



PHILIPS

Lifeline

Medical Alert Service

The ultimate guide to yoga for seniors

Help prevent falls by strengthening your body and mind to protect your well-being and independence.



“If exercise could be packaged into a pill, it would be the single most widely prescribed and beneficial medicine in the nation.”¹

Why is yoga important for seniors?

It’s widely accepted that regular exercise is important for all ages, but it’s especially true for seniors. Declines in physical activity can affect their healthy aging. For an older adult, beginning an exercise regimen can be intimidating, especially if one is out of shape, dealing with multiple chronic conditions, or just doesn’t know where to start. High-impact exercises – such as running, cycling, and weightlifting – may be too strenuous. But starting a beginner yoga routine is a great, low-impact exercise option for them. It’s an excellent choice to help with balance while keeping their body strong, without the stress on muscles and joints that come from high-impact exercise.

Yoga is one of the most popular mind and body exercises, with more than 35 million US adult users currently practicing.² Unlike many other forms of physical exercise, yoga is a combination of breathing exercises, meditation, and physical postures used to achieve a state of relaxation and a balance of mind, body, and spirit.²

The two most practiced steps (“limbs”) in the US are postures (“asanas”) and breath control (“pranayama”). These make up the physical poses and breathing practices of hatha yoga and meditation.

Hatha yoga is a gentle form of exercise that has a positive impact on physical, mental, and emotional well-being. It also could be a promising intervention to manage fear of falling and improving balance in older adults.³

Because asanas can be easily adapted to fit anyone’s needs, yoga is one of the best forms of exercise for older adults to build strength while helping to improve both their flexibility and balance. It can also help boost their mood by reducing anxiety, lowering their heart rate and blood pressure, and improving their sleep.

1. Butler R.N. (1978). Public Interest Report No. 23: Exercise, the Neglected Therapy. The International Journal of Aging and Human Development, 8 (2), 193–195. <https://doi.org/10.2190/AMIW-RABB-4PJY-P1PK>
2. Clarke T., Barnes P., et al., “Use of Yoga, Meditation, and Chiropractors Among US Adults Aged 18 and Over,” Center for Disease Control and Prevention, NCHS Data Brief, No. 325. Nov. 2018.
3. Schmid A., Van Puymbroeck M., Kocaja D.M., “Effect of a 12-week yoga intervention on fear of falling and balance in older adults: a pilot study.” Arch Phys Med Rehabil. 2010 Apr; 91(4):576–83.



“Exercise shows a positive effect on injurious falls, including the most severe falls and those that result in medical care.”⁴

The benefits of yoga for seniors

Regular physical activity is essential for healthy aging. It can help muscles grow stronger so seniors can continue doing their day-to-day activities and remain independent. Strength training can also reduce signs and symptoms of many diseases and chronic conditions, such as arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and osteoporosis.

Activities that help seniors with balance can help improve their ability to resist forces within or outside the body that cause falls. Engaging in multicomponent physical activities such as yoga can help reduce risk of injury from falls and help improve physical function.⁵

Yoga can be characterized as light-intensity physical activity. It can also be considered both aerobic and muscle strengthening, depending on the type and postures practiced.⁵

Research finds yoga can boost brain function and improve cognitive ability. Practicing hatha yoga three times a week for eight weeks showed significantly improved performance on executive function measures of working memory capacity, in addition to efficiency of mental set-shifting and flexibility.⁶

4. Molina P., “The effect of fall prevention exercise programmes on fall induced injuries in community dwelling older adults: systematic review and meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials.” *BMJ*. 2013 Oct 29;347:f6234. doi: 10.1136/bmj.f6234. PMID: 24169944; PMCID: PMC3812467.
5. “Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition,” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2018.

6. Gothe N. P., et al. “The effects of an 8-week Hatha yoga intervention on executive function in older adults.” *The Journals of Gerontology, Series A, Biological sciences and medical sciences* vol. 69,9 (2014): 1109-16. doi:10.1093/gerona/глу095





Making yoga accessible for all seniors

As a healthcare professional, it's important to remember that yoga can offer extraordinary health benefits for seniors when it supplements traditional medical care – even for those with limited mobility. (There are some medical conditions for which yoga is not recommended, such as unregulated high blood pressure, Parkinson's, or Alzheimer's. Seniors should always check with their physician before starting any exercise program, including yoga.)

Mind-body exercises are beneficial for improving global reasoning, cognitive flexibility, working memory, verbal fluency, and learning in cognitively intact or impaired older adults.⁸

Interventions involving meditative movements may serve as a promising opportunity to improve psychological health, such as quality of life, depressive symptoms, and fear of falling.⁹

Yoga interventions for older adults are a safe, feasible, and effective alternative practice for maintenance of cognitive functions both in age- and disease-related decline.¹⁰ Yoga can be practiced in as little as 30 minutes per day, without the need for expensive equipment, while still helping to improve physical function.

Rather than traditional yoga, seniors with limited mobility can practice chair yoga, either from a seated position or standing behind a chair for support. Chair yoga also has been shown to reduce their fear of falling.¹¹

“Exercise reduces fall rates in older people by 21%. Greater fall prevention effects – rate reductions of 39% – are seen from programs that challenge balance and involve more than three hours per week of exercise.”⁷

7. Whitney J. C., “Exercise to prevent falls in older adults: an updated systematic review and meta-analysis.” *British Journal of Sports Medicine* (2017), 51, 1750–1758.
8. Wu C., et al., “Effects of Mind-Body Exercises on Cognitive Function in Older Adults: A Meta-Analysis.” *J Am Geriatr Soc.* 2019 Apr;67(4):749–758. doi: 10.1111/jgs.15714. Epub 2018 Dec 18. PMID: 30565212.
9. Weber M., et al., “Effects of Mind-Body Interventions Involving Meditative Movements on Quality of Life, Depressive Symptoms, Fear of Falling and Sleep Quality in Older Adults: A Systematic Review with Meta-Analysis.” *Int J Environ Res Public Health.* 2020 Sep 9;17(18):6556. doi: 10.3390/ijerph17186556. PMID: 32916879; PMCID: PMC7559727.

10. Bhattacharyya K.K., et al., “Effects of yoga-related mind-body therapies on cognitive function in older adults: A systematic review with meta-analysis.” *Arch Gerontol Geriatr.* 2021 Mar-Apr;93:104319. doi: 10.1016/j.archger.2020.104319. Epub 2020 Dec 7. PMID: 33338831.

11. Galantino M., et al., “Safety and feasibility of modified chair-yoga on functional outcome among elderly at risk for falls.” *Int J Yoga.* 2012 Jul;5(2):146–50. doi: 10.4103/0973-6131.98242. PMID: 22870000; PMCID: PMC3410195

Top 7 benefits of yoga*

• **It keeps one’s mind sharp**

Yoga creates a quiet time that helps sharpen the mind.

• **It strengthens bones and joints**

Yoga prevents or slows down bone density loss and relieves joint stiffness and pain.

• **It improves one’s balance and stamina**

Yoga’s slow movements and holding poses help a person’s balance and improves strength.

• **It reduces stress**

Yoga’s postures and slow, controlled breathing can reduce stress.

• **It improves sleeping habits**

Stretches or breathing exercises before bedtime reduce insomnia.

• **It slows down aging**

Yoga improves circulation, slows the heart rate, and builds strength.

• **It reduces back pain**

Yoga strengthens back muscles while improving flexibility and stability.

Yoga and falls prevention

Taking steps to prevent falls should be a priority for all older adults. Yoga is an excellent way to reduce one’s risk of falling. Its slow movements, strengthening poses, and focused breathing improve a person’s balance, stability, and strength.

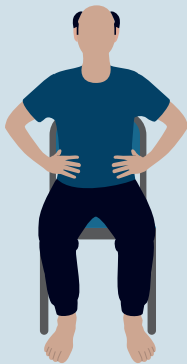
*According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/9-benefits-of-yoga

12 chair yoga poses for older adults

1. Ujjayi Breathing

This is a great starter pose: Sit up tall at the edge of your seat and place your hands on your waist. Take a deep breath in through the nose, expanding through your sides and abdomen, then exhale slowly.

Repeat for 10 breaths.



2. Cat-Cow

This pose helps to relieve back and neck tension. Inhale and arch your back to look up at the ceiling. Exhale, pulling your abdominals in and rounding your back as you bend forward.

Repeat this 5 times.



3. Circles

To release and relax hip muscles, circle your hips clockwise 5 times while seated without moving your upper body, then do the same counterclockwise 5 times.



4. Sun Salutation Arms

This pose lengthens the spine while releasing tension in the shoulders and neck. Sitting tall, breathe in and lift your arms up, pressing your palms overhead. While exhaling, float your arms back down to your sides.

Repeat 5 times.



Chair yoga poses for older adults

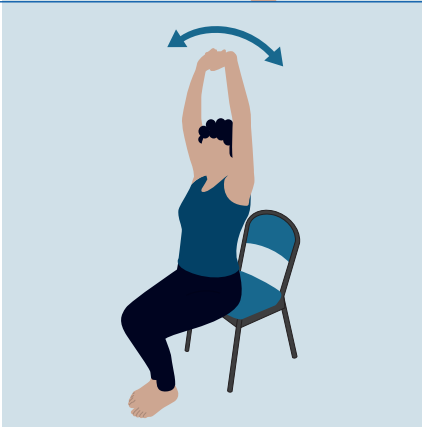
5. Sun Salutations with Twists

Repeat the previous exercise, adding a twist as you exhale.
Repeat 5 times on each side, holding the last twist for 5 seconds.



6. High Altar Side Leans

This pose stretches the spine and shoulders. Lift your arms and interlace your fingers in front of you. Turn your palms to the ceiling as you straighten your arms above your head.
Lean to the right for 3 breaths, then to the left for 3 more.



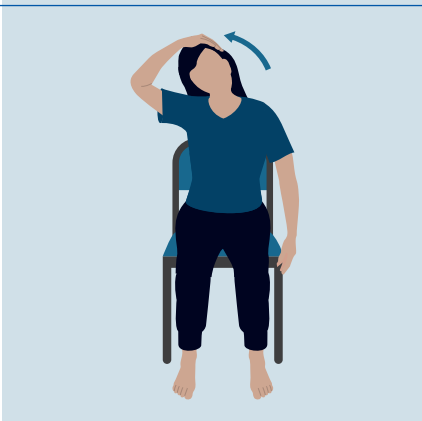
7. Eagle Arms

This pose helps reduce shoulder aches. Stretch your arms out to each side, bring one arm under the other at shoulder height and bend your arms at the elbows with palms together.
Hold for 5 breaths, unwind and repeat arms in opposite position.



8. Assisted Neck Stretches

The neck is a major stress area. Drape your right arm over your head until your palm reaches your left ear. Let your head fall to your right shoulder, and hold for 5 breaths.
Repeat on the opposite side.



9. Ankle to Knee

The hip area is also a stress spot. To loosen up, sit up straight, bend your right knee and place your right ankle over your left knee. For a deeper stretch, lean forward.
Hold for 5 breaths, then repeat on the opposite side.



10. Goddess with a Twist

This is another great hip stretch: Open your legs wide and point your toes out. Place your right arm inside your right leg, reaching for the floor. Lift your left arm toward the ceiling and look up to your palm.
Hold for 5 breaths, then repeat on the opposite side.



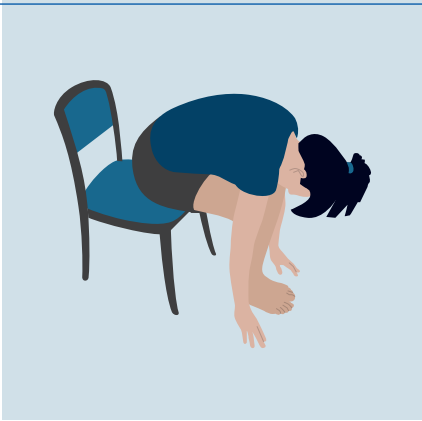
11. Warrior 2

This gives you a full-body stretch. Sit tall at the edge of your seat. Bend your right knee to the side and stretch your left leg out behind you as you press your outer heel down.
Hold for 5 breaths, then repeat on the opposite side.



12. Forward Fold

To finish, let blood flow to the brain. Sit tall and straight, then fold down over your legs, letting your head, neck, and body hang limp.
Hold for as long as you want before rolling back up to a sitting position.

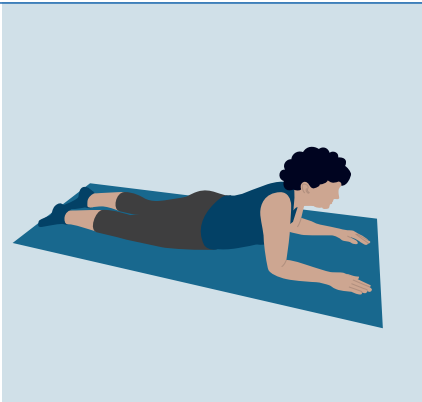


7 more yoga poses for seniors

1. Sphinx

For upper back strength, lie on your stomach with your forearms on the mat and your elbows under your shoulders. Press firmly into your arms and draw your shoulder blades together and down your back.

Lift your abdominals in and up and stay for 5 to 8 breaths.



2. Downward Facing Dog

This pose is great for joint health, flexibility, and body strength. Start on your hands and knees and lift your hips up and back. Use your core strength and legs to bring the weight back as much as possible.

Stay for 5 to 8 breaths and repeat 2 more times.



3. Bird Dog

This pose is good for abdominals and back support. Kneel and stretch one arm forward and the opposite leg back. Keeping your back flat, draw your belly button toward your spine. Stay for one breath and then switch sides.

Repeat 5 times.



4. Mountain Pose

This one helps with balance. Stand tall with your feet apart and aligned with your hips. Draw your abdominals in and up and relax your shoulders down and back.

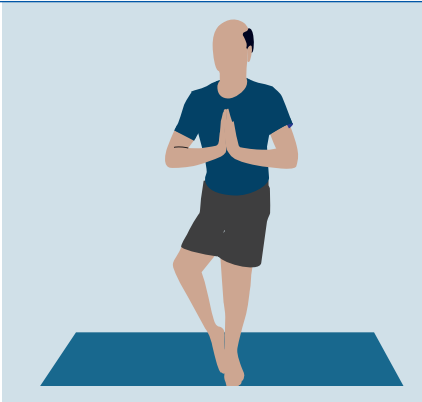
Breathe 5 to 8 breaths.



5. Tree Pose

The tree pose is good for balance and concentration. Stand tall and place one foot on the opposite leg or with one toe touching the ground.

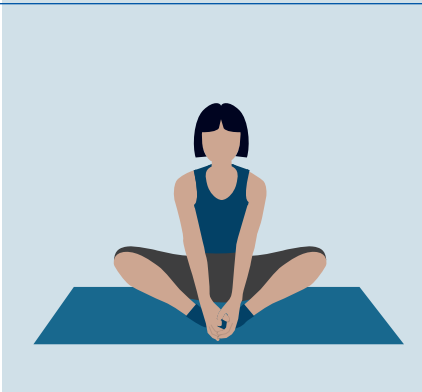
Open your leg to the side, bring your hands to a prayer position and hold for 5 to 8 breaths.



6. Cobbler's Pose

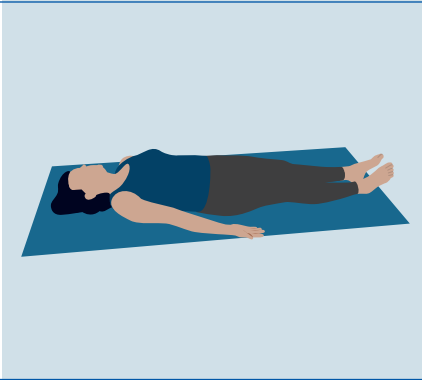
Sit tall and bring the soles of your feet together as you open your knees out to the sides. Fold yourself forward but try to prevent rounding the lower back.

Hold for 5 to 8 breaths.



7. Savasana

Savasana restores peace to the body and mind. Lie down and let the floor support you. Completely relax the muscles, breathe as you lie there and take a deep, restorative break.



NOTE: Always consult with your healthcare professional before using the poses in this booklet.

The exercises herein do not substitute for an exercise program provided by your health practitioner.

Stop if you experience any pain or discomfort while performing the poses in this booklet.



Fear of falling can start and accelerate a cycle of decline

Strength and balance exercise, such as yoga, is an important step in helping to prevent falls. But you might find that many of your seniors do not exercise regularly because they're afraid of falling. Having such a fear is a common and potentially disabling problem among seniors.

Approximately 25% to 55% of older adults report having a fear of falling. Among this group, between 20% and 55% report restricting their activity. This can lead to reduced social interaction and physical deconditioning.¹²

No one wants to fall. But if a fall or any other medical emergency occurs and a senior is unable or reluctant to press their PERS button, Philips Lifeline with AutoAlert¹³ – our proprietary fall detection technology – can automatically place a call for help.

Give your seniors the confidence to stay active knowing that having Philips Lifeline with AutoAlert means they always have quick and reliable access to help whenever they need it – anytime, anywhere.¹⁴

12. Murphy S., et al., "The development of fear of falling among community-living older women: predisposing factors and subsequent fall events." *The Journals of Gerontology, Series A, Biological sciences and medical sciences* vol. 58,10 (2003): M943-7. doi:10.1093/gerona/58.10.m943.
13. AutoAlert does not detect 100% of falls. If able, a subscriber should always push their alert button when they need help. Button signal range could vary due to environmental factors.

14. Coverage inside and outside the home provided where AT&T wireless network coverage is available. Recharging of the GoSafe pendant is done by the subscriber as needed by connecting it to its charger.
15. Claim based on the number of subscribers.
16. Up to 1 meter of water for 30 minutes. Refer to IFU for more details.

The Philips Lifeline difference

There's a reason why over 250,000 healthcare professionals have relied on Philips Lifeline, the #1 medical alert service in the US today.¹⁵ Philips Lifeline helps empower older adults to feel confident and independent at home.

Easy to use

Subscribers can press their waterproof¹⁶ help button at any time to request the help they need.

Technologically advanced

Philips Lifeline with AutoAlert can automatically place a call for help if it detects a fall – even if subscribers can't push their button.¹²

Responsive

The Philips Lifeline Medical Alert Service quickly connects a subscriber to one of our North American-based response centers to request the help they need in any situation—anytime, anywhere.¹⁷

Accommodating

Each subscriber decides how they would like to be helped – by a neighbor, family member, or an emergency professional.



Referring Philips Lifeline has never been easier!

 **1-855-655-4400, ext. 55000**

Call us today to activate your Philips Lifeline Referrals account so you can refer your seniors directly by phone. An intake specialist will answer your call, reach out to your senior on your behalf, and even follow up to let you know your senior has enrolled in the Philips Lifeline Medical Alert Service.

 **www.lifelinereferrals.com**

When you activate your Philips Lifeline Referrals account, you can make patient referrals online.



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