



INTRODUCTORY AUDIO GUIDE FOR PRENATAL YOGA ROUTINES

Hi there! Welcome to Yoga Home Practice Introductory Audio for Prenatal Yoga.

Practising yoga throughout your pregnancy is a wonderful gift that you give to yourself and your unborn baby. Prenatal yoga will help you be in the best possible shape for birth and beyond! You will enjoy benefits on all levels - physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. As you practise regularly you'll increase your strength, stamina and flexibility. You'll also find that your yoga helps you deal more effectively with stress and anxiety. And, you'll appreciate the quiet time you set aside for your yoga practice as a sanctuary for you to connect with the baby growing inside you.

It is important for you to follow the step-by-step instructions during the guided practice, and to proceed at your own pace. As you do the postures, listen carefully to your body and recognise any warning signs. It's vital that you do not over-stretch during your pregnancy. Your body is influenced by the hormone '*relaxin*' during pregnancy which softens the joints and ligaments in the pelvis and spine. Work to a point where you are getting a gentle and effective stretch rather than aiming to drastically improve your flexibility during this time.

Before commencing our Prenatal classes, it's important that you consult your doctor, particularly if you have any complications in your pregnancy, including a history of miscarriage.

All of the Prenatal classes are appropriate for the second and third trimesters of pregnancy. You can pick and choose classes according to their designated '*intensity*' to match your energy levels on any given day of your pregnancy. For example, if you are feeling particularly tired and heavy, you could choose to do the more gentle meditative practices offered in *Classes 6 or 7 of Program 1*.

However, that said, it is ideal that if you are new to yoga, you at least practice classes 1 through to 3 a few times first as these are designed to introduce you to the fundamentals of breath work and posture awareness, before moving onto the following sequences which take for granted a certain degree of yoga experience and awareness.

If you are in the first trimester of pregnancy, this is a delicate time during which the hormonal changes following conception are taking place as well the implantation of the embryo in your uterus. It is recommended to avoid vigorous exercise during this time. In fact to be on the safe side, it's advisable to carry out a very modified practice, or just rest during this time and focus on breath and relaxation



If at any time you experience pain, dizziness, nausea, or breathlessness, slowly come into any of the neutral postures such as supported Child's Pose or *Supta Baddha konasana* along inclined or crossed bolsters – and rest there for as long as you need to.

Here are some other 'golden rules' for practicing yoga safely during pregnancy:

- Be gentle and intuitive in your practice. Do not over-exert or raise your heart rate too high. Your breathing should always be even and unstrained. Rest often, if you need to.
- It's advised to avoid any positions lying flat on your back for prolonged periods of time after the start of the second trimester. Therefore any postures that we practice on your back, you will be reminded to rest onto your side at intervals if you begin to experience any sensations of discomfort.
- Avoid *Malasana* (squat pose) if your baby is in breech position after 34 weeks, or if you have a cervical stitch, haemorrhoids or vulval varicosities.
- Make sure you practice your pelvic floor exercises ('*kegels*') regularly in preparation for birth as well as for optimum post-partum recovery – we include them within the posture and breath practices in the prenatal classes, however, also try to practice your kegels often throughout the day – for example, when you are waiting at a traffic light!
- If you suffer pain in the pubic bone (*pubic symphysis*) check with your health practitioner before continuing your prenatal yoga. You may be advised to avoid all wide-leg poses like *Upavista konasana* (wide leg seated pose) and one-leg poses (eg: *Stork Pose, Warrior III*).
- If you suffer pain in the sacrum (sacro iliac joint), again, check with your doctor first, and then if you continue with your practice, you will need to avoid all forward bending in *Upavista Konasana* (wide legged seated pose) and *Baddha konasana* (seated groin stretch) and you will might also benefit from regular practice of Class 5 which is designed to be stabilising and supportive for this area.

THE SPACE

In respect of the space, find a peaceful clear area for your practice. Make sure the space is quiet and clean – free from any other activities or distractions. You need to be comfortable in this space. This is time just to be with yourself, so make it important to choose an appropriate space. If it is accessible to you, find a special place.



Should you decide to take your Yoga Audio Routine with you outside to a park or beach, make sure the conditions are pleasant, and face away from the sun to keep the glare away from your face.

BREATHING AND THE BODY'S MOVEMENT

A simple guide to breathing and the body's movement:

- Breathe in as the body stretches and expands.
- Breathe out as the body contracts, releases or folds forward.
- In the absence of any breath instruction, breathe normally.

TIME AND DURATION FOR PRACTISE

Here are some tips on the time and duration of practise.

Practise gently. Your breath is intrinsically connected with the quality of your practice. Hence the goal is not to rush through it, as this would bring about rapid shallow breathing.

Practise regularly. To reap the many benefits of practising yoga during your pregnancy, it's important to have a consistent practice. Consistent practice basically means practising yoga as often as you can, ideally 2-3 times a week. We understand that you may not be able to physically get to a live yoga class this often. Hence, our Yoga Home Practice online classes have been specifically designed to meet your needs.

It is best to practice your yoga on an empty stomach – such as before breakfast, or at least an hour before dinner.

EQUIPMENT

Here's an overview on the equipment you'll need.

It would be ideal for you to have a quality yoga mat. This provides a soft non-slip surface allowing you to grip effectively and feel grounded with your hands and feet. A rug or a carpet may also be used, however for maximum benefits, a yoga mat is recommended.



Have two folded blankets or small cushions within reach. It's also essential to have at least one bolster, preferably two for all the classes. Some routines will also require you to have a belt or strap, one to two bricks, or a chair. These props will assist in supporting you appropriately in the postures to avoid strain and aid maximum comfort and release of tension. Also have a blanket or a light jumper ready to keep yourself warm especially towards the end of the practice.

Practise with bare feet, and wear appropriate loose clothing or sportswear that allows ease of movement.

Enjoy your practice!

Yoga is a process and not a destination. As long as you are engaging your body, breath and mind you are doing yoga.

From the teachers and staff at Live Yoga Life - the home of Yoga Home Practice, we bid you courage to be who you are.

Namaste!

The Team from Live Yoga Life