

# Asanas for climbers

## Shoulder, elbow, wrist and antagonist muscle sequence.

### **Surya Namaskara Ka : Sun Salutation A**

5 rounds to warm up. Maintain full awareness with the breath.

2 rounds - Hold Plank for 5 breaths. Hold Chaturanga for 5 breaths.

### **Surya Namaskara Kha : Sun Salutation B**

5 rounds. Sink deeply into Utkatasana (Fierce Pose) and remain for 5 breaths. Holding Adho Mukha Svanasana for 5 breaths helps with stiffness in the region of the shoulder blades. Utkatasana removes stiffness in the shoulders. Maintain full awareness with the breath.

*NOTE: Chaturanga Dandasana : "This pose is similar to dips in western gymnastics. Strengthens the arms (triceps) and wrists and develops power." Iyengar*

*NOTE: "End each cycle in a variation of Malasana (Garland Pose). The Sun Salutations warm up the whole body, and the long repetitions of Malasana open the groin and back, easing the way for the arm balances." Donna Farhi*

### **Parsvottanasana : Side-stretched out posture**

5 breaths on right. Hands in Anjali Mudra (Prayer Pose) behind back. The wrists move freely and stiffness is removed. The shoulders are drawn back which helps to correct rounded shoulders. Stretches flexors of the wrist and fingers.

### **Virabhadrasana III : Warrior III**

5 breaths on right.

### **Ardha Chandrasana : Half Moon**

5 breaths on right.

### **Baddha Utthita Parsvakonasana : Bound Extended Side Angle**

5 breaths on right.

### **Utthita Trikonasana : Extended Triangle Posture**

5 breaths on right.

### **Purvavritta Trikonasana : Revolved Triangle Posture**

5 breaths on right.

### **Prasarita Padottanasana C & D: Wide-Legged Forward Bend**

5 breaths in each.

### **Bakasana : Crane Posture**

Strengthens arms. 5 breaths.

## **REPEAT ON LEFT**

### **Sit in Virasana (Hero Pose)**

#### **Garudasana : Eagle Posture (Arms only)**

Right arm entwined with left (right on top) and then left arm entwined with right (left on top). 5-10 breaths on each side. Relieves shoulder tension and opens the upper back.

#### **Gomukhasana : Cow Face Posture (Arms only)**

Left hand reaches over first and clasps hands with right, then repeat on left. 5 -10 breaths on each side. Good shoulder opener. The shoulder joints move freely and the latissimus dorsi are fully extended. The upper arm stretches the lower fibres of the pectoralis major.

### **Supta Virasana. Reclining Hero Pose**

Hold for 5 -10 breaths

**Tadasana with Parvatasana arms** (arms interlaced above the head, palms facing up). Hold for 5 -10 breaths.

**Uttanasana : Standing Forward Bend**

Move into Uttanasana and interlace your fingers behind your back and bring your hands over your head. Open the chest and roll the shoulders back. Hold for 5 -10 breaths. Keeping hands clasped move back into **Tadasana**. Open the chest and roll shoulders back. Hold for 5 -10 breaths. Release hands.

Shoulder rolls. Wrist circles.

**Dolphin**

Dolphin opens and strengthens all of the muscles of the upper back, shoulder girdle, and chest. It is a good preparation for Pincha Mayurasana, Headstand and Handstand. Hold for 5 -10 breaths.

**Pincha Mayurasana : Peacock Feather**

Releases tension in the shoulder girdle, opens the chest and strengthens the shoulders, upper arms and upper back. It also tones the abdominals and strengthens the legs and buttocks. The triceps contract stabilizing the upper arms and shoulders. Hold for 5 -10 breaths.

**Adho Mukha Vrksasana : Downward Facing Tree (Handstand)**

Increases strength in the shoulders arms and torso. Handstand provides the bone strengthening benefits of a weight bearing exercise to the wrists, fingers, elbows, arms and shoulders. Hold for 5 -10 breaths.

**Vasisthasana : Side Plank Pose**

Begin in Adho Mukha Svanasana. Move into Plank. Move into side plank on the right and hold for 5 breaths. Repeat on the left. Move back into Plank. Strengthens the wrists.

*NOTE: "It's essential to do arm balances on a hard floor. Do not practice on soft carpet, because your wrists will collapse below the level of your fingers, overextending the wrist joint. This can weaken the wrist and contribute to problems such as Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. Donna Farhi.*

**Purvottanasana : Upward Plank Intense stretch of the East (fingers pointing towards feet)**

Strengthens wrists, improves the movement of the shoulder joints and expands the chest fully. The pectoralis major and minor are awakened and stretched in this posture. It relieves fatigue from strenuous forward bending asanas. Stretches flexors of the wrist and fingers. Stretches the biceps. Hold for 5 -10 breaths.

**Bhujangasana : Cobra Pose**

Stretches chest, shoulders, and abdomen. Firms the buttocks. Strengthens the spine. Opens the chest, allowing deeper breathing. Hold for 5 -10 breaths.

**Salabhasana : Locust Pose**

A climber's lats are usually strong and tight which cause the shoulders to roll down and forward closing the chest. Salabhasana and Bhujangasana will counteract this problem. Hold for 5 -10 breaths.

*NOTE: "If the latissimus muscles (the "lats") are too tight, they can contribute to rotator cuff injuries by preventing full outward rotation of the upper arm bones (humeri) when lifting the arms overhead." Roger Cole, Ph.D. is an Iyengar-certified yoga teacher.*

**Ustrasana : Camel Posture**

Corrects drooping shoulders. Hold for 5 -10 breaths.

**Urdhva Dhanurasana : Wheel**

Strengthens arms and wrists. Hold for 5 -10 breaths.

*NOTE: "Pulling the shoulder blades down and back in most of your yoga poses will help strengthen the muscles that oppose the lats, especially the middle and lower trapezius. Activate the back muscles below your shoulder blades, including the lower trapezius, which will pull your shoulder blades down and help open your chest. Focus on lifting and opening the chest." Julie Gudmestad*

**Janu Sirsasana : Head to Knee Posture**

5 breaths on the right.

**Parivrta Janu Sirsasana – Revolved Head to Knee Pose**

5 breaths on the right.

**REPEAT ON LEFT**

**Paschimottanasana : Seated Forward Bend. Intense stretch of the West**

Stretches the hamstrings, stretches and lengthens the entire spine. Hold for 5 -10 breaths.

**Salamba Sarvangasana : Shoulderstand**

Focus on releasing the upper trapezius. Hold for 5 -10 breaths.

**Halasana : Plow**

Focus on releasing the upper trapezius. Releases stiffness from the shoulders. It will lead to development and elasticity of the shoulders, elbows and wrists. Hold for 5 -10 breaths.

**Setu Bandha Sarvangasana : Bridge Posture**

Hold for 5 -10 breaths.

**Matsyasana : Fish Pose**

Hold for 5 -10 breaths.

**Jathara Parivartanasana: Revolved Abdomen Posture**

5 deep breaths on the right and then repeat on the left.

**Vipassana : Insight Meditation.**

**SAVASANA : 10 minutes**

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**Keep a pen and paper handy when you practice and when you have an insight – write it down.**