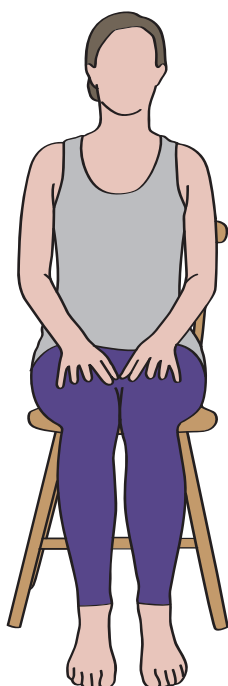


Chair yoga

Chair yoga brings all the benefits of regular yoga practice, and is perfect if you have limited mobility and need to sit



Basic seated asana

- Sit upright on a sturdy chair, with feet flat on the floor, on a firm block or similar
- Take time to settle in and be comfortable. Place a cushion behind your back for support if needed
- Lengthen through the spine, feet on the floor, sitting back fully on the chair, but lifting the crown of the head up



Full breath practice

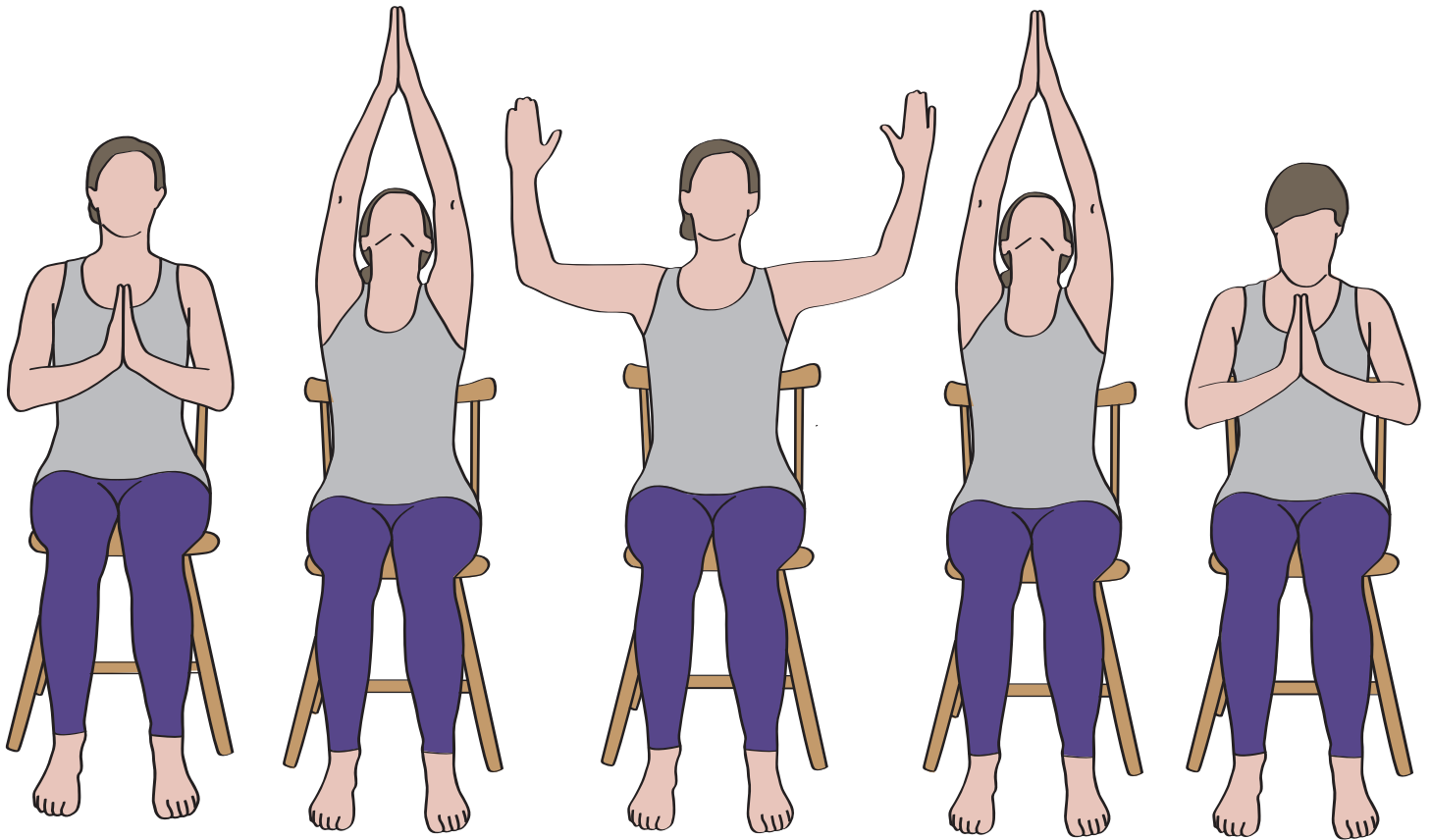
- Sit comfortably upright
- Bring one hand to your abdomen and one to your chest. Allow yourself to feel the breath moving in your body. Do not try to force anything
- If possible, relax your abdomen and feel the breath moving your hands – the chest and abdomen expanding under your hands as you inhale, and softening as you exhale
- Take 3-8 breaths in this way. You can close your eyes if that feels right. Notice how you feel now, physically, mentally and emotionally



Pranamasana – bring hands together

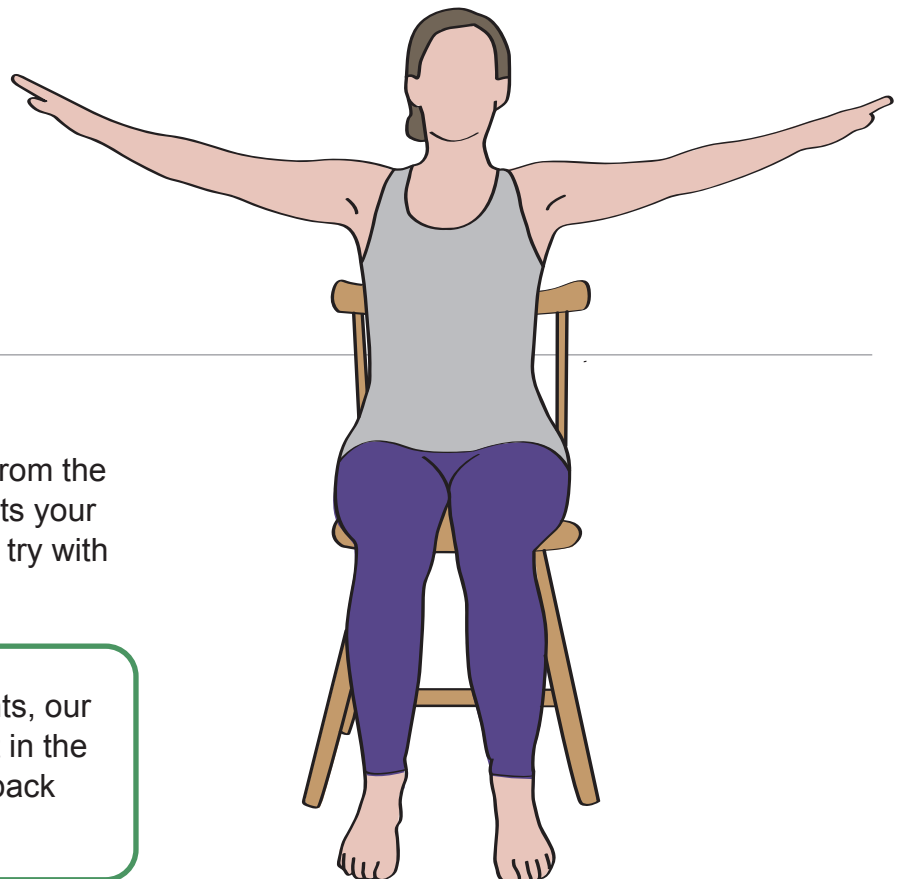
- Bring the palms of your hands together the best you can. This is 'pranamasana, or prayer pose
- The hands have come into a gesture of prayer at the heart centre. The hand position here is also called anjali mudra. It is a gesture of respect and salutation to yourself and others

We often take this posture as a starting and finishing practice. Breathe through the nose a few times here – if it feels right you can bow your head towards your hands and close your eyes



Heart opening energiser

- Start in prayer pose and bring the palms of your hands together the best you can
- Inhale and rise the hands up past your eyebrow centre and above the crown of the head
- Exhale and open arms wide to look like goal posts, lifting and opening the heart centre
- Inhale and rise the hands up again, joining together above the crown of the head
- Bring your hands back past the eyebrow centre to the heart
- Take this practice 3-5 times



Arm circles

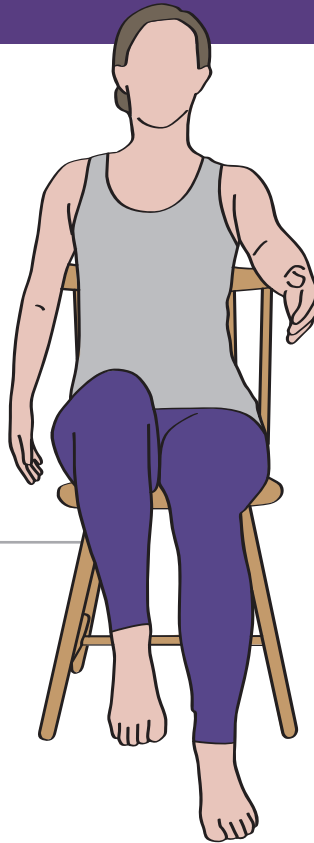
- Take the arms wide and make circles from the top of your arms, where your arm meets your shoulder joint. Try this both ways, also try with palms face up and face down

These are good for our shoulder joints, our arm strength and to keep movement in the connective tissue across the upper back and chest.

Exercises from home

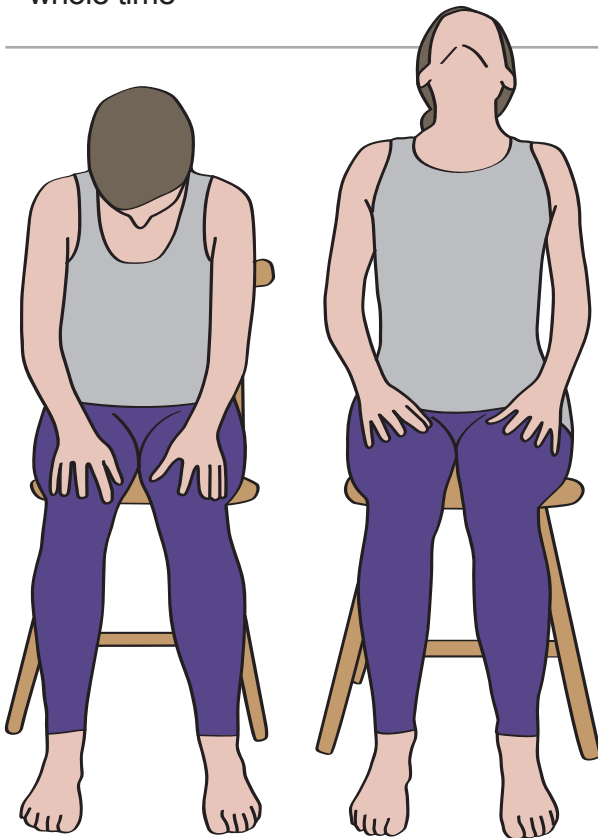
Marching

- Swinging your arms, try to lift one foot at a time away from the floor as the opposite arm swings forwards
- Do your best to visualise your legs moving if they cannot actually lift from the floor. Let the arms move freely if you can
- Keep going for 20 seconds to a minute. Breathe in and out of the nose the whole time



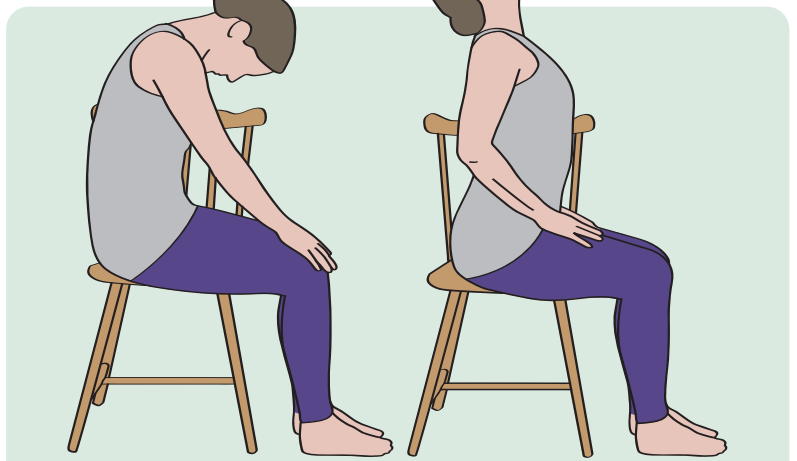
This is an exercise in concentration as well as a physical practice!

This is good exercise for our arms, legs and our hearts, pumping blood around the body as we move. You may find yourself getting out of breath, even as you sit marching in your chair!



Sitting cat stretches

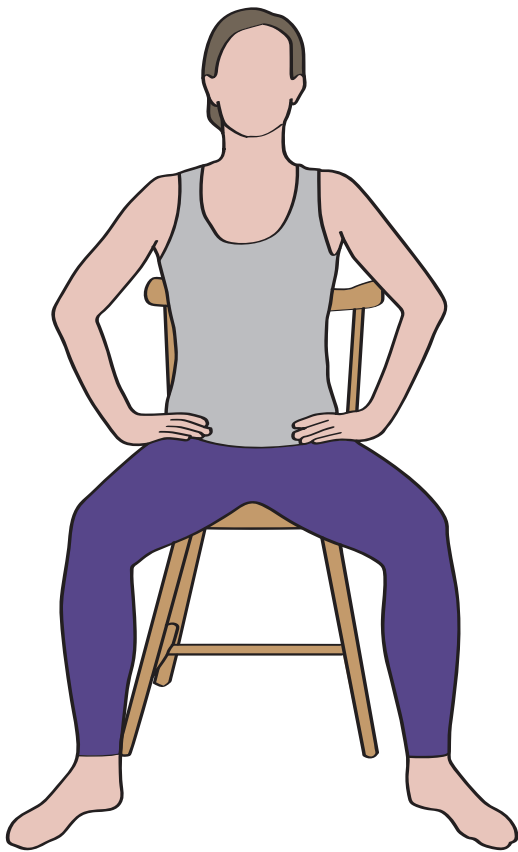
- In an upright seated position, shuffle slightly forwards on the chair (you do not need to turn to the side, Tracy has turned, just so you can see better)
- Inhale in an upright position, then exhale as you round your back, round your shoulders forward and feel your tailbone moving to point forwards. You may feel your back lengthening as you draw your navel in to your spine
- Next time you inhale, lift the head and chest and draw your shoulders back and down



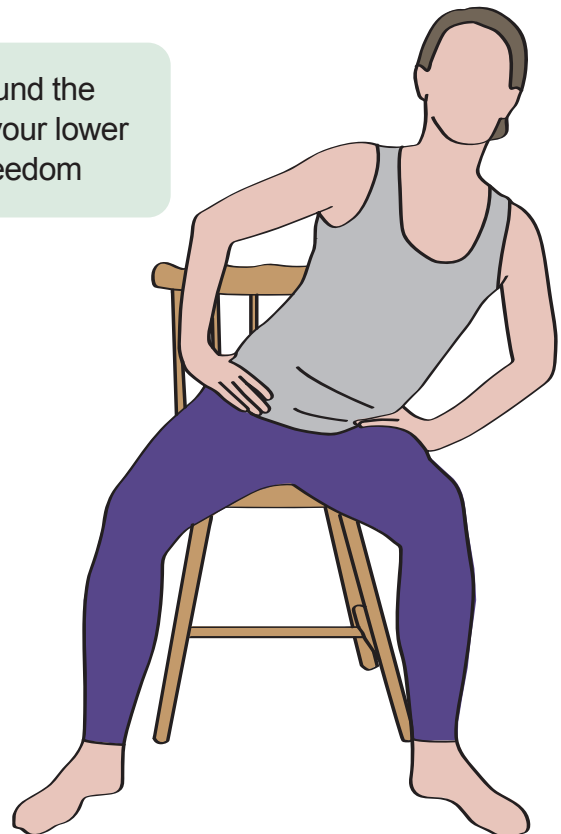
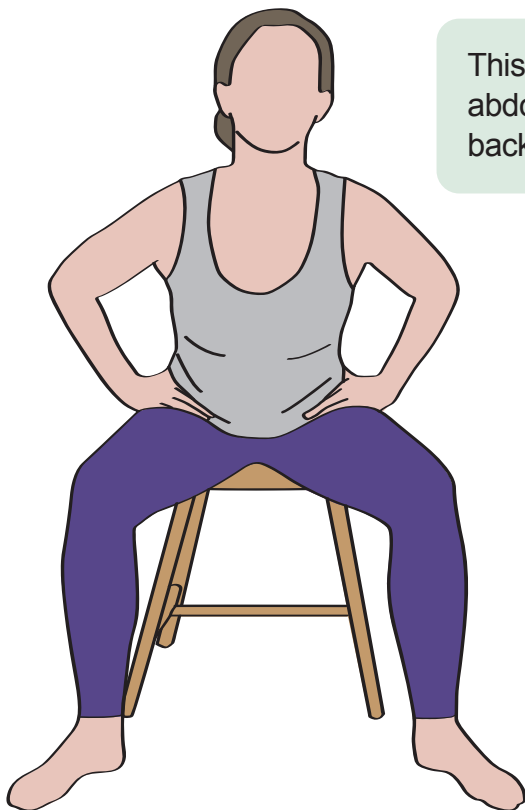
Side view - you do not have to sit sideways

towards the centre and base of the spine. Also draw the tailbone back so it is pointing behind you. You may feel the front of your body lengthening now. Be careful not to drop your head, keep control of your neck muscles as you gently look up

- Move gracefully, like a cat between these 2 positions. Continue to move in time with your breath if you can. Remember never to force or strain. Repeat 3-6 times in both directions
- This allows the spine to move forwards and backwards, helps to alleviate backache and maintain good posture



This will tone all around the abdomen and give your lower back some lovely freedom



Pelvic circles

- In an upright seated position, shuffle slightly forwards on the chair and separate your feet, turning the toes out slightly to form a stable base
- With your hands on your hips (or holding the chair if that is more secure for you) begin to make circles from the pelvis. Circle out to the side, the front, the other side and backwards
- Circle 3-5 times in one direction and then the same the other way. Be sure to remain with your feet firmly on the floor and to feel in control of your movements
- Hold onto the chair or another support if you need to as you move



Seated twists

- In an upright seated position, shuffle slightly forwards on the chair. Bring your legs and feet together
- We're going to twist to the right first, so before you do, just shuffle your right buttock back slightly. Now take the right hand behind to the chair back and the left hand to the outside edge of the right thigh. Breathe well there for 3-5 breaths
- Come back to centre, and adjust legs to be side by side again and pause for a moment. Take some seated cat stretches
- Then getting ready to twist to the left, before you do, shuffle the left buttock back slightly. Now take the left hand behind the chair to the back and the right hand to the outside edge of the left thigh. Breathe well there for 3-5 breaths
- Come back to centre again and take a few seated cat stretches

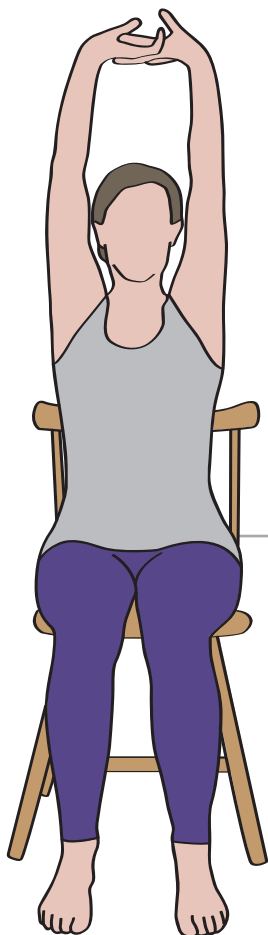
Seated twists are wonderful to massage the abdominal organs and to loosen the spine

Seated side bends

- In an upright seated position, shuffle slightly forwards on the chair and have your feet flat on the floor with a slight gap
- We're going to reach over to the left first so that the right side of the trunk, abdomen and lungs is stretched first. Hold the seat of the chair with the left hand and, as you inhale, raise the right arm up
- Now exhale and reach across to the left, feeling a wonderful stretch to the right side. Inhale as you lift the right arm up again and exhale the right arm back down by your side
- Repeat on the other side, having a lovely stretch this time to the left of the body
- Repeat 3-5 times to each side, breathing in and out of the nose all the way through

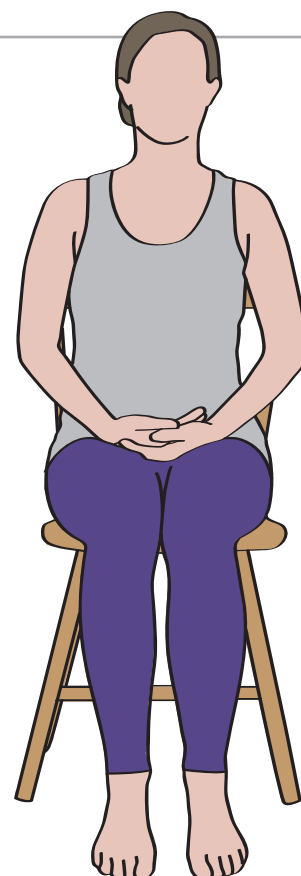
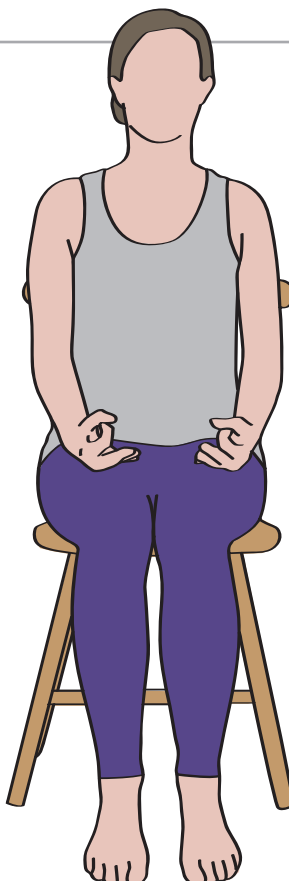


Remember not to force or strain



Arm raise stretch

- In an upright seated position, interlock the fingers in front of you and turn the palms away, if that is comfortable for you. Notice which way you have your hands interlocked
- Inhale and reach the arms up and overhead. Do your best and if your hands are uncomfortable then release the fingers and simply stretch up. As you are ready to exhale, release the fingers and take the arms wide and down using the whole exhale
- Interlock the fingers again – this time with the fingers interlocking the other way so that it feels strange! Repeat the process. Repeat both ways 2-4 times



Meditation and relaxation

- Now is the time to put your layers back on – socks, a cardigan and a blanket over you to prevent you getting too cold
- In an upright seated position, sit right back into the chair. Allow the first finger and thumb on each hand to touch in a circle. You could tuck the first fingernail down towards the base of the thumb if that is comfortable. The other three fingers are comfortably open. Rest the backs of the hands on the thighs, palms face up. This is called Chin Mudra – a gesture of consciousness. Allow yourself to relax and just focus and concentrate on the gentle rhythm of your breath, flowing in and out of your nostrils
- Close your eyes if you feel able. Begin to count the breath, every time you exhale count 1, then 2, all the way up to 5. Once you reach 5, go back to the start at 1 and count up to 5 again. You may lose your counting or concentration, do not worry, just start again at 1. One or two rounds is sufficient
- When you feel ready relax the hands and remain in this upright but relaxed state for a few more minutes. Observe the thoughts in your mind and each time you notice a thought, visualise popping that thought onto a cloud in the sky and have it float away. Stay relaxed for a few more minutes, popping thoughts onto clouds. Then after 5 minutes or so allow your mind to travel wherever it wants to go
- From here slowly draw your awareness back into your physical body, breathe more deeply to the top of the lungs and begin to wiggle your fingers and toes, if you can. Blink your eyes open and take in your surroundings once again. Have one more stretch up (arm raise stretch) then release
- Well done! You can carry on with your day feeling a little stronger, a little lighter, a little more balanced with a sense of peace and calm