

A Chair Sequence for Aging People

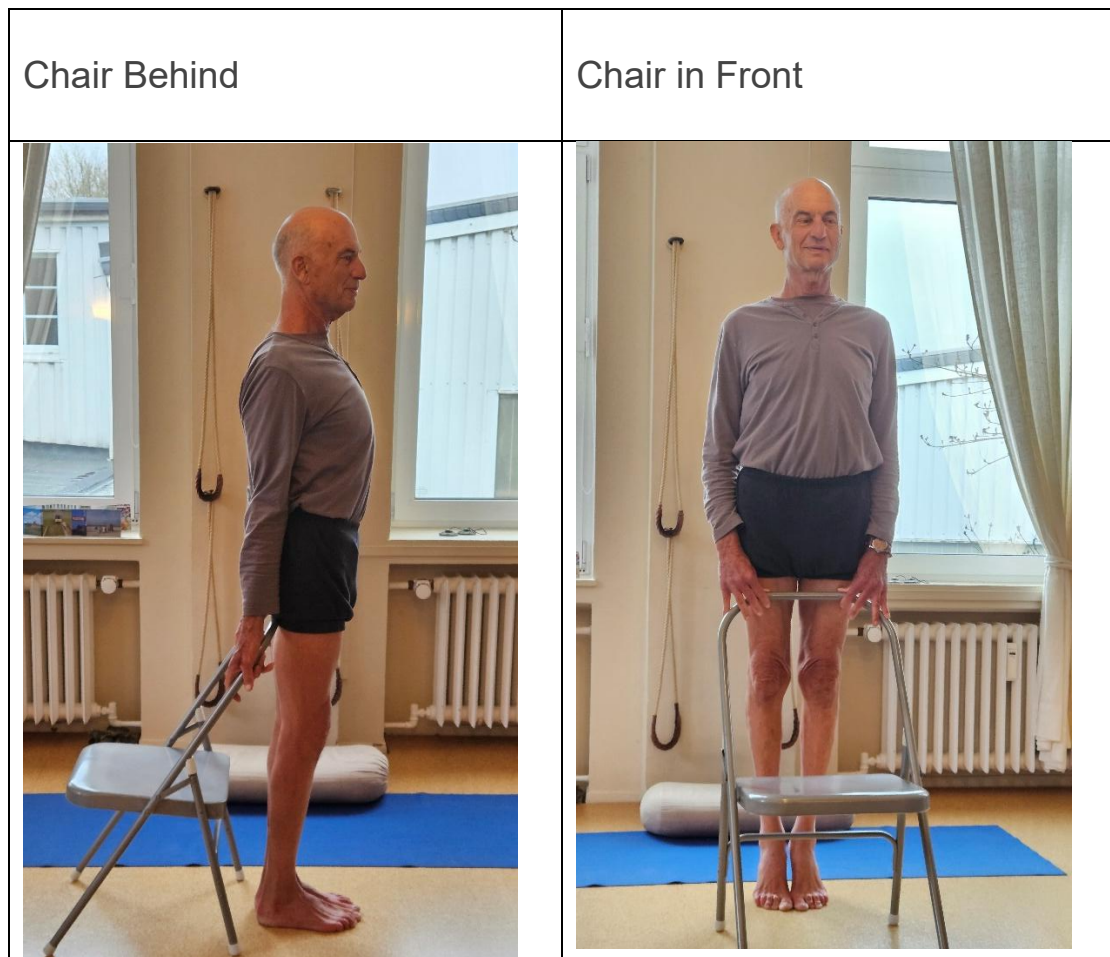
I taught his sequence in a workshop in Bielefeld Germany. Most of the photos were taken there by one of the students. I added some photos that were missing. Special thanks to Melanie Tholen and to the participants of the workshop!

Tāḍāsana

1. Chair in Front

The chair helps:

- To maintain stable balance
- Holding the backrest allows to achieve even load on the two feet



1. Chair Behind

The chair helps:

- To maintain stable balance
- To roll the shoulders back and down

- To open the chest

Vṛksāṣana

1. Chair behind

The chair helps:

- To maintain stable balance.
- To roll the shoulders back and down.



2. Chair in front

The chair helps:

- To maintain stable balance

In all lateral poses, having the wall at the back is very helpful: The chair in front provides further support. It helps to maintain a proper balance and gives confidence for aging people with balancing difficulty.



If there is a knee pain and the leg can't be folded completely, or if the lifted foot tends to slide, tighten a belt on your thigh and place the foot against the belt. Add a small piece of mat between the belt and fold to make the foot support thicker.



Otherwise try to bring the heel up to the groin of the standing leg.

Once the balance is secured, attempt to release the chair and stretch your arms up.

Ardha Uttānāsana

The chair helps:

- To extend the arms and back
- To make the thoracic spine concave

Holding the backrest, move your thighs back to extend the armpits and sides of the trunk.



To make the chair stabler, place its back against the wall.

In most of the variations shown here, you can place the back of the chair against the wall to prevent it from moving and to feel more secure.

If, when holding the backrest your back is concave, place block on the backrest, or support your hands higher on the wall.



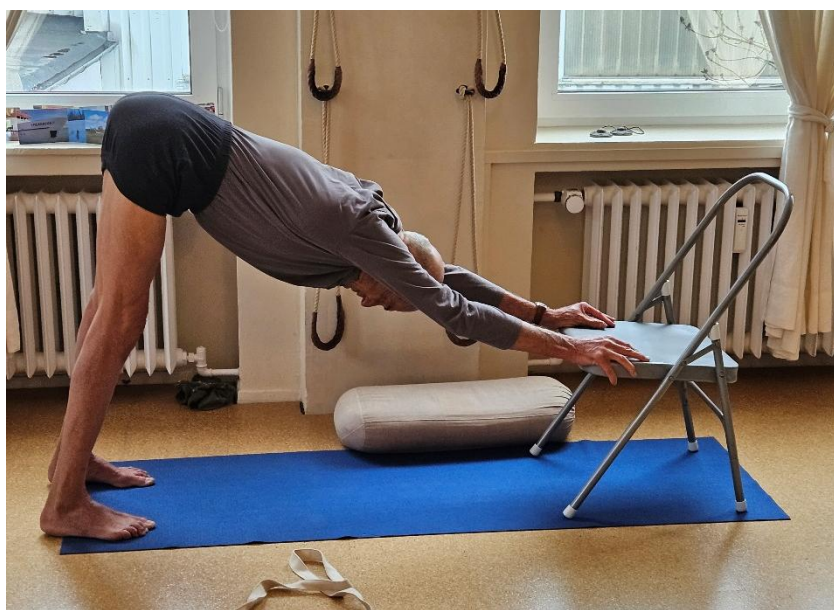
Adho Mukha Śvānāsana

1. Hands on the seat

The chair helps:

- To decrease the load on the arms, thus allow staying in the pose longer.
- To shift load to the legs which enables more extension of the trunk.

You can place your hands on the seat, or on the bar between the chair's legs.





2. Holding the rear legs of the chair

Benefits

Same as in the previous variation, but this one puts a bit more load on the arms.



You can also go to the other side of the chair and place the hands on the bottom of the seat, or hold the front legs of the chair:



Uttānāsana

1. Forearms and forehead on the seat

The chair helps:

- To relax deeply.
- To extend the hamstrings in a gradual and controlled manner



2. Resting on a folded chair

The chair helps:

- Two relax deeply on the pose

Use a bolster for further support



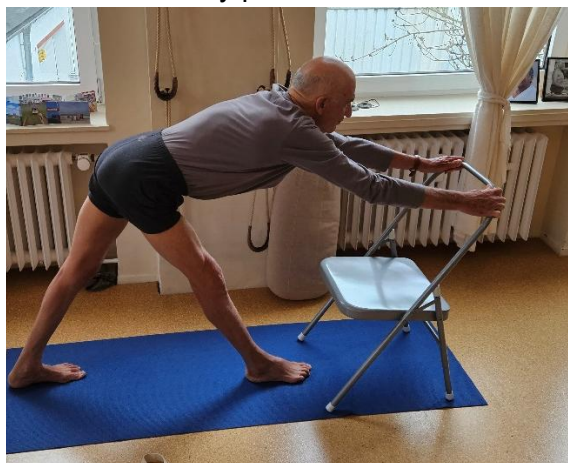
Pārsvottānāsana

1. Forehead on the seat

The chair helps:

- To stretch the spine and the side of the trunk forward.
- To balance the two hips
- To relax the head, brain and abdomen

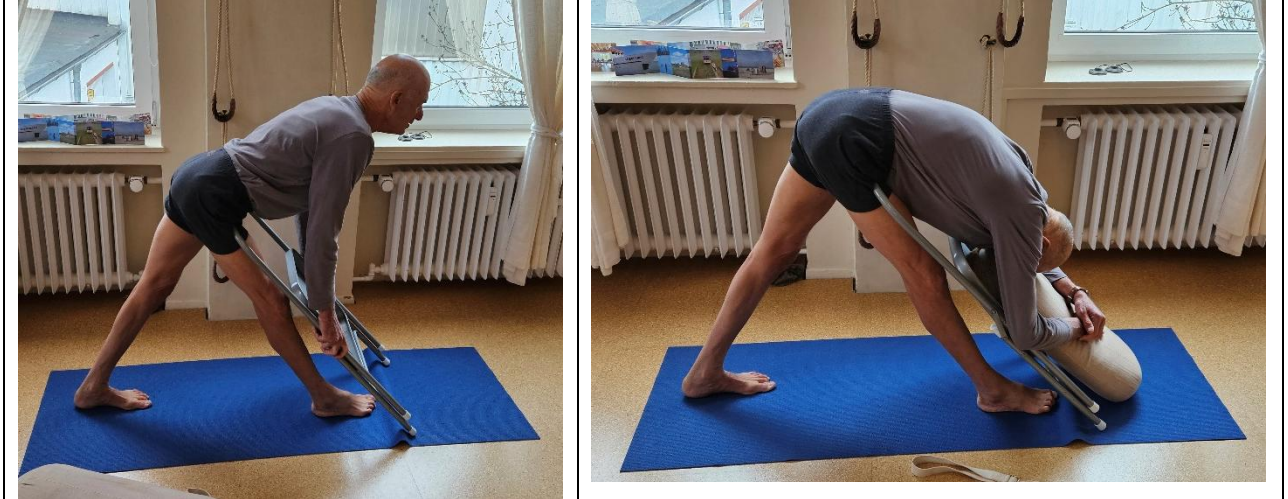
Start by holding the backrest; Look forward, extend the back and make it concave. Then rest your forehead on the seat and stretch your arms forward. You may place a bolster on the seat for additional support (not shown).



2. Resting on a folded chair

The chair helps:

- To verify that the two hips are aligned (in-line and on the same height)
- To relax deeply in the pose.



Utthita Trikoṇāsana

1. Back against the wall, chair in front

This variation is especially beneficial for people with balance difficulty. The wall at the back provides a stable support and allows to check the alignment.

The chair helps:

- To maintain a stable balance.
- To check the alignment of the pose.
- To turn the chest toward the ceiling.

When doing the pose on the right side

1. Stand with your back to the wall and spread your legs.
2. Place your left heel against the wall.
3. Place the right foot such that its heel is in line with the arch of the left foot.
4. Move your right buttock away from the wall and your left thigh toward the wall.
5. To go to the pose, slide your shoulders and the back of the head against the wall.
6. Once you are in the pose, you may try to stretch the top arm along the wall.

When doing the pose on the right side: The left heel, right buttock bone, spine and head, should all be on one vertical plane. The wall teaches this.



2. Chair behind the body

The chair:

- Supports the pose and helps to keep balance
- Helps to roll the shoulders back
- Provides various levels of support for the right arm (seat, back leg, back bar)



3. Chair in front without the Wall

The chair:

- Supports the pose and helps to keep balance
- Helps to roll the chest up.
- Helps to extend the bottom side of the trunk (right side in the photo).
- Provides various levels of support for the right arm (seat, back leg, back bar)



4. Stretching the bottom side

The chair:

- Supports the pose and helps to keep balance
- Helps to extend the bottom arm and bottom side of the trunk (right side in the photo).



This can also be done with the back against the wall.



5. Resting the head

This variation can help people suffering from neck pain or dizziness.

The chair:

- Provides support for the bottom hand (right in the photo), and the head.
- Helps to maintain the head in line with the trunk.
- Allows staying in the pose effortlessly.



More Standing Asanas with the Back against the Wall and a Chair in Front

Pārvīṛṭṭa Trikoṇāṣana

To do the pose on the right side:

1. Stand facing the wall and spread your legs.
2. Turn your legs to the right.
3. Twist and place your left hand on the seat. Push the backrest with your right hand.
4. Bring both shoulders and head to the wall.
5. You can then extend the left arm down to catch the back leg of the chair, or the back bar.

In this way you can do other lateral standing poses. We show two examples.

Pārīvērtā Trikoṇāsana



Utthita Pārśvakoṇāsana



Ardha Chandrāsana

1. Back against the Wall



2. With a folded chair

If you can balance without the wall, you can use a folded chair to support the pose.

The chair:

- Decreases the load on the standing leg.
- Helps to maintain the length of the standing leg.
- Helps to maintain balance.



Standing Poses Sitting on the Chair

Note: In poses where you sit on the chair you need to verify that the height of the seat matches that of your knee. Before going to the pose, stand next to the chair and observe where your knees are.

If your knees are higher than the seat, place on the seat some support (a blanket, a foam or a block).

If your knees are below the level of the seat, take some support for your feet (they should not hang in the air).

Sitting on the chair allows to hold the pose with less effort and more stability.

Vīrabhadrāsana II

1. Backrest in front

Having the backrest in front allows to use the backrest to lift the chest

To do the pose on the right side:

2. Sit on the chair with your right buttock bone.
3. Start with your left leg bent and slowly straighten it. (you can have the left heel against the wall – not shown).
4. Hold the backrest to lift the chest.

5. Then you can stretch your arms sideways and look at the right.



2. Backrest behind

Having the Having the backrest behind helps to roll the shoulders back



Vīrabhadrāsana I

1. Backrest in front

Holding the backrest allows to lift the chest and bring the trunk to a vertical upright position.

From there you can look up and stretch your arms up (not shown).



2. Backrest behind

Having the backrest behind allows to move the shoulders back and open the chest.





3. In between two chairs

The two chairs support the pose and allow to lift the trunk from its base, the pelvic floor. The chairs also provide stability.



Vīrabhadrāsana III

1. Hands on the Wall



2. With two Chairs



Pārivṛtta Pāśvakoṇāsana

To do the pose on the right side:

1. Sit on the chair such that the backrest is on your right.
2. Twist to place your left elbow against your right knee. With your right hand push against the backrest.

3. Slowly straighten your left leg.



4. Then you can slide your left arm down and catch the back leg of the chair.



Utthita Marīchyāsana III



Utthita Hasta Pādāṅguṣṭhāsana I

Note: In all the Utthita Hasta Pādāṅguṣṭhāsana variations, if the chair is too high for you, stand on a block, or use a lower stool.

1. Back Against the Wall

1. Place the chair at an appropriate distance from the wall.
2. Stand with your back against the wall and lift your right leg on the seat.
3. Align your hips (descend the right one if needed).
4. Then Straighten your legs and place it on the backrest.



2. Facing the wall

Here too, start by placing your foot on the chair and then straiten it against the wall.



Utthita Hasta Pādānguṣṭhāsana II (lateral)

1. Back against the wall



2. Facing the wall – Using a belt on the shoulder

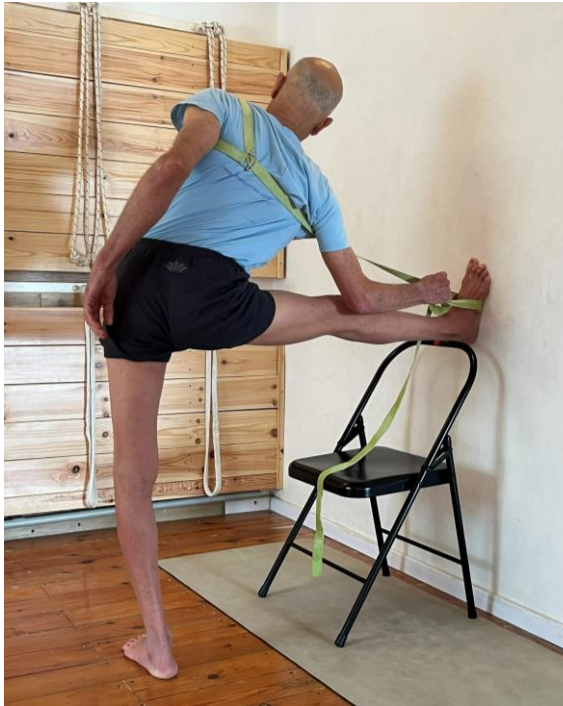
Note: In all the variations shown here with a belt, the loop should be about 20 cm long.

If the chair is too high for you, stand on a block, or use a lower stool.

To do the pose with the right leg lifted:

1. Place the back of the chair against the wall, a few centimeters away from it.
2. Stand in Tāḍāsana facing the wall, lift the right leg and place the foot on the seat.
3. Descend the right buttock. When lifting the leg, don't allow the left leg to move.
4. Take a belt and place the loop on your left shoulder.
5. Pass the belt on your back and to the inner foot.
6. Bend and lean toward the right leg, pull the belt, then stand upright.

7. The belt should be stretched and should help you to deepen the lateral opening



Front View:





Utthita Hasta Pādānguṣṭhāsana III (twist)

To do the pose with the right leg lifted:

- Place the back of the chair against the wall, a few centimeters away from it.
- Stand in Tāḍāsana facing the wall, lift the right leg and place the foot on the seat.
- Descend the right buttock. Then straighten the leg and place the foot against the wall.
- When lifting the leg, don't allow the left leg to move.
- Take a belt and place the loop on your right shoulder.
- Pass the belt on your back and to the outer foot.
- Bend the right leg, pull the belt, then straighten the leg.
- The belt should be stretched and should help you to deepen the twisting action.



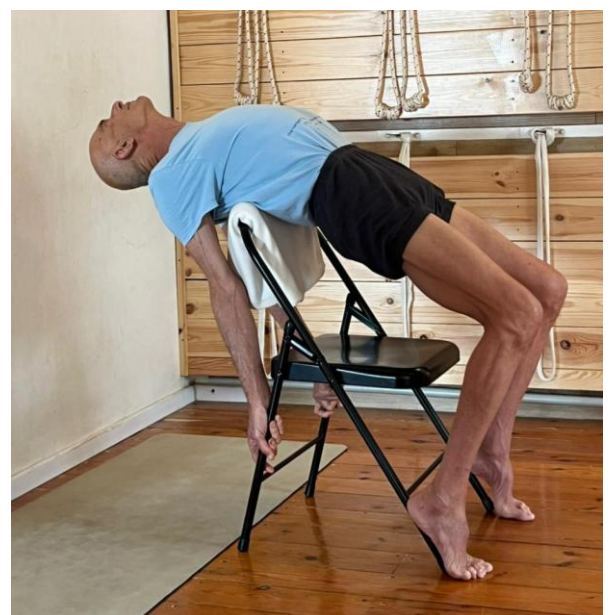
Back Arching

- Place a bolster (or other support) on the seat and sit on it.
- Arch back on the backrest.
- If your neck is sensitive, place a belt on your upper arms and lean your head on it.



Ūrdhva Dhanurāsana Preparation

1. Sit on the chair and place your heels on its front legs.
- Note: this will prevent the chair from tilting back, so be sure to place your heels there.
2. Lift yourself to place your mid back on the (padded) backrest.
3. Arch back while walking your hands down the back legs of the chair.

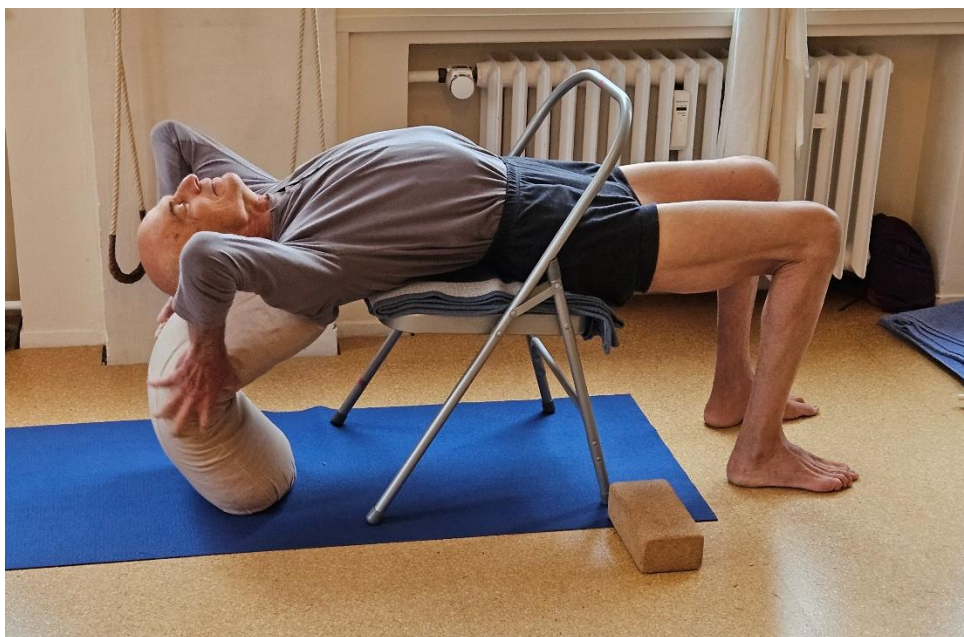


4. Then you may arch back to place your hands against the wall.

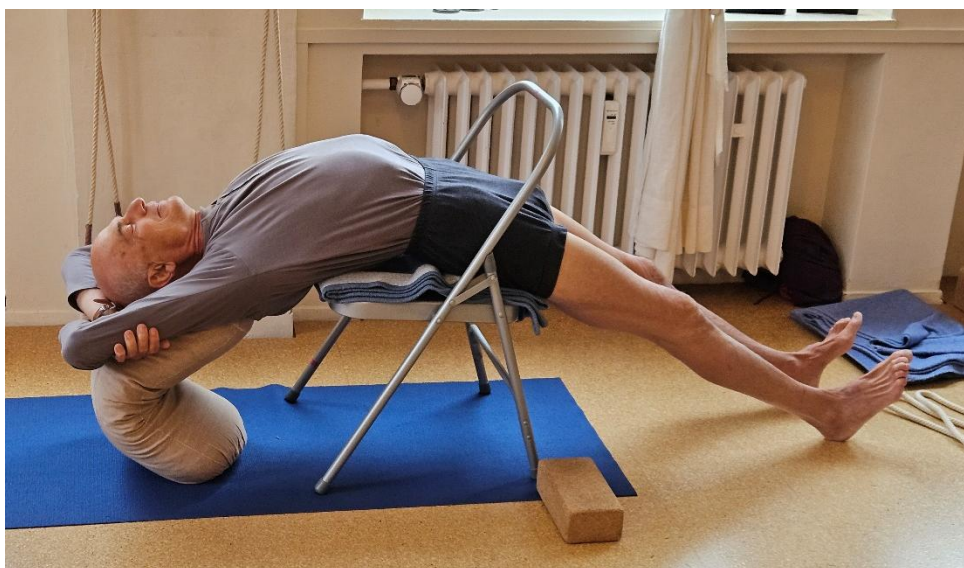


Dwi Pada Viparita Daṇḍāsana on the Chair

1. Place a bolster in front of the chair.
2. Sit with your legs under the backrest, lie down and arch back.
3. Catch the bolster and fold it to support your head and neck.



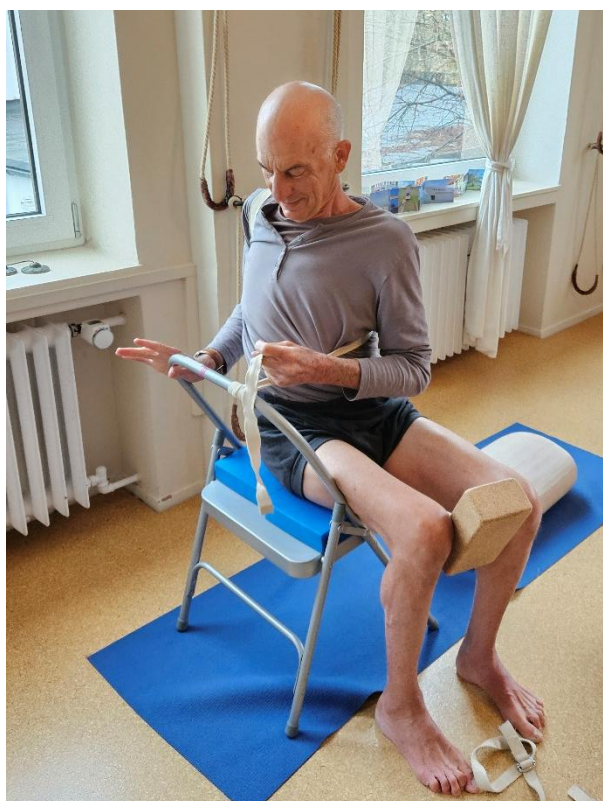
4. If possible, straighten your legs, on the floor, or against the wall.



Bharadvājāsana I on the Chair

To twist to the right:

1. Sit on the chair with your right side close to the backrest.
2. Make sure that your thighs are parallel to the floor (see explanation about sitting on the chair above).
3. Hold a block between your knees.
4. Place a looped belt on your right shoulder.



5. Pass the belt on your back and then around the backrest.
6. Lean forward and bring your left side closer to the backrest.
7. Pull the belt with your left hand, then push against the backrest with your right hand, and sit upright.

Note: Instead of using a block between the knees, you can use another belt to fix your left groin to the chair (as shown below). This stabilizes the pelvis. The pelvis should be stable when twisting the spine.





Marīchyāsana II on the Chair

1. Place a block or a couple of foam blocks on the chair, so your buttocks are higher than your heel.
2. Use your right hand on the backrest to help twisting.



Mālāsana on the Chair



Prasārita Pādottānāsana with Shoulder Support

1. Using two chairs



2. Using a single chair on its side

Pad the chair's legs with a couple of blankets on each side.



Garuḍāsana on the Chair

1. Start by sitting on the chair. You can tighten a belt on your elbows or forearms.
2. Lift a little from the chair, and then sit again.
3. Repeat a few times.



Utkatāsana

1. On the chair
4. Start by sitting on the chair. You can tighten a belt on your elbows or forearms.
5. Lift a little from the chair, and then sit again.
6. Repeat a few times.



2. Against the wall



Sitting Asanas

Daṇḍāsana on the Chair



Sitting on the chair for Prāṇāyāma

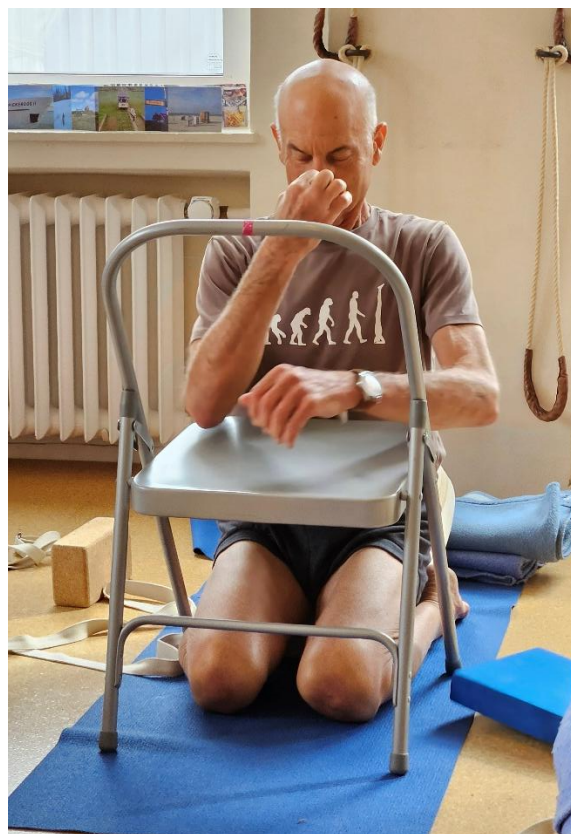


Baddha Koṇāsana Supporting the back on the seat

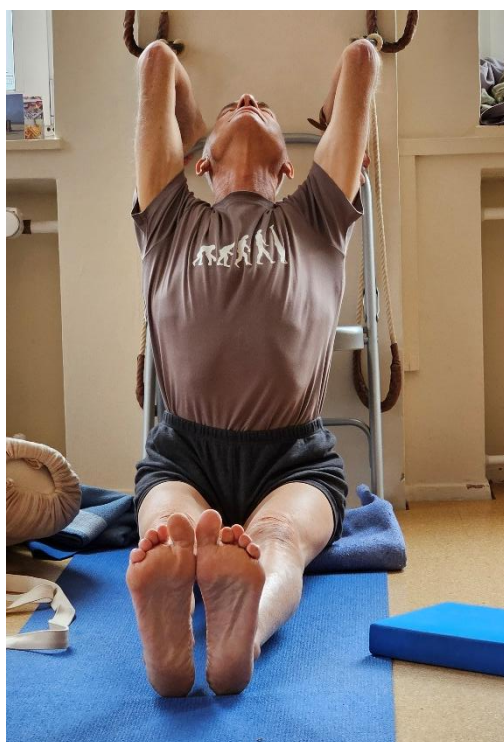


Vīrāsana with a chair in front

Having the chair in front enables to lean the elbow on the seat to practice digital Prāṇāyāma.



Daṇḍāsana Supporting the back on the seat



Upaviṣṭha Koṇāsana Supporting the back on the seat



Supta Vīrāsana on a chair

1. Place a chair on the mat and a bolster or a folded blanket next to it.
2. Sit in front of the chair in Virasana, such that the front of the chair is facing your back.
3. Turn to take the chair and move it over your head. At this stage you shouldn't allow the chair to fold.
4. Move the chair all the way down, then fold it.
5. Lie back on the seat. Place the bolster under your head and neck.

Note: you may add a support under or on the chair.



Sarvāṅgāsana on the chair



Śavāsana

In Savasana it's good to place weight on the body. You can place a bolster on your thighs, and the folded chair on top of it.

