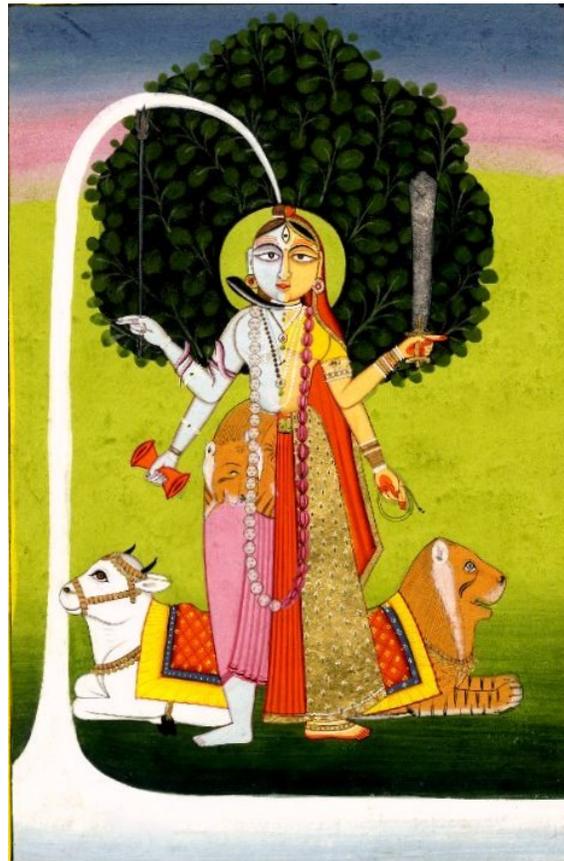


*"The wholeness, completeness and satisfaction of supreme love increases and releases the inner soma. In the experience of supreme love, we are deeply nourished. There is no giving or receiving, there is only love. Nothing is lost and everything is gained in supreme love. Supreme love is deep surrender, and is based in deep satisfaction, which is the opposite of seeking. All resolves into love itself. All is love, and in that love all is deeply nourished". – Kaya*

## *Agni + Soma*

**Home Study Program**  
SRY Veda School  
For Teachers

Kaya Mindlin  
[www.yogawithkaya.com](http://www.yogawithkaya.com)



# Principles of SRY

- Emphasis on the Soma aspect of yoga practice, Recognition and Refinement of the Agni aspect of practice, in the right dose.

- Awareness of the body
- Poses angle into and release core (spinal) tension / blockages
- Cultivate a parasympathetic (calming) nervous system response
- When the body slows down, the mind slows down
- Support a process of surrender (letting go) as a means to Self-awareness
- Props provide support and alignment
- Release of muscles, not stretch of ligaments
- Get tight areas moving, while restraining / supporting hypermobile areas
- Stabilize the joints / prevent overstretching
- Repetition calms the mind
- Inward oriented
- Noncompetitive
- Teacher teaches, does not do a performance of yoga for the group
- Teacher looks at individual bodies and does hands-on-alignments
- Precise, personalized alignment and propping
- Support gives release
- Settling the mind as the main means for healing, transformation and awareness.
- Cultivating meditation
- Letting go (of physical tension, of mental resistance, of rāga / dveṣa, etc.)
- Sequencing that considers the effect of pose architecture on body / mind
- Teaching according to themes
- Moving in, being in, moving out and being still after a pose are equally important
- Language, poses, and lesson plan consider Ayurvedic principles, Vāstu principles and the classical teachings of yoga (eg. Patanjali Yoga Sūtra, Advaita Vedanta)

## Cosmic Principles: Soma and Agni

Agni	Soma
Sun	Moon
Day	Night
Right	Left
Exhalation	Inhalation
Udāna	Prāna
Upward Rising	Downward Flow
Hot	Cool
Pingala	Ida
Movement	Stillness
Tailbone, Pelvis, Navel	Head, Mind, Heart
Purification	Nourishment
Dissatisfaction / Desire	Satisfaction / Contentment
Pain / Pleasure	Bliss
Activity	Receptivity
Fire	Fuel
Metabolism	Sustenance
Upward Rising	Downward flowing
Śakti {movement}	Śiva {stillness}
Divine Father	Divine Mother {nourisher}
Hreem	Shreem
Hamsa / I am that	Soham / That I am
Kundalīni Śakti	Sushumna
Outer pursuit	Inner Focus
Effort	Relaxation
Striving	Surrender
Aspiration	Allowance
Mountain	Lake; Flowing Waters
Upward pointing triangle	Downward pointing triangle

## Agni + Soma

Divine counterparts. Cosmic categories. Both are viewed as a connection between the human and the divine. Agni and Soma are sometimes said to be married and to be the most significant gods (*devas*) placed at the level of manifestation. From cosmic, to planetary, to the subtle body to each cell. One cannot have one without the other.

## Soma Deva

*"Soma is the bestower of immortality"*

120 of the hymns of the Rg Veda are devoted to Soma.



## Agni Deva

*"Agni is the root of fire in the body and should be treated with great care"*

"Agni" is the first word of the Rg Veda and is addressed in 1/3 of its hymns.





## Quotes on Soma

### **Śiva Saṃhitā**

*"In this body, which is the Brahmānda [microcosm; literally the egg], there is the nectar-rayed moon, in its proper place, on the top of the spinal cord... this moon has its face downwards, and rains nectar day and night."*

*"Below the force-center in the middle of the Sahasrāra [lotus at the top of the head], there is the moon [soma]; let the wise contemplate this. By contemplating on this moon, the Yogī becomes adorable [loved] in this world and is respected by the gods and adepts. In the sinus of the forehead, let the yogi contemplate on the ocean of milk."*

*"In the sinus of the forehead there is the nectar-containing moon, with 16 rays [full moon]. Let the yogi contemplate on this stainless moon."*

*"Let the Yogī continually drink the nectar which flows out of the inner soma"*

### **Dr. Vasant Lad**

*"In the beginning it is a drop. Drop becomes drip, drip becomes flow, and flow becomes flood and flood becomes rush. Then you will experience profound peace in the chest. Along with that peace, there is love".*

*"That soma brings tranquility, love, happiness and love divine."*

*"Through meditation, pranayama we increase soma. Through contemplation we create space for soma to flow."*

*"Soma, agni and prana maintain life... Soma is building, Agni is glowing and prana is flowing"*

*"Soma nourishes mind. The universal mind, and the individual mind... Soma is the bridge between the individual mind and grand cosmic mind."*

### **Dr. David Frawley**

*"Yoga properly done is mainly a rejuvenation process, not a detoxification process. We need a paradigm shift in the yoga world, which is dominated by hot and active yoga. We tend to burn ourselves out and become over stimulated. We need to restore the balance of the soma, the water, the yin principle and the Shiva principle in the higher sense. A model of health and wellbeing for the 21<sup>st</sup> century must be rooted in soma."*

*"Soma relates to the deeper aspects of yoga. Calming, rejuvenating practices that slow us down, take us within, and bring us to non-doing – that is a soma practice."*

*"Yoga practice is ultimately more a way of non-doing than doing. It is more a way of undoing. It is doing less, turning within, letting go, and surrendering. Yoga means discovering the healing essence that can draw us to a higher awareness naturally, in which we can let go of our stress, our anxiety, our negativity, our traumas, all these emotional factors that disturb us and keep us down. Inner yoga is that in which we move from activity to surrender and to cultivating the flow of grace."*



## Yoga Practice Categories + Agni / Soma

Type	Effects + Notes	Soma / Agni
<p>Supine Poses</p> <p>Reclined / Lying on Back. Considered a horizontal angle.</p>	<p>Generally promotes restfulness and relaxation, balances vata, provides the greatest amount of physical support, is beneficial for new students, students with pain or injury, students who need extra help with finding release and “letting go”.</p>	
<p>Prone</p> <p>Body is facing downward, usually laying face down</p>	<p>Promotes release, opens the front of the body through support and the back of the body through space.</p> <p>Can feel vulnerable to students.</p> <p>Students may get leg or foot cramping in prone poses – this is due to tightening the tailbone while moving the legs or torso in this position and can also be due to the mental tension of the vulnerability of laying face down {no control}.</p> <p>The lack of control of laying face down is scary for some. It is the freedom from control that is simultaneously therapeutic, but this can take time for some.</p>	
<p>Standing</p> <p>Torso and legs are upright.</p> <p>Vertical angle</p>	<p>Promotes strength, balance, and focus. Especially beneficial for vata and kapha, while pitta-types can tend to over-do and should be taught to not over-exert.</p>	

<p><b>Twists</b></p> <p>Twisting one or more segment of the spine.</p> <p>Twists may be reclined, seated, prone, forward-bending or back-bending</p>	<p>Massages the spine</p> <p>Quiets the mind</p> <p>Massages internal organs and tissues of the area twisted.</p> <p>Improves breathing.</p> <p>Balances the flow of ida and pingala nādis.</p>	
<p><b>Seated</b></p> <p>Torso is upright (vertical), while legs are at a horizontal angle.</p>	<p>Promotes a balance of relaxation and alertness and balances all doshas (vata, pitta and kapha). Beneficial for awareness, meditation and study.</p>	
<p><b>Backbends</b></p> <p>Arching one or more segment of the spine</p>	<p>Stimulating, warming, massaging and purifying to the specific area{s} being emphasized in the pose.</p> <p>*Potential risk of over-working and damaging areas that move easily, and further blocking, stagnating or tightening already stuck areas.</p>	
<p><b>Inversions</b></p> <p>Upside down</p> <p>Full inversions are a vertical angle, while others combine verticality with horizontal – such as plow pose.</p>	<p>Promote warmth, stimulation, reversal of apana vayu {downward flow} and in increase of upward flow {due to gravity} of bodily fluids and prana.</p>	

<p>Movement / Flow Practices</p> <p>Movement, often coordinated with breath</p>	<p>Stimulating Warming Purifying Efforting</p> <p>Can occur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- within a pose</li> <li>- from one pose to another</li> <li>- in and out of a pose.</li> </ul>	
<p>Pranayama</p> <p>Mudra</p> <p>Mantra</p>	<p>These influence in this order:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Subtle Body, which</li> <li>2. Impacts the mind, which</li> <li>3. Impacts the physical body</li> </ol> <p>These impact at the subtle level, and are therefor more powerful {greater potential for healing / transformation but also greater risk for damage}</p>	

Notes:

# Spinal Release Poses, Agni and Soma

## Flow Poses and Agni and Soma

## Soma Mantra



SoHam : That I am

Hamsa: I am that

Purpose	<p>So'ham = That I am. It is a soma mantra. The reverse is hamsa = I am that. This is an agni mantra.</p> <p>We generally need more soma and agni, so the soma mantra can be done more frequently.</p>
Effects	<p>Quiet the mind, increase peace, love, bliss, and an expansion of awareness / consciousness. So'ham means "That I am" and 'That' = pure consciousness; that which I am seeking, God, Consciousness, Awareness.</p>
How To	<p>Seated or Reclined</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inhale "soham"</li> <li>2. Exhale "hamsa"</li> </ol> <p>Or</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inhale So</li> <li>2. Exhale ham</li> </ol> <p>Optional addition</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inhale "so" and visualize the breath flowing in from the crown, down to the tailbone</li> <li>2. Exhale "ham" and visualize the breath rising up from the tailbone to the crown</li> </ol> <p>Or, visualization as above, inhaling Soham and exhaling hamsa</p>
Sequencing	<p>Can be done safely, anytime</p>

Soma Mantra  
5 Part Mantra of Sundarī Devi



Om  
Hrīm – Śrīm – Klīm – Aim – Sauḥ  
[ Hreem – Shreem – Kleem – Ah-eem – Sow-ha ]

## Nādi Śodhana Prānāyāma

### Pranayama to Open the Peripheral Nādis {ida and pingala}

What it is	An intentional practice, this prānāyāma is also known to occur spontaneously in deep states of concentration, particularly one or the other nostril being open, depending on what is opening in terms of ida and pingala nādis.
Basic Principles	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Recommended to practice this in a seated meditation position, as appropriate to the individual.</li> <li>2) Done as a solitary practice, or <i>before or after</i> yogāsana or to prepare for meditation.</li> <li>3) This pranayama is considered safe for all people. One can emphasize the left or right side, though generally for yogic practice of meditation, contemplation and soma we would emphasize the left nādi.</li> <li>4) There are variations on the basic practice, including counting the breaths, controlling the lengths of the breath, holding the breath, not included in this handout.</li> </ol>
Effects & Purpose {pertaining to opening the LEFT}	Stimulates the parasympathetic response, Cultivates soma, through emphasizing prana on the soma side of the body. Increases relaxation, concentration and quiet mind. Increases energy, vitality and stamina. Increases oxygenation of cells. Increases mental clarity and inward-turned awareness. Increases prāna (life force), which is subtler than breath, but carried by the breath. Relaxes the whole body, and can release tension in the muscular system* throughout the whole body.
Ayurvedic Considerations	Tridoshic, but especially calming for vata and pitta dosha.
Sequencing	<p>Beneficial 1) as a solitary practice, or 2) before āsana, or 3) after āsana to prepare for meditation or to reap deeper benefits from the pranayama having prepared with more gross level opening of the body from āsana, or 4) to prepare for meditation or contemplation.</p> <p>You can do this before and after a Touchstone Practice {such as tadasana} to notice if Nādi Shodhana had an effect on the Touchstone.</p>
Contraindications	Note. Safe in all conditions if emphasizing the left nādi, including safe and recommended for pregnant Mamas.
Common Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Breathing shallowly {up in the clavicles or upper lobes of the lungs}</li> <li>- Breathing forcefully (pushing / squeezing the breath)</li> <li>- Holding the breath / controlling the breath</li> <li>- Tightening the spine / body {common to arch the waist due to wrong proprioception regarding what is “straight”}</li> </ul>

<p>How to Do Alternate Nostril Breathing</p>	<p>Teacher should always demonstrate. Show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the hand position {s}</li> <li>- the starting and ending on the left</li> <li>- the direction / sequencing of the breath – in, switch, out, in, switch, out, in... etc.</li> </ul> <p><u>Preparation</u> Prepare your comfortable, upright seated position {eg. Sukhāsana, Svastikāsana, Firm Pose, Sitting in a Chair, etc}</p> <p><u>Practice</u> {note – there are times to emphasize the right nādi, however here we are teaching the left, more appropriate for yogic purposes}</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Simply become aware of your breathing as it is, breathing through your nostrils, with your mouth closed, but relaxed.</li> <li>2. Breathe naturally, but allow the breath to soften and settle downward into the lower lobes of the lungs, both the front and back of the body.</li> <li>3. Get your hand / fingers ready, but continue breathing through both nostrils.</li> <li>4. After your next EXHALE, close your right nostril, and,</li> <li>5. Inhale through the left.</li> <li>6. Close the left nostril and,</li> <li>7. Exhale out through the right.</li> <li>8. Inhale back in through the right and,</li> <li>9. Plug your right nostril</li> <li>10. Exhale out left.</li> <li>11. Inhale back in left.</li> <li>12. Plug the left nostril</li> <li>13. Exhale out right,</li> <li>14. Inhale back in through the right and,</li> <li>15. Plug your right nostril</li> <li>16. Exhale out left.</li> </ol> <p>As they continue you can repeat a few reminders. But talk less once they are going.</p> <p><b>Repeat 9x or more</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. We will do one more round.</li> <li>18. The next time you exhale through your left nostril, remove your hands.</li> <li>19. Breathe naturally through both nostrils, letting the effects continue.</li> </ol> <p>*There are further levels of this practice, to be taught at a higher level therapeutic training, however this level is the deepest, most powerful and most important.</p>
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# Soma Ujjayi

victorious pranayama + soma cultivation

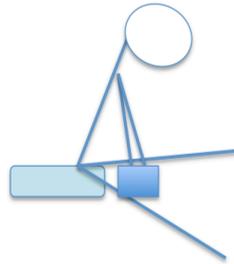
What it is	The sonorous sounding breath, <i>ujjayi</i> means “victorious” or “conquering”.
Practice Principles	<p>Done QUIETLY – without excessive throat tension – only loud enough that the practitioner can hear the sound with the inner ear, NOT so loud that others around can hear easily.</p> <p>Done in a seated position or shavasana, as a solitary practice or <i>before (never after or during) yogāsana</i> {with some exception}</p> <p>Done for the purpose of pratyahāra (inward turning of the mind and senses)</p>
Ayurvedic Considerations	These variations are tri-doshic
Sequencing	Most beneficial 1) as a solitary practice, or 2) before āsana, to deepen the effects of your practice.
Contraindications	See basic ujjayi handout
Common Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Too loud</li> <li>- Tightening neck</li> <li>- Breathing forcefully (pushing / squeezing the breath)</li> <li>- Holding the breath / controlling the breath</li> <li>- Making the ujjayi sound <i>only</i> in one direction (i.e. on the exhale), often by forcing the breath</li> </ul>

<p>How to Do</p> <p>Soham Ujjayi</p>	<p>Lying in shavasana... follow basic instructions for relaxed, quiet ujjayi pranayama. Ensure that students have..</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The proper sound</li> <li>2. Relaxed body</li> <li>3. Relatively slow paced breath</li> <li>4. Relatively smooth sound</li> <li>5. Relatively full sound</li> </ol> <p>Instructions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Now we are going bring in some new elements to deepen this practice.</li> <li>2. We will geographically direct the breath along the spine + then bring in a mantra.</li> <li>3. As you inhale, experience the breath coming in in through crown of your head and then down the length of your spine to the tip of your tailbone.</li> <li>4. As you exhale, experience the breath rising from your tailbone up the length of your spine to the crown of your head</li> <li>5. Continue like this.</li> <li>6. Inhale from the crown of your head, down your spine all the way to the tip of your tailbone</li> <li>7. Exhale from the tip of the tailbone all the way up the length of your spine to the crown of your head.</li> </ol> <p>Continue. Teacher can repeat various coaching language as needed.</p> <p>OPTIONAL Next Step Invoking the mantra</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. As you inhale in and down, repeat inwardly the silent mantra So {crown to tailbone}</li> <li>9. As you exhale up and out, repeat inwardly the silent mantra Ham {tail to crown}</li> <li>10. Inhale so into your spine, filling it with the sound all the way down</li> <li>11. Exhale ham into your spine – moving the sound up.</li> </ol>
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# Supported Kurmāsana

## MicroFlow Variations

supported tortoise pose



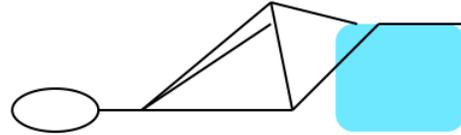
Purpose	{in addition to basic pose} Encourage the gathering, holding and flow of agni, prāna and soma through the mulādhara cakra / tailbone / sitbones / low pelvis / thighs + secondarily through the heart / anāhata cakra as well as the neck, throat / Vishuddha cakra and base of the skull.
Vedic Considerations	<p>Vata dosha will benefit from the release and opening of the seat of vata and the main vata organs (colon and mind); reduces busy mind, anxiety, restlessness, insecurity)</p> <p>Pitta types will benefit from the general effect of the forward bend.</p> <p>Kapha types benefit from the the movement + use of and strengthening of the arms as well as the opening of the back of the heart, which tend to be a blocked and boggy area for kapha.</p>
Contraindications	Knees bending, or thighbones turned outward beyond a natural turnout will indicate that this pose is not effective, and the individual should use a different pose for this region.

<p>Centerline MicroFlow Up and Down</p>	<p>Do the basic pose with the hands on block {s} BETWEEN THE LEGS, leaning in with arms straight. Stay here for a minimum of 35 seconds before moving on.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We are going to do a micro movement, coordinated with breath.</li> <li>2. Inhale to prepare, and as you exhale bend your elbows JUST A LITTLE to tip your torso down lower. This is not about how far you go, it is just to provide a micro massage of some key areas of the core of your body.</li> <li>3. Inhale, exhale, and as you inhale, straighten your elbows to return to where you began.</li> <li>4. We are going to move slowly back and forth over the area you just covered. You'll move SLOWLY a small amount, at the pace of your breath.</li> <li>5. Again, on your next exhalation, bend your elbows JUST A LITTLE to tip your torso down lower – to the same point as before.</li> <li>6. As you inhale, straighten your elbows to return to where you began.</li> <li>7. Continue to bend your elbows and tip forward as you exhale, and straighten your arms to come up as you inhale. Your head stays down.</li> <li>8. Your arms facilitate the movement. Your spine stays FREE from EFFORT.</li> <li>9. Moving slowly. Up and down, at the pace of your breathing. You are just covering the same small distance back and forth. We are massaging the tissue and bringing in prāna, warmth and nourishment.</li> <li>10. Do about 7 repetitions</li> <li>11. The next time you inhale to straighten your arms, stay there. Take another breath or two.</li> <li>12. Push yourself all the way up [neck and head up last] and notice the effects.</li> </ol>
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<p>SideLine MicroFlow Up and Down</p> <p><b>*SHOULD BE DEMONSTRATED FIRST + IDEALLY STUDENTS WILL HAVE DONE CENTERLINE MICROFLOW IN PREVIOUS CLASSES / SESSIONS.</b></p>	<p>Align in the basic pose with the hands on block {s} BETWEEN THE LEGS, leaning in with arms straight. Stay for a minimum of 35 seconds before moving on.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Now, use two blocks {one on either side of your left leg} to continue the pose with arms straight, over that leg for a few breaths. [Stay here for 15 seconds or so]</li> <li>2. We are going to do a micro movement, coordinated with breath.</li> <li>3. Inhale to prepare, and as you exhale bend your elbows JUST A LITTLE to tip your torso down lower. This is not about how far you go, it is just to provide a micro massage of some key areas of the core of your body.</li> <li>4. Inhale, exhale, and as you inhale, straighten your elbows to return to where you began.</li> <li>5. We are going to move slowly back and forth over the area you just covered. You'll move SLOWLY a small amount, at the pace of your breath.</li> <li>6. Again, on your next exhalation, bend your elbows JUST A LITTLE to tip your torso down lower – to the same point as before.</li> <li>7. As you inhale, straighten your elbows to return to where you began.</li> <li>8. Continue to bend your elbows and tip forward as you exhale, and straighten your arms to come up as you inhale. Your head stays down.</li> <li>9. Your arms facilitate the movement. Your spine stays FREE FROM EFFORT.</li> <li>10. Moving slowly. Up and down, at the pace of your breathing. You are just covering the same small distance back and forth. We are massaging the tissue and bringing in prāna, warmth and nourishment.</li> <li>11. Do about 4-7 repetitions</li> <li>12. The next time you inhale to straighten your arms, stay there. Take another breath or two.</li> <li>13. Push yourself all the way up [neck and head up last] and notice the effects.</li> </ol> <p>[Do the other side – optional to pause at the centerline in the middle to notice the differences and transition]</p>
<p>Centerline + Sidelines MicroFlow</p> <p>DEEP!</p> <p>Students should experience the previous two variations previously</p>	<p>Align in the basic pose with the hands on block {s} BETWEEN THE LEGS, leaning in with arms straight. Stay for a minimum of 35 seconds before moving on.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. With a block between the legs, do the Centerline MicroFlow about 3-7x</li> <li>2. Move to the left side and do MicroFlow there about 3-7x</li> <li>3. Move back to center and rest in forward bend, with the spine naturally rounded [do not pull or stretch forward]</li> <li>4. Move to the right side and do MicroFlow there about 3-7x</li> <li>5. Return to center and rest in forward bend, with the spine naturally rounded [do not pull or stretch forward]</li> <li>6. Push yourself up slowly, neck and head coming up last.</li> </ol>
<p>Sequencing</p>	<p><b>VERY IMPORTANT:</b></p> <p>In either order...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lunge afterwards</li> <li>2. do a backbend or backbending for the thoracic spine to counter the long forward bend {shoulder Blade pose or Jathara Parivrttanāsana for example}</li> </ol>

# Supta Ardha Apānāsana – Sacral Angle MicroFlow

supported reclined half air liberating pose – medial angle

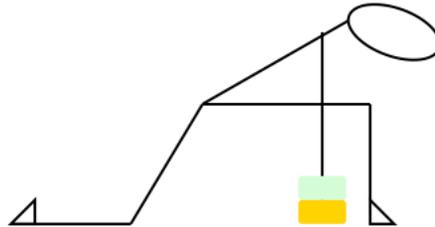


Purpose	{in addition to basic pose} Encourage the gathering, holding and flow of agni, prāna and soma through the sacral cakra region / sacrum / pelvis.
Vedic Considerations	Ayurveda – Most beneficial for vata and pitta doshas, balances the seat of vata and the main vata and pitta organs. +The Microflow increases agni, making this pose more kapha-balancing.  Vāstu – Horizontal angle – good for a restful experience. Gather + hold soma
How To	Once in the basic pose for 35 seconds <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We are going to do a micro movement, coordinated with breath.</li> <li>2. Inhale to prepare, and as you exhale use your hands and arms to bring your knee JUST A LITTLE BIT CLOSER, without losing the medial angle alignment. Your knee must continue to align toward the opposite cheekbone. It’s okay if your knee moves just a teeny bit. Maybe just a half-inch!</li> <li>3. We are going to move slowly back and forth over the area you just covered. You’ll move SLOWLY a small amount, at the pace of your breath.</li> <li>4. Again, on your next exhalation, use your hands and arms to bring your knee JUST A LITTLE BIT CLOSER again.</li> <li>5. As you inhale, relax your hands and arms so your knee moves away from your chest the same distance it just moves.</li> <li>6. Exhale your knee back in, inhale it away. Use your hands and arms to facilitate the movement.</li> <li>7. Continue in as you exhale and away as you inhale. Slow. You are just covering the same small distance back and forth. We are massaging the tissue and bringing in prāna, warmth and nourishment.</li> <li>8. The next time you exhale, stay there. Take another breath or two.</li> <li>9. Now coax / allow your knee to drift back toward the same side earlobe.</li> <li>10. [Do the next pose / the other side]</li> </ol>
Misalignments, Contraindications & Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contraindicated if there is pain in this variation, even if coached to do smaller micro movement. They can do the basic pose without MicroFlow</li> <li>- May be contraindicated for some post hip replacement</li> <li>- Watch for / coach to prevent tightening pelvis, groin, back or spine instead of using arms + gravity to facilitate the movement</li> <li>- See general problems associated with MicroFlow practices</li> </ul>

# Bala Anjaneyasana

## VARIATIONS

pose of Anjani / “mini lunge”



Purpose	<p>Counterbalance forward bends. Lengthen hip creases / “hip flexors”. Prepare for standing. Increase mental focus. Increase leg strength.</p> <p>Integrate openings of other poses into life.</p> <p><b>MicroFlow Movements</b> increase the chance of releasing the very-hard-to-reach psoas muscle and increase the integration effects of Anjaneyāsana. Here we gather, hold and digest the triad of agni / prāna / soma in an area that is highly stagnant / ridged / depleted in most people.</p>
Effects	<p><b>Anatomical:</b> Possible release of psoas muscle and lumbar region. Bearing / strengthening benefits to arms and legs. Head provides traction to the cervical vertebrae, back leg provides traction to the pelvis.</p> <p><b>Subtle:</b> <i>Manipura cakra</i>. Cultivates surrender, via a forward bend through the upper torso and neck. Cultivates a massage of muscles and abdominal organs through a gentle backbend through the lower torso / pelvis. Increases mental focus and mental strength. Improves the mood.</p>
Vedic Considerations	<p>Ayurveda – Tridoshic benefits. The bow of the head, makes this pose especially beneficial for pitta types, and the use of leg strength is beneficial for vata and kapha.</p> <p>Vāstu – Multiple angles – horizontal, diagonal and vertical, dynamic, warming and balancing pose for all elements.</p>
Contraindications	<p>Someone with knee pain / knee injury may or may NOT be the MicroFlow variations pose – try the painful side first and if they cannot do it comfortably and well aligned, choose a different pose. Someone with wrist pain can place fists on blocks instead of flat palms, or allow fingers to drape over the edge of the blocks.</p> <p>The prenatal version of this pose requires additional training.</p>

<p>Back Toes Tuck</p> <p>*The following MicroFlow variations can be done with or without the toe tuck.</p> <p>Ideally teach the toe tuck FIRST before combining it with MicroFlow</p>	<p>After being in the basic pose for 15 or more seconds...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tuck your back toes under.</li> <li>2. Relax whatever muscles you used to do that, keeping the toes tucked.</li> <li>3. This provides traction to the psoas muscle.</li> <li>4. To come out, you can keep your toes tucked, and untuck them when you are in the tabletop position on all fours.</li> </ol> <p><u>EFFECTS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Helps activate leg muscles.</li> <li>- Increases the traction to the psoas muscle, and therefore the release</li> <li>- Helps students feel the release more</li> <li>- Is a more familiar angle for yogis from other styles, so makes the pose</li> <li>- Good preparation for Cat and Cow pose</li> </ul>
<p>Micro-Flow Back and Forward</p>	<p>After being in the basic pose for 15 seconds or so...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inhale, and as you exhale, push into your hands to back your hips and torso up a few inches.</li> <li>2. As you inhale, use your arms and gravity to come forward again. JUST RETURN TO WHERE YOU STARTED. Do not lunge further forward.</li> <li>3. Inhale to come back again, covering the same ground.</li> <li>4. Exhale to move forward.</li> <li>5. You are just moving a few inches. Move slow, coordinating the breath with the movement.</li> </ol> <p>Go back and forward 3-5 times, then switch sides.</p> <p><u>EFFECTS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Massaging and releasing the psoas muscle</li> <li>- strengthening the legs and arms</li> <li>- bringing awareness to the psoas.</li> </ul>
<p>Micro-Flow Side to Side</p>	<p>[script is with the left leg forward]</p> <p>After being in the basic pose for 15 seconds or so...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Widen your blocks SLIGHTLY</li> <li>2. Inhale to prepare, then as you exhale, push into your right hand, to lean left {the weight in your left hand will increase}</li> <li>3. As you exhale, press into your left hand to lean right.</li> <li>4. This is a small movement. Continue side to side. Exhale left {toward side of the front leg}, inhale right {toward side of the back leg}</li> <li>5. This is a micro movement. Cover the same ground side-to-side, movement at the pace of your breath.</li> <li>6. Allow the movement to cause a sort of serpentine or billowing effect through your spine.</li> <li>7. Inhale to come back again, covering the same ground.</li> </ol> <p>Go side to side 3-5 times, then switch sides.</p>

<p>Micro-Flow Head and Heart</p>	<p>Always demonstrate this!</p> <p>After being in the basic pose for 15 seconds or so...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inhale to prepare, still preparing as you exhale, now as you inhale, slowly raise your neck and head, like a serpent.</li> <li>2. As you exhale, slowly lower your neck and head all the way.</li> <li>3. Inhale, letting the movement instigate from behind your heart, and bring your head up an inch less than before.</li> <li>4. As you exhale, slowly lower your neck and head all the way.</li> <li>5. Inhale, letting the movement instigate from behind your heart, and bring your head up an inch less than before.</li> <li>6. As you exhale, slowly lower your neck and head all the way.</li> <li>7. Continue, moving at the pace of your breath. Each time you inhale up, come up one inch less than last time, as you exhale, lower all the way.</li> <li>8. This means, each breath, the distance you are covering is LESS. So the movement gets SLOWER</li> </ol> <p>[you may need to demonstrate this]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Do this 4-7 times.</li> <li>10. Allow the movement to cause a sort of serpentine or billowing effect through your upper spine.</li> <li>11. End with head down and then come out.</li> <li>12. Sit up for a few moments before switching sides {otherwise the neck can get fatigued}</li> </ol> <p><u>EFFECTS</u></p> <p>Massaging and releasing the UPPER spine {thoracic through the neck}. They may notice their head hanging lower and lower. Like scratching an “itch” in the vertebrae behind the heart. The upper spinal openings will “trickle down” and cause more release to the region of the psoas muscle, so they may find their hips lowering down toward the floor during this variation as well.</p>
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# Vidalāsana

cat and cow vinyasa + *MicroFlow* Variations



Purpose	Massage the spine, energize body and mind, hypnotic effect on the mind, reduce stagnation. Easily accessible pose to most students, yet deep in its effects!
Effects	<p><b>Anatomical:</b> Massage and “warming” the whole spine; increased circulation through the torso - including internal organs, abdominal muscles, intercostal muscles, back muscles, etc; improves wrist health; weight bearing benefits (improves bone density); release of tension in “frozen” areas (behind the heart and through the pelvis).</p> <p><b>Subtle:</b> Enlivening; focuses and calms the mind at the same time; improves mood</p>
Vedic Considerations	<p>Ayurveda – Tridoshic benefits, especially beneficial to kapha dosha because of the back bending quality and the rhythmic movement. Beneficial to vata because the coordinated movement with breath quiets the mind.</p> <p>Vāstu – Multiple angles / balancing pose for all elements.</p>
Contra-indications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One with knee pain / injury may have discomfort – they can spread an extra mat or blanket out underneath their WHOLE body (feet, knees, palms)</li> <li>- Someone with wrist pain can use fists (not blocks), however leaning into their palms, while uncomfortable can be very beneficial.</li> <li>- Someone with a lumbar spine injury or neck injury should be VERY careful in Cow Pose not to overarch the waist or neck. <u>THEY CAN DO A NEUTRAL / TABLE TOP position here instead of an arching.</u> Coach them to get other (frozen) parts of the spine (sacrum and ribcage) moving and not to move excessively in the waist or neck.</li> <li>- During the third trimester of pregnancy this pose is not advised, as the weight of the belly can pull mom’s lumbar area into an overstretch in Cow pose and hurt her back.</li> </ul>
Sequencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cat and Cow pose is appropriate at any point in your practice <i>except</i> after deep backbends (because there will be a risk of over-arching through the lumbar)</li> <li>- This movement is especially beneficial sequenced in any of the following ways:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- at the beginning of your practice to warm up the spine</li> <li>- at the end of your practice to bask in spread openings through the whole spine</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Cat and Cow pose can also be done on it’s own, as a solitary practice.</li> <li>- After Cat &amp; Cow, it is important to do a forward bend: Child’s Pose, Reclined Child’s Pose or Curled up on Side with knees hiked up</li> <li>- It can be beneficial to sequence a spinal twist before or after Cat &amp; Cow pose to deepen the benefits.</li> </ul>

How To	<p><u>Preparation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Start on your hands (palms) and knees in a table-top position, with knees aligned under hips and wrists aligned under shoulders</li> <li>- Tuck your toes under (toenails should not be on the floor)... this will enable the use of leg muscles and the lengthening of the spine.</li> <li>- Spread your fingers wide and straighten elbows</li> </ul> <p><u>CAT</u></p> <p>Move into “Cat Pose” – round your whole spine toward the ceiling, starting at the tailbone...tip your tailbone down, then let the “rounding” move upward ... rounding through your sacrum.. waist... ribs.. and let your neck and head soften downward... your head provides traction to your upper spine.</p> <p><i>... now begin moving into COW</i></p> <p><u>COW</u></p> <p>Move into “Cow Pose” – begin at your tailbone, point your tail up toward the ceiling and let an arching climb the length of your spine – through your sacrum... your waist... your ribs... between your shoulder blades... and gentle bring your neck and head up, so you are softly gazing straight ahead.</p> <p><i>... now begin moving into CAT</i></p> <p><b>Repeat movement from Cat to Cow several times...</b></p> <p><b><i>Optional Approaches</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Move at the pace of your breathing – <i>exhaling into Cat Pose</i> (rounded spine) and <i>inhaling into Cow Pose</i> (arched spine)</li> </ul> <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Move extra slowly, vertebrae-by-vertebrae, going especially slowly through the “frozen” areas that don’t seem to get as much movement... bring extra awareness to the tight areas.</li> </ul> <p><u>Completion</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. End in Cat pose (with your spine ROUNDED toward the ceiling)</li> <li>2. Untuck toes, walk knees and feet together, and move in to Childs Pose for a few breaths, softening your back, belly, arms and legs.</li> </ol>
Propping	<p><b>No propping in general</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If there is knee pain, one put the knees in the holes of gardening knee pads (one under each knee, even if the pain is only in one knee) OR spread one or more blankets or a yoga mat under the whole body so that the knees are cushioned but the palms, knees and feet are at the same level (in other words do not only cushion under the knees unless using gardening knee pads)</li> </ul>
Alignments & Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wrists beneath shoulders – go around the room and check this, as this is difficult for students to feel / see in their own bodies.</li> <li>- Knees beneath hips – go around the room and check this, as this is difficult for students to feel / see in their own bodies. Check this again after they begin moving, as they can start to unknowingly rock their hips forward or back which will be unstable and also reduce the movement they get through the spine.</li> </ul>

<p><i>MicroFlow</i> Side to Side In Cat</p>	<p>BEST to demonstrate this variation before they do Cat-Cow Pose</p> <p>Having moved back and forth from Cat to Cow 2 or more times, end in Cat Pose and....</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue pressing firmly into your hands, knees and toes, and even drawing your navel inward partway toward your spine... all this maintains your spine in a rounded position.</li> <li>2. Inhale to prepare and, as you exhale slowly lean to the right, leaning more weight into your into your right limbs.</li> <li>3. As you inhale, slowly lean to the midline, through the midline and then into your left limbs.</li> <li>4. Continue like this, moving slowly, side to side at the pace of your breath.</li> <li>5. Inhale to lean left, and exhale to lean right.</li> <li>6. Keep pressing firmly into your toes, knees, and hands. Keep your navel drawn in halfway.</li> <li>7. This is a micro movement. You just move a short distance, at the slow pace of your breath</li> <li>8. This will encourage a soothing, subtle massaging serpentine effect through</li> </ol> <p>[repeat 3-7 times]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. The next time you are in the middle, stop here.</li> <li>10. Untuck your toes, and walk your knees and feet together, bring your hips down and back into child's pose.</li> </ol>
<p>Slow Lean Back In Cat</p>	<p>BEST to demonstrate this variation before they do Cat-Cow Pose</p> <p>Having moved back and forth from Cat to Cow 2 or more times, end in Cat Pose and....</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue pressing firmly into your hands, knees and toes, and even drawing your navel inward partway toward your spine... all this maintains your spine in a rounded position.</li> <li>2. Inhale to prepare and, as you exhale slowly start to sink your hips down and back toward your heels.</li> <li>3. Stop when you reach a sticky, achy, numb or interesting area.</li> <li>4. Stay here, with easy breathing.</li> <li>5. This will encourage a soothing rounding release into a tight area that needs attention and circulation.</li> <li>6. Stay here, easy breathing, being aware of the sensations in the back, front and center of your body.</li> </ol> <p>[15-20 seconds or so]</p> <p>Untuck your toes, and walk your knees and feet together, bring your hips down and back into child's pose.</p>

# Paschimottanāsana

## Opening of the Back of the Body



Purpose	Massage the spine, calms body and mind, hypnotic effect on the mind, cultivates deep inner surrender of the mind and body.
Effects	<p><b>Anatomical:</b> Improves overall mental and physical health and wellbeing. Massages the whole spine; increased circulation and awareness through the back of the torso; compresses / massages the internal organs; release of tension in “frozen” areas (behind the heart and through the pelvis).</p> <p><b>Subtle:</b> Reverses tendencies toward over-effort, striving. Cooling, calming, cultivates soma, calms heat and excess agni or excess desire and pursuit. Calms the mind; increases balanced calm energy; Increases and balances and enlivens soma, increases awareness, slows the mind down by slowing the body down.</p>
Vedic Considerations	Forward bend especially beneficial to pitta Opening the back of the heart great for pitta and kapha Moving slowly balances pitta and vāta
Contraindication	Pregnant students – will need to stop when belly / breasts are in the way or breathing is labored {3 <sup>rd</sup> trimester}.
Sequencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Beneficial and blissful to do a seated simple spinal twist or blades pose after this pose, followed by contemplation / meditation.</li> <li>- Please do <i>Anjeneyāsana</i> within 1-3 poses after practicing this pose.</li> <li>- Prior to this pose, you can do nothing, or a pass up the whole spine, or anything!</li> </ul> <p>NOTES: Makes a great <i>Touchstone</i> practice.</p>

Demonstration	<p>Must demonstrate this pose. Show:</p> <p>Moving down:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not efforting / pulling / stretching</li> <li>- Moving slowly</li> <li>- Turning palms toward ceiling in <i>sharanāgati mudra</i></li> <li>- Spine rounding</li> </ul> <p>Moving up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Moving slowly</li> <li>- Palms DOWN</li> <li>- Using hands / arms on blocks or upper thighs {not knees}</li> <li>- Moving from the tailbone up the spine.</li> <li>- Rolling neck and head up slowly [they can go faster though if it is very painful or uncomfortable!]</li> </ul>
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<p>How To</p>	<p><u>Preparation</u>  Start seated on 1-3 or 4 blankets. Extend your legs forward, heels touching or close. Legs relaxed.  Sit High enough that knees are not bending.  If you have hyper extending knees, please prop behind your thighs to support.  Optional – have a block on either side of your legs, to help with coming up.</p> <p><u>Moving Down</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sit with your spine upright but relaxed. Lean into your seat, breath naturally.</li> <li>2. Inhale to prepare, and as you exhale soften your neck and head downward but keep your shoulders upright</li> <li>3. Inhale again and as you exhale, let your shoulders soften downward, and let go more vertebrae in the upper spine.</li> <li>4. Inhale and pause, and as you exhale soften downward another segment of your spine.</li> <li>5. Continue. Pause as you inhale, and let go downward as you exhale.</li> <li>6. You can turn your palms up toward the ceiling in a hand mudra of letting go</li> <li>7. Rest when you have softened forward and downward as low as you go in this moment.</li> </ol> <p><u>Rolling Up</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Turn your palms down onto the blocks or your upper thighs near your hips.</li> <li>9. Start rolling up, one vertebrae at a time, from your tailbone up.</li> <li>10. You do not need to coordinate your breath with the rolling up.</li> <li>11. Move slowly, awarefully, being aware of each vertebrae as best you can.</li> <li>12. Let the slow movement draw your mind inward, blissfully, even if your body is imperfect.</li> <li>13. Keep rolling up slowly by pressing into your hands. Let your arms facilitate the movement up so your spine stays relaxed.</li> <li>14. Move at your own pace. You decide.</li> <li>15. Once you reach your upper spine you can use back muscles.</li> <li>16. Roll each vertebrae of your neck up individually, if you can.</li> <li>17. Your head sits atop your spine last.</li> </ol> <p><u>Marinating</u>  When you come up, you can sit in a cross-legged position and let the effects continue for you.</p> <p>Teacher: Great to do Shoulder Blade Pose, or a seated twist after and sit quietly or with a contemplation. Do Anjaneyasana within 2 poses to counterbalance and to integrate the effects.</p>
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<p>Rolling up with So'ham</p> <p>Experienced</p>	<p>Add to Rolling up!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Roll up, two vertebrae silently inhaling in the inner sound “so”.</li> <li>2. Roll back down one vertebra, silently exhaling out the inner sound ‘ham’</li> <li>3. Continue this all the way up. Inhaling in the silent inner sound “so’ as you roll up two vertebrae, breathing that sound right into the vertebrae.</li> <li>4. Exhaling out the silent inner sound ‘ham’ as you roll back down one vertebra.</li> </ol> <p>Effect</p> <p>Helps bring awareness to cultivating the Soma, and digesting it with Agni. Slows down the movement and increases all of the benefits of the basic pose.</p>
<p>Propping</p>	<p><b>Seated on 1-4 blankets.</b> <b>More than this, and they really can't practice this āsana.</b></p>
<p>Alignments &amp; Problems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knees bending {increase blankets under butt, to no more than 4}</li> <li>- Thighs turned outward extremely</li> <li>- Pulling forward / stretching / trying to keep the back straight</li> <li>- Efforting</li> <li>- Knees hyperextending {prop beneath thighs}</li> </ul>

## Ardha Parivṛta Paschimottanāsana

### Half Twisted Opening of the Back of the Body



Purpose	Massage the spine, calms body and mind, hypnotic effect on the mind, cultivates deep inner surrender of the mind and body, opens ida and pingala nadi {soma / surya nadis}
Vedic	Tridoshic
Contraindication	NOT APPROPRIATE FOR PREGNANT STUDENTS DUE TO THE TWISTING OF THE BELLY~
Sequencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Beneficial and blissful to do a shoulder blades pose after this pose, followed by contemplation / meditation.</li> <li>- Please do <i>Anjeneyāsana</i> within 1-3 poses after practicing this pose.</li> <li>- Prior to this pose, you can do nothing, or a pass up the whole spine, or anything!</li> </ul>

<p>How To</p>	<p>Ideally before practicing this pose, in previous classes or sessions they would have experienced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Paschimottanāsana, basic pose</li> <li>- Seated Spinal Twists, such as Parivrtta Sukhāsana</li> </ul> <p><u>Must demonstrate this pose. Show them:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Must bend the elbows / using the arms to twist</li> <li>- All the three movements moving in and out – twisting, leaning to the side and the forward bend.</li> <li>- Using the arms to roll up.</li> <li>- Rolling up from tailbone upward</li> </ul> <p><u>Preparation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start seated on 1-3 or 4 blankets in a cross-legged position. Prop under your right knee.</li> <li>• Extend your left leg out at an angle, so that inner thigh aligns with the sole of the other foot. They don't need to touch, just be aligned.</li> <li>• Legs relaxed.</li> <li>• Sit High enough that the extended leg's knee is not bending.</li> <li>• If your knee hyper extends, prop behind that thighs to support.</li> <li>• RECOMMENDED – have a block on either side of your extended, to help with coming up.</li> </ul> <p><u>Moving Down</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sit with your spine upright but relaxed. Lean into your seat, breath naturally.</li> <li>2. Place your left fist behind you on your blankets and press downward into it to lengthen your spine a bit</li> <li>3. Place your right hand on the outside of your left thigh. Remember, when you use your arms to twist, your elbows <b>MUST BEND!</b></li> </ol> <p>4. <b>FIRST TWIST + BEND!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inhale to prepare, and as you exhale, use both arms to twist to your left.</li> <li>- Inhale again and as you exhale, let your torso soften downward over that extended leg, sliding your right hand down the leg, and bringing the back arm forward, putting that left hand or fist on the floor or a block.</li> </ul> <p>5. <b>SECOND TWIST + BEND!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inhale to prepare, and as you exhale, use both arms to help you twist to your left further.</li> <li>- Inhale again and as you exhale, let your torso soften downward more over that extended leg, sliding your right hand down the leg.</li> </ul> <p>6. <b>THIRD TWIST + BEND!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inhale to prepare, and as you exhale, use both arms to help you twist to your left further.</li> <li>- Inhale again and as you exhale, let your torso soften downward more over that extended leg, sliding your right hand down the leg or even around the outside of your foot.</li> </ul>
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	<p><b>7. RESTING / PAUSING</b>  Pause here, relaxing, palms up in sharanāgati mudra.</p> <p><u>Rolling Up</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Turn your palms down onto the blocks or floor on either side of your leg, with elbows bent.</li> <li>2. Start rolling up, one vertebrae at a time, from your tailbone up.</li> <li>3. Remember, to come down, you twisted, tipped forward, and leaned over to the side over the leg. So to come up each vertebrae must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UNTWIST</li> <li>- ROLL UP</li> <li>- COME BACK TO CENTER</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. These three movements might happen all at the same time, or not.</li> <li>5. Don't over think it or force the process, but do be aware of it, and move slowly to allow this natural unwinding to happen.</li> <li>6. You do not need to coordinate your breath with the rolling up.</li> <li>7. Move slowly, awarefully, being aware of each vertebrae as best you can.</li> <li>8. Let the slow movement draw your mind inward, blissfully, even if your body is imperfect.</li> <li>9. Back your hands up toward your upper thigh if needed.</li> <li>10. Keep rolling up slowly by pressing into your hands. Let your arms facilitate the movement up so your spine stays relaxed.</li> <li>11. Move at your own pace. You decide.</li> <li>12. Once you reach your upper spine you can use back muscles.</li> <li>13. Roll each vertebrae of your neck up individually, if you can.</li> <li>14. Your head sits atop your spine last.</li> <li>15. Bring the extended leg in to sit cross-legged again.</li> <li>16. Do the other side</li> </ol> <p>Teacher – good to ask for questions between the two sides.</p> <p><u>Marinating</u>  When you come up, you can sit in a cross-legged position and let the effects continue for you.</p> <p>Teacher: Great to do Shoulder Blade Pose and sit quietly or with a contemplation. Do Anjaneyasana within 2 poses to counterbalance and to integrate the effects.</p>
Propping	<p><b>Seated on 1-4 blankets.</b>  <b>More than this, and they really can't practice this āsana.</b></p>
Alignments & Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knees bending {increase blankets under butt, to no more than 4}</li> <li>- Thighs turned outward extremely</li> <li>- Pulling forward / stretching / trying to keep the back straight</li> <li>- Efforting</li> <li>- Knees hyperextending {prop beneath thighs}</li> </ul>



## Soma Flow / So'ham Flow



Purpose	Massage the spine, energize body and mind, hypnotic effect on the mind, reduce stagnation.
Effects	<p><b>Anatomical:</b></p> <p>Improves overall mental and physical health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Massage and “warming” the whole spine; increased circulation through the torso - including internal organs, abdominal muscles, intercostal muscles, back muscles, improves bone density; release of tension in “frozen” areas (behind the heart and through the pelvis). Strengthen the legs, arms, wrists, and abdominal muscles.</p> <p><b>Subtle:</b> Enlivening; focuses and calms the mind at the same time; improves mood; increases balanced calm energy; resolves lethargy and heaviness; resolves weakness; resolves busy mind. Increases and balances and enlivens soma, agni, prāna through awareness, dynamic movement, breath.</p> <p>Collecting nourishment, life force and the ability to digest both.</p>
Vedic Considerations	<p>Ayurveda – Tridoshic benefits, especially beneficial to kapha dosha because of the back bending quality and the rhythmic movement coordinated with breath. Beneficial to vata because the coordinated movement with breath quiets the mind. Helps pitta due to pitta’s desire to move and accomplish, but does so in a sattvic way!</p> <p>Vāstu – Multiple angles / balancing pose for all elements.</p> <p>Soma is nourishing you with every inhale. It is the flow of grace, <b>moving in and down</b> and nourishing your spine and whole being. You are being <b>BREATHED</b> by the universe. The universe is blowing life force and</p>

	<p>nourishment IN to you as you inhale from the top of the spine down to the tailbone.</p> <p>Agni is warming you with every exhale. It is the fire of transformation, <b>moving up and out</b>, opening and purifying your spine. You are breathing back out into cosmic nature with every exhale, letting go upward and outward!</p>
Contraindication	<p>- Knee pain, wrist pain, or back pain or overall discomfort or inability will prohibit this pose. Return to Cat / Cow pose and Anjaneyāsana to develop readiness for this.</p> <p>- Someone with a lumber spine injury or pain in particular should avoid.</p> <p>- During the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> third trimester of pregnancy this pose is not advised, as the weight of the belly can pull mom’s lumbar area into an overstretch in the backbending portion and be in the way in the child’s pose portion.</p>
Sequencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Please do Anjaneyāsana prior to practicing this pose.</li> <li>- Along with Anjaneyāsana, this practice can be done anytime – at the beginning, middle, end of a practice or as a solitary practice on it’s own.</li> </ul> <p>NOTES:</p>
Demonstration	<p><u>Demonstrate this pose!</u></p> <p>Move slow and show them all the segments of the pose:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Childs pose</li> <li>2. Cat pose</li> <li>3. Updog</li> <li>4. Cow pose</li> <li>5. Child’s pose</li> </ol> <p>Talk about using the ARMS AND LEGS to facilitate the movement and the abs to support the spine from overarching or strain.</p> <p>Talk about the movement being in the spine / vertebrae and moving from tailbone up the spine.</p> <p>Show them the inhale on the moving forward, and exhale moving back.</p> <p>Show them a natural pause in updog at the end of the inhale and child’s</p>

	<p>pose at the end of the exhale.</p> <p>Show them that moving faster is EASIER and more beneficial here than going to slow, but that they must maintain the integrity of the pose.</p> <p>If teaching with so'ham, show them the sound, by pronouncing it aloud, though they will practice the mantra silently within.</p>
<p>Soma Flow Basic</p>	<p><u>Begin with Anjaneyāsana!</u></p> <p><u>Preparation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Start in <b>Child's pose</b> with arms outstretched, fingers wide, middle finger {the Saturn finger} pointing straight ahead. Your elbows will NOT be on the floor, because they are STRAIGHT. Take a few breaths here.</li> </ul> <p><i>As you give instructions, you may need to rearrange these depending on where students are in the pose, moment to moment.  You won't be able to get all the words in necessarily. These are for you to use according to your discretion. The more experienced the student, the easier this will come!</i></p> <p><u>Moving in:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As you inhale, press into your lower legs and the tops of your feet to come up to all fours with your spine ROUNDED.</li> <li>2. You are in <b>cat pose</b>! [press into your legs and arms and pull navel in halfway]</li> <li>3. Still inhaling, Continue moving forward, letting your hips naturally sink downward, and an arching CLIMBS your spine from tail to top. Bring your neck and head up last.</li> <li>4. You are in <b>up dog</b>! Gaze straight ahead. Navel in halfway!</li> <li>5. Keep your head up, and start moving back now, leading with your tail.</li> <li>6. An arch climbs your spine as you move back toward <b>Cow Pose</b> position.</li> <li>7. Continue moving through. Keep your head up as your tail starts to round down toward your heels. Your whole spine will round now as you move back toward <b>Child's pose</b>, bringing your head down last!</li> <li>8. Continue, keeping the integrity of the movement. Inhaling to come forward through cat pose and into up dog. Exale to move back through cow pose and back to child's pose.</li> <li>9. There will be a natural pause at the end of the inhale in updog and at the end of the exhale in child's pose</li> <li>10. As you move, it's important to the ARMS AND LEGS to facilitate the movement and the abs to support the spine from overarching or strain.</li> </ol> <p>Note! If your knees start to widen as you move, you can move them back together when you are in the TABLE TOP position {cat pose}.</p> <p>Note! The first few rounds you may have to extend your hands and arms a</p>

	<p>little more forward in Updog. KEEP THEM THERE. Do NOT slide your hands back and forth as you move, keep them <i>sthira</i>!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Let your breath support the movement. Let it flow, naturally. Let your spine be massaged by the movement. Let prāna move you. If you move a little faster, it will come more naturally!</li> <li>12. Inhale to move forward and exhale back!</li> </ol> <p><u>Completion</u> End in Childs pose. Continue breathing easily. Let the effects continue.</p> <p>Can follow with Anjaneyāsana, or other poses, or complete here.</p>
<p>SomaFlow With Breath Visualization</p> <p>Experienced</p> <p>Can be done with natural breath OR ujjayi</p>	<p>Do this practice with awareness of directing the breath.</p> <p>Upon inhaling and moving forward, visualize the breath coming in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In through the crown of the head</li> <li>2. All the way down the spine to the tip of the tailbone</li> </ol> <p>Upon exhaling and moving back, visualize the breath moving out:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. From your tailbone</li> <li>2. Up the whole spine all the way to the crown of the head</li> </ol> <p>Repeat: Inhale as you move back, visualizing the breath and moon like nectar flowing in and down [from head to tail] your whole spine.</p> <p>Exhale as you move forward, visualizing the breath and fire of transformation rising up your spine [from tail to head].</p> <p><b>[optional to do the above with ujjayi sound]</b></p> <p><b>Note – if using ujjayi sound</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Only then do this practice at the BEGNINING of your yoga session, or as it’s own practice.</li> <li>2. pump the movement MORE vigorously along with the breath and let the ujjayi sound be louder than it would be in shavāsana</li> <li>3. Continue the ujjayi for a few breaths in garbhasana afterwards</li> </ol>
<p>SomaFlow With So’ham Mantra</p>	<p><i>Students have practiced previously:</i></p> <p><i>Cat Cow</i></p>

<p>More experienced!</p> <p>Can be done with natural breath OR ujjayi</p>	<p><i>So'ham breathing or meditation</i></p> <p><i>Soma Flow Basic</i></p> <p><i>Soma Flow with Breath Visualization</i></p> <p>With above visualization, now bring in the so'ham mantra. So increases the nectar of rejuvenation and ham increases the fire of transformation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As you move up and forward, inhale in the awareness of the sound So {which represents soma}</li> <li>2. As you exhale back and down, exhale out the awareness of the sound Ham {which represents agni}</li> <li>3. Continue with this. Inhale forward, So; Exhale back, Ham</li> </ol> <p><b>[optional to do the above with ujjayi sound]</b></p> <p><b>Note – if using ujjayi sound</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Only then do this practice at the BEGNINING of your yoga session, or as it's own practice.</li> <li>5. pump the movement MORE vigorously along with the breath and let the ujjayi sound be louder than it would be in shavāsana</li> <li>6. Continue the ujjayi for a few breaths in garbhasana afterwards</li> </ol>
<p>Propping</p>	<p><b>No propping in general</b></p>
<p>Alignments &amp; Problems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hands sliding</li> <li>- Shoulders ahead of wrists in updog {they must move the hands forward and bring the navel in halfway}... if they move their hands forward, they must KEEP THEM THERE [see above, no hands sliding]</li> <li>- Lumbar over arching / unsupported – they must use abdominals – navel in halfway.</li> <li>- Knees spreading apart – they bring them together when they are in cat or cow {not in updog or childs pose}</li> <li>- Head moving up or down too soon! Coach them.</li> <li>- Tight areas of spine not moving – coach them or touch the areas that are not moving {heart and sacrum in particular}</li> <li>- Generally losing the integrity of the movement – they are often too tight, moving too slow or overthinking!</li> </ul>

# Mahā Mudrā

The Great Seal



Purpose	<p>A full body mudra, which stamps / seals / locks one into a deep state of stillness of body, mind and subtle energy flow due to the effect on the peripheral nādis {ida and piṅgala}. Has a profoundly meditative effect on the mind.</p> <p>Quiets the mind. Drops one into meditation. Great preparation for meditation. Great to open the left and right sides of the bodies, increase left / right balance {of body, brain and nādis}. A profound pose. Yet accessible to most students.</p>
Vedic	<p><i>“[with Mahā Mudrā], even the most unfortunate Yogī might obtain success. By this means all the vessels of the body are roused and stirred into activity, the life is increased and its decay is checked and all sins are destroyed. All diseases are healed, and the gastric fire is increased. It gives faultless beauty to the body and destroys decay and death. All fruits of desires and pleasures are obtained and the senses are conquered. The Yogī fixed in meditation acquires the above mentioned things through practice” – Shiva Samhita</i></p>
Contraindication	<p>NOT APPROPRIATE FOR PREGNANT STUDENTS</p> <p>NOT APPROPRIATE FOR NEW STUDENTS</p> <p><i>“Know this Mudrā is to be kept secret with the greatest care... it should be practiced in private and ought never to be given to everybody.” – Shiva Samhita</i></p>
Sequencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Beneficial and blissful to do a shoulder blades pose after this pose, followed by contemplation / meditation.</li> <li>- Please do <i>Anjeneyāsana</i> within 1-3 poses after practicing this pose, for integration and stabilization.</li> <li>- Prior to this pose, you can do nothing, or a pass up the whole spine, or anything!</li> </ul>

<p>How To</p>	<p>Ideally, in previous classes or sessions they would have experienced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Paschimottanasana, basic pose</li> <li>- Seated Spinal Twists, such as Parivrtta Sukhāsana</li> <li>- Ardha Parivrtta Paschimottanasana</li> </ul> <p>In addition, these are related and supportive preparation for or compliments to the Mahā Mudra:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nādi Shodhana [alternate nostril breathing]</li> <li>- Chin Mudra or other hand mudras</li> <li>- Svastikāsana</li> <li>- Viparīta Karāni Mudra</li> </ul> <p><u>Must demonstrate this pose. Show them:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They must bend the elbows / using the arms to twist</li> <li>- All the three movements moving in and out – twisting, leaning to the side and the forward bend.</li> <li>- How to come up</li> <li>- Getting the strap in place</li> <li>- How to back up until the spine feels straight-ish</li> </ul> <p><u>Preparation – same as Ardha Parivrtta Paschimottanasana</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HAVE A STRAP WITHIN YOUR REACH, FOLDED IN HALF</li> <li>• Start seated on 1-3 or 4 blankets in a cross-legged position. Prop under your right knee.</li> <li>• Extend your left leg out at an angle, so that inner thigh aligns with the sole of the other foot. They don't need to touch, just be aligned.</li> <li>• Legs relaxed.</li> <li>• Sit High enough that the extended leg's knee is not bending.</li> <li>• If your knee hyper extends, prop behind that thighs to support.</li> <li>• RECOMMENDED – have a block on either side of your extended, to help with coming up.</li> </ul> <p><u>Moving Down– same as Ardha Parivrtta Paschimottanasana</u>  <u>ALWAYS START WITH THE LEFT LEG EXTENDED FIRST</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sit with your spine upright but relaxed. Lean into your seat, breath naturally.</li> <li>2. Place your left fist behind you on your blankets and press downward into it to lengthen your spine a bit</li> <li>3. Place your right hand on the outside of your left thigh. Remember, when you use your arms to twist, your elbows MUST BEND!</li> </ol> <p><b>4. FIRST TWIST + BEND!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inhale to prepare, and as you exhale, use both arms to twist to your left.</li> <li>- Inhale again and as you exhale, let your torso soften downward over that extended leg, sliding your right hand down the leg, and bringing the back arm forward, putting that left hand or fist on the floor or a block.</li> </ul>
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### 5. SECOND TWIST + BEND!

- Inhale to prepare, and as you exhale, use both arms to help you twist to your left further.
- Inhale again and as you exhale, let your torso soften downward more over that extended leg, sliding your right hand down the leg.

### 6. THIRD TWIST + BEND!

- Inhale to prepare, and as you exhale, use both arms to help you twist to your left further.
- Inhale again and as you exhale, let your torso soften downward more over that extended leg, sliding your right hand down the leg or even around the outside of your foot.

### 7. RESTING / PAUSING

Pause here, relaxing, palms up in sharanāgati mudra.

#### Moving into the Mudra

1. Turn your palms down onto the blocks or floor on either side of your leg, with elbows bent.
2. Push into the floor, to straighten your elbows
3. Tip your chin down, and back your neck and head up {double chin style} to align your neck with your spine.
4. Gaze at your toes
5. Bring your navel in at half strength toward your spine to support your low back as you let go of the floor and get your strap
6. Wrap your strap a FULL loop around your toe BALL JOINTS. Hold one side of the strap in either hand
7. Your elbows are straight, with hands as low down on the straps as can reach.
8. Keep your navel in at half strength. Gaze at your toes
9. Now, start back up your low back, mid back, upper back until you are straight. your elbows straight, your hands sliding back along the straps, until your back feels straightish.
10. I'LL BE COMING TO CHECK AND LET YOU KNOW IF YOU NEED TO BACK UP MORE

Teacher – check! Many students need to back up significantly the first time.

11. Abide here.
12. You can gaze at your toes, or close your eyes and have an inner gaze
13. Allow the mudra to have an effect. Even if your body or the pose is imperfect, this mudra has a direct effect on the subtle level. It works.
14. See if you feel held by the mudra, or locked in, or drawn inward.
15. You can stay as long as you like.
16. When you feel complete on this side, simply sit up. Let go of the strap. Bring your extended leg in. In a crossed legged position let the effects continue.

	<p><u>Marinating</u> When you come up, cross legged and let the effects continue for you.</p> <p><u>Other side</u> Teacher – good to ask for questions between the two sides. Now do the right side.</p> <p><u>Marinating</u> Take time after both sides. The effect is deep. You can do blade with little instruction as possible. Then do a contemplation or meditation or silence, for a minute or two.</p> <p>Do Anjaneyasana within 2 poses to counterbalance and to integrate the effects.</p>
Propping	<p>Seated on 1-4 blankets. More than this, and they really can't practice this mudra</p>
Alignments & Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knees bending {increase blankets under butt, to no more than 4}</li> <li>- Thighs turned outward extremely</li> <li>- Pulling forward / stretching / trying to keep the back straight; Efforting</li> <li>- Knees hyperextending {prop beneath thighs}</li> <li>- Back not backed up enough {too far in a forward bend}</li> <li>- Neck arched or dipping down.</li> <li>- Elbows bent while holding the strap, instead of arms straight</li> </ul>