

## Spider 2

Level 2 Difficulty

*Spider 2* – a great abdominals builder! It's a strong hamstring stretch, great for hip rotators, and rebuilds and further strengthens your lower back. A great follow up to *Spider 1*, they form a natural combination that remedies many lower back and hip issues. As with *Spider 1*, some people find it a little awkward to hold on to their foot in this pose. Hopefully, you'll find some of the tips here helpful for that.

### Main Benefits:

Loosens & strengthens lower back, inner thighs, hip rotators & shoulders.

**Body Parts Used by This Posture:** Lower back, sacrum, inner thighs, hip rotators, knees, toes & shoulders (a little)

**Combines Well with:** Spider 1 (together they make up Spider 3), Hip Opener, Leg Overs

**Compensating Pose (Follow Up with a Brief Repetition of):** Leg Fold 1

**Warms You Up for / Builds You Up for:** Spider 3, Hamstring Stretches like Wood Chopper, Chest Expansion 2, Chest Expansion – Leg Extensions & Leg Overs. Lunge, Chest Expansion, Leg Clasp, Back Stretch, Leg Over, Rishi's Posture, Leg Stretch, Shoulder Stand, Plow, Balancing Poses

**Build Up to with:** Jumping Frog, Wood Chopper 1, Back Stretch, Leg Over 1

**Good for These Practice Goals:** Morning yoga; senior's yoga; improve personal posture; meditation warm up; sports warm up; great for runners, bikers, swimmers, marital artists

**Best Breathing Theme Matches:** Works very well with almost all Breathing Themes.

**Best for Flexibility or Strength:** Strength

**Best if:** Static (Pose is held rather than kept in motion.)

**Traditional Pose Type:** Forward Bends

**Energy Center Used:** Root and Belly

**Recommended for These Health**

**Conditions:** carpal tunnel syndrome; frozen shoulders; allergies; asthma; weak bladder; bronchitis; compressed disc in lower back; cystosis; excessive bloating; chronic injury of hip, lower back or shoulders; ibs; lung removed; menopause & pre-menopause, menstruating (having your period) at this moment; migraines and headaches, both chronic and happening at the moment; pneumonia; pregnancy - first half; restless legs; sciatica; scoliosis; spondylitis; pronation of feet & or hips

**Avoid Under these Health Conditions:** arthritis in fingers, knees, toes; osteoporosis in lower back, spine, neck, toes; compressed disc in upper neck, upper shoulders, middle back, lower back; diverticulitis; femoral, hiatal, or umbilical hernias; high blood pressure (untreated); fresh injury or surgery to knee, lower back or shoulder; pins in upper, middle, lower back or knee or ankle; last half of pregnancy; prolapsed uterus or intestines; fresh case of whiplash;

**Difference from Spider 2:** Spider 1 is a warm up for Spider 2. Spider 1 is mostly an inner thigh & sacrum stretch. Spider 2 is a hamstring & lower back stretch and work out for your abdominals & shoulders.



## Spider 2

Level 2

### Basic Instruction

Try Learning Spider 1 first. This will give you the basic beginning movements. It's also an excellent pose to do in combination with this one.

#### 1. Start – as with Spider 1

lying on your back, legs together, arms by your sides



#### 2. Next

Bring one knee up toward your chest



#### 3. Next

Reach down and hold on to *the tops of your toes*. Do this with the arm that corresponds to the leg. Arm goes inside the leg.



#### 4. Next – Spider 1 Option

**Keeping your knee close to your chest**, tug your foot in a motion down the line of the arm toward your shoulder, so that the foot and the knee are coming closer to your head.

#### Key in Spider 1

**Your knee stays bent and your heel stays close to your body. The motion is like a lunge.**

#### 5. On to Spider 2

- Without letting go of your toes
- Straighten your leg
- Then sit up to meet it, (bringing your nose toward your thigh).

Let your non stretching leg and its arm rest loosely on the floor.

#### You Will Feel This In Your

- Hamstrings
- Lower back
- Abdominals
- Upper Back (slightly)



#### 6. Hold Spider 2 for 2 – 4 breaths or until your abdominals begin to tire.

With each breath in, elongate your spine (but don't lose the height you've gained in your pose)

With each breath out, sit up more and more, bringing your upper body closer to your leg.

**Tip** Breathe out strongly. This will help you sit up

**Tip** Let your non-stretching side relax, hanging loosely against the floor.

#### Release

Lower your leg and arm to the floor.  
Wait while your body lets go of the pose

#### Switch Legs

Repeat until you've done 2 – 3 repetitions on each side alternating sides.



#### Key

Your arms goes inside the leg. This frees hip rotators enough to put the stretch deep into the hip, lower back and sacrum.

**Modifications**



**Modification:** If you can't hold onto your toes, it's OK to hold onto your ankle or your leg, although not ideal.

If your fingers keep slipping or if you have arthritis in your fingers or toes, try lacing your fingers in between your toes. As a final option, a yoga strap can work, when wrapped across the middle of the foot.

**Tip** Unless you have a sensitive lower back, it's better to hold on to your *foot*, with your leg slightly bent, than to straighten the leg completely by holding on to the *leg*.



**Safety Tip for people with sensitive lower backs** In your case, it's advisable not to straighten the leg completely, but to keep it slightly bent. Even better if you hold on to your leg and not your toes.

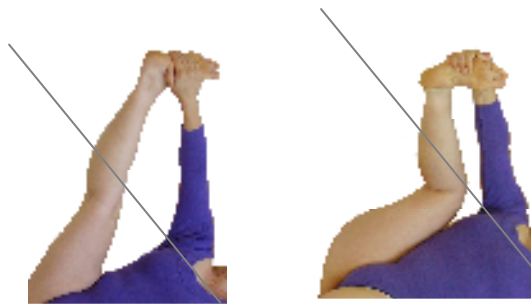


Lacing fingers in among your toes might help your grip.



Yoga Strap as a final resort.

**Tip** Once your leg is in place upright, the action is *sitting up* to meet the leg, as opposed to drawing the leg closer to your head.



**Try not to hold the foot from the instep or from the outer edges.** This will tend to twist the hip and the ankle, increasing your chance of injury.

**Common Errors**

Do not allow your leg to wander away from the body. Keep the knee as close to the body & your arm as you can. When the knee swings out, you lose much of the stretch and risk injuring your knee & hip.

Do not twist your foot in order to hold on to it. This can strain your ankles and hips. This often happens when people grip the outside or inside edge of their foot, rather than the top. If you can't hold your toes or the ball of the foot, try holding on to your leg instead.

Try not to start with your hand and arm outside of the leg. This will make it difficult to straighten your leg and will strain your hip rotators and shoulder. You need to keep your arm on the inside. This will also allow you to make a smooth transition between *Spider 1 to Spider 2* when the time comes.

**Discovery Exercises**

- Experiment with having your hand holding on to your foot in different places, such as your toes, the outside of your foot and the inside of your foot. Notice how this changes the alignment in the hip and knee and how it tends to move the leg away from or toward the center line of the body. (Do this gently and not to any great extent. Stop before anything in your hip or knee hurts.)

**Breathing**



**Start**

Breathe in

Breathe out, letting your weight settle & body relax.

© 2002 - 2009  
Corinne Friesen  
www.audiodyoga.com



Breathe in

Breathe out bringing your knee up toward your chest & holding on to your foot.

Breathe in and out as you firm your grip and settle into place



**Optional hold for 2 – 6 breaths** or to the limit of your ability to stretch.

(Breathing in, & out see if the stretch willingly increases, without forcing it.)



Breathe in, sitting up, elongating your spine.

Breathe out, sitting up farther.

**Hold for 2 – 4 breaths** or until your abdominals begin to tire.

With each breath in, elongate your spine (but don't lose the height you've gained in your pose)

With each breath out, sit up more and more, bringing your upper body closer to your leg.

**Release**  
Breathe in,  
Breathe out, lowering leg and arm to the floor.

Wait while the tension in the muscles dissolves.

**Switch**, do other side.

**Repeat 3 times each side**



## Spider 2

Level 2

### Combination 2

**Spider 1**, held for several breaths, then **Hip Opener** for several breaths, returning to Spider 1 position, then go into **Spider 2** for several breaths. **Option:** Go from Spider 2 into **Leg Over 2**. Hold Leg Over 2 for several breaths before returning to the Spider 1 position and then releasing the pose. **Switch Sides. Repeat.** This is even better than the above combination for rebuilding the lower back, relieving sciatic pain, improving the flexibility of the hip rotators while supplying a great hamstring stretch. It also releases the psoas and stretches out the trapezius in the shoulders. However, it is more demanding, being a level 5 in difficulty, and, as a remedial combination, it requires that you've restored your lower back and sciatic somewhat with the Spider 1 & 2 combination first.



Hold each position until you reach the limit of your ability to stretch, feeling your body letting go and relaxing more and more into the stretch with each breath out (*Red Level Breathing Theme*), or use *Yellow* or *Green Level Breathing Themes* for great results also.