

Divine Beauty

I recently checked out an incredible exhibition called **Body Worlds**. It's a collection of more than 200 human "specimens," including entire bodies. In some pieces, skin is pulled back to expose layers of muscle, joints and bones. I was fascinated by the science, but even more struck by the incredible beauty of the human body. Universally accepted principles of architecture, even popular works of art like DaVinci's Perfect Man have alluded to the phenomena of the "divine proportion." Sometimes referred to as the Golden Section or, mathematically expressed as a value called *phi*, the *divine proportion* suggests that we are practically hard-wired to see beauty when things appear to be in perfect mathematical ratios. In my own yoga practice, I have frequently contemplated the beauty of the human body as reflected in the alignment and execution in a pose. Yet, when I think of all the yoga students I have seen, all looking very different even while performing the same pose, I realize I'm more amazed by the beauty of infinite variety. There seems to be no end to the infinite possibilities we find in life, and no better example of this beauty than in appreciating the infinite possibilities of our bodies.



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Parsvakonasana



Virabhadrasana 2



Prasarita
Padottansana



Parvrtta
Parsvakonasana



Trikonasana



Natarajasana



Salambasana



Eka Pada Raja
Kapotasana



Supta Virasana



Halasana

Application: In doing series of poses with variations, we can appreciate the beauty of infinite variety, working from a basic structure to create infinite variety. Do you have long limbs? A short waist? Think about how your body has its own unique characteristics. So many different factors affect how you, personally, execute a pose; what you look like, and even how you feel in different parts of your body. No one does Virabhadrasana 2 exactly like you. And isn't that beautiful?

Photos by Alyce Henson

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