

# Surrender To God:

Ten Yoga Props Used In Restorative and Yin Yoga Practice

- by Dr. Donna Jagielski



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## Surrender To God: Ten Yoga Props Used in Restorative and Yin Yoga Practice - by Dr. Donna Jagielski

Props are highly beneficial in all yoga classes, but they are imperative in both yin and restorative classes. Intended to provide comfort, props meet you where you are in the pose rather than “get you into” the pose as many people think. Using props is the ultimate in making the modifications one needs.

As you explore and include props in your practice, notice how each one serves a different purpose, even when combined. As you practice various poses using the props listed below, you are also invited to meditate on specific Scripture.

### Prop: Rectangle Bolster

#### Description and Typical Uses:

This rectangular bolster is found in yin and restorative classes. Many times the rectangular bolster is used in conjunction with other props such as blocks.

- In the configuration of a bridge using two upright blocks, and the bolster on top so the legs can drape over the top.
- In the configuration of a ramp, placing the bolster diagonally in front of one upright block, to be placed in front of the torso to achieve a comfortably seated forward fold.
- Using the same configuration of a ramp but now placed behind the back so that one can recline while seated in an upright pose such as butterfly.

#### Scripture Association:

*Joshua 4:23*

*For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we passed over.*

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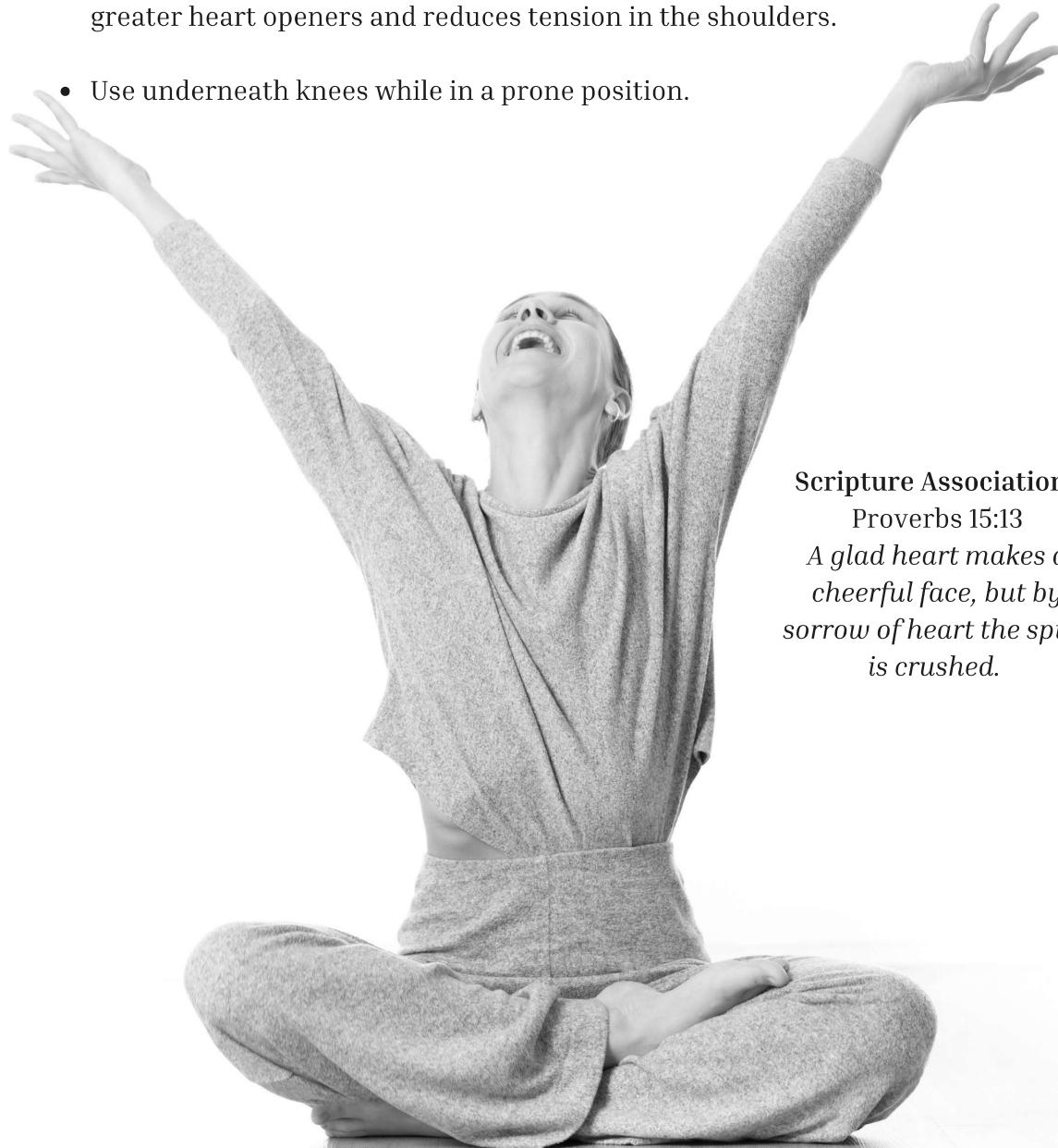




## Prop: Round/Cylinder Bolster

**Description and Typical Uses:** Very similar to the rectangular bolster, the round is an excellent addition to the bolster family because of the fully rounded features. The log shape is configured to match the curvature of behind the knees and the vertical length of the spine.

- Using this log bolster vertically behind your spine assists in creating greater heart openers and reduces tension in the shoulders.
- Use underneath knees while in a prone position.



### Scripture Association:

Proverbs 15:13  
*A glad heart makes a cheerful face, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is crushed.*

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## Prop: Blankets

**Description and Typical Uses:** This is typically used as a cushion under knees when kneeling to provide greater support. There are a great number of uses especially when used in conjunction with other props such as bolster. A blanket can be folded various ways and rolled to be similar to the round bolster, though it will not be as firm.

- Stacked blankets under the hips in a seated pose will lift the hips, allowing for greater comfort.
- A folded blanket under the knee while in kneeling poses such as camel or child's pose.

### Scripture Association:

Judges 4:18

*Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, "Come, my lord, come right in. Don't be afraid." So he entered her tent, and she covered him with a blanket.*

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## Prop: Blocks

### Scripture Association:

*Romans 14:13*

*Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way.*

### Description and Typical Uses:

Blocks have now come in materials other than foam. Cork blocks produce a different weight and texture. There are also shorter and longer lengths, often referred to as either "blocks" or "bricks". Again, blocks/bricks used in conjunction with other props such as blankets will soften the hardness.

- If the hip area is tight, blocks are used to support and lift the knees higher in reclining diamond pose. If the hardness of the blocks pose a challenge, lay a blanket over the blocks.

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## Prop: Sandbags

**Description and Typical Uses:**  
Sandbags tend to be an underutilized prop.  
Adding the weight of the sandbag, allows  
muscles to further relax.

- In restorative practice place the sandbag on flexed feet in legs up the wall pose.
- While in a prone position, place the sandbag on the quadriceps.
- In butterfly pose, place the sandbag on the feet to allow the feet to stretch closer to the floor.

### Scripture Association:

*Psalm 139:17-18*

*How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I am awake, and I am still with you.*

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# Prop: Wedge

## Description and Typical Uses:

Wedges provide excellent support for hands and feet in the effort to achieve full rooting and planting.

- Place underneath the heels in downdog to provide greater opportunity for the heels to be rooted and planted.
- Place underneath hands in downdog to ease stress placed on the wrists.

## Scripture Association:

*Jeremiah 32:24*

*"See how the siege ramps are built up to take the city. Because of the sword, famine and plague, the city will be given into the hands of the Babylonians who are attacking it. What you said has happened, as you now see."*

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# Prop: Wheel

## Description and Typical Uses:

One of the newest props that has risen in popularity recently, this is a prop for practitioners who wish to deepen backbends by stretching the spine safely through support.

- Specifically designed to assist with backbends and heart opening poses such as wheel.



## Scripture Association:

*Ezekiel 1:15-16*

*As I watched the four creatures, I saw something that looked like a wheel on the ground beside each of the four-faced creatures. This is what the wheels looked like: They were identical wheels, sparkling like diamonds in the sun. It looked like they were wheels within wheels, like a gyroscope.*

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# Prop: Eye Pillow



## Description and Typical Uses:

Depending on the type/fabric of the eye pillow, you may consider adding essential oils such as peppermint, eucalyptus or lavender so that you can breath in the fragrant oil as you rest. Eye pillows add greater darkness to our dristi, encouraging the ‘vision’ to move more internally rather than being distracted by the external world.

- Place over eyes during savasana.

## Scripture Association:

Matthew 6:22

*“The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light,*



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# Prop: Strap

## Description and Typical Uses:

The strap is used to support the body in many poses both upper and lower body. Also aids in increasing flexibility and decreasing tension.

- For the upper body, use the strap to ‘extend’ the reach of hands in Cow’s Face pose.
- For the lower body, place the strap around the ball of the foot when extending the leg to the side in a prone position during yin practice.

## Scripture Association:

*1 Samuel 25: 13*

*And David said to his men, “Every man strap on his sword!” And every man of them strapped on his sword. David also strapped on his sword. And about four hundred men went up after David, while two hundred remained with the baggage.*

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## Prop: Meditation Cushion

### Description and Typical Uses:

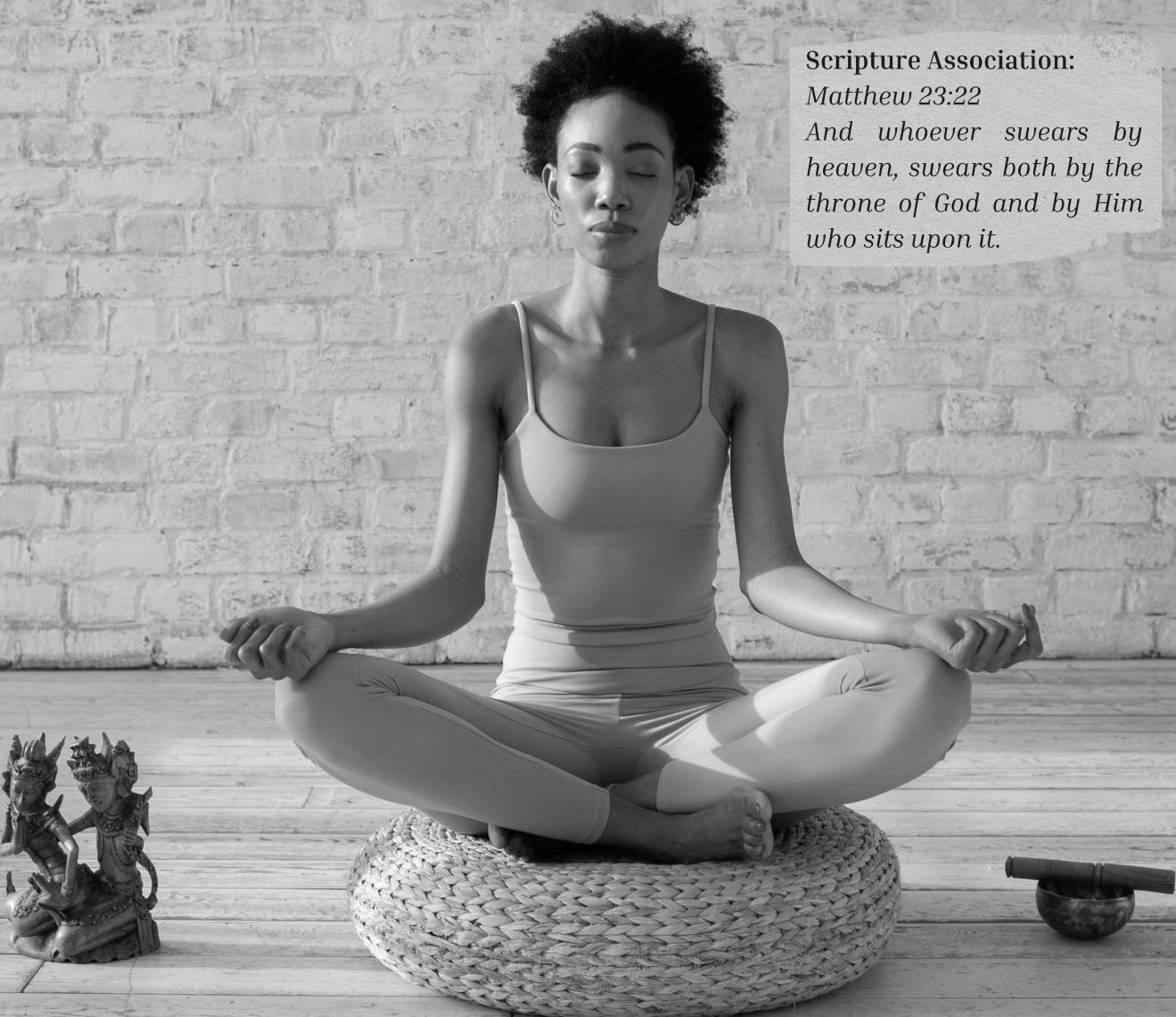
Even though blankets can be stacked to obtain seated height, using a meditation pillow will provide even greater lift. Think car vs. SUV. Also different from simply stacking blankets, a meditation cushion is shaped and sized just like a typical seat cushion, specifically designed for sitting.

- Sit in an easy cross-legged pose on the center of the meditation cushion before practice begins.

### Scripture Association:

*Matthew 23:22*

*And whoever swears by heaven, swears both by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it.*



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