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Yoga For You

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Garudasana

The garuda is a mythical bird, and the final pose of garudasana resembles the shape of this eaglelike creature. We have divided the pose into stages that can be practiced individually. Practice of the first stage brings freedom to the shoulders, arms and wrists. The second stage creates strength and suppleness in the ankles and hips. The final stage requires balance and determination and brings physical, mental and emotional stability.

1. Stand straight with the feet together (Tadasana).
2. Stretch the arms apart in line with the shoulders and open and expand the chest as you pull the arms apart.
3. With an exhalation, swing the left arm over the right and cross the upper arms above the elbow.
4. Now entwine the forearms and bring the palms together. The thumbs should now point toward the face as in the photograph.



MANOA YOGA CENTER
Barbara Kaneshiro, left, Emily Kramer-Berger and Elizabeth Carson, students of Manoa Yoga Center, show the stages of garudasana.

5. Breathe evenly through the nose as you lift the elbows to the height of the shoulders. Lift the chest up and spread the area of the upper back between the shoulder blades.

6. Stay for a few breaths and repeat to the other side. Practice regularly until the shoulders and arms gain flexibility. Learn to stay in the pose as you breathe and open the upper back as you expand the chest. This is stage 1.

7. In stage 2, we learn to entwine the legs. Stand in Tadasana. Place the hands on the hips. Bend the knees and cross the right leg over the left. With practice you will be able to wrap the right foot behind the left calf. Keep the hips and trunk facing forward and the spine erect.

8. To accomplish the final stage, first do stage 1, then with an exhalation, entwine the legs. Learn to hold the pose without wavering. Repeat to the other side, where the right arm will be over the left arm and the left leg will be on top of the right leg.

Ray Madigan and **Shelley Choy** are certified Iyengar Yoga teachers and co-direct the Manoa Yoga Center at Manoa Marketplace. Visit www.manoayoga.com or call 382-3910. Manoa Yoga Center, the authors and the Star-Bulletin take no responsibility for any injury arising from the practice of these yoga postures. Readers should seek a doctor's approval before commencing this yoga practice.

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