

Sequence created and modeled by Rosa Santana, Intermediate Junior II, Hallandale, FL



Made in Brazil with Mexican ingredients, Rosa Santana, CIYT, Intermediate Junior II, has been studying, teaching, and propagating the therapeutic art of Iyengar Yoga and the teachings of Patanjali since 1995. She was drawn to the mental and physical discipline after suffering three accidental falls, one of which fractured her tailbone. Since healing her back, neck and sciatica pains, she has introduced yoga to thousands of students who had never experienced this healing art, philosophy, and science.

In 2001, she founded [Yogarosa](http://www.yogarosa.com) (www.yogarosa.com), in the Miami area, which has become a respected yoga studio in the classical teachings of Iyengar Yoga. She has hosted numerous internationally recognized teachers and continues to teach and mentor yoga students and teachers.

She has had the privilege of studying directly with Yoga Master B.K.S. Iyengar, and the Iyengar family in India on numerous occasions. She is currently studying with Eddy Marks and Mary Obendorfer and has been inspired by many teachers along her path and is deeply grateful to all of them, especially Marilyn Rubin for introducing her to this life changing subject, and Bobbi Goldin for being an ethical role model and mentor in the world of the business of yoga.

Why Padmasana?

Padma means lotus. Some students come to yoga and can sit easily *in padmasana*, whereas some students take years to cultivate their blooms. What is a lotus, and why would we want to put ourselves in the shape of one anyway? What does the lotus have to teach us? Considered one of the most sacred symbols in Hinduism, the lotus flower is special because it has been

depicted as being the seat of the Gods. Virtually every Hindu God and Goddess sits on a lotus flower: Vishnu, Brahman, Siva, Ganesha, Laxmi, Durga, Agni, Parvati, Rama, and Surya. And many of them are depicted holding one or many Lotus flowers. The Mahabharata mentions how Laxmi emerged from a lotus flower that bloomed on Vishnu's forehead. Today, *Malas* (prayer beads) made of lotus seeds are used to worship Laxmi. In Buddhism, there is a story about lotus flowers growing with each step the Buddha took. In Nichiren Buddhism, the Heart Lotus Sutra is considered the premier chant to attain enlightenment. The lotus represents purity and the most exalted state of consciousness.

In Egypt, in the Book of the Dead, there were spells for "transforming oneself into a lotus" and thus fulfilling the promise of resurrection. The lotus was also used by shamans as a healing plant and used for altered states of consciousness. Since ancient times, the lotus can also be seen in numerous architectural structures around the world, its beauty and symbolism representing fertility and related ideas, including birth, purity, sexuality, rebirth of the dead, and, in astrology, the rising sun. When planted, the lotus seed germinates and floats to the surface of the water as a leaf. When the flower blooms, it is protected by the leaves, and never touches the muddy waters. It blooms outwards and radiates, as it has a love affair with the sun. The lotus is edible, and it has many medicinal properties in Southern Asia.

“Those who dedicate their actions to God, abandoning all attachment, remain untouched by sin, just as a lotus leaf is untouched by water.” (Bhagavad Gita, 5.10).


Born in dirt, but maintaining purity and beauty is the message of the lotus. For many of us who have been to India, we are shocked by the poverty, the trash and the filth. But we choose to return mostly because of those beautiful inhabitants with the golden smiles and fully bloomed lotus hearts. What if we could begin to germinate some expression of a lotus, or at the very least to represent a more sacred manifestation of such?

To start, put aside any past experiences, positive or negative about *padmasana*. Watch your mind as it starts to sprout memories about this pose. Gently remind yourself that one of the symbols of a lotus is rebirth. Try to make this your very first lotus and follow along. Be open to the possibility of a new discovery. Be like the Egyptian lotuses, which bloomed every day, after they closed at night. Let go of the mud beneath you, have no expectations, and put yourself into “sprouting mode.”

Sequence for *Padmasana*

Approximate Time: 60-75 minutes

Props required: Mat, Blocks, Blankets, Belt

<p><i>Adho Mukha Sukhasana</i> Downward Facing Easy Pose (30-60 seconds per side)</p> 	<p>Sitting in <i>Sukhasana</i>, walk the fingertips forward to lengthen the trunk. Lengthen the anterior spine by moving the sternum forward, anchoring the outer hips down. Keep the hands wide to maintain the collarbones broad. Notice your physical state, your state of mind and your breath. Change the cross of the legs and repeat on the other side.</p>
<p>Series of 5 poses: <i>Utthita Trikonasana</i> Extended Triangle Pose <i>Utthita Parsvakonasana</i> Extended Side Angle Pose <i>Ardha Chandrasana</i> Half Moon Pose <i>Utthita Parsvakonasana</i> Extended Side Angle Pose <i>Utthita Trikonasana</i> Extended Triangle Pose</p>	<p>Create fluidity. Do these three poses sequentially on the right side for less than 15 seconds each. Begin in <i>Trikonasana</i>, go to <i>Parsvakonasana</i> keeping top arm up, continue into <i>Ardha Chandrasana</i>, and return to <i>Parsvakonasana</i>, then straighten the leg into <i>Trikonasana</i>. Beginning in <i>Trikonasana</i>, focus on the foot of the front leg being firm, especially on the inner foot, and bring the external rotation of the leg all the way up into the hip. Rotate the top of the femur versus the bottom of the femur. Use a block if rotation is not coming easily. Open the chest and spread the wingspan of your arms to broaden your collarbones.</p>

Maintain and observe the rotation of the leg as you transition into *Parsvakonasana*, *Ardha Chandrasana*, *Parsvakonasana*, and finally straighten the front leg back into *Trikonasana*.

Observe how your *Trikonasana* evolved, (hopefully), or stayed the same. Repeat on the left side and compare the two hips. This internal analysis can help to bring more understanding into the imbalances of the body.

Stand in *Tadasana* (Mountain pose, not pictured) and observe your mind state.



Utthita Trikonasana

Utthita Parsvakonasana

Ardha Chandrasana

Utthita Parsvakonasana with Block in Front
Extended Side Angle Pose (30 seconds each side)



Reinforce the head of the femur to externally rotate in the hip socket before you bend the leg. Go to *Parsvakonasana* on the right with a block in front of foot, palm down. Encourage the bent knee to move back as the right buttock moves in. The arm in front of the knee won't allow the knee to perform the work of the hip.

As Geeta Iyengar says, "Move your pumpkin (buttocks) deep inwards!"

Repeat on the left side.

On the second round, lengthen the inner knee away from the groin, and draw the outer knee back towards the buttock. Repeat on both sides.

Utthita Parsva Hasta Padangusthasana with Support
Extended Hand to Big Toe Pose to the Side
(15-30 seconds each side)



Stamp the inner heel of the standing leg down and keep weight towards the back of the heel. Roll the top leg out and extend from the inner groin to the inner heel. Resist the outer thigh in and inner thigh out.

As you lift the chest, spin the abdomen away from the top leg to soften the groins.

Repeat on other side.

If ropes are not available, place the foot on a table or wall, and raise the arms in *Urdhva Hastana*

Supta Padangusthasana II
Reclining Hand to Big Toe Pose to the Side
(15-30 seconds each side)



Use this reclined version to study the difference between the standing version. Observe how gravity helps you and how it hinders you.

Remember how the floor provided the stability for the standing foot. Now observe how it provides more awareness of the back body.

Observe the difference in the groin when there's no weight, compared to the standing version.

Repeat the actions from *Utthita Parsva Hasta Padangusthasana* and notice the difference. Observe the variances in both hips and groins.

Hold the foot with a belt, if unable to hold the toe with the fingers.

Supta Padangusthasana II with supporting leg in *Baddha Konasana*
Reclining Hand to Big Toe Pose to the Side with other leg in Bound Angle Pose
(15-30 seconds each side)



Place your left leg in *Baddha Konasana* and catch the big toe of right leg and extend the leg from the inner groin. Maintain the hips level.

Baddha Konasana leg helps to maintain leverage of the pelvis.

Extend the inner knee of the *Baddha Konasana* leg away from the groin and keep the outer left side of the sacrum grounded.

Maintain the shoulders down, and the chest lifted.

Sirsasana
Headstand
3-5 minutes



Press your inner wrists and outer elbows and lift the shoulder blades. Lift the sacrum without pushing the inner groins forward. Balance the inner groins pressing back, with the lift of the sacrum, so that the groins don't harden.

Keeping your heels lifting up, extend the metatarsals upwards. Make your inner and outer ankle bones parallel.

Find the balance where you are not struggling. The pose should feel stable and refreshing. If not, come out and readjust.

Perform at the wall if unable to balance in the middle of the room.

Virasana
Hero Pose
3-5 minutes



Sit in *Virasana*, using a block or support under the buttocks as needed. Ground the roots of the femurs downwards as you lift the trunk upwards. Use your hands to pressurize the thighs and get more grounding and also more lift in the chest. See that your shins and ankles are in one line and minimize distortion in the ankles by using more height under buttocks if the ankles collapse outwards or inwards. Parallel the outer and inner ankles.

Be quiet for a moment.

From *Virasana*, lean back onto your hands, and lift your knees up any amount to stretch the tops of the feet and the front of the ankles. Repeat three or four times.

See if there is more space in *Virasana* to pull the skin of the top shins forward towards the knees. Observe the feeling in the front ankles.

Paryankasana/Supta Virasana
Couch Pose/ Reclined Hero Pose
3-5 minutes



Use a tall block under the thoracic spine. Use more support under the buttocks and back as needed.

Extend the skin of the feet away from the knees, and the skin of the top of the shins away from the feet.

See that the inner and outer ankles are parallel. Root the tops of thighs downwards and lengthen the trunk towards the elbows. Support the head on the forearms with the hands near elbows.

The head is in *Supta Virasana* position with bound arms, but the pelvis remains in *Paryankasana* position, to focus the stretch on the legs.

If there are no restrictions, remove the brick and bring the back to the floor.

Baddha Konasana

Bound Angle Pose

5-7 minutes



If your knees are below your hips, sit on the floor.

Otherwise, set up the blankets as pictured, and sit on them keeping the hamstrings free.



Come into the pose, by catching the ligaments and tendons of the inner knees to keep the knees on track.

Lengthen the inner knees away from the groins, with a little help from your hands. Also, use the hands to externally roll the flesh of the inner thighs near the knees away from you.

Keep your hands there for a bit to make sure your knees understand where to be.



Press the outer heels into one another. Imagine your thigh bones grow longer and your shin bones grow shorter.

After removing the hands from the knees, take your thumbs on the ball mounds of the feet and the rest of your fingers under the feet to catch the outer feet.

Turn the soles of the feet up, maintaining the big toe nails (the part ladies paint) close to the floor.

Notice the feeling in the groins when you turn the feet. Then don't turn the feet and compare. You can spend hours doing this and discover all kinds of wonderful adventures in your hips and groins. But for now, we will be moving on.

Bring your knees together to exit pose, then stretch the legs in *Dandasana* (staff pose).

Upavistha Konasana

Seated Angle Pose

5 minutes



Sit on the floor or the blankets with the legs wide. If using, place the blankets in such a way that the hamstrings are not on them, as in *Baddha Konasana*, (above picture).

Press the femurs down. Notice how the more the femurs descend, the more height comes to the trunk.

Extend inner heels away from groins. Reach outer ankles towards outer hips.

Siddhasana

Pose of the *Siddhis* (Supernatural Powers)

2-3 minutes each side



From *Upavistha Konasana*, bend your left leg in the same manner as you bent it in *Baddha Konasana*.

Place the heel to the left of the pubis and use your hands to turn the outer heel away from you, so that the top of the foot turns more towards the floor. Starting with the heel lateral to the pelvis will create more space in the groin and knee.

Stretch the inner knee away from the groin and have the foot point towards right leg.



Holding inner right knee, bend the leg and bring the foot in front of the left foot, in line with the right groin.

Lengthen both knees away from groins and work the right foot as you did the left, moving outer heel away from you.

Take the right foot and place it on top of bottom foot, aligning the heels with the pubis, maintaining the inner thighs long.

Tuck the toes into the crease between left calf and thigh. To tuck the toes of the left foot, lift right knee enough for you to catch the toes to bury them into the cradle of your right calf and thigh.

Place hands in *Jnana Mudra* (seal of knowledge), rolling the upper arms out, and press the back of the hands into knees to move shoulder blades in and lift the chest.

Gaze at the tip of your nose and release tension from the face.

With closed eyes, feel the ankles, feet and legs. Press them down to get more height in the trunk.

Notice the quality of your mind in this introspective pose.

Repeat on the other side.

Supta Padmasana
Reclining Lotus Pose
5-15 seconds, each side



Think about cultivating your *Padmasana* with patience and gentleness. This is a flower after all, that floats in the water. How do you handle a flower? How do you treat a petal? Imagine your feet and legs are petals, and don't force. Let them be watery. Now is your opportunity to practice *YOG*, observing every step of the process.

Practice *ahimsa* (non-violence) with your knees. The knees are delicate pieces of the lotus puzzle and are only designed to bend like a door hinge. The ankles and hips, however, have much more range of motion. You wouldn't ask a fish to pull a sled. Just so, you can't ask your knees to do the work of the hips.

Let this pose help you dive into your own structure and get to know the parts that move and those that don't. Be kind to the resistant areas and find out how much movement they are willing to give.



If *Padmasana* comes easily for you, see if you are working from your mobile areas, and see if you can discover where there may be rigidity or lack of awareness.

Lift your right foot and catch the outer foot with your left hand as you simultaneously place your right hand in the inner right knee as you did in *Baddha Konasana*. Work the foot as in *Siddhasana*, aligning your heel near the right groin.

Move the right inner knee away from the groin while lengthening the right inner thigh.

Place the foot on the root of the left thigh and adjust the foot so that the outer heel moves towards the inner heel.

If the right knee stays away from your groin far enough, bring the left leg into *Padmasana* in the same manner as the first leg.

If the second leg does not come into *Padmasana* easily, keep the left foot on the floor, and work on *Supta Ardha Padmasana* (Reclining Half Lotus).



Extend the knees away from the head, and *do Parvatasana* (arms extended with interlocked fingers) to lengthen the trunk.

Repeat on the other side.



Padmasana

Lotus Pose

3-5 minutes



From *Dandasana* (not shown), relax legs as in *Savasana* (Corpse Pose).

Take the right leg out as in *Baddha Konasana* and place the knee far away from the groin.

Roll the bent leg inner thigh out and lengthen the thigh towards the knee.



Catch the foot as in *Siddhasana*, rolling the outer heel away from your pelvis. Lengthen the inner knee away from the groin and lean into right thigh to lift the foot and slip the top of foot to the root of the left thigh.

Alternative Pose: *Ardha Padmasana*

If the knee can't stay on the floor or if there is a knee concern, cultivate *Ardha Padmasana* by slipping your left foot under the right thigh. If the right knee is still up, try a blanket under the buttocks to release the knee down. If the knee stays up, return to the prior pose, *Supta Padmasana*.



See that the bent leg outer ankle moves forward and turn the foot as in *Siddhasana*.

Lean forward and slip the left foot onto the root of the right thigh, turning the foot as in *Siddhasana*.



Lengthen the inner knees away from the groins, and extend the feet keeping the inner and outer ankles parallel as much as possible.

If the knees or ankles are hurting, the movement is probably not coming in the hips, so come out of the pose.



Once in full *Padmasana*, lift interlaced arms and stretch arms into *Parvatasana* pressing the outer thighs down.

Whether you got into the full pose or part of the pose, you are cultivating *Padmasana*. This is the desired posture for meditation and pranayama, because it is very grounding, even though you are floating in muddy water. Funny how yogis can float and be grounded at the same time. This is the power of our *Siddhis*.

Halasana
Plough Pose
1-3 minutes



With the watery feeling of *Padmasana*, come to *Halasana*.

Pressing the forearms down, lift the chest, spread the collarbones and move the skin of your back up.

Lift your inner groins up and reach your heels to the buttock bones.

Feel your mind condition.

Sarvangasana
Shoulderstand
1-3 minutes



Take legs up from *Halasana* and let your legs and trunk be irrigated.

Move the inner groins back and resist the middle buttocks forward. Soften the feet, keeping the inner and outer ankles parallel.

Go back to *Halasana*.

Supta Konasana
Reclining Wide Angle Pose
1-3 minutes



From *Halasana*, catch the big toes and separate the legs. Lift your outer hips and lift the femurs up.

Extend the inner feet away from the groins and move the outer ankles towards the hips.

Pull the arms into the sockets and broaden the collarbones.

Return to *Halasana*.

Karnapidasana
Ear Pressure Pose
1-3 minutes



From *Halasana*, bend your knees and cover your ears with your knees.

Use your hands to help you move the heels closer to the shoulders to become more compact.

Widen the elbows to pull legs in more, and to widen the collarbones. Bring the sitting bones downward, in the direction towards the feet.

Observe your mind state and your breath.

<p><i>Savasana</i> Corpse Pose 5-10 minutes (Not pictured)</p>	<p>Let the watery feeling of having been a Lotus Flower (or Bloom) help you to descend into the deep waters of your own existence in this pose in which those parts of you that are no longer useful are cast off.</p> <p>Shed the dirt of the muddy waters. Shed the old seeds that no longer exist. Let your body expand outwards as it relaxes and seeks the rays of the sun to transform you into that beautiful sacred lotus that exists in each and every one of us.</p>
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