

***Parsvottanasana* – Intense Stretch of the Sides of the Body Pose (At Wall)**

Parsva means side and *ottan* means intense stretch. In this pose, the sides of the body are lengthened and stretched. By regular practice the legs become flexible and shapely.

- 1) Stand facing the wall with the hands level at hip height. Spread your palms evenly against the wall.
- 2) Pressing your palms and keeping them in place, step back away from the wall, until your arms are straight and legs are vertical, with the back of the heels in line with the buttock bones.
- 3) Keep your feet hip width apart and your knees pointed toward the wall. Balance your weight evenly on your feet without turning them outward.
- 4) Straighten your legs as you tighten your thigh muscles. Your kneecaps will lift and the hamstrings will stretch.
- 5) Keeping your hands stretching into the wall, press your legs back to stretch the spine evenly. Do not let the back arch or hunch. Instead, focus on an even, long spinal extension. This is *Ardha Uttanasana*, Half Intense Stretch Pose. (See last week's column and photo.)
- 6) Now, step the right foot forward under the chest and the left foot back. Press the thighs back, away from the wall, to straighten the legs. Keep the sacrum level; do not let the hips tilt.
- 7) As you stay in the pose, work to stretch the sides of the body evenly by pressing into the wall with your hands and pressing back, in the opposite direction, with your legs.
- 8) Stay for 30-60 seconds with steady, even breathing through the nose. Step forward to come out of the pose. Repeat to the other side, stepping the left foot forward and the right foot back.



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