

Linking with Baddha Konasana

As teachers and students we learn to link action(s) in poses to other poses. Some links are easily perceived and understood while others are not so clear. In the following sequence the action of Baddha Konasana is the primary link.

First let us look at the actions that are necessary to bring the legs downward into Baddha Konasana and what is the major area that restricts taking the legs downward. When sitting in Baddha Konasana the ankles and knees are in flexion, the thighs are externally rotated and abducted at the hip joint. When the thighs are limited in their ability to move downward it generally indicates that the inner thigh muscles are contracted. Tight inner thigh muscles restrict abduction and external rotation.

A moveable joint is controlled by two opposing sets of muscles, extensor and flexors, i.e. antagonist and agonist, which I refer to as complimentary muscles groups.

Even though the instruction to “stretch from the inner thigh to the inner knee” may be given to take the thighs down, anatomically muscles do not stretch “on-their- own.” Tight muscles get elongated through reciprocal inhibition. (*Reciprocal inhibition describes the process where muscle groups on one side of a joint contract, which in turn signal their compliment muscle group on the other side to relax*). Therefore, to take the thighs down in Baddha Konasana the abductors of the thighs and external rotators at the hip must contract strongly to signal the inner thigh muscles to relax so that as the femurs get pulled downward the inner thigh muscles get elongated.

Also keep in mind that movement happens to the less stable part of the body at the joint. In Baddha Konasana the pelvis is stable and the thighbones are the less stable, so when contraction is made the thigh moves downward. When the legs are stable, that same contraction at the joint will cause the pelvis to move.

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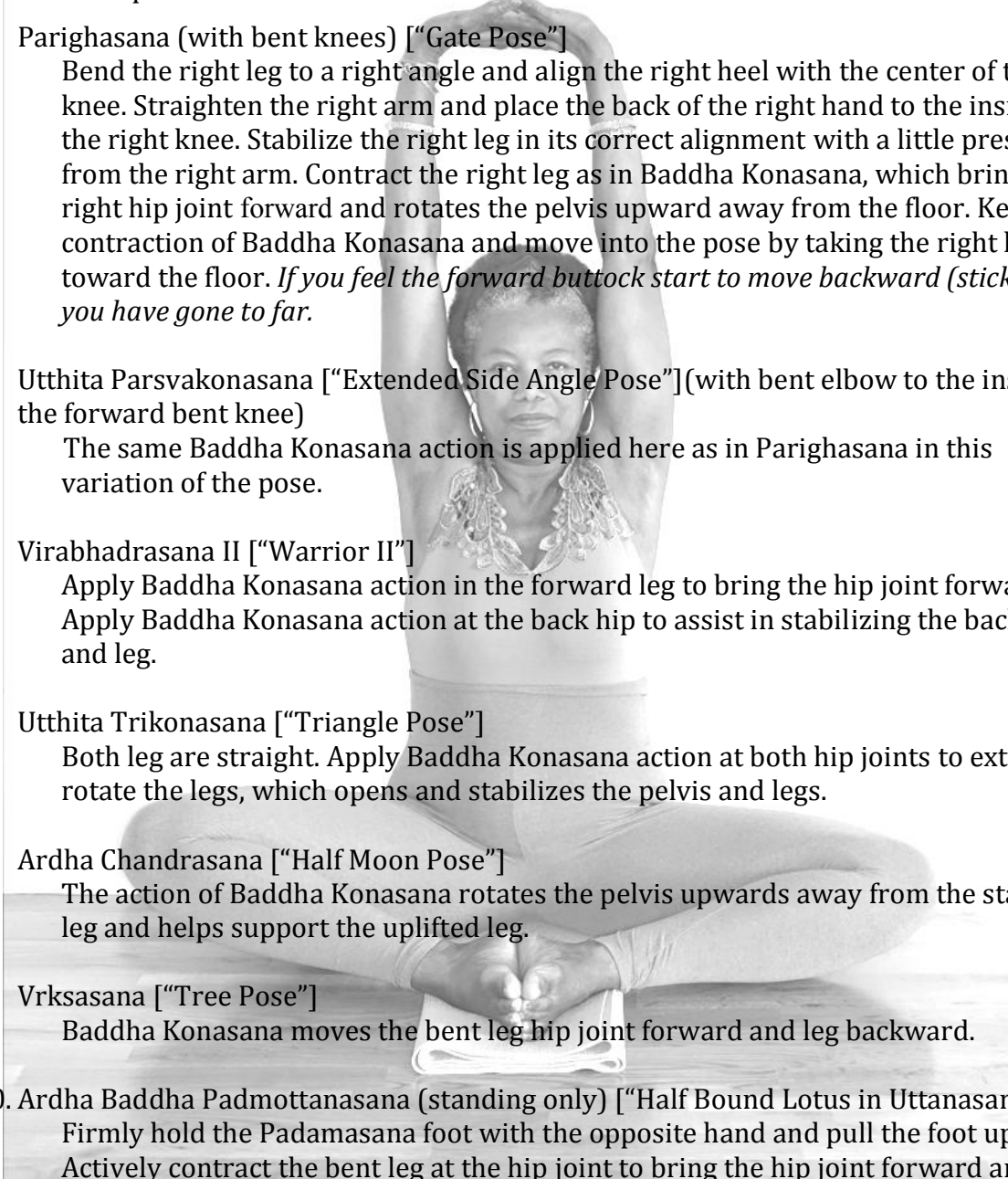
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Model: Jaki Nett

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Sequence

1. Adho Mukha Virasana ["Child's Pose"]
2. Adho Mukha Svanasana ["Downward Facing Dog"]
3. Baddha Konasana ["Bound Angle"]
Sit in Baddha Konasana, spine lifted. Contract the muscles on the outside of the thighs as though pulling an attached strap from the lateral head of the fibula toward the hipbone and toward the midline of the sacrum.
4. Parighasana (with bent knees) ["Gate Pose"]
Bend the right leg to a right angle and align the right heel with the center of the left knee. Straighten the right arm and place the back of the right hand to the inside of the right knee. Stabilize the right leg in its correct alignment with a little pressure from the right arm. Contract the right leg as in Baddha Konasana, which brings the right hip joint forward and rotates the pelvis upward away from the floor. Keep the contraction of Baddha Konasana and move into the pose by taking the right hand toward the floor. *If you feel the forward buttock start to move backward (stick out) you have gone to far.*
5. Utthita Parsvakonasana ["Extended Side Angle Pose"] (with bent elbow to the inside of the forward bent knee)
The same Baddha Konasana action is applied here as in Parighasana in this variation of the pose.
6. Virabhadrasana II ["Warrior II"]
Apply Baddha Konasana action in the forward leg to bring the hip joint forward. Apply Baddha Konasana action at the back hip to assist in stabilizing the back pelvis and leg.
7. Utthita Trikonasana ["Triangle Pose"]
Both leg are straight. Apply Baddha Konasana action at both hip joints to externally rotate the legs, which opens and stabilizes the pelvis and legs.
8. Ardha Chandrasana ["Half Moon Pose"]
The action of Baddha Konasana rotates the pelvis upwards away from the standing leg and helps support the uplifted leg.
9. Vrksasana ["Tree Pose"]
Baddha Konasana moves the bent leg hip joint forward and leg backward.
10. Ardha Baddha Padmottanasana (standing only) ["Half Bound Lotus in Uttanasana"]
Firmly hold the Padmasana foot with the opposite hand and pull the foot upward. Actively contract the bent leg at the hip joint to bring the hip joint forward and the knee backward to line up with the supporting legs knee. *(Be sensitive that the buttocks do not stick out)*



11. Prasarita Padottanasana I ["Wide Leg Forward Bend"] (hands flat on the floor and head down)
12. Uttanasana ["Forward Bend"] (feet apart)
13. Sirsasana ["Headstand"] with:
 - Baddha Konasana (beginning level)
 - Padmasana (Intermediate/advance level)The actions of Baddha Konasana lift the knees upwards and bring the hip joint forward.
14. Salamba Sarvangasana ["Shoulder Balance"] with:
 - Baddha Konasana (beginning level)
 - Padmasana (Intermediate/advance level)
15. Halasana ["Plough Pose"]
16. Dandasana ["Staff Pose"]
17. Adho Mukha Baddha Konasana ["Downward Facing Bound Angle"]
 - Hold the shins, ankles or feet. Contract strongly at the hip joints and move that contraction toward the midline of the sacrum. Hold this strong contraction and fold forward.
18. Maha Mudra ["The Great Seal"]
 - One leg is in Dandasana. Baddha Konasana alignment and action in the bent leg.
19. Siddhasana ["Siddha" = perfected being]
20. Janu Sirsasana ["Head of the Knee Pose"]
 - The bent leg alignment is learned in Siddhasana, its action is Baddha Konasana.
21. Upavistha Konasana ["Seated Wide Angle Pose"]
 - Take the legs wide. Then to move the legs wider, slide the pelvis forward as the legs moves laterally away from the midline, i.e., Baddha Konasana action.
22. Dandasana ["Staff Pose"]
23. Parsva Dandasana ["Staff Pose twisting to Side"]
24. Marichyasana II
25. Paschimottanasana ["Stretch of the West Side"]
26. Savasana