

(Half) Bow

Level 3 / Posture 58

Benefits:

Strengthens quadriceps, shoulders & lower back, upper back, abdominals.

Time to Do: 3 – 5 minutes

Body Parts Used by This

Posture: Thighs, lower back, upper back, shoulders, abdominals



Build Up to This Posture with : Half Bow Preparatory Pose, Balance Posture 1, 2; Pelvic Lift

This Posture Builds You Up for: Bow, Balance Posture 1, 2, 3; Pelvic Lift, Back Push Up, Incline Plane, Lunge

Energy Center Used: Root, Belly, Solar Plexus, Heart, Throat

Try Learning First: Half Bow Preparatory Pose, Balance Posture 2

Who Should Not Do This Pose: Pregnant women (but your belly is probably telling you that already!)

This posture is an excellent way to build up to the demanding Bow posture, or can be used as a substitute for it. The Half Bow builds strength in your quads , lower back, upper back, shoulders & abdominals. If you're round bodied, it can be difficult to reach your ankles or foot. Rather than avoiding the pose completely, try hanging on to your pant leg or use a belt around your ankle. If you keep practicing this pose you will eventually be able to hold on to your foot without help – maybe sooner than you think! The full “Bow” won't be far away!

Difference from Half Bow Preparatory Pose: The Half Bow uses most of your body, while the Preparatory Pose uses mostly the thighs. The Half Bow is very similar to the full Bow in benefits and in demands. However, it's harder to do than the Preparatory Pose, especially for those with round bodies.

Difference from Bow: The Half Bow is easier!

Yoga Snack

Another great TV watching pose! But watch out for that tendency to fall asleep on the spot! A good one before bed to help you fall asleep.

Basic Instruction



Start

lying on your stomach, legs together, arms by your sides, forehead on the floor / mat / pillow.

2. Bend one knee, bringing your foot toward your hip.

3. Hold on to your foot with the corresponding hand, (same hand as the foot).



Place the other hand on the floor under your collar bone.

4. Tug your foot closer to your body.

5. Hold for 6 breaths



See if the stretch will (willingly) increase each time you breathe out.

You Will Feel This In Your thigh!

6. Optional: Push against the floor with your front hand, raising your body up.



7. Then pull your foot up and away from your body. (Your hand pulls up, the foot tries to pull away from the body & the hand.)

8. Hold for 6 breaths

See if the stretch will (willingly) increase each time you breathe out.

Release Lower your leg and arm to the floor. Relax.

Switch Sides. Repeat

Do 3 times on each side, alternating sides.

Safety Tip Watch out for pain, pressure or burning in your lower back. This means you've come up too far.

Details

Start

If you need to, at a beginning level, you can start lying on your front with your chin *to the side*.

Safety Tip – if you do that it can put more pressure on your lower back. Also this will not allow you to elongate your spine as much.

Elongating your spine: Once you are in your starting position, take a moment to *lengthen your spine* – let your spine “grow” a little. This will give you more flexibility & more benefits in the long run.



Safety Tip

A common error: holding on to the foot with the *opposite* hand. This makes it more likely you will twist your ankle. And you won't get as good a stretch in the thigh.



If you use this modification:

Do 3 times on one side.
Let go, relax.

Then do the other side.

After each repetition, relax the stretch but **don't let go** of your ankle / leg / belt

Modifications

If you can't reach your foot:

If you can't reach your foot, it can be difficult to squirm into & out of the posture. Try the holding on to your ankle, your leg, your pant leg or use a belt. This means you will not want to alternate legs during your repetitions.

Safety Tip Do not twist your ankle to hold on to your foot. If you can't manage this safely, then hold on to your ankle or your leg, or your pant leg or use a belt.

Safety Tip Many people get very ambitious with this pose and push their bodies up too much. This will strain the lower back, is harder work for your shoulders than you might be ready for – and so is discouraging. If you’re fighting the pose, try going a little lighter & try not aiming for so much extension so soon.

Posture Excellence

To get the most out of this pose – once you’re in the pose push your belly & chest toward the floor for a rounded, boat-like shape. If you’ve taken the time to elongate your spine first, this will be easier and you’ll achieve better extension.

Breathing- Basic Movements

1. Settle into your starting position

Breathe in & out feeling your body settle and relax



2. Breathe in drawing your foot up & holding onto it



3. Breathe out, tugging the foot closer

4. **Hold for 6 breaths**, feeling your foot coming closer to your hip every time you breathe out.



5. Breathe out, pulling the foot up & back & pushing your body upward.

6. **Hold for 6 breaths**, feel your extension increasing every time you breathe out.

Release
Breathe in

Breathe out, lowering your foot & arm

Do 3 times on each side, alternating sides.

Breathing for the Modified Movements

For those who need to hold on to their ankle or use a belt.



Settle into your starting position
Breathe in & out feeling your body settle and relax



Breathe in
Breathe out tugging the foot closer

Hold for 6 breaths, feel your foot coming closer to your hip every time you breathe out.



5. Breathe out, pulling the foot up & back & pushing your body upward.

6. **Hold for 6 breaths**, feeling your extension increasing every time you breathe out.

Release

Breathe in

Breathe out, relaxing your stretch, but don't let go of your leg.

Repeat, 2 more times, same side.

Final release:

Breathe in

Breathe out, lowering leg & arms completely.

Relax.

Repeat other side.

When you master this pose, you might like to go on to the full version of the Bow.