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The 4-stage Cobra is featured in the "Freedom from Stress" Dru Yoga programme (audio CD) and in the forthcoming Dru Yoga book.

The 4-stage Cobra

Bhujangasana

Stage 1

Begin by lying face down with your legs together and your arms stretched out in front of you. Press your hands into the ground as you breathe in, raise the head and upper thoracic vertebrae up. Do not throw the head back but look forwards, lengthening the neck. Breathe out and come down. Repeat this again.

Stage 2

Draw the hands back one hand length. The elbows will go to the side. Breathe in, press into the ground. Lift the head up, straighten the arms, taking your elbows off the ground. This will create a slight compression to the thoracic vertebrae. Pause for a moment then breathe out coming down, with the elbows coming out to the sides again. Take care to lower your chin down before you lower your head.

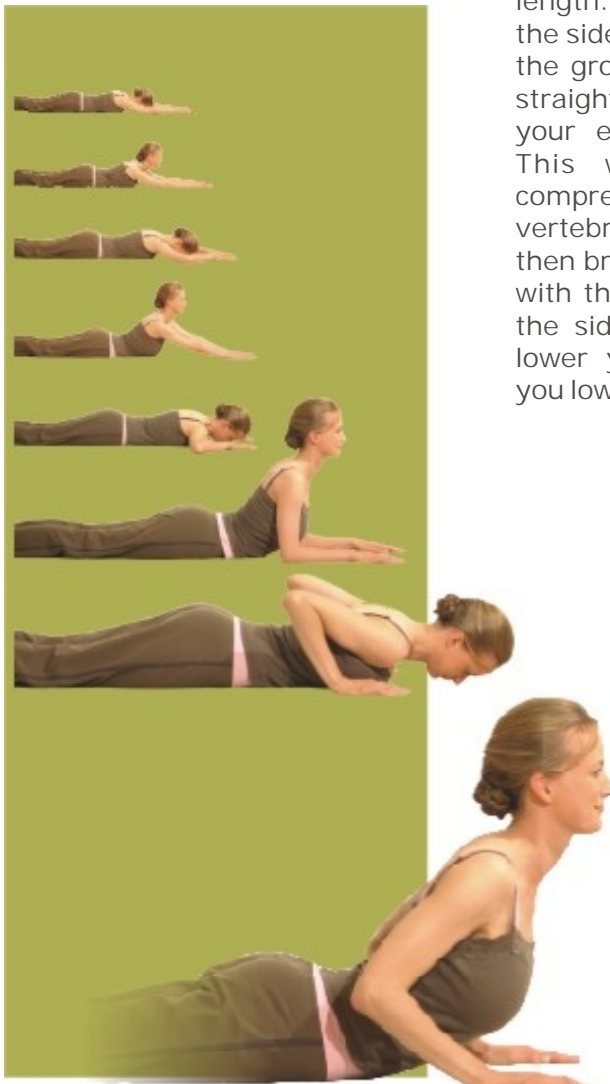
Stage 3: The Sphinx

Draw the hands back so that your thumbs are in line with your eyes. When you are ready, breathe in and press down with your hands as you raise your head and pull your sternum forwards and upwards. Bring in your elbows so that they are directly under the shoulders. This is the sphinx. To complete this posture, breathe out and lower down to the ground, letting the elbows extend out to the sides and just rest for a few moments.

Stage 4: The cobra

Draw the hands back so that they are directly under the shoulders. Tuck the arms into the sides, with the elbows in the air. Breathing in, raise the head, pressing down with the hands and lift the chest off the ground. Keep the navel on the ground at all times, and contract the abdomen slightly to maintain protection for the lower spine. Raise the head to look forwards. Lengthen the neck and then gently tilt the head to look slightly up. Raise the eyes to gaze at the point between the eyebrows (sambhavi mudra).

Breathe out, and gently lower your head first bringing your chin down towards the chest and then lower your sternum to the ground. Now fold your arms and place your forehead on your arms, and open your legs slightly turning your heels to face inwards and just give your self sanction to relax for a few moments.....



Dru Yoga is renowned for its therapeutic benefits. Generally it is suitable for most people but if you have any health concerns please consult your health advisor before performing any form of exercise. The Cobra is contraindicated for people with hiatus hernia peptic ulcers, for people who have had recent abdominal surgery, or are suffering from hyperthyroidism. Pregnant women, people suffering from muscle spasm or tight muscles in the back should avoid this posture.