



Prasarita Padottanasana (Wide Legged Standing Forward Bend)

Description

Prasarita Padottanasana A

https://yogateachercentral.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/prasarita-A-floor-between-feet-shutterstock_361015093.jpg

Prasarita Padottanasana B

https://yogateachercentral.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/prasarita-B-hips-shutterstock_361015093.jpg

Prasarita Padottanasana C

https://yogateachercentral.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/prasarita-C-clasped-overhead-shutterstock_361015093.jpg

Prasarita Padottanasana D

https://yogateachercentral.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/prasarita-D-toes-shutterstock_367194719.jpg

Prasarita Padottanasana

prasarita = spread out, separated or expanded

pada = foot or leg

uttan = intense stretch, extended

Expanded Leg Intense Stretching Posture

Also known as: Wide Legged Standing Forward Bend

Heart of Pose



- Standing Forward Bend

Naming

- Version A: Hands to floor
- Version B: Hands at waist
- Version C: Clasped behind back
- Version D: Clasping big toes

Notes

Prasarita Padottanasana is one of the quieter standing poses. This pose stretches the hamstrings, but more gently than poses in which the legs are closer together. You can include this pose at the end of your standing pose practice, as a rest between vigorous standing poses, as a preparation for a long practice of seated forward bends, or before or after Down Dog. In addition, it can be practiced before you begin inverted poses. — Judith Lasater

- Sometimes used as a milder inversion such as an alternative for Headstand
- Version C prepares shoulders for Shoulderstand
- Often sequenced at end of standing poses to relieve fatigue
- — This is a resting pose! — (Silva Mehta)

See Also

- [Asana Categories](#)
- [General Alignment Principles](#)
- [Alignment Cueing](#)

Benefits

Musculoskeletal

- Stretches hamstrings, adductors (inner thigh muscles), and calves
- — Makes hips joints more flexible — (Judith Lasater)
- Strengthens — and stabilizes — legs
- Strengthens feet & ankles
- — Spinal traction relieves upper body tension, elongates spine and core — (Erich Schiffmann)
- — Hydrates the spinal disks — (Joseph LePage)

Energy, Mood, Emotion

- Relieves fatigue



- Deep release and introspective quality of this pose quiets and soothes the nervous system (Baron Baptiste)

Inner Body

- Increases blood flow to brain
- Invigorates brain; circulates fluids and energy to the trunk and head (Joseph LePage)
- Tones internal organs: liver, spleen, kidneys, digestive organs, pancreas, and gallbladder (Baron Baptiste)

Cautions

When choosing a variation or alternative, consider the following:

1. The heart / purpose of the pose.
2. The role it is playing in the sequence.
3. Why the pose is not accessible or appropriate for this student at this time.

Contraindications

- [Disc disease](#)
- Hernia, hiatal
- [Pregnancy: Last month](#)
- Reflux

In addition, [inversions](#) in general are not recommended for:

- Inversions (of any type) are typically contraindicated for any conditions that may be made more severe by an elevation of blood pressure or intracranial pressure.
- Brain Conditions such as Epilepsy, Trauma, Stroke, or Intracranial Pressure
- Cervical Spondylitis
- Diabetes and/or Insulin Resistance
- Eye Issues including Glaucoma or Retinal Detachments
- Heart or Circulatory System Conditions such as Cardiovascular Disease or Hypertension / High Blood Pressure
- Menstruation (opinions differ; see Wisdom & Inspiration below for considerations)
- [Overweight](#)
- [Pregnancy](#), Second and Third Trimesters
- Vertigo
- Viral Infection such as Flu or Cold, and Infections of the Ear or Sinuses

Kyphosis

<https://yogateachercentral.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/bad-posture-types.jpg>

- In the case of Kyphosis (also called Hyperkyphosis or Thoracic Kyphosis), forward bending (spinal flexion) of any sort is contraindicated.
- [Neck, Shoulder & Upper Back Issues](#)

Sciatic Pain

- In the case of [sciatic pain](#), sometimes forward bends are completely avoided.
- Other experts recommend avoiding seated forward bends and those with a twisting component such as *Janu Sirsasana* (Head to Knee Pose).
- Generally, forward bends done on the back such as *Apanasana* (Knees to Chest) are considered safer.

Watch Out For

- Bending from lower back rather than hip joints, causing a rounding in the back.
- Hunching shoulders.
- Pelvis tilted to one side rather than evenness though the hips.
- Strenuous Forward Bends
- Strenuous forward bends in general are not advised in the following cases. These conditions indicate a need for particular care in choosing forward bend variations or alternatives, and promoting safe practice.

Pain

- Any case where pain is experienced during forward bending, including degenerative discs, low back strain or any acute injury.

Back Issues

- Disc Injury, recent or acute
- Disc Herniation
- [Osteoporosis of the thoracic spine](#)
- Spinal Stenosis, when instructed by healthcare provider to minimize forward bends.
- Spinal surgery, recent

More

- [Hamstring tendonitis](#), when there is pain in hamstrings during forward bending.
- Hernia or a abdominal wall separation if increased bulging in those areas is created by forward bending.
- [Pregnancy, 2nd & 3rd trimesters](#)



Verbal Cues

It's typically advised that teachers provide no more than three instructions per pose so that students have time to work with the teaching. Here you'll find many options from which to choose. Some cues make the same point in different ways, and occasionally some can be contradictory, so please try them out for yourself. When cues are unusual or uniquely described, we have noted the source.

Feet

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. Keep feet parallel; may need to turn toes in slightly to do so.*
2. • Allow legs to be far enough apart so crown of head touches ground or prop with neck and spine at their maximum length. • (Joseph LePage)*
3. Press feet firmly. Fully engage both inner and outer edges of feet.
4. Center weight over arches. (Notice if in variations, weight shifts to heels and come back to center.)
5. Distribute weight evenly across the bottom of each foot.
6. • Do not grip with the toes. • (David Swenson)
7. Spread weight evenly between heel and ball of each foot. • Press inner heels into ground and lift arches. • (Rodney Yee)
8. • Press into the outer edges of the feet as you lift the sitting bones up toward the ceiling, softening and lengthening the hamstring muscles. • (Christina Brown)
9. Lift inner anklebones; press into outer edge of feet.
10. • Stabilize the ankles by pressing the balls of the feet into the mat, while at the same time lifting the arches. • (Ray Long)
11. In full posture, outer edges of feet stay down and knees are straight.
12. If your head easily reaches the floor, then bring feet closer. (Baron Baptiste & Erich Schiffman)

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

Legs & Hips

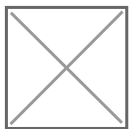
1. Find strong legs without • jamming, • locking or hyperextending knees.
2. • Activate • or • engage • quads, or • Lift kneecaps. •
3. Lift inner thighs away from each other.
4. Engage adductors (inner legs) to avoid rolling out onto outer edges of feet. (David Swenson)
5. Keeping feet still, move inner legs away from each other.
6. • Draw lower legs together and widen thighs energetically, creating space in pelvis. • (Joseph LePage)
7. • Roll thighs slightly in to open back of pelvis. • (Joseph LePage)

8. Pull tops of thighs back.
9. Keep hips centered over legs.
10. Bring hips forward so backs of heels, backs of knees & sit bones are in one line. (Christina Brown)
11. Lift & spread sit bones.
12. Engage hip flexors and abdominals to squeeze torso against thighs. (Ray Long)
13. â??Draw the pubic bone back & up while stretching the belly button and sternum toward the floor.â?• (Mark Stephens)

EXPANDING THE SHAPE OF WHO YOU ARE

Spreading the legs as wide apart as they are able to stretch is immensely satisfying, and it expands the shape of who we are in the outer world. â?? Christina Brown

Shoulders, Arms, Hands

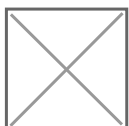


1. In traditional full poses, hands on floor are in line with feet.
2. Spread fingers wide.
3. When hands are on floor, elbows are over wrists, forearms vertical & upper arms parallel to ground.
4. When, hands are on floor, â??Draw elbows in toward each other to open the back.â?• (Baron Baptiste)
5. Lift shoulders.
6. Move shoulder blades into back & up toward pelvis â??so that you can truly relax your neck from the foundation of your shoulder blades.â?• (Rodney Yee)

DEEP STRETCHING

Deepen the stretch by stretching into the elbows, pressing them away from you, as you simultaneously press your hands firmly forward on the floorâ??as though you were trying to slide the floor forwardâ??without actually allowing your hands to move. Stretching into the elbows and pressing forward with the hands will take you deeper through your legs.â?• â?? Erich Schiffman

Hands Clasped (Version C)



1. Keep elbows bent and wrists straight. (Kat Heagberg)
2. Lengthen hands away from shoulders, arms releasing toward floor.
3. Squeeze shoulder blades together; open upper chest.

4. Draw arms into their sockets and firm shoulder blades onto back. (Rodney Yee)
5. Inhale, stretch out through arms and lengthen arms by moving shoulders toward hands. Exhale, make hands heavy, squeezing them gently down toward floor. (Erich Schiffman)

Head, Neck, Back



1. When setting up, align back of head with back of pelvis. (Kat Heagberg)
2. Allow back of neck to be long.
3. Let the weight of your head lengthen the spine.
4. Keep lengthening front of spine.
5. Lengthen spine straight down.
6. Inhale, lift ribs away from belly; exhale, fold forward more deeply
7. Relax the back.
8. "Spread buttock bones away from each other to create space" in the SI joint and to prevent strain in the lumbar. (Silva Mehta).
9. Keep eyes soft and steady.
10. Relax face, forehead, jaw.

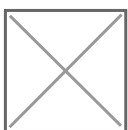
ELONGATE LOW BACK

Initiate and continue the forward bend from your hips joints and not from your lower back. In other words, your pelvis should tip forward so that your lower back is elongated and the arch in the lumbar spine retains its natural curve: it does not round up or out. You can accomplish this, in part, by keeping your abdominal muscles slightly active. If your lower back is in the right position, then your ribs will neither poke out nor be pulled in. "Judith Lasater

KEEP CHEST & COLLARBONES BROADENED

[For Hands Clapsed, Version C:] Broaden your collarbones, lift your sternum, and start to reach your hands away from your pelvis (keeping your elbows at least slightly bent). If your lower ribs jut forward, draw them back. Keep that as you reach your hands back away from your pelvis. Keep your elbows at least slightly bent. This will help you to stay broad across your chest! Keep broadening through your collarbones and move your chest forward like you would in cobra pose. Relax your face and jaw. "Kat Heagberg

Energetic or Inspirational Cues





1. [Balance will and surrender](#).
2. “Feel the pelvis as the physical and energetic center of the body, where will and surrender are balanced, harmonized, and integrated. Rest in this balance of will and surrender, each complementing the other, and forming a unity which is the whole Self.” (Joseph LePage)
3. “Breathe smoothly. Bring the pose to life.” (Erich Schiffman)
4. Engage [bandhas](#).

FILL THE TORSO WITH COOLING ENERGY

Draw breath and energy up the legs into the pelvis with each inhalation, and with each exhalation, allow cooling energy to cascade down the spine, creating a waterfall that fills the torso with a pool of soft, cooling energy. “ Joseph LePage

Variations Summary

Naming Summary

- Prasarita Padottanasana A “ Hands to floor
- Prasarita Padottanasana B “ Hands at waist
- Prasarita Padottanasana C “ Hands clasped behind back
- Prasarita Padottanasana D “ Hands clasping big toes

Beginner Variations & Alternatives

- Fingertips (vs palms) on ground
- Hands under shoulders (rather than between feet), head on bolster or block
- Hands under shoulders (rather than between feet), chest lifting, torso parallel to ground
- Hands to block or blocks, torso parallel to ground
- Hands reach further forward, as in Down Dog
- Hands to shins, torso parallel to ground
- Bend knees
- Rather than grasping big toes, hold backs of legs
- While grasping big toes, flex elbows & pull with arms but rather than folding, keep chest lifted
- Bend knees, elbows to thighs, flat back (David Swenson p 37)
- Rather than clasping hands, clasp opposite elbows

More Advanced Variations

- Hands on floor back behind feet
- Hands in [Anjali Mudra](#) behind back, as in [Parsvottanasana](#)
- Side Twist Variation: Walk hands toward right foot; clasp ankle. Or place left hand on outside of right ankle and right hand at low back. Exhale, turn belly to right. Switch sides.



Other Variations

- Pitta: Focus on complete surrender of upper body (Joseph LePage)
- Kapha: Focus on keeping pose active (Joseph LePage)
- Hands clasping ankles

Variations

Arm Bind Variations

Clasp Elbows

<https://yogateachercentral.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Prasarita-Arm-Bind.jpg>

Clasp opposite elbows or take *Gomukhasana* (Cow Face) arms.

Fold One Side

One or Both Hands to Foot

<https://yogateachercentral.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Prasarita-7-fold-one-side.jpg>

More Variations & Adaptations

See Variations for many more considerations.

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