Use of Props in Prenatal Yoga Practice

Yoga props (blocks, straps, blankets, bolsters, etc) can be very helpful in improving alignment and providing support in regular yoga practice, as well as prenatal yoga practice. Below are some examples of using props that are safe for prenatal students.

Sitting

Blankets, blocks or bolsters can be used to lift the hips, taking pressure off the knees and low back. It allows the student to sit more comfortably with less flexion of the hips, while maintaining the natural S-curves of the spine.
Down Dog

A chair or blocks can be used under hands to reduce the stretch in the calves and hamstrings and create more space for a pregnant belly, so hips can remain lifted as the heels reach towards the floor. Just encourage students to look to the floor or slightly lift their head when pregnant to decrease any dizziness.

A block can also be used under the forehead to help lengthen through the neck.
A block can also be used between the hands in dolphin to help students maintain proper distance between their hands and forearms.
Other Standing Postures

Triangle
A block or chair can be used in order to maintain the alignment of the shoulders and hips, while providing support in the posture.
Pyramid
Blocks can be used for support and give more space to ensure that flexion is from the hips with the pelvic bowl tipping forward, and space to square the hips forward.

Extended Side Angle
A block can be used to prevent the chest and side body from collapsing into the posture by giving more space and allowing the front leg to have less of a deep bend in the knee.
**Warrior 3**
A block can be used to provide stability and support, making it easier to maintain the posture and square the hips towards the floor. Students can also place their back foot against a wall for additional support and stability.

![Warrior 3](image)

**Half Moon**
A block can be used in half moon to provide more stability and support, making it easier for the student to balance and open the chest and hips to the side.

![Half Moon](image)
Chair Pose
A block can be placed between the thighs in Chair pose to help maintain the alignment of the knees and to engage the muscles of the inner thighs and core.

Standing Hand to Foot
A strap can be used to provide an extension of your arm when you may find it difficult to reach your hand to your foot directly. Simply make a loop with your strap and place the loop around the foot of the leg you are lifting.
Standing Straddle Forward Fold
Blocks can be used under students’ hands to give more space and decrease the stretch in the hamstrings. This helps the student maintain a flat back and press back from the hips so the pelvic bowl tips forward.

Lunges
Blocks can be used with a low lunge posture to provide space and support, which helps the student lift through the chest rather than collapsing forward.
Seated Postures

Boat
Using the wall or strap for Boat pose can help improve stability and upper body posture in this position.

Cow’s Face
Using a strap to bridge the gap between your hands in Cow’s Face and provide leverage to stretch more deeply.
Seated Forward Bends

Students can sit on a block to lift the hips, create more space, and help tilt the pelvic bowl forward.

Students can use a strap to assist in flexing the feet and keeping knees straight.

Students can use a bolster between their legs and forehead to support them in this posture and allow them to relax into the posture without dropping the head too much if the pelvic bowl is not tipping forward enough.
Back Bends

During pregnancy, it is best to stay away from any deep back bends, but gentle back bends can be wonderful, and props can be useful to create more space for the belly.

Camel
Blocks can be used to provide students with the support they need, without having to reach back for their heels, which may create too deep of back bend for pregnant students.

Upward Facing Dog
Blocks can be used under the hands in upward facing dog to provide extra space to reduce stress on the low back and allow students to draw their shoulders down and back rather than collapsing into the posture.
Reclined Bound Angle
Sitting with the soles of your feet together, make a large loop with the strap and place the strap around your torso. Then bring the strap in front of your feet and tuck it in behind them. Cinch up the strap until it is holding you snug. Relax down onto your back. Using the strap this way helps to keep your feet in close and your thighs pressing down.

These are just a few examples of how props, as introduced by Iyengar yoga, can be used to support and enhance a yoga practice.

Create Your Own Sequence of Postures Using Props
List five postures to practice with props

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Now, try out your sequence.