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Yoga For You

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MANOA YOGA CENTER
Shelley Choy, co-director of Manoa Yoga Center, demonstrates stage 1 of the uthitha hasta padangusthasana.

Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana

(Extended Hand to Big Toe Pose), Stage 1

This pose brings flexibility to the back of the legs and relief to those suffering from sciatica and lower back pain. It is helpful for runners and other athletes. We will be presenting three stages of this pose, which should be practiced together to receive maximum benefit.

To practice the pose you will need a piece of furniture or counter that is about hip height. You will also need a belt or a length of rope.

1. Stand facing the chair or counter. Place feet together.
2. Lift your right leg and place the heel on the chair or counter. The heel should be in line with the right hip. Tighten your knees and straighten both legs. Keep the left leg vertical with the heel in line with the back of your body.
3. Place your hands on your hips and stand erect; do not lean forward or back. If the back rounds, lift your spine in and up.
4. Do not let the right hip lift. To prevent this, press your right heel down and press the whole right leg toward the floor. Keep the pelvic bones level and do not let them tilt.
5. Press your right leg down and lift the trunk up. If your legs are stiff, place the right heel on a lower height.
7. Take the belt and place it around the right foot. Hold the belt with both hands and walk your hands down the belt until your arms are straight. Now, pull with your arms to lift your chest and trunk. Hold the pose with quiet breathing. Maintain the firmness in your legs, the balance of your body and the lift of your 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.