

THE YOGA POSERS

ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA

DOWNWARD DOG IS THE QUINTESSENTIAL YOGA POSE

<p>BIOMECHANIC BASICS</p>	<p>Category: Forward Fold with axial extension. Hips hinge to 90 degrees. Shoulders flexed. Wrists extended. Ankles dorsiflexed. Spinal curves are reduced. Upper arms externally rotate as forearms internally rotate.</p>
<p>BENEFITS</p>	<p>This pose builds arm and leg strength and flexibility while reducing spinal curves and achieving maximal spinal elongation. Posterior chain has the opportunity to lengthen. Done properly, this pose improves scapular-humeral rhythm and humeral external rotation.</p>
<p>COMMON COMPLAINTS</p>	<p>Tight, stiff hamstrings and calves, shoulder tension or pain, wrist pain. Too much weight in arms is fatiguing. Hard to achieve “resting pose” experience.</p>
<p>COMMON MISALIGNMENTS</p>	<p>Hips adduct (knees narrow) & internally rotate. Stance too short or too narrow. Hands too narrow. Body weight shifted too far forward. Spinal curves increase, especially thoracic flexion (kyphosis). Scapulae do not fully upwardly rotate. Upper arms internally rotate and hunch. Weight in hands rolls to outer wrist.</p>
<p>VARIATIONS</p>	<p>One leg raised in air (with knee bend and stacked hip often). Twist (hand to opposite shin). Dolphin Pose. “Frog Dog” (squatting with wide knees). Bent knees (like Utkatasana). Wall Dog (hands on wall). Longer or shorter stance.</p>
<p>THERAPEUTIC APPLICATIONS</p>	<p>Hands to wall. Dolphin to protect wrists. Supported with head on block/bolster. Heels vs wall for stability. Heels up to improve hip flexion. Wrists elevated to reduce extension. Hands turned out to improve humeral external rotation. Wide legs to improve hip hinge.</p>



FAVORITE CUES

- Bend your knees as you lift your hips and heels
- Hug an imaginary beach ball between your elbows
- Press your chest towards your thighs as you float your armpits
- Index fingers parallel
- Sitbones down (for flexis)
- Sitbones up (if stiff hams)