

# Mindful Movement -Yoga

The word yoga means to yoke or bind. Postures/movements in a mindful yoga practice are used to connect the mind to the body's experience as well as to loosen, relax and stretch the body. This movement and mind connection reminds us of the parts of the body that are easily ignored during our day-to-day hustle and bustle. To start your mindful yoga practice, here are a few quick tips.

## *Be Aware*

The movements that occur in your practice are explorative. In this case, where your body goes your mind follows. It takes practice to keep your mind following body movement and to develop the focus needed. This is why yoga is called a practice. When practicing meditative yoga, one allows the mind to experience what the body is feeling at each given moment. Like the meditation practice, having both an inside and outside designated area to practice is beneficial to help develop present moment awareness and strengthen the mind-body connections.

## *Take Care Not to Push*

Yoga movement is gentle on the body when done mindfully. In your mindful yoga practice there is no need to strive for the outward appearance of a pose. Plan to use this time to be kind to your body. Having a consistent dedicated practice time is helpful, much like learning a language or musical instrument. Careful, slow and small moves can be most effective in finding safe positions that help create the mind-body connection.

## *Accept What Is - Not Aiming for Perfection*

The poses depicted on the following page are a good starting point. You may not be able to get into each posture. That is okay. ***Mindful yoga is about maintaining a safe practice, never moving your body beyond what it is capable of – or ignoring your doctor's orders.*** Allow yourself to explore the mind-body connections that already exist.



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*Chair options are also beneficial for the movements shown below.*



## Mountain Pose

Weight even on both feet; shoulders, hips, & ankles all in one line.



## Upward Salute

Be mindful of doctors' orders & your body needs.



## Side Stretch

Could keep legs together. Stretch arms out, open the sides & expand the ribs.



## Mountain Pose

Keep breathing smooth & even, feel your spine & lengthening.



## Side Bend

One arm over, opening the side & expanding the ribs.



## Side Bend then Both

Rib opening makes breathing easier - after one arm each side - Do both arms up to side bend.



## Shoulder Shrugs+

Gentle shoulder shrugs-rolls, neck movements up/down, ear to shoulder, side turns.



## Side Stretch

Stretch arms out, open the sides & expand the ribs, this time could add a balance with leg up/out to side. Both sides.



## Standing Side Twist

Slow, gentle twist from the waist-with the breath, small relaxed movement- no jerking, avoid if causes discomfort or pain. Breathe; hold as able up to 3-5 breaths. Both sides.



## Forward Fold

Could use a chair or block for support. Bend knees slightly & fold torso over legs, moving from the hips, not the lower back. Raise up to hands on thighs & then if possible use core to raise one arm at a time



## Chair Pose

Inhale & raise arms above your head or in front - bend knees, weight into your heels.



## Tree Pose

Weight onto one foot, keep hips square, bend opposite leg, -may keep toes on floor, raise leg & arms as able. Both sides.



## Savasana

Could be on bed or on bench. Awake, yet completely relaxed - just notice/observe...

