

Ardha Chandrasana (Half Moon pose)

Pronounced ar-dhuh-cuhn-draah-suh-nuh the word 'ardha' means half and 'chandra' means moon in Sanskrit.

This pose is usually performed from trikonasana (triangle pose) and some authorities state that the name of half moon is derived from the movement of the back leg as it lifts from the floor in an upwards arc.

When teaching this pose we can initially include the use of aids to give support and balance, and once the pose is more familiar we can still offer these choices so that whenever possible students can find the support they need:

1. Practice with back of body against the wall
2. Practice with the support of a partner
3. Practice independently

Teaching Points:

Stage 1

- Start in trikonasana (triangle pose), right foot leading, if necessary turning the lead foot in a few degrees and allow the top hip to fall forwards to maintain alignment for the knees.
- Looking down bend the right knee as you place the right hand around one foot in front of the right foot. You may need to simultaneously bring the left leg a little closer if necessary
- Continue to look downwards as the right leg is straightened and the left leg is raised upwards. It is possible to stay here.

Stage 2

- Now draw the top shoulder backwards as the lower hip is rotated open, opening the chest and groin respectively. Keep the back long and spacious. A block or similar may be required under the lower hands. Could stay here.

Stage 3

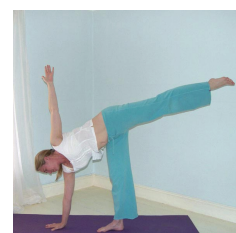
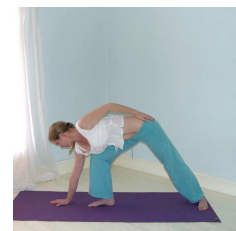
- If possible now lift the left arm vertically, energetically lifting out of the lower arm into the upper arm, keeping both shoulders open. Could stay here.

Stage 4

- To complete the pose slowly rotate the head to look upwards at the upper thumb if possible.
- **Stay here** extending outwards from the centre of the body into each of the limbs, maintaining space within all joints as you reach outwards.

To exit

- To exit slowly bend the right knee, lowering the left leg to the floor, coming to a standing position or alternatively returning to trikonasana.
- Now practice to the other side.



Note: Check that the spine remain long i.e. extended and straight rather than bowed - students often require a block beneath the lead hand so the body remains open, especially when a student has proportionally longer legs, or shorter arms and torso.

Benefits:

- Tones and strengthens legs
- Especially strengthens the hip abductors
- Strengthens and frees hips
- Strengthens the knee joints
- Strengthens ankles
- Opens chest and shoulders muscles
- Invigorates, lifting energy levels
- Gives confidence & enthusiasm

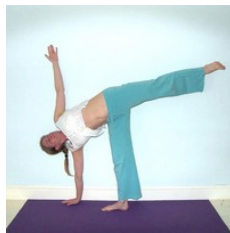
Good preparation

Hip and shoulder mobilisers, adductor stretches, chest openers, abdominal, back, shoulder and abductor strengtheners

Cautions & possible modifications

- **For pregnancy:** can use modified versions by placing lower hand on blocks/chair, back against the wall or work in kneeling position
- **For HBP/heart conditions:** keep the upper arm to the side, working with head at same height as torso by placing blocks or a chair seat beneath the lower hand; could move dynamically without staying in the full pose but must not work with strain
- **For balance problems:** work against a wall or against the hip of a partner
- **For hamstring and groin injury:** work gently, avoiding opening at the hips as intensely, if necessary placing lower hand on blocks and keeping top hip down
- **For neck problems:** keep the head looking downwards or forwards
- **For sacroiliac problems:** can keep upper hip tilted downwards
- **Hyperextension of the lower knee:** keep lower knee aligned with the ankle and hip joints, pada bandha reducing weight just into heel, microbend knee if needed

The main modifications are shown above, to include:



Place back to the wall

Try to ease the whole of the back of the body against the wall, working to roll the top hip backwards.

Bend the lower leg

For some students working with the lower leg good variation which may also be a good



bent will be a preparation.

Developments

The main development is work alone without support and look upwards. It is surprising looking upwards makes the posture so much more challenging!

Adjustments

We must scan the room to check all students have the correct foot placement, and that the lower ankle is positioned below the hips, helping students to find this where necessary. We can adjust the positioning of the arms, offering a block as needed.

We can help students into this posture by standing behind them, looking towards the head so the side of our hip is against their buttocks. The student can enter the pose with the support you are offering and once they have entered the full pose we can place a hand upon the top hip and gently draw it back, increasing the external rotation at the lower hip; this can also be used as partner work.