



## Online Prenatal Training for Yoga Instructors and Fitness Professionals

### Prenatal Yoga Training

[www.prenatalyogatraining.org](http://www.prenatalyogatraining.org)

[www.ccattuticreative.com](http://www.ccattuticreative.com)

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#### **Suggested Books:**

Yoga for Pregnancy-Francoise and Doriel Hall

Inner Beauty, Inner Light-Frederick Leboyer

Yoga for Pregnancy-Rosalind Widdowson

Preparing for Birth with Yoga- Janet Balaskas

#### **Purpose of Prenatal Yoga (as a teacher)**

\*To have the student experience successful birth. Whatever that is for them, even if they have an epidural

\*We need to create a space for that to happen

\*Focus on creating that space- needs to feel evolving, fluid, and flexible

#### **Components of a Prenatal Class**

- 1) Creating Community
- 2) Movement (postures) strengthens and releases muscles, creates a dynamic environment for mom and baby.
- 3) Breath- increases circulation and energy, releases stress, anchors mom in the present
- 4) Inner Focus
- 5) Visualization
- 6) Relaxation
- 7) Safety

## Components

### 1) Creating Community

- Introduce yourself
- Ask: name, due date, hospital where they will deliver, if they know the sex of the baby
- Ask about sciatica, back issues, injuries, over-all health
- Ask if anyone has studied yoga
- Each time a student arrives have them introduce themselves

### 2) Movement- Always stress there is no set way to do a pose, fluid movement is key, we are dealing with the creative process so it is never orderly.

- If a student has practiced for a while, you might give them a more advanced pose
- Tempo- rhythmic and even. Everyone is different when they move in their postures but the tempo should be even and fluid.

### 3) Breath- Always suggest that their own breathing rhythm is important. In general avoid breathing together. This is important for labor and delivery. Confidence in the breath is key.

### 4) Inner Focus- Suggest some postures be executed with eyes closed. When eyes are open the gaze should be focused but relaxed and expansive.

### 5) Visualization- Experience a different reality and to direct and transform energy. Practice be in two places at once. Practiced during poses.

### 6) Relaxation- Grounding and expanding, increase awareness through releasing muscles. Student to have an experience of lightness.

### 7) Safety- Create an atmosphere of safety by teaching a safe practice. Always teach to what is happening in the room in terms of energy level, stages of pregnancy, and fitness ability.

## **Benefits of Prenatal Yoga**

- Balance
- Increased circulation
- Increased focus
- Increased awareness
- Increased confidence
- Detachment
- Feeling of well-being
- Increased creativity
- Increased strength and flexibility- hormone relaxin
- Eases back pain
- Develop new connections
- Connects mom to baby
- Reduces swelling
- Increases energy while relaxing the mind to restore calm and focus
- Helps to reduce nausea and mood swings
- Opens pelvis for delivery
- Faster recovery
- helps with digestion
- Whole new generation of yogis- if mom practices yoga it is likely that the child will.

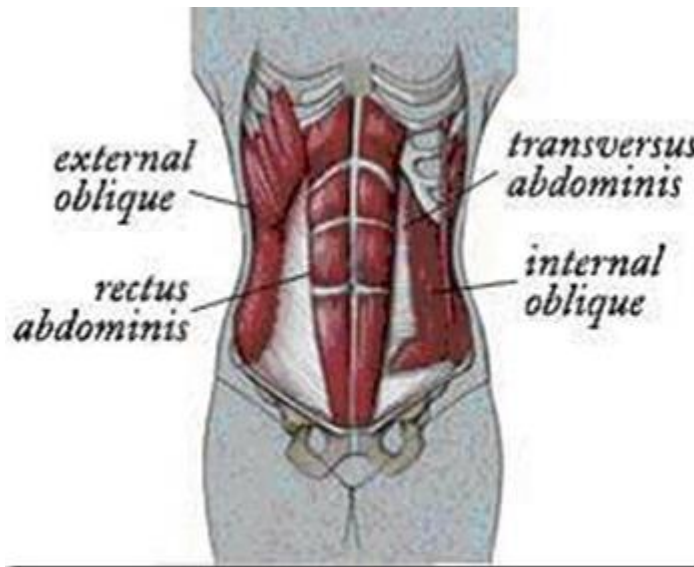
## **Structure of the Abdominal Muscles**

**There are three sets of abdominal muscles:**

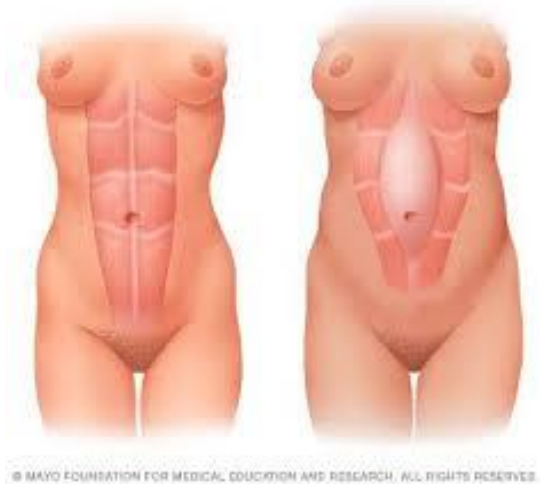
1. **Rectus Abdominis**-It is the outermost layer of abdominals. It runs up and down the center body and has two halves called the recti. Connecting these two halves sits a fibrous piece of tissue called the linea alba. The main function

of these muscles is to support the back.

2. **The Obliques-** This layer is under the rectus abdominis and attached to the linea alba. The external obliques run diagonally downward from the rib cage to the pelvis. The internal obliques cross under the externals and run diagonally upward from the pelvis to the rib cage. The main function of these muscles are flexing of the trunk and turning from side to side.
3. **Transverses Abdominis (transverse muscle)-** Innermost layer of abdominals. It runs straight across the abdomen and the back like a corset. It is attached in the back to the bottom six ribs and the top of the pelvis. The action of this muscle is forward and backward. It compresses the abdominal cavity like a girdle. This is an extremely important component to the abdominal muscle network. It holds everything in place. It is important for this muscle to be flexible and strong and it is essential in delivery.



**Diastasis-** The word diastasis means “separation.” It is a separation of the rectus abdominis above and below the navel. This separation weakens the support of the back. There are different levels of diastasis. There is always some separation that happens and it is always good to check. Traditional abdominal work is contraindicated if this issue is present.



### **There are 3 main contributing factors to Diastasis:**

- 1) Hormones
- 2) The baby putting pressure on your muscles
- 3) Weak abdominal muscles (stronger ones tend to withstand the pressure)

### **Checking for Diastasis:**

Lie on your back with your knees bent; put your fingers (pointing down) over your navel and press down gently as you lift your head. Feel if there is a separation.

### **Abdominal Work**

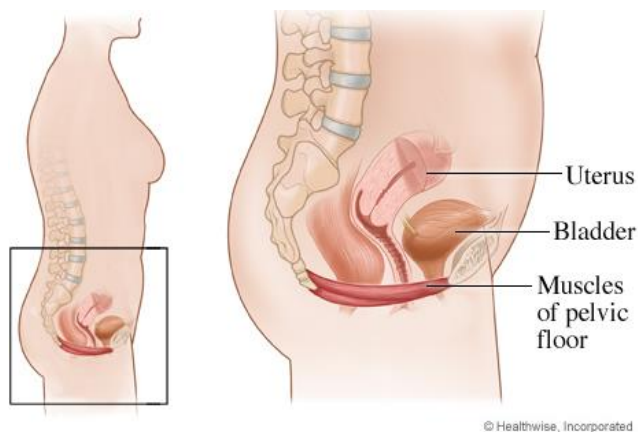
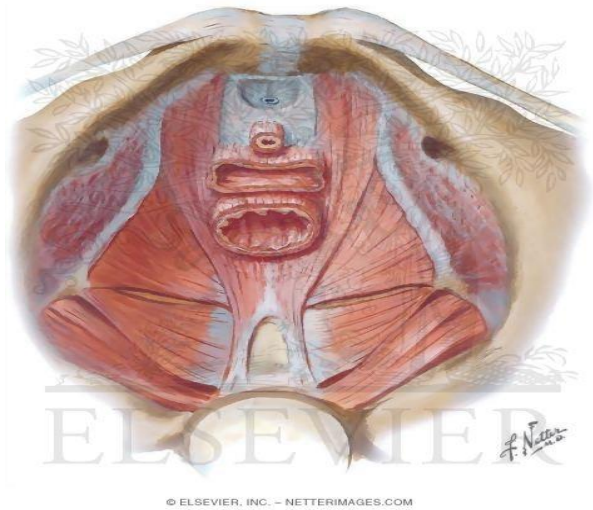
These can be done seated against the wall or lying on the floor.

- 1) Simple abdominal work- Inhale balloon the belly away from the spine. Exhale bring the belly back towards the spine. Use this as a way to get in touch with the breath and coordinate movement with the breath. Do this several times as a warm up. We're getting in touch with the transverse muscle.
- 2) Abdominals I-Now we are going to focus on moving the abdominal muscles in small  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch increments. Inhale balloon the belly away from the spine and then move the belly toward the spine about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch. Hold and breathe. We are not coordinating the breath with movement here, we are simply engaging the muscle while we breathe around the holding. Then you move the belly in another  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch and hold and breathe, then again. I consider this half way. Next you move two or three more times toward the spine. Visualize the abdominal muscles against the

spine then you release it in the same way, back to where the muscles are ballooning out.

- 3) Abdominals II-Using then same technique inhale the belly away from the spine. Bring the belly half way on the exhale and hold it there for a few breaths. Then move the muscles toward the spine  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch, then again until you feel the muscles are kissing the spine. Then release the same way to half way and hold and breathe. You can mix this up, moving from ballooning the belly out and then going in half way.
- 4) Do a three part breath for integration.

**Pelvic Floor** – Same as above, only lifting the pelvic floor muscle toward the navel. Visualizing the pelvic floor opening is important on the release. Refer to Module II.



**Squatting-** stretches the pelvic floor

-Can be done with block against the wall

-Bring in abdominal and pelvic floor work together.

## **Physical Issues**

-Weight gain

-Leg cramps

-Ligament pain- 2 round ligaments hold uterus forward

-Diastasis

-Sciatica

-Indigestion

-Out of breath

-Positional issues- laying on your back—baby presses on the vena cava (main blood vessel from the heart)

-Back pain

-Nausea

-Dizziness

-unbalanced

-stiffness

-relaxin- increases movement in joints

-constipation

-hemorrhoids

-skin discoloration

-Difficulty sleeping

-hormonal changes

-Breast pain

-Increased urination

-Fainting-usually dehydration

-pelvic pain

## **Emotional Issues**

-Fear- delivery, losing attractiveness

-Psychic Issues- Energy field is open, unwanted energies can get in.

- Support is a big issue
- Worried about baby's health
- Worried about their relationship
- Life style changes
- May be unmarried
- Dreams will change- issues will show up in dreams

### **How do these show up?**

- Rounded shoulders
- Low energy
- Quiet during class
- Talkative
- Not showing up in class- nice to send email
- Ask if anyone has had interesting or different dreams- can reveal a cleansing of emotion issues, or concerns about change.

### **Poses for Stages of Pregnancy**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Trimester (week 1-12)-Bound pose, cat-cow- relieves confusion and fatigue
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester (week 13-28)-Warrior II, squat, camel, legs up the wall- assists with feeling stronger
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester (week 29-40)-tree balance, warrior II, cat/cow, foot work-assists with fear

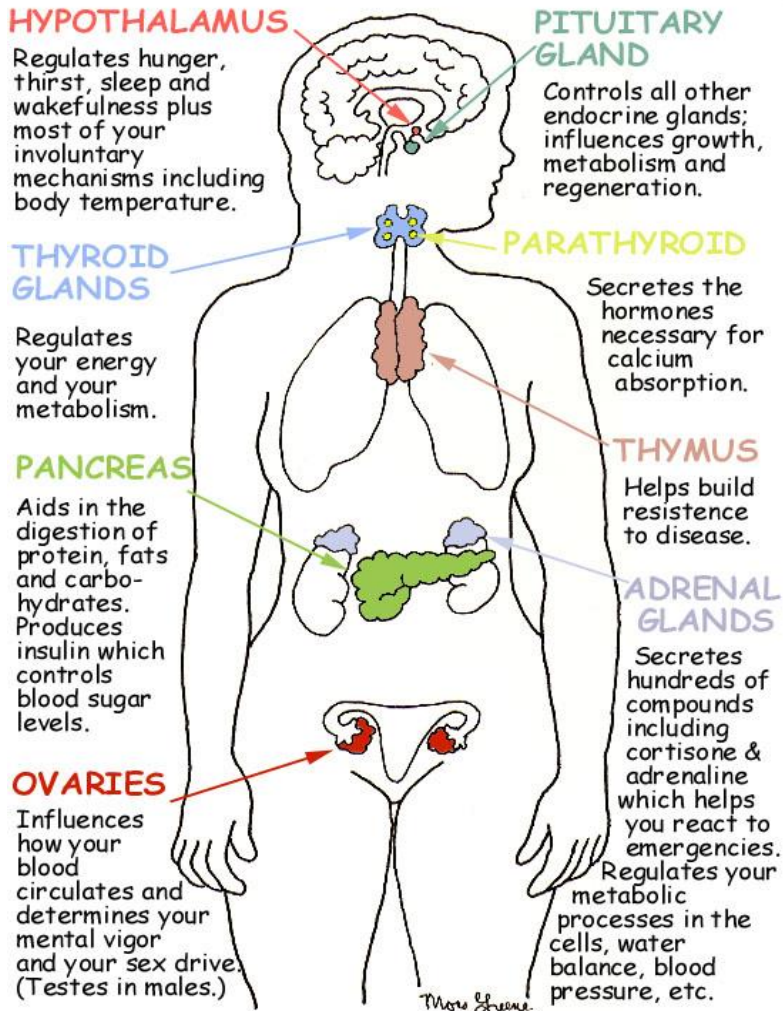
### **Hormones**

Body of a pregnant woman is over-active. Everything accelerates. More feelings and emotions. Issues come up for healing, pregnancy assists in spiritual progress. "Let down" after delivery. The over active presence of hormones recedes and the woman does not feel the same acceleration.

**Endocrine System-** Made up of glands that produce hormones.



## THE ENDOCRINE SYSTEM



**METABOLISM** - The conversion of nutrients into energy and building materials to meet your body's needs.

### Characteristics of the endocrine system

- Slow to initiate and prolonged in its action
- Regulates- metabolism, growth and development, tissue function, sleep and mood

**Relaxin**-a hormone produced by the ovaries during pregnancy that causes pelvic and cervical expansion and relaxation. It inhibits muscular contractions of the uterus that would cause natural abortion of the developing child, stimulates the growth of the glands in the breasts that are responsible for milk production, and increases the amount of water in the uterus. The hormone is found only in pregnant females and its activities last only for 24 hours after birth

## Chakras and the Endocrine System

Chakras are an energetic system that effect our well-being. Each chakra connects to a specific gland. If the gland is out of balance then it will influence the chakra connected to it, and if a chakra is out-of-balance then the corresponding gland will be effected. Chakras and glands interact with one another continuously. Our job will be to affect balance between these two systems using yoga as a tool.

### The Seven Chakras



#### Crown Chakra

*Our ability to be fully connected spiritually.*

#### Third Eye Chakra

*Our ability to focus on and see the big picture.*

#### Throat Chakra

*Our ability to communicate.*

#### Heart Chakra

*Our ability to love.*

#### Solar Plexus Chakra

*Our ability to be confident and in control of our lives.*

#### Sacral Chakra

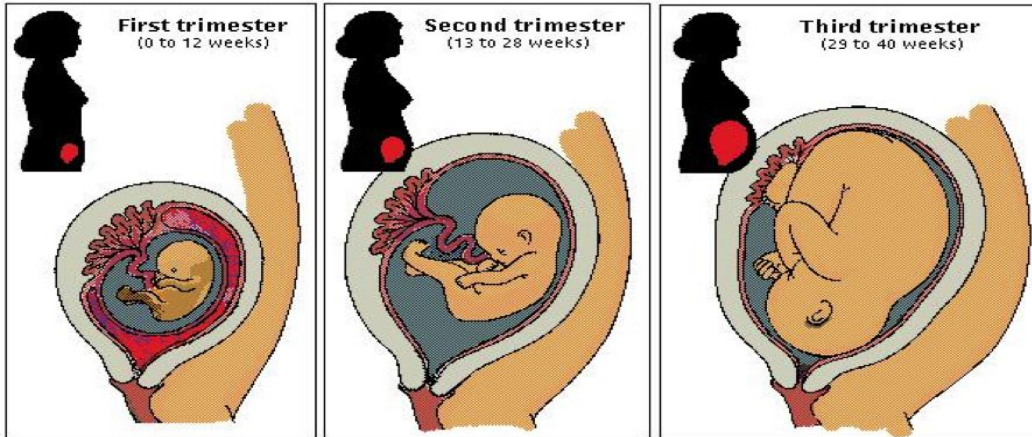
*Our connection and ability to accept others and new experiences.*

#### Root Chakra

*Our foundation and feeling of being grounded.*

- 1) Root Chakra- gland: ovaries
- 2) Sacral Chakra- gland: adrenals
- 3) Solar Plexus Chakra- gland: pancreas
- 4) Hear Chakra- gland: thymus
- 5) Throat Chakra- gland: thyroid/parathyroid
- 6) Third Eye- gland: pituitary

## 7) Crown- gland: hypothalamus and pituitary

**Trimesters**

Pregnancy lasts about 40 weeks counting from the first day of last period.

First Trimester~1-12 weeks

Second Trimester~13-28 weeks

Third Trimester~28-40 weeks

**Physical Manifestation of Each Trimester***First Trimester*

- \*Hormonal changes
- \*Extreme fatigue
- \*Tender swollen breasts
- \*Upset stomach with or without vomiting (morning sickness)
- \*Cravings or distaste for certain foods
- \*Mood swings
- \*Constipation
- \*Headache
- \*Heartburn
- \*Weight gain

*Second Trimester*









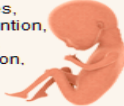








- \*Most women find second stage to be easier than the first. Nausea and fatigue are gone.
- \*Body aches- back, abdomen, and groin
- \*Stretch marks on abdomen, breasts, thighs

- \*Darkening of skin around nipples
- \*A line on the skin running from navel to pubic hair line
- \*Swelling of ankles, fingers, face

### Third Trimester

- \*Breathing may become difficult
- \*Increased urination
- \*Shortness of breath
- \*Heartburn
- \*Swelling
- \*Hemorrhoids
- \*Trouble sleeping
- \*Low back discomfort
- \*Increased fear

### Poses for Stages

Pregnancy Stages		
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start of the first trimester.</li> <li>• Ovulation and conception</li> <li>• During week 4 some home pregnancy tests will detect that you have conceived.</li> <li>• The embryo is just two cells.</li> </ul> <p><b>Month 1</b></p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signs of Pregnancy: Extreme fatigue, frequent urination, morning sickness, and hormonal fluctuations.</li> <li>• The baby's heart is beating.</li> <li>• The baby's brain is formed.</li> </ul>  <p><b>Month 2</b></p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embryo officially becomes a fetus.</li> <li>• Decreased morning sickness.</li> <li>• Fetus is about the size of a plum.</li> </ul>  <p><b>Month 3</b></p>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start of the second trimester.</li> <li>• The baby's bones are hardening and will now show up on an x-ray.</li> <li>• The baby is about 5 inches long and weighs about 5 ounces.</li> </ul>  <p><b>Month 4</b></p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You begin to feel the baby start to kick.</li> <li>• The baby's hearing starts developing.</li> <li>• Common discomforts during this month: backaches, indigestion, heartburn, headaches, water retention, dizziness, constipation.</li> </ul>  <p><b>Month 5</b></p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This month marks the halfway mark in your pregnancy.</li> <li>• At the end of this month the baby is almost fully formed.</li> </ul>  <p><b>Month 6</b></p>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possible occurrences of Braxton Hicks contractions.</li> <li>• The baby's brain is beginning to process sights and sounds.</li> <li>• The baby is about 13 inches long.</li> </ul>  <p><b>Month 7</b></p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The baby is fully formed and putting on weight.</li> <li>• The baby's lungs are almost fully developed.</li> </ul>  <p><b>Month 8</b></p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common discomforts: Braxton Hicks contractions, pelvic pressure, difficulty sleeping.</li> </ul>  <p><b>Month 9</b></p>

*First Trimester*

-Bound pose, cat/cow, breathing practices help with fatigue and mood swings.

*Second Trimester*

-Squat, modified camel, legs up the wall, warrior II- helps with body aches, swelling, increases strength, stretches abdominal muscles.

*Third Trimester*

-Tree balance, warrior II, cat/cow, foot work. Excellent for fear, balance, eases back and increases energy.

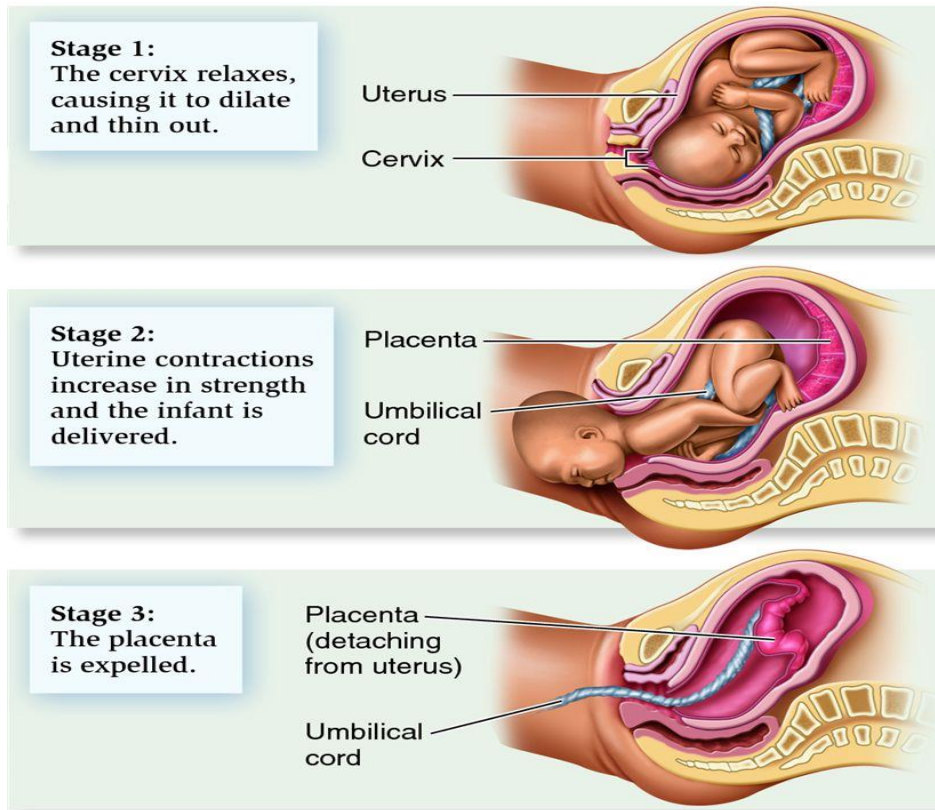
**Stages of Labor-**

**\*First Stage-** 3 phases- early, active phase, transition phase

**\*Second Stage-** Baby is born

**\*Third Stage-** Birth of placenta





### First Stage- 3 phases

- Early or Latent Phase- Lasts about 8 hours-Where women have regular contractions. Important there is a focus on the breath and can focus inwardly when contractions occur and then relax when they subside. Process of letting go and riding the wave, not taking one contraction to the next. In this phase the woman is able to walk. Usually spends this time at home. She may feel eager, excited and social. Important to conserve energy. We practice this in class.

-Second Phase-Active Labor- Regular contractions that become long, stronger, and close together over time. Women usually go to the hospital when contractions are 5 minutes apart, lasting more than 60 seconds. During this stage women will be concentrating on the task at hand and won't feel like doing anything else. This is where the practice of prenatal yoga comes into play. Turning inward and being familiar with one's inner landscape is essential.

-Third Phase- Transition- Most difficult part of labor and the shortest. Lasting 30 minutes to 2 hours. The cervix is opening the last few centimeters. Pain may be intense. All energy is concentrated on the work of labor.

### Second Stage

-Baby is born, lasts from one contraction up to 2 hours.

### Third Stage

-Birth of baby and ends with birth of placenta, shortest stage, 5-15 minutes.

### **Sequencing**

- Fluid
- Connected
- Practice that by-passes the mind
- Language- positive, reassuring, calming

### **Outline of Basic Prenatal Class:**

- Opening and Visualizations
- Seated Poses
- Standing Poses
- Balances
- Seated Poses for cool down
- Relaxation and Visualization

### **Difference Between a general class and a prenatal class:**

- Depth of physical and emotional issues
- Life transition
- More posture modifications
- More back issues
- Less physical assists, more oral
- No partner work
- Creative use of props

### **Contra-indicated poses-American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists**

- \*Inverted poses
- \*Back Bends
- \*Supine Poses
- \*Twists



**Not always true for some yogis.**

### **Use of Props**

- Blankets
- Blocks
- Chairs-if available
- Belts
- Wall

### **Variations on a Basic Prenatal Class**

- Bolster- small roll under armpits
- Supported camel
- Supported half-moon balance
- Bridge
- Half shoulder stand
- Vary visualizations
- Combine abdominal work with pelvic floor lifts
- Wall sequence
- Chair sequence
- Ball sequence

### **Room Set Up**



- candle/ incense for clearing
- Music- have it playing while students arrive
- Mats with props organized

### **Elements of a Powerful Visualization**

- Imagery
- Tone of voice
- Pacing/ cadence
- Relax body first so think mind can relax
- Music
- Color
- Creating warmth or coolness
- integration

### **Teaching a Multilevel Class**

- Level of experiences
- Different trimester
- Different fitness levels
- Students who sign up again can do more

For Example:

1<sup>st</sup> Trimester, fatigue- student will not do or do less of the up and down squats- suggest cat/cow

2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester, body aches- more back issues and groin and ligament pain- no camel, less squat, more warrior II

3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester, shortness of breath- more breath work.

\*Students within one week of their due date may do triangle with twist.

### **Weaving in Postpartum work:**

- Start from first class with abdominal exercises
- Suggest that this movement is important postpartum

### **Postpartum Issues**

- Space in belly may feel empty
- Week lower back
- General fatigue
- Feeling out-of-shape, negative body image
- postpartum depression
- Feeling confined

### **Remedies:**

- Fill abdominal space with breath and the pumping action of the transverse muscle. Do abdominal work on back and seated.
- C curve variations
- relaxation
- Community

## **Wall Practice**

### **Shoulder Stretches**

- Bend elbow on wall/standing
- Arms extended up wall/standing

### **Seated Childs Pose**

- Place seat of chair facing wall, place knees on wall and arms extended up wall, bent elbows or straight

### **Right Angle with Block**

- place block below knee pressing against wall, placing finger tips on wall or extended up

by the ears

### **Half Moon Balance**

-Lean against wall on right side and slowly lift left leg. Place block under right hand if needed. Allow the chest to open and lift the gaze.

### **Squats**

-Back against the wall and experiment with bending the knees into half and full squat. Anywhere along this pathway is useful.

-Face wall and slowly walk hands down the wall into a full squat.

### **Tree Balance**

-Lean on wall, move into tree balance. Slowly take spine away from wall to a free standing tree.

### **Seated Wide Angle**

-If needed sit on blanket and face wall in a wide angle, heels on wall and finger tips on wall.

### **Hero Pose and Supported Camel**

-Kneel on blanket and sit on heels, toes touching the wall. Bring hands on wall and slowly walk them up the wall until kneeling. Lift the gaze skyward.

### **Bolster**

Place rolled blanket, 2-3 inches in height, lay over it just below the armpit. Bring arms in goal post position. Breathe into the bolster and allow the upper back to drape over the bolster. This is excellent for clients who are out-of- breath or have asthma.

### **Chair Sequence**

\*High Lunge- Right foot on seat of the chair and bend knee. Lean forward a bit to stretch back leg. Repeat on other side.

- \*Forward Bend with belt- Placed belt around right foot and straighten leg. Extend torso over extended leg. Keep chest lifted. Repeat on other side.
- \*Side Bend- Place right foot on chair and extend leg with belt around the foot. Turn left foot out along with pelvis and torso (side body is now facing the chair). Belt is in right hand, lift left arm and extend to the right for a side bend. Repeat on other side.
- \*Standing Balance with Belt- Place right foot on chair and extend the leg. Lift the leg off the chair and extend left arm out from joint for a counter balance.
- \*Twist- Right foot on chair, bend knee, and extend left arm. Light twist to the left. focus on the thumb. Repeat.
- \*Seated Twist- Sit on chair with right hand on right knee, extend left arm lightly twisting to the left. Focus on thumb.
- \*Up and Down Squat- Stand behind chair and lightly place hands on chair. Bend knees and come to a half squat. If there is no pain (knees, hips) walk hands down the chair and proceed all the way to heels to a full squat. Retrace steps to standing with a long spine, holding onto the chair. This is very challenging but builds strength.
- \*Dancer- One hand on chair. Bend one knee and hold foot. If appropriate move foot away from body.
- \*Tree Pose- One hand on chair
- \*Half Moon Balance- Place both hands on seat of chair. Draw the belly in half way and lift the right leg. If stable lift the left arm then open torso to the side. Lift gaze to the left hand.
- \*Bridge- Start on the mat on back. Bend legs and place calves on chair seat. Press down with legs and lift pelvis and hold for a few breaths. Slowly release to the floor.
- \*Camel- Kneel on mat with back facing the chair seat. Extend arms back as if you have wings and place hands on chair. Press down with the hands and gaze at the ceiling, stretching the abdominal muscles.

## Introduction

**Opening**-grounding-sit on blanket or bolster

### Breathing with Abdominal Work

~Basic Belly Breath

~Abdominal Work-Inhale and balloon out the belly. Move the abdominal muscles in toward the spine slowly in small increments (1/2 inch) holding and breathing at each increment until you feel the belly is meeting the spine. Hold at that point for a few breaths and then reverse. Repeat 5-10 times.

~Variation on Abdominal Work- Bring abdominals half way toward the spine. You can either bring the abdominals toward the spine or forward to ballooning out the belly.

### Warm Ups

-Bound Pose-Lengthen spine skyward and then forward keeping the spine long.

-Seated Cat in Bound Pose-Placing each hand below the knees. Hale lift the spine and exhale rolling back. Each woman moves at her pace following her own breathing pattern.

-In Bound Pose rotate the spine in one direction and then the other.

-Wide Angle with circular movement

### Seated Postures

-Extend right leg out and place belt around the ball of the foot-extend forward with a flat back

-Lift the leg off the floor and bring leg out to the right. Bring the leg across the body, then back to the floor.

-Twist-Take the belt in the left hand while bringing the right hand behind your back. Focus your gaze to the side and allow it to soften. Repeat entire sequence on the other side.

-Seated Squat

-Cat/Cow in table position-rotate circle tail bone

-Spinal Balance-extend right leg and left arm.

-Childs Pose

-Sit on Heels and lift pelvis off heels and stretch thighs. Tuck your toes and roll into a squat. Lift the hips, bend the knees and place hands on thighs. Come up in a flat back.

-Standing Cat in half squat.

-Pelvic Circles

-Warrior II

-Triangle