

Standing Postures and Bhastrika Pranayama

A big thank you. Choose a wide stance—a good spacing; the outer edges of the feet parallel. Let the feet meet the floor. Discover how the body inhabits the space. The feet can "pass through" the floor; the crown of the head reaches for the ceiling.

But also, the sensitivity and the front of the body: we can sense the wall in front, the distances behind us, to the left, and to the right. It's the sensitivity of the body awakening in all directions.

Turn the sole of the right foot to the right, and you can turn the left foot slightly inward. The left leg will be well extended. Face the right foot. We choose to slightly bend the front leg at first. Do not push against the floor; let the feet truly sink into it.

This requires not "freezing" the posture, allowing bodily oscillations to happen. Sometimes it doesn't feel entirely comfortable or secure, but let it happen. Bring the arms behind the back: the right wrist in the left hand.

The front of the body lengthens—from the pubis to the throat. Explore forward, gently. The front leg can remain slightly flexed. Perhaps you can release and abandon the head. See how far you can go; force nothing.

Balance may not be easy; just see what happens. The breath is very alive. As if a benevolent hand were gently pushing the torso forward, the torso rises. The back is not involved in the ascent. Release the arms, free the hands. All ten toes point forward.

Feel the feet meeting the floor. You might feel one leg surrendering more than the other. Don't comment or draw conclusions; just notice.

Good. Left foot to the left, right foot slightly inward. Extend the right leg well. Press into the outer edge of the right foot, the pinky-toe side. We choose to bend the left leg slightly at first to move gently into the pose.

Take the right wrist in the left hand behind the back. Long front side. Dive forward gently from the pelvis. See how far you can go. Can you abandon the head? The breath is long.

Exhale. Long breaths. Right leg is well extended. A benevolent hand pushes the torso forward. The torso rises.

No back involved; free the hands. All ten toes point forward.

Feel the feet in the floor.

If you don't freeze the posture, you can also feel the hips. Tension can flow into the feet and then into the floor. The breath flows.

Right foot to the right, left foot adjusted... we turn it in. (I've had some difficulty today because I hurt my left knee slightly; don't watch if I lose my balance). Facing the front leg.

If you can, bring the hands into prayer ("Paschim Namaskarasana") behind the back between the shoulder blades. If not, you can hold opposite elbows. The front side lengthens, chest opens. Lean toward the front leg.

Perhaps you can straighten it or keep it slightly bent. See what's possible for you and release. The belly, the head, the torso... we don't push the floor away. Is the back leg well extended? Is the outer edge of the foot well anchored?

As if the torso were being pushed upward, it rises. Release the hands. All ten toes forward. Feel the feet, the floor; the feet that sink and pass through.

Supple, flexible. Don't freeze anything: the ankles, the knees, the hips... simply don't push the floor away.

Left foot to the left, right foot slightly inward. Facing the left leg. You can perhaps straighten the left leg already, or keep a slight flexion. Bring the palms together in prayer behind the back or hold opposite elbows. Lean toward the leg gently, whatever is possible without forcing.

Can I let myself be moved by the coming and going of the breath? Inhale following exhale. You can release the head. Like a draft of air lifting the torso, it rises.

Yes. Arms and hands are freed. Toes forward. Feel the legs surrendering into the floor, to the left and to the right.

Turn the right foot to the right, the back foot slightly inward. Torso to the right. Arms are heavy, hanging; the leg straight this time. Lean forward over the leg.

You will see for yourself if it's too demanding or if there is too much compression. The knee will bend naturally—let it happen. And release, release, release... the belly, the chest, the head... shoulders flow into the hands. The breath flows.

Place the right hand (either on fingertips or flat) in front of the right leg, whatever works best for you. Left hand on the left hip. First, let the left hip move back.

Move back. Then the torso follows, turning toward the sky. The hip stacks over the other hip, then the torso pivots. The head can be in line with the spine or turned toward the sky, depending on your neck today. Don't block the breath. Inhale well, exhale well. Return to frame the leg.

The torso rises. Toes forward. The feet meet the floor. Let the hips settle into the feet.

Left foot to the left, right foot slightly inward. Torso turns left. Arms hang. Long front side. Dive forward gently. Left leg straight, right leg straight.

Unless there is really too much compression or tension. Abandon the torso. Strong presence in the outer edge of the right foot. The breath flows.

Place the left hand in front of the left foot, on fingertips or flat. Right hand on the right hip. The right hip moves back and up, then the torso pivots toward the sky. As if you wanted to press your chest against the ceiling. The head either toward the ceiling or in line with the spine. Don't force. The breath flows.

Return over the leg. Both arms descend. Torso rises. All ten toes forward. Bring the heels and toes together in zigzag until they are hip-width apart. Outer edges parallel.

Feel the reaction. See what has been touched by the practice. Let the body adjust; let the feet meet the floor. Let the outer edges of the feet sink.

You might feel a slight dynamic: the base of the pubis moving slightly forward. The chest clears from the digestive tract; shoulders free. Both arms rise out to the sides. Depending on your shoulders, see if you can bring them overhead. Don't create extra tension.

The thumbs find each other. Keep the pubis forward, chest cleared. The breath flows. Inhale; palms are very alive, fingers long. Reach for the ceiling, but keep the shoulders low.

Interlace the ten fingers and turn the palms toward the ceiling. Keep the pelvis slightly forward. Chin tucked.

The chest, the hands, and the arms move back slightly—not too far. Keep the pelvis slightly forward. Inhale, a moment of plénitude; the feet sink.

Hands reaching back and up. Exhale. Two or three breathing cycles. After the inhale, a moment of suspension: the body grows to infinity, like a magic body of two or three meters, or even beyond the room. Exhale, release slightly.

Inhale... suspension... magic... growing infinitely. Exhale. The head returns, arms vertical, then they descend slowly. This is not an abandonment; the return is also part of the posture.

Lie down on your back. Feet slightly apart, falling outward. We choose to do nothing. Shoulders far from ears, neck aligned, chin slightly tucked.

Discover the points of support. Let the body settle into them. Feel the breath. Inhale: the caress, the wave rising from feet to head. Exhale: the wave descending from head to feet.

Let yourself be rocked by this caress, by this wave. Like waves rocking you. Imagine you are on an island... and let yourself be hypnotized by the waves, by their musical silence or musical resonance. Let yourself be made by a gentle freshness.

Discover how good it is to do nothing, to enter into intimacy with yourself and these internal movements. Simply BEING. Feel the substance of the body; keep that same sensation.

Let the body indicate the path to a seated position. Sit with legs crossed, with or without support. Seat is on the front of the sit-bones. Verticalize the pelvis. The chest cleared from the digestive tract. Shoulders surrendered; hands also.

The crown of the head reaches for the sky, placed just above the coccyx in your perception. Weightless. Give yourself to the vibration.

Thank you.