

Back Bend 3

Level 3 / Posture 45

Benefits:

Strengthens quadriceps & ankles, stretches back & toes; strengthens & loosens shoulders & wrists.

Time to Do: 3 minutes

Body Parts Used by This Posture:

Quadriceps (thighs), shoulders, arms wrists, lower back, ankles, toes

Warms You Up for: Balance Posture 2, 3, Dancer's Posture, Pelvic Lift, Back Push Up, Warrior, Lunge, Bow, Half Bow

Warm Up with: Dancer's Posture, Pelvic Lift, Balance Posture 1, Bust Expansion

Builds you up for: Postures requiring strength in the thighs (quads) or arms: Balance Posture 2, 3; Bow; Half Bow; Back Push Up, Warrior; Lunge; Dancer's Posture; Pelvic Lift; Chest Expansion, Chest Expansion Extension, Bust Expansion

Combines Well with: Child Pose

Try Learning First: Pelvic Lift; Bust Expansion; Back Bend 1, 2

Energy Center Used: Belly, Solar Plexus, Chest



People either love this pose or avoid it completely! It's a great quad stretch. It loosens up your thighs beautifully for tougher poses like Balance Posture 3, Bow, Half Bow, and, eventually leads you to those quintessential yoga poses, the Back Push Up & the Warrior! So, I would encourage you to experiment with this pose, find ways to make it work for you. There are tips in these pages to help you do that. If you just can't come to terms with it, try the simpler moves of Back Bend 1 or 2.

Yoga Snack

Try watching TV like this! OR do a round while waiting for the bath to run.

Difference from Back Bend 1 Includes leaning back all the way & resting arms on the floor; and arching chest toward ceiling.

Difference from Back Bend 2 Includes arching chest toward ceiling for greater strengthening in the back.

Basics

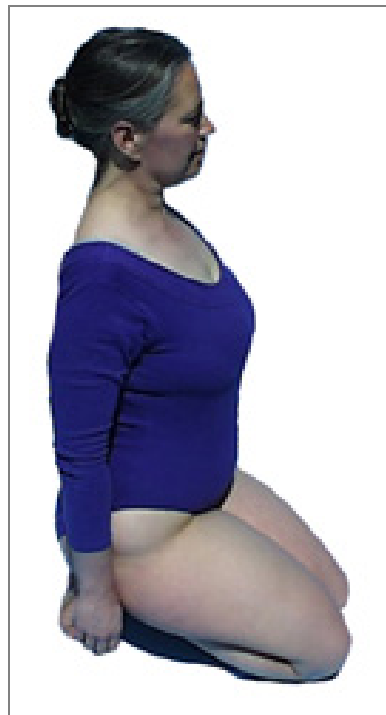
Start

Sitting on your knees
resting your weight on your toes
legs together
body upright
arms by your sides
Back of your head, shoulder blades and hips lined up
with each other.



Then

Lean Back
Until you feel a good
stretch in your thighs
& you can feel your
abdominals working.
You will feel a good
stretch in your toes,
too!
Rest your upper
body on your finger tips



Now

Arch your back, stretch your belly & chest
toward the ceiling.

Hold 2 – 6 breaths

You Will Feel It In

Your back, your thighs, your shoulder & upper arms,
your toes, your chest.



Release by returning upright. Feel your body relaxing. **Do 3 times**

Breathing



Breathe in
Breathe out letting weight settle down to knees.



Breathe in
Breathe out leaning back & arching up
Hold 2 – 6 breaths

Release

Breathe in , returning upright

Breathe out, feeling body relaxing & allowing weight to settle down into legs

Details



Start

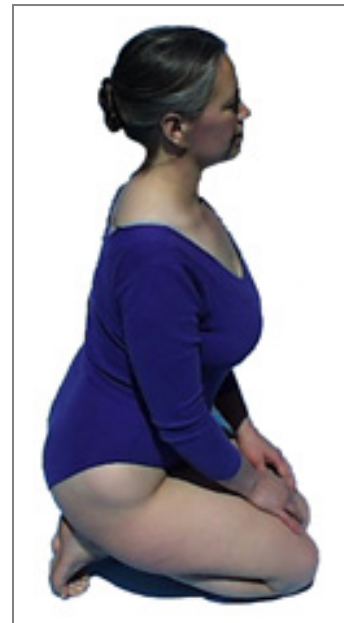
Sitting on your knees
You are essentially in the sitting version of **Mountain Pose**.

Body is straight.

Elongate your spine, (make your back feel a little longer / taller, but not so much that it feels like work).

Sitting on your toes →

Some people find the toe stretch too intense – their toes aren't strong enough or flexible enough to hold the weight of their body. To vary the intensity of the stretch in your toes, simply adjusting how much you sit straight down onto your feet and how much you shift your weight forward.





Then

Lean Back

Rest your upper body on your finger tips

Tip Your spine is still elongated here.

Arch your back, stretch your belly & chest toward the ceiling. Think of it as growing upward from the center of the chest

Hold 2 – 6 breaths

Release by returning upright. Feel your body relaxing.

Do 3 times

Discovery

Try leaning back into this pose – now slouch. See how that changes the stretch? Some people find they lose some of the stretch in the thighs and they strain the shoulders more when they slouch. Certainly, you are less flexible when you lose the elongation in your spine.



Common Errors

- Slouching
- Dropping the head.



Keep the head & neck in line with your back

& keep your back straight

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Modifications

Can't get comfortable? Can't get your hands to the floor?

Try putting a cushion behind you, until you become more flexible in your thighs.

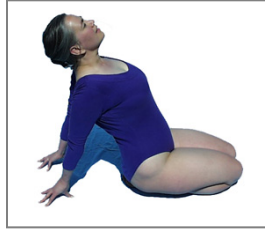
You might also like to try putting a cushion between your hips and your legs. See if that supports your weight better.

When you have mastered this pose, if it no longer challenges you, you might like to try resting your weight on flat palms, instead of on your finger tips. This will give you a stronger stretch in your thighs.

Once you have built up strength and flexibility in your spine and thighs, you can challenge yourself further by resting your weight on your flat palms. This will give you a stronger stretch. **But watch for pressure in your lower back.** This tells you you've gone too far and that your body isn't quite ready for the extreme stretches yet.



Try Combining Back Bend 3 with Child Pose for a mini-routine:



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