

Chakra Yoga Handouts



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Yoga Classes on Fridays 6.30pm @ the Mudgeeraba Foundation Centre,
7 School ST Mudgeeraba. Casual \$15

Yoga classes on Mon and Wed 7pm @The Beach House Gym on 104
Currumbin Ck Rd. Casual \$18

Yoga During Your Pregnancy.....

It is beneficial to do yoga even if suffering from common pregnancy niggles such as constipation, tired legs, back and shoulder muscle tension, depression, and anxiety. Most women who do yoga from conception and during pregnancy experience a more comfortable pregnancy, a smoother childbirth, and are able to recover faster after child birth.

Don't push yourself if you become short of breath, tired, or in pain. Listen to your body, and work with it, not against it. When feeling faint, sit down with your head between your knees, or lie down on your side in recovery position.

Please seek medical clearance from your doctor or health practitioner before starting any fitness program.

PELVIC FLOOR EXERCISES: Your pelvic floor muscles surround the anus, vagina, and urethra, and also support the weight of the pelvic and abdominal organs. The ligaments and joints of the body soften during pregnancy.

They are also known as Kiegal exercises or "squeeze your weez". Practice these whenever you need to sit out a pose in a class that is not advisable for pregnancy.

Also while passing urine, try stopping your flow once or twice and then continue to completely empty the bladder. This helps you identify the pelvic floor muscles. Once you are able to feel the pulling up and tightening action, you can do these exercises anywhere several times a day, e.g. when stopping at a traffic light, during ads on T.V., or before going to sleep at night. Pull up from the back and to the front, hold for a count of five, and then let go. Repeat five times.

THE PELVIC TILT: This means tucking in the tail-bone so as to avoid an arch in the lower back, known as lordosis. Remember to do this during standing, sitting and kneeling poses. It is particularly important during pregnancy because the weight of the growing baby can create a painful lordosis of the lower back.

GOLDEN RULES

TAILOR POSE:

This promotes a flexible pelvis, and prepares for an easier birth. Return to this pose whenever you need to sit out a pose in a class that is not advisable for pregnancy. Sit with the soles of the feet together, and knees bent, so that the heels are tucked close to the groin. DO NOT bounce or force the knees downwards. Allow gravity to do it, or if the inner thigh muscles are very tight, you can also support the thighs with cushions.

STANDING:

As your baby grows, your centre of gravity changes, therefore it is best to stand with your feet wider apart, so as to give yourself a stronger support base.

SUN SALUTATION:

Place your feet hip width apart throughout.

Replace Cobra pose with Sphinx pose (aka crocodile pose).

Replace Upward Dog with Cat Stretch if in third trimester.

JUMPING OR HOPPING:

This can stress your pelvic floor muscles. Instead of jumping your feet apart or together during a movement, step them up one at a time.

STANDING FORWARD BENDS:

Keep your legs apart to avoid compressing your abdomen.

Do not lock your knees straight, when bending down. Keep them softly bent. You have to avoid hyper-extending any joints while pregnant because they become over flexible during pregnancy.

If you feel dizzy with your head down, lift your head, bend your knees and bring your elbows or hands to your thighs. Or you can do a sitting forward bend instead.

THREE LEGGED DOG:

Do not do three legged dog while pregnant because your sacroiliac joints are too soft due to the pregnancy hormone *relaxin*. Instead do Downward Dog, or move down to Cat Stretch if you are into your third trimester.

LUNGES:

Keep your tail bone tucked under so as not to add load to your lower back.

STANDING BALANCE POSES:

Instead of standing one leg, keep both feet on the ground with the weight mostly on the main leg, and the other foot just touching the floor to keep your balance, eg Tree Pose, Eagle Pose.

You can also use the wall for support.

SITTING FORWARD BENDS:

Keep your legs apart to avoid compressing your abdomen.

SIT UPS:

Do not do sit ups that are stronger than you did before your pregnancy. Your abdominal muscles are being stretched to accommodate your baby, and will sometimes separate, usually returning to normal after childbirth. Strong abdominal sit ups may prevent the muscles joining up again, and could resulting herniation of the abdominal muscles.

Do not get up from the floor by sitting straight up. Instead get up gently by rolling onto your side and pushing up by your arms.

BACK BENDS:

Do not hyperextend your back. This means to avoid arching your back into an excessive curve when standing, or lying. As your pregnancy hormones (*relaxin*) soften all joints and ligaments, you could overstretch the lower back, making recovery difficult after childbirth.

BRIDGE POSE & THE WHEEL:

Do not do the wheel, but you can do a gentle bridge pose instead.

Keep your feet hip width apart and a comfortable distance from you buttocks. On the exhalation, gently press your lower back onto the floor, and then as you inhale, lift the pelvis, curling the tailbone under.

CAT POSE:

During cat pose/stretch, avoid excessive arching of the spine by doing gentle movements. Keep your neck level with the rest of your spine by looking just ahead, not up to the ceiling.

HINDI SQUATS:

Place feet wide apart so that your knees can open outwards allowing your belly to fit in between your thighs. Turn your feet out, and press down all four corners of your feet. If feeling unsteady, position your back against a wall. Bring your hands to prayer position and press your elbows against your inner thighs.

Squatting, using the wall for support, relieves backache, strengthens back and thigh muscles, and increases flexibility of the pelvis.

LYING ON YOUR TUMMY:

Avoid any position that may compress your baby as it grows in size. This includes cobra and sphinx, unless you can protect your belly with large cushions.

Some core/back poses can be modified by doing them on hands and knees.

COBRA POSE & SPHINX POSE:

Cobra is not recommended due to the possibility of compressing your baby and hyper-extending the lower back. Do sphinx instead, and as your belly gets bigger, use cushions underneath to avoid compressing your baby.

BOW POSE:

Avoid this pose as this would compress your baby and overextend your lower back. You can do a gentle sphinx pose instead, as described above, or do a gentle camel pose with knees wide and hands supporting your lower back.

TWISTS:

Twists can be modified by turning away from the bent knee instead of turning over it. This avoids putting pressure on the abdomen.

THREE LEGGED DOG:

Avoid doing **the three legged dog, and the standing split**, as these may overstretch your sacroiliac joints. Instead stay in downward dog, or do a gentle cat stretch.

TOE POINTING:

Do not excessively point your toes, as this can cause uncomfortable cramps. If you do find you are cramping a lot, see your naturopath about some magnesium amino acid chelate salts which are safe to take while pregnant. Your GP can also order a blood test to check your magnesium levels.

RELAXATION AND MEDITATION:

It is best not to lie flat on your back, for long, after the second trimester, or any time if it makes you feel uncomfortable and faint. As your baby grows heavier, when you lay on your back, the baby's weight can press down on your large blood vessels (i.e. the inferior vena cava). This would make you feel sick and dizzy, and could delay circulation and oxygen flow to the baby.

DO NOT allow your lower back to arch while **lying on your back**. Support it by raising your legs on a support. If doing a hamstring stretch while lying on your back, support the back and abdominals by holding your foot in a sling. After the second trimester it is best to do standing hamstring stretches, using a chair for support.

Instead of lying flat on your back, use the recovery position instead
You can also place a cushion under your head and a cushion between your knees.

Lying on your left side instead of your right encourages your baby to get in the proper position for birth.

IN GENERAL

DO NOT try to keep up with the rest of the class if you feel tired at any time. This is especially so if you are partaking in a general class where not everyone is pregnant! Rest in Child's Pose or Seated Star Pose (crossed legged but with knees and hips more open).

DO NOT exercise if you feel pain in your lower back or pelvic floor, pain and sudden swelling in one or both legs, nausea, dizziness, or difficulty walking, vaginal bleeding, or waters breaking.

It is important to empty your bladder toilet before and after a yoga session. Drink a glass of filtered, alkaline water a half before and after a class.

Do not eat a heavy meal before a class. Eat 2 hours before exercising, or have a light snack.

CAUTION WITH LIFTING HEAVY WEIGHTS. Avoid lifting heavy weights. Bend and lift from your thighs, holding the weight close to your chest, and do not twist as you straighten up as you lift.

DO NOT do **contact sports**, jogging, horse riding and skiing. DO NOT engage in jerky or bouncy movements.

DO NOT wear **high heels**. DO NOT **stand for long periods** at a time.