

Chair Yoga - Release Tension/Connect to Life's Deeper Meaning

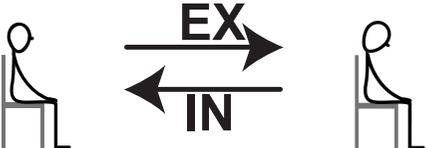
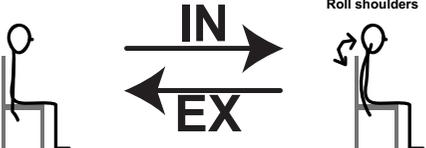
This chair practice includes several tension-releasing exercises for head, face, neck and shoulders, and includes a meditation on connecting to deeper meaning and purpose in your life.

Notes: Take your time; the practice may take 30-45 minutes. Read the instructions as well as looking at stick figures.

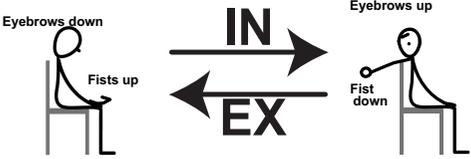
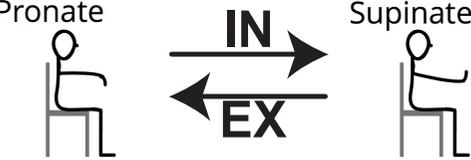
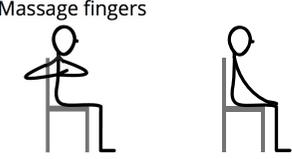
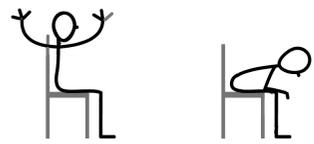
On inhale, expand chest then belly. On exhale, contract belly, then chest.

Connect smooth, easy breaths to your movements. Allow for an open, objective mindset.

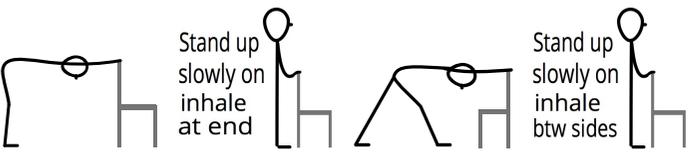
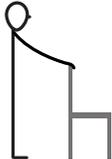
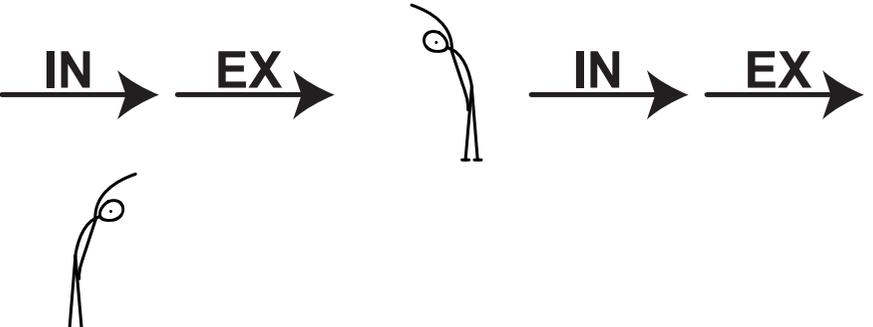
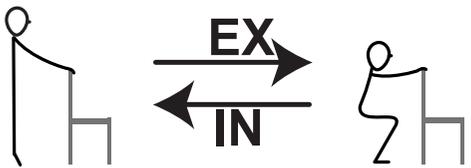
We reap the most benefit from yoga practice when we focus on attention itself.

1		<p>Sit tall with dignity. Inhale chest to belly, exhale belly to chest. Over the course of 6 smooth breaths bring yourself to a state of alert, mindful presence.</p> <p>From an open mindset, consider the concept of connecting to deeper meaning and purpose in your life. Use the practice today to release tensions in the body so that you may sit in meditation on this deeper meaning at the end of your practice.</p>
2		<p>Inhale with dignity, head level. Exhale and lower the chin. Repeat slowly 4x</p>
3		<p>Use slow, smooth breaths to roll the shoulders. 4x in 1 direction, then the other</p>
4		<p>Move eyes slowly and take breaks between each set of eye exercises. 3 sets of each:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Move eyes around "clock face" - 12, 3, 6, 9; then reverse. "Toggle" your gaze from a close object, like your hand extended in

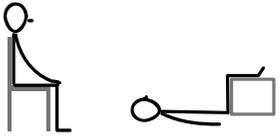
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		<p>front of you, to a faraway object, like a tree out the window. c. Gaze at an object nearby; make your gaze "fuzzy"; then make it "sharp." Repeat with a faraway object.</p>
5		<p>On this exercise, lengthen and deepen your breath a bit. Make upward fists in lap, looking down. Inhale, raise eyebrows and stretch arm out to side as you simultaneously turn fist down. Repeat 4x to each side, alternately.</p>
6		<p>On inhale, lift fingers upward. On exhale, drop fingers downward. 4x up/down</p>
7		<p>Massage each finger from base to tip. Then pause to breathe consciously.</p>
8		<p>Lengthen breath a bit for this exercise. Hold arms up with fingers spread, thumbs pointing back. Relax tops of shoulders but hold your dignified posture. Turn head to one side and look at center of palm. Stay 3 breaths. Rest in forward bend position, then repeat to other side. End by resting in forward bend position for 4 breaths.</p>
9		<p>Alternately lift heels and toes 12 x.</p>
		<p>A. Spread palms on top of chair or counter. Step back, stretch through armpits, stretch sitting bones to wall behind you; keep knees soft. Gaze at floor. Stay for 4 slow breaths in and out. Inhale and stand up slowly.</p>

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<p>10</p> 	<p>B. Step one foot back. Stay for 3 slow breaths in and out. Inhale and stand up slowly, then repeat on other side. Inhale and stand up slowly when finished.</p>
<p>11</p> 	<p>Pause and notice sensations in your body, energy level, quality of breath.</p>
<p>12</p> 	<p>Lengthen breath for this exercise. Inhale and raise left arm up to side. On exhale stretch laterally. Keep chest and shoulders facing front so you don't turn the upper body toward the floor. Stay 4 breaths, then repeat on opposite side.</p>
<p>13</p> 	<p>Inhale to stand up on toes. Exhale and bend knees to comfortable level. Repeat 4x.</p>
<p>14</p> 	<p>On exhale, twist belly, shoulders and head to one side. Close the eyes and stay for 4 slow breaths, lengthening your exhales. Repeat to other side.</p>
<p>15</p> 	<p>Exhale to the level of forward bend that is comfortable for you. Stay 4 slow breaths, lengthening your exhales.</p>
	<p>Sit comfortably in your chair or lie on the floor with your lower legs on the chair. You might want to cover up for warmth. Use your exhales to progressively soften each part of your body, from the top of your head</p>

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16	 <p>to your toes. Stay focused but relaxed as you purposefully take yourself through this releasing body scan. Then relax the breath and rest for 5 minutes.</p>
17	 <p>Take 6 deeper breaths and come back to a state of alert presence.</p> <p>Sitting Meditation: Without judgement or evaluation, reflect on the deeper meaning and purpose of your life. Do you live your life in a way that is expanded, peaceful and free? Is there a way to live your life that is more open to this potential?</p> <p>Sit in open reflection for 5-10 minutes. Allow your breath to anchor you to the present moment, so your reflection is objective and honest.</p> <p>Afterward, journal any thoughts or intentions that resulted from your meditation. Namaste, dear ones. My heart honors your heart.</p>