



## Gentle Yoga for Kids or Seniors




**Session includes posture, breathing, stretches and relaxation – time: 15 to 20 minutes**

Keeping physically active is key to a healthy lifestyle. Gentle Yoga was developed so anyone could do it. The exercises can all be adapted to accommodate anyone’s physical limitations. If you feel pain, back off the stretch until you feel comfortable. There should be no pain and no strain in Gentle Yoga. Each stretch should feel good. Listen to your body and be gentle. *(GENTLE YOGA FOR ALL, New River Health Association, Scarbro, WV, instructional manual.)*

Regular exercise and stretching can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it has been a while since you have exercised and you have health issues or concerns, please talk to your primary care provider before starting any new exercise routine.

Instructions: Gentle Yoga was designed to be done with an instructor so, it works best that way. Obviously, while we are all shut in, we must improvise. If you can, have someone read the instructions while a second person does the exercise and then switch. If that is not possible, you can do it alone, but you will need to read through it a couple times and figure out how to do each pose. The “Helps to” column is just for your information.

<p><b>“ POSTURE:</b></p> <p>While sitting upright in a chair, turn feet so they are parallel to one another. Bring shoulders up towards ears and move shoulder blades back toward one another. Bring rib cage forward and lift your heart. Relax your lower back. Bring ears over shoulders and shoulders over hips. Now we are ready to start.</p>		<p><b>Helps to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce headaches, neck and shoulder pain.</li> <li>• Alleviate lower back pain</li> <li>• Improve breathing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Belly Breathing – 1 minute</b></p> <p>Continue sitting up straight. Spread your fingers low across your belly. Slowly inhale through your nose. As you exhale, push firmly on your belly in and up, gently moving the air out with your hands. When you inhale, feel your lower belly expand under your hands (like filling a balloon). As you exhale, slowly press in and up again with your hands, then relax. Repeat – inhale and fill up with air; exhale, moving the air out.</p>		<p><b>Helps with:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stress</li> <li>• Emotional balance</li> <li>• Relaxation</li> <li>• Rehabilitation of chronic lung disease</li> <li>• Muscle tone in chest and belly</li> </ul>

<p><b>Warm up NECK STRETCHES – 1 minute 30 seconds</b></p> <p>Bring chin down toward the center of the chest. Lift heart and lengthen rib cage. Take one ear toward shoulder (can stretch down with opposite hand toward floor to enhance stretch) Bring your head and chin back to center. Bring chin down toward the center of the chest. Take other ear toward other shoulder.</p>		<p><b>Helps to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loosen neck muscles</li> <li>• To improve range of motion</li> <li>• To drive better</li> </ul>
<p><b>ELBOW ROLLS – 1 minute</b></p> <p>Sit straight – breathe normally. Touch the top of your shoulders with your fingertips, and raise your elbows straight out to your sides. Slowly circle your elbows forward and around. Do 4 of these. Relax. Now change directions and do 4 more. Repeat</p>		<p><b>Helps to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen upper back, shoulders and arms</li> <li>• Loosens chest and strengthens respiratory muscles to improve breathing</li> <li>• Strengthens muscles we need for dressing, grooming and other daily activities that require arm strength</li> </ul>
<p><b>Arm Swing – 1 minute 30 seconds</b></p> <p>Come to edge of chair &amp; hold on for support. Bend knees, feet parallel, stretch your arms straight ahead level with your shoulders and exhale. As you inhale, lift your face to the ceiling – opening arms to the side. As you exhale, bring your chin to your chest, round your back, and bring your palms together in front of you. Continue the motion, inhaling as you open and exhaling as you round your back, bringing your palms together.</p>		<p><b>Helps with:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To expand the rib cage, to increase circulation</li> <li>• Invigorates and energizes, relieve breathing problems and depression</li> <li>• Digestion</li> <li>• Improves motion in spine</li> <li>• Helps to reduce back pain from bulging discs</li> <li>• Strengthens shoulder and upper back</li> </ul>

### Seated Leg Lift – 2 minutes 30 seconds

Sit straight up in your chair with hips against the back of your chair for support. Breathe in and out three times through your nose. Exhale fully. Now inhale, lift one leg, keeping knee straight. Flex toes back toward your forehead – feel the stretch. Point and flex your toes and rotate your foot muscles – do 8 of these if you can comfortably. Exhale as you slowly lower your leg to the floor. Relax. Repeat with the other leg. **Repeat once more on each leg.**



### Helps with:

- Range of motion in the hip joint
- Strengthens the abdominal, hip and knee muscles and muscles in the back of lower leg
- Improves walking and stair climbing ability
- Improves balance and confidence
- Brings circulation down into the feet

### FROG POSE - 30 to 35 seconds

Come to edge of chair and place hands on knees. As you inhale lift the face & heart toward sky keeping tongue off roof of mouth. Take waistline toward back of chair. As you exhale round back, chin comes toward the chest. Slowly come back up to center. **Repeat three more times.**



### Helps:

- Improve digestion
- Limbers back and maintains flexibility in spine

### SNEAKY BUNS – 35 seconds

Start on the edge of the chair, knees bent and together with feet flat on the floor, hands just outside of hips, and elbows slightly bent. Squeeze knees and "cheeks" together tightly while pushing down with hands on chair, extending elbows (you'll sit taller, but you should never leave your seat). **Repeat three more times**



### Helps:

- Firm your behind
- Firm inner thighs
- Firm triceps

### Side Stretch – 1 minute 45 seconds

Sit straight, let your arms relax at your sides – Breathe in and out 3 times through your nose. Inhales, lifting left arm up next to your ear. As you exhale, bend from the waist to one side holding the side of your chair with the right hand for support. Inhale coming back to center and relax. Now switch sides. Repeat to the other side. Repeat twice more on each side, alternating. Feel the stretch from your hips along your entire side and out your fingertips.



Helps:

- Strengthen muscles
- Increases mobility of the spine and hip joints
- Tone waistline
- Breathing problems by strengthen respiratory muscles

### Seated Twist – 1 minute

Sit straight with feet flat on the floor. Breathe in and out three times. Place your left arm across the back of the chair. Sit up straight, and inhale. Exhale as you slowly turn toward the right side as far as you can and bring your right hand to either the side of your chair or to the wrist of your hand. Pull with your right hand to get the greatest stretch. Focus on one spot, looking as far over your left shoulder as you comfortably can. Hold for three seconds. Now exhale as you slowly return to face the front and relax. Repeat on the other side. This exercise is done only once on each side.



Helps:

- Range of motion of shoulder joints
- Strengthens muscles in shoulders and upper arms
- Loosens the chest wall and strengthens respiratory muscles to improve breathing
- Strengthens muscles for grooming, dressing and other daily activities that require arm strength

### FOOT FLAPS – 45 seconds

Sit up straight and stretch one leg out while holding on to the edge of your seat. Turn your foot around in circles 8 times one direction and 8 times the opposite direction. Now spread toes as wide as you can and then tighten them four times. Switch legs and repeat.

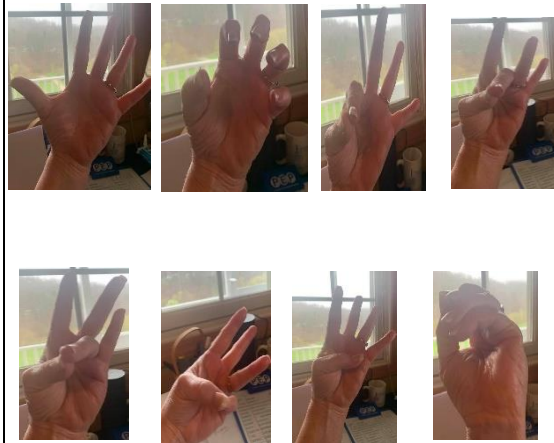


Helps:

- Reduce arthritis pain by increasing circulation
- Strengthens arches and muscles in feet

**HAND EXERCISES – 1 minute 30 seconds**

Sit straight and breathe normally. Raise your hands up with elbows bent until your hands are just slightly in front of your shoulders. Stretch your fingers apart as far as they will go, then make a claw. Stretch – claw 3 more times. Now touch your thumb to the fore finger slowly, then do each finger. Finally pull your thumb into the palm of your hand as if to show four fingers on each hand. Do this 4 times. Now take one hand and place on the tips of your fingers of the other hand and gently pull finger back as far as you can without pain, then push them down toward the ground. Do this twice on each hand. Now do four wrist rolls with both hands at the same time each direction.

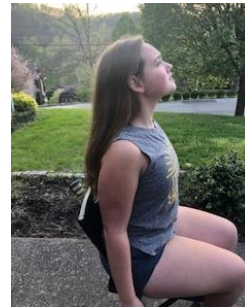


**Helps:**

- Relieve pain and symptoms of arthritis
- Strengthens grip and use of hands
- Increases muscle tone in the lower arm

**CORE STRENGTH – 1 minute**

Sit straight all the way back in your chair with your feet flat on the floor. Breathe in and out three times. Sit up tall and roll your shoulders back towards your ears and down along your spine to open your chest. Exhale and draw your belly button towards your spine (the back of the chair) and hold for a count of 3. Repeat this three times.



**Helps:**

- To strengthen core muscles

**Hug Stretch – 1 minute**

Sit straight and breathe in and out 3 times through your nose. Inhale and raise your face to the ceiling – bringing arms out to both sides. Exhale and round your back – bring your chin to your chest and wrap your right arm over your left arm to give yourself a hug. Inhale – open the hug and bring your face towards the ceiling. Exhale – bring your left arm over your right arm and give yourself another hug. Take a deep breath and be thankful for your health.



**Helps:**

- Overall mental health
- To relax
- Calm anxiety

**Relaxation- 1 minute 30 seconds**

**This is a great relaxation and rest sequence that you can use anytime you need to relax and refresh. It does not have to be done with the “Gentle Yoga” to be useful.**

Sit comfortably in your chair, hands in your lap. Close your eyes. Give your body permission to relax completely. Be as limp as a rag doll. Pause for 1 full minute. (Younger kids may only be able to do this for 30 seconds). Take a deep breath through your nose, breathing in completely; then exhale through your nose. Inhale again – exhale and relax. Focus on your breath as you inhale again, then exhale, letting your whole body relax and melt into your chair. Just breathe normally now. Pause---absorbing how peaceful you feel. Now gently take a breath and stretch as you open your eyes.



**The total session is about 17 minutes long, so you should plan 20 minutes for transition.**

**Live United**



**Live Drug Free**

*Credits: Alice Christensen, Developer of Easy Does It Yoga and funded by the Robert C. Byrd, Center for Rural Health at Marshall University; Training funded by the Merck Foundation; Arrangement and choice of exercise set: Angela D. Saunders, Director of the Prevention Empowerment Partnership; Special thanks to the position models: Brooklyn Johnson, PEP Youth Member, Tyler and Abrianna Jarrett, community members.*



Prevention Empowerment Partnership

**LIVE UNITED**



United Way  
of the River Cities