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Yoga For You

Ray Madigan and Shelley Choy

Purvottanasana

Stage 2 » Purvottanasana belongs to the clan of backward extensions and this week we show the completed pose.

"Purva" means the "east" or "front side" of the body. "Uttana" means "intense stretch." In this pose, the back of the body is extended and contracted while the front of the body is open and stretched.

This pose brings vigor to the spine and a sense of rejuvenation to the spirit. It helps relieve stiffness in the back after practicing forward bending asanas. The shoulders are stretched and opened and the wrists are exercised.

1. Sit on the floor with your legs stretched out straight in front.
2. Place your hands a few inches behind the buttocks, shoulder width apart. Point your fingers forward.
3. Press your palms down to straighten the arms. Rotate the upper arm bones out to lift and fully open your chest, then look at your chest.



MANOA YOGA CENTER
Kim Schaper, a student at Manoa Yoga Center, demonstrates Purvottanasana, where the front of the body, from the toes to the head, receives an even stretch.

4. Keep this open chest as you press your big toe mounds into the floor and lift your entire body up with an inhalation.

5. Lift your buttocks without letting your hips sag. Keep your arms straight. Distribute the weight evenly on your hands and feet.
6. Reaffirm the lift of your chest as you take your head back.
7. Lift the sides of the chest up and keep the shoulder blades into the back so that your shoulders do not round.
8. Now breathe evenly through your nose, feeling an even opening across the front of the body.
9. Stay for a few breaths, exhale and come down. Repeat a few times, working to increase flexibility and stability in the pose while maintaining evenness in the arch of the spine.

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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