

## Rabbit

Level 2

### Benefits:

Loosens & strengthens lower back, shoulders, neck. Corrects alignment in lower back and hips

**Time to Do:** 3 minutes

**Body Parts Used by This Posture:** Lower back, arms, shoulders, neck

**Build Up to This Posture with:** Child Pose, Back Stretch, Leg Stretch, Wood Chopper, Complete Breath 2, Leg Fold, Rock & Rolls

**This Posture Builds You Up for:** Shoulder Stand, Plow, Forward Bends like Leg Clasp, Wood Chopper

**Combines Well with:** Back Bend 2 or 3, Camel

**Energy Center Used:** Root, Belly, Solar Plexus



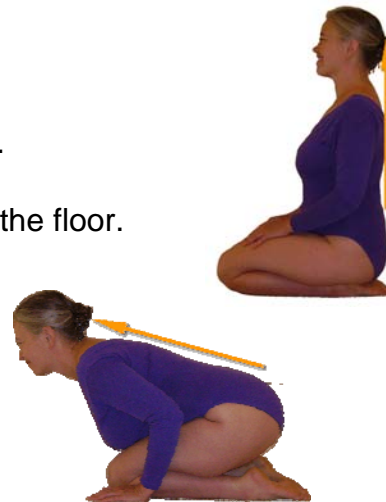
**Who Should Not Do This Pose** Pregnant women. It compresses the belly too much. However, you'll hardly need the warning, since there's not much chance you'll want to do it after the fourth month!

This is a wonderful pose for releasing your neck, shoulders and lower back. It stretches your entire neck, including up to where the neck joins the skull. It's one of the few yoga poses that loosens under the shoulder blades. It releases tension in the trapezius muscles. It stretches out your lower back. It corrects the alignment in your hip girdle, (your lower back and hips).

### Start from Child Pose – like this:

- Sitting on your knees.
- Elongate your spine.
- Then 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 from the Rabbit 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 go into Child Pose is a key part of getting the most out of the Rabbit.

**Next**

Hold onto your heels. Have all your fingers and your thumbs on the outside of the heels.



**Bring your hips upward.**



If your shoulders and lower back allow it, you continue to bring your hips upward until your arms are straight.

To increase the stretch, keep trying to bring your hips more upward.



You'll feel some of your weight rolling onto the top of your head. If that is uncomfortable for you, you can straighten your head a little.

However, if you allow your head to rotate, curling it more under your body, you can increase the stretch in your neck and lower back.

If you get an extreme stretch and want more, you can tuck your head into your knees farther.

Release by reversing your movements, letting your hips down and returning your arms to your sides.

**Modifications**

**If you cannot reach your feet, use a yoga strap or belt.** This is one of the few poses where I freely recommend using props. There are few ways to modify this pose without one.

If you have trouble sitting in the opening Child Pose without your neck or shoulders or thighs resisting, try using a firm cushion or a rolled up yoga mat to support your head.



## 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.



**Breathe in** as you go into the Rabbit.



**Hold the pose** as you **breathe in and out**.

**Breathing in**, see if you can increase the stretch by coaxing your hips up farther.

**Breathing out**, feel the weight in your shoulders and legs sinking and relaxing, without losing any of the stretch.

**Release the pose** as you breathe out.

## Common Errors

- Overlapping the feet. This misaligns the lower back and reduces the stretch there.
- Resting weight on the chin. This compresses the upper neck and curves it in the wrong direction, causing pain, discomfort and even injury.
- Starting off with the body crooked. As you sit in your starting position, you need your neck, body hips and legs lined up with each other.

