

Rivers on Yoga

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Halasana – The Plough Posture

Hala means plough. This posture is named for its shape, which resembles the ox drawn plough still commonly used in India and elsewhere in the world.

Halasana has the same benefits as the shoulder-stand. It is believed to be particularly beneficial to those who have a tendency to high blood pressure. The abdominal organs are toned and bloating caused by gas is relieved. The muscles in the arms, hands and shoulders are also toned.

Benefits:

Restores physical and mental equilibrium

Balances blood pressure

Dispels abdominal gas

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

1. Be in Salamba Sarvangasana – the shoulder-stand. In shoulder stand we are working to align the body in a very particular way. When correctly aligned in shoulder-stand, the shoulders, hips, knees and ankles are stacked in a straight line perpendicular to the floor. The elbows are pressed down into the floor and with the feet flexed the legs are extended.
2. Keeping your legs straight and with your pelvic bones directly over your shoulders slowly lower your feet to the floor behind you. If you are unable to reach the floor, place your feet on a chair or stool. Keep your toes and heels together with your feet flexed.
3. Interlace your fingers and extend your arms down and along the floor behind you. Press the heels of your hand together. Firm your thigh muscles, and roll your inner thighs towards the ceiling. Feel your legs extending. Feel the spaces behind your knees growing



Pictured above is the shoulder stand series, a set of variations for those willing to expand their reach.

larger and open. Lift your tail-bone towards the ceiling. Feel your torso and spine extending. Hold the posture for one minute. Breathe slowly and evenly.

4. Slowly walk both of feet over to the left. Do not move your shoulders. Keep your toes and heels together. You are now in Parsva Halasana. Hold the posture for one minute, and then return to Halasana. Repeat Parsva Halasana to the right, and hold for another full minute. Are your toes and heels still together? Return to Halasana.
5. Changing nothing else in posture take your arms over your head and with the palms of your hands facing the ceiling extend your arms along the floor. This is a further variation on Halasana. Hold the posture for one full minute. Keeping your arms and your legs extended, slowly lower your feet to the ground.