

Asana

Seated Forward Bend

Paschimottana Asana

Starting Position: supine with the arms overhead along the floor.

Press your knees together with some strength (for spontaneous realization of Mula Bandha), bring the arms down towards the sides of the torso, then exhale and lift your head, chin to the chest, and sit up with your torso (without effort). Pull the flesh out and away from your sit bones to sit up tall.

Phase 1: While exhaling and maintaining chin to chest contact, clench your abdomen inwards and upwards, round the spine and bend your torso onto your lower limbs, flexion at the hips. Your body assumes the shape of the letter P. This first phase is energetic and the most powerful; abdominal contraction is maintained for dozens of seconds. Hands grasp your big toes or your feet, your elbows close to the sides of the legs and touching the floor if possible. The upper part of your forehead presses against your legs to aid contraction in the abdomen.

Breathing: spontaneous and posteriorly perceived if the static phase is prolonged (few minutes), or Ujjayi Breathing with rhythmic Thunderbolt Gesture.

In any case, the idea is to experience a sensation of your breath pushing gently against the spine.



Phase 2: Come up slightly, stretch out your torso and the back of your head (traction in two directions) and then bend your torso – from the lower abdomen to the shoulder – onto your thighs, as if glued to your legs.



Keep a light and precise traction with your arms, the point of your sacrum slides backwards and your head moves towards your feet, lengthening the spine.

Breathing: spontaneous and posteriorly perceived if the static phase is prolonged (a few minutes), or Ujjayi Breathing with rhythmic Thunderbolt Gesture.

Contraindications: avoid the first phase in case of disc protrusion or herniation.

Benefits: promotes emotional balance and better energy management; stimulates body purification, increases mobility of spine, regularizes functions of genital organs, kidneys, liver; useful to prevent and reduce menstrual cycle related problems.