

Prenatal Yoga

By Jude Block, E-RYT

“You relax naturally & easily
You trust your body & your mind
Moment by moment you know
exactly what to do”

-Affirmation from Jude’s class

Practicing prenatal yoga brings awareness to both mother and child and the amazing changes happening in the body. It prepares a woman to give birth actively and instinctively, building trust in her body’s wisdom while bringing forth a sense of calmness, confidence and focus. Yoga encourages us to go within, bringing quiet to the mind so we can listen to our body’s cues. It connects us to the intuitive and innate wisdom within each of us.

Prenatal yoga helps to alleviate some of the common physical discomforts of pregnancy – fatigue, lower back pain, leg cramps, upper back and shoulder tightness, sciatica, nausea and indigestion. The poses strengthen and open the body for birth, keeping the muscles strong and toned yet flexible. It helps with physical balance as the body’s center of gravity continues to shift. Modifications are available to suit each pregnancy stage or to adjust to how the woman’s body is feeling week to week.

Pranayama (or breathwork) is essential for relaxation. Maintaining deep and even breaths increases the intake of oxygen and helps reduce stress and anxiety. It calms the mind and body to develop a greater sense of inner focus and contentment. When the breath is coordinated with rhythms of contractions, the increase of oxygen provides the stamina to ride the sensations while restoring energy during the breaks in between.

The yoga postures in conjunction with the breath are tools to keep us in the present moment - without attaching to the past or grasping for the future. This is vital for the journey of labor as you work through each individual contraction with dignity and a calm focus. When a contraction is over it is time to leave it in the past and rest. While each contraction is a step closer to meeting the baby face to face, it is not the time to get lost in thoughts of how long that will be. The laboring is done right there in the present moment with the birthing woman feeling empowered in the ability to tap into her vast inner resources.

Two important parts of a prenatal yoga class happen in the few minutes before class begins and ends. Before class the women chat about how they are feeling, their prenatal visits, the latest baby gear, etc. The supportive community they create is beneficial as feelings are validated and friendships are made. At the end of each class there is a relaxation and reflection time. This quiet and peaceful time is an opportunity for the mom-to-be to recharge, reenergize and connect with her baby along with her own true nature and intuition which will guide her on the amazing path into motherhood.

Jude Block, owner of Ever-Present Yoga, is an Experienced Registered Yoga Teacher (E-RYT) and a Certified Prenatal Yoga Teacher for Conscious Birthing. www.EverPresentYoga.com