Uttitha Parsvakonasana A & B

Description

UTTHITA PÄ?RSVAKOÅ Ä?SANA A (5 MOVEMENTS)

1	EKAM	Inhale, open to the right, arms out
2	DVE	Exhale, right hand down, left arm reaches

3	TRINI	Inhale, up. Feet parallel, arms out.
4	CATVARI	Exhale, left hand down, right arm reaches
5	PANCA	Inhale, up

UTTHITA PÄ?RSVAKONASANA B (5 MOMENTS)

1	EKAM	Inhale, open to the right, arms out
2	DVE	EXHALE, TWIST LEFT HAND DOWN
3	TRIÅ I	INHALE, UP. Feet parallel, arms out.
4	CATVARI	EXHALE, TWIST RIGHT HAND DOWN
5	PANCHA	INHALE, UP EXHALE, SAMASTHITI

Anatomy

UTTHITA PARSVAKONASANA

EXTENDED LATERAL ANGLE POSE

This pose represents a natural progression from virabhadrasana IIâ??another exam- ple of continuity between poses. Imagine that in Warrior II you are taking an exag- gerated step in preparation to throw a spear. Utthita Parsvakonasana would be the â??follow throughâ?• of throwing the spear. We go from an erect trunk in Warrior II to one that is laterally flexing in this pose. The back arm moves from extending away from the body in Warrior II to stretching over the head in Utthita Parsvakonasana. Combining the action of the shoulder and arm with anchoring the back foot into the ground creates a stretch of the entire upper side of the body. Turn the back foot in and the front foot out ninety degrees. Straighten the back knee and externally ro- tate the hip. Flex the torso over the front thigh and rotate the chest upward from the abdomen. This causes the lower side of the body to shrink and the upper side to stretch. Look at how the shoulders and pelvis tilt in opposite directions, com- municating with each other through the spine. Press the front foot into the floor with the weight starting at the posterior heel and spreading across the ball of the foot and toe mounds. Turn the face slightly upward and tilt the head back. Remember that the underlying story of this pose is in the breath. Use the accessory muscles of breathing to open the chest and deepen your inhalations while relaxing into the exhalations. Turning the body activates the abdominal mus- cles, which work in conjunction with the internal intercostals and the elastic recoil of the lungs to aid in exhalation. Remember to ease in and out of the breath to cre- ate a sound like waves on a beach. Use ujjayi breathing.

BASIC JOINT POSITIONS

- â?¢The back foot turns in 30 degrees and supinates.
- â?¢The front foot turns out 90 degrees.
- â?¢The back knee extends.
- â?¢The back hip extends and externally rotates.
- â?¢The trunk laterally flexes and rotates up.
- â?¢The lower-side shoulder abducts and the elbow extends.
- â?¢The upper-side arm abducts and flexes overhead, with the elbow extending.
- â?¢The upper-side forearm pronates.
- â?¢The cervical spine rotates the head to face upward with the neck slightly extended.

STEP 1 Combine contraction of the lower-side abdominals, hip flexors, and spinal rotators and flexors to bend the torso over the front leg. This involves a layered movement of the femur flexing, the pelvis tilting forward (anteverting), and the var- ious deep back muscles laterally flexing and rotating the spine.

STEP 2 Anchor the back foot into the floor by contracting the tibialis posterior to turn the foot inward (inversion). Then try to draw the top of the foot toward the shin by engaging the tibialis anterior muscle. This presses the heel down. Straight- en the knee by activating the quadriceps and its synergist, the tensor fascia lata. Co-activate the gluteus medius and adductor magnus to stabilize the femur in the hip socket. The cue for this is to attempt to drag the back foot away from the front, while pressing the sole of the foot into the floor.

STEP 3 This image shows a combination of muscles that can be used concurrently to extend the back body and open the front body. The gluteus maximus forms the cornerstone, extending and externally rotating the back femur. The adductor mag- nus synergizes this extension. The cue for engaging these

muscles together is to press the sole of the back foot into the floor and drag it toward the back side of the mat. The lower-side erector spinae both flexes the trunk and opens the chest for- ward and upward. The cue for this action is to arch the lower-side back.

STEP 4 Here we show the principle of connecting the upper and loweappendicular skeletons, that is, the upper arm and outer knee. Engage the triceps to straighten the elbows. Press the hand onto the floor or onto a block to contract the serratus anterior. Then activate the external rotators of the shoulder, including the infraspinatus and teres minor, to turn the shoulder out. Press the outer knee into the arm to engage the gluteus medius and tensor fascia lata. Notice how this counteracts the tendency of the pelvis to move outward and the knee to drift in- ward. This is an example of closed chain contraction, where we move the origin of a muscle instead of its insertion. In this case, the gluteus medius and tensor fascia lata move the ilium bone. Connecting the arm and leg in this manner creates lever- age and combines with the action of the back-leg gluteus maximus to open the front of the pelvis.

SUMMARY All of this culminates in the final pose stretching the upper-side back muscles; the front-leg gluteals; the front of the pelvis, including the back-leg adductors; and the calf muscles of the back leg.

PARIVRTTA PARSVAKONASANA

REVOLVING LATERAL ANGLE POSE

Parivrtta parsvakonasana is both a twist and a standing pose. Two stories take place simultaneously here: lunging forward and turning the torso. The main story in this pose is the combined action of turning the shoulders in one direction and the pelvis in the other; the connection between the shoulders and the pelvis turns the spine. Press the upper arm into the thigh to create a leveraging force that ro- tates the torso toward the front leg. At the same time, externally rotate the rear hip and leg to turn the lower body in the other direction. This produces a coiling effect on the vertebral column. As with the warrior poses, Parivrtta Parsvakonasana has the front hip and knee flexing to produce a sense of forward movement, while the back hip and knee extend to constrain this momentum. Combine the leveraging forces of the extremities with the rotational force produced by the abdominal oblique muscles to turn the torso and spine. The skeletal system is divided into the axial and appendicular skeletons, with the appendicular skeleton being further divided into the arms and shoulder girdle (upper section) and the legs and pelvic girdle (lower section). The axial skeleton comprises the vertebral column and thorax. Just as the earth revolves around its axis, when you connect the upper and lower appendicular skeletons, as in this pose, you can rotate the body around its axisâ??the vertebral column (see *The Key Muscles of Yoga* for a more detailed explanation on the skeletal system).

BASIC JOINT POSITIONS

- â?¢The back foot rotates inward 90 degrees.
- â?¢The front foot turns out 90 degrees.
- â?¢The front hip and knee flex to 90 degrees.
- â?¢The back hip extends and externally rotates.
- â?¢The trunk laterally flexes and rotates.

- â?¢The wrists extend and the elbows flex.
- â?¢The shoulders abduct.
- â?¢The cervical spine rotates to turn the head to face upward.

Parivrtta Parsvakonasana Preparation

Begin in a lunge position with the back knee on the floor. Keeping the knee on the floor provides an opportunity to feel the lunge and twisting actions in the pose without the challenge of balance. Press the opposite elbow against the front knee to turn the torso. Activate the abdominals to get a feeling for rotating the trunk to- ward the front leg. Contract the back-leg quadriceps and gluteus maximus to straighten the knee and extend the hip. As flexibility increases with time, place the forward hand on a block and press the back of the arm against the outer thigh. The classical pose has the hand on the floor outside of the foot and the back foot flat on the floor, turning in about thirty degrees. This requires a great deal of flexibility in the spine and should never be forced.

STEP 1 Squeeze the torso against the thigh to contract the hip flexors, including the psoas and its synergists. Press the outer side of the thigh against the back of the elbow, activating the sartorius. Note that the pelvis tilts forward as the front-leg femur flexes.

STEP 2 Press the elbow against the knee to turn the body. Break down this act into the following subplots, and feel how each action deepens the twist of the torso:

- **A.** Press the upper palm down against the lower palm to activate the upper-side pectoralis major.
- **B.** Press the back of the lower arm into the thigh to activate the lower-side posterior deltoid.
- **C.** With the front arm fixed against the thigh, draw the upper-side scapula toward the spine. The rhomboids will pull the torso into a deeper rotation around the axis of the spine.
- **D.** Attempt to scrub the upper-side palm away from the body to contract the triceps and the lower-side palm toward the chest to contract the biceps. The palms wonâ??t move because they are pressing together, but the activation of these mus- cles aids to turn the torso.

STEP 3 Engage the lower-side abdominal oblique muscles to revolve the trunk to- ward the front leg. At the same time, gently arch the back to turn the torso from the core. The lower-side serratus anterior muscles aid to rotate the torso, and the upper-side rhomboids draw the scapula toward the spine to synergize this action. These combined movements turn the chest around the axis of the spine.

STEP 4 There is a tendency for the front-leg knee to drift inward in this pose. Counter this by pressing the side of the leg into the back of the arm to activate the tensor fascia lata. Create stability in the pose by combining opposing actions in the front and back legs. Do this by attempting to straighten the front knee while push- ing off with the back foot.

STEP 5 Activate the back-leg quadriceps to straighten the knee. Contract the back- leg buttocks to extend and externally rotate the femur. Visualize the gluteus min- imus muscle stabilizing the ball of the hip in the socket.

SUMMARY Engaging the muscles as detailed in Steps 1 through 5 produces recip- rocal inhibition of their antagonists, relaxing them into the stretch. In Parivrtta Parsvakonasana, the following muscles lengthen in the torso: the lower-side erec- tor spinae and quadratus lumborum, the lower-side

rhomboids, and the upper-side serratus anterior. In the lower body, the front-leg hamstrings, adductor magnus, and gluteus maximus stretch, while the back-leg psoas, pectineus, adductor longus

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