

# Proper Posture

## Beginner Yoga Poses

It all begins with the breath. Everything else will fall into place. Hold each pose for five slow and deep breaths, in and out of your nose.

### 1. Mountain Pose (Tadasana)



Stand with purpose! Feet planted parallel with the big toes touching. Keep your spine in one straight line from the top of the head to the tailbone. Engaging the legs, lifting up the knee caps, drawing the tailbone down and lifting the belly up and in. Soften your shoulders down the back, turn your palms forward, look straight ahead and feel the power of Mountain Pose.

## 2. Forward Fold (Uttanasana)



Starting from mountain pose with feet hip-width apart (beginners) or feet together (intermediate/advance), hinge from the hips on an exhale and fold over forward. Remain mindful of the breath and keep your spine as straight as possible. Let the head hang heavy and relax your jaw.

**Please note:** A straight spine is more important than having straight legs. Bend your knees as much as needed to keep a straight spine with your chest touching your thighs.

### 3. Downward Dog (Adho Mukha Svanasana)



Keeping the feet hips-width apart and the hands shoulder width apart, lift your hips toward the ceiling on an exhale. Bend the knees and lift the heels as necessary, draw the chest toward the tops of the thighs, pressing your hands firmly against the floor to pull the hips back. Maintaining eyeline between the legs or toward the belly.

#### 4. Plank (Kumbhakasana)



Place your hands and knees on the floor. Align your wrists directly under your shoulders, forming a straight line. Spread your fingers and press down through your forearms and hands. Gaze down, lengthening the back of your neck and draw your abdominal muscles toward your spine. On an inhale, tuck your toes and step your feet back, bringing your body into one straight line. Keep your thighs lifted, making sure not to let your hips sink to low or butt stick up in the air. Heels reaching back, with arms and torso strong, the body should be in a straight line from the crown through the heels. Now just breathe.

## 5. Warrior 1 (Virabhadrasana 1)



With this pose the front foot's heel should line up with the back-foot's arch. The front knee should be directly over the ankle. Face both hips forward, draw the tailbone down and pull the ribs in. Raise your torso and arms up on an inhale and stand firm in your warrior pose.

## 6. Warrior 2 (Virabhadrasana 2)



Similar to warrior one, but arms raised parallel to the floor and in line with the shoulders reaching actively out to the sides, palms down. Back foot should be at a 90-degree angle and front thigh should be parallel to the floor, knee over ankle. Imagine spreading your mat apart with your feet. Draw the tailbone down and pull the ribs in, making sure to keep proper alignment. Eyes should look out beyond the middle finger. Breathe and stand strong in warrior 2.

## 7. Baby Cobra (Ardha Bhujangasana)



Lying face down on the mat, with the pubic bone and the tops of the feet pressing into the ground. Feet as wide as the hips and hands are resting beside the rib cage, hugging your elbows close to the body. Using the strength from in the lower back, begin to lift your chest off of the floor. Roll your shoulder blades into the upper back, pulling the shoulders away from the ears. \*Your elbows should be at a 45-degree angle and the effort should be from your back rather than from the arms. Inhale lifts the chest off the floor and the exhale will lower your chest back to the starting position.

## 8. Upward-Facing Dog (Urdhva Mukha Svanasana)



Place your feet hip-width apart and arms shoulder-width apart. On the inhale, straighten your elbows so your entire torso, knees, and thighs are lifted from the ground. Actively press the tops of the feet into the mat to lift the kneecaps, awaken and engage the quads. Lift from the center while pulling your shoulders down the back away from your ears. Look slightly upward, towards your third eye. Exit the pose on an exhale.

## 9. Child's Pose (Balasana)



A pose of surrender. In a kneeling position, with your big toes touching and knees as wide as the shoulders. Draw your hips down to your heels as your arms extend forward on the floor and your forehead lowers to the ground. There are various ways to do child's pose. If you have tight hips, it can be helpful to place a blanket or pillow between your hips and heels and a block for your forehead.