



# GREEN MOUNTAIN ZEN CENTER

5014 SUNSET BLUFF DRIVE, HUNTSVILLE, AL 35803

Volume 1, Issue 11

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## Strike a Lotus Pose!

*Shelley Quinn*

I am a human pretzel! Ouch. How do I sit like that? The Full Lotus or Padmasana (as in Yoga) position can seem like a challenge, but it is actually a classic pose for meditation and Pranayama (the control Yoga breathing) because it enhances concentration.

### From the hip

From my understanding, the Lotus position creates stability in the body, releases tension in hips, ankles, knees, and legs, improves circulation between legs and torso, increases circulation in the lumbar and abdomen, increases circulation to abdominal organs, is restful, and strengthens good posture, all leading to clear awareness. It is an advanced pose that requires patience and practice.

### Take it easy

It is better to push slowly, relax into the position, and stretch often. Sitting Lotus position may not happen instantly and

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## ZEN FRIENDS

SOUTHWIND SANGHA ZEN ASSOCIATION

[HTTP://WWW.SOUTHWINDSANGHA.ORG/](http://www.southwindsangha.org/)

FURNACE MOUNTAIN

<http://www.furnacemountain.org/fm.html>

SAN FRANCISCO ZEN CENTER

<http://www.sfzc.org/>

ZEN CENTER OF ASHEVILLE

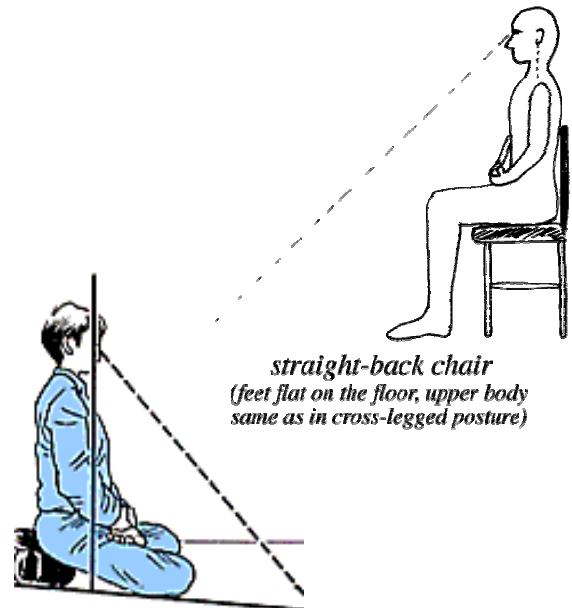
<http://zcasheville.org/>

GREAT TREE ZEN TEMPLE

<http://www.greatreetemple.org/>

GIAC LAM TEMPLE

INDIAN CREEK RD, HUNTSVILLE, AL



could take a year or more. It is better to start with what you know, and then take it a little further as you feel stronger.

Begin sitting in a crossed-leg position. Take hold of your right foot with both hands and bring it high onto the left thigh, up into the groin. Left foot remains snuggled under the right knee, bringing us to the Half Lotus position.

*Ah, I like this. Can I stay?*

Why not? Stay in Half Lotus as long as you wish. But let us remember to balance our stretch by switching legs within the same practice period or the next time you practice. For example, if you sit for 5 minutes with the right leg on top, sit the following 5 minutes with the left leg on top.

*My legs are in place, how is my posture?*

First visualize that you are a 3-D triangle mountain, or technically an irregular tetrahedron. Ta-da! The three basal points are the sit bones, and the two knees. Feel your sit bones (the two bony spots that you feel pushing to your seat) dropping directly into the chair, floor, zafu, etc...like strong roots. Find a sense of length in the lower back. The crown of the head floats upward to create space between ears and shoulders. The chin is tucked in slightly. Place hands in desired position (meditative, on thighs, or on head with elbows sideways). Align ear lobes over the sit bones and nose over the navel. The back is broad through the shoulder blades and the collarbones are opening. I find it helpful, while breathing easily, sideways through the ribcage, to observe the effects of my breath in my body by placing my hands on the collarbones, *and listen*, sides and back of the ribs, *and listen*, the stomach, *and listen*. Observe the movement of your body as you breathe. Breathing laterally into the ribs encourages a fuller breath.

*I can do this all day!*

Great, then practice your posture all day, feet flat on the floor or crossed. When you are sitting in a chair, on the couch, in the car, on a bench, observe your posture and listen to your breath. The more you practice, the more natural the Half Lotus and Full Lotus will become as well as the calming, restful benefits of meditation.

<http://www.howtostretch.com/fulllotu.htm>

<http://www.movingintostillness.com/book/t-alotus.html>

**Ballet-Fit Workout** by Megan Connelly

**The Three Pillars of Zen** by Roshi Philip Kapleau

## Question Box

*A Spot for the Curious*

What foods or drinks have a relaxing effect on your body and mind? What kinds have a tense effect?

Please Email your reply to:

[Shelley.a.quinn@comcast.net](mailto:Shelley.a.quinn@comcast.net)

Replies to be posted in the February issue.◇

## ZAZEN SERVICES

SUNDAY SERVICES AT 7:00 PM TO 8:30PM

### NEWCOMERS' MEDITATION INSTRUCTION:

EVERY WEDNESDAY

AT 7:00 PM

### DHARMA DISCUSSION GROUP:

JANUARY 22<sup>ND</sup>, 2006

AT 6:00 PM

DHARMA DISCUSSION AND TELECONFERENCE WITH *TaiUn* MICHAEL ELLISTON, ABBOTT, ATLANTA SOTO ZEN CENTER  
TOPIC: THE BUDDHA'S FIRST THREE SERMONS

### LOOKING FORWARD:

MAY 12 - 14, 2006

WEEKEND SESHIN

FEATURING GUEST TEACHER *TaiUn* MICHAEL ELLISTON  
ABBOTT, ATLANTA SOTO ZEN CENTER

### CONTACT JIM GORDON FOR MORE INFO:

(256) 882-0513 (HOME)

(256) 426-3344 (CELL PHONE)

### OR GO TO THE WEBSITE:

HTTP://WWW.GMZC.US

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