

## Hero's Pose (with feet and toes flexed) + Downward-facing Dog Sequence for Runners

Performed either before or after a run or ride, this posture provides various degrees of stretch to the lower back, quadriceps, calves, achilles tendons, and the bottom of the feet.



### **Props required:**

1-2 blocks

### **Helps in the prevention and management of the following sports injuries:**

- Calf strain
- Achilles tendon strain
- Medial tibial stress syndrome (shinsplints)
- Achilles tendonitis
- Anterior and posterior tibial tendonitis

### **Benefits of the posture:**

- Stretches and strengthens the arches of the feet.
- Increases flexibility in the knees, hips, and ankle joints.
- Releases tension and stiffness in the lower back.

### **Instructions:**

- Move down to the floor onto your hands and knees with the toes curled under. Try to bring all 5 toes in contact with the mat.
- Move the hips back toward the heels until you feel a comfortable, gentle stretch. Reach the heels back.
  - If possible, place 1-2 blocks under the hips and allow the sitting bones to come to rest on the block(s). With time and practice, gradually work toward sitting back onto 1 block (as shown above).
- Remain here for 10 breaths. Explore the effects of putting more weight on one side and then the other.
- Exhale out of the posture and move into downward-facing dog for 5 breaths. Repeat the sequence 3-4 times.