

Yoga

By RAMA VERNON
THE DOG POSE

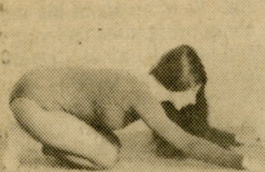
Known for its patience, good humor and fidelity, the dog is considered to be man's best friend.

In yoga this is especially so if you're an avid jogger, bicycle rider, rapid walker or a sitter and get hamstrung by the tightness in the back of your legs.

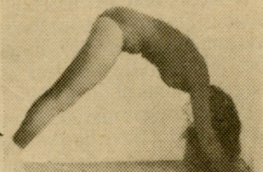
The Dog Pose is a loyal aid to loosening and lengthening these shortened muscles. For this reason, it's used to condition the legs for forward bending.

Regardless of your age and physical limitation, The Dog is an effective preparation for all postures of yoga as it quickens circulation, strengthens arms, shoulders, stomach muscles and contributes to a stronger and more flexible back. As it is also an elixir for a sore or stiff neck, it is used as a counter pose following either a rigid night's sleep or an overly ambitious Shoulderstand.

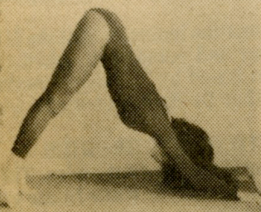
In the beginning when attempting to mimic the sometimes uncomfortable concave stretch, it might help to remember the canine virtues of courage and tenacity and that the bark is supposed to be worse than the bite.



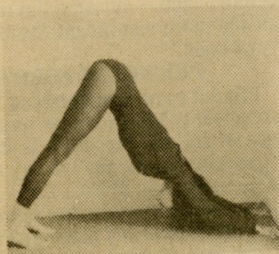
1. **FACING** a wall, kneel on floor and place wrists the same distance apart as the width of your shoulders. Spread thumb and forefinger pressing them against the wall.



2. **PUSH** up on the balls of your feet by pushing the soft part of the thumb and forefingers against the baseboard and the palms into the floor. Look at your feet to see that they are parallel to each other and about six inches to one foot apart.



3. **STRETCH** up on your toes, raising buttocks toward ceiling and attempt to indent your lower as well as upper back. If this is difficult, raise the head to help indent the shoulder blades. If back continues to be rounded, bring feet back a little farther from the head.



4. **KEEPING** your back concave and buttocks uplifted, try to bring heels toward floor. If back rounds, stay on the balls of feet. Let head and neck relax between the arms. Note: Hold for a series of two to four breaths and then return to position No. 1. Then repeat if desired. The duration of the pose may be increased gradually.