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NOTES FOR PRACTICAL YOGA CLASSES

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SOME YOGA PRACTICES FOR DAILY SADHANA

By

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ASANAS FOR PRACTICE

1. SUKHA ASANA

Sit on the floor with both legs stretched out in front. Bend your knees and sit with your legs crossed at the ankles. This is the pleasant posture known as Sukha Asana. Clasp your hands together to form the Yoga Mudra with fingers of the right hand dominant. Sit straight and perform deep and controlled breathing.



2. VAJRA ASANA

This is the best posture for Pranayama as the erect spine allows for maximum lung expansion. Sit on the floor with both legs stretched out in front of yourself. Now bend the knees and come into a kneeling posture. Sit down on your heels so as to put your entire weight on the heels and ankles. Try to keep the ankles and heels of both feet as close together as possible. Sit straight, place the palms on the thighs and perform nine rounds of deep and controlled breathing.



3. PADMA ASANA

Sit on the floor with both legs stretched out in front. Bend your right knee and place the right foot on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh. You may also do the reverse by placing left foot on right thigh followed by right foot on left thigh. Don't do this if you have any severe problems with the knee joints. Perform the Dhyana Mudra with your thumb and index finger together and other fingers straight and place it on the knees. Sit straight and perform deep and controlled breathing.

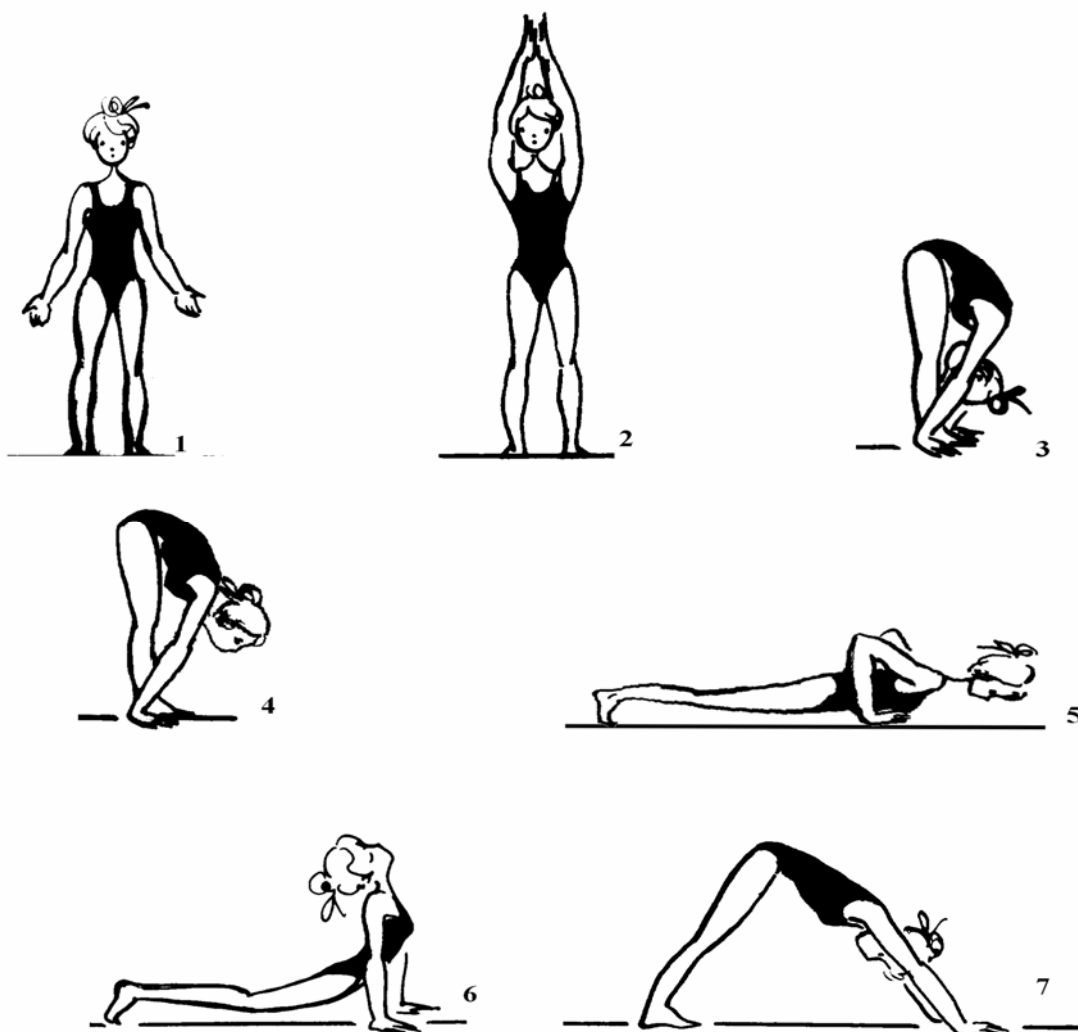


4. ARUNA SURYA NAMASKAR

There are various different types of Surya Namaskar and the one introduced here is called the Aruna Surya Namaskar. Aruna refers to the bright red quality often visible in the sun's rays at dawn. This version of Surya Namaskar provides an excellent warming up exercise, especially in the early morning, when the body may be sluggish, lethargic and stiff from the night's sleep. The keywords to remember with Aruna Surya Namaskar are "stretch" and "breathe". The breathing must be deep and regular. Surya Namaskar is done best in the early

morning facing the sun when it is rising above the horizon. Your body will thank you as the endocrine glands and being exposed to the early morning sun positively stimulates your entire body.

- Stand in the Samastithi Asana (Fig. 1) with weight balanced equally on both feet, palms facing the sun. Breathe deeply in and out. Enjoy the feeling of the early morning sun's rays striking the whole body, especially the palms of the hands.
- On a deep incoming breath, stretch the hands outward in a big circle and bring them together, palm-to-palm, and high over the head, stretching them upwards as much as possible in Anjali Mudra (Fig. 2).
- On the next outgoing breath, stretch down-wards, bring the hands palms flat down to the ground and the head to the knees. Do not bend the knees. (Fig. 3).
- On the next incoming breath, lift the head as high as possible, stretching the neck, the whole back and spine. Keep the hands as flat to the ground as possible (Fig. 4).
- Blast out the breath with a "whoosh" and jump vigorously back with the body parallel to the ground in Chatur Danda Asana. Toes are turned under. The body should not touch the ground and should be held as stiff as possible and parallel to the ground, as straight as a meter rule (Fig. 5).
- On the next incoming breath, bend the torso upwards, pressing on the ground with the hands in the Kokila Asana, (Cuckoo Posture). The toes



are turned under and the legs and thighs do not touch the ground. Bend the back and the head and neck as much as possible. Look up at the sky (Fig. 6).

- On the next outgoing breath, push on the hands and feet and lift the buttocks up to the sky. This is Meru Asana, the Mountain Pose (Fig. 7). The knees should be tight and straight. Push on the heels. Push on the hands and lift the buttocks as high as possible. Keep the back straight. In this position, take the breath in through the nose and "whoosh" it out through the mouth, as forcibly as possible, consciously using the

diaphragm muscle vigorously at least ten times, as rapidly as possible. This breathing exercise is known as Nasarga Mukha Bhastrika. This helps to relieve lots of the pent up stress from the body.

- On the next incoming breath, jump forward with the head up (Fig. 4).
- On the next outgoing breath, lower the head down to knees (Fig. 3).
- On the next incoming breath, lift the torso and return to the standing position stretching the arms up in Anjali Mudra (Fig. 2).
- On the next outgoing breath, return the arms back to the side and stand in the Samastithi Asana, with palms facing the sun. (Fig. 1).

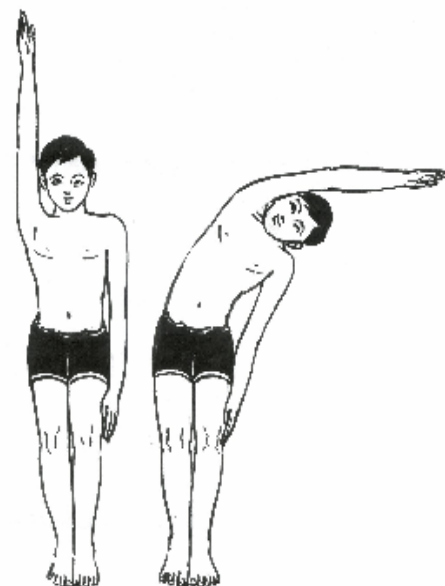
5. **ARDHA KATI CHAKRASANA**

Stand in the Samastithi posture with your weight balanced equally between both feet.

Lift one hand over the head and stretch to the opposite side giving a good stretch to the entire side of the body as far as possible.

Make sure that you lift the hand on the in breath and lower on the out breath. Do this three times on each side.

Finally relax in the Samastithi Asana with some deep breathing.



6. **TRIKONA ASANA**

Stand in Samastithi Asana. Jump with the feet two to three feet apart and stretch the arms to the sides so that they are pulling the chest in opposite directions. Turn to the right side and slowly bring the hand down to the right foot and place the palm of the right hand on the floor in front of the right foot. Look up at the middle finger of the left hand. Let the entire torso get a good twist and stretch. Hold the position for 30 seconds. Release and come back in the same manner as you have gone into the pose. Repeat on the opposite side and then relax in Samastithi Asana with a few rounds of deep breathing.



7. **USHTHRA ASANA**

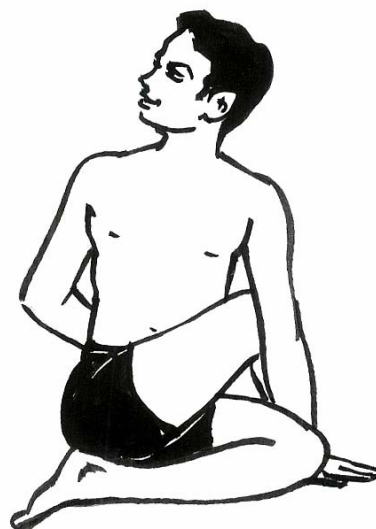
The Camel Posture and its variations are excellent Hathenas to force air into the inferior, lower abdominal lobes of the lungs. To do the Camel Pose, sit in the heel-sitting Vajrasana. On an incoming breath raise off the heels on to the knees and with a back-bend catch the heels with the hands. Breathe in and out through the nose and concentrate on the lower section of the lungs where the air is being forced. When ready release the hands from the heels and come up to the kneeling position. Then come down slowly to the Vajra Asana. Do not close the eyes at any point of the practice. If the posture is difficult you can perform a modified variation by avoiding the heel catching motion and by limiting yourself



only to coming up onto the knees on the in breath and then sitting down on the out breath.

8. **ARDHA MATSYENDRA ASANA**

Sit erect with legs stretched out in front with the heels together and the palms pressing on the floor by the side of the buttocks. This is the Uttana Asana. Fold the right knee and place the heel tight against the perineum. Place the left foot by the side of the right thigh crossing around the knee. Bring the right hand round the outer side of the left knee passing between the chest and the knee and catch hold of the left big toe. The right shoulder blade rests on the outer side of the left knee. Now take the left hand round the back and try to catch the right thigh. Look back over the left shoulder, (the erect knee acts as a fulcrum for getting maximum twist of the spine). Keep the trunk vertical. Hold the pose for a few seconds with soft breathing and then release to come back to the Uttana Asana. Repeat on the opposite side. This pose gives an excellent massage to the abdominal organs and is very useful for those suffering from diabetes as well as digestive disorders. It is also useful for neck and back problems.



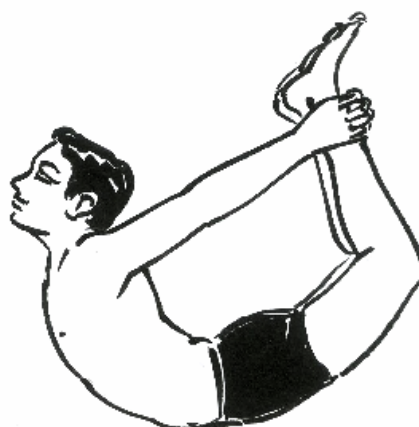
9. **BHUJANGA ASANA**

Lie down in the Unmukha Asana (the face prone pose) with the hands by the side of the body. Keep the chin on the floor with the body from toes to head in a straight line. Bend both the elbows and place the palms on the floor by the side of the chest. Slowly lift the head and then raise the chest till the arms are fully straight. Do not lift the navel off the floor. Feel the awareness of the bending at the lumbar region. After a few seconds relax and bring the chest and head down, touching the floor with the chin. Release the hands and then relax in the Unmukha Asana.



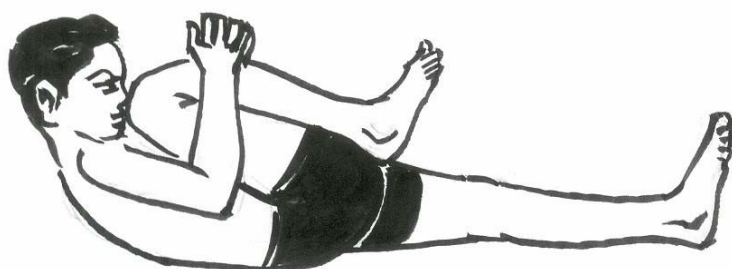
10. **DHANURA ASANA**

From the Unmukha Asana fold the knees and catch hold of the feet with the respective hands. Raise the head, chest and also thighs by tugging the hands and legs, so that the spine is arched backwards like a bow. Look up and feel the stretch in the entire back. This pose can also be performed first with the right side only, followed by the left and then with both sides together. Relax back in the face prone pose. This pose gives an excellent massage to all the abdominal organs as well as tones up the entire back.



11. EKA PADA PAVANAMUKTA ASANA

Lie down in Shava Asana. Breathe in and out for a count of six or eight. On the in breath bend and lift the right knee and bring it to the forehead that is simultaneously raised to meet the knee. On the out



breath lower the head and bring the foot back to the floor. Repeat this at least three times on right and then left side. Then relax in Shava Asana with

deep breathing. This is very good for joint pains, gas troubles and abdominal problems in general.

12. DWI PADA PAVANAMUKTA ASANA

Lie down in Shava Asana. Breathe in and out for a count of six or eight. On the in breath bend and lift both knees and bring them to the forehead that is simultaneously raised to meet the knees. On the out breath lower the head and bring the feet back to the floor. Repeat this at least three times. Then relax in Shava Asana with deep breathing. This is very good for joint pains, gas troubles and abdominal problems in general.



13. HALA ASANA

From Shava Asana lift both legs up towards the sky on the in breath. Take the legs over the head until the toes touch the ground beyond the head. Do not bend the knees. Stretch the arms out behind the back or hold on the lower back with the elbows on the floor. Hold the pose for a few seconds with lighter



breathing and when ready on the out breath lower the legs back to the floor. With practice you will be able to hold the pose for longer duration of time. Repeat this at least three times and then relax in the Shava Asana with light deep breathing. Those who have neck problems shouldn't do this pose as it may aggravate the neck pain.

14. SARVANGA ASANA

Lie down in Shava Asana. On the in breath, raise both legs together up to 45 degrees from the ground. Further raise the legs up to 90 degrees and place the hands by the side of the body.

Raise further, the buttocks and the trunk taking the support of the arms and the elbows by firmly placing the elbows on the ground and support the back with both the palms.

Keep the trunk and legs in a straight line by supporting the trunk on the shoulders. Keep the head on the floor.

Breathe in a shallow manner while concentrating on the pressure at the throat region. Release the pose after a few seconds and relax in Shava Asana.

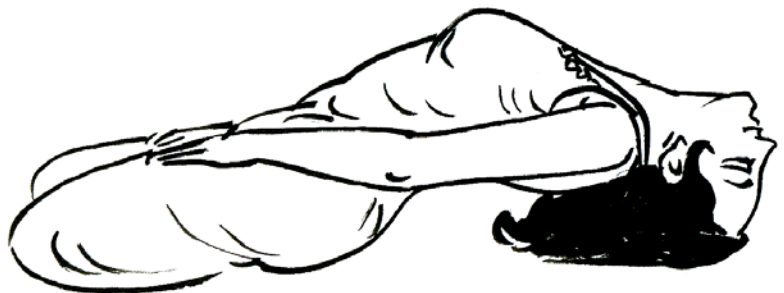
This pose stimulates the endocrine system and is especially good for the Thyroid Gland. It is also useful in cases of diabetes, prolapse and piles.



15. MATSYA ASANA

The Fish Posture and its variations are excellent conditioners for improving the mid-chest breathing. Sit with your legs stretched out in the Uttana Asana. Lock the legs into Padma Asana. Bend back on to the elbows until the head touched the floor. Catch hold of the toes with the hands and back bend as much as possible. Breathe deeply in and out and discover the air is concentrated mostly in the mid-chest area, relieving congestion or repairing faulty breathing habits. Release the pose and slowly come up to the Padmasana in the reverse way that we went into it.

Release the legs and stretch them out in Uttana Asana. If this is too difficult for you, then you can perform a modified fish posture with the legs stretched out in front of you. Let the head hang loose with the emphasis on mid chest breathing.



16. PASCHIMOTTANA ASANA

Sit in the Uttana Asana and perform Danda Asana. Bend forward from the lower back with the palms facing forward and with the index fingers catch the big toes respectively. Bend further forward, until the face rests on the knees. Hold the pose for a few seconds with soft breathing and then release the fingers and come back to the sitting pose. Then lie down in Shavasana and relax for some time with deep breathing. This pose helps to stretch the entire back and tones up the abdominal organs. However patients of hypertension and

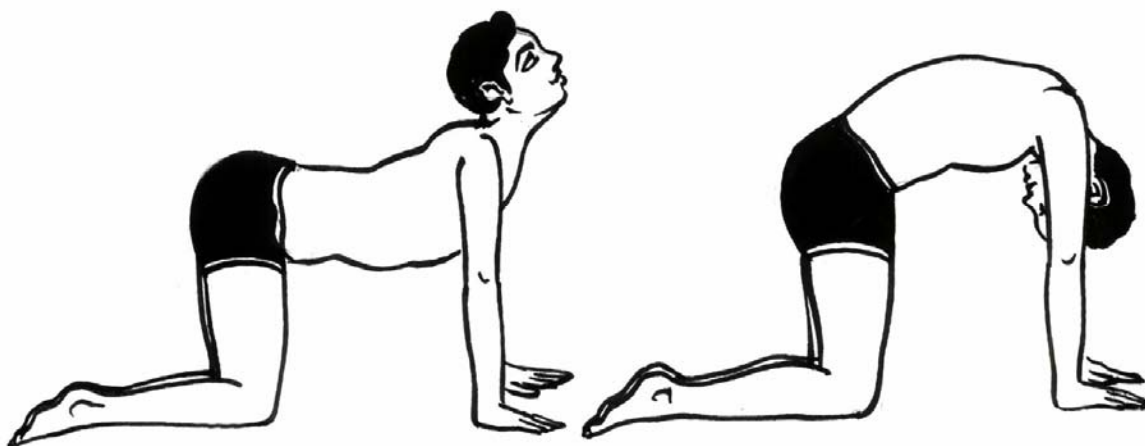


back troubles should avoid it.

PRANAYAMAS

1. VYAGRAHA PRANAYAMA

The Tiger Breath is an excellent way to strengthen the diaphragm and contributes to complete breathing utilizing all three parts of the lungs. Simulating the breath action of the giant cats, this breathing routine is highly recommended to increase breath capacity and to produce stamina and physical beauty. Keep the palms of both hands and both knees on the floor in such a way that you are in a four footed pose.



Keep the body parallel to the floor. Take a deep in-breath and let the abdomen sag towards the floor while lifting the head up high. While exhaling arch the back as high as possible, and lower the head in between the arms and shoulders. Repeat the entire sequence three to six rounds before resting back onto the heels in the Vajrasana for some relaxed, automatic breath. This is very good for joint pains, prolapsed internal organs and for rehabilitation in pregnancy and post delivery conditions.

2. PRANAVA PRANAYAMA

This Pranayama uses the sound of the Omkara and has unlimited healing potential. It harmonizes the body, emotions and mind and is an important part of the Rishiculture Ashtanga Yoga tradition as taught by Yogamaharishi Dr Swami Gitananda Giri. In this practice emphasis is placed on making the sound AAA, UUU and MMM while breathing out for a duration of two to three times the duration of the inhaled breath.



To perform Adham Pranayama, the abdominal or lower chest breathing, perform Chin Mudra and place the Mudra on your thighs. Breathe in deeply into your lower chest area 1-2-3-4-5-6. Breathe out with the sound aaa.....

Breathe in 1-2-3-4-5-6. Breathe out ----aaaaaaaaa-

Breathe in 1-2-3-4-5-6. Breathe out ----aaaaaaaaa-



To perform thoracic or mid-chest breathing, the Madhyam Pranayama, curl your fingers inward to form the Chinmaya Mudra. Place the Mudra on your thighs and breathe in deeply into your mid chest region 1-2-3-4-5-6. Breathe out with the sound ooo.....

Breathe in 1-2-3-4-5-6.. Breathe out ----ooooooooo

buzzing sound is very much like the Anuswarah sound of “mm” of the “AUM”. Repeat this at least nine times.

4. SURYA PRANAYAMA

Sit in Vajra Asana and perform Nasarga Mudra with your right hand. Close the left nostril with the little and ring fingers. Inhale slowly through the right nostril for a count of four. Now exhale through the right nostril for a count of eight. Keep the left nostril closed all the time during the practice. Repeat the same for a total of nine rounds. Patients of depression and narcolepsy can benefit by practising this Pranayama 27 rounds before breakfast, lunch, dinner and before going to bed at night sleep.



5. CHANDRA PRANAYAMA

Sit in Vajra asana and perform Nasarga Mudra with your right hand. Close your right nostril with the thumb. Inhale slowly through your left nostril for a count of four. Now exhale through the same left nostril for a count of eight. Keep the right nostril closed all the time during the practice. Repeat the same for a total of nine rounds. Patients of anxiety, hypertension and other stressful conditions can benefit by practising this Pranayama 27 rounds before breakfast, lunch, dinner and before going to bed at night sleep.



RELAXATION

1. SHAVA ASANA

Shavasana is a relaxing and energizing posture in which the body, emotions and mind are united in the process of conscious relaxation. 15 minutes of Shava Asana properly performed is equal to more than one hour of refreshing sleep.

Lie supine on the ground with your head preferably to the north enabling your body to be in alignment with the earth's electromagnetic field. Make sure that your head and body are in a straight line while your hands are kept relaxed by your side with the palms facing upwards. Bring your feet together and then let your forefeet fall away into a 'v' shape with your heels as close together as possible.

Start to consciously watch your breath by letting your awareness settle in the abdominal area. Feel the abdominal movements as your abdomen rises as you breathe in and falls as you breathe out.



After a few rounds of this practice, slowly let your awareness settle at the tip of your nose. Feel the cool inspired air flowing into your nostrils as you breathe in and become aware of the warm expired air flowing out of the nostrils when you breathe out. Consciously regulate your breath so that the duration of the incoming and outgoing breathes are equal. The inspiration and expiration can be for a count of 4 or 6 initially and then with practice elongated to a count of 8 or 10. Perform at least nine rounds of this conscious deep breathing and enjoy the relaxed sensation that spreads throughout your body.

After performing 10 to 15 minutes of the Shavasana slowly start to move your fingers and toes. Perform conscious stretching and make a smooth transition from the relaxed to the active state. Lift your left arm over your head and turn over onto your left side. Continue the turning action until you come into the face-prone pose. Perform Makarasana by placing your right hand on the left while the left is placed palm down on the ground in front of you. Keep your forehead or chin on your right hand while keeping your legs a foot apart.

Bring your hands forward near your shoulders and push yourself back into the Bhujangasana. Continue the back bending movement and go into the four footed Chatus Pada Asana. Relax into the Sashangasana with your arms stretched out in front and then finally come back to the Vajrasana. With your palms on your thighs sit quietly for some time and enjoy the effects of the deep relaxation that has spread to every part of your body.

2. SPANDHA – NISHPANDHA KRIYA

This practice is done from Shavasana using the Yogic concept of Shpanda Nishpanda, which means the coupling of tension and relaxation. We consciously tense different parts of our body as much as possible and then relax them to the maximum in a step-by-step manner. This produces a better relaxation response than the mere attempt to relax without putting in the initial effort of tension.

Lie down in a comfortable supine Shavasana with your entire body in a single straight line. After a few seconds of relaxation in this position, start to tense your entire body part-by-part from your toes up to the top of your head until every part of your body is as tense as possible. Hold this 100% tension state of Spandha for a few seconds. Let all the muscles of your entire body be as tense as possible. At the peak of the tension, just 'let go' and immediately relax your entire body 100%. This is the state of Nishpandha. Enjoy this relaxed state and with conscious awareness continue to watch your breath as it comes in and goes out of your nose.

Repeat this practice again by tensing up your entire musculoskeletal system to the state of Spandha and hold it for a few seconds. When ready let go completely and enjoy the Nishpandha state for a few minutes.

To complete the practice repeat the Spandha – Nishpandha Kriya a third time by tensing up your entire musculoskeletal system from your toes to the top of your head. Hold the complete tension for a few seconds. When ready let go completely and enjoy the complete relaxation that ensures. Be aware of how all your muscles relax in this practice because the relaxation is deepened when it is contrasted with tension.

This practice is a boon for those suffering psychosomatic, stress induced and stress aggravated disorders such as hypertension,

diabetes, asthma, insomnia, peptic ulcers and bowel disorders. It is also useful for patients of musculoskeletal problems such as neck pain, back pain and arthritis.

3. SAVITRI PRANAYAMA IN SHAVA ASANA

Lie supine on the ground with your head preferably to the north enabling your body to be in alignment with the earth's electromagnetic field. Make sure that your head and body are in a straight line while your hands are kept relaxed by your side with the palms facing upwards. Bring your feet together and then let your forefeet fall away into a 'v' shape with your heels as close together as possible.

Start to consciously watch your breath by letting your awareness settle in the abdominal area. Feel the abdominal movements as your abdomen rises as you breathe in and falls as you breathe out.

The relaxation in Shavasana can be further deepened by utilizing the Savitri Pranayama to relax and rejuvenate your body, emotions and mind.

Breathe in through your nose for a count of 6. Hold in the breath for a count of 3. Breathe out through your nose for a count of 6. Finally hold the breath out for a count of 3. Make sure that you are breathing in and out through both nostrils and that you are using the complete Yogic breathing. Perform at least 9 rounds of this combination practice that heightens the relaxation to a very deep level.

Breathe in 1-2-3-4-5-6. Hold in 1-2-3. Breathe out 1-2-3-4-5-6. Hold out 1-2-3.

Breathe in 1-2-3-4-5-6. Hold in 1-2-3. Breathe out 1-2-3-4-5-6. Hold out 1-2-3.

Breathe in 1-2-3-4-5-6. Hold in 1-2-3. Breathe out 1-2-3-4-5-6. Hold out 1-2-3.

After performing 10 to 15 minutes of the Shavasana slowly start to move your fingers and toes. Perform conscious stretching and make a smooth transition from the relaxed to the active state. Lift your left arm over your head and turn over onto your left side. Continue the turning action until you come into the face-prone pose. Perform Makarasana by placing your right hand on the left while the left is placed palm down on the ground in front of you. Keep your forehead or chin on your right hand while keeping your legs a foot apart.

Bring your hands forward near your shoulders and push yourself back into the Bhujangasana. Continue the back bending movement and go into the four footed Chatus Pada Asana. Relax into the Sashangasana with your arms stretched out in front and then finally come back to the Vajrasana. With your palms on your thighs sit quietly for some time and enjoy the effects of the deep relaxation that has spread to every part of your body.

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