

Routine to Build You Up to Doing Back Bends & Bow Poses

Level 2 – 5, depending on modifications you prefer to use.

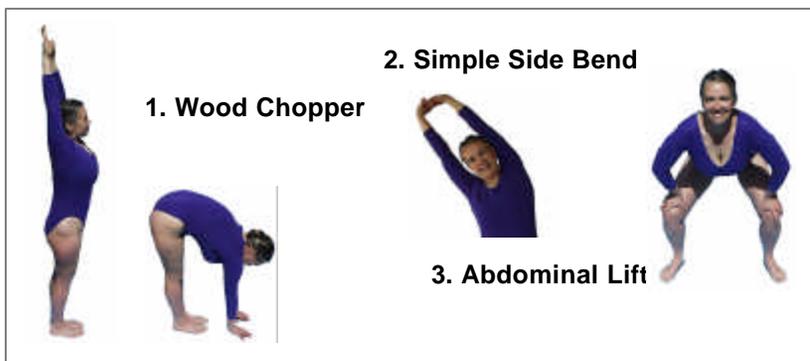
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Bows & Back Bends require a strong lower back, strong abdominals, strong thighs and loose, strong shoulders, (especially in the front of your chest). Fortunately, Bows and Back Bends also help *create* strong, loose backs, abs, thighs and shoulders. If your back is weak, you don't have to give up on Back Bends and Bows completely. Work at gentler versions of the postures and learn how to elongate your spine. This will make you much more flexible without straining your back.

Key: Don't be too ambitious. Overdoing these poses, quickly leaves you incapacitated and drastically slows your progress.

Poses that build you up to Back Bends and Bow Poses (in increasing order of difficulty): Wood Chopper, Puppy, Simple Side Bend, Abdominal Lifts, Back Bend 1, Pelvic Lift, Half Bow Prep Pose, Bust Expansion, Balance Posture 1, Back Bend 2, Half Bow Extension, Cobra, Balance Posture 2, Back Bend 3, Camel.

Best Breathing Themes: This depends on what you need to develop, flexibility or strength. For any muscle group that requires strength, pick a body building breathing theme such as the Fourth Breathing Theme. For any muscle group that needs flexibility, pick a Breathing Theme that moves you in rhythm with your breath and go for many, short repetitions – such as the Yellow Level Breathing Themes, like the Eleventh Breathing Theme. If you need to develop both strength and flexibility, then do several short repetitions using one breathing theme, then, for the final repetition

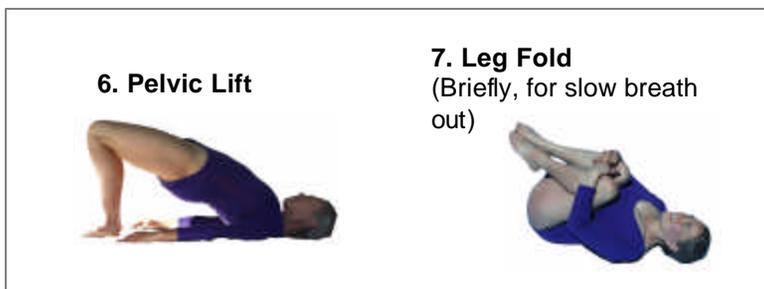


4. Breathing Exercise

The Wave, or Chest Breathing 1, with this addition: As you finish breathing in, pause, let your shoulders drop and relax, then breathe out.

5. Meditation

As you settle into meditation, start taking longer to breathe out, until your breaths are long and slow. Continue with long, slow breaths out for the rest of your meditation time. (Breathing out through your mouth helps pace your breathing.)



These Half Bow poses blend well with the following ones, the Cobra and Puppy, for a good mini routine that takes about 5 minutes.

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9. Cobra

(at whatever level you can practice it.)



10. Puppy



11. Bust Expansion



12. Hug (briefly, for one, slow breath out, then switch which arm is on top and hold briefly, for one, slow breath out.)



13 & 14. Back Bend 2 or 3 alternating with Puppy



OR 13 & 14. Back Bend Primer alternating with Back Stretch



10. Gradual Relaxation

- ? Relax your body, step by step, from your feet to your face, one area at a time, feeling that part of your body letting go, sinking down, more and more every time you breathe out.
- ? Do about 6 breaths for each area.