MONKIKA

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GENTLE CHAIR YOGA, ONE WEEK AT A TIME

28-Day Gentle Chair Yoga for Seniors

A 4-week plan you can follow at home with one sturdy chair. 13 poses with clear photos, a routine for each week and a chart to tick off your days.

13 poses
sitting, or standing with the chair

8–16 min
a day, growing a little each week

5 days
a week, with 2 easy days

General information, not medical advice. If you have a health condition, ask your doctor or physical therapist which poses are right for you before you start.

BEFORE YOU START

Set up safely, then go slowly

Your chair

- Sturdy, with no wheels, armrests if you have one.
- Pushed against a wall so it cannot slide.
- For the standing poses, hold the back of the chair.

You

- Comfortable clothes, flat shoes with grip or bare feet on a non-slip floor.
- Water nearby.
- Someone close by the first time you do the standing poses.

How to breathe

- In through your nose, out slowly through your nose or mouth.
- Move with your breath. Never hold it.
- If you lose your breath, pause and rest.

When

- Same time each day, for example after breakfast.
- Not right after a big meal.
- 5 days a week. On the other 2 days, take a short walk or rest.

No pain

A gentle stretch is fine. Pain is not. Come out of the pose slowly.

Small is fine

Move only as far as feels comfortable. Use the Easier option.

Skip if unsure

Every pose is optional. Leave out any pose that does not feel right.

Talk to your doctor first

- If you have a heart, lung, joint or balance problem, or any other health condition.
- If you have osteoporosis: some forward bends and twists may not suit you (poses 6, 8 and 10 are marked).
- If you have had recent surgery, or a hip, knee or back operation at any time.

Stop and get medical help right away if you have chest pain or pressure, trouble breathing, or feel faint or dizzy.

HOW THE 28 DAYS WORK

One new step each week

Each week keeps the poses you already know and adds a few new ones. By week 4 you do all 13, from sitting to standing with the chair.

WEEK 1 — about 8 minutes a day

Breathe and loosen up

Learn the slow breath and wake up the neck, shoulders, hips and ankles.

Poses: 1. Seated mountain breath, 2. Neck stretch, 3. Seated reach up, 4. Seated march, 5. Ankle flex and point

WEEK 2 — about 10 minutes a day

Open your spine

Add 2 gentle back moves: cat-cow and the side bend.

New: 6. Seated cat-cow, 7. Seated side bend

WEEK 3 — about 13 minutes a day

Twist and stretch

Add a soft twist, a leg extension and a forward fold.

New: 8. Seated twist, 9. Seated leg extension, 10. Seated forward fold

WEEK 4 — about 16 minutes a day

Stand with support

Add 3 moves with the chair as your support: stand up, lift, balance.

New: 11. Chair pose (sit to stand), 12. Side leg lift, 13. Supported balance

All 13 poses at a glance


1 Seated mountain breath


2 Neck stretch


3 Seated reach up


4 Seated march


5 Ankle flex and point


6 Seated cat-cow


7 Seated side bend


8 Seated twist


9 Seated leg extension

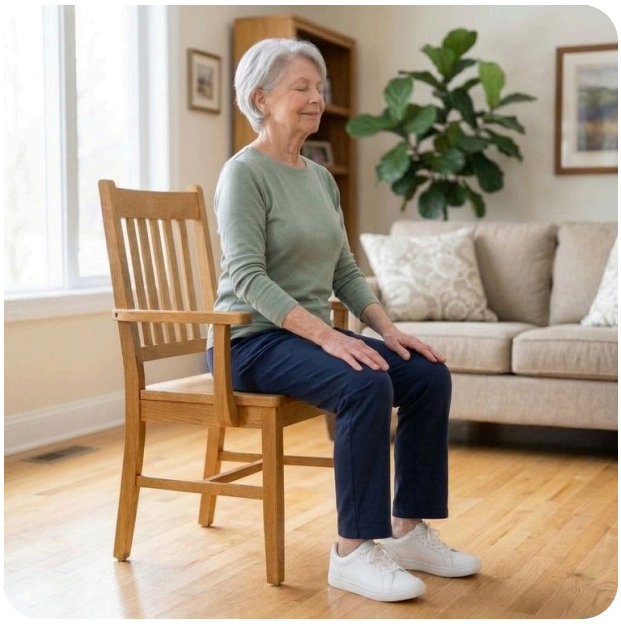

10 Seated forward fold


11 Chair pose (sit to stand)


12 Side leg lift


13 Supported balance

Every day ends the same way: sit tall, hands on your belly, eyes closed, and take 5 slow breaths (pose 1). It is the easiest part, and many people say it is their favorite.



1 SITTING · FROM WEEK 1

Seated mountain breath

1. Sit tall in the middle of the chair, back away from the backrest, feet flat and hip-width apart.
2. Rest your hands on your thighs. Relax your shoulders and close your eyes if you like.
3. Breathe in slowly through your nose for a count of 4, then out for a count of 6.

How much 5 slow breaths · about 1 minute

EASIER
Lean back against the chair.

HARDER
Count 5 in, 7 out.



2 SITTING · FROM WEEK 1

Neck stretch

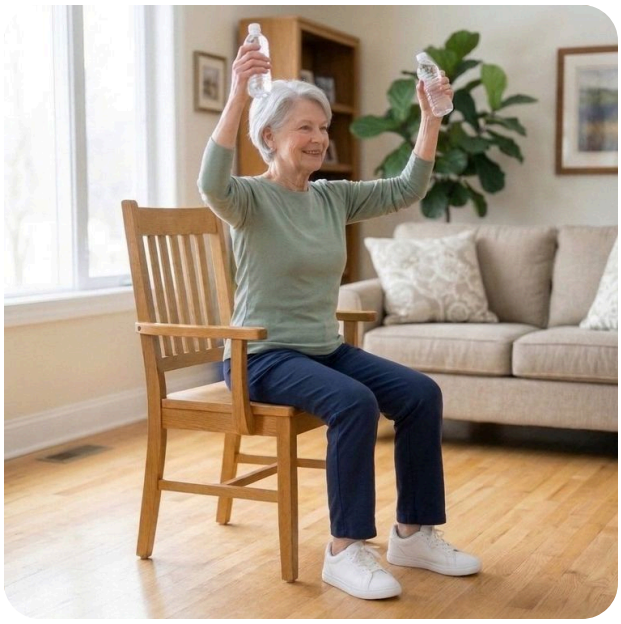
1. Sit tall, shoulders relaxed and low.
2. Slowly tilt your head to one side, ear toward your shoulder, without lifting the shoulder.
3. Stay for 3 breaths, bring your head back to the middle, then tilt to the other side.

How much 3 breaths each side · 2 times

EASIER
Tilt only a little.

HARDER
Then turn your head slowly to look over each shoulder.

Never roll your head in full circles. Stop if you feel dizzy or tingling in your arms.



3 SITTING · FROM WEEK 1

Seated reach up

1. Sit tall, feet flat, arms relaxed by your sides.
2. Breathe in and raise both arms in front of you and up over your head, elbows soft.
3. Breathe out and lower your arms slowly. Small water bottles in your hands are optional.

How much 5 to 8 times

EASIER
One arm at a time, or only to shoulder height.

HARDER
Hold two small water bottles, or stay up for 3 breaths.



4 SITTING · FROM WEEK 1

Seated march

1. Sit near the front of the chair, feet flat on the floor.
2. Lift your right knee a few inches, put the foot down, then lift the left knee.
3. Keep a steady rhythm and swing your arms gently if that feels good.

How much 1 minute

EASIER
Lift only your heels, toes stay down.

HARDER
March for 2 minutes.



5 SITTING · FROM WEEK 1

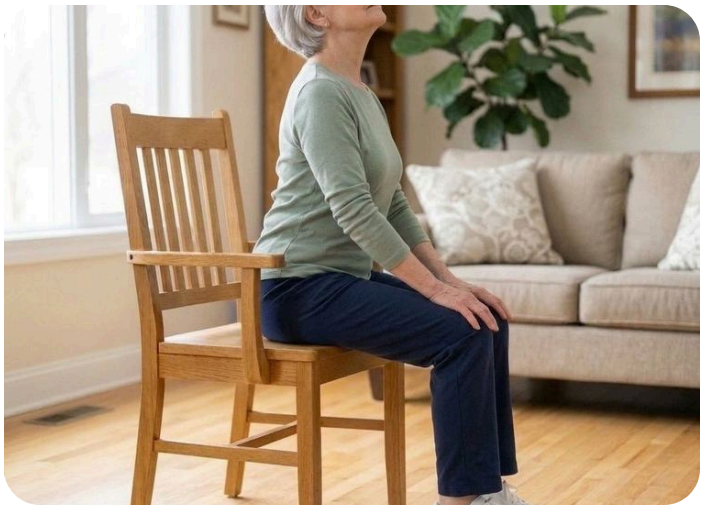
Ankle flex and point

1. Sit near the edge of the chair, legs out in front, heels on the floor.
2. Pull your toes toward you, then point them away from you.
3. Finish with 5 slow circles each way with both feet.

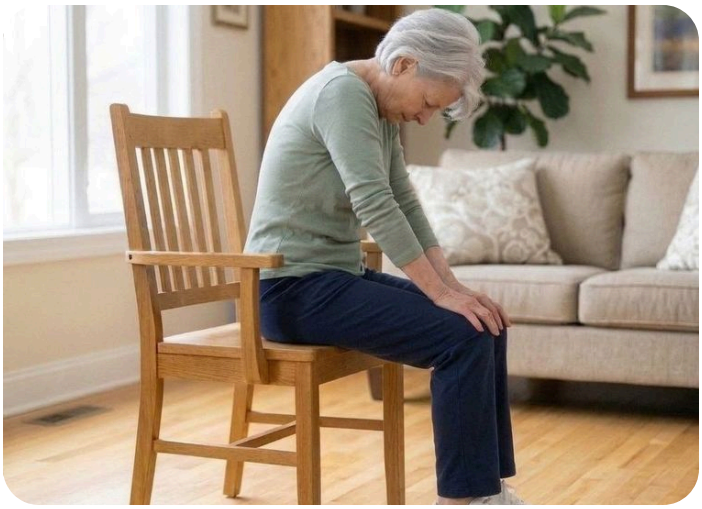
How much 5 times each way, then 5 circles

EASIER
One foot at a time, knee bent.

HARDER
Hold each position for 5 seconds.



Cow · breathe in



Cat · breathe out

6 SITTING · FROM WEEK 2

Seated cat-cow

1. Sit near the front of the chair, feet flat, hands on your knees.
2. Cow: breathe in, lift your chest forward and up and draw your shoulders back.
3. Cat: breathe out, round your back, chin toward your chest. Move slowly between the two.

How much 5 to 8 rounds

EASIER
Make the movement smaller.

HARDER
Pause for one breath in each shape.

If you have osteoporosis, skip the cat (rounded back) and ask your doctor about this pose.



7 SITTING · FROM WEEK 2

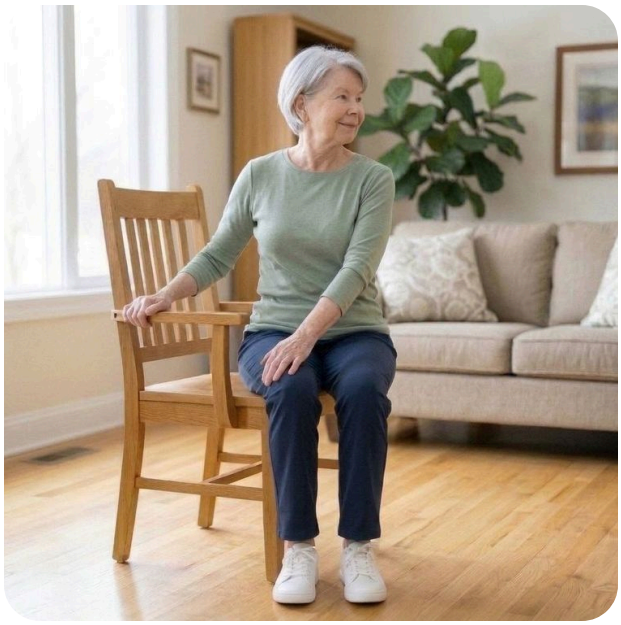
Seated side bend

1. Sit tall with both hips on the seat, feet flat.
2. Breathe in and raise one arm. Breathe out and lean gently to the other side, your other hand resting on the seat.
3. Stay for 3 breaths, come back up slowly, then switch sides.

How much 3 breaths each side · 2 times

EASIER
Hand on your shoulder instead of overhead.

HARDER
Stay for 5 breaths.



8 SITTING · FROM WEEK 3

Seated twist

1. Sit tall, feet flat, knees pointing forward.
2. Breathe in and grow tall. Breathe out and turn your chest and head gently to one side. One hand on the opposite knee, the other on the armrest.
3. Stay for 3 breaths, come back to the middle, then turn to the other side.

How much 3 breaths each side · 2 times

EASIER
Turn only your head and shoulders a little.

HARDER
Stay for 5 breaths.

Turn with your breath, never by pulling with your arms. Skip it if you have osteoporosis or have had back surgery, unless your doctor says it is fine.



9 SITTING · FROM WEEK 3

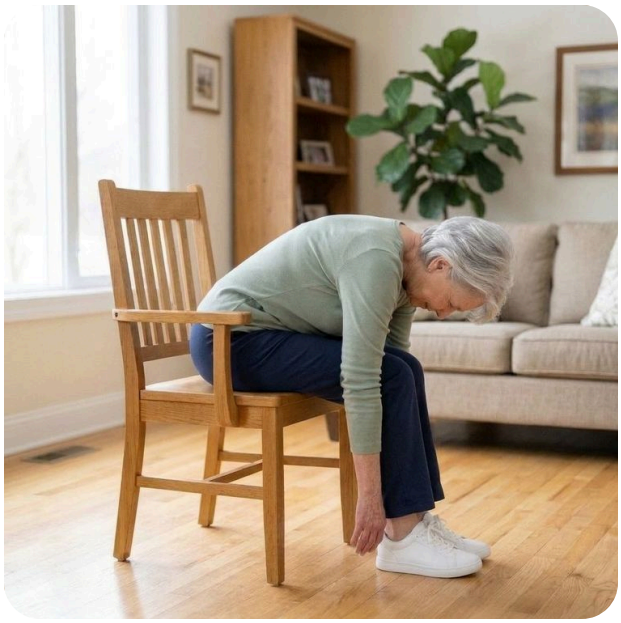
Seated leg extension

1. Sit back in the chair, feet flat on the floor.
2. Slowly straighten your right leg in front of you, as far as is comfortable.
3. Hold for a breath, lower it slowly, then switch legs.

How much 8 to 10 times each leg

EASIER
Straighten the leg only part of the way.

HARDER
Hold for 3 seconds and pull your toes toward you.



10 SITTING · FROM WEEK 3

Seated forward fold

1. Sit near the front of the chair, feet flat and wider than your hips.
2. Breathe out and bend forward from your hips. Let your arms hang down.
3. Stay for 3 breaths. Come up slowly, head last, using your hands on your thighs.

How much 3 to 5 slow breaths

EASIER
Hands on your knees, bend only a little.

HARDER
Stay for 5 to 8 breaths.

Skip it if you have osteoporosis, or if bending forward makes you dizzy. Sit up slowly.

Week 4 uses the chair as your support. Stand behind it and hold its back with both hands. Skip these moves if you feel unsteady, or ask someone to stand next to you.



11 SITTING, THEN STANDING · FROM WEEK 4

Chair pose (sit to stand)

1. Sit near the front of a sturdy chair with armrests, feet flat and hip-width apart.
2. Lean forward a little and stand up. Push on the armrests if you need to.
3. Sit back down slowly, with control, as if you were about to sit on a low stool.

How much 5 to 8 times

EASIER
Use your hands on the armrests.

HARDER
Cross your arms over your chest.



12 STANDING · HOLDING THE CHAIR · FROM WEEK 4

Side leg lift

1. Stand behind the chair, feet slightly apart, both hands on the back.
2. Slowly lift your right leg out to the side. Keep your back straight and toes facing forward.
3. Lower it slowly, then switch legs.

How much 8 to 10 times each leg

EASIER
Lift the leg only a few inches.

HARDER
Pause for a second at the top.



13 STANDING · HOLDING THE CHAIR · FROM WEEK 4

Supported balance

1. Stand tall behind the chair, both hands on the back.
2. Lift one foot a little off the floor and find your balance. Breathe slowly.
3. Put it down, then switch feet.

How much 10 seconds each foot · 3 to 5 times

EASIER
Keep your toes on the floor, only lift the heel.

HARDER
Hold with one hand, then with your fingertips. Keep the chair within reach.

Every day, to finish: sit tall, place your hands on your belly, close your eyes and take 5 slow breaths, longer on the way out. Then open your eyes, roll your shoulders back twice and stand up slowly.

Make it a habit

- Leave the chair where you will see it.
- Tick each day on the chart, last pages.
- Ask a friend or family member to join you, even on a video call.

Missed a day?

- Simply carry on the next day.
- Missed most of a week? Repeat that week.
- Tired or sore? Do only poses 1 to 5.

YOUR DAILY ROUTINE

Weeks 1 and 2

Week 1 · Breathe and loosen up

about 8 minutes a day

1	Seated mountain breath	5 slow breaths · about 1 minute
2	Neck stretch	3 breaths each side · 2 times
3	Seated reach up	5 to 8 times
4	Seated march	1 minute
5	Ankle flex and point	5 times each way, then 5 circles
1	Closing breath	5 slow breaths

This week Learn the slow breath first. On a busy day, even pose 1 and the closing breath count as a day done.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Routine ☐	Routine ☐	Routine ☐	Routine ☐	Routine ☐	Easy day: short walk ☐	Rest ☐

Week 2 · Open your spine

about 10 minutes a day

1–5	**Your week 1 routine, same order**	**about 8 minutes**
6	Seated cat-cow NEW	5 to 8 rounds
7	Seated side bend NEW	3 breaths each side · 2 times
1	Closing breath	5 slow breaths

This week Cat-cow and the side bend move your back in two directions. Keep both movements small at first.

Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14
Routine ☐	Routine ☐	Routine ☐	Routine ☐	Routine ☐	Easy day: short walk ☐	Rest ☐

YOUR DAILY ROUTINE

Weeks 3 and 4

Week 3 · Twist and stretch

about 13 minutes a day

1–7	**Your week 2 routine, same order**	**about 10 minutes**
8	Seated twist NEW	3 breaths each side · 2 times
9	Seated leg extension NEW	8 to 10 times each leg
10	Seated forward fold NEW	3 to 5 slow breaths
1	Closing breath	5 slow breaths

This week Take the twist and the forward fold most gently of all. Skip them if your doctor has told you to avoid bending or twisting.

Day 15	Day 16	Day 17	Day 18	Day 19	Day 20	Day 21
Routine ☐	Routine ☐	Routine ☐	Routine ☐	Routine ☐	Easy day: short walk ☐	Rest ☐

Week 4 · Stand with support

about 16 minutes a day

1–10	**Your week 3 routine, same order**	**about 13 minutes**
11	Chair pose (sit to stand) NEW	5 to 8 times
12	Side leg lift NEW	8 to 10 times each leg
13	Supported balance NEW	10 seconds each foot · 3 to 5 times
1	Closing breath	5 slow breaths

This week Keep the chair against a wall and hold its back with both hands. Have someone nearby the first few times.

Day 22	Day 23	Day 24	Day 25	Day 26	Day 27	Day 28
Routine ☐	Routine ☐	Routine ☐	Routine ☐	Routine ☐	Easy day: short walk ☐	Rest ☐

YOUR 28-DAY CHART

Tick a circle each day

Stick this page on the fridge. Write the date in each box. After day 28, keep going with week 4, or start again at week 1 with the Harder options.

Week 1 Breathe and loosen up	1 Routine 8 minutes Date ___ ○	2 Routine 8 minutes Date ___ ○	3 Routine 8 minutes Date ___ ○	4 Routine 8 minutes Date ___ ○	5 Routine 8 minutes Date ___ ○	6 Easy day short walk Date ___ ○	7 Rest Date ___ ○
Week 2 Open your spine	8 Routine 10 minutes Date ___ ○	9 Routine 10 minutes Date ___ ○	10 Routine 10 minutes Date ___ ○	11 Routine 10 minutes Date ___ ○	12 Routine 10 minutes Date ___ ○	13 Easy day short walk Date ___ ○	14 Rest Date ___ ○
Week 3 Twist and stretch	15 Routine 13 minutes Date ___ ○	16 Routine 13 minutes Date ___ ○	17 Routine 13 minutes Date ___ ○	18 Routine 13 minutes Date ___ ○	19 Routine 13 minutes Date ___ ○	20 Easy day short walk Date ___ ○	21 Rest Date ___ ○
Week 4 Stand with support	22 Routine 16 minutes Date ___ ○	23 Routine 16 minutes Date ___ ○	24 Routine 16 minutes Date ___ ○	25 Routine 16 minutes Date ___ ○	26 Routine 16 minutes Date ___ ○	27 Easy day short walk Date ___ ○	28 Rest You did it! Date ___ ○

How did it feel?

- Week 1: _____
- Week 2: _____
- Week 3: _____
- Week 4: _____

After 28 days

- Keep 5 days a week, or at least 2 to 3.
- Add a daily walk if you can.
- Try a gentle or seniors yoga class near you.

SOURCES AND SHARING

Where this plan comes from

Sources

- National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NIH): *Yoga for Health* and *Yoga for Older Adults*. Chair yoga as a gentler option for seniors with limited mobility; talk to your health care provider first if you have a medical issue.
- National Institute on Aging (NIH): *Workout to Go* and *Everyday Fitness Ideas: Staying Safe*. Seated march, ankle stretch, leg extension, sit to stand, side leg lift, standing on one foot, safety tips.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *Physical activity for adults 65 and older*. Weekly aerobic, muscle-strengthening and balance activities.
- Mayo Clinic: *Exercising with osteoporosis: Stay active the safe way*. Bending forward and twisting at the waist.
- Park J. et al. (2017), *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* 65(3): pilot trial of chair yoga twice a week for 8 weeks in older adults with hip or knee osteoarthritis.

Photos: illustrative images created for this guide. This plan is general information for healthy adults and is not a substitute for advice from your doctor or physical therapist.

Know someone who would like this? Print a copy for them, or send them the free download page:

monkikashop.com/gentle-movement

About MONKIKA

A small US store for comfort at home: heated knee, leg and foot massagers, with free, plain-English guides. Some people like to warm stiff knees or cold feet for a few minutes before they start, with a warm towel, a heating pad or a heated massager. Free guides: **monkikashop.com/our-blog**