

Vinyasa Yoga Home Practice Book

Anthony Grim Hall



Vinyasa Krama Yoga Sequences

Vinyasa Krama Subroutines and practice notes



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VINYASA KRAMA PRACTICE NOTES AND GUIDELINES

NOTES from Ramaswami's Complete book of Vinyasa Yoga

WHAT IS VINYASA KRAMA ?

Vinyasa Krama = Movement and Sequence methodology

'Each of the important postures are practiced with elaborate vinyasas (variations).'

'Each variation is linked to the next one by a succession of special transitional movements synchronised by the breath'

PARAMETERS ?
(from Yoga sutras 2.46)

STEADINESS (sthira)

COMFORT (sukha)

SMOOTH + LONG BREATHING (pratyatana sithila)

THE BREATH

'Smooth inhalations accompanying expansive movements'

BREATH RATE?

We average 15 breaths a minute

In our asana practice we aim for 4-6 breaths a minute.

This could come down to as little as 2 per minute in some postures *e.g.* inversions

STYLE OF BREATH?

UJJAYI

Breath out making a hahhhhhh sound now breath in making the same sound now breathe in making the same hahhh sound.

By constricting the throat a little more a little less we can make the hissing sound stronger or lighter/louder or softer.

This is Ujjayi

The breath connects the mind with the body.

HOW?

Direct your attention inside your chest

Locate where you feel your breath centered, where inhalation appears to start and where exhalation converges.

Focus attention here for a few breaths, then engage ujjayi, a rubbing sensation in the throat.

Finally connect your breath to your movements.

The flow of breath is like the flow of oil, smooth and uniform.

HOW LONG DO WE STAY IN POSTURES?

Many postures may be repeated 3-6 times (often going a little deeper into the pose each time). Stay for 2-6 breaths.

Some postures have the option of extended stays EG. Paschimottanasana 5-10 minutes Maha Mudra 5 minutes each side Shoulderstand 5-10 minutes Headstand 10-20 minutes

ANATTA SAMAPATTI ?

Focus mentally on the breath

Asana with variation and coordinated breathing

HOW LONG TO PRACTICE ?

Krishnamacharya would have Ramaswami practice 40 minutes of asana, 20 minutes of Pranayama, Meditation or Chanting.

HAVE A PLAN!

BANDHAS?

As we become more confident with our asana we should begin to work on engaging the bandhas as these can help to steady us in our postures.

Jalandhara bandha

'There are three important bandhas. the first is jalandhara bandha, or locking the chin against the breastbone. This may be done during kumbhkas and whenever the posture requires the chin to be locked, which is normally the case during forward bends and when keeping the back erect. In backbends and twisting postures it is not possible to do jalandhara bandha'. p127

Mula and Uddiyana bandha

'The other two bandhas, however, should be practiced in most of the asanas, especially after exhalation. The first is mula bandha, which means "constricting of the anus" It is done after a complete exhalation. After the exhalation is over, the abhyasi (yoga student) should anchor the body in the asana he or she is in and then slowly and deliberately close the anus and draw in the rectum by contracting the perineal and surrounding muscles of the pelvic floor. Then as if in a continuous movement, the abdomen, including the navel, is drawn in, pushing up the diaphragm into the now almost empty chest cavity, which is then called uddiyana bandha (drawing in of the diaphragm)... This technique is one of the specialities of yogic breathing" p127

PERFECTION IN POSTURE?

'When one is able to stay in the posture (utkatasana) for three to six breaths, then one should slowly increase the time to complete a stipulated number of breaths.

Thereafter, one should remain in the posture for a predetermined number of breaths chosen by the practitioner or teacher, or for a fixed period, say three to five minutes. Then one's practice should be aimed at reducing the number of breaths while remaining in the posture for the same duration. for instance one may take a total of twenty breaths while in the posture. Later on, it may be possible to remain in the posture steadily and comfortably (sthira and sukha) for five minutes with perhaps only ten breaths. This is one method for attaining asana siddhi (perfection in posture) that one can test of oneself. Having achieved this level of comfort in the posture, one can then introduce the bandhas, which will increase the time taken for each breath.

Srivatsa Ramaswami Yoga for the Three Stages of Life P 127

HOW TO PRACTICE VINYASA YOGA

CORE VINYASA KRAMA POSTURES

Ramaswami recommends we practice a long Paschimottanasa (Seated forward bend), Sarvangasana (shoulder stand) and Sirsasana (headstand) daily.

Ideally we would aim to stay at least

5 minutes in Paschimottanasana Page 117

5 Minutes in Sarvangasana Page 194

While working towards shoulder stand we can work on Dwi padapitam or perhaps lat with our legs elevated against a wall.

10 minutes in Sirsasana Page 223

While working towards headstand we may stay in a Vajrasana vinyasa p156, our head on the floor and hips raised high or in headstand preparation position but without kicking up into the full headstand.

5 more minutes in Sirsasana.

The Hasta (hand/arm) variations page 20, Maha mudra page 94, Bahdha konasana page 133 and Padmasana page 259 might also be considered if key postures to include in your daily practice

HOW TO BUILD A DAILY PRACTICE WHILE EXPLORING VINYASA KRAMA SUBROUTINES.

If you're a complete beginner

Begin by exploring the On your feet sequence subroutines starting on Page 20 while concentrating on linking the breath with the arm movements.

When these become comfortable look to the first few movements in the different subroutines in each of the sequences. The movements often become more challenging as the subroutine progresses, be prepared to stop after the first few postures and then look at the next subroutine.

If you've practiced other styles of yoga.

You might like to explore different vinyasas from those in your regular style. Find a posture you're familiar with from your own style and perhaps include in your practice the postures that come before and after it in the subroutine or substitute a different subroutine altogether from the same sequence from which your own posture derives.

Example. If you practice Ardha badha padmotanasana the one legged bound half lotus standing forward bend (page 69) you might practice the preceding forward bend without the bind or attempt the challenging squat. Alternatively you might like to substitute the Standing marichi subroutine (page 72) for Ardha badha padmotanasana.

Another approach is to build a practice around the core and key postures Ramaswami recommends on Page 17, by including the subroutines from which they derive and adding other subroutines from the different sequences.

The practice book has been designed so as to explore a different subroutine each day, perhaps adding the new subroutine to the core and key asana.

At the end of each sequence there is a breakdown sheet of the different subroutines, as you are familiar with all or most of the subroutines you might

choose to practice the sequence as a whole.

VINYASA KRAMA SEQUENCES

ON YOUR FEET SEQUENCE

Day 1 : Hasta Vinyasas Subroutine



Samasthitி copy



Parsva bharga



Lifting pelvis



Purva bharga



stretching out of pelvis



Elbow movement



Hands crossed on shoulders



Hands on same shoulders



hands locked behind



Locked at elbows



Prishthanjali



Arms raised back bend

Day 1 : Hasta Vinyasas Subroutine Practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Hasta vinyasas is the first subroutine I include in my Vinyasa Yoga Practice Book, it's from the *On your feet* sequence and is how I start my practice every morning whether I'm practicing Ashtanga or Vinyasa Krama.

Two things I particularly remember from Ramaswami's TT course in LA

Balance

Ramaswami would have us take a moment while standing to focus on our balance, he would have us sway slightly forward and back and to the sides and then have us bring our hips slightly forward, makes such a difference with all the upcoming arm movements.

Raising the hips.

This was one of only two times I remember Ramaswami giving hands on adjustment and encouraging us to give the same to each other. He would have us stand behind each other, put our hands on our partners hips, then as they began the arm movements he would have us lift up their hips, higher and higher as they stretched and then hold the hips up as the arms lowered and then raised again.

This raising of the pelvis, and aiming to keep it raised throughout most of the *On your feet* sequence has been a important focus of my practice ever since. I raise my pelvis on that long slow inhalation and then when it won't lift any further I try to stretch out of my pelvis altogether and with each movement I try to bring it back up and keep it there.

This can be a surprisingly intense and focused subroutine.

This lifting out of the pelvis gets carried over into other subroutines and sequences, seated and Asymmetric come to mind right from the start in Dandasana (staff pose).

Day 2 : Parsva-bhangis (side movements) Subroutine



Parsva bhanga left side



Parsva bhanga right side



Parsva Bhangi II



Parsva bhangi vinyasa



Parsva bhanga vinyasa



Parsva bhangi Prishtanjali



Parsva Bhangi prishtanjali

Day 2 : Parsva-bhangis (side movements) Subroutine Practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTSTIPS SUGGESTIONS

After the backbends in Day 1's hasta subroutine I tend to do a variation of the fourth picture over on the left. I take my arms up twist to the left and then lean back, a kind of twisting variation of the hasta backbends. It was good then this morning to spend some time on the full twisting subroutine. Parsva bhanga itself, that leaning over to the side posture in the first two pictures, was something I neglected for a long time, I just plain forgot about it. Since rediscovering it a few months back I include it every morning, getting much deeper into the posture now than in the pictures on the left.

Balance is a problem in all of these, the trick I find is to really ground the opposite foot from the direction your twisting. So if your twisting to the right as in pictures 3, 5 and 7, press the LEFT foot down into your mat. However, as you come back to centre it's a good idea to relax the foot little by little as you turn back otherwise it sends you off balance.

Something I noticed this morning was the tendency to allow the opposite shoulder to the directing your twisting drift in a little. So again, if your twisting to the right you need to be mindful of your left shoulder, make sure you keep both shoulders back (though allowing the shoulder blades to drop down the back, don't bunch), you should feel as if both your arms are being stretched outward as you turn on the big inhalation. Ramaswami talks of expansive movements.

My notes on these subroutine posts are just practice notes in the sense of my own experience of practicing the postures and sequences. They're no substitute for Ramaswami's more detailed instructions.

After this subroutine this morning I carried on through the rest of the on your feet sequence, then into some standing before moving on to the bow sequence, some drop backs and a little of meditative so as to include Kapo. After the backbends I used paschimottanasana as a counter pose and then carried on into the shoulder stand and it's prep, a long headstand and some baddha konasana and lotus work.

Day 3 : Uttanasana (forward bend) Subroutine



Ardha Uttanasana



Purna uttanasana



Purna uttanasana



Niralamba Uttanasana 1



Niralamba uttanasana 2



Niralamba uttanasana 3



Parsva bharga uttanasana



Parsva bharga uttanasana



Kurmiasana vinyasa



Tiryang mukha Uttanasana



Tiryang mukha uttanasana

Day 3 : Uttanasana (forward bend) Subroutine Practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Big important subroutine this, deepest forward bend to one of the deepest backbends.

Forward bend first.

Most of the notes I add to these posts will be little tips and hints that have come up in my practice while working with the subroutines over the last couple of years or perhaps carry overs from the Ashtanga community that might be useful in the Vinyasa Krama context. This one though concerns safety.

Engage your bandhas and stick your backside out!

When I practice forward bend I have the seated forward bend, paschimottanasana, in mind. Ramaswami would encourage us to stretch out of our hips as we folded over. This was the only other posture I remember him giving a hands on assist. He would come behind us, put his hands above the coccyx, push the sacrum forward and keep pushing forward while we were in the pose, then he would encourage us to take turns doing the same on each other.

I'm also reminded of a video I saw of Dharma Mittra demonstrating paschimottanasana. He would have you sit with your knees slightly bent and then shuffle back so your sitting forward on your sit bones which helps to flatten the legs, taking your backside further and further back before folding over.

All these are reminders that the forward bend is happening from the hips rather than starting at the spine. In that first picture above, stretch up out of your pelvis as before and then as you bend over from the hip really stick your backside out, push it back, it's kind of like a counterweight, same thing happens in a headstand when you bring your legs down into inverted staff, your backside goes further and further back, if it didn't you'd fall out of your headstand.

This takes a lot of the pressure off your back.

Notice the first picture is Ardha Uttanasana, half forward bend. Ramaswami would have us fold to there and then come back up, we might repeat that 2-6 times and that might be as far as your comfortable going. You could then do the other hand/arm variations in the half bend rather than the full. Of course you could work into it too, start with disa uttanasana (sanskrit check, quarter forward bend?) or less and work up to half bend.

When I started yoga five years ago my hands could only reach half way down my shins.

Another way to take some pressure off your back in forward bending is to engage the bandhas, more on these in a future post (there are notes at the beginning of my book) Simply put for now, contract your anus, draw it up, with some practice you'll feel like you're gripping the base of your spine, Ramaswami has a fishing rod analogy, holding the base of the spine like the handle of a fishing rod. You should feel your stomach come back and up a little too, encourage that, suck it back a little further, up a little more. Bandhas help give you a firm, secure base to begin your bending whether forward or back.

Backbending.

The bandhas help with the backbends too, think fishing rod whenever you do backbends and hold firmly onto the base of your spine.

In Ashtanga we call the Tiryang mukha Uttanasana mini subroutine we see here a dropback and there are hundreds of blog posts on it (fifty odd on mine alone). It's challenging and something to work towards. Unless you're eight in which case you'll probably drop back into it without even thinking.

You might want to work at urdhva Danurasana in the bow sequence first, become comfortable there and strong in your arms and shoulders lifting up into it there before trying to drop back into it here.

If this is a posture that's available to you then a couple of tips that have worked for me lately are..

1. Ramaswami's fishing rod analogy above, engaging the bandhas so it feels like you're gripping the base of your spine and holding on all the way down and back up.

2. Remembering that this is a back stretch rather than back bend, really stretch up and lift out of your pelvis. The backstretch begins in your toes and ends in your fingertips.

3. Just as with the forward bend don't think of this as a spinal bend but rather that it begins at the hips. Where you pushed your hips back in Uttanasan above, here you push your hips forward, as far forward as possible.

4. It's good to work at the wall as you practice this. Take a few steps out from the wall and drop back as far down the wall as feels comfortable and use the wall to push off to come back up, remembering to start the return motion by shifting your hips forward.

keep working a little further down the wall.

I still find dropping back near the wall for the first couple useful. I can do it without it but it takes the pressure off for the first couple of these and thus any strain. I might tap lightly off the wall coming up the first one or two,

I tend to do five to seven of these. The first couple I tap off the wall the next three I just come up to standing and then drop back again. The last two I'll come up and then fold over into my forward bend.

5. be mindful when moving from the backbend to the forward bend, don't forget to go from shifting your hips forward for the backbend to shifting them back, sticking your backside out for the forward bend

6. Ramaswami seems to have you doing the backbend with your feet together as in most of the On your feet sequence. I find this challenging, it's unstable. I've done it that way but I prefer to have my feet a little apart.

7. Ramaswami also talks about coming up on the exhalation. I've always done it on the inhalation although coming up on the exhalation is interesting, I'll often do both.

8. Feet feet turned out or lifting heels? Both are probably bad habits. I used to turn my feet out now I keep them closer together and parallel but lift my heels a little as I drop back the last little bit and just as I come up.

9. If you're about to drop back for the first time, you're confident in your urdhava danhurasana, you've been dropping back half way to the wall for a little while and as you work on your backbend you can see the floor, you're feeling brave. OK, one last tip, KEEP YOUR ARMS STRONG. The tendency is to collapse your arms a little as you land which means your the top of your head bangs against the mat ([see HERE](#)). If you keep your arms strong as your hands touch the mat you should be fine.
10. Type backbending or drop back into my Ashtanga blog, you'll find a lot of posts with all kinds of ideas. most of these come from the community, tips and hints that have worked for others.

Day 4 : Ardha utkatasana (half squat) Subroutine



Ardha Utkatasana



Ardha Utkatasana



Ardha Utkatasana



Ardha Utkatasana



Ardha Utkatasana

Day 4 : Ardha utkatasana (half squat) Subroutine Practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTS/TIPS SUGGESTIONS

I was verysuspicious of the bandhas for a long time, Ashtangi's seemed to refer to them as if they were pixie dust. You want to lift up in utpluthi, "engage the bandhas". You want to jump back, "engage the bandhas", you want to get to the end of the sequence without turning into quivering mush, "ENGAGE THOSE BANDHAS MARINE". I was also 'slightly' resistant to anything that seemed to hint of 'new age'. I think I tended to lump the bandhas in with the chakras, all this talk of energy locks...., no thanks.

I still don't know if I buy into the energy lock idea, jury is still out on that one but I am convinced there's something going on with the bandhas, if only on a muscular level. Yesterday in Day 3's uttanasana subroutine I mentioned how Ramaswami uses the analogy of a fishing rod. Engaging the bandhas feels like it's holding firmly the base of the spine just as you would hold the handle of a fishing rod. It helps to make your backbends more secure and I would say your forward bends also.

In Yoga for the Three Stages of Life, Ramaswami writes about the bandhas in the context of Utkatasana, today and tomorrow's subroutines.

Jalandhara bandha

'There are three important bandhas. the first is jalandhara bandha, or locking the chin against the breastbone. This may be done during kumbhkas (breath retention) and whenever the posture requires the chin to be locked, which is normally the case during forward bends and when keeping the back erect. In backbends and twisting postures it is not possible to do jalandhara bandha'. p127

Mula and Uddiyana bandha

'The other two bandhas, however, should be practiced in most of the asanas, especially after exhalation. The first is mula bandha, which means "constricting of the anus" It is done after a complete exhalation. After the exhalation is over,

the abhyasi (yoga student) should anchor the body in the asana he or she is in and then slowly and deliberately close the anus and draw in the rectum by contracting the perineal and surrounding muscles of the pelvic floor. Then as if in a continuous movement, the abdomen, including the navel, is drawn in, pushing up the diaphragm into the now almost empty chest cavity, which is then called uddiyana bandha (drawing in of the diaphragm)... This technique is one of the specialities of yogic breathing" p127

Utkatasana is one of the best postures for first getting to grips with the bandhas, others are downward dog and tatkamudra (pond gesture) from the Supine sequence.

Ardha Utkatasana comes up in Ashtanga and I practiced it for a couple of years without really thinking about it. It's one of the, how should I say, leastcomplicated postures. There are no binds, no twists, you just squat a little. It's hard work but then in Ashtanga your only holding it for five breaths and to be honest it was a bit of a relief after the postures that had gone before. Later, when I began practicing 2nd series and had to do pasasana, the full squat and bind, I began to take the half squat more seriously, started to think about my alignment more, about using the bandhas to help with balance, make it more stable.

I had a big shock recently when I came across Ramaswami using Utkatasana as an example of how to work towards developing the parameters of yoga asana as introduced by Patanjali in the yoga sutras, steadiness and comfort (sthira and sukha).

'When one is able to stay in the posture (utkatasana) for three to six breaths, then one should slowly increase the time to complete a stipulated number of breaths. Thereafter, one should remain in the posture for a predetermined number of breaths chosen by the practitioner or teacher, or for a fixed period, say three to five minutes. Then one's practice should be aimed at reducing the number of breaths while remaining in the posture for the same duration. for instance one may take a total of twenty breaths while in the posture. Later on, it may be possible to remain in the posture steadily and comfortably (sthira and sukha) for five minutes with perhaps only ten breaths. This is one method for attaining asana siddhi (perfection in posture) that one can test of oneself. Having achieved this level of comfort in the posture, one can then introduce the bandhas, which will increase the time taken for each breath. P 127

I posted on this five minute Utkatasana HERE, hard work, what you don't see in the video is the pool of sweat that poured from my forehead after three minutes.

Today I practiced the half squat, Ardha Utkatasana. In ashtanga we practice it arms above our head, palms together. In Vinyasa Krama Ramaswami gives us four arm variations but you could probably use the other hand variations from Day 1, as well. This morning, with the focus on the subroutines this project is giving me, I included all the variations below. I entered and exited each of the variations on the breath, down on the inhale back up on the exhale, twice then on the third time held the posture for five long slow breaths. Just for luck I then did the first posture again and tried to hold it for five minutes, I managed three and that seemed plenty.

In this series of posts I'm focusing on each of the subroutines, doing them as in the book with all the variations and using Ramaswami's guidelines for developing sthhira and sukha, as outlined above. I'm staying longer, engaging the badhas more fully, looking to slow the breath and employ breath retention, really milking the subroutines for all they've got.

That would be one way to practice, pick one or two subroutines and practice them in this way, include Ramaswami's key postures, Paschimottanasana, shoulder stand and headstand and you probably have an hour practice.

My own approach is to include some but not all of the available vinyasas (variations) of a subroutine in my morning practice. I tend to do a shortened version of the On your feet sequence just as on Ramaswami's TT course. We learned the whole sequence over the first couple of days but then for the next four weeks just did a shortened version.

This morning I did a few of the hasta variations from Day One and a couple of the twists from Day two and about half of Day three. This saved me time for the full ardha Utkatasana subroutine above. I didn't practice the full squat (saving that for tomorrow) but moved on to some of the other Triangle and On one leg vinyasas, again not all the options available in the full subroutines. After standing I did most of Bow sequence then some seated before moving on to the inversions followed by some baddha konasana and lotus work.

One thing that is new in my practice and that I plan on keeping up is to aim to practice at least one subroutine fully and with all the variations available, a

different one every day perhaps, as in this series of posts.

Day 5 : Utkatasana (full squat) Subroutine



Utkatasana



Utkatasana



Utkatasana



Utkatasana



Utkatasana



Utkatasana

Day 5 : Utkatasana (full squat) Subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Utkatasana is of course the logical development from yesterdays ardha utkatasana (half squat) but can be practiced as a stand alone subroutine as can most of the subroutines in Ramaswami's book. We might choose to practice the half squat one day the full squat another.

In my practice I tend to do a mixture of both, so I might start with the hands out in front half squat version of the first variation below and then do the hands above head version of full utkatasana as in the third picture, both of these postures I might enter and exit on the breath but then aim for a long stay in the hands behind the back in prayer vinyasa of utkatasana, the 6th picture below.

The hands behind the back version is a tough posture and it can be challenging to stop yourself from falling back, yep done that. Bandhas help. I engage them and then have a mental image of a large hook attached to my mula bandha and hooked into the mat below. Jalandhara bandha, the chin lock also helps, also really laying on the ujjayi breath, constricting the throat more, all seem to help.

I like these postures, you feel them in the thigh muscles but I see them as prep for pasasana, a really nasty bind in utkatasana that will come up tomorrow.

Ramaswami used to talk about tapas postures, usually the On one leg vinyasas but I think these count too especially if you go for the full five minute stay, surely we earn a boon from the gods for that one.

In Ashtanga when working towards pasasana sometimes a rolled up towel under the heels is suggested and that might be an idea if you lack flexion in the ankle as a result of your bone structure.

The first posture might be attempted holding on to a chair for support, the others with your back against a wall if you need a little help while building up some strength in your legs

My left knee tends to play up a bit sometimes, old old injury. If you feel strain on the knee coming up put your hands to the mat and come up into uttanasana (standing forward bend and come back up that way.

Day 6 : Malasana (garland pose) Subroutine



Samasthitி



raise arms



Lifting pelvis



Utkatasana



Kurmasana



Malasana/Kanchyasana



Kurmasana variation

Day 6 : Malasana / Kanchyasana (garland pose) Subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

The differences between the final three postures in this subroutine, are that in pic. 5 kurmasana, we reach around our knees and hold our ankles but keep our head up. In pic. 6 Malasana or Kanchyasana we reach further around to clasp our hands around our back (in the full expression of the pose) like a belt and rest our forehead on the mat. In the final posture, pic 7, we go even deeper into the squat, round our back even further and rest the crown of our head on the mat.

Many if not most of the subroutines in Vinyasa Krama can stand alone and we can mix and match these subroutines to form a practice that suits our requirements. Some though are clearly advanced developments of postures and require some preparation.

Kurmasana is a challenging posture, the tendency when we begin to reach around for our ankles is to fall backwards, the hands behind the back utkatasana posture is good preparation here. Good engagement of the bandhas as outlined in Day 4 (ardha utkatasana) is helpful, keeping the chin down while working first one and then the other hand around our ankles makes it a little easier too. Once we have a good grasp of our ankles we can then release jalandhara bandha, the chin lock and look up. Of course it's a good idea to lower the chin again before unclasping and returning to standing back through utkatasana.

Another tip for reaching around for our ankles and ultimately to clasp our hands behind our back is to stretch up out of our pelvis and keeping that stretch as we lower into utkatasana. Feeling longer we can then stretch further beyond our knees giving us more room to reach around our knees.

A tip for malasana, as you lower your head towards the mat raise your thighs off your calves. Lifting your backside up allows you to lower your head more carefully to the mat, less chance of tipping forward, then when your forehead is settled lower your thighs back to your calves while keeping your forehead on the mat.

The final kurmasana variation entails a rounding of the back to bring the crown

to the mat.

Day 7 : Pasasana (noose pose) Subroutine



Samasthitி copy



Parsva bharga



Lifting pelvis



Utkatasana



Pasasana



Pasasana

Day 7 : Pasasana (noose pose) Subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Pasasana, noose pose, is perhaps the most challenging subroutine in the On your feet sequence, it has a full squat (utkatasana) while facing to the side and one of the trickiest of binds, reaching around the back and both knees.

The trick to the utkatasana while facing the side is the same as the earlier twisting subroutines. Press firmly into the mat with the opposite foot to the direction your twisting, so if you're turning to the right press the left foot firmly into the mat as you lower into your squat, it does seem to make a difference.

In the Ashtanga system the entry to pasasana is a standard utkatasana, facing ahead but I find this twist to the side before squatting in Vinyasa Krama, helpful in setting up for the bind.

Another approach I came upon by accident is to turn to the side and then do a full forward bend, hands to the mat, before squatting into the sideways-on utkatasana, this makes an interesting exit from the posture too. This wasn't how Ramaswami taught me but it's a nice option if you struggle with a sideways utkatasana and benefit from the added support of your hands on the mat.

Binding in Pasasana



reach far out to the right



bend down as low as possible, shoulder in line with knee or even below



presses the shoulder and knee together to stabilise



rotate your hand arm clockwise, palm up



reach back as if putting on a coat, forearm high against knee almost the elbow



dip lower, press knee and forearm together to stabilise



stretch right shoulder out and around



keep knee and forearm pressed firmly as you reach further around your back to bind



settle into the posture, more twist and focus on alignment.

[VIDEO LINK](#)
HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

The bind is very tricky, you need a secure and comfortable utkatasana and good flexibility in twisting.

This posture took me a year or so to grab my fingertips without using a belt to work my hands together or a rolled up towel beneath my heels.

Focus on your breath and give some thought to bandhas to help anchor you. you can do it without them but they'll probably make it a lot easier.

As in the first picture below, twist as far to the right as you can and stretch your arm out and as far back as possible.

Dip down bringing your shoulder in line with and preferably below the knee (pic 2)

Keep leaning out to the side almost to the point of falling over as you start to bring your arm around and press your shoulder and knee against each other to give you more stability (pic 3)

Rotate the palm out and over as you begin to reach back, think trying to put on a coat that has the sleeves tangled (pic 4).

This one I find key. Try and bring your forearm up as high up your left leg as possible, right up on the knee (pic 5). It seems too high but as you'll see in the next picture (pic 6) the knee will bring the arm down as you begin to bind.

Now you want to shift the pressing together from the left arm/right leg to the left arm/left leg which will keep you secure as you begin to reach your other arm around. It's not really pressing together but rather your pushing your knee down against your arm which is in turn pulling up against the knee (pic 6 still).

Nicely secure and locked in place with the left arm and right knee, begin the twist by bringing your right shoulder up and around while sliding your arm firmly down your back towards your waiting hand (pic 7).

At first you'll settle for fingertips. If you hold a scarf or belt in your right hand you might be able to swing that towards your waiting left hand and get some sort of bind that way, shuffling your hands down the belt a little further each time until your clap fingertips (pic 8)

Eventually, with practice, you'll be able to keep twisting, I find it's a twisting and lifting up out of the pelvis that helps take your shoulder even further around and allowing a deeper bind at the wrist.

In the video you'll see that on the second side, due to the sweat, my arm slips a little off the knee. I'm still getting the bind but really only one knee. Drying your knees and shoulder helps, some put a cloth over their knees but on a good day I find I'm able to get the full bind around both knees and on the sweatiest of days, it depends how flexible and warmed up you are that particular morning.

Day 8 : Surya namaskara (sun salutations with mantra)

ON YOUR FEET : suryanamaskara (sun salutation - with mantras)



1. Om Hram
udhyannadya mitramaha
Mitraaya Namaha



2. Om Hrim
ār̥channuttarāṁ divam
Ravaye Namaha



3. Om Hroom
hydroghām mamsūrya
Suryaaya Namaha



4. Om Hraim
harimāṇapca nāśaya
Bhaanve Namaha



5. Om Hraum
śukeṣume harimāṇam
khagaaya Namaha



6. Om Hrah
ropaṇākāsu dadhmasi
Pooshney Namaha



7. Om Hram
atho hāridraveṣume
Hiranayagarbhaaya Namah



8. Om Hrim
harimāṇam ni dadhmasi
Om Mareechibhyoh Namaha



9. Om Hroom
udaghādayamādityo
Adityaaya Namaha



10.Om Hraim
viśvena sahasā saha
Savitre Namaha



11. Om Hraum
viṣantāṁ mahyam īrandhyān
Arkaaya Namaha



12. Om Hrah
me aham dviśate radham
Bhaaskaraaya Namah

Day 8 : Surya namaskara (sun salutations with mantra) practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Srivatsa Ramaswami's has a traditional version of the Sun salutation laid out with the corresponding mantras starting on p. 213 of 'The Complete book of Vinyasa Yoga'. The idea is that you would move into each pose, retain the inhalation or exhalation while mentally chanting the mantra.

On the Vinyasa Krama [home page](#) you can find a link to Chants and Mantras including the Sury Namaskara chants available for download. To try and learn/practice it, I edited in some pauses to allow me time to enter the postures, and have been playing it on my itouch while performing the Salutation.

You have the option of chanting the full mantra (actually it's three mantras joined together) or just the quick version down below which would mean a shorter breath retention.

The book includes full translations of each of the mantras. and here's a link to an [article](#) by Ramaswami on the Sun Salutation with mantra.

*One note on the Video, the squat posture before the first Chatauranga, is like Pasasana without the bind, squatting with the heels down rather than sitting on the mat (difficult to see that from behind).

The Twelve Sury Namaskara mantras

STANDING

1. Om Hram

udhyannadya mitramaha

Mitraaya Namaha

RAISE ARMS UP

2. Om Hrim

*ārohannuttarāṁ divam
Ravaye Namaha*

NB. Fingers are interlaced, palms facing outwards

BEND FORWARD

3. Om Hroom

*hṛdrogham mamsūrya
Suryaaya Namaha*

SQUAT

4. Om Hraim

*harimāṇaṁca nāśaya
Bhaanve Namaha*

NB. Squatting on heels

PLANK

5. Om Hraum

*śukeṣume harimāṇaṁ
khagaaya Namaha*

LAY FLAT

6. Om Hrah

*ropaṇākāsu dadhmasi
Pooshney Namaha*

NB. Arms out stretched hands together

PLANK

7. Om Hram

*atho hāridraveśume
Hiranayagarbhaaya Namah*

UPWARD FACING DOG

8. Om Hrim

*harimāṇam ni dadhmasi
Om Mareechibhyoh Namaha*

DOWNWARD FACING DOG

9. Om Hroom

*udaghādayamādityo
Adityaaya Namaha*

JUMP TO SQUAT

10.Om Hraim

*viśvena sahasā saha
Savitre Namaha*

FORWARD BEND

11. Om Hraum

*viśantam̄ mahyam̄ randhyan
Arkaaya Namaha*

RETURN TO STANDING

12. Om Hrah

*mo aham dviṣate radham
Bhaaskaraaya Namah*

The sun salutation mantra has three parts,

Part 1. (Quick version) Bijakshara mantras

1. Om Hram
2. Om Hrim
3. Om Hroom
4. Om Hraim
5. Om Hraum
6. Om Hrah
7. Om Hram
8. Om Hrim
9. Om Hroom
10. Om Hraim
11. Om Hraum

12. Om Hrah

Part 2. Mantras from the vedas

1. Udyannadya mitramaha

2. Arohannuttarāṁ divam
3. Hṛdroghaṁ mamsūrya
4. Harimāṇamca nāśaya
5. Sukeṣume harimāṇam
6. Ropanākāsu dadhmasi
7. Atho hāridraveṣume
8. Harimāṇam ni dadhmasi
9. Udaghādayamādityo
10. Viśvena sahasā saha
11. Dviṣantam mahyam randhyan
12. Mo aham dviṣate radham

Part 3 Laukika Mantra

1. Om Mitraaya Namaha (Salutations to the Friend of All)
2. Om Ravaye Namaha (Salutations to the Shining One)
3. Om Suryaaya Namaha (Salutations to he who induces activity)
4. Om Bhaanve Namaha (Salutations to he who illumines)
5. Om khagaaya Namaha - Salutations to one who moves through the sky
6. Om Pooshney Namaha - Salutations to the giver of strength and nourishment
7. Om Hiranayagarbhaaya Namah - Salutations to the Golden Cosmic Self
8. Om Mareechibhyoh Namaha - Salutations to the Rays of the Sun
9. Om Adityaaya Namaha - Salutations to Sun of Aditi (the Cosmic Mother)
10. Om Savitre Namaha - Salutations to the Stimulating power of the Sun
11. Om Arkaaya Namaha - Salutations to he who is fit to be praised (arka= energy)
12. Om Bhaaskaraaya Namah - Salutations to the one who leads to enlightenment

DAY 9 : Practising 'On your feet' subroutines.

Vinyasa krama On your feet Sequence



DAY 9 : On your feet / tadasana sequences and subroutines Practice notes

There are ten main sequences in Ramaswami's book, [The Complete Book of Vinyasa Yoga](#)

On your feet
Triangle
On one leg

Asymmetric
Seated

Bow
Meditative

Supine
Inverted

Lotus.

We can practice a sequence as a whole and make that our practice for the day or perhaps split over two days, depending on how much time we have available. This is something Ramaswami recommends when first learning the sequences.

Once we become familiar with the sequence we have three options or approaches.

THREE APPROACHES TO VINYASA KRAMA PRACTICE

1. Continue to practice the full sequence

2. Choose one or two subroutines from different sequences to construct our practice.

3. Choose a number of key postures and/or their vinyasas (variations) from the different subroutines and doing the same from other sequences construct our practice.

In my own practice, over a week, I tend to employ all three approaches.

In the morning I tend to use the 3rd approach, whether It's a Vinyasa Karma practice or an Ashtanga practice.

In the evening I tend to practice the 2nd approach, a short asana practice of one of two subroutines before settling down to pranayama and meditation practice.

On my day off work I'll usually go for the 1st approach and practice a full sequence, usually one of the longer ones, Asymmetric, Supine or On your feet, or perhaps two of the shorter ones, Bow and Meditative or Seated and Lotus.

This morning I happened to included all three approaches which perhaps shows the flexibility and integration of Vinyasa Krama

The full On your feet sequence (approach 1)

Five minute Paschimottanasana

The Shoulderstand prep subroutine (approach 2)

Five minute shoulder stand

Ten minute headstand

Five minute shoulderstand vinyasas (approach 3)

Maha mudra

Pranayama in siddhasana

Meditation in padmasana

In all my morning practices and sometimes in the evening too I'll begin my

practice with a shorter On your feet or tadasana sequence. This would be the 3rd approach, a number of different vinyasas from the different subroutines that make up On your feet.

This is very similar to the short version of the On your feet sequence that we practiced every morning with Ramaswami on his teacher training course at LMU. <http://youtu.be/mhMP8QC7uTk>

TRIANGLE SEQUENCE

Day 10 : Uttita Trikonasana subroutine



TRIANGLE SEQUENCE



Uttita Trikonasana sthiti



Uttihita trikonasana



utthit trikonasana

Day 10 : Uttita Trikonasana subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

I've re shot the video for the first Triangle subroutine. The older video was cut from the full Triangle sequence and at the time I was looking at Vinyasa Krama from a Sequence perspective. Here I'm focusing on Vinyasa karma at a subroutine level and find I'm noticing details I'd missed. I've mentioned several times that this series of posts or my practice book are no substitute for Ramaswami's book. I can't stress that enough, every time you dip into his Complete book of Vinyasa Yoga you find little details, subtleties that you missed in first, second or even tenth reading. What I present here and in my book are just cheat sheets, the broad brushstrokes of a practice.

So what did I miss first time around?

For one thing the jump. Actually, I didn't miss it, I avoided it and stepped my legs apart. There's a jump into the triangle postures in Ashtanga too but nobody seems to do them anymore, truth be told I think we feel a little ridiculous, Vanity vanity and in yoga too, now that really is ridiculous.

Iyengar always seemed to jump into the posture and I seem to remember Krishnamacharya did in the old 1938 video, he did it with a twinkle in his eye too. Ramaswami had us jump into triangle on his TT course.

We have become yoga mat centric and this leads to confusion. Ramaswami used to wonder why we didn't all have carpets rather than fancy yoga mats. On a yoga mat we have turn to the side before jumping our legs apart or we have to jump and turn to the side in midair before landing with our legs apart.

Better, in VK anyway, is to turn sideways on the mat.

Ramaswami has us raise our arms out to the side on the inhalation, exhale and then, before inhaling with our exhale still held, jump our legs apart.

Notice the feet, facing forward, turned out just a little.

I remember on the TT Ramaswami was asked or rather informed by a couple of the students that they had always practiced triangle poses with the foot your were bending towards turned out 45 degrees.

I loved Ramaswami's response. He didn't say his way was right, the proper way, the only true way and back it up with an anatomical or physiological argument but rather that it was just the way his teacher, Krishnamacharya, had taught him, that he had tried the other ways himself but found he felt more comfortable with the way he had been taught.

Later I managed to see Krishnamacharya book, the Yogasanagalu and there he is in several pictures just as Ramaswami had taught the posture to us along with everything else..

With triangle pose I tend to take a few minutes in the beginning posture trikonasana stithi. I'll treat it like tadasa, the on the feet sequence, take a few breaths to move the hips back and forth and to the side, find the best point of balance. Then I'll do some hand variations, again similar to the on your feet sequence, just getting a feel for that starting position from which several of the subroutines will develop. I don't know of Ramaswami teaching this but it seems in keeping with his approach. Take a moment perhaps in all the stithi postures to the different sequences, asymmetric, seated, lotus, like an old Zen monk getting comfortable on his zafu.

As with the sideways bends and twisting in the On your feet subroutines, paying attention to the feet is important in triangle. Press down the opposite foot to the side your bending but also the inside of the foot on the side your bending in to, from the heel all the way to the big toe.

The more stable the base the more protected the knees, pushing down into the mat takes some of the stress off the knees.

Again as with the side stretches in On your feet, really stretch out of your hips before beginning your bend and keep stretching up along both sides of your body. The tendency is to stretch the outside and collapse the inside, stretch through both.

Breathe, strong ujjayi.

Engage bandhas

Both will protect your knees.

When I first started asana practice I couldn't get much further than just below my knees, no rush, don't force it, it'll come. Besides the hand to the floor bit isn't the point of the pose, the stretch is.

Day 11 : Parivritta trikonasana (twisting)subroutine



raise arms on exhalation

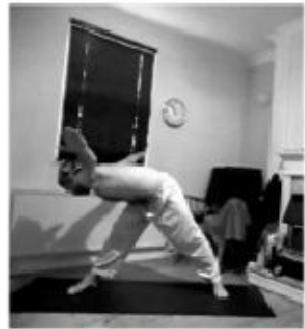
inhale, exhale hold and jump legs apart



turn on next exhalation

lower on next exhalation

twist on next exhalation stay 2-6 breaths



Unwind on inhalation : here you would come back to standing and do the other side before returning here for the reverse twist

reverse twist on exhalation

unwind and come up to horizontal on inhalation



come up to standing on inhalation

turn back to the front on inhalation

exhale hold and jump feet back together, lower arms on next exhalation.

Day 11 : Parivritta trikonasana (twisting)subroutine Practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Ramaswami is very clear in his book, as practiced in Vinyasa Krama, this posture has three distinct steps.

'You can see that the movement from the trikonasana position and the final posture is made in three distinct steps' The Complete Book of Vinyasa yoga p150

What's the rush? We get fixated on the final posture, even in styles of yoga where the movement in and out of the postures play such an important role, it's hard to slow it down. In Ashtanga I have to remind myself to slow the upward and downward dogs after the the jump back, remember to keep the breath at the same rate as when in the posture.

Here it's even slower. We raise our arms on the exhalation take our inhalation and then turn on the long exhale, inhale and then on the next exhalation lower half way, staying there for another inhalation before turning, again on the exhalation and finally settling into the posture. The exit is the same but in reverse unwinding on the inhalation, pausing for the exhalation before straightening on the inhalation, pause again for another exhalation then turn to the front on the final inhalation.

That's four breaths in and four breaths out of the pose, then there's the 2-6 breaths while in the final posture, that's fourteen but then we have the reverse twist, another fourteen. I clock the video below at a little over eight minutes and to be honest my breathing could have been, perhaps should have been, a lot slower.

What's the rush

The same tips for keeping the knees safe apply here as from yesterdays uttita trikonasana

Press down the opposite foot to the side your bending but also the inside of the foot on the side your bending in to, from the heel all the way to the big toe. The more stable the base the more protected the knees, pushing down into the mat takes some of the stress off the knees.

really stretch out of your hips before beginning your bend and keep stretching up along both sides of your body. The tendency is to stretch the outside and collapse the inside, stretch through both.

Breathe, strong ujjayi.

Engage bandhas

and one more comes to mind...

push your backside out as you take that breath in forward bend just as in the half forward bend in the On the feet sequence so as to protect your back.

Day 12 : Uttita parsva konasana (side stretch) subroutine



Raise arms on inhale, exhale, hold jump legs apart.



lower slowly while exhaling into Utthita parsva konasana. Come up on inhale, repeat 3 times



on the 3rd time raise right arm, palms together, hold 3-6 breaths



return to trikonasana stithi



return to utthita parsva konasana



straighten the leg on exhalation, stay for 3 breaths



bend and straighten leg three times



raise right arm, palms together



raise leg from hip at end of exhalation



bend and straighten leg three times



return to utthita parsva konasana



return to trikonasana stithi

Day 12 : Uttita parsva konasana (side stretch) subroutine Practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

This is a particularly challenging subroutine and the intermediate stage may be plenty to be going on with for a while. The important thing is to work on the balance and breathing, only moving on when the breath allows us to do so.

Ramaswami referred to the On one leg postures and subroutines as tapas.

In Sanskrit tapas means heat and these postures certainly heat you up, used figuratively tapas can denote spiritual suffering, mortification or austerity, which comes closer to the experience of a one legged squat.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Bandhas Mula and Uddiyana

see [Day 4 Ardho Uttkatasana](#)

Balance.

Balance is everything here, move your weight about, depending on where you are in the sequence, move it forward , bringing your heavy pelvis forward over your knee as you raise you leg

Raise your leg from the hip

Look straight ahead

Visualize

I use a geyser coming up out of the ground and up through my leg which seems to help to keep it strong (old Aikido trick). As I lower I'm lowering down into the geyser which keeps me strong and supported. Whatever you use the mind needs to be completely focused.

Tapas

Think tapas, you get to ask the gods for a boon (favour) after this.

Benefits

These are tough but they strengthen the legs, above and below the knees which will protect them in the long term. Strong legs help in the standing backbends.

Caution

Be careful of your knees, use the back of a chair if necessary,
Don't go down too low at first.

Lowering is easier than coming back up. If necessary lower slowly but then put your hand and foot back down to come back up before raising your arm and leg and lowering again until your legs strengthen enough to come back up unsupported.

Day 13 : Parsva konasana (side stretch) subroutine



from trikonasana stithi



turn to the side, turn foot to 45 degrees
raise arms and bend back



palms to mat, face to knee



raise back up on inhalation



lower again on exhalation, repeat 3 times
stay for 3-6 breaths the final time



bind arms behind hands grasping elbows



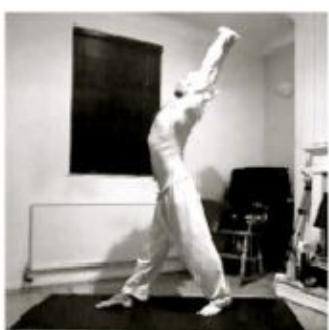
lower and hold for 3-6 breaths



hands in reverse prayer



stay for 3-6 breaths



raise arms again and bend back



palms to mat, foelhead to knee



raise leg on inhalation, hold for 3-6
breaths, return to trikonasana stithi

Day 13 : Parsva konasana (side stretch) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

I've practiced Parsva konasana (or utthita parsvottanasana in ashtanga speak) in the Ashtanga style of Pattabhi Jois for a number of years, enter the posture on the breath, stay for five, exit on the breath and repeat on the other side.

In the Vinyasa Krama approach to parsva konasana we can see the comprehensive nature of this style of practice. First we enter and exit a simplified, supported, vinyasa/variation of the posture on the breath, then on the third entry we stay for a significant period of time, three to six long slow inhalations and exhalations. Next up come two versions of the posture, an elbow bind and the more classic hands in reverse prayer. As we have seen from the On your feet sequences there are probably other hand/arm variations that we might explore here. Finally we enter the posture again with our palms on the mat but this time raise our trailing leg from the hip in a counter pose, holding for another three to six breaths before returning to the original starting point of trikonasana stithi. There are approximately fifty breaths taken in this one subroutine and it can take anywhere from twelve to twenty minutes depending on how long and slow we make our breath.

This is a pattern that we see in many of the Vinyasa Krama subroutines.

Enter/exit on the breath
long stay
Vinyasas/variations
counter posture
return to starting position (stithy).

I tend to practice a couple of the vinyasas in different postures from different subroutines and sequences, building my practice by covering a wide range of posture types. This morning, re shooting the video for this practice sheet I was reminded of how profound practicing a posture in this way can be.

Entering and exiting on the breath allows us to work a little deeper into the posture each time. Knowing we have several attempts we can be gentle on ourselves, ease into the posture

The long stay in the posture allows us to settle, find the spaces, shift our weight here there, sink into the pose.

The vinyasas allow us to explore, extend, expand upon the 'theme' and yet remain centred

The counter pose and return to the point in which we began gives a sense of completeness, the subroutines generally exists as a whole.

And there's flexibility, depending on the level of our practice or how warmed up we are we might not bend as deeply, do all the vinyasas or stay as long.

Caution.

parsva konasana offers a deep stretch to the hamstrings and this is one benefit of working slowly into the posture, it's not one to rush unless we have been prepared before hand by other postures or subroutines.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Protect the hamstrings by pressing the leading foots toes firmly into the mat

Focus on the trailing hip, make the movement from there. So if you're bending over your right leg focus on your left hip, bend from there. but make sure your hips are in line with each other.

Leading with that trailing hip has the curious sensation of having your backside pulled up into the air as you're bent over as if there is a giant balloon hooked into your gluteus maximus

In the final variation, when you raise your leg, again lift from the hip

When entering those three times at the beginning of the subroutine I lead with my chin the first time, my nose the second and my forehead the third, this come

from a later supine subroutine.

Engage your mula and uddiyana bandhas, these help protect your hamstrings in paschimottanasana, the seated forward bend but will have the same effect here.

A tweaked or pulled hamstring seems to take forever to heal up completely, for months you'll find yourself mindful of it. You can still practice but it puts a bit of a damper on it, so go easy here. That's what a vinyasa karma subroutine is designed to do, to ease you into a posture and vinyasas.

Day 14 : Viabhadrasana (Warrior) subroutine



Virabhadrasana sequence



rotate shoulders in circular motion



lift chest stretch back



knee bent forehead to knee



raise arms and legs



Arms clasped behind



repeaton left side



bring arms forward rotating at shoulder



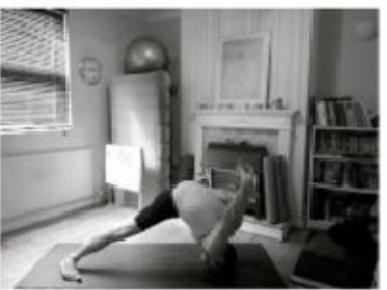
forhead to bent knee



squat as low as possible



straighten



forhead to mat

Day 14 : Viabhadrasana (Warrior) subroutine Practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

The motion from the first to the second picture is revolving shoulder joint action, a fluid almost circular motion. the same action comes up in the On your feet sequence in the haste variations from Day one.

Notice the difference between the third picture here and yesterdays parsva konasana, this is similar but with the knee bent. It's the bent knee that characterises virabhadrasana

As with parsva konasana the raising of the leg comes from the hip

Visualise a rope on you wrist and on your raised ankle stretching you

As with Day 12, Utthita parsva konasana we need to protect our one as we straighten and bend the leg

Be careful of your knees, use the back of a chair if necessary,

Don't go down too low at first.

Lowering is easier than coming back up. If necessary lower slowly but then put your hand and foot back down to come back up before raising your arm and leg and lowering again until your legs strengthen enough to come back up unsupported.

Focus on bandhas to help keep your steady and fix your gaze on a point on the mat.

In the final posture use the repeat approach at first going in and out of the posture on the breath a little deeper each time.

Commentary

I was asked "Why Subroutines"?

Here seems as good a place as any to put my own thoughts on this.

Vinyasa' in the Ashtanga style of Pattabhi Jois tends to refer to the transitioning in and out of a posture, the jump back often referred to as the half-vinyasa but in Vinyasa Krama it has Krishnamacharya's usage as variation.

I seem to remember Ramaswami referencing Krishnamacharya as saying that asana without it's vinyasa is futile. Krishnamacharya writes on this in his Yoga Makaranda, p79 saying '...all the vinyasas should be followed'.

The subroutines are the vinyasas/variations of an asana, but also the stages that lead into and out of an asana. Krishnamacharya says too that the vinyasas must be practiced so that the prana circulates evenly. Ramaswami talks about the vast range of asana as allowing the blood to circulate to all areas of the body. I'm happy to link (loosely) prana to blood circulation. If we only practice a few asana we don't access our bodies evenly and completely.

This suggests that practicing a bunch of unrelated postures in a practice is less than ideal.

But of course we can only practice so much, so there's compromise

Vinyasa Krama recommends practicing a number of subroutines one morning and then different subroutines the following day and so on through the week or ten days so we reach all areas of the body in our practice.

Ashtanga has a wide mixture of postures and mini subroutines that you practice daily.

I like a subroutine will often lead up to a posture, give you variations that allow you to extend and develop the main posture and then finish with a counterpose, it seems to make sense. Plus if your going to do a posture, if we think that a posture has some value, some benefit then surely we should be milking it for everything it's got. Every slight variation of the posture has a different subtle effect on the body.

The sequences in the book are just groupings of postures, all the Supine postures, all the Bow postures. Standing gets split into three sequences both feet , one foot/leg and triangle which seems to form a grouping of it's own, then of course all the many postures in lotus and inversions etc. At the back of the book are a number of subroutines that don't seem to fit into any grouping.

Within that grouping, Asymmetric say, there are a number of key asana and it's around these that the vinyasas, the variations are built. Ashtanga has that with the janu sirsasana mini subroutine but it also has the one leg bent back posture, tiring mukha eka para paschimottanasana all on it's own. Vinyasa Krama has a whole subroutine built around that pose, the different possibilities it raises. Interestingly there is a nice variations but in fourth series ashtanga, with the other leg behind the head.

Some subroutines are more challenging than others and they would come later in that overall grouping of subroutines and some of those subroutines seem to lead on to each other others are complete and stand alone. It seems to make sense that Virabhadrasana subroutine follows utthita Parsva konasana but it's clearly different. The prasaritta subroutine (see tomorrow day 15), almost exactly the same as in Ashtanga, isn't a development at all and could probably go anywhere in the triangle sequence at the beginning, middle or end.

Day 15 :Parasarita padottanasana subroutine



Prasarita padottanasana vinyasas



crown of head to mat



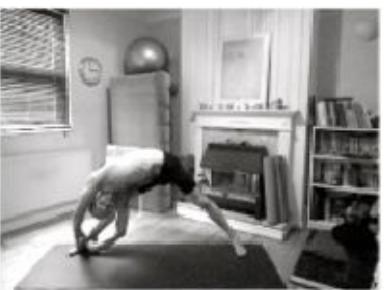
clasp big toes or feet



Prishtanjali



Twist to left and lower



Twist to right and lower



work towards niralambha samakonasana

Day 15 :Parasarita padottanasana subroutine Practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Stretch up out of the pelvis

As with the forward bends in the On the feet subroutines this posture is all about the hips. Think more about bringing the hips over and down.

Keep the feet facing forward to protect the knees

Engage mula bandha for stability, visualise a weight on a chain dropping to the mat from your perineum. as you take your hips over imaging your mull bandha and uddiyana bandha trying to raise the weight, pulling up on the chain as you bring your hips over.

Stick your backside out/back

Draw in your uddiyana bandha, your belly back and up to give more room for the final fold as your head reaches the mat between your feet.

Engage the bandhas before raising back up on the inhalation

Don't rush it, take a tip from the earlier subroutines, enter the pose hands to the floor on the exhalation and come up on the inhalation , then go a little deeper with each breath.

Try it with the wall a foot behind you so you know you won't topple backwards.

The twist (pic 5 +6) is tricky here's a similar action from seated. Watch the video(link under practice sheet), if I'm going to the right leg I'll take my right arm over to my left hip as fold/lean/twist towards my right foot, taking my left arm over in front of my fact to grab the outside of my left foot. Now reach for the inside of the left foot with the palm of your right hand and twist as if to bring

your chest through your arms.

Day 16 : Triangle subroutine breakdown



10

TRIANGLE SEQUENCE

Ultimate Trikonasana

Ultimate Trikonasana

Ultimate Trikonasana

Parsvottanasana

Parsvottanasana



12

Parivrtta Trikonasana

Ultimate parivrtta trikonasana



13

Dandasana Vinyasa

Ultimate Dandasana Vinyasa

Ultimate Dandasana Vinyasa

Dandasana Vinyasa

Dandasana Vinyasa

Dandasana Vinyasa



14

rotate shoulders in circular motion

Ultimate stretch back

Inhale and exhale to move

Downward dog legs

Arms elevated behind

Inhale left side



15

bring arms forward rotating cl

Inhale to continue

Squat as low as possible

Straighten

Exhale to end

Prasarita padottanasana

extreme

Inhaling to end

Exhale

Tilt to left and lower

Tilt to right and lower

Work towards front limb

extreme

Day 16 : Triangle subroutine breakdown Practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

I first began practicing yoga in the ashtanga style of Patthabi Jois and a number of triangle postures, even a subroutine (prasarita), begin that style of practice. Ashtanga starts with a number of Suryanamaskaras (sun salutations), the second type of which includes a nod to virabhadrasana, after a forward bend, the next nine postures are triangle asana.

Ashtanga can be quite an extreme practice and I tend to credit the fact that I didn't receive an injuries with the practice of the standing sequence, considering it to be warm up and preparation, "triangle keeps you safe". This is a blessing but also a bit of a curse. I find it hard to consider a practice without including some triangle asana but I've also tended to think of the triangle postures as merely warm up, preparation for the more challenging postures to come.

So when practicing Vinyasa Krama I include a number of Triangle postures directly after the tadasana sequence, sometimes with a couple of suryanamaskara sandwiched in between. As a rule I'll follow the order of triangle postures I'm familiar with from ashtanga, utthita trikonasana including the reverse twist but at utthita parsvakonasana i'll include the vinyasa Krama subroutine (day 12) with the palms coming together and the one leg squat. I'll do the prasarita subroutine next and then throw in the parsva konasana posture before moving on to some On one leg postures.

One thing to come out of this review of trikonasana subroutines is that I'll be spending more time in my practice on the parsva konasana subroutine (day 13) rather than just the key posture.

Another problem with seeing the triangle postures as merely warm up/preparation postures is that we can forget what an intense hamstring stretch is involved. In Ashtanga we would have practiced eight to ten sun salutations before moving onto trikonasana, the body and legs in particular are warm and well stretched out. In Vinyasa Krama we tend not to include as many Sun salutations and for this reason need to approach the triangle postures with caution.

The utkatasana and ardho utkatasana subroutines from the On your feet sequence can be good preparation for the one leg squats in triangle and the Uttanasana, forward bend, On your feet subroutine can warm up the hamstrings for the intense stretch they'll receive in Utthita parsvakonasana.

Vinyasa krama subroutines often tend to include a gentle approach to the postures, we might enter and exit on the breath a few times, going a little deeper into the posture each time before settling into the full expression of the pose. We should think carefully before dropping that gentle introduction

ON ONE LEG SEQUENCE

Day 17 : Vrikrmasana (tree pose)subroutine



On one leg sequence



Bhagirathasana



Vrikmasana



Vrikmasana



Vrikmasana



One leg squat arms out front



Vrikmasana bound



Andha baddha padmottanasana



bound Vrikmasana squat variation



return to standing

Day 17 : Vrikrmasana (tree pose) subroutine Practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Ramaswami refers to the On one leg series as tapas (heat) or austerity postures.

My favourite austerity story is the tragic tale of Amba from the Mahabharata. Rejected by the great warrior Bima, the man she loves, Amba practices austerities, standing on one toe for twelve years in the snow. Siva grants her the boon (gift) of telling her that in the next life she will kill Bima.

Caution

One legged postures build strength in the legs, protecting the knees by strengthening the muscles above and below. However, while building up those muscles the knee is at risk in the one legged squats, especially coming back up so caution is advised. I've had operations on my knees in my youth so, while happy to squat down into these postures I still tend to come back up but putting down my hands and returning via uttanasana (forward bend) just to be on the safe side, especially in the colder weather, see video link.

Quietingen the mind

No other postures seem to quieten the mind as much as balancing postures, if you're having a severe attack of monkey mind one morning a One leg subroutine might be just the thing.

Balance

Balance can be improved by fixing the gaze on one point. In most postures in the On one leg sequence the chin is down as is the gaze.

Slowing and regulating the breath can help with balance as well, make your ujjayi a little stronger a little more forceful by tightening the throat, the glottis a little more.

Engaging the bandhas (see practice guidelines DAY 1), drawing up the anus and sucking in and up the belly but not too strongly which might send you off balance.

Half lotus

Many find this challenging, don't worry, we get to work on half and full lotus in many of the Vinyasa Krama sequences, taking different approaches. In the Asymmetric sequence we have a long build up to half and full lotus while seated. In Supine we approach the postures laying down and upside down as well as in the Inverted sequence. In the Lotus sequence several of the Asymmetric subroutines reappear as preparation for full lotus.

I was thinking this morning that standing on one leg is actually a good first approach to half lotus. The danger of lotus is thinking it's all about the knees, bending and twisting and pretzeling them into position. Lotus is actually all about the hip.

Look at the first picture, Bhagiratasana, we place the foot against the inner thigh. To do so we bend the knee, lifting the foot, then take the knee outwards bringing the foot to the inside of the thigh. The hip is a ball and socket joint, we've already begun to rotate the ball in the socket. To go deeper and into half lotus and Vrikmasana (tree pose), rotate the ball a little further in the socket, taking the knee a little further out and down which automatically brings the foot up towards the groin. Here's the bit I like best about approaching it standing, to go a little deeper still and bring the foot up a little higher into the groin we allow the knee to drop a little further. There's been no wrenching and pulling up to get the foot into position it's done almost of its own accord and is worth remembering when we approach half lotus seated.

Of course depending on our flexibility we might not get the foot as high up into the groin as we might wish, we may have to make do with half way up the thigh so we can support the foot with our hand. As we start to squat the bend in the knee will give us some support allowing us to let go and take the hand position, whether out in front or above the head.

Squatting

Gazing down, engaging bandhas, focusing the breath all help. At first go just as far down as feels comfortable then come back up.

We lower on the exhale, come back up on the inhalation.

Ideally we will lower all the way and stay for a number of breaths, 3-6 but on first encountering squats it might be a good idea to go down as far as is

comfortable on the exhale and then come straight back up on the inhale a few times, then if we feel confident go down a little way stay for a breath, perhaps two and then come back up. We might also try it holding onto the back of a chair.

Binding

As with the Lotus we will come across the arm behind the back while holding onto the toe bind in several of the sequences, seated, reclining and inverted approaches.

While working on the bind we might hold the raised right foot with our left hand and then reach around with our right and hold the inside of the left elbow.

To get in a little deeper we can walk our fingers down our forearm towards our foot, a little further each day.

Another approach is to stretch up out of the pelvis, twist to the right and take our shoulder over and back as if we were putting our hand through a sleeve. When we have gripped as far down our arm as we're able or perhaps our hip bone we then take a firm hold and then straighten back up and realign ourselves as best we can.

Yet another approach is to put our right arm behind our back, the back of our hand just above our hip and then turn and then twist to the right sliding our hand over our hip towards our foot.

It took me quite a while to get this bind, I seem to remember wrapping a belt around my foot and holding the ends, working a little further down the belt each day, each week.

Day 18 : Standing Marchi subroutine



On one leg sequence



Standing marichi



bound standing marichi



Forward bending bound Marichi



return to standing

Day 18 : Standing Marchi subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

As with yesterday, Day 17, slow steady breathing, downward gaze fixed on a single point and the engaging of the bandhas can help here.

Ramaswami suggests leaning forward slightly when we try to reach around the leg.

When bound, as we bend forward, we aim to ultimately bring the forehead below the knee but in the beginning can settle for first the forehead and then the nose.

We might enter the posture on the exhalation and then come straight out on the following inhalation. then as we become more confident stay for one breath and progress from there, the die is to work on remaining steady and comfortable.

the gaze will move of course as we bend but try to keep it in a single line, tracking from the mat to our foot and up our leg.

Ramaswami asks us to squeeze the knee tight against our chest on each exhalation 'squeezing as much air out of our lungs as possible'.

Caution

As we bend deeper into the bound pose we give quite a stretch to the gluteus maximus (buttock) so want to make sure we're sufficiently warmed up. The forward bends, uttanasana and ardho uttanasana subroutines in the On your feet sequence are a suggestion.

Day 19 : Utthita Padangushtasana (stretched leg-arm) subroutine



On one leg sequence



Uttita padangustasana



Uttita hasta padangustasana



Uttita pasvashita



Uttita padangustasana variation



Uttita hasta padangustasana variation



Uttita pasvashita variation



return to standing

Day 19 : Utthita Padangushtasana (stretched leg-arm) subroutine

[VIDEO LINK](#)

My own Bête Noire of a subroutine, pure tapas.

Some discrepancies between the book and video. There are two main approaches to uttita padangustasana, one is to bring the knee to the chest and then straighten the leg out in front of you as I do in the video. The other approach and the one, the one I use now is the same as in Ramaswamis book, raise the leg straight up in front of you and then take hold of the big toe.

I noticed Ramaswami has us raise the leg on the exhalation, I've always done it on the inhalation, I tried it his way this morning and I think I like it, it feels more controlled, focused.

In every stage we should aim to stay for three long, smooth breathes.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Ground your standing foot, from the big toe to the heel.

Ramaswami recommends engaging the bandhas, see guidelines Day One, basically, draw up the anus and suck in and raise the belly at the end of the exhalations and hold.

Uddiyana bandha seems particularly effective for keeping the leg raised, really suck the belly in and up into the ribcage as much as possible while holding the leg out straight.

Sucking the belly in will also give you more room for folding over your leg.

When folding forward to bring your forehead to the knee, push the hip/buttock back, remember your uttanasana.

Lift up the buttock of the raised leg, I visualise that it's supported on some kind of Subway standing lean/seat

Don't drop the pelvis when swinging the leg around to the side

The squat is on the long slow exhalation, strong ujjayi will give more control

I find the squat here the easiest of the one legged squats, the outstretched leg with the foot held seems to give you more control as you lower.

Folding over your leg in the squat imagine a rope attached to your foot and another to your hips and that your being stretched outward, you still wanting to be pushing your backside out in this forward bend.

To come up engage the bandhas strongly, press through the mat, raise up slowly with the inhalation.

Coming up from these one legged squats is where you'll start to think there may be something to bandha work after all.

Caution

This is an intense hamstring stretch and forward bend so make sure you are nicely warmed up. The utkatasana and uttanasana half and full subroutines from the On your feet sequence would be one way to go or perhaps the Utthita parsvottanasana. The latter is an intense hamstring stretch itself but it's possible to work into the stretch in that subroutine.

Work up to the squat, lowering a little way and then coming back up perhaps on the breath. If you're wobbling and swaying too much don't try to lower all the way or you risk spraining an ankle.

Day 20 : Virabhadrasana (warrior) subroutine



On one leg sequence



Virabhadrasana sequence



Virabhadrasana variation



Warrior

Day 20 : Virabhadrasana (warrior) subroutine Practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

This is similar to the final vinyasas of the virabhadrasana subroutine from the triangle sequence

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

We aim to stay in each position for three long steady breaths.

Ramaswami has us bend our knees slightly and lower the trunk, then from the bent leg position we raise the leg

As with parsva konasana the raising of the leg comes from the hip

Keep the standing leg bent as you stretch out the leg and arms

Visualise a rope on your wrist and on your raised ankle stretching you.

Now straighten the leg on the inhalation

Focus on bandhas to help keep your steady and fix your gaze on a point on the mat.

Again, to raise the leg higher for the final position, raise from the hip.

Cautions

As with Day 12, Utthita parsva konasana, we need to protect our knee as we straighten and bend the leg

Use the back of a chair in the beginning if necessary,

Don't go down too low at first.

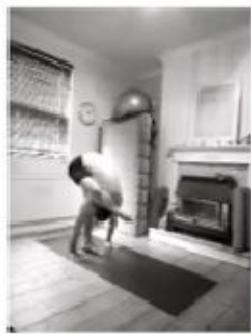
Day 21 : Durvasana (named after a sage) subroutine



On one leg sequence



Durvasana



Skandasana



Durvasana variation



utpluthi



return to standing

Day 21 : Durvasana (named after a sage) subroutine

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Standing leg behind head, it's perhaps a good time to mention that we don't have to practice the subroutines consecutively, nor are we expected to be able to do all of them. A Leg behind head posture comes up here, in the one leg sequence, but It may be a good idea to work towards the posture in the Asymmetric sequence or Supine where it also appears. The leg behind head subroutines in those sequences include more preparation than here too.

If you're already able to put your leg behind your head comfortably and want to try it standing with this subroutine it's probably a good idea to make sure your sufficiently warmed up and stretched out. The Utkatasana is a good place to start for the work on the hips, uttanasana for the forward bend and I highly recommend the Uthita padangusthasana and especially the standing marchi subroutines. The standing marchi will do a good job of pushing your hip back.

For leg behind head postures in general I made a video recently on approaching the posture in Vinyasa Karma. In the video I approach the standing LBH from seated, putting the leg behind my head and then moving into the LBH forward bend Skandasana or Richikasana. Here's the link

<http://vinyasayogaathome.blogspot.com/2011/08/few-words-on-getting-your-leg-behind.html>

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

To get the leg behind the head in standing you want to bend forward, take the leg over above your elbow, push the hip back (why standing marchi is useful prep) and take the foot over and around your head dipping your head in at the same time.

Shuffle the foot a little further behind with your shoulder, you want to have your leg far enough around that the foot isn't pushing too strongly on your neck.

Next it's case of straightening up although you're always likely to be a little stooped...unless you're nine. One way is to walk the hands up the leg but that's a bit

of a cheat, better is to stretch out of your hips just as we've been doing in the On your feet sequences and keeping your back strong.

It's advisable perhaps. to have done some work on back bending postures to make your back strong before moving on to leg behind head postures.

One more thing that I remembered practicing this earlier, I think we tend to be afraid of falling out of this and landing awkwardly and painfully with our leg still behind our head. I've stumbled in this a couple of times, this evening included and always the leg pops back from behind the leg neatly giving you time to stop yourself falling. It's tricky, can take a couple of attempts if you haven't practiced it for a while or if it's your first time.

Day 22 : Natarjasana (dancing Shiva) subroutine



On one leg sequence



Natarajasana



full natarajasana



return to standing

Day 22 : Natarjasana (dancing Shiva) subroutine

[VIDEO LINK](#)

I still find some backbend preparation helpful before attempting Natarjasana. I tend to do some of the Bow postures and perhaps Kapotasana from meditative and even Eka pada raja kapotasana below to prepare myself for bringing the elbow out and around.

One of the difficulties with Natarjasana as with Eka pada raja kapotasana is the grip on the foot.

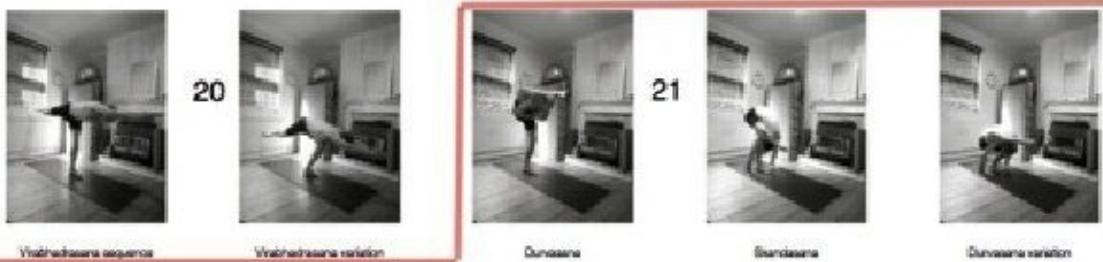
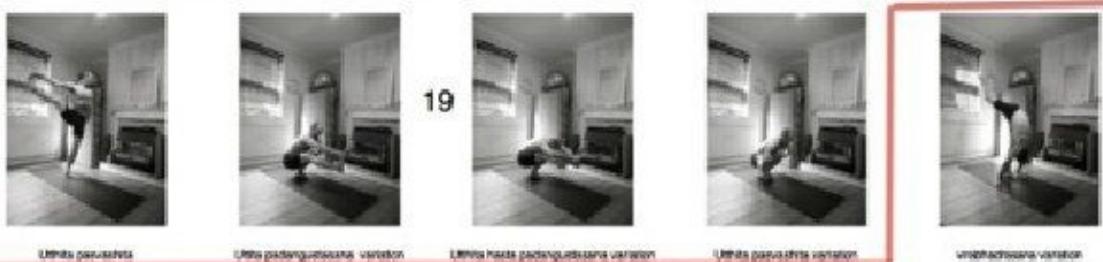
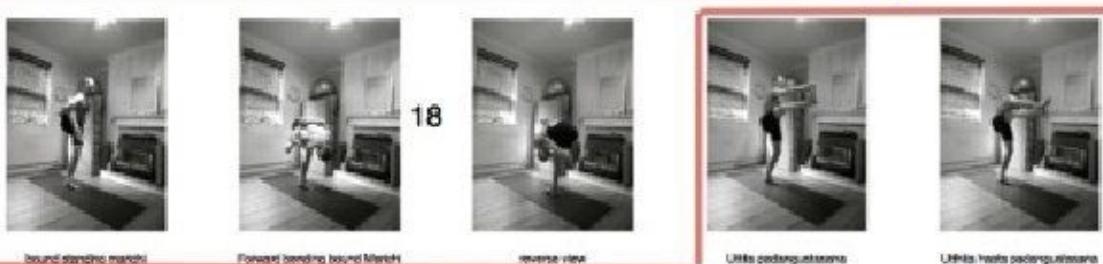
HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

<http://youtu.be/-cfrudM2pEo>

1. Lift your leg up behind you bending the knee and bringing your heel towards your buttock but turn the foot outwards. Rest the back of your hand against the outside of your ankle.
2. Turn your hand palm outwards and take hold of the top of your foot.
3. Rotate your elbow outwards and bring the foot up. At this point you'll need to begin the backbend to make the space for the elbow to come out and the shoulder rotate.
4. Stretch up out of your hips, tilt the pelvis down and begin to arch the back as if you were preparing to drop back into urdhva danhurasana, continue to bring the elbow out and over to end up above your shoulder.

In Slow motion <http://youtu.be/TM5djO6V7b0>

Day 23 : On one leg Subroutine breakdown Sheet



Day 23 : On one leg Subroutine breakdown Sheet Practice notes

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

I tend to practice One leg postures at the beginning of my practice along with the other standing poses in the Triangle and Tadasana subroutines but this may be the influence of Ashtanga, force of habit. I try to mix up the subroutines Standing marchi one day, the one legged virabhadrasana another, Again, with my Ashtanga background I tend to practice the bound vrikmasana and Utthita para paschimnottanasana postures daily but will turn one of them into it's Vinyasa Krama subroutine, squatting in the one posture one day the other the next.

I tend to practice Natarjasana as part of a group of back bending subroutines, Bow and Meditative with eka pada raja kapotasana as preparation for the subroutine.

I practice the standing leg behind head as part of other leg behind head subroutines, usually those from the Asymmetric series.

To recap

Ramaswami refers to the On one leg series as tapas (heat) or austerity postures.

Caution

One legged postures build strength in the legs, protecting the knees by strengthening the muscles above and below. However, while building up those muscles the knee is at risk in the one legged squats, especially coming back up so caution is advised.

Quietingen the mind

No other postures seem to quieten the mind as much as balancing on one leg postures, if your having a sever attack of monkey mind one morning a One leg subroutine might be just the thing.

Balance

Balance can be improved by fixing the gaze on one point. In most postures in the On one leg sequence the chin is down as is the gaze.

Slowing and regulating the breath can help with balance as well, make your ujjayi a little stronger a little more forceful by tightening the throat, the glottis a little more.

Engaging the bandhas (see practice guidelines DAY 1), drawing up the anus and sucking in and up the belly but not too strongly which might send you off balance.

Gripping the mat with the standing foot as if trying to make fist, pushing down with the heels and big toe while drawing up the instep can also improve stability.

ASYMMETRIC SEQUENCE

Day 24 : Dandasana (Staff pose) lead in subroutine



Take three breaths



Take three breaths



Take three breaths



Take three breaths



Take three breaths



Take three breaths



Take three breaths



Take three breaths engaging mula and
uddiyana bandhas



Jump or step through through



pass through your arms keeping your feet
off the mat if possible, straighten legs
before lowering



Take three breaths



Take three to six breaths

Day 24 : Dandasana (Staff pose) lead in, subroutine Practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

The lead in to Dandasana above includes the challenging jump through the arms to seated, below is a simplified version of the lead in where we enter dandasana from utkatasana (full squat) I've included it at the end of the video.

Dandasana is an important 'hub' pose of all the seated asana, as such I sometimes like to explore the posture a little by borrowing the hand/arm vinyasas from the On your feet subroutines

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

[VIDEO LINK](#)

It's good to keep the 'On your feet' subroutines in mind with the seated postures, we have the same lifting up and stretching out of the pelvis that we stress in tadasana. The chin trends to be down as is the gaze and in the upcoming forward bends we bend from the hip pushing our buttocks back so want to be sitting forward on our sit bones in Dandasana.

Jump through

The jump through is challenging. One of the best ways to learn it is, from downward facing dog, to jump/hop to just behind our arms landing with our feet slightly crossed, then with our knees bent shuffle through our arms and sit down. Engage the arms all the time in preparation for taking all the weight of the body when progressing to the full jump through. We should also aim to engage mula and uddiyana bandha as this will help to give us some lift.

In the practice Book I include screenshots of ten different kinds of jump through and jump back, they can also be found [HERE](#) and can be seen on the Video link below the poster.

On the following page is the legs uncrossed jump through that Ramaswami recommends, it comes towards the end of the video.

I find the above approach to the jump back very challenging and tend to stick with the crossed leg version I'm most familiar with. Here though is a link to a video of my friend Chris from Ramaswami's 2010 Vinyasa krama teacher training course we both attended <http://youtu.be/qGQSH-2OOjI>.

VINYASA KRAMA STRAIGHT LEG JUMP THROUGH



Day 25 : Marchi (after the sage) subroutine



Dandasana



Niralamba Dandasana



Marichiyasa Sihiti



marichiyasana.



marichiyasana



marichiyasana



marichiyasana.



marichiyasana



Ardha matsyendrasana

Day 25 : Marchi (after the sage) Subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

This subroutine forms a pattern that we find in many of the subroutines. A 'hub' pose (pic 1) a starting position or stithi, here Marichiyasana stithi, the key posture, Marichyasana (pic 4), a number of variations (pic 5, 6 and 7) and finally a counter pose (pic8).

We have the option of practising the whole sequence on one side, the left say and then the right or if we are doing a number of Asymmetric subroutines we might practice all of them on one side before moving on to the other.

There are some other marchi vinyasas and that come up later in the Asymmetric series under Hybrid asymmetric vinyasas. These could be added to this subroutine before the counter pose if we were only including this subroutine in our practice.

Picture 10, Ardha matsyendrasana is not really part of the marchi although it differs from the marchi variation in Picture 7 only by the crossing of the leg and doesn't seem out of place here as an extension or development of the marchi sequence. It appears again at the end of the Asymmetric sequence with the more challenging full kingfisher pose, purna matsyendrasana.

There are a few other postures that I've encountered in the advanced Ashtanga series that don't appear in Ramaswami's Vinyasa Krama book, it's interesting to see where they might be best placed as a development and extension of a subroutine just as ardha matsyendrasana is here.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Remember to lift up and out of the pelvis in preparation for the forward bends. The stretching of the arms overhead in Dandasana should remind us of tadasana.

The tibia (inner shin bone) is kept upright, try to avoid turning it inwards or outwards.

There is a subtle twist at the hips as we bend over the outstretched leg.

The chin is down in a light to strong jaladhara bandha, we aim to bring the forehead to the knee or beyond in vinyasa krama.

We stay in each stage for at least three breaths.

The breaths are long, slow, steady, smooth, aim for five second inhalations but try to extend the exhalations.

As with the standing march we squeeze more air out of the lung by tightening the bind on each exhalation.

As you swing the arm around the knee think of putting on a coat the dipping of the shoulder forward as you reach around, half rotating your arm to get further around the knee.

As you settle into the bind, roll your sit bone over the muscle, once over you become more stable and feel less likely to fall backwards.

Engage the bandhas, mula will ground you providing more stability, sucking in your belly in uddiyana bandha will give you more room for the forward bend.

In the counterpose (pratikriya) ground the toes and really push the hips up on each breath, well be seeing more of these hip lifts in the supine subroutines.

Day 26 : Ardha padmasana (half lotus) subroutine



Dandasana



Niralamba Dandasana



Ardha padmasana



Ardha padmasana



Ardha badha padma paschima utanasana



Vashitasana



Ardha matsyendrasana



Ardha matsyendrasana



Utpluthi



Ardha badha padma

Day 26 : Ardha padmasana (half lotus) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

This subroutine follows the pattern mentioned in day 25. A 'hub' pose (pic 1), a starting position or stithy here ardha padmasana stithi (pic 3) which is also, in this case, the key posture Ardha padmasana, a number of variations follow (pic 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9) and finally a counter pose (pic 10). What's different here are the lifts/arm balances (pic 9) and the side/lateral lift (pic 6). This subroutine when practiced on both sides gives us a full range of hip movement.

Half lotus

See Day 17 Vrikmasana for some notes on standing half lotus.

To get into half lotus : Bend the knee bringing it towards the chest, allow the knee to drop out to the side, key here is the natural rotation in the hip joint. Bring the foot close to the opposite thigh, hold your foot in one hand and the knee in the other and GENTLY encourage the rotation of the ball and socket hip joint, bring the knee forward parallel with the floor towards the opposite knee and the foot further up the thigh and ideally, eventually, towards the groin.

CAUTION

You don't want to force this action, if you feel strain on your knee it may be better to practice tomorrow's subroutine built around mama mudra with the foot against the thigh rather than on top instead. Practicing the maha mudra subroutine will bring half, and eventually, full lotus closer.

As we have found in all forward bending asana, stretch out of the hips as we practiced in the standing On your feet sequences, the same goes for the twisting postures.

CAUTION.

In picture six (the raised hip), Vasishtasana or Kashyapasana we must be careful of the knee. Work from the top down, pushing down into the mat and lifting your shoulders then lifting the hip which will allow the leg to straighten, lower in reverse, DON'T push off the mat from the foot, knee or hip first as this will put too much strain on the knee which is vulnerable here.

The lift /Utpluthi (pic9)

Lean forward , put your hands slightly forward of your hips, engage mula and uddiyana bandha, drop your shoulders bend your elbows. Now push down through the mat lifting your body off the mat. At first you might only manage to lift your backside off the mat, your heels remaining grounded. However, keep engaging the legs for the full count of three to six breaths as this will build strength for future attempts.

Day 27 : Maha mudra (great seal) subroutine



Dandasana



Niralamba Dandasana



Maha Mudra sthiti



Maha mudra



janusirsasana



SAM_1987

Day 27 : Maha mudra (great seal) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Ramaswami mentions mahamudra as a key posture in Vinyasa Krama and encourages us to include it in our daily practice.

Ramaswami also advises us to stay in the pose '*...a long time, say about five or more minutes*'.

Because we are encouraged to stay in mahamudra for a significant amount of time we may choose to practice just janusirsasana in this subroutine and then later, at the end of our practice, dwell in mahamudra as preparation for pranayama.

I like to practice it in this subroutine for the usual three to six breaths and then do an extended stay at the end of my practice followed by badha konasana before entering padmasana (lotus) for my pranayama practice.

Maha mudra is an excellent posture for working on mula, uddiyana and jalandhara bandhas.

As we take hold of our toe we have sit forward on our sit bones, grounded in this way it becomes easier to focus on exploring mula bandha, the holding of the toe, gives a sense of stability when engaging uddiyana bandha

Mula and Uddiyana bandha

'The other two bandhas, however, should be practiced in most of the asanas, especially after exhalation. The first is mula bandha, which means "constricting of the anus" It is done after a complete exhalation. After the exhalation is over, the abhyasi (yoga student) should anchor the body in the asana he or she is in and then slowly and deliberately close the anus and draw in the rectum by contracting the perineal and surrounding muscles of the pelvic floor. Then as if in a continuous movement, the abdomen, including the navel, is drawn in, pushing up the diaphragm into the now almost empty chest cavity, which is then called uddiyana bandha (drawing in of the diaphragm)... This technique is one of the specialities of yogic breathing" p127

Leaning forward to grab our toe we allow our head to tilt forward bring our chin down. the chin tilted down is almost the default positng in Vinyasa Krama for the beneficial effect it has in the spine. We can practice it lightly or bring the chin tighter into the breastbone for Jalandhara bandha

Jalandhara bandha

'There are three important bandhas. the first is jalandhara bandha, or locking the chin against the breastbone. This may be done during kumbhkas and whenever the posture requires the chin to be locked, which is normally the case during forward bends and when keeping the back erect. In backbends and twisting postures it is not possible to do jalandhara bandha'. p127

Day 28 : akrarnadhanurasana (archer) & Kraunchasana (heron) subroutine



Dandasana



Akarna Danurasana



Kraunchasana

Day 28 : akrarnadhanurasana (archer) & Kraunchasana (heron) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

These postures were a revelation for me when working towards the leg behind head postures as they provide such excellent preparation.

Although we're holding on to the big toe and these are often referred to as big toe stretching postures it's the complete other end of the leg we're focused on, where the head of the femur enters the pelvis.

Remember this is a ball and socket joint, rather than wrenching the leg back there is a gentle drawing back of the leg that allows for some rotation in the joint in akrarnadhanurasana.

In Kraunchasana as well there is a slow raising of the leg which allows for the rotation in the joint.

Caution

Although we're focussing on the hip joint here Kraunchasana gives an extreme hamstring stretch so we need to be sufficiently prepared, possibly through earlier standing postures in our practice.

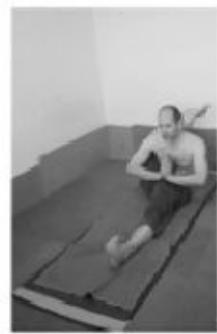
Day 29 : Eka pada sirsasana (leg to head) subroutine



Dandasana



Kraunchasana



Ekapada Sirsasana



Fold over outstretched leg, chin beyond
the knee



Skandasana



Chakorasana

Day 29 : Eka pada sirsasana (leg to head) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

On DAY 21 for Durvasana, the standing leg behind head posture subroutine, I wrote...

Standing leg behind head, it's perhaps a good time to mention that we don't have to practice the subroutines consecutively, nor are we expected to be able to do all of them. A Leg behind head posture comes up here, in the one leg sequence, but It may be a good idea to work towards the posture in the Asymmetric sequence or Supine where it also appears. The leg behind head subroutines in those sequences include more preparation than here too.

Even though I've been able to put my leg behind my head comfortably for a number of years I still tend to include a number of preparation postures. In the subroutine above we have kauranchasana but I always tend to include akrarna dhanurasana (archer) from the previous subroutine (day 28). I'll also take the hip back as in the archer pose and then bring my leg from my foot to my knee parallel to my chest while supporting my foot with one hand and my knee with the other, I think of this as rocking the baby, I'm not sure if it has a sanskrit name or is even a posture.

The earlier Asymmetric subroutines are also excellent preparation for the eka para sirsasana and this is one example where keeping a number of subroutines together and following them in order may be good practice. Here are my key leg behind head preparatory postures.

Marichiyasana Day 25 where the knee is bent and we forward bend down the inside of the bent leg.

Maha mudra and Janu sirsasana from Day 27 where the hip is opened right up on one side and then the forward bend while the hip is so open.

Akrarna dhanurasana from Day 28 where the the leg is drawn back, rotating the head of the femur up and back in the hip socket

Kauranchasana from Day 28 which continues the rotation of the head of the femur as we take the leg perpendicular

Rocking the baby (see above) where the rotation is turned inward bringing the leg into a semblance of the position it will aim to be in Eka pada sirsasana but here in front of the body.

I tend to include the above postures in an extended Eka para sirsasana subroutine

HINTSTIPSSUGGESTIONS

If putting your leg behind your head is not available to you at this time you might work towards it in this subroutine by simple putting your leg over your shoulder, your right leg over your right shoulder say. I practiced chakorasana this way for quite some time. Go through the subroutine in the same way perhaps including the preparatory postures I mention, taking the usual breath count, gradually working towards the full expression of eka padasirsasana.

Getting the leg behind the head postures

If you're already able to put your leg behind your head it's still important to make sure you're sufficiently warmed up and stretched out. The Utkatasana is a good place to start for the work on the hips, uttanasa for the forward bend and I highly recommend the Uthita padangusthasana and especially the standing marchi subroutines. The standing marchi will do a good job of pushing your hip back.

For leg behind head postures in general I made a video recently on approaching the posture in Vinyasa Karma. In the video I approach the standing LBH from seated, putting the leg behind my head and then moving into the LBH forward bend Skandasana or Richikasana. Here's the link

<http://vinyasayogaathome.blogspot.com/2011/08/few-words-on-getting-your-leg-behind.html>

Bring the foot into the rocking the baby position (take the hip back as in the archer pose and then bring my leg from my foot to my knee parallel to my chest while supporting my foot with one hand and my knee with the other, I think of this as rocking the baby) take the leg outwards, rotating in the hip socket then

bending then unbending at the knee bring the leg over in a circular motion dipping your head under the leg.

When dipping under the leg slightly twist in towards the inside of the knee, as the foot settles behind the head you can then straighten out of the twist taking the leg a little further and more comfortably over the shoulder.

Shuffle the foot a little further behind with your shoulder, you want to have your leg far enough around that the foot isn't pushing too strongly on your neck.

I used to try and pull my leg as far behind my head, as far over towards the other shoulder as possible, now I like to take my leg just over my head but as far over to the leg side as possible, this allows me to then shrug my shoulders further through and seems to allow the leg to settle lower and ultimately deeper. this is perhaps more easily seen on the video link above.

It's advisable perhaps. to have done some work on back bending postures to make your back stronger before moving on to leg behind head postures.

I've just noticed the forward bend in Eka para sirsasana picture is missing from the above practice sheet (a new practice sheet will be on its way shortly).

Before folding forward try to stretch tall out of the pelvis just as in all other forward bends.

Lead with the chest

there is a slight twist as we bring our body over the outstretched leg

Reclining into Skandasana

Before reclining backward we want to again try and stretch out of our hip just as we have seen in the on your feet/tadasana postures.

Ground the heel, better to allow the knee to bend than let the leg come up and flap about as the grounding of the heel will give you some control and stop you from rolling over to the side.

There is a reclining version of Skandasana in the Supine sequence where you put your leg behind your head in supine, this is good to know as your head popping out from behind the head while reclined is not a disaster.

To return to Eka pada sirsasana bring your outstretched leg up over your head far enough to give you some momentum as you rock backup to seated.

Chakorasana

Place your hands forward of your hips and push down through the mat lifting your body.

Raise your outstretched leg towards your face (eventually you will be able to bring your face to your knee while lifted) by rocking your hips forward.

Day 30 : Triyangmukha (bent back leg) subroutine



Tiryang-mukha-ekapadasana



with forward bend



with forward bend and twist



Kramchhasana



Counterpose



Utpluthi



Hanumanasana



with forward bend

Day 30 : Triyangmukha (bent back leg) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

This is actually two subroutines, the first ends with Picture 5 the counter pose, however you can see how the folded back leg postures gives a stretch to the quadriceps preparing your for hanumanasana/ anjanayanasana (pic 7).

In Hanumanasana we're stretching the hamstrings on the front leg and the quadriceps on the back leg so we want to make sure both have received sufficient preparation in earlier subroutines in our practice.

I struggled with hanumanasana for a long time before coming to Vinyasa krama. I credit my ability to enter the posture to the long stays paschimottanasana that we'll see in the seated sequence subroutines.

A long stay is called for in picture 2, the forward bend with the leg bent back, Ramaswami recommends five minutes and that extra time is well spent.

Picture 4 is, I've just realised, an addition of my own, it's a bent back leg version of kraunchasana which we saw in Day 28. I've mistakenly carried this over from ashtanga but it doesn't seem out of place. Here we're stretching the hamstrings as well as the quads, again excellent preparation for hanumanasana.

Although the preceding postures can be seen as excellent preparation for hanumanasana they are all excellent stand alone postures and this is one of my favourite subroutines whether or not I choose to continue on to hanumanasana in that particular days practice or not.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Ramaswami stresses here that hanumanasana, the monkey-god posture is particularly challenging and should be practiced with guidance.

Prepare yourself for a year or so working towards this, that prep will include becoming more comfortable in extended stays in paschimottanasana.

In a sense hanumanasana is also a backbend so that is another area we can work on leading up to this posture.

When you are ready to attempt it, from downward dog you might try stepping through, rocking back on your heel and lowering on to your trailing knee.

Don't step through too far at first, as so often in Vinyasa Krama we enter a pose gently, on the breath and then return to stithi on the breath then enter again a little more deeply, eventually entering for a longer stay which we then precede to deepen with each breath.

Find a place that is comfortable and focus on your breathing keeping both legs engaged.

Eventually you will be able to step through a little further and as you rock back on your heel stretch back with your reclining leg. Again find a point that is comfortable, keep both legs engaged and focus on your breath, the longer you stay the better.

The time will come when you have stretched through and have stretched into the pose far enough to no longer be balanced on your knee, only your hands will be supporting you. Blocks here might be something to consider.

Try engaging the muscles of both legs firmly and keeping them engaged for a count of fifteen second then relax and allow yourself to lower a little deeper. Again caution is advised.

If you overdo it here, you'll pull or at least tweak a hamstring and won't be able to work on the pose for another three to six months, this is not one to rush.

There is a temptation when you almost reach the floor to allow your hip to twist slightly and come down on the side of one buttock, this is a bad idea as it puts tension on the knee.

I found this is a nice posture to work on after practicing eka pada raja kapotasana

Day 31 : Tiryang mukha Marichiyasana (Backward foot) subroutine



Tiryang-mukha-ekapadasana



with forward bend



with forward bend and twist



Kramchhasana



Counterpose



Utpluthi



Hanumanasana



with forward bend

Day 31 : Tiryang mukha Marichiyasana (Backward foot) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Stay at each stage for three to six breaths

This subroutine is an extension on the previous subroutine but also of the marchi sequence from Day 25

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

The forward bend here(pic 2) is surprisingly challenging, lift up out of the pelvis, enter the forward bend on the front of your sit bones pushing your backside back.

Make the exhalation long and slow as you bend forward, constrict the glottis more to make a more forceful ujjayi to control the descent.

As with the standing and seated marchi subroutines, the bind can be the challenge

We reach behind our back on a smooth exhalation

As you swing the arm around the knee think of putting on a coat the dipping of the shoulder forward as you reach around, half rotating your arm to get further around the knee.

Engage the bandhas, mula will ground you providing more stability, sucking in your belly in uddiyana bandha will give you more room for the forward bend.

As ever on the twist we again want to stretch up out of our pelvis on the inhale and twist a little more on each of the exhalations, lifting a little more on the inhalations.

Day 32 : Ardha padma marichiyasana (half lotus sage) subroutine



Dandasana



Niralamba Dandasana



Ardha padmasana



Ardha padmasana



Ardha badha padma paschima utanasana



Vashitasana



Ardha matsyendrasana



Ardha matsyendrasana



Utpluthi



Ardha badha padma

Day 32 : Ardhapadma marichiyasana (half lotus sage) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

This subroutine comes before Day 31's tiryng-mukha marichiyasana in Ramaswami's book and on the video link above, I missed it out from the practice sheets but will switch them back around when updating [my book](#).

This along with Day 31 and the next two subroutines are hybrid asymmetric vinyasas, each leg is in a different position, here the right in padmasana while the left is in marchi.

I find this half lotus version easier than the backward facing foot from yesterday, the lotus seems to give more stability when lowering my forehead to the mat in pic 3.

Notes for the half lotus are of course the same as in Day 26 but we're required to have a tighter lotus, the foot deeper into the groin to allow the other thigh to come up as we bring the opposite foot to our buttock.

Half lotus

See also Day 17 Vrikmasana for some notes on standing half lotus.

To get into half lotus : Bend the knee bringing it towards the chest, allow the knee to drop out to the side, key here is the natural rotation in the hip joint. Bring the foot close to the opposite thigh, hold your foot in one hand and the knee in the other and GENTLY encourage the rotation of the ball and socket hip joint, bring the knee forward parallel with the floor towards the opposite knee and the foot further up the thigh and ideally, eventually, towards the groin.

CAUTION

You don't want to force this action, if you feel strain on your knee it may be better to practice tomorrow's subroutine built around mama mudra with the foot against the thigh rather than on top instead. Practicing the maha mudra subroutine will bring half, and eventually, full lotus closer.

As yesterday, for the bind sit tall, stretch out of the pelvis and swing the arm around the knee on the exhalation. Search for the binding hand as if you were trying to put your arm through the sleeve of a tangled jacket.

On the next inhalation stretch tall again up out of the pelvis to straighten and realign after the fumbling for the hand behind your back, then lower your forehead to the mat.

The same goes for the twist to look over your shoulder, sit tall and lift up out of your pelvis to create the space to allow for your body to twist.

Picture 6 is another variation of marchi, a very challenging reverse twist. It's not in [Ramaswami's Complete Book of Vinyasa Yoga](#) but if your coming from Ashtanga as I did it's a posture you might miss and slips into the subroutine nicely here.

To get into the reverse twist you need to have the foot on the floor slightly to the left of your left buttock and then tilt the knee inwards. Bandhas need to be engaged, mula to ground, uddiyana to give more space around the midriff. Sit very tall, lift up as high out of the pelvis as possible. Twist as far to left as your able and swing your right arm around your right knee, you'll need to dip your body slightly down to the left to bring the outside of your shoulder as close to the outside of your knee as you can. As you stretch around to bind your shoulder brings your knee over, half way around you come out of the dip and stretch up out of your pelvis again while twisting to look over your shoulder. There is a tendency to drop the left shoulder, you'll need to keep it high to be able to reach the left hand behind your back.

The reverse twist is challenging and can take sometime to master but many of the principles are the same as the upcoming purna matsyendrasana, another posture that we gradually work towards.

Day 33 : Bharadwajasana (sage) & Mahabandha (great lock) subroutine



Dandasana



bharadvajasana



Mahabandha

Day 33 : Bharadwajasana (sage) & Mahabandha (great lock) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

A nice subroutine for maybe towards the end of the practice, perhaps an alternative to full lotus if it's still, as I heard it put once, blossoming.

Bharadwajasana

In the video I'm practicing Bharadwajasana ashtanga style, here in Vinyasa Krama we look over the shoulder on the same side as the folded back leg.

The unbound hand rests on your hip rather than placed under the knee....firmly if you need the extra support for the twist.

Try to keep the shoulders level, there's a tendency to dip the side your twisting in to.

Twist a little further whith each exhalation

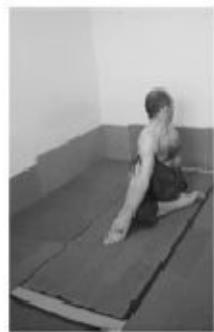
Mahabandha (pic 3) engages five bandhas or locks

1. Maha bhandha : closing anus with heel
2. Mula bandha : rectal lock
3. Uddiyana bandha : abdominal lock
4. Jalandhara bandha : chin lock
5. Jihva bandha toungue lock

Day 34 : Matsyendrasana (half and full Kingfisher) subroutine



Dandasana



Ardha matsyendrasana



Purna matsyendrasana

Day 34 : Matsyendrasana (half and full Kingfisher) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Ardha masyendrasana (half kingfisher) is relatively straight forward and a lovely posture but the full Kingfisher pose is challenging.

Getting into Purna Matsyendrasana

This is my current approach.

We need a high, tight half lotus. I take my right leg back, rotating the femur head as far back as possible in the hip socket, similar to archer pose but without bringing the foot to the ear.

I like to have my heel to the right of my belly button before rotating the femur back around, bringing my knee back to centre and my foot big up above the groin, still keeping the heel close to the belly button.

Let the right leg and knee settle on the mat then, and here's the trick, lift up a little and lower slightly on the right of the right sit bone.

Take the left foot over the knee, the knee will be half way up the foot, you need to have it braced enough that it doesn't pop out of the bind later.

Bring the left knee over, now here's another trick, stretch up out of your pelvis, engage uddiyana sucking in your belly, the space made will allow your foot to point upwards allowing your knee to come further over.

At the same time fill the chest on the inhalation as you bring your knee over, almost holding the knee in place with your chest as you reach behind the knee bringing your right shoulder as far to the outside of the knee as possible.

This should enable you to slide your arm down the leg and grab your left foot.

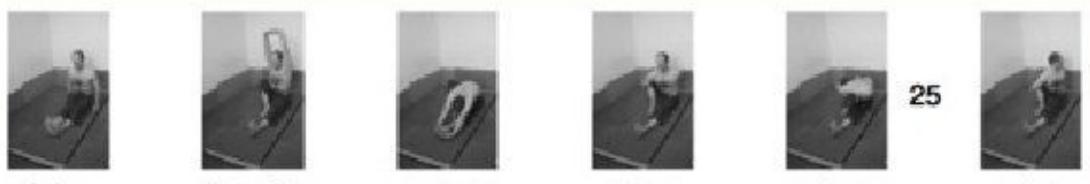
Settle yourself, open up your body to the side, look over your shoulder and reach around behind your back with your left hand and hold your right hip bone.

Now it's just a case of balancing the three opposing forces, your left knee wanting to open to the left, your right arm pushing your knee to the right but bringing but wanting to turn the body to the right and your left arm and hand on your hip turning your body out to the left.

When you get them all balanced and settle the great this really is one of the greatest of postures.

Below is a link to a video I made earlier today that the above description is based upon <http://youtu.be/vVSdO1RYMXU>

Day 35 Asymmetric subroutine breakdown



25



26



27



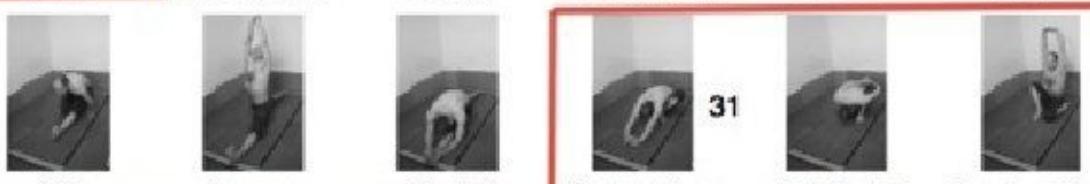
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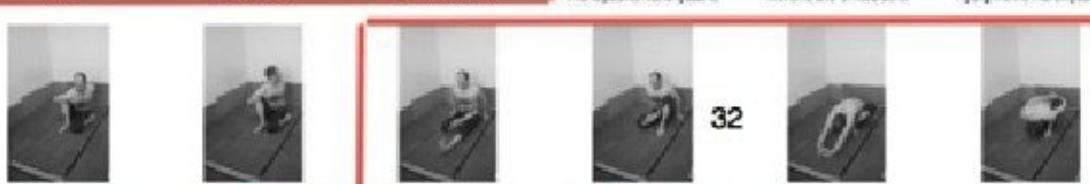
Fold over stretching leg
leg beyond the knee



30



31



32



33

34



Day 35 Asymmetric subroutine breakdown practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Practicing Asymmetric subroutines.

This was for a long time my favourite sequence of subroutines from Vinyasa Krama, it was familiar enough to a large section of the Ashtanga Primary series I was familiar with and yet encapsulated all I came to love about Vinyasa Krama. I loved how postures would grow out of the ones that had preceded it, developing and extending a theme. Without the Jump back that comes between each posture in Ashtanga I felt as if I was settling ever further into alignment and could relate the subtle differences of the postures of the subroutine more within my body. I liked how you would enter a posture gently, exit and then enter again a little more deeply and how you would then stay for a longer time sinking deep within the pose. The effect of the Asymmetric subroutines when practiced together is cumulative, it is advised to practice all the postures on one side as opposed to switching sides after every pose. Both approaches have their benefits but there's something, if not hypnotic, then certainly meditative about the flow of these postures one into the other. What else struck me powerfully was how the ground for more challenging postures, the leg behind head poses say or purna matsyendrasana, was being prepared, this is perhaps even clearer in the Lotus sequence where we're led through some of the same Asymmetric subroutines we find here towards full lotus.

However this is a long sequence when practiced together, ten subroutines that need to be practiced on both sides, practiced slowly, mindfully it can well over an hour to practice them all.

In my daily practice I like to include an asymmetric subroutine or two before seated subroutines.

As a rule I tend to save the maha mudra subroutine for late in my practice perhaps just before badha konasana from Seated, I like to stay in mama mudra for quite some time before settling down to pranayama

Whenever I practice leg behind head postures whether in Ashtanga or Vinyasa krama I always include the archer and heron subroutine from Day 28

Here's Ramaswami from this months newsletter writing about how the Asymmetric sequence and subroutines work the full range of movement of the hip joint.

'Yoga, especially vinyasakrama yoga, tends to work with almost all the articulation of all the joints especially the ankles, knees, hips, the spine and arms. Take the asymmetric sequence, in which one leg is kept in one position and the other leg kept in several positions, and in each subroutine several movements are done. Take for instance Marichyasana, the hip joint is kept in one position in which the inferior bone of the joint, the femur, is kept in the fixed position of Marichyasana and all the vinyasas are done by which the superior bone structure *viz.* the pelvis is moved around and manipulated. In other words, the ball in the socket is kept stationary and the socket is moved around. When you move on to the next subroutine, mahamudra/janusirsasana, the femur head within the socket takes a different stationary position and in the vinyasas the pelvis is moved around. In the third subroutine, the half lotus, the femur head position is again altered, but keeping it stationary a number of movements are done in the subroutines — akarnadhanurasana, kraunchasana, ekapadasirsasana, vajrasana, matsyendrasana, bharadvajasana and any others-- in which the pelvis is moved around. In fact in the series of vinyasas within those asanas, all the possible movements of the marvellously engineered hip joint are done in a short time giving a complete treatment for the hip joint.'

[From Srivatsa Ramaswami's Nov 2011 Vinyasa krama Newsletter](#)

SEATED SEQUENCE

Day 36 : Paschimottanasana (posterior stretch) subroutine



Dandasana



Paschimatanasana



Paschimatanasana



Paschimatanasana



Paschimatanasana



Paschimatanasana



Niralamba Paschimatanasana
Paschimatanasana



Niralamba Paschimatanasana
Paschimatanasana



Paschimatanasana



Paschimatanasana



Purvatanasana

Day 36 : Paschimottanasana (posterior stretch) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Paschimottanasana is one of the 4 Key Vinyasa Krama Asana that Ramaswami recommends we spend a considerable time in every day, the other three are Maha mudra (day) Sarvangasana (shoulder stand) and sirsasana (headstand).

' Yoga texts recommend vaseth, which means one should stay in this posture for for a long time. Even a stay of five minutes has a tonic effect on the posterior muscles, the abdominal muscles and the pelvic organs, because of the rectal and abdominal locks'.

Srivatsa Ramaswami Complete Book of Vinyasa Yoga p 75

Paschimottanasana is one of only two asana that I remember Ramaswami giving hands on adjustment, he would push forward our sacrum as we folded forward into the posture (the other adjustment was in tadasana where he would grip the pelvis and lift and hold up while we would do the hand arm variations).

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

In dandasana (pic 1) stretch fully as in standing tadasana, lifting up out of the pelvis, fold forward from the pelvis, imagine pushing your backside back as when we practiced uttaniasana (standing forward bend).

The slight bend you may find in the knees is GOOD, this is protecting your hamstrings, eventually, over time your legs will be able to stay flat.

It took me about a year before my legs would stay flat on the mat, there was always a slight bend of my knees.

Caution

Forcing the legs to flatten could damage your hamstrings, this is not fun and even a tweak of the hamstrings will take weeks if not months to pass completely. It's the pelvis we're most interested in working anyway in this posture, be kind to your hamstrings.

As you become more comfortable in the posture, a gentle way to work towards getting your legs a little flatter (not necessarily all the way) is to spend a minute or so in the posture then shuffle your sit bones backwards this will gently lengthen your hamstrings and allow them to flatten them a little more. Settle for another minute and then shuffle back a little further.

Engaging mula bandha (drawing up the anus) helps to protect your hamstrings, it seems to activate the gluteus maximus taking some of the stress off the hamstrings.

Engaging uddiyana bandha, sucking in the belly creates space for you to deepen your forward bend.

In Vinyasa Krama, in an extended stay in paschimattanasana we may lengthen the exhale and even hold the breath at the end of the exhalation and engage the bandhas strongly.

Inhalation 3-5 seconds, exhalation 5-10 or even 15 seconds.

In vinyasa Krama the chin is tilted to the chest and in an extended stay we may engage jalandhara bandha, the throat lock more strongly.

Occasionally I find tatkamudra a useful pre paschimottanasana posture, here's a link to a post concerning this <http://tinyurl.com/6egyxoy> Here's the gist of the post.

The other week, while practicing Primary series I was trying to settle into paschimottanasana but was feeling a little stiff. I laid back on the mat for a moment and figured while I was there I'd get my bandhas warmed up, better to engage them in the forward bend (I tend to spend five to ten minutes in paschimottanasana, Vinyasa Krama style). So I raised my arms over my head for tatkamudra stretched and at the end of my exhale stopped the breath and drew up and back mula bandha, connected it to uddiyana, drawing my abdominal muscles inward and backward and bringing the small of my back onto the mat. A few long slow breaths and I went back to paschimottanasana, low and behold, the stiffness was gone and paschi felt comfortable enough for a long deep stay.

Day 37 : Kurmasana (turtle pose) subroutine



Dandasana



Kurmasana



Akunchita kurmasana



Purvottanasana

Day 37 : Kurmasana (turtle pose) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

On the Video link above Kurmasana is at the end of the paschimottanasana video beginning at 6:55

Also in the video I enter kurmasana via Dwi pada sirsasana (both legs behind head) this is an advanced entry to the posture that allows you to get deeper into the pose.

Before attempting the Dwi pada entry be sure that your comfortable with eka pada sirsasana (one leg behind head) from the Asymmetric and Supine sequences as well as perhaps Yoga nidra from the Supine sequence.

In the video I also raise my heels off the mat this too is an advanced version of Kurmasana. To be able to raise the heels the legs need to be high up above the elbow. Push the backside back engage the bandhas and stretch the legs which should cause them to straighten and the heels to lift. this gives an intense stretch to the hamstrings so they need to be nicely warmed up before hand with for example a long five minute Paschimottanasana or uttanasana.

It is sufficient to enter the posture from the mat, keep the heels down and focus on the breath as in paschimottanasana, short inhalations and long slow exhalations.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

To get the legs over the head in akuncha kurmasana (pic 3) from the mat, one trick is to shuffle the left foot as far over to the right as possible so it meets the right foot. Use the outside of the top half of the right foot to lever the heel up and over the left foot to hook them together, then you can move both feet to the center of the mat and curl your head in. here's a link to a post and video from my blog.

<http://tinyurl.com/cqfynlu>

**Day 38 : Purva tanasana (anterior stretch) and Vashitasana (after the sage)
subroutine**



Dandasana



Puratanasana



Vasishtasana: right side



Vasishthasana left side



Dandasana

Day 38 : Purva tanasana (anterior stretch) and Vashitasana (after the sage) subroutine practice notes.

These postures make excellent counter postures to the long pashimottanasana, kurmasana and konasana subroutines from the seated sequence.

Stay in each purvatasana for three breaths but vashitasana for three to six breaths,

The challenge is to raise the hip(s) a little further on each exhalation.

As well as exercising the full range of the motion of the hip (along with the forward bending postures subroutines above) these postures are excellent for exercising the front back and side muscles of the legs that cross the knee joint. Exercising these muscles will give more support to the knee in the On one leg subroutines but also to advanced postures in which the knees are heavily involved.

VASHITASANA SEQUENCE

VIDEO LINK

Towards the end of Ramaswami's Complete book of Vinyasa yoga there is a chapter titled Visesha Vinyasa Kramas, the sun salutation sequence with mantras is found here along with some other dynamic sequences. One of these sequence based on Vashitasana incorporates purvatasana and vashitasana above but also the ardha-baddha padma vasitasana or Kashyapasana from Asymmetric. I thought it might be interesting to look at the full sequence here and especially at the last eight postures that pass back and forth between purvatasana and vashitasana, it's a mini sequence I like to practice after the above postures.

Here's a link to a video of the short vasistasana sequence <http://youtu.be/fA4FHPTxSlg>

On the following page is the full sequence.

We are encouraged to stay at each stage for three breaths, it's a tapas sequence that I find makes a nice short evening practice to burn off a few of the days rajas

before settling down to some pranayama and meditation.

Vashitasana sequence.



Start from downward dog



Vasishasana stithi



Hold big toe and straighten leg



bring leg to half lotus



raise arm while in half lotus



swing arm around the back and hold
big toe in Kashyapasana



return to downward dog



Vasishasana stithi



Hold big toe and straighten leg



bring leg to half lotus



raise arm while in half lotus



swing arm around the back and hold
big toe in Kashyapasana



return to downward dog



Vasishasana stithi on right arm



lower back into Purvatasana



Vasishasana stithi on left arm



downward facing dog



return to Vasishasana stithi on left arm



return to purvatasana



return to vasishasana stithi on right
arm the return to downward dog

Day 39 : SEATED : Chatushpadeetam (table pose) subroutine



Dandasana



Catushpada peetam



Catushpada peetam



Catushpada peetam

Day 39 : SEATED : Chatushpadapeetam (table pose) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

I find these a hip raises a nice counter to the forward bends for 'straightening' the spine out.

Plus the activate all the muscles that cross the knee thus developing more support for the knee in postures where the knee is exposed, On one leg postures, Lotus, Vajrasana etc.

the focus on raising the hip is helpful for working on advanced backbends like Kapotasana where we want to get the hips as far forward as possible.

Reminder

There is a little 'nudge' to the lower back, as Ramaswami puts it, at the end of the raising of the leg which stretches the small of the back and lifts the leg a little higher.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

I find it helps to think of fitting the raising of the leg as coming from the hip rather than thinking of raising the other end, the foot, the leg

Rather than thinking about straightening the leg think more of stretching through the leg which helps to straighten it.

Leg raises come up in some of the other sequences.

Sometimes in my shorter evening practice I like to focus the leg raising vinyasas. Here's a link to a video of some of those found in Vinyasa Krama <http://youtu.be/dsHWEHRaIAs>

Day 40 : Navasana (boat) and Urdhwa paschimotasana subroutine



Dandasana



Navasana



Upward Boat Pose (Urdhva Navasana)



Urdhwa Paschimottanasana



Savasana

Day 40 : Navasana (boat) and Urdhwa paschimotasana (up looking posterior stretch) subroutine practice notes.

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Nice example of the taking rest principle in Vinyasa Krama. Navasana is a challenging posture that can get the breath and heart rate going, if it does Ramaswami encourages us to take a short rest.

The first posture (pic 2) is salambasana navasana, supported boat pose. If you find full Navasana challenging then you might want to stick with the supported version or do a mixture of the two, a few breaths in Salambasana navasana then an attempt at navasana before returning to a few more breaths in the supported version.

HINTSTIPSSUGGESTIONS

In Navasana let physics do some of the work. Raise your legs but then pivot backwards on your backside as a counterweight to your legs which will bring your legs a little higher.

Stretch through the legs does a better job of straightening the legs than trying to lift from the feet.

The same goes for the back stretch through the back as in so many other postures in Vinyasa Krama, stretching/lifting out of the pelvis, try to flatten the small of the back as in yesterdays table pose.

If like me you have a pronounced coccyx then navasana is particularly challenging, try to avoid settling on the tip of the coccyx. I have to be a little above mine which means I need to place greater emphasis on straightening my back.

For the final posture Urdhwa pachimottanasana you might find it easier to begin with gripping the ankles and finding your balance then as you fold closer to your legs shuffle your hands up you your heels.

Day 41 : SEATED : Upavishta konasana (seated angle stretch) subroutine



Dandasana



Upavista Konasana sthiti



Upavista Konasana



Upavista Konasana



Upavista Konasana



Upavista Konasana



Forward bend to the right side



forward bending twist to the left side



forward bend to right



forward bending twist to right

Day 41 : SEATED : Upavishta konasana (seated angle stretch) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Upavishta konasana is one of those seemingly straight forward postures that we take for granted. I must have practiced it everyday for a couple of years before I gave it a second thought.

Vinyasa Krama often helps you to see some of the seemingly straight forward postures as if for the first time. It's the Vinyasas entering and exiting the posture on the breath, going in a little deeper each time. It's the long stays, elongating the exhalations and engaging the bandhas and it's the subtle variations on the key pose, the different hand variations, the twists, lifts and counters.

Try building a practice around this one routine, give yourself a lot of time, a LOT of time.

I credit this subroutine with improving my lotus, making it more comfortable and allowing me to stay longer, I credit it with helping me to get my knees to the mat in badha konasana and for getting my leg down below my neck and onto my shoulders in kapilasana a deep leg behind head posture.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

The usual tips apply for this as for all the forward bends. Lift up high out of the pelvis, shift your backside back, remember to fold from the hip rather than form the back and work your way into the pose, you have time here, nine variations, there's no rush.

On the side bend, leaning over to the right for example, I like to take my right hand and hold on to my left hip and twist in a little. Now reach over your head with your left arm and fold inside your hip. laying along the thigh to grab your right foot with your left arm. NOW bring the right arm around parallel to the mat and take the inside of the right foot and finally twist in and up between your arms.

Use one of the hip raises like table pose as a counterpose.

Day 42 : SEATED : Badha konasana subroutine



Dandasana



Badha konasana



Badha konasana



Badha konasana



Mula bandhasana



Padmasana



Bhadrasana



Siddhasana



Gomukhasana



Gomukhasana



Yoganarasiimhasana



Dandasana

Day 42 : SEATED : Badha konasana subroutine practice notes

I mentioned in the previous post that I credited working on Upavishta konasana (Day 41) with a much improved badha konasana allowing me to bring my feet closer to the perineum and the knees to the mat. As it's a favourite posture I sometimes like to include some of the hand/arm variations we find in the tadasana sequence as well as Day 41's Upavishta konasana.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

To get deeper into badha konasana prepare with extended stays in paschimottanasana and upavishtas konasana.

Sit up tall lifting up out of the pelvis

sit as far forward as possible on the sit bones

As you bring your feet closer towards the perineum, keep a little space between your feet to allow the turn outwards as if opening a book, turning your soles up to face you.

To allow this to happen there is a rotation in the hip joint, this should not be forced but something that will come over time as you work with hip opening postures like those in the Seated and Asymmetric particularly the janu sirsasanas.

Mula bhandasana

In this version you lift up and sit on the heels holding onto the feet (there is another advanced posture where you roll your feet over so that your heels face forwards and your toes point backwards before sitting on your heels), engage Mula, Uddiyana and Jalandhara bandha

Padmasana will be looked at in more detail in Lotus subroutines

Gomukhasana has too different versions, one where you sit on the heel and the

one shown here practiced in Vinyasa krama where you sit between the heels.

Day 43 : Seated Subroutine breakdown

Seated sequence subroutine breakdown



Day 43 : Seated Subroutine breakdown

[VIDEO LINK](#)

I find the Vinyasa Krama Seated sequence to be short enough to practice in its entirety, along with some standing postures and inversions, unlike the Asymmetric sequence, say, which is perhaps prohibitively long for a single practice.

If you have a shorter time to practice you can of course do fewer of the vinyasas from the different subroutines, the side twists from upavishta konasana but not from paschimottanasana for example or some of the hand/arm variations in paschinmottanasana, the others in konasana. Not all of the extra seated postures need to be practiced each time.

I like to do a mixture of Asymmetric and Seated subroutines, some of the Asymmetric hip openers, janu sirsasana, maha mudra as prep along with upavishta konasana for badha konasana and padmasana, I might save the long paschimottanasana for after back bending postures as a counter pose.

Ashtangis might like to look at this Seated sequence subroutine breakdown along with the one for the Asymmetric subroutines and see how Vinyasa Krama many subroutines they can spot in the Ashtanga Primary series.

In a sense Ashtanga Primary is a collection of subroutines, it gives some hints into how a Vinyasa Krama practice might be built up at the subroutine level. In Vinyasa krama we wouldn't have a jump back and through after every posture but perhaps after every subroutine or group of postures, a lead in and out of the Asymmetric postures within your practice perhaps, as well as of any from Seated or Bow...

In Ashtanga paschimottanasana is entered a number of times and there are several vinyasas of janu sirsasana and Marichi and some of the later shoulder stand postures have longer stays than the earlier postures. We might do the same in our Vinyasa Krama practice but where the Ashtanga Series remains fixed each day. In Vinyasa Krama we're free to change in which postures we stay for an extended period and which will focus on employing extra vinyasas.

BOW SEQUENCE

Day 44 : Bow : Makrasana (crocodile) & Manduka (frog) subroutine



Chaturanga dandasana



Makrasana



Bend knees in on exhale



Manduka

Day 44 : Bow : Makrasana (crocodile) & Manduka (frog) subroutine practice notes.

[VIDEO LINK](#)

The above video links you to Makarasana This VIDEO LINK takes you to Manduka asana'

I love this gentle lead into the deeper backbends and tend to include it along with pretty much all the Bow sequence when practicing backbends. Much of Bow is similar to the backbend section of Ashtanga Intermediate series but with more vinyasas, more time spent preparing for the deeper backbends.

I often add and/or mix the Bow Subroutine with/to the Meditative subroutines, which includes the Kapotasanas.

Most if not all of these postures and/or subroutines can be used as counterposes for Shoulderstand and/or any deep forward bend although you would tend to start with the lighter vinyasas

These postures tend to be repeated three to six times entering on the inhalation exiting on the exhalation except for manduka asana where you stay in the posture from 3 to six breaths

HINTSTIPSSUGGESTIONS

As with all backbends your aiming to stretch the whole length of your spine

Stretch and lift out of your pelvis just as if you were standing

Stretch and push out the chest on the inhalation, stretch the legs on the exhalation bringing them towards your buttocks.

Caution

Manduka (pic 4) can put a lot of stress on the knees make sure the muscles from the pelvis to the ankles are activated, the muscles that cross the knee will give support.

In the beginning use the feet just as support for the hands to push down upon and lift the chest and head, later, in time , when you become more confident of your knees and have built strength in your legs look to push your feet closer to the mat.

As you push down on your feet stretch out through your thighs which will lift the knee and tilt the feet closer to the mat this also avoids stress to the knees.

Day 45 : Bow : Bhujangasana (cobra) subroutine

BOW : bhujangasana (cobra)



Bhujangasana (bent arms)

Bhujangasana

bend legs in



Raja kapotasana

arms straight behind back, hands together

hands in reverse prayer

Day 45 : Bow : Bhujangasana (cobra) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Bhujangasana is similar to Urdhva Mukha Svanasana (Upward facing dog) except that pelvis remains groundedon the mat.

The postures are repeated again and again in each vinyasa (variation) raising and arching the spine on the inhalation returning on the exhalation.

because they are repeated so many times we can gently, gradually, deepen the stretch as the subroutine progresses.

Raja kapotasana is an advanced back bending posture where we aim to stay for three to six breaths with the head on the soles of the feet.

In Raja kapotasana Ramaswami instructs us to keep the thighs together, this is particularly challenging.

Picture 3 is a gentler version of Raja kapotasana, a working towards it.

HINTS TIPSSUGGESTIONS

To work on develop our flexibility we might take a tip from Urdhva Mukha Svanasana (Upward facing dog)

To go deeper into Urdhva Mukha Svanasana (Upward facing dog) where our pelvis is off the mat we are able to arch the back as much as possible but then work from the pelvis and bring it down and almost through the arms which deepens the backbend.

This is possible in bhjangasana also. Arch the back on the inhalation and at the end of the inhalation lift up off the mat enough to bring the pelvis forward a little and back down on to the mat, deeper into the posture.

In arching the back we stretch and lift out of the pelvis just as we have done in the standing bacbending hand/arm variations in tadasana.

There is also a stretch in the opposite direction, try to stretch your legs from your

buttocks to your toes, this is especially important in Raja kapotasana.

The main challenge and 'trick' to Raja kapotasana is to keep the pelvis on the mat as much as possible.

To bring the feet closer to the head the stretch from your thighs rather than just the calves.

Raja kapotasana will work the hamstrings and calf muscles and we must be careful not to overstretch them in reaching for the head.

Day 46 : Bow : Asymmetric Salabhasana (locust) subroutine

BOW: Asymmetric Salabhasana (locust) Subroutine



Salabhasana: raise right arm/right leg



raise right arm/left leg



raise left arm/left leg



raise left arm/right leg

Day 46 : Bow : Asymmetric Salabhasana (locust) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Ground the leg you are not lifting, push the thigh, shin, foot into the mat

There's a tendency to lift the leg from the foot but activate the buttock and begin to lift from the head of the femur itself rotating it up in the hip socket, along with the thigh, the knee the calf and the foot, lift the whole leg.

Stretch through the length of the leg

At the end of the inhalation give the hip a little nudge upwards while pushing the other hip into the mat.

As with the leg, rather than just lifting the arm stretch right through the arm from the shoulder to the hand.

Day 47 : Bow : Salabhasana (locust) subroutine

BOW : Salabhasana (Locust) Subroutine



raise both arms both legs



hands behind head



hands in reverse prayer



Vimanasana raise and spread arms and legs



Viparita salabhasana



Gandha bherundasana

Day 47 : Bow : Salabhasana (locust) subroutine practice notes.

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Regular Salabhasana

As Day 46 (Asymmetric Salabhasana), There's a tendency to lift the leg from the foot but activate the buttock and begin to lift from the head of the femur itself rotating it up in the hip socket, along with the thigh, the knee the calf and the foot, lift the whole leg.

Tuck the tailbone and stretch through the length of the leg

At the end of the inhalation give the hip a little nudge upwards while pushing the other hip into the mat.

As with the leg, rather than just lifting the arm stretch right through the arm from the shoulder to the hand

Stretch through both the arm and the leg, tho seems to make them lighter as if they want to float up.

In all these postures stretch through the back lifting out of the pelvis to give space for the arch of the back.

Ground the pelvis into the mat.

Viparita Salabhasana [VIDEO LINK](#)

In the Vinyasa Krama version of this posture the hands are clapped together under the groin.

We can begin to explore this posture by placing a towel under our shoulders to

take some of the pressure off our throat, which can feel strange and uncomfortable in the beginning.

It's possible to take the legs up together, in the video I walk the legs in as far as possible and then push off with one leg while leading with the other.

As your legs go up the back will need to arch to catch the feet at the top of the arch.

Tuck the tailbone and stretch from the pelvis to the toes.

Keep the legs straight and take the feet beyond the head to find a point of balance where the weight of the feet counteracts the weight of the pelvis

Press the full length of the arm firmly into the mat

There is the fear of flipping over, although this is highly unlikely in Viparita Salabhasana you may wish to practice near a wall as in the video. (This will also allow you the option of walking down the wall when beginning to work on the next posture Gandha Bherundasana).

Here's a link to a video showing the use of the towel <http://youtu.be/xwDSQyjBl8c>

Gandha Bherundasana [VIDEO LINK](#)

In this challenging posture a development of Viparita salabhasana we seek to bring the feet to the head. This may take some time to achieve.

The trick is to drop the hips to bring the feet lower

We also need to create more of an arch in the back. To do this take your feet further beyond your head in Viparita Salabhasana, the increased counterweight will allow you to drop your chest a little lower towards the mat creating a deeper backbend.

The temptation is to bring the feet in towards the head by bending at the knee but try to stretch through the full length of your legs as you bend at the knee.

The tendency is to focus on the lower half of the body but still try to stretch through the full length of the spine as if you are still lifting out of the pelvis. Although the upper body won't move it will seem to create space in the spine and sacrum allowing your to arch the back more comfortably.

Day 48 : Bow : Dhanurasana (bow) subroutine

BOW : dhanurasana (bow) and return sequence



Dhanurasana subroutine hold right hand
right foot

both hands right foot

left hand right foot



left hand left foot

both hands left foot

right hand left foot



both hands both feet

lay on right side

lay on left side



Chaturanga dandasana

Day 48 : Bow : Dhanurasana (bow) subroutine practice notes

Asymmetric Dhanurasana

Get a grip during exhalation

Pause for a breath

Pull in your leg on the next inhalation

Relax on the exhalation

Repeat three to six times

Pause for a breath after the final exhalation

Dhanurasana

Reach back and catch both legs on the exhalation

Drawin in the legs on the inhalation

Relax on the exhalation

Repeat three to six times.

Ideally the feet knees, thighs will stay together although in the beginning it's acceptable if not preferable to allow them to be a few inches apart.

Drishti (gaze) look straight ahead.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Engage Mula and uddiyana bandha, imagine there is a pea beneath you belly that you are trying not to squash by drawing in your belly throughout.

Tuck the tailbone

Rather than lifting for the leg or pulling in there is a stretching through the whole body. Because the hand and foot are bound this stretch arches the back and lifts the chest and leg.

Drop the shoulder blades down the back to allow the chest to lift more easily and to relax the neck.

In the asymmetric version, ground the whole trailing leg pressing into the mat

from the hip to the toes.

Day 49 : Bow Subroutine breakdown

Bow sequence Subroutine breakdown



Day 49 : Bow Subroutine breakdown practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

There are a number of intense back bending postures in Vinyasa Krama.

Dropping back into Purna chakrasana in the Standing sequence

Raja kapotasana in Bow sequence

Gandha Bherundasana in Bow sequence

Kapotasana in Meditative the sequence

Urdhava Dhanurasana found in the Supine sequence

Uttanasana mayurasana in the Supine Sequence

Viparita Dandasana in the Inverted sequence

Vrishikasana in the Inverted sequence

The subroutines in Bow sequence give perhaps the most preparation and gradual development in developing your back bending facility. As such these subroutines might be included in your practice as preparation for the intense back bending postures in the other sequences.

If you don't feel ready for some of the more intense backbends in the other sequences and tend to skip the postures above, the Bow sequence, missing out Raja kapotasana and gandha berundasana, may be a good place to work towards them.

A light back bending practice might include any or all of the back bending subroutines below

The hand/arm variations back stretching subroutine from Standing

All of the Bow subroutines passing on raja kapotasana and gandha berundasana

Ustrasana subroutine from the meditative sequence missing out kapotasana.

The dwipaditam (desk pose) subroutine from Supine possible including urdhva danhurasana

Possibly the one legged uttana mayurasana subroutine from Sequence Supine

Remember to include a forward folding counter posture after you back bending postures, perhaps working gently into a long stay in paschimottanasana or upavishta konasana

I often tend to practice Bow subroutines and Meditative subroutines together, the Bow subroutines as a preparation for the Meditative sequences Kapotasana subroutine.

' Backbending' is perhaps not the best expression, rather we should think of these postures as an arching of the back, a back stretch rather than bend.

A back stretch begin in the toes and ends in the fingertips.

In the Bow sequence subroutines we stretch out through the legs feet, toes and stretch our body out of the pelvis and up through the arms.

Engaging the bandhas can support the base of the spine in all back bending postures. here's Ramaswami from his Sept 2011 Newsletter

'The spinal column descends from the occipital region and we have the aajna chakra in that region and the sahasrara is in the cranial region. The tailbone is the baby of the assembly at the bottom and tucked nicely but is surrounded by heavy muscles and tissues and protected well. It has some mobility.'

Since it is the root of the spine it is also known among Yogis as the Mula. Since both Hata Yoga and Kundalini Yoga are predominantly connected with the spine the mula becomes an important aspect of yoga. When one wants to work with the spine, it, the coccyx, should be firmly anchored. Let us consider the example of the fishing rod (old times). It has a flexible pole, a string and the bait. (sorry I could not think of an ahimsa example). One holds the pole at the far end and when the bait is taken, the pole bends. The fisherman will have to hold the pole firmly so that the pole can bend to the extent required, even though there will be some play or movement in the hand of the holder. Further he has to hold at the farthest point, holding a bit inside the pole reduces the leverage and the pole will not bend sufficiently.

The coccyx and sacrum (sacro-coccygeal section) are at the bottom of the backbone. The coccyx is at the very end of the spine. It represents a vestigial tail (hence the common term tailbone) and consists of three to five very small bones fused together. There is, limited movement between these bones permitted by fibrous joints and ligaments. The sacrum is a large triangular bone at the base of the spine and at the upper and back part of the pelvic cavity and where it is 'inserted' like a bone wedged between the two hip bones. Its upper part is

connected to the last lumbar vertebra and the bottom part to the coccyx. In children it consists normally of five unfused vertebrae which begin fusing around 16 years and become completely fused around 26. It is kyphotic (curved, concavity facing forward). Even so, it is now an established fact that the sacrum moves between the ilia by both ambulatory and respiratory motions . It would therefore point to the logic of the use of fuller breathing in vinyasa movements as in Vinyasa Krama.

So the mula or the tail bone will have to be held firmly during the spinal exercises. And the yogis used the well known technique called mulabandha which is contracting a few groups of muscles surrounding the tailbone: the perineum, rectum and the gluteal muscles. All spinal movements, the forward bend, the rounded back, the turn, the back bend, the side bend, all will be better if the mula is gripped firmly and engaged.'

MEDITATIVE SEQUENCE

Day 50 : Meditative : Vajrasana (thunderbolt) subroutine

MEDITATIVE : vajrasana (after sage)



Vajrasana



raise arms above head .. palms up



hasta vinyasa



forward bending variations in vajrasana



arms outstretched



hands behind buttocks



'...dig hands a little into your lower abdomen'



'...place forehead on the floor'



hands in Prishthanai (prayer)



extend chest and return to vajrasana



Counterposes



raising chest

Day 50 : Meditative : Vajrasana (thunderbolt) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

A relatively straight forward posture in which, as with tadasana and it's hand/arm vinyasas, we can focus on the breath and movement of the arms but also of the hips.

This is also an excellent posture for engaging the bandhas are lengthening the exhalation in the forward bends which me may choose to stay in for a considerable time.

The forward bends are more challenging than they look as the posture is less stable than in say paschimottanasan and upavishta konasana. As we beginning to fold forward our hips want to list and it's difficult to control the decent and not end up head butting the mat.

Vajrasana may also be used as a posture for pranayama and meditation and may be the ideal alternative if you struggle with padmasana (lotus).

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS.

Engage the bandhas, especially Mula bandha, drawing up the anus. this seems to act as an anchor, focusing our attention on where we need to counter the weight of our arms and upper body as it folds forward.

press the lower legs from the knees to the toes into the mat, especially focusing on the toes and dorsal feet.

The counter poses in the last two pictures are excellent positions to begin focusing on raising the hips as far as possible and pushing them forward, exploring nutation(the tilting of the pelvis both clockwise and counterclockwise) and strengthening the quads, all useful preparation for the backbends that come later in the meditative sequence as well as those in other sequences.

Day 51 : Meditative : Ushtrasana (camel) subroutine

MEDITATIVE : Ushtrasana (camel)



Vajrasana



raise arms above head , palms up



Ushtrasana



Return to Vajrasana stithi

Day 51 : Meditative : Ushtrasana (camel) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

In the video I enter ushtrasana from 'namaste' position, with the hands palms together, in the Book Ramaswami has you enter ushtrasana from arms raised as in the pictures above.

Day 52, tomorrow, will look at moving from Ushtrasana to Kapotasana. Kapotasana is an advanced position and challenging without a certain degree of preparation, key to that preparation is Ushtrasana.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

The danger in kapotasana is to put too great a strain on the lower back, to avoid this we want to create a strong and stable base, ushtrasana allows us to focus on developing that stability.

Press the toes into the mat, all of them

Press the feet into the mat

Press the whole of the lower leg from the toes to the knees into the mat

Keep pressing into the mat from the moment you begin to raise your arms above your head, throughout your stay in ustrasana and until you return to vajrasana stithi

Engage your bandhas, draw up your anus and suck in the belly, imagine the muscles of the bandhas holding the base of the spine firmly, (Ramaswami's fishing rod example).

Engage the front of your thighs (make the most of any postures that engage the quads so as to develop strength).

Most important of all bring the hips forward and keep encouraging them forward throughout all the way back into ushtrasana and throughout your stay in the posture.

With every inhalation raise up your chest and with every exhalation push your pelvis a little further forward.

As you raise your arms and lift up of your knees lift out of your pelvis and try to keep lift ion out of your pelvis throughout your stay in ustrasana.

Ideally your legs and thighs should be together, this may be something to work towards as it is less stable.

**Day 52 : Meditative : Ushtrasana (camel) to Kapotasana (pigeon)
subroutine**

MEDITATIVE : Ushtrasana to Kapotasana (camel to pigeon)



Vajrasana stithi



raise arms above head , palms up



Ushtrasana



return to vajrasana stithi



raise arms above head , palms up



Ushtrasana advanced variation



Advanced kapotasana



Kapotasana



return to advanced kapotasana



return to ushtrasana



return to Vajrasana stithi

Day 52 : Meditative : Ushtrasana (camel) to Kapotasana (pigeon) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

This is an extended Ushtrasana subroutine (Day 51) that continues on into Kapotasana (pigeon), kapotasana is a challenging posture, it's wise to work on becoming comfortable and stable in Ustrasana then advanced Ustrasana before moving on to Kapotasna for which they prepare you.

HINTSTIPSSUGGESTIONS

These are the same as for yesterdays ushtrasana subroutine (Day 51)

The danger in kapotasana is to put too great a strain on the lower back, to avoid this we want to create a strong and stable base, ushtrasana allows us to focus on developing that stability.

Press the toes into the mat, all of them

Press the feet into the mat

Press the whole of the lower leg from the toes to the knees into the mat

Keep pressing into the mat from the moment you begin to raise your arms above your head, throughout your stay in ustrasana and until you return to vajrasana stithi

Engage your bandhas, draw up your anus and suck in the belly, imagine the muscles of the bandhas holding the base of the spine firmly, (Ramaswami's fishing rod example).

Engage the front of your thighs (make the most of any postures that engage the quads so as to develop strength).

Most important of all bring the hips forward and keep encouraging them forward

throughout all the way back into ushtrasana and throughout your stay in the posture.

With every inhalation raise up your chest and with every exhalation push your pelvis a little further forward.

As you raise your arms and lift up of your knees lift out of your pelvis and try to keep lift ion out of your pelvis throughout your stay in ustrasana.

Ideally your legs and thighs should be together, this may be something to work towards as it is less stable

Advanced Ushtrasana (picture 6)

Remembering all of the above, the lifting out of the hips and keeping the legs from the toes to the knee firmly into the mat, engaging the thighs and pushing forward the pelvis, arch back and take your arms over your shoulders towards your heels.

At first you may only be able to reach the mat behind you and may have to work towards taking your heels or ankles over time.

To avoid collapsing as you arch backwards it's necessary to keep your thighs strongly engaged and your hips forward and keep lifting out of your pelvis.

To reach your heels: one way is to land your hands on the mat and then walk them in towards and up your feet.

Ideally you will want to reach your heels from the air, this will take time but the trick is to keep the pelvis forward and the thighs engaged.

Work on strengthening the thighs and keeping the hips forward in other Vinyasa Krama postures, particularly the table subroutine in the Supine sequence.

If Kapotasana is beyond you for now you will bend to come back up from advanced Ustrasana. To do so press your legs from the toes to the knees into the mat, engage the thighs strongly and most importantly lift from the hip pushing your pelvis forward.

Kapotasana

From Advanced Ustrasana inhale, press your palms, engage your thighs and tighten your buttocks, push your pelvis forward as if you were going to come back up to seated but instead lower your head to the mat as near your feet as is possible for you.

By acting as if to lift out of the pose when lowering you give your self more control in lowering into the deep back bend.

You may wish to stay in this version of Kapotasana for a number of breathes, lifting the chest on the inhale and pushing forward the hips on the exhalation.

The depth of your kapotasana will depend on your Ushtrasana, if you begin to lower while your hands are on the mat, your toes or half way up your feet that will be the extent of your kapo. To go deeper into the posture you will need to take your feet, ankles of calves in Ustrasana and then lower.

It is harder to deepen your Kapotasana once you have lowered your head to the mat although it is possible to take a rest and then straighten the arms and lifting the head and walking back in.

The depth of your kapotasana seems to be directly related to how far your able to push tour pelvis forward and keep it forward.

On the exhalation take your arms around to the side and hold your thighs.

To come back up return your arms to your heels on the inhalation and return as in Advanced ushtrasana above, pressing your legs from the toes to the knees into the mat, engaging the thighs strongly and most importantly lifting from the hip and pushing your pelvis forward.

The ideal is to perform this subroutine with your feet, knees and thighs together,

this is challenging as it gives you a less secure base and there is the danger of toppling over to one side, good bandha control is necessary as well as smooth and steady breathing.

Day 53 : Meditative : Standard Camel walk subroutine

Meditative: Standard Camel walk subroutine



Vajrasana stithi



lift up on the inhale



step forward right leg



fold over thigh palms beside right foot



raise up and arch back to hold the heel



raise back up



return to Vajrasana stithi



lift up on the inhale and step forward left leg



fold over thigh palms beside left foot



raise up and arch back to hold the heel



raise back up



return to vajrasana stithi

Day 53 : Meditative : Standard Camel walk subroutine practice notes

VIDEO LINK

I've split the camel walk up into two sequences the, standard and advanced depending on which version of Ushtrasana is employed.

This is a curious subroutine and has more of the feel of a sequence like the Sun salutation or of some of the other Visesha vinyasa krama's that Ramaswami brings together in Chapter 11 of his Complete book of vinyasa yoga like the Vasishtasana, Halasana, and Ajaneyasana sequences.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

The same suggestions for the ushtrasana subroutine apply here but with some extra considerations due to the fact we're stepping up onto one foot.

Step forward about a foot in front of the trailing knee, when you arch back your knee will come forward, you want to step far enough forward that you don't over extend your knee past your toes.

Press down on all four corners of the foot, as you arch back you'll press more firmly on the ball of the foot and the toes.

Press the back toes of the trailing foot into the mat, all of them

Press the back of the foot into the mat

Press the whole of the lower leg from the toes to the knees into the mat

Keep pressing into the mat from the moment you begin to raise your arms above your head, throughout your stay in ustrasana and until you return to vajrasana

stithy

Engage uddiyana bandha drawing in your belly as you fold over your leg

Engage your bandhas, draw up your anus and suck in the belly, imagine the muscles of the bandhas holding the base of the spine firmly, (Ramaswami's fishing rod example).

Engage the front of your thighs (make the most of any postures that engage the quads so as to develop strength).

In this version of ustrasana we reach around to take hold of our foot rather than taking our arms over our shoulders (advanced version - see tomorrow Day 54)

Most important of all bring the hips forward and keep encouraging them forward throughout all the way back into ushtrasana and throughout your stay in the posture.

With every inhalation raise up your chest and with every exhalation push your pelvis a little further forward.

As you raise your arms and lift up of your knees lift out of your pelvis and try to keep lift up out of your pelvis throughout your stay in ustrasana.

Day 54 : Meditative : Advanced Camel walk subroutine

Meditative: Advanced Camel walk subroutine



Vajrasana stithi



Raise arms and lift off thighs



Step forward right leg



bend forward place palms beside feet



raise up, arms over head bend back and
catch heel



raise back up from the hips



return to vajrasana stithi



Raise arms and lift off thighs and step
forward left leg



bend forward place palms beside feet



raise up, arms over head bend back and
catch heel



raise back up from the hips



return to vajrasana stithi

Day 54 : Meditative : Advanced Camel walk subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

This is the advanced version of yesterday's Camel walk subroutine with the advanced Ushtrasana (Picture 5&9).

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

For the advanced Ushtrasana on one knee, a major concern is of course balance. In the beginning consider stepping through slightly to the outside of the line with the hip, this will make your base more stable.

It's very important to lead with the hip when coming up from this posture.

Advanced Ushtrasana (from Day 52).

Remembering to lift out of the hips and keep pressing the leg, from the toes to the knee, firmly into the mat, engaging the thighs and pushing forward the pelvis, arch back and take your arms over your shoulders towards your heels.

At first you may only be able to reach the mat behind you and may have to work towards taking your heels or ankles over time.

To avoid collapsing as you arch backwards it's necessary to keep your thighs strongly engaged and your hips forward and keep lifting out of your pelvis.

To reach your heels: one way is to land your hands on the mat and then walk them in towards and up your feet.

Ideally you will want to reach your heels from the air, this will take time but the trick is to keep the pelvis forward and the thighs engaged.

Work on strengthening the thighs and keeping the hips forward in other Vinyasa Krama postures, particularly the table subroutine in the Supine sequence.

An advanced extension of this version of Ushtrasana is Eka pada kapotasana, where we lower the head to the foot and stretch out the leading leg.

The same suggestions for the standard camel walk subroutine from Day 53 apply here but with some extra considerations due to the fact we're stepping up onto one foot.

Step forward about a foot in front of the trailing knee, when you arch back your knee will come forward, you want to step far enough forward that your don't over extend your knee past your toes.

Press down on all four corners of the foot, as you arch back you'll press more firmly on the ball of the foot and the toes.

Press the back toes of the trailing foot into the mat, all of them

Press the back of the foot into the mat

Press the whole of the lower leg from the toes to the knees into the mat

Keep pressing into the mat from the moment you begin to raise your arms above your head, throughout your stay in ustrasana and until you return to vajrasana stithy

Engage uddiyana bandha drawing in your belly as you fold over your leg

Engage your bandhas, draw up your anus and suck in the belly, imagine the muscles of the bandhas holding the base of the spine firmly, (Ramaswami's fishing rod example).

Engage the front of your thighs (make the most of any postures that engage the quads so as to develop strength).

Most important of all bring the hips forward and keep encouraging them forward throughout, all the way back into ushtrasana and throughout your stay in the posture.

With every inhalation raise up your chest and with every exhalation push your pelvis a little further forward.

As you raise your arms and lift up of your knees lift out of your pelvis and try to keep lift up out of your pelvis throughout your stay in ustrasana.

Day 55 : Meditative : Virasana (hero pose) subroutine

MEDITATIVE : Virasana (hero's pose)



Vajrasana sthiti



raise arms above head .. palms up



Spread feet slightly wider than hips, keep knees together



sit between feet



place forehead and arms on floor



come back up to seated



round back and lay bac into
Prayankasana, rest hands on thighs or
knees



rest hands on thighs or heels



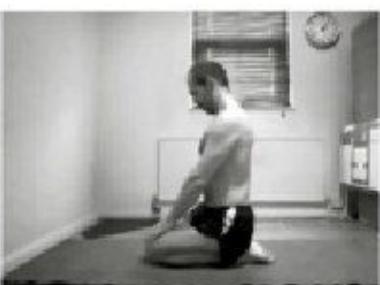
raise arms above head and come back to
seated or keep hands on heels and push
up to seated



Raise arms and torso up



bring the feet back together



return to vajrasana sthiti

Day 55 : Meditative : Virasana (hero pose) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

The Virasana subroutine is excellent for working on the quadriceps, the muscles at the front of the thighs. Strong quads are important for giving support in ushtrasana and kapotasana from the previous Meditative sequence subroutines. In backbends the hips tend to want to be carried back as we arch backwards, strong quads help keep control of the hips keeping them forward and raised.

The virasana subroutine also involves nutation (titling) the pelvis as well as rotating the femurs inwards, two more useful tips for developing back bending.

Virasana is one of the few postures where the femurs and thighs are rotated inwards and towards each other rather than away from each other, as such it is an excellent counter posture for intense hip openers like badha konasana and samakonasana to name but two.

You may not feel ready for postures like kapotasana or dropping back into Urdhava dhanurasana but Virasana can provide some of the groundwork and skills that can be employed later.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

If your feet don't lie flat in Vajrasana you can roll up a small towel and place it between the front of the foot and the ankle.

If your knees feel stressed or tilt upwards you can place a small cushion beneath your buttocks or a rolled up yoga mat that you can sit on and even lay back upon in pictures 7 and 8

Props don't tend to be used that much in Vinyasa Krama but because of the stress that can be put on the knees this seems a subroutine where they might be considered.

The reclining supta virasana (pics 7& 8) puts the most stress on the knees and should be avoided until the other postures feel comfortable.

Virasana can also stimulate the knee complex and build strength in the muscles that cross the knee.

In picture 3 the knees stay together but the feet come wide enough apart to be able to sit between them.

The forward bend in picture 5 is surprisingly unstable, there's a point as you fold forward where you can overbalance sending our face towards the mat, in this version the arms are outstretched but we can also fold forward with the hands behind the back in reverse prayer although caution is advised, engage the bandhas stingly and press the feet firmly into the mat.

Ideally the buttocks will stay on the mat in the forward bend and our forehead and hands will touch the mat at the same moment.

When arching back in picture 7 it's acceptable to place your forearms on the mat with the hands on the heels.

When arching back tilt (nutate) the coccyx towards the pubic bone and rotate the femurs and thus the thighs inwards.

Press the toes, the feet the legs firmly into the mat as you lower backwards to help support the back. Do the same when coming back up,

It is acceptable to push down on the heels to come back up

Virasana is a beautiful posture, ideal for spending a considerable time and working on engaging the bandhas and elongating the breath.

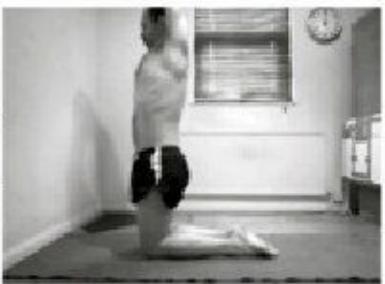
Virasana is one of the five postures rRamaswami recommends at the end of his book, The Complete Book of Vinyasa Yoga for pranayama (breathing exercises) and meditation, the other four are, Padmasana, Siddhasana, Gomukhasana and vajrasana.

Day 56 : Meditative : Simhasana (lion pose) subroutine

MEDITATIVE : Simhasana (Lion pose)



Vajrasana stithi



raise arms above head .. palms up



cross legs at ankles



Simhasana in virasana



rise up on inhalation



Simhasana { rise up and lower into simhasana three times}



rise up on inhalation



uncross legs



lower back into Vajrasana stithi

Day 56 : Meditative : Simhasana (lion pose) subroutine practice notes

Simhasana is a Vinyasa of Virasana, as such the same practice notes apply.

Raise up off the thighs on the inhalation bringing the arms above the head, lower and place the hands on the knees fingers spread, breathe in and on the exhalation make the lion face.

Lions face: on the exhalation, exhaling with a long "haaaa" sound eyes wide, tongue outstretched.

HINTSTIPSSUGGESTIONS

The Virasana subroutine is excellent for working on the quadriceps, the muscles at the front of the thighs. Strong quads are important for giving support in ushtrasana and kapotasana from the previous Meditative sequence subroutines. In backbends the hips tend to want to be carried back as we arch backwards, strong quads help keep control of the hips keeping them forward and raised.

The virasana subroutine also involves nutation (titling) the pelvis as well as rotating the femurs inwards, two more useful tips for developing back bending.

Virasana is one of the few postures where the femurs and thighs are rotated inwards and towards each other rather than away from each other, as such it is an excellent counter posture for intense hip openers like badha konasana and samakonasana to name but two.

If your feet don't lie flat in Vajrasana you can roll up a small towel and place it between the front of the foot and the ankle.

If your knees feel stressed or tilt upwards you can place a small cushion beneath your buttocks or a rolled up yoga mat that you can sit on and even lay back upon in pictures 7 and 8

Props don't tend to be used that much in Vinyasa Krama but because of the stress that can be put on the knees this seems a subroutine where they might be

considered.

DAY 57 : Meditative Subroutine's Breakdown

Meditative subroutines breakdown



DAY 57 : Meditative Subroutine's Breakdown

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Reviewing the Meditative subroutines has been a rediscovery, in the past I've tended to add the Ushtrasana to Kapotasana subroutine to the Bow sequence in a backbend focused practice similar to that I was familiar with from Ashtanga Intermediate series, neglecting the other subroutines altogether.

Since practicing Vajrasana at the beginning of the week I've included the subroutine several times at the end of my regular practice in place of padmasana and Vajrasana itself as a posture for my pranayama and meditation practice.

Virasana has turned out to be excellent preparation for the work I've been doing recently on Samakonasana as it loosens and lengthens the quadriceps, it's also an excellent counter posture for any asana like Samakonasana but also badha konasana where the femur heads are rotated outwards as in Vajrasana the joint is rotated inwards, towards each other, I struggle to think of another asana that does this.

It was always a surprise to me that a sequence that included Kapotasana should be called meditative and yet Dharana, the sixth limb of Patanjali's yoga, is Concentration and few postures so readily concentrate the mind as Kapotasana. However it is the vajrasana and virasana postures that give the sequence its name, both are considered by ramaswami as suitable for pranayama and meditation practice.

Where to practice Meditative subroutines.

The camel walk subroutine strikes me as a nice, stand alone, 'extra' practice, perhaps when you have limited time to practice, although a little preparation would most likely be necessary for the advanced version, perhaps one of the bow subroutines.

The Vajrasana, Virasana and Simhasana are ideal for the end of practice, winding down subroutines.

Vajrasana is an excellent quadriceps strengthening subroutine, regular inclusion will help prepare you for many of the back bending postures subroutines as

strong legs take stress off the lower back.

Virasana with it's internal rotation of the femur heads in the hip joints is an ideal counter posture for hip openers, like the leg behind head postures in Asymmetric or any of the Konasana subroutines, especially those in the Seated sequence.

One thing the Meditative subroutines lack is twisting, Bharadwajasana from Day 33 comes to mind as an additional posture, leading into Mahabandha for bandha focus but perhaps a stronger focus on the twisting postures in the tadasana subroutine might make for a more balanced practice.

SUPINE SEQUENCE

Day 58 : Supine : Tatakamudra (pond gesture) & Jayaraparivritti (belly twist) Subroutine

SUPINE : Tatkamudra (pond gesture) & Jataraparivritti (belly twist) Subroutine



Supine stithi



tatkamudra, engage mula, uddiyana and jandhara bandhas



tatkamudra variation, raise the arms above the head and engage the bandhas



Jataraparivritti, arms outstretched, legs to right, turn head to left



Jataraparivritti, arms outstretched, legs to left, turn head to right



return to Supine stithi

Day 58 : Supine : Tatakamudra (pond gesture) & Jayaraparivritti (belly twist) Subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Tatakamudra (pond gesture), so called because the pronounced abdominal cavity created by engaging the bandhas fully, resembles a pond.

We engage the bandhas and create this pond effect while the arms are by the side, above our head and also, if we wish, while in jataraparivritti, the belly twist.

To create the effect, Ramaswami writes...

'Exhale completely. Anchor your heels , tailbone, arms and back; press down through your palms and draw in the rectum; pull the lower abdomen in and towards your back. hold the locks for five to ten seconds. your chin should be locked as well' p105 Complete Book of Vinyasa Yoga : Srivatsa Ramaswami

The abdominal lock in the arms raised above head position is perhaps the most effective and thus has the most pronounced 'pond' effect, the legs to the sides in jataraparivritti, the belly twist, the least pronounced.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Ramaswami recommends holding the bandhas for ten seconds, this is something to build towards, start with three and then five.

Towards the end of the exhalation begin to focus on mula bandha, and begin to prepare for drawing in the rectum at the end of a full exhalation.

I like to imagine that I'm drawing my mula bandha up but also back where it meets the uddiyana, drawing the belly back towards the spine as if a thread is attached to your belly button. Flatten the spine against the mat eliminating the space caused by the curve of the back and continue to draw back and up your belly to create a cavity beneath the ribcage.

To create a deeper cavity and intensify uddiyana bandha even more once you have drawn your belly back and up as far as it will go stretch the ribcage up and outwards.

Remember to engage jalandhara bandha, the throat lock by bringing the chin firmly down to the chest as much as possible without raising the head.

Eliminating the space between the mat and the spine seems to relax the spine making this an ideal preparation posture for paschimottanasana, especially on a cold morning or when you have had less of a warm up.

Flatening the length of the spine along the mat also works as a way of relaxing the spine after intense backbends with or without engaging the bandhas fully.

Tatakamudra is an excellent posture for beginning an exploration of bandhas

BANDHAS?

As we become more confident with our asana we should begin to work on engaging the bandhas as these can help to steady us in our postures.

Jalandhara bandha

'There are three important bandhas. the first is jalandhara bandha, or locking the chin against the breastbone. This may be done during kumbhkas and whenever the posture requires the chin to be locked, which is normally the case during forward bends and when keeping the back erect. In backbends and twisting postures it is not possible to do jalandhara bandha'. p127

Mula and Uddiyana bandha

'The other two bandhas, however, should be practiced in most of the asanas, especially after exhalation. The first is mula bandha, which means "constricting of the anus" It is done after a complete exhalation. After the exhalation is over, the abhyasi (yoga student) should anchor the body in the asana he or she is in and then slowly and deliberately close the anus and draw in the rectum by contracting the perineal and surrounding muscles of the pelvic floor. Then as if in a continuous movement, the abdomen, including the navel, is drawn in, pushing up the diaphragm into the now almost empty chest cavity, which is then

called uddiyana bandha (drawing in of the diaphragm)... This technique is one of the specialities of yogic breathing' p127

Day 59 : Supine : Apanaasana (pelvic floor poses) subroutine

SUPINE : apanasana (Pelvic floor) & pavanamuktasana (wind relieving) subroutine



Anapanasana, right leg to chest



Pavanamuktasana, chin to knee



Pavanamuktasana, nose to knee



Pavanamuktasana, forehead to knee



Apanasana left leg to chest



Pavanamuktasana, chin to knee



Pavanamuktasana, nose to knee



Pavanamuktasana, forehead to knee



Apanasana, both legs to chest



Pavanamuktasana, chin to knee



Pavanamuktasana, nose to knee



Pavanamuktasana, forehead to knee

Day 59 : Supine : Apanasana (pelvic floor poses) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

This subroutine alternates vinyasas of two postures, apanasana, pelvic floor poses and pavanamuktasana, wind relieving posture.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

In all the anapanasana vinyasas the head stays on the mat, the hip lifts to bring the knee or knees to the chest.

In all the pavamuktasana vinyasas the head lifts off the mat to bring with the chin, nose or forehead to the knee or knees.

It's acceptable to raise the head when catching the knee in anapanasana but once caught lower the head, and tighten the grip around the leg or legs and press the thigh(s) against the lower abdomen.

In the pavamuktasana vinyasas be careful not to strain when bringing your forehead to your knee, stretch up through the length of your spine and drop your shoulder blades down your back.

Engaging uddiyana at the end of the exhalation may also help to allow the forehead to reach the knee.

Ramaswami includes anapanasana along with urdwa-parasarita-pada-hastasana ("U" formation) and dwipadapitam (desk pose) as important sarvangasana (shoulder stand) preparation.

I also find anapanasana and urdwa-parasarita-pada-hastasana ("U" formation) to be excellent counter postures to intense back bending along with yesterday's tatakamudra (pond gesture).

Day 60 : Dwipadapitam (Desk pose) subroutine

SUPINE : dwipadapitam (Desk pose)



Dwipadapitam subroutine

grab heels

grab opposite heels, wrists crossed



arms stretched in front of chest

arms above head

right leg raised



half lotus

half lotus ankle grabbed

left leg raised



left leg raised holding ankle

half lotus

half lotus ankle held.

Day 60 : Dwipadapitam (Desk pose) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Classic Vinyasa Krama, a key posture extend, developed and explored through a number of vinyasas.

Dwipadapitam is a deceptively simple posture, one that could so easily be neglected or practised half hearted on the way to a more complex and intricate posture.

And yet this is a key backbend preparation posture, for those postures in which we arch backwards or upwards relying on strength and control in the hips and pelvis.

And once we achieve a fair semblance of such backbends, it is perhaps strength in the legs and skill at nutating, tilting the pelvis, that will allow us to go deeper, and achieve steadiness and comfort.

Control of the hips, tilting the pelvis, developing leg strength along with improved control of the bandhas can all be worked upon here in the dwipadapitam subroutine and it's vinyasas.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Use all or part of the dwipadapitam subroutine as preparation or warm up for the deeper backbends.

Use all or part of the dwipadapitam subroutine as counterpose for deep forward bending postures and subroutines.

As warm up or counterpose practice these vinyasas gently focusing on the breath.

For a more intense practise work on pushing the hips further up on every breath

Keep the legs strong throughout, push the feet into the mat especially the toes and stretch though the whole length of the leg(s).

Explore nutation, tilting the pelvis upwards, to create more space for the spine to

arch.

Take the weight on the shoulders rather than the neck, make sure the shoulderblades are dropped down the back and not hunched up and compressing the neck

Push the chest up and almost over the shoulders.

Dont feel you have to practise all the vinyasas of this subroutine in one practise, practise some one day the others another day.

However the postures where the heel(s) are grabbed are the more advanced and challenging vinyasas.

If time is limited you might practise a couple of the simple vinyasas and then switch to the more advanced variations rather than the simple and advanced versions for every variation.

Day 61 : Madhya sethu (mid region bridge pose) & Urdhvadhaurasana (bridge) subroutine

Supine : 84 Madhya sethu (mid bridge pose) & Urdhvadhaurasana (bridge) Subroutine



Supta asana



madhya sethu



madhya sethu variation



Uttana padasana



Sethubandasana



Urdhva Dhanurasana or adho chakrasana



chakrasana

Day 61 : Madhya sethu (mid region bridge pose) & Urdhvadhaurasana (bridge) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

We often tend to think of bridge postures as backbends, this seems misleading causing us to focus on the arch of the back rather than on the raising of the hips, of the pelvis. In Vinyasa Krama the bridge postures are a continuation of the pelvic lifts, the dwipadapitam (table poses), of Day59, the division into two separate subroutines is arbitrary.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Ramaswami describes these postures as an arching of the torso, we achieve this by 'pressing down' the arms, neck and back of the head in Madhya sethu, by 'anchoring' the back of the head and neck in the Madhya sethu vinyasa (pic 3), 'anchoring' the buttocks and crown of head in uttana padasana, 'anchoring' the crown and feet in sethubandasna and 'pressing through' the palms and feet in Urdhwa dhanurasana.

Anchoring, pressing down, pressing through, in these postures the legs and arms, shoulders neck are engaged, it is this strong support that allows us to arch the back safely. the arms and shoulders are strengthened in the arm raises hand arm variations of the on the feet subroutines, the legs strengthened through such postures as those found in the one leg sequence, the half and full squats, this strength protects the back in so called back bending postures

As a rule of thumb 'a back bend begins in the toes and ends in the fingertips', the whole body is engaged rather than just a bending of the spine.

'Backbend preparation begins in postures that strengthen the ankles, legs, hips, pelvis, shoulders, arms, neck.

In standing 'backbends it's easy to fall into the mistake of immediately bending the back in the supine postures because the back is lying on the mat and can't bend backwards we are forced to consider the other factors.

In supine we tend to think more easily of arching the back,in Ramaswami's

words we 'arch the torso', ground the neck and shoulders or crown of head and lift the chest, creating an arch in the spine.

We also continue the pelvic lifts of Day59 and grounding our feet lift our hips, the legs are engaged from the toes, through the heels, calves, back and front of thighs all the way up the the hips.

The tailbone is tucked in and held in place by mula bandha, creating space for the spine to avoid any compression as we arch up.

Sethubandasana

Ground/anchor the crown of the head and as we arch up by lifting the chest and hips, roll over to the forehead, be sure to drop the shoulder blades down the back so as not to hunch the shoulders and compress the neck.

Urdhva dhanurasana

The necessary Shoulder strength can be built through surynamaskaras, lead in's to the sequences, practising the arm raises of tadasana vinyasas daily as well as some of the easier arm balance postures.

Take the urdhava dhanurasana position with the hands over the shoulders and press down without lifting up, just engaging the hands , arms and shoulders, raise the hips as in dwipadapitam but don't lift the shoulders just keep them engaged and breathe, three to six long exhalations.

When your ready to lift the shoulders, raise up for one breath and lower, repeat one more time than feels comfortable, try to include a few minutes on this every practise.

Inhale hold and lift

Rather than thinking about the arms, think of lifting the chest, rather than thinking about your legs thin about lifting the hips.

Once lifted work on bringing the shoulders the chest further over the arms as if your being lifted and drawn backwards.

Chakrasana

As we walk in we are creating a deeper arch or rather a higher arch, think

Cathedrals, lifting the hips higher and higher.

Walk the hands towards the feet rather than the other way around.

We don't want to compress the spine but rather create more space for the arch to take place, tuck in the tailbone, engage mula bandha strongly to keep it tilted, push out the chest, drop the shoulder blades down the back so as not to compress the neck.

STRETCH rather than bend

As you walk in breathe, settle the breath, try to elongate the exhalations to relax into where you are, inhale strongly, hold and step in, exhale slowly.

Each time you step your hands closer try to take three steady breaths, if you feel comfortable take another small step closer to your heels. When you have gone as far as feels 'comfortable, step back out and take a couple of breaths until you have come back to where you first raised up then lower back to the mat.

Day 62 : Leg and arm lifts subroutine

Supine leg and Arm lifts Subroutine



Supta asana sthitि



Raise right arm right leg



raise right arm left leg, ुrdhvaprasana



raise left arm left leg



raise left arm right leg, ुrdhvaprasana



Suptapadangustasana right side



Suptapadangustasana left side



raise both arms both legs
ुrdhvaprasarita padahastasana



hold toes, ubhayapadangustasana



hold toes, spread legs 90 degrees, V
formation



Spread and lower legs as much as
possible, Suptaprasarita padangusthasana



return to supta asana sthitि

Day 62 : Leg and arm lifts subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Urdwa-parasarita-pada-hastasana Pic. 8, along with Anapanasana and Dwipadapitam are the three postures that Ramaswami recommends as preparation for shoulder stands

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Raise the arm(s) over the head on the inhalation, raise the legs on the exhalation

Hold each posture for three to six breaths

Ideally we want to keep the sacrum, the small of the back on the mat while lifting the legs, difficult, engage mula bandha to anchor.

Suptapadangustasana pic. 6 & 7 is another vinyasa found in Ramaswami's Yoga for the three stages of life.

After raising the arm above the head and again when lowering the leg we take a couple of breaths to really stretch the leg and arm on the same side or across the body on opposite sides.

When raising the leg we begin the lift at the buttock, the hip joint rather than just with the foot and lower portion of the leg.

Stretch through the whole length of the arm and leg when lifting and lowering.

On lowering both arm and both legs, another vinyasa is to hold for a breath at 45 degrees.

In the final posture, suptaparsvapadangustasana (pic.11), spreading the legs and lowering as far as possible try to drop the femur heads in the hips socket which is really dropping the sacrum back towards the mat rather than just pulling out and down on the toes.

Work towards suptaparsvapadangustasana (pic.11) by working on the parasarita series from the triangle sequence along with trikonsasna from the same series and the upavishta trikonasana from the seated sequence.

Caution

The leg lifts are basically forward folds/bends, as such they can involve an intense hamstring stretch, be sure you are sufficiently warmed up, perhaps through some of the standing postures. Alternatively, work in to these stretches by raising the leg only half way for the first couple of breaths, going a little deeper with each vinyasa.

**Day 63 : Supta trivikramasana & yoganidra (reclining yogi pose)
subroutine**

SUPINE : Supta trivikramasana and yoganidrasana (reclining yogi pose)



Supta asana



Supta dakshina-parsva-padangushtasana



Supta ardha-palvata-dakshina-pasam



Dakshina Bhairava asana



Supta vama-parsva-padangushtasana



Supta ardha-palvata-vama-pasam



Vama Bhairava asana



Yoganidrasana

Day 63 : Supta trivikramasana & yoganidra (reclining yogi pose) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

It is interesting to compare the preparation for the leg behind head postures in Asymmetric sequence (Day 29 Ekapadasirsasana) and here in the Supine Sequence with the Supta trivikramasana subroutine.

In the Asymmetric sequence we have the hip openers of janu sirsasana and Ardha padmasana followed by the archer and heron postures. In the Supine sequence we also have a half lotus vinyasa in the dwipadapitam (desk pose) subroutine and the hamstring stretches in the previous subroutine (Day 62 leg and arm lifts) that include spreading the legs wide and drawing them back and down.

In this subroutine the preparation continues. Suptapadangustasana can be practise as part of the previous subroutine or here before moving into the half crossed body pose, sputa ardha-parivarta-dakishina-padangustasana.

Of course the postures and subroutines mentioned above are all valid in their own right but it's important to see that the leg behind head postures don't just appear out of nowhere, they are challenging postures and as such are carefully worked towards and prepared for.

This should be taken into account when practising at a subroutine rather than sequential level. If in our practise we wish to include some Asymmetric and Supine postures we might include subroutines that prepare for the leg behind head postures in Asymmetric E.G. janu sirsasana, archer, heron but then practice Dakishina bhairva asana (pic 4) in this subroutine. Or we might use similar preparatory postures and subroutines from the On one leg sequence, Vrikmasana, standing march and the uttuta padangustasana subroutine that also lead up to a leg behind head posture, Durvasana.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

If putting your leg behind your head is not available to you at this time you might work towards it in the eka pada sirsasana subroutine from Asymmetric Series (Day 29) by simple putting your leg over your shoulder, your right leg over your right shoulder say. I practised chakorasana this way for quite some time.

Getting the leg behind the head

If you're already able to put your leg behind your head it's still important to make sure you're sufficiently warmed up and stretched out. The Utkatasana is a good place to start for the work on the hips, uttanásana for the forward bend and I highly recommend the Uthita padangusthasana and especially the standing marchi subroutines. The standing marchi will do a good job of pushing your hip back.

When dipping under the leg slightly twist in towards the inside of the knee, as the foot settles behind the head you can then straighten out of the twist taking the leg a little further and more comfortably over the shoulder.

Shuffle the foot a little further behind with your shoulder, you want to have your leg far enough around that the foot isn't pushing too strongly on your neck.

I used to try and pull my leg as far behind my head, as far over towards the other shoulder as possible, now I like to take my leg just over my head but as far over to the leg side as possible, this allows me to then shrug my shoulders further through and seems to allow the leg to settle lower and ultimately deeper. This is perhaps more easily seen on the video link above.

It's advisable perhaps to have done some work on back bending postures to make your back stronger before moving on to leg behind head postures.

Before folding forward and dip under the leg try to stretch tall out of the pelvis just as in all other forward bends.

Lead with the chest

There is a slight twist as we bring our body over the outstretched leg

In Dakishina bhairva asana (pic 4) ground the heel into the mat, better to allow the knee to bend than let the leg come up and flap about as the grounding of the

heel will give you some control and stop you from rolling over to the side.

In Yoga nidra, put the left leg as far behind the head as possible, preferably slightly over the shoulder to take the strain from off of the neck. Hold the right leg lower than normal, at the calf. bring the right foot to the left and use the left foot as a pivot to bring your right foot further down over the ankle and thus deeper behind the head. ideally you want the feet to cross at the ankles and pointing straight.

In the beginning you'll be using the ankles to hook the feet together and stop them from slipping further up the neck.

Yoganidrasana tends to feel more comfortable than Dakishina bhairva asana as there is more stability. Some call this pose the sleeping yogi pose rather than the reclining yogi, the inhalation will be shallow but try to lengthen/slow the exhalation and relax into the posture.

once familiar with yoganidra it's possible to remain in the posture for a considerable time.

I like to follow yoganidra with earlier Supine postures like tatakamudra and dwipadapitam as counter poses .

Day 64 : Jataraparivitti (stomach twist variation) subroutine

SUPINE : jataraparavitti (stomach twist) subroutine



Supra asana

Left leg to right palm

right leg to left palm



Supra asana

raise arms out to the side, palms up

Raise legs



Lower feet to left palm

raise legs back to center

lower feet to right palm



raise legs to center, return arms to the side

lower legs back to supra asana

Day 64 : Jataraparivritti (stomach twist variation) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

In Ramaswami's book The complete book of Vinyasa Yoga, the postures above come after Dakshina bhairava asana on the right side in the previous subroutine (day 63) but then then appears again after yoganidra along with a both legs taken to the side variation.

It can of course stand as a subroutine in it's own right and is an excellent twisting posture.

Ramaswami has other variations of the sequence where the legs are together.

In one variation, you take your legs up and over to the side to land on your palm in one movement, stay for three to six breaths and then return to asana sthiti and then repeat on the other side.

In another variation you take the legs up and over to the palm on one exhalation return to asana sthiti on the next inhalation and then take to the other side on the next exhalation. you can then repeat the vinyasa three to six times, resting between movements if you become short of breath.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Raise the leg(s) from the hip rather than from the foot and lower leg

Press the length of the arm(s) into the mat to give stability.

Lift the head slightly before turning the head

Twist at the hips

Try to keep the back flat.

Ideally the trailing leg should remain as flat and straight as possible, this is challenging.

Day 65 : Sarvangasana (shoulderstand) preparation subroutine

SUPINE : Sarvangasana (shoulderstand) preparation subroutine



Supta asana



Apansana, both legs to chest



Pavanamuktasana, chin to knee



Pavanamuktasana, nose to knee



Pavanamuktasana, forehead to knee



Dwipadapitam



Dwipadapitam, grab heels



urdhwa-prasarita-pada-hastasana (leg and arm lift)



Leg and arm lift grab toes

Day 65 : Sarvangasana (shoulderstand) preparation subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Ramaswami states in *The Complete Book of Vinyasa Yoga*

'Even though all the vinyasas we have considered so far under the category of supine poses can be reckoned to be preparatory for the shoulder stand, three of them are considered essential before going in for the shoulder stand pose in the Vinyasa method of yoga practice.' p122

The three are

Anapanasana (pictures 2-5) see Day 59

Dvipadapitam (pictures 6+7) see Day 60

Leg and arm lift (pictures 8+9) see Day 62

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

General

Ramaswami also recommends the hand and arm variations in tadasana (Day 1) from the On your feet sequence, as useful for relaxing and loosening up the neck and shoulders.

The practice sheet above represents my default preparation, I like to do all three of the pavamuktasana, neck tilts, bringing the chin, nose and then forehead to the knee (anapanasana pose is when the head remains on the mat, pavamuktasana when the head tilts). Here I've done the both legs together version but you could just as well do the single leg version on both sides instead.

The same goes for the arm and leg lifts, here too, I've gone for the both legs together version but you could do the single leg vinyasas, either same arm/same leg or cross body.

In Dwipadapitam any of the vinyasas would be acceptable or even a long stay in just the ankle hold, lengthening breath and engaging bandhas.

Anapanasana (pictures 2-5) see Day 59

In all the anapanasana vinyasas the head stays on the mat, the hip lifts to bring the knee or knees to the chest.

In all the pavamuktasana vinyasas the head lifts off the mat to bring with the chin, nose or forehead to the knee or knees.

It's acceptable to raise the head when catching the knee in anapanasana but once caught lower the head, and tighten the grip around the leg or legs and press the thigh(s) against the lower abdomen.

In the pavamuktasana vinyasas be careful not to strain when bringing your forehead to your knee, stretch up through the length of your spine and drop your shoulder blades down your back.

Engaging uddiyana at the end of the exhalation may also help to allow the forehead to reach the knee.

Dwipadapitam (pictures 6+7) see Day 60

Keep the legs strong throughout, push the feet into the mat especially the toes and stretch though the whole length of the leg(s).

Explore nutation, tilting the pelvis upwards, to create more space for the spine to arch.

Take the weight on the shoulders rather than the neck, make sure the shoulderblades are dropped down the back and not hunched up and compressing the neck

Push the chest up and almost over the shoulders.

Leg and arm lift (pictures 8+9) see Day 62

Raise the arm(s) over the head on the inhalation, raise the legs on the exhalation

Hold each posture for three to six breaths

Ideally we want to keep the sacrum, the small of the back on the mat while lifting the legs, difficult, engage mula bandha to anchor.

Day 66 : Sarvangasana (shoulderstand) lead in subroutine

SUPINE : shoulderstand lead in.



Shoulderstand lead in



tadasana-samsthiti



Uttanasana



Utkatasana



Chaturanga dandasana



Urdhva mukha svanasana



Adho mukha svanasana



tuck in chin lower shoulders to mat



Sarvangasana vinyasas

Day 66 : Sarvangasana (shoulderstand) lead in subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Ramaswami has Sarvangasana (shoulderstand) along with Sirsasana (headstand) and paschimottanasana (seated posterior stretch) as the three postures his teacher, Krishnamacharya recommended practicing every day and for a considerable length time.

Sarvangasana, it is suggested, should be practiced for anything between five and twenty minutes daily.

Ramaswami recommended we spend three minutes in Sarvangasana with the legs relaxed then another two minutes with them straight in classic sarvangasana. After that first five minutes we might then consider exploring some of the vinyasas.

Looking ahead I think we have seven sarvangasana subroutines.

Ramaswami would also recommend a counterpose after sarvangasana so as to relieve the strain placed on the neck and shoulders, he suggests bhujangasana (cobra, Day 45) and especially makrasana (crocodile, Day 44) as ideal counterposes, stating that, 'The counterposes, as a rule, should be simple, effective and targeted' (Yoga beneath the surface p105).

HINTS/TIP/SUGGESTIONS

The above practice sheet shows the advanced lead in, it requires a degree of flexibility in the neck and shoulders at picture 8 that may not be available to you.

It is important that in Picture 8 the shoulders are on the mat rather than the back of the neck, engage jalandhara bandha (the chin lock)

Rather than risk strain in the early stages one may consider the alternative approach on the following page.

Here a blanket is used beneath the shoulders, creating space for the neck and

avoiding any strain.

SUPINE : Alternate sarvanagasana (shoulder stand) lead in.



Supta asana



raise legs



take legs over your head, raising the pelvis



take the legs beyond your head and shoulders then push upwards



as the legs push up place the hands below the hips for support



the hands should end up placed on the back with the fingers pointing upwards.

**Day 67 : Akunchasana (contraction pose) in Sarvangasana (shoulderstand)
subroutine**

SUPINE : akunchasana (contraction pose)



Sarvangasana vinyasas



Sarvangasana vinyasas



Sarvangasana vinyasas



Sarvangasana vinyasas



Sarvangasana vinyasas

Day 67 : Akunchasana (contraction pose) in Sarvangasana (shoulderstand) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

In these vinyasas your bending the leg at the knee and bringing it down to the side of the forehead by rounding the back.

When you bend both knees together you bring them down to your forehead, again by rounding the back.

Bring your legs down while exhaling, take them back up while inhaling.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

The main concern here is with balance, try bringing the leg down just half way on the exhalation and take them back up.

Pay attention to the pelvis and keeping it steady.

As you bring the knee all the way down make sure you are keeping the other leg straight, stretching up thorough the leg.

At first come down only as far as feels comfortable and stable.

To bring the knee all the way to the forehead you may need to engage uddiyana bandha at the end of the exhalation sucking the belly in and slightly up into the ribcage allowing you to bend/curl your back further and bringing your knee closer to your forehead.

The single leg version is repeated there to six times, down on the exhalation back up on the inhalation.

In the legs together version bring the knees to the forehead and stay for three to six breaths, the inhalation will be shallow because you so deeply folded but try to lengthen the exhalation.

This is a good position for engaging and exploring the bandhas.

The legs together version can also be practiced in the same way as the single leg version, bringing the knees down to the forehead and back up on the inhalation, repeating three to six times.

The final version is to gently twist after bending both knees and bringing the the knees to the side of the forehead and eventually to the floor beside your head, stay for three to six breaths.

Day 68 : Supta ardha badha halasana subroutine

SUPINE: Supta ardha badha halasana to Halasana Subroutine



Sarvangasana



Ekapada halasana



ekapada halasana



Supta ardha badha halasana



supta ardha badha halasana



Halasana



halasana variation



Urdhva-mukha paschimatanasana



Sarvangasana

Day 68 : Supta ardha badha halasana to Halasana in Sarvangasana (shoulderstand) subroutine

[VIDEO LINK](#)

As a reminder, Ramaswami recommends we spend five minutes in Sarvangasana (first three minutes with the legs relaxed next two with the legs straight in standard Shoulderstand) before practising the sarvangasana vinyasas

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Picture 2+3 lower the leg from the hip, try to keep both legs, the one lowering and the one remaining straight by stretching through the whole leg right up to the toes.

Engage mula bandha by drawing up your anus and then uddiyana bandha by drawing your belly back and up at the end of the exhale, this hollowing of the belly will allow you to lower the last inch or two to the floor with control.

Raise the leg back up to standing slowly with control on a long inhalation, there's a tendency to take the leg back up quickly, thinking that the important aspect of the posture is the lowering of the leg.

Both the lowering and raising of the leg are vinyasas.

Between picture 3 and 4 we can include an extra vinyasa in which we bend the knee to bring the right foot into the left groin then bend the left knee to bring the knee towards the forehead. This can act as a preparatory vinyasa for Supta ardha badha halasana.

It's also possible to include yet another vinyasa where we bring the right foot to the left goring then lower the left leg bringing the toes to the floor above our head. This is an unbound version of Supta ardha badha halasana

It may be advisable to work on the bind in the On one leg sequence or asymmetric where one foot is in half lotus and the is a more stable base.

In Sarvangasana, bing the right foot to the left groin and lower the left leg

slightly. Support the back firmly with the right arm, making the right leg good and straight by engaging it strongly.

Use the left hand to bring the right foot deeper into the left groin. Return the left hand to support the back and then swing the right arm around the back twisting the hips to gain better access to the right toes.

It's may be useful to think of the action of putting on a jacket in which the second sleeve has become a little tangled.

before lowering the foot to the mat, try to straighten up and relax the shoulders as much as possible

Gain a firm hold of the right toe with the right hand and lower the left foot to the mat above your head..

In Halasana, Picture 6, lower both legs to the mat above your head first then stretch the arms to the floor

Engage bandhas, enabling you to draw in your belly to create the space for a deep fold.

Inhalation will be shorter than normal but exhalation can be long and slow, stay for 6-12 breaths.

For urdhwa-mukha-paschimottanasana, picture 8, take the the toes as in picture 7 and work towards a deeper foold as in paschimottanasana in the seated sequence over a number of breaths. For the first three hold the toes, the next three fold deeper and take the side of the feet, with the next three breaths take the heels if that feels available to you.

This is an extreme forward bend and you will want to make sure that your hamstrings have been sufficiently warmed up and loosened earlier in your practice.

Day 69 : Urdhva Konasana in Sarvangasana (shoulderstand) subroutine

SUPINE: Urdhva konasana Subroutine



vicsnap-2011-12-09-08h19m22s11



open legs wide into Urdhva konasana



open legs on Inhalation, close exhalation
repeat three times



Third time stay in urdhva konasana for
three to six breaths



urdhva baddha konasana



bring toes to mat above the head



supta konasana



return to sarvangasana

Day 69 : Urdhva Konasana in Sarvangasana (shoulderstand) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

As a reminder, Ramaswami recommends we spend five minutes in Sarvangasana (first three minutes with the legs relaxed next two with the legs straight in standard Shoulderstand) before practising the sarvangasana vinyasas

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Ramaswami suggests the option of opening and closing the legs into urdhwa konasana three times, on the breath, before remaining in the posture for three to six long breaths.

This is a good opportunity to work into the stretch, starting with the legs opening to quarter, half and finally full stretch.

Try not to allow the legs to come forward or the back to drop too far back into your hands, this posture should ideally happen with the hips and legs in line, on a plane as it were.

In Urdhwa baddha konasana, I find it useful to roll on to the outside of the feet to open the legs wider before bringing the feet back together.

There is the option of bringing the legs down towards the mat and then raising them back up into urdhwa konasana, three times on the breath, each time going deeper into the fold.

Engage bandhas, drawing the belly back and up to create more space for the deep forward bend.

We can begin by holding the toes, then the sides of the feet and finally the heels, drawing ourselves deeper into the posture on each long exhalation.

**Day 70 : Urdhva Padmasana (lotus) in Sarvangasana (shoulderstand)
subroutine**

SUPINE : urdhva padmasana (upside down lotus)



Sarvangasana vinyasas



Urdhva padmasana



Akunchita urdhva padmasana



Pindasana



Urdhva padmasana vinyasas



Urdhva padmasana vinyasas



Pratiklyya

Day 70 : Urdhva Padmasana (lotus) in Sarvangasana (shoulderstand) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

As a reminder, Ramaswami recommends we spend five minutes in Sarvangasana (first three minutes with the legs relaxed next two with the legs straight in standard Shoulderstand) before practising the sarvangasana vinyasas

Ramaswami would also recommend a counterpose after sarvangasana so as to relieve the strain placed on the neck and shoulders, he suggests bhujangasana (cobra, Day 45) and especially makrasana (crocodile, Day 44) as ideal counterposes, stating that, 'The counterposes, as a rule, should be simple, effective and targeted' (Yoga beneath the surface p105).

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Padmasana (lotus) can be a challenging posture and there are many places to work towards it in Vinyasa Krama.

In Asymmetric Sequence: Padmasana doesn't appear as such but there are several hip opening postures, janusirsasana in particular, that prepare you for ardha baddha padmasana (half lotus).

In Lotus sequence : The lotus sequence picks up where Asymmetric leaves off with more vinyasas in half lotus before moving on to full lotus.

In Seated sequence : Padmasana (lotus) follows the deep hip opening subroutines of upavishta konasana and badha konasana.

In Supine sequence : More half lotus variations, this time in dwipadapitam (table pose). In shoulder stand we have the half lotus vinyasas of Day 68 but also the extreme hip openers of the previous (Day 69) Urdhva Konasana subroutine.

In Inverted Sequence : As with Supine and Seated the lotus vinyasas in headstand follow, konasana and badha konasana subroutine.

In all of the above sequences we can see that padmasana (lotus) follows hip opening postures, this is because padmasana (lotus) is a hip rotation rather than a twisting of the knees.

CAUTION

Don't twist the knees to get into padmasana, rather the knee is relaxed slightly and the femur head rotated in the hip joint allowing the knee to come out to the side like turning the page of a book bringing the foot up toward the opposite thigh. We bring the foot to the opposite groin by rotating the hip joint further and using the hand to guide (guide not pull) the foot into place.

Once one foot is comfortable on the opposing thigh we do the same for the other leg, relaxing the knee slightly, rotating the femur head in the hip joint but here in the inverted postures of shoulder stand and headstand we can allow the first leg to drop back a little to allow the second foot to come up smoothly on to the thigh, guiding the foot deeper into the groin with our hand.

Allowing the first leg to drop back to allow the second foot to come up onto the thigh more easily is something that's only available in the inverted postures. For this reason Supine may, surprisingly, be an easier option for developing padmasana.

Because we want to use one hand to draw the foot deeper into the groin we need to make sure that we are firmly supported in shoulder stand with the other hand. Be sure to have the hand supporting the back rather than the hip. the hand should be close to but not on the spine with the fingers pointing upwards.

You may want to bring the trailing leg further over the head and shoulders in the beginning to stay stable.

Lowering the lotus (pic.3)

Engage the bandhas, draw up the anus and draw the belly in and up to create space to fold your lotus towards your head, try to keep your lotus as close to your chest as possible.

Pindasana (pic.4)

To achieve pindasana you need a nice tight lotus with the knees brought closer towards each other, the thighs almost parallel. make sure your hips are over or preferably in front of your shoulders so that when you remove your hands you

don't roll back down to the mat. Swing your arms around your legs and clasp your hands and ideally bind at the wrist

If your lotus is not tight enough to bind fully you may still be able to hold the thighs while you work towards tightening your lotus and deepening the fold.

The Twists (pictures 5&6)

Assuming your right foot is on your left thigh the first twist bringing the left knee to the right side of the head is less challenging than bringing the right knee to the left side of the head due to the way the legs are folded.

Start with the twist. Twist at the waist to the right on the exhalation, stay for three breaths. then, on the next exhalation, twist a little further to the right while at the same time lowering your left knee towards your right ear. Stay for three breaths.

Pratkriya (Counterpose pic.7)

The final posture of the subroutine, Sarvangasana padmasana (pic 7) is the Pratkriya (counterpose), bending the waist backward to counter the forwards bends.

Move the hands to the hips with the fingers facing forward over the hips and the thumbs pointing towards the spine.

In the beginning bring the chest further over your head and then arch back just a little at the waist on the inhalation and then come back to vertical on the exhale, arch the back a little further on each inhalation as you become more confident.

Use the bandhas to keep stability, engage mula bandha strongly by drawing up the anus, draw the belly in and up and engage the chin lock.

Stretching up out of the hips as much as possible in this position by expanding and lifting the chest, push the hips upwards.

To return. point your lotus up on the exhalation, slide your hand back into the regular shoulder stand position with the finger pointing upwards, when vertical allow your hips to open which will bring the knees further away from each other bringing the feet down the thighs and out of the bind.

**Day 71 : Niralumba Salambhasana (unsupported shoulderstand)
subroutine**

SUPINE : 94 Niralamba Salambhasana (unsupported shoulderstand)



Sarvangasana vinyasas



Niralamba Sarvangasana



Niralamba Sarvangasana vinyasa



Niralamba Sarvangasana vinyasa



Niralamba Sarvangasana vinyasa



Niralamba Sarvangasana vinyasa



halasana

Day 71 : Niralumba Salambhasana (unsupported shoulderstand) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

As a reminder, Ramaswami recommends we spend five minutes in Sarvangasana (first three minutes with the legs relaxed next two with the legs straight in standard Shoulderstand) before practising the sarvangasana vinyasas

Ramaswami would also recommend a counterpose after sarvangasana so as to relieve the strain placed on the neck and shoulders, he suggests bhujangasana (cobra, Day 45) and especially makrasana (crocodile, Day 44) as ideal counterposes, stating that, 'The counterposes, as a rule, should be simple, effective and targeted' (Yoga beneath the surface p105).

An unsupported shoulder stand assumes your regular shoulder stand is stable and comfortable. if your feeling any stress on your neck then you should probably avoid the unsupported version for the time being.

A good warm up is often required to allow the shoulders to relax enough for unsupported shoulder stand, the and arm variations in Tadasana from Day1 are a good place to start, these could also be done in dandasana.

Practicing forward folding postures with the chin down will also stretch and relax the neck in preparation for shoulder stands as would engaging jalandhara bandha (chin lock).

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Explore the unsupported headstand by removing one hand at a time from supporting your back may be a good introduction to finding the required balance.

In regular shoulderstand, stretch your back more, extend up through the legs and lean your torso and hips in the direction of your head, your legs will come beyond your head but remain straight up.

Your hands on your back should feel as if they are hardly necessary to support

the shoulder stand.

Reach up with one arm on the inhalation and stretch it up along your thigh, remain for three breaths. Return it to your back and repeat with the other hand, remembering to stretch your hand up along the thigh, stretching through your trunk and the full length of your legs feet and toes.

If one hand at a time is comfortable, take first one hand off the back, stretch it along the thighs and then after a breath bring the other hand to the other thigh. Hold for a breath and then bring the first hand back to the back and after another breath return the second hand.

When comfortable in niralumaba sarvangasana (unsupported headstand) consider exploring the vinyasas.

When lowering and raising the leg, begin the action in the hip, while stretching through the length of the leg.

By lowering on the inhalation you keep more control of the descent.

In lowering the leg to the mat (pic.3) place one arm on the mat above your head on the inhalation, stay for a breath and then on the next inhalation lower the leg to the palm, hold the toe and ideally stay for three breaths.

You may wish to lower the leg on the inhalation and raise it on the exhalation while you become comfortable with the movement and shift in balance, repeating three times and then holding the toes on the third lowering.

Problems can come on the raising of the leg back up to horizontal. be sure to keep the torso forward and stretching up through the legs and keeping the trailing leg forward of your head while raising the leg.

in the next vinyasa bring both hands above the head. in the beginning you might lower first one hand, stay for a breath and then bring the other to join it staying for a breath before returning the first hand on the next breath and the second hand on the following breath.

As this becomes comfortable and stable try bringing both hands above the head and stay for three breaths.

There is another vinyasa not shown, where you bring your arms behind your head clasping your elbows.

In the vinyasa in picture six, halasana (plough) lay the hands along the mat behind your head and then on the inhalation lower your legs to the mat above your head, the stretched out arms give more stability in this posture.

**Day 72 : Halasana (plough) & Uttana mayurasana Stretched peacock)
subroutine**

SUPINE : halasana - uttana - mayurasana (plough to peacock)



Sarvangasana vinyasas



halasana



uttana mayurasana



uttana mayurasana vinyasa



uttana mayurasana vinyasa



uttana mayurasana vinyasa



uttana mayurasana vinyasa

Day 72 : Halasana (plough) & Uttana mayurasana Stretched peacock) subroutine practice notes.

[VIDEO LINK](#)

As a reminder, Ramaswami recommends we spend five minutes in Sarvangasana (first three minutes with the legs relaxed next two with the legs straight in standard Shoulderstand) before practising the sarvangasana vinyasas

Ramaswami would also recommend a counterpose after sarvangasana so as to relieve the strain placed on the neck and shoulders, he suggests bhujangasana (cobra, Day 45) and especially makrasana (crocodile, Day 44) as ideal counterposes, stating that, 'The counterposes, as a rule, should be simple, effective and targeted' (Yoga beneath the surface p105).

This Subroutine could follow on nicely from Day 68 : Supta ardha badha halasana to Halasana

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

For Halasana (pic 2) from Sarvangasana (shoulder stand) we first place our arms outstretched along the mat and then lower the legs to the mat above our head on the inhalation.

Lowering on the inhalation gives more control of the descent as does engaging the legs by stretching out through the legs from the hips to the feet.

Remember to lower and raise the legs from the hips rather than thinking about lowering the feet to the mat.

Uttana Mayurasana (stretched peacock)

From Sarvangasana tuck the tailbone, engage moola bandha by drawing up the anus, bend the knees, expand the chest, arch the back and lower your feet gently to the mat on the inhalation.

Lowering on the inhalation gives more control as does engaging the bandhas.

Stay for a breath and then stretch first one leg and then the other, press your feet, from the toes to the heels and both sides of each foot firmly into the mat.

Stay for three to six breaths lifting up through the hips as in dwipadapitam

Return to sarvangasana by bending the knees bringing the legs back to where you first landed them.

Support the back, exhale, hold the breath and raise your hips and thus your legs off the mat, the knees stay bent until you are vertical again when you stretch the legs back up into sarvangasana.

Some may find the uttana mayurasana vinyasa's, where the legs are lowered one at a time (pictures 4-7) easier or less intimidating than full uttana mayurasana, in which case, you might wish to switch them around in the subroutine, at least in the beginning.

This vinyasa is less intimidating because the trailing leg can act as a counter weight to the leg lowering to the mat behind you.

From shoulder stand lower one leg above your head (your right leg say) then inhale, hold the breath and bend the knee of the upright leg (your left) and arching your spine and supporting your back with your hands lower the left foot to the mat behind you.

As you lower your right leg will come up, stretching out through this leg will give control of the descent to the mat of the other leg. The right leg will come up to vertical as the left leg comes to rest on the mat behind you

Stay in this position with one leg bent and the other straight for three breaths. Stretch out through the vertical leg from the hip.

After three breaths on the next inhalation stretch out the left leg along the mat while trying to keep the vertical leg stretched and engaged.

Stay for another three breaths.

To return: On the exhalation bend the left leg again bringing it closer to the body, stay for a breath. Exhale, hold the breath, press down from the shoulders to the

elbows, round the back and from the hip raise the leg allowing the right leg to lower back into eka pada halasana. On the next inhalation bring your right leg back up to join the left in Sarvangasana sthiti

Basically, as one leg goes down the other come up like a seesaw.

Day 73 : Sarvangasana mandala (circular ambulation in plough) subroutine

SUPINE : Sarvangasana mandala (circular ambulation in plough)



Sarvangasana vinyasas

Sarvangasana mandala

Sarvangasana mandala



Sarvangasana mandala

Sarvangasana mandala

Sarvangasana mandala



Sarvangasana mandala

Sarvangasana mandala

Sarvangasana mandala

**Day 73 : Sarvangasana mandala (circular ambulation in plough) subroutine
practice notes.**

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Sarvangasana mandala employs several of the movements from the previous subroutine, the forward bend halasana (day 72 & 71) in konasana (day 69) the back stretch in the previous uttana mayurasana subroutine (Day 72) and twisting in urdhva padmasana vinyasas (day 70).

If we want to practice sarvangasana mandala separately from the previous subroutines then we should make sure we have practiced some foreword bends, back stretches and twisting postures in other subroutines to be sure we are sufficiently warmed up and flexible.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

I strongly suggest you practice this subroutine after the previous halasana and uttana mayurasana subroutine (day 72) as the mandala involves a flip over from halasana to uttana mayurasana which is a twisting motion.

The mandala may be best worked towards in stages.

The flip from uttana mayurasana to halasana seems to be slightly less intimidating than the other way around.

First we need to enter the first stage of uttana mayurasana

STAGE 1

Uttana Mayurasana (stretched peacock)

From Sarvangasana tuck the tailbone, engage moola bandha by drawing up the anus, bend the knees, expand the chest, arch the back and lower your feet gently to the mat on the inhalation.

Lowering on the inhalation gives more control as does engaging the bandhas.

There is no need to stretch the legs completely for now.

With the knees bent side step your legs to the side as far as possible.

Now lower your body to the mat onto your left hip, your feet will be on top of each other. Roll your right leg over the left, bringing the left hip over the right and walk shuffle your legs a little further round.

Return your hands to your back, raise your hips and walk/sidestep further around until you are in halasana.

Relax and then do the same movements in reverse.

STAGE 2

When this movement is comfortable or at least familiar, the twisting and rolling the hip over, try the movement without lowering to the mat.

From Uttana Mayurasana walk the legs around to the left as far as possible, with each extra step the right hip will rise. When you can go no further in that position, support the back strongly, take a breath and at the end of the exhalation hold the breath and flip your waist bringing the right hip over the left to land on your feet.

Continue walking the feet around into halasana and relax.

Practice going back and forth on one side, flipping from uttana mayurasana to halasana and back again.

Once you are comfortable flipping back and forth on one side practice the same movement on the other.

STAGE 3

Now you are comfortable flipping flipping from halasana to uttana mayurasana and back again your ready for the full mandala,

We begin in halasana walk around as far as possible, pause, take a breath, exhale and hold then flip over and continue walking around into uttana mayurasana. Continue walking/sidestepping/shuffling around to the other side, pause, exhale, hold the exhalation and flip over and continue back to the starting position, Halasana.

The Breath

from halasana

Inhale

Exhalation: move to the right to around 45 degrees

Inhale

Exhalation: continue on to 90 degrees

Inhale

Exhale and hold: flip your waist over and land on your feet

Inhale

Exhalation: continue moving around until you are in uttana mayurasana (180 degrees)

Inhale

Exhalation continue around another 45 degrees

Inhale

Exhalation continue around to around 270 degrees

Inhale

Exhale and hold; Flip the waist over and land on your feet

Inhale

Exhalation continue around until you are in the starting position

When comfortable with the movements repeat the subroutine counterclockwise.

Day 74 : Karnapindasana (closed ear pose) subroutine

SUPINE : karnapindasana (closed ear pose)



Sarvangasana



Halasana



Karnapidasana



Halasana vinyasa



bring arms above head and roll the legs
back through



Savasana

Day 74 : Karnapindasana (closed ear pose) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

As a reminder, Ramaswami recommends we spend five minutes in Sarvagasana (first three minutes with the legs relaxed next two with the legs straight in standard Shoulderstand) before practising the sarvagasana vinyasas

Ramaswami would also recommend a counterpose after sarvagasana so as to relieve the strain placed on the neck and shoulders, he suggests bhujangasana (cobra, Day 45) and especially makrasana (crocodile, Day 44) as ideal counterposes, stating that, 'The counterposes, as a rule, should be simple, effective and targeted' (Yoga beneath the surface p105).

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

To be able to bring the knees to the mat beside your ears, the neck and shoulders need to be sufficiently relaxed. A long sarvagasana or some halasana subroutine variations can help achieve this,

Engage jalandhara bandha, the chin lock, bringing the chin tight against the chest.

Engage uddiyana bandha, drawing the belly in and up to create more space for the forward fold.

Kandapindasana is a posture in which we can stay for a considerable amount of time, Ramaswami recommends twelve breaths.

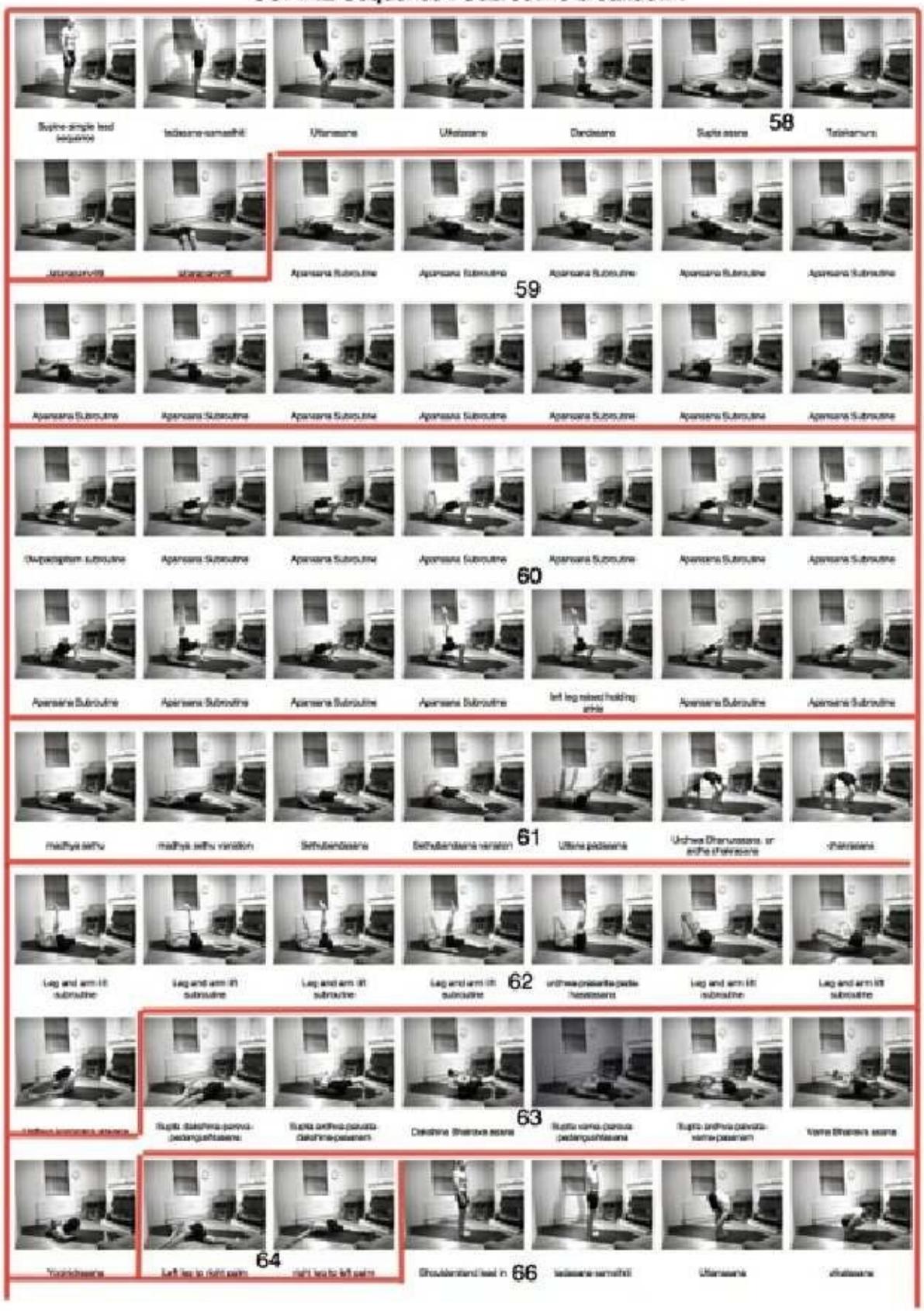
Because of the tight fold, the inhalation will be short but try to lengthen the exhalation.

To bring your legs through the arms, retain uddiyana and on the inhalation, stretching each vertebra, allow your back to slowly unfurl along the mat, keeping your legs as close to your body as possible all the way through the arms.

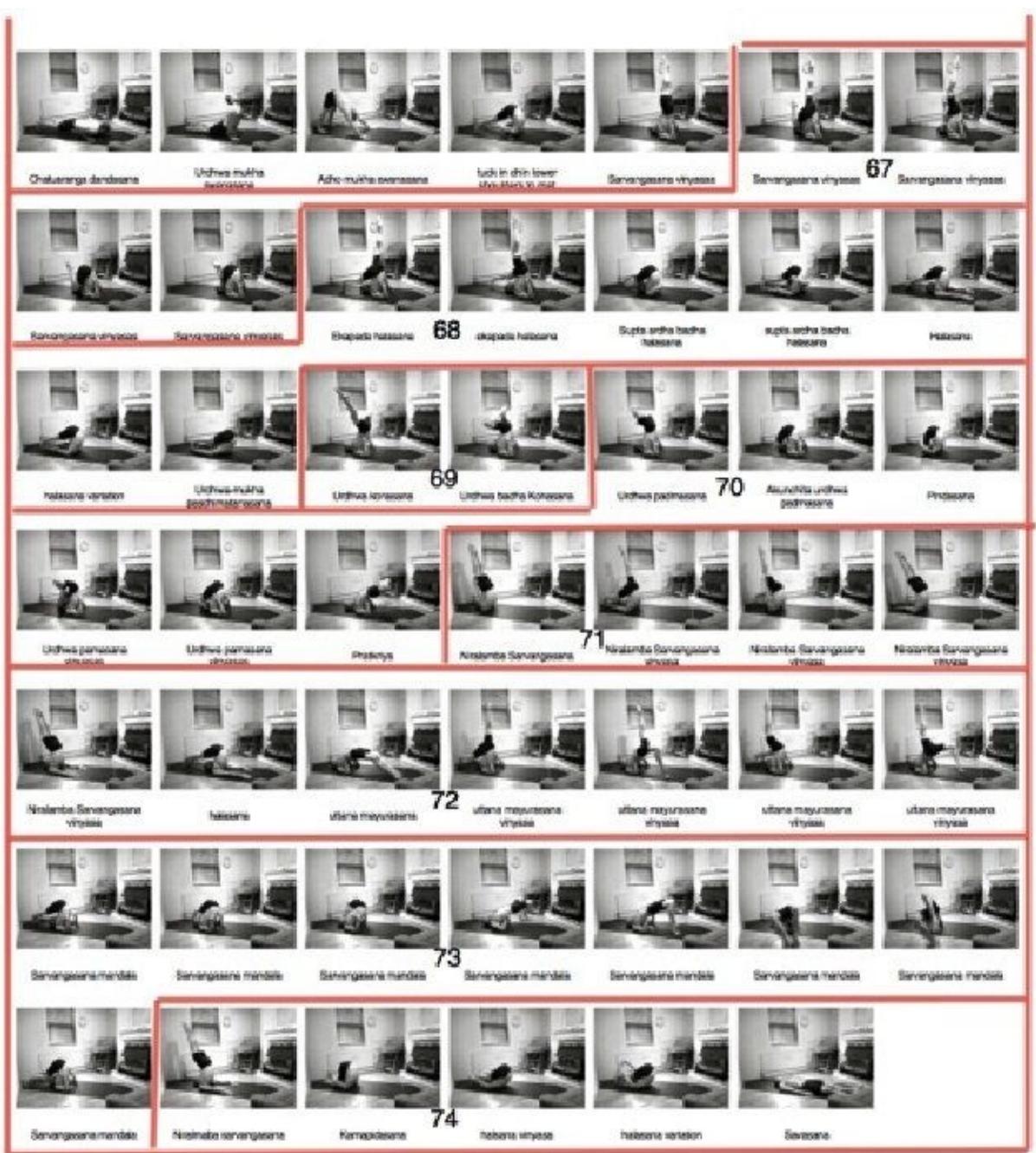
Ideally the legs should not touch the arms on the way through.

DAY 75 : Supine: Subroutine Breakdown Page 1

SUPINE Sequence : Subroutine breakdown



Page 2



DAY 75 : Supine: Subroutine Breakdown practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Ramaswami recommends we spend five minutes in Sarvagasana (first three minutes with the legs relaxed next two with the legs straight in standard Shoulderstand) before practising the sarvagasana vinyasas

Ramaswami would also recommend a counterpose after sarvagasana so as to relieve the strain placed on the neck and shoulders, he suggests bhujangasana (cobra, Day 45) and especially makrasana (crocodile, Day 44) as ideal counterposes, stating that, 'The counterposes, as a rule, should be simple, effective and targeted' (Yoga beneath the surface p105).

Supine used to be my least favourite sequence when I first started practicing Vinyasa Krama. It's long a sequence and I was never sure what approach to take. It took quite some time to realise it was, if anything, the perfect sequence, forward bends, twists, backbends, inversions, leg behind head postures, lotus... it has everything.

That said, because of it's length I don't tend to practice it as a stand-alone sequence, I do however practice most of it's sequences regularly.

I practice takamudra as preparation for deep forward bends like pashimottanasana as well as a counterpose for backbends, pressing the lower back into the mat while engaging bandhas.

I practice Apanasana, the pelvic floor poses for the same reasons.

In advanced back bending I've realised the importance of pushing the hips forward as far as possible and tucking under the tailbone, Dwipadapitam (desk pose) is perfect for working on this and ideal preparation for urdhva dhanurasana and Charasana (wheel pose).

It has some of the best twisting postures in yoga with Jataraparivritti (belly twists).

It also has some of the best leg behind head preparation I've come across.

As well as an excellent preparatory subroutine for Shoulder stand.

INVERTED SEQUENCE

Day 76 : INVERTED : Sirsasana (headstand) Lead in

INVERTED: Sirsasana (headstand) lead in



from Vajrasana.



Interlace fingers



place back of head in cup made by the hands



raise the hips



walk in bringing the hips over, even slightly beyond the shoulders



draw the legs close to the body balancing on head and forearms



straighten the waist while keeping the knees bent



straighten the knees into Sirsasana

Day 76 : INVERTED : Sirsasana (headstand) Lead in

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Ramaswami writes concerning Sirsasana (headstand) and it's subroutines

'...inversions should be considered as unique contributions of Yoga, for health. Within the first few minutes of Sirsasana practice, the leg and thigh muscles, the gluteal muscles, relax. The chest, back, shoulders and neck muscles also relax as all these are not required to maintain the postural tone as in the upright position. It has been found that due to the relaxation of the leg muscles, the blood pressure in the legs drop to about 30mm. There is no great rush of blood to the head among the adept yogis due to auto regulation; yet the gravity helps to open up many capillaries in the brain, head and face which may otherwise remain partially closed. People with high blood pressure and retinal problems will have to be careful. However persons with mild hypertension and under control with diet, life style change and even medication could benefit from this posture if they had learnt it from early life. It appears to increase pressure on the shoulders which would result in the brain trying to reduce the blood pressure. Therefore if one would practice Sirshasana regularly for a sufficient duration, one's pulse rate tends to reduce, thereby reducing the strain on the heart. Gradually there is a reduction in the blood pressure'.

[Srivatsa Ramaswami Newsletter Aug 2009](#)

There are several approaches to headstand, the above is the standard Vinyasa Krama approach.

If your new to headstands here is a link to a tutorial <http://youtu.be/J68JvZtAHN4>

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Consider using a wall while building confidence (this us useful when kicking up into headstand as you can tap off the wall - see tutorial link above)

When interlacing the fingers, engage the little fingers (pic 2)

Make a firm base with your arms, you're going to press down through your arms and take most, if not all, of the weight on them rather than on your head.

Headstand is an arm balance

Walk in bringing the hips over the shoulders and even beyond them to use as a counterweight for your legs. (pic 5)

Engage moola and uddiyana bandha,

Raise the feet off the mat while exhaling and bring the legs close to the body (Pic 6)

Press down through the length of your forearms, especially your elbows as you raise your feet.

Focus on the hips or the pelvis in space.

Drop the shoulder blades down the back, this should create space stop your neck getting pinched

Stretch out through the whole length of your body, engage your legs and bring your attention to the furthest point, your toes

Focusing the mind on the toes will control the balance when fully extended.

Come down by going back to half headstand, bring the legs to the chest

Make sure the toes are turned up so you land safely.

Day 77 : INVERTED : Akunchasana (knee bends) subroutine

INVERTED : Akunchasana (knee bends) Subroutine



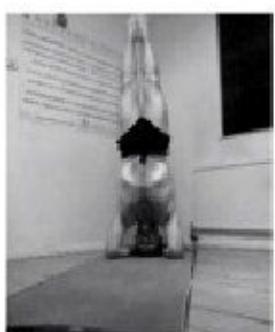
Sirsasana shthi



bend right knee



bend left knee



Sirsasana shthi



bring both knees to the chest



Sirsasana shthi



bring right leg to left groin



bend left knee



sirsasana shthi



bring left leg to right groin



bend right knee



return to sirsasana shthi

Day 77 : INVERTED : Akunchasana (knee bends) subroutine practice notes.

[VIDEO LINK](#)

'...when sirsasana is mastered, the breath rate, which is normally about fifteen to twenty breaths per minute, automatically comes down',

Work towards two breaths a minute over time.

'Sirsasana should always be practiced in the morning, as is laid down by the authorities on yoga.'

'And, as a counterpose, it should be followed by an equal length of time in the practice of sarvangasana (shoulder stand)'.

'The procedure is thus to do sirsasanam for twenty-four breaths, followed by a two-minute rest in savasana. Then one should do sarvangasana for the equal number of twenty four breaths, followed by a sitting posture each as padmasana for a few breaths, until one feels normal and relaxed'.

from Srivatsa Ramaswami Yoga for the Three Stages of Life p142

HINTSTIPSSUGGESTIONS

Towards the end of my morning asana practice I spend few minutes in the sarvangasana preparatory postures, anapanasana, urdhva prasarita pada hastasana and dwipadapitam.

I then spend at least five minutes in sarvangasana, the first three minutes with the legs relaxed.

Then I practice for headstands for ten to twenty minutes (ten minutes minimum).

For the first five minutes I don't practice any vinyasas but try to slow my breathing towards two breaths a minute and work on engaging bandhas.

The rest of the time in headstands I spend on Vinyasas, one or more of the inverted subroutines.

Coming down from headstand I'll stay for a few moments with my forehead on the mat, when sitting up I'll bring my head up last.

After a couple of minutes in savasana I practice another five minutes of Sarvangasana (shoulder stand), this time practising vinyasas, one or more shoulder stand subroutines

Finally I'll spend a period of time in Vajrasana, padmasana or mahamudra before moving on to my pranayama practice.

the head point of sirsasana should be the crown of the head

Control your balance with your forearms and especially your elbows

Urdhva akunchasana

For these movements the neck and shoulders need to be relaxed and well stretched out, the hasta vinyasas in tadasana (Day 1) are a good place to start your practice.

Bend the knee towards the chest on the exhalation, straighten the leg on the inhalation.

The danger is to fall forward out of the headstand while bending the knee towards the chest, be sure to engage the opposite hip and stretch out through the full length of the leg.

The tendency is to lean the straight leg forward, imagine taking it backwards slightly to counter the pull forwards.

Don't try to bring the knee down too far on the first bend, work a little deeper on each repetition.

If necessary take an extra breath or two after each bend of the knee, adjusting the head arms and shoulders.

Round your back slightly on the third bend to bring the knee lower.

Engage bandhas, uddiyana bandha, sucking in the belly will create more space allowing your to take the knee lower.

Bringing both legs to the cheat is more challenging as you don't have the trailing straight leg to act as a counterweight, round the back, again, go a little lower on each exhalation.

In Ardhapadmasana-akunchasana try to bring the leg as far into the goring as possible, shuffle the foot in a little deeper if possible.

In Ardhapadmasana-akunchasana the need to round the back slightly will be more apparent.

Day 78 : INVERTED : Leg raises subroutine

INVERTED : Akunchasana (knee bends) Subroutine



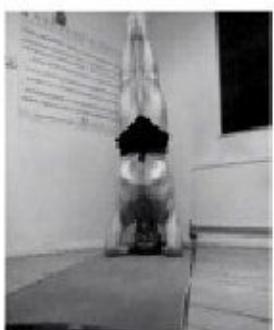
Sirsasana sthiti



bend right knee



bend left knee



Sirsasana sthiti



bring both knees to the chest



Sirsasana sthiti



bring right leg to left groin



bend left knee



sirsasana sthiti



bring left leg to right groin



bend right knee



return to sirsasana sthiti

Day 78 : INVERTED : Leg raises subroutine practice notes.

[VIDEO LINK](#)

See Day 77 for general Sirsasana (headstand) practice guidelines and Day 76 for Sirsasana lead in and How to do a headstand.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS.

Urdhava akinchhasana (Day 77) is ideal preparation for this subroutine.

As with akunchasana use the full length of the forearms to control your balance, especially the elbows.

Engage the bandhas especially, uddiyana (drawing in the belly) for lowering of the leg to the front.

Lower from the hip rather than from the foot

Stretch out through the length of the leg as you lower.

Stretch through the leg that remains vertical

Ideally the vertical leg should not come forward while the other leg is lowering, nor should the knee bend.

When lowering the leg to the side press down through the elbow on the opposite side to stay balanced

In viparita garandasana, begin to wrap the leg as low as possible,

Once wrapped stretch up through the leg that is being wrapped, try to stay straight and not lean backwards.

In the back arch, twist first and then arch the back.

Anchor the head and elbows as you twist

Press down firmly into the mat, the elbow on the opposite side to which your twisting.

Engage mula and uddiyana bandha to help support the arch of the back, engage the hips and push them forward.

Day 79 : INVERTED : Upavishta konasana (inverted triangle) subroutine

INVERTED : Urdhva Konasana subroutine



Sirsasana sthiti



upavista konasana



twist trunk to the right



twist trunk to the left



return to upavista konasana



return to sirsasana sthiti



bring heels together into upavista badha konasana



return to sirsasana sthiti

Day 79 : INVERTED : Upavishta konasana (inverted triangle) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

See Day 77 for general headstand practice guidelines.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

We stay in urdhava konasana for six long inhalations and exhalations allowing us plenty of time to deepen the posture.

Spread the legs wide and allow gravity to widen them further for the first couple of breaths

Rotate the thighs outward and allow the legs to widen a little further with gravity.

Try tensing the muscles of the thighs for one or two long breath and relaxing them for the next allowing them to widen still further with gravity

Twists (pictures 3&4)

Stretch out through the length of both legs

Twist on the exhalation

Press the opposite elbow from the direction your twisting firmly into the mat to maintain balance and stability.

Urdhva badha konasana

We stay in bahda konasana for six long inhalations and exhalations also, allowing time to deepen the posture.

Bend the knees and bring the feet together for the first couple of breaths.

For the final breaths press the heels together and on the exhalation, working from the hips , open the knees laterally like opening a book.

Relax on the inhalation, maintaining the stretch but press into the heels once more on the exhalation while rotating the femur head in the hip joint further and allowing the knees to open wider.

Day 80 : INVERTED : Urdhava Padmasana (inverted lotus) subroutine

INVERTED : urdhava padmasana (inverted lotus) Subroutine



Sirsasana sthiti



spread legs into urdhava konasana



bring right foot high up left thigh



take back the right knee and bring left foot to right thigh



twist to the right



twist to the left



lower your legs



return to urdhava padmasana and repeat x3



lower feet to chin, viparita yoga mudra



return to urdhva padmasana



lower knees to mat



raise your legs back up to urdhva padmasana and finally sirsasana sthiti

Day 80 : INVERTED : Urdhava Padmasana (inverted lotus) practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Padmasana (lotus) can be a challenging posture and there are many places to work towards it in Vinyasa Krama.

In Asymmetric Sequence: Padmasana doesn't appear as such but there are several hip opening postures, janusirsasana in particular, that prepare you for ardha baddha padmasana (half lotus).

In Lotus sequence : The lotus sequence picks up where Asymmetric leaves off with more vinyasas in half lotus before moving on to full lotus.

In Seated sequence : Padmasana (lotus) follows the deep hip opening subroutines of upavishta konasana and badha konasana.

In Supine sequence : More half lotus variations, this time in dwipadapitam (table pose). In shoulder stand we have the half lotus vinyasas of Day 68 but also the extreme hip openers of the previous (Day 69) Urdhva Konasana subroutine.

In Inverted Sequence : As with Supine and Seated the lotus vinyasas in headstand follow, konasana and badha konasana subroutine.

In all of the above sequences we can see that padmasana (lotus) follows hip opening postures, this is because padmasana (lotus) is a hip rotation rather than a twisting of the knees.

CAUTION

Don't twist the knees to get into padmasana, rather the knee is relaxed slightly and the femur head rotated in the hip joint allowing the knee to come out to the side like turning the page of a book bringing the foot up toward the opposite thigh. We bring the foot to the opposite groin by rotating the hip joint further to bring the foot into place.

Once one foot is comfortable on the opposing thigh we do the same for the other leg, relaxing the knee slightly, rotating the femur head in the hip joint but here in the inverted postures of shoulder stand and headstand we can allow the first leg to drop back a little to allow the second foot to come up smoothly on to the thigh, working the foot deeper into the groin.

Allowing the first leg to drop back to allow the second foot to come up onto the thigh more easily is something that's only available in the inverted postures. For this reason Supine and inverted may, surprisingly, be an easier option for developing padmasana.

In Sirsasana

Come into lotus via urdhva konasana. Spread the legs wide, on the exhalation, bend the right knee and rotating the femur in the hip joint bring the right foot up on to the left thigh (you may drop the left leg back a little to counter the weight of the knee coming forward to stay balanced pic.3). Inhale and on the next exhalation take your right knee back which will cause your left knee to bend slightly. Rotate the left femur head in the hip joint to bring the left foot onto that right thigh.

You may need to shuffle your feet slightly to settle into your lotus, try to do this by working from the hip joint rather than from the knee.

Twists

twist on the exhalation, a gentle twist at first, twisting a little further on each exhalation.

Anchor the head and elbows

Press the opposite elbow to the direction your twisting firmly into the mat.

Viparita yoga mudra - Lowering your lotus

These become progressively more challenging.

Version 1 (pic.7) bend at the waist while exhaling bringing the knees to the chest

.

To raise your lotus, engage your bandhas and lift on the inhalation.

Version 2 (pic.9), bend at the waist on the exhalation, to the previous position, but then, while continuing your exhalation, round the back slightly to bring your feet to your chin.

To raise from there, engage the bandhas and while inhaling, straighten the back and then the waist.

Press into your elbows as you lift.

Version 3 (pic.11) on the exhalation, bend at the waist then round the back to bring your feet to your chin (the previous position). Your knees should be almost tucked into your armpits and resting at the top of your arms.

Take an inhalation here and then on the next exhalation slide/lower your knees down the backs of your arms to rest on the mat touching your elbows.

To lift back up from here, exhale fully, engage the bandhas and pressing firmly into the mat with your elbows draw your knees back up the back of your arms to your armpits.

Take a breath and on the next exhalation, straighten the back to bring the knees to the chest and then straighten the waist to bring your lotus the last of the way up.

Lifting the lotus is challenging, once lifted, pause to take one of two breaths, then when you are ready, allow your knees to draw apart, releasing your lotus back into urdhava konasana, finally bringing your legs back together into sirsasana sthitii.

Lotus to Sirsasana [VIDEO LINK](#)

The final vinyasa called for a tight lotus and you may wish to work towards this as a separate subroutine (see Lotus subroutines -to come).

From seated padmasana, lift up onto your knees, bend forward and place your hands on the mat with the fingers interlocked ready for headstand. Place the back of your head in the cup formed by your hands and bring your knees forward so

they are touching your elbows.

To lift back up from here, exhale fully, engage the badhas and pressing firmly into the mat with your elbows draw your knees back up the back of your arms to your armpits.

Take a breath and on the next exhalation, straighten the back to bring the knees to the chest and then straighten the waist to bring your lotus the last of the way up.

Follow the directions above for the 3rd version (pic 11) to lower and raise your lotus to and from the mat.

Day 81 : INVERTED : Viparita Dandasana (crooked staff) subroutine



Sirsasana sthiti



urdhva dandasana



sirsasana sthiti



arch the back and take the legs back and down



drop to toes



Viparita dandasana



walk back in



hop up



Sirsasana sthiti

Day 81 : INVERTED : Viparita Dandasana (crooked staff) subroutine practice notes.

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Fear is the biggest problem here, we're never quite sure how far our feet are away from the mat behind us.

Overcoming the fear.

Knowing our body will be comfortable in that position helps. Before dropping into Viparita dandasana from headstand, try it from the mat first. Push up into udhva dandasana then bring the hands to the head, cupping it as in headstand with your forearms and elbows on the mat. Finally walk the feet out into viparita dandasana proper.

From viparita dandasana, walk the feet back in and hop up and down a few times. your not trying to come up but just to get a feeling for how you'll drop into the position.

Walk further so you have to go up onto your toes, hop up and down again this time on your toes again just to get a feeling for how you'll land on your toes.

Notice how as you walk in your chest comes forward, this will be key for dropping out of headstand but also for hopping back up again.

If you still lack confidence consider putting some large firm cushions at the end of the mat to drop on to.

You might start with several cushions and then take one away each time until you finally dropping directly onto the mat.

Lowering the legs into urdhava dandasana (pic.2)

As you lower your legs, push your hips backwards as far as possible

Keep the lower back flat, don't allow it to round

Stretch out through the legs

If you push your hips back far enough they should act partly as a counter weight to your legs allowing your legs to stay horizontal without too much effort.

The drop (pic. 4 & 5)

As you take the legs over you need to counteract the weight of the legs as much as possible giving you time to lower them, with control, as close to the mat as possible.

Push down into the mat with your elbows, this is your anchor

Drop your shoulder blades down your back

Inhaling push out your chest, bringing it towards your chin, imaging your pushing your chest out and down towards the mat.

Allow your back to arch

Tuck your tailbone and engage the bandhas as fully as possible

While doing all of the above, lower the legs further and further behind you.

Your knees will be bent, allow your feet to drop to the mat landing on your toes and then your heels.

Once landed, take a breath and walk your feet out as far as possible stretching through your torso and legs.

Coming back up (pic. 7&8)

Walk back in to the point at which you landed when you dropped.

You want to bring as much weight forward as possible

Drop the shoulder blades down your back, inhaling push your chest out and down towards the mat, arch the back as much as possible.

When you ready exhale, hold the exhalation and hop up

It's the hips that will carry you over, bend your knees and when you hop up think about lifting your hips rather than your feet and legs.

As you hop up push your hips up and forward over your shoulders and your chest down towards the mat.

You want to catch the point just before you were forced to drop, you don't have to hop all the way up just to that point and catch the point of balance.

Once caught, draw your legs closer to your body and careful release the arching of the back raising the hips, the knees and finally the feet

Day 82 : INVERTED : Inverted Mandala Subroutine



Sirsasana sthit



urdhava dandasana



lower feet to the floor



walk around to the left



twist your waist as much as possible while
anchoring your head and shoulders



flip over on the exhalation



viparita dandasana



continue walking around



twist the waist as much as possible and
flip over on the exhalation



continue walking around



return to the starting position



return to sirsasana sthit

Day 82 : INVERTED : Inverted Mandala Subroutine practice notes.

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

The Inverted mandala is a more challenging version of the Sarvangasana (shoulder stand) mandala from Day 73.

It includes viparita dandasana from Day 82 but because it doesn't involve the drop back into the posture sit can be practiced as a stand-alone subroutine.

Viparita Dandasana is quite an intense backbend so some backbend preparation is advised as warm up, the back bend vinyasas from the tadasana subroutine, Day 1, is a suggestion as are some of the pelvic lifts from Supine as well as perhaps urdhava danurasana.

More intense than the backbend is the belly twist as you flip first one way and then the other as you walk around. Twist preparation might include Parsvabhangis, from Day 2 and especially the belly twists from Supine, Jataraparivritti Subroutine day 64.

The flip

As you lower your feet to the mat, ground your head and elbows and walk around, clockwise, on the inhalation. When you can no longer keep your feet on the floor come up on to your toes.

Exhale, take one last large step with your left foot, hold the exhalation, bring your right hip up, take the right leg over the left, twist at the waist and flip your leg all the way over so your right toes lands on the mat in front of your left foot.

The higher you're able to keep your hip the more you'll be able to keep the head and elbows anchored on the mat.

Continue walking around, pause for a breath at viparita dandasana then carry on around clockwise as far as you're able.

Again on the exhalation, take one last step with the right foot up on the toes, the

hips high. Hold the exhalation bring the left hip over twisting at the waist as much as possible, step over with the left foot and give a last flip of the hips to bring your left foot all the way over the right landing on the toes.

Continue on round to the starting position and return to Sirsasana

**Day 83 : INVERTED : Niralumba sirsasana (unsupported headstand)
subroutine**



Start from Vajrasana



place forearms on mat



place head between forearms



walk in, hips over shoulders copy



bring knees to chest



unbend the waist



straighten legs , pichha mayurasana



take legs beyond shoulders, bring head and chest through



padma pichha mayurasana



vrischikasana



pichha mayurasana



return to vajrasana

Day 83 : INVERTED : Niralumba sirsasana (unsupported headstand) subroutine practice notes.

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTTIPSSUGGESTIONS

Coming up to headstand with the forearms on the mat can be challenging, the trick is to walk the feet in, bringing the hips well over the shoulders.

Press down into the mat from the fingertips to the elbows.

In regular headstand where the fingers are interlocked you may find that you press your arms into the mat while attempting to draw your hands apart and yet squeezing your fingers together to prevent them parting, this pulling of the hands can help ground and anchor your arms as you lift up.

A similar effect can be had in the forearm version where you press down into the mat but also try and slide your arms apart along the mat, because the pressing into the mat is stronger than the attempt to draw the arms apart the arms stay in place and yet the action anchors the arms and gives a secure foundation as you move through the more challenging vinyasas.

The lift

Notice the 45 degree angle of the arms in Picture 7. To lift, exhale and push down through the hands, forearms and elbows and draw your shoulders back to bring your arms to a 90 degree angle at the elbow, as your shoulders come back your head lifts off the mat.

Stretch out through the full length of your body, through the trunk, hips, legs feet even the toes.

Arch your back bringing your legs over and beyond your shoulders take the head and chest through the arms, to balance.

Forming your lotus.

With your head and legs forward of your shoulders allow one leg to drop back, your left and folding the right one, rotate the hip joint to allow your right leg to rest on the left thigh as high up near the groin as possible. bring the left leg forward and bending the knee bring the left foot on to the right thigh while pressing down through the forearms and pushing the head through the arms as much as possible.

Vrischikasana

We need to create a deep arch in the back, engage mula and uddiyana bandha to support the tailbone which we want to tuck forward to create more space in the vertebrae.

take the head through the arms as much as possible, take the legs further over and push the pelvis forward. Stretch through the length of the legs and allow the weight of the legs to drop them down towards the head.

To exit, push through the legs and unbend the waist on the inhalation.

In the Subroutine we should ideally stay in pinchamyrurasana as asana sthiti as we move through the vinyasas. However, as we build strength we might practice each vinyasa separately coming back down to downward dog and even taking a mini savasana to allow the heart rate and breath to steady.

Day 84 : INVERTED : Arm variations in Niralumba sirsasana (unsupported headstand) subroutine



Sirsasana sthiti



arms outstretched



arms folded



arms in front



Sirsasana sthiti



lift up hands outstretched



arms outstretched



lift up arms folded



arms folded



lift up arm in front



arms in front



Sirsasana sthiti copy

Day 84 : INVERTED : Arm variations in Niralumba sirsasana (unsupported headstand) subroutine practice notes.

[VIDEO LINK](#)

In this subroutine we have four headstand arm variations, the regular sirsasana (Pic.1), arms outstretched (pic 2), arms folded in front of our face (pic 3) and the arms outstretched in front (pic4).

In the previous subroutine we also had the forearm, pincha mayurasana, version.

In the next subroutine there is yet another hand variation where the head and arms form a tripod.

HINTSTIPSSUGGESTIONS

Try all six headstand hand/arm variations individually and decide which two you find most comfortable, more stable.

Try switching between the two, when that is comfortable try switching back and forth between these two most comfortable variations.

Practice switching back and forth in your regular headstand practice.

You may find that although the regular headstand and, perhaps, the tripod variations are the most stable but that this is not necessarily the easiest transition.

Try switching from the regular headstand into each of the hand/arm variations to find which transition is the most comfortable.

Once found, practice this transition regularly becoming more comfortable with the shift in weight as you move first one arm and then the next. The control we develop here can then be applied to the more challenging transitions.

You might find that entering the different headstand variations from vajrasana or downward dog easier than switching hand positions while up in headstand, if so practice each of the headstand variations separately spending time in each until

they become stable.

I tended to find the transition from regular headstand to the arms folded in front of the face the most awkward and the entry to the forearm headstand from downward dog was the most challenging, you might be different.

In all the transitions we want to engage the torso, the chest, stretching the front back and sides. Stretch up through the pelvis the legs, feet toes as if reaching up towards the ceiling, we want to create a feeling of lift, of lightness.

Arms outstretched

Ideally we want to have our arms and head in a straight line. the further forward our hands the more stable the position.

Shift your weight slightly to one side pressing down firmly on the right little finger, forearm and elbow, while inhaling stretch your left arm out to the side but slightly forward.

Shift your weight to the left side, the head and left hand, press down through the mat and, on the next inhalation, stretch out the other hand to the side but again a little in front.

Stay for a three breaths then reverse the process bringing first one then the other hand back to support the head.

As you practice this version, work to bring your hands further back until you are comfortable with your hands inline with your head.

The final version is to move both hands at the same time, again begin by moving the hands, on the inhalation, to the sides but a little in front, working, over time to the hands in line with the head ideal.

from downward dog

Again begin practicing with the outstretched arms slightly out of line, forward of your head as it's a more stable position.

The trick is to walk in so that your hips are as far over your shoulders as possible, this will take the most strain away from the neck.

Press firmly into the mat with the hands.

To lower bring the hips as far back as possible so that you can lower slowly and with control, bringing the knees to our chest first and then lowering the feet.

Arms folded

Shift the weight or at least line of balance to the left arm and then thread the right arm in front of your face. Shift the weight, line of balance, to this arm and then bring the left to join it folding the arms. reverse the process, a subtle shift of weight/balance to one arm while you bring the left hand back to the starting position behind your head and then the other.

from downward dog

With the arms folder in front of your face we need to make even more of an effort to bring out hips over and even beyond our shoulders before bending the knees lifting our and bringing our knees to our chest.

Lower in the same way as for arms outstretched but shifting the hips even further back over and beyond the shoulders, as far as possible.

Arms outstretched.

We may try this variation with the palms face down at first while we gain control and stability within the posture but ideally the palms will be facing up.

We might get into the position with the palms down and then turn the palms over into the full expression of the vinyasa.

As with all the headstand hand/arm versions above, shift the weight/line of balance slightly to one side as you shift the hand position, here outstretched in front of you. press down through the first palm or back of hand, shift the weight/line of balance slightly and bring the other hand to join it, reversing the process after three breaths.

from downward dog.

We might consider entering the arms outstretched position from tripod headstand, the hands placed on the mat, palms down at a 45 degree angle to our head.

Walk our feet in to bring our hips over and even beyond our shoulders, bends the

knees and bring them to our chest. Unbend the waist taking the feet behind us and then unbend the knee into sirsasana.

Shifting the weight/line of balance move first one hand further forward and then the other.

When we are comfortable entering via tripod try entering the arms outstretched in front variation with the palms down and then finally with the palms up.

Try lowering from this position, first with the palms down but latter with the palms up using the backs of the hands as support.

Lower in the same way as for arms outstretched, shifting the hips even back over and beyond the shoulders, as far as possible.

Day 85 : INVERTED : Handstand subroutine



Headstand from downward dog



niralumna sirsasana sthitි



push up into handstand



vrkshasana



niralumna sirsasana sthitි



bhujapeedasana



bhujapeedasana variation



kukkutasana



ashtavakrasana left side



ashtavakrasana right side



vlcsnap-2011-12-22-06h20m36s11



return to starting position

Day 85 : INVERTED : Handstand subroutine practice notes.

[VIDEO LINK](#)

This handstands subroutine takes a considerable amount of strength and stamina as well as good balance, it is something we can work towards however. Pincha mayurasana, the forearm stand from Day 83 is excellent preparation, individual vinyasas from Day 83's Niralumba Sirsasana subroutine might be included in our regular daily practice to build strength.

In this subroutine the full handstand is achieved by pushing up from kapliasana, the tripod headstand, this is particularly challenging and may take regular practice.

Another entry to handstand is from Downward dog, jumping with the feet together bringing the hips over the shoulders, the legs straight out in an inverted dandasana then unbending the waist to bring the legs vertical. We may prefer to practice this at the wall.

Another option, is again from downward dog to kick first one leg and then the other vertical.

The trick is the bring the shoulders over the hands as we kick or jump up bringing the hips over the shoulders.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Handstand from tripod

Lift the head from the mat and bring it through the arms taking the legs over the head, exhale hold and push down ion the mat engaging and stretching up through your legs to press up to handstand.

In working towards this entry we might kick up to the wall in handstand and then, with the feet against the wall, bend the elbows slightly to allow the head to lower, with control, towards the mat. Lower just a little at first and then push back up to handstand. Lower a little further each day or each week.

Vrishikasana (pic 4)

A backbend, bring the head and chest through the arms and the feet as far over the head as possible.

Engage mula and uddiyana bandha as if you're taking a firm grip on the tailbone which you then tuck in as much as possible.

Push the hips forward as much as possible, stretch out through the full length of the spine, bring the chest through even further, stretch out through the hips, legs feet.

Allow the hips to drop arching the back, allow the knees to bend bringing the feet towards your head.

To return to regular handstand, unbend at the waist pushing up through the legs.

Bhuja peedasana (pic. 6)

Returning to Kapilasana, the tripod headstand, bend the knees, engage mula and uddiyana bandha drawing in the belly to allow your knees to come as high up and close to the chest as possible.

Bend at the waist and bring the knees to the outside of the armpits. Squeeze the knees as if trying to bring them together although your torso, of course, is in the way.

Allow the hips to drop at the same time bringing your head off of the mat.

Drop the shoulder blades down the back, Engage the shoulder girdle. Press down into the mat, bring the shoulders ever further forward to counter the weight of your hips. Straighten the arms and try to bring the feet as close to your bottom as possible.

To exit, bend your elbows slowly and lower your head gently to the mat, take the knees up and then unbend the knees back into kapilasana.

Bhuja peedasana variation (pic. 7)

Precede as above for bhuja peedasana but being sure that the knees are as far up

on the outside of the armpits as possible, unbend the knees and stretch them around in front of your body and bind at the ankle. Drop the hips and bring the feet up higher and hold for three to six breaths.

To return.

Unbind the ankles, raise the hips high, bend the knees and bring your feet back behind you and up towards your bottom. Return to kapilasana as for bhjua peedasana above.

Urdhava Kukkutasana (pic 8)

This vinyasa demands a nice tight lotus.

Open your legs or drop back the left leg and bending the right knee rotate the hip joint to allow the left foot to come onto the left thigh high up near the groin. Drop back the right knee, rotate the femur head in the left hip joint to allow the left foot to come up onto the right thigh.

Try to work the right foot high up the thigh to make as tight a lotus as possible.

Engage mula and uddiyana bandha, draw in the belly to create space for the forward bend. Bring the knees as far up into the armpits as possible.

Visualise pressing your knees through your armpits so the protrude out through your arms.

Allow the hips to drop at the same time pressing down through the hands. Move the shoulders forward beyond your hands to counter the weight of the hips. The shoulder blades are dropped down the back the shoulder griddle engaged as the arms straighten and you settle for three to six breaths.

To return

Bend the elbows slightly at first and lower your head slowly and with control to the mat by bringing the hips up.

Once the head is on the floor take the hips back and unfold at the waist raising your lotus, unbind and stretch out through the legs.

Ashtavakrasana

Bend the knees towards the chest as if in Bheeja peedasana but twisting bring the right knee (with the let above it) across the chest towards the left armpit, take the knee beyond the arm and resting the knees abut the arm stretch-out the legs on the exhalation while raising the head.

Stretch out through the legs at a right angle to your bay while raising your chest and head, stretch out through the head and chest as much as possible.

The return is challenging. Lower the head back to the mat as you bend your knees and bring your feet back as close to your bottom as possible while lifting the knees off the arm and untwisting. Take the hips high to bring the knees back to the chest and return to kapilasana.

DAY 86 : Inverted: Subroutine Breakdown Page 1

INVERTED Sequence : Subroutine breakdown



Page 2



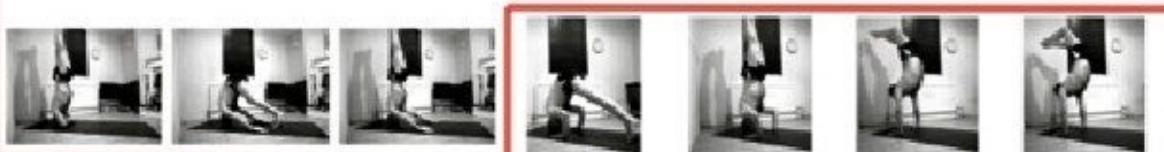
82



83



84



85



DAY 86 : Inverted: Subroutine Breakdown practice notes.

[VIDEO LINK](#)

'...when sirsasana is mastered, the breath rate, which is normally about fifteen to twenty breaths per minute, automatically comes down',

Work towards two breaths a minute over time.

'Sirsasana should always be practiced in the morning, as is laid down by the authorities on yoga.'

'And, as a counterpose, it should be followed by an equal length of time in the practice of sarvangasana (shoulder stand)'.

'The procedure is thus to do sirsasanam for twenty-four breaths, followed by a two-minute rest in savasana. Then one should do sarvangasana for the equal number of twenty four breaths, followed by a sitting posture each as padmasana for a few breaths, until one feels normal and relaxed'.

from Srivatsa Ramaswami Yoga for the Three Stages of Life p142

Practicing Inverted Subroutines

Towards the end of my morning asana practice I spend few minutes in the sarvangasana preparatory postures, anapanasana, urdhva prasarita pada hastasana and dwipadapitam.

I then spend at least five minutes in sarvangasana, the first three minutes with the legs relaxed.

Then I practice for headstands for ten to twenty minutes (ten minutes minimum).

For the first five minutes I don't practice any vinyasas but try to slow my breathing towards two breaths a minute and work on engaging bandhas.

The rest of the time in headstands I spend on Vinyasas, one or more of the inverted subroutines.

Coming down from headstand I'll stay for a few moments with my forehead on the mat, when sitting up I'll bring my head up last.

After a couple of minutes in savasana I practice another five minutes of Sarvagasana (shoulder stand), this time practising vinyasas, one or more shoulder stand subroutines

Finally I'll spend a period of time in Vajrasana, padmasana or mahamudra before moving on to my pranayama practice.

LOTUS SEQUENCE

Day 87 : LOTUS : Ardha badha-padmasana (half lotus) subroutine



dakshina ardha padmasana, fold forward
and hold right foot



swing arm behind and hold toe, ardha
baddha padmasana



take hold of foot and fold forward



Kashyapasana



ardha matsyendrasana variation, twisting
while holding instep



ardha matsyendrasana variation, twisting
while holding outside of foot



counter pose



repeat for other side take hold of foot and
fold forward



Kashyapasana



ardha matsyendrasana variation, twisting
while holding instep



ardha matsyendrasana variation, twisting
while holding outside of foot



counter pose

Day 87 : LOTUS : Ardha badha-padmasana (half lotus) subroutine practice notes.

[VIDEO LINK](#)

This is almost the same subroutine as Day 26, Adha padmasana, found in the Asymmetric sequence.

This subroutine along with the half lotus subroutines found in the other sequences can be considered as preparation for full lotus

[from On One Leg Sequence Day 17 Vrikmasana](#)

[from Asymmetric Sequence Day 26 Ardha padmasana](#)

[from Asymmetric Sequence Day 32 Ardha padma marichiyasana](#)

[from Supine Sequence Day 60 Dwipadapitam](#)

[from Supine Sequence Day 68 Supta ardha badha halasana](#)

The hip opening [Mahamudra subroutine from Asymmetric Day 27](#) is also good preparation for the half lotus as well as the [Badha konasana Subroutine](#) leading up to padmasana from Day 42

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Half lotus

See Day 17 Vrikmasana for some notes on standing half lotus.

To get into half lotus : Bend the knee bringing it towards the chest, allow the knee to drop out to the side, key here is the natural rotation in the hip joint. Bring the foot close to the opposite thigh, hold your foot in one hand and the knee in the other and GENTLY encourage the rotation of the ball and socket hip joint, bring the knee forward parallel with the floor towards the opposite knee and the foot further up the thigh and ideally, eventually, towards the groin.

CAUTION

You don't want to force this action, if you feel strain on your knee it may be better to practice tomorrow's subroutine built around mama mudra with the foot against the thigh rather than on top instead. Practicing the maha mudra subroutine will bring half, and eventually, full lotus closer.

As we have found in all forward bending asana, stretch out of the hips as we practiced in the standing On your feet sequences, the same goes for the twisting postures.

CAUTION.

In picture 4 (the raised hip), Vasishtasana or Kashyapasana we must be careful of the knee. Work from the top down, pushing down into the mat and lifting your shoulders then lifting the hip which will allow the leg to straighten, lower in reverse, DON'T push off the mat from the foot, knee or hip first as this will put too much strain on the knee which is vulnerable here.

Day 88 : LOTUS : Padmasana (lotus) subroutine



Dandasana



ardha padmasana



Padmasana



Parvatasana



Bhadrasana



Bhadrasana with hands closer to the knees



Parvatasana



laghu yoga mudra



utpluthi while bending forward



parvatasanaopy



dakshina -parsva laghu yoga mudra



vama-parsva laghu yoga mudra

Day 88 : LOTUS : Padmasana (lotus) subroutine practice notes.

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Padmasana (lotus) can be a challenging posture and there are many places to work towards it in Vinyasa Krama.

In Asymmetric Sequence: Padmasana doesn't appear as such but there are several hip opening postures, janusirsasana leading to mahamudra in particular, that prepare you for ardha baddha padmasana (half lotus).

In Lotus sequence : The lotus sequence picks up where Asymmetric leaves off with more vinyasas in half lotus before moving on to full lotus.

In Seated sequence : Padmasana (lotus) follows the deep hip opening subroutines of upavishta konasana and badha konasana.

In Supine sequence : More half lotus variations, this time in dwipadapitam (table pose). In shoulder stand we have the half lotus vinyasas of Day 68 but also the extreme hip openers of the previous (Day 69) Urdhva Konasana subroutine.

In Inverted Sequnece : As with Supine and Seated the lotus vinyasas in headstand follow, konasana and badha konasana subroutine.

In all of the above sequences we can see that padmasana (lotus) follows hip opening postures, this is because padmasana (lotus) involves a rotation of the hip joint rather than a twisting of the knees.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

Getting in to full Lotus

NB: THE most important thing to remember is to protect your knees, that it's the hip joints that do all the work, the knees only bend one way it's the rotation of the ball and socket hip joint that makes padmasana possible

Right leg

Bend the right knee and bring it up towards the chest. Reach with the right hand

down inside the thigh and take hold of the right ankle.

Allow the right knee to drop out to the side through the rotation of the hip joint. Focus on that hip action, of the ball and socket joint, the femur head rotating in the hip socket, encourage it.

There's a tensing of the right buttock a lifting almost and a stretching of the thigh as you encourage the rotation in the hip joint that will bring the knee down towards the mat and the ankle to come up. This action should only happen at the hips joint your NOT pulling up the ankle and your NOT forcing the knee down.

If this isn't happening it might be best to work on more hip opening postures, mahamudra in Asymmetric, badha konasana in Seated.

Lift up through the torso, support the right foot with the left and right palms and guide NOT pull the foot to the left thigh.

Lift up again and bend forward slightly, roll onto the front of the sit bones and guide the right foot a little further up the left thigh into the groin.

Again lift and roll further onto the sit bones allowing the right knee to rest on the mat.

Left leg

Bend the left knee and again focusing on the hip joint allowing the left knee to drop out to the side.

Rock your body forward and draw the right knee out to the side through the thigh muscles. Lock the knee by pressing the calf muscles against the thigh.

Reach over the left foot and support the left ankle with the left palm, cupping under the foot with the right palm, encourage the hip joint to rotate further and allow the knee to drop further out and down. Again, your not pulling on the foot but rather supporting it to allow the hip joint to do it's work.

Lift up through the torso, rock further forward on the sit bones and stretch out through the left thigh to allow the foot to come up over the right leg.

Using the strength of the thighs bring the knees a little towards each other this

will bring the right foot finally up onto the right thigh closer to the groin.

Shuffle around on your sit bones if necessary, encouraging more rotation of the hip joints to tighten the lotus, this is preferable to wrenching, tugging, pulling the feet.

Ultimately, for many of the lotus vinyasas you will require a nice tight lotus where the heels are digging slightly into the belly, the soles of the feet pointing up and the knees closer together. In fact, the heels can be considered to be massaging the inner organs in some of the vinyasas by pressing deep into the belly

To release

Sit up straight lifting up through the torso, focus on the left hip joint and encourage it to rotate by engaging the thigh muscles which will press the left knee into the mat this will allow you to very gently encourage the left foot off of the right thigh.

As you allow the knees to draw apart the lotus will unfold, again allow the right hip joint to do its work bringing the right knee down into the mat and allowing the right foot to glide off the left thigh.

Padmasana subroutine

Ramaswami recommends coming into half lotus, taking a breath or two, continuing into full lotus, staying for a three breaths and then releasing the lotus before repeating six times.

You may wish to enter and exit your lotus for each of the vinyasa in this subroutine. Over time you may feel comfortable staying for a couple of the vinyasas and eventually the whole subroutine even sequence.

Lotus postures are excellent for working on the bandhas, the perineum is grounded allowing for greater focus on mula bandha, the lotus a stable base for deep uddiyana and jalandhara bandhas (see practice guidelines Day 1 for more on bandhas).

Bhadrasana The hand position can be low on the thigh fingers tucked under the feet (pic 5) or closer to the knee (pic 6). If the knee be careful not to press the knees down, especially if the lotus position is still new to you.

Laghu yoga mudra (pic 8) is a deep forward bend, draw the buttocks back, come onto the front of the sit bones, engage mula and uddiyana bandha, sucking in the belly in to create more space for the body to fold forwards over your lotus. The same goes for the side vinyasas of yoga mudra (pic 11 & 12), be careful not to allow the opposite knee from the side your folding in to to raise, encourage it to stay down by grounding the sit bones.

Utpluthi (Pic 9) is all about hand placement. place the hands too far forward and the weight of the hip bones will keep your grounded, too far back and the weight of the knees will stop you from achieving lift. So place the hands just forward of mid thigh as close to your thighs as possible.

Bring your shoulders over your hands, bring your shoulders down, engage the shoulder girdle and after exhaling hold the breath out and push down into the mat through your hands and lift

Mula bandha should be engaged but engage it more strongly, tuck the tailbone under, the lower half of your body should feel tight and compact, draw your pelvis up into your torso and hold.

Keep the bandhas engaged and the tailbone tucked while your breath.

In this version of utpluthi you bend the body over the lotus, in a later version in the lotus sequence the body is more erect.

Day 89 : LOTUS : Badha Padmasana (bound lotus) subroutine



Padmasana



reach around and take hold of the toes



throw the other arm around the back to grab the other toe into badha padmasana



Yoga mudra



Dakshina vanna yoga mudra



Vama yoga mudra



Urdhva-mukha padmasana



Supta padmasana



Matsyasana



Badha matsyasana



Padmasana

Day 89 : LOTUS : Badha Padmasana (bound lotus) subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

There are some easier versions of baddha padmasana (pic 3)

1. Reach around the back with the left hand and place the back of the hand on the waist, just above the hip bone. Reach around with the right arm and place the back of the hand against the waist just above the left hip.
2. When the above feels comfortable, turn the left hand (the one resting above the right hip) over, use the little finger to draw your hand onto the hip bone.
3. When that too feels comfortable, try to do the same with the other hand, turning it over and using the little finger to lever the hand down onto the hip bone.

This may be your bind for a little while, play with it, stretching up, arching back a little, twisting a little to the left a little to the right, explore how to get a better grip on the hip bone.

Try to lever the right elbow a little further over the left by using your right hand as a fulcrum.

4. When you feel ready to move on reach far around with the left hand and take hold of the big toe now use the hip bind above for the other hand, reaching around with the other hand but just pressing the back of the hand against the waist above the hip. Switch hands to become comfortable with both sides.

5. It's possible to use a belt, strap or scarf thrown over the feet to work your hands down to your toes or perhaps the second hand.

6. Another approach is to reach around with the left hand and take hold of the left toe then instead over throwing the right arm around the back and over the

left arm, try threading your right arm between your left elbow and back. Use the left arm to work your right over your back and down toward the left hip and finally right toe.

7. To get the full bind , make a tight lotus, you feet high up in your groin, heels pressing into your belly.

Lift up out of the pelvis and twist around to the left as far as possible, keep lifting and twisting. Use your hand to press into the hip and lever you arm a little further around to enable you to take hold of your toe.

Now twist to the right leading with the shoulder, bring the back of the hand to the waist and work it down over the hip lifting and twisting all the way until you able to hold your other toe.

Straighten up the shoulders, settle and engage bandhas and take long slow breaths.

Forward bending, to the front and sides.

here we need to engage mula and uddiyana bandha, sucking in the belly to create space, this is especially importat in the forward bends to the sides where we want to stretch out over the knee.

Before folding forwards, arch the back slightly, stretch up tall out of the pelvis, push back the buttocks and stretch out over your lotus and when to the slides, your knees.

Urdha mukha padmasana (pic 7) is a back stretch, a counter pose, tuck the tailbone under and push the chest out and up.

Baddha matsyasnana (pic 10)is a more challenging version of seated baddha padmasana, try the above variations to work towards it, ultimately you will need to arch your back and twist fist to the left and then the right.

You might find this version of the baddha padmasana bind easier as you have the floor to help you work your arm around, your also able to tilt the lotus towards.

Day 90 : LOTUS : Urdhva padmasana (lifted up lotus pose) Subroutine



Supta padmasana



Urdhva padmasana



akunchita urdhava padmasana



pindasana



urdhava padmasana



twist to the right, left knee to right side of face



twist to left, right knee to left side of face



counterpose



return to akunchita urdhava padmasana



stretch out the arms



roll over into padma bhujangasana and practice simhasana three times.



return to padmasana

Day 90 : LOTUS : Urdhva padmasana (lifted up lotus pose) Subroutine practice notes

[VIDEO LINK](#)

HINTS\TIPS\SUGGESTIONS

To get up into Shoulder stand while in Lotus, bring your arms to your side, exhale fully and press your arms down into the mat, hold and roll the lotus up to your chest, aim your knees at a 45 degree angle up over your head and stretch/push your knees up into shoulder stand while shifting your hands to your hips and then your back either side of your spine with the fingers pointing up and the elbows not too far apart.

Alternatively, Start from regular shoulder stand, spread the legs apart, drop the left leg back a little, bring the right foot to the left thigh by rotating at the hip then bring the left foot to the right thigh again through the rotation of the hip.

Engage mula and uddiyana bandha at the end of the exhalation sucking in the belly to create more space to lower your lotus down to your chest.

Remember in Vinyasa Krama you can work towards this, lowering a little way on the first exhalation, take it back up on the inhalation, lower a little further on each exhalation.

When lowering your need to make sure your hips are high and over your shoulders or you will tend to roll back down to the mat.

Pindasana (pic 4) The fold needs to be deep, use the bandhas, sucking your belly back and up into your ribcage to create space. Your inhalations will be short but try to keep your exhalations long.

Ultimately you want to wrap your arms around your lotus and bind at the wrist, this requires a deep lotus with the feet high up in the groin and heels digging into the belly.

If your lotus is not as tight then bind at the fingers or just hold the thighs.

Twists

From udrdhava padmasana (lotus shoulderstand) Stretch up through the pelvis lengthening the body as much as possible, twist on the exhalation and lower/fold your knee to the outside of your forehead.

Again, work a little lower on each exhalation

Remember to keep the hips high and over the shoulders to prevent rolling back.

Counterpose (pic 8) There are two hand positions, the one in the picture with the palms supporting the sacrum and the another where the thumbs point toward but remain outside of the spine, resting lower down on the back of the hips with the fingers coming around the hip bone. I tend to prefer the later.

This is a back stretch so tuck the tailbone under and to counter the weight of the legs by pushing the chest out and up, engage jalandhara bandha (chin lock) firmly.

The posture is entered on the inhalation by bending from the waist and arching the back.

Stay in the position for three breaths, perhaps going a little deeper into the pose each time or go back and forth to akunchita urdhva padmasana (pic 3) and the counter pose on the breath if holding is too challenging.

Simhasana Subroutine [VIDEO LINK](#). From Akunchita urdhvapadmasana, stretch out the arms above your head, roll your lotus slowly down to the mat, keep the momentum to bring your arms up and over passing through regular lotus as you put your hands to the floor and come up on to your knees. Lower your body flat to the floor stretch your arms out in front of you, palms together as if in prayer.

Place the palms on the mat beside you close to your chest. Tuck the tailbone (this is a back stretch) anchor the knees, try to bring the hips as close to the mat as possible , arch the back stretching out through the waist. Stretch out through the full length of your body, pushing out your chest take the head back. This is a Bhujangasana variation and can be worked on in the Bow sequence subroutines.

Lions face.

Inhale stretching back the head and as you exhale make a long Haaa sound while stretching your tongue out and down and widening the eyes. Focus your attention on the mid brow.

You may like to repeat this three times, closing the mouth on the inhalation and taking the head back before repeating the lions face on the exhalation.

Day 91 : LOTUS : Kukkutasana & garbha pindasana Subroutine



Parvatasana



Bharadwajasana



Bharadwajrasana, left side



utpluthi



return to padmasana



push arms through thighs



kukkutasana



garbha pindasana



purna garbha pindasana



uttana kurmasana



Supta padmasana

Day 91 : LOTUS : Kukkutasana & garbha pindasana Subroutine practice notes.

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Bharadwajrasana, raise the arms and twist then lower into the pose

Kukkutasana

Push the arms through the space between your thighs and calf muscles, you may need to spray some water on your arms if your legs are bare and the weather cooler (no sweat). If this is a problem see the notes below for garbha pindasana.

Exhale fully, hold, engage mula and uddiyana bandha and drop the shoulder blades down the back. Press down into the mat to lift but keep the shoulderblades lowered .

As you press down visualise moving slightly forward and up. If you just push down there is a tendency to keep falling backwards off your hands. look at picture 7 and notice how there is a slight lean forward, the shoulders over the hands.

Garbha pindasana

Creating space to get the arms through

Here, once in lotus, I lift my left leg a little away from the right holding just above the ankle. this creates a little more space to get the first arm through. For the second arm I press the top side of my left foot against my right thigh flexing the ankle a little to lever the leg up a little thus creating more of an opening to pass the arm through.

Video Tutorial here <http://youtu.be/chQwvJN-K98>

Try taking the arms through at an angle, the right arm runs parallel to the right calf, same for the left.

Video Tutorial here <http://youtu.be/Ct35la57mBw>

Utpluthi (Pic 4) is all about hand placement. place the hands too far forward and the weight of the hip bones will keep your grounded, too far back and the weight of the knees will stop you from achieving lift. So place the hands just forward of

mid thigh as close to your thighs as possible. In the earlier version of utpluthi you bend the body over the lotus, in this version the body is more erect.

Bring your shoulders over your hands, bring your shoulders down, engage the shoulder girdle and after exhaling hold the breath out and push down into the mat through your hands and lift

Mula bandha should be engaged but engage it more strongly, tuck the tailbone under, the lower half of your body should feel tight and compact, draw your pelvis up into your torso and hold.

Keep the bandhas engaged and the tailbone tucked while your breath.

Day 92 : LOTUS : Special lotus balancing postures Subroutine



Padmasana



Place palms on mat and come up on to knees



Urdhva kukutasana



Padmasana



place palms close together on mat, come up onto knees and press elbows into the belly



Padma mayurasana



Place head on mat in front of lotus



Urdhva padmasana



With twist to left:



with twist to right



padma pinchmayurasana



padmasana

Day 92 : LOTUS : Special lotus balancing postures Subroutine practice notes.

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Practicing these arm balances and inversions together in one subroutine can be challenging, consider working on them separately at first perhaps including one arm balance a practice or every few days. Utpluthis, the raised lotus from Day 91 is another arm balance as is Kukkutasana, also from Day 91, both will build strength as will the lead in's to most of the subroutines and the sun salutation with mantra.

HINTS TIPS SUGGESTIONS

This version of urdhava kukkutasana is a sliding up the arms or rather the arms are there as a guide, we don't want to rely on them too much.

Place the hands close to the knees, rock up onto the knees, shoulders over the fingers. Drop the shoulder blades down the back, engage mula and uddiyana bandha.

Exhale completely hold and pressing the hands down into the mat hoist the lotus up towards the armpits lifting up from your perineum, mula bandha.

The shoulders remember are over the fingers as you come up your shoulders may need to come even further forward to create a counterweight to your hips.

In the beginning hold for a breath and then lower on the inhalation, as you become stronger and improve your balance you may stay for longer, three to six breaths.

Padma mayurasana

Place the hands on the mat as close to the body as possible, almost tucked under your lotus.

bend your elbows slightly and allow your shoulders to drop to allow your elbows to dig into your belly.

Come up onto your knees and then stretch forward while at the same time raising your knees off the ground.

Padma Mayurasana is in effect a back stretch, tuck in the tailbone and attempt to arch the back slightly to bring the lotus up higher.

The elbows need to be together and really dig into the belly.

In the beginning hold for a breath and then lower on the exhalation, as you become stronger and improve your balance you may stay for longer, three to six breaths.

Lotus to Sirsasana [VIDEO LINK](#)

The final vinyasa called for a tight lotus and you may wish to work towards this as a separate subroutine (see Lotus subroutines -to come).

From seated padmasana, lift up onto your knees, bend forward and place your hands on the mat with the fingers interlocked ready for headstand. Place the back of your head in the cup formed by your hands and bring your knees forward so they are touching your elbows.

To lift back up from here, exhale fully, engage the badhas and pressing firmly into the mat with your elbows draw your knees back up the back of your arms to your armpits.

Take a breath and on the next exhalation, straighten the back to bring the knees to the chest and then straighten the waist to bring your lotus the last of the way up.

Follow the directions above for the 3rd version (pic 11) to lower and raise your lotus to and from the mat.

DAY 93 Lotus Subroutine Breakdown

LOTUS : Subroutine Breakdown



DAY 93 Lotus Subroutine Breakdown practice notes.

[VIDEO LINK](#)

Padmasana, the lotus posture is, of course, the classic meditation posture. Although there are other notable meditation postures, siddhasana, gomukhasana, virasana and vajrasana, padmasana holds a special place because of it's stability. There is a beauty to it's construction, it feels symmetrical, the legs bound secure allowing for the arm balances, for example, in the final subroutine of the series. It is an excellent posture for engaging the bandhas, mula bandha feels particularly grounded and the stability of the pose lends itself to exploring uddiyana and jalandhara bandhas.

As well as for meditation practice, padmasana is an excellent posture for pranayama, again, on account of it's stability.

Some however may find the posture boring or tedious, the subroutines allow us to explore multiple vinyasas while in padmasana, creating interest that may encourage us to spend longer in the posture which will in time allow the posture to become more comfortable.

The first subroutine day 88, the half lotus, is a good preparation for developing the lotus posture as are many of the hip opening postures and vinyasas from the asymmetric and seated sequences.

In this course of subroutines I've placed the sequences in order in which I tend to practice them, starting with standing postures moving on through seated or backbend postures up to inverted. I tend to finish my practice with one or more lotus subroutines, staying in the posture for my pranayama and meditation practice.

However, while working towards padmasana the half lotus or siddhasana for example would serve just as well.

I've tried to stress that padmasana is about the hips rather than the knees so here, again are my practice notes for entering padmasana from Day 88

Getting in to full Lotus

NB: THE most important thing to remember is to protect your knees, that it's the hip joints that do all the work, the knees only bend one way it's the rotation of the ball and socket hip joint that makes padmasana possible

Right leg

Bend the right knee and bring it up towards the chest. Reach with the right hand down inside the thigh and take hold of the right ankle.

Allow the right knee to drop out to the side through the rotation of the hip joint. Focus on that hip action, of the ball and socket joint, the femur head rotating in the hip socket, encourage it.

There's a tensing of the right buttock a lifting almost and a stretching of the thigh as you encourage the rotation in the hip joint that will bring the knee down towards the mat and the ankle to come up. This action should only happen at the hips joint your NOT pulling up the ankle and your NOT forcing the knee down.

If this isn't happening it might be best to work on more hip opening postures, mahamudra in Asymmetric, badha konasana in Seated.

Lift up through the torso, support the right foot with the left and right palms and guide NOT pull the foot to the left thigh.

Lift up again and bend forward slightly, roll onto the front of the sit bones and guide the right foot a little further up the left thigh into the groin.

Again lift and roll further onto the sit bones allowing the right knee to rest on the mat.

Left leg

Bend the left knee and again focusing on the hip joint allowing the left knee to drop out to the side.

Rock your body forward and draw the right knee out to the side through the thigh muscles. Lock the knee by pressing the calf muscles against the thigh.

Reach over the left foot and support the left ankle with the left palm, cupping under the foot with the right palm, encourage the hip joint to rotate further and

allow the knee to drop further out and down. Again, your not pulling on the foot but rather supporting it to allow the hip joint to do it's work.

Lift up through the torso, rock further forward on the sit bones and stretch out through the left thigh to allow the foot to come up over the right leg.

Using the strength of the thighs bring the knees a little towards each other this will bring the right foot finally up onto the right thigh closer to the groin.

Shuffle around on your sit bones if necessary, encouraging more rotation of the hip joints to tighten the lotus, this is preferable to wrenching, tugging, pulling the feet.

Ultimately, for many of the lotus vinyasas you will require a nice tight lotus where the heels are digging slightly into the belly, the soles of the feet pointing up and the knees closer together. In fact, the heels can be considered to be massaging the inner organs in some of the vinyasas by pressing deep into the belly

To release

Sit up straight lifting up through the torso, focus on the left hip joint and encourage it to rotate by engaging the thigh muscles which will press the left knee into the mat this will allow you to very gently encourage the left foot off of the right thigh.

As you allow the knees to draw apart the lotus will unfold, again allow the right hip joint to do it's work bringing the right knee down into the mat and allowing the right foot to glide off the left thigh.

WINDING DOWN

Pranayama, Pratyahara, Meditation

This section to be developed and expanded in the 4th edition

Pranayama

I've just posted a bunch of Pranayama videos on Youtube for the sister blog , Vinyasa Krama Sequences and subroutines and thought I'd make the most of them and make this Pranayama week here too. They basically outline stages in developing a practice, I've broken them down so you can start wherever you feel most comfortable.

The videos aren't great, the sound quality is poor, sorry, but if you crank up the volume I think you can get an idea of what's going on. Also, my chanting is quite awful, sounds a lot better in my head which is where it tends to stay. Mostly I give instruction and a count for the first round and then just do it for the next couple. I'd hoped the recording would pick up the sound of my breathing but it doesn't really catch it. In the later videos I try recording a voice over but that's a nightmare to sync. They are what they are and if anyone is curious or had wanted to start building a practice they might be something to be going on with. I'll go into a little more detail on each video over the next couple of days but if you're tempted to dive in right away here's a suggestion.

Start off with some Kapalibhati [HERE](#) and then move on through the main Pranayama videos. Try Pranayama 1 and 2 and see how comfortable that is, you might want to keep the exhale at an eight count rather than ten, that's fine. If you're comfortable there give Nadi Shodhana a try, videos 5 & 6, they have the same ratio. At this point you might want to try learning the Pranayama mantra (see the chant page at the top of the blog, it printed out as well as some MP3's of Ramaswami teaching it) and chanting along, it has the same ratio as the first ujaii video. After a couple of days, sessions or weeks start increasing the ratios with videos 3 & 4 and/or 6 & 7. When you're ready you might like to try and increase the retention of the breath long enough to chant the full mantra 15-20 seconds depending how fast you go. I tend to start off fast and then settle down to a slower chant half way through my practice.

If you're linking here from the Youtube videos and aren't an Ashtangi then I should probably say something about bandhas. You could give them a miss at first and just go through the videos missing that part out altogether although

some would argue it's not pranayama without them. Start with what feels comfortable, a nod in their direction perhaps. So three bandhas here, very very simply put Mula bahanda (rectal lock, just lightly clench and lift the rectal muscles for now, it gets more subtle as you go on), Uddiyana is where you see me draw in my belly and lift. Mine is a little extreme here, it's how I tend to practice but also makes clear what's going on for the video. To start with you might like to imagine a thread that draws your belly button back towards your spine, it's a start. The third lock is Jhalandara, throat lock, just bring your chin down towards your chest, ideally the space between your clavicle

The first four videos are straight forward Ujaii breathing (constrict the throat to make yourself sound a little like Darth Vader) building up the ratios. The first one is 1;1;1, five seconds inhale, five holding the breath and five exhaling. The second one has the same ratio but includes the bandhas so 1;1;1;1. The next one doubles the exhale 1;1;2;1 and the fourth doubles the holding of the inhale so 1;2;2;1 that's 5 second inhale/ 10 seconds hold *10 seconds exhale* 5 seconds for the bandhas.

The next group, five, six and seven are basically doing the same thing, building up the ratios, but employ Nadi Shodhana, alternating the nostrils.

Pranayama 8 is one of my favourites. It's Ujaii Pranayama but with mantra. While inhaling you chant in your head the first part of the Pranayama mantra then chant the second part while holding the breath and chant the final part as you exhale. I've made it 1;1;1;1; but you can slow down the speed of your chanting to change the ratio.

Pranayama 9 is my standard, everyday, Pranayama practice. The ratio is 1;4;2;1 and I chant the full pranayama mantra while retaining the breath after the inhale.

The final video is Viloma Ujaii with mantra and at the same ratio 1;4;2;1. This alternates the nostrils as in nadi Shaodana but also includes ujaii breathing. It's tricky but quite something once you get the hang of it.

I should also mention the Kapalibhati I put up a couple of weeks ago as I always do that before starting my Pranayama, kind of the link between my asana practice and the Pranayama.

123. yogic postures for `breathing exercises p247

124. Kapalabhati p248

125 a Pranayama p249

125 b Ujaii 1;1;1;1

125 c Ujaii 1;1;2;1

125 d Ujaii 1;2;2;1

The following Pranayamas are taken from Ramaswami's other book 'Yoga for the three stages of life'.

125 e Nadi shadana 1;1;1;1

125 f Nadi shadana 1;1;2;1

125 g Nadi Shodana 1;2;2;1

125 h Ujaii with mantra

125 j Nadi Shodana with mantra

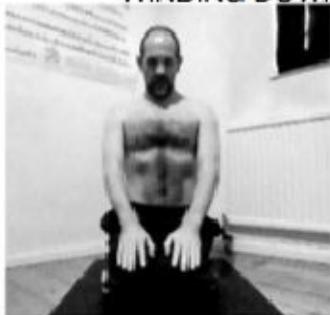
125 k Viloma ujaii with mantra

126. The Locks (Bandhas) p250

127. Pratyahara - Sealing the senses p253

Meditation and Pranayama postures

WINDING DOWN : Meditation and Pranayama postures



Vajrasana



Vajrasana with uddiyana bandha



Padmasana



Padmasana with uddiyana bandha



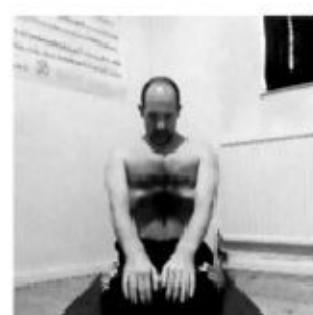
Siddhasana



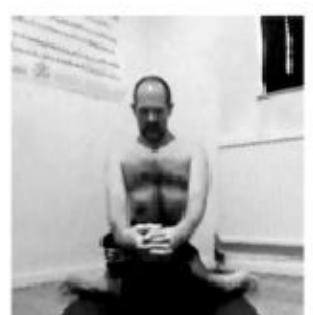
Siddhasana with uddiyana bandha



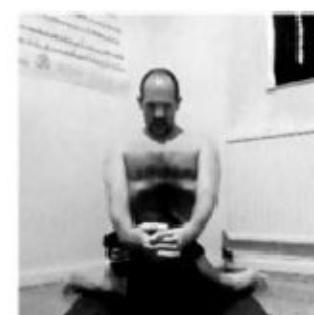
Virasana



Virasana with uddiyana bandha



Gomukhasana



Gomukhasana with uddiyana bandha

Kapalabhati hand and arm positions

WINDING DOWN : Kapalabhati hand and arm positions



Pranayama Hand mala (for counting the breath) Version One

WINDING DOWN : Pranayama, hand mala (version one)



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12

Pranayama Hand mala (for counting the breath) Version Two

WINDING DOWN : Pranayama, hand mala (version two)



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12

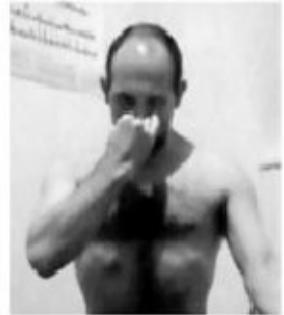
Pranayama



Retain exhale engage mula and uddiyana bandhas



Lift thumb off Right nostril and inhale



Close both nostrils and retain inhalation



Lift ring finger off nostril and exhale



Retain exhale, engage mula and uddiyana bandhas)



Lift thumb off LEFT nostril and inhale



Close both nostrils and retain inhalation



Lift thumb off Right nostril and exhale



Repeat sequence (Retain exhale engage mula and uddiyana bandhas) copy

Pratyahara in Padmasana and Vajrasana

WINDING DOWN : Pratyahara in padmasana and vajrasana



In padmasana Thumbs close ears



First two finger rest on eyelids



Ring fingers rest lightly against nostrils



Little fingers rest against corners of mouth



In Vajrasana Thumbs close ears



First two finger rest on eyelids



Ring fingers rest lightly against nostrils



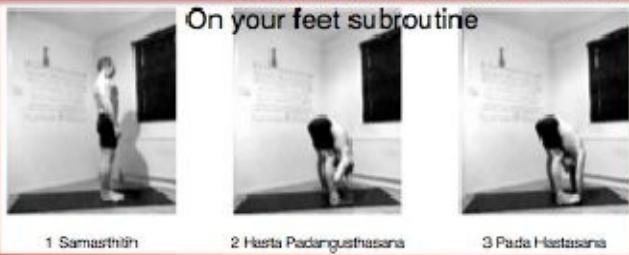
Little fingers rest against corners of mouth

The Subroutines in the Ashtanga Yoga Primary series

The Subroutines in the Ashtanga Yoga Primary series

Ashtanga Primary series - Subroutine break down.

On your feet subroutine



1 Samasthitih

2 Hasta Padangusthasana

3 Pada Hastasana

Triangle subroutines



4 Uthita Tri Konasana

5 Uthita Tri Konasana



6 Parivrtta Tri Konasana



7 Parivrtta Tri Konasana



8 Utthita Parsva Konasana



9 Utthita Parsva Konasana



10 Parivrtta Parsva Konasana



11 Parivrtta Parsva Konasana



12 Prasanta Padottanasana A



13 Prasanta Padottanasana B



14 Prasanta Padottanasana C



15 Prasanta Padottanasana C

On one leg Subroutines



16 Utthita Parsvottanasana



17 Utthita Parsvottanasana



18 Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana



19 Utthita Parsvasahita



20 Utthita Eka Padasana



21 Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana



22 Utthita Parsvasahita



21 Utthita Eka Padasana



22 Andha Baddha Padmottanasana



23 Andha Baddha Padmottanasana

Another Triangle subroutine



24 Utthita Virabhadrasana



25 Virabhadrasana A



26 Virabhadrasana A



27 Virabhadrasana B



28 Virabhadrasana B

Ashtanga Primary series



Seated subroutine inc. counterpose

1 Dandasana

2 Paschimottanasana A

3 Paschimottanasana B

5 Purvottanasana

6 Ardha Baddha Padma Paschimottanasana



Asymmetric Subroutines

7 Ardha Baddha Padma Paschimottanasana

8 Tirieng Mukha Eka Pada paschimottanasana

9 Tirieng Mukha Eka Pada paschimottanasana

10 janu Sirsasana A.

11 Janu Sirsasana A.



4 Paschimottanasana C

10 Janu Sirsasana B

11 Janu Sirsasana B

12 Janu Sirsasana C

13 Janu Sirsasana C



14 Marichyasana A

15 Marichyasana A

16 Marichyasana B

17 Marichyasana B

18 Marichyasana C



19 Marichyasana C

20 Marichyasana D

21 Marichyasana D

22 Navasana

23 Bhujapidasana

More seated subroutines



24 Kurmasana

25 Supta Kurmasana

26 Garbha Pindasana

27 Garbha Pindasana

28 Kukutasana

Ashtanga Primary series



28 Badha Konasana A

29 Badha Konasana B

30 Badha Konasana C

31 Upavistha Konasana A

32 Upavistha Konasana B



33 Supta Konasana

34 Supta hasta padangusthasana

Supine subroutines

35 Supta Parsvahita

36 Supta hasta padangusthasana

37 Supta Parsvahita



38 Utkaya Padangusthasana

39 Utkaya Padangusthasana

40 Urdhva Mukha Paschimottanasana

41 Setu Bhendhasana

42 Urdhva Dhanurasana x 3



50 Salamba Sarvangasana

51 Halasana

52 Karna Pidasana

53 Urdhva Padmasana

54 Pindasana



55 Mayurasana

56 Uttana Padasana

short Inverted Subroutine

57 Sirsasana

58 Urdhva Dandasana



71 Buddha Padmasana

72 Yoga Mudra

73 Padmasana Jnana Mudra

74 Utpli

75 Savasana

Another approach to constructing a practice based on the Ashtanga system

The Subroutines in Ashtanga primary series

As we work through Ramaswami's book it can sometimes be hard to visualise how we can turn all this information, on all these postures, in these great long sequences, into a mornings practice. We can practice the full sequences as they stand and Ramaswami recommends this approach as a way to learn all the sequences and postures, the complete syllabus as it where. I found that approach useful too, you get to see the families of postures, how they relate to each other, leading up to and developing postures. Sooner or latter though we're probably going to want to work at a subroutine level.

Below is the popular Ashtanga Primary sequence. What I've done is divide the practice up into the different Vinyasa karma sequences. Within those sequence boxes it should be easy to see there are one or more subroutines. The Ashtanga practice that ashtangi's run through every day is just a collection of subroutines.

After their Suryanamaskaras, Ashtangi's move on to a Standing sequence that includes a short 'On your feet' sequence and the three 'Triangle' subroutines. Next up are a couple of 'On one leg' sequences before the Warrior sequence which is another 'Triangle' subroutine.

This is STILL my framework for all my asana practices in the morning. I add a short tadasana sequence at the beginning and I might add or change a subroutine but this is pretty much my warm up, It worked, it kept me safe.

The Ashtanga seated section in Primary begins with vinyasas in Paschimottanasana a Vinyasa Krama 'Seated' subroutine then after a counter pose moves on to , what, five simplified 'Asymmetric' subroutines. Four more simplified 'Seated' subroutines come next and then we're into, I count seven, 'Supine" subroutines'.

The series ends with a simple Inverted subroutine, a headstand, and then a couple of 'Lotus' subroutines before Savasana.

The only things missing are 'Bow' and 'Meditative' subroutines. Some Ashtangi's

who have been practicing for some time add on some of the Ashtanga 2nd series postures which include some cobra and locust postures, (these are from our Bow sequence) and Kapotasana (from Meditative).

Vinyasa Krama is different from Ashtanga, we don't use the jump back as much, we breath more slowly, repeat postures, take more breaths but most significantly perhaps, we're not tied to the same sequence of postures every day. However the Ashtanga series I'm so familiar with has helped me to develop a framework to hang my own Vinyasa Karma practice on.

So here's a suggestion.....

Come up with a basic practice following Ramaswami's guidelines.

Start with some On your feet Tadasana hand/ arm variations.

Pick a Triangle and On one leg subroutine that you like.

Now pick an Asymmetric subroutine then one from Seated to go with your long Paschimottanasana.

Do the same with Bow and Meditative perhaps and then the Shoulderstand preparation postures.

Finish with a couple of vinyasas in Shoulderstand (Supine) and headstand (Inverted) and finally a short Lotus subroutine.

Now practice this for a few weeks until it's so familiar you don't have to think about it. this becomes your framework as Ashtanga has been mine.

The next step is to start switching and changing subroutines. Don't change everything over night, you'll only become lost again just change two or three subroutines at most. Keep doing this over the next couple of weeks keeping the same overall structure of your practice.

JUMP BACK AND THROUGH LIBRARY

<http://youtu.be/xBDPYqrQAg>

VINYASA KRAMA JUMP BACK

JUMP BACK LIBRARY : Vinyasa Krama Jump back



VINYASA KRAMA JUMP THROUGH

JUMP BACK LIBRARY : Vinyasa krama jump through



CROSSED LEG JUMP THROUGH AND BACK

JUMP BACK LIBRARY : Crossed leg jump through and back



HIGH CROSSED LEG JUMP THROUGH

JUMP BACK LIBRARY : High crossed leg jump through



STRAIGHT LEG JUMP THROUGH

JUMP BACK LIBRARY : Straight leg jump through



ONE LEG BENT BACK

JUMP BACK LIBRARY : Tiryaming mukha marichiyasana (one leg bent back)



HALF LOTUS JUMP BACK

JUMP BACK LIBRARY : Half lotus jump back



FULL LOTUS JUMP BACK

JUMP BACK LIBRARY : Full lotus jump back



FULL LOTUS JUMP BACK (REVERSE VIEW).

JUMP BACK LIBRARY : full lotus jump back from behind



FULL LOTUS JUMP THROUGH

JUMP BACK LIBRARY : Full Lotus jump through



MARICHYASANA JUMP BACK

JUMP BACK LIBRARY : Marichiyasana jump back



DANDASANA UTPLUTHI JUMP BACK

JUMP BACK LIBRARY : Dandasana utpluthi jump back



EKA PADA SIRSASANA JUMP BACK AND THROUGH

JUMP BACK LIBRARY : Eka pada sirsasana (leg behind head) Jump back and through



RAMASWAMI'S SUBROUTINE NUMBERING SYSTEM

Ramaswami's subroutine list with page numbers to 'The Complete Book of Vinyasa Yoga'.

Links to my video's of the subroutines can be found here

<http://vinyasakramayoga.blogspot.com/>

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- 124. Kapalabhati p248
- 125. 125 a Pranayama p249
- 126. 125 b Ujaii 1;1;1;1
- 127. 125 c Ujaii 1;1;2;1
- 128. 125 d Ujaii 1;2;2;1

The following Pranayamas are taken from Ramaswami's other book 'Yoga for the three stages of life'.

- 125 e Nadi shadana 1;1;1;1
- 125 f Nadi shadana 1;1;2;1
- 125 g Nadi Shodana 1;2;2;1
- 125 h Ujaii with mantra
- 125 j Nadi Shodana with mantra

125 k Viloma ujaii with mantra

126. The Locks (Bandhas) p250

127. Pratyahara - Sealing the senses p253

VINYASA KRAMA SEQUENCE PRACTICE CARDS

ON YOUR FEET

Vinyasa Krama 'On your feet' sequence practice sheets p1



Samasthit



Parsva bharga



Lifting pelvis



Purva bharga



stretching out of pelvis



Elbow movement



Hands crossed on shoulders



Hands on same shoulders



hands locked behind



Locked at elbows



Prishthanjali



Arms raised back bend

Vinyasa Krama 'On your feet' sequence practice sheet p2



Parsva bhangi left side



Parsva bhangi right side



Parsva Bhangi II



Parsva bhangi vinyasa



Parsva bhangi vinyasa



Parsva bhangi Prishtanjali



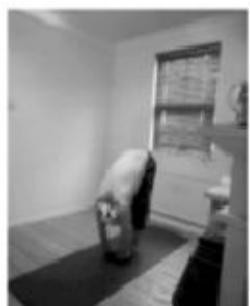
Parsva Bhangi prishtanjali



Ardha Uttanasana



Purna Uttanasana



Purna uttanasana



Niralamba Uttanasana 1



Niralamba uttanasana 2

Vinyasa Krama 'On your feet' sequence practice sheet p3



Niralamba uttanasana 3



Parsva bharga uttanasana



Parsva bharga uttanasana



Kurmasana vinyasa



Tiryang mukha Uttanasana



Tiryang mukha uttanasana



Ardha Utkatasana



Ardha Utkatasana



Ardha Utkatasana



Ardha Utkatasana



Ardha Utkatasana



Utkatasana

Vinyasa Krama 'On your feet' sequence practice sheet p4



Utkatasana



Utkatasana



Utkatasana



Utkatasana



Utkatasana



Kurmasana and Kanchiyasana



Pasasana



Pasasana



return to samasthitி from squat



through utthanasana



Tadasana



Savasana

TRIANGLE SEQUENCE

Vinyasa krama Triangle sequence practice sheets p1



TRIANGLE SEQUENCE

Uttita Trikonasana sthitī

Uttita trikonasana



utthita trikonasana

Parivritta trikonasana

Parivritta trikonasana



Parivritta trikonasana

Uttita parsva konasana

Uttita parsva konasana



Uttita parsva konasana vinyasa

Uttita parsva konasana vinyasa

Uttita parsva konasana vinyasa

Vinyasa Krama Triangle sequence Practice sheets p2



Uttita parsva konasana vinyasa



Uttita parsva konasana vinyasa



Uttita parsva konasana vinyasa



parsva konasana vinyasa



parsva konasana vinyasa



parsva konasana vinyasa



parsva konasana vinyasa



parsva konasana vinyasa



parsva konasana vinyasa



parsva konasana vinyasa



parsva konasana vinyasa



parsva konasana vinyasa

Vinyasa Krama Triangle sequence Practice sheets p3



parsva konasana vinyasa

parsva konasana vinyasa

parsva konasana vinyasa



parsva konasana vinyasa

parsva konasana vinyasa

Virabhadrasana sequence



rotate shoulders in circular motion

lift chest stretch back

knee bent forehead to knee



raise arms and legs

Arms clasped behind

repeaton left side

Vinyasa Krama Triangle sequence Practice sheets p4



bring arms forward rotating at shoulder

forhead to bent knee

squat as low as possible



straighten

forhead to mat

Prasarita padottanasana vinyasas



crown of head to mat

clasp big toes or feet

Prishthanjali



Twist to left and lower

Twist to right and lower

work towards mirallamī samakonasana

ON ONE LEG SEQUENCE

Vinyasa krama "On one leg" sequence practice sheets p1



On one leg sequence



Bhagirathasana



Vrikmasana



Vrikmasana



Vrikmasana bound



Vrityanasana



One leg squat arms out front



Vrikmasana bound



Ardha baddha padmottanasana



bound Vrikmasana squat variation



Standing marichi



bound Standing marichi

Vinyasa krama 'On one leg' sequence practice sheets p2



Forward bending bound Marichi



reverse view



Uttita padangustasana



Uttita hasta padangustasana



Uttita pasvashita



Uttita padangustasana variation



Uttita hasta padangustasana variation



Uttita pasvashita variation



Virabhadrasana sequence



virabhadrasana variation



Virabhadrasana variation



Durvasana

Vinyasa krama "On one leg" sequence practice sheets p3



Skandasana



Durvasana variation



utpluthi



Natarajasana



full natarajasana



return to standing

ASYMMETRIC SEQUENCE

Vinyasa Krama Asymmetric sequence Practice sheets (right side only) p1



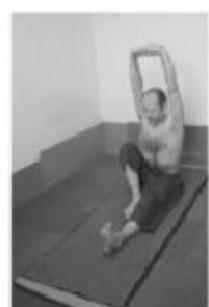
Adho-mukha-Swanasana



Dandasana



Niralamba Dandasana



Marichiyasa Sihiti



marichiyasana



marichiyasana



marichiyasana



marichiyasana



marichiyasana



Ardha matsyendrasana



Ardha padmasana



ardha padmasana

Vinyasa Krama Asymmetric sequence Practice sheets (right side only) p2



Ardha badha padma paschima uttanasana



Vashitasana



Ardha matsyendrasana



Ardha matsyendrasana



Utpluthi



Ardha badha padma



Maha Mudra sthitii



Maha mudra



janusirsasana



Akarna Danurasana



Kraunchasana



Ekapada Sirsasana

Vinyasa Krama Asymmetric sequence Practice sheets (right side only) p3



Skandasana



Chakorasana



Tiryang-mukha-ekapadadasana



with forward bend



with forward bend and twist



Kranchhasana



Counterpose



Utpluthi



Hanumanasana



with forward bend



Ardha padma marichiyasana



with bind and forward bend

Vinyasa Krama Asymmetric sequence Practice sheets (right side only) p4



Tryang-mukha marichiyasana



With bind



with bind and twist



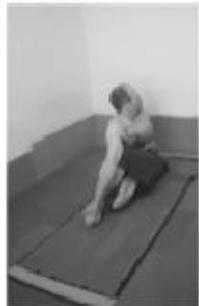
Bhara dwajasana



Mahabandha



Archa matsyendrasana



Purna matsyendrasana

SEATED SEQUENCE

Vinyasa krama seated sequence practice sheets p1



Seated Sequences lead in



Downward dog



Jump through



Samasthitī



Dandasana



Paschimatanasana



Paschimatanasana



Paschimatanasana



Paschimatanasana



Paschimatanasana



Paschimatanasana



Paschimatanasana

Vinyasa krama seated sequence practice sheets p2



Niralamba Paschimottanasana.
Paschimottanasana



Niralamba Paschimottanasana
Paschimottanasana



Purvottanasana



Kurmasana



Aikunchita kurmasana



Purvottanasana



Vasishtasana right side



Vasishthasana left side



Gatushpada peetam



Gatushpada peetam



Gatushpada peetam



Navasana

Vinyasa krama seated sequence practice sheets p3



Purna navasana.



Urdhwa paschimottanasana.



Savasana.



Upavista Konasana sthit



Upavista Konasana



Upavista Konasana



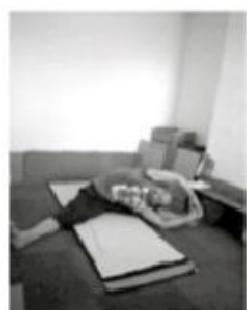
Upavista Konasana



Upavista Konasana



Forward bend to the right side



forward bending twist to the left side



forward bend to right



forward bending twist to right

Vinyasa krama seated sequence practice sheets p4



Badha konasana



Badha konasana



Badha konasana



Mula bandhasana



Padmasana



Bhadrasana



Siddhasana



Gomukhasana



Gomukhasana



Yoganarisimhasana



Dandasana



Savasana

BOW SEQUENCE

Vinyasa krama Bow sequence practice sheets p1



Bow sequence lead in



uttanasana



Utkatasana copy



Chaturanga dandasana



"Lie facedown in asana sthiti"



Makrasana



bend knees in on the exhale



Manduka



Bhujangasana / cobra



Bhujangasana



Bhujangasana



Locust pose subroutine

Vinyasa krama Bow sequence practice sheets p2



Locust pose subroutine



Locust pose subroutine



Locust pose subroutine



Locust pose subroutine



Locust pose subroutine



Locust pose subroutine



Locust pose subroutine



Viparita salabhasana



Ganda Bherundasana after yogi Bherunda



Dhanurasana, Bow pose subroutine



Dhanurasana, Bow pose subroutine



Dhanurasana, Bow pose subroutine

Vinyasa krama Bow sequence practice sheets p3



Dhanurasana, Bow pose subroutine



Dhanurasana, Bow pose



Dhanurasana, Bow pose



Lying on left side



Return sequence, upward facing dog



Downward facing dog



Utkatasana



Uttanasana as counter pose to backbends



Tadasana



Samsasthiti

MEDITATIVE SEQUENCE

Vinyasa krama meditative sequence practice sheets p1



Samasthiti

Uttanasana

Utkatasana

'lean forward slightly on to knees'



Vajrasana

raise arms above head , palms up

hasta vinyasa

foreward bending variations in vajrasana



arms outstretched

hands behind buttocks

'...dig hands a little into your lower abdomen'

'...place forehead on the floor'



hands in Prishthanāi (prayer)

extend chest and return to vajrasana

Counterposes

raising chest



Ustrasana subroutine

Ushtrasana

advanced variation

Kapotasana

Vinyasa krama meditative sequence practice sheets p2



Camel walk sequence

step forward

head to knee

place hands on heels and raise chest



eka pada kapotasana

return to vajrasana

Virasana vinyasa

sit between feet



virasana hasta vinyasana

place forehead and arms on floor

Prayankasana

cross legs at ankles



Simhasana in virasana

utpluthi

Chaturanga dandasana

Upward facing dog



downward facing dog

Utkatasana

Uttanasana

samasthitි

SUPINE SEQUENCE

Vinyasa Krama Supine sequence practice sheet p1



Supine simple lead sequence

ladasana-samasthitī

Uttanasana

Ulkatasana



Dandasana

Supta asana

Tatakamura

Jataraparivritti



jataraparivritti

Apansana Subroutine

Apansana Subroutine

Apansana Subroutine



Apansana Subroutine

Apansana Subroutine

Apansana Subroutine

Apansana Subroutine



Apansana Subroutine

Apansana Subroutine

Apansana Subroutine

Apansana Subroutine

Vinyasa Krama Supine sequence practice sheet p2



Vinyasa Krama Supine sequence practice sheet p3



Urdhwa Dhanur-asana or ardha chakrasana

chakrasana

Leg and arm lift subroutine

Leg and arm lift subroutine



Leg and arm lift subroutine

Leg and arm lift subroutine

urdhwa-prasarita-pada-hastasana

Leg and arm lift subroutine



Leg and arm lift subroutine

Urdhwa konasana vinyasa

Supta dakshina-parsva-pedangushtasana

Supta ardha-paiyata-dakshina-pasanam



Dakshina Bhairava asana

Supta vama-parsva-pedangushtasana

Supta ardha-paiyata-vama-pasanam

Vama Bhairava asana



Yoginidrasana

Left leg to right palm

right leg to left palm

Shoulderstand lead in

Vinyasa Krama Supine sequence practice sheet p4



Tadasana-samsthiti

Uttanasana

Utkatasana

Chaturanga dandasana



Urdhwa mukha swamasana

Adho mukha swanasana

tuck in chin lower shoulders to mat

Sarvangasana vinyasas



Sarvangasana vinyasas

Sarvangasana vinyasas

Sarvangasana vinyasas

Sarvangasana vinyasas



Ekapada halasana

Ekapada halasana

Supta ardha badha halasana

Supta ardha badha halasana



Halasana

halasana: variation

Urdhwa-mukha
paschimottanasana

Urdhwa konasana

Vinyasa Krama Supine sequence practice sheet p5



Urdhwa padmasana

Urdhwa padmasana

Akunchita urdhwa padmasana

Pindasana



Urdhwa padmasana vinyasa

Urdhwa padmasana vinyasa

Pratkiṇī

Niralamba Sarvāṅgasana



Niralamba Sarvāṅgasana vinyasa

Niralamba Sarvāṅgasana vinyasa

Niralamba Sarvāṅgasana vinyasa

Niralamba Sarvāṅgasana vinyasa



Halasana

uttana mayurasana

uttana mayurasana vinyasa

uttana mayurasana vinyasa



uttana mayurasana vinyasa

uttana mayurasana vinyasa

Sarvangasana mandala

Sarvangasana mandala

Vinyasa Krama: Supine sequence practice sheet p6



Sarvangasana mandala

Sarvangasana mandala

Sarvangasana mandala

Sarvangasana mandala



Sarvangasana mandala

Sarvangasana mandala

Niralamba sarvangasana

Kamapidasana



halsana viryasa

halasana variation

Savasana

INVERTED SEQUENCE

Vinyasa Krama Inverted sequence Practice sheets p1



'From vajrasana, slowly bend forward'



...draw your legs close to body



....straighten waist keeping knees your
knees bent



...straighten your knees so your body is
straight!



Akunchanasana Akunchanasana vinyasa



Akunchanasana vinyasa



Akunchanasana vinyasa



Ardha padma Akunchanasana



Ardha padma Akunchanasana



Lowered right toes to mat



lower left toes to mat



Viparita garundasana

Vinyasa Krama Inverted sequence Practice sheets p2



Viparita garundasana



Urdhwa konasana



Urdhwa konasana



Urdhwa konasana



Urdhwa baddha konasana



Urdhwa padmasana



Urdhwa padmasana



Urdhwa padmasana



Akunchita urdhwa padmasana



Urdhwa dandasana



practriya



viparita dandasana

Vinyasa Krama Inverted sequence Practice sheets p3



Handstand with straight knee approach



...straighten your knees as you inhale



...slowly raise your legs straight



Sirsasana



Niralamba sirsasana



Arms bent in front of face



arms spread in front



Mukta hasana sirsasana



slowly lower your legs down



bring toes to the mat



lower knees to mat and rest

LOTUS SEQUENCE

Vinyasa Krama lotus sequence practice sheet p1



Ardha badha padmasana Vinyasas

ardha padmasana

ardha-padmasana paschimatanasana



Ardha badha padmasana
paschimatanasana

Kashyapasana

ardha-badha padmasana variation



ardha-padmasana variation

Prathikriya

ardha-padmasana



ardha-padmasana paschimatanasana

Ardha badha padmasana
paschimatanasana

Kashyapasana

Vinyasa krama lotus sequence practice sheet p2



ardha-badha padmasana variation

ardha-padmasana variation

Prathikriya



Padmasana

Parvatasana

Bhadrasana



Laghu yoga mudra

Utpluthi

Vama-parsva-laghu yoga mudra



dakshina-parsva-laghu yoga mudra

Badha padmasana

Yoga mudra

Vinyasa krama lotus sequence practice sheet p3



vanya yoga mudra

dakshina yoga mudra

Urdhwa mukha padmasana



supta padmasana

Matsyasana

Urdhwa padmasana



Pindasana

Uddhwa pindasana

Urdhwa pindasana



Pratikriya

akunchita urdhwa padmasana variations

padma bhujangasana / ious cobra pose

Vinyasa Krama lotus sequence practice sheet p4



twist to left side in lotus



twist to right side in lotus



Lolasana



Kukkutasana



garbha pindasana



Purna garbha pindasana



Uttana kurmasana



Supta padmasana



urdhwa kukkutasana



Padma mayurasana



urdhwa padmasana



urdhwa padmasana



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Vinyasa krama lotus sequence practice sheet p5



urdhwa padmasana



urdhwa padmasana



urdhwa padmasana



urdhwa padmasana



Viparita yog mudra



lotus in handstand



return sequence downward facing dog



Utkatasana



Uttanasana



tadasana