

## MANUAL PLAY PAUSE BE YOGA CARDS

*PlayPauseBe is a deck of cards that allows you to create yoga sequences like a pro. It is a system specifically developed to practice yoga mindfully, disconnecting from everything. Practice anywhere, any time, at your own speed, with your breath!*

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**The idea behind the PlayPauseBe deck is by Umberto Mezzadra**

**The cards and their manual have been developed, elaborated, and designed by Tine Tvinnereim Horn in cooperation with Umberto Mezzadra for Strumpi LTD**

**Yoga expertise has been provided by Illona Tschopp and Tine Tvinnereim Horn**

**Illustrations are by Giulia Rosa for Strumpi LTD**

**Important! Before you PLAY the cards: check the list of ' Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have' to check if any of the precautions apply to you, checking so forth if you can do the posture. The lists include the most common precautions and contradictions, however, this is not a comprehensive or complete list, this manual is meant to be a guide and it is your responsibility to **clarify with your healthcare professionals whether you can:****

1. Do yoga at all
2. Do the position at hand
3. How you should adapt the position for your individual body

**Our points include general recommendations, and every individual is different. Furthermore, the deck is not particularly adapted for pre-and postnatal. Please consult a yoga teacher or healthcare professional before you do any of the postures in the deck if you fall into these categories.**

## Key- positions in yoga that we will later refer to only by name:

### Correct seated posture/ Crossed legged (Sukhasana, Siddhasana, and Svastikasana) and Diamond position (Vajrasana)

Find a comfortable seated position either with legs crossed or seated on your heels (**Diamond position**). If your knees hurt you can sit on a pillow or block and/or place a pillow or block under your knees in the option crossed legs, or under your buttocks (in between your buttocks and heels) if you are seated on your heels. Adapt until you find a position that is OK for you. Make sure you are sitting up nice and tall, with a straight lumbar spine. If you tend to curve your lower back, place a pillow under your coccyx to help your pelvis tilt slightly forward elongating your lumbar spine. Roll your shoulders back and down. Let them be relaxed away from your ears. Open your chest. Tilt your head slightly down towards your chest to elongate your neck. Feel both seat bones grounded onto the mat, but at the same time imagine that you are pulled up through an imaginary string through the crown of your head, elongating your spine and sitting with dignity.

### Tabletop position

Tabletop is a position on all fours. Make sure that your knees are placed on the ground directly under your hips (ninety-degree angle with calves) and that your fingers are widespread with your wrists underneath your shoulders. Point your feet and press them actively into the ground. (If you need extra stability you can tuck your toes under by flexing your feet.) Push the ground actively away from you, creating space between your shoulder blades. Make sure your back is straight, and that your neck is an elongation of your spine.

## Positions one by one

### Category 1. WARM UP

This category is composed of gentle warm up positions that are ideal to start your practice with. Open your body, and prepare for what's to come. However, some of these positions can also be used during your practice to for instance release tension between the shoulderblades after a position that is intense for your shoulders. Lastly, if you want a quick and good practice you can also use the warm up and the slow down cards together and create a full practice.

#### 1. Cat Cow - Marjaryasana Bitilasana

##### Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:

- Neck injury (adapt by keeping your neck neutral instead of looking up and down).
- Chronic or recent injury to knees. (If you have discomfort in the knees or a recent injury when you are on your knees, you can fold your mat for additional support under your knees to gradually strengthen them. If you have chronic knee pain, consult your doctor before practicing these positions.

**How to PLAY the pose:** Start on all fours in a tabletop position, knees under hips, fingers widespread, wrists underneath shoulders. Press all four corners of the palms into the mat and dig your fingers actively down, as if you were pressing into sand. Rotate your elbows backwards and keep your arms active and strong throughout. Inhale, sway your back and look up, pull your chest forwards between your arms into Cow. Exhale, curve your back and look towards your belly into Cat. Pull your belly button in towards the spine and push the ground away, create space between your shoulder blades. Repeat at least five times, move with your breath.

##### Where to PLAY the pose:

Tip: Cat Cow is a great way to neutralize the spine in-between heart openers and other positions during your practice, not only during the warmup.

##### The benefits of PLAYING the pose:

- Lungs: stretches and strengthens the breathing muscles
- Heart: increases blood circulation. It may lower heart rate when done slowly and restoratively
- Digestion: stimulates digestion
- Strength: arms, shoulders, and spine
- Flexibility: improves the mobility of the spine
- Organs: stimulates abdominal organs including the pancreas, reproductive organs, and adrenal glands. It may help relieve menstrual discomfort
- Posture: helps alignment of the body and particularly the spine
- Sleep: helps battle insomnia as a restorative pose. Let your belly relax out on your inhales, move slowly and gently.

#### 2. Seated shoulder circles

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Shoulder injury

**How to PLAY the pose:** Find your correct seated posture. Place your fingertips on your shoulders and make big circles with your elbows. Starting by bringing your elbows together in front of your chest. Inhale while you bring them upward to the sky, keeping your elbows together as long as you can. Then open them wide to the side and exhale going back down. While you bring them up, you create space between your shoulder blades. When you bring them down squeeze your shoulder blades together as much as you can, opening your chest. This is great to warm up and release for any tension in your shoulders and shoulder blades. Repeat at least five times in both directions. When you repeat the opposite direction, inhale to come up, and exhale to come down.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

This card can be used to release tension after arm balances and inversions, not only in the warm up.

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: stretches and strengthens the breathing muscles
- Strength: shoulders and shoulder blades
- Flexibility: opens the chest and increases the mobility of the shoulders
- Posture: releases tension in the shoulders and between the shoulder blades, and opens the chest.

### 3. Seated Side Stretch

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Spinal injury, be gentle in your movements and do not go too deep into the posture.

**How to PLAY the pose:** Lateral side bending to warm up the spine. Find your correct seated posture. Inhale grow tall through your spine and bring your left arm up towards your ear, arm extended tall all the way out through the fingertips. On that same inhale continue the movement extending your spine into a side bend towards the right. Keep both sit bones on the ground. Exhale here in your side stretch. You can support yourself with your right hand on the ground. Try not to lean on the hand, engage your core to keep yourself in the position. Make sure to open your chest to the sky, so that you are not curving your left shoulder forward in your side bend. Instead, open up to create space for your lungs, strengthening your breathing muscles and correcting the posture. Use your breath to expand your ribcage and open your heart to the sky. Inhale coming up, switch arms, repeat on the other side. Repeat five times each way.

Think about extending instead of bending. Imagine that you have an invisible string from your seat bones on the ground extending through the crown of your head, that grows taller with every inhale. Look wherever is comfortable for your neck.

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: opens the chest and strengthens the breathing muscles.
- Digestion: stimulates digestion
- Flexibility: improves the flexibility of the spine.
- Organs: stimulates the abdominal organs.
- Posture: strengthens the spine and core. Opens the chest and corrects forward curving shoulders.
- Sleep: can improve sleep.

### 4. Seated Gentle Twist

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Avoid if you are pregnant

**How to PLAY the pose:** Find your correct seated posture. Inhale, extend tall through your spine, exhale to twist. Always start to twist to the right side first because the way your digestive system is made. Engage your core to twist. Place your left hand on your right knee, but make sure not to use your arms to push yourself into the twist. Open your chest and keep your spine tall. Inhale extending up, and exhale go deeper into the twist. Try not to go too deep, as this is just a warm up. Stay in the twist for a few breaths. Inhale coming back to center, exhale to stay. Repeat to the other side. Repeat as many times as you like, but if you are doing deeper twists in postures later in your sequence, make sure to repeat at least 3-5 times.

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: opens the chest and strengthens the breathing muscles
- Heart: calms the nervous system and can therefore reduce hypertension over time
- Digestion: improves digestion
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs: stimulates abdominal organs
- Posture: improves spinal health, strength, and flexibility. Opens the chest
- Sleep: can improve sleep.

## 5. Wrist Warm Up

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Shoulder and wrist injury

**How to PLAY the pose:** Find your correct seated posture. Make big circles with your wrists while you bring your arms out to the side, and up above the head. Inhale while you come up. Exhale bring the arms down making circles with the wrist the other way. Repeat five times. Extend your arms as wide out as you can, to make the movement as big as possible to warm up your shoulders as well.

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Flexibility: improves wrist flexibility
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Posture: releases tension in the shoulders and improves seated posture.

## 6. Butterfly - Baddha Konasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Groin or knee injury
- Pregnancy - use pillows under your knees, because of the relaxing hormones in the pelvic area, especially in the third trimester.

**How to PLAY the pose:** Sit down on your mat. Place the soles of the feet together and bring your heels as close to your pelvis as possible, without curving your lower back. Sit up nice and tall through your spine, open your chest, and let your knees fall out to the side. Hold on to your toes, ankles or further up on your shins. Open your elbows out to the side to create space for your chest. Wiggle your butterfly wings by letting your knees go up and down with small movements to release extra tension. This is why this position is called Butterfly. If you want (with your knees still) keep your spine straight and start to lean your neck and upper body forward, without curving the lumbar spine. And if you are very flexible bringing your head down to your feet.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

Great as a warmup for hip openers.

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: can be beneficial for asthma
- Heart: stimulates the heart and improves general circulation, good for HBP
- Flexibility: stretches the inner thighs, groins, and knees
- Organs and hormones: stimulates the abdominal organs including kidneys, bladder, reproductive organs, and prostate glands. Helps relieve the symptoms of menopause, menstrual discomfort, and sciatica
- Posture: opens chest and hips, extends the spine
- Brain: can help alleviate mild depression, anxiety, and fatigue
- Sleep: can improve sleep.

## 7. Open Chest

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Neck injury: keep your chin towards your chest
- Shoulder injury or pain

**How to PLAY the pose:** Find your correct seated posture. Bring your hands behind you, with your fingertips pointing away from you. Keep your palms as close to the buttocks as possible. Squeeze your shoulder blades to open your chest. Let your shoulders be low, away from your ears. Keep extending upwards through your spine, imagine someone is lifting you up by a string coming out through your chest. Let your head rest backwards to open your neck if that feels OK for you. Alternatively bring your chin in towards your chest. Breathe and hold the posture while you imagine that for every inhale, you use your breath to create space in between each one of your ribs in your rib cage. After at least five deep slow breaths on your next inhale come back to neutral. Think about extending and opening, instead of leaning back and bending.

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: opens the chest and strengthens the breathing muscles
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs and hormones: stimulates the thyroid gland in the neck
- Posture: corrects forward curving shoulders and opens the chest
- Brain: calms the mind.
- Sleep: can improve sleep

## 8. Neck

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Neck injury: be gentle in your movement, and consult your doctor.

**How to PLAY the pose:** To warm up the neck we have three exercises.

1) Inhale look up to the sky, extending your neck tall. On an exhale look down and bring your chin towards your chest. Make sure you are not crunching the neck when looking up; in other words do not let your head go fully backwards.

2) Inhale extend your neck tall, exhale and look towards the right. Inhale to center. Exhale looks towards the left. Inhale to center.

3) Side bending of the neck. Inhale extend tall through every vertebra of your neck; exhale tilt your head towards the right with your right ear towards the right shoulder. Keep your shoulders nice and low. Inhale back to center, repeat on the other side.

Repeat all exercises at least five times each way. Make sure you are not going too deep into the stretches as this is a warm up. Listen to your body.

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Flexibility: improves neck mobility
- Organs and hormones: stimulates the thyroid gland in the neck
- Posture: releases tension in the neck and shoulders and strengthens the neck

## 9. Thread the Needle - Parsva Balasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Chronic or recent injury to knees, neck, or shoulder. (If you have chronic knee pain or a recent injury, when you are on your knees you can fold your mat for support under the knees to gradually strengthen them)
- To avoid during pregnancy (unless you know when to do it, and how to adapt).

**How to PLAY the pose:** Find your tabletop position. Place your right hand in the middle underneath your chest. Inhale extend your left hand up to the sky. Keep your hips square, but use your core to twist and open your chest to the sky. Exhale bring that left hand down, thread the needle by bringing your hand underneath your body and place it on the ground on the right

side of your body with your palm facing down. Place your left shoulder on the ground and rest your head on the ground as well. Keep walking the fingers away from you until you find a stretch in between the shoulder blades, continue to keep your hips square. Keep your left hand out directly from your left shoulder

For your right hand you have three options: 1) either it can stay where it already is close to your face, 2) you can extend it out on the ground alongside your ear above your head. 3) If you don't feel a stretch in between your shoulder blades: you can bring your right arm up and behind your back, and if you're very flexible maybe even find your way to the inside of your left thigh with your right hand. No matter where you have your right hand, keep opening your right shoulder to the sky and bring your right shoulder blade down the back. Stay here and breath for at least five breaths. Even longer is good. To come out place your right hand back beside your face underneath your shoulder. Inhale push your right hand down into the ground and lift your upper body up bringing your left hand all the way up returning to the initial starting twist opening your left shoulder and arm up to the sky, all on the same inhale. Exhale bring your left hand back to the ground into your tabletop. Repeat on the other side.

On the card the first two drawings are indicating the movement. The third drawing is an optional position.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find:

- 1. Cat Cow
- 8. Neck
- 59. Child's Pose

FAST FORWARD to:

- 48. Downward Facing Dog

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: stretches and strengthens the breathing muscles
- Heart: increases blood circulation to the upper extremities. Be careful if you have HBP because your head is lower than your heart, consult your doctor
- Digestion: improves by stimulating the abdominal organs
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs: stimulates the abdominal organs and detoxifies the body
- Posture: stretches the chest and releases tension between the shoulder blades
- Brain: calms your mind and nervous system. Can also help to reduce stress.

## 10. Core

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

Avoid if you are pregnant.

**How to PLAY the pose:**

For all exercises start laying on your back and make sure to start by pulling your bellybutton in towards your spine and press your lower back firmly into the mat so that you are not swaying your lower back.

A) Leg lifts: start with your legs at 90 degrees above the floor, exhale and bring your legs down towards the mat. Legs can be straight or bent, straight legs will be more intense. Squeeze your legs together, and bring them as far down as you manage, without compromising your lower back/curving your back. If this happens, back off and do not go so deep. Inhale, to extend out. Exhale, come back to center. Keep your head on the ground. Try not to bring your legs closer to your face than 90 degrees. Keep your hips on the ground. Tip: it can be helpful to keep your hands under your buttocks with your thumbs together to stabilize and help your back straight/avoiding a sway back. Optional arm position: keep your arms alongside your body, press them into the ground for support. If you notice that you have a tendency to bulk up with your belly (your rectus abdominis bulging out from your belly, even if you are trying to pull your bellybutton in towards the spine) this probably means that your transverse abdominis are not strong enough yet. Therefore adjust the movement, do not go so far towards the ground with your legs. Work on exercise B) more to strengthen your transverse abdominis first before you try this (A) exercise again. Note: this exercise is quite intense for your hip flexors, so if you are not so strong in these muscles yet, start with fewer repetitions. In general we do not recommend doing this exercise daily as this can be too much on your hip flexors, as you are also working these muscles quite a lot in your yoga practice and when you are walking. Listen to your body.

Advanced option: if you are very strong in your core and hip flexors, you can include 'hundreds exercise' (from pilates) while you are lifting the legs up and down (if you know this exercise).

B) Start with your legs 90 degrees away from the ground, and the arms alongside your body. Inhale, lift your hips slightly off the ground, without bringing your feet towards your face. Try to keep your legs still in a 90 degree angle compared to the floor. Exhale to come down. Try pulling your belly button towards the spine and imagine that your hips are lifting. If you are quite weak in your transverse abdominis you might not manage to lift the hips off the ground at all, that is perfectly OK, you are still working on those inner core muscles. With time you might be able to lift a few centimeters off the ground. Keep repeating the exercise for as many repetitions as you like. Keep your head and upper back on the ground.

C) Bicycle crunches: place your hands behind your head. Bend your right knee and bring your left elbow towards the outside of the right knee. If this is not possible, bring it in the direction of the right knee, across your body. Inhale, to center, stretching the right leg back out and bending the left, exhale to bring your right elbow on the outside of the left knee. Continue with your breathing, keep pulling the belly button in and down toward your spine. The leg that you are not twisting towards can either be: 1) extended out, straight, hovering off the ground (close to the ground but not on the ground). However, this is quite a lot for your hip flexors. Therefore, option 2) place that foot on the ground with your knees bent close to your buttocks so you are lifting every second foot up from there. Alternatively, if your hip flexors are bothering you, and it feels better to stay with both knees bent, feet on the ground, you can also just have your hands on the back of your head and move in the direction of the opposite knee and thigh, without lifting the opposite leg off the ground. Let your neck be an extension of your thoracic spine and let your head naturally follow your upper spine movement as slightly twist your thoracic spine. If your neck is bothering you, try bringing your chin closer to your chest, instead of looking towards the ceiling.

D) With your hands behind your head and with your legs 90 degrees compared to the ground, flex your feet. Exhale, bring your right hand to the outside of your left foot (or in that direction). Inhale to center, exhale to the other side. Working the obliques and transverse abdominis, pulling your belly button in towards the spine. Let your neck be an extension of your thoracic spine and let your head naturally follow your upper spinal movement and slight twisting of your thoracic spine. If your neck is bothering you, try bringing your chin closer to your chest, instead of looking up towards the ceiling.

For all of the above: do 20 of each, or as many as you like. It is very individual to how strong your core is. It is much better to do fewer repetitions correctly, with your breathing, slowly and working on really activating your transverse abdominis, pulling the belly button in towards the spine, instead of rushing through too many, and compromising for instance your lower back and/or hip flexors.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

FAST FORWARD to:

- 78. Knees to Chest

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Digestion: stimulates digestion. Strengthening your core muscles. It is one of the best ways to improve your digestion
- Strength: strengthens the core and legs
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs: stimulates the abdominal organs
- Posture: improves posture by strengthening the core.

## 11. Sun salutations A - Surya Namaskar A

Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:

- Arthritis
- Back problems
- Heart problems
- HBP
- Pregnancy (make adaptations)
- Lower back injury: make adaptations
- Wrist injury
- See precautions for each position included in this series

**How to PLAY the pose:** Follow the sequence on the card clockwise. Sun Salutation A is a standard sequence composed of several positions. 1. You start in: '13. Mountain Pose', inhale, bring your arms above your head, palms together or shoulder width apart (extended Mountain Pose). Exhale, hinge from the hips fold forward into '14. Standing Forward Fold'. Inhale, lift your chest to find a flat back. Exhale fold forward, bend your knees if you need to, and place your hands on the ground underneath your shoulders. On the same exhale, step or jump back into '44. Plank Pose'. Inhale in plank, push the ground away from you. Exhale, '45. Plank to Four Limbed Staff Pose' stay here, or alternatively move all the way down to the floor

onto your belly. Inhale, lift up into '29. Cobra' or '30. Upward Facing Dog'. Exhale, move back into your '41. Downward Facing Dog'. Optional here is to have your knees on the ground and move through a table top or '51. Child's Pose' on your way into '41. Downward Facing Dog' (this is great if you do not have the strength yet in your arms and core, to move directly from your '29. Cobra' or '30. Upward Facing Dog' into your '41. Downward Facing Dog' without swaying the back. You should be leading with your hips, and stay nice and strong whilst pushing back into your '41. Downward Facing Dog'. Stay for three to five breaths in '41. Downward Facing Dog'. On your next inhale, step or jump to the front of your mat, placing the feet in between your hands. On that same inhale, lift your chest to find a flat back. (Option 2) Instead of continuing directly in the same inhale: exhale, fold into '14. Standing Forward Fold' before inhaling to lift your chest.) Exhale fold forward. Inhale, come all the way up, your arms reaching out to the sides, palms together above the head in extended Mountain Pose. Before you exhale, to bring your palms down in front of your heart, (or exhale directly folding forward starting the next round of your Sun Salutation) and come back to '13. Mountain Pose'.

While you are doing Sun Salutation A, remember that you can always make adaptations according to your needs, such as bent legs in your forward fold, taking your '45. Four Limbed staff pose' (Chaturanga) on your knees, choosing '29. Cobra' or '30. Upward Facing Dog', and walk or jump into your '44. Plank' and from '41. Downward Facing Dog' back to the front of the mat. Remember to start gentle with a low '29. Cobra' if this is early in your practice, before you go into a deeper one or an '30. Upward Facing Dog'. Repeat as many times as you wish but 3-5 times are recommended to build heat in the body. Move with your breath. The breathing cues described here are the standardized way of breathing with your movements to create a cardiovascular exercise. However, if you become out of breath, feel free to take it slower and stay in each position for more breaths and rest in '51. Child's Pose' instead of '41. Downward Facing Dog' if you need to rest or catch your breath.

See each individual position used in '11. Sun Salutation A' for more information about how to do and/or adapt the positions in this sequence.

#### **Where to PLAY the pose:**

Some like to start their practice with Sun Salutation A. However, we recommend warming up wrists and shoulders before. Playing for instance card 5 while standing and also card 2.

#### **The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

(For more specific benefits see each of the individual positions included in the series).

- Lungs: stretches and strengthens the breathing muscles and diaphragm. When moving with your breath this becomes a cardiovascular exercise
- Digestion: stimulates digestion
- Strength: the whole body
- Flexibility: stretches the back of the legs, improves spine mobility, and opens the chest
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs: stimulates the abdominal organs
- Posture: strengthens and stretches the muscles around the back and the core, and opens the chest
- Brain: when completed with your breath, it has a calming effect on the mind and nervous system.

## **12. Sun salutations B - Surya Namaskar B**

#### **Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Arthritis
- Back problems
- Heart problems
- HBP
- Pregnancy (make adaptations)
- Lower back injury: make adaptations
- Wrist injury
- See precautions for positions included in this series

#### **How to PLAY the pose:**

Follow the sequence on the card clockwise.

Sun Salutation B is a standard sequence composed of several positions. You start in: '13. Mountain Pose', inhale, sit down into your '15. Chair Pose'. Exhale, fold forward, hinging from your hips into '14. Standing Forward Fold'. Inhale, lift your chest to find a flat back. Exhale fold forward, bend your knees if you need to and place your hands on the ground underneath your shoulders. On the same exhale, step or jump back into '44. Plank Pose'. Inhale in plank, push the ground away from you. Exhale, '45. Plank to Four Limbed Staff Pose' stay here, or alternatively move all the way down to the floor onto your belly. Inhale, lift up into '29. Cobra' or '30. Upward Facing Dog'. Exhale, move back into your '41. Downward Facing Dog'. Inhale, bring your right leg forward in between your hands, make sure your knee is straight above your ankle, place your left foot so



that your heels are in one line and your toes are approximately 45 degrees to the side if this is an alignment that is ok for you in your '19. Warrior 1' (see description for cues and adaptations for this position). Inhale, to come up to your '19. Warrior 1' (you can use that same inhale to come up, or you can use an extra exhale to adjust your feet position before coming up). Exhale, come down, placing your hands under your shoulders, framing the right foot. Step back to your '44. Plank Pose', and move through your '45. Plank to Four Limbed Staff Pose' on that same exhale. Inhale, lift up into '29. Cobra' or '30. Upward Facing Dog'. Exhale, move back into your '41. Downward Facing Dog'. Inhale, bring your left leg forward in between your hands, make sure your knee is straight above your ankle, place your right foot to prepare for your '19. Warrior 1'. Inhale, to come up to your '19. Warrior 1'. Exhale, come down, placing your hands under your shoulders, on each side of the foot. Step back to your '44. Plank Pose', and move through your '45. Plank to Four Limbed Staff Pose' on that same exhale. Inhale, lift up into '29. Cobra' or '30. Upward Facing Dog'. Exhale, find your '41. Downward Facing Dog'. Stay for three to five breaths. On your next inhale, step or jump to the front of your mat, in between your hands. On that same inhale, lift your chest to find a flat back. (Option 2) Instead of continuing directly on the same inhale: exhale, fold into '14. Standing Forward Fold' before inhaling to lift your chest.) Exhale fold forward. Inhale, find your '15. Chair Pose'. Exhale to '13. Mountain Pose'.

Repeat as many times as you wish but 3-5 times are recommended to build heat in the body and to warm up the body for the rest of the practice. Move with your breath. The breathing cues described here are the standardized way of breathing with your movements to create a cardiovascular exercise. However, if you become out of breath, feel free to take it slower and stay in each position for more breaths and rest in '51. Child's Pose' instead of '41. Downward Facing Dog' if you need to rest or catch your breath. Moving with the breathing cues that are explained here is quite advanced, so do not worry if you need to slow it down quite a bit to make sure you have the time to find and settle in, for instance your '19. Warrior 1', with the correct alignment before moving on.

For illustrative purposes our drawing is showing only one '19. Warrior 1' Vinyasa sequence in Sun Salutation B, there are two '19. Warrior 1' sequences before you move on, to include both legs in each Sun Salutation B. Remember that you can always go all the way down to the ground in your '45. Plank to Four Limbed Staff Pose' do a '29. Cobra' instead of a '30. Upward Facing Dog'. If you have particularly tight iliopsoas (hip flexor) muscles and adjusting your stance in '19. Warrior 1' is not enough; you can exchange it with 17. Crescent Lunge. For further adaptations see 11. Sun Salutation A for transitions, and the positions mentioned for adaptations relating to each position. If you are not familiar with 12. Sun Salutation B, make sure you read the description of each position included in the sequence, and consult your yoga teacher for advice and adaptations for your body. Pay particular attention to the cues to protect your knees and hips in '15. Chair Pose' and '19. Warrior 1'. Make sure to engage your glutes in: '44. Plank', '45. Plank to Four Limbed Staff Pose', '29. Cobra' and '30. Upward Facing Dog', to protect your lumbar spine. Remember that it is always better to keep doing adaptations such as '45. Plank to Four Limbed Staff Pose' on your knees and work on doing it correctly and without pain, until you build the strength to do the full position, than to rush the journey and injure yourself. Stay safe.

#### Where to PLAY the pose:

REWIND and find:

- 11. Sun Salutations A

#### The benefits of PLAYING the pose:

(For more specific benefits see each of the individual positions included in the series).

- Lungs: stretches and strengthens the breathing muscles and the diaphragm. When moving with your breath this becomes a cardiovascular exercise
- Digestion: stimulates the abdominal organs
- Strength: the whole body
- Flexibility: stretches the back of the legs, improves spine mobility, and opens the chest. Opens the hips and iliopsoas.
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs: stimulates the abdominal organs
- Posture: strengthens and stretches the muscles around the back, core, and hips, and opens the chest
- Brain: when done with your breath it has a calming effect on the mind and nervous system.

## Category 2. STANDING POSTURES

In all standing postures you should generally hold for five breaths if you want to do a hatha yoga practice. However, if you want a dynamic flow and know how to create that, you can adapt and move in and out of the postures as you wish. Yogis choice.

Note on the distribution of weight on the sole of the foot: this is important for all standing and balance postures. You have three main points on the sole of your foot: one on the heel and two on each corner on the ball of the foot, creating a triangle. Aim to have an equal distribution of weight in between these three points. Try to avoid collapsing arches and having the weight too far forward or backward.

For all standing postures it is important to have an active standing leg. Do not hyperextend your knee, rather work on a micro bend, engaging your quadriceps pulling the kneecap up to protect your knee joint.

### 13. Mountain Pose - Tadasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Headache
- LBP

**How to PLAY the pose:** Feet together or adjust your stand with your feet slightly apart (whatever is OK for your knees), usually you stay at the front of the mat. Feel grounded through the soles of your feet. But at the same time standing tall like a mountain, elongating up through the crown of your head. Tilt your pelvis slightly to find your neutral spine. Roll your shoulders back and down to open your chest. Engage your abdominals so you avoid going into a backbend. Pull your kneecaps up and engage your quadriceps and buttocks. Relax your face and jaw.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

Mountain Pose is a good position to start with a standing sequence and to return to, as a way of centering yourself during your practice. Try placing your hands in namaste in front of your heart, close your eyes and feel the pose before you continue.

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Heart: improves circulation
- Strength: strengthens the thighs, knees, ankles, and arches as well as abdomen and buttocks
- Posture: improves posture, reduces flat feet, relieves sciatica
- Brain: calms the mind.

### 14. Standing Forward Fold - Uttanasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Spinal disc disorder or back injury
- LBP and dizziness: legs slightly apart and come up slowly
- Pregnancy: feet wider apart
- Acidity: keep your chest in line with your hips, not lower, creating a flat back (Standing half forward bend)
- Hamstring strain or injury: bend knees and do not go beyond 80% into the stretch
- Headache (depending on the type of headache).

**How to PLAY the pose:** From '13. Mountain Pose', feet together or hip distance apart, fold forward hinging from the hips. Keep your back straight as long as possible, then release. There are several variations for your arms here. Ragdoll, where you hold onto your elbows and release your neck, head, and upper body to gravity. Another option is to place your hands on the ground (or in the direction of the ground). Keep your legs strong, bend your knees if you have to. If you have your legs straight, engage your quadriceps pulling your kneecaps up, and try to work your weight slightly forward towards your toes (without lifting your heels). Notice how this changes your leg and core activation. Remember to engage your core. When you do your first forward fold in the practice, remember to be gentle in the beginning, e.g. by keeping your legs bent.

If you have lower back discomfort or are very inflexible, you can stay with your knees bent.

Option for sleep sequence. When done for sleep, choose ragdoll arms for a deeper release in neck and shoulders or arms relaxed down and head resting on blocks. Bend your knees for a deeper rest, the point now is not the hamstring stretch but an inward focus, a calm, blood to the head and tension release. Stay for a few breaths, not minutes, like referred to in the introduction to Sleep.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

FAST FORWARD to

- 13. Mountain Pose
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 51. Plank Pose

Additional info: It is a great counterpose to neutralize your spine after, for instance, backbends and inversions.

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: can be beneficial for asthma. Strengthens and stretches the intercostal breathing muscles and diaphragm
- Heart: can be beneficial for HBP. Stimulates the heart
- Digestion: improves the digestive system
- Strength: strengthens the legs and back
- Flexibility: stretches the hamstrings, calves, and hips
- Immune system: stimulates the lymphatic system and helps de-stress
- Organs and hormones: stimulate the abdominal organs including the liver, kidneys, and reproductive organs. Can help relieve symptoms of menopause. It may be beneficial for fertility.
- Posture: brings length and lightness to the spine. Stretches the shoulders, chest, and neck
- Brain: calms the brain and nervous system. Can help relieve stress, mild depression, fatigue, and anxiety. May relieve headache and symptoms of sinusitis
- Sleep: can help battle insomnia. When done for sleep, choose ragdoll arms (holding on to your elbows) for a deeper release in the neck and shoulders or arms relaxed down and head resting on blocks. Bend your knees for deeper rest, the point now is not the hamstring stretch but an inward focus, a calm, blood to the head, and tension release. Stay for a few breaths, not minutes, like referred to in the introduction to Sleep.

## 15. Chair Pose - Utkatasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Headache
- LBP
- HBP and heart problems: keep your hands low in front of your heart, or avoid position completely dependent on your condition.

**How to PLAY the pose:** Feet together (if it feels ok for your knees) or hip distance apart. From your '13. Mountain Pose' start bending your knees squeezing them together, if you have them hip distance apart keep them in line with your hips and ankles. Bend your knees until your heels are lifting off the ground, when they do you know that you have reached your limit, so go a little bit back until your heels are back on the ground. Now start leaning your upper body slightly forward. Tilt your pelvis slightly to elongate and find your neutral spine. Open your chest, engage your core. Your neck is an elongation of your spine. Raise your hands above your head keeping your arms alongside your ears as an extension of your spine. Or keep them in front of your heart in namaste if you have high blood pressure. Keep engaging your thighs and glutes. Sitting low into this imaginary chair. Stay, breath and let it burn.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 11. Sun Salutation A
- 12. Sun Salutation B
- 13. Mountain Pose
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 48. Downward Facing Dog

FAST FORWARD to

- 13. Mountain Pose
- 14. Standing Forward Fold

Additional info: Chair Pose can be a neutralizing pose in a sequence after backbends such as '34. Cobra'.

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: strengthens and stretches the breathing muscles
- Heart: raises the pulse, and blood flow, stimulates the heart as a cardiovascular exercise, as your big thigh muscles are working hard
- Digestion: stimulates digestion
- Strength: strengthens the thighs, knees, ankles, calves, buttocks, back, and core
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs and hormones: stimulates abdominal organs

- Posture: may be therapeutic for flat feet, strengthens the back, and opens the chest.

## 16. Twisted Chair Pose - Parivrtta Utkatasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- HBP
- Injury or recently had surgery to the spine, neck, ankles, knees, hips and SI-joint, shoulders, abdomen, rib cage, and eyes
- if you are pregnant: you should completely refrain from this position

**How to PLAY the pose:** Find your Chair Pose, as described above. From here, place your hands in front of your heart. As you exhale, twist towards the right. You can bend even lower down in your Chair Pose and get your elbow on the outside of your right knee if that feels OK, but it is important to keep your hips square. Keep opening the chest to the sky breath here, engage your core, belly button towards the spine. Inhale to extend the spine, exhale to twist deeper, using your core. Inhale to come out back to center. Then exhale and repeat to the other (left) side. Stay in each twist for at least 3-5 breaths or longer.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find:

- 4. Seated Gentle Twist
- 11 Sun Salutation A
- 12. Sun Salutation B
- 13. Mountain Pose
- 15. Chair Pose

FAST FORWARD to:

- 14. Standing Forward Fold (right after)
- 15. Chair Pose (right after)
- 13. Mountain Pose
- 57. Side Crow

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: strengthens and stretches the breathing muscles
- Heart: cardiovascular exercise, as you are using your big thigh muscles
- Digestion: stimulates
- Strength: strengthens the hip flexor muscles, thighs, adductors, glutes, core, back, and shoulders
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs: stimulates abdominal organs including the liver and kidneys
- Posture: stretches the side body. Opens the chest, shoulders, and upper back.

## 17. Crescent Lunge - High Lunge - Ashta Chandrasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Lower back pain: adapt by bending your back leg to elongate your lumbar spine
- HBP and heart problems: keep your hands low in front of your heart, or avoid the position completely dependent on your condition.

**How to PLAY the pose:** From '13. Mountain Pose'. Inhale, take a big step back with your right leg, toes on the ground, foot pointing forwards, keeping the feet hip distance apart, exhaling here. Hips facing forward. Upper body stays nice and tall. Engage your core and pull your lower ribs in. Bend the knee of your left leg, and make sure that the knee is straight above the ankle. Tilt your pelvis slightly, leading the tailbone down to find your neutral spine, and avoid a sway back (lower back). It is ok to bend your right leg to manage this. Sit low in your lunge without hanging in it. Engage your glutes. Strong, active standing legs: imagine that they are pulling in towards a middle line, and at the same time elongating outwards. Extend your arms above your head, in line with your ears, energy out through the fingers. Stay for five breaths or include the position in a

flow. To come out either step back to the front of your mat to '13. Mountain Pose', or continue with a standing sequence. Repeat on the left side straight away or after a flow.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 6. Butterfly
- 11. Sun Salutation A
- 12. Sun Salutation B
- 15. Chair Pose
- 22. Wide-Legged Forward Bend
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 62. Low Lunge Pose

FAST FORWARD to

- 13. Mountain Pose
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 15. Chair Pose
- 19. Warrior 1
- 20. Warrior 2
- 21. Reverse Warrior 2
- 23. Extended Side Angle Pose
- 32. Warrior 3
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 51. Plank Pose

Additional information: FAST FORWARD to standing balances.

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: can be beneficial for asthma. Opens the chest
- Heart: cardiovascular exercise, as you are using your big thigh muscles
- Digestion: stimulates digestion
- Strength: strengthens the legs, glutes, core, back, feet, and ankle
- Flexibility: stretches the hips (e.g. hip flexors) and the thighs
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs and hormones: stimulates the abdominals organs including the reproductive organs
- Posture: may help relieve sciatica and back pain.

## **18. Triangle Pose - Utthita Trikonasana**

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Diarrhea
- Headache
- Heart condition: consult your doctor to check if the position is OK for you. Keep the upper arm on the hip and practice against the wall
- HBP: keep your upper arm on your hip, not extended up above your heart, and look down
- LBP
- Neck problems: look down or to the side instead of up, or wherever is comfortable for your neck.

**How to PLAY the pose:** From '13. Mountain Pose' take a big step back with your left leg. Left foot pointing 90 degrees to the side, right foot pointing straight forward, open your left hip to the side. Engage quadriceps on both legs, pulling the kneecaps up. Arms out to the sides, level with your shoulders. Inhale, extend your upper body forward, when you cannot extend any more tilt your upper body and arms and take hold of your leg with your right hand. Your left arm is opening towards the sky.

Shoulders away from ears. Imagine that you have a wall behind you, and that you are opening your left shoulder towards that wall, opening your chest. Engage your buttocks, so that they are not sticking out. The neck is an extension of your spine. Look up towards your left hand, or down on the ground if you feel discomfort in the neck. Breathe here for at least five breaths. Come up on an inhale. Pivot your feet and find the position on the other side or include a flow before you repeat on the other side. If you wish you can take hold of your big toe with your thumb and two fingers. Or for an extra core challenge, try to not hold on to your leg, but instead have it inside or outside of your shin, hovering. Alternatively place your hand on the ground on the outside of your foot (pinkie toe side). You can also use a block here to place your hand on.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 3. Seated Side Stretch
- 6. Butterfly
- 13. Mountain Pose
- 11 Sun Salutation A
- 12. Sun Salutation B
- 30. Tree Pose

FAST FORWARD to

- 14. Standing Forward Fold (counterpose)
- 20. Warrior 2
- 23. Extended Side Angle Pose
- 68. Half Moon

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: stretches the chest
- Heart: cardiovascular exercise as you are using your big thigh muscles
- Digestion: stimulates digestion, can reduce bloating, and be gas relieving. Can also be beneficial for acidity
- Strength: strengthens the legs, knees, ankles, core, side body, and back
- Flexibility: stretches the hips, groin, hamstrings, calves, and back. Opens the shoulders and chest
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs and hormones: stimulates the abdominal organs, including the reproductive organs. Can help relieve menstrual discomfort. It may be beneficial for fertility
- Posture: stretches the chest, shoulders, and spine. May alleviate backache, flat feet, neck pain, and sciatica. This is one of the best positions to correct imbalances if you have scoliosis. Can be preventative for osteoporosis
- Brain: can be beneficial for anxiety and help alleviate stress.

## 19. Warrior 1 - Virabhadrasana 1

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Heart problems and HBP: consult your doctor first. If you are cleared to do the position keep your hands in front of the heart or on your hips.
- Neck problems: look forward instead of up.
- Shoulder problems: if it's painful to keep your palms together, open your hands wider or place them in front of your heart or on your hips.

**How to PLAY the pose:** From '13. Mountain Pose' take a big step back with your left leg. Right foot pointing forward, left foot pointing 45 degrees to the side. Heels are in one line. Bend your right knee, make sure it is straight above your ankle. Engage your glutes. Hips square, and facing forward. If you do not manage to have your hips facing forward, move your left foot towards the left edge of your mat, widening the space between your legs. Widen until you are able to face the hips forward. If it is not possible for you to keep your hips square with your left heel still on the ground (Warrior 1), you can always exchange this card with '17. Crescent Lunge – High Lunge'. In your Warrior 1: engage your quadriceps and pull the kneecap up on your left leg, to protect your knee. Make sure it is not bending in any way. Arms up above your head, either straight or palms together. Look forward or up into your hands. Chest and shoulders all pointing forward. Stay and breathe for five breaths.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 6. Butterfly
- 11. Sun Salutation A
- 12. Sun Salutation B
- 17. Crescent Lunge - High Lunge
- 30. Tree Pose
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 62. Low Lunge Pose

FAST FORWARD to

- 13. Mountain Pose
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 20. Warrior 2
- 23. Extended Side Angle Pose

Warrior 1 is also good preparation for backbends (together with '17. Crescent Lunge – High Lunge' and '62. Low Lunge Pose' – as it opens the hip flexors).

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: stretches the chest and lungs
- Heart: improves circulation. Cardiovascular exercise as you are using your big thigh muscles
- Digestion: stimulates digestion
- Strength: strengthens the legs, knees, ankles, buttocks, core, back, shoulders, and arms
- Flexibility: stretches the thighs, groins, calves, ankles, chest, and neck
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs and hormones: stimulates abdominal organs including the reproductive organs and thyroid gland in the neck.
- Posture: strengthens the shoulders, arms, and back muscles. Opens the chest.

**20. Warrior 2 - Virabhadrasana 2****Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Neck problems: you can still do the position, but look to the side and let your neck be an extension of your spine. Do not look forward above your hand
- Diarrhea
- Heart condition and HBP

**How to PLAY the pose:** Legs wide apart, right foot pointing forward, left foot pointing ninety degrees to the side. Opening the hips and the shoulders to the side. Exhale to bend your right knee, make sure your right knee is above your ankle, and not bending in or outwards. Do not let your knee go beyond your ankle and only bend it to ninety degrees, this is important to protect your knee. Strong standing back leg pulling your kneecaps up and engaging quadriceps. Push the outer side of your left foot down into the ground. Arms are opening wide level with your shoulders to the sides. Look over the middle finger of your right hand. Shoulders are relaxed down away from your ears. Remember to relax your face and jaw, even if this is a strong position for your legs, you are a strong and calm warrior. Repeat on the other side. Stay and breath for at least five breaths.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 6. Butterfly
- 11. Sun Salutation A
- 12. Sun Salutation B

- 18. Triangle Pose
- 30. Tree Pose

FAST FORWARD to

- 18. Triangle Pose
- 21. Reverse Warrior 2
- 23. Extended Side Angle Pose
- 68. Half Moon

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: stretches and strengthens chest and lungs
- Heart: improves circulation. Cardiovascular exercise as you are using your big thigh muscles
- Digestion: stimulates digestion
- Strength: increases stamina. Strengthens the legs, glutes, ankles, arms, core, and back
- Flexibility: stretches the inside of your legs and groins. Opens the hips
- Immune system: boosts the immune system by e.g. stimulating the lymphatic system
- Organs: stimulates abdominal organs, including the reproductive organs. Can be beneficial for fertility
- Posture: may alleviate backache. Stretches shoulders. Can be therapeutic for flat feet, sciatica, osteoporosis, and carpal tunnel syndrome

## 21. Reverse Warrior 2 - Viparita Virabhadrasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- HBP (keep our upper arm behind your back, instead of straight above your head)
- LBP
- Neck, spine, or shoulder injury. Do not go deep into the posture. Look wherever is comfortable for your neck. Adjust your arm position for where it's ok for you, for instance behind your back.

**How to PLAY the pose:** From '20. Warrior 2'. Inhale turn your right palm facing upwards and lift your right arm backwards as you open your chest to the sky. Your left arm is placed on your back thigh or your calf, depending on your flexibility, but never on your knee. Option for your left arm: wrap it around your back. Use your core to stay with integrity, do not lean too much on your back leg. Look up if that is comfortable for your neck. Make sure you are opening your chest and not closing or curving with your shoulder. Inhale to come back to '20. Warrior 2'.

Sequenziong tip: if you have chosen Extended Side Angle, you can also include a dynamic flow between the two postures. In this way, you move only your upper body back and forth, with your legs firm.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find:

- 3. Seated Side Stretch
- 6. Butterfly
- 11. Sun Salutation A
- 12. Sun Salutation B
- 20. Warrior 2
- 23. Extended Side Angle Pose

FAST FORWARD to:

- 13. Mountain Pose
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 18. Triangle Pose
- 20. Warrior 2



- 23. Extended Side Angle Pose

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: stretches and strengthens chest and lungs
- Digestion: stimulates
- Strength: increases stamina. Strengthens the legs, glutes, ankles, core, arms, and back
- Flexibility: stretches the legs, groins, and chest
- Immune system: boosts the immune system by e.g. stimulating the lymphatic system
- Organs and hormones: stimulates the abdominal organs including the reproductive organs and thyroid gland in the neck. Can be beneficial for fertility
- Posture: opens the chest and shoulders. Strengthens the muscles around the spine and core
- Brain: the opening of the chest stimulates the vagus nerve that calms the nervous system, and acts as de-stressing.

## 22. Wide-Legged Forward Bend - Prasarita Padottanasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- LBP, be careful especially coming up, take it slow
- Lower back injury or back problems, do a very adapted posture (not doing all four, but a simple modified stretch) according to what your doctor advises. Bending your knees and going no more than 80 percent into the posture may help.

**How to PLAY the pose:** starting in '13. Mountain Pose' at the top of the mat. Inhale take a big step back on the mat with your left leg. Open your hips to the side and pivot both feet to face the side of the mat. Let your big toes point slightly inwards, not too much. Now you are ready to enter one or all four of the wide-legged forward folds.

A: inhale place your hands on your hips, extend your spine up through the crown of your head. Exhale fold forward. Hinging from the hips. Keep your back flat. Place your hands on the ground or in the direction of the ground if you cannot reach the ground, you can also use blocks for support here. Relax your neck and breath into the stretch. Engage the quadriceps and try to get your weight forward in the direction of your toes, without lifting your heels. If you are flexible enough you can place your hands inline with your feet and let your elbows be above your hands. Work on getting your head in the direction of the mat. If you are very flexible and the crown of your head is reaching the mat and you still manage to keep a straight back, stay here and adjust the position of your feet, closer together or wider apart so that you allow for your spine to elongate and your neck to be free, without resting on the ground, but slightly above it. If this is the case for you, you can also walk your hand further away from you, in between your legs, straightening them out and allowing for an even deeper stretch. Shoulders away from ears to give space for your neck. Breathe here. Inhale, extend your spine, lift your chest, flat back. Fingertips on the ground, or where they used to be. Fold one more time and stay. Inhale, come all the way up to standing, with a flat back coming up.

Option for advanced practitioners: if you want to, you can enter a straddle press '40. Tripod Headstand' and returning back to your forward fold here before you continue your practice.

Sleep. Choose the simple variation, A. You can place a block or other form of support under your head, to rest your head and neck on. Do not go too deep into the stretch but try to find a place of calm.

B: inhale arms out to the side, exhale hands back on your hips and elongate your spine forward, hinging from the hip. This time with your hands kept on your hips (thumbs on your backside, and rest of your fingers forward). Aim at having a flat back, leading with the crown of the head towards the floor or into a stretch that feels OK for you. Stay for five breaths, inhale to come up to standing. Exhale when you reach an upright position.

C: inhale stretch your arms out to the side; exhale fold your hands behind your back (clasp your hands). Inhale extend your arms away from you to open your chest. Elongate your spine. Exhale fold forward, again hinging from the hips. This time, keep the hands clasped and begin to open your hands away from your back. Stay here for five breaths. Work on elongating your spine, relax your neck, and get your hands as far away from your buttocks and back as you can to open your shoulders. Squeeze your shoulder blades together in the back to open your chest. Breathe. Inhale to come up to standing and exhale here to release the hands.

D: inhale, place your hands on your hips, exhale folding forward, hinging from the hip. This time take hold of your big toes, if you can reach them. Or adapt to a moderated forward fold. If you manage to reach your big toes, try to maintain a straight back. Let your neck be relaxed and open your elbows out to the side. Make sure your elbows are in line with your shoulders and not opening too far backwards. Pull the shoulders away from the ears to create space for your neck. Stay and breath for five breaths. Inhale lift your chest, let your hands stay holding on to your big toes, exhale folding forward one more time. Stay and breath. Inhale, come all the way up to center. Exhale hands to hips. Inhale, bend your knees and exhale, step back to the front of the mat to '13. Mountain Pose'. Remember to bend your knees before going to '13. Mountain Pose', to protect your knees. Or alternatively if you want to stay with your legs wide, you can transition into other standing posture.

Remember to pull the kneecaps up, engage your standing legs. Do not hyperextend the knees (goes for all four variations).

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 2. Shoulder Warm Up
- 6. Butterfly
- 7. Open Chest
- 11. Sun Salutation A
- 12. Sun Salutation B
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 18. Triangle Pose
- 48. Downward Facing Dog

FAST FORWARD to

- 13. Mountain Pose
- 15. Chair Pose
- 19. Warrior 1
- 20. Warrior 2
- 23. Extended Side Angle Pose
- 46. Headstand
- 60. Seated Forward Fold

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: opens the chest and lungs (especially in C)
- Heart: can be therapeutic for high blood pressure. Stimulates heart
- Digestion: tones the abdominal organs
- Strength: strengthens the legs, ankles, and feet
- Flexibility: stretches the inner and back legs and the spine
- Immune system: boost the immune system, especially when folding your hands back (C)
- Posture: alleviates mild backache and strengthens the spine
- Brain: can be therapeutic for headache, fatigue, and mild depression. Calms the brain and nervous system
- Sleep: calming if done restoratively (A). Choose the simple variation. You can place a block or other form of support under your head, to rest your head and neck on. Do not go too deep into the stretch but try to find a place of calm.

## 23. Extended Side Angle Pose - Utthita Parsvakonasana

Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:

- Headache
- HBP
- Neck problems: look where it's comfortable for your neck, for instance straight ahead instead of looking up or down.
- LBP

**How to PLAY the pose:** From '20. Warrior 2'. Inhale and extend your right forearm down, resting it on your right thigh, Option 1. Make sure that you are not collapsing in your shoulder, keeping them drawn away from the ears. Push downwards with your forearm towards your thigh to create space around your neck. Option 2, place your right hand all the way down to the floor or onto a block on the inside of your right foot close to your calf. Squeeze your shoulder towards your knee and your knee into your shoulder to help lengthen the inner thigh and keep the chest lifted. Pay attention to your bent knee and make sure it is above the ankle in both options mentioned above.

Your left arm is extending above your head close to your ear. Open your chest to the sky. Be careful not to curve your left shoulder forward but rather open up. With the arm above your head, turn your palm so that your little finger is pointing down towards the ground. Energy throughout your fingers. You can look towards your hand if that's ok for your neck. Look down to the ground or look to the side. Hold for about 5 breaths. Inhale, engage your core, lifting up to '20. Warrior 2'. Remember to repeat on both sides.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 3. Seated Side Stretch
- 6. Butterfly
- 11. Sun Salutation A
- 12. Sun Salutation B
- 18. Triangle Pose
- 20. Warrior 2 (right before)
- 22. Wide-Legged Forward Bend
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 64. Seated Wide-Legged Forward Fold
- 76. Reclining Bound Angle Pose

FAST FORWARD to

- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 21. Reverse Warrior 2
- 48. Downward Facing Dog

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: stretches chest and lungs
- Heart: stimulates the heart
- Digestion: aids digestion. This is one of the best poses to stimulate your digestion if things are slow
- Strength: strengthens the legs, knees, ankles, buttocks, and core (particularly obliques). Increases stamina
- Flexibility: stretches the groin, waist, and legs
- Immune system: boosts the immune system by e.g. stimulating the lymphatic system
- Organs and hormones: stimulates abdominal and reproductive organs. Can reduce menstrual discomfort
- Posture: stretches shoulders and spine. Opens the chest and strengthens muscles around the shoulder blades.

## 24. Knee to nose - Phalakasana Variation Knee to Nose

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Wrist-, forearm-, elbow-, and shoulder injuries.
- Rotator cuff, the muscles of the legs, neck, the muscles of the spine, abdominal injuries or surgery, injury of the rib cage, hips.
- Acid Reflux

**How to PLAY the pose:** From '48. Downward Facing Dog', inhale to lift your right leg up and behind you into a three legged dog. Lift your left heel so that you come onto the toes. As you exhale, shift your body forwards until your hips are level with your body and shoulders in line with the hands in a plank position. Bend the right knee, bringing it towards the nose, rounding your spine and bringing your chin into your chest as you do so.

Press firmly into all four corners of the hands to protect your wrists and create space in between your shoulder blades so they do not collapse. Keep your core engaged throughout.

Hold here for one to five breaths. To come out of the pose, push your hips back and swing your right leg back and up behind you, returning to one leg downward facing dog. Option to repeat the posture on the same side or release the right foot and repeat on the left side.

You can also do this pose directly from a plank pose, by lifting and bending the right knee and drawing it towards the nose.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 51. Plank
- 25. Knee to elbows
- 28. 3 legged dog

FAST FORWARD to

- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 62. Low Lunge Pose
- 43. Fallen Triangle

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Digestion: stimulates digestion
- Strength: arms, shoulders, and spine
- Immune: creates an inner fire that helps boost your immune system
- Posture: helps alignment of the body and particularly the spine
- Brain: promotes presence and clarity when practicing mindfully

## 25. Knee to Elbows - Phalakasana Variation Knee to Elbow

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Wrist-, forearm-, elbow-, and shoulder injuries.
- Rotator cuff, the muscles of the legs, neck, the muscles of the spine, abdominal injuries or surgery, injury of the rib cage, hips
- Acid Reflux

**How to PLAY the pose:**

From '48. Downward Facing Dog', inhale to lift your right leg up and behind you into a three legged dog. Lift your left heel so that you come onto the toes. As you exhale, shift your body forwards until your hips are level with your body and shoulders in line with the hands in a plank position. Bend the right knee, bringing it towards the right elbow, trying to tap the outside of the elbow.

Keep your spine straight and gaze slightly forwards. Press firmly into all four corners of the hands to protect your wrists and create space in between your shoulder blades so they do not collapse. Keep your core engaged throughout.

Hold here for one to five breaths. To come out of the pose, push your hips back and swing your right leg back and up behind you, returning to 3 legged dog. Repeat again but this time bring the right knee to the left elbow, crossing the body. Feel free to come back to downward dog in between if needed. Remember to do both sides.

You can also do this pose directly from a plank pose, by lifting and bending the right knee and drawing it towards the elbow.

To make this pose more challenging, lift the knee higher to tap the upper arm instead of the elbow.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 28. 3 legged dog
- 53. Side Plank
- 24. Knee to nose

FAST FORWARD to

- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 28. 3 legged dog
- 63. Pigeon Pose
- 43. Fallen triangle

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Digestion: stimulates digestion
- Strength: arms, shoulders, and spine
- Immune: creates an inner fire that helps boost your immune system
- Posture: helps alignment of the body and particularly the spine
- Brain: promotes presence and clarity when practiced mindfully

## 26. Extended Side Angle Binds - Baddha Utthita Parsvakonasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Injury to shoulders, lower back, spine or neck, hips, knees, or internal organs
- Pregnancy

**How to PLAY the pose:**

Come into '23. Extended Side Angle Pose' with right knee forward. Push the front knee forward until it stacks over the ankle. Bend your left (top) elbow and reach your hand behind your mid back, palm facing outwards. Reach your right (lower) arm under your right thigh, bending the elbow to wrap it around the leg. Reach your hand towards the lower back, trying to grab the opposite hand.

Once binded, draw your top shoulder back to keep your chest open towards the sky. Keep your gaze upwards. Feel free to use a strap if the full bind is not accessible. Or, to go deeper, try to clasp the wrist or lower arms instead. Stay for 5 to 10 breaths. Remember to do both sides.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 23. Extended Side Angle Pose
- 20. Warrior 2

FAST FORWARD to

- 73. Bird of Paradise Pose
- 68. Half Moon
- 62. Low Lunge Pose
- 69. Standing Split

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: opens the rib cage.
- Heart: stimulates the heart, this is a heart opener pose beware of your shoulders rounding forward, keep your chest open.

- Digestion: stimulates digestion.
- Flexibility: lengthens the hamstrings, and opens the groins.
- Immune: boost your stamina and energy. Helps to fight fatigue.
- Organs and hormones: stimulates the abdominal organs.
- Posture: helps to elongate and create awareness in the sides of your torso. Helps your ability to open the hips.

## 27. Wild Thing - Camatkarasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Lower back pain / hyperlordosis
- Injury in your shoulders, back, neck, elbows, or wrist

**How to PLAY the pose:** Start from '28. 3 legged dog'. Bend the knee of the floating (right) leg and open your hips, pivoting the knee to face the sky. Slightly bend the standing (left) leg as you rotate the hips further. Slowly lift your right arm and bring the floating foot behind you onto the floor.

Press the hips up toward the sky, keeping the left knee bent. The left heel can remain lifted or press the foot into the floor. Try to extend your right leg, planting the sole of the foot down as you open the heart and press the chest back behind you. Press all four corners of your left hand into the mat to protect your wrist. Extend your right arm behind you and gaze towards it.

Hold for up to 5 breaths, breathing into the heart center. To come out, turn the hips back down towards the ground, placing your right hand back on the mat. Release the right leg and take a few breaths in downward dog or child's pose before repeating on the other side.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 28. 3 legged dog
- 50. Upward Table or Upward Plank
- 39. Upward Bow (Wheel) Pose

FAST FORWARD to

- 39. Upward Bow (Wheel) Pose
- 28. 3 legged dog

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: opens and stretches the chest which helps boost the performance of the lungs
- Heart: deep heart opener, creates space in the chest area and improves circulation
- Digestion: stimulates digestion
- Strength: challenges your arm and shoulder strength
- Flexibility: opens breast tissues, hip flexors, and quadriceps
- Immune: boosts the immune system through the opening of the chest, enhancing breathing capacity.
- Organs: opens space for the lungs
- Posture: pushes you to focus on the elongation of the spine and the opening of the heart - the back foot helps to understand how you can elongate your spine more, feel free to use this back foot for elongation.
- Brain: promotes presence and cultivates mindfulness. Being upside down also increases the blood flow to the brain, giving it more oxygen.

## 28. 3 legged dog - Tri Pada Adho Mukha Svanasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Wrist sensitivity (or use a block or carpal tunnel syndrome)

- HBP
- Late-term pregnancy
- Arm, shoulder, or back injuries
- Hip flexors/ quadriceps hurting (torn tissues)

**How to PLAY the pose:** From '48. Downward Facing Dog', lift one leg up and behind you, reaching the foot towards the sky. Keep your hips squared and press firmly into both hands. Don't let the floating foot just hang there; either flex or point it to engage the leg muscle. Try to keep the standing foot pressing into the ground, but if this is too challenging, lift the heel.

Ensure your spine stays straight and core is engaged; your gaze should be to your standing leg. Hold for 5 to 10 breaths. Remember to do both sides.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**  
REWIND and find

- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 27. Wild Thing
- 11. Sun Salutations A
- 24. Knee to nose
- 25. Knee to elbow

FAST FORWARD to

- 62. Low Lunge Pose
- 17. Crescent Lunge - High Lunge
- 19. Warrior 1 / 2 / etc
- 53. Side Plank
- 27. Wild Thing
- 24. Knee to nose
- 25. Knee to elbow

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: boosts the performance of the lungs as the diaphragm has to work hard, pushing against gravity. Tip: Press shoulder away from your ears and use your lifted foot to press further back and create length in the sides of your body.
- Heart: this gentle inversion will improve circulation and thus is beneficial the heart function.
- Digestion: stimulates digestion
- Strength: strengthens your upper body, shoulders, and arms.
- Flexibility: opens the hamstrings of the standing leg, as well as the hip flexors of the leg that is in the air. Pay special attention to keeping your hips squared to obtain these benefits, as it is a common mistake to open the hips and get into the groins instead.
- Immune: this pose is energizing for your nervous system and helps to relieve stress as you develop more awareness in the body due to the balancing aspect of the pose.
- Organs: micro compression of the kidneys that acts as a boost for this particular organ, this poses works as well with the bladder meridian, which stimulates your bladder.
- Posture: deepens the awareness of hips opening and helps to create space in the hip flexors which might be very beneficial for your lower back if you have a deep curve in the lumbar spine.
- Brain: boost focus and presence.

## Category 3. BALANCES

See introduction on standing postures for distribution of weight on your foot. It is important to always keep a strong standing leg. Therefore, do not collapse in your arches, or hyperextend the knee (it is better to have a micro bend in the knee than hang on your joint), but engage the quadriceps pulling the kneecaps up and engaging your glutes keeping your hips square. Do not worry if you fall out of balance, then simply bring yourself back up and smile! No judgement. Wiggling is perfectly fine it will just strengthen your stability muscles more. With time you will find stillness and ease in the postures. Balances are great for

confidence and to feel grounded. Remember to always do both legs and not wait too long after engaging in balances before your do counter poses.

Late term pregnancy: because of increased relaxing hormones you might experience weaker ankles, knees and for instance fallen arches, and problems with your balance. If so, find additional support from a chair or wall.

Be mindful if you suffer from vertigo or medical conditions that affect balance. Talk to your doctor before attempting these postures. Find support for instance from a wall.

## 29. Dancer Pose - Natarajasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Back injury: like a slip disc, you should avoid this position completely
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Knee injury
- HBP

**How to PLAY the pose:** Make sure you are sufficiently warmed up in your shoulders and hip flexors. Find your balance on your left leg, take hold of the right foot by bringing your right heel towards your buttocks. Squeeze your buttocks and begin to push your foot into your hand, balancing on the left leg and opening the chest. Your left hand is reaching up and forward, whilst you keep your hips square. You can tilt your upper body forward if you want to challenge your balance, but make sure to tilt from the hip as you reach upwards whilst extending the spine. Exhale to come down. Repeat on the other side. If you're doing a standing sequence, try to avoid waiting too long before you do a counter pose.

Moderation: use a strap to moderate around your shin/ankle, holding the strap with your hand if you cannot reach your foot.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 1. Cat Cow
- 2. Shoulder Warm Up
- 6. Butterfly
- 7. Open Chest
- 12. Sun Salutations B
- 19. Warrior 1
- 20. Warrior 2
- 30. Tree Pose
- 32. Warrior 3
- 37. Bow Pose
- 39. Upward Bow (Wheel) Pose
- 40. Camel Pose
- 53. Half Split / Split
- 62. Low Lunge Pose

Additional info: If you have not stretched enough in your quadriceps and groin before doing this posture, alternatively you can do a brief standing stretch before moving into '29. Dancer Pose'. Bring your heel towards your glutes, standing and balancing on your other leg. Keep your hips square and your knees together. Hold for a few breaths before you open into a '29. Dancer Pose' with the same leg lifted.

FAST FORWARD to

- 14. Standing Forward Fold (counterpose)
- 22. Wide-Legged Forward Bend (counterpose)

Additional info: or all other standing balances or postures.



**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: stretches the chest and diaphragm
- Digestion: stimulates digestion
- Strength: the spine, arms, buttocks, and legs
- Flexibility: stretches the shoulders, thighs, groin, and abdomen
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs: stimulates kidneys. Advanced with a flipped grip on the hand whilst looking up, will also stimulate the thyroid glands in your neck which has hormonal benefits
- Posture: stretches the chest and shoulders and strengthens the back and hips
- Brain: calms the mind and improves focus.

### **30. Tree Pose - Vrksasana**

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- HBP: have your hands in front of your heart, not above your head.

**How to PLAY the pose:** Find your balance on the left leg, place your right foot on your ankle, calf or thigh (not on your knee, as this can injure your knee) and open your right knee out to the side. Encourage your hips to stay square by squeezing your buttocks and engaging the quadriceps of your standing leg, pulling the kneecap up. Relax the shoulders, jaw, face, open the chest, place hands in front of your heart - palms together. Find one point of focus for your eyes. For an extra challenge to your balance lift the arms above your head and look up to them, either with the palms together or apart.

Moderation: place your lifted foot on the ankle or shin rather than the thigh.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 6. Butterfly
- 13. Mountain Pose

FAST FORWARD to

- 13. Mountain Pose
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 17. Crescent Lunge - High Lunge
- 20. Warrior 2
- 22. Wide-Legged Forward Bend

Additional info on FAST FORWARD: other standing balances. '30. Tree Pose', is a great hip opener for other standing postures such as '20. Warrior 2' etc.

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Heart: may have a calming effect.
- Strength: the thighs, calves, ankles, feet, and core
- Flexibility: stretches your inner thighs and groin
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Posture: helps with proper alignment of the spine
- Brain: calms your mind and nervous system. Improves focus and helps you feel grounded.

### **31. Extended Hand to Big Toe Pose - Utthita Hasta Padangustasana A & B**

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Ankle injuries
- Shoulder injury: keep your knee bent if it is too challenging for your shoulder to keep it straight
- Low back injuries: if you're cleared by your doctor to do the position you can adapt by bending your lifted leg.

**How to PLAY the pose:** Find your balance on your left leg. Start bending the knee of the right leg and bring the thigh of your right leg upwards towards your belly. Take hold of your big toe with your right thumb, index and middle fingers. Whilst keeping your hips square and rest the left hand on the left hip. This is a great place to be. If you wish to extend your right leg, try to extend it in front of you all the way. Keep your shoulders straight and avoid the right shoulder leaning forwards, following your extended leg out. Breath. Stay for at least five breaths. Look in front of you.

Option B (on card): Inhale, start moving your leg out wide to the side whilst you balance on the standing leg and open your hip. Look above your left shoulder, down to the ground away from your extended leg. Breath open the hip as much as you can. Let your hip remain level, do not lift the right hip with the leg. Stay for at least five breaths. Inhale to bring the leg back to the front. Exhale release your hand. If you want an extra challenge for your strength: you can try to stay with your leg lifted off the ground for five breaths before you release it down to the floor. Shake out your legs and repeat on the other side.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 2. Shoulder Warm Up
- 6. Butterfly
- 11. Sun Salutations A
- 12. Sun Salutations B
- 14. Standing Forward Fold / 60. Seated Forward Fold / 66. Head-to-Knee Forward Bend
- 18. Triangle Pose (B suggested)
- 20. Warrior 2 (B suggested)
- 22. Wide-Legged Forward Bend / 64. Seated Wide-Legged Forward Fold
- 30. Tree Pose

FAST FORWARD to

- 11. Sun Salutations A
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 34. Cobra
- 48. Downward Facing Dog

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: stretches and strengthens the breathing muscles
- Strength: strengthens the back, arms, legs, and ankles
- Flexibility: stretches the hamstrings and hips
- Posture: strengthens your back muscles, hips, and shoulders. Opens the chest
- Brain: calms the mind and improves focus.

## **32. Warrior 3 - Virabhadrasana 3**

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- HBP
- Back injury: take precautions
- Ankle and knee injury

**How to PLAY the pose:** Find your balance on your left leg. Extend your right leg behind you, either to the ground or hovering it slightly above the ground. Hands in front of your heart. Inhale, start tilting your upper body forward at the same time as your right leg is lifting. Imagine that the upper body and the leg are connected and you are moving as one line. Keep your hips square facing the front of the mat and elongate out through your head to toe. Tilt until you are parallel to the ground if the

hamstrings on your left leg allow it. Relax your face. Encourage the shoulders away from the ears. Pull your belly button in towards your spine. Remember to engage quadriceps and pull your kneecaps up on your standing leg. Remember not to hyperextend your standing leg, a micro bend is great. Flex or point the toes of the right leg behind you to achieve a strong and active leg. Stay wherever you can, with the upper body and right leg in one line. Breathe. If you want an extra challenge, you can take your arms out to the side (aeroplane) or as an elongation of your upper body above your head in front of you. Inhale to come up. Repeat on the other side. Either directly, or after a flow of standing postures.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 1. Cat Cow
- 11. Sun Salutations A
- 12. Sun Salutations B
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 15. Chair Pose
- 19. Warrior 1 / 17. Crescent Lunge - High Lunge
- 20. Warrior 2
- 22. Wide-Legged Forward Bend
- 30. Tree Pose
- 60. Seated Forward Fold / 66. Head-to-Knee Forward Bend
- 68. Half Moon

FAST FORWARD to

- 15. Chair Pose
- 61. Half Split or Split
- 63. Pigeon Pose
- 69. Standing Split

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: stretches and strengthens the breathing muscles
- Digestion: stimulate abdominal organs via the strong engagement of the core muscles
- Strength: ankles, legs, buttocks (one of the best asanas for your glutes), shoulders, back, and core
- Flexibility: hips and hamstrings
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs: stimulates abdominal organs
- Posture: strengthens the back, hips, and shoulders
- Brain: improves concentration and focus.

### 33. Eagle Pose - Garudasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Knee injuries: should avoid this posture or could alternatively take the arm bind.

**How to PLAY the pose:** From your '13. Mountain Pose' take your arms out wide to the side and cross your right arm underneath the left in front of you, placing the back of the left upper arm/elbow into the inside of the elbow of the right arm. Let your right arm wrap around your left forearm. Aim at bringing your lower arms together squeezing them towards each other as you try to reach your palms together. With your arms wrapped like this, keep your shoulders low and bring your elbows and upper arms forward away from your face to open across the shoulder blades.

Moderation for arms: if you don't manage to wrap your hands like the description above, you can instead do the following: after you have brought the right hand beneath the left, place the right hand on the opposite left shoulder and the left arm on the right shoulder and then continue to encourage the elbows forward to open across the shoulder blades, as above.

Legs: Find your balance on your left leg, remember the equal distribution of weight. Lift your right leg up, bending your knee and bring your right thigh towards your belly. Now bend your left standing leg slightly, and guide your right leg across your left thigh. The right leg could rest across the thigh or continue to wrap around the back of the left calf. If you manage a double wrap here, you bring your toes of the right leg behind the calf of the left leg. If this is hurting your knee, or you don't have the flexibility to wrap all the way around that is OK, wrap as much as you manage and breathe. Try to keep your hips square and stable. Stay in the position for at least five to ten breaths. If you want an extra challenge you can hinge forward from your hips with your legs in the same position and start moving your upper body forward into a low flying eagle, leaning with your arms and upper body forward and down towards your legs.

When you have finished here inhale to come up before you exhale to release both arms and legs. Shake out the arms and legs well before you change and repeat on the other side. Remember to relax your jaw and face and breath. This position requires coordination and focus like an eagle.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 2. Shoulder Warm Up
- 9. Thread the Needle
- 11. Sun Salutations A
- 12. Sun Salutations B
- 15. Chair Pose
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 22. Wide-Legged Forward Bend
- 30. Tree Pose
- 76. Reclining Bound Angle Pose
- 67. Seated Twist

FAST FORWARD to

- 13. Mountain Pose
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 15. Chair Pose
- 29. Dancer Pose (or another backbend)
- 30. Tree Pose
- 48. Downward Facing Dog

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: therapeutic for asthma. Stretches the breathing muscles in the back
- Heart: improves circulation
- Digestion: stimulates the abdominal organs, especially if you lean forward
- Strength: core, glutes, and legs (particularly ankles and calves)
- Flexibility: stretches the ankles, calves, thighs, and outer hips
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Posture: stretches and strengthens the spine, can relieve lower backache and sciatica. Releases tension between the shoulder blades/upper back
- Brain: improves concentration, focus, and coordination.

## 4. BACKBENDS (Heart Opener)

We recommend including Cat Cow in the warmup if you are including backbends within your sequence of cards.

After these postures, always stay in a neutral spine with the spine straight for at least three long breaths before you go into a counter pose. If you have picked several backbends, remember to generally do them chronologically, that is one before two, two before three dots. However, in the case of '33. Bridge Pose' and '34. Upward Bow (Wheel) Pose' these two can be done in a sequence after each other, see explanation in 'How to PLAY the pose'. Stay in a neutral spine in between backbends as well, saving the counterpose until the end of your backbend series (if doing multiple). Counter poses to neutralize after backbends are, forward folds, such as seated- 52, 56, 58 and 67, 68 or twits 59 or 65 and 16. You could also do standing

forward folds such as 14 or 22.

If you have a back injury, consult your doctor for the appropriate adaptation for your individual case or refrain from doing them at all.

To simplify the cards, we have suggested one counter pose, but you are free to exchange this counter pose with other ones listed under FAST FORWARD to - for that specific pose.

Backbends are called heart openers for a reason: opening the chest and heart space can be exposing for us. This action of opening the heart space is also connected to the nervous system and brain. It can release emotional tension which can be liberating. However, if you struggle with suppressed emotions or trauma, it can also have the opposite effect and be emotionally difficult. If this is your situation and it feels overwhelming to go into deep backbends, start with the more gentle heart openers and feel your way.

### 34. Cobra - Bhujangasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Carpal tunnel syndrome: do a low Cobra where you are not putting as much weight onto your wrists, or you could even lift your hands off the ground
- Back pain: Take a low Cobra and do not go deep into the backbend, make sure to use your back muscles to lift
- Headache
- Pregnancy: avoid

**How to PLAY the pose:** With the hands underneath your shoulders, squeeze your buttocks and inhale to lift your chest. Encourage your shoulders away from the ears, and your elbows in towards your body. Squeeze the shoulder blades together and down the back, to bring your chest forward and elongate your lumbar spine. Look up, extending your neck (strong neck), to stretch your throat if this is OK for your neck, or look straight ahead, letting the neck be a continuation of the spine. Big toes together, legs and feet pressing into the ground.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 1. Cat cow
- 7. Open Chest
- 36. Locust Pose

FAST FORWARD to

- Backbends
- 14. Standing Forward Fold / 60. Seated Forward Fold
- 48. Downward Facing Dog / 59. Child's Pose

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: opens the chest. Can be therapeutic for asthma
- Digestion: stimulates abdominal organs
- Strength: strengthens the back (and muscles around the spine), buttocks, arms, and wrists
- Flexibility: improves the flexibility of the spine opens the chest, stretches the abdomen
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs: stimulates the thyroid gland and the abdominal organs including the liver and kidneys
- Posture: opens the chest and strengthens the back. May help relieve sciatica
- Brain: may help alleviate stress and fatigue.

### 35. Upward Facing Dog - Urdhva Mukha Svanasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Carpal tunnel syndrome or wrist injury: adapt by doing it on your fists or change this card with '34. Cobra'
- Shoulder injury, modify with '34. Cobra'

- Back pain: be very mindful of how you do this posture. Do not crunch your lower back but try to elongate it and open into your thoracic spine (you may want to change this card with '34. Cobra').
- Headache
- Pregnancy
- Neck injury: do not look up, but let your neck be an extension of the spine

**How to PLAY the pose:** Hands are underneath your shoulders, shoulder width apart. Keep pushing the ground away from you with your arms as you engage the buttocks and the legs are strong. Squeeze your shoulder blades together sending them down the back to open the chest forward. As you push the ground away from you, begin to lift the thighs away from the ground so that you are pressing into the tops of the feet and the hands. Look up, extending your neck (strong neck), to stretch your throat if this is OK for your neck, or look straight ahead.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 1. Cat Cow
- 7. Open Chest
- 34. Cobra
- 38. Bridge Pose

FAST FORWARD to

- Backbends
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 48. Downward Facing Dog / 59. Child's Pose
- 60. Seated Forward Fold

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: can be therapeutic for asthma. Stretches chest and lungs
- Digestion: stimulates abdominal organs
- Strength: strengthens the back (and muscles around the spine), buttocks, legs (thighs in particular), arms, and wrists
- Flexibility: improves the flexibility of the spine and stretches the front body (hip flexors and abdomen)
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs: stimulates the thyroid gland, and abdominal organs including the liver and kidneys
- Posture: improves posture. Opens the chest and strengthens muscles around the shoulder blades and back. May help relieve sciatica.
- Brain: may help alleviate mild depression and fatigue. Energizes body and mind. (May also be emotionally difficult, see the introduction to backbends.)

## 36. Locust Pose - Salabhasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Headache
- Serious back injury
- Neck injury: look down and let your neck be an elongation of your spine.
- HBP
- Pregnancy: avoid

**How to PLAY the pose:** From laying on your belly, forehead resting on the mat, begin to squeeze your buttocks. Inhale to lift both chest and legs off the ground. Squeeze your shoulder blades together, to direct your chest forward. Hands can be either by the sides elongating towards your toes with the palms facing down, or interlacing your fingers behind your back and lifting away from the glutes. Repeat as many times as you wish.

If you want to do several after each other or/and have drawn '32 Bow Pose' as well, wait to take your counterpose (51. Child's Pose) until you have finished your backbend sequence. Between several backbends on your belly, rest on your belly with a

neutral spine (optional here to wiggle your buttocks from side to side to release tension in your lower back) in between your repetitions and after you have finished your sequence before you do your counter pose.

Sleep. For a more restorative variation, let your feet stay on the ground, instead of lifting both the upper body and the legs.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 1. Cat Cow
- 7. Open Chest
- 19. Warrior 1 / 17. Crescent Lunge - High Lunge
- 34. Cobra
- 38. Bridge Pose

FAST FORWARD to

- 59. Child's Pose / 14. Standing Forward Fold / 60. Seated Forward Fold
- 37. Bow Pose
- 40. Camel Pose
- 44. Shoulder Stand

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: stretches the chest and breathing muscles
- Digestion: stimulates abdominal organs. May aid in case of flatulence, constipation, and indigestion
- Strength: strengthens the muscles around the spine and back, neck, buttocks, arms, and legs
- Flexibility: stretches the shoulders, belly, hip flexors, and thighs
- Immune system: boost the immune system e.g. stimulates the vagus nerve which may be stress-reducing and immune strengthening
- Organs: stimulates abdominal organs and the thyroid gland
- Posture: improves posture and may help relieve lower back pain. Helps correct forward curving shoulders by stretching shoulders and chest and strengthening muscles between the shoulder blades
- Brain: can help alleviate stress and fatigue
- Sleep: may improve sleep. Restorative variation, let your feet stay on the ground, instead of lifting both the upper body and the legs.

## 37. Bow Pose - Dhanurasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- HBP
- Migraine
- LBP
- Lower-back pain: do not go too deep into the posture, listen to your body. (You may want to exchange this card with '36. Locust Pose')
- Neck injury: Avoid straining your neck by looking up too much, let your neck be an elongation of your spine
- Knee injury: consider doing an active variation (not holding your feet)
- Pregnancy: avoid

**How to PLAY the pose:** From laying on your belly. Bend your knees, drawing the heels towards the glutes. Take hold of your feet, squeeze your buttocks to protect your lumbar spine. Push your legs actively backward, pressing the tops of the feet into the hands in order to lift your chest like stringing a bow. Squeeze your shoulder blades together to open the chest, the neck is an elongation of the spine. If you cannot reach your feet, you can take the posture without the bind and instead keep reaching the arms back in the direction of the feet whilst pressing the heels towards you.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 1. Cat Cow
- 2. Shoulder Warm Up
- 7. Open Chest
- 12. Sun Salutation B
- 19. Warrior 1 / 17. Crescent Lunge - High Lunge
- 34. Cobra
- 35. Upward Facing Dog
- **36. Locust Pose**
- 38. Bridge Pose
- 62. Low Lunge Pose

FAST FORWARD to

- 35. Upward Facing Dog
- 39. Upward Bow (Wheel) Pose
- 40. Camel Pose
- **59. Child's Pose** / 60. Seated Forward Fold / 14. Standing Forward Fold

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: stretches chest and breathing muscles
- Digestion: aids digestion and may help with mild constipation and flatulence
- Strength: strengthens the back muscles, shoulders, shoulder blades, buttocks, and legs (particularly hamstrings and knees)
- Flexibility: stretches the entire front of the body: ankles, thighs, groin/deep hip flexors (psoas), abdomen, chest, shoulders, and throat
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs and hormones: stimulates the organs of the abdomen and neck
- Posture: strengthens the back muscles and opens the shoulders and chest. This is one of the best postures to correct forward hunching shoulders
- Brain: may alleviate mild depression and fatigue. Energizes body and mind. (May also be emotionally difficult, see introduction backbends).

## 38. Bridge Pose - Setu Bandha Sarvangasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Back, neck, or shoulder injury: avoid this pose unless your doctor has cleared you, and you know how to adapt and modify it for your needs.

**How to PLAY the pose:** Start by lying on your back and bend your knees and bring the soles of your feet to the mat with your feet hip-distance apart. Toes pointing forward and heels close to buttocks. Engage your pelvic floor muscles in and up, drawing your belly button towards the spine. Tilt the pelvis and push your lower back down into the mat before starting to lift your hips off the floor. Rolling up vertebrae by vertebrae through the spine, into your '33 Bridge Pose'. Squeeze your buttocks to protect your lumbar spine. Roll up onto your shoulders if you want to and interlace your fingers underneath the back to open the chest more. Remember to keep your knees above your ankles (and not let them fall out to the sides). Stay here and breath. Come down on an exhale, slowly bringing the spine down again, vertebrae by vertebrae.

Sleep. When used for sleeping you can do a restorative variation by using props. For example, with a block underneath your hips (sacrum resting on the block), the flat part where your hips meets your buttocks (not the lumbar spine). And rest down on the block with your hips, without letting your knees fall out to the sides. If you do not have a block you can use a pillow, a bolster or a book. Options for your arms here: you can have your arms out wide or cactus the arms, straight out from your shoulders with your palms facing upwards.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 1. Cat Cow



- 7. Open Chest

FAST FORWARD to

- **78. Knees to Chest** (right after, unless you have drawn the card wheel pose, then do it after you are finished with wheel pose)
- 39. Upward Bow (Wheel) Pose
- 44. Shoulder Stand

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: opens the chest. Strengthens, and stretches the breathing muscles. Can be therapeutic for asthma
- Heart: Can be therapeutic for high blood pressure. However, if you have a heart condition consult with your doctor first
- Digestion: improves
- Strength: buttocks, thighs, ankles, back, and shoulders
- Flexibility: stretches the chest
- Immune system: boosts the immune system e.g. vagus nerve, lymphatic system
- Organs: stimulates abdominal organs, including the bladder, liver and kidney, and the thyroid gland. Helps relieve the symptoms of menopause and menstrual discomfort when done in a supported way
- Posture: opens the chest and corrects forward curving shoulders. Stretches and strengthens the spine. May reduce backache and be therapeutic for osteoporosis
- Brain: Calms the brain and nervous system. Helps alleviate stress, anxiety, fatigue, and mild depression. May reduce headaches and sinusitis
- Sleep: May help with insomnia. When used for sleeping you can do a restorative variation by using props. For example, with a block underneath your hips (sacrum resting on the block), the flat part where your hips meet your buttocks (not the lumbar spine). And rest down on the block with your hips, without letting your knees fall out to the sides. If you do not have a block you can use a pillow, a bolster or a book. Options for your arms here: you can have your arms out wide or cactus the arms, straight out from your shoulders with your palms facing upwards.

### 39. Upward Bow (Wheel) Pose - Urdhva Dhanurasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Back injury
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Headache
- Heart problems
- HBP
- LBP
- Constipation or diarrhea

**How to PLAY the pose:** After your '33. Bridge Pose', laying on your back with your feet hip distance apart and knees above ankles. Place your hands with the thumbs next to your ears, fingertips facing towards your shoulders. Make sure your elbows are above your wrists, shoulder distance apart. Inhale lift your hips into your bridge, squeezing your glutes, shoulders still on the ground. From here press through your hands and feet to lift your shoulders off the ground and find your Wheel pose. Work on moving your chest in the direction of your arms. Remember to always squeeze your buttocks and engage your core to protect your lumbar spine. Make sure your knees are not pointing outwards to the sides, but remain parallel. Your head can drop back if you don't feel any discomfort in the neck. Stay and breath. Work on opening in the chest and shoulders and working towards extending your arms straight. However, there should be no pain in your lower back and the opening in this backbend should mainly happen in your thoracic spine. Exhale to come down. Take it slowly, keeping your chin towards your chest as you come down. Repeat as many times as you want. Remember to stay in a neutral spine, simply laying on the mat, before you do your counter poses. Make sure you have warmed up your spine, opened the chest and hip flexors sufficiently before you enter this position. We recommend doing at least a couple of repetitions of '33. Bridge Pose' right before you enter in this position.

Note on breathing: usually, you inhale to come up. For some, however, it might help to exhale when you lift up if you have very tense breathing muscles in your rib cage. A deep inhalation therefore can restrict the mobility of your spine.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 1. Cat Cow
- 3. Seated Side Stretch
- 4. Seated Gentle Twist
- 5. Wrist Warm Up
- 7. Open Chest
- 8. Neck
- 12. Sun Salutation B
- 19. Warrior 1 / 17. Crescent Lunge - High Lunge
- 34. Cobra
- 35. Upward Facing Dog
- **38. Bridge Pose**
- 65. Boat Pose

FAST FORWARD to

- 16. Twisted Chair Pose
- 59. Child's Pose
- 60. Seated Forward Fold
- 64. Seated Wide-Legged Forward Fold
- 66. Head-to-Knee Forward Bend
- 67. Seated Twist
- 75. Supine Twist
- 77. Happy Baby
- **78. Knees to Chest** (wait until you are finished with all your wheels before doing this one)

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: expands the chest and lungs. It may be therapeutic for asthma
- Digestion: stimulates abdominal organs. If you are struggling with constipation make sure you are doing some other asanas first, to help you go to the bathroom before. For instance, '44. Shoulder Stand' or '45. Plow Pose'
- Strength: strengthens glutes, hamstrings, back muscles, shoulders, and arms
- Flexibility: stretches hip flexors, muscles of the abdomen, and the wrists. Opens the shoulders and chest
- Organs: stimulates the thyroid, pineal, and pituitary glands. Stimulates abdominal organs including, the kidney, pancreas, liver, and reproductive organs. Can be beneficial for fertility
- Posture: Expands chest, lungs, and shoulders. Strengthens the spine, can be therapeutic for back pain and osteoporosis
- Brain: can relieve stress, anxiety, and mild depression. Helps boost energy levels. (May also be emotionally difficult, see introduction backbends).

## 40. Camel Pose - Ustrasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- HBP
- LBP
- Pregnancy
- Migraine
- Back injury (particularly lower back)
- Neck injury

**How to PLAY the pose:** Kneeling on your shins, legs hip distance apart and with your hips elevates away from the heels.. Tuck your toes under. Squeeze your buttocks. Place your hands above your buttocks, where your buttocks meet the spine, fingers pointing down thumbs facing outwards. Squeeze the elbows in. Inhale to lift and extend your spine. Exhale squeeze your

shoulder blades and open your chest as you let your hips press forward and breath here. You can either let go of your neck, fully backwards, relax, or keep your chin towards your chest. Do not hold your head with a tense neck.

Variation 1. Instead of keeping the hands on the back, place your hands on your heels with the toes tucked under. Keep rolling your shoulders back towards the center of your back.

Variation 2. With the front of the wrists pointing down towards the ground and with the feet now flat, tops of the feet on the ground. Place the arms towards the soles of the feet for a deeper variation of this pose.

For all Choose the variation that suits you. Make sure you do not have any pain in your lumbar spine. It is perfectly ok not to go deep. Inhale to come up, engaging your core. Exhale sit down on your heels, with a neutral spine stay here for a moment before doing your counter pose.

You can adapt with a blanket under your knees if you experience any pain in the knees when you do this pose.

#### **Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 1. Cat Cow
- 7. Open Chest
- 8. Neck
- 12. Sun Salutations B
- 19. Warrior 1 / 17. Crescent Lunge - High Lunge
- 34. Cobra
- 35. Upward Facing Dog
- 36. Locust Pose
- 37. Bow Pose
- 65. Boat Pose

FAST FORWARD to

- 37. Bow Pose
- 39. Upward Bow (Wheel) Pose
- 44. Shoulder Stand
- 59. Child's Pose / 60. Seated Forward Fold

#### **The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: opens the chest and shoulders
- Digestion: improves digestion
- Strengthens the back muscles, buttocks, glutes, triceps, thighs, and knees
- Flexibility: stretches the entire front of the body, abdomen, chest, and throat. Also stretches the ankles, thighs, and groin (deep hip flexors)
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs: stimulates the abdominal organs including the reproductive organs, and the thyroid gland in the neck
- Posture: opens the chest and shoulders (corrects forward curving shoulders). Strengthens the back and hips
- Brain: can reduce stress and anxiety. (May also be emotionally difficult, see introduction backbends).

## **41. Fish Pose - Matsyasana**

Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:

- HBP
- LBP
- Migraine
- Neck- or back injury

**How to PLAY the pose:** Place your hands with fingers widespread and thumbs together palms facing down, underneath your buttocks. Keep your elbows in line with your wrists and shoulders. Push the elbows and forearms down into the ground to lift your chest away from the arms. Legs are relaxed on the ground. Relax your neck and if it feels comfortable allow the head to move back, gently place the crown of the head on the ground. Breathe here and notice how much air you can get into your lungs in this position, when you are opening your chest like this.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 1. Cat Cow
- 7. Open Chest
- 8. Neck
- 36. Locust Pose
- 44. Shoulder Stand / 45. Plow Pose

FAST FORWARD to

- 38. Bridge Pose
- 40. Camel Pose
- 75. Supine Twist
- **78. Knees to Chest**

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: stretches the muscles (intercostals) between the ribs, and increases lung capacity. It may be therapeutic for asthma
- Digestion: stimulates digestion, may relieve mild constipation
- Strength: strengthens the muscles of the back and the neck
- Flexibility: stretches the deep hip flexors (psoas), the belly, and the front of the neck
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs: stimulates the abdominal organs and the glands of the throat and head (thyroid, parathyroid, pineal, and pituitary)
- Posture: helps correct rounded shoulders. Improves spinal flexibility and strength
- Brain: calms the mind and nervous system, and may help relieve anxiety and stress.

## 42. Pyramid Pose - Parsvottanasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Hyperextension in the knee (or micro bend your knee)
- HBP or LBP
- Ankle, hip, or knee injury
- Pain in the hamstrings
- Hips not leveled (one leg longer than the other, adjust as needed by placing something under your foot to have your hips squared)

**How to PLAY the pose:** From '13. Mountain Pose' step your right foot back like you are coming into Warrior 1; front toes facing forwards, back toes at a 45 degree angle (pointing to the top right corner of your mat). Keep both hips facing forwards and both heels firmly on the ground. Take time to adjust the position of your legs. If your heel is lifting, bring it closer towards you. If your hips turn out to the side, bring your feet further apart, creating a wider stance.

With your hands on your hips, slowly fold forward from the hip joint. Keep your spine straight as you come down, bringing your chest towards the front leg. Focus on keeping the hips squared and back straight rather than how deep you fold. Once you reach your maximum, relax your head, allowing your forehead to come towards your shin.

Your hands can come to the floor or the shin. You can also use blocks to place your hands on. Place blocks either side of the front foot at the level you require. The back leg should stay straight but you can microbend the front knee if needed. Hold the posture for 5 to 10 breaths

To come out, bring your hands to your hips and lift your upper body with your core engaged. Repeat on the other side.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 13. Mountain Pose
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 69. Standing Split
- 17. Crescent Lunge - High Lunge
- 62. Low Lunge Pose

FAST FORWARD to

- 32. Warrior 3
- 69. Standing Split
- 72. Handstand
- 13. Mountain pose

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Heart: as you move deeper into this pose, keeping the hips squared, you move towards an inversion - which again benefits your heart as it stimulates your blood flow.
- Immune: helps to clear your sinuses and allows new blood to flow to your brain
- Organs: stimulate your abdominal organs, which in turn helps with your digestion.
- Posture: deepens the awareness around the hips, elongates the hamstrings and spine as well as reinforces them. Micro bending the knee (front) is recommended.
- Brain: has a calming effect on the mind.
- Sleep: take a few breaths in this pose and feel how the whole backside of your body lengthens and you come closer to you, which can create a feeling of security. Depending on the person it can help you to cool down.

## **43. Fallen Triangle - Patita Tarasana**

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Wrist, shoulder, hip, arms, neck, lower back, or spine injuries
- Sciatica

**How to PLAY the pose:** From a plank pose, lift and bend your right knee, drawing it forwards like you are coming into a knee to nose or knee to elbow pose. Instead of tapping the knee, extend the leg out to the left side, placing the outer side of the foot on the ground. Lift your left arm up and roll the shoulder back to open the chest. Press the hips up and gaze up towards your top arm.

Your supporting hand is under your shoulder and your core should remain strong and engaged to prevent your hips from dropping. The edges of the feet are your support in this pose. Hold for up to five breaths and then come out first by releasing the hand to the floor and then stepping the right leg back to plank. Either come straight into the other side or rest in Child's pose for 5 breaths.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 50. Upward Table or Upward Plank
- 24. Knee to Nose
- 25. Knee to Elbows
- 53. Side Plank

- 51. Plank pose

FAST FORWARD to

- 50. Upward Table or Upward Plank
- 24. Knee to Nose
- 25. Knee to Elbows
- 53. Side Plank
- 63. Pigeon Pose

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: can create more space to breathe if the option of lifting the hand and reaching up towards the sky is taken.
- Digestion: stimulates digestion
- Strength: strong activation in the arms, shoulders, and in deep core muscles.
- Flexibility: gives a deep stretch of the hips, hamstrings, and IT band
- Immune: creates inner fire.
- Organs and hormones: gentle twist that will boost your digestion and abdominal organs.
- Posture: strengthens and lengthens the spine as well as opens the hips and chest.

## Category 5. INVERSIONS

Inversions stimulate the lymphatic system, the abdominal organs and nervous system, thereby boosting the immune system. They can be preventative for cold and relieve symptoms of sinusitis and bronchitis because of increased blood flow to the head and the way gravity works with your lungs during inversions.

Many will say that you should not do inversions when you are menstruating. There is no medical/scientific reason for this. It is a myth that for some reason is stuck in the yoga community. However, if you struggle with pain, bloating or severe issues related to your menstruation, as always, listen to your body and make adaptations according to what feels ok. Be aware that some might have less control over the core muscles, so in your full inversions keep this in mind.

### 44. Shoulder Stand - Sarvangasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Diarrhea: avoid, this posture strongly stimulates digestion
- Headache
- Neck injury (avoid), neck pain (avoid), or tech neck (adapt with a blanket to get your shoulders higher than your head)
- Pregnancy
- Disc injury
- HBP

**How to PLAY the pose:** Laying on your back. Relax your neck and make sure your neck has two fingers distance away from the mat throughout this position. It is important that you do not turn your head to either side during the position and that your neck stays relaxed. Whilst looking straight up, lift your legs ninety degrees up and bend your knees. Engage your core and begin to lift the hips, walk your hands (and arms) up your lower back to help lift your hips up towards the sky. Make sure your elbows are in line with your shoulders. Use your hands, with your thumbs facing outwards, to support your back and help you lift yourself as high up onto your shoulders as you can. Keep walking your hands further down your back as you press into the elbows and shoulders. In the position relax your feet and notice how the blood is flowing down from your feet to your brain. See if you can notice a tingling sensation in your feet. Stay here for some long breaths, before you go down. As you're coming down, go slowly vertebrae by vertebrae, helping with your hands and core muscles.

Option 1. You can stay lower down in this position and not go as vertical. If you're doing this, stay with your elbows and upper arms on the ground at a ninety degrees angle with your hands on the back and support your hips from there.

Option 2. If you have neck problems you could take card '69. Feet Up the Wall'.

Sleep. You can choose the adapted variations if you wish. You can also build under your shoulders with blankets or pillows so there is not such a deep stretch in your neck as you lift the legs, but ensure your head is resting on the ground and there is space under the neck.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 2. Shoulder Warm Up
- 8. Neck
- 9. Thread the Needle
- 38. Bridge Pose
- 45. Plow Pose

FAST FORWARD to

- **41. Fish Pose**
- 45. Plow Pose
- 75. Supine Twist
- 78. Knees to Chest

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: can be therapeutic for asthma. The inverted position with a compression in the chest strengthens and stretches the breathing muscles in the back that are often tight and stretches the diaphragm too
- Digestion: stimulates the digestive system. This is one of the most effective positions to help you go to the bathroom, therefore it can be therapeutic for constipation
- Strength: Tones the legs, buttocks, and core. Strengthens the neck, upper back, and shoulders
- Flexibility: stretches the shoulders and neck
- Immune system: boost immune system e.g increases lymphatic flow
- Organs: stimulates the thyroid and prostate glands and abdominal organs including the liver, kidneys, and bladder. Stimulates reproductive organs. Helps relieve symptoms of menopause
- Posture: reduces tension in the neck and shoulders. Helps with healthy alignment and strengthens the core
- Brain: Calms the brain and nervous system. Can help relieve stress, and mild depression, and reduce fatigue. Can relieve headache and symptoms of sinusitis
- Sleep: can help battle insomnia. Option to build up under your shoulders with blankets or pillows so there is not such a deep stretch in your neck as you lift the legs, but ensure your head is resting on the ground and there is space under the neck.

## 45. Plow Pose - Halasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Diarrhea
- Neck injury
- Asthma (Compresses the chest, take precautions. But can also strengthen and be beneficial over time. Consult your doctor before practicing this position)
- HBP
- Pregnancy

**How to PLAY the pose:** See initial description (card '37. Shoulder Stand'). When you are in '37. Shoulder Stand' begin to lower your legs toward the ground behind your head, with the legs straight and active. Get your back as straight as possible, lifting the coccyx into the sky. You can release your arms here and interlace your fingers behind your back. Option 1. Flex your toes and have them on the ground. Option 2. Use a block underneath the feet if they do not reach the ground. To come down, bring your arms up to support your back as you bring the legs back over the head. If you feel flexible enough, you could bend your knees and place them on the forehead. If you do not want to do '37. Shoulder Stand' first you can extend your legs directly out into '38. Plow Pose' (see initial description before you lift your legs up of '37. Shoulder Stand', and then instead extend your legs down).

Adaptation. If you get neck pain in this position or find it hard to fully extend the legs into the posture. You can place a blanket or towel under your shoulders, so that your head is lower than your shoulders and your neck is relaxed down. You can also keep your hands on the back for more support.

Sleep. You can choose, if you wish, the adapted variations. Where you build up with blankets/pillows under your shoulders, for a not so deep stretch in your neck for sleep.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 2. Shoulder Warm Up
- 8. Neck
- 9. Thread the Needle
- 14. Standing Forward Fold / 60. Seated Forward Fold
- 38. Bridge Pose
- 44. Shoulder Stand

FAST FORWARD to

- 41. Fish Pose
- 44. Shoulder Stand
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 60. Seated Forward Fold
- 75. Supine Twist
- 78. Knees to Chest

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: can be therapeutic for asthma
- Digestion: stimulates the abdominal organs. Beneficial for diabetic people, and can increase weight loss when practiced over time
- Strength: tones the legs, buttocks, and core. Strengthens neck, upper back, and shoulders
- Flexibility: stretches the back of the legs, shoulders, and spine
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs: stimulates the abdominal organs (including liver, kidney, and pancreas), and the glands (thyroid, pineal, and pituitary)
- Posture: therapeutic for backache. Stretches the shoulders and spine
- Brain: reduces stress and fatigue. Therapeutic for headache and sinusitis. Calms the brain.
- Sleep: can help battle insomnia. Option to build up under your shoulders with blankets or pillows so there is not such a deep stretch in your neck as you lift the legs, but ensure your head is resting on the ground and there is space under the neck.

## **46. Headstand - Sirsasana**

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Back injury
- Headache
- Neck injury, consult your doctor and avoid if you are unsure.
- Heart conditions
- HBP
- LBP
- Pregnancy



- Glaucoma/eye disorders

**How to PLAY the pose:** Start seated on your heels with your buttocks, feet, and knees together. Place your elbows down on the ground in front of you, quite close to your knees, and take hold of your elbows from the inside. Make sure your elbows are kept here in this position without moving. Open the forearms to create a triangle and interlace your fingers to create a nest with your hands. This must stay firmly on the ground. Make sure that the interlaced fingers (the nest) are strong and not wobbly to create a firm foundation with your hands and arms for your head to rest into. Now place the back of your head into that nest and the crown of the head on the floor. Cupping the back of the head strongly, tuck your toes under and begin to lift your buttocks up towards the ceiling and start to walk your feet in towards your face to feel your spine lengthening and hips lifting.

Push the ground away from you and push evenly through your shoulders, forearms and hands into the mat. Aim to press evenly through all parts of your arms onto the mat with equal pressure, this is the base for your headstand so it must be strong. You should push so much that ideally, you should be able to slide a piece of paper underneath your head here, but don't worry if this is not happening this is what we are imagining for ourselves to understand how much we should actually be working with our arms and shoulders in this position. Engage your core and from here you can pull your thigh towards your belly and one heel towards your buttocks. If this feels OK, you can also lift the other leg in the same way creating a tuck position with the legs. If you feel stable here, with your coccyx lifted up to the ceiling, you could try to extend one leg at a time or both at the same time up into a straight Headstand. See if you can find a straight line engaging your core and avoid swaying your back. Think about elongating your spine, engaging your buttocks, pointing your toes and squeezing your legs firmly together. Remember to breathe.

Come down whenever you want to and whenever you feel you need to. Make sure to try and come out slowly, come down the same way you went up, one leg at a time. Try to work on finding stability and to enter and exit slowly, with control and avoid jumping into or out of the pose. The wall is your friend and it's great to practice with that in the beginning so you have support if you were to fall. If you're practicing in the middle of the room and you were to fall, make sure that you immediately look towards your belly bringing your chin towards your chest so that you protect your neck when you are rolling onto your back. In this way, your fall should be pretty safe as you are rolling with a curved spine and protecting your neck. Rest in '51. Child's Pose' to center yourself for some time before you move on with your practice again. Remember to relax your jaw, have faith and remember to breathe steadily and deeply. Many of the benefits from inversions like Headstand, come from us breathing. If we manage to breathe deeply and steadily, we also give the inner organs a extra massage.

If you are a more advanced practitioner, you can play with different ways of entering and exiting, such as floating up with straight legs and play with different variations (e.g. eagle legs, middle split).

If you have a neck injury make sure you pay attention to the precautions and avoid doing your Headstand if you have any issues that cause pain. Always consult a medical professional.

#### **Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 1. Cat Cow
- 2. Shoulder Warm Up
- 8. Neck
- 10. Core
- 11. Sun Salutations A
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 36. Locust Pose
- 44. Shoulder Stand
- 48. Downward Facing Dog

FAST FORWARD to

- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 59. Child's Pose

#### **The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: can be therapeutic for asthma. Strengthens and stretches the intercostal breathing muscles and diaphragm
- Digestion: improves the function of the digestive system
- Strength: strengthens the arms, shoulders, neck, spine, core, and legs
- Immune system: boosts the immune system

- Organs: tones the abdominal organs, including the liver, kidneys, and bladder, and stimulates the reproductive organs. Therapeutic for diabetics. Helps relieve the symptoms of menopause and helps infertility. Stimulates the pituitary, prostate, and pineal glands
- Posture: improves alignment. Strengthens spine, neck, shoulders, and core
- Brain: calms the brain and nervous system and helps relieve stress and mild depression. Increases focus. Can relieve headache, migraine, and symptoms of sinusitis
- Sleep: can be therapeutic for insomnia.

## 47. The Clown or Tripod Headstand - Sirsasana 2

Take precautions (or skip) **PLAYING** if you have:

- Back injury
- Headache
- Shoulder injury
- Wrist injury
- Neck injury
- Heart conditions
- HBP
- LBP
- Pregnancy
- Glaucoma/eye disorders

**How to PLAY the pose:** Start by sitting on your heels, with your knees together. Place your hands in front of you on the ground, in front of your knees, close to your body and with your fingers widespread, hands shoulder width apart. From here place the crown of your head (the top of your head) on the ground in front of you, creating a triangle with your head and your two hands. (The triangle should be equal distances and the crown of the head becomes the top of the triangle). Make sure your elbows are now above your wrists and not falling out to the side or collapsing inwards. With your arms strong, start pushing the ground away from you. Shoulders away from your ears, elongate your neck. From here tuck your toes under and start lifting your buttocks up towards the ceiling extending your legs. Walk your feet closer to your face and bend your knees, placing one knee at the time on the upper arm, which is the platform that your arms are creating. You can place one knee at a time or maybe both if that feels OK. Try to balance here. If you notice you are unstable, you might want to try and place your knees even closer to your armpits. Try to become compact, yet extend out through your spine and your coccyx up to the sky. Squeeze your heels in towards your buttocks and engage your core pulling the thighs in towards your belly. Try not to collapse into the posture. Breathe for as long as you want and then come down slowly with control, placing each knee back on the arms as support. Rest in '51. Child's Pose' when you're done.

If you want to continue from here and go into a full Tripod Headstand, aim to lift your knees off the upper arms and squeeze your heels and knees together, squeezing the legs tightly and if you feel stable keep lifting the knees up until your legs begin to extend. Breathe. Engage your core and try to find a straight line. Engage your buttocks and squeeze your legs together. Relax your face and your jaw. Pull your ribs in to avoid a banana-back. Work on elongating the spine, core is strong, shoulders are pushing away from the ears and you keep pushing the ground away from you all the time. Remember to breathe. If you wish, you could play with different leg variations here once you're confident. For example, out wide to the side, diamond position, eagle legs or whatever you want to play with. Come down slowly with control whenever you feel ready for it. If you are familiar with your Tripod Headstand from the initial starting position with your hands and head on the ground, you can walk your feet closer to your head and instead of going through the Clown, with the knees resting on the arms, you can go straight up into Tripod Headstand, either with bent or straight legs. No matter which position you choose, make sure to rest in your '51. Child's Pose' for quite some time afterwards to center yourself and feel the benefits of this position. Also to allow blood flow to settle after the blood has been rushing to your head. In '51. Child's Pose', you can keep the arms alongside your body, to release even more tension in your shoulder blades.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 5. Wrist Warm Up
- 2. Shoulder Warm Up
- 8. Neck
- 10. Core
- 11. Sun Salutations A

- 14. Standing Forward Fold

FAST FORWARD to

- 59. Child's Pose

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: may be therapeutic for asthma. Strengthens and stretches the intercostal breathing muscles and diaphragm
- Digestion: stimulates digestion
- Strength: strengthens the arms, wrists, shoulders, neck, legs, core, and spine (and buttocks when you have your legs straight)
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs: tones the abdominal organs, including the liver, kidneys, and bladder, and stimulates the reproductive organs. Therapeutic for diabetics. Helps relieve the symptoms of menopause and helps infertility. Stimulates the pituitary, prostate, and pineal glands
- Posture: strengthens spine, neck, shoulders, and core
- Brain: calms the brain and nervous system and helps relieve stress and mild depression. Increases focus. Can relieve headache, migraine, and symptoms of sinusitis
- Sleep: can help with insomnia.

## 48. Downward Facing Dog - Adho Mukha Svanasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Diarrhea
- HBP
- Headache: you don't have to avoid this posture but listen to your body. It also depends on the source of the headache and what kind of headache you have
- Shoulder injury / prone to dislocation in the shoulders
- Pregnancy: avoid after week 36

**How to PLAY the pose:** Hands are shoulder width apart flat on the mat, feet are parallel and hip distance apart and pointing straight forwards. Press all four corners of the palm into the mat, actively spread your fingers, and dig them into the mat. Push the ground away from you in the shoulders, rotating your elbows slightly forwards imagine that your upper arms are squeezing towards each other, activated and relax your neck. Make sure your spine is straight by finding the right distance between hands and feet. To find the correct distance between legs and arms you can start in a tabletop position, hands underneath shoulders and knees underneath hips and from there tuck your toes under and lift your buttock towards the sky. Tilt your pelvis up so that your coccyx is pointing to the sky. The straight line should continue through from your hands, wrists, elbows and neck so that the whole upper part of your body creates one straight line. Do not hyperextend or curve your back. If you need to bend your knees to help keep length in your spine, do so. If not, you can extend your knees out, engage your quadriceps pulling up the kneecaps, and encourage your heels towards the ground without collapsing in your arches (strong feet). Pull the belly button in towards the spine. If your heels reach the ground, push all three corners of the sole of the feet into the ground, and you should be able to lift your toes slightly if you wish. Imagine that your hands and feet are actively pulling towards a midline. Relax your face.

Adaptation: if you feel pain in your shoulders, try to place your hands a bit wider than shoulder-width apart, and maybe even turn your fingers a little bit out to the sides, instead of facing forwards.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 1. Cat Cow
- 2. Shoulder Warm Up
- 5. Wrist Warm Up
- 11. Sun Salutations A
- 14. Standing Forward Fold

FAST FORWARD to

- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 59. Child's Pose

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: can be therapeutic for asthma. Strengthens the muscles in the chest increasing lung capacity
- Heart: may be therapeutic for high blood pressure
- Digestion: improves digestion and can be therapeutic for constipation
- Strength: strengthens the arms, shoulders, hands, wrists, core, feet, and legs
- Flexibility: stretches the hamstrings, calves, arches, shoulders, and hands
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs: stimulates abdominal organs including the liver and kidney. May help relieve symptoms of menstrual discomfort and menopause (optional to do a restorative variation with head support). Stimulates pituitary and pineal gland (increased blood flow to the brain).
- Posture: Lengthens the spine and improves spinal alignment and flexibility. May relieve back pain and sciatica. Can be therapeutic for flat feet and may help prevent osteoporosis
- Brain: calms the brain and can help alleviate stress and mild depression. Energizes the body, and may alleviate headache, fatigue, and sinusitis
- Sleep: may be therapeutic for insomnia.

## 49. Dolphin - Ardha Pincha Mayurasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Arm, back, or shoulder injury (or inflammation)
- Glaucoma/eye disorders
- HBP
- Pregnancy: avoid after week 36

**How to PLAY the pose:** This position is like '41. Downward Facing Dog', only that your elbows and forearms are on the ground. Elbows are shoulder distance apart and make sure your forearms are inline with your shoulders. Try to extend your chest so that your upper arms and your shoulders become an extension of your spine. Try to aim at creating a straight line from your coccyx to your elbows. To enter into '42. Dolphin' you can enter from Dolphin Plank, plank on your forearms or you can enter from '41. Downward Facing Dog'.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 2. Shoulder Warm Up

FAST FORWARD to

- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 59. Child's Pose
- 71. Forearm Stand

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: can be therapeutic for asthma. Strengthens the muscles in the chest increasing lung capacity
- Heart: can be therapeutic for high blood pressure
- Digestion: improves digestion and can be therapeutic for constipation
- Strength: strengthens the arms, shoulders, core, feet, and legs
- Flexibility: stretches the shoulders, hamstrings, calves, and arches
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs: stimulates abdominal organs including the liver and kidney. May help relieve symptoms of menstrual discomfort and menopause (optional to do a restorative variation with head support). Stimulates pituitary and pineal gland (increased blood flow to the brain)

- Posture: Lengthens the spine and improves spinal alignment and flexibility. May relieve back pain and sciatica. Can be therapeutic for flat feet. May help prevent osteoporosis
- Brain: calms the brain and can help alleviate stress and mild depression. Energizes the body, and may alleviate headache, fatigue, and sinusitis
- Sleep: may be therapeutic for insomnia.

## 6. ARM BALANCES

For all of these postures your wrists need to be well warmed up, '5. Wrist Warm Up'. You can also warm up your wrists additionally in poses such as '1. Cat Cow', tabletop etc. When you include more advanced arm balances it is important that you warm up your wrists also by gradually adding more weight to your wrists through the practice, starting with one dot positions, then two before attempting three dots. For instance: move from '1. Cat Cow, to '44. Plank' / '41. Downward Facing Dog' / '11. Sun Salutation' before two and three dots. Make sure to shakeout your wrists after, and stretch out your shoulder blades with e.g. '9. Thread the Needle' or '22. Wide Legged Forward Bend', with hands interlaced behind back are helpful to release tension after in your shoulders and shoulder blades. It is also beneficial to do any core related poses before arm balances to help you activate core engagement and make it easier for you to manage these postures as the lift is coming from core strength.

Arm balances are a great way to introduce some fun into your practice, learn to laugh at yourself if you fall and come back up to try again without judgement. A great lesson/practice to transfer into life off the mat as well.

After arm balances, '51. Child's Pose' is a good option for a counter pose, with arms alongside the body. Or alternatively you could move through a Sun Salutation. Another good counter pose for all arm balances is a '68. Supine Twist'.

## 50. Upward Table or Upward Plank - Ardha Purvottanasana or Purvottanasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Wrist, elbow, and shoulder injury
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Neck injury: adapt by having your chin toward your chest, or avoid completely depending on your situation
- HBP
- Pregnancy

**How to PLAY the pose:**

Upward Table: start seated on your buttocks and bend your knees placing your feet on the ground hip distance apart. Place your hands behind your buttocks approximately a fist distance away from your buttocks, shoulder width apart, fingers wide and facing towards the buttocks. Inhale lifting your hips up towards the sky, push down through your feet and hands, squeeze your glutes. Your knees should now be above your ankles and your hands underneath your shoulders. Breathe here, open your chest. You can look towards your belly if that feels best for your neck or if it's ok for your neck let your head go all the way back, releasing the head and neck to feel a good stretch in the front of your throat. Breathe here engaging your core and glutes and when you are ready to come down, exhale and slowly release your buttocks to the ground.

Upward plank: Start seated on the ground with your legs extended out and together in front of you. Place your hands behind your buttocks approximately a fist distance away from your hips, shoulder width apart. Spread your fingers wide facing in the direction of the buttocks. Point your toes. As you inhale, push your hands and heels down into the ground and lift your hips up to the sky, squeeze your buttocks and legs together. Open your chest. Try to make your big toes come down to the ground and together. Stay and breath here and try to lift your hips as high as you can if it feels ok for your shoulders. Here you have the same options for your head and neck as you had in upward table. You can let your head go backwards all the way relaxing your neck or you can keep looking towards your belly. Stay and breath, try to stay for at least five breaths before you come back down. Exhale to come down, sit back on your buttocks and release.

Upward plank is a quite challenging position, so if it is too uncomfortable for you, upward table is a great option with similar benefits. If it feels better for your wrists and elbows, there is the option of pointing your fingers away from you instead of towards the hips.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 1. Cat Cow
- 5. Wrist Warm Up
- 7. Open Chest

- 8. Neck
- 11. Sun Salutations A
- 12. Sun Salutations B
- 37. Bow Pose
- 38. Bridge Pose

FAST FORWARD to

- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 60. Seated Forward Fold

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: opens the chest
- Strength: strengthens the arms, hands, shoulders, wrists, core, buttocks, and legs
- Flexibility: stretches the shoulders, chest, and front of the ankles (upward plank)
- Organs: stimulates abdominal organs including the bladder. May improve the function of the adrenal glands and thyroid gland (in the neck). May help relieve menstrual discomfort
- Immune system: boosts. Stimulates the thymus gland (important until late puberty)
- Posture: opens the chest and corrects rounded shoulders.

## 51. Plank Pose - Phalakasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Shoulder, wrist, and elbow injury

**How to PLAY the pose:** Option 1: Traditional plank on your hands and toes. Place your hands underneath your shoulders, fingers widespread. Push the ground away from you and create space between your shoulder blades. Rotate your elbows backwards so that the inside of the elbows points forwards (do not hyperextend your elbows). Press your toes on the ground, hip distance apart and extend the legs strongly. Your body is a stiff plank, your glutes are engaged, trying to create one straight line from the crown of your head all the way out to your heels. Make sure your neck is an elongation of your spine looking down on the mat. Remember to engage your core, pulling your bellybutton into the spine.

Option 2: On the knees. Hands in the same position as the option above and place your knees on the ground, still hip distance apart. Glutes and core muscles engaged, same as above, so that you create a straight line from your knees on the ground through your spine to the crown of your head.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find:

- 1. Cat Cow
- 5. Wrist Warm Up
- 48. Downward Facing Dog

FAST FORWARD to:

- 35. Upward Facing Dog
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 50. Upward Table or Upward Plank
- 52. Plank to Four Limbed Staff Pose
- 53. Side Plank
- 54. Crow Pose (and other arm balances)
- 59. Child's Pose

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Digestion: the core activation stimulates digestion

- Strength: strengthens the arms, hands, wrists, muscles around the shoulder blades and shoulders, upper back, and neck
- Increases strength in the core, buttock, and legs
- Organs: stimulates abdominal organs
- Posture: strengthens the back and spine. Improves posture and may reduce back pain.

## 52. Plank to Four Limbed Staff Pose - Chaturanga Dandasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Pregnancy: if you have the strength it's ok to do the pose but avoid going all the way down to the floor
- Shoulder or elbow injury or any pain (avoid e.g. if you feel a pinching sensation in the front of your shoulder)

**How to PLAY the pose:** From your '44. Plank Pose'. ON an Inhale, move your weight forwards in the direction of your fingertips so your shoulders come forward beyond your fingertips. Exhale bend your elbows and squeeze your upper arms in towards your body so that your elbows do not go out to the sides. Make sure you do not squeeze your elbows underneath your body to help yourself down, that does not strengthen the arms. Elbows are now above the wrists. Stop the movement when your elbows and shoulders are in one line, hovering above the floor. This downward movement is done with a body that is as stiff as a plank. Stay and breath. The movement can also be done by lowering your body all the way to the ground so you are flat on the floor and from there you would move into a '29. Cobra' instead of an '30. Upward Facing Dog' in a sun salutation or in a flow.

Moderation: you can do the position on your knees as well, starting from a plank on your knees (as described above in 44). Make sure you continue to do this moderation until you are strong enough to do the full version without swaying your back.

If you experience any stinging or pain in the shoulder in this pose, it might be that the muscles at the front of the shoulder are too tense. Either skip doing the position, or you can avoid going all the way by broadening your collarbones, moving your sternum slightly forward and taking a higher version by keeping your shoulders above elbow height.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 1. Cat Cow
- 2. Shoulder Warm Up
- 5. Wrist Warm Up
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 51. Plank Pose

FAST FORWARD to

- 34. Cobra
- 35. Upward Facing Dog
- 37. Bow Pose / 40. Camel Pose / 7. Open Chest
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 50. Upward Table or Upward Plank
- 51. Plank Pose
- 55. Eight-Angle Pose
- 57. Side Crow
- 59. Child's Pose

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Digestion: the core activation stimulates digestion
- Strength: strengthens the arms (particularly triceps), hands, shoulders, wrists, neck, legs, and buttocks. Increases core strength
- Organs: stimulates the abdominal organs

- Posture: strengthens the core, back, and spine

### 53. Side Plank - Vasisthasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Wrist, shoulder, and elbow injury
- Carpal tunnel syndrome

**How to PLAY the pose:** from '44. Plank Pose'. Rotate your body so that your weight comes over on only your right hand and the right side of your right foot. Your right hand is still underneath your right shoulder, left shoulder straight above the right, extending the arm towards the sky. Push the ground away from you. Keep your body as straight as possible, engage your glutes, your neck is an elongation of your spine, do not hang on your shoulder or hips. Feet are flexed and legs are strongly active. Stack your feet on top of each other, so left on top of your right. Moderation 1: for extra stability place the left foot on the ground right in front of the right foot (legs straight). Moderation 2: you could drop your right knee onto the mat for more support and keep your left leg long in one line from your shoulder to the sole of the foot. Moderation 3: stay with your right leg on the ground but bend the knee of the left leg and place the foot on the mat in front of you, at hip height, with your foot under the knee, for stability. Still maintaining a straight line through you right leg and your body.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 1. Cat Cow
- 2. Shoulder Warm Up
- 3. Seated Side Stretch
- 5. Wrist Warm Up
- 11. Sun Salutations A
- 12. Sun Salutations B
- 22. Wide-Legged Forward Bend
- **51. Plank Pose**
- 48. Downward Facing Dog

FAST FORWARD to

- 18. Triangle Pose
- 21. Reverse Warrior 2
- 23. Extended Side Angle Pose
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 50. Upward Table or Upward Plank
- 51. Plank Pose
- 59. Child's Pose
- 68. Half Moon
- 72. Handstand

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Digestion: the core activation stimulates digestion
- Strength: strengthens the arms, hands, wrists, muscles around the shoulders blades and shoulders, upper back, and neck. Increases core strength and particularly the obliques. Strengthens inner ankles, thighs, buttocks, and back of the legs
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs: stimulates abdominal organs
- Posture: Strengthens the back muscles and spine. Improves posture and helps to find a neutral alignment of the spine
- Brain: helps focus and improves a sense of balance.



## 54. Crow Pose - Bakasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Wrist, shoulder, and elbow injury
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Pregnancy

**How to PLAY the pose:** Make sure you have warmed up your wrists properly before you start. Seated in Yogi Squat with your heels together and feet out wide to the side, like the first position in ballet, press your buttocks low towards your heels and your knees out wide to the side. Place your hands shoulder width apart, with your fingers spread wide, in front of you on the mat. Fix your gaze at a point in front of you on the mat, not straight down or in between your legs as this will make you fall. From here you have three options to get into a Crow Pose.

Beginner option: Bend your elbows, lean your upper body forward and use the platform that you create with your upper arms to rest your thighs on, or shins if that is easier for you. In the beginning, the thighs can be easier. Have your elbows above your wrists, and lean forwards to engage your core. Squeeze your thighs into the upper arms and play with lifting 1 foot off the ground, squeezing your heels towards your buttocks. You can lift one leg at a time and it's OK to stay here and practice this until you're comfortable with taking flight and trying to lift both legs at the same time, finding your balance on your hands. Bring your big toes together when you fly, if you can. When you're lifting your feet off the ground, imagine sucking your thighs in and up towards your belly and engaging your core strongly by pulling the belly button in towards the spine. You can always have a pillow in front of you if you are worried about a face plant.

Option 2: Full Crow. You are in a yogi squat, hands on the ground in front of your fingers widespread hands shoulder distance apart. Look forward onto the mat. Aim at squeezing the inside of your knees towards the outside of your upper arms. The higher up towards your shoulders/armpits the better. Inhale to lift up. You can start with lifting one leg at a time squeezing both knees in towards the arms. Keep the arms strong so that the elbows are in one line with the wrists and the shoulders and sucking everything up towards the belly, engaging the core and pelvic floor muscles. If both feet are lifted, bring your big toes together and lift your heels high up towards your buttocks. Stay here and breathe. Extra challenge here: we are working towards, with time, extending the elbows and arms. This is challenging so it's perfectly fine that you don't manage this but in order to go in that direction dare to get your weight forward towards your fingertips as you are working on extending your elbows.

Variation (option 3): Crane pose. If full Crow Pose feels comfortable for you, you can try Crane. From Yogi Squat, this time lift up and place your knees inside your armpits as high as possible, so not on the outside this time but inside. From here lift one leg at a time (or both) and lift your feet up with your heels towards your buttocks and take flight squeeze everything in and up, thighs towards the belly, heels towards buttocks and belly towards spine. Try to see if you can rely less and less on leaning on your arms but more on lifting using your core and hip flexors. Here you can also work towards extending your arms into straight arms as described in Crow Pose above.

For all three options: pull your heels actively towards your buttocks. Inhale to lift up, breathing and relaxing your face, Exhale to come down. When you're done remember to shake out your wrists properly. Either with simple shakes, or some circles etc. Option 4: if you have a wrist issue or wrist pain and you still want to try to work on crow strength and crow benefits, you can try to do this baby crow on your elbows and lower arms. In this option, place your lower arms on the ground in front of you, and if you're not flexible enough to sit in a squat you can also sit on your knees here. Elbows and hands are the same distance as your shoulders, press the whole of the lower arm firmly into the ground and from here lift up onto your toes and place your knees into your armpits. Push the ground away from you, engage your core and see if you can manage to lift one foot at a time off the ground, with your heel towards your buttocks, taking flight in this low crow. Try not to collapse down into your shoulders, keep lifting up and pushing the ground away from you.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 1. Cat Cow
- 2. Shoulder Warm Up
- 5. Wrist Warm Up
- 6. Butterfly
- 10. Core
- 11. Sun Salutations A
- 12. Sun Salutations B
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 51. Plank Pose
- 59. Child's Pose

- 77. Happy Baby
- 78. Knees to Chest

FAST FORWARD to

- 5. Wrist Warm Up
- 9. Thread the Needle
- 47. The Clown or Tripod Headstand
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 50. Upward Table or Upward Plank
- 51. Plank Pose
- 52. Plank to Four Limbed Staff Pose
- 55. Eight-Angle Pose
- 57. Side Crow

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Digestion: may help with indigestion and flatulence
- Strength: strengthens the arms, hands, shoulders, wrists, abdominal muscles, and inner thighs
- Organs: tones the abdominal organs
- Posture: strengthens and stretches the back (upper). Can relieve lower back pain
- Brain: improves mental endurance and focus.

## 55. Eight-Angle Pose - Astavakrasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Wrist, shoulder, and elbow injury
- Pregnancy

**How to PLAY the pose:** There are several ways to get into Eight angle pose. This is what I find is the easiest way for most of my students. Seated on your buttocks on the mat. Lift your legs and place your right upper arm underneath your right thigh. (If you are flexible enough to do so place the back of your knee as close to the shoulder as possible/ knee above the shoulder.) See if you can lift your left calf above your upper arm. Place your left hand on the ground close to your, in between your legs, right hand is on the ground on the outside of the right leg. Hands shoulder width apart. Cross your legs so that your right foot is hooked underneath the ankle of your left foot. Flex your feet, to make sure your legs are firmly locked together, it will help you to keep them together.

From here, firmly pull your left elbow in towards your body and engage your core strength, push your hands into the mat while you try to lift your buttocks off the ground. At the same time start to extend your legs out and squeeze them together. From here bend your elbows leaning your shoulders forward until your upper arms and lower arms create 90 degrees and your elbows are above your wrists. Open your chest, broadening the collar bones and elongating your spine. Here you are helping to lift your legs by leaning the inside of your left thigh onto the platform that your left arm is creating with the upper arm, balancing on that left upper arm. Your right elbow is not holding your body, but take sure that your right arm is still nice and strong and your elbows are not falling out to the side. Breathe here.

Pay attention to the right shoulder that has a tendency to dip deeper down than the left when you are here, so try to make your shoulders even. Look forward in front of you on the mat. Stay as long as you want and when you're ready come back out sit down on your buttocks, release your legs and repeat on the other side.

Remember: when you engage your legs out, try to squeeze them together and try work on extending them straight. In the beginning, this is not so easy with time it gets easier. Before you do this position make sure you have opened your hips properly.

Note on sequencing: there are more fancy ways to both, get in and out of this posture, and transition into more advanced arm balances so if you know how to do that feel free to for instance include a vinyasa in between repeating on the other side.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 1. Cat Cow
- 2. Shoulder Warm Up
- 5. Wrist Warm Up
- 6. Butterfly
- 10. Core
- 11. Sun Salutations A
- 12. Sun Salutations B
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 22. Wide-Legged Forward Bend
- 31. Extended Hand to Big Toe Pose
- 33. Eagle Pose
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 44. Plank
- 52. Plank to Four Limbed Staff Pose
- 60. Seated Forward Fold
- 64. Seated Wide-Legged Forward Fold

FAST FORWARD to

- 5. Wrist Warm Up
- 7. Open Chest
- 9. Thread the Needle
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 50. Upward Table or Upward Plank
- 60. Seated Forward Fold

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: stretches the diaphragm and strengthens the breathing muscles
- Digestion: stimulates digestion
- Strength: strengthens your chest muscles, arms, hands, shoulders, wrists, and back. Tones your core, buttocks, legs (entire leg especially inner thighs), and ankles
- Flexibility: stretches e.g. your hamstrings and chest
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs: tones the abdominal organs including the reproductive organs
- Posture: strengthens and stretches the back, chest, and core
- Brain: improves your focus, concentration, and balance. May help relieve stress and anxiety.

## **56. Firefly - Tittibhanasana**

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Wrist, shoulder, and elbow injury
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Low back injury
- Hamstring injury
- Pregnancy

**How to PLAY the pose:** Find your pose '14. Standing Forward Fold' and bring your legs out wider to the side approximately to the edges of the mat into a wider legged forward fold. From here, bend your knees and try to bring your shoulders underneath your knees, open your chest as if you were going into Insect position (not in the deck) if you know this position. From here when you have hooked your shoulders underneath your knees, place your hands on the ground fingers widespread, and hands are shoulder distance apart. Bend your knees and bring your buttocks down, bend your elbows to create a platform with your upper arms, so that your elbows are above your wrists and lean your thighs onto that platform. Engage your core and see if you can lift one leg off the ground in front of you, then the other (or both at the same) and squeeze your thighs in towards your shoulders. The clue here for Firefly is to have your thighs as high up on your upper arms and as close to your head as possible. When you begin to lift the legs, try not to let them fall out wide to the side. As in any arm balance, we're thinking about sucking everything in towards the midline and engaging the core.

From here, if you have your legs out wide and extended, see if you can extend your elbows and lift up in a high-flying Firefly. It's OK if that's not possible. Then stay down on your platform in a low flying Firefly with bent elbows, until you have the strength to lift. If you choose to lift all the way up, extending your arms, see if you can push the ground away from you as much as you can as you look forward ahead of you on the ground.

If you wish you can tilt your Firefly from here by letting your buttocks gradually and with control tilt down towards the floor, without touching the it and pointing your toes up to the sky. Try to open your chest, push the shoulders away from your ears and lengthen your spine, relax your jaw. It's important here to keep engaging the core and keep squeezing your thighs in towards your shoulders and upper arms. Look in front of you, lift your gaze upwards together with your tilting action. See if you can find your balance here, remember to breath.

To come out of your Firefly you have several options. One is to lift back up using your core into your high flying Firefly, and from here bend your knees and bring your heels backwards towards the buttocks so that only your knees and thighs are squeezing in towards your shoulders and your toes are pointing backwards (still balancing on your arms). From here you can, if you want, sit back into a yogi squat or jump back into a plank, and do your vinyasa. An easier way to get out of this posture, when you are in your Firefly, either tilted or lifted, simply, gently place your buttocks down back on the ground. This is especially easy if you're in tilted Firefly. From here you are seated on the ground and can do whatever counter pose you want, for instance 56. Wide-legged forward fold and the for instance '43. Upward Table or Upward Plank'. Make sure you shake out your wrists after you have come out of the position. Firefly can also, as the '47. Crow Pose', be done on your elbows if you have issues with your wrists. However a low flying Firefly like this is quite challenging, so it is not necessarily for everyone.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 1. Cat Cow
- 2. Shoulder Warm Up
- 5. Wrist Warm Up
- 6. Butterfly
- 10. Core
- 11. Sun Salutations A
- 12. Sun Salutations B
- 22. Wide-Legged Forward Bend
- 23. Extended Side Angle Pose
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 44. Plank
- 63. Pigeon Pose

FAST FORWARD to

- 5. Wrist Warm Up
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 35. Upward Facing Dog
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 50. Upward Table or Upward Plank
- 51. Plank Pose
- 55. Eight-Angle Pose
- 57. Side Crow
- 60. Seated Forward Fold
- 64. Seated Wide-Legged Forward Fold

- 78. Knees to Chest

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Digestion: improves digestion
- Strength: strengthens the arms, hands, shoulders, wrists, core, back, quadriceps, and inner thighs
- Flexibility: stretches the inner groins, hamstrings, and the back of the torso
- Organs and hormones: stimulates the abdominal organs, including the reproductive organs and bladder
- Posture: strengthens and stretches the back
- Brain: improves a sense of balance and focus.

## 57. Side Crow - Parsva Bakasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Lower back, wrists, shoulder, or elbow injury
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Pregnancy

**How to PLAY the pose:** From your '16. Twisted Chair' pose, always to the right first, sit all the way down with your buttocks towards your heels. Now open your hands if they are in front of your heart, and place your hands on the mat at the right side of your hip parallel to your shoulders and the edge of the mat. Remember to place them a little bit further away from you than what you might think, to create space to and make it easier for you to get into the Side Crow. A common mistake many of my students make is placing their hands too close to the body. That makes it pretty difficult to get up. So placing their hands away from you, shoulder width apart, fingers spread wide. Look forward in front of you on the ground, not between your hands, straight down or in between your legs, as that will make you fall. So look in front of you on the ground and from here you have two options.

Option 1: The cheating option. If you are not familiar with Side Crow and you don't have that much shoulder-, arm- and core strength yet, this is a great way to start to learn to fly sideways. Here we use our elbow for extra support to hold the body. From crouching down in the low twisted chair to the right, firmly press your left elbow in towards your right thigh, lower than your knee but make sure that your thigh is placed quite high up on your upper arm and not exactly on the elbow because that will make it more easy to slide off. Use your right elbow now to press firmly into your hip area and your belly. Make sure that you do not allow the elbows to fall out wide to the side but that they are firm and strong in the same distance as your shoulders and bending at 90 degrees. From here, the key is to dare to lean forward in the direction of your fingertips, so that you simply lean into it and lift your feet off the ground trying to find your balance on your elbows, moving with momentum. Breathe and see if you can manage to open your chest and elongate your spine in this deep twisted arm balance. Extend your neck as an elongation of your spine. You can also look to the side in the direction of your knees into the room and find your drishti point here. Breath. When you are ready exhale and come back to center.

Option 2: Full Side Crow. Place the left arm in the same position as described in option 1 (cheating option). However, now we do not use the support of the right elbow to hold the body. Instead it is outside of our upper body balancing by itself. This option requires more strength in your shoulder and core. When you lean forward, see if you can find your balance still engaging your core and finding stability.

When you're in your Side Crow, whether you do the cheating version or the less supported one, try to get your thighs parallel to the floor and lift your heels towards your buttocks, leaning your upper body forward so that your upper body is also parallel to the floor. Try to open your chest and make your shoulders even parallel to the floor. This is challenging but it is what we are aiming at. To come out of either pose, sit down with your feet back on the floor and lift up finding your twisted chair then your normal chair and repeating on the other side. It's important to do both sides and always do the right side first.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- Make sure you warm up your spine, wrist, and shoulders properly before you do this deep twist:
- 1. Cat Cow
- 2. Shoulder Warm Up
- 4. Seated Gentle Twist
- 5. Wrist Warm Up
- 10. Core
- 11. Sun Salutations A

- 12. Sun Salutations B
- **16. Twisted Chair Pose (right before)**
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 44. Plank
- 52. Plank to Four Limbed Staff Pose
- 67. Seated Twist

FAST FORWARD to

- 5. Wrist Warm Up
- 9. Thread the Needle
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 15. Chair Pose
- **16. Twisted Chair Pose (right after)**
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 50. Upward Table or Upward Plank
- 51. Plank Pose
- 55. Eight-Angle Pose
- 60. Seated Forward Fold
- 78. Knees to Chest

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Digestion: improves digestion
- Strength: strengthens the arms, hands, shoulders, and wrists. Tones the core and side body
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs and hormones: massages abdominal organs, including the liver, pancreas, and kidneys. Stimulates the reproductive organs
- Posture: strengthens the spine. Reduces asymmetry in the lower spine
- Brain: improves a sense of balance and focus.

## 58. Figure 4 - Eka Pada Utkatasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Spinal, knee, hip, or ankle injury
- Weak ankles (use a wall)
- Pain in the quadriceps

**How to PLAY the pose:** From “13. Mountain Pose”, shift your weight into your left foot. Slowly bend your right knee and lift it up. Turn the right knee out to the side as you slowly bend the standing leg. Ensure your hips stay squared. Place the right ankle just above the left knee and sink your hips lower, bending deeper into the standing knee. Your left knee should not bend past your left toes.

Bring your hands to a prayer position at the heart center and sit back, keeping your chest lifted. If this makes it difficult to balance, keep your hands on your hips instead. Avoid rounding your spine and keep your gaze fixed on one point straight ahead of you, not down. Keep pressing firmly into your standing foot and engage your core to maintain your balance.

Take 5 to 10 breaths here. To come out, bring one hand to the knee and the other hand to the heel. Slowly straighten the leg before releasing it to the ground and repeating on the other side.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 30. Tree Pose
- 13. Mountain Pose

- 17. Crescent Lunge - High Lunge

FAST FORWARD to

- 74. Flying Pigeon
- 30. Tree Pose
- 68. Half Moon
- 31. Extended Hand to Big Toe Pose
- 29. Dancer Pose

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Digestion: stimulates digestion
- Immune: creates space in the lumbar spine which is where tensions are stored for a lot of people.
- Organs and hormones: may help to relieve menstrual discomfort for some women.
- Posture: reinforces awareness of squared hips as well as the ability of the ankle to be flexible and strong. Strengthens the spine and upper body.
- Brain: if done standing, may help boost your focus and mental clarity.
- Sleep: when done restoratively, lying on your back this pose will help you release your muscles, and promote sleep.

## Category 7. SEATED POSTURES

Seated postures are often good to tune in and center yourself. And can therefore be used towards the end of your practice, before your slow down. However, you can also use some of these positions to open your body in the beginning of the practice (then more gentle variations if you are not yet properly warmed up). Or you can include seated postures in between Vinyasa or Flows if you want to keep the heat up in between stretches, and have a more dynamic practice. Many of these positions can be seated alternatives to standing postures for instance as counterposes to backbends.

### 59. Child's Pose – Balasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Diarrhea
- Pregnancy (adapt with wide legs to make space for your belly, add bolsters and pillows as your belly grows)
- Ankle, knee, or hip injury (if you are cleared by your doctor you can adapt with pillows under your buttocks, (perhaps also hugging a bolster in the front) until your knees and hips are comfortable).

**How to PLAY the pose:** Start kneeling, with the knees and feet together or alternatively knees can be out wide to the edges of the mat, with the big toes together. Press your buttocks towards your heels, you can place a pillow underneath your buttocks if your knees hurt. Let your head rest towards the mat, with your arms relaxed forwards or alongside your body to open more between your shoulder blades. You can always return to Child's Pose if you need a break during your yoga practice.

Sleep. Normal Child's Pose is great for sleep, but you can also play with having your knees out wide to the edges of the mat, big toes together, and hugging a bolster or pillow in front of you (starting under your chest, not your belly). Place the bolster/pillow so that it gives a gentle pressure on your chest and relax your head to one side.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find/after

- 59. Child's Pose is a resting pose that can precede or follow any asana.

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Heart: increases blood flow to the head and has a calming effect on the nervous system slowing down the heart rate. This posture can be therapeutic for hypertension coming from stress. Consult your doctor as it might be beneficial for you to support your head on a bolster, in a wide-legged Child's Pose, keeping your head higher than your heart.

- Digestion: improves digestion, helps reduce bloating and indigestion
- Flexibility: gently stretches the hips, thighs, knees, and ankles
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs and hormones: stimulates the abdominal organs, including kidneys, gallbladder, and pancreas
- Posture: alleviates back and neck pain. Releases tension in between your shoulder blades in the variation with arms alongside your body
- Brain: calms the brain and nervous system. Can help relieve stress and fatigue.
- Sleep: helps battle insomnia. Normal Child's Pose is great for sleep, but you can also play with having your knees out wide to the edges of the mat, big toes together, and hugging a bolster or pillow in front of you (starting under your chest, not your belly). Place the bolster/pillow so that it gives a gentle pressure on your chest and relax your head to one side.

## 60. Seated Forward Fold - Paschimottanasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Asthma
- Diarrhea
- Back injuries or back pain (if you have lower back pain, and are cleared by your doctor, adapt by e.g. bending your knees, and do not go deep into the posture.)
- Hip, hamstring, or groin injury
- Pregnancy (legs wider to give space for your belly and go no more than 80% into the stretch)

**How to PLAY the pose:** Seated on the mat, feel both seat bones on the mat. Feet together and flexed. Inhale extend your arms up and above your head. Exhale extend your back body forward and let your arms rest alongside your legs, hinging from the hip. Try to keep your back as straight as you can (it is ok to bend your knees for moderation). If you want a deeper stretch, keep your lumbar spine straight, but relax your upper body forward, curving the back and leaning forward towards your legs. Hold on to your legs or toes, wherever you reach. Pull your kneecaps up and engage your quadriceps, to relax the hamstrings (for an active stretch). Stay for at least five breaths. Inhale to come up.

Sleep. For a restorative variation, you can place a pillow or a block under your head to rest on. Bend your knees, and let your feet be slightly apart, if you need to, to fully relax into it. The aim now is the calming effect of folding forwards, tuning in, rather than an intense stretch.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 4. Seated Gentle Twist
- 6. Butterfly
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 59. Child's Pose
- 66. Head-to-Knee Forward Bend

FAST FORWARD to

- 38. Bridge Pose
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 50. Upward Table or Upward Plank

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Heart: can be therapeutic for HBP/hypertension. Make sure you build your head up with blocks and pillows so your head is above your heart, if this is required by your doctor.
- Digestion: stimulates digestion and appetite. Can reduce bloating (and help remove belly fat). It may be therapeutic for colitis
- Flexibility: stretches the spine, shoulders, and hamstrings
- Immune system: boosts the immune system



- Organs and hormones: stimulates the abdominal organs including, the liver, kidneys, ovaries, and uterus, May be beneficial for fertility and impotence. May help relieve symptoms of menopause and menstrual discomfort
- Brain: calms the brain and nervous system. Can help alleviate stress, mild depression, anxiety, and fatigue. May reduce headache and symptoms of sinusitis
- Sleep: can be therapeutic for insomnia when done restoratively. For a restorative variation, you can place a pillow or a block under your head to rest on. Bend your knees, and let your feet be slightly apart, if you need to, to fully relax into it. The aim now is the calming effect of folding forwards, tuning in, rather than an intense stretch.

## 61. Half Split or Split - Ardha Hanumanasana or Hanumanasana

Take precautions (or skip) **PLAYING** if you have:

- Groin, hamstring, hip, or knee injury

**How to PLAY the pose:** Half split: start by kneeling on your left leg, calf, and front of the foot on the ground. Place your right leg in front of you whilst keeping your hips square and straight above the left knee. Inhale extend your spine tall, exhale fold forward with your upper body towards your right leg into a half split, stay keeping your spine straight. Build up with blocks under your hands if you need to. Try to relax your face. Stay for at least five breaths. While you stay here flex your right foot and pull your kneecaps up, engaging your quadriceps for an active stretch. Keep pulling the right leg into the hip socket and try not to collapse in your hip to either side. Keep a stable and strong position even if you are stretching.

Option 2: Full split: form your half split, inhale, and start to move your right leg forwards, so that you move further down into your split, with your hips towards the ground. Make sure your hips are still square. Use blocks or pillows to build up wherever you need to (under your hands, under your right thigh, under your hip, etc.). If you manage to get all the way down to the ground, you can either sit up tall with your upper body, hands on the ground, or place the hands in front of your heart, or even above your head. Or you can fold forward, and move the upper body forward over your right leg. Use your inhale to come up, supporting yourself with your hands to come out of the posture.

For both: to increase flexibility over time stay for two minutes to deeply work into your muscles. Remember to repeat on both sides and always engage your glutes. If you struggle with pain in your left knee (that is on the ground) you can fold your mat (or blanket) under your knee.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 6. Butterfly
- 11. Sun Salutations A
- 12. Sun Salutations B
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 17. Crescent Lunge - High Lunge
- 18. Triangle Pose
- 22. Wide-Legged Forward Bend
- 29. Dancer Pose
- 60. Seated Forward Fold
- 62. Low Lunge Pose
- 64. Seated Wide-Legged Forward Fold
- 66. Head-to-Knee Forward Bend
- 76. Reclining Bound Angle Pose

FAST FORWARD to

- 50. Upward Table or Upward Plank
- 60. Seated Forward Fold (if you do a full split)
- 64. Seated Wide-Legged Forward Fold
- 66. Head-to-Knee Forward Bend

- 69. Standing Split

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Digestion: stimulates digestion (When leaning forward)
- Strength: Strengthens legs (particularly the hamstrings, quadriceps, and knees)
- Flexibility: stretches hips, groins, quadriceps, hamstrings, calves, and back
- Organs and hormones: stimulates abdominal organs including the reproductive organs (when leaning forward)
- Posture: increases awareness and stability through the pelvis. Can ease symptoms related to plantar fasciitis and sciatica.

## 62. Low Lunge Pose - Anjaneyasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Heart problems

**How to PLAY the pose:** Start with your left (or right) foot forward and the leg bent with your knee straight above your ankle, foot facing forward. Extend your right leg behind you, hip distance across with hips facing forward. Keep the hips level and try to not lean forward too much so that you collapse into the hips. Think about pulling the thigh of the front leg back towards the hips, and keep engaging the legs, as if they were scissors closing to create engagement. Actively tuck the tailbone down to protect your lumbar spine. Options for the upper body: 1) Have both hands on the ground, for stability. 2) Place your hands on your left knee and lift your upper body up. Use your core for balance. 3) Open your arms above your head towards the sky.

If you find it difficult to balance here, tuck the toes of the right foot under. Make sure your knee is in line with your hip, which is again in line with the right foot. Breathe here.

4) Bound Crescent Low Lunge. If you want a deeper stretch for your quadriceps and iliopsoas muscles, you can begin to bend the knee of your right leg behind you and reach back with the left hand to take hold of your right foot and pull your right heel in the direction of your buttocks. If you want an extra opening in your shoulders, place your right hand in line with your left foot on the ground underneath your right shoulder, and use your left hand to bring your right foot in towards you. Moderation: if you do not manage to reach your foot you can use a strap/towel/sweater and take it around the ankle of your right foot and pull it in towards you. Remember not to hang into your right shoulder, but actively push the ground away from you.

Sleep. For a restorative variation, lean slightly forward. You can place your hands on the ground or blocks, and alternatively with both hands on the inside of the leg in front, allowing the leg to go slightly to the side in Lizard Pose. A deeper option is going all the way down on your elbows, elbows resting under the shoulders. You can also rest your head on a block.

For both: remember to do both sides and always engage. Inhale to come back to center. Always exhaling going into the stretch and using the inhales to come out of the stretch. If you struggle with pain in your left knee (that is on the ground) you can fold your mat (or blanket) under your knee.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 6. Butterfly
- 11. Sun Salutations A
- 12. Sun Salutations B
- 15. Chair Pose
- 22. Wide-Legged Forward Bend
- 48. Downward Facing Dog

FAST FORWARD to

- 19. Warrior 1
- 29. Dancer Pose
- 60. Seated Forward Fold / 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 64. Seated Wide-Legged Forward Fold / 22. Wide-Legged Forward Bend

- 66. Head-to-Knee Forward Bend

#### The benefits of **PLAYING** the pose

- Lungs: opens the chest
- Strength: strengthens the thigh muscles, hip, knee, ankles, calves, and core
- Flexibility: stretches thighs and hips flexors (hip opener). Stretches the muscles around the shoulder and chest, when doing the variation where you pick up the leg in the back
- Organs: stimulates the abdominal organs
- Posture: strengthens the back muscles. Can ease symptoms related to sciatica. Can reduce lower back pain if the pain is related to having tight iliopsoas
- Sleep: can improve sleep, when done restoratively. For a restorative variation, lean slightly forward. You can place your hands on the ground or blocks, and alternatively with both hands on the inside of the leg in front, allowing the leg to go slightly to the side in Lizard Pose. A deeper option is going all the way down on your elbows, elbows resting under the shoulders. You can also rest your head on a block.

### 63. Pigeon Pose - Eka Pada Rajakapotasana

#### Take precautions (or skip) **PLAYING** if you have:

- Ankle, knee, hip, sacroiliac (issue or injury), back injury
- In case of shoulder injury avoid flipping the grip

**How to PLAY the pose:** From your tabletop position, '44. Plank Pose' or '41. Downward Facing Dog', bring your right leg forward with a bend in the knee and place your right knee on the ground by the right wrist, so that it is in line with your right shoulder and hip. Adjust the shin of your right leg to open it up towards your left wrist until you find a stretch. Flex the foot of your right leg to protect your knee. Make sure you don't have pain in your knee. Extend your left leg out behind you, knee and ankle in line with the hip, and try to keep your hips square (facing forwards). Sit down into the stretch. It's ok to place a pillow underneath the right buttocks/hip to help level the hips. You can also build up with more blocks and pillows according to your flexibility level. The most important thing here is keeping your hips square. A tip can be to tuck the toes under your left foot to help your hip stay square. You can sit up keeping the chest lifted, or lean forward onto your arms. If you want to do sleeping pigeon and feel open enough to do so without any pain in the knee, you can walk your arms forward until you extend the chest towards the ground and feel a good stretch. You can lean onto your elbows or all go all the way down to the floor. You can also rest your head on a block if you want to support the neck. Breathe freely. Come up on an inhale. Generally for all variations, as Pigeon Pose can put a lot of pressure on your knee if not done correctly it is important to adjust. It is also important not to collapse into your stretch, no matter how flexible you are. Try to keep an active stretch, while engaging your glutes, thigh and hips.

Option: when sitting up right you can also puff your chest like a pigeon, in other words, open your chest in a mini backbend.

Moderation: If this is hurting your lower back or your knee do the pigeon alternatively on your back or seated.

1) On your back: Laying on your back bend both knees and bring your right ankle and place it below the knee of your left leg. Now open the right knee to the side. Bring your right hand in between the gap in your legs and hold onto your left shin or the back of the left thigh, bringing your left arm to the same place from outside the left leg. Keep pulling your left leg in towards you while at the same time opening your right knee away from you. Make sure that your right knee is in line with your right shoulder and hip and keep your spine, shoulders and head resting on the mat. Keep flexing the foot of your right leg to protect your knee.

2) Seated: If you don't manage to reach your left leg whilst on your back (in the above explanation), you can alternatively sit up on your buttocks. Have your feet hip distance apart in front of you with the knees bent. Cross your right foot on top of the left thigh, just beneath the knee and flex the right foot. Actively open the right knee out to the side. Use your arms behind you to support yourself and extend the spine. Try to keep a straight back. Adjust the position of your left foot further away on the mat if you need to, to find a straight back. Keep opening the right knee away from you, while at the same time keeping it inline with your right shoulder.

For all: stay for as many breaths as you want and change to the other side when you're ready.

Sleep. For restorative variation support with a block/pillows under your head, or do it on your back, be gentle.

#### Where to **PLAY** the pose:

REWIND and find

- 1. Cat Cow
- 6. Butterfly
- 11. Sun Salutations A
- 12. Sun Salutations B
- 18. Triangle Pose
- 23. Extended Side Angle Pose
- 30. Tree Pose
- 34. Cobra
- 38. Bridge Pose
- 64. Seated Wide-Legged Forward Fold / 22. Wide-Legged Forward Bend
- 66. Head-to-Knee Forward Bend
- 76. Reclining Bound Angle Pose

FAST FORWARD to

- 1. Cat Cow
- 36. Locust Pose
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 60. Seated Forward Fold (if your Pigeon Pose is upright)
- 67. Seated Twist

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: opens the shoulders and chest
- Heart: can be beneficial for the heart because it can have a calming effect, in 'sleeping pigeon' (leaning forward). Make sure to build up with blocks and pillows to be comfortable. And support your head so your neck is relaxed
- Digestion: improves digestion (particularly sleeping pigeon)
- Flexibility: stretches the thighs, groin, hip flexors (psoas, rectus femoris), hip rotator muscles (gluteus medius and minimus), abdomen, chest, and shoulders
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs and hormones: stimulates the abdominal organs (particularly in 'sleeping pigeon') including the reproductive organs. May help with a urinary disorder
- Posture: opens the shoulders and chest (when done upright). Can relieve sciatica and ease chronic lower back pain
- Brain: calms the brain and nervous system
- Sleep: can help sleep (when done restoratively). For restorative variation support with a block/pillows under your head, or do it on your back, be gentle.

## 64. Seated Wide-Legged Forward Fold - Upavistha Konasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Lower-back or hamstring injury

**How to PLAY the pose:** Seated on both seat bones, open your legs as wide as you can. Make sure your back is straight by tilting your pelvis slightly forward so that you are not hanging forward curving your lumbar spine. Adaptation, if you do not manage to keep your back straight, put a pillow or block under your coccyx to help with the pelvic tilt. Make sure your toes and your knees are pointing up towards the sky. Inhale and extend your spine, exhale to start to walk your hands forward, maintaining your back as straight as possible. Walk as deep into the stretch that feels ok for you. Try to relax into it. Flex your feet actively and start engaging your quadriceps pulling your kneecaps up to further release your hamstrings (for an active stretch). Stay for at least five to ten breaths in the posture. If you are very flexible you can have your elbows on the ground, or even belly and chest all the way down to the ground. But make sure your back is straight. Inhale to come up, helping with your arms. Exhale to release your legs, bend your knees and help your legs together with the support of your hands.

Sleep. For restorative variation, you can place a pillow or a block under your head, to rest in front of you.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 1. Cat Cow
- 4. Seated Gentle Twist
- 6. Butterfly
- 11. Sun Salutations A
- 12. Sun Salutations B
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 22. Wide-Legged Forward Bend
- 59. Child's Pose
- 66. Head-to-Knee Forward Bend

FAST FORWARD to

- 6. Butterfly
- 22. Wide-Legged Forward Bend
- 38. Bridge Pose
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 50. Upward Table or Upward Plank
- 76. Reclining Bound Angle Pose

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Heart: can be therapeutic for high blood pressure. Can be calming for the nervous system and therefore slow down the heart rate, being beneficial for HBP/hypertension over time. Make sure to build your head up with blocks and pillows so your head is above your heart if this is required by your doctor.
- Digestion: stimulates digestion
- Flexibility: stretches the insides and backs of the legs (e.g. hamstrings, groins, abductors, and knees)
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs and hormones: stimulates the abdominal organs including the liver, kidneys, and reproductive organs. Can help relieve menstrual discomfort.
- Posture: strengthens and stretches the spine. Can help relieve sciatica and arthritis. Promotes a healthy pelvis
- Brain: calms the brain and nervous system
- Sleep: can improve sleep (when done restoratively). You can place a pillow or a block under your head, to rest in front of you.

## 65. Boat Pose - Navasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Asthma
- Diarrhea
- Headache
- Heart Problems
- LBP
- Neck injury
- Pregnancy

**How to PLAY the pose:** Seated on your buttocks with your legs/feet in front of you on the mat. Engage your core and pull your pelvic floor muscles in and up. Elongate your spine so that you maintain a straight lumbar spine. Lift your legs off the ground with your knees bent and your legs squeezing together, shins parallel to the floor. You can hold underneath your knees with your hands to help support your legs if you need to. Lift your chest. Keep elongation through your spine out through the crown of your head. Your neck is an elongation of your spine. Relax your face. Keep pulling your bellybutton in towards the spine. Stay for five breaths. Exhale to come down. Resting your legs on the ground. Repeat as many times as you wish. An option is to let go of your legs, extending your arms out in front of you. You can keep your legs bent, or if you want a challenge

yourself further, extend your legs out to straight, squeezing them together. Point your toes for active feet, no matter which position you choose. Make sure that you always keep a straight spine. If you do not manage to keep a straight spine, go back to the moderation with bent legs. Your legs and back extended, should create a V shape. Stay for five breaths. Exhale to come down. Resting your legs on the ground. Repeat as many times as you wish.

When learning how to hold a Boat Pose, you can start with fewer breaths, and gradually build the strength to hold for a longer time. Always pay attention to your lower spine and remember to relax the shoulders away from ears and relax the face. You can also extend one leg at the time, while you are learning Boat Pose.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 10. Core (B)
- 11. Sun Salutations A
- 12. Sun Salutations B
- 14. Standing Forward Fold / 60. Seated Forward Fold
- 48. Downward Facing Dog

FAST FORWARD to

- 6. Butterfly
- 15. Chair Pose
- 37. Bow Pose
- 39. Upward Bow (Wheel) Pose
- 45. Plow Pose
- 46. Headstand
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 50. Upward Table or Upward Plank

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Digestion: improves digestion
- Strength: strengthens the core, back, hip flexors, quadriceps, and inner thigh muscles
- Organs and hormones: stimulates abdominal organs including the kidneys, liver, pancreas, and prostate glands. Also stimulates the thyroid gland in the neck
- Posture: strengthens the spine and back muscles. Improves alignment
- Brain: improves focus and concentration. Can help relieve stress.

## 66. Head-to-Knee Forward Bend - Janu Sirsasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Diarrhea
- Knee or lower back injury
- Asthma
- LBP

**How to PLAY the pose:** Sitting on the mat, with both legs stretched out in front of you. Feet together. Hips square. Bend the right knee and place the foot towards the inner thigh of your left leg. Let the right knee fall out to the side. You can adjust how close to the pelvis you want to have the heel of your right foot, according to what feels best for you (high up on the thigh, or lower down the leg). If you need to you can place a pillow or block under your knee. Always keeping your hips square. From here, inhale to extend your arms up above your head, and make a small twist/adjustment towards the leg that is extended in front of you, exhale keep extending and folding over that left leg (now you are adjusting your upper body so that it opens towards your bent leg). Take hold of your left leg, wherever you can reach and try to relax your upper body, neck, and head down towards the leg. Working towards having your head towards your knee. Flex the toes and foot of your extended leg. Inhale to come up, exhale to release. Remember to do both sides.

Sleep. For restorative variation, you can place a pillow or a block under your head, to rest on when folding forward.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 4. Seated Gentle Twist
- 6. Butterfly
- 11. Sun Salutations A
- 12. Sun Salutations B
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 30. Tree Pose
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 59. Child's Pose
- 60. Seated Forward Fold

FAST FORWARD to

- 38. Bridge Pose
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
  - 50. Upward Table or Upward Plank
  - 67. Seated Twist

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Heart: Can be therapeutic for HBP. (see 60. Seated Forward Fold)
- Digestion: improves digestion
- Flexibility: stretches the spine, hamstrings, and groins
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs: stimulates the abdominal organs including the liver, pancreas, uterus, spleen, stomach, kidneys, and reproductive organs. Effective in relieving menstrual discomfort and symptoms of menopause
- Posture: helps improve postural imbalances in the body (hip and spine). Strengthens the back muscles during pregnancy (up to the second trimester), go to a maximum of 80% into the stretch (do not squeeze the belly)
- Brain: calms the brain and nervous system. Can help alleviate mild depression, anxiety, fatigue, symptoms of sinusitis, and headache
- Sleep: can help battle insomnia. For restorative variation, you can place a pillow or a block under your head, to rest on when folding forward.

**67. Seated Twist - Ardha Marichyasana****Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Back or spine injury
- Hip, SI joint, or knee issues (square hips and gentle variation)
- HBP
- LBP
- Migraine
- Diarrhea
- Pregnancy: avoid completely
- Headache

**How to PLAY the pose:** Here you have three options. No matter which one you choose, you start seated with your legs extended in front of you on the mat. Legs together, straight back, sit up nice and tall – do not hang into your lower back. Feel both seat bones on the ground.

Leg variation 1: Bend your right leg and place your foot on the ground on the inside of your left thigh. You can twist from here, to the right.

Leg variation 2: Place your right foot across your left thigh. Make sure the sole of the right foot is fully on the ground and that your hips are still square. Twist from here, to the right.

Leg variation 3: From variation 2, bend your left leg with your heel in toward your hip so that your knees are aligned one above the other. Make sure you are not seated on that left foot, and that both seat bones are on the ground. Make sure your knees are not hurting. If the position feels ok, you can twist from here.

No matter which leg variation you choose: Inhale extend your arms up, extending the spine, exhale twist to the right. Take hold of your right thigh/knee with your left hand and open your chest to the right. Keep elongating the spine and place your right hand close to your buttocks to allow for an even greater lift in your spine (so that you are not curving your back). Use your core to twist. Imagine that on every inhale, you are lifting a little taller through the spine and on your exhales, you twist using your core. Keeping your hips square while you are twisting. You can hold on to your right leg either from the outside (if that feels good), or if you want you can place your left elbow on the thigh of your right leg (close to the knee) or all the way on the outside of the knee, and let your elbow bend, point the fingers up to the sky. If you are an advanced practitioner and know how to bind, you can also always bind here if your wish. To come out of the posture, inhale and then release to center. Exhale to release the legs out. Shake the legs out before you repeat on the other side. Remember to always twist to the right first, because of the way our digestive system is made. Stay neutral before twisting to the other side. Remember to do both sides one after the other.

Sleep. Choose the gentlest variation here, no need to go into a deep twist. Work on opening in the chest.

#### **Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 1. Cat Cow
- 3. Seated Side Stretch
- 4. Seated Gentle Twist
- 6. Butterfly
- 9. Thread the Needle
- 63. Pigeon Pose (if you are doing the most advanced version)
- 64. Seated Wide-Legged Forward Fold
- 66. Head-to-Knee Forward Bend
- 69. Standing Split
- 75. Supine Twist
- 76. Reclining Bound Angle Pose

FAST FORWARD to

- 6. Butterfly
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 50. Upward Table or Upward Plank
- 60. Seated Forward Fold
- 64. Seated Wide-Legged Forward Fold

#### **The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: can be therapeutic for asthma
- Heart: choose a gentle variation, twisting stimulates the nervous system and can relieve hypertension/HBP over time
- Digestion: stimulates digestion. Can help with digestive issues and constipation
- Strength: strengthens the core, hips, legs, and back
- Flexibility: stretches the shoulders, spine legs, and hip opener (especially with the advanced version)
- Immune system: twists help boost the immune system
- Organs and hormones: stimulates the abdominal organs, including the liver, pancreas, kidneys, and reproductive organs. May help relieve symptoms of menopause and menstrual discomfort
- Posture: may alleviate mild backache and hip pain. Strengthens and stretches the spine and opens the chest



- Brain: stimulates the brain and nervous system. Can help with fatigue. Choose the gentlest variation here, no need to go into a deep twist. Work on opening the chest.

## Category 8. ADVANCED

This category is an additional category meant for advanced practitioners. You can totally skip this category and still create an infinite number of sequences using the other categories of the deck that are already covering all of the major asana groups. If you want to try and play with these positions, and have never done them before: we advise you to try them for the first time under the supervision of your teacher.

We do not recommend any of these positions for pregnant practitioners, unless you already are an advanced practitioner and are familiar with these positions from before your pregnancy, and know how to adapt.

### 68. Half Moon - Ardha Chandrasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Neck problems
- Headache or migraine
- LBP
- Diarrhea
- Knee- and ankle injury

**How to PLAY the pose:** Start from '18. Triangle Pose' or '20. Warrior 2', with your right leg forward. Start to heel toe your left foot a little bit closer towards the right. Bend your right leg and place the fingertips of your right hand on the ground in front of you, underneath your shoulder (try not to lean on your arm for support). Aim to place it in front of your right foot, ideally in line with it, but if it is difficult to find stability here it can be easier to begin with placing your fingertips further out to the right side of the mat. Inhale to extend your right leg, pressing through the sole of the right foot and start to lift your left leg off the ground, opening your hip to the side. Feel your left hip opening and open your shoulders and chest here too. Stacking your left shoulder above the right shoulder and extending your left hand up to the sky. Make sure your left shoulder is not curving forward here. If you need to place a block underneath your right hand, to get yourself higher up, that is perfectly fine. If you want to work towards building additional core stability here, you can hover with right hand off the ground here into a full moon. Your right hand is flying off the ground and you are using your core strength to hold the lift, this is a full moon. No matter where you are you're aiming at opening your hip all the way to the side, stacking your hips so that your right leg, knee and foot is pointing straight forward to the front of the mat, but your left hip, knee and foot are pointing to the side of the room. Flex your left foot and elongate out through the heel of your left leg. Keep opening and extending here. Stay and breath. If you fall out of balance, just come back up and keep trying - no judgement. Look to the side or down onto your right hand if that is easier for your balance. If you are flexible and want an additional challenge, you can work on lifting that left leg a little bit higher than parallel to the floor and play with that. Breathe. Stay for five breaths. Make sure your shoulders are away from your ears, and remember your neck is an extension of your spine. Relax your face and your jaw. Make sure your standing leg is strong, pulling the kneecap up, engaging quadriceps without hyperextending your knee if you have a tendency to do that. If you do not have the hamstring flexibility to keep your standing leg straight, it is also OK to keep it bent. See if you can get your weight forward towards the toes of your standing leg without falling out of balance and lifting your heel. Breathe. Engaging your core by pulling the belly button in towards the spine. This position is great for your abs and obliques.

To get out of your posture or transition into a different position you have several options. For instance you could begin to bend that right leg and step back into a '20. Warrior 2' or '18. Triangle Pose' and continue a standing flow. Another option is to pivot your hip parallel to the floor into straight hips and transition into a '27. Warrior 3'. Or from here you can go straight into a '61. Standing Split' or finding a Forward Fold. Shake out and repeat on the other side or include your other side into the flow that you have created.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 6. Butterfly
- 12. Sun Salutations B
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 18. Triangle Pose
- 20. Warrior 2
- 22. Wide-Legged Forward Bend / 64. Seated Wide-Legged Forward Fold
- 23. Extended Side Angle Pose

- 30. Tree Pose
- 31. Extended Hand to Big Toe Pose
- 32. Warrior 3
- 53. Side Plank
- 61. Half Split or Split
- 76. Reclining Bound Angle Pose

FAST FORWARD to

- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 18. Triangle Pose
- 22. Wide-Legged Forward Bend
- 32. Warrior 3
- 67. Seated Twist
- 69. Standing Split

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: opens the chest and strengthens the breathing muscles
- Digestion: stimulates digestion
- Strength: strengthens the core, ankles, legs, buttocks (particularly gluteus medius), back muscles, and muscles around the spine
- Flexibility: stretches the groin, hamstrings, inner thighs, and calves
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs and hormones: stimulates abdominal organs, and may relieve menstrual discomfort
- Posture: stretches and strengthens the shoulders and spine and opens the chest
- Brain: improves coordination and may help relieve stress. Improves sense of balance.

## 69. Standing Split - Urdhva Prasarita Eka Padasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Knee, ankle, hamstring, and lower back injury
- Headache (depending on the type of headache)
- Pregnancy

**How to PLAY the pose:** There are many ways to enter this pose, here we will explain how to enter from forward fold. Find your balance of your left (or right) leg, in the forward fold. Place your hands on the ground for support. Start lifting your right leg up towards the sky. Keeping your hips square. Work on extending that right leg as straight as you can, pointing your toes. Extend your standing left leg (if you manage), without hyperextending the knee. Engage your core to help keep your balance, strong glutes. Try to get your weight forward, towards your toes, without lifting your heel. Remember to relax your neck and face. Encourage length through the spine as you lower the upper body forwards and down. See if you can lift higher up with your left right leg on an inhale, stay for at least five to ten breaths. Exhale to bring the leg back down. Remember to repeat on the other side.

Variation 1: Keep both hands on the ground for stability.

Variation 2: Try to place your right hand on the ankle of your left leg. Try to see if you can rely less and less on your left hand for balance, and see if using only your index finger is feasible.

Variation 3: See if you can hold the ankle of your left leg with both hands. (This is an advanced variation).

Moderation: If you do not reach the ground with your hands and your standing leg straight, build up with block(s) for support under the hands, so that you can keep lifting and extending your right leg. Or keep your standing leg bent.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 6. Butterfly

- 12. Sun Salutations B
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 17. Crescent Lunge - High Lunge
- 18. Triangle Pose
- 19. Warrior 1
- 22. Wide-Legged Forward Bend
- 29. Dancer Pose
- 32. Warrior 3
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 60. Seated Forward Fold
- 61. Half Split or Split
- 62. Low Lunge Pose
- 63. Pigeon Pose
- 66. Head-to-Knee Forward Bend
- 68. Half Moon

FAST FORWARD to

- 11. Sun Salutations A
- 13. Mountain Pose
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 15. Chair Pose
- 22. Wide-Legged Forward Bend
- 32. Warrior 3
- 34. Cobra
- 35. Upward Facing Dog
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 60. Seated Forward Fold
- 61. Half Split or Split
- 64. Seated Wide-Legged Forward Fold
- 67. Seated Twist
- 68. Half Moon
- 70. Super Soldier
- 72. Handstand
- 75. Supine Twist

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: stretches and strengthens the diaphragm. Can be therapeutic for asthma
- Digestion: stimulates digestion
- Strength: strengthens the thighs, knees, calves, ankles, buttocks, back muscles, and core
- Flexibility: stretches the back of the leg (e.g. hamstring), the front thigh, and the groin
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs and hormones: stimulates the abdominal organs including the liver, kidneys, and reproductive organs. Stimulates the pituitary and pineal glands
- Posture: strengthens the back and hips. Can reduce lower back pain
- Brain: calms the brain and nervous system, and improves focus and balance.

## **70. Super Soldier - Viparita Parivrtta Surya Yantrasana**

Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:

- Knee, ankle, hamstring, shoulder, and lower back injury
- Headache (depending on the type of headache)
- Pregnancy

**How to PLAY the pose:** Start in '13. Mountain Pose' with your feet a little bit wider than hip distance apart, fold forward finding Forward Fold. From here bend your knees and see if you can wiggle your right shoulder in between your legs and on the back side of your right knee. If you need to have your legs wider apart to get into this position, that is perfectly fine. Find the position that works for you. If you know the Insect posture this is kind of what we are aiming at. When you manage to get your right shoulder around on the back of your right leg, place your left fingertips on the ground, for support and stability, and try to open your chest. The left hand is out wide, a little bit wider than your shoulder. From here see if you can find your balance on your right leg and lift your left leg off the floor. If you have the flexibility and it feels OK to do so, see if you can manage to take hold of your left toes with your right hand and from here extend your right leg straight. Move your left knee upwards to the sky and try to open your hip as much as possible. See if you can manage to keep holding onto your left foot with your right hand, pulling your heel towards your buttocks. Use your muscles to open that left hip and thigh, squeeze your buttocks and engage your standing leg, pulling the kneecaps up. Keep breathing and opening your chest pushing your right shoulder into that right standing leg. You can look straightforward if that is the best for your balance and your neck, but if you want additional challenge you can look either down into the ground or even up to the sky. You can play here. Try to breath and use your breath to create space in your chest. Try to be peaceful and strong, like a Super Soldier connecting to you inner strength and the stability in your breathing. When you feel done, after at least five breaths, let go off your left foot and release it down finding your wide-legged forward fold. Shake it out a little bit. Maybe rest in a Ragdoll forward fold, holding your elbows releasing your neck and shoulders. Repeat on the other side.

Additional information; for extra stability instead of having your fingertips on the ground, you can press the whole palm into the ground. Make sure that you always have your shoulders away from your ears. If it's easier for you to take hold of your lifted foot when you have already moved your knee upwards to the ceiling and found your Super Soldier position, that's your choice. We all have different bodies and different techniques to move into postures and that's OK. If you don't manage to get hold of the foot, you can also try to open up without holding it and let the knee lift into the air. If you don't manage to extend your standing leg perfectly straight in the beginning, because you lack the flexibility, that is also fine. It still is a great position to work on inner strength, core and trust.

#### **Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 1. Cat Cow
- 2. Shoulder Warm Up
- 4. Seated Gentle Twist
- 6. Butterfly
- 7. Open Chest
- 10. Core
- 12. Sun Salutations B
- 17. Crescent Lunge - High Lunge
- 18. Triangle Pose
- 20. Warrior 2
- 29. Dancer Pose
- 60. Seated Forward Fold
- 61. Half Split or Split
- 62. Low Lunge Pose
- 64. Seated Wide-Legged Forward Fold
- 69. Standing Split

FAST FORWARD to

- 11. Sun Salutations A
- 13. Mountain Pose
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 15. Chair Pose
- 22. Wide-Legged Forward Bend
- 34. Cobra

- 35. Upward Facing Dog
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 56. Firefly
- 64. Seated Wide-Legged Forward Fold
- 69. Standing Split
- 75. Supine Twist
- 79. Feet Up the Wall

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: stretches and strengthens the diaphragm and opens the chest. Can be therapeutic for asthma
- Digestion: stimulates digestion
- Strength: strengthens the thighs, knees, calves, ankles, buttocks, back muscles, and core. Strengthens the arm and shoulder assisting in balance
- Flexibility: stretches the side of the body, the back of the leg (hamstring), the front thigh, knee, groin, and chest
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs and hormones: stimulates the abdominal organs including the liver, kidneys, and reproductive organs. Stimulates the pituitary and pineal glands
- Posture: strengthens the back, shoulders, and hips. Opens the chest. Can reduce lower back pain
- Brain: calms the brain and nervous system, and improves focus and balance. Demands trust in yourself and playfulness. Can help to improve confidence.

## 71. Forearm Stand - Pincha Mayurasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Back, neck, or shoulder injury
- Headache
- Heart condition
- HBP
- Pregnancy

**How to PLAY the pose:** From your '42. Dolphin' pose begin to walk your feet closer towards your face. Push the shoulders actively away from you. Push the lower arms and hands firmly down into the ground and start lifting your right leg off the floor up towards the sky as high as you can. Lift up onto the toes of your left foot and see from here if you can play with finding a balance. See if by lifting the right leg and with the engagement of the core, staying here in this lifted position with one leg still on the ground, you can begin to build the strength (over time) to help you one day automatically float into your Forearm Stand. This will take time. It will also require quite a lot of hamstring flexibility. Engage your core and see if you can use that left foot to kick slightly off the ground. Leading with your right leg up and over the head, try to find a balancing point here and bend the left knee, pulling the left thigh in towards your belly. See if you can hold and squeeze here with your thigh in towards your belly and heel towards your glutes. Balancing with the left leg still bent will help you have more control and fall back to the ground where you came from instead of falling over into a backbend or to the side. This also builds core strength. Engage your buttocks when you lift up. See if you can try to find a hold pulling the lower ribs in, tilting the pelvis so that you elongate your spine. Push the ground away from you, elevating your shoulders and elongating your neck. It can be easy in the beginning to look in between your arms on the floor for balance. As you go into the posture it can be helpful to shift the weight forwards into the shoulders and towards the fingertips as you lift up.

You can also use a wall to kick up towards and then find your balance with both legs and see if you can get off the wall one leg at a time. If you use this technique where you kick up with one leg at a time squeezing the other thigh in towards your belly make sure that you repeat the same amount of kick-ups on the other side as well. It can also help to practice with a block in between your hands (palms flat on the ground, block placed in between your thumb and index finger). Remember to rest in your '42. Dolphin', Forward Fold or Child's Pose in between your attempts, so that you don't exhaust your shoulders. Forearm Stands require a lot of shoulder strength and therefore patience to get there.

The clue is to get a real lift and push into your shoulder girdles to lift yourself off the ground. If you're a more advanced practitioner and you're used to getting into your Forearm Stand, try to work on your straight line. See if you can challenge yourself with switching your gaze and letting your neck be an elongation of your spine so that the crown of your head is pointing towards the floor without touching the floor. If you want to play with Hollow Back or Scorpion variations, that is always an option for more advanced practitioners.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 1. Cat Cow
- 2. Shoulder Warm Up
- 7. Open Chest
- 8. Neck
- 10. Core
- 11. Sun Salutations A
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 22. Wide-Legged Forward Bend (with a block squeezed between the bent elbows)
- 36. Locust Pose
- 46. Headstand
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 49. Dolphin
- 51. Plank Pose
- 72. Handstand

FAST FORWARD to

- 9. Thread the Needle
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 49. Dolphin
- 59. Child's Pose
- 72. Handstand

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: stretches diaphragm and increases blood flow to the lungs. Enhances breathing, strengthening the breathing muscles
- Digestion: stimulates the digestive system
- Strength: strengthens the shoulders, arms, buttocks, legs (hamstrings, hip flexors, and inner thigh muscles), core, serratus muscles, side core, and back muscles
- Flexibility: stretches the shoulders, neck, and chest (and belly in scorpion variation)
- Immune system: stimulates the lymphatic system, and boosts your immune system
- Organs and hormones: stimulates the abdominal organs including the reproductive. Can be therapeutic for diabetics. Can help relieve the symptoms of menopause. Stimulates the pituitary and pineal glands
- Posture: strengthens the spine and core, and improves alignment. Improves bone health
- Brain: calms the brain and nervous system. May help relieve stress and mild depression. Improves sense of balance. Enhances blood flow to the brain increasing focus and energy. Boosts your mood through play!

## **72. Handstand - Adho Mukha Vrksasana**

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Neck-, back, or shoulder injury
- Headache
- Heart condition
- HBP
- Pregnancy

**How to PLAY the pose:** There are many ways to get into your Handstand. Here we describe the way from '61. Standing Split'. But don't worry if you don't manage your '61. Standing Split' you can still work on your Handstand in other ways. From '61. Standing Split', place your hands firmly into the ground shoulder distance apart, quite close to your standing leg (your toes are almost in line with where your palm starts, that will make it easier to get up). Press all four corners of the palm down into the mat, fingers are extended wide but not too wide because you want more stability forward and backward, than from side to side. Bend your fingers slightly to grab down into the mat (spider hands). Push the ground away from you as much as you can,

elevating your shoulders towards your ears, slightly curve your upper back. From here strongly engage your core, and make sure to lean forward to get your shoulders right above your wrists before you kick up into your Handstand. This is important to avoid kicking up with a banana back, and it will help with your stability. Tuck your pelvis to elongate your lumbar spine, engaging your core and pelvic floor muscles. If you lose your engagement in your pelvic floor, the tilt in your pelvis, or collapse into your shoulders you will lose your balance. You need that strength in order to master Handstand over time. With your leg lifted in '61. Standing Split', bend your standing leg and do a small jump, moving forward first so that your shoulders come above the wrists, and then getting your hips stacked above your shoulders as well. Try to create a straight line with your torso. Aim to lift your lifted leg straight up to the ceiling. Your standing leg is the one that you're kicking up with and here I want you to aim at bending the knee and bringing the thigh of this leg in towards the belly. This way you can also have stability and avoid falling over backwards while you learn to find a straight line. This is also therefore a safer way to practice in the middle of the room. If you feel like you are about to fall, you also can cartwheel yourself to one side. You can take this to the wall if you are more comfortable learning to kick up with your back towards the wall. Make sure to not be too far away from the wall when you practice in the beginning.

When you are in your Handstand, aim at straightening both legs up to the ceiling and try to find that straight line. Important here is to engage the core, pulling the lower ribs in to really engage your TVAs (transverse abdominals) squeeze your buttocks, squeeze your legs together, and the elevation/lift in your shoulders. In the beginning it can be easier to look down on the floor in between your hands, but with time try to practice to elongate your neck looking forward, shifting the gaze. You can jump up into your Handstand, trying to find some hang time and include that in your practice to build strength in your shoulders which is a great way to get a sense of finding a balance upside down without worrying too much that you don't hold it for long. Repeat as many times as you want. It is OK just to play. Remember to repeat on the other leg as well, so you're not building an asymmetrical strength on one side with your dominant leg.

Option tuck jump entry: if it's easier for you to practice getting into the Handstand with tuck jumps you can do that from your '41. Downward Facing Dog'. Try to jump forwards and engage your core to stop your movement when your shoulders are above your wrists and your buttocks are above your shoulders, or slightly beyond. Pull your thighs in towards your belly and heels in towards your glutes and try to balance here. This kind of jumping can also create strength and stability. If you are balancing in the middle of the room and notice that you are falling forward in the direction of your fingers, press strongly into your fingers. If you are noticing that you are falling backwards use your shoulders to stabilize, pushing the shoulders slightly back. Try to have a plan on how you will fall out of your Handstand.

#### **Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 1. Cat Cow
- 2. Shoulder Warm Up
- 5. Wrist Warm Up
- 8. Neck
- 10. Core
- 11. Sun Salutations A
- 12. Sun Salutations B
- 13. Mountain Pose
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 36. Locust Pose
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 51. Plank Pose
- 54. Crow Pose
- 69. Standing Split (suggested right before)
- 71. Forearm Stand

FAST FORWARD to

- 5. Wrist Warm Up
- 9. Thread the Needle
- 11. Sun Salutations A
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 22. Wide-Legged Forward Bend
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 50. Upward Table or Upward Plank
- 59. Child's Pose
- 60. Seated Forward Fold

- 71. Forearm Stand

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: stretches the diaphragm and increases blood flow to the lungs. Enhances breathing, strengthening the breathing muscles
- Digestion: stimulates the digestive system
- Strength: strengthens the shoulders, arms, buttocks, legs (hamstrings, hip flexors, and inner thigh muscles), core, serratus muscles, side core, and back muscles
- Immune system: stimulates the lymphatic system, and boosts your immune system
- Organs and hormones: stimulates the abdominal organs including the reproductive. Can be therapeutic for diabetics. Can help relieve the symptoms of menopause. Stimulates the pituitary and pineal glands
- Posture: strengthens the spine and core, and improves alignment. Improves bone health
- Brain: calms the brain and nervous system. May help relieve stress and mild depression. Improves sense of balance. Enhances blood flow to the brain increasing focus and energy. Boosts your mood through play!

### 73. Bird of Paradise Pose - Svarga Dvijasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Be mindful with your hamstrings, consider skipping if they are tired.
- Pelvic pain
- Pregnancy
- HBP
- Weak ankles
- Sensibility or injuries in the shoulders, hip, or back.

**How to PLAY the pose:** From '23. Extended Side Angle Pose', find the bind like in '26. Extended Side Angle Bind'. Walk or step the back foot in so that it is next to the front foot. Keeping the bind, shift your weight into the unbinded leg and slowly lift the heel of the leg with the bind. Find your balance then slowly lift the binded leg up along with your chest as you rise towards a standing position.

Keep your hips squared, draw your shoulders back, and take a moment to find your balance by pressing into your standing foot and fixing your gaze on one point in front of you. Option to extend the lifted leg or keep the knee bent. If you extend the leg, ensure your chest stays open and you do not round your spine. If you cannot bind, use a strap to bring you into this challenging balance.

You can come out the same way you went in, or simply release the bind and lower the leg to Mountain Pose. Remember to do the other side.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 23. Extended Side Angle Pose
- 26. Extended Side Angle Binds
- 13. Mountain pose

FAST FORWARD to

- 68. Half Moon
- 14. Standing Forward Fold
- 23. Extended Side Angle Pose
- 26. Extended Side Angle Binds
- 13. Mountain Pose

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**



- Flexibility: intense opening in the hips, in the shoulder, and around the heart. Focus on bringing shoulders back and down to keep the chest open.
- Organs and hormones: may reduce menstrual discomfort and stimulate heart function.
- Posture: develops awareness around hips, and chest. Plus challenges the ability to balance on one foot.

## 74. Flying Pigeon - Pada Galavasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Wrist, shoulder, or hip sensitivity and/or injuries
- Pay attention if you are not yet in control of the weight distribution of your body weight on your hands. Be mindful of elongating the spine and projecting the heart forward as it is common to see a rounding of the spine, go slow.

**How to PLAY the pose:** Start in '58. Figure 4'. Keeping your standing knee bent, fold forward from your hips to lower your upper body down, folding your chest over your thighs. Release your hands to the ground, placing them shoulder width apart, and slightly forward (so you have the possibility to bring your weight forward, and not straight up).

Keep your gaze forward, hook the foot of the bent leg to the outside of the upper arm and press the knee into the flesh of your other bicep. Press all four corners of your hands into the ground as you shift your weight forwards and lift the back heel. Engage your core to find balance and keep your arms strong as you lift the toes and then the leg up. You can either keep the floating leg bent or extend it upwards. Your chest is pressing forward and up and the back (floating) leg should remain engaged.

To come out, bend the floating leg and release the foot to the ground. Walk your hands back to your standing foot as you straighten the leg and rise to standing. Repeat on the other side.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 58. Figure 4
- 63. Pigeon pose

FAST FORWARD to

- 28. 3 Legged Dog
- 48. Downward Facing Dog
- 43. Fallen Triangle
- 30. Tree pose

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: enhances the need to breathe fluidly otherwise the pose cannot be sustained.
- Digestion: stimulates digestion.
- Strength: upper body, arms, and shoulder as well as deep core muscles.
- Flexibility: deep hip opener as well as opening the hamstrings and calves.
- Organs: abdominal organs are stimulated, as well as focusing more on the activation of the pelvic floor muscles.
- Brain: deepens your focus and oxygenates the brain with new blood flow.

## Category 9. SLOW DOWN

This category is composed of typical poses to help you slow down and take in the practice towards its end, no matter how dynamic it has been. To center yourself, release tension, and end with some calm. Tuning in. All the cards can be used in sequence as numbered as a longer slowdown. But you can also just choose some of them. However, the last three cards are a typical end to your practice. We recommend always ending with these three cards in sequence.

Additionally the positions of slowdown can be used as counterposes after for instance backbends and to have a moment of pause during your practice. Lastly these positions themselves are quite powerful, and can be used to create a slow and

restorative complete practice to e.g. calm the brain and nervous system, boost your immune system and improve your sleep.

## 75. Supine Twist - Supta Matsyendrasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- SI joint or back injury or pain (choose gentle variation with both legs bent, and support with pillows if you need to)
- Shoulder injury (adjust your arm and shoulder position according to what feels OK for you)
- Neck injury (keep a neutral neck looking up)
- Pregnancy: avoid

**How to PLAY the pose:** Start by lying on your back and place your right foot beside your left knee resting your left hand on your right knee. Extend your right arm at 45 degrees out from your shoulder, resting it on the ground. Bring your right knee across your body, toward the floor. Try and see if you can keep both shoulders on the ground. Let the knee be heavy and go in the direction of the ground. Seeking to work towards having both the right knee and right shoulder on the ground as you twist. Alternatively, you can lift your shoulder off the ground or place a pillow under the knee if the twist becomes too intense. Another alternative is to try bending both knees to relieve the twist slightly. Try to have your extended left leg in line with your spine. Inhale back to center and do the other side. Stay in the position for quite some time, breath.

Sleep. If the variation with the extended leg is too intense, then have both knees bent and let them both fall to the same side, for a gentler variation.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

A good position to neutralize the spine and release tension, as an alternative to forward folds.

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Lungs: stretches and strengthens the breathing muscles
- Heart: can be therapeutic for hypertension/HBP because it has a calming effect on your nervous system. Choose a gentle variation
- Digestion: stimulates digestion
- Flexibility: elongates and stretches the spine and opens the chest
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs and hormones: stimulates the abdominal organs
- Posture: stretches and elongates the spine and improves alignment
- Brain: calms the brain and nervous system
- Sleep: can help improve sleep. If the variation with the extended leg is too intense, then have both knees bent and let them both fall to the same side, for a gentler variation.

## 76. Reclining Bound Angle Pose - Supta Baddha Konasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Groin, knee, or lower back injury (adjust feet position, closer or further away from the pelvis, make sure to adapt with bolsters and pillows until you are comfortable)
- Pregnancy: when laying on your back for an extended period of time, pay attention to numbness in the legs, or if you experience any dizziness then move onto your side (particularly towards the middle of the second trimester and onwards.)

**How to PLAY the pose:** Start by laying on your back, bring the soles of your feet together and let your knees fall out wide to the side. Bring your heels closer to your pelvis if you want a more intense stretch. Explore by moving your heels and feet further away for a different stretch. If this is too intense for your knees, you can place pillows under them on either side. Let your palms face upwards, with your arms relaxed out to the side, alongside your body. Relax your face, and tune into your breathing. Stay here for five to ten slow breaths.

Sleep. For restorative variation for sleep, you can place pillows under your knees, or even have a bolster or pillows along your spine and head to have your chest slightly lifted and open. Make sure your buttocks are on the ground if you choose to do this variation, and that your lower back is comfortable.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 6. Butterfly
- 30. Tree Pose

FAST FORWARD to

- 77. Happy Baby
- 78. Knees to Chest
- 79. Feet Up the Wall

Additional information: you can also use this card in your warm up, instead of for instance '6. Butterfly', to open your hips, if you want to start your practice laying down.

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Heart: stimulates the heart and improves general circulation.
- Flexibility: stretches the inner thighs, groins, and knees
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs: stimulates abdominal organs including the ovaries and prostate gland, bladder, and kidneys. May help relieve the symptoms of menstruation discomfort and menopause
- Brain: calms the brain and nervous system. It may help alleviate stress and mild depression
- Sleep: may help improve sleep. Restorative variation for sleep; you can place pillows under your knees, or even have a bolster or pillows along your spine and head to have your chest slightly lifted and open. Make sure your buttocks are on the ground if you choose to do this variation, and that your lower back is comfortable.

## **77. Happy Baby - Ananda Balasana**

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Knee or hip injury
- Pregnancy: when laying on your back for an extended period of time, pay attention to numbness in the legs, or if you experience any dizziness then move onto your side (particularly towards the middle of the second trimester and onwards.)

**How to PLAY the pose:** Laying on your back. Bring your knees out wide to each side of your torso, with the soles of the feet facing upwards towards the sky. Hold onto the outside of your feet, or alternatively further down on your calves if you are not able to reach your feet whilst keeping your spine, shoulders, and head on the ground. Keep your buttocks on the ground. Rock from side to side if you like a happy baby, if you want to give yourself a bit of massage and love.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 59. Child's Pose
- 78. Knees to Chest

Additional information: you can also use this card at the beginning of your practice or as an alternative to forward folds to neutralize the spine.

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Heart: Slows the heart rate. Can be calming. Since your feet are lifted higher than your heart, consult your doctor to make sure you can do this position
- Digestion: helps the digestive system and problems with constipation and bloating
- Flexibility: gently stretches the glutes, back of the thighs, groin, and back
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs: stimulates the abdominal organs including the kidneys and reproductive organs

- Posture: Gently stretches and releases tension in the lower back and the sacrum
- Brain: calms the brain and nervous system. Can help relieve stress and fatigue
- Sleep: may help improve sleep.

## 78. Knees to Chest - Apanasana

### Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:

Pregnancy (keep your legs wide, do not squeeze the belly), and when laying on your back for an extended period of time, pay attention to numbness in the legs, or if you experience dizziness, then move over to the side (particularly towards the middle of the second trimester and onwards).

**How to PLAY the pose:** Start by laying on your back. Bend your knees and bring your thighs toward your belly, heels towards your calves/buttocks. Hold on to your shins, knees or back of the thighs. Relax. Give yourself a good hug. You deserve it. Rock from side to side, to massage your lumbar spine. A good counter pose for any backbend.

### Where to PLAY the pose:

Additional information: you can use this card to neutralize the spine, after for instance backbends.

### The benefits of PLAYING the pose:

- Heart: Slows the heart rate. Can be calming. Since your feet are lifted higher than your heart, consult your doctor to make sure you can do this position
- Digestion: massages the abdomen and improves digestion. Reduces bloating. It may be therapeutic for colitis
- Flexibility: stretches the lower back
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs: stimulates the abdominal organs including the reproductive organs
- Brain: calms the brain and nervous system. Can help with relieving headaches, migraine, stress, and fatigue
- Sleep: may help improve sleep

## 79. Feet Up the Wall - Viparita Karani

### Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:

- Heart condition consult your doctor
- Pregnancy: when laying on your back for an extended period of time, pay attention to numbness in the legs, or if you experience dizziness then move over to your side (particularly towards the middle of the second trimester and onwards).

**How to PLAY the pose:** Lay down on the ground with your buttocks close to the wall. Let your feet rest up towards the wall. Your legs and feet can be relaxed. If you want you can also place a pillow or block under your buttocks, resting on the sacrum for a slightly different lower back release and a gentle lift through the pelvis. Close your eyes with your arms relaxed. Enjoy.

### Where to PLAY the pose:

REWIND and find

- Any position this is a great way to end your practice.

FAST FORWARD to

- 80. Savasana

### The benefits of PLAYING the pose:

- Heart: may be therapeutic for HBP and LBP. Can be beneficial to stimulate the heart in an inversion that is not too intense. Since your feet are lifted higher than your heart, always consult your doctor to make sure you can do this exercise. Come in and out of the posture slowly
- Digestion: increased blood flow to the abdomen, improves digestion
- Flexibility: gently stretches the back of the legs, front of the torso, and the back of the neck
- Immune system: boosts the immune system

- Organs and hormones: may be helpful for women during the menstrual cycle or premenstrual symptoms to relieve cramps and relax the abdomen. Can be therapeutic for urinary disorders
- Posture: relieves tired or cramped legs and feet, and reduces swelling. Releases tension in the lower back
- Brain: calms the brain and nervous system. Can help relieve stress, fatigue, mild depression, migraine, and headache
- Sleep: can help improve sleep.

## 80. Savasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Back injury or discomfort: place a bolster or pillows under your knees to elongate your lumbar spine.
- Pregnancy: when laying on your back for an extended period of time, pay attention to numbness in the legs, or if you experience dizziness then move over to your side (particularly towards the middle of the second trimester and onwards)

**How to PLAY the pose:** Lay down on your back. Let your feet fall gently out to the side. Let your arms fall down alongside but a little away from your body. Palms facing upwards. Relax your face and your jaw. Relax your whole body and soften the muscles. Tune into your natural breathing. If it is uncomfortable for your lower back, you can place a pillow under your knees. Take your time in Savasana to just be. Tune into how your body feels after the practice. Do not skip Savasana, take at least two minutes, preferably five to ten, or even fifteen. Lay in total stillness to absorb all the benefits of your practice. Take your time, this is what you came for!

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- Your practice

FAST FORWARD to

- 81. Fetal pose
- 82. Namaste

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Heart: helps to lower blood pressure and slows the heart rate
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Brain: calms the brain and nervous system. Can help alleviate stress, mild depression, headache, and fatigue
- Sleep: can help battle insomnia.

## 81. Fetal Pose - Parsva Savasana

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**

- Shoulder injury: adapt so that you are comfortable
- Neck injury: place a pillow under your head to be comfortable

**How to PLAY the pose:** From Savasana, slowly move your fingers and toes. Softly bring movement back into the body and in your own time bend your knees and bring your thighs to your belly and you roll over to the right side. Here you can extend your right arm out, or have it under your head (whatever feels most comfortable). Relax and take a moment to feel how it feels to stay in this safe and supported position. This is a great place to think about three things that you are grateful for in your life. To conclude the practice. When you're ready, in a very relaxed way, use the arms to support yourself up to. If you want to stay for a long time (for instance for a sleep sequence) you can place a pillow or bolster in between your knees and ankles, or even under your head.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**

REWIND and find

- 80. Savasana

FAST FORWARD to

- 82. Namaste

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Heart: slows the heart rate. Calms the brain and nervous system and can therefore be beneficial for the heart
- Digestion: lying on the left side is good for digestion, it encourages the food waste to move in the right direction in your colon
- Immune system: boosts the immune system
- Organs and hormones: stimulates the abdominal organs especially on the left side (when lying on the left side) like the pancreas and spleen
- Brain: calms the brain and nervous system. This is a comforting position that the primitive part of the brain recognizes as safe, from when you were in your mother's womb
- Sleep: can help improve sleep.

## 82. Namaste

**Take precautions (or skip) PLAYING if you have:**  
Knee pain or injury (adapt)

**How to PLAY the pose:** Find a comfortable seated position from the introduction, Correct Seated posture. Place your hands with palms together in front of your heart, thumbs are touching your sternum in the middle of your chest. Close your eyes. This is the time where you thank yourself for showing up on the mat today. This is also a good time to come back to any intention that you might have set at the beginning of your practice. Before you open your eyes. Try to intentionally think about how you might want to bring some of the peacefulness with you into the rest of your day.

**Where to PLAY the pose:**  
PLAY to start and finish your practice.

**The benefits of PLAYING the pose:**

- Heart: slows the heart rate. Calms the brain and nervous system and can therefore be beneficial for the heart
- Immune system: the meditative effect boosts your immune system by calming your nervous system
- Posture: sitting in an upright position with your back tall, helps to correct your seated posture
- Brain: calms the mind and nervous system
- Sleep: can help improve sleep.

Abbreviations:

LBP – low blood pressure

HBP – high blood pressure

**And now, it is time to: Log off and tune in!**

**Let's play!**

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