

## Patanjali

Once upon a time, Ananta the thousand headed king of the serpents was blessed by a vision of Lord Shiva. He immediately acquired a great aspiration to become a yogi and to teach Yoga to humanity. He asked Lord Vishnu and was granted a boon to incarnate on earth. It is said that he fell (pat) into the palms (anjali) of a virtuous woman called Gonika and manifested as her son. She called him Patanjali.

According to Indian Tradition, the sage Patanjali was a famous grammarian who wrote a learned commentary on Panini's tome of Sanskrit Grammar ( Ashta-Adhyayi or Eight Lessons), and lived around 2nd Century BC.

Patanjali is more remembered and revered for his summary of a particular Yoga Path in his work Yoga Darshana which is popularly called the Yoga Sutras. This is a compilation and systemization of a philosophy of Yoga which was heretofore kept hidden. From this work onwards, Yoga was seen to have a solid philosophical base and competed with other schools of philosophy. In this respect, a word of caution is in order — philosophy in the Indian context always denoted a course of action and a way of life, rather than a purely academic pursuit as it has become in the West.

According to Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras:

*When the fluctuations in the mind-stuff are completely restricted, then the state of Yoga is attained.*

*Pada 1, sutra 2*

*Posture is that which is steady, stable and firm as well as easy and pleasant.*

*Pada 2, sutra 46*

*Postures are important for releasing tension, producing relaxation and a favorable physical environment for mind to identify with the Universal Consciousness.*

*Pada 2, sutra 47*

Posture 6

## Bow Pose

Benefits:

Energetic: stimulates navel center

Mental / Spiritual: self-control

Physical: strengthening of digestive system

Therapeutic: diabetes; gastrointestinal disorders; menstrual disorders; obesity

**Avoid this posture: high blood pressure; heart disease; colitis; peptic or duodenal ulcers**

**Affirmation used during holding phase: My energies and emotions are completely under control**

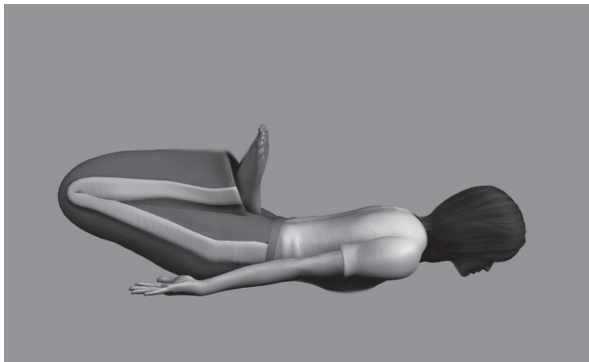
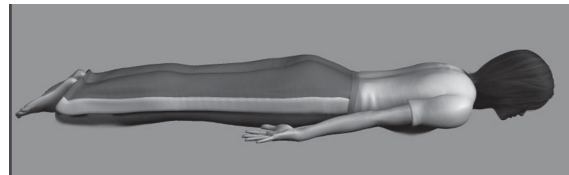
Sanskrit Name: Dhanurasana

Siddha: Patanjali

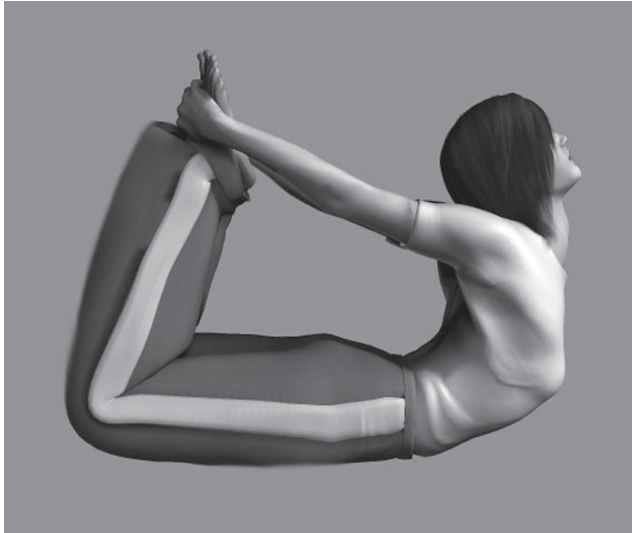


Stand erect with heels together and toes apart; the palms of the hands are placed together at the heart level. Lower the hands by the sides; shoulders and legs relaxed; eyes softly focused ahead.

Lie down on your front with hands by the side. Keep the legs together.



Fold your knees and bring the feet to the buttocks, in effect kicking the buttocks if possible. Do this motion for about a dozen times.



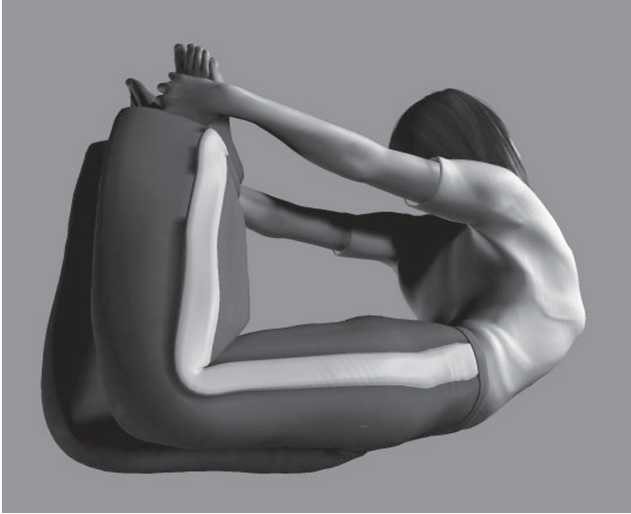
Stop the motion and grab your feet with your hands. Press feet backward, lifting the head and shoulders upward and then lift up the thighs, arching backwards. Hold this position for about 30 seconds, while repeating **the affirmation, “My energies and emotions are completely under control.”**

Then begin rocking motion forwards and backwards. Do this rocking for about dozen times. Stop motion, lower back, keeping hands on feet.

Once again, pull up with arched back. Roll to left side.

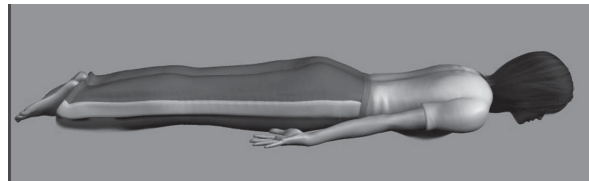
*If this is difficult, you may wish to cross your arms on the back when your roll to the side.*





Roll to the other side and continue this side to side motion for about ten times.

Stop motion and return to the center. Relax in this position.



When ready to get up, sit up on hands and knees and perform a few cat stretches. Then sit on your heels stretching the hands in front in a dog stretch and finally rising into the downward dog. Walk towards the hands and stand up with palms together.

