



Viparita Dandasana – The Inverted Stick Posture

This week we continue with our series of supported restorative postures. Last week we were in Supta Baddha Konasana – the lying bound angle posture. This week we are placing our bodies in a backbend posture using the support of a chair. The posture is called Viparita Dandasana. Viparita means inverted and Danda refers to a stick, staff or rod.

This posture extends the front of the body and spine. The hip flexor muscles are also extended and the chest is opened. Space is created in the visceral cavities of the body. The organs in the chest, abdomen and pelvis are tone and revitalized.

This posture also has a profound psychological effect. The central nervous system is toned and the senses are heightened. Awareness of the back of the body is increased. You will notice an improvement in both your sitting and standing posture. You will feel good about yourself.

Benefits:

Extends front of body and spine

Tones internal organs

Revitalizes central nervous system

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

1. Place a chair about 2-3 feet from a wall with the back of the chair facing the wall. I recommend using a steel folding chair with no padding. You can obtain one from an office supply company. Place a tightly rolled yoga mat or a folded blanket on the front edge of the chair.

2. Sit on the chair facing the wall with both of your legs through the back of the chair. Bring your pelvis forward to the back edge of the chair. Hold the top of the chair with both hands and slowly lie back, placing the lower half of your shoulder blades on the rolled mat/blanket.
3. Continue holding the top of the chair. Place your feet as flat as possible against the baseboard and slowly push yourself away from the wall until you are able to straighten your legs with your heels pressed against the baseboard. Bring your big toes and heels together and flex your feet. Firm your thigh muscles (quadriceps) and roll your inner thighs towards the floor. Extend your legs, pushing your heels hard against the baseboard.
4. Allow your head to hang freely from your neck. Take your arms over your head and with your palms facing the ceiling reach into the room behind you. Try interlocking your thumbs. This will help you to achieve more extension in the arms and openness in the chest. If this is painful place your arms out to the side with your palms facing up.
5. Keep your legs active, and breathe slowly deeply and evenly. Hold the posture for 1-3 minutes.
6. Come out of the posture by returning your hands to the top of the chair. Bend your knees and pushing your heels firmly into the floor, take a full complete inhalation and on the exhalation slowly pull yourself up.
7. Sit up straight and pay attention to how you feel. Notice the effect of this work on your spine and breathing. As you become more practiced you can stay in the posture for longer periods of time.

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