

Yoga for Your Life

Group Program Occupational Therapy Book

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Introduction:

Yoga was started nearly 5000 years ago by Maharishi Patanjali. Since then, the practice of yoga has grown and spread throughout the world because of its many benefits and healing properties. It has often been hailed as one of the best natural therapies out there, so it makes perfect sense to incorporate the practice of yoga with occupational therapy. This book will teach you on how to lead an 8-week program that will do just that. The purpose of this program is to teach 7 different yoga flow sequences, or vinyasas, that focus on different aspects of a person's life. The goal is that once people have learned the flow sequences, they can incorporate them into their everyday life to increase their overall happiness and quality of life.

Yoga poses, or asanas, are combined together to create flow sequences. Each yoga pose is designed to focus on different parts of the body, both physically and mentally. Typically the flow sequences are combined with yoga poses that focus on similar parts of the body, and flow in a way in which one pose leads into the next pose. Keeping that in mind, I researched different yoga poses that focused on what the flow sequence is trying to accomplish and then combined them in a way that progresses after each one. This booklet will teach you all of the flow sequences so that you may teach them to others. Modifications for yoga poses will also be discussed because some of the yoga poses could be challenging to individuals.

In the next few pages of this book, I will lay out each week of the program into their own section. Each section will include the flow sequence, a description of its use and benefits, discussion questions, and how to apply the flow sequences outside of the group. Along with this booklet, included with this program is a video that will take you through each flow sequence as well as posters that have each sequence on them with pictures of the corresponding poses. Be sure to let the group members know that you can give them copies of the posters or instruction video if they would like one to take with them after the group has ended.

Week 1: Introduction to Yoga and Basic Poses

The group session for week one will focus on providing a basic introduction to yoga and practicing a few basic yoga poses. It would be great if each person in the group had a yoga mat or a towel they could use for the poses.

Since this is the first time the group is meeting, you should start out with introductions and an icebreaker activity. One example of this would be to have everyone introduce him or herself and then show the group any yoga pose they might know. After introductions have been made, then you can ask the group if they know anything about yoga and let them share what they do know. After that is when you can give a very basic introduction to yoga and talk about its many physical and mental benefits. Feel free to look back at the first page of this book for talking points or you can even do your own research to further your knowledge of yoga and its benefits. During this time, you will also be telling the group members what to expect in the next 7 weeks and how what you will be teaching them can benefit their life. Then you can have the entire group members try out very basic yoga poses to become familiar with them. Most of the group members have probably never done yoga before so you will need to be patient with them and demonstrate the poses to them. I have provided a list of basic yoga poses that you can have the group try or feel free to create your own list if you would like. All of the poses I have provided below are incorporated into the 7 flow sequences.

Basic yoga poses:

- Child's pose
- Leg up the wall pose
- Corpse pose
- Tree
- Standing forward bend
- Head to knee pose
- Happy baby
- Mountain pose with our without arms up

You will need to leave 15 minutes at the end of the group session for discussion so plan which yoga poses you would like the group to and make sure to leave enough time for discussion. I would recommend having them sit in the pose for 15-30 seconds depending on the difficulty of the pose. I also recommend having them go through each yoga pose twice because the more times you have them do a pose, it allows for greater muscle memory. This will hopefully help them to get into the pose and hold them easier. These recommendations can be applied to all of the flow sequences although you are more than welcome to alter how long they are in each pose and how many times they do each pose.

The discussion portion of this first group will focus on concerns the client may have or how they feel about this group and yoga in general. I have provided you with questions to help facilitate the discussion portion, but feel free to add any other questions you deem appropriate. These include:

- How did you feel while doing the different yoga poses?
- Does this group sound exciting to you?
- If not why are the reasons?
- Is there anything you are anxious or nervous about as far as this group goes?
- Do you think you will enjoy this group?
- After this first session, do you see how yoga could benefit your life?
- Which poses did you like and which did you not?
- Did you find any of the poses challenging?

Before the session concludes, make sure to reiterate the important of this group and how it will benefit them. Also make sure you thank everyone for attending and that you look forward to the next session.

Week 2: Flow Sequence to Improve Sleep

The focus of week two will be a flow sequence to help improve quality of sleep. Sleeps is an occupation that everyone does, so this flow sequence will be useful to anyone especially those who are having trouble falling asleep or have a low quality of sleep. The yoga poses used in this sequence are meant to focus on preparing the body for sleep both mentally and physically. These poses help prepare the body and organs for a restful night of sleep.

If there are new members who joined the group, make sure to do another introduction. You can choose to also do another icebreaker activity as well. Once introductions are finished, you will explain to the group the purpose of this session and how this flow sequence can help improve their sleep if done right before going to bed. They can even do this flow sequence in their bed.

This flow sequence will need to go in a specific order. Please reference the poster for this flow sequence and the corresponding video. These can be used as added aids during the group to help the members learn the sequence. As stated earlier, I recommend doing each pose for 15-30 seconds twice before moving on to the next pose in the sequence, but you can choose to do the group another way if it fits the group better.

The order of the flow sequence is as follows:

1. Seated forward bend
2. Bound angle pose
3. Head to knee pose
4. Seated spinal twist
5. Reclined spinal twist
6. Happy baby
7. Corpse pose

After the group has gone through the sequence, then you can start on the discussion portion. Discussion questions to help facilitate this include:

- Do you have any questions about the poses or the flow of this sequence?
 - Do you think you will use this to help you sleep?
 - Were there any challenging poses or poses you would like to see modified?
 - How did you feel going through the flow sequence?
 - Does this make you excited to learn the rest of the sequences?
 - How do you think you could use this in your life?
 - Where do you think you can use this? Examples?
- * Make sure to thank the group members for participating before the session is over

Week 3: Yoga Flow Sequence for Waking up and Starting your Day

The focus for this weeks flow sequence will be to help people wake up in the morning and prepare them to start their day. The sequences will focus on preparing the body and mind by facilitating the different body systems to be better prepared for the start of the day. This can be used to help wake you up and prepare you for being focused and awake for the day. You can think of it as a natural caffeine or coffee substitute. Be sure to do introductions for any new members in the group. I would recommend telling the group they can do this flow sequence right when they wake up in their bed for the first two poses they will then need to get up to do the other four poses, but by getting up and doing them it will better prepare their body and mind to wake up

This flow sequence will need to go in a specific order. Please reference the poster for this flow sequence and the corresponding video. These can be used as added aids during the group to help the members learn the sequence. As stated earlier, I recommend doing each pose for 15-30 seconds twice before moving on to the next pose in the sequence, but you can choose to do the group another way if it fits the group better.

The order of the flow sequence is as follows:

1. Plank pose
2. Upward facing dog
3. Downward facing dog
4. Crescent lunge pose
5. Crescent lunge prayer twist
6. Mountain pose

After the group has gone through the sequence, then you can start on the discussion portion. Discussion questions to help facilitate this include:

- Do you have any questions about the poses or the flow of this sequence?
- Do you think you will use this to help you wake up?
- Were there any challenging poses or poses you would like to see modified?
- How did you feel going through the flow sequence?
- Does this make you excited to learn the rest of the sequences?
- How do you think you could use this in your life?
- Where do you think you can use this? Examples?

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Week 4: Yoga Flow Sequence for Giving you Energy

The focus of this week's yoga flow sequence is to give your body and mind the energy it needs during the day. The purposes of the poses are to focus on the parts of the body that increase your energy levels. Think of it as a natural energy drink or boost. You can do this flow sequence in conjunction with the waking up flow sequence to better prepare your body for getting ready for the day, or you can do this flow sequence at any point if you need a pick-me-up or an energy boost. They can do this flow sequence anywhere, however some of the poses require you to be on the ground so they will probably need a mat or towel for this pose. This flow sequence can be more vigorous than others since it is meant to be energizing, so I would also let the group members know this as well. Modifications can be made to make the poses easier if needed.

This flow sequence will need to go in a specific order. Please reference the poster for this flow sequence and the corresponding video. These can be used as added aids during the group to help the members learn the sequence. As stated earlier, I recommend doing each pose for 15-30 seconds twice before moving on to the next pose in the sequence, but you can choose to do the group another way if it fits the group better.

The order of the flow sequence is as follows:

1. Cobra pose
2. Locust pose
3. Plank pose
4. Side plank pose
5. Chair pose
6. Warrior one pose
7. Warrior 2 pose

After the group has gone through the sequence, then you can start on the discussion portion. Discussion questions to help facilitate this include:

- Do you have any questions about the poses or the flow of this sequence?
- Do you think you will use this to help you wake up?
- Were there any challenging poses or poses you would like to see modified?
- How did you feel going through the flow sequence?
- Does this make you excited to learn the rest of the sequences?
- How do you think you could use this in your life?
- Where do you think you can use this? Examples?

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Week 5: Yoga Flow Sequence for Clearing the mind, meditation, and focus

The focus of this weeks flow sequence is to help you meditate and focus. This flow sequence works more with the mind to help you not only clear your mind and meditate, but also focus to help you accomplish everyday tasks and get through the day with a clear mental focus. I would recommend educating the group on using this early in the day, so that they will be more focused. They can also do this flow sequence to help them accomplish any task where they will need to focus and have their mind cleared. This sequence is also great if you have a lot on your mind and you would like to meditate and clear your mind from added stress in your life.

This flow sequence will need to go in a specific order. Please reference the poster for this flow sequence and the corresponding video. These can be used as added aids during the group to help the members learn the sequence. As stated earlier, I recommend doing each pose for 15-30 seconds twice before moving on to the next pose in the sequence, but you can choose to do the group another way if it fits the group better.

The order of the flow sequence is as follows:

1. Mountain pose with arms up
2. Mountain pose with prayer arms
3. Warrior two pose
4. Tree pose
5. Eagle pose
6. Knee to chest
7. Corpse pose
8. Leg up the wall pose

After the group has gone through the sequence, then you can start on the discussion portion. Discussion questions to help facilitate this include:

- Do you have any questions about the poses or the flow of this sequence?
- Do you think you will use this to help you focus?
- Were there any challenging poses or poses you would like to see modified?
- How did you feel going through the flow sequence?
- Does this make you excited to learn the rest of the sequences?
- How do you think you could use this in your life?
- Where do you think you can use this? Examples?

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Week 6: Yoga Flow Sequence for Anxiety Relief

This week's flow sequence is great for anxiety relief. We all have points in our life where we are nervous or have a lot of anxiety. You can use this sequence as a natural way to help your body relieve anxiety. This flow sequence works to help the body release neurotransmitters that will do just that. Anytime an individual is having anxiety or is worried, they can just do this flow sequence to help relieve whatever they are dealing with. You can also couple this yoga pose with breathing techniques, guided imagery, or other types of relaxation techniques to get an added benefit.

This flow sequence will need to go in a specific order. Please reference the poster for this flow sequence and the corresponding video. These can be used as added aids during the group to help the members learn the sequence. As stated earlier, I recommend doing each pose for 15-30 seconds twice before moving on to the next pose in the sequence, but you can choose to do the group another way if it fits the group better.

The order of the flow sequence is as follows:

1. Child's pose
2. Forward fold pose
3. Warrior three pose
4. Tree pose
5. Waterfall or leg up the wall pose
6. Corpse pose

After the group has gone through the sequence, then you can start on the discussion portion. Discussion questions to help facilitate this include:

- Do you have any questions about the poses or the flow of this sequence?
- Do you think you will use this to help you relieve anxiety?
- Were there any challenging poses or poses you would like to see modified?
- How did you feel going through the flow sequence?
- Does this make you excited to learn the rest of the sequences?
- How do you think you could use this in your life?
- Where do you think you can use this? Examples?

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Week 7: Yoga Flow Sequence for Boosting Immunity

This week's yoga flow sequence is for boosting your body's immunity to fight off diseases. The poses in this flow sequence works with your body's immune system and organs to help enhance their ability to fight off diseases. One of the ways it does this is by getting your lymph system moving and clearing out your body faster. Your lymph system is the way your body fights off infections. This flow sequence can be used instead of taking medication to help an individual dealing with sickness or even such things as allergies. You can also do this yoga flow sequence everyday as a preventive way of stopping your body from becoming ill. You do not have to be sick for this flow sequence to work. It will help boost immunity even if you are perfectly health, so this is a flow sequence that anyone could use in his or her life.

This flow sequence will need to go in a specific order. Please reference the poster for this flow sequence and the corresponding video. These can be used as added aids during the group to help the members learn the sequence. As stated earlier, I recommend doing each pose for 15-30 seconds twice before moving on to the next pose in the sequence, but you can choose to do the group another way if it fits the group better.

The order of the flow sequence is as follows:

1. Child's pose
2. Cobra pose
3. Downward facing dog pose
4. Mountain pose with arms up
5. Chair pose
6. Bridge pose
7. Fish or supported fish pose
8. Waterfall or leg up the wall pose

After the group has gone through the sequence, then you can start on the discussion portion. Discussion questions to help facilitate this include:

- Do you have any questions about the poses or the flow of this sequence?
- Do you think you will use this to help your immune system?
- Were there any challenging poses or poses you would like to see modified?
- How did you feel going through the flow sequence?
- Does this make you excited to learn the rest of the sequences?
- How do you think you could use this in your life?
- Where do you think you can use this? Examples?

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Week 8: Yoga Flow Sequence for Aiding in Digestion

Congratulations! You have made it to the last day of the program. I hope you and the individuals in the group have been able to see the benefits these yoga poses can give you in your life. This last flow sequence is to be used in aiding in proper digestion. A lot of medications that people are on can cause issues with the digestive track. Also with more people being diagnosed with digestive issues, this flow sequence can be a great way to help the body compensate for both of these issues. This flow sequence can also be used with individuals who do not have any issues too because it can help them prevent issues from happening as they age. This flow sequence can be individualized for each individual based on when they would like help in the aiding of digestion. A few examples of when they could do this sequence includes in the morning, at night, or after meals. If they do this after meals, I would suggest waiting thirty minutes to an hour after eating before doing the flow sequence.

This flow sequence will need to go in a specific order. Please reference the poster for this flow sequence and the corresponding video. These can be used as added aids during the group to help the members learn the sequence. As stated earlier, I recommend doing each pose for 15-30 seconds twice before moving on to the next pose in the sequence, but you can choose to do the group another way if it fits the group better.

The order of the flow sequence is as follows:

1. Cat-cow pose
2. Downward facing dog
3. Triangle pose
4. Extended wide squat
5. Bridge pose
6. Seated one legged spinal twist
7. One legged supine spinal twist
8. Knee to face pose

After the group has gone through the sequence, then you can start on the discussion portion. Discussion questions to help facilitate this include:

- Do you have any questions about the poses or the flow of this sequence?
- Do you think you will use this to help your digestive track?
- Were there any challenging poses or poses you would like to see modified?
- How did you feel going through the flow sequence?
- Does this make you excited to learn the rest of the sequences?
- How do you think you could use this in your life?
- Where do you think you can use this? Examples?

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Modifications for Poses:

Please reference the video that goes along with this program for examples of modifications to the poses. Most of the poses can be broken down to make them simpler. This can be accomplished many ways such as having them do as much of the pose as possible while seated in a chair or lying down. If modifications still do not work for an individual, the next step would be to try and have the person do as much of the pose as possible, even if that means just moving his or her arms or legs. If an individual can not do one pose in a series, another adaptation is to ask the person to instead do their favorite pose in the series again. Yoga blocks and straps are also great tools to use to modify the poses to make them easier. Google is also a great reference to find modifications. If you type in the name of the pose and then put "modification" you should be able to find a modification that will work for the group. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or want suggestions on how to modify a pose.

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Please feel free to contact me anytime if you have questions.