

## Shanti Yoga Teacher Training

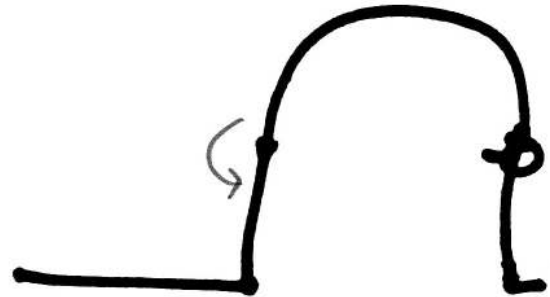
This workbook has illustrations of the following asanas which are some of your “Fundamental Asanas” you need to demonstrate for your certification. To see the other asanas, check Chapter 4 in your manual. More information on most of these asanas can be found in Erich Schiffman’s Moving Into Stillness, Part Three.

1. Sukhasana
2. Dandasana
3. Bidalasana
4. Ardha Chandrasana I
5. Vrksasana
6. Utkatasana
7. Uttanasana
8. Parsvottanasana
9. Trikonasana
10. Virabhadrasana II
11. Virabhadrasana I
12. Adho Mukha Svanasana
13. Parsvakonasana
14. Setu Bandhasana
15. Caturanga Dandasana
16. Urdhva Mukha Svanasana
17. Bhujangasana
18. Dhanurasana
19. Ustrasana
20. Urdhva Dhanurasana
21. Parighasana
22. Parivrtta Trikonasana
23. Ardha Chandrasana II
24. Marichyasana I & III
25. Adho Mukha Vrksasana
26. Sirsasana
27. Sarvangasana
28. Halasana
29. Savasana

**Bidalasana**  
*Cat Pose*  
bidL-AHS-anna

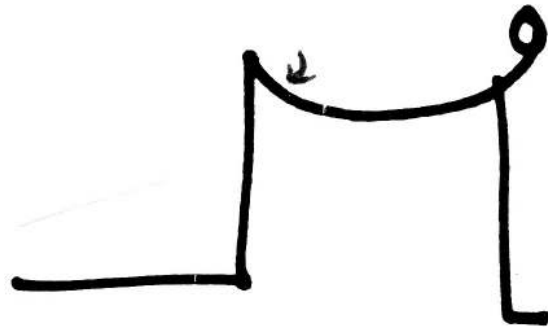
**Cat Tilt (retroversion of the pelvic girdle)**

- pelvis rotates back around femur heads, coccyx toward pubic bone
- navel moves up towards spine
- abdomen and buttocks contract
- back muscles elongate
- arms lengthen, hands push down to lift out of shoulders, head curls in
- Squeezing inward reduces lung volume, so begin on the exhale



**Dog Tilt (anteversion of the pelvic girdle)**

- pelvis rotates forward around femur heads
- coccyx, sit bones turn up, buttocks widens
- spine dives into back
- the back muscles contract and the abdomen stretches
- lengthen arms, chest moves forward
- gaze upwards
- open chest increases lung volume, begin on inhale



**Neutral**

- front and back of spine the same length
- outer shoulders towards hips, front shoulders lift



**Notes:**

Be gently persistent, do not overdo but proceed mindfully, moving through the spine.

Think of the pelvis, not the spine. Dial pelvis forward for “anteversion”, backward for “retroversion. In neutral your spine extends, sacrum is level, parallel to the floor.

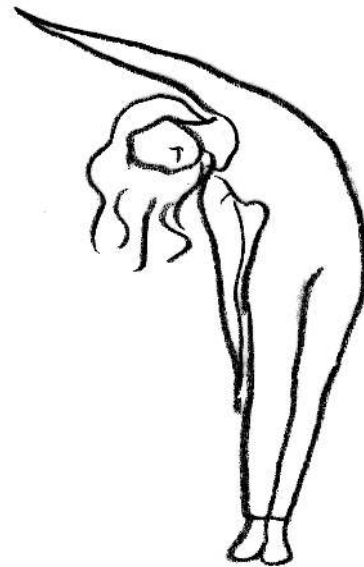
**Benefits:**

- Loosens spine and back. Stretches front and back body, frees neck and shoulders.
- Teaches awareness, playing the edge, breathwork, moving from the core
- Provides vocabulary for instruction (pelvis always be in one of these positions)
- Reduces tension in neck & shoulders while massaging kidneys.
- Stimulates spinal fluid, digestive tract, improves circulation through spine and core, third chakra

**Ardha Chandrasana I**  
*Standing Side Stretch*  
are-dah chan-DRAHS-anna  
ardha = half

chandra = glittering, shining, having the brilliancy or hue of light (said of the gods); usually translated as "moon"

- Begin in Tadasana, feet together, soles merge into floor
- Press down evenly across ball of foot & heels
- Lift arches & ankles up
- Contract quadriceps to draw kneecaps up
- Fully extend knees w/o locking
- Femurs & inner groins press back
- Tailbone in & down to elongate the low back
- Lift out of the base of pelvis
- Abdomen draws towards low back
- Inhale, raise & externally rotate the left arm until it's vertical, alongside your ear, with the palm facing inward
- Feel the two lines of energy, one up the arm and one down the legs, and then establish the alignment of your center.
- Exhale, lean to the right, turn your head & look down, pressing your hips sideways.
- Shoulders relax & shoulderblades draw down, flat on back.



**Notes:**

The arches of the feet are lifted, connecting with the upward lifting in the pelvic floor, the lower abdomen, rib cage, cervical spine, and the top of the head. The shoulder blades are dropped onto the support of the rib cage and connect with the downward release of the tailbone and the grounding of the points of contact between each foot and the floor.

**Benefits:**

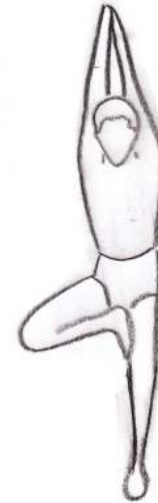
Tremendous side stretch increasing flexibility of spine, arms and rib cage. Stimulates liver, kidney & spleen function. Activates the squeeze & soak principle on the side body musculature, endocrine & nervous systems and the primary meridians along the spine (ida & pingala).

## **Vrksasana**

### *Tree Pose*

vrik-SHAHS-anna      vrksa = tree

- From Tadasana, shift your weight slightly to one foot, keeping the inner foot firm to the floor
- Find a drishti, gaze point
- Slide the other foot up the balancing leg, pressing the heel into the leg & externally rotate the femur
- Extend that inner thigh toward the knee
- Knee points towards the floor
- Draw the navel toward the spine
- Extend both sides of the waist
- Slide the shoulder blades down
- Press the palms together and stretch the arms upward



#### Notes:

Do this against the wall to build strength & awareness. To challenge, try closing eyes, standing on a soft surface.

#### Benefits:

Strengthens the ankles, thighs, calves and spine. Stretches the groins and inner thighs, shoulders and chest. Stimulates the abdominal organs, diaphragm and heart and reduces flat feet. Teaches risk taking and conditions the proprioceptive ability to balance. Can relieve sciatica.

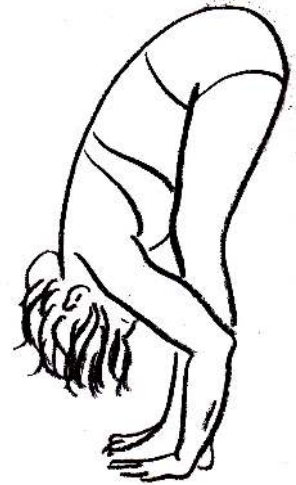
## Uttanasana

*intense standing forward fold*

OOT-tan-AHS-anna

ut = intense tan = stretch

- press heels down, lift arches up
- distribute weight evenly between ball & heel of feet
- shift weight forward so hips are above feet, weight is towards balls of feet
- fully extend the knees, lift quadriceps & hamstrings
- widen & lift buttock bones to release the pelvis
- lengthen the spine, soften the belly
- release the neck
- gravity is your friend, relax into it



### Notes:

Uttanasana can be performed either as an intense, active forward bend, or as a passive, restorative pose. In either case, keep the legs active though knees might need to be bent. In the passive version, gravity should do the work. Hips could be against a wall with legs bent & feet about 12 inches away or with hands or arms on a chair. In the active version, vigorously extend the chest and spine as the main action. People experiencing tightness in the back of the legs sometimes force themselves down which increases tightness & congestion in the rectus femoris & psoas. Instead soften the knees to find space in the hip joint, allowing the spine to release. Only then does lengthening the legs produce an even stretch along the entire back line of the body. People with back injury, osteoporosis, or both should approach deep forward bending cautiously & gradually. Those with high blood pressure should go into this pose gradually & remain in it only if their breathing is not strained. Those with low blood pressure should come out of this very slowly to avoid dizziness.

### Benefits:

Teaches the fundamentals of all forward folds. Uttanasana has two lines of energy radiating outward from your center. Hips are in dog tilt and the spinal column is the primary line of energy. The idea is to elongate the spine outward through the crown of the head as you fold into the pose. Stretches entire backside of body, especially legs & lower back. Elongates spine. Increases flexibility. Massages internal organs, tones liver, spleen, kidneys. Increases blood circulation to legs, torso and brain. Restorative after strenuous poses.

# Shanti Yoga Teacher Training

## **Parsvottanasana**

*Intense Side Stretch*

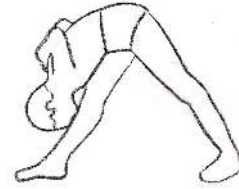
parsh-voh-tahn-AHS-anna

ut = intense

Parsva = side, flank

tan = to stretch

- Press the palms together or hold opposite elbows or fist to fist.
- Open chest upwards.
- Press down through the back heel and revolve the back leg inward.
- Femurs & inner thighs press back.
- Hips square towards the front of the mat.
- Fully extend knees without locking.
- Lift out of the base of the pelvis & extend the spine forward.
- Fold at the top of the front leg, sending the femurs & groins back.
- Shoulders move back, shoulderblades retract.
- Continue to press the palms together and keep the shoulders back.
- Extend the chest on inhalations, deepen the fold on exhalations.
- Tongue, throat, face are relaxed.
- Breathe naturally but fully.



### Notes:

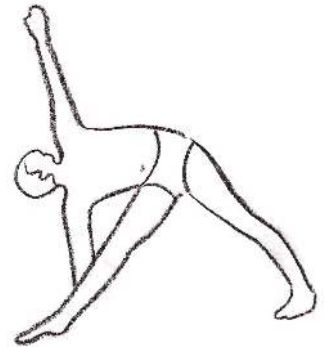
This forward bend is more intense in the hamstrings than Uttanasana because the position of the back leg directs more of the flexion into the hip joint and spinal flexibility is less of an issue. Although the back leg is positioned with the leg turned out slightly, the action of the muscles is toward internal rotation, to bring the pelvis into alignment. The anchoring of the back outer heel is important to counterbalance this internal rotation so that it doesn't get overdone.

### Benefits:

Tremendous leg, back and shoulder stretch. Increase flexibility of hips, spine, shoulders, and legs. Strengthens legs. Tones abdominal organs, Develops balance and stamina. Improves circulation throughout the body, especially the head.

**Trikonasana**  
*Triangle Pose*  
Trikonasana  
(trik-cone-AHS-anna)  
trikona = three angle

- Spread feet leg length (3' to 4') apart
- Rotate both thighs out, front knee in line with 2nd toe, back foot turned towards front of mat in line with knee
- Press down into the outer edge of the back heel and the front inner heel, lift arches & ankles up
- Lift (contract) quadriceps to draw kneecaps up & fully extend knees w/o locking thrust back calf to the rear
- Femurs & inner groins press back & tailbone moves in & down towards back heel to elongate the back
- Squeeze the front leg buttock into the body and lengthen the bottom ribs forward towards the front foot
- Elongate lower side of the trunk
- Lift out of the base of pelvis towards the heart center
- Abdomen draws towards low back
- Align the torso and both shoulders with the midline of the bottom leg
- Elongate the spine, broaden both chest & back body, extend into the crown
- Lift & broaden front edges of the armpits, relax shoulders, shoulderblades draw down & bottom tip scoops in & forward, low front ribs draw in
- Rotate head until you can see the top thumb, keep neck in alignment with the rest of the spine
- Spread top palm & thrust fingers toward the ceiling
- Extend the chest fully and rotate upper side of the body to the rear



**Notes:**

You're actually forming an equilateral triangle because the legs are about the same distance apart as the leg length. Triangle has five lines of energy radiating outward from your center. One line of energy travels downward through each leg, one line stretches outward through each arm, and one line moves up the spine and out the crown of your head. One hip will be in dog tilt, the other in cat tilt. There are many subtleties of stretch and alignment in this pose.

**Benefits:**

Increases strength and flexibility of the feet, legs, hips, and back. Opens the chest, elongates the spine, relieves backache, strengthens neck. Improves digestion and elimination.

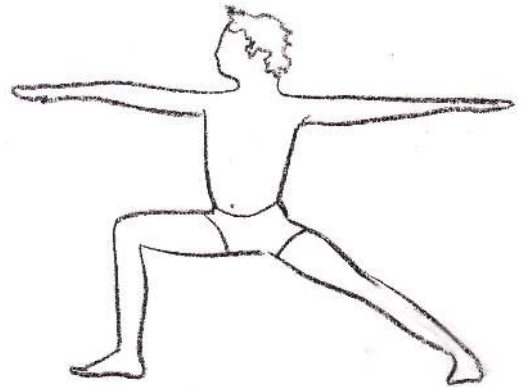
## Virabhadrasana II

### *Warrior II*

veer-ah-bah-DRAHS-anna

virabhadra = the name of a fierce mythical warrior

- Feet same distance apart as in Virabhadrasana I, so that your front knee does not pass your ankle
- Press down through both heels & lift your ankles up
- Front thigh parallel to the floor, knee directly above the front ankle & over the second toe
- Draw the front leg buttock into the body as you move the knee out
- Roll the back thigh out
- Trunk perpendicular, hips parallel to floor
- Lift out of the floor of the pelvis
- Open the chest, lift the sternum, shoulder blades into chest
- Fully stretch arms
- Femurs & inner groins press back
- Tailbone in & down to elongate the low back
- Lift out of the base of pelvis
- Abdomen draws towards low back
- Arms straight, muscles hugging the bone, external rotated with lower arm pronated, palms facing floor
- Lift & broaden front edges of the armpits & chest while back edges press down & widen
- Center of perineum ascends, lifting through the core & the crown



#### Notes:

The arches of the feet are lifted, connecting with the upward lifting in the pelvic floor, the lower abdomen, rib cage, cervical spine, and the top of the head. The shoulder blades are dropped onto the support of the rib cage and connect with the downward release of the tailbone and the grounding of the points of contact between each foot and the floor.

#### Benefits:

Opens groins and hip joints, stretches the inner thigh muscles, strengthens buttocks, legs, quadriceps, arches of the feet, abdominals, shoulders, and arms. Opens chest, improves breathing. Increases circulation throughout body.

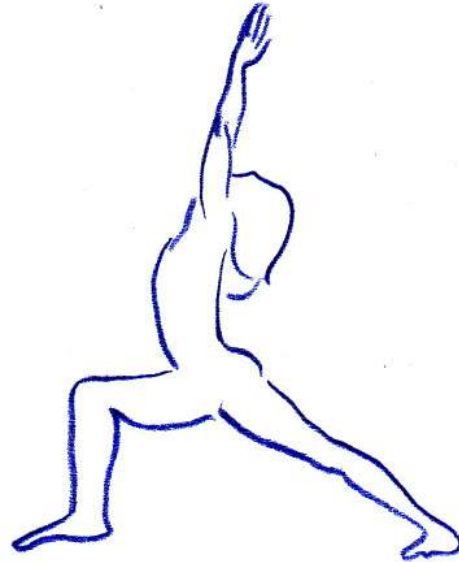
## Virabhadrasana I

### *Warrior I*

veer-ah-bah-DRAHS-anna

virabhadra = name of a fierce mythical warrior, exalted warrior

- Front knee at 45 degree angle, points over 2nd toe of front knee
- Pubic bone to back heel, tailbone to front knee
- Lift arches & ankles up
- Press outer heel to floor
- Chest rotates forward
- Tailbone in & down to elongate the back
- Lift out of the base of pelvis
- Abdomen draws towards low back
- Arms are straight & external rotated
- Back of the heart moves to the front of the heart
- Shoulders relax & shoulderblades draw down
- Bottom tip of shoulderblade moves forward, low front ribs draw slightly in
- Center of perineum ascends, lifting the core of the body & the crown of the head
- Tongue, throat, face are relaxed
- Breathe naturally but fully.



#### Notes:

The arches of the feet are lifted, connecting with the upward lifting in the pelvic floor, the lower abdomen, rib cage, cervical spine, and the top of the head. The shoulder blades are dropped onto the support of the rib cage and connect with the downward release of the tailbone and the grounding of the points of contact between each foot and the floor.

#### Benefits:

Strengthens legs, back, shoulders and arms. Develops strength, stability and stamina in the entire body. Increases flexibility in the front groins, hips, back, and shoulders. Opens chest. Beginning of backbending poses. Strengthens energy in body.

#### Contraindications:

Those with high blood pressure, don't take arms overhead. Prenatal after the first trimester, the weight of the abdomen may strain the low back.

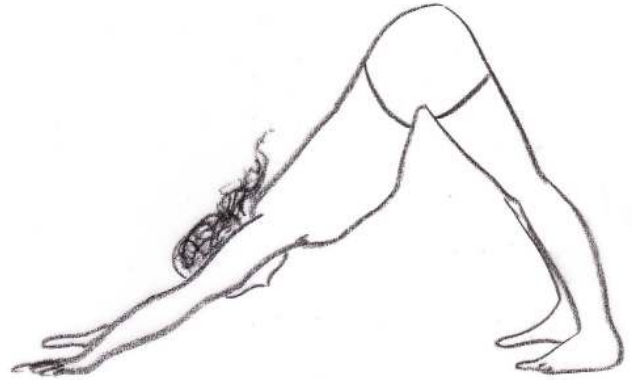
## **Adho Mukha Svanasana**

### *Downward Facing Dog Pose*

AH-doh MOO-kah shvah-NAHS-anna

adho mukha = having the face downward    shvana=dog

- Press base of ten fingers and heel of hand down
- Wrist wrinkle is parallel to front of mat, hands spread maximally
- Lift wrists & arms up out of hands
- Press heels down, calves down to heels
- Lift hamstrings up out of knees
- Draw upper arms very straight & open through armpits & chest
- Release neck
- Draw weight off the arms & back into legs
- Take top of thighs & inner groins back & away from each other (internal rotation of legs)
- Lift the buttock bones until sacrum & pubic bone are perpendicular to thighs
- Open & extend chest
- Open armpits fully (external rotation of upper arms)
- Relax face



#### Notes:

Dog Pose has two lines of energy radiating outward from your center. The center of this pose, as always, is your pelvis. Hips will be in dog tilt. The first line of energy moves down the legs and into the feet, the second line travels through your spine and arms into your hands on the floor. Make this pose dynamic by telescoping through these lines, establishing a “straightish” line down your spine & down your back legs. The idea in this pose is to form a triangular, pyramidal shape. You’ll look like a dog stretching in the morning.

#### Benefits:

Stretches entire backside of the body, especially the arms, shoulders, hips, hamstrings, calves, and Achilles tendon. Strengthens hands, arms, and upper body, opens the chest, improves breathing. Overall body stretch, removes fatigue, and rejuvenates body. Lengthens spine, rejuvenates discs. Increases circulation to brain.

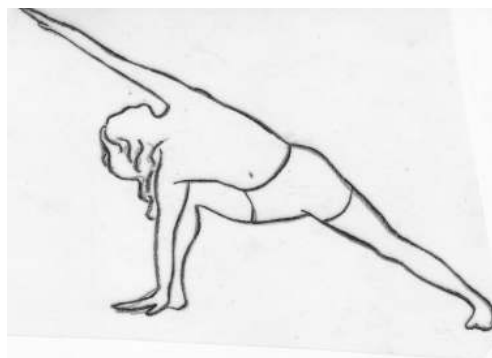
## Utthita Parsvakonasana

### Extended Side Angle Pose

oo-TEE-tah parsh-vah-cone-AHS-anna

utthita = extended      parsva = side, flank      kona = angle

- Same stance as Virabhadrasana II (front heel to back foot arch, feet 4 - 5' apart or until front knee forms right angle)
- Press down into the outer edge of the back heel and the front inner heel, lift arches & ankles up
- Bend front knee to a right angle, shin perpendicular, thigh parallel to floor, knee directly above ankle
- Front leg is in external rotation
- Move front buttock into body, front knee presses against arm, extend front inner groin
- From hips, press down into back heel
- Lift back inner thigh
- Elongate the spine, open the chest
- Revolve the top waist and chest toward the ceiling
- From the back hip press into the heel, from back waist stretch into the fingers
- Extend chest fully
- Squeeze the front leg buttock into the body and lengthen the bottom ribs forward towards the front foot
- Elongate lower side of the trunk
- Lift out of the base of pelvis towards the heart center
- Abdomen draws towards low back
- Align the torso and both shoulders with the midline of the bottom leg
- Elongate the spine, broaden both chest & back body, extend into the crown
- Lift & broaden front edges of the armpits & relax shoulders & shoulderblades draw down
- Rotate head until you can see the top thumb



#### Notes:

Following your hand with your gaze helps keep your head in the proper position.

#### Benefits:

Increases strength and flexibility of the thighs, legs, hips, and back. Opens the chest, stretches side waist and lateral rib cage areas, elongates the spine, relieves backache, strengthens neck. Strengthens arms. Improves digestion and elimination.

## **Sukhasana**

### *Easy Cross-legged Pose*

Sukhasana (suk-AHS-anna)

sukh = joy, happiness, and comfort

- Come into a comfortable seated position in which the knees are below the hip joints
- Merge the sit bones into the earth
- Feel the stability of the base of the posture
- From this base, allow the spine to lengthen upwards maintaining the natural curves
- Abdomen draws towards low back
- Arms are straight & external rotated
- Lift & broaden front edges of the armpits & chest while back edges press down & widen
- Tongue, throat, face are relaxed
- Breathe naturally but fully.



#### Notes:

Beyond the idea of restoring natural function to the pelvis and lower back, yogic sitting also has an association with more advanced practices. The word asana can be translated as “seat,” and many believe, all of asana practice can be viewed as a way of feeling the spine, limbs and breathing so that the yogi can spend extended periods of time in a seated position from which the distraction of dealing with gravity and breath can disappear, feeling the body’s energies for the deeper contemplative work of mediation. With modifications, this is an optimal beginning pose to teach fundamentals of spinal awareness and is a great position for pranayama and meditation.

#### Benefits:

Often considered the starting point of asana practice, sukhasana develops awareness of fundamentals throughout the body which will be taken into most every standing posture. With emphasis on both sthirra and sukha, elongating and relaxing, front body lifting, back body drawing down, sukhasana teaches balance. Opens the hips, lengthens the spine, promotes groundedness and inner calm. Amplifies the state of serenity, tranquility, and eliminates anxiety and relieves physical and mental exhaustion and tiredness.

#### Contraindications:

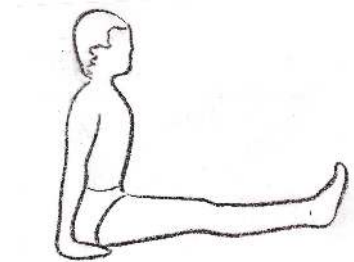
Severe knee injury, though with adequate props should be available OK.

## Dandasana

### *Staff Pose*

dan - DAHS-anna          danda = stick, staff

- Legs straight on floor, sacrum into body, center of sit bones firmly down, perineum, pit of abdomen in and up, pelvis level to floor
- Press down evenly across ball of foot & heels
- Legs parallel, press down evenly the back thigh, knee, calf
- Open the soles of feet, inner edge of foot extends forward, outer edge slightly back
- Press hands into floor and draw sides and back of torso up
- Shoulder blades draw into body, sternum lifts up, diaphragm relaxed
- Shoulders back, arms rotate out, chest open
- Draw everything toward medial core, sides, back, front.
- Contract quadriceps to draw kneecaps up
- Fully extend knees w/o locking
- Femurs & inner groins press into floor
- Lift out of the base of pelvis
- Abdomen draws towards low back
- Tongue, throat, face are relaxed
- Breathe naturally but fully.



#### Notes:

This pose clearly reveals how tightness in the legs can create spinal flexion. Obstacles that show up in this pose are often the cause of difficulties in more complex poses, where the restrictions are less obvious. Not everyone can use their arms to help create the neutral spinal extension due to proportional differences in the arm to torso length. However, this might also be caused by chronically elevated or depressed positioning of the scapulae on the rib cage or if the spine is unable to extend into vertical because of tightness in the hips and legs, the arms may seem too long. For vinyasa students interested in jump throughs, knowing your arm to torso length is important and this pose can show if blocks under hands are necessary.

#### Benefits:

Brings awareness to the torso to arm ratio, hip/leg flexibility. Strengthens the back muscles, the abdomen, legs, arms, and stretches the shoulders and chest  
Improves posture

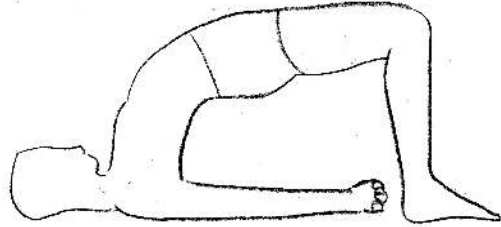
## Setu Bandhasana

### *Bridge Pose*

SET-too BAHN-dahs-anna

bandha = lock      setubandha = the forming of a bridge

- Lie on your back with knees bent hip distance, toes slightly turned in (you should be able to see your heels just outside your hips)
- Beginning with your tail, peel the spine off the floor, vertebra by vertebra, until your weight is resting on your shoulders, not the cervical spine
- Press down firmly with your feet as you lift and draw your buttocks under toward the backs of the knees
- Keep your thighs parallel, femurs turned in to broaden sacral area
- Continue to move the tailbone towards the pubic bone & lift the chest toward the chin, finding a lift (bridge) between the shoulderblades
- Come down slowly, maintaining the cat tilt & maintain flat back, feet apart on floor, knees together (rather than drawing knees into chest...that is a no-no after back bends) & then a twist.



#### Notes:

It can be a challenge to get full hip extension in this pose. If the hamstrings and adductors are not strong enough, the gluteus maximus may do too much and pull the legs into external rotation; or the other adductors will activate to bring the knees together but also flex the hips. The action in the arms is the same as for the shoulder stand and viparita karani (legs up the wall) and the action in the hips and legs is the same as for lifting into urdhva dhanurasana. Therefore, sustaining this basic posture requires a high degree of coordination necessary for other more advanced postures. Nice to use a block under sacrum, can be moved several ways to provide different information.

#### Benefits:

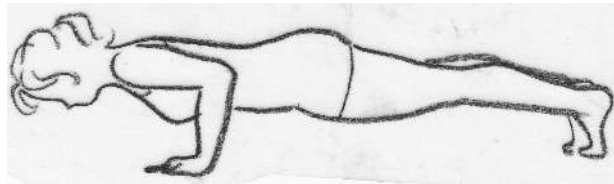
Increases strength and flexibility of the back and thighs. Opens and releases the chest, heart and lungs.

#### Contraindications:

Even those with back problems can do a modified version of this pose (lift only a little) and find it is very beneficial. Cervical spine, lower back & knees are vulnerable in this pose.

**Chaturanga Dandasana**  
*Four-Limbed Stick Pose*  
chat-tour-ANG-ah don-DAHS-anna

- Lie face down, legs straight, toes tucked, feet hip-width apart
- Place hands under elbows, when lifted will form a right angle at the elbows
- Shoulders roll back, shoulderblades are flat, cat tilt (this is a small backbend)
- Lift & sustain this posture by pushing through the heels, engaging the full abdomen wall & quadriceps.
- Legs are internally rotated



**Notes:**

Maintaining this position relative to gravity calls into play virtually all the respiratory muscles, along with the arms and shoulder girdle. This degree of muscular effort produces a strong stabilizing effect on the movements of the diaphragm, which will operate against considerable resistance. Progress consists of making the muscular effort as efficient as possible, which will result in the ability to maintain both the alignment and smooth breathing for increasingly longer periods of time. A “mini-vinyasa” exploring dual actions might help build awareness & strength (in plank, push into floor with hands...on an exhale, lift navel up & round back slightly, on an inhale, push heels back). Think of this pose as a backbend, keeping the chest broad & open & maintain the cat tilt, internal rotation of legs throughout.

**Benefits:**

Chaturanga Dandasana requires and develops balanced upper body strength. The key is the position and use of the hands and the utilization of the full power of the legs, so that an even distribution of weight and even utilization of muscles results. It awakens the legs and develops stability and strength in the limbs and in the trunk.

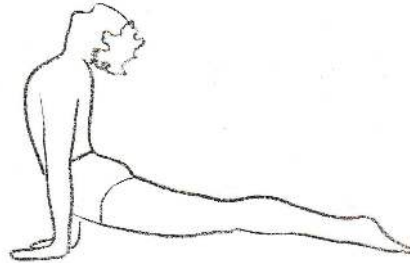
## Urdhva Mukha Svanasana

*Upward facing dog pose*

OORD-vah MOO-kah shvon-AHS-anna

urdhva=rising or tending upward, raised muka=face shvana=dog

- From a face-down position, tops of the feet on the floor hip-width apart and long
- Keeping the legs straight and strong, raise them off the floor pressing the tops of the feet down and drawing the hips forwards as they come just off the floor
- Use the hands to raise the chest and head upwards off the floor, while maintaining the action of the bandhas, hands and legs
- Shoulders & wrists are aligned
- Pull sternum through the arms, shoulders stack over wrists
- Wrist angle is 90
- Keep the core of the body soft with rhythmic Ujjayi breathing.
- Tailbone in & down to elongate the low back
- Lift out of the base of pelvis, contact buttocks
- Abdomen draws towards low back
- Lift & broaden front edges of the armpits & chest while back edges press down & widen
- Shoulders relax & shoulderblades draw down
- Bottom tip of shoulderblade moves forward, low front ribs draw slightly in
- Center of perineum ascends, lifting the core of the body & the crown of the head



### Notes:

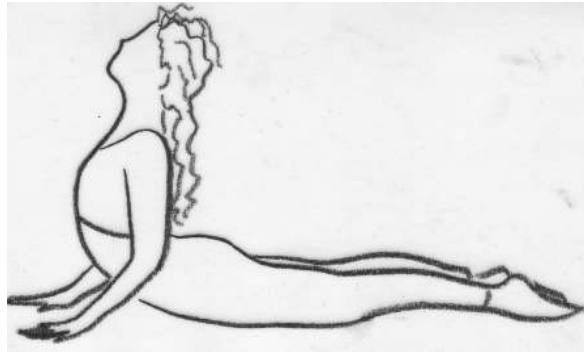
As the counterpose to the “exhaled” adho mukha svanasana, this pose is clearly related to the expansive action of inhaling. Support the body with hands and tops of the feet. Pull the hips toward the arms until the chest expands fully. If this bothers the low back, keep thighs on the ground or do cobra instead.

### Benefits:

This pose is a powerful, demanding backbend. The legs must be kept powerful, without tension in the buttocks or pelvic floor, to protect the lumbar spine from pinching. It opens the chest, mobilizes the spine and develops the arms and legs. It is a counterbalance to forward extensions. It teaches the role of the legs and bandhas in supporting the lumbar spine during backbends. It is one of the Suryanamaskar postures.

**Bhujangasana**  
*Cobra Pose*  
boo-jang-GAHS-anna

- Begin with stabilization of the trunk by inner spiraling of legs and tucking of tail bone
- Next work for side body length, stretch from hip to arm pits
- Push hands down & isometrically pull them back
- Roll shoulder blades to center of back (retract)
- Lift palate, top of mouth
- Keep cervical spine long & supported (not compressed)
- Focus on curling the sternum up more than lifting
- Keep wideness in front & back upper body
- Inhale away from gravity



**Notes:**

Cobra is the foundation of horizontal backbends. Hand positions can vary including floating hands above ground for awareness of back body energy. Less is more...avoid pushing too hard with hands & compressing the low back.

**Benefits:**

Tremendous chest opener. Increases strength and flexibility of spine, arms, back. Breaks up tension in back, shoulders, neck. Stimulates thyroid, kidneys, adrenals. Improves digestion, elimination, reproduction, lung capacity. Safe precursor to more strenuous backbends.

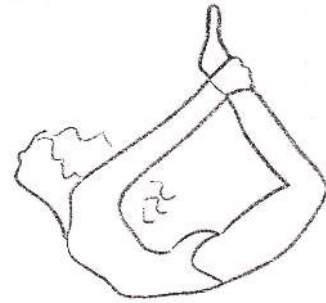
## **Dhanurasana**

### *Bow Pose*

don-your-AHS-anna

dhanu = bow

- Elongate before lifting
- Inhale, lift the chest
- Exhale, lift the legs with the knees hip distance apart
- Contract the buttocks
- Stay on the abdomen
- Extend chest fully
- Toes spread, feet go up



#### Notes:

The front of the shoulder joint is structurally vulnerable in this position. If the scapulae are not mobilized in the direction of the stretch, too much pressure could be put into the front of the shoulder joint, resulting in an overstretch of the subscapularis or damage to the joint capsule. Because this is a bound pose, the pressure into these vulnerable joints is greater. It is common to rock back and forth by pushing the belly into the floor, it is much more intense to practice not rocking by directing the inhalation into the already expanded chest region.

#### Benefits:

Brings tremendous strength and elasticity to back and spine. Stretches chest, shoulders, abdominals, thighs, and increases strength of back, buttocks, legs. Tones abdominal organs. Stimulates kidneys, adrenals.

#### Contraindications:

Those with spondylolisthesis or spondylolysis should practice only with the assistance of a teacher. Those with knee injuries, exercise caution. Not suitable for prenatal.

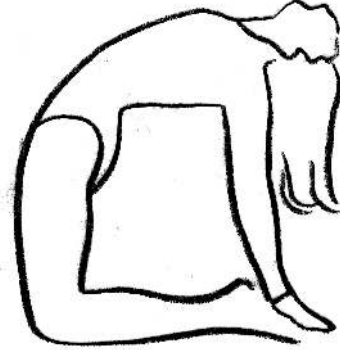
## **Ustrasana**

### *Camel Pose*

oosh - TRAHs-anna

ustra = camel

- From kneeling, slowly come off your heels and bring your thighs upright, slight internal rotation
- Place hands on top of buttocks
- Press shins down to lift up through the chest
- Keep your chin level so you can focus on getting maximum extension through the thoracic spine
- Each time you inhale, expand the chest
- Each time you exhale, maintain the lift of the chest and move a little more into the arc
- Keep pelvis in cat tilt and in line with knees
- To come up, press a bit forward & down into the thighs.



#### Notes:

Mild internal rotation of the legs is recommended to keep the sacroiliac joints stable. It can be very challenging to find a healthy extension of the spine at the base of the neck or the top of the thoracic spine. It helps to focus on lifting the upper chest. A blanket under shins for the shins to touch ground.

#### Benefits:

Tremendous chest and shoulder opener. Stretches front of body, increases circulation throughout. Stretches knees, thighs, groins, brings mobility to the spine, releases tension in upper back. Strengthens legs, buttocks, back, neck. Stimulates kidneys, adrenals. Camel is an intense stretch for the digestive system, especially the esophagus. Breathing improves because of opening in rib cage and chest. Opens heart center, heightens perceptions. Exhilarating.

#### Contraindications:

Those with spondylolisthesis or spondylolysis should practice only with the assistance of a teacher. Those with arthritis should avoid bringing the head back if this causes dizziness.

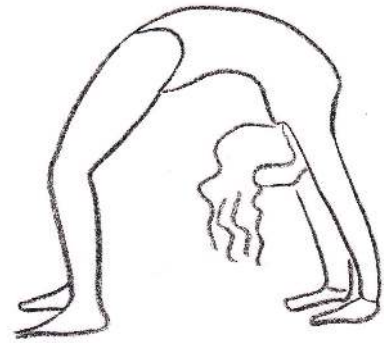
## **Urdhva Dhanurasana**

*Upward Facing Bow Pose/ Wheel*

OORD - vah          don - your - AHS - anna

urdhva = upward    dhanu = bow

- With feet parallel and slightly turned inn, press down through heels and hands
- Keep shins vertical and knees over heels
- Thighs roll in and buttocks slightly contracts
- Lift the tailbone and open the groins
- The highest point should be just below the navel
- Open the chest and move the thoracic spine in
- Open the armpits and extend the trunk forward
- Move armpits over wrists
- Lengthen arms to bring them vertical
- Come down exactly as you went up.



### Notes:

Some feel frustrated by their inability to take deep, full breaths in this pose because the body is stabilized in a maximal inhalation and there is very little one can do to expand further if attempting to inhale deeply. Quiet, relaxed breathing is preferable.

### Benefits:

One of the most special poses in yoga. Very energizing, exhilarating, yet calming. Keeps the body alert and supple, mind awake and clear. Wheel develops tremendous strength and flexibility of the spine and whole body. Strengthens feet, legs, thighs, buttocks, upper back, shoulders and arms. Stretches quadriceps, pelvic region, abdominals, full length of spine, chest, and shoulders. To make it easier at first, take hands & feet further apart.

### Contraindications:

Those with spondylolisthesis or spondylolysis, high blood pressure, detached retina or glaucoma or those with carpal tunnel syndrome should take care and seek an experienced yoga teacher for modifications. Also, might not be advisable for prenatal as there is a strong pull on the abdominal muscles.

## Parighasana

### *Gate Pose*

par-ee-GOSS-ann

parigha = an iron bar used for locking a gate

- From kneeling, fully extend knee w/o locking, anchor foot on floor, heel in line with other knee
- Stretch up through opposite arm and move towards the extended side
- Femurs & inner groins press back
- Tailbone in & down to elongate lumbar
- Lift out of the base of pelvis
- Abdomen draws towards low back
- Arms are straight & external rotated with lower arm pronated, palms facing towards body
- Lift & broaden front edges of the armpits & chest while back edges press down & widen
- Shoulders relax & shoulderblades draw down
- Bottom tip of shoulderblade moves forward, low front ribs draw slightly in
- Center of perineum ascends, lifting the core of the body & the crown of the head
- Tongue, throat, face are relaxed
- Breathe naturally but fully.



#### Notes:

Rotation is automatic with side bending in the spine because of both the shape of the articular facets in the vertebrae and the spiral pathways of the muscles. To keep the action pure lateral flexion, there needs to be a counterrotation in the rib cage. In this case, the upper ribs rotate posteriorly and the lower ribs rotate anteriorly

#### Benefits:

Great side stretch!

## **Parivrtta Trikonasana**

*Revolved three angle pose*

*par-ee-vrit-tah trik-cone-AHS-anna*

*parivrtta = to turn around, revolve tri = three kona = angle*

- Step feet 3 - 4' apart, heel to heel or wider
- Press back heel down, inner edge front foot down
- Lift legs up, front leg up, press weight down through back leg
- Scissor thighs together and firm hips
- Lift buttock bones, extend torso, both sides of waist even
- Contract thighs to pull kneecaps up
- Fully extend knees w/o locking
- Rotate shoulders until perpendicular to floor
- Rotate head until left eye sees thumb
- Shoulder blades in, kidneys in, open chest and front of body
- Lift & broaden front edges of the armpits & chest while back edges press down & widen
- Shoulders relax & shoulderblades draw down
- Bottom tip of shoulderblade moves forward, low front ribs draw slightly in
- Center of perineum ascends, lifting the core of the body & the crown of the head



### Notes:

Parivrtta Trikonasana is a hybrid between Trikonasana, Parsvottanasana & a full spinal twist. Be comfortable with those fundamentals before proceeding to this pose. Coming out of this pose: proceed slowly & mindfully, support your back by drawing the soft frontal body up into your spine...use your whole body in concert when you transition. Less is more here....use blocks stacked to help extend.

### Benefits:

Provides deep opening for the hip and hamstrings. Strengthens legs, frees rib cage allowing for improved breathing and greater self-confidence. Full spinal twist releases tension in the back. Stimulates the kidneys and abdominal organs. Frees energy through the spine and core. Improves balance and concentration.

**Ardha Chandrasana II**  
*Half Moon II Pose*

- Usually approach from Triangle or Warrior II, knee & front foot are pointed forward
- Shift weight gently to front foot, press down evenly across all 4 corners of foot, lift arch
- Move your hand forward & away from the midline, shift weight to hand & foot
- Contract quadriceps to draw kneecaps up
- Fully extend both legs w/o locking
- The back leg serves as an active counter-balance to the to the front leg
- Use top outer hip to lift leg...forming one straight line from crown of head through spine through top leg
- Keep top quadriceps & abdomen active and tailbone in to avoid (banana-ing)
- Shoulders relax & shoulderblades draw down
- Bottom tip of shoulderblade moves forward, low front ribs draw slightly in
- Tongue, throat, face are relaxed
- Breathe naturally but fully
- Endeavor to have all limbs in the same plane.



**Notes:**

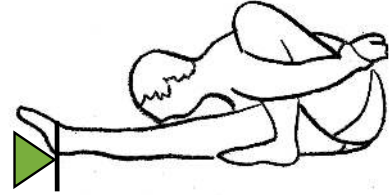
This pose carves a half moon; ideally, it hangs quietly in the sky...all limbs must remain on the same plane, because tipping the leg backwards causes loss of balance and compresses the low back. However, it's not a forward fold either. Use a block if you need to bend the front leg as you need to lengthen not shorten muscles. Play with your drishti's here.

**Benefits:**

Strengthens the legs, core, develops balance, "risk-taking", trust.

**Marichyasana I & III**  
*Son of Brahma Pose I & III*

- From Dandasana, draw the heel of one foot toward the sitting bone on that side (toe is slightly in & heel will be at sit bone so not next to extended leg).
- Keep pelvis level with both sitting bones down evenly
- Extend leg straight out from hip and spread the toes, dorsiflex foot
- Engage the extended leg quadriceps
- Engage abdominals, lengthen sternum away from navel
- Fold at hip crease.
- The “wrapper” hand is the “grabber”
- Press bent knee toward chest, keep foot pressing into floor
- Both sit bones on the floor
- Pull up through spine to elongate and lift the sternum
- Chest opens and roll both shoulders back.



Extended leg should be in dandasana, toes pulled back to knee, quadriceps engaged.

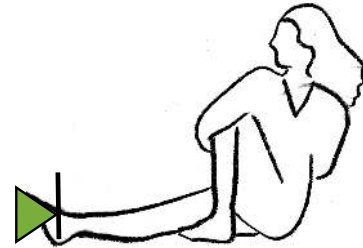
Notes:

Benefits:

Stimulates circulation, tone and function of the internal organs, especially liver, spleen, intestines. Rotates spine fully, erases backache, stretches hip. Tones and massages the abdominal area. Relieves lower back pain caused by muscular tension. Frees chest and shoulders. Assists the elimination of toxins stored in the muscle and organ tissue.

Contraindications:

Not suitable for prenatal.



**Adho Mukha Vrksasana**

*Handstand*

Downward Facing Tree Pose

ah-doh moo-kah vriks-SHAS-anna

- Shoulders stack over wrists
- Spine lengthens, tailbone towards heels
- No scoop in lower back, pull abdomen & low ribs in

Notes:

Contraindicated for those with back, shoulder or neck injury, heart conditions, high blood pressure. If you are experienced with this pose, you can continue to practice late into pregnancy however don't take up the practice after you become pregnant. Build strength slowly.

Benefits:

Strengthens, the shoulders, arms, and wrists. Improves balance, calms the brain and helps relieve stress and mild depression.



**Sirsasana**  
*Headstand*  
(shear-SHAHS-anna)  
sirsa = head

- Fingers firmly interwoven all the way to the web of the hand (webbing is tight, but relaxed, forming a U-shape (not a triangle)
- Elbows shoulder width apart, upper arms parallel
- Tuck chin slightly before the head is on the floor
- Place the crown of the head on the floor; too far back & the neck will be too straight, too far forward and you will create too much curve in the neck
- Chin parallel to floor, maintain a natural curve in the neck
- Press down through the center of the forearms and lift the shoulders away from the wrists, weight in the arms, do not tense the neck. Press down through the inner wrist, do not let the hands fall back or come apart. Biceps roll out.
- Shoulders broaden laterally away from the spine. Draw the thoracic spine in to open the chest without distorting the floating rib or puffing the diaphragm.
- Roll the thighs in and draw the femurs back. Draw the sacrum and tailbone in to stabilize the lower back.
- Legs stretch away from the hips, reach up through the inner legs, lifting weight off the shoulders with the strength of the legs, ankles touch, extend through the ball of the foot. Pull kneecaps up by contracting the thighs. Spread the toes.
- Make the body compact, everything draws in toward the medial core, as in Tadasana.
- Tongue, throat, face are relaxed, breathe naturally but fully.



**Notes:**

Sirsasana is basically an upside down Tadasana. The body is kept as straight as possible without back arch and with the base of the neck extending backward. Practice headstand before shoulderstand...never the opposite. Can also follow with supported bridge or plow.

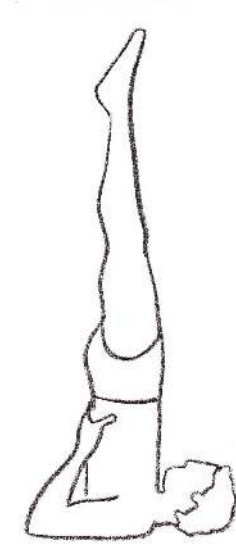
**Benefits:**

Irrigates the brain, stimulating pineal and pituitary glands. Strengthens neck, shoulders, arms. Relieves tired legs. Stimulates circulation, digestion, elimination. Centering, warming, develops concentration and focus. Energizing, calming, soothing to the whole body. Clears the mind, heightens sensitivity, conducive to meditation.

**Contraindications:** Back injury, Headache, Heart condition, High blood pressure, Menstruation, Neck injury, Low blood pressure: Don't start practice with this pose, Pregnancy: If you are experienced with this pose, you can continue to practice it late into pregnancy. However, don't take up the practice of Sirsasana after you become pregnant. Sirsasana is considered to be an intermediate to advanced pose. Do not perform this pose without sufficient prior experience or unless you have the supervision of an experienced teacher.

**Sarvangasana**  
*Shoulderstand*  
(sar-van-GAHS-anna)  
sarva = all anga = limb  
“whole body pose”

- Toes spread, extend through ball of the foot
- Legs straight, inner thighs together & back
- Thrust pelvis forward
- Contract buttocks
- Thrust palms into lower ribs and push trunk forward vigorously
- Lift frontal body up & sternum towards chin
- Move elbows toward one another, elbows shoulder width apart
- Shoulders shrug away from ears, press upper arms down
- Tongue, throat, face are relaxed
- Breathe naturally but fully.



**Notes:**

Use blankets under shoulders and arms so that only the head rests on the floor to decrease compression in the neck.

**Benefits:**

Irrigates brain, thyroid, parathyroid. Strengthens upper body. Opens chest. Stretches neck, shoulders, and upper back muscles. Stimulates circulation and energy flow through neck to brain and body. Improves digestion and elimination. Relieves fatigue. Relaxing. Aid to insomnia and exhaustion. Soothing, energizing. Calms and rejuvenates body. Nurturing effect.

**Contraindications:**

Diarrhea, Headache, High blood pressure, Menstruation, Neck injury

Pregnancy: If you are experienced with this pose, you can continue to practice it late into pregnancy. However, don't take up the practice of Sarvangasana after you become pregnant.

Salamba Sarvangasana is considered to be an intermediate to advanced pose. Do not perform this pose without sufficient prior experience or unless you have the supervision of an experienced instructor. Some schools of yoga recommend doing Salamba Sirsasana before Salamba Sarvangasana, others vice versa. The instruction here assumes the former order.

## **Savasana**

*Corpse Pose*

*sha-VAHS-anna*

*sava = corpse, shiva = lord of destruction*

- This can seem like the most difficult or most easy pose - the challenge is find complete release of tension from body & mind.
- The purpose is to feel relaxed, comfortable so you can move into meditation.
- Like all asanas, remember to go through the stages of moving into, being in and moving out of this pose with full awareness. Take time to get completely comfortable and at least as much time moving your way out.



### Notes:

A deep state of conscious relaxation is quite different from sleep, which is a common experience in this pose. In savasana, the body is completely at rest and its metabolism freed of the demands of contending with gravity, making it possible to practice the most difficult breathing exercise of all: the act of being full aware of, but not controlling, the breath's movements.

### Benefits:

Theta brain wave patterns predominate in Savasana, with electrical activity oscillating and vibrating at a frequency of 4-8Hz. This state of brain function engages the intuitive unconscious mind. Healing occurs in this state. Deeper states of Savasana take the brain wave pattern into Delta (0.5-2 Hz frequency), similar to the brain wave state of dreaming. This deeply relaxing state takes the full body into the healing mode and sets the stage for meditation. Elicits the parasympathetic response.

# Shanti Yoga Teacher Training

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