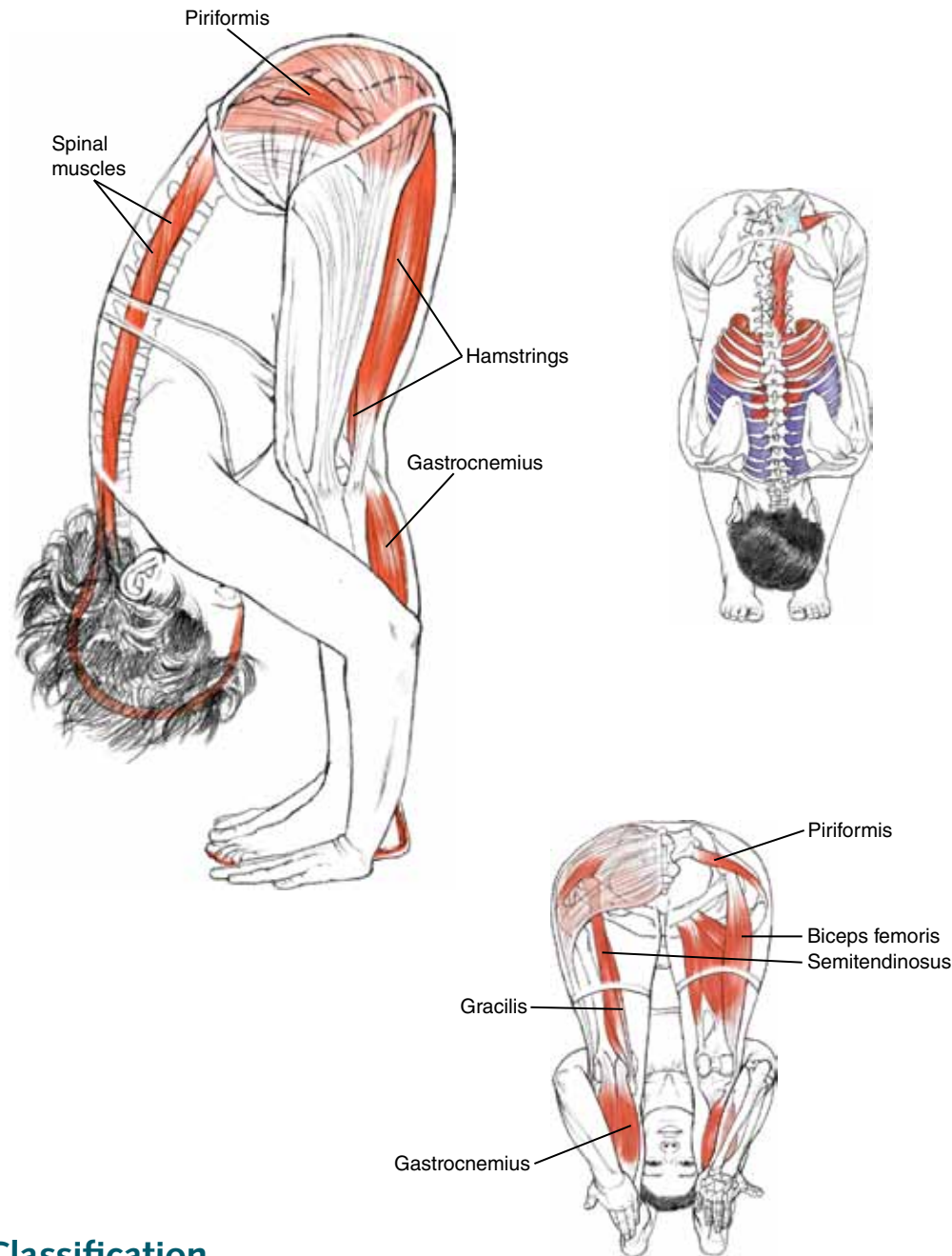


Uttanasana

Standing Forward Bend

OOT-tan-AHS-anna

ut = intense; tan = stretch



Classification

Symmetrical standing forward-bending pose

Skeletal joint actions

Spine

Mild flexion

Lower limbs

Hip flexion, knee extension

Muscular joint actions

Spine

Passively lengthening

Spinal muscles

Lower limbs

Concentric contraction

To maintain knee extension:
Articularis genu, vastii

Eccentric contraction

To maintain balance:
Intrinsic and extrinsic muscles
of foot and lower leg

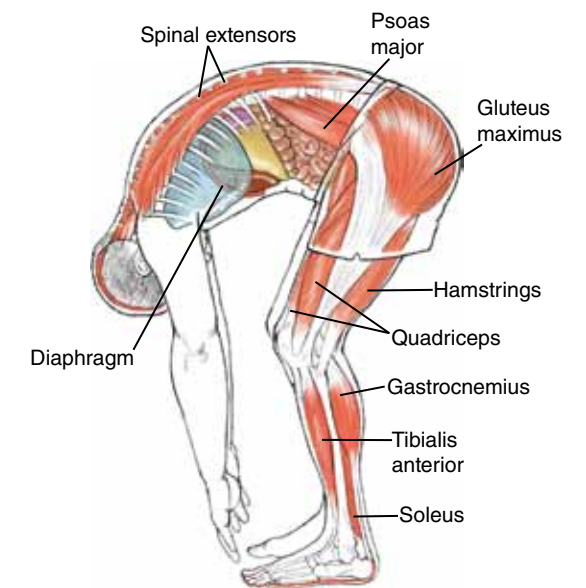
Passively lengthening

Hamstrings, gluteus medius
and minimus (posterior
fibers), gluteus maxi-
mus, piriformis, adduc-
tor magnus, soleus, gastroc-
nemius

Notes

The less the hips can flex in this pose, the more spinal flexion occurs.

Tightness in the hamstrings, spinal muscles, and gluteals reveals places where there is excess effort. In this pose, gravity should do the work of moving one deeper into the pose. People experiencing tightness in the back of the legs sometimes pull themselves down by using the muscles of hip flexion, which creates tightness and congestion in the front of the hip joints. A more efficient choice would be to release the knees, find some softness in the hip joints, and allow the spine to release. After the spine has released, extending the legs can produce an even lengthening along the entire back line of the body.



If the hamstrings are tight, slightly bending the knees helps release the spine.

Breathing

Deep hip flexion and spinal flexion compress the abdomen and restrict the ability of the abdomen to move with the breath. This compression combined with gravity also moves the center of the diaphragm cranially, so more freedom is needed in the back of the rib cage for the breath.