



Yoga For You

Ray Madigan and Shelley Choy

Urdhva Prasarita Padasana

Upward Expanded Leg Pose, Stage 2 » Last week we presented the first stage of this pose, in which the legs are held up vertically with the trunk long and extended. In Stage 2, the legs are taken lower and the effects are greater. In this pose, the abdominal muscles are strengthened and fat around the abdomen is reduced. The abdominal organs become toned and the back muscles are strengthened. Urdhva Prasarita Padasana helps relieve gastric problems and flatulence.

1. Lie on the floor on your back with the feet together and body straight.
2. Come into Stage 1 of Urdhva Prasarita Padasana. Hold your legs tightly with the thigh muscles. Keeping your legs straight and vertical, stretch your legs and arms away from each other to extend the trunk. Roll your outer thighs inward so your kneecaps face directly toward you.
3. As you stay here, observe as the action of your arms and legs create the feeling of expansion in the trunk, bringing your lower back closer to the floor. If the lower back arches, extend your arms and legs with equal effort to lengthen the back and take out the arch.



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Leslie Ashburn, a student at Manoa Yoga Center,
demonstrates Urdhva Prasarita Padottanasana, Stage 2.

4. Keep this extension in the trunk by stretching arms and legs as you lower your legs 30 degrees toward the floor. Lower your legs by pushing out through the heels, maintaining firmness in your thigh muscles. Continue to roll your outer thighs inward. Hold briefly, then bring your legs to a vertical position, bend your knees, place your feet on the floor and relax.

5. Repeat this sequence several times without losing the extension in your back. Keep your legs tight and knees gripped. Keep your arms actively extending. Do not hold your breath or tighten your face, but stay calm and breathe softly through your nose. Your mind should stay completely focused and quiet and absorbed in maintaining an even extension throughout the limbs and trunk.

As you gain the ability to perform this pose without strain, you will become ready to take the legs to 60 degrees. Then lower the legs to just above the floor.

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.