


# Yoga for Mental Clarity

Mental fog, sometimes called chemo fog or chemo brain can be caused by radiation treatments to the brain and many types of chemotherapy. There may be memory lapses, difficulty concentrating, remembering details, and difficulty multi-tasking. These symptoms may be short-lived or may last for a long while after treatment ends. This week we will focus on balancing pranayamas, grounding mudras that help clear the mind, and standing balancing postures to help build mental focus.


## CENTERING

These preparation practices help to set the mood and intention for healing to take place.

	<p><b>Chant MMM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Begin seated comfortably</li><li>• Take a deep inhale into the lower abdomen</li><li>• As you exhale chant MMM while drawing belly in and down</li><li>• You may begin to feel a vibration at the crown of the head</li><li>• <u>Benefits</u>: Helps balance the digestive system</li></ul>
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## PRANAYAMA

This breathing practice helps to balance the two hemispheres of the brain.



	<p><b>Nadi Shodhana</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• With right hand close right nostril with thumb and left nostril with pinkie finger in the following pattern:</li><li>• Inhale through right nostril, exhale through left nostril, inhale through left nostril, exhale through right nostril</li><li>• Repeat for 10 rounds at a time, monitoring the effects.</li><li>• <u>Benefits</u>: Balances the sympathetic nervous system (fight or flight) and the parasympathetic nervous system (rest and digest), increases communication between the right and left hemispheres of the brain.</li></ul>
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## MUDRA

These mudras help to increase mental focus, clarity and concentration.




	<p><b>Jnana Mudra</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Touch the tips of thumb and index fingers together</li><li>• Extend middle, ring and knees</li><li>• <u>Benefits</u>: Helps with concentration and meditation, helps to calm circular thoughts</li></ul>
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	<p><b>Trishula Mudra</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curl little fingers inward to touch base of thumbs</li> <li>• Hold little fingers down with thumbs</li> <li>• Extend other fingers straight</li> <li>• Rest backs of hands on knees</li> <li>• <b>Benefits:</b> Improves mental clarity and concentration</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Dhyana Mudra</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Touch tips of thumbs and index fingers together.</li> <li>• Bring right and left hands together and place right middle, ring and pinkie fingers on top of left middle, ring and pinkie fingers.</li> <li>• <b>Benefits:</b> Encourages meditative state, integrates all facets of our being</li> </ul>

## ASANA


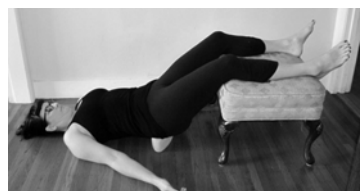
These balancing postures help to build mental focus and concentration.

	<p><b>Tree Pose</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stand with feet hips-width apart and block between feet. .</li> <li>• Step right foot onto block with heel resting on inner left ankle.</li> <li>• Draw belly in and release tail bone towards floor.</li> <li>• Inhale and draw arms overhead without gripping shoulders.</li> <li>• Hold as long as you can balance with comfort, release and change sides.</li> <li>• <b>Benefits:</b> Mental focus and balance, leg strength, stretches inner thighs</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Talasana</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stand with feet hips-width apart.</li> <li>• Inhale lift up onto balls of the feet as you raise arms forward and either place hands on hips or raise them overhead.</li> <li>• Exhale release weight back into heels as you release the arms to sides.</li> <li>• Repeat 3-5 times with the breath.</li> <li>• <b>Benefits:</b> Strengthens arches of feet, ankles and calves, improves balance</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Stork Pose</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stand with feet hips-width apart.</li> <li>• Pick up left knee up to hip height and allow shin to hang vertically. Hold for a moment and then release on the exhalation.</li> <li>• Release and repeat to other side.</li> <li>• You may also raise arms overhead and balance on one leg for several breaths.</li> <li>• <b>Benefits:</b> Builds focus and balance</li> </ul>

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## RESTORATIVE

This restorative will help to balance the two functions of the nervous system.

	<p><b>Supported Childs Pose</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kneel straddling a long bolster. Place a second bolster over first with end of bolster in front of your low abdomen. A third bolster can go under the far end of the second bolster or use a folded blanket or block to support under it. Extend front of body over second bolster and rest forehead on backs of hands or turn head to the side.</li><li>• <b>Benefits:</b> Creates a calm, grounded space to get away from the demands of daily life.</li></ul>
	<p><b>Instant Maui</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lie on back with legs in the seat of a chair. Lift pelvis off floor and place block or a folded blanket under pelvis. Place arms away from sides and palms up.</li><li>• Rest 15 minutes.</li><li>• <b>Benefits:</b> Induces relaxation response, reduces swelling of feet and legs, relaxes lower back</li></ul>

## MEDITATION

The meditation for digestion helps you to envision the inner wisdom that lies just underneath everyday thoughts and reactions.

Bring awareness to your eyebrow center and imagine sitting at the edge of a deep still lake. Spend time creating the landscape around your lake, is it large or small, is there a rocky bank or a sandy shore? See yourself in a small steady vessel that will venture onto the surface of your lake. You are floating in a boat on the pond of your mind. You are safe in your boat, bobbing in the water, observing the landscape you created; the billowy white clouds, the deep blue sky, the green of the land around the pond. Visualize the waves on the surface of the lake, these represent the thoughts and activity of your mind. Are they gentle ripples or choppy waves? Hear the sound they make; feel the movement the waves create for your vessel, rocking gently like a cradle or thrashing from side to side?

Bring your attention back to your breath. Imagine that as you inhale and exhale the ripples and waves begin to subside. The smooth inhale and exhale of your breath bring calm and stillness to the water. Continue conscious breathing until the surface of your pond is smooth, glassy still and transparent. Gaze into the water and observe your reflection in the surface of the calm clear water. See your hair, your face, the intelligence in your eyes, a soft smile on your lips reflecting your new found sense of stillness. Notice the expansiveness of the sky reflected in the water below. You are completely at peace here. Look into the depths and sense the limitless universe. It is below you, above you, all around you – within you. Allow the clarity of this knowledge to seep deeply into your mind, your body and your consciousness.

Continue to look deeper and deeper into the water, trying to see to the very bottom. You try very hard to see what is lying on the lakebed but the harder you try to see it, the more waves form on top of the water which churns up the sediment obscuring your view. As thoughts disturb your concentration, do not try to push them away, simply acknowledge them and let them float away so that your mind can create stillness and clarity within the water.

Continue to gently focus your attention on stilling the waters of your mind so that you can see a glimpse of lake's bottom. Allow the breath to become calm, slow and steady. As your breath slows and calms, the waves on the surface of the lake also slow and calm. Your mind becomes still and clear like the water of the lake and you will begin to see what is lying on the lakebed easily and without strain. What is lying on the bottom of your lake? What

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symbol or item has been revealed by your consciousness in this moment of stillness? Gently hold onto this image as a profound inner silence arises from this gentle focus.

Witness and absorb the contentment and gratitude you discover as you connect with your limitless inner wisdom. In reality there is only now and the truth that is found there...what is... and what is not. Sitting peacefully in your boat of tranquility, you drift safely to shore and disembark onto the bank.