

Drop backs to the wall

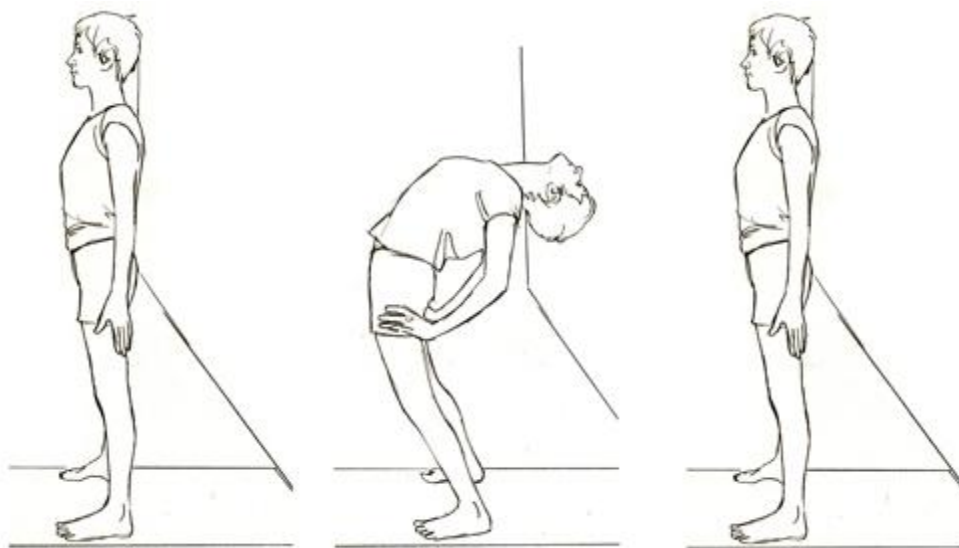
Benefits: Opens the chest and shoulders. Helps develop confidence. Refreshes the internal organs.

Back bends can leave you energized and confident for days after you practice them. And dropping back into Urdhva Dhanurasana adds a whole new dimension to the pose. Learn 'drop backs' by first dropping to the wall. But before you start you will need to be able to push up into Urdhva Dhanurasana away from the wall, with the elbows extended and stable.

Standing Back Bend

Master this 'standing back bend' before you take your hands to the wall: In order for the spine to be soft and supple your legs must be strong and stable, helping you to maintain a strong connection with the earth. (That connection is what will eventually allow you to soar back up and out of your backbend to standing.) If the legs are not firm, the spine will harden, making it difficult to bend.

Stand in Tadasana with your palms on your waist. Plant the outer edges of your feet and your heels to the floor. Straighten your legs: firm your kneecaps. Keeping your eyes wide open, lift your chest and coil the points of your shoulder blades into your back. Draw your sternum bone up to the ceiling.



Now slide your hands down to your hips, thumbs on sacrum. Roll your shoulders back and lengthening through the side body and with a big lift through the back ribs, take your head back to look behind you. As you continue arching back over, you can slide your hands down to the middle buttock, then to the buttock crease. You can also press the backs of your hands against the backs of your thighs, as you curve over.

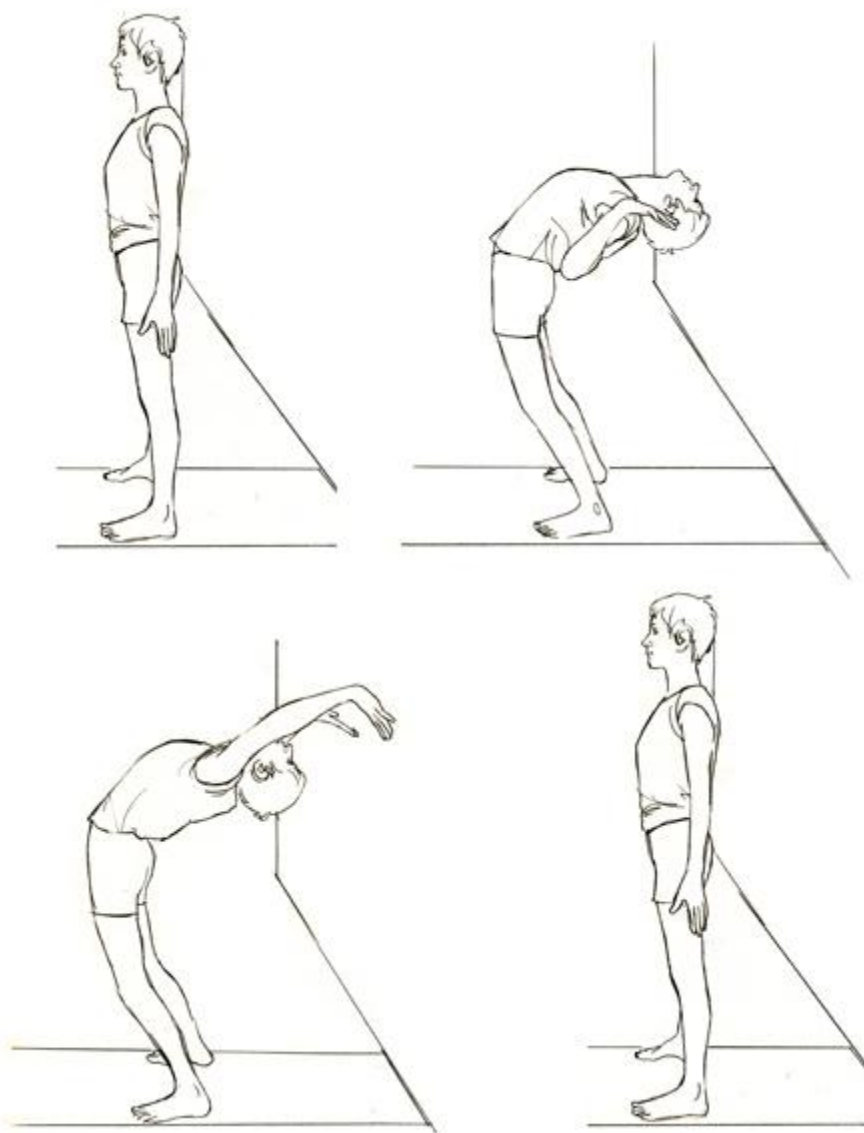
When you can't bend back anymore with straight legs, allow the knees to bend.

You can go through and fully explore this process two or three times before you reach your hands to the wall.

Dropping straight back to the wall and coming back to standing

Stand in Tadasana about two or three feet away from and facing out from the wall with your feet separated to the outer edges of the mat.

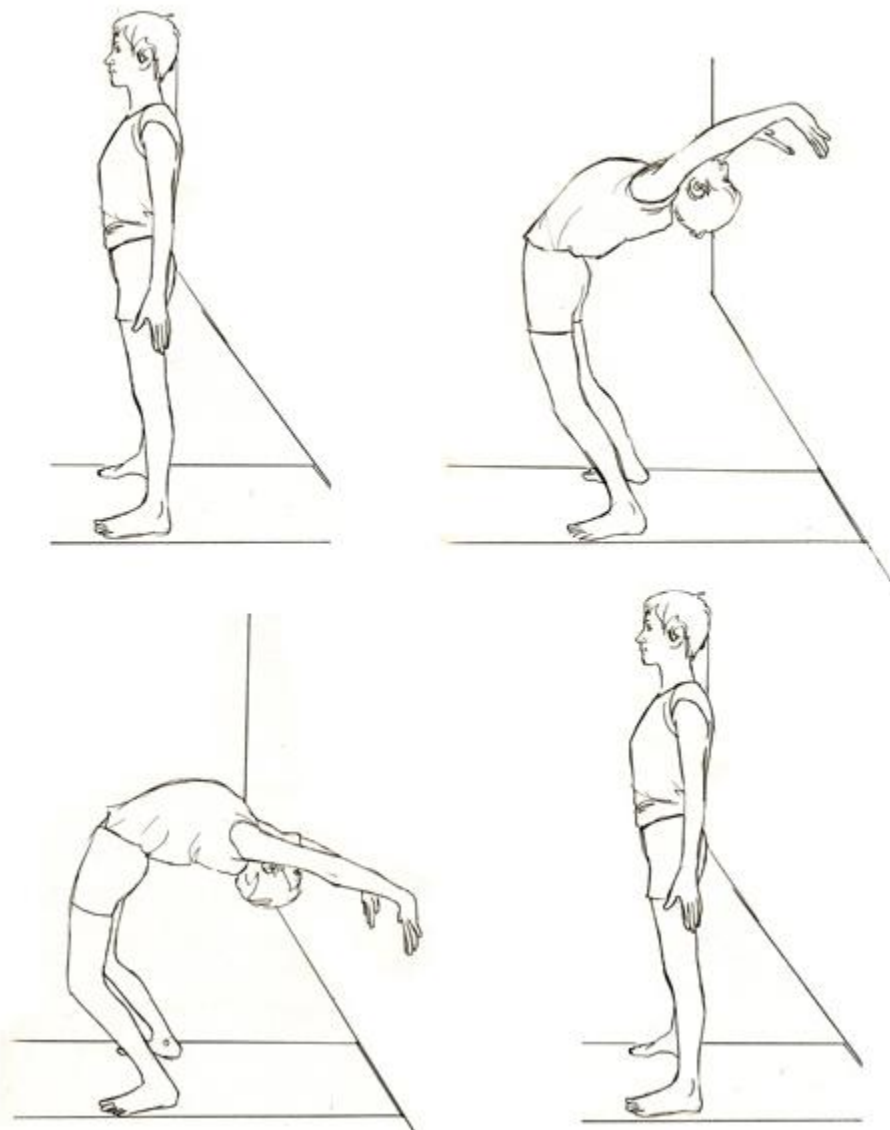
Lift your chest and side ribs, and coil your shoulder blades in. Draw your sternum bone up to the ceiling, as before. Raise your arms and curve your palms back toward the wall. Slide your shoulder blades further down your back.



Extend your arms fully to touch the wall behind you. Return to standing by pressing your heels down (rather than by pushing away from the hands) and repeat until you are at ease with this posture.

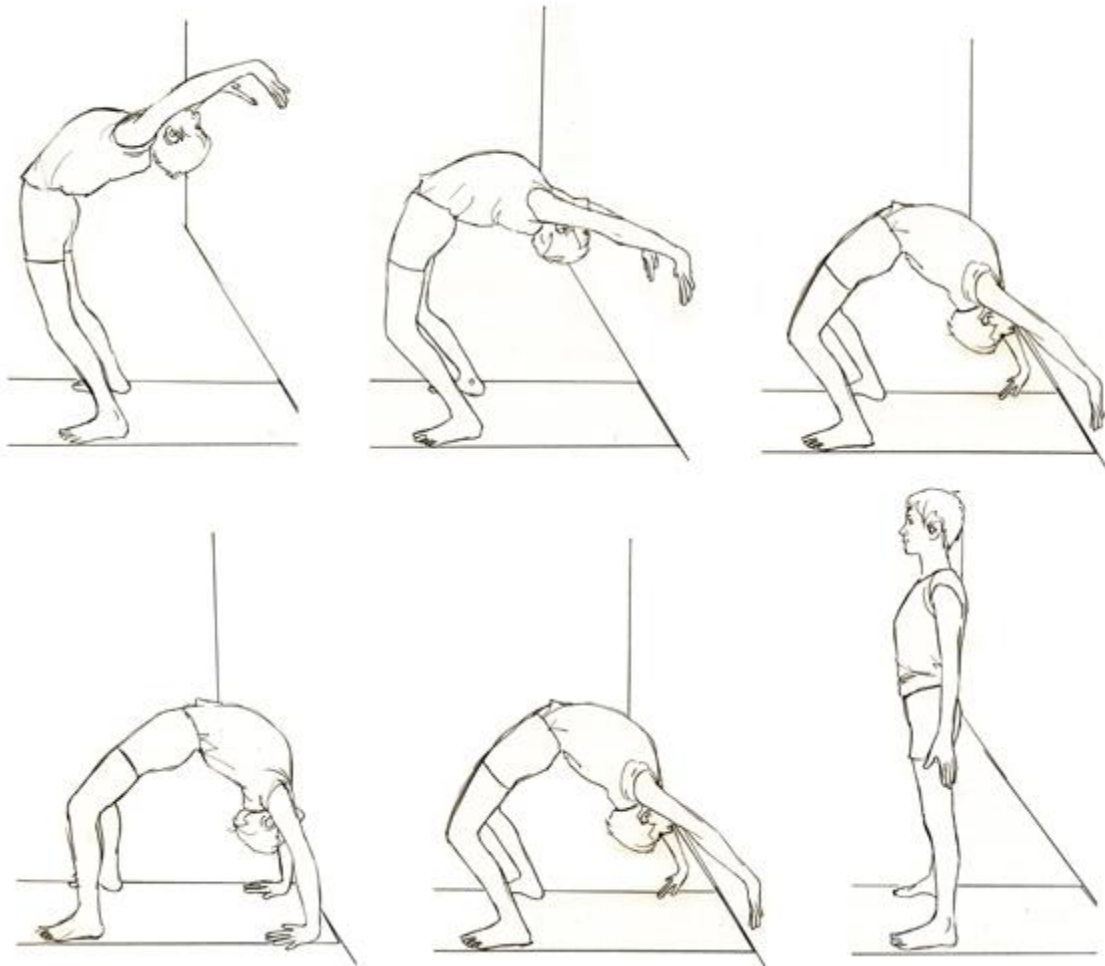
Walking down and back up the wall

Allowing the feet to turn out stresses the lumbar spine in the pose, so keep the outer edges of the feet parallel to each other. Roll the inner thighs back and move the middle of the buttocks in. Drop back to the wall. Begin by walking down a little bit, and then coming up.



Each time you walk down, lift the side ribs and chest more, and move the tailbone in. Curve the front ribs around the upper back ribs. Maintain the lift of the sternum bone using the support of the shoulder blades as you walk back up.

In time, walk further and further down the wall until you can perform Urdhva Dhanurasana with your hands on the floor. Practice returning with the hands further down the wall in stages.



Later, you can try dropping down on something like a bench or coffee table, and then something lower, and then something even lower till you can drop over all the way to the floor.

To walk up: To walk back up the feet will have to walk back underneath you.

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

- Sacrum, low back, shoulder or neck injury
- Pregnancy
- High blood pressure
- Wrist problems or carpal tunnel syndrome
- Menstruation