

Shoulder Bridge

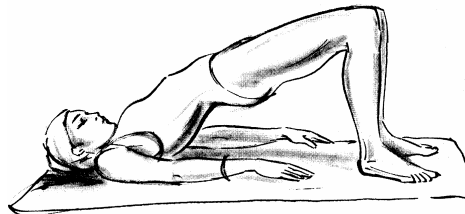
Information Sheet

How to Practice

- ⇒ Start in semi-supine (check that your feet are about hip width and a half apart) and have your arms by your sides with the palms of the hands facing downwards.
- ⇒ Tuck the chin into the chest a little so that it isn't pointing toward the ceiling and the cervical vertebrae are fairly flat.
- ⇒ Tilt the pelvis forward so that your lower back moves toward the floor (tightening the stomach muscles is one way of doing this).
- ⇒ Begin to push into the ground with the soles of the feet and start to peel your spine off the floor so that your hips and buttocks move upwards.

Start gently and if it is easy then gradually lift the hips up higher and higher (the shoulder blades remain in contact with the floor the whole time).

- ⇒ You can either: breathe out as you come into Shoulder Bridge and breathe in as you come back down to the floor, or you can hold the Shoulder Bridge with deep belly breathing or breath of fire.
- ⇒ If holding, it is best to support yourself with your hands underneath your hips.



Some Variations:

- ◇ Have your hands behind your head, and then alternate between lifting the head and then lifting the hips. Exhale as you lift something up; inhale as you place it back on the floor.
- ◇ Alternate between tucked womb and Shoulder Bridge. Breathe out into tucked womb and breathe in as you lift into Shoulder Bridge.
- ◇ Instead of just lifting the hips up and down, make circles in the air with the hips.
- ◇ Advanced: bring the soles of the feet together with the knees out to either side and lift the hips up and down.

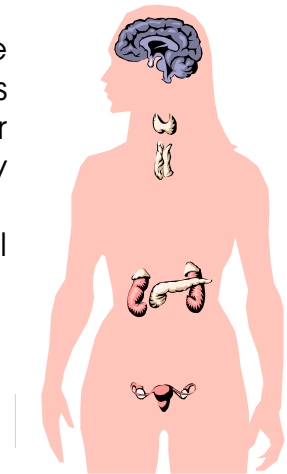
Counterposes:

Tucked Womb: Lying on the back with the knees above the chest and a hand on each knee. Use the hands to draw the knees toward the chest and roll the head up. Balances the spine.

Knees side to side with the legs in semi-supine. Balances the hips.

Benefits and effects:

- Massages and stretches the colon and abdominal organs, improving digestion.
- Tones the female reproductive organs and is thus good for PMT, amenorrhea, menopause, and prolapsed uterus.
- The pressure exerted on the neck by the posture stimulates the thyroid gland. The thyroid gland is involved in regulating metabolism and other endocrine glands so it can help to balance body weight and mood swings.
- Can assist with asthma and various bronchial conditions.
- Re-aligns the spine, particularly in the lumbar region.
- Stretches the quadriceps and the psoas muscle.
- May alleviate round shoulders.



Contra-indications:

- ⇒ Later stages of pregnancy
- ⇒ Peptic or duodenal ulcers
- ⇒ Abdominal (hiatus) hernia