



# PRISON YOGA PROJECT

**A PATH FOR HEALING AND RECOVERY**

---

**JAMES FOX**

## Intermediate Practice

This represents a fairly challenging asana routine for those in sound physical condition. It is intended for a more experienced practitioner and comprises most of the fundamental yoga asanas. Unless you have done the Basic Practice for the prescribed period of time, the Intermediate Practice is not recommended as a starting asana practice.



## Centering & Opening

**(1) Easy Pose (*Sukhasana*)** – seated in cross-legged position. Allow the spine to lengthen gently toward the crown of the head; chest open, shoulders relaxed. Chin dropped slightly toward the chest, head positioned so openings of ears are aligned with the shoulder joints. Shift weight slightly forward on sitting bones to stabilize arch in the lower back. Proper alignment assists in keeping the body stable and still, supporting meditation practice. If unable to sit in this position, you can sit on a chair or a bunk with your back supported. *Sit quietly for 5 minutes.* (See Daily Meditation Practice or Expanding Awareness of Breath.)

**(2) Cow/Cat** – begin in Cow moving into position on inhalation, allowing the back and spine to arch, tailbone tilted upward, belly relaxed, arms straight with wrists under shoulders and knees under hips, hip width apart. Tilt head back looking up at eyebrows. Then as you exhale completely transition to Cat, rounding the spine and back, drawing the lower belly in toward the spine, tucking the tailbone between the legs, bringing your chin to the collarbone, looking to the tip of your nose. As your chin comes to your collarbone complete the exhale expelling all the air from the lungs. *Duration: 10 repetitions, inhaling slowly into Cow and exhaling slowly into Cat.*

**(3) Downward Facing Dog (*Adhomukha Svanasana*)** – starting with wrists under shoulders and knees under hips, walk your hands at least a hand length forward keeping them shoulder width apart and fingers spread wide. Curl your toes under and lift the body. Press your hands firmly into the floor extending your arms, shifting your chest toward your legs while allowing the spine to lengthen toward its base. Inner armpits open toward the floor. Keep the back of your head in alignment with your arms. Legs are firmly flexed, no wider than hip width, heels press toward the floor. When first going into Down Dog you can bend one leg and straighten the opposite one, going back and forth, then finally straighten both legs and settle into pose. Heels will probably remain off floor. *Duration: 5 complete breaths.*

**(4 & 5) Plank to Chaturanga (*Chaturanga Dandasana*) to Downward Facing Dog** – from Downward Dog come to Plank (push-up position). Inhale and bring your body a couple of inches off the floor (*Chaturanga Dandasana*) and exhale pressing back to Plank. Hands are placed under the shoulders, legs and abdominal muscles flexed. Do this slowly 5-10 times. Then from Plank, exhale and press back to Downward Dog again, *staying for 3-5 complete breaths.*

**(6) Child's Pose (*Balasana*)** – from Downward Dog spread your knees wide apart and come onto the mat. Drop the buttocks toward feet sitting on heels if possible. Keep the spine lengthened as you rest your forehead on the mat or a rolled up towel. Arms can be resting out in front of you or alongside your legs. *Duration: at least 10 complete, deep, relaxed breaths.*

**(7) Downward Facing Dog** – inhale and come up on your hands and knees and then up to Down Dog again. Work on alignment of body as described in (3) and focus your awareness on the exhalation as you exhale completely. *Duration: 5 complete breaths.*

**(8) Standing Forward Fold (*Uttanasana*)** – from Down Dog bend your knees and as you exhale hop your feet forward toward your hands. Straighten your legs, keep your feet hip width apart, bring your back up parallel with the floor, and then exhale folding the torso over the legs. Keep your thighs flexed with your weight evenly balanced on your feet from side to side and heel to toe, spine lengthening toward the crown of your head. *Duration: 5 complete breaths.*

**(9 & 10) Standing Half Forward Fold (*Ardha Uttanasana*)** – from Standing Forward Fold on an inhale bring your back up parallel with the floor, first spreading your arms out to the side, then lengthen your arms out in front of you. Arms, back of head and neck and spine all in parallel alignment. Keep your weight firmly balanced on your feet and extend your arms out through your fingertips. *Duration: 5 complete breaths*

**(11) Standing Forward Fold** – from Half Forward Fold on the fifth exhale fold forward again into the full Standing Forward Fold. Keep legs flexed, weight balanced on feet, spine lengthened, neck relaxed. *Duration: 5 complete breaths.*

**(12) Transition to Standing/Mountain** – from Standing Forward Fold inhale and come up to Half Forward Bend with arms stretched out to the side parallel with floor. On next inhale continue raising the torso, keeping the legs flexed and spine lengthened, sweeping the arms up from the sides of the body until the palms of the hands meet over head. (See figure 14). Look to your hands above your head, and as you exhale extend the arms out to the side and down, bringing your palms together and lifting them to your sternum (heart) in a prayer gesture. *Stay here for 5 complete breaths.*



(13)



(14)



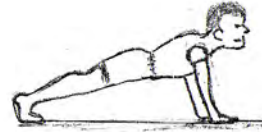
(15)



(16)



(17)



(18)



(19)



(20)



(21)



(22)



(23)



(24)

## Purification

The following two series are variations of Sun Salutations (Surya Namaskara). They are to be practiced by going through each series individually, addressing first one side of the body and then the other side. This means that for the first series (13) to (24), you do the first set with the left leg back for poses (15, 16 & 17), and the left leg forward for pose (22). For the second set of the series you take the right leg back (15, 16 & 17), and the right leg forward for pose (22). All the other poses are performed in both sets as illustrated and described.

**(13 & 14)** Mountain (*Tadasana*) to Standing Forward Fold – start in Mountain with your hands together in front of your heart. Keeping your legs flexed, weight balanced on your feet, hip width apart, spine lengthened. After 2 complete breaths, on an inhale sweep your arms up out to the side, look at your hands as they come together over your head, and then exhale sweeping the arms out to the side toward the floor, folding the torso over the legs to come into the Standing Forward Fold. *Pause here for 2 breaths.*

**(15)** Low Lunge – from Standing Forward Fold inhale bringing your back up parallel with the floor and exhale as you fold your torso forward stepping your left leg and foot back into a “runner’s lunge.” Hips drop down, look forward, chest open, hands on fingertips, lifting up behind the knee, back leg extends through the heel, stay on the ball of the foot. *Remain here for 2 breaths.*

**(16)** Lunge Twist – while in the Low Lunge, place the left hand under the left shoulder and twist your torso open to the right and extend your right arm and hand toward the ceiling. Keep the back leg straight, lifting up behind the knee. *Duration: 5 complete breaths.*

**(17 & 18)** Low Lunge to Plank – from the Lunge Twist bring your right arm down and come back into the Low Lunge for a breath. Then step the right leg back and come into Plank (push-up position). *Stay in Plank for 2 complete breaths.*

**(19)** Locust (*Salabhasana*) – from Plank come down onto the floor resting your forehead on the mat. Take a couple of breaths, then on your next exhale lift your head and chest, lift your legs and extend your arms back behind you with your palms facing one another. Keep your knees lifted, legs and feet close and draw your shoulder blades together. Keep lifting up from the sternum. *Duration: 5 complete breaths.*

**(20 & 21)** Resting to Downward Facing Dog – from Locust come down onto the floor resting your forehead, staying for 2 breaths. Then curl your toes under and press up to Plank, and back to Down Dog, see description (3). *Stay in Down Dog for 3 complete breaths, exhaling completely out your nose.*

**(22 & 23)** Low Lunge to Standing Forward Fold – from Down Dog exhale and step the left foot forward into the Low Lunge, then step the right foot next to the left and bring your back up parallel with the floor. Try to keep your fingertips in touch with the mat; keep the legs flexed/straight. Inhale and as you exhale bend into the Standing Forward Fold. *Remain for 3 complete breaths.*

**(24)** Transition to Mountain – from Standing Forward Fold, inhale and come up to Mountain. See description for (12). *Remain in Mountain for 3 complete breaths before starting the set over.*



(25)



(26)



(27)



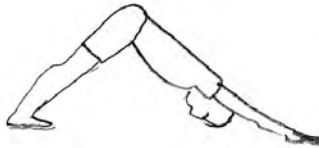
(28)



(29)



(30)



(32)



(33)



(31)



(34)



(35)



(36)



## Purification (continued)

For this second series (25) to (36) of Sun Salutations, you do the first set with the left leg back for (27, 28, 29 & 30), and the second set with the right leg back for those poses. The other poses are performed in both sets as illustrated and described.

**(25 & 26)** Mountain (*Tadasana*) to Standing Forward Fold – see description for 13 & 14. *Pause here for 2 breaths.*

**(27)** Low Lunge – see description for 15. *Stay here for 2 breaths.*

**(28)** Crescent Lunge (*Alanasana*) – from the Low Lunge place your hands on your right knee, then inhale and sweep your arms up over your head shoulder width apart. Keep the back leg straight lifting up behind the knee. Stay on the ball of the back foot extending through the heel. *Stay 5 complete breaths.*

**(29)** Revolved Lunge (*Parivrtta Parsvakonasana*) – from Crescent Lunge exhale and place the left elbow behind the right knee, bringing your hands together in front of your chest fingertips pointing up. Use the left elbow to help you twist the torso as you draw your right shoulder open. Keep the back leg straight lifting up behind the knee. Stay on the ball of the back foot extending through the heel. *Duration: 5 complete breaths.*

**(30)** Low Lunge to Plank – from Revolved Lunge inhale and take your left elbow off the right leg, and turning the torso forward place your fingertips down and come back into the Low Lunge for a breath. Then step the right leg back and come into Plank (push-up position). *Stay in Plank for 2 complete breaths.*

**(31)** Chaturanga Dandasana to Upward Facing Dog (*Urdhvamukha Svanasana*) – from Plank come down a couple of inches off the floor to *Chaturanga Dandasana*, then shift the chest and head forward while pressing upward to come into Upward Facing Dog. Lengthen the arms pressing the palms firmly into the floor under the shoulders. Lift from the crown of the head. Legs are flexed with knees off the floor, weight on the top of the feet, spine lengthening, look forward and slightly upward. *Stay 3-5 complete breaths.*

**(32)** Downward Facing Dog – from Upward Facing Dog shift onto the balls of your feet and *exhale back to Downward Facing Dog for 3 breaths.*

**(33)** Standing Forward Fold – from Down Dog bend your knees and as you exhale hop your feet forward toward your hands and come into Standing Forward Fold. See description for (8). *Stay for 3 breaths.*

**(34)** Powerful Squat (*Utkatasana*) – from the Standing Forward Fold, with your feet hip width apart, bend your knees and drop your tailbone as if you were going to sit in a chair. Place your hands on your knees and inhaling sweep your arms up shoulder width apart while staying in the squat. Your tailbone should be 4-6 inches higher than your knees. Try to tuck the tailbone slightly as you extend your arms and ribcage upward. *Duration: 5 complete breaths.*

**(35)** Standing Forward Fold – from the Powerful Squat straighten your legs and bring your back parallel with the floor, arms out to the side to Standing Half Forward Fold, then exhale folding forward into the Standing Forward Fold. *Duration: 5 complete breaths.*

**(36)** Transition to Mountain – from Standing Forward Fold, inhale and come up to Mountain. (See description figure 12). *Remain in Mountain for 3 complete breaths before starting the set over.*

**Note:** When you complete the second set rather than going from Standing Forward Fold (35) transitioning to Mountain Pose (36), go from Standing Forward Fold to Downward Facing Dog to Child's Pose. See description for (6). *Rest in Child's Pose for 10 complete breaths.*



(37)



(38)



(39)



(40)



(41)



(42)



(43)



(44)



(45)



(46)



(47)



(48)



## Resiliency

**(37)** Handstand – get into a Low Lunge position, see description (15), facing a wall or the inside of a cell door. Place your hands shoulder width apart about 9-12 inches away from the wall. If you are right handed, your right leg should be extended back in a Low Lunge. If you are left handed, your left leg back. Whatever feels most natural to kick up into a handstand against the wall. Kick the back leg up balancing your weight on your hands a couple of times getting used to the sensation. When you are ready, go all the way up. Once in a handstand your feet should be close together against the wall. Keep lengthening your arms, hands under your shoulders not wider. Keep looking toward the wall. Experiment with taking your feet off the wall to come into a balanced Handstand. *Try to hold the Handstand for 30 seconds, increasing to 1 minute with practice.*

**(38)** Child's Pose – see description (6). Come down from Handstand to Child's Pose *for 1 minute.*

**(39)** Standing Forward Fold – see description (8). From Child's Pose come to Standing Forward Fold for *5 complete breaths.*

**(40 & 41)** Transition to Mountain – see description (12). Remain for *3 complete breaths.*

**(42)** Triangle (*Trikonasana*) – from Mountain step your left foot back 4-5 ft. planting the heel firmly. Your front heel should be aligned with the middle of the arch of the back foot, the back foot angled slightly forward. Turn your hips to face left. Inhale and raise your arms parallel with the floor and as you exhale reach as far forward as you can with your right arm parallel with the floor while shifting your hips. Then place your left hand on your left hip and right hand on your right shin. Inhale and spin open the left side of your chest toward the ceiling. Feel the left hip stacking directly above the right hip as your torso and hips rotate open. When you are ready, raise your left arm toward the ceiling and turn your head to look at your left hand. *Stay at least 30 seconds.* Then come back to Mountain (41) and repeat on the other side (right leg back, left leg forward).

**(43)** Warrior II (*Virabhadrasana II*) - from Mountain step your left foot back 4-5 ft. planting the heel firmly. Your front heel should be aligned with the middle of the arch of the back foot, the back foot angled slightly forward. Turn your hips to face the left. Inhale and bring your arms up parallel with the floor, and as you exhale bend the right leg as close to a 90 degree angle as possible. Your right knee should be directly over your right ankle. Keep the back leg straight lengthening it and pressing the back foot down firmly. Look to the tips of your right fingers. Keep your torso vertically aligned over your hips. *Stay at 30 seconds. Then come back to Mountain (41) and repeat on the other side (right leg back, left leg forward).*

**(44)** Extended Side Angle (*Parsvakonasana*) – begin in Warrior II, see description (43), with your left leg and foot back. Stay in Warrior II for 3 complete breaths. Then place your left hand on your left hip and your right fingertips to the outside of your right foot (if this is too difficult you can place your right forearm on the top of your right thigh). Right leg is bent at a 90 degree angle. Rotate the left side of your chest and torso open and extend your left arm over your ear reaching out over the bent right leg. Your left arm should be a diagonal extension of your left leg. *Stay at least 30 seconds. Then repeat on the other side (right leg back, left leg forward).*

**(45)** Intense Side Stretch (*Parsvottanasana*) – begin standing in Mountain (41). Step your left foot back 3-4 ft. keeping the foot facing forward. Align the front right heel with the back left heel. Turn your hips to face forward. Place your hands on your hips and keeping your legs flexed and straight, bend forward from the waist bringing your back parallel with the floor. Then extend your arms forward over the right leg and as you exhale, fold the torso over the right leg, bringing your hands onto the floor on either side of the right foot or onto your shin. *Stay for 5 complete breaths. Then come back to Mountain and repeat on the other side (right leg back, left leg forward).*

**(46)** Tree (*Vrksasana*) - from Mountain (41) shift your weight into your left leg. Feel yourself grounded through that flexed leg. When ready, pick up your right foot placing and pressing it to the inside of your left thigh, right heel as close to the left groin as possible. Keep your spine lengthened. Bring your hands together in front of your heart at the sternum. Find a spot on the floor to focus your gaze, breathe easily. *Stay at least 5 complete breaths before stepping back to Mountain. Then repeat, this time lifting the left foot onto the inside of the right thigh.* Once you become accustomed to being in the pose you can raise your hands arms over your head, shoulder width apart, while staying balanced on the leg. Bring your hands back in front of your heart before stepping back into Mountain.

**(47)** Standing Forward Fold – see description (8). *Stay in Standing Forward Fold at least 5 complete breaths.*

**(48)** Child's Pose – see description (6). *Stay at least 10 complete breaths.*



(49)



(50)



(51)



(52)



(53)



(54)



(55)



(56)



(57)



(58)



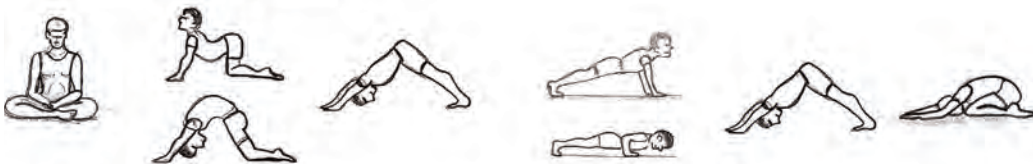
(59)

## Closing & Integration

- (49)** Lying On Stomach – from Child’s Pose (48), come lying down onto your stomach on the floor with your arms along side your body. Turn your head to the side. *Stay here a couple of breaths.*
- (50)** Bow (*Dhanurasana*) – while lying on your belly pick your head up and bend one leg at a time stretching your arms back to hold your ankles. On the next inhale pull on shins of the legs and raise the knees while at the same time lifting your chest and head. The arms and hands act like a bow to tighten and bend the body. Keep your knees and ankles hip width apart while you keep lifting. *Stay for 5 complete breaths or 30 seconds. Then release the ankles and bring the legs, chest and head back to the floor to relax an equal amount of time. Repeat the pose at least once again.*
- (51)** Staff Pose (*Dandasana*) – come to a seated position stretching your legs out in front of you while keeping the thighs flexed and the spine lengthened. Lift up from the crown of your head and extend out through the heels of your flexed feet (toes curl toward your face). Place your hands under your shoulders on the floor or on your thighs. *Remain for 5 complete breaths.*
- (52)** Seated Twist (*Ardha Matsyendrasana*) – from Staff Pose, bend the right leg placing your right heel on the floor, and bend the left leg allowing it to remain on the floor, left knee facing forward. Bring the left heel over to the outside of the right buttock. If possible, pick up the right leg and foot, crossing it over the left leg. See if you can place the outside of the right ankle up against the top of the left thigh as you plant the right foot on the floor. Bring your right hand directly behind your back close to your body to help keep the spine straight. Wrap the inner left elbow around the right knee. As you inhale, lengthen your spine, as you exhale twist the entire torso to the right. Look behind you over your opened right shoulder. *Stay for 10 complete breaths before switching your legs and twisting to the other side.*
- (53)** Staff Pose – *come back to Staff Pose for 5 breaths.*
- (54)** Cobbler (*Baddhakonasana*) – from Staff Pose bring the soles of your feet together, knees out to the side. Keep your back straight, spine lengthened. *Stay for 3 complete breaths.*
- (55)** Butterfly to Cobbler– while in Cobbler, move your feet forward 3-4” keeping the soles together. Inhale fully and as you exhale fold the torso forward over your legs, forehead dropping toward your feet. You can round your back. Keep your arms, shoulders and neck completely relaxed. Let the body surrender into the pose continuing to let go of any holding and tension. As you exhale in the pose draw your lower belly in toward your spine. Practice Mindful Awareness, let go of thinking and stay connected to your body and breath. *Remain in the pose a minimum of 3 minutes; with practice increase the time to 5 minutes.* From Butterfly slowly come up to Cobbler. Stretch your legs out in front of you and lean back with your weight on your hands placed on the floor behind your shoulders. *Rest for a few breaths.*
- (56)** Resting to Sphinx – start by lying down on your stomach, head turned to the side. *Stay for 3 complete breaths, then rise up onto your elbows and forearms.* Elbows placed directly under the shoulders, arms resting on the floor, shoulder width apart, legs and buttocks relaxed. Put a little pressure into your forearms and elbows so the chest does not sag toward the floor. Keep the belly soft. Practice Mindful Awareness, let go of thinking and stay connected to your body and breath. *Remain in the pose a minimum of 3 minutes. With practice increase the time to 5 minutes or move into Seal for the final 2 minutes.*
- (57)** Seal to Resting – after being in Sphinx for 3 minutes, press your palms into the floor and straighten your arms. Keep the legs and buttocks relaxed. Be careful not to force yourself to stay in the pose if it feels like too much pressure on the lower back. *Remain in Seal for 2 minutes before coming back down to Sphinx, and then lying down with your head turned to the side. Rest for 30 seconds.*
- (58)** Seated Forward Fold (*Pachimottanasana*) – starting in Staff Pose, see description (51), inhale reaching your arms up over your head and exhale folding your torso over your legs, grabbing your feet or your shins. Keep your legs and feet flexed, toes curling toward your face. Lengthen your spine to keep weight off your lower back. *Remain in pose 1 minute.*
- (59)** Corpse (*Savasana*) – after completing Seated Forward Fold, lie down on your back. Separate your feet shoulder width apart and let the legs and feet roll open. Bring your hands about a foot away from the side of your body, palms open toward the ceiling. Walk your shoulders down away from your ears. Pick your head up, lengthen your neck and settle the head again. Let your body settle into a deep state of relaxation. Allow any pressure or tension from the scalp, forehead, temples, jaw to release to the floor where the back of your head rests. Let your body completely surrender into the floor. Let your awareness remain with your breathing. *Stay for at least 5 minutes. This is a good time to practice Deep Relaxation Breathing (Viloma Pranayama).* End *Savasana* completely relaxed breathing naturally.

# Intermediate Practice

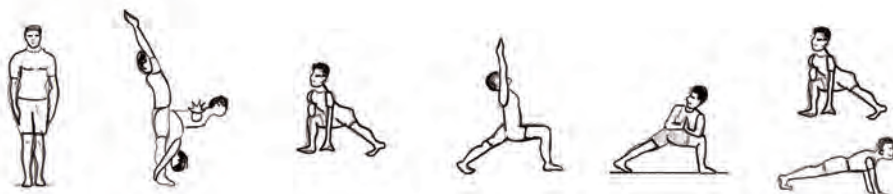
## Centering & Opening



## Purification



## Purification (continued)



## Resiliency



## Closing & Integration



