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## Warrior 1

In most yoga classes the standing pose *Virabhadrasana 1* is standard practice. In this pose you take the stance of a mighty warrior. You balance your weight between both legs, and your torso rises up evenly from your hips.

In the full pose, many beginners rely on their muscles to sustain the position and quiver uncontrollably after a few seconds, at which point things go downhill. Like other split-leg standing poses, *Virabhadrasana 1* is anchored and stabilized by rooting the outer back-heel into the ground.

Many beginners have tight groins, so bending the front knee buckles the back knee and pulls the outer back-heel off the floor (imagine a tree without roots). Before you bend your front knee, 'dig' your outer back-heel into the floor. As you bend your front (right) knee, have an imaginary friend resist that movement by pulling on a strap on your left groin. Your left leg will move physically, but energetically it opposes the movement and keeps your outer back-heel rooted.

### Technique

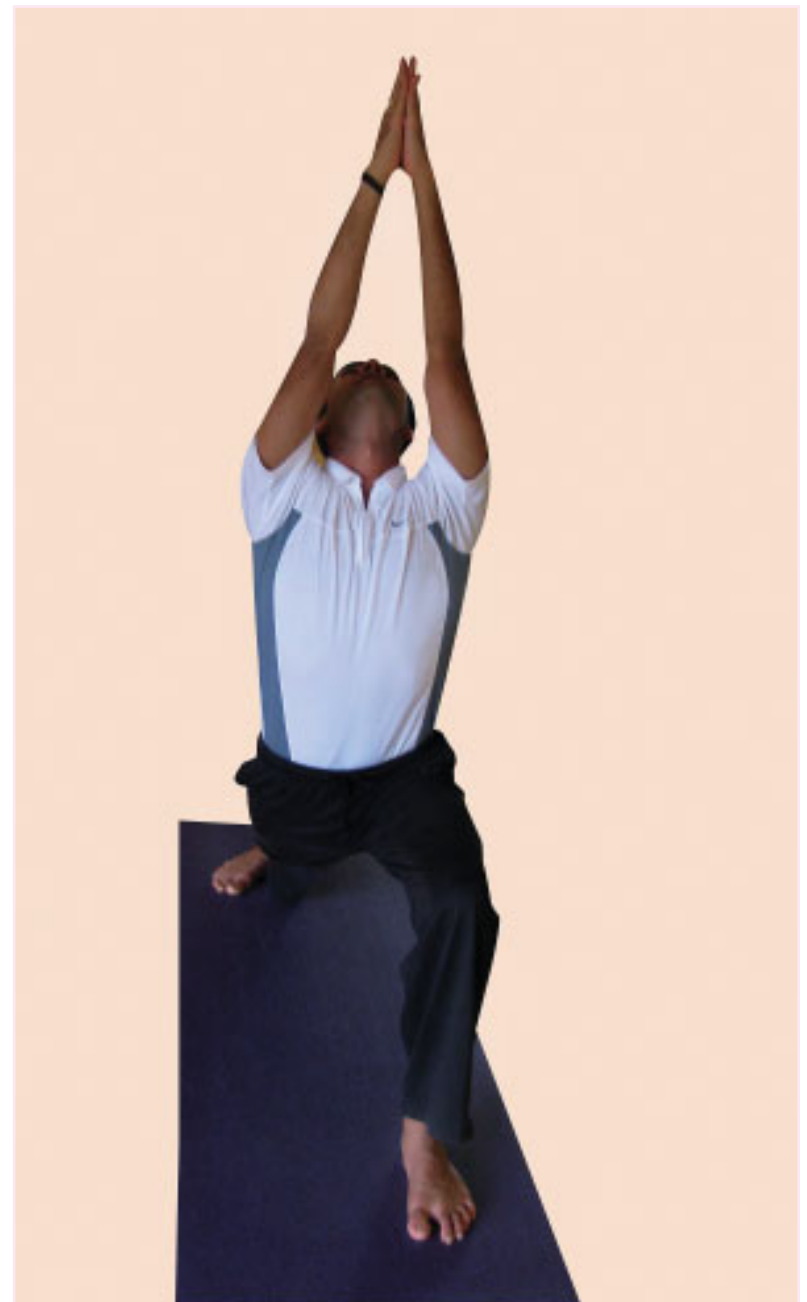
1. Stand with feet together and hands by your side. This position is referred to as *Tadasana*.
2. Raise both arms above the head, stretch up and join the palms.
3. Inhale deeply and with a jump, spread the legs apart sideways by 4 to 4.5 feet.
4. Exhale and turn to the right. Simultaneously turn the right foot 90 degrees to the right and the left foot slightly to the right. Flex the right knee until the right thigh is parallel to the floor and the right shin is perpendicular to the floor, forming a right angle between the right thigh and the right calf. The bent knee should not extend beyond the ankle, but should be in line with the heel.
5. Stretch out the left leg and tighten at the knee.
6. The face, chest and right knee should face the same way as the right foot. Throw the head up, stretch the spine from the coccyx and gaze at the joined palms.
7. Hold the pose for 20 seconds to half a minute, breathing normally.
8. Repeat positions 4 to 6 on the left side, reversing all processes.
9. Exhale and jump back to *Tadasana*.

### Benefits

In this pose the chest is fully expanded and this helps breathing. It relieves stiffness in shoulders and back, tones up the ankles and knees, and cures stiffness of neck. It also reduces fat around the hips and stretches the groin.

### Contraindications

Serious knee injury, sprained ankle, neck problems – look straight ahead, rather than over the hand. High blood pressure – conduct under supervision.



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