

Date:
November 10th, 2006

Level:
Intermediate

Focus:
Hip openers

Notes:
Continuing with the idea from the last practice of working with tight or over-stretched hamstrings, this practice features hip-openers—to free the buttocks and lower back—with

simple, bent-leg forward extensions to deepen the fold in the hips. If you do not yet have full Lotus available to you, substitute Half Lotus or Comfortable Pose with the legs bound together by a belt.

	Pose	Props	Set-Up	Notes
opening poses (balancing)	Virasana Hero Pose	Blankets/ Blocks	Sit up on support if the sitting bones do not reach the floor.	2-3 min. Calm and center the mind.
	Adho Mukha Sukhasana Downward Facing Comfortable Pose	Blankets/ Blocks	Sit up on support for greater ease.	30 sec. Soften thighs, hips, lower abdomen. Keep sitting bones level.
	Adho Mukha Shvanasana Downward Facing Dog Pose	Belt Block	Belt forearms below elbow for support. Block between thighs.	30-60 sec. Activate triceps, soften shoulders. Activate quads and inner thighs, draw block back. Lengthen trunk.
Inversions (activating)	Adho Mukha Vrksasana Hand Stand	Wall		30-90 sec. Ground index fingers and thumbs. Activate triceps, soften shoulders. Activate quads, reach legs up. Lengthen trunk. Broaden back towards wall.
	Pincha Mayurasana Forearm Stand	Block Belt Wall	Place block between fingers as a spacer and belt upper arms shoulder width.	30-90 sec Soften, broaden, lift shoulders. Activate triceps, ground index finger and thumb. Activate quads, reach legs up.
	Salamba Shirshasana I Head Stand I	Blankets		3-10 min. Soften, broaden, lift shoulders. Activate triceps, ground elbows. Activate quads, reach legs up. Soften abdomen, lengthen waist.
	Supta Virasana Reclined Hero Pose	Blankets/ Blocks Belt	Belt legs together. Support trunk as necessary.	3-5 min. (To counter <i>Shirshasana</i> .) Soften thighs and buttocks, roll tailbone to knees. Soften abdomen and broaden back ribs.
forward extensions (settling)	Gomukhasana Cow Face Pose		Full version of pose with shins together.	30-60 sec. Soften hips, groin and lower abdomen.
	Gomukhasana Cow Face Pose	Bolster/ Blankets	Sit up on support if necessary to keep sitting bones even.	30-60 sec. Soften hips, groin and lower abdomen.
	Child's Pose	Belt Blankets	Slip belt over thighs and under ankles so thighs are pulled down. Support head and buttocks as necessary.	1-2 min. Soften hips, groin and lower abdomen.
	Adho Mukha Vajrasana Downward Facing Thunderbolt Pose	Belt Blankets	Slip belt over thighs and under ankles so thighs are pulled down. Support head and buttocks as necessary.	1-2 min. Soften hips, groin and lower abdomen.
	Adho Mukha Virasana Downward Facing Hero Pose	Belt Blankets	Slip belt over thighs and under ankles so thighs are pulled down. Support head and buttocks as necessary.	1-2 min. Soften hips, groin and lower abdomen.
	Adho Mukha Sukhasana Downward Facing Comfortable Pose	Blankets/ Blocks	Sit up on support for greater ease.	30 sec. Soften thighs, hips, lower abdomen. Keep sitting bones level.

	Pose	Props	Set-Up	Notes
fwd xtensions (settling)	<i>Adho Mukha Ardha Padmasana</i> Downward Facing Half Lotus Pose	Block/Blanket	Support head.	30-60 sec. Soften hips, groin and lower abdomen.
	<i>Adho Mukha Padmasana</i> Downward Facing Lotus Pose	Blankets	Support both the head and the raised knee.	30-60 sec. Soften hips, groin and lower abdomen.
inversions (settling)	<i>Setu Bandha</i> Bridge Pose	Block(s)	Place blocks under sacrum so that pelvis feels lifted rather than dropped.	3-5 min. Soften abdomen, shoulders. Activate quads, triceps. Lengthen waist.
	<i>Salamba Sarvangasana I</i> Shoulder Stand I	3 blankets Belt	Stack blankets up and lie with shoulders on, neck off. Belt elbows shoulder width.	3-10 min. Soften, broaden, ground shoulders. Lengthen triceps, ground elbows. Activate quads, reach legs up. Soften abdomen, lengthen waist.
	<i>Karnapidasana</i> Ear Pressure Pose	3 blankets Belt	Bend knees and press them into sides of head.	30 sec. Soften hips, groin, lower abdomen. Roll tailbone to heels, soften and broaden entire back.
	<i>Parshva Karnapidasana</i> Side Ear Pressure Pose	3 blankets Belt	Walk legs to one side, bend knees and press them into side of head.	30 sec. Soften hips, groin, lower abdomen. Roll tailbone to heels, soften and broaden entire back.
	<i>Pindasana in Sarvangasana</i> Embryo Pose Shoulder Stand	3 blankets Belt	Cross legs into <i>Padmasana</i> and pull knees into chest.	30 sec. Soften hips, groin, lower abdomen. Roll tailbone to heels, soften and broaden entire back.
	<i>Parshva Pindasana in Sarvangasana</i> Side Embryo Pose Shoulder Stand	3 blankets Belt	Still in <i>Padmasana</i> , pick legs up, turn trunk to one side and bring knee into side of head.	30 sec. Soften hips, groin, lower abdomen. Roll tailbone to heels. Turn waist and level hips.
seated poses (settling)	<i>Vajrasana</i> Thunderbolt Pose	Blanket	Roll blanket up and wedge firmly behind knees.	30-60 sec. Soften knees, calves and hamstrings.
	<i>Dandasana</i> Staff Pose	Blanket	Roll blanket up and place it under thighs just above knees.	30-60 sec. Press thighs firmly down into blanket roll. Soften groin, hips and lower abdomen
restorative (settling)	<i>Supta Baddha Konasana</i> Reclined Bound Pose	Bolster Belt Blocks/ Blankets	Belt legs, recline over bolster and support head and thighs.	3-5 min. Soften groins, lower thighs, abdomen and chest.
	<i>Shavasana</i> Corpse Pose	Bolster Blanket	Bolster under knees. Blanket under head.	5-10 min.

Please note that not all exercises presented here are suitable for everyone, and this or any exercise program may result in injury. Please be sure to consult with your physician before beginning this, or any, exercise program. While the author has made every effort to ensure that the exercises herein are accurate and safe, the author is not responsible for adverse effects or consequences sustained by any person using this information.

Practice the poses appropriate to your level. Only practice poses you have been taught in class and about which you feel confident. Add or omit poses according to the time available.



Qualities of the Poses

activating	These poses energize the system.
balancing	These poses calm the system when agitated and stimulate the system when sluggish.
settling	These poses calm the system