Jan LeFrancois is an Intermediate Junior II certified Iyengar yoga teacher who lives and teaches in Spartanburg, South Carolina, and owns Iyengar Yoga Spartanburg, [http://iyengaryogaspartanburg.com/](http://iyengaryogaspartanburg.com/). Jan first came to yoga when she was in elementary school and imitated her college student brother as he practiced asanas in their living room. She came back to yoga as an adult dealing with mononucleosis in the early 1990’s and began studying Iyengar yoga in 1994. She has continued her study of Iyengar yoga since that time and thanks Jan Campbell and Mary Reilly for their teaching and guidance through her most recent assessment in 2017. Jan is also an associate professor of psychology at Converse College where she teaches beginning yoga and some blended yoga and psychology classes such as “Women’s Wellbeing and Yoga,” and “Yoga and Stress Management.” She and her husband Paul have several pets including Yoshe, their dog who hails from the streets of Pune, India.

**Sequence created and modeled by Jan LeFrancois, Intermediate Junior II CIYT, Spartanburg, SC**

**Photos by:** Maria Boothe and Paul LeFrancois

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**Matsyasana, Fish Pose**

Approximate Time: 90 minutes

Props required: 1-2 blocks, 3-4 blankets, strap, mat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matsyasana, Cross Legged Pose</th>
<th>Swastikasana</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Sit on two folded blankets with your shins crossed at the midpoint of each shin.</td>
<td>● Sit quietly for a few breaths and sound <em>aum</em> to yourself.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Balance your weight evenly across the two sitting bones and lift your chest.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Roll the inner, upper arms out and back to move the outer shoulder blades in towards the spine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Press the inner edges of the shoulder blades forward towards the front chest and move the portion of the spine between the shoulder blades, the dorsal thoracic spine, forward to the sternum.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Adho Mukha Virasana
Downward Facing Hero’s Pose

- Sit on your heels with your knees apart and the big toes together.
- Take your chest into the space between your inner thighs.
- Extend your arms forward, alongside your ears and lengthen the side chest, waist, and outer hip sockets back in the direction of wall behind you.
- Press into your inner hands as you turn the inner upper arms up and spread across the top shoulders.
- As in Swastikasana, move the inner edges of the shoulder blades in toward the front chest and spread the front ribs.
- Keep your waist and lower back long.
- Focus on the action of the shoulder blades and work on holding this one-pointed state of consciousness (ekagra) for several breaths.

### Adho Mukha Svanasana
Downward Facing Dog Pose

- From Adho Mukha Virasana, extend your legs into Adho Mukha Svanasana. As you do this, press your top thighs back strongly.
- Press down through the inner edges of your feet and draw the inner thighs up.
- Roll the upper inner thighs back.
- Draw up your back thighs and move your buttock flesh toward the upper back thighs. Notice how this helps lengthen the lower back.
- Press into the thumb side of each hand, lift up the inner arms and turn the inner, upper arms forward.
- Move the dorsal spine forward toward the sternum as you did in Adho Mukha Virasana.
- Keeping your focus on the shoulder blade action, go on pressing the top thighs back and lengthening the waist and lower back.
### Uttanasana
Intense Stretch Pose

- From *Adho Mukha Svanasana*, bring your feet together or a few inches apart.
- Walk your hands back to your feet.
- Press evenly through the feet, lift up your thighs and tighten your knee caps.
- Similarly, to *Adho Mukha Svanasana*, as you lift the thighs, turn the inner, upper thighs back and spread across the back thighs and across the lower back.
- Release your neck and head downward.
- If your hands don't reach the floor, use a block under each hand.

### Tadasana
Mountain Pose

- Stand with your feet together, spread your toes, press down evenly through the feet and lift your thighs and inner groins.
- As in *Uttanasana*, roll your inner thighs back and bring your buttock flesh towards the hamstrings.
- Lift your chest up, and as in *Adho Mukha Svanasana*, turn your inner, upper arms forward, the outer upper arms back and press the dorsal thoracic spine forward.
- Spread the collarbones.
- Keep moving the buttock flesh toward the hamstrings to keep the lower back long.
| **Utthita Parsvakonasana**  
Extended Side Angle Pose | ● From *Tadasana*, jump and spread the feet and hands widely apart.  
● Turn the left foot inward an inch or two and the right foot and leg out 90 degrees.  
● Exhale and as you press through the outer edge of the left foot and bend the right knee to a 90-degree angle, knee aligned over the ankle.  
● Lift the chest, exhale and extend through your right hand, as you take your chest out over the right leg and your right hand to the floor or to a block.  
● Extend the left arm straight up to broaden the chest.  
● On an exhalation, bring the left arm alongside the head and extend.  
● Press into the inner edge of the right foot, lift from the arch to the inner knee. Turn the knee inner to outer and draw the outer thigh to the outer hip socket.  
● Grip the outer right hip, roll it under the right sitting bone and turn the right side of the pelvis toward the wall in front of you. Focus on the action of firming the right buttock as you work with other actions in your pose.  
● Turn the left side of the pelvis back toward the wall behind you.  
● Press down through the inner edge of the right hand as you lift the inner arm up to the shoulder and turn the upper arm inner to outer.  
● Clasp the right shoulder blade into the upper back ribs to help revolve your right upper chest toward the wall in front of you.  
● Extend from the outer edge of the left foot through the fingertips of the left hand as you extend strongly the left arm alongside the ear.  
● To come up, press through the left foot, lift the left arm and come up.  
● Stand in *Tadasana*. Repeat to the other side. |
| --- | --- |
| **Ardha Chandrasana**  
Half Moon Pose | ● From *Tadasana*, jump and spread the hands and feet widely apart.  
● Turn the left foot in an inch or two and the right foot and leg out 90 degrees and come into *Utthita Trikonasana*.  
● As in *Utthita Parsvakonasana*, roll the right buttock under the right sitting bone and grip. |
- Bend the right knee and step forward with the right hand and left foot.
- Extend the inner thigh of the left leg, lift the leg up to be parallel with the floor.
- As in Utthita Parsvakonasana, keep rolling and firming the right buttock to the right sitting bone.
- Hold your focus here as you turn your right inner upper arm out to firm the shoulder blade into the upper back chest.
- Turn the chest forward.
- Extend strongly from the inner groin of the left leg to the inner ankle. Extend straight up through the left arm.
- On an exhalation, keep the firmness of the right buttock as you lightly lower the left leg to the floor back into Utthita Trikonasana.
- From here come up, go into Tadasana, and then repeat on the left side.

**Prasarita Padottanasana**
Wide Legged Intense Stretch Pose

- Stand in Tadasana and place your hands on your waist.
- Jump and spread your feet widely.
- Spread your toes, press evenly through your feet and lift up through the thighs.
- Press the top thighs back as you extend your chest forward and down.
- Place the top of your head on the floor. If your head doesn’t touch the floor, use a block or folded blanket under the top of your head.
- Place your hands on the floor, shoulder width apart and in line with your feet. If this is not possible, move your hands a few inches forward.
- Draw your upper arm bones into your shoulder sockets and move your shoulders up and away from the neck in order to lengthen and create space in the neck. Hold for several breaths.
- To come out, press back into the heels, firm your thighs, lift the chest and come up.
- Step or jump the feet back into Tadasana.
### Sirsasana  
**Headstand**  
3-5 minutes

- Fold a sticky mat or blanket into fourths. Place at the wall if you are unable to balance away from the wall.
- Interlace your fingers and place your forearms, wrists, and outer edges of the hands on your folded mat or blanket, shoulder width apart.
- Turn from the outer elbows to the inner elbows and press down through the forearm bones, outer wrists and outer hands. Notice how these actions help you to draw the biceps and triceps up to the shoulders and lift the shoulder blades.
- Place the top of the head on the mat/blanket and the back of the head into the cupped hands.
- Maintain the lift of the upper arms and shoulders as you come up one leg at a time or both legs together.
- Once up, extend the inner thighs through the inner edges of the feet and roll the outer thighs in.
- Move the middle buttock forward.
- Keeping the strong lift of the shoulders, come down one leg at a time or both legs together.

### Pincha Mayurasana  
**Peacock Feather Pose**

- Have your folded mat or blanket at the wall and place a block with the long edge at the wall.
- Create a loop in the strap that is slightly narrower than shoulder width.
- Slide your arms in the loop until the strap is just above the elbows.
- Place your palms on the floor with your thumbs along the front of the block and your index fingers at the short ends of the block.
- Roll from the outer edge of the hand to the inner edge and press down across the hands and forearms evenly as you lift the shoulders.
- Look down to the block. Swing one leg up and kick with the other leg to come up to the wall.
- As in **Sirsasana**, roll the outer thighs in and extend up through the inner legs and inner edges of the feet.
| **Dandasana**  
Staff Pose | ● Turn the inner upper arms forward toward the wall as the outer upper arms turn back toward the center of the room, and clasp the shoulder blades into the back ribs.  
● Focus, *ekagra* state of consciousness, on the shoulder blades pressing into the back ribs to move the sternum forward.  
● Go on lifting up through the upper arms and shoulders, as you lower one leg, and then the other to the floor.  

| **Virasana**  
Hero’s Pose | ● Sit with your legs together and extended out in front of you.  
● Lengthen your inner legs from the inner thigh through the inner edge of each foot.  
● Roll the thighs outer to inner and press down the inner legs.  
● As you press the inner legs down, lift the chest, roll the outer upper arms back and move your shoulder blades from outer edge to inner edge.  
● Press the inner edges of the shoulder blades forward to the spine and move the spine to the sternum.  
● Broaden the collarbones.  
● Lengthen the spine up, aligning the head with the shoulders.  

● Kneel with your knees together and your feet spread apart widely enough so that you can sit between your feet. If your buttocks do not touch the floor, sit on a block.  
● Place your hands on your thighs.  
● Spread your toes, press the outer shin bones down, and roll your inner groins down as you lift your chest.  
● Similar to *Dandasana*, roll your outer arms back, your inner arms forward and move your dorsal thoracic spine forward.  
● Lift from the bottom sternum to the top. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pose</th>
<th>Instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Paryankasana**<br>Couch Pose | ● From *Virasana*, lean back and take your hands and forearms to the floor beside your chest.  
● Press down through your elbows to lift your chest and move your spine up into an arch. If your spine won’t arch, use a block just underneath the dorsal thoracic spine to help you lift, arch the spine. If your head doesn’t touch the floor, use a folded blanket under the back of your head.  
● Extend your arms overhead, bend your elbows and clasp the elbows with your hands.  
● As you do that, roll the outer, upper arms in toward the head and turn each elbow from the inner elbow to the outer elbow.  
● Press the forearms down to the floor or to a folded blanket on the floor underneath your arms and lift the dorsal thoracic spine.  
● Hold your focus here. Without disturbing your focus, be aware of the spreading of the front chest. |
| **Dandasana**<br>Staff Pose     | ● Sit with your legs together and extended out in front of you.  
● Lengthen your inner legs from the inner thigh through the inner edge of each foot.  
● Roll the thighs outer to inner and press down the inner legs. |
• As you press the inner legs down, lift the chest, roll the outer upper arms back and move your shoulder blades from outer edge to inner edge.
• Press the inner edges of the shoulder blades forward to the spine and move the spine to the sternum.
• Broaden the collarbones.
• Lengthen the spine up, aligning the head with the shoulders.

### Upavistha Konasana
Wide Angle Seated Pose

• Sit on the front edge of a folded blanket(s).
• From Dandasana, spread your feet widely apart.
• Press the center, median line of the back of each leg down.
• Extend from the inner thighs through the inner edges of the feet.
• Draw back the outer thighs to the outer hips.
• Lift the chest.
• Place your fingertips on the floor outside of each thigh. Press down through the fingertips, extend the arms up.
• Roll the outer arms back, move the shoulder blades in toward the spine and forward.
• Lift from the bottom sternum to the top sternum.

### Baddha Konasana
Bound Angle Pose

• From Upavistha Konasana, take your hands to your inner knees and turn the knees inner to outer as you bend the knees and bring the soles of the feet together.
Press the outer edges of the feet together. This will cause the knees to separate more and extend the inner thighs.

- Draw back the outer thighs to the outer hips.
- Place your hands on your ankles or shins. Pull your hands into your ankles or shins to extend your arms and chest.
- Then turn the inner arms forward and outer arms back.
- Lift up through your chest.
- Come back to Dandasana.
- Repeat this pose and Upavistha Konasana as much as needed to prepare the inner thighs and groins for Padmasana.

Preparation for Padmasana (Lotus Pose)

- From Dandasana, take your right hand to your inner right knee, turn the knee inner to outer and draw the knee back and out to the side.
- Lean to the right enough so that the right knee comes to the floor.
- Slide your hands under the outer ankle and shin of the right leg, roll the inner calf up and slide your foot on to the upper left thigh.
- Gently pull the inner knee and inner thigh away from your right foot in order to extend the inner thigh.
- Bring your chest back to an upright position.
- If from here you can’t bring your knee to the floor, place a folded blanket under your sitting bones to lift your spine and chest. This can create space in the inner groin and help the knee to descend.
- To release, support the right knee with your right hand and place your left hand under the outer ankle of the right foot. Carefully move the right foot off the left thigh and sit in Dandasana.
- Repeat to the other side. Do this *Padmasana* preparation 2-3 times to each side.

**Padmasana**
Lotus Pose

- Follow the directions in the preparation for *Padmasana*, have the right foot on the top of the left thigh.
- Then, using your left hand, turn the left knee out, and pull it back.
- Lean to the left enough so that the left knee touches the floor. Keep the knee low as you slide your hands under the outer ankle and slide the left foot onto the top of the right thigh.
- Place your hands beside your outer hips and lift the chest.
- Balance your head atop your spine.

**Padmasana Alternative Pose**
(*Swastikasana* with Figure 8 loop)

- If *Padmasana* is not possible, then work in *Ardha Padmasana* or *Swastikasana*.
- For these poses, create a large loop in a strap and then twist the strap once to create a figure 8.
- Slide one end of the 8 over one knee and the foot underneath it and slide the other end of the 8 over the opposite knee and foot underneath it.
- Tighten the strap so that it is firmly holding the legs in place.
| Matsyasana  
Fish Pose | Come to *Padmasana*, or if unable to then do *Ardha Padmasana* or *Swastikasana* with the figure eight loop belting the legs as described above.  
- Lean back and take your hands, forearms, and elbows to the floor beside your trunk.  
- Let your knees lift away from the floor as you lean back.  
- Manually move your buttock flesh toward your hamstrings.  
- Move your outer thighs in toward each other and extend the inner thighs and groins, taking your knees to the floor.  
- Press down through your elbows, turn your inner, upper arms out, firm the shoulder blades into the back ribs and lift the chest.  
- Move the dorsal thoracic in toward the sternum, lengthen your neck and take the top of your head to the floor.  
- Draw your outer thighs toward each other.  
- Move the buttock flesh down to the hamstrings and firm it as you extend the inner groins and front thighs toward your knees. Through these actions, take your knees to the floor. |
- If your groins won’t extend, go on firming the buttocks and drawing the outer thighs toward each other.
- Extend your arms alongside your head, and as in *Paryankasana*, bend your elbows, clasping the opposite elbow with the opposite hand.
- Roll the inner, upper arm toward the floor as you turn the elbows inside out.
- Press the forearms down to the floor and if they don’t touch down, use a folded blanket under them.
- If you have neck issues, you can practice *Supta Padmasana* (Reclined Lotus Pose) on a bolster lengthwise under your spine and head.

**Bharadvajasana I without clasp**  
Pose dedicated to the Sage *Bharadvaja*

- Sit in *Dandasana*, bend your knees and take both feet to the outer left hip, placing the left foot over the arch of the right foot.
- If your pelvis is uneven from right side to left side, place 1-2 folded blankets under the right sitting bone, so that the pelvis is even.
- On an exhalation, turn your waist and chest to the right and place your left hand to the outer right thigh.
- Place your right hand behind your sacrum.
- Lift your chest and turn your inner upper arms to your outer upper arms and focus on moving your dorsal thoracic spine forward and up.
- Lift the sternum.
- Turn your head to look over your left shoulder.

**Salamba Sarvangasana**  
Shoulderstand

- Stack 3-4 folded blankets and create a shoulder width loop in a strap.
- Lie down so that your shoulders are on the blankets and your head is on the floor.
- Turn your arms inside out and place your fingertips on the floor beside your outer hips.
- On an exhalation, swing your feet over head to the floor or to support if needed in *Halasana*.
- Position the strap firmly around the arms, just above the elbows.
- Lift your legs up into *Salamba Sarvangasana*.
- Press the outer shoulders down, the backs of the arms down and extend the chest up.
- As in *Salamba Sirsasana*, lengthen the legs from the inner thighs to the inner knees to the inner edges of the feet.
- Maintaining the strong extension of the legs, roll the outer thighs in and bring the middle buttocks forward.
- Soften your jaw, tongue, eyes. Look toward the chest.

| **Parsva Halasana**  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plow Pose to the Side</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| - From *Salamba Sarvangasana*, lower the legs until the toe tips touch the floor or chair.  
| - Press the front thighs to the back thighs and the head of the shin into the calf to extend the back of each knee.  
| - Lengthen the calf to the heel.  
| - Walk the feet over to the right shoulder or to the right side of the chair seat, if using a chair.  
| - Keep the back legs extended, and then draw back the outer right thigh to the outer hip.  
| - Have the big toe joints aligned with each other.  
| - Walk back to center and repeat to the left.  
| - Bring the legs back to center and remove the strap.  
| - Slowly roll the chest and legs down to the floor.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Savasana</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Lie down on the center of your mat.</td>
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</table>
| Corpse Pose | ● Place your feet flat on floor, then lift your pelvis and manually move your buttock flesh toward your hamstrings.  
|            | ● Place the pelvis back down and extend your legs.  
|            | ● Hold the outer edges of the mat and turn your arms inside out, drawing the shoulder blades in toward each other and up into the back ribs.  
|            | ● Release the hold on the mat and move your arms 40 degrees from your side body.  
|            | ● Roll your legs open, close your eyes and relax all over.  
|            | ● Bring your focus on your breath. Be aware of the state of your consciousness. Did your practice of focus on parts of the body in the asanas help to cultivate a restrained or controlled state of mind? |

**Philosophy**

One’s practice of yoga can bring *parinama* (transformation) in the state of one’s consciousness. There are five states of consciousness: *mudha* (dull), *ksipta* (vacillating, wandering), *viksipta* (varying between wandering and stable), *ekagra* (one pointed) and *nirrudha* (controlled or restrained). Yoga *sadhakas* (aspirants) seek to cultivate a restrained, yet aware, state of consciousness through practicing one pointed focus. Notice the state of your consciousness at the beginning of your practice and see if it changes as you work on cultivating an *ekagra* or one pointed focus state of consciousness through your asana practice.

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