

# Parsvottanasana

(Side or flank of chest extension)

## Benefits:

Removes stiffness from the legs and hips

Creates elasticity in the spine

Increases mobility in the wrists

Corrects round shoulders

Opens chest and improves breathing capacity.

## Contra-indications/Cautions:

Acute shoulder injuries

Diseases affecting balance

The hand position in this posture makes it appear very unusual – and it is the hand position that makes this forward bend challenging. It creates the added dimension of managing your balance while coming forward into what is an invigorating hamstring stretch. This posture also extends the sides of the chest/torso, creating space for the lungs to function. Continued practice creates improved breathing capacity and enhanced stamina/endurance. Runners love this stretch for its benefits! The hamstrings are lengthened and spine is extended. The abdominal organs are squeezed and cleansed.

1. Stand in tadasana (mountain pose). Bring your hands behind your back and, turning the fingers in towards the back and up, bring the palms of the hands together (see photo inset). If you are unable to do this, fold your arms behind you with your hands as close as possible to your elbows.
2. Inhale and jump or step your feet one leg's length apart. Turn your torso to the right, bringing the left hip square into the room, at the same time turning your left foot in about 60 degrees, while turning your right foot out 90 degrees.
3. Work hard to bring the left hip parallel with the right. Try to achieve this by creating a scissor action with the legs.



4. Press your feet firmly into the floor. Roll your thighs in and firm your thigh muscles (quadriceps). Look up and back. Try to look behind yourself. Focus on your balance. Now, squeeze your elbows towards each other. This action opens the chest.
5. Inhale. On the exhalation, bend at the hips, leading with your breastbone and bend forward into the room, forming a right angle with your torso. Look up to the ceiling, extending the spine. Hold this position for 5-10 seconds and on an exhalation continue into the forward bend, all the way down to your extended leg.
6. Release the neck and let the head hang down. If your head reaches your leg, rest your forehead on your shin. If it doesn't, that's okay.
7. Continue rolling the thighs in, and keep the quadriceps firm. Bring the left hip square with the right and concentrate on sending the right buttock back. (This dual action is what helps to keep the pelvis square in the room). Keep the legs straight.
8. Hold the posture for five complete breathes then inhale and gracefully return to your upright position.
9. Repeat, bending to opposite side.

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