

Significance of Setu Bandha Sarvangasana in Healthy Life

Dr. Jyoti Gangwal¹, Dr. Sanjay Kholiya², Dr. Neha Kumawat³, Dr. Vikash Bhatnagar⁴

^{1,2,3}PG Scholar, ⁴Associate Professor,

^{1,3,4}Department of Sharir Rachana, ²Department of RSBK,

^{1,2,3,4}National institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the science of life. It plays an important role to prevent and treat the disease. *Ayurveda* specifically deals with mind body balance. The main part of it is *Yoga* and *Asana*. *Yoga* provide us a simple remedies, facile skills and procedure of good health. *Asana* gives physical and mental power and tone the body-mind for further exercise. *Setu Bandha SarvangAsana* is often referred to as the Bridge Pose. This *Asana* stretches and tones the neck, spine, and chest. Practicing this *Asana* reduces depression, stress, and anxiety and calms the brain. The lungs are opened up, and thyroid problems are reduced. *Setu Bandha SarvangAsana* (Bridge Pose) greatly benefits pregnant women and also helps alleviate menstrual pain and symptoms of menopause. It also aids high blood pressure, sinusitis, asthma, insomnia, and osteoporosis.

KEYWORDS: *Yoga, Asana, Setu Bandha SarvangAsana, Bridge Pose, Menopause*

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INTRODUCTION

Setu Bandha SarvangAsana or bridge pose is a common posture or *Asana*. (Sanskrit: सेतुबन्धासन; Setu – Bridge, *Bandha* – Bind/Lock, *Asana* – Pose/Posture; Pronounced as SAY-tuh-bun-DHAHS-ana.)

This *Asana* gets its name from the Sanskrit words 'Setu', which means bridge, 'Bandha', which means lock, and 'Asana', which means pose. This pose resembles the structure of a bridge, and therefore, it is named as such. This pose stretches your back, neck, and chest and relaxes your body.

This *Asana* must be done when your bowels and stomach are absolutely empty. Make sure you have your meals at least four to six hours before the practice. Your food will be digested, and there will be enough energy to expend. Although it is best to practice this *Asana* in the morning, you could also practice it in the evening.

- **Level:** Basic
- **Style:** Vinyasa
- **Duration:** 30 to 60 Seconds
- **Repetition:** None
- **Stretches:** Thorax, Neck, Vertebral column
- **Strengthens:** Legs, Back, Neck, Chest

Steps-

1. 1.Begin the *Asana* by lying flat on your back.

2. Bend your knees and place your feet on the floor hip-width apart. Make sure that your ankles and knees are placed in a straight line.
3. Let your arms rest beside your body, with your palms facing downwards.
4. Inhale, and lift your back (lower, upper, and middle) off the floor. Roll in your shoulders, and make sure your chin touches your chest without you having to move it. Let your shoulders, feet, and arms support your weight.
5. Firm up your buttocks as you tighten them. Make sure your thighs are parallel to each other and the floor.
6. Interlace your fingers and push your hands harder to the ground to lift your torso higher.
7. Hold the posture for at least a minute. Breathe slowly and deeply.
8. Exhale and release the pose.





Fig. Setu Bandha SarvangAsana

Benefits-

Top benefits of bridge pose (*Setu BandhAsana*)- This *Asana* helps to strengthen the muscles of the back. The stretch also helps to relieve the stress trapped in the back. This *Asana* stretches and tones the neck, spine, and chest. Practicing this *Asana* reduces depression, stress, and anxiety and calms the brain. The lungs are opened up, and thyroid problems are reduced. This *Asana* also massages the digestive organs, thereby helping to improve digestion. This *Asana* greatly benefits pregnant women and also helps alleviate menstrual pain and symptoms of menopause. It also aids high blood pressure, sinusitis, asthma, insomnia, and osteoporosis. With regular practice of this *Asana*, blood circulation is improved too.

The health benefits of this yoga pose are many. Some of the important benefits of this yoga *Asana* are being mentioned below:

- **Thyroid treatment:** Providing appropriate stretch on the back leads to suitable massage to the neck. In fact, it helps to regulate the functions of thyroid gland thereby helpful in releasing thyroxin hormone.
- **Relieves back pain:** This *Asana* provides the spine a backward movement and correct stretching, which is helpful in easing back ache and strengthens the back.
- **Good for neck pain:** The yoga pose removes strain from the neck.
- **Good for tennis elbow:** If one raises one’s back by holding his ankle, it exerts effective stretch on the elbow and may be helpful in treatment of tennis elbow.
- **Healthy nervous system:** Since this *Asana* gives healthy and flexible spine thus good for the better health of the nervous system.
- **Good for mind and body:** The yoga posture provides good health to nerves, which indirectly control the smooth coordination of body and mind.
- **Massage the Colon:** It facilitates suitable stretches and massages to the abdominal organs, especially the colon.
- **Good for brain:** It has calming effect to the brain thus helpful in reducing stress, depression and anxiety.
- **Enhance digestion:** It improves digestion.
- **Osteoporosis:** It is also suggested to those who have having the problems of Osteoporosis.
- **Good for asthma:** It enlarges the horizon of chest and shoulder while performing. Accordingly, works upon the expansion of the lungs.
- **Strengthens buttocks:** This *Asana* is effective in making the buttocks stronger.
- **Menopause problems:** It helps to ease out the problems related with menopause.

- **Strengthens legs:** The pose is good for weak and tired legs. Take a look at some amazing benefits of bridge pose.

Precautions and Contraindications-

These are some points of caution you must keep in mind while you practice this *Asana*.

1. People who are suffering from a neck injury must either completely avoid this *Asana*, or do it with a doctor’s permission under a certified yoga instructor.
2. Pregnant women may do this *Asana*, but not to the full capacity. They must do it under the guidance of a yoga expert. If they are in their third trimester, they must do this *Asana* with a doctor’s consent.
3. If you have back problems, you must avoid this *Asana*.

Beginner’s Tips-

Beginners must keep in mind that when they roll their shoulders underneath, they must not pull them away forcefully from the ears. This will tend to overstretch their necks. Gently lift the tops of the shoulders towards the ear while pushing the insides of the shoulder blades away from the spine.

Anatomy- Bridge Pose (*setu* = dam, dike, or bridge, *bandha* = lock)

setubandha = the forming of a causeway or bridge , a dam or bridge

It can be a challenge to find full hip extension in this pose without also adducting or externally rotating at the hip joints. If the hamstrings and adductor magnus are not strong enough, the gluteus maximus may do too much and pull the legs into external rotation, the other adductors (such as the pectineus) may activate to bring the knees together but also flex the hips, or the rectus femoris may work to extend the knees but interfere with the ability to extend the hips.

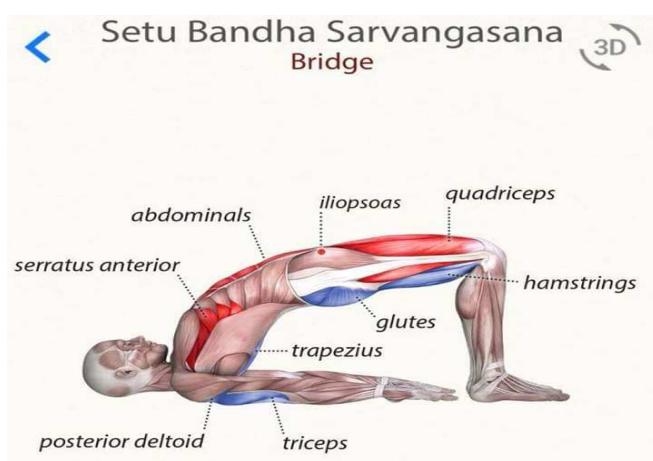


Fig. Setu Bandha SarvangAsana

Spinal extensors (especially lumbar) may be useful, but too much lumbar extension is not helpful because it may limit hip extension by putting tension on the psoas complex. While the final position of the knees is actually a flexed shape, the action of coming into the pose is one of extension because it is moving from more flexion to less flexion.

The elevation of the scapulae moves the shoulder blades into the floor, which then lifts the rib cage away from the floor. It is important that the scapulae are not depressed or pulled down the back in this position, because that action moves

the scapulae away from the cervical spine, leaving the flexed neck to bear the weight of the upper body.

The action in the arms is also the foundation for *Salamba SarvangAsana* and *Viparita Karani*; the action in the hips and legs is the same as for lifting into *Urdhva DhanurAsana*.

All in all, considering the many muscle actions that must be balanced for this pose to work, sustaining this basic posture actually requires a high degree of coordination.

Therapeutic application-

This pose, also called the Bridge Pose, completely opens up the heart, chest, and shoulders. The back of the neck, the hip flexors, the spine, and the thighs also get a good stretch.

Your heart is placed higher than your head in this *Asana*, and therefore, it is considered a mild inversion. Yet, it gives you all the benefits of an inversion i.e., relief from anxiety, fatigue, stress, insomnia, headaches, and mild depression. It calms the mind and reduces the blood pressure, in fact, normalizing it. The opening of the chest entails an increase in the lung capacity, and therefore, this *Asana* greatly benefits those suffering from asthma.

This *Asana* stimulates the thyroid glands and helps regulate metabolism. It is a great *Asana* for those who spend the whole day in front of the computer, owing to their jobs. The stretch in the knees and shoulders acts like a massage, therefore refreshing and rejuvenating the practitioner.

This is a fairly simple *Asana* that has a whole lot of benefits, owing to the stretching of almost the entire body. You must definitely add it to your usual workout regimen.

Advanced Pose Variations-

To deepen the pose, once you are comfortable in the pose, lift your heels off the floor, and push your tailbone up, closer to the pubis.

You could also try the *Eka Pada Setu Bandha SarvangAsana*.



RIGHT



LEFT

Fig. Eka Pada Setu Bandha SarvangAsana.

Once you take position, lift your right knee, right into the torso. Inhale, and stretch the leg that is perpendicular to the floor. Stay in position for at least 30 seconds. Then, exhale and release the foot. Lock in the foot again, and repeat the same on the left leg for an equal amount of time.

Preparatory Poses-

BhujangAsana
VirAsana
Adho Mukha SvanAsana

Follow-Up Poses-

Eka Pada Setu Bandha Sarvangasana
SarvangAsana
ChakrAsana
Udharva DhanurAsana

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