

Visual Aid - Yoga Mods

This is meant to serve as a visual aid to common yoga postures and the modifications we will make to them, to support all of the audio classes and videos, and so that you can integrate it into your body before you start the yoga class. This is how I modify poses and I will give you a brief description on why. Let's begin...



Instead of this...



...Try this

Downward Dog

To gain true strength, instead of relying on and stretching out our shoulder joint, we draw our shoulder blade downward as we bring our arms away from our ears and have a slight bend at the elbow. We also keep the natural curvature of our spine intact to support its discs, and all tissues that function best in this alignment. Again, instead of relying on the back and hip joint, you gain strength in your glutes and thighs here. To maintain the curvature of our spine, we bend our knees as deeply as needed. We also relax our head and neck, not lifting upward and stressing out the upper spine and neck muscles.



Instead of this...



...Try this

Forward Bends

Traditional forward bends have you lean forward, creating a C-shape to your spine, tucking your pelvis, and locking your knees. You are told it is a "hamstring stretch", but what it does is stress the discs in your lower back and wear them out over time. These forward bends have a deep knee bend to them, to support your pelvic health by not tilting it as well as the health of your spine, as again, we maintain that natural curvature. You should feel the activation in your thighs and glutes, never a pulling on any part of the spine.

Instead of this...



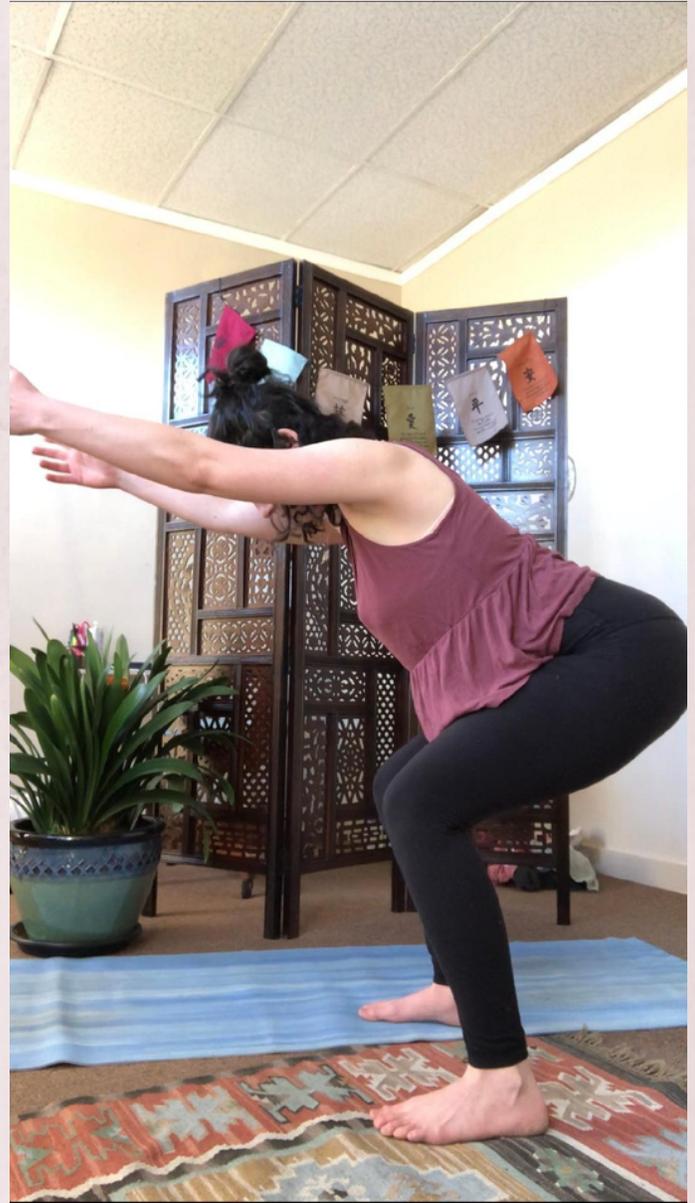
...Try this

...and this





Instead of this...



...Try this

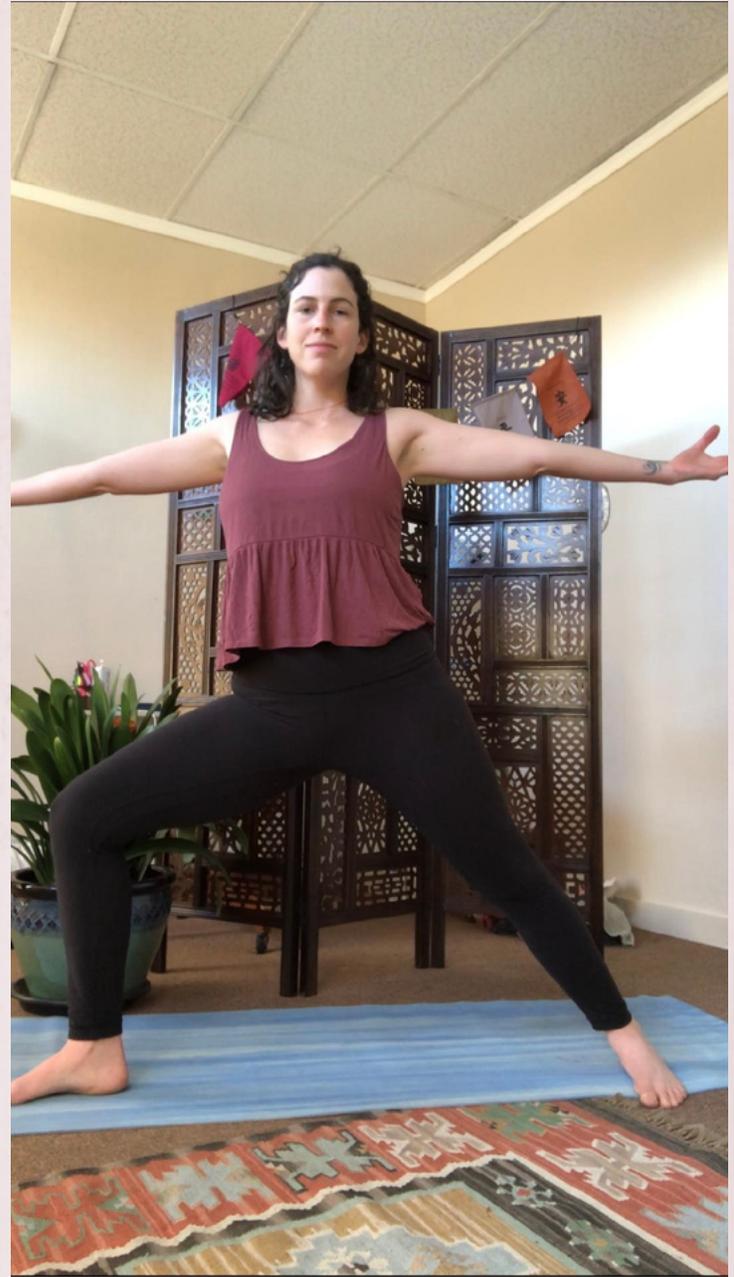
Rolling Up to Stand

As we roll up from a forward bend or any time we come to standing, we gain more strength and avoid putting more pressure on discs with unnecessary loads by coming up in a deep chair pose which additionally strengthens our thighs and glutes.

Feel free to read this article to learn more:
www.sequencewiz.org/2013/08/14/rolling-up-from-a-standing-forward-bend-can-damage-your-spine/



Instead of this...

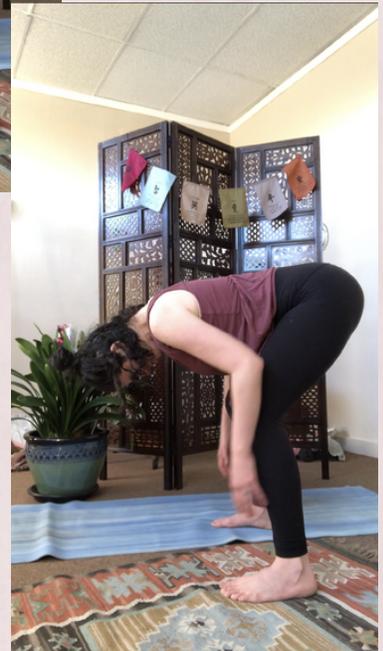


...Try this

Triangle + Warrior Poses

You will see in the yoga class that I do NOT go the deepest I can into a pose. That usually leads to "sitting" in the joints, instead of recruiting our muscles for strength and support. It also usually requires locking knees or losing the curves of our spine, and coming away from our center. In this way, we feel the strength being built and return to our core-centered awareness

Instead of these, try these...



Relax Your Neck

So often in yoga as well as if you flip through any fitness magazine, you'll see a constant lifting of the neck. This encourages us to live in our heads, not our core, as we lead with our eyes. It also strains our face, neck and chest muscles over time and affects our spine all the way down the line. This takes a lot of reminding ourselves at first, but anytime you find yourself doing this, shake your neck out and find your neutral.

Safe Twisting

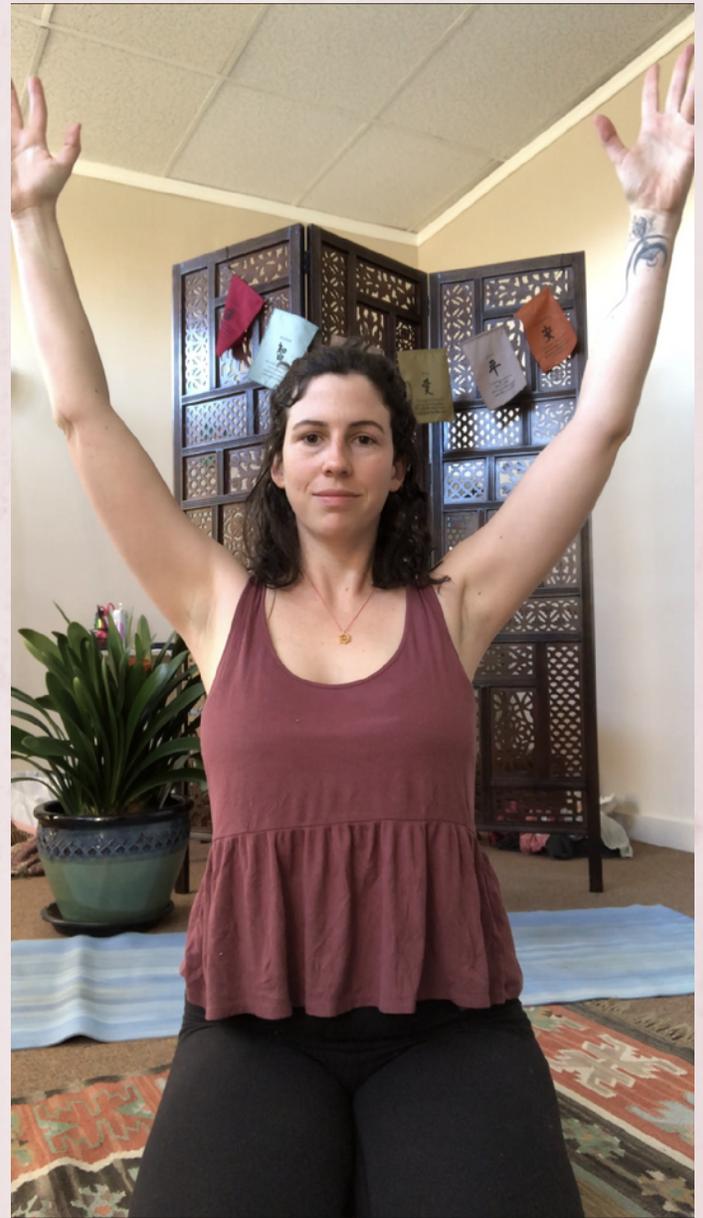
Always keep your lower (lumbar) back neutral when twisting. To not do so stresses your lumbar and sacral ligaments that are needed to provide hip stabilization. Loose ligaments lead to loss of joint integrity, which leads to pain and in some cases, replacements. When our ligaments are over-stretched, it is difficult to feel it over time as we lose connection to the sensory nerves within them.

Over time, constant flattening of our lumbar curve also leads to loss of the beautiful curves of your body and butt! When twisting, we don't want to go too far, as flexibility truly is a liability here. We can engage in a very gentle stretch. If you are having trouble taking in a breath and losing any aspect of good alignment, you are going too far.





Instead of this ..



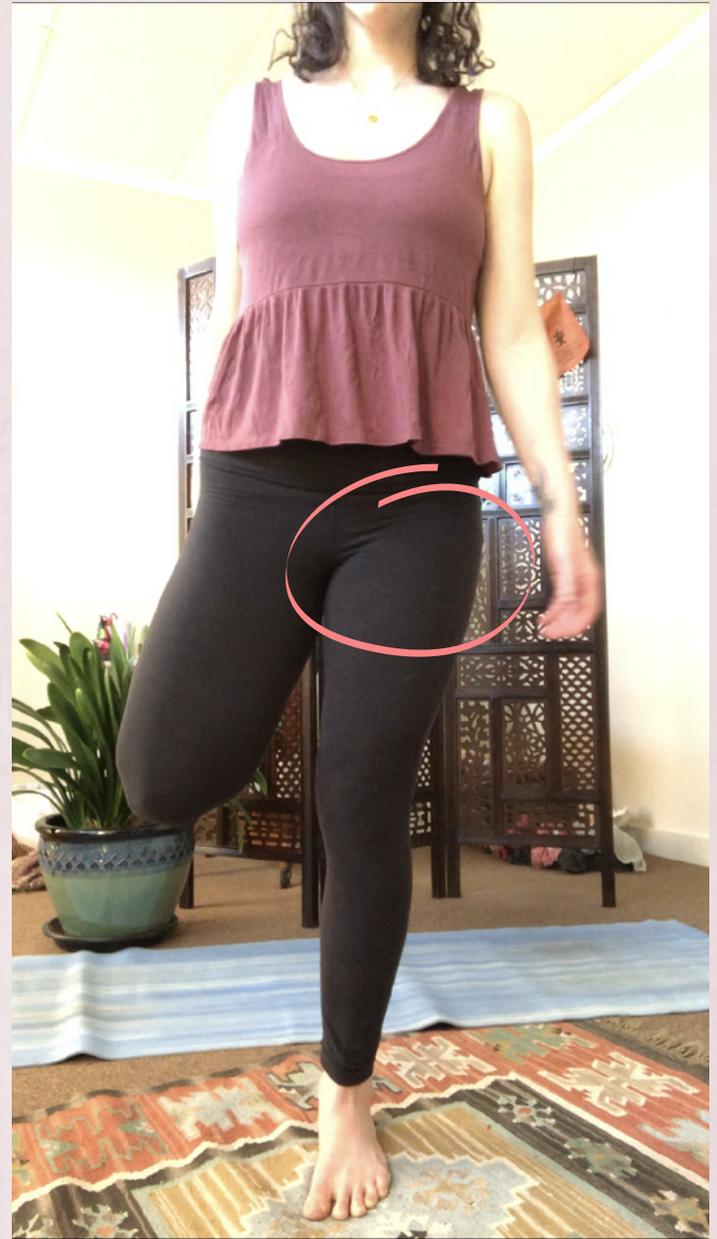
...Try this

"Sitting" in Shoulder Joint

What does this mean and look like? It looks like relying on your shoulder joint to support your weight. It looks like pulling your joint out of its optimal alignment centered in its socket, in order to "stretch" it. Reminder: we don't want to stretch joints, we need them as centers of stabilization. Then we can gain real strength from surrounding muscles.



Instead of this ..



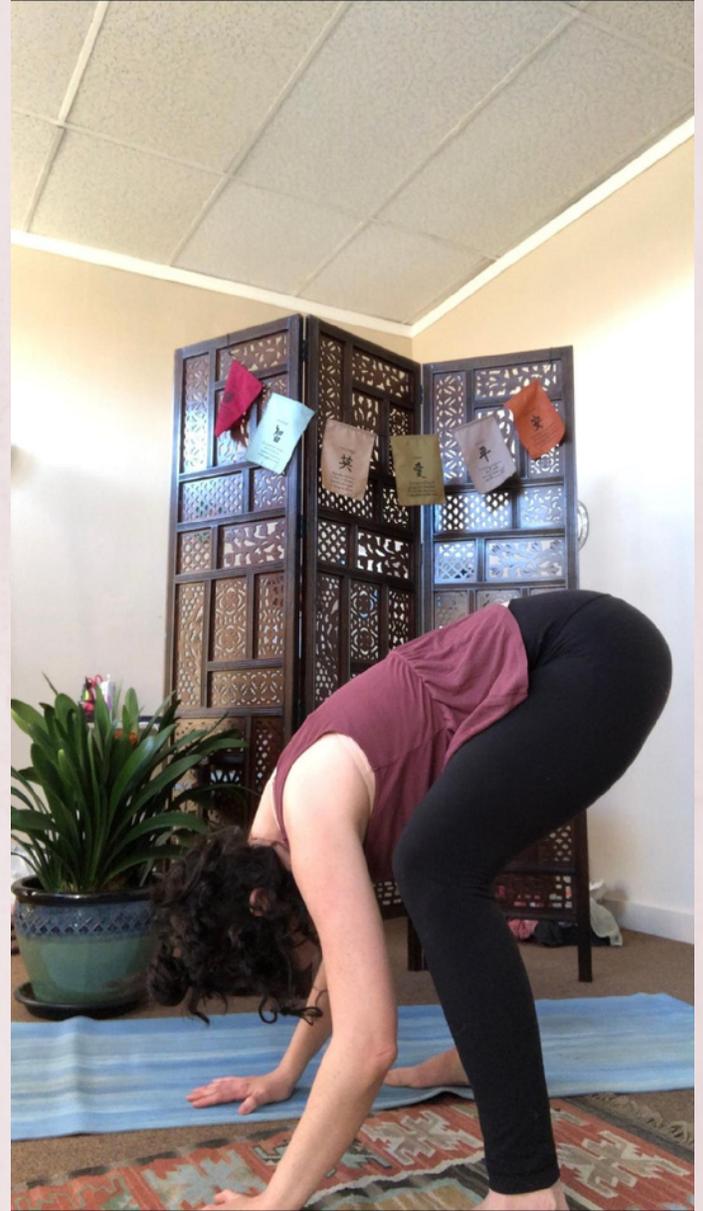
...Try this

Sitting" in Hip Joint

What does this mean and look like? It looks like relying on your hip joint to support your weight, usually seen in balancing poses instead of relying on surrounding glute and thigh muscles, but can also be seen when trying to get **deep** into other poses. In the picture on the left, my hip juts out to the side. To address that, I square my hips. Sitting in your hips stresses out the joint and can wear it out over time. Try to notice when you find yourself doing this.



Instead of this ..



...Try this

Locking Knees vs Bending

I've mentioned this before, how locking your knees affects the tilt of your pelvis (which affects all structures within it) and affects the natural recruitment pattern of everything above it. It also is an energetic barrier to receiving grounded energy from the Earth. This is something you'll have to also continually remind yourself until it becomes second nature!