

Head Stands? Just do not do them!

Many, including myself, agree that the "the king of asanas", the head stand, is also terrible for most people's spines (see shape). In the Shape article a spine surgeon suggest doing headstands without very strong paraspinal and core musculature can cause unsafe stress on a portion of the body that was already not meant to bear weight. He states your feet are made to carry around your entire body weight all day. Your head? Not so much. And who has strong paraspinal and core musculature? Not most people and certainly not most newbies to yoga he states. Added to this I state that people already have poor posture from working at a desk or poor pda use and doing a head stand on posture will add to it and cause further damage. **The Bottomline: Your neck is not meant to bear the weight of your body.** It also has the potential to exacerbate things such cervical disc herniations, arthritic bone spurs, and other conditions that could cause pressure on the spinal cord or spinal nerves. Aside from the risk of neck injury, headstands can cause spikes in intraocular pressure (IOP), the pressure of fluid in the eye. An Indian study found that when yoga practitioners did headstands, their IOP temporarily doubled, on average. I have a couple clients how are opticians and they claim they have seen a connection with detached retinas and the performance of head stands. Another risk concerns people with glaucoma. In glaucoma, pressure builds up around the eye, impairing vision. A headstand exacerbates this pressure. Also, if the blood vessels in your eyes have ever burst or you see floaters, inverted poses are not for you. The same goes for anyone who has had recent eye surgery. Added to this if you have high blood pressure you are at increased risk. Headstands increase your blood pressure from 100/60 mm Hg to 150/110 mm Hg in your head, which could possibly increase the risk of a stroke (see more here). **Any questionable benefits from doing head stands (no research to back benefits up) do not out weigh so many risks. SEE OTHER RISKY YOGA POSES**

DON'T DO THAT
EXERCISE AND TRAINING
TECHNIQUES THAT YOU
SHOULD NOT DO

