



Ardha Chandrasana(Half Moon Pose)

Description

Ardha Chandrasana

<https://yogateachercentral.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/ardha-chandrasana-half-moon-shutters>

Ardha Chandrasana Chapasana

<https://yogateachercentral.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/sugarcane-ardha-chandrasana-chapasana>

Ardha Chandrasana

ARE-duh chun-DRAHS-anna

â??ardhaâ?• = half

â??chandraâ?• = brilliance, moon

Half Moon Pose

â??The Sanskrit word Chandra also refers to the qualities of brilliance or shine of the moonâ?|. A lightness and freedom can be experienced in this pose as if you can radiate in all directions.â?• â??
Marla Apt

Heart of Pose

- Balance
- Twists Torso

Joint Actions



- Standing leg: internal rotation; knee extension
- Lifted leg: hip external rotation, knee extension, ankle dorsiflexion
- See also: [Joint Movements & ROM](#)

Effects / Benefits

Energy, Mood, Emotion

Effects to energy, mood or emotion may include the following.

- Challenges and promotes focus and mental stillness.
- Boosts energy and mood.
- May ease tension and relieve stress.
- Brings a balance of heating and cooling.

Inner Body

Inner body effects may include the following.

- Challenges and develops the [vestibular system](#) in a relatively unique way. (See quote below.)
- Tones [abdominal organs](#).

Our vestibular system, the apparatus in the inner ear that gives our brain information about motion, head position, and spatial orientation, is unfamiliar in Half Moon Pose (Ardha Chandrasana). Even though you're maintaining two points of contact (hand and foot), the pose is often more difficult for practitioners than Vrksasana (Tree Pose). That's partly because the head is not upright. â??
Charlotte Bell

Musculoskeletal

Musculoskeletal effects may include the following.

Strengthens

- [Core](#)
- [Spine](#)
- Side body and abdomen
- Chest
- [Outer hips](#), buttocks, legs
- Ankles and wrists

Stretches

- [Calves](#)



- [Hamstrings, inner thighs, groins](#)
- [Back muscles](#)
- Chest, [shoulders](#)

General

- As with all [balancing](#) practices, challenges and improves coordination, proprioception and balance

Ardha Chandrasana Chapasana

Half Moon Bow Pose / Sugarcane offers these additional effects:

- Stretches hip.
- The many effects of [backbending](#)

ROOTING DOWN & EXTENDING OUT TEACHES COORDINATION,
INTERDEPENDENCE, FOCUS

You are rooting down into the earth with your standing leg while simultaneously lifting and extending your raised leg into space. The meeting of these two forces â?? rooting down and extending out â?? gives you the power to balance and suspend your spine and torso in midair. The pose teaches coordination and can help you understand the interdependence of the actions in your body. It can train you to stay focused and balanced during challenging moments of transition in *asana* practice. â?? Nikki Costello

Therapeutic Uses*

- [Digestive Issues](#)
- [Low Back Issues](#) (some types, including â??sacrum pain, [sciatica](#) pain and lumbar aches,â?• per Marla Apt)
- Osteoporosis (Baxter Bell MD)
- [Stress & Tension](#)

* This pose is often associated with positive effects related to the conditions listed. But unless trained in yoga therapy, teachers are usually advised against â??prescribingâ?• particular asanas to address specific conditions.

Contraindications & Cautions

Contraindications

This pose generally not recommended for students with these conditions:

- [Hip Replacement, recent](#)
- [Knee Replacement, recent](#)
- [Osteoporosis](#)

Knee Risk

- Avoid [hyperextending](#) standing leg. Student can be guided to have a "micro-bend" in knee.
- Watch for misalignment of ankle and knee joints of standing leg. Guide students to point toes and knee straight ahead.

ADDING A STEP TO HELP WITH KNEE ALIGNMENT

It's super-common for the front knee to collapse in toward center in half moon, which can make the pose feel more wobbly, and, over time, can lead to some not-so-happy knees. Before you open up into the pose, align your front knee by bending it slightly and lifting your heel, as though you were wearing a high-heeled shoe. Press into the ball of your right big toe, and track your knee toward the pinky-toe side of your foot. Keep rooting through the ball of your big toe and continue to track your knee toward the pinky toe as you *slowly* lower your front heel to the floor. You can keep a small bend in your front knee if it helps you to keep it aligned, or you can move your front leg toward straight. Maintain this healthy-knee alignment as you open up into the pose. — Kat Heagberg

Cases for Practicing Variations

In the following cases, Marla Apt recommends using wall [variations](#):

- Fatigue
- Lower back weakness
- Leg weakness
- Pregnancy

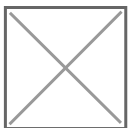
In the following cases, Marla Apt recommends practicing [versions](#) with a block, enabling both legs to be straight:

- Back stiffness
- Hamstring tension

Alternatives

If variations do not address the student's condition, these alternatives might be suitable:

Utthita Trikonasana (Extended Triangle Pose)



- Learn more: [Utthita Trikonasana](#)

Vrksasana (Tree Pose)

A person doing a yoga poseDescription automatically generated with medium confidence



- Learn more: [Vrksasana](#)

See [Asana Category: Balancing](#) for more pose options.

Basic Form

Set Up

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Place block in front of â?? and slightly outside â?? front foot.

1. Begin in [Utthita Trikonasana \(Extended Triangle\)](#).
2. With hand on block or floor beneath shoulder, bend front knee.
3. Option: Traditional pose has top arm reaching straight up. This photo shows a variation of moving into pose with top arm at hip. Top arm can also reach straight back along hip and leg.

[Utthita Trikonasana \(Extended Triangle\)](#) and/or [Utthita Parsvakonasana \(Extended Side Angle\)](#) are often used as preparation and entry points for Half Moon Pose.

Moving Into Pose

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Inhale

1. Slide back foot closer to front.
2. Avoid using momentum* and instead, slowly transfer weight to front foot and hand.
3. Turn from the belly to open front torso toward sky.
4. Keep grounded leg bent while getting balance. Then straighten.
5. Extend top arm up (if shoulders can stack and balance is stable) or keep it at the hip.

* â??Take your time, and donâ??t forget about your standing leg! While it can be tempting to â??pop upâ?• â?! â??shoot forwardâ?• or [otherwise]â?! come into half moon too quicklyâ?! [this] is a surefire way to feel unstable once you get there. Thereâ??s no need to hurry! Take your time and set the stage for a steady *ardha chandrasana* right from the start.â?• (Kat Heagberg)

Exhale

1. Slowly straighten front leg.
2. Draw kneecaps up.
3. Press through both feet.

Gaze



- Traditional gaze is at upper fingertips.
- If neck tension is an issue, gaze down or neutral

Hold Time

- 20 seconds to 1 minute

Coming Out

1. Exhale, bend front knee.
2. Lower leg back to floor, reaching it long in preparation for Triangle Pose.*
3. Inhale, adjust front leg into Triangle Pose.

*Marla Apt emphasizes [here](#) the benefits of going back through Triangle Pose on the exit as opposed to dropping the leg down next to the standing leg.

To Emphasize

<https://yogateachercentral.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/ardha-chandrasana-half-moon-shutters>

1. Keep standing foot and knee pointing straight ahead.
2. Reach lifted leg straight back from hip.
3. Keep spine long and chest opening upward.
4. Align bottom arm under top arm.
5. Radiate out from belly through spine, legs and arms.

Verbal Cues

Standing Leg

A person doing a handstand on a wooden platform

It's usually advised to teach [standing poses](#) from the ground up. • Avoid focusing on upper body alignment, pose refinements or deepening the expression of the pose until the foundation is properly aligned and steady.

1. Point toes straight forward.*
2. Keep knee in line with ankle.**
3. Anchor four corners of foot.
4. "You can continue to return to grounding the mound below the big toe and the outer heel any time you need to regain a sense of balance in the pose." (Kathryn Heagberg)
5. "Imagine the muscles surrounding [your] pelvis are sending electrical impulses down to [your] heel, magnetizing it to the floor." (Allison Ray Jeraci)
6. Maintain a strong arch in foot.
7. Draw kneecap up.

8. Engage quadriceps.
9. â??To avoid knee discomfort, keep rotating standing leg out away from middle so knee remains facing toes of that foot.â?• (Yoga: The Iyengar Way)
10. Keep leg strong and straight. (but avoid hyperextending knee).
11. If discomfort in knee, slightly bend standing leg.
12. â??Press your forward hip deep into your body and keep it moving inward.â?• (Cool Yoga Tricks)

*Please also see: [Common Problems in Alignment Cueing for Standing Poses](#)

**Please see [Cautions](#) for an extra step that can help with knee alignment.

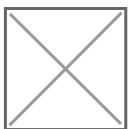
FINDING YOUR BALANCE

Finding your balance in Half Moon Pose is not something that happens at the end of the pose, but rather at the very beginning. It comes, in large part, from the position that you establish with your front foot. You might move your supporting foot in the process of coming up into the pose. This usually manifests as a slight inward rotation of the front foot. The intention is no doubt to create more stability, but it actually creates lessâ?!. Remember, practice Half Moon Pose with your front foot firmly planted in the position that you establish at the outset. â?? Judith Lasater

A WAY TO ENCOURAGE ACTIVATION WITHOUT HYPEREXTENSION

[There is a] tendency to hyperextend your knee on the standing leg in order to get more liftâ?!. [To avoid this] put a little weight in your fingertips and lift your front heel a half-inch off the mat. Then, put your heel down again. You should feel the top of your calf muscle moving forward. Keeping that action, lift your kneecap up â?? then straighten your leg. Why It Works: Youâ??re engaging your standing legâ??s entire posterior chain, which makes it almost impossible to hyperextend your knee. â?? Meghan Rabbitt

Lifted Leg



1. Align leg with hip.
2. Avoid swinging the lift leg backward. Keep it in line with hip.
3. Lift quadriceps.
4. Stretch leg and foot away from torso.
5. Imagine youâ??re pushing your foot into a wall.
6. â??Resist up, as though someone were trying to press your leg down.â?• (Kathryn Heagberg)
7. Externally rotate extended leg.

AVOID BACKBENDING



Don't swing your top leg back. Swinging the lifted leg back behind the body is a common half moon mistake that brings your body into a wobbly backbend instead of a steady balance. To find more steadiness in the pose (and give your poor low back some relief), actually bring your lifted foot forward a little at first. Then, bring the foot of your lifted leg in line with (but not behind) its matching hip, and see if you find a greater sense of equanimity in the pose. â?? Kat Heagberg

Torso & Head

A person doing a yoga poseDescription automatically generated with medium confidence

1. Look to floor or straight ahead until you feel balanced.
2. Extend spine.
3. Lengthen torso and leg away from each other.
4. â??Extend spine and torso uniformly.â?• (Cool Yoga Tricks)
5. Align head and neck with spine. (May need cue to draw head back slightly.)
6. Draw sides of neck gently back. (Yoga Teachersâ?? Toolbox)
7. Relax shoulders away from ears and draw shoulders down back.
8. Allow head to turn up.
9. Inhale and lengthen tailbone.
10. Lift and open upper hip toward ceiling.
11. Turn chest toward sky.
12. Revolve trunk up.
13. Face chest and pelvis straight forward.
14. Turn head and focus eyes on ceiling or thumb of top arm.

AVOID STICKING TAIL OUT

You will tend to let your sitting bones and tailbone move into a backbend (sticking your butt out). So with the rotation of your bottom leg, bring your sitting bones and tailbone back in line with the plane of your torso. â?? Moving Toward Balance: 8 Weeks of Yoga with Rodney Yee

OPEN CHEST WHILE COMING INTO POSE

A student often comes into Half Moon Pose, completely straightens the supporting leg, and *then* tries to open the chest. Suggest that your student open the chest *while* coming into the pose. To do this, when student is two-thirds of the way up, have him or her turn and open the chest, and then straighten the lower leg. Practicing this way is physically and mentally powerful. â?? Judith Lasater

More Cueing Considerations

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1. â??Keep fingertips lightly but firmly on the floor, facing same way as foot. Bend knuckles. Extend wrist and arm upward, away from hand.â?• (Yoga: The Iyengar Way)
2. Align thumb of grounded hand with little toe of grounded foot. (Marla Apt)
3. Align top arm with bottom.



4. Extend arms from shoulders.
5. Energize arms and legs.
6. Radiate out from your center.
7. Engage [bandhas](#).
8. Inhale, feel expansion in upper chest and back; exhale, draw low belly in.
9. Learn to synchronize the actions of raising back leg, straightening front leg and arm when going into posture. (Yoga: The Iyengar Way)

Imagery

SHINING LIKE THE MOON IN THE SKY

Nothing lights up the yoga room like students shining in half moon pose, or *ardha chandrasana*. As our limbs reach out in all directions, it's as if we're floating, suspended in space like the moon in the night sky. Allison Ray Jeraci

These affirmations are suggestions are from Joseph and Lilian LePage, Yoga Teachers Toolbox 2005.

- Perfect balance is my very nature.
- I attune to the body of energy.

See also: [Yoga & Balance \(as a Theme\)](#)

EXPANDING FROM STRONG FOUNDATION

The idea of radiating out in a balancing pose may sound out of reach. But I've found that if you concentrate on creating stability in your standing leg, hip, shoulder blades and tailbone, you'll have a strong foundation from which to extend and expand in all directions. Marla Apt

Visualize a spiral of golden sunlight at the solar plexus, and expand the rib cage to allow for more open breath. Joseph and Lilian LePage

COUNTERING THE PULL OF GRAVITY & SOARING

To balance gracefully in Half Moon, it's essential that you build a solid foundation in the feet, legs, and hips. Doing so requires patience and resolve, but once you've got this underpinning you'll grip less in your diaphragm and rib cage. Your upper body will be light, and instead of being bound by gravity, you'll feel as though you are soaring above the earth, like a great hawk. Tias Little

Video

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Teachasana.com | Teaching Half Moon Pose [5 min video](#)



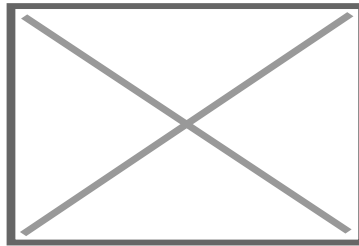
Moving In & Out of the Bind (Chapasana)

??EXPERIMENT WITH THE EFFECT OF GAZE ON BALANCE

Including the gaze as a foundational element of a pose can be the difference between balancing and falling. Try this: Move into half moon pose and turn your gaze up to the sky. Now, bend your top leg and take the bind ([chapasana](#)). Once finished, release the pose and come back to standing. Now, move back into half moon pose, and before you take the bind with the back leg, look down at the floor to set your gaze. Now bind. Now look up. You??re likely to feel more stable. ?? Lizzie Brooks

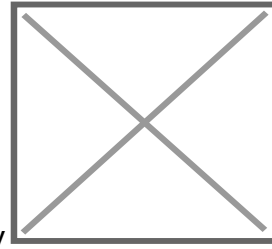
Variations

Ardha ChandrasanaFull Pose





Block and Strap VersionsBlock Under Hand, Strap Around Standing Leg
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Lift Hand from BlockAdded Challenge in an Accessible Way

Vary Gaze or Move NeckVary Neck Position

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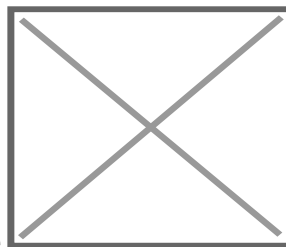


Increase Load on HipStrength Building

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Back to Wall â?? Step 1Setup

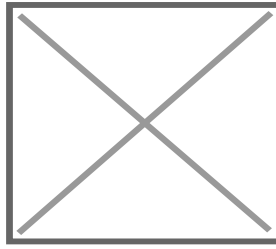
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Back to Wall â?? Step 2Moving into Pose



Back To Wall Step 3Full Expression



Foot to Wall Step 1Measure Distance

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Foot to Wall â?? Step 2Press Foot into Wall

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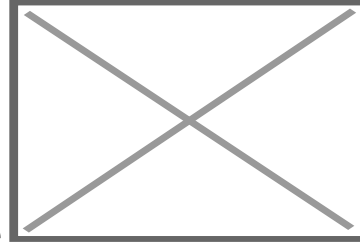
Kneeling VersionWarm Up or Variation

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Warrior 3 to Half MoonHip Rotation Practice

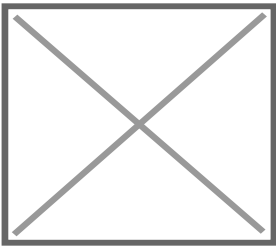


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Floating Half MoonMultiple Challenge Options

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For added challenge there are multiple options. There are three types of variations, sometimes called Floating Half Moon: Keep the top arm on the floor, lift the bottom arm a few inches, or lift the bottom arm as high as possible. Baxter Beal demonstrates [here](#). Or, keep the top arm parallel to the floor, reach the bottom arm forward as far as possible. Rachel LaPlante teaches [here](#). Or, keep the top arm reaching up, reach the bottom arm forward as far as possible, shown [here](#). Reach both arms forward, aligning the shoulders outside the ears, as shown. Other challenge options: Breathe and straighten the standing leg, as shown. Try to lift the hand off the ground, as shown in front of the feet (directly under the shoulders). Provide support and alignment. An added challenge is to balance on one leg, a variation also suggested is to place the feet on a mat.



Ardha Chandrasana Chapasana Sugarcane Pose

A person doing a handstand Description automatically generated with medium confidence

Known as
Moon Bow
or Sugarcane
Pose, this
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Sequencing

Preparation

To practice this pose, warm and prepare the body, particularly the following:

- Hamstrings
- Hips
- Shoulders
- Chest and back â?? for the ability to widen and lift the chest, lengthen the side body and avoid rounding the torso in this pose
- Stability, balance
- For Sugarcane version, increased preparation of hip flexors and quadriceps

Pose Considerations

A person doing a handstand Description automatically generated with medium confidence

[Utthita Trikonasana \(Extended Triangle\)](#) serves a primary preparation role.

You apply what youâ??ve learned in *Trikonasana* to stabilize yourself. The work of your front leg in *Trikonasana*, for example, has to be well ingrained since it becomes your pillar on which to stand in *Ardha Chandrasana*. â?? Marla Apt

Other pose considerations may include:

- [Adho Mukha Svanasana \(Downward Facing Dog\)](#) â?? Spine and shoulders
- [Crescent Lunge](#) â?? Chest, shoulders, stability and balance
- [Utthita Parsvakonasana \(Extended Side Angle\)](#)
- [Parsvottanasana \(Pyramid\)](#) â?? Hips and hamstrings
- [Backbends](#)
- [Ardha Bhekasana \(Half Frog Pose\)](#) or other [hip flexor and quadriceps stretches](#) â?? For sugarcane version

Neutralizing, Countering & Balancing

A picture containing laying, lying, feetDescription automatically generated

The following poses are recommended by Olga Kabel [here](#) to neutralize the effects of the pose:

- [Sphinx Pose](#) and/or [Salabhasana \(Locust\)](#) â?? Kabel teaches a version (called *Vimanasana* in Vinyiyoga) designed to stabilize the sacrum after asymmetrical poses. See more [here](#).
- [Jathara Parivartanasana \(Reclined Twist\)](#) â?? To stretch hips, back and neck
- [Paschimottanasana \(Seated Forward Bend\)](#) â?? To stretch back body and neck, and to counter asymmetrical poses

Hands On Adjustments

Important â?? See [Asana Adjustment & Assisting Guidelines](#) before considering any hands on adjustments.

Balance & Deepen



To help student feel supported while exploring alignment and deepening.

1. Set up behind student. Be in a wide legged squat facing student. Or (as in photo) be in Mountain facing same direction as student.
2. Ensure her front foot and knee are properly aligned straight ahead.
3. Support her grounded leg. If you are facing her, support with your ribs & front body. If youâ??re facing same direction, use your hip and leg to provide support.
4. With one hand, support thigh of lifted leg.
5. With other hand, support upper arm.
6. Gently provide lift to back leg (as appropriate) while gently guiding top arm to be directly above shoulder and lengthening. She may lean slightly into you.
7. To exit, slowly release hands but keep supporting her until youâ??re sure she is balancing on her own.

Balance, Deepening & Opening



To support student as in previous photo but emphasizing opening in chest.

1. Set up behind student. Be in a wide legged squat facing student. Or (as in photo) be in Mountain facing same direction as student.
2. Ensure her front foot & knee are properly aligned straight ahead.
3. Support her grounded leg. If you are facing her, support with your ribs & front body. If youâ??re facing same direction, use your hip & leg to provide support.
4. With one hand, support thigh of lifted leg.
5. With other hand, cup top shoulder.



6. Gently provide lift to back leg (as appropriate) while gently, mindfully drawing shoulder toward you. She may lean slightly into you.
7. To exit, slowly release hands but keep supporting her until you're sure she is balancing on her own.

Author

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