



# Karuna Yoga Newsletter







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## RELAXING INTO POSTURES

Many of you may remember Jane Fonda as the fitness instructor who motivated people to be their best with expressions such as “feel the burn,” and “no pain, no gain.” In the 90s, people started to look for something a little gentler, with less pounding and pushing and often turned to yoga. The problem was that we had become so indoctrinated with the Jane Fonda type workouts that although we had taken up yoga our thought patterns remained the same. Now we need to change our thought patterns, to let go of the effort, to not try so hard.

### When you “let go” something happens - physically, neurologically and psychologically:

-   Physically, breathing is better; your body relaxes, as does your soft tissue. When tight muscles relax, there is greater strength.
-   Neurologically, you will create a relaxation response. The heart rate will slow down, blood pressure will lower and there will be a greater level of awareness. You will often end up going further into the posture with greater ease.
-   Psychologically, there is less attachment, and a greater acceptance with what is real and what the body is accomplishing in this moment.

### “Letting go” also applies if you want to relieve knee pain, back or neck pain or shoulder problems. If you are in pain and yet you push your way into postures the following happens:

- ❖ Your pushing leads to forcing. Forcing leads to tension.
- ❖ Your muscles and fascia resist and you'll end up compensating elsewhere.
- ❖ You'll create inefficient holding patterns.
- ❖ You'll hold your breath and use your breath to stabilize rather than your deep core muscles.
- ❖ Your chance for re-injury increases.

### How to “let go”:

- ❖ Relax into your movement. As you continue to move with relaxation, your strength will improve. Remember, tight muscles are weak muscles, so as tight muscles relax, they will become stronger.
- ❖ Breathe easily. Remember, you want to use your breath to breathe, not to stabilize.
- ❖ If you feel strain or ache, ease out to a position where there is no strain. If you have pain or strain constantly through your day, then be sure that your pain symptoms don't increase with your practice.
- ❖ Don't believe that your “bad back” or “bad knee” will be bad forever. I have seen so many people increase their range of motion, strength, and stability while at the same time reduce or eliminate their aches, strains, or pain.
- ❖ Remember, relaxing is not doing nothing. You are actively relaxing.
- ❖ Instead of saying to yourself, “Okay, just a little further,” say, “Relax just a little more.”

# Posture of the Month

## **BADDHA KONASANA – Fixed Angle Posture**

In Sanskrit, Baddha means “bound” or “caught” and kona translates as “angle”. Regular practice of Baddha Konasana increases the flow of blood to the abdomen, pelvis and back. It helps to treat arthritis of the knee, hip and pelvic joints.

### **Technique**

1. Sit in Dandasana with your legs straight out in front of you, raising your pelvis on a blanket if your hips or groins are tight. Bend your knees, pull your heels toward your pelvis, then drop your knees out to the sides and press the soles of your feet together.
2. Bring your heels as close to your pelvis as you comfortably can. With the first and second finger and thumb, grasp the big toe of each foot. Always keep the outer edges of the feet firmly on the floor. If it isn't possible to hold the toes, clasp each hand around the same-side ankle or shin.
3. Stretch your spine upward. Lift your chest and collarbones so that you are sitting up as straight as possible.
4. Never force your knees down. Instead release the heads of the thighbones toward the floor. When this action leads, the knees follow.
5. Stay in this posture anywhere from 1 to 5 minutes. Then inhale, lift your knees away from the floor, and extend the legs back to their original position.

### **Beginner's Tip**

It can be difficult to lower the knees toward the floor. If your knees are very high and your back rounded, be sure to sit on a high support using blocks or blankets. Focus on your groin and consciously relax it.

### **Cautions**

If you have a groin or knee injury, only perform this posture with blanket support under the outer thighs.

### **Preparatory Postures**

- ❖ Supta Padangusthasana – using a belt and stretching each leg up and out to the side.
- ❖ Virasana – hero posture. Go onto your knees then sit between your legs using a block if necessary.
- ❖ Vrksasana – tree posture.

### **Benefits of this posture**

- Stretches the inner thighs, groins, and knees
- Keeps the kidneys and prostate gland healthy
- Keeps the ovaries healthy
- Helps to treat urinary tract disorders
- Helps relieve mild depression, anxiety, and fatigue
- Soothes menstrual discomfort and sciatica
- Helps relieve the symptoms of menopause
- Therapeutic for flat feet, high blood pressure, infertility, and asthma
- Helps to open blocked fallopian tubes
- Consistent practice of this posture until late into pregnancy is said to help ease childbirth.



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