

Inclined Plank Pose

Vasisthasana

(Vah-sish-TAH-anna)

Vasistha = sage, best, richest

Vasisthasana is an asymmetrical balancing arm support pose. It requires a lot of strength to be performed correctly. If you can't easily support your own weight, be sure to do one of the modifications first.



The blueprint

The yogi balances on one arm, stretching the opposite arm overhead so the two are aligned, while holding her hips off the floor.

How to do it:

1. Start in [Plank](#) (Chaturangasana) with hands under the shoulders and knees under the hips. Hold your body in a straight line so your hips don't dip.
2. Rotate your entire body to the left, so the weight of your body is on the outer side of your left foot. Your body is facing the front. Strengthen the left arm by firming the triceps muscle and pressing the base of the index finger firmly against the floor.
3. Raise your right arm, extending the arm, hand and fingers vertically upward. Keep your torso and hips in line with your legs. Balance, holding the pose for 3-8 breaths.
4. Exhale. Return to Plank, then inhale, moving into Side Plank on the other side. Hold the posture for 3-8 breaths.
5. After balancing on both sides, move into [Child's Pose](#).

Do:

- Keep head and eyes looking forward.
- Firm the scapulas and sacrum against the back torso.
- Align your entire body into one long diagonal line from the heels to the crown.
- Stack shoulders and hips
- Position your supporting hand slightly in front of its shoulder so the supporting arm is angled a bit, relative to the floor

Don't:

- allow your hips to dip.

Benefits:

- Strengthens the arms, belly, and legs
- Stretches and strengthens the wrists, increases their flexibility
- Stretches the backs of the legs in the full versions
- Improves sense of balance, concentration and focus
- Tones abdominal muscles

Contraindications:

- Students with serious wrist, elbow, or shoulder injuries should avoid this pose.

Beginners have three options:

- Bring your bottom knee and shin to the mat until you have enough strength to fully support your body weight.
- Keep your bottom leg extended, bend your top knee, and step your top foot in front of your body.
- Keep your legs extended but rest on the forearm of your supporting arm instead of extending it.

If you're more advanced:

1. Start as in Inclined Plank.
2. Bend your right knee, opening it to face upward. Grasp your right foot or big toe between your thumb and first two fingers of your right hand. Place your right arm in front of your right leg, then straighten your right leg upward as you straighten your arm which holds the toe.
3. Turn your head to look up toward your right hand.
4. Hold for several breaths. Return to Plank and repeat on the other side.