

THE YOGA POSERS

BHUJANGASANA

COBRA POSE IS A BELLY BACKBEND THAT OPENS THE HEART

BIOMECHANIC BASICS	Category: Backbend. Spine extends, Hips extend. Feet plantar flex. Shoulders mildly extend and externally rotate. Wrists extend.
BENEFITS	This pose stretches the anterior superficial and deep myofascial lines, from head to toes. Energizing. Expands the capacity of the front ribcage to inhale (especially the bucket handle lift). Strengthens and shortens the often weak and long back body and stretches the often tight, short front body.
COMMON COMPLAINTS	Low back pain, neck pain, wrist pain, shoulder pain, sole of foot cramping.
COMMON MISALIGNMENTS	Stiff students: Fail to arch the low back and overly tuck the pelvis. Over-engaged or gripping gluteals and abdominals' overall too tense. Flexi Students: Too much lumbar arching with lax abdominals and gluteals, overall too loose. Shoulders round forward and interiorly rotate. Elbows lock. Pelvis hovers off ground. Relaxed legs and feet. Upper back too round.
VARIATIONS	Sphinx Pose on forearms is milder & easier on the wrists. "Bulldog" Cobra (arms in 'goal post' with hands turned inwards) sets the shoulders on the back. Wide legs helps the back arch more; narrow legs reduces the arch.
THERAPEUTIC APPLICATIONS	Blanket under the ASIS and belly reduce excessive anterior pelvic tilt. Blanket closer to the lower pelvis and hip crease reduces excessive posterior pelvic tilt. Raising the hands on blocks helps the chest lift and makes it easier to get the shoulders back.



FAVORITE CUES

- Lift your low belly (flexis)
- Relax your belly (stiff)
- Isometrically pull back with your hands (stiff)
- Isometrically press forward with your hands (flexis)
- Press all ten toes down
- Lift the root of the thigh by firming your 'thut'