

Supported Shoulderstand

Salamba Sarvangasana

Sah-LOM-bah Sar-van-GAHS-anna)

salamba = with support (*sa* = with

alamba = support)

sarva = all

anga = limb

Salamba Sarvangasana is an inverted pose that strengthens your entire body. It has many of the same benefits of the Headstand but the circulation is directed to your thyroid gland instead of the head. Salamba Sarvangasana is considered an intermediate to advanced pose so if you haven't

practiced this pose before, try Setu Bandha Sarvangasana (Bridge Pose) or the variation for beginners below first. If you're more advanced, you can move into Halasana (Plow Pose) from here.



The blueprint

The yogi rests on her shoulders, legs parallel and extended to the ceiling. The hands support the midback, the chin is away from the chest and the face is relaxed.

How to do it

1. Lie on the floor with your knees bent and feet flat with your heels as close to your buttocks as possible, arms at your sides.
2. Exhale, press your arms against the floor, and push your feet away from the floor, drawing your thighs into your front torso. Continue lifting, curling your pelvis and then your back torso away from the floor, so that your knees come toward your face.
3. Place your palms against your back. Raise your pelvis so that your torso is perpendicular to the floor. Walk your hands up your back.
4. Inhale and lift your bent knees toward the ceiling, bringing your thighs in line with your torso and pressing your tailbone toward your pubis. Inhale again and straighten the knees, pressing the heels up toward the ceiling.

From this position, check your alignment

Do:

- Check your alignment
 - legs, pelvis and torso should be parallel
 - chest should be lifted
 - shoulders and upper arms are actively pressed into the floor

Don't:

- let your legs relax and splay
 - tuck your chin against your chest. There should be about a two-finger-width space between your chin and chest.
 - spread your elbows wider than your shoulders
5. To come out of the pose, exhale, bending your knees into your torso and rolling your back slowly and carefully onto the floor, one vertebra at a time. Keep the back of your head on the floor and don't arch your back.

Benefits

- Relieve stress and mild depression
- Relieves allergies
- Stimulate thyroid and abdominal organs
- Calm nervous system
- Increases circulation
- Promotes mindfulness
- Improves digestion
- Reduces fatigue and alleviates insomnia

Contraindications

- High blood pressure
- Menstruation
- Migraine or tension headache
- Neck or shoulder problems
- Diarrhea

For Beginners

Use a wall to prepare for Salamba Sarvangasana. Sit sideways, as close as possible, next to a wall. Exhale, swinging your shoulders down and your legs up onto the wall. Make sure your chin isn't tucked into your chest. Breathe.

Variation

One of the simplest variations is Eka Pada Sarvangasana (pronounced ACHE-ah PAH-dah, *eka* = one, *pada* = foot or leg *sarva* = all *anga* = limb).

Come into the pose. Keeping your left leg perpendicular to the floor, exhale and lower your right leg parallel to the floor. Be careful not to shift the left leg's position. If the right leg's hip sinks toward the floor, turn the right leg out, moving the right sitting bone toward the left. Hold the two sitting bones together then rotate the right leg back to neutral. Hold for 20-30 seconds then inhale, bringing the right leg back to perpendicular. Repeat the sequence with the left leg.