

Seated Forward Bend

This pose stretches your spine, shoulders, and hamstrings. It also improves digestion and stimulates internal organs such as the liver, kidneys, ovaries, and uterus. Seated Forward Bend can also ease headaches. An introspective posture, its gesture of surrender helps to reduce stress and calm your mind.

HOW TO DO IT

- Sit in Staff Pose (pages 218–19), with your legs extended in front of you and your feet flexed.
- Inhale and lift your arms above your head, parallel to each other. Sit up tall to lengthen your spine.
- Exhale and fold forward. Grasp the outside of your right foot with your right hand, and the outside of your left foot with your left hand.
- Hinge at your hips, easing your abdomen down toward your thighs. Allow your head to release downward, and hold for the recommended breaths.

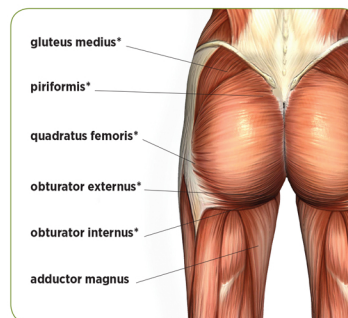


DO IT RIGHT

- Keep your feet flexed.
- Try sitting on a folded blanket if desired.
- To help you fold deeper onto your thighs, think of having a slight arch in your lower back as you root your thighs into the floor.
- Close your eyes if you feel comfortable doing so.
- Try to lengthen your exhalations so that they are longer than your inhalations.
- Avoid letting your big toes move closer to you than the other toes; as you flex, your feet should be straight, as if you were standing on the floor.

MODIFICATION

EASIER: If your hamstrings and/or lower back feel tight, try placing a yoga strap around the balls of your feet instead of reaching all the way to your feet.

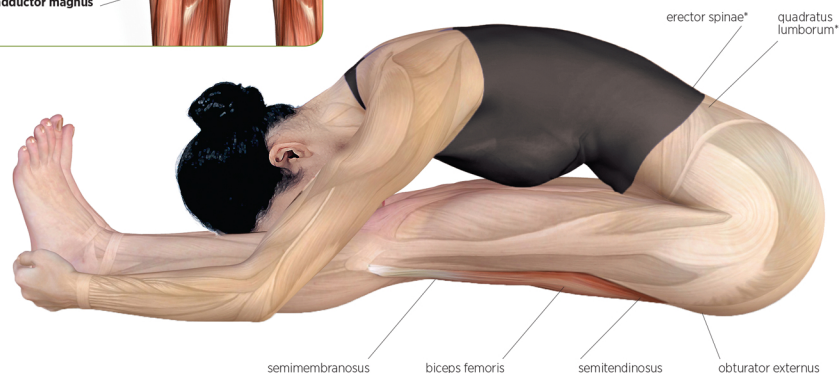


Annotation Key

Bold text indicates target muscles

Light text indicates other working muscles

* indicates deep muscles



FACT FILE

SANSKRIT

• Paschimottasana

TARGETS

- Shoulders
- Hamstrings
- Back

BENEFITS

- Stretches spine, shoulders, and hamstrings
- Calms mind
- Relieves headaches and depression

CAUTIONS

- Hamstring issues
- Lower-back issues

Upward Salute

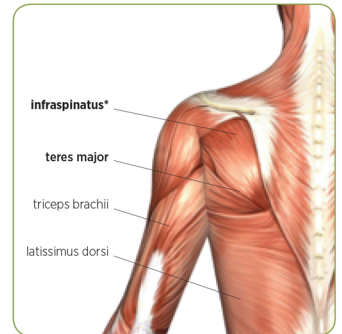
Upward Salute is a joyous pose, worthy of its place as the second pose in Sun Salutation A (page 39). Performed correctly, it stretches your entire body.

HOW TO DO IT

- Begin in Mountain Pose (pages 32–33), with your arms at your sides.
- Inhale as you reach your arms out to your sides, and continue lifting until you are standing with your arms above your head. Your hands should be shoulder-width apart.
- Straighten your arms, and rotate your shoulders open externally so that the palms of your hands face each other, spreading up through your fingertips.
- Gaze forward. Hold for the recommended breaths.

DO IT RIGHT

- Stretch your arms completely straight from your elbows.
- Soften any tension in your shoulders.
- Avoid tensing your shoulders up toward your ears.



FACT FILE

SANSKRIT

- Urdhva
Hastasana

TARGETS

- Entire body

BENEFITS

- Offers a full-body stretch, especially the arms, shoulders, and abdomen

CAUTIONS

- Neck issues
- Shoulder issues

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Volcano Pose

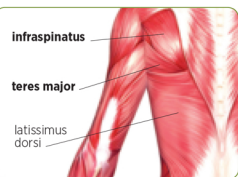
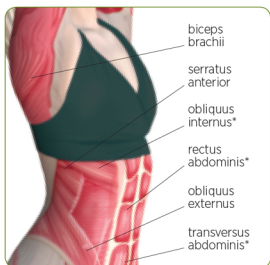
A variation of Upward Salute, Volcano Pose is also known as Upward Hand Pose. It is a base pose that helps boost energy, making it a great pose to include in yoga sequences.

HOW TO DO IT

- Begin in Mountain Pose (pages 32–33), with your arms at your sides.
- Gently raise your arms to the ceiling.
- Tilt your head back to bring your gaze up to your thumbs. Hold for the recommended breaths.

DO IT RIGHT

- Stretch your arms completely straight from your elbows.
- Soften any tension in your shoulders.
- Avoid tensing your shoulders up toward your ears.



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FACT FILE

SANSKRIT

- Urdhva
Hastasana

TARGETS

- Entire body

BENEFITS

- Offers a full-body stretch, especially the arms, shoulders, and abdomen

CAUTION

- Neck issues
- Shoulder issues

Sun Salutation A

As its name suggests, this graceful standing bend is often part of a Sun Salutation variation, following Upward Salute or Volcano Pose. It creates space in the lower back and hip flexors, preparing you to move into a forward bend.

HOW TO DO IT

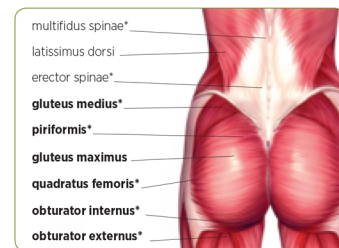
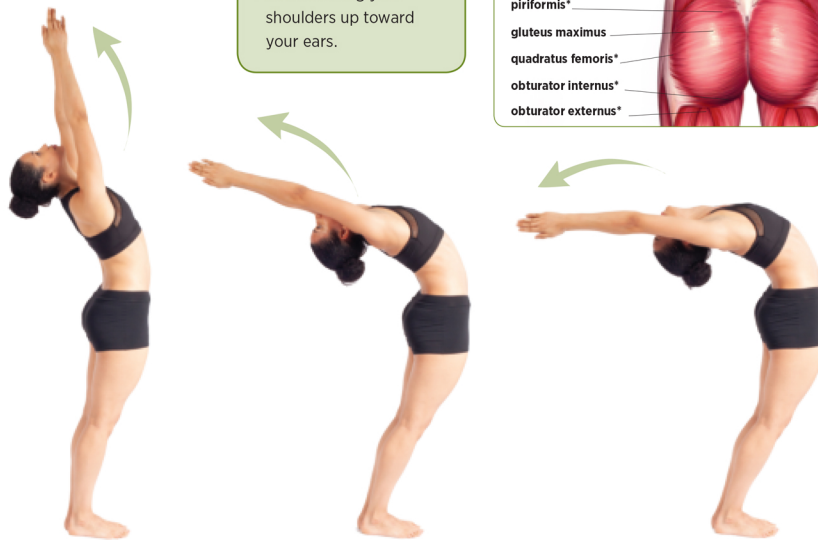
- Begin in Mountain Pose (pages 32–33), with your arms at your sides.
- Move into Upward Salute (pages 36–37).
- Keeping your arms extended, drop your shoulders back in as deep a backbend as you can comfortably assume. Hold for the recommended breaths.

DO IT RIGHT

- Perform it on a deep exhalation.
- Begin with small moves, tilting backward only as far as you can go while maintaining your balance.
- Stretch your arms completely straight from your elbows.
- Soften any tension in your shoulders.
- Avoid tensing your shoulders up toward your ears.

Annotation Key

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* indicates deep muscles



FACT FILE

SANSKRIT

- Surya
Namaskarasana

TARGETS

- Entire body

BENEFITS

- Offers a full-body stretch, especially the arms, shoulders, and abdomen

CAUTIONS

- Neck issues
- Shoulder issues
- Lower-back issues