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Prenatal Yoga Home Sequence (30 min)

Equipment needed:

- Yoga mat
- Blanket
- Blocks (use stacks of books if you don't have blocks)
- Bolster (use a rolled-up blanket or a couple of pillows if you don't have a bolster)

1. Meditation (5 min)

- Take a few minutes before practice to clear your mind, settle your thoughts, and shift your energy. Find a comfortable seat (using props to sit on for comfort) or any other position that works for you. Some ideas for meditation:
 - Picture a blue sky. Your thoughts are the clouds – they are there, but you don't need to focus on any of them. Just let them pass by and enjoy the calm, clear space between.
 - Picture a scene you find relaxing. Make it specific – sights, smells, sounds, how it makes you feel.
 - Or, try heart meditation. Place your hands in lotus mudra (with your pinkies and thumbs touching, open up the rest of your fingers like a flower and hold your hands in front of your chest). Focus on the shape of this mudra and imagine you are opening your heart in this way. As you inhale, picture positive emotions and energy flowing into your heart and to baby through your hands, and as you exhale allow any negative emotions and energy to flow out. When you are ready, close your palms back together and “lock in” the positive elements while blocking out the negative.

2. Pranayama (breathing) (5 min)

- Pranayama can help let go of stress by engaging the parasympathetic nervous system (the “rest and digest” system, as opposed to the “fight or flight” sympathetic nervous system). It also improves oxygen supply, boosting “feel good” hormones.
- Great practice for labour (focus on the full exhale and relaxing your body as you breathe)
 - Alternate-nostril breathing: Make a fist with your right hand and untuck your thumb and pinky finger. Use the thumb to close the right nostril as you breathe in the left, then close the left nostril with your pinky as you breathe out the right. Breathe back in through the right nostril, close right and breathe out left. Repeat 10-15 times.
 - Brahmaree (bumble bee): With your lips closed, breathe in through your nose. Exhale through your nose and make a “humming” sound all the way to the end of your breath. Repeat 10-15 times.
 - Breath with sound: Inhale through your nose and as you exhale open your mouth and make a vowel sound all the way to the end of your breath. Try “ahhhh”, “oooo”, “ohhhh”. You could also combine this with the brahmaree sound and do “ohhhmmmm”. Repeat 10-15 times.



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3. Asana (postures) (15 min)

- Neck stretches (standing):
 - Start in Mountain Pose (chin level with floor, head level with ceiling, pelvis neutral so your bum isn't sticking out – if it is, bring your pubic bone and navel and little closer together, feet grounded with toes spread, shoulder blades relaxed down the spine, hug baby in towards your back)
 - Inhale as you extend taller, exhale tilt your right ear to your right shoulder (5 breaths)
 - Inhale to come back to centre, exhale tilt your left ear to your left shoulder (5 breaths)
 - Inhale come back to centre, exhale look over your right shoulder and look to the right corners of your eyes (5 breaths)
 - Inhale back to centre, exhale look left with eyes left (5 breaths)

- Shoulder and chest stretches (standing):
 - Start in Mountain Pose
 - Interlace your fingers behind you or clasp opposite elbows or forearms. Breathe deeply for 5-10 breaths.
 - Release your arms and take them in front of you. Hug opposite shoulders, maybe bring the backs of your hands together, or maybe wrap your arms in full Eagle Arms.
 - Repeat both with the opposite pinky in front for your clasped hands (or opposite forearm on top if you held elbows or forearms). When you hug your shoulders, have the opposite arm on top as well.

- Two Moon Salutations:
 - Stand with feet wide, inhale lift arms, exhale fold at the waist. Rest arms on thighs or fold forward (can use blocks under hands). Bend knees if needed and think about lifting sit bones to the sky.
 - Inhale look up and step your left foot to the back of your mat (on the ball of your foot). Take a few breaths in the lunge to open your hips.
 - Turn both sets of toes to the left edge of your mat in a wide-legged stance. Bend one knee, straighten the other, and switch, stretching your inner thighs.
 - Turn to the back of your mat so your left foot is forward in the lunge. Hold for a few breaths.
 - Turn back to the left edge of your mat, and either stretch side to side again or hold a squat for several breaths (in the squat, point your toes slightly out, push the outside edges of your knees to the space behind you, and bring your arms into a "cactus" shape).
 - Turn to the front of your mat so your right foot is in front. Step your left foot to the top of the mat and forward fold.
 - Inhale come up (hug baby in towards your spine), stretch your arms high, exhale arms down.
 - When you do the next one, step back with your right foot first instead.



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- **Tree Pose:**
 - Stand tall, root left foot down (spread toes but don't grip with them, ground with either side of the ball of the foot and the centre of your heel).
 - Take the sole of your right foot to your inner shin or inner thigh.
 - Push foot into leg and leg into foot.
 - Hug baby in.
 - Hands on baby, breathe deeply. Baby is resting perfectly in between grounding (roots of a tree) and expansion (branches and leaves). Hold for five breaths and repeat on the other side.

- **Cat/Cow:**
 - Come down to all fours, pad up knees with blankets
 - Inhale into Cow, lift head and tailbone to sky (or stay in a neutral spine)
 - Exhale into Cat, tuck chin, round back up to sky, extend tailbone down towards heels
 - Repeat 5-10 times
 - If your lower back is bothering you, just focus on the Cat position, holding for about 5 breaths (repeat a few times)
 - Rest in Child's Pose after for a few breaths, if desired

- **Pigeon:**
 - From all fours, slide right knee to inside of right wrist, angle your shin to what's comfortable for you and stretch left leg behind you. Use props under right glutes and in front of you so you can relax forward. Hold 10 breaths if you can, then switch sides. You should feel a stretch in your bum muscles.
 - If you find the stretch really intense, try some of the humming and sound breaths and see if that helps relax your muscles.

4. Savasana (5 min)

- Always finish practice with a few minutes of savasana.
- Rest in a comfortable position (on your side or in Reclined Goddess pose using props – put a bolster or a bunch of pillows/blankets underneath you so you're resting at a 45 degree angle, then bring the soles of your feet together and let your knees drop out to the side).
- Try to keep your body and mind as still as possible as you rest. Count your breaths (inhale to a count of three, four, or five, depending on the length of your breath, then exhale to that same count).

Feel free to email me at julia@jewelyoga.ca if you have questions and/or to share your baby news when it's time! 😊