

CHAIR YOGA POSES

SPINE FLEXION/EXTENSION

1. Sitting at the front of the chair with knees wide, extend the spine out and down and then round back up to vertical. Repeat several times. (Cat/cow substitute)
2. Sit at the front of the chair with knees wide, extend the spine out and down over the right knee, to center, over the left knee and back to vertical. Repeat several times and then reverse direction.
3. Raise the arms over head, interlace the fingers, turn the palms toward the ceiling and circle the arms and torso as if drawing a circle on the ceiling. Reverse direction.

HIP OPENERS

1. Sitting at the front of the chair cross the right leg over the left so that the outside of the right leg above the ankle is resting on the left leg above the knee. Allow the right knee to drop down, keeping the right foot flexed. For a further stretch: extend the torso out over the legs, then allow the back to round and the head to drop. Hold and breathe into the right hip. Repeat on other leg. (Pigeon substitute)
2. As a substitute to Pigeon pose is to start by cradling the right lower leg with the two arms and rotating the femur in the hip socket before placing the right leg on the left. (Rock-the-baby substitute.)
3. Sitting at the back of the chair place the bottom of the right foot on the chair and hug the knee into the body while lengthening the spine.
4. Sitting at the front of the chair with knees hip-width apart and hands on thighs, extend the torso out and down allowing it to rest on the thighs; bring the hands to the floor and let the head drop. Hold and breathe through the lower back. To come up, press the hands on the thighs.
5. Stand with the right side of the body to the left side of the chair. Place the right foot on the seat of the chair so that the right foot is facing forward. The left leg is straight with the left foot facing forward. Slowly bend the torso forward letting the head and arms hang. (If necessary the right hand can rest on the chair for support.) Hold and breathe, then come up slowly. Repeat on the opposite side.

6. Do #5 with the foot that is on the seat of the chair turned out to the side. This will move the stretch more towards the inner part of the thigh.
7. Use the chair for balancing while doing tree pose. The less flexible men can place the bottom of the right foot on the left ankle or knee. The more flexible can place it on the inside of the left thigh. The most flexible men can also do the variation of holding the top of the right foot in the left hand and placing the foot at the top of the left thigh as the right knee descends towards the floor.
8. Use the chair for balancing while bending the right knee and bringing the right heel to the right buttocks with the right hand. This can also be taken into dancers pose, extending the left arm up and forward.
9. Rest right thigh parallel to front of the chair, with the left leg extended straight out the side with the whole bottom of the left foot on the floor. Extend the arms out in the T position. Hold and breathe. (Warrior II substitute.) Then rest the right forearm on the right thigh and extend the left arm out over the head and to the right - stretching the whole left side of the body from the foot to the fingertips. (Extended side-angle pose substitute.)

TWISTS

1. Sit sideways on the chair so that the body is perpendicular to the back of the chair with the right side of the body near the back of the chair. Turn to the right and place the hands on the back of the chair. Push with the right hand and pull with the left. Turn the head to the right shoulder. Hold and release slowly. Repeat in the opposite direction.
2. Do the above pose with the leg that is closest to the chair resting on the opposite leg as in the 1st stage of Hip Opener # 1.

FORWARD BENDS

1. Face the back of the chair with legs hip-width apart. Place the hands on the hips and bend from the hip crease and then rest the forearms parallel on the top of the back of the chair. Or this can be done facing the front of the chair and coming down to rest the hands on the seat of the chair for a downward-dog substitute.
2. Face the front of the chair and place the heel of the right leg on the seat of the chair. Bend forward and place the hands on the seat of the chair - some men may have to bend the knee slightly, more flexible men can place their hands on the top of the chair.
3. Face the front of the chair and place the bottom of the right foot on the seat of the chair. Bend forward and place the hands on the seat of the chair - some men may have to bend the knee slightly, more flexible men can place their hands on the top of the chair. After holding here for a while to stretch the shin, bend the right knee into a lunge to stretch the thigh and calf of the left leg.