

# Standing forward bend

## Pada hasthasan

If you notice that your legs are stiff from too much sitting, practise this Standing forward bend. Using the pull of gravity, this pose lengthens the muscles and ligaments of the entire posterior of your body - from heels to the middle of the back.

### Benefits

#### PHYSICAL

- Lengthens the muscles in the legs, hips, and lower back.
- Moderately increases the blood supply to the brain.
- Progressively trims the waist when accompanied by proper diet.
- Helps to overcome constipation.

#### MENTAL

- The stimulation of the spine, the activated sense of balance, and the extra blood supply to the brain produced by this pose all bring relief from *tamas*, a state of low energy characterized by sluggishness, inertia, sleepiness, forgetfulness, and depression.

**CAUTION** If the backs of your knees are over-extended, you should focus on keeping your knees straight without pushing them backwards.

## Standing forward bend All levels

### Beginner and Intermediate

Stand upright, with your legs together. Inhale and stretch your arms up alongside your ears.



**2** Exhale and bend forwards from the hips so that you make a horizontal line with your arms and upper body.



**3** Continue exhaling and bending forwards. Catch hold of your ankles or calves, or hold onto your big toes in the Classical foothold (see below). Hold for up to 1 minute with slow rhythmical breathing. Continue with Step 4 or inhale and come back up, with your arms and head hanging, then return to standing.



### Advanced

**4** If you can hold your toes, come into the full pose by bringing your arms behind your knees and holding your elbows. With an exhalation, push your arms down along your calves. Alternatively, for a greater stretch in the legs, slide the palms of your hands under your feet (see below). Hold either position for up to 1 minute, with slow rhythmical breathing, then come back up as in Step 3.



**Alternative foothold**  
Slide the palms under the feet.

Increase the stretch in the spine by pushing the arms farther down



### COMMON FAULTS

