

YOGA

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MAGAZINE

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AROUND
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Your
Attitude,
Change
Your
Karma!*

DAVID SYE
*Uses Yoga
to Take on
Youth
Gangs*

GIVE BACK
FEEL GOOD

*Make a
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to Your
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Yoga FOR THE SECOND TRIMESTER OF Pregnancy

Emma Sharma, experienced and qualified prenatal yoga teacher, who has recently released her own prenatal yoga DVD [in association with Yoga Magazine] informs women in their second trimester of safe postures, breathing and pelvic floor exercises they can do to maintain strength, flexibility and stamina during pregnancy. A mother herself, she understands the importance of maintaining a steady yoga practice throughout pregnancy, both in terms of fitness and in order to prevent and relieve common pregnancy discomforts.

Welcome to your second trimester of pregnancy. You have probably shared your happy news with friends and family by now and may be starting to have that pregnancy 'glow'. Many women find this to be a time of renewed energy after the exhaustion often associated with the first trimester, although this is not always the case. This is the time to make use of any boost in energy you may have, before the weight of the baby slows you a little in the third trimester. During the coming weeks you will probably become increasingly aware of the presence of your baby inside of you as you start to feel him or her moving around and as your belly starts to grow. Dedicating time to yoga will encourage you to focus inward and connect with your growing baby. Make the most of this trimester; if you plan to go on holiday then now is the best time since this is the optimal period to travel during pregnancy.

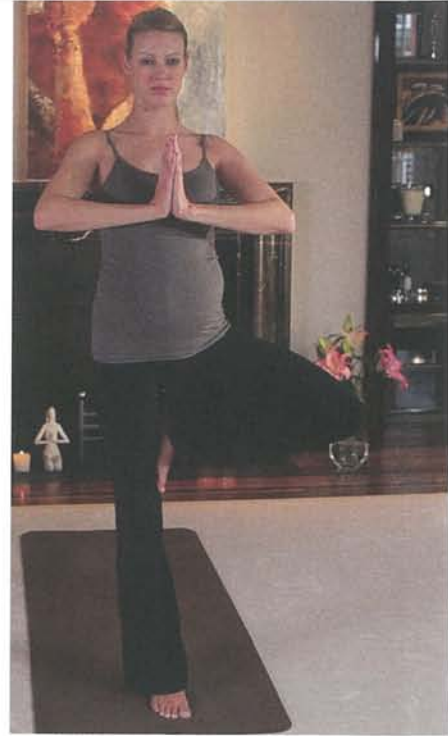
The second trimester is rarely without any discomforts however. Common complaints are of cramps, dizziness, constipation, varicose veins, back pain, sciatica and carpal tunnel syndrome. Yoga can help relieve these ailments and should be practiced regularly. Pregnancy is not an illness, and should not be treated as such. You can continue with an active prenatal yoga practice to help maintain your strength, flexibility and stamina for labour and an easier recovery postpartum. If you stay active your body will thank you for it in the long run. However, listen to the needs of your body and be mindful that it is going through many changes. If you start to feel fatigued then try to rest when you can. If you are new to yoga, it is not too late to start now; most prenatal classes welcome women of all levels. If you are unable to attend a prenatal class near you then you can enjoy a yoga practice from the comfort of your home by following a prenatal yoga DVD. The following postures are suitable for your second trimester and may help to relieve common pregnancy discomforts during this time. Each posture comes with its own list of benefits.

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Tree Pose

This pose will increase your sense of balance. It strengthens the ankles, calves, thighs and spine and stretches the groin, inner thigh, chest and shoulders. It also helps to relieve sciatica, a common pregnancy ailment. If you are suffering from pubic pain then please do not balance on one leg.

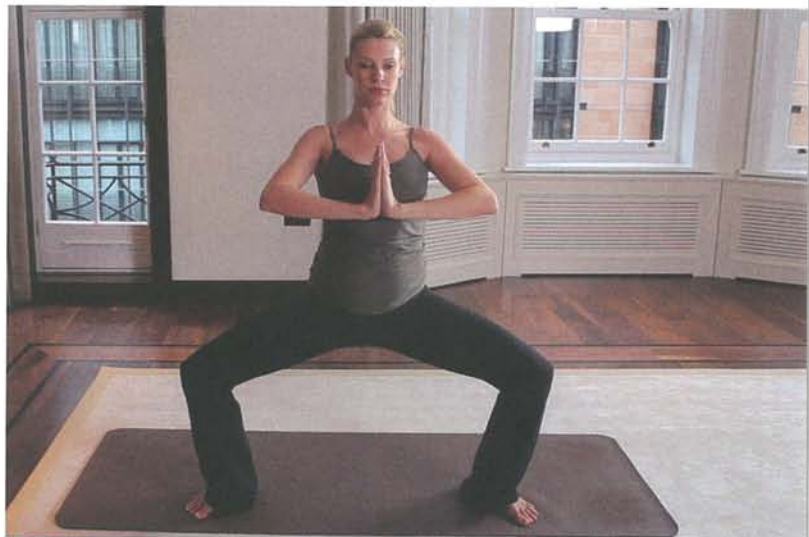
-Stand with your feet together in mountain pose. Focus your gaze on a fixed point in front of you. Shift your weight slightly onto your left foot. Turn your right knee to the side and raise your right heel to rest on the ankle of your left foot. Stay here, or if you feel comfortable, clasp your right ankle with your right hand and slowly raise your right foot up to rest the sole on your left inner thigh, toes pointing downward. Resist with the outer left leg. Bring your hands together in prayer in front of your chest. Then, if you are steady, slowly raise your hands over your head, following with your gaze. Stay here for a few slow, deep breaths. Then release your hands back down to your heart centre, following with your gaze and release your right foot on an exhalation and then repeat on the other side.



Warrior II

This pose is a great groin opener and strengthens your legs and ankles. It will also help to relieve back pain, common in pregnancy.

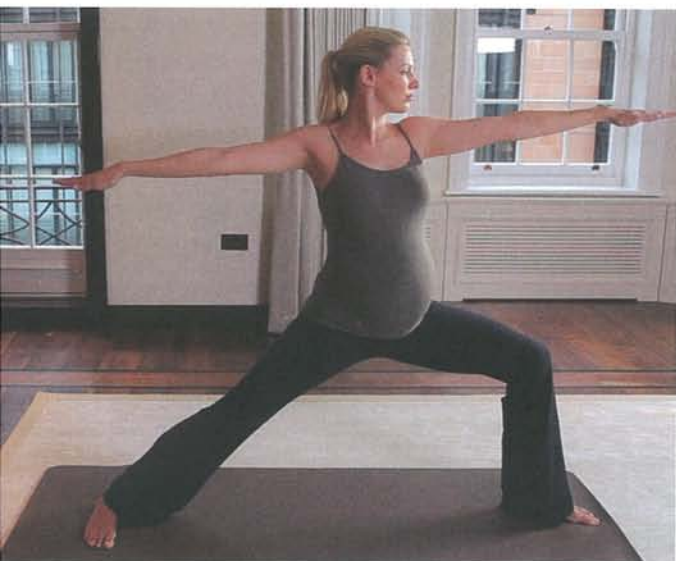
-On an exhalation take a big step out to the right with your right foot so your feet are about 4 feet apart. Keep your left foot parallel to the mat and turn your right foot in 45 degrees. Align your left heel with your right heel. Bend your left knee 90 degrees and make sure that your knee is directly over your ankle. Bring your arms out to the sides of your body in line with your shoulders, palms down and turn to look over your left hand. Ensure that your torso stays directly over your hips. Hold the posture for a few slow deep breaths. Then inhale straighten your left leg and turn on your feet to do the same on the other side.



Half Squat

This pose is a good thigh strengthener which will prove useful in labour if you are planning to try some gravity assisting upright positions. If your baby is in breech position after 34 weeks or you are suffering from pubic pain then please do not practice squats at all.

-Turn your toes out and heels in and bring your hands together in prayer in front of your chest. Exhale as you come down into a half squat with your knees tracking slightly over your ankles. Keep your spine straight and lengthen your tailbone down. Keep your face soft. Hold this pose for a few breaths, breathing through any discomfort in your thighs. If you feel any strain in your back then straighten your legs and return to standing. Inhale and come back up, raise your arms overhead and exhale slowly, lowering your arms and torso down again. Repeat this posture a couple more times, moving with your breath.



Yoga Pregnancy



Garland Pose

This posture stretches the groin, back and ankles. It is a highly beneficial pose to practice during pregnancy, helping you to feel comfortable in this natural position for giving birth. It tones your pelvic floor muscles, improves circulation to the whole pelvic area and helps you to open out your hips and groin to their widest for an easier delivery.

-Come to a squat on the floor with your feet flat if you can, if you can't, then fold a blanket and put it under your heels. Keep your feet as parallel as you can. Separate your thighs and lean your torso between your legs, keeping your spine straight. Bring your hands into prayer in front of your chest and press your elbows against your inner knees. Hold the position for a few slow, deep breaths.



Pelvic Floor Exercises

These exercises are very important during and after pregnancy to help strengthen and prepare the pelvic floor for childbirth and postpartum. They will help increase blood flow and elasticity of the area. The pelvic floor muscles are those that are used to interrupt the flow of urine. You can practice the following pelvic exercises at any time during your day and you will be thankful you made the time.

-Come into a comfortable cross-legged seated position with your eyes closed. Moving with your breath, inhale and contract your pelvic floor and exhale, release the muscles. Again, inhale, contract and exhale, release. Repeat this a few more times. Try not to hold your breath. Concentrate more on the release of the muscles than the contraction; this is what will give you good control over your pelvic floor.

-Now imagine three floors in a building, contract to the first floor and hold, then the second floor and hold and finally contract to the third floor and hold. Then slowly release with control to the second floor and hold, to the first floor and hold and back to the ground floor and completely release. Repeat again.



Pranayama During Pregnancy

You and your baby will receive oxygenated blood throughout the pregnancy by learning to breathe effectively. The following pranayama exercise called alternate nostril breathing is very beneficial during pregnancy. This breathing exercise has a calming effect on an agitated mind and balances the energy of your nervous system. It revitalises you, improves brain function, cleanses your lungs and improves sleep.

-Come into a comfortable seated position with your spine straight. Bend your middle and index fingers of your right hand into your palm and just relax your left hand by your side. Lightly rest your right thumb on your right nostril and your ring and baby finger on your left nostril. Block your right nostril with your right thumb. Take a slow, deep breath in through your left nostril, then block your left nostril with your ring and baby finger. Exhale and breathe out through your right nostril, releasing the air slowly and deeply. Keep your left nostril blocked and breathe in through your right nostril. At the end of the inhalation block your right nostril and slowly exhale from your left nostril. Repeat a couple more times taking slow, deep breaths.

In next month's issue
Emma Sharma will provide follow-on
advice for women in their third trimester of
pregnancy. To find out more about Emma Sharma
or to purchase her newly released prenatal yoga DVD
[in association with Yoga Magazine], which includes a
beginners and advanced workout visit

emmasharma.com