

Precautions

- Practice and perform Yoga poses in the company of family, friends or a caregiver when possible
- Always breathe normally as you perform and pose
- Allow yourself to stretch within each pose to the point where you experience mild tension only
- Stop immediately if you feel pain and consult with your doctor

Benefits of Wheelchair Yoga

- Improved strength
- Increased flexibility
- Increased lung capacity
- Improved restful sleep
- Less feeling of isolation
- Increased feelings of connection
- Less feelings of stress, anxiety and tension
- Improved focus
- Improved clarity
- Overall improved sense of well being

8 Yoga Poses for Wheelchair Users

1. Cow Pose

This yoga pose is a front of body-opener.



Cow pose

- Begin by holding on to your chair or placing your hands on your thighs
- Gently lift your head toward the ceiling as you inhale and expand through the front of your chest, carefully arching your back
- Continue breathing as you hold the pose for a few deep breaths

2. Cat Pose

This yoga pose stretches your back.



Cat pose

- Place your hands on your thighs or grip your chair
- Round your upper body forward as you exhale
- Arch your spine like a cat and drop your chin down toward your chest
- Hold the position for a few deep breaths then release

3. Side Stretch

This yoga pose focuses on the obliques. Refrain from going too deep into this pose if you have rods. It is wise to avoid this stretch unless you have approval from your physician.



Side Stretch

- Begin by lifting one arm up over your head as you inhale while your other arm rests for support
- Exhale as your stretching arm reaches as far as it can go over your head
- Continue breathing deeply as you hold the pose for about 3 to 5 breaths
- Inhale as you come back to the center and begin to do the same stretch for the other arm

4. Twist

This yoga pose focuses on stretching and relieving tension from your back.



Twist

- Inhale as you bring your right hand across to your left leg while using your opposite arm for support
- Exhale as you twist to look over your left shoulder
- Continue breathing as you hold the position for 3 to 5 breaths
- Carefully release the hold and gently switch to repeat the same steps for the opposite side

5. Forward Bend

This pose focuses on the lower back hips and hamstrings.



Forward Bend

- Begin by inhaling as you lengthen your spine by sitting tall
- Exhale as you bend forwards from your waist while placing your hands on your wheelchair for support
- Continue breathing deeply as you hold the position for 3 to 5 breaths

6. Eagle Pose

This pose stretches the shoulder and back.



Eagle Pose

- Begin by inhaling and lifting your arms
- Exhale as you cross your arms at the elbows so that your hands are back-to-back
- Continue breathing as you hold the position for about 20 to 30 seconds

7. Hip Stretch

This pose focuses on the hips.



Hip Stretch

- Begin by lifting one leg and crossing it over the other as you inhale
- Exhale and lean forward from your hips
- Hold the stretch as you continue breathing for 3 to 5 breaths
- Carefully release your leg and repeat the same steps using the other leg

8. Leg Stretch

This yoga pose stretches the hamstring.



Leg Stretch

- Begin by lengthening your spine and sitting tall as you inhale
- Exhale as you reach your hands around the back of your leg or shin and lift your knee so it is at a comfortable level
- Continue breathing deeply as you stretch and hold the position for 3 to 5 breaths
- Carefully come out of each stretch and repeat the same steps for the other side

Always ask for your doctor's approval before performing any of the above yoga poses or introducing any new exercises into your daily routine. It is recommended to perform yoga in a quiet room or with soft music playing in the background. Remember to stop performing yoga at the first sign of pain and consult with your physician.