

# How to Sit on a Chair or Stool

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Updated August 27, 2024

If you wish to sit on a chair, sit on the first half or so of the chair so that you are not leaning against the back of it. The spine should support the upper body. An exception to this would be if you have a **diagnosed** spinal injury and need to support your spine by leaning against the back of the chair.



You should sit facing a white or light-coloured wall. If you do not have a neutral surface to gaze on for your sittings, then you can improvise by ironing a white sheet which can be pinned to the wall with thumb tacks. Or you can purchase large sheets of white bristle board from Amazon or an art supply store which can be used for this purpose.



As you can see, in this photograph the toes are very close to the lower baseboard. The feet are flat on the floor and not angled back or forward. The chin is tucked in and the shoulders are allowed to roll back — nose over the navel, ears over the shoulders.



Whether you are using a chair or a stool, your knees should be shoulder-width apart and your feet should be parallel to each other (not turned 'in' or 'out'). The mudra is held in the same way one would place it while sitting cross-legged. The elbows are slightly away from the body.

If you want to learn how to sit in a cross-legged posture but it is too painful for you to sit for a full 30 minutes without breaking posture part-way through, then practise sitting that way at other times, outside of your sitting. For example, when you are watching a movie or reading a book, sit cross-legged so that the ligaments and tendons in your hips and legs and feet can begin to stretch out enough to let you sit that way. Once you can do that for a full 30 minutes without it becoming 'an endurance test', then apply that to your sitting rounds.

What is important about posture is not how you look. It's what you actually **do** when you are sitting in whatever posture you are using - whether you are sitting on a chair, a stool, a seiza bench, or a cushion.

### **As to the forms you should use if sitting on a chair:**

#### **At the beginning of the round:**

Once you take your seat facing the wall, calculate the time when the sitting round should end. Or set a timer. Your feet should be shoulder-width apart and your hands in the mudra. When you are ready to begin do the forms:

Bow forward from the hip and exhale through the mouth, audibly so that you can both feel and hear the exhalation.

Straighten to what you think "straight" is, and as you straighten, inhale through the mouth, audibly, so that you can both feel and hear the inhalation.

Settle into 'balance point' (a hair back from what you think 'straight' is) and exhale through the mouth audibly so that you can both feel and hear the exhalation.

Once you have settled into balance point, close your mouth and begin breathing through the nose. Place the tip of your tongue against the hard palate behind your upper front teeth. Your teeth should be lightly in contact with each other (at least a molar or two at the back).

Now stay like that for the next 30 minutes. Don't fidget or change posture.

Sit nose over the navel, ears over the shoulders and tuck your chin in. Don't let your head jut forward.

#### **The forms for ending the sitting round:**

At the end of the round bow forward and exhale. Then stand up and brush your seat off if it needs it.

Turn the chair to face into the room and place it in its original position.

Place your hands in shashu to walk away or to begin a kinhin round.

#### **Shashu mudra:**

To place your hands in shashu, form your right hand into a circle. Place your left thumb into the circle and draw both hands back so that the knuckle of the thumb of your right hand is contacting the solar plexus (where your ribcage meets).

