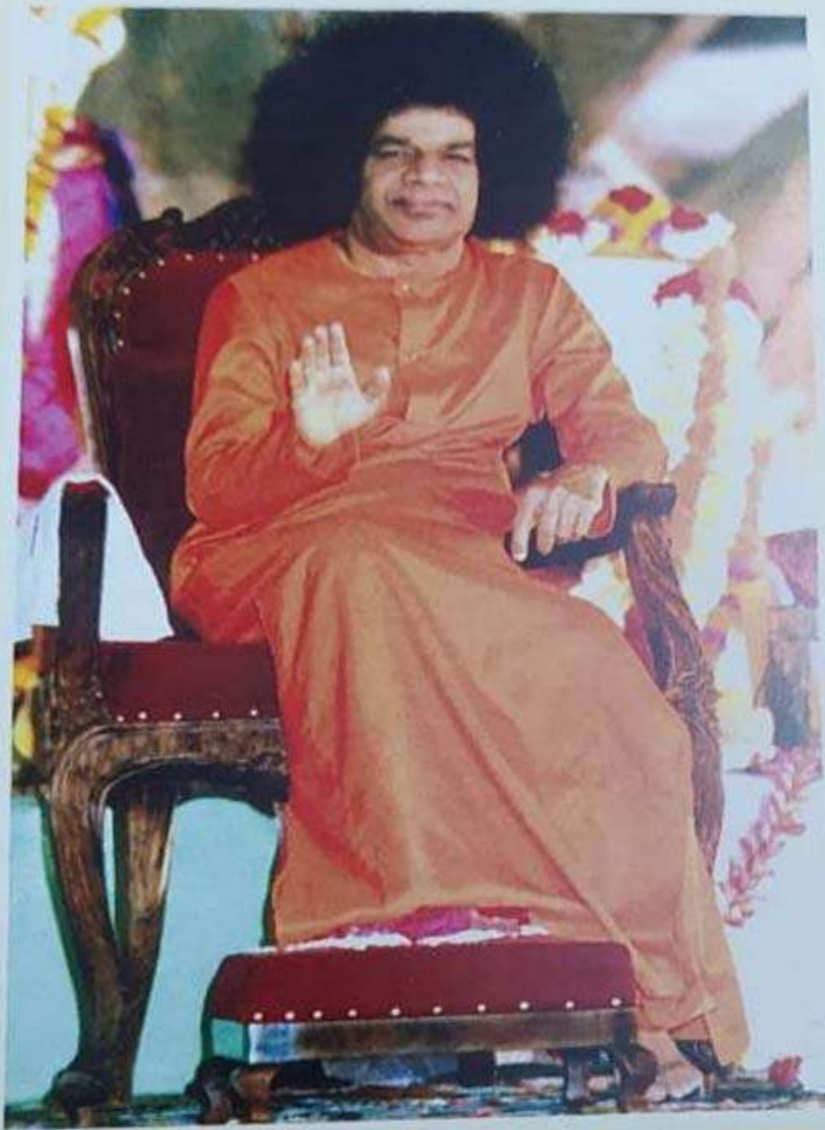


Om Sri Sairam



I offer my humble pranams at the Golden Feet of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba my Divine Master with whose Grace I live every conscious moment of my life and dedicate this book.

- Dr. S. Hema

EASY YOGA

(For Beginners)

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This book is dedicated to my most loving parents

MAC Spin Foundation

24, II Avenue, Indira Nagar, Chennai-600020. Tel: 4403364.

2/12/03



POBINDRA SINGH (ROBIN SINGH)
Director

Yoga is an ancient system meant for total development, viz., physical, mental, moral and social. It relaxes our mind, increases our concentration, physical strength and flexibility of body.

I am happy that Dr. S. Hema, an eminent Yoga Therapist who is trained both in western medicine and Yoga, is bringing out a book titled "Yoga for Health".

I am sure that the book will inspire people to practise Yoga and lead a healthy and happy life.

MAC SPIN FOUNDATION
DIRECTOR

MY JOURNEY INTO YOGA

It was the summer of 1993. Time when most colleges open to welcome not only the old students but also the new ones. It was at this time when my son Sriram, a fresh graduate, kept first step into the IIT Madras.

The environment, the mess and the the hostel everything was new to him and exciting. However, this excitement did not last long as he developed allergy due to Allergic Rhinitis and Sinusitis and difficulty in breathing within a week's time. He was back home and doctors suggested surgery of nose and tonsils to cure him. He was worried and so was I. Surgery meant being out of action for about a month, which is a long time.

I was very much interested in Yoga since childhood. The school Saradha Vidyalaya of Ramakrishna Mission where I studied opened the doors to yoga for me. At this time of crisis, my friend Dr. Suseela Sambamoorthy suggested that I should try yogatherapy with Dr. Krishapna Raman for my son. I did so, he taught 3 exercises to my son. Within three days, the problem was solved and the yogatherapy avoided the surgery and the difficulties associated with it. My son was back into action. I immediately took up a decision that I should learn this ancient art and help people with chronic diseases. With blessings and guidance of eminent teachers such as Yogi Sakthi Varadharajan, Yogi Dr. A.S. Ashok Kumar and Yogi Smitha B. Shah, I acquired skills in this art and developed my knowledge more intensively by learning from many schools of yoga in and around the city and also from Yoga Institute of Santacruz. I gained more knowledge by reading books, attending seminars and travelling wide.

I started an Institute of Yoga in 1993 where eminent teachers come and train students and patients are treated for various problems which are discussed in this book. The aim of the institute is spreading the message of yoga; to do scientific research on yogatherapy and to provide proper solution of the patients' problems by combining yogatherapy with modern medicines. My institute also gives training for people who want to become Instructors of Yoga and Yogatherapists.

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WHAT IS YOGA

A recent definition of Health by W.H.O is "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely absence of diseases or infirmity". So health is not just physical. It is physical, mental, emotional, psychological spiritual and moral. It is the pre-requisite for every kind of happiness.

It is only yoga, the most ancient sacred tradition known to humanity which can show the way to perfect health, perfect mind control and perfect peace with one's self, the world, nature and God. Its roots go back at least 5000 years, far longer than any other religion or spiritual path. It is India's greatest gift to mankind.

The great sage Patanjali who was born in 200 BC systematized the science of yoga which till then was being handed down by word of mouth from one generation to another. Traditionally it is said that Lord Siva was the innovator of yoga. Yoga is explained vividly in the great scriptures like Vedas, Upanishads, Gita and Ramayana.

Bhagavad Gita says

"Yoga is equanimity in success and failure (2/48)

Yoga is skill and efficiency in action (2/50)

Yoga is supreme success of life (4/3)

Yoga is the giver of untold happiness (5/2)

Yoga is serenity (6/3)

Yoga is the destroyer of pain (6/17)"

The word Yoga is derived from the sanskrit root "yuj" which means to "join", "unite" or "merge". The practice of Yoga integrates the body with the mind and the mind with the soul.

Maharshi Patanjali explained yoga as "Chitta Vritti Nirodhah", which means Yoga is the control of thought waves in the mind.

Swami Sivananda has explained that "Yoga is integration and harmony between thoughts, words and deeds, or integration between head, heart and hands".

Yoga is a science and an art. It can be practiced by all irrespective of race, colour, caste, creed, sex and age.

BENEFITS OF YOGA

1. General health is developed.
2. Memory power is enhanced and eye sight is improved
3. Reduces excess fat and gives good shape to the body
4. Brings emotions under control.
5. Increases the power of concentration in the work.
6. Reduces depression and anxiety.
7. Increases flexibility of the spine.
8. Improves blood circulation to all parts of the body.
9. The vital organs of the body are activated.
10. Maintains flexibility of the limbs.
11. Neuro -muscular and Neuro - glandular systems are re-conditioned.
12. Helps one to withstand greater stress and strain.
13. Tones up the abdominal organs and muscles.
14. Helps in the elimination of accumulated toxins in the body.
15. Makes one feel fresh throughout the day.
16. Body resistance is increased.
17. Prevents all the diseases.
18. All the endocrine glands are activated. Hormonal balance is maintained.
19. Gives one a feeling of health and harmony.
20. Increases will power and alertness.
21. Paves way for success in life.
22. Helps in cultivation of correct mental attitude.
23. Lowers the triglycerides and blood sugar level.
24. Digestion and excretion are improved.
25. Keeps the skin supple, soft and glowing.
26. Delays aging process and reduces physical fatigue.
27. Helps in getting rid of bad habits.
28. Power of thinking and creativity are increased.
29. Also cures all the diseases and improves longevity.
30. Teaches you to accept life as it is and adjust to the surroundings.
31. Helps us to lead a happy, healthy and long life with positive attitude.

And Many More...

Advantages of Yoga over other systems of exercise

1. Yoga refreshes while others exhaust.
2. There is no age bar for practise of yoga. Young and even very old can do yoga.
3. Patients with Heart disease or High Blood pressure should not do other forms. But yoga can be practised by sick and weak also.
4. Yoga achieves voluntary control of autonomous system. Other systems achieve involuntary control.
5. Range of movement is greater in yoga than anyother system.
6. There is no wear and tear even with prolonged practise of yoga.
7. There is no depletion o f hormone or electrolyte imbalances in yoga as in other forms of exercise.
8. Yoga is quiet and restful and less irritative.
9. Energy is conserved in yoga. Energy is wasted in other exercise.
10. Yoga balances the function of the organs. The organs is stimulated if it is underworking. It is suppressed if it is overworking . No other exercise does this.
11. Mind is calmed in yoga. It does not occur in other systems.

Important Instructions for Yoga Practice

A word of warning and caution. There are certain 'dos' and 'dont's' here which should be adhered to at any cost, to derive maximum benefits and avoid harmful results by the practice of Yoga.

1. Yoga postures are best done in a quiet, well-ventilated room, free of dust, insects, moisture.
2. Practise on a rug, mat or blanket.
3. Bladder should be emptied and bowels should be evacuated.
4. Asanas should be done on an empty stomach.
5. If coffee or tea is taken, allow atleast half an hour before starting the practice.
6. Wear loose, minimum clothes.
7. Keep mouth closed during exercise. Exhale and inhale only through the nose.
8. The mind must be calm and undisturbed.
9. Practise alone and in silence, at the same place and preferably at the same time.

10. The best time for exercise is in the early morning. If morning hours are not convenient, it can be done in the evening before dinner
11. If you are tired, practise the relaxation first.
12. Avoid strain. In the early stages, start by practising lightly, always stopping short of actual fatigue.
13. Ladies should not do *Asanas* during Menstrual Period. Anyhow if there is over bleeding one must do *Vipareetha karani* to get cured. *Shavasana, Nadi Suddhi Pranayama* and *Meditation* can be done during periods.
14. It can be done four hours after a heavy meal.
15. For those who are constipated *Matsyasana* can be performed first which helps in evacuation of bowels and then continue the other *Asanas*. Don't do *asanas* when you are ill.
16. Do a thorough medical check up to rule out any major ailment before starting the practise.
17. Close your eyes while doing *asanas*.
18. A minimum of 20 minutes *yoga* practice daily will provide desired results.
19. Patients who have undergone any type of surgery must avoid *asanas* for six months.
20. If it is not possible to practise all the *Asanas* in the mornings, one can do the standing postures and *Suryanamaskars* followed by *Savasana*. The remaining *Asanas* and *Pranayama* can be practised in the evenings.
21. After the practice of *Asanas* and *Pranayama*, one must sit in comfortable posture and practise meditation at least for ten minutes.
22. Do not wear spectacles or loose ornaments when you do *Asanas*. They may get damaged and also cause injuries.
23. Practice of *Asanas* for curing diseases must be done under the personal supervision of an experienced yogatherapist.
24. If you feel sleepy at the starting, practise standing postures and four to six *Surya-namaskars*.
25. Regularity is the most important factor if you want to derive the full benefits of the *Yogasanas* quickly.
26. If the practice of *Asanas* are discontinued due to unavoidable circumstances there is no fear of any adverse reaction. After some days you can again start practising.
27. Learn Yoga only from a qualified *Guru*.

YOGA FOR CHILDREN

It is little short of a miracle that modern methods of instruction have not already completely strangled the holy curiosity of enquiry, because what the delicate little plant needs most, apart from initial stimulation, is freedom; without that it is surely destroyed.

- Albert Einstein.

"During the last twenty years I have tried to bring yoga into the homes and schools. There was a great misunderstanding about yoga when I was a child. It was thought that yoga was only for those people who were finished with life. If anybody was to practise yoga at a young age; people would remark, "Yoga, so early?" Even now, many people, still think that yoga is only a pastime for retired people, but I always felt that yoga has more to do with the evolution of the human mind and the human body."

- Swami Sathyananda Saraswathi.

At what age should children start yoga classes?

At the age of eight teach them surya namaskar, mantra and pranayama. These three practices should be continued for several years until the signs of puberty appear. Then change the practices and give them more asanas and pranayama. If the child starts these three practices at the age of eight, puberty will naturally be delayed for two or three years. Usually puberty takes place between fourteen and sixteen, but if the child practises yoga, puberty will start at fourteen and be established at eighteen. When the signs of puberty appear, the child can take up all major asanas.

Meditation techniques should be taught after the age of twenty-one. This applies to those children who have been practising yoga from the age of eight. Up to the age of twenty-one they should use simple methods of meditation, such as kirtan, chanting and visualization.

Can girls also do them?

It is not correct to say that these practices were not meant for girls. In the vedic age, both boys and girls were initiated into sandhya and Gayatri. It was only later, during the period of our cultural decadence, that this amendment was made. Girls can definitely practise Gayatri mantra.

Should yoga be taught to children, or should it be left to their own choice?

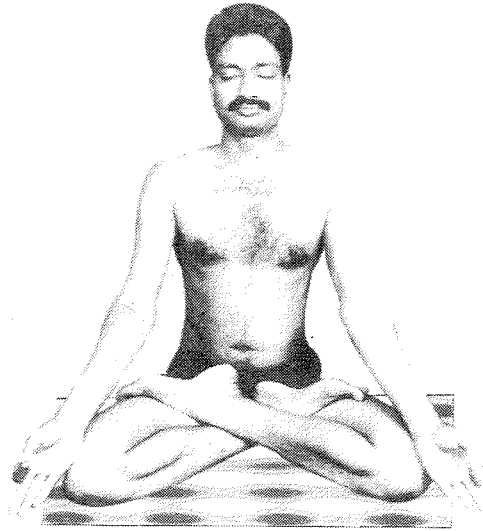
If you are going to leave yoga to the children's choice then you should leave everything to their choice. Children are pliable, innocent and devoted. They believe in higher realities but they need proper training. It is better to give them an education in spiritual life, discipline and yoga from the very beginning. When both parents and children follow a disciplined and regular lifestyle, it will ultimately reflect in the behaviour and personality of a nation. Your nation, government and family are your pride and that pride is discipline. All the achievements of America, Germany, Russia and China have been brought about through discipline. The first yoga sutra of Patanjali is "*Atha yoga anushasanam*", which means yoga is discipline. It doesn't even say yoga is practice. Give your children discipline but only little by little. If you press a pencil too hard the lead will break. Give your children discipline in the light of a spiritual and yogic education.

When should yoga be integrated into the school?

Yoga can be taught in easily understandable terms from class five to university level, step by step, by teachers who have made a thorough study of the subject and have undergone special training.

Courtesy : Yoga Education for Children, Swami Satyananda Saraswathi, Bihar School of Yoga, Munger.

PADMASANA

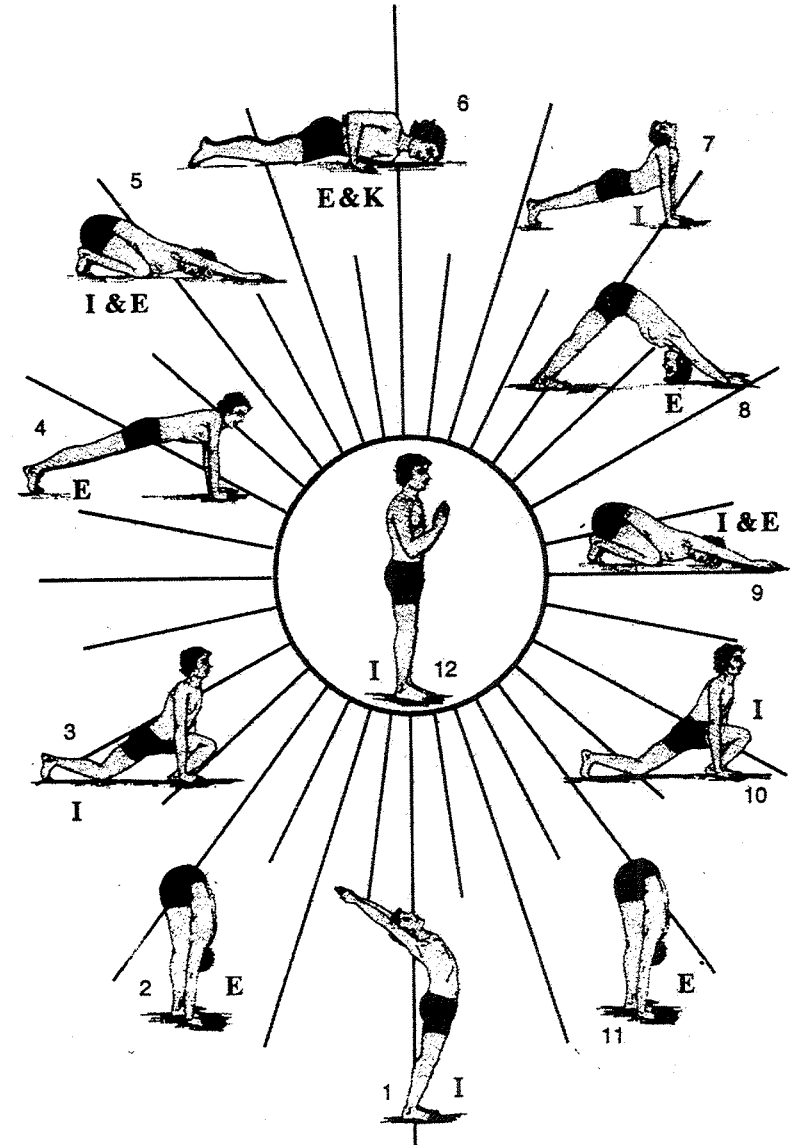


Padmasana (Lotus Pose)

This is a meditative pose. *Padma* in sanskrit means lotus. In this *asana*, the body takes the shape of a lotus. Hence it is called so. During floods lotus can lengthen its stalk and come out of the surface of water and withstand the floods while other water plants get immersed and get perished. Likewise a man who practises *Padmasana* can withstand any amount of tension or pressure arising out of the physical or mental ailments and live gracefully.

Technique: Sit, keeping both the legs stretched in the front. Bend any one of the legs and place the foot on the opposite thigh, so that the sole faces upward. In the same manner fold the other leg so that both the heels are placed opposite to each other and are arranged in such a manner that they press the groin, on the corresponding sides. The head, neck and spine should be kept straight and hands should be placed on the knees by forming *dhyanamudra* (making a hollow circle by folding the index fingers and touch the inside middle parting of the thumb on the corresponding side.)

SURYANAMASKAR



I - Inhale E - Exale K - Hold the Breath

Surya Namaskar (Sun - Salutation Poses)

The sun is considered to be the source of life-energy. Our ancients found that a set of bodily movements, practised in the soft sun of the morning, in the form of oblation, gave them an abundance of health, vitality and spiritual uplift.

Surya Namaskar is a compound exercise. Here, twelve different movements are done consecutively, in a smooth and graceful manner, with proper breathing.

The body becomes strong, supple, agile and healthy.

Twelve steps of Surya Namaskar are as follows:

Starting position: stand erect with feet together and hands folded.

1. Raise the arms sideways and upward above the head, join them together, bend the trunk backward. Inhale.
2. Bend the body forward and downward, forehead touching the knees, palms touching the ground on either side of the feet, knees straight. Exhale.
3. Move the right leg backward, make it as straight as possible with the left knee between the arms, back arched, chest held high and head up. Inhale.
4. Take the left leg backward, in line with the right leg and rest only on palms and toes, keep the body straight from head to toes. Exhale and hold the breath.
5. Bend the knees, rest them on the floor without changing the position of the palms and toes, touch the forehead on the ground. While taking the position inhale, and then exhale.

6. Without moving the palms and toes, come forward, perform a dip by bending the arms, body weight on palms and toes. While taking the position inhale, and then exhale.
7. Straighten the arms, back well arched, head up, without changing the position of the palms and toes. Keep the knees off the ground. Inhale.
8. Raise the hips, keep the arms and legs straight, heels touching the ground, bring the head between the arms. Exhale.
9. Same as 5th position. Inhale and exhale.
10. Take 3rd position with right leg between the arms. Inhale.
11. Return to 2nd position and exhale.
12. Inhale and return to starting position.

Benefits :

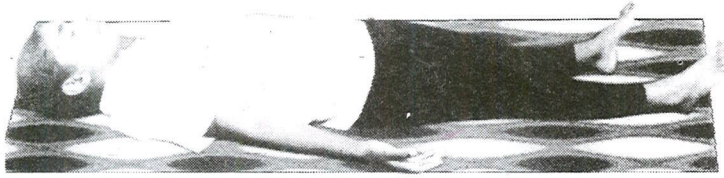
1. Reduces abdominal fat.
2. Brings flexibility to spine and limbs.
3. Increases the breathing capacity.
4. Increases blood circulation and oxygenation.
5. Helps in spiritual awakening.

Hints : One should practise this facing east in the morning in the open air or facing west during sunset.

Through the path of devotion subtle sense come readily and naturally under control.

... Sri Ramakrishna

SHAVASANA



SHAVASANA (Corpse Posture)

This may be better called *Shanti Asana* (The peaceful Pose). It is a valuable *yoga* posture for relaxation. This should be performed in the beginning and at the end of all *yoga* sessions. Also can be performed in between *asanas* when one feels tired.

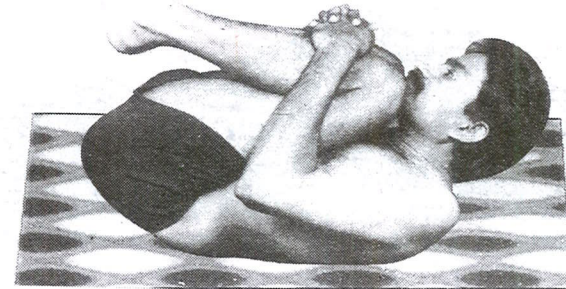
Technique: Lie on the back face upwards. Keep the legs stretched out and two feet apart. Arms should be kept by the sides a little away from the chest, palms facing upwards. Close the eyes. Keep the body motionless like a corpse. Gradually relax every muscle of the body by paying attention to each one separately from the tip of the toe to the top of the skull. Keep the mind fixed on the abdominal breathing. Breathe deeply. The abdomen should balloon out while you inhale and should get flattened while you exhale. There is no time limit for this *asana*. This can be performed according to time available.

Benefits:

1. Reduces physical, mental and emotional stress, strain and fatigue of all kinds.
2. Gives total relaxation to the body.
3. Soothes nerves and mind.
4. Reduces basal metabolic rate, pulse rate and blood pressure.

Hints: For maximum benefit this can be performed just before sleep.

PAVANAMUKTHASANA



PAVANAMUKTHASANA (Gas releasing Pose)

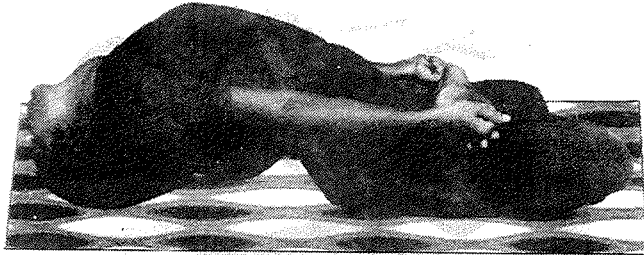
Technique: Keep the hands by the sides of the body in the supine position. Bend both the legs at the knees. Make a fingerlock with the hands and place it a little below the knees. Bring the thighs close to the chest. Raise the head and shoulders and bring the nose in between the knees. Remain in this posture for 15 seconds. Then bring the legs and head down to the normal position. Repeat it two times.

Benefits :

1. Strengthens the abdominal muscles.
2. This *asana* regulates the movement of air in the body.
3. Constipation is relieved.
4. Strengthens organs like liver, spleen, pancreas and stomach.
5. Excess fat of the abdomen is reduced.

Hints: Patients suffering from cervical spondylitis, heart disease and hypertension should not raise the head. Pregnant women should not do this *asana*.

MATSYASANA



MATSYASANA (Fish Pose)

Matsya means fish. The body resembles a fish in this posture. One can swim in water like a fish in this *asana*. Fish eats the dirt and purifies the water. Likewise this *asana* purifies our blood and keeps us healthy.

Technique: Sit in *Padmasana*. Lie flat on the back. Extend the arms overhead. Lengthen the spine. Now hook both the big toes with the index and middle fingers. Place the elbows on the floor. Arch the back and rest the crown of the head on the floor. Remain in this posture for 50 counts. Then release the head and legs and take rest in *Shavasana*.

Benefits:

1. Lungs get strengthened. Thyroid gets activated.
2. Headache caused by the stiffness of the neck is cured.
3. Excretory system is stimulated. All the toxins from the body are removed.
4. Nervous system is activated.
5. High blood pressure is normalised.

BHUJANGASANA



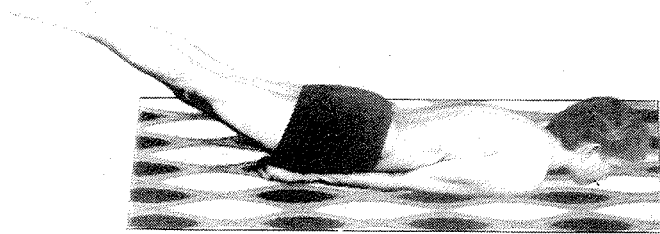
BHUJANGASANA (Cobra Pose)

Bhujanga means snake. This posture resembles a snake. Lie on the abdomen, keeping the legs together, chin touching the floor and the soles facing up. Place the arms on the floor by the side of the chest, the palms facing the floor. Bring the arms back to the last rib bone. Keep the hands bent at elbows. Least pressure should be exerted on the hands. Keep the hands close to the body. Now raise the head first and then the upper portion of the trunk slowly, just as the cobra raises its hood, till the navel portion is about to leave the ground. Arch the dorsal spine well. Keep the body below navel straight in touch with the ground. Remain in this position for 15 seconds. Do it twice.

Benefits:

1. It makes lungs and heart strong.
2. Helps in keeping the dorsal spine elastic and strong.
3. Backache due to overstrain is relieved.
4. Helps in considerable reduction of the abdominal fat. Increases immunity.
5. Useful *asana* for bronchitis, asthma and cervical spondylitis.
6. It helps in increasing memory power and concentration.
7. Menstrual problems are corrected.

SALABHASANA



SALABHASANA (Locust Pose)

Technique: Lie down on the abdomen. Keep your fists under the waist. Let the chin rest on the floor. Then raise both the legs tightly stretched as high as possible without bending the knees. Remain in this position for 15 seconds. Bring the legs down and take some rest. Do it twice.

Benefits :

1. It cures diseases of uterus and ovary.
2. Ear problems are corrected.
3. It controls sugar in diabetics.
4. Because of back stretch kidneys, liver and spleen gets activated.
5. It gives good shape to the body.

Hints:

1. Those suffering from enlargement of liver, hernia, and peptic ulcers should not practise this *asana*.
2. Those who are not able to raise the legs, can use a stool and place the legs in the beginning.

PARVATHASANA



PARVATHASANA (Mountain Pose)

Technique : Sit in *Padmasana* or *Ardha Padmasana*. Raise the hands sideways and bring the arms straight over the head and join the palms. Remain in this position for 20 seconds and bring the hands down. Do it twice.

Benefits:

1. It gives good shape to the body.
2. It improves concentration and memory power.
3. It reduces excess flesh in arms.
4. Functions of heart and lungs are improved.
5. Spinal cord is stretched and so nervous system is stimulated.

Hints:

1. At the beginning stage, it can be practised sitting close to the wall for support.
2. Those who could not do *Padmasana* can practise it in *Ardha Padmasana* or *Sukhasana*.

YOGAMUDRASANA



YOGAMUDRASANA (Psychic-Union Pose)

Technique: Sit in *Padmasana*. Hold the right wrist with the left hand behind the body. Sit erect. Bend gently down towards the right knee and see that the tip of the nose touches the knees. Return to upright seated position. Repeat in the same manner on the left side. Perform the practice three times, on the fourth round, bend down forward to touch the floor with the forehead.

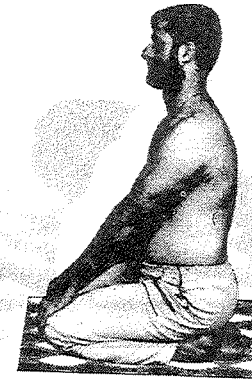
Benefits:

1. Provides better circulation of blood in the vertebral column.
2. Excretion is improved.
3. Reduces excess fat in abdomen.
4. The intra-abdominal compression gives a gentle massage to the internal organs.
5. Improves blood circulation in the face and head region.

Yoga removes ignorance and impurities and thus leads one's mind to enlightenment as to the true nature of self.

- Markande Purana

VAJRASANA



VAJRASANA (Thunderbolt Pose or Kneeling Pose)

Vajra means Thunderbolt. This *asana* makes body hard and strong. Hence it is called so.

Technique: Kneel down with the knees and big toes touching the ground. Then sit on the knees. The whole body weight is supported by ankles and knees. In the beginning, slight pain may be felt in the knee and ankle joints but passes off very quickly. Keep the knees quite close. The trunk, neck and head should be kept in straight line. Place the hands straight on the knees, palms down.

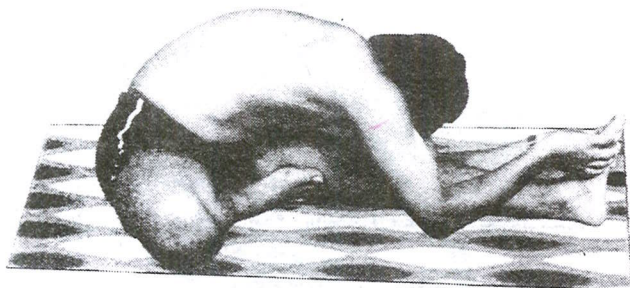
Benefits

1. If one sits in this *asana* after a heavy meal food will be digested quickly.
2. Cures peptic ulcer and hyperacidity.
3. Strengthens pelvic muscles and helps in normal child birth and prevention of hernia.
4. Rheumatism is cured and prevented.
5. Good pose for meditation and *pranayama*.

Hints:

1. If there is pain in the thighs, the knees may be separated slightly.
2. Beginners may place a folded blanket below the heels for comfort.

JANUSIRASASANA



JANUSIRASASANA (Head-Knee Pose)

Technique : Sit erect and stretch the left leg forward. Fold the right leg at the knees and fix the foot close to the left thigh in such a way that the heel touches the perenium. Bend forward catching the toe of the extended leg and try to bring the forehead close to left knee joint. Remain in this position for 20 seconds. Then come back to the normal position and repeat this asana on right side.

Benefits:

1. Tones abdominal organs.
2. Narrows the waist.
3. It increases will power and helps to overcome bad habits like smoking and drinking alcohol.
4. Soothenes nerves and mind.
5. Relieves congestion in pelvic organs.

Hints:

1. This *asana* is called as "MAHA MUDRA" or "RAJA MUDRA"
2. Do not sit on the heel.
3. The leg should be kept straight without bending at the knee.
4. Patients with spinal cord disorders should not do this *asana*.

VIRIKSHASANA



VIRIKSHASANA (Tree Pose)

Technique: Stand in Tadasana. Bend the right knee. Place the right foot on the left upper thigh. Rest the hands on the hip. Stretch the arms up. Join the palms. Remain in this posture for 20 seconds. Return to Tadasana. Now keep the right leg straight and bend the left leg. Do the pose on the other side.

Benefits:

1. Develops will power.
2. Establishes equilibrium and mental stability.
3. Improves concentration.
4. Cures nervous disorders.
5. It also strengthens the legs and make the knee joints more supple.

Hints:

1. Beginners can practise it close to the wall.
2. The eyes to be kept open and see any object in front of you for stability.

TOLASANA



TOLASANA

Technique : Stand erect. Legs, waist, neck all should be in a straight line. Stand absolutely straight. Lift the hands slowly upwards after inhaling. Let the palms face forward. Retain the breath, stand on toes and stretch the body. In the beginning, you can take the support of any wall.

Benefits:

1. This asana increases height.
2. The vertebral column and the heart are strengthened.
3. Lungs become flexible.
4. Indigestion is cured.
5. Unnecessary fat is reduced.
6. It strengthens arms and legs.

Hints: This must be done for some time after *Shirshasana*. It is a good pose recommended for ladies also.

ARDHA CHAKRASANA



ARDHA CHAKRASANA (Half-wheel Pose)

Technique: Stand erect with legs together. Support the back at the waist by the palms. Bend backwards from the lumbar region. Bend the head backwards, stretching the muscles of the neck. Knees should not bend. Remain in this position for 20 seconds. Slowly come back to normal position. Do it twice.

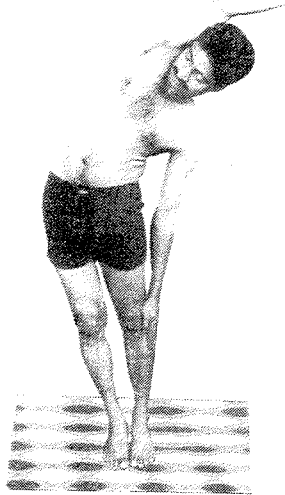
Benefits:

1. Makes the spine flexible.
2. Stimulates the spinal nerves.
3. Promotes circulation of the blood in the head.
4. Back pain and hip pain are relieved.
5. Excessive fat is removed and body gets good shape.

The mind is restless and hard to control. But by practise (abhyasa) and dispassion (vairagya) it can be controlled.

- Gita

ARDHAKATTI CHAKRASANA



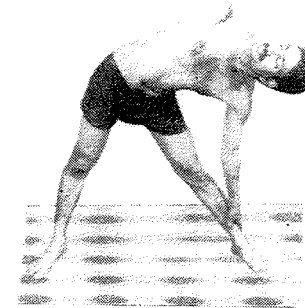
ARDHAKATTI CHAKRASANA

Technique: Stand erect with feet close together, hands along the thighs, fingers stretched out. Raise the right arm sideways up above the head until the arm touches the ear, palm facing left. Bend slowly on to the left side, keep the left palm down as far as possible along the left leg. Raised hand should not bend at the elbow. Knees should be straight. Breathe normally. Remain in this position for 20 seconds and come back to normal position. Repeat the same on the left side, by bending towards the right. Do it twice.

Benefits:

1. This gives a good lateral bending to the spine and helps in keeping it flexible and healthy.
2. Improves liver function.
3. Hip pain is relieved.
4. Fat in the hip region is removed.
5. Gives good shape to the body.

TRIKONASANA



TRIKONASANA (Triangle Posture)

Technique: Stand erect. Raise both the hands slowly by the sides till they reach the horizontal position as the right foot is moved to about a metre away from the left foot. Slowly bend to the right side in the same plane. The fingers of the right hand should touch the right foot. The left arm is straight up, in line with the right hand. Left palm face forward. Stretch up the left arm and gaze along the fingers. Slowly come back to horizontal position without disturbing the legs. Bring both the hands slowly down.

Benefits :

1. Fat around the hip gets reduced.
2. Stiffness of neck gets relieved.
3. Eye sight is improved.
4. Flat foot gets corrected.
5. Kidney functions are improved.

Hints:

1. Persons suffering from low back pain and arthritis should be careful.
2. Bend from the right waist region and don't bend the knees and elbows. Avoid forward bending.

VAKRASANA



VAKRASANA (Spinal Twist)

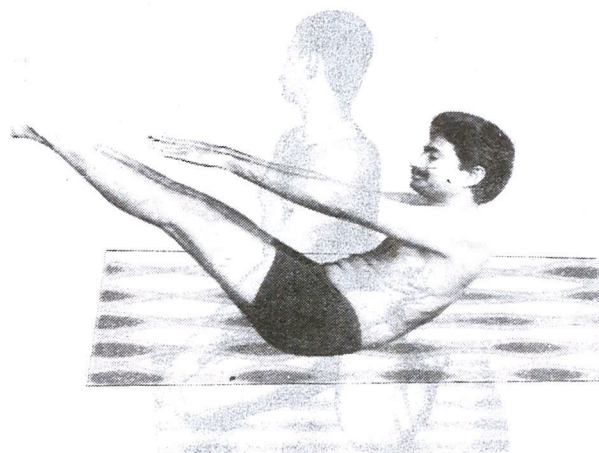
Technique: Sit erect and stretch both the legs forward. Bend the right leg and keep it close to the left knee. Bring the right hand backwards and rest it on the floor in a straight line. Bring the left hand from outwards and hold the right ankle. Twist the body right side and lift the head slightly upwards. Remain in this position for 30 seconds. Repeat the same on the left side.

Benefits:

1. It controls sugar level in diabetic patients.
2. It reduces excess fat in abdomen and hip.
3. It gives massage to spine.
4. It prevents and cures all problems in the vertebral column.
5. Kidneys, liver and spleen are strengthened.
6. Constipation is relieved.

Hints: Patients with enlarged liver and peptic ulcers should not practise the asana.

NAUKASANA



NAUKASANA (Boat Pose)

Technique: Lie on the back. Raise both the legs to 90 degrees. Hold the knees with the hands. Now forcibly get up and see that your body resembles a boat with only buttocks resting on the floor and balance. After balancing release the hands from knees and keep it stretched above the knees and remain in this position for 15 seconds. Do it twice.

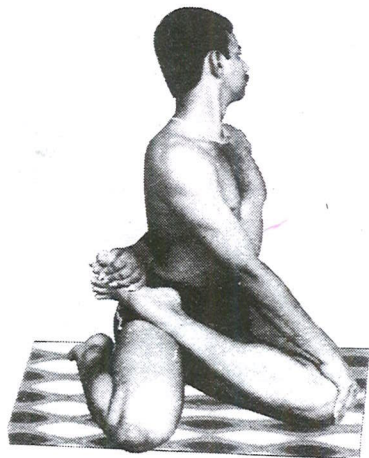
Benefits:

1. Relieves body stiffness and back pain.
2. Increases power of digestion.
3. Organs of abdomen like spleen, kidneys and colon get good blood circulation.
4. Heart and lungs are strengthened.
5. Reduces excess fat in the abdomen.

Hints:

1. Those who could not raise the body can practise with a stool.
2. If practiced immediately after waking up from bed, it keeps the body energetic for the whole day. Removes mental tension and lethargy.

BHARADVAJASANA



BHARADVAJASANA

Bharadvaja, a great sage practised this *asana*. Hence it is named after him.

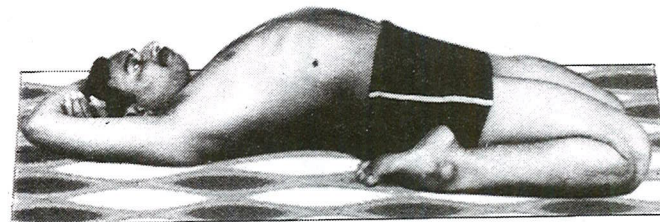
Technique: Sit erect and stretch the legs forward. Now fold the right leg and keep it by the side of the body. Then fold the left leg and place it on the right thigh. Place the right hand on the left knee. Take the left hand around the back and hold the left great toe. Turn the head to the left side and close the eyes. Remain in this position for 30 seconds. Come back to starting position and repeat it on the left side.

Benefits

1. Reduces excess fat.
2. Pancreas is stimulated and is good for diabetics.
3. Gives massage to the spine and spondylitis problem is cured.
4. Arthritis and back pain are relieved.
5. Digestion is improved.

Hints: Those who cannot turn and hold the big toe can keep the hand on the back.

SUPTA VAJRASANA



SUPTA VAJRASANA (Supine Pelvis Pose)

It is also called as *paryankasana*.

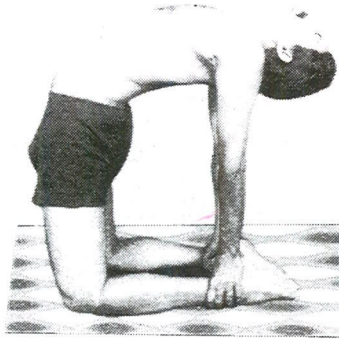
Technique: Sit in *Vajrasana*. Stand up on the knees and set the feet apart, so that you can sit between them. Place the hands on the front part of the feet. Bend backward and let the elbows rest on the ground one by one. Bend the neck backward and lower the whole of the back on the ground. Stretch the hands backward. Stay in this position for a little while. Keep the hands crossed above the head. Keep the knees close together touching the ground. Normalise your breathe and remain in this posture for one minute.

Benefits:

1. Heals peptic ulcer.
2. Reduces excess fat in the thighs and hip.
3. Improves excretion.
4. Diabetes is controlled.
5. Spinal cord diseases are prevented and cured.
6. Strengthens abdominal and pelvic muscles.

Hints: It's a very good exercise for ladies as it corrects menstrual disorders and makes the body slim.

USHTRASANA



USHTRASANA (Camel Pose)

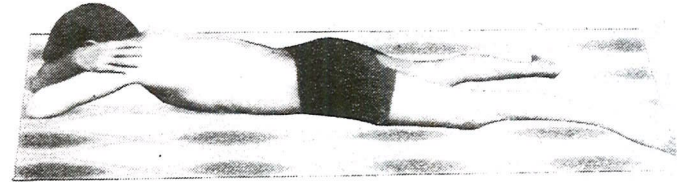
Technique: First sit in *Vajrasana* posture and stand up on the knees. Gradually separate the knees until they are 25 to 30 cm apart. Now place the hands on the waist in such a way that the fingers should be towards the abdomen and the thumbs towards the back. In this state throw the neck back and also bend backward from the waist. When the bend is complete, take the hands off the waist and put them on the soles of the feet. Throw the abdomen forward and the neck backwards as far as possible. Stay in this position for 20 seconds. While coming back place the hands on the waist and stand erect on the knees. Then sit in the rest posture. Do this twice.

Benefits:

1. It has good effect on the thyroid glands.
2. The body becomes more elastic.
3. It corrects the digestive system.
4. Lungs get stimulated.
5. It alleviates constipation.
6. Stimulates spinal nerves and relieves backache.
7. It is beneficial for reproductive system.

Hints: It should be followed by any forward bending *asana* like *Shashankasana*. People with Thyroid disorder and Lumbago should not do this *asana*.

MAKARASANA



MAKARASANA (Crocodile Pose)

Technique: Lie on the abdomen. Keep the legs wide apart. Bring the arms forward and keep the left palm on right shoulder and right palm below the left armpit. Rest the head in between the hands and close the eyes. Concentrate on abdominal breathing.

Benefits:

1. It gives relaxation to all parts of the body.
2. It increases the lungs capacity and so oxygen intake is more and makes us feel fresh.
3. It gives relief for asthma, bronchitis and other lung disorders.
4. Useful to those whose spine or back is injured.
5. It improves concentration.

Yoga is withdrawal of the senses.

- *Katha Upanishad*
Union with the deity in the fire, in the sun, in heart is Yoga
- *Maitri Upanishad*

ASHTANGA YOGA

Hatha Yoga was systematised by the great sage Patanjali under eight parts known as Ashtanga Yoga meaning eight limbs of yoga. "Ashta" means Eight, "Anga" means Limb.

The eight limbs of Yoga are:

Yama - The universal commandments. These are:

- | | | |
|--------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Ahimsa | - | Non-violence |
| Sathya | - | Truth |
| Asteya | - | Non-Stealing |
| Brahmacharya | - | Self-control |
| Aparigraha | - | Non-accumulation of needless wealth |

ii) Niyama - The personal disciplines. These are:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|
| Saucha | - | Cleanliness and purity |
| Santosha | - | Satisfaction and contentment |
| Tapas | - | Austerity, ability to bear hardship |
| Svadyaya | - | Self-study |
| Ishvara
Pranidhana | } - | Faith in God |

- | | | |
|---------------|---|---|
| iii) Asana | - | Postures |
| iv) Pranayama | - | Control of breath and bio-energy |
| v) Pratyahara | - | Withdrawal of the sense organs from the objects of sense |
| vi) Dharana | - | Intense concentration for developing inner vision |
| vii) Dhyana | - | Meditation, uninterrupted and deep concentration for prolonged period |
| viii) Samadhi | - | The goal of Yoga, a true sense of communion and peace |

VIPAREETHA KARANI



VIPAREETHA KARANI (Inverted Pose)

Technique No 1: Lie on the back. Raise the legs and hip with the help of the arms. Bend the arms and hold the hips in the hands so that the body is supported on the elbows, shoulder-blades and head. The back should form an angle of 45 degrees with the ground. Remain in this position for 5 to 15 minutes. Then lower the legs slowly and relax.

Benefits:

1. It has all the benefits of Shirshasana and Sarvangasana.
2. The blood circulation is increased in neck, throat and head region.
3. Brain cells receives more supply of oxygen.
4. Endocrine glands are stimulated.
5. Improves eye sight and memory power and Digestion.
6. Prevents formation of wrinkles in the face and increase vitality of the body.
7. Swelling in the legs deminish.
8. Cures Insomnia, Back pain, Prolapse of uterus, Diabetis and Blood pressure etc. It is called as "Sakala Roga Nivarini" as it is curing all diseases.



VIPAREETHA KARANI (With pillows)

Technique No 2: Place 3 cotton pillows one above the other. Sit on the front edge of the pillows and slowly bend backwards and place the head and shoulders on the floor. Join the legs together and raise the legs. Keep the legs at 90 degrees to the floor. The weight of the body is now on the shoulder and neck. Place the arms relaxed on the floor. Remain in this posture for 5 to 15 minutes in normal breath. Then slowly lower down the legs on the floor, raise the hip, remove the pillows one by one and take rest in *Shavasana*.

Hints:

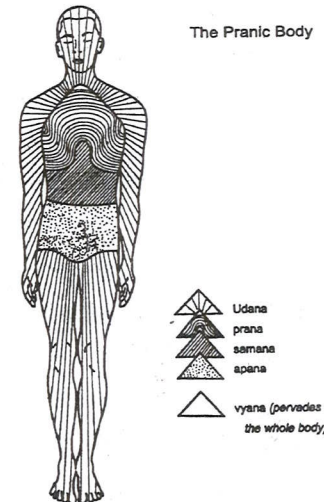
1. It should not be practised during day time as it induces sleep.
2. If it is done just prior to dinner, one gets sound sleep.
3. It is safer and better to use pillows to avoid back pain.
4. It is enough to practise only this asana to cure all the pain and diseases for those who don't have time to do all the asanas.
5. Do not practise on mosaic floor.

PRANAYAMA

The word *Pranayama* consists of two parts *prana* and *ayama*. *Prana* means breath, life, vitality, or cosmic energy. *Ayama* means control. Thus pranayama means control of the vital force by regulated breathing. It is a deliberate technique of inhalation, retention, exhalation and suspension of breath in exhalation. Great sage Patanjali says "*Tasmin sati svasa prasvasayoh gativichedan pranayamah*". It means pranayama is the regulation of the incoming and outgoing flow of breath with retention. Just as bathing is necessary for purification of body, Pranayama is essential for purification of mind.

The pranic body

According to yogic physiology, the human framework is comprised of five bodies or sheaths, which account for the different aspects to dimensions of human existence. These five sheaths are known as:



- a) *Annamaya kosha*, the food or material body
- b) *Manomaya kosha*, the mental body
- c) *Pranamaya kosha*, the bioplasmic or vital energy body
- d) *Vijnanamaya kosha*, the psychic or higher mental body
- e) *Anandamaya kosha*, the transcendental or bliss body.

Although these five sheaths function together to form an integral whole, the practises of *pranayama* work mainly with *pranamaya kosha*. The *pranamaya kosha* is made up of five major *pranas* which are collectively known as the pancha or five *pranas*: *prana*, *apana*, *samana*, *udana* and *vyana*.

Yoga Sastra tells us that *prana* the air we breathe, fulfils several functions in the human body. Each of these has a special name:

Prana- Prana (here the general term takes on a specific meaning) that circulates in the area around the heart and controls breathing.

Apana- Prana that circulates in the lower regions of the abdomen and controls excretory function (urine and faeces).

Samana- Prana that stimulates the gastric juices, thus facilitating digestion.

Udana- Prana that remains in the thoracic cage, controls the absorption of air and food.

Vyana- Prana that spreads throughout the body and distributes the energy from food and breath.

The objectives of Pranayama are :

1. Removes the imbalances of *Prana* which are the causes for most of the ailments and diseases.
2. Initiate the process of positive health development.
3. Gain control over inner energies and thus on mind.

The principles used in Pranayama are :

1. Slowing down of breath.
2. Conscious feeling of breath and other internal changes (developing an inner awareness)

Physiology of Pranayama:

1. It reduces the respiratory and heart rate.
2. It increases the oxygen uptake.
3. Metabolic rate of body is reduced.
4. Complete neuro-physiological relaxation occurs.
This rest is far superior to sleep.

Benefits of Pranayama:

1. It gives a feeling of freshness, energy and lightness of body and mind.
2. Prevents and cures hypertension.
3. Strengthens the lungs. Increases its capacity and cures the disorders.
4. Digestion is improved.
5. Excretory system is stimulated. Toxins are removed from the body.
6. Skin tone is well maintained. Acne is prevented.
7. All the endocrine glands are stimulated.
8. It makes the nervous system more energetic.

9. *Pranayama* can be used for therapy. Problems of high blood pressure, allergic rhinitis, vasomotor rhinitis, sinusitis, recurrent infections of the upper respiratory tract, chronic headaches, migraine, peptic ulcers, anxiety states can be treated by many kinds of *pranayama*, without the need for *asanas*.

10. It increases concentration and helps in meditation.

Guidelines:

1. Guidance of an experienced *guru* and mastery of *asanas* are essential for *pranayama* training.
2. It should be done preferably after a bath.
3. The bowels and bladder should be evacuated.
4. It should be done in empty stomach or six hours after a meal, or half an hour after a drink.
5. Early morning and just after sunset in the evening are the best time to practise.
6. It should be done in a clean, airy, quite place free of insects.
7. It should be practised at the same time and place and same posture regularly.
8. It is best done sitting on the floor on a folded blanket in *padmasana*, *siddhasana* or *vajrasana*.
9. Eyes should be closed throughout.
10. Each should realise his own capacity while doing *pranayama* and not exceed it.
11. *Shavasana* after *pranayama* refreshes both body and mind.
12. Practitioners of *pranayama* should stop smoking.

Precautions:

1. *Pranayama* should be practised only with the proper guidance of competent *Guru*.
2. Those suffering from heart complaints, high blood pressure and with very weak lungs should never practise *kumbhaka* (holding the breath).

3. *Pranayama* should be practised only after mastery over *asanas* achieved. Stop the practise if you feel giddy.

SECTIONAL BREATHING

It corrects the breathing pattern and increases the vital capacity of the lungs. It has 3 sections:

Abdominal Breathing or Diaphragmatic Breathing:

Sit erect in *Vajrasana*. Keep the fingers of both the hands at the level of umbilicus with a gap of two finger breaths. Inhale for 3 counts. Now hold the breath for 3 counts and exhale for 6 counts. The abdomen is made to bulge continuously with the air entering especially into the lower sections of the lungs. While exhaling the abdomen is drawn inwards continuously and slowly. Repeat the breathing cycle. There should be no jerks in the whole process. It should be smooth, continuous and relaxing.

The diaphragm separating the thorax from the abdomen descends during inhalation with the bulging of the abdomen. This increases the airflow into the lower sections of the lungs. The rhythmic movement of the diaphragm massages the contents of the abdomen gently, and helps the organs to function normally. It promotes the general circulation also.

Thoracic (Chest) Breathing or Intercostal Breathing:

Sit erect in *Vajrasana*. Inhalation and exhalation are performed by expanding and contracting the chest sideways which can be observed by keeping the hands on the chest at the nipple level. The middle lobes are opened up fully by this type of breathing.

Upper Lobar Breathing or Clavicular Breathing:

Sit erect in *Vajrasana*. Keep the hands on the shoulder. Collar bones raise during inhalation and comes out during exhalation. The air is forced into the uppermost regions of the lungs thus ventilating the upper lobes. The sparingly used upper lobes of the lungs will be properly aerated by this breathing.

EPILOGUE

Learn to Live

I usually start and end my classes with the message

"Learn to Live". Because Yoga teaches us the art of living. It helps us to accept life, to live in the present, to keep smiling, to be pure, to do good to others and to attain spiritual calmness.

Live in the Present

Living in the present is the Secret of Success. Osler said "Live neither in the past nor in the future, but let each day's work absorb your entire energies and satisfy your widest ambition."

"You take care of today. That will take care of tomorrow" - so said an English scholar. Omar Khayyam said "Yesterday is dead, Tomorrow is yet to be born, why lament when today is full of delight? It is necessary to engage ourselves in the work of the present moment." What the scholars have said in the present century had been discovered by the Indian sages thousands of years ago. We have now forgotten their message. The various set-backs and failures that we experience in life, can be attributed to the neglect of these words of wisdom. Vedic texts says

"Yogis don't regret the events of the past. They don't care for the future. They operate entirely in the world of the present."

Keep Smiling

Life moves; it proceeds through its road - which is always bumpy. It must. It is a route to the top, and as hill-roads always do, it rises and falls. It proceeds through ascents and descents, and yet, if the traveller is facing the peak, in spite of temporary ascents and frequent descents, he is ever progressing. Therefore keep smiling; all falls are a rise in the Total.

How Strange, How True! Yoga, the lives of saints and teachings of spiritual leaders of ancient India have attracted the attention of foreign intellectuals due to their innate strength, though there is no effort for their propagation.

Is it not strange but true that they don't appeal to the youth and educated people of our country? When the Westerners have been fully benefited by yoga by starting many yoga centres in their country, we are not attaching much importance to yoga as they do.

Vision beyond

Swami Vivekananda said "*We want today muscles of iron and nerves of steel*". What he implied was that a weak physique could not contain or uphold powerful thoughts and ideas. The duty of the Youth today is to fight against and overcome poverty, ignorance, disease and threats of war and lead humanity to light. He also proclaimed that message of Yoga would spread throughout the world, at one point or the other. The well known historian Arnold Toynbee made a prediction towards the middle of this century: "*India will conquer her conquerors culturally, not politically*", as Swami Vivekananda has already hinted.

Next Step

So it is the duty of every citizen of India to learn the art of our ancient Yoga and spread its message throughout the country to make it prosperous.

Faith Heals

The Hindu reported in its issue on 26th June 1979 that an experiment had been conducted by Dr. Benson, Boston, America, for forty years. It was a report based on an experimental study of the effect of the doctor's personality, the instructions they give, and the confidence the patients have in them. Physicians have been quite familiar with the phenomenon of confidence affecting cures in the treatment of diseases. The research paper of Dr. Herbert Benson of Beth Israel Hospital, Boston was published in New England Journal of Medicine. The researchers concluded that more than the medicine, it was the doctor's encouragement, assurance, love, concern and sincerity that gave relief to patients. People might be surprised at Dr. Benson's finding that 82% people were cured by faith.

Estd. 1993

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF YOGA (Regd.)

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AIM OF THE INSTITUTE

1. To bring the beneficial aspects of yoga to everyone in society.
2. To make yoga a socially relevant science by using scientific research.
3. To provide proper solution to the patients' problems by first studying the condition thoroughly with the help of modern investigations and providing combined treatment of yoga and modern medicines according to the severity of the disease and individual make-up of the patients.

ACTIVITIES OF THE INSTITUTE

1. We conduct regular yoga classes for general health for all age groups.
2. We are attached to various Hospitals and clinics and give treatment for diseases as an alternative therapy.
3. We conduct camps at various schools, colleges, universities and other teaching institutes, to teach simplified and specially designed course for the students to increase their memory power, concentration and for prevention of common childhood & adolescent mental and physical problems.
4. We conduct free camps for women in co-ordination with all Women Association so that they lead a happy and healthy family-life.
5. We assist various corporate offices and teach yoga for the busy professionals to overcome stress and strain.
6. We train yoga teachers to teach yoga to one and all.
7. We train yoga teachers in yogatherapy with basic knowledge of anatomy, physiology and diagnosis and symptoms of various diseases.
8. We send trained yogatherapists to patients' houses for treatment.

9. We conduct seminars and yoga competitions for school students at various places.
10. We conduct yoga camps for diabetics, pregnant women, hypertensives and asthmatics in association with eminent allopathy doctors in respective fields, where we assess the patients condition before and after the yogatherapy.
11. Courses offered in the institute:
 - i) Yoga Foundation Course (YFC) Duration: One month.
 - ii) Personality Development camp for students.
Duration : 10 days especially during quarterly, half-yearly and summer holidays.
 - iii) Yogatherapy treatment course.
Duration: Two weeks to four weeks.
 - iv) Diploma in yogatherapy (DYT). Duration: Six months.
 - v) Yoga Instructors Course. Duration: Three months.
 - vi) Yoga Advanced Course. Duration: Three months.

GENERAL SHORT COURSE

FOR HALF-AN HOUR DAILY PRACTICE FOR GENERAL FITNESS

	Number	Duration in Minutes
Forward-Backward Bending	10 times	2
ASANAS		
Suryanamaskar	3 times	3
Standing :		
1. Ardhakatti Chakrasana (both sides)		2
2. Ardha Chakrasana		1/2
3. Pada Hastasana		2
Sitting :		
1. Yoga Mudra or Shasankasana		2
2. Ustrasana or Supta-Vajrasana		1/2
3. Vakrasana (both sides)		2
Lying Posture :		
1. Bhujangasana		1
2. Sarvangasana		3
3. Matsyasana		1
4. Shavasana		4
PRANAYAMA		
1. Kapalabhati	20 strokes	1
2. Nadi Suddhi or Sectional breathing	5 rounds	2
MEDITATION		4
Total		30

ARDHA PADMASANA (Half Lotus Pose)



By **ARJUN SRIRAM**
Grandson of the Author

Sit with the legs straight in front of the body. Bend one leg and place the sole of the foot under opposite thigh. Bend the other leg and place the foot on top of the opposite thigh. Without straining, try to place the upper heel as near as possible to the abdomen. The head neck and spine should be kept straight.

Benefits:

1. This is good posture for *pranayama* and meditation.
2. Enhances Memory power and concentration.
3. Strengthens back and legs.

Hints: By alternatively placing each foot in the elevated position, the practitioner will slowly prepare his legs for the practice of padmasana.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Yoga Kalaimamani Dr. S. Hema, M.B.B.S., D.Y.T is a Successful gynecologist and obstetrician by profession and an expert in Yoga therapy too. She has integrated allopathy with yoga in the treatment of chronic diseases. She is Founder and Director of Indian institute of yoga established in 1998. She has authored many books and VCDS on yoga therapy. She had received yoga kalaimamani award from Governor of Tamil nadu for conducting more than 200 yoga camps for diabetes in association with southern chapter of **Diabetic Association of India**. **Dr. Mohan** world famous diabetologist has accredited her **books and VCD on yoga for diabetes**. She is an ardent devotee of Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. She is at present working as yoga therapist in **Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital Prasanthi Nilayam Puttaparthi**.



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