



Plank Pose

Step 1

Start in Adho Mukha Svanasana. Then inhale and draw your torso forward until the arms are perpendicular to the floor and the shoulders directly over the wrists, torso parallel to the floor.

Step 2

Press your outer arms inward and firm the bases of your index fingers into the floor. Firm your shoulder blades against your back, then spread them away from the spine. Also spread your collarbones away from the sternum.

Step 3

Press your front thighs up toward the ceiling, but resist your tailbone toward the floor as you lengthen it toward the heels. Lift the base of the skull away from the back of the neck and look straight down at the floor, keeping the throat and eyes soft.

Step 4

Plank Pose is one of the positions in the traditional Sun Salutation sequence. You can also perform this pose by itself and stay anywhere from 30 seconds to 1 minute.

Contra indications and Cautions

Carpal tunnel syndrome

Modifications and Props

Do Adho Mukha Svanasana with your index fingers and thumbs pressed against a wall. Inhale the torso forward, as above, and press the crown of your head against the wall. Use the pressure of the head on the wall to learn about the release of the shoulder blades down the back.

Deepen the Pose

Open the space between the shoulder blades. As you press the outer arms inward, push the inner borders of the shoulder blades into this resistance. Make sure you don't narrow across the collar bones to do this. This is a useful action to learn for poses like Bakasana and Sirsasana.

Preparatory Poses

Adho Mukha Svanasana

Chaturanga Dandasana

Follow-up Poses

Adho Mukha Svanasana

Bakasana

Chaturanga Dandasana

Beginner's Tip

To help strengthen the arms in this pose, loop and secure a strap around your upper arms, just above the elbows. Push the inner arms out against this strap. Release the outer arms from the shoulders to the floor, and lift the inner arms from the bases of the index fingers to the shoulders.

Benefits

Strengthens the arms, wrists, and spine

Tones the abdomen

Partnering

A partner can help you learn about the lift of the top thighs in this pose. While in the position, have your partner loop a strap around the topmost thighs, just where they join the pelvis, and lift up. Press your tailbone down, against this lift, and lengthen along your back thighs through your heels.

Variations

Just as Adho Mukha Svanasana has a one-leg-lifted variation, so does Plank Pose. After coming into the position, inhale and lift one leg parallel to the floor. Press strongly

through the raised heel and lengthen through the crown of your head, keeping the tailbone pressed towards the pubis. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds, exhale the foot to the floor, then repeat with the left leg for the same length of time.

References - Yoga Journal Asanas