

Dandasana

Danda = Stick or Staff “Stick Posture”

Our spine is our danda, or stick -- attention is given to proper alignment of the spine in this and many poses.

Dandasana is the “Samasthiti” of the seated poses, most of our seated poses start from this position.

Dandasana is our transition from the external to the internal. Standing poses work more externally on the body opening our hips and hamstrings making our body a little more flexible to go deeper in the postures. Seated postures focus on internal cleansing. Use dandasana as a pose to make the mental shift from an external focus to an internal focus.



Alignment

- ॐ Sit with legs outstretched, thighs slightly contracted and feet dorsiflexed (toes pulled back). Do not allow heels to lift off floor, push through your heels and think of moving your sitting bones and heels away from each other.
- ॐ Straighten your back, lift your heart, ribs closed in (not popping out), back of your neck long, ears over shoulders, chin parallel to the floor.
- ॐ Relax the external muscles of your body in this pose, do not create tension! Instead use your inner strength, your bandhas, to create length in your spine and lift of your heart. Imagine your bones supporting your posture and your muscles relaxing on your bones ... Let your muscles “hang” on your skeleton.

NOTE: If you have tightness in your lower back or hamstrings you will need to bend your knees to keep the spine straight —“attention to spinal extension”.

- ॐ Dandasana helps prepare the back for the forward bending postures to come. It also develops awareness of extending our spine--this action strengthens the middle back (improving posture). The middle back first





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contracts as we prepare for a forward bend (with the “inhale look up and extend your spine”) and then relaxes as we ease into the pose.

Yoga Chikitsa aka Primary Series

Dandasana is the transitory pose from the standing postures to the seated postures. This is where we enter the Primary Series of Ashtanga Yoga, known as “yoga therapy” or yoga chikitsa. The practice of yoga chikitsa helps to cleanse and purify the internal organs—if the organs of the body are not clean, disease develops. In today’s sedentary lifestyle with the prevalence of processed foods and toxins (in our food, in our environment, in our toiletries and household products, etc.!) — the organs of the body are over-loaded.

The asana in primary series are effective in preventing the accumulation of waste products, keeping the body free from disease. Postures (yogasana) can help rebalance a diseased body and maintain balance in a healthy body. Each individual asana has many specific benefits, however detoxing is a central theme of primary series. It is not just the asana that detoxify the body, it is the heat, the sequencing, the breathing and the bandhas combined with the asana that create quite an extraordinary therapeutic system.

The actual practice of learning and doing Ashtanga Yoga is therapy—the breathing, sweating, stretching, rearranging, realigning, squeezing and soaking, purifying and transforming.

It cleans out the system, de-stressing and detoxing as it assists the body in its ability to heal itself and maintain a strong and healthy immune system.