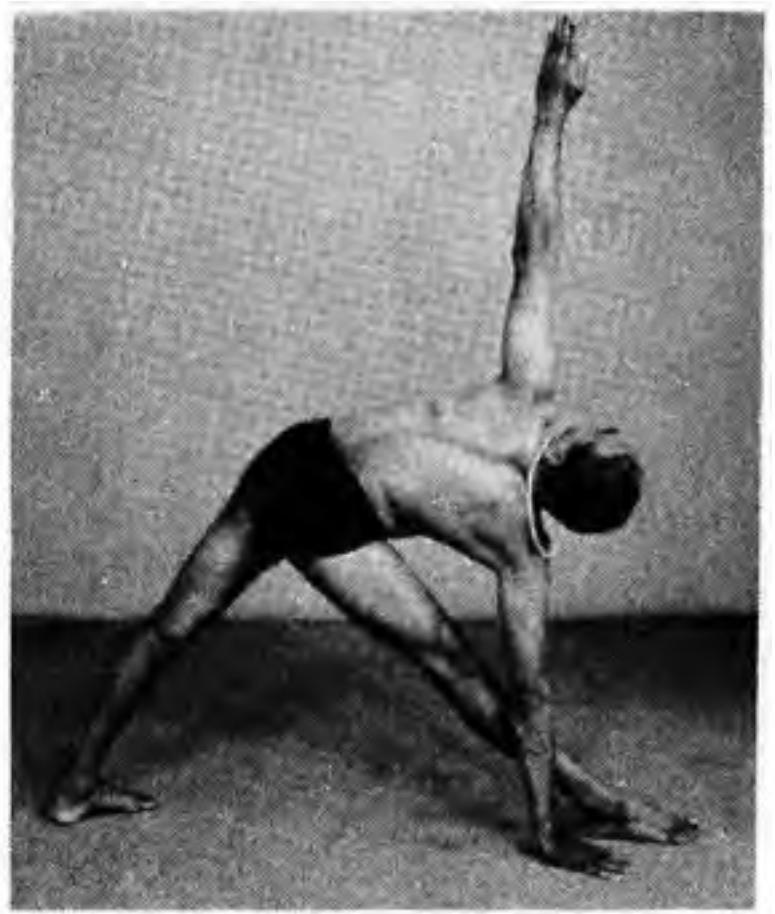




4



5

outstretched left hand. Keep the right knee locked tight by pulling up the knee-cap and keep the right knee facing the toes.

6. Remain in this position from half a minute to a minute, breathing deeply and evenly. Then lift the right palm from the floor. Inhale and return to position 2 above.

7. Now, turn the left foot sideways 90 degrees to the left, turn the right foot slightly to the left, keep both knees tight and continue from position 2 to 6, reversing all processes. Inhale and come to position 2. Hold the posture for the same length of time on the left side.

8. Exhale, and jump, coming back to Tādāsana. (Plate 1)

Effects

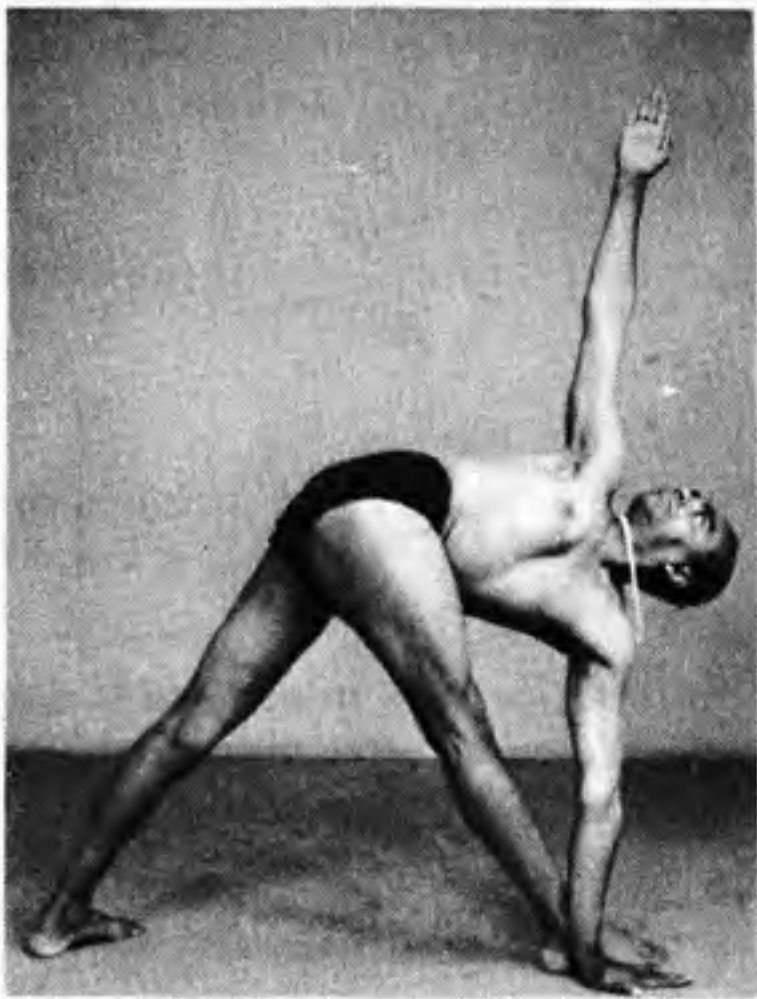
This āsana tones up the leg muscles, removes stiffness in the legs and hips, corrects any minor deformity in the legs and allows them to develop evenly. It relieves backaches and neck sprains, strengthens the ankles and develops the chest.

4. *Parivṛtta Trikoṇāsana* Five* (Plates 6 and 7)

Parivṛtta means revolved, turned round or back. Trikoṇa is a triangle. This is the revolving triangle posture. It is a counter pose to Uttihita Trikoṇāsana. (Plate 4)

Technique

1. Stand in Tādāsana. (Plate 1.) Take a deep inhalation and with a jump spread the legs apart sideways 3 to 3½ feet. Raise the arms sideways, in line with the shoulders, palms facing down. (Plate 3)
2. Turn the right foot sideways 90 degrees to the right. Turn the left foot 60 degrees to the right, keeping the left leg stretched out and tightened at the knee.
3. Exhale, rotate the trunk along with the left leg in the opposite direction (to the right) so as to bring the left palm on the floor near the outer side of the right foot.
4. Stretch the right arm up, bringing it in line with the left arm. Gaze at the right thumb. (Plates 6 and 7)



7

5. Keep the knees tight. **Do not lift the toes** of the right foot from the floor. **Remember to rest the outer side of the left foot well on the floor.**
6. Stretch both the shoulders and shoulder-blades.
7. Stay in this pose for half a minute with normal breathing.
8. Inhale, lift the left hand from the floor, rotate the trunk back to its original position and come back to position 1.

9. Exhale, repeat the pose on the left side by turning the left foot sideways 90 degrees to the left and the right foot 60 degrees to the left and place the right palm on the floor near the outer side of the left foot.
10. Stay in the pose on both sides for the same length of time, which can be adjusted by doing, say, three to four deep respirations on each side.
11. After completing the time, inhale, raise the trunk back to its original position, bring the toes to the front and keep the arms as in position 1.
12. Exhale and jump back to Tādāsana. (Plate 1.) This completes the āsana.

Effects

This āsana tones the thigh, calf and hamstring muscles. The spine and muscles of the back are also made to function properly, as the pose increases the blood supply round the lower part of the spinal region. The chest is expanded fully. The pose relieves pains in the back, invigorates the abdominal organs and strengthens the hip muscles.

5. *Utthita Pārśvakonāsana* Four* (Plates 8 and 9)

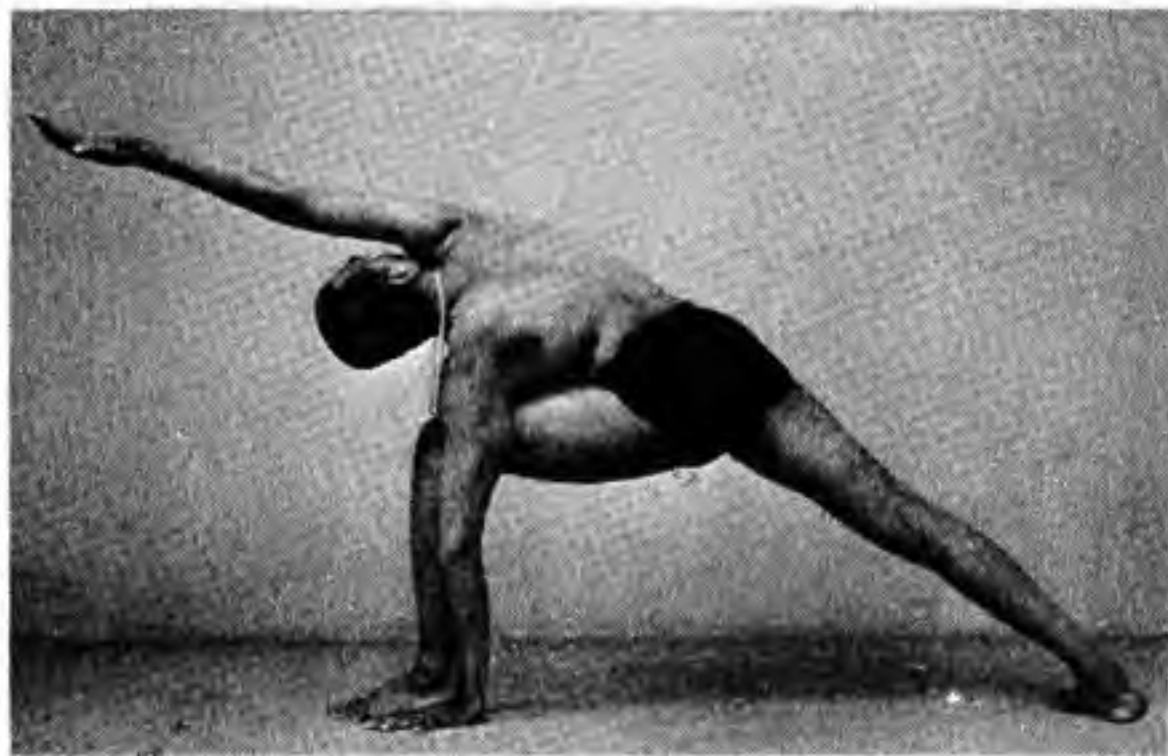
Pārśva means side or flank. Koṇa is an angle. This is the extended lateral angle pose.

Technique

1. Stand in Tādāsana. (Plate 1.) Take a deep inhalation and with a jump spread the legs apart sideways 4 to 4½ feet. Raise the arms sideways, in line with the shoulders, palms facing down. (Plate 3)
2. While exhaling slowly, turn the right foot sideways 90 degrees to the right, and the left foot slightly to the right, keeping the left leg stretched out and tightened at the knee. Bend the right leg at the knee until the thigh and the calf form a right angle and the right thigh is parallel to the floor.
3. Place the right palm on the floor by the side of the right foot, the right armpit covering and touching the outer side of the right knee. Stretch the left arm out over the left ear. Keep the head up. (Plates 8 and 9)
4. Tighten the loins and stretch the hamstrings. The chest, the hips and the legs should be in a line and in order to achieve this, move the chest up and back. Stretch every part of the body, concentrating on the back portion of the whole body, specially the spine. Stretch the spine until all the vertebrae and ribs move and there is a feeling that even the skin is being stretched and pulled.



8



9

5. Remain in this pose from half a minute to a minute, breathing deeply and evenly. Inhale and lift the right palm from the floor.
6. Inhale, straighten the right leg and raise the arms as in position 1.
7. Continue with exhalation as in positions 2 to 5, reversing all processes, on the left side.
8. Exhale and jump back to Tāḍāsana. (Plate 1)

Effects

This āsana tones up the ankles, knees and thighs. It corrects defects in the calves and thighs, develops the chest and reduces fat round the waist and hips and relieves sciatic and arthritic pains. It also increases peristaltic activity and aids elimination.

6. *Parivṛtta Pārsvakoṇāsana* Eight* (Plates 10 and 11)

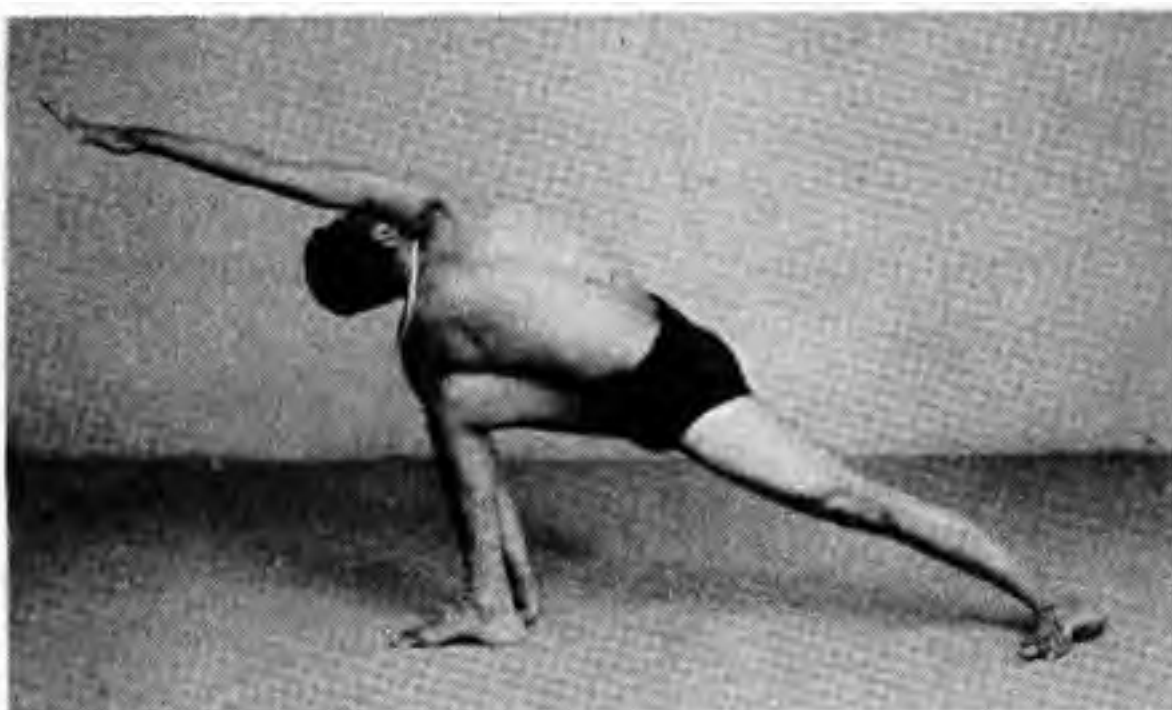
Parivṛtta means revolved, turned round or back. Pārsva means side or flank. Koṇa is an angle. This is the revolving lateral angle posture.

Technique

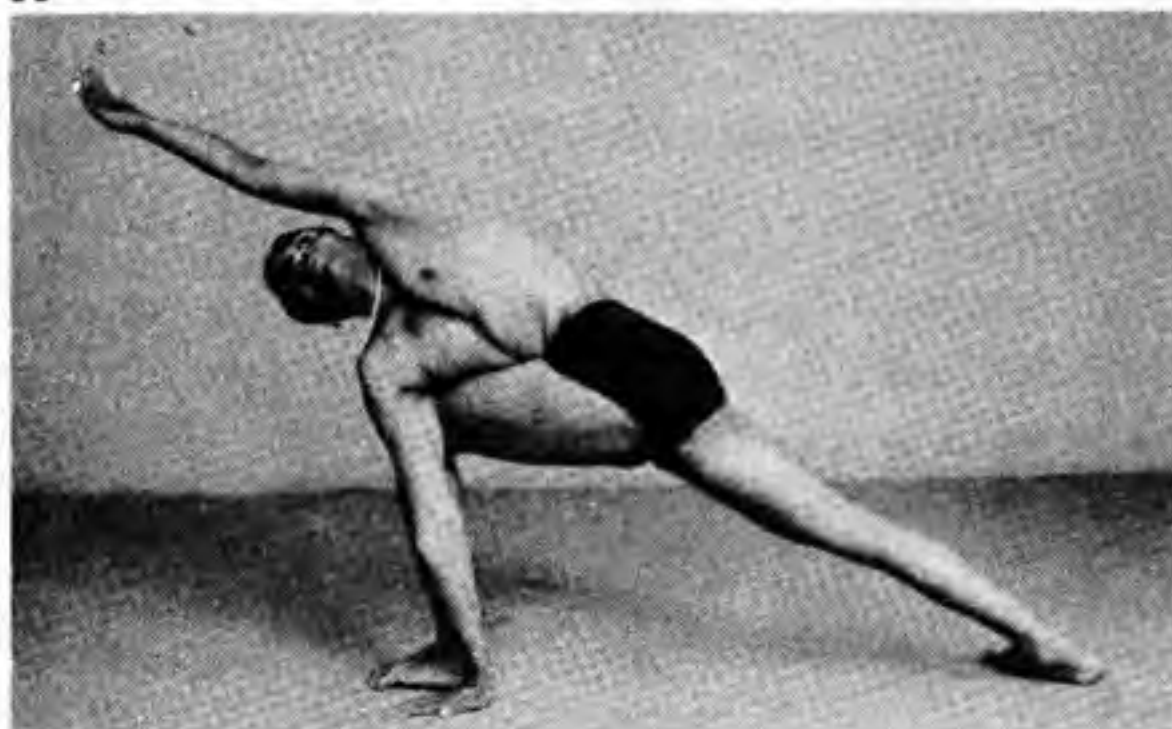
1. Stand in Tādāsana. (Plate 1)

2. Take a deep inhalation, and with a jump spread the legs apart sideways 4 to 4½ feet. Raise the arms sideways in line with the shoulders, palms down. (Plate 3)

3. Turn the right foot sideways 90 degrees to the right and the left foot 60 degrees to the right, keeping the left leg stretched out and tightened at the knee. Bend the right leg at the knee until the thigh and the calf form a right angle and the right thigh is parallel to the floor.



10



11

4. Exhale, and rotate the trunk and the left leg so as to bring the left arm over the right knee. Rest the left armpit on the outer side of the right knee, and place the left palm on the floor by the outer side of the right foot. (Plates 10 and 11)
5. Give a good twist to the spine (to the right), turn the trunk and bring the right arm over the right ear (as in the illustrations) and gaze up at the outstretched right arm. Keep the left knee tight throughout.
6. Hold this pose from half a minute to a minute, breathing deeply and evenly. Inhale, and lift the left palm from the floor. Raise the trunk and come back to position 2, by straightening the right leg and raising the arms.
7. Continue with exhalation on the left side, as in positions 3 to 5, reversing all processes.
8. In all cases where the movements are done first on one side and then on the other the time taken should be the same in each case. This general rule applies here.

Effects

This pose being a more intensified one than Parivṛtta Trikoṇāsana (Plate 6), has a greater effect. The hamstrings, however, are not stretched as much as in Parivṛtta Trikoṇāsana. The abdominal organs are more contracted and that aids digestion. The blood circulates well round the abdominal organs and the spinal column, and they are thus rejuvenated. The āsana helps to remove waste matter from the colon without strain.

7. *Vīrabhadṛāsana I* Three* (Plate 14)

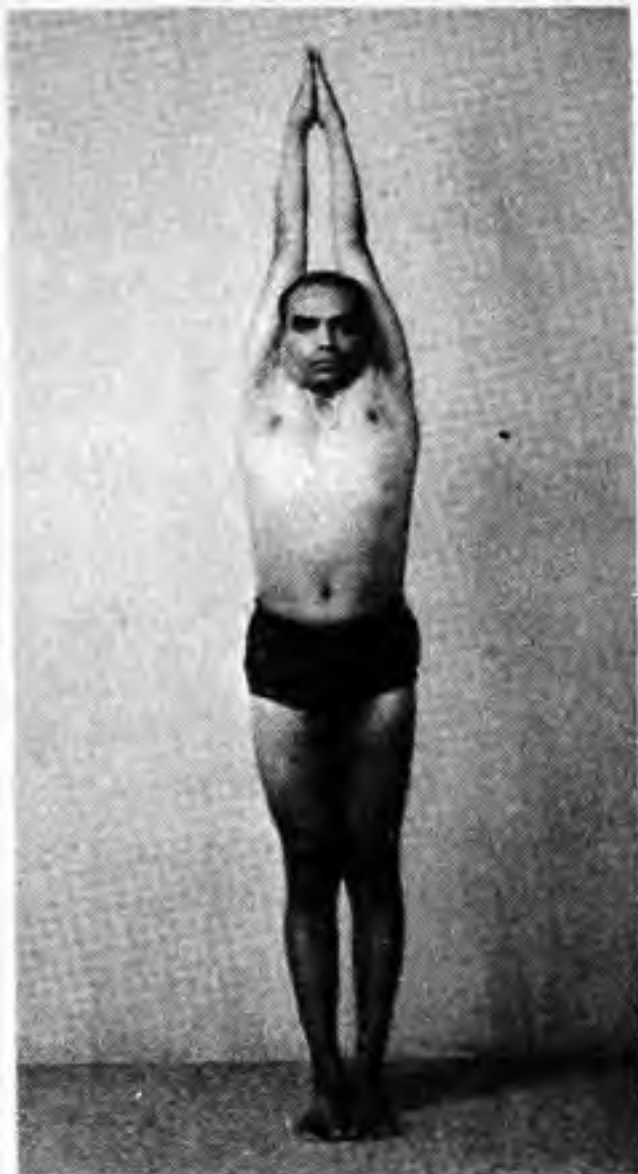
Dakṣa once celebrated a great sacrifice, but he did not invite his daughter Satī nor her husband Śiva, the chief of the gods. Satī, however, went to the sacrifice, but being greatly humiliated and insulted threw herself into the fire and perished. When Śiva heard this he was gravely provoked, tore a hair from his matted locks and threw it to the ground. A powerful hero named Vīrabhadra rose up and awaited his orders. He was told to lead Śiva's army against Dakṣa and destroy his sacrifice. Vīrabhadra and his army appeared in the midst of Dakṣa's assembly like a hurricane and destroyed the sacrifice, routed the other gods and priests and beheaded Dakṣa. Śiva in grief for Satī withdrew to Kailās and plunged into meditation. Satī was born again as Umā in the house of Himālaya. She strove once more for the love of Śiva and ultimately won his heart. The story

is told by Kālidāsa in his great poem *Kumāra sambhava* (The Birth of the War-Lord).

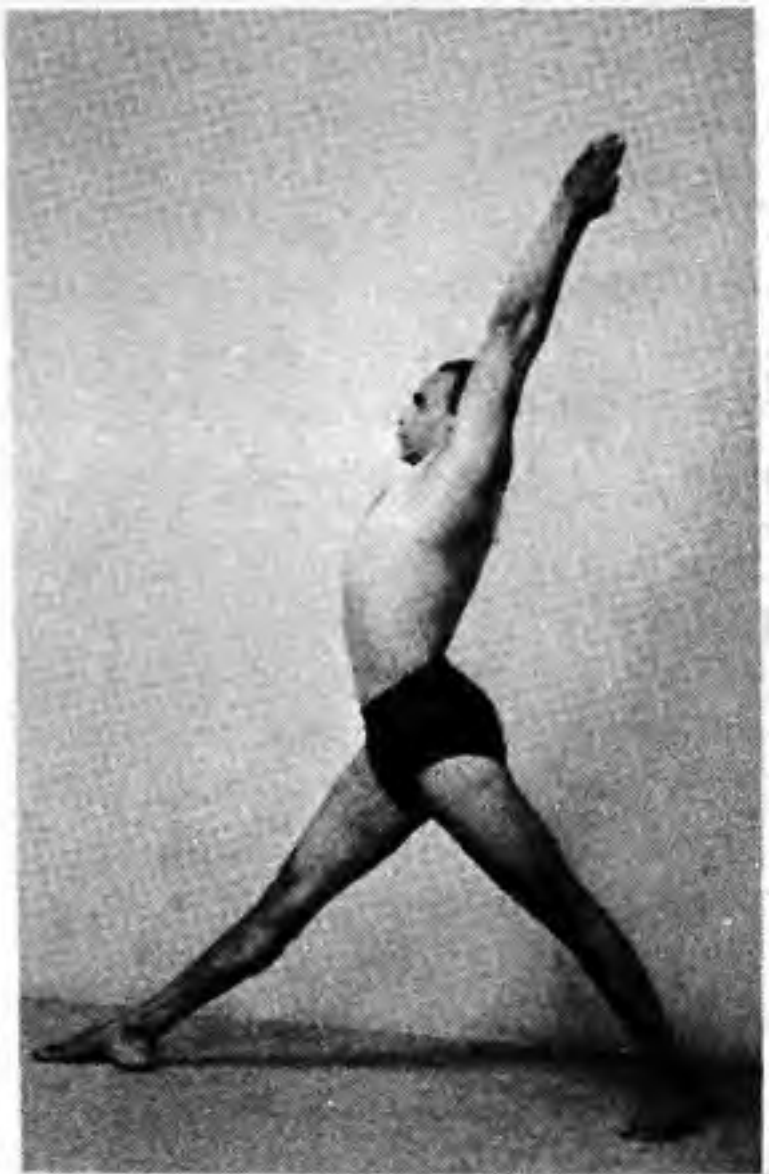
This āsana is dedicated to the powerful hero created by Śiva from his matted hair.

Technique

1. Stand in Tādāsana. (Plate 1)
2. Raise both arms above the head; stretch up and join the palms. (Plate 12)
3. Take a deep inhalation and with a jump spread the legs apart sideways 4 to 4½ feet.
4. Exhale, turn to the right. Simultaneously turn the right foot 90 degrees to the right and the left foot slightly to the right. (Plate 13.) Flex the right knee till the right thigh is parallel to the floor and the right shin perpendicular to the floor, forming a right angle between the right thigh and the right calf. The bent knee should not extend beyond the ankle, but should be in line with the heel.



12



13

5. Stretch out the left leg and tighten at the knee.
6. The face, chest and right knee should face the same way as the right foot, as illustrated. Throw the head up, stretch the spine from the coccyx and gaze at the joined palms. (Plate 14)



14

7. Hold the pose from 20 seconds to half a minute with normal breathing.
8. Repeat on the left side as in positions 4 to 6, reversing all processes.
9. Exhale and jump back to Tādāsana. (Plate 1)

*** All standing poses are strenuous, this pose in particular. It should not be tried by persons with a weak heart. Even people who are fairly strong should not stay long in this āsana.

Effects

In this pose the chest is fully expanded and this helps deep breathing. It relieves stiffness in shoulders and back, tones up the ankles and knees and cures stiffness of the neck. It also reduces fat round the hips.

8. *Vīrabhadrāsana II One** (Plate 15)

Technique

1. Stand in *Tādāsana*. (Plate 1)
2. Take a deep inhalation, and with a jump spread the legs apart sideways 4 to 4½ feet. Raise the arms sideways in line with the shoulders, palms facing down. (Plate 3)
3. Turn the right foot sideways 90 degrees to the right and the left foot slightly to the right, keeping the left leg stretched out and tightened at the knee. Stretch the hamstring muscles of the left leg.
4. Exhale and bend the right knee till the right thigh is parallel to the floor, keeping the right shin perpendicular to the floor, thus forming a right angle between the right thigh and the right calf. The bent knee should not extend beyond the ankle, but should be in line with the heel. (Plate 15)



15

5. Stretch out the hands sideways, as though two persons are pulling you from opposite ends.
6. Turn the face to the right and gaze at the right palm. Stretch the back muscles of the left leg fully. The back of the legs, the dorsal region and the hips should be in one line.
7. Stay in the pose from 20 seconds to half a minute with deep breathing. Inhale and return to position 2.
8. Turn the left foot sideways 90 degrees to the left and the right foot slightly to the left, flex the left knee and continue from positions 3 to 6 on the left side, reversing all processes.

9. Inhale, again come back to position 2. Exhale and jump back to Tādāsana. (Plate 1)

Effects

Through this pose the leg muscles become shapely and stronger. It relieves cramp in the calf and thigh muscles, brings elasticity to the leg and back muscles and also tones the abdominal organs.

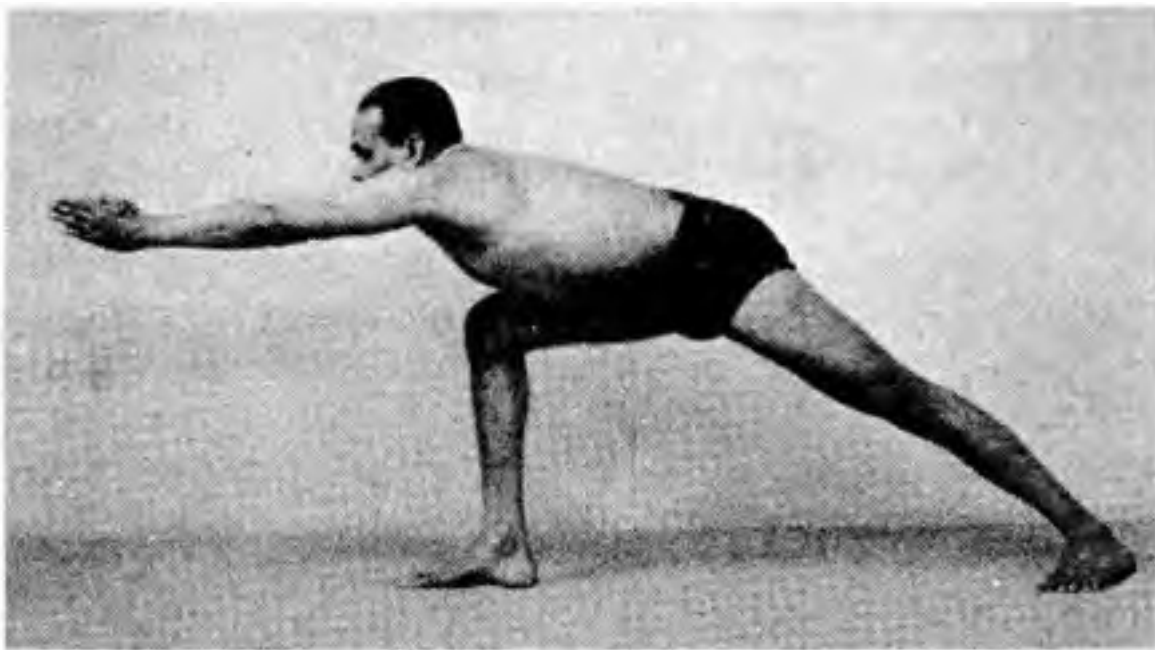
Mastery of the standing poses prepares the pupil for the advanced poses in forward bending, which can then be acquired with ease.

9. *Vīrabhadrāsana III* Five* (Plate 17)

This posture is an intensified continuation of Vīrabhadrāsana I. (Plate 14)

Technique

1. Stand in Tādāsana. (Plate 1)
2. Take a deep inhalation and with a jump spread the legs apart sideways 4 to 4½ feet. (Plate 3)
3. Come to the final pose of Vīrabhadrāsana I on the right side. (Plate 14)



16

4. Exhale, bend the trunk forward and rest the chest on the right thigh. Keep the arms straight and the palms together. (Plate 16.) Rest in this position, taking two breaths.

5. Now exhale and simultaneously lift the left leg from the floor by swinging the body slightly forward and also straighten the right leg, making it stiff as a poker. Turn the left leg inwards so that the front is parallel to the floor. (Plate 17)



17

6. Hold in this pose from 20 to 30 seconds, with deep and even breathing.
7. While balancing, the whole body (except the right leg) is to be kept parallel to the floor. The right leg, which should be fully stretched and stiff, should be kept perpendicular to the floor. Pull the back of the right thigh and stretch the arms and the left leg as if two persons are pulling you from either end.
8. Exhale and come back to Vīrabhadrāsana I. (Plate 14)
9. Repeat the pose on the left side.

Effects

The illustration (Plate 17) conveys the harmony, balance, poise and power attained by practising this āsana. It helps to contract and tone the abdominal organs and makes the leg muscles more shapely and sturdy. It is recommended for runners, as it gives vigour and agility.

All the movements of this āsana improve one's bearing and carriage. When we stand badly, by throwing the weight on the heels, we retard symmetrical growth and hamper spinal elasticity. Standing with the weight on the heels causes the stomach to protrude and lessens bodily and mental agility. This āsana helps one to stand firmly on the soles of the feet, keeps the stomach muscles in and gives agility to the body and the mind.

10. *Ardha Chandrāsana* Five* (Plate 19)

Ardha means half. Chandra is the moon. The pose resembles the half moon, hence the name.

Technique

1. Stand in Tādāsana (Plate 1) and then do Utthita Trikoṇāsana, (Plate 4), following the technique described earlier.
2. After attaining Trikoṇāsana on the right side, exhale and place the right palm about a foot away from the right foot by bending the right knee and at the same time bringing the left foot near the right one. (Plate 18)



18

3. Wait in this position and take two breaths. Then exhale and raise the left leg from the floor, toes pointing up. Stretch the right hand and the right leg.
4. Place the left palm over the left hip and stretch up, keeping the shoulders well up. Turn the chest to the left and balance. (Plate 19)



19

5. The weight of the body is borne on the right foot and hip. The right hand is only a support to control the balance.
6. Hold the pose from 20 to 30 seconds, breathing deeply and evenly. Then slide the left leg to the floor and go back to Trikoṇāsana. (Plate 4)
7. Repeat the pose on the left side.

Effects

The posture is beneficial for those whose legs are damaged or infected. It tones the lower region of the spine and the nerves connected with the leg muscles and it strengthens the knees. Along with other standing postures, this āsana cures gastric troubles.

Note. Those who feel weak and are exhausted by the standing poses should only practise Utthita Trikoṇāsana (Plate 4) and Utthita Pārśvakoṇāsana (Plate 8), as these two āsanās strengthen the body. The other standing āsanās should be done only by people who have built up their strength and whose bodies have become elastic.

11. *Utthita Hasta Pādānguṣṭhāsana* Sixteen* (Plate 23)

Utthita means extended. Hasta means the hand. Pādānguṣṭha is the big toe. This pose is done by standing on one leg, extending the other in front, holding the toe of the extended leg and resting the head on the leg.

Technique

1. Stand in Tādāsana. (Plate 1)
2. Exhale, raise the right leg by bending the knee and hold the big toe of the right foot between the thumb and the fore and middle fingers of the right hand.
3. Rest the left hand on the left hip and balance. (Plate 20.) Take two breaths.
4. Exhale, stretch the right leg forward and pull it. (Plate 21.) Take two breaths.
5. When you are firm in this position, hold the right foot with both hands and raise it still higher. (Plate 22.) Take two breaths.
6. Now, with an exhalation rest the head, then the nose and lastly the chin beyond the right knee. (Plate 23.) Stay in this position and take a few deep breaths.



20



21



22



23

7. Exhale, release the hands and lower the right leg to the floor to return to Tādāsana. (Plate 1)
8. Repeat the pose on the other side, keeping the right leg on the floor and raising the left leg.
9. Balancing in positions 5 and 6 is difficult and cannot be attained without mastering position 4.

Effects

This āsana makes the leg muscles powerful and the balance gives one steadiness and poise.

12. *Pārsvōttānāsana* Six* (Plate 26)

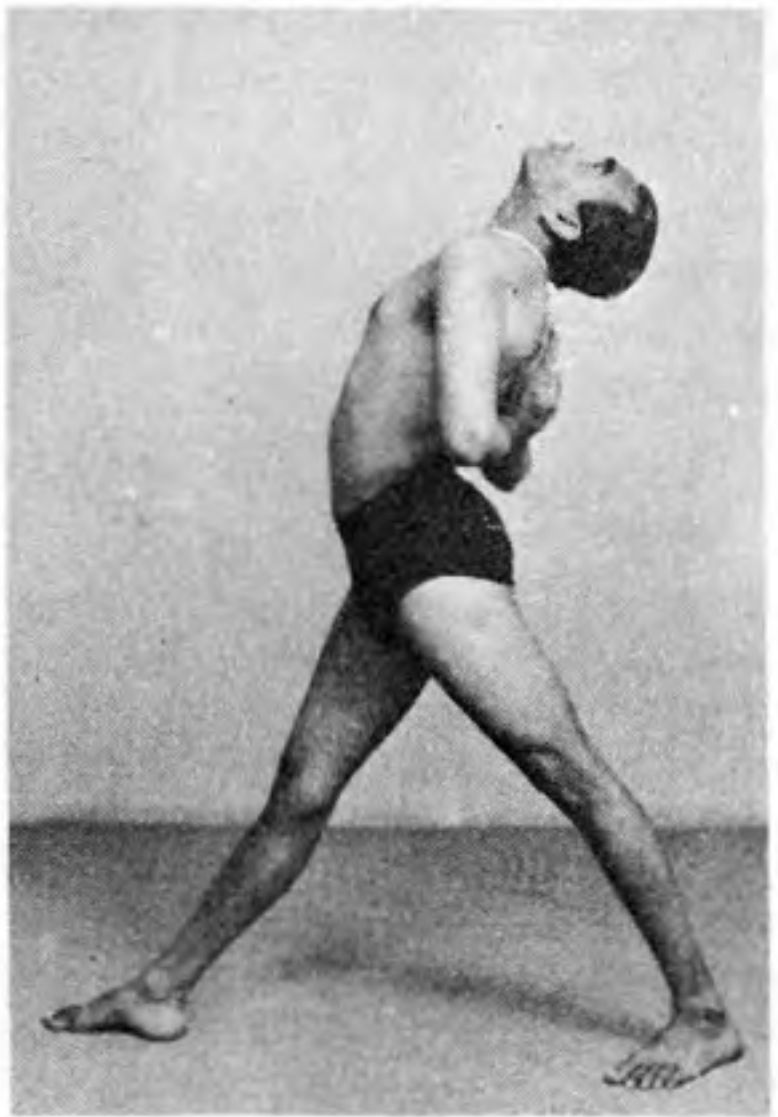
Pārsva means side or flank. Uttāna (ut=intense, and tān=to extend, stretch, lengthen) means an intense stretch. The name implies a pose in which the side of the chest is stretched intensely.

Technique

1. Stand in Tādāsana. (Plate 1.) Inhale deeply and stretch the body forward.
2. Join the palms behind the back and draw the shoulders and elbows back.
3. Exhale, turn the wrists and bring both palms up above the middle of the back of the chest, the fingers at the level of the shoulder-blades. You are doing 'namaste' (the Indian gesture of respect by folding the hands) with your hands behind your back. (Plate 24)
4. Inhale and with a jump spread the legs apart sideways 3 to 3½ feet. Stay in this position and exhale.
5. Inhale and turn the trunk to the right. Turn the right foot 90 degrees sideways to the right keeping the toes and heel in a line with the trunk; turn the left foot with the leg 75 to 80 degrees to the right and keep the left foot stretched out and the leg tightened at the knee. Throw the head back. (Plate 25)
6. Exhale, bend the trunk forward and rest the head on the right knee. Stretch the back and gradually extend the neck until the nose, then the lips and lastly the chin touch and then rest beyond the right knee. (Plate 26.) Tighten both the legs by pulling the knee-caps up.
7. Stay in the pose from 20 seconds to half a minute with normal breathing. Then slowly move the head and trunk towards the left knee by swinging the trunk round the hips. At the same time turn the



24



25



26

left foot 90 degrees towards the left and the right foot 75 to 80 degrees to the left. Now raise the trunk and head as far back as you can, without bending the right leg. This movement should be done with one inhalation.

8. Exhale, bend the trunk forward, rest the head on the left knee and gradually extend the chin beyond the left knee by stretching the neck as in position 6.

9. After holding the pose from 20 seconds to half a minute with normal breathing, inhale, move the head to the centre and the feet to their original position so that the toes point forward. Then raise the trunk up.

10. Exhale and jump back to Tāḍāsana (Plate 1), releasing the hands from the back.

11. If you cannot fold the hands together behind the back, just grip the wrist and follow the above technique. (Plates 27 and 28)



27

Effects

This āsana relieves stiffness in the legs and hip muscles and makes the hip joints and spine elastic. While the head is resting on the knees, the abdominal organs are contracted and toned. The wrists move freely and any stiffness there disappears. The posture also corrects round and drooping shoulders. In the correct pose, the shoulders are drawn well back and this makes deep breathing easier.



28

13. *Prasārita Pādōttānāsana I* Four* (Plates 33 and 34)

Prasārita means expanded, spread, extended. Pāda means a foot. The pose is one where the expanded legs are stretched intensely.

Technique

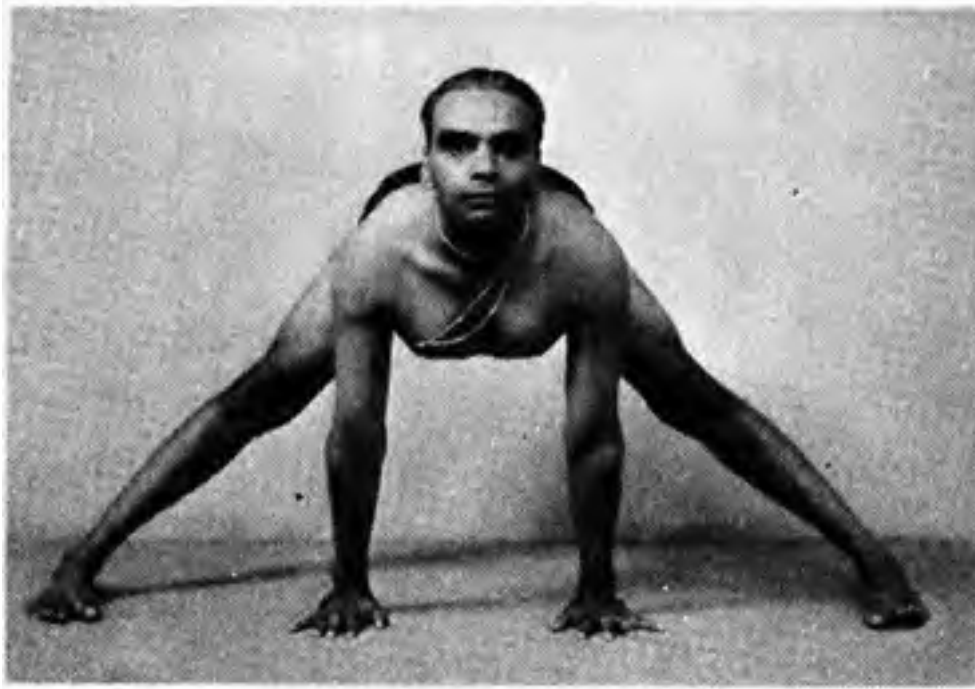
1. Stand in Tādāsana. (Plate 1)

2. Inhale, place the hands on the waist and spread the legs apart $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 feet. (Plate 29)



29

3. Tighten the legs by drawing up the knee-caps. Exhale, and place the palms on the floor in line with the shoulders between the feet. (Front view Plate 30)

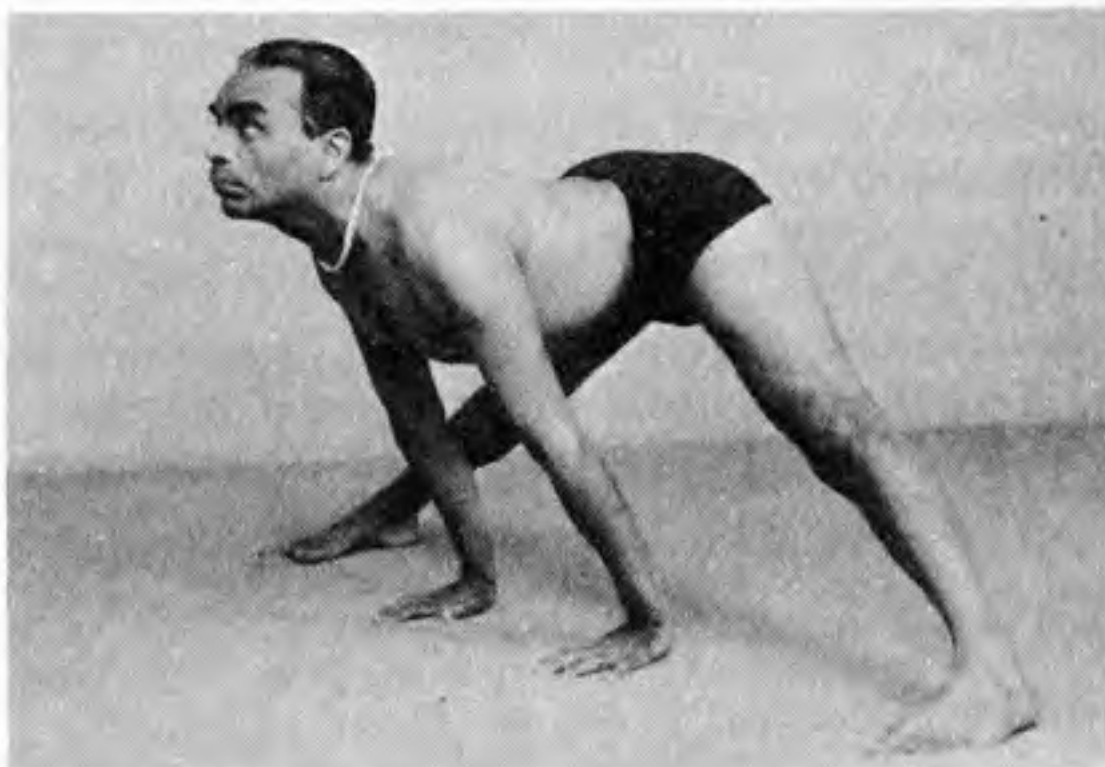


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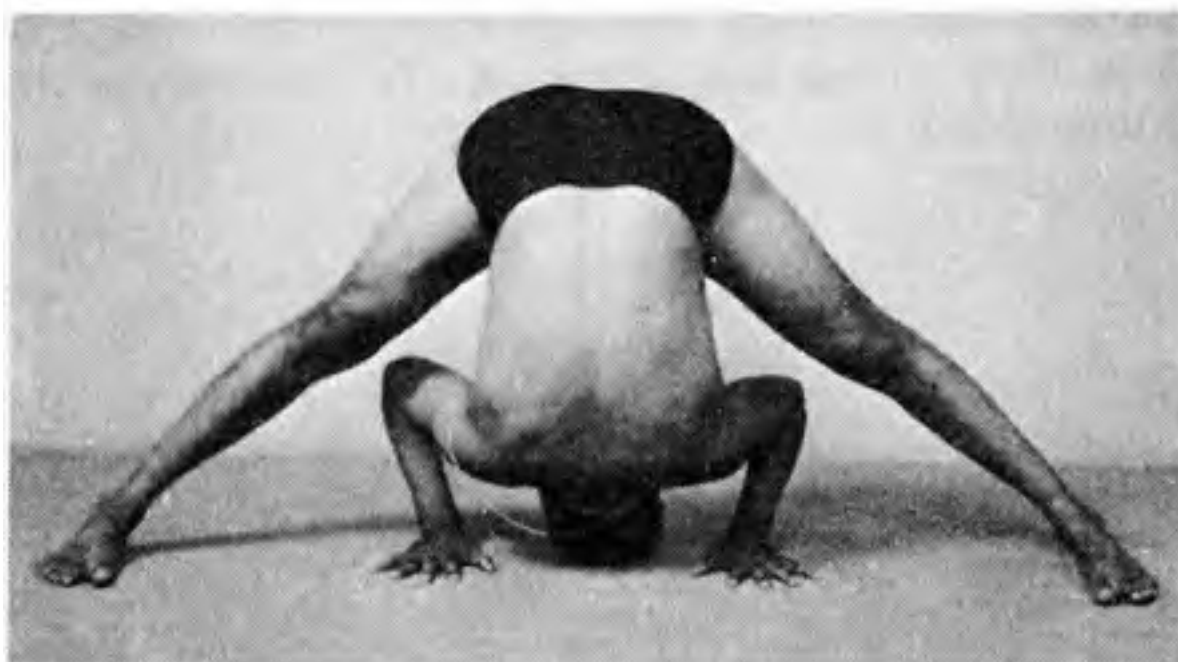


31

4. Inhale and raise the head up, keeping the back concave. (Side view Plates 31 and 32)
5. Exhale, bend the elbows and rest the crown of the head on the floor, keeping the weight of the body on the legs. (Plates 33 and 34.)



32



33



34

Do not throw the body weight on the head. Both feet, both palms and the head should be in a straight line.

6. Stay in the pose for half a minute, breathing deeply and evenly.
7. Inhale, raise the head from the floor and straighten the arms at the elbows. Keep the head well up by making the back concave as in position 4. (Plate 30)
8. Exhale and stand as in position 2. (Plate 29)
9. Jump back to Tādāsana. (Plate 1)

14. *Prasārita Pādōttānāsana II* Four★ (Plates 35 and 36)

This is an advanced movement of the earlier pose. Here the hands are placed on the waist instead of on the floor (Plate 35), or are folded at the back as if one is doing 'namaste' behind the back (Plate 36) as described in Pārsvōttānāsana. (Plate 26.) In this movement the leg stretch is intensified.



35



36

Effects

In this pose the hamstring and abductor muscles are fully developed, while blood is made to flow to the trunk and the head. People who cannot do Śīrṣāsana (Plate 184) can benefit from this pose, which increases digestive powers.

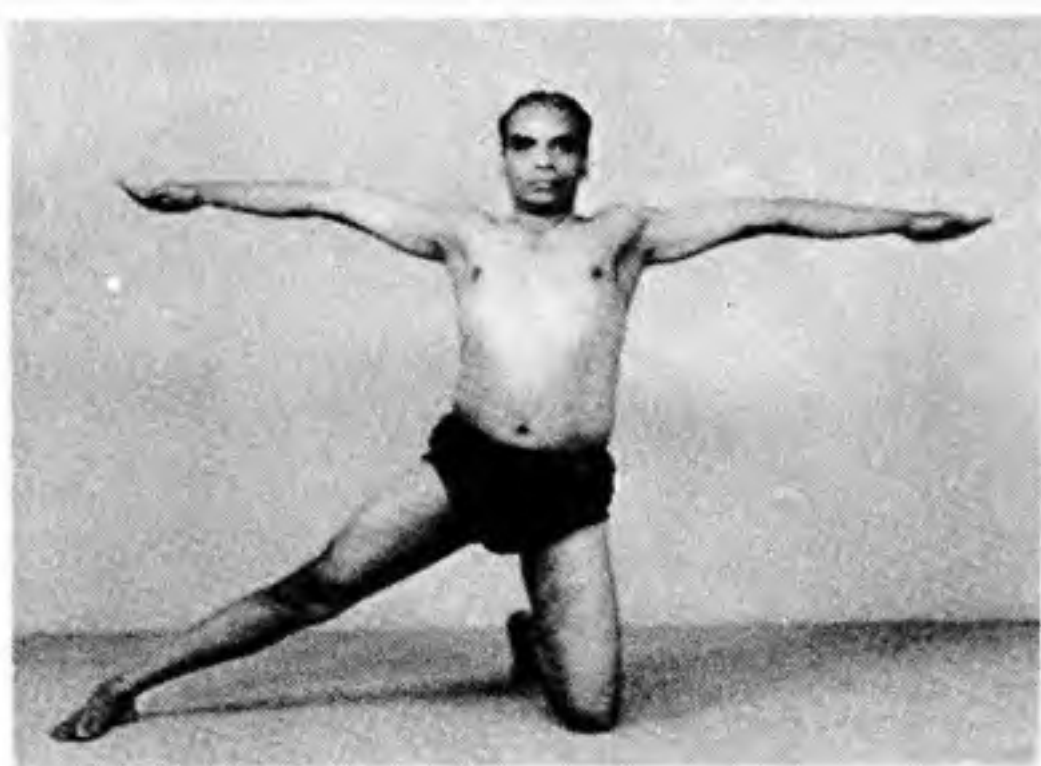
All the standing poses described above are necessary for beginners. As the pupil advances he attains better flexibility and then the standing poses can be dispensed with, though it is advisable to do them once a week. All these standing poses help to reduce the body weight.

15. *Parighāsana* Four* (Plate 39)

Parighā means a beam or bar used for shutting a gate. In this posture, the body resembles a cross beam used for locking a gate, hence the name of the pose.

Technique

1. Kneel on the floor with the ankles together.
2. Stretch the right leg sideways to the right and keep it in line with the trunk and the left knee. Turn the right foot sideways to the right, keeping the right leg stiff at the knee.
3. Extend the arms sideways with an inhalation. (Plate 37.) Take two breaths.



37

4. Exhale, move the trunk and right arm down towards the extended right leg. (Plate 38.) Rest the right forearm and wrist on the right shin and ankle respectively, the right palm facing up. The right ear will then rest on the right upper arm. Move the left arm over the head

and touch the right palm with the left. The left ear will then touch the left upper arm. (Plate 39)



38



39

5. Stay in this position from 30 to 60 seconds, breathing normally.
6. Inhale, move the trunk and arms back to position 3. Bend the right leg and kneel on the floor, keeping the ankles together again.
7. Repeat the pose on the other side, substituting right for left and vice versa. Stay in the pose on both the sides for the same time.

Effects

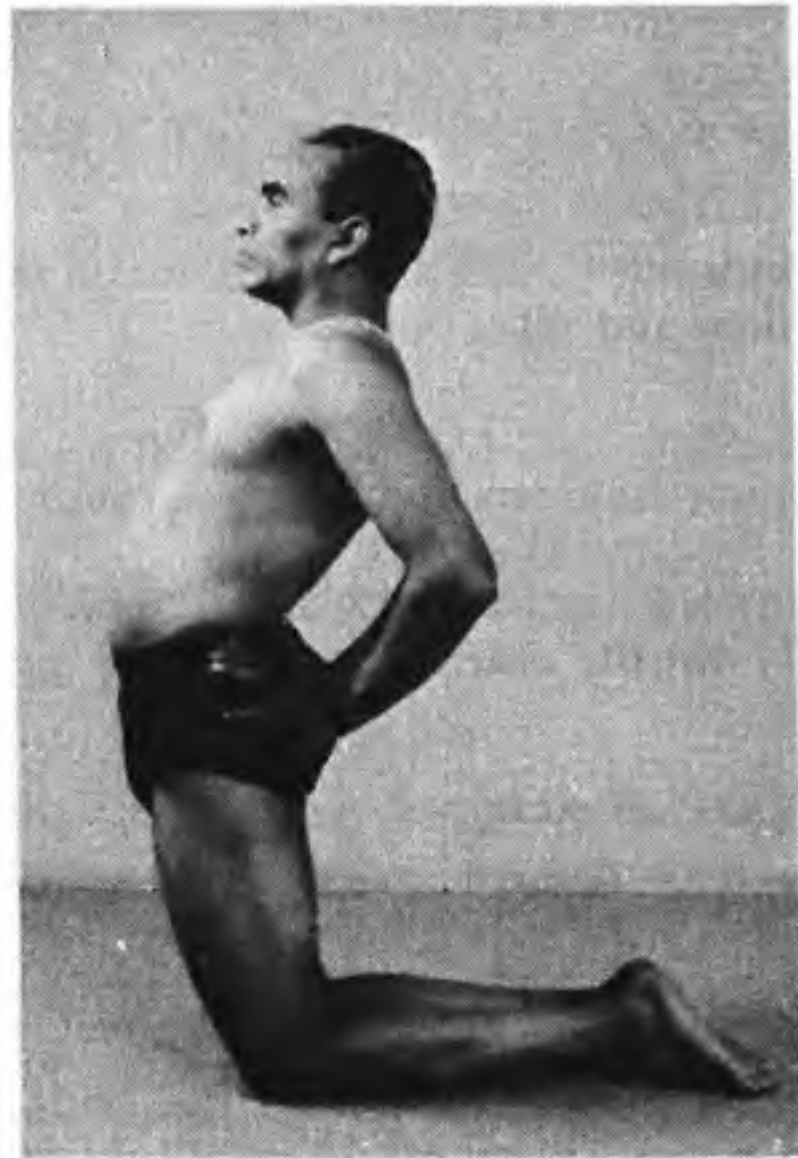
In this posture the **pelvic region is stretched**. One side of the abdomen is extended while the other side is laterally flexed. This keeps the abdominal muscles and organs in condition and the skin round the abdomen will not sag but remain healthy. The sideways spinal movement will **help persons suffering from stiff backs**.

16. Uṣṭrāsana Three* (Plate 41)

Uṣṭra means a camel.

Technique

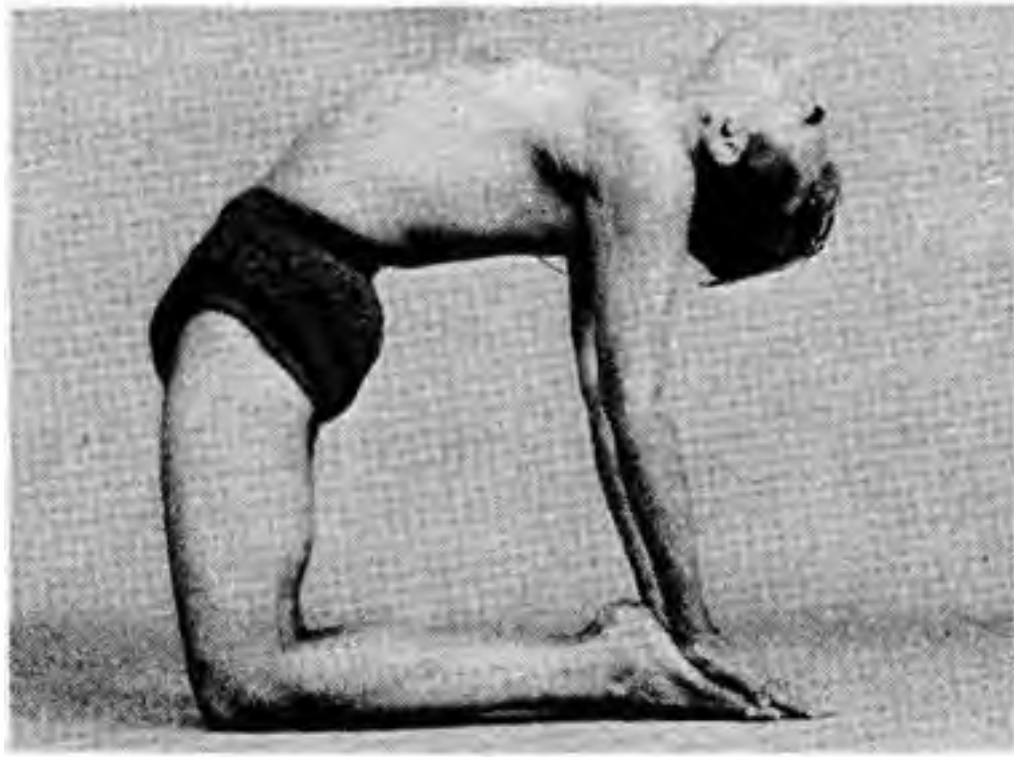
1. Kneel on the floor, keeping the thighs and feet together, toes pointing back and resting on the floor.
2. Rest the palms on the hips. Stretch the thighs, curve the spine back and extend the ribs. (Plate 40)



40

3. Exhale, place the right palm over the right heel and the left palm over the left heel. **If possible, place the palms on the soles of the feet.**
4. **Press the feet with the palms**, throw the head back and push the spine towards the thighs, which should be kept **perpendicular to the floor.**

5. **Contract the buttocks** and stretch the dorsal and the coccyx regions of the spine still further, keeping the neck stretched back. (Plate 41)



41

6. Remain in this position for about half a minute with normal breathing.
7. Release the hands one by one and rest them on the hips. (Plate 40.) Then sit on the floor and relax.

Effects

People with drooping shoulders and hunched backs will benefit by this āsana.

The whole spine is stretched back and is toned. This pose can be tried conveniently by the elderly and even by persons with spinal injury.

17. *Utkatāsana* Two* (Plate 42)

Utkata means powerful, fierce, uneven. This āsana is like sitting on an imaginary chair.

Technique

1. Stand in *Tādāsana* (Plate 1), stretch the arms straight over the head and join the palms. (Plate 12)
2. Exhale, bend the knees and lower the trunk till the thighs are parallel to the floor. (Plate 42)
3. Do not stoop forward, but keep the chest as far back as possible and breathe normally.



42

4. Stay in the pose for a few seconds, 30 being sufficient. It is difficult to balance in this pose.

5. Inhale, straighten the legs (Plate 12), lower the arms, come back to Tādāsana (Plate 1) and relax.

Effects

The pose removes stiffness in the shoulders and corrects any minor deformities in the legs. The ankles become strong and the leg muscles develop evenly. The diaphragm is lifted up and this gives a gentle massage to the heart. The abdominal organs and the back are toned, and the chest is developed by being fully expanded. It is a beneficial pose for horsemen.

18. Pādāṅguṣṭhāsana Three* (Plate 44)

Pāda means the foot. Anguṣṭha is the big toe. This posture is done by standing and catching the big toes.

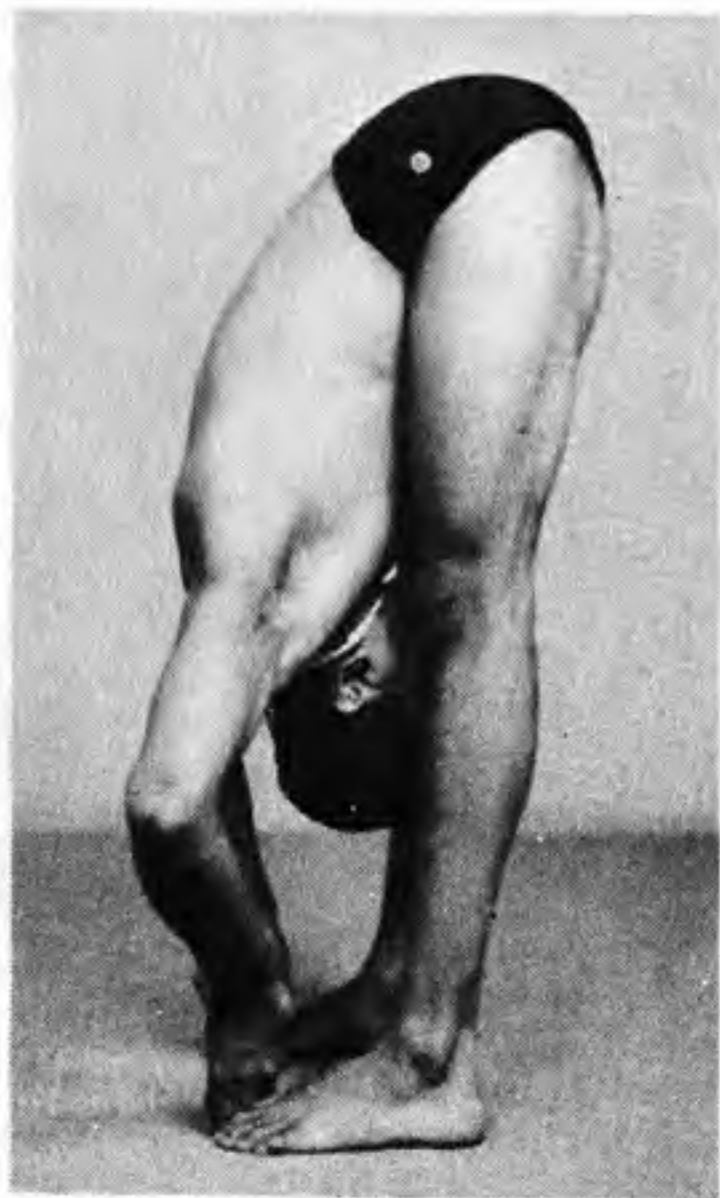
Technique

1. Stand in Tādāsana. (Plate 1.) Spread the legs a foot apart.

2. Exhale, bend forward and hold the big toes between the thumbs and the first two fingers, so that the palms face each other. Hold them tight. (Plate 43)



43



44

3. Keep the head up, stretch the diaphragm towards the chest and **make the back as concave as possible**. Instead of stretching down from the shoulders, **bend forward from the pelvic region** to get the concave shape of the back from the coccyx.

4. Keep the legs stiff and do not slacken the grip at the knees and toes. **Stretch the shoulder-blades also**. Take one or two breaths in this position.

5. Now exhale, and bring the head in between the knees by tightening the knees and pulling the toes without lifting them off the floor. (Plate 44.) Remain in this pose for about 20 seconds, maintaining normal breathing.

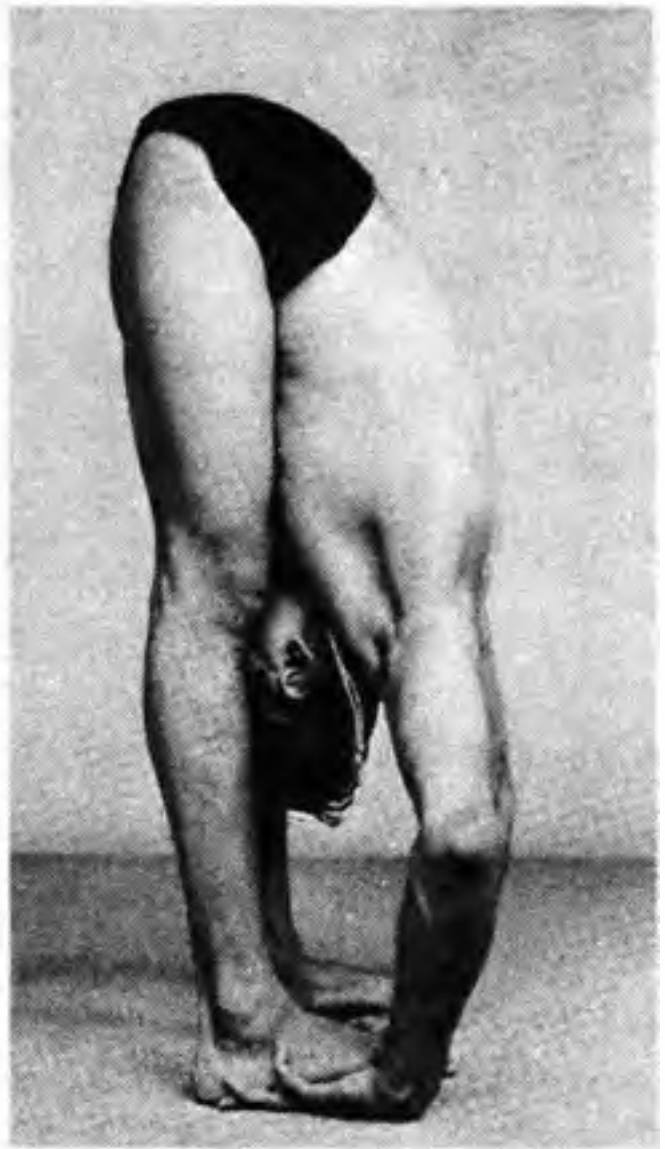
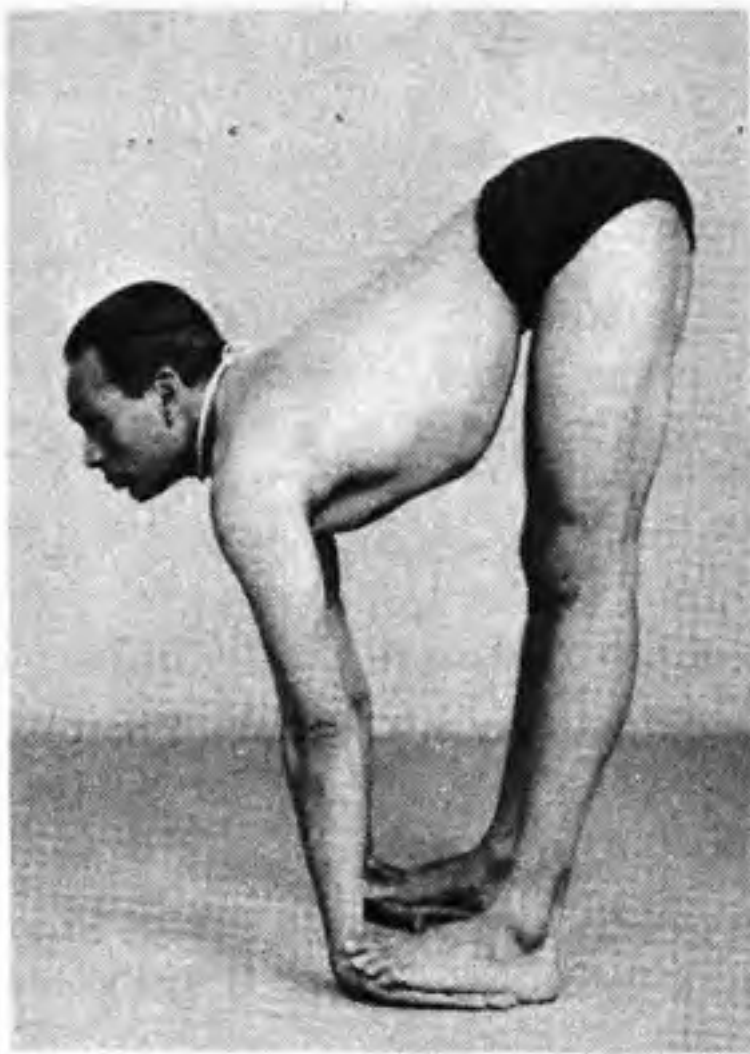
6. Inhale, come to position 2 (Plate 43), release the toes and stand up. Return to Tādāsana. (Plate 1)

19. *Pādahastāsana* Six* (Plate 46)

Pāda means the foot. Hasta means the hand. This posture is done by bending forward and standing on one's hands.

Technique

1. Stand in *Tādāsana*. (Plate 1.) Spread the legs a foot apart.
2. Exhale, bend forward and without bending the legs at the knees insert the hands under the feet so that the palms touch the soles. (Plate 45)



3. Keep the head up and make the back as concave as possible. Do not slacken the grip at the knees and take a few breaths in this position.
4. Now exhale, and move the head in between the knees by bending the elbows and pulling the feet up from the palms. (Plate 46.) Stay in the pose for about 20 seconds with normal breathing.
5. Inhale, raise the head and come back to position 2 (Plate 45), with the head well up. Take two breaths.
6. Inhale, stand up and return to *Tādāsana*. (Plate 1)

Effects of Pādānguṣṭhāsana and Pādahastāsana

The second āsana is more strenuous than the first, but the effects of both are the same. The abdominal organs are toned and digestive juices increase, while the liver and spleen are activated. Persons suffering from a bloating sensation in the abdomen or from gastric troubles will benefit by practising these two āsanās.

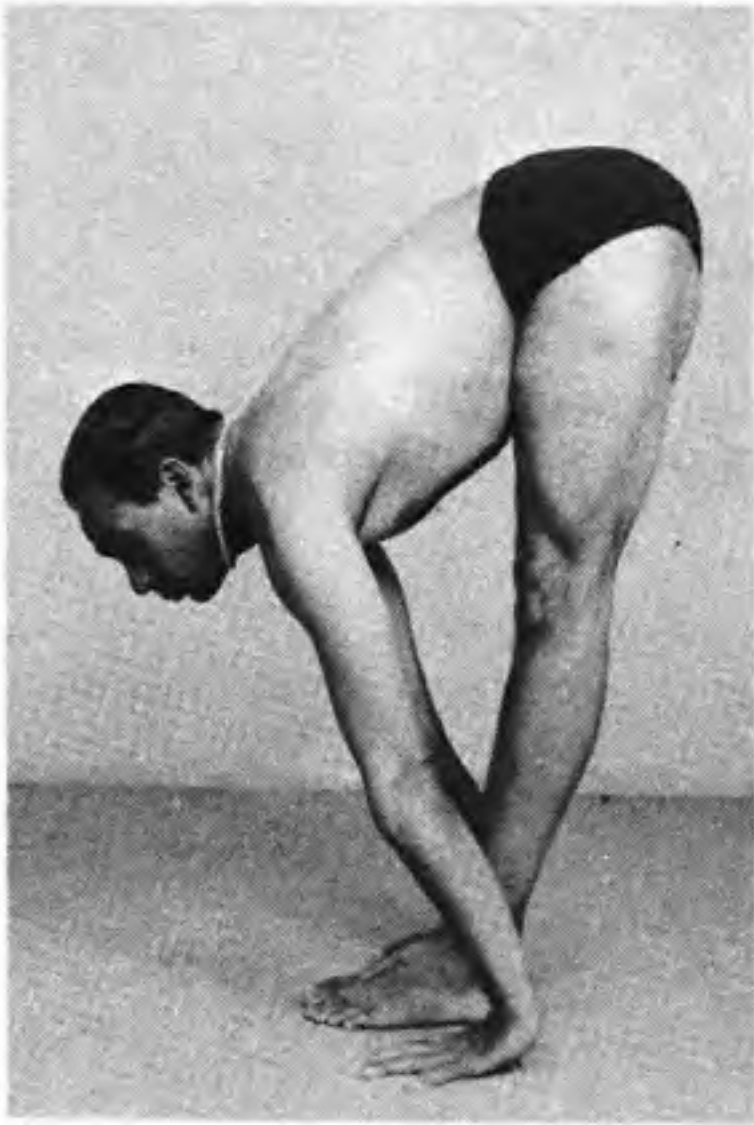
Slipped spinal discs can only be adjusted in the concave back position as in Plates 43 and 45. Do not bring the head in between the knees if you have a displaced disc. I have experimented with persons suffering from slipped discs and the concave back position proved a boon to them. It is imperative to get guidance from a guru (master) before trying this pose, because it may not be possible to achieve the concave back position immediately. One has to master other minor poses before attempting this one.

20. *Uttānāsana* Eight* (Plate 48)

Ut is a particle indicating deliberation, intensity. The verb tān means to stretch, extend, lengthen out. In this āsana, the spine is given a deliberate and an intense stretch.

Technique

1. Stand in Tādāsana (Plate 1), keeping the knees tight.
2. Exhale, bend forward and place the fingers on the floor. Then place the palms on the floor by the side of the feet, behind the heels. Do not bend the legs at the knees. (Plate 47)
3. Try to hold the head up and stretch the spine. Move the hips a little forward towards the head so as to bring the legs perpendicular to the floor.
4. Remain in this position and take two deep breaths.
5. Exhale, move the trunk closer to the legs and rest the head on the knees. (Plate 48)
6. Do not slacken the grip at the knees, but pull the knee-caps well up. Hold this position for a minute with deep and even breathing.
7. Inhale and raise the head from the knees, but without lifting the palms from the floor. (Plate 47)
8. After two breaths, take a deep inhalation, lift the hands from the floor and come back to Tādāsana. (Plate 1)



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Effects

This āsana cures stomach pains and tones the liver, the spleen and the kidneys. It also relieves stomach pain during menstrual periods. The heart beats are slowed down and the spinal nerves rejuvenated. Any depression felt in the mind is removed if one holds the pose for two minutes or more. The posture is a boon to people who get excited quickly, as it soothes the brain cells. After finishing the āsana, one feels calm and cool, the eyes start to glow and the mind feels at peace.

Persons who feel heaviness in the head, flushing or any discomfort while attempting Śīrṣāsana (Plate 184), should do Uttānāsana first; then they will be able to do Śīrṣāsana (the head stand) with comfort and ease.

21. **Ūrdhva Prasārita Ekapādasana** Six* (Plate 49)

Ūrdhva means upright, above, high. Prasārita means extended, stretched out. Eka means one, pāda means the foot. This posture is done by standing on one leg, bending forward and lifting the other leg high up.

Technique

1. Stand in Tādāsana. (Plate 1)
2. Exhale and bend the trunk forward. **With the left hand catch the back of the right ankle. Rest the right hand on the floor** by the side of the right foot and the head or the chin on the right knee.
3. Lift the left leg as high up in the air as possible. Tighten both knees. Keep the toes of the lifted leg pointed upwards. The legs should remain straight so that the toes point straight ahead and do not tilt sideways. (Plate 49)



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4. Stay in the pose for about 20 seconds, with even breathing. Inhale, bring the left leg down to the ground and come back to Tādāsana. (Plate 1)
5. Repeat the pose on the other side, keeping the left leg on the ground and the right leg up in the air. Stay in the pose for the same length of time on both sides.

Effects

This āsana tones the leg muscles and reduces fat around the hips.

22. *Ardha Baddha Padmōttānāsana* Nine* (Plate 52)

Ardha means half. Baddha means bound, restrained, caught, withheld. Padma is a lotus. Uttāna is an intense stretch.

Technique

1. Stand in Tādāsana. (Plate 1)
2. Inhale, raise the right leg from the floor, bend the right knee and rest the sole of the right foot on the left thigh.
3. Hold the right foot with the left hand, bring the right arm round the back and catch hold of the big toe of the right foot with the thumb and the fore and middle fingers of the right hand. (Plate 50)



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4. Release the left hand. Exhale, bend the trunk forward, place the left hand on the floor by the left foot (Plate 51), and keep the head up. Make the back as concave as possible. Take a few breaths.
5. Exhale, rest the head or the chin on the left knee. (Plate 52)
6. If the whole left palm cannot be placed on the floor, start with the tips of the fingers, then gradually place the fingers and lastly the whole palm on the floor. Similarly with the position of the head, first place the forehead on the left knee, then extend the neck to place the tip of the nose, then the lips and lastly the chin on the left knee. The progress from the head to the chin shows that the body is becoming more and more elastic.
7. After taking a few deep breaths in this pose, inhale and raise the trunk to position 4. (Plate 51.) Take two breaths.



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8. Inhale, lift the left palm from the floor and come to position 3. (Plate 50)

9. Release the left foot from the grip of the right hand and return to Tādāsana. (Plate 1)

10. Repeat on the other side, keeping the right leg on the floor, bending the left leg, placing the left foot on the right thigh, catching the left toe with the left hand from behind, bending forward and placing the right palm on the floor. (Plate 53)

11. **If you cannot hold the toe with the hand from behind, place both the palms on the floor and follow the above technique.** (Plates 54 and 55)



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Effects

Stiffness of the knees is cured by this āsana. As the abdominal organs are contracted, digestive powers increase and the peristaltic activity helps to eliminate toxin creating waste matter. The pose helps one to move the shoulders further back. This expands the chest and helps in breathing freely and deeply.

23. Garuḍāsana One* (Plate 56)

Garuḍa means an eagle. It is also the name of the king of birds. Garuḍa is represented as the vehicle of Viṣṇu and as having a white face, an aquiline beak, red wings and a golden body.

Technique

1. Stand in Tāḍāsana. (Plate 1.) Bend the right knee.
2. Bring the left leg over the right thigh above the right knee and rest the back of the left thigh on the front of the right thigh.
3. Then move the left foot behind the right calf so that the left shin touches the right calf and the left big toe hooks just above the inner side of the right ankle. The left leg is now entwined around the right leg.
4. You are balancing on the right leg only; this will take some time to learn.
5. Bend the elbow and raise the arms to the level of the chest. Rest the right elbow on the front of the left upper arm near the elbow joint. Then move the right hand back to the right and the left hand back to the left and join the palms. The left arm will now be entwined around the right arm. (Plate 56)
6. Remain in this position for a few seconds, say about 15 to 20 with deep breathing. Then release the arms and legs and come back to Tāḍāsana. (Plate 1)
7. Repeat the pose, standing on the left leg and entwining the right leg around the left leg and the right arm around the left arm. Stay for an equal length of time on both the sides.

Effects

This āsana develops the ankles and removes stiffness in the shoulders. It is recommended for preventing cramps in the calf muscles. For removing cramps in the legs and for relieving pain the poses recommended are Garuḍāsana, Vīrāsana (Plate 89) and Bhekāsana, also called Mandukāsana (Plate 100), described later.



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24. **Vātāyanāsana** Eleven* (Plate 58)

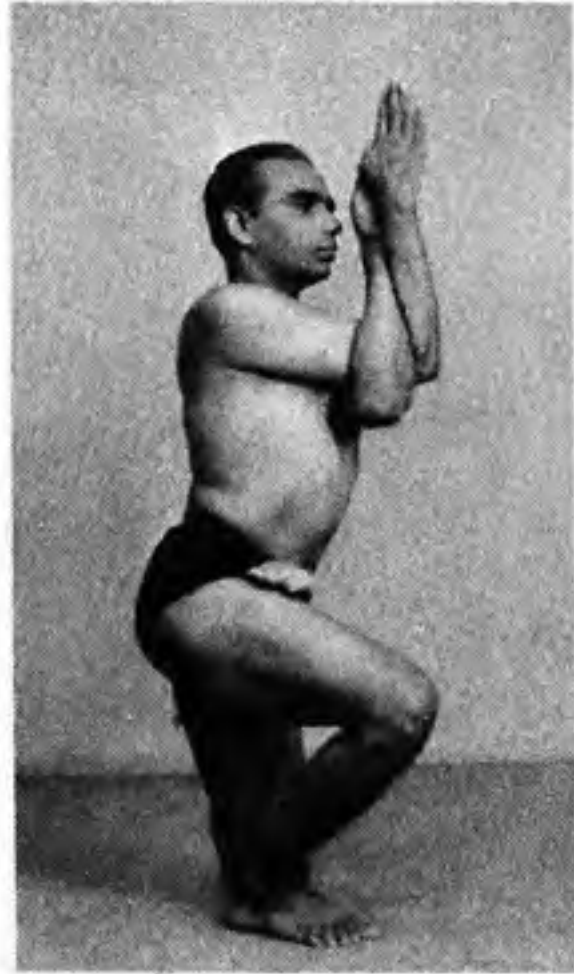
Vātāyana means a **horse**. The pose resembles a horse's face hence the name.

Technique

1. Sit on the floor, and place the left foot at the root of the right thigh in half Padmāsana.
2. Place the hands on the floor by the side of the hips. Exhale, raise the trunk off the floor and place the top of the left knee on the floor. Place the right foot near the bent left knee and keep the right thigh parallel to the floor. (Plate 57)
3. **Stretch the pelvis forward**, keep the **left thigh perpendicular** to the floor, raise the hands, **straighten the back and balance** the body. Do not stoop forward while maintaining the balance, but keep the back erect.
4. Bend the elbows and raise the arms to the level of the chest. Place the back of the upper right arm near the elbow on the front of the upper left arm above the elbow joint. Entwine the forearms round one another and join the palms. Hold this position for about 30 seconds with normal breathing. (Front view : Plate 58. Side view : Plate 59)
5. Release the arms, sit on the floor and straighten the legs.



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6. Repeat the pose on the other side. Here, place the right foot at the root of the left thigh, place the **left foot near the bent right knee on the floor** and entwine the arms in front of the chest so that the left arm is over the right near the elbow joint, and balance, keeping the left thigh parallel to the floor. Maintain the pose for an equal length of time on both sides. Then release the pose and relax on the floor.

7. In the beginning, it will be difficult to balance and the knees will be painful. With practice the pain disappears and the balance is achieved.

Effects

In this pose the **hip joints** receive proper circulation of the blood and minor deformity in the hips and thighs is corrected. The pose is also good for stiffness in the **sacroiliac region**.

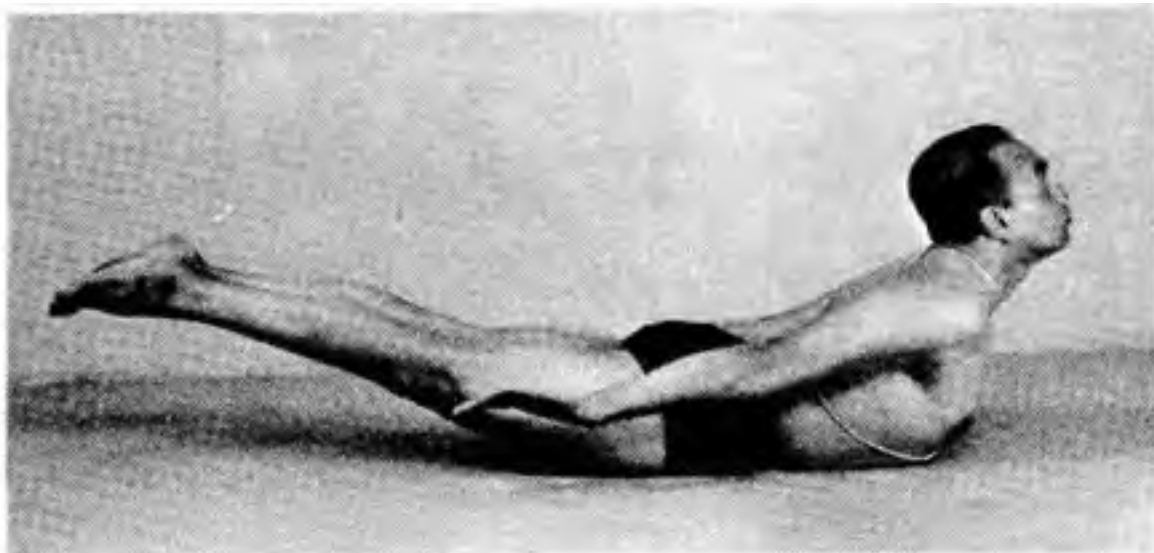
25. **Śalabhāsana** One* (Plate 60)

Śalabhā means a locust. The pose resembles that of a locust resting on the ground, hence the name.

Technique

1. Lie full length on the floor on the stomach, face downwards. Stretch the arms back.
2. Exhale, lift the head, chest and legs off the floor simultaneously as high as possible. The hands should not be placed and the **ribs should**

not rest on the floor. Only the abdominal front portion of the body rests on the floor and bears the weight of the body. (Plate 60)



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3. **Contract the buttocks** and stretch the thigh muscles. Keep both legs fully extended and straight, touching at the thighs, knees and ankles.
4. Do not bear the weight of the body on the hands but stretch them back to exercise the upper portion of the back muscles.
5. Stay in the position as long as you can with normal breathing.
6. In the beginning it is difficult to lift the chest and the legs off the floor, but this becomes easier as the abdominal muscles grow stronger.

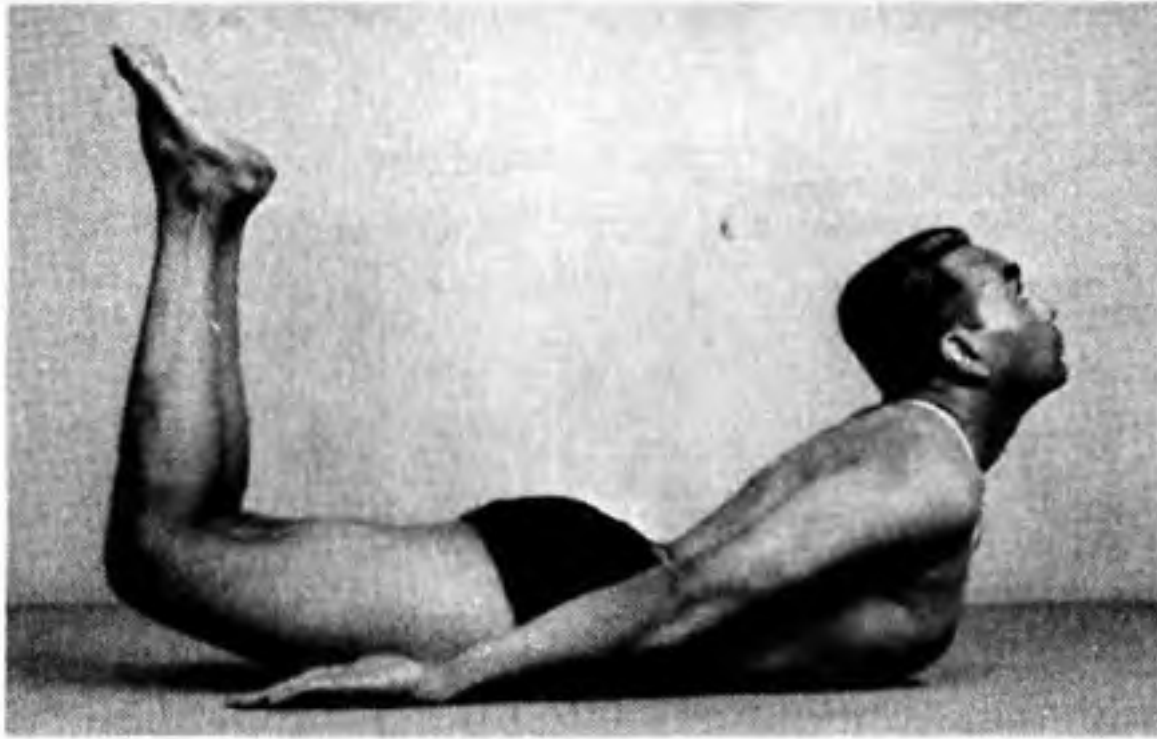
Effects

The pose **aids digestion and relieves gastric troubles and flatulence.** Since the spine is stretched back it becomes elastic and the pose **relieves pain in the sacral and lumbar regions.** In my experience, persons suffering from slipped discs have benefited by regular practice of this āsana without recourse to enforced rest or surgical treatment. The bladder and the prostate gland also benefit from the exercise and remain healthy.

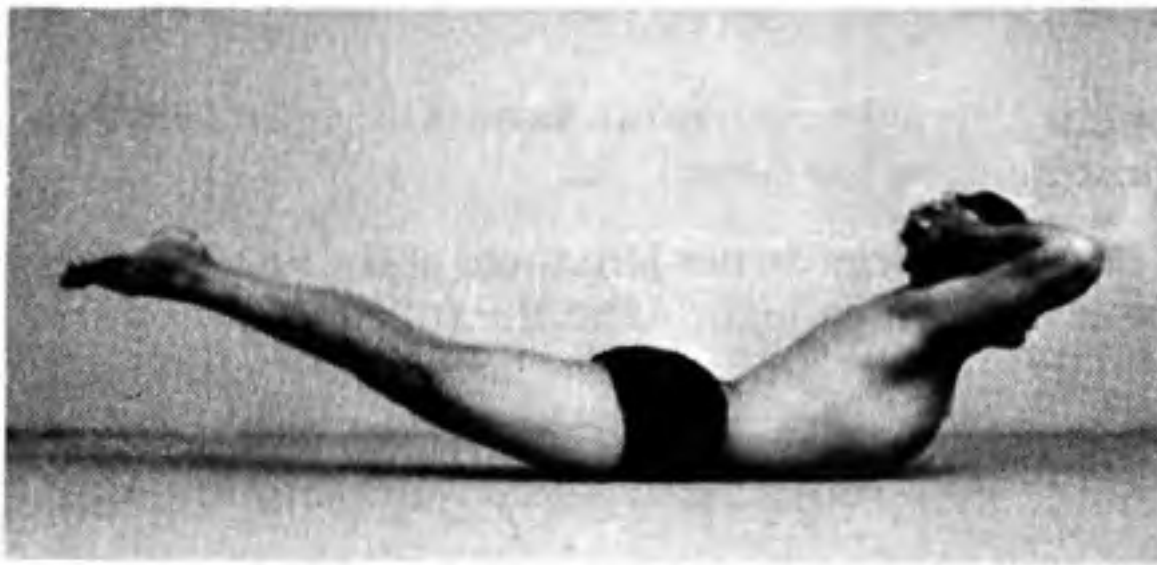
A variation of the pose may also be tried to relieve aches in the lower part of the back. Here, the legs are bent at the knees and the thighs are kept apart while the shins are kept perpendicular to the floor. Then with an exhalation, the thighs are lifted off the floor and brought closer together until the knees touch, the shins still being kept perpendicular. (Plate 61)

Verse 40 of the second chapter of the Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā describes 26. **Makarāsana** (Plate 62) thus :

‘Lie on the ground face down, the chest touching the earth and both legs stretched out: catch the head with the arms. This is the Crocodile Posture which increases bodily heat.’ It is a variation of Śalabhāsana.



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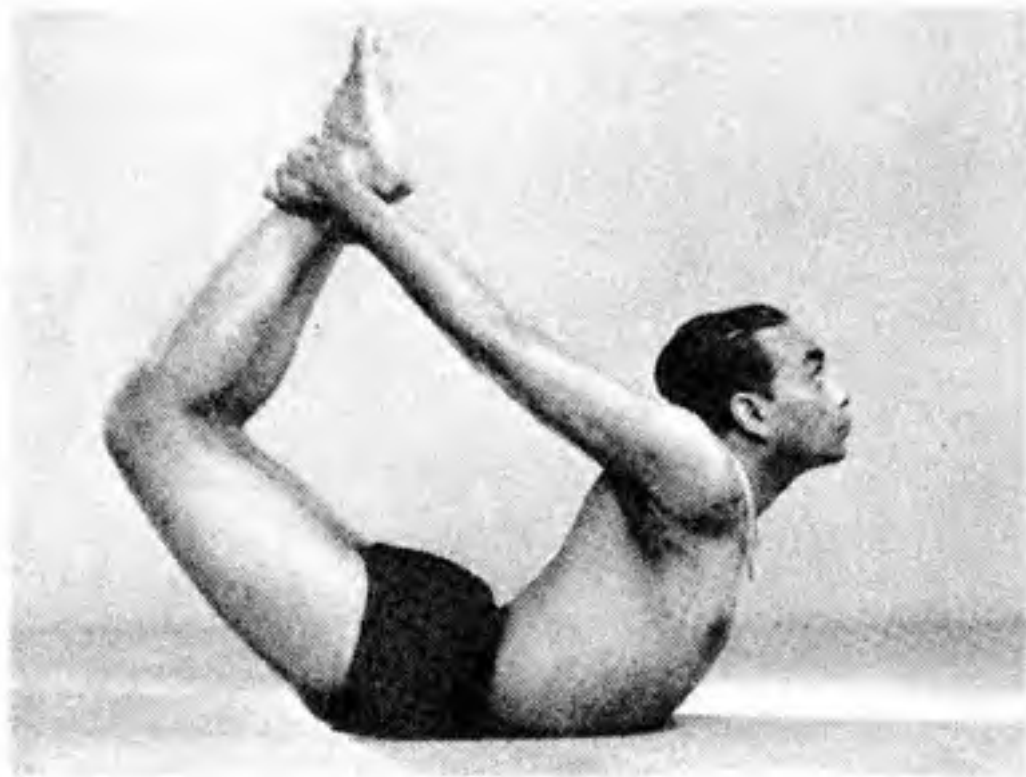
62

27. **Dhanurāsana** Four* (Plate 63)

Dhanu means a bow. The hands here are used like a bow-string to pull the head, trunk and legs up and the posture resembles a bent bow.

Technique

1. Lie full length on the floor on the stomach, face downwards.
2. Exhale and bend the knees. Stretch the arms back and hold the left ankle with the left hand and the right ankle with the right hand. Take two breaths.
3. Now exhale completely and pull the legs up by raising the knees above the floor, and simultaneously lift the chest off the floor. The arms and hands act like a bow-string to tauten the body like a bent bow. (Plate 63)
4. Lift up the head and pull it as far back as possible. Do not rest either



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the ribs or the pelvic bones on the floor. Only the abdomen bears the weight of the body on the floor.

5. While raising the legs **do not join them at the knees**, for then the legs will not be lifted high enough. **After the full stretch upwards has been achieved, join together the thighs, the knees and the ankles.**

6. **Since the abdomen is extended, the breathing will be fast**, but do not worry about it. Stay in the pose to your capacity from 20 seconds to one minute.

7. Then, with an exhalation, release the ankles, stretch the legs straight, bring the head and the legs back to the floor and relax.

Effects

In this posture the spine is stretched back. Elderly people do not normally do this, so their spines get rigid. This āsana **brings back elasticity to the spine and tones the abdominal organs**. In my experience, persons suffering from slipped discs have obtained relief by the regular practice of Dhanurāsana and Śalabhāsana (Plate 60) without being forced to rest or to undergo surgical treatment.

28. **Pārśva Dhanurāsana** Four* (Plates 64 and 65)

Pārśva means sideways. In this variation of Dhanurāsana, one performs the posture lying on one's side.

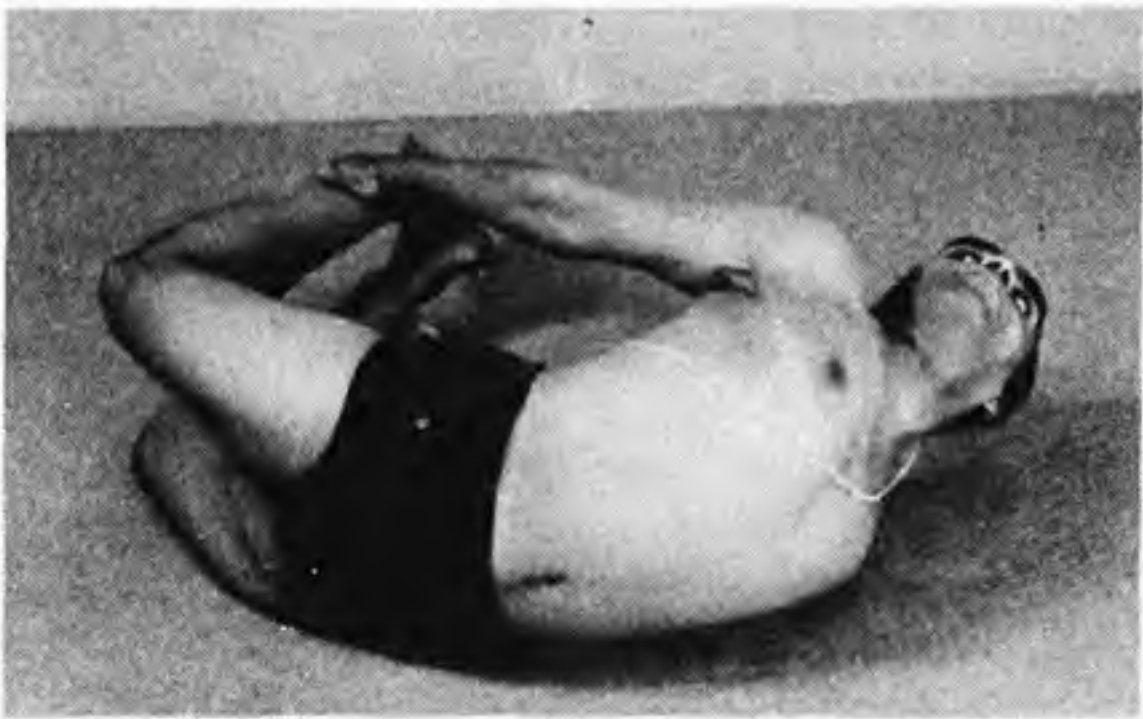
Technique

1. Perform Dhanurāsana. (Plate 63)

2. Exhale, roll over to the right side and stretch the legs and chest. (Plate 64)
3. Inhale and come to position 1. Then exhale, and roll over to the left side. (Plate 65)



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4. Stay on either side for the same length of time according to your capacity with normal breathing. Inhale, come back to Dhanurāsana, release the legs and relax.
5. In this pose, which is a more strenuous version of the earlier one, the ankles are inclined to slip from the hand grip. Therefore, grip the ankles more firmly.