



Bhujapidasana

Description

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BHUJAPIDASANA (13 MOVEMENTS)

7	SAPTA	Inhale, jump around hands, cross feet
8	ASTAU	Exhale, fold chin down
9	NAVA	Inhale, lift up Exhale, Bakasana
10	DASA	Inhale, lift up
11	EKĀDASA	Exhale, jump back, Chaturanga
12	DUADASA	Inhale, Upward-Facing Dog
13	TRAYODASA	Exhale, Downward-Facing Dog

Anatomy

Bhujapidasana has many similar joint actions to those found in Tittibhasana, except here the ankles are crossed and the knees are flexed. As with Tittibhasana, Kurmasana can be used to prepare the hips and back for the pose. Ideally, the legs are as high up as possible on the arms, with the weight of the body balanced over the hands. A great deal of flexibility must be attained in the lower back and gluteals to perform this posture. There should also be a sufficient external rotation of the hips (meaning the length of the internal rotators). Press up into the pose by straightening the elbows while squeezing the legs around the arms. The thighs form a bandha, or a "lock," where they join with the arms. The contact point where the ankles cross forms another bandha. Attempting to pull the feet apart augments this lock, strengthening the abductors of the hips.

Alternatively, you can bend the knees and use the thighs and calves to squeeze the arms (while at the same time attempting to straighten the elbows).



BASIC JOINT POSITIONS

- The hips flex and adduct.
- The knees flex.
- The ankles dorsiflex.
- The feet evert.
- The toes extend.
- The trunk flexes.
- The shoulders flex, adduct, and externally rotate.
- The wrists extend.
- The cervical spine extends.

Preparation

Gain flexibility in the hips by stretching the internal rotators with cradle stretch, as shown. Use a facilitated stretch to make this more efficient (protecting the knees at all times). Lengthen and prepare the lower back muscles with poses like Prasarita Padottanasana, Kurmasana, and Uttanasana. Strengthen the wrists and arms with Chaturanga Dandasana and Full Arm Balance. Begin in Tadasana. Bend forward and place the hands in between and behind the lower legs. Walk the feet in front of the hands. Then hook them around each other, preferably at the ankles, and lift up. Squeeze the thighs into the arms and straighten the knees, pulling on the lock at the ankles. Then bend the knees and squeeze the arms between the legs. In both variations, contract the triceps to straighten the arms and press them outward into the thighs. Come out by unlocking the feet and placing them back on the floor; stand in Uttanasana. Have a bolster or blanket in front of you if you fall forward in the pose.

STEP 1 Flex the trunk and hips by contracting the psoas and its synergists (the pectineus, adductors longus and brevis, and sartorius). Engage the rectus abdominis by gently squeezing the stomach muscles to further stabilize the pose.

STEP 2 Hook one foot over the other. Then lock the feet by activating the tibialis anterior muscles (draw the tops of the feet toward the shins). Evert the ankles by tilting the outer edges of the feet upward. The peroneus longus and brevis create this action. Then combine the lock at the ankles with the variations described in Steps 4 and 5.

STEP 3 Press the mounds at the base of the index fingers into the mat by pronating the forearms with the pronator teres and quadratus. Lift the body up by engaging the triceps to straighten the elbows. Straightening the elbows produces an outward resistance against the thighs, creating one-half of the lock, with the other half created by the legs. Then use the anterior and lateral deltoids to forward flex the shoulders (as if you were lifting the hands overhead). Contract the pectoralis major at the front of the chest to add to and stabilize the lift. The serratus anterior will automatically activate and abduct the scapulae away from the midline of the back, tethering the shoulder blades in place. A cue for this is to imagine pressing the hands against a wall while visualizing this muscle engagement. Finally, externally rotate the shoulders by contracting the infraspinatus and teres minor muscles, as well as the posterior deltoids. This action combines with pronation of the forearms to create a coiling effect down the arms and through the elbows, tightening the ligaments around the elbow joints (ligamentotaxis). This further stabilizes the arms in the pose.



STEP 4 Attempt to straighten the knees by contracting the quadriceps. This is one variation that can be used to create a bandha where the arms and legs meet. The tensor fascia lata contributes to this action in addition to synergizing the psoas inflexing the hips. It also internally rotates the hips, counteracting the pull of the stretching gluteus maximus. Visualize the gluteus minimus contracting to aid the tensor fascia lata.

STEP 5 Try another variation of Bhujapidasana, where you flex the knees by engaging the hamstrings. This squeezes the arms between the calves and thighs. At the same time, straighten the elbows and note how the arms and legs form a lock or bandha.

SUMMARY By flexing the trunk and hips, Bhujapidasana stretches the erector spinae and quadratus lumborum muscles of the back, as well as the gluteus maximus. The rhomboids and middle portion of the trapezius also lengthen due to abducting the shoulder blades. Forward flexing the shoulders stretches the posterior deltoids. These muscles also eccentrically contract to externally rotate the shoulders.

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