



# A YIN YOGA SEQUENCE

TO RESTORE ENERGY, COOL THE BODY AND IMPROVE LOWER BACK HEALTH  
BY REBALANCING OUR KIDNEY CHI (VITAL ENERGY)

This is an excellent sequence to practise when we have been pushing ourselves too much, either physically or mentally, and are feeling run down, stressed and exhausted. You will feel both revitalised and rested after the practice.

The focus of yin yoga is on softening, surrendering and letting go of any physical or mental effort or striving. It is about being rather than doing. In a yin practice we want to come to our appropriate 'edge' in each posture, then settle down, soften and stay with whatever arises. Ideally we are looking to stay in each of the postures for a minimum of 5-minutes. Beginners may want to try 2-3 minutes. We are trying to relax any muscular effort or engagement so that we can send more chi to the deeper connective tissues and joints. As we stay a while strong sensations may arise in the body, and we want to try to breathe into and through these sensations and watch how they shift and change with time, rather than struggling against them physically or mentally. (N.B. as with any type of yoga, if there is any sudden sharp or piercing pain, then we should carefully come out of the pose.) Keep your breathing long, slow and deep. If the breath becomes jagged, forced or interrupted it is a signal that we are trying too hard and need to back off from the physical intensity of the pose. Enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the practice. Allow your mind to quieten, release some of its busy thought patterns and rest in the present moment, as the body unwinds, melts and releases into the postures.



## 1. BUTTERFLY POSE

This is similar to Baddha Konasana. As a yin pose, move the feet further away from the pelvis – around two hands' distance away – so that we can come into the posture in a more relaxed way.

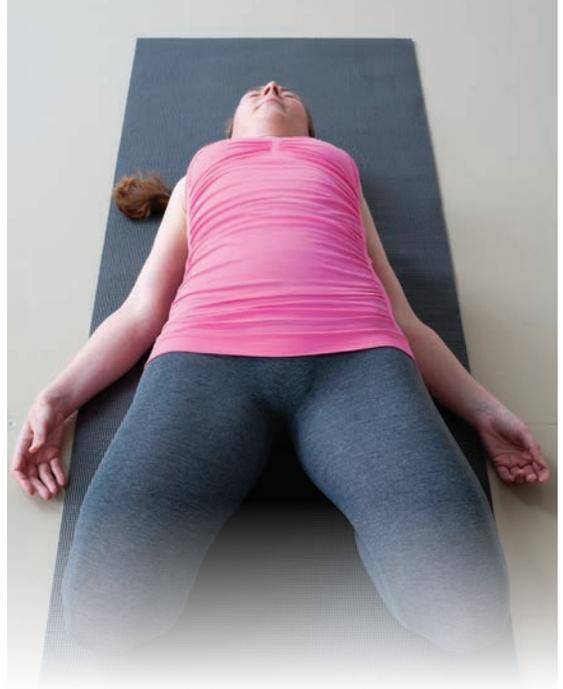
Fold forward from the hips until you feel an appropriate amount of sensation in your outer hip, inner groin and lower back. Try to soften all of the muscles, and allow the spine to round, with the head resting either on the feet, in your hands, or on a block. After 5 minutes, slowly come out of the posture and stretch out the legs in front of you and rest back on your hands for 5 breaths.



## 2. SPHINX POSE

Lie on your front and press into your hands to raise the chest and rib cage off the floor, resting on your elbows and forearms. Have the elbows shoulder width apart, holding around the elbows or with the forearms stretched in front of you, palms together.

Try to relax all of the muscles in the legs and buttocks, and stay for 5-10 minutes. Then lie flat on your front for 1-2 minutes, breathing deeply into your lower back and from there carefully bring yourself into Child's Pose for 1-2 minutes.



## 3. SADDLE POSE

Similar to Supta Virasana except that here we want to keep the feet together, and rather than lengthening the lower back, we want to tilt the sacrum and coccyx towards the lumbar spine to bring some temporary pressure into this area.

Begin by sitting on the heels with the feet together and the knees apart, and then use your hands, elbows and forearms as a support as you carefully lower your torso and head towards the floor. If necessary, use a bolster horizontally under the shoulders and/or some support under your head. Use your abdominal muscles and hands pressing into the floor and to bring you up. Lie flat on your front for 1-2 minutes, breathing deeply the lower back.

## 4. FULL FORWARD BEND

Similar to Paschimottasana except that we want to relax all muscular effort and attempts to 'get somewhere' in the pose and we can allow the spine to round. You may use some height under the sit bones to help with the forward rotation of the pelvis, and a rolled up yoga mat under the knees to encourage more release. The head can rest on a cushion if it doesn't down come to the legs.



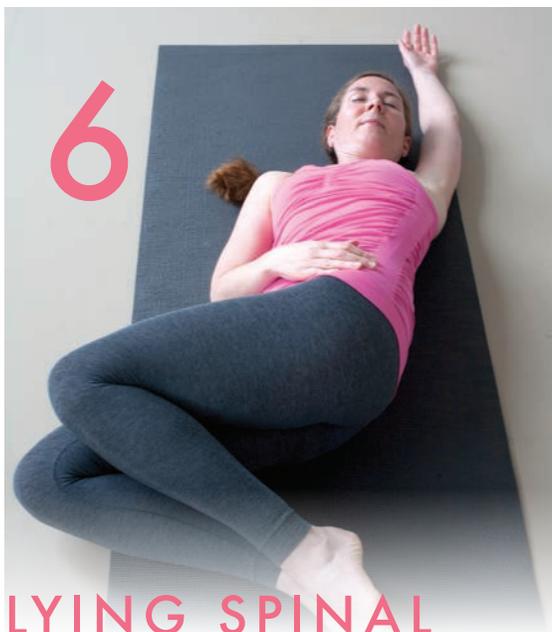
# 5



## DRAGONFLY POSE

Similar to Upavista Konasana, except that we want to relax any muscular engagement in the legs and let go of any sense of 'getting' somewhere. Fold forwards onto a bolster if that feels more comfortable.

# 6



## LYING SPINAL TWIST

Lie on your back, with the legs bent and feet together on the floor. Exhale and carefully bring the legs and feet to the floor on your right, whilst trying to keep the upper left side of the torso and shoulder on the floor. If it feels comfortable and safe, raise the left arm alongside your head.

Stay for 5 minutes, breathing into spine and the kidneys in the back of the body. Exhale to carefully bring the left arm back down by your side and inhale to bring the knees back to your starting position, resting on your back for 5 breaths. Repeat on the other side.

## 8. LEGS UP THE WALL POSE

Carefully take the legs up the wall, perhaps using a belt round the thighs to allow the legs to release a little more. Finish with a long Savasana to allow the body and mind to absorb the full effects of your practice.

# 7



## STIRRUP POSE

Bring the knees into the chest for 5 breaths and then separate the knees and bring the soles of the feet to face the sky, holding around the inner arches of the feet. Keep the feet over the knees, and draw the knees and thighs down towards the earth, either side of the torso, whilst keeping the lower back on the floor. Keep the neck, face and shoulders relaxed and use a cushion under the head if required. Stay for 3 minutes, breathing deeply into the hips and groin.

