

banish those bingo wings!

by Patricia Ezechie



The really wonderful thing about Yoga is that it works on all levels. It helps us find peace and calmness (mind); build a strong, toned and balanced physique (body); and connect with the essence of who we are (spirit).

Having said that, some people are drawn to Yoga initially because they want to tone specific parts of their body and have heard Yoga can help them. Whenever I come across anyone like this, I welcome them with open arms and a wry smile as I know what a wonderful surprise and unexpected series of gifts their practice will bring them.

So, for all the people out there who are thinking of taking up Yoga because they want a fabulous body, here are 3 poses that will help

you build beautifully toned, sculptured arms. These poses work on the major muscle groups, the Biceps and Triceps Brachii situated in the front and back of the upper arm. With dedication, perseverance and daily practice, they can help transform your upper arms and build the strength required for stronger arm balances and poses. If, while practising these postures, you want to incorporate deep breaths and link the poses into a flowing sequence, maybe ending with a relaxation, all the better!

For details www.Yogasiromani.com. The full 'Banish those Bingo Wings' sequence is available for download at www.Yogastickmen.com.

plank pose

I like to think of Plank Pose or *Kumbhakasana* as the gateway pose to stronger more toned arms, and the precursor to more advanced arm balances. As well as working on the biceps and triceps brachii isometrically, *Kumbhakasana* requires the engagement of the whole core of the body.

To hold the pose comfortably and safely the abdominal muscles must be engaged and the tailbone lengthened towards to heels to ensure there is no strain on the lower back. The wrists remain directly below the shoulders.

Begin by holding for just a few seconds, dropping down to the knees as required, and slowly build up the time the pose is held for as strength develops. Alternate between Plank and Down Dog to create a sequence or bend the elbows slightly before pushing back up to come into a series of mini press ups. Rest a required and don't forget to BREATHE

side plank pose

Side Plank Pose also known as One Arm Balance or *Vasisthasana* (named after the sage Vasistha) focuses on one side of the body and builds strength and tone from the shoulder through to the wrist. As with *Kumbhakasana*, the core must be engaged to support the body in the pose. Both the biceps and triceps of the balancing arm are working strongly to support and balance the body.

This is a strong and challenging pose so listen to your body! If your arms are not ready to tackle this pose, keep working with *Kumbhakasana* until sufficient strength has developed. Alternatively, come into the pose but with the upper arm resting against the body, palm facing down. Moving from Plank to Side Plank while working with the breath creates a powerful, heat and strength generating vinyasa.

8 limbed pose

So named because 8 parts of the body touch the ground (feet, knees, chest, hands and chin), 8 Limbed Pose is often thought of (incorrectly I might add) as just a transition pose in many sequences in Yoga.

Supporting the whole of the body on just these 8 points requires a great deal of strength and focus particularly in the arms. This pose can also be practised instead of *Chataranga Dandasana* which can be extremely challenging especially on the shoulders.

Begin by coming into this pose from Plank pose, and holding for a few breaths before lowering the whole body down to the ground slowly. As strength develops, you can flow from 8 limbed into Cobra.

Incorporating Down Dog into this vinyasa creates the ultimate upper arm and shoulder primer. Always listen to your body, work with the breath and don't over do it. Slow and steady ensures gradual development of strength and tone and avoids injury.

PLEASE NOTE: These poses should NOT be attempted if you have serious wrist, elbow or shoulder problems.

