

The Three Warriors (*Virabhadrasana I, II, III*)

Warrior I—*Virabhadrasana I*

Warrior I prepares the body to launch forward. The body becomes a storehouse for potential energy like a sprinter preparing to bolt out of the blocks. The torso lengthens by extending out of the pelvis and upwards through to the chest. It prepares the body for backbends.



- ⌚ Back foot is turned to 30 degrees, front foot is pointing at 12 o'clock.
- ⌚ Heels in line.
- ⌚ Press down through outside edge of your back foot pulling up the inner arch.
- ⌚ Back leg is straight.
- ⌚ Front thigh is parallel with the mat. Knee over ankle, in line with second toe.
- ⌚ Square the pelvis/hips to the front.
- ⌚ Stack shoulders over hips.
- ⌚ Scoop your tailbone down and forward.
- ⌚ Rotate both thigh (femurs) bones outwards.
- ⌚ Engage *Mula* Bandha by drawing pelvic floor up.
- ⌚ Engage *Uddiyana* Bandha by pulling navel in towards your spine.
- ⌚ Arms up overhead, straighten elbows and lift up from the pelvis.
- ⌚ Palms facing and shoulder width apart.
- ⌚ Chest lifted upwards and forwards.
- ⌚ Gaze (*Drishti*) straight ahead or up towards your hands.

Modifications: Shorten your distance from your front back heel and toes of your back foot. Widen your stance to the sides of your mat. Straighten your front knee a little. Drop you back knee to the mat. Cactus arms, folded arms holding elbows, hands in prayer or hands on your hips.

Warrior II—*Virabhadrasana II*

Warrior II embodies readiness, stability and courage like a true warrior. The body is in readiness to launch. It strengthens the lower legs and opens the chest, pelvis and hips. It is an excellent hip-opener and sculpts the muscles of the buttocks and thighs.



- ⌚ Back foot is parallel to the back of the mat, front foot is pointing at 12 o'clock.
- ⌚ Front heel in line with back inner arch.
- ⌚ Press down through outside edge of your back foot pulling up the inner arch.
- ⌚ Back leg is straight.
- ⌚ Lift the back inner thigh upwards.
- ⌚ Drag the mat apart with your feet to engage the leg muscles giving a strong foundation.
- ⌚ Front thigh is parallel with the mat. Knee over ankle, in line with second toe.
- ⌚ Spin your front inner thighs out.
- ⌚ Tuck your tailbone under and press it towards your front knee.
- ⌚ Find length in your spine.
- ⌚ Stack your shoulders over your hips.
- ⌚ Drop your shoulder blades down your back (shoulders away from ears). Soft arms.
- ⌚ Stretch both arms apart finding length through the fingertips.
- ⌚ Engage *Mula* Bandha drawing up pelvic floor.
- ⌚ Engage *Uddiyana* Bandha drawing navel towards your spine.
- ⌚ Gaze (*Drishti*) is to your front middle finger.

Modifications: Shorten your stance and straighten your front knee a little. Use a wall to press your back foot into for balance and support. Don't turn your head, look straight ahead.

Warrior III—*Virabhadrasana III*

Warrior III converts the potential energy stored in Warrior I into movement, projecting the body forward into a balance on the front leg. It focuses on rotation of the pelvis and flexion of the torso towards the standing leg. It creates a stretch in the muscles at the back of both legs.



- ⌚ Standing leg foot at 12 o'clock. Toes are active.
- ⌚ Micro bend in the knee of standing leg, pulling the knee cap up to engage the quadriceps.
- ⌚ Lift up from the pelvis on the standing leg and engage the glutes.
- ⌚ Other leg is lifted and parallel to the floor.
- ⌚ Square the hips to the floor (level hips).
- ⌚ Slightly turn the heel out/toes in on the lifted leg to internally rotate the hip .
- ⌚ Extend out through the heel of the lifted leg.
- ⌚ Torso parallel to the floor and in line with hips, shoulders, elbows and hands.
- ⌚ Arms either side of you head in line with your ears. Palms facing inwards and thumbs pointing upwards.
- ⌚ Engage *Uddiyana* Bandha drawing navel towards your spine.
- ⌚ Lengthen from tips of your fingers to sole of your outstretched foot.
- ⌚ Gaze (*Drishti*) to the mat.

Modifications: Use the support of the wall while bending forward or a chair which is shoulder height. Don't lift the back leg as high and only lean forward to 45 degrees. Rest your back leg on a chair.