

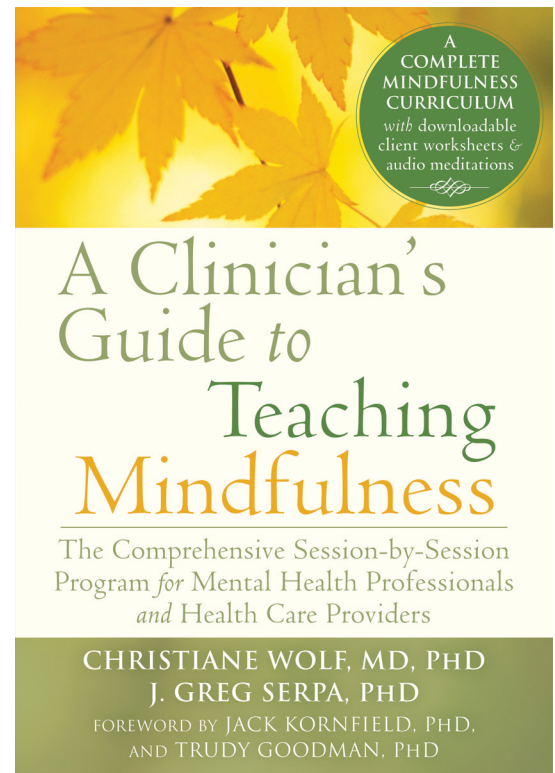
Mindful Movement or Chair Yoga

A guide to accompany the practices in

A Clinician's Guide to Teaching Mindfulness

by

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This guide to yoga poses is to be used in conjunction with the audio recording available at www.SharingMindfulness.com. From the Sharing Mindfulness website, go to Downloads → Audios → Yoga: Chair Yoga – Long (45 Minutes) G. Serpa file.

TIPS FOR STUDENTS

- Allow your own body to be your teacher. The goal is *Wise Effort*. Moving and using a body part only if it feels right.
- No posture should be uncomfortable or painful.
- Rather than emphasis level of *effort*, try to practice at 50% effort while maximizing the level of *attention*.
- The goal is to link breath with the movement. Take your time.
- Try to be in the body without judgment or self-criticism about how the body “should” move or feel.

Set-Up

- Use a firm, straight-backed chair
- Sit up straight with the shoulders over the hips
- Knees are directly above the ankles
- Hands rest on the thighs
- Feet flat on the floor (use blocks or a folded blanket under your feet if you are shorter, sit on folded blankets if you are taller)



Breathing Posture

- Gently close the eyes and place the hands by the belly button
- Explore the quality of the breath in the abdomen
- Second hand posture is on lowest ribs
- Notice the quality of the breath in the rib cage
- Last hand position is up by the collar bones – invite ease with each breath



Neck Posture I

- With an exhale, gently lower chin to chest in a slow “yes” movement
- No need to push through the full range of motion
- As you inhale, lift the chin while keeping the neck long
- Carefully link the movement to the breath



Neck Posture II

- Exhale and gently move the chin towards one shoulder as if making a “no” movement
- Keep the neck long and the shoulders relaxed
- Move towards the other shoulder on the inhale

Neck Circles

- A reminder to move gently and carefully. There should never be discomfort.
- Start by sitting up tall with the crown of the head stretching up to the ceiling.
- Make small circles with the nose the size of a dime in a clockwise direction.
- Slowly increasing the size of the circle gradually moving from dime-sized to a ping pong ball, a tennis ball, an orange, and only if it feels right in the neck, to the size of a CD.
- As the circles get larger, move more slowly.
- Gently come to a stop and reverse directions, moving from the largest size circle and spiraling in to the smallest movement.
- Fall into stillness and observe the sensations of the body



Shoulder Circles

- On an inhale, slowly circle the shoulders forward and up towards the ears
- On an exhale, circle the shoulders back and down, pulling the shoulder blades together slightly
- Continue with a few breath cycles
- Then reverse the direction by rotating the shoulders back and up on an inhale, and forward and down on the exhale



Arm Raises

- Start by finding an upright posture, drop the right hand over the side of the chair with the palm towards the body and thumb pointed forward
- On an inhale leading with the thumb, slowly lift the arm forward and up
- Only lift the arm as far as it feels comfortable
- Gently lowering the arm with an exhale
- Throughout the movement, keep the shoulder blade snugly into the back for support
- After a few cycles of movement, pause briefly and repeat on the other side



Side Bend

- Place your left hand on the chair back by your hip for support if possible
- Lift the right arm as in the arm raise on an inhale
- Keeping both hips down in the chair, side bend on the exhale
- Come back up to vertical on the inhale, lower the arm with an exhale
- Switch sides



Modified Cat-Cow

- Scoot forward on the chair to allow for movement in the spine
- Sit up extra tall with the hands on the thighs or knees, lifting through the crown of the head
- On an inhale, push the heart forward to open the chest while lifting the chin
- As you exhale, pull the belly button into the spine, drop the chin to the chest and round the back



Chest Opener and Shoulder Hug

- Grasp the back edge of the seat to open the chest
- For a deeper stretch, gently lean forward for a few cycles of breath
- Release and grasp the elbows or the shoulders for a hug to create more space between the shoulder blades



Spinal Twist

- On an inhale, sit up with the crown of the head stretching up to the ceiling
- Begin to rotate the belly button slightly to the right on the exhale
- Continue to rotate to the right by turning the lower ribs, shoulders, and if it is available the neck. Reach the left hand across to the right knee
- Hold the rotation for a few cycles of breath if comfortable
- On an exhale, return to a neutral spine and recovery for a few breaths
- Repeat on the other side



Set-up for Hip Opener

- Three options for leg placement
- If the hips are tight, cross the right foot over the left
- For a deeper stretch, cross the right calf over the left knee ensuring the left foot and ankle are directly below the knee
- For the full stretch, place the right foot (flexed) on the left knee



Hip Opener

- Sit up tall and allow the hip to gently open gradually for a few cycles of breath
- For a deeper stretch, lean forward and hold for a few more breath cycles
- On an inhale, return to a neutral spine, uncross the legs on an exhale
- Recover for a few cycles of breath
- Repeat on the other side



Mountain Pose

- Stand behind the chair and use the chair back for support if needed
- Start by setting the feet under the hips, inside edge of feet parallel
- Activate the legs and hips to pull up on knee caps and slightly tuck pelvis
- Lift up through the spine and relax the shoulders
- Rotate arms so palms face forward to open chest and snug the shoulders blades against the back
- Find the balance between activation and ease



Tree Pose

- Stand behind the chair and use the chair back for balance assistance as needed
- Ground the left foot into the floor, toes pointed forward, and firming the left thigh and hip
- Right foot comes into “kickstand” with heel onto the left leg and ball of the right foot on the floor for balance
- Options include moving into a low tree (sole of right foot on left lower leg) or high tree (sole of right foot on left thigh)
- For a few cycles of breath, balance and tolerate any micro-adjustments
- When you are ready, come out of the balance, pedal out the feet
- Repeat on the other leg

Return to Seated Chair Posture

- Gently return to the seated posture
- Set the ankles directly below the knees, the shoulders over the hips
- Softly close the eyes
- Extend up through the spine ensuring the shoulder blades are snug against the back
- Return the attention to the sensation of the breath in the body
- Noticing any gentle echoes of the recently completed movement throughout the body
- If it is available to you, observing any sense of gratitude for the body
- Take a few moments to breath inviting a sense of ease into the body with each breath