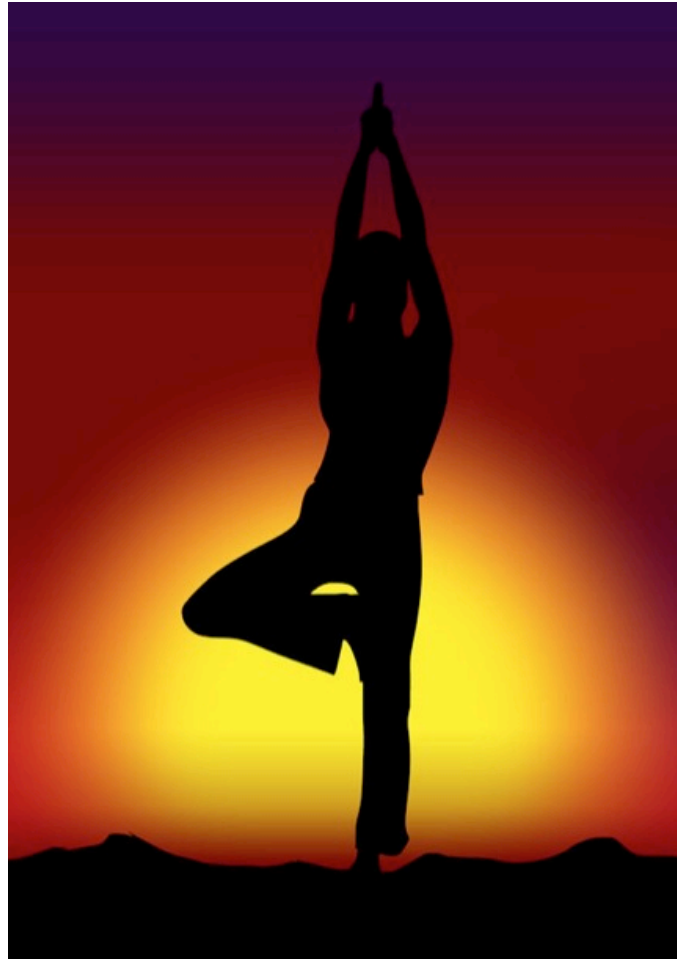


VA SCEPTER Study

Yoga For Chronic Low Back Pain

Home Practice Manual



Index

General information about Yoga and instructions for home.....	3
Sequence 1: Standing Poses (5 minutes).....	6
Sequence 2: Sitting Poses (5 minutes).....	10
Sequence 3: Floor Poses (5 minutes + final resting pose).....	14

General information about Yoga and instructions for home practice

General information the Yoga classes and home practice

Yoga classes in the current program

As part of the current program you will be attending two Yoga classes a week. During these classes you will be learning a series of physical postures, which will include standing postures, seated postures and floor postures. All classes will be led by a teacher who will give you precise instructions about both the bodily alignment and the breathing pattern that are specific to each posture. That will ensure that all postures are executed safely and bring you the maximum benefit. In addition, during some of the classes the teacher will also introduce you to some basic aspects of Yoga philosophy.

Home practice

We strongly recommend that, in addition of the weekly Yoga classes, you also do a regular home practice for the whole duration of the program. A regular home practice is invaluable for solidifying the work that you do in class, and will undoubtedly increase the benefits you will gain from the program. This manual will be your “home practice friend” and guide you through it step by step.

As you will see, the manual contains three short home practice sequences:

- A 5 minute standing poses sequence which you can easily fit into your daily routine whenever you have some spare time
- A 5 minute sitting poses sequence which you can also easily do sitting in a chair
- A 5-10 minute floor poses sequence for which you will need your Yoga mat

The poses contained in each of these sequences will all be poses that you have previously performed during the Yoga classes. The specific instructions that are provided for each pose will also correspond to the ones that were given to you in class. If you do find any of the instructions unclear however, please don't hesitate to ask the instructor to clarify them for you at any time.

In order for you to gain the maximum benefit from the program we recommend the following Yoga practice regime:

- Two days a week: Yoga classes at the VA
- Two days a week: Do the full home practice (i.e. sequences 1, 2 & 3)
- Two days a week: Do at least one of the three home practice sequences
- One day a week: No Yoga practice – enjoy a day off

And lastly, in terms of organizing your home practice we recommend that you put aside a set time every day, which will make it easier to build up a routine. Many people find it convenient to do their practice first thing in the morning before breakfast, while others prefer to practice in the evening before going to bed. Either way works well so just

choose whatever time suits you best given your daily commitments. An important thing to remember though is not to practice on a full stomach, so try to allow at least two hours after a full meal or one hour after a snack.

Interested in more information about Yoga?

Yoga is a very old discipline that originated in ancient India over 5000 years ago. In the Western world Yoga became popular as a physical system of health exercises in the late 19th century, and there are many styles of Yoga practiced today. The different styles vary in terms of the specific physical exercises, breathing techniques as well as meditation techniques they include. If you are interested in learning more about the history of Yoga, below are a few suggestions for books you might enjoy. In addition you can also ask the instructor for more recommendations.

“Light On Yoga” (B. K. S. Iyengar)

“The Heart of Yoga” (T. K. V. Desikachar)

“Yoga for Wellness” (Gary Kraftsow)

We hope you will enjoy embarking on your Yoga journey!

Sequence 1: Standing Poses (5 minutes)

1. Mountain Pose (Tadasana) with arm variations

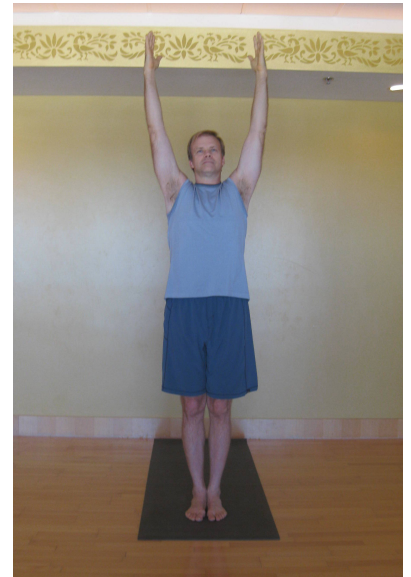
- Press down evenly through the four corners of each foot
- Elongate through all four sides of the torso
- Draw the shoulders away from the ears
- Extend through the crown of the head

* Hold for 5 even breaths



- Lift arms above the head
- Palms face each other
- Extend through the fingertips
- Draw the shoulders away from the ears

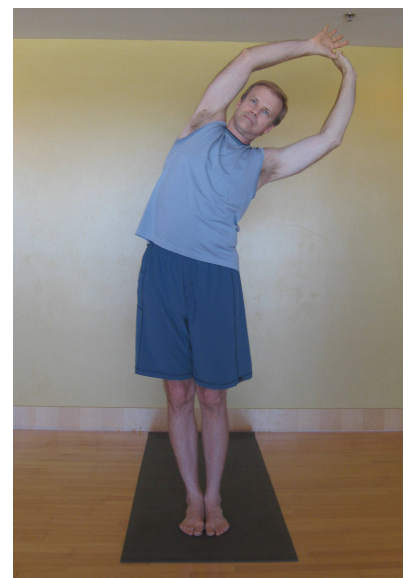
* Hold for 5 even breaths



- Lift arms above the head
- Interlace the thumbs
- Stretch to the side
- Don't let the torso lean forward

* Hold for 5 even breaths

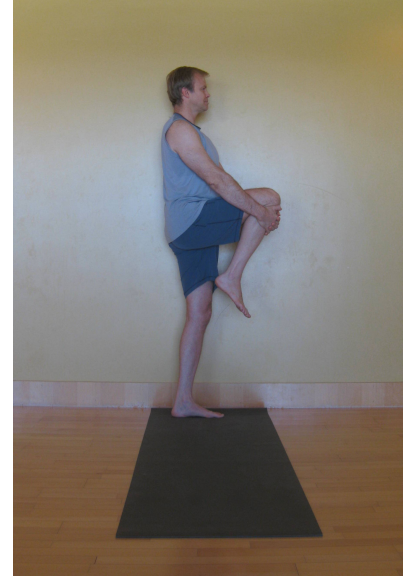
* Repeat on the other side



2. Standing Leg Stretch

- Stand firmly on one leg
- Interlace the hands
- Draw the other knee towards the chest
- Keep a straight spine

- * Hold for 5 even breaths
- * Repeat on the other side



3. Tree Pose (Vrksasana)

*** Choose the variation that feels best for you**

Overall alignment

- Elongate through all four sides of the torso
- Lift arms above the head
- Draw the shoulders away from the ears
- Look straight ahead

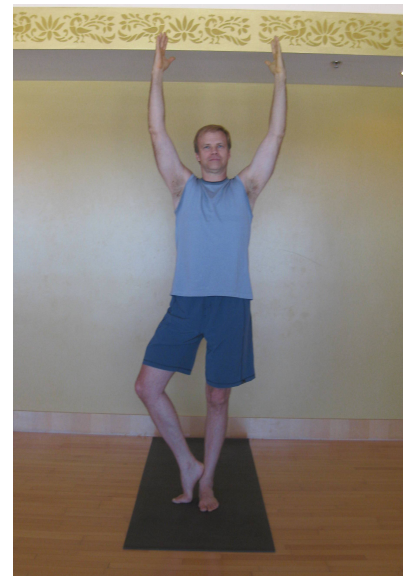
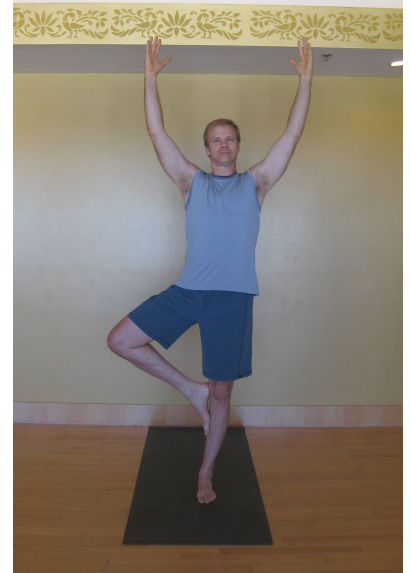
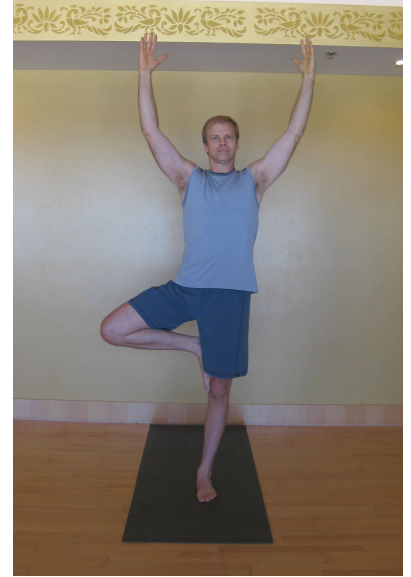
Standing leg

- Press the foot firmly into the mat

Lifted leg

- a) Keep toes on the floor for support
- b) Press the sole of foot against the shin below the knee
- c) Press the sole of foot against the inner thigh

- * Hold for 5 even breaths
- * Repeat on the other side



Sequence 2: Sitting Poses (5 minutes)

1. Basic Seated Position (Sukhasana) – Chair version

- Press the soles of the feet into the ground
- Elongate through the spine
- Keep the shoulders away from the ears
- Extend through the crown of the head

* Hold for 5 even breaths



2. Seated Cat-Cow Stretch (Bidalasana) – Chair version

Overall alignment

- Sit at the edge of the chair
- Press both feet into the ground

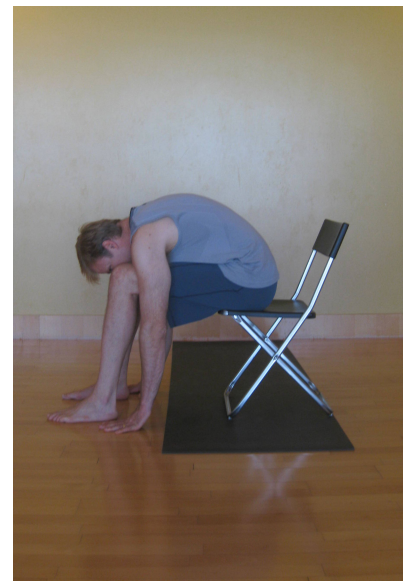
Arch the spine (inhale)

- Place hands on the chair behind the back
- Gently arch the spine and look up

Round the spine (exhale)

- Fold forward and reach hands to the floor
- Gently round the spine and look towards the navel

* Repeat for 5 rounds of even inhales and exhales



3. Seated Twist (Marichyasana) – Chair version

- Sit at the front of the chair
- Place one hand on the chair behind the back
- Place the other hand on the opposite knee
- Gently twist to the side
- Keep elongating through the spine
- Elongate through the crown of the head

- * Hold for 5 even breaths
- * Repeat on the other side



Sequence 3: Floor Poses (5 minutes + final resting pose)

1. Staff Pose (Dandasana)

- Reach forward evenly through both feet
- Place hands outside the hips
- Engage the lower belly
- Elongate through all four sides of the torso
- Draw the shoulders away from the ears
- Extend through the crown of the head

* Hold for 5 even breaths



2. Seated Forward Bend (Paschimottanasana)

* Choose the variation that feels best for you

- Keep the knees slightly bent
- Place the hands on the mat
- Elongate through the spine
- Extend through the crown of the head



- Keep the legs straight
- Place the hands on shins
- Elongate through the spine
- Extend through the crown of the head



- Keep the legs straight
- Grab a hold of the toes
- Elongate through the spine
- Extend through the crown of the head



* Hold for 5 even breaths

3. Knees to Chest Pose (Apanasana)

- Draw knees into the chest
- Hold each shin with one hand
- Lengthen the lower back
- Release the shoulder blades down the back
- Keep the neck long
- Look towards the ceiling

* Hold for 5 even breaths



4. Supine Twist (Supta Matsyendrasana)

- Release the legs to one side
- Lengthen the lower back
- Keep both shoulders on the floor
- Hold the knees down with one hand
- Extend the other hand out to the side
- Look towards the ceiling

- * Hold for 5 even breaths
- * Repeat on the other side



7. Corpse Pose (Savasana)

- Separate the legs
- Let the hips release into the floor
- Relax the belly
- Release the arms out to the side
- Relax the hands
- Keep the neck long
- Relax the facial muscles



* Stay in the pose for as long as you like ☺ ...