

POSE OF THE MONTH

Urdhva Mukha Paschimottanasana

Urdhva means upward, *mukha* means face, *paschimo* means west, *uttanasana* means intense stretch, so upward facing intense west stretch (the west being the back side of our body). This is the same posture as the first in the seated poses, except you turn it against gravity and add a balance challenge to it!

Method:

- ॐ From downward facing dog hop through and lie down on your back in Supta Samasthiti.
- ॐ Press your lower back toward the floor exhaling, with an Inhale lift your legs up and over to the plough position, be aware to not push with your hands to lift your legs up (unless you need to), try to use the strength of your abdominals for this lift.
- ॐ Exhale, catch the outer edges of your feet, toes pointed, ideally hold close to your heels, but rolling up with straight legs is easier if you hold closer to your toes. If possible keep your legs straight, and lengthen your spine by reaching your sitting bones toward the ceiling.
- ॐ To prepare for the roll up, exhale and draw your hips toward your head by flexing your spine and rolling over your toes until they are flexed, Inhaling push off your toes roll up (trying to keep your legs straight), to make the roll smooth; curve your lower back by drawing your abs inward using your bandhas and your breath for the rolling motion.



- ॐ To catch balance, at the end of your inhale lift your tailbone, head, and heart upward coming to balance just behind your sitting bones, and straighten your legs if possible. Exhale and tuck your head in toward your knees, working gently toward straightening your legs. Point your toes. Drishti is upward.

- ॐ This pose requires more hamstring flexibility as well as momentum than the previous pose. If you are tight in your hamstrings, it is OK to bend your knees during the rolling motion and while holding the posture.
- ॐ Hold this position 5 breaths, exhaling cross your legs ground your hands, inhale pick up and exhale jump back for vinyasa.



Benefits:

This pose strengthens the abdominals and lower back, the esophagus, and the 2nd chakra. When our second chakra is purified, activities become light and free and easy, and impediments such as disease do not torture one.