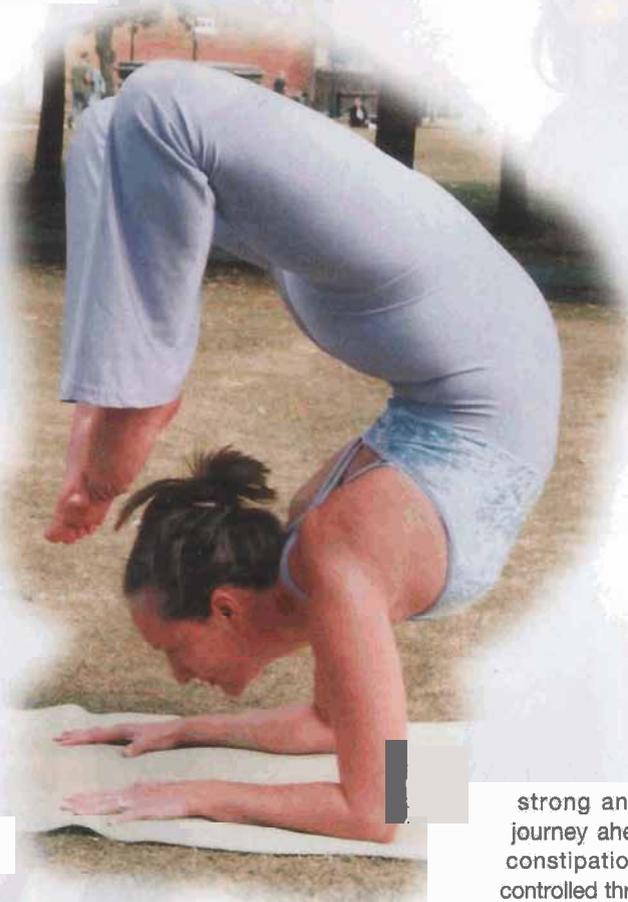


# Pregnancy Yoga Trimester 2

Now entering the fifth month of her pregnancy **Samantha Lee** adapts a yoga practice for you to enjoy together with your bump

Pictures: Lizzie Thomas



**I HAD MY FIRST** scan at 20 weeks and was amazed to see the image of my baby, alive and healthy. It was an emotional high, one of many I've experienced during my pregnancy. With these come inexplicable lows as the body's hormone levels go into overdrive.

In the second trimester (four to six months) the fear of miscarriage is greatly reduced. However instead of morning sickness you may begin to experience heartburn and incontinence problems as the uterus drops onto the pelvic system.

The awareness of the responsibility of parenthood can be overwhelming. Through all this emotional upheaval and physiological change, a woman can find herself feeling marooned and out of control.

Yoga will help your mind and body adjust in this time of change and growth. Through awareness of the breath and movement you will calm your hormonal system, and relax your mental state. This will help you bond with your unborn child.

Through stamina building asanas your body will be kept

strong and fit for the continuing journey ahead. Wind, heartburn and constipation can be alleviated and controlled through light twisting asanas.

Restless legs and swelling of the limbs can be eased with various leg relaxing

postures. Incontinence can be addressed and prevented by subtle pelvic exercises.

And most important of all, the mind can be calmed and given a chance to listen to the inner guidance we have within us all.

Some women have better energy levels in the second trimester. Others will feel like they are struggling. In both cases your yoga practice is a tonic that will energise the system and refresh a tired mind.

If you are new to yoga then be aware of the effect that your practice has on you. You will benefit immensely from regular practice, but do not try more advanced poses without instruction. If you have an established practice, most positions can be modified to suit your individual needs. The best teacher is your own body. Learn from its nuances and subtle language. Don't do anything that feels uncomfortable and, if in doubt, stop.

## Here is a suggested second trimester practice

### Spinal Rolls

Stand in tadasana (mountain pose).

Inhale and raise your arms above your head bringing the palms together. Exhale bending forward from the hips towards the floor, bending the knees slightly.

As you begin to inhale, curl your back and roll back up to standing continuing to rise until your arms are above you once again.

Continue this flowing movement for five breaths.

### Siddhasana with Mula Bandha (Easy sitting pose with pelvic breathing exercises)

Start by sitting cross legged. Bring your hands together in prayer position in front of you at groin level. Inhale and raise the hands up to the top of your chest. On an exhale turn the palms over so they face down and push them back down to the starting position.

Now partner this move with the pelvic exercise.

The point of focus is the vaginal area. Focus on the muscles that you use to stop urine flow.

As you inhale, pull your pelvic muscles up and on an exhale release them so they feel like they are falling down into the earth. Feel your body lengthen on the inhale, and ground itself on the exhale.

Practise this breathing sequence for a few minutes.

### Flowing arm and leg raises

Stand in tadasana. Inhale and raise your left knee and your right arm simultaneously.

As you exhale release both back to the starting position. Change sides, and alternate between both sides 10 times. Experience the stability within and be guided by your breath.

Repeat the exercise, this time stretching each leg out behind you, 10 times on each side.

### Utthita Trikonasana (Triangle pose)

Stand in tadasana. Exhale and step your feet three to four feet apart. On an inhale and raise your arms parallel to the floor and reach out to the sides with your shoulder blades wide, and palms facing down.

Turn your left foot in slightly to the right and your right foot out to the right 90 degrees. Align the right heel with the left foot arch. Lift your thighs and keep the body open.

Exhale and extend your body to the right directly over the plane of the right leg, bending from the hip joint, not the waist. Feel as if you are reaching for something far off to the right. When you have stretched as far forward as you can, release the right hand down onto your thigh, shin, ankle or floor.

Anchor this movement by strengthening the left leg and pressing the outer heel firmly to the floor. To give this pose more of a dynamic feel you can hold the toe. Whatever you choose, breathe in the position and keep

the body open and light. Stretch your left arm toward the ceiling keeping the energy flowing through your arm to your left fingertips.

If your body hunches over to the right through the left shoulder then bring the right hand further up the leg. Breathe openly and fully for a few breaths.

Inhale to come up, strongly pressing the back heel into the floor and reaching the top arm toward the ceiling. Reverse the feet and repeat for the same length of time to the left. Come down and relax in balasana.

### Balasana (Child's pose modified)

Kneel on the floor. Touch your big toes together and sit on your heels, then separate your knees to give your belly some space. Place a blanket in front of you to lay your head on and give you some height away from your belly as it grows bigger.

On an exhale, lay your body down between your thighs. Lengthen your tailbone away from your back while you lift the base of your head away from the back of your neck.

Lay your hands on the floor alongside your torso, palms up, and release your shoulders toward the floor.

Stay here for a few minutes. To come out slowly rise up on an inhale.



### Adho-mukha-svanasana (Downward pose)

Start in balasana with your arms stretched in front of you, palms facing down. Keeping your hands where they are come up onto all fours. Curl your toes under and on an exhale straighten through your legs.

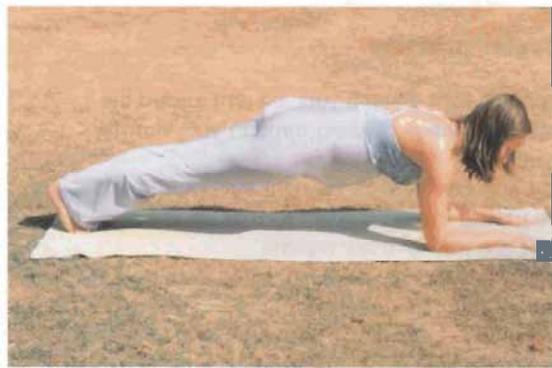
Push down into your hands, spreading the fingers.

Do not sag into the shoulders. Lengthen and strengthen your arms. Turn the buttocks upward and let them release. Roll the thighs inward and up slightly as you lift the kneecaps.

Make sure your feet are straight, shoulder width apart, toes spread, and press the heels toward the floor. Don't worry if they don't reach - a rolled up mat or towel can be placed under the heels to help you release further.

To come out, exhale and bend the knees coming back down into balasana. »





### Chaturanga-dandasana (Plank pose modified)

Start in adho-mukha-svanasana (downward dog).

Inhale and draw your body forward until the arms are straight to the floor and the shoulders directly over the wrists, body parallel to the floor.

Slowly bring your elbows to the mat, one by one, so you are supporting your body on

your forearms.

With your weight on your toes push out through your heels and let the energy flow from your toes to your fingertips. Try and press your outer arms inward and your fingers into the floor. Spread your collarbones away from the sternum and pull your front thighs up toward the ceiling.

Keep your body strong here and don't let the hips sag down towards the floor, or rise too high. Really breathe here fully and deeply using the breath to increase the stamina flowing through you.

To release, bend your knees and come down into kneeling and relax in balasana for a few breaths.

### Baddha Konasana (Bound Angle pose)

Sit with your legs straight out in front of you, raising your pelvis on a blanket if your hips are tight. Exhale, bend your knees, pull your heels toward your pelvis, then drop your knees out to the sides and press the soles of your feet together.

Bring your heels as close to your pelvis as you comfortably can. Clasp the sides of your feet or the ankle or shin. Sit so that you can begin to feel the bottom of your hips sink into the floor.

Lift the spine up from the base of the pelvis. Try not to hunch forward. Then inhale, lift your knees away from the floor, and extend the legs back to their original position.

### Matsyasana (Fish pose modification)

Sit with your legs out front legs together and feet pushing away from you.

Bring your hands behind you fingers pointing in towards you about a forearm's length away from you. Inhale and lift up through the spine and make sure the body is as lengthened as possible.

On an exhale, lift the chest up and release the head back. Push into your hands and arms and feel the stretch from the lower abdomen through to the top of your skull.

Rotate the shoulders back. Lift through the chest. If you have neck problems then do not let the head drop back.

Breathe here for a few breaths filling the lungs. To release, on an inhale bring your head back to centre then, leading with your chest, come back to sitting.



### Savasana (Corpse pose modified)

As you become larger you should make adjustments to your savasana position. As the baby grows there is more chance of compressing the aorta and the vena cava artery with the extra weight, which can cause oxygen depletion in the womb. In this practice we will add blankets behind the head and body to help gravity aid your relaxation.

Lie on your back. Place a few blankets underneath you with your head in line with your shoulders. Raise or lower your prop as you wish, making sure it is completely comfortable. Close your eyes and breathe naturally. Allow your attention to move through your head and face, including the top of the skull, forehead, eyebrows, eyes, cheekbones, and nostrils.

Be aware of the breath at the nostrils for several breaths. Relax the mouth, unhinge the jaw and chin. Survey the neck and throat, shoulders, arms, elbows, wrists, hands, fingers, and fingertips.

Feel as though you are inhaling from the tips of the fingers up to the shoulders, and then exhaling back to the finger tips.

Look into the centre of the chest - let it release the ribs to the side.

Be aware of the stomach, abdomen, lower back, hips, thighs, knees, calves, ankles, feet, and toes. Let them sink further down into the earth.

As you exhale, let go of all tension, worries, and anxieties. Inhale as if you are inhaling new life and energy, as well as a sense of peace and relaxation.

Feel your baby float inside of you, calm serene, connected in relaxation with you. Stay here for five to fifteen minutes.

To come out of this deep relaxation, inhale deeper, helping yourself become more aware. Wiggle the fingers and toes. Feel the sensations of the outside world returning.

Roll over slowly to your right hand side and rest here for a moment. When you feel ready slowly push and come on up to sitting.



*This session will take about an hour depending on how long you hold each pose. Keep aware of your body and how you flow from one asana and breath to another. Come to be aware of the little life inside of you enjoying its passage to birth. Yoga is a calm sanctuary where you can experience a peaceful loving union in which to communicate and get to know your baby. Enjoy this moment to its fullest.*