



# YOGA YOUR WAY

LETTING YOUR BODY GUIDE YOUR MOVEMENT

With **Yoga Your Way** we invite you to experiment and find ways of moving that feel appropriate for your body and needs in the moment. This booklet is presented in a sequence, but yoga is never 'one-size-fits-all'. To create a practice that works for you, you are welcome to choose which movements you try, how long you hold them and when you take rest. It is important to move within a range that doesn't increase pain or tension, and allows for your natural breath to flow. You might decide to practice yoga with your eyes open or closed, always guided by your comfort. If you have health concerns, it's a good idea to speak to your physician before adding in new exercise.

**Yoga** is a 5,000-year-old system of healing practices originating in India that includes philosophy, meditation, breath work, lifestyle and ethical principles, and movements (forms). Here you'll find some of the physical forms of yoga, called 'asana' in Sanskrit, the language in which yoga was first documented.

## Seated Cross-Legged (Sukhasana) or Kneeling (Vajrasana)



Gather anything you need to feel comfortable and supported for your practice. (e.g., blanket, towel, books). Begin sitting on the ground in a way that feels best for your body. You may sit on a mat or blanket if that feels comfortable. Legs stretched out in front of you is also an option.

## Seated Spinal Twist (Parivrtta Sukhasana)



Try lengthening your spine and turning within your comfortable range. You might go from side to side a few times to warm up then spend a few breaths on each side, noticing sensations in your body and adjusting to stay within an easeful range of movement.

Repeat on your other side.

## Seated Side Stretch (Parsva Sukhasana)



Explore reaching up and leaning over within your comfortable range. You might use one hand on the floor to support your body here.

Repeat on your other side.

## Cat Cow (Chakravakasana)



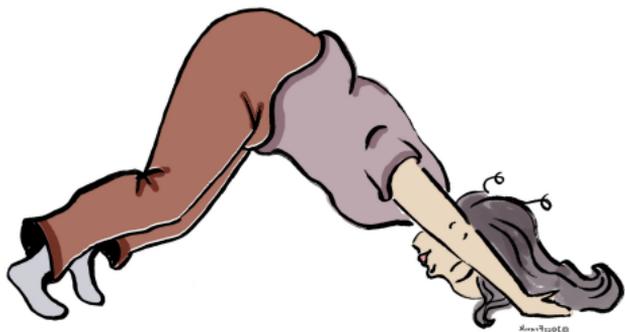
Explore rounding your spine a comfortable amount on your exhales, then lengthen or arch your back on inhales (depending on your comfort and body's needs). This can be done on your forearms instead of on your hands.

## Seat to Heels (Balasana)



If comfortable, bring your seat towards your heels. Your knees could be closer together or wider apart (adjust for your comfort). You could add blankets or books under your hips and/or head for support.

## **Puppy** (Uttana Shishosana) or **Downward Facing Dog** (Adho Mukha Svanasana)



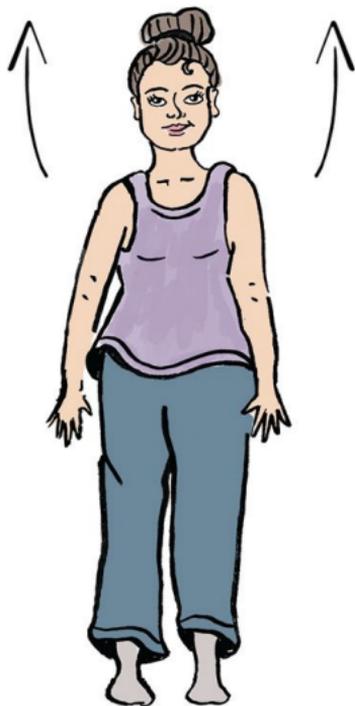
Option to stretch your arms forward and keep your knees on the floor as you lengthen your spine, or to lengthen your legs and raise your hips into the air, depending on what works best for your body.

## Half Forward Fold (Ardha Uttanasana) or Forward Fold (Uttanasana)



Try folding forward from your hips with your knees bent for comfort. Keeping your spine long, you could support your hands on your thighs, shins, a block or other surface.

## Mountain (Tadasana)



Explore standing, feeling your feet on the ground and your spine lengthening. If you like, try shifting weight in your feet from left to right, and forward and back a little and then see how it feels to stand tall at centre.

## Chair (Utkatasana)



Experiment with reaching your buttocks back as though sitting down into a chair. You might bend your knees a little, or a lot, depending on how this feels in your body. Your arms could be lifted or down by your side.

## Tree (Vrksasana)



Experiment with standing on one foot. You could rest your other foot to your inner ankle and keep your toes connected to the ground, or move your foot higher up your leg. Option to raise your arms overhead.

Repeat on your other side.

## Forward Fold (Uttanasana) to **Sitting**



Consider making the transition to sitting via Forward Fold (Uttanasana) or however works best for your body.

## Boat (Navasana)



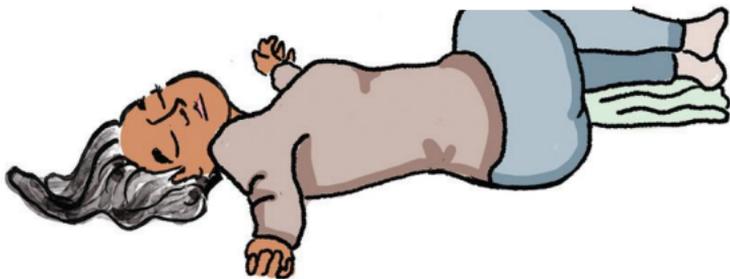
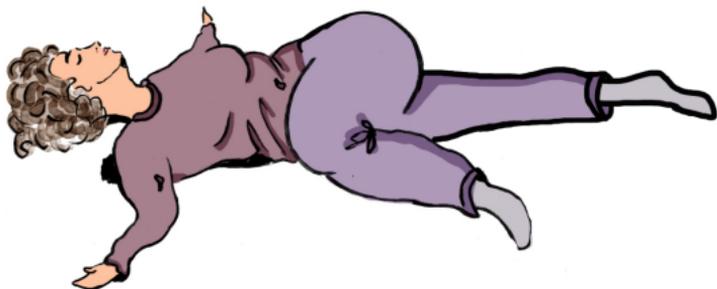
With your feet out front, try lengthening your spine or even leaning back a little, maintaining a long spine. If this is comfortable, you could try lifting your feet, maybe one at a time or both together.

## Little Bridge (Setu Bandhasana)



Starting with your feet under your knees and your feet about as far apart as your hips, try pressing into your feet to lift your hips a comfortable amount. You could lift and lower a few times or hold for a few breaths.

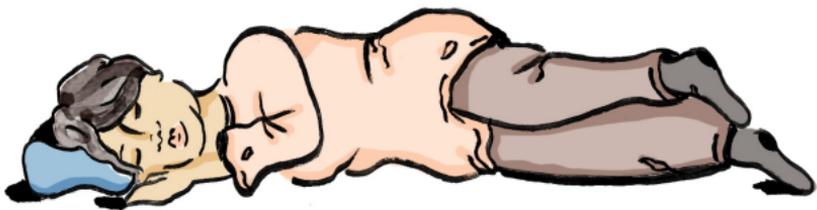
## Reclining Twist (Jathara Parivartanasana)



Laying on your back with your arms outstretched, try resting your knees over to one side and consider placing support (a folded blanket or pillow) under your legs for comfort.

Repeat on your other side.

## Rest (Savasana) and Closing



Rest for a however long you like in a comfortable position. You might lay on your back, perhaps adding some support (e.g., a rolled up blanket or towel) for more comfort. Another option could be to lay on your side. If you like, use this moment to appreciate yourself for taking the time to practice yoga today.



reaching out  
with **yoga**

**Reaching Out with Yoga** was a five-year collaborative research project between the BC Society of Transition Houses and Yoga Outreach. During the project, volunteer yoga teachers shared trauma-informed and choice-based yoga with women, children and youth accessing Transition House services and PEACE programs across BC.

We created this booklet so that women, children and youth could continue to access trauma-informed yoga practices on their own, and when the in-person classes are not available to them.

For more information about the Reaching Out with Yoga project please visit [www.bcsth.ca](http://www.bcsth.ca) & [www.yogaoutreach.ca](http://www.yogaoutreach.ca).



BC Society of  
Transition Houses

