

More Standing Asanas

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The caption of the previous article appeared by typographical mistake as "On Four Feet For Asanas" instead of "On Your Feet For Asanas." However, the earlier title will be more appropriate to the present write up, as the first posture we take up is really on "Four legs" or Chaturangadandasana.

CHATURANGADANDA SANAM :

Chatur = Four; Anga = limbs; Danda = Stick

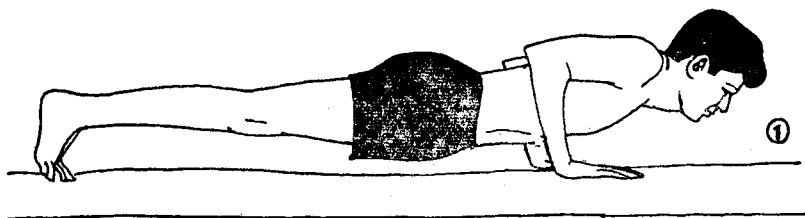
The 'four legged stick pose' is an important transition posture. It consists of four steps or vinyasas. First

stand in Tadasana, with arms overhead. Exhaling, proceed to do Ardha Uttanasana and Uttanasana in that order, keep the palms beside the feet, as mentioned in the June issue. Then pressing the palms in-hale, raise the head, and exhaling proceed to do Utkatasana, but without raising the arms. Do a few inhalation and exhalation in the posture.

Thereafter, holding the breath after exhalation, press the palms slightly, lift the feet off the ground, jump back and land on the tip of the big toes of your feet, dropping the body horizontally like a stick, so that the body rests about 4" above the ground and parallel to it. In this posi-

tion only the palms and the big toes rest on the ground and the entire body is above it. (Refer sketch 1). It is said that the body should be truly horizontal. You may breathe normally in this posture and stay between one to six breaths. In the initial stages, the hands and shoulders are likely to tremble, but in due course one may overcome the deficiency.

For a number of people, it may not be possible to jump back as mentioned, out of fear of falling down on the face, or sheer weakness of the limbs. It is all the more so with obese persons, some of which group may have dif-



iculty in preventing the belly touching the ground and yet keep the back straight. For the beginners, therefore, rather than jumping back, it may be better to proceed from Utkatasana step by step. First just raise both the heels, and then push one leg back and then the other. This is a preparatory posture for strengthening the forearms and shoulders and improve their tone.

coming out?

**URDHVAMUKHA
SWANASANAM**

Urdhuvamukha — Upward
Face
Swanasana — Dog posture.

This asana gets the name as it resembles a dog stretching up on its forelegs. Assume first Chaturangandasana as mentioned earlier. Then stretch the ankles and rest on the upper side of the toes. Then inhaling, press the palms and stretch the upper body and raise it up, but keeping the legs and thighs parallel to the ground. This can be achieved the stretching the feet, legs, knees and thi-

ghs and pushing the pelvis forward so that the navel is between the hands. The recommended Drishti (gazing) is the tip of the nose. Stay in this posture for a few breaths upto 6 breaths. Refer to sketch (2). This helps to correct the postural defect of desk working people who tend to crouch. Then exhaling one may return to Chaturangadandasana.

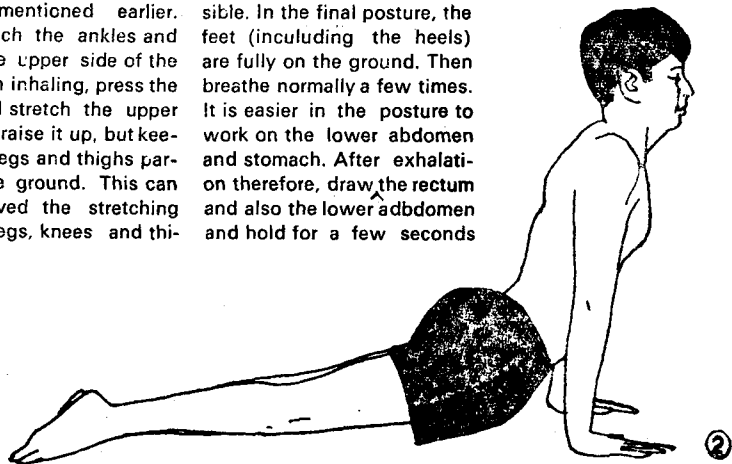
**ADHOMUKHA
SWANASANAM**

Adhomukha — downward
face
Swanasanam — dog pose

The first vinyasas are as in Urdhvamukhaswanasanam. Then pressing the palms and exhaling, push, the hip back and up, as far as possible. In the final posture, the feet (including the heels) are fully on the ground. Then breathe normally a few times. It is easier in the posture to work on the lower abdomen and stomach. After exhalation therefore, draw the rectum and also the lower abdomen and hold for a few seconds

(upto 5 seconds). This may be repeated after every exhalation. Also stretch the back of the neck and lock the chin against breastbone (Jalandharabandha). One may stay in the posture for up to 6 breaths in the beginning. This is a very good posture to help relieve flatulence, indigestion and other minor digestive disorders. The two swanasanas act as counterposes to each other.

From Adhomukha swanasana, one should return to Tadasana by retracing the steps. First from Adhomukhaswanasana, pressing the palms, after exhalation hold the breath and by slightly flexing the knees, jump forward (the arms still on the ground please) and land, so



that the feet are between the palms. This will be Utkatasana. Do a few normal breaths and then bend the head and keeping the forehead on the knees, inhale, press the palms and feet and raise the hip up to Uttanasana. Then after a couple of breaths, inhale raise arms and straighten up to Tadasana sthithi.

For those who are unable to come to Utkatasanam from Adhomukhaswanasanam by jumping, the easier method of returning by bringing in one foot after the other may be adopted. And again, if it is not possible to go to Uttanasana from Utkatasanam, (these are explained in the June issue) one may raise the arms in Utkatasana (Refer sketch 2 June Issue) and then return to Tadasana sthithi.

One may have observed

dogs doing these two exercises beautifully and seem to really enjoy the stretching. One should relax with the help of long, deliberate exhalation (Rechaka) and do these postures.

Actually the following extended group of asanas in the order given forms the well known Suryanamaskaram.

1. Samasthithi or Tadasana
2. Ardha Uttanasanam
3. Uttanasanam
4. Utkatasanam
5. Chaturangadandasanam ?
6. Urdhvamukhaswanasanam
7. Adho Mukha svanasanam
8. Utkatasanam
9. Uttanasanam
10. Samasthithi.

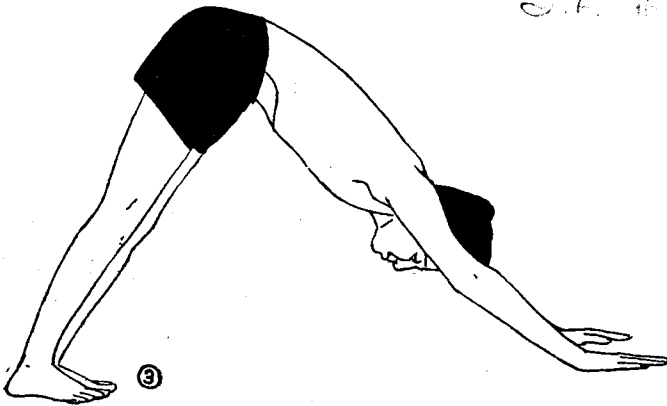
One may repeat the whole group 3 to 6 times, with the correct breathing mentioned and staying in each step for a few breaths.

PARSVOTTANASANAM

Parsva — side
Uttana — stretching

Start with Tadasana, as usual. Inhale and holding the breath, jump and spread the legs by about $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet, landing gently on the feet. Then hold the left wrist by the right foot outward by about 60° , and also the upper body. Breathe normally a couple of times and then exhaling, press the feet and keeping the knees straight, stretch the back and also the neck and bend forward, until the forehead touches the right knee.

Handwritten note: D.A. 10/1/57



Stay in the posture for a few breaths, and inhaling raise and get back to the standing position. This is Vamaparsvathnasanam (Stretching the left side posture.) The same movement should be repeated on the right side (Dakshina Parsva).

In this posture, the hips and the pelvic joints are twisted or rotated. The knees and ankles experience an angular stretching and thus this posture helps in improving the play of these joints. It can be practised by both women and men. There are a number of Hastha vinyasas. One would require placing both the palms on the sides of the body between the feet. One can also do it by keeping the arms stretched to the sides or with keeping the palms closed, behind the back, as illustrated in the June issue.

Finally after exhalation, hold the breath, jump back and gently return to Tadasana sthithi.

VIRABHADRASANAM

It is named after Virabhadraswami.

This is an extension (vinyasa) of Parsvottanasanam, described earlier. Start with Tadasana. Inhale and holding the breath, jump and spread the legs by about 3½

feet. Stay for a few breaths. Inhale, raise the arm overhead and interlock fingers. Exhale, turn the right foot outward. Stretch the left leg, keeping the left knee straight, and bend the right knee, pushing it forward and lowering the body consequently. Now, inhale deeply and stretch the upper body, dropping the head back and looking up. This is Virabhadrasana. Do a few breaths in this posture. Refer to sketch (4).

Inhale, straighten the knee and turn to centre position. Repeat the posture on the left side.

It could be observed that this posture requires further stretching of the thighs and calf muscles and the turn in the hip joint is further accentuated. Athletes and sportsmen who require to be agile may benefit by this group of asanas. It is not that yoga encourages sports — on the contrary it is the contention that games, as they waste energy, are a hindrance to the realization of higher benefit of Yoga. Sports are Angabhangasadhanas (injures

one or other part of the body) whereas yoga is sarvangasadhana or beneficial to all parts of the body. But then, those who do care for sports only may still benefit from these postures.

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