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Yoga For You

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MANOA YOGA CENTER
Howard Wolff, foreground, Jana Wolff, center, and Annie Egi
show the stages of going into Parsvottanasana.

Parsvottanasana

"Parsva" means side and "uttana" means intense stretch. In this pose, the legs are kept firm and steady while the chest is extended and opened. This pose is wonderful for making the legs strong and flexible. People who suffer from backaches receive relief from regular practice.

You will need a height such as yoga blocks, or a chair for this pose if you are stiff.

1. Stand with your feet together. Place a yoga block on either side of your feet.
2. Keep your right foot in place as you step the left foot back. Bring your feet about 4 feet apart with your left heel in line with the right heel. Turn your left foot in a little.
3. Now press your feet down and straighten your legs fully. Raise your arms up close to your ears and lift the trunk as you extend and straighten your arms.
4. Keep your legs straight and turn your trunk so it is in line with the right leg. Learn to keep the lift in the torso as you bring the pelvic bones, waist and chest to face the right. Note that the left side of the body does not easily turn so you must work conscientiously to bring symmetry to the pose.
6. Keep your legs straight and stretch out through the arms as you extend your torso over the right leg and bring your hands to the blocks. Straighten your arms and lift the chest as you extend the sides of your body forward. Make your back concave. If your back rounds, lift the buttock bones up and arch your back. If your legs are stiff, you might need to take the hands to a higher height to keep them straight while your back remains in a concave shape.
7. Remain in the pose for up to 30 seconds, working to keep your legs straight and knees tight. Make the pelvic bones level and the chest and trunk even. Do not let the sacrum or shoulders twist. Open and lift the chest.
8. To come out of the pose, tighten your legs, bring hands to your hips and inhale to come up evenly with an open chest.
9. Step the feet together between the blocks and practice to the other side by stepping the right foot back.

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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