

Supta Baddha Konasana with one leg straight

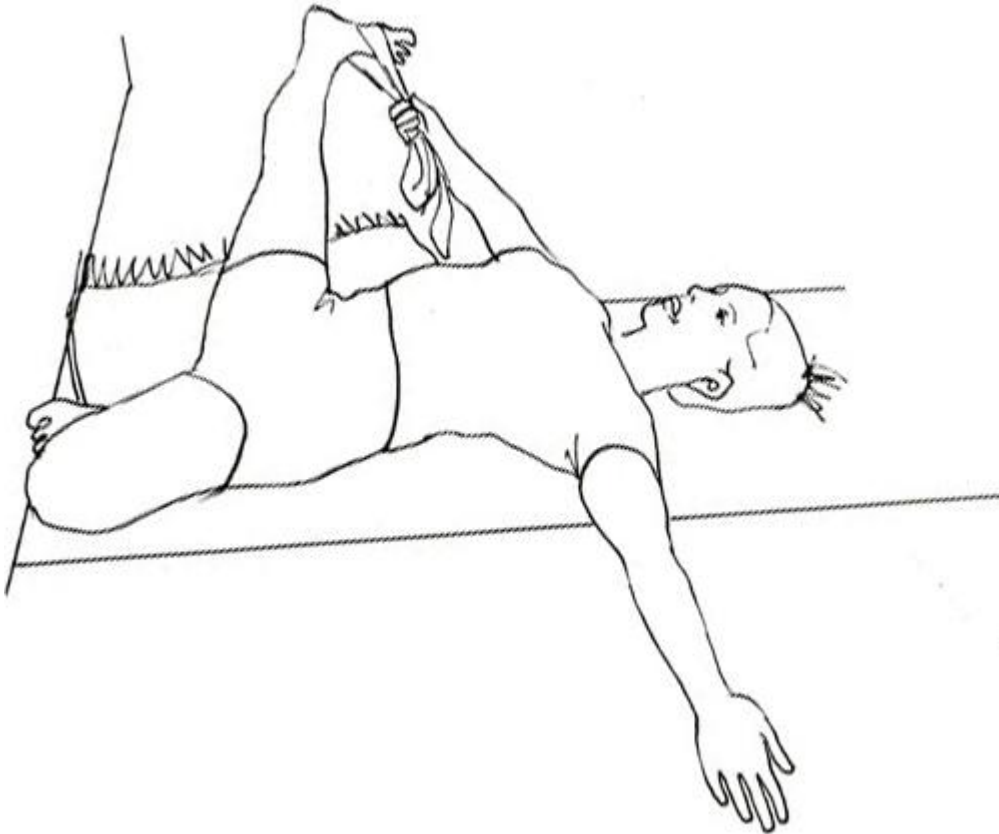
Supta Padangusthasana I with leg up

Supta Padangusthasana I with leg to the side

Supta Baddha Konasana with one leg straight

Benefits: This challenging variation of Supta Baddha Konasana opens up the hip joints, and lengthens the adductor muscles.

Prepare: Sit on a yoga mat close to and facing a wall with the soles of your feet together. Turn your toes out (keeping the heels and the balls of the feet together) and brace them against the wall.



Practice: Place the strap around the arch of your right foot. Straighten your right leg out to the side. To prevent your body from tipping over to the side, you may place a sand bag at the very top of the left thigh, and the rolled blanket under the right thigh. Allow the hip-bones to widen. Extend out through your inner right heel. Draw back from your outer right heel toward your right hip socket.

Return your right leg to the Baddha Konasana position. Change sides.

To come out: Pull your knees together. Roll over to the side and sit up.

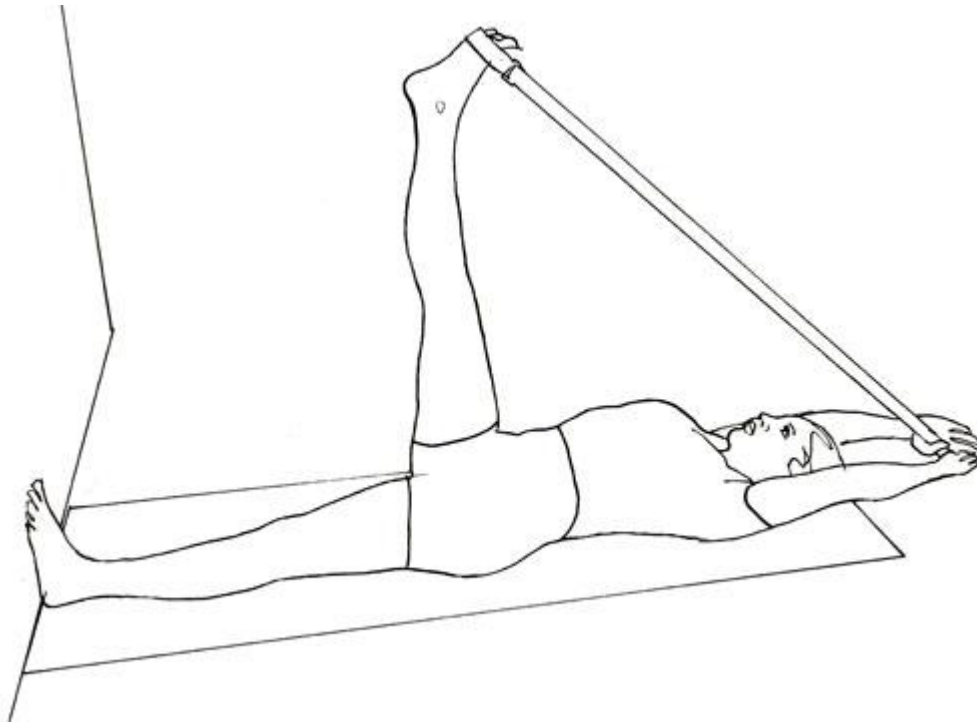
Supta Padangusthasana with one leg up

Benefits: Promotes flexibility in the hamstrings and hips. This seemingly simple pose is tremendously effective: it creates traction in the lower back and strengthens the abdominal muscles. Regular practice relieves low back pain, and stretches out lumbar spine compression and disc or sacral degeneration. So, not only should you practice this pose to maintain the health of the lower back, if you put your back out, this is (one of) the poses that will remedy the situation.

Begin: Lie on your back, perpendicular to a wall. Place the soles of your feet against the wall, with your heels on the floor.

Bend your knees slightly and with your hands slide the skin of your buttocks and sacrum toward the wall. Then push your heels into the wall and straighten your legs. You will feel the traction in the lumbar spine that this adjustment gives you. If your head doesn't rest comfortably on the floor, support it with a folded blanket. Hooking your thumbs, extend your arms above your head. Change the hook of your thumbs and repeat. Press both thighs down and see if you can get them to touch the floor. Press the inner edges of your heels into the wall. Draw your toes away from the wall.

Undo the hook of the thumbs. Bend your right knee, and hug your thigh toward you. Internally rotate your inner left thigh and press it to the floor. Push your left heel and the mound of your left big toe actively into the wall.



There are several ways of working with a strap: Variation 1). The illustration shows a method that opens up the shoulder joints as you work with the legs.

Here is another method: Variation 2). Loop a strap around the arch of the right foot and hold the strap in both hands. Inhale and without disturbing your left leg, straighten the knee, until the leg is perpendicular to the floor.

Practice: If your right buttock lifts off the floor, or if your knee simply doesn't straighten, lower the right leg a bit, but do keep both knees locked.

If the left thigh pops up away from the floor, press it back down. Align your left and right hip bones with each other: roll your right buttock bone toward your left heel to bring the right side of your trunk to the the same length as the left. You almost cannot overdo this action - almost everyone needs to do it more. While your right foot moves toward you, the head of the right femur bone must move away (in the direction of your foot on the floor).

Arms: (Still Variation 2), walk your hands up the strap until the elbows are fully extended. Do not let the arms be pulled up from the shoulders by the strength of the leg. Keep the shoulders pulling strongly down toward the floor.

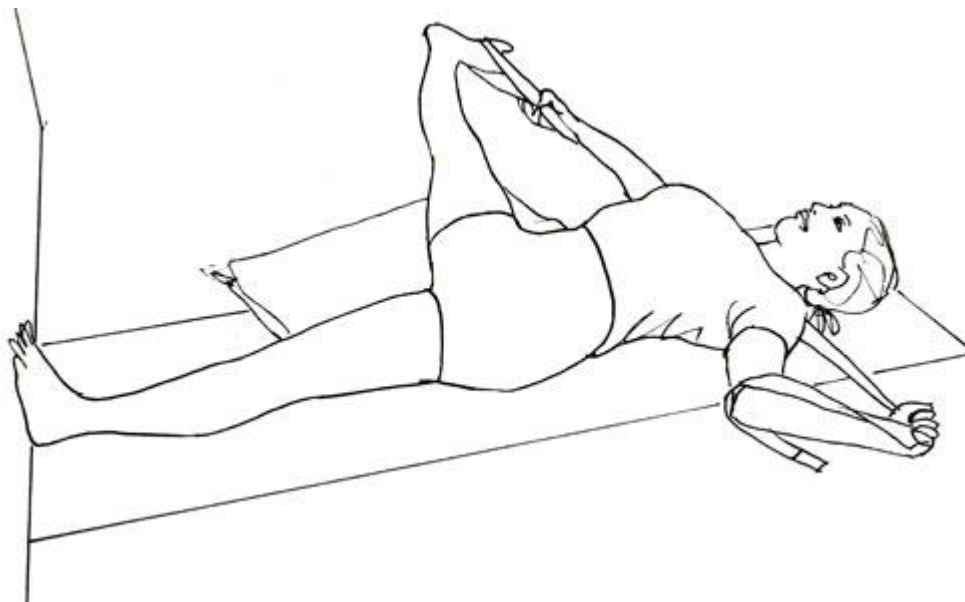
'Connect' your upper arm bones back into the arm sockets: Draw the upper arm muscles onto the upper arm bone and 'scrub' them up the bone toward the shoulder joints. Press the outer shoulder blades into the floor. Widen the collarbones away from the sternum.

Legs: Extend up first through the back of the right heel, and once the back of the leg between the heel and sitting bone is fully lengthened, lift through the ball of the big toe. Release the head of the right thigh-bone more deeply into the pelvis.

Hold the vertical position of the leg anywhere from 1 to 3 minutes.

Supta Padangusthasana 1 with leg to the side

Benefits: Stretches tight hamstrings, groins, and adductor muscles. Often times low back and sacrum pain is accompanied by tightness in the groins and inner thighs, so this pose is especially beneficial for those who suffer from sciatica. Knees are strengthened. The prostate gland is stimulated. Women experience relief from menstrual discomfort. This pose may also help in cases of infertility.

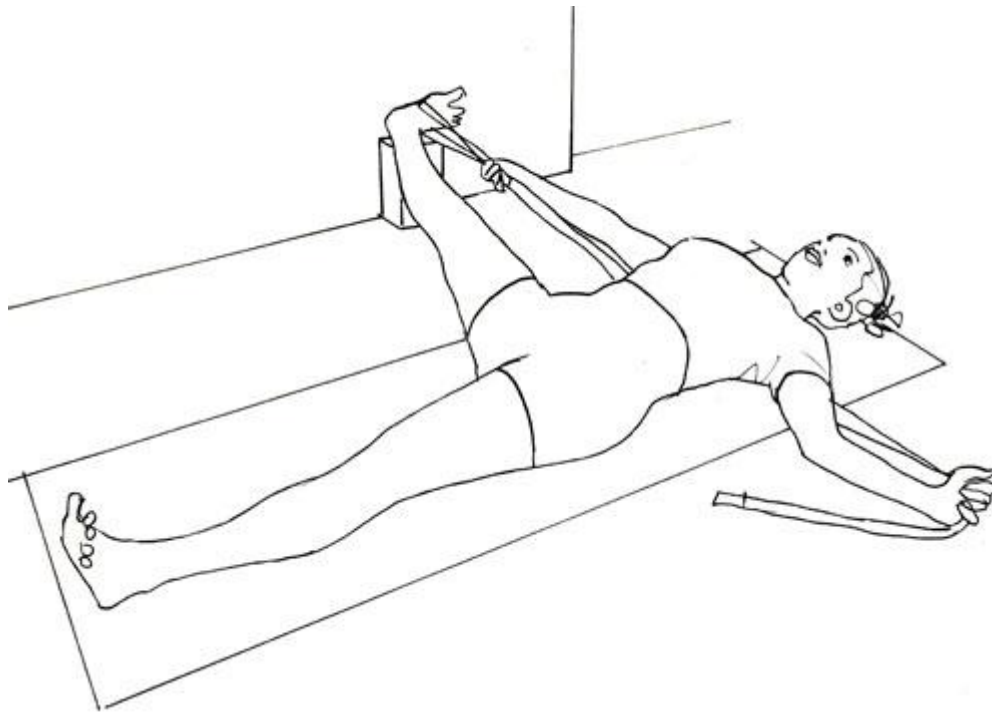


Begin: Remain on the floor, perpendicular to a wall, as for Supta Padangustasana 1, With The Legs Up. Place the soles of your feet against the wall, with your heels on the floor. Take the right leg up first, as described. Place a folded blanket just under the right buttock. (Try also having a rolled blanket flushed up against the right side of your pelvis and trunk to help you maintain a level pelvis.) Make a loop in the strap and place the arch of your foot in the loop. Place the fingers of your right hand in the loop. Thread the strap under your upper back and hold the other end of the strap in your left hand. Turn your right thigh outward from the hip joint, so the knee and toes look to the right. Pinning the top of the left thigh to the floor, exhale and take the right leg out to the right.

Pause for a moment halfway down, and pay particular attention that the right hip does not hike up toward your armpit. Draw the right buttock bone down strongly toward your left foot to lengthen the right side of your torso and to keep the hip bones aligned.

Keeping the legs straight and the left side grounded extend out from your inner right thigh to your inner right heel (without allowing the pelvis to tip to the right) and again, move your outer right hip and buttock away from your head toward the left foot. Draw your outer right thigh into your hip socket. Roll your navel toward the left leg side to keep your sacral area flat on the floor.

Make sure that you don't over-rotate the right thigh in its socket: The outer edge of your right foot should be exactly parallel to the floor. I.e., don't tip your toes to the floor.



Variation: Place a block against the wall. Lie alongside and leg distance from the wall. Place your right leg in line with your hip, on the block. If the block isn't tall enough or if your left hip lifts off the floor, add another block or some blankets, or use the seat of a chair for support.

PRACTICE NOTES:

To open your right groin and work on lengthening your inner thigh muscles, align your foot with your right hip. To lengthen your hamstring muscles, align your foot with your right shoulder.

Pay attention to the alignment of the upper body: press your right shoulder down toward the floor and then broadening your chest, move across from the right shoulder to the left, and press the left shoulder to the floor. Keep the collarbones parallel to the pelvic heads.

Relax your face and throat and take a few smooth exhalations. Look up at the ceiling, keeping your head, chest, and abdomen centered. Keep your spine elongated. Avoid the tendency to raise the chin and collapse the back neck.

Hold the side position from 1 to 3 minutes. On an inhalation, bring your right leg back to 90 degrees, bend the knee, release the strap then slowly release your leg to the floor. Extend out through both heels before changing sides.

Coming out: On an inhalation, bring your right leg back to 90 degrees, bend it toward your chest, and release it to the floor. Change sides.