

Sample Instructional Video

Hello! Welcome to an introduction to Eden Yoga's upcoming beginning yoga program. The program includes 16 videos that offer clear, simple instruction, and a short whole-body yoga practice.

With this video I'd like to give you a sense of what these 16 videos are like.

Each video will include:

- One concept from yoga philosophy
- At least one core principle of physical alignment
- Several poses that you can easily practice at home, at the office...pretty much anywhere

The philosophical concepts are from the classic two thousand-year-old text "The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali". This book lays out ten basic principles that are considered a foundation for any yoga practice. These are the 5 *Yamas* and 5 *Niyamas*, which have to do with our interactions with self and others. Number one is *ahimsa*, which means non-violence or non-harming. In the spirit of *ahimsa*, I designed this beginning yoga program to help you develop first-and-foremost a SAFE yoga practice.

So how do we prevent injury?

Following these two rules will go a long way in avoiding injury:

1. Move slowly in and out of poses with careful attention to alignment, and
2. Only go to about 85% of your maximum stretch. A good measure of this is to make sure you can maintain a steady, relaxed breath in the pose.

We'll talk about these two guidelines throughout the course. They are especially important in the beginning because it often takes some practice to distinguish between the muscular discomfort that happens as you build strength and flexibility, versus over-doing it and risking injury.

Let's begin with ***Urdvha Hastasana, Upward Hand Pose***. This can be done seated or standing.

1. Straighten the arms in front of you, **make the palms parallel**
2. As you take the arms up, **spin the elbow creases** away from each other to keep the palms parallel
3. **Straighten the arms** at the elbows

Slowly release the arms back down.



Now take the arms up without those actions and see what happens. Usually the palms face forward and the shoulders move up into the neck. This is not problem, except for the fact that most of us spend a lot of time in a similar posture. (Video clips: Driving, computer, phone, reading in bed, sleeping). To maintain a healthy posture and strong, stable shoulders joints, we want to focus on actions to bring a *balance of strength and flexibility* to all the muscles around our joints.

Ok, good. Now let's break this down a little more. This is a simple pose, but excellent for maintaining healthy, pain-free shoulders.

1. As you spin the elbow creases away from each other, **draw the lower armpits down** the sides of the ribcage
See how that releases tension where the neck and shoulders meet?
2. **Draw the arms into the shoulder sockets**
See how it broadened across the collarbones?
Can you feel how these actions stabilize the shoulder socket?
3. Keep drawing the outer armpit down as you take the arms up
4. Reach the fingertips to the ceiling to straighten the arms

Slowly release the arms back down.

The next pose is **Urdvha Baddha Hastasana, Upward Bound Hand Pose.**

1. **Interlace the fingers, and press the palms away from you**
2. **Draw the outer armpits down** as you lift the arms
3. Draw the thumbs and little fingers toward the floor as you **press the palms to the ceiling**



****Remember to practice ahimsa.** Hold the pose at about 85% of your maximum stretch. You will benefit much more from backing off a bit and maintaining a steady, relaxed breath, than by straining.**

Release the arms down. **Change the interlace of the fingers**, opposite index finger on top. **Repeat.**

Next is **Tadasana, Mountain Pose.**

This pose teaches steadiness on the feet and improved symmetry between the left and right sides of the body. When we stand, it's common to shift the weight into one hip and drop the chest. Standing in line at the store, at the sink washing dishes, etc. are great opportunities to practice *Tadasana* and improve balance and posture.

From the front:

1. **Stand with the feet together or hip width apart**
2. **Balance the weight equally between the left and right foot**



From the side:

1. **Move the thighbones back** to take weight in the heels
2. **Move the buttocks forward** to shift the weight toward the toes. Use those two actions to balance the weight between the toes and the heels
3. **Lift the sides of the ribcage as you reach the fingertips downward**



Can you see how these actions have created more symmetry between the left and right sides of the body and created spaciousness equally across the front side of the body and the back side?

Do you feel more steady, alert and confident this posture is compared with the other?

Paschima Namaskarasana, Reverse Prayer Pose

1. **Press the hands into the back** to broaden across the collarbones
2. **Reach the elbows down**
3. To release, straighten the arms and reach the fingertips to the floor (do not shake out the arms)

Repeat the same way, or with the palms together.



OR



OR



Gomukhasana, Cow Face Pose (arms only)

Top arm:

1. As you turn the elbow crease out, **reach the straight up**
2. Bend the elbow and **walk the fingers down the back.**
Keep the elbow in line with the shoulder by turning the triceps toward the face.



Bottom arm:

3. Bring the hand behind the back
4. **Press the hand into the back** to broaden across the collarbones
5. **Reach the elbow toward the floor**
6. Clasp the hands behind the back (or use towel or belt)



Adho Mukha Svanasana, Downward Facing Dog Pose (hands on wall)

1. Place the hands on the wall at hip height and step the feet back so they are under the hips.
2. **Turn the elbow creases out**
3. Pretend to **slide the paint down the wall** to activate the outer armpits
4. **Press the wall away** and **move the thigh bones back** to lengthen the spine

For a deeper stretch, step the feet further from the wall.



Adho Mukha Svanasana, Downward Facing Dog Pose *With a twist

1. Stand with the hands on the wall, hips over the ankles
2. **Grasp the outer left knee with the right hand**
3. To twist, **bend the left elbow and turn it up** toward the ceiling as you **pull on the left leg**
4. To release, bring both hands back to the wall.

Repeat on the other side.



Parsvottanasana, Intense Side Stretch (hands on wall)

1. Step the right foot forward and left foot back
2. Place both hands on the wall
3. **Draw the right hip back** to square the hips (make both hips equidistant from the wall in front of you)
4. **Turn the elbow creases out.** "Pull the paint down the wall" to **lift the chest**
5. To release, step the back leg in and come up

*Remember ahimsa: Hold the pose just shy of your maximum stretch. Maintain straight legs and a smooth, steady breath.

Take a shorter stance for less stretch, longer stance for a deeper stretch.

Repeat on the other side.



Virabhadrasana I, Warrior I (hands on wall)

1. Step the right foot forward and left foot back
2. Straighten the back leg, plant the heel firmly on the floor
3. **Bend the front leg** until the knee is directly over the ankle.
(If knee goes past the ankle, take a longer stance)
4. **Turn the elbow creases out, draw the outer armpits down** and pull the paint down the wall to **lift the chest**.
5. To release, step in.



Switch sides and repeat.

*I designed our practice today to counteract the neck, shoulder, and back tension caused by long hours at a computer, driving, etc. Instead of practicing the classic versions of these poses, we used the wall to dynamically open the chest and strengthen the upper back muscles.

Tadasana, Mountain Pose

1. **Balance the weight** between the left foot and the right foot
2. Balance the weight between the heels and toes
3. **Lift the sides of the ribcage**

Let's observe the effects of today's practice.

- Relax the gaze, let your gaze be level across the room.
Relax the eyes
- Relax the facial muscles and jaw
- Relax the tongue. Let it rest in the floor of the mouth
- Feel the sensation of the breath moving in and out of the lungs



As you release from Mountain Pose and move into your day, carry this sense of peace and tranquility with you.

Thank you for watching. I look forward to seeing you next time!