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Yoga For You

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Malasana

(Garland Pose) » Last week, we presented the preparatory stage of Malasana. Here we show the classic pose using supports to help get the correct shape and actions in the pose. In Malasana the abdominal muscles are contracted and the abdominal organs are squeezed. This promotes health in the digestive system. Due to the flexion of the hip and knee joints, the hips and knees become supple. Regular practice keeps the sacrum healthy and helps to relieve back pain.

1. Fold a yoga mat and stand with the heels on the mat and the feet together.
2. Extend the arms straight out, in line with the shoulders, palms facing each other.
3. Exhale as you bend the knees and squat, bringing the buttocks close to the heels. Keep the heels down onto the mat. If the knees are stiff, practice this a few times to loosen them up. You might have to go back to practicing the preparatory stage that we showed last week until flexibility is achieved.
4. Now, spread your knees apart and extend arms and torso forward between the knees. Wrap your arms around the shins bringing the armpits as close to the ankles as possible.



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Kim Schaper, a student at Manoa Yoga Center, demonstrates Malasana with her heels and head supported.

5. Clasp the ankles with the hands.

6. Keep your heels down as you bring your head to the floor or to a yoga block.
7. Squeeze the knees into the side of the body and feel how the back rounds and spreads as abdominal muscles contract.
8. Stay for 30 seconds. Stand up and repeat.

With regular practice, you will eventually gain the flexibility to keep your heels on the floor with your feet flat and bring your head to the floor as well.

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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