



Yoga Poses & Adaptations for Hip Health and Hip Issues

Description

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, we view numerous poses from the lens of hip health and supporting students who are experiencing hip issues.

Objective

Be aware of specific *asana* considerations for hip health and supporting students who are experiencing hip issues.

Description

Explain the reason for students with hip issues to be cautious with twists and why using the cue, “hug the midline” may not be appropriate for students with hip issues. Describe the purpose you might select *Anjaneyasana* and a point of emphasis for stretching quads and hip flexors. Provide hip-related intentions and considerations for each of the following standing poses: *Virabhadrasana II*, *Utthita Parsvakonasana*, *Virabhadrasana I*, *Prasarita Padottanasana*, *Parsvottanasana*, *Vrksasana*, *Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana*, and *Parivrtta Trikonasana*. Provide intentions and considerations for *Malasana*, *Setu Bandhasana*, *Supta Padangusthasana* and *Gomukhasana*. List seated pose considerations for stretching external rotators and explain how propped variations of *Virasana* may support hip health.

General Considerations

When considering *asana* for students with hip issues:

1. Be cautious with twisting.

2. Instead of using the cue, "hug the midline," with these students, focus more on making space and avoiding any gripping.
3. For arthritis of the hip, see links below.

Twisting Cautions

- The deeper the twist, the more stress that may be placed on hips, so use caution with twists.
- [Asana Category: Twists](#)

When the hips tip from weakness in the gluteus medius or tightness in the adductors, the outer hip is strained. The more the pelvis rotates in twisting poses, the greater the stress on the hips. When the rear hip drops, the front hip pulls up, causing both gripping and pulling in the gluteus medius. Doug Keller

Gripping vs. Making Space

BE CAUTIOUS WITH "HUG THE MIDLINE"

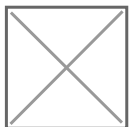
In postures such as *Parivritta Trikonasana* or *Eka Pada Rajakapotasana*, the adductors are strongly pulled when the pubic bone is drawn back away from the inner thigh of the forward leg. In these poses, we are often instructed to "hug the midline," but in doing so we may actually be gripping too tightly, failing to create the space necessary for the bone to find its center in the hip joint. Doug Keller

Arthritis

For arthritis of the hip, see:

- [About Arthritis](#)
- [Yoga & Arthritis](#)
- [Arthritis of the Spine, Hips or Shoulders](#)

Anjaneyasana



- This pose stretches the hip flexors.
- Keeping the back thigh vertical and stacking the pelvis and spine directly over the thigh helps stretch the quadriceps and hip flexors. Lower the hips forward and down to isolate and stretch the hip flexors, especially the rectus femoris. (Jason Crandell)
- [Anjaneyasana \(Low Lunge\)](#)

Standing Poses

Virabhadrasana II



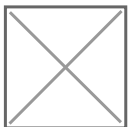
- Strengthens [external rotators](#). (Mukunda Stiles)
- [Virabhadrasana II \(Warrior 2 Pose\)](#)

Utthita Parsvakonasana



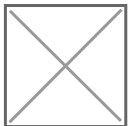
- Stretches adductors.
- [Utthita Parsvakonasana \(Extended Side Angle Pose\)](#)

Virabhadrasana I



- Strengthens [adductors](#) and [TFL](#). (Mukunda Stiles)
- [Virabhadrasana I \(Warrior 1 Pose\)](#)

Prasarita Padottanasana



- Stretches [hamstrings](#) and [adductors](#).
- A variation: bend one knee and press forearm against thigh to stretch entire adductor group. (Jason Crandell)
- [Prasarita Padottanasana \(Wide Legged Standing Forward Bend\)](#)

Parsvottanasana



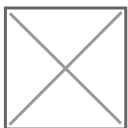
- Strengthens [psoas](#) and [adductors](#). (Mukunda Stiles)
- Stretches one set of [hamstrings](#) at a time which may be more effective for students with tight hamstrings than stretching both as in Uttanasana. (Jason Crandell)
- [Parsvottanasana \(Intense Side Stretch / Pyramid Pose\)](#)

Vrksasana



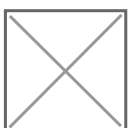
- Strengthens [adductors and external rotators](#) of straight leg.
- [Vrksasana \(Tree Pose\)](#)

Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana



- This one-legged balance pose helps develop more stability in each hip through conscious alignment of the ankle, knee, and hip joints. (Marla Apt)
- [Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana \(Extended Hand to Toe Pose\)](#)

Parivrtta Trikonasana with Assist



- Image shows an option with wall and chair.

- A different option: Support back foot to ensure it remains grounded. Place strap or hands-on back leg. Gently pull just enough to ensure hips are level and stable.
- The belt imitates the firmness and support of the inner thigh muscles; the idea here is to learn to create the same action on your own, keeping both hips level.
- [Parivrtta Trikonasana \(Revolved Triangle Pose\)](#)

Malasana



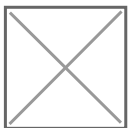
- Malasana provides a thorough, inner leg stretches while also flexing the knees and hips deeply. (Jason Crandell)
- [Malasana \(Yogic Squat\)](#)

Setu Bandhasana



- Strengthens [glute maximus](#) and [hamstrings](#). (Mukunda Stiles)
- [Setu Bandhasana \(Bridge Pose\)](#)
- For strengthening options to prepare for asana, see [Hip Strengthening Exercises](#).

Supta Padangusthasana



- Develops both hip strength and mobility.
- Can be used to teach how to keep thighs rooted in hip sockets.
- [Supta Padangusthasana \(Reclined Hand to Toe Pose\)](#)

STRENGTHENING & MOBILIZING

In general, keeping your hip joint as mobile as you can and the supporting muscles as strong as possible will help [those with osteoarthritis of the hip] stay functional! Because you can do many yoga poses without bearing direct weight on your hip joints, including prone or supine poses, seated poses, and inversions, yoga provides many ways for you to work on both joint range of motion and

strengthening. For example, Reclined Leg Stretch (*Supta Padangusthasana*) with all four variations, help both mobility and strength. â?? Baxter Bell MD

LEARNING TO KEEP THIGHS ROOTED IN HIP SOCKETS

I recommend that you teach your student the variations of *Supta Padangusthasana*â??such as holding her foot with a beltâ??so she can learn to keep her thighs rooted in the hip sockets when doing hip flexion, adduction, abduction, and external rotation. â?? Marla Apt

Gomukhasana



- Stretches abductors.
- Reclining variation offers a version where the rest of the body can relax.
- [Gomukhasana \(Cow Face Pose\)](#)

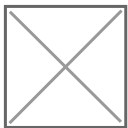
Seated External Rotator Stretching

Sucirandhrasana



- Stretches [glutes](#), [external rotators](#), and [abductors](#).
- [Sucirandhrasana \(Eye of the Needle Pose / Reclining Pigeon\)](#)

Eka Pada Rajakapotasana



- â??This bittersweet posture uses the weight of the entire body to stretch the external rotators.â?• (Jason Crandell)
- [Eka Pada Rajakapotasana \(One Legged King Pigeon Pose\)](#)

Agnistambhasana (Fire Log Pose)



- Externally rotates the thighs even more deeply than Pigeon Pose.
- [Agnistambhasana \(Fire Log Pose\)](#)

Virasana



- Propped variations can address asymmetries and stiffness in hips, knees, and ankles, while providing deep relaxation to fatigued leg muscles. (Marla Apt)
- [Virasana \(Hero Pose\)](#)

Author

michaeljoelhall