



## POSE OF THE MONTH

June 2006

**Ardha Baddha Padma Paschimottanasana** – half bound lotus intense west stretch (Ardha means half, Baddha (similar to bandha) means bound, caught or restrained, padma means lotus, paschima means west, Uttana means intense.)

Forward bending with the foot in half lotus has a powerful effect on the liver and spleen. This is the purpose of forward bending with your heel pressing into your abdomen—to stimulate the liver and spleen.

### Method

- ॐ From Dandasana, place your right leg into the half lotus position, heel moving toward your navel, ankle on top of your left thigh and right knee moving toward left knee. Try to turn the sole of your foot upward as you bring your leg into half lotus, this will help to alleviate some twisting on the knee.
- ॐ Reach around your back with your right hand and try to *bind* or catch your foot. If you can not catch your foot, then try to catch your elbow, if you can not catch your elbow, then cradle your right leg in your arms working to stretch the hip (sometimes we need to work externally on the hip joint before we can work internally on the organs ;).
- ॐ With your left hand, catch the outer edge of your left foot if possible, inhale lift your head and extend your spine
- ॐ Exhale forward bending, forehead or chin moving toward your knee or shin. Take five deep steady breaths here.
- ॐ Inhale head up, exhale ground your hands, inhaling lift up for vinyasa or to switch your feet.



**Note of caution regarding knees and hips**, if you have knee problems half lotus needs to be approached very carefully. The lotus position puts a slight twist on the knee—some may need to avoid this position. Also, if you have tight hips and try forward bending with your leg in half lotus you may twist the knee further; as a general rule if you are bound hand to foot it is most likely safe for you to forward bend with your leg in lotus. If you are not bound this could be a sign of tight hips and forward bending should be done with caution, however if you have strong knees then forward bending is safe.



### Benefits

This asana benefits the liver and spleen; both organs play a part in the digestive processes. The liver controls digestion of fats and contributes to the control of your metabolism; the spleen purifies the blood and strengthens the immune system. Once the liver is working correctly the spleen is automatically corrected. Gastric problems and constipation are also alleviated with this asana.

A golden rule for correct digestion is 'the stomach should be filled half with food, one quarter with liquid, and one quarter air'.

