

Baddha Konasana – Cobbler Pose

Pronounced bud-dhuh kohn-aah-suh-nuh the word baddha means bound and kona means angle in Sanskrit.

This pose is named the cobblers pose because traditionally cobblers in India mended the shoes by holding the shoe between their feet, indeed you can still see this in India today.



Fig. 1

Teaching Points:

Stage 1

- Sit in dandasana, staff pose, check here to see if bending knees or sitting upon a block helps to keep the spine extended & comfortable, with a natural lumbar curve.
- Bending the knees draw the legs inwards so feet are closer to the torso and allow knees to fall to the sides, if there is space between thighs and the floor place padding beneath thighs so the muscles can relax.
- Adjust the position ensuring the sits bones are to ground, hips square; if there is any discomfort in the knees then place the feet a little further forwards or try dorsiflexing the feet which helps to direct rotation at ankles/knees back to the hips
- Check the back is upright and comfortable, sternum raised, shoulders relaxed, chin parallel to the floor, hands lightly holding the lower legs or placed upon knees.
- Breathe here releasing the muscles of the hips/legs imagining the release of muscles is occurring at the femur heads rather than focusing upon drawing knees to the floor.



Stage 2

- Can slowly flex the torso forward at the hips as if to draw the pelvic bone to the ground first; keep the spine long, upper body relaxed so may only fold forwards for a few degrees or remain upright
- Stay here maintaining a long and open spine, using the breath to relax the body and mind, initiating a relaxation response where the muscles release and we can go a little deeper into the pose
- Can wrap index & middle fingers around the big toes and ease the soles into an inverted position, i.e. soles showing to the ceiling, as if opening a book, but if there is any discomfort in ankles and/or knees stay with feet in dorsiflexion
- When ready to exit, lift the torso if flexed, draw legs together using hands if wished, returning to dandasana, staff pose



Fig. 2

Note: it is good to vary the distance of the placement of the feet because different portions of the hip rotators will be used.

Caution: Never bounce the legs and up and down as this kind of ballistic flexibility training, where we **use momentum** to force the body beyond its normal ROM, can lead to injury. Indeed this does not actually increase our flexibility as the stretch reflex in an effort to avoid injury is initiated creating muscular contraction rather than lengthening

Benefits:

Stretches the adductors & groin muscles	Balances urinary system
Balances reproductive organs	Aids easier childbirth
Soothes menstrual pain	

Good preparation

Hip mobilizers, adductor stretches, mobilization of the spine eg. twists

Cautions & possible modifications

- Lower back problems and sciatica: take care and can sit upon a block, stay at stage 1
- Pregnancy: keep knees lower than hips after 32 weeks, may need blocks beneath buttocks and also possibly thighs.
- Groin or knee injury: can help to place padding beneath thighs
- Discomfort of ankles: can try dorsiflexing the feet to direct the rotation to the hips, can take feet further away or wrap feet with blanket or similar
- If flexing forward the usual cautions apply..

Variations

A weight placed upon the thighs

It is possible to use a sandbag or similar to help relax into the pose, but note that the legs must be supported by padding if the thighs do not touch the ground.

Use Isometric Flexibility Training (or PNF if extended)

Here we hold a static stretch at full ROM then contract the stretched muscles against some form of immovable resistance. This means we can press down with our hands or elbows as we try to lift the legs together, and after a few breaths we can release the pressure and move into a new passive stretch. This creates strength as well as flexibility.

Using adjustments

In this pose if we exert pressure by pressing down on thighs or the back is definitely not helpful and can lead to injury, however we can kneel in front and place hands at the hips joints where thumbs point towards us and fingers point behind, and here gently roll the top of the thigh backwards.

Figure 1. <http://www.feelgoodyogavictoria.com/learning-centre/yoga/bound-angular-baddha-konasana-pose/> (accessed 18.11.16)

Figure 2. <https://uk.pinterest.com/emakarov/yoga-poses-during-period/> (accessed 18.11.16)