



## Setu Bandha Sarvangasana - The Bridge Posture

In his book *Light on Yoga*, B.K.S. Iyengar tells us that “A healthy and flexible spine indicates a healthy nervous system. If the nerves are healthy a man is sound in mind and body”.

This week we are working on Setu Bandha Sarvangasana. Setu Bandha means the building of a bridge. Sarvanga means the whole body. In this posture the whole body is made to resemble an arched bridge.

This posture creates flexibility and suppleness in the whole spine, including the neck. The chest is expanded and opened creating space in the thoracic cavity. The lungs can fully expand increasing breathing capacity.

Remember to work gently into the posture. Do not try to “muscle” or force yourself, and as always remember to breathe.

### Benefits:

Improves spinal flexibility.

Increases breathing capacity

Mobilizes shoulder joints

### Caution:

If you have recent injury or a pre-existing medical condition please consult with your physician before you begin.

1. Lie down on your back. The surface should be firm. A carpeted floor is good. Bend your knees and place the soles of your feet on the floor. Your ankles should be directly under your knees with your feet hip width apart and parallel. Bring your arms to your side-body with your palms facing up. Extend your arms along the floor towards your feet. Roll the thumb side of your hands towards the floor and your pinky fingers towards the ceiling. Notice how this action opens the front of your chest. Feel your chest expanding as your breastbone lifts towards the ceiling. Bring the inner edges of your shoulder-blades up into your back ribs. Feel your chest opening even more.
2. Lift your pelvis up away from the floor and interlace your fingers behind your back. Continue lifting your pelvis towards the ceiling. Keeping your fingers interlaced extend your arms and press your wrists down into the floor
3. “Walk” your shoulders towards your heels. Lift your breast-bone towards the ceiling. You should be looking at a “wall of chest” in front of you. Keep your feet parallel with your heels planted firmly into the floor. Do not distend your abdomen. Breathe.
4. You can modify the posture by reaching for, and then holding your ankles press your heels even more firmly into the floor and lift your pelvis higher. Feel the front of your chest expanding like the surface of an inflating balloon. Feel the back of your neck extending.
5. Hold the posture for fifteen seconds and then release. Repeat the posture three times. As your stamina and flexibility improves hold the posture for longer periods.

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