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## Yoga For You

Ray Madigan and Shelley Choy



MANOA YOGA CENTER  
Vickie, Shelley and Sylvia demonstrate Paschima  
Namaskarasana, which builds upon a mastery of simpler  
poses.

## Paschima Namaskarasana

"Paschima" refers to the west or backside of the body. "Namaskar" is to join the hands in prayer. In this pose the hands are joined behind the back. Over the past two weeks, we have presented poses to open the shoulders and chest. Paschima Namaskarasana may be attempted when one has gained some mastery of the previous poses.

1. Stand with the feet together (tadasana).
2. Bend your knees a little and swing your hands behind your back at waist level. Join your fingertips together and point the fingers down toward the floor.
3. Press your fingertips together as you take your elbows back and work to stretch and open the chest. Straighten your legs.
4. With an exhalation, point your fingers up toward your head and move the hands further up your back. Roll your shoulders back and press the palms together to fully open your chest.
5. Release your hands and repeat the pose several times. With regular practice, learn to slide the hands higher up the back. Stay in the final pose for a minute with even breathing. Press the little-finger side of the hands into the spine to further help open the chest. Notice that as you practice, the lower back tends to arch. Press your thigh bones back and pull your buttocks down toward the heels to keep your lower back long.

**Ray Madigan** and **Shelley Choy** are certified Iyengar Yoga teachers and co-direct the Manoa Yoga Center at Manoa Marketplace. Visit [www.manoayoga.com](http://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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