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Directorate of Distance Education

P.G. Diploma in Yoga

I - Semester

426 14

PRACTICAL

LAB I: SIMPLE ASANAS AND PRANAYAMA

Reviewer	
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INTRODUCTION

NOTES

Yoga is essentially a spiritual discipline based on an extremely subtle science which focuses on bringing harmony between mind and body. It is an art and science for healthy living. The word 'Yoga' is derived from the Sanskrit root yuj meaning 'to join', 'to yoke' or 'to unite'. According to Yogic scriptures, the practice of Yoga leads to the union of individual consciousness with universal consciousness. According to modern scientists, everything in the universe is just a manifestation of the same quantum firmament. Today, everybody has conviction about Yoga practices towards the prevention of disease, maintenance and promotion of health. Millions and millions of people across the globe have benefitted by the practice of Yoga and the practice of Yoga is blossoming and growing more vibrant with each passing day.

The widely practised Yoga *sadhanas* are *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Āsana*, *Prānāyāma*, *Pratyāhara*, *Dhāraṇa*, *Dhyāna*, *Samādhi*, *Bandhas* and *Mudras*, *Shatkarmas*, *Yuktāhāra*, *Mantra-japa*, *Yukta-karma*, etc. *Yamas* are restraints and *Niyamas* are observances. These are considered to be pre-requisites for further Yogic practices. *Āsanas*, capable of bringing about stability of body and mind, "*kuryat-tadasanam- sthairyam*", involve adopting various psycho-physical body patterns and giving one an ability to maintain a body position (a stable awareness of one's structural existence) for a considerable length of time. *Prānāyāma* consists of developing awareness of one's breathing followed by regulation of respiration as the functional or vital basis of one's existence. It helps in developing awareness of one's mind and helps to establish control over the mind.

This practical lab book, *Simple Asanas and Pranayam*, describes the methods and techniques of practising various *Asanas and Pranayam*.

Sitting Types

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1. Ardha Padmasana or Veerasana

Ardha Padmasana (Half Lotus Pose)

In Ardha Padmasana, the meaning of “Ardha” is one part or half, “Padma” represents the Lotus and the Asana stands for the seat, pose or posture. Ardha Padmasana is the variation of the authentic seated posture (Lotus Pose or Padmasana in Sanskrit).



Ardha Padmasana is more suitable for those people who have less flexibility in their lower body and also for those who are uncomfortable to perform the full Padmasana (Traditional Lotus Pose). Half Lotus pose is also best for learners or who are new to Yoga. Ardha Padmasana or Half Lotus pose is used as meditations pose same like Padmasana.

Focusing Chakra: The Crown chakra

Position: Seated Pose

Level of Asana: Basic

Steps of Ardha Padmasana (Half Lotus Pose)

- First, take a position of Dandasana (Staff Pose) with straight legs in front of you and keep your spine erect.
- Now, fold (bend) your right knee and place right heel in the direction of your groin, by this number 4 – shape is formed with the combination of your right and left legs.

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- At that time, you have to keep your leg relaxed and not to push your knee towards the ground for a deep stretch.
- Now, you have to fold (bend) your left knee, at that time your both legs are in the crossing position. Keep your left ankle on the top of your right butt crease. Keep your left foot sole pointing towards the roof.
- After that, you have to keep your hands on your both knees. Remember one thing; during the pose keep your spine erect along with keeping your head straight.
- Note that, during the whole procedure keep your face muscles relax and close your eyes or you can set your gaze to a particular point present in front of you.
- Remain in the pose about 1 minute or up to one minute or for the time period of your Pranayama/Meditation practice (during this, breathe deeply). Come back to the Staff Pose and repeat with the other leg.
- For discharging, extend your both legs towards the ground and sit in the staff pose.
- Follow the same procedure with your other leg on top.
- After performing the pose with your both legs, rest in the Savasana (Corpse Pose) for 3 to 5 minutes.

Ardha Padmasana Tips for Beginner's

If you are not able to keep your foot on your hip crease on its own, in this, you use your hands and arms to assist your leg position.

You can also use a folded blanket if you are facing problems regarding balancing.

Benefits of Ardha Padmasana (Half Lotus Pose)

- Ardha Padmasana stretches & strengthens your ankles, knees and inner thighs.
- Best for those people who find difficulties (bend their leg) to perform Padmasana.
- It calms your mind and relaxes your body.
- Good pose for meditation & Pranayama also.
- Half lotus pose gives relieve in sciatica and menstrual pain.

NOTE

Keep in your mind, throughout the process you have to breathe deeply. Ardha Padmasana is a variation of the Padmasana (Lotus Pose) mainly designed for beginners. If you want to improve your Lotus pose then practice Ardha Padmasana regularly for flexibility

2. Swastikasana (The Auspicious Pose)-Steps and Benefits

Sanskrit Name: Swastikasana.

English Name: The Auspicious pose.

Position: sitting

Swastikasana is a Sanskrit word and which is made up from combinations of Su+Asti+ka, in this 'Su' means good, meaning of 'Asti' is 'existence' and 'ka' stands for to make. Swastikasana is a simple meditation Pose. People who feel difficulties to perform Asanas like Siddhasana or Padmasana, Swastikasana is best for them. In India Swastika is a symbol of Happiness, good luck or Auspiciousness. In this Asana the position of the legs resembles the symbol of the Swastika, so that's why this Asana is named as Swastikasana or Auspicious pose. Swastikasana (The Auspicious Pose) is simple to attempt and this is one of best Asana for meditative activity or for long sitting. This position may be described as one that helps to understand the unity of existence.

Steps of Swastikasana (The Auspicious Pose)

- First sit comfortably on the ground or floor and spread out your legs in front of you.



- Fold your left leg; keep the sole of your left leg against the inner thigh of your right leg.
- Now bend your right leg and keep your right foot in the space between left thigh and calf muscles.
- Catch your left foot by the toes and try to pull it up and place it between the right calf and thigh.
- Your knees have to firmly touch the floor.
- Maintain the pose so that you feel relax.

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- Your body and trunk should erect.
- Place your hands on your knees in any mudra.
- Control on your breath. Breathing slowly and normally.
- You may also focus on the tip of your nose or center of eye brow it's depending on the type of meditation technique.
- In the beginning try to sit for 10 to 15 minutes in this meditative pose, day by day increase the time of sitting.

Benefits of Swastikasana (Auspicious Pose)

- It is a best meditation Asana for those people who cannot sit comfortably or find difficulties in classical poses like Padmasana and Siddhasana.
- Those people who are suffering from varicose veins and pain in the leg muscles can perform this Asana.
- Daily practice of this meditative pose increases the concentration level.
- Give calmness to the mind.
- Suitable for everybody in any age group.

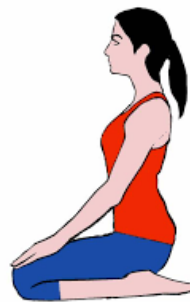
Note

Avoid this Asana in case of sciatica and sacral infections, consult a doctor or well educated yoga expert before doing this Asana in any medical problems.

3. Vajrasana

Steps to do Vajrasana

1. Kneel down with lower legs stretched straight backwards and toes crossing each other.
2. Sit over the heels – your buttocks should sit on the heels and thighs on the calf muscles.
3. Sit straight with head facing forward and hands on your knees.
4. Close your eyes (optional) and focus on breath observing inhalation and exhalation.
5. Practice this position for 5 – 10 minutes in initial days and increase gradually up to 20 – 30 minutes.



Vajrasana - Points to remember

1. You may feel pain in the legs when you begin to practice this asana. If your leg aches, undo the asana and stretch your legs. Now massage your ankles, knees and calf muscles with hand. This soothes the muscles and pain gradually fades.
2. If you have knee problem, have history of knee injury or had recent knee surgery; don't practice Vajrasana.
3. You can still practice this asana if you are pregnant. Be cautious to keep your knees apart to not stress your abdomen.

Benefits of Vajrasana

1. Vajrasana helps better blood circulation in the body. It modifies the blood flow by reducing the blood flow in lower portion, especially in the legs and increasing blood flow to the digestive organs resulting to efficiency of the digestive system. People with weak digestion are benefited. Better digestion checks acidity and ulcers.
2. People with sciatica and severe lower back problems should regularly practice vajrasana to be benefited.
3. Vajrasana is the answer to constipation, stomach disorder, digestive problems, acidity. It makes lower body flexible, strengthens sexual organs, tones body muscles (hips, thighs, calves), cures joint pains, urinary problems, etc.
4. Losing weight becomes possible with regular practice of Vajrasana. You will see the difference in your belly fat after a few weeks of regular Vajrasana practice.
5. Vajrasana calms mind and relaxes the nerves.
6. Slow and rhythmic breathing in this position can induce a meditative state.

Variations

Kurmasana (Tortoise Pose): After sitting on Vajrasana, firmly press the buttocks with the soles. Your head, neck and trunk are already erect, you can keep your hands on hips, knees or on the sides of the chest. Remain in this position for 3 minutes to as long as you can.

Ardha Kurmasana: While sitting in Vajrasana, stretch your both hands straight to your face level; the palms should face each other. Slowly bend and lie down on the ground on the support of your hands. Remain in this position for as long as you are comfortable.

Utthana Kurmasana: Release your buttocks from the seated position over the ankles. Put the ankles so close that they are one over the other; your spine, neck and head erect. Keep your hands in between calves and thighs. Now slowly release the hands and press the head with your hands looking downward. Sprains and pains in the back will disappear.

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Mandukasana (Frog Pose): In Vajrasana, relax your knees keeping them at the sides. Keep your hands on the knees. Stay in this position for as long as you can.

Padadirasana: Sitting on Vajrasana, stretch your hands to the chest level, palms facing each other.

Parvatasana: Gradually raise your body and the hands above from your original Vajrasana position.

Ananda Mandirasana: Release your hands from the knees in your Vajrasana and hold the heels with your two hands.

Angushthasana: From your Vajrasana, slowly raise the knees trying to maintain position in the toes alone.

Supta Vajrasana: From your Vajrasana, release hands from the knees. Gradually bend backwards. Place your forearm and elbows on the floor and arch the spine and neck back until the crown of the head touches the ground. Take normal breaths. Remain in this position for as long as you are comfortable. Don't try this asana until you have gained command over Vajrasana. Beware, your knees are in more pressure in this position than in Vajrasana.

4. Bhadrasana

Bhadhra means firm or auspicious.

Sthiti: Long sitting posture (Visramasana)



Technique

- Sit erect with the legs stretched out in the front.
- Keep the hands beside the hips. Dandasana.
- Now put the soles of your feet together.
- Exhale and clasp your hands together over your toes. Pull your heels as close as possible up to perineum region.
- If your thighs are not touching or are not close to the floor, place a soft cushion underneath the knees for support. This is the final position.
- Stay here for some time.

Benefits

- Keeps the body firm and stabilize the mind.
- Keeps the knees and hip joints healthy.
- Helps to relieve knee pain.
- Acts on the abdominal organs and releases any tension in the abdomen.
- Benefits women by relieving abdominal pain often experienced during menstruation.

A word of caution

Avoid this practice in case of severe arthritis and sciatica.

5. Gomukasana

Gomukhasana (The Cow-face Pose)

Gomukhasana (pronounced go-muKHA-suh-nuh) is an intermediate level seated posture. The name is derived from the Sanskrit words go (meaning cow) mukha (meaning face) and asana (meaning posture). This posture is called “cow-face” pose due to the lower limbs that resemble the face of the cow. The knees with a gap in between them look like the mouth. The shin looks like side of a cow’s face. The feet look like the ears of a cow. This posture helps to open your shoulder joints thus enabling a wider range of motion. Also, it is known for opening the hips. Hips are the known storage depot for stress, anxiety and fear. Sitting in this pose for several minutes while concentrating on your breath and release of these deep muscles, your body will overcome the negative effects of the aforementioned issues. It will also improve your posture because of the intense focus on lifting the spine. Gomukhasana is a great pose for athletes to test their ability to stay tough in a difficult situation. Working to open the shoulder joint, this pose is an obvious choice for any athlete that depends on arm strength. It opens and clears the rotator cuff while strengthening the supporting back muscles to add power. Stretched and strengthened hips and thighs are important for power and speed in sports that involve running. Opened glutes give more power to push for speed. Improved posture for athletes translates into more space in the chest cavity, leading to greater lung capacity and breath control.

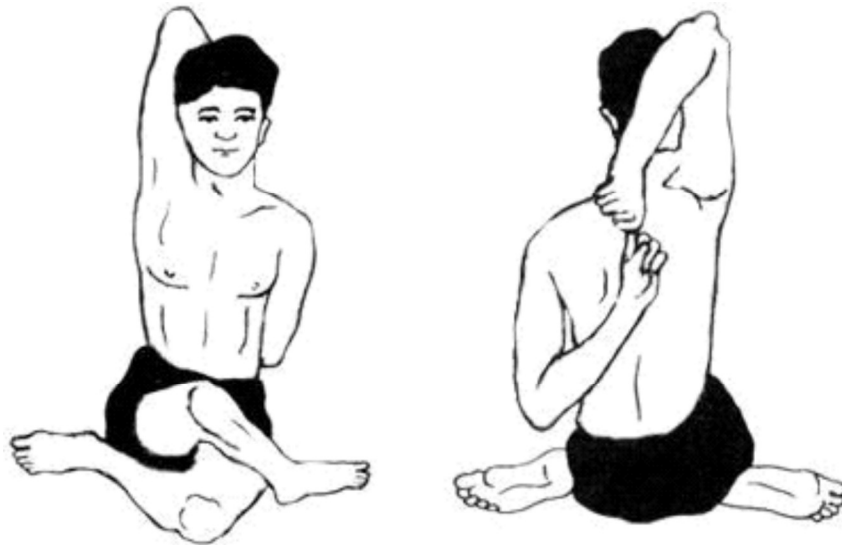
Steps to perform Gomukhasana (pronounced go-muKHA-suh-nuh)

- Begin by sitting in cross-leg seated posture
- Bring your right foot on top of the left thigh and slide it as close to the left hip as possible
- Bring your left ankle by the side of the right hip. Try to make sure that one knee is over the other
- Slide both your feet far behind, but make sure you are comfortable
- Try to keep the spine straight and vertical and the head facing forward

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- Raise your right arm and bring your it over your shoulder
- Wrap your left arm behind the back and reach to grasp your left hand with the right hand behind the back, clasping the fingers together
- Stay in the final pose for about 10-12 breaths.
- Release the hands and stretch the legs straight, bounce the knees a few times.
- Repeat the asana using the opposite limbs
- Finally release the post and relax in a comfortable cross-legged sitting posture



*Gomukhasana – The Cow Face Pose
Fingers are locked at behind*

Health Benefits of Gomukhasana (pronounced go-muKHA-suh-nuh)

- It stretches your hips
- It provides power to your ankles, thighs, shoulders, armpit, chest, deltoid and triceps
- Relieves chronic knee pain
- Strengthens your spine and abdominal muscles
- Helps decompress low spine (during folded variation)
- Strengthens the hip joint

Adjustments of Gomukhasana (pronounced go-muKHA-suh-nuh)

In the beginning you may find it difficult to hold the two hands together; however, with practice, you should gradually be able to do so. In case you are unable to hold the hands, you may like to use a strap holding it with the two hands and trying to close the gap between the two hands.

Contraindications of Gomukhasana (pronounced go-muKHA-suh-nuh)

- If you have sciatica, the use of a prop under the hips or folding forward could aggravate the condition.
- Avoid the pose if you have serious neck or shoulder problems
- If pregnant, do not fold forward during first trimester
- Do not practice if you have serious knee problems

Parivrtta Trikonasana also known as Revolved Triangle Pose is an asana. Parivrtta – Revolved, Trikona – Triangle, Asana – Pose; Pronounced As – par-ee-vrit-tah trik-cone-AHS-anna

This asana is basically a counter pose to the Utthita Trikonasana and is definitely more complex. This asana is a combination of a forward bend and a deep twist. It needs a good sense of balance and a sense of openness in order to achieve stability in the pose. This is one of the first standing postures that you will learn when you enroll yourself in a yoga course. It teaches you how to work every part of your body in unison with one another.

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RELAXATIVE ASANAS

1. Makrasana

Setubandha means formation of bridge. In this posture, the body is positioned like a bridge, hence the name. This is also called as Catuspadasana.

Sthiti: Supine lying; Savasana.



Technique

- Bend both the legs at the knees and bring the heels near the buttocks.
- Hold both the ankles firmly; keep the knees and feet in one straight line.
- Inhale; slowly raise your buttocks and trunk up as much as you can to form bridge.
- Remain in this position for 10-30 seconds, with normal breathing.
- Exhale, slowly return to the original position and relax in Savasana.

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- In the final position, the shoulders and head remain in contact with the floor.
- If required, in the final position, you can support your body at the waist with your hands.

Benefits

- Relieves depression and anxiety. Strengthens lower back muscles.
- Stretches abdominal organs, improves digestion and helps to relieve constipation.

A word of caution

People suffering from ulcers and hernia, and women in advanced stages of pregnancy should not practice this asana.

2. Savasana and Its Various Stages

Savasana Yoga (Corpse Pose) – How to Do Steps and Benefits

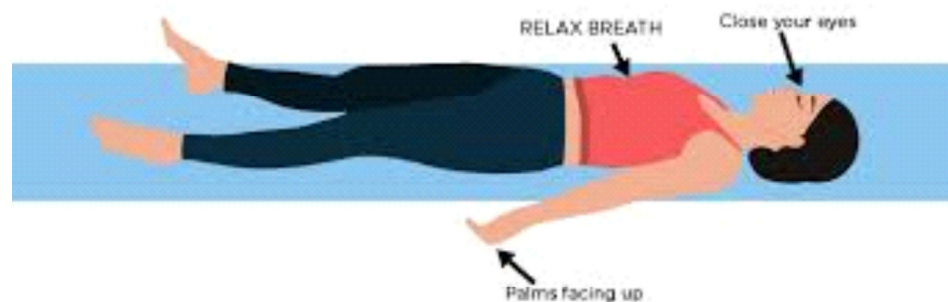
What Is Yoga Savasana

Searching for savasana yoga Pose? Savasana is a vital pose of your practice. For lots of new practitioners, savasana can be the nearly all hard pose to master plus the most threatening posture to grasp as it want you to only be. Savasana (corpse pose) boosts mood and relieves stress and anxiety, but it also has just as lots of physical benefits. The Sanskrit word ‘sava’ means ‘corpse’. This pose looks like sleeping pose or else dead body. It is extremely simple plus each one can perform this asana. You have to focus on every portion of the body.

This asana is single of the easiest asanas to obtain into but the most tricky to practice. It is single of the best relaxation pose and if performed properly and by full efforts, can rest each body part, calming not only the body however also the mind.

How To Do Yoga Savasana (Corpse Pose) Steps, Benefits and Precautions:

This article will educate you about the corpse pose (yoga savasana), teach you instructions for how to do savasana yoga steps, benefits and precautions.



Performing Steps for Yoga Savasana or Corpse Pose:

1. Be positioned flat on your backside, like our sleeping pose. Legs are supposed to be separated.
2. Maintain your arms at your side and your palms facing up. Now slow down.
3. Close your eyes moreover breathe deeply and bit by bit through the nostrils.
4. Start concentrating from your head to your feet. This way you are deliberately calming your each portion of the body. Avoid moving ahead devoid of relaxing each part of the body.
5. On every inhaling plus exhaling (breathing) feel that your body is entirely relaxed. Allow your tension, depression, worry and stress run away on every exhale.
6. Those having excellent concentration can perform for a long time and others can perform for 3-5 minutes.
7. Relax the muscles which lead to a decrease in the demand for blood and oxygen, giving the circulatory and respiratory systems a break.

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Benefits of Savasana Yoga (Corpse Pose)

- Lead to a relaxed mind that permit you to see moreover tell to the world in a new realistic light, be extra well-organized in work moreover carry extra happiness into life.
 - Savasana yoga remove worrying thoughts plus tensions.
 - Once the body is relaxed the consciousness of the mind boost and this lead to the growth of pratyahara.
 - Savasana can be extremely helpful in menstruation because it propose a deep rest to the muscles moreover also to the mind.
 - Corpse pose is helpful for emotional disturbances, anxiety, irritation, depression plus frustration; redirect the energy moreover offering a sentiment of calmness also freshness.
 - Irregularity in the menstrual cycle is frequently analytical of a superior problem. Savasana assist to re- balance the body moreover rest each body system.
 - Get better the working of the brain. Decrease high blood pressure. Helpful for preventing also improving heart complaint.
 - Savasana yoga will offer the peace plus calm needed by soothing the muscles, focus the mind and getting rid of any anxieties or else doubts.
- Integrate the mood of relaxation into the conscious moreover unaware awareness.
- All activities within the body require oxygen, supplied throughout blood circulation. Once we need extra oxygen the circulation is improved that leads to a boost in respiration.

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- Makes Self acceptance. Later than working in class to develop form, strength, poise, and suppleness. In savasana (corpse pose) there is no ruthless, no fight. Let your mind to get a break from preparation the future otherwise review the past. Surrender to the current moment.

Precautions for Savasana Yoga or Corpse Pose

- Constantly create Savasana earlier than practicing other yogasana and following ending yogasana.
- That judgment hard to practice in the morning otherwise evening can do whereas resting at night.
- Focus is significant.
- Whereas practicing Savasana, if you experience drowsy otherwise sleepy you can respire a bit faster and deeper. Benefits of Savasana not only limit you to relaxing your body and mind, but it also has a huge part to play in your sleep. If you experience insomnia as such, you can easily try this yoga before hitting the bed. However, one should never fall asleep whilst doing the yoga which would hamper the gentle balance between relaxation and controlling your breathing.

See More: Uttanasana Benefits

Immensely easy and maybe one of the best created hypes of the now trending crazes, yoga once was a secluded practice only engaged into by the saints or the sages who first came up with the concept. Even though the history to yoga is still not definite, the future for this journey is definitely well lit and adorned. Yoga now has become a commercial attraction, attracting people from all walks and ages. They found how mind and body can both be sated just by using the enhanced body movements and breathing techniques and within a few day the heated trend of using yoga to capture the essence of mind and fitness of the body became a huge hi

There are many different ways to practice exteriorization in Savasana. Here are four approaches, each of which deals with successively more subtle points of focus: the body, the senses, the breath and the mind itself. Any one of these practiced alone would be sufficient, or you may combine two or more for longer holdings.

Muscle Relaxation

Starting with the feet and working your way to the head, use suggestion to soften and release the different parts of the body.

Eventually, you learn how to voluntarily initiate relaxation, but initially it may take the use of guided imagery to encourage the muscles to relax. Here are some suggestions:

- Silently name each body part and imagine the breath flowing directly into that body part. Think of the body part as being darker or in shadow and imagine that the breath brings light into the muscles.

- Alternatively, you can think of the breath as dissolving the tension like sugar dissolving in water. With each exhalation the tension flows out of the body.
- After naming the body part, imagine it getting heavier and heavier with each exhalation and sinking into the floor.
- After naming the body part, imagine it melting as if it were snow melting in the winter sun.
- Imagine the body were a sack of grain. For each body part, visualize rips forming in the sack and the grain pouring out onto the floor.
- Imagine the body as a suit of clothes falling through the air in slow motion and touching the ground, body part by body part. As each part touches the floor, all the wrinkles fall out of the fabric.

NOTES

Sense Withdrawal

Sensory withdrawal begins with relaxation of the physical sense organs. This softens their attachment to the outside world, preparing them to turn inwards. Sometimes this can be a bit nebulous for the inexperienced practitioner to grasp. Releasing specific parts of the face can assist in the release of the nearby sense organs.

The sense of touch resides in the skin. While softening the muscles of the body, pay special attention to the skin, allowing it to soften and release as well. This has the added benefit of calming the nervous system directly, as there is a connection between the skin cells and the nerves: nerves, skin and brain all emerge from the same embryonic cells in the womb.

The senses of taste and smell can be released by addressing the mouth and nose:

- Soften the tip of the tongue and allow it to detach itself from the roof of the mouth.
- Release the tongue from the tip to the root, near the back of the throat.
- Release the roof of the mouth and the back of the throat.
- Soften upwards from there behind the nose and into the nostrils.
- Soften the bridge of the nose and the sinuses.

The sense of hearing can be released by softening the jaw and the ear canal:

- Soften the chin and the jaw.
- Soften the hinges of the jaw.
- Soften the ear canal in and forward towards the eyes.
- Soften the inner ear.

The sense of sight can be released by softening the temples, the muscles around the eyes and the eyeballs themselves:

- Soften the temples. Allow them to deflate and sink inwards.
- Soften the eyebrows, the cheek bones and the bridge of the nose.

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- Soften the muscles around the eyes.
- Soften the eyeballs and allow them to sink down past the temples.
- Soften the backs of the eyes and the optic nerve. moving back into the skull.

According to yogic philosophy there is one more sense, the mind. The mind, as opposed to consciousness or thoughts, is the part of you that organizes all the senses and mediates between consciousness and the outside world. To release the mind, we have to address the brain directly:

- Soften the skull.
- Soften the brain itself.
- Allow the brain to detach itself from behind the forehead and let it sink down to rest on the back of the skull.
- Allow the front of the brain to settle on the back of the brain.
- Soften the individual brain cells and allow them to deflate and sink towards the floor.

Breath Awareness

With the body relaxed and the senses turned inwards, it is now possible to become aware of the inner spaces of the body and the movement of the breath. There are two ways to think of the breath, either as the mechanism of breathing or as the flow of breath.

In the first, we can either observe the movement of the ribcage and belly or the passage of air through the nostrils. Let us look at the ribcage first:

- Bring the awareness into the inhalations and exhalations.
- Observe what moves as you inhale, what moves as you exhale.
- Observe the expansion of the ribcage as you inhale.
- Observe the release of the belly as you exhale.
- Observe the spreading of the diaphragm as you inhale.
- Observe the release and resetting of the diaphragm as you exhale.
- Allow each inhalation to emerge seamlessly out of the exhalation that precedes it.
- Allow each cycle of breath to flow seamlessly into the cycle that follows it.

Meditation

Even though the reclined position is not the ideal posture of meditation, it is still possible to practice a detached attitude towards the thoughts that fill the mind:

- Observe each individual thought as it arises.

- Do not categorize the thoughts. Simply acknowledge them for what they are. Think of them as words or images projected on a screen.
- As the mind wanders, gently acknowledge that it has done so and bring your awareness back to the thoughts flowing across the mind.
- As the mind becomes engaged in the thoughts, gently acknowledge that this has happened, release the thought and allow it to proceed on its way.
- As the mind begins to calm itself, you may find that the thoughts become a little less frequent a little less insistent. Start to become aware of the moments of silence between each thought.

NOTES

The Effort of Effortlessness

Savasana is a very demanding pose to practice. It has the potential to take us right up to the very limits of conscious awareness. It is as easy to think it unnecessary and to avoid it as it is to allow it to become nothing more than a nap. It demands of us both diligence and finesse. Too long in the pose and the mind may become dull and even lose consciousness. Too little time, or time spent wrestling with our thoughts, and the pose is almost useless. And yet, the benefits are many and profound. I urge you to give the pose the attention it deserves. Experiment with the different set-ups and become familiar with their effects. You will find different variations appropriate for different practices, different times and different states of mind. Experiment, too, with the different methods of turning inward to find what works for you so that you may reap the benefits of this wonderful pose.

Savasana helps us learn how to completely surrender, stop fighting the clock, and make space for peace and harmony to fill the soul. Savasana is like turning off your computer when it's acting up. Once you reboot it, the computer often has greater functionality.

5 Steps to a Successful Savasana

1. **Set yourself up for success:** Stretch out on your mat and be sure you're completely comfortable. Use bolsters, pillows, blankets, and cover your eyes with an eye pillow or towel. The more comfortable you are, the more you can relax. The more relaxed you are, the more easily you can surrender. The more open you are to surrendering, the more benefits you'll receive.
2. **Take one final cleansing breath:** Your teacher will likely prompt you to take one audible exhale, signaling to your body to release into the pose. This cleansing breath also sends a message to your parasympathetic nervous system that it is safe to relax and be just as you are.
3. **Scan for tension:** Mentally run through all the parts of your body and try to make them heavier. Be on the lookout for tension hiding in the jaw, temples, shoulders, and hips because stress likes to accumulate in these areas.

NOTES

4. **Then, just notice:** Some days will be easier than others, and that's part of the practice. See if you can be still, at ease, and simply trust that the breath will carry you to the next moment. Watch for those peaceful moments of quiet between the thoughts. Over time, they'll get longer, and you'll find more inner quiet.
5. **Set an intention:** Before you come out of Savasana, take a mental snapshot of how you feel on every level. Ask yourself what you'd like to take with you from your practice, and what you might like to leave behind. Seal these observations into your psyche with an inner smile, and then enjoy a deep inhale to awaken and emerge into your day. Now take a moment to notice that you feel more rested, awake, and alive than you did before.

Holding hands in Savasana floating on the Pacific Ocean in spontaneously evokes a sense of trust, interconnectedness, play and peace. Yoga is a way to remember our essential nature and the life energy bubbling up from within into formations and creation.

CULTURAL ASANAS

Standing Types

1. Trikonasana

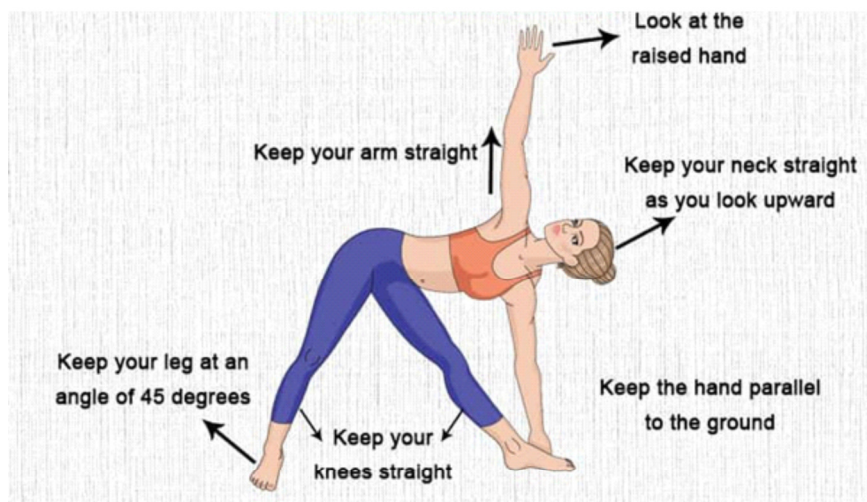
Trikona means triangle. Tri means three and kona is an angle. As the asana resembles three arms triangles made by the trunk and the limbs, it has been named Trikonasana.



Technique

- Stand with your feet comfortably apart.
- Slowly raise both the arms sideways till they are horizontal.
- Exhale, slowly bend to the right side and place the right hand just behind the right foot.

- The left arm is straight up, in line with the right arm.
- Turn the left palm forward.
- Turn your head and gaze at the tip of the left middle finger.
- Remain in the posture for 10-30 seconds with normal breathing.
- As you inhale slowly come up.
- Repeat for the left side.



NOTES

Benefits

- Prevents flat foot.
- Strengthens calf, thigh and waist muscles.
- Makes the spine flexible, improves lungs capacity.

A word of caution

- Avoid this posture in case of slipped disc, sciatica, and after undergoing abdominal surgery.
- Do not do beyond limits and overdo the lateral stretch.
- If one cannot touch the feet, one can reach for the knees instead.

2. Parivrutha Trikonasana

What You Should Know Before You Do The Asana

As with all the asanas in yoga, it is important to keep your bowels and stomach clean. Make sure you have your meals at least four to six hours before your workout so that you give your system enough time to digest the food and give out the required energy for the workout.

The best time to practice yoga is usually at dawn or dusk.

Level: Basic

Style: Hatha Yoga

NOTES

Duration: 30 Seconds

Repetition: Once on each side

Stretches: Knees, Hips, Shoulders, Thighs, Vertebral column, Thorax, Ankles, Hamstrings, Calves, Groin

Strengthens: Knees, Thighs, Ankles



How To Do The Parivrtta Trikonasana (Revolved Triangle Pose)

1. Stand erect on your mat, preferably in Tadasana.
2. Then, take a three feet step backward with your right foot, and turn it out at about 25-degrees to the side. Your left toes must point forward. At this stage, your hip point must face the side of the mat. Also, quickly check the alignment of your feet. They must be hip-width apart, with both the heels aligned with each other. The heel and arch must also be aligned.
3. Place your left hand on the waist, and inhale and raise your right hand overhead as you elongate your spine.
4. Firmly root the outside of the back foot, and pull in the lower part of your belly so that your lower back is supported. Exhale and hinge forward at the waist. Make sure your spine is stretched as you reach out with the right arm.
5. Depending on your flexibility and range of motion, allow your right hand to reach for your shin or on the floor outside of your foot. Inhale and continue extending through the crown of the head, making sure your spine is long.
6. Quickly check if the outside of the right foot is firmly rooted in the ground. Then, exhale and rotate to the left. Stretch the left arm towards the sky as you gaze at it.
7. Breathe slowly and deeply as you hold the pose for a few seconds.
8. To exit the pose, look at your left foot, and pull your belly in. Then, inhale and gently rise. Place your hands on your waist and bring your feet together. Repeat the asana on the opposite side.

Precautions and Contraindications

These are a few points of caution you must keep in mind before you do this asana:

1. If you have a back or spine injury, you must do this asana only under the supervision of an expert. If not, it is best to avoid practicing this asana.
2. Also, avoid this asana if you have the following conditions:
 - a. Low blood pressure
 - b. Migraine
 - c. Diarrhea
 - d. Headache
 - e. Insomnia

NOTES

The Benefits of the Revolved Triangle Pose

These are some amazing benefits of Parivrtta Trikonasana.

1. It gives the legs a good stretch and makes them strong.
2. The hips and the spine get a good stretch.
3. Practicing this asana opens up the chest, and therefore, breathing is improved.
4. Back pain is relieved.
5. The abdominal organs are stimulated and therefore, digestion is improved.
6. Balance, focus, and concentration are improved.

The Science Behind The Parivrtta Trikonasana

There are two different dynamic energies associated with the Revolved Triangle Pose. The first is rooting the legs to the earth, and the second is sending energy upward through the extended arms. This asana is a perfect union of sthira and sukha, or effort and ease. Through this, other opposites like soft and hard, contraction and expansion, descending and ascending, and solar and lunar are also addressed in this asana.

Although this asana seems like a twist, when you reach the floor, you will realize it is more about balancing. But you will feel steady and comfortable if you know how to use your core and leg muscles to support yourself. When you get your alignment right, you will attain flexibility and strength as you balance yourself out energetically as well as physically. Practicing this asana not only makes your mind steady but it also gives you a sense of being free. Then, as one arm reaches the earth, and the other soars towards the sky, you will find stability that will allow you to surrender to the present and the future.

3. Parsva Konasana

Parsvakonasana derives its name from Sanskrit where “Parsva” means “Lateral”, “Kona” means “angle” and “Asana” means “Pose”.

NOTES

In Parsvakonasana, the body forms an angle on the lateral side of the body and hence the name Parsvakonasana.

Parsvakonasana or Lateral Angle Posture stretches the lateral muscles of the body thereby increasing the flexibility and strength.



Steps to Do Performing Parsvakonasana or Lateral Angle Posture

Following are the technique or the steps to do Parsvakonasana or Lateral Angle Posture:

- Stand erect with the heels together and a little space between the toes.
- While performing Parsvakonasana or Lateral Angle Posture, expand the chest and drop the shoulders to a relaxed position and keep your neck straight.
- While inhaling, take the right feet away from the left feet to around 3-4 inches. Both the feet should be parallel to each other
- Next step to do Parsvakonasana or Lateral Angle Posture involves turning your right foot towards the right side at ninety degrees without turning your body to the right.
- Bend the right knee in such a way that the right thigh is parallel to the ground.
- While exhaling, bend your right hand to touch the right feet with fingers together in such a way that the right side of the body touches the right thigh.
- While practicing Parsvakonasana or Lateral Angle Posture, take your left hand up in such a way that your biceps touch the left ear.
- Keep the arms straight and look the left hand upwards.
- This is the final position of Parsvakonasana or Lateral Angle Posture.
- Maintain normal breathing in this position for 20-30 seconds.
- To come back in the original position, bring your left hand back to touch the left thigh while inhaling and right hand back to stand straight.
- While exhaling, bring your legs together.

- Practice Parsvakonasana or Lateral Angle Posture 4-5 times by changing sides i.e. - on both left and right sides.

Benefits of Parsvakonasana or Lateral Angle Posture

- Parsvakonasana or Lateral Angle Posture is beneficial in relieving menstrual discomfort.
- It is said to cure Infertility.
- Strengthening of Hip, knee, ankle, and shoulder is done with regular practice of Parsvakonasana or Lateral Angle Posture.
- Parsvakonasana creates traction in spine which helps in nourishing vertebral discs.
- It strengthens the abdominal muscles thereby increasing the stamina of the body.
- It is said to cure Osteoporosis.
- One of the benefits of Parsvakonasana or Lateral Angle Posture is that it helps in getting rid of Sciatica.
- Parsvakonasana is very beneficial for people with lower back pain.
- Regular practice of Parsvakonasana or Lateral Angle Posture is said to be beneficial in relieving Constipation.

Precautions While Performing Parsvakonasana or Lateral Angle Posture

- Insomniac people should not perform Parsvakonasana or Lateral Angle Posture
- People with High and Low blood pressure should not perform Parsvakonasana
- Parsvakonasana or Lateral Angle Posture should not be practiced by people with headache.
- If you have severe neck problems like cervical etc. do not turn your head, instead look straight and keep your neck long.

Tips While Performing Parsvakonasana or Lateral Angle Posture

- While performing Parsvakonasana or Lateral Angle Posture it is very important to do it in proper alignment.
- Always try and start building the pose from ground by fixing your toe and then knee and thigh and then move up to place your hands. You should practice the asana from ground up.
- Always align your knee in the direction of your toe otherwise the alignment will be incorrect and the desired results won't be achieved.
- As you start practicing the advanced pose, the body tends to come forward instead of being in line, thus unbalancing the pose.

NOTES

NOTES

4. Tadasana

Instructions

1. From a standing position, bring the feet together or hip width apart, parallel. Lift up the toes, spread them wide and place them back on the floor. Feel your weight evenly balanced through the bottom of each foot, not leaning forward or back.
2. Pull up the knee caps, squeeze the thighs and tuck the tailbone slightly under. Feel the hips aligned directly over the ankles. The legs are straight, but the knees are not locked back.
3. Inhale and lift out of the waist, pressing the crown of the head up towards the ceiling, feeling the spine long and straight.
4. Exhale and drop the shoulders down and back as you reach the fingertips towards the floor. Gently press the chest / sternum towards the front of the room.
5. Continuing to reach out through the fingers, inhale the arms up, turning the palms shoulder height, bringing the arms into a H position.
6. Exhale relax the shoulders down from the ears while still reaching the crown and fingers up.
7. Breathe and hold for 4-8 breaths.
8. To release: exhale the arms down to your sides or bring the palms together in front of your chest.



Benefits + Contraindications

Benefits: Mountain pose is the foundation for all of the standing postures and improves posture, groundedness, stability and confidence.

Contraindications: Recent or chronic injury to the shoulders.

Modifications + Variations

Variations: There are multiple variations on the placement of the hands: A) Fingers interlaced with index finger pointing up, B) Arms down with the palms resting against the outer thighs, C) Palms together in front of the heart in Anjali mudra (Samasthiti / Equal Standing pose)

NOTES

5. Chakrasana



Chakrasana (Wheel Pose)

Have you been practicing the mystical science of yoga for a long time now? If yes, then advance your practice to next level and build your way to Chakrasana (Wheel Pose). Perform the strong-back bending wheel asana and benefit your whole body, mind, and soul.

Alternatively known as Urdhva Dhanurasana (Upward-Facing Bow Pose), this yoga asana has many reported benefits. It is believed that a consistent practice of wheel pose greatly enhances the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of a practitioner and unlocks the heart chakra. Slowly delve into the practice of chakrasana and keep all the vital nerves and spine protected and healthy.

Learn the steps to perform Chakrasana (Wheel Pose)

1. Lie down on a yoga mat with bent knees and place your heels close to your hips.
2. Raise your arms, fold your elbows, and rest your palms beside your ears with fingers pointing towards the shoulders.
3. Actively press the feet into the floor and push your tailbone and posterior away from the ground.
4. Now, press the hands down into a yoga mat and lift the crown of the head from the floor.
5. Keep your arms and inner feet parallel to the earth.
6. Straighten the arms and come into a wheel pose.
7. Look down at the floor and hold this pose for 30 seconds.

NOTES

Have a look at the Top 10 health benefits of wheel pose

1. **Opens the Heart Chakra:** Unleash the power of love, kindness, and happiness through the practice of chakrasana. The chakrasana opens up the heart chakra, Anahata and makes the practitioners experience the spiritual power and positive transformations. Heal your heart, balance your heart energies and savor an increased sense of connectedness with the life.
2. **Balances the Nervous system:** Consistently perform wheel pose and trigger your parasympathetic nervous system. The wheel pose is well-known to reduce the signs and symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress. It slows, cools down the mind, balances the nervous system, and helps you rest in a peaceful state.
3. **Energizes the body:** Chakrasana is a great and natural body-mind energizer. Whenever you feel low on energy levels, perform a wheel pose and vitalize all your stamina, energy, and strength. The pose also unlocks the various energy centers and channels within the body and helps prana travel through the entire body revitalizing the spirit of the practitioner.
4. **Stimulates the Thyroid Glands:** The performance of chakrasana highly benefits the pituitary and thyroid glands. The wheel pose helps produce the TSH releasing hormone (TRH) which signals the pituitary gland to stimulate the thyroid gland and assist in keeping these glands in the best of the health.
5. **Stretches the Back:** Reverse the ill effects of a sedentary lifestyle by performing a chakrasana. The chakrasana effectively stretches the upper and lower back thus providing relief from a backache and associated health problems.
6. **Strengths the Vertebrae:** A wheel posture powerfully strengthens and lengthens the vertebrae that enhance the elasticity and flexibility of the spine. It is an effectual yoga asana that creates space in the spine and keeps it healthy.
7. **Heightens Lungs Health:** Chakrasana is an instrumental yoga posture that opens and strengthens the lungs. It intensifies the amount of oxygen to the rib cage and improves respiration. The prolonged holding of this posture with deep inhalations and exhalations therapeutically affects the asthmatic patients.
8. **Promotes Weight Loss:** As you stretch your body in a wheel pose you naturally lose fat-build up from your oblique areas. When practiced regularly, you shall notice a toned and slim body. It also strengthens the abdominal muscles granting you a robust physique.
9. **Loosens Hips:** Athletes acknowledge the importance of having flexible hips. Wheel pose potently opens up the hips and increases mobility in the posterior that enables them to perform their movements efficiently. The pose also helps in keeping the hips and lower back strong thus benefiting the overall wellness.

10. **Reduces Osteoporosis:** As we age our bones become weak and brittle and the risk of developing osteoporosis increases. Wheel pose effectively reduces the onset of osteoporosis by strengthening the bones of the body.

Make this powerful and potential yoga pose a part of your daily routine and exhibit a robust physique, peaceful mind, and compassionate soul

NOTES

6. Pada Hastasana

Pada means feet, hasta means hands. Therefore, Pada Hastasana means taking the palms down towards the feet. This is also referred as Uttanasana.



Technique

- Stand straight with feet 2 inches apart.
- Inhale slowly and raise the arms up.
- Stretch up the body from the waist.
- Exhale and bend forward until the trunk is parallel to the ground.
- Exhale, and bend forward until the entire palm rests on the ground.
- Maintain this final posture for 10-30 seconds.
- Those who are having stiff back should bend according to their capacity.
- Now inhale, come up slowly to the vertical position and stretch the arms above the head.
- Exhale and slowly return to the starting position in reverse order.
- Relax in Tadasana.

NOTES

Benefits

- Makes the spine flexible, improves digestions, and prevents constipation and menstrual problems.

A word of caution

- Please avoid this practice in case of cardiac or back problems, abdominal inflammation, hernia and ulcers, high myopia, vertigo and during pregnancy.
- Those with vertebral and disc disorders should also avoid this practice.

7. Ardha Chakrasana

Ardha means half. Cakra means wheel. In this posture, as the body takes the shape of a half wheel, hence it is called Ardha Chakrasana.



Technique

- Support the back at the waist with all the fingers together pointing forward or downward.
- Drop the head backwards and stretching the neck muscles. As you inhale, bend backwards from the lumbar region; exhale and relax.
- Stay here for 10-30 seconds with normal breathing.
- Inhale and slowly come up.

Benefits

- Ardha Chakrasana makes the spine flexible and strengthens the spinal nerves.
- Strengthens the neck muscles, and improves breathing capacity.
- Helps in cervical spondylitis.

A word of caution

- Avoid this posture in case of vertigo or a tendency to giddiness.
- Hypertensive patients shall bend with care.

8. Utkatasana

Utkata means fierce and powerful. The Utkatasana is a powerful posture that increases heat in the body. The Muladhara, Svadhithana, and Manipura chakras are strongly activated in this pose.



NOTES

Benefits of Utkatasana

- Builds digestive fire which aids in digestion and massages the abdominal organs.
- Teaches us to hinge at the hip flexors.
- Develops strength in the legs and core.
- Uses deep core muscles to create space between our hips and our ribcage.

Contraindications

- Avoid cueing your students to practice chair pose as though their back is against a wall. Chair pose should teach us to hinge from the hip crease. This allows us to keep neutral spine and have less tension in the back.
- Use the support of a wall if you suffer from knee or lower back pain.
- Low back or hip pain.

Step-by-Step

- Start in mountain pose with your feet either together or 6 inches apart.
- Bend your knees, hinge from the hip crease and allow your seat to stick out behind you.
- Make sure the knees travel right over the feet.
- Take particular care that the knees and ankles do not roll inward.

NOTES

- Feel your deep abdominal muscles engage further as you sit down into an imaginary chair.
- Keep a neutral spine – Avoid tucking the tailbone or trying to keep your back straight as though against a wall.
- Make sure the lower ribcage stays connected to the abdominals (the lower ribs should not stick out).
- Focus on lengthening in the waist.
- Feel a natural curve in the back of the neck and that your shoulders relaxed.
- For more of a challenge lift the arms so that the arms are in line with the torso.
- Find a perfect point of balance between the muscles on the front and the back sides of your body. Rest into this point of balance.
- Feel the muscles of your legs hugging the bones.

9. Vrikshasana

Tree Pose - Vrikshasana

Vriksha - Tree; Asana - Posture or Pose

The asana is pronounced as VRIK-shAH-sana

This posture replicates the graceful, steady stance of a tree. Unlike most yoga poses, the Tree Pose requires keeping our eyes open in order to maintain body balance.



How to do the Tree Pose (Vrikshasana)

- Stand tall and straight with arms by the side of your body.
- Bend your right knee and place the right foot high up on your left thigh. The sole of the foot should be placed flat and firmly near the root of the thigh.
- Make sure that your left leg is straight. Find your balance.
- Once you are well balanced, take a deep breath in, gracefully raise your arms over your head from the side, and bring your palms together in 'Namaste' mudra (hands-folded position).
- Look straight ahead in front of you, at a distant object. A steady gaze helps maintain a steady balance.
- Ensure that your spine is straight. Your entire body should be taut, like a stretched elastic band. Keep taking in long deep breaths. With each exhalation, relax the body more and more. Just be with the body and the breath with a gentle smile on your face.
- With slow exhalation, gently bring down your hands from the sides. You may gently release the right leg.
- Stand tall and straight as you did at the beginning of the posture. Repeat this pose with the left leg off the ground on the right thigh.

NOTES

Benefits of the Vrikshasana / Tree Pose

- This pose leaves you in a state of rejuvenation. It stretches the legs, back and arms, and invigorates you.
- It brings balance and equilibrium to your mind.
- It helps improve concentration.
- This posture has been found to relieve some cases of sciatica.
- It makes the legs strong, improves balance, and opens the hips.
- Helps those who are suffering from sciatica.

Contraindications of the Tree Pose (Vrikshasana)

Avoid doing this posture if you are suffering from migraine, insomnia, low or high blood pressure (those with high blood pressure may do this pose but without raising their hands overhead, as this may further raise their blood pressure)

10. Bakkasana

How to Do the Crow Pose (Yoga)

Crow or crane pose, which is called bakasana in Sanskrit, is one of the first arm balances learned by yoga students. Crow pose strengthens the arms, wrists and abdominal muscles. It also stretches the upper back and the groin. Bakasana can be slightly tricky to learn, but with regular practice you can master crow pose and then tackle more difficult variations of this asana, or position.

NOTES



(i) Start in garland pose: Garland pose, or malasana in Sanskrit, is a hip-opening pose that resembles bakasana but in an upright position. This asana may make it easier for you to enter crow pose if you are new to yoga or don't have a lot of arm or wrist strength.

- Keep your head up and press your elbows and knees against one another. It's important to not press your elbows against your inner thighs so that you can keep your chest area as open as possible.
- Don't collapse your shoulders. Pull your shoulder blades down your back to lift your chest.
- Keep your gaze straight ahead.

(ii) Place your hands on the floor: From either malasana or uttanasana, place your palms flat on the floor. They should be about a shoulder width apart, or slightly wider. This will help you support your weight while performing bakasana.

- Spread your fingers wide. This will provide you with more stability once you are in the pose. If it feels more comfortable, turn your fingertips slightly towards each other.
- Use a strap to keep your arms in line, if necessary. To use a strap properly for bakasana, make a loop and measure it so that it is approximately the width of your shoulders when flattened.

(iii) Shift your weight forward and pull up your sitting bones: The transition from uttanasana or malasana can be tricky. Slowly begin shifting your weight on to your hands and lifting your sitting bones toward the sky to help you enter full bakasana more easily.

- If you are in malasana, you'll want to bend your elbows and move your chest forward while you shift your weight forward.

(iv) Place your knees on your triceps: To move into bakasana, bend your elbows slightly, lift up onto your toes and try to position your knees onto your triceps, as high above the elbows as possible. Imagine you are trying to get your knees into your armpits!

(v) Squeeze or snuggle your inner thighs against the sides of your torso, burrow your shins into your upper arms.

- Use your mula bandha, or root lock, to suck your abdominal muscles inwards and keep you sitting bones lifting towards the sky.
- To make the transition into crow pose easier, you can try standing on a block. This will give you extra height and make it easier to get your knees into position against your upper arms.

(vi) Gaze forward: One of the most important aspects of mastering bakasana is keeping your gaze forward. If you try to look down at your hands or back at your feet, you may lose your balance.

- Try to focus your concentration, or drishti, in front of your hands.
- If your fear of falling is holding you back, try placing a pillow or blanket on the ground in front of you to soften a fall.

(vii) Lift one foot off the ground, then the other: Shift your weight onto your hands by leaning your knees into your triceps and lifting your feet up off the floor.

- Never hop into crow pose (or any yoga pose)! Gently and gradually shift your weight forward until your feet come off the ground.
- If you are nervous, begin by slowly lifting one foot off the ground, then replace it and lift the other. When you feel strong and balanced, try lifting both feet at the same time.
- Once both feet are off the floor, try touching your big toes together and tuck your heels as close to your buttocks as you can manage.

(viii) Straighten your arms and lift your sitting bones: Once your have achieved crow and can hold it for more than a few seconds, straighten your arms and lift your sitting bones. This will help you master the pose and cycle through a vinyasa if you choose. you can make a few adjustments in order to master the pose.

- Straighten your arms as much as possible. They should not be splayed out to the sides.
- Round out your spine and draw your abdominal muscles inwards and upwards using mula bandha.
- Gradually work towards holding this pose for up to a minute. If your wrists start to hurt, make sure that your palms are fully flat to the floor.

(ix) Finish the asana or cycle through a vinyasa. Once you've finished practicing bakasana, you can either lower back to malasana or cycle through a vinyasa if you are more experienced. Remember to only do what asanas you can without losing proper form

Benefits of Crow Pose

- Tones the abdominal wall

NOTES

NOTES

- Strengthens abdominal organs to aide in lower back pain and indigestion
- Strengthens arms
- Stretches and strengthens the back
- Stretches and strengthens inner thighs
- Opens the groin
- Strengthens the wrists! TRUTH! Practice.
- Builds endurance and focus – mental focus and calm!

Sitting Postures

1. Vakrasana

Vakra means twisted. In this asana, the spine is twisted which has a rejuvenating effect on its functioning.



Sthiti: Dandasana

Technique

- Bend the right leg, and place the right foot beside the left knee.
- As you exhale, twist the body to the right.
- Bring the left arm around the right knee and clasp the right big toe or place the palm beside right foot.
- Take the right arm back and keep the palm on the ground with the back straight.
- Remain in the posture for 10-30 seconds with normal breathing and relax.
- Take out your hands with exhalation and relax.
- Repeat the same on the other side.

Benefits

- Increases flexibility of the spine.
- Helps to overcome constipation, dyspepsia.
- Stimulates pancreas and helps in the management of diabetes.

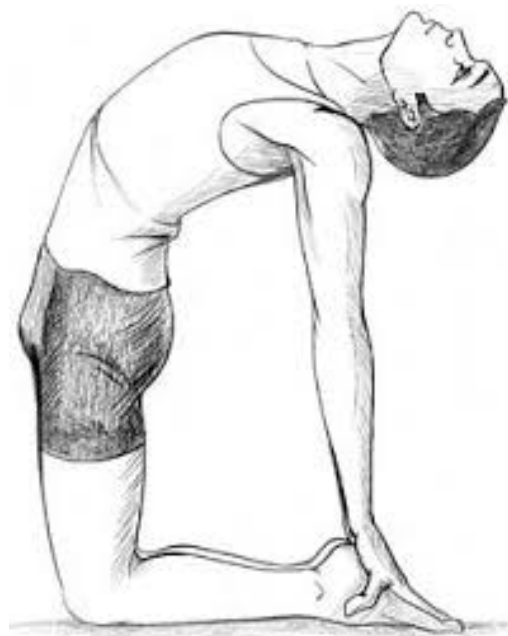
A word of caution

Please avoid this posture in case of severe back pain, vertebral and disc disorders, after abdominal surgery and during menstruation.

2. Ardha Ustrasana

Sthiti: Long sitting posture (Visramasana)

Ustra means camel. The final version of this asana resembles the hump of a camel. In this version, only the first stage (half) of the asana is being practiced.



NOTES

Technique

- Sit in Visramasana.
- Come to Dandasana.
- Fold your legs and sit on your heels.
- Keep the thighs close and big toes touching.
- Place the hands on the knees.
- The head and back should be straight.
- This is Vajrasana.
- Stand on your knees.
- Place the hands on the waist with fingers pointing downward.
- Keep the elbows and shoulders parallel.
- Bend the head back and stretch the neck muscles; inhale and bend the trunk backwards as much as possible. As you exhale, relax.
- Keep the thighs perpendicular to the ground.

- Remain in the posture for 10-30 seconds with normal breathing.
- Return with inhalation; sit in Vajrasana.
- Relax in visramasna.

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If you can reach the heels, you can place your hands on them and bend backwards. This is called Ustrasana.

Benefits

- Relieves constipation and back pain.
- Increases blood circulation to the head and cardiac region.

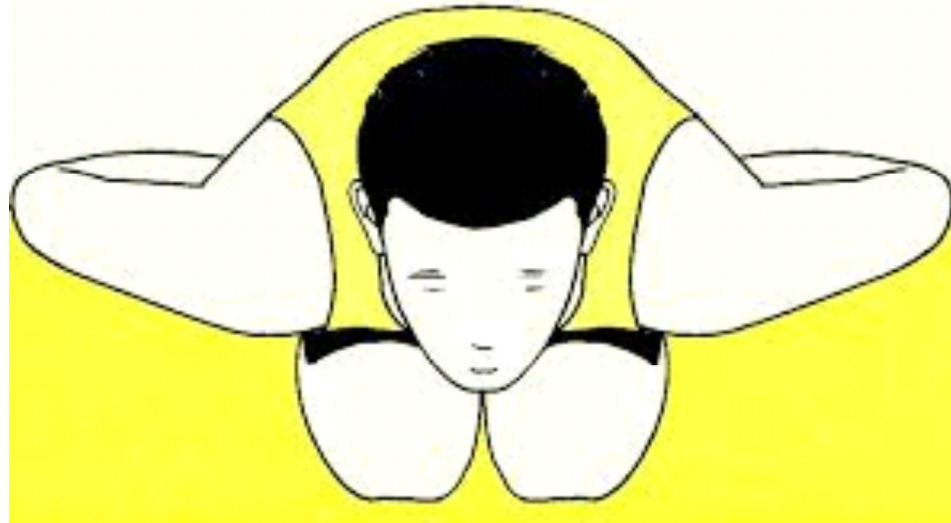
A word of caution

In case of hernia and abdominal injuries, arthritis, vertigo and pregnancy, please avoid doing this asana.

3. Mandukasana

Mandukasana meaning

The word Mandukasana has been derived from Sanskrit word मंडूकासन. It is consisted of two words manduk and asana. The meaning of manduk is Frog and asana is showing a yoga posture. In the final stage, the asana seems to like frog, hence the name. It is one of the important yoga poses to give appropriate massage to the abdominal organs. It is helpful to make your stomach flat by burning the extra fats from the belly.



How to do frog pose

The simple steps to do Mandukasana are given below. By following these technique, one can perform Mandukasana even oneself.

- Sit in Vajrasana.

- Now, make fists where thumbs should be inside.
- Put the fists at the naval region.
- Inhale deeply.
- With exhale bend forward and put maximum pressure on the naval area.
- While bending forward, your chest should touch your thigh and see ahead with open eyes just like as frog.
- Maintain the pose as long as you can do.
- Inhale-exhale slowing while maintaining the pose.
- Come to Vajrasana with deep inhale.
- Perform it 3 to 5 times.

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Health benefits of frog pose

- It massages the entire abdominal organs. Thus, good for smooth functioning of these organs.
- It controls weight. Thus effective for those who are longing for weight loss and making the stomach flat.
- It is beneficial in case of constipation and indigestion.
- It is helpful to release unwanted gases from the stomach thus make you feel relaxed and calm.
- It helps to control diabetes by stimulating the pancreas.
- Dislocated naval can be corrected by performing this asana.
- It should be practiced by those who have asthmatic condition.
- It strengthens the back if practice technically right.
- It is good for chest and shoulders.
- Regular practicing the asana is helpful to minimize the impact of menstrual cramps.
- It can be practiced to relieve stress, anxiety and depression.
- In traditional texts, it has also been said that the asana helps to awakening of Kundalini.

Precautions of frog pose

Some of the contraindication, cautions and side effects of frog pose are given below:

- It shouldn't be performed by those who has backache
- It shouldn't be practiced who has ulcer.
- Knee pain patients should avoid it.
- Don't put maximum stretch on your stomach; try to maintain the pose for longer period of time.

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- Avoid if having ankle injuries.
- High blood pressure
- Insomnia
- Migraine.

4. Suptha Vajrasana

Supta Vajrasana (Reclined Thunderbolt Pose)-Steps And Benefits

The meaning of Supta in Sanskrit is ‘reclined’ and Vajra means ‘thunderbolt’. This is the important and very useful Asana for improving the digestive system and Stamina.

Although there are fourteen variations during this Supta Vajrasana, practicing one and mastering it’s enough to tone your body.

Supta Vajrasana is a advanced and reclined version of Vajrasana where the higher body reclines backwards, so the rear rests on the ground. The arms rest on the ground to either aspect of the trunk, with the palms facing up.

It is additionally referred to as ‘Supta Virasana (Reclined Hero Pose)’ and has minor variations like Eka Pada Supta Vajrasana (One-Legged Reclining fastened Firm Pose) or Ardha Supta Vajrasana (Half Reclined fastened Firm Pose) involves one leg folded below the body whereas the opposite is being stretched.

It is additionally practice together with ‘Pavan Muktasana for rising the entire gastrointestinal system and intestine.



Steps of Supt Vajrasana

- Sit comfortably in Vajrasana.
- Keeping your palms on the floor beside the buttocks, your fingers pointing to the front.
- Slowly bend back, putting the proper forearm and also the elbow on the bottom so the left.
- Slowly bring down your head to the ground while arching the back. Place your hands on the thighs.

- Try to stay the lower legs connected with the ground. If necessary, separate the knees.
- Make certain that you simply don't seem to be overstraining the muscles and ligaments of the legs.
- Close the eyes and relax the body.
- Breathe deeply and slowly within the final position.
- Release within the reverse order, inhaling and taking the support of the elbows and also the arms raise the top higher than the bottom.
- Then shift the weight on the left arm and elbow by slipping the body, then slowly returning to the beginning position.
- Never leave the ultimate position by straightening the legs first; it's going to dislocate the knee joints.

Repeat this process for 3 to 5 times and once you master it increase the time for 8 to 10 times.

Benefits of Supta Vajrasana

- It tones the spinal nerves, makes the rear versatile and realigns rounded shoulders. The nerves within the neck, the thyroid and parathyroid gland glands square measure notably stirred.
- It massages the abdominal organs assuaging digestive ailments and constipation.
- The ribcage is stretched and dilated totally, that helps to fill the lungs to its maximum capability and transportation additional element into the system.
- It enhances courageousness and confidence level within the temperament.
- It is useful for those stricken by respiratory disorder, and different respiratory organ ailments.

5. Sasangasana

Shashankasana or the Rabbit pose is so called as the asana resembles a Rabbit in the final position. There are many benefits of this asana including relaxation, relieving of depression and much more. Age or flexibility is one of the barriers to perform or practice asana but Shashankasana is one of those which is very easy to perform and can be done by anyone regardless of age.

How (steps) to practice Shashankasana?

- Sit down on the floor with a simple or yoga mat.
- Stretch your leg in front and keep your spine erect.
- Bend your right leg by your knee, bring it back and keep your right buttock on your foot.

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- Now bend your left leg by your knee, bring it back and keep your left buttock on your foot.
- Keep your right foot big toe on the left foot big toe.



- This position is named as vajrasana.
- Sit comfortably in Vajrasana and keep your palms on your thighs.
- Inhale and raise your hand straight upwards and stretch.
- Now exhale and bend forward.
- Try to touch your nose or chin to the ground.
- Keep your arms stretched and palms on the ground.
- Stay in this position as long as possible.
- Keep your breath out.
- But if you want to stay for longer then start breathing normally.
- Then slowly inhale and rise up with straight arms.
- Exhale and bring back your hands down and keep your palms on your thighs.



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- This is a complete cycle of shashankasana.
- The practice can be repeated 5 to 10 times as per the convenience of time and comfort.

Benefits of Shashankasana (Rabbit pose)

- Relaxing posture.
- Tones the pelvic muscles.
- Stimulates the abdomen organs.
- Massages the abdominal muscles.
- Can help in sexual disorders.
- Gives a good relaxing stretch to the spine.

Variations

There are some variations of Shashankasana. One of the popular variations is done by placing the hands behind the back, instead of taking it all the way to the front.

How to do this variation?

- Start in Vajrasana.
- Take your hands to your back and hold your left hand with the right hand.
- First, inhale and with exhalation bend forward till your head touches the ground (or as much as possible).
- Remain in this for as long as possible. Slow and relaxed breathing can be done in the final position.
- Inhale and raise the body up and then relax.
- It loosens up the legs and strengthens them in preparation for sitting in meditation Asanas.
- It enhances ability and intelligence.
- This posture stretches the rear muscles and separates the individual vertebrae from one another, emotional pressure on the discs.

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- Often nerve connections emanating from the neural structure square measure squeezed by these discs, giving rise to numerous styles of aching.
- This posture helps to alleviate this downside and encourages the discs to resume their correct position.
- It regulates the functioning of the adrenal glands.
- It tones the girdle muscles and also the sciatic nerves and it is useful for girls who have an underdeveloped pelvis.
- It helps to alleviate disorders of each the male and feminine procreative organs.
- Regular follow relieves constipation.
- It helps to eliminate anger, aggression and relax the mind.

6. Ardha Sirsasana

Ardha Sirsasana is for you, if you are not able to do Sirsasana; however, can enjoy its full benefit. Additionally, once you gain confidence can start doing Sirsasana.

‘Ardha’ means ‘half’, ‘shirsha’ means ‘head’ and ‘asana’ means ‘posture’. Ardha Sirsasana common name in English is half headstand.

Ardha Sirsasana supplies nutrient-rich pure blood to the brain, which connects to our whole body and acts as a regulator. Thus, it kindles and regulates entire body function by increasing blood supply to scalp and brain.

Half headstand stimulates the nervous system, boost mental alertness and clarity. It is a centering, calming and soothing posture. People suffering from sleep problems, memory loss and low vitality can recover by the regular practice of this asana.

Ardha Sirsasana stimulates pineal and pituitary glands, and help normalizes its function; thus entire nervous system starts recovering.

How do you do Ardha Sirsasana?



- Take a blanket, which is needed to be placed under your head for some cushion effect.
- Position your forearms on the blanket in front of you with the fingers interlocked and the elbows in front of the knees. The distance between elbows to interlocked fingers in both sides should be same so that it forms an equilateral triangle.

- Position your crown of the head on the blanket in between the interlocked hands.
- Slowly lift your buttocks and knees against the ground so that your legs are straightened, keeping the toes on the floor.
- Now you have formed an inverter “V” (or triangle) of the body.
- Maintain this position as long as is possible without any strain, slowly bend your knees, lower it, and grounded. Rest for a while, then lie down on your back, and relax in Savasana.

Benefits of Ardha Sirsasana

- It rejuvenates nervous system and brain, thus helps diabetics to stop nerve damage.
- Improve lung’s capacity by loading blood with enough oxygen as well as heal cough, cold, sinusitis, and asthma.
- Aids proper blood circulation and removes fluid buildup in the foot, thus limits foot conditions.
- Kindle digestion and normalize metabolism, thus helps maintain the blood-glucose level. Psychological problems such as stress, depression and anxiety are more common among diabetes, which has relieved by handstand.
- It normalizes the functions of kidney, liver, intestine, stomach and reproductive organ.
- Finally, it provides a glow to your face and makes you more attractive

7. Sirsasana

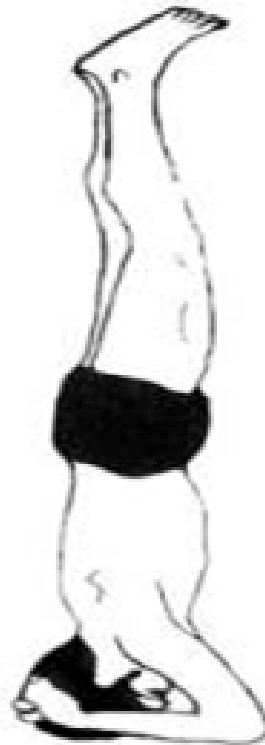
Headstand Yoga Pose (Sirsasana)

A number of people are apprehensive and disinterested to do Sirsasana because of its headstand position and requires some sort of balance. In fact, it is not difficult to practice if it is performed under the guidance of an expert and providing the basic rules are carefully followed. The brain needs well oxygenated blood for performing its various functions smoothly. However, in case of sedentary as well as general people, the brain didn’t receives sufficient enriched oxygenated blood that leads to headache, pituitary malfunctioning, diabetes, sexual problems, improper vision, hair fall, skin conditions, piles, varicose vein etc.

It also prevents blood stagnation in the lower parts of the body thus ensures homogenous blood supply to the entire parts of the body. The scientific experiment has verified that the amount of air breathed per minute during the performance of headstand yoga was considerably reduced. Oxygen consumption by the tissues increased and the amount of oxygen exhaled was less, indicating that the transfer of oxygen to the blood is greatly increased. It has been also shown that the number of WBC has increased thus prevents the body from infections and develop immunity. The ideal time to practice it is early in the morning just before breakfast.

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How to do headstand yoga

Mastering Sirsasana is not a difficult task. Here are the 10 simple and easy steps are being enumerated to raise the body into the final pose and how to become mastered for headstand yoga. Once this is achieved then staying in the final pose is little difficulty.

- Interlock the fingers tightly, palms forming a cup.
- Place the head on the formed cup so that the crown of the head touches the palms.
- Raise the knees from the floor by pulling the toes towards the head. Slowly raise your legs upwards from the floor.
- After the body gets properly balanced in this position, gradually and slowly straighten the legs.
- Take care that you maintain equilibrium and you don't fall backwards
- Make sure that the spine and thighs are in line, straight and vertical.
- Relax the whole body as much as possible.
- Close the eyes
- Breathe slowly and deeply.
- This is the final pose of sirasana. Stay in the final pose for a comfortable length of time. Come back by flexing the knees and sliding them down to the floor in reverse order.

Benefits of Headstand Yoga Pose (Sirsasana) for Hair, Skin and Health

Headstand Yoga pose is known as king of all asanas due to its multiple health benefits. It speeds up the blood circulation and ensures that brain receives sufficient well oxygenated blood. Sedentary lifestyle, lack of exercises and faulty modern set up lead to varicose vein, hemorrhoids and general efficiency of the organs of the body. So, Sirsasana is an unnatural method of combating an unnatural lifestyle, helps to solve all endocrine related problems including many diseases and disorders. Regular practice helps to develop the body, disciplines the mind and widens the horizons of the spirit. One becomes balance and self-reliant in pain and pressure, loss and gain, shame and fame, and defeat and victory.

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- (i) **Good for healthy brain:** Brain is the controlling centre of the body that helps to function the physical and mental aspects of the body efficiently and effectively. The headstand yoga pose allow to manifest the brain more vividly. It can rejuvenate and revitalize the entire brain. Sirsasana directs an enriched oxygenated supply of blood to the brain cells and the billions of cells receive more nourishment.
- (ii) **Headache and Migraine:** Sirsasana helps to relax and strengthen the compression of certain blood vessels in the brain thereby prevent the occurrence of these ailments. Note, however, sirsasana shouldn't be done during the actual time of headache or migraine. These ailments are also associated with mental tension, so sirsasana helps to prevent these ailments by inducing calmness.
- (iii) **Control pituitary functions:** Practicing sirsasana increases blood flow to the brain thereby revitalizes all the nervous system and the controller of the endocrine system, the pituitary. Thus, it acts like as panacea to rectify various types of glandular and nervous disorders.
- (iv) **Diabetes cure:** The headstand yoga pose shows a significant positive influence in relieving diabetes. The main cause of diabetes is the pituitary gland whose symptoms itself manifest in the malfunctioning of pancreas. The master gland secretes too much of diabetogenic hormone that leads to type 2 diabetes. Modern medicine is not so effective in curing the condition but Sirsasana acts directly on the pituitary gland by improving the blood supply thus help in combating diabetes.
- (v) **Treat sexual disorders:** Sirsasana helps in combating sexual disorders such as prostrate problems hydrocele, leucorrhea, spermatorrhea, and all general menopausal and menstrual ailments. The yoga pose drains blood from the associated sexual endocrine glands and organs, thus improves the functional efficiency.
- (vi) **Anxiety reliever:** Anxiety is the greatest factor in causing sexual disorders and other complicated problems. Sirsasana alone or with meditative techniques of Yoga helps to calm the mind. The headstand yoga is an excellent method of bringing about calmness and concentration.

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- (vii) **Treat thyroid:** It acts directly on the thyroid gland by balancing the metabolic functions. Malfunctioning of the thyroid can result in many ailments either directly or indirectly. The headstand yoga pose helps to bring perfect health to this vital organ.
- (viii) **Improves eye vision:** It improves the overall functions of eyesight, sense of smell and taste. The extra supply of blood during sirsasana helps to work the sensory organs perfectly. Various types of ailments such as myopia, astigmatism and catarh and general bad hearing have been found to improve by regular practice of sirsasana.
- (ix) **Skin complexion:** The condition of the facial skin can also be improved through regular practice of sirsasana. Pimples and wrinkles are often caused by inadequate removal of waste materials and insufficient nourishment from the blood. Sirsasana directs an oxygen rich flow of blood to the facial skin thereby improving the facial complexion.
- (x) **Prevents hair fall:** Hair loss, greying of hair and baldness are often caused due to bad blood circulation in the scalp. Sirsasana doesn't only direct enriched blood to the brain, it also sends it to the scalp. The transforming of grey hair into its original color and good growth of hair is possible through the practice of this headstand pose.
- (xi) **Cures piles and varicose vein:** The problems of varicose vein and piles caused by accumulation of blood in the legs and anus respectively. Regular practice of sirsasana relieves the pressure on the blood vessels help in alleviating either of these ailments. All the organs of the pelvis and abdomen are revitalized by sirsasana.
- (xii) **Memory power:** Memory power, intelligence and all mental functions are improved. Regular practice of sirsasana makes healthy pure blood flow through the brain cells which rejuvenates them so that thinking power increases and thoughts become easier.
- (xiii) **Removes lethargy:** This asana is a tonic for those people who tire quickly. It ensures a proper supply of blood to the pituitary and pineal glands in the brain. Our growth, health and vitality depend on the proper functioning of these two glands.
- (xiv) **Relives cold and cough:** The lungs gain the power to resist any climate and stand up to any work, thus helpful in relieving of colds, coughs and tonsillitis.
- (xv) **RBC formation:** Regular practice of sirsasana show marked improvements in the hemoglobin content of the blood

8. Tolasana

Definition - What does Tolasana mean?

Tolasana is an arm balancing variation of lotus pose, or padmasana. This asana is part of the primary series of Ashtanga yoga, where it is used to engage and challenge

the muscles one final time before the body is released and relaxed at the end of a practice. It is also a powerful posture for learning the lower two bandhas.

To perform this asana, the yogi begins in lotus pose. The hands are placed on either side of the body, and the arms are activated so the body and legs are lifted off the ground. The body can then swing between the arms like a scale.

The name for this posture comes from the Sanskrit root word, tola, which usually means “scale” or “balance,” but can also mean “poising oneself.” In English, tolasana is called scale pose.

Yogapedia explains Tolasana

Tolasana is a challenging posture because of the way it requires the yogi to draw their body weight and energy up. As such, it helps to activate the mula bandha (root lock) and uddiyana bandha (upward abdominal lock). It is also said to be beneficial for stimulating the muladhara (root) chakra, thus promoting a sense of stability and groundedness.

Because it is a strong pose, it requires the mind to find the balance between effort and ease in order to create a sense of calm in the pose. It may require a lot of practice to attain this posture, which can teach patience and acceptance.

The balancing quality of this posture helps improve the student’s overall balance in body and mind. It is also good for calming the mind and relieving stress or anxiety.



This pose is not recommended for yogis who are not able to comfortably perform Padmasana (Lotus Pose). If you have a shoulder, wrist, ankle, or knee injury, be cautious before entering into this asana.

If you are a beginning yogi and find Tolasana difficult to perform, try starting in Ardha Padmasana (Half Lotus Pose) before raising yourself. In this way, your bottom foot will rest under the top thigh while the top leg is in regular Lotus.

To try this pose with a licensed yoga practitioner, check out our yoga class schedules for each branch of CNY Healing Arts (Syracuse, Rochester, Albany).

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Getting Into Scale Pose

Begin in Padmasana (Lotus Pose). Place your palms on the floor beside your hips. Press your hands against the floor, slowly activating your arms and abdomen as you lift your legs and buttocks upward and off the floor.

Your legs should still be positioned in Padmasana. Your torso should be vertical with your head and neck relaxed, softly gazing forward. If you want to raise yourself higher, you can place each hand on a yoga block before lifting.

Hold yourself in suspension for 2-5 deep, slow breaths. Then, lower your legs and buttocks back to the floor, uncross your legs, perform Padmasana with the opposite leg on top, and repeat Tolasana for the same number of breaths.

Benefits of Scale Pose

- Strengthens your arms and wrists
- Tones your abdominal muscles
- Stimulates your abdominal organs
- Improves your sense of balance
- Calms your mind.

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Benefits of Scale Pose

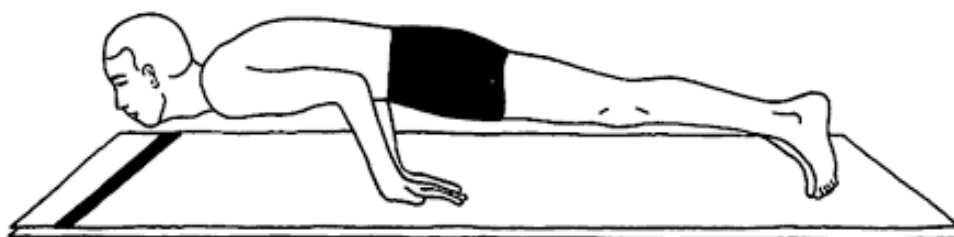
- Strengthens your arms and wrists
- Tones your abdominal muscles
- Stimulates your abdominal organs

- Improves your sense of balance
- Calms your mind.

9. Hamsasana

Swan Yoga Pose—Hamsasana

“Hamsa” means swan. Two swans representing breath and spirit called Ham and Sa appear in the ancient text Saundarya Lahari. They dwell in the mind of the Great and subsist on the honey of the blooming lotus of knowledge. Ham is the in breath and Sa is the out. While practicing Swan pose or meditating, practicing the Hamsa breath can be beneficial. As you exhale, create the sound ham with your breath and in your mind. As you inhale, create the sound Sa with your breath and in your mind. This asana is also sometimes called pigeon pose.



Benefits of Swan Pose

- Stretches the hip joints in adduction and flexion.
- Creates greater flexibility in the gluteal muscles and deep rotator muscles of the hips.
- Stretches and detoxifies the lymph nodes in the groin, giving a boost to the immune system.

Contraindications

- People suffering from knee, hip, pelvic, low back or ankle pain should begin with modifications.

Step-by-Step

- Before positioning yourself in swan pose, make sure that your hips and ankles are properly warmed up. It can be advisable to practice several hip opening yoga asanas to open and warm up the hips first.
- Start on all fours. Bring your right knee forward between your hands with the heel of your right foot close to the left hip crease. Slide your left knee back, lengthening the left leg and squaring your hips to the mat.
- Place your hands underneath your shoulders and feel the weight evenly distributed across your palms.
- Feel the pelvic floor lift up into Mulabandha.

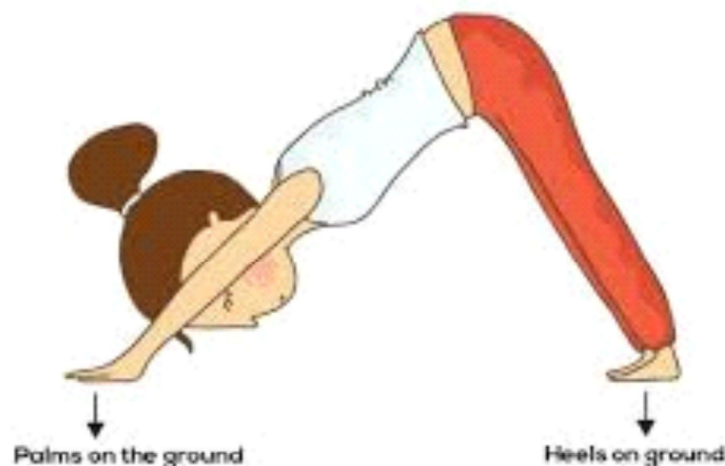
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- Use these Bandhas to protect your lower back as you press your left thigh into the earth.
- Inhale and reach your torso up into Swan lift, your heart lifting to the sky.
- Feel your hips release, and feel energy floating down toward your knees.
- Hinge forward from the hips and exhale into swan dive. Keep the spine long and feel a deeper stretch in the gluteal muscles on the right side of the body. Fold your hands on top of each other and rest your forehead on the backs of your hands.
- Feel the stretch all along your left thigh and deep in the psoas muscle.
- Feel the release of tension in your forehead and facial muscles as your head rests on the backs of your arms.
- Press your hands under your shoulders. Lift knees off the mat. Draw your right knee back under your hip and come onto all fours

10. Parvatasana

According to yoga, weakness of the body in any form can be removed through the practise of asanas. Patanjali says in the Yoga Sutras: „Sthiram Sukham Aasanam”. When we can hold a pose for a long period of time, without any tension or discomfort, this state is called asana.



Today, we look at Parvatasana which is also known and translated as Mountain Pose. To clarify this pose one needs to know that there are two types of Mountain Poses.

One of them is the standing Mountain Pose called Tadasana. The other one is Parvatasana, the grounded mountain, which we will discuss.

In Parvatasana our body resembles the shape of a mountain: Legs, back and arms build the sides of the mountain and our buttocks the top.

Parvatasana is often practised wrong or thought to be downward facing dog.

In this section, you will find the step by step asana tutorial for Parvatasana:

We start in tabletop position or cat and cow pose. Do a few rounds of curving your spine. Ideally, you should rotate your wrists and ankles prior to attempting the pose to prevent strain.

Step 1:

Relax your spine. Close your feet and knees together. Now adjust your hands: they should be right under your shoulders in one line.

Step 2:

On your next exhalation tuck your toes in and lift your knees off the mat. Push your buttocks up and activate your kneecaps.

Step 3:

Straighten your legs, they should be in one line. Feet and legs remain together. Now, try to reach your heels onto the mat. Keep your arms active.

Try to touch the crown of your head onto the mat.

If you cannot touch your heels onto the mat, walk on the spot and try to increase the flexibility of your calves.

This is the final pose: hold the posture for 1 minute while breathing normally.

Benefits of Parvatasana

- Strengthens to muscles of the shoulders, arms, and legs
- Increases flexibility in the spine, hamstrings, and calves
- Tones the spinal nerves and balances the nervous system
- Improves the blood circulation to the brain

Contraindications of Parvatasana

This posture should be avoided in case of the wrist, hip or ankle injury.

It should not be practised by people who suffer from spinal disorders.

11. Baddha Konasana (Bound Angle Pose)

What is Baddha Konasana (Bound angle pose)

Sanskrit: बद्धकोणासन (Baddha – Bound, Kona – Angle, Asana – Pose; Pronounced As BAH-dah cone-AHS-anna)

This pose is also known as cobbler pose because most cobblers sit in this position to work. It is also known as butterfly pose since it opens the hip joints and the up and down movement of knee make it look like a stance of a butterfly.

This Baddha Konasana (Bound angle pose) is one of the most effective and best pose to reduce the stiffness in hip joints and helps in their better hip joint

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flexibility. Baddha Konasana is one of my favorite pose that I enjoy practicing on a daily basis due to its enormous benefits on the lower body.

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How It Works?

Hip joint is one of the most important joint of the body which helps in mobilizes your lower body. Healthier and flexible hip joint helps in better synchronization of lower and upper body. With poor hip mobility, you won't be able to practice most of the yoga postures and will make you prone to any injury.

Baddha Konasana (Bound angle pose) helps in better blood flow towards your groin area which improves the male and female reproductive system and it helps our body in many different ways. This pose can also be performed while your meditation session to experience the improved benefits.

Benefits of Baddha Konasana (Bound angle pose)

Blood Flow: Baddha Konasana (Bound angle pose) is known to have its positive effects on the blood flow towards the lower body part and abdominal area which in turn helps in better functioning of internal organs, digestions and excretion.

Magical For Runners: Every runner needs to be flexible in their groin area and hip joints, this asana does the same for them. Improved hip flexibility leads to longer running and lower post running stiffness.

Better Digestion: Baddha Konasana (Bound angle pose) has a soothing effect on intestinal walls and with the improved blood flow it enhances the body's capabilities of digesting food. Through better digestion, this pose aids your body in different ways like relieving constipation, better elimination of body waste and better nutrients absorption.

Lower Body Stretch: Improves flexibility of inner thigh, groins, and knees

Menstrual Cramps: This asana has proven effects on menstrual cramps due to better blood circulation in groin areas.

Stimulates Abdominal Organs: Kidneys, ovaries, prostate gland, bladder

Relieves Sciatica Pain: This pose helps in relieving sciatica pain through mobilizing hip joint and maintaining better blood flow in the abdominal area.

Energize: Baddha Konasana (Bound angle pose) helps you feel energized by reducing the stress levels. Other reclined variation of Baddha Konasana helps in reducing the blood pressure which results in lowering the anxiety.

Pregnant women: This yogic pose has shown positive effects on women while the period of pregnancy. Practicing this asana said to easy childbirth.

Infertility: Baddha Konasana (Bound angle pose) has soothing effects on the ovaries in women which lead to the cure of infertility and healthier reproductive system.

Relieves stress: Baddha Konasana (Bound angle pose) helps in relieving stress through two different ways:

- This asana is a great asana to practice meditation, and meditation helps in elimination of stress and anxiety.
- This asana helps in regulating the blood flow in the body which results in normal blood pressure and decreased anxiety.

Better Posture: Baddha Konasana (Bound angle pose) reduces the stiffness from hip joints and thigh which allows the body to stay in the natural posture and more flexible. It cures asthma and high blood pressure.

Perfect For Modern Lifestyle: Two most prominent diseases gifted by modern lifestyle is bad posture and stress. This Baddha Konasana (Bound angle pose) helps in relieving stress through better blood flow and relaxation to mind. This asana also helps in improved posture through flexing your hip joints and making them with better mobility.

Relieve Fatigue and Insomnia: Bound angle pose is also known for its proven effects on curing fatigue and insomnia through improving blood pressure.

Decreased Muscle Tension: A reclined version of Baddha Konasana (Bound angle pose) helps in decreasing the all over muscle tension, relieving the stress from the body and helps in regulating blood flow within the body.

Step By Step Guide

- Sit in an erect position on a flat surface and stretch your legs out.
- Exhale and bend you're both knees to touch both soles together.
- While pressing your heels close together try bringing your heels closer to pelvis area.
- Now grab your big toe of each foot with your thumb and index finger and the middle finger.

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- Never try to force your knee towards the floor, instead, let your head of thigh bone move towards the floor. This will make your knees to move towards floor naturally.
- You can also move your knees up and down like the wings of a butterfly to increase the range of your hip mobility without putting unnecessary constant pressure on your hip joint.
- Maintain the position for 1-5 minutes and then inhale and lift your knees away from the floor and straighten your legs back in their original position.

12. Dandasana (Staff Pose)

Works as the starting position of several standing yoga poses. Similarly, Dandasana is the foundation for all the seated yoga postures. A perfectly challenging yoga asana for beginners to start with. Staff pose warms up the body and prepares you mentally and physically to start your yoga practice. Dandasana tests the strength of your spine. Practicing it for the first time will let you know how good are you at your base.

Dandasana is derived from two Sanskrit words. This is what each word means: Dand = Stick or staff, Asana = Posture or comfortable seat.

The spine is held straight in a vertical position as if a stick rooted in the earth. Let's move to steps to practice Staff Pose.



Staff Pose Steps

- Sit on your yoga mat with the legs outstretched in front of your body. Point your big toes upwards.
- Keep the spine and neck erect, legs together and feet gently touching each other.
- Place the palm on the floor by the side of your hips, point fingers towards the toes.

- Keep the arms straight to provide a firm and gentle support to the spine.
- Stretch your big toes towards yourself and firmly press your thighs and heels into the floor.
- Engage the muscles of your legs to root your legs down into the ground.
- Gently press your palms against the floor to elongate your back.
- Stretch the spine upwards right from the pelvis to the top of your head.
- Lift your chest up and slightly draw your shoulders back to broaden your collarbones.
- Maintain a straight gaze and take slow breaths.
- Hold Dandasana from 20 seconds to a minute depending on how long you feel comfortable.

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Practice Tips

- (a) In staff pose, a lot of people find it very hard to keep the spine straight. To cope with it, place your palms slightly behind the buttocks. Transfer a very little of your body weight on the arms. This will support your back to sit straight.
- (b) If you have stiff hamstrings and you experience tension in your hips while practicing the pose. Place a folded blanket below your buttocks to make the pose more comfortable.
- (c) Be careful not to round your back. Practice against a wall if necessary to ensure your back is straight during the pose. As the muscles of your spine gain strength, discontinue the support of the wall.
- (d) You may keep the elbows slightly bent if you can't place your palms firmly on the ground.

Staff Pose Precautions

All us are accustomed to the lifestyles which may one day eventually lead to some health problems unless we follow a healthy diet and an exercise regime regularly. Now, bad standing and sitting postures make our back muscles weak resulting in stiffness and pain which if ignored could lead to severe conditions. So pay attention to your body and take a positive initiative towards a healthy living. That's the biggest precaution we all can take.

Coming back to Staff Pose:

- Keep the knees slightly bent if you have knee pain.
- Avoid practicing staff pose if you have wrist or spine injury.

Staff Pose Benefits

- Strengthens the muscles of the spine and improves body posture.
- Stretches chest, shoulders, upper back and abdomen.

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- Prevents any kind of back condition or disease.
- Develops a strong core and calms the mind.
- Beneficial for those suffering from sciatica and asthma.

13. Sithila Dandasana: Sitting: Sithila Dandasana

- Sit with legs stretched apart and relaxed.
- Slightly incline the trunk backward, supporting the body by placing the hands behind.
- Palms facing backwards.
- Let the head hang freely behind or rest on either of the shoulders.
- Eyes gently closed.



14. Pachimottasana

Stretch the back of your entire body, open your hips, and create a state of inner calm.

Paschimottanasana: Paschima = Western · Uttana = Intense stretch · Asana
= Pose



Benefits

Stretches the back of your entire body, from your heels to your head; helps to open your hips; strengthens your agni (digestive fire); creates a state of inner calm

Instruction

Before exploring any particular asana, first complete at least three rounds of Surya Namaskar A (Sun Salutation A).

1. For Paschimottanasana, begin in Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward-Facing Dog Pose). At the end of an exhalation, step (or jump) to a seated position.
2. Straighten your legs and place your hands next to the flesh of your outer hips. Bring your legs together with the insides of your feet touching. Flex your feet by drawing your toes toward you, and simultaneously press out through the balls of your feet. Activate your thigh muscles by drawing them up, away from your kneecaps. Draw your low belly softly toward your spine. Let your shoulders move back, and begin to breathe into your chest and your entire rib cage.
3. Keeping the activation of your legs and low belly, reach forward to hold your big toes, the sides of your feet, or a wrist beyond your flexed feet.
4. Maintaining the hold, inhale and lift your chest, lengthening your abdomen and sides. Gently relax your shoulders away from your ears.
5. As you exhale, begin to move deeper into a forward fold. Try not to pull with your arms. Instead, keep your shoulders relaxed. Bend your elbows and bow your head, gazing toward your legs. Relax your neck and let your breath move freely.
6. Keep gently drawing your low belly toward your spine, lifting your waist off your thighs. On inhalations, feel a broadening of your chest and a lengthening in the front of your torso. On exhalations, feel a widening in your upper back as you continue to relax your shoulders. Hold for at least 5 breaths. To exit the posture, inhale and lengthen your torso upward while straightening your arms. Complete a full exhalation before releasing your feet.

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Avoid These Common Mistakes

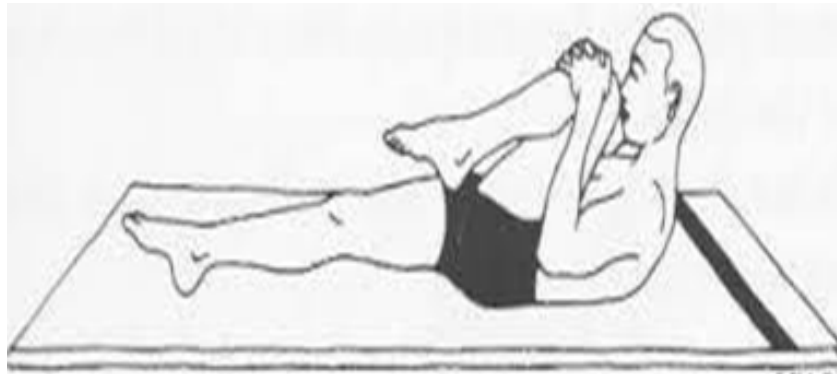
- Don't let your feet or knees turn out. This overstretches your inner knees and brings the stretch out of the belly of your hamstrings, closer to your joints.
- Don't round and harden your back, pushing your torso away from your legs. This will create tension and inhibit your breath, which can strain your back.

Supine Type

1. Ardha Pawanmuktanasana

Ardha Pawanmuktasana (Half Wind Relieving Pose)— Half wind relieving pose or Ardha Pawanmuktasana is beginner's pose. The pose is very good for stomach disorders. Practice this pose for sure if you have acidity or gastric issues. The preparatory poses for half wind relieving pose are such as bridge pose (setu bandha sarvangasana) and fish pose (matsyasana).

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Ardha Pawanmuktasana Steps

- Lie on your back on the mat. Keep your legs straight on the floor and hands at your sides.
- Bend your right leg. Exhale and draw your right leg to your chest. Inter-lock your fingers with each other and hold your right knee with it. Keep your left leg extended on the floor.
- Hold the pose for 10-15 seconds or more. Inhale and extend your right leg to the floor.
- Now bend your left leg and draw your left leg to your chest and keep your right leg extended on the floor.
- Hold the pose for 10-15 seconds or more. Inhale and extend your left leg to the floor.
- Relax and repeat the same for 8-10 times with each leg.
- To deepen the stretch, lift your head and touch your nose to the knee when you are in the full pose. This is much beneficial, but practice it only if you are comfortable.

Ardha Pawanmuktasana Benefits

- Half wind relieving pose is most useful for helping to release the unwanted and toxic gases from the digestive system.
- It improves the quality and efficiency of digestive system.
- It relieves indigestion, bloating, constipation, acidity and flatulence.
- This pose is therapeutic in menstrual disorders, impotence and sterility.

Ardha Pawanmuktasana Contradiction/ precautions

- If you have get done abdominal surgery or hernia problem, do not practice this pose.
- Pregnant women should not practice this pose.
- Those who has spinal injury or sciatica should not practice this pose.
- Do not deepen the stretch if you have injury in neck.

2. Pavana Mukttanasana

Pavan means wind and mukta means to release or to make free. As the name suggests, this asana is useful in removing wind or flatulence from the stomach and intestines.

Sthiti: Savasana



Technique

- Lie down flat on the back.
- Bend both the knees and bring the thighs to the chest.
- Interlock the fingers and clasp the shin below knees.
- Exhale; rise the head till your chin touches the knees and relax.
- This is Pavanamuktasana.
- Bring the head back to the ground.
- While exhaling, lower the legs to the floor.
- Rest in Savasana

Note

- Synchronise your breathing with the leg movement.
- While touching the knee with the nose/ forehead, you should be able to feel the lumbar region stretch; keep the eyes closed and focus your attention on the lumbar region.

Benefits

- Removes constipation; gives relief from flatulence, decreases the bloating sensation in the abdomen and aids digestion.
- Offers deep internal pressure, massage and stretching of the highly complicated network of muscles, ligaments and tendons in the pelvis and waist region.
- It tones up the back muscles and spinal nerves.

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A word of caution

Please avoid this practice in case of abdominal injuries, hernia, sciatica or severe back pain and during pregnancy.

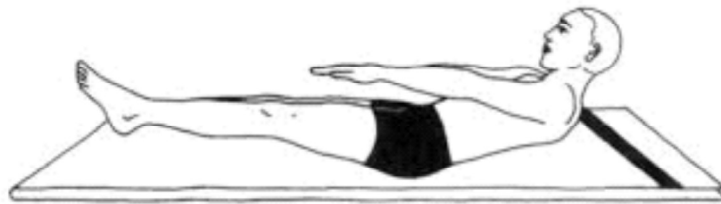
3. Navasana

Many shall admit to the fact that we are busy juggling to create a work-life balance, and at times it becomes really hard to keep a check on the health. The daily stress, consumption of packaged food, lack of time to indulge in self-care, and so many other factors contribute towards a poor physical-psychical health. While being busy running around with our jobs and personal commitments, we tend to ignore the early signs of warning that later develop into serious issues.

Therefore, it's imperative that we spare a few minutes to our own health and wellness. And, what better way to do it than practicing the natural system of yoga? Even an everyday practice of 10 minutes shall benefit you holistically. Moreover, the practice of Boat pose (Navasana) is the adornment of a healthy being.

As you dig into the Navasana, your body mimics the shape of a boat with sails and oars. The pose challenges, strengthens abdominal muscles, enhances concentration, and builds stamina. Given below are the seven stages of performing a Navasana (Boat Pose):

- Sit on a yoga mat with bent knees and heels as close to the hips as possible.
- Keep your hands 2-3 inches behind the posterior.
- Lengthen your body from the top of the head to the hips
- Slightly lean back and with an exhalation, lift the feet off the yoga mat.
- Gently extend the legs in the front and keep the shins parallel to the floor.
- Stretch the arms outward alongside the legs.
- To exit the pose, bend the knees and rest the feet on the floor.



Here are some of the health benefits of boat pose:

- (i) **Strengthens the Abdominal Muscles:** Who doesn't like abs? Sure, they look nice. But they are also equally important for keeping the body's health. Strong abdominal muscles positively support a person in daily function, sports, and physical health. Strong abdominal muscles make a strong core

and form a powerful axis for the whole body. The boat pose also bestows various benefits such as reduced back pain, better posture, and greater balance.

- (ii) **Improves the Functioning of Liver and Kidneys:** The abdomen of a human body constitutes liver, kidneys, pancreas, etc. The performance of boat pose improves the health of all the abdominal organs, especially the liver and kidneys. A proper functioning of these organs detoxifies the body from toxins and regulates its fluids thus establishing a robust health.
- (iii) **De-stresses the Body and Mind:** A Tranquilized mind is one of the remarkable mental benefits of navasana. It acts as a de-stressor. It makes the mind peaceful by warding off all the unwanted thoughts. Whenever in stress, practice the boat pose and revive your state of mind naturally.
- (iv) **Rectifies the Back Problems:** With constant slouching and excessive forward movements, a backache and various back-related problems are inevitable. The painless method of boat yoga posture is highly helpful in reducing a backache and rectifying the associated problems. It effectively stretches the spine and strengthens the weak back muscles.
- (v) **Promotes Healthy Weight Loss:** If you wish to lose weight from your stomach, hips, and waist without any side effects then Navasana is the best choice to trust. The practice of boat pose helps shed extra pounds from the stomach and waist in the most desirable manner.
- (vi) **Enhances Blood Circulation:** An increase in the blood flow within the body significantly benefits the heart and improves the lymphatic system. Increased blood circulation leads to the flow of oxygen-rich blood to the lower extremities as well thus providing relief from varicose veins.
- (vii) **Treats Navel Displacement:** A problem which is still unrecognized by other sciences. The science of yoga acknowledges the problem of navel displacement that causes pain, affects the movement of prana, creates a feeling of nausea, and constipation. The boat posture corrects the misalignment of the navel-center and places it in its appropriate position.
- (viii) **Balances Hormonal System:** An imbalanced hormonal system creates a disharmony within the body too. The hormonal disparity can lead to fatigue, depression, insomnia, and unhealthy cravings. Balance your hormonal system by performing navasana. A balanced hormonal system secretes healthy hormones within the body and keeps the organs in good health

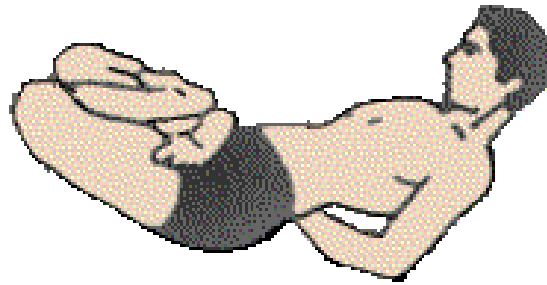
4. Tolan Gulasama

Tolangulasana-1

Other Names: Weighing Scale Pose, Wighing Scale Lotus pose, Weigh Scale Posture, Tolangula Asana, Tolangul Asan, Tolangula-padmasana

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Description

When this asana is performed, the body takes the shape of scales. So it is called Tolangulasana. This has come through tradition. In its final position the whole body is balanced on closed fists.

How to reach the stretch

- (a) Sit in Padmasana.
- (b) Take support of the elbows to lie down on the back.
- (c) Lie down on the bank.
- (d) Raise the foot-lock slightly towards the stomach so that your buttocks may be raised. Place both the closed fists under the buttocks. Elbows should touch the ground.
- (e) Now raise foot-lock as well as head and back and balance your whole body on the fists. (Elbows should be up from the around).
- (f) While returning back to the original position takes your weight on both the elbows first. Slowly bring back and head back to the ground.

How to release the stretch

Hold the position for a while and then remove the fists from under the buttock and come to original position.

Benefits

- (i) It stimulates blood circulation in the muscles and the nerves of the arms and the hands which are incidentally toned up and strengthened.
- (ii) It strengthens and enlarges the rib-box.
- (iii) It increases the elasticity of the spine and tones up the nervous system.
- (iv) It cures diseases such as constipation, dysentery, asthma, tuberculosis and diabetes.
- (v) The abdominal tension pushes down all fecal matter to the end of the passage of the colon.
- (vi) The constant practice of this asana improves the functioning of the sound box and brings melody to the voice. It improves the eyesight.

Caution

Those who are suffering from pain in spine or neck, or having complaint of ulcer in stomach should not practice it

5. Viparitha Karani

Vipareet = Reversed; Karani = performing; Mudra = gesture or position

Vipareeta karani mudra is a classical hatha yoga mudra which is considered to be a preparatory version for beginning the practise of inverted asanas. The name implies the position of the body in relationship to the gravity as it is changed profoundly in this as well as in all the inverted postures. It is a simple yet effective asana as it not only works as preparation for inversions but also helps reestablishing the nervous connection while soothing the nerves.

How to do it?

- (a) The base position is lying down supine with hands to the sides.
- (b) Inhale deeply and hold the breath inside. Bring the legs up to the right angle from the floor while keeping the knees extended. Check how the abdomen gets engaged in the process. Continue breathing normally.



- (c) Now inhale deeply and while holding the breath, contract the abdomen more strongly while lifting the spine off the floor. Bring the hands to support the torso adjacent to the sacrum bone, the flat space that you feel under the lower back and place the torso at a 45 degree angle from the floor. Legs will move parallel to the floor over and behind the head. Adapt to this position. The key point of awareness is abdomen which is the central axis of building the asana from here.

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- (d) As you get comfortable, continue breathing and extend the hips and bring the legs to a 45 degree elevation with pelvic being the base. Hands will be bear weight of the body along with the abdomen so you might experience it in your wrists and elbows.
- (e) Stay in the posture for minimum 30 seconds while breathing deeply through diaphragm. You will feel your diaphragm here.
- (f) Coming out, flex the hips bringing the legs down and in a controlled manner put the torso down on the floor with a coordinated effort of hands and abdomen.
- (g) Check your breath and relax the abdomen.

Benefits

- Vipreeta karani mudra, as mentioned earlier, is a nice way to build your inversion practise. It gives a stability of the core and strengthen the wrists and lower arms.
- This asans helps in balancing the agni in the stomach which is related with assimilation, digestion and excretion.
- Novice students can find it extremely helpful in understanding the relationships with the gravity.
- Help in relieving the strain from the heart.
- It is used as a primary technique along with other mudras in Kundalini Yoga, for channelising the Pran Shakti.

6. Matyasana : Matsya – Fish; Asana – Pose

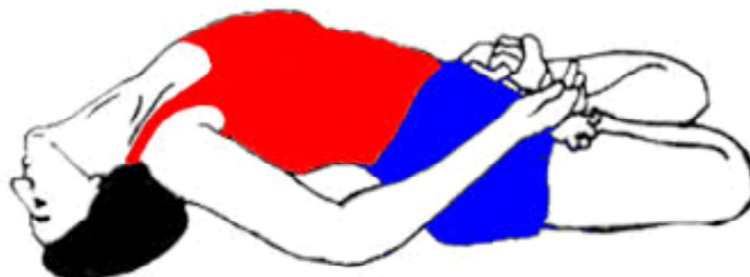
This asana is pronounced as mut-see-ahs-ana.

The fish pose, if carried out in water, allows the body to float quite easily like that of a fish; hence the name.

How to do Matsyasana / Fish Pose

- Lie on your back. Your feet are together and hands relaxed alongside the body.
- Place the hands underneath the hips, palms facing down. Bring the elbows closer toward each other.
- Breathing in, lift the head and chest up.
- Keeping the chest elevated, lower the head backward and touch the top of the head to the floor.
- With the head lightly touching the floor, press the elbows firmly into the ground, placing the weight on the elbow and not on the head. Lift your chest up from in-between the shoulder blades. Press the thighs and legs to the floor.

- Hold the pose for as long as you comfortably can, taking gentle long breaths in and out. Relax in the posture with every exhalation.
- Now lift the head up, lowering the chest and head to the floor. Bring the hands back along the sides of the body. Relax.



NOTES

Benefits of the Matsyasana / Fish Pose

- Stretches the chest and neck
- Helps relieve tension in the neck and shoulders
- Provides relief from respiratory disorders by encouraging deep breathing
- Tones the parathyroid, pituitary and pineal glands

Contraindications of the Fish Pose (Matsyasana)

- Avoid this posture if you have high or low blood pressure. Migraine and insomnia patients should also refrain from doing the Fish Pose. Those who have had serious lower-back or neck injuries are strongly recommended not to practice this pose.

7. Uttana Padasana:

Uttana Padasana gets its name from Sanskrit where "Uttana" means "Intense Stretch", "Pada" means "leg" or "foot", and "Asana" means "Pose" or "Posture".

Uttana Padasana is also named as raised leg pose because in the final position the legs are raised above the ground thereby stretching the muscles of the body.

Uttana Padasana is a traditional yoga pose which stretches the muscles of the abdomen, thighs, calves and lower back.

It also helps in case of a lot of digestive ailments thereby strengthening the digestive system.

How to do Uttana Padasana or Raised Leg Pose?

- The steps to do Uttana Padasana or Raised Leg Pose involve lying flat on the ground or on yoga mat with your back on the floor.
- Keep your knees together and your knees tight and keep breathing.
- Raise your hands above your head while you start practicing Uttana Padasana or Raised Leg Pose

NOTES

- The toes and heels of both the feet should be kept together touching and toes of both the feet should point upwards.
- The next step to do Uttana Padasana or Raised Leg Pose requires you to lift both your feet, while inhaling, from the floor almost at an angle of 45 to 60 degrees with the torso lying flat on the floor.
- Hold your breath in this pose for 20- 30 breaths or for as long as you can.
- While Exhaling, bring your legs back to touch the floor.
- Now, raise your legs again at an angle of 60 degrees from the ground.
- Retain the breath for a few seconds in this pose.
- Start to arch your torso a little on the floor on such a way that the lower back is arched slightly.
- For beginners, the chin should be tucked to the neck while the torso is raised.
- For those practicing the advanced Uttana Padasana pose or Raised Leg Pose, the upper torso should be raised as much as you can while the upper body is supported by dropping the head slowly and gradually to touch the floor.
- For both beginners and those practicing advanced pose, the legs will be raise at an angle of 60 degrees from the floor with the knees kept straight. Note that you should not bend knees while practicing this pose.
- This is the final Uttana Padasana or Raised Leg Pose. Stay in this position for a few breaths or for as long as you feel comfortable.
- This completes one round of Uttana Padasana or Raised Leg Pose. Practice the same for 4-5 rounds for maximum benefits.
- The pose where only the legs are raised at an angle of 60 degrees from the ground while the torso touches the ground is called Ardha Uttana Padasana or Half or Raised Leg Pose.
- Ardha Uttana Padasana can be performed by people who have difficulty in raising the upper body.

What are the Benefits of Practicing Uttana Padasana or Raised Leg Pose?

- Uttana Padasana or Raised Leg Pose is very beneficial for people suffering from Diabetes.
- It is also said to relieve Constipation with regular practice.
- Uttana Padasana or Raised Leg Pose strengthens the whole Digestive system thereby relieving indigestion etc.
- It also relieves ailments of the back especially lower back pains.
- Uttana Padasana also relieves pain and problems associated with waist, hip joint and buttocks.

- It massages the abdominal organs and also helps in reducing fat from waist and thighs.
- It also calms the nervous weakness and brings a sense of calmness in the body.
- Uttana Padasana also relieves tension in shoulders, neck and throat.
- It relieves stress and anxiety.
- Uttana Padasana or Raised Leg Pose is also said to improve posture.
- It also improves blood circulation in whole body.
- Uttana Padasana also improves the functioning of reproductive system.

NOTES

Precautions While Practicing Uttana Padasana or Raised Leg Pose

- People suffering with problems in Lumbar region should not practice Uttana Padasana or Raised Leg Pose.
- People who have had muscle pulls should not perform this Asana.
- People who have high Blood pressure should practice Uttana Padasana carefully or should practice under proper guidance.
- People with any back injury or who have gone undergone any recent abdominal surgery should not practice Uttana Padasana or Raised Leg Pose.



Tips While Practicing Uttana Padasana or Raised Leg Pose

- For beginners, who face difficulty while raising the legs should take the help of hands to raise legs.
- Knees should never bend while or during the time your legs are raised.
- A maximum of 5 rounds of Uttana Padasana or Raised Leg Pose should be practiced in one go.
- Do not over stretch or over exert your body while practicing this asana. Go as far as your body allows. If you can't raise legs at 60 degrees from the floor, start raising legs at an angle of 45 degrees. It takes patience, persistence and regular practice to reach the final position of advanced pose. Start slow

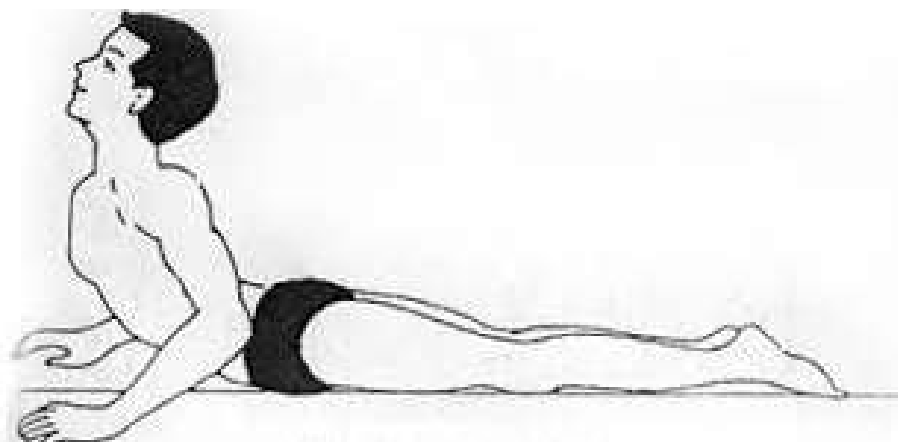
Prone Type Postures

1. Bhujangasana

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Bhujanga means snake or cobra. In this *asana*, the body is raised like hood of a snake.

Stithi: Prone posture or *Makarsana*



Technique

- Lie down on your stomach, rest your head on your hands and relax the body.
- Now join your legs and stretch your arms.
- Keep the forehead on the ground.
- Now place your hands just beside the body; keep palms and elbows on the ground.
- As you inhale slowly, lift the chin and chest come up to navel region.
- Stay there comfortably.
- This is called *Sarala Bhujangasana*.
- Now come back and place your forehead on the ground.
- Keep your palms besides the chest where your elbows were and raise the elbows.
- Inhale; slowly lift the chin and chest up to navel region.

This is Bhujangasana

- Exhale, rest your forehead on the ground and place your palms and rest your head on the palms and spread your legs and relax.

Note

- Keep the legs firm so that no load or strain is felt on the lumbar spine.

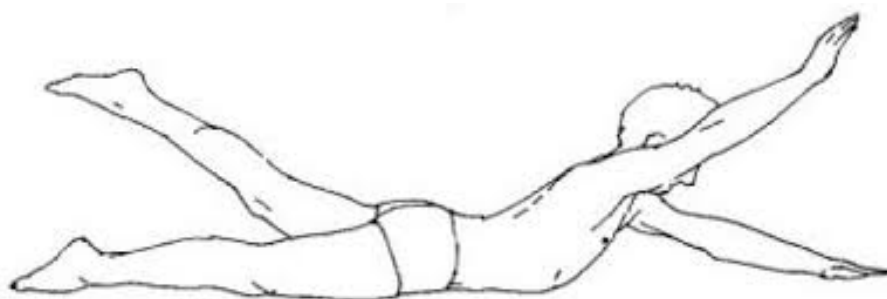
Benefits

- This asana is best for stress management.
- It reduces abdominal fat and alleviates constipation.
- It also helps to remove backache and bronchial problems.

A word of caution

- Those who have undergone abdominal surgery should avoid this asana for 2-3 months.
- Those who suffer from hernia, ulcers should not practice this asana.

2. Ardha Salabhasana



Other Names: Half Locust Posture/ Pose, Ardha Shalabha or Salabha Asana, Ardh Shalabh or Adha Salabh Asan

Description

This asana has a very little difference from Salabhasana, because in this asana only legs will be lifted upwards.

How to reach the stretch

- Lie down on your stomach in Advasana.
- Put your chin on the ground and the rest part of the face should remain lifted upwards.
- Now lift your both legs upwards. Your arms should rest on the both sides of your torso.
- Remain in the pose for some time and relax.

How to release the stretch

To release, stay in the posture for some time and then relax in the first position of Advasana.

Benefits

- It strengthens the muscles of the spine, buttocks, and backs of the arms and legs.
- It stretches the shoulders, chest, belly, and thighs.

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- It improves posture.
- It stimulates abdominal organs.

Caution

NOTES

- (i) People with neck injuries should keep their head in a neutral position by looking down at the floor; they might also support the forehead on a thickly folded blanket.
- (ii) Who have the problem of headache or serious back injury should not do this asana

3. Dhanurasana (bow pose)



Dhanurasana has been named after the shape the body takes while performing it – that of a bow. Dhanu means bow; Asana means posture or pose.

How to do Dhanurasana (Bow Pose)

- Lie on your stomach with your feet hip-width apart and your arms by the side of your body.
- Fold your knees, take your hands backwards and hold your ankles.
- Breathing in, lift your chest off the ground and pull your legs up and back.
- Look straight ahead with a smile on your face.
- Keep the pose stable while paying attention to your breath. Your body is now curved and taut as a bow.
- Continue to take long deep breaths as you relax in this pose. But bend only as far as your body permits you to. Do not overdo the stretch.
- After 15 -20 seconds, as you exhale, gently bring your legs and chest to the ground. Release the ankles and relax.

Benefits of Dhanurasana (Bow Pose)

- Strengthens the back and abdominal muscles
- Stimulates the reproductive organs
- Opens up the chest, neck and shoulders
- Tones the leg and arm muscles
- Adds greater flexibility to the back
- Good stress and fatigue buster
- Relieves menstrual discomfort and constipation
- Helps people with renal (kidney) disorders

Contraindications of Dhanurasana (Bow Pose)

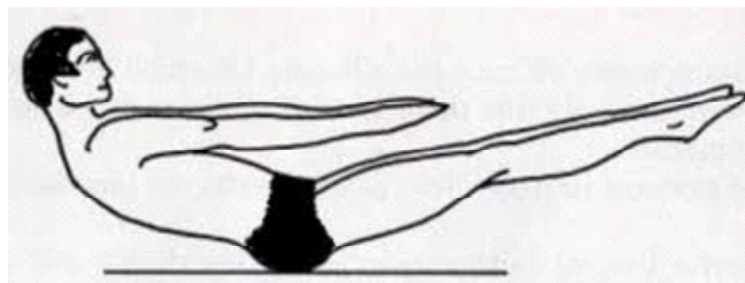
Do not practice Dhanurasana (Bow Pose) if you have:

- High or low blood pressure
- Hernia
- Neck injury
- Pain in the lower back
- Headache migraine
- Recent abdominal surgery
- Ladies should avoid practicing this yoga pose during pregnancy

4. Naukasana

Nauka = Boat, Asana = Posture or Pose

This yoga posture has been named after the shape it takes – that of a boat. Naukasana is pronounced as NAUK-AAHS-uh-nuh.



Naukasana - Boat Pose

How to do Naukasana / Boat Pose

- Lie on your back with your feet together and arms beside your body.
- Take a deep breath in and as you exhale, lift your chest and feet off the ground, stretching your arms towards your feet.
- Your eyes, fingers and toes should be in a line.

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- Feel the tension in your navel area as the abdominal muscles contract.
- Keep breathing deeply and easily while maintaining the pose.
- As you exhale, come back to the ground slowly and relax.

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It also forms a part of the Padma Sadhana sequence, where this yoga pose is practiced after Dhanurasana (Bow Pose).

Benefits of the Boat Pose (Naukasana)

- Strengthens the back and abdominal muscles
- Tones the leg and arm muscles
- Useful for people with hernia

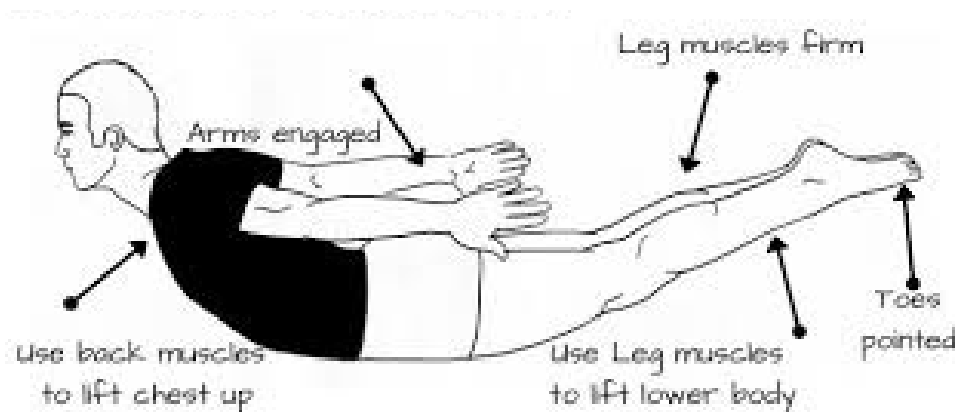
Contraindications of the Naukasana - Boat Pose

- Do not practice this yoga pose if you have low blood pressure, severe headache, migraine, or if you have suffered from some chronic diseases or spinal disorders in the recent past.
- Asthma and heart patients are advised to avoid this pose.
- Women should avoid doing Boat pose (Naukasana) during pregnancy and during the first two days of the menstrual cycle

5. Salabhasana

Salaba means a locust.

Sthiti: Prone posture; *Makarsana*



Technique

- Lie down on your stomach in *Makarsana*.
- Rest the chin on the floor; keep both hands beside the body; palms facing upwards
- Inhale, raise the legs off the floor as much as you can without bending the knees.
- Extend the arms and legs well to ease the lift of the body off the floor.

- Stay in this position for 10-20 seconds breathing normally.
- Exhale, bring the legs down towards the floor.
- Rest for a few seconds in Makarasana.

Note

- Pull up the knee caps and squeeze the buttocks to improve the posture. This asana is more beneficial when performed after Bhujangasana

Benefits

- Helps in sciatica and lower backache.
- Tones the hip muscles and those in the kidney region.
- Reduces fat on the thighs and buttocks; good in weight management
- Helps the abdominal organs aiding digestion

A word of caution

- Cardiac patients should avoid this posture. Please proceed cautiously in case of severe lower back pain.
- People with high blood pressure, peptic ulcers and hernia should also avoid this posture.

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PREPARATORY FOR PRANAYAMA

1. Kapalabathi

Sthiti: Any meditative posture eg Sukasana/Padmasana/Vajrasana



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Technique

- Sit in any meditative posture.
- Close the eyes and relax the whole body.
- Inhale deeply through both nostrils, expand the chest.
- Expel the breath with forceful contractions of the abdominal muscles and relax.
- Do not strain.
- Continue active/forceful exhalation and passive inhalation.
- Complete 30 rapid breaths, then take a deep breath and exhale slowly.
- This is one round of Kapalabhati.
- Each round shall be followed by deep breathing.
- Repeat 2 more rounds.

Breathing: Forceful exhalation by contracting the abdominal muscles, without any undue movements in the chest and shoulder region. Inhalation should be passive throughout the practice.

Number of rounds: Beginners can practice up to 3 rounds of 20 breaths each. The count and rounds can be increased gradually over a period of time.

Benefits

- Kapalabhati purifies the frontal air sinuses; helps to overcome cough disorders.
- It is useful in treating cold, rhinitis, sinusitis, asthma and bronchial infections.
- It rejuvenates whole body, and keeps the face young and vibrant.
- It balances and strengthens the nervous system and tones up the digestive system.

A word of caution

- Please avoid this practice in case of cardiac conditions and giddiness, high blood pressure, vertigo, chronic bleeding in the nose, epilepsy, migraine, stroke, hernia and gastric ulcers.

2. Sectional Breathing

(i) Abdominal Breathing

Diaphragmatic Breathing and Types of Breathing in Yoga

Most people breathe incorrectly. Their breathing is shallow, using only a small part of their lung capacity. This results in a large part of lungs remaining unutilized and hence allowing germs to accumulate in those lower areas, resulting in ill health.

Types of Breathing in Yoga

The three types of breathing techniques explained hereunder viz. diaphragmatic breathing (also referred to as Abdominal breathing or Belly Breathing), Thoracic breathing (also referred to as Chest Breathing), and Clavicular breathing introduce the practitioner to the correct breathing habits with an increased awareness of the breathing process, which is otherwise normally ignored. We start with Abdominal breathing.

What is Diaphragmatic Breathing

The diaphragm is a domed sheet of muscle that separates the lungs from the abdominal cavity. The diaphragmatic breathing or the abdominal breathing is characterized by enhancing the movement of the diaphragm up and down while minimizing the movement of the rib cage. This kind of breathing is the most efficient way to breathe, but due to stress, an unbalanced lifestyle and many other factors which are the result of modern day lifestyle, it is forgotten.

- Place the right hand on the abdomen.
- Develop the feeling that now onwards the breath has to be drawn in and out directly through the navel.
- Continue breathing slowly and deeply, without moving the shoulders or expanding the chest.
- Inhale while expanding the abdomen as much as is comfortable. The diaphragm will compress the abdomen with the navel and right hand moving up, reaching their highest point.
- Exhale while contracting the abdomen again as much as is comfortable.
- At the end of exhalation, the abdomen will be contracted with the navel (and the palm) having moved towards the spine reaching its lowest point.
- This abdominal breathing.
- Continue it for a few minutes and keep on observing the movement of the right hand.
- In the end relax and become aware of the spontaneous breathing pattern.
- Become aware of the body, the surroundings and then open the eyes gently.

Diaphragmatic Breathing Benefits

- In Belly Breathing or the Diaphragmatic Breathing, movement of diaphragm enables the utilization of lower lobes of the lungs.
- This breathing results in the equal expansion of the alveoli.
- The Diaphragmatic breathing improves lymphatic drainage from basal parts of the lungs.

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- It messages the abdominal organs that lie immediately below the diaphragm including stomach, liver etc.
- Belly breathing exerts a positive effect on cardiac functioning.

Once the technique of abdominal breathing becomes a part of daily life and the correct breathing pattern is restored, there will be a great improvement in the state of physical and mental well being and the practitioner learns to breathe properly.

(ii) Thoracic

Thoracic Breathing or Chest Breathing is inhalation done by expanding and contracting the ribcage. The middle lobes of the lungs are utilized in this type of breathing. The intercostal muscles are properly used to expand and contract the chest cavity.

Diaphragmatic vs Chest Breathing

- The Thoracic breathing utilizes the middle lobes of the lungs whereas, in Diaphragmatic/Abdominal Breathing, movement of diaphragm enables the utilization of lower lobes of the lungs.
- Thoracic Breathing expends more energy than the abdominal breathing for the same quantity of air exchange.
- The man associates himself with Thoracic breathing when he is under physical exertion or doing exercise.
- This breathing is also experienced when a man is under stress.
- Abdominal breathing is the most efficient way to breathe, whereas thoracic breathing is not.

Thoracic (Chest) Breathing Technique

- Lie in Savasana and relax the whole body.
- Become aware of the natural and spontaneous breathing process.
- Place the right hand on the abdomen and the left hand on the chest.
- Start inhaling by slowly expanding the ribcage.
- Develop the feeling that all the individual ribs are expanding outward and upward creating more space for the air to be drawn into the lungs. The left hand also moves up with a negligible movement of the right hand.
- Expand the lungs as much as possible utilizing its full capacity.
- Start exhaling by contracting the ribcage and forcing the air out of the lungs. The left hand will come down too with the right hand moving the least. This is Thoracic breathing.
- Continue it for a few minutes, taking a small pause after each inhalation and exhalation.

- Then relax and again become aware of the natural and spontaneous breathing process.
- Become aware of the physical body, the surroundings and then gently open the eyes.

Chest Breathing Benefits

- Thoracic breathing allows utilization of middle lobes of the lungs and helps lungs to be fully inflated.
- Thoracic breathing, when combined with abdominal breathing, helps the body to obtain more oxygen.

(iii) Clavicular

Clavicular breathing occurs when the thoracic breathing has been completed and in order to absorb a little more air into the lungs, the upper ribs and the collarbone are pulled upwards. It can be said that the clavicular breathing is the final stage of total ribcage expansion.

Clavicular Breathing Exercise

- Lie on a yoga mat or a blanket in Savasana and relax the body.
- Start inhaling and expand the ribcage fully, as in Thoracic breathing.
- Inhale a little more and feel the expansion in the upper portion of the lungs near collar bones.
- The collar bones and shoulders will also move up slightly.
- While exhaling, first release the collarbone area, the lower neck, and the upper chest.
- Then relax the remaining rib-cage portion and come back to the starting position.
- Continue the clavicular breathing for some time.
- Then relax and come back to normal breathing.
- Again become aware of the natural and spontaneous breathing process.
- Become aware of the physical body and then the surroundings and then gently open the eyes.

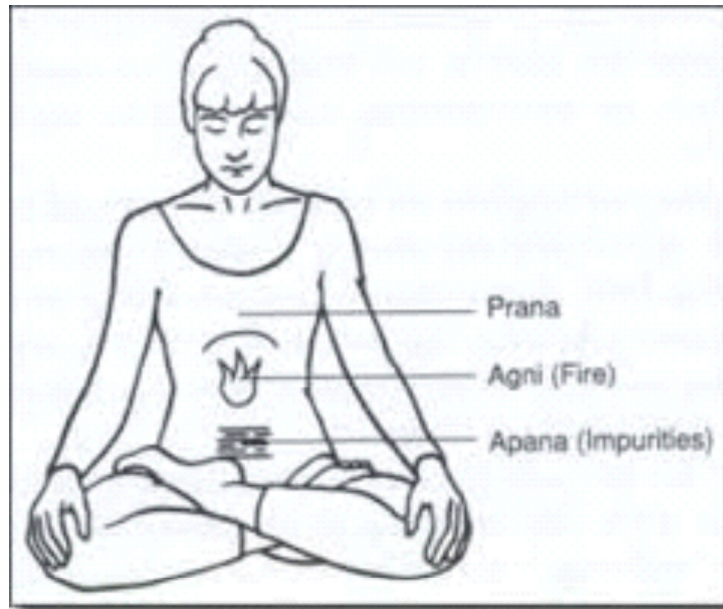
In daily life, the clavicular breathing is only experienced when under extreme physical exertion or may be experiencing obstructive respiratory diseases such as asthma.

Although breathing is a spontaneous process, conscious control of it may be taken to learn and develop correct and deep breathing techniques. Rhythmic, deep and slow breathing exercises result in establishing the natural, relaxed rhythms of the also, read.

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(iv) Full Yogic Breathing

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Full Yogic Breath is a deeply balancing pranayama (breathing exercise) that benefits vata, pitta, and kapha. It is sometimes known as three-part breath because it works with three different sections of the torso and naturally engages all three lobes of the lungs. Full Yogic Breath revitalizes the entire body with prana (essential life force). In particular, it benefits the vital organs, which can easily become stagnant, constricted, or fraught with emotional and physical tension when we experience stress. Full Yogic Breath relieves stress, refreshes the mind, and activates the parasympathetic nervous system, encouraging a calmer, more balanced state of being overall. It also helps to correct unhealthy breathing patterns. This pranayama can be engaged at any time, but it is especially beneficial when practiced intently for five to fifteen minutes every day—preferably on an empty stomach. The early morning is an ideal time to practice Full Yogic Breath.

Overview of the Practice

Full Yogic Breath begins with a deep and fluid inhalation that fills three sections of the torso independently, but continuously. First, we breathe into the lower abdomen. Then, we breathe into the mid-section of the torso, expanding the diaphragm and the ribs as the inhalation continues. And finally, we draw the breath into the upper chest and shoulders as the inhalation comes to a close. This slow and purposeful inhalation is then followed by a long, slow, gentle exhale, expelling the breath from these same three sections of the torso in reverse order, releasing the upper chest, then the diaphragm and ribs, and finally the lower abdomen. One round of Full Yogic Breath includes one complete inhalation and one complete exhalation.

Both the inhalation and the exhalation should feel fluid and continuous; at no point should either one cause any strain whatsoever. Keep in mind that it may take some time to develop a relaxed relationship with this type of breath work, especially if it is new to you; it is no accident that pranayama is referred to as a practice. What's important is the intention to develop our capacity for moving the breath intentionally, fluidly, and yet without tension or struggle.

Instructions for Practice

Choose a comfortable seated or lying position. If sitting, make sure that your pelvic bones are rooted into the surface beneath you, and that your spine is erect. If you prefer to lie down, lie on your back and relax your entire body, as in savasana.

Gently close your eyes and take a few moments to settle in. Close your mouth and breathe only through your nostrils. Quiet your mind, and attune to your body. Begin by simply observing the natural flow your breath. Let go of any thoughts and allow yourself to arrive completely in the present moment.

When you are ready, inhale slowly and with purpose, drawing your breath deep into the lower abdomen, starting from the pelvic floor and slowly allowing the breath to fill upward (toward the navel) and outward (away from the spine). Initially, focus only on filling the lower abdomen.

As the breath fills this area, allow it to expand outward in all directions—to the front (expanding the lower belly), to the sides (expanding the hips), and to the back (expanding the lumbar spine and the sacrum)—as it moves upward toward the navel.

Once the lower abdomen has filled completely, continue the inhalation by filling the mid-torso in a similar manner. Continue to draw the breath upwards, from the navel to the ribs, allowing the breath to gently expand the diaphragm, the ribs, and the mid-back as the breath continues to rise.

Once the mid-torso feels full, complete the inhalation by drawing the breath into the upper chest—allowing prana to rise up into the heart, the sternum, and finally into the shoulders and the base of the neck. Feel the collarbones lift slightly.

This completes the inhalation. For many, there is a brief, but natural pause at the top of the inhalation. If this occurs, just allow it to be there for a moment before surrendering to a long, slow exhalation. First, release the breath from the upper chest as the heart, lungs, sternum and shoulders all relax—dropping down and drawing in, toward the spine. Then, expel the breath from the mid-torso, feeling the ribs contract and the navel draw in, closer to the spine. And lastly, release the breath from the lower abdomen, feeling the belly contract and draw inward toward the spine.

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This completes one round of Full Yogic Breath. If your exhalation is followed by a natural pause, take a moment before beginning the next round. Then, draw a fresh inhalation into the lower abdomen.

After several rounds of Full Yogic Breath (up to fifteen minutes), allow your breathing to return to normal for a minute or two before gently opening your eyes and bringing your practice to a close. Then, before you move on to your next activity, pause briefly to notice how you feel. Are you more refreshed, awake, and relaxed? How did your practice affect or benefit you today?

As you become more comfortable with the practice of Full Yogic Breath, you can integrate this style of breathing more and more throughout your day-to-day activities.

PRANAYAMAS

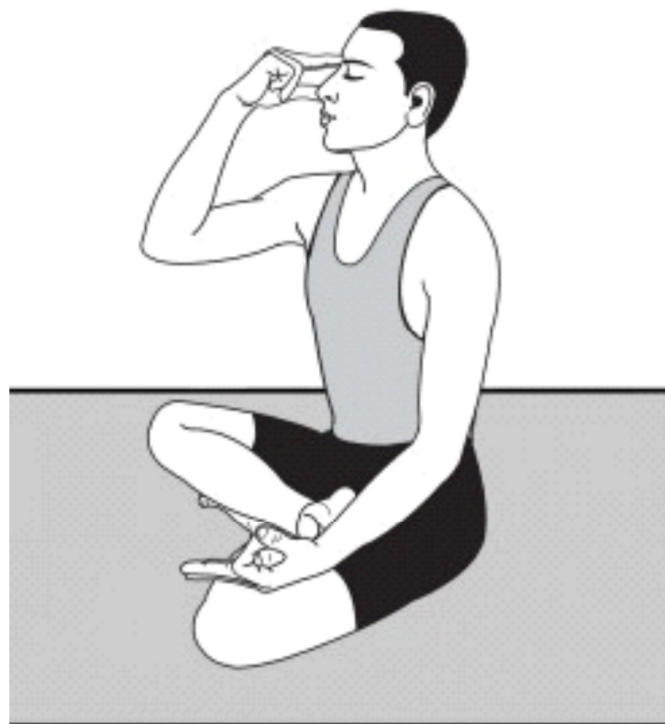
1. Suha Pranayama (Anuloma Viloma)

Anulom-Vilom Pranayama

Anulom Vilom Pranayama (अनुलोम प्रणायाम) is one of several Pranayama or breathing exercise used in the practice of Hatha yoga. At first, you have to understand the meaning of Anuloma and Viloma. In this, the first word Anu roughly translates as with and word Loma means hair implying “with the grain” or “natural”. And the meaning of Viloma is “against the grain.” Anuloma is opposite to Viloma. It is very helpful in respiratory-related diseases like Asthma. Anulom Vilom Pranayama is the best way of balancing the Tri dosas in our body. Our body gets ill when Tri dosas are not in balancing position. Vaat, Pitta, Kaffa known as Tri dosas, Tri means “three” and the meaning of dosas is impurities. All these are present in the body of every people. If one of them is an imbalance that we suffer from different diseases. All three are the cause of all diseases. So it’s important to balance these tri dosas. If you really want to balance these Tri dosas than do Anulom Vilom pranayama regularly. It is the simplest and best way for this.

Steps of Anulom Vilom Pranayama

- Anulom Vilom Pranayama is very easy to do, first of all, close your eyes and sit in Padmasana and rest your hands on your knees.
- Close the right nostril with the right thumb. Inhale slowly through the left nostril, inhale the oxygen as much as you can, this will fill your lungs with air.



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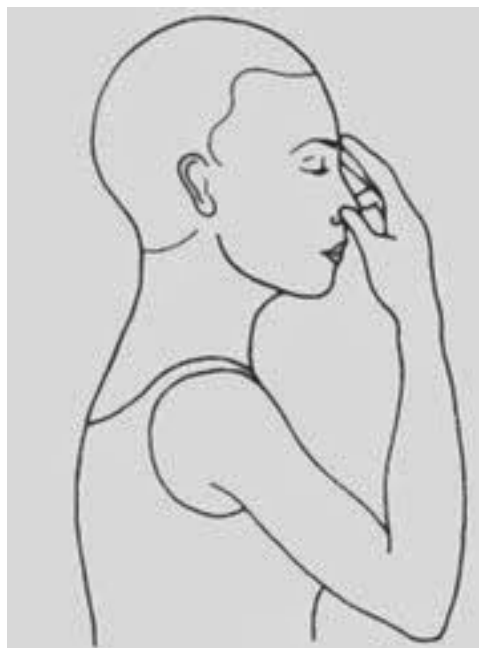
- Remove your thumb from your right nostril, as you remove your thumb from right nostril just exhale.
- When you exhale use your middle finger to close your left nostril then inhale with our right nostril and remove thumb from the right nostril then exhale. Repeat this process for 5 minutes.
- Be focused and concentrate on your breathing.

Benefits of Anulom Vilom Pranayama

- Helps to cure mental problems like Depression, Anxiety, stress, Tension etc.
- Most beneficial for breathing related problems like (Bronchitis, Asthma) etc.
- Improve the working of lungs.
- Best breathing technique for boosting your memory (Makes your brain sharper).
- Improves your immune system, so it cures general issues like a cough & cold.
- Without any doubt, Anulom Vilom is the most suitable Pranayama for all.
- Alternate nostril breathing is an ideal breathing technique for maintaining your heart healthy.

2. Surya Anuloma Viloma Pranayama

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Position : Sit in any meditative posture or any comfortable sitting posture with the head and spine straight. Close the eyes and relax the whole body.

Practice

- When the body is comfortable and relaxed , focus on your breath for a few minutes effortlessly.
- Adopt Nasika Mudra with your right hand (folding index and middle fingers towards palm).
- Close the left nostril with the little and ring fingers of Nasika Mudra.
- Inhale and exhale slowly through the right nostril (surya nadi) only.
- During the practice, keep the left nostril closed all the time during the practice.
- One cycle of inhalation and exhalation forms one round.
- Exhalation should be longer than inhalation.
- Repeat 9 rounds.
- Depression patients should practice this pranayama 27 rounds before breakfast, lunch, dinner and before sleep (4 times a day).

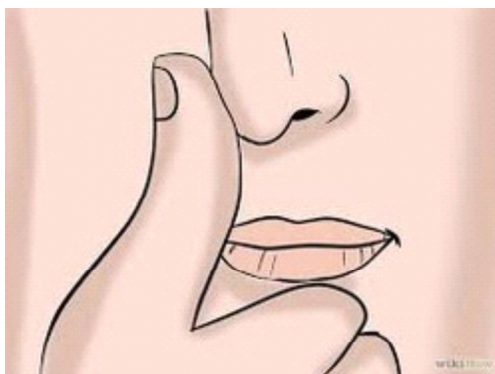
Benefits

- It increases the heat in the body.
- Purifies the blood and improves digestion.
- Cures the problem of gas in the abdominal region.
- Beneficial for depression patients and weight reduction.

Limitations

- Avoid the practice during summer.
- Not recommended for anxiety, high blood pressure patients.

3. Chandra Anuloma Viloma Pranayama



Nasika Mudra

Position : Sit in any meditative posture or any comfortable sitting posture with the head and spine straight. Close the eyes and relax the whole body.

Practice

- When the body is comfortable and relaxed , focus on your breath for a few minutes effortlessly.
- Adopt Nasika Mudra with your right hand (folding index and middle fingers towards palm).
- Close the right nostril with the tip of the thumb.
- Inhale and exhale slowly through the left nostril (chandra nadi) only.
- During the practice, keep the right nostril closed all the time.
- One cycle of inhalation and exhalation forms one round.
- Exhalation should be longer than inhalation.
- Repeat 9 rounds.
- Anxiety patients should practice this pranayama 27 rounds before breakfast, lunch, dinner and before sleep (4 times a day).

Benefits

- It lowers the high blood pressure.
- Beneficial for anxiety and mental tension.

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- It is a cooling breathing practice.
- The body becomes cool.
- It will help to calm down the mind.
- Do not practice in winter.

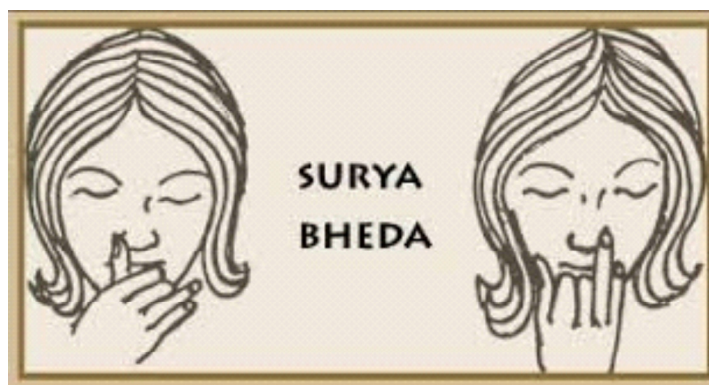
4. Surya Bhedana Pranayama (Right Nostril Breathing)

Surya Bhedana Pranayama or Surya Bheda Pranayama is very effective and most important pranayam which is mentioned in Hatha yog Pradipika. The meaning of “Surya” is Sun and the meaning of the word “Bhedana” is piercing, enter or breaking through something. In term of yoga Right nadi (right nostril) is called surya nadi or Pingala, and Left nadi (left nostril) is named as Chandra nadi or Ida nadi. The right nadi is the entrance way of Pingala Nadi, speaking to the sun vitality, the hot vitality or the manly vitality in our body. It is the vitality which is in charge of animation and physical work. By practicing Surya Bhedana Pranayama we are seriously initiating the sun vitality or as it were activating so as to make a leap forward of sun vitality the right nostril relaxing. Yoga propounds that in our body the place of Sun is close to the navel and also the moon within the skull. Whereas the moon contains a cooling result, and the sun creates heating impact. In this process we use right nadi (right nostril) for breathe in (inhalation) and the left nostril for breath out. This process is also named as Viloma type of Pranayama.

This concept has been in all probability derived from the actual fact that the food we eat is digestible within the part of the body close to the navel. Digestion is purportedly control by heat, of that the Sun is that the supply of. The air breathed through the Right nadi is purportedly makes an effect on alternative kinds of important energies in our body. Because of this impact these energies amass close to the foundation of the navel that is meant to possess an excellent significance in arousal the Kundalini.

How to Perform Surya Bhedana Pranayama (Without Bandha)

- Sit comfortably in Padmasana or Siddhasana.
- Keep your head and spine erect with eye closed.
- Shut your left nostril with your ring finger and little finger.
- Now breathe in (inhale) slowly and deeply through your right nadi.
- After that, shut your right nadi with the thumb of your right hand.
- Then exhale through your left nostril, along with keeping your right nostril closed.
- This is one cycle is completed.
- Repeat this process around 5 – 10 times.



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How to Perform Surya Bhedana Pranayama with Bandha

- Sit comfortably in Padmasana, Siddhasana or Swastikasana.
- Keep your head and spine erect with eye closed.
- Shut your left nostril with your ring finger and little finger.
- Now breathe in slowly, deeply and quietly (without making any noise while inhalation).
- When inhalation is completed, then shut your right nadi (right nostril) with your right thumb, left nadi is closed also.
- Hold your breath and make Jalandhar Bandha and Mula bandh also.
- Now hold the position with bandha for 5 to 10seconds. (Hold your breath with lock (bandha) as long as you can.
- Release Jalandhar bandha and open your left nostril and exhale slowly.
- Repeat this act for 5 to 10 times.

During this activity you ought to tally in the accompanying way:

Count to 2 amid inward breath, to 8 while holding the breath and to 4 amid exhalation. Once you perfect in this Pranayama you can also increases the time ratio like 4, 16, 8 or 8, 32, 16, depending on your capacity.

Jalandhar bandha

(While holding your breath bends your chin downward resting it on the throat pit).

Mula Bandha

(During the process of retention try to pull upward your anus).

Benefits of Surya Bhedana Pranayama

- Surya Bheda Pranayama activates the body functions.
- Very helpful for increasing the digestive fire.
- Best for awakening the Kundalini Shakti.
- Surya Bhedana Pranayama cures all diseases that are caused by insufficiency of oxygen in the blood.

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- It cleans the frontal sinuses.
- Beneficial in Vata related problems.
- It destroys intestinal worms.
- Best for winter sessions.
- If you feel cold in your feet or hands then try this.
- It creates lots of energy.
- Boost the Appetite.
- It is the best breathing exercise for cold and cough, Asthama, or other respiratory problems.
- Best and simple method in Low blood pressure.
- It cures gas problem.
- Best for those Women who are suffering from a lack of sexual desire.
- Useful in Leucoderma and other skin related problems.

Note

You can begin with the low checking and after that expand it. In the earliest reference point of your practice you can even begin doing it without Kumbhaka (the holding) and Jalandhar Bandha. That will make you feel greater with the relaxing. At that point you gradually bring those components into the activity.

People, who are experienced high blood pressure problem, don't try this. Those people who have experienced brain surgery or heart surgery should take advice from medical expert or yoga expert before doing Surya Bhedana Pranayama. Always do Pranayama in systematic way and in under the supervision of an expert person.

5. Nadi Shodhana

What is Nadi Shodhana?

Nadi = subtle energy channel; Shodhan = cleaning, purification; Pranayama = breathing technique.

Nadis are subtle energy channels in the human body that can get blocked due to various reasons. The Nadi Shodhan pranayama is a breathing technique that helps clear these blocked energy channels, thus calming the mind. This technique is also known as Anulom Vilom pranayama.

Cause of Obstruction in the Nadis

- Nadis can get blocked on account of stress
- Toxicity in the physical body also leads to blockage of nadis
- Nadis can get blocked due to physical and mental trauma
- Unhealthy lifestyle

What Happens When these Nadis are Blocked?

Ida, Pingala and Sushumna are three of the most important nadis in the human body.

When the Ida nadi is not functioning smoothly or is blocked, one experiences cold, depression, low mental energy and sluggish digestion, blocked left nostril. Whereas when the Pingala nadi is not smoothly functioning or is blocked, one will experience heat, quick temper and irritation, itching body, dry skin and throat, excessive appetite, excessive physical or sexual energy, and blocked right nostril.

Reason: Why You Should Practice Nadi Shodhan Pranayama

- (i) Nadi Shodhan pranayama helps relax the mind and prepares it to enter a meditative state.
- (ii) Practicing it for just a few minutes every day helps keep the mind calm, happy and peaceful.
- (iii) It helps in releasing accumulated tension and fatigue.

How to Do Nadi Shodhan pranayama? - Alternate Nostril Breathing Technique)

- Sit comfortably with your spine erect and shoulders relaxed. Keep a gentle smile on your face.
- Place your left hand on the left knee, palms open to the sky or in Chin Mudra (thumb and index finger gently touching at the tips).
- Place the tip of the index finger and middle finger of the right hand in between the eyebrows, the ring finger and little finger on the left nostril, and the thumb on the right nostril. We will use the ring finger and little finger to open or close the left nostril and thumb for the right nostril.
- Press your thumb down on the right nostril and breathe out gently through the left nostril.
- Now breathe in from the left nostril and then press the left nostril gently with the ring finger and little finger. Removing the right thumb from the right nostril, breathe out from the right.
- Breathe in from the right nostril and exhale from the left. You have now completed one round of Nadi Shodhan pranayama. Continue inhaling and exhaling from alternate nostrils.
- Complete 9 such rounds by alternately breathing through both the nostrils. After every exhalation, remember to breathe in from the same nostril from which you exhaled. Keep your eyes closed throughout and continue taking long, deep, smooth breaths without any force or effort.

Cautions to be Taken While Practicing Nadi Shodhan Pranayama (Alternate Nostril Breathing Technique)

- Do not force the breathing, and keep the flow gentle and natural. Do not breathe from the mouth or make any sound while breathing.

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- Do not use the Ujjayi breath.
- Place the fingers very lightly on the forehead and nose. There is no need to apply any pressure.
- In case you feel dull and are yawning after practicing Nadi Shodhan pranayama, check the time you take to inhale and exhale. Your exhalation should be longer than inhalation.

Tips While Doing Nadi Shodhan Pranayama

- It is a good idea to do a short meditation after doing Nadi Shodhan pranayama.
- This breathing technique can also be practiced as part of the Padma Sadhana sequence.



Benefits of Nadi Shodhan Pranayama (Alternate Nostril Breathing Technique)

- Excellent breathing technique to calm and center the mind.
- Our mind has a tendency to keep regretting or glorifying the past and getting anxious about the future. Nadi Shodhan pranayama helps to bring the mind back to the present moment.
- Works therapeutically for most circulatory and respiratory problems.
- Releases accumulated stress in the mind and body effectively and helps relax.
- Helps harmonize the left and right hemispheres of the brain, which correlate to the logical and emotional sides of our personality.
- Helps purify and balance the nadis - the subtle energy channels, thereby ensuring smooth flow of prana (life force) through the body.
- Maintains body temperature.

Contraindication

None. After you have learnt this breathing technique from an Sri Sri Yoga teacher, you can practice this pranayama on an empty stomach, 2-3 times a day.

6. Sitali Pranayama (Cooling Breath)

The meaning of word “Sheetali” is cooling down, that process which can cool down our body and gives feeling of coldness. The word Shitali is originally taken from the word “Sheetal” which means cold or soothing. The daily practice of Sheetali Pranayama can calm the mind along with body. In Ancient text Hatha yoga Pradipika Sheetali pranayama and Sheetkari pranayama is mentioned. The process of Sheetali Pranayama is very similar to Sheetkari pranayama. Sheetali Pranayama and Sheetkari is also a breathing technique (Pranayama). The basic purpose of the Shitali Pranayama is to decrease or cool down the body temperature, this may have positive impact on our nervous system and endocrine glands. Person becomes young and charming by practicing this process which is mentioned in Hatha yoga Pradipika by Swami Swatmaram ji. Person is able to control thirst and hunger with daily practice of sheetali Pranayama. This has been mentioned in ancient books which are related to Yog.

How to perform Shitali Pranayama (sheetali Pranayama Steps)



- Set comfortably in any meditative pose like Padmasana, Swastikasana e.t.c.
- Keep your both hands on knees.
- Now bring your tongue all the way out and fold both sides of tongue like a tube or straw.
- Take a long, deep inhalation through the tube in the tongue which is formed by folding the both sides of tongue.

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- After Inhalation close your mouth and exhale with both nostrils.
- Repeat this about 8 to 10 times.

Steps of Sheetali Pranayama with Bandha

- Set comfortably in any meditative pose like Padmasana, Swastikasana e.t.c.
- Keep your both hands on knees.
- Now bring your tongue all the way out and fold both sides of tongue like a tube or straw.
- Take a long, deep inhalation through the tube in the tongue which is formed by folding the both sides of tongue.
- After inhalation, lower your chin to the chest (Jalandhar bandha) and hold the breath about 6 to 8 seconds. (During retention of breath lower and bend the chin downward resting it on the throat pit.)
- When you feel like breathe out release the Jalandhar bandha (lift your chin to the normal position) and exhale slowly by the left nadi (nostril).
- Repeat it about 5 to 6 time.
- In the end, bring your breathing back to normal and feel relax.

Benefits of Sheetali Pranayama

- Sheetali Pranayama is useful in diseases which related to tongue, mouth and throat.
- It is very beneficial in diseases of spleen.
- Helpful in fever and indigestion.
- Controls the High B.P.
- Useful in Pitta related diseases.
- It purifies the blood.
- Best for cooling down the body temperature.
- Best for fighting against the Insomnia problem.
- It calms the mind, and it's a effective stress buster.
- If our mind is calm we can easily deal with anger and anxiety.
- Effective in hyperacidity.

Caution

People who are low B.P. and those people who are suffering from Asthama, cold and cough or other respiratory related problem should not try this.

If you are not able to fold your tongue like tube then try Sheetkari Pranayama in that case. Sheetkari have the same effects like Sheetali Pranayama.

7. Sitkari Pranayama

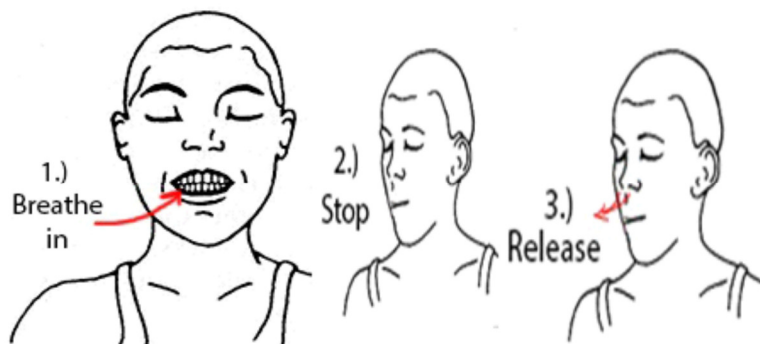
Sheetkari Pranayama (Hissing Breath)-Steps And Benefits

Yoga Asanas and Pranayama are the two distinctive gifts to people for maintaining healthy life by natural manner. They enforce not solely physical well – being however additionally mental well being. In Shitali pranayama and Sheetkari pranayama we breathe through mouth. These are same like a Python’s breathing. Python, hens, kids of deer takes a deep breath through opening the mouth and they all are simply sucked in with the air and it’s the capability to digest it. Sheetkari pranayama and Shitali process are also like this.

Both of two breathing activities are very useful in cooling down the body and mind also. Performing 6 or 7 rounds of these processes can alleviate your thirst when you are feeling vey thirsty and there is no water available. Shitali and Sheetkari pranayama are mentioned in Hatha yoga Pradipika as a process of pranayama. Shitali and Sheetkari pranayama are similar, but there is only one difference between them, is way of breathing. In Shitali we breathe through folding our tongue and in Sheetkari we inhale through teeth.

Steps of Sheetkari Pranayama

- Sit in any meditative pose in which you are comfortable.
- Keep your eyes close and try to touch the tongue upward.
- Join the upper and lower row of teeth.



- Now open your lips and start inhaling with making the sound See-See.
- After inhaling close your lips and breathe out through nose.
- Repeat this at least 8 to 10 rounds.

Benefits of Sheetkari Pranayama

The benefits or plus points of Sheetkari is same as Shitali Pranayama but there are some following plus points of Sheetkari pranayam.

- Cools down the body temperature so it is useful in Fever.
- It is beneficial in mouth related diseases, throat and tongue.

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- Helps in spleen and indigestion.
- Best for High blood pressure and for summer session.
- It is effective in dental problems like pyorrhea.
- It controls the body temperature.
- Calms the mind and it is best stress buster.
- Reduces the emotional excitation and mental tension.
- Best for depression.

People who are suffering from cold and cough, Asthama or other respiratory problems, tonsillitis should not practice Sheetkari and Shitali pranayam. People who have Low Blood pressure problems are strictly advised that not to perform this pranayama.

Sheetkari pranayama is the variation of Shitali Pranayam. People who are not able to fold their both sides of tongue in Shitali pranayam can perform this pranayam. Perform Shitali pranayama and Sheetkari pranayama after doing Asana and other Pranayama.

8. Bhramari Pranayama

Bhramari Pranayama, also known as Humming Bee Breath, is a calming breathing practice that soothes the nervous system and helps to connect us with our truest inner nature. Bhramari is the Sanskrit word for “bee,” and this pranayama is so named because of the humming sound produced at the back of the throat during the practice—like the gentle humming of a bee.



Benefits

Bhramari Pranayama

- Calms and quiets the mind
- Releases cerebral tension
- Stimulates the pineal and pituitary glands, supporting their proper functioning
- Soothes the nerves
- Relieves stress and anxiety
- Dissipates anger
- Lowers blood pressure
- Bolsters the health of the throat
- Strengthens and improves the voice
- Supports the healing of bodily tissues
- Induces sound sleep

Contraindications

Bhramari should not be practiced by pregnant or menstruating women. It is also contraindicated for individuals with extremely high blood pressure, epilepsy, chest pain, or an active ear infection. Bhramari should not be practiced in a supine position (lying down).

When to Practice

Bhramari (as with most pranayamas) is best practiced on an empty stomach. While it can be practiced at any time of day, bhramari is particularly potent in the early morning and late at night—when there are fewer distracting noises and our inner perception is most acute.

How to Practice

Choose a comfortable sitting position. If you are able, it is best to sit cross-legged on the floor with a cushion or blanket to comfortably elevate the hips. Alternatively, you may choose to sit toward the front of a chair, with your feet flat on the floor. Allow the spine to lengthen so that the back, neck, and head are erect. Gently close the lips, keeping the teeth slightly apart, and bring the tip of your tongue to the space behind the upper front teeth. Maintain this position of the mouth throughout the practice, frequently checking to ensure that the jaw remains relaxed. Then, close each ear with the thumbs, place the index fingers at the midpoint of the forehead—just above the eyebrows—and reach the middle, ring, and pinky fingers across the eyes so that the tips of these fingers press very gently against the bridge of the nose.

To begin, take a long, deep breath in through the nostrils, bringing the breath all the way into the belly. Drop the chin to the chest and begin to exhale slowly, making a steady, low-pitched ‘hmmm’ sound at the back of the throat—like the

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humming of a bee. Focus on making the sound soft, smooth, and steady. The positioning of the tongue allows the vibration to better resonate throughout the head, affecting the tissues of the brain. Keep the body completely still and bring your awareness to the center of the head—to ajna chakra—letting the sound fill the head and spread to the body. Merge with the sound and allow the vibration to permeate your entire being. At the end of the exhalation, slowly straighten your neck as you inhale again through the nostrils to repeat the process. Begin with seven repetitions. You may either continue with seven repetitions, or you may add one repetition per week, slowly building up to a total of seventeen repetitions.

After the final exhalation, allow your breath to return to normal and observe any changes that have occurred. How do you feel physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually? What energetic shifts do you notice as a result of this practice? Where do you notice sensation in your body and how is it different from when you started? When you are ready, gently open your eyes, continuing to direct some of your awareness within. If it is morning, slowly stand and offer your full attention to the rest of your day; if it is evening, notice the vibrational calm that this practice has initiated in your body and try to maintain it as you prepare to retire for the night