

# The benefits of chair yoga for older people



You may have heard that yoga is a wonderful way to maintain your physical health and calmness of mind. And it's true. Yoga can help improve strength, balance, flexibility, and meditation skills. But is it only for those who are young and flexible, and who can afford weekly \$40 classes? Absolutely not!

There's a way to try out yoga that's low cost, low impact, but high reward. And it's suitable for older people and people recovering from injuries. All you need is a stable chair with no arms, and you can do some gentle yoga in your own home for free. Chair yoga can reduce pain and stress, which may improve your physical and mental health. This promotes your independence as you age well.

## Why try chair yoga?

Chair yoga can help you maintain an active lifestyle as you age. It's an exercise for falls prevention, and a measure of preventative health. It's shown to have helped with:

- Handgrip strength
- Upper and lower limb strength
- Static balance
- Agility
- Dynamic balance

# The benefits of gentle exercise

Regular light exercise like chair yoga helps manage conditions such as type 2 diabetes. It helps with how your body responds to insulin. It also aids in managing cholesterol and blood pressure.

And of course, low-impact exercise is beneficial to sufferers of arthritis. In fact, chair yoga can improve quality of life in older adults with osteoarthritis. It can decrease joint pain and lessen the impact this condition has on your everyday living.

## Emotional benefits of chair yoga

Yoga is known for its health benefits, mindfulness, and community. A chair yoga class may introduce you to new breathing and meditation practices. This can improve your mental health and calmness of mind. And it's an opportunity to connect with people in your area. Read more about the importance of staying connected.

## How to get started

### Getting set up

Convinced that chair yoga is worth a shot, but still wondering how to get started? Here are some handy tips. First, put on comfortable clothes. Next, get your stable, armless chair. Be sure to place it on a flat surface. Choose somewhere you have room to extend your arms around you. It might also be nice to find a place with natural light and a pleasant view.

### Getting going

To get things going in a self-directed way, you can use an exercise sheet with a few different poses to try. If you want a more guided session, you can find helpful videos online.

You can also download apps like the Daily Yoga mobile app, though these often come with a monthly fee. (Learn more about helpful mobile apps for older people.)

Or you can find a local group in your community to practice with. Chair yoga classes are often quite affordable.

### Staying safe

Before you begin, remember to listen to your body. Stop and seek advice from a medical professional if you feel new or increasing pain, or if you feel dizzy, clammy, or short of breath. Some exercises may not be for you. Consult a medical professional if you are unsure.

## Develop skills at your own pace

Once you've mastered the seated poses, you might have the option to advance your difficulty level. You may even want to try standing poses that include the chair as support. Chair yoga can allow for a self-determined progression. You can engage this practice whenever you like and step it up whenever you're ready.

As for how often you should practice, even a little bit of yoga helps. But keeping up with a regular fitness routine could be most beneficial for you. Get advice from your healthcare professional when planning a new exercise regimen.

## More helpful information

If you would like to find local exercise classes, social activities, and helpful tips, take the quick LiveUp quiz or call our helpful team for free today on 1800 951 971.

## References

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## How to use this information

LiveUp provides free information to help you make informed decisions about your health. This information is for general and educational purposes only, is not intended to provide a comprehensive guide, and does not replace medical advice.

Everyone is different, so some of these tips may work better for you than others. You should use your own judgment and seek medical advice when applying this information to yourself, to determine if it is suitable in your circumstances. Your use of, or reliance on, this information is solely at your own risk. Independent Living Assessment Incorporated is not responsible or liable for any injury, loss, or damage caused as a result of your use of, or reliance on, this information.



Scan the QR code for more helpful articles and downloadable exercise sheets on the LiveUp website.

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