

Contract and Expand to Find the Center




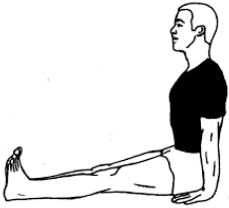
Twists are of are two types. They open with a broad abdomen, or they cross over and cause the abdomen to deeply withdraw. At times we aren't even in a twist, but because of the position of the legs we have a more open or withdrawn abdomen.

Twists that close against a leg like revolved triangle generally expand the back body. While a more open twist like a forward triangle tends to broaden the front. Work carefully, not forcibly, and witness the poses.

Start with the invocation. Or sit quietly for a while considering the process of going within and how that brings us to a center. Consider how reaching out to the unknown brings growth. Use the first set of asanas to draw your attention inward; specifically, towards the region of the abdomen.

Seated Asanas – draw your attention to the abdomen. We can call this “mental confinement”.





Sit tall while watching and listening to your breath. Hold each pose for 3-5 minutes. Start to perceive the broadened versus withdrawn abdomen. Never protrude the abdomen. At times breath more fully and actively, other times slow and soft.

<p>Baddha Konasana</p>	<p>Sit on height as needed</p> <p>Release the thighs as you broaden the abdomen</p> <p>Keep chest lifted with arm support</p>	
<p>Virasana</p>	<p>Use height under hips and between feet</p> <p>Lift chest</p> <p>Prolong exhalations</p>	
<p>Upavistha Konasana</p>	<p>Sit on adequate height</p> <p>Straighten the knees</p> <p>Lift the chest while you broaden your abdominal region</p>	
<p>Dandasana</p>	<p>Sit on a blanket</p> <p>Hold the legs together</p> <p>Making the hips narrow</p>	

Seated Twists

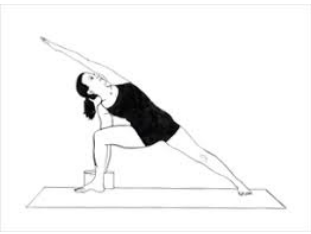

Generally, we extend upward or along the spine when we inhale and revolve with the exhalation. Repeat the set a few times. Once in the pose hold and take a few breaths at different latitudes of your torso.



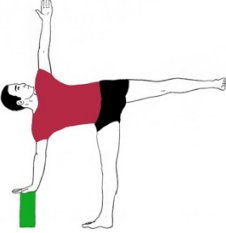



* Tight closed abdominal twists should not be practiced when menstruating.

Bharadvajasana I	Sit on some height Lift your chest without arching low back Practice with head turned with the twist and also, away from the twist	
Marichyasana III	Sit on some height Use height under back hand if helpful	
Bharadvajasana II	Carefully support the padmasana leg and knee with a blanket Use belt to help reach foot if needed	
Ardha Matsyendrasana	A blanket under the hips helps with balance Back hand can use the wall or block	

Standing Asanas





Feel free to edit out some if you like. But keep the pairs of two so you can continue the contrast and compare exercise of a broad abdomen or a withdrawn abdomen. Don't force, do the pose, then observe where more effort could be useful. You can try each set of 2 in many different ways – back to the wall, facing the wall, back foot to the wall, or independently.

Utthita Parsvakonasana	Use the support of wall and block if needed Creating a deep bent leg groin Roll abdomen open towards the ceiling	
Parivrtta Parsvakonasana	Cross down arm over bent leg Allow back heel to lift for better twisting Twist more after or while exhaling	



<p>Utthita Trikonasana</p>	<p>Use a block as needed Keep legs straight Roll abdomen and chest towards the ceiling</p>	
<p>Parivrtta Trikonasana</p>	<p>Cross arm over the front leg The top hand can stay on waist Turn more after or while exhaling</p>	
<p>Ardha Chandrasana</p>	<p>Use wall support as needed The top hand can stay on waist Open pelvis and chest towards the ceiling There is a lot of space to open</p>	
<p>Parivrtta Ardha Chandrasana</p>	<p>Use wall support as needed Enter from Parivrtta Trikonasana Keep hips level as you twist more deeply.</p>	
<p>Parsva Hasta Padangusthasana</p>	<p>Use belt to reach foot if needed Standing leg strong Use wall for balance</p>	
<p>Parivrtta Hasta Padangusthasana</p>	<p>Use wall for support Standing leg strong Use the breath to help you twist</p>	



Inversion Preparation – If you don't do headstand you can begin with this prep.

Notice with these 3 standing forward bends that during exhalation your abdomen takes on a different internal shape. Skip down to Setu Bandha set if not doing inversions.

<p>Prasarita Padottanasana</p>	<p>Use height under the head if needed Anchor outer foot Lift inner thighs</p>	
<p>Uttanasana</p>	<p>Lift inner thighs, even hold block there Roll pelvis over the lifted and narrow abdomen Relax face</p>	
<p>Adho Mukha Svanasana</p>	<p>Use support such as hands or heels to wall, elbow belt, and/or head support Lift abdomen Lengthen side chest</p>	
<p>Ardha Sirsasana</p>	<p>Place hands carefully Lift shoulders Raise abdomen</p>	

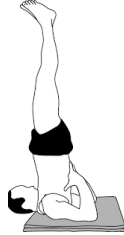



Sirsasana with different leg positions. Evaluate how changing the legs affects the shape of the abdomen. Use the wall as needed. If using the wall remember you have to twist first with legs together before you can do the Virasana or split legs. Skip this section if you aren't confident yet with your headstand.

<p>Sirsasana I</p>	<p>Hold steadily for a few minutes before attempting the variations. Keep shoulders lifted Legs firm will better define abdomen shape</p>	
<p>Parsva Sirsasana</p>	<p>Keep both legs rolling into each other Twist the pelvis without separating the legs If twisting right, turn right armpit left and vice versa</p>	

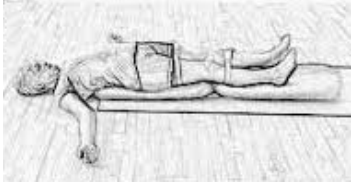

Virasana in Sirsasana	<p>Maintain shoulder lift</p> <p>Lift buttocks</p> <p>Bent legs together</p> <p>Compare this abdomen to the next pose</p>	
Parivrtta Ekapada Sirsasana	<p>If using wall twist first with legs together</p> <p>Leg nearest the wall moves back</p> <p>Notice different abdomen because of different legs</p>	

Sarvangasana

Hold your shoulderstand still for at least 3 minutes. After all the twisting with a broad abdomen or narrow abdomen notice the sense of center that has developed. When you do the leg variations study the difference in the abdomen from pose to pose.

Salamba Sarvangasana	<p>Use adequate blanket height</p> <p>Keep legs firm</p> <p>Notice change in the abdomen compared to headstand</p>	
Parsva Ekapada Sarvangasana	<p>Keep hips level when you lower one leg sideways</p> <p>Not necessary to go to the floor</p> <p>Watch how abdomen changes when you change your legs</p>	
Halasana	<p>Bring legs to a chair or bolster if the floor is too difficult</p> <p>Keep hips lifted</p> <p>Note change in the abdomen</p>	
Supta Konasana	<p>Keep legs firm</p> <p>Lift hips</p> <p>Broaden abdomen as you do your legs</p>	

Setu Bandha Sarvangasana – With open chest prolong exhalations observing how the breath reveals the internal shape of the abdomen.

Setubandha Sarvangasana On bolsters	Use blocks or blankets if you don't have bolster Let groins settle down	
Viparita Karani Wide Legs	Let abdomen, groins, and entire legs expand	

Savasana

Place yourself very carefully. Be mindful of the midline. Extend, expand, and be still in the center.

