

yoga

JOURNAL

ANNUAL DIRECTORY
Your Complete
Guide to Finding
a Yoga Teacher

Yoga in Your 20s, 30s, 40s, and Beyond

As time goes by your
body changes—and so
should your practice.

KARMA YOGA AWARDS
Five Yogis Who Are Making
the World a Better Place

FOCUSING ON A.D.D.
How Yoga Can Help
Control Symptoms and
Reduce Medication

NATALIE GOLDBERG
On What Motivates Her
to Keep Meditating



Asana

BY BARBARA BENAGH

Downward-Facing Dog to Upward Bow

Benefits

Tones spine

Massages and strengthens abdominal organs

Makes shoulders more flexible

Strengthens arms and legs

Builds endurance

Contraindications

Tendency to dislocate shoulders

Chronic shoulder injuries

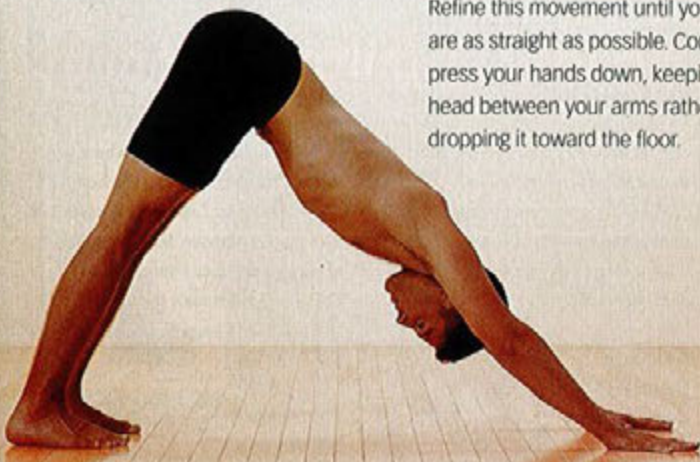
Pregnancy

Unmanaged high or low blood pressure

Herniated lumbar discs

Positional vertigo

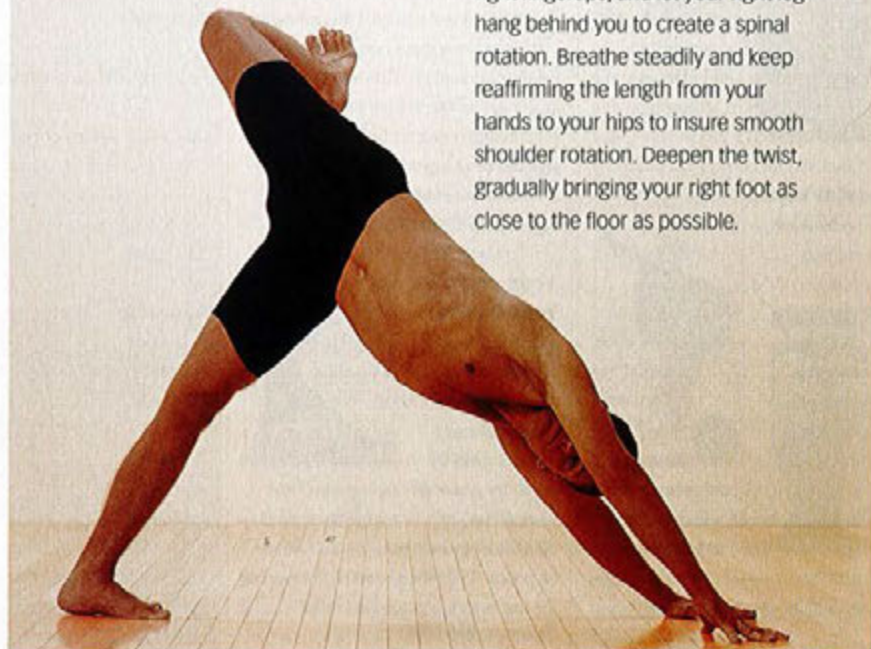
1 Adho Mukha Svanasana. In Child's Pose, curl your toes under and extend your arms forward. Inhale and lift your hips back and up to raise your knees off the floor. Exhale, extending back and up with your hips to lengthen your spine. Refine this movement until your legs are as straight as possible. Continue to press your hands down, keeping your head between your arms rather than dropping it toward the floor.



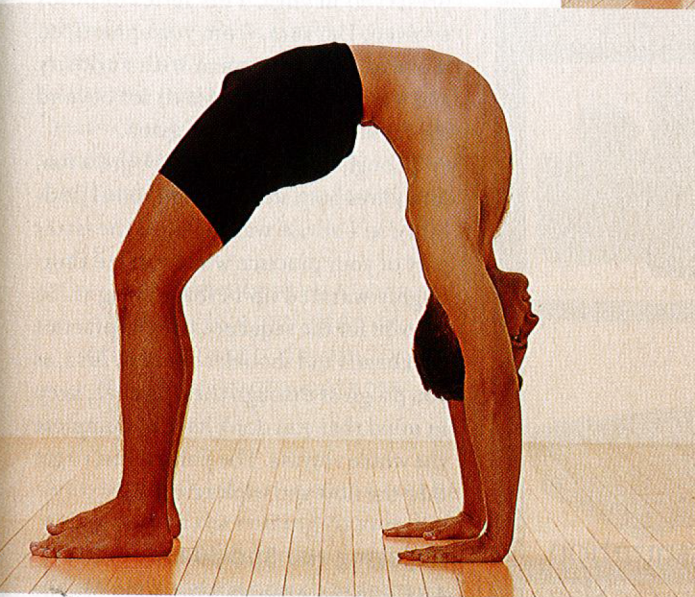
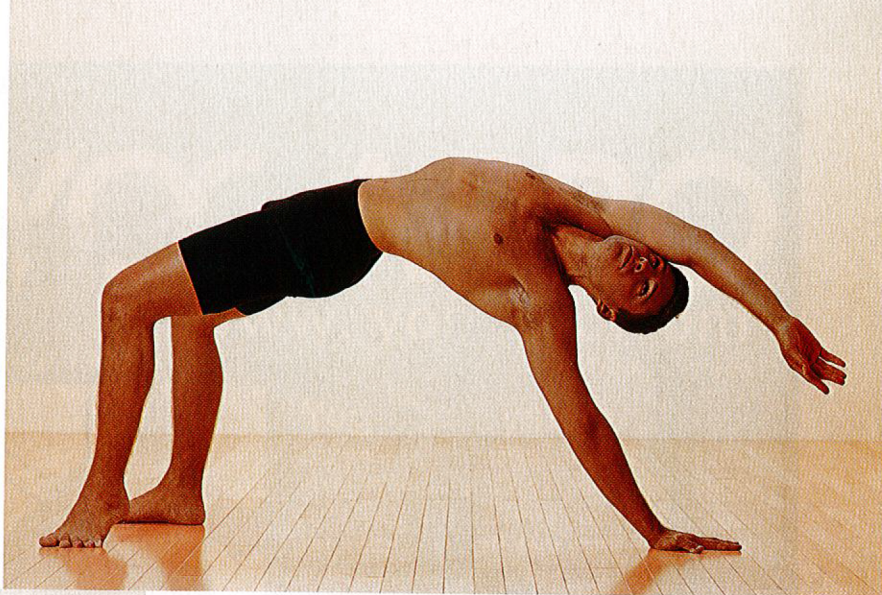
EARLIER THIS year while watching *Jazz*, filmmaker Ken Burns's documentary series, I was struck by a comment from Chicago jazz great Eddie Condon. A leader in the desegregation of jazz, Condon observed that when white musicians first came on the scene they were eager to play jazz but "stiff with education." I was reminded that as we in the West embrace the ancient tradition of yoga, we need to leave room for the earthy elements that keep a yoga practice as playful as it is serious.

Contemporary yoga, highly influenced by Western culture, has taken the practice to whole new levels of anatomical precision. And there's no doubt about it: Technique and form matter. Proper form harnesses our energy and puts it to good use. Biomechanical details guide us

2 Creating the Twist. In Adho Mukha Svanasana, raise your right leg, bend the knee, and open your right hip toward the ceiling. Shift your weight to your left hand, come onto your right fingertips, and let your right leg hang behind you to create a spinal rotation. Breathe steadily and keep reaffirming the length from your hands to your hips to insure smooth shoulder rotation. Deepen the twist, gradually bringing your right foot as close to the floor as possible.



3 Flipping the Leg. From Exercise 2, twist until you can bring your right foot to the floor. Let your right hand lift and bring the arm next to your head. Place your feet parallel and slightly wider apart than your hips. Lift your hips and pull them over the feet as you rotate your upper body and place your right hand on the floor, fingers facing your feet. Turn your left hand to complete the backbend. If you can't bring the right arm to the floor, hold the twist for several breaths, then reverse out of it back to Downward Dog, as described in Exercise 5.



4 Urdhva Dhanurasana (Upward Bow Pose). Balancing the weight evenly between your hands and feet, breathe steadily, making sure you complete each exhalation. Draw your inner groins into your hips, gently lift your tailbone, and create length in the backs of your calves. Move your inner arms toward your legs and roll your top shoulder blades toward your hips as you bring your shoulders as close to directly over your wrists as possible. Let your head hang freely. Stay in the pose for several breaths, becoming comfortable and steady.

5 Flipping Back to Downward Dog. To come back to Adho Mukha Svanasana, turn your left hand toward your right. Keep your feet planted and press your left hand firmly into the floor as you rotate your chest strongly to the left and pull the right hand from the floor. Then pivot your left foot to face your hands and exhale to gently rotate the rest of your body back to Downward Dog. Repeat the whole sequence on the other side.

