

Chair Yoga Intervention Protocol

General Purpose: To assist clients improve their physical fitness/health, improve mood, and decrease potential behaviors through a low-impact, seated exercise.

Population: All populations who utilize wheelchairs for ambulation or individuals with high fall risk.

Program Description: Chair yoga is an excellent intervention that has evidence backing its beneficial outcomes. Chair yoga can be used as an adaptation from regular yoga for an individual, who has difficulty balancing, is confined to a wheelchair, or who is a high fall risk. Chair yoga assists in improving balance, strength, flexibility, anxiety, stress, sleep disturbances, pain, and arthritis among others.

Client Problems that may be Addressed: Yoga has been known to help improve sleep (Manjunath, Telles, 2005), improve strength and decrease arthritis symptoms (Dash, Telles, 2001), improve mood/anxiety (Gaur, 2001), decrease chronic pain (Gaur, 2001), and improve breathing difficulties (Nagarathna, Nagendra, Seethalakshmi, 1991).

Contraindicated Criteria: Some clients may have physical limitation such as paralysis or a traumatic injury that may need additional adaptation for the client to participate.

Intervention Activity: Depending on the population (high/low functioning) explain what yoga and chair yoga is and its benefits. Explain to all participants to take breaks when needed, to 'listen to their bodies', to stay hydrated, and to take it at their own pace. Follow protocol and take breath breaks frequently. Finish by asking participants how they feel and provide water for hydration.

Staff Training and Certification Requirements: Each staff member should be certified and licensed (if applicable) as a certified therapeutic recreation specialist (CTRS) and be required to maintain his or her licensure and certification. Moreover, each staff member should be trained and educated in implementing a chair yoga intervention; understanding the benefits and/or risks that are involved in using chair yoga as an intervention.

Risk Management Considerations: Similar to any physical activity, injury can occur if not done properly. Moreover, be familiar with any serious illness/injury that your client may be experiencing so that you can provide appropriate adaptations.

Anticipated Outcomes: Clients will understand the benefits and poses of chair yoga. With regular participation, clients will improve strength, flexibility, decrease stress/anxiety, improve sleeping patterns, and decrease pain among others.

Program Evaluation: Staff will ask clients about their experience with yoga and how they felt before and after the interventions in identifying validity of the use of yoga and/or chair yoga as an appropriate intervention.

Research Support:

Dash M, Telles S (2001). Improvement in hand grip strength in normal volunteers and rheumatoid arthritis patients following yoga training. *Indian J Physiol Pharmacol* 45(3): 355-360.

Gaur, S (2001). Preliminary findings of the Harbor-UCLA Medical Center study presented at the American Psychiatric Association's annual meeting in May 2001.

Dash M, Telles S (2001). Improvement in hand grip strength in normal volunteers and rheumatoid arthritis patients following yoga training. *Indian J Physiol Pharmacol* 45(3): 355-360.

Manjunath NK, Telles S (2005). Influence of Yoga and Ayurveda on self-rated sleep in a geriatric population. *Indian J Med Res* 121(5):683-90.

Nagarathna R, Nagendra HR, Seethalakshmi R (1991). Yoga-chair breathing for acute episodes of bronchial asthma. *Lung India* ix, 4:141-144.

Chair Yoga Poses:

- **Arm stretches**
 - **Hand to grab shoulders—grabbing oranges**
 - Make circles with elbows
 - Change direction
 - **Squeeze elbows back and forth—chicken wings**
 - Inhale pull elbows together
 - Exhale pull elbows apart
 - **Elbows up and Elbows down—bird wings**
 - Inhale elbows up
 - Exhale elbows down
 - **Take a breath**
 - **Hand to grab shoulders—picking oranges—to side**
 - Hands to shoulders--inhale
 - Open arms--exhale
 - **Hand to grab shoulders—picking coconuts—to front**
 - Hands to shoulders—inhale
 - Arms open—exhale
 - **Goal post—arms together**
 - Inhale—arms together
 - Exhale—arms apart
 - **Goal post wave—arms down**
 - Inhale—arms up
 - Exhale—arms apart
 - **Take a breath**
- **Neck stretches**
 - **Ear to shoulder**
 - Inhale left
 - Exhale right
 - **Front and back**
 - Just look at ceiling and ground
 - Inhale up
 - Exhale down
 - **Left to Right**
 - Inhale left
 - Exhale right
- **Back stretch**
 - **To Right**
 - Right arm to back of chair
 - Left arm to knee
 - Exhale twist

- **To Left**
 - Left arm to back of chair
 - Right arm to knee
 - Exhale twist
 - **Take a breath**
 - **Leg stretch**
 - **Marching—Left and Right**
 - Inhale lift right
 - Exhale drop right
 - Inhale lift left
 - Exhale drop left
 - **Walking up wall—left and right—extending leg**
 - Inhale lift right
 - Exhale drop right
 - Inhale lift left
 - Exhale drop left
 - **Rock N’ Roll feet--Point and Flex Feet--rocking**
 - Inhale point
 - Exhale flex
 - **Toe lift**
 - Inhale toe lift
 - Exhale toe down
 - **Ankle circle right**
 - Lift right foot
 - Foot circle
 - Change directions
 - **Ankle circle left**
 - Lift left foot
 - Foot circle
 - Change directions
 - **Foot stretches**
 - **Point and Flex**
 - Right Foot
 - Left Foot
 - **Take a breath—3**
 - Deeper you breath the better you feel
 - **Back Stretch**
 - **Extended Leg Forward Fold**
 - Extend Feet apart—1-2 feet knees apart, hands on knees, knees stacked on top of ankles
 - Inhale, Exhale, forward fold
 - Exhale, lift body
 - Knees together

- **Forward Fold with breath**
 - Hands on knees
 - Exhale forward fold
 - Inhale come up
 - **Knee Lift—with breath**
 - Right
 - Interlace fingers, grab knee, pull knee toward head with exhale
 - Inhale to release
 - Left
 - Interlace fingers, grab knee, pull knee toward head with exhale
 - Inhale to release
 - **Take a breath—3**
 - **Shoulder shrugs**
 - Inhale lift
 - Exhale drop
 - **Shoulder shrugs—left and right**
 - Right
 - Inhale up
 - Exhale Down
 - Feet pressed into ground
 - Belly engaged
 - Left
 - Inhale up
 - Exhale Down
 - **Arm Raises—Arm Arrows—right and left**
 - **Right**
 - Straight arm and hand
 - Inhale lift
 - Exhale right
 - **Left**
 - Straight arm and hand
 - Inhale lift
 - Exhale right
 - The more you exercise....the farther you will go
 - **Apple picking—left and right**
 - **Right**
 - **Lift right arm**
 - **Pick apple**
 - **Put in bucket**
 - **Left**
 - Lift left arm
 - Pick apple
 - Put in bucket

- **Cherry picking—both hands**
 - Fingers above
 - Pointing fingers—left and right
 - Opening fingers—left and right
 - **Squeeze and extend hands**
 - Arms Extended
 - One arm at a time if residents are tired
 - Inhale extent
 - Exhale squeeze
 - **Wrist circles**
 - Arms extended
 - Circle wrists
 - Other direction
 - **Take a breath**
 - **Flipping Hands**
 - Arms extended
 - Inhale flip up
 - Exhale flip down
 - **Waving arms**
 - Extend arms
 - Wave arms down
 - Wave arms up
 - **Pointing fingers**
 - Arms extended
 - Point fingers toward each other
 - Point fingers away
 - **Rolling fingers**
 - Arms extended
 - Roll fingers in
 - Roll fingers out
 - **Spreading fingers apart**
 - Arms extended
 - Spread fingers apart
 - Bring fingers together
 - **Take a breath**
 - **Prayer Stretch**
 - Hands at prayer
 - Move to left
 - Move to center
 - Move to right
 - **Chair sun salutation**
 - Inhale bring arms up
 - Exhale hands at heart center

- Repeat
- **Forward Fold with breath**
 - Hands on knees
 - Exhale forward fold
 - Inhale come up
 - Repeat
- **Connect**
 - Inhale arms up
 - Exhale hands through heart center fold forward
 - Inhale arms up
 - Repeat
- **Take a breath**
- **Back stretch**
 - **To Right**
 - Right arm to back of chair
 - Left arm to knee
 - Exhale twist
 - **To Left**
 - Left arm to back of chair
 - Right arm to knee
 - Exhale twist
- **Final Relaxation**
 - Hands on knees
 - Eyes closed, or look at ground
 - Deep breaths
 - **Namaste**