



*The Ultimate Guide to the*

---

# YOGA WHEEL

Paul Meisner

**Copyright**

© 2020 by Tranquil Yogi

All rights reserved. This book or parts thereof may not be reproduced in any form, stored in any retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise—without prior written permission of the author, except as provided by United States of America copyright law.

For information about special discounts available for bulk purchases, sales promotions, use in classes or courses, fund-raising and educational needs, contact Tranquil Yogi at [info@tranquilyogi.com](mailto:info@tranquilyogi.com) or on our website at [tranquilyogi.com](http://tranquilyogi.com)

Photos credit to Stevi (@stevii.c)

Model credit to Nic (@neaturenikk)

Tranquil Yogi and the Tranquil Yogi Logo are registered Trademarks of Tranquil Yogi and Practical Green Solutions Inc.

Visit Tranquil Yogi at [tranquilyogi.com](http://tranquilyogi.com)

First Edition

**Disclaimer**

The information and suggestions in this book are not intended to provide medical advice and should only be attempted by qualified yoga practitioners. If you feel that a pose in this book is beyond your current level of practice do not attempt it until you have build up sufficient skills, strength, and/or balance. The content included herein are simply for educational purposes and do not take the place of working with a qualified yoga instructor. Every effort has been made to ensure that the content provided in this book is accurate and helpful for our readers at publishing time. However, this is not intended as an exhaustive treatment of the subjects. No liability is assumed for injury, losses or damages due to the information provided. You are responsible for your own choices, actions, and results. Please be careful and listen to your body.



# Table of Contents

Introduction	iv
Backbends	2
Modified Hero Pose	3
Modified Wheel Pose	5
Leg Stretches	8
Seated Hamstring Stretch	9
Half Hanuman Variation	11
Lunge - Foot on wheel	12
Frog Variation	14
Upper Body and Full Body Stretches	16
Side Shoulder Stretch	17
Puppy Dog Variation	18
Upward Facing Dog	19
Pigeon	20
Strength	22
Crescent Lunge	23
Wheel Lunge	24
Plank (Side Wheel)	25
Plank (Shin on wheel)	26
Balance / Inversions	29
Shoulder Stand	30
Plow Pose	31
Forearm Stand	32
Other Poses to try	34



# Introduction

## *what is a yoga wheel*

A Yoga wheel is a support ‘prop’ that assists you in your Yoga Practice. It can be used to provide additional range of motion to your stretches and to provide an active component to strengthening. In yoga you have active and passive props that provide various enhancements to your practice. A passive prop is something that provides support to your practice, whereas an ‘active’ prop provides some sort of enhancement to your practice. Examples of ‘passive’ props could be a yoga block, a yoga mat, towel or even a wall or chair. Active Props include yoga straps, yoga wheels, inversion benches or even another Yogi.

The Tranquil Yogi Enlighten Yoga Wheel is an active prop, and we are going to show you how to use it to provide you a series of enhancements to your practice that will help you open your heart, stretch out your back, open your hips, strengthen your shoulders and triceps and just about every part of your body.







# YOGA WHEEL

in this book you'll learn



Don't be intimidated by the yoga wheel, it is accessible for people at all levels. At its most basic form, the Yoga Wheel is typically thought of as a tool to gently support you in stretching and lengthening your back, however it can be used for so much more.

In this e-book we will be guiding you through a number of ways that you can use the Yoga Wheel to enhance your practice.

This book is organized by 'parts of the body. If you are looking to target a particular area, simply turn to that section and work through any or all of the poses and variations you wish to try.





# BACKBENDS

A common use of the Enlighten Yoga Wheel is to support, lengthen and stretch the back. This can be done in several different ways.



# Modified Hero Pose



In order to perform this pose start by kneeling with the tops of your feet on your mat. If it is within your range of motion, sit back on your heels and, place the yoga wheel behind you. Hook both thumbs on the yoga wheel behind you.

Holding onto the yoga wheel, slowly lower your lower/mid back onto the wheel and relax onto the wheel letting it hold your weight.



Once you have relaxed onto the wheel, several options exist to help you enhance the benefits of the pose.



# MODIFIED HERO POSE

## **Variation 1**

Extend your arms overhead.. stretching them behind you.

## **Variation 2**

Extend your arms to the sides and down towards the floor

## **Variation 3**

Draw your shoulder blades together on your back. (Combine with arms overhead or to the sides)

## **Variation 4**

Let your head and neck relax and follow the gentle curvature of the yoga wheel.

## **Variation 5**

Lift your hips towards the ceiling. Feel the enhanced quad stretch.

## **Variation 6**

All or any combination of the above



**Areas Targeted:** Lower Back, shoulders, chest

**Benefits:** Heart opening, gentle back, oblique and chest stretch

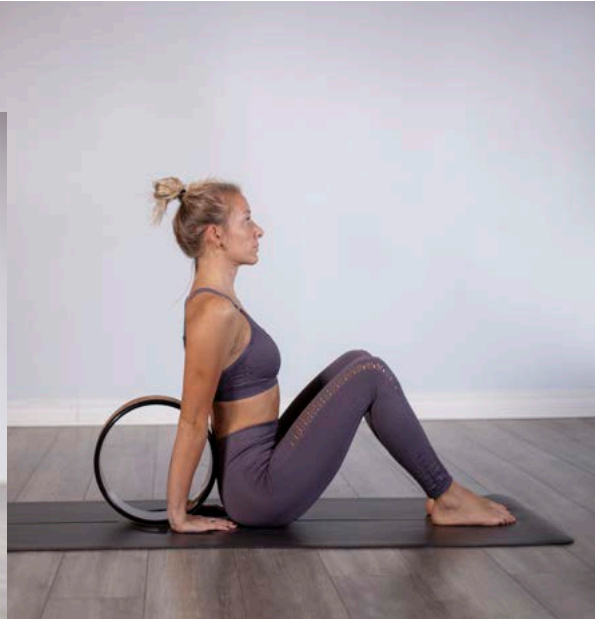




# Modified Wheel Pose

Start by sitting down on your mat with your legs bent, feet flat on the floor and knees directly in front of you on your mat.

Hook both thumbs on the yoga wheel behind you, lean back and slowly press into your feet, lifting your hips off the ground and pressing your mid back into the yoga wheel behind you.



As you feel the wheel become stable under you, remove your thumbs from the wheel and let it take your weight.

Slide back and forth, using your legs to move your back up and down on the wheel. massaging and relieving tension in the lower back

Explore various arm positions (prayer position, overhead, out to the sides) and heart opening

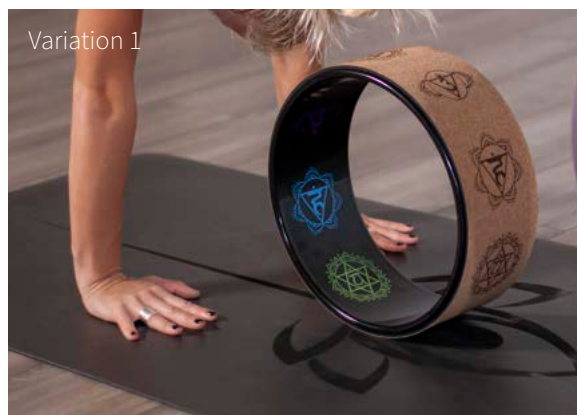


# Modified Wheel Pose

## Variation 1 - Full Wheel

Start with the wheel under you, reaching your hands overhead and plant them firmly on the ground, palms down with your fingers facing towards your shoulders.

Move your feet so they are flat on the ground, shoulder width apart. Press into your hands and feet, lifting your midsection into the air.



*NOTE: it is easy to touch the wheel with your head when you lift up causing it to roll away under your feet, be mindful of the position of the wheel when you come down.*

## Variation 2 - Figure Four

Start with the wheel under you with both feet flat on the ground. Move your body until the wheel is placed at your lower back and sit up with your lower back still firmly pressed into the wheel. Lift up one foot and cross it over the thigh on the other foot that is still planted on the ground.



Maintaining your lower back on the wheel, rotate and lower your hips down towards the ground (it helps to keep your tailbone close to the wheel as this will enhance the stretch)



**Areas Targeted:** Lower Back, Mid Back, Shoulders, Triceps, Glutes

**Benefits:** Heart opening, gentle back and heart stretch, back massage



# Modified Wheel Pose

## **Variation 3 - Shoulder Stretch**

Start with the wheel under you with both feet flat on the ground. Move your body until the wheel is at your upper back. Reach both arms overhead and grasp the wheel.

Slide back and forth on the wheel and feel the shoulder stretch and backbend.

Start with biceps by your ears, and feel free to experiment with different elbow positions to target different parts of your shoulder muscles.

As an enhancement, roll your elbows down towards the ground, and lift your hips to the sky





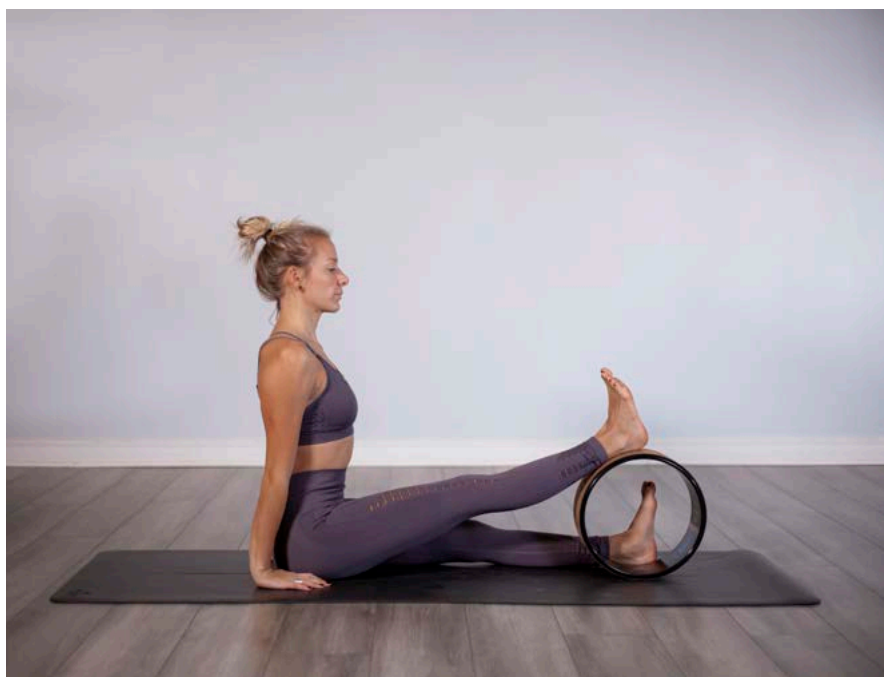
# LEG STRETCHES

A common use of the Enlighten Yoga Wheel is to stretch out your legs. Several variations exist.





# Seated Hamstring Stretch



Start by sitting down on your mat with your legs stretched out in front of you, lift up one leg, placing your shin on the wheel with the other foot stretched out in front of you beside the wheel. Maintain a micro bend in your extended knee. Flex your foot towards your face, foot extending up to the sky.

Keeping your back straight, lean forward towards your extended leg, use a practice strap to apply consistent pressure if required

## Variation 1

Put both legs on the wheel for a double leg stretch



*NOTE: using a strap will help make this stretch much more accessible*



# Seated Hamstring Stretch

## **Variation 2**

Open your legs to a V shape and place the wheel under one leg. Stretch with your torso facing the raised leg. Switch legs.



## **Variation 3**

Open your legs to a V shape and place the wheel under one leg. Lean towards the raised leg with your sidebody. Option to stretch the raised arm overhead. Switch legs.



**Areas Targeted:** Hamstring, Lower Back

**Benefits:** Deep hamstring stretch, release tension in legs and lower back



# Half Hanuman Variation



Kneel on one knee on your mat, the other foot out in front of you in a low lunge position. place the wheel in front of you under your front leg. Using your Illume Yoga Blocks on each side of you to help with your balance, extend your front leg forward, place the wheel under your front shin. Maintain a micro-bend in your forward leg to protect your joints.

Rock forwards and backwards feeling the stretch in your hip flexors (Back leg) and hamstring (Front Leg).

Switch legs.

## **Variation 1**

Explore how deep you can go in the forward slide on the wheel.

## **Variation 2**

Experiment with your balance. Hands out to the side, above your head etc.

## **Variation 3**

If your flexibility allows it, press forward into full hanuman (Splits) with your front foot on the wheel



**Areas Targeted:** Hamstring, Hip Flexor

**Benefits:** Deep hamstring stretch, release tension in legs, hips and lower back



# Lunge - Foot on Wheel

Start by kneeling on one knee, the other foot out in front of you (Low lunge), lift your back foot off the ground, and place the wheel under your back foot, flexing your foot to hold the wheel behind you. (Note, it can sometimes be helpful to lean forward and place one hand on the ground and use the other hand to place the wheel behind your raised foot)

Place a knee pad or towel on the ground under your knee if required.



Lift your torso off the your front knee and draw your shoulders onto your back body. Square your hips to the front of your mat and extend your arms above you. As you lift up, gently rock your hips forward keeping the knee from extending past your forward ankle. Feel the extension in your hip flexors on your front leg and the deep stretch in your quads on your back leg.

## **Variation 1**

Keep hands on blocks, on the ground or on your forward thigh for less range of motion

## **Variation 2**

Raise arms up, press hips forward and lean back into a gentle backbend to enhance the stretch.

**Areas Targeted:** Quads, Hip Flexor

**Benefits:** Deep Quad stretch, Heart Opening, Hip flexor mobility





# Lunge - Foot on Wheel

## Variation 3

If your mobility allows it, extend your backbend to reach back for your back foot.



# Frog Variation

---

Kneel down, torso facing the long side of your mat, knees wide, feet together behind you.

Keeping both hands on the ground, stretch out one leg to the side along your mat, keeping the other knee bent. Lift your extended leg and place the side of your shin on the yoga wheel, flexing your foot back toward your knee.

Slowly slide your leg to the side on the wheel, opening your hips. Feel the stretch in your inner thigh, hips and hip flexors. Repeat on the other side.



# Frog Variation



**Areas Targeted:** Inner thighs, hip flexors, hips

**Benefits:** Deep inner thigh stretch.

## ***Variation 1***

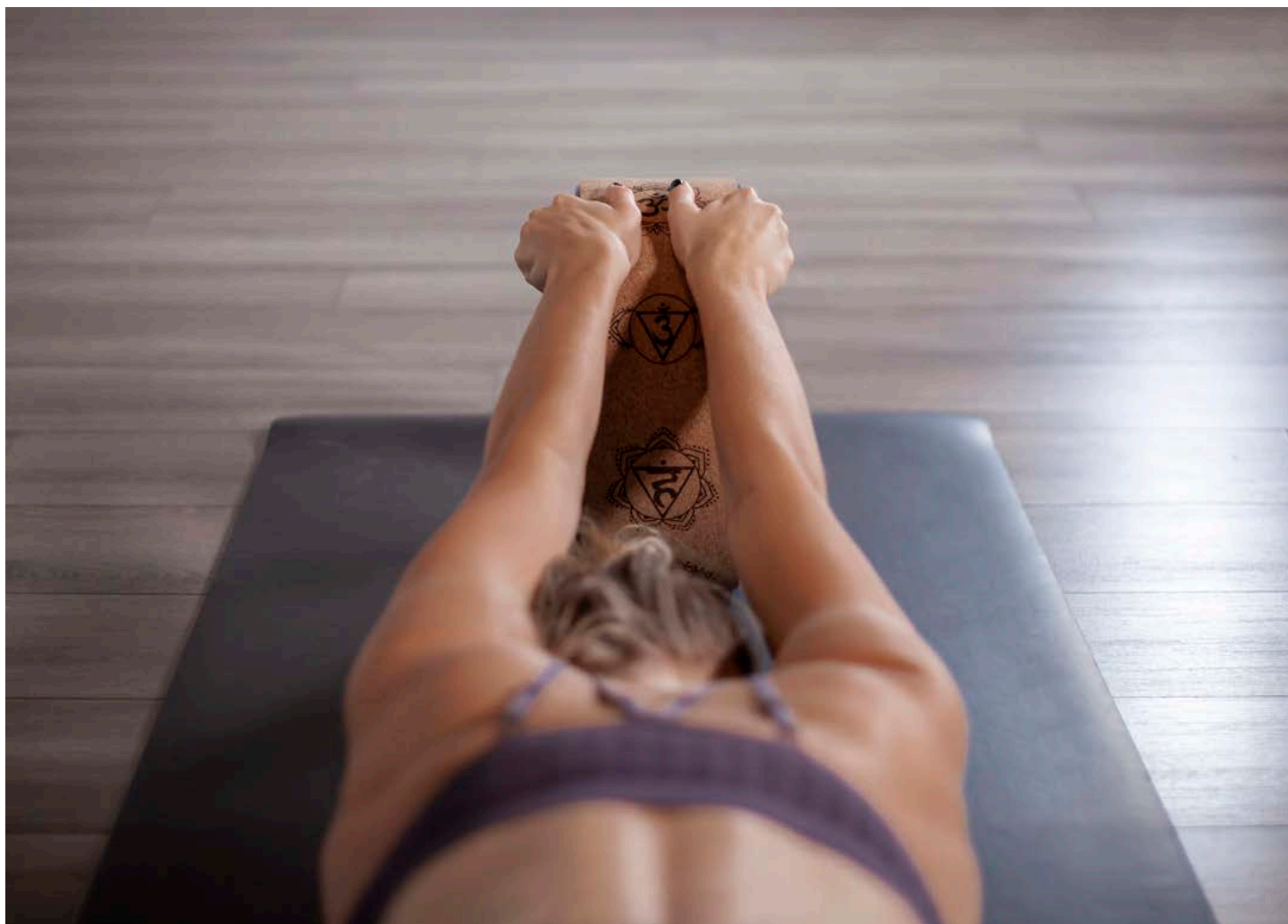
Adjust the position of your upper body. Depending on your flexibility you can try

- Elbows on the floor
- Arms straight, hands on floor
- Hands on blocks (try different heights)
- Torso lifted with arms up to the sky.

## ***Variation 2***

Adjust your foot and leg position, foot parallel with the floor, 45 degrees up from the floor and perpendicular to the floor. This will come naturally as you adjust your torso position from variation #1





# UPPER BODY AND FULL BODY STRETCHES





# Side Shoulder Stretch



Sit on one hip, facing the long side of your mat.

As you lower down to the side, hold the wheel under your upper arm. Using your other hand as a support lower onto your mat using the wheel to stretch out your shoulder and obliques.

Repeat on the other side

## **Variation 1**

Adjust the location of the wheel further away from the torso. Start on the upper arm on the tricep, and move down the arm (avoid the elbow).

## **Variation 2**

Reach the upper arm (the one not on the wheel) overhead.

## **Variation 3**

Without changing body position, alternate to press and relax into the wheel to build muscular strength along with flexibility.

## **Variation 4**

Pressing into the wheel, lift hips off of the floor into a side plank on the wheel.

Variation 1



Variation 2



Variation 4



**Areas Targeted:** Obliques and Shoulder

**Benefits:** Side body strength, shoulder mobility, shoulder strength



# Puppy Dog Variation

Kneel on your mat, knees slightly wider than hip width apart. Curl your toes under and sit your hips back towards your heels. Lower your chest towards your mat and place both palms on the wheel out in front of you. Let your head relax down towards the floor and press into your hands to engage your shoulders and upper back.



## ***Variation 1***

Engage the shoulders and extend your gaze forward



**Areas Targeted:** Obliques, Shoulder, upper back

**Benefits:** Side body strength, shoulder mobility, shoulder strength



# Upward Facing Dog



Lie on your mat, chest down, Place the wheel in front of you. Place your palms on the floor, press into the floor and lift your chest off the ground. Supporting your weight with one arm, use the other arm to bring the wheel in under your lifted chest. Feel the enhanced backbend as you enjoy a deeper backbend as you relax into the wheel.

## **Variation 1**

As you lift into your backbend, press your hips towards the wheel to enhance the backbend.

## **Variation 2**

Place hands on the wheel to lift even higher.



**Areas Targeted:** Shoulders, upper back, lower back

**Benefits:** Enhanced Back Mobility



# Pigeon

Start from a seated position on your mat, bring one leg out in front of you with your shin parallel to the front of your mat (or wherever your range of motion allows you), extend your back leg out behind you with the toes curled under for stability. Lift your chest up and take the yoga wheel and thread your front shin through the wheel.

Placing your hands on the wheel, lift your torso slightly off the wheel and explore with moving the wheel forwards and back enhancing the stretch through your hips and glutes.



## **Variation 1**

Lift chest up, stretch arms towards sky.

**Areas Targeted:** Core, glutes, hamstring, hip flexors

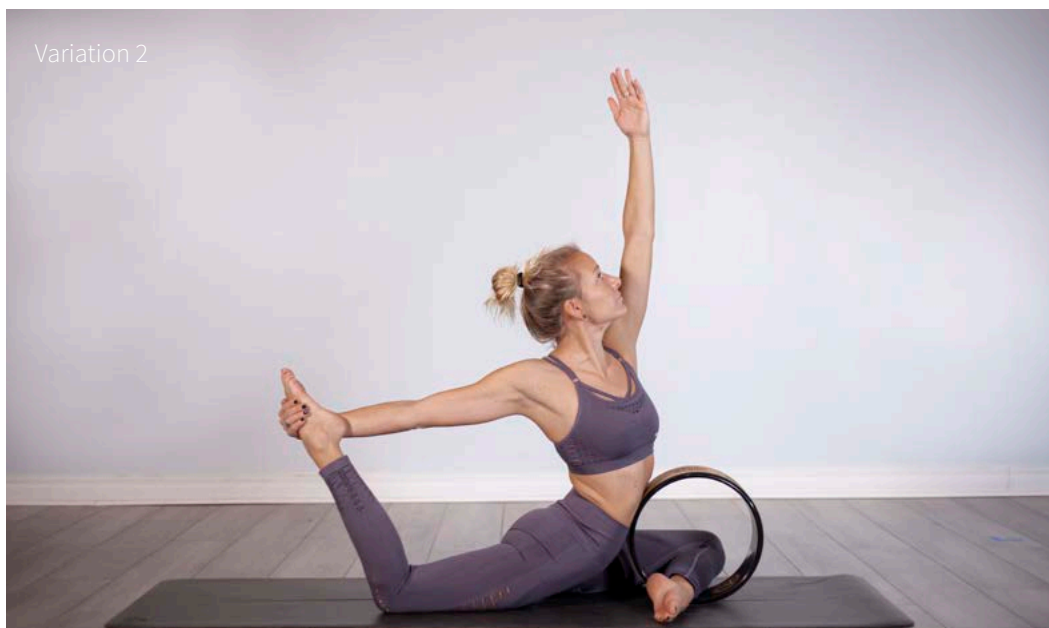
**Benefits:** Enhanced hip mobility, strengthen core.





# Pigeon

Variation 2



## **Variation 2 - King Pigeon**

Place the same hand as your forward leg on the wheel, bend your back knee and reach back and find your ankle with your opposite hand



Variation 2





# STRENGTH

The Enlighten Yoga Wheel can be effectively used to build and tone various muscle groups by adding additional challenge to existing poses by adding balancing aspects along with dynamic movement.



# Crescent Lunge



Stand on your mat, take a step back with one leg and sink into a crescent lunge. Make sure your back foot is straight with your heel raised. Place the yoga wheel under the thigh of your back leg, being careful not to place it under your knee. Square your hips to the front of the room and press your thigh into the wheel to engage your hip flexor on your back leg.

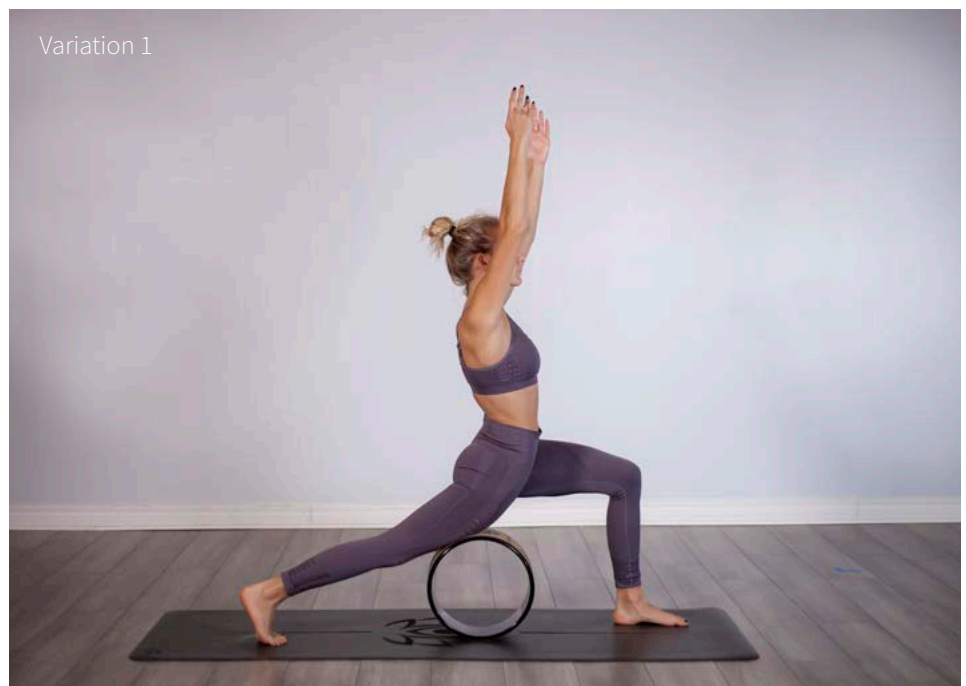
Press thigh into wheel. Engage hip flexor to feel strengthening of your hip flexor. Switch sides when ready.

## ***Variation 1***

Lift chest up, stretch arms towards sky.

## ***Variation 2***

While in Lunge position, without moving your feet, engage your front hamstring to draw your front foot back towards your torso, creating a muscular engagement on your front leg as well.



**Areas Targeted:** Quadriceps, Hamstring, Hip flexors

**Benefits:** Enhanced hip mobility, leg strength, balance.





# Wheel Lunge

As a variation on the crescent lunge, start in a standing position on your mat. Take a step back with one foot. Place the yoga wheel under your shin with both hands on the floor. Slowly bend your front knee to lift your back foot off the ground, hooking the wheel with your foot.

From this position, press down with your shin onto the wheel, feel the engagement in your hip flexor.



Variation 1

## ***Variation 1***

Lift chest up, stretch arms towards sky.

## ***Variation 2***

While in Lunge position, without moving your feet, engage your front hamstring to draw your front foot back towards your torso, creating a muscular engagement on your front leg.

## ***Variation 3***

Explore a gentle backbend being careful to watch your balance.

**Areas Targeted:** Hamstring, Hip flexors, Glutes

**Benefits:** Enhanced hip mobility, leg strength, balance.





# Plank - Side Wheel



Kneel down on your mat, place the wheel on your mat with the opening of the wheel facing you. Leaning forward, place your palms in the centre of the wheel. Your hands should be between 3-6" apart (5-15 cm) and place your palms in the centre of the wheel (not too close to the front of the wheel) and stack your shoulders almost directly above the wheel. Once you have a firm foundation, press into your palms into the wheel. Engage your core.

## ***Variation 1***

Lift up your knees into a full plank variation. Try to keep a flat back from front to back of your mat.



## ***Variation 2***

Staying in plank position, gently rock the wheel from side to side of your mat, only moving a few inches at the time to engage your shoulder muscles.

## ***Variation 3***

Push up. While holding the plank position, lower your torso down towards the wheel. Press back up to plank. Maintain elbows close to your side body, feel free to experiment with elbows wider depending on your personal ability.

**Areas Targeted:** Core, Shoulders

**Benefits:** Core strength, shoulder strength



# Plank - Shin on Wheel

Kneel on your mat, knees slightly wider than hip width apart. Curl your toes under and sit your hips back towards your heels. Lower your chest towards your mat and place both palms on the wheel out in front of you. Let your head relax down towards the floor and press into your hands to engage your shoulders and upper back.



Variation 1



## ***Variation 1***

Three legged plank. Remaining in the plank position, with one shin on the wheel, press the other leg out behind you in a three legged plank.

## ***Variation 2***

As an option, to test and train your balance, extend the opposite arm in front of you in a wheel variation of bird dog.

Variation 2



# Plank - Shin on Wheel

## **Variation 3**

Alternate leg crunch. Starting in the original position, with one leg on the wheel and the other knee hovering above the ground. Draw in the knee towards your chest of the extended leg while at the same time extending the bent knee behind you. Repeat at any speed you wish. If you do this at a faster rate it will help raise your heart rate for a cardio workout.



## **Variation 4**

Double leg crunch. Place one shin then the other on the wheel and slowly draw both knees into your chest to perform a crunch on the wheel. As you get comfortable with the movement explore moving slowly or more quickly back and forth to feel the muscular engagement of your core, shoulders and hip flexors.



# Plank - Shin on Wheel



## ***Variation 5***

Pike on wheel. Starting back in the original position, with one leg on the wheel and the other knee hovering above the ground, extend your second leg behind you. Keeping both legs straight, engage your core and lift your hips off the ground into a pike position. Alternate option, if you don't have the strength in one leg to lift your hips up into a pike, try putting both legs together on the wheel.

Note: It takes some practice to move your leg with the wheel, take your time as you get used to the wheel before trying any advanced movements.

**Areas Targeted:** Core, Shoulders, Hip Flexors

**Benefits:** Core strength, shoulder strength, Balance







# BALANCE / INVERSIONS

The Enlighten Yoga Wheel is an amazing prop that you can add to your practice to assist you with your balance and inversion poses. You can incorporate it as a support to assist you with proper form in each pose or to augment the pose to increase the benefit of the pose for your practice.



# Shoulder Stand

Lie down with your back on the mat, wheel beside you. Lift your legs off the ground until they are perpendicular to your mat, back and hips still on the ground. Slide the wheel to just beyond your hips. Hold onto wheel and lift legs and hips until lower back and glutei are resting on the wheel, shoulders resting on the ground. Feel free to rest here enjoying the tension relief on your lower back or move onto the variations.

## ***Variation 1***

Press into your shoulders, hands on the wheel to provide balance and shoulder mobility. Lift your feet into the air into full shoulder stand



## ***Variation 1***

Eagle Variation

**Areas Targeted:** Core, Shoulders, Lower back

**Benefits:** Core strength, Shoulder Mobility, Balance



# Plow Pose

---



Starting in shoulder Stand, slowly lower your extended legs toward your chest, keeping your knees straight, bring your feet overhead towards the floor. Depending on your body, bring your feet as close to the floor as your flexibility allows.

Note: Plow is an advanced pose, be careful not to put any strain on your neck.



## ***Variation 1***

Bend your knees to bring them near you head to extend the stretch to your lower back.

**Areas Targeted:** Core, Shoulders, lower back, hamstring

**Benefits:** Core strength, Shoulder Mobility, Balance, Back Flexibility



# Forearm Stand

Start in a dolphin dog, elbows on the ground in a triangle with both hands holding the wheel in front of you. Gently place your head between your elbows, engaging your shoulders to remove any pressure from the top of your head to protect your neck. (NOTE: It is important that in all forearm stands that you protect your neck and back by engaging your shoulder muscles instead of putting weight directly on your neck)



Walk upwards towards the wheel and carefully hop your feet off the ground until you are able to achieve a supported forearm stand using the wheel as a 'wall' to catch you and help to train your balance. As you get used to this movement and are learning to judge the amount of hop you need, we suggest placing the wheel against a wall as a starting point.

Feel free to enter the pose with bent legs and as you get comfortable extend your legs straight

You may find yourself leaning into the wheel as you get used to the pose.. this is perfectly acceptable! Explore with your balance to find what is comfortable for you.





# Forearm Stand



## ***Variation 1***

Once you are able to achieve a steady balance try exploring different leg positions such as

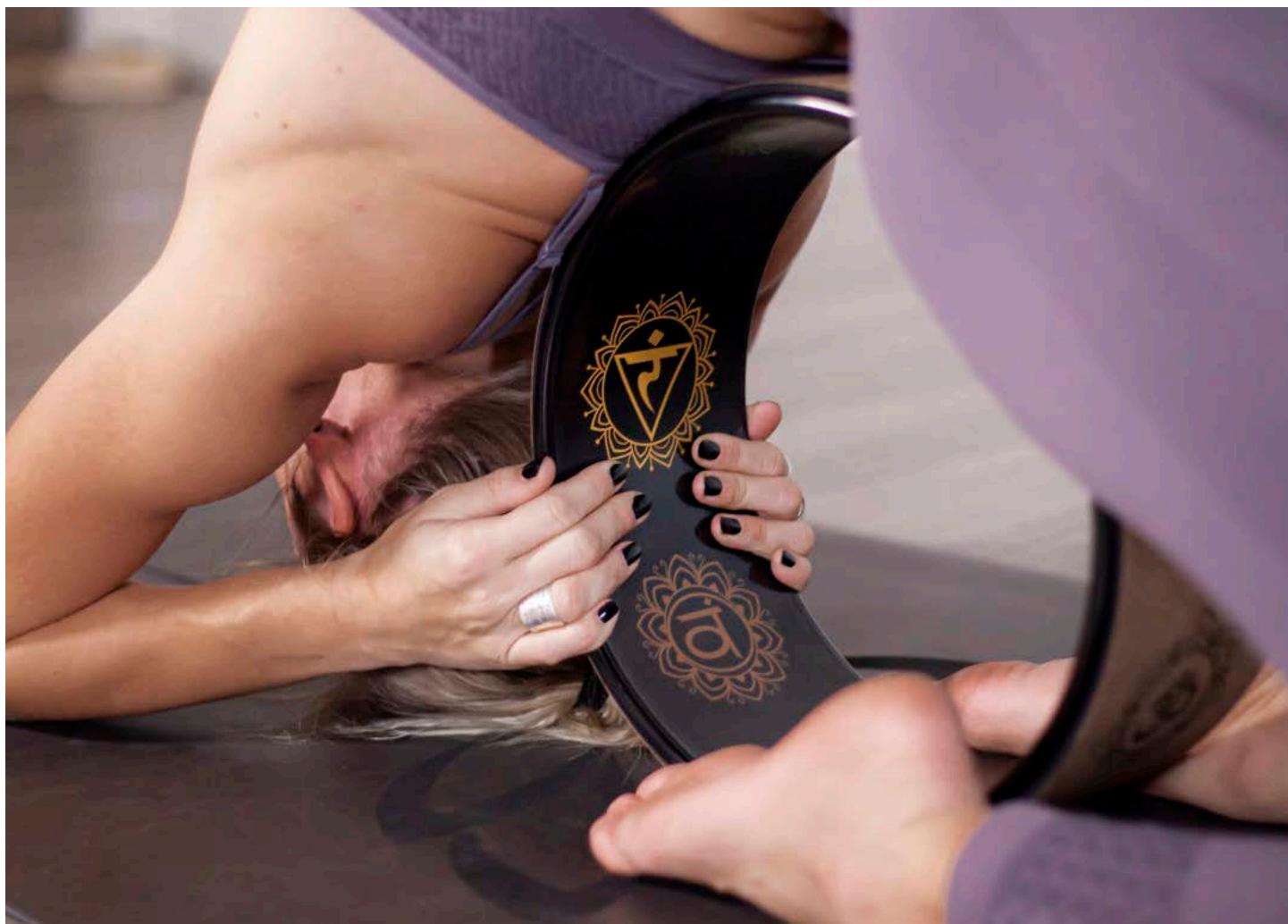
- Bend Legs
- Lotus Position



**Areas Targeted:** Core, shoulders, lower back

**Benefits:** Core strength, shoulder strength, balance





# OTHER POSES TO TRY

The possibilities are endless with your Enlighten Yoga Wheel. Try out many of your favourite poses and experiment to find new ones. Engage with us and post your photos online. We may feature you in a future post!



# Wide Legged Forward Fold



# Revolved Wide Legged Forward Fold



# Single Leg Balance



# Hand to Foot





## Handstand

---



## Dancers

---



## Crow

---



## Garland Squat

---



## Side Plank

---





# Scorpion

---



## Eagle Plow Variation

