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Yoga For You

Ray Madigan and Shelley Choy



MANOA YOGA CENTER
Ray Madigan demonstrates the
chair hamstring stretch.

Chair hamstring stretch

This gentle stretch relieves fatigue in the legs and lengthens tight back muscles. With regular practice, the hamstrings become supple, and chronic lower back soreness can be relieved.

1. Place a chair with its back squarely against a wall. Stand facing it, about a leg-length distance away, with your feet evenly together.
2. Place your right heel on the chair, with the toes on the wall and your right knee facing the ceiling. Keep your left foot pointed toward the wall or turn it out just slightly so that you can keep your balance.
3. Tighten your thigh muscles and pull your kneecaps up toward your pelvis.
4. Breathe in and stretch your arms toward the ceiling to lift your trunk. As you exhale, bend forward from the hips and extend your hands high up the wall. Work to keep your pelvic bones level with the wall; do not let your spine distort.
5. Breathe evenly and smoothly through your nose as you walk your hands up the wall to stretch your spine and back of your legs.
6. Hold the pose for up to a minute, then inhale as you lift your arms and return to upright position.
7. Repeat this pose with your other foot on the chair.

Remember to keep your thighs tight and to hold the pose with a steady gentle stretch. Do not force. You can place something soft on the chair to cushion your heel.

Ray Madigan and **Shelley Choy** are certified Iyengar Yoga teachers and co-direct the Manoa Yoga Center at Manoa Marketplace. Visit www.manoayoga.com or call 382-3910. Manoa Yoga Center, the authors and the Star-Bulletin take no responsibility for any injury arising from the practice of these yoga postures. Readers should seek a doctor's approval before commencing this yoga practice.

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