

# Yin Yoga Sequence

## What is Yin?

We tend to practice dynamic, active yoga practices, designed to work only half of the body - the muscular half, or 'yang' tissues. Yin Yoga allows us to work the other half - the deeper 'yin' tissues of our ligaments, joints, deep fascial networks and even our bones. All of our tissues are important and need to be exercised so we can achieve optimal health.

## When and How to Practice Yin?

Early in the morning or in the evening is ideal; surroundings tend to be quieter, and there isn't the busyness of the day to worry about.

- Listen to your body.
- Come into the pose to an appropriate depth (don't force it) - you're going to be in the pose for a while.
- Resolve to remain still. This is where your mindfulness practice and breath awareness comes in.
- Hold the pose for a set period of time. Put a timer on, but come out earlier if you need to.

## These are just some of the benefits of Yin, both long and short term

- It is a very deep practice for the body and mind.
- It calms the mind, helping to reduce feelings of anxiety and stress.
- Better lubrication and protection of the joints.
- Great for injury prevention and injury recovery.
- Increases mobility in the body, especially the hips.
- Can improve digestive health; bloating, cramps, too often, too infrequent... you get the drift!

## Preparation

Clear some space both physically and mentally for your practice, choose some music or find a quiet space, set the tone for relaxation.



Get hold of as many props as you can; blocks, cushions, blankets, pillows, a bolster, encyclopaedias or yellow pages are good alternatives if you don't have blocks. You'll need a timer if you use your phone, turn it to flight mode, you won't regret it.

## 1. Supported Childs Pose ('Balasana'): 2 minutes, head on each side

Bolster, or pillow if you don't have a bolster, for your support. Knees mat width apart, big toes to touch, and lengthen your spine as you begin to lower down on an exhale. This one can be strong on the neck. If you experience tension in the neck ('tech neck' from computer work), use more props and pillows so you feel comfortable, or hold the posture for a shorter amount of time.

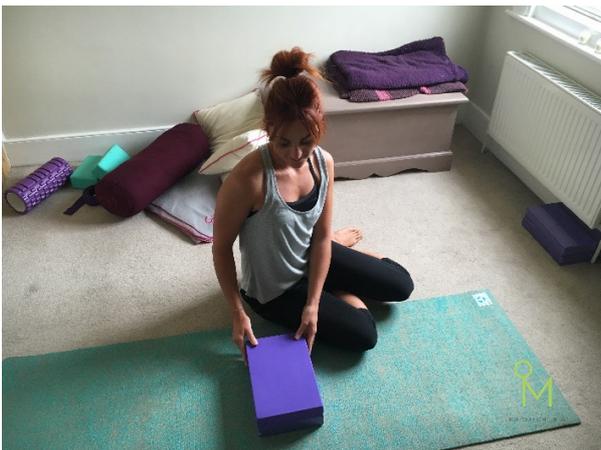


### Benefits

Lengthens the spine, opens the hips and stretches the tops of the feet, which is great for tibias anterior which can lead to shin splints (I'm talking to you runners!).

## 2. Supported Bridge ('Setu Bandhasana'): 2-5 minutes

One or two blocks, placed under the lower back. Make sure this feels comfortable, and fidget until you find the sweet spot where you can completely release the weight of your hips onto the blocks.



### Benefits

Rejuvenates tired legs, opens the chest and lengthens the back of the neck, draining blood away from the head, calming the nervous system.

### 3. Legs Up the Wall ('Viparita Karani'): 3-5 minutes

This is your 'go to' inversion yogis! If you don't fancy shoulderstand/ headstands etc in class, take this pose. If you are feeling creative, place a pillow, block or bolster under the hips to create more of an inversion and play around with leg variations.



#### Benefits

Extends the spine, decompresses the lumbar spine (common cause of lower back pain) helps regulate blood pressure, energises tired legs, calms the mind and is really soothing before bed!

### 4. Reclined Bound Angle Pose ('Supta Baddha Konasana'): 2-3 minutes

Lying down, bring the soles of the feet to touch. Play around with how close / far away your feet are from your body. Option to place pillows under the thighs for additional support. Remember you're going to be here for a while and need the legs to relax.

You can try a rolled up mat, blanket or towel at the base of the shoulder blades to open the chest and stretch the pectoral muscles.



### Benefits

Stretches inner thighs, adductor muscles, increases external rotation of the hips, can aid digestion as it stimulates blood circulation to lower abdominals

### 5. Supported Forward Fold ('Paschimottinasana'): 1-2 minutes

Get yourself lots of props here - maybe sit on a bloc and use more than one pillow for support. Inhale, lengthen the spine and begin to lean forwards. When you feel the resistance in your body, flow down. If your hamstrings are really tight, roll up a mat or blanket and place under bent knees. Relax your legs, forget about flexing your toes and don't pull yourself into this posture - look how rounded my back is, it's relaxed.



### Benefits

Stretches the spine, shoulders and hamstrings, can aid digestion as you're applying pressure to digestive organs, can help regulate blood pressure and calms the nervous system.

## 6. Bound Angle Pose ('Baddha Konasana'): 2 – 3 minutes

Try sitting up on a block, bring the soles of the feet together, cushions under the thighs for additional support and create a nice comfortable stack to rest your head on. Inhale, lengthen the spine and when you feel the resistance in the hips, flop down on the support, rounding the spine.



### Benefits

See 'Supta Baddha Konasana' and add on; deep flexion of the spine, releases tension in back of the neck.

## 7. Corpse Pose ('Savasana'): 5 minutes

Don't skip this one! It's tempting but it's just as beneficial as the other postures. And we're being Yin, not Yang so lie down, either legs long, feet mat width apart, or take this variation with a bolster (or substitute with a pillow). Tuck yourself in with a blanket. Set your timer and give yourself permission to relax.



## Benefits

When the body relaxes, it becomes stronger and healthier. This posture calms the mind, allows the tissues to relax and adjust to the postural changes we've made and activates the parasympathetic nervous system; rest and digest.

Wake yourself up slowly and mindfully Yin Yogis. Take a moment to acknowledge your practice.  
Drink lots of water to hydrate those tissues you just lengthened.



If you're interested to know more about Yin Yoga, how it links with Chinese Medicine, regulates hormones and the many other therapeutic benefits of this deep practice, contact me to arrange a 1-2-1 session designed around your needs.

[www.DoYourOMThing.co.uk](http://www.DoYourOMThing.co.uk)