
Movement For Makers with Liza Laird

Chapter 1 - Movement For Makers

Overview

- The repetitive motions of knitting or sewing can really wear and tear on the body. Gentle movements allow us to be able to make for longer. My name is Liza Laird and I'm a yoga instructor and knitting instructor. My focus is the intersection of yoga and making. For the past 15 years, I've been leading yoga and yarn retreats where we learn movement and self massage in order to take care of our greatest tool, our bodies. When I was 31 years young, I found a lump in my breast and was diagnosed with breast cancer. From that moment on, I needed to rethink how I was moving my body, not only how I was knitting and spinning, but how I was practicing yoga. I needed to go from a very strong, powerful yoga practice to something kinder and gentler so I could continue doing the things that I love while undergoing treatment. Ever since then, I've made sure that my practice is kind, gentle, and restorative. And movement for makers is just that. It's an approachable way to include movement in your life, so you can continue making, I'll be showing lots of modifications, so don't worry about doing yoga or being able to touch your toes. You don't need any prior experience. Just come with an open and curious mind so that you can add this in to your daily creative endeavors.

Flow and props

- Have you ever been knitting or crocheting or throwing on the pottery wheel and noticing that you're getting into a flow state? Well, in yoga, there's a term for that as well, which is flow, and it's all about this idea of your mind, body, and spirit coming into alignment. Everything's connected movement is helpful for all kinds of makers, and I'm going to offer some ideas for props that you might wanna have on hand. Number one is a chair that is sturdy with no wheels. You probably are already knitting or crocheting in that chair. You can also use yoga blocks, a strap, tennis ball or massage ball, a yoga mat. Blankets or pillows are all handy tools that can help you in your practice. In your class downloads, you'll find a PDF version of the basic props list that I have in my book, *yoga of Yarn*, where I list out all of these basic props, the yoga use, and also the knitting use, which can totally translate to whatever your preferred craft is. Let's say you've been creating for a while as predominantly a knitter. I'm going to use a knitting example. I sometimes knit 250 stitches in the round to create a scarf or a cow, and as I'm going along, I get into that flow state. Then my mind wanders a little bit and I snap a knitting needle. That definitely throws off my centeredness. So sometimes what I do is I shift and move into physical movements in order to get myself back into that flow state before I carry on with whatever my project might be. I'll show you a short flow that you can try out whenever you find yourself stumbling, seated in your chair, shift to the front of your chair. Whenever you're trying to do any physical movements in a chair, I would recommend shifting your weight forward because your feet are planted firmly into the ground and it kind of forces you into a proper alignment and lifted up posture. If you're sitting back here towards the middle of your chair, it's more likely that you're gonna tilt back and lean back. I also love to sit this way on a chair simply because I'm only five foot one, and it's much easier for my feet to touch the ground. Depending on your height, you'll find your balance state to be able to have a nice tall spine. So seated at the edge of your chair with your hips and knees in line, and your knees over your ankles. You're gonna want your feet about hip distance apart, your feet and your knees. One way to test

that. Put two fists together and place them directly between your knees. This is an approximation of your hip distance apart. Begin by having your hands flat onto your thighs. Take a deep inhale. You can close your eyes here and exhale. You'll notice I did a little wiggle there. I often like to do that just to get myself into my body a little bit more, so you can always add a little extra movement just to ground yourself. Eventually, we'll come to that place where the body is still, but sometimes when you're first starting out, it's a little bit of a reset. So first, just breathing and sitting. Then begin by stretching your arms down by your sides, palms facing forward fingertips spreading palms wide. Inhale, reach your arms up overhead. If your shoulders don't allow it, you just come partway up. Remember to listen to your body and where you are at. As you exhale, spread your arms wide, palms facing towards the floor, and release the hands down. Again, inhale, reach the arms up overhead. Exhale, tilt forward as you lower your arms down by your sides. If you know you can't forward fold too far, what you'll do is place your hands onto your thighs as you're coming forward into your forward fold. If it's available to you, release the hands and come all the way down. If you're in the position with your hands up onto your thighs, you'll just inhale to lift, exhale to fold a little bit more. What it looks like with the hands on the floor is inhale, lift, exhale, fold. Inhale, reach your arms up overhead and exhale, lower your arms down by your sides. That short flow can be very powerful when you really focus on each movement connecting with a single breath. I'll demonstrate the entire sequence one more time without speaking so you can understand how it flows. So try that on your own. Find your own sequence of breath, the length of inhale and the length of exhale. Anytime you need to reconnect with your body, mind, and spirit.

Basic warm-up movements

- In knitting before we start a project we usually swatch that is we knit a small, maybe four by four square of fabric in order to understand what our final product will look like. Now, if you're a quilter, that usually means you prep your pattern or you wash your fabric. Or if you're a painter, you prepare your canvas no matter what your craft is. It's important to prepare for your project, but it's also important to prepare your body for that physical repetition that will inevitably occur when you start working. Put your project down before you get too far and come to sit at the front of your chair. I'm going to offer you multiple poses, different things that you can do as a warmup before you get too deep into a project, or once you've worked for 20 minutes or an hour, take a break and try one or multiple variations that I show you. You don't have to do all of it at once. You'll understand what your body needs. Begin by warming up the hands. Bring the palms together in front of you and rub them really quickly together. You're looking to create friction and heat with your hands. You could do this for five seconds or 20 seconds. You'll know when your hands are warmed up. That's a great way to get those hands ready for working with tiny needles if you're doing embroidery or whatever you're working on. Another great hand warmup is the hand shake. It's pretty self-explanatory, but it's a great way to get the blood flowing and going no matter if you've been typing at a computer or texting for a long period of time. It's also, again, just another way for us to rejuvenate our bodies and get things going. After you feel like your hands are pretty warmed up, you can move up to your wrists and just try some simple wrist rolls going one direction and then the other. Try to have your shoulders relaxed and a tall spine. If you feel like wrist rolls are easy enough for you and you wanna add in your shoulders and arms warming up, you can always play around with having the arms straight out to the side in a T shape, going back and forth, always switching directions, trying to find balance or play around with the arms up overhead. Let the hands rest for a moment and let's check out our shoulders a little bit more. Inhale, lift your shoulders to

your ears and then exhale, release them back and down. Inhale, lift the shoulders to your ears and then exhale back and down. One more time, inhaling up, exhaling back and down. You'll notice I'm only doing these one time or maybe three times and for just a few seconds. You don't need a lot. Just a little bit of time spent warming up the body. Stretch your arms out in front of you and try bringing your fingertips up towards the ceiling or imagine your nails of your hands are coming back towards your face and we're trying to keep these arms up at shoulder height. Exhale, release and point the fingers towards the floor. Now the palms are facing towards your body and you'll feel a little bit of an opening across the forearm. Try that one more time. Inhale, fingertips up towards the ceiling, and then exhale fingertips towards the floor. Then leave one arm in that position and take your opposite hand and take your thumb underneath your wrist. The thumb will pull away from your body as your other fingers. Press into the back of the hand and bring that hand towards your body. This will allow an opening across your forearm and your wrist. Hold that again for about five to 10 seconds or maybe five breaths. And when you're ready to release, turn the fingertips back up towards the ceiling. You'll take your opposite hand and make sure you grab the thumb as well as all of the fingers. And very gently coax these fingers more towards your body, more towards your head, all the while breathing steadily. Taking a few breaths here and release. Always being sure to do the opposite side, the same thing, trying to balance out what naturally becomes unbalanced throughout the day. You are welcome to stop here, but even though you think, okay, I'm at my pottery wheel and I'm mostly just using my arms. We can't forget about our hips and our legs and our feet because they're all part of the equation. Everything's connected, and they even start to build tension through the repetitive motion and the way that we sit. So we'll start with our feet. You will lift one leg up and hold onto the back of the thigh. You don't have to lift it very high. You can even keep the foot on the ground and simply just lift your toes up towards you and warm up the ankle. That way if it's available to you, you'll hold onto the back of your thigh and roll out that ankle one direction and then the other, switching to the other leg. When you're ready, we'll continue on demoing something with this leg, 'cause I wanna keep working. Open this hip. I'm gonna lift the leg up, hold onto the back of my thigh and just rock my leg side to side. I'm avoiding knocking back. I'm going to stay as upright as possible and rock the leg a little bit. If it's available to you, you can even grab onto your shin and pull that leg in, finding length and height as you compress the together, watch out for those knees. Always ease off if there's any sharp shooting pains. Flex your foot. You can hold onto your foot and stay right here, or slowly release the ankle to the top of the thigh. Inhale and exhale. Allow the outer hip of the left leg to open and breathe. You can stay upright or if it's available to you, lengthen your spine, grow taller, and then exhale, tilt forward still a long spine so we're not hunching or rounding. We're keeping a tall spine as we fold forward. Use your breath. So use an inhale to lift. Exhale, release your foot and try the same thing on the other side. It's important to warm up the body to prepare for the repetitive motion of making, and it's also important to take breaks often. So pick and choose a few of these postures and try them out. These movements are there for you when you need it.

Full body balancing and chair-assisted poses

- Everything in the body is connected, and your body is full of energy centers. There are seven main energy centers that you might traditionally learn in a yoga class, like your root chakra, for example, that go from the base of your spine all the way up to your top. Now, what can happen when we're sewing, for example, and your foot's on that pedal for a long period of time, the body can get out of misalignment. The same thing when you're knitting. If you're a thrower and you're constantly

moving your yarn like that, the right side of your body might become dominant, and then the energy centers shift and can create blockages, but also just physically, the muscles can get tight. So this is a full body balancing sequence. Since everything's connected, we need to remember to move the whole body, stretch and expand everything. This is a practice that you can do after you've been making for a while, and you just need the body to feel longer and expanded after. It might feel a little compressed from all of the repetitive motions. You'll need a chair for this practice and a blanket. You might want some extra props, like a pillow or something if you want some more support underneath your knees, but you'll figure that out as you go along. Coming to stand in Mountain Pose, you'll have your feet hip distance apart or even a little wider if that feels sturdier for you. With your arms down by your sides, palms facing forward. Take a deep inhale and exhale release. Try to remind yourself as you inhale your breathing in and exhale, you're just letting everything go. Then inhale, reach the arms up overhead. Exhale, lower your arms down by your sides. If that feels like a great way to wake up your shoulders after stitching or sewing for a long period of time, do that a few times. Inhaling up and exhaling the arms down. Then we'll move into a tree pose. Playing with our balance is imperative as we get older because it's one of the first things that can go by the wayside. So practicing it on a regular basis can help prevent any falls and things in the future. So what you'll do is press one foot firmly into the ground. This standing leg is gonna be strong and stable. Have a chair nearby or a wall so that you can hold on and feel secure. The opposite leg will bend and the ball of your foot will be in the ground. You can stay right here. You don't need to go any further, but if you'd like to explore, what you can do is open up that hip so we're not just popping the knee out. I'm actually rotating the top of my femur bone in my hip and opening up my hip and lengthening my inner thigh out to the side. Here's another spot. You can stop and take a breath and check in with yourself. Maybe scoot your foot a little bit closer to that standing leg. I'm pressing the ball of my foot into the arch of my other foot. So this foot here, I'm sliding and pressing in. It's the action of the opposite foot and foot to press each other, this opposition that's helping me lengthen and stand tall. If your balance isn't great, stay right here. But if it's available to you, you can start to slide that foot up a little higher and maybe place your foot onto your calf muscle, not on a joint, because what's happening is we're pressing the foot into the leg and the leg into the foot, and we don't wanna mess with our joints. We wanna press into like the bone, the muscle where there's actual ability to press back and lengthen and lift. You can stay right here, or maybe you keep going and you grab onto your ankle. Lift that leg up. The hip is open, and press your foot up onto your inner thigh. My heel is pressing strongly into my inner thigh, and my inner thigh is pressing back into that foot. You can hold onto the chair, reach your arms up, play around with your balance and even your gaze. So when you're sewing or throwing the pottery wheel, you're looking directly at your materials right here. You can play with expanding your gaze by either looking directly at eye level, looking up towards the ceiling, towards the floor, or even closing your eyes and seeing if you can keep that balance. When you're ready, you close the hip, bring the leg forward, release down, and try the same thing on the other side. Continuing on with the flow. The next thing for body balancing is a Warrior two pose. We'll stand about an arm's distance away from a chair. I've got my hips facing the seat of the chair. Again, make sure your chair doesn't have wheels and it's sturdy. And sometimes if you're new to this practice, it can be helpful to move the chair up against a wall just for that extra stability. I'm going to bend one leg. My standing leg will be straight and strong. The thigh muscles are lifting up, and I'll lift this leg up. Then open the leg out to the side. Now, if doing that motion balance wise isn't working for you, the chair is here for you, right? You scoot yourself in a little bit, lift that leg up, and then slowly move your

foot to the inner part of the chair. So my foot's directly in the center of the seat. You can see that my foot is pressing firmly down into the chair. My inner thigh is opening. Knee is over the ankle. This right leg, your standing leg can move to the side as far as you can comfortably stand, opening up your inner thighs and being tall and being able to stay in a steady breath. The moment your breath becomes raggedy or you can't control it, you ease off. And try something a little simpler to stand in your warrior two pose. You can add in the arms by stretching your fingertips, long reaching side to side, and then the gaze can be with your chin, parallel with your chest, so directly in front of you, or right over the middle finger of the front arm. Exhale, release to come out, you just shift your weight to your standing leg and either lift that foot up and place the foot down, or you will slowly slide that foot down. You can bring your hands to the chair and place the foot onto the floor. Take your time, especially if this is the first time going through this flow. Let's shift into a supported downward facing dog. Downward facing dog is a common posture. I'm sure you've seen it before, but I love to do it with a chair because I feel like it's gentler on my shoulders. And really great for all makers who use the repetitive motion and put a lot of wear and tear on their shoulders. Come to stand at the front of your chair, so the seat is facing you, and your arms are about one arm's length away from the chair. Bend your knees slightly feet or hip distance apart. Plant your hands onto the chair. Wiggle your hips a little bit to lengthen your spine, and then slowly step your feet back until your hips and shoulders are in line. And your hips and ankles are in line. You can keep the knees bent. Stretch your sides by shifting your hips to the side a little bit, and breathe here. Press the hands firmly into the chair, especially the knuckles. You're not sinking into your wrists, but pressing down. And breathe in. And breathe out to come outta the pose. Step your feet forward and roll up to standing. Let's come to sit on the chair now, sitting on the edge of the chair, hips forward, knees and ankles in line. Take your hands to the back of the chair. Feel your shoulder blades. Press into your back and slowly inhale. Lift the chest, lift the gaze, and then exhale. Release. It's a small but mighty back bend. If you feel like you can add a little bit of strength to your back bending, take your hands to the sides of the chair. Feel a stable and sturdy grip. Step your feet forward a little bit so you can slide your hips off the chair. You might wanna stay right here or slowly lift your hips up, lengthen the front of your body, press your heels into the floor, and if it's available to you, you let your head tilt back, opening up the throat, and then exhale. Slowly release, lower the hips back down to the chair. Take your time. And there you go. Now next, we're going to move down onto our knees. If it's unavailable for you to be on your knees, you would just end your sequence there. If you can lower yourself down onto the floor, slowly use the support of the chair. Come to stand on your knees. I am about one arm's length away. You can see my hands are just hitting the seat of the chair. Place your hands onto the chair and inhale, lift, exhale. And then we're gonna lift one arm up towards the ceiling and open the chest. Then slide this hand forward a little bit, and exhale will thread the needle. So I'm threading my arm directly underneath the opposite arm, releasing my shoulder to the chair and my head down. Now, if you feel like it's a little cramped and want some support, you could always put a blanket underneath your head and then maybe crawl this arm up for a little bit of an extra stretch and breathe here. Release the top hand down, press down to lift up and repeat that on the other side. To finish off, I love a good restorative child's pose. Grab a blanket or a pillow, whatever feels more appropriate for you, and you'll place it right between your knees and your calves so that your butt can sit down and be a little supported so there's not so much pressure on your knees. Place your hands onto the chair. Take a moment, and then as you exhale, we will release down. And what we're trying to do is get our forehead to rest on the seat of the chair and the backs of our arms as well. So you might have to adjust, scoot your hips back a little

bit, but we want everything to be fully supported. And then the hands can just come back behind you trying to hold onto the backs of your shoulders so that we're opening up the back, the backs of the arms, and lengthening your spine. Gently release the arms, press the hands down into the chair to lift yourself up to seated. I'm gonna demo this again without talking, so you can see the whole flow in sequence.

Shoulder openers

- If you ever feel like you need your posture lifted up and your shoulders opened and strengthened, this is the sequence for you. I'm going to go through a few different wonderful shoulder openers that you as makers definitely need for this. The only prop you really need is a strap or a scarf. I have my yoga strap here. It's about 10 feet long. It's excessive in length for this practice, but it can come in handy. Open up your strap or scarf and hold it out in front of you. You'll hold your thumbs and your arms at about shoulder distance apart and you're not gripping onto the strap at all. Very gentle hold. The thumbs are all that is holding onto the strap. You'll see the width of my arms right now a little wider than my shoulder distance. And then on an inhale I'm going to lift my arms up overhead and as I lift, I'm going to allow my arms to open up a little bit and come behind me. So I might need to hold onto the strap a little bit more so I don't lose it and behind me. And then lower down. Release the strap on one side and then bring it back to the front. As makers and people in the modern world, we're constantly bringing our arms forward to text work on a computer or knit, right? So we want to try to constantly be opening up the shoulders, so don't bother with the whole bringing the arms back forward. Okay. Bring your arms out in front of you again and try that one more time. Gentle hold on the strap. Inhale, lift up and as you exhale, lower the arms back behind you. If you are hitting a sweet spot here and you really feel your chest opening, you can hold onto the strap a little bit more and open up your chest or slowly just exhale and repeat. Try that a few times in a row at least five times, and always feel free to work up to doing more. Take your strap and if it's long like mine, fold it in half and then place it over your shoulder. Stretch one arm out to the side. Have your thumb facing up towards the ceiling. Then turn your palm up towards the ceiling. You might already feel an opening and a stretch here, and this might be as far as you go. If it's available to you, stretch your arm all the way up by your ear. You might need to adjust the strap a little bit to get it into place and reach that arm up. You can take your opposite hand and hold onto this arm to keep it into place because what often happens is we pop out to the side. We wanna try to hug the armpit in towards the ear as we bend this elbow back and find the strap. See if you can leave that arm there and then stretch your opposite arm out to the side. This time, thumb pointing towards the floor. So the head of the arm bone rotates forward just for the beginning. Lower the arm down behind you. You might stop here or slowly slide the back of the hand up the back until you find the strap and grab onto the strap. Don't worry about the fingers touching. They don't have to. Some days mine touch and sometimes they don't. It all depends on the tension and stress that's going on in my shoulders. And then breathe in here. Keep expanding, pointing the upper elbow up towards the ceiling and the bottom elbow towards the floor. This arm that has the elbow pointing towards the ground, that head of the arm bone rolls back to open the collarbones there very slowly. Release unwind. You can move the strap to the other side and try it again on the opposite side. Another idea I'd like to offer you, instead of holding it in a static position, what you can do is just flow in and out of it. Don't try to get those fingertips to touch. It's more creating some lubrication to the joints and opening up the shoulders that way. Okay, now you can place your strap down or off to the side. Take your hands to your thighs and try a few cat cows. So what that means is inhale,

arch your back, lift your gaze, exhale round your spine, pull your belly button in your hands can come forward to give you a deeper curve. And then inhale arch and exhale round. And try that a few times. Now take your thumb into your fingers and wrap your fingers around your thumb. Stretch your arm out to be at shoulder height. Start to lower the arm towards the floor and tilt that thumb. Imagine the thumb is pointing back to the wall behind you. So you're opening up the shoulder, the head of the arm bone and bring the arm back and back and back. Then if you feel like you go, like to go a little bit deeper, you'll bring the opposite ear to shoulder and stretch a little bit more. One more step if you'd like. Take this opposite hand to the head and very gently coax the ear and the shoulder closer together, bringing this reaching arm back more and down to come out. Simply release the stretched hand down and then slide this hand to the other side of your head to push up and lift and try again. On the other side, the thumb tucks. You wrap your fingers around your thumb, stretch your arm out to a T. If that's unavailable to you, you start lower down. You work with where your body is at. And then you can play around with tilting that ear to the shoulder. And you don't always have to keep going the hand on top of the head. It's just a little extra. Okay? And always remember to try to use your hand to lift up so that you don't have to use the tension or the the muscles of your neck. You can do all of these shoulder openers or just one of them right where you're sitting. And if you'd like to try even more shoulder openers, you can check out my daily practice.

Hip openers

- I love being able to open my shoulders, sitting in between rows or taking a break from weaving, but I can't forget about my hips, and neither should you. They can get so tight from sitting for long periods of time, no matter if it's from sitting at your pottery wheel or even just driving for extended period of time. We need to remember our hips. Make sure to warm them up before trying any of these movements. You can always check back in the warmup to see any little movements that can help warm up the body. To prepare for hip opening for this practice, you'll need a block and a strap. Depending on your height, you might want an extra block, but for now I think one block and one strap will come in handy. Using your sturdy chair with no wheels, you'll sit to the side, so you've got one hip facing the side of the back of the chair, and place one foot onto the block in front of you. Now, if you are taller than me, again, I'm only five foot one. You might not need the block, so you'll have to check what works for you. But for me, the block just gives me a little boost to be able to get deeper into my hip opener. I have my front leg firmly on the block. The back of my thigh is resting on the chair. Now this leg will slide back behind me. My toes are tucked. My hip and knee are not directly in line. I'm actually trying to slide my knee back a little bit to feel an amazing opening across the front of my hip flexor. The hip flexor right here that can get so tight from sitting for extended periods of time, this might be enough. You might wanna stay right here, or maybe you wanna slide that foot back a little bit more. I love to play with reaching my arm up to feel the expansion all the way up to the tips of my fingers, maybe even a mini back bend or even stretch to the side. Then come back up very slowly. You can hold onto your chair. You can untuck your toes. Slide this foot forward and come on back to center. Try that on both sides. We always wanna balance out another option. If that was good for you, but you're like, I really need a little bit more, come up to standing. Place your block directly in the middle of the seat of your chair. Hold onto the back of the chair for extra stability and place one foot onto the block. Your hips are facing forward towards the chair and the block. This back leg can stay right here. I'm in a pretty compact pose, but you can get used to it. First. In this position, maybe reach the arms up overhead, but as you feel like you could go a little bit

deeper, the standing leg moves back so you can kind of wiggle and scoot it back or hop the leg back a little bit. You're up on the ball of your back foot. You can, your leg can be straight and you can reach your arm up. That back leg can be bent as well, and then slowly release to come out. You can hold onto your chair, scoot this foot in and place your foot down. Try again on the other side. Place your block off to the side and come back to seated. We'll try Eagle legs. In daily practice, I go over eagle arms. These are the legs that go with that posture. Scoot forward, so your hips are at the front of your seat and you're feeling stable. Keep one leg firmly on the ground and cross the opposite leg over. You might stay right here, or the full expression of the pose is actually wrapping the foot, so you scoot this foot back. I kind of come out of my cross a little bit. I wrap my foot around the other side of my leg, and I need to, since I'm coming into it from an odd position, being seated in the chair, I hold onto the chair and I can scoot myself forward so my knees and toes are in line just to protect that bottom knee. If you want to, you can play around with lifting the hips by pressing your feet down, or just stay right here. Another option though, is to lean forward a little bit. You can play around with reaching towards the floor. Don't try to touch the ground. It's not gonna happen and it doesn't need to, but lengthening forward just helps get into those hips a little bit more. Lift on up, uncurl, unwind, release. Try that on the other side. Now, another hip opener that I love, but traditionally is taught sitting on the floor floor. I'm gonna show you how you could do it in a chair. For this one, you'll scoot all the way back to the edge of the chair and have one leg and one hip directly in the middle of the seat. Set yourself up. If you're short. Leg me. Place a block onto the floor just to stabilize your foot so you feel fully connected. The opposite leg will lift up, and then you're trying to stack your knees on top of each other. So you see how my knees are stacking. If your hips are tight, you might not get here, or you might stay here, right? If your hips are tight, you might be in this position, or you might be able to get the knees stacked and the foot over here. Or you can try to bend the leg fully and hold onto this foot and open up the whole outer edge of your hip with your knees stacked like this. Inhale and lengthen, and then stay right upright. Or as you exhale, you can tilt forward a little bit to get deeper into that outer hip. Lift up release. Place the feet down. Take a breath. Try the same thing on the other side. One last hip opener I'd like to show you. You might need a strap for this. A t-shirt, a scarf, anything that you can grab onto. I've got my extremely long strap, so I'm gonna unfold it, fold it in half, and then fold it again. And now I've got a loop, right? I'm gonna stick my foot through that loop, sit towards the edge of your chair, but be able to grab onto the seat, so you might have to shift to the side. Keep one leg stable. Plant that foot into the floor. Lift this leg up. You can use your hand to lift the leg. Then use your loop to grab onto the ball of your foot. Breathe here. Then start to lift the heel up as if you're going to straighten this leg. Quick, change to the arm. Do you see how the palm of my hand is facing towards the leg? You can play with switching the hold, so you're getting an upper grip around the strap. Just see what feels most appropriate for your shoulder. Then you can hold onto the chair behind you and either stay with that bent leg or start to straighten that leg up and deepen into a twist. You can even reach that arm behind you if it's available to you, but you can always keep hold of the chair bending that leg gently. Release the strap and try it on the other side. Find which one is your favorite. Mine is the last one I just showed you.

Self-massage

- After I've done a lot of movement, or maybe I've crocheted for too long or spun for too long, I'd like to give myself a little massage. In order to do self massage at home, all you need is a tennis ball. You could also have a massage ball, lacrosse ball, whatever works for you. Tennis ball is usually a

great beginner place because it's a little softer than a lacrosse ball. Always be sure to monitor how much pressure you're putting on 'cause you can bruise yourself. Since everything in the body is connected, we wanna make sure we do a full body massage. I'm going to start with my feet. Placing the ball on the floor, place the bottom of your foot onto the ball. Your heel will be on the ground, and you can just very slowly move side to side. When doing self massage, you wanna move as slowly as possible and then make sure to go across the arch of the foot all the way to the heel. Spend as much time there as you need. When you're done, come down to the floor, place the ball underneath your calf muscle, and then you can vary gently and slowly. Slide your leg up and down along the ball. If you find a sweet spot, stay there for a moment, and again, gentle small movements. From there, move up to your hamstring, so the back of your upper leg, and as much pressure as you want to put on it. So you can lift your foot off the ground and really lean into it or keep that foot down. Take your time and if you need to, just stay there a little longer. Now we'll shift up to our outer hip. In order to do this, you'll need to lift up one side and then place the tennis ball underneath it and basically sit on top of the tennis ball. Now you can stay right here. Even just moving the knee up and down might be interesting enough for you. Or I like to go super deep in this and I press the opposite foot down, lift up my hip and rock side to side, getting really into the deep outer hip muscles. Find your sweet spot. This is always my retreat goer's favorite one. Let's continue opening up that hip, but we'll shift to lay on our side so you can lift up your hip as you lay down and place the tennis ball underneath. You'll get a slightly different angle here, and you can rock your hip side to side, massaging deeper into the tennis ball. Stay there as long as you need to, but when you feel ready, start to shift the ball up a little higher. This is a very tender area, so you might wanna skip some spots, especially around your ribs. Take your time and explore. The last spot I'm going to do with you is placing the ball underneath the armpit. Now this can be quite intense, so to ease off of it, you lift your head and support your head with your hand. You can have your opposite hand on the floor again to lift up out of it a little bit and just ease into it. Continue on down your arm to your hand, and then try on the other side, starting at your feet. Once again, I keep a tennis ball or a massage ball in every one of my project bags. You can take this self massage and all of these movements and have them with you at any time that you need so that you can have mental clarity, flexibility, and the ability to make for longer.