

Benefits:

Strengthens & loosens shoulders & wrists; strengthens muscles all the way down the spine; strengthens abdominals, quadriceps, ankles; improves posture

Time to Do: 3 minutes

Body Parts Used by This Posture:

Shoulders, upper arms, wrists, spine, torso, thighs, ankles.

A Good Substitute for: Shoulder Stand, Head Stand, especially when they are not appropriate for you.

Warm Up with: Balance Posture 2, 3, Dancer's Posture, Pelvic Lift, Pelvic Lift Extension, Back Bend, Bust Expansion, Chest Expansion

Builds you up for: Postures requiring strength in the arms and wrists, back, abdominals or ankles or requiring good posture: Bow; Back Push Up, Chest Expansion, Back Bend 3, Shoulder Stand

Combines Well with: Back Stretch

Try Learning First: Pelvic Lift; Pelvic Lift Extension, Bust Expansion; Back Bend 2, 3; Balance Posture 2, 3; Dancer's Posture; Chest Expansion

Energy Center Used: Solar Plexus, Chest, Throat

Best Breathing Theme: *Second and Eleventh Breathing Themes.*

Do Not Do This Pose If: You have compromised shoulders or neck. Which means you should not do this pose if you have injuries or conditions that include your neck or shoulders.



There are few poses that work so much of the body! *Incline Plane* will build your body strength in most key areas – and it improves your posture. I also use it as an excellent substitute for the Shoulder Stand, since it works almost all the same muscle groups. For example, pregnant women spend almost a year with the shoulder stand off their list of poses, but the *Incline Plane* can keep you in shape so that you'll be able to do the Shoulder Stand more easily once you're back in action! *Incline Plane* is one of the few poses that you can do throughout your entire pregnancy that really works your body.

Yoga Snack

Try watching TV this way!

Basic Instruction

Start

- sitting
- legs together
- arms behind you,
 - with hands about 2 – 3 hand lengths away from your body
- heels on the floor



Key: Have your finger tips pointing away from you! This opens up your shoulders and allows your body to lift better.



Then

Take the time to “elongate your spine”. Get the feeling that your spine is growing slightly. This straightens your body with ease and makes your back more flexible. It will also line your back up properly to be able to carry more weight and you will gain more benefit from the pose without strain.

Next

Swivel your hips into a pelvic tilt. This is done by flattening out the curve in your lower back, as if you’re doing the Pelvic Push. You’ll feel the bottom of your hips shift upward. Swiveling into a pelvic tilt will allow you to do the Incline Plane without straining your lower back.

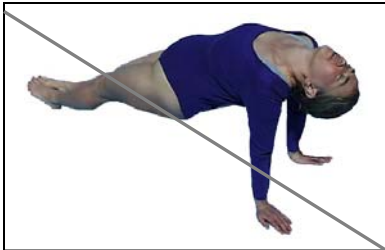


Now the Incline Plane!

Raise your hips up as high as they'll go.



Tip Your aim is to form a straight line from your shoulders, down your body, along your legs to your ankles. If you can't manage this height yet, that's OK. Working to your own limit is what is bringing you the benefits of the pose.



Don't drop your head back. That is very hard on your neck and shoulders. Not to mention it cuts off circulation to your head! Keep your neck and spine lined up with each other.

Hold for 2 – 6 breaths

Release

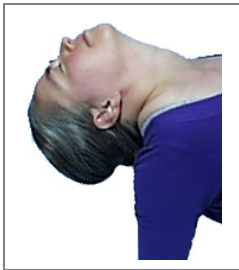
Lower your body back to the mat. Feel your weight sinking into the floor as your muscles release the pose.

Do 3 times. See if you can get higher each time.

Common Errors



Allowing the knees & feet to roll to the side. This puts too much strain on your knees and can injure them. Keep your legs and feet together, feet pointing upward.



Allowing the head to slump back. Again this puts too much strain on the neck and can injure it.

Forgetting to elongate the spine or swivel the hips before going into the Incline Plane. This can put too much strain on your lower back.

Breathing



Breathe in
going into the pose.

Hold
Breathe in & out 2 – 6 times
OR
No hold as such, simply pause the motion & your breathing.



Release
Breathe out,
lowering your body & feeling your hips sink into the floor.

Longer holds develop strength, but can strain muscles that are weak or tired, especially in your shoulders, arms and wrists. Remember, that, even if you move into and out of this pose without holding it, you are

Try Combining with the Back Stretch



Do one repetition of the Incline Plane and then flow into a gentle version of the Back Stretch.

Tip Be sure to keep your spine elongated throughout both the Incline Plane and the Backstretch.

Symptoms and Remedies

Symptom when doing the pose	Remedy
Lower back is in pain, or it feels like there is pressure building there or feels like it's being pinched.	Remember to flatten out your lower back and swivel your hips upward for the pelvic tilt before doing the lift.
Neck, upper shoulder and or biceps pinching, straining or in pain	You might have you arms out behind you too far. Try bringing your hands in a bit. About 2 – 3 hands lengths away from your body is good.
Can't seem to lift your hips high enough to make a straight line with your body. But your back doesn't hurt.	You might have your arms too close behind you. Try starting with your hands farther back. About 2 – 3 hand lengths away from your body is good.