

# clear and confident

*Activate your inner power by refining your awareness and listening before you take action.*

**Elena Brower**, the founder of Virayoga in New York City, invites you to explore what power feels like as you move through this fun and challenging practice. “Inner power comes from your capacity and willingness to **listen and be receptive** to sensations as they arise, so that you know with total certainty how to direct your attention and energy in any situation,” explains Brower, who is an Anusara Yoga teacher.

When you cultivate receptivity for whatever comes your way—sensations in your practice, people in your life, challenges, or triumphs—it’s easier to forgo your initial reaction and instead take a moment to see things more clearly. And by cultivating patience, you create the space to refine your responses. Brower designed this sequence—which includes several standing poses that demand balance—to hone your patience and observation skills. She suggests you pay close attention to your breath as you practice: how it moves, sounds, and spreads a feeling of spaciousness throughout your body. In time, you’ll start to trust your ability to observe and move confidently toward balance in any context.

As you develop skill in this method of observation, you’ll learn to refine your responses in life. Be receptive and patient, and you’ll see your own qualities and life’s purpose with greater clarity. Ultimately, doubt and uncertainty will dissolve, leaving you with the taste of true freedom. What could be more powerful than that? **JENNIFER RODRIGUE**

## to begin

**Take a seat** and rest your hands, one on top of the other, over your heart. Observe the qualities of your heart: Does it feel open or contracted? Warm or cool? Take 5 long, conscious breaths. Bring your palms together in Anjali Mudra. When you feel your mind is clear, begin with 3 to 5 rounds of your favorite Sun Salutation.

## to finish

**Settle** into Savasana (Corpse Pose). Place your right hand on your belly and your left hand on your heart. Feel the spaciousness there and in your body. Notice the slower pace of your breathing, the softness in the muscles of your face, the clarity in your mind. Rest in Savasana for 5 to 10 minutes.

### 1 Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward-Facing Dog Pose)

Start on all fours and claw the floor with your fingertips to activate power in your arms. Keeping your arms straight, invite your breath into your heart. Soften your shoulder blades toward your heart and extend from your heart to your hands. Breathe in deeply, lift your knees, and reach your sitting bones skyward. Take 5 breaths.

### 2 High Lunge

From Down Dog, step your right foot forward, ground down through your feet, and feel the power in your legs. Bend your right knee and lift your torso and arms up. Press your left thighbone up and lengthen your tailbone down. Lift your abdomen and encourage receptivity throughout your inner body. Take 5 breaths. Then step back to Down Dog and repeat on the left side.

### 3 Utthita Trikonasana (Extended Triangle Pose)

Step your right foot forward and your left heel down, and straighten your front leg. Receive your breath, taking your right hand to a block or to the floor outside your right foot and your left hand to your waist. Hug your feet toward each other, lengthen your tailbone down, and move your left shoulder blade in as you reach your left arm high. Take 5 breaths, step back to Down Dog, and then repeat on your left.

### 4 Salabhasana (Locust Pose)

Lie on your stomach, interlace your hands behind you, and point and lengthen your toes. On an inhalation, lengthen the sides of your waist and lift your arm bones up and back. On an exhalation, lift your head and



chest. Keep your legs and feet grounded. From your pelvis, expand outward through your limbs, creating spaciousness. Take 5 breaths; then return to Down Dog.

### 5 Baddha Parsvakonasana (Bound Side Angle Pose)

Step your right foot forward; turn your left heel down. Bring your left hand to your left waist and hold your inner right ankle with your right hand, taking your right shoulder under your right thigh. Then wrap your right hand up and behind your back. Pause and breathe. Lift your left arm up and behind you; then hold your left hand with your right or use a strap. Create spaciousness inside with your breath. Take 5 breaths and switch sides, taking Down Dog after each side.

### 6 Parsvottanasana (Intense Side Stretch)

Step your right foot forward, turn your left heel down, and straighten your right leg. Inhale fully into the back of your chest and belly, move your outer right hip back, and root down from your pelvis through both feet. Melt your heart over your right leg for 5 breaths.

### 7 Parivrtta Trikonasana (Revolved Triangle Pose)

From Parsvottanasana on your right side, take your right hand to your hip and your left hand to a block or the little-toe side of your front foot. Breathe and observe as you root down through your feet and hug your shins in toward the midline. On an exhalation, move your right shoulder blade





A video of this Home Practice sequence can be found online at [yogajournal.com/livemag](http://yogajournal.com/livemag).

in. On another exhalation, twist from the left side of your belly toward the right and lift your right arm high. Take 5 breaths; return to Down Dog and repeat from Parsvottanasana on your left side.

### 8 Virabhadrasana III (Warrior Pose III)

Step your right foot forward from Down Dog and place your fingertips on the floor slightly in front of your foot. On an inhalation, fill your whole torso with breath and step up onto your right leg. Lift your left leg to hip height. Move your inner left thigh up and your outer right hip back. Reach your arms alongside your hips and lengthen your spine as you extend your heart forward. Take 5 breaths; then release back to Down Dog and switch sides.



### 9 Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana (Extended Hand-to-Big-Toe Pose)

From Down Dog, step forward and come to standing. Bring your right knee to your chest, and hold the outside of your right foot or use a strap. Straighten your left leg, move your left inner thigh back, and lengthen your tailbone down. Straighten your right leg forward and, if you're steady, swing your right leg out to the side and reach your left arm high. Breathe triumphantly here for 3 to 5 breaths; then release and switch sides.

