

How to: Begin in a seated position



Adjustments/Variation:

Many. Knees can stay bent, in the air or on the floor. Hands can hold on to the back of the knees, or be placed on the floor beside the hips for extra stability. Encourage students not to put weight into the hands – feather touch on the floor. You can work side strength and twisting muscles by “rowing the boat” – hands clasped, pull from side to side. You can work sides, hip and leg strength by putting the bottoms of the feet together and knees wide apart. Holding in this position increases muscle endurance. Work on firing up the cardiovascular system and dynamic strength by pulsing the legs toward the chest and out, smoothly, for several counts.

You can go fast or slow, depending on the strength of your audience, and work with feet together, knees out or legs together and extending.

Advancements / Strong Version:

1. Reach the hands up toward the toes and pull the toes toward the sky. 2. Separate the extended legs. 3. Hands on the toes pointed up to the sky in an upside down forward fold.

Prep / Follow up:

This is a core strengthening posture that virtually every student can do to some degree. Plan to do 3 or 4 sets & variations of the posture, beginning with feet down and demonstrating how the long spine leans back – no rounding – and building difficulty cue by cue. This allows everyone to find their place, and track improvement over time. Follow up with a supportive rounding of the back. Place the feet on the floor, hug the knees, soften. Or, lie in savasana.

Benefits:

Tones whole torso, hips, legs, spine. Improves digestion. Grounding and confidence building. Kidneys, intestines, thyroid, prostate.

Contraindications:

Neck and spine injuries need to keep their feet on the floor. Use metaphorical language: imagine a yard stick taped to your spine and your head is taped on to it also. Feet down also for pre-natal, menstruation discomfort, digestive problems. They say it's also bad for asthma, headaches, heart disease, insomnia, but I find that a meditative gradual approach can alleviate many of those symptoms.

Chakras: 1st, 2nd, 3rd

Spiritual Aspects:

Teaches inward focus.

Affirmation:

I rock!

Benefits to Classes: Boat is a great toner for the whole torso, and doing 3 or more in a sequence, with brief rests in between is a complete ab “set” in your series, that doesn't take up too much time in the class. Students like the challenge of boat. It is stimulating second chakra energy in a grounding way, and takes lots of purpose and concentration (3rd) also. Consistent, simple instruction, track-able results, uplifting energetically.