

Parsvottanasana - Stage 1

Parsva means side and *uttana* means intense stretch. In this pose the side of the chest is expanded and stretched. The shoulders and wrists gain flexibility and the legs and back become supple. Due to the expansion of the chest, those suffering from asthma may gain benefit.

- 1) Stand with the feet together (*Tadasana*). With an exhalation, swing the arms behind the back and join the palms with the fingers pointing upwards. This is *Paschima Namaskarasana* (see previous column). If the shoulders or wrists are too stiff, then hold the elbows (see *Paschima Baddha Hastasana*). Roll the shoulders back to open the chest.
- 2) On an exhalation, jump the legs 3-4 feet apart.
- 3) Turn the left leg in about 45 degrees and turn the right leg out. Straighten the legs fully and keep the knees tight.
- 4) Now, without disturbing the legs, turn the trunk to the right. Keep turning the left side of the trunk so that both sides of the hips, chest and shoulders face evenly over the right leg. Squeeze the outer hips in and keep the right hip in line with the right foot.
- 5) Breathe in deeply and lift the chest as you roll the shoulders back and down. Throw the head back and gaze up between the eyebrows. Note that the neck should not feel crunched. To avoid this, work to move the upper spine in and take the elbows back. Draw the buttocks down to the floor and move the tailbone into the body, so that the lower back remains lengthened.
- 6) Stay in this pose with even breathing for up to 30 seconds, then repeat to the other side.

