

Sirsasana: Headstand

Headstand counteracts tiredness, improves concentration and boosts self confidence.

Medical benefits:

First and foremost, Sirsasana, when practiced correctly, oxygenates the brain — it can also help those with memory loss. When practiced incorrectly, it can do a lot of damage to the neck, so be sure to study with a qualified yoga teacher.

This pose strengthens the back; it helps those with arthritis of the lower back, dorsal region, and shoulder joints as well as dealing with lumbago, sciatica, and general backache.

It also works on the legs; any experienced yoga practitioner who has had the misfortune of spraining a knee or an ankle knows how effective this pose is at bringing down a swelling or inflammation in these joints. Varicose veins and coccyx pain and displacement can also be reduced.

Diseases of the respiratory system, lungs and heart such as palpitations, asthma, breathlessness, bronchitis, nasal catarrh, chills, cold and cough, and (after medical treatment and rest) pleurisy and pneumonia, can all be brought to vibrant good health through regular practice of this pose.

Headstand also brings relief for those suffering from digestive problems; constipation, acidity, colic and colitis can all be ameliorated with this and other poses.

It can also boost low blood pressure. Other conditions that greatly benefit from Headstand are diabetes, displaced uterus, epilepsy, umbilical hernia, inguinal hernia, impotency, anaemia, appendicitis, insomnia, kidney problems, menstrual disorders, prostrate problems, tonsillitis and duodenal ulcer.

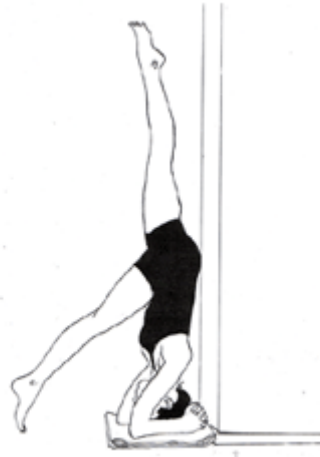
Always practice this pose regularly in equal measure with your shoulder stand.



1. Start by practicing against a wall. Kneel down in front of a wall. Interlace your hands. Place your elbows a shoulder width apart on the floor and then place the outer edges of your interlaced hands on the floor, touching the wall.
2. Place the crown of your head on the floor, inside your hands.



3. Raise your hips and straighten your legs. Pull your upper back away from the wall, press your forearms down and lift your shoulders away from the floor.



4. Come up, one leg at a time.



5. Place your feet but not your buttocks on the wall. To avoid compressing your neck, secure a strong base: continue raising your shoulders up and pressing your shoulder-blades in toward your chest. Touch the inner edges of your feet together and stretch your legs up.



6. Gradually move away from the wall, a few inches at a time until you can balance without support. Don't be in a hurry to do this. Work diligently and methodically to develop strength and balance.

PRACTICE NOTE:

Sirsasana is not for beginners. Iyengar yoga teachers really are second to none when it comes to teaching inversions! Learn this in an Iyengar level II class.

Until you are ready to begin learning headstand, practice Standing Wide Leg Forward Bend Pose (Prassarita Padottanasana).