

Child Pose

Level 1 / Posture 9

Benefits: Loosens & Relieves Strain in: Shoulders & Lower Back. Deeply relaxing.

Body Parts Used by This Posture: Upper Back, Shoulders, Lower Back

Good Before: Meditation, Breath Work

Builds you up for: Rabbit, Shoulder Stand, Plow, Leg Fold, postures that require suppleness and strength in the spine & shoulders.

Energy Center Used: Mostly Belly center; also Solar Plexus, Heart & Throat to some extent. This is one of the poses that opens and clears the often neglected back side of these charkas.

People either really love this pose or they don't like it at all! The deciding factor seems to be how much weight you're carrying around your middle. If you can't fold up and get comfortable, and if your tummy interferes with your breathing, you might not like it much at first. I really encourage you to experiment with ways to be comfortable in this pose. It can become such a gentle way to deeply relax!

Start

This posture can follow several other postures and so the starting position flows from them, including the Puppy, the Back Stretch, Back Bends and Camel. When you do this in combination with those poses, the basic principles remain much the same as when starting from a seated position like this:

- Sitting on your knees.
- Elongate your spine.
- Stretch your body forward over your legs.
- Curl your head between your knees.
- Rest the top of your head or your forehead on the floor.
- Arms rest by your sides, hands by your feet.
- Allow your shoulders to drop toward the floor and relax.
- Let the weight in your body drop downward.

In this opening position you might feel a gentle stretch in your lower back and shoulders.

Tip You'll get the best stretch the more your head is curled under and the more your nose is tucked between your knees.

Key Stretching your body forward along your legs before you curl under is a key part of getting the most out of this pose.



Breathing

Sitting on your knees, **breathe in & out** as you settle into place.



Breathing in, elongate your spine.



Breathing out, stretch your body forward along your knees, curling your head under.



Breathe in and out as you settle into place.

Hold for 20 – 60 breaths – or as long as you like.

While you hold the pose, notice your weight dropping more and more every time you breathe out.

If you can come to terms with Child Pose, it can become very meditative as you sit still and breathe.

Common Errors

Having the arms forward, not allowing your arms to rest by your sides. Having your arms forward is OK but you will get a better stretch for your shoulders if you have your arms lying on the floor, beside your legs and feet.

Having the hips up in the air. Again, this is OK when your hips or thighs are tight, but you get a better stretch for your back with your hips down. Allow your body to shift back slightly and let your hips drop. If this is difficult for you it might be because your tummy is bumping into your legs, in which case you can separate your legs to give your belly somewhere to go.

Stretching the arms forward like the Puppy pose. It's common to confuse the Puppy and the Child Pose. In fact, they can overlap in the way you modify them. However, when done exactly, you turn into a closed ball for Child Pose, with your hips down and arms by your sides. An exact Puppy involves the hips being up, off the lower legs and arms fully stretched forward. They are both benefiting the shoulders and lower back, but in different ways.

Modifications

Usually, people start Child Pose with their legs together. If your belly is going to get in the way, separate your legs. (This gives you a place to put your tummy!)

If this pose is hard for your neck and shoulders, you can bring your hands forward and rest your forehead on your hands or on your fists. Or you can rest your head on a firm cushion or on a rolled up yoga mat.

If your body doesn't like to let your weight down onto your lower legs you can place a pillow or cushion between your hips and legs. This will tilt you forward and can allow you to just let your weight drop and relax.