

June 14
Yin & Release Practice Outline
and
Self-Myofascial Release Prop Guide

Yin & Release Practice Outline

June 14 Workshop

This sequence blends self-myofascial release (SMFR) and Yin yoga to support fascial hydration, nervous system regulation, and somatic awareness. Each section targets a specific area of the body to invite deep release, improved mobility, and integration.

Target Area: Soles of the Feet

5 minutes per side – Ball Rolling for Feet

Roll a single therapy ball between your foot and the floor, exploring the heel, arch, ball of the foot, and toes.

Why we do this: Stimulating the feet helps awaken the fascial network and enhances proprioception, supporting balance and grounding throughout the practice.

3 minutes – Toe Stretch

Kneel with the toes tucked under and sit back onto the heels. Use props for support as needed.

Variation: Bend forward and place your palms on the floor (fingers pointing toward the knees) to add an inner wrist stretch. This variation distributes weight more evenly, reduces pressure on the toes, and gives the mind a second area of focus.

Why we do this: Stretches the plantar fascia and toe extensors, which are often restricted by shoes and daily habits. Supports posture and releases tension in the feet and lower legs.

Yin & Release Practice Outline

Target Area: Neck

3 minutes – Suboccipital Rolling on a Block

Lie down and place one edge of a yoga block at the base of your skull, with the opposite edge on the mat. Gently nod “yes” and “no” to check your placement, then slowly roll your head from ear to ear. Soften with a towel if needed.

Why we do this: This technique targets the suboccipital muscles—commonly tight from screen use and stress—and sends calming signals to the nervous system.

3 minutes – Front Neck Stretch

Lie on your belly with a soft (semi-deflated Pilates) ball or block under your chin. Allow the front of your neck to stretch over the prop.

Why we do this: Helps release chronic tension in the front of the neck and throat from postural habits or emotional holding, creating space for openness and ease.

5 minutes per side – Graceful Bow Neck Stretch

Sit comfortably. Let one arm rest behind your back or extend it at a 45° angle to a block. Drop your ear toward the opposite shoulder. Slightly tilt your head forward or back to refine the stretch (moving sensation to the front or back of the neck).

Why we do this: Targets the sides and back of the neck, helping to release tension in the upper traps, jaw, and shoulders. The angle variation allows you to find what your body needs.

1 minute – Rebound / Rest

Sit or recline in a supported position. Close your eyes and notice any shifts.

Why we do this: A moment of stillness helps the nervous system absorb the work and allows fluids, energy and awareness to reorganize..

Yin & Release Practice Outline

Target Area: Upper Trapezius / Rhomboids / Spine

2 minutes per side – Upper Trap Compression

Lie on your back with feet on the floor. Place two single balls under the upper traps. Lift the hips into a supported bridge and explore arm movement (e.g., arms overhead and back down).

Why we do this: Releases tension in the upper shoulders and neck—areas often tight from stress and poor posture.

2 minutes per side – Inner Shoulder Compression

Still supine, place a single ball between the spine and the inner edge of the shoulder blade. Rest your head on a block or blanket. Cross your arms in a self-hug and gently release, repeating or exploring arm variations.

Why we do this: Targets the rhomboids and posterior shoulder. Compression (combined with breath) helps release holding patterns and improve shoulder mobility.

3 minutes – Thoracic and Lumbar Spine Rolling

Using a pair of therapy balls, roll slowly along either side of the spine from mid-back to lower back.

Why we do this: Hydrates spinal fascia and supports decompression, especially in areas that often feel stiff or overworked.

3 minutes – Caterpillar

Sit with extended or slightly bent legs. Round the spine forward and allow the head to hang heavy.. Rest arms and head on props.

Why we do this: Passively lengthens the spine and hamstrings while soothing the nervous system after rolling.

3 minutes per side – Rolling Panda / Thread the Needle Variation

From tabletop or Child's Pose, thread one arm under the body.

Variation: In Rolling Panda, extend the opposite leg and optionally hold the ankle or a strap. The top arm can extend forward or wrap behind the back.

Why we do this: Offers rotation and glide across the shoulder, upper back, and side neck. Enhances coordination between fascia and breath.

1 minute – Rebound / Rest

Yin & Release Practice Outline

Target Area: Chest / Inner Shoulder

3 minutes per side – Pecs Compression on a Block

Lie face down with a ball placed on a block under one pectoral. Rest into the pressure or move a bent arm from ribcage to overhead in a slow “rainbow.” Shift ball position gradually.

Variation: For a gentler version, sit and manually roll the ball using your hand.

Why we do this: Helps release tightness in the chest and shoulders, improves postural alignment, and supports deeper breathing.

3 minutes per side – Open Wing

Lie face down with one arm extended out to the side (palm down initial but you can reposition your hand palm up or down for the hold). Gently roll toward that arm to stretch the front of the chest.

Variation: This pose can also be done standing or kneeling at a wall.

Why we do this: Stretches the pectorals and shoulder fascia—ideal after compression work to re-lengthen the tissue.

1 minute – Rebound / Rest

Lie in stillness and notice the sensations across the front body.

Why we do this: Stillness helps the body register change, restore balance, and re-integrate.

Yin & Release Practice Outline

Target Area: Glutes and IT Band

3 minutes per side – Glute Release with Ball

Sit with legs extended, place a therapy ball under one glute. Rock gently side to side or add half-butterfly or windshield wiper movements with one leg.

Why we do this: Releases the gluteal fascia and piriformis—often tight from sitting, walking, or high-output movement.

3 minutes per side – Side-Lying Outer Thigh Roll

Lie on your side with a ball under the outer hip or thigh. Support yourself on your forearm or hand and gently shift your weight to roll.

Why we do this: Targets the IT band and outer hip fascia. Helps reduce gripping and restore ease in lateral movement.

5 minutes per side – Reclining Figure-4 into Spinal Twist

Lie on your back with knees bent. Cross one ankle over the opposite thigh and draw the legs in, using hands or a strap. Hold for 3 minutes. Then allow both legs to drop into a gentle twist, keeping the figure-4 shape or uncrossing legs and taking any version of the spinal twist. Hold for 2 minutes.

Why we do this: Combines deep glute release with spinal rotation, encouraging cross-body integration and whole-body relaxation.

Closing

5 minutes – Savasana

Lie in a supported, comfortable position. Let your breath and body settle completely.

Variation: Rest calves on a bolster supported by two blocks to elevate the legs—offering a restorative alternative to legs-up-the-wall.

Why we do this: Savasana supports full-body integration and nervous system recovery. It's where the subtle work of the practice settles into the system.

Self-Myofascial Release Prop Guide

SMFR Props Guide:

What You'll Need (and What You Might Already Have)

Self-myofascial release (SMFR) doesn't require fancy equipment. You can start with what you have at home—and explore over time to find what feels best for your body. Below are some of the most useful props we work with in class, along with options for improvising and recommendations based on what I personally use in my own practice.

Yoga blocks help support the body, elevate therapy balls, and create angles that enhance release.

- **Foam Blocks:** Come in a range of densities. Some are soft and forgiving; others are firm and supportive.
- **Cork Blocks:** Denser and more grounded than foam. Offer a firmer surface, which can be helpful for certain releases.
- **Wooden Blocks:** Very firm and not usually necessary for SMFR.

What I use: I prefer denser foam or cork blocks. My current favorite brand is Manduka (for both cork and recycled foam blocks). I also like Bean Products (Chicago-based) and 42 Birds for high-quality cork props.

Therapy Balls are the main tools for targeted myofascial release. You can buy specialty therapy balls—or get creative with household items.

- **RAD Roller balls** are what I use in class:
 - **Rounds (Single Balls):** Soft medical-grade silicone, available in different sizes and densities.
 - **Everywhere Multitool (Twin Balls):** Designed to cradle either side of the spine.
- **Cork Therapy Balls:** A popular and eco-friendly option, cork balls tend to be firmer than silicone and offer a more grounded feel. They're a great choice if you prefer solid feedback with less “give.” Brands like 42 Birds offer quality cork options in various sizes.
- **DIY Alternatives:**
 - Tennis balls are a great starting point.
 - Tie two together inside a sock to create twin balls.
 - Lacrosse balls are smaller and firmer.

Self-Myofascial Release Prop Guide (continued)

Tip: Explore before you invest. Your body will tell you what it responds to best. Also, if you live with a dog, store your DIY tools accordingly!

A soft, inflatable ball / Pilates Ball is incredibly versatile—useful for the neck, front of the body, and gentle pressure points.

- Size: I currently use a 9" diameter ball for versatility. Though I also like a slightly smaller diameter for self-myofascial release.
- Material: Look for a soft-density, latex-free ball.

What I use: I use the Franklin Method® Air Ball™ because of its quality and durability. But I've also used many other brands, and the more affordable versions often work just as well for casual home use.

Remember:

There's no one perfect prop—only what works for you. The best tools are the ones that invite curiosity, comfort, and effectiveness in your own body. You can build your collection slowly, or use what you have on hand to begin exploring today.

Thank You for Practicing

Thank you for joining Yin & Release, this weekend.

We're excited to offer three more workshop classes this summer at Chi-Town Shakti.

To explore more practices or stay connected, visit lakesideyin.com or feel free to reach out with any questions or reflections.

Warmly,
Kathryn