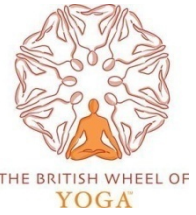


Assessment front sheets for Unit 1: 'Applied Anatomy and Physiology and the Teaching of Asana':

Task description paragraph 1.2.2



1.1a Posture Profile

Name of Student Teacher: Sarah Beck

Date of submission of profile:

<p>Name(s) of asana in Sanskrit: Virasana</p> <p><i>Pronounced as 'veer-AAH-suh-nuh</i></p> <p>Literal translation/derivation The pose of the hero</p> <p>(sometimes this pose is referred to as vajrasana meaning diamond pose or thunderbolt pose)</p> <p>Common English Name(s): Kneeling pose</p>		
<p>Asana Analysis: Key joints/articulation/nature of movement</p>	<p>Extension of vertebral column (vertebrae articulate with each other)</p> <p>External rotation of shoulders & slight adduction of arms at the shoulders (humerus articulates with glenoid cavity of the scapulae)</p> <p>Retraction and depression of scapulae</p> <p>Flexion of legs at hips & a slight internal rotation (the head of the femur articulates with the acetabulum of the hips)</p> <p>Flexion of lower legs at the knees (femur articulates with the tibia)</p> <p>Plantar flexion of the feet at the ankles (talus articulates with</p>	
<p>Key factors involved in creating the movement from the starting point (prone, supine, semi-supine, sitting, kneeling, standing). Factors include muscular contraction, both concentric and eccentric as appropriate, and gravity.</p> <p>Key muscle groups that need to be able to lengthen and relax in the posture (will be stretched?)</p>	<p>When lowering into virasana from 'all fours' will need to eccentrically contract the quadriceps</p> <p>Quadriceps need to lengthen & relax, anterior tibialis needs to lengthen & relax</p>	

<p>Key factors that may cause limitations (joint shape, body proportion, tightness or weakness of key muscles e.g. tight hamstrings in uttanasana; weak quads in utkatasana)</p> <p>Key muscle groups that need strength either to move into, hold, or exit the posture</p>	<p>Tight quadriceps and tight shin muscles (anterior tibialis) limit this posture. Also some students will naturally possess more ability to rotate the lower leg at the knee joint; the knee joint is designed for flexion and extension but dependant upon the natural flexibility of the knee ligaments, especially the collateral ligaments some students will find that they can adopt the full pose with ease whilst others will find there is little or no movement. (This is one of the main reasons why we much teach this pose with great sensitivity and why I will personally only teach it to classes where I believe the students possess enough self-awareness to choose the correct version of virasana.)</p> <p>Some strength in the quadriceps is required to exit the pose. Also some strength is required in the back muscles, i.e. erector spinae, and psoas muscle, to keep the spine erect when staying in the posture.</p>
<p>Preparation Give examples of specific preparation. Indicate areas the preparation is targeting from the factors identified above. Ways of mobilising key joints</p> <p>Ways of preparing key muscle groups that will lengthen and relax</p> <p>Ways of preparing key muscle groups that need strength either to move into, hold or exit the posture</p>	<p>Knees can be mobilised by for instance the knee crank whilst in dandasana, staff pose or working dynamically with utkatasana (squat pose)</p> <p>Ankles can be mobilised by foot flaps in dandasana, staff pose or raised urdhva hastasana on toes</p> <p>Quadriceps stretches such a soft natarajasana, the dancer, a modified version of ustrasana, camel pose, hands placed behind buttocks, lifting buttocks.</p> <p>Anterior tibialis stretches where feet plantar flexed such as the lunge or modified version of ustrasana, hands placed behind buttocks, lifting buttocks.</p> <p>Quadriceps strengtheners such as dynamic kneeling, utkatasana, squat pose or virabhadrasana II, warrior 2 pose</p> <p>Erector spinae strengtheners such as forms of shalabhasana, locust pose where upper body is raised, virabhadrasana III, warrior 3 balance or dandasana staff pose.</p>
<p>Areas for Caution</p> <p>General inflexibility</p> <p>Stiffness in ankles</p>	<p>Modifications to completed posture/Aids</p> <p>Can sit upon heels: if necessary placing blocks between buttocks and thighs (as lifting hips removes pressure upon feet, ankles & knees), it is also possible to try placing a thin roll behind knees to open the knee joint a little</p> <p>Can sit between heels: placing blocks beneath buttocks</p> <p>Can sit upon heels: but flex (tuck) toes underneath or try placing padding beneath ankles</p>

<p>Knee replacement</p> <p>Knee problems, to include arthritis</p> <p>Varicose veins</p>	<p>Use an alternative such as dandasana, staff pose if not possible to kneel or can place several blocks between the buttocks and heels</p> <p>Can sit upon heels: if necessary place padding beneath the knees, sit on blocks or try placing a thin roll behind knees, can also try placing a folded blanket beneath shins allowing the knee caps to project over the edge. If pain persists then may need to adopt an alternative position such as dandasana, staff pose.</p> <p>Use an alternative such as dandasana staff pose.</p>
<p>Stages leading to the posture, if appropriate, (using less challenging/modified versions to prepare for/ lead into the final posture): including teaching points to promote good structural alignment and core strength/stability as appropriate to the posture</p> <p>Students must first learn to sit with comfort in a kneeling pose where the buttocks are to heels and this must be explored first adopting modifications and alternatives as needed; this may require the use of blocks, blankets for padding and where possible bolsters, thin rolled towels or the like.</p> <p>Alternatives can include dandasana, staff pose, and if staying for longer, for instance for a meditation some students may prefer to use another seated pose such as maitryasana, friendship pose i.e. sitting in a chair.</p> <p>We can start from Majrasana, cat pose where we are on all fours. The knees are hip width apart and the front of the feet facing downwards, placed slightly wider apart than the knees. The hands and arms continue to support the weight of the body as the buttocks are slowly lowered to the floor. At first we can sit to the front of the sitting bones with a slight anterior tilt of the pelvis, then as we engage the core muscles we can gently create a slight posterior tilt of the pelvis until the pelvis is horizontal, in a neutral position and we sitting centrally upon the sitting bones.</p>	
<p>Teaching points while in the posture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the feet are aligned, top of feet to the floor • Ensure the spine is erect with a natural lumbar curve, also that the pelvis is balanced, if not then place blocks beneath buttocks • Check there is no pain or discomfort within the ankles or knees, if so adopt a modification • Let the head be level, chin horizontal to the floor, neck lengthened, crown rising upwards • Shoulders down away from ears and chest open • Tuck the shoulder blades down towards the waist and inwards • Let the hands be lightly upon the knees • Ground downwards through the buttocks as you stay whilst keeping the spine extended. 	
<p>Bringing students out of the posture</p> <p>To release from the pose we can draw our weight forwards and into our hands, returning to Majrasana, cat pose</p>	
<p>Variations/ways of developing the posture</p>	

We can stay in the pose and work there for instance raising arms overhead with fingers clasped, working with other shoulder mobilising exercises such as cow's head arms or shoulder circles, or perhaps adopt a hasta mudra.

We can take knees apart, toes touching. Here we can sit with buttocks to heels or buttocks between heels. This variation is called Bhadrasana, the gentle pose. (3)

We can flex the trunk forwards over the thighs, lifting and lowering with the breath. This is often called shashankasana, the hare pose, and can be performed with buttocks to heels or buttocks between heels. Alternatively another version of shashankasana is where we can stay in the flexed position, forehead to floor, hands clasped behind the back. (4)



We can work with supta virasana where the back is laid along the floor, and here it is important that aids are used as necessary to **ensure there is no strain upon the neck, lower back or knees**. This is very challenging pose and there must be long term preparation.

It is possible to work with the version of virasana as given in some of the older texts such as the Gheranda Samhita where we come on to raised knees and tuck the ankle of one leg across the top of the thigh of the other leg. This presents many challenges however as it is now a balance and for most students the hip cannot rotate enough to enable the knees to touch the floor without exerting too much pressure upon the ligaments of the knee, also where there is insufficient external hip rotation excessive pressure can be placed with the lower back.

We can also adopt the version found within the Hatha Yoga Pradipika where we come into vajrasana, i.e. with buttocks to the floor between lower legs bring one leg to a flexed position, foot to the floor, placing an elbow upon this knee, resting the head upon the palm. Focusing upon ajna chakra. Although the placement of the lower leg possesses all of the attendant challenges to the knee and ankle joints. Alternatively we can sit with thighs abducted, with one foot tucked behind the same side buttock and the opposite foot placed over the opposite thigh. Here excellent hip and ankle mobility is necessary and so it is not possible for many students. (1)

Bihar School's (Satyananda Yoga) version is as the first above but they also offer a raised kneeling version where one foot is placed across the top of the opposite thigh, hands above head palms together. This requires great balance, ankle flexibility and external hip rotation(2)

Counterposes

Not always necessary for the buttocks to heels although if staying for more than a few breaths may need to move into a counterpose such as:

- Purvottanasana, east stretch: ankles and thighs stretched, knees extended
- Adho Mukha Svanasana, down facing dog: ankles moved in opposite way, knees extended, thighs contracted

Key benefits and effects: (If esoteric, refer to source ancient texts)

- Tones the quadriceps and ankles
- On release improves circulation to the feet
- With practice can release the pain of arthritis in ankles and feet
- Improves digestion if adopted after eating a meal

- Helps to quiet the body and mind for meditation

References in source ancient texts (if any)

Gherandha Samhita, Sris Chandra Vasu, Theosophical Publishing House Ltd, 1895, p32
 Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Swami Muktibodhananda Saraswati, Bihar School, 1985, p63 (1)

Sources of information from modern teachers/bibliography

Asana, Pranayama, Mudra and Bandha, Swami Saraswati, Bihar School Publications, p83 (2) p87 (3) p91 (4)
 Instructing Hatha Yoga, Kathy Lee Kappmeier & Diane M. Ambrosini, Human Kinetics, 2006
 Moving into Stillness, Erich Schiffman, Pocket Books, 1996, p197
 Structural Yoga Therapy, Mukunda Stiles, Samuel Weiser, 2000, p234
 The Yoga Bible, Christina Brown, Godsfield Press, 2003, p120
 Yoga, Mind, Body & Spirit, Donna Farhi, Newleaf, 2000, p188

Student teacher’s comments on what has been learned from this task

Student teacher’s signature

Date

Tutor’s comments:

Tutor’s signature

Date

Notes for guidance: This template should be expanded in size to include detail as required. Diagrams may be used for explanation. All areas of the profile must be covered as relevant to the specific posture. Some aspects will be more applicable than others, depending on the posture. Tutors may ask for other information to be included.