

Pose of the month, May 2008

NAVASANA = BOAT POSE

(NA-VA-SANA)

NAVA = BOAT ASANA = POSE

Boat is a great pose to feel and get in touch with the breath. It's a powerful pose, invigorating similar to warrior. Victor

This pose is very hard for me because it requires abdominal and deep hip flexor strengthener! It requires you to balance on the tripod of your sitting bones and tailbone. While the lower belly should be firm, it shouldn't get hard and thick. Try to keep the lower belly relatively flat. Press the heads of the thigh bones toward the floor to help anchor the pose and lift the top sternum. Breathe easily. Tip the chin slightly toward the sternum so the base of the skull lifts lightly away from the back of the neck. Paddy

Navasana is a wonderful abdominal and spine strengthener. Not only do you get a chance to work these muscles in a different relationship to gravity, you also get a chance to lengthen and stabilize at the same time, bringing in a component of balance which is unique to yoga. Navasana is very stimulating for the 2nd Chakra, Svadhithana, which is the fluid center of the body. This allows one to tap into the creative water element of the body, while keeping in mind the image of a majestic boat floating on the waters of the earth. So find your Boat Pose, go with the flow, and tap into your creative energy!! Carole

Love boat pose! This was my alternative to half locust when after surgery when I couldn't lay on my belly for months. Belly to spine, strong abs really help. Balance on the sits bones and extend arms and legs, all very actively engaged. Spread your collarbones wide. Anne

Boat Pose strengthens the abdominal wall and the deep hip flexors. For me boat is challenging; I start seated with legs bent and then I come back onto my hands and elbows onto the floor then I raise my legs up (adds support for the back if needed). Theresa H.

In this pose, it's most important to not cave into the chest. Lengthen from the pubis to the heart and keep the back straight. I really like to lift the heart and relax the scapula to find the lift and stay in the pose longer. Also try to keep the abdominal muscles from becoming too hard. Lisa K.

I found Navasana extremely fatiguing for months when I was learning to do the Primary Series, but now that my core is strong, I love it and almost always include it in vinyasa classes. I like to repeat a series of three mid-class and have the students place blocks under the hands and lift the seat off the floor with crossed feet between repetitions of the pose. Experienced students can place hands on the floor. Nothing strengthens the core and front legs like that! I also like to perform Bastrika breathing (forceful exhales through the nose by pumping the belly, or "panting like a dog") for 15 reps while holding Navasana with as long a spine as possible, heart lifted. My cues: Long spine, no rounding, keep heart lifted like it's being pulled toward the ceiling, and chest and legs working towards each other. Modifications: Grip behind the bent knees with hands, knees bent as you build strength, or always if you have any disc problems. Lynn S.

While in this pose activate the toes! No matter which variation you are practicing, by keeping the energy flowing all the way to the toes you can keep the legs from getting too heavy. From the toes this baseline of energy can also be lengthening upwards to the crown via the long and reaching spine! Think of the proverbial bungee cord stretching the entire length of your body! Keefer

In my limited experience with this pose I have found that strength through the inner thighs is very helpful, using energy all the way through the toes, keeps the energy flowing along the leg out from the body. I also think that the more concentration on the widening of the collarbones the better position I find my back in ~ straighter!

Ron