

The Best is Yet to Come

Yoga on a chair?
Try if you dare!



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Sun Salutations in Yoga50plus



1 Bring the palms of your hands together in front of your chest, inhale deeply, and exhale. Let's get started!



2 Inhaling, bring your hands up over your head, your palms facing forward, and

Sun Salutations on the chair are a wonderful way to integrate yoga into everyday life. Grab a chair, place the book in the right place, and go through the movements and the transitions step by step. You will discover that the harmonic flow of the successive movements makes it easy to follow the steps. Inhaling, you go into the stretch, and exhaling, you relax and move into the next position. You'll be able to do this very quickly without using the book. One of my participants once said: "The sun salutations are like a dance." How right she is!



3 Exhaling, bring your head to your left knee, your hands grasp your left shin. If you can't bend this far, grab the bottom of your thigh at the back of your knee (see detail in photograph).



4 Inhaling, sit upright, lift your sternum, and pull your left knee toward your chest. Exhaling, lower your left leg. Repeat the sequence with your right leg.



5 Exhaling, relax your hands, lower your right leg, and let both arms hang down at the sides.



6 Inhaling, rotate your left hand up and over your head. Follow your hand with your eyes. Stretch your side. Exhaling, lower your left hand. Repeat on the right side. Then lower your right hand to your left knee.



7 Inhaling, place your left hand on the left side of the backrest, and twist your upper body to the left. Exhaling, come back to the center. Repeat on the right side.



8 Inhaling, come into Cobra Pose, your palms facing forward. Open your chest upward, stretch your chin up, and hold.



9 Exhaling, stretch your arms back, and grip the sides of the seat with your hands. Inhaling, raise your left leg. Exhaling, lower your leg. Repeat with the right leg.



10 Inhaling, raise both legs.



11 Exhaling, lower both extended legs and stretch your chin far forward. Slide your hands up higher and higher on the backrest, release your hands like wings from the backrest.



12 Inhaling, rotate your arms down past your ankles, forward, and up.



13 Bring the palms of your hands together over your head. Stretch yourself upward.



14 Exhaling, bend your knees, and bring your hands together in front of your chest. If you wish, start another cycle.

Awakening Yourself to Your Ten Bodies

Source: Owners Manual for the Human Body (Yogi Bhajan, 1997)

1 INTRO Sit on the edge of your chair, extend your legs forward. Your thighs no longer rest on the chair and your knees are straight. Your heels are touching the ground. Now lean back so that your back almost touches the backrest. Bend your elbows and push them backward. Your forearms are parallel to the ground and your palms facing each other.

BREATH/MOVEMENT Pull your sacrum down and your pubic bone up. Activating your pelvic floor muscles gives your lower spine the necessary support. Beware to keep your lower back straight, as you raise your extended legs about 3-4 inches. Point your toes forward, look straight ahead, and hold the position (1). Use only your belly to breathe. As you exhale, pull your navel in and slightly up. Relax your belly as you inhale. Do the exercise at your own pace. You might want to increase the pace and do yogic Breath of Fire.

FOCUS Take the strength you need from your center and stretch.



1-3
min.



TO END Powerfully contract Root Lock, inhale, stretch yourself, then exhale, and hold your breath out for some seconds. Pull your shoulders down and stretch from the crown of your head to the soles of your feet. Exhaling, pull your knees to your chest, and inhaling, relax your feet on the mat, and sit upright. Relax in Easy Chair Pose. Feel the energy around your Navel Point.

NOTE Stretch from the crown of your head to your heels, but pull your sacrum and your shoulders down slightly.

- Find your balance by pushing your elbows slightly more forward or backward.
- Keep your spine elongated. Continuously, pull your sternum up gently, keep your back straight, pull your shoulders down, and extend your neck by pulling your chin back and down slightly.
- Apply Root Lock throughout the exercise.

EASIER VARIATION From the same starting position, pull your sacrum down, raise one leg, and stretch it well over the other leg (2). Breathe as stated above. After a while, change sides. Before ending the exercise, you might want to try the original position again.

EVEN EASIER VARIATION Alternately raise your extended leg.

Backward Bends

If you bend backward, you open yourself forward at the same time. The extended stretching of the back from the pelvis forms the basis for each backward bend – it elongates the body. It allows us to breathe deeply, which gives the whole body oxygen and yogic prana. The vital energy increases and old tightness and constrictions in the heart are released. Backward bends literally help you to open your heart, to breathe, and walk upright through life. The backward bend creates space between the vertebrae and strengthens the muscles of the front half of the body. It deepens the breath and harmonizes the internal processes. On a mental-spiritual level it leads to a strengthening of perseverance and willpower. It opens you up to new ideas.

BACKWARD BENDS GET YOU DOWN TO BUSINESS We bend forward on a daily basis, for example when we tie our shoelaces or when working at our desk. In comparison, it's rare that we bend backward. Also, the weight of the problems that lie on our shoulders pull us down at the front and let us slump.

The consequences: a tight chest, hard heartedness or the attempt to protect ourselves, by making oneself small or building armor around oneself. Through backward bends we can learn to open ourselves up to the new and the beautiful. From the walls we have built around our heart for protection, we can build bridges into life.

BREATHING MEANS LETTING GO Backward bends allow you to become more aware of your emotions. If you give them space, then existing tension can be released. It is therefore possible that deep breathing in backward bends can cause negative feelings such as sadness, fear, or anger to come to the surface. Observe the feelings and then relax and exhale them out. Through the exhale you open yourself up and allow new space within you. In addition to the expansion that you experience during the inhalation, the deep yogic aspect of this exercise manifests itself in the exhalation, in letting go.

TIPS FOR EVERYDAY LIFE Integrate backward bends into your everyday life, for example after sitting for a long time. They are good at preventing a rounded back (kyphosis) and are a guaranteed mood enhancer.

BACKWARD BENDS AT THE DOOR Stand with your back to the narrow side of a door. Press your heels left and right against the door panel. Grip the door handles with your fingers, push your pelvis far forward, and lift your chest.

BACKWARD BENDS AT THE WALL Stand facing a wall with about 4-8 inches distance between you and the wall. Press your pubic bone against the wall. Extend your arms up and bend them back and up.

THE GENTLE BACKWARD BEND

INTRO Come standing up. Place your palms on the sides of your pelvis so that your thumbs are close to your spine to support you gently during the backward bend.

BREATH/MOVEMENT Apply Root Lock (see page 162) as you inhale. Pull your sacrum down and elongate your body from your pelvis. Pull your shoulder blades together and down and lift your chin. Let your eyes wander back along the ceiling of the room and bend backward. The elongation grows from the lower to the upper spine. Hold this position. Breathe long and deep into the stretch.

FOCUS Open forward.



TO END Inhale deeply, hold. Lower your eyes so that you are looking straight ahead. Relax in Mountain Pose (see page 20) and feel within.

NOTE Just do these gentle variations if you find the more demanding variations in this book too challenging.

EVEN EASIER VARIATION You can also do this exercise sitting on the chair.

For more details, look page 167



Yoga for Seniors Manual

The Best is Yet to Come

- with over 400 illustrations in the text
- with 21 yoga sets from Kundalini Yoga
- with many senior-friendly modified yoga poses
- with senior-specific warm-up sequences
- with suitable partner yoga exercises and Venus Kriyas

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**With many tips for
yoga teachers!**

