



Garudasana (Eagle Pose)

Description

Garudasana

gah-rue-DAHS-anna

• = Mythological name of the • = king of birds • = who transports Lord [Vishnu](#)

Eagle Pose

Heart of Pose

- Standing Balance
- Hip & Shoulder Opening

Joint Actions

The following are from Leslie Kaminoff's book, *Yoga Anatomy*.

- Mild spinal flexion
- Scapula abduction, upward & lateral rotation, elevation
- Elbow flexion
- Pelvis anterior tilt, counternutation
- Hip flexion, internal rotation, adduction
- Knee flexion, internal rotation
- Ankle dorsiflexion
- Foot • = lifted in eversion, standing in slight supination
- See also: [Joint Movements & ROM](#)

Preparation

- To help prepare legs for *Garudasana*, consider poses such as [Utkatasana \(Chair Pose\)](#), [Vrksasana \(Tree Pose\)](#), and [Gomukhasana \(Cow Face Pose\)](#).
- To help prepare shoulders for *Garudasana*, consider poses such as [Bridge Flows](#), [Shoulder Stretches](#), [Ardha Garudasana \(One Arm at a Time\)](#), [Thread the Needle / Reach Under the Bed](#), and [Gomukhasana \(Cow Face Pose\)](#)

Effects / Benefits

Musculoskeletal

Musculoskeletal effects may include the following.

- Cultivates balance.
- Strengthens glutes, hips, inner thighs and quads.
- Strengthens core.
- Strengthens ankles.
- Strengthens chest.
- Stretches upper back and between shoulder blades.
- Stretches shoulders, arms and wrists.
- Stretches outer hips, IT band, and ankles.
- It broadens the sacrum, an area where many people typically hold a lot of tension, and softens the groins, which allows a free flow of energy in the lower body. (Cyndi Lee)

STRENGTHENS STANDING LEG WHILE DEMANDING PRESENCE

By standing on one leg, as you do in Eagle pose, you isometrically chisel and tone every muscle in the standing leg and buttock cheek! This pose demands your presence and cultivates balance, strength, and serenity. Baron Baptiste

BALANCE, STRENGTH & STRETCHING

This pose is a combination of balance, strength, and stretching. *Garudasana* (Eagle pose) is great for unlocking tension in the shoulders and developing strength in the ankles. *Garudasana* can feel like you are tying yourself in a knot, but once you get used to it, you'll feel its instant benefits. It builds balance, brings calmness, sharpens your focus, and helps with concentration. Learning to open the back torso is beneficial for advanced inverted poses, such as Handstand and Headstand. YogiTimes. *Garudasana / Eagle Pose*

Energy, Mood, Emotion

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

- Draws energy inward.

- Improves focus and concentration.
- Relieves stress.
- May inspire a feeling of serenity, poise, steadiness.
- Cultivates confidence.
- Heating.

What we love about *Garudasana* is that it gives the opportunity for full introspection because you have to rely on your sense of touch to stay in the pose. â?? Sophie Parienti and Jesse Gabler

Inner Body

Inner body effects may include the following.

- Increases circulation to joints.
- Improves digestions and elimination.
- â??Massages abdominal and pelvic organs, especially ovaries & testes.â?• (Joseph LePage)

Contraindications & Cautions

Contraindications

- [Ankle injury](#)
- [Low blood pressure](#)
- [Plantar fasciitis](#)
- [Shoulder injury](#)

Cautions

- Donâ??t force ankles, arms or wrists.
- Ensure knee of standing knee faces forward.
- If there is low back, knee or hip pain, begin with modifications.

Basic Form

Set Up

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1. Place hands on hips and feet together or hip width apart.
2. Bend knees slightly. Or, bend deeply into Chair Pose

Moving into Pose

A person dancing in a roomDescription automatically generated with medium confidence

Legs

1. Shift weight and lift leg. Exhale, cross thigh and knee over grounded leg.
2. Hook toes around shin. Or, place foot on block, or on floor.
3. If right leg is wrapping over top of left leg, then take left arm over right.*

Arms

1. Cross hands so bottom hand connects with palm of top hand. (Or, hook thumbs. Or, reach hands straight out and cross hands so backs are together, then draw back toward face, as Amber Karnes teaches [here](#).)
2. Lift elbows to shoulder height.

Stay upright or bend forward bringing bottom elbow to touch top knee. (Instructions and images [here](#).)

*Alternatively, Switch Placement of Arms

“My teacher, Sandra Anderson, taught the pose with the same arm as leg on top (if the right leg is on top, the right arm is on top, and vice versa). This seemed a bit more challenging, balance-wise! I asked her why she taught the pose this way, and her answer was pretty intriguing, and a great reminder of the deeper, more subtle aspects of *asana*. [See the [article](#) for a consideration of how energy flows in asymmetrical poses.]” Kat Heagberg

To Emphasize

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1. Stack shoulders over hips.
2. Keep knee of grounded leg pointing straight ahead.
3. Expand upper back and collarbones.
4. Squeeze arms and legs together.
5. Stretch hands and fingers up.
6. Relax face.

Verbal Cues & Mythology

Legs & Feet

A picture containing person, femaleDescription automatically generated

1. Bend standing leg.
2. Keep grounded foot stable with heel and toes down.

3. Keep knee of grounded leg pointing straight ahead.
4. Squeeze inner thighs together.

Shoulders, Arms & Hands

A person doing yogaDescription automatically generated with medium confidence

1. Stack shoulders over hips.
2. Stack forearms over elbows.
3. Keep elbows lifting to shoulder height or,
4. Slowly move arms up and down, noticing changes.
5. Draw shoulders down away from ears.
6. Squeeze elbows together.
7. Press outer borders of shoulders away from each other. (Joseph LePage)
8. Point fingers straight up.
9. Stretch hands and fingers up.

Head, Neck & Torso

1. Reach torso upward.
2. Soften face.
3. Gaze softly straight ahead.
4. Draw navel toward low back to find neutral pelvis.
5. Release sacrum down to lengthen the low back.
6. Keep pelvis and torso as upright as possible.

More Verbal Cues

1. Point knees and elbows straight forward.
2. Inhale, expand upper back, shoulder blades and collarbones. Exhale, squeeze arms and legs together. (Stephanie Pappas)
3. Lift torso up and bend down into standing leg.
4. Release struggle.

THREE ACTIONS AT WORK

There are three actions at work in Eagle Pose: centering your hips and shoulders, opening your chest, and creating spinal length and space. To square your hips, imagine holding a bowl of water on your pelvic floor. Try not to let a single drop spill out over the front edge of your pelvis. Scoop your tailbone in and slightly under and pull the front of your pelvis up toward your abdomen. Draw the pit of the belly in and up. You also want to align your hips horizontally; concentrate on keeping both hip bones level and pointing straight ahead. Baron Baptiste

SQUEEZING LEGS & ELBOWS

Consider *Garudasana* to be a balancing version of the fetal position, with the hips adducted and internally rotated and the arms crossed over one another. Squeezing the legs together connects the pelvis with the feet and helps to maintain balance. Squeezing the elbows together augments the contractile force of the leg muscles and the pelvic diaphragm, thereby synthesizing balance and *mula bandha*. — Ray Long

BREATH & ENERGY

Imagine that you are a boa constrictor, wrapping around yourself. Feel the pulsation of your energy contracting and expanding. Draw your breath and energy toward the center and midline of your body. — Stephanie Pappas

FEELING ENERGY MOVE UP

Feel energy move up through the spiral formed by the body, from the feet to the crown of the head, replicating the form of the DNA in your own body. Feel all the cells of your being coming into alignment as they resonate with this life force. Notice that this spiral of energy begins deep in the earth and continues up to the heavens, forming an energetic link between earth and sky with the body supported in the center. Feel this spiral of energy rise up into the third eye, instilling your being with the centered strength of the eagle as you gaze forward proudly like Garuda, the winged vehicle of the Gods. — Joseph LePage

Mythology Behind Pose Name

GARUDA LEGENDS

Garuda, the eagle god known in Buddhist lore for his 40-foot wingspan, is revered for his special powers, such as shrinking and growing at will. A single flap of his gargantuan wings is said to move mountains. Garuda is ubiquitous in the East. His image is the national symbol of Thailand and Indonesia, and his legends span across Hinduism and Buddhism. He plays a starring role in the first book of India's epic, *Mahabharata*. — Charlotte Bell

VISHNU'S VEHICLE, DIVINE BIRD & POWERFUL SOLAR SYMBOL

Garuda means "wings of speech." This is the name of Vishnu's vehicle, a divine bird whose wings are formed by the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet. Garuda is a powerful solar symbol, leading to enlightenment. — Joseph LePage

MYTHICAL CREATURE GARUDA: EAGLE'S HEAD, WINGS & TALONS & HUMAN BODY

It is humbling, as human beings, to realize the limits of our own perception. Perhaps that is why, in mythology, the symbolism of birds and animals is incorporated into the gods and goddesses. For example, the mythical creature Garuda (whom this pose is named after) has the eagle's head, wings and talons, and a human body. With its extended sight, as well as the power to soar to great heights and to strike its target with precision, Garuda is famed for its ability to destroy evil in the form of nagas,

or snakes. Symbolically considered to be a destroyer of obstacles on the path of Liberation, Garuda is also the vehicle of Visnu, the Divine power that preserves life. â?? Swami Lalitananda

MYTHICAL, KING OF BIRDS, A MAGICAL SPECIES, NEVER GET TIRED, RIDE THE WIND

To find ease and a feeling of freedom in the pose, it might help to think about the myths behind Garudasanaâ??s name. Garuda, though often translated as â??eagle,â?• is actually a mythical bird in the Hindu and Buddhist traditions. As the vehicle of the god Vishnu, Garuda is said to be the king of birds. In Tibetan traditions, the garudas are considered a magical species; they are often described as â??outrageousâ?• because of their extraordinary ability to fly and fly and flyâ?| and never land. They never have to land because they never get tired. And they never get tired because they ride the wind. â?? Cyndi Lee

THE EAGLE: A SYMBOL OF POWER & VICTORY, KEEN EYESIGHT, NO ENEMIES, LIVES IN SOLITARY SPLENDOR

The eagle is the king of the birds, a symbol of power and victory. A bird of prey, it hunts from sunrise to sunset, flying and soaring over its territory, spotting faraway prey with its extremely keen eyesight. It strikes with unerring accuracyâ?| has no enemies, and lives in solitary splendor. It is no surprise then that the eagle is an emblem of victory in battle and also for the triumph of spirit over intellect. â?? Swami Sivananda Radha

Baxter Bell Videos

[3 min, Eagle arms](#)

A picture containing standingDescription automatically generated

[3 min, Arm variations](#)

A picture containing textDescription automatically generated

[4 min, Arms vinyasa](#)

A picture containing floor, sport, gymnasticsDescription automatically generated

[5 min, Slow dynamic version](#)

A picture containing floor, indoor, sportDescription automatically generated

[3 min, Eagle arms, Tree legs](#)

A picture containing floor, person, sport, armDescription automatically generated

Barrie Risman Video: 14-min Sequence

•A short practice for exploring Eagle pose. The sequence focuses on the lower and upper body work separately and then it puts them together in the full pose. I offer simple warmups, prop variations, and modifications to make this pose more accessible and enjoyable to practice. •

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Variations Summary

Leg Variations & Alternatives

A person doing yogaDescription automatically generated with medium confidence

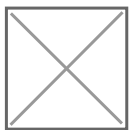
1. Less bend in the knees
2. Foot of crossed leg rests on block
3. Foot of crossed leg rests on floor
4. Figure 4 Legs with side of shin on thigh
5. [Utkatasana \(Chair Pose\)](#) legs with Eagle arms
6. Any other leg stance, such as Warrior 2 (shown)
7. Eagle arms stretch from a seated position, either a meditation seat such as *Vajrasana*, or from sit bones with knees bent and ankles crossed in front as shown in [Variation Photos](#)

Arm Variations & Alternatives

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1. With arms around upper chest in a hug
2. Sometimes called *Ardha Garudasana*, stretch one arm at a time as shown [here](#) and [here](#)
3. Rest elbow in other elbow but forearms don't cross; make fists.
4. Use a strap as Amber Karnes teaches and demonstrates [here](#)

More Variations



1. Practice with sit bones at wall.
2. Have a chair or wall within reach to steady balance, as needed.
3. Lean torso forward, almost parallel to floor.
4. Move or tilt arms to one side for a few breaths, and then the other.
5. Make big circles with elbows both directions. (Charlotte Bell)
6. Practice from a chair as Andrew McGonigle teaches [here](#).
7. Practice a core strengthening variation and flow from a supine position as Leah Sugerman teaches [here](#).

8. Practice from a supine position, as Jivana Heyman teaches [here](#).
9. Combine Eagle arms with other poses as shown above.

Very slowly and mindfully rotate your head and neck in semicircles from one shoulder to the other. Do not tilt the head back in Eagle Arms. Keep your head in front of or lined up with the shoulders. â??
Charlotte Bell

Variation Photos

GarudasanaEagle PoseA picture containing standingDescription automatically generated

Balance without Wrapping LegPrep Or Alternative

A person jumping in a roomDescription automatically generated with low confidence

In Other Standing PosesCombine Eagle Arms with Other Poses

A person doing yogaDescription automatically generated with medium confidence

Modified Seated Balance PrepEagle Arms from a Seat

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Eagle Arms StretchFrom a Comfortable Seat

A person doing yogaDescription automatically generated with medium confidence

See [Variation Cues](#) for instructions
As a preparatory alternative practice balance with less challenging leg positions
[Variation Summary](#) many ideas
See [Variation Summary](#) many ideas
In this sequence variation legs are crossed front in a or alternative for Eagle legs.
See [Variation Summary](#) many ideas

Arm Variation HugWrap Arms Around Torso

A person sitting on the floorDescription automatically generated with low confidence

Ardha GarudasanaHalf Eagle Pose One Arm at a Time

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Other CombinationsIn Various Poses

A picture containing tableDescription automatically generated

Eagle Legs in a TwistFrom a Supine Position

A person posing for a pictureDescription automatically generated with medium confidence

Matsyasana VariationEagle Arms & Legs in a Different Pose

A person doing a plank on the floorDescription automatically generated with low confidence

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Category

1. Uncategorized

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