



Yoga For You

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Supta Swastikasana

(Reclined Cross Pose) » "Supta" means "to recline" and "swastika" is a cross. In this pose, the legs are crossed as the torso is stretched along the floor. The hips, groin and legs become supple, and backaches are relieved.

1. Sit on the floor with the legs straight in Dandasana (see previous column at starbulletin.com/2006/04/09/features/yoga.html).
2. Bend the left knee and place the left foot under the right knee.
3. Bend the right knee and place the right foot under the left knee. This is Swastikasana (see the leg position in last week's column).
4. Now, recline onto the elbows without disturbing the position of the legs or buttocks.
5. Use your hands to move the buttocks toward your feet so your lower back is long and broad.
6. Look at your knees and breathe quietly through the nose, focusing on releasing the groin and knees. Allow your knees to rest on your feet.



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DJ Gervais demonstrates Supta Swastikasana.

7. Keep your knees releasing down as you recline onto your back so that the length of the back and head are on the floor.
8. Stretch your arms up in line with the shoulders, perpendicular to the floor. Tighten your arm muscles so they grip the arm bones. Turn your palms to face the knees. Your back and shoulders should remain flat against the floor. Breathe and release the knees to the feet and relax your legs.
9. Exhale as you extend your arms overhead in line with the shoulders so that the back of your hands rest on the floor. If your shoulders are stiff, the arms will bend. If this is the case, use a support, such as a pillow, to rest your hands.
10. Hold this pose without strain. Breathe evenly and smoothly through the nose as you release the legs. To keep your back from arching, keep your buttocks lengthening toward your shins and extend out through the arms.
11. After a minute, change the cross of your legs and repeat to the other side.

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.