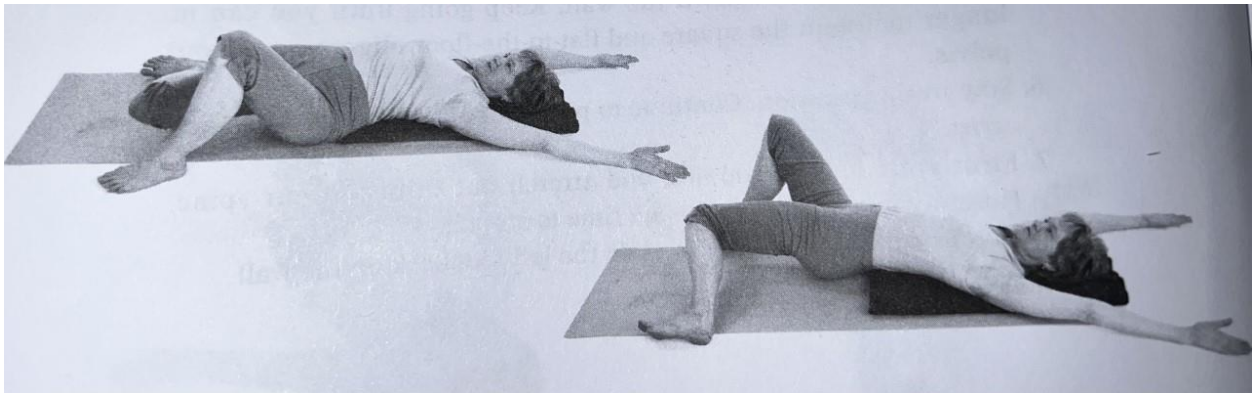


Beginning Lumbar Poses

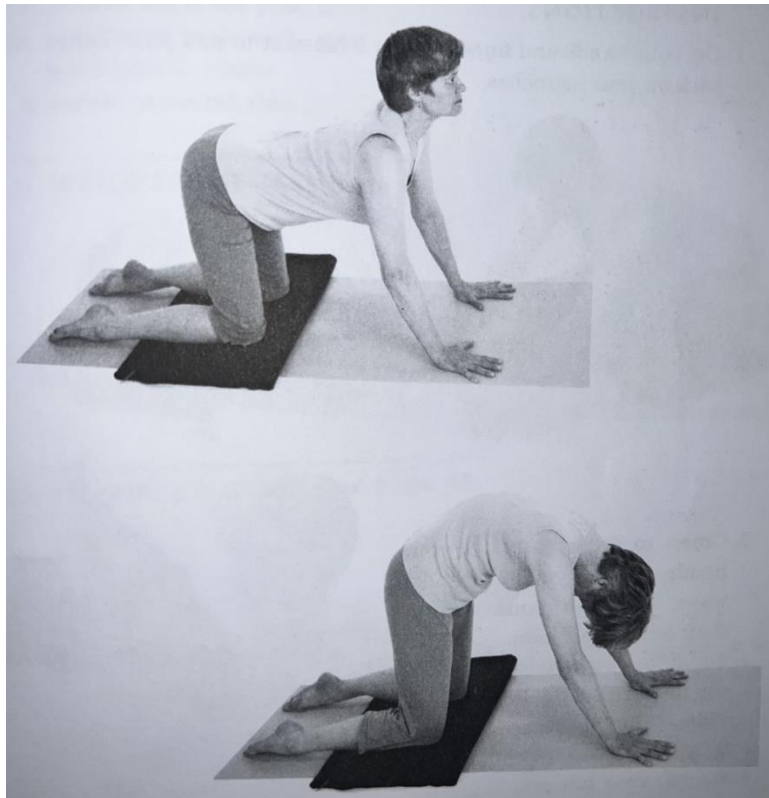
WINDSHIELD WIPER

1. Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet about twenty-four inches apart.
2. Rest your arms on the floor at a comfortable angle to the side and above shoulder height, palms facing up.
3. Inhale to prepare, and as you exhale, tilt your right knee down and in toward your left foot. The left knee remains pointed upward.
4. Firm your leg muscles, widen the back of the pelvis, then keeping the width, lengthen the tailbone along the same diagonal line as your thigh bone, toward the right knee.
5. Stretch your right arm along the floor and away from your thigh for a full connected stretch of the whole right side of your body.
6. Breathe fully, allow the ribs and waist area to spread, then release and repeat on the other side.



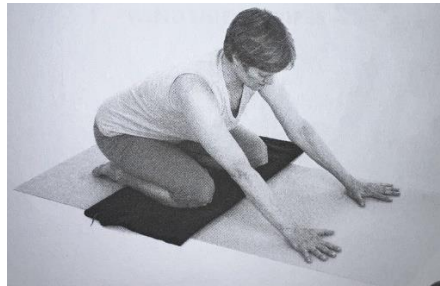
CAT-COW

1. Come down on your hands and knees, placing them shoulder- and hip-width apart, respectively.
2. Breathe deeply to open up from inside.
3. With care but lightly, begin to curve and arch your back.
4. Inhale as you move your head and tailbone up. Let the middle of your back soften and descend toward the floor.
5. Exhale. Use your abdominal muscles to push your back up toward the ceiling. Let your head and tailbone curl downward.
6. Continue moving in this way for as long as it feels good.
7. Move your ribs and/or pelvis in slow circular patterns to loosen and mobilize everything, but go easy on the neck. You are warming up all the torso muscles and coordinating them—think fluidity!

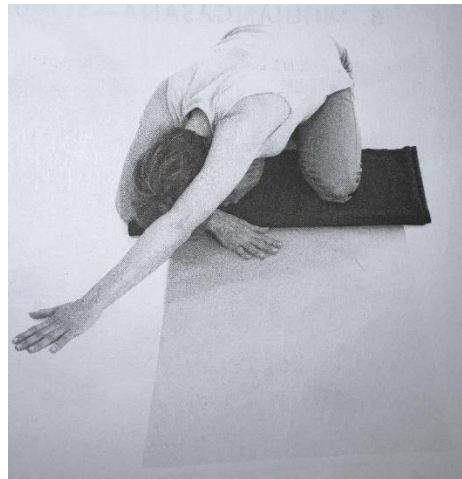
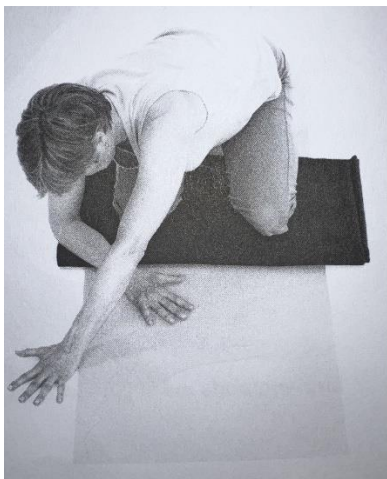


SIDE CHILD'S POSE

1. On your hands and knees, using a blanket to pad your knees, sit back on your haunches.



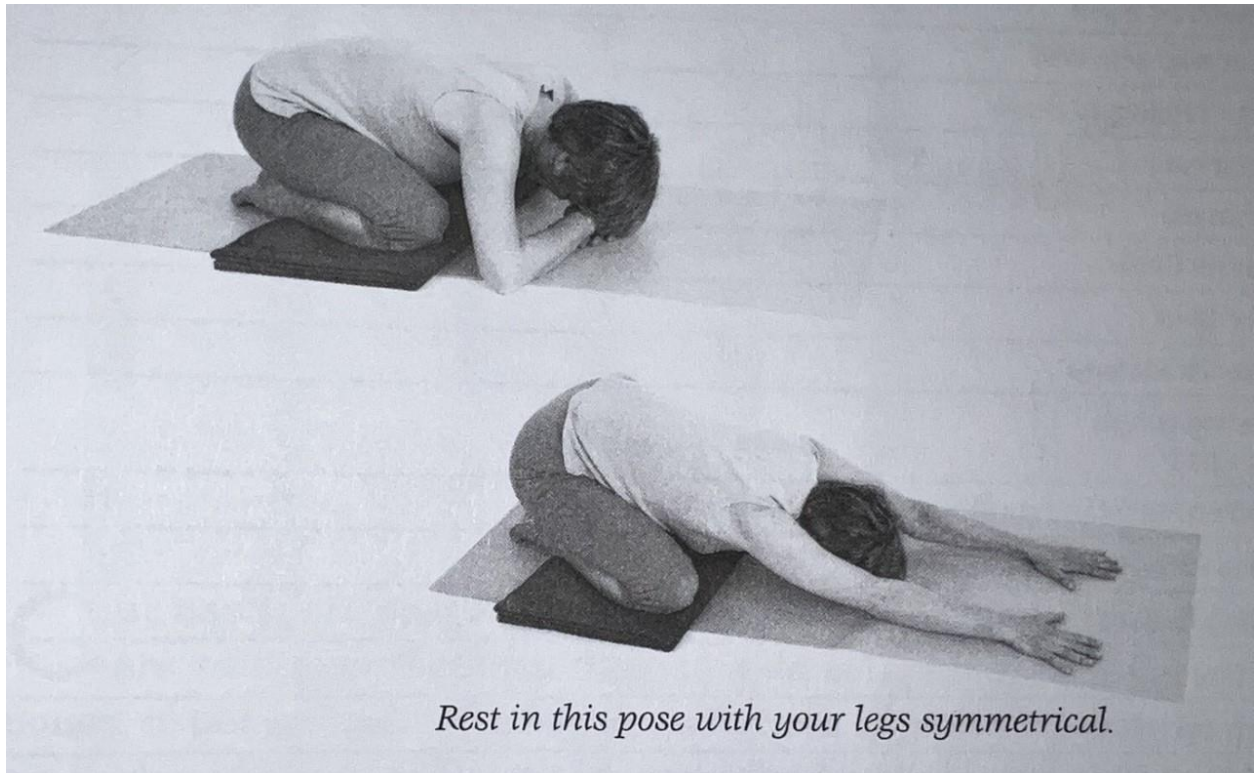
2. Creep to the right with your hands, curving your torso sideways. Maintain your legs in their original position.
3. Bend your right arm and place the forearm on the floor to provide a resting place for your head.
4. Stretch your left arm along the floor near your head. Curve it to your right. Hold the hips and thighs steady.
5. Lift up the left side of your ribs and your left armpit to be level with the right side.
6. Find the longest stretch you can make; stay there as you breathe deeply. Extend out through your left arm and back through your left hip with a calm, steady effort.
7. To come out of the pose, raise your head and walk your hands back to center.
8. Repeat on the left side.



CHILD'S POSE

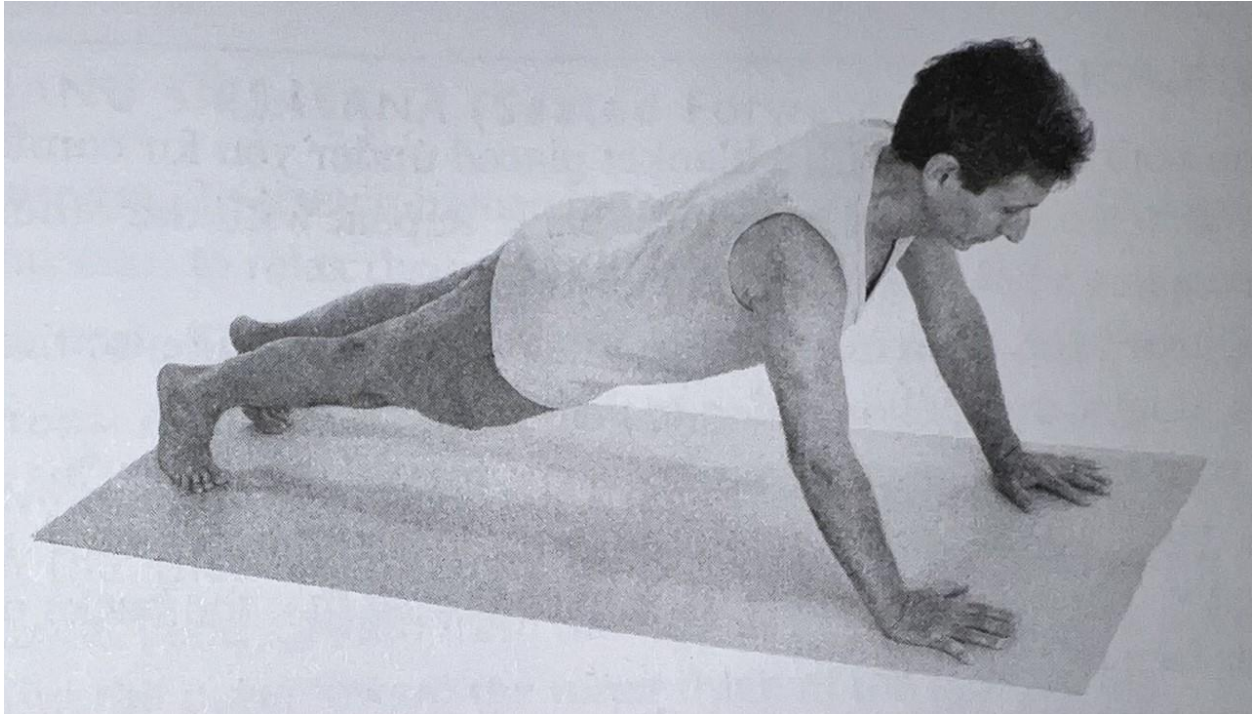
NEEDS: mat/yoga mat and a blanket or two, possibly washcloths for the knees

1. Come onto your hands and knees on a folded blanket.
2. If your feet or ankles are stiff, position yourself with your feet half on and half off the edge of the blanket. Place a folded washcloth behind each knee.
3. Widen your knees.
4. Fold your hips back toward your heels.
5. Reach forward with your chest and rest your forehead on your folded hands or on another blanket. An alternative stretch is to extend your arms forward on the floor.
6. Breathe deeply. Reduce effort and surrender tension in your body and mind.

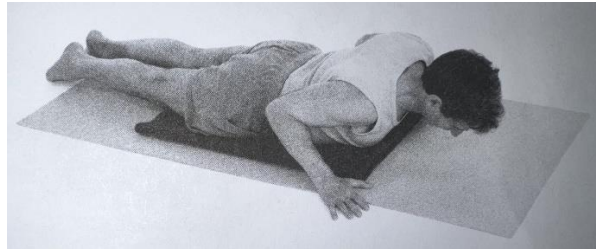


PLANK, STAGE III

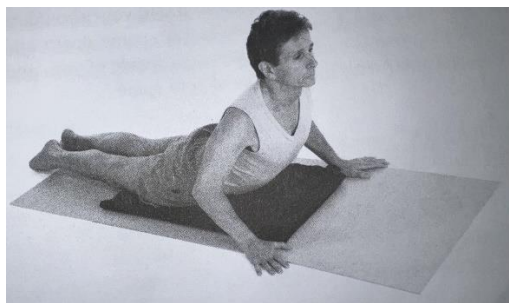
1. On your hands and knees, walk your hands forward about one hand's length.
2. Steady your arms, with elbows straight, while softening and lowering the upper chest.
3. Inhale as you lift your knees up and straighten out your whole body into one long plank from feet to head. Be careful to get the right height for your pelvis and your head (the heaviest and least-supported parts, respectively) – not too low or too high. A friend or mirror can tell you.
4. Hold your belly firm and your legs active.
5. Reach the tailbone back toward your heels.
6. Be steady for several breaths, then release down with exhalation.



BHUJANGASANA (COBRA)

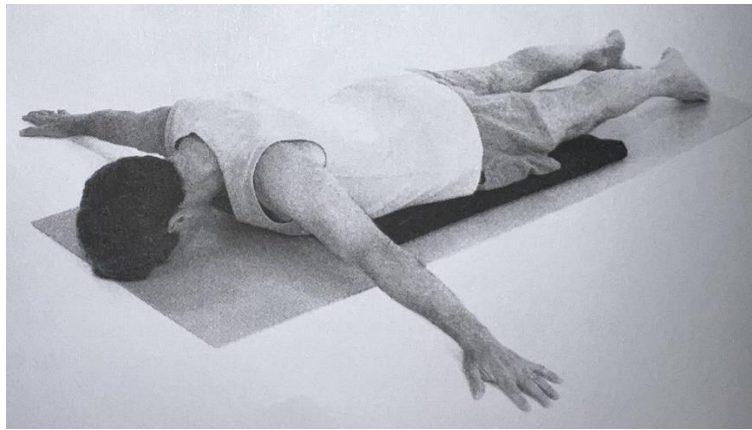


1. Lie on your stomach with a blanket placed under you for comfort.
2. Lift one leg up an inch and pull it back. Repeat with the other leg. This creates a good length in the lower back.
3. Briefly turn the front of your legs in toward the midline, so that the heels, thighs, and pelvis widen in the back.
4. Pull your tailbone toward your heels and toward the floor. This stabilizes your lower back, enabling you to stretch forward more strongly. The legs will rotate back to center so that the backs of the knees face straight up.
5. Lift up onto your forearms briefly to pull your upper body forward away from your legs.
6. Lie back down and put your hands to the sides of your chest, with your fingers pointing a bit and your forehead on the floor.
7. Lift your shoulders away from the floor, keeping them square across.
8. Inhale; lengthen forward through your whole torso. Expand from the inside.
9. Contract your upper back muscles and move the shoulder blades in toward the spine.
10. Curl up with your head and chest, keeping your shoulders back.
11. Press carefully down through your arms to lift more, but keep your arms bent and the upper arms and shoulders back.
12. Keep your pelvis on the floor while maintaining these actions. Use your breath to expand forward from the inside.
13. Stay up for several breaths, then soften and release down.

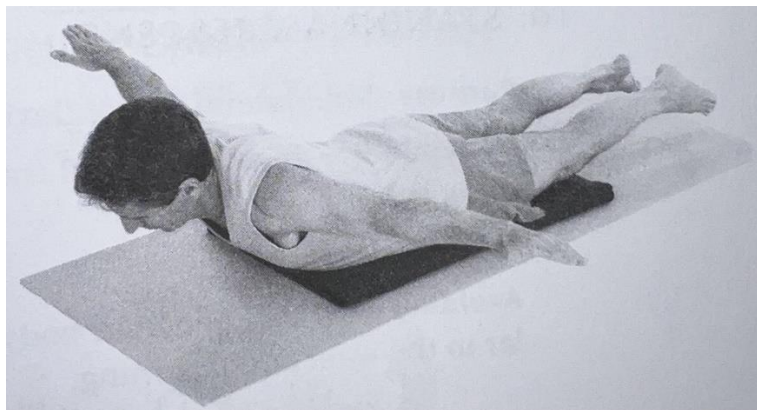


SALABHASANA (LOCUST POSE AIRPLANE VARIATION)

1. Lie on your stomach on a mat, with a folded blanket placed under your abdomen to prevent lower back strain.
2. Stretch your arms out to the sides, palms down. Place your forehead on the floor.
3. Prepare the body with strength, drawing energetically into the core of your pelvis. Firm your leg and lengthen your tailbone. Firm your buttocks without squeezing them together.



4. Lift the shoulders away from the floor without raising your head or your hands. Lengthen the sides of your body from your hips to your armpits.
5. Inhale and lift your arms, head, and legs a little off the floor, extending out from your center as you lift.
6. Stay up for several breaths, extending your upper body and legs in a continuous arc. Use the breath to remain light.
7. Slowly return down.



STAGE II, WALL DOG

1. Place your hands on the wall above eye level, with your index fingers pointing up and your arms shoulder-width apart.



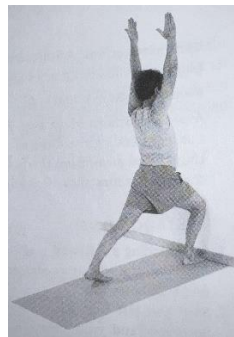
2. Place your feet hip-width apart and parallel.
3. Straighten your arms and move your chest a little toward the wall.
4. Move your upper arms more securely back into the shoulder joints.
5. Keep your elbows straight and your upper arms light but active.
6. Bend forward through your trunk until there is one long diagonal line from hands to hips. You can step back as needed.
7. Elevate your sitting bones and separate them, which will make an arch in your lower back.
8. Draw in your belly and lengthen the tailbone back.
9. Let the thoracic spine soften downward without your arms collapsing.
10. If your hamstring muscles allow, do the pose with straight legs. If your hamstrings are tight, your knees can bend slightly to allow the pelvis to tilt properly. Find the degree of effort in extending yourself that feels good, using your breath.
11. After several breaths, come back up as you inhale, and step toward the wall.

STANDING LUNGE WITH WALL

1. Stand facing a wall and place your hands on the wall at a comfortable height, elbows bent.
2. Step the left foot back, keeping both feet and your pelvis facing directly toward the wall.
3. Bend the forward right knee over the ankle. The back heel will be up off the floor.
4. Roll your upper arms and shoulders back.
5. Take a deep breath as you lift your spine up and firm the leg muscles.
6. Lean slightly toward the wall and widen your upper thighs and buttocks apart.
7. Curl the back of the pelvis down and the front part up, drawing your belly in and up.
8. Firmly anchor in your pelvis, bring your shoulders and head back directly over your hips, and shift more weight onto the back foot to lower the heel toward the floor. Hold the back thigh lifted away from the floor.
9. Maintain a balance of strength and expansion.

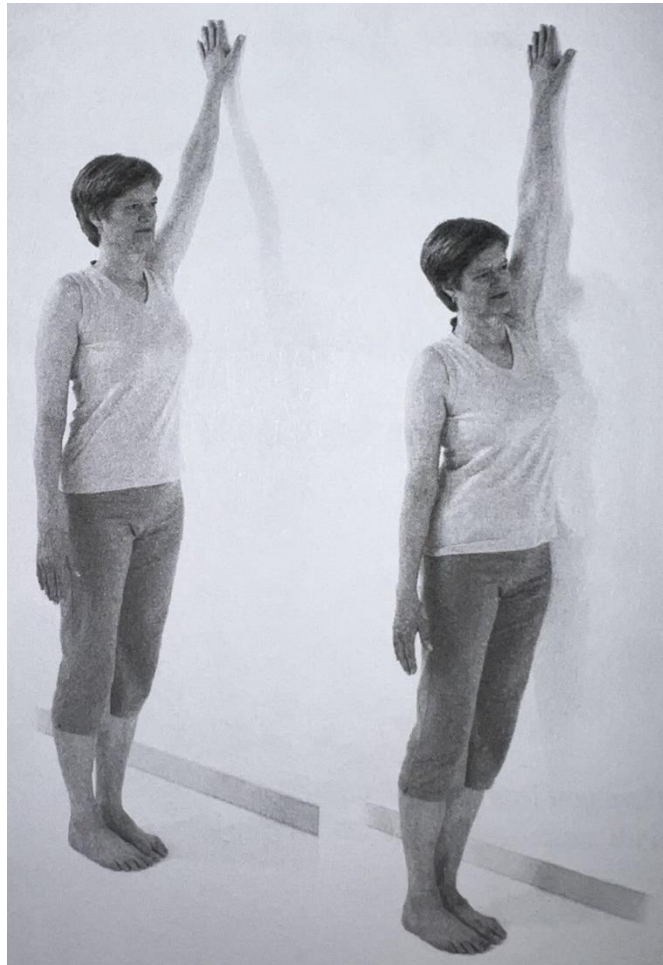


10. To intensify: Place the toes of the front foot up the wall.
11. Step your left foot as far back as you can while maintaining your hips facing squarely toward the wall.
12. Isometrically pull your hands down the wall (without moving them) to lift your chest. Look up.
13. If you feel steady enough, lift your arms up alongside your head. Reach up vigorously!
14. Exhale and return to base, then repeat on the other side.



STANDING CRESCENT

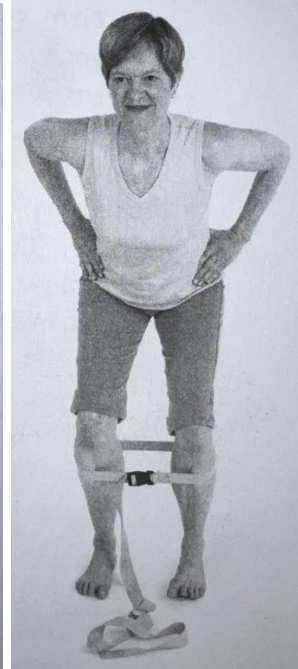
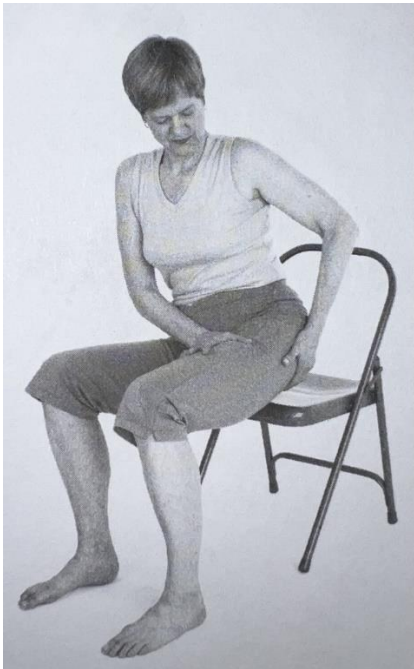
1. Stand with your left side a few inches from a wall. Lift your left arm high.
2. Test whether you are more comfortable with the palm side or the little finger side of your hand on the wall.
3. Firm all arm muscles and retain the upper arm well within the shoulder joint.
4. Inhale, lift up through your torso, and lean sideways toward the wall until your hip and possibly your shoulder area touch the wall.
5. Gradually intensify this side stretch during several breaths. You can step a little farther from the wall for a deeper stretch.
6. Return to center.
7. Repeat on the other side.



PRESSURE COOKER

Sitting Variation

1. Sit on a firm chair with your legs parallel and hip-width apart.
2. With both hands on one hip and thigh, manually turn the thigh in and broaden the hip to the side.
3. Perform the same action on the other side as well. This adjustment sets your foundation and allows for the actions that follow to be most effective.
4. Lean forward and place your hands on the outside of the legs just below your knees. If you have shoulder or arm pain, place a belt to encircle your legs just below the knees instead of using your arms.
5. Widen and retract your sitting bones. Lean forward from your hips, not your waist. Firm all your thigh muscles and inhale as you lengthen out through your spine.
6. As you exhale, push your hands strongly in toward the midline, and press out equally strongly with your thighs. The resisted isometric movements will widen your pelvis, relieving compression in the hips and sacroiliac joints.



CHAIR TWIST

1. Sit sideways in a firm chair without arms, with your right side close to the chair back. Set your legs hip-width apart and parallel, with your knees vertically over your ankles.
2. Firm your leg muscles, manually widen your buttocks and upper thighs as in Pressure Cooker, then sit tall with awareness of your spine as your central core.
3. Reach your tailbone lightly downward and lift your lower belly to lengthen and stabilize the lower spine.
4. Inhale, lengthen through your whole torso, and retract your shoulder blades together behind you so that the actions of your arms will affect your torso and spine.
5. Exhale, turn to the right, and take hold of the chair in a way that helps you turn more deeply.
6. Coordinate your actions with your breath, inhaling as you lengthen your spine and exhaling as you turn farther. Use the rhythm of your breath to coax more movement through your body.
7. To keep your hips and pelvis aligned, pull your left thigh back into the hip socket. This will counteract the normal tendency for the pelvis to turn with the spine. The more strongly you use your arms, the more important it is to retract the shoulders and upper arms to distribute the force of the twist.
8. Return to the center. Prepare to twist to the left by turning to the other side of the chair.



CHAIR MALASANA

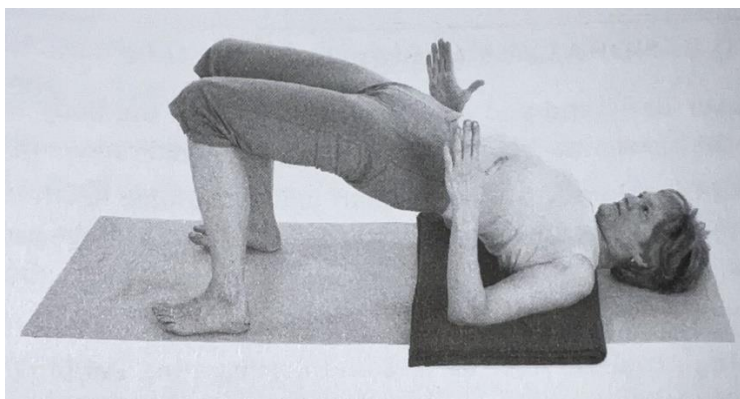
1. Sit on the front edge of a chair, with your feet parallel and a bit wider apart than your hips.
2. Manually pull your sitting bones and buttocks back and apart as in Pressure Cooker.
3. Inhale, and lengthen up through your spine.
4. Exhale. Reach your chest forward and unroll your whole spine out between your legs.
5. Pull in your abdomen; breathe deeply; be sure to fill the backs of your lungs down to the bottom of your rib cage.
6. Allow your head to hang down. Touch the floor with your hands, gently retracting your upper arms into the shoulder joints while stretching your hands forward.
7. Breathe deeply and soften inside.
8. When you are ready to come out of the pose, reach your chest forward as you raise your torso.

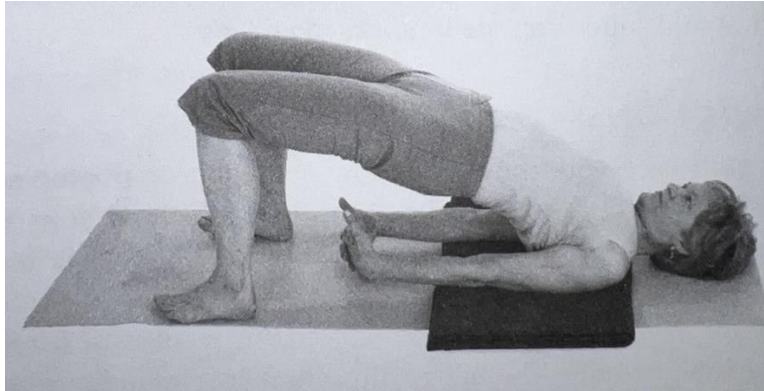


BRIDGE POSE

Needs: mat/yoga mat and a blanket

1. Lie on your back with the tops of your shoulders on the top edge of the folded blanket and your head on the mat. Bend your knees, place your feet hip-width apart, parallel, and about six to eight inches from your hips.
2. Place your arms alongside your body, palms facing up. Take a few breaths, inflate your inner body, and soften any shoulder tension.
3. Inhale. Curl your sitting bones down and apart to ensure that the pelvis stays wide.
4. Exhale. Raise your hands until your elbows are bent ninety degrees. Point your fingers up.



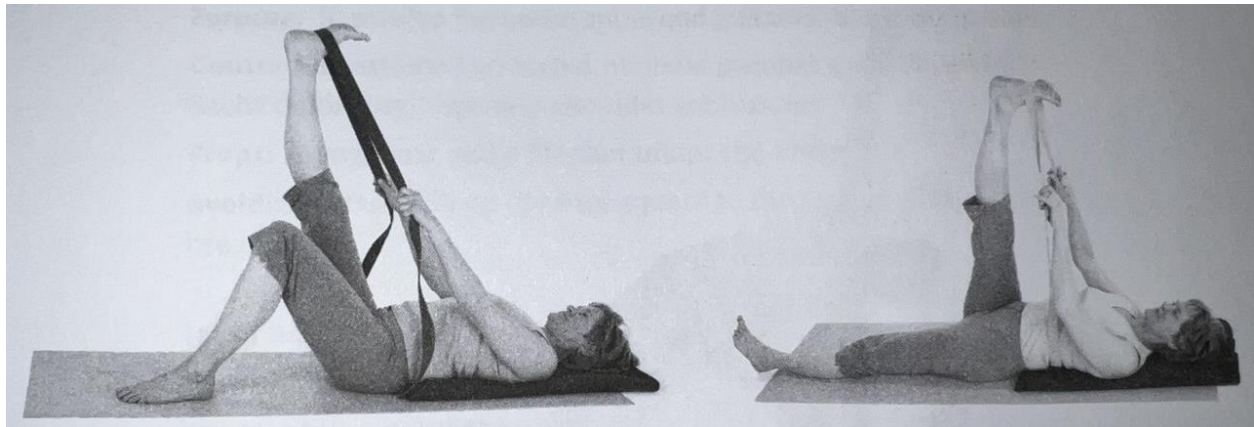


5. Lift your hips, spine, and chest as you inhale, then roll each shoulder under so that your weight is on the tops of your shoulders.
6. Point your knees straight forward. Lift and extend your tailbone toward your knees.
7. You can clasp your hands underneath you for more support, pressing the arms down to lift more. Interlace your fingers but separate the wrists.
8. Contract the buttocks, firmly lengthening them away from your waist without squeezing tightly.
9. Stretch the sides and the center of the body down from your throat out through the legs, unfolding your own power.
10. Exhale softly as you come down.

LEG STRETCH WITH BELT

NEEDS: mat/yoga mat, a belt, and a blanket

1. Lie on your back with your knees bent, feet flat. Arrange the blanket so that the lower edge comes to the small of your back, with your buttocks on the floor.
2. Relax and experience your body being fully supported by the floor.
3. As you inhale, move your sitting bones down toward the floor and apart, which will arch your lower back.
4. Contract your abdomen in and up and lengthen your tailbone toward your heels without flattening your lower back.
5. With your pelvis thus stabilized, raise your right leg and hook a belt around the foot. Hold one end of the belt with each hand.



6. Gradually straighten the leg, firming the muscles on all sides and elevating your heel.
7. Adjust the angle of the leg so that you can straighten your knee. Use your thigh muscles strongly to fully extend it.
8. If your right leg stretches up to ninety degrees, then straighten the left leg to be flat on the floor for more challenge.
9. Extend through both legs fully, even if it means backing off with your right leg.
10. The main action is to push your right thigh away from your upper body (which keeps your lower back slightly arched). Note: the goal is *not* to force the right leg or foot towards your head.
11. Once you have the actions, scan your body for unnecessary tension and release it.
12. Return to lying flat with both legs stretched out on the floor. Take note of any changes in sensation.