

Clayton Yoga Teacher Training Yoga Anatomy Tips

Over 75% of all injuries occur coming out of a pose.
Mindfulness was not there!
And as a result attention to the pose is gone.

TADASANA

Pronounced (tah-DAHS-anna)

Tadasana is the starting position for standing poses.

Engage all the muscles and find inner strength placing a block between the thighs.

Practicing Tadasana as a pose in itself is important to begin strong.

Step to the front of your mat. Take a deep belly breath. Stand with your feet facing front about hip width apart. Ground the weight evenly though out your feet. Spread your toes. Lift the inner ankles and strengthen the inner arches of your ankle and draw the weight slightly forward.

Firm your thigh muscles and tuck in your tail bones and make you stomach tight, then imagine a line or string that will stretch from your thighs to your core, neck, and head. You want to feel that all of your spine is aligned with your body and your ribs are aligned with your pelvis. Turn the upper thighs slightly inward. Double check that your tailbone is tucked toward the floor.

Drop your shoulder blades into your upper back. Without pushing your lower front ribs forward, keep ribs soft, lift the top of your sternum straight toward the ceiling. You want your chest to be strong.

UTTANASANA

Stand in Tadasana with your feet hip-width apart. Look down at your feet and check that they are parallel and that the inner edge of each foot is pointing straight ahead, spread your toes. Press your feet into the floor. Breathe in deeply. As you exhale fold forward from your hip joints. The emphasis is on lengthening the spine as you move more fully into the position.

Go slowly. Clasp hold of your elbows and let your head and arms dangle, or clasp your hands around your legs and let your arms slide down the back of your legs. Press the heels firmly into the floor and lift the sitting bones toward the ceiling. Turn the top thighs slightly inward.

With each inhalation, lift and lengthen the spine just slightly; with each exhalation release a little more fully into the forward bend. Let your head hang.

Feel where your spine is, your core, and allow the spaces between vertebrae to expand. You'll feel your spine elongate as you breathe. Breathe smoothly in a relaxed strain-free manner. To come up, bring your hands back onto your hips, press your tailbone down and into the pelvis and come up on an inhalation with a long front torso.

The wider the feet go, the easier it is on the lower back.

Counter indications for this posture and all other inversion: glaucoma, high blood pressure, detached retina, and previous neck surgeries

Benefits:

Forward fold is a natural yin pose! It is also a anti-depressant, bringing blood flow to the brain. Stretches entire backside of body, especially legs and lower back. Elongates spine. Increases flexibility. Massages internal organs, tones liver, spleen, kidneys. May like to bring elbows in and

hands behind the head to relax the spine even further. Increases blood circulation to legs, torso, and brain.

ARDHA-UTTANASANA

Inhale, raise head slowly, and watch the front of the yoga mat. This is a head coming out of the turtle.

Roll shoulders backwards, exhale, let arms hang down, hands on ground or just above your feet. Also you may place hands on hips or allow hands to grasp elbows. Feel the strength in your core build. Keep your back straight and draw your belly inward.

Relax the neck, jaw and shoulders. Inhale lift from your shoulder blades and elevate your torso while allowing arms to continue hanging till your hands reach the tops of your feet, ankles, or lower shins.

(This will depend on your anatomy and comfortable range of motion.)

Roll shoulders backward as you elevate (Sexy Shoulders)

Modification: Make Lion face

COBRA

Lift slowly engaging the upper back muscles. Lift and roll the collar bones to smile. Elbows stay in and chin tucks down (hold a small orange) and level with the floor.

Avoid the quick sudden movement upwards

Placement of palms is key so bring the wrists back 2-4 inches until they are directly under the elbows and very close to the sides of the ribcage.

Feel as if there is a small orange between the chin and top of the chest. Legs are also working strongly, push back again through feet and toes.

Tailbone engaged and tucking under, bringing the pubic bone into the earth and softening the low back.

Lift slowly first with the top of the upper back. Soften the shoulders down away from the ears.

Lift and support the heart to unlock and open forward. Feel your courage!

Modification: Locust

ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA

(Downward-Facing Dog)

From Child's Pose keep your hands firmly rooted, tuck your toes under, extend your spine and lift the abdomen into Adho Mukha Svanasana.

You can also come into this pose from tadasana-exhale, bend at the waist and as your hands reach the ground step the feet back, one at a time.

A block between the inner thighs is useful.

This posture places the spine into traction and it is helpful to bring hands in closer (shoulder distance apart)

Your big toes should be in line with your hip bones, broaden your shoulder blades and get your shoulders away from the ears-release

the head down. Push forward gently through your palms as if you are driving your hands into the earth and lengthening the front of the mat. From here you can move the fingers toward the outside of your mat to better lengthen your inner arms and biceps.

Push your bottom up while pushing heels toward the ground and keep the stomach/core tight and strong. Your sits bones are reaching for the ceiling, but your hands and feet are making you stay on the earth. Press into the base of each big toe and spread energy evenly through the four corners of your foot, making sure to lift up the inner ankle.

Your neck will stay long as the shoulder and upper back muscles work to keep you stable and grounded, rock back and forth and make adjustments to find your right Adho Mukha Svanasana.

Your heels do not have to touch the ground, some of ours will not and that is okay! This is a great stretching pose, feel the stretch in the arches of the feet, through the hamstrings, along the dorsal and thoracic spine, into the shoulders, and right down into your palms.

Benefits: Strengthens the ankles and tones the legs, slows down heartbeat, reduces stiffness in shoulder blades, can help to prevent hot flashes during menopause.

This pose can restore energy when tired and can be held longer when comfortable, listen to your body. Do not practice during pregnancy, if you have high blood pressure, or frequent headaches. Use the modification instead.

Modifications: Puppy pose

Teaching adjustment: stand in front of student and push with both arms into area surrounding sacrum, if this is comfortable for student you can put more weight into the adjustment by rooting your feet and pressing more into their pose. To make sure the arms are straight you can stand lightly on their hands then roll the shoulder blades inward gently.

URDHVA MUKHA SVANASANA

Upward Dog.

How to do the pose:

First Lie face down on the floor. Stretch your legs back, with the tops of your feet on the floor.

Bend your elbows and spread your palms on the floor beside your waist so that your forearms make a 90 degree angle to the floor.

Then inhale and press your inner hands firmly into the floor and slightly back, open your heart and roll your shoulders back and down as you slowly lift keeping your joints well stacked. Remember to allow the arms to bend gently, allow never lock the elbows. Keep the thighs firm and slightly turned inward, the arms firm and turned out so the elbow creases face forward. Lastly, press the tailbone toward the pubis and lift the pubis toward the navel. Narrow the hip points.

Firm but don't harden the buttocks. Firm the shoulder blades against the back and puff the side ribs forward. Lift through the top of the sternum but avoid pushing the front ribs forward, which only hardens the lower back. Look straight ahead or tip the head back slightly, take care not to compress the back of the neck and harden the throat.

Modifications and Props:

Often it's difficult to keep the legs strongly suspended above the floor. Before you move into the pose, position a thick blanket roll below your top thighs. When you are in the pose, lightly rest your thighs on this roll as you press the tailbone closer to the roll.

Also you may like to use two 1/2 blocks under your hands to help the torso get added lift and the spine to lengthen providing adequate support to the strong legs and open heart.

To increase the strength and lightness of this pose, push from the backs of your knees along the calves and out through the heels. The tops of your feet will press more firmly against the floor; as they do, lift the top sternum up and forward.

Benefits:

Focuses on wrists, helps with sciatica, Improves posture, Strengthens the spine, arms, wrists, Stretches chest and lungs, shoulders, and abdomen, Firms the buttock, Stimulates abdominal organs, Helps relieve mild depression, fatigue, and sciatica, Therapeutic for asthma.

Contraindications and Cautions: Back injury, Carpal tunnel syndrome, Pregnancy.

CHATURANGA DANDASANA

Four-Chatur/ limb-anga/ danda-staff/asana-pose (seat)

Is a very engaging and strengthening pose.

It is mainly a pose used in transition into Urdhva-Mukha- Svanasana (upward-facing-dog) or Bhujangasana (cobra), Chaturanga Dandasana can be a challenging pose in and of itself.

To start off, ensure there strength in the core muscles (abdominal muscles), upper back muscles (rhomboids, Subscapularis, erector spinalis groups), shoulder and fore/arm muscles (SITS group, teres major, deltoids, biceps, forearm and hand muscles). These are the main muscles that we use to engage in Chaturanga Dandasana.

Starting from plank pose, engage the shoulder muscles and stack your joint all the way down to your wrist. Palms are firm and fingers spread wide and supporting.

Back is straight, lower back and glut muscles are relaxed, toes supporting as weight is distributed to your toes.

Begin to flex the elbow as your lean about 2-3 inches forward rolling from your toes. As you come forward, keep in focused intention with your head, but lead the pose with your chest. Lower till your arm is parallel with your torso, and your elbows are at or near a 90 degree angle, core and shoulder muscles are in full engage.

The 2nd variation is the same as above except in this version before lowering down, you slowly bring your knees to the mat. Here the feet are not as engaged. As you lower, still engage your core muscles and upper back; keeping the lower back muscles relaxed and not too flexed. This is a great modification if the core, shoulder, and/or arm muscles are weak or damaged and need to be strengthened. The most challenging often for women and easiest version for men is to emphasize the upper shoulders.

Chaturanga Dandasana is a great transitioning pose, but more that that is a great pose to strengthen the core and shoulder muscles, as well as, an excellent asana that offers variations that can build key muscle groups all on there own. Never to forget to BREATH!!!

UTKATASANA

OOT-kah-TAHS-ANNA Awkward pose

Start with Tadasana or standing pose. Stand up straight with arms and hands by your side.

Version 1

First inhale , Then as you begin to exhale bend your knees so it looks like your sitting but with out a chair. Drop your arms like you wish to touch the floor and feel the shoulders relax down. Next inhale as you reach your arms up over your head, and beside your ears. Hold yourself here for about 5-6 breaths . Take a nice big inhale as you straighten your legs and let your arms come back down along your sides returning to standing pose.

Version 2

From standing pose push your hips back and forth a few times just to get the feel of how they move. Then with your arms down by your side, roll your shoulders back so you can feel those big flat bones of your upper back pressing down your back.

Now as you begin to inhale raise your arms over your head along side of your ears. Be sure to keep your shoulders down your back. You may now close your hands together palms touching and look up at your thumbs or simply keep your arms shoulder distance apart. Hold this pose for a few breathe then on an exhale stand up straight with your arms at your sides.

Modification

If your knees are tight or week don't bend them quite so deep. If your arms are week try the pose with your hands on your hips.

PADA GUSTASANA

The word 'Pada' would mean foot and the word ' Angustha' would mean the big toe. This pose is when you stand and hold the big toes.

This is a beautiful variation on the forward bend.

Start in uttanasana inhale and on the exhale bend a little deeper into the pose. Here extend the elbows out to the sides and breath.

Have the feet a foot apart, a comfortable position for you.

Exhale and bend forward and hold the big toes between the thumb and the first two fingers, for the palms to face each other.

Palms up and slide then under your feet bending deeper and extending your elbows out more and more with each inhale.

Tuck your tailbone under and elongate the spine.

This pose will strengthen the neck and back muscles while stretching the backs of the legs and hamstrings.

Reaching through the crown of the head.

You can get a really good stretch in the spine.

For a modification use a block under your hands for support either horizontal or vertical

Stand in Uttanasana knees slightly bent and elbows out.

Joanna's Modification: Grab two big toes and extend leg out from center, hold in the air, balance on standing leg and breath.

Benefits

This relaxes the brain and body

The stretching and pulling massages the abdominal organs.

PADA HASTASANA

Maintain your balance by keeping your eyes open and focused on the ground behind your feet bring your weight slightly forward while grounding your heels. Lift the toes and slide your hands under your feet

As one of the forward bending poses the focus should be to bend at the hip while keeping your upper torso as close as possible to your thighs.

The risks in this pose are injury to the hamstrings and lower back. Remind students to pay attention to their bodies and use modifications if they start to feel a strain in these areas.

Also, students with blood pressure issues may become dizzy from having their head lower than their heart. Remind them to breathe regularly while coming out of this pose slowly.

Remember to plant your feet firmly, distribute your weight to all four corners of each foot, breathe into your chest rather than your stomach and exhale as you bend forward at the hip stretching your elbows away from each other and shrugging your shoulder blades down your back.

Ideally your eyes will be looking at or below your knees and the backs of your fingers will lay on the ground in front of you.

It is OK if you bend your knees to achieve this position, internally rotate the femurs (shins), rotate the pubic bone back and up and stretch your sternum toward the ground.

Modifications

Rest your hands on blocks on the ground in front of you or sit in a chair in order to position yourself in a forward bend with the backs of your fingers on the ground in front of you.

You will want to hold this pose for three to five breaths so the edge is to pose where the student can still inhale and exhale without straining.

Benefits

Feel the synovial fluid flowing in your spine.

EXTENDED TRIANGLE

Utthita Trikonasana oo---TEE---Tah
trik---cone---AHS---anna

Start in Tadasana

inhale. Exhale

Spread your feet wide apart.

Some say one leg width apart,

some say ankles under your wrist.

Depending on how wide your legs are apart

will determine how hard those front leg muscles have to work.

However it may actually be easier

to keep the spine from bending if the legs are further apart.

In some cases you may have less hip rotation toward the floor

Basically listen to your own anatomy.

Inhale and turn your right foot and leg to the side, heel

lined with the arch of your left foot.

Engage your leg muscles, draw them up from the floor to your pelvis.

Bend the front right knee slowly, open the hip and lengthen from the side waist. Lift all 10 toes off the floor and draw muscular energy into the entire legs back and front.

Work the sitting bones like a figure 8.

Exhale and allow your pelvis to extend sideways over right leg.

Inhale Exhale and continue to extend your spine over your right leg. Inhale Exhale and reach your right arm to your leg where ever is comfortable just below your knee, the floor or to block place on the floor

below your shoulder.

Then look forward toward your left thumb.

Find your place in this pose where you can still breath and take five breaths.

Modification

Bring the pose against a wall with a chair. Take your front arm to the top of the chair and lift your opposite arm up the wall. Try to keep your shoulders planted strongly against the wall.

PARIVRTTA TRIKONASANA

Exhale, step your right foot back 3-3.5 feet, turn to the right and square your hips to face the back of the mat. Root down through your legs, tuck the tailbone under. If possible, the front and back heel are in line.

If this comprises your balance, take the right foot to the side a few inches, keeping the hips square.

Inhale and take the arms wide to the side, in a T shape. Relax the shoulders. Bend the front knee slightly and lifting out of the left side body, take the left arm forward and as you lengthen and move the chest and naval toward the right leg, pick up the back left foot.

Draw the outer right hip back and bring the left hip forward.

Place the left fingers on the floor outside the right foot, or, to lighten, place the hand on the shin or on a block.

In the twists, you want to make sure the sides of your waist are lengthening. Keep both side body long and even.

Create a stance that is supportive and fun!

Beginners should keep the right hand placed on the lower back. When ready, lift the right arm up to the midheavens.

If your neck is ok, turn your head and look at the right hand. If this causes strain in the neck, keep looking forwards, keeping the spine and neck in one long line. Keep breathing, even through your breath is naturally constricted in this twist.

Keep the sacrum flat and keep rooting the back foot towards the Earth.

Breathe for between 5 and 10 breaths, focusing on the exhale.

Come out of Parivrtta Trikonasana on an inhale, untwisting the same way you came into the pose.

Repeat on the other side.

PARSVAKONASANA

Step the right foot back 4 feet and turn the right toes out 90 degrees.

Place the right elbow on the right thigh.

Stretch the left arm alongside the left ear.

The right knee moves for the right little toes and the right hip deepens, also the left arm elongates next to the left armpit, palm facing down.

The right hand may reach for the outer front right ankle. Or be placed inside the front foot, or elbow to right thigh for greater support. Distribute the work evenly through the body and shift the weight to the back leg for greater support.

Modification

Use of block on either side of the front foot

Keep hands on both hips

Press energetically into the front big toe and the back little toe

PAVRITTA PARSVAKONASANA

Bring the palms to the heart center and turn to the right placing the left elbow on the right thigh.

Exhale. Open the right foot to the right.

Lift the back heel off the floor and give the hips room to breath. You want to make sure the hips are squarely in alignment in order to allow the spine to safely lengthen and be supported.

Place the left elbow on the outside of the right knee, or for something easier, left hand on the floor inside of front foot.

To create more rotation in the torso, you want to apply pressure between the arm and the knee. Elongate the spine.

Gaze at the fingers. STAY HERE FOR 5 LONG DEEP BREATHS.

INHALE.

Bring the torso all the way up. Close the right foot, open the left foot. EXHALE. Repeat on the left side.

INHALE. All the way up. Feet parallel.

EXHALE. Walk or jump to the front of the mat.

Modification

You may enjoy using a block or if you have shorter arms.

Place chair on the side you are rotating towards.

Come into the pose; resting your forearm on to the chair. Opposite hand to sacrum.

Bend at the back leg, placing the knee on the floor.

Benefit

This posture provides a great twist at the torso; giving the torso and the intestines a nice “ringing”. Move from the belly to top and try to get longer in all twists. Breathing is constricted. Be patient here. This pose is also a great strengthening pose for the quadriceps and a good heart opener for any practice.

PRASARITA PADOTTANASANA A, B, C,D

Balance on the four corners of your left foot.

Bend the knee to keep the spine straight.

A

Step your right foot back creating a wide stance lengthwise on your mat. Position your feet parallel to the edges of the mat.

Place our hands on your hips and fold forward at the hips.

Place your palms down onto the mat and position your wrists under your elbows.

Lengthen the spine forward.

Pull the shoulder blades down and back against the ribs.

B

Step your right foot back creating a wide stance lengthwise on your mat. Position your feet parallel to the edges of the mat.

Place your hands on the hips and fold forward at the hips.

Keep your hands on your hips.

Draw the elbows toward each other. Expand your chest.

C

Step your right foot back creating a wide stance lengthwise on your mat. Position your feet parallel to the edges of the mat.

Interlace your fingers behind your back at the lumbar spine.

Pull the shoulder blades together and down against the back ribs.

Fold forward at the hips.

Gently stretch your arms up and over your head as you fold forward.

D

Step your right foot back creating a wide stance lengthwise on your mat. Position your feet parallel to the edges of the mat.

Place your hands on your hips and fold forward at the hips.

Move your fingers to your toes and pull up on the big toes.

Find grounding in the four corners of the feet.

Bring the shoulder blades down the back.

Emphasize:

-Position your hips directly over your heels.

-Keep your legs straight.

-Internally rotate quadriceps.

-In A, B, and D keep your hands on your hips during forward fold to encourage the anterior rotation of the pelvis.

-Draw the pubic bone back and up.

-Stretch the belly toward the mat in folding forward.

-Stretch the sternum toward the mat in folding forward.

-Bring the weight forward onto the balls of the feet.

-Ground the fronts of the heels onto your mat.

-Relax your neck letting your head hang like a ripe piece of fruit.

MODIFICATIONS:

Bend your knees if pain is felt in the hamstrings or the lower back.

Use blocks under your hands

Benefits

Can be used as a starting stance for other standing asanas

Is a good preparation for the foundation of Bakasana and Tittibhasana stretches the pectorals and the anterior deltoids

C can be used to open the shoulders for shoulder extension in Setu Bandha Sarvangasana prepares shoulders for safe flexion in backbends

PARSVOTTANASANA

Stand in Tadasana.

Tailbone done. Exhale, step your right foot back 3-3.5 feet and square your hips. Root down through your legs, tuck the tailbone under.

Inhale, lengthen through the crown of your head and fold your torso forward. Stop when the torso is parallel to the floor.

Keep your hands on your hips and square your hips to face back of the mat. Place your fingertips on two tall blocks alongside the right front foot. Press the thighs back and lengthen the torso forward, lifting through the top of the sternum.

Be sure to soften the front-leg hip toward the earth and away from the same-side shoulder while you continue squeezing the outer thighs. Hold your torso and head parallel to the floor for a few breaths.

Press into the front big toe and the back little toe.

Then, if you have the flexibility, bring the front torso closer to the top of the thigh, but don't round forward from the waist to do this. Hold your maximum position for 15 to 30 seconds, then come up with an inhalation by pressing actively through the back heel and dragging the coccyx first down and then into the pelvis.

UTTITHA HASTA PANDANGUSTHASANA

Balance on the four corners of your left foot and lift gently your right knee. Reach for the right big toe and extend the right leg to your degree.

Draw your head to knee.

Keep the right knee bent (if necessary) but the back straight.

Keeping your balance, take the right leg out to the right.

Bring your leg in front again, bring forehead to the knee and let go of the foot and hold the hips with both hands.

Stay here for five remaining breaths.

ARDHA BADDHA PADMOTTANASANA

Start in Tadasana.

Take your right arm and put it across the small of your back. You can keep your left arm above your head.

At the same time bring the middle of your right shin across the top of your left knee.

Then grab your big right toe with your right hand. Balance yourself and slowly exhale.

Slowly bend forward from the hips and lower your head as close to the floor as possible.

Breathe in and out as necessary.

Place your left palm on the ground. Hold this position for 30 seconds. Release your big toe from your hand.

Place both feet on the ground and both palms on the floor.

Exhale and slowly return to Tadasana and then do the same pose with your opposite limbs.

Modification: Vrkasasana

VIRABHADRASANA

(Warrior 1)

Inhale

Step your left foot back on your mat, slightly angle the foot with toes to protect the knees. In yoga, you will always want to keep the toes in line with the knee.

Bend your right knee to a 90 degree angle.

Lift your arms out and up overhead

Keep your left heel in line with your right big toe.

Angle your left foot to follow the direction of your left knee keeping them in line with each other.

Bring the right knee toward the right little toe.

Keep your right knee stacked on top of your right ankle, do not extend the knee past the ankle.

Keeping the outer edge of your back foot firmly rooted down, try to maintain a feeling of pelvic neutrality while spiraling the inner thigh of your back leg strongly back.

Align heels of both feet or align the front foot heel to the back foot arch. Lift the front of your hips away from your front leg while lightly drawing your lower belly and sacrum toward each other and tuck your tailbone under.

Turn the hips toward the front left corner of the mat.

Externally rotate your right quadricep.

Internally rotate your left leg up to the top of the thigh then externally rotate the quadricep and lift it up.

Draw your belly in, your belly button "touching" the spine of exhalation. Lift your fingers high into the air feeling a lengthening on both sides of the rib cage.

Lift your rib cage up and away from your hips.

Soften and roll the shoulders down and away from the ears and the blades back and down onto the upper back.

Extend the sternum forward to draw length in the spine and create more space in the neck.

Draw your chin slightly forward and down.

Lift the crown of the head to the sky.

Emphasize:

A steady rounding of the feet grounding all four corners of each foot into Mother Earth, balancing weight equally between the front, back, inside and outside of each foot

A steady energetic lifting through the spine, through the heart center, and out through the fingertips

A steady, fluid, and even inhaling and exhaling of the breath your eyes are soft
your heart is open

Modifications:

If there is pain in the knee or the lower back use less of a bend

If the student can keep the arms straight above the head encourage them to draw their palms together overhead

If it is OK with their neck, encourage them to lift their head up and back and bring their gaze up at the thumbs

Turn palms upward to externally rotate the arms at the shoulder joints then reach arms out and up overhead keeping the shoulder blades back and down.

Bring the hands to the hips for more stability and support

Take a lower lunge and bring the back knee onto the mat

Squarely face the hips to the front of the mat

VIRA II (Warrior II)

You can start this pose from Tadasana or Vira One.

From Tadasana spread your feet wide apart, Prasarita stance. Inhale and extend your arms wide to the side.

turn your left foot slightly to about 30 to 45 degrees.

Turn your right leg out about a 90 degree angle.

Left heel should be in line with the right foot arch.

engage your leg muscles and draw them up from the floor to your pelvis.

Exhale, keeping your legs engaged, bend your right knee to 90 degrees. Keep torso vertical, right thigh parallel to the floor and right knee directly over the ankle.

Activate left leg fully allowing left heel to anchor to the floor.

Relax shoulders away from ears.

Hug upper arms to shoulder joints and lengthen arms outward.

Hold pose for five breaths.

Inhale as you come out of pose.

You may want to pivot your feet at this point. You may also repeat pose on other side.

Take your arms shoulder height and energetically push into the back arm and back leg.

Lift and tone the abdomen in and up and find lightness in the torso. Allow the ribcage to soften into the back body and pull back thigh in and up.

Modification:

Legs in shorter stance.

Place hand on back of hip or sacrum.

Back knee drops to the floor and front hand inside front foot and opposite arm above the head.

PASCHIMOTTANASANA

(Wide Stance forward bend)

Benefits: This pose helps counteract the stress gravity puts on your spine, favoring exhalation and venous return from lower body. This is also known to be the safest most accessible inversion in all of yoga practice.

Pose A

First, spread feet apart check posture (tailbone tucked, shoulders down and back, ribs strong) Breath into your belly and bend from the hips bringing your hands to the ground (in line with feet if possible), keep back straight, bend elbows. Hold for a few breaths or as long as feels personally safe

Pose B

Inhale and come up with straight back

Exhale and Place hands on hips and bring torso back down keeping hands in place

Hold for a few breaths and come up with an inhale

Pose C

While standing, clasp hands behind back, exhale and bring torso down folding from hips, keeping hands clasped

Pull hands away from body as far as comfortable and hold for a few breaths

Inhale and carefully come up

This is a seated forward bend, sometimes called a west bend.

This stems from the idea that morning practice is done facing east to greet the rising sun.

The front of the body is considered east therefore the back is west.

This pose stretches the spine, the hamstrings and the calves, stimulates the kidneys, liver and colon as well as improves function of the lymphatic, digestive and reproductive systems.

It relieves menopausal, menstrual discomfort, headache and sinusitis, stress, anxiety and mild depression.

It soothes the nervous system, reduces fatigue, insomnia and high blood pressure.

From Dandasana with legs extended knees slightly bent, push your torso up with your hands and lengthen your spine, drop into the hips, draw your low back in and push into your heels evenly.

Work the ten toes open and feel the solar plexus lift up and open. Bend the knees and tilt your pelvis forward.

Modification

Sit up on a blanket or two and help the pelvis to rotate forward Use a strap if you cannot reach for toes comfortably

Keep the knees bent entire time

Work the soles of the feet and separate through the toes

Open the entire back leg of the body

It is important to remember lead with your heart and not with your head in order not to bend the spine.

Let gravity do the work of stretching the muscles.

Moving the elbows out and away from each other will help draw the shoulder blades down the back and help keep the spine straight.

See if you can grasp your big toes.

If you want a deeper stretch reach for the soles of your feet, or try crossing your arms.

If you are having difficulty reaching your toes, try using a strap looped around the soles of your feet.

Students with low back pain, injury or asthma should use a gentle variation for the pose or avoid it all together.

Pregnant students should use a gentle variation with their legs wider apart.

PURVOTTANASANA

From Dandasana, place with your hands about one foot behind your hips with your fingers pointing forward towards the hips.

Bend your knees slightly and place your feet flat on the floor, big toes turned inward.

Pressing your inner feet and hands down against the floor, lift your hips as high as possible,

Without losing the height of your hips, straighten your legs one at a time. Lift your hips still higher without hardening your buttocks.

Bend knees and draw the feet closer to the hips and lift the torso and thighs up to a position approximately parallel to the floor, shins and arms parallel to each other (reverse Table Top)

Press your shoulder blades against your back torso to support the lift of your chest.

Slowly drop your head back careful not to compress the back of your neck

After a comfortable hold, exhale and sit back down in Dandasana.

Modification:

Reverse Table Top

Change direction with hand placement

Keep your head lifted

Stack your wrists and elbows under your shoulders

Try to press the balls of the feet firmly down

Internally rotate the thighs

Press the tailbone toward the heels

Expand across the chest by pressing the tips of the shoulder blades up into the chest

allow the head to drop back carefully to protect the neck

ARDHA BADDHA PADMA PASCHIMOTTANASANA

Translates to 'Half-bound-Lotus-with-intense-stretch-of-back-of-body'

This pose is almost exactly like Ardha Baddha Padmottanasana except that the posture is seated.

Start in Dandasana

Inhale, lengthen through the spine and crown of the head.

Create a bind with your right leg over your left and hold

that foot with the alternating hand, stretching it over the length of the spine.

Exhale and fold forward keeping your spine straight.

In this pose, the core muscles must work harder to create

extension of the spine without the aid of gravity (as in the standing version of the pose) to draw one deeper into the pose.

The pose also puts a gentle pressure to the abdomen, massaging the vital organs with the breath/stretch combination

The binding of the arm opens the chest and shoulder, encouraging a feeling of extension and spaciousness

in this forward bend rather than rounding or curling inward.

Repeat on the opposite side.

TRIANG MUKHA EKA PADA PASCHIMOTTANASANA

Also Known As: Three-Limbed Forward Bend

In Three Limbed Forward Bend, you will start from Dandasana.

Exhale and fold the left leg back and place heel outside of your left hip. Straighten the right leg out in front of you.

There should not be any discomfort in either of your legs.

If there is you can sit on a folded blanket or under the knee joint.
You can also use a strap to help reach the foot, if you cannot.
Inhale and stretch hand up, lengthening the spine.
Exhale, lean forward from hips and place hand as far as you are able to without curving the spine.
Be mindful not to hunch your shoulders. You want to hold the pose for 5 breaths.

JANU SIRSANANA

Sit on the floor with your sitting bones rooted on a folded blanket and your legs straight in front of you.
Inhale, bend your right knee, and draw the heel back toward your perineum. Rest your right foot sole lightly against your inner left thigh, and lay the outer right leg on the floor, with the shin at a right angle to the left leg (if your right knee doesn't rest comfortably on the floor, support it with a folded blanket).
Press your right hand against the inner right groin, where the thigh joins the pelvis, and your left hand on the floor beside the hip.
Exhale and turn the torso slightly to the left, lifting the torso as you push down on and ground the inner right thigh. Line up your navel with the middle of the left thigh. You can just stay here, using a strap to help you lengthen the spine evenly, grounding through the sitting bones.
When you are ready, you can reach out with your right hand to take the inner left foot, thumb on the sole. Inhale and lift the front torso, pressing the top of the left thigh into the floor and extending actively through the left heel.

Use the pressure of the left hand on the floor to increase the twist to the left. Then reach your left hand to the outside of the foot. With the arms fully extended, lengthen the front torso from the pubis to the top of the sternum. Exhale and extend forward from the groins, not the hips. Be sure not to pull yourself forcefully into the forward bend, hunching the back and shortening the front torso. As you descend, bend your elbows out to the sides and lift them away from the floor. Lengthen forward into a comfortable stretch. The lower belly should touch the thighs first, the head last. Stay in the pose anywhere from 1 to 3 minutes. Come up with an inhalation and repeat the instructions with the legs reversed for the same length of time.

NAVASANA

(nava=boat, asana=pose)

Navasana is a great pose for strengthening the core muscles (rectus abdominus, iliopsoas, transverse abdominus, internal obliques), as well as, developing strength in the antagonist lumbar/back muscles (external obliques, erector spinae, quadratus lumborum, serratus anterior and posterior).

Roll onto the front of your sitting bones.

Lift your legs directly in front of your chest. Extend your arms straight out in front.

Keep a strong V in your back rather than a U.

Benefits are:

Strengthens the abdomen, hip flexors, and spine

Stimulates the kidneys, thyroid and prostate glands, and intestines

Helps relieve stress and conditions the body

Improves digestion

Contraindications & Cautions:

Asthma

Heart Problems

Insomnia

Low blood pressure

Menstruation

Pregnancy

Neck injury: Sit with your back near a wall to perform this pose. As you tilt your torso back, rest the back of your head on the wall.

Modification:

Keep feet on the mat.

Use a blanket as needed. Bend the knees also if needed.

UBHAYA PADANGUSTHASANA

From reclining, bring the legs over the head and bind the hands to feet.

Keep the knees bent and push strongly with the back of the head and roll up along the length of the spine to sitting.

Modification:

Keep the knees bent

URDVA MUKHA PASCHIMOTTANASANA

While reaching for the sky, lengthen the sides of the waist, and look up with the chest broad and spine lengthened.

Modification:

Bring the knees toward the forehead

URDHVA DANURASANA

Take the feet to the floor under the knees hip distance apart.

Reach for the heel cords to find your correct length as well.

Bring the hands along either side of the ears with the palms toward the shoulders.

Press into the hands and come onto the crown of the head.

Draw the elbows together and triceps back in toward the armpits. Feel the shoulder blades on the back and press into the palms and lift the chest up off the floor.

Modification:

Come up to the crown of the head, bring the elbows in alongside the eyes, and remain here, practicing external rotation of the shoulders upside down!

SETU BHANDASANA

Take the feet to the floor under the knees hip distance apart.

Reach for the heels.

This is the distance for your individual bridge.

Press gently into the floor with the elbows and lift the hips up off the floor. Bring the shoulder blades under the upper back.

Feel the skin soft around the neck like a “sharpe puppy”.

Bring a block between the inner thighs.

Open the top of the chest like a dome.

Lift the pelvis up, interlace the fingers and relax the the butt muscles.

Modification:

Place a block under the sacrum and interlace the fingers and roll the shoulders open

SALAMBA SARVANGASANA

From the floor, bring the elbows in and take the legs up to 90 degrees. Again, keep the shoulder open and upper back externally rotated. Skin soft around the upper back and neck like a “sharpe puppy”. Press into the triceps and lift the hips with a gentle rock back as you press off the mat.

Lift the legs above the torso.

Take your hands to your low back bringing your hand to the skin of the back also creates more traction.

Make sure to keep the elbows in very important and legs together.

Walk the hands slowly up the back body and engage the front abdomen strong and lifted. If your cervical spine bothers you in anyway, bring your legs to a 75 degree angle.

Modification: Candle

UTTANA PADASANA

Press into the elbows and shift the weight into the forearms

Take your head back and feel the crown of the head on the floor.

The full posture is to lift the legs to 45 degrees and straighten the arms toward the legs.

SIRSASANA

Use a wall for support if you like bring yourself into ‘Dolphin prep’.

Take the elbows to the mat shoulder distance apart and interlace the fingers.

Walk your feet toward your elbows, don’t round the upper back. Keep the back straight and lightly hop into a ‘bunny hop’.

Headstand requires a strong abdomen and Uddiyana Bandha.

Do not attempt to lift the feet off the floor until your Dolphin feels secure. Use a wall as needed.

Modification:

Practice Headstand in stages.

When your bunny hop feels secure, then you may extend your legs directly upward.

Condition your body in these inversions beginning with one minute and with regular practice over several months hold as long as 8-10 minutes.

SAVASANA

Take rest.

Manually adjust the shoulder blades under the upper back body.

The mind is alert and awake.

Stay present to the breath.

Enjoy the way that you feel and receive the peace that comes from this present moments.

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