



Asana Soul Practice  
Prenatal Yoga Modifications & Considerations  
By Trimester

Yoga is a great, low impact, form of exercise that is safe to practice throughout the full length of your pregnancy. We built this guide to help you continue to enjoy your favorite classes with us. We've got you mama, you are strong and supported!

**1<sup>st</sup> Trimester**

Yay, congrats! You just found out you're having a baby. It's likely no one except you and your partner knows your expecting. A secret that's hard to keep when your body is going through lots of change. It's important to disclose your pregnancy to your yoga instructor/ fitness instructor and anywhere you might be unsure if modifications are required.

For instance, I had no idea I couldn't get a massage during my first trimester – I went in for my appointment and decided to mention it to them (the masseuse was the first person I told! Felt weird to tell this stranger first, but felt it was likely necessary), I was immediately told this is not allowed, and was asked to reschedule. Glad I said something!

Anyways, here are the modifications & considerations to make when practicing yoga in the **first trimester**:

Modifications:

- 1.) **No closed twists:** meaning – no twists that “ring out” the abdomen. – For example, seated spinal twist where the elbow is hooked over the knee.
  - a. Open twists are ok! As long as there is space for the belly – general rule of thumb is that the heart and belly button should remain in alignment with each other. For example: low lunge twist is ok (space for the belly)
  - b. This is a modification that will remain throughout the full length of your pregnancy.
- 2.) **Jumping doesn't feel great, and should be avoided:** in general, jumping is going to start to feel... weird... even now. Avoid jumping up and jumping back if this is cued during your class – choose to walk up or step back instead.

### 3.) **No holding your breath or hyperventilating:**

- a. In yoga, sometimes we practice breathing exercises that involve “Breath retention” If the teacher offers a breathing exercise like this, just skip the part about holding your breath.
- b. Avoid breathing exercises that really speed up your heart rate or create “stress” – for example, skip “breath of fire” – which is rapid inhales and exhales through the nose.

#### Considerations:

1.) **Tell us you are expecting!** Let us help you stay safe and supported throughout class.

### 2.) **You will experience fatigue during your first trimester**

- a. You are making a small human! While it’s not visible yet, there’s a lot happening internally, and you will get reeeally tired on some days. Honor how you feel, take it easy – try a basic flow class instead of your usual soul power, or at least give yourself more childs pose breaks, it’s ok to take a rest.

### 3.) **Be sure to bring a bottle of water.**

- a. It’s important to stay hydrated! Take sips of water throughout class as needed.

### 4.) **Nausea/Morning Sickness**

- a. Try not to do yoga on an empty stomach during this time, especially if you are taking an early morning class. Have a granola bar, some nuts, or a piece of fruit before class to help keep nausea away during your practice. Staying hydrated also helps. Ginger chews/ candies are helpful too.
- b. If you feel nauseous during class; pause, take a break, come to table top or childs pose, step out to go to the restroom as needed, it’s ok!

### 5.) **Shortness of breath**

- a. This is normal too! You will find yourself shorter on breath, and perhaps your usual stamina is not quite there.
- b. Again, take breaks. Listen to your body, you don’t need to take every vinyasa that’s offered. This is your practice, every day is different. Remember to mindfully breathe during yoga, this helps too.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester**

Hooray! Hopefully you’ve made it past morning sickness, and likely your fatigue has passed. You might feel like you can do anything! That’s awesome. Though, when one thing goes away, there’s something new around the corner to adjust to. Don’t worry, we’ve got you covered.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester Modifications:**

Continue with above modifications from the 1<sup>st</sup> Trimester

### **1.) No lying on your belly:**

- a. this is not a hard and fast rule right when you hit your second trimester. It's really about how it feels for you. Once you start showing, you will not be able to lie on your belly, however sometimes you might not be showing, and it still feels weird. Do what feels right.
- b. What to do instead? Come to table top, do a few rounds of cat/cow, or take child's pose, meet the class back in a place that feels right. You'll know.

### **2.) No more inversions (going upside down):**

- a. If you have an active yoga practice and inversions are your jam, you might have continued to practice them in the first trimester, that's ok! Though, we recommend avoiding inversions from here on out. Listen to your body, do what feels right.

### **3.) Backbends/Upward Dog will start to feel weird:**

- a. The low back and your abdominal wall are starting to change, mostly internally right now and maybe not so visible, but you can feel it.
- b. Stop practicing upward facing dog when it no longer feels right. Meet us back in downward dog, or take a little cow pose (arching just the upper back in table top).
- c. You may start to avoid wheel pose, and just stick with bridge pose. And/or begin to modify other deep backbends like camel pose too – instead of taking full camel, keep your hands on your low back vs. bringing hands to the ankles.

### **4.) Avoid lying on your back:**

- a. It might feel fine at first, but towards the end of your second trimester you'll likely not want to lie on your back. For savasana, lie on your left hand side or sit in meditation. I also really like a "heart lift" with blocks under my upper back (between the shoulder blades/at the bra line) and head to help open my shoulders and allow for rest on an incline.

- 5.) **Start to avoid holding plank pose:** Towards the end of the second trimester, you'll want to avoid holding plank pose to protect your abdominal wall. Drop your knees, take a baby chaturanga instead. (feel free to ask us what this looks like)

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester Considerations**

### **1.) Move mindfully, rise up slowly.**

- a. Your ligaments are stretching to make space for the baby and your growing uterus. Suddenly – small movements will create a big sensation, a feeling of a painful internal stretch. It's ok, you are safe, but it just doesn't feel good.
- b. How to avoid? Move/Rise a little slower. Especially when coming up from the ground. Where you normally might move quickly, take it down a notch or two, rise up slowly.

## **2.) Carpel Tunnel**

- a. During pregnancy, we are prone to carpel tunnel. Movement is super helpful here.
- b. How to help? Circle your wrists a lot, this helps to release tightness and promotes blood flow and oxygen to the wrists.
  - i. If being in something like a plank pose or downward dog bothers your wrists, you can make fists – this helps to take pressure off the wrists.

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester**

There's no hiding baby now! Bump is visible, baby is moving around, and you're getting to the home stretch! You can still practice yoga, and go to your favorite classes, ya just gotta make space for the belly. You are an intuitive goddess, you are capable of anything. Stay active for as long as you can! It will help with those aches and pains, and help prevent swelling of the ankles and wrists.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester Modifications**

Keep all the same modifications from the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester

- 1.) **Use blocks!** Blocks and props are your best friends. Blocks help to bring the floor up to you, they create stability, support, and create space for the belly. Use them everywhere and anywhere – I even recommend a block under the forehead in child's pose!
- 2.) **No lying on your back.**
  - a. You might start this in the second trimester. But definitely need to avoid in the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Use the same modifications offered in the second trimester tips.
- 3.) **Don't hold plank pose/modify core exercises.**
  - a. We want to keep our core strong, and at the same time we want to avoid putting too much stress on the abdominal wall to avoid separation of the muscle, also known as diastasis recti. As our belly stretches to make room for baby, this becomes even more important to modify.
  - b. You can still come to a plank pose for a hot second, but then drop the knees and take a baby chaturanga, cat/cow, or child's pose.

- c. Boat Pose: you might want to keep your hands behind your thighs, or place your hands behind you for support. You can still do boat pose!

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester Considerations

#### **1.) Make space for the belly!**

- a. Take a wider stance than you normally would, in any pose or shape that requires more space for your babe. Widen the stance as much as you need to be comfortable.

#### **2.) Heartburn/Reflux**

- a. You may be dealing with some heartburn/reflux. If you feel this during your yoga practice, take a table top position instead of down dog for a few rounds. And, you might not take a standing forward fold as deep as normal, use a block to bring the floor up to you.

Welp, that's everything! It might seem like a lot to take in, but all in all it's fairly simple! We just wanted to provide you with more information & knowledge than you would receive otherwise. Take it one trimester at a time, it will all make sense and become intuitive as your body changes.

As always, we are here to support you and help you feel your best. Please ask us things! There are no silly questions. All of our teachers can help to guide these modifications. Also, please tell us how you're feeling 😊 Practicing for two is a beautiful journey, and your self-care practice is a great gift you are giving to you and your baby.