

## Strength and Hip Openers

### High Lunge (Utthita Ashwa Sanchalanasana)

#### How to:

- On your hands and knees in Table pose, step the right foot forward between the two hands, with the knee directly over the ankle. Tuck the back toes under and straighten the back leg.
- Press the palms, fingers or fists into the floor to lift the crown of the head up towards the ceiling. Roll the shoulders down and back and press the chest forward. Look straight ahead with the chin parallel to the floor.
- Extend the back leg by pressing the heel towards the floor and by pressing the back of the knee up towards the ceiling. Relax the hips and let them sink down towards the floor.
- Breathe and hold for 2-6 breaths.
- To release: Lower the left knee down and slide the right knee back into Table, or step the right foot back into Downward Facing Dog.
- Repeat on other side.

#### Benefits:

- Opens the hips and chest.
- Stretches the groin and legs.
- Lengthens the spine.
- Strengthens the lower body.



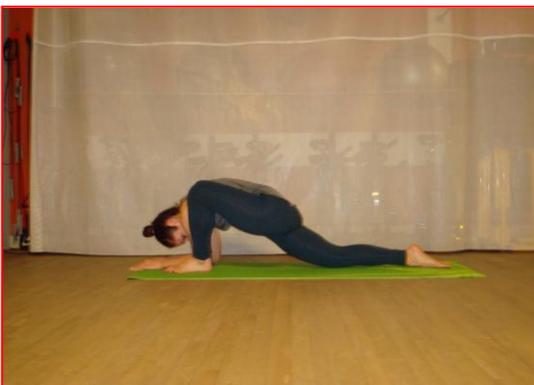
### Lizard Pose (Utthan Pristhasana)

#### How To:

- Begin in Downward-Facing Dog (Adho Mukha Svanasana). On an exhale, step your right foot forward to the outside (pinky finger) edge of your right hand. Both arms should be to the left of the right leg.
- Lower your left knee down onto the ground and release the top of your left foot. Take a look down to ensure that the right knee isn't moving past the right ankle, and distribute the weight evenly across both hips.
- Sink your weight down into your hips and check in with your body. If you feel comfortable, lower down onto both forearms. Keep the chin lifted and the chest open.
- To move even deeper into the pose, curl your left toes under and press up into the ball of the left foot. Actively lift the inner left thigh and press the left heel back while reaching the chest forward.

#### Benefits:

- Opens the hips, hamstrings, groins and hip flexors
- Strengthens the inner thigh muscles on the front leg
- Opens and releases the chest, shoulders and neck
- Prepares the body for deeper hip openers such as Pigeon Pose and Hanuman Pose





### **Warrior I (Virabhadrasana)**

#### **How to:**

- Standing with the legs about 3.5 feet apart, turn the back foot out to 45 degrees rotating the leg from the socket keeping the hips square.
- Inhale the arms up, turn the palms to the ceiling at shoulder height and clasp the thumbs.
- Exhale and bend the right knee to a 90 degree angle over the right ankle
- Keep hips square, the left leg fully stretched, and the left heel pressed into the floor so there is equal weight on both feet.
- Keep breathing as you hold

#### **Benefits:**

- Develops strength and stamina in the whole body.
- Increases flexibility in the groin, back and shoulders.
- Opens the chest, which improves respiration.



### **Modified Warrior**

This option, to kneel on the knee, is for tightness in the hip flexors, or if the balance or strength is not enough to hold from the toes.



### Dog Pose (Adho Mukha Svanasana)

#### **How To:**

- From the Table Pose, curl the toes under and lift the tailbone to the ceiling.
- Press the shoulder blades down and back, extending the trapezius fully. Let the head hang to the floor to relax the neck, lengthen the spine back towards the tailbone, lift the abdomen, and let the heels sink into gravity without forcing them down to keep the tailbone lifted to the ceiling
- Hold the posture and breathe.

#### **Benefits:**

- Strengthens the wrists, upper body and abdomen.
- Stretches the spine, shoulders and calves.
- Increases circulation to the head.
- Relieves tension in the shoulders and neck.



### Four-limbed Staff Pose (Chaturanga dandasana)

#### **How To:**

- From Plank Pose, align your shoulders slightly ahead of the wrists and come onto the balls of your feet, pressing the soles of your feet back, as if into a wall behind you.
- Push back through the heels to engage the quadriceps and bring the lower body to life, and reach your sternum forward, creating a straight, taut line of energy from the crown of your head through your feet.
- Inhale, draw the heads of the shoulders and the tops of the thighs up and away from the floor, pull your lower body up and in, and release the tailbone toward the floor.
- Exhale, bend your elbows, keeping them over your wrists and drawn in against your sides. Slowly lower yourself toward the floor, keeping your body as straight as a plank of wood, neither letting your center sag nor sticking your buttocks up in the air.
- Bring your gaze to the floor, about 6 inches in front of you, and continue to lower until your shoulders are at the same height as your elbows.
- Continue to reach through the heels, sternum, and crown of the head as you breathe.

#### **Benefits:**

- Strengthens arm, shoulder, and leg muscles
- Develops core stability
- Prepares body for inversions and arm balances



### Upward Dog (urdhva mukha)– Variation

#### **How to:**

- From the Downward Dog to the Upward Dog. The upward dog is like the Cobra with the toes curled under and the thighs off the floor. It can be done two ways, inhale updog, exhale dog or inhale plank, exhale down into staff, inhale up dog, exhale down dog
- Repeat several times (it is easier to do the yoga push-ups (upward dog) with the legs apart)

#### **Benefits**

- Improves posture
- Strengthens the spine, arms, wrists
- Stretches chest and lungs, shoulders, and abdomen
- Firms the buttocks
- Stimulates abdominal organs
- Helps relieve mild depression, fatigue, and sciatica
- Therapeutic for asthma

