

Week 3. Are you Sitting Comfortably?

YOGA OFF THE MAT

1. Notice when you find yourself sitting on a chair. Do you have an option to sit on the floor instead? For example, if you are watching TV, get on the floor and cycle through some of the seated postures we did in class.
2. Peter Blackaby suggests trying to find at least 3 ways of sitting that you feel reasonably comfortable in, so that you can move from one to the other when you start to feel a bit uncomfortable. As adults, it can take a long time for soft tissue to change sufficiently to make floor sitting comfortable. Forcing it will mean that our knees suffer. Sitting takes patience and persistence – better to sit for shorter times and then move to sit in a different way rather than forcing through anything.

YOGA ON THE MAT

Sitting postures in Yoga are the ones that connect us most directly into the tradition. If you have studied the ancient Patanjali yoga sutras or even the medieval Hatha Yoga Pradipika texts you will know that the aim is to find a posture that is comfortable and steady. The word asana literally means what it sounds like - to sit well on your arse!! You might experiment with ways that your movement practice prepares you for sitting still.

NOURISHING YOGA Moves with Sam Loe

Reclined Hip Exploration



The gentle hip opening sequence that uses the ground to create stability and the breath as a gentle guide to deepening and engaging with the posture. Explore your hip movements with a relatively straight leg as you go through flexion, external rotation, internal rotation and bend the knee to explore a fuller external rotation. For an extended version of the sequence we practiced in class see this video on Supta Padangustasana:

<https://vimeo.com/82437471>

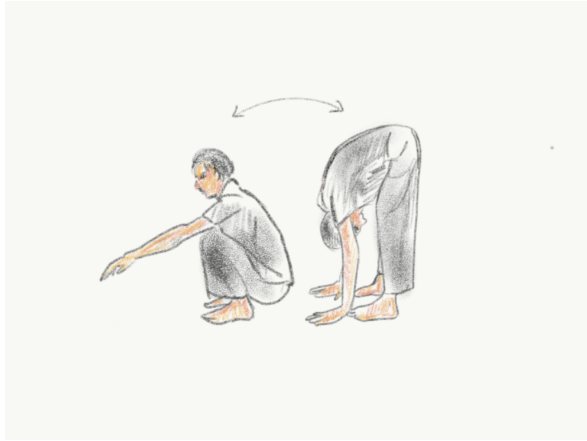
Cobbler Pose



Bring the soles of the feet together. If you are reasonably free in the hips, have the heels a hand-span away from the pubic bone. If the hips seem quite stiff, allow the feet to move further away until you feel comfortable. You may wish to do this posture with a wall behind you to support your spine. Allow the knees to relax down, if there is discomfort, place rolled up blankets under your thighs. Over time, sometimes years, the knees may go lower but pelvic skeletal structure may mean that they never reach the ground at all. Experiment with having the soles of the feet together or opening up towards you.

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Squatting



From standing, have the feet hip width apart and parallel and allow your body to softly roll into a forward bend like a rag doll. Keep the head and neck relaxed and start to bend the knees to a squatting position. Heels may need to lift off the ground...but still keep balance between inner and outer foot. Then straighten the legs back onto a forward bend. Repeat a few times. Can you keep the head and neck relaxed throughout the movement?

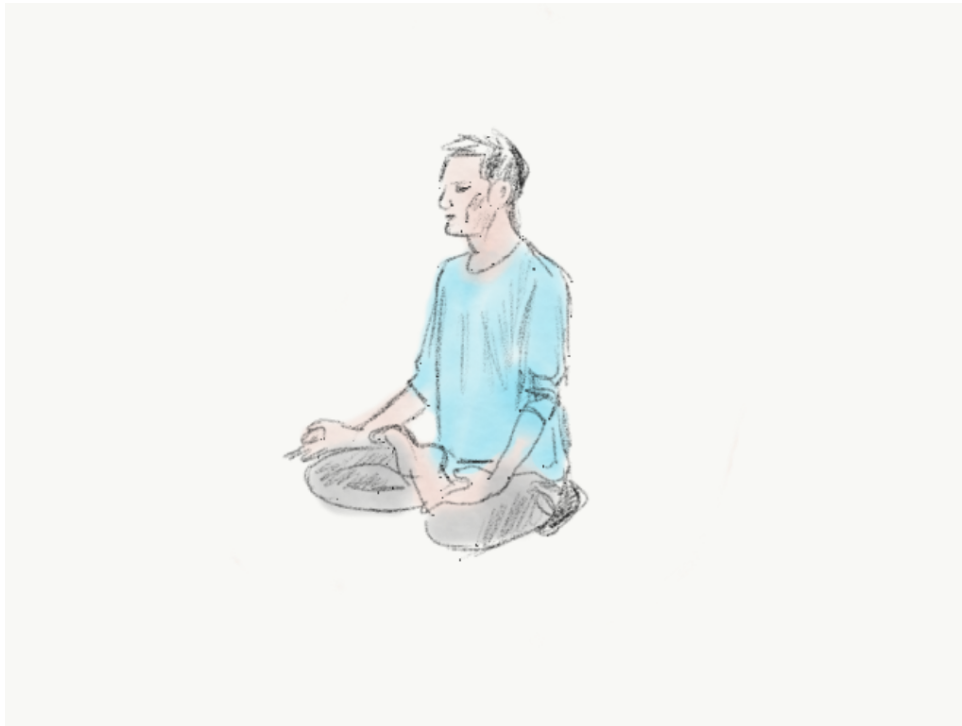
Side Sitting



From Peter Blackaby's 'Intelligent Yoga'. Kneel with your feet tucked under you. Take your arms out in front as you shift the weight of your pelvis off centre and to your left. Then keep the arms as counterweights as you explore shifting your pelvis to the right. Go from from one side to the other 3-5 times. Then sit with your feet out in front of you and again with your arms out in front helping to create momentum swing your legs from one side of your pelvis to the other. Notice how your centre has to co-ordinate this movement.

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Meditation Beginnings



Find your most comfortable sitting position which could be cross legged or kneeling and make a good surface to sit on so that there is an effortless feeling of ease at your Centre.

Observe where you experience the movement of breathing on the backdrop of stillness. Follow the sensation of inhale and then the sensation of exhale. In and out. In movement we connect with stillness. In stillness we might connect with the movement of the life force that is animating us. Connect with your breath as a tether to presence for 2-3 minutes at the end of your movement practice.