



Yoga Tools and Techniques



Yoga Bharati

Reference Manual

Yoga Teacher Training

In Affiliation with

**Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana, Bengaluru, India
(VYASA)**

Each Soul is potentially divine. The goal of life is to manifest that divinity within by controlling nature internal and external. Do it by Work or Worship or Philosophy or Psychic control, by one or more or all of these and be FREE

- **Swami Vivekananda**

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Teaching Techniques

Suggested General Guidelines

- Keep a gap of at least two hours between a light meal and a yoga session or a gap of 4 hours between a heavy meal and a yoga session
- Ideal bathing time - half an hour before or after the yoga session. Wear loose clothing. For your own safety, avoid wearing chains, rings, watches or scarves when you are participating in the yoga practice.
- Be aware of your own medical or other condition(s) such as pregnancy, back pain, diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity and consult your physician before joining a yoga class and get his/her approval to start the class. Understand the recommended contraindications. When and if applicable to you, do not participate in those specific yoga poses (asanas). If you feel comfortable inform your yoga instructor about your medical condition(s) before you start the yoga class.
- During Yoga class, keep your cell phone or beeper off or on silent mode

Teaching a Yoga Class

- Teaching skills and qualities
- Things to avoid
- Lesson Plan
- Classroom design and management
- Techniques and tools of teaching Yoga and a need to practice teaching

Teaching Skills and Qualities

A teacher should also be a good student as teaching is a dynamic, reflective and constantly evolving process. Teaching the concepts and practices of Yoga is very complex. A Yoga teacher should be a well-prepared, energetic, dynamic and a good communicator who can explain difficult concepts in simple words.

Things to Avoid

Doing the right things is critical but it is equally important to avoid doing the “wrong” things when you teach.

- Never assume the skill and knowledge level of your students.
- Never single out a student in the class.
- Try not to physically touch a student to show corrections to a posture/asana without their permission. You may go next to that person, sit or stand by them and show them the correct way.

Know Your Class

When you structure your class; assess the number of students, age group, health status, language barriers, and level of knowledge and skills of all students.

Consider taking following actions when applicable:

- Customize contents of each class, respond to students honestly, and look for opportunities to improve, provide some ground rules for the practice of Yoga.

- Remind the students to stop practicing Yoga if he/she experiences a sharp pain, numbness or dizziness. Create an environment of “No competition”.
- Consider safety of students as well as your own and encourage students to listen to their body and honor limitations at all times. If it hurts, it is not yours — should be the mantra.

Assess following parameters:

- Total number of students in a class (class size)
- Age group
- Health status, relevant limitations
- Need for a demonstrator
- Additional assistance such as providing a chair (for seniors) or any other props.

Points to Remember:

- Provide very SIMPLE, CLEAR and AUDIBLE instructions.
- You may have a class where students may be at different skill and knowledge levels and, hence, customize instructions to accommodate all students.
- Respond to student’s questions honestly. Keep an open mind to suggestions for improvement.
- Provide some ground rules for the practice such as:
 - i. Breathe through both nostrils at all times. Do not hold your breath unless specifically instructed. Instruct students to stop the practice if and when one feels a sharp or shooting pain, numbness or dizziness.
 - ii. There is no competition between you and the others! Listen to your body and honor your limitations at all times.

Techniques and Tools of Teaching Yoga

Teaching is an art and a science. Be aware of the learning styles of your students such as visual, verbal and kinesthetic styles and try to accommodate their needs in your teaching style.

Audible, yet not overpowering, tone of voice and clear instructions are important for a verbal learner. Showing pictures or demonstration is helpful for a visual learner and the actual experience doing and practicing asana will be helpful to the kinesthetic learner. Emphasizing the importance of breathing and relaxation of body and mind is vital.

Need to practice giving instructions:

It is very important to practice giving clear and audible instructions with just the right pace or speed and refine them when and if necessary. Give instructions to yourself when you practice Yoga postures. Observe other teachers to improve your own skills.

Practice your class Asana routine:

To understand all the subtleties, the teacher should have self-practiced the postures that are being included in your class routine. Yoga teacher should not focus on his/her own self-practice while teaching the class. Teacher should observe and connect with the students as he/she performs the Yoga routine.

Begin your Yoga Practice by reciting the Opening Mantra/Poem

Preparation

- Sit in a comfortable sitting posture.
- Keep your back and neck straight and relax the rest of your body.

- Close your eyes.
- Join your palms at the heart center in Namaste position.
- Let us recite the opening Peace chant (Shanti Mantra): *Om Sahanaavavatu...* (Lead and follow or Chant along depending upon the need)
- After the mantra: Take your hands behind your back, hold the right wrist with your left hand.
- Bend forward at your waist (or from hip?) and try to touch the forehead to the ground.
- Slowly come back up to a sitting position.
- Blink your eyes a few times and then slowly open your eyes.

End the Yoga Practice by reciting the Closing Mantra

Preparation

- Sit in a comfortable sitting posture.
- Keep your back and neck straight and relax the rest of your body.
- Close your eyes.
- Fold your hands at the heart center. Palms facing each other, hands on the chest.
- Let us recite the closing Peace chant (Shanti Mantra): *Sarve Bhavantu...*
- After the mantra: Take your hands behind your back and hold your right wrist with your left palm.
- Bend forward from the hip and try to touch your forehead to the ground.
- Slowly come back up to a sitting posture.
- Rub your palms to generate some heat, cup your eyes with the respective palms (without pressing on the eyelids).
- Gently massage your face and neck.
- Bring the palms in front of you as an open book, Blink your eyes a few times and gently open your eyes and look at the palms.

Opening Mantra

ॐ सहनाववतु सहनौ भुनक्तु

सहवीर्यं करवावहै ।

तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Om Sahanaavavatu sahanou bhunaktu

Saha veeryam karavaavahai

Tejasvi naa vadhee tamastu maa vidvishaavahai

Om Shantih Shantih Shantih

Meaning

May we both be protected

(Teacher and student)

May we both be nourished

May our work be energetic

May our knowledge be radiant and may there not be hatred between us

Om Peace, Peace, Peace.

Surya Namaskar Mantra

हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण सत्यसापिहितं मुखं ।
तत्त्वं पूषन् अपावृणु सत्यधर्माय द्रष्टये ॥

***Hiranmayena patrena satyasyapihitam mukham
Tat tvam pushan apavrunu satyadharmaya drustaye***

Meaning

A golden lid covers the truth, O Sun! Kindly open the lid and lead us to truth. (Golden lid is the Sun's shining disc that acts as a metaphor to the glittering material worldly pleasures. Truth is the fire inside the Sun that acts as a metaphor to the luminant spirit inside all of us, but is hidden behind the material sensual world)

Pranayama Mantra

प्राणस्येदं वशे सर्वम्, त्रिदिवे यत् प्रतिष्ठितम् ।
मातेव पुत्रान् रक्षस्व, श्रीश्च प्रज्ञांचविदेहि न इति ॥

***praanasyedam vashe sarvam, tridive yat pratisthitam
maateva putraan rakshasva, shrischa prajnaanscha vidhehi na iti***

Meaning

Whatever exists in three worlds (the heaven too) is all under the control of Prana. (O prana) protect us as a mother protects her children; give us affluence and intelligence.

Cyclic Meditation Mantra

लये संबोधयेत् चित्तं विक्षिप्तं शमयेत् पुनः ।
सकषायं विजानीयात् समप्राप्तं न चालयेत् ॥

***laye sambodhayet chittam vikshiptam shamayet punah
sakashaayam vijaaniyat samapraaptam na chaalayet***

Meaning

When the mind is dull, wake it up; and when it is distracted and fast, calm it down. Understand your mind and when you reach the equanimity, do not disturb.

Closing Mantra

सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः

सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।

सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु

मा कश्चित् दुःख भाग् भवेत्॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Sarve bhavantu sukhinah

Sarve santu niraamayah:

Sarve bhadraani pashyanttu

Maa kaschit dukha bhaagbhavet

Om Shantih Shantih Shantih

Meaning

May all be happy

May all be free from diseases

May all see things auspicious

May none be subjected to misery

Om Peace, Peace, Peace.

Sthiti Positions

Sthiti (Initial) and Shithila (Relaxing) Postures

The Initial or Sthiti positions are adopted before each asana is performed and the Relaxed or Shithila positions are used to relax the body after performing an asana. In the Sthiti positions the body is alert and the mind is focused and prepared to attempt the next asana. The Shithila positions allow the body to relax and return to normal state before proceeding to the next asana. The Shithila positions are also used to build awareness of the effects of the asana by bringing the mind to the parts of the body stimulated by the asana practice.


- Tadasana – Palm Tree Pose/Mountain Pose/Initial Standing Pose
- Shithila Tadasana – Relaxed Standing Pose
- Dandasana – Extended Staff Pose/Initial Sitting Pose
- Shithila Dandasana - Relaxed Sitting Pose
- Initial Prone Pose
- Makarasana - Crocodile/Alligator Pose
- Initial Supine Pose
- Shavasana - Corpse Pose/Supine Resting Pose

Sthiti Tadasana (Palm Tree Pose/Mountain Pose/Initial Standing Pose)

This is explained in Asanas Section

Sthiti Dandasana (Initial Sitting Pose/Extended Staff Pose)

This is the initial posture to be adopted before starting any sitting asanas.


	<p>Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sit with both legs stretched with the heels together.• Place your palms on the floor by the side of your hips.• Keep your spine, neck and head aligned straight.• Close your eyes. Observe slow gentle breathing as you feel the vertical linearity of the body from the hips above as you relax in this posture. Keep your spine perpendicular to the floor.
<p>Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Try to keep the heels touching the floor as they tend to lift off the floor when your legs come together.• Arm position may vary a little depending on its length. Try to keep shoulders down and away from ears.	

Contraindications: People with severe knee problems may not be able to sit down on the mat.

Benefits: Strengthens legs and improves spinal alignment, core strength, and loosens the hamstrings

Shithila Dandasana (Seated Relaxation Pose)

This is the final relaxed posture to be adopted after performing any sitting asanas.


	<p>Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sit with your legs stretched apart and relax.• Slightly incline your trunk backwards, supporting the body by placing the hands behind.• Fingers pointed backwards.• Let your head hang freely behind or rest on the shoulder.• Gently close your eyes. Observe slow gentle breathing with stomach movement with each breath.
<p>Notes: Try to collapse feet to the floor as much as possible naturally.</p>	

Contraindications: People with severe knee problems may not be able to sit down on the mat.

Benefits: Relaxation and awareness after sitting poses.


Sthiti Prone (Initial Prone Pose)

This is the initial posture to be adopted before starting any prone asana

 <p>Subtle Aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Do not hold breath at any time.● You may feel a little shortness in breathing as you are lying on your stomach. Try to maintain slow gentle breathing throughout this posture	<p>Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Lie down on your stomach with legs together with toes pointing outwards and the soles of the feet facing up and chin touching the floor. Observe slow gentle breathing.● Inhale and Stretch your arms straight above the head, biceps parallel to your ears and palms resting on the ground.● Gently close your eyes. Breathing may be shallow with stomach on the floor.● Exhale and relax your hands observing slow gentle breathing.
<p>Contraindications:</p> <p>Pregnant women should not practice this posture.</p>	<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Strengthens back muscles.● Improves digestion and function of internal organs.


Makarasana (Alligator/Crocodile Pose)

This is the final relaxed posture to be adopted after performing any prone asanas.

	<p>Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Lie down on your stomach with feet wide apart, heels touching the ground and facing each other.● Bend both elbows and place the right palm on the left shoulder and the left palm on the right shoulder.● Rest your chin at the point where the forearms cross each other.● Gently close your eyes. Observe slow gentle breathing with stomach movement with each breath.
<p>Subtle Aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Breathe normally and try to relax your entire body.● You may feel a little shortness of breath as you are lying on your stomach. Try to maintain slow gentle breathing throughout this posture.	
<p>Contraindications:</p> <p>Pregnant women should not practice this posture.</p>	<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Massages abdomen and helps people with back pain and with digestive problems.● Relaxes entire body, excellent for hypertension

Supine Initial Pose


This is the initial posture to be adopted before starting any supine asanas.

	<p>Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Lie down on your back with legs together.● Stretch your arms straight above the head, elbows straight, biceps parallel to your ears and palms facing the ceiling.● Keep palms away from each other and at the same distance as your shoulder width.● Close your eyes. Observe slow gentle breathing with stomach movement with each breath.
<p>Notes: Try to relax the entire body and mind. As a variation, hands can be placed by the side of the body.</p>	

<p>Contraindications: Pregnant women should not practice this posture in second and third trimesters</p>	<p>Benefits: Relaxes body and mind.</p>
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Shavasana (Corpse Pose/Supine Resting Pose)

Also known as the Corpse posture, this is the initial posture to be adopted before starting any supine relaxation techniques.

	<p>Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Lie down on your back with legs and arms drop open.● Keep the feet apart and arms about 45 degrees from the side of your body.● Slightly stretch your body and allow the whole body to relax completely with your eyes gently closed.● Become aware of different parts of your body starting from toes to head and then consciously relax. Feel the spread of relaxation in all parts of the body progressively.● Release all control of your body and mind. Let your body move deeper and deeper into a state of total relaxation.
<p>Modifications: If lying down on your back hurts, bend your knees or place a blanket under both knees to alleviate pressure on the back.</p> <p>Subtle Aspects: Try not to fall asleep while performing this posture. With regular practice, awareness develops, and relaxation will be deeper, natural and spontaneous.</p>	

<p>Contraindications: Pregnant women should not practice this posture. They could lie down on one side of their body.</p>	<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Relaxes the whole body and nervous system.● Rejuvenates mind – an excellent antidote for stress.
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Breath and Body Synchronization Practices

The Respiratory system is both voluntary and involuntary. The Breath serves as a bridge between the voluntary and involuntary functions; and can be used to change involuntary functions of the body. It also serves as a bridge between the body and mind, between the conscious and the subconscious. Several ailments can be traced to incorrect breathing, speed of breath, and irregular breathing patterns. Development of good breathing habits is one of the most effective ways to harness energy and correct imbalances in the body/mind complex.

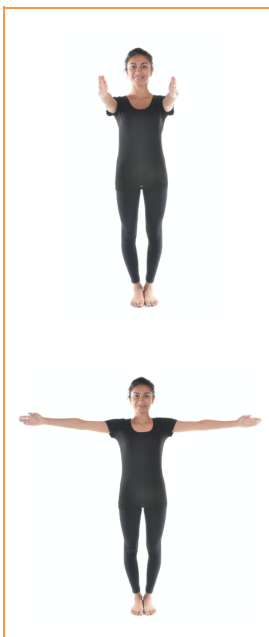
Objectives of breathing practices

- Regulate breathing.
- Develop awareness about breathing through the movements of different parts of the body.
- Activate the lungs to fully utilize all the lobes and increase lung capacity.
- Normalize the breathing rate.
- Make the breathing uniform, continuous and rhythmic.
- Synchronize breath and motion.

Standing Breathing Practices

Below are the instructions for the breathing practice.

Arms in and out Breathing

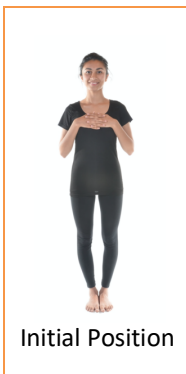


Practice (from Sthiti Tadasana):

- Extend your arms in front of you, in level with your shoulders, and bring the palms close to each other.
- As you inhale, spread your arms sideways in horizontal plane.
- As you exhale, bring both arms forward with palms close to each other.
- Perform 4-6 rounds. Keep the breath and the body movements continuous and synchronized.

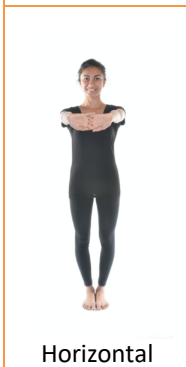
Relax in Shithila Tadasana. Feel the changes in the breath and the body; especially the arms, shoulders and the back of the neck.

3-Part Arms Stretch Breathing



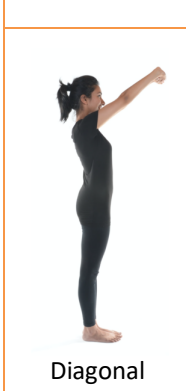
Practice (from Sthiti Tadasana):

- Stand straight with your feet together or slightly apart, and hands by the side of the body.
- Interlock the fingers of your hands and place the palms on the chest.
- Collapse and relax your shoulders.
- Close your eyes.



Stage I: (Horizontal)

- As you inhale, stretch your arms outward, horizontally in front of your chest so that your arms are at shoulder level, palms facing outwards.
- As you exhale, reverse the process and bring the palms back onto the chest and relax your shoulders.
- This is one round. Perform 4-6 rounds. Keep the breath and the body movements continuous and synchronized.



Stage II: (Diagonal)

- As you inhale, stretch your arms diagonally, in line with the forehead, palms facing outwards.
- As you exhale, reverse the process and bring the palms back onto your chest.
- This is one round. Perform 4-6 rounds. Keep the breath and the body movements continuous and synchronized.



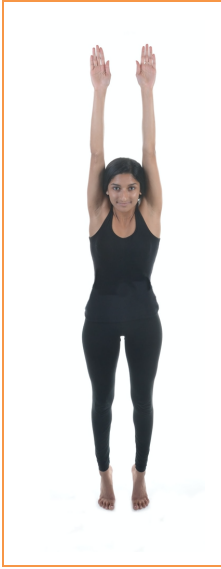
Stage III: (Vertical)

- As you inhale, stretch your arms vertically above the head, palms facing outwards.
- As you exhale, reverse the process and bring your arms back onto your chest.
- This is one round. Perform 4-6 rounds. Keep the breath and the body movements continuous and synchronized.

Note: While moving the hands up and down, let them be close to the tip of the nose.

Relax in Shithila Tadasana. Feel the changes in the breath and body; especially the arms, shoulders, back, and sides of the body.

Ankle Stretch Breathing



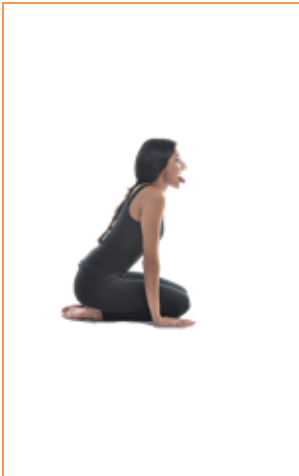
Practice (from Sthiti Tadasana):

- Stand in Tadasana with your gaze fixed on a point in front of you at your eye level.
- Place your palms on your thighs.
- As you inhale, lift your arms up, heels off the ground and stand on your toes.
- As you exhale, lower your arms and heels down.
- Perform 4-6 rounds. Keep the breath and the body movements continuous and synchronized. Feel the stretch from your ankles up to fingertips as you reach upward.

Relax in Shithila Tadasana, hands by the side of your thighs. Observe your breath and enjoy the stability for a few seconds.

Sitting Breathing Practices

Dog Breathing



Practice (from Sthiti Vajrasana):

- Place your hands on the ground beside the knees.
- Make the spine slightly concave and fix the gaze straight ahead.
- Open your mouth wide and stretch the tongue wide. Practice rapid panting like a dog with rapid and vigorous inhalation and exhalation for 20 - 30 secs.
- Repeat the practice again one more time.

Relax in Shashankasana or Vajrasana and observe your breath, cooling of your tongue and relaxation in the facial muscles.

Subtle Aspects: *Breath is rapid, but shallow and there is a sharp contraction in the abdomen muscles during exhalation.*

Contraindications: *Since this is a dynamic practice with possibility of experiencing hyperventilation, epileptics and high blood pressure patients should avoid it.*

Rabbit Breathing



Practice (from Sthiti Vajrasana):

- Sitting in Vajrasana, bend forward and rest the forearms on the floor, with elbows by the side of the knees and palms flat on the ground.
- The torso is parallel to the ground. Maintain the head in line with the torso.
- Open your mouth partially. Your tongue rests on the base of the lower teeth.
- Gaze at a point about 2 feet on the ground in front of you.
- Pant quickly like a rabbit, using only the upper part of the chest. Feel the expansion and contraction of the chest muscles. Continue for 20-40 breaths.

Close your mouth. Stretch your arms forward, lower the forehead onto the ground and relax in Shashankasana. Feel the relaxation of chest and thorax. Allow your breath to return to normal.

Subtle Aspects:

- Breathe rapidly through the mouth only, using the thoracic muscles.
- Make sure that the abdomen presses on your thighs, preventing any abdominal movement.
- Do not drop your head on to the floor during practice.

Marjalasana Breathing (Cat and Cow Breathing)



Practice (from Sthiti Vajrasana):

- Sit on your mat. Start on your hands and knees in a table pose, hands directly below your shoulders and knees below your hips. Your arms and thighs are vertical.
- As you inhale, arch the spine down toward the floor, lift your chin and head and look at the ceiling. The spine gets a concave shape.
- As you exhale, arch the spine upward toward ceiling, draw the stomach in, and bring the head down and chin close to the chest to make the spine convex.
- This is one round of cat breathing. Perform 4-6 rounds. Keep the breath and the body movements continuous and synchronized.

Sit back on your heels into Vajrasana. Stretch your arms forward, lower the forehead onto the ground and relax in Shashankasana. Allow your breath to return to normal.

Subtle Aspects:

- Before starting the practice, ensure that you are comfortable while standing on “all-fours” (i.e., two hands and two knees).
- Use a towel or a blanket under the knees if you feel uncomfortable in the knees during this practice.
- Coordinate the movements with breathing.
- Keep the eyes closed and practice with awareness.
- Do not bend the arms or move the thighs forward and backward.

Marjalasana Breathing 2 (Cat and Cow Breathing as Ab-Stabilizer)



Practice (from Sthiti Vajrasana):

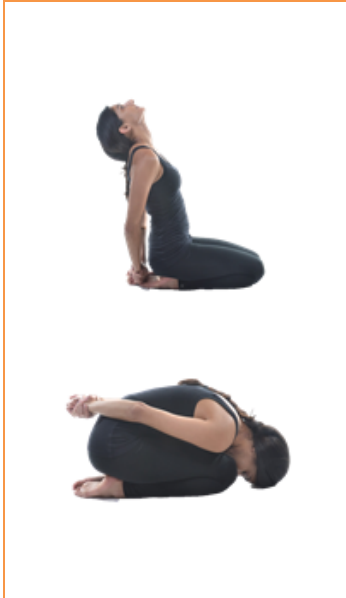
- Sit on your mat. Start on your hands and knees in a table pose, hands directly below your shoulders and knees below your hips. Your arms and thighs are vertical.
- As you inhale, lift the right arm and left leg such that they are parallel to the ground.
- As you exhale, bend the right elbow and left knee to bring them close to each other.
- This is one round. Perform 4-6 rounds. Keep the breath and the body movements continuous and synchronized.
- Hold the extended arm and leg pose for a few breaths for maximum benefit.

Sit back on your heels into Vajrasana. Stretch your arms forward, lower the forehead onto the ground and relax in Shashankasana. Allow your breath to return to normal.

Subtle Aspects:

- Before starting the practice, ensure that you are comfortable while standing on “all-fours” (i.e., two hands and two knees).
- Use a towel or a blanket under the knees if you feel uncomfortable in the knees during this practice.
- Coordinate the movements with breathing.

Shashankasana Breathing (Child pose Breathing)



Practice (from Sthiti Vajrasana):

- Take your hands behind your back, make a fist with the right hand and hold the right wrist with the left hand.
- As you inhale, bend backward from the waist, opening up the chest.
- As you exhale, slowly bend forward from the waist bringing the forehead onto the ground in front of the knees. Collapse the shoulders.
- As you inhale, slowly come up to the vertical position and then slightly lean backward.
- This is one round. Perform 6-8 rounds. Keep the breath and the body movements continuous and synchronized.

Stretch your arms forward, lower the forehead onto the ground and relax in Shashankasana. Allow your breath to return to normal.

Subtle Aspects*:

- *Keep the shoulders collapsed.*
- *Separate the knees to avoid unnecessary pressure on the abdomen and chest.*
- *Synchronize breathing with movement.*
- *Keep your eyes closed and maintain complete breath awareness.*
- *As an asana hold the position with forehead on the ground for up to a minute while breathing.*
- *Arms may also be held above the head during breathing or asana practice for this posture.*

Contraindications:

- *People with hypertension should exercise caution holding this pose for long.*

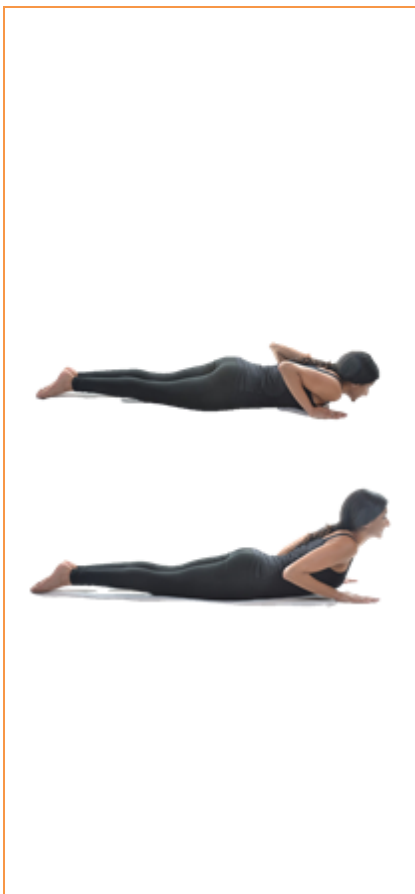
Benefits

- *Excellent for calming down the mind*
- *Great practice for gastrointestinal disorders, back pain, anxiety, and respiratory ailments.*

** Details regarding Subtle Aspects, Benefits, and Contraindications in the asana section*

Prone Breathing Practices

Bhujangasana breathing (Cobra Pose Breathing)



Practice (from Sthiti Prone):

- Place the palms down, close to your chest. Tuck your elbows in.
- **High Bhujangasana:** As you inhale, raise the head and torso up with the support of the palms. Your shoulders are pulled down and elbows slightly bent.
- As you exhale, slowly bring the torso and head back to starting position.
- This is one round. Perform 4-5 rounds. Keep the breath and the body movements continuous and synchronized.
- **Classic Bhujangasana:** As you inhale, raise the head and torso up to the navel with minimal support of the palms. Engage the core and gluteal muscles.
- As you exhale, slowly bring the torso and head back to starting position.
- This is one round. Perform 4-5 rounds. Keep the breath and the body movements continuous and synchronized.

Relax in Makarasana. Feel the changes in the body, especially the lower back.

Modifications:

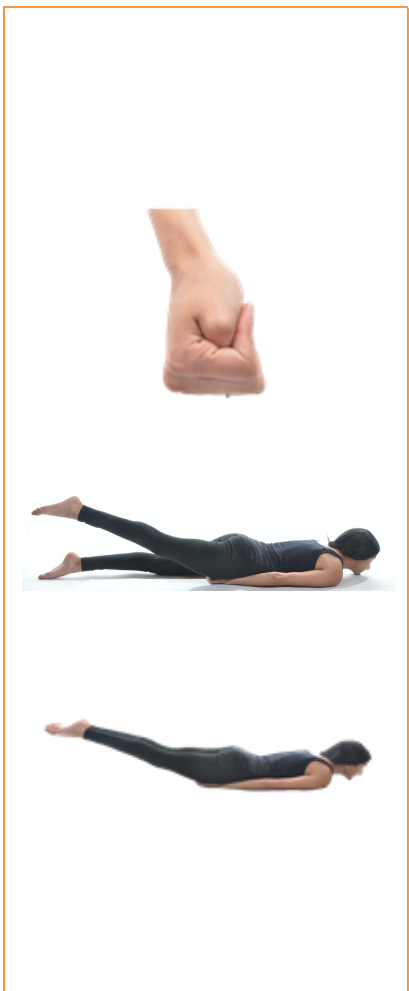
- *Supported High Bhujangasana and unsupported classic bhujangasana are two variations. You may practice one or both as needed.*
- *One can take the arms behind the back, interlock the fingers and place on the buttocks and practice bhujangasana. This helps open up the chest and shoulders.*
- *The arms can be tied at the back and lifted upward to help raise the torso up.*

Subtle Aspects:

- *Supported High Bhujangasana gives a deep stretch to the lower spine. The unsupported bhujangasana helps strengthen the back.*
- *Maintain awareness on the lower back.*

** Details regarding Subtle Aspects, Benefits, and Contraindications in the asana section*

Shalabhasana Breathing (Locust Pose Breathing)



Practice (from Sthiti Prone):

Make fists of your palms with the thumb tucked inside in Adi-Mudra आदि-मुद्रा and place each fist under the corresponding thigh with knuckles facing the floor. Place the chin or forehead on the ground.

Ardha Shalabhasana

- As you inhale, raise one leg up as far as comfortable without bending the knee or tilting the hip.
- As you exhale, slowly lower the leg to the floor.
- Repeat next inhale and exhale with the other leg.
- This is one round. Perform 6-8 rounds. Keep the breath and the body movements continuous and synchronized.

Purna Shalabhasana

- As you inhale, raise both the legs together as high as you can, keeping the knees straight.
- As you exhale, return both legs back onto the floor.
- This is one round. Perform 4-6 rounds. Keep the breath and the body movements continuous and synchronized.

Relax in Makarasana. Feel the changes in the body, especially the lower back.

Modifications:

- *In prone pose, you may externally rotate your arms and place the palms on the ground below your torso with elbows close to each other instead of fists.*

Subtle Aspects:

- *Maintain awareness on the lower back.*

** Details regarding Subtle Aspects, Benefits, and Contraindications in the asana section*

Vimanasana Breathing (Airplane Pose Breathing)



Practice (from Sthiti Prone):

- Lie on your abdomen with your feet together and your chin on the floor.
- Stretch your arms out horizontally to either side of the body.
- As you inhale, raise the upper torso, arms, and legs so that your weight rests on the lower torso. Keep your elbows and knees straight.
- As you exhale, slowly lower the upper torso, arms and legs to the ground.
- This is one round. Perform 6-8 rounds. Keep the breath and the body movements continuous and synchronized.

Relax in Makarasana. Feel the changes in the body, especially the lower back.

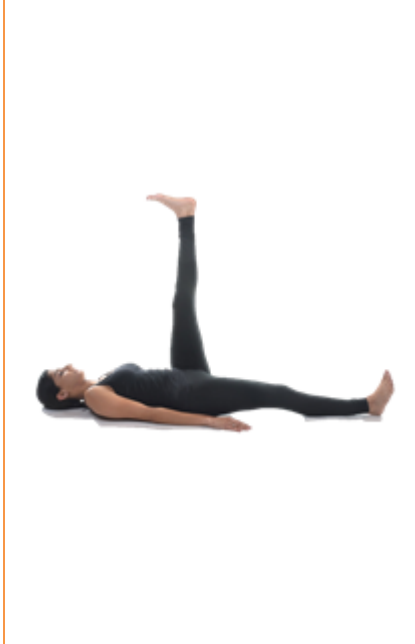
Subtle Aspects:

- Maintain awareness on the lower back.

** Details regarding Subtle Aspects, Benefits, and Contraindications in the asana section*

Supine Breathing Practices

Supine Leg Raise Breathing- Single Leg (Ardha Uttanapadasana)



Practice (from Sthiti Vajrasana):

- Place your arms next to your body, palms facing down.
- As you inhale, slowly lift the right leg up without bending the knee, as far as comfortable (bring it vertical if possible).
- As you exhale, gently lower the leg down to the floor; as slowly as possible.
- Repeat the practice with the left leg.
- This is one round. Perform 8-10 rounds. Keep the breath and the body movements continuous and synchronized.

Relax in Shavasana. Feel the changes in the back of the legs and the abdominal region.

Modifications:

- *The arms can be extended above the head or the hands can be placed under the head with elbows bent for better comfort.*

Contraindications:

- *If you have back pain and lifting the leg hurts your back, avoid practicing or practice with the other leg folded and foot on the ground.*

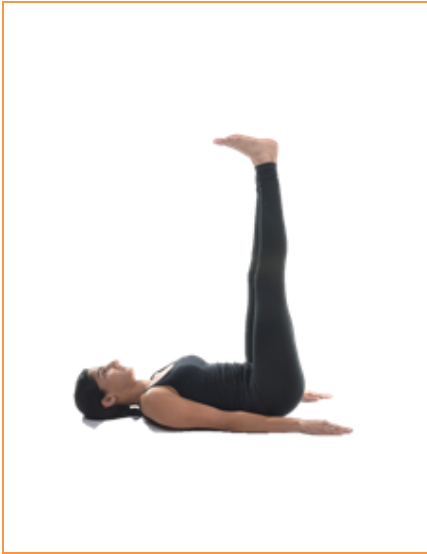
Subtle Aspects:

- *Do not bend the knees throughout the practice.*
- *Do not lift the stationary leg in an effort to raise the other leg further.*
- *Synchronize the breath with leg movements and maintain breath awareness.*

Benefits:

- *Strengthens the back, strengthens the core muscles, and gives flexibility to the thighs and pelvic region.*

Supine Leg Raise Breathing- Both Legs (Uttanapadasana)



Practice (from Sthiti Vajrasana):

- Place your arms next to your body, palms facing down.
- As you inhale, slowly lift both the legs without bending the knees, as far as comfortable (up to vertical, if possible).
- As you exhale, slowly lower your legs to the floor.
- This is one round. Perform 6-8 rounds. Keep the breath and the body movements continuous and synchronized.

Relax in Shavasana. Feel the changes in the body, especially the abdominal region and back of the legs.

Modifications:

Four options for arm positions:

- *Place the arms below the buttocks with palms facing down (supports back)*
- *Bend the elbows and place the hands below the head*
- *Extend the arms over the head with palms facing up*

Contraindications:

- *If you have back pain and lifting the legs hurts your back, avoid practicing it.*


Subtle Aspects:

- *Do not bend the knees throughout the practice.*
- *If you have a weak abdomen, start practicing with alternate legs first.*
- *Bring down the legs slowly in a controlled manner.*

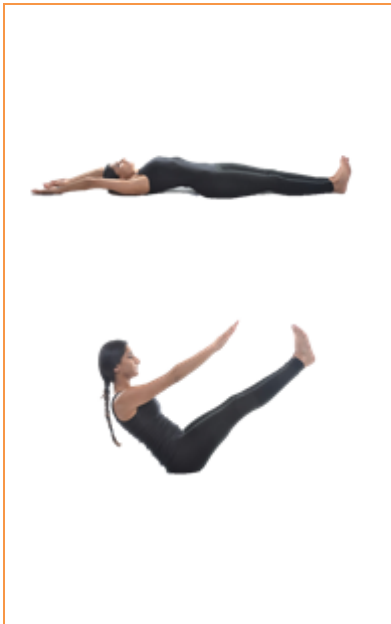
Benefits:

- *Strengthens the back and gives flexibility to thighs and pelvic region.*

Side Leg Raise Breathing (Shesha Shayanasana)

	<p><i>Practice (from Supine Vajrasana):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Lie down on the left side, with the head resting on folded left arm. Support the back of the neck with the left hand.● Place the right hand on the right thigh or in front of the chest.● Keep the whole body as straight as possible.● As you inhale, slowly lift the right leg up without bending the knee, as far as comfortable.● As you exhale, slowly lower the leg.● This is one round. Perform 6-8 rounds. Keep the breath and the body movements continuous and synchronized.● Repeat the same practice on the other side. <p><i>Relax in Shavasana. Feel the changes in the body, especially the hip region.</i></p>
<p>Contraindications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● <i>If you have back pain and lifting a leg hurts your back, avoid practicing it.</i>	<p>Subtle Aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● <i>While raising the leg you can maintain the balance, by pressing the palm on the ground.</i>● <i>Feel the strong stimulation of the lateral stretch at the lumbar region.</i>
<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● <i>Strengthens the back and gives flexibility to thighs and pelvic region.</i>	

Supine Boat Pose Breathing (Ardha Navasana)



Practice (from Supine Sthiti):

Refer to Asana pages for details about this practice.

- Bring your arms above your head, palms facing up.
- As you inhale, lift both the legs, head and back off the ground. Keep the legs at 30-45° angle to the floor. Look toward the toes. (low back on the ground)
- As you exhale, slowly lower the legs and torso to the ground.
- This is one round. Perform 6-8 rounds. Keep the breath and the body movements continuous and synchronized.

Relax in Shavasana. Feel the changes in the body, especially the abdominal region.

Modifications:

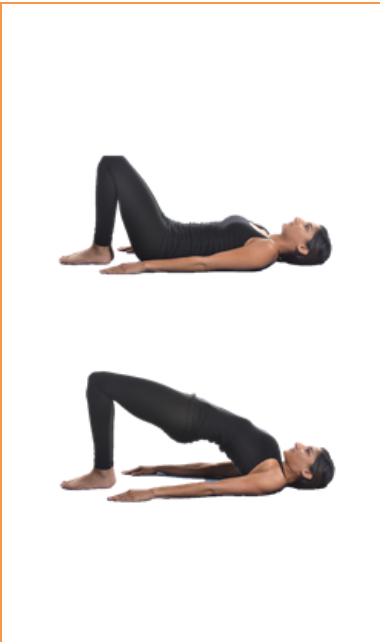
- One can reverse the breathing so as to exhale while raising the torso and legs and inhale to relax back into supine posture.
- Arms can be parallel to the ground.
- You may keep the lower back on the ground in Supine Half Boat Pose.

Subtle Aspects:

- In the final position, the weight of the body rests on the buttocks with no other body part touching the floor.

** Details regarding Subtle Aspects, Benefits, and Contraindications in the asana section*

Setubandhasana breathing (Bridge Pose Breathing)



Practice (from Sthiti Supine):

Refer to Setubandhasana in Asanas section for details.
Below are additional instructions for the breathing practice.

- Place your hands next to your body, palms facing down.
- Fold both the legs placing the feet on the ground close to the buttocks.
- As you inhale, raise your hips and torso up as far as you can.
- As you exhale, slowly lower them down to the floor.
- This is one round. Perform 5 rounds. Keep the breath and the body movements continuous and synchronized.

Relax in Shavasana. Feel the changes in the body, especially the back, thighs and knees.

Modifications:

- You may chant A-kara while lowering the body down.
- You may press the spine down and crunch your abdomen in resting pose. Alleviates back pain and strengthens the abdomen.
- Try to keep feet and knees together if you can.

Subtle Aspects:

- You may roll the shoulders outward, toward the ground, to get a better lift to the upper back and hips
- Do not move your neck in the final position
- Feel the stretch in the lumbar region while going up and release of the stretch while coming down.

Loosening: Dynamic Practices (Sithalikaarana Vyayama)

Principles:

- Loosen various joints in the body.
- Improve flexibility of the spine by repeatedly stretching and relaxing different muscles.

Objectives:

- Remove lethargy and laziness in the body.
- Develop stamina in the body.
- Discipline the body-mind complex.
- Improve cardiac function.
- Improve circulation and respiration.

Tips:

- Practice the exercises repetitively.
- Count the steps slowly and perform with attention.
- Bring awareness to the performance before increasing the speed.
- Increase the speed and number of repetitions depending on capacity.
- Synchronize physical movement and breathing.

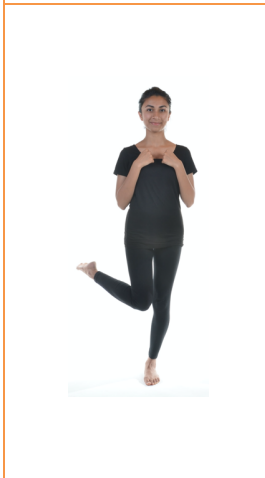
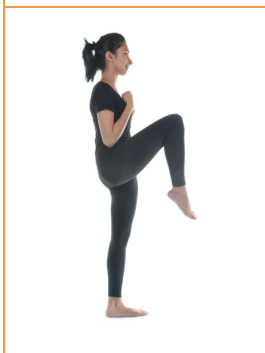
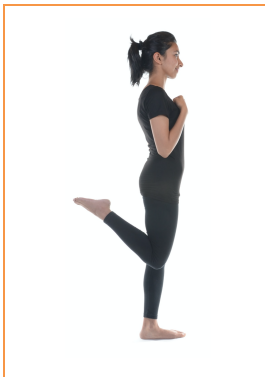
Benefits of Dynamic Yoga Practices

Loosening Practices, when practiced as Dynamic Yoga, remove the lethargy and laziness in the body. These practices are very effective in helping with obesity, anxiety, depression and overall positive health. They help in overcoming depression and anxiety problems by creating a positive speed in the body and mind to counter the negative speed of the mind inherent in these ailments. Given the dynamic nature of these practices, children benefit because of its stimulative effects.

Classification of Loosening Practices

- a. Yogic jogging and Mukha Dhouti for relaxation
- b. Ardha Chakrasana/Padahasthasana Loosening (Forward/Backward bending)
- c. Ardhakati Chakrasana Loosening (Side bending 1)
- d. Trikonasana Loosening (Side bending 2)
- e. Parivrtta Trikonasana Loosening (Bend and Twist)
- f. Twisting
- g. Supine Bicycling Practice
- h. Pavanamuktasana Kriya practices
- i. Straight Leg Raising, single and Both Legs (description under Breath and Body Synchronization)

Yogic Jogging



Sthiti: Tadasana

Practice:

- Make fists with your hands, thumb tucked inside and place them on your chest.
- Collapse and relax your shoulders.

a. Slow jogging

- Start jogging on the balls of your feet slowly 10-20 times.

b. Backward jogging (with legs folding at knee)

- Lean a little forward and bring your heels up to the buttocks.
- Practice 10-20 times with increasing speed to your maximum speed.
- Gradually slow down and continue to jog on the balls of your feet.

c. Forward jogging (with knees raising forward)

- Lean slightly backward and raise the knees higher, thighs hitting the abdomen.
- Practice 10-20 times with increasing speed to your maximum speed.
- Gradually slow down and continue to jog on the balls of your feet.

d. Side jogging (with legs twisting at knee)

- Lift the heels sideways and jog with your heels beside the thighs.
- Practice 10-20 times with increasing speed to your maximum speed.
- Gradually slow down and continue to jog on the balls of your feet.
- Finally stop the practice.

Notes:

- Increase the speed of jogging gradually and not too quickly.
- Try not to stop at any stage of the practice until you have completed all the 4 stages of jogging.
- Keep the fists on the chest throughout the practice.

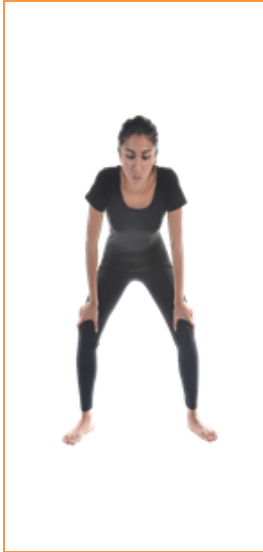
Contraindications:

- People with knee pain or back pain should either avoid this practice or may practice as a low impact practice without jumps.

Benefits:

- Can be practiced as high impact or low impact (without jumping). Great loosening practice for all and can act as a cardio endurance practice.

Mukha Dhouti (Candle Blowing)



Sthiti: Tadasana

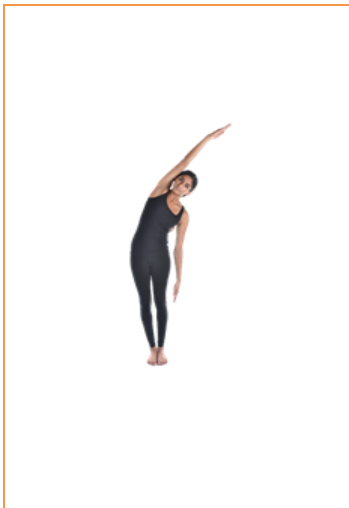
Practice:

- Bend forward keeping the back straight. Place the palms on the respective thighs, keeping the arms straight.
- Actively exhale, forcing the air out through your mouth for a few rounds of breath. Inhalation is passive.
- Stand in Shithila Tadasana and relax for awhile.

Notes:

- *Exhalation in Mukha Dhouti brings the heart rate down quickly and relieves the strain of jogging and jumping.*
- *Pulling the abdomen inward during exhalation can improve the force of expulsion of air.*

Side Bending 1 (Ardha Kati Chakrasana) Loosening



Sthiti: Tadasana

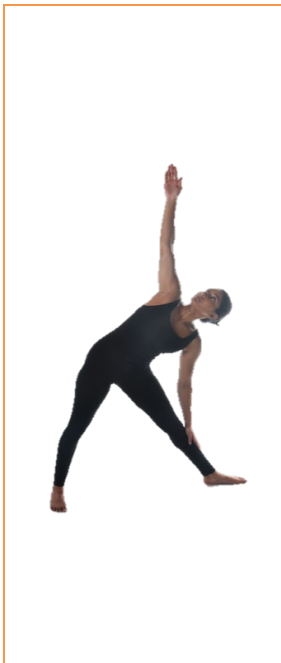
Practice:

- As you inhale, raise the right arm up keeping the bicep by the ear.
- As you exhale, bend to the left. Bend in the same plane.
- As you inhale, straighten the arm and the torso.
- Exhale and lower your arm down.
- Do the complimentary bending to the right side.
- Practice 6-8 times, alternatively bending to the right and left. Start slow and gently increase the speed to your maximum capacity.
- Relax in Shithila Tadasana.

Subtle Aspects:

- *Do not bend forward or backward; maintain the plane.*

Side Bending 2 (Trikonasana) Loosening



Sthiti: Tadasana

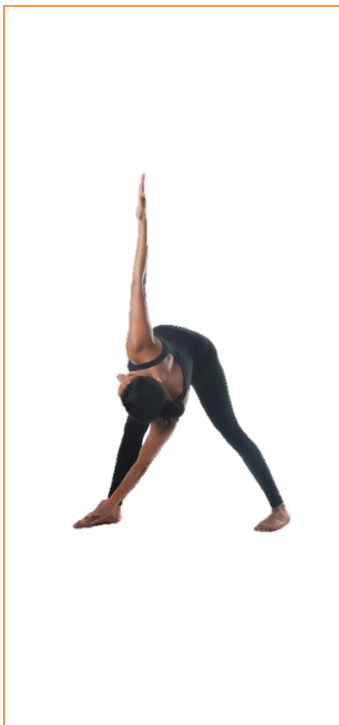
● **Practice:**

- Spread your feet about one leg-length apart (3-5 feet as is comfortable).
- As you inhale, raise the arms to the side with your palms facing down until they are parallel to the ground.
- As you exhale, bend from the waist to the right and bring the left arm up. Look up at the left hand.
- As you inhale, slowly rise up with arms raised to the side.
- As you exhale, bend to the left and bring the right arm up. Look up at the right hand.
- As you inhale, slowly come up.
- Practice 6-8 times, alternatively bending to the right and to the left. Start slow and gently increase the speed to your maximum capacity.
- Relax in Shithila Tadasana.

Subtle Aspects:

- Do not bend forward or backward; maintain the plane.

Bend and Twist (Parivrtta Trikonasana) Loosening



Sthiti: Tadasana

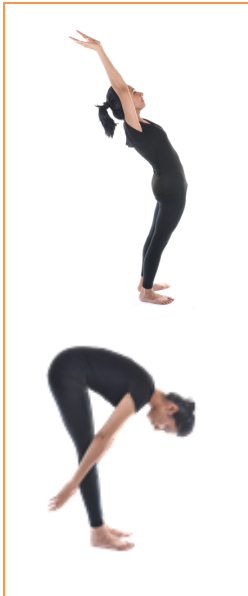
Practice:

- Spread your feet about one leg-length apart (3-5 feet as is comfortable).
- As you inhale, raise the arms to the side with the palms facing down until they are parallel to the ground.
- As you exhale, bend forward from the hips and twist to reach the right hand to the left foot. Bring your left arm up and look at the palm of your left hand. Knees and elbows are straight.
- As you inhale, rise up halfway and with exhalation, twist to reach the left hand to the right foot, bringing your left arm up.
- Practice 6-8 times, alternatively reaching the right hand to the left foot and reaching the left hand to the right foot.
- Relax in Shithila Tadasana.

Subtle Aspects:

- *Keep abdominal muscles tight to help protect the back.*
- *People with hypertension, do not bring the head below the heart.*

Forward/Backward bending (Ardha Chakrasana/Padahastasana)



Sthiti: Tadasana

Practice:

- As you inhale stretch the arms straight above the head and bend backward.
- As you exhale, bend forward from the hips and swing the arms down.
- Practice inhalation with back bend and exhalation with forward bend 20 times. Start slow and increase the speed to maximum capacity.
- Gradually slow down and then stop the practice.
- Relax in Shithila Tadasana.

Modifications:

- You may keep legs apart and the arms can be moving between the legs; this is easier on the back.
- Bending the knees slightly during forward bends will make it easier on the back.

Contraindications:

- People with severe back pain should avoid this practice.
- People with hypertension or heart conditions should not bend with head lower than the heart.

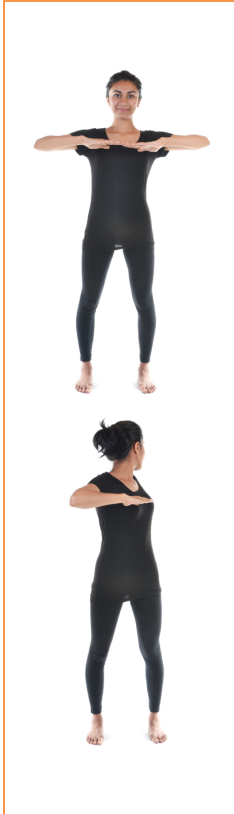
Subtle Aspects:

- Start slowly and gradually increase the speed within your limits.
- While bending forward do not let the hands touch the ground.
- Always bend from the root of the back.
- Make the movements free, easy and flowing.
- Keep the knees straight.

Benefits:

- Strengthens the back and loosens the waist.

Twisting



Sthiti: Tadasana

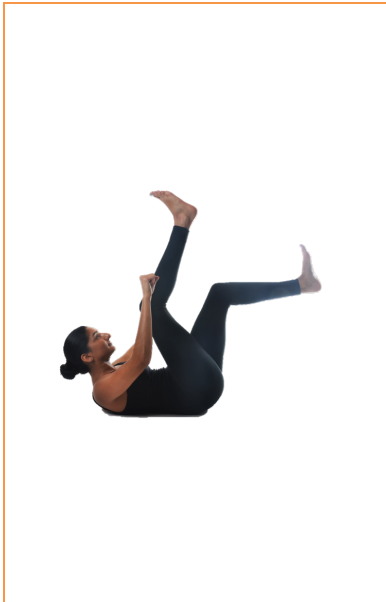
Practice:

- Spread your feet comfortably apart.
- As you inhale, raise the arms up parallel to the ground, bending at the elbows. Keep the palms facing downward and the tips of your fingers close to each other, in front of your chest.
- Keep the legs firm on the ground and twist to the right as you exhale, straightening the right elbow and arm, while keeping the left elbow bent in its original position. Simultaneously, twist the neck to the right and look at the right hand fingertips.
- As you inhale, come back to center.
- Repeat the same on the left.
- Practice 10-20 rounds with increasing speed to maximum capacity.
- Gradually slow down and then stop the practice.
- Relax in Shithila Tadasana.

Notes:

- All twisting should be above the waist level. Keep the body below the waist, straight and firm.
- Do not bend the knees.

Supine Bicycling Practice



Sthiti: Supine Posture

Practice:

- Slowly Inhale and raise both legs to 90° positions.
- Raise your head and crunch your abdomen.
- Flex your legs at the knee and circle them in the air as if you are bicycling. You may bring your palms under the head or circle the hands also along with legs.
- Practice 20-50 rounds with increasing speed to maximum capacity. Breathe normally.
- Gradually slow down.
- Reverse the direction of bicycling.
- Practice 20-50 rounds of bicycling in each direction.
- As you exhale, lower the legs down to the ground.
- Lie down in Shavasana and relax.

Subtle Aspects:

- Your feet should form a complete circle to have proper bicycling movement.
- Concentrate on the knee joints.

Pavanamuktasana Kriya (Wind Release Posture)

A dynamic practice to create compression in the abdomen and to alleviate gastric and intestinal issues.



Sthiti: Supine Posture

Practice:

- As you inhale, raise the right leg up; exhale and bend the leg at the knee and gently bring the right knee towards the chest with the hands (fingers interlocked, around the knee). Lift the head and try to touch the chin to the right knee.
- Gently lift your left leg off the ground and rotate your left leg 8-12 times clockwise and 8-12 times counterclockwise without bending the knee.
- As you exhale, lower your left leg and the head to the ground.
- Release the right leg down to the ground.
- Repeat this practice with the left knee toward the chest and the right leg rotating.
- Relax in Shavasana.

Subtle Aspects:

- While rotating the leg breathe normally and try to draw as big a circle as possible in the air.
- Maintain the compression around the abdomen to have the best results.
- Keep the knee straight while rotating the leg.

Modifications:

- Rest the head on the floor if neck hurts while trying to touch the chin to knee.

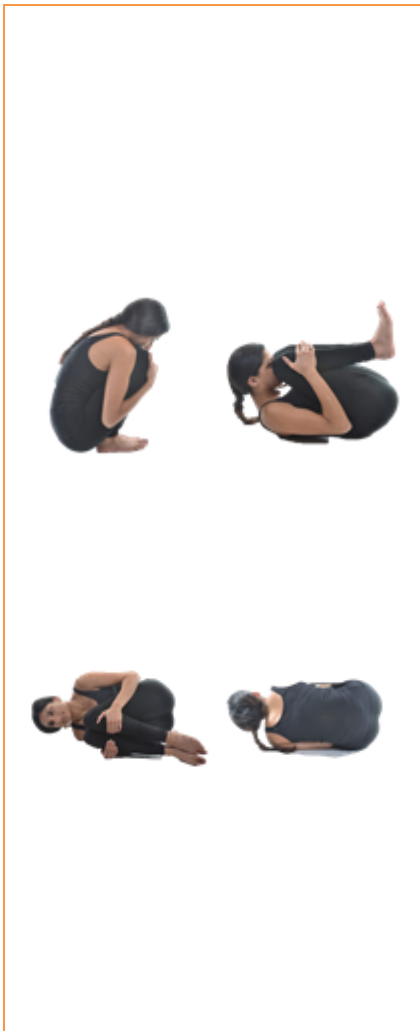
Contraindications:

- For any abdominal pain use caution.

Benefits:

- Strengthens abdomen.
- Relieves gastric troubles.
- Energizes digestive and excretory systems.

Pavanamuktasana Kriya Rocking and Rolling (Wind Release Posture)



Sthiti: Supine Posture

Practice: Rocking

- Inhale. As you exhale, fold both of the knees and bring them towards the chest with the hands interlocked just below the knees. Try to touch your chin to the knees.
- As you breathe normally, rock your body forward and backward 5 – 10 rounds.
- While rocking forward, try to rest the feet on the ground and while rocking backward, feel the nice massage to the spine.
- Relax and observe the changes.

Practice: Rolling

- Inhale. As you exhale, roll the entire body to the right until the right elbow touches the ground.
- Inhale back to center.
- As you exhale, roll to the left until the left elbow touches the ground.
- Repeat this Rolling alternately to the right and left for 5 rounds.
- Stop the rolling.
- As you inhale, release the hands, bring the head onto the ground.
- As you exhale, lower the legs slowly to the ground.
- Relax in Shavasana.

Contraindications:

- People with spinal and/or abdominal problems should use caution.
- People with sensitive back could use thicker mats.

Modifications:

- Rest the head on the floor if neck hurts while trying to touch the chin to knee.
- If you can lift your head but are unable to perform rocking and rolling, then a smaller range of motion can be attempted.

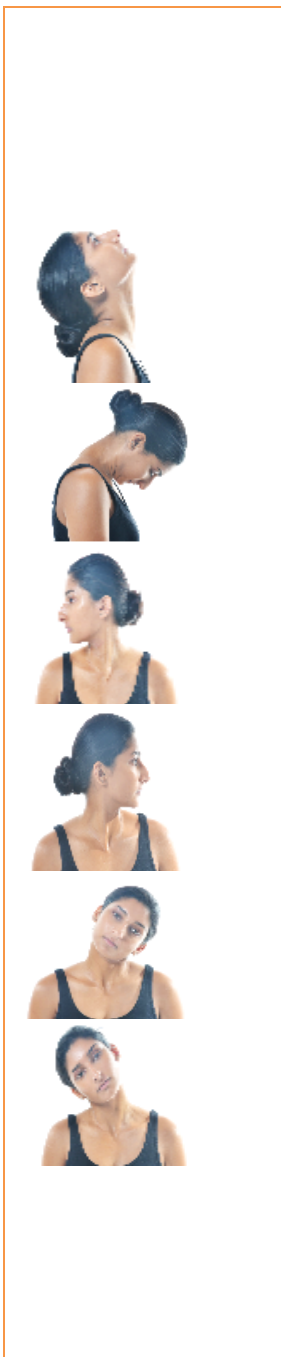
Benefits:

- Massages upper and lower backs, hips and buttocks.
- Strengthens abdomen.
- Relieves gastric troubles.
- Energizes digestive and excretory systems.

Sukshma Vyayama (Subtle Joint Exercise)

Finer practices give stimulation to joints and muscles around the joints. These practices are very effective in relieving joint problems and Arthritis. Good for older people since these are simpler practices.

Neck Movements (Greeva Sanchalana)



Sthiti: Tadasana

Practice:

Stand with feet at a hip-distance apart.

Head Up and Down Movement

- As you inhale, stretch the neck up and move the head as far back as comfortable.
- As you exhale, move the head down and try to touch the chin to the chest.
- Perform the movements 4-5 times.

Side to Side Head Movement

- Slowly move the head to the right side as far as comfortable keeping the head straight. Repeat on the other side.
- Perform the movements 4-5 times.

Bending the Head

- Slowly Bend the head to the left and try to touch the left ear to the left shoulder. Repeat on the other side.
- Perform the movements 4-5 times.

Neck Rotation

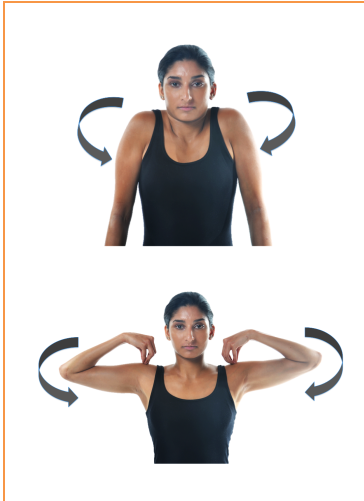
- Slowly bend the head forward, to the right, gently backward and to the left side in a smooth circular movement for 4-5 rounds. Repeat in the reverse manner for 4-5 rounds each.

Relax and Feel the stretch and stimulation in the muscles of the neck.

Subtle Aspects:

- *If you have neck pain, you may avoid neck rotations.*
- *You may practice neck movements in sitting position also.*

Shoulder Rotation (Skanda Chakra)



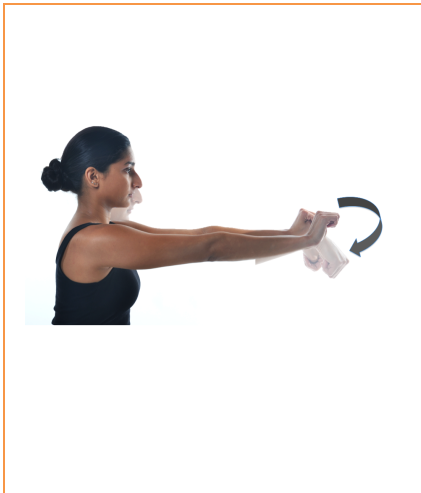
Sthiti: Tadasana

Practice:

- Place fingertips on top of shoulders.
- Allowing the elbows to lead, rotate shoulder joints in a circular movement.
- Rotate the shoulders 6-8 times in one direction and 6-8 times in the reverse direction as you breathe normally.
- Relaxation in Shithila Tadasana.

Note: You may perform shoulder rotations with arms down (without the fingers on the shoulders)

Wrist Rotations (Manibandha Chakra)



Sthiti: Tadasana

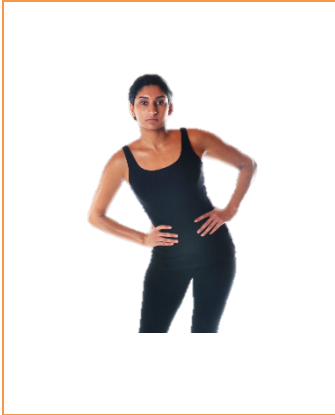
Practice:

- Stretch your arms straight in front of the chest at shoulder level, keep them parallel to the ground.
- Make tight fists of your hands (palm facing down).
- Practice wrist rotations clockwise 6-12 times and counterclockwise 6-12 times as you breathe normally.

Relaxation: Shithila Tadasana

Variation: You may also move the fists up and down from the wrists for 6-12 times with normal breathing.

Hip Rotation (Kati Chakra)

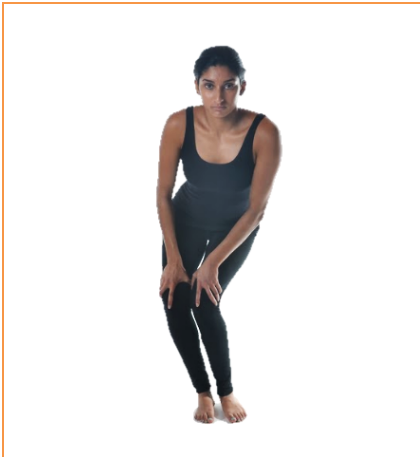


Sthiti: Tadasana

Practice:

- Stand with feet about 2-3 ft apart (slightly wider than hip distance).
- With hands on the waist, rotate the hips in a circular motion keeping the head and neck straight.
- Rotate the hips in a wider circle clockwise and counterclockwise 6-8 times as you breathe normally.
- Relaxation in Shithila Tadasana.

Knee Rotation (Janu Chakra Sanchalana)



Sthiti: Tadasana

Practice:

- Bend the knee slightly and place your hands just above the knees.
 - Rotate the knees in one direction for 8-10 times.
 - Repeat this practice in the reverse direction for same number of times.
- Relax in Shithila Tadasana.

Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutation)

Surya Namaskar is one of the best routines that Yoga offers. It is commonly performed with either 10 or 12 steps in each cycle. Surya Namaskar can be performed either as a dynamic loosening practice or as an asana sequence.

Principles of Surya Namaskar practice:

The characteristics of dynamic practices are energizing movements with speed and repetition. Physical exercises (non-yogic) are mostly effective on muscular, circulatory and respiratory systems. However Yogic exercises like Surya Namaskar, stimulate the nervous and glandular systems thereby rejuvenating and energizing the entire body. Thus laziness (*Tamas*) is shattered leading to *Rajas* (activity). Surya Namaskar is very effective for removing lethargy in children and adults alike. Surya Namaskar sequence is a combination of asanas involving speed and repetition preparing the practitioner for further asana and pranayama practices. Surya Namaskar also can be practiced slowly as asanas and move from *Rajas* to *Satva* — a balanced tranquility of mind.

Surya Namaskar Mantra

Hiranmayena patrena satyasyapihitam mukham

Tat tvam pushan apavrunu satyadharmaya drustaye

हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण सत्यसापिहितं मुखं ।

तत्त्वं पूषन् अपावृणु सत्यधर्माय द्रुष्टये ॥

Meaning

O Sun, a golden lid (material universe) that looks like a shining disc of yours covers the truth (spiritual essence) that is like a burning fire within you. Remove the lid that covers the truth within and show me the truth (and give me the courage to follow).

10-Step Dynamic Surya Namaskar



Chart: 10-Step Surya Dynamic Namaskar

Sequence: 10-Step Dynamic Surya Namaskar

1. *Ardha Chakrasana* अर्ध चक्रासन (Half Wheel Pose) [inhale]
2. *Pada Hastasana* पादहस्तासन (Hands to Feet Pose) [exhale]
3. *Ashva Sanchalanasana* अश्वसंचलनासन (Horse Riding Pose or High Lunge) [inhale]
4. *Chaturanga Dandasana* चतुरंग दण्डासन (Plank Pose) [exhale]
5. *Ashtanga Namaskar* अष्टांग नमस्कार (Eight-Point Salutation) [hold your breath or shallow breathing]
6. *Urdhva Mukha Shvanasana/Bhujangasana* उर्ध्व मुख श्वानासन / भुजंगासन (Upward Facing Dog) [inhale]
7. *Parvatasana/Adho Mukha Shvanasana* पर्वतासन / अधो मुख श्वानासन (Downward Facing Dog) [exhale]
8. *Ashva Sanchalanasana* अश्वसंचलनासन (Same as step 3) [inhale]
9. *Pada Hastasana* पादहस्तासन (Same as step 2) [exhale]
10. *Ardha Chakrasana* अर्ध चक्रासन (Same as step 1) [inhale]

Come to Sthiti - Tadasana with Namaskara mudra [exhale and relax]

Instructions for 10 Step Dynamic Surya Namaskar

1. As you inhale, raise your arms above your head, lengthen the spine, firm your buttocks and push your pelvis forward to bend backward. Engage the core. There may be a slight vibration in the core muscles while in the final pose - Ardha Chakrasana (Half Wheel).
2. As you exhale, push the hips slightly back, soften the knees, and bend forward from the hips. In the final pose, straighten the knees and if possible, place your palms on the mat on either side of the feet - Padahasthasana (Forward Bending Pose).
3. With your palms on the mat on either side of the feet; as you inhale, step your right foot back as far as possible, lower your hips, arch the spine and look up. Left shin is vertical and chest is close to the left thigh; Right knee is off the ground in the final pose (Make sure the left knee does not go beyond the left toe) - Ashva sanchalanasana (Horse Riding or Lunge pose).
4. As you exhale, step the left foot back to join with the right. Your body is in one straight line and the body weight is balanced only on your hands and toes in the final pose (Draw your belly button in) - Chaturanga Dandasana (Plank Pose).
5. As you inhale, gently lower your knees to the ground, exhale and bring the chest down in between the hands and forehead (or chin) on the ground. The abdomen and hips are off the ground in the final pose - Ashtanga Namaskara (Eight Point Salutation).
6. As you inhale, raise the head, arch your back, and rise up on your arms with palms on the ground (directly below the shoulders). Elbows must be straight. Keep the knees off the ground if you can - Bhujangasana (Cobra).
7. As you exhale, raise the hips toward the ceiling, take the hips back, and if possible, heels to the ground. Keep the head between the arms. (If needed, separate your feet to hip distance and walk your feet forward by an inch and adjust the pose) - Parvatasana (Mountain/Downward Dog).
8. As you inhale, step your right foot in between the two hands, your palms on the ground; Lower your hips, arch the spine and look up. Keep your right shin vertical and the right thigh close to the chest. Left knee is off the ground in the final pose- Ashva sanchalanasana (Horse Riding or Lunge pose).
9. As you exhale, step the left foot forward joining the right and take the hips toward the ceiling. Straighten your knees and if possible, place the palms on the mat on either side of the feet- Padahasthasana (Forward Bend).
10. As you inhale, rise up from the hips; lift your arms toward the ceiling and bend back. Firming the buttocks, bend back by pushing the pelvis forward in the final pose - Ardha Chakrasana (Half Wheel).

As you exhale, straighten the spine and lower your arms. Join the hands at the heart center into Namaste position.

12-Steps Surya Namaskar Asanas



Chart: 12-Step Surya Namaskar Asanas

Sequence: 12-Step Surya Namaskar Asanas

1. *Ardha Chakrasana* अर्ध चक्रासन (Half Wheel Pose) [inhale]
2. *Pada Hastasana* पादहस्तासन (Hands To Feet Pose) [exhale]
3. *Ashva Sanchalanasana* अश्वसंचलनासन (Horse Riding Pose or High Lunge) [inhale]
4. *Chaturanga Dandasana* चतुरंग दण्डासन (Plank Pose) [exhale]
5. *Shashankasana* शशांक आसन (Extended Child Pose) [inhale and exhale]
6. *Ashtanga Namaskar* अष्टांग नमस्कार (Eight-Point Salutation) [hold your breath or shallow breathing]
7. *Urdhva Mukha Shvanasana/Bhujangasana* उर्ध्व मुख श्वानासन / भुजंगासन (Upward Facing Dog) [inhale]
8. *Parvatasana/Adho Mukha Shvanasana* पर्वतासन / अधो मुख श्वानासन (Downward Facing Dog) [exhale]
9. *Shashankasana* शशांक आसन (Extended Child Pose) (Same as step 5)
10. *Ashva Sanchalanasana* अश्वसंचलनासन (Same as step 3) [inhale]
11. *Pada Hastasana* पादहस्तासन (Same as step 2) [exhale]
12. *Ardha Chakrasana* अर्ध चक्रासन (Same as step 1) [inhale]

Come to Sthiti - Tadasana with Namaskara mudra [exhale and relax]

Instructions for 12 Step Surya Namaskar

1. As you inhale, raise your arms above your head, lengthen the spine, firm your buttocks and push your pelvis forward to bend backward. Engage the core. There may be a slight vibration in the core muscles while in the final pose - Ardha Chakrasana (Half Wheel).
2. As you exhale, push the hips slightly back, soften the knees, and bend forward from the hips. In the final pose, straighten the knees and if possible, place your palms on the mat on either side of the feet - Padahasthasana (Forward Bending Pose).
3. With your palms on the mat on either side of the feet; as you inhale, step your right foot back as far as possible, lower your hips, arch the spine and look up. Left shin is vertical and chest is close to the left thigh; Right knee is off the ground in the final pose (Make sure the left knee does not go beyond the left toe) - Ashva sanchalanasana (Horse Riding or Lunge pose).
4. As you exhale, step the left foot back to join with the right. Your body is in one straight line and the body weight is balanced only on your hands and toes in the final pose (Draw your belly button in) - Chaturanga Dandasana (Plank Pose).
5. As you inhale, lower your knees to the ground. As you exhale, push the hips back and gently lower your torso and rest on the heels. Rest the forehead on the ground - Shashankasana (Child Pose).
6. As you inhale, raise your torso up with the support of the palms, and as you exhale, bring the chest down in between the hands and place the forehead (or chin) on the ground. The abdomen and hips are off the ground - Ashtanga Namaskara (Eight Point Salutation).
7. As you inhale, raise the head, arching the back, and rise up on the arms with palms on the ground (directly below the shoulders). Elbows must be straight. Keep the knees off the ground if you can - Bhujangasana (Cobra).
8. As you exhale, raise the hips toward the ceiling, take the hips back, and if possible, heels to the ground. Keep the head between the arms. (If needed, separate your feet to hip distance and walk your feet forward by an inch and adjust the pose) - Parvatasana (Mountain/Downward Dog).
9. As you inhale, lower your knees to the ground. As you exhale, push the hips back and gently lower your torso and rest on the heels. Rest the forehead on the ground in the final pose- Shashankasana (Child Pose).
10. As you inhale, step your right foot in between the two hands, your palms on the ground; Lower your hips, arch the back and look up. Keep your right shin vertical and the right thigh close to the chest. Left knee is off the ground in the final pose- Ashva sanchalanasana (Horse Riding or Lunge pose).
11. As you exhale, step the left foot forward joining the right and take the hips toward the ceiling. Straighten your knees and if possible, place the palms on the mat on either side of the feet- Padahasthasana (forward bend).
12. As you inhale, rise up from the hips; lift your arms toward the ceiling and bend back. Firming the buttocks, bend back by pushing the pelvis forward in the final pose - Ardha Chakrasana (Half Wheel).

As you exhale, straighten the spine and lower your arms. Join the hands at the heart center into Namaste position.

Surya Namaskar Bija Mantras

Mantras are combinations of sounds which are designed to produce a specific effect on the mind and its functioning. The mantra can be spoken aloud, whispered or repeated mentally, with mental repetition being the superior method. When a sound is mentally repeated with awareness and concentration, the thought takes on the form of that sound, it becomes the sound and the energy inherent in that sound manifests in the mind.

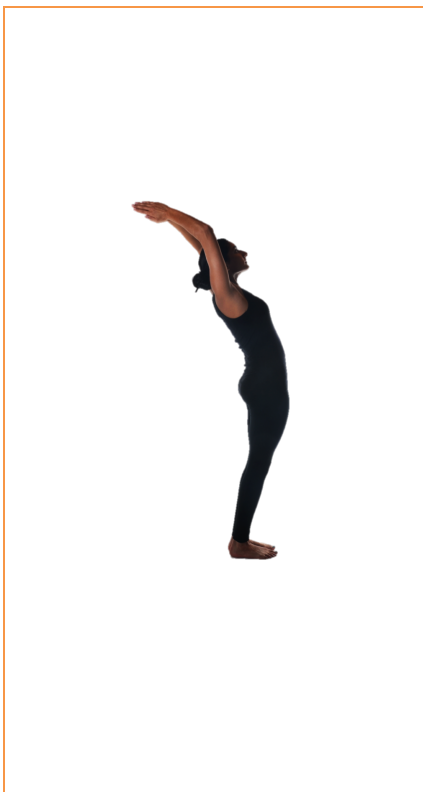
Each round of Surya Namaskar is done after the utterance of “Omkaara” with the appropriate “Bija Mantra” and a name of the Sun, which corresponds to the chakra in the body in ascending order. Bija Mantras do not have any meaning by themselves, but they are specific sounds believed to have subtle effects on different systems and parts of the body. There are 6 Bija Mantras: *Hraam* ह्राम्, *Hreem* ह्रीम्, *Hroom* ह्रूम्, *Hraim* ह्रैम्, *Hroum* ह्रौम् and *Hrah* हः.

Surya Namaskar Bija Mantra Table

	Bija Mantra	References of the Sun	Devnagri
1	Om Hraam Mitraya Namah	Friend of all	ॐ ह्राम् मित्राय नमः
2	Om Hreem Ravaye Namah	Praised by all	ॐ ह्रीम् रवये नमः
3	Om Hroom Suryaya Namah	Stimulator of all	ॐ ह्रूम् सूर्याय नमः
4	Om Hraim Bhaanave Namah	Giver of lustre to all	ॐ ह्रैम् भानवे नमः
5	Om Hroum Khagaya Namah	Stimulator of senses	ॐ ह्रौम् खगाय नमः
6	Om Hrah Pusne Namah	Nourisher of all	ॐ हः पूष्णे नमः
7	Om Hraam Hiranyagharbhaya Namah	Energy and Vitality to all	ॐ ह्राम् हिरण्य-गर्भाय नमः
8	Om Hreem Marichaye Namah	Destroyer of all diseases	ॐ ह्रीम् मरीचये नमः
9	Om Hroom Adityaaya Namah	Attracts all	ॐ ह्रूम् अदित्याय नमः
10	Om Hraim Savitre Namah	Begetter of all	ॐ ह्रैम् सवित्रे नमः
11	Om Hroum Arkaaya Namah	Revered by all	ॐ ह्रौम् अर्काय नमः
12	Om Hrah Bhaaskaraya Namah	Radiance for all	ॐ हः भास्कराय नमः
	Om Shri Savitra Surya Narayanaya Namah	Salutations to Sun the incarnation of Vishnu, the sustainer of the universe	ॐ श्री सवित्र सूर्य नारायणाय नमः

Surya Namaskar Poses

The following section has detailed description for each of the poses used in Surya Namaskar:



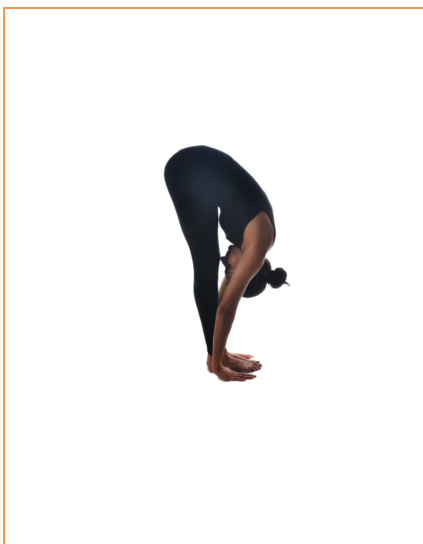
Ardha Chakrasana अर्ध चक्रासन (Half Wheel Pose) [inhale]

- As you inhale, raise your arms above your head, lengthen your spine and bend backward.
- Focus should be on lengthening the spine rather than bending backward.
- Pelvis may be pushed forward to get extra stretch.

Modifications and Subtle Aspects:

- *Your palms can be held together as in Namaskara Mudra, or can be clasped with index fingers pointing up, or the arms can be held parallel to each other for better balance. (Need three pictures of only extended arm/hand positions).*
- *Contracting the buttocks and pushing the pelvis forward helps you get a deeper backbend.*
- *Actively lengthen the spine by trying to reach strongly upward through your arms.*

Engage the core. There may be a slight vibration in the core muscles.

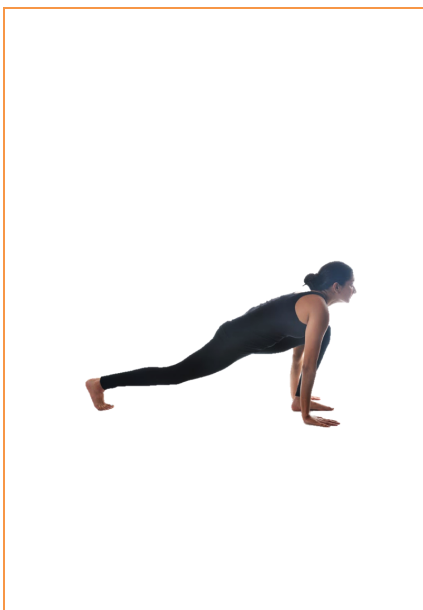


Pada Hastasana पादहस्तासन (Hands To Feet Pose) [exhale]

- As you exhale, soften your knees (slightly bent), pushing the hips slightly back, bend forward from the hips.
- Straighten your knees. Try to touch your forehead to the knees.
- Place the palms on the mat on either side of the feet or let them hang down from the shoulders. Do not bend your knees.

Variations:

If you have a back pain or tight hamstrings, bend your knees.

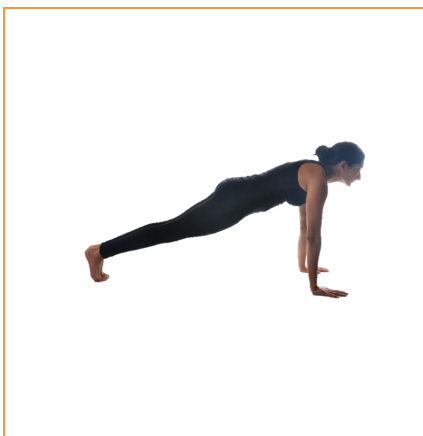


*Ashva Sanchalanasana अश्वसंचलनासन
(Horse Riding Pose or High Lunge) [inhale]*

- As you inhale, step your right foot back as far as possible keeping your palms on the ground pushing the hips forward and downward.
- Left shin is perpendicular to the ground, left thigh close to the chest. Lower your hips, arch your spine and look up.

Variations:

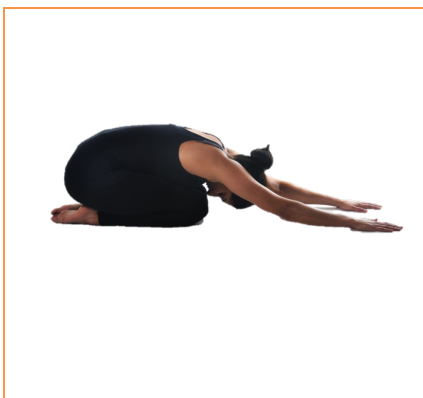
1. When practicing as a dynamic 10 step SN, the back knee should be straight and preferably should not touch the ground.
2. When practicing asana in a slow manner holding each pose for a few breaths in 10 step or 12 step SN, you may place the back knee down and uncurl the toe of the back leg.



*Chaturanga Dandasana चतुरंग दण्डासन
(Plank Pose) [exhale]*

- As you exhale, step the left foot back to join with the right.
- Make sure the body weight is balanced only on hands and toes. Keep the body in one straight line from toe to head.
- Take care to keep the neck in line with the back.

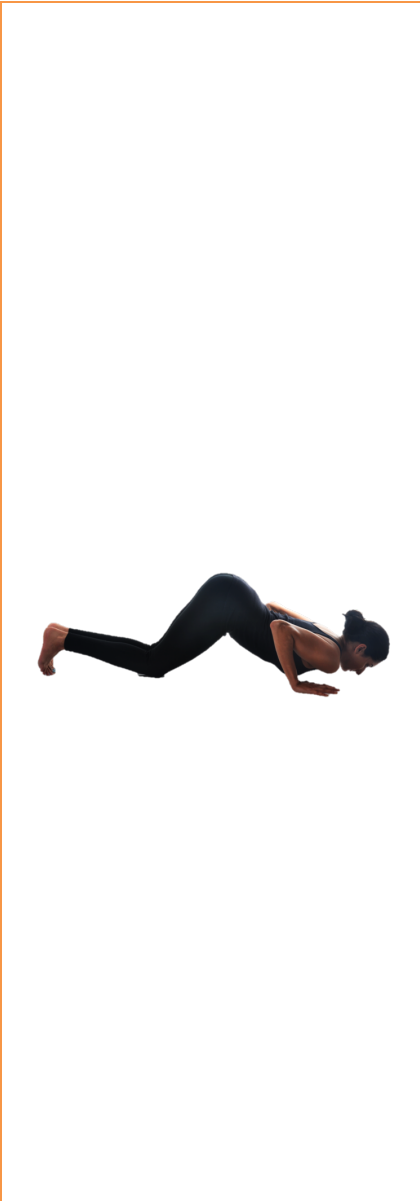
Note: Looking at the ground 3ft in front of you helps keep the body in a straight incline.



*Shashankasana शशांक आसन
(Extended Child Pose) [inhale and exhale]*

- As you inhale, gently lower your knees to the ground.
- As you exhale, push the hips back and gently lower your torso and rest on the heels (The heels would be touching the hips).
- Rest the forehead on the ground.

Note: The hands and toes are ideally in the same place as before and try not to move or adjust them.



*Ashtanga Namaskar अष्टांग नमस्कार
(Eight-Point Salutation)*

[hold your breath or shallow breathing]

Option 1 - From Shashankasana in 12 step SN

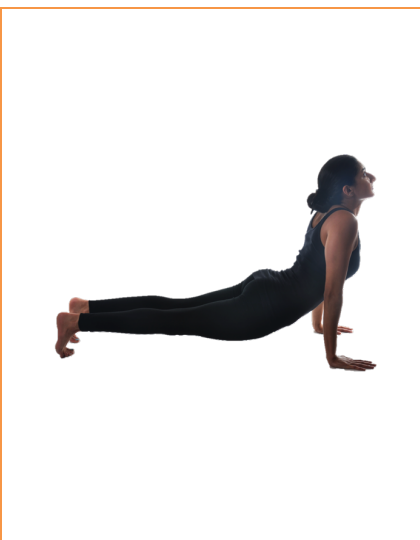
- Glide the upper body forward bringing the chest on the ground between the hands and hold your breath (Bahya kumbhaka बाह्य कुम्भक).
- Rest your forehead (or chin), chest, palms, knees and toes on the ground with elbows close to the body and pointing up. Abdomen, hips and thighs are off the ground.

Option 2 - From Chaturanga Dandasana in 10 step SN

- As you inhale, gently lower your knees to the ground.
- As you exhale, bring the chest down on the ground between the hands and hold your breath (Bahya kumbhaka बाह्य कुम्भक).
- Rest your forehead (or chin), chest, palms, knees and toes on the ground with elbows close to the body and pointing up. Abdomen, hips and thighs are off the ground.

Subtle Aspects:

- *The hands and toes are ideally in the same place as before and try not to move or adjust them.*
- *Eight points of body (forehead/chin, chest, palms, knees, toes) are in contact with the ground – hence the name Ashtanga Namaskar (Salutations with eight parts).*
- *If you cannot hold your breath, practice shallow breathing.*

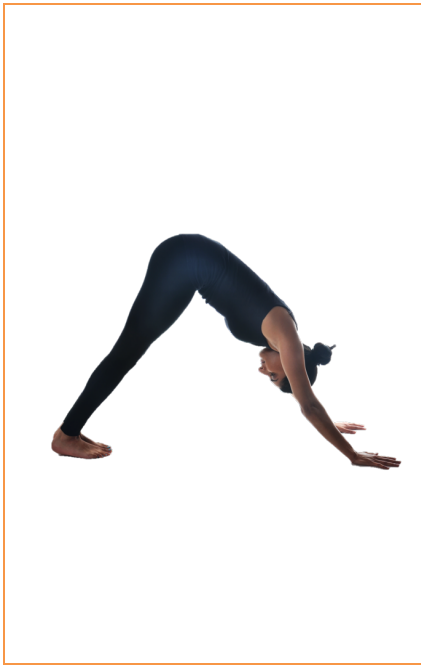


*Urdhva Mukha Shvanasana/Bhujangasana उर्ध्व मुख
श्वनासन/ भुजंगासन (Upward Facing Dog) [inhale]*

- As you inhale, raise the head, arch your spine, and rise up on the arms with palms on the ground directly below the shoulders.
- Elbows should be straight. Toes may be tucked in.
- Keep the knees off the ground if you can.

Subtle Aspects:

- *As a variation, you may practice Bhujangasana भुजंगासन with knees on the ground and toes extended back.*
- *The hands and toes are ideally in the same place as before and try not to move or adjust them.*



Parvatasana/Adho Mukha Shvanasana पर्वतासन/ अधो मुख श्वानासन (Downward Facing Dog) [exhale]

- As you exhale, raise the hips toward the ceiling, bringing the head towards the knees and place your heels on the ground.
- Form an inverted V shape with head between the forearms.

Subtle Aspects:

- Your hands and toes are ideally in the same place as before. If needed, adjust the feet slightly to get the heels to the ground. This gives optimal stretch to the ankles and calf.
- Try to bring your forehead close to your knees without lifting the heels off the ground.

You may perform Uddiyana Bandha उड्डीयान बंध (abdominal lock) and Moolabandha मूलबंध (rectal lock) in this pose.

The complementary cycle should be practiced by taking the left foot back in Ashva Sanchalana अश्वसंचलनासन (Horse Riding Pose or High Lunge) and bringing the left foot forward after Parvatasana/Adho Mukha Shvanasana पर्वतासन / अधो मुख श्वानासन (Downward Facing Dog).

<p>Modifications:</p>	<p>Notes:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For people with physical limitations, variations have been developed - ex. Chair Surya Namaskar – these are beyond the scope of this manual. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surya Namaskar should be practiced on an empty stomach preferably at sunrise and/or sunset facing the sun directly. • All positions are practiced in sequence to complete one cycle. • Surya Namaskar needs to be practiced with full attention to breathing, awareness in each position as noted. • Maintain your natural breathing pattern and rhythm; one should not feel out of breath during this practice.
<p>Contraindications:</p>	<p>Benefits:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyone suffering from hernia, spinal disorders, high blood pressure should practice Surya Namaskar only after consulting a physician. • Women during menstruation, prenatal and postnatal conditions should avoid or practice with caution after their doctor's approval. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps loosen the joints and muscles in the body. • The combination of all asanas as a cyclic practice has many health benefits such as weight loss, vitalizing the entire body, sharpening the mind and reaching optimal health. • Surya Namaskar has a very beneficial influence on all the systems of the body: nervous, circulatory, respiratory, digestive and glandular.

Asana (Yoga Poses)

Introduction

Asana आसन is a Sanskrit word that means “seat” or “pose”. Asanas are popularly known as Yoga postures, positions or poses. They are specialized postures of the body often derived from the animal kingdom. Asanas have also been named after famous sages (*rishis* ऋषि) or the shape of the body in the final position. Several thousand asanas exist. There are several asana styles such as *Vinyasa* विन्यास, Power Yoga, etc. Due to these stylistic variations, in some cases, the same posture may have different asana names while in other instances the same asana name may refer to different postures.

Principles of Asana Practice

Asanas are techniques to bring about very deep rest to different parts of the body. This is achieved by performing the postures as per the two major definitions given by Patanjali. Per Sage Patanjali’s definition, Asanas are postures that are maintained with ease and stability for extended period of time (*Sthirasukham Asanam*, स्थिरं सुखं आसनम्). Initially the surface muscles (limb and trunk) are stretched or contracted to achieve the final posture.

Make sure you release any unnecessary tension during the final pose such as clenching of the teeth, holding of the breath, tightening of the facial muscles, etc. Adjust your body to practice the posture safely. Follow Patanjali’s second definition – *Prayatna Shaithilya* प्रयत्न शैथिल्य or release of effort. However, after getting to your final posture you move on to the second step, wherein, you relax all the prior contractions, feel the changes in the body due to pose such as the flow of *prana* प्राण, the heart rate, breathing and muscle relaxation. In this phase as you pass your awareness throughout the body you learn to relax all the unnecessary muscles such as those of face, neck, back, arms that were tightened. This leads to further improvement of the posture and reduces the energy spent to maintain the posture for longer duration without exhaustion. At this stage, your attention shifts to the intra-abdominal organs.

You may now move on to the third stage to experience *Anantasamapatti* अनंतसमापत्ति or Expanded awareness even at the edge of your discomfort. You may visualize a feeling of expansion, diffusion and ‘letting go’ while in the final posture.

Objectives

- To evoke the dormant potential and raise human beings to higher levels.
- To improve flexibility of the spine.
- To promote positive health and overall personality development.
- To improve physical harmony, stamina, *pranic* balance and mental equipoise.

Practice

- Starting Position
- Intermediate Practice
- Final Position

Categories

- Standing
- Sitting
- Prone (lying on the stomach)
- Supine (lying on the back)

Types

- Meditative – Brings stability and awareness to the body. Keeps the spine upright.
- Relaxation – Maximum surface area resting on floor. Creates a state of awareness.
- Balancing – Minimal surface area touching the ground. Focuses the mind to improve concentration, can also improve balance.
- Culturing – General purpose asanas for toning the whole body. Good for therapeutic purposes.
- Inverted – Combines Culturing and Balancing aspects and brings head below the heart.

Characteristics




1. *Sthira* स्थिरं – Stable and maintained for a sufficient period of time for the blood flow and nerve impulses to become normal.
2. *Sukha* सुखं – Happy or at peace, with a smile on your face.
3. Regular breathing.
4. Close your eyes whenever possible (Keep your eyes open for balancing asanas).
5. In each asana, use your own judgment for how long to hold an asana although generally asanas may be instructed to be held for 1-2 minutes in the class.





Asana Chart




Please Note:




- If you have any limitations listed for a specific asana, please consult your doctor. Use caution if you choose to practice it or avoid the asana completely if it is contraindicated.
- If you have had any recent surgeries please consult your doctor before attempting any asanas.
- People with **cardiac problems (for example hypertension and any type of heart disease)** please consult your doctor before beginning Yoga practice.
- People with **hypertension** are advised not to keep their heads below heart level for extended periods of time.




Asana Chart




Picture	Asana	Awareness	Benefits	Contraindications	Complementary pose
<i>Standing Poses</i>					
	<i>Ardhakati Chakrasana</i> अर्धकटी चक्रासन (Lateral Half Wheel Pose) Type: Standing Culturing	Awareness on the lateral muscles in the waist region. Awareness on sides of the torso, spine, fingers of extended arm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces fat in the waist region. Improves lateral flexibility to the spine and alleviates back pain. Stimulates the internal organs of the abdomen. 	Scoliosis, back pain, and neck pain.	Self (practice both sides)
	<i>Pada Hastasana</i> पादहस्तासन (Forward Bending Pose) Type: Standing Culturing	Extension in the spine, hamstrings; contraction of muscles in the front of the thighs, and enhanced circulation in the head region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes the spine flexible. Enhances blood flow to the head and calms the mind. Strengthens the thighs, stretches the hamstrings and calves. Helps prevent constipation and improves digestion. 	Severe spinal problems, cardiac problems, hypertension, and vertigo.	<i>Ardha Chakrasana</i> अर्धचक्रासन
	<i>Ardha Chakrasana</i> अर्धचक्रासन (Half Wheel Pose) Type: Standing Culturing	Spine and neck regions and expansion of the chest and shoulders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes the spine flexible and strengthens the neck muscles. Strengthens the core muscles Relaxes abdominal organs Expands the rib cage and the shoulders; therefore, helps improve breathing. 	Balance problems and vertigo, hernia, and back pain.	<i>Pada Hastasana</i> पादहस्तासन




	<p><i>Trikonasana</i> त्रिकोणासन (Triangle Pose) Type: Standing Culturing</p>	<p>Lateral waist region and thighs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens the calves, waist and thigh muscles. • Stretches the muscles of the hip and loosens the hip joint. • Makes the spine flexible and corrects the curvature of the back. • Helps in preventing flat foot. 	<p>Back pain, slip disc and sciatica problems, vertigo or balance issues.</p>	<p>Self (practice both sides)</p>
	<p><i>Parivritta Trikonasana</i> परिवृत्त त्रिकोणासन (Revolved Triangle Pose) Type: Standing Culturing</p>	<p>Spine and abdomen regions, thighs and knees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves spinal flexibility. • Improves kidney function. • Strengthens the thigh muscles. 	<p>Spinal problems, cardiac problems or severe hypertension.</p>	<p>Self (practice both sides)</p>
	<p><i>Veerabhadrasana</i> वीरभद्रासन (Warrior Pose I and II) Type: Standing Culturing</p>	<p>Thighs, lower back, shoulders and arms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens and stretches thighs and legs. • Strengthens lower back and shoulders. 	<p>Knee pain, cardiac problems or severe hypertension.</p>	<p>Self (practice both sides)</p>
	<p><i>Parshva Konasana</i> पार्श्वकोणासन (Lateral Angle Pose) Type: Standing Culturing</p>	<p>Legs, hips, back and extended side of body</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expands the thorax • Strengthens the thighs. • Relieves constipation. • Prevents back pain. • Opens hips. 	<p>Knee pain, cardiac problems or severe hypertension. backpain?</p>	<p>Self (practice both sides)</p>



	<p><i>Vrikshasana</i> वृक्षासन (Tree Pose) Type: Standing Balancing</p>	<p>Back, shoulders and arms, maintaining balance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens the thighs, calves, back and shoulders. • Balancing focuses the mind and helps develop concentration 	<p>Any leg injuries.</p>	<p>Self (practice both sides)</p>
<p>Sitting Poses</p>					
	<p><i>Vajrasana</i> वज्रासन (Diamond Pose) Type: Sitting Meditative</p>	<p>Ankles, thighs and back and steadiness of mind.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeps the spine straight and tension free bringing peace and stillness of mind. • Alleviates back pain • Relieves symptoms of Varicose veins. • Gives flexibility to the ankles and prevents flat foot. • Helps in digestion when practiced after meals. • Excellent pose for Pranayama and Meditation. 	<p>Rheumatic problems and knee problems.</p>	<p>None</p>
	<p><i>Padmasana</i> पद्मासन (Lotus Pose) Type: Sitting Meditative</p>	<p>Awareness of erect spine and steadiness of mind.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeps the spine erect for a symmetrical posture. • Allows the meditators to hold the body stable for long periods. • Brings stability to the mind. 	<p>Sciatica, ankle and knee problems and pregnancy.</p>	<p>None</p>




	<p><i>Shashankasana</i> शशांकासन (Child/Mo on Pose) Type: Sitting Culturing</p>	<p>Ankles, thighs and back, calmness of mind</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhances blood flow to the head. • Stimulates the brain. • Provides flexibility to the spine, ankles and knees. • Alleviates respiratory ailments. • Excellent for gastrointestinal disorders, back pain and anxiety in adults and children. • Helps prevent varicose veins. 	<p>Rheumatic problems, knee problems, gastric and peptic ulcers, severe hypertension</p>	<p><i>Ushtrasana</i> उष्ट्रासन</p>
	<p><i>Ushtrasana</i> उष्ट्रासन (Camel Pose) Type: Sitting Culturing</p>	<p>Torso, neck, back and thighs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves spine and neck flexibility. • Increases the blood circulation to the head. • Stretches the entire front portion of the body. 	<p>Knee and, Neck problems, Hernia, vertigo, and severe hypertension.</p>	<p><i>Shashankasana</i> शशांकासन</p>
	<p><i>Paschimottasana</i> पश्चिमोत्तनासन (Seated Forward Bend) Type: Sitting Culturing</p>	<p>Hamstrings and spinal column</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulates and gives flexibility to spinal column and back muscles. • Improves digestion, and prevents constipation • Stimulates liver and kidneys. For women, it stimulates the ovaries and uterus and is excellent for menstrual disorders and during menopause. • Increases flexibility of the hamstrings. • As with any forward bends, this pose calms the mind. 	<p>Herniated disc and lower back pain.</p>	<p><i>Ushtrasana</i> उष्ट्रासन</p>






	<p><i>Vakrasana</i> वक्रासन (Spinal Twist Pose) Type: Sitting Culturing</p>	<p>Twisted spine and abdominal organs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulates spinal nerves and improves flexibility of the spine. • Prevents constipation and indigestion. • Stimulates pancreas and benefits practitioners with diabetes to normalize blood glucose levels. 	<p>Abdominal or back problems.</p>	<p>Self (practice both sides)</p>
	<p><i>Ardha Matsyendrasana</i> अर्ध- मत्स्येन्द्रासन (Matsyendra Half Twist Pose) Type: Sitting Culturing</p>	<p>Abdomen region, twisted spine, hips and thighs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulates spinal nerves and improves flexibility of spine. • Prevents constipation and indigestion. • Stimulates pancreas. • Stretches hips and thigh muscles. 	<p>Abdominal, neck and back problems.</p>	<p>Self (practice both sides)</p>
	<p><i>Gomukhasana</i> गोमुखासन (Cow Face Pose) Type: Sitting Culturing</p>	<p>Shoulders, back and stretch in the abdominal region</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretches hips, thighs, shoulders, chest and back. Improves posture and gives spinal flexibility. • Helps with gastrointestinal problems. • It also stimulates and balances the nervous system. 	<p>Sciatica, back problems, chronic shoulder pain, and hip joint problems.</p>	<p>Self (practice both sides)</p>



	<p><i>Baddhakona asana</i> बद्धकोनासन (Bound Angle Pose) Type: Sitting Meditative</p>	<p>Pelvic organs, hip joint, and hamstrings of the leg</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent for women with menstrual disorders, and for women in the second half of pregnancy (healthy pregnancy). • Excellent for prostate health in men. • Great for hip and thigh muscle flexibility and in general for good health of all 	<p>* Women during the first half of pregnancy should avoid this pose. * People with knee problems should exercise caution.</p>	<p><i>Baddhakona asana</i> बद्धकोनासन (Bound Angle Posture) Type: Sitting Meditative</p>
	<p><i>Malasana</i> मालासन (Squat Pose) Type: Sitting Balancing</p>	<p>Pelvic organs, Lower back, hip joint, and hamstrings of the leg</p>	<p>Excellent for women with menstrual disorders, and for women in the second half of healthy pregnancy. Excellent for prostate health in men. Great for hip and thigh muscle flexibility and in general for good health of all</p>	<p>* Women during the first half of pregnancy should avoid this pose. * People with knee problems should exercise caution.</p>	<p><i>Malasana</i> मालासन (Squat Posture) Type: Sitting Balancing</p>
	<p><i>Janu Shirshasana</i> जानु शीर्षासन (Seated Head to Knee Pose) Type: Sitting Culturing</p>	<p>Lower back, hamstrings of extended leg</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretches the spine, shoulders, hamstring and groin. • Calms the mind. • Stimulates internal organs like liver and kidneys, and improves digestion. • Relieves anxiety, fatigue, headache, and menstrual discomfort. 	<p>Back problems, knee problems, asthma, and diarrhea.</p>	<p>Self (practice both sides)</p>

Prone Poses					
	<p><i>Bhujangasana</i> भुजंगासन (Cobra Pose) Type: Prone Culturing</p>	Back and neck	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds flexibility and strength in the spine. • Reduces abdominal fat. • Benefits people with asthma. • Elevates the mood and helps reduce stress and fatigue. 	Back problems and cervical spondylosis.	<p><i>Shalabhasana</i> शलभासन</p>
	<p><i>Shalabhasana</i> शलभासन (Locust Pose) Type: Prone Culturing</p>	Lower back and legs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alleviates symptoms of sciatica and low back pain. • Strengthens and increases flexibility in the entire back and legs, strengthens the upper back; helps improve posture and relieves stress caused by slouching forward. • Strengthens abdominal muscles and chest. • Stimulates the kidneys, endocrine and digestive system. 	Cardiac problems and severe back problems.	<p><i>Bhujangasana</i> भुजंगासन</p>
	<p><i>Dhanurasana</i> धनुरासन (Bow Pose) Type: Prone Culturing</p>	Spine, abdomen, and neck	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps with gastrointestinal disorders. • Stimulates the whole body and helps in reducing fat. • Tones the arms and legs. • Stimulates pancreas and prevents and mitigates diabetes. 	High blood pressure, back pain, shoulder pain, knee pain, and abdominal surgery. Practice this asana with caution.	<p><i>Paschimottasana</i> पश्चिमोत्तनासन</p>

	<p><i>Vimanasana</i> विमानासन (Airplane Pose) Type: Prone Culturing</p>	<p>Back</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolves gastrointestinal disorders. • Stimulates the whole body and helps in reducing fat. • Tones the arms and legs. 	<p>Cardiac problems, severe back problems and abdomen problems.</p>	<p><i>Paschimottan asana</i> पश्चिमोत्तनासन</p>
<p>Supine Poses</p>					
	<p><i>Vipareeta Karani</i> विपरीत करणि (Half Shoulder Stand Pose) Type: Supine Inverted</p>	<p>Awareness in the lower abdomen, shoulders and in the effects of inversion such as increased pressure in the head region if any.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relaxes the spinal muscles. • Helpful in curing constipation, gastric disorders and menstrual disorders. 	<p>Cervical spondylosis and severe hypertension, women during menstruation .</p>	<p>None</p>

	<p><i>Sarvangasana</i> सर्वांगासन (Shoulderstand Pose) Type: Supine Inverted</p>	<p>Shoulder, neck, balancing aspect, and in the effects of inversion such as increased pressure in the head region if any.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relaxes the back muscles. • Helpful in relieving constipation, gastric disorders and menstrual disorders, and varicose veins. • Strengthens the immune system, balances the hormones, calms the nervous system, and stabilizes the digestive system. • Excellent for anxiety in adults and children. • Stimulates the thyroid glands. • Promotes healthy circulation to the upper extremities, which in turn promotes alertness and focus in the mind. 	<p>Cervical spondylosis, severe hypertension, and shoulder / neck problems, women during menstruation .</p>	<p><i>Matsyasana</i> मत्स्यासन</p>
	<p><i>Matsyasana</i> मत्स्यासन (Fish Pose) Type: Supine Culturing</p>	<p>Neck, chest and spine</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good for people with diabetes, asthma and respiratory problems. 	<p>Abdominal, thoracic, shoulder / neck problems and thyroid problems.</p>	<p><i>Sarvangasana</i> सर्वांगासन</p>
	<p><i>Halasana</i> हलासन (Plough Pose) Type: Supine Inverted</p>	<p>Shoulder, neck and in balancing the body</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretches and stimulates the back muscles, spinal joints and lumbar nerves. 	<p>Spinal problems, cardiac problems and severe hypertension, women during menstruation .</p>	<p><i>Chakrasana</i> चक्रासन</p>

	<i>Setubandh asana</i> सेतुबंधासन (Bridge Pose) Type: Supine Culturing	Torso, back, shoulders and neck	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens the back. • Reduces fat in the abdomen and strengthens the glutes. • Improves digestion. 	Back and Neck Pain, severe hypertension, cardiac problems, women during menstruation	<i>Paschimottan asana</i> पश्चिमोत्तनासन
	<i>Navasana</i> नावासन (Boat Pose) Type: Supine Culturing/ Balancing	Abdomen, spine and balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps reduce abdominal fat. • Strengthens neck, back, abdomen, and thighs. 	Abdominal problems, neck / back problems and pregnancy.	<i>Vimanasana</i> विमानासन
	<i>Shavasana</i> शवासन (Corpse Pose) Type: Supine Relaxation	Body, mind and breath	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calms the mind and relaxes the entire body; reduces stress at a deep level. • A very effective remedy for all psychosomatic disorders. 	No limitations. People with back problems can fold legs to reduce stress on their backs.	None
Advanced Poses					
	<i>Chakrasana</i> चक्रासन (Wheel Pose) Type: Supine Culturing Balancing and Inverted	Back, torso, arms, legs, wrists and balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brings very good flexibility to spine. • Stimulates all parts of the body. • Strengthens arms, shoulders and legs. 	Spinal, wrist and cardiac problems, severe hypertension, and vertigo. Practice this advanced asana with caution.	<i>Halasana</i> हलासन
	<i>Hamsasana</i> हंसासन (Swan Pose)	Arms, shoulders and core muscles	Strengthens the shoulders, wrists and abdomen region.	Wrist problems, stomach problems, hernia and menstrual problems.	<i>Shashankasana</i> शशांकासन

	Type: Sitting Culturing				
	Ardha Shirshasana अर्ध शीर्षासन (Half head stand Pose) Type: Sitting Inverted	Neck, head, arms and balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calms the mind. • Strengthens the neck, arms, spine and stimulates abdominal organs. • Relieves constipation and improves digestion. 	Weak neck or back, eye problems, cardiac problems and severe hypertension, ear inflammation, and recent dental work.	<i>Refer to the practice section for this asana.</i>
	Shirshasana शीर्षासन (Headstand Pose) Type: Sitting Inverted	Neck, head, arms and balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calms the mind. • Strengthens the neck, arms, spine and abdominal organs. • Relieves constipation and improves digestion. 	Weak neck or Back, eye problems, cardiac problems, and severe hypertension, ear inflammation, severe asthma, slipped discs, cold or sinusitis, and recent dental work. Practice this asana with caution.	<i>Refer to the practice section for this asana.</i>

Practices to Avoid for Specific Health Conditions

People with severe health conditions such as severe hypertension, heart disease, abdominal surgery for hernia, C-section, spinal and hip surgeries, high risk pregnancy or any other severe conditions should consult their doctor before taking up a yoga practice. The table below is only a general guide for people who have already consulted their doctors and is not a substitute for a doctor's advice. In addition to following their doctor's advice and the recommendations listed below, practitioners are strongly advised to listen to their body during the practice. If at any time they have difficulty performing the practices, or feel dizziness, discomfort or sharp pain, they should stop the practice and consult their doctor again.

In all of the conditions below, advanced asanas such as Halasana, Chakrasana, Veerabhadrasana, Dhanurasana, Supta Vajrasana, Supta Veerasana, Shirshasana, etc. should be avoided.

Recommended practices are some simple sukshma vyayama, pranayama, relaxation techniques and meditation techniques. Even with these simple postures and techniques, observe caution and consult your doctor before taking up any practice.

Health Condition	Practices to Avoid
Severe Hypertension & Heart Disease (People with mild blood pressure problem controlled by medication should also exercise caution.)	Avoid any asanas where the head is below the heart level such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pada Hastasana (Forward Bend) • Parivritta Trikonasana (Revolved Triangle) • Vipareeta Karani • Halasana Trikonasana (Triangle) • Paschimottanasana (Seated Forward Bend) • Sarvangasana (Shoulder Stand) • Shirshasana/Ardha Shirshasana (Head Stand) Prone poses such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shalabhasana (Locust) • Vimanasana (Airplane) • Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose) should also be avoided or practiced with caution.
Varicose Veins	Standing asanas that involve long holding should be avoided.
Abdominal Surgery, Postnatal women after C-Section	Any asanas that give a deep stretch, severe compression or a twist to the abdomen should be practiced with caution or avoided. Examples are: Ardha Chakrasana, Trikonasana, Ushtrasana, Vakrasana, Ardha Matsyendrasana and the advanced asanas listed above should be avoided.
Surgery of spine	Any asanas that give deep stretch, severe compression or a twist to the spine should be practiced with caution or avoided. The asanas to avoid for spinal surgery is similar to the case of abdominal surgery.

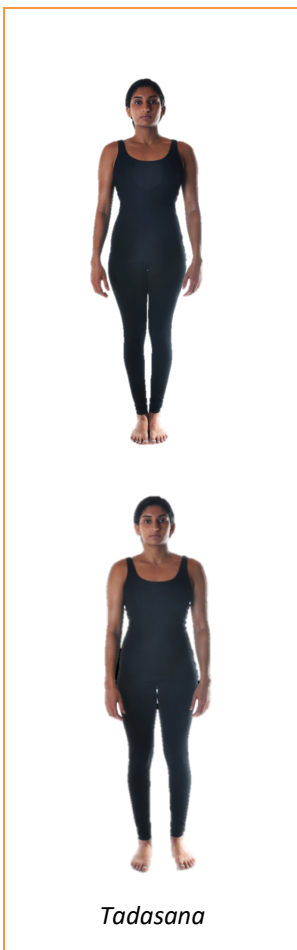
Pregnancy	Pregnant women should not practice asanas on their own without the doctor's advice and prenatal yoga teacher's guidance. Any forward bends or twists that compress the stomach and abdominal region should be avoided. Prone postures should be avoided, and even supine postures should be avoided after the first trimester.
Menstruation	Avoid inverting postures, abdominal strengthening poses, dynamic practices and practices such as Kapalabhati that give a severe thrust to the pelvic region.

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Standing Asanas

Tadasana (Palm Tree Pose)

Standing posture to practice meditation and for centering.



Practice:

- Stand tall with spine erect. Keep your feet slightly apart for better balance; Feet are parallel to each other.
- Firmly plant the balls of the feet and the heels on the ground forming a triangular support. Place the toes lightly on the floor.
- Engage your thigh muscles.
- Keep your pelvis neutral.
- Engage your core muscles by tucking in your abdomen. Keep your chest lifted up and broad.
- Lengthen your spine and stand tall.
- Broaden your shoulders and relax them down.
- Keep your hands alongside the torso, hanging down.
- Keep your legs, torso and head in one plane.
- Gently close your eyes and observe the balance.
- Maintain the final posture with normal breathing.

Relax in Shithila Tadasana (Relaxed Standing) and observe the changes in the body.

Note: *Advanced version of this is with feet together called Samasthiti. See Advanced asana section for this pose.*

Contraindications:

- *People with low back pain are advised to keep their feet hip width apart.*
- *People with low blood pressure and weak heart are advised to avoid practicing this pose for too long, as they may get dizzy due to stagnation of blood in the legs and feet.*
- *People with varicose veins are advised to exercise caution.*

Subtle Aspects and Benefits:

- *Improves awareness as there is a minimal base of support; hence balancing the body at a "point" on the ground causes the awareness to be focused there.*
- *Improves thighs and core strength if practiced correctly with abdomen tucked in.*
- *Improves awareness of standing posture in daily life.*
- *If you feel a loss of balance with eyes closed, keep them half open and gaze at the floor in front of you.*

Vrikshasana (Tree Pose)

A standing balancing posture that builds concentration.



Modifications:

- Fix your gaze on a stationary object that is at the eye level, or at a point on the ground 3-6 feet in front of you.
- Join your hands in Anjali Mudra (Namaskar) at chest level.
- Place the raised foot on your ankle, side of your shin or on the ground next to the standing leg.
- The leg can be folded in half padmasana with the ankle, placed on the opposite thigh.

Subtle Aspects:

- Avoid placing the raised foot directly on the side of the standing knee.
- Make sure the standing leg is firm and stable.
- Avoid hyperextending the knee of the standing leg.
- Maintain your balance by keeping your gaze fixed at your point of focus.
- If you have hypertension or balance issues, tighten the leg muscles (hamstrings, quads and calf) to stand longer without feeling giddy as it restricts the gush of blood circulation to the lower extremities.



Vrikshasana

Practice (from Sthiti Tadasana):

- Fix your gaze on a stationary point in front of you. Shift your weight to the right leg and extend your right arm out to the side for balance.
- Lift your left foot. Place it on the right inner thigh with the help of your left hand.
- As you inhale, raise your arms up. Join the palms in Anjali Mudra (Namaste) above your head.
- Keep your gaze on the focal point and keep your balance steady.
- Maintain the final posture with normal breathing.

Returning to Sthiti:

- As you exhale, lower your arms.
- Release the left leg down with the help of your right hand and return to Tadasana (Standing Pose)

Relax in Shithila Tadasana (Relaxed Standing) and observe the changes in the body. Repeat on the other side.

Vrikshasana (Tree Pose) contd.....

Contraindications:

- *People with leg injuries, varicose veins, or knee pain are advised to exercise caution or avoid the posture.*
- *People with herniated disc are advised to exercise caution or avoid this posture if there is a pain in the back.*
- *People with hypertension are advised to exercise caution while standing in this pose for long and avoid taking their hands above the head.*
- *People who feel lightheaded or dizzy in this pose are advised to avoid this pose or build it up slowly.*
- *People with balance problems are advised to practice with caution, use wall support initially, or may practice with toes of the raised leg lightly touching the floor.*

Benefits:

- *Strengthens thighs, calves, back and shoulders*
- *Strengthens core muscles and improves general posture*
- *Helps open the hip joints.*
- *Prevents flat foot.*
- *Helps develop concentration by focusing the mind on one object.*
- *Helps calm down the mind.*

Ardha Chakrasana (Half Wheel Pose)

A standing culturing pose that involves a supported backbend and neck stretch.



Ardha Chakrasana

Practice (from Sthiti Tadasana):

- Place your hands at the back of the pelvis with fingers pointing down to support your back.
- While inhaling, expand your chest and bring your elbows close to each other at the back.
- Tighten your buttocks, stretch spine upward, and slowly arch back from the lumbar region (lower back/waist). Tilt your neck slightly back.
- Engage your core. You may notice a slight vibration or shaking in the core.
- Relax your shoulders, keep your chest open.
- Maintain the final posture with normal breathing.

Returning to Sthiti:

- As you exhale, release the arch from your spine, release your hands alongside the body. Return to Tadasana (Standing Pose).

Relax in Shithila Tadasana and observe the changes.

Modifications:

- You may place the hands on the waist for easier version.
- You may support your back with your palms or may lift your arms up for an additional challenge as you advance in the pose.
- You may keep the neck neutral and work only on the lower spine if there are neck problems.

Contraindications:

- People with balance problems and vertigo should exercise caution.
- People with hernia should exercise caution during backbends.
- People with back pain are advised to exercise caution.

Subtle Aspects:

- Keep your awareness on the spine, neck, expansion of the chest, and shoulders.
- Avoid bending your knees while in the final pose.
- Tightening the leg muscles (hamstrings, quads and calf), helps people with hypertension or balance issues to stand long without feeling giddy as it restricts the gush of blood circulation to the lower extremities.

Benefits:

- Makes the spine flexible and strengthens the neck muscles.
- Strengthens the core muscles of the abdomen.
- Relaxes abdominal organs
- Expands the rib cage and the shoulders; therefore helps improve lung capacity and thereby improves breathing.

Pada Hastasana (Standing Forward Bend Pose)

A standing posture involving a deep forward bend that stretches the hamstrings and the spine.



Padahastasana

Practice (from Sthiti Tadasana):

- Place your hands on the waist.
- While exhaling, bend forward from your hips while keeping the spine erect and long.
- Place your hands above your knees or on your shin. As you inhale, lengthen your spine keeping the chin forward; and as you exhale, fold forward deeper to complete the bend. Keep your belly closer to your thighs, to support your lower back.
- Place the hands on the ground next to the feet if possible.
- Straighten your knees. Relax your neck, allow your head to hang freely.
- Remain comfortably in your final posture for a few breaths.

Returning to Sthiti:

- As you inhale, rise up from the hips slowly into a standing position (if needed with knees bent). Straighten your knees.
- As you exhale, lower your arms down.
- Return to Tadasana (Standing Pose).

Relax in Shithila Tadasana and observe the changes.

Modifications:

- *If it is difficult to reach the ground, place your palms on your shins or quads.*
- *While folding forward, you could either place your hands on your hips or raise your arms above the head.*
- *For a deeper stretch, slide your palms under the soles of your feet.*
- *If your hamstrings are very tight, you can place the hands on blocks and perform half padahastasana.*
- *Advanced practitioners may fold forward keeping the legs straight throughout the practice.*
- *Advanced practitioners may practice with chin or forehead touching their knees.*
- *While coming out of the pose: 1 - you may bend your knees and rise up; 2- or keep the knees straight but place the hands on the legs and keep sliding the hands up and slowly rise up with support; 3 - keep the knees straight and rise up using core strength with spine erect and the lumbar curvature still intact (without curving the back)*

Subtle Aspects:

- Keep your quadriceps engaged by gently contracting the thighs.
- Keep your neck in line with your spine until the forward bend is complete. Then, allow the neck to relax, with your head hanging down freely.
- Be aware of the extension in the spine, hamstrings; contraction of muscles in the front of the thighs, and observe the increased circulation in the head region. This is a simple inverted pose where the level of the head is below the level of the heart.
- To prevent injury, avoid curling your back in Padahastasana.

Contraindication:

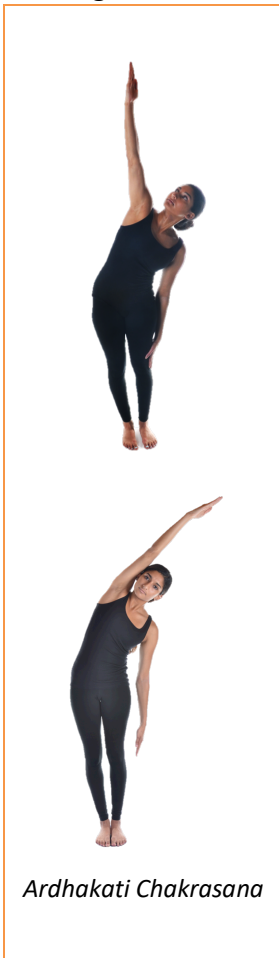
- People with lower back problems are advised to either avoid this posture, or keep their knees bent to prevent injury.
- This practice is contraindicated for people with cardiac problems and moderate to severe hypertension as it brings head below the heart.
- People with vertigo are advised to exercise caution to prevent dizziness.
- Pregnant women are advised to avoid this posture.

Benefits:

- Makes the spine flexible.
- Enhances blood flow to the head and calms the mind.
- Strengthens the thighs, stretches the hamstrings and calves.
- Helps prevent constipation and improves digestion.

Ardhakati Chakrasana (Lateral Half Wheel Pose)

Also called Lateral Arch posture, this is a standing pose that provides a deep side stretch to the waist region.



Practice (from Sthiti Tadasana):

- As you inhale, slowly raise the left arm by the side and bring it parallel to the floor.
- As you exhale, turn the palm upward.
- As you inhale, continue to raise the left arm straight up. Reach strongly upward.
- As you exhale, slowly bend the torso laterally to the right. You may take your arms along the bend or keep the arm vertically up straight.
- Relax your right arm and let it hang loose by the side.
- Maintain the posture with normal breathing

Returning to Sthiti:

- As you Inhale, straighten the body, arm stretched upward
- As you exhale, lower your left arm and bring it parallel to the floor.
- As you Inhale, turn the palm down.
- As you exhale, continue to lower the arm down and return to Tadasana (Standing Pose). Repeat on the other side.

Relax in Shithila Tadasana (Relaxed Standing) and observe the changes in the body and focus on the difference between the left and right sides. Repeat on the opposite side.

Modifications:

One may keep the raised arm straight up vertical and bend only the torso. This gives a balance to the body while giving a deeper stretch to the side.

Notes:

- Awareness on the lateral muscles in the waist region.
- Do not touch the biceps to the ears. This may pinch the shoulder muscles. Keep the shoulders wide.
- Awareness on sides of the torso, spine, fingers of extended arm
- Bend laterally in a single plane. Do not lean forward or backward. Do not bend the raised arm.
- Do not bend the knees.
- In the final position, keep both feet firmly on the ground.

Contraindications:

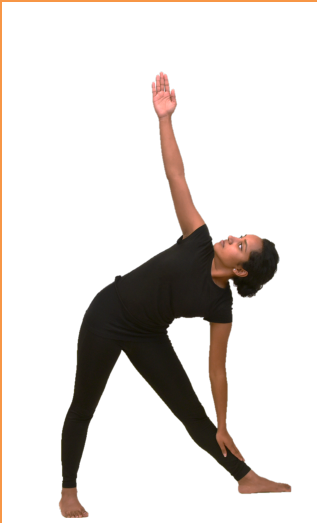
- People with scoliosis should consult their doctor.
- People with back pain, observe caution.

Benefits:

- Reduces fat in the waist region.
- Improves lateral flexibility to the spine and alleviates back pain.
- Stimulates the internal organs of the abdomen.

Trikonasana (Triangle Pose)

A side bending pose that gives a lateral stretch.



Trikonasana - feet turned to the side of the bend



Trikonasana - feet facing forward

Practice (from Sthiti Tadasana):

- Start on the left side of the mat in Tadasana.
- Step your right foot to the right side so that the feet are one leg-length apart (3-5 feet as is comfortable).
- Turn your right foot out 90°, left foot in 30 to 45°. Keep your right heel in line with the arch of your left foot.
- While inhaling, stretch your arms sideways to shoulder level.
- While exhaling, bend from the hips to the right. Let the right hand reach your shin, ankle, or foot (as is comfortable).
- Stretch your left arm up, stretch through your fingertips. Try to keep both arms in one vertical plane.
- Keep gazing softly at the left hand. Or keep your head and neck in line with your spine and gaze forward.
- Maintain the final posture with normal breathing.

Returning to Sthiti:

- While inhaling, bring your torso back to center, arms parallel to the ground and feet together.
- While exhaling, lower your arms to the sides.
- Return to Tadasana (Standing Pose):
 - *Either by bending one leg at the knee, placing your hands on the thigh, lifting that leg to join the other stationary leg to come into Tadasana*
 - *Or by bending both legs and jumping into Tadasana*

Relax in Shithila Tadasana (Relaxed Standing) and observe the changes in the body. Specifically, note the contrast in sensations between the left and right sides of the body. Repeat on the opposite side.

Trikonasana (Triangle Pose) contd

Modifications:

- *As a modification to this pose, try keeping your feet pointing forward instead of turning to the side of the stretch. This may be easier to balance. You may also turn the feet to point outward slightly for a better grip.*
- *In case of neck discomfort, avoid looking up at your hand. Keep your neck in line with your spine and look forward.*
- *In case of balancing issues, you can use a block. Place one hand on the block closer to your front foot. Remain steady and comfortably in this pose.*
- *To increase the challenge and awareness in the pose, close your eyes and maintain the balance in the pose.*

Contraindications:

- *People with back pain, slip disc and sciatica problems may find this pose uncomfortable. If so, exercise caution.*
- *As with every balancing pose, people with vertigo or balance issues are recommended to exercise caution.*

Subtle Aspects:

- *Be aware that different people have different leg and arm lengths. Keep the feet approximately one leg width apart (to make an approximate equilateral triangle). Hand can reach thigh, shin, ankle, foot (as is comfortable); avoiding the knee.*
- *Avoid leaning forward or backward. Keep the body in one plane throughout the practice.*
- *Make sure to keep the hips in the same plane as the body.*
- *To prevent lower back injury, avoid bending to the side from the waist. Bend from the hips only.*
- *To lengthen the spine and strengthen the core, avoid resting your weight on the leg, by pressing the hand against front leg. Place the hand lightly.*
- *Take your awareness to the torso and thighs, keep them engaged.*

Benefits:

- *Strengthens the calves, waist and thigh muscles.*
- *Stretches the muscles of the hip and loosens the hip joint.*
- *Makes the spine flexible and corrects the curvature of the back.*
- *Helps in preventing flat foot.*

Parivritta Trikonasana (Revolved Triangle Pose)

A combination of forward bending, twisting and some balancing.



Parivritta
Trikonasana - feet
turned to the side of
bend



Parivritta
Trikonasana - feet
pointing forward

Practice (From Sthiti Tadasana):

- Step your feet one leg-length apart (or 3-5 feet). Turn your right foot to the right by 90° and left foot inward about 30° toward right, keeping the right heel in line with the center of the left foot.
- As you inhale, raise your arms out to the side to shoulder height.
- As you exhale, lean forward and twist the torso to the right until you reach your left hand down to the ground on the outside of the right foot. Extend the right arm above your head.
- The right arm extends up, vertically in line with the left arm, palm facing outward. Reach up strongly through your right arm.
- You may turn your head and softly gaze at the right palm or you may choose to keep the head and neck neutral.
- Maintain this posture with normal breathing.

Returning back to Sthiti

- As you inhale, slowly rise up until the arms are again parallel to the floor. Turn the feet to face forward.
- As you exhale, bring your arms down to the side.
- Return to Tadasana (Standing Pose).

** Relax in Shithila Tadasana (Relaxed Standing) and observe the changes in the body. Repeat on the opposite side.*

Modifications:

- As a modification to this pose, try keeping your feet pointing forward instead of turning to the side of the stretch. This may be easier to balance. You may also turn the feet to point outward slightly for a better grip.
- If your hand cannot reach the ground, you can place the hand on any part of the leg such as your shin or ankle.
- Turning the head to look up the extended arm may cause strain in the neck; if so, look straight ahead while keeping the neck in line with the spine.
- Use a block to rest your lower hand if you find it difficult to reach the ground to keep the balance.

Subtle Aspects:

- Place the feet wide enough to make an equilateral triangle; wrists should be right above ankles.
- Keep your hips from tilting or leaning back by distributing your weight evenly across the feet front to back.
- Awareness is in the spine, abdomen region, thighs and knees.

Parivritta Trikonasana (Revolved Triangle Pose) contd...

Contraindications:

- *People with back pain, slip disc and sciatica problems may find this pose uncomfortable. If so, exercise caution.*
- *As with every balancing pose, people with vertigo or balance issues should exercise caution.*
- *People with hypertension should exercise caution.*

Benefits:

- *Strengthens the calves, waist and thigh muscles.*
- *Makes the spine flexible and corrects curvature of the back.*
- *Helps in preventing flat foot*
- *Improves kidney function.*

Veerabhadrasana (Warrior Pose) I and II

Standing culturing posture that builds strength, stability and endurance.



Veerabhadrasana 1

Practice (from Sthiti Tadasana):

- Start on the left side of the mat in Tadasana.
- Step your right foot to the right side so that the feet are one leg-length apart (3-5 feet as is comfortable).
- Turn your right foot 90° to the right and left foot inwards 30°. Keep the heel of your right foot in line with the arch of your left foot.
- Bend your right knee until the right shin is vertical, and right thigh is parallel to the ground.
- Keep your torso vertical; avoid leaning forward.
- Turn your torso to the right. Square your hips. As you inhale, raise your arms over your head and palms are in namaste position. Arch the back slightly, and gaze upward.
- Maintain the posture with normal breathing.

Returning to Sthiti:

- Straighten your torso, lower your arms and straighten your legs.
- Turn your torso and feet forward.
- Return to Tadasana (Standing Pose):
 - *Either by bending one leg at the knee, placing your hands on the thigh, lifting that leg to join the other stationary leg to come into Tadasana*
 - *Or by bending both legs and jumping into Tadasana*

Relax in Shithila Tadasana (Relaxed Standing) and observe the changes in the body. Repeat on the opposite side.

Veerabhadrasana (Warrior Pose) I and II contd....



Veerabhadrasana 2

Practice (From Sthiti Tadasana):

- Start on the left side of the mat in Tadasana.
- Step your right foot to the right side so that the feet are one leg-length apart (3-5 feet as is comfortable).
- Turn your right foot to the right by 90° and left foot in 30°. Keep the heel of your right foot in line with the arch of your left foot.
- As you inhale, raise your arms sideways to shoulder level (parallel to the floor).
- Bend your right knee until the right shin is vertical. If possible, bring the right thigh parallel to the ground.
- Turn your head to the right. Keep your torso vertical and avoid leaning forward.
- Keep the gaze past your fingers on the right hand.
- Maintain the final posture with normal breathing.

Returning to Sthiti:

- Straighten your legs. Turn your torso and feet to face forward. As you exhale, lower your arms by your side.
 - Return to Tadasana (Standing Pose):
 - *Either by bending one leg at the knee, placing your hands on the thigh, lifting that leg to join the other stationary leg to come into Tadasana*
 - *Or by bending both legs and jumping into Tadasana*
- Relax in Shithila Tadasana (Relaxed Standing) and observe the changes in the body. Repeat on the opposite side.*

Modifications:

- *Adjust the angle between the thigh and the leg to suit your comfort levels and health considerations.*
- *Beginners may practice with hands on the waist.*

Contraindications:

People with knee problems, observe caution.

Subtle Aspects:

- *The knee of the bent leg does not cross the toes.*
- *Awareness in the thighs, lower back, shoulders and arms.*
- *Press the heel of the back foot down to relieve any strain on the front knee.*
- *Coming out of the pose: In case the asana has been held for an extended period of time, place both hands on your front thigh and using the strength from your hands come out of the pose to standing pose. This will help if the thighs are fatigued.*

Benefits:

- *Strengthens and tones thighs, knees, shoulders, arms and back.*
- *Loosens hips and stretches hamstrings, calf and ankles.*
- *Tones the abdominal organs and improves core strength.*
- *Improves stamina and excellent for kids and adults.*

Parshva Konasana (Lateral Angle Pose)

Standing lateral bend that also opens the hip region and strengthens the legs.



*Parshva Konasana 1
with elbow on the thigh*



*Parshva Konasana 2
with hand on the
ground*

Practice (From Sthiti Tadasana):

- Step your feet one leg-length apart (or 3-5 feet). Turn your right foot to the right by 90° and left foot inward about 30° toward right, keeping the right heel in line with the center of the left foot.
- Bend your right knee until the right shin is vertical and if possible, bring the right thigh parallel to the ground.
- As you exhale, lean forward to bring the right side of the torso to rest on the right thigh. Place the right hand on the floor beside the right foot.
- As you inhale, extend the left arm over the head with biceps by to the ear.
- You may turn your head and look toward your extended left hand or gaze forward.
- Maintain the posture with normal breathing.

Returning back to Sthiti

- As you inhale, rise up and straighten your torso, bringing the arms parallel to the floor.
- Straighten your front leg, turn your torso and feet to face forward. As you exhale, bring your arms down to the side.
- Return to Tadasana (Standing Pose).

** Relax in Shithila Tadasana (Relaxed Standing) and observe the changes in the body. Repeat on the opposite side.*

Modifications:

For a easier practice, place the elbow on the thigh with the bent knee and have the palm facing upward instead of placing the palm on the floor (See Pic Parshva Konasana 1).

Contraindications:

People with back problems and knee problems should exercise caution.

Subtle Aspects:

- *In the final position, there should be a right angle between the thigh and the shin for the front leg. The back leg should be straight without bending the knee. Both the soles should be firmly grounded.*
- *Awareness in the legs, back and extended side of body.*

Benefits:

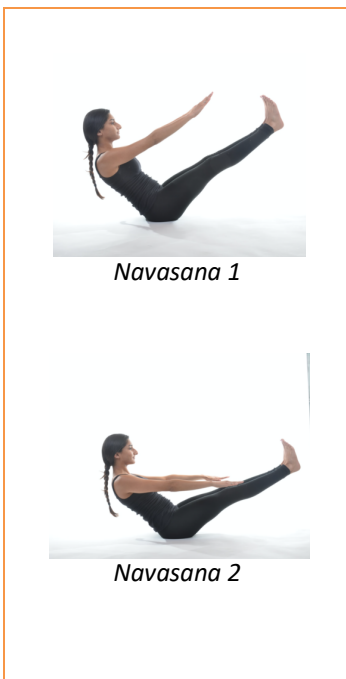
- *Expands the thorax*
- *Strengthens the thighs and relieves constipation*
- *Prevents back pain*
- *Improves stamina*

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Sitting Asanas

Navasana (Boat Pose)

Supine balancing posture to strengthen the core muscles.



Practice (From Sthiti Dandasana):

- As you exhale, slightly lean back and raise the legs off the ground until they are at a 45° angle to the floor; bringing your arms parallel to the legs (See Pic Navasana 1) or parallel to the ground (See Pic Navasana 2).
- Make sure you are balancing on the sit bones with legs and torso forming a V-shape, similar to the bow of a ship.
- Draw in your abdomen, lift your chest and lengthen the front of the torso. Keep the legs straight. Keep your neck and back in alignment (See Pic Navasana 1 and 2).
- Maintain the final posture with normal breathing.

Returning to Sthiti:

- As you inhale, lower the legs and torso to the ground.

Relax in Shithila Dandasana (Relaxed Sitting) and observe the changes in the body.

Modifications:

- In the beginning phase, you may place the hands on the ground for support and if you cannot keep the legs straight, you may bend the knees and keep the shin parallel to the ground.
- Ardha Navasana - Hold your legs at a 30° (or 45°) angle and keep the lower back on the ground.
- People with weak core, or back and neck problems may practice this pose with only legs raised and torso on the ground.

Subtle Aspects:

- In the final position, the balance of the body rests entirely on the sit bones.
- Do not hold your breath during this practice.
- Awareness in the abdomen, spine and balancing aspect.

Contraindications:

People with neck and back pain must exercise caution or avoid this posture.

Benefits:

- Helps reduce abdominal fat
- Strengthens neck, back, abdomen, and thighs

Paschimottanasana (Seated Forward Bend Pose)

Seated forward bend that provides spinal and lateral extension.



Paschimottanasana

Practice (from Sthiti Dandasana):

- Raise the arms out to the side and turn them overhead until they are vertical and biceps are by the side of the ears. Stretch the torso from the base of the spine as you inhale.
- As you exhale, bend forward from the hips, keeping the chin up.
- Forward fold from the hips further with your next exhale and hold the big toes with fingers or hold the ankles.
- If possible, bend the arms at the elbows, place the elbows on the ground next to your legs and rest your head on the knees. Relax the abdomen muscles and keep knees straight. Maintain the posture with normal breathing.

Returning to Sthiti:

- As you inhale, rise up from the hips with arms stretched up.
- As you exhale, lower the arms down.

Relax in Shithila Dandasana (Relaxed Sitting) and observe the changes in the body.

Modifications:

- *If you cannot reach the toes, then hold any part of the leg and maintain the pose with normal breathing.*
- *If there is a discomfort in the lower back, try bending the knees slightly to relieve tension in the back.*

Contraindications:

Contraindicated for people with herniated disc. People with low back pain should exercise caution.

Subtle Aspects:

- *Try and keep the knees straight if you can do so without pain in the lower back.*
- *Maintain awareness in the hamstrings and spinal column.*

Benefits:

- *Stimulates and gives flexibility to spinal column and back muscles*
- *Improves digestion, and prevents constipation*
- *Stimulates liver and kidneys*
- *Stimulates the ovaries and uterus for women; Excellent for menstrual disorders and during menopause*
- *Increases flexibility of the hamstrings*
- *As with any forward bends, this pose calms the mind*

Janu Shirshasana (Seated Head to Knee Posture)

Seated forward bend that provides spinal and lateral extension.



Janu Shirshasana 1



Janu Shirshasana 2

Practice (From Sthiti Dandasana):

- Bend your left knee and draw the left heel toward the perineum and the sole touching your inner right thigh. The left knee and thigh rest on the floor.
- Turning the torso slightly to the right, line up your navel with the middle of the right thigh.
- As you inhale, raise your arms above your head, stretching the torso upward and lengthening the spine. Make sure to keep the left thigh on the ground (See Pic Janu Shrishasana 1).
- As you exhale, bend forward from the base of the hips (groin). Slowly bend forward without hunching, and if possible, bring your forehead to your knees. Make sure your right toes are vertical.
- If possible, wrap your palms around your right sole, and bend your elbows out to the sides of the right leg.
- Lengthen forward into a comfortable stretch with the lower belly touching the right thigh and the head touching the right knee. Breathe normally and maintain the position.

Returning to Sthiti

- As you inhale, raise your body and stretch your arms up and bring the torso to the center. As you exhale, lower your arms.
- Release your legs and return to Dandasana (Extended Staff Pose).

** Relax in Shithila Dandasana (Relaxed Sitting) and observe the changes in the body. Repeat on the opposite side.*

Janu Shirshasana (Seated Head to Knee Posture) cont.....

Modifications:

- *If you cannot reach the foot, hold any part of the leg to make it easier on the spine.*
- *You may take the leg that is straight wider than 90° as a stretch and a twist to the spine and the waist.*
- *You may consider sitting on a folded blanket to make it easier and safer to bend forward.*
- *A slight bend in the knees may enable safer forward bend if your hamstrings are too tight.*
- *You may put a strap around the foot and hold the strap until you get the flexibility to hold the foot.*

Contraindications:

Back problems, knee problems, asthma, and diarrhea

Subtle Aspects:

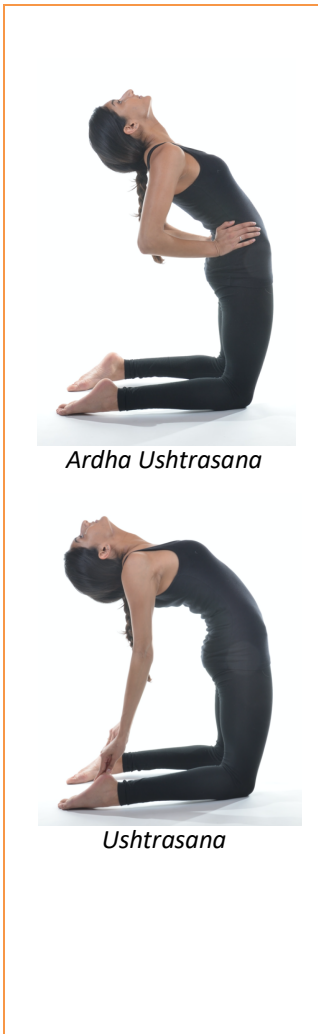
- *Do not force yourself into deeper forward bends. The ligaments of the lower back get strained and may tear.*
- *Do not hunch the back over.*
- *Awareness is in lower back, hamstring of extended leg.*

Benefits:

- *Stretches the spine, shoulders, hamstring and groin*
- *Calms the mind*
- *Stimulates internal organs like liver and kidneys, and improves digestion*
- *Relieves anxiety, fatigue, headache, and menstrual discomfort*

Ushtrasana (Camel Pose)

A kneeling backbend to give flexibility to the spine and torso and to stimulate the neck.



Practice (from Sthiti Dandasana):

- Bend your knees to one side and come up on hands and knees. Transition into standing on your knees on a soft mat, placing the knees hip width apart.
- Place the palms on the back of the pelvis to support your lower back, fingers pointing downwards.
- Bring the elbows closer together expanding your chest and shoulders.
- As you inhale, lengthen your spine and bend backward into Ardha Ushtrasana (half Camel).
- If possible, slowly lean backward and release the hands one at a time and place each hand on its respective heel for Full Ushtrasana (Camel). Arch the neck back.
- Maintain the posture with normal breathing.

Returning to Sthiti:

- Place your palms on the back of the pelvis one hand at a time and straighten your torso.
- Lower your body into Vajrasana (Diamond pose) or come to table top pose with knees and hands on the ground.
- Release the legs and return to Sthiti dandasana (Extended Staff pose).

Relax in Shithila Dandasana (Relaxed Sitting) and observe the changes in the body.

Modifications:

- Heels may be raised slightly by tucking the toes in or knees can be separated further to make the back bend easier.
- Place a soft blanket or a towel below your knees for additional comfort.

Contraindications:

Knee problems, Neck problems, Hernia, vertigo, and severe hypertension.

Subtle Aspects:

- Your thighs should be perpendicular to the ground.
- Awareness on the torso, neck, back and thighs.

Benefits:

- Improves spine and neck flexibility.
- Increases the blood circulation to the head
- Opens the chest and improves breathing
- As with all back bends, this improves self-esteem

Gomukhasana (Cow Face Posture)

A seated posture that stretches the shoulders, back and thighs.



Gomukhasana 1



Gomukhasana 2

Practice (From Sthiti Dandasana):

- Slide your right foot under the left knee to the outside of the left hip, leaving your left leg extended.
- Lift your left leg and cross it over the right leg, stacking the left knee on top of the right, and bring the left foot to the outside of the right hip. (See Pic Gomukhasana 1)
- As you inhale, raise your right arm up toward the ceiling. As you exhale, bend at the elbow and bring your palm in between your shoulder blade.
- As you inhale, extend your left arm to the side with your thumb facing down. As you exhale, internally rotate your arm, bend your elbows, and bring your left hand up the center of your back. Tuck your forearm into the hollow of your low back. The back of your left hand is in between the shoulder blades.
- Roll your shoulders back and down. If possible, hook the fingers of both hands. (See Pic Gomukhasana 2)
- Maintain this posture actively reaching your top elbow toward the ceiling while reaching your lower elbow toward the floor. The top elbow should be beside your head and the neck should be erect.

Returning to Sthiti

- Release the hook and bring the arms down.
- Release your legs and return to Sthiti.

** Relax in Shithila Dandasana (Relaxed Sitting) and observe the changes in the body. Repeat on the opposite side.*

Modifications:

- *If crossing the legs is a problem, this asana can be performed in Vajrasana.*
- *If you cannot hook the fingers, you can use a strap between the hands or simply hold at a distance with the top hand behind the head, pushing the head back to keep the neck erect.*

Contraindications:

Sciatica, back problems, chronic shoulder pain, and hip joint problems

Subtle Aspects:

- *If the left leg is on the top, then the left arm is the lower one and vice versa.*
- *Awareness on shoulders, back and abdomen region.*

Benefits:

- *Stretches hips, thighs, shoulders, chest and back; Improves posture and gives spinal flexibility*
- *Helps with gastrointestinal problems*
- *It also stimulates and balances the nervous system*

Ardha Matsyendrasana (Matsyendra Half Twist Pose)

Standing lateral bend that also opens the hip region and strengthens the legs.



Practice (From Sthiti Dandasana):

- Bend the right leg and slide the the right foot underneath the left leg and place the right heel next to the outer edge of the left hip.
- Bend the left knee and place the left foot on the outer side of the folded right knee. Make sure both hips are resting on the floor.
- As you inhale, raise the right arm vertically and stretch up through the shoulder.
- As you exhale, twist the waist to the left and bring the right elbow onto the outer side of the left knee. (The left knee acts as a fulcrum and the right arm acts as a lever to maximize the spinal twist). Hold the left big toe with the right hand. The triceps of the right arm rests on the outer side of the left knee.
- Wrap the left arm behind your back and try to touch the right thigh. Gaze over the left shoulder making sure to keep your torso upright.
- Maintain the posture with normal breathing.

Returning back to Sthiti:

- Release the arms and return to Sthiti.
- Unwind from the twist by releasing the left leg and straighten the legs.

** Relax in Shithila Dandasana (Relaxed Sitting) and observe the changes in the body. Repeat on the opposite side*

Modifications:

- *Instead of wrapping one arm around the back, it can be placed on the floor behind the spine for support.*
- *If the front hand does not reach the toes you can bend it at the elbow and hold the forearm vertical.*

Subtle Aspects:

Awareness in the abdomen region, twisted spine, hips and thighs.

Contraindications:

Abdominal, neck and back problems

Benefits:

- *Stimulates spinal nerves and improves flexibility of spine.*
- *Prevents constipation and indigestion.*
- *Stimulates pancreas.*
- *Stretches hips and thigh muscles.*

Baddha Konasana (Bound Angle Pose)

A seated hip opener pose that gives stretch to the inner thighs and stimulates the pelvic organs.



Practice (From Sthiti Dandasana):

- From Dandasana with legs stretched in front of you, bend your knees and bring your heels toward your pelvis and press the soles of your feet together.
- Bring your knees out to the sides as low as possible and if possible, the knees may be placed on the ground.
- The pelvis should be in neutral position with both sit bones on the ground. As you inhale, lengthen the torso, expand the chest. As you exhale, relax the shoulders.
- Maintain the posture with normal breathing.

Returning back to Sthiti:

- Release the legs, and return to Sthiti.

** Relax in Shithila Dandasana (Relaxed Sitting) and observe the changes in the body.*

Modifications:

- You may raise your pelvis on a blanket if your hips or groins are tight.
- Practice Ardha and Purna Baddha Konasana (butterfly) loosening to improve this posture.

Subtle Aspects:

- Do not force the knees to go down. Simply stretching and expanding the inner thighs will take the knees down.
- You may practice Kegels (Ashwini Mudra in this pose for additional benefits).

Contraindications:

- Women during the first half of pregnancy should avoid this pose.
- People with knee problems should exercise caution.

Benefits:

- Excellent for women with menstrual disorders, and for women in the second half of pregnancy (healthy pregnancy).
- Excellent for prostate health in men.
- This pose provides general health benefit for everyone.
- Great for hip and thigh muscle flexibility.

Malasana (Yogic Squat Pose)

A seated hip opener pose that gives stretch to inner thighs and stimulates pelvic organs.



Malasana

Practice (From Sthiti Dandasana):

- Squat with your feet slightly wider than hip distance.
- Place your feet fully on the ground and separate your thighs slightly wider than torso.
- Place your elbows against your inner thighs and bring your hands in Anjali Mudra (Namaste).
- Maintain the posture with normal breathing.

Returning back to Sthiti:

- Bring the hips down to the floor, release the legs, and return to Sthiti.

** Relax in Shithila Dandasana (Relaxed Sitting) and observe the changes in the body.*

Modifications:

You may sit on a yoga pillow or a block if you cannot practice squatting.

Subtle Aspects:

- *Observe the stimulation in the thighs and pelvic region.*
- *You may practice Kegels (Ashwini Mudra in this pose for additional benefits.*

Contraindications:

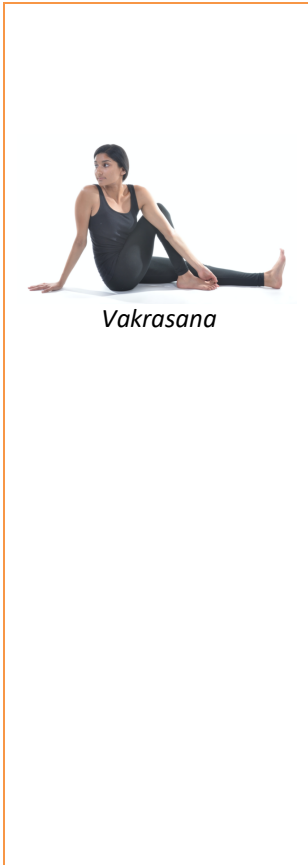
- *Women during the first half of pregnancy should avoid this pose.*
- *People with knee problems should exercise caution.*

Benefits:

- *Excellent for women with menstrual disorders, and for women in the second half of pregnancy (healthy pregnancy).*
- *Excellent for prostate health in men.*
- *This pose provides general health benefit for everyone.*
- *Great for hip and thigh muscle flexibility.*

Vakrasana (Seated Spinal Twist Pose)

A seated twist to stimulate abdominal organs.



Practice (From Sthiti Dandasana)

- Bend your right leg and place the sole of the right foot on the ground next to the left knee (or close to the buttocks)
- Place your right palm on the ground behind you, close to the base of your spine, with the fingers pointing back. Keep your spine erect.
- As you Inhale, raise your left arm up. As you exhale, lower the left arm and place the left elbow on the outside of the right knee, straighten the arm and hold the right toe.
- Lengthen your spine and twist from the waist to the right. Turn your head to your right and look over the right shoulder. Open your right shoulder.
- Maintain this posture with normal breathing.

Returning to Sthiti:

- Unwind from the twist by releasing your left arm, right arm and straighten your right leg to come to sthiti Dandasana (Extended Staff Pose).

** Relax in Shithila Dandasana (Relaxed Sitting) and observe the sensations in your body. Repeat on the opposite side.*

Modifications:

- *If the front hand does not reach the toe you can bend it at the elbow and hold the forearm vertical.*
- *If you cannot cross your elbow across the outer knee, wrap the front arm around that knee.*
- *For deeper twist, you may place the right foot across the left knee, outside of the thigh. Make sure to keep both sit bones on the ground.*

Contraindications:

Abdominal or back problems

Subtle Aspects:

- *Awareness in the twisted spine.*
- *Awareness in the abdominal organs during and after the practice.*
- *Twisting poses gently squeeze the visceral organs thereby expelling accumulated toxins. While coming out of the spinal twist, the same organs receive fresh supply of blood and nutrients.*

Benefits:

- Stimulates spinal nerves and improves flexibility of the spine.
- Prevents constipation and indigestion.
- Stimulates pancreas and benefits practitioners with diabetes to normalize blood glucose levels.

Vajrasana (Diamond Pose)

Sitting meditative posture to keep the spine erect and to calm the mind.



Vajrasana

Practice (From Sthiti Dandasana):

- Bending your knees to one side, come up on your hands and knees as in a table pose.
- Release your hands, untuck your toes and gently lower your torso and rest the buttocks in between the heels to separate. The heels would be touching the hips.
- Rest your palms on your thighs and sit up straight. Maintain the posture with normal breathing.

Returning to Sthiti:

- Bring your hands on the ground for support and release the legs to one side, sit on your buttocks and slowly extend your legs straight out in front of you in Dandasana (Extended Staff Pose).

Return to Shithila Dandasana and observe the changes in the body.

Modifications:

- For advanced practice, you may join the heels and place your buttocks on the heels.
- You may place a pillow underneath your buttocks to ease the strain on the knees.

Subtle Aspects:

- One can meditate in this posture with chin mudra or any meditation mudras.
- In the final posture the soles of the feet face upwards, toes touch each other, and heels are apart (feet are in V shape). Sit between the heels.
- Awareness in the ankles, thighs and back and steadiness of mind.

Contraindications:

Rheumatic problems and knee problems.

Benefits:

- Keeps the spine straight and tension free bringing peace and stillness of mind.
- Alleviates back pain.
- Relieves symptoms of Varicose veins.
- Gives flexibility to the ankles and prevents flat foot.
- Helps in digestion when practiced after meals.
- Excellent pose for Pranayama and Meditation.

Shashankasana (Child/Moon Pose)

Seated forward bend to enhance blood flow to the brain and calm the mind.



Shashankasana 1



Shashankasana 2



Shashankasana 3

Practice (From Sthiti Dandasana):

- Bending your knees to one side, come up on your hands and knees as in a table pose.
- Release your hands, untuck your toes and gently lower your torso and rest the buttocks in between the feet (bringing big toes together) and allowing the heels to separate. The heels would be touching the hips.
- Take your hands behind your back; Making a fist of the right hand and hold your right wrist with your left hand (or vice versa). Relax your shoulders. (See Pic. *Shashankasana 1*).
- As you Inhale, lengthen your spine and bend backward, expanding your chest (See Pic. *Shashankasana 2*).
- As you exhale, bend forward from the hips with torso in one line, bringing your forehead onto the ground in front of your knees. Relax your shoulders. (See Pic. *Shashankasana 3*).
- Maintain the posture with normal breathing.

Returning to Sthiti:

- Bring your hands on the ground for support and release the legs to one side, sit on your buttocks and slowly extend your legs straight out in front of you in Dandasana (Extended Staff Pose)

Relax in Shithila Dandasana and observe the changes in the body.

Modifications:

Knees can be placed slightly wider apart if the forehead does not touch the ground.

Contraindications:

Rheumatic arthritis of knees or any other knee problems, gastric and peptic ulcers and severe hypertension

Subtle Aspects:

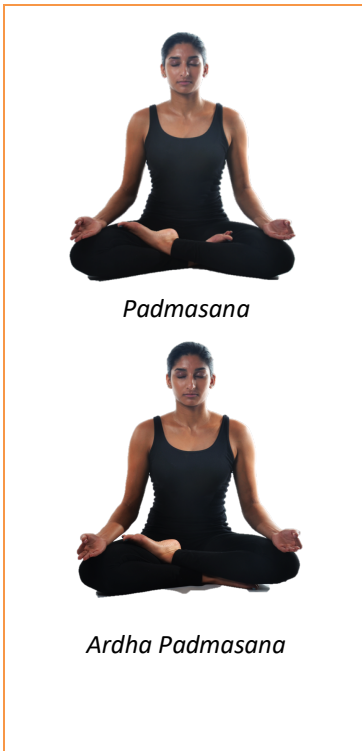
- *Awareness on the ankles, thighs and back, calmness of mind.*
- *Keep the shoulders collapsed and keep the hips close to the heels.*
- *Release the legs slowly if there are knee problems.*

Benefits:

- *Enhances blood flow to the head.*
- *Stimulates the brain and calms the mind.*
- *Provides flexibility to the spine, ankles and knees.*
- *Alleviates respiratory ailments.*
- *Excellent for gastrointestinal disorders, back pain and anxiety in adults and children*
- *Helps prevent varicose veins.*

Padmasana (Lotus Pose)

Meditative posture to keep the spine erect and to enable concentration.



Practice (From Sthiti Dandasana):

- Bend the right leg and bring the right foot onto your left thigh, close to the body. The right heel must be close to the navel with the sole facing up.
- Bend the left leg and cross it over the right leg placing the left foot onto your right thigh, again heel close to the navel with the sole facing up.
- Draw the knees close to each other. Push the groin to the floor and lengthen the spine.
- Sit erect with hands in chin mudra palms facing up, and the hands placed on the knees with elbows slightly bent.
- Maintain this position with normal breathing.

Returning to Sthiti:

- Return to Sthiti by releasing one leg at a time.

Relax in Shithila Dandasana and observe the changes in the body

Modification:

Beginners can start with preparatory practice of Ardha Padmasana with right leg over left thigh and left leg under right thigh and vice versa.

Contraindications:

- Sciatica, ankle and knee problems
- Not advised during pregnancy

Notes:

- *Padmasana can be stressful on the knees. Bring awareness to the knees and hips while attempting the posture. Both knees should ideally touch the ground. Otherwise, you may place a block or folded towel or a pillow under the raised knee.*
- *In the final posture bring awareness on the spine and steadiness of mind.*

Benefits:

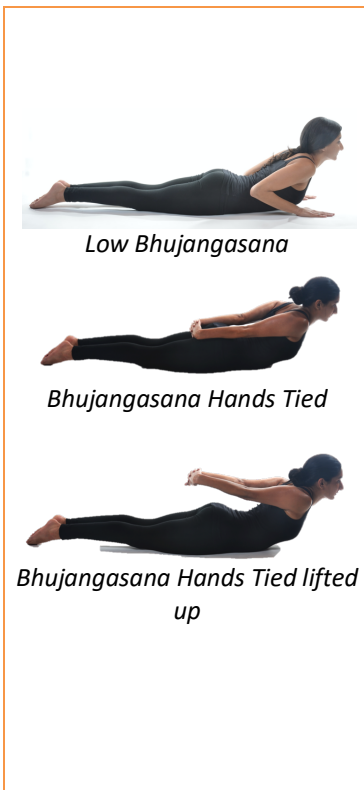
- *Keeps the spine erect for a symmetrical posture.*
- *Allows the meditators to hold the body stable for long periods.*
- *Brings stability to the mind.*

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Prone Asanas

Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose)

Prone posture to provide a deep back bend.



Practice (From Sthiti Prone):

- Place your palms on the ground close to your chest below your shoulders; keep the elbows close to your body. (See *Bhujangasana pic 1*).
- As you inhale, lift your head and torso; drawing the shoulders back and pushing the chest forward.
- Arch the dorsal spine backwards as far as you can. Use the back muscles to lift the torso maintaining minimum pressure on the palms. (See *Bhujangasana Pic 2*).
- Keep the body below the navel in touch with the ground.
- Maintain the final posture with normal breathing.

Returning to Sthiti:

- As you exhale, lower your torso, release your arms, extend them in front of your body to return to Sthiti prone posture.

Relax in Makarasana (Prone Relaxation) and observe the changes in the body.

Modifications:

- *High Bhujangasana - This is a variation of Bhujangasana with hands supported on the ground and the torso lifted off the ground with elbows tucked in. It can be practiced before the Bhujangasana (without hand support) as it helps stretch the spine and prepares for the bhujangasana.*
- *This asana can be practiced with the hands behind the back with the fingers interlocked and either resting on the buttocks or lifting the arms with interlocked fingers upward as if lifting the torso with the arms.*
- *Urdhva Mukha Shvanasana (Upward Dog) - This is a high Bhujangasana with the knees off the ground. It is practiced in Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutations) and can serve as a preparatory practice for Bhujangasana.*

Subtle Aspects:

- *Awareness in the back and neck. Beginners with neck inflexibility or neck pain may gaze forward keeping the neck neutral.*
- *Engage the thighs, with the entire legs and tops of the feet firmly on the ground and firm the buttocks without overly hardening them.*

Contraindications:

- *Severe back problems and cervical spondylosis*

Benefits:

- *Builds flexibility and strength in the spinal muscles*
- *Reduces abdominal fat*
- *Useful in the management of bronchial asthma and back problems*
- *Elevates the mood and helps reduce stress and fatigue*

Shalabhasana (Locust Pose)

Prone posture with raised legs to strengthen the lower back.



Adi Mudra



Shalabhasana 1



Ardha Shalabhasana



Purna Shalabhasana

Practice (From Sthiti Prone):

- In the prone position, place the chin or forehead on the floor and bring the arms by the side of the body.
- make fists of your palms with the thumb tucked inside, *Adi-Mudra आदि-मुद्रा*, (See Pic *Adi Mudra*) and place each fist under the corresponding thigh with knuckles facing the floor. (See Pic *Shalabhasana 1*).

Ardha Shalabhasana

- As you inhale, gently lift the right leg up toward the ceiling.
- Do not bend the knee or tilt the hip. Keep the opposite leg straight on the ground, relaxed (Contract the glutes and thigh muscles)
- Maintain the final posture with normal breathing.

Returning to Sthiti:

- As you exhale, return the raised left leg back onto the floor. Repeat on the opposite side.

Purna Shalabhasana

- As you inhale slowly lift both legs up toward the ceiling.
- Do not bend the knees or tilt the hip. (Contract the glutes and thigh muscles)
- Maintain the final posture with normal breathing.

Returning to Sthiti:

- As you exhale, return the legs back onto the floor, release your arms and extend them in front of your body to return to prone sthiti.

Relax in Makarasana (Prone Relaxation) and observe the changes in the body.

Shalabasana (Locust Pose) contd...

Modifications:

- *Instead of making fists, advanced practitioners can place their palms on the ground under the pelvis. This requires inner rotation of the shoulders with elbows close to each other.*
- *Instead of arms below the torso, they can be placed next to the body with palms facing down.*

Contraindications:

Cardiac problems and severe back problems.

Subtle Aspects:

- *Awareness in the lower back and legs.*
- *Tightening the quadriceps (thighs) and pulling up the kneecaps helps keep the legs straight and firming the buttocks helps improve posture.*

Benefits:

- *Alleviates symptoms of sciatica and low back pain.*
- *Strengthens and increases flexibility in the entire back and legs, strengthens the upper back; helps improve posture and relieves stress caused by slouching forward.*
- *Strengthens abdominal muscles and chest.*
- *Stimulates the kidneys, endocrine and digestive system.*

Dhanurasana (Bow Pose)

Prone posture in a shape of a bow to provide a deep back bend and stretch to the spine.



Dhanurasana 1



Dhanurasana 2

Practice (From Sthiti Prone):

- In the prone pose, bend your legs at the knees and bring your heels close to the buttocks, keeping your knees hip distance apart.
- Reaching back with both hands, hold the respective ankles from the outside.
- As you inhale, lift your feet and thighs off the mat toward the ceiling, and raise your head and chest up. The spine is arched back like a bow.
- Allow the body to balance on the lower abdomen or the pubic bone; do not bend the elbows; keep the arms straight.
- Maintain the final posture with normal breathing.

Returning to Sthiti:

- As you exhale, gently lower your torso and knees back to the ground and release the legs to return to prone Sthiti.

Relax in Makarasana (Prone Relaxation) and observe the changes in the body.

Modifications:

- If you can't hold your ankles, use a yoga strap.
- In the advanced pose, you may keep the knees together.
- In the advanced pose, the feet are close to the head and you may take the arms above the head and hold the toes.

Contraindications:

- Observe caution or avoid for high blood pressure as it compresses the diaphragm.
- People with back pain, and abdominal surgery should avoid or exercise caution.
- People with shoulder pain may not be able to practice comfortably.
- People with severe knee problems may not be able to practice this pose.

Subtle Aspects:

Awareness in the spine, abdomen, and neck.

Benefits:

- Helps with gastrointestinal disorders.
- Stimulates the whole body and helps in reducing fat.
- Tones the arms and legs.
- Stimulates pancreas and prevents and mitigates diabetes.

Vimanasana (Airplane Posture)

Prone posture with raised upper and lower parts of the body and resting on the abdomen.



Practice (From Sthiti Prone):

- Lie on your abdomen with your feet together and your chin on the floor.
- Stretch your arms out perpendicular to the body with the palms facing down.
- As you inhale; raise the upper torso, arms, and legs so that your weight rests on the lower torso. Keep your elbows and knees straight.
- Hold the posture with normal breathing.

Returning to Sthiti

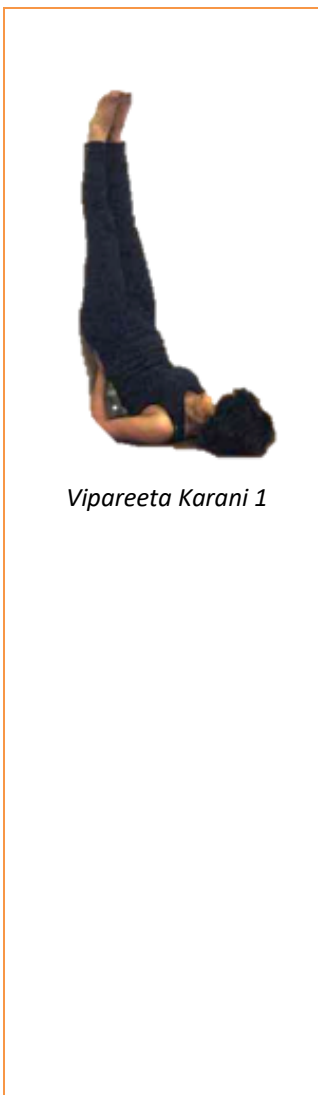
- As you exhale, slowly bring your legs and hands down to the floor.

** Relax in Makarasana and observe the changes in the body.*

Supine Asanas

Salamba Vipareeta Karani (Half Shoulder Stand/Inversion Pose)

Angled inverted supine posture with raised legs with or without wall support.



Wall Supported/Salamba (From Supine Sthiti)

- Sit with your left side against the wall, with spine upright.
- Gently lower your right shoulder on the ground and lie down with the torso perpendicular to the wall. Turning your body toward left, lie on the back with buttocks to the wall and legs raised against the wall as you lie on your back.
- Rest for a few seconds with your legs against the wall.
- If possible and comfortable, bend your knees and place the soles of the feet on the wall.
- Slowly lift your hips and torso off the ground. Place one elbow on the ground and lift the opposite shoulder and move your hips close to the wall. Alternate this movement until your hips and legs touch the wall.
- Straighten your legs so that your entire lower body, from the buttocks to the feet, is touching the wall.
- Your torso is inclined at about 45° (See Pic Vipareeta Karani 1).
- Maintain this final posture with normal breathing.

Note: If lifting the waist off the ground is difficult, practice legs up the wall pose with your buttocks resting on a pillow.

Returning to Sthiti:

- Gently push yourself away from the wall and slide your legs down to the right or left side.
- Gently come into supine position on the mat.

Relax in Shavasana (Supine Relaxation) and observe the changes in your body.

Niralamba Vipareeta Karani (Half Shoulder Stand//Inversion Pose)



Vipareeta Karani 1



Vipareeta Karani 2

Without Wall Support/Niralamba:

- In the supine position, raise the legs off the ground until they are 90°, keeping the knees straight (See Pic. Vipareeta Karani 1).
- Lift the buttocks off the ground by taking the raised legs slightly backward. Keep the toes pointing back.
- Support the waist with your palms and further raise the buttocks and the trunk off the ground. Bring the legs to a vertical position.
- In the final position, the trunk is inclined at about 45°. The weight of the legs is supported by the elbows and shoulders which are resting on the ground (See Pic Vipareeta Karani 2).
- Maintain this final posture with normal breathing.

Returning to Sthiti:

- Slowly release your hands from the waist and bring your palms to the ground.
- Lower the buttocks to the ground (you can do this safely by taking the legs back toward your head, bending your knees, and lowering the torso one vertebrae at a time).
- Bring the legs perpendicular to the floor.
- Gently lower the legs onto the floor.

Relax in Shavasana (Supine Relaxation) and observe the changes in the body.

Modifications:

You can use a pillow under the hips with wall support if necessary.

Subtle Aspects:

- *Direct your awareness to the lower abdomen.*
- *Awareness also in the shoulders and in the effects of inversion such as increased pressure in the head region if any.*
- *In the version without wall support, observe caution while raising the legs off the ground to 90° position to protect the lower back.*
- *To avoid straining the lower back, keep your abdominal muscles engaged and your lower back pressed to the floor.*

Contraindications:

- *Cervical spondylosis*
- *People with hypertension and heart disease should avoid and consult with their doctor.*
- *women during menstruation.*

Benefits:

- *Wall supported version relaxes the back muscles and alleviates back pain and relaxes the body and mind.*
- *Helpful in relieving constipation, gastric disorders and menstrual disorders, and varicose veins.*
- *Strengthens the immune system, balances the hormones, calms the nervous system, and stabilizes the digestive system.*
- *Stimulates the thyroid glands.*
- *Promotes healthy circulation to the upper extremities, which in turn promotes alertness and focus in the mind.*

Setubandhasana (Bridge Pose)

Supine posture with raised trunk and hips to give stretch to the abdomen and spine.



Setubandhasana 1



Setubandhasana 2



Setubandhasana 3

Practice (From Supine Sthiti):

- Lie in supine pose with your legs bent, feet on the ground, and hands by the side of the body, palms facing down.
- Placing the feet hip width apart on the ground, pressing the palms down, inhale and lift your hips and back toward the ceiling (*See Pic. Setubandhasana 1*).
- Rolling your shoulders back and underneath the body, extend your arms along the floor and try to hold your ankles, or clasp your hands and place them under the pelvis.
- As you inhale, Draw your tailbone toward the pubic bone and raise your torso as high as you can.
- Maintain this final posture with normal breathing.

Returning to Sthiti:

- Release your arms and place them by the side of the body.
- As you exhale, slowly lower your hips and torso onto the floor one vertebrae at a time.
- Stretch your legs out and relax.

Relax in Shavasana (Supine Relaxation) and observe the changes in the body.

Setubandhasana (Bridge Pose) contd...

Modifications:

- Hands may be placed alongside the body with palms facing down or hands may be clasped and placed under the pelvis if you cannot hold your ankles safely (See Pic Setubandhasana 2).
- You can also support your waist with the hands, placing the elbows on the ground for increased stretch and support (See Pic Setubandhasana 3).
- For the restorative version of this pose, place a block or bolster under your lower back (sacrum).

Contraindication:

- *Back and Neck Pain.*
- *Severe hypertension and cardiac problems.*
- *Women during menstruation should exercise caution.*
- *People with knee pain should exercise caution.*

Subtle Aspects:

- Feel the stretch in the lumbar region.
- Awareness is on the torso, back, shoulder and neck.
- In the final pose make sure your knees should not extend past the toes.

Benefits:

- Strengthens the back.
- Reduces fat in the abdomen and strengthens the glutes.
- Improves digestion.

Sarvangasana (Shoulder-stand Pose)

Supine inverted posture with chin lock that provides health benefits for the whole body.



Sarvangasana 1



Sarvangasana 2

Practice (From Sthiti Supine):

- In supine position; as you inhale, raise the legs off the ground until they are 90°, keeping the knees straight.
- Lift the hips off the ground by taking the raised legs slightly backward. Keep the toes pointing back (See Pic. Sarvangasana 1).
- Support the waist with your palms and further raise the buttocks and the torso off the ground. Bring the legs to a vertical position.
- While keeping your legs vertical, place the palms on the lower back for support and straighten the torso vertically by pushing your back with your hands such that the chin touches the chest.
- Come to the final shoulder stand position, keeping the body in a vertical line with the legs stretched upward (See Pic. Sarvangasana 2).
- Maintain this posture with normal breathing.
- Returning to Sthiti:
- As you exhale, gently lower the torso to the ground (you can do this safely by taking the legs back toward your head, bending your knees, and lowering the torso one vertebrae at a time).
- Slowly release your hands from the waist and bring your palms to the ground.
- Lower your legs slowly and return to Sthiti.

** Relax in Shavasana (Supine Relaxation) and observe the changes in the body.*

Modifications:

In the advanced practice of this asana the hands can be placed on the floor (Niralamba Sarvangasana).

Contraindications:

Cervical spondylosis, severe hypertension, shoulder/neck problems, women during menstruation.

Subtle Aspects:

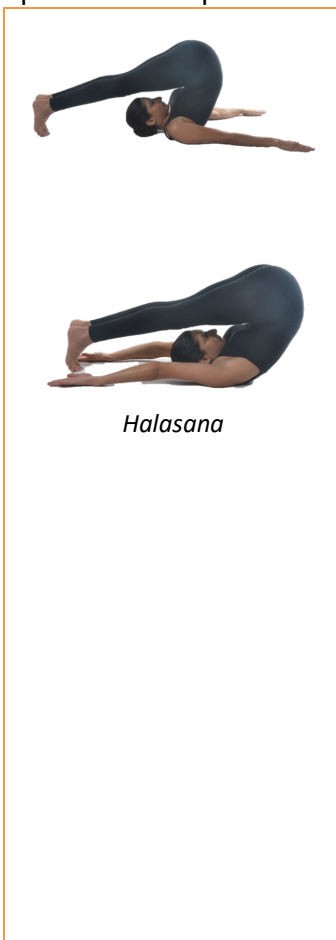
- Awareness in the shoulder, neck, balancing aspect, and in the effects of inversion such as increased pressure in the head region if any.
- Do not move the neck in the final position.
- Follow up with Matsyasana as complementary posture.

Benefits:

- Stimulates and keeps the thyroid healthy.
- Relaxes the whole body.
- Stimulates pelvic and abdominal organs.
- Useful in addressing varicose veins and lower abdominal disorders.
- Helpful in relieving constipation, gastric disorders and menstrual disorders, and varicose veins.
- Strengthens the immune system, balances the hormones, calms the nervous system, and stabilizes the digestive system.
- Excellent for anxiety in adults and children.
- Stimulates the thyroid glands.
- Promotes healthy circulation to the upper extremities, which in turn promotes alertness and focus in the mind.

Halasana (Plough Posture)

Supine Inverted posture that combines a backbend and inversion.



Practice (From Sthiti Supine):

- In the supine position; as you inhale, raise the legs off the ground until they are 90°, keeping the knees straight.
- Lift the hips off the ground by taking the raised legs slightly backward. Keep the toes pointing back.
- Support the waist with your palms and further raise the buttocks and the torso off the ground. Bring the legs to be vertical.
- Straighten the torso and come to the final shoulder stand position, keeping the body in a vertical line with the legs stretched upward. (See *Sarvangasana 2*)
- With control, allow your legs to extend backward parallel to the ground.
- As you exhale, lower your legs further until your toes touch the ground behind your head. Release both hands and rest the arms straight on the ground parallel to each other with palms facing the ground. (See *Pic Halasana*).
- Maintain this posture with normal breathing.

Returning to Sthiti

- As you inhale, raise the legs upward and gently rest the torso on the floor.
- As you exhale, lower your legs to the ground to sthiti.

** Relax in Shavasana and observe the changes in the body.*

Modifications:

If legs don't reach the ground behind the head, hold them in any intermediate position while supporting the back.

Subtle Aspects:

- *Make sure that you have achieved perfect balance before you release the hands from supporting the torso.*
- *Awareness in the shoulder, neck and in balancing the body.*

Contraindications:

Spinal problems, cardiac problems and severe hypertension, women during menstruation.

Benefits:

Stretches and stimulates the back muscles, spinal joints and lumbar nerves.

Matsyasana (Fish Posture)

Supine posture that gives a backward bend to the neck releasing the chin lock as a complementary to Sarvangasana.



Practice (From Sthiti Supine):

- In supine posture, slide your hands below the hips with palms facing down. Rolling your shoulders back, bring your elbows close to each other.
- With the support of the elbows; as you inhale, raise your shoulders and chest up. Keep your legs and buttocks on the floor. As you exhale, allow your head to drop gently back and gently place the crown of the head on the ground (see pic Matsyasana 1).
- Breathe deeply and comfortably.

Returning to Sthiti

- To come out of the posture, lift your head slightly, relax your elbows. As you exhale, lower your back to the floor.

** Relax in Shavasana and observe the changes in the body.*

Modifications:

Can also be performed with the legs in Padmasana but it is an advanced pose (See pic Matsyasana 2)

Contraindications:

Abdominal, thoracic, shoulder and neck problems.

Subtle Aspects:

Awareness in the neck, chest and spine.

Benefits:

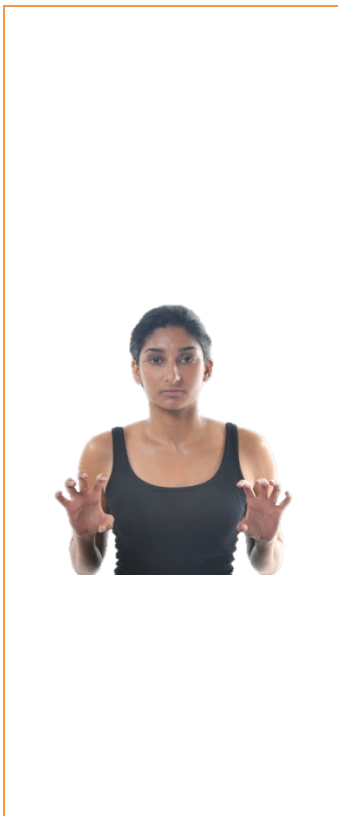
Good for people with diabetes, asthma and other respiratory problems, and thyroid problems.

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Additional Yoga Techniques and Asanas

Sukshma Vyayama

Anguli Shakti Vikasaka (fingers/cobra pose)



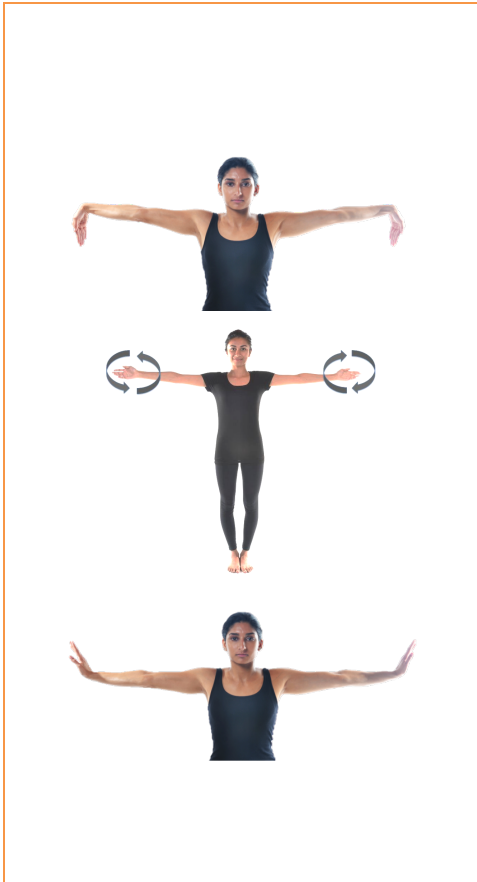
Sthiti: Tadasana

Practice:

- Bend the elbows and bring your hands by the side of your shoulders.
- Bend the fingers of both your hands into a shape of the hood of a cobra.
- Stiffen the fingers as if you are holding a big ball for about 10-20 secs, increasing the stiffness to your maximum capacity.
- Repeat the above steps, this time stiffen the fingers as if you are holding a smaller ball such as a tennis ball for about 10-20 secs, increasing the stiffness to your maximum capacity.
- Repeat the above steps, this time stiffen the fingers as if you are holding a smaller ball such as a golf ball for about 10-20 secs.
- Relax after each round by lowering the arms down and observe the fingers.

Note: For effectiveness of the practice, you may consider stiffening the entire length of the arms from the shoulder joints to the fingertips as much as you can so that they start trembling.

Kara Tala Shakti Vikasaka (Wrist and Arm strengthening)



Sthiti: Tadasana

Practice:

- Raise the arms up parallel to the ground with palms facing downward.
- Move the palms up and down 6-12 times from the wrist with normal breathing.
- You may also practice turning the entire arms to face the palms upward and downward in pronation and supination actions. This loosens and strengthens the triceps.
- Feel the stretch in the fingers and palms.
- Relaxation: Shithila Tadasana

Note: *You may practice this with arms stretch out to the side without bending the elbows.*



Bhuja Bhanda Shakti Vikasaka (Yogic Karate Punches)

Sthiti: Tadasana

Starting position

- Make fists of your hands with the thumbs tucked in.
- Bend the elbows, raise the forearms and bring fists near the chest, fists facing up.

Practice (one arm at a time):

- As you exhale forcefully, push the right arm forward to the level of the shoulder.
- As you inhale, pull the fist back to the starting position.
- Repeat on the left side. Practice for 6-12 rounds.

Practice (both arms simultaneously)

- As you exhale forcefully, push both the arms forward forcefully to the level of the shoulder.
- As you inhale, pull the fists back to the starting position.

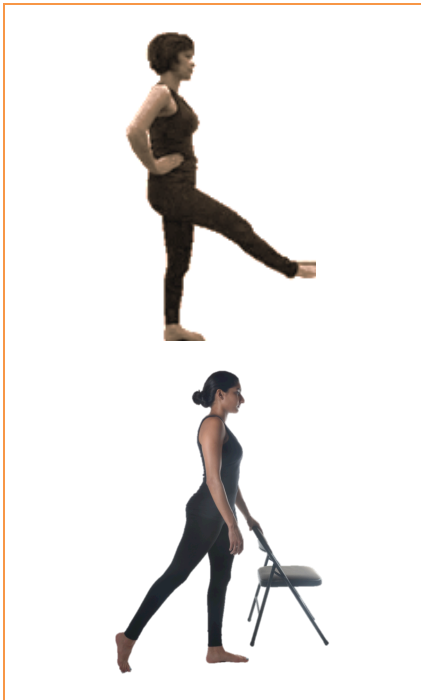
Practice in Shithila Tadasana.

Note:

- *Synchronize breath with the arm movements.*
- *Do not jerk the elbows severely. Use the strength of the upper arm and keep the elbow soft (slightly bent) in the final pose.*



Pada Sanchalana (Leg Movements)

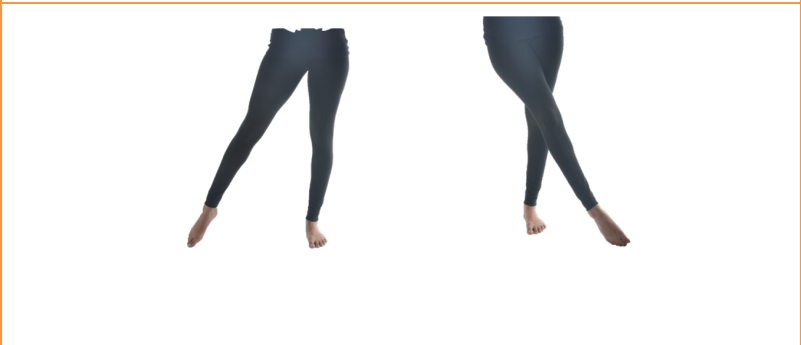
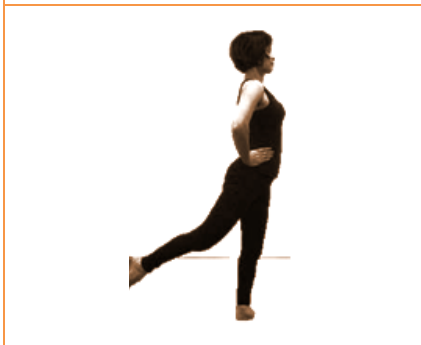


Sthiti: Tadasana

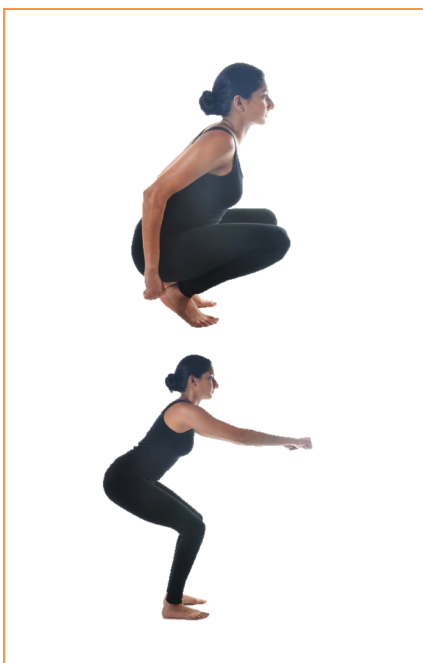
Practice:

- Stand firmly on the left leg.
- With hands on the waist, move the right leg forward and backward 8-10 times keeping the leg straight.
- Repeat with the other leg 8-10 times.
- Stand firmly with the left leg.
- Keeping your hands on the waist. move the right leg sideways to the right and to the left crossing the left leg 8-10 times keeping the leg straight.
- Repeat with the other leg 8-10 times.
- Relaxation: Shithila Tadasana.

Note: *This is excellent practice for everyone as a hip opener and to strengthen legs. People with balance problems can practice holding a chair.*



Pindali Shakti Vikasaka (Calf Strengthening)

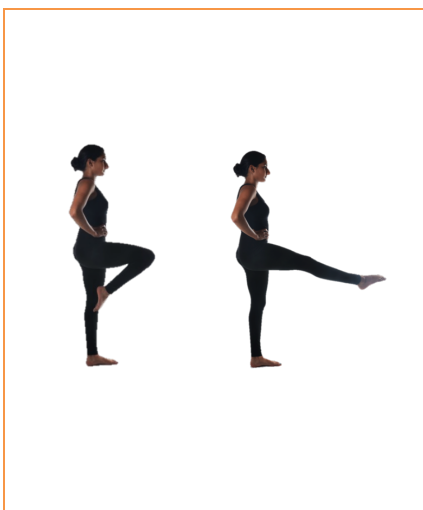


Sthiti: Tadasana

Practice:

- As you inhale, clench the fists and hold the arms close to the chest.
- As you exhale, squat down and gently take arms down with elbows bent and fists clench.
- As you inhale, stand up and bring the arms in a reverse row by moving them forward and upward.
- Return to the starting position with the arms close to the chest.
- Practice squat down and stand up 6-12 times. Practice another 6-12 times, bringing the arms in a forward row by moving them forward and downward while maintaining the same breathing pattern.
- Relax in Shithila Tadasana.

Janu Shakti Vikasaka (Knee Strengthening)



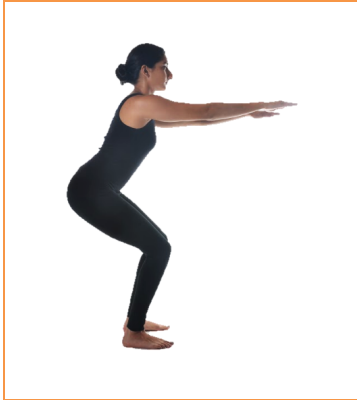
Sthiti: Tadasana

Practice:

- Bend the right knee with calf and knee joint tightened with your maximum strength. The sole of your foot is facing backward.
- Kick to the front and immediately bend the knee back to touch the buttock. Practice 6-12 times.
- Repeat this practice with the left leg 6-12 times.
- Relax in Shithila Tadasana.

Note: Do not jerk the joints. Perform with muscles of the calf and thighs contracted for maximum effectiveness.

Jangha Shakti Vikasaka (Thigh Strengthening)

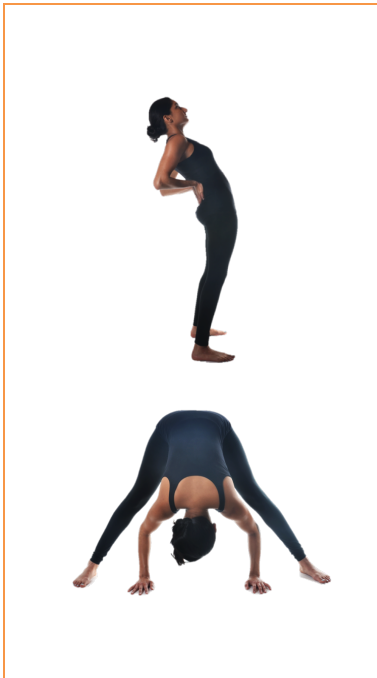


Sthiti: Tadasana

Practice:

- Stretch out the arms straight in front at shoulder height, with palms facing down.
- As you exhale, bend your knees gradually till your thighs come parallel to ground.
- Hold this position for 10 to 15 sec with normal breathing.
- As you inhale, rise up to standing. Practice 6 to 12 times.
- Relax in Shithila Tadasana.

Kati Shakti Vikasaka (Waist Strengthening)



Sthiti: Tadasana

Practice:

- Spread your feet comfortably apart.
- Place your hands at the back of the pelvis with fingers pointing down to support your back.
- As you inhale, bend backward from the waist as far as you can.
- Maintain this posture for a few normal breaths.
- As you exhale, bend forward trying to bring head as close to the ground as possible without bending knees. Maintain this posture for a few normal breaths.
- Hands are ideally held at the back of the pelvis or can be placed on the ground but minimal weight on the hands. Do not bend the knees.
- Practice 5 to 10 times.
- Relax in Shithila Tadasana.

Shithalikaarana Vyayama (Loosening Practices)

Bhunamana (Sitting Twist and Bend)



Sthiti: Dandasana

Practice:

- Sit with the legs straight and feet together.
- Place both of your palms on the right side.
- Inhale and as you exhale, twist the upper body to the right side and bend down; if possible, touch the forehead to the ground.
- As you inhale, rise up and as you exhale, repeat the twist and bend on the left side.
- Practice 8-12 times with increasing speed to maximum capacity.
- Gradually slow down and then stop the practice.
- Relax in Shithila Dandasana.

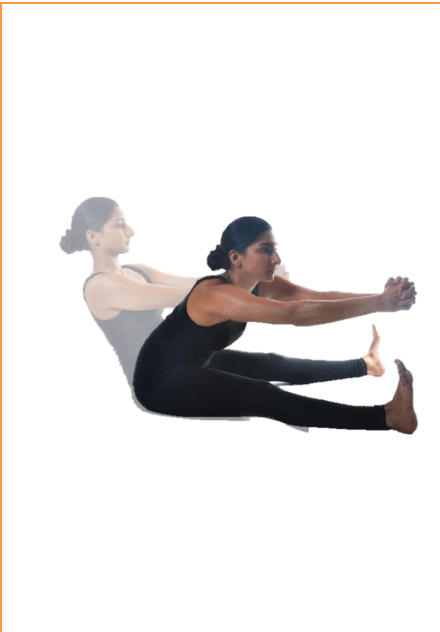
Contraindications:

People with back pain may avoid or bend only as much as possible.

Benefits:

Helps with weight management around the belly; opens up the hips and improves blood circulation in the upper body.

Chakki Chalana (Sitting Twist and Bend)



Sthiti: Dandasana

Practice:

- Sit with the legs wide apart.
- Stretch your arms out in front of you and interlock the fingers.
- Start rotating your arms in one direction, in a circular motion, without bending your elbows.
- Practice 8-12 times with increasing speed to maximum capacity.
- Gradually slow down.
- Reverse the direction and repeat the practice 8-12 times with increasing speed to maximum capacity.
- Gradually slow down and then stop the practice.
- Rest in Shithila Dandasana.

Contraindications:

- *People with back pain may avoid or bend only as much as possible. Another easier way to practice this is with one leg folded, with the foot by the side of the other thigh (as in Janu Shirshasana).*

Benefits:

- *Helps with weight management around the belly; Loosens the hamstrings; Opens up the hips and improves blood circulation in the upper body.*

Nauka Sanchalana (Sitting Boat Rowing)



Sthiti: Dandasana

Practice:

- Sit with the legs straight and feet together.
- Make the hands into fists and prepare to move arms like rowing a boat.
- As you inhale, bring the arms up. As you exhale, perform a forward bend bringing the arms down. Arms up and down are making the motion of rowing.
- Practice 8-12 times in continuous rowing boat motions and forward bends with increasing speed to maximum capacity.
- Gradually slow down.
- Reverse direction and practice 8-12 times in a continuous reverse rowing boat motion and forward bends with increasing speed to maximum capacity.
- Gradually slow down and then stop the practice.
- Rest in Shithila Dandasana.

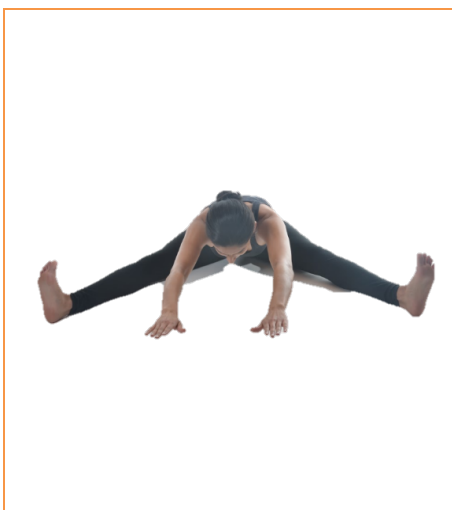
Contraindications:

- *People with back pain may avoid or bend only as much as possible.*

Benefits:

- *Helps with weight management around the belly; Loosens the hamstrings; Opens up the hips and improves blood circulation in the upper body.*

Upavishta Konasana Loosening (Chapati/Tortilla Making)



Sthiti: Sitting Posture

Practice:

- Sit with the legs wide apart.
- As you inhale, sit up straight with arms stretched out in front of you. As you exhale, bend forward and allow your hands to move further away from you.
- Practice this for 8-12 times with increasing speed to maximum capacity, making the action of rolling a chapati (tortilla) using an imaginary rolling pin.
- Gradually slow down and then stop the practice.
- Rest in Shithila Dandasana.

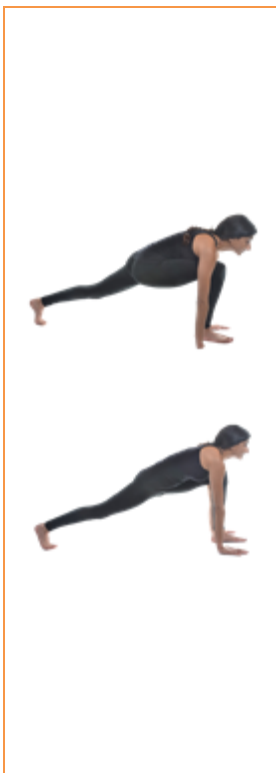
Contraindications:

- People with back pain may avoid or bend only as much as possible.

Benefits:

- Helps with weight management around the belly; Loosens the hamstrings; Opens up the hips and improves blood circulation in the upper body.

Ashva Sanchalanasana Loosening (Horse Riding Alternate Legs)



Sthiti: Tadasana

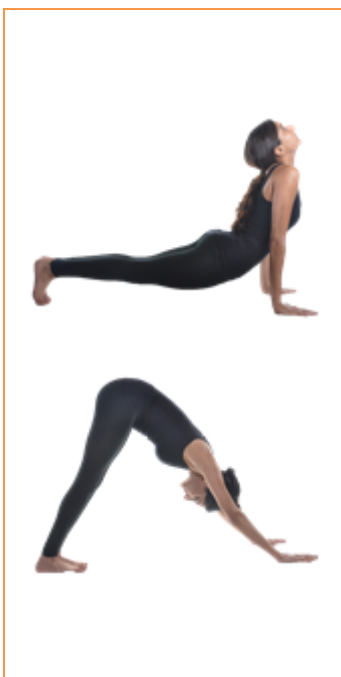
Practice:

- As you exhale, bend down. With your palms on the mat on either side of the feet; as you inhale, step your right foot back as far as possible, lower your hips, arch the spine and look up. Left shin is vertical and chest is close to the left thigh; Right knee is off the ground in the final pose (Make sure the left knee does not go beyond the left toe).
- With a jump, switch legs and perform the complementary pose with left foot back and right foot in the front.
- This completes one round.
- Practice 10-15 rounds with increasing speed to maximum capacity.
- Gradually slow down and then stop the practice.
- Relax in Shithila Tadasana.

Subtle Aspects:

People with knee conditions must observe caution.

Bhujangasana and Parvatasana Loosening (Cobra/Mountain Combo)



Sthiti: Prone Posture

Practice:

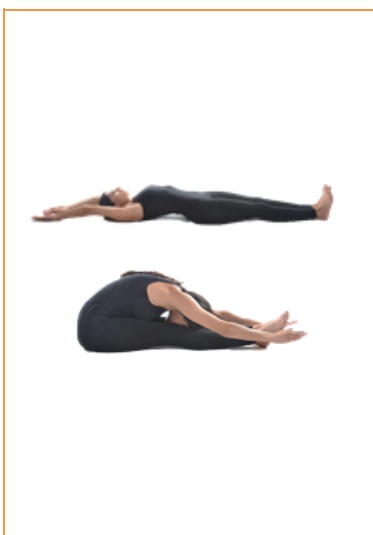
Bhujangasana

- As you inhale, raise the head, arch your back, and rise up on your arms with palms on the ground (directly below the shoulders). Elbows must be straight. Keep the knees off the ground if you can.

Parvatasana

- As you exhale, raise the hips toward the ceiling and bring the head toward the knees and if possible, heels to the ground.
- This is one round of practice.
- Practice 10 to 20 times with increasing speed to maximum capacity.
- Gradually slow down and then stop the practice.
- Relax in Makarasana.

Paschimottanasana Loosening



Sthiti: Supine Posture

Practice:

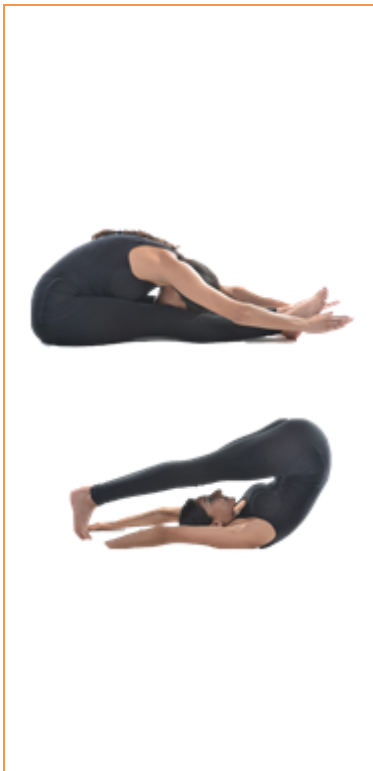
- With hands stretched above the head, as you inhale, rise up and as you exhale, bend forward into Paschimottanasana keeping the knees straight. Try to touch the forehead to the knees.
- As you inhale rise up and as you exhale roll back on the ground in supine resting pose.
- Practice 10-15 times with increasing speed to maximum capacity.
- Gradually slow down and then stop the practice.
- Lie down in Shavasana and relax.

Subtle Aspects:

- Start slowly and gradually increase the speed.
- Practice should be performed with rhythmic movements.
- Allow the breathing to be smooth, rhythmic and natural.
- Do not bend the knees during the practice.

Contraindication: *Not recommended for people with back pain.*

Paschimottanasana/Halasanana Loosening



Sthiti: Supine Posture

Practice:

- As you inhale, lift both legs up rapidly by pressing down on the hands and using core strength.
- As you exhale, take the legs back over the head keeping the legs straight, and bringing the toes to the ground like in Halasana.
- As you inhale quickly, swing your legs back to the starting position and sit up.
- As you exhale, bend forward into Paschimottanasana keeping the knees straight. Try to touch the forehead to the knees.
- This is one round. Rock back and forth alternately into Halasana and Paschimottanasana in this manner.
- Practice 10-15 times with increasing speed to maximum capacity.
- Gradually slow down and then stop the practice.
- Lie down in Shavasana and relax.

Subtle Aspects (Paschimottanasana/Halasanana):

- Start slowly and gradually increase the speed.
- Practice should be performed with rhythmic movements.
- Allow the breathing to be smooth, rhythmic and natural.
- Do not bend the knees during the practice.

Contraindication: *Not recommended for people with back pain.*

Advanced Asanas

Chakrasana (Wheel Pose)

Inverted curving and balancing posture with the body shaped like an arch.



Chakrasana

Practice (From Sthiti Supine):

- Place your palms on the ground on either side of your head under your shoulders, with fingers pointing toward the feet.
- Bend the knees and place the feet on the ground close to the buttocks, hip width apart.
- Pushing your palms and feet on the ground, as you inhale, raise the torso off the ground. Arch the entire body upward in the shape of a wheel.
- Maintain the posture with normal breathing.

Returning back to Sthiti:

- As you exhale, slowly place the head on the ground, followed by the neck, back and hips.
- Release the arms and legs and return to supine Sthiti.

** Relax in Shavasana (Supine Relaxation) and observe the changes in the body.*

Modifications:

None.

Contraindications:

- Spinal, wrist and cardiac problems, severe hypertension, and vertigo.
- Practice this advanced asana with caution.

Subtle Aspects:

- Awareness in the back, torso, arms, legs, wrists and balance.
- Do not lower the buttocks first or allow them to collapse downward.

Benefits:

- Brings flexibility to spine.
- Stimulates all parts of the body.
- Strengthens arms, shoulders and legs.

Hamsasana (Swan Posture)

Sitting culturing posture balancing body weight on the hands.



Hamsasana 1



Hamsasana 2

Variations:

None

Contraindications:

Wrist problems, stomach problems, hernia and menstrual problems.

Practice (From Sthiti Vajrasana):

- Separate your knees. Raising your buttocks off the ground, place the hands between the knees, fingers pointing backward. Place your elbows on the abdomen close to the navel region.
- Bend the elbows and lean forward, supporting the weight of the torso on the elbows at the navel (See Pic Hamsasana 1).
- Lower your forehead and extend the legs behind you with the toes on the ground.
- Now raise your head so that the neck is in line with the torso and look straight ahead.
- Your body should be in a straight line at an inclination of about 30° to the ground. The weight of your body should be on the hands and on the tips of the toes (See Pic Hamsasana 2).
- Maintain this final posture with normal breathing.

Returning to Sthiti

- Slowly bring the forehead back down to the floor.

** Relax in Makarasana.*

Notes:

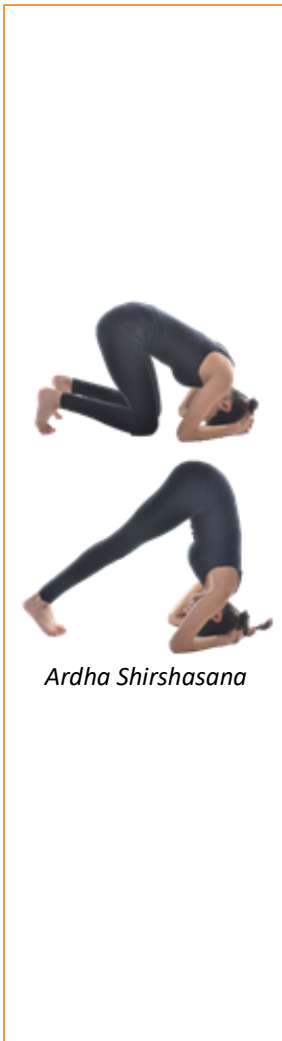
- Awareness in the arms, shoulders and core muscles
- This asana serves as a preparatory practice for Mayurasana (peacock pose).

Benefits:

Strengthens the shoulders, wrists and abdomen region.

Ardha Shirshasana (Half Headstand)

Partially inverted pose that is a preparatory pose for Headstand or Shirshasana.



Practice (From Sthiti Vajrasana):

- Place the forearms on the mat in front of you with the fingers interlocked and the elbows in front of the knees.
- The distance between the elbows should be equal to the distance from each elbow to the interlocked fingers, forming an equilateral triangle.
- Place the crown of the head on the mat in between the interlocked hands.
- As you inhale, slowly raise the hips toward the ceiling by straightening the legs and lifting the knees off the ground, keeping the toes on the floor.
- Your torso should be vertical and the body should form a triangle on the ground.
- As you exhale, let the body weight travel through your arms with minimal pressure on your neck and head region.
- Maintain this posture with normal breathing.

Returning to Sthiti

- As you exhale, slowly lower your knees to the ground and relax in modified Shashankasana by placing your forehead on stacked fists so that the pressure in the head comes back to normal.
- Return to Sthiti.

** Relax in Shavasana (Supine Relaxation) and observe the changes in the body.*

Modifications:

You may place a folded blanket in front of you and rest your head on the blanket in the final position.

Contraindications:

- *Weak neck or back, eye problems, cardiac problems and severe hypertension, ear inflammation, and recent dental work.*
- *Practice this advanced asana with caution.*

Subtle Aspects:

- *Awareness on the neck, head, arms and balance.*
- *If the torso is not vertical, slowly walk your feet towards your head until your back is straight.*

Benefits:

- *Calms the mind.*
- *Strengthens the neck, arms, spine and abdominal organs.*
- *Relieves constipation and improves digestion.*

Shirshasana (Headstand)

Full inversion posture that provides several benefits to the body and mind.



Shirshasana 1



Shirshasana 2



Shirshasana 3



Shirshasana 4

Practice (From Sthiti Vajrasana):

- Place the forearms on the mat in front of you with the fingers interlocked and the elbows in front of the knees.
- The distance between the elbows should be equal to the length of the forearms forming an equilateral triangle.
- Place the crown of the head on the mat in between the interlocked hands.
- As you inhale, slowly raise the hips toward the ceiling by straightening the legs and lifting the knees off the ground, keeping the toes on the floor.
- Your torso should be vertical.
- Let the body weight travel through your arms with minimal pressure on your neck and head region.
- As you exhale, slowly walk your toes toward the torso. Bend the knees slightly and press the thighs against the abdomen and lower chest.
- Transfer the body weight slowly from the toes to the arms, with minimal pressure on the neck and head, maintaining a steady balance.
- Lift the feet off the ground, carefully balancing on the arms and lightly on the crown of the head.
- Gradually raise the legs up in a controlled motion. Adjust the torso to counterbalance the weight of the legs (*See Pic Shirshasana 2*)
- Slowly straighten the thighs and fold the legs back so that the soles face backward. (*See Pic Shirshasana 3*).
- Straighten the knees until the legs are in a vertical line with the torso. The whole body should be in one straight line with the feet relaxed. Maintain balance in the body (*See Pic Shirshasana 4*)
- Hold the posture with normal breathing.

Returning to Sthiti

- As you exhale, bend your knees and slowly lower your knees to the ground and relax in modified Shashankasana by placing your forehead on stacked fists so that the pressure in the head comes back to normal.
- Return to Sthiti.

** Relax in Shavasana (Supine Relaxation) and observe the changes in the body.*

Shirshasana (Headstand) cont....

Modifications:

- *You may place a folded blanket in front of you and rest your head on the blanket in the final position.*
- *Can be practiced using a wall or a partner for support in the beginning stages.*

Contraindications:

- *Weak neck or back, eye problems, cardiac problems, hypertension, ear inflammation, recent dental surgery, jaw problems, severe asthma, slipped discs, cold or sinusitis.*
- *Practice this advanced asana with caution.*

Subtle Aspects:

- *Awareness on the neck, head, arms and balance.*
- *If the torso is not vertical, slowly walk your feet toward your head until your back is straight.*
- *Engage the core muscles in this practice*

Benefits:

- *Calms the mind.*
- *Strengthens the neck, arms, spine and abdominal organs.*
- *Relieves constipation and improves digestion.*

Pranayama

Kapalabhati (Skull Shining Breath)

A cleansing kriya and a preparation for pranayama involving active exhalation and passive inhalation.



Sthiti: Sukhasana or Padmasana or Vajrasana.

Practice:

- Perform active exhalation and passive inhalation from both nostrils at the pace of 60 breaths per minute for one minute. Slow down and stop.
- Practice silence for 1 minute, watching the natural cessation of the breath (Kevala Kumbhaka) and enjoy this as long it lasts. Then go back to normal breathing.
- Repeat again with 120 breaths per minute.

Contraindications:

Kapalabhati is to be avoided in case of

- High Blood Pressure
- Ischemic Heart Disease
- Vertigo
- Epilepsy
- Hernia
- Gastric ulcer
- Slip Disc
- Spondylitis
- Women should avoid this practice during their monthly period cycle and during pregnancy.

Benefits:

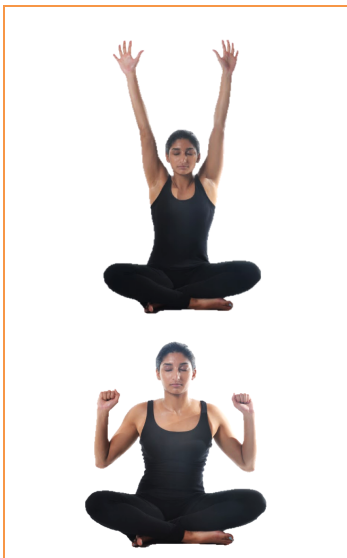
- Brain cells are invigorated. It brings a shining to the forehead with regular practice. It balances and strengthens the nervous system. It removes drowsiness from the body.
- It provides a nice massage to all the abdominal organs.
- Highly beneficial for people with Gastrointestinal Disorders.
- It cleanses the lungs and also the entire respiratory tract.
- It is good for asthmatics and other respiratory disorders too.
- It removes the distractions of the mind and prepares it for meditation.
- The practitioner achieves a state of Kevala Kumbhaka, i.e. automatic cessation of breath.

Notes:

- Throughout the practice, the spine must be kept erect without any movement of the trunk, neck or the face.
- Allow the inhalation to happen automatically by relaxing the abdominal muscles at the end of each quick exhalation.
- Start with 10-20 strokes per minute and repeat it for 2-3 rounds with restful breathing in between the rounds. With regular practice one can increase the speed to 60-120 breaths per minute.

Bhastrika (Bellows Breath)

A cleansing kriya and a preparation for pranayama involving active inhalation and active exhalation.



Sthiti: Sukhasana or Padmasana or Vajrasana.

Practice:

- With forceful inhalation raise your arms up with hands open and with forceful exhalation, bring your arms to your shoulder level making fists of your hands. Inhale and exhale from both nostrils. Start slow, increase the pace and slow down and stop. You may practice for 15-30 breaths as per your capacity.
- Practice silence for 1 minute, watching the natural cessation of the breath (Kevala Kumbhaka) and enjoy this as long it lasts. Then go back to normal breathing.
- Repeat again if needed.

Contraindications:

Bhastrika is to be avoided in case of

- High Blood Pressure
- Ischemic Heart Disease
- Vertigo
- Epilepsy
- Hernia
- Gastric ulcer
- Slip Disc
- Spondylitis

Women should avoid this practice during their monthly period cycle and during pregnancy.

Benefits:

- Brain cells are invigorated. It balances and strengthens the nervous system. It removes drowsiness from the body.
- It provides a nice massage to all the abdominal organs.
- It cleanses the lungs and also the entire respiratory tract.
- It is good for asthmatics and other respiratory disorders too.
- It removes the distractions of the mind and prepares it for meditation.
- The practitioner achieves a state of Kevala Kumbhaka, i.e. automatic cessation of breath.

Notes:

- Throughout the practice, the spine must be kept erect without any movement of the torso, neck or the face.
- You can practice Bhastrika without involving arm movements, but instead sitting in sukhasana, padmasana or Vajrasana.
- Start with 10-20 strokes and increase to 30-40 breaths. Always follow with a period of restful watching of the breath for a minute.

Sectional Breathing (Vibhagiya Pranayama)

Sthiti: Vajrasana, Sukhasana or Padmasana

- This is a preparatory breathing practice for Pranayama. It corrects poor breathing habits and increases lung capacity.
- The purpose of this practice is to make the practitioner aware of the three different types of respiration (Abdominal, Thoracic & Clavicle) and incorporate them into Full Yogic Breathing.
- This exercise can be performed lying down in Shavasana or sitting in a cross-legged position (Padmasana or Sukhasana or Vajrasana) with head, neck and spine erect.
- All breathing should be performed through the nose & not through the mouth.
- As you increase the number of rounds of Full Yogic Breathing day after day, you will come to develop this practice as an automatic and normal function of the body.
- Bring calmness in daily activities.
- Thinking and clarity of thought improve.
- When you feel tired or angry, practice of Full Yogic Breathing will help in calming down your mind and revitalizing it.

Sectional breathing has four parts:

Part 1: Diaphragm Breathing: (Udara Pranayama or Adhama Pranayama)



Mudra: Chin mudra

Practice:

- Inhale and expand your abdomen.
- Slowly exhale and observe your abdomen collapse.
- Observe Kevala Kumbhaka, the effortless cessation of breath at the end of each exhalation
- Repeat the round for 5 times

Notes:

- In abdominal breathing the air fills the lower lobes of the lungs.
- Avoid movement of the chest.

Part 2: Chest Breathing: (Hridaya Pranayama or Madhyama Pranayama)



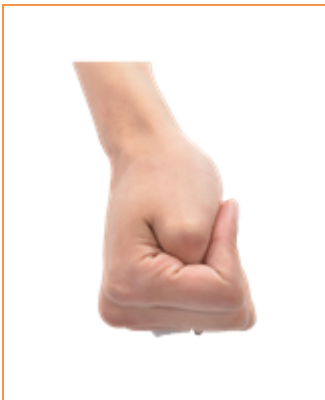
Mudra: Chinmaya mudra

Practice:

- Inhale and expand your chest area outward.
- Slowly exhale and observe the contraction of your chest.
- Observe Kevala Kumbhaka, the effortless cessation of breath at the end of each exhalation
- Repeat the round for 5 times.

Note: Avoid movements of abdomen.

Part 3: Clavicle or Collarbone Breathing: (Bhuja Pranayama or Adya Pranayama)



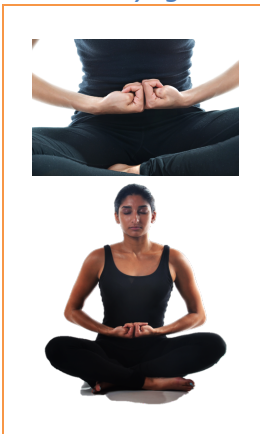
Mudra: Adi mudra

Practice:

- Inhale and expand your clavicular region upward. Keep your chest, ribs and abdomen steady.
- Slowly exhale and observe your clavicular muscles collapse.
- Observe the effortless cessation of breath.
- Repeat the round for 5 times.

Note: Avoid movements of abdomen and chest.

Part 4: Full yogic breathing (Sampurna pranayama)



Mudra: Brahma mudra

Practice:

- While inhaling expand your abdomen, chest, and shoulder muscles.
- While exhaling collapse all three lobes and relax.
- Observe the effortless cessation of breath.
- Repeat the round for 5 times.

Notes (Sectional Breathing):

- Roughly gauge the time of your inhalation and exhalation. Take one third of your inhalation time for adhama, one third for madhyama and one third for adya pranayama. Follow the same sequence and timing for exhalation.
- As you increase the number of rounds of Full Yogic Breathing day after day, you will come to develop this practice as an automatic and normal function of the body

Nadi Shuddhi or Anuloma/Viloma(Alternate Nostril Breathing)



Sthiti: Sitting with Nasika Mudra

Nasika Mudra: Fold the first two fingers of the right hand and use the edge of the right thumb to close the right nostril and the edge of the ring finger to close the left nostril (Vice versa for left-handed people).

Practice:

- After normal inhalation with both nostrils, close your right nostril with the tip of your right thumb and exhale through your left nostril.
- Keeping your right nostril closed, inhale through left nostril.
- Now switch and close the left nostril with the tip of your right ring finger. Now deeply exhale through your right nostril only.
- Next, inhale from your right nostril. After a full deep inhalation, close your right nostril with right thumb.
- This is one complete round. Repeat this practice for 9 rounds.
- Always end the practice as you exhale through both nostrils as normal breathing.

Subtle Aspects:

- The first symptoms of correct practice are the feeling of freshness, energy and lightness of the body and mind.
- Exhalation should be longer than inhalation to enhance relaxation.
- If you inhale forcefully, you may get a headache, heaviness of the head after the practice.
- Hand position should be neutral with the shoulders relaxed and breath should follow its natural rhythm.

Benefits:

- Nadi Shuddhi cleanses the nasal tract and promotes balance between the two nostrils.
- Increases the vitality; lowers stress and anxiety; induces tranquility, clarity of thought, and concentration.
- Increases the digestive fire & appetite.
- This practice is beneficial for respiratory disorders such as Bronchial Asthma, and Nasal Allergies. However, it should be avoided during moderate to severe blockage of nose.
- Basal Metabolic rate decreases as in the case of all other Pranayama practices.
- *Spiritual Benefit: It clears pranic blockages and balances Ida and Pingala nadis, causing Sushumna nadi to flow which leads to deep states of meditation and spiritual awakening.*
- *Spiritual Benefit: It helps to maintain Brahmacharya, which is a prerequisite for spiritual progress.*

Surya Anuloma Viloma



Limitations:

Hypertensive patients, heart patients, very skinny persons with eating disorders should avoid this practice.

Sthiti: Vajrasana, Sukhasana or Padmasana & right hand in nasika mudra.

Practice:

- Close your left nostril with your right ring and little fingers. Do deep inhalation through your right nostril.
- Then again exhale from your right nostril.
- This is one complete round.
- Repeat this practice for 9 rounds.
- Keep your left nostril closed with your right ring and little fingers throughout the practice.
- Always end the practice as you exhale through both nostrils as normal breathing.

Benefits:

- *Lungs, heart and stomach get purified.*
- *Rhythmic breathing is the result*
- *Lung capacity increases*
- *Helps in curing diseases pertaining to lungs*
- *Heart-beat gets normalized*
- *Surya Anuloma Viloma is beneficial in obesity.*

Chandra Anuloma Viloma



Limitations:

Obesity patients and allergic persons should avoid this practice

Sthiti: Vajrasana, Sukhasana or Padmasana & right hand in nasika mudra.

Practice:

- Close your right nostril with your right thumb. Deep inhale through your left nostril.
- Then again exhale from your left nostril.
- This is one complete round.
- Repeat this practice for 9 rounds.
- Close your right nostril with your right thumb throughout the practice.

Benefits:

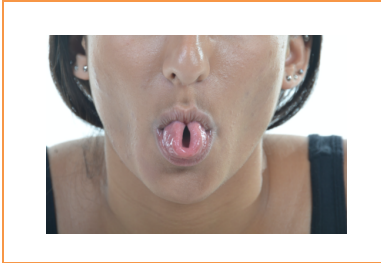
- *Lungs, heart and stomach get purified.*
- *Rhythmic breathing is the result*
- *Lung capacity increases*
- *Helps in curing diseases pertaining to lungs*
- *Heart-beat gets normalized*
- *Chandra Anuloma Viloma helps in gaining weight*

Cooling Pranayama

There are three types of cooling pranayama

- o Shitali
- o Shitkari
- o Sadanta

Shitali



Sthiti: Vajrasana,

Practice:

- Fold both sides of your tongue lengthwise and stretch the tongue out. Inhale slowly from the mouth..
- Close your mouth and exhale through your nose.
- Repeat for 9 times

Shitkari

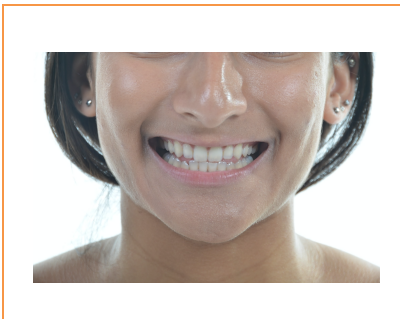


Sthiti: Vajrasana,

Practice:

- Fold your tongue upwards and bite your folded tongue gently between your teeth. There will be a space between the folded tongue on the two sides.
- Slowly inhale from your mouth. The air will enter through the space in the folded tongue.
- Close your mouth and exhale through your nose.
- Repeat for 9 times

Sadanta



Sthiti: Vajrasana,

Practice:

- Clench your teeth.
- Inhale through your mouth. The air enters through the space in between clenched teeth.
- Close your mouth and exhale through your nose.
- Repeat for 9 times.

Contraindications:

- People with Low Blood Pressure should avoid this practice.
- People suffering from cold, sore throat, bronchitis, etc. should avoid this practice.
- Practitioners with sensitive teeth, missing teeth or dentures, etc. should avoid Shitkari and Sadanta. Instead they can practice Shitali.
- Generally avoid this practice in cool climates.

Benefits:

- Induce muscular relaxation.
- Overall cooling effect is experienced.
- Soothe the eyes, ears and purify the blood.
- Quench the thirst, appease hunger and generate a feeling of satisfaction.
- The taste buds and the mouth are sensitized.
- Allergies due to cold can be effectively overcome by prolonged practice.
- Help in reducing tensions, stress and induce mental tranquility.
- Shitkari & Sadanta keep the teeth and gums healthy.
- Help reduce blood pressure and acidity.
- Cure chronic dyspepsia (indigestion), various skin diseases, inflammation of spleen, and releases even very subtle tensions.
- Expansion of awareness, which is a facet of spiritual growth, takes place as you move from Shitali (linear awareness) to Shitkari (surface awareness) and then to Sadanta (3-D awareness).

Ujjayi Pranayama



Sthiti: Sit in any meditative posture.

Practice:

- To start with, exhale completely and empty the lungs. Then, start inhaling slowly and with awareness through both nostrils with the glottis partially closed.
- Because of the partial closure of the glottis, the air flows in and out with friction thereby creating a sibilant (s) sound in the throat. This resembles the hissing sound of a snake.
- After you have completed the inhalation, exhale very slowly with the same hissing sound.
- Make the exhalation as long as possible, longer than the inhalation at 4:6 ratio.
- This is one round. Perform 9 rounds.

Notes:

- Hissing sound is produced at the throat both while inhaling and exhaling.
- Because of the hissing sound, Ujjayi is also known as “Hissing Pranayama “
- The inhalations and exhalations should be slow, continuous.

Contraindications:

- Heart disease and low blood pressure.

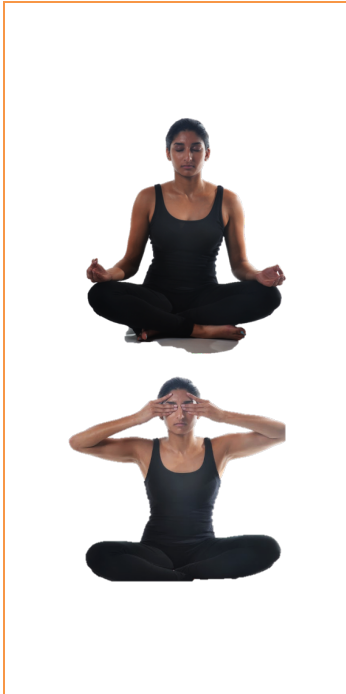
Benefits:

- Tranquilizing practice with a healing effect.
- Soothes the nervous system, calms the mind, and lowers blood pressure and heart rate.
- Induces a meditative state.

Variations:

- One can practice only exhalation Ujjayi for better relaxation.

Bhramari (Bee Sound Breathing)



Sthiti: Vajrasana or Padmasana or Sukhasana

Practice with ears open:

- Close your mouth with your tongue touching the upper palate of your mouth. Your upper and lower teeth should be separated. You may adopt Chin Mudra.
- Chant N-Kara (N sound) while exhaling with a high pitch 3 times (or more). Bring the sound from the back of your throat. Inhale and begin....
- Relax and observe the silence with sound awareness.

With eyes and ears closed

- Gently close your eyes with your first three fingers and close your ears by gently placing your thumb into your ears or by pressing the flap of your ear. [Do not plug your ears firmly].
- Close your mouth with your tongue touching the upper palate of your mouth.

Notes:

- Start with 5 to 10 rounds of Bhramari in the beginning and slowly increase to 10 or 15 minutes.
- You may choose to cup your eyes with your palms as in palming. This is beneficial for people with eye problems or can be practiced for alleviating stress or headache.
- Can be practiced any time to relieve mental tension.
- If practiced in a group environment, you may keep your ears open to enjoy the collective vibration.
- Variation: Chanting M-Kara sound in a lower pitch is a variation of Bhramari and can be chanted before and after the high pitch N-Kara Sound.

Benefits:

- Creates a soothing effect on the nervous system.
- Cultures the voice and increases the melody.
- Relieves stress and cerebral tension.
- Reduces anger, anxiety, insomnia and blood pressure.
- Good for all psychosomatic problems as it reduces stress and tension.
- Eliminates throat ailments (tonsils, pains, etc.).
- Speeds up the healing of the body tissue, therefore may be practiced after surgery.
- Develops 3-Dimensional awareness.
- It expands further towards all pervasive awareness.
- It induces a meditative state by harmonizing the mind and directing the awareness inwards.

Nadanusandhana

Nadanusandhana has 4 sections. (Refer the pictures of Sectional breathing)

A-KARA

Sthiti: Vajrasana, Sukhasana or Padmasana

Practice:

- Hands in chin mudra. The palms facing upwards. Put your hands on your thighs. Inhale.
- Chant A-kara (sound a) while exhaling from the stomach. Feel the resonance of the sound in the lower regions of the body (legs).
- Repeat for 9 times.

U-KARA

Sthiti: Vajrasana, Sukhasana or Padmasana

Practice:

- Hands in chinmaya mudra. The palms facing upwards. Put your hands on your thighs. Inhale.
- Chant U-Kara (sound U) while exhaling from the chest. Feel the resonance of the sound in the middle regions of the body (trunk).
- Repeat for 9 times.

M-KARA

Sthiti: Vajrasana, Sukhasana or Padmasana

Practice:

- Hands in adi mudra. The palms facing upwards. Put your hands on your thighs. Inhale.
- Chant M-Kara (sound M) while exhaling from the shoulder region. Feel the resonance of the sound in the upper regions (head).
- Repeat for 9 times.

A-U-M KARA

Sthiti: Vajrasana, Sukhasana or Padmasana

Practice:

- Hands in Brahma mudra. Put your hands on your thighs. Inhale.
- Divide the breath into 4 equal parts; first three parts to chant A-U-M-Kara (sound Aum) during exhalation and the 4th part is a silent part in which you maintain inner silence.
- Feel the resonance of the sound in whole body.
- Repeat for 9 times.

Points to note:

- Different sounds like A, U, M & A-U-M combined are produced loudly so that they generate a fine resonance all over the body. (Resonance will occur only when the frequency of the generated sound matches with the natural frequency of the body).
- These resonant sounds act as stimulations & the post-resonance silence deepens the awareness and releases subtle tensions.
- Therefore, while producing different sounds (A, U, M & A-U-M combine) try to adjust the pitch in such a way that a fine resonance is achieved.

Relaxation Techniques

Instant Relaxation Technique (IRT)

Sthiti: Shavasana

Practice:

- Bring your legs together, join the heels and toes together and place the palms by the side of the thighs.
- Start tightening from your toes.
- Tighten the ankle joints, and calf muscles.
- Pull up the kneecaps.
- Tighten the thigh muscles.
- Compress and squeeze your buttocks.
- Exhale and suck your abdomen in.
- Make fists and tighten the arms
- Inhale and expand the chest and hold your breath in.
- Tighten the shoulders, neck muscles and compress the face.
- Tighten the whole body from the toes to the head.
- Tighten. Tighten. TIGHTEN.
- Release and let go of the whole body, instantaneously. Breathe
- Legs and arms go apart with the open palms facing up.
- Collapse the whole body.
- Enjoy the instant relaxation.
- Chant **AUM** Kara.
- Slowly bring your legs together and the hands by the side of the body. Take your right arm over your head and your left hand on your chest or abdomen.
- Turn over to the right side, resting on your right arm. Place your left palm on the ground in front of your chest.
- Slowly come up to a sitting position.
- Open your eyes with a few blinks when you are ready.

Contraindications :

People with hypertension should observe caution.

Quick Relaxation Technique (QRT)

Sthiti: Shavasana

Phase I:

- Feel the abdominal movements. Observe the movements of abdominal muscles going up and down as you breathe in and out normally. Observe 5 cycles.

Phase II:

- Synchronize the abdominal movements with deep breathing. The abdomen bulges up with inhalation and sinks down with exhalation. Observe 5 cycles.

Phase III:

- As you inhale deeply and slowly, energize the body and feel the lightness. As you exhale completely collapse all the muscles, release the tension and enjoy the relaxation. Observe Kevala Kumbhaka after each exhalation (natural cessation of breath) Observe 5 cycles.
- Chant “AAA” in a low pitch while exhaling. Feel the vibrations in the lower parts of the body.
- Slowly bring your legs together and the hands by the side of the body. Raise your right hand over your head and your left hand on your chest or abdomen.
- Turn over to the right side, resting on your right arm. Place your left palm either on your thigh or on the ground in front of your chest.
- Slowly come up to a sitting position.
- Open your eyes with a few blinks when you are ready.

Deep Relaxation Technique (DRT)

Sthiti: Shavasana

Practice:

Gently move your whole body, make yourself comfortable and relax completely.

Phase I:

- Bring your awareness to the tip of the toes, gently move your toes and relax. Sensitize the soles of your feet; loosen the ankle joints; relax the calf muscles; gently pull up the kneecaps, release and relax; relax your thighs...., squeeze your buttocks, release and relax; relax your hip region. Totally relax the lower part of your body. R..e..l..a..x.... Chant three A-sounds (A-kara) while exhaling; I..n..h..a..l..e....AAAAAA..Feel the vibration in the lower parts of your body.

Phase II:

- Bring your awareness to the middle part of your body. Observe the abdominal movements...[pause], relax your abdominal muscles and all of the internal organs... relax the chest musclesrelax your lungs and heart... relax.... Bring your awareness to your back. Relax your lower back... crawl up vertebrae by vertebrae.... relax your middle back and all the way up to the neck. relax your shoulders. Bring your awareness to the arms.. Relax your fingers one by one. Relax your palms, your wrist joints..... forearms....elbow joints....triceps and biceps ... the arms are relaxed.... Shift your awareness to your neck....(optionally and time permitting.... slowly turn your head to the right and left, again bring it back to the center....) Relax the neck. Relax the middle part of your body, totally relax. R..e..l..a..x.... Let us chant 3 U-kara while exhaling; I..n..h..a..l..e....UUUUUU; Feel the vibration in the middle part of your body.

Phase III:

- Bring your awareness to your head and facial region. Relax the cheeks and the chin with a beautiful and gentle smile. Relax your chin, drop the lower jaw, relax the jaws, relax your teeth.... relax your tongue.. let it fall freely inside the mouth.... .and relax your lips...relax your throat and vocal chords. Bring your awareness to your nose.... feel the warm air touching the walls of your nostrils as you exhale... the cool air touching the walls of the nostrils as you inhale. Relax your eyeballs and collapse them into the eye sockets... Relax your forehead and temples.... Relax your ears, relax the sides of your head....back of the head and crown of the head. Relax your entire head region, totally relax. R...e...l...a...x.... (Optionally..Chant three M-kara while exhaling; I..n..h..a..l..e....MMMMM..... Feel the vibration in your head region)

Phase IV:

- Observe your whole body from toes to head and relax, chant an AUM in a single breath. Feel the resonance throughout the body.

Phase V:

- Slowly come out of the body consciousness and visualize your body lying on the ground completely collapsed.

Phase-VI:

- Imagine the vast beautiful blue sky. The limitless blue sky. Expand your awareness as vast as the blue sky. Merge yourself into the blue sky. You are becoming the blue sky. You are the blue sky. Enjoy the infinite bliss. E..N..J..O..Y.... the blissful state of silence and all pervasive awareness.

Phase-VII:

- Slowly come back to body consciousness. Chant an “AUM” kara as you exhale.... I..n..h..a..l..e A...U..M. Feel the resonance throughout the body, soothing and massaging effect from toes to the head.

Phase –VIII:

- Gently give some movement to your toes and fingers. Feel the lightness, alertness and movement of energy throughout the body. Slowly bring your legs together and the hands by the side of the body. Stretch both arms over your head.. Stretch from toes to fingers. Bring the right hand on the abdomen, Turn over to the left side and come up to a sitting position when you are ready. (Or you can turn to the right side and come up)

Kriyas (Special Techniques)

The literal meaning of the Sanskrit word *Kriya* is an action or deed. In Yoga discipline however, *Kriyas* refer to cleansing practices. Bathing, washing the face, brushing the teeth, etc., are all kriyas. But Yoga kriyas, special Yoga techniques, are meant to cleanse the inner organs. Among several kriyas available in the yogic lore, six major kriyas called Shat Kriyas are quite comprehensive.

They are:

- 1) Trataka for eyes
- 2) Neti for upper nasal tract (from nostrils to throat)
- 3) Kapalabhati for lower respiratory tract (from nostrils to lungs)
- 4) Dhouti for upper G.I.T. up to stomach
- 5) Nauli for abdominal muscles and viscera (Agnisara is the preparatory phase for Nauli)
- 6) Basti for lower G.I.T. especially for the rectum (Shankha prakshalana is for the entire G.I.T.)

Objectives :

- Cleanse the inner tracts, namely, the optical path, respiratory tract and gastrointestinal tract, thereby refreshing the inner paths. Tardiness is thereby removed.
- Develop an inner awareness.
- Desensitize the possible hypersensitive reactions in the pathways (as in nasal allergy)
- Build stamina and willpower.
- Simulate the body system by either an external medium or by will power.

Note: Relax deeply after the kriyas and often even during the kriya practice itself.

Among the Kriyas mentioned above only the following kriyas are covered during the course:

- 1) Trataka
- 2) Jala Neti
- 3) Kapalabhati
- 4) Agnisara (Preparatory phase for Nauli).

Teaching Tips

- 1) Refer to the medical reports before introducing the kriyas. Hypertension patients, I.H.D. and other heart problem cases, should not be introduced to kriyas to start with.
- 2) Ask them to practice slowly and for lesser duration in the beginning. Repeat if necessary.
- 3) Give good relaxation while sitting or in Shavasana.
- 4) Increase duration and/or speed depending on their progress and the forbearance power.

Trataka Session

The whole session takes about 30 mins.

Eye Exercises

- Up & Down or Vertical movements of Eyeballs: ↑ ↓
 - Number of Rounds:10 -Palming: Simple Palming.
- Right & Left or Horizontal Movement of Eye Balls: ←L R→
 - Number of rounds: 10 -Palming: Simple Palming.
- Diagonal movement of Eyeballs:
 - Right Up & Left Down
 - Left Up & Right Down
 - 10 rounds of each followed by Press & Release Palming
- Rotational or Circular Movement of Eyeballs
 - Clockwise: 10 rounds
 - Anticlockwise: 10 rounds
- End with Palming of hands without applying too much pressure.

Jatr Trataka (Hand movements, cleansing the Eyes)

1) Vama Jatr Trataka (Left Shoulder trataka):

- Stretch the left arm, thumb stretched vertically and other fingers closed inwards. Thumb should be at the same level as the eyes.
- Slowly rotate the left arm leftwards with the shoulder as the hinge. Keep staring at the midpoint of the thumb. Without turning your neck, only with your eyes follow the thumb until it is barely visible from the corner of your eye.
- Maintain for 30 seconds to 1 minute.
- Slowly return to center (front). Do palming.

2) Dakshina Jatr Trataka (Right shoulder Trataka):

- Perform the same Practice as Vama Jatr Trataka with the right arm and right thumb
- Repeat the Vama Jatr Trataka and Dakshina Jatr Trataka alternately one after the other for 5 times.

3) Ubhaya Jatr Trataka (Defocusing):

- Hold out both arms and both thumbs at the level of the eyes. Stare at the midpoints of both the thumbs.
- Slowly start moving the right arm to the right and the left arm to the left. Both midpoints should be stared at simultaneously without turning the neck. Maintain the position for about a minute.
- Slowly return to center (original position). Do palming.
- Repeat 5 times

4) Urdhva Mukha Trataka (Upward gaze):

- Keep the left thumb horizontally at the level of the eye. Stare at the midpoint of the thumb.
- Slowly start raising the thumb upwards and follow the eye movements focused on the midpoint of the thumb. Do not move the head up with your eyes. Maintain for ½ min to 1 min.
- Slowly release by bringing down the same. Do palming.

5) Adho Mukha Trataka (Downward gaze Trataka):

- Repeat the same with the right arm.

- Instead of right arm going up, it should go down.
 - Again only eyes should follow. No neck movements.
 - Do extensive palming for 2 – 3 minutes in the end.
- 6) **Bhramadhy Trataka (Center of the eyebrows Trataka)**
- Place the tip of the thumb of the right hand on the middle of the forehead between the two eyebrows.
 - Feel the touch. Stare at the middle point of the forefinger as you start taking it away horizontally at the same level until your right arm is fully stretched. After a few seconds slowly bring the finger nearer and almost touching the center of the two eyebrows. Do palming.
 - Repeat 3 times. Palming for 2 minutes to release all the strain from the eyes.
- 7) **Nasagra Trataka (Tip of the nose Trataka):**
- Place the tip of the right thumb at the tip of the nostrils (Nasagra). Feel the touch. Stare at it.
 - Slowly start taking the finger away from the nose tip along the nasal line.
 - When the right arm is fully stretched continue staring for about a minute.
 - Return slowly until the tip of the finger touches the nasagra. Perform palming.
 - Repeat 3 times.

Jyoti Trataka (Candle Flame Gazing)

Preparation

- Arrange a burning candle with the flame at the same height as the eyes at a distance of about a meter.
- Sit in any meditative posture – Padmasana or Vajrasana comfortably with spine erect (remove glasses).
- Start gazing at the flame without blinking.
- Learn to ignore the irritation and watering of the eyes.
- Perform palming after completion by closing the eyes and placing the palms on the eyes in such a way that the center dip of the palms exerts no pressure on the eyeballs but all the muscles surrounding the eyeballs will be under pressure. Hold the pressure for 10 to 20 seconds and release the palms gradually. Feel the deep relaxation. Repeat to relieve all tension caused by staring.
- With practice, the gaze becomes steady, making the mind single pointed. Relaxation of the eyes through palming is important. Otherwise, excessive strain of the eye muscles may cause headaches.
- Progress slowly starting with 10 seconds and increasing the duration by 10 seconds per week, up to 3 minutes.

The cleansing process activates the tear glands, purifies the optical system, promotes good concentration and strengthens the will power. Generally, it cures the eye defects, if done properly.

Practice:

- Focusing: On the whole flame – Stage 1
 - Press & Release Palming
- Intensive Focusing: On the Tip of the Wick – Stage 2
 - Palming with Constant Pressure

Tips for stages 1 and 2:

- Continuously gaze at the flame.
- No blinking or winking.
- Smooth and effortless gazing.
- Use your “willpower” and ignore watering or irritation in the eyes.
- Gazing for 30 to 60 seconds.
- Defocusing: (in 4 steps)
 - Step 1: Focus on the whole flame for a few seconds.
 - Step 2: Slowly defocus your attention, i.e. a defocused look at the flame.
 - Expand your vision.
 - See the aura around the flame, gradually becoming bigger & bigger.
 - Also see the small-small light particles around the flame.
 - Enjoy this expansive state for about a minute.
 - Step 3: Again focus on the whole flame for a few seconds.
 - Step 4: Close your eyes and visualize the “AFTER-IMAGE” of the flame between eyebrows.
 - As the image disappears, go for palming.
 - Palming: Palming with Bhramari (5 rounds)
- Silence:
 - At the end of it all, sit quiet for some time and observe the changes taking place inside you.

Tips for Trataka Practitioners

- Remove glasses, wristwatches, belts, & be quite comfortable in the posture.
- Sit with your head, neck and spine upright.
- Always open the eyes while blinking.
- During Jyoti Trataka, when you open the eyes, don't look at the flame right away. Start looking at the floor and then bring your gaze into the flame.
- During exercises you must not move your head. Only eyeballs move.
- During Trataka practices try not to blink or move the eyeballs in any way.
- During palming don't let the palms touch or press the eyeballs. (Palms and not fingers cover the eyes).
- During palming do very slow & deep breathing with awareness.
- Palms are placed such that there is complete darkness to the eyes.
- The facial muscles, eyebrows and eyelids should remain totally relaxed-a beautiful smile on the face.
- Trataka should be performed after asanas and pranayama.
- Trataka must be practiced on a steady flame.
- The practitioner must avoid undue strain to the eyes.

Benefits and Contraindications of Trataka Practice

Benefits:

Physical:

- It keeps away the eyestrain by improving the stamina of eye muscles and by giving deep relaxation to them.
- It makes the eyes clear, bright and radiant.
- It cleanses the tear glands and purifies the optical system.

Important note:

Those who suffer from insomnia and mental tension should perform this practice (of gazing continuously) for 10 to 15 minutes to one hour before sleeping at night.

Therapeutic:

- Observatory Refraction Errors get corrected as the external eye muscles improve.
- It strengthens the ciliary muscles (short & long sightedness is benefited).
- It balances the nervous system, relieving nervous tension, anxiety, depression and insomnia.

Spiritual:

- It helps to develop concentration and improves memory.
- It helps to develop a stronger will power.
- It is an excellent preparation for meditation.

Limitations:

- Glaucoma patient should avoid (or do under proper guidance)
- Epileptics should avoid candle flame gazing. They can, however, choose a totally steady object to gaze on.
- People with eye infection should avoid.
- In case of burning sensations in the eyes or headache, one should avoid this practice.

Neti (Clearing Nasal Passages)

There are four types of “Neti” in general practice, namely: Jala Neti, Sutra Neti, Dugdha Neti (performed with milk) and Ghruta Neti (performed with ghee – purified butter). Only two kinds are described here. **Neti should be performed under the guidance and instruction of an experienced instructor**

Jala Neti:



- Add about half a teaspoon of salt to Neti pot full of lukewarm water. Hold the pot in the right hand. Insert the nozzle of the pot into the right nostril. Keep the mouth open to allow free breathing through the mouth.
- Tilt the head, first slightly backward, then forward and sideways to the left so the water from the pot enters the right nostril and comes out through the left by gravity. Allow the flow till the pot is empty.
- Repeat the same on the left side.
- Blast out the air accumulated in both the nostrils by active exhalations through alternate nostrils in Kapalabhati to cleanse the nasal passages of the remaining water.
- Relax in Shavasana. (This is a must).

Benefits:

It helps to clear the nasal passages. Removes cold, hypersensitivity, headache, sinusitis, bronchitis and stimulates the olfactory nerves.

Limitations:

Neti should be avoided if you have had a recent ear infection or nasal septum operation. Also avoid neti for a few days after a bleeding nose.

Sutra Neti:



- Insert the blunt end of a thin, soft rubber catheter horizontally into the right nostril.
- Gently push it along the floor of the nose until the tip is felt in the back of the throat.
- Insert the right index and middle finger through the mouth and catch the tip of the catheter at the back of the throat.
- Pull it out through the mouth and gently massage the nasal passage by catching the two ends of the catheter.
- Remove the catheter through the nose.

- Rinse if needed and repeat on the left side. Relax in Shavasana.

Note:

- Take care not to push the catheter vertically into the nostril.
- Before you start the practice, cut and trim the nails of your fingers as it may injure the throat when you are trying to grasp the tip of the catheter.

Benefits:

Clears the nasal passages and pharynx. Tremendous will power increase during the insertion of the catheter. Decreases sensitivity to dust pollution etc. in nasal allergy patients.

Limitations :

Neti should be avoided if you have had a recent ear infection or nasal septum operation. Avoid sutra neti if you have back pain, hypertension or cardiac problems or if you are pregnant. Also avoid neti for a few days after a bleeding nose.

Kapalabhati Kriya (Quick Breathing)

(Refer to Pranayama section for detailed instructions and pictures.)

This kriya, washes out the carbon dioxide from the blood, activates the brain cells, cleans the air passages and stimulates the abdominal organs.

- Sit comfortably in Padmasana or Vajrasana or Sukhasana with spine erect.
- Exhale forcibly as a burst through nose using the abdominal muscles.
- Inhale passively through the nose by relaxing the abdominal muscles.
- Repeat as quickly as possible starting with 60 strokes per minute and increasing gradually up to 120 per minute.
- There is no holding of the breath.
- The rapid active exhalations with passive effortless inhalations are accomplished by flapping movements of the abdomen. At the end of the minute there is an automatic suspension of breath (Kevala Kumbhaka). Enjoy the deep silence of mind associated with this practice.

Alternate Nostril Kapalabhati

In alternate nostrils Kapalabhati, the air is forced out during bursts of exhalation through alternate nostrils. The speed is maintained at the same level at 120 strokes per minute.

Agnisara Kriya

This is a practice of flapping the abdomen with Uddiyana Bandha lock. Details about Uddiyana bandha can be found on page . This practice squeezes and massages all the internal organs of the abdomen.

Method:

- Exhale completely through the mouth;
- Expand the chest by mock inhalation movement sucking in the relaxed abdominal muscles so that they lie flat almost in touch with the backbone.
- Flap your abdomen by sucking the abdominal muscles and relaxing them alternately until you have a need to inhale. Release the bandha, the abdominal muscles and inhale while coming back up into Tadasana.



Note:

This is practiced at the end of exhalation (Rechaka Kumbhaka) before the beginning of inhalation (Puraka).

Benefits:

Improves digestive system and is good for diabetes, asthmatics and other ailments involving abdominal organs.

Limitations: People with ulcers and ulcerative colitis should avoid this practice.

Bandhas and Mudras

Bandhas and Mudras are neuro-muscular locks and gestures. Bandhas are safety locks used during the process of breath holding kumbhaka. These bandhas and mudras are advanced techniques in Hatha Yoga used mainly for the culturing of emotions. They also help the aspirants to still the mind.

All bandhas and mudras can be practiced either in Sitting or Standing pose.

Bandhas

Mula Bandha (Anus-lock/Root-lock)

Method:

In Sukhasana, Padmasana or Ardha Padmasana, press the perineum with the left heel, keep the right heel above the genital organs and contract the anus.

Uddiyana Bandha (Fly-up lock)

“Ud” “Di” in Sanskrit means to “Fly up”. Here it is said that for the Yogi who practices this regularly, his Prana moves up through the subtle centers. The significance of Uddiyana is to restrain the breath and hence is called a Bandha or Lock.

Method:

- Exhale completely through the mouth;
- Expand the chest by mock inhalation movement sucking in the relaxed abdominal muscles so that they almost are in touch with the backbone.
- This is practiced at the end of exhalation (Rechaka Kumbhaka) before the beginning of inhalation (Puraka).
- Maintain for some time and then exhale slowly and then inhale slowly.



Jalandhara Bandha (Glottis-lock)

This is used for restraining the breath below the level of the glottis after inhalation in Antarkumbhaka.

Method:

- Contract the throat; press the chin firmly against the chest at the jugular notch after inhaling.
- The breath is stopped at the throat.
- With gradual practice the pressure of air on the glottis will be released and the whole system will be relaxed, while the breath gets stopped near the throat.

These three bandhas Uddiyana, Jalandhara and Mula Bandhas form one group called **Bandha Traya (The Trinity Lock)**. These Bandhas are used exclusively as locks during Kumbhaka i.e. to restrain and close the passage for the breath. Uddiyana Bandha is used in Bahya Kumbhaka and Jalandhara Bandha during Antarya Kumbhaka. Mula Bandha can be done during Puraka, Kumbhaka, and Rechaka and also in meditation and Japa. This Bandha prevents the building up of tension in the head.

Mudras

Mudras are very simple yogic gestures used to evoke certain positive feelings. A large variety of them are used in dance. When they are used in Yoga they evoke the Prana and set it in different patterns. In Yoga, they increase awareness, evoke and harness emotions through neuromuscular coordination. Probably they act on the glandular system. Physiology of mudras is yet to be understood.

Derived from the root (Nuda Garsabe) mudras are those yogic practices, which bring joy and bliss, energy and enthusiasm. They can be categorized into the following 7 groups:

1. Kriya Mudras
2. Asana Mudras
3. Pranayama Mudras
4. Shakti Calini Mudras
5. Dhyana Mudras
6. Jnana Mudras
7. Hasta Mudras

Mudras associated with different yogic practices like kriyas, asanas, pranayamas, etc. are termed thus. Many permutations and combinations of these basic groups form a wide gamut of mudras. Some of the selected mudras are presented here.

Asana Mudras: (Gestures using Postures)

Asana mudras are particular asanas often used with breath locks to calm down the mind by harmonizing pranic flows in different regions. These simple Asana Mudras are described below:

Yoga Mudra: (Yoga gesture)

Method:

- Sit in Padmasana or Vajrasana or Sukhasana, catch hold of the right wrist with the left hand behind the back.
- Bend forward and touch the floor with the forehead.
- Inhale and hold the breath.
- Release the breath and return.
- Yoga mudra can also be performed by putting the palms in between the heels and the abdominal wall before bending forward.

Benefits of Yoga Mudra: This stimulates the nervous system, especially the nerves and strengthens the abdominal and pelvic muscles. Helps in improving digestion and problems of constipation.

Maha Mudra: (Royal gesture):

Method:

- Sit with legs stretched, bend the left leg at the knee and press the perineum with the heel.
- Inhale completely and hold the breath.
- Catch hold of the big toe of the stretched right leg with both hands by bending the waist forward.
- Keep the chest up.
- Employ the Mula Bandha.
- While making a swallowing movement, bend the neck forward and press the chin in the chest.
- Employ Jalandhara Bandha.
- While maintaining, relax the head region and feel the locking of air below the throat. Maintain for some time.
- Release the lock by raising the head back, exhale slowly, and then inhale.
- Repeat this with the other leg.
- Repeat for an equal number of times on either side every day.

Benefits of Maha Mudra: Many diseases of the stomach are effectively treated by this mudra.

Vipareeta Karani Mudra:

Method:

- Sthiti: lying supine on the ground over the blanket with arms along the body.
- Raise the legs together to 45° position keeping the knees straight.
- Raise the legs further to 90°
- Raise the buttocks and the trunk by supporting the body with the palms at the waist to take the weight on the arms and elbows.
- Come to a final position with the body at 45° to the ground and the legs vertical.
- Inhale and hold the breath.
- Exhale and relax
- Repeat inhale-breath hold-exhale cycle 3 to 5 times
- Come down slowly (in the reverse order 3, 2, 1 and Sthiti) and relax.

Benefits of Vipareeta Karani Mudra: This mudra stimulates the abdominal organs and tones them up. It is very effective for persons suffering from abdominal disorders and diabetes.

Pranayama Mudras

In Pranayama, certain mudras are used to help control the breath and thereby the inner pranic forces.

Chin Mudra (the gesture of Consciousness)



Method :

- Put your hands on your knees (your palms may face upwards or downwards.)
- Bring your thumb and index finger together.
- This is used in association with abdominal breathing during sectional breathing (Vibhagiya pranayama)..

Chinmaya Mudra (the second gesture of Consciousness)



Method:

- Put your hands on your knees (your palms may face upwards or downwards.)
- Bring your thumb and index finger together.
- Fold the rest of the fingers inwards to touch the palms.
- This is used in thoracic breathing during sectional breathing (Vibhagiya pranayama).

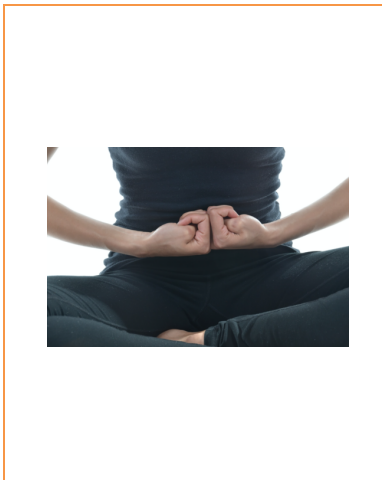
Adi Mudra (the Root Gesture)



Method:

- Put your hands on your thighs (your palms may face upwards or downwards.)
- Fold the thumb inwards and allow the rest of the fingers to wrap your thumb into a fist (not too loose or too tight).
- Placed on the thighs, Adi Mudra is used while performing Clavicle breathing of sectional breathing (Vibhagiya pranayama).

Brahma Mudra



Method:

- Take hands in Adi Mudra
- Place fists in naval region with the outer parts of the fingers touching each other.
- Brahma Mudra is used while performing full yogic breathing.



Nasika Mudra or Nasagra Mudra (Nose Gesture)



Method:

- Fold the right index and middle fingers to touch the palms and make a clamp using the thumb, ring finger and the small finger.
- Use your thumb to close the right nostril, the ring and the small fingers to close the left nostril. You should not press the fingers onto the nostrils but close the nostril by gently pressing the nostril right below the nasal bone.

Note: You may practice with left hand if needed.

This mudra is extensively used in Pranayama involving either single nostril or alternate nostril breathing like Surya Anuloma Viloma, Chandra Anuloma Viloma and Nadi Shuddhi etc.

Namaskara/Anjali Mudra



Method:

This is the most common palms-together gesture used to greet people and also while chanting Mantras. It invokes a feeling of humility and surrender.

Note: Dhyana Mudras invoke the feeling of love, compassion and surrender and helps in enhancing the meditative effect.

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