



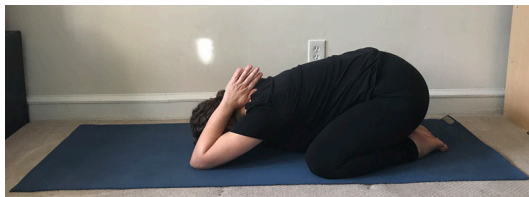
RESTORATIVE YOGA PRACTICE FOR WINTER

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POSE 1. CAT + COW WARM UP

To begin any Yoga asana practice, it's always wise to warm the body at least a little.

1. Start in a tabletop position. Your knees should be aligned directly below hips, your wrists directly below shoulders. Direct your attention to your breath moving in and out of the belly.
2. Inhale: Lift the tailbone skyward, drop the belly, lift your gaze (cow pose).
3. Exhale: Curl the tailbone down, reach the back of the heart skyward, tuck the chin (cat pose).
4. Repeat for 5-10 rounds of inhales and exhales.



POSE 2. WARMING WIDE-LEGGED CHILD'S POSE

A gentle hip opener can help release repressed emotions that live in the soft tissue around the pelvis. Letting the heart melt toward the ground reminds us of both inner wisdom and the insights that come when we take the time to look within ourselves.

1. From tabletop pose (see above), bring the big toes to touch, and separate the knees wide – maybe as wide as the mat. Walk the fingers forward and drop the heart as you rest the forehead (third eye) on the mat. Feel the tailbone drop toward the heels. Breathe.
2. Optional: To open and warm the arms more in this pose you can (a) tent the fingertips, and/or (b) bring hands to prayer then bend the elbows, letting the thumbs of the prayer hands come to the base of the skull.
3. Breathe here for about 5 inhales and exhales.

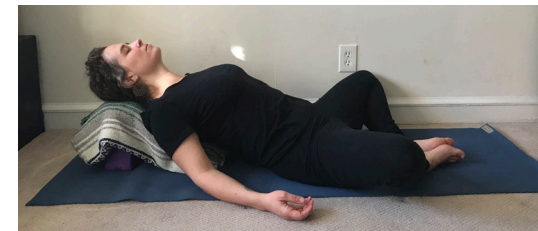
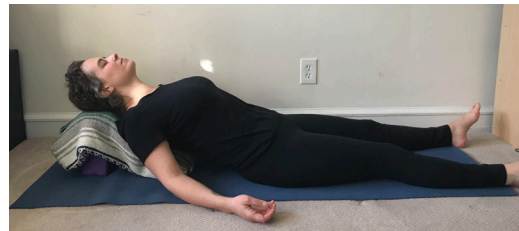
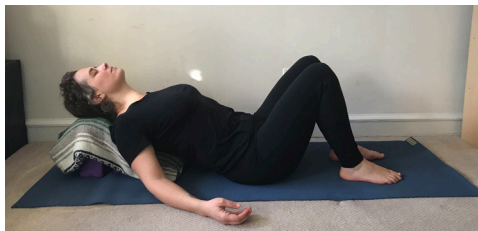
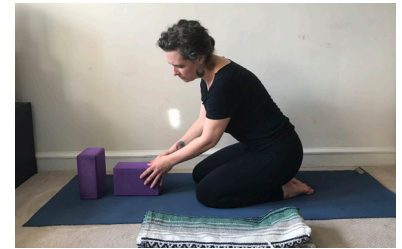
POSE 3. HEART BENCH

This heart-opening pose releases the shoulders to keep the heart open. This is a great pose for when you desire to remain open, both physically and emotionally. Imagine your heart is being held for you as you practice this.

Props needed: 2 Yoga blocks + 1 blanket.

Note: You can use a small box or comparably-sized object if you do not have Yoga blocks.

1. To set up this pose: Put one Yoga block on the tallest height at the top of your mat, then put a second block perpendicular to the other block and 1-2 inches apart from the first. This second block goes on the lowest height.
2. For extra comfort, place a folded blanket over the blocks without losing the shape of the heart bench made by the blocks.
3. Lay on your back so that the bottom edge of the block closest to you is around the middle of your back (the back of your heart).
4. Leave the knees bent, extend the legs out, or butterfly the knees. Do whatever serves your body best in the moment.
5. Breathe here for about 5 minutes.
6. To exit the pose: Tuck the chin and grab behind the knees to lift yourself up to a seated position.





POSE 4. VIPARITA KARANI (LEGS UP THE WALL)

This is a very relaxing and grounding pose. It balances the nervous system, and can also alleviate headaches, regulate your heart rate, relieve lower back pain, and give you energy when you are fatigued or experiencing stress. This pose can provide a paradigm shift. The release that you find when you can truly relax in this shape of your body is a true embodiment of receptivity and rest.

(Note: If you suffer from **hypertension**, be mindful of how long you stay in this pose. Check in regularly with how you feel, and coming out of the pose if you notice dizziness.)



Props needed: 1 blanket.

1. To set up this pose: Put your folded blanket flush against the wall, horizontally.
2. Sit on the blanket with your right hip against the wall.
3. As you swing your legs up the wall, let your torso find the ground. Find balance in your hips on the blanket. Let your arms relax by your sides. Relax your legs, shoulders, brow, and neck.
4. Rest and breathe here for 4-6 minutes.
5. Optional: For deeper hip-opening and inner leg stretch, separate the heels to find a comfortable straddle.
6. To exit the pose: Bring the bottoms of the feet to the wall and rest for a moment. Feel the change. Then roll onto the right side of the body for another moment. Gently use your hands to press yourself up to sit.



POSE 5. SUPPORTED LOCUST

This pose has an energizing quality to it since the very minor back-bend gently stimulates the adrenal glands. This supported version of locust pose offers rest as it invigorates, making this a good winter pose – activating natural balance and energy even as we more deeply unwind. This is a helpful pose if you suffer from indigestion or fatigue.

Props needed: 1 bolster + 1 blanket.

Note: You can make a bolster if you do not have one by folding 2-3 blankets.

1. To set up this pose: Lay your bolster horizontally at the bottom of your mat. Fold your blanket into a narrow rectangle and lay it flush against your bolster.
2. Bring the knees onto the blanket, shins on the bolster, hands toward the top of the mat.
3. Gently lower the upper body forward and down, letting the elbows hug the ribcage as you lower.
4. Make a pillow with the hands, let the elbows splay out to the sides, and rest the third eye on the pillow you made with the hands. Release everything into the supports.
5. Breathe here for 3-5 minutes, in and out through the nose.



POSE 6. SUPPORTED CHILD'S POSE

This is a deeper, more restorative version of pose 2 of this practice. The use of supports makes you feel more held and able to release.

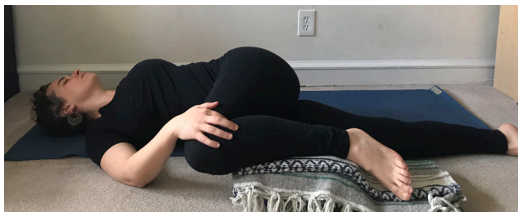
1. To set up this pose: Lay your bolster vertically with a blanket horizontally across the top of the bolster, making a T shape support.
2. Bring the big toes to touch, widen the knees, and walk the heart forward until the torso is fully supported by the props. Let the third eye come to the blanket. Turn the head to one side then the other if you have difficulty breathing.
3. Breathe here for 4-6 minutes.

POSE 7. SUPPORTED SETU BANDHĀSANA (RESTORATIVE BRIDGE POSE)

Like the other poses, this is equal parts rejuvenating and restorative. This pose again rouses subtle, steady energy by activating the adrenals without much effort as it calms the heart, mind, body, and spirit.

Props needed: 1 Yoga block.

1. Lie on the floor with a block nearby or in your hands. Bend the knees and firmly plant the bottoms of the feet on the floor with the heels as close to the sitting bones as possible. Inhale, exhale. Optional: Place a folded blanket under the shoulders to protect the neck.
2. On an exhale, press the feet and arms actively into the ground, lifting the pelvis skyward. Keep your thighs and feet parallel to each other.
3. Gently place the block on the flattest level directly under the back of the pelvis. Slowly lower the hips onto the flat block, finding comfort and ease. Relax the arms down by the sides. Release everything onto the supports.
4. Breathe here for 3-5 minutes, in and out through the nose.



POSE 8. SUPPORTED SUPINE TWIST

This pose brings the spine into a twist that massages the internal organs. It is detoxifying for the body, mind, and heart. You can use your deep breathing to enhance the detoxification and relaxation in this pose.

Props needed: 1 bolster OR a block with a blanket or two on top..

1. Bring the supports to the right side of your mat a little lower than hip height.
2. Leave the right leg extended long and hug your left knee into your chest.
3. Gently let the left leg float right, crossing over the body and come to rest on the supports. Let your left arm rest on the left side of the body. Rest your right hand on your supported knee. Breathe deeply here through your nose for 2-4 minutes.
4. To exit the pose: Let the knee drift back up and hug it into your chest. Extend the left leg and breathe. Then simply **repeat the same instructions on the other side.**

POSE 9. SUPPORTED UPAVIṢṬA KOṆĀSANA (WIDE ANGLE FORWARD BEND)

This pose continues to open the backs of the legs and hips for more overall release of the body. This can also help with sciatic pain and help detoxify the kidneys.

Props needed: 1-2 Yoga blocks.

1. Sit sideways on your mat. Lean your torso back slightly on your hands. Slowly open your legs to an angle of about 90 degrees (or less if it feels like too big of a stretch for your body). Find an angle that is comfortable for you while sitting. **If you find yourself uncomfortable sitting this way, raise your sitting bones onto a folded blanket for a slightly lifted seat.**
2. Imagine your inner thighs spinning skyward. The kneecaps should point straight up toward the ceiling. Reach out through the heels, flexing the feet.
3. Set up the blocks exactly in the middle of the angle of the legs, directly in front of the heart and just far enough away so that when you fold forward, the forehead can come to rest on the blocks.
4. Before folding forward, make sure the knee caps are pointing skyward and the sitting bones are grounding down into your seat. Lift the heart, feeling length in the spine, then gently walk the hands forward.
5. Rest the forehead on the block support. Try to maintain length in the spine. Allow the hands to come to the tops of the legs. If you find you need more support for the forehead, add a blanket to the top of the blocks, then repeat step 4.
6. Keep the feet flexed! Breathe here for 1-3 minutes.
7. To exit the pose: Use the support of the hands on the mat to walk the torso back up to a sitting position, then slowly and gently bring the legs back together.



POSE 10. SAVASANA (CORPSE POSE)

This pose may look “easy,” but many people find this to be one of the most difficult poses. You may be a very flexible, well-balanced, physically strong person, but this pose presents a different set of challenges: it invites us to practice **the art of deep awareness, release, and stillness**. This pose accurately reminds us that **rest is a discipline** and takes practice. The rewards of this practicing this pose regularly and faithfully are immeasurable.

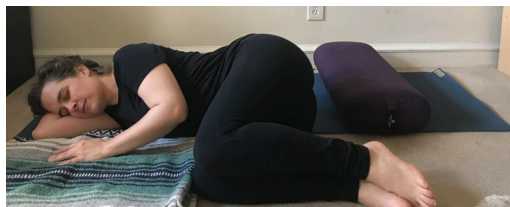
Minimum prop recommendation: 1 bolster + 1 blanket.



1. Sit longways on the mat with the knees slightly bent. Slide the bolster behind the knees or in the space just above the backs of the knees.
2. Gently lower the upper body down to a flat position on the mat. Make sure the bolster is still behind the knees.
3. Optional: For an increased sense of security and groundedness, lay a folded blanket across the abdomen and pelvis.



4. Feel the shoulders roll back down into the ground. Feel the heart open skyward. Let the palms open. Fully release the arms and legs.
5. Feel the back of the neck lengthen, and the skull resting into the support of the mat.
6. Gently close the eyes. Take a deep inhale through the nose. Open the mouth and release an exhale. Let go as fully as you can.
7. Rest here for 5-10 minutes, aware of your breath but not doing anything to control it.



8. To exit the pose: Slowly and gently bring the bottoms of the feet to the bolster, hug the knees into the chest, and roll off to the right side of the body for a moment. Feel the support of the Earth.
9. With conscious awareness and in an unhurried way, rise to an easy seat. Let in light thank yourself for giving yourself the gift of your practice. ♥