

MODERN PERSPECTIVE VIEW ON ASANAS AND THEIR VERSATILE APPLICATIONS

A report submitted by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project-work is to explore the many applications of practicing yoga asanas in our daily lives. The key points guiding this report were asanas and their health benefits in our daily lives including the physiological effects of regular asana practice and the psychological effects of regular asana practice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would first and foremost like to express my gratitude to my yoga guru Dr. Karuna Murthy, without whose patience and constant guidance, my yoga path would forever remain incomplete and directionless. I would also like to thank Dr. Rati Rao whose proficiency in Vinyasa classes helped me learn newer methods of sequencing while simultaneously helping in deepening my own practice. Finally, I want to thank my family and friends for being a constant pillar of support.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION, HISTORY AND ORIGIN OF
YOGA AND ASANAS

1. INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY OF YOGA

The word *Yoga* comes from the Sanskrit word *Yuj*, which means to unite. Hence, in its truest sense, Yoga can be defined as the **union of the individual consciousness** with the **universal consciousness**.

Yoga as we know it today traces its origin to the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali which is known to be the first compiled written text of Yoga. However, yoga has been practiced in the Indian subcontinent from the pre-Vedic ages. According to the Hindu mythology, Lord Shiva was the first yogi. The rituals of yoga were incorporated in the lifestyles of the sages of the Vedic period. The Bhagavad Gita also mentions many forms of yoga: Jnana yoga, Bhakti yoga, Karma yoga and Raja yoga. However, during the earlier ages, yoga was more of a form of lifestyle which was not restricted to the yoga we practice on the mats in the current times.

2. DEFINITION OF YOGA

योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः

Sage Patanjali defined Yoga as “To still the movements of the mind is Yoga”.

यमनियमासनप्राणायामप्रत्याहारधारणाध्यानसमाधयोऽष्टावङ्गानि

Patanjali Yoga Sutras define the eight limbs, or stages, of Raja Yoga as:

1. Yamas: Guidelines for external discipline
2. Niyamas: Guidelines (duties) for internal discipline
3. Asanas: The practice of physical postures
4. Pranayama: The practice of breathing techniques to control prana (the vital force)
5. Pratyahara: Withdrawal of the senses.
6. Dharana: The state of concentration
7. Dhyana: The practice of meditation
8. Samadhi: The state of bliss and enlightenment.

अहिंसासत्यास्तेयव्रह्मचर्यापरिग्रहा यमाः
शौचसन्तोषतपःस्वाध्यायेश्वरप्रणिधानानि नियमाः

Yamas: Non-violence, truth, non-stealing, sensual abstinence, and non-possessiveness are the five external disciplines.

Niyamas: Cleanliness, contentment, austerity, study of scriptures, and surrender to God are the five duties for internal discipline.

Hatha yoga is the combination of the third and fourth limbs of Raja Yoga, Asana and Pranayama. Hatha yoga and its various types are practiced in the modern world. The word *Hatha* comes from the Sanskrit words for *sun* and *moon*, *Ha* signifying the active energy of the sun and *Tha* signifying the calming energy of the moon. Balancing the two energies is the ultimate goal of the Hatha yoga practice.

3. DEFINITION OF ASANA

The word *Asana* means *pose* in Sanskrit.

स्थिरसुखमासनम्

The definition of Asana according to Sage Patanjali is “Steady and Comfortable is Asana”.

प्रयत्नशैथिल्यानन्तसमापत्तिभ्याम्

By endless effort and meditation, an asana is mastered.

ततो द्वन्द्वानभिघ्रातः

Then, one is no longer disturbed by the pairs of opposites.

हठस्य प्रथमांगत्वादासनं पूर्वमुच्यते ।
कुर्यात्तदासनं स्थैर्यमारोग्यं चांगलाघवम् ॥

The definition of Asana according to Hatha Yoga Pradipika is:

Prior to everything, asana is spoken of as the first part of hatha yoga. Having done asana one gets steadiness (firmness) of body and mind; disease-lessness and lightness (flexibility) of the limbs.

It is important to note that most yoga poses were practiced after observances ancient yogis made of nature’s behaviour be it in the form animals, birds, plants or objects used in their daily lives. Hence it can be safe to say that the practice of yoga takes the yogi or yogini back to their most natural-self.

4. IMPORTANCE OF ASANA PRACTICE

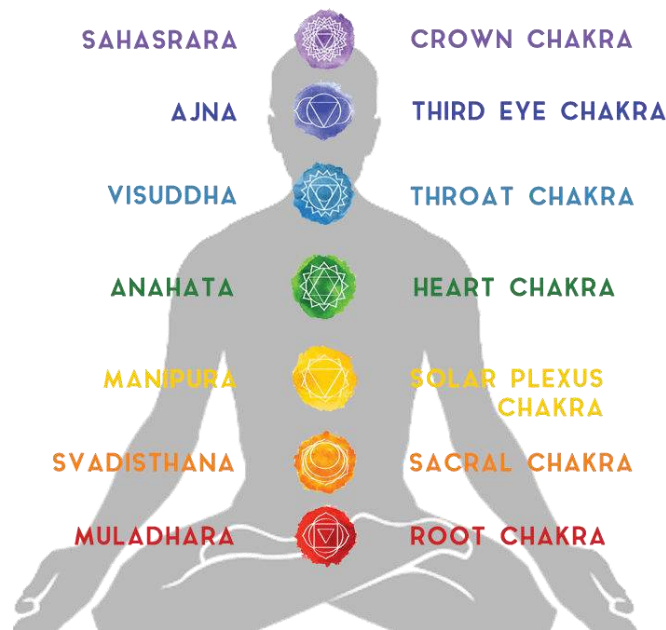
Historically speaking, the main purpose of practicing asanas was to prepare the yogi's mind and body for sitting in meditation for uninterrupted periods of time, that is, attaining *Dhyana* and *Samadhi* through the practice of asanas. However, as mankind and technology progressed, the more subtle and hidden benefits of asana practice were brought to light. Yoga practice brings together the physical and mental self of the practitioner in unison, helping them in leading a peaceful life. Regular practice of yoga asanas has a deep impact on the betterment of the practitioner's physical, mental and spiritual health. Through regular asana practice, the practitioner develops a control of their body and hence subsequently their mind.

Physical benefits of asana practice include improved flexibility, alleviation of respiratory disorders, better stamina, increase in muscle strength, strengthening of the immune system, stimulation and regulation of glandular activity, elimination of toxins, improvement in blood circulation, stimulation of the lymphatic and the nervous system, to generalize and name a few. Regular yoga practice also has known to calm the mind and alleviate stress levels. It also instills a sense of discipline and regularity in the practitioner while developing the qualities determination and perseverance that also help in dealing with the uncertainties of the modern lifestyle.

It is important, however, to note, that most, if not all of these benefits come from a regular continued practice.

CHAPTER TWO
KUNDALINI YOGA AND ASANAS

1. CHAKRAS: ENERGY VORTICES OF THE BODY



The psychic or pranic body is said to be fueled by Chakras, or the psychic centres, which are subtle energy vortices in the body. The word *Chakra* comes from the Sanskrit word for *wheel*, as the chakras act as a swirling vortex of latent energy. They receive and store the cosmic prana which is used by the different organs of the body. These chakras have been observed by yogis and sages of various tradition by psychic introspection. Chakras act as the path between the interaction physical and the energetic (spiritual) aspects of the human existence. It is said there can be anywhere between 7 to 117 number of chakras in our body, each serving a different purpose and healing potency.

The blockage of any chakra is considered to have a significant impact on the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of a person. This is because each chakra is said to function in harmony with all the other chakras, and hence if any one chakra is blocked, it can disrupt the flow of energy throughout the body. This can be rectified by consciously focusing and meditating on the energy chakra during the regular asana practice to guide yourself towards unblocking the flow of the energy in the pranic body.

Chakras are connected through the channel of *nadis*, the Sanskrit word for *rivers*. The interaction between the energy flow through nadis and chakras is said to regulate the flow of prana, the cosmic vital energy, through our physical body. Chakras are storage houses of the energy channels. The ideal state of a human being's existence is when all seven chakras are open allowing a balanced flow of energy.

Out of the seven main chakras, the six that are located along the spinal column are Muladhara, Svadisthana, Manipura, Anahata, Vishuddha and Ajna. The seventh chakra, Sahasrara is located above the physical head of the human body and is acquired only at significantly evolved states of human consciousness.

1. Muladhara Chakra, Root Chakra



Physical location	Pelvic floor
Number of petals	Four
Color	Deep red
Shape	Yellow square
Yantra	Earth element
Mantra	Lam

Mula is the Sanskrit word for *root* and hence Muladhara chakra is the root of primal, grounding energy. It is found at the pelvic floor and is our connection to the Earth. Hence it keeps us grounded to reality, and controls our most primal and natural instincts including hunger, sleep, sex, and survival.

The blockage of the Muladhara chakra could cause low self-esteem and self-destructive behaviours. When it is balanced and active, we feel strong secure and confident.

Even though this chakra is activated during the practice of most of the asanas in Hatha yoga, the few asanas that activate and strengthen this chakra are:

- Vrikshasana (Tree pose)
- Utkatasana (Chair pose)
- Virabhadrasanas 1,2,3 (Warrior pose 1,2,3)
- Trikonasana (Triangle pose)
- Parsvakonasana (Extended Side Angle pose)
- Malasana (Garland pose)
- Paschimottanasana (Seated forward fold)
- Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward facing dog)
- Urdhva Mukha Svanasana (Upward facing dog)
- All seated meditative postures (Sukhasana, Padmasana, Vajrasana, etc)

2. Svadisthana Chakra, Sacral Chakra



Physical location	Sacrum
Number of petals	Six
Color	Vermillion
Shape	White crescent moon
Yantra	Water element
Mantra	Vam

In Sanskrit *sva* means *one's own* and *adisthana* means *dwelling place* and hence the Svadisthana Chakra is responsible for creativity and fertility. It is the chakra responsible for being truly connected to one's own innermost self. The desire for pleasure, especially in the form of food and sex, increases when this centre is activated. These desires can become an obstacle to the awakening of prana at this level. In order to pass through this one needs to develop willpower.

When the Svadisthana Chakra is unbalanced, one feels emotionally unstable and guilt-ridden. When it is balanced, we are able to feel enjoyment towards life, our mind is creative and we are receptive to change.

Asanas that involve movement in the hips and lower abdomen stimulate this chakra. A few of the asanas are:

- Utkata Konasana (Goddess pose)
- Ardha Chandrasana (Half-moon pose)
- Baddha Konasana (Butterfly pose)
- Janu Shirshasana (Head to Knee pose)
- Bhujangasana (Cobra pose)
- Shalabhasana (Locust pose)
- Supta Vajrasana (Reclining hero's pose)
- Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward facing dog)
- Hanumanasana (Full split)
- Malasana (Garland pose)
- Padangusthasana (Standing hand to toes pose)
- Balasana (Child's pose)

- Parighasana (Gate pose)
3. Manipura Chakra, Solar Plexus Chakra



Physical location	Behind the navel
Number of petals	Ten
Color	Yellow
Shape	Red triangle
Yantra	Fire element
Mantra	Ram

In Sanskrit *Manipura* literally means the *city of jewels* and hence it is thought to be our body's own treasure centre of power and well-being. It is said to be store-house of the prana (vital life force) in our body. It is also said to be responsible for attracting the universal prana ourselves. It is this chakra that gives us the true sense of our purpose.

When the Manipura Chakra is unbalanced, one feels the lack of courage and self-confidence is low. Physical ailments such as stomach and kidney issues also arise. When it is balanced, we feel confident, strong and believe in the power we hold. It is predominantly influenced by activity, dynamism, strength and will.

Being in the sun is said to activate this chakra. A few of the asanas that also activate the Manipura Chakra are:

- Trikonasana (Triangle pose)
- Parighasana (Gate pose)
- Parsvottanasana (Intense side stretch)
- Natarajasana (King of Dancers pose)
- Virabhadrasanas 1,2,3 (Warrior pose 1,2,3)
- Paschimottanasana (Seated forward fold)
- Ardha Matsyendrasana (Half Lord of Fishes Pose)
- Marichyasana A,B,C,D
- Navasana (Boat pose)
- Ushtrasana (Camel pose)
- Simhasana (Lion's pose)

- Marjaryasana (Cat-Cow pose, Durga Go)

4. Anahata Chakra, Heart Chakra



Physical location	Heart
Number of petals	12
Color	Green
Shape	Hexagonal
Yantra	Air element
Mantra	Yam

In Sanskrit *Anahata* means 'unstruck' or 'unbeaten'. The Anahata Chakra is the seat of anahad nada, the cosmic sound, which is experienced only in the highest state of meditation. This sound is unstruck, because it is not caused by any external form of friction nor can it be heard by the ears, mind or psyche. It is a transcendental sound, which can only be perceived by the pure consciousness. Anahata is the heart centre and is responsible for the awakening of emotions. The person with a developed Anahata is generally very sensitive to the feelings of others. This chakra's awakening bestows the power to heal others.

When the Anahata Chakra is unbalanced, one feels the deepest feelings of insecurity, emotional dependence, disappointment, loneliness and despair. When it is balanced we are filled with compassion, unconditional love and faith.

Asanas that focus on chest and shoulder opening activate this chakra. Backbends also help in activating it. A few asanas are:

- Trikonasana (Triangle pose)
- Garudasana (Eagle pose)
- Hanumanasana (Forward Split)
- Natarajasana (King of Dancers pose)
- Rajkapotasana (Pigeon pose)
- Setu bandhasana (Bridge Pose)
- Dhanurasana (Boat pose)
- Ushtrasana (Camel pose)

- Simhasana (Lion's pose)

5. Vishuddha Chakra, Throat Chakra



Physical location	Throat
Number of petals	16
Color	Silver Blue
Shape	Round
Yantra	Space
Mantra	Ham

Vishuddha in Sanskrit means *especially pure*, as the *shudh* symbolizes purity and *vi* intensifies it. This chakra is said to be the centre of our creativity and self-expression. The chakra is responsible for helping us share our truth and connect with the external world.

When the Vishuddha Chakra is unbalanced, one is unable to express oneself to the people around, and when the energy of this chakra begins overflowing, one speaks too much and listens too less. When this chakra is balanced and stimulated is when one has mastered the art of communicating their emotions in healthy ways, speaking as well as listening.

Asanas that press the muscles in the neck and the throat help in balancing the energy of the throat chakra. A few such asanas are:

- Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward facing dog)
- Chakrasana (Wheel pose)
- Setu bandhasana (Bridge Pose)
- Matsyasana (Fish pose)
- Ushtrasana (Camel pose)
- Simhasana (Lion's pose)
- Halasana (Plow pose)
- Sarvangasana (Supported shoulder stand)
- Pincha Mayurasana (Peacock pose)
- Vrschikasana (Scorpion Pose)
- Shirshasana (Headstand)

6. Vishuddha Chakra, Third Eye Chakra



Physical location	Behind the eyes
Number of petals	2
Color	Violet
Shape	Round
Yantra	Manas
Mantra	Om

The word *Ajna* means *command* and is the monitoring centre of the body. It also means *eye* in Sanskrit and is also known as the third eye of intuition. Called the master or the guru chakra, it is the point where the three main nadis, or the energy channels, merge into one stream of consciousness and flow up to the Sahasrara Chakra. After regular asana practice, when one enters the deep meditative state where all the senses have been withdrawn and one enters into the dimension of *shoonya*, or void, or the higher consciousness. Ajna is the centre of mind and represents a higher level of awareness which gazes inward rather than outward.

When this chakra is active and stimulated, one gains intuition, sixth sense, trust in one's actions due to knowing your innermost self. However, when unbalanced, it makes one untrusting, indecisive and cynical.

Nadi shodhana pranayama stimulates the energy of the ajna chakra and balances the energy channels. A few of the asanas that stimulate the chakra are:

- Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward facing dog)
- Shavasana (Corpse pose)
- Pincha Mayurasana (Feathered Peacock pose)
- Shirshasana (Supported head stand)
- Balasana (Child's pose)
- Sukhasana (Comfortable pose)
- Sidhasana (Adept's pose)
- Swastikasana (Auspicious pose)
- Padmasana (Lotus)
- Supta Vajrasana (Reclining Warrior pose)

- Matsyasana (Fish pose)

7. Sahasrara Chakra, Crown Chakra



Physical location	Above the crown of the head
Number of petals	Infinite (1000)
Color	Violet
Shape	Lotus
Yantra	Cosmic energy
Mantra	Om

Sahasrara or the crown chakra is the seat of supreme consciousness. Located just above the crown of the head, it is said to not be a psychic centre but beyond the realm of the psyche. Sahasrara is the absolute, the highest point of human consciousness. It is the state reached by a yogi when their individual consciousness is no longer different from the universal consciousness.

The potential power for all the chakras lies in Sahasrara. When this chakra is activated and balanced, self-realization or samadhi is achieved. It is the chakra responsible for spirituality and enlightenment. When it is unbalanced, we go looking for answers and happiness from the outside rather than searching for them within.

A few asanas that help in reaching Sahasrara are:

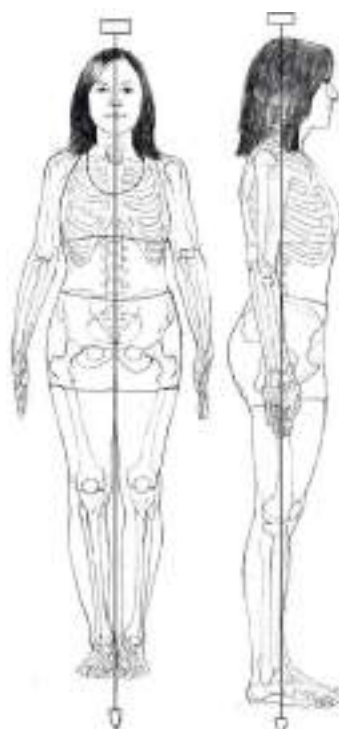
- Prasarita Padottanasana (Extended-Leg Forward Bend) with the crown of the head placed on the mat
- Hanumanasana (Forward split)
- Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward facing dog)
- Shavasana (Corpse pose)
- Pincha Mayurasana (Feathered Peacock pose)
- Shirshasana (Supported head stand)
- Matsyasana (Fish pose)

CHAPTER 4

ASANAS

STANDING ASANAS

Tadasana or Samasthiti



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara
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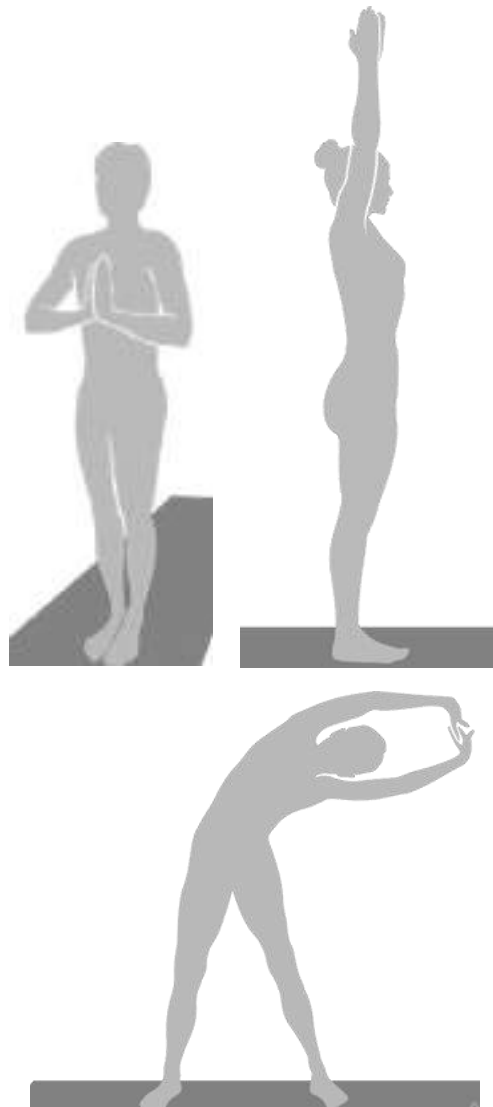
Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Toe abduction, stability Toe flexion (pressure into ground)
Lower leg	Slight external rotation of lower leg Stability to counter body sway (muscles relaxing and contracting as necessary to maintain balance)
Thigh	Knee extension and patellar elevation Thigh extension Slight internal rotation of femur
Hip and Pelvis	Pelvic Stability Hip stability
Torso	Trunk stability Spinal extension and stability Rib and chest elevation
Shoulder	External rotation of humerus
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Forearm supination
Hand and fingers	Finger extension
Neck	Neck extension and stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
Corrects standing posture and body alignment	None

Tones the lower body Strengthens the spine and abdominal muscles Establishes a state of concentration and calmness in mind	
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Variation:

1. Palms in Namaskara
2. Palms over head in Namaskara
3. Tiryaka Tadasana



Vrkshasana (Tree Pose)



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R)	Toe abduction, stability Toe flexion (pressure into ground)
Foot and toes (L)	Toe extension
Lower leg (R)	Knee extension, stability Stability to counter body sway (muscles relaxing and contracting as necessary to maintain balance)
Lower leg (L)	Ankle dorsiflexion
Thigh (R)	Knee extension and patellar elevation Stability and adduction
Thigh (L)	Knee flexion
Hip and Pelvis (R)	Hip extension Pelvic stability
Hip and Pelvis (L)	Hip flexion Hip external rotation
Torso	Trunk stability Spinal extension and stability Rib and chest elevation
Shoulder	Adduction of Scapulae Postural support in mid back External rotation of humerus
Upper arm	Abduction of humerus
Lower arm	Elbow flexion

Hand and fingers	Finger extension Finger adduction
Neck	Neck extension and stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
Builds concentration and focus Strengthens postural balance Reduces stress Strengthens and stabilizes the feet and ankles Increases overall body strength	Students with high blood pressure should refrain from lifting hands

Variations:

1. Palms overhead in Namaskara

2. Pose deepening



Utkatasana (Chair Pose)



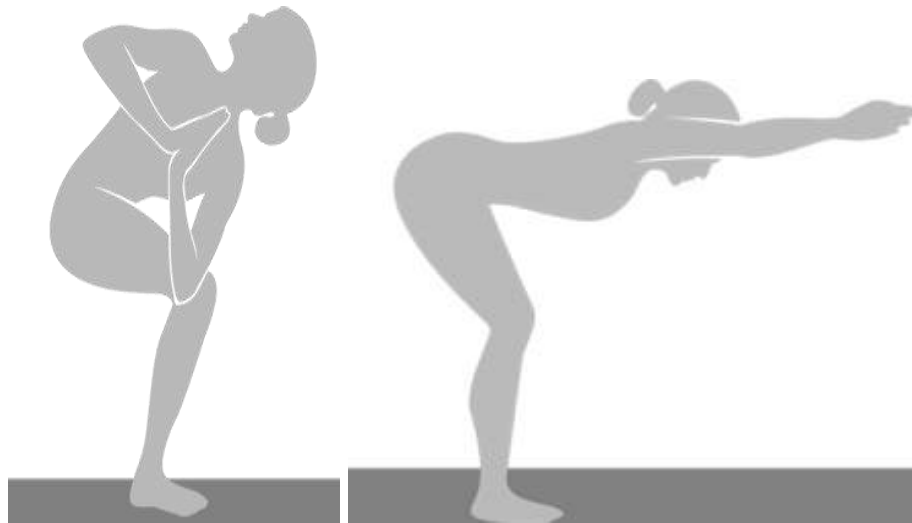
Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Toe abduction, stability
Lower leg	Ankle dorsiflexion, stability Stability to counter body sway (muscles relaxing and contracting as necessary to maintain balance)
Thigh	Knee flexion, stability
Hip and Pelvis	Hip flexion, stability Pelvic Stability
Torso	Trunk stability Spinal extension and stability Rib and chest elevation
Shoulder	External rotation Humeral flexion Scapular adduction
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Forearm supination Elbow extension
Hand and fingers	Finger extension Finger adduction
Neck	Neck extension and stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
Builds strength and endurance in the hips and thighs Improves balance Strengthens and stabilizes the knee joint Opens and tones the chest and shoulder	Those with knee pain or injury should avoid bending the knees deeply

Variations:

1. Revolved Chair Pose
2. Half Chair Pose



Garudasana (Eagle Pose)



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Fourth Chakra Anahata
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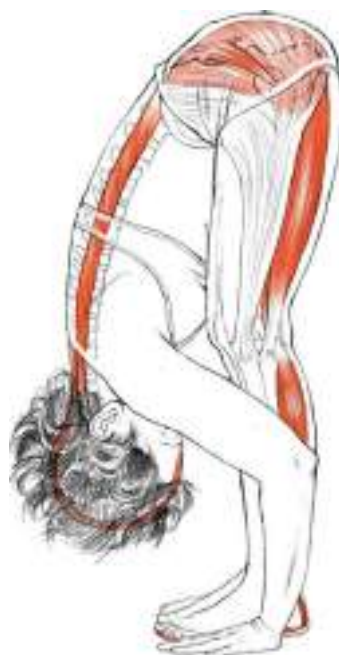
Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R)	Toe abduction, foot stability Toe flexion (pressure into ground)
Foot and toes (L)	Toe hyperextension
Lower leg (R)	Ankle dorsiflexion Ankle stability
Lower leg (L)	Ankle dorsiflexion Ankle eversion
Thigh (R)	Knee flexion, stability
Thigh (L)	Thigh and Knee flexion
Hip and Pelvis (R)	Hip flexion, stability
Hip and Pelvis (L)	Hip flexion
Torso	Trunk stability Postural support and downward pull of scapulae
Shoulder	Horizontal flexion of humerus Stability and external rotation of humerus Scapular depression Scapular stability
Upper arm	Elbow flexion
Lower arm	Pronation of lower arm
Hand and fingers	Wrist extension Wrist stability Finger extension Finger adduction
Neck	Neck extension and stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
Helps develop focus, concentration, increases balance Provides a deep stretch in the outer hips Opens and stretches the shoulder muscles Stretches and strengthens the calf and ankle of the standing leg	Those with knee pain or injury should avoid bending the knees deeply For those with hip replacement surgeries, crossing the limbs beyond the midline is not advised

Variations: Sleeping Eagle Pose



Uttanasa (Standing forward bend)



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Fourth Chakra Anahata
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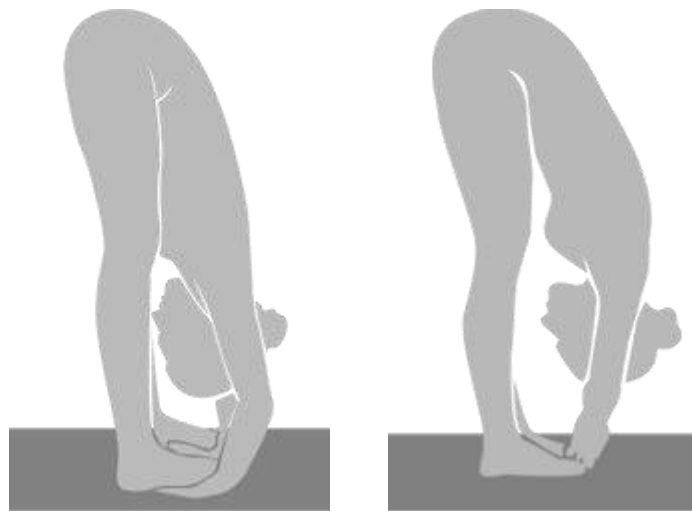
Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Toe abduction, stability Toe flexion (pressure into the ground)
Lower leg	Slight external rotation of lower body Stability to counter body sway (muscles relaxing and contracting as necessary to maintain balance)
Thigh	Knee extension
Hip and Pelvis	Hip flexion, stability
Torso	Spinal extension and stability Rib and chest extension
Shoulder	Humeral flexion Scapular abduction
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Wrist extension, hyperextension
Hand and fingers	Finger extension
Neck	Neck extension

Benefits	Contra-indications
Builds strength and endurance in the spinal muscles Improves balance Lengthens and stretches the hamstrings Stimulates the liver, spleen and	Students with back concerns need to be mindful while practicing forward bends, can use props Not advised for students with glaucoma Not advised for practicing during

kidneys Stimulates the digestive system Helps relieve headaches	pregnancy
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Variations:

1. Palms under feet (Padahastasana)
2. Three finger grip (Padangustasana)



Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana (Standing hand-toe pose)



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Second Chakra Svadisthana
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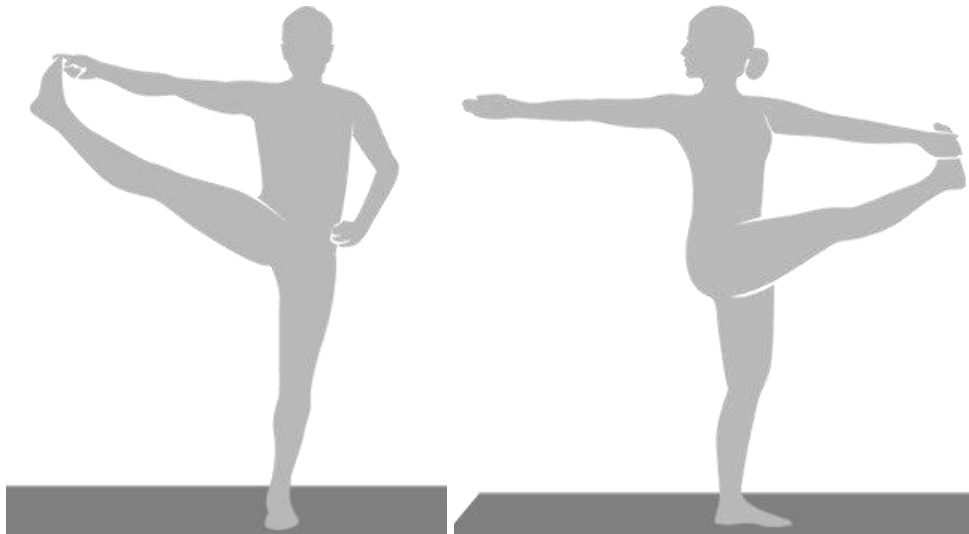
Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R)	Toe abduction, foot stability Toe flexion (pressure into ground)
Foot and toes (L)	Toe extension
Lower leg (R)	Stability to counter body sway (muscles relaxing and contracting as necessary to maintain balance)
Lower leg (L)	Ankle dorsiflexion
Thigh (R)	Knee extension, patellar elevation Stability, adduction
Thigh (L)	Knee extension
Hip and Pelvis (R)	Hip extension, stability
Hip and Pelvis (L)	Hip flexion
Torso	Trunk stability Pelvic stability Spinal extension and stability Rib and chest elevation
Shoulder (R)	Humerus abduction External humeral rotation Scapular adduction
Shoulder (L)	Shoulder flexion External humeral rotation Scapular stability
Upper arm (R)	Elbow flexion

Upper arm (L)	Elbow Extension
Lower arm (R)	Forearm Supination
Lower arm (L)	Elbow extension Forearm pronation
Hand and fingers (R)	Wrist extension Finger adduction
Hand and fingers (L)	Finger flexion Finger adduction
Neck	Neck extension and stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
Builds strength and stability Improves balance and concentration Tones the abdominal muscles Balances stability and symmetry in pelvis and spine	Students with lower back injuries should practice with modifications (belt)

Variations:

1. Hasta Padangusthasana (extended toe to the side)
2. Parivrita (Revolved) Hasta Padangusthasana



Utthita Trikonasana (Extended Triangle Pose)



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Third Chakra Manipura Fourth Chakra Anahata
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Toe abduction, foot stability Toe flexion (pressure into ground)
Lower leg (R)	Stability to counter body sway (muscles relaxing and contracting as necessary to maintain balance)
Lower leg (L)	Internal rotation of foot, stability
Thigh (R)	Knee extension, patellar elevation External rotation of femur, stability Hip stability
Thigh (L)	Stability External rotation of femur, stability
Hip and Pelvis (R)	Abduction, stability Pelvic stability Hip stability External rotation of femur, stability
Hip and Pelvis (L)	External rotation of femur, lateral flexion, stability Hip extension, stability Lateral flexion to right, stability Pelvic stability
Torso (R and L)	Trunk stability and rotation Spinal extension and stability Rib and chest elevation

Torso (L)	Lateral flexion to right, stability
Shoulder	Humerus abduction and joint stability External humeral rotation Scapular adduction and rotation Postural support in mid back and downward pull on scapulae
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Forearm Supination Elbow Extension
Hand and fingers	Wrist and finger extension Finger adduction
Neck	Stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
Tones the legs and strengthens the ankles Loosens and stabilizes the hip joints Hamstring extension Helps release spinal tension Opens the chest and shoulders Strengthens and aligns the neck Stimulates abdominal organs	Students with heart conditions, high blood pressure or shoulder concerns should gaze downward and keep the upper arm on the hip Neck pain patients should gaze forward

Variations:

1. Easy trikonasana (soft hands on calves)



Parivritta Trikonasana (Revolved Triangle Pose)



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Third Chakra Manipura
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Toe abduction, foot stability Toe flexion (pressure into ground)
Lower leg (R)	Stability to counter body sway (muscles relaxing and contracting as necessary to maintain balance) Plantar flexion for foot and ankle stability
Lower leg (L)	Ankle stability
Thigh (R and L)	Knee extension, patellar elevation Hip stability
Hip and Pelvis (R)	Hip flexion
Hip and Pelvis (L)	Hip extension Slight external rotation and stability
Torso (R and L)	Trunk stability and rotation Rib and chest elevation
Torso (R)	Rotation to right
Torso (L)	Rotation to right
Shoulder	Humerus abduction and joint stability External humeral rotation Scapular adduction and rotation Postural support in mid back and downward pull on scapulae
Upper arm	Elbow extension

Lower arm (R)	Forearm Supination Elbow Extension
Lower arm (L)	Pronation Wrist hyperextension Elbow Extension
Hand and fingers	Wrist and finger extension Finger adduction
Neck	Stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Tones the legs and strengthens the ankles</p> <p>Loosens and stabilizes the hip joints</p> <p>Hamstring extension</p> <p>Helps release spinal tension</p> <p>Enhances balance</p> <p>Stimulates and massages abdominal organs</p>	<p>As with any twisting posture, students with an acute back injury should be cautious when practicing this asana or skip it entirely.</p>

Utthita Parsvakonasana (Extended Side Angle Stretch)



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Second Chakra Svadisthana
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Toe abduction, foot stability Toe flexion (pressure into ground)
Lower leg (R)	Stability to counter body sway (muscles relaxing and contracting as necessary to maintain balance)
Lower leg (L)	Ankle inversion, stability
Thigh (R)	Knee flexion
Thigh (L)	Knee extension, stability External rotation of femur, stability
Hip and Pelvis (R)	Hip flexion, abduction, stability Pelvic stability Hip stability External rotation of femur, stability
Hip and Pelvis (L)	Hip extension, stability Abduction Pelvic stability
Torso (R and L)	Trunk stability Rib and chest elevation
Shoulder (R and L)	External humeral rotation Scapular adduction and rotation
Shoulder (R)	Humerus abduction and shoulder stability
Shoulder (L)	Humerus flexion
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Forearm Supination Elbow Extension
Hand and fingers	Wrist and finger extension

	Finger adduction
Neck	Stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
Stretches the sides of your body Helps relieve sciatica Helps relieve hips, thigh, and lower back pains Opens and stabilizes the hips Opens the shoulder and the chest Increases circulation to heart and lungs Tones the abdominal muscles	Students with knee concerns should be extra careful to prevent the bent knee from either rolling inward or extending beyond the line of toes. Neck pain patients should gaze forward.

Variations: Badhha (bind) Parsvakonasana



Parivritta Parsvakonasana (Revolved Extended Side Angle Stretch)



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Third Chakra Manipura
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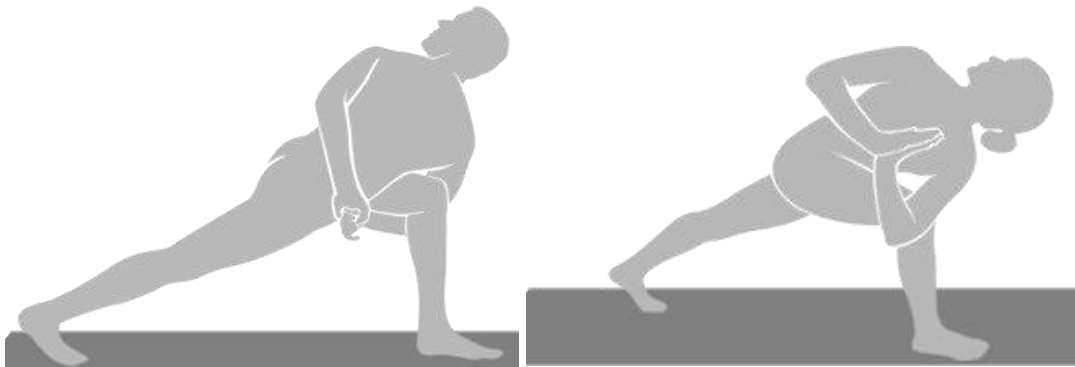
Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Toe abduction, foot stability Toe flexion (pressure into ground)
Lower leg (R)	Stability to counter body sway (muscles relaxing and contracting as necessary to maintain balance)
Lower leg (L)	Ankle inversion, stability
Thigh (R)	Knee flexion
Thigh (L)	Knee extension, stability
Hip and Pelvis (R)	Hip flexion, abduction, stability Pelvic stability External rotation of femur, stability
Hip and Pelvis (L)	Hip extension, stability External rotation of femur, stability Pelvic stability
Torso (R and L)	Trunk stability Rib and chest elevation
Shoulder (R and L)	Scapular adduction
Shoulder (R)	Humerus flexion External humeral rotation
Shoulder (L)	Humerus abduction and shoulder stability External humeral rotation Slight hyperextension of humerus, stability
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Forearm Supination Elbow extension
Hand and fingers (R)	Finger extension Finger adduction

Hand and fingers (L)	Wrist hyperextension Finger extension Finger adduction
Neck	Stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
Stretches the sides of your body Helps relieve sciatica Helps relieve hips, thigh, and lower back pains Opens and stabilizes the hips Opens the shoulder and the chest Increases circulation to heart and lungs Tones the abdominal muscles Improves digestion Builds balance and focus	Students with knee concerns should be extra careful to prevent the bent knee from either rolling inward or extending beyond the line of toes. Neck pain patients should gaze forward. Not advisable for practicing during pregnancy

Variations:

1. Badhha (bind) parivritta parsvakonasana
2. Hands to chest in Namaskara



Parsvottanasana (Intense Side Stretch)



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Third Chakra Manipura
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Toe abduction, foot stability Toe flexion (pressure into ground)
Lower leg (R)	Stability to counter body sway (muscles relaxing and contracting as necessary to maintain balance)
Lower leg (L)	Ankle dorsiflexion, stability
Thigh	Knee extension, patellar elevation
Hip and Pelvis (R)	Flexion, stability Pelvic stability
Hip and Pelvis (L)	Hip extension, stability Slight external rotation Pelvic stability
Torso (R and L)	Trunk stability and rotation Spinal extension and stability Rib and chest elevation
Shoulder	Humerus abduction and joint stability External humeral rotation Scapular adduction and rotation Postural support in mid back and downward pull on scapulae
Upper arm	Hyperextension of humerus
Lower arm	Forearm pronation Elbow flexion
Hand and fingers	Wrist hyperextension Finger extension

Neck	Extension and stability
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Benefits	Contra-indications
Tones the legs and strengthens the ankles Opens the chest and shoulders Strengthens and aligns the neck Relieves stiffness in neck, shoulder, elbows and wrists Stimulates abdominal organs Increases balance Deep stretch in the hips, sides and torso	Students with glaucoma or high blood pressure should not place the head below the heart Neck and shoulder pain patients should practice modified version of hand placement

Variations:

1. Pasrvottanasana with hands in Namaskara behind the back



Prasarita Padottanasana (Extended-Leg Forward Bend)



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Seventh Chakra Sahasrara
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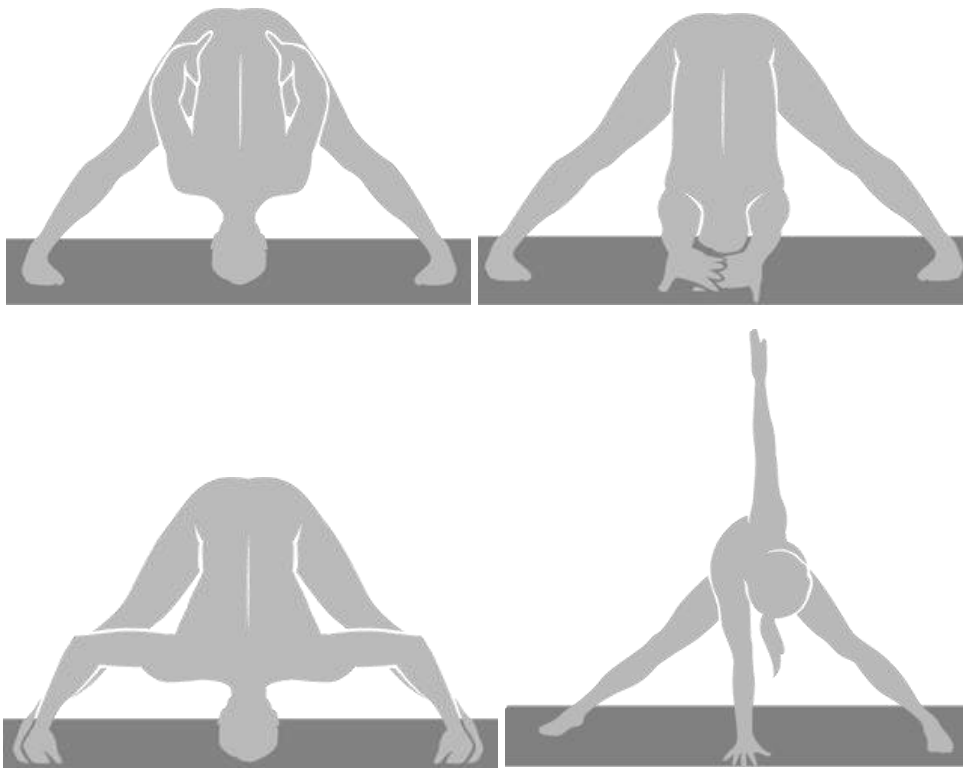
Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Toe abduction, foot stability Toe flexion (pressure into ground)
Lower leg	Stability to counter body sway (muscles relaxing and contracting as necessary to maintain balance)
Thigh	Leg extension
Hip and Pelvis	Flexion, stability Thigh abduction, stability Pelvic stability
Torso	Spinal extension and stability Rib and chest elevation
Shoulder	Overhead extension Scapular adduction
Upper arm	Humeral flexion
Lower arm	Wrist hyperextension Elbow flexion
Hand and fingers	Finger extension
Neck	Extension and stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
Stretches the hamstrings, inner thighs, and lower back Tones and builds stability in the legs and strengthens the ankles	Students with low-back concerns should be extremely mindful and bend at the hips only as far as is comfortable. A block or wall should

Stretches the shoulder joints Relaxes and recharges the mind and body Stimulates abdominal organs Increases balance	be used for additional support. Neck and shoulder pain patients should practice modified version.
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Variations:

1. Prasarita Padottasana with hands on hip.
2. Prasarita Padottasana with hands clasped behind the back.
3. Prasarita Padottasana with three finger grip on big toes.
4. Revolved Prasarita Padottasana



Virabhadrasana 1 (Warrior 1)



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Third Chakra Manipura
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Toe abduction, foot stability Toe flexion (pressure into ground)
Lower leg (R)	Slight ankle dorsiflexion, stability Ankle stability
Lower leg (L)	Ankle inversion, stability
Thigh (R)	Knee flexion, stability
Thigh (L)	Knee extension
Hip and Pelvis (R)	Hip flexion, stability Pelvic stability External rotation
Hip and Pelvis (L)	Hip hyperextension, stability Pelvic stability
Torso (R and L)	Trunk stability Slight spinal hyperextension and stability Rib and chest elevation
Shoulder	Humeral flexion, stability External rotation

	Scapular adduction
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Forearm supination
Hand and fingers	Finger adduction Finger extension
Neck	Stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Tones the legs and strengthens the thighs</p> <p>Opens the chest, abdomens and shoulders</p> <p>Stabilizes the hips, knees and ankles</p> <p>Builds strength and endurance</p> <p>Improves flexibility and strength of the spine</p>	<p>Students with high blood pressure and shoulder pain should not raise their hands, instead keep them parallel to the ground.</p> <p>Students with knee pain should be extra careful to not turn the knee inward or outwards</p>

Variation:

1. Lower lunge



Virabhadrasana 2 (Warrior 2)



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Second Chakra Svadisthana Third Chakra Manipura
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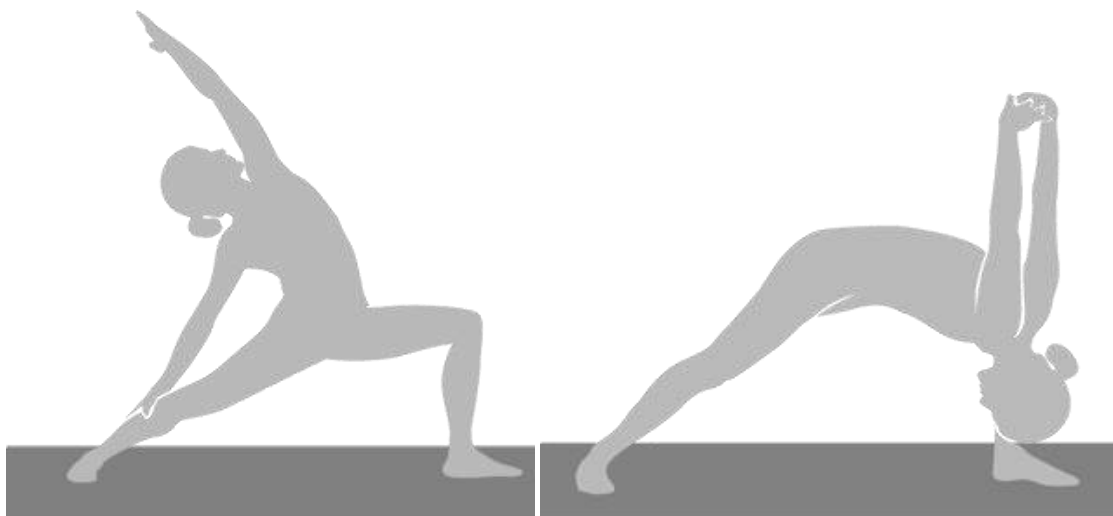
Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Toe abduction, foot stability Toe flexion (pressure into ground)
Lower leg (R)	Ankle dorsiflexion, stability Stability to counter body sway (muscles relaxing and contracting as necessary to maintain balance)
Lower leg (L)	Ankle inversion, stability
Thigh (R)	Knee flexion, stability
Thigh (L)	Knee extension
Hip and Pelvis (R)	Hip flexion, stability External rotation Abduction, stability
Hip and Pelvis (L)	Hip extension, stability Pelvic stability External rotation Abduction, stability
Torso (R and L)	Trunk stability

	Rib and chest elevation
Shoulder	Humeral abduction, stability External rotation of humerus Scapular adduction and rotation Supporting posture in mid back, downward pull of scapulae
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Forearm pronation Elbow extension
Hand and fingers	Finger adduction Finger extension
Neck	Head rotation to right, stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
Tones the legs and strengthens the thighs Opens the chest, abdomens and shoulders Stabilizes the hips, knees and ankles Builds strength and endurance Improves flexibility and strength of the spine Opens the hip muscles Tones the abdominal muscles Helps in body alignment	Students with knee pain should practice with modifications During pregnancy proceed with caution

Variations:

1. Humble warrior
2. Reverse warrior (Parsva Virabhadrasana)



Virabhadrasana 3 (Warrior 3)



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Third Chakra Manipura
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R)	Toe abduction, foot stability Toe flexion (pressure into ground)
Foot and toes (L)	Toe flexion
Lower leg (R)	Stability to counter body sway (muscles relaxing and contracting as necessary to maintain balance)
Lower leg (L)	Plantar flexion
Thigh (R)	Knee extension, stability Stability and adduction
Thigh (L)	Knee extension
Hip and Pelvis (R)	Hip extension, stability Pelvic stability Abduction, stability
Hip and Pelvis (L)	Hip flexion, stability Abduction, stability
Torso (R and L)	Spinal extension and stability Trunk stability Rib and chest elevation
Shoulder	Humeral flexion, stability External rotation of humerus Scapular adduction and rotation Maintenance of humeral flexion against gravity
Upper arm	Elbow extension

Lower arm	Forearm supination Elbow extension
Hand and fingers	Finger adduction Finger extension
Neck	Extension and stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
Tones the legs and strengthens the thighs, spine, shoulders and hips Opens the chest Builds abdominal strength Improves stamina, endurance and balance Opens the hip muscles Helps in improving hip alignment	Students with knee pain and high blood pressure should practice with modifications and caution

Variations:

1. Virabhadrasana with modifications



Utkata Konasana (Fire Angle/Goddess Pose)



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Second Chakra Svadisthana
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Toe abduction, foot stability Toe flexion (pressure into ground)
Lower leg	Ankle dorsiflexion, stability
Thigh	Knee flexion, stability
Hip and Pelvis	Hip flexion, stability Hip external rotation, stability Pelvic stability
Torso	Spinal extension and stability Trunk stability Rib and chest elevation
Shoulder	Humerus abduction, stability External rotation of humerus Postural support in mid back and downward pull of scapulae
Upper arm	Humeral abduction Elbow extension
Lower arm	Pronation Elbow extension
Hand and fingers	Finger extension

Neck	Extension and stability
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Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Opens and strengthens the hips and groin.</p> <p>Strengthens the entire thigh and the upper body.</p> <p>Stabilizes the knee joints.</p> <p>Serves as a beneficial pose during pregnancy due to the pelvic opening.</p> <p>Increases overall body strength.</p>	<p>Students who have had knee or hip surgery should refrain from this pose until range of motion is re-established, then proceed with modifications if medically appropriate.</p>

Variations:

1. Utkata Konasana with garuda arms.
2. Utkata Konasana with hands in Namaskara.
3. Revolved Utkata Konasana



Ardh Chandrasana (Half Moon Pose)



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Second Chakra Svadisthana Fourth Chakra Anahata
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R)	Toe abduction, foot stability Toe flexion (pressure into ground)
Foot and toes (L)	Toe extension, flexion
Lower leg (R)	Stability to counter body sway (muscles relaxing and contracting as necessary to maintain balance)
Lower leg (L)	Ankle dorsiflexion
Thigh (R)	Knee flexion and extension, stability Patellar elevation External rotation of femur, stability
Thigh (L)	Knee extension, patellar elevation
Hip and Pelvis (R)	Hip flexion, stability Pelvic stability Abduction, stability
Hip and Pelvis (L)	Hip extension, stability Hip stability against gravity
Torso (R and L)	Spinal extension and stability Trunk stability Rib and chest elevation

Shoulder	Humerus abduction, shoulder stability Humerus depression External rotation of humerus Scapular adduction Postural support in mid back and downward pull of scapulae
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Forearm supination Elbow extension Wrist hyperextension
Hand and fingers	Finger adduction Finger extension
Neck	Stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
Tones the legs and strengthens the thighs and hips Opens the chest and shoulders Builds abdominal strength Improves balance, concentration and focus Opens and strengthens the hip muscles	Pregnancy- after the first trimester, this pose should be practiced with modifications. Those with extreme weakness or balance difficulty should use modifications. Hip or knee replacement- those with a replacement joint should either refrain from doing this pose or practice it with modifications.

Variations:

1. Ardha Chandrasana with modified knee support
2. Ardha Chandrasana with Bow arms



Parivritta Ardh Chandrasana (Revolved Half Moon Pose)



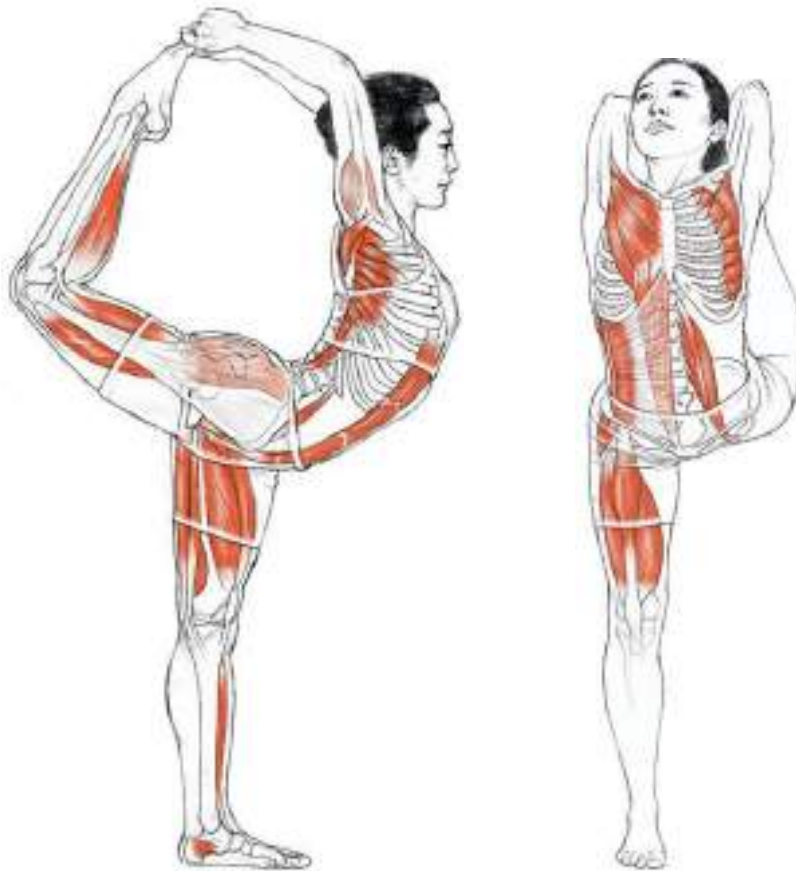
Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Second Chakra Svadisthana Fourth Chakra Anahata
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R)	Toe abduction, foot stability Toe flexion (pressure into ground)
Foot and toes (L)	Toe extension, flexion
Lower leg (R)	Stability to counter body sway (muscles relaxing and contracting as necessary to maintain balance)
Lower leg (L)	Ankle plantar flexion
Thigh (R)	Knee extension, stability Patellar elevation
Thigh (L)	Knee extension, stability Patellar elevation
Hip and Pelvis (R)	Hip flexion, stability Pelvic stability External rotation of femur
Hip and Pelvis (L)	Hip extension, stability
Torso (R and L)	Trunk stability Rib and chest elevation
Torso (R)	Trunk rotation to right
Torso (L)	Trunk rotation to right
Shoulder	Humerus abduction, shoulder stability

	External rotation of humerus Scapular adduction Postural support in mid back and downward pull of scapulae
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Forearm supination Elbow extension
Hand and fingers (R)	Finger adduction Finger extension
Hand and fingers (L)	Wrist hyperextension, stability Finger extension
Neck	Stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Improves flexibility and strength in the hips and torso.</p> <p>Builds balance and focus.</p> <p>Increases stamina.</p> <p>Tones the abdominal muscles.</p>	<p>Students feeling weak or dizzy should skip this posture.</p> <p>Students with acute back injury should avoid this pose. Those with neck issues should practice with caution or modification.</p> <p>It is inadvisable to attempt this posture during pregnancy due to the extreme rotation in the torso.</p>

Natarajasana (King of the Dancers Pose)



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Third Chakra Manipura Fourth Chakra Anahata
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R)	Toe extension, flexion
Foot and toes (L)	Toe abduction, foot stability Toe flexion (pressure into ground)
Lower leg (R)	Ankle dorsiflexion
Lower leg (L)	Stability to counter body sway (muscles relaxing and contracting as necessary to maintain balance)
Thigh (R)	Knee flexion, stability Thigh adduction
Thigh (L)	Knee extension, adduction, stability Patellar elevation
Hip and Pelvis (R)	Hip hyperextension, stability
Hip and Pelvis (L)	Hip stability Pelvic stability
Torso (R and L)	Trunk stability Rib and chest elevation
Torso (R)	Trunk rotation to right
Torso (L)	Trunk rotation to right

Shoulder	Hyperflexion, humerus adduction External rotation Scapular adduction, stability
Upper arm	Elbow flexion
Lower arm	Forearm supination
Hand and fingers	Finger flexion
Neck	Stability

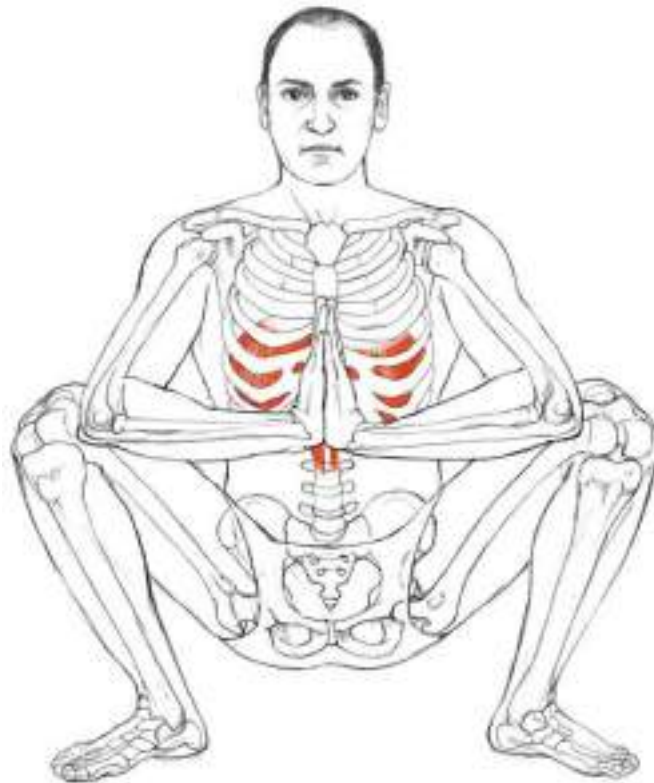
Benefits	Contra-indications
Stretches the chest and shoulders deeply Enhances balance and concentration Lengthens and strengthens the front of the torso and spine Stretches the quadriceps	Students with acute lower back injury should refrain performing from the back-arching in this posture. During pregnancy, students should practice with modifications

Variations:

1. Natarajasana easy modification
2. Natarajasana with one arm forward



Malasana (Squat/Garland Pose)



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Second Chakra Svadisthana
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Toe abduction, foot stability Toe flexion (pressure into ground)
Lower leg	Ankle dorsiflexion Ankle stability
Thigh	Knee flexion, stability
Hip and Pelvis	Hip flexion Stability
Torso	Trunk stability
Shoulder	Internal rotation
Upper arm	Elbow flexion
Lower arm	Forearm supination
Hand and fingers	Finger extension Finger adduction Thumb abduction
Neck	Neck flexion

Benefits	Contra-indications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Stretches the back muscles. •Opens the pelvic area. •Massages the internal organs. •Strengthens the abdominals. •Stabilizes and builds strength in the ankles and feet. 	<p>Students with a knee injury should either practice with modifications or skip this pose.</p>

Variations:

1. Malasana with half revolved squat
2. Ardha Malasana with extended squat
3. Badhha Malasana



SEATED AND KNEELING ASANAS

Sukhasana (Easy Pose)



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Sixth Chakra Ajna (Helps in all activating all Chakras)
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Benefits	Contra-indications
Helps in meditation and pranayama Keeps the spine in ideal posture Calms mind and body Improves lower body flexibility	Those with back pain should take caution and not sit for longer duration Not advised for sciatica patients

Sidhasana (Adept's Pose)



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Sixth Chakra Ajna (Helps in all activating all Chakras)
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Benefits	Contra-indications
Helps in focusing in meditation and pranayama Keeps the spine in ideal posture Calms mind and body Improves lower body flexibility Improves blood circulation in lower body Good for improving digestive and reproductive health Regulates hormones	Those with back pain should take caution and not sit for longer duration Not advised for sciatica patients

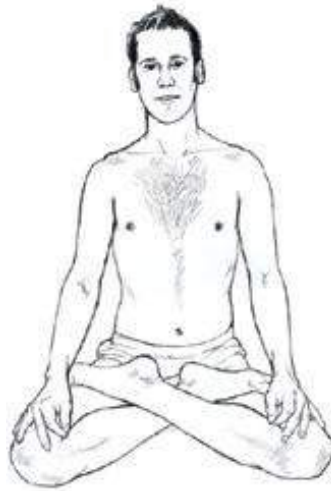
Swastikasana (Auspicious Pose)



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Sixth Chakra Ajna (Helps in all activating all Chakras)
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Benefits	Contra-indications
Helps in focusing in meditation and pranayama Keeps the spine in ideal posture Calms mind and body Improves lower body flexibility Improves blood circulation in lower body Improves nervous disorders Relieves varicose pain Regulates hormones	Those with back pain should take caution and not sit for longer duration Not advised for sciatica patients

Padmasana (Lotus Pose)



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Sixth Chakra Ajna (Helps in all activating all Chakras)
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Benefits	Contra-indications
Helps in focusing in meditation and pranayama Keeps the spine in ideal posture Calms mind and body Improves lower body flexibility Tones abdomen, thighs Improves blood circulation in lower body Good for improving digestive health Regulates hormones	Those with back pain should take caution and not sit for longer duration Not advised for sciatica patients Not advised for pregnant students

Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Toe extension
Lower leg	Ankle dorsiflexion
Thigh	Knee flexion, stability
Hip and Pelvis	Hip flexion External rotation
Torso	Spine extension, stability Trunk stability
Shoulder	External rotation of humerus Scapular adduction Postural support in mid back, downward pull of scapulae

Upper arm	Elbow flexion
Lower arm	Forearm supination
Hand and fingers	Finger flexion
Neck	Neck flexion

Variations:

1. Badhha Padmasana
2. Tolasana
3. Padhma Bhujangasana



Dandasana (Staff pose)



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara
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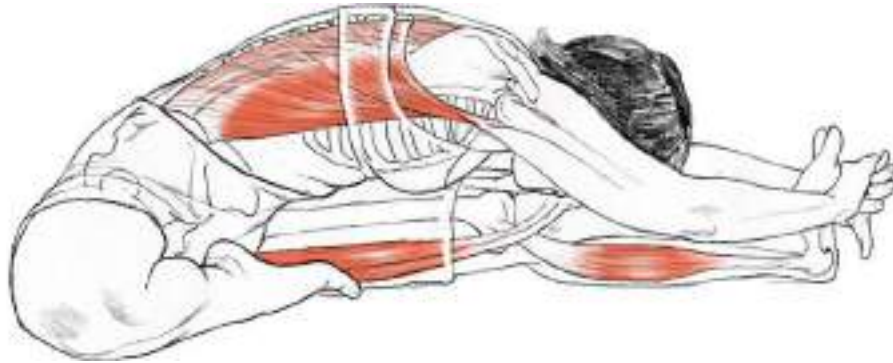
Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Toe extension
Lower leg	Ankle dorsiflexion
Thigh	Knee extension
Hip and Pelvis	Hip flexion Pelvic stability
Torso	Rib and chest elevation Trunk stability
Shoulder	External rotation of humerus Scapular adduction Postural support in mid back, downward pull of scapulae
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Elbow extension Wrist hyperextension
Hand and fingers	Finger extension
Neck	Neck extension and stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
Massages internal organs Strengthens upper back.	Those with back pain should take caution and not sit for longer duration

<p>Strengthens and stretches abdominal muscles, lower back, and thighs. Can soothe heartburn. Helps build postural awareness, foundational for advanced seated asanas</p>	
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Janu Shirshasana (Staff pose)

Janu-Thigh Shirsha-Head



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Second Chakra Svadisthana
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Toe extension
Lower leg	Ankle dorsiflexion
Thigh (R)	Knee flexion
Thigh (L)	Knee extension
Hip and Pelvis (R)	Hip flexion Initial hip external rotation Hip abduction and external rotation
Hip and Pelvis (L)	Initial hip external rotation, forward bend Hip flexion over 120 degrees
Torso	Spinal extension with forward flexion Trunk stability
Shoulder	Humeral flexion External rotation of humerus Scapular adduction, stability Postural support in mid back, downward pull of scapulae
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Forearm supination
Hand and fingers	Finger flexion
Neck	Neck extension and stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
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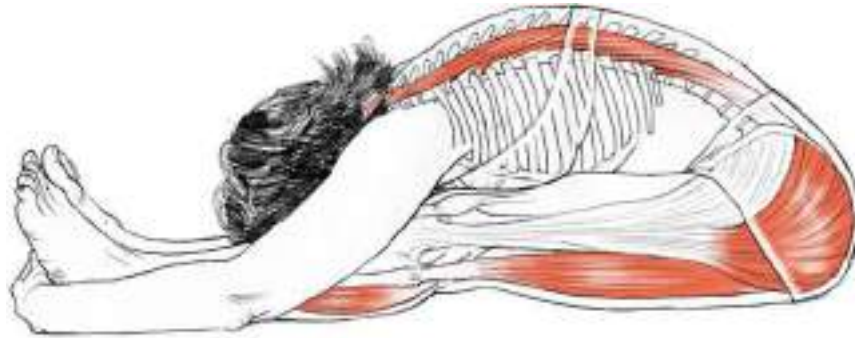
<p>Stretches and strengthens the spine. Stretches the hamstrings and groin. Calms the nervous system and helps relieve mild depression. Improves digestion. Can reduce anxiety, fatigue, and headache. Relieves symptoms of high blood pressure, insomnia, and sinusitis.</p>	<p>Those with knee or back pain should take precautions while practicing Due to the pressure created in the abdomen, those with intestinal discomfort should refrain from practicing this pose until the discomfort passes.</p>
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Variations:

1. Parivritta Janu Shirshasana



Paschimottanasa (Seated Forward Bend)



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Third Chakra Manipura
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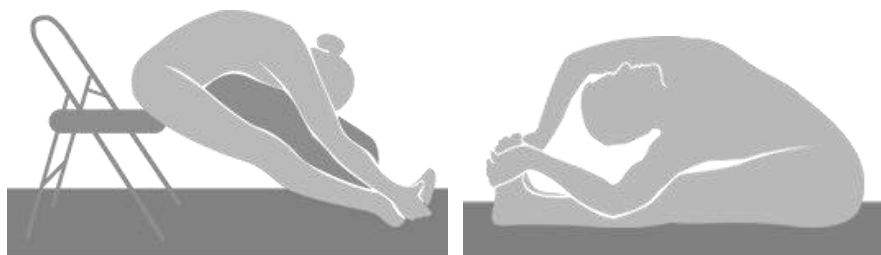
Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Toe extension
Lower leg	Ankle dorsiflexion
Thigh	Knee extension
Hip and Pelvis	Hip flexion, forward bend Hip flexion over 120 degrees
Torso	Spinal extension with forward flexion Trunk stability
Shoulder	Humeral flexion External rotation of humerus Scapular adduction, stability Postural support in mid back, downward pull of scapulae
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Elbow extension Forearm supination
Hand and fingers	Finger flexion
Neck	Head extension and stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
Calms and soothes the nervous system. Stretches the hamstrings and the entire back, both in the passive and the active variations. Stimulates circulation to the liver,	Those with knee or back pain should take precautions while practicing Due to the pressure created in the abdomen, those with intestinal discomfort should refrain from practicing this pose until the

<p>kidneys, and reproductive organs. Improves digestion. Can relieve some symptoms of menstrual discomfort and menopause. May alleviate headache, anxiety, and fatigue. Can help relieve high blood pressure, infertility, insomnia, and sinusitis.</p>	<p>discomfort passes.</p>
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Variations:

1. Ardha Paschimottanasana
2. Parivritta (revolved) Paschimottanasana
3. Trianga Mukhaikapada Paschimottanasana



Badhhakonasana (Bound angle pose/Butterfly pose)



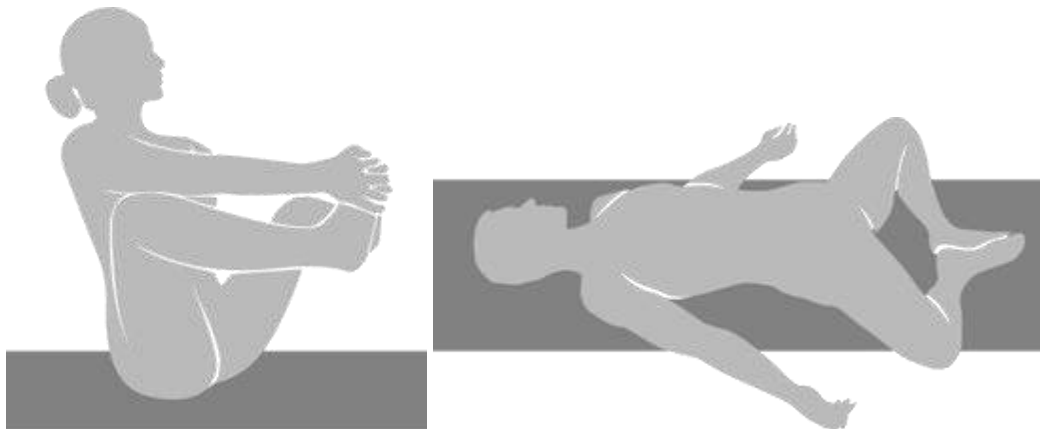
Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Second Chakra Svadisthana
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Toe extension
Lower leg	Ankle inversion
Thigh	Knee flexion
Hip and Pelvis	Hip flexion, forward bend Hip external rotation
Torso	Spinal extension Rib and chest elevation Trunk stability
Shoulder	External rotation of humerus Scapular adduction, stability Postural support in mid back, downward pull of scapulae
Upper arm	Elbow flexion
Lower arm	Forearm supination
Hand and fingers	Finger and thumb flexion
Neck	Neck extension and stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Promotes wellness in the urinary and reproductive organs.</p> <p>Increases general circulation by stretching the major arteries and lymph glands in the groin, legs, and thighs.</p> <p>Stretches the adductor muscles of the thighs.</p> <p>Relieves mild depression symptoms.</p> <p>Can help alleviate pain from sciatica.</p> <p>Relieves discomfort for pregnant and menstruating women.</p> <p>Helps ease childbirth, if practiced regularly</p>	<p>Those with knee, hip, groin or back pain should take modifications with props while practicing</p>

Variations:

1. Supta Badhakonasana
2. Dandayamna (balancing) baddha konasana



Kurmasana (Tortoise pose)



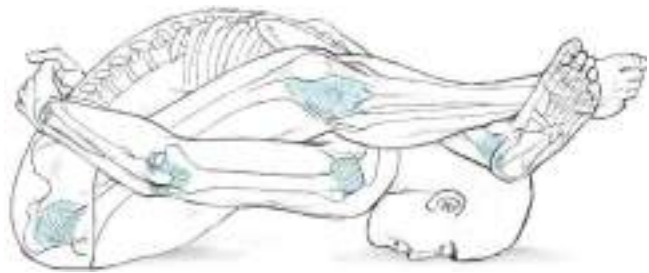
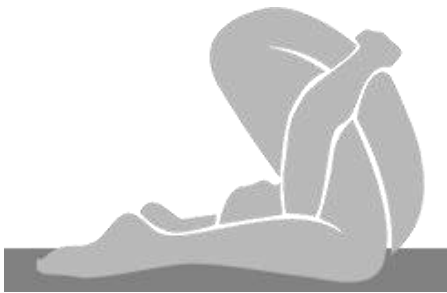
Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Second Chakra Svadisthana
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Toe extension
Lower leg	Ankle dorsiflexion
Thigh	Knee extension
Hip and Pelvis	Hip flexion, forward bend Hip abduction Hip external rotation
Torso	Spinal extension Trunk stability
Shoulder	Shoulder abduction, internal rotation Scapular downward rotation, stability Postural support in mid back, downward pull of scapulae
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Forearm pronation
Hand and fingers	Finger and thumb flexion
Neck	Neck extension and stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
Promotes wellness the respiratory, reproductive and digestive organs Increases general circulation by stretching the major arteries and lymph glands in the groin, legs, and thighs. Stretches the thigh, spine and shoulder muscles. Helps in opening the hips and chest Improves spinal flexibility	Those with hip, groin or back pain should take modifications with props while practicing. Pregnant students can practice with modifications or skip the pose.

Variations:

1. Baddha Viparita Kurmasana (Inverted Bounded Tortoise)
2. Supta Kurmasana



Upavishta Konasana (Wide-Angle Seated Forward Bend)



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Second Chakra Svadisthana
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Toe extension
Lower leg	Ankle dorsiflexion
Thigh	Knee extension
Hip and Pelvis	Hip flexion over 120 degrees Thigh abduction
Torso	Spinal extension and stability Rib and chest elevation Trunk stability
Shoulder	Scapular adduction Humerus horizontal extension External rotation, joint stability
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Forearm supination
Hand and fingers	Finger and thumb flexion
Neck	Neck extension and stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Opens the hips. Stretches the groin, hamstrings, and lower back. Stimulates digestion. In a complete forward bend, deeply stretches the hips and lengthens the torso</p>	<p>Those with hip, groin or back pain should take modifications with props while practicing. Pregnant students can practice with modifications using props or skip the pose.</p>

Variations:

1. Merudandasana



Ardha Matsyendra Asana (Half Lord of the Fishes Pose)



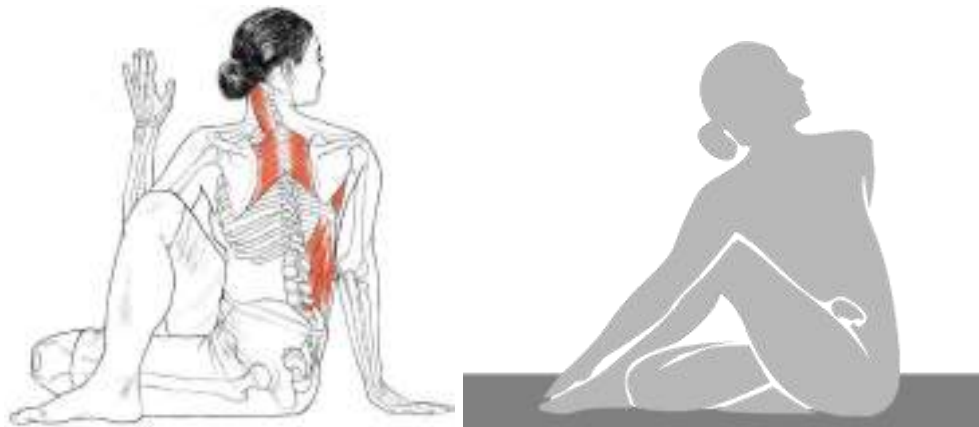
Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Third Chakra Manipura
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Toe extension
Lower leg	Ankle dorsiflexion
Thigh (R)	Knee flexion Thigh adduction
Thigh (L)	Knee extension
Hip and Pelvis (R)	Hip flexion
Hip and Pelvis (L)	Hip flexion
Torso (R and L)	Rib and chest elevation Trunk stability
Torso (R)	Rotation to right
Torso (L)	Rotation to right
Shoulder (R and L)	External rotation, joint stability
Shoulder (R)	Humeral hyperextension, stability Scapular adduction
Shoulder (L)	Humerus horizontal extension, leverage against right knee
Upper arm (R)	Forearm extension
Upper arm (L)	Elbow flexion
Lower arm (R)	Elbow extension Forearm supination
Lower arm (L)	Forearm pronation
Hand and fingers (R)	Wrist hyperextension
Hand and fingers (L)	Wrist extension Finger extension Finger adduction
Neck	Neck extension and stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Increases energy level. Stimulates and massages the internal organs, specifically the kidneys and liver. Stimulates digestion. Aligns the spine. Builds the trunk muscles. Opens the shoulders and chest.</p>	<p>Students with migraine headache or severe cold symptoms should replace this posture with a gentle, restorative supine twist. Students with a hip replacement should not cross the foot of the bent knee over the straight leg. Students suffering from a back concern should either proceed with caution or skip this pose. Pregnant students should rotate only through the upper spine.</p>

Variations:

1. Matstyendrasana



Marichyasana A and B



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Second Chakra Svadisthana Third Chakra Manipura
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Toe extension
Lower leg	Ankle dorsiflexion
Thigh (R)	Knee flexion
Thigh (L)	Knee extension
Hip and Pelvis (R)	Hip flexion
Hip and Pelvis (L)	Initial hip external rotation Hip flexion, abduction, stability
Torso	Spinal extension with forward flexion Trunk stability Chest and rib elevation
Shoulder	Humeral flexion External rotation of humerus Scapular adduction, stability Postural support in mid back, downward pull of scapulae
Upper arm	Elbow flexion
Lower arm	Elbow extension Forearm pronation Wrist extension
Hand and fingers	Finger flexion
Neck	Neck extension, stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Increases energy level. Massages the internal organs. Brings the spine into alignment. Builds strength in the trunk muscles. Strengthens the hip and shoulder joints. Increases circulation in the joints. Relieves stiffness in the hips, knees, and ankles. Strengthens the low spine and abdominal muscles.</p>	<p>Those with knee, spine, shoulder or back pain should take precautions while practicing Due to the compression into the abdomen, students in the second or third trimester of pregnancy should not practice this posture.</p>

Marichyasana C and D



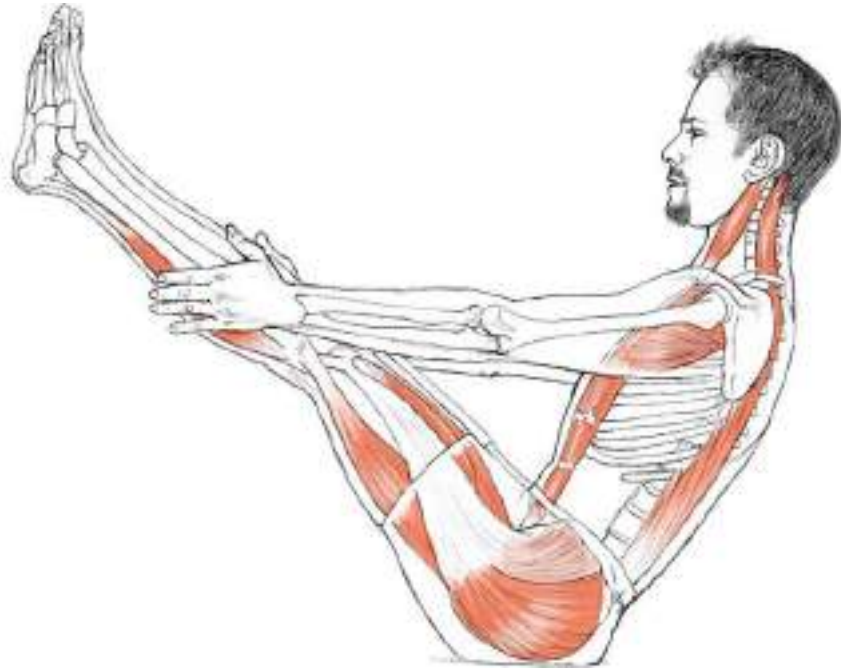
Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Second Chakra Svadisthana Third Chakra Manipura
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Toe extension
Lower leg	Ankle dorsiflexion
Thigh (R)	Knee flexion
Thigh (L)	Knee extension
Hip and Pelvis (R)	Hip flexion
Hip and Pelvis (L)	Initial hip external rotation Hip flexion, abduction, stability
Torso (R and L)	Spinal extension Trunk stability
Torso (R)	Rotation to right
Torso (L)	Rotation to right
Shoulder (R)	Humerus hyperextension and adduction External humeral rotation Scapular adduction
Shoulder (L)	Humerus hyperextension Internal rotation Scapular adduction
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm (R)	Elbow flexion
Lower arm (L)	Elbow flexion Forearm pronation Wrist extension
Hand and fingers	Finger flexion
Neck	Head rotation to right, stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Increases energy level. Massages the internal organs. Aligns the spine. Builds strength in the trunk muscles. Deeply strengthens the hip and shoulder joints. Opens the shoulder joints. Increases circulation in the joints. Increases focus.</p>	<p>Those with knee, spine, shoulder or back pain should take precautions while practicing Due to the compression into the abdomen, students in the second or third trimester of pregnancy should not practice this posture.</p>

Navasana (Boat pose)

Navasana is a seated jackknife balancing position. The legs are raised off the ground with straight knees, and the toes hover at eye level. The spine is straight and reclined slightly, with the arms extended parallel to the ground.



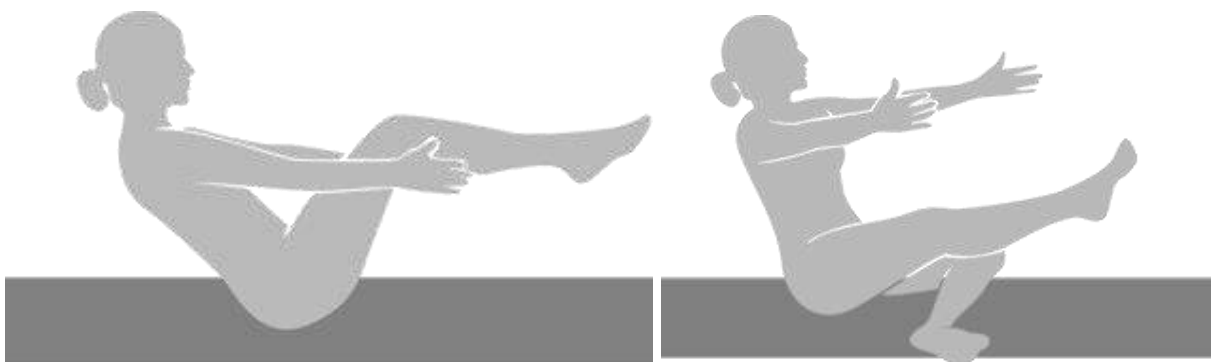
Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Third Chakra Manipura
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Toe extension
Lower leg	Plantar flexion
Thigh	Knee extension Thigh adduction
Hip and Pelvis	Hip flexion
Torso (R and L)	Spinal extension, stability Trunk stability
Shoulder	Humeral flexion Joint stability
Upper arm	Elbow extension, stability
Lower arm	Forearm supination
Hand and fingers	Wrist extension Finger extension
Neck	Neck extension, stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Strengthens the thighs, hips, abdominal muscles, and back; targets the core musculature. Massages the internal organs. Stimulates digestion. Builds balance and concentration.</p>	<p>Pregnant or injured students are advised to avoid this posture. Due to the pressure created in the abdomen, students with intestinal discomfort should refrain from practicing this pose until the discomfort passes.</p>

Variations:

1. Navasana with arms extended
2. Ardha Navasana
3. Ek Pada Navasana



Hanumanasana (Full split pose)

Hanumnasana is a forward split which provides very beneficial flexibility in the hamstrings and hip flexors.



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Second Chakra Svadisthana Fourth Chakra Anahata Seventh Chakra Sahasrara
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Toe extension
Lower leg (R)	Ankle dorsiflexion
Lower leg (L)	Ankle plantar flexion
Thigh	Knee extension
Hip and Pelvis (R)	Hip flexion
Hip and Pelvis (L)	Hip hyperextension
Torso (R and L)	Slight lumbar hyperextension, spinal stability Trunk stability
Shoulder	Humeral flexion External rotation, stability Scapular adduction
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Forearm supination Forearm extension
Hand and fingers	Finger adduction Finger extension
Neck	Neck extension, stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
Stretches the hamstrings and hip flexors. Stabilizes, balances and opens the deep hip muscles. Helps relieve sciatica pain. Strengthens the spinal and abdominal muscles.	Students with hamstring or groin injury should proceed with modifications.

Variations:

1. Hanumanasana with props
2. Ardha Hanumanasana



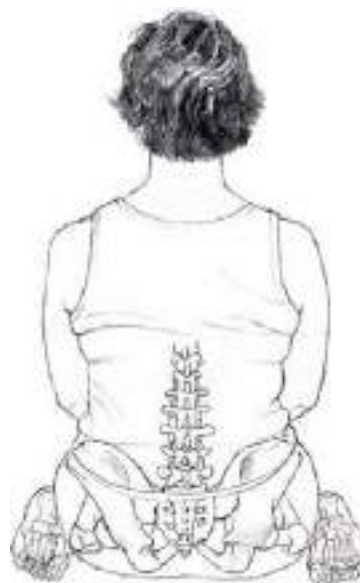
Vajrasana (Thunderbolt pose)

Vajrasana is a kneeling posture in which the hips are seated on the soles of the feet.



Virasana (Hero's pose)

Virasana is a deep kneeling posture in which the hips are seated on the ground between the feet.



Energetic Focus

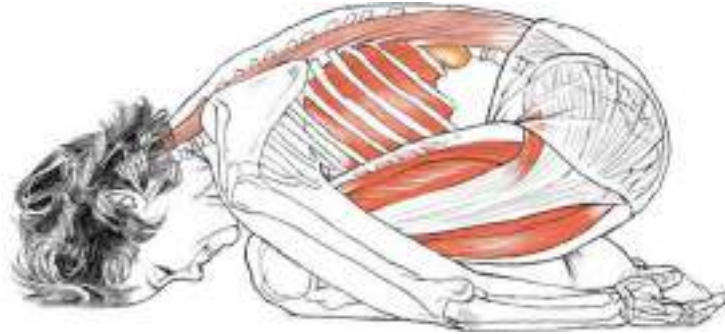
First Chakra Muladhara

Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Toe extension
Lower leg	Ankle plantar flexion Internal rotation
Thigh	Knee flexion
Hip and Pelvis	Hip flexion
Torso (R and L)	Trunk stability Spinal extension and stability Rib and chest elevation
Shoulder	Humeral adduction External rotation of humerus, stability Scapular adduction
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Forearm pronation Wrist hyperextension
Hand and fingers	Finger extension
Neck	Neck extension, stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Helps alleviate heel spurs and strengthens the arches.</p> <p>Stretches the quadriceps and ankles.</p> <p>Helps alleviate arthritis pain in the feet and ankles.</p> <p>Provides good spinal support for meditation (better than sitting cross-legged)</p> <p>Stimulates digestion.</p>	<p>Students with undiagnosed knee pain should not practice this posture. Others with a knee injury should proceed cautiously and with modifications.</p> <p>Students with cardiac or other circulation concerns should avoid this pose.</p>

Balasana (Child's pose)

Balasana is a kneeling, prone position where the shins rest on the ground and the belly and chest lie on the thighs. This pose calms the body and replaces energy after vigorous, challenging postures.



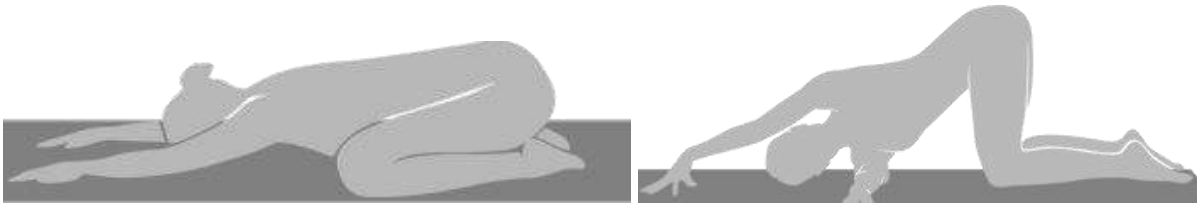
Energetic Focus	Second Chakra Svadisthana Third Chakra Manipura Sixth Chakra Ajna
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Plantar flexion
Lower leg	Knee flexion
Thigh	Hip flexion
Hip and Pelvis	Legs slightly abducted
Torso (R and L)	Slightly flexed
Shoulder	Slight internal rotation if arms at side Overhead extension
Upper arm	Relaxed
Lower arm	Extended
Hand and fingers	Relaxed
Neck	Forward flexion, stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
Restores energy. Stretches and releases the lower back. Relaxes the neck and shoulders. Works as a restorative posture. Stimulates digestion.	Students with knee pain should proceed with modifications. The pressure placed on the abdomen in this pose can exacerbate intestinal distress, so students should avoid this pose until the discomfort passes.

Variation:

1. Arms extended overhead
2. Parsva Balasana (Thread the Needle pose)



Parighasana (Gate pose)

Parighasana works as an intense side stretch. It helps in improving flexibility in the hips.



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Second Chakra Svadisthana Third Chakra Manipura
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R)	Toe flexion
Foot and toes (L)	Toe extension
Lower leg (R)	Ankle plantar flexion
Lower leg (L)	Ankle plantar flexion and stability
Thigh (R)	Knee extension
Thigh (L)	Knee flexion
Hip and Pelvis (R)	Hip abduction and external rotation
Hip and Pelvis (L)	Hip extension, stability Pelvic stability
Torso (R and L)	Trunk stability
Torso (L)	Lateral flexion to right
Shoulder (R)	External humeral rotation Humerus horizontal flexion

Shoulder (L)	Humerus flexion External rotation Scapular adduction
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm (R)	Forearm supination
Lower arm (L)	Forearm extension
Hand and fingers (R and L)	Wrist extension Finger extension
Hand and fingers (L)	Finger adduction
Neck	Neck extension, stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
Applies a deep lateral stretch to the torso and lower back. Loosens the spine. Stretches the pelvis and chest. Strengthens the lateral abdominal muscles. Aids in digestion.	Students with knee pain should proceed with modifications. Those with back pain or injury should limit the lateral stretch to some degree and use props for support.

Variation:

1. Arms extended overhead, deepening the pose



Ushtrasana (Camel pose)

Ushtrasana is a kneeling back bend. It helps in opening the hips and shoulders for more demanding back bends.



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Third Chakra Manipura Fourth Chakra Anahata
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Toe hyper extension Foot stability
Lower leg	Ankle in dorsiflexion, stability
Thigh	Knee flexion, stability
Hip and Pelvis	Hip hyperextension, stability Pelvic stability
Torso (R and L)	Trunk stability Spinal stability
Shoulder	Scapular adduction External humeral rotation Hyperextension and adduction of humerus
Upper arm	Elbow extension (also aids in hyperextending humerus)
Lower arm	Forearm supination Wrist hyperextension
Hand and fingers	Finger flexion
Neck	Neck hyperextension, stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Opens the shoulders and chest. Strengthens the mid-back and shoulder muscles. Stretches the abdominal cavity. Increases circulation to the throat area. Lengthens the hip flexors. Stretches the fronts of the ankles. Increases awareness of alignment.</p>	<p>Students with back, neck or knee pain should proceed with modifications. Students with high blood pressure should practice with caution.</p>

Variation:

1. Ardha Ushtrasana
2. Parivritta Ushtrasana



Simhasana (Lion pose)

Simhasana is a kneeling asana. It incorporates a powerful breathing technique to release any tension in the throat, chest and face.



Energetic Focus	Third Chakra Manipura Fourth Chakra Anahata Fifth Chakra Vishuddha
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Toe extension
Lower leg	Ankle plantar flexion Internal rotation
Thigh	Knee flexion
Hip and Pelvis	Hip flexion
Spine	Flexion of atlanto-occipital joint, neutral spine Adduction and elevation of eyeballs
Torso (R and L)	Trunk stability Spinal extension and stability Rib and chest elevation
Shoulder	Humeral adduction External rotation of humerus, stability Scapular adduction
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Forearm pronation Wrist hyperextension
Hand and fingers	Finger extension
Neck	Neck extension, stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Improves the functioning of thyroid and parathyroid glands.</p> <p>Exercises and rejuvenates facial muscles.</p> <p>Improves the health of respiratory organs.</p> <p>Helps in curing voice related difficulties, like stammering, etc.</p> <p>Helps in calming the mind</p> <p>Improves digestion.</p> <p>Acts as an outlet for negative energy.</p>	<p>Students with back or knee pain should practice using modifications such as sitting on a chair</p>

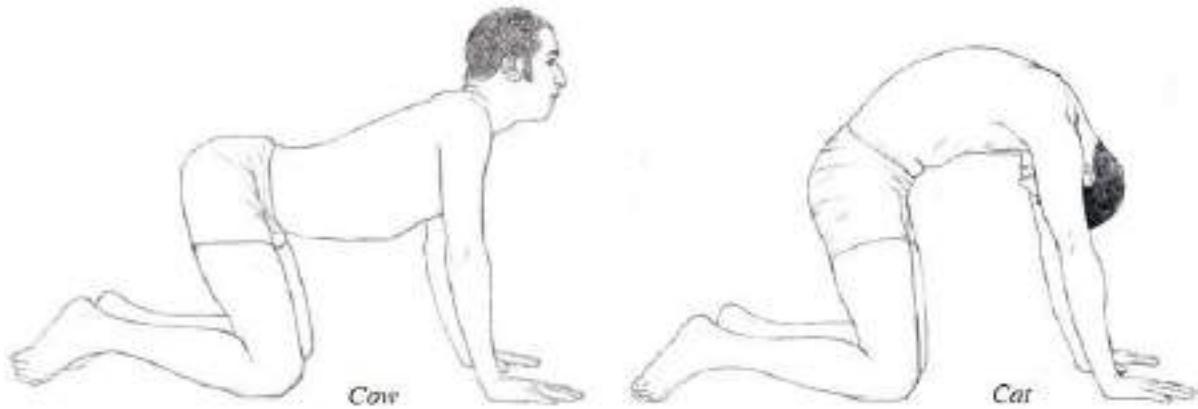
Variation:

1. Simhasana with Virasana legs



Marjaryasana (Cat-Cow pose, Durga Go)

Durga Go is a flowing pose practiced on the hands and knees. It moves the spine through a gentle range of rounded flexion (cat's pose) and hyperextension (cow's pose).



Energetic Focus	Third Chakra Manipura Fourth Chakra Anahata
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R and L)	Toe extension
Lower leg	Ankle plantar flexion, stability
Thigh	Knee flexion
Hip and Pelvis	Hip flexion Hip stability Pelvic stability
Torso (Cat phase)	Torso stability Spinal flexion Sternoclavicular stability
Torso (Cow phase)	Spinal hyperextension and stability
Shoulder (Both phases)	Flexion of humerus Stability and external rotation of humerus Supporting posture in mid back, downward pull of scapulae
Shoulder (Cat phase)	Scapular adduction, stability Humeral adduction
Shoulder (Cow phase)	Adduction of scapulae
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Forearm pronation Forearm extension Wrist hyperextension
Hand and fingers	Wrist stability Finger extension, stability Finger abduction

Neck (Cat phase)	Initial neck flexion Neck flexion
Neck (Cow phase)	Neck hyperextension, stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Improves the functioning of thyroid and parathyroid glands.</p> <p>Exercises and rejuvenates facial muscles.</p> <p>Improves the health of respiratory organs.</p> <p>Helps in curing voice related difficulties, like stammering, etc.</p> <p>Helps in calming the mind</p> <p>Improves digestion.</p> <p>Acts as an outlet for negative energy.</p>	<p>Students with a wrist concern should practice with modifications.</p> <p>Students with neck pain or injury should keep the head aligned with the torso.</p> <p>Students with acute lower back pain or injury should move through a smaller range of motion.</p>

Variation:

1. Vyaghrasana Variation 1
2. Vyaghrasana Variation 2
3. Modified, wrist pain



Rajakapotasana (King pigeon pose)

Rajakapotasana is a seated back-bending asana. It promotes flexibility of the hip and torso.



Energetic Focus	Second Chakra Svadisthana Fourth Chakra Anahata
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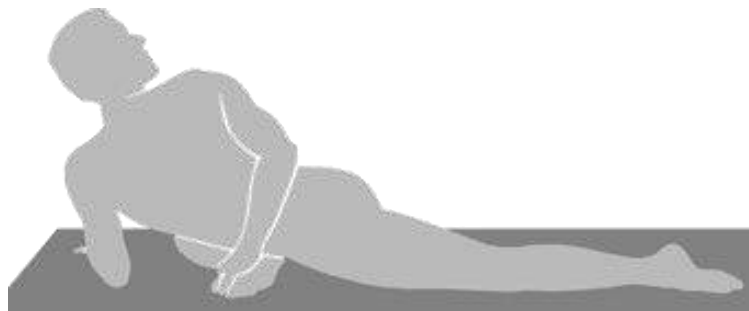
Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Toe extension
Lower leg (R)	Ankle dorsiflexion, stability
Lower leg (L)	Ankle plantar flexion and stability
Thigh (R)	Knee flexion
Thigh (L)	Knee flexion
Hip and Pelvis (R)	Hip flexion Femoral abduction Initial femoral external rotation Femur external rotation
Hip and Pelvis (L)	Hip hyperextension
Torso (R and L)	Spinal hyperextension Rib and chest elevation Trunk stability
Shoulder	Humerus flexion Stability and external rotation of humerus Scapular adduction, stability Supporting posture in mid back, downward pull of scapulae
Upper arm	Elbow flexion

Lower arm	Wrist flexion
Hand and fingers	Finger flexion
Neck	Neck hyperextension, stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Opens the hips and chest. Lengthens the hip flexors and external rotators. Stabilizes the hips. Improves flexibility. Stimulates and stretches the abdominal organs.</p>	<p>Students with an acute knee or hip concerns should avoid this posture.</p>

Variation:

1. Arms extended overhead, forward bend
2. One legged variations of Rajakapotasana (Eka pada Rajakapotasana)
3. Revolved Parivritta Eka pada Rajakapotasana



SUPINE AND PRONE ASANAS

Asthangam Namaskara (Eight limbs pose/ Zen pose)

Zen Asana is a prone pose in which the toes, knees, hands, chest, and chin touch the ground. The hips and lower back are lifted and reach away from the waist, whereas the elbows are flexed and aligned close to the ribs.



Energetic Focus	Fourth Chakra Anahata
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Toe spreading Toe hyperextension
Lower leg	Ankle dorsiflexion, stability
Thigh	Knee flexion Leg adduction, stability
Hip and Pelvis	Hip flexion
Hip and Pelvis (L)	Hip hyperextension
Torso	Trunk stability Spinal extension Sternoclavicular stability
Shoulder	Humerus extension, adduction, stability Stability and external rotation of humerus Adduction of scapulae Supporting posture in mid back, downward pull of scapulae
Upper arm	Elbow flexion
Lower arm	Forearm pronation Wrist hyperextension
Hand and fingers	Wrist stability Finger extension Finger abduction
Neck	Neck hyperextension, stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
Strengthens the sternum. Promotes alignment, stability, and flexibility in the spine and shoulders.	Students with lower back injury or pain should modify or skip this pose. Modification should be used by students with shoulder or wrist injury

<p>Prepares the body for backbends and other weight-bearing arm poses. Creates expansion in the neck and lower back.</p>	<p>or pain or carpal tunnel syndrome. Students who have difficulty holding this pose should practice with modifications. This pose should be avoided after the first trimester in pregnancy, and with modifications in the second and third trimesters.</p>
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Shalabhasana (Locust pose)

In Shalabhasana, the body is prone and the legs are lifted off the ground. The posture has two main variations, both of which strengthen the back of the body.



Energetic Focus	Second Chakra Svadisthana Third Chakra Manipura
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Toe abduction Toe flexion
Lower leg	Ankle plantar flexion
Thigh	Knee extension Slight thigh adduction, stability
Hip and Pelvis	Hip hyperextension
Torso	Trunk stability Spinal hyperextension Rib and chest elevation
Shoulder	Arm hyperextension External rotation Adduction of scapulae
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Forearm supination Arm extension Wrist extension
Hand and fingers	Finger extension Finger adduction
Neck	Neck extension, stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Strengthens the lower back and the posterior hip and thigh muscles. Stretches and strengthens the abdomens. Stimulates the kidneys. Opens the shoulders and chest. Stimulates circulation in the abdomen and chest.</p>	<p>Since the belly is on the ground, this posture should not be practiced after the first trimester of pregnancy. Students with lower back pain or injury should either practice this pose one leg at a time or avoid the pose.</p>

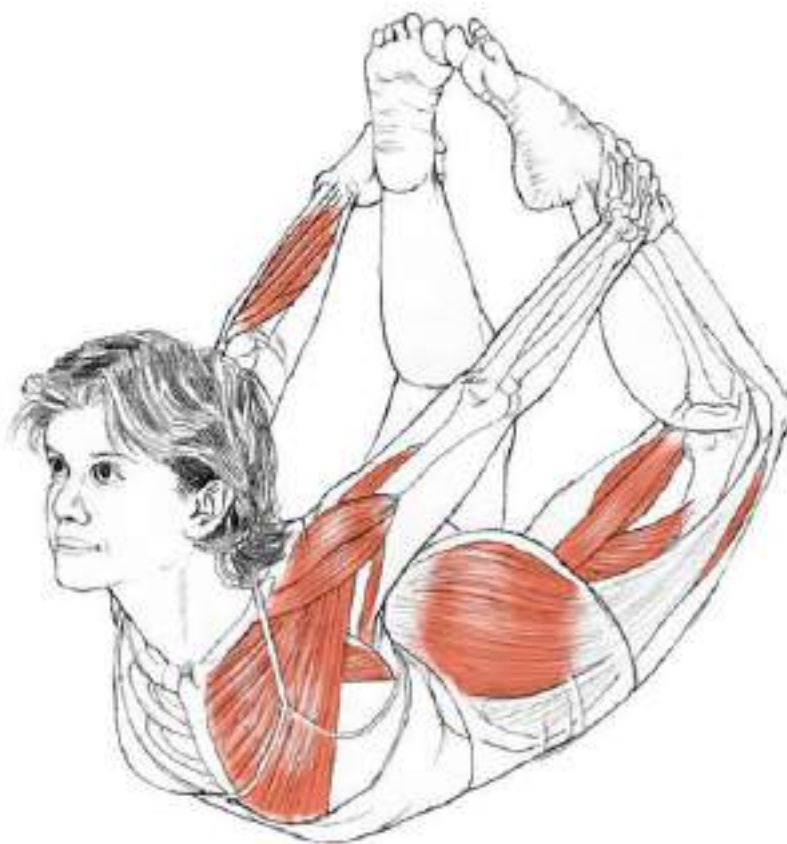
Variation:

1. Viparita Shalabhasana (deep posture)



Dhanurasana (Bow pose)

Dhanurasana is a moderate to deep backbend.



Energetic Focus	Third Chakra Manipura Fourth Chakra Anahata
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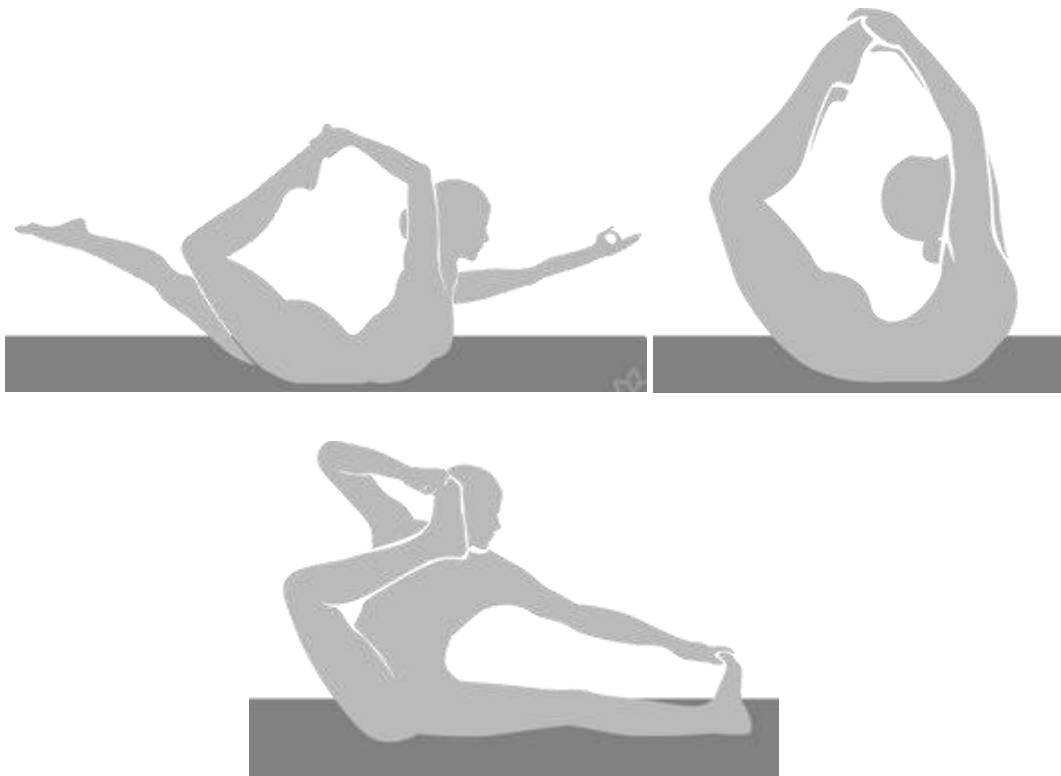
Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Toe extension
Lower leg	Ankle plantar flexion
Thigh	Knee flexion
Hip and Pelvis	Initial hip hyperextension Active hip hyperextension
Torso	Trunk stability Spinal hyperextension Rib and chest elevation
Shoulder	Humerus hyperextension External rotation Adduction of scapulae
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Forearm pronation Elbow extension
Hand and fingers	Wrist extension Finger flexion Finger adduction

Neck	Neck hyperextension, stability
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Benefits	Contra-indications
Stretches the entire front of the body. Strengthens the spine. Opens the shoulders, chest, and throat. Stimulates circulation in the abdomen and anterior of the pelvis. Strengthens the lungs.	Since the belly is on the ground, this posture should not be practiced after the first trimester of pregnancy. Students with lower back pain, high blood pressure or heart concerns should avoid the pose. Students with shoulder injury or pain should practice with modifications.

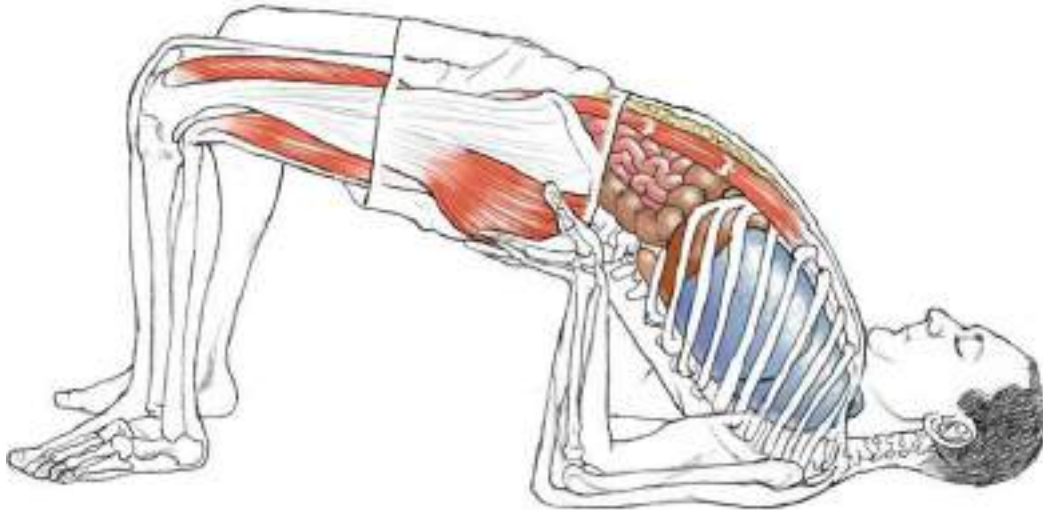
Variation:

1. Ardha Dhanurasana
2. Padangustha Dhanurasana
3. Akarna Dhanurasana



Setubandhasana (Bridge pose)

Setu Bandhasana is a relatively easy back bend in which the head, the neck, and the top edge of the shoulders remain on the ground, while the knees are flexed and the feet are flat on the ground. The resulting body shape resembles a bridge.



Energetic Focus	Third Chakra Manipura Fourth Chakra Anahata Fifth Chakra Vishuddha
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Toe abduction Toe flexion
Lower leg	Ankle dorsiflexion, stability
Thigh	Knee flexion Slight adduction
Hip and Pelvis	Hip hyperextension
Torso	Trunk stability Spinal hyperextension Rib and chest elevation
Shoulder	Humerus hyperextension External rotation Adduction and depression of scapulae
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Forearm pronation Elbow extension
Hand and fingers	Finger flexion Finger adduction
Neck	Neck flexion, jalandhara bandha

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Opens and expands the chest. Strengthens the mid and upper spine. Helps alleviate symptoms of mild depression. Stretches the entire torso. Increases circulation to the thyroid gland. Energizes the legs. Relieves low-back tightness. Helps alleviate menstrual and menopausal discomfort.</p>	<p>The use of neck pillows should be avoided in this posture, as they do not allow for the proper range of motion in the back of the neck. Students with acute neck pain or injury should avoid this pose. This pose should not be practiced after the second trimester.</p>

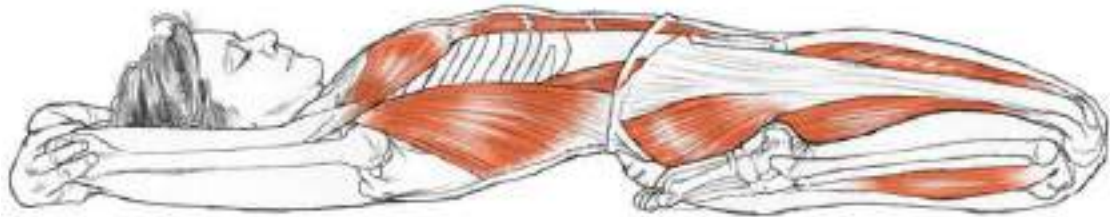
Variations:

1. Hands pressed to the mat
2. Eka Pada Setu Bandhasana



Supta Virasana (Reclining Hero pose)

Supta Virasana is a supine posture in which the knees are bent and the lower legs tucked under or to the outside of the thighs. This pose provides an excellent stretch for the quadriceps.



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Second Chakra Svadisthana Third Chakra Manipura Fourth Chakra Anahata
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Toe extension
Lower leg	Ankle plantar flexion Ankle inversion
Thigh	Knee flexion
Hip and Pelvis	Hip and pelvis extension
Torso	Trunk stability
Shoulder	External rotation Humerus flexion
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Forearm pronation Elbow extension
Hand and fingers	Finger flexion Finger adduction
Neck	Neck flexion, jalandhara bandha

Benefits	Contra-indications
Lengthens the quadriceps and iliopsoas. Increases circulation in the legs. May help alleviate symptoms of sciatica. Gently stretches the abdomen and aids digestion. Opens the chest. Increases flexibility in the ankles	Students with knee replacement should avoid this asana. Those with back concerns should practice with modifications. Due to hormone-induced laxity in the tendons and ligaments during pregnancy, the reclining version of Virasana should not be practiced past the first trimester.

and feet. Helps relieve menstrual discomfort.	
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Variations:

1. Ekapada Supta Virasana



Matsyasana (Fish pose)

Matsyasana is a supine backbending posture in which the legs, hips, and crown of the head remain on the ground while the chest and ribs are lifted.



Energetic Focus	<p>Fourth Chakra Anahata Fifth Chakra Vishuddha Sixth Chakra Ajna Seventh Chakra Sahasrara</p>
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Toe flexion
Lower leg	Plantar flexion
Thigh	Knee extension
Hip and Pelvis	Hip flexion
Torso	Trunk stability Spinal hyperextension
Shoulder	Scapular adduction Humerus hyperextension
Upper arm	Elbow flexion
Lower arm	Forearm pronation Wrist extension, stability
Hand and fingers	Finger extension, stability
Neck	Neck hyperextension, stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Opens the rib cage, chest, and abdomen. Helps with respiratory ailments. Gently strengthens the neck. Increases circulation in the throat. Stimulates the thyroid gland. Strengthens the back. Improves digestion.</p>	<p>Students with high blood pressure or migraine should refrain from practicing this pose. Students who suffer from insomnia should not practice this posture immediately before trying to sleep. Students with neck injury should refrain from practicing this pose. Students with pain the lower back musculature should practice with modifications. Those with acute lower back pain or disc injury</p>

	should refrain from practicing this pose.
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Variations:

1. Matsyasana with Padmasana Legs
2. Matsyasana deepening the posture



Viparita Karani (Restorative Legs Up the Wall)

Viparita Karani is a restful supine asana.



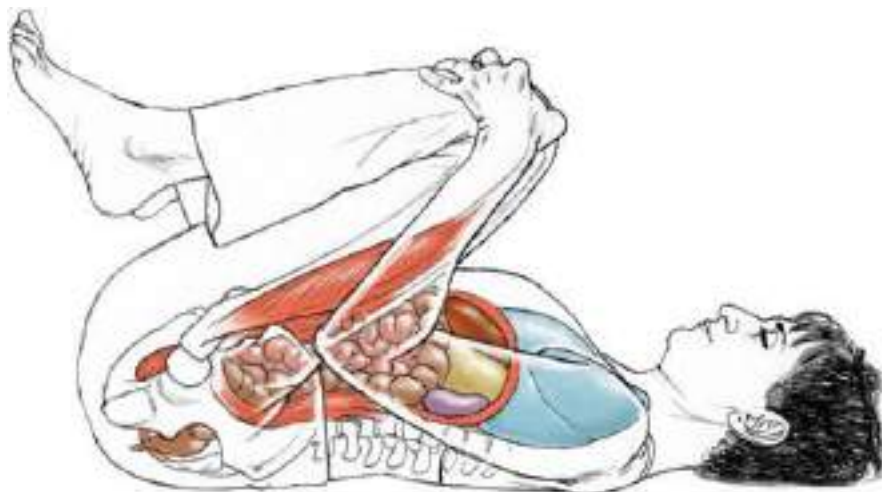
Energetic Focus	Second Chakra Svadisthana
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Neutral
Lower leg	Neutral
Thigh	Knee extension
Hip and Pelvis	Hip flexion
Torso	Spinal extension
Shoulder	External rotation
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Wrist extension
Hand and fingers	Neutral
Neck	Neck extension, stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
Helps relax the lower back. Calms the nervous system. Helps increase comfort and range for other forward bends. Relieves menstrual discomfort.	None

Pavanamuktasana (Purifying or Wind Relieving Pose)

Pavanamuktasana is a supine asana that stretches the lower back as it calms the mind and body.



Energetic Focus	Second Chakra Svadisthana Third Chakra Manipura
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Plantar flexion
Lower leg	Knee flexion
Thigh	Knee flexion, thigh stability
Hip and Pelvis	Hip flexion
Torso	Spinal flexion and stability
Shoulder	Flexion
Upper arm	Elbow flexion
Lower arm	Finger flexion
Hand and fingers	Finger flexion
Neck	Neck flexion, stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
Stimulates the digestive organs. Stretches and releases the lower back. Massages the reproductive organs. Tones the arms and legs.	Students with neck concerns should practice with modification. The pressure placed on the abdomen in this pose can worsen intestinal distress, so students with this condition should avoid this pose until the discomfort passes. Students who have a hernia or are healing from abdominal surgery should refrain from practicing this

	pose. After the second trimester, this pose should be practiced with modification.
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Variations:

1. Pavanmuktasana with one leg



Viparita Karani (Restorative Legs Up the Wall)

Viparita Karani is a restful supine asana.



Energetic Focus	Second Chakra Svadisthana
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Neutral
Lower leg	Neutral
Thigh	Knee extension
Hip and Pelvis	Hip flexion
Torso	Spinal extension
Shoulder	External rotation
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Wrist extension
Hand and fingers	Neutral
Neck	Neck extension, stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
Helps relax the lower back. Calms the nervous system. Helps increase comfort and range for other forward bends. Relieves menstrual discomfort.	None

Supta Padangusthasana (Reclining Hand-to-Toe Pose)

Supta Padangusthasana is a supine position which is used as a transitional asana to move from the more active phase of a session into more relaxing and restorative poses near the end.



Energetic Focus	Second Chakra Svadisthana Third Chakra Manipura
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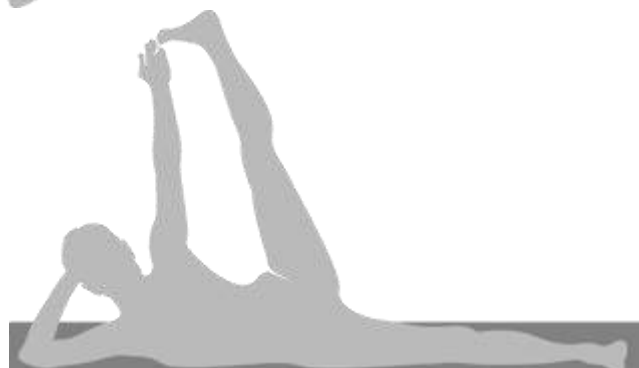
Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes (R)	Toe abduction Toe dorsiflexion
Foot and toes (L)	Toe extension
Lower leg (R)	Ankle dorsiflexion
Lower leg (L)	Ankle dorsiflexion
Thigh (R)	Knee extension
Thigh (L)	Knee extension
Hip and Pelvis (R)	Hip flexion
Hip and Pelvis (L)	Hip extension, stability
Torso	Trunk stability
Shoulder (R)	Shoulder flexion External humeral rotation Scapular adduction
Shoulder (L)	Shoulder abduction
Upper arm (R)	Elbow extension
Upper arm (L)	Elbow flexion
Lower arm (R)	Forearm Supination Elbow extension
Lower arm (L)	Forearm pronation
Hand and fingers (R)	Wrist extension Finger flexion
Hand and fingers (L)	Finger adduction

Neck	Neck extension and stability
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Benefits	Contra-indications
Lengthens the hamstrings and hips without any strain on the back. Stretches the calves and arches. Stimulates the reproductive organs. Relaxes the spine. Aids digestion.	Pregnant students should lie on the side instead of on the back and to flex the top leg toward the chest.

Variations:

1. Supta Padangusthasana – lengthening the hamstrings
2. Supta Padangusthasana B
3. Anantasana



Jathara Parivartanasana (Belly Twist)

Jathara Parivartanasana is a restorative supine pose with a gentle twist which is generally used in a finishing sequence at the end of class.



Energetic Focus	Second Chakra Svadisthana Third Chakra Manipura
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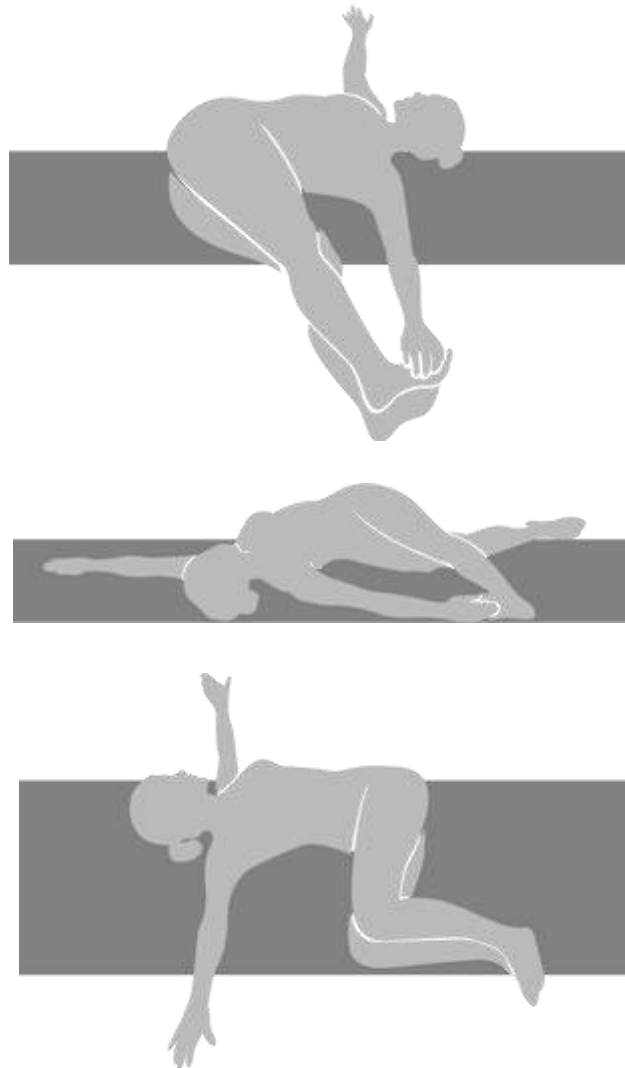
Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Toe extension
Lower leg	Ankle dorsiflexion
Thigh (R and L)	Knee flexion
Thigh (R)	Thigh adduction
Hip and Pelvis (R and L)	Hip flexion
Hip and Pelvis (R)	Internal rotation
Torso (R)	Pelvis rotation
Torso (L)	Stability
Shoulder	External humeral rotation Scapular adduction
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Forearm supination Elbow extension
Hand and fingers	Finger extension
Neck (R)	Head rotation to right
Neck (L)	Head rotation to right

Benefits	Contra-indications
Cools and relaxes the body. Stretches the entire spine gently. Requires little strength in the back. Opens the chest. Relaxes the neck. Aids digestion.	Students with a hip replacement should not cross the thighs over the midline of the body and should practice with modification. Students with disk injury or spinal pain should practice with

	modification. Students past the first trimester should avoid deep supine twists, including this pose, and instead should practice seated upper back and neck twists.
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Variations:

1. Jathara parivarthasana modification
2. Eka Pada Jathara Parivartanasana
3. Ardha Jathara Parivartanasana



Shavasana (Corpse Pose)

Shavasana is a supine pose which is a quintessential finishing, resting, and restorative asana in which one reclines on the ground with the arms stretched beside the body.



Energetic Focus	Sixth Chakra Ajna
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Toe extension
Lower leg	Slight ankle plantar flexion
Thigh	Knee extension
Hip and Pelvis	Hip extension Femoral external rotation
Torso	Spinal extension
Shoulder	Humerus external rotation, abduction
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Forearm supination Wrist extension
Hand and fingers	Finger extension
Neck	Neck extension, stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
Relaxes both the mind and the body after a physically intense asana practice. Allows for deep healing and relaxation, thus leading to successful meditation. Removes fatigue Helps increase the body's psycho-neuro-immunological abilities	After the first trimester, pregnant students should practice this pose either by lying on the left side or with the head and chest raised so that they are not flat on their backs. Students with back pain or injury should practice with modification.

ARM BALANCING AND INVERTED ASANAS

Uttitha Chaturanga & Chaturanga Dandasana (Plank & four limbs staff pose)

Uttitha Chaturanga is the equivalent of the plank pose and Chaturanga Dandasana is similar to doing a pushup.



Energetic Focus	Third Chakra Manipura
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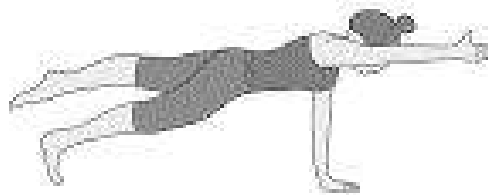
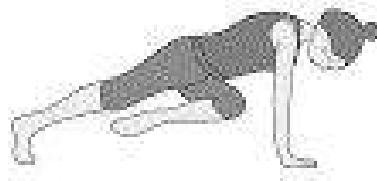
Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Toe abduction Toe hyperextension Forefoot stability
Lower leg	Ankle dorsiflexion, stability
Thigh	Knee extension Femur adduction, stability
Hip and Pelvis	Hip extension Hip stabilization
Torso	Torso stability Spinal extension and stability
Shoulder	Sternoclavicular stability Humerus flexion extension, stability Humerus extension, adduction, stability Stability and external rotation of humerus Scapular abduction, stability Supporting posture in mid back, downward pull of scapulae
Upper arm	Elbow extension Elbow flexion and stability
Lower arm	Forearm pronation Forearm extension Wrist hyperextension, stability

Hand and fingers	Finger extension Finger abduction
Neck	Neck extension, stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
Prepares the body for variations of extended body postures. Strengthens the shoulders, arms, and wrists. Strengthens the abdominal muscles and massages the organs.	Students with wrist injury or pain or carpal tunnel syndrome should use modifications. Students who have difficulty holding this pose should practice with modifications. This pose should be practiced with modification past the first trimester.

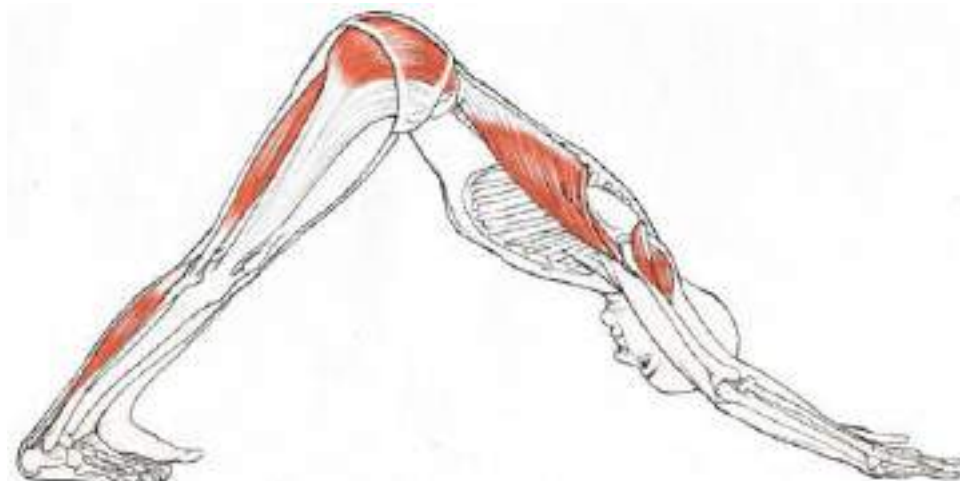
Variations:

1. Low Chaturanga
2. One legged Chaturanga
3. Alternate leg, hand Chaturanga



Adho Mukh Svanasana (Downward facing dog pose)

Adho Mukha Shvanasana is considered a resting asana, but it requires considerable strength and flexibility in both the upper and lower body. It is a foundational pose for arm balances.



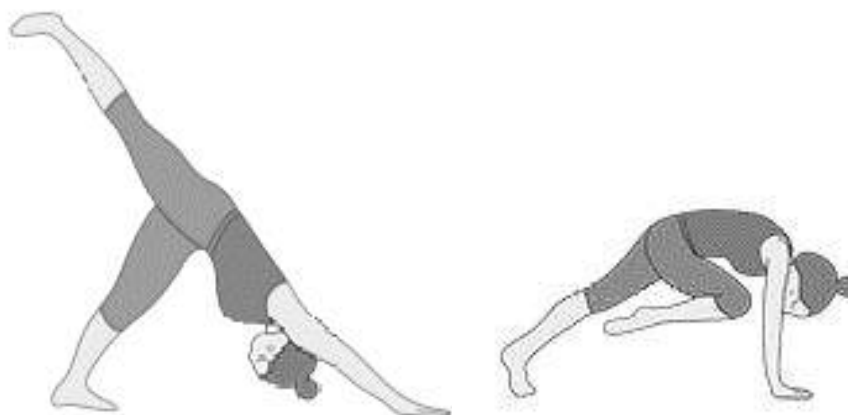
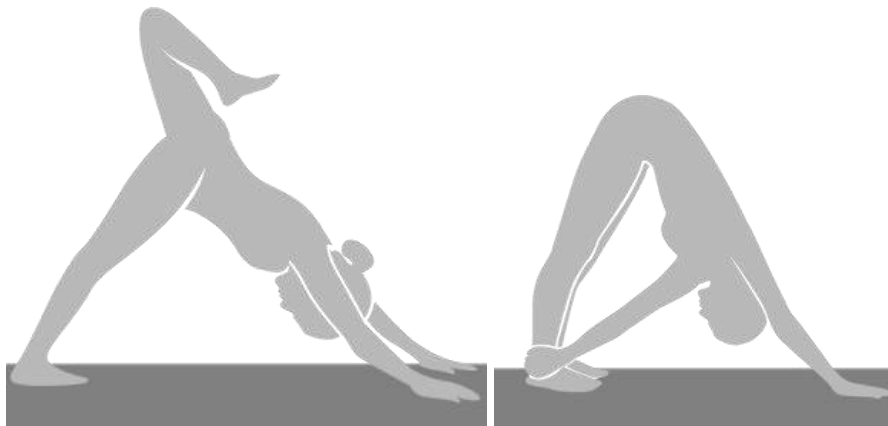
Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Fourth Chakra Anahata Fifth Chakra Vishuddha Sixth Chakra Ajna Seventh Chakra Sahasrara
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Toe abduction Toe extension, stability
Lower leg	Ankle dorsiflexion
Thigh	Knee extension
Hip and Pelvis	Hip extension Hip internal rotation and stability Pelvic stability
Torso	Torso stability
Shoulder	Humerus flexion and hyperflexion, stability Scapular abduction, external rotation of humerus Joint stability Scapular stability, downward pull of scapulae Sternoclavicular stability
Upper arm	Elbow extension, stability
Lower arm	Forearm pronation Wrist hyperextension, stability
Hand and fingers	Finger extension Finger abduction
Neck	Neck relaxed

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Builds strength and stability in the shoulders.</p> <p>Stretches the hamstrings and deeper calf muscles that other stretches usually cannot affect.</p> <p>Stretches, strengthens, and improves circulation in the legs, making this posture especially beneficial for runners.</p> <p>Stretches the hands and feet.</p> <p>Rejuvenates the whole body.</p> <p>Builds a foundation for other inversion postures.</p> <p>Relaxes the heart.</p> <p>Increases blood flow to the head.</p> <p>Can relieve menstrual and menopausal discomfort.</p>	<p>Students with wrist injury or pain or carpal tunnel syndrome should use modifications.</p> <p>If a student has a tendency toward shoulder dislocation, do not emphasize the external rotation of the shoulders. Instruct the student to focus on keeping the arms as straight and as comfortable as possible.</p> <p>This pose should be practiced with modification past the first trimester.</p>

Variations:

1. Eka Pada Adho Mukha Svanasana
2. Parivrtta Adho Mukha Svanasana
3. Tri Pada Adho Mukha Svanasana
4. Knee to Chest



Urdha Mukh Svanasana (Upward Facing Dog Pose)

In Urdha Mukh Svanasana, the entire body is lifted off the ground and supported on the palms and the top of the feet. The spinal extension is deeper in this pose, and more strength is needed to maintain the openness in the chest and shoulders.



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Second Chakra Svadisthana Fourth Chakra Anahata
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Toe extension against the ground
Lower leg	Ankle in plantar flexion but actively dorsiflexing
Thigh	Knee extension
Hip and Pelvis	Hip extension and hyperflexion Hip stability
Torso	Torso stability Spinal hyperextension
Shoulder	Humerus flexion, stability Arm stability Scapular adduction, external rotation of humerus Joint stability Supporting posture in mid back, downward pull of scapulae
Upper arm	Elbow extension, stability
Lower arm	Forearm pronation Elbow extension Wrist hyperextension, stability
Hand and fingers	Finger extension Finger abduction
Neck	Slight neck hyperextension and stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Strengthens the spine, arms, wrists, legs, and hips. Opens the chest. Increases circulation to the lungs and abdomen. Increases spinal range of motion. Improves posture. Stretches the abdomen and hip flexors. Stimulates the abdominal area.</p>	<p>Students with wrist injury or pain should instead practice Bhujangasana. Pregnant students past the first trimester should use a substitute posture (Cat and Cow Pose). Students with lower back pain should use Bhujangasana as a substitute pose.</p>

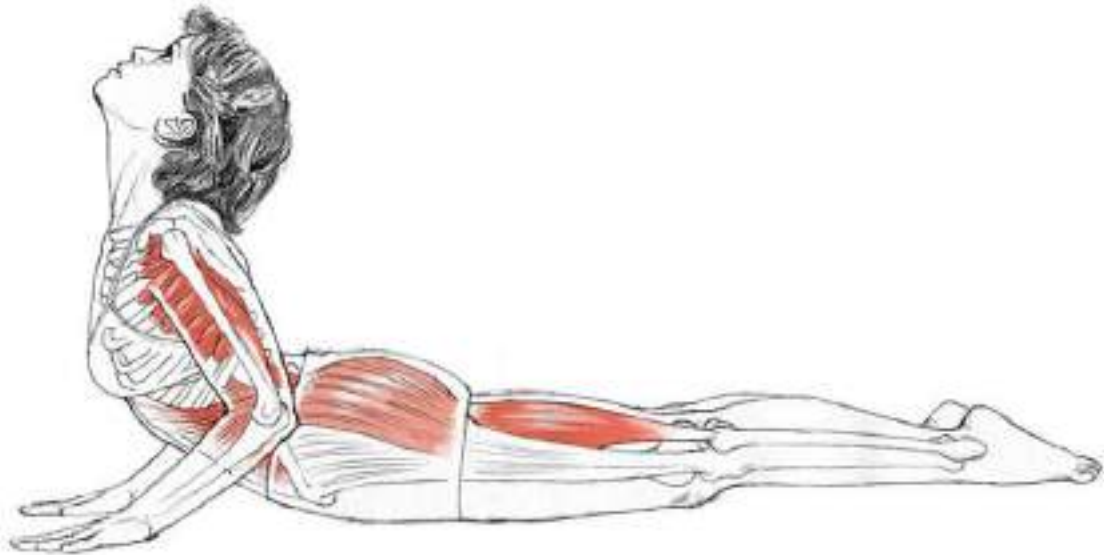
Variations:

1. Modification for ankle problems



Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose)

Bhujangasana is a prone back-bending posture with the chest is lifted off the ground and the arms are at the sides.



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Second Chakra Svadisthana Fourth Chakra Anahata
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Toe abduction Toe hyperextension
Lower leg	Ankle in plantar flexion
Thigh	Knee extension Leg adduction
Hip and Pelvis	Hip hyperextension
Torso	Torso stability Spinal hyperextension Sternoclavicular stability
Shoulder	Humerus extension and adduction, stability Scapular adduction, external rotation of humerus Scapular stability Supporting posture in mid back, downward pull of scapulae
Upper arm	Elbow flexion
Lower arm	Forearm pronation Wrist hyperextension
Hand and fingers	Wrist stability Finger extension Finger abduction
Neck	Slight neck extension and stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Increases range of motion in the spine. Strengthens and stretches the spine. Opens the chest and shoulders. Increases circulation through the lungs and abdomen. Energizes the legs. Can be used to relieve pain from herniated disks and sciatica.</p>	<p>Students with wrist injury should practice with modifications. Pregnant students past the first trimester should use a substitute posture (Cat and Cow Pose). Students with back pain should use avoid this pose</p>

Variations:

1. Tiryaka Bhujangasana
2. Ardha Bhujangasana
3. Raja Bhujangasana
4. Bheka (frog pose) Bhujangasana



Vasishthasana (Side plank Pose)

Vasishthasana is a side plank pose most often practiced with the body balanced on the side of one foot and the palm of the hand on the same side.



Energetic Focus	Third Chakra Manipura Fourth Chakra Anahata
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Toe extension
Lower leg (R)	Lateral ankle stability
Lower leg (L)	Ankle dorsiflexion
Thigh	Knee extension Leg adduction, stability
Hip and Pelvis (R and L)	Hip extension, stability
Hip and Pelvis (R)	Hip stability
Torso	Torso stability Spinal extension and stability Sternoclavicular stability
Shoulder	Horizontal humerus extension, external rotation, and stability Scapular adduction
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm (R)	Forearm pronation Forearm extension Wrist hyperextension, stability
Lower arm (L)	Forearm supination
Hand and fingers (R)	Finger extension Finger abduction

Hand and fingers (L)	Finger extension
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	Finger adduction	
Neck (R)		Head rotation to left
Neck (L)		Head rotation, neck stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Strengthens the arms, abdomen, and legs.</p> <p>Stabilizes the shoulders.</p> <p>Stretches and strengthens the wrists.</p> <p>Opens the chest.</p> <p>Opens the hips if the top leg is lifted.</p> <p>Improves concentration and balance.</p>	<p>Students with wrist injury should practice with modifications.</p> <p>Pregnant students past the first trimester should practice with modifications.</p> <p>Students recovering from serious injury or illness should use avoid this pose</p>

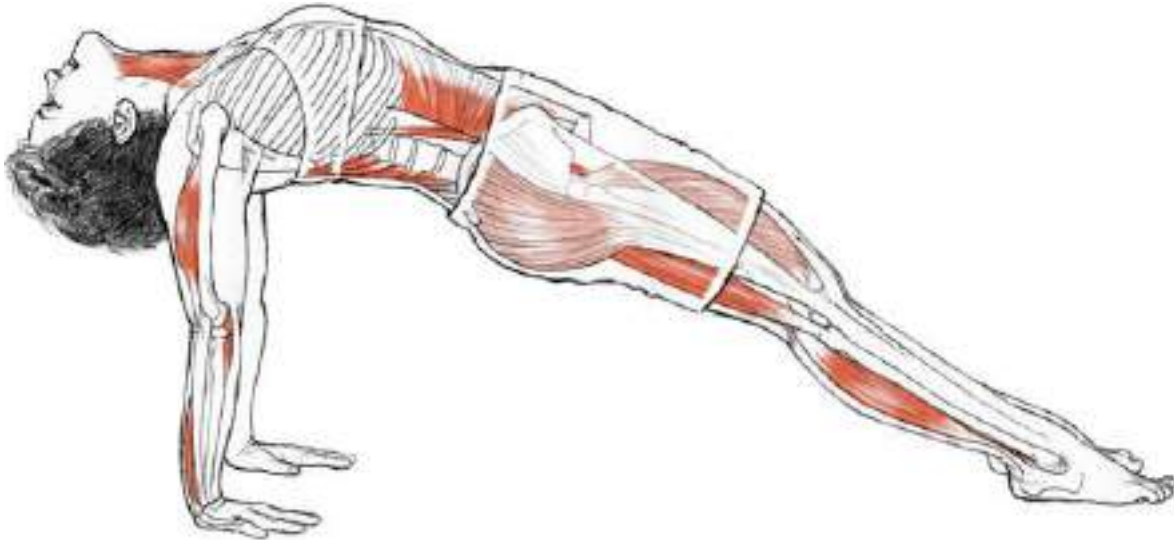
Variations:

1. Ardha Vashishthasana (Half or supported side plank)
2. Vashishthasana deepening the posture



Purvottanasana (Upward plank Pose)

Vasishthasana is a side plank pose most often practiced with the body balanced on the side of one foot and the palm of the hand on the same side.



Energetic Focus	Third Chakra Manipura Fourth Chakra Anahata
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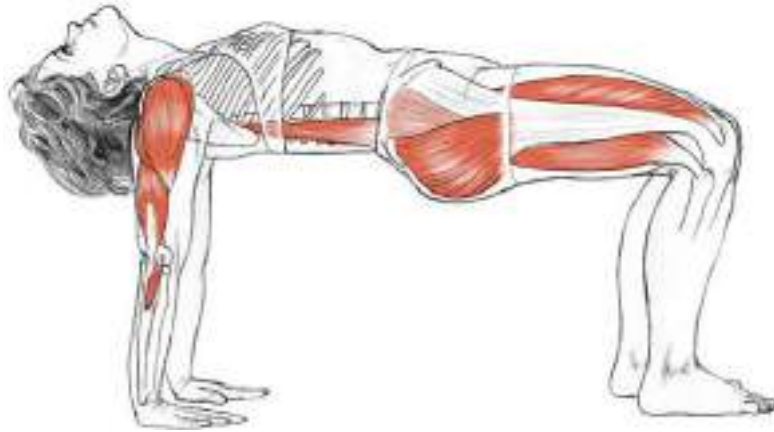
Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Toe flexion (pressure into ground)
Lower leg	Ankle in plantar flexion
Thigh	Knee extension
Hip and Pelvis	Hip extension
Torso	Torso stability Hyperextension
Shoulder	Humerus hyperextension, stability Scapular adduction Scapular stability
Upper arm	Elbow extension
Lower arm	Forearm pronation Wrist hyperextension
Hand and fingers	Finger extension Finger abduction
Neck	Neck hyperextension and stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Deeply stretches the chest and shoulders.</p> <p>Strengthens the wrists and ankles.</p> <p>Builds endurance.</p> <p>Provides a counter stretch to Paschimottanasana (seated forward bend) or seated forward fold.</p>	<p>Students with shoulder or wrist injury should practice with modifications or avoid the pose.</p> <p>Students with a neck concern should not hyperextend the neck so that the head drops below the shoulders.</p> <p>Practice with modifications.</p>

Strengthens the posterior muscles in the legs and spine.	
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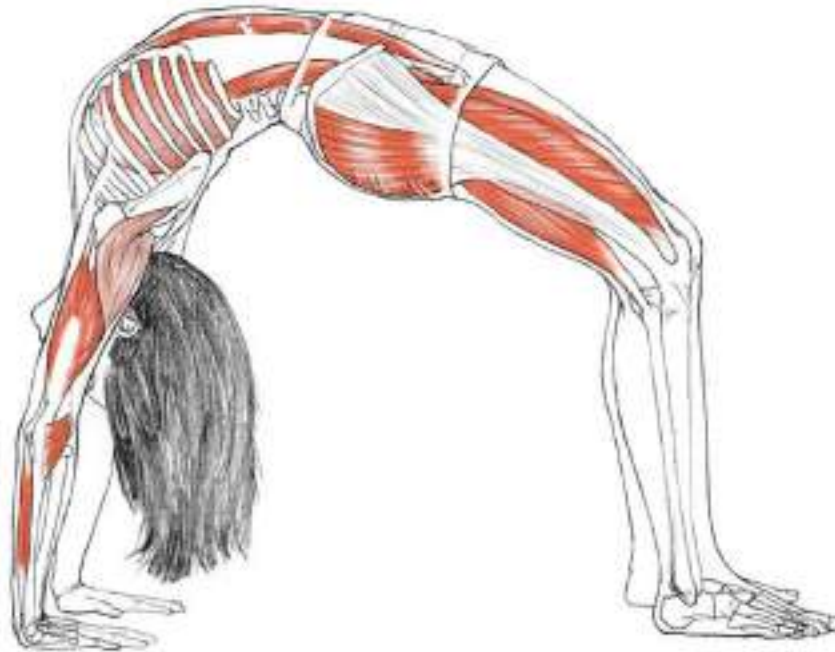
Variations:

1. Ardha Purvottanasana



Urdhva Dhanurasana, Chakrasana (Wheel Pose)

Urdhva Dhanurasana is a full backbend in which the hands and feet support the body and the abdomen faces toward the sky. The pose may also be classified as an inversion.



Energetic Focus	Third Chakra Manipura Fourth Chakra Anahata Fifth Chakra Vishuddha
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Toe abduction Toe flexion (pressure into ground)
Lower leg	Ankle in plantar flexion
Thigh	Knee flexion Thigh adduction, stability
Hip and Pelvis	Hip hyperextension
Torso	Torso stability Spinal hyperextension Sternoclavicular stability
Shoulder	Humerus hyperflexion, stability External rotation Scapular adduction Scapular stability
Upper arm	Elbow extension, stability
Lower arm	Forearm pronation Forearm extension Wrist hyperextension
Hand and fingers	Finger extension, stability

	Finger abduction
Neck	Neck hyperextension and stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Increases flexibility and range of motion in the spine.</p> <p>Strengthens the shoulders, arms, wrists, legs, and spine.</p> <p>Opens the chest and shoulder girdle.</p> <p>Relieves asthma symptoms by expanding the lungs.</p> <p>Increases energy.</p> <p>Stimulates the thyroid gland.</p>	<p>Students with shoulder or wrist injury should practice with modifications or avoid the pose.</p> <p>Students with glaucoma or high blood pressure are advised against practicing this pose.</p> <p>Students with back injury should avoid this pose.</p>

Variations:

1. Eka pada Chakrasana
2. Supta Chakrasana (Restorative posture)



Halasana (Plow Pose)

In Halasana, the shape of the body resembles that of a traditional plow utilized to till the earth; the legs represent the handles and the rest of the body the blade.



Energetic Focus	Fourth Chakra Anahata Fifth Chakra Vishuddha
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Toe flexion Toe hyperextension
Lower leg	Ankle in plantar flexion Ankle dorsiflexion
Thigh	Knee extension Femur adduction, stability
Hip and Pelvis	Hip flexion Pelvic stability
Torso	Torso stability Spinal extension and stability
Shoulder	Arm hyperextension External rotation Scapular adduction
Upper arm	Elbow extension, stability
Lower arm	Forearm pronation Forearm extension
Hand and fingers	Finger flexion Finger adduction
Neck	Neck flexion, jalandhara bandha

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Stretches the neck, back, and shoulders.</p> <p>Can relieve indigestion.</p> <p>Promotes sound sleep.</p> <p>Stimulates the thyroid gland, abdominal organs, and digestion.</p> <p>Helps relieve menopausal symptoms.</p>	<p>Students with asthma or high blood pressure are advised to use a chair to place the legs.</p> <p>Students with back injury should practice with modifications.</p> <p>Pregnant students who are experienced with this pose can practice during pregnancy, new students should avoid this pose during pregnancy.</p>

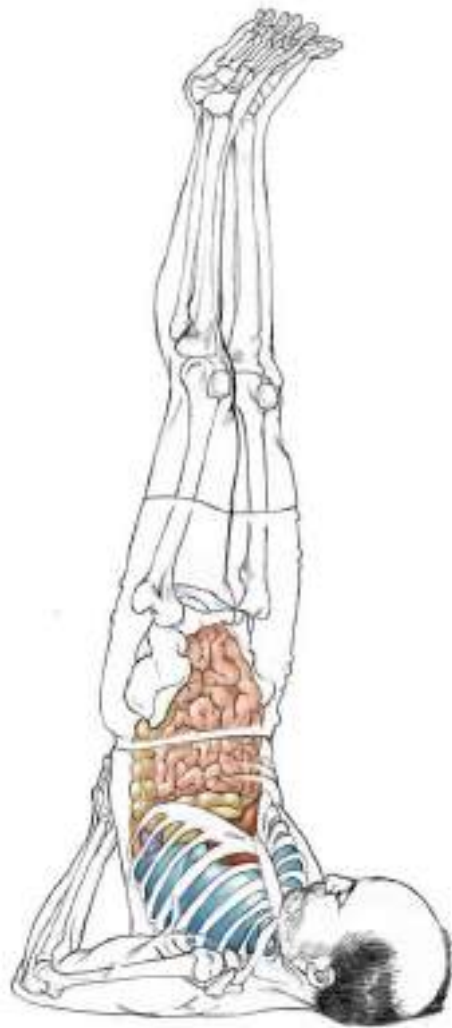
Variations:

1. Ardha Halasana
2. Karnapidasana (advanced)



Salamba Sarvangasana (Supported Shoulder Stand)

In Salamba Sarvangasana almost all of the body weight is supported by the upper body, specifically the upper spine, upper arms, shoulders, and back of the head. It is often considered the queen of all asanas because it is both active and restorative.



Energetic Focus	Fourth Chakra Anahata Fifth Chakra Vishuddha
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Toe extension
Lower leg	Ankle in plantar flexion
Thigh	Knee extension Femur adduction, stability
Hip and Pelvis	Hip extension Hip stability
Torso	Torso stability

	Spinal extension and stability
Shoulder	Humerus hyperextension, stability External rotation Scapular adduction, depression and stability
Upper arm	Elbow flexion Arm stability
Lower arm	Forearm pronation, stability Wrist hyperextension
Hand and fingers	Finger extension Finger abduction
Neck	Neck flexion, stability, jalandhara bandha

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Soothes the nervous system and the mind, thus relieving stress and mild depression.</p> <p>Stimulates the thyroid gland.</p> <p>Aids digestion.</p> <p>Stretches the shoulders and neck.</p> <p>May relieve menopausal symptoms.</p> <p>Reduces fatigue and may help alleviate insomnia in some people.</p> <p>Beneficial for relieving symptoms of asthma, infertility, and sinusitis.</p>	<p>Students with neck or shoulder injury should practice with careful modifications.</p> <p>Pregnant students who are experienced with this pose can practice during pregnancy, new students should avoid this pose during pregnancy.</p>

Variations:

1. Nirlamba Sarvangasana (Unsupported Shoulder Stand)



Bakasana (Crane Pose)

Bakasana is an arm balance but is frequently used as a transitional seated pose. In this squatting arm balance, the arms support the weight of the body.



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Second Chakra Svadisthana Third Chakra Manipura
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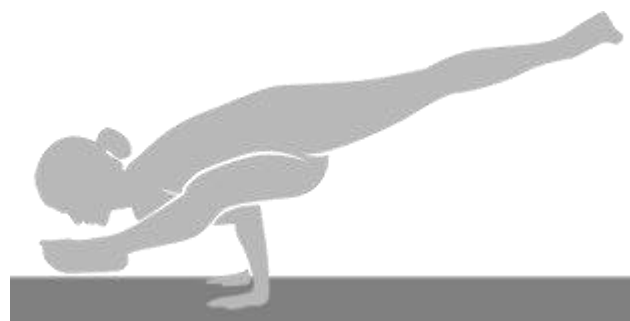
Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Toe extension
Lower leg	Ankle dorsiflexion
Thigh	Knee flexion Hip abduction, stability
Hip and Pelvis	Hip flexion Hip abduction
Torso	Torso stability Spinal extension and stability Sternoclavicular stability
Shoulder	Flexion of humerus, stability Adduction of humerus External rotation and stability of humerus Shoulder and scapular stability Supporting posture in mid back, downward pull of scapulae
Upper arm	Elbow flexion Arm stability

Lower arm	Forearm pronation, stability Wrist hyperextension, stability, balance
Hand and fingers	Finger extension, stability, balance Finger abduction
Neck	Neck hyperextension, stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
Strengthens the arms and wrists. Improves focus and balance. Strengthens the abdominal muscles. Stretches and strengthens the lower back.	Students with wrist concerns should refrain from practicing this posture. This posture is not recommended for pregnant students after the second trimester.

Variations:

1. Parsva Bakasana
2. Eka Pada Parsva Baksana
3. Koundinyasana (Flying Crane Pose)



Salamba Shirshasana (Supported Headstand)

Shirshasana is considered the king of asanas. The supported version puts the least stress on the head and neck because the majority of the body weight is supported by the forearms and shoulders.



Energetic Focus	Sixth Chakra Ajna Seventh Chakra Sahasrara
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Toe extension
Lower leg	Ankle plantar flexion
Thigh	Knee extension Femur adduction
Hip and Pelvis	Hip extension Hip stability
Torso	Torso stability Spinal extension and stability Sternoclavicular stability
Shoulder	Flexion of humerus, stability External rotation and stability of humerus

	Scapular abduction, depression and stability Shoulder and scapular stability Supporting posture in mid back, downward pull of scapulae
Upper arm	Humerus flexion, shoulder stability Stability and balance
Lower arm	Forearm pronation, stability
Hand and fingers	Wrist stability Finger flexion Finger adduction
Neck	Neck extension, stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Increases stamina and strength in the shoulders, neck, abdominals, and upper spine and helps prevent bone degeneration in these areas.</p> <p>Creates good posture.</p> <p>Improves circulation.</p> <p>Massages the lungs and builds resistance to illness.</p> <p>Stimulates the pineal gland.</p> <p>Increases energy and body heat.</p> <p>Increases concentration and balance as it stimulates the pressure points at the Sahasrara chakra (crown of the head).</p>	<p>This posture is not recommended for pregnant students who are new to practice yoga after the second trimester.</p>

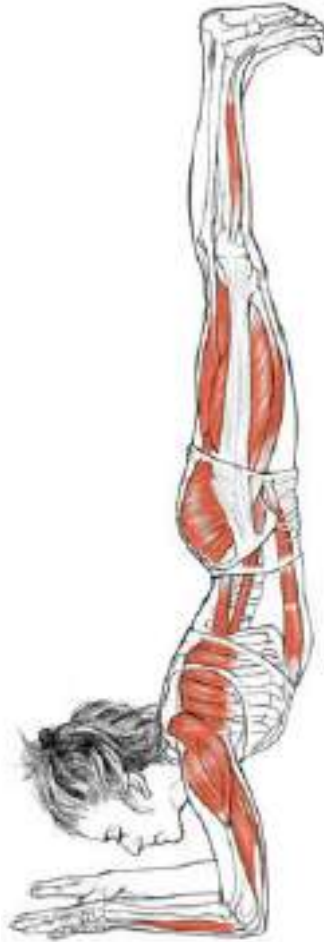
Variations:

1. Makrasana
2. Acunchanasana



Pincha Mayurasana (Hand stand)

Pincha Mayurasana is an arm balance that strongly uses the same shoulder-stabilizing muscles used in Salamba Shirshasana (Supported Headstand) here, however, the head and neck do not support any body weight.



Energetic Focus	Third Chakra Manipura Fourth Chakra Anahata Fifth Chakra Vishuddha Sixth Chakra Ajna Seventh Chakra Sahasrara
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Body Segment	Kinematics
Foot and toes	Toe extension
Lower leg	Ankle plantar flexion
Thigh	Knee flexion
Hip and Pelvis	Hip extension Hip stability
Torso	Torso stability Spinal hyperextension and stability

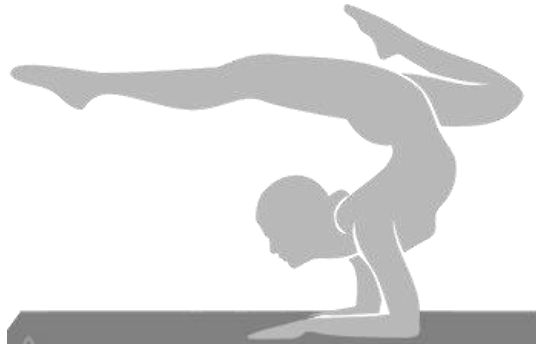
Shoulder	Flexion of humerus, shoulder stability External rotation and stability of humerus Joint stability Scapular depression and stability Supporting posture in mid back, downward pull of scapulae
Upper arm	Elbow flexion, stability Stability and balance
Lower arm	Forearm pronation, stability Elbow stability
Hand and fingers	Hand and wrist stability Finger extension Finger abduction
Neck	Neck hyperextension, stability

Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Strengthens and stabilizes the shoulders and the mid and upper back.</p> <p>Maintains shoulder flexibility.</p> <p>Strengthens the low spine.</p> <p>Stretches and tones the abdominal muscles.</p> <p>Energizes the body and mind.</p> <p>Increases circulation, concentration, and balance.</p>	<p>Students with acute neck, shoulder, wrist and back injury should refrain from practicing this pose.</p>

Variations:

1. Mayurasana
2. Vrschikhasana (Scorpion Pose)
3. Vrschikhasana with one leg extended





CHAPTER FIVE
BANDHAS AND ASANAS

Bandha in Sanskrit means *to hold* or *to lock*. In traditional yoga, bandhas are practice used to retain or control the body's internal prana or the cosmic vital energy.

Mulabandha (root bind or perineum contraction)

Mulabandha is located in the perineum between the anus and the genitalia. Practicing mula bandha helps stimulate the digestive and reproductive systems and brings an uplifting and refreshing feeling to the asanas.



Energetic Focus	First chakra Muladhara Sixth Chakra Ajna
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Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Energizes the body. Stimulates the pelvic nerves and prepares for asanas. Tones the reproductive and excretory systems. Builds abdominal strength Helps in curing psychosomatic and degenerative illnesses. Helps in improving concentration. Relieves depression and promotes good health. It helps to realign the physical, mental and psychic bodies in preparation for spiritual awakening.</p>	<p>This practice should only be performed under the guidance of a competent teacher. Mula bandha raises the energy, and may precipitate hyperactivity.</p>

Uddiyana bandha (abdominal contraction)

Uddiyana bandha is located in the lower abdominal area. The action of this lock lifts the respiratory diaphragm and supporting musculature while still allowing for normal respiration. The physical action of this bandha also helps support and stabilize the inverted poses. The inward, lifting action draws the energy in the same direction. It is ideally performed in conjunction with mudras, bandhas and pranayamas. It is believed uddiyana bandha completes mula bandha, as uddiyana bandha continues to move energy harnessed through the chakras to the heart with more force than practicing mula bandha alone. If practiced uddiyana bandha on its own, it should be performed after asanas and pranayamas and before meditation.



Energetic Focus	Third Chakra Manipura Fourth Chakra Anahata
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Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Stimulates the function of the pancreas and liver and strengthens the internal organs.</p> <p>The digestive fire is stimulated.</p> <p>The abdominal organs are massaged and toned.</p> <p>The adrenal glands are balanced, removing lethargy and soothing anxiety and tension.</p> <p>Improves blood circulation throughout the torso.</p> <p>Stimulates the solar plexus chakra, which has many subtle influences on the distribution of energy throughout the body.</p>	<p>Students suffering from cervical spondylosis, high intracranial pressure, vertigo, high blood pressure or heart disease should not practice jalandhara bandha as it strains the heart.</p> <p>Refrain from the practice if any vertigo or dizziness arises.</p>

Jalandhara bandha (throat contraction)

Jalandhara bandha is located at the top of the throat. The action of this lock occurs when the chest is lifted and the chin rests on or near the sternal notch. This bandha is traditionally practiced in seated meditation. The slight restriction in breathing caused by flexion in the neck benefits the respiratory system and calms the nervous system by drawing attention to the rhythm and flow of the breath, which generally helps to alleviate physical and emotional stress.



Energetic Focus	Fifth Chakra Vishuddha
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Benefits	Contra-indications
<p>Compresses the carotid sinuses and helps to regulate the circulatory and respiratory systems.</p> <p>Regulates heart rate and increases breath retention.</p> <p>Helps in mental relaxation, relieving stress, anxiety and releases anger.</p> <p>Develops meditative introversion and mindfulness.</p> <p>The stimulus on the throat helps to balance thyroid function and regulates metabolism.</p> <p>Helps in opening the vishuddha chakra and hence helps in being more expressive and confident of one's opinion.</p>	<p>Persons suffering from colitis, stomach or intestinal ulcer, diaphragmatic hernia, major abdominal problems, high blood pressure, heart disease, glaucoma and raised intracranial pressure should not perform this practice.</p> <p>It should be avoided during pregnancy.</p>

Maha bandha (the great bind)

Maha bandha gives enhanced benefits of all three bandhas as it combines the practice of all three bandhas beginning with jalandhara bandha (throat bind), followed by uddiyana bandha (abdominal bind) and, finally, mula bandha (root bind) It affects the hormonal secretions of the pineal gland and regulates the entire endocrine system. The degenerative and ageing processes are checked and every cell of the body is rejuvenated. It creates mindfulness prior to meditation. When perfected, it can fully awaken prana in the main chakras.



Energetic Focus	First Chakra Muladhara Third Chakra Manipura Fifth Chakra Vishuddha Sixth Chakra Ajna Seventh Chakra Sahasrara
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Benefits	Contra-indications
Combines the benefits of all three bandhas.	Persons suffering from colitis, stomach or intestinal ulcer, hernia, major abdominal problems, high blood pressure, heart disease, glaucoma and raised intracranial pressure should not perform this practice. It should be avoided during pregnancy. Refrain from the practice if any vertigo or dizziness arises.

CHAPTER SIX
ASANA PRACTICE AND MENTAL HEALTH

While regular yoga practitioners would vouch for the positive impact of yoga on their mental health, The American Psychological Association recognised the significance and importance of the practice of yoga and incorporated it as an alternative treatment for mental health issues because of its innumerable benefits. In an article written by Dr. Deborah Khoshaba, she mentions that through the regular practice of asanas and controlled breathing, one can elevate the levels of the neurotransmitter called gamma-Aminobutyric Acid, also known as GABA. It has been studied that low levels of GABA lead to increased states of apprehension, anxiety, paranoia, and fear. Consequently, low levels of GABA lead to an increase in the release of cortisol, a stress hormone, hence leading to increased stress levels. When the release of GABA is increased, the body experiences calmness and relaxation. Numerous studies have proven the elevated levels of release of GABA after a session of yoga involving asanas and pranayama. A typical one hour session of Yoga complete with Surya Namaskar, Asanas, Pranayama and Yoga Nidra have resulted in increased GABA levels, and hence, subsequently, lower stress levels.

Along with GABA, the release of neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine are also witnessed. Low levels of serotonin risk increasing the vulnerability of developing Major Depressive Mood Disorder, Persistent Mood Disorder, various Anxiety Disorders etc. Yoga provides a vital for an alternative to be used in place of medication, medications involving the mediation of serotonin contain several side effects. Hence, yoga is the optimal replacement for less severe symptoms where alternatives to medication are feasible. The Lion's Pose Simhasana has been highly researched to uplift mood, hence, increasing the release of serotonin in the brain. Dopamine, commonly known as the happy hormone, can play a negative role on mental health when either it is released excessively or released very less. The release of dopamine is disrupted in Schizophrenia, Bipolar Mood Disorder, Parkinson's Disease etc. Dopamine is responsible for our motor co-ordination, motivation, arousal and even executive functions like planning, decision making, memory, and control. The disruptions lead to improper functioning in the areas mentioned above. Regular asana practice serves as an exceptional additional therapy, alongside medication, for individuals with schizophrenia to reduce symptoms like hallucinations and delusions which involve cognitive functioning. The reduction in the severity of symptoms along with improvement in learning ability was noticed by the researcher Babu Paikkatt and colleagues in their research on benefits of yoga in out-patients of schizophrenia. However, the practice of yoga for treatment of

schizophrenia does not involve Dhyana - meditation, only asana and heavily mediated and controlled pranayama for individuals with schizophrenia. The practice of yoga also has an increasing effect on the release of the neurotransmitter Oxytocin, commonly called the love hormone, it increases the sense of belongingness and also enhances empathy, compassion, and love. The release of oxytocin also reduces overall stress levels. Regular practice of yoga asanas and pranayama leads to a stabilized and sufficient release of Oxytocin which allows individuals to grow more as social beings while simultaneously reducing the effects of chronic anxiety and stress.

The exercise of Controlled Breathing, in yoga known as Pranayama, is often used during psychotherapy sessions as well to calm hyperventilation. This involves, Yogic breathing. When an individual is hyperventilating, or experiencing panic, it is seen that the levels of oxygen and nutrients reaching their brain declines, consequently making it tougher for the individual to recover because the brain is overusing the resources. Yogic breathing, under the therapist's guidance allows the individual's breathing rate to be regulated and returned back to its normal pace. It is also used in Psychological First Aid, after assessing that the individual is no longer in physical danger. The technique called Progressive Muscular Relaxation (PMR), which is also called Yoga Nidra, uses a modified guidance to induce relief in every muscle of the body from head to toe, and also transfer the individual into a semi- wake deep meditative state through deep breathing.

Mindfulness is also used in Psychotherapy to enhance lives to be the best version of ourselves. It aims at reinforcing positive experiences and enhancing positive intuitions. Mindfulness is a practice which can be defined as learning to be in the present, neither succumbing to the past, nor worrying about the future. It is a deliberate act on regulating one's attention and observing own's thoughts, feelings, emotions, desires, and body state. It proceeds to enhance one's capabilities to not be judgmental of their own self or of the others, increase sense of compassionate understanding and empathy, it helps build resilience and increase one's capability to overcome any challenge without disrupting the emotional state of being. Being able to control own's emotions, is a life skill one develops through continuous yoga practice. The state of mind created by the practice of mindfulness, increases the ability to handle stressful situations and overcome stress in the long run, it also aids the ability to express oneself better. Finally, mindfulness positively effects the subjective wellbeing and quality of life, which are the indication an individual's perception, attitudes, feelings and

thoughts regarding their own self, including life satisfaction and happiness, and quality of physical, emotional, interpersonal and mental health.

CHAPTER SIX
SOME COMMON PHYSICAL AILMENTS AND
ASANAS

While regular yoga practitioners would vouch for the positive impact of yoga on their mental health, The American Psychological Association recognised the significance and importance of the practice of yoga and incorporated it as an alternative treatment for mental health issues because of its innumerable benefits. In an article written by Dr. Deborah Khoshaba, she mentions that through the regular practice of asanas and controlled breathing, one can elevate the levels of the neurotransmitter called gamma-Aminobutyric Acid, also known as GABA. It has been studied that low levels of GABA lead to increased states of apprehension, anxiety, paranoia, and fear. Consequently, low levels of GABA lead to an increase in the release of cortisol, a stress hormone, hence leading to increased stress levels. When the release of GABA is increased, the body experiences calmness and relaxation. Numerous studies have proven the elevated levels of release of GABA after a session of yoga invol\

CHAPTER EIGHT
SEQUENCING ASANAS

A typical yoga session or class follows a basic framework, playing with which allows different teachers to come up with their own unique teaching style. A basic framework that is followed is:

- **Centering the mind:** As every yoga student come to their yoga mat after living an extremely different and unique life, it is important to make them aware of the practice and prepare them for the practice to follow. This can be done by mindful breathing techniques or chanting in the beginning of the class.
- **Physical warm up:** To prepare the muscles and joints for the movement that is going to follow in the practice, it is important to do physical warm up to avoid any injury, such as a muscle pull. A few rounds of Surya Namaskar based on the level of advancement in the class is often used as a warm up technique.
- **Main practice:** This is generally the most physically challenging portion of the class as the muscles are warmed up, a variety of asanas are sequenced in a manner so as to reap maximum benefits of the class. This sequencing can be done for specific areas of the body such as opening the chest and shoulders, loosening of the neck, building arm strength, improving flexibility in the hips, building abdominal strength, curing back problems, etc.
- **Cooling down:** Cooling down after an intense asana and pranayama session is as important, if not more, as the main practice. Restorative asanas are often categorized as finishing asanas as they are not physically strenuous. Shavasana or guided meditative sleep is recommended for concluding every class.

1. Chest opening asanas:

- Bhujangasana (Cobra pose)
- Urdhva mukha svanasana (Upward facing dog)
- Utitha Trikonasana (Triangle pose)
- Utitha Parsvakonasana (Extended side angle pose)
- Dhanurasana (Bow pose)
- Natarajasana (King of dancers)
- Virabhadrasana 2 and 3 (Warrior poses 2 and 3)
- Ushtrasana (Camel pose)

2. Neck and Shoulders:

- Virabhadrasana (Warrior 1)
- Ushtrasana (Camel pose)

- Gomukhasana (Cow's face pose)
- Garudasana (Eagle pose)
- Tadasana (Mountain pose) with arms overhead
- Utitha Trikonasana (Triangle pose)

3. Lower back:

- Surya Namaskar
- Virabhadrasana (1,2,3)
- Ardha Chandrasana (Half-moon pose)
- Prasarita Paddotanasana (Extended leg forward bend)
- Parshvottanasana (Intense Side Stretch)
- Utitha Trikonasana (Triangle pose)
- Ardha Matsyendrasana (Half Lord of the Fish pose)
- Utanasana (Intense forward bend)
- Balasana (Child's pose)

4. Abdominal strength (focus on deep abdominal breathing, mulabandha):

- Navasana (Boat pose)
- Utitha Chaturanga Dandasana (Plank pose)
- Vashishthasana (Side plank pose)
- Shalabhasana (Locust pose)
- Halasana (Plow pose)
- Shirshasana (Head stand)
- Purvottanasana (Reverse plank pose)

5. Hip opener:

- Utthita Trikonasana (Extended Triangle)
- Virabhadrasana 2 (Warrior 2)
- Parsvakonasana (Extended side angle pose)
- Natarajasana (King Dancer)
- Dhanurasana (Bow Pose)
- Parivrtta Trikonasana (Revolving Triangle Pose)
- Variations of Raja Kapotasana (Pigeon Pose)
- Ushtrasana (Camel Pose)
- Baddha Konasana (Bound Angle Pose)

6. Building lower body strength in calves and hamstrings:

- Utthita Trikonasana (Extended Triangle)
- Parshvottanasana (Intense Side Stretch)

- All forward bends
- Hanumanasana (Forward-Split Pose)
- Supta Padangusthasana (Reclining Hand to Toe Pose)
- Vrksasana (Tree Pose) and other single-leg standing poses
- Virabhadrasana 1,2,3 (Warrior 1,2,3)
- Adho Mukha Shvanasana (Downward-Facing Dog)
- Parshvottanasana (Intense Side Stretch)

7. Improving stamina and endurance

- Tadasana (Mountain Pose)
- Utthita Trikonasana (Extended Triangle)
- Virabhadrasanas (Warrior variations)
- Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana (Extended Hand-to-Toe Pose),
- Bakasana (Crane Pose),
- Urdhva Dhanurasana (Upward Bow Pose)
- Shirshasana (Supported Headstand)

8. Twisting asanas

- Jathara Parivartanasana (Belly Twist)
- Ardha Matsyendrasana (Half Lord of the Fishes Pose)
- Parivritta Trikonasana (Revolving Triangle Pose)
- Parivritta Parsvakonasana (Revolved Intense Side Stretch)

9. Balancing asanas:

- Malasana (Basic Squat, or Bead Pose)
- Adho Mukha Vrksasana (Handstand)
- Vrksasana (Tree Pose)
- Garudasana (Eagle Pose)
- Bakasana (Crane Pose)
- Pincha Mayurasana (Peacock Feather Pose)

10. Inverted asanas:

- Uttanasana (Intense Forward Bend),
- Prasarita Padottanasana (Extended-Leg Forward Bend)
- Adho Mukha Shvanasana (Downward-Facing Dog)
- Salamba Sarvangasana (Supported Shoulder stand)
- Salamba Shirshasana (Supported Headstand)
- Pincha Mayurasana (Peacock Feather Pose)

11. Forward bends

- Uttanasana (Intense Forward Bend)
- Paschimottanasana (Seated Forward Bend)

- Parshvottanasana (Intense Side Stretch)
- Prasarita Padottanasana (Extended-Leg Forward Bend)

12.Backward bends

- Supta Urdhva Dhanurasana (Restorative Backbend)
- Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose)
- Setu Bandhasana (Bridge Pose)
- Virabhadrasana I (Warrior I)
- Ushtrasana (Camel Pose)
- Urdhva Dhanurasana (Upward Bow Pose)