

## Pregnancy yoga: practice sheet number three

*NB BI = Breathe in; BO = Breathe out*

- 1) **Breath and body awareness.** Sit comfortably. Watch the breath come and go. Feel how you feel without judgement.

**Kneeling movements.** Place cushion between buttocks and heels or kneel up if uncomfortable. Alternatively, just sit.

- 2) **Hero's pose (chest opener).** Clasp hands in front then BO to straighten arms away and turn palms to face away from body. BI to raise straight arms to sky. Breathe a few rounds as you push hips down to ground and arms up to sky. Keep shoulders relaxed. BO to return arms to sides. Repeat.
- 3) **Chest opener.** Clasp hands behind back and BO to straighten arms, keeping them downwards. Next BO lift arms if you can. Stay a few breaths without arching small of back. Release and repeat.
- 4) **Neck releases.** Relax shoulders and release chin towards chest. Keeping chin tucked in, **gently** circle chin towards one ear, back to centre, then over to other side. Repeat a few times, keeping shoulders relaxed at all times.

**Sitting movements.** The next movements are done with legs wide apart, sitting upright on sitting bones and on cushion if needed. All the movements are done with a straight spine with the movements coming from the hip joints rather than the waist.

- 5) **Hip joint loosener.** Sit as above. Clasp hands in front of body, elbows bent. Rotate base of pelvis on floor in small circles feeling the hip joints loosening. The movement comes from the hips not the waist or arms. Go round in both directions.
- 6) **Stirring the porridge.** This is an extension of the previous practice. This time, allow the hands and arms to circle too, as if stirring porridge. Make the circles as big as you want. Repeat on the other side.
- 7) **Chest openers.** Sit as above. Place right hand inside left leg and lean in that direction from the hip joint, keeping right sitting bone on ground. Look at right hand: BI and circle arm to sky, BO to circle behind then swoop back to starting position to complete the circle. Keep looking at hand that moves and allowing chest to follow movement. Do a few circles then other side.
- 8) **Pelvic floor exercise.** Find your favourite position e.g. bum in air, kneeling, sitting. Imagine the pelvic floor like a beautiful flower. BI close all the petals of the flower tightly, BO long and gently allowing all the petals to unfold. Repeat a few times.

### Standing movements

- 9) **Basic standing posture** (mountain pose). Stand well i.e. feet spreading, knees a little bent, lower spine releasing downwards, chest open, chin neutral, breath flowing. Check the pelvis is in a neutral position (not too far forward or too far back).
- 10) **Half squats.** Stand feet wider than hips, feet pointing out a little. BI then as BO allow knees to bend, keeping spine upright. Repeat a few times, raising arms if you wish on BI, then lowering them on BO as you go into ½ squat.
- 11) **Drops.** From same starting position, BI tense all muscles in body, sigh the BO out and release tension, going into ½ squat.
- 12) **Relaxation.** Lie on left hand side. Relax all the parts of the body in turn, starting with feet and ending in head, until the whole body feels at ease. Allow the breath to be effortless. Take a few minutes relaxing with awareness on your baby.

