





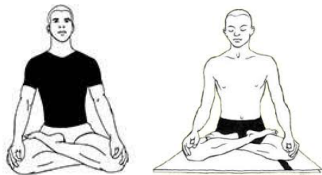


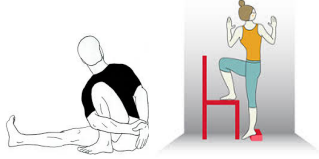

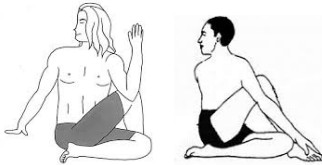
Sarvangasana, (shoulderstand), the mother asana.

This practice is centered around shoulderstand, and the qualities of nurturing, discipline, laughter, and love. Beginners may have some trepidation doing the pose in-home practice unsupervised because it is an inversion. But when moving slowly and intelligently all can approach Sarvangasana; even if they don't complete the classical pose by the end of this sequence. Every step we take towards a more advanced pose should feel like a manageable next step, not a giant leap. Sometimes we think of growing up as only growing out of childhood, especially around Mother's Day.


Begin with the invocation, and some quiet time considering the influential "mothering" you've received in your life. Dedicate this practice to those qualities and individuals with gratitude and appreciation. Poses marked with ** are not beginner's poses. If you feel safe trying, go ahead, or just skip over them. It won't negatively affect the sequence.



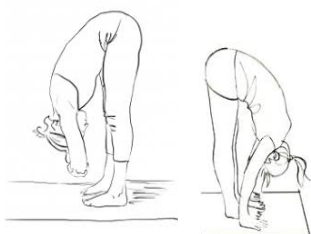

Sarvangasana requires supple back muscles and flexible arms and shoulders. Twisting and arm entwining poses can help with that aim. And they remind us of how closely and firmly mothers do hold on while supporting us. Do each seated pose a few times, don't rush through. If you are editing out some poses because they are too difficult or new, then add more repetitions of the ones you are refining.

Swastikasana with Parvatasana arms	Sit on blankets to bring hips level with knees Extend side chest when lifting arms	
Parivrtta Swastikasana	Inhale to become tall Exhale to twist Change legs; repeat	
Bharadvajasana I	Move feet to side of hips Have blanket under hips 1 st attempt use back hand on block 2 nd attempt hold front arm elbow or use belt to grasp	
Bharadvajasana II	This is the first pose where we learn padmasana actions Sit on enough height, support padmasana knee with block or blanket. Hold padmasana foot with back arm with belt if needed.	

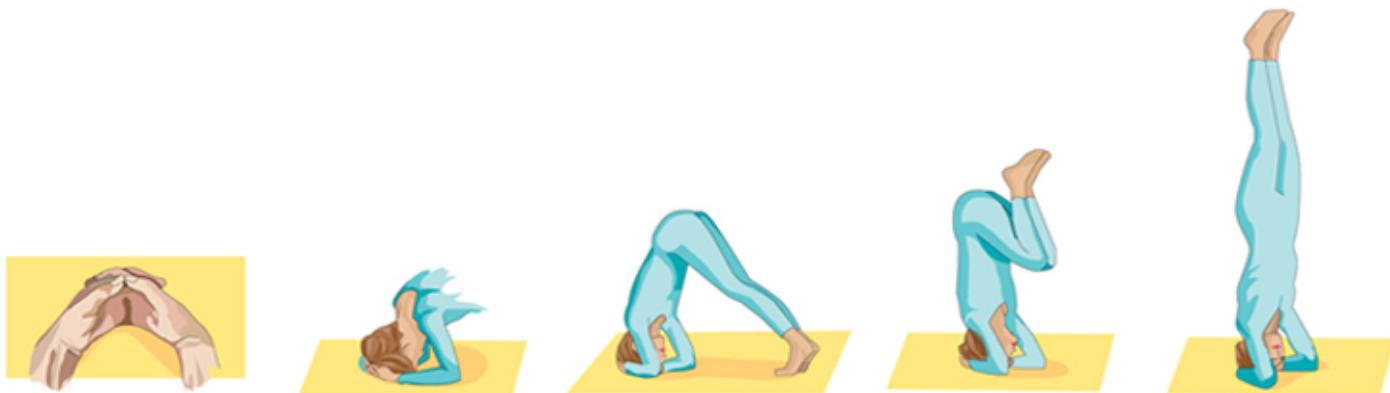
**Padmasana or Ardha Padmasana	Sit with hips level or higher than knees. Take extreme care attempting Padmasana	
**Parivrtta Padmasana	Hold top foot from behind with belt if needed Front hand goes to knee	
**Baddha Padmasana	Catch first the toes or foot of the topmost foot While holding onto foot or belts, arch chest up and head back	
Marichyasana I	Sit on blanket, have belt handy 1 st attempt use elbow on front knee and block behind 2 nd attempt wrap front arm around knee, toss back hand or belt to complete the entwining Or use chair version	
**Marichyasana III	Sit on blanket, have belt handy 1 st attempt use elbow on front knee and block behind 2 nd attempt wrap front arm around knee, toss back hand or belt to complete the entwining	
**Ardha Matsyendrasana	Use blanket under hips for ease and balance. 1 st attempt hold front knee and use block behind 2 nd attempts try hooking elbow, or full arm to reach front foot and finally behind	

Next practice a few standing poses that place the head below the navel and heart. They acclimate us to the upside-down positions.




Adho Mukha Svanasana	Heels pressed to the wall Develop confidence in and appreciation for your legs	
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Prasarita Padottanasana	Use the same power in your legs as the previous dog pose Use blanket, block, or chair for head support if yours doesn't reach the floor.	
Adho Mukha Svanasana	Hands to the wall Develop more lift in your shoulders and side chest	
Uttanasana	Maintain strong lift in legs Let head freely hang	
Adho Mukha Svanasana	Press legs back and up Use arms strongly to extend side chest Let head hang freely	

Here is a good place to do Sirsasana. See that you are levelheaded, with a strong lift to your shoulders, and firm enough legs to add lightness to your headstand. Develop stability, strength and lightness even in a topsy turvy world. If you aren't yet kicking up to head stand a few attempts of placing the hands and head and lifting the hips while the legs stay on the ground is how we begin. It's not necessary to kick up when new to the pose. But work on lifting the shoulders, and pressing the forearms near the wall, (in case you feel ready!)

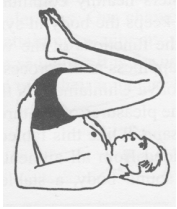
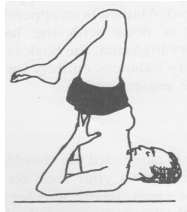
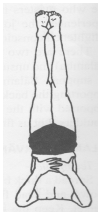


The next backbends share a shape but have a different part of the body on the floor. Give each one a few attempts or repeat the set a few times. Your Mom probably bent over backwards a few times for you.




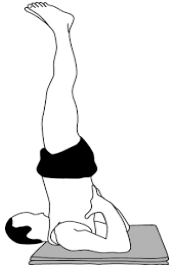
Dhanurasana	Pull shins strongly into your hands Use two belts if you cannot reach ankles The more you pull your shins, the more your chest will open	
Ustrasana	Push shins strongly into floor as you raise your side chest and sternum	
Chatuspadasana	Align the Knees directly over the ankles Pull chest away from the ankles	

Below are three methods of practicing Sarvangasana with the most difficult one presented first. Newer students should use the chair version or the wall. Continuing students should try all three and compare the differences they notice while entering, staying and exiting each version. Study each stage, monitor your breathing to be slow and complete in all stages.




Independent Sarvangasana - Use proper blanket height under shoulders and neck, and belt or sticky mat under elbows.

Start with shoulders positioned on blankets	Use arms to first push floor, then support hips	
Virasana legs	Hold for several breaths Push tailbone in, and extend thighs straight up	
Lifted legs	Keep tailbone in, and extend through thighs to feet	

Wall Supported Sarvangasana

Begin with shoulders on blankets Near wall	Draw shoulders under toward hips See that you have adequate height under shoulders, so your neck and throat are soft	
Lift hips using feet on wall	Imagine drawing feet down the wall, don't push through the wall as you will push yourself off the blankets	
Extend feet up the wall	Keep hips lifted and tailbone drawn in Hold for several breaths	
Learn to balance with feet off the wall	See that your tailbone remains in, and hips don't fall back towards the wall.	

Chair Sarvangasana

This takes practice to not fall off the chair, but this version is one you can hold for a long time and reap physiological benefits – good to build up your immunity	Hold onto the chair while slowly lying back and lower to bolster or blankets	
When you are totally settled you can then start slow soft breathing	Position your shoulders securely before extending your legs, or inserting your arms under chair	
It's fine to close your eyes. Slide down very carefully and rest on the floor before getting up	Legs can be on back of chair, or in Baddha Konasana, Or upright	

Rest in Savasana. Give thanks to Mother Earth, (and call your Mom).