

Highlights of the 2008 National Ataxia Foundation Wheelchair Yoga Session



Preparations

1. When starting your practice of wheelchair Yoga, choose one Yoga pose and do it daily. Add on new poses as time and interest allows
2. Yoga is a celebration of the expression of the pose in your body in a completely unique way. No two poses will be the same. Do your best to express the pose uniquely and fully in your own body
3. Stretch only to where you feel a mild discomfort. If you feel pain, ease up on the stretch or come out of it completely

Precautions

1. Take it easy, take it slow
2. If you have rods along your spine, consult with a physician. In general, follow the natural movements of your body. I.e. if you do a movement normally as part of your everyday life, then you may do it, but be sure to be mindful of your range of motion.

Benefits of Wheelchair Yoga

1. Wheelchair Yoga can be used to control pain by helping you to control your experience of pain
2. Wheelchair Yoga can be used to help improve breathing, especially for those with asthma, and may reduce dependence on inhalers
3. To see improvements, you need to have a daily practice of Yoga for several months

Breathing

1. The breath is your connection to your energy
2. No matter what you're body is doing, focus on your breath.
3. Become centered in your breath

Belly Breathing

1. Breathe into your low belly, the sides of your belly and your low back
2. Practice lying down
3. A steady breath means a steady mind
4. Come back to an awareness of the breath whenever you can throughout your day

Spine Health

1. Spine flexibility is connected to your health
2. Three directions of flexibility for your spine
 - a. Forward and back
 - b. Side-to-side
 - c. Twisting

Three stretches for the three directions of the spine

1. [Cat & Cow](#)
2. [Side Bend](#)
3. [Twist](#)

For more breathing exercises and stretches, visit <http://www.mayallbehappy.org>