

Iyengar Yoga for Beginners (No Props)-Session 1

This is the first session of a 5 week Beginners course, where we use only a mat and a towel (and perhaps a book) as minimal props. The aim here is to lay the foundation for those who are new to Iyengar Yoga so that you can build up a base and get an idea of what Iyengar Yoga is, without having to invest in more than a yoga mat.

Each class will build on the previous session, repeating a few poses already explored, as well as adding a few new postures to what you have already done. It is a systematic sequencing of sessions so that you can start to develop an understanding of the principles involved in the practice of Iyengar Yoga.

Start in forward Virasana, a version of Childs pose with the feet apart. This helps to settle yourself into your body and prepare for the more active poses to come.

Come up to standing, and follow the basic instructions for Tadasana, Mountain Pose, to establish a balanced alignment to work from. From Tadasana, you will do a few arm variations to help bring some life to the shoulders and upper body.

1/2 Uttanasana to the wall, a standing forward bend with hands to the wall at two different heights to open the shoulders and the upper thoracic area.

In this course we concentrate most on the standing poses at first, as they bring opening and connection to the the hips and legs, and help to integrate the various body parts back to the centre. Notice your feet throughout, and see what tendencies you have there. What happens in the feet follows through to the rest of the legs and pelvis, and then to the upper body. You will often be asked to "check your feet".

Four standing poses to start with, repeating each one twice: Trikonasana (Triangle Pose), Parsvakonasana (Side Angle Pose), Parsvottanasana (Standing forward bend to the side) and Prasarita Padottanasana, a wide legged forward extension to finish.

Then extend the arms up, fingers interlocked (Parvatasana) to bring uplifting energy to the chest.

Extend the legs forward to release the knees -Dandasana (Rod or Staff Pose).

Sit with simple cross-legs and turn to release the back muscles with a simple seated twist, changing the cross leg after going to Left and to the Right and walking the hands forward after finishing each side.

To finish the sequence, take the mat to the wall and lie back flat with the legs up the wall. Then bend the knees into the chest to lengthen through the spine.

Turn to the side and lie back in Savasana (Corpse Pose), the resting pose done at the end of every sequence to bring yourself back to neutral, observing a quiet breath as the body releases to the floor.

Sequence steps



Virasana Forward

Downward-Facing Hero Pose

Join your feet together under your buttocks and keep your knees far enough apart for your ribs to fit in between your legs as you fold forward. You can rest your head on the floor or on a block.



Tadasana

Mountain Pose

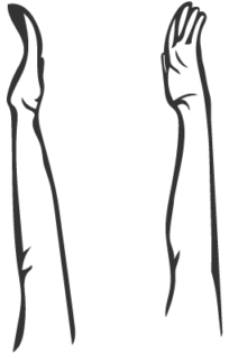
Stand up tall and straight, place your feet close together, with your heels and big toes touching. Imagine as if you are standing with your back against the wall. Extend your whole body from the heels up through the crown of your head.



Urdhva Baddanguliyasana

Upward Salute with Interlocked Fingers

Stretch your arms in front of you and interlock your fingers. Turn your palms inside out and lift your arms up overhead, making sure to keep your shoulders open. Change the interlock of your fingers and repeat.



Urdhva Hastasana

Upward Salute

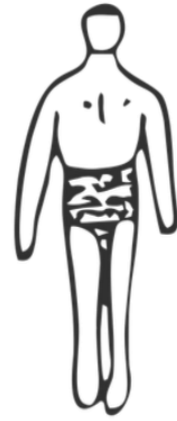
Keep your shoulders open and stretching away from your ears as you externally rotate your arms and lift them up above your head. Resist the urge to tip backwards, maintain the Tadasana line.



Half Uttanasana

Half Forward Bend

Stand in front of a wall. Keeping your back and legs straight, tip from your pelvis until your chest is parallel to the ground. Push your hands into the wall and stretch your hips backwards.



Tadasana

Mountain Pose

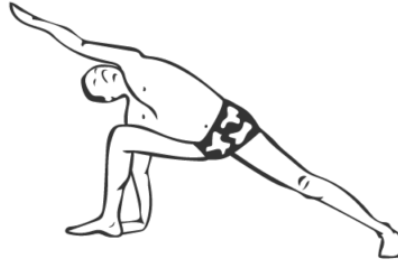
Stand up tall and straight, place your feet close together, with your heels and big toes touching. Imagine as if you are standing with your back against the wall. Extend your whole body from the heels up through the crown of your head.



Utthita Trikonasana

Extended Triangle Pose

Keep the toes and kneecap of your left leg pointed forward and, keeping your spine straight and long, stretch over your leg. Place your left hand on your ankle or on a block next to your foot. Look up towards your extended right arm.



Utthita Parsvakonasana

Extended Side Angle Pose

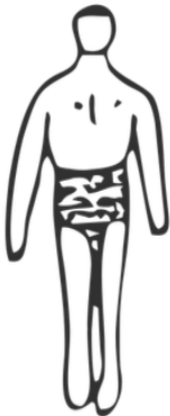
Bend your front leg and place your hand by your foot as you stretch your other arm up and over your head. Pull your waist away from the floor, keep your back straight. Place a block under your hand if necessary.



Uttanasana

Standing Forward Bend

Starting in Tadasana, exhale and reach down towards your feet. Let your spine release downwards. You can bend your knees or place your hands on blocks if you lack the necessary flexibility.



Tadasana

Mountain Pose

Stand up tall and straight, place your feet close together, with your heels and big toes touching. Imagine as if you are standing with your back against the wall. Extend your whole body from the heels up through the crown of your head.



Parsvottanasana

Pyramid Pose

Place your feet one leg-length apart, your back foot angled out slightly. Keep your legs straight as you start to fold over your front leg, maintaining a concave spine for as far into the bend as possible.



Prasarita Padottanasana (Concave Spine)

Wide Legged Forward Bend with Concave Spine

Spread your weight evenly between your feet and keep your back straight as you tip from your hips, placing your hands on the floor, blocks, or chair seat, depending on your flexibility.



Vajrasana
Diamond Pose
Sit in a kneeling position with the feet together right beneath the buttocks.



Parvatasana in Virasana
Mountain Pose in Hero Pose
Sit in Virasana, stretch your arms in front of you, and interlock your fingers. Turn your palms outward and, keeping your shoulders open and ribs in neutral, extend your arms upward.



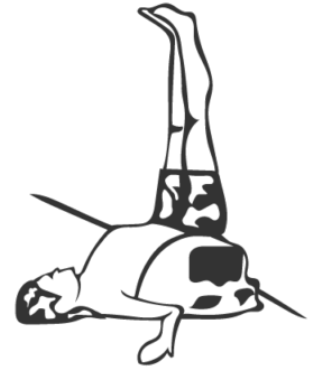
Dandasana
Staff Pose
Point your sit-bones down and extend upwards through the crown of your head. Use support under your buttocks or bend knees if needed to get your back straight.



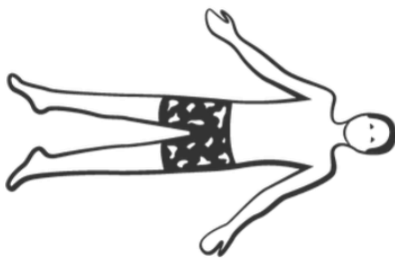
Simple Cross Legs Twist
Sit with your legs crossed and back straight. Place your hand onto the opposing knee and, staying tall through the crown of your head, look over your shoulder as you twist.



Simple Cross Legs Forward
Sit with your legs crossed. Keep your sit-bones pointing down as you stretch your arms forward to capacity, lengthening your spine.



Viparita Karani
Legs-Up-the-Wall Pose
Bring your hips up to the wall and lift your legs up. You can use a bolster or other form of support under your hips and lumbar spine to incorporate a mild backbend into the pose.



Savasana
Corpse Pose
Lie down on the floor. Spread your arms and legs slightly at your side. Relax and concentrate on your breath.