

Accessible Yoga: Education Engagement Empowerment



Identify why Accessibility is important in our Yoga classes

Our Yoga classes are not homogeneous

We as teachers need to be able to welcome every body, at any age, in any state of health into our classes

We need to learn how to adapt various movements and postures to accommodate our students. With this knowledge, we can be of service to more people.

Have you ever felt excluded from a class due to the teacher's attitude or inability to accommodate your needs? I know I have.

Many conditions are invisible, for example many types of arthritis. **By giving options people feel included and seen by the teacher.** People are grateful for the variations that we can offer them.

Accessible Yoga, developed by Jivana Heyman, is a welcoming and inclusive practice for all. By offering choices and adapting the asanas, we can reach out to more people with our Yoga practice.

In this webinar, we will offer a variety of Yoga postures and demonstrate how to teach them on a mat, bed or couch; using a chair or a wall. These variations/choices can also be adapted to other types of movement such as strength training, balance training, water fitness. The possibilities are endless.

Other things to think about to be more inclusive:

Clothing, lighting, volume, supports and props



Examples of Accessible Language Options

- **Today's** “expression of the pose”. Subjective, and mindful to their experience that day
- Consider using posture or movement instead of pose. Trauma- informed Yoga teaches us that the word pose may be triggering to sexual assault survivors.
- Offer options and choices **without qualifier** (bent knees or straight legs instead of “for those more flexible”) **“Get off the bus anytime”**
- No one size fits all
- You look strong enough to stand. Don't assume by looking. **Setting up for failure/success.**
- Remove emphasis on where someone feels the movement
- **Permission to client** – go towards toe v touch toe
- “It's better to adapt a pose to a person than a person to a pose” Jivana Heyman



Tree

Traditional

Intention/purpose: standing balance asana, connection to ground

Starting position: Standing on both feet, hands at heart center.

Description: From Mountain; ground into left leg, right knee bent, ext rotate r hip, toe on ground or bottom of foot connected to left standing leg; hands at heart, raise up arms; gaze forward



Adapted Tree Option

Options:

Seated in Chair

Arms at heart center or in cactus or
raised above head

One foot on balance pad

Standing next to a chair or wall for
support



Extended Side Angle

Traditional

Intention/purpose: Balancing side body opener, part of the Warrior Series

Start position: From Warrior II, bring the front elbow to rest on the bent knee.

Description: Knee is stacked over the ankle to wherever is comfortable. The other arm reaches up alongside the ear. The intention is one continuous diagonal line from the back foot to the extended arm or crown of head.



Adapted Extended Side Angle

Options:

Seated in Chair; Arms and legs stay the same

Seated in chair, front arm rests on second chair

Seated in chair, top arm variations can include extending alongside the body, hand on hip, into cactus, touching shoulder



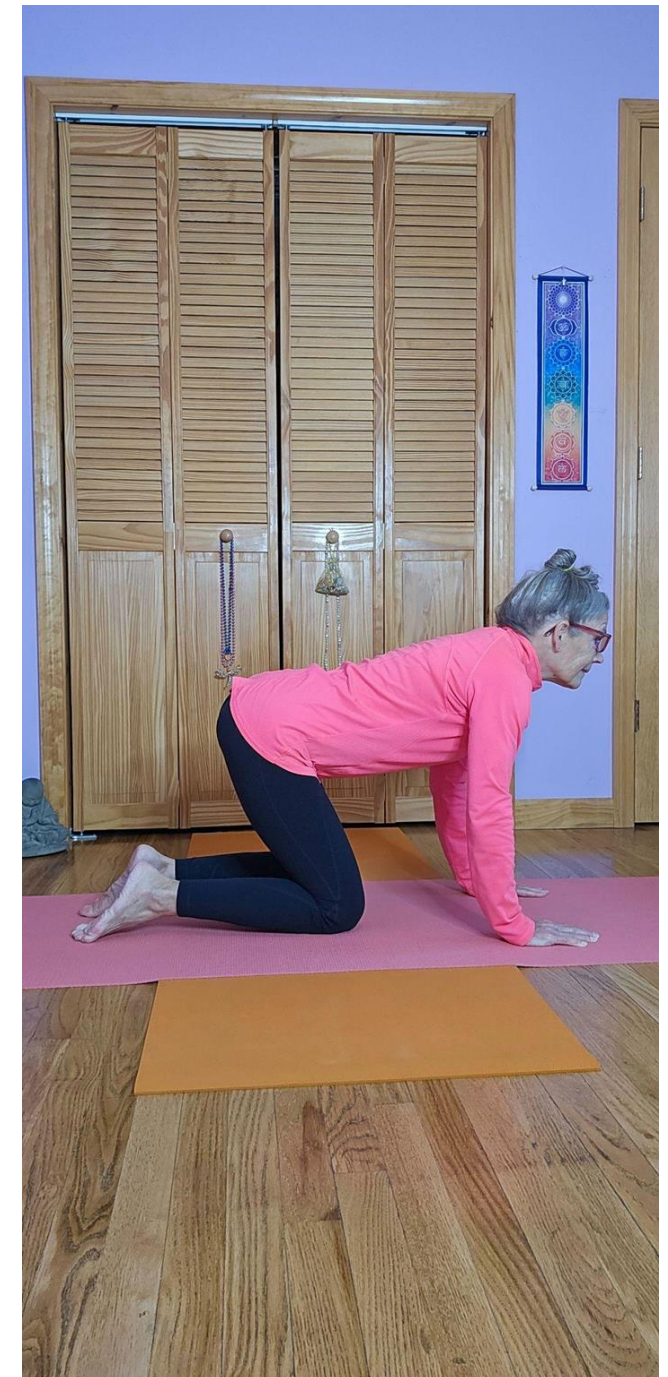
Cat/Cow

Traditional

Intention/purpose: Warm-up of spine through ROM of cervical to sacrum, coordination of breath with movement

Starting position: From hands and knees in Table

Description: For Cat, round the back and bring the belly toward the spine and the whole spine into a C-shaped curve while exhaling. For Cow, arch the back, opening the chest and front body while inhaling.



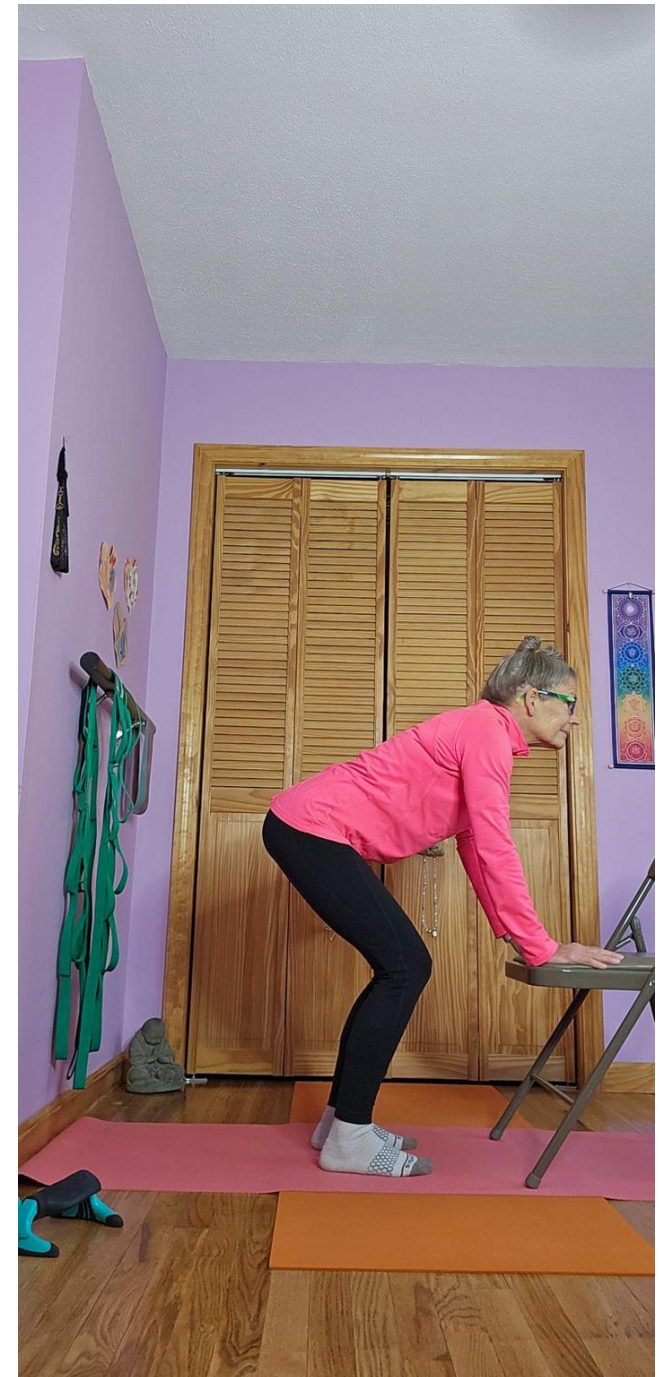
Adapted Cat Cow

Options:

Seated in Chair, hands on the legs

Standing using the chair for support

Kneeling with knee, wrist supports such as kneeling pads or hands on blocks, wedges or wrist grips



Down Dog

Traditional

Intention/purpose: Inversion, part of Sun Salutation

Starting position: from Table on the floor

Description: Tuck toes under and lift knees. Press hips toward ceiling with the head relaxed and gaze is toward the toes. Heels do not have to touch the mat. Palms press firmly into the mat like making a handprint.



Adapted Down Dog

Options:

Hands on chair either on seat or back of chair

Hands on wall

Seated in chair, arms raised in front of body or up overhead



You try!

Head Toward the Knee



References - Yoga

Heyman, Jivana (2024) The Teacher's Guide to Accessible Yoga. Rainbow Mind Publications

Moonaz, Steffany (2020) Yoga for Arthritis Teacher's Manual. Arthritis Foundation



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THANK YOU!

