

POSE 17 Forward Bends**Uttanasana**
Intense Forward Stretch

Uttanasana relieves mental and physical exhaustion, reduces depression and insomnia, fatigue by increasing the blood flow to the brain, soothing the brain cells and sympathetic nervous system.



The Intense Forward Stretch stimulates the liver and kidneys, stretches the hamstrings, calves and hips. It strengthens the thighs and knees.

Props

- Sticky mat. For alternative pose three to four blocks.

Please refer to my website for information about all yoga props from Hugger Mugger™
joann.yoga/yoga/yoga-props/

Foundation

1. Place feet hip-width apart, bend the knees and rest the torso on top of the thighs. Align the heels with the little toes, and establish weight in metatarsals and heels equally.

Getting into the pose

2. Lift up the sit-bones (ischium) by extending the legs.
3. Engage triceps muscles, taking shoulder blades towards the hips, and releasing the chest toward the thighs.
4. Release the neck from the shoulders, drop the head from the neck.
5. In the POSE (**main photo**), establish a smooth rhythm of breath, and hold for seven breath cycles.

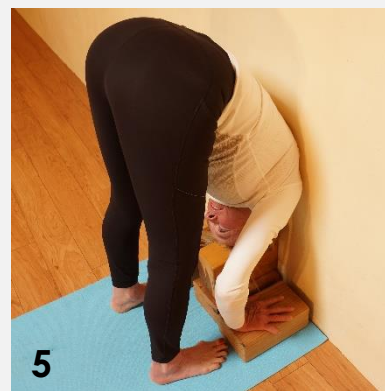
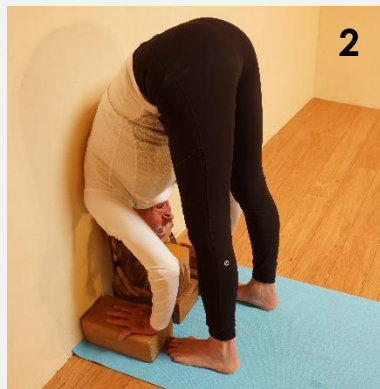
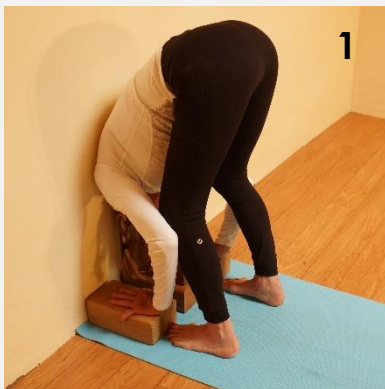
Release

6. Bend the knees to your chest.
7. Maintain equal weight throughout the feet, inhale, and with an exhalation lift the torso up.

Duration: Keep the pose for **seven breath cycles**.

Alternative pose - Uttanasana at the wall is much more supportive, and a good way to start.

- Place blocks shoulder width apart at the wall to support the hands. Also place blocks for the crown of the head. Step the toes to the hand blocks. Place the crown of the head on the head blocks. Distribute the weight in the feet, keeping the heels grounded, just like in **photo 1**.
- Roll the spine into the wall, keeping the head planted on the blocks. Triceps reach for the ceiling, and lift the sit-bones and help extend the legs, just like in **photos 2 through 5**.
- In the POSE (**photos 4 and 5**), establish a smooth rhythm of breath, and hold for five breath cycles.
- Coming out, bend the knees, rest the torso on top of the thighs, and step the feet back to a downward dog distance.



Extra focus:

- Use the exhalations to lift the sit-bones with the hamstrings.

Avoid:

- Unweighting the heel and bending the knees.
- Holding the breath.