

**POSE OF THE MONTH**

July 2006

**Tirianga Mukhaekapada Paschimattanasana** – One foot transversely facing back intense west stretch (Triang means transverse, Mukha means face, Eka means one, pada means leg or foot, paschima means west, Uttana means intense.)

This is another forward bending posture -- with one leg folded back alongside the thigh. This is NOT the “hurdlers stretch” as that stretch is contraindicated in the field of sports medicine (except for hurdlers!) due to the strain it places on the inner ligaments (medial collateral) of the knee.

**Method**

☯ From Downward facing dog, hop through folding your right leg back, right foot alongside your right thigh, top of your foot on the floor, knees together. Pay attention to not let your foot roll out; all five toes should be in contact with the floor.

☯ Catch your left foot with both hands (even if you have to bend your knee), lift your head and chest up fully, take an inhale

☯ Exhale bend forward from the hip joint and place your forehead on your knee or shin. If

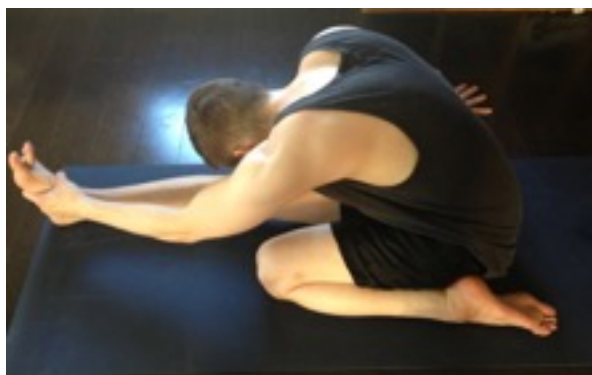
you are ‘listing’ or tilted to one side you may have to keep your elbow on the floor to help stabilize (or your hand), otherwise if you can, lift your elbows and gaze out toward your toes. Stay here for 5 deep breaths.

☯ Inhale lift your head, exhale ground your hands, inhale pick up yourself tucking your left leg under your right leg and take

vinyasa or switch

feet and repeat left.

**Some precautionary work may be necessary.** If you are very tilted in this posture you may need to practice Virasana or knee sitting to get the ankles, knees, and/or thighs enough range of motion to do the full posture. Sitting on your heels with feet and knees together is the easiest position, progress by moving your feet apart (keep your knees together) and your sitting bones toward the floor. When you are able to sit with your sitting bones on the floor you will be comfortable in tirianga mukhaekapada paschimattanasana. To make virasana more





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comfortable you can roll your calf out as you tuck your thigh in—although some would call this movement a fidget that requires too much thinking! If tiriang position is too hard on your knee, you can practice child's pose (balasana) or virasana in place of the full posture temporarily. Remember you are working externally on the body, and you will not be receiving the benefits of Triang Mukhaekapada paschimattanasana, so be careful not to let yourself get "stuck" in balasana or virasana, but try the full posture regularly.

In general, if you feel knee pain while in Virasana you can place a block beneath your sitting bones or lift your hips up and either come forward onto your hands and knees or just lower your hips to the point of no pain. If you feel work or stretch in the ankles and tops of feet—you need this posture!

### Benefits

This pose cures a number of afflictions including body fat, water retention, swollen thighs, hemorrhoids, and sciatica. When sciatica is present apana vayu and vyana vayu are not working properly. (Vyana vayu during the night moves around the body and collects waste material generated by the Dhatu (tissue) metabolism. When we eat heavy or animal based foods this process takes all night and terminates by Apana Vayu (the energy of 'down and out' as in giving birth or going to the bathroom) becoming active to remove all the waste that Vyana vayu collected during the night - this should allow an evacuation in the morning. Until Apana vayu removes the waste Vyana vayu is still working on removal of wastes and will make the body stiff aggravating the sciatic nerve.)

This pose requires internal hip rotation of the leg that is tucked back help to release tight external hip rotators that are common in western societies. If your knee flares to the side in the marichyasana series . . . or if your knees want to bow outward in paschimattanasana . . . these are signs you have tight external hip rotators, this pose will be useful to correct that.

This pose is also a counter balance to the external rotation of the hip joint in the padmasana (lotus) and half lotus posture. These postures initially externally rotate the thigh to someone learning lotus newly, as the hip joint gets more flexible and the lotus position deepens (knees moving closer together and heels rotating upward) the thigh then will start to internally rotate, which seems to be a better position for the knees while in lotus).

It is reminded by Pattabhi Jois that these benefits come with consistent practice over a long period of time! In yoga terms this would be called durga kala (very long time) and nairantarya (without break).