



RESTORATIVE YOGA SEQUENCE FOR MENSTRUATION:

1. SUPPORTED SUPTA VIRASANA:

Supta Virasana is quite possibly the best asana for digestion issues which due to the increased levels of progesterone can be prominent before and during menstruation. This posture is amazing for stretching out the abdomen and relieving any constriction that may be occurring in the GI tract. This not only allows free-flowing energy to this region, but also alleviates issues such as gas, bloating, cramping, hyperacidity, congestion and general aching in the abdominal region. Further this pose helps to remove stagnant circulation in the lower extremities, reducing any swelling or aches in this area.

****If the butt does not come to the ground comfortably in the initial seated Virasana position, place a folded blanket between the legs to give support. The reclined version should not be practiced if there is not proper support under the glutes. If you cannot find a comfortable seat in this posture, please avoid this posture until support can be found.**

Directions: Come into a comfortable seated Virasana position. Place several pillows behind the back, parallel to the body. Keeping the legs steady and the knees on the ground, slowly and gently lie back onto the pillow. The entire back, neck and head should be completely supported here, with no pain or discomfort. If pain is present, you most likely will need to add more pillows. Once you find a comfortable position, place the eye cover over the eyes, a blanket over the body and relax into the pose. Stay here for 3-5 minutes. ****If the knees feel compromised at any point or the legs fall asleep, it is recommended to come out of the posture.**

2. SUPPORTED SUPTA BADHAKONASANA:

This posture is useful for grounding the energy and calming the mind (aka Vata), relieving any stress and constriction in the body. It is a great pose for women to practice during menstruation as it removes obstructed or stagnant energy in the uterus, almost instantly alleviating congestion, pain and cramping. Supta Badhakonasana creates space for all of the organs in the solar plexus region and works directly on the liver and spleen. Therefore is beneficial for promoting healthy digestion, since menstruation can cause negative symptoms such as constipation, gas and bloating.

Directions: Place a couple of pillows behind the back for support. Come into a comfortable Badhakonasana (“butterfly pose”) position, then lie back onto the pillows making sure there is complete support of the back, neck and head. There should be absolutely no pain, tension or effort here, everything is soft and released. If needed, add another pillow. Once you have found a comfortable position, place an eye cover over the eyes and a blanket over the body (especially the pelvic area). Stay in this pose for 5 to 10 minutes.

3. SUPPORTED FORWARD FOLD:

This restorative version of the forward fold (aka paschimottanasana) is perfect for menstruation, as it promotes healthy blood flow to the pelvic region and removes sluggishness to the abdominal organs. It carries many benefits for women such as grounding the energy, calming the mind, balancing emotions, releasing stress throughout the body and relieving lower back pain. Forward folding postures are also considered beneficial for the digestion which can be hampered before and during menstruation; however, you must only practice gentle ones to avoid putting too much pressure on the uterus. ***Please note that if there is acute cramping occurring, any posture that folds forward should be avoided.

Directions: Come into a seated position with the legs gently stretched out in front of you. Place 2-4 pillows perpendicular to your legs. They should lay on top of your legs, just about at the knee and shin area (or higher if needed). Come forward to a gentle forward fold placing only the forehead to the pillow, allowing the head and neck to release completely. Once again the muscles are all completely relaxed and you are merely letting the pillows hold you up rather than pushing or pulling into the pose. The nose and mouth should not be covered, so adjust the pillows as needed. The arms can relax on the pillows on their respective side. Hold this position for 3-5 minutes.

4. SUPPORTED JANU SIRSASANA:

Similar to the supported forward fold, janu shirsasana carries many of the same benefits such as calming the mind, grounding the energy, increasing digestion and relieving lower back pain. This pose also works specifically on the liver, spleen and kidneys, all of which can be a bit weak during menstruation. ***Please note that if there is acute cramping occurring, any posture that folds forward should be avoided.

Directions: From a seated position, bring the right leg out straight in front of you. Take the left leg and bend it in so the bottom of the left heel is placed in front of the groin area. Place 2 or more pillows onto of the right leg, perpendicular to the body. Once you have found a comfortable position, gently fold forward over the right leg placing only the forehead onto the pillows. If the whole face comes into the pillow, this means you should move the pillow down the leg more until your forehead is able to come onto the pillow solely. The arms can come forward and rest on the pillows as well. Once again this should be done without any straining, so if needed add more pillows. Stay in this pose for 3 minutes on the right side and then switch to having the left leg in front (for equal time).

5. SUPPORTED UPAVISHTAKONASANA:

This pose hosts a wide range of health benefits for women during menstruation. In fact practicing this pose regularly is said to alleviate all disorders of the uterus. According to Iyengar, it stimulates the ovaries, making this restorative asana a “boon to women”. Practicing this posture during menstruation is essential for stabilizing Apana Vayu, the downward moving wind, which can be both over or under active in many menstrual disorders. It promotes circulation to the pelvic area, stabilizing blood flow during menstruation. Routine practice of this posture during menstruation helps to even the inhale and the exhale, as often the exhalation becomes longer during menstruation. ***Please note that if there is acute cramping occurring, any posture that folds forward should be avoided.

Directions: From a seated position, spread the legs out wide in front of you into a wide angle, keeping the legs fairly straight without pushing or straining the leg muscles. Place a couple pillows between the legs in a horizontal direction. Fold forward at the waist until the forehead is placed onto the edge of the pillow, allowing the upper body to release completely. Once again the muscles are all completely relaxed and you are merely letting the pillows hold you up rather than pushing or pulling into the pose (add more pillows if this is not happening). The nose and mouth should not be covered, so adjust the pillows if needed. Stay in this pose for 3-5 minutes. For severe reproductive issues, this pose should be practiced daily throughout the entire month and should be held for at least 5+ minutes.

6. SHAVASANA:

Although Shavasana can be a nice way to end any Yoga practice, during menstruation it is all the more beneficial. With the body working in full gear to cleanse the system, along with a substantial amount of blood loss, it is no wonder why our energy is so low directly before and during menstruation. Ending your restorative practice with Shavasana allows a calmness throughout the body while simultaneously relieving fatigue and restoring the energy. Since our nervous systems can be extra sensitive during menstruation, this pose is essential as it is said to soothe the nerves and tame Prana.

Directions: Come completely onto the back, with the legs straight out in front of you and your arms softly resting beside each respective side of the body. The palms can be placed in an upward position. There is absolutely no tension or muscle strain in this pose, rather just complete passivity of both the body and mind. Stay here breathing into the lower abdomen for 1 minute, then release any control of the breath and continue to lie here for an additional 5 minutes (or as long as needed).