

Module 9 Interpreting Contentment

Methodology:

Chair Yoga

- **Chair yoga** offers support while building balance, strength, and mobility... making it accessible and gentle for a wide range of practitioners.
- It's not just for individuals with limited mobility... it's also great for school, office, or time-limited settings.
- Using a chair can help participants focus on specific parts of the body while offering safety and stability.
- Offering chair variations in your classes reduces stigma and normalizes the use of props, making yoga more inclusive.
- Encouraging everyone to explore supported options may lead to deeper self-awareness and surprising benefits, even for those who typically practice without props.

Using Props/Creative Props

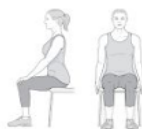
- **Normalize prop use** by demonstrating their benefits and offering them as the *first* option... not as a fallback.
- **Offer accessible variations first** (PYP Methodology) so everyone can find the version of a posture that suits them best.
- Props like chairs, blocks, straps, blankets, and walls support **balance, stability, comfort, and anxiety reduction**.
- Props make it easier to focus on sensation and embodiment instead of struggling with discomfort or comparison.
- Avoid the perception that props are for the "less capable" by integrating them confidently into your guidance.
- Use props *creatively* to deepen poses:
 - **Mountain Pose** or **Forward Fold on blocks** = explore balance and stretch
 - **Pigeon with a block under the hip** = more stability, easier core/pelvic engagement
- Practicing with props yourself helps you understand their full potential and helps normalize their use for your students.
- Props don't make a pose "easier"... they make the experience more *honest*, more *informed*, and often more *empowering*.

Chair Yoga Exercises

DIRECTIONS

Most positions begin using the same seated position (called Sit tall):

- Sit in a chair with feet planted firmly on the floor
- Back straight (to elongate your spine)
- Hands may be at your sides or on your legs

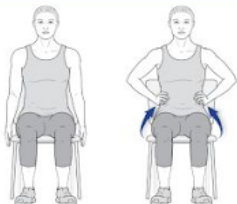


TIPS

- Move slowly through each pose, holding each pose for 3 to 5 slow breaths.
- If a pose is challenging, pause and start again when your breathing returns to normal.
- Be cautious if you have arthritis in your spine or neck, or a low-back injury.

1 SEATED BREATHING

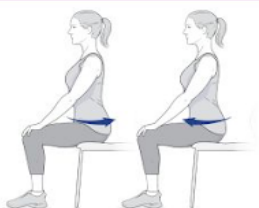
- A. Sit tall at the edge of the chair. Place your hands on your waist.
- B. (take a deep breath in through the nose), expanding through your sides and abdomen.
- C. slowly.
- D. Repeat for 3-5 breaths.



2 HIP CIRCLES

Helps release and relax hip muscles.

- A. Sit tall.
- B. Without moving your upper body, circle your hips clockwise five times.
- C. Repeat, rotating counterclockwise five times.



3 COW POSE

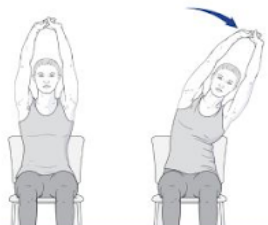
- A. Sit tall with your palms on your knees.
- B. and drop your head back, pulling your chest up and forward for a slight backbend. If you have arthritis in your spine or neck, keep your neck straight.

From Cow Pose, go directly into Cat Pose.



7 HIGH ALTAR SIDE LEANS

- A. Sit tall. Lift your arms and interlace fingers.
- B. Turn your palms toward the ceiling and straighten your arms above your head. If you have sore wrists, gently grasp one hand with the other.
- C. Lean to the left side.
- D. Hold for 2-3 breaths.
- E. Repeat, leaning to the right side.



8 SEATED GODDESS WITH A TWIST

- A. Sit tall with your legs open wide and your toes pointed out.
- B. Place your left arm inside your left leg, pointing at the floor. Lift your right arm toward the ceiling and gaze toward the right hand.
- C. Hold for 2-3 breaths.
- D. Repeat on other side.



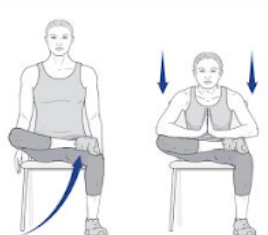
9 WARRIOR TWO

- A. Sit tall at the edge of the chair. Bend your right knee to the side and stretch your left leg out behind you, as you press through your heel.
- B. Raise your arms to the sides and turn your head to the right.
- C. Hold for 2-3 complete breaths.
- D. Repeat, adjusting for the left side.



10 FIGURE FOUR

- A. Sit tall and place your right ankle on your left knee. Flex your toes. Pull your belly towards your spine, heart reaching forward, and gaze straight ahead.
- B. Put your palms together.
- C. and slowly lean forward at the hips. Gently push your right knee down towards the floor with your palm or right elbow.
- D. Hold for 2-3 breaths.
- E. Repeat, adjusting for the other side.



4 CAT POSE

- A. and round your back, pulling in your belly towards your spine. Gently tuck your chin in your chest and expand the area between your shoulder blades.
- B. Repeat Cow Pose and Cat Pose 3-5 times.



5 SEATED SUN SALUTATIONS

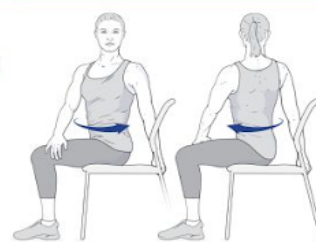
Helps to strengthen and increase shoulder flexibility. If you have shoulder discomfort, lift to shoulder level only.

- A. Sit tall and lift your arms overhead with your palms facing each other but not touching.
- B. Look up between your hands, towards the ceiling.
- C. and allow your arms to float down to your sides.
- D. Repeat for 3-5 breaths.



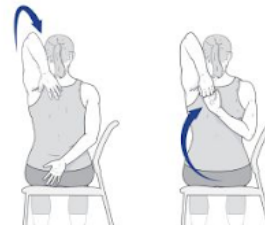
6 SIDE TWIST

- A. Sit tall in the chair. Place your left hand on the seat behind you and your right hand on the outside of your left knee.
- B. and reach your head up with energy toward the ceiling.
- C. As you ee, gently turn your shoulders to the left. To help deepen your twist, gently press your left hand against your right knee.
- D. Hold the twist for 2-3 complete breaths.
- E. Repeat, rotating to the right side.



11 COW HANDS

- A. Sit tall with your feet hip distance apart.
- B. and lift your left hand toward the ceiling.
- C. bend your arm at the elbow and place your arm on your upper back.
- D. and reach your right hand behind and clasp both palms together.
- E. Hold for 2-3 breaths.
- F. Repeat, adjusting for the other side.



12 UPWARD PLANK

- A. Sit tall and place both hands on the seat behind you. Hold the sides of the chair seat and extend your feet in front of you on the floor.
- B. and lift your butt and press your hips strongly toward the ceiling. If comfortable, allow your head to drop back, close your eyes, and relax.
- C. and set your butt on the chair.



13 FORWARD FOLD STRETCH

Stretches hamstring muscles and lower back.

- A. Sit tall on the edge of the chair. Extend your legs in front of you with your heels on the floor and your toes pointing up.
- B. flex your quad muscles (try to lift kneecaps), and lean forward at the hips.
- C. Place your hands on your knees, shins or toes (whatever is comfortable). Keep your chest toward your feet and your gaze straight ahead.



14 FORWARD FOLD

Finish with a calming forward bend, which lets blood flow to the brain.

- A. Sit tall. Fold your upper body over your legs, letting your head, neck and body hang limp.
- B. Hold for as long as you want before rolling back up to a sitting position.



Yoga Philosophy:

Santosa & Interpreting Contentment:

- **Santosa (contentment)** is the Niyama focused on finding peace in the present moment and trusting your personal path.
 - It builds upon the **Yamas**—non-harm, truth, non-stealing, moderation, and letting go—by encouraging **inner trust and gratitude**.
 - Contentment doesn't mean complacency; it means **trusting the journey** even while navigating healing and growth.
 - It's especially challenging for those healing from **deep trauma or chronic survival mode**, where **self-trust has been compromised**.
 - Santosa invites us to **let go of the chase** for what we think we lack and to **stop comparing ourselves** to others.
 - The goal is to **honor where you are**, appreciate what you have, and offer gratitude for the steps you're taking.
 - Whether your practice is spiritual, earth-based, or personal, **if it's rooted in honesty and healing**, Santosa affirms you're on the right path.
 - Ultimately, Santosa reminds us: **gratitude leads to peace**, and peace makes room for healing.
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No Justice, No Peace:

- Contentment can feel **out of reach or even selfish** when we're consistently exposed to injustice and suffering.
 - Finding **inner peace** doesn't mean ignoring the world's problems... it means **shifting how we respond** to them.
 - Santosha (contentment) is supported by other yogic principles like **non-harm, truth, moderation, and letting go**, which help us align with justice and compassion.
 - **Taking part in this training** is already an act of justice and transformation... you're doing the internal work necessary for external change.
 - Your **self-awareness and healing** directly impact how you engage with your community and advocate for justice.
 - **Santosha comes through action...** committing to learning, healing, and using your voice and talents to support yourself and others.
 - Contentment is not about complacency...
 - it's about **channeling your fire** with focus, alignment, and purpose to create meaningful change.
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“Hurt People, Hurt People. Healing People, See People”

- Consider how your **own well-being** has affected your capacity to serve...both during physical illness and emotional trauma.
 - Times of personal pain and healing often **shift our energy inward**, making outward service more difficult and sometimes counterproductive.
 - If we don't take time for **self-care and healing**, we risk harming others unintentionally through reactivity or emotional overwhelm.
 - Service begins with the **self**—by prioritizing your healing, you're building the tools and capacity needed to support others sustainably.
 - Sometimes, the **only person you're ready to serve is yourself...** this awareness is powerful and valid.
 - As healing deepens, you begin to **see yourself and others more clearly**, creating the foundation for authentic, compassionate service.
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Embodied Anatomy:

Skin, Fascia & Connective Tissue

- **The Skin** is the body's most visible organ, unique in color, elasticity, and sensitivity.
- We perceive ourselves from *within*, even though we often seek reflection *externally*.

Skin's Vital Functions:

- **Sensation:** Tactile receptors help us feel touch, pressure, vibration, temperature, and pain.
- **Regulation:** Maintains internal body temperature.
- **Protection:** Shields internal organs from infection and impact.

Connective Tissue:

- Exists throughout the entire body—under the skin, around muscles, in vessels, and between bones.
- **Primary Functions:**
 - ◆ Provides body structure and shape
 - ◆ Transports fluids
 - ◆ Stores energy
 - ◆ Defends against threats (e.g., infections)

Types of Connective Tissue:

- **Connective Tissue Proper:** fat, tendons, ligaments, fascia
- **Tendons:** connect muscle to bone
- **Ligaments:** connect bone to bone and stabilize joints
- **Fascia:** weaves through the entire body, providing stabilization and integration

Supporting Connective Tissue: cartilage and bone

- **Cartilage:** cushions joints and absorbs impact
- **Bone:** provides rigid structural support

Fluid Connective Tissue: blood and lymph

- **Blood:** transports oxygen and removes waste
- **Lymph:** supports immune function through white blood cells

Comparative Discussion – Koshas:

- The **Koshas** are five energetic layers of human consciousness, described in the *Upanishads*.
- These layers range from the most **dense (physical)** to the most **subtle (spiritual)**.

The Five Koshas:

1. Annamaya Kosha – Physical Body

- Outermost layer.
- Composed of muscles, bones, organs.
- Capable of healing and transformation.

2. **Pranamaya Kosha** – Energy Body

- Contains the nadis (energy channels).
- Governs breath and life force (prana).
- Influences the physical body through energetic activity.

3. **Manomaya Kosha** – Mental Body

- Home of the mind and thoughts.
- Includes mana (rational mind) and buddhi (intellect).
- Processes emotions, sensory input, and reactions.

4. **Vijnanamaya Kosha** – Wisdom Body

- Holds personal insight and higher reasoning.
- Helps with discernment and decision-making.
- Interprets and refines the data from the mental body.

5. **Anandamaya Kosha** – Bliss Body

- Innermost and most subtle layer.
- Associated with deep peace, joy, and spiritual connection.
- Closest to the true self or pure consciousness.

- Each kosha influences the others, especially the **physical body**, and supports a holistic view of healing and self-awareness.

Posture & Sequencing:

Building a Sequence:

- **Start with Energetic Awareness**
 - ◆ Connects participants to breath and energy
 - ◆ Helps release or build energy to begin the session
- **Follow with Range of Motion Exploration**
 - ◆ Warms joints and muscles
 - ◆ Focuses on the spine, hips, shoulders
- **Centering and Somatics** (Phase 3)
 - ◆ Can be placed throughout the practice, especially after physical effort
 - ◆ Supports nervous system regulation and self-reflection
 - ◆ Rooted in *Santosha*—inviting contentment and presence
- **Strength & Resilience**
 - ◆ Builds mental and physical strength
 - ◆ Encourages challenge with self-respect and boundaries
- **Concentration & Focus**
 - ◆ Introduces balance and coordination
 - ◆ Engages both sides of the body and deepens body awareness

- **End with Integration & Relaxation**
 - ◆ Allows the body and mind to rest and absorb benefits
 - ◆ Can include *Yoga Nidra*, *Yin Yoga*, breathwork, or guided rest
- **Overall goal:** Create a **cohesive, trauma-informed journey** that supports participants' physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing.

Cultivating Practices for Specific Needs: Supporting Common Physical & Emotional Concerns

- **Back Pain, Hip Tightness, Shoulder Tension**
 - Use gentle movements during **Range of Motion Exploration**:
 - *Hip circles, shoulder rolls, spinal flexion/extension (Cat/Cow)*
 - Postures to include:
 - **Spine:** Supported twists, forward folds, gentle backbends
 - **Hips:** Seated figure-four, supported Pigeon variations
 - **Shoulders:** Eagle arms, Supported Fish Pose
 - Emphasize **invitational language** and curiosity about sensations
- **Respiratory Health**
 - Focus on **Energetic Awareness & Integration & Relaxation** phases
 - Offer gentle *breath practices* like:
 - Alternate Nostril Breathing
 - Three-part breath
 - Utilize *Chair Yoga* to reduce strain and increase accessibility
- **Chair Yoga Integration**
 - **Can be used in all phases** of trauma-informed sequencing
 - Beneficial for:
 - Participants with mobility limitations
 - Settings with limited space (e.g., schools, offices)
 - Seated options for:
 - Twists, forward folds, Warrior variations
 - Promotes:
 - Balance, flexibility, joint support
 - Inclusivity and accessibility
 - Cultivation of **Santosha** (contentment)

Honoring Boundaries, Individual Agency, and Integration:

- **Facilitator Priorities**
 - **Honor personal boundaries** and support **individual agency**
 - Emphasize that *participants are the experts of their own bodies*
 - Use **invitational cues** and offer **adaptable posture options**
- **Navigating Emotions**
 - Emotions may arise, especially during **Integration & Relaxation**
 - Offer **grounding reminders** and encourage non-judgmental observation

- Suggest **journaling** as an optional tool for reflection and processing

- **Structuring a Trauma-Informed Sequence**

- Combine the six key sections:

1. Energetic Awareness
2. Range of Motion Exploration
3. Centering and Somatics
4. Strength & Resilience
5. Concentration & Focus
6. Integration & Relaxation

- Address common needs like:

- Back pain
- Respiratory challenges
- Mobility limitations

- **Guiding Principles & Intentions**

- Guided by **Santosha (contentment)**: support participants in finding peace within
- Foster **safety, empowerment**, and a **sense of belonging**
- Help participants build **healing, resilience**, and **self-connection**