

Poses to Alleviate Eye Strain

A therapeutic asana sequence should be approached not merely as a prescription of poses but more importantly as a description of how to practice. This sequence is for practitioners with no underlying health conditions affecting the eyes. In all poses, consciously relax the facial muscles, forehead, temples, and eyes, observe normal breathing, and draw attention inward. In the supine poses, a cloth or a yoga belt may be used to cover the eyes, or use a headwrap throughout. Hold each pose for 5 minutes, or to capacity. Do not strain. This sequence is adapted from *Yoga: The Path to Holistic Health* by B.K.S. Iyengar, Chapter 7. See modifications below for practice during pregnancy, menstruation, and for beginners.

Adho mukha virasana (bolster support for torso plus blanket under forehead)

Prasarita padottanasana (head supported by blanket, bolster, or block)

Adho mukha svanasana (head supported by blanket, bolster, or block)

Uttanasana (feet hip distance apart, head supported on chair seat or block)

Ardha halasana (feet to chair seat or thighs resting on bolster across chair seat)

Supta baddha konasana (bolster for spine, blanket under head, support thighs, belt the legs)

Setubandha sarvangasana (bolster supporting spine and sacrum, block(s) or bolster supporting feet)

Viparita karani (bolster under sacrum) or simple legs up the wall

Supported savasana (chest supported by bolster plus blanket under the head)

Ujjayi pranayama in supported savasana

Modifications:

- During pregnancy: practice adho mukha virasana, adho mukha svanasana, supta baddha konasana, setubandha with legs in baddha konasana, and viparita karani
- During menstruation: practice adho mukha virasana, adho mukha svanasana, supta baddha konasana, setubandha, supported savasana, and ujjayi pranayama
- Beginners or those wishing a shorter sequence: practice adho mukha virasana, adho mukha svanasana, supta baddha konasana, simple legs up the wall, supported savasana

Sutra study: Patanjali Yoga Sutra II.54 “Withdrawing the senses, mind and consciousness from contact with external objects, and then drawing them inwards towards the seer, is pratyahara.” Read B.K.S. Iyengar’s commentary in *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*.