

from house of flow

FEEL AT HOME IN YOUR GROWING BODY

A 4-PART PRENATAL SERIES HANDBOOK

DIA DEARSTYNE



WELCOME HOME.

Disclaimer: For your safety, please consult with your physician before beginning any exercise program. By participating in this exercise or exercise program you agree that you do so at your own risk, are voluntarily participating in these activities, and assume all risk of injury to yourself. This list offers general guidelines regarding yoga and pregnancy. Each pregnancy is unique and therefore it is best to talk with your healthcare provider before participating in a new activity and check in with them should any questions or conditions arise.

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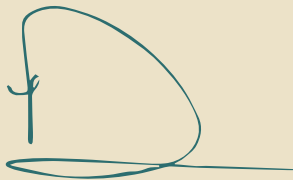
Welcome home to House of Flow!

It's a true honor to bring this 4-part Prenatal Yoga series to you at such a unique time in your life. I hope you'll approach this practice with an open heart, curious mind, and a sense of humor! Be ready to slow down and soften, create space in new areas of your body for your baby to grow into, and find access to your own deep strength and power throughout this series.

This practice is safe for any pregnant person in any stage of their pregnancy, but please check in with the list of contraindications listed in this Prenatal Series Handbook if you are unsure and of course, check in with your care provider.

While moving through these classes you can expect to draw a deep connection between you and your baby using pregnancy-specific asana, breathwork, and mantra. Our hope is that you walk away from each experience feeling grounded and at home in your growing body, and prepared for a more optimal birth experience when the time comes. If you have any questions as you move through this series please feel free to reach out and ask.

I can't wait to practice with you and I'm so glad you're here!



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Each class uses two yoga blocks, a blanket, and a bolster.

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CONTRAINDICATIONS FOR:

Breech Presentation - A position in which the feet or buttocks of the fetus appear first during birth. Generally speaking, breech may not be an issue until about 30-34 weeks, but check in with your care provider to find out what kind of exercise they recommend you avoid during this time and read more about Breech presentation here. If your baby is posterior or transverse avoid postures that would encourage their spine to rest against yours. This includes reclined positions like prolonged legs up the wall or Supta Virasana (reclined hero's pose) and Baddha Konasana (reclined bound angle). It is beneficial to do "belly down" poses like cat/cow, body circles, and a brief downward facing dog to encourage baby's spine away from your spine, but exclude all inversions if your baby was once in a breech position and has finally turned head-down. If your baby is breech you will want to avoid deep squats like Malasana (yogi squat) and any deep external rotation and hip opening that encourages the top of your pelvis to widen (inlet of the pelvis). Skip Transverse Abdominal breath in classes 3 + 4. See Placenta Previa below for similar recommendations

Clerage - A procedure in which the cervical opening is closed with stitches to prevent or delay preterm birth. Check in with your care provider to find out what kind of exercise, if any, is best for you during this time.

Dilutional Anemia - Abnormally low levels of red blood cells in the bloodstream. Most cases are caused by iron deficiency (lack of iron), related to increased plasma volume, which dilutes the red blood cells. Check in with your care provider to find out what kind of exercise is best for you during this time. Can lead to dizziness and light-headedness. If you experience this during class, stop your practice, move slowly to a comfortable seat and hydrate. It may feel good to put your head between your knees so long as your belly doesn't get in the way.

Edema - Swelling caused by extra blood in the body and increased progesterone which cause small blood vessels to relax. Check in with your care provider to find out what kind of exercise is best for you during this time and if your Edema is serious. Generally speaking, Edema is often seen in the feet, lower legs, and hands, but shouldn't interfere with a healthy Prenatal Yoga practice. Moving helps to decrease the pooling of water in the feet. Avoid prolonged, motionless standing.

Nausea, Heartburn, Indigestion - Inversions and forward folding can irritate these ailments. To modify your practice keep your head above your heart. You can stay in "half lift" instead of coming to full forward folds and opt for cat/cow or calf stretches in place of Downward Facing Dog.

Placenta Previa - A condition in which the placenta covers the opening of the uterus. Check in with your care provider to find out what kind of exercise, if any, is best for you during this time. Eliminate or modify poses that add extra pelvic pressure or compress the abdomen. Poses that create deep pelvic openings should be removed or modified during practice. Modify postures with deep external rotation such as Goddess Pose and Malasana (Garland Pose or "Yogi Squat") by not going deeply into these postures or skipping all together, take Warrior postures and Extended Side Angle with a shorter stance or while sitting in a chair, take Tarasana instead of Baddha Konasana while propped on a bolster or blanket. Do not take Pigeon Pose and Skip Transverse Abdominal breath in classes 3 + 4.

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CONTRAINDICATIONS FOR:

Preeclampsia or Pregnancy Induced High Blood Pressure - Prenatal Yoga may help reduce your chances of developing preeclampsia, but check in with your care provider to find out what kind of exercise, if any, is best for you during this time. It is best to modify poses that require your arms to elevate over your head for a long period of time, since that requires the heart to work harder to pump blood upward, by simply doing the posture with hands resting on hips, extended outward (as in Warrior 2), or with hands by your sides. When in class listen to your body and take breaks as needed.

Round Ligament Pain - These two ligaments run up from the sides of the groin and attach to the upper outer edges of the uterus. These ligaments elongate as the uterus grows. Deep stretches such as lunges and backbends can sometimes trigger round ligament pain which has been described as a momentary sharp, stabbing pain in the lower abdomen on either the right or left side, or both. If that happens during practice gently come out of the posture and into hip flexion (draw knees towards your chest with Child's Pose or take an easy forward fold) to relieve strain. Round ligament pain should pass quickly. Take a more gentle approach to the rest of your practice and avoid quick, jerky movements.

Sciatica, Sacroiliac (SI), Pubic Symphysis Pain - Each of these conditions are nuanced in their own ways, but regarding your Prenatal Yoga practice they can all be approached with the same care. Avoid deep external rotation in the hips by taking more shallow and wide stances in standing postures like lunges and Warrior 1. Support your knees with blocks or extra blankets in seated postures where external rotation occurs such as Baddha Konasana (Bound Angle or "butterfly" pose).

Stuffy Nose or Pregnancy Rhinitis - Due to increased blood volume, blood vessels are more dilated. This can lead to nasal stuffiness. Breathe through your mouth in pranayama practices and if inverted postures create too much pressure in your sinuses follow indications for Nausea, Heartburn, Indigestion.

Resources:

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (AGOC)
Prenatal Yoga Center
High-Risk Pregnancy and Yoga
Yoga Mama
Spinning Babies

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CLASS DESCRIPTIONS

CLASS ONE | SOFTEN AND RECEIVE

The first step in our prenatal yoga journey is to soften our bodies and minds to all the changes happening around (and inside of) us so we are better able to receive this constant newness with warmth and grace. Class 1 sets the foundation for the rest of the series, beginning with a comfortable seated posture and Sama Vritti Pranayama, we move on to a full-body practice featuring familiar asana like Cat/Cow, Warrior II, and Revolved Triangle, but with the Prenatal Yoga spin, keeping your baby and changing pregnant body in mind. Practice closes with Pelvic Floor breathing and Savasana.

CLASS TWO | CREATE SPACE: HIPS + PELVIS

"I am grounded. I am spacious." Class two is all about creating space in our bodies for baby to grow and for us parents to feel as comfortable as possible along the way! In Class 2 we begin in a restorative Child's Pose coupled with Wave Breath, before moving into juicy hip and pelvis-focused asana with both external and internal rotation. Asana includes dynamic Anjanayasana three ways, supported Malasana, Goddess Pose, and internally rotated Prasarita Padottanasana. Practice closes with Pelvic Floor breathing and Savasana.

CLASS THREE | CREATE SPACE: CHEST, SHOULDERS + UPPER BACK

Are you starting to feel like your shoulders are constantly rounded forward and sitting up straight takes real effort? As your bump miraculously grows in front of you that weight can become a lot for your body to support and eventually it just feels easier to give into it. In class 3 we'll work to counter that closed off, rounded feeling in our chest, shoulders, and upper back to help relieve stress and create more space in these places. We begin in a supported Supta Baddha Konasana with a body scan and Metta (Loving Kindness) Meditation before moving on to a number of seated heart-opening variations, Thread the Needle, Gate Pose, and supported Ustrasana (Camel Pose). Practice closes with Transverse Abdominal (new!) and Pelvic Floor breathing, and Savasana.

CLASS FOUR | LENGTHEN + STRENGTHEN

"I can. I am!" We've softened, we've created space in our lower and upper bodies, now it's time to strengthen! Pregnant bodies are powerful and Class 4 proves that. Beginning in supported Virasana with Nadi Shodhana Pranayama, we quickly move on to more dynamic asana specifically meant to help lengthen and strengthen our posterior chain of muscles (think glutes, hamstrings, calves, and back muscles). Postures include dynamic squats, Vrksasana (Tree Pose), and Warrior III. Practice closes with Transverse Abdominal and Pelvic Floor breathing and Savasana.

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ABOUT DIA DEARSTYNE

Dia came to yoga in 2014 as a struggling modern dancer living in NYC, looking for a break from her usual dance class haunts. At that time she had no idea what a lasting impact this practice would leave on her, but over the years yoga has become one of her greatest passions and a true lifeline—no matter where you find yourself in life, your practice will meet you there.

Dia received her 200hr RYT through Yoga Vida NYC; 85hr Prenatal Yoga RPYT certification through the Prenatal Yoga Center under Deb Flashenberg; and has logged 200 hours towards her 300hr RYT certification through Yoga Vida NYC. Dia leads her classes through dynamic and accessible yoga asana with warmth and inclusivity—always with attention towards creative sequencing and safe alignment. She teaches throughout the Hudson Valley, most notably as a Lead Teacher at the Newburgh Yoga Shala in Newburgh, NY and hosts her own YouTube channel, Yoga With Dia.

Learn more by visiting her website at www.diadearstyneyoga.com

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