

Parvatasana



Mountain Pose or Downward Facing Dog is one of the main postures in Surya Namaskar. Sometimes it can be a little of a challenge as the hamstrings will not allow the heels to touch the ground...so please do keep the knees soft as this will help you lengthen in the spine rather than round it...therefore allowing you to get the most of the stretch and tone in the back muscles. Some of us have a tight upper body, so to reduce pressure on the shoulders, focus on drawing the chest towards the thighs.

Instructions

1. From all fours position, tuck the toes under, take the bottom to the heels, hands shoulder width apart, middle finger pointing forward.
2. Spread the fingers and press through the hands and through the feet simultaneously so the knees lift an inch off the floor.
3. Using the power of the legs lift the tailbone towards the ceiling, knees soft unless you know the heels will reach the floor easily, drawing the chest towards the thighs; softening through the elbows and shoulders.
4. Check the feet are hip width apart with the toes facing forward. Release the heels onto the floor, only if you can, without the spine rounding, or have a blanket or block for the heels to rest on.
5. Let the head and neck hang freely from the shoulders, ears between upper arms. Look towards the belly button.
6. Feel the length of the spine and the space along the ribs. Let the shoulders be free. Feel into the legs and abdomen.
7. Hold for as long as is comfortable...steady natural rhythmic breathing.
8. To release: bring the knees to the mat and release into child pose, balasana, hands by the feet or use them to rest the forehead on.

Benefits + Contraindications

Benefits: strengthens the nerves and muscles in the arms and legs; tones the spinal nerves; stimulates circulation in the upper spine;

Contraindications: Recent or chronic injury to the back, hips, wrists, arms or shoulders, unmediated high blood pressure.

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Modifications: a) Use blocks under the feet or heels against a wall. b) Place a folded towel under the wrists. c) forearms on the floor version. d) do from standing with hands on a flat surface like a kitchen worktop.

A useful article for more detail and adjustments, although there are lots of adverts :

<https://breakingmuscle.com/fitness/deconstructing-downward-dog-make-the-most-of-a-fundamental-pose>

Image from: <https://shop.balticmill.com/products/downward-facing-dog-greeting-card>