

# grounded traveler

*A postflight practice helps you get grounded and enjoy your destination after a journey.*

Traveling, especially by air, can wreak havoc on your posture and your mental state, not to mention your energy body. Not familiar with your energy body? Think of a time when you felt spacy, anxious, or generally unsettled after traveling. Many yogis believe that such a state occurs when there is too much upward-moving energy in the body, which leads to a sense of imbalance. “My teacher John Friend believes that travel results in decreased *apana vayu*, the downward-moving, or rooting, energy of *prana*,” says Anusara Yoga teacher Ross Rayburn. To mitigate the negative effects of a long journey, Rayburn designed the following sequence to root your energy down, which will help you feel physically strong, mentally clear, and **energetically balanced**.

“As you do this practice, cultivate a slow, deep, even breath. On slow inhalations, focus on rejuvenation, and on long exhalations, focus on steady groundedness,” says Rayburn. “And focus on a peaceful image or thought so that your attitude grounds you as well.” On the physical side, he advises that you anchor yourself in three primary ways: “Hug the muscles to the bones,” he says, “like a warm embrace with the intention of insulating the body and making it feel secure”; move the thighbones back toward the hamstrings, which has a grounding effect on the body; and root the pelvis down toward the earth so the abdomen, low back, and upper body feel light. DIANE ANDERSON

## to begin

**Be still** Sit for a few minutes in a comfortable cross-legged posture. Cultivate a breath that evokes calm, patient feelings, and think of situations or places that make you feel stable, grounded, and secure.

**Invoke** Chant Om or an invocation to connect to something bigger.

**Warm up** Do three repetitions of Sun Salutation.

## to finish

**Meditate** Sit for a short meditation. Focus on sending blessings to loved ones.

**Rest** Enjoy Savasana (Corpse Pose) for 5 to 10 minutes.





### 1 Lunge Pose

From Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward-Facing Dog Pose), step your right foot forward and come to the ball of the left foot. See that your front shin is vertical and your left leg is straight. Come up on all 10 fingertips and breathe deeply. On each inhalation, with your “grounded” image in mind, engage the muscles of your legs and lift the back thighbone. On exhalations, keep your legs strong, scoop your tailbone down and in, and root your pelvis toward the earth. Repeat for 5 breaths on each side. Then return to Down Dog.

### 2 Utthita Parsvakonasana (Extended Side Angle Pose)

Step your right foot into a lunge and bring your left heel to the floor. Engage your leg muscles with a grounded quality up the legs to the pelvis. Keep the legs strong. Place your right hand by your right foot and lift your left arm up and alongside your ear. Scoop your tailbone so that the abdominals lift. Root your pelvis so that your upper body lifts and stretches. Stay for 3 to 5 breaths, then switch sides.

### 3 Downhill Skier

Stand with your feet parallel, sitting-bone-distance apart. Deeply bend your knees and place your forearms on your thighs. Breathe deeply and spread your toes to engage your leg muscles. Keep your legs strong and move your thighbones back and apart. Energetically root the pelvis down and feel how this encourages the torso and spine to lift and stretch upward. Stay for 3 grounding breaths. Stand upright to come out of the pose.

### 4 Downhill Skier Twist

Now add a twist to Downhill Skier. Once the thighs and pelvis are rooted, place the right forearm on the left knee, twist your torso, and raise your left arm. The challenge of this pose

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is to maintain a grounded lower body while twisting and lifting one arm. Stay for 3 breaths before standing all the way up. Then pause and switch sides.

### 5 Prasarita Padottanasana (Wide-Legged Standing Forward Bend)

Take a wide stance. The feet should be wide enough to feel a stretch yet close enough to engage the muscles. Bend forward and touch the floor with both hands. Spread the toes and isometrically sweep the feet toward the midline to engage and ground the muscles. Keep the muscles strong, especially the outer-shin and inner-thigh muscles. Maintain grounded thighbones as you exhale, scoop the tailbone, and root the pelvis down. Stay for 5 breaths, then slowly come up and stand in Tadasana (Mountain Pose).

### 6 Parsvottanasana (Intense Side Stretch)

From Tadasana, step the left foot back and place it flat on the floor. The distance between your feet is shorter here than in previous standing poses, and all your toes should face forward. On an inhalation, engage your leg muscles from your feet to your pelvis. Move both thighbones back. Scoop your tailbone so that the stomach lifts. Root your pelvis down. Place your hands by your front foot and bend forward. Breathe here for 3 breaths. Switch sides.

### 7 Sphinx Pose, with bent knees

Lie on your stomach with your forearms on the floor, elbows under the shoulders and hands elbow-distance apart. Place





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your knees sitting-bone-distance apart, and bend your knees 90 degrees so the shins are vertical. Breathe deeply. Flex your feet and spread your toes to engage the muscles of the legs. Press the bottom of your thighs and your knees down and notice how this creates space to move the top of your thighbones back. Keep the thighbones back (and the knees down), and scoop your tailbone until your abdominals lift. Ground yourself for 5 breaths.

## 8 Pigeon Pose, variation

Bring your right leg forward into Pigeon. Align the left leg behind the left hip. Bend your left knee. Twist to the right. Hold your left foot with your right hand. Place the left hand or the left forearm on the floor. Breathe deeply and soften any tension. Engage your leg muscles. Keep the lower legs strong, left knee solidly on the floor as you scoop your tailbone, root your pelvis, and twist your spine. Stay for 5 breaths, then repeat on the other side.

## 9 Supta Padangusthasana (Reclining Hand-to-Big-Toe Pose)

Lie on your back with the legs extended. Lift your right leg and interlace your fingers around the back of it at the middle of the hamstring muscle. Engage the muscles of both legs. Root your bottom thigh down as you scoop your tailbone, root your pelvis down, and stretch through both legs. Take 5 breaths, and then switch sides.



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cut out and save!