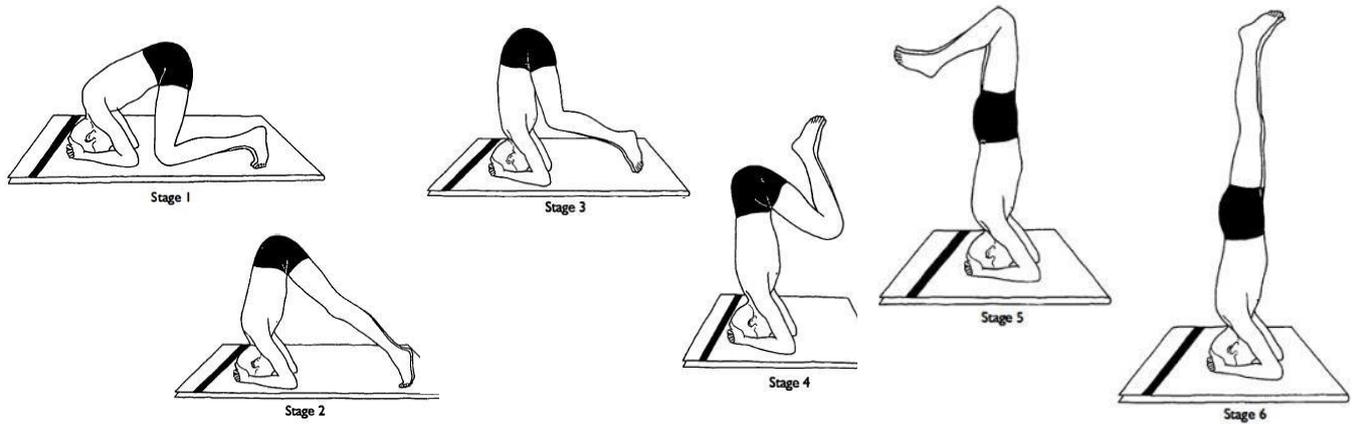


## ADVANCED ASANAS

### Sirshasana (Headstand Pose)



Sirshasana is a powerful and advanced inverted pose.

**Stage 1:** Sit in vajrasana.

Close the eyes and relax the entire body. After a few minutes, open the eyes, bend forward and place the forearms on a folded blanket with the fingers interlocked and the elbows in front of the knees. The distance between the elbows should be equal to the distance from each elbow to the interlocked fingers, forming an equilateral triangle. Place the crown of the head on the blanket between the interlocked fingers. Wrap the hands around the head to make a firm support so that it cannot roll backward when pressure is applied.

**Stage 2:** Lift the knees and buttocks off the floor and straighten the legs.

**Stage 3:** Slowly walk the feet as close as possible towards the trunk and head, gradually moving the back towards the vertical position. Bend the knees slightly, press the thighs against the abdomen and lower chest. Transfer the body weight slowly from the toes onto the head and arms, maintaining a steady balance. Raise one foot off the floor about 20 cm, carefully balance, then raise the other foot and balance on the head and arms, holding the legs upright.

**Stage 4:** Bending the knees, gradually lower legs in a controlled movement. Adjust the trunk slightly to counterbalance the weight of the legs. Fold the legs back so the heels fold towards the buttocks. The knees are now pointing down with the legs together. Maintain the position for a few seconds, before proceeding.

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**Stage 5:** Raise the knees to the vertical position. Keeping the heels near the buttocks, slowly straighten the hips so that the thighs move up and away from the torso. Raise the knees until they point directly upward and the thighs are in line with the trunk. Balance the body.

**Stage 6:** Slowly straighten the knees and raise the lower legs. The whole body should be in one straight line with the feet relaxed. This is the final position. Close the eyes and balance the whole body, staying in the final position for as long as is comfortable.

**Stage 7:** Return to the starting position by slowly bending the knees and lower the body with control, in the reverse order, until the toes touch the floor. Remain with the head on the ground in the kneeling position for a short time, then slowly return to the upright position.

### Benefits

- ✓ This asana is very powerful for awakening sahasrara chakra and therefore it is considered the greatest of all asanas.
- ✓ Sirshasana revitalizes the entire body and mind.
- ✓ It relieves anxiety and other psychological disturbances which form the root cause of many disorders such as asthma, hay fever, diabetes and menopausal imbalance. It also helps to rectify many forms of nervous and glandular disorder, especially those related to the reproductive system.
- ✓ This asana reverses the effect of gravity on the body. Strain on the back is thus alleviated and the reversed flow of blood in the legs and visceral regions aids tissue regeneration.
- ✓ The weight of the abdominal organs on the diaphragm encourages deep exhalation so that larger amounts of carbon dioxide are removed from the lungs.

### Limitations

- ✓ Sirshasana should not be practised by people with neck problems, headache or migraine, high blood pressure, heart disease, thrombosis, arteriosclerosis, cataract, vision problems, chronic constipation, kidney problems, impure blood, severe near-sightedness, weak blood vessels in the eye, conjunctivitis, chronic glaucoma, inflammation of the ears or any form of blood haemorrhage in the head.
- ✓ It should not be practised during pregnancy or menstruation.