

# Upper Back Opening Sequence

Pixie has put together a sequence to help release tension in the upper back, and open up for fluid movement of the body. Beginning with forward bends and arm work with namaskar and gomukhasana, and working up to opening the upper back and shoulders with bharadvajasana and chatushpadasana.

## Sequence steps



### Supta Baddha Konasana

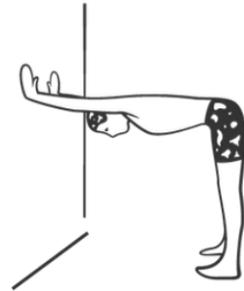
Reclining Bound Angle Pose  
3 minutes

Join your feet together, your heels pressed to your pelvis. Lie back over a bolster or other form of support. Relax and let your chest open. If necessary, use a strap to hold your feet in place.



### Simple Cross Legs Forward

30 seconds per side  
Sit with your legs crossed. Keep your sit-bones pointing down as you stretch your arms forward to capacity, lengthening your spine.



### Half Uttanasana

Half Forward Bend  
30 seconds

Stand in front of a wall. Keeping your back and legs straight, tip from your pelvis until your chest is parallel to the ground. Push your hands into the wall and stretch your hips backwards.



### Sirsasana Preparation

Headstand Preparation

5-6 breaths

Place your forearms flat on the floor next to a wall and interlock your fingers behind the back of your skull. Keeping your head on the floor and your back straight, start to walk your feet closer toward your trunk. Straighten your back and pull your hips up to capacity. This can also be done with your feet to the wall.



### Urdhva Baddhanguliyasana

Upward Salute with Interlocked Fingers

5-6 breaths per side

Stretch your arms in front of you and interlock your fingers. Turn your palms inside out and lift your arms up overhead, making sure to keep your shoulders open. Change the interlock of your fingers and repeat.



### Paschima Namaskar

Reverse Prayer Pose

5-8 breaths

Stand in Tadasana and spread your arms outward. Then bring your hands behind your back, join your palms together, and walk them up to capacity. If you lack wrist mobility, you can also simply grab hold of your elbows.



**Gomukhasana Arms**

Cow Face Pose  
5-8 breaths per side  
Extend your left arm up and the right one down. Bend your elbows and reach your hands toward each other from behind. If clasping them is not possible, use a belt or strap. Pull your elbows in opposite directions. Repeat on both sides.



**Adho Mukha Svanasana**

Downward-Facing Dog Pose  
45 seconds  
Press evenly into your hands and feet. The main aim is to elongate the back of your body while lifting your hips up as high off the ground as possible. If necessary, bend your knees a little but stay strong in the legs.



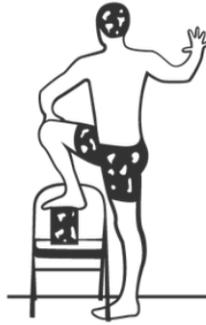
**Adho Mukha Vrksasana**

Handstand  
30 seconds  
Open your hands into the floor and strengthen your arms as you lift your body up, one leg at a time, into an inverted balance. Use the wall for support if necessary. If pushing yourself up proves to be too difficult, you can walk your feet up the wall.



**Bharadvajasana**

Bharadvaja's Twist  
4-5 breaths each side  
Bring your legs to one side. Place one hand on the knee - this will help you deepen the twist. The other hand can be placed on the floor, helping you twist even deeper. Alternatively, you can bring it behind your back until it joins the elbow of the other arm. Stretch upwards through the crown of your head.



**Utthita Marichyasana**

Extended Sage Marichi Pose  
4-5 breaths each side  
Place your feet parallel to the wall. Lift the leg closest to the wall up and place your foot on a chair. Twist your chest towards the wall and use your hand as leverage to go deeper into the twist.



**Chatushpadasana**

Four-Footed Pose  
5 breaths  
Lie down with your knees bent so that your feet are close to your buttocks. Grab onto your ankles and lift your hips up above the ground. Open your chest up and breathe.



**Simple Cross Legs Forward**

45 seconds per side  
Sit with your legs crossed. Keep your sit-bones pointing down as you stretch your arms forward to capacity, lengthening your spine.



**Lying Back Over Support (Step 1)**

1 minute  
Place support under your back and bend your legs. Your aim is to open and lift your chest as much as possible, so prepare extra blankets or bolsters.



**Lying Back Over Support (Step 2)**

1.5 minutes  
Place support under your back and lie down with your legs bent.



### **Lying Back Over Support (Step 3)**

1.5 minutes

Place support under your upper body, buttocks, and thighs. Lie down and breathe.



### **Supported Setu Bandha Sarvangasana**

Supported Bridge Pose

2 minutes

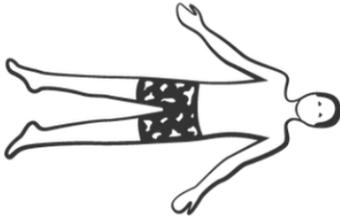
Lie down over support placed under the whole of your body from the thoracic spine down to your knees. The shoulders swoop down to touch the floor. Spread your arms outward or slightly at your side. Activate your feet and press them into the wall.



### **Simple Cross Legs Forward**

45 seconds per side

Sit with your legs crossed. Keep your sit-bones pointing down as you stretch your arms forward to capacity, lengthening your spine.



### **Savasana**

Corpse Pose

5-10 minutes

Lie down on the floor. Spread your arms and legs slightly at your side. Relax and concentrate on your breath.