

Baby Pigeon

Level 3 Difficulty

Here's one of our top poses for opening your hips, loosening your groin ligaments and giving you 'yoga butt'. It's also a great remedy for lower back and sciatic issues. Baby Pigeon might feel awkward at first and may challenge your ability to bend forward, but if you can get comfortable in it, you'll love the way it brings you to a slower, calmer frame of mind. Once you find your comfort zone with Baby Pigeon, you'll be ready for the more demanding full Pigeon and Sleeping Pigeon poses, which bump up the benefits a big notch! People with round bodies and women in the first half of pregnancy can still gain lots of benefit from this pose by taking tips in the 'modifications' section below.



Main Benefits: Loosens outer hip, sacrum, lower back, hip rotators, inner thighs, knees, groin ligaments.

Body Parts Used by This Posture: Lower Back, Sacrum, Inner Hip, Glutes, Hip Rotators

Compensating Pose: Resting Sage

Combines Well with: Seated Twists, Resting Sage, Puppy

Build Up to with / Warm Up with: Abdominal Lifts 1 & 2; Butterfly poses, Hip Openers; Outer hip stretches such as Side to Sides, Knee Over, Leg Overs, Hip Rolls, Simple Side Bend, Triangle Poses, Twists and Eagle pose; Forward Bends such as Back Stretch, Leg Stretch, Leg Clasp, Wood Chopper, Chest Expansion & Chest Expansion – Leg Extensions, Sitting Wide Angle, Standing Wide Angle; Back Bends such as Back Bend 2 & 3, Supported Back Bend, Upward Dog, Cobra poses; Balance Posture 1 & 2; Downward Boat; Frog & Jumping Frog, Half Moon, Leg Fold 1, Leg Fold 2, Lunges, Puppy, Rabbit, Rishi's Posture 1, 2 & 3; Side Splits, Spider 1, 2 & 3; Standing Leg Stretch 1 & 2; Sun Salutations; Moon Salutations; Wood Chopper 1, 2 & 3

Builds You Up for / Warms You Up for: Hip Opener, Leg Over 2; Lunges; Camel; Bow Poses; Balance Posture 3; Plow 1 & 2; Shoulder Stands; Standing Leg Stretch 2 & 3; Twisted Triangle; Twisted Side Stretch; Cross Legged Pose; Lotus

Best for Flexibility or Strength: Flexibility

Good for These Practice Goals: General flexibility and also flexibility specifically of: Hip Rotators, Upper Back, Upper Chest, Spine, Middle Back, Lower Back, Sacrum, Outer Hips, Glutes, Groin, Inner Thigh, Hamstrings, Quads, Knees, Ankles, Feet; Sports in general and specifically: Running, Biking, Swimming, Martial Arts; General Fitness; General Yoga Practice; Better Sleep; Improving Personal Posture; Clearing Cleansing & Energizing of the Root, Belly, Solar Plexus & Heart Chakras; Chanting from the Root, Belly or Solar Plexus;

Best if Movement Oriented or Static: Static

Traditional Pose Type: Forward Bend

Energy Center Used: Root, Belly (Sacrum), Solar Plexus, Heart, Throat

Best Breathing Theme Matches: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6b, 7b, 15a, 15, 15b, 16a, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 22b

Recommended for These Health Conditions: Arthritis in spine; chronic injury of hip, lower back or shoulders; pneumonia; bronchitis; asthma; lung removed; menopause & pre-menopause; menstruating (having your period) at this moment; IBS; sciatica; scoliosis; spondylitis; sleeping difficulties; hyperactivity; attention deficit; mind racing; pronation of feet & or hips.

Avoid Under these Health Conditions: Arthritis in hips; osteoporosis in knees or hips; diverticulitis, femoral, hiatal or umbilical hernia; fresh hip injury or surgery in hip, lower back or knee; pins in upper, middle or lower back; pins in knee or ankle region; high blood pressure (untreated); pregnancy - last half; prolapsed intestines or uterus.

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Start

Sitting with your legs out in front of you.

Tuck your left foot in toward your groin.

Bend the other (right) knee & foot off to the (right) side.

Turn your body slightly, so that you are facing your right knee.

Place a hand on either side of that knee.



Tip Your belly button should be in line with your knee, but if you can't turn that far, that's OK. This will happen in time.



Key Both of your hips, (your glutes), need to be in touch with the ground. If this means you have to roll your weight more onto one side than the other, this is OK for now. In time, your hips will loosen

and you will be more able to have your weight evenly spread between both hips. In all cases, it's important that your front leg (left leg) and hip be fully in touch with the floor.

Next



Right now you are probably leaning more on your right hip than on your left. Roll your weight more toward the center line of your body, beginning to even out the weight on each hip. You'll start to feel the stretch in your right glute.

Key Do not allow your glutes leave the floor. Only roll to the center as far as you can without either hip lifting off the floor. If this means that you are not fully centered, then that is OK. Again, in time your hips will loosen and you will be more able to center your weight.



Note In this respect, *Serenity Yoga* teaches Pigeon poses differently than some other schools do. You might be familiar with the more common method of centering your weight and, over time, training the hips to drop to be in full contact with the floor. We've found that our approach will bring you to the final, correct alignment, sooner and with less chance of injury.

Next Steps

Stretch your body forward along your (left) leg.

As you do so, sink down to drape your body along your leg.

Tip Your sternum (the bone at the middle of your chest) should meet up with your knee.



In the full Baby Pigeon, you continue to let your body drop until your head and arms are resting on the floor. If this is not possible, see the modifications below.

Optional Extension



After holding the pose, when you're ready to release it, you can add the optional step of extending your arms. In this additional movement your arms are fully reaching while you are keeping the weight of your body fully sunk down onto your leg. This gives more stretching for your shoulder sockets and helps release them. However, it reduces the stretch for the upper back and sacrum.

Breathing in – reach your arms farther, but without lifting your body.

Breathing out – feel your body sinking, but don't allow your arms to drop.

Modifications

Most modifications for Baby Pigeon focus on reducing the distance you need to bend forward. In that way, you ease the stretch in your lower back and glutes. For example, you can:



Make a 'nest' for your head with your hands.



Put a small, firm cushion under your head.



You Will Feel This In

Or bend well forward, but continue to hold yourself slightly upright using your hands.

Holding the Pose

Hold for 6 or more breaths or as long as you feel any muscle group releasing into the pose. Once you are in the Baby Pigeon, your purpose is to let your weight fully drop. This will maximize the stretching to your glutes, lower back, sacrum and shoulders. It can also be the most restful and relaxing way to approach the pose. So, with each breath out, feel your weight sinking down toward your leg and into the floor.

- Your Glutes
- Your Sacrum
- Your Lower Back
- Your Middle Back & Spine
- Your Shoulders
- and even in your Neck

Release

- Breathing in, lift your body upright and return both legs to the front, into Resting Sage position.



Wait while the muscles in your back, hips and glutes soften, letting go of the pose.

Repeat on other side to complete 1 round.
Do 2 – 3 rounds.

Encouragement You might find that you're 'holding back', not allowing yourself to fully drop into this pose. This especially happens when we're afraid that the pose is going to bring us pain. However, by taking your time with the pose and letting your weight drop with each breath out, you can safely let your weight fully go – thereby bringing yourself its maximum benefits.

Breathing

Breathe however you like while you are setting up the pose.



Once you are in your opening position, take a slow breath or two to settle into place. Let your weight drop with your breath out.



Breathing in – elongate your spine. Breathing out – fully drop your weight down onto your leg, Each breath out – allow your weight to drop more fully.



Breathing out – stretch your body forward and down along your leg.



Still Breathing Out, fully let your weight drop onto your leg.

The Hold

Each breath in – feel your body opening up, especially noticing the sides and back of your chest opening.

Each breath out – feel the weight in your body sinking more and more onto your leg, your shoulders dropping, your sacrum stretching and letting go, your hips sinking.

Optional Extension

Breathe in – moving into the extension

Breathe out – allowing your weight to sink.

Each breath in – reach your arms farther, but without lifting your body.

Each breath out – feel your body sinking, but don't allow your arms to drop.



Release the pose by breathing in and sitting up.

Breathe out as you settle into Resting Sage.

Breathe in and out as your muscles release the Baby Pigeon and before you continue on to the other leg.



Once You're Fully Comfortable with This Pose

You might like to move on to Pigeon and Sleeping Pigeon. These are slightly more demanding versions. They work some additional muscles and stretch the key areas more strongly.

