

Arhanta Yoga

ASHRAMS

ARHANTA YOGA® YIN YOGA TEACHER TRAINING MANU



- Traditionally ALL Yoga poses are done with the eyes closed.
- ASANAM = Steady & Comfortable
- Asanas – steady, comfortable poses **physically & mentally.**
 - Steady Physically – no shaking, no swaying, be still
 - Mentally Steady – no thinking about things
 - No thoughts
 - As soon as your mind starts to wander, bring your thoughts back to your body. Notice your body alignment. Notice your breath. Send your breath to the parts of your body that are tense or uncomfortable.
- **80% Rule** – to stretch deeper Yin tissues (tendons, ligaments), the student should not go beyond 80% of their capacity in the pose.
 - If they go deeper – the pressure will go to the Yang muscles and may lead to injury
 - **The use of props is HIGHLY recommended.**
- ZONES – **RED, ORANGE OR GREEN**
- **RED** – Pain. “OMG, when am I done” thoughts. Discomfort. **No Go Zone.**
 - Modify pose and use props to bring you into the **ORANGE** zone.
- **ORANGE** – Uncomfortable but can stay in pose. Not wanting to come out of pose, can hold it for 3 – 5 minutes. Eventually can hold it for 10 minutes.
- **GREEN** – Don’t feel anything. Wasting time. When in the green zone, adjust so that you are in the **ORANGE** zone.

Go Slow. Take your time going into and coming out of the poses. Use props as necessary. Breath.



1. Corpse pose - SHAVASANA



Physical Benefits:

- Corpse pose is a great pose to relax the body, mind, and the subtle energies.
- It helps to neutralize the blood pressure in the body, relieve stress from the muscles and internal organs. If you focus deeply you can observe your breathing, heartbeat as well the flow of energy in the body.
- It is a great counter pose for many poses.

Instructions:

- Lie down on your back, feet mat width apart.
 - Toes will drop out – this is normal. In some cases toes will drop in.
- Spread your hands keeping them below the shoulders, palms facing upwards.
 - Fingers will naturally curl in – this is normal.
- Neck – back of the neck long – sometimes ok if your head drops to one side.
- Chest open and relaxed.
- Eyes closed.
- Take easy relaxed breaths. **Keep the body and mind completely still.**
- To come out bring your feet together, hands above your head and gently stretch.
- **Recommended Hold Time:** 30 seconds to 5 minutes

Common Mistakes – bringing chin up. You want to keep the back of your neck long so that the chin drops down. If the chin comes up it will compress the back of the neck.



2. Child Pose (Caterpillar) - SHASHANKASANA



Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|---|----------------------|
| Talus, Pelvis, lumbar, thoracic, cervical | Quads, thoracolumbar |

Contraindications:

- People with knee injuries should avoid this pose.
- People with lower back issues will find this pose uncomfortable.

Instructions:

- Sit on your knees, bend forward and place your forehead to the floor (use hands if necessary).
- Bring your hands to your sides.
- Stay in the pose for 3 to 5 minutes.
- To come out slowly roll up, if required use your hands to push up.

Watch out for:

- Head or hips should not hang in the air. This can result in neck pain or lower back pain.
****Hips should be resting on heels and head resting on floor – if not, use cushion(s)****



Modifications:

- If the forehead is not touching the ground a cushion may be placed under the forehead.
 - Widen knees also, if this doesn't work, you may put cushion under chest
- If hips are not resting on the heels:
 - a cushion can be placed under the hips.
 - Yoga block may be placed between feet.
- In case of lower back issues feet can be opened hip or shoulder width apart.
- If shoulders are painful you may put cushion under chest or straighten arms in front of you.

Alternate Poses:

- Air release pose or angel pose

Counter poses:

- A counter pose is normally not needed after this pose, but corpse pose can be done.

Recommended Hold Time: 30 seconds - 5 minutes



3. Crocodile Pose - MAKARSANA



Physical Benefits:

- Same as corpse pose. RESTING POSE

Instructions:

- Lie down on your belly, toes touching each other, heels dropped outwards.
 - If thighs thick, toes may not touch each other, ok.
 - Dropping heels outward helps buttocks and thighs totally relax.
- Place your hands under cheek.
 - You may also put forehead on hands.
 - If shoulders uncomfortable this way you may bring your hands to your sides.
- Take easy relaxed breaths. Keep the body and mind completely still.

Recommended Hold Time: 30 seconds to 2 minutes (if you hold for 5 minutes you may fall asleep)



4. Air Release Pose (Caterpillar) - PAWANMUKTASANA



Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|---|----------------------|
| Talus, Pelvis, lumbar, thoracic, cervical | Quads, thoracolumbar |

Instructions:

- Lay on your back, fold your knees into your chest
 - Hold knees as close as possible to the chest
 - Feet relaxed – not flexed/not extended
 - Cushion may be used under head if stretch is not felt in the spine (adds slight forward bend)
- Stay in the pose for 30 seconds to 2 minutes.

Watch out for:

- Neck should be long.

Recommended Hold Time: 30 seconds - 2 minutes

Alternate Pose:

- Child pose - **Basically child's pose on the back.**

Counter poses:

- A counter pose is normally not needed after this pose, but corpse pose can be done.



5. Bridge Pose (Saddle)



Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Toes, ankles, knees, pelvis, lumbar | Quads, hip flexors, rectus abdominis, Obliques |

Other Benefits:

- Gives gentle stretch to the pelvis.
- Gentle quads stretch.
- Releases pressure from lower back.

Instructions:

- Lay on your back, feet mat width apart.
- Place a block under your sacrum.
 - If block is too hard under sacrum, you may use cushion or pillows.
 - **IMPORTANT to put block/cushion under sacrum and not under low back.**
- Keep feet close to hips or lay flat & relax the legs and let feet drop outwards.
- Hands laying next to you – push hands into ground.
- Back of neck always long

Counter poses: Air release pose or child pose.

Recommended Hold Time: 2 minutes - 5 minutes



6. Angel Pose (Caterpillar)



Same as Child's Pose – only sitting.

Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Pelvis, lumbar, thoracic, cervical | Quads, thoracolumbar |

Instructions:

- In sitting position bring your knees and feet together.
 - **Make sure sitting on Sits bones and curve in low back, if not, sit on block or cushion.**
- Place your forehead on your knees.
 - If you cant put head on knees you may use cushion

Alternate poses:

- Air release pose or child pose.

Recommended Hold Time: 30 seconds - 1 minute



7. Fish Pose - MATSYASANA



Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Cervical, thoracic | Rectus abdominis, upper body |

Instructions:

- Lay on your back, feet together.
- Place a cushion under your middle back – head hanging backward on ground.
 - **Make sure head is touching ground – if not cushion is too high**
- Relax the legs straight in front.
- **If body can't fully relax in this pose increase the cushion size.**
- Palms generally facing down – if up not a big deal

Counter poses:

- Corpse pose, air release pose or child pose.

Alternate Poses:

- Melting heart pose

Recommended Hold Time: 2 minutes - 5 minutes

****If pose done without cushion – turns into a Yang pose – hold for 1 minute, max 2 minutes****

8. Melting Heart - ANAHATASANA



Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Thoracic, cervical, humerus, scapula | Rectus abdominis, glutes, upper body |

Other Benefits:

- Melting Heart pose gives a deep backbend and stretch for the upper and middle back.
- It opens and stretches the shoulders.
- It stretches the intercostal muscles and stimulates the thymus gland, which improves the immune response.

Contraindications:

- Any kind of neck pain or neck injury.
- Any tingling or prickly sensation in the hands or fingers. These sensations are often a sign that a nerve is being compressed. You can try to relieve them by opening your hands wider or folding them above your heart.

Instructions: **how you come into this pose if very important.**

- Come on all fours, knees under the hips, wrists under the shoulders, feet softly pointed.
 - Feet hip width apart – not together/not too wide.
- SLOWLY Walk your hands forward, allowing your chest to drop toward the floor. Keep your hips above your knees. If possible, keep your hands shoulder width apart.
 - If the chest is not resting on the floor, use a prop under your chest or belly.
 - If your shoulders are uncomfortable bend your arms and put your hands on your neck or join palms.
 - **Make sure your hips stay over your knees.**
 - If you shift your hips forward there will be more pressure on the shoulders.
 - If you keep your hips over your knees the weight/pressure will be distributed evenly between the knees & shoulders.
- To come out either move back to child pose or slide forward and lie down onto your belly.



Modifications:

- If shoulder strain prevents the arms from going overhead, you can open the arms further apart or even fold them.
- If you are very flexible in your back, you can bring the chin to the floor and look forward.
- If knees are uncomfortable, you can place a blanket underneath them.
- If required toes can be tucked under, a blanket or roller can be placed under ankles.
- Chest can be rested on a bolster or a cushion.
- You can also do this pose with just one arm forward at a time, resting the head upon the other forearm.

**Counter pose:**

- Child Pose

Recommended Hold Times: 3 to 5 minutes

9. Banana Pose



Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Lumbar, thoracic, cervical, scavicle | Obliques, upper body |

Physical Benefits:

- Banana pose stretches the lateral side of the body.
- It works the spine in a lateral flexion (side bend).
- It stretches the oblique stomach muscles and the side intercostal muscles between the ribs.

Contraindications:

- If you feel tingling in the hands while extending your arms overhead, you can place a bolster under the arm or simply bring the hands down.
- If you have lower back issues, it is better not to go too far in this pose.

Instructions:

- Start with lying down on your back. Feet together. Hands under the head.
- Move your legs sideways and reach out with your hands sideways – in crescent shape.
 - Cross outer leg of crescent over inner leg.
- **Keep both hips and shoulders on the ground.**
- Hold the pose for 1 to 3 minutes.
- To come out move your legs back to center and bring your arms down.

- Repeat other side.

Modifications:

- You can cross the ankles to increase the lateral stretch.
- If you feel any tingling in the hands, trying to support the arms with a bolster, or rest the arms across the chest.

- **If no stretch is felt – put a blanket under both hips to raise them slightly.**

Counter poses:

- Air release pose or Shavasana.

Similar Asanas:

- A lying down version of Half-moon.

Recommended Hold Time: 1 to 3 minutes each side.

10. Butterfly (Caterpillar, Dragonfly)



Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Femur, Pelvis, lumbar, thoracic, cervical | Groin, Hamstrings, thoracolumbar |

Other Benefits:

- This pose stretches the lower back.
- If the feet are moved away from the groin, the hamstrings will get more stretch.
- If the feet are closer to the groin, the adductor muscles get more stretch.
- This pose is very good for stimulating the kidneys and the prostate gland.
- Regular practice of this pose removes heaviness in the testicles, regulates periods and improves function of ovaries.

Contraindications:

- For people with sciatica this pose can aggravate sciatica so skip or modify – **don't bend forward.**
- Avoid dropping the head down in case of any neck issues.

Instructions:

- Start in the seated position. Bring the soles of your feet together slightly away from your groin.
 - **Make sure you are sitting on your sits bones and there is a curve in your low back – if your low back is straight sit on a block or cushion.**
- Bent forward towards your feet and walk forward with your hands in front of you.
 - Feet are together or facing upwards
 - **If holding onto your feet – do NOT pull toes up with hands!**
- To come out walk backward with your hands and slowly rollup and straighten your legs.

Modifications:

- In case of tight hips / knees / hamstrings elevate the hips with a bolster or a cushion.
- If the neck is stressed you can support the head in the hands, resting elbows on a bolster.
- **You could place a bolster in front of you and rest your chest on it.**
- Various hand /arm positions are possible; hold feet, hands on floor in front of student, or arms relaxed behind the body.
- **In case of any back issues you can do the reclining variation; lie down on your back, keeping legs in butterfly.**
- **If you have sciatica, elevate the hips by sitting on a cushion, until the knees are below the hips, or avoid this pose entirely.**
- **For people with lower back disorders which do not allow flexion of the spine, keep the back straight or do pose up against the wall.**

Counterposes:

- Sitting up straight or a gentle sitting back bend
- Lying on stomach like crocodile.
- Crocodile, Child pose, Cross legged spinal twist.

Recommended Hold Times: 3 - 5 minutes



11. Half Butterfly

Make bring straight leg in front of you.

- Leg to side stretches groin
- Leg in front stretches hamstrings

May also use bolster under chest.



Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Femur, Pelvis, lumbar, thoracic, cervical | Groin, Hamstrings, thoracolumbar |

Physical Benefits:

- This pose stretches the lower back as well as the hamstring of the straightened leg.
- It stimulates the pancreas, liver and the kidneys.

Contraindications:

- People with hyper lordosis or lower back issues may feel uncomfortable while bending forward.
- People with sciatica may also feel uncomfortable.
- People with knee problems may find it uncomfortable to bend over with the knee bent.

Instructions:

- Sit with your feet wide apart. Bend left knee and bring the heel close to the groin, right knee facing the ceiling.
 - **Straight leg to the side stretches groin. If you bring leg to the front it will stretch hamstrings more.**
- Slowly walk forward with your hands in front of you and place your head on the ground and stretch your hands in front of you.
- To come out walk back with your hands and slowly roll up.

Modifications:

- Foot can be placed away from the groin to increase the stretch in the hamstring and rotation of the hip.
- You can bend toward your right knee and bring your head to the knee.

Counter poses:

- Corpse pose or crocodile pose.

Recommended Hold Times: 3 - 5 minutes each side

12. Easy Camel (Saddle)



Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Toes, ankles, knees, pelvis, lumbar | Quads, hip flexors, rectus abdominis, Obliques |

Physical Benefits:

- This pose compresses all the spinal vertebrae and improves flexibility of the spine.
- Regular practice of camel pose cures hyper kyphosis or hunched back.
- It stretches the psoas muscle.
- It is a nice chest opener.

Contraindications:

- People with hyper kyphosis will find the pose difficult.
- People with knee problems will find this pose uncomfortable.
- People with neck injuries or neck pain should not drop the head.

Instructions:

- Begin with sitting on your knees, legs hip width apart.
 - feel free to open knees to make more comfortable.
- Lift your hips off the heels. (Gently push Pelvis out.)
 - You can keep hips down if knees hurt
- Reach out with your right hand and hold the right heel. Hold the left heel with your left hand.
 - You may place hands on floor behind you or lean on chair.
- Breathe in and drop your head backwards.
- Hold the position from 1 to 5 minutes.
- To come out bring your hips down.

Modifications:

- You can place your hands on your lower back.
- You can lean on a chair.
- You can lean back on your hands.

Counter poses:

- Child pose, crocodile, half butterfly.

Recommended Hold Time: 1 - 5 minutes



13. Cat Pulling its Tail (Twist)



Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Pelvis, lumbar, thoracic, cervical | Glutes, Groin, Hip flexors, obliques |

Physical Benefits:

- This pose compresses the lateral lower back.
- It stretches the glutes, quadriceps and upper thighs.

Contraindications:

- People with lower back pain should go gently in this pose. You may not be able to bend the knee and pull the foot too far.

Instructions:

- Lie down on your right side. Extend left leg in front of you and bend right leg behind you.
- Hold your right foot with left hand while resting on the right elbow.
 - Put bolster behind back – slowly drop shoulder toward floor onto bolster
- Gently push the right knee away from you.
 - To intensify stretch spread legs apart further
- To come out release the bottom foot and roll onto your stomach. Straighten the bottom leg and roll onto your back.

Modifications:

- You can lie down on the ground and raise your supporting hand above the head.

Counter poses:

- Child pose, Shavasana or air release pose.

Recommended Hold Time: 3 - 5 minutes each side



14. Caterpillar (Forward Bend)



Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Pelvis, lumbar, thoracic, cervical | Hamstrings, thoracolumbar |

Physical Benefits:

- This pose stretches the spinal ligaments and hamstrings.
- It improves the digestions by compressing & stimulating the abdominal organs.
- It stimulates Kidneys and adrenals and improves their functioning.

Contraindications:

- For people with tight hamstrings it can be difficult.
- If you have hyper lordosis or any lower back issues, you may struggle in this pose.

Instructions:

- Sit with both legs straight out in front of you, feet together or hip width part – keep feet gently active.
- Breathe in and raise your arms toward the ceiling.
- As you breathe out, reach out forward with your hands toward your ankles.
- Aim your nose to your knees so the back is round.
- Hold the pose for 2 to 5 minutes.
- To come out slowly roll up.

Modifications:

- If you have tight lower back, open your feet apart or **sit on a cushion**.
- If hamstrings are tight, bend the knees and place a bolster under the knees.
- **You can put cushion under chest.**
- You can support your head with your hands.





****Goal is NOT to touch your nose to your knees – moving from the pelvis, stretching hamstrings and thoracolumbar is. ****

←If you feel the stretch with this much forward bend, then you stay there.

MOST INJURIES HAPPEN IN THIS POSE. Do not use your hands to pull yourself further forward.

If you have Lumbar Spine/Low Back issues, you may lay with your legs up on a wall. ↓



Counter poses:

- Inclined plane, diamond pose, crocodile or table pose.

Recommended Hold Time: 3 - 5 minutes

↑ You may also use a strap.

- Put the strap around the feet
- Lay on back with feet in the air
- Put the strap around the head with your head on a pillow.



15. Dangling Pose



Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Pelvis, lumbar, thoracic, cervical | Hamstrings, thoracolumbar |

Physical Benefits:

- It provides stretch for the whole spine, especially lower back.
- It compresses the stomach and abdominal organs.
- It activates the hamstrings.

Contraindications:

- **People with high or low blood pressure should do this pose for shorter durations.**
- People with lower back issues can place the hands on the ground or support the head on cushions or a chair and decrease the duration if required.

Instructions:

- Begin in the standing position, feet hip width apart.
- Slowly roll down and hold your elbows.
- Hold the pose for 1 to 5 minutes.
- To come out relax your hands, bend your knees and slowly roll up.

Watch out for:

- Knees should not be bent too much.



Modifications:

- Place your hands on a chair, table or the wall to ease the pressure from the back.
- Place cushions or bolster under your head.
- If you are very flexible you can place your palms under your soles.
- **You may also do this pose against the wall**
 - **Lean on wall – keep knees soft**
 - **Bend forward**
 - **Wall is taking a lot of the weight**

**Counterposes:**

- Corpse pose, Crocodile, Child pose.

Recommended Hold Time: 1 - 5 minutes

16. Deer (Shoelace)



Great pose to prepare for Saddle pose.

Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|--|--|
| Femur, tibia, pelvis, lumbar, thoracic, cervical | Glutes, Groin, thoracolumbar, cervical |

Contraindications:

- In case of any pain in the knee the foot can be brought closer to the pelvis.

Instructions:

- Start by sitting in Butterfly position on the floor.
- Lift your left knee and bring your left foot behind you – doesn't matter where.
- If possible, move your right foot away from your pelvis – **you want to keep this leg at 90°**.
- To come out simply bring your legs back to butterfly position.
- Change to other side.

Modifications:

- **Ideally you should bend forward**
- If comfortable you can lie down on the ground on your left or right side.
- You can reach forward with your hands and bend forward.
- You can bend over your internally rotated leg.
- If required, you can also support yourself on your elbows.

Counter poses:

- If you do it on both sides, it acts as counter pose in itself.
- Angel Pose

Recommended Hold Time: 3 - 5 minutes each side.





17. Dragon

Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Toes, ankles, knees, pelvis, lumbar | Quads, hip flexors, rectus abdominis, obliques |

Physical Benefits:

- Dragons are deep hip and groin opener poses.
- They stretch the back leg's hip flexors and quadriceps.
- They stretch the Psoas muscle of back leg.



Contraindications:

- If there is a lot of pressure on the knee of the back leg, you can place a blanket under the knee.
- In case of knee issues hold the pose for short duration.



Instructions:

- From the standing forward bend position or on all 4s, place the left leg all the way back.
- Keep right leg bent in front – **knee can cross foot – that's ok.**
- Point the left foot and push the hips gently towards the right heel.
- Place the forearms inside of the right foot. Drop the head.
- To come out use your hands and come back in standing forward bend or all 4s.
- Change to other side.



↑ only pose done this way is Yin. All others are Yang poses.

Watch out for:

- Back knee should not be under the hip to avoid any extra pressure on the knees.

Modifications:

- If back knee is uncomfortable place a bolster under the shin below it so that the knee is raised.
- **You can place a cushion under the knee / thigh – takes pressure off pelvis.**
- You can also place a cushion under the head/chest.

Counter poses:

- Down Dog, Child pose or any other forward bend.

Recommended Hold Time: 3 - 5 minutes each side.



18. Frog (Dragonfly)



Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Femur, tibia | Groin, hamstrings |

Physical Benefits:

- Frog pose is a deep adductors and hip opener.

Contraindications:

- If there is pain in the knees, a blanket should be placed under them.
- If the neck is stiff, you can place the forehead on the floor.

Instructions: **Highly recommend to put blanket down first.**

- Come on all 4's
- Open legs wide
 - **Keep knees in line with the hips.**
 - **Flexing foot will protect the knee.**
- Go onto elbows
- Upper body goes down on floor as far as it can go.
 - **Can put cushion under the belly or chest.**

Watch out for:

- Knees should be in line with hips.
- Shins should be parallel to each other.

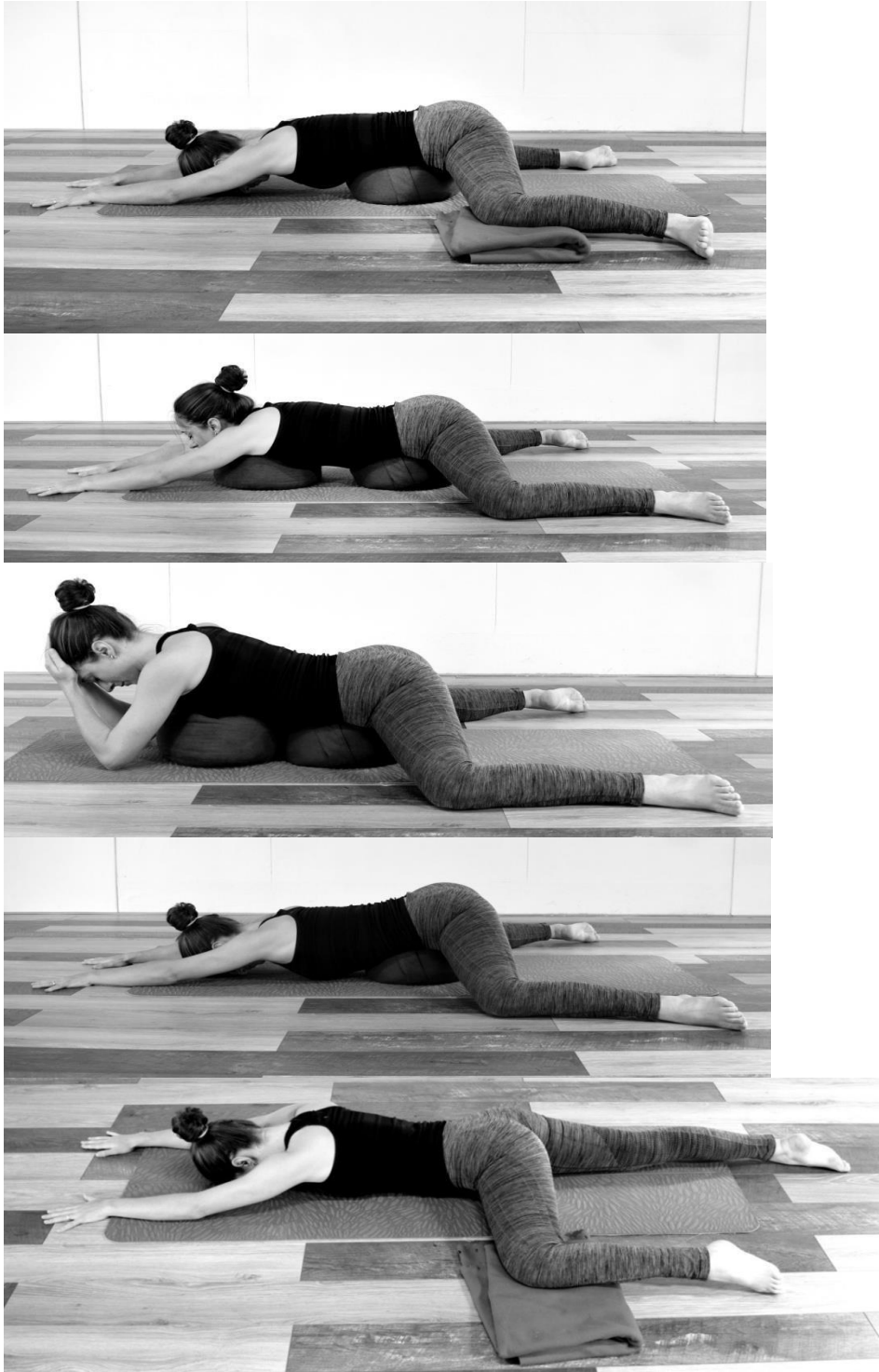
Modifications:

- You may place a bolster under your chest to relax the upper body.
- If there is too much weight on the knees, you may bolster under your pelvis.
- If the shoulders are uncomfortable, spread the hands wider apart or bend the elbows and place the hands under your chin.
- In case of very tight adductors, you can straighten one leg.

EASY FROG/TADPOLE/LADY FROG

- Lay on belly
- Bring knees out diagonally, adductors/groin on ground, feet soles together (**like above but with feet together**)
- Normally the feet will come off the ground while doing this ****make sure to point the toes up and heels toward the ground****





Counter poses:

- Child pose, air release pose.

Recommended Hold Time: 3 - 5 minutes



20. Happy Baby (Dragonfly)



Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Pelvis, lumbar, talus | Thoracolumbar, quads, glutes |

Physical Benefits:

- Happy baby pose is a deep hip opener.
- It releases and decompresses the sacroiliac (SI) joints

Contraindications:

- During menstruation the pose can be uncomfortable.

Instructions:

- Lying on your back, bring your knees next to you.
- Hold the soles of the feet from inside and gently pull them down, keeping shins perpendicular to the ground.
 - **You may also hold your calves or under your knees.**
- To come out bend the knees in your chest and stretch the legs to come in Corpse pose.

Watch out for:

- Shins should be perpendicular to the ground.
- Feet are active.

Modifications:

- You can hold your shins or knees if holding soles is uncomfortable.
- You can place a cushion under the tailbone or head to make it more comfortable.

Recommended Hold Time: 2-5 minutes

Counter poses:

- Corpse pose, Crocodile pose.





21. Reclining Twist (Twist)



Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Pelvis, lumbar, thoracic, cervical | Obliques, glutes, thoracolumbar |

Physical Benefits:

- Reclining twist helps to release tension from the lower spine and hips.
- It stimulates stomach and the abdominal organs.

Contraindications:

- People with lower back issues may feel uncomfortable.

Instructions:

- Lying on your back feet together.
- Bring your knees above your hips, using your hands as levers drop them to right side, turn your head to the left side.
- Stay in the pose for 3 to 5 minutes.
- Change to other side.

Watch out for:

- Both shoulder blades should stay on the floor.
- Keep shoulders low – if you keep them high you will get an arch in the low back.
- Head should be dropped toward opposite direction.





1. Lay flat on back
2. Bend leg – place foot on knee
3. Drop leg to opposite side -you can keep foot on knee

If you can not keep shoulders flat on floor – put cushion/bolster under knee/leg (see pic below) use soft cushion/bolster not a block.

You can hold onto your toes if you want to



Modifications:

- **Adjusting the knees lower, or higher, will deepen the stretch.** If the knees are higher, this moves the twist to the upper back; lowering the knees moves the twist more to the lumbar/sacrum.
- If a shoulder is off the floor you can place a blanket under it.
- In case of shoulder issues, you can bring your hands to your abdomen.



Counter poses:

- Hug the knees and rock on your back from side to side
- Windshield Wipers while lying back can be a nice release. Lying down with your knees bent and your feet on the floor as wide apart as the mat, drop the knees from side to side.
- Air Release Pose, Shavasana.

Recommended Hold Time: 3 - 5 minutes each side

22. Saddle - one of the most difficult poses – not many can do this pose



Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Toes, ankles, tibia, pelvis, lumbar | Quads, hip flexors, rectus abdominis, obliques, thoracolumbar |

Physical Benefits:

- A deep opening in the sacral-lumbar arch.
- Deep stretch to the SI Joint
- Stretches hips flexors and quadriceps.
- Stimulates the thyroid gland.

Contraindications:

- It can be uncomfortable for people with tight back or tight sacroiliac (SI) joints.
- People with knee problems can find this very uncomfortable.

Instructions:

- Start with sitting on the knees in Diamond pose. Lean back on your hands and then on your elbows. Slowly move further to place your head on the ground and hold your elbows above your head.
- Bring the heels out of the hips.
- Stay in the pose for 2 to 5 minutes.
- To come out shift your weight on your elbows and then straighten your legs one by one.

Modifications:

- You can place a bolster under the lower back.
- You can place a bolster under the shoulders.
- You can place a blanket under the ankles if required.
- You can also straighten one leg for Half Saddle.
- You can sit in ½ position by laying back on your elbows or on a bolster

Counter poses:

- Air release pose and then Corpse pose.

Recommended Hold Time: 3 - 5 minutes





If you have trouble sitting with your legs in this position start with:

- ½ bow pose (see below)
- Deer Pose
- Cat Pulling its Tail
- Easy Camel

Also start sitting in SEIZA – with your legs beside your bum. If you can not put your bum on the ground with your legs to the side, sit on a cushion. (Then gradually start to lean back on chair.)



↑ ½ Bow Pose

23. Shoelace



70% of people will struggle with this pose!



← Loose Shoelace



← Untied Shoelace



Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Femur, tibia, pelvis, lumbar, thoracic, cervical | Glutes, Adductors, thoracolumbar |



Physical Benefits:

- A deep hip opener.
- Stimulates knee joints and stretches spinal ligaments.

Contraindications:

- People with stiff hips or knees will be very uncomfortable in this pose.
- Pregnant women should also keep the back straight.

Instructions:

- Begin by sitting on your heels and then slide onto one buttock and bring the outside foot over toward the opposite hip. **Cross leg over top of leg on leaning side.**
- Once legs are in position if comfortable bend forward.
- Stay in the pose for 3 to 5 minutes.
- Change legs.

Counter poses:

- Corpse pose, angel pose, child pose.

Recommended Hold Time: 3 - 5 minutes each side

Modifications:

- People with lower back issues can keep the back straight without rounding it. **Do not bend forward**
- People with tight hips or knees can place cushions under knees.
- If this is too uncomfortable you can sit cross legged or half lotus position and then bend forward.
- To ease the flexion, you can place a bolster under the chest.
- When folding forward, you can support the head with the hands, leaning the elbows onto the thighs or a block or bolster.
- Hands can be to the side or in front of the body or stretch the arms back behind the body.
- If pressure is too intense in the hips or knees, remain upright or take more weight into the hands and arms.





- Ideally – knees should be over each other in centre
- Heels at hips & toes pointed away from hips

DO NOT SIT ON HEELS

Extremely good for hip rotation.

24. Snail (Caterpillar)



Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Pelvis, lumbar, thoracic, cervical | Hamstrings, thoracolumbar |

Physical Benefits:

- A very deep stretch of the whole spine.
- Squeezes the thyroid gland, heart, stomach, pancreas and adrenal glands.
- Increases blood pressure in the brain, eyes and ears.
- Stretches hamstrings.

Contraindications:

- Not recommended for anyone with neck injury, high blood pressure, upper body infection, vertigo, glaucoma.
- People with any lower back issues will find this pose to be very uncomfortable.
- People with big belly, breasts or pregnant women will need to modify this pose.

Instructions:

- Start with lying down on your back.
- Bring your feet behind your head using your hands against the floor.
- Rest the hands on the ground or support your back.
- Hold the pose for 2 to 5 minutes.
- To come out slowly roll down.

Watch out for:

- Hips should be reaching towards ceiling not sinking on chest.
- If back is curled, then hands should be supporting the back.



Modifications:

- If you have flexible back, you can drop your knees next to your ears.
- If your feet are on the ground, you can interlock the fingers and walk your hands slightly away from your shoulders.
- If the feet are not touching the ground, you can place a bolster under them.



****Feet should be resting. If not on floor put on bolster or chair****

Always support the back with your hands

**Counter poses:**

- Corpse pose or a gentle backbend.

Recommended Hold Time: 1 - 3 minutes

25. Sphinx (Saddle)



Active Pose:

- Keep elbows gently pressing into the floor
- Keep head up
- Keep feet flat on the floor

The body will naturally take care of the rest.

Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|-------------------|---|
| Lumbar. Thoracic | Rectus abdominis, thoracolumbar, obliques |

Physical Benefits:

- Gives a gentle compression and stimulation to the sacral-lumbar arch.
- Tones the lower spine and abdominal organs.
- Stimulates the stomach, kidneys and adrenal glands through compression.

Contraindications:

- Can be uncomfortable for people with tight back or tight sacrum.

Instructions:

- Lie down on your stomach, feet hip width apart, elbows under your shoulders.
- As you breathe in slowly rise up while pushing the belly in the floor.
- Hold the pose for 2 to 5 minutes.
- To come out slowly relax and go to crocodile pose.

Watch out for:

- Feet should be together so hips are closed and the lower back is supported.
- Elbows should be right under the shoulders or next to your chest.



Modification:

- You can support your head with your hands.
- You can place a cushion or bolster under your chest.



26. Seal (Saddle)



Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Pelvis, Lumbar, Thoracic, Cervical | Quads, hip flexors, rectus abdominis, thoracolumbar |

Physical Benefits:

- Gives a deep compression and stimulation to the sacral-lumbar arch.
- Tones the whole spine and abdominal organs.
- **Strengthens the arms and shoulders.**
- Stimulates the kidneys and adrenal glands through compression.

Contraindications:

- Can be uncomfortable for people with tight back or tight sacrum.
- People with weak arms will find it difficult to hold the pose.

Instructions:

- Lie down on your stomach, feet shoulder width apart, hands next to your chest.
- **Keep your feet active & flat on floor so your hips stay engaged – if we don't do this it will put more pressure on the low back.**
- As you breathe in slowly rise up while pushing the arms in the floor, keeping the pelvis on the floor.
- **Keep shoulders relaxed and elbows in – if you engage shoulders too much it becomes a Yang movement.**
- Hold for 2 to 5 minutes.
- To come out slowly relax and go to crocodile pose.

Watch out for:

- Feet should be hip or shoulder width apart.



Modifications:

- You can place cushion under your belly or chest.
- You can move your hands away to release pressure.
- **You can also cradle your chin with your elbows on the cushion.**
- For people with tight back, weak arms they can also do sphinx, with belly on the floor and elbows bent.

**Counter poses:**

- Crocodile pose or Child pose.

Recommended Hold Time: 2 - 5 minutes



27. Square (Shoelace) - loose shoelace



Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Femur, tibia, pelvis, lumbar, thoracic, cervical | Glutes, Adductors, thoracolumbar |

Physical Benefits:

- A deep hip opener.

Contraindications:

- People with tight knees need to be careful not to twist the knee too much.

Instructions:

- Sit with legs straight in front of you.
- Bend the left leg, keeping the shins parallel to your hips.
- Lift the right leg and place it over left. **Knee over feet – ankle over knee**
- **You can put blanket under ankle on floor if bothersome**
- Stay in the pose for 2 to 5 minutes.
- To come out lift the upper leg and straighten it out.

Watch out for:

- Ankles should be over the knees.

Modifications:

- You can place cushions under your knees to relieve the pressure.
- Bending forward stretches the lower back and can intensify the stress in the hips. If you can't come forward, sit on a cushion.



**Counter poses:**

- Angel pose, Saddle.

Alternate poses:

- Eye of the needle, swan, deer, wall variation

Recommended Hold Time : 3 - 5 minutes



28. Squat (Dragonfly)



****DO NOT sit on cushion – basically removes all stretch from pose****

Instead:

- Use rolled up towel or socks under heels
- Roll up the end of the yoga mat and use this
- Feet turned out
- Elbows on inside of knee – gently push out on knee

Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Talus, tibia, fibula, pelvis, lumbar | Groin, thoracolumbar |

Physical Benefits:

- Opens the hips and strengthens the ankles.
- Provides gentle stretch to the lower back.
- Stimulates intestines and improves bowel movement.

Contraindications:

- For people with short Achilles tendon will not be able to sit comfortably.
- People with knee or ankle problems should avoid this pose.

Instructions:

- Stand feet hip or shoulder width apart. **Feet turned out.**
- Squat down and bring your arms in front of you. **Elbows on inside of knees.**
- Bring your hands in prayer position and push your elbows in your knees.
- Stay in the pose for 3 to 5 minutes.

Watch out for:

- Weight should be on the whole foot.
- Back should be as straight as possible.

Modifications:

- For people with short Achilles tendon they can open feet wider.
- If it is too much weight on the knees, you can do happy baby instead.
- If heels are not touching the floor, you can roll a blanket under them.



Counter poses:

- Child pose, crocodile, easy camel or any gentle back bend.

Alternate poses:

- Happy baby, frog, easy frog, wall variation

Recommended Hold Time: 3 - 5 minutes



29. Dragonfly / Straddle - **should be done every day!**



Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Femur, pelvis | Groin, hamstrings |

Physical Benefits:

- Opens the hips, groin and stretches the hamstrings.
- Stretches the adductor muscles.

Contraindications:

- People with sciatica or lower back issues will find this pose uncomfortable.
- People with tight hamstrings will need to modify.

Instructions:

- Come in a sitting position.
- Open your legs wide keeping the knees and feet pointing upwards.
- Walk forward with your hands as far as possible.
- **If knees bend or are shaking – hamstrings tight – sit on bolster.**
- Stay in the pose for 3 to 5 minutes.
- To come out simply walk back with your hands, bring the legs together.

Watch out for:

- Feet are active.
- Try to keep the back as straight as possible.



Modifications:

- In case of sciatica issues, you can place a blanket under your hips.
- In case of lower back issue keep the back as straight.
- In case of tight hamstrings (if they are shaking), you can place bolsters or cushions under your knees.
- If you are flexible you can place your forehead on the ground and stretch the hands to the sides.
- You can use a bolster under the chest.
- If head is too heavy for the neck, support the head in hands.
- If the hamstrings are tight you can also bend to the side aiming for the knee with your forehead.



**Counter poses:**

- Corpse pose, crocodile or any gentle backbend.

Recommended Hold Time: 3 - 5 minutes

30. Swan (Saddle, Shoelace) - Pigeon Pose



Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|---|--|
| Toes, Talus, Tibia, Femur, pelvis, lumbar, thoracic, cervical | Glutes, quads, hip flexors, rectus abdominis, obliques |

Physical Benefits:

- A very good hip opener with a back bend.
- Rotates front hip externally and stretches the hip flexors of the back leg.

Contraindications:

- People with tight hips or knee issues will need to modify.

Instructions:

- Start by sitting on your knees (diamond pose). Shift the weight on your hands and bring your left leg as far back as possible, keeping the foot pointed.
- Slowly open the right knee outwards to rotate the hip. **Keep Ankle parallel to pelvis.**
- Stay in the pose for 3 to 5 minutes
- Change sides.

Watch out for:

- Both hips should be parallel and on the ground.



Modifications:

- People with too tight hips can place a blanket under the pelvis.
- To protect the front knee, you can keep the foot flexed.
- To reduce pressure on the knees, keep the weight back into the hips as you lower yourself.
- Stay on the hands with the arms straight or come on to the elbows.
- You can use a cushion under your hip or thigh.

**Counter poses:**

- Child Pose, Crocodile, downward facing dog pose.

Recommended Hold Time: 3 - 5 minutes each side



31. Sleeping Swan



| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Femur, tibia, pelvis, lumbar | Glutes, adductors |

Modifications:

- You could lie on a bolster placed lengthwise under the chest.
- If you're really flexible, try to bring the front foot forward, pull the bent knee more to the side, and lay your chest on top of the shin.
- Other alternatives include 'Eye of the Needle' (can be done Lying down, while sitting, or with one leg against the wall), Shoelace, or Square Pose.



Benefits:

- Same as swan.

Joints Affected:

- Same as swan.

Counter poses:

- Crocodile pose.

Recommended Hold Time: 3 - 5 minutes each side



32. Eye of the Needle (Shoelace)



****Do if you can not do Swan or Sleeping Swan****

Target Areas:

| Skeletal Segments | Myofascial Groups |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Femur, tibia, pelvis, lumbar | Glutes, adductors |

Joints Affected:

- Spine & Pelvis.

Instructions:

- Lay on your back, bend your left leg, foot on the floor.
- Place your right ankle across the knee.
- Bend your left knee towards your chest & grab your shins with your both hands.

Counter poses: Air Release Pose or Child’s Pose.

Recommended Hold Time: 2 minutes - 5 minutes each side

