

## Apanasana: Gas Ejector Pose



- From a semi-supine position, lift feet and place hands upon the knees if possible, holding lightly with hands
- Let the upper body be straight along the ground, the neck lengthened, ensuring the chin has not lifted; check the back of the shoulders remain relaxed against the floor. If necessary place a block behind the head or hold around the thighs just beneath the knees
- With every exhalation draw the knees towards the abdomen, and with every inhalation allow knees to move away from the abdomen into a more perpendicular position
- Each time the legs move allow the elbows to fall to the side of the body
- At all times **keep the buttocks to the floor**, do not allow them to lift
- Broaden across the collar bones, keeping the upper body relaxed
- See if you can connect with the breath and **let the movement come primarily from the abdominal muscles and hip flexors rather than the arms**
- Work dynamically in time with a long slow breath

### Benefits:

- Massages and balances lumbar muscles, reducing stiffness and pain
- Can reduce muscle spasms if held for more than 10 minutes
- Gently releases the hamstrings
- Can aid sciatica
- Balances apana vayu, the downward moving wind, helping to remove gas and constipation, promoting good circulation in the abdominal region and effective elimination
- Promotes peristalsis and gently massages abdominal organs improving digestion; often recommended for IBS
- Also balances apana vayu by encouraging a complete exhalation
- Can help alleviate menstrual cramps
- Good counterpose for asana where the spine has been strongly moved, especially for backbends or twists
- Calms the breath, body and mind

### Cautions:

- **Anxiety/Depression/High Stress:** Keep eyes open if wish
- **Hiatus Hernia/Abdominal Surgery:** Soft seated forward bend
- **Kyphosis or chin lifts, tight upper back/neck muscles:** Padding beneath back of head
- **Pregnancy:** Take legs apart or can practice soft forward bend if uncomfortable supine, or kneeling over chair seat or similar
- **Vertigo:** Turn head to one side

**Variation:** Work with one leg only, this is **Vatnyasana** or **Pawanamuktasana**, here the right leg is drawn inwards first then the left leg so we are massaging the ascending and then descending colon i.e. working in the direction of the colon. If needed the other straight leg can be bent with foot to floor to help stabilize the back when there are back conditions or stiff hips, both buttocks must be kept to the floor



# Balasana: Childs' Pose



- From kneeling position easing buttocks to heels
- Fold forwards over thighs, forehead to floor
- Place arms down by side, palms up-facing, shoulders released
- Gently breath into the back and relax the abdomen over the thighs
- Consciously relax the whole body, including the neck, shoulders, arms and hands
- To exit, press hands to floor, sitting up

## Benefits:

- Restores energy
- Releases low back
- Relaxes neck & shoulders
- Soothing for mind

## Cautions:

- **Hiatus Hernia/Abdominal Surgery:** Alternative of seated forward bend
- **High Blood Pressure/Cardiac Problems, Ear/Eye/Nose Conditions/Older Diabetic:** Place block or fists beneath forehead
- **Inflexibility:** Place block beneath buttocks, blocks under forehead, toes can tuck under, can try taking knees a little further apart
- **Knees:** Try padding beneath knees, try padding beneath shins or alternative of soft forward bend
- **Pregnancy:** Move legs apart or can practice soft forward bend if uncomfortable supine, or kneeling over chair seat or similar

## Variations:

- Arms overhead, resting along on the ground, elbows bent if needed
- Arms overhead, resting along ground then lifting onto fingertips as inhale and lower down as exhale
- Arms overhead, resting along ground then walking fingertips to one side and then the other
- Toes touching, knees further apart, often known as Mandukasana (Frog Pose)