

# Some Simple Balancing Asanas

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Apart from the many group of Asanas referred to, some requiring balancing, merit attention. These help to develop a sense of balance, correct disproportions and give the Abhyasi a tremendous sense of self-confidence. Children love to do many of them. Some of them resemble gymnastic movements, but in yoga as is always, the movements are done with corresponding breathing pattern.

## BALANCING ARTS

Among the balancing postures there are those that require balancing on one foot, on one palm and one palm and one foot or on both the palms. Balancing on the palms are usually called utpluti and can be tried in almost all the sitting postures. These require strength of the arms (Sthairya) and also suppleness of the limbs and joints (angalayhara)

Starting with Tadasana, many balancing postures are

possible depending upon the position of one leg, the other foot being on the ground.

Standing in Tadasanam, exhale and stretch right leg forward, and hold the big toe with the fingers of the right hand. Keep the left hand on the hip. Keep both the knees stretched and maintain balance for a few breaths. Now stretch the other arm and hold the right foot. Exhale and raise it still further.

The final position requires, stretching the spine and bending forward on exhalation, so as to keep the forehead, nose or the chin on the right knee. After some practice, one may stay in the posture for a few breaths, maintaining of course the balance.

It is possible that one loses balance in the initial stages, while raising the leg. In the initial stages, one may

bend the knee, hold the big toe with the fingers and keeping the other hand on the hip, stretch the knee. Alternately one may keep the leg stretched and keep the heel on a raised platform or table and then raise the leg off the table.

## STRENGTH TO HIPS

This gives strength to the hips and the leg muscles and gives one steadiness and poise. This posture is known as Uthlithapadaangushtasana.

There is yet another interesting way of attaining this posture which requires more supple joints and a better sense of balance. From Tadasana, proceed to do Utkatasana. Staying in that posture, exhale, keep the left hand on the hip and stretch the right leg, and hold the big toe with the fingers of the right hand. Now inhale, rise up, keeping the right leg stretched without bending the right knee.

## ARDHA-BADDHA-PADMA- UTHAANAASANA'M

Start from Tadaasanam, Exhale, bend the right leg and keep the foot at the top of the left thigh. Inhale, raise the right arm and then exhaling hold from behind the big toe of the right foot by the fingers of the right hand. Stay for a few breaths. Refer to Sketch 1. Exhale, bending forward and keeping the left palm on the ground by the side of the left foot, and keeping the forehead on the stretched knee.



This posture when with bending forward is Ardha-baddha-padma-paschimataanaasanam. The added requirement in this posture is that

one has to be on one foot and do the movements without fallin

This posture helps in strengthening the shoulders, and opens up the chest and thus facilitates free breathing. The pressure of the heel on the abdomen helps abdominal and pelvic organs and muscles.

There are many other postures that require balancing on one foot. Garudaasanam, requires keeping one leg encircling the other straight leg right from the groin. Keeping the foot on the inside of the thigh, with the corresponding knee bent and at right angles to the straight leg is Vrikshaasanam or tree pose, especially when the arms are also raised overhead and palms kept together. Keeping right leg in Padmasanam, bend on exhalation the left knee so that the right knee is kept on the ground, still maintaining the balance. In this position, the left foot and the right knee are on the ground. This is Vaataayanaasanam. All these require considerable concentration but bestow grace, poise and stability to the Abhyaasi. Many other asanas like Natarajaasanam, Durwaasanam, Trivikramaasanam etc., are the more complicated ones in the same group postures. Asanas requiring to balance

on one foot and one palm help to stretch and tone up the side muscles (Paarsva). They also are helpful in strengthening the arm and give great flexibility to the hip joint. A group of Asanas starting with Vasistasana require such balancing.

## VASISTAASANA

This group of Asanas proceed from Chaturangadandaasana, explained in an earlier Indian Review issue. Start with Tadaasana. Exhale, proceed to do Utkatasana. Then on the next exhalation place the palms by the side of the feet. Then holding the breath jump back to Chaturangadandaasana. On the next exhalation, raise the hips in Adhomukhaswaanasanam, but slowly tilt the body to one side, with the right palm and the outside of the right foot on the ground. Keep the left arm along the side of the body. Now on the next exhalation press the right palm, arch the body further up so that both the feet are on the ground. Inhale, raise the left arm and look up. This is Vasishtasanam. Refer to Sketch (2). This asana attributed to the great sage, as mentioned, apart from strengthening the hip, the lumbar region and the rather stubborn coccyx along the spine to the cervical region. Stay for a few breaths.



and difficult variation of the simpler Vasisthaasana. The shoulders and especially the sacral region are benefited.

There are a number of variations on this kind of balancing which include, Viswaamitraasana, Kapinjalaasana etc.,

Balancing on both the palms, is fascinating to anyone interested in physical culture. The gymnasts and other artists make use of this with telling effect. To yogis doing this on the floor, the

There are interesting variations possible in this posture-Exhale, remaining in Vasisthaasana, bend the left knee, hold the big toe by the fingers of the left arm and stretch it up.

### KASYAPAASANA

Bend the left knee on exhalation and keep it on the top of the right thigh. Exhale, balancing on the palm and leg, hold the big toe of the left leg with the fingers of the left hand from behind. Inhale press the palm and the foot raising the hip and the trunk, and look up. This is Kasyapaasana an important



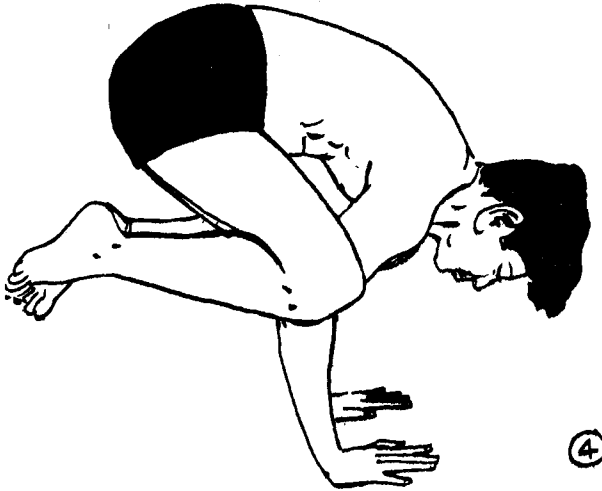
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variations are far too many. In almost any sitting posture, the palms may be placed on the floor and the body raised and it is called Utpluti.

Perhaps the most common Utpluti is raising the body

the palms one may twist the body to one side beyond the base and by the side of one arm when it is known as Parsva Uttaana Kurmaasana. There are of course different starting points for these asanas; one may start from Sir-

are started, interestingly from Sirshaasana and then the head raised, balancing on the palms. One of the interesting but simple postures is Bhujapeetasana. Place the palms in the ground, with the feet on the ground. Press



while in Padmasanam. Sit in Padmasanam. Exhale keep the palms on the floor, hold the breath and raise the body by about four angulas when it is known as Tholangaasana (Refer Sketch 3). Children enjoy swinging to and fro when it is called Lolasana. Balancing on

sasana, Urdhwapadmaasana and proceed to do the balancing postures Utpluti may be attempted in Paschimataasana, Simhaasana, Vajraasana, etc.

In raising the body as above, there are many variations possible. Most of these

the palm, spread the knees, raise the feet balancing on the palms. This is Bhujapeetasanam. There are further variations possible. Refer to sketch (4). This simple balancing posture, helps strengthen the wrists and one tends to feel light in course of time.

