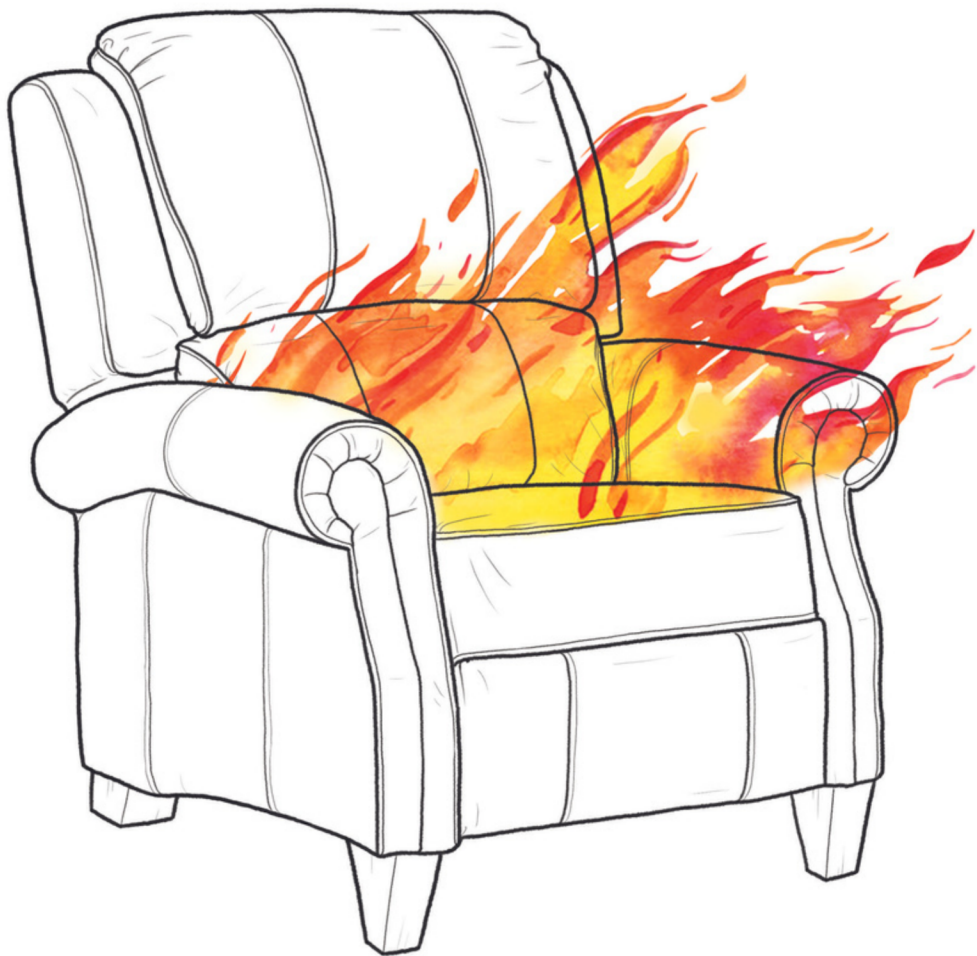


Burn Your Chair



Posture Modification
Guide

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Introduction

You were born with a set of invisible tools. Tools that when rediscovered will allow you to heal the parts of you that hurt. These tools mend simultaneously the physical, emotional, and mental parts of you that are linked to pain and disease. In order to employ them, you will need to revert to a more instinctive way of living. You will have to reject the societal norms that hurt you and practice putting yourself first.

Burn your chair. Get out of your seat and onto the floor. If a part of you is aching, tired, or tight, do something about it. Does sitting at your desk leave you hunched forward and stiff? Stand up, take a walk, and straighten yourself out. Are long hours in front of the TV or computer making you feel lonely or depressed? Go for a walk in nature to reconnect with your roots. Do you notice tension or anxiety as you stand in line at the coffee shop? Place your hands on your hips and make your body bigger to reshape your embodiment. Every cat and dog stretches when they've been still for too long, shouldn't you? We are so accustomed to accepting the seats and shapes of our daily lives, suffering in them as if we have no choice.

This posture modification guide focuses on the eight postures I consider to be essential for encouraging self healing within the human body. It's not necessary to try and do every pose every day, however this would provide you with a very complete daily posture practice. Postures can be performed completely independent from each other and spaced out throughout your day; or they could be performed all together in one long posture cycling practice to create a movement routine.

Practice first thing in the morning to refresh or before bed to calm. Focus on the postures that speak to you on any given day for relieving acute pain; or practice them all regularly to maintain a more consistent and global sense of ease within you. I suggest the latter whenever possible.

If you feel some of these postures are unavailable to you, don't give up. Proceed in your practice with cautious curiosity. Be playful. Be creative. All of these postures have room for self expression. They may require small modifications and support that help you feel safe. Or they may require complete reconstruction resulting in a shape that is only partially inspired by the original offering. Look at the illustrations to inspire ideas of how to modify the shapes for your needs; but don't worry about looking like the people in the pictures. Rather, mimic the shape demonstrated much like a child would, seeking a similar but not exact version of the shape, guided by the sensations of your body. Your body will tell you how to adjust in order to stay safe. Consistent attempts at this practice will gradually transform your body and change what you are capable of.

Mindful self exploration will address your unique body better than any ancient text or movement system could ever hope to. After enough consistent practice you might discover yourself instinctively assuming these postures without consciously intending to, guided by the edges of your body and mind. This will be the moment in which your innate ability to self heal is fully restored. The only teacher you will need from then on will be the one guiding you from within.

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Sitting

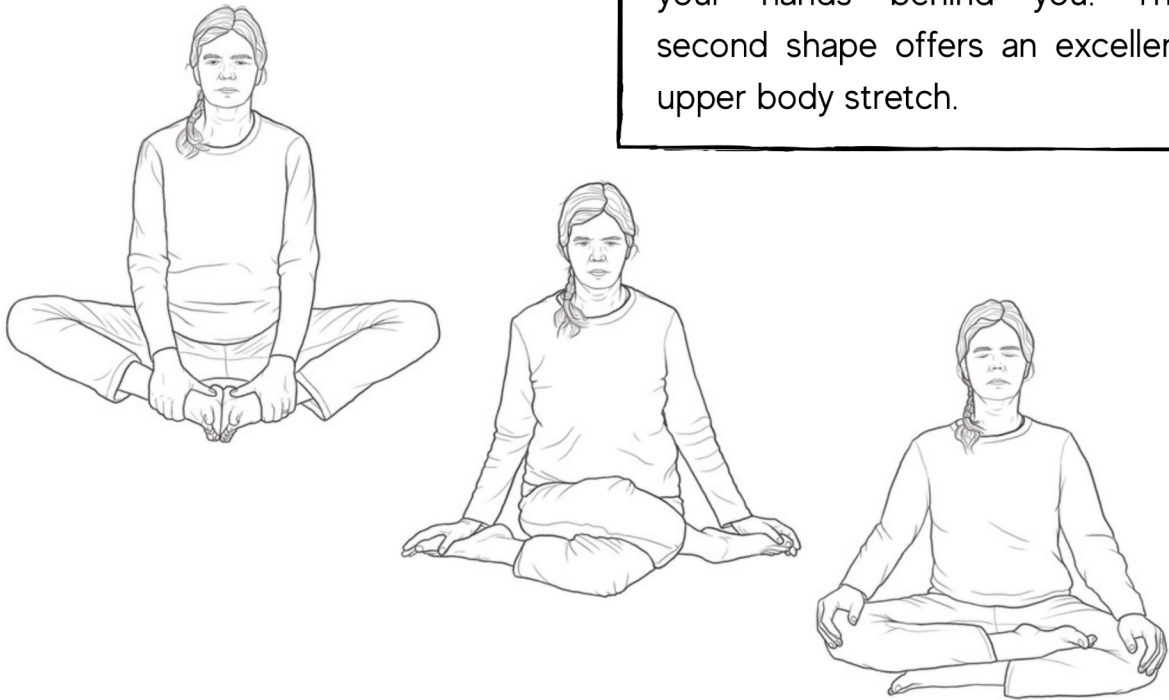
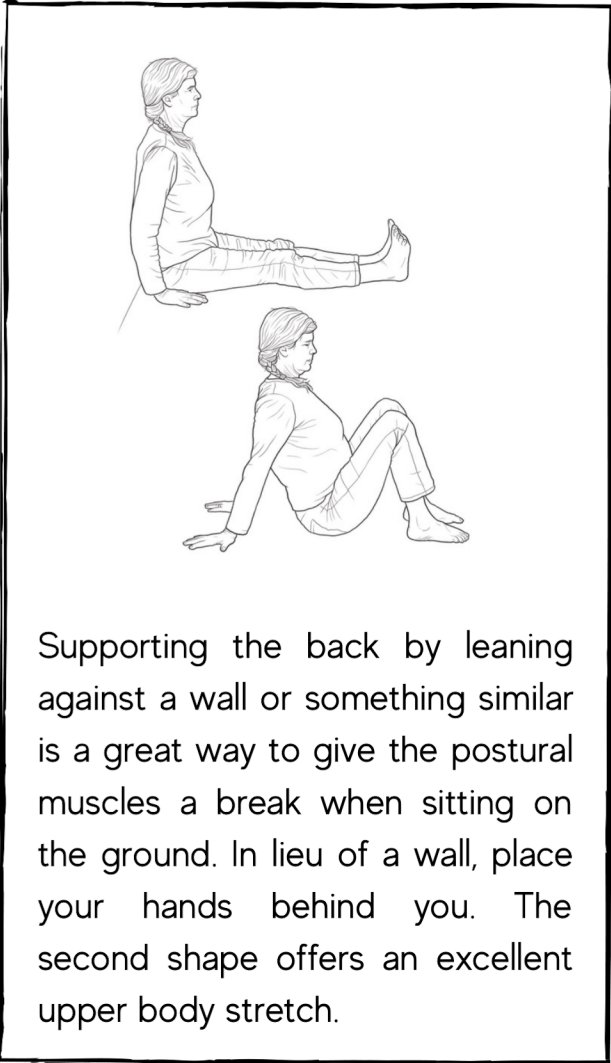
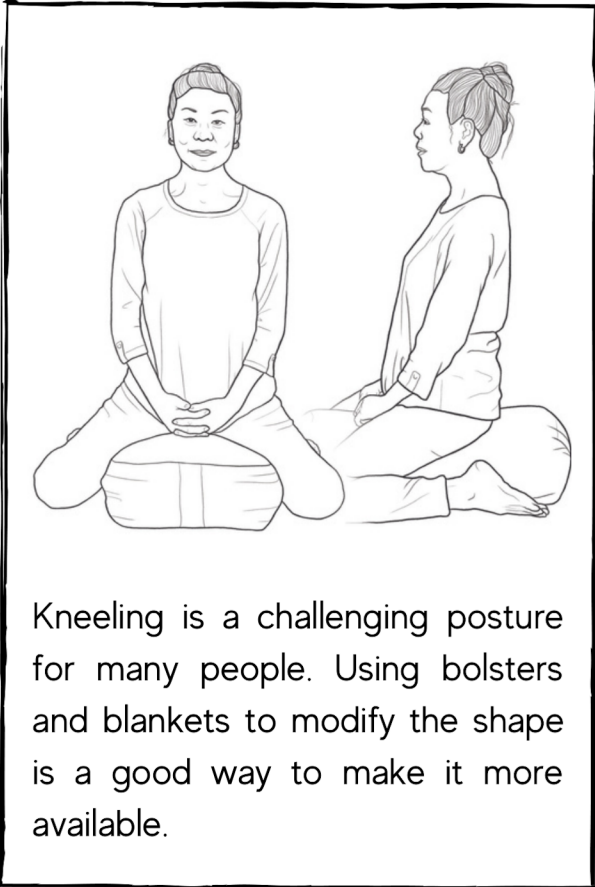


Sitting on the ground frees the body from the confines of chairs. Free to move, you'll discover many variations to sitting that make it something you can do for long periods of time without pain.

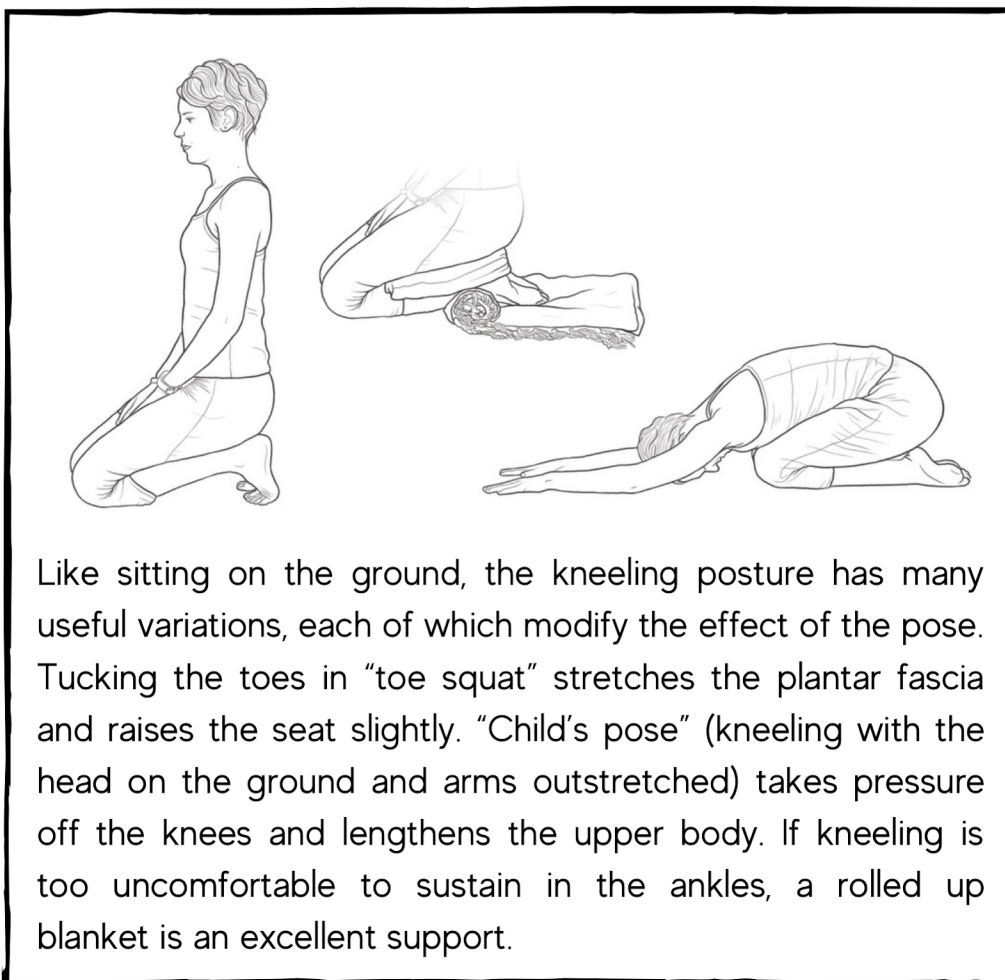
Elevating your hips from the ground while seated will make more sitting positions available. To come into "stacked logs pose," cross one leg over the other placing the ankle (not the foot) on the thigh right above the knee. This is an intense glute stretch for many people, but a bolster or other support under the hips will make the position more sustainable.



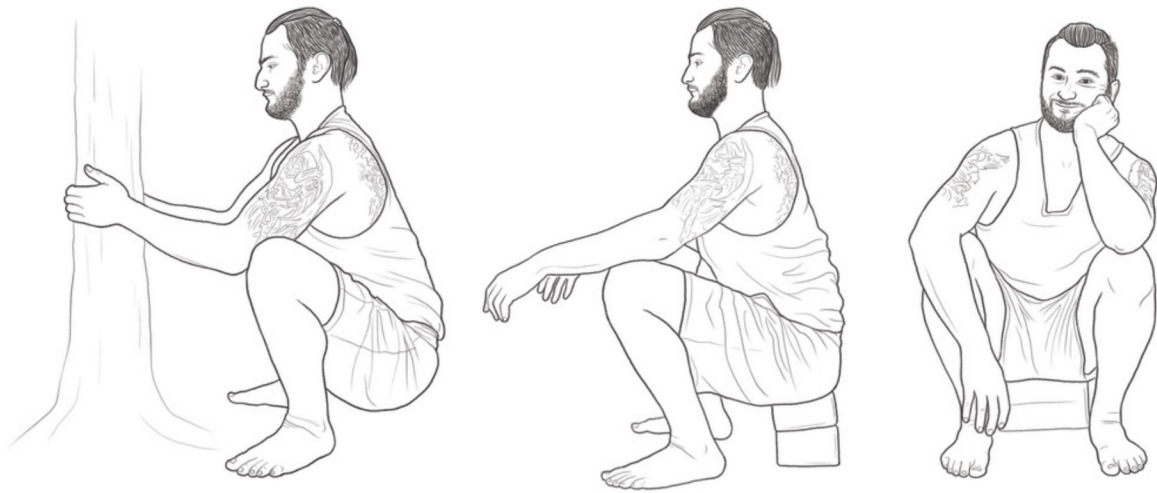
"Ninety-ninety pose" is an excellent shape for building hip mobility and improving posture. From a cross-legged position, bend one leg behind you, aiming for ninety degree angles at both knees. For a gentler shape narrow the distance between the legs, decrease the knee angles, or boost the hips.



The key to sitting on the ground is periodic posture cycling. Change your shape often to get the most out of your practice. Experiment with how you arrange your legs and how you support yourself. Over time you will discover the positions you like as well as the positions you don't like (but know you need in order to heal).



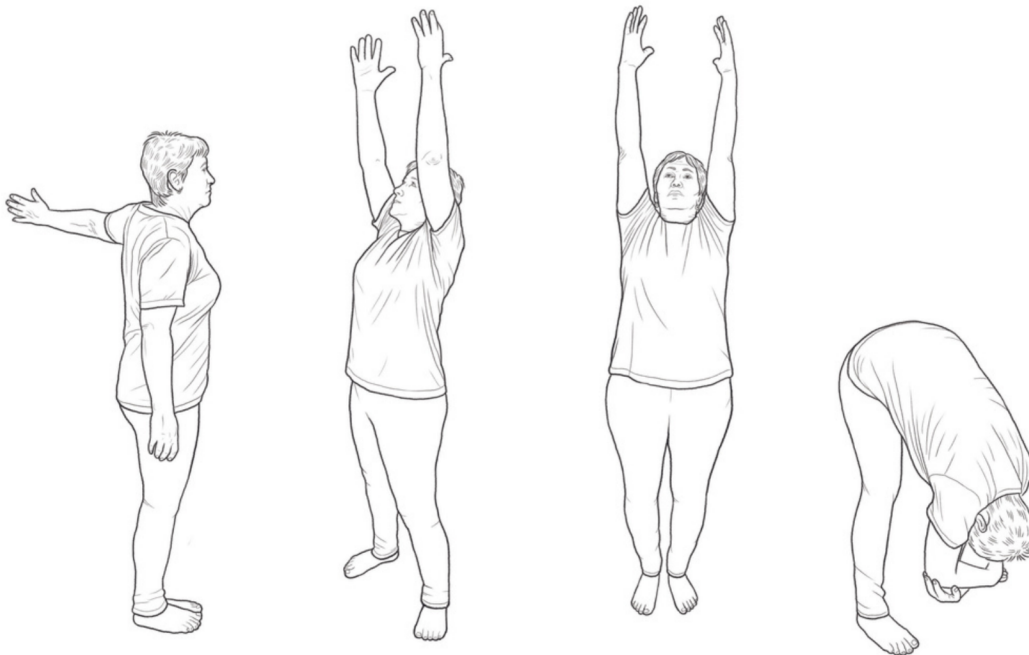
Leaning back against something can make squatting more doable. If the squat is a challenging shape for you, turn your back to a wall leaving one foot’s distance between your heels and the wall. With your feet hip distance apart and toes pointing slightly outward, hinge at the waist to touch the ground. Keeping your hands on the ground, lean your hips against the wall. Slowly bend at the knees, keeping your weight against the wall until you reach an edge you could maintain for a bit. If the squat is easier for you, simply lean against the wall from standing and slide down into “wall squat.”



Be creative in supporting yourself in squat. Grab onto something in front of you if you feel like you are going to fall back. Boost your hips with a stack of books or a short stool. Sit on a staircase with your hips on a higher stair and your legs arranged in a squatting shape on a lower stair.

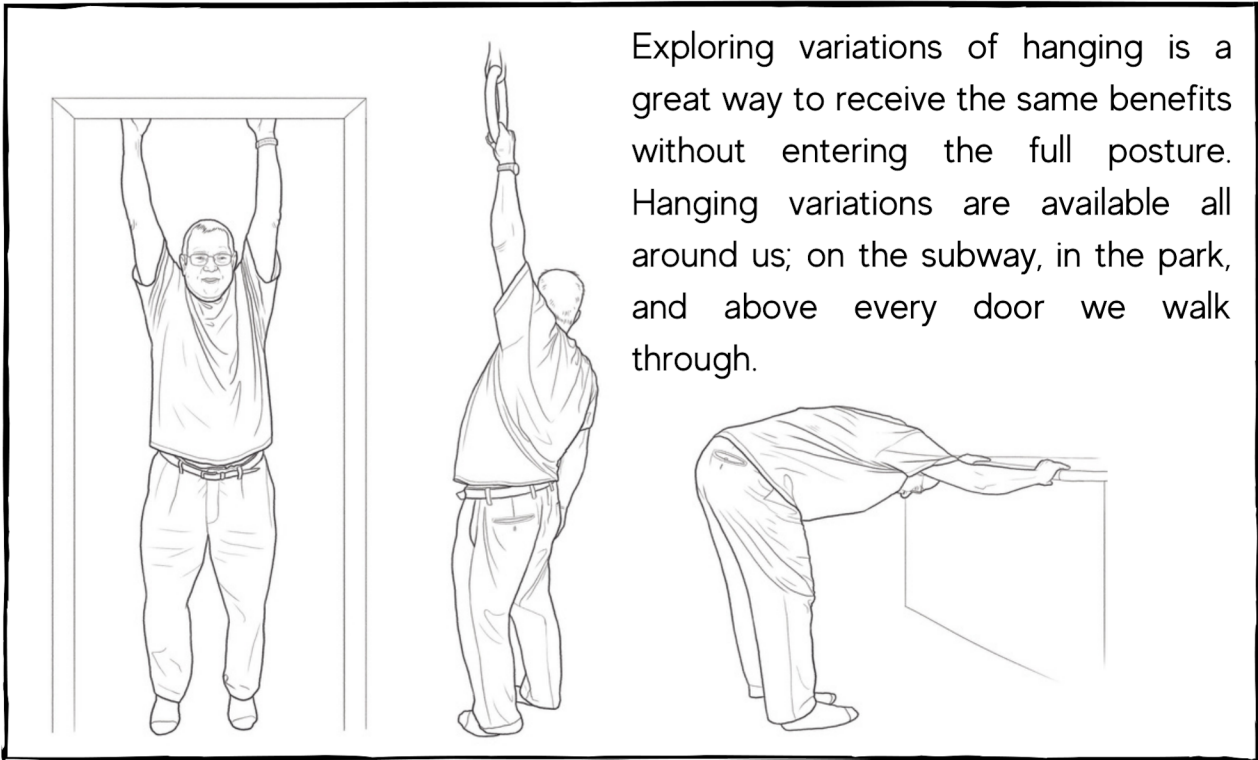
Standing

Standing is a great counter position for sitting. It makes a wide array of stretches and exercises available to help us shake off stagnation and revitalize our bodies. By reaching, bending, and folding from a standing position, we can utilize leverage and gravity to aid in releasing tension.



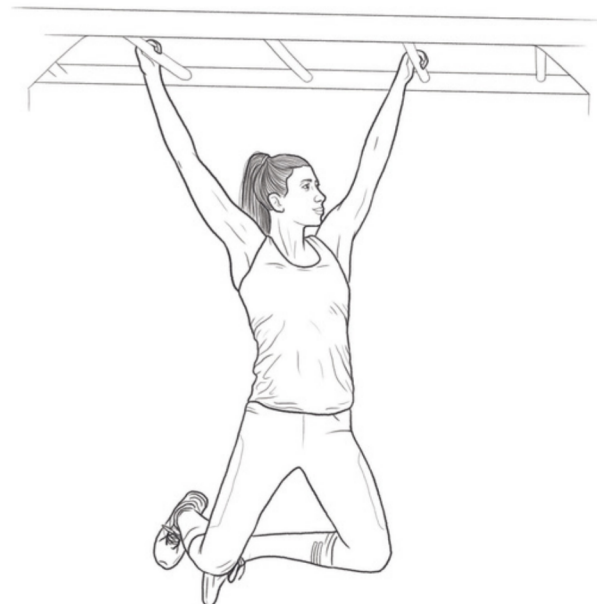
Oftentimes the reason we find standing for long periods painful is because we stand with disengaged posture. Just like when we sit slumped in a chair, standing disengaged compresses the body and induces lethargy. By standing actively, we support the hips and back with muscular engagement. This may feel a bit more tiring, but it has the simultaneous advantages of strengthening the body, encouraging fullness of breath, and preventing pain.

Hanging

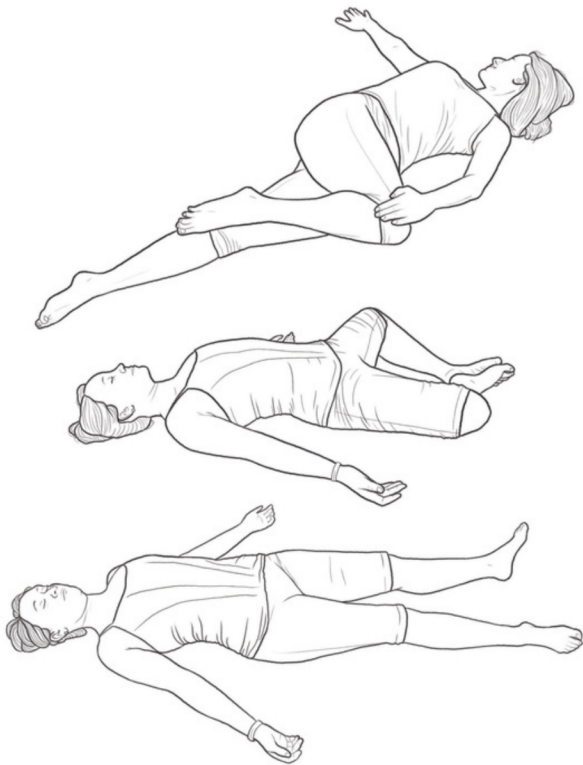


Exploring variations of hanging is a great way to receive the same benefits without entering the full posture. Hanging variations are available all around us; on the subway, in the park, and above every door we walk through.

Once you are comfortable with the hanging posture you can begin experimenting with movements like swinging from bar to bar (braciation). Pulling movements like braciation and climbing develop highly functional upper body strength, enhance coordination, and increase self confidence.



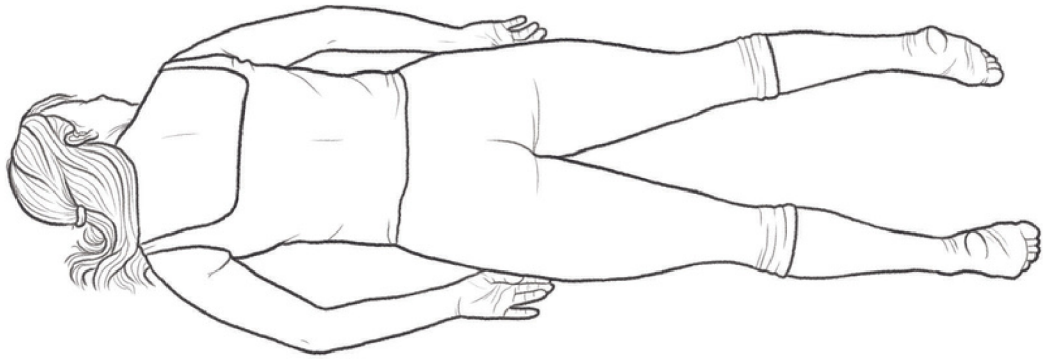
Lying Down



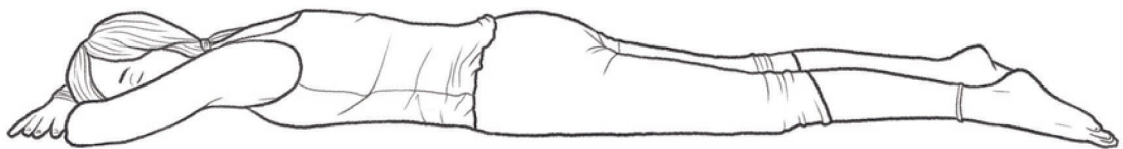
There are many stretches and other therapeutic exercises available while lying on the ground. Since it is in a position that induces relaxation, the body will associate the exercises with tranquility. This makes the exercises more effective, and maintains a healthy balance of activity and rest.



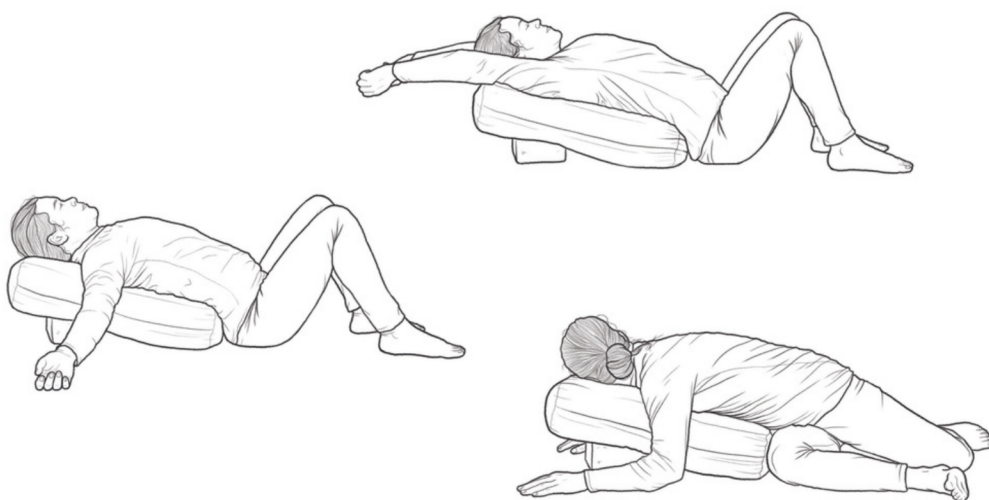
Lying on the ground instead of on furniture encourages us to arrange our body in a way that is self supportive. This keeps us in tune with our bodies, preventing us from remaining stagnant in one position too long like we might when sleeping on a memory foam mattress.

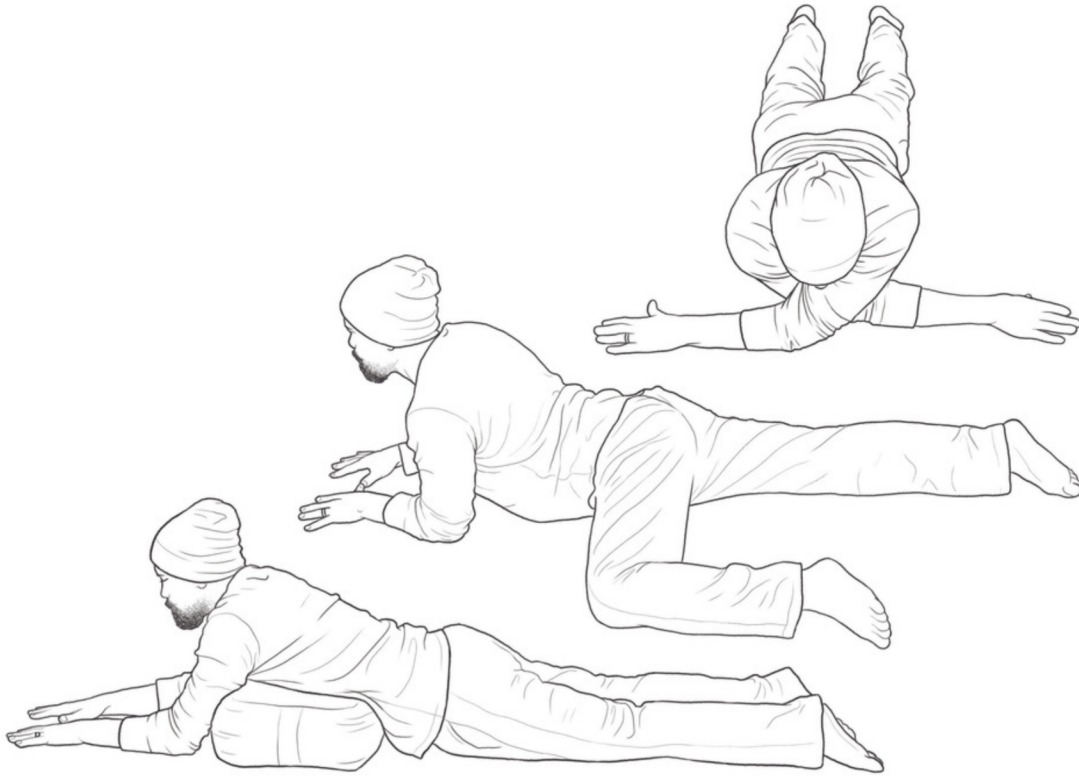


Lying face down on the ground has a calming effect because the pressure on our ribcage and abdomen encourages diaphragmatic breathing. Breathing deeply lying face down turns the diaphragm into a weightlifter when inhaling actively. When we exhale, the weight of the body helps squeeze the air out of the lungs, signaling the body to relax further.



There are many ways to modify lying on the ground to create restorative shapes. In lieu of yoga props, use common household items like pillows, blankets, and books to build a nest for positions that offer gentle stretching and encourage deep relaxation. Lying with arms outstretched at different angles and arranging the legs in various ways will produce a wide array of sensations and benefits.





Experiment with various arrangements of your arms and legs to create different sensations in sphinx. Pad the arms or boost the chest with a pillow or blanket to make the position less fatiguing.

Any Time

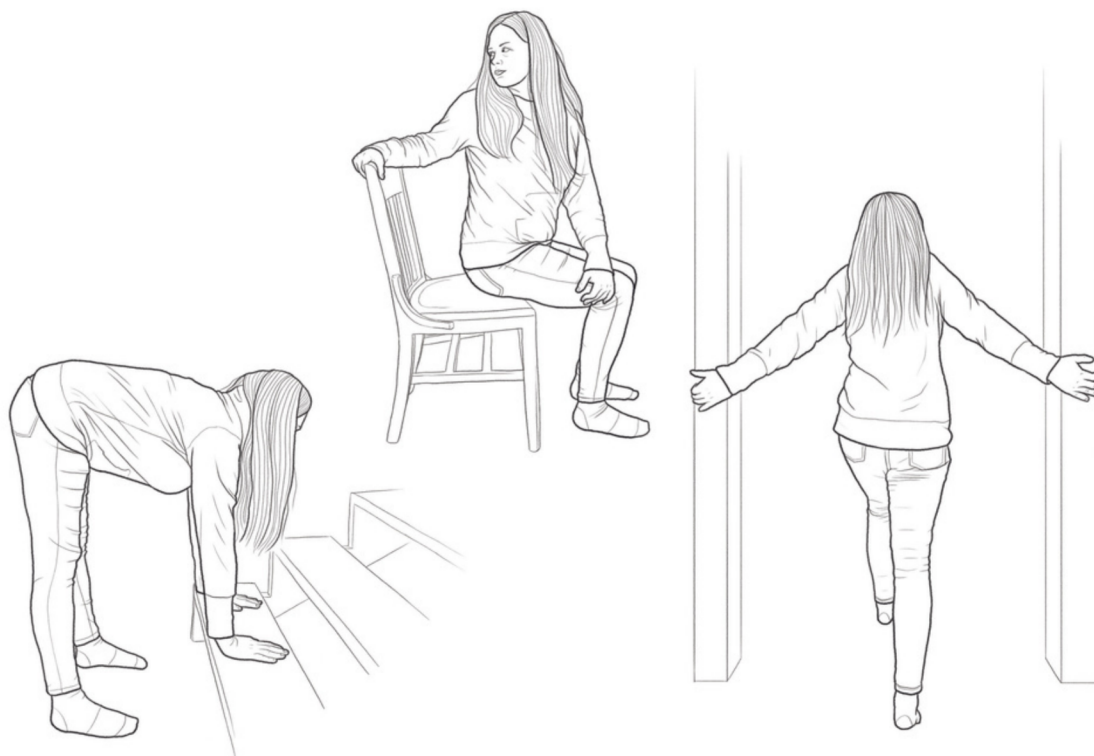


Combining the practices of active rest and grounding is easy. Simply perform active rest postures barefoot. If being barefoot isn't comfortable you can wear leather moccasins or wool socks since they are conductive when moistened by dew or sweat. You can also become grounded by touching the Earth (or other conductive surfaces that are in contact with it) with your hands or other bare skin.

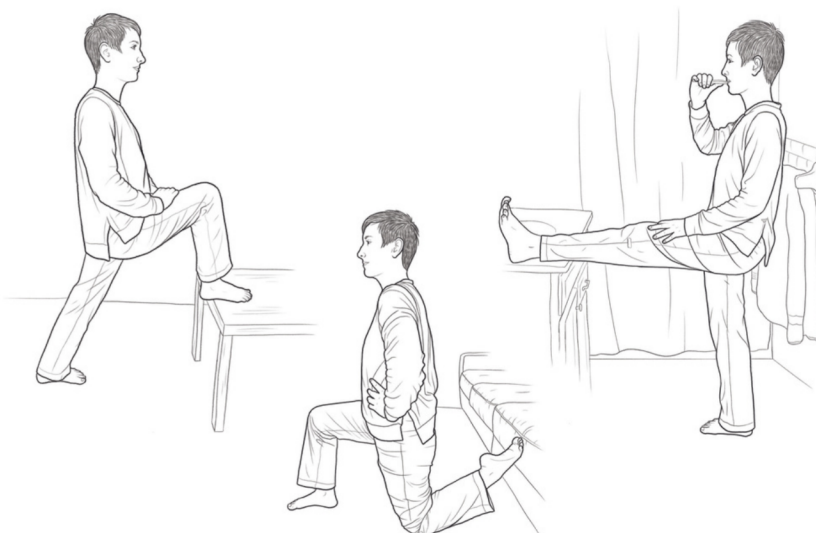


Practicing active rest in urban environments is easy because there are so many possibilities all around you. You can inconspicuously hang from safety handles, squat with your back to a wall, or perform simple seated stretches when it's impossible to avoid chairs.

Indoor environments offer a wide array of tools for enhancing your self care practice. With a little imagination, everything around you can become useful. Stairs offer varying heights that can make stretches and exercises more or less challenging depending on your needs. Doors offer us the opportunity to simulate hanging or otherwise stretch the upper body. Even chairs can sometimes offer us more mechanical advantages than sitting on the ground for deepening the practice of active rest.



Household items and furniture transform when you stop looking at them as single use items and start being creative in utilizing them to promote the practice of active rest.



Active rest can enhance other activities. Instead of sitting, reclining, or lying on furniture, practice active postures while you read, write, work on the computer, or watch TV.

