Cobra Pose

INSTRUCTIONS
1. Lie on your belly, with the forearms flat on the floor, elbows under the shoulders, chin on the floor and legs together.
2. Press the forearms down into the floor and inhale and lift the head and chest off of the floor, keeping the neck in line with the spine.
3. Pull up the knee caps, squeeze the thighs and buttocks, engage mula bandha, and press the pubic bone down into the floor.
4. Keep the elbows close to your sides and use the arms to lift you up even higher. Drop the shoulders down and back and press the chest forward. Draw the chin in towards the back of the neck and gaze up at the third eye point.
5. Breathe and hold for 2-6 breaths.
6. To release: exhale and slowly lower the chest and head to the floor. Turn the head to one side, slide the arms alongside your body and rest.

BENEFITS + CONTRAINDICATIONS
Benefits: Sphinx opens the chest and strengthens the core body. Cobra aligns the spine and invigorates the kidneys and nervous system.
Contraindications: Recent or chronic injury to the back, arms or shoulders, pregnancy or recent abdominal surgery.
**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. From Table pose, slowly drop the hips forward toward the floor.
2. Press palms down into the floor, drop the shoulders down and back, press the chest forward and reach the crown of the head up towards the ceiling.
3. Inhale and lift thighs and legs off of the floor by pressing the tops of the feet down and engaging mula bandha.
4. Breathe and hold for 1-3 breaths.
5. To release: bend the knees and lift the hips back up into table position

**BENEFITS + CONTRAINDICATIONS**

**Benefits:** Upward Facing Dog opens the chest and strengthens the whole body. Up dog aligns the spine and invigorates the kidneys and nervous system.

**Contraindications:** Recent or chronic injury to the back, hips, arms or shoulders, pregnancy and recent abdominal surgery.

**MODIFICATIONS + VARIATIONS**

**Modifications:** Place yoga blocks under the palms.

**Variations:** Tuck the toes under to lift the legs higher off the floor.
**DOWNWARD DOG**

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. From Table position, tuck the toes under, press into the hands and begin to lift the hips up towards the ceiling.
2. Spread the fingers wide apart with the middle finger facing forward, and the palms shoulder width apart. Press the out through the fingers and edges of the hands.
3. Using straight (but not locked) arms, press the hips up and back reaching the chest towards the thighs. Lift up through the tailbone to keep the spine straight and long.
4. Have the feet are hip’s width apart with the toes facing forward. Press the heels into the floor feeling a stretch in the back of the legs. The legs are straight, or you can have a small bend at the knees to keep the back flat.
5. Let the head and neck hang freely from the shoulders or look up at the belly button.
6. Breathe and hold for 4-8 breaths.
7. To release: bend the knees and lower the hips back to Table position, or come all the way down to child pose.

**BENEFITS + CONTRAINDICATIONS**

**Benefits:** Downward facing dog deeply stretches the back, opens the chest, and builds upper body strength. This posture stimulates the brain and nervous system, improving memory, concentration, hearing and eyesight.

**Contraindications:** Recent or chronic injury to the back, hips, arms or shoulders, unmediated high blood pressure.

**MODIFICATIONS + VARIATIONS**

**Modifications:** A) Use blocks under the hands or head. B) Place a folded towel under the wrists. C) Press both heels against a wall.

**Variations:** [Dolphin pose](#), [One Leg Down Dog](#), Down Dog Twist.
INSTRUCTIONS

1. From Mountain pose, bend the right knee shifting all the weight into the left leg. Turn the right knee to the right wall resting the heel against the left leg.
2. Look down at the floor and stare at one point. Slowly slide the right foot up the left leg, only as high up as you can maintain your balance. When you are balanced here, slowly bring the palms together, prayer position in front of the heart.
3. Keep staring at your focal point on the floor. Keep the left leg strong pressing the foot into the floor. Keep the right knee bent 90 degrees towards the side wall. The shoulders are down and back and the chest is pressing forward.
4. If you are very balanced here, try the next stage by inhaling the arms over the head. The arms are in an H position, or the palms are together with the thumbs crossed, or the fingers are interlaced with the index finger pointed up. The fingers are reaching up and the shoulders are down and back.
5. Breathe and hold for 4-8 breaths.
6. To release: slowly exhale the arms down and then release the legs back into mountain.
7. Repeat on the other side.

BENEFITS + CONTRAINDICATIONS

**Benefits:** Tree pose increases balance, focus, memory and concentration and strengthens the ankles and knees.

**Contraindications:** Recent or chronic knee or hip injury.

MODIFICATIONS + VARIATIONS

**Modifications:** A) Bring the arms out to the sides for more stability. B) Practice next to a wall, placing a hand on the wall for support.
Side Lung Angle

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. From Warrior II pose (with right knee bent), bring the right elbow down to the right knee and inhale the left arm up towards the ceiling and then exhale the arm over the ear, making a straight line with the left side of your body.
2. Keep the right knee bent directly over the ankle, sink the hips down towards the floor, and reach the left fingers away from the left foot.
3. Breathe and hold for 3-6 breaths.
4. To release: inhale and reach the left fingers up and back into warrior II or straighten the legs coming into 5 pointed star.
5. Repeat on other side.

**BENEFITS + CONTRAINDICATIONS**

**Benefits:** Extended Side Angle pose opens the side of the body from the feet to the fingers, energizes the body and strengthens the legs.

**Contraindications:** Recent or chronic injury to the hips, knees, neck or shoulders.

**MODIFICATIONS + VARIATIONS**

**Variations:** A) Straighten the lower arm and reach the hand to the floor. B) Wrap the top arm around the back and the lower arm under the bent knee to grasp hands for Bound Extended Side Angle
Triangle Pose

INSTRUCTIONS

1. From a standing position with the legs 3 feet apart as in Five Pointed Star, turn the right toes to the right wall and the left toes slightly inwards. Inhale and press the left hips out to the left as you slide both arms to the right parallel to the floor.
2. Exhale and rotate only the arms, raising the left arm up and resting the right hand against the right leg, with the palms facing forward.
3. Press into the feet, pull up the knee caps, keeping the legs strong. Reach the finger tips away from each other, bringing the arms into one straight line with the shoulders stacked on top of each other. Press the left hip forward and the right hip back.
4. Breathe and hold for 3-6 breaths.
5. To release: inhale and reach the raised hand up towards the ceiling as you press down into the feet using the whole body to lift back into 5 pointed star.
6. Repeat on the other side.

BENEFITS + CONTRAINDICATIONS

Benefits: Triangle pose engages every part of the body, strengthens the core, opens the hips and shoulders and stretches the legs.

Contraindications: Recent or chronic injury to the hips, back or shoulders.

MODIFICATIONS + VARIATIONS

Modifications: Use a yoga block on the floor to support the lower hand.

Variations: A) Bring the raised arm over the ear parallel to the floor. B) The lower hand can rest on the floor on the inside or outside of the leg, or the lower hand can grasp the big toe with the middle and index fingers.
**Warrior I**

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. On your hands and knees in Table pose, step the right foot forward between the two hands, with the knee directly over the ankle. Tuck the back toes under and straighten the back leg.
2. Press the palms, fingers or fists into the floor to lift the crown of the head up towards the ceiling. Roll the shoulders down and back and press the chest forward. Look straight ahead with the chin parallel to the floor.
3. Extend the back leg by pressing the heel towards the floor and by pressing the back of the knee up towards the ceiling. Relax the hips and let them sink down towards the floor.
4. Breathe and hold for 2-6 breaths.
5. To release: Lower the left knee down and slide the right knee back into Table, or step the right foot back into Downward Facing Dog.
6. Repeat on other side.

**BENEFITS + CONTRAINDICATIONS**

**Benefits:** High lunge opens the hips and chest, stretches the groin and legs, lengthens the spine and strengthens the lower body.

**Contraindications:** Recent or chronic injury to the legs or hips.

**MODIFICATIONS + VARIATIONS**

**Modifications:** Use yoga blocks under the hands.

**Variations:** This is an easier variation of this pose is Low Lunge.
Warrior II

INSTRUCTIONS

1. From Five Pointed Star, turn the right toes to the right wall and bend the right knee directly over the right ankle.
2. Turn the hips and the shoulders towards the front and reach out through the finger tips, reaching towards the side walls. Turn and look at the right middle finger.
3. Press into the feet, keeping the legs strong. Sink the hips down towards the floor, and reach the crown of the head up to lengthen the spine. Relax the shoulders down and back, pressing the chest forward.
4. Breathe and hold for 3-6 breaths.
5. To release: straighten the legs and turn the feet forward coming back into 5 pointed star.

BENEFITS + CONTRAINDICATIONS

Benefits: Warrior II strengthens the legs, opens the hips and chest. Warrior II develops concentration, balance and groundedness. This pose improves circulation and respiration and energizes the entire body.
Contraindications: Recent or chronic injury to the hips, knees or shoulders.

MODIFICATIONS + VARIATIONS

Modifications: Place hands on hips.
Warrior III

INSTRUCTIONS

1. From Mountain pose, step the right foot a foot lengths forward and shift all of your weight onto this leg.
2. Inhale the arms over your head and interlace the fingers, pointing the index finger up.
3. As you exhale, lift the left leg up and out, hinging at the hips to lower the arms and torso down towards the floor.
4. Look down at the floor and stare at a point for balance. Reach out through the left toes and the crown and fingers making one straight line.
5. Breathe and hold for 2-6 breaths.
6. To release: inhale the arms up to lower the leg back to the floor and step both feet together back into Mountain pose.
7. Repeat on the other side.

BENEFITS + CONTRAINDICATIONS

Benefits: Warrior III improves balance, memory and concentration, and tones and invigorates the whole body.
Contraindications: Recent or chronic injury to the legs, hips, back or shoulders.

MODIFICATIONS + VARIATIONS

Variations: A) Hold on to opposite elbows with the arms over your head. B) Bring the arms out to the sides. C) Place your hands on your hips.
Table Top

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Come to the floor on your hands and knees. Bring the knees hip width apart, with the feet directly behind the knees. Bring the palms directly under the shoulders with the fingers facing forward.
2. Look down between the palms and allow the back to be flat. Press into the palms to drop the shoulders slightly away from the ears. Press the tail bone towards the back wall and the crown of the head towards the front wall to lengthen the spine.
3. Breathe deeply and hold for 1-3 breaths.

BENEFITS + CONTRAINDICATIONS

**Benefits:** Table is the starting point and transition posture for many floor postures and helps lengthen and realign the spine.
**Contraindications:** Recent or chronic injury to the wrists or knees.

MODIFICATIONS + VARIATIONS

**Modifications:** A) Place a folded blanket under the knees to protect them from pressure and stress. B) Make fists with the hands to reduce pressure on the wrists.
**Variations:** Balancing Table.
INSTRUCTIONS

1. From Table pose, exhale and lower the hips to the heels and forehead to the floor. Have the knees together or if more comfortable, spread the knees slightly apart.
2. The arms can be overhead with the palms on the floor, the palms or fists can be stacked under the forehead, or the arms can be along side the body with the palms up.
3. Breathe slowly and deeply, actively pressing the belly against the thighs on the inhale.
4. Breathe and hold for 4-12 breaths.
5. To release: place the palms under the shoulders and slowly inhale up to a seated position.

BENEFITS + CONTRAINDICATIONS

Benefits: Child pose calms the body, mind and spirit and stimulates the third eye point. Child pose gently stretches the low back, massages and tones the abdominal organs, and stimulates digestion and elimination.
Contraindications: Recent or chronic injury to the knees.

MODIFICATIONS + VARIATIONS

Modifications: A) Place a blanket under the hips, knees and/or head. B) If pregnant, spread the knees wide apart to remove any pressure on the abdomen.
Variations: Open the knees wider to slide the arms between the legs reaching under the body and turn the head to the side.
Caterpillar

INSTRUCTIONS

1. From Dog tilt, slowly exhale and lower the chin and chest straight down to the floor, bringing the chest between the palms.
2. Keep the elbows close to your sides, press the chest down towards the floor and lift the tailbone up towards the ceiling.
3. Breathe and hold for 2-4 breaths or vinyasa between dog tilt and caterpillar, inhaling into dog and exhaling into caterpillar.
4. Breathe and hold for 4-12 breaths.
5. To release, inhale into dog tilt and exhale into table or slide the chest forward through the arms into prone position.

BENEFITS + CONTRAINDICATIONS

Benefits: Caterpillar pose stretches the neck and shoulders and lengthens and realigns the spine. This posture strengthens the arms and upper body.
Contraindications: Recent or chronic injury to the wrists, elbows, shoulders, back or neck.

MODIFICATIONS + VARIATIONS

Modifications: A) Place a blanket under the knees.
INSTRUCTIONS

1. From Standing Forward Fold, step or jump both feet back 4-5 feet into a push-up position.
2. Spread the fingers wide apart with the middle finger pointing forward, press into the palms with the arms are straight. Tuck the tailbone under so the legs, hips and torso are one straight line. Press the crown of the head forward and with the toes tucked, press the heels back.
3. Breathe and hold for 1-4 breaths.
4. To release: either bend the knees to the floor into Child pose, or bend the elbows and lower down into Kataranga.

BENEFITS + CONTRAINDICATIONS

Benefits: Plank pose builds upper and core body strength, lengthens the spine and strengthens the low back muscles.
Contraindications: Recent or chronic injury to the arms, back or shoulders.

MODIFICATIONS + VARIATIONS

Modifications: Bend both knees to the floor.
Variations: To build more core strength use the Low Plank variation.
INSTRUCTIONS

1. From Table pose, exhale and tuck the tail bone under, round the spine and let the head drop down.
2. Press into the palms to drop the shoulders away from the ears and to reach the middle and upper back up towards the ceiling.
3. Breathe and hold for 4-8 breaths, or vinyasa between cat pose and dog pose, inhaling into dog and exhaling into cat.
4. To release, inhale and flatten the back moving into Table.

BENEFITS + CONTRAINDICATIONS

Benefits: Cat pose stretches the middle to upper back and shoulders.
Contraindications: Recent or chronic back pain or injury.

MODIFICATIONS + VARIATIONS

Modifications: Place a folded blanket under the knees to protect them.
**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. From table pose, inhale and reach the tailbone up towards the ceiling, arching the spine and letting the belly drop down.
2. Spread the fingers wide apart and press the palms into the floor. Drop the shoulders down from the ears and to reach the crown of the head up towards the ceiling. Look up as high as you can towards the ceiling without straining.
3. Breathe and hold for 4-8 breaths, or vinyasa between cat tilt and dog tilt, inhaling into dog and exhaling into cat.
4. To release, exhale and flatten the back moving into Table or Child pose.

**BENEFITS + CONTRAINDICATIONS**

**Benefits:** Dog tilt pose stretches the middle to low back and hips, lengthens the spine, and stimulates the kidneys and adrenal glands.

**Contraindications:** Recent or chronic back pain or injury.

**MODIFICATIONS + VARIATIONS**

**Modifications:** Place a folded blanket under the knees to protect them.
INSTRUCTIONS

1. Lying on your back, let the arms and legs drop open, with the arms about 45 degrees from the side of your body. Make sure you are warm and comfortable, if you need to place blankets under or over your body.
2. Close the eyes, and take slow deep breaths through the nose. Allow your whole body to become soft and heavy, letting it relax into the floor. As the body relaxes, feel the whole body rising and falling with each breath.
3. Scan the body from the toes to the fingers to the crown of the head, looking for tension, tightness and contracted muscles. Consciously release and relax any areas that you find. If you need to, rock or wiggle parts of your body from side to side to encourage further release.
4. Release all control of the breath, the mind, and the body. Let your body move deeper and deeper into a state of total relaxation.
5. Stay in Shavasana for 5 to 15 minutes.
6. To release: slowly deepen the breath, wiggle the fingers and toes, reach the arms over your head and stretch the whole body, exhale bend the knees into the chest and roll over to one side coming into a fetal position. When you are ready, slowly inhale up to a seated position.

BENEFITS + CONTRAINDICATIONS

Benefits: Corpse pose is essential to practice at the end of every yoga practice. This posture rejuvenates the body, mind and spirit while reducing stress and tension.
Contraindications: Third trimester of pregnancy.

MODIFICATIONS + VARIATIONS

Modifications: Place a bolster or blankets under the low back and/or knees.
Knee Down Twist

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Lying on your back, bring your arms out to the sides with the palms facing down in a T position. Bend the right knee and place the right foot on the left knee.
2. Exhale drop the right knee over to the left side of your body, twisting the spine and low back. Look at the right finger tips.
3. Keep the shoulders flat to the floor, close the eyes, and relax into the posture. Let gravity pull the knee down, so you do not have to use any effort in this posture.
4. Breathe and hold for 6-10 breaths.
5. To release: inhale and roll the hips back to the floor, and exhale the leg back down to the floor.
6. Repeat on other side.

BENEFITS + CONTRAINDICATIONS

Benefits: Knee down twist stretches the back muscles, realigns and lengthens the spine, and hydrates the spinal disks.
Contraindications: Recent or chronic injury to the knees, hips or back.

MODIFICATIONS + VARIATIONS

Modifications: A) Place a folded blanket under the bent knee to support it.
Variations: Rest the left hand on the right knee adding more weight for gravity to pull the knee down.
INSTRUCTIONS

1. Lying on your back, bend both knees and place the feet flat on the floor hip width apart. Slide the arms alongside the body with the palms facing down. The fingertips should be lightly touching the heels.
2. Press the feet into the floor, inhale and lift the hips up, rolling the spine off the floor. Lightly squeeze the knees together to keep the knees hip width apart.
3. Press down into the arms and shoulders to lift the chest up. Engage the legs, buttocks and mula bandha to lift the hips higher.
4. Breathe and hold for 4-8 breaths.
5. To release: exhale and slowly roll the spine back to the floor.

BENEFITS + CONTRAINDICATIONS

Benefits: Bridge pose builds core and lower body strength, lengthens and strengthens the spine, energizes the body, and stimulates the endocrine and nervous systems.

Contraindications: Recent or chronic injury to the knees, shoulders or back.

MODIFICATIONS + VARIATIONS

Modifications: Use a yoga block under the hips to support your weight.

Variations: Interlace the hands together behind your back, walk the shoulders in and press down with the arms and shoulders.
INSTRUCTIONS

1. Lie on your belly, with the chin on the floor, legs together and arms alongside the body, 45 degrees away from the sides, with the palms down.
2. Pull up the knee caps, squeeze the thighs and buttocks, engage Mula Bandha, and press the pubic bone down into the floor.
3. Inhale and lift the legs, head, chest, and arms off of the floor. Reach out through the fingers, toes and crown of the head. Keep the neck in line with the spine.
4. Drop the shoulders down and back and press the chest forward. Keep the legs, buttocks, and mula bandha strong, and keep the pubic bone pressing down into the floor.
5. Breathe and hold for 2-6 breaths.
6. To release: exhale and slowly lower the chest, head, arms and legs to the floor. Turn the head to one side, slide the arms alongside your body and rest. Rock the hips from side to side to release any tension in the low back.

BENEFITS + CONTRAINDICATIONS

Benefits: Locust pose strengthens the legs and core body while opening the chest and stretching the low back. Locust pose tonifies the kidneys and stimulates the reproductive and digestive systems.

Contraindications: Recent or chronic injury to the back, arms or shoulders, pregnancy, menstruation, or recent abdominal surgery.

MODIFICATIONS + VARIATIONS

Modifications: A) Place a folded blanket under the hips or place a rolled up blanket or bolster under the thighs. B) Place a rolled blanket under the rib cage.

Variations: To strengthen your low back bring the arms out to the sides or forward over your head.
INSTRUCTIONS

1. On your hands and knees in Table pose, inhale the right leg up parallel to the floor, reaching the toes towards the back wall.
2. Starring at a point between the palms, slowly inhale the left arm up parallel to the floor, reaching the fingers towards the front wall.
3. Breathe and hold for 3-6 breaths.
4. To release: slowly exhale the left arm down, and then lower the knee down, back into table position.
5. Repeat on other side.

BENEFITS + CONTRAINDICATIONS

Benefits: Balancing Table pose improves balance, memory, focus and coordination. This posture builds core body strength and lengthens the spine.
Contraindications: Recent or chronic injury to the knees, back, arms or shoulders.

MODIFICATIONS + VARIATIONS

Modifications: Place a folded blanket under the knees to protect them from pressure and stress.
Variations: Reach the arm and leg out to the side wall.
Use one or more of the following postures to build a sequence leading up to this pose: Table, Tiger.
Use one or more of the following postures to build a sequence ending after this pose: low warrior! One-Legged King Pigeon, One Handed Tiger, Table.
**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. From table position, lower the forearms to the floor and step both feet back four to five feet into a push-up position.
2. Spread the fingers wide apart with the middle finger pointing forward and press the forearms down into the floor. Tuck the tailbone under and strongly engage the abs to bring the legs, hips and torso into one straight line. Press the crown of the head forward and with the toes tucked, press the heels back.
3. Breathe and hold for 1-4 breaths.
4. To release: bend the knees to the floor into Child pose.

**BENEFITS + CONTRAINDICATIONS**

**Benefits:** Low plank pose strongly builds core body strength, lengthens the spine and strengthens the abs, upper arms, shoulders and low back muscles.

**Contraindications:** Recent or chronic injury to the hips, arms, abdomen, back or shoulders.

**MODIFICATIONS + VARIATIONS**

**Modifications:** Bend both knees to the floor.

**Variations:** This pose is a variation of full Plank pose.