

# Pose of the Week 1-5-08

## Downward Facing Dog



### Adho Mukha Svanasana

*(AH-doh MOO-kah shvah-NAHS-anna)*

*adho* = downward

*mukha* = face

*svana* = dog

Also called Down Dog, Dog, Dog Tilt

One of the key poses in vinyasa style yoga, downward facing dog is part of the Sun Salutation and commonly used between flows. Once comfortable in Down Dog, it becomes a welcome resting place, an all over stretch, and a great neutralizer.

- Calms the brain and helps relieve stress and mild depression
- Energizes the body
- Stretches the shoulders, hamstrings, calves, arches, and hands
- Strengthens the arms and legs
- Helps relieve the symptoms of menopause
- Helps prevent osteoporosis
- Improves digestion
- Relieves headache, insomnia, back pain, and fatigue
- Therapeutic for high blood pressure, asthma, flat feet, sciatica, sinusitis

**Primary Muscles** – the whole back side of the body, calves, hamstrings, glutes, lats, deltoids  
Working against gravity strengthens the arms, legs and shoulders.

**Variations** – lessen the intensity by bending the knees, or choosing hands and knees or child's pose. If wrists are bothered, try rolling up a towel at the front of the mat to lessen the bend at the wrists. Other variations – dog with one leg in the air, dog with one leg in the air and hip rolled open, dog with one arm on mat and the other behind the back.

### Tips –

- Hips reach to the sky like a tall mountain.
- Hands fully connect with the floor – all ten fingers, palms, knuckles.
- Explore softening the knees with a slight bend to get more extension in the back and arms, and lesson the effect on the low back.
- Press the chest toward the legs without hyper extending the elbows.
- Head and neck relaxed.
- Equal energy, weight in the hands/arms and the feet/legs. It should not feel like a pushup.
- Push away with the hands and arms, let go with the backs of the legs.

*/ take a moment to equalize, restore, reflect*



Kris Lowe  
www.heartfilledyoga.com