



## Vasisthasana – The one arm, one leg balance posture

This week's challenging posture, Vasisthasana, builds upper body strength and requires mental focus and concentration. If you have weak wrists and arms you may find this posture particularly challenging. Warm up and work towards building strength in your arms and wrists by practicing Adho Mukha Svanasana, the downward facing dog posture, before you attempt this pose.

This posture is named for, and dedicated to the sage Vasistha. In his seminal work, "Light on Yoga," B.K.S. Iyengar tells us that Vasistha was the family priest of a solar race of Kings and the author of several Vedic hymns. He was representative of brahmanic power and dignity, and was one of seven sages identified with the stars that comprise the "big dipper" in the constellation of Ursa Major, the great bear.

We are going to practice this posture with our feet against a wall/baseboard. This will make it easier for you to find the action required in legs.

### Benefits:

Strengthens the wrists and arms.

Tones the lower spine

Concentrates the mind

### Caution:

If you have a recent injury or a pre-existing medical condition, please consult with your physician before you begin.

1. Begin in Adho Mukha Svanasana, the downward facing dog posture, with your heels pressed into a baseboard. Press your hands firmly into the floor (especially the thumb side of the hand) and extend your arms, lifting the shoulders up and back. Continue pressing your heels down into the baseboard - pull your shins back, firm your thigh muscles and lift your buttocks up and back as if you were trying to sit on the ceiling.
2. Move your left hand forward six inches and, turning you whole body ninety degrees to the right, place your left foot against the baseboard (in line with your left hand). Stack your right foot on top of your left foot. Place your right arm against your right side. At this point, your hand and arm should be lined up with your shoulder.
3. Flex your feet. Keeping your big toes and heels together, extend your legs, pressing through the inner heel/arch. Firm your thigh muscles and push your heels into the baseboard. Align your body so that a straight line can be drawn from the crown of your head to your heels. The typical misalignment occurs by raising the hips too high or not high enough. Keep the tailbone tucked and the pelvic bones in alignment with the rest of your body, as we practice in Tadasana.
4. Hold the posture for fifteen seconds. Breathe evenly. Now as if you were slowly playing a movie in reverse return to Adho Mukha Svanasana. Repeat the posture by bringing the right hand forward and turning to the left.
5. As you gain strength in the posture try holding your foot with your first two fingers hooked around your big toe. Raise and extend your leg, turn your head and look up at the ceiling. When you are able to do this, you can practice without the support of the wall.baseboard.

copyright 2002-2008, Tony Rivers