

Downward-Facing Dog Posture



Position 1 – With a chair



Physical focus:

Calves
Achilles
Hamstrings

Foundation :

Ankles flexed to 45 degrees.
Heels reaching to the floor (not necessarily touching the floor).
Knees can be bent slightly if necessary in order to reduce the tension on the hamstrings.

Precaution :

If you suffer from sciatica, bend your knees or avoid the posture if you feel a tingling or burning sensation down the back of the legs or buttocks.

(Continued on next page)



Position 2 – Without a chair



Alignment :

** Align the torso to a right angle to the thighs.
Keep the feet hip-width apart and the toes pointing forward – 2nd toe in line with the heel.
A straight line from the hips, through to the shoulders and wrists.
Upper arms in line with the ears

Prevention and management of the following injuries :

(Hip and ankle flexibility will improve with practice)
Calf strain
Achilles tendon strain
Shin splints

Downward-Facing Dog Pose

Prop(s) Required :

1 chair if necessary

Instructions :

- Kneel on your mat with the arms, forearms, and thighs perpendicular to the floor.
 - The hands are placed slightly forward from the shoulders.
 - Stack the hips above the knees.
 - Place the feet hip-width apart.
 - Spread and broaden the palms.
 - Turn the toes under.
 - Raise the knees off the floor.
- Exhale and move back onto the balls of the feet and the knees 4-6 inches above the floor.
- Establish the foundation of the pose:
 - Firmly press the index finger knuckles down into the chair or floor and extend through your fingers.
- Use the connection of the hands into the chair/ floor to elongate the front torso and the spine.
- Use the exhale to lift the hips up and back while reaching the chest (sternum) backward toward the knees.
- Keeping the elbows stable, extend the arms fully away from the hands.
- Gradually straighten the legs and aim to create a straight line from the hips and through to the shoulders and wrists.
- Focus on maintaining a calm, quiet breath; Use the inhale to create length in the spine and the exhale to extend the hips up and back – so that the heels descend closer to the floor.
- Remain in the posture for 5 to 20 breaths.
- Use your hands to push yourself back up to kneeling on your hands and knees, and then to sitting.