

# Virabhadrasana 1 ~ Warrior 1

**Purpose:** Use alignment to get opening and release through the spine instead of compressing through the waist area.

Look for a lunge-like stretch in the back thigh.

Increase strength and stamina.

Learn to use abdominals to support and lengthen the spine.

Learn to use the legs instead of spinal muscles.



*Figure 1 Warrior 1 (but back foot should point forward, with toes slightly inward as in Tadasana, and with heel on the floor)*

## **Before doing:**

Open up the spine with at least a tailbone and sacrum pose followed by a lunge. For example, you can do the first three of the Magic 4, then Tadasana and Virabhadrasana 1, followed by the last pose of the Magic 4 (JP, reclining twist).

## **How to do:**

1. Stand in tadasana, leaning weight through your leg bones into your feet.
2. Place your hands on your waist to keep track of alignment of hips.
3. Slide your right foot back, a large step back, while keeping your hips square and facing forward.  
Position your back foot so it is still facing forward.  
You may need to move one foot out a little to the side so you are not on a "tightrope."
4. Bring your navel in at  $\frac{1}{2}$  strength to lengthen your lower back and support your spine.
5. Bend your left knee and move both hips forward as you position that knee over your ankle (not over your toes). Use your hands to help keep your hips square (side to side and front to back).

Keep your ribs aligned over your hips to give you lengthening in your lower spine instead of a swayback or crunch in your low back and waist.

You should be standing straight, with your shoulders over your hips.

6. Raise your arms into Hasta Padasana and lower your shoulder blades down your back.

Reach your thumbs toward the back of the room.

7. Keep your back leg straight, with your back heel on the floor. Find a lunge-like stretch in the front of that thigh. Bend the back ankle more deeply.

Keep your front knee bent and in line over your ankle. Lean extra weight in that heel, distributing weight evenly between both feet.

8. Stay in the pose for 45 seconds to 2 minutes (start at 45 seconds and build up over time). Move out of the pose by straightening your forward knee and lowering your arms. Step the back foot forward and stand in Tadasana again.

9. Do the other side.

Feel what it is like to be a Warrior: one who perseveres in face of challenges and obstacles, who stands valiantly in and for your Self, who stands for the rights and needs of others who need protection and support.

To paraphrase Dr. Martin Luther King, the ultimate measure of your character and worth is not how you stand in times that are easy and comfortable but how you stand in times that are difficult and inconvenient.