

Padahastasana for Height

My first yoga teacher really loved Padahastasana. He started us almost every class with a relaxed version. We would be in the pose until everyone got situated on our mats. Sometimes Darren would ask us to hold the pose for really a long time. I don't think we ever were in the pose for less than a minute (unless we were the late comer) and it was usually more like two or three minutes, or more.

At first, it was a difficult pose to get into, not to mention hold for so long. My back wouldn't loosen up, or I would start to feel dizzy, or my arms would start to get sore. I began to think it was maybe a sort of punishment!

But then, after a few weeks, the pose started to feel like a break. I started to feel the benefit of the pose and as I grew stronger, the pose became like a secret connection to the deep peace each practice brought me.

This pose is good for your back, abdomen, and legs. By keeping the fold, your hamstrings find greater flexibility and your internal organs are massaged. A sort of inversion, the pose increases blood circulation (especially to the brain), which improves your concentration and keeps you calm.

Your calves and lower back also gain more flexibility, and as you breathe deep, and hold the pose with intent, you increase strength of the abdomen. It has been argued that this pose helps to lengthen the spine (making you taller!).

The pose also improves digestive disorders and if practiced regularly can remove fat from the abdominal area.

It is important to go gently into this pose so that you gain the strength you need to stay in it for a while. As you fold over, be sure to extend the top of your head out in front of you, always lengthening your spine. Tuck in your belly as you

extend out and fold down into the pose.

It also helps to sort of sway a little once you are in the pose, to find the relaxation in it. Keep your nose as close to your knees/thighs as possible, without tucking your neck too far.

Be there are breathe. Find your calm strength, and as you rise back up at the end, draw your shoulders back and feel yourself that much taller.