



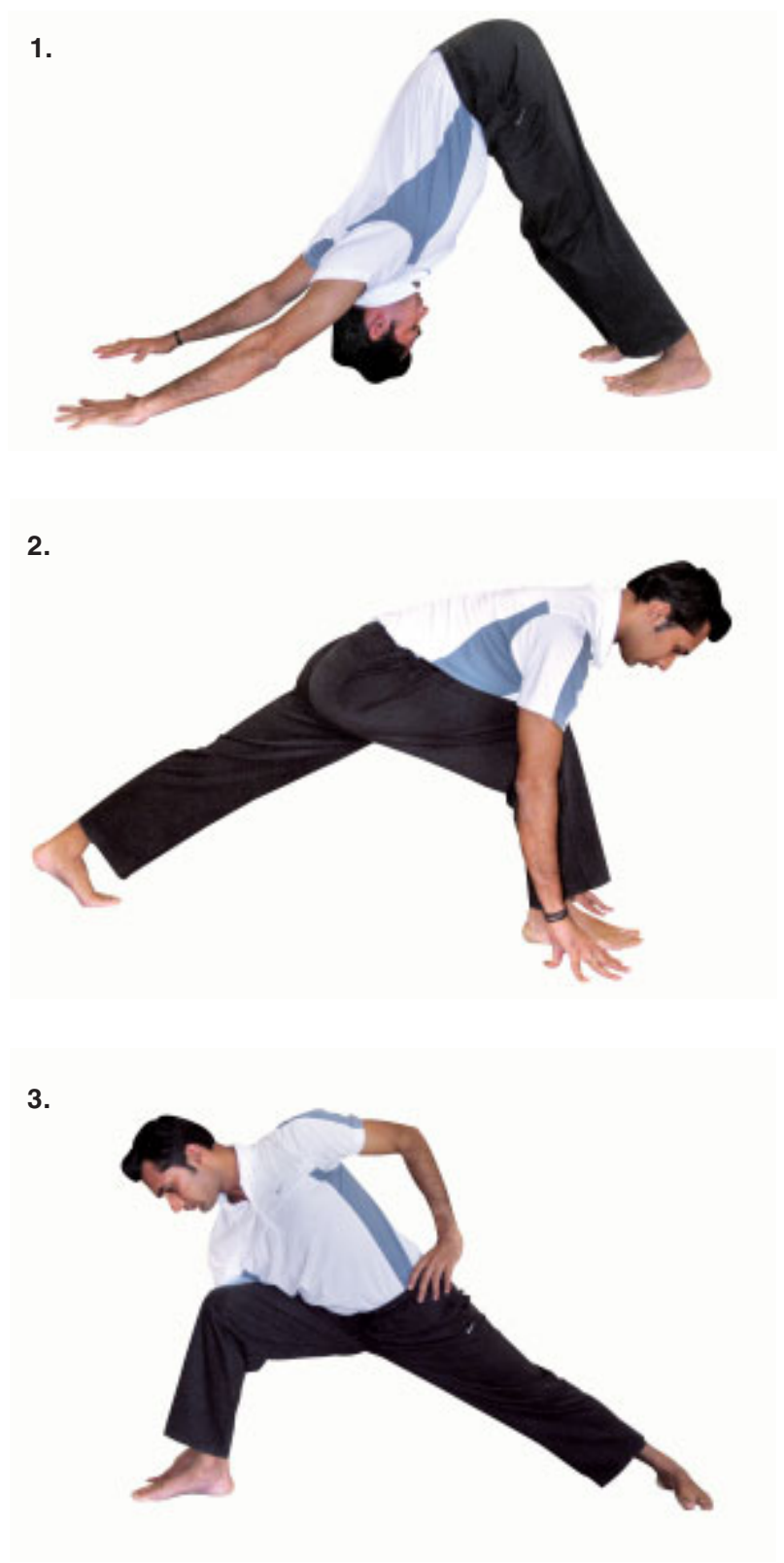
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**L**ike the Warrior I pose practiced in the last [Yoga Moments *Phuket Gazette*, May 9], the *Virabhadrasana 2* (Warrior II) series of poses is standard practice in most yoga classes. When you begin yoga exercises, you might find that your thoughts are preoccupied with all that you've done or have yet to do, and your body is not quite as supple as you had anticipated. Fortunately, yoga allows for transition time. Most practices begin with an opening phase of gentle yet thorough movements to awaken the body, stoke the breath, and cultivate the attention.

Good starting poses facilitate circulation and lead you into your sequences with ease. They address the major joints and large muscle groups, gently awakening the arms, shoulders, legs and hips.

**Technique**

1. Start from Downward-facing Dog [Yoga Moments, *Gazette*, April 11].
2. Inhale and place your right foot close to the palm of your right hand, aligning the knee over the ankle.
3. Exhale and turn your left foot sideways 90 degrees from hip, aligning the heel of your back foot with your front foot. Keep the right hip in line with the right knee by pressing it inward and knee outward.
4. Inhale and raise your left hand overhead, resting it over the left waist line. Lift the torso sideways by placing the right elbow on your right thigh, expanding your chest while constantly pushing the right hip inside. Exhale and look over your left shoulder.
5. Inhale and without changing your lower body position replace your right elbow with your right hand on your knee, pushing the torso slightly back to align head with tail bone. Exhale and look over your right shoulder.
6. Final Position: Inhale and stretch your arms out sideways at shoulder level parallel to the floor, as though two people are pulling you from opposite ends. Now gaze at your right thumb. Stretch the back muscles of the left leg fully. The back of the legs, the dorsal region and the hips should be in one line.
- 7.\*a) Stay in the pose for five to seven deep breaths. b) Exhale and place your hands on the floor either side of your right foot and place the foot back into the Downward Dog position. c) Repeat the exercise on your left-hand side.
8. Once complete, drop onto your knees and rest the hips over your heels and your head on the mat in front of your knees. Relax.



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**Benefits**  
 This pose both strengthens and shapes the calf muscles, relieving cramp in the calf and thigh muscles. It also brings elasticity to the legs and back muscles and stretches the groin. Finally, it opens the chest, improves balance and tones the abdominal muscles.

**Contraindications**  
 Serious knee injury, sprained ankles, neck issues – look straight ahead rather than over the hand. High blood pressure – conduct under supervision.

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