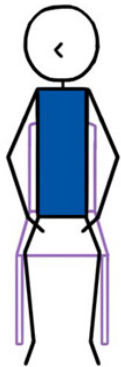


FREE BEGINNER GUIDE

Chair Yoga for Beginners

A gentle 15-minute practice you can do at home



SETTLE



MOVE



BREATHE

10 simple movements. One sturdy chair. No floor work.

George Watts | BWY Yoga Teacher

GeorgeWatts.org

One clear beginner practice

Move gently without getting onto the floor.

Hello

I am George, a British Wheel of Yoga teacher and creator of the Online Yoga Lesson Planner. I made this guide for the person who wants to try chair yoga but is not sure where to begin.

You do not need to be flexible. You do not need to remember yoga names. You only need a stable chair, enough room to move your arms and permission to make every movement smaller.

By the end of 15 minutes

- You will have gently moved your shoulders, spine, sides, legs and ankles.
- You will know how to make every movement easier.
- You will have a short sequence you can return to without planning it again.

ONE USEFUL RULE

Comfort is the guide. A smaller movement done calmly is still the practice.

Set up before you start

Two quiet minutes here make the whole practice easier.

Your chair

- Choose a solid, stable chair without wheels.
- Place it on a non-slip surface; put it against a wall for sit-to-stand.
- Sit so both feet can rest flat. Use a folded blanket under your feet if needed.
- Clear enough space to move your arms and legs without bumping furniture.

Your practice

- Wear comfortable clothing and keep water nearby.
- Move slowly and keep breathing; never force a stretch or hold your breath.
- Choose a range that feels light and manageable today.

Important safety note

This guide is general education, not medical advice. If you have not exercised for a while, are unsure whether these movements suit you, have a health condition or injury, or have recently had surgery, check with a GP or healthcare professional involved in your care. Stop if you feel pain, chest discomfort, dizziness, faintness or uncomfortable breathing.

Chair setup guidance cross-checked with the NHS sitting exercises page.

Your 15-minute practice

Use the timings as a guide. Skip anything that is not right for you today.

1 Chair Centering 1 min

2 Chair Shoulder Circles 1 min

3 Chair Cat Cow I 2 min

4 Chair Side Bend I 2 min

5 Chair Gentle Twist 2 min

6 Chair Knee Extension 2 min

7 Chair Ankle Rolls 1 min

8 Chair Forward Bend II 1.5 min

9 Chair Sit To Stand 1.5 min - optional

10 Chair Abdominal Breath 1 min

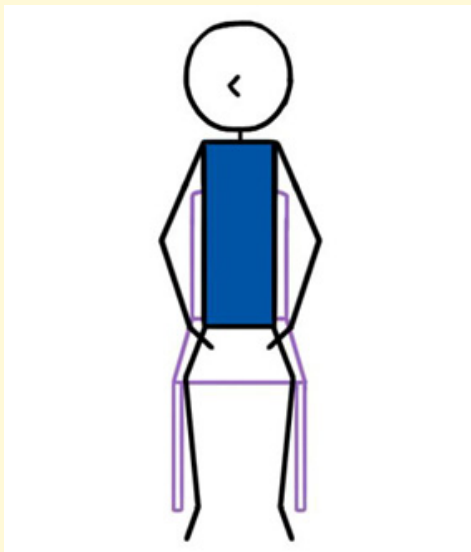
Beginner pacing

You should be able to speak comfortably. Rest whenever you want, and finish with the breathing page even if you skip other movements.

1

Chair Centering

Arrive, settle and give your attention one simple place to rest.



MOVE IN A COMFORTABLE RANGE

How to practise

- Sit near the front of the chair with both feet supported.
- Rest your hands on your thighs and let your shoulders soften.
- Notice one inhale and one exhale without trying to change them.
- With each exhale, feel the chair and floor supporting you.

TRY

Stay for about 1 minute.

Make it easier

Sit against the backrest or place a folded blanket under your feet.

Notice

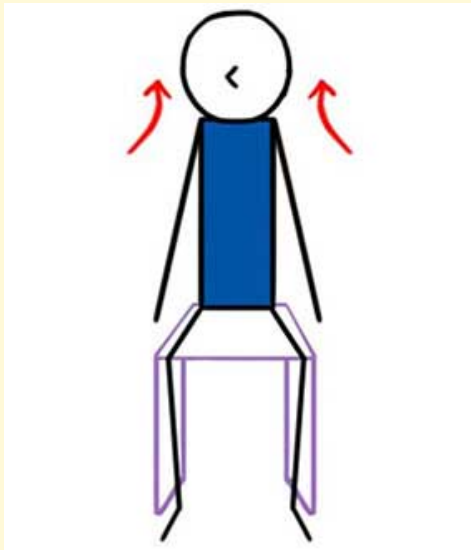
Can your jaw, hands and shoulders do a little less?

[View this pose in George's Chair Yoga Directory](#)

2

Chair Shoulder Circles

Warm the shoulders with a slow, easy circle.



MOVE IN A COMFORTABLE RANGE

How to practise

- Sit tall with your feet flat and your arms relaxed.
- Lift your shoulders gently towards your ears.
- Roll them back, then let them slide down.
- Reverse the direction if that feels comfortable.

TRY

Make 5 slow circles each way.

Make it easier

Move one shoulder at a time or make the circles smaller.

Notice

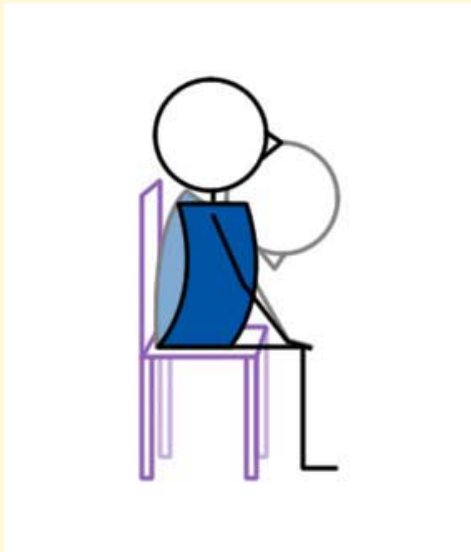
Keep your neck long and your breathing unforced.

[View this pose in George's Chair Yoga Directory](#)

3

Chair Cat Cow I

Let the breath guide a gentle wave through your spine.



MOVE IN A COMFORTABLE RANGE

How to practise

- Place your hands on your thighs and sit upright.
- Exhale: round your back gently and let your head follow.
- Inhale: lengthen your spine and lift your chest forward and up.
- Continue slowly, moving only as far as feels comfortable.

TRY

Flow for 6 slow rounds.

Make it easier

Make it a very small pelvic tilt and keep your gaze forward.

Notice

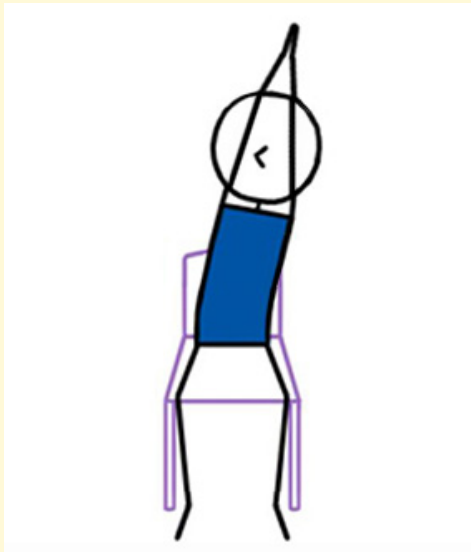
The movement can be smaller than you expect and still be useful.

[View this pose in George's Chair Yoga Directory](#)

4

Chair Side Bend I

Create a little more space through each side of the body.



MOVE IN A COMFORTABLE RANGE

How to practise

- Sit near the front of the chair with both feet grounded.
- Inhale and raise your arms, or lift just one arm.
- Exhale and lean gently to the left without lifting the right sit bone.
- Inhale back to centre, then repeat on the other side.

TRY

Take 2 rounds, pausing for 2 breaths on each side.

Make it easier

Keep one hand on your thigh and reach the other arm only as high as comfortable.

Notice

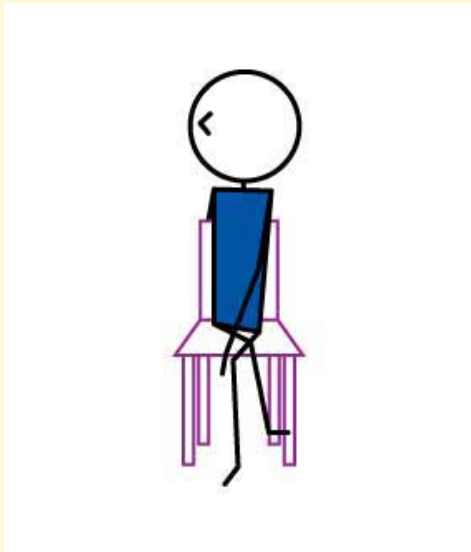
Think length first, then a small side bend.

[View this pose in George's Chair Yoga Directory](#)

5

Chair Gentle Twist

Turn from the ribs while keeping the movement calm and controlled.



MOVE IN A COMFORTABLE RANGE

How to practise

- Sit tall with both feet flat and your knees pointing forward.
- Place your left hand on your right thigh and your right hand beside or behind you.
- Exhale and turn your chest gently to the right; keep your hips facing forward.
- Return to centre and repeat on the other side.

TRY

Hold each side for 2 or 3 easy breaths.

Make it easier

Keep both hands on your thighs and make the turn smaller.

Notice

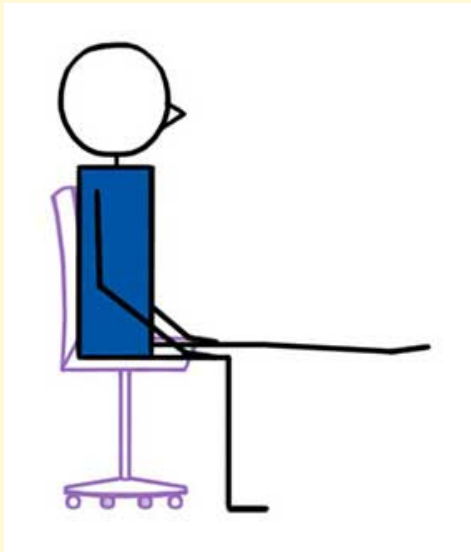
Let your eyes and head follow only as far as your neck is happy.

[View this pose in George's Chair Yoga Directory](#)

6

Chair Knee Extension

Wake up the legs with a steady lift and a controlled return.



MOVE IN A COMFORTABLE RANGE

How to practise

- Sit tall and hold the sides of the chair if you want more support.
- Inhale and straighten your right leg as far as comfortable.
- Pause briefly without locking or forcing the knee.
- Exhale and lower with control; repeat on the left.

TRY

Do 5 slow repetitions on each side.

Make it easier

Slide the heel forward on the floor instead of lifting the foot.

Notice

Keep the rest of your body quiet while the leg moves.

[View this pose in George's Chair Yoga Directory](#)

7

Chair Ankle Rolls

Give each ankle a slow circle before the standing option.



MOVE IN A COMFORTABLE RANGE

How to practise

- Sit tall and hold behind your right thigh if useful.
- Lift the foot a little, or keep the heel resting on the floor.
- Draw slow circles with your toes in both directions.
- Lower the foot and repeat on the left.

TRY

Make 5 circles each way with each ankle.

Make it easier

Keep the heel down and draw tiny circles with the toes.

Notice

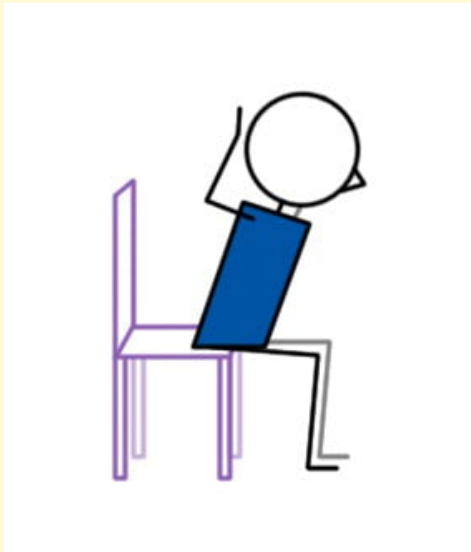
Slow circles usually feel clearer than large, fast ones.

[View this pose in George's Chair Yoga Directory](#)

8

Chair Forward Bend II

Hinge forward a little while keeping the breath easy.



MOVE IN A COMFORTABLE RANGE

How to practise

- Sit near the front of the chair with your feet grounded.
- Rest your hands on your thighs or bring your palms together.
- Lengthen your spine, then tip forward from the hips.
- Pause halfway, then press your feet down and return upright.

TRY

Repeat 3 times, moving with your breath.

Make it easier

Keep both hands on your thighs and hinge only a few centimetres.

Notice

Come up slowly, especially if you are prone to dizziness.

[View this pose in George's Chair Yoga Directory](#)



MOVE IN A COMFORTABLE RANGE

How to practise

- Place the chair against a wall and sit near the front edge.
- Bring your feet under or slightly behind your knees.
- Lean forward from the hips and press through your feet to stand.
- Pause, then bend your knees and sit down slowly with control.

TRY

Repeat 3 times, or skip this page today.

Make it easier

Use your hands on the chair or thighs, or practise the forward lean without standing.

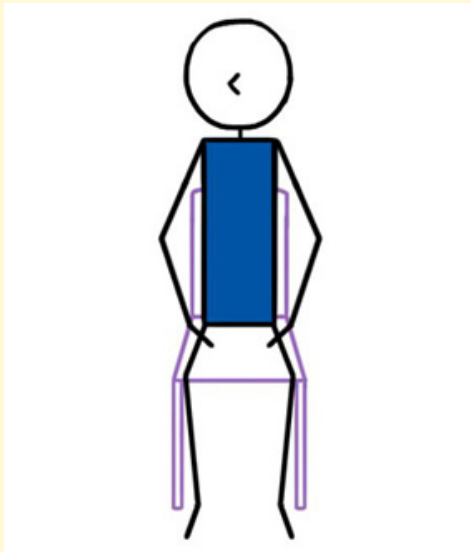
Notice

If balance is uncertain, practise with a suitable person nearby.

[View this pose in George's Chair Yoga Directory](#)

Chair Abdominal Breath

Finish by letting your breathing return to its own quiet rhythm.



MOVE IN A COMFORTABLE RANGE

How to practise

- Sit comfortably with both feet supported.
- Place your hands on your belly or rest them on your thighs.
- Notice the gentle movement under your hands as you inhale.
- Let the belly soften as you exhale; do not force a deep breath.

TRY

Stay for about 1 minute.

Make it easier

Keep your hands on your thighs and simply notice the breath.

Notice

There is nothing to achieve here. Let the practice finish quietly.

[View this pose in George's Chair Yoga Directory](#)

You have a practice now

The next step is not to make it harder. It is to make it familiar.

A tiny seven-day plan

- Day 1: Try the full sequence and circle the three movements you liked most.
- Days 2 to 6: Practise those three movements for five minutes.
- Day 7: Return to the full sequence and notice what feels more familiar.

For yoga teachers

Use this guide as a beginner handout or as the starting point for a short chair-yoga class. Add pauses, repeats and rest according to the people in front of you.

PLAN CHAIR YOGA CLASSES ONLINE

Keep exploring

[Browse the full Chair Yoga Pose Directory](#)

[Read the 12-step eBook creation guide](#)

Sources: pose illustrations and core instructions, GeorgeWatts.org Chair Yoga Pose Directory; chair setup guidance, NHS Sitting Exercises (nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/sitting-exercises/). Accessed 12 September 2026.

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