

# ASANA

## SIDDHASANA

*“So is siddhasana the chief of all asanas”*



**This looks an advanced asana but with the use of blocks and, providing you have no knee damage, it becomes a possibility.**

**SIDDHA** (A wise or enlightened person)

**SIDDHASANA** (The seat of the siddhas)

*If you have the book, read the Hatha Yoga Pradipika 1 Slokas 33-45*

Before starting on *Method* below, make sure to loosen and warm the body up as described later.

## METHOD

1. Sit up straight with the legs stretched forward.
2. Bring the ankles across each other, with the knees bent, out to the side with the knees flat on the floor.
3. Have the lower heel pressed firmly into the perineum and the second heel placed directly on top of the lower heel or the top toes may be tucked down into the opposite thigh, according to foot length.
4. Bring the hands into jnana mudra (thumb and finger joined, three fingers straight), resting lightly on the knees.
5. Bring the chin down into jalandhara bandha.
6. Fix the eyes on the brow centre in shambhavi mudra.

## NB

**In the west, position 5 is used as part of Pranayama (advanced breathing) practice. Position 6 is used rarely and tends to produce a headache if not an advanced practitioner.**

## PREPARATION

1. All ankle movements to stretch and flex.
2. Rotation of hip, especially outward.
3. Spinal twists, again lying on your back, let the knees move from side to side.
4. Make sure the body is warm – do some quick movements as if prior to strenuous exercise.

## COUNTERPOSE

Lie down and stretch and rotate and arch.

## MODIFICATIONS USING SUPPORT

1. Cushions and blocks under the seat.
2. Meditation stool.
3. Meditation band, this wraps around and supports the outstretched knees. But this is not ideal as it directs the circulation downward instead of upwards.
4. Wall.
5. Another's back.
6. Chin slightly down, tongue resting relaxed, turned up slightly, this stops saliva collecting.

It is very important that the knees are touching the floor, as this gives stability to the pelvis and lumbar back, helping the whole spine to lift up. If the knees are raised up, it causes a V-shape and the circulation is directed into the lower pelvis causing a reduction in the flow.

### Solution

Place a block under the base of the spine, which will reduce any curvature in the mid-back and slightly tip the pelvis upward, the lower edge will tilt upwards and the upper edge will tilt backwards. A maximum of three blocks could be tried, in order to get the knees to touch the floor. After that it becomes counter-productive and the person would be wiser to kneel, sit on a chair or sit with the back against the wall and legs straight out.

## CONTRA-INDICATIONS

Knee pain, hips too restricted, or any inflammation in the legs. The asana produces a limit itself if there is any stiffness in the joints, but take note of limitations as sitting with a rounded back or knees poking up is not comfortable or desirable.

## BENEFITS AND EFFECTS

1. As stated in yoga texts, plus:
2. Locks the pelvis in position, to give firm support to the spine.
3. Reduces pressure in legs, so that more circulation is in torso and head, aiding concentration upwards in meditation.
4. The locked position stops falling over if drowsy.

## MUSCLES AND JOINTS

1. Muscles of the ankles and top of the foot stretched including the long peroneus muscle which runs from the outside lower tibia to the base of the big toe.
2. Outward rotation of the ball of the femur involves several muscles, including: psoas magnus, iliacus, biceps femoris and three adductors.

The main muscle to affect the rotation of the head of the femur outwards, is the periformis. Its origin is at the front of the sacrum, its insertion is at the top of the femur. However, it is not always a stiff hip which limits the movement but the ankle or the knee.

There must be a very positive approach in adapting as there is to be no forcing beyond a firmness in placing the feet. Stiffness in either ankle, hip or knee will make Siddhasana difficult to achieve.

**The slightest pain is an indication *not* to progress further, particularly in the knee**