

What is Chair Yoga?

Chair Yoga is a gentle form of Yoga. With so many types of Yoga available, here is one that most of us can practice. Inversions and complicated maneuvers are not necessary in a Chair Yoga class.

All it takes is the motivation to get started. Most Chair Yoga classes don't use a Yoga mat, but the main prop used is a chair. This helps with balancing poses, and most common Yoga postures can be modified for the chair.

We have one particular Chair Yoga class, in Pawtucket, RI, that uses both chairs and Yoga mats. Within this type of Yoga class, you can cover standing, seated, supine, and prone postures. Most of our classes use the chair only, due to the difficulty of getting up, or down, on the floor.

Chair Yoga sessions are most commonly seen in senior centers, assisted living complexes, nursing homes, adult day care centers, and physical rehabilitation units. Clients can learn any number of Yoga postures, breathing techniques, meditation, and stage-by-stage relaxation, with the aid of a chair.

Standing postures, such as Triangle and Warrior variations, can be practiced seated, or standing, with the aid of a chair. You can practice Sun Salutations or Vinyasa, (flowing postures), from seated or standing positions.

Contrary to popular opinion, Chair Yoga is not for seniors only. Most of us take our good health for granted. The physically handicapped have no age boundaries, and they are very enthusiastic students.

Due to trauma, or a debilitating disease, at any time, any one of us could become physically handicapped. Most of us drive cars every day, and there is always a risk of an auto accident.

Some younger family members of seniors, and the physically handicapped, get involved in classes and private sessions. When family members participate in a class, or private session, it is always a good quality time for everyone.

Chair Yoga teachers must continually educate themselves, be knowledgeable of body mechanics, use of props, and a variety of ailments. This field requires teachers with compassion and the patience to help those who are doing their personal best.

It is also a field with growth opportunities; as the population is aging, there are not enough Chair Yoga teachers to go around. Some estimates indicate there are 1.5 million, or more, Yoga practitioners, over the age of 55, within the United States. Therefore, the demand far outweighs the supply of Yoga teachers for this particular field.

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Paul Jerard, is a co-owner and the director of Yoga teacher training at: Aura Wellness Center in, North Providence, RI. He has been a certified Master Yoga teacher since 1995. He is also a master instructor of martial arts, with multiple Black Belts, four martial arts teaching credentials, and was recently inducted into the USA Martial Arts Hall of Fame. He teaches Yoga, martial arts, and fitness to children, adults, and seniors in the greater Providence area. Recently he wrote: Is Running a Yoga Business Right for You? For Yoga students who may be considering a new career as a Yoga teacher.