

## **Shalabha-asana (The Locust or Grasshopper Posture)**

The Sanskrit word Shalabha means locust or grasshopper.

### **Position of Readiness:**

1. Lie on the stomach with the head turned to one side and the arms alongside the body with palms facing upward.
2. Turn the head and place your chin on the floor. Slide your hands under your thighs, with the palms pressed gently against the top of your thighs.
3. Inhale slowly and then raise the head, chest, and legs off the floor as high as possible. Tilt your head as far back as possible. Keep your feet, knees, and thighs pressed together.
4. Starting at the top of the head and working your way down to the feet, bring your attention to each part of your body, consciously relaxing it before proceeding on to the next.
5. Remain in the posture while holding the breath. You can support your legs by pressing the hands upward against your thighs
6. Hold the posture for as long as you can hold the inhaled breath then slowly return the legs, chest, and head to the floor while exhaling.
7. Remove your hands from under your thighs and place the arms alongside your body. Turn your head to the side and rest.

### **Daily Practice:**

Hold this posture for as long as you can hold the inhaled breath. Repeat the shalabha-asana three times.

### **Benefits:**

1. *The shalabha-asana* has many benefits. Besides strengthening the muscles of the upper legs and lower back, it stimulates the stomach and intestines helping to relieve gastrointestinal gas, strengthens the bladder, and stretches the spine.

**Note:** To assist raising the legs as high as possible keep the back of the hands resting against the floor while pushing the legs upward with the fingers. As you get better at this posture and increase the strength of your legs you can raise the hands completely off the floor so your legs are raised unsupported. This increases the benefits of the *shalabha-asana*.