



PROTECT YOUR KNEES BEFORE THE BIND

There are moments in practice where the desire to reach the full expression of a posture becomes stronger than the awareness we bring into it. Marichyasana D is often one of those moments.

It is a complex posture that asks for many things at once, a deep twist, a stable foundation, openness in the hips, and space in the shoulders. Everything comes together in a single movement, and when the body is ready, it can feel natural, almost effortless. But when it is not, the strain is often carried silently by the knees.

The posture begins with half lotus, which becomes the foundation of the entire pose. From here, the second leg folds in and the foot grounds. The spine twists, the shoulders rotate, and the arms reach for the bind. It is easy to focus on the final stage of the binding and lose focus on the foundation of the pose. If the twist comes from the hips, or if the knee in half lotus is not comfortable in the first place, this could put strain on the knee joint and, over time, cause injury.

The knee joint does not work in isolation, it listens to the hip and responds to the ankle. In yoga, particularly in Ashtanga, when the hip is restricted, the knee may end up compensating by doing more than it should.

Similarly, if the foot and ankle are not properly aligned in half lotus, the knee will adjust, often leading to discomfort or pain.

Your body always tries to communicate, and understanding how the body feels while holding an asana is important. The sensation in the hip should feel like a deep opening, steady and grounding, while the sensation in the knee is sharper, more fragile, and often more immediate in its signals. One sensation invites you to stay, while the other calls you to adjust or step back.

In a led class, the rhythm of the sequence moves quickly, and Marichyasana D arrives with a shorter count, meaning less time to enter the full pose and the bind. Many practitioners rush to place the leg into half lotus, reaching for the bind before establishing steadiness, in order to keep up with the rhythm of the class or to reach the bind before the count moves on. In that moment, awareness can fade, and the body follows ambition rather than readiness. Over the years, I've seen, and experienced, how easily the knee can be compromised in this posture when patience is lost, even for a moment.

To protect the knees is not to hold back, but to practice with intelligence and patience. One of the first steps forward is to consider preparation not as a step behind the posture. It is the posture at the stage your body is in today.

Start from the foundation of the pose. Work towards achieving half lotus by allowing the hips to open gradually, without force. Build strength around the joint, especially through the support of the glutes, so that flexibility is held with stability. Keep the hips grounded and the knee in half lotus supported rather than pushed into position. Let the rotation arise from the spine. Keep the foot active in half lotus, creating integrity through the entire leg.

Move slowly as you enter the posture. Take a breath or two before you move deeper. Feel the placement. Feel the weight of the body grounded through the foundation. And if there is any sharpness or discomfort in the knee, listen immediately. The body always speaks, even in the quietest ways.

The bind will come in time, or it may not. And that is not the purpose of the practice. What matters is the relationship you build with your body along the way, the patience you cultivate, the awareness you deepen, and the respect you offer to your limits as they gradually transform.

In Ashtanga, we are not only learning to move deeper into postures, but to move more truthfully within ourselves.

In complex postures like Marichyasana D, the bind is not a measure of progress.

Awareness is.

