

# The Asanas

Independent Research



# Mountain Pose / Tadasana

*Tada* =Mountain and *asana* =seat

## Getting into the Pose

- Stand with your feet hip-width apart and the pinky edges of your feet parallel.
- Anchor the four corners of your feet (big and pinky toe mounds, and inner and outer edges of heel) into the earth.
- Draw your shoulder blades slightly together on the back and rotate your palms to face forward.

## Points of Alignment to Transform Your Practice

- Inwardly rotate your legs so that your inner thighs spiral back.
- Balance inward rotation with outward rotation by allowing your sacrum to drop down and hugging your navel up.
- Energize the lower half of your body into the ground, and allow that energy to rebound up off the floor to lift your upper body.
- Float a buoyant rib cage up off of your pelvis, lengthening the front, back, and sides of your body equally.
- Activate the arms and point your fingertips to the earth gently and purposefully.
- Release your shoulder blades down your back and float the back of the head up so that your ears draw back to stack over your shoulders.

# Forward Fold / Uttanasana

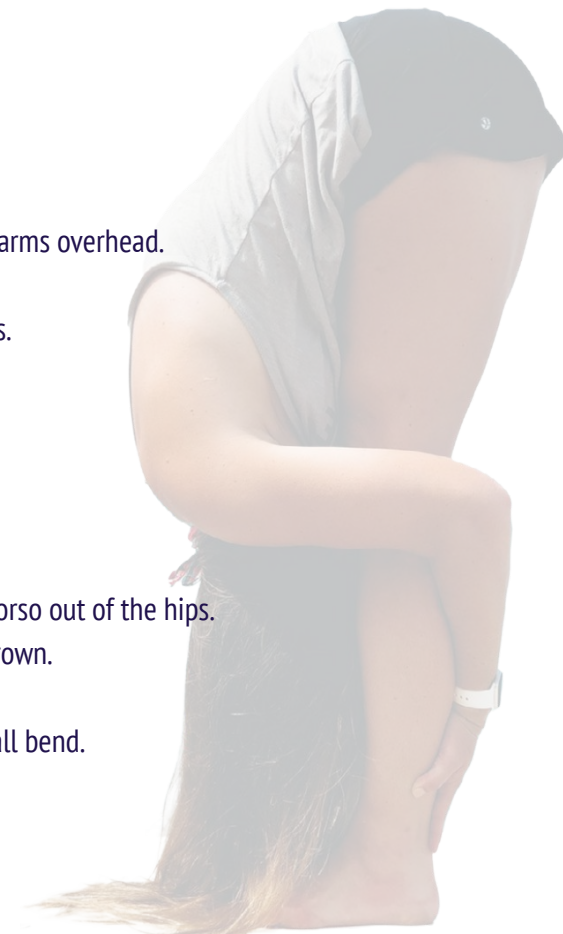
*Uttana = Intense Stretching; Asana = Pose*

## Getting into the pose

- From Mountain Pose with feet hip-width apart and parallel, take a breath to reach the arms overhead.
- On an exhale, separate your arms and swan dive into a forward bend.
- Touch the floor, let your arms hang, or take a bind such as grabbing for opposite elbows.

## Points of Alignment to Transform Your Practice

- Tip your pelvis forward to lift the Sitz bones and deepen the fold.
- Spread your toes and root all four corners of your feet into the earth.
- Center your weight over the arches of your feet
- Allow the weight of your arms and head to gently traction the low back and draw the torso out of the hips.
- Keep your shoulder blades on your back as you lengthen your spine from tailbone to crown.
- Draw the kneecaps up to activate the legs.
- Listen to your body: If straight legs feels like too much too soon, give your knees a small bend.



# Half-Lift / Ardha Uttanasana

*Ardha= Half; Uttana = Intense Stretching; Asana = Pose*

## **Getting Into the Pose:**

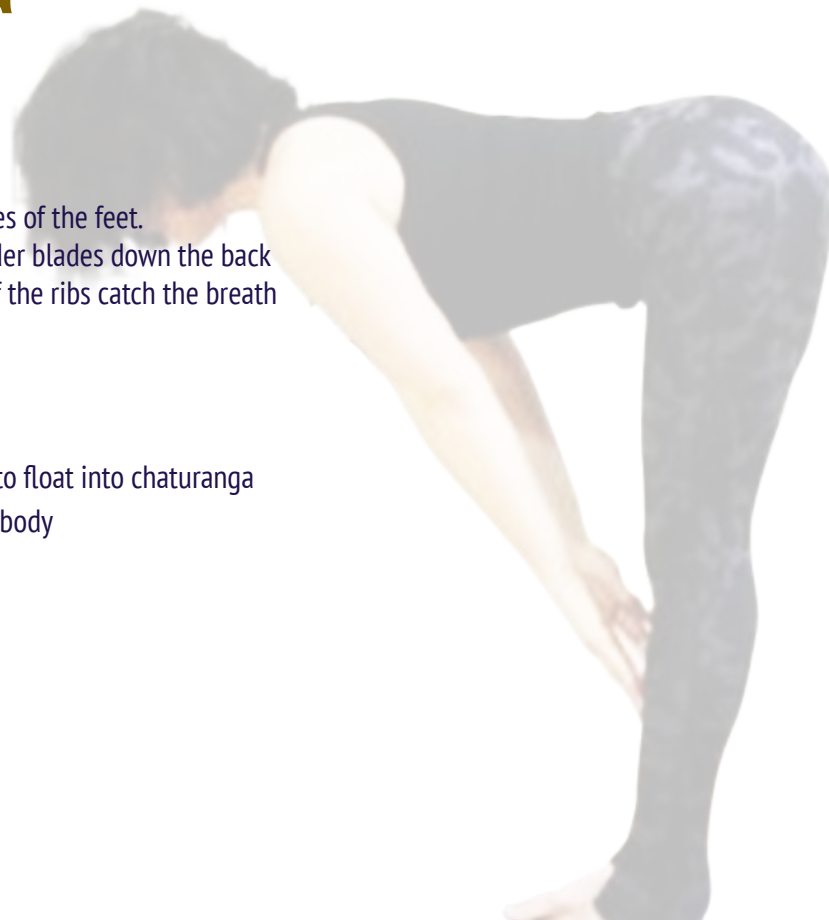
- Softly bend the knees and press deeply into the feet. Lift the intrinsic muscles of the feet.
- Emphasize lengthening the spine by narrowing the ribs and draw the shoulder blades down the back
- Expand across the heart and cast gaze down. Breathe in and feel the back of the ribs catch the breath

## **Points of Transformation:**

- Keep hips over ankles and hug the inner thighs inward toward the midline.
- If hands are on the floor, stabilize shoulders over wrists to prepare the body to float into chaturanga
- Draw a deep engagement into the back muscles where the waist tapers into body
- Inner spiral back shoulders to create breadth across the chest
- Create an upward lift with the breath

## **Benefits:**

- Strengthens Back as it emphasizes hip hinge
- Strengthens Hamstrings and Glutes



# Low Plank / Chaturanga Dandasana

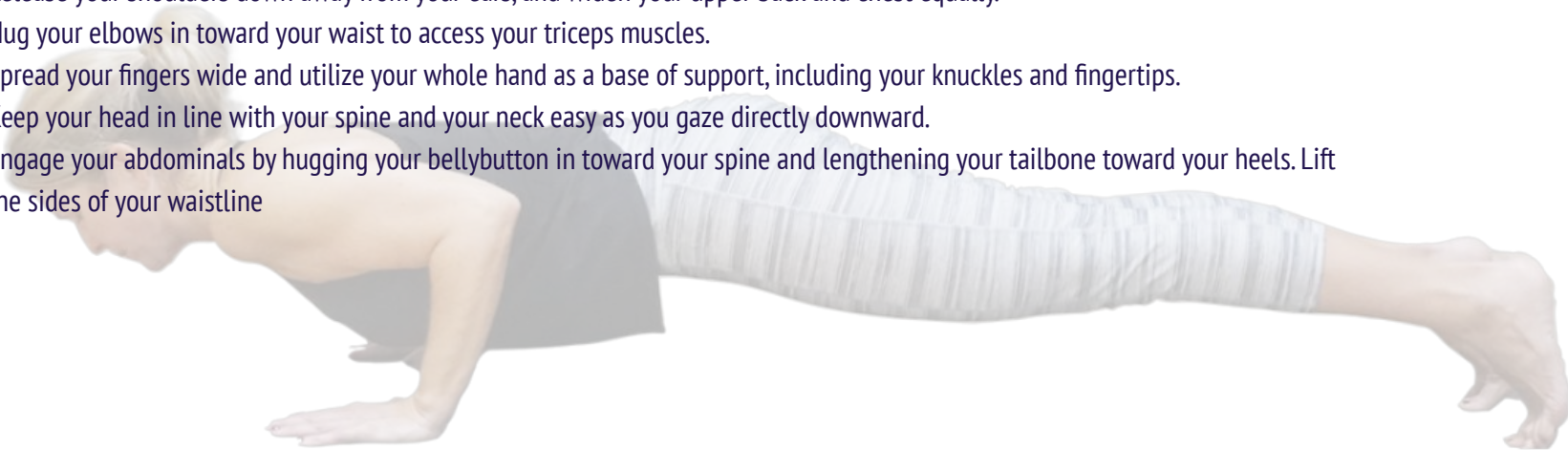
*Chatur = Four; Anga = Limbs; Danda = Staff; Asana = Pose*

## Getting Into the Pose

- From Plank Pose with shoulders over wrists (the position at the top of a push-up), shift forward and bend your elbows so that your elbows stack over your wrists and your upper arms are parallel to the floor.
- This pose may be performed on the balls of your feet or with knees on the ground.

## Points of Alignment to Transform Your Practice

- Release your shoulders down away from your ears, and widen your upper back and chest equally.
- Hug your elbows in toward your waist to access your triceps muscles.
- Spread your fingers wide and utilize your whole hand as a base of support, including your knuckles and fingertips.
- Keep your head in line with your spine and your neck easy as you gaze directly downward.
- Engage your abdominals by hugging your bellybutton in toward your spine and lengthening your tailbone toward your heels. Lift the sides of your waistline



# Cobra / Bhujangasana

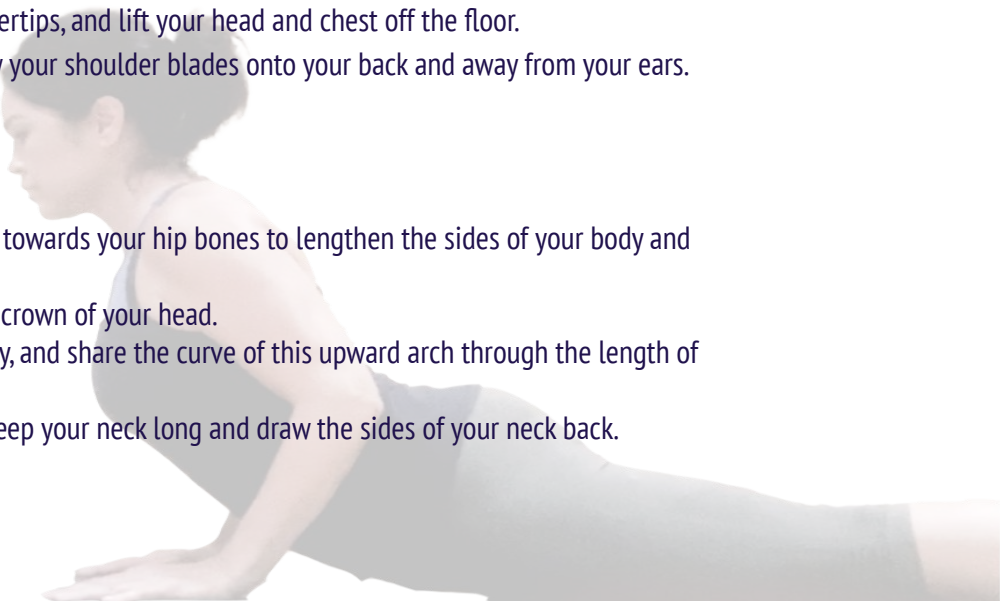
Bhujanga=snake, or serpent; Asana = pose, or seat

## Getting Into the Pose

- Lie on your abdomen, and bring your hands to the sides of your rib cage so that your elbows are stacked above your wrists and your middle fingers point straight ahead. The elbows gently hug into the sides of your body.
- On an inhale, energize down into your hands, knuckles, and fingertips, and lift your head and chest off the floor.
- Keep your elbows bent and your thighs on the floor as you draw your shoulder blades onto your back and away from your ears.

## Points of Alignment to Transform Your Practice

- Without moving your hands, energetically drag your wrists back towards your hip bones to lengthen the sides of your body and heart forward.
- From the core of your pelvis lengthen up the spine through the crown of your head.
- Imagine the vertebrae of your spine are softening into your body, and share the curve of this upward arch through the length of the whole spine.
- Anchor down through the tops of your feet and your tailbone. Keep your neck long and draw the sides of your neck back.



# Downward Facing Dog / Adho Mukha Asana

*Adho = Downward; Mukha = Facing; Svana = Dog; Asana = Pose*

## Getting Into the Pose

- From tabletop position,
- walk your hands one handprint forward,
- turn your toes under, and press down into your feet to float your hips up.

## Points of Alignment to Transform Your Practice

- With the hands shoulder-width apart, spread your fingers wide and energize down into fingertips. Middle fingers point ahead.
- Imagine your hands are sliding your sticky mat forward to leverage the shoulders back.
- Allow the shoulders to turn on the back to spin the creases of your elbows to face forward. This is external rotation in the shoulders and will broaden the scapula and collarbones.
- Feet are hip-width apart with middle toes pointing ahead.
- Send your inner thighs back, reach your sitting bones to the sky, and breathe.

## Benefits of Downward Facing Dog

- Strengthens and stretches the legs and shoulders
- Calms the nervous system
- Improves digestion
- Balances the 5 Ayurvedic Elements (Earth, Water, Air, Space, Fire) and the 7 Chakras



# Chair Pose / Utkatasana

Utkata = Fierce, Powerful; Asana = Pose

## Benefits

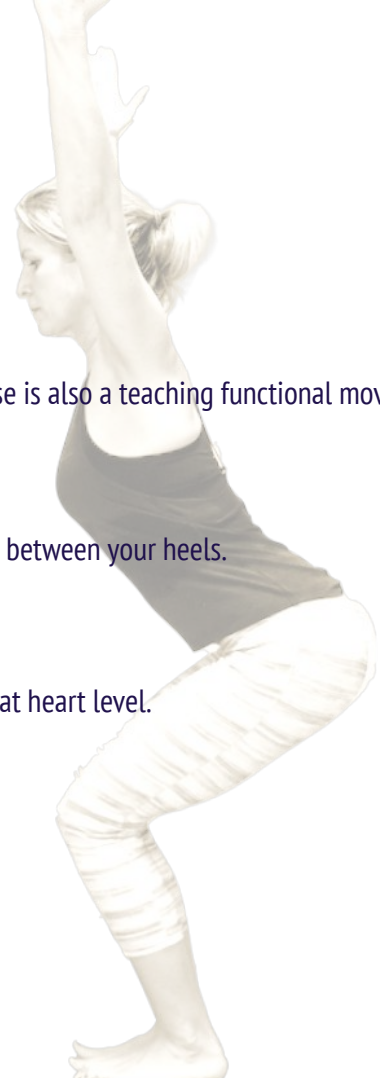
- Chair pose is a strengthening posture that develops awareness in the legs, core and back body. This pose is also a teaching functional movement.

## Getting Into the Pose

- From Mountain Pose, step your feet together so that your big toes touch while leaving an inch of space between your heels.
- Feel the seal of your inner thighs.
- Inhale to lengthen your spine and add space between your bottom ribs and the top of your pelvis.
- Exhale and bend your knees as if sitting into a chair.
- Fingertips may touch the floor outside of your feet, reach overhead, or hands may stay in prayer mudra at heart level.

## Points of Alignment to Transform Your Practice

- Draw your Sitting bones back to take your weight further back toward your heels.
- Roll glute mounds under and spiral inner thighs towards the floor.
- Find the balance of effort and ease as you witness heat and sensations arise within the body.



# Upward Facing Dog / Urdhva Mukha Svanasana

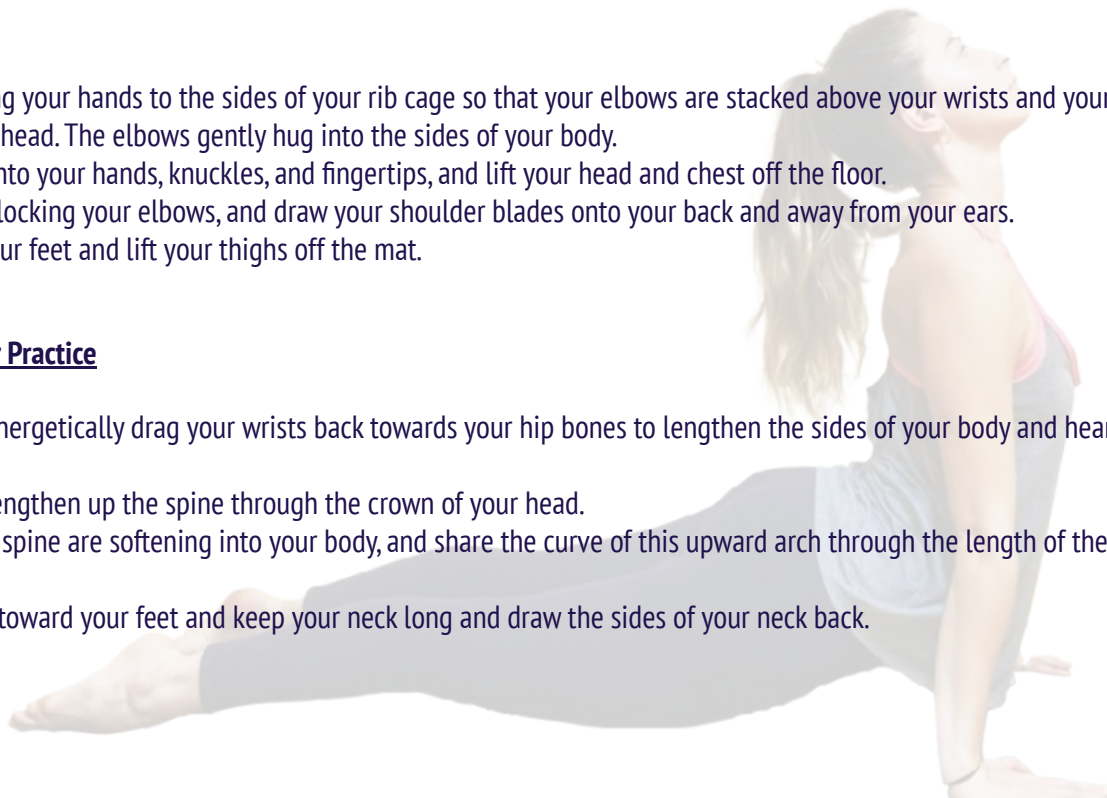
Urdhva = up; mukha = face; svan = dog

## Getting Into the Pose

- Lie on your abdomen, and bring your hands to the sides of your rib cage so that your elbows are stacked above your wrists and your middle fingers point straight ahead. The elbows gently hug into the sides of your body.
- On an inhale, energize down into your hands, knuckles, and fingertips, and lift your head and chest off the floor.
- Straighten your arms without locking your elbows, and draw your shoulder blades onto your back and away from your ears.
- Press down into the tops of your feet and lift your thighs off the mat.

## Points of Alignment to Transform Your Practice

- Without moving your hands, energetically drag your wrists back towards your hip bones to lengthen the sides of your body and heart forward.
- From the core of your pelvis lengthen up the spine through the crown of your head.
- Imagine the vertebrae of your spine are softening into your body, and share the curve of this upward arch through the length of the whole spine.
- Lengthen your tailbone down toward your feet and keep your neck long and draw the sides of your neck back.



# Warrior 1 / Virabhadrasana

Vira = Hero, Brave; Bhadra = Virtuous; Asana = Pose

## Getting Into the Pose

- From Mountain Pose with the feet hip-width apart and toes pointing ahead, take a giant step back with one foot.
- Turn your back foot out at a 45-degree angle.
- Bend into your front knee. Adjust the distance between your feet as needed to keep your front shin perpendicular to the floor while your front thigh moves toward parallel to the floor.

## Points of Alignment to Transform Your Practice

- Square your shoulders, rib cage, and hips toward your front. If this feels unavailable, try widening your stance.
- Energize down into the heel and pinky edge of your back foot to maintain a straight leg and protect your back knee.
- Hug your triceps into your ears. Outwardly rotating your arms will spiral your inner shoulders back and broaden your chest and upper back.
- Draw your navel up and in, and send your sacrum down.

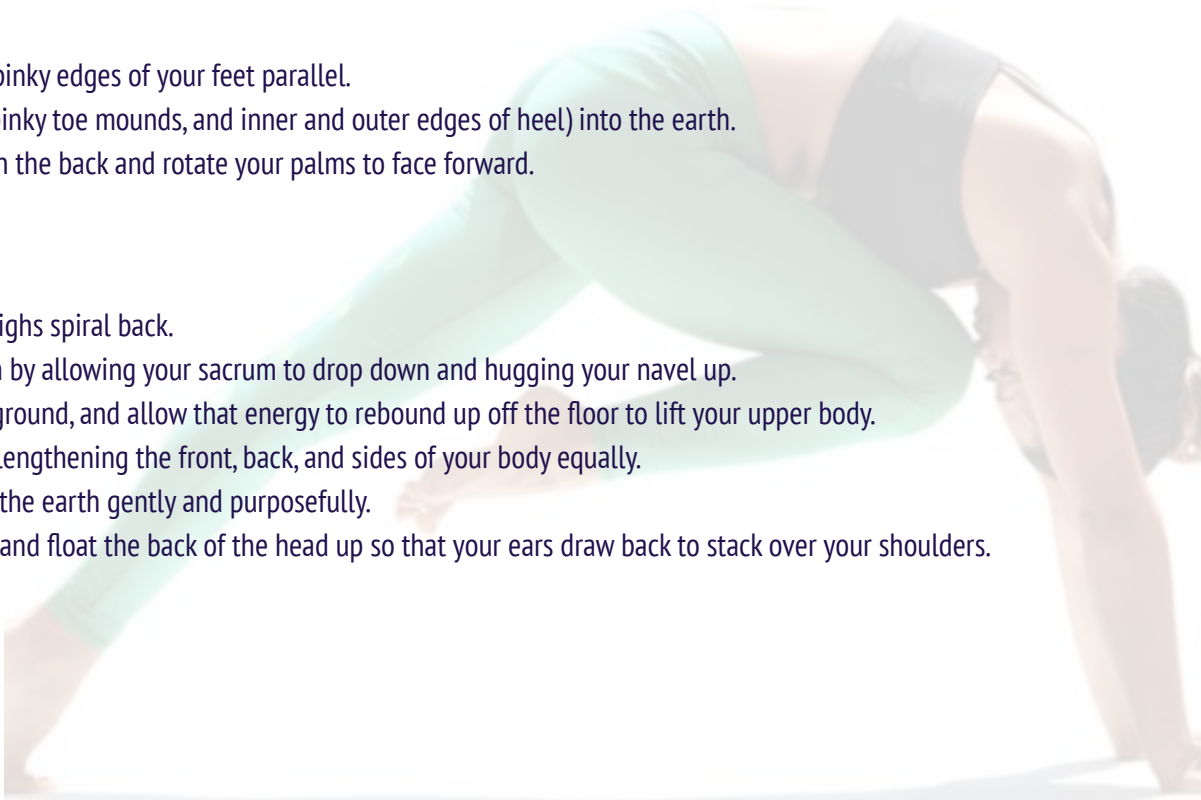
# Cheetah and Mountain Climbers

## Getting into the Pose

- Stand with your feet hip-width apart and the pinky edges of your feet parallel.
- Anchor the four corners of your feet (big and pinky toe mounds, and inner and outer edges of heel) into the earth.
- Draw your shoulder blades slightly together on the back and rotate your palms to face forward.

## Points of Alignment to Transform Your Practice

- Inwardly rotate your legs so that your inner thighs spiral back.
- Balance inward rotation with outward rotation by allowing your sacrum to drop down and hugging your navel up.
- Energize the lower half of your body into the ground, and allow that energy to rebound up off the floor to lift your upper body.
- Float a buoyant rib cage up off of your pelvis, lengthening the front, back, and sides of your body equally.
- Activate the arms and point your fingertips to the earth gently and purposefully.
- Release your shoulder blades down your back and float the back of the head up so that your ears draw back to stack over your shoulders.
- Breathe along the earth-sky axis.



# Side Plank Pose / Vasisthasana

## Benefits of Side Plank

- The primary muscles used are the obliques, along with the gluteus medius and gluteus maximus to stabilize the hips. Your shoulder stabilizers keep you aligned as well. This exercise can help you be able to sustain good posture and ease of movement by building a strong core and better balance.

## Getting Into the Pose

- From plank pose spin to blade side of one foot, left or right.
- Stack feet and pull toes back towards the body like you are standing on the ground.
- Stack hips and shoulders. Ensure your head is directly in line with your spine.
- Your left arm can be aligned along the left side of your body. Engage your abdominal muscles, drawing your navel toward your spine.
- Lift your hips and knees from the mat while exhaling. Your torso is straight in line with no sagging or bending.

## Points to Transform Your Pose

- Avoid Hips Sagging by pressing into heels and lifting underside waist
- Avoid rolling shoulders forward and hips back. This will help you recruit the inner obliques, serratus and glute medius.
- Externally rotate both shoulder blades to promote a strong shoulder girdle.
- Press into feet to engage gluteus medius



# Crescent Warrior / Anjaneyasana

## Benefits of low Crescent Lunge Pose

- Increases muscular endurance
- Develops flexibility in the hips and shoulders
- Strengthens the arches, ankles, knees, and thighs

## Set Up Cues

- Step between hands from down dog and plant right foot. Reach arms overhead and stack shoulders over pelvis.
- Lay back foot flat with toes facing down, front knee over front ankle
- Scissor inner line to keep hips and shoulders square. Elevate heart with shoulder blades

## Points to transform

- Lift low belly off front thigh, engage hip points
- Reach up through the arms and externally rotate the shoulders so that the inner shoulder spirals back and your shoulder blades glide down the back.
- drop your tailbone down to lengthen low back while lowering hips for a deeper stretch
- Color in your low back with breath



# Crescent Warrior / Ashta Chandrasana

*Ashta = eight ; Chandra = moon; Asana = pose*

## Benefits of High Crescent Lunge Pose

- Increases muscular endurance; Develops flexibility in the hips and shoulders
- Strengthens the arches, ankles, knees, and thighs

## Set Up Cues

- Step between hands from down dog and plant right foot. Reach arms overhead and stack shoulders over pelvis.
- Feet are hips distance apart, with front knee over front ankle. Back heel is lifted and anchored over toe knuckles.

## Points to transform

- Square your shoulders, rib cage, and hips toward your front. Keep your arms parallel and facing each other
- Reach up through the arms and externally rotate the shoulders so that the inner shoulder spirals back
- Bend your back leg and drop your tailbone down to lengthen low back.
- Color in your low back with breath to float the rib cage up off of the hips and to prevent the low back from compressing.
- Experience the rooting action of the low body into the floor, and the rising action of the upper body into the sky.



# Twisting High Lunge

## Setting up the pose

- From crescent lunge, exhale, sweep right arm down and reach it to the back of your mat. ,
- Keep your back heel lifted, your back leg straight and contracted as you rotate your torso toward your front leg
- Keep the front knee stacked over the ankle.
- Curl your low belly up off the front thigh contracting deeply into the inner core and protract the shoulder blades keeping a strong connection to the core.

## Transforming the Pose

- This is an unsupported twisting motion, which means that as we inhale we actively lengthen our spine and as we exhale we deepen the twist.
- Create more space in your front body by lifting the front of your hips and extending the spine out of the pelvis.
- Draw your lower ribs back into the body and take your gaze toward your back hand, keep hips square..

# Warrior II / Virabhadrasana II

Virabhadra = Mythical Warrior; Asana = Seat, or pose

## Setting up the pose

- Extend your arms out to your sides and stand with your feet wide enough that your ankles line up under your wrists. Palms will face down.
- Turn one leg out at the hip so that the heel of one foot lines up with the arch of the other foot.
- Bend into your front knee. Adjust the distance between your feet as needed to keep your front shin perpendicular to the floor while your front thigh moves toward parallel to the floor.
- Turn your gaze past your front fingertips and establish a drishti, a focal point to assist with balance. Draw your chin slightly down so that the back of your neck lengthens.

## Points to Transform:

- Activate your front hip by drawing your bent knee open to the pinky edge of your front foot.
- Keep your shoulders stacked over your hips so that your lunge stays in your legs and not in your torso.
- Energize down into the heel and pinky edge of your back foot to maintain a straight leg and protect your back knee.
- Draw your navel up and in, and send your sacrum down.
- Broaden your chest and back equally so that your rib cage stays aligned with the pelvis.



# Extended Side Angle / Utthita Parsvakonasana

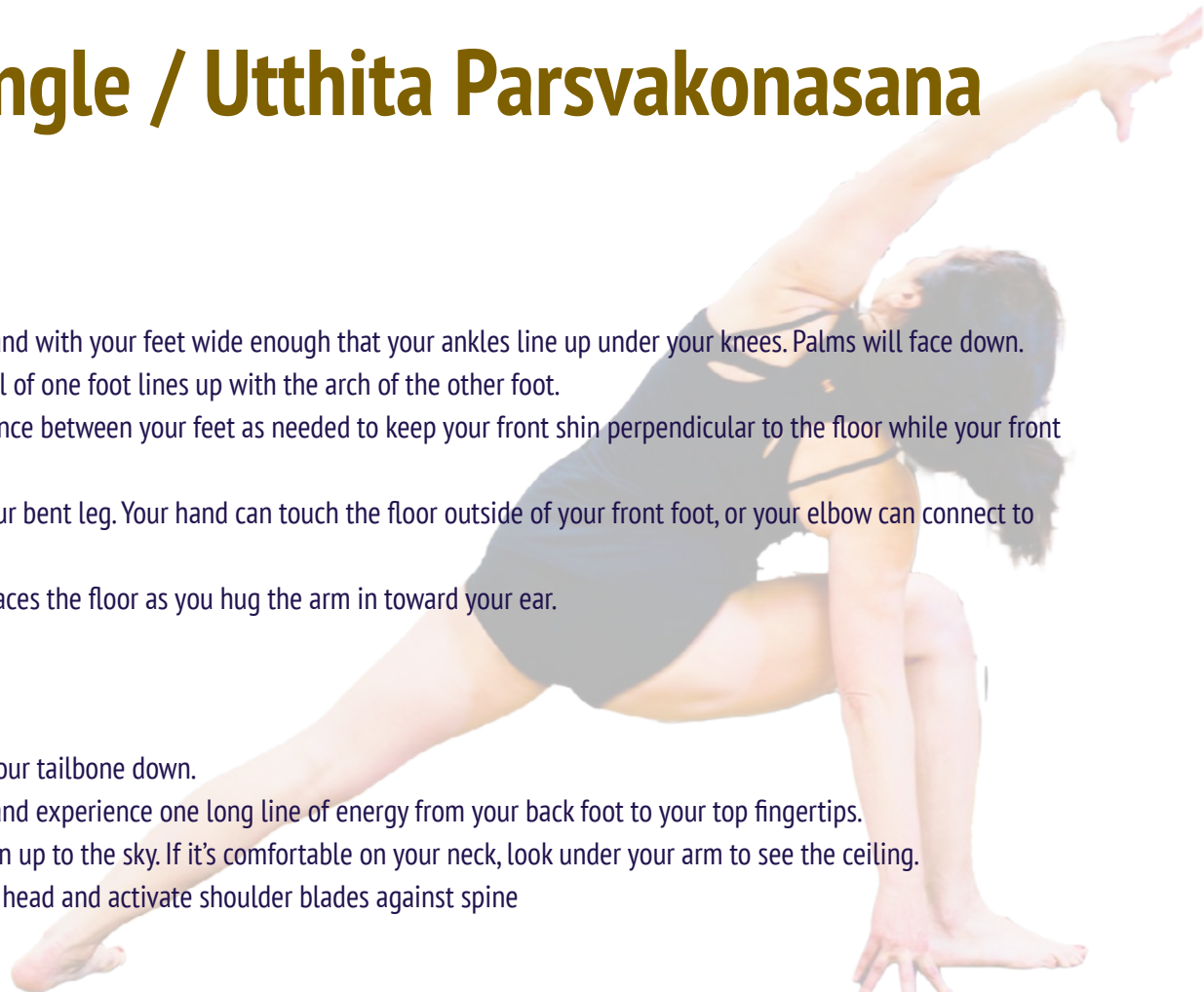
Utthita = Extended; Parsva = Extend; Kona = Angle

## Setting up the Pose

- Extend your arms out to your sides and stand with your feet wide enough that your ankles line up under your knees. Palms will face down.
- Turn one leg out at the hip so that the heel of one foot lines up with the arch of the other foot.
- Bend into your front knee. Adjust the distance between your feet as needed to keep your front shin perpendicular to the floor while your front thigh moves toward parallel to the floor.
- Fold at the hip to lower your body over your bent leg. Your hand can touch the floor outside of your front foot, or your elbow can connect to your front thigh.
- Externally your top arm so that the palm faces the floor as you hug the arm in toward your ear.

## Refining Cues: Internal/External

- Hug your navel into your spine and drop your tailbone down.
- Reach out through your rib cage and arm and experience one long line of energy from your back foot to your top fingertips.
- Rotate your torso so that your top ribs open up to the sky. If it's comfortable on your neck, look under your arm to see the ceiling.
- Extend forward through the crown of your head and activate shoulder blades against spine



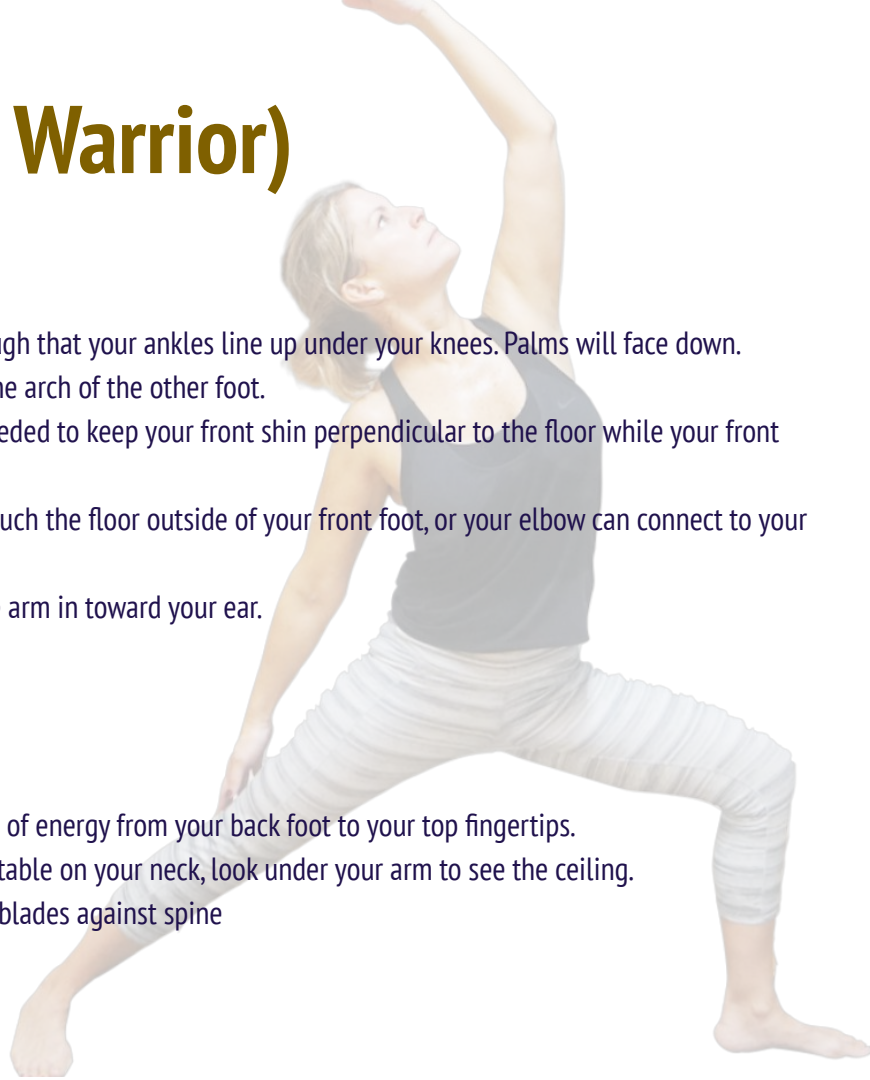
# Reverse Warrior (Peaceful Warrior)

## Setting up the Pose

- Extend your arms out to your sides and stand with your feet wide enough that your ankles line up under your knees. Palms will face down.
- Turn one leg out at the hip so that the heel of one foot lines up with the arch of the other foot.
- Bend into your front knee. Adjust the distance between your feet as needed to keep your front shin perpendicular to the floor while your front thigh moves toward parallel to the floor.
- Fold at the hip to lower your body over your bent leg. Your hand can touch the floor outside of your front foot, or your elbow can connect to your front thigh.
- Externally your top arm so that the palm faces the floor as you hug the arm in toward your ear.

## Refining Cues: Internal/External

- Hug your navel into your spine and drop your tailbone down.
- Reach out through your rib cage and arm and experience one long line of energy from your back foot to your top fingertips.
- Rotate your torso so that your top ribs open up to the sky. If it's comfortable on your neck, look under your arm to see the ceiling.
- Extend forward through the crown of your head and activate shoulder blades against spine



# Standing Split / Urdhva Prasarita Eka Padasana

Urdhva = Upward; Prasarita = Spread out; Eka Pada = One Foot; Asana = Seat

## Setting up the Pose

- Extend your arms out to your sides and stand with your feet wide enough that your ankles line up under your knees. Palms will face down.
- Turn one leg out at the hip so that the heel of one foot lines up with the arch of the other foot.
- Bend into your front knee. Adjust the distance between your feet as needed to keep your front shin perpendicular to the floor while your front thigh moves toward parallel to the floor.
- Fold at the hip to lower your body over your bent leg. Your hand can touch the floor outside of your front foot, or your elbow can connect to your front thigh.
- Externally your top arm so that the palm faces the floor as you hug the arm in toward your ear.

## Points of Transformation

- Hug your navel into your spine and drop your tailbone down.
- Reach out through your rib cage and arm and experience one long line of energy from your back foot to your top fingertips.
- Rotate your torso so that your top ribs open up to the sky. If it's comfortable on your neck, look under your arm to see the ceiling.
- Extend forward through the crown of your head and activate shoulder blades against spine

# Yoga Squat / Malasana

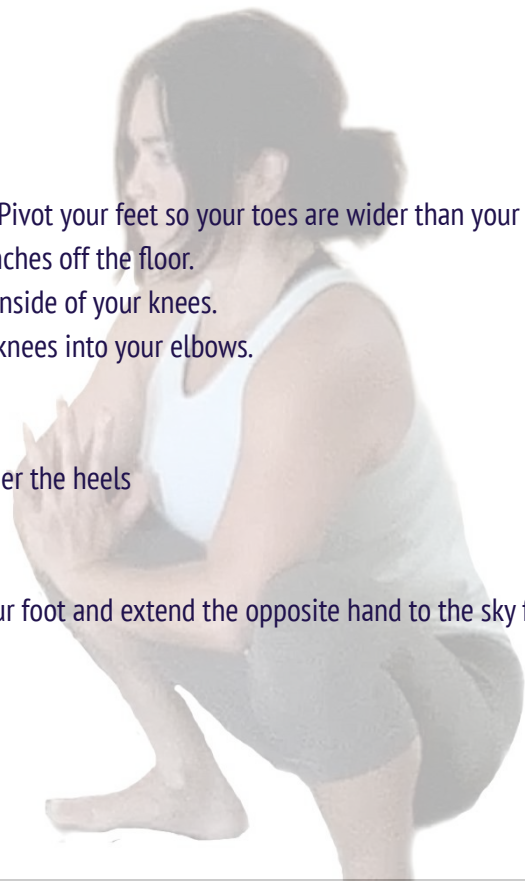
Virabhadra = Mythical Warrior; Asana = Seat, or pose

## Setting up the pose

- Start in Mountain Pose (Tadasana), with your feet slightly wider than hip distance apart. Pivot your feet so your toes are wider than your heels.
- Bend your knees deeply, sinking down until your hips are lower than your knees, a few inches off the floor.
- Bring your palms together at heart center, and wedge your elbows one at a time, to the inside of your knees.
- Push your elbows into your knees to open your hips, and gently press the inside of your knees into your elbows.

## Points to Transform

- If your heels don't touch the floor, place foam blocks, a wedge or a rolled up blanket under the heels
- Lift the pelvic floor and the deep belly to avoid falling back.
- Press through the feet and feel your roots
- To intensify the stretch in your groins, place one hand on the ground on the inside of your foot and extend the opposite hand to the sky for a twist and hold, then switch sides



# Pigeon Pose / Eka Pada Rajakapotasana

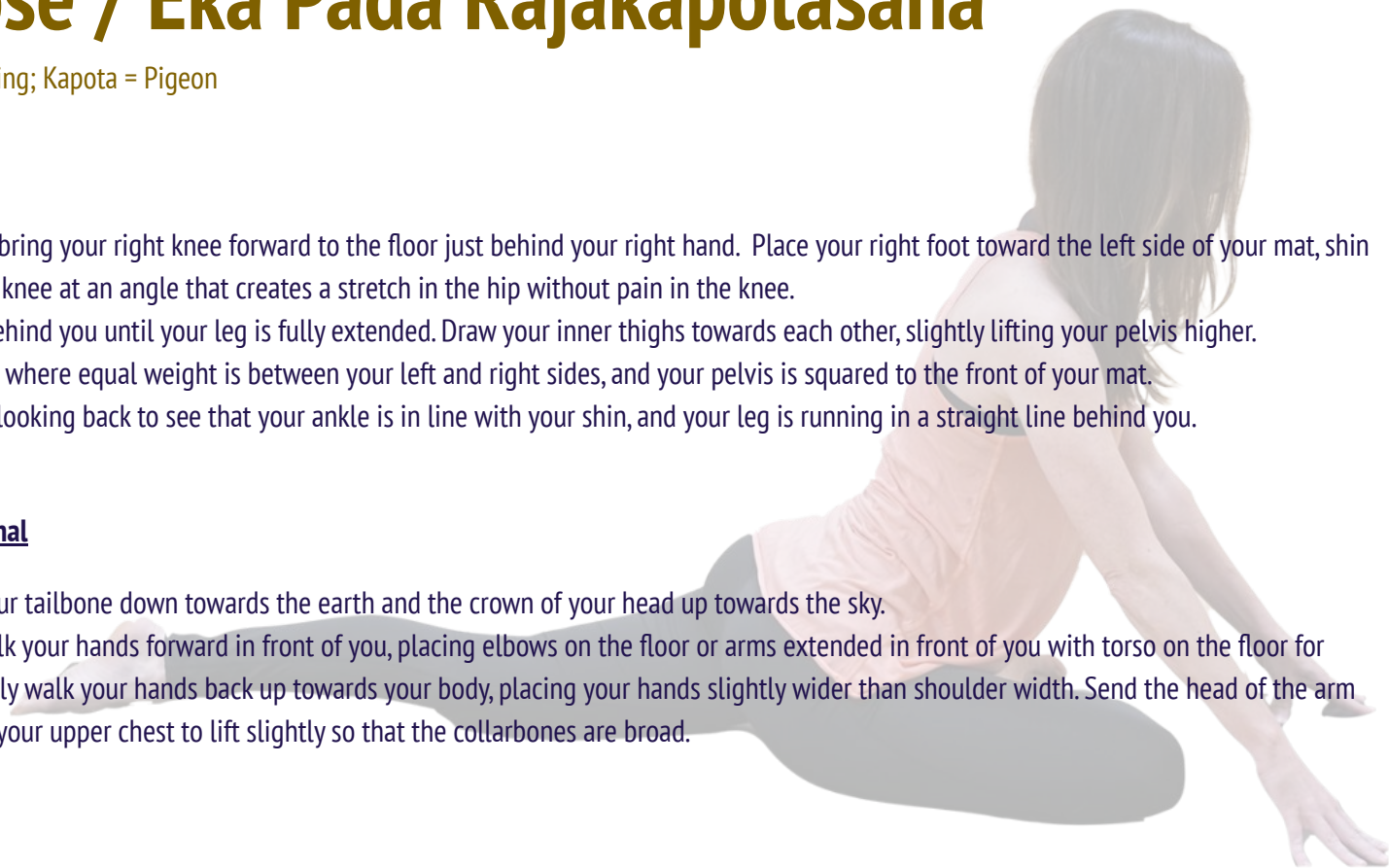
Eka Pada = One Foot; Raja = King; Kapota = Pigeon

## Setting up the Pose

- From downward dog, bring your right knee forward to the floor just behind your right hand. Place your right foot toward the left side of your mat, shin on the mat, with your knee at an angle that creates a stretch in the hip without pain in the knee.
- Walk your left knee behind you until your leg is fully extended. Draw your inner thighs towards each other, slightly lifting your pelvis higher.
- Find the middle point where equal weight is between your left and right sides, and your pelvis is squared to the front of your mat.
- Uncurl your left toes, looking back to see that your ankle is in line with your shin, and your leg is running in a straight line behind you.

## Refining Cues: Internal/External

- On an inhale, send your tailbone down towards the earth and the crown of your head up towards the sky.
- Exhale and slowly walk your hands forward in front of you, placing elbows on the floor or arms extended in front of you with torso on the floor for sleeping pigeon. Slowly walk your hands back up towards your body, placing your hands slightly wider than shoulder width. Send the head of the arm bones back, allowing your upper chest to lift slightly so that the collarbones are broad.



# Runner's Lunge/Easy Twist

## Setting up the Pose

- Step Foot between hands and keep palms grounded
- Hips are at the level of the knee and the back thigh is lifted while pressing back toes deeply into the mat.
- Square your hips to the front of the mat paying special attention to the front hip crease.
- Draw inner thighs inward and press through the front heel.
- Lengthen spine and lift the belly off the front thigh.

## Points of Transformation

- Deeply engage your pelvic floor and lengthen the space between the ribs and hips on both sides.
- To twist, plant back leg palm under shoulder. Maintain pelvic alignment and roll shoulders open to stack over each other. Chest is facing the front thigh.
- Create an upward reach through the shoulder blades, while narrowing the hips and ribs.
- Deeply press the back toes downward and the front heel rooted.



# Lizard lunge/Utthan Pristhasana

Utthan = Stretch out; Pristha = Back of the body

## Setting up the Pose:

- Step forward with one foot and bring it to the outside of your mat. Bring both hands and shoulders inside of the forward foot.
- Press the back toes into the earth and flex the back thigh.
- Come down to the back knee and forearms, or a combination to find your hip release.
- Press the front heel down and forward to engage the hamstrings, keeping the hips stable.
- Lift the pelvic floor as you exhale and lengthen the spine. Create space between the shoulders and ears.

## Refining Cues: Internal/External

- Avoid compensating for tight hips by rounding shoulders and disengaging posture.
- Deepen the pose by letting the front knee splayed outward. Keep toes and knee facing same direction
- Release the breath, and release tension on your exhale. Maintain a posture of grounding while releasing.



# 1/2 Front Split / Ardha Hanumanasana

Ardha = Half; Hanuman = Monkey god; Asana = Pose

## Setting up the pose

- From low lunge shift hips back. Keep hips lifted and bring the back hip over back knee. Insure that the hips are squared over the mat.
- Roll the front hip crease back to square hips, and put a microbend in the front knee.
- Pull toes toward the body and lengthen the spine.
- Torso folds over the front leg with spine's integrity honored. If this is too intense, a modification of this pose could be a seated one leg forward fold.

## Points of Transformation

- Bring shoulders wide and spread collar bones
- Use the pelvic floor to take the weight out of the hands, developing strength and hip mobility.
- Press the front heel down and back on your exhale
- Try rotating toward the extended leg to deepen the pose. Open the chest and shoulders bringing the hand to the low back.

# Crow [Crane] Pose / Bakasana

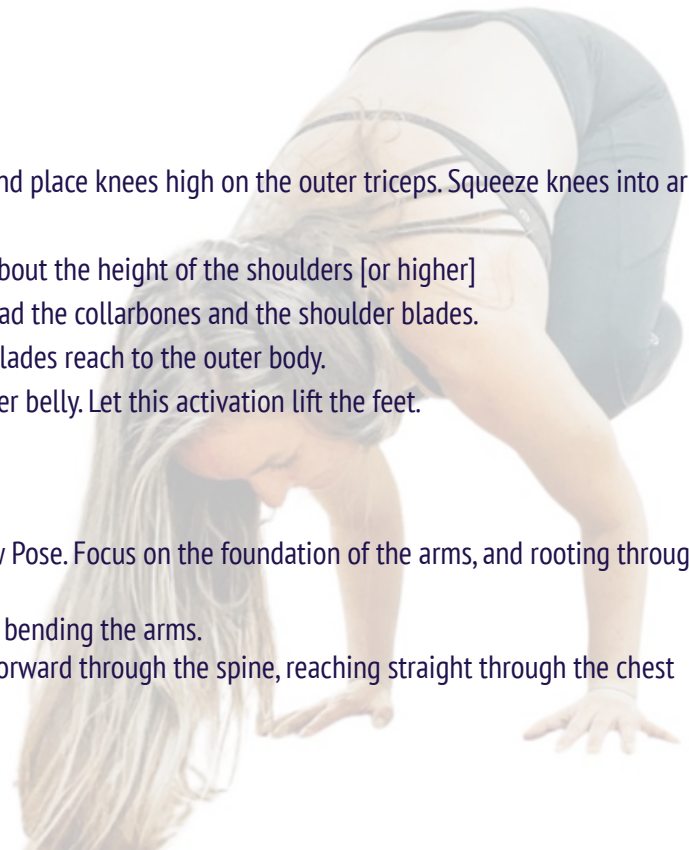
Baka = Crane; Asana = Pose

## Setting up the Pose

- Place palms shoulder's distance apart and bring feet together. Squat down and place knees high on the outer triceps. Squeeze knees into arms and arms press back into knees.
- Place elbows directly over wrists, and begin to bend the arms. Lift the hips about the height of the shoulders [or higher]
- As you bring the shoulders forward, begin to shift the gaze forward and spread the collarbones and the shoulder blades.
- Hug elbows together keeping them in the joint sack, and feel the shoulder blades reach to the outer body.
- Press into your palms and begin to engage inner thighs, hamstrings and lower belly. Let this activation lift the feet.

## Points of Transformation

- Fear is often the biggest obstacle when starting with arm balances like Crow Pose. Focus on the foundation of the arms, and rooting through the palms to rise from the pelvis and hamstrings.
- Maintain Elbows over wrists and focus on bringing the shoulders forward by bending the arms.
- Hug the sitting bones towards each other and continue a gentle activation forward through the spine, reaching straight through the chest
- Avoid looking down. Drishti is forward
- Feel your hip flexors pull in as you spread the upper back



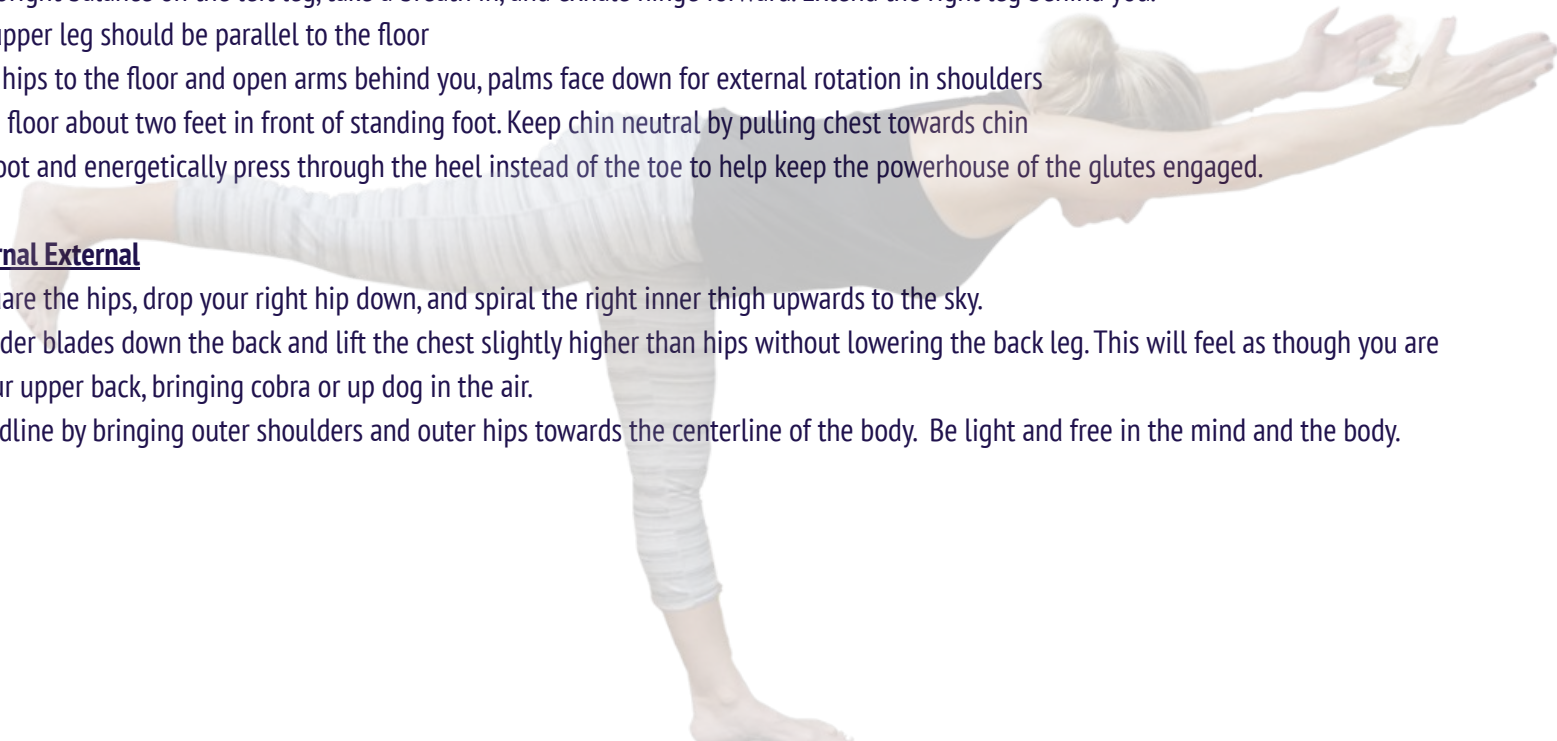
# Warrior III - Airplane Pose / Virabhadrasana III

## Setting up the Pose

- Standing upright balance on the left leg, take a breath in, and exhale hinge forward. Extend the right leg behind you.
- Torso and upper leg should be parallel to the floor
- Square the hips to the floor and open arms behind you, palms face down for external rotation in shoulders
- Gaze at the floor about two feet in front of standing foot. Keep chin neutral by pulling chest towards chin
- Flex back foot and energetically press through the heel instead of the toe to help keep the powerhouse of the glutes engaged.

## Refining Cues: Internal External

- To help square the hips, drop your right hip down, and spiral the right inner thigh upwards to the sky.
- Draw shoulder blades down the back and lift the chest slightly higher than hips without lowering the back leg. This will feel as though you are arching your upper back, bringing cobra or up dog in the air.
- Hug the midline by bringing outer shoulders and outer hips towards the centerline of the body. Be light and free in the mind and the body.



# Half Moon Pose / Ardha Chandrasana

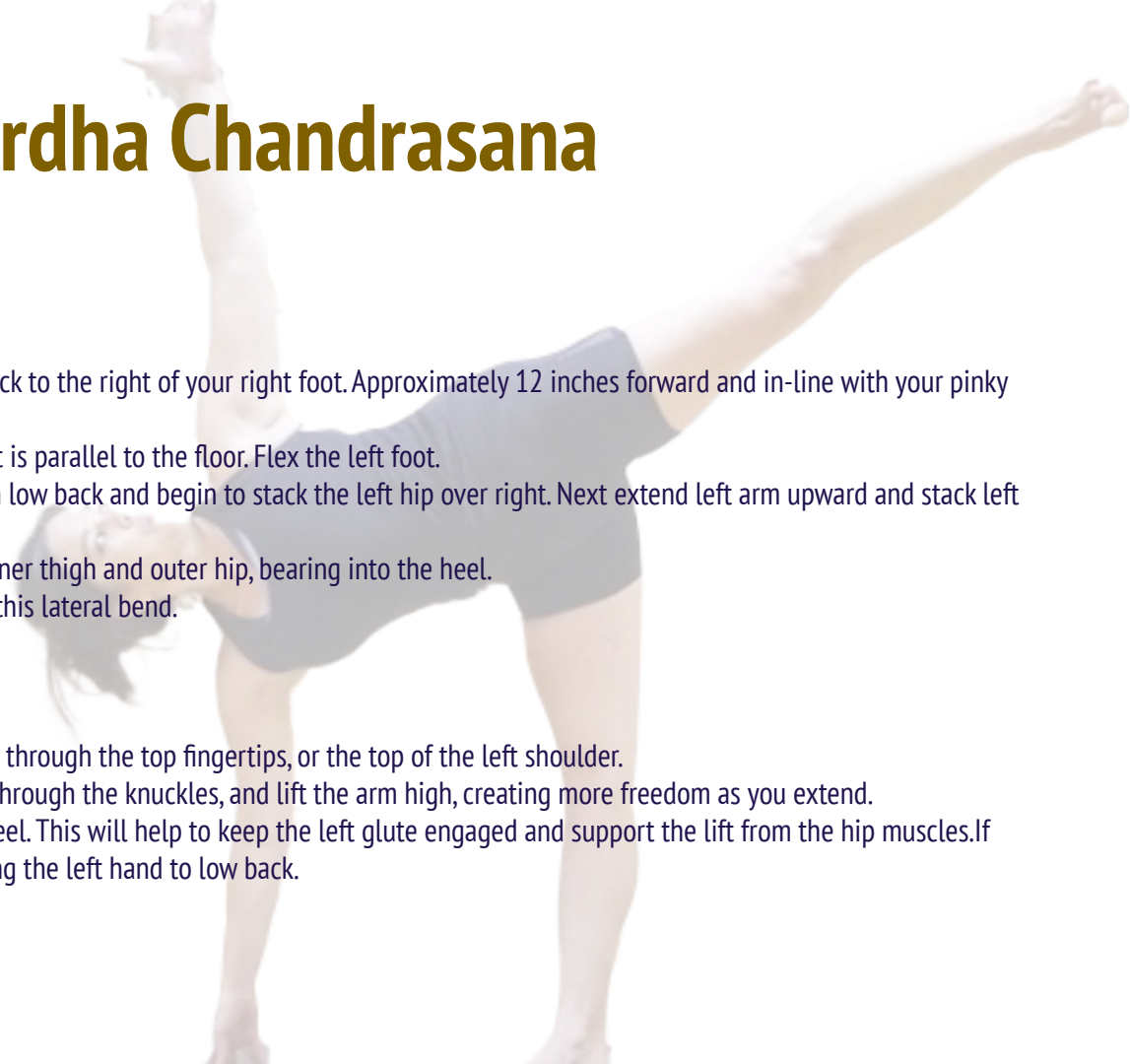
Ardha = Half; Chandra = Moon; Asana = Seat, Pose

## Setting up the Pose

- From the top of your mat forward fold. Place a block to the right of your right foot. Approximately 12 inches forward and in-line with your pinky toe. Place your hand on the block.
- Shift weight onto right foot and lift left leg until it is parallel to the floor. Flex the left foot.
- Once balance is found here, place the left hand on low back and begin to stack the left hip over right. Next extend left arm upward and stack left shoulder over right.
- Keep weight over the right leg by engaging the inner thigh and outer hip, bearing into the heel.
- Curl the right side waist into the body to support this lateral bend.

## Refining Cues : Internal/External

- Create a line of energy from the bottom fingertips through the top fingertips, or the top of the left shoulder.
- If your top arm is lifted, spread the fingers, reach through the knuckles, and lift the arm high, creating more freedom as you extend.
- Imagine you are extending energy from the left heel. This will help to keep the left glute engaged and support the lift from the hip muscles. If shoulders do not stack completely, modify by taking the left hand to low back.



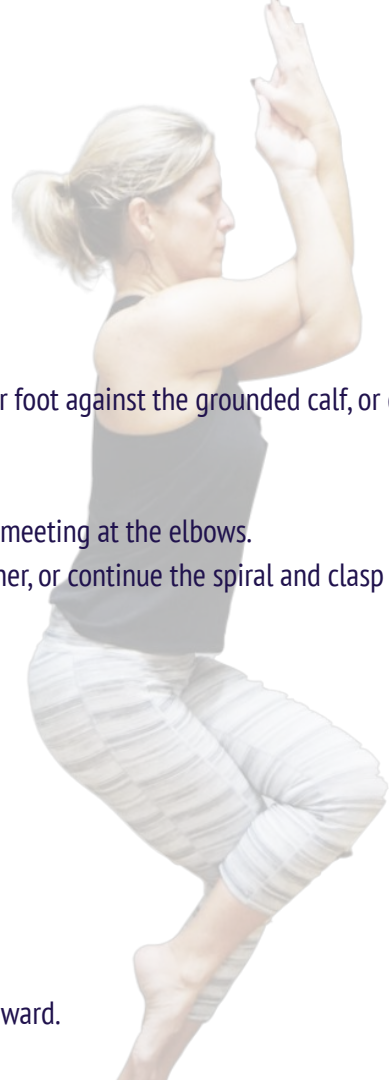
# Eagle Pose / Garudasana

## Setting up the Pose

- Bend your standing leg in a little chair pose, scoop your tailbone down and under.
- Extend your lifting leg and wrap the thigh high around the standing leg. Press the outer foot against the grounded calf, or double wrap the foot behind the calf.
- Square your hips towards the front of the mat.
- Reach arms into a T position and sweep the lifted leg arm under the grounded leg arm meeting at the elbows.
- Spiral the forearms around each other and press the back of the palms against each other, or continue the spiral and clasp the palms.
- Draw torso over pelvis and shoulder blade will spread and activate against the back.
- Lift the chest towards the elbows and bring the gaze towards the center of the hands.
- Keep the elbows along the midline of the body.

## Refining Cues/Internal/External

- Remain firmly grounded in the foot and press through the big toe.
- Keep the inner thighs engaged and roll them inward to seal the thighs together.
- To deepen the pose, lift the elbows and bring forearms forward.
- Relax your awareness and soften the entire body as you physically and mentally turn inward.



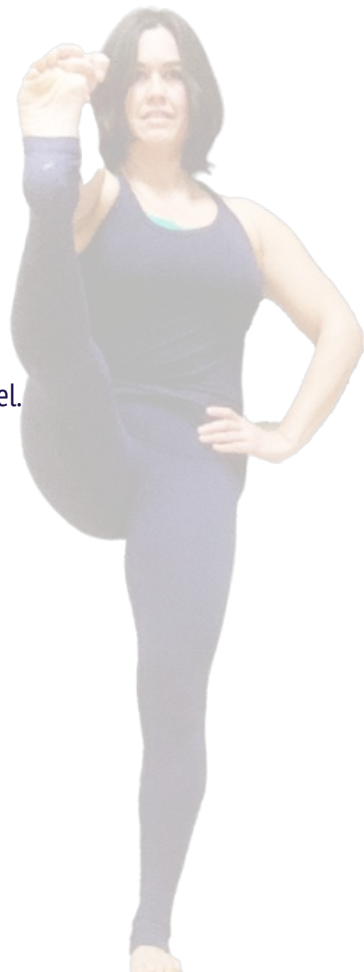
# Hand-To-Big-Toe Pose / Utthita Hasta

## Setting up the Pose

- Standing on one leg, bring your opposite shin towards your body and grip the shin.
- Level your hips, and draw your lifted knee inner hip toward the midline.
- Grip the big toe with the peace fingers of the same arm, keep your gaze forward and steady.
- From the pit of the belly, lift the torso over the pelvis and exhale as you straighten the leg pressing through the heel.
- Avoid pulling the shoulders forward or bending at the waist. If this happens return the hand to the shin.
- Maintain a neutral spine and focus on the inner strength of the pelvis to hold spinal integrity.
- Spread the shoulder blades and engage the rhomboids. Lift the gaze and find courage in the drishti

## Refining Cues/Internal/External

- As a challenge, take your leg to the side, and gaze over opposite shoulder
- Bring the glutes under the body and hips level. Find this strength in the deep muscles of the pelvic floor
- Avoid rotating the torso
- Narrow the ribs and shoulders as you express expansion in the breath.
- Be generous with your energy outward, keep focused internal gaze between the brow.



# Tree Pose / Vrksasana

## Setting up the Pose

- From mountain pose lift your heel high and place the sole of the foot onto the opposite inner thigh.
- Level your hips and pass your heel into the thigh, press the thigh into the heel
- Focus your steady gaze forward
- Press your lifted knee back, externally rotating from the hip.
- Square your ribs and shoulders forward.
- Bring hands to Namaste at the center of the chest or lift them overhead

## Refining Cues : Internal/External

- Maintain one central line of energy through the entire body
- Square your hips to the front while gently contracting the inner belly upward
- Lift the sides of your waist and narrow your hips
- Create the feeling of a strong trunk with flexible branches
- Spread your upper body and breath wide, gaze to the horizon
- Deepen your roots and remain supple. Develop equanimity that allows you to be flexible and strong during the challenges of life.



# Dancer Pose / Natarajasana

## Benefits

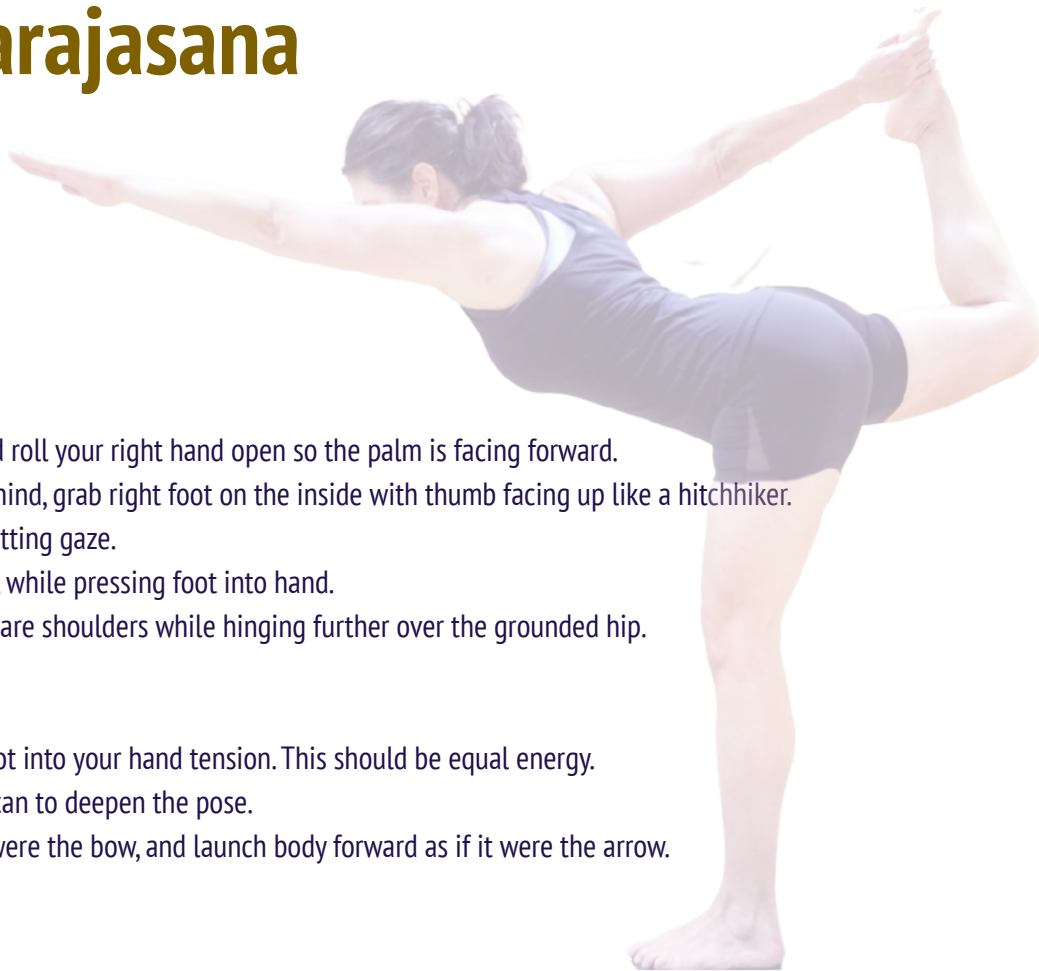
- Improves concentration and focus
- Strengthens legs and opens chest, shoulders
- Increases coordination and balance

## Setting up The Pose

- From standing bring your left arm to the sky, and roll your right hand open so the palm is facing forward.
- Bend right knee and bring right foot up from behind, grab right foot on the inside with thumb facing up like a hitchhiker.
- Bring knees together, set gaze and balance by setting gaze.
- Inhale and lift heart high as you stretch forward, while pressing foot into hand.
- Keep chest higher than hips and continue to square shoulders while hinging further over the grounded hip.

## Refining Cues: Internal/External

- Reach through your lifted arm and press your foot into your hand tension. This should be equal energy.
- Extend and straighten back leg as much as you can to deepen the pose.
- Maintain a strong action in both legs as if they were the bow, and launch body forward as if it were the arrow.
- Breath into front body, and fill up back ribs.



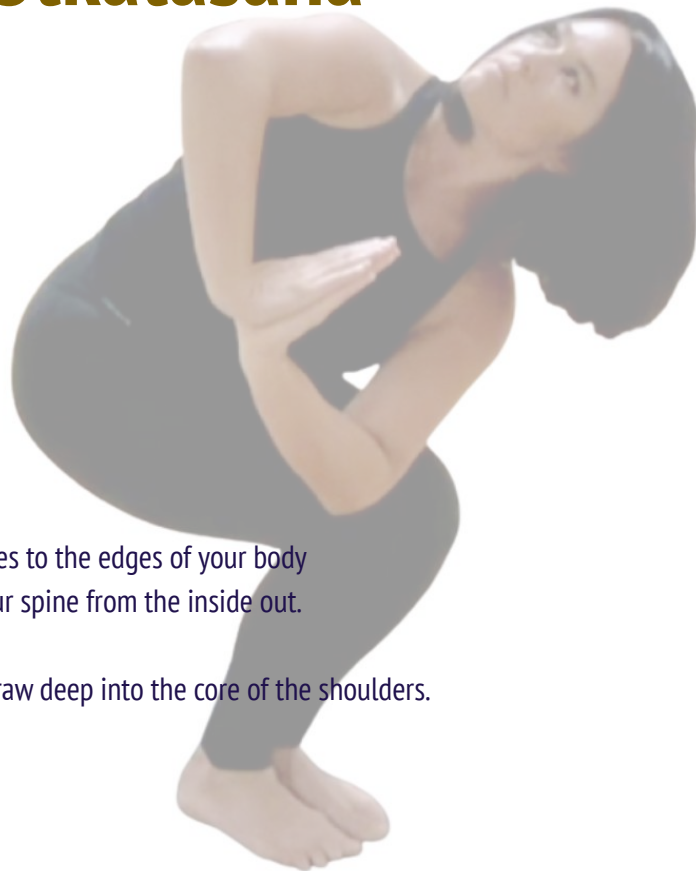
# Revolved Chair / Parivrtta Utkatasana

## Setting Up the Pose

- From chair pose, bring the hands to the heart.
- At the bottom of the exhale twist [R,L] and anchor elbow over outer thigh.
- Lengthen spine and square hips
- Gaze is towards the sky or to the earth if the neck is sensitive.

## Refining the Pose: Internal/External

- Cement the feet evenly and spread toes across the earth
- Lift deep from the lower belly off the thighs and spread the shoulder blades to the edges of your body
- Spiral the obliques instead of the arm to deepen the twist, wringing out your spine from the inside out.
- Wrap your glutes under you and lean into the heat
- Try Splitting the arms to deepen the pose, stack hands and shoulders and draw deep into the core of the shoulders.



# Triangle / Trikonasana

## Setting up the Pose

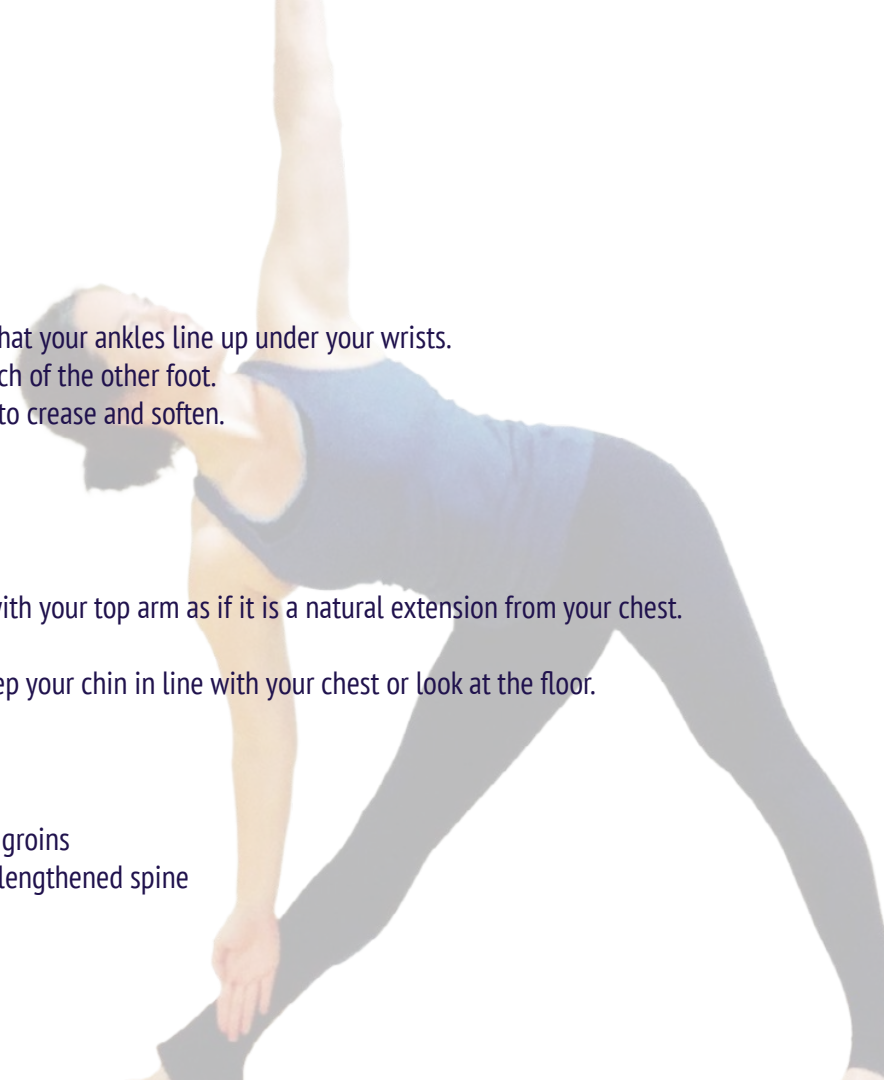
- Extend your arms out to your sides and stand with your feet wide enough that your ankles line up under your wrists.
- Turn one leg out at the hip so that the heel of one foot lines up with the arch of the other foot.
- Reach forward through the arm over the turned out leg and allow your hip to crease and soften.
- Rest your hand down on your shin, ankle, or on the floor near your foot.

## Refining Cues

- Roll your top ribs up and back and send your bottom ribs under. Reach up with your top arm as if it is a natural extension from your chest.
- Keep the right and left sides of your waist evenly extended.
- Look up to your top hand if it feels comfortable on your neck, otherwise keep your chin in line with your chest or look at the floor.

## Benefits of Triangle Pose

- Stretches and strengthens the legs and hips, especially the hamstrings and groins
- Stabilizes the sides of the torso, opens the chest, and creates traction for a lengthened spine



# Wide Leg Forward Fold / Prasarita Padottanasana

## Benefits:

- Stretches the groins, hamstrings, and back muscles
- Opens the hips, Brings fresh, oxygenated blood to the head and Relieves mild depression

## Setting up the Pose

- Face the long end of your mat, step the feet wide apart, feet as close to parallel as feels comfortable. You are looking for stability and grounding.
- Engage your thighs by drawing them up. Interlace your fingers behind your back and lengthen your spine and open your chest as you inhale.
- Release your shoulders down your back and draw your shoulder blades together as you fold from your hips bringing your hands overhead.

## Refining Cues

- Keep your back straight and release your head down towards the floor, let the head fall heavy
- Lift the inner arches of the feet and balloon the breath into the middle back
- If you feel comfortable here, broaden the shoulders, bend the elbows, and clasp your big toes with your index and middle fingers. Rest the crown of your head on the mat.



# Revolved Crescent / Parivrtta Alanasana

## Benefits

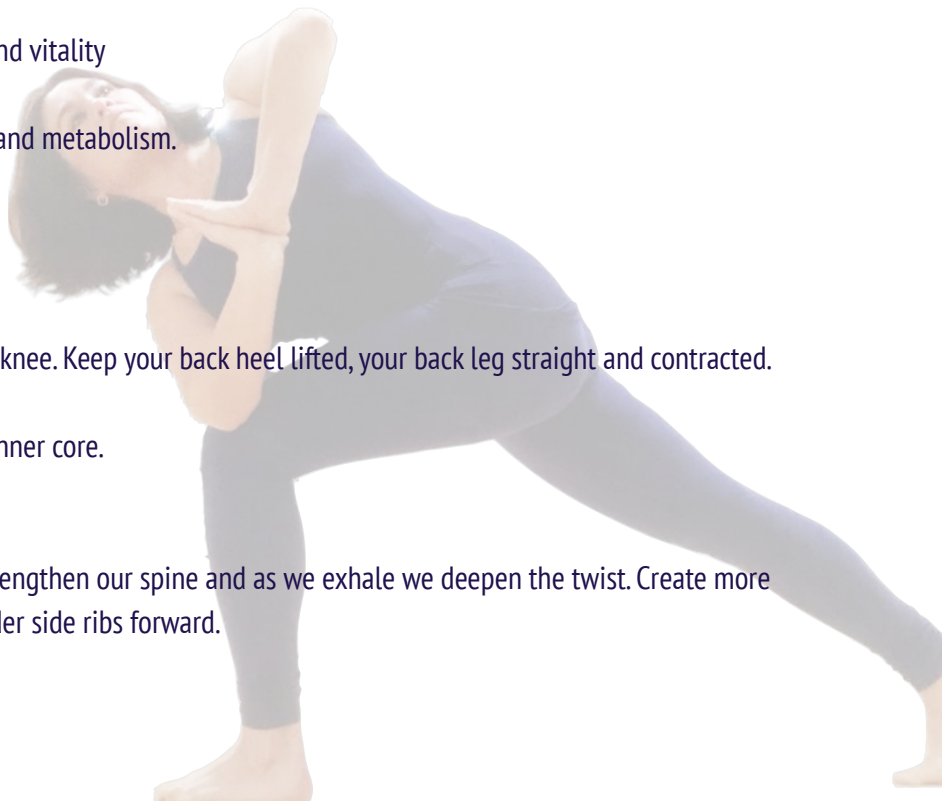
- Stimulates manipura, the third chakra. This is our seat of confidence and vitality
- Strengthens, tones, and stretches the spine, hips, legs and buttocks.
- Stimulates and detoxifies internal organs and kidneys. Aids digestion and metabolism.
- Improves balance and stability.

## Setting up the pose

- From crescent lunge, bring hands to heart and tilt torso forward,
- Exhale all of the air out of the body then bring the right elbow to left knee. Keep your back heel lifted, your back leg straight and contracted.
- Keep the front knee stacked over the ankle.
- Curl your low belly up off the front thigh contracting deeply into the inner core.

## Points of Alignment

- This is a twisting motion, which means that as we inhale we actively lengthen our spine and as we exhale we deepen the twist. Create more space in your front body by spinning top shoulder back as you roll under side ribs forward.
- Focus on extending the spine in the twist, stay rooted into back toes.



# Pyramid Pose / Parsvottanasana

## **Benefits**

This pose lengthens the hamstring of the front leg and strengthens the quadriceps when engaged. An incredible balance posture, cue for stability in this pose. Also this pose strengthens the entire spine; ankle, knee, and hip joints; and supportive structures of the joints

## **Setting up the pose**

- Step the left foot directly behind you and allow the toes to turn out at a 45-degree angle. Inhale, lift your torso out of your hips, and take a slight backbend.
- Exhale and fold forward from the hips, extending your torso over your right leg. Maintain a straight spine as you find your edge. Allow your gaze to settle to the floor.
- Inhale and lengthen your spine.

## **Refining Cues: Internal/External**

- Keep the upper and lower spine extended and, if choosing to round, only round the upper spine.
- Keep your hips stacked equally, side by side, engaging the front of the thighs.
- Hinge first at the hips, and keep the abdominals drawn up and in toward the spine.
- On each inhale, feel your chest expand and spine lengthen. On each exhale, relax the back of the front thigh and dissolve forward.

# Revolved Triangle / Parsvottanasana

## Benefits

- Revolved Triangle stretches the hamstrings, calves, spine, and hip musculature,
- relieves mild back pain, strengthens the hip muscles and
- stimulates the abdominal organs.

## Setting up the pose

- From pyramid pose place your right palm under the shoulder, on a block or on the floor. Inhale extend your spine and exhale and rotate your torso to the left, squaring off your hips with the front of your mat.
- Ground the outer edge and heel of your left foot down, and then turn your torso further to the left.
- Extend your left hand toward the sky. Gaze toward your left palm.

## Refining Cues: Internal/External

- Reach your hands away from each other; grow wide in your chest.
- As you inhale, lengthen the spine to create space. As you exhale, deepen your twist.
- Direct your gaze up, toward your top hand.
- Do not force the twist by pressing into the ground with your bottom hand. Lift your belly up and in.



# Boat Pose / Navasana

## Benefits

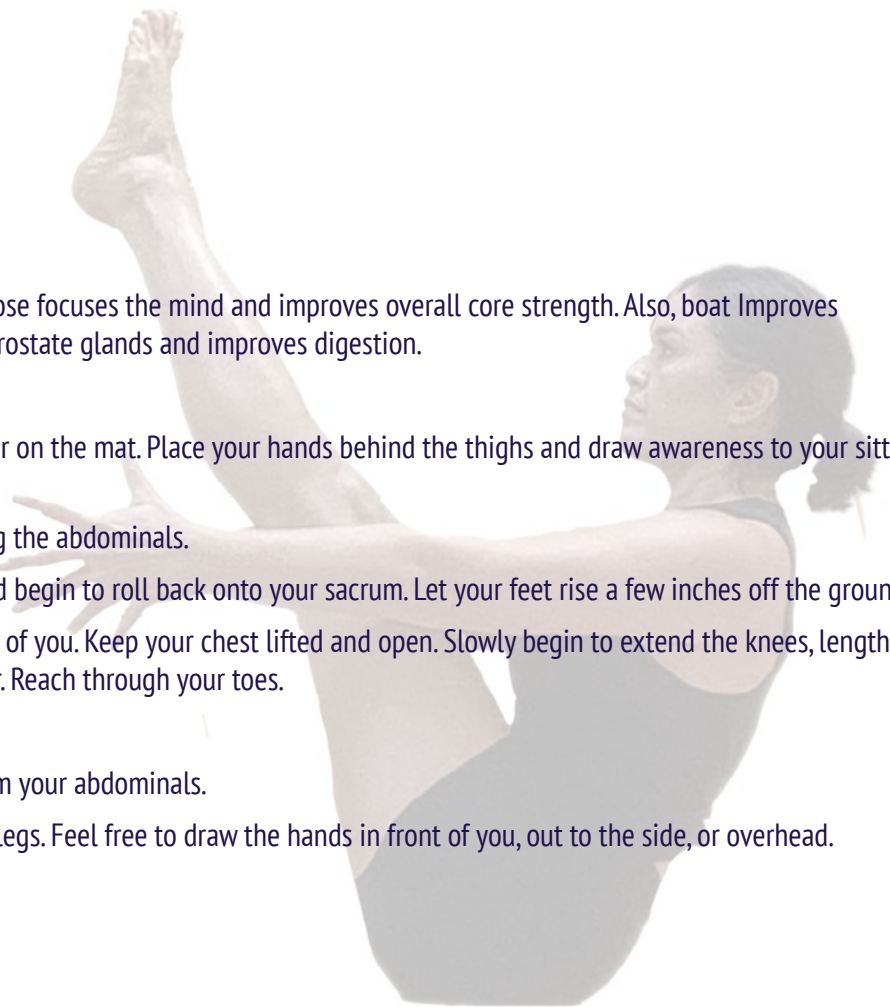
- Strengthens the hips flexors, abdominals, and low spine. Boat pose focuses the mind and improves overall core strength. Also, boat Improves coordination and balance, stimulates the kidneys, thyroid, and prostate glands and improves digestion.

## Setting up the pose

- Begin in a seated position with the knees bent and feet together on the mat. Place your hands behind the thighs and draw awareness to your sitting bones.
- Inhale and lift out of the torso. Lengthen the spine while firming the abdominals.
- Supporting the backs of your thighs with your hands, exhale and begin to roll back onto your sacrum. Let your feet rise a few inches off the ground.
- As you inhale, release your hands and extend your arms in front of you. Keep your chest lifted and open. Slowly begin to extend the knees, lengthening your legs diagonally, at around a 45-degree angle with the floor. Reach through your toes.

## Refining Cues: Internal/External

- Keep the upper and lower spine lifted through the torso and firm your abdominals.
- Squeeze the knees and reach through your toes to extend your legs. Feel free to draw the hands in front of you, out to the side, or overhead.



# Locust Pose / Salabhasana

## Benefits:

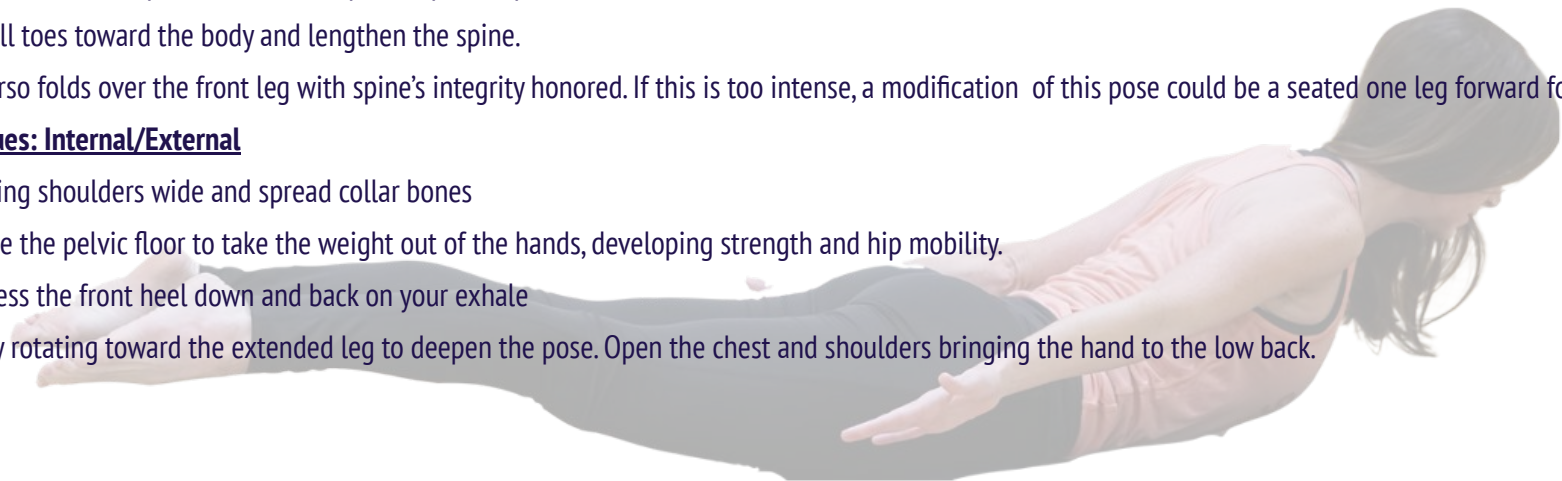
Locust pose is great for strengthening the back muscles, hamstrings, and core. This pose stimulates the abdominal organs, aids in digestion and improves the posture. This pose is a dynamic back-bending posture which is stimulating to the nervous system.

## Setting up the pose

- From low lunge shift hips back. Keep hips lifted and bring the back hip over back knee. Insure that the hips are squared over the mat.
- Roll the front hip crease back to square hips, and put a microbend in the front knee.
- Pull toes toward the body and lengthen the spine.
- Torso folds over the front leg with spine's integrity honored. If this is too intense, a modification of this pose could be a seated one leg forward fold.

## Refining Cues: Internal/External

- Bring shoulders wide and spread collar bones
- Use the pelvic floor to take the weight out of the hands, developing strength and hip mobility.
- Press the front heel down and back on your exhale
- Try rotating toward the extended leg to deepen the pose. Open the chest and shoulders bringing the hand to the low back.



# Bow Pose / Dhanurasana

Dhanu = Bow; Asana = Seat

## Benefits

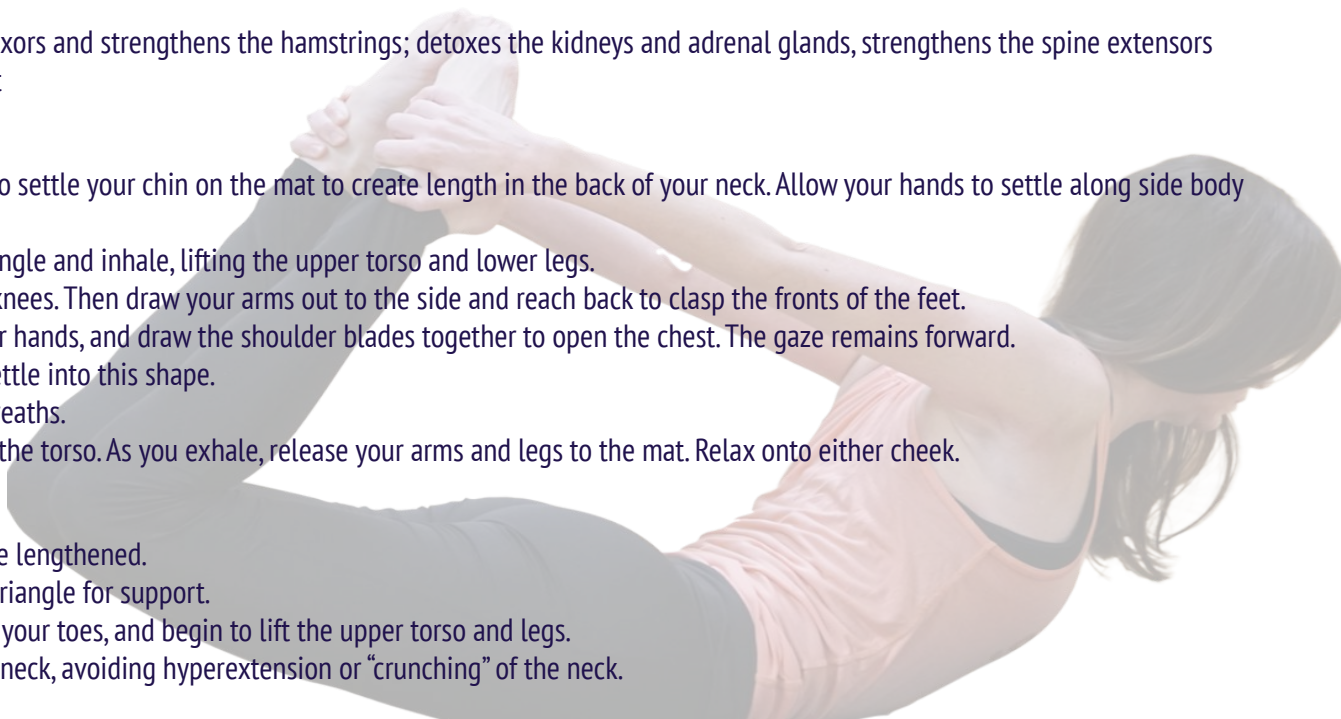
- Bow pose lengthens the hip flexors and strengthens the hamstrings; detoxes the kidneys and adrenal glands, strengthens the spine extensors and opens the chest and throat

## Setting up the pose

- Lie down on your belly. Begin to settle your chin on the mat to create length in the back of your neck. Allow your hands to settle along side body with palms facing the mat.
- Root down into your pelvic triangle and inhale, lifting the upper torso and lower legs.
- Exhale and begin to bend the knees. Then draw your arms out to the side and reach back to clasp the fronts of the feet.
- Inhale, press your feet into your hands, and draw the shoulder blades together to open the chest. The gaze remains forward.
- Exhale and allow yourself to settle into this shape.
- Hold this pose for 5-10 slow breaths.
- To exit, inhale and lift through the torso. As you exhale, release your arms and legs to the mat. Relax onto either cheek.

## Refining Cues: Internal/External

- Keep the upper and lower spine lengthened.
- Ground down into your pelvic triangle for support.
- Reach through your crown and your toes, and begin to lift the upper torso and legs.
- Keep space in the back of your neck, avoiding hyperextension or “crunching” of the neck.



# Bridge Pose / Setu Bandha Sarvangasana

## Benefits

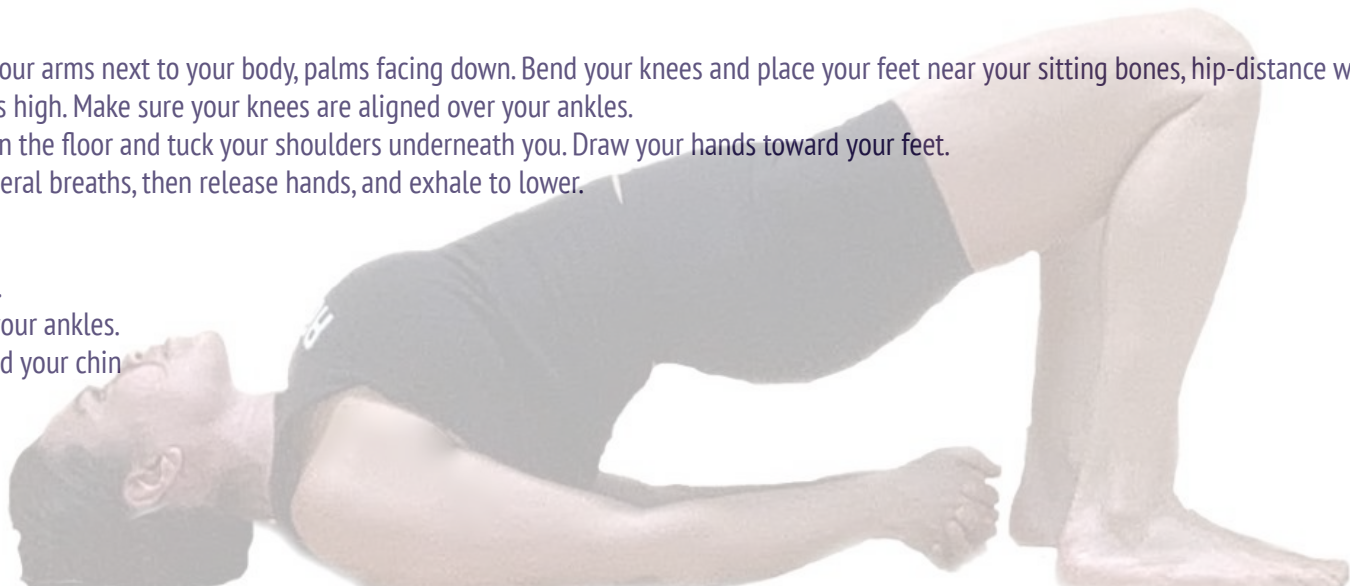
- Stimulates the thyroid; Improves posture and opens rounded shoulders
- Stretches the abdominal organs and improves digestion
- Tones the female reproductive organs; Relieves anxiety, fatigue, and insomnia

## Setting up the pose

- Lie on your back with your arms next to your body, palms facing down. Bend your knees and place your feet near your sitting bones, hip-distance wide.
- Inhale and lift your hips high. Make sure your knees are aligned over your ankles.
- Interlace your fingers on the floor and tuck your shoulders underneath you. Draw your hands toward your feet.
- Stay in the pose for several breaths, then release hands, and exhale to lower.

## Refining Cues:

- Keep your legs parallel.
- Align your knees over your ankles.
- Reach your chest toward your chin



# Wheel Pose / Urdhva Dhanurasana

## Benefits

- Stimulates the thyroid; Relieves anxiety, fatigue, and insomnia
- Improves posture and opens rounded shoulders
- Stretches the abdominal organs and improves digestion; Tones the female reproductive organs

## Setting up the pose

- Lie on your back, bend your knees, and draw your heels toward your sitting bones.
- Inhale and root down into your feet. Begin to firm your glutes and lift the pelvis upward, off the floor. Exhale and engage the inner thighs to keep them parallel.
- Inhale and press your palms into the floor alongside your head, with fingertips facing the shoulders. Extend your arms and lift your head off the ground. Be sure to you're your wrists in line with your elbows, and allow the head to hang heavy between them.
- Exhale and allow yourself to settle into this shape. Hold this pose for up to 5-10 slow breaths.
- To exit, lift through the torso on an inhalation. Then slightly tuck your chin and release to the mat on an exhalation. Slowly draw your knees to your chest.
- Hug thighs inward and lengthen back of neck

# Seated Forward Fold/Paschimottanasana

## Benefits

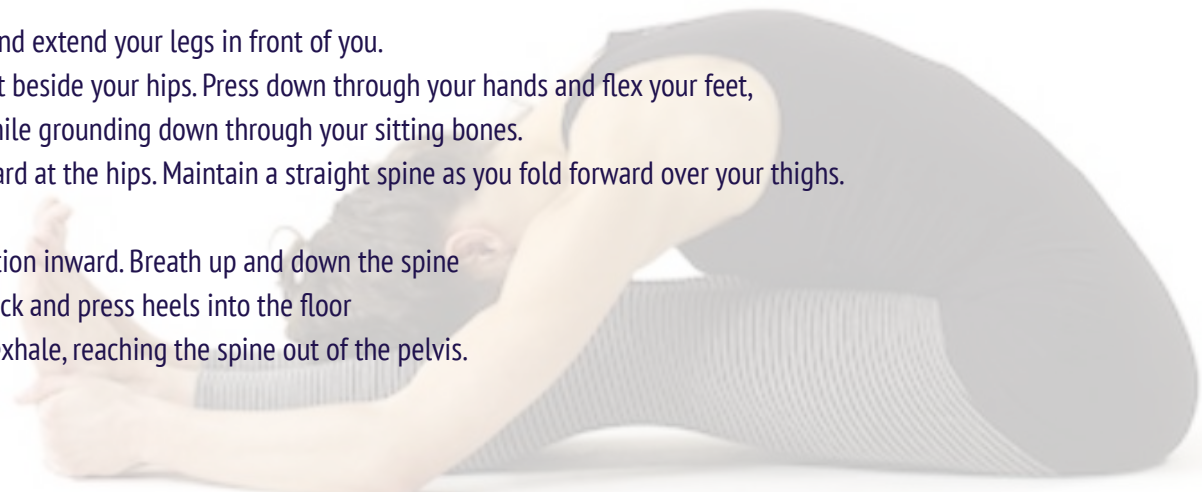
- Stretches the hamstrings, shoulders, and lower back. Lengthens the spine
- Invigorates the nervous system. Eases the symptoms of menstruation and menopause
- Stimulates the abdominal organs and improves digestion
- Relieves stress, anxiety, and mild depression

## Setting up the pose

- Come to a seated position and extend your legs in front of you.
- Place your hands on the mat beside your hips. Press down through your hands and flex your feet,
- Inhale and lift your torso while grounding down through your sitting bones.
- exhale, begin to hinge forward at the hips. Maintain a straight spine as you fold forward over your thighs.

## Refining Cues

- Soften gaze and draw attention inward. Breathe up and down the spine
- Lengthen the back of the neck and press heels into the floor
- Engage hip flexors as you exhale, reaching the spine out of the pelvis.



# Happy Baby / Ananda Balasana

## Benefits

- Realigns and stretches the spine. Gently stretches the groins, hamstrings, and inner thighs
- Opens the hips. Happy baby calms the mind.
- Great for releasing stress.

## Setting up the pose

- Lie on your back. Exhale and draw your knees toward your chest. Grasp the outer edges of your feet with your hands.
- Widen your knees and draw them toward your armpits. Align your ankles over your knees.
- Press your tailbone and shoulders into the ground. Flex your feet and press them into your hands, while pulling your hands toward the floor.
- Stay in Happy Baby pose for several breaths. Exhale and release to the ground. Draw your knees to your chest for a counter stretch.

## Refining Cues

- Create resistance between the hands and the feet.
- Create length in your lower back by pressing the tailbone toward the floor.

# Fish Pose / Halasana

Matsya = Fish; Asana = Pose, seat

## **Benefits**

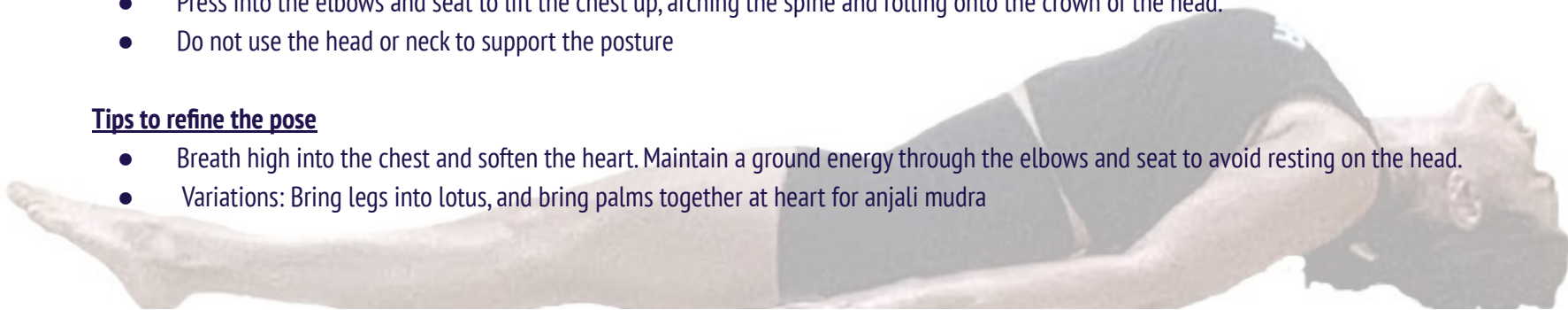
Fish Pose stretches the front of the body, particularly the throat, chest, abdomen, hip flexors, and intercostals (the muscles between your ribs). It strengthens the upper back muscles and the back of the neck, which improves spinal flexibility and posture

## **Getting into the pose**

- Lie on your back and bring arms alongside of your body. Slide the hands palms down under the tops of the thighs, just below the buttocks.
- Have the elbows slightly bent, next to the sides of your torso.
- Press into the elbows and seat to lift the chest up, arching the spine and rolling onto the crown of the head.
- Do not use the head or neck to support the posture

## **Tips to refine the pose**

- Breathe high into the chest and soften the heart. Maintain a ground energy through the elbows and seat to avoid resting on the head.
- Variations: Bring legs into lotus, and bring palms together at heart for anjali mudra



# Supine Twist / Supta Matsyendrasana

## Benefits

- Balances sacroiliac joints, Improves digestion
- Relieves pain in the low back, spine, and hips

## Setting up the pose

- Starting on your back, Inhale and engage your core. Bend your right leg and draw the knee to your chest.
- As you exhale, draw your right knee across the left side of your body. Allow the spine to gently rotate, placing your left hand on top of your right knee for support. Rest your bent knee on the ground, so your right thigh aligns with your hips.
- Inhale and extend your right arm out to the side, at shoulder height, with your palm facing up.
- Feel free to draw your gaze toward the open arm to deepen the stretch.

## Refining Cues

- On each inhale, reach through the extended arm and the bent knee in opposite directions.
- On each exhale, work toward rolling your entire rib cage to the mat to ground the shoulders.
- Bring your knee toward your chest, and slowly draw it across the body.
- You should not feel anything sharp or shooting; if so, back off the stretch or release the posture.



# Plow Pose / Halasana

## Benefits

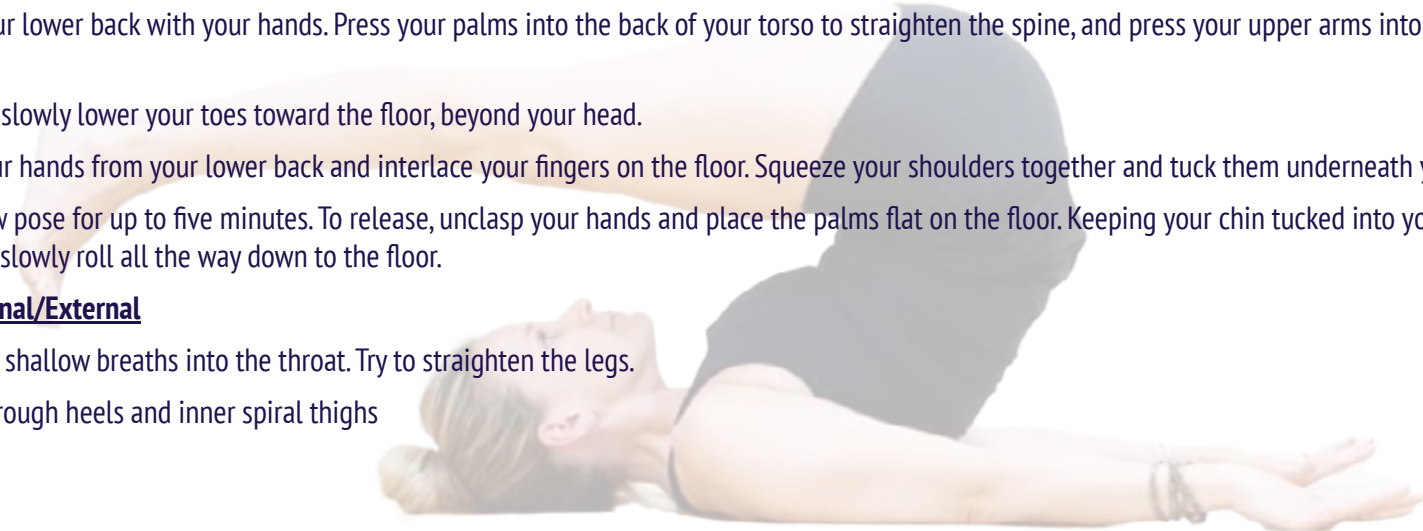
- Increases spinal flexibility and stretches the shoulders and low back.
- Stimulates the thyroid gland, massages the internal organs and boosts immunity; Relieves stress and fatigue

## Setting up the pose

- Lie on your back with your arms alongside your body, palms facing down. Inhale and use momentum to reach your feet toward the sky.
- Support your lower back with your hands. Press your palms into the back of your torso to straighten the spine, and press your upper arms into the ground.
- Exhale and slowly lower your toes toward the floor, beyond your head.
- Release your hands from your lower back and interlace your fingers on the floor. Squeeze your shoulders together and tuck them underneath you.
- Stay in Plow pose for up to five minutes. To release, unclasp your hands and place the palms flat on the floor. Keeping your chin tucked into your chest, exhale and slowly roll all the way down to the floor.

## Refining Cues: Internal/External

- Breathe shallow breaths into the throat. Try to straighten the legs.
- Push through heels and inner spiral thighs



# Shoulderstand / Salamba Sarvangasana

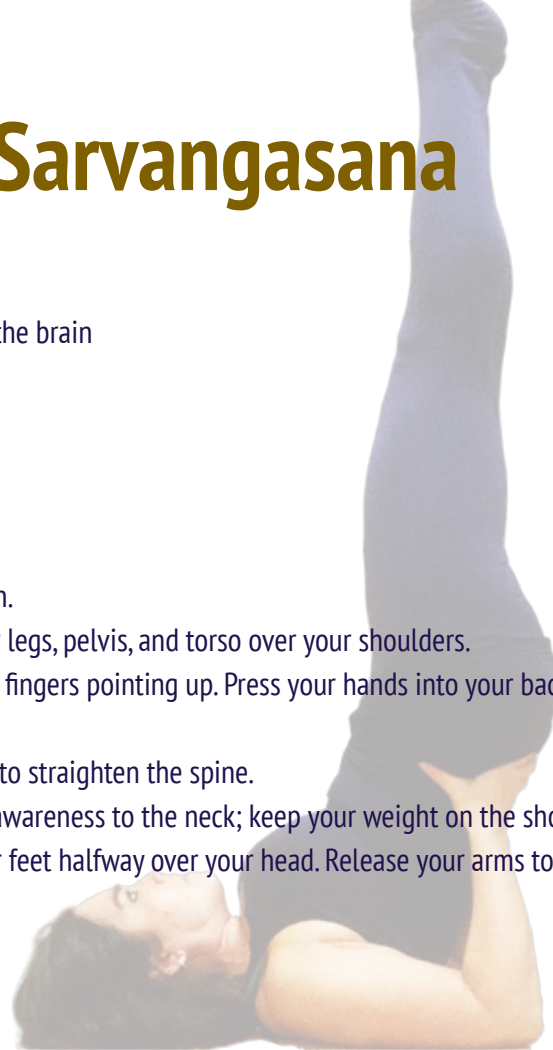
*salamba* = with support; *sarva* = all; *anga* = limb

## Benefits

- Stimulates the thyroid and parathyroid glands; Increases circulation to the brain
- Revitalizes the ears and eyes; Massages the abdominal organs
- Boosts the immune system
- Calms the mind; Soothes the nervous system

## Setting up the pose

- Lie on your back with your arms alongside your body, palms facing down.
- Inhale and use momentum to lift your feet toward the sky, aligning your legs, pelvis, and torso over your shoulders.
- Support your lower back by placing the palms on the back of your torso, fingers pointing up. Press your hands into your back and your upper arms into the ground to straighten the legs.
- Draw your elbows close to each other. Walk your hands down your back to straighten the spine.
- Tuck your chin into your sternum and lift through your toes. Bring your awareness to the neck; keep your weight on the shoulders and upper arms.
- Stay in the pose for several breaths and up to three minutes. Lower your feet halfway over your head. Release your arms to the floor. Keep your chin tucked into your chest and slowly roll all the way down to the floor.



# Headstand / Salambasana

## Benefits

- Stimulates the brain and relieves stress
- Tones and stimulates the abdominal organs
- Improves cardiac output. Lowers blood pressure and heart rate
- Strengthens the shoulders and improves spinal alignment and strength

## Set Up the Pose

- Start in a tabletop position. Place your forearms on the floor and lace your fingers together.
- Place the crown of your head onto the floor between the palms, and cup the palms behind the back of the skull.
- Inhale, lift your knees off the floor, and walk the feet toward your elbows into an inverted “V” shape. Feel the weight of your body transferring into your shoulders and forearms. Be careful not to put excess weight on your neck and crown.
- As you exhale, firm your abdominals and lift your feet away from the floor. Draw both feet up toward the sky and stack the arches of your feet over the center of the pelvis. Align your pelvis over the crown.
- Engage the inner thighs to turn the legs inward slightly. Press the heels of your feet toward the ceiling. Firm the tailbone against the pelvis and draw the abdominals in.
- To release from Supported Headstand, exhale and draw the abdominals in for support. Then slowly draw your feet down onto the mat. Relax into child’s pose for 5 breaths



# Savasana / Corpse Pose

## Benefits

- Calms the nervous system. Relaxes the body and settles the mind. Savasana allows for the practice to settle into the body and relieves anxiety, stress, mild depression, and fatigue.

## Setting up the pose

- Gently recline onto your back and extend your legs. Position your lower back by lifting your pelvis, pressing it toward your tailbone with your hands, and then resting it back onto the mat.
- Release your legs, soften the groin, and let your feet turn out evenly and naturally. Allow your legs to rest heavily into the mat and your arms to settle alongside the body. Place the palms facing upward to open the chest and shoulder space.
- When you feel comfortable, close your eyes and take a deep inhale. Notice how your chest expands and body lifts. As you exhale, notice how your body settles and dissolves into the floor.
- Scan your body for any residual tension and breathe into that space. Allow your eyes to sink back into your head and gaze inward. Soften your tongue, jaw, nose, eyebrows, and forehead.
- Allow the body to dissolve into the mat, feeling it sink heavily into your space

