

# **YOGASANA**

The word 'Yoga' is derived from the Sanskrit root 'Yuj', meaning **'to join' or 'to yoke' or 'to unite'**. As per Yogic scriptures the practice of Yoga leads to the union of individual consciousness with that of the Universal Consciousness, indicating a perfect harmony between the mind and body, Man & Nature.

Yoga is essentially a spiritual discipline based on an extremely subtle science which focuses on bringing harmony between mind and body. It is an art and science of healthy living. According to modern scientists, everything in the universe is just a manifestation of the same quantum firmament. One who experiences this oneness of existence is said to be in yoga, and is termed as a yogi, having attained a state of freedom referred to as mukti, nirvana or moksha. Thus the aim of Yoga is Self-realization to overcome all kinds of sufferings leading to 'the state of liberation' (Moksha) or 'freedom' (Kaivalya). Living with freedom in all walks of life, health and harmony shall be the main objectives of Yoga practice.

"Yoga" also refers to an inner science comprising of a variety of methods through which human beings can realize this union and achieve mastery over their destiny. Yoga, being widely considered as an 'immortal cultural outcome' of Indus Saraswathi Valley civilization – dating back to 2700 B.C., has proved itself catering to both material and spiritual upliftment of humanity. Basic humane values are the very identity of Yoga Sadhana.

## **2.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES of Yoga Education**

Yoga educations can prepare the students physically and mentally for the integration of their physical, mental and spiritual faculties so that the students can become healthier, saner and more integrated members of the society and of the nation.

Yoga education helps to develop self-discipline and self-control, leading to enhanced awareness, concentration and higher level of consciousness.

Yoga education leads to:

1. Better mental and Physical Health.
2. Good Emotional Stability.
3. Integrate moral values.
4. Higher level of consciousness.

Yoga education can enhance all the activities of the students, be it academic or sport or social. Yoga techniques provide improved attention in studies, better stamina and co-ordination for sports and a heightened awareness and balanced attitude for social activity.

## **2.2 A Brief History and Development of Yoga:**

The practice of Yoga is believed to have started with the dawn of civilization. The science of yoga has its origin thousands of years ago, long before the first religions or belief systems were born. In the yogic lore, Shiva is seen as the first yogi or Adiyogi, and the first Guru or Adi Guru.

Several Thousand years ago, on the banks of the lake Kantisarovar in the Himalayas, Adiyogi poured his profound knowledge into the legendary Saptarishis or "seven sages". The sages carried this powerful yogic science to different parts of the world, including Asia, the Middle East, Northern Africa and South America. Interestingly, modern scholars have noted and marvelled at the close parallels found between ancient cultures across the globe. However, it was in India that the yogic system found its fullest expression. Agastya, the Saptarishi who travelled across the Indian subcontinent, crafted this culture around a core yogic way of life.

The Number of seals and fossil remains of Indus Saraswathi valley civilization with Yogic motives and figures performing Yoga Sadhana suggest the presence of Yoga in ancient India. The phallic symbols, seals of idols of mother Goddess are suggestive of Tantra Yoga.

Presence of Yoga is available in folk traditions, Indus valley civilization, Vedic and Upanishad heritage, Buddhist and Jain traditions, Darshanas, epics of Mahabharata and Ramayana, theistic traditions of Shaivas, Vaishnavas, and Tantric traditions. In addition, there was a primordial or pure Yoga which has been manifested in mystical traditions of South Asia. This was the time when Yoga was being practised under the direct guidance of Guru and its spiritual value was given special importance. It was a part of Upasana and yoga sadhana was inbuilt in their rituals.

The Sun was given highest importance during the Vedic period. The practice of 'Surya namaskara' may have been invented later due to this influence. Pranayama was a part of daily ritual and to offer the oblation. Though Yoga was being practiced in the pre-Vedic period, the great Sage Maharshi Patanjali systematized and codified the then existing practices of Yoga, its meaning and its related knowledge through his Yoga Sutras. After Patanjali, many Sages and Yoga Masters contributed greatly for the preservation and development of the field through their well-documented practices and literature.

Historical evidences of the existence of Yoga were seen in the pre-Vedic period (2700 B.C.), and thereafter till Patanjali's period. The main sources, from which we get the information about Yoga practices and the related literature during this period, are available in Vedas (4), Upanishads(108), Smritis, teachings of Buddhism, Jainism, Panini, Epics (2), Puranas (18) etc.

Tentatively, the period 500 BC - 800 A.D. is considered as the Classical period which is also considered as the most fertile and prominent period in the history and development of Yoga. During this period, commentaries of Vyasa on Yoga Sutras and Bhagawadgita etc. came into existence. This period can be mainly dedicated to two great religious teachers of India –Mahavir and Buddha. The concept of five great vows – Pancha mahavrata- by Mahavir and Ashta Magga or eightfold path by Buddha - can be well considered as early nature of Yoga sadhana. The explicit explanation of yoga is given in Bhagawadgita and more elaborately in Gyam Yoga, Bhathi yoga and karma Yoga. These three types of yoga are still the highest example of human wisdom and even today people find peace by following the methods as shown in Gita.

Patanjali's yoga sutra besides containing various aspects of yoga is mainly identified with eight fold path of Yoga. The very important commentary on Yoga sutra by Vyasa was also written. During this very period the aspect of mind was given importance and it was clearly brought out through Yoga sadhana, Mind and body both can be brought under control to experience equanimity. The period between 800 A.D. - 1700 A.D. has been recognized as the Post Classical period wherein the teachings of great Acharyatrayas -Adi Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, Madhavacharya -were prominent during this period. The teachings of Suradasa, Tulasidasa, Purandardasa, Mirabai were the great contributors during this period. The Natha Yogis of Hathayoga Tradition like Matsyendaranatha, Gorkshanatha, Cauranginatha, Swatmaram Suri, Gheranda, Shrinivasa Bhatt are some of the great personalities who popularized the Hatha Yoga practices during this period.

The period 1700 - 1900 A.D. is considered as Modern period in which the great Yogacharyas - Ramana Maharshi, Ramakrishna paramahansa, paramahansa Yogananda, Vivekananda etc. have contributed for the development of Raja Yoga. This was the period when Vedanta, Bhakti yoga, Nathayoga or Hatha-yoga flourished. The Shadanga-yoga of Gorakshashatakam, Chaturanga-yoga of Hathayogapradipika, Saptanga-yoga of Gheranda Samhita, were the main tenents of Hatha-yoga.

Now in the contemporary times, everybody is convinced of yoga practices towards the preservation, maintenance and promotion of health. Yoga has spread all over the world by the teachings of great personalities like Swami Shivananda, Shri T. Krishnamacharya, Swami Kuvalayananda, Shri Yogendara, Swami Rama, Sri Aurobindo, Maharshi Mahesh Yogi, Acharya Rajanish, Pattabhijois, BKS. Iyengar, Swami Satyananda Saraswathi and the like.

### **2.3 Clearing Misconceptions:**

For many, the practice of yoga is restricted to Hatha Yoga and Asanas (postures). However, among the Yoga Sutras, just three sutras are dedicated to asanas. Fundamentally, hatha yoga is a preparatory process so that the body can sustain higher

levels of energy. The process begins with the body, then the breath, the mind, and the inner self.

Yoga is also commonly understood as a therapy or exercise system for health and fitness. While physical and mental health is natural consequences of yoga, the goal of yoga is more far-reaching. "Yoga is about harmonizing oneself with the universe. It is the technology of aligning individual geometry with the cosmic, to achieve the highest level of perception and harmony."

Yoga does not adhere to any particular religion, belief system or community; it has always been approached as a technology for inner wellbeing. Anyone who practices yoga with involvement can reap its benefits, irrespective of one's faith, ethnicity or culture. Traditional Schools of Yoga :These different Philosophies, Traditions, lineages and Guru-shishya paramparas of Yoga lead to the emergence of different Traditional Schools of Yoga e.g. Jnana-yoga, Bhakti-yoga, Karma-yoga, Dhyana-yoga, Patanjali-yoga, Kundalini-yoga, Hatha-yoga, Mantra-yoga, Laya-yoga, Raja-yoga, Jain-yoga, Bouddha-yoga etc. Each school has its own principles and practices leading to ultimate aim and objectives of Yoga.

Yogic Practices for Health and Wellness: The widely practiced Yoga Sadhanas (Practices) are: Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana (Meditation), Samadhi /Samyama, Bandhas & Mudras, Shat-karmas, Yukta-ahara, Yukta karma, Mantra japa, etc. Yama's are restraints and Niyama's are observances. These are considered to be pre-requisites for the Yoga Sadhanas (Practices). Asanas, capable of bringing about stability of body and mind ' kuryat-tad-asanam-sthairyam...' , consists in adopting various body (psycho-physical) patterns, giving ability to maintain a body position (a stable awareness of one's structural existence) for a considerable length and period of time as well.

Pranayama consists in developing awareness of one's breathing followed by wilful regulation of respiration as the functional or vital basis of one's existence. It helps in developing awareness of one's mind and helps to establish control over the mind. In the initial stages, this is done by developing awareness of the 'flow of in-breath and out-breath' (svasa-prasvasa) through nostrils, mouth and other body openings, its internal and external pathways and destinations. Later, this phenomenon is modified, through regulated, controlled and monitored inhalation (svasa) leading to the awareness of the body space/s getting filled (puraka), the space/s remaining in a filled state (kumbhaka) and it's getting emptied (rechaka) during regulated, controlled and monitored exhalation (prasvasa).

Pratyahara indicates dissociation of one's consciousness (withdrawal) from the sense organs which helps one to remain connected with the external objects. Dharana indicates broad based field of attention (inside the body and mind) which is usually understood as concentration. Dhyana (Meditation) is contemplation (focussed attention inside the body and mind) and Samadhi – integration.

Bandhas and Mudras are practices associated with pranayama. They are viewed as (the) higher Yogic practices mainly consisting on adopting certain body (psycho-physical) patterns along with (s well as) control over respiration. This further facilitates control over mind and paves way for higher yogic attainment. Shat-karmas are de-toxification procedures, help to remove the toxins accumulated in the body and are clinical in nature.

Yuktahara (Right Food and other inputs) advocates appropriate food and food habits for healthy living. However practice of Dhyana (Meditation) helping in self-realization leading to transcendence is considered as the essence of Yoga Sadhana (The Practice of Yoga).

## **2.4 Fundamentals of Yoga Sadhana:**

Yoga works on the level of one's body, mind, emotion and energy. This has given rise to four broad classifications of Yoga: karma yoga, in which we utilize the body; bhakti yoga, where we utilize the emotions; gyana yoga, where we utilize the mind and intellect; and kriya yoga, where we utilize the energy.

Each system of Yoga we practice would fall within the gamut of one or more of these categories. Every individual is a unique combination of these four factors. "All the ancient commentaries on Yoga have stressed that it is essential to work under the direction of a Guru." The reason being that only a Guru can mix the appropriate combination of the four fundamental paths, as is necessary for each seeker.

## **2.5 Yoga Education:**

Traditionally, Yoga Education was imparted by knowledgeable, experienced, and wise persons in the families (comparable with the education imparted in convents in the west) and then by the Seers (Rishis/Munis/Acharyas) in Ashrams (compared with monasteries). Yoga Education, on the other hand, aims at taking care of the individual, the 'Being'. It is presumed that a good, balanced, integrated, truthful, clean, transparent person will be more useful to oneself, family, society, nation, nature and humanity at large. Yoga education is 'Being oriented'. Details of working with 'being oriented' aspect have been outlined in various living traditions and texts and the method contributing to this important field is known as 'Yoga'.

Present days, Yoga Education is being imparted by many eminent Yoga Institutions, Yoga Colleges, Yoga Universities, Yoga Departments in the Universities, Naturopathy colleges and Private trusts & societies. Many Yoga Clinics, Yoga Therapy and Training Centers, Preventive Health Care Units of Yoga, Yoga Research Centers etc. have been established in Hospitals, Dispensaries, Medical Institutions and Therapetical setups.

Different social customs and rituals in India, the land of Yoga, reflect a love for ecological balance, tolerance towards other systems of thought and a compassionate outlook towards all creations. Yoga Sadhana of all hues and colours is considered panacea for a meaningful life and living. Its orientation to a comprehensive health, both individual and social, makes it a worthy practice for the people of all religions, races and nationalities.

**Conclusion:** Now-a-days, millions of people across the globe have benefitted by the practice of Yoga which has been preserved and promoted by the great eminent Yoga Masters from ancient time to this date. The practice of Yoga is blossoming, and growing more vibrant every day.

Modern yoga is most commonly associated with the physical practice of asana; a series of postures often weaved together in styles such as Vinyasa Flow or Ashtanga. Asana practice is generally intended to build strength and stamina, to improve flexibility, coordination and balance, and to relax the body. However, this provides only one small aspect of the tradition of yoga as a whole.

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras provide the traditional foundation of yoga, in which he outlines an eightfold path of the practice. Known as the 'Eight Limbs of Yoga,' this path offers a guide to individuals who are dedicated to creating a union between body, mind and spirit.

**Om Aapada MouLi Paryantam GuruNaam Aakriteem Smaret Tena Vignaaha Pranashyanthi Shidyanthi cha Manorataaha.**

Om, to overcome the difficulties in life meditate on the form of a Guru. Through His Grace, you will overcome all the hurdles and will attain peace.

**Om Yogenā Chittasya Padena Vachaam malam Sharirsya cha Vaidyakena Yopakarottam Pravaram Muninaam Patanjalin Praanjali raanatosmi.**

Om, through Yoga mind becomes clear, through grammar speech becomes clear, through Ayurveda bodily impurities are removed. Our prostrations to Patanjali Rishi who is the authority in all these 3 areas.

**Om Ananta Guna Poornaya Dosha Dooraya Vishnave Namataha Sri Prananaathaya Bhakta Beesta Pradayine.**

Om, Prostrations to the Lord Vishnu who has the infinite qualities and who is beyond defects and to the Mukhya Prana who fulfils desires of all devotees.

**Om Buddir Bala Yasho Dhairyam Nirbhayatva Arogatha Ajadyam Vakpatutwam cha Hanumat Smaranatbhavet.**

Om, by contemplating on Hanuman one gets all 8 siddhis – Intelligence, Strength, Glory, Courage, Fearlessness, Good health, Removes laziness and Mastery of speech.

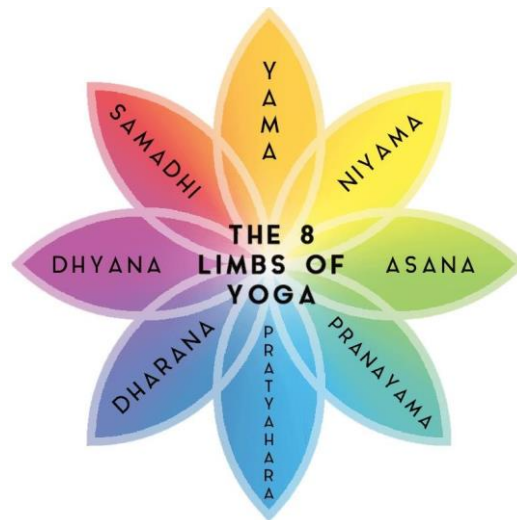
**Om Satchidanada Roopaya Visvopatyaadhi Hetave Tapatraya Vinashaya Sri Krishnaya Vayam Namaha.**

Om, Our Prostrations to the Lord Krishna who is the embodiment of Satchitananda, Lord of the Universe, the remover of all 3 Taapas (adyatmik, adi boutik and adi daivik - problems associated within oneself, immediate surrounding and far away).

- Yoga – Limited understanding in the west generally associated with physical exercise to become fit.
- Yoga comes from the Sanskrit word root Yuj meaning joining. Bringing Jivatma (lower Self) to Paramatma (Higher Self) is Yoga.
- Yoga has 3 benefits – physical, physiological and spiritual.
- In the Srimad Bhagawat Gita 2nd Chapter Yoga is defined as Samatwam Yoga Uchhyate (equanimity is Yoga) and Yoga Karmasu Kaushalam (Dexterity in action is Yoga). In the 6th Chapter it says Dhukha Samyoga Viyogam Yoga Sanjnitam (Getting rid of suffering is Yoga). This Yoga is achieved through Karma (Selfless action), Bhakti (Devotion to the Highest), Jnana (Knowledge of the Highest) and Raja (Royal) Yoga.
- Raja Yoga is the combination of Karma, Bhakti and Jnana and takes in to account that a healthy body is needed to fulfil all our Dharmas (sharira madhyam khalu dharma sadhanam). Karma, Bhakti and Jnana Yoga makes the mind quiet there-by slowing the breathing. On the contrary, in Raja Yoga, breathing rate is slowed by proper breathing. When the breathing is slow, mind becomes calm and still.
- Patanjali Rishi (an incarnation of Shesha, incarnated to please the Lord) divided Raja yoga in to 8 limbs. It is like an eight storied building. One needs to start from the Yama and Niyama and once one starts on to that, with persistence one reaches other levels automatically. As Patanjali says Yoga does not come to one who is not disciplined (Atha Yoga Anushasanam). But for the disciplined one, it comes naturally.
- The first four steps Yama, Niyama, Asana and Pranayama are external practice (Bahiranga Sadhana) and next four steps Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi are internal practices (Antharanga Sadhana).
- The Yama, Niyama and the 4 antharanga Sadhanas –Pratyahara, Dharana,, Dhyana and Samadhi are the same in all types of Yogas, though they are called by different names.

## 2.6 The eight limbs according to Patanjali are:

YAMA-NIYAMA-ASANA-PRANAYAMA-PRATYAHARA-DHARANA-DHYANA-SAMADHAYO ASTA ANGANI.



- A. **Yama:** Abstentions or restraints (AHIMSA-SATYA-ASTEYA-BRAHMAACRYA-APARIGRAHA YAMAH) The Yamas in relation to the outer world consists of non-injury, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, and non-acquisitiveness. Patanjali says irrespective of race, country, religion and time everyone must observe the Yamas.
- B. **Niyama:** Observances for oneself which cultivate positive qualities (SHOUCHA-SANTOSHA-TAPAS-SWADYAYA- ISWARA PRANIDANA). Five spiritual and self-discipline observances (cleanliness, contentment, spiritual austerities, study of scriptures and surrender to God).
- C. **Asana:** physical posture, originally intended only for seated meditation, but more recently adapted to encompass all physical yoga practices, Yoga postures
- D. **Pranayama:** breathing exercises to control the flow of prana (vital life force), Yogic breathing
- E. **Pratyahara:** Withdrawal of senses
- F. **Dharana:** Single pointed Concentration
- G. **Dhyana:** Meditation
- H. **Samadhi:** Super consciousness, Liberation or blissful union with the Divine

- Yama and Niyama are for conserving our energy. They act as a fence and prevent the wrong energy entering in. If the fence is not proper, however much of asana and pranayama one may do, it will not help. Yama helps Yogis to be in harmony with other people and Niyama helps one to be in harmony with oneself.

- Asana and Pranayama are the cleaning process. Yama and Niyama can be classified as Inputs. Asana and pranayama are the Processors. Pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and Samadhi are the Outputs.



### **1.6.1 Yama : Yamas are for building healthy society**

- Ahimsa: A lot of emphasis is laid on Ahimsa. This is the foundation and basis of Yoga and all Spiritual pursuits. When we kill some animal for our pleasure, we are not in harmony with it and this is against the principle of Yoga. Humans are supposed to be protectors and not destructors. When we eat dead animal, it decreases the digestive fire (Jatara Agni) which results in various vata (air), kapha (phlegm) and Pitta (fire) Doshas (defects). This way Ahimsa caused on others affects the doer also. When ahimsa is not mastered we get disturbed thoughts when we sit for meditation and we cannot sit for long in silence.

The person who masters Ahimsa (non injury) – there is no feeling of hatred in his/her presence. Satya: One has to be truth to oneself. Thinking, action and speech should become one.

The person who masters Satya (Truth) – All his/her blessings comes true. All his needs will be fulfilled without his/her asking.

Asteya: In Stealing which do not belong to one – physical things or knowledge should not be stolen.

The person who masters Asteya (non stealing) – Wealth comes to that person naturally.

Brahmacharya: Brahmacharya is the moderation in recreation to avoid the dissipation of energy.

The person who masters Brahmacharya (moderate in recreation)– He acquires spiritual energy–outward joy and inner peace.

Aparigraha: One should not hoard things which are not of immediate use. A lot of energy is wasted in preserving things.

The person who masters Aparigraha (non hoarding)– He/she gets the knowledge of present, past and future.

### **1.6.2 Niyama: For developing ourselves**

- Saucha: There should be physical and mental purity. As a result of purity there arises indifferences to the body and the person does not enjoy the company of worldly (extrovert) people.

- Santosha: There should be an inner contentment. We should reduce our needs. As a result of contentment, one gains supreme happiness.

- Tapas: Tapas is the ability to endure difficulties without complaining. As a result of mortification, impurities are removed and special powers come to the body and sense organs.

- Swadyaya: One should not forsake daily scriptural and self studies and reflection on

them. As a result of study, one obtains the vision of that aspect of God which one has chosen to worship.

- Iswara Pranidana: Devotion and Surrender to the Lord is paramount for spiritual aspirant. Sadhana is a daily practice and this should be done at least twice a day during the Sandhya (sun rise and sun set) times to build up inner strength. As a result of devotion to God, one achieves Samadhi. Tapas (enduring the difficulties, austerities), Swadyaya (self study, daily reading of Holy Scriptures) and Iswara Pranidana (surrender to the God) together is called the Kriya Yoga.

### **1.6.3 Asana**

- Asana is defined by Patanjali as Sthira Sukha Asanam. Posture becomes firm and relaxed through enduring the natural tendencies of the body and through meditation on the infinite. By this one is not easily troubled by dualities of sense- experience.
- Whatever posture we are comfortable with where we can sit in for a long time is Asana. To achieve asana Siddhi, we need to various postures to loosen the joints and cleanse the nadis.
- By doing asanas the chest expands, lung capacity increases and thereby breathing rate decreases. This reduces the load on the heart and heart gets some time to relax. Humans normally breathe 15-20 times a minute. Rabbits breathe 60-70 times a minute. Elephants breathe 5-6 times a minute. Tortoise breath 2-3 times a minute. Elephants live over 150 years. Tortoise lives for about 250 years. Rabbits 3-5 years. By reducing breathing rate, life expectancy is increased. The life is measured in terms of number of breaths one takes and not by the number years one lives.
- Anger, jealousy, anxiety, worry, grieving increases the number breaths and reduces the jataara agni (digestive fire). This results in many physical and psychic disorders. We need to counter anger and other defects by observing Yama and Niyama.
- While doing the asanas like acupressure, it applies pressure to the particular part of the body and revitalizes that part. Asana is done with full concentration and identifying oneself with the asana. One should enjoy the asana and should be expressed through the pleasant face.
- Performing asana, one comes to harmony with the nature and other animals in the nature. In the 10th Chapter of Srimad Bhagawat Gita, it says among animals I am Lion, among water animals I am crocodile, among mountains I am Himalaya, among birds I am Garuda etc. The purpose asana is also to identify ourselves with the animals or nature and live in harmony with them.

### **1.6.4 Hata Yoga**

- In the human body there are 72,000 nadis (energy carrying nerves). Wherever nadis meet, there forms an energy centre called Chakra. Generally the energy does not flow

through properly in the body because of impurities. This is cleaned by the process of various asanas, pranayams and Hata Yoga Kriyas.

- Hata Yoga. Ha means Sun and Ta means Moon. Hata also means +ve and -ve energy. Bringing Sun and Moon centers together so that Prana moves through Sushumna central nadi) is Hata Yoga. Though we have 2 nostrils generally we breathe only through one nostril. Left nostril is connected to the right brain. It is called Ida. It is also called as Moon nadi. Breathing in through the left nostril cools the body. When the body gets heated up through emotions, Prana moves through left nostril (Ida) to cool the body down.
- The right nostril is connected to the left brain. It is called Pingala. It is also called as Sun nadi. Breathing in through the Right nostril heats the body up. When the body gets cooled down through calm and clear thinking, Prana moves through right nostril (Pingala Nadi) to warm the body up.
- This alternate switching happens every about 2 hours. Practicing Pranayama makes the Prana to travel through the central nadi called Sushumna nadi. By bringing the prana to the Sushuman Nadi (bringing sun and moon system together) we will not be oscillating like a pendulum for every passing thoughts and emotions. This done through Nasika shuddhi (cleaning the nasal passage) and Nadi shuddhi (cleaning the nadis) pranayama.
- There are 6 Hata yoga kriyas. They are Neti (cleaning the sinus through the nose), Dhauti (cleaning the wind and food pipe), Nauli (churning the stomach muscles), Basti (cleaning the lower and upper intestine), Kaphalabathi (cleaning the sinus and head by active exhale and passive inhale) and Tratak (gazing on light)

### **1.6.5 Pranayama**

- Prana is not just breathing. Breathing is the external sign of prana. Yogis can live without breathing for a long time. When the Prana leaves the body, breathing stops and that body is then called dead. Since we have prana in the body we are called "Prani".
- By doing pranayama, the covering of inner light is removed.
- Our scriptures say we have various gods function in the body like Sun and Moon on the Eyes, Dig devatas on the ears, Aswini Kumaras on our shoulders etc. These Gods can function only when we have the Mukhya Prana (vital air) in the body. When the Prana leaves the body, our gods cannot function any more.
- Pranayama means expansion of Prana (Prana Ayama). Prana is divided into Prana (energy makes heart pump, feel etc.), apana (excretion), Vyana (circulation), Samana (digestion), Udana (makes us talk, swallow etc) and 5 upa pranas like Naga (Burping), Kurma (Blinking), Devadatta (Yawning), Kruku (Sneezing), Dhanajaya (preserving the body for a while after death).
- On inhalation, our diaphragm (situated below the lungs) moves downwards. Air you breathe in through the nose is drawn down the trachea to the lungs, which are

protected by the ribcage. If we are breathing properly, the abdomen and ribcage will expand as we inhale. On an exhalation, our diaphragm moves upwards, compressing the lungs and pushing air out of them. The air passes back up through the trachea and out through the nostrils.

- When full breathing takes place (all 3 stages udara (stomach- Deep abdominal breathing), ura (chest middle – Thoracic breathing) and griva swasa (upper chest breathing - Clavicular breathing) our breathing rate reduces automatically and mind becomes calm and serene. The 12th chapter of the Bhagawat Gita says that person does not get agitated by the world nor he can agitate the world. Such a person becomes like a walking temple and his or her mere presence is spreading peace, love and harmony.

- To make the Prana move through the Sushumna Nadi techniques like Nadi shodana, Ujjayi, Surya bedhana, Shitali, Shitakari, Bastrika, Kapalabhati Pranayama are practiced.

### **1.6.6 Pratyahara, Dharana and Dhyana**

Through Dharana mind gains power of concentration. When the mind is withdrawn from the sense objects, sense-organs are also withdrawn from the mind. Thus the sense objects are said to imitate the mind. This is pratyahara.

Yoga nidra is an important process for training in mind for pratyahara, dharana and dhyana. It is a process of calming the mind and yet being fully aware of the process. This helps in strengthening the link between the Ajna and Anahata Chakra.

Some Asanas and Pranayama:

#### **Lying Down**

1. Yoga Nidra
2. Alternate leg movements, 30 deg, 45 deg, 90 deg
3. Both legs 30 deg, 45 deg, 90 deg
4. Legs side lifting
5. Cycling, clockwise and anti-clockwise
6. Supta Padangustasana
7. Bhujangasana
8. Shalabhasana
9. Anantasana
10. Sastanga namaskara

Sitting:

1. Butterfly
2. Toe rolling
3. Forward bending
4. Half butterfly
5. Marjari
6. Janu Sirsasana
7. Balasana

8. Sasankasana
9. Paschimottasana
10. Urdvamuka Swanasana
11. Ado Muka Swanasana
12. Mandukasana
13. Vajra Purvottasana
14. Kukkutasana
15. Virabhadrasana
16. Marichyasana
17. Yoga Nidra

Stand up:

1. Forward bending
2. Backward bending
3. Sideways bending
4. Neck rolling
5. Shoulder rolling
6. Wrist rolling
7. Legs Rolling
8. Tadasana
9. Walk on toes and heels
10. Virabdrasana I
11. Parivritta Trikonasana
12. Trikonasana
13. Surya Namaskara
14. Pada angustasana
15. Parsvottasana
16. Ardha Kati Chakrasana

The four traditional paths of yoga are:

1. Bhakti (devotion)
2. Karma (action/selfless service)
3. Jnana (knowledge/self-study)
4. Raja (self-discipline/practice).

Yoga is also used as a therapeutic tool for many physical and mental conditions, and mind-body research is now demonstrating its effectiveness as a treatment for chronic pain, anxiety, depression, cardiovascular disease and diabetes, to name but a few.

Modern age is the age of science and reason. Like any true knowledge, science has a great future. In recent years, there have been revolutionary developments in science and information technology. Our country is emerging as a leader in these areas and our lifestyle is being significantly influenced by these developments. Like any coin, the golden coin of science also has two sides. In proper hands, science is a blessing for the whole humanity. On the other hand, unscrupulous persons can use scientific knowledge for destructive purposes. The existing weapons of mass destruction are capable of

destroying the whole world many times over. In human terrorists are spilling human blood on a daily basis.

In twentieth century alone, millions have perished due to wars and terrorist violence based on ethnic, religious and political hatred. Science has no answer to this grave problem staring us in the face. What does science tell us about how to behave, battle our emotions and passions and what to believe / not believe? Solution to the crisis of character has to be in moral-spiritual terms. It is clear that scientific 'know how' should be guided by spiritual 'do how' so that science is practised at its noblest. Science cannot be ethically neutral and needs to be purified of its undesirable and arrogant obsessions. With the advancement of science, there should be a parallel development of art and spirituality. Otherwise we will have nuclear giants who are emotional pigmies and spiritual infants. Realizing this fact, Einstein has said that 'science without religion is lame and religion without science is blind'. However, many religious cults are based on mutually antagonistic doctrines and unscientific dogmas. They emphasize sectarian religiosity above humanity and spirituality. Religious beliefs that are in conflict with morality, humanity and reason cannot be accepted. Hence, there is a need to emphasize spirituality which not only transcends sectarian religious beliefs, but also is complementary to science. In the Vedic tradition, dharma is that which helps us in achieving all round progress in the external material world (abhyudaya) as well as development at the inner, spiritual level (nihshreyas).

Yoga is a spiritual science for the integrated and holistic development of our physical, mental as well as moral-spiritual aspects. Yoga is based on philosophy that is practical and for our day-to-day living. Yoga produces desirable physiological changes and has sound scientific basis 2, 3, 4. True wealth of a nation consists of superior and noble persons it harbors.

"Arjuna, I am the sapidity in water, light of the sun and moon, sacred AUM of the Veda, sound in ether, manliness of men, lion among quadrupeds, garud among the birds, ashwath among trees and Kapil among Siddhas" 8,9,10.

Lord Krishna further says that 'Everything that is glorious, brilliant and powerful is a part manifestation of My glory'. Thus, yogic vision promotes unity of humanity with the whole creation and nature. It is clear that while materialism aggravates conflict between man and nature, yoga eases and solves it. From the yogic point of view, natural resources are to be harnessed for common good and not for satisfying human greed.

## Unit – II

### Swaasa Kriya

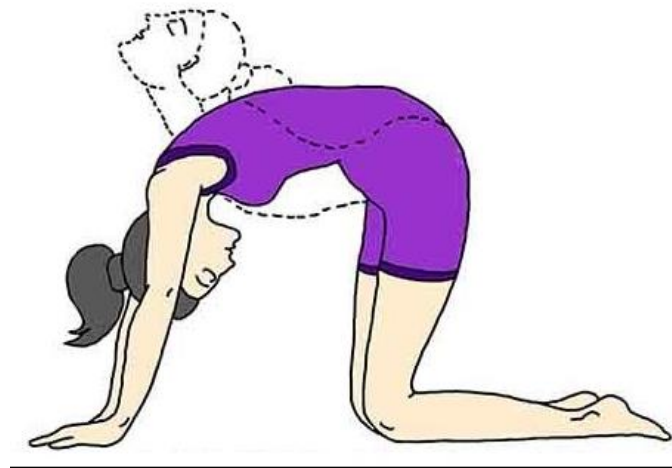
For beginners and therapeutic purpose, we do only Swaasa Kriya and next level we can follow the pranayama and advance pranayama as well.

#### 2.1 Deep Breathing:

Sit in meditative posture. First exhale and use a light uddiyan bandha and mool bandha. Inhale slowly and deeply. The belly comes out. Exhale slowly. The belly comes in. Practise it for 3 to 5 minutes. Concentration will be on breathing or navel (Manipur chakra)



#### 2.2 Marjalaraswa (The Cat Pose)



1. Kneel on the floor and lean forward putting both your palms on the floor pointing forward.
2. The legs can be slightly apart and palms should be at shoulder length.

3. Take the position similar to a standing cat. Let your trunk be parallel to the ground, the thighs should be vertical and straight. The lower leg and feet should be on the floor.
4. This is the base position. Relax your body completely. Make sure your shoulder and back muscles are relaxed.
5. Now exhale completely and feel your belly go inwards. At the same time move your head inwards between your shoulders. While doing this your back will bend and arch upwards.
6. Now inhale and arch your back in the opposite direction. The spine will bend slightly downwards. The head, neck and shoulders should be arched backwards, as if you are looking up.
7. Repeat this process, as many times as you are comfortable. Do this asana with slow and deep breathing and feel the stretch it gives to your back, neck and shoulders. Feel the stiffness disappear and the sense of greater flexibility in your back muscles and spine.

### **Benefits of Marjalswasa (The Cat Pose)**

1. Marjalswasa loosens up the spine and make it flexible. It gets rid of stiffness in the back muscles.
2. It is good for those suffering from Spondylitis and slipped disk.
3. Marjalswasa also has an indirect effect on the organs of the lower abdomen, including the digestive system, intestines and the reproductive organs. It gives a good massage and stretch to these organs.

### **Contraindication for Marjalswasa (The Cat Pose)**

1. Marjalswasa should be avoided if you have any knee injury.

## **2.3 Swana Swasa**

Swana + Pranayama = Swana Pranayama. The Sanskrit word **swana** (श्वाँ) means Dog and Pranayama means a breathing exercise. Literally, it is **Dog Breathing Exercise**. The technique is similar to panting like a dog. You may have come across some mammals like dog pants by keeping the tongue outside and making breathing that sounds like 'ha' ha' 'ha'. This is because they won't sweat like humans and they have to maintain their body temperature. Therefore a breathing technique like this is called **Dog Panting Breathing Exercise**.





## Swana Swasa Steps

### Step 1

Assume Bhadrasana. Ensure the big toes are in contact with each other. Then, place the palms on the knees.

**Step 2** Then, close the eyes and relax the body for a few seconds. Thereupon, lean forward and straighten the arms keeping the head erect.

### Step 3

After that, open the mouth wide and extend the tongue outside. Then, breathe like the panting of the dog. Extend the tongue outside to the maximum.

### Step 4

Contract the stomach while exhaling and expand the stomach while inhaling. The movements should be spontaneous and not forceful. A beginner may breathe ten times which constitutes one round. Perform three rounds like this. An adept may go up to twenty breathes of three rounds. Relax for 30 seconds to one minute between two rounds.

## Swana Swasa Benefits

- It helps to maintain body temperature.
- Moreover, it improves digestion and remove diseases like indigestion and acidity. Hence, it aids in digestive process.
- Besides, it is a good preparatory practice for Agnisar Kriya, Nauli, and Uddiyana Bhandha.
- It activates Navel Chakra.

Above all, it strengthens the muscles of abdomen and diaphragm.

## 2.4 CHALANE KRIYAS



**Chalane kriya**



**Neck Up & Down**



**Right & Left Neck bending**



**Right & Left Neck Stretching**



**Right & Left Neck Twisting**



**Neck stretch side ways**



**Neck Rotation**



**Trunk rotation**



**Trunk rotation**



## 2.5 SURYA NAMASKARA

**Om Hirnmayena PatreNa Satyasya Pihitam Mukham Tat Twam Pooshanna PaavruNu Satya Dharmaya Dristaye.**

O Protector Sun, please remove the golden plate covering your face (by whose radiance I am unable to see the Truth) so that the Truth behind you may be revealed to me.

1. **Om Hram Mitraya Namaha** (stimulates brain, heart, respiratory organs, lungs, chest) (friend of all).
2. **Om Hrim Ravaye Namaha** (invigorates throat, heart, digestive system) (praised by all).
3. **Om Hrum Suryaya Namaha** (strengthens liver, spleen, stomach and uterus) (stimulator of all).
4. **Om Hraim Bhanave Namaha** (stimulates kidney) (giver of luster to all).
5. **Om Hroum Khagaya Namaha** (normalizes the function of rectum and anus) (stimulator of senses).
6. **Om Hrah PusNe Namaha** (develops throat and chest) (nourisher of all).
7. **Om Hram Hiranyagarbhaya Namaha** (stimulates brain, heart, respiratory organs, lungs, chest) (developer of energy and vitality for all).
8. **OM Hrim Marichaye Namaha** (invigates throat, heart, digestive system) (destroyer of all diseases for all).
9. **Om Hrum Adityaya Namaha** (strengthens liver, spleen, stomach, uterus) (Attracts all).
10. **Om Hraim Savitre Namaha** (stimulates kidney) (Begetter of all).
11. **Om Hroum Arkaya Namaha** (normalizes the function of rectum and anus) (Fit to be revered by all).
12. **Om Hrah Bhaskaraya Namaha** (develops throat and chest) (refulgent in all).

**Om Sri Savitra Suryanarayanaya Namaha**

## **SURYA NAMASKARA MANTRAS**

- |    |                                |   |                            |
|----|--------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| 1  | PRANAMASANA<br>THE PRAYER POSE |    | OM MITRAYA NAMAHA          |
| 2  | HASTA<br>UTTANASANA            |    | OM RAVAYE NAMAHA           |
| 3  | PADA HASTASANA                 |    | OM SURYAYA NAMAHA          |
| 4  | ASHWA<br>SANCHALANASANA        |    | OM BHANAVE NAMAHA          |
| 5  | PARVATASANA                    |   | OM KHAGAYA NAMAHA          |
| 6  | ASHTANGA<br>NAMASKARA          |  | OM PUSHNE NAMAHA           |
| 7  | BHUJANGASANA                   |  | OM HIRANYA GARBHAYA NAMAHA |
| 8  | PARVATASANA                    |  | OM MARICHAYE NAMAHA        |
| 9  | ASHWA<br>SANCHALANASANA        |  | OM ADITYAYA NAMAHA         |
| 10 | PADA HASTASANA                 |  | OM SAVITRE NAMAHA          |
| 11 | HASTA<br>UTTANASANA            |  | OM ARKAYA NAMAHA           |
| 12 | PRANAMASANA<br>THE PRAYER POSE |  | OM BHASKARAYA NAMAHA       |

# SURYA NAMASKARA



## 2.6 Pranayama:

1. Nadi Shodanam: Alternate nose deep breathing. Exhale is twice as long as inhale
2. Brahamari Pranayama
3. Ujjayi Pranayama
4. Shitali and Shitakari Pranayama

Vaasudeva Kriya:

This is a combination of Kriya, Pranayam and Mantra. Doing this, breathing becomes very slow and steady. Practicing this for a long time, mind automatically goes to ajapa (spontaneous repetition of Lord's name). This is the very purpose of all spiritual sadana irrespective of the path we take. In the Bagawad Gita 8th chapter Sri Krishna says, whatever you think and leave the body you attain that. Therefore at all the time think of me by surrendering mind and intellect and continue your battle of life. This way you will attain me. There is no doubt about it.

Practicing the Vasudeva Kriya helps to achieve this quickly.

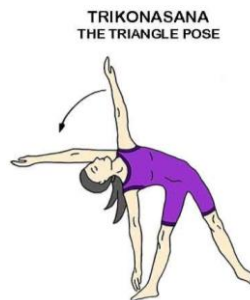
**Om Naham Karta Hari Karta Hari Karta Hi Kevalam Om Shanti Shanti Shantihi**

I am not the doer Hari is the doer, only Hari is the Doer.  
Om Peace, Peace, Peace

**Om Ayam me hasto Bhagavan ayam me bhagavattaraha Ayam me viswa bheshajoyam Shivabi marshanaha**

The Supreme resides in my palms. The Supreme resides in my palms as a healer. All the medicinal herbs in this world are in my palms. With these palms I heal myself and I heal others.

## **2.7 Trikonasana (The Triangle Pose)**



Trikonasana or the triangle pose is a good stretching exercise which gives flexibility to the spine and pelvic region. In Sanskrit 'trikona' means 'three corners' or a 'triangle'.

Trikonasana is an excellent posture to develop strength and balance. It also gives flexibility to the legs, waist and knees.

It gives a sense of expansiveness as the arms and torso are bent and reaches for the toes. It gives a sense of balance for the whole body. Those who have stiff legs, knees and waist can use this posture to regain their flexibility and strength. Performing Trikonasana briskly can be a good exercise that can give a sense of well-being and relieves depression. It is one of those asanas which is great choice for outdoor workout, in your garden or on the mountains or amidst nature.

If you feel stiffness of the leg, waist or torso muscles while doing this, then perform this posture very slowly with slow and deep breathing. In due course of time, your body will develop the flexibility and the stiffness will go away.

1. Stand erect with the feet about 3 feet apart with knees straight.
2. Raise both the hands till they are in line with each other, parallel to the ground. Inhale when you are raising the hands.
3. Now bend towards the right and slightly bend the knees, to touch the right foot with the hands. Look up at the left hand. Exhale when you are bending down to touch the foot. Keep the eye open throughout the practice.
4. Return to the standing position.
5. Repeat this with the left hand touching the left foot.
6. This is one round.
7. Practice as many rounds as is comfortable.

### **Benefits of Trikonasana (The Triangle Pose)**

1. Trikonasana gives flexibility of the back and spine.
2. It stimulates the digestive fire and removes constipation.

3. It massages the muscles and nerves in the pelvic region, relieving stiffness and mild pains.
4. It tones all organs in the abdomen maintain the health of those organs.
5. Trikonasana is a good workout which can get the blocked energies moving and can relieve depression.

## 2.8 Virabhadrasana – I (Warrior Pose)

VIRABHADRASANA - I  
THE WARRIOR POSE



1. Stand straight with the legs spread out. Let there be distance of at least 3 feet between the two feet.
2. Raise the hands above the head and the palms facing each other.
3. Turn to the left and slowly rotate the left foot about 90 degrees to the left so that it is aligned with the chest.
4. Turn the right foot slightly (around 15 degrees) towards the inside.
5. Bend the left knee till the thighs are parallel to the ground. The right leg should remain straight.
6. The head, the chest, the left knee and the left foot should be aligned in one direction. Now you may bring the palms closer so that they touch each other.
7. Retain this position for few breaths, which should be slow and deep.
8. To release the pose, raise yourself up and straighten the left knee. Turn to the right to go back to the original position.
9. Repeat this on the other side too. This is done by bending the right knee and turning to the right side and aligning the head, chest, knee and foot to the right.

## Virabhadrasana – II (Warrior Pose)

VIRABHADRASANA - II  
THE WARRIOR POSE



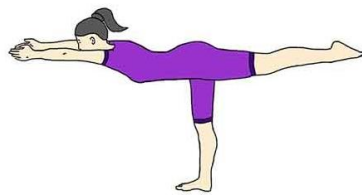
1. Assume the Virabhadrasana – I position. After releasing the pose, come back to the standing pose.
2. Turn the right foot 90 degrees to the front. The left foot is facing sideways as in Virabhadrasana – I.



3. Stretch both hands and place them parallel to the ground, aligning them along the shoulders.
4. The head, chest, left knee and foot should face the left direction. Gaze forward along the direction of the left foot.
5. Take slow deep breaths and remain in this position as long as you are comfortable.
6. After releasing the pose, the same can be tried on the right side.

### **Virabhadrasana – III (Warrior Pose)**

**VIRABHADRASANA - III**  
THE WARRIOR POSE



1. Assume Virabhadrasana – I position.
2. In this position, you are gazing to the left with the head, chest, knee and left foot aligned together.
3. Next we are going to try a balancing pose. Slowly bend forward and lower the hands and bring them parallel to the ground.
4. Now slowly raise the right leg above the ground. Make it parallel to the ground.
5. Maintain this final pose for as long as you are comfortable. In the final pose, the entire weight of the body is supported by the left foot. The entire balance too is on the left leg. This is a balancing pose and requires a little practice.
6. To release the pose, slowly bring down the right foot to touch the ground. Make the left knee straight, turn to the front and bring the hands back down to the starting position.

### **Benefits of Virabhadrasana (Warrior Pose)**

1. Virabhadrasana gives a good stretch to the leg muscles.
2. It is good for the organs in the abdomen.
3. It can improve flexibility of the back muscles.
4. It improves the nervous balance of the body.
5. It can relieve stress in the shoulders.

## **2.9 Vrikshasana (The Tree Pose)**

**VRIKSHASANA**  
THE TREE POSE



1. Start in the standing position. Stand straight with arms on the side of the body.
2. Now, take your hands and place on the hips. This can help you to balance better. Bend your right knee and place it on the inner side of the left thigh just above the left knee. The sole of the feet should touch the inner thigh.
3. The left leg should remain straight. Try to maintain the balance of the body. The entire weight of the body rests on the left leg.
4. Once you are steady, start raising the hands above the head. Bring the hands together, palms touching each other, in the prayer pose or Namaste. The spine and chest should be held straight.
5. Try to maintain your balance and look straight ahead. Breathe normally in this position.
6. Try to maintain this for as long as you are comfortable.
7. To release the pose, exhale slowly and simultaneously bring down the hands to the sides. Gently release the right leg and bring it to the floor.
8. You can repeat the same procedure on the other side, by placing the left leg on the side of the right inner thigh.

### **Benefits of Vrikshasana (The Tree Pose)**

1. This asana is excellent for developing a good sense of balance.
2. Vrikshasana strengthens the legs, arms and shoulders.
3. It can help those suffering from sciatica.
4. Vrikshasana calms the mind and makes the body steady and strong.
5. It can strengthen the ligaments of the ankle and feet.
6. Vrikshasana can be used to correct posture related problems.

Those suffering from vertigo and high blood pressure should avoid Vrikshasana.

## **2.10 Tadasana (The Palm Tree Pose)**

TADASANA  
THE PALM TREE POSE



1. Stand erect with legs slightly apart with the hands on the sides.
2. Raise the hand above the head and look straight.
3. Interlock the fingers and turn it upwards. The palms should be facing the sky.
4. The gaze can be adjusted to look slightly above the horizontal level.
5. Take a deep breath and stretch the arms, shoulders and chest upwards.
6. Raise the heels so that the weight of the body is borne by the toes.
7. Stretch the whole body from the feet to the head.
8. Remain in this position for few seconds.
9. Bring down the heels while breathing out.
10. This is one round. One can practice up to 10 rounds.
11. During the whole practice the eyes should remain steadily fixed in front little above the head level.



### **Benefits of Tadasana (The Palm Tree Pose)**

1. Tadasana gives a good stretch to the arms, chest, abdomen, spine and the legs.
2. It creates a sense of physical and mental balance. This sense of balance can be enhanced if one practices the same with closed eyes.
3. Tadasana can help to increase height.
4. Women during early stages of pregnancy can be benefited due to the gentle stretch of the abdomen.
5. Tadasana can also be performed before and after inverted poses like Sirsasana to redistribute the blood in the body. During Sirsasana the blood accumulates in the head. Beginners especially can see their eyes getting red as it gets filled with excess blood. Tadasana when performed rapidly helps to bring down the accumulated blood from the head and redistributes it in the body.
6. Tadasana is one of the poses used during the practice of Shankaprakshalana or the cleaning of the stomach and intestine. This quickly moves the saline water which one drinks during the process to the lower intestine and rectum, thereby quickening the cleansing process.

### **2.11 Tiriyaka Tadasana (Swaying Palm Tree Pose)**

**TIRYAKA TADASANA**  
**SWAYING PALM TREE POSE**



1. Stand erect with hands on the sides. The legs can be kept about a feet and half apart. Different variations vary the gap between the two feet as per convenience and choice.
2. Interlock the two palms with the palms facing downwards.
3. Inhale slowly and raise the interlocked hands over the head. Now the palms are facing upwards.
4. Pull your arms straight up so that the biceps touch the ears.
5. Now exhale slowly and turn towards the left side. Keep on bending to the extent possible without straining. During this process, keep the upper arms close to the ears.
6. Stay in this position for as long as you are comfortable. Feel the stretch on the right side ribs and the waist region.
7. Inhale and come back to the straight position with palms facing the sky.
8. Repeat this procedure on the right side.
9. This constitutes one round. Do as many rounds as you feel comfortable.
10. To release the pose, exhale and bring down the interlocked palms from the front. Release the lock and place the hands on the sides. Come back to the standing position with legs together.

### **Benefits of Tiriyaka Tadasana (Swaying Palm Tree Pose)**

1. Tiriyaka Tadasana gives a good stretch to the sides.

2. During the bend towards the left, the liver gets toned as the liver is on the right side which gets a good stretch.
3. This Pose reduces the fat around the waist.
4. Tiriyaka Tadasana stimulates the bowel movements. This is practised during Shakaparakshalana, which is a method of cleansing the bowels using simple warm salt water. During Shankaparakshalana, warm salt water is consumed on empty stomach, to clean the entire intestine. Tiriyaka Tadasana is performed during this procedure to speed up the evacuating process.
5. It helps to expand the chest and improve breathing.
6. This pose also strengthens the legs during stretching while creating a sense of balance.
7. It tones the organs in the abdomen and improves digestion.

## 2.12 Sarvangapushti

On the mat, spread your feet within your comfort zone. Form the fists with the thumbs tucked in. Your thumbs are not visible this way. These types of fists are usually preferred during yogic exercises.



### Technique of Sarvangapushti

1. Raise both the arms upwards behind the back of the head. Then with one wrist upon the other, bend towards the ankle of the right leg (Second Position)
2. Now change the position of the wrists and while inhaling through the nose, raise the arms backward (Third Position).
3. Describing a circle with the trunk and bring the arms down towards the left ankle (Fourth Position).
4. Again change the position of the wrists and while inhaling through the nose, raise the arms backward.
5. This forms one round.
6. Describing a circle with the trunk and bring the arms down towards the right ankle.
7. Repeat the 2nd Step.

### Precaution of Sarvangapushti

You should know the precautions of any exercise that has huge benefits before practising it. Sarvangapushti should not be performed during the following conditions:

1. Back pain /lumbar spondylitis / cervical spondylitis. (As forward bending is not allowed during the back or cervical pain).
2. Hernia (bending – backward and forward – can aggravate the issue)
3. Past Surgical abdominal operation, one should consult physician (There is probability of some injury.)
4. Any recent surgical operation (healing can be affected)
5. Heart diseases/High Blood Pressure (Blood pressure can be raised during such exertion and can slightly load the cardiac capacity)
6. Vertigo (forward bending is avoided during vertigo and hence, the sarvangapusthi should not be done during vertigo)

### **Benefits of Sarvangapusthi**

As the name sarvangapusthi suggests by its meaning, 'sarv' means all, 'ang' means organs, Pusthi, "prosperous, well-nourished"), this exercise is for whole body development and strengthens all parts of the body. It is similar to sarvangasana which is an inverted posture. In Sarvangasana, stagnant blood from the lower parts of the body, i.e. legs and abdomen is drained to the heart thereby improving the supply of fresh blood to these parts and the whole circulatory system. The methods in both of these exercises are differently helping the whole body. In sarvangapusthi, the entire body is strengthened by musculo-skeletal spinal movements whereas in sarvangasana, it is the inversion that causes reverse flow of blood.

### **2.13 Utkatasana (The Chair Pose)**

UTKATASANA  
THE CHAIR POSE



1. Stand erect with both the feet spaced apart.
2. Take your hands forwards with palms facing downwards, till it is horizontal to the floor.
3. Now imagine that you are going to sit on an imaginary chair. Bend your knees and try to sit down on the imaginary chair.
4. Once you have reached this position, the thighs will make a 45 degrees angle with the lower legs.
5. Raise the hands up and bring them alongside your ears.
6. The gaze can be forward or slightly raised.
7. Stay in this final pose as long as you are comfortable. Try to breathe normally in the pose and relax your mind. Try to increase the duration of the final pose with practice.
8. You may try to go up and down the seat, as if trying to slightly get up with from the chair and then sitting in it again. This will strengthen your leg and thigh muscles.
9. To release the pose, come back to the standing position with hands back to the sides.

10. Lie down in Shavasana to relax for few minutes. You may even sit in a chair (a real one!) to relax.

### **Benefits of Utkatasana (The Chair Pose)**

1. Utkatasana strengthens the hips and lower back muscles.
2. It gives balance and stability to the body.
3. It strengthens the arms, legs and thigh muscles.
4. It tones the knees and ankles.

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## UNIT – III

### **3.1 SITTING ASANAS**

#### **3.1.1 Baddha Konasana (Bound Angle Pose)**

1. Sit on the floor with legs stretched out.
2. Bend the knees and bring the feet together.
3. Hold the ankles with the hands and pull it towards the groins.
4. Wrap your interlaced fingers around the feet and hold it.
5. Pull the feet towards you as much as possible. Do not strain.
6. Try to keep the knees as close to the ground as possible, but do not force it.
7. Keep the chest open and the back straight. Relax the arms and shoulders and gaze straight ahead. Breathe slowly and steadily with awareness.
8. Hold the position for as long as you are comfortable.
9. To release the position, free the hands and stretch the legs in front of you. Gently massage the thighs and groin muscles if there is any pain and if needed, lie in Shavasana as a relaxation pose.
10. The knees can also be moved up and down in the final position, also popularly known as the butterfly pose and is used to loosen the groin and hip muscles.

**BADDHA KONASANA**  
THE BOUND ANGLE POSE



#### **Benefits of Baddha Konasana (Bound Angle Pose)**

1. Baddha Konasana improves the flexibility of the groin muscles, the hips and the thighs.
2. This pose is good for preparation to sit in other meditative postures like the lotus pose or Padmasana.
3. Helps to open up the pelvic region and can alleviate sciatica.
4. It can relieve hernia and pain in the testicles.
5. It can help women to regulate their menstrual cycle.

#### **Contraindications of Baddha Konasana**

1. Baddha Konasana should not be done by those suffering from any groin, hip or knee injury.
2. Women should avoid this during their menstruation.
3. If the knees do not touch the floor, do not push it down forcefully beyond a limit. The performance of any asana should be without pain.
4. Those with high blood pressure and heart problems should do this with caution with guidance from an authorized yoga instructor.

### 3.1.2 Bharadvajasana

1. Be seated on the floor and keep the legs stretched out. This is dandasana, the staff pose which is used as starting posture for many seated asanas.
2. Bend the right knees and bring them toward the right side under the right buttocks.
3. Bend the left knees and hold the left ankle in your hands.
4. Raise the left foot up, bending it further and pulling it towards your right thigh. Place the left foot on the right thigh just below the hip bone, similar to that in half lotus pose. Be careful not to overstretch as this requires good flexibility of the hips.
5. Now place the right hand on the left thigh near the knees.
6. Straighten out your upper body, neck and head.
7. Now, start twisting to the left with the left hand going behind the back. The spine is twisted towards the left along with the shoulders and neck. Breathe in while doing the twist as the chest expands.
8. Remain in this position for as long as you are comfortable.
9. To release the pose, twist back to the normal position and release the left leg from the thighs. Sit with legs stretched out, breath normally and rest.
10. This can be repeated on the other right side with the right leg placed on the left thighs.

**BHARADVAJASANA**  
A SITTING TWIST POSE



### Benefits of Bharadvajasana

1. Bharadvajasana gives a good stretch to the back, shoulders and neck muscles.
2. It is good for lower back pain and sciatica.
3. The sideways twist of the upper body can relieve neck pain.
4. It massages the organs in the abdomen, thereby improving digestion and assimilation.
5. This pose relaxes the back muscles and relieves mental tension.
6. It can be practiced by pregnant women; as the gentle twist will strengthen lower back muscles prior to delivery.

### Contraindications for Bharadvajasana

1. Avoid this pose if you have any lower back or spine injury.
2. If you had any recent surgery of the back or spine, consult your physician before attempting yoga poses.

3. While placing the bend leg on the thighs, be careful not to over stretch. You have good flexibility of the hips, then it is easy. Do not overdo as it can injure your knees.

### **3.1.3 Mandukasana (The Frog Pose)**

1. Sit in Vajrasana or the thunderbolt pose. This is the simple kneeling posture.
2. Make a fist with both hands with the thumb tucked inside the four fingers.
3. Place the two fists on the abdomen on both sides of the navel.
4. Exhale and pull the abdomen slightly inside. Slowly bend forward and press the navel with both the fists.
5. Keep the back as straight as possible and look forward in the bend position.
6. Keep the breath outside in this position and maintain it for as long as you are comfortable.
7. To release the pose, inhale and slowly raise the trunk up to kneeling position, bring the hands back to the sides and relax.
8. Repeat this for about 3 – 5 times.

#### **MANDUKASANA THE FROG POSE**



### **Benefits of Mandukasana (The Frog Pose)**

1. Mandukasana tones all organs in the abdomen including the stomach.
2. It is good for the pancreas and has beneficial for diabetes.
3. It can relieve constipation.
4. It can reduce extra fat in the belly, waist and thighs and helps in weight reduction.
5. Mandukasana improves digestive and excretory functions.
6. It gives a good stretch to the back muscles.
7. It can relieve pain in the knees, legs and ankles.

### **Contraindications for Mandukasana (The Frog Pose)**

1. Those who have back pain should avoid forward bending asanas in general.
2. Those who have any injury of the knees or hips should avoid doing Mandukasana.
3. Mandukasana should not be done by pregnant women.
4. If you had any recent surgery of the abdomen, chest, knees or legs, then avoid doing this pose



### 3.1.4 Ushtrasana (The Camel Pose)

1. Kneel down and sit on your heels. Keep the knees and heels slightly apart.
2. Now raise yourself up on the knees.
3. Stretch your hands backwards and slowly bend your head and back with chin raised. You can place your hands on the either side of the hips. Stabilize ourself in this mid-position.
4. Now, continue the stretch till your hands reaches down and you can feel the heels of your feet. Rest your hands on the heels. Make sure your chest is expanded and the neck is flexed backwards with gaze towards the sky.
5. Remain in this position for as much as you are comfortable. You may go from 30 seconds to 3 minutes depending on your comfort level.
6. To release the position, inhale and come back to the kneeling position. During the return, beginners should be careful not loose your balance and fall.
7. Once in the kneeling position, you can rest in Shashankasana or the Hare Pose for some time.

**USHTRASANA**  
THE CAMEL POSE



### Benefits of Ushtrasana (The Camel Pose)

1. This asana gives a good stretch to the back, chest, hips, groins and neck muscles and is helpful for back pains, stooping shoulders and also for correcting postural defects of the spine.
2. It tones the digestive, excretory and reproductive organs.
3. Ushtrasana improves the flexibility of the spine.
4. It expands the chest and improves lung capacity.

### Contraindications for Ushtrasana (The Camel Pose)

1. Ushtrasana should be avoided by those who suffer from serious neck problems.
2. Those suffering from vertigo should perform this asana with caution, without losing balance. Have a yoga trainer to assist you in such cases.

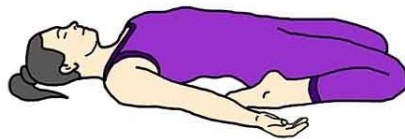
### 3.1.5 Supta Virasana

1. Start with sitting on the floor with legs spread out.
2. Bend the legs and come to the kneeling position. Spread the legs to the sides of the thighs with the feet resting next to the buttocks. This basic pose is called

Virasana, the Hero's pose. In this pose, the knees are kept close together, legs bent and buttocks resting on the floor with the legs and feet outside the thighs on the side.

3. Once the Virasana position is taken, slowly bend backwards, supporting the body weight using your arms and elbows, till the back of the head touches the ground.
4. Let the back rest on the ground firmly and rest the hands on the floor next to the thighs. The palms can be kept facing upwards on the floor besides the feet.
5. Breathe normally and deeply in a rhythmic manner.
6. Close the eyes and relax all the muscles of the body.
7. Remain in this position, as long as it is comfortable.
8. While performing this asana, the thigh muscles are stressed and may cause pain in the initial stages, especially if they are stiff. With practice, as the thigh muscles become more flexible, the pain will go away.
9. To release the pose, sit up using the support of your hands on the floor. Slowly release the legs and spread them out in front.
10. Shavasana can be used as a resting pose after doing this asana.

### **SUPTA VIRASANA RECLINING HERO POSE**



#### **Benefits of Supta Virasana**

1. Supta Virasana stretches the abdominal and thigh muscles.
2. It improves digestion.
3. This pose can strengthen the hip region and brings flexibility to the back, but those suffering from sacral pain should consult a doctor before attempting this.
4. It brings flexibility to the lower back and hips.
5. For women, it improves health of reproductive organs.

#### **Variation of Supta Virasana**

There are various variations of Supta Virasana where the placement of the hands is changed. In the most common variation, the hands are raised and placed under the head. This variation puts no pressure on the neck, but expands the chest and increases the pull on the abdominal muscles.

#### **Contraindications of Supta Virasana**

1. This asana stretches the entire spine and puts pressure on the hips and sacral regions. Those suffering from sacral pain and other spinal defects should seek expert advice before attempting this asana.
2. If you have any injury of the lower back or hips avoid this pose.

3. This pose is an intermediate level pose. Perform other simpler asanas to gain flexibility of the knees and thighs. Attempt this pose only after improve flexibility of the knees and thighs.

### 3.1.6 Vakrasana

Vakra means twisted and asana indicates a yoga posture. It means it's a yoga pose where suitable twisting is experienced. Basically, twisting is observed in the spinal region that is why it is also known as half spinal twisted pose or easy spinal twist pose. Though, Vakrasana seems to be a simple yoga pose yet it provides adequate twisting and stretching to the lower abdomen thus quite effective for the health of body organs viz. pancreas, liver, kidney ovary, testis, stomach, and intestine. The practice of the pose is beneficial in case of diabetes. Regular practice also helps to burn off belly fat. It is also one of the important yoga poses of the common yoga protocol of the International Day of Yoga.

1. Sit on the ground with legs stretched out.
2. Bend left leg from the knee and place the foot beside the right knee.
3. Keep the spine straight and twist the waist towards the left as you exhale.
4. Bring the right arm towards the left side foot in such a way that the outer side of the right arm touches the outer side of the left leg, and place the right hand beside the left foot.
5. Take left arm back and keep the palm on the ground in such a way that the trunk is kept erect with a proper twist.
6. Repeat from the opposite side.
7. This is one round. Do 2 to 3 rounds.



### Benefits of Vakrasana

1. This helps to provide extension and compression to our back and spine muscles and nerves. This help to improve the condition of your back and spine muscles and nerves.
2. It helps your body to squeeze out the stagnated and sluggish blood from the spinal region. And this further helps to circulate the same to the lungs and heart for the purification process. Hence, this helps to improve the health of our lungs.
3. Helps old age people to prevent adjoining vertebrae to fuse together. This is a common health issue amongst old age people.
4. Increase flexibility and reduce the stiffness in the body. Especially people who have a stiff body should practise Vakrasana.
5. It helps to treat health problems like rheumatism, diabetes, and constipation. People who have diabetes should practise Vakrasana every day.
6. It is beneficial for people with mild cases of slipped disc and sciatica.

7. It helps to circulate blood to the different organs which also include our brain, and this helps to get rid of a headache.
8. It helps to improve the digestion process because of the twisting and compression of the digestive system, our digestive system releases more digestive juice that enhances the digestion process.
9. Vakrasana promotes urinary region health and prevents urinary infections. Also, this asana helps to ensure the proper flow of blood, nutrients and oxygen to the urinary region.

### **3.1.7 Gomukhasana (Cow Face Pose)**

1. Sit on the floor with legs extended in front of you.
2. Fold the left leg and place it under the right buttocks
3. Fold the right leg, and place it on top of the left thighs.
4. The knees of both the legs should be close to each other, one above the other.
5. Bend your left arm and place it behind the back.
6. Bend your right arm, take it over the right shoulders and place it on the back as far as it can go.
7. Now try to touch the two hands behind the back. Initially you may be able to just touch the fingers. Later as you develop flexibility, you will be able to catch the left hand with the right hand.
8. Keep the trunk erect and expand your chest. Also pull the head a little to the back.
9. Maintain this position for as long as comfortable. In the final position, breathe normally and deeply, with awareness on the breath.

GOMUKHASANA  
THE COW FACE POSE



### **Benefits of Gomukhasana (Cow Face Pose)**

10. Gomukhasana helps to make the back flexible.
11. It can remove stiff shoulders and backpain.
12. It helps in the treatment of sciatica.
13. It stimulates the kidneys and can help those suffering from diabetes.
14. It helps to develop the chest.
15. It helps in sexual ailments.

### **3.1.8 Janu Sirsasana (The Head to Knee Pose)**

1. Sit on the floor with both the legs stretched out in front of you.
2. Now bend the right leg and bring the feet close to the left thighs. Let the sole of the right foot touch the inner left thigh.
3. Adjust the right foot so that it touches the right groin.

4. Stretch the right bend leg as far back as possible without strain.
5. The left leg should remain the straight position with toes pointing upwards.
6. Take a deep breath and take your arms above the head in line with your ears.
7. Now exhale slowly and bend the body forward.
8. Let the hands go forward and grab the left foot either by the toes or the middle of the foot depending on which is more comfortable.
9. Pull your trunk forward until your forehead touches the knees.
10. Remain in this position for as long as you are comfortable. One can hold the breath if you remain in the position for few seconds. Else for longer durations, one can breathe normally in the final position.
11. To release the Janu Sirsasana Pose, raise your trunk to upright sitting position. Inhale while coming back to the sitting pose. Release the right leg and stretch it in front of you to come back to the starting position where both legs are stretched out in front of you.
12. Repeat this pose with the other leg, i.e. bending the left leg against the right thigh.

### **JANUSIRSASANA HEAD TO KNEE POSE**



#### **Benefits of Janu Sirsasana (The Head to Knee Pose)**

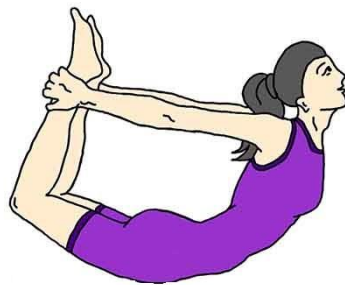
1. Janu Sirsasana is an excellent asana for gaining flexibility of the legs, hamstrings, shoulders, arms and the thighs.
2. Janu Sirsasana calms the mind and has a soothing effect on the heart.
3. To get further stretching benefits, one can practice Paschimottanasana where the bending is done with both legs stretched out in front of the body.

#### **3.1.9 Dhanurasana (The Bow Pose)**

1. Lie down flat on your stomach with your hands on the side. Relax and breathe normally.
2. Slowly bend your knees backwards as far as possible, almost touching the back of your buttocks.
3. Now arch your head and neck upwards and backwards. Slowly move the hands towards the lower leg. Use both your hands and try to get hold of your lower leg at the ankles. Hold on to the ankles till you complete the asana.
4. Now inhale deeply and expand your chest. At the same time, pull the legs upwards using your hands. Arch your trunk backward and upwards along with your head and neck. When fully stretched, your shape will resemble a bow. Your thighs will be raised above the ground and you will be resting on the abdomen and the lower part of the chest alone.

5. Continue in this position as much as you are comfortable, starting from few seconds up to 30 seconds.
6. Release the pose by letting go of the lower legs and bringing the legs, trunk and head to the original supine position. Exhale during this process of releasing the pose.
7. Dhanurasana gives a very good back bend. It is good to follow it up by a counter pose to stretch the body in the opposite direction. The child's pose can be a good counter pose for Dhanurasana. To perform the child's pose, Kneel on the floor and bend forward, putting your head between the knees and the forehead touching the floor. Take your hands behind your buttocks and hold your right wrist with your left hand. Adjust your position to relax all your body parts. Breathe slowly and deeply in this position. Stay as much as you are comfortable.
8. Slowly release the child's pose and rest in Shavasana.

**DHANURASANA  
THE BOW POSE**



**Benefits of Dhanurasana (The Bow Pose)**

1. Dhanurasana improves the strength of the back and the lower abdominal muscles.
2. It gives a good stretch to the shoulders, hands, thorax, thighs and the legs.
3. Dhanurasana massages the abdomen and internal organs.
4. It improves digestion.
5. It massages the pancreas and is good for diabetic patients.
6. Dhanurasana expands the chest and corrects stooping of the back and shoulders.

**3.1.10 Shashankasana (The Hare Pose)**

Shashankasana or the “Hare Pose” is so called as the asana resembles hare in the final position. Benefits of Shashankasana include relaxation, relieving of depression and a good upper body stretch. Shashankasana is a very easy asana to perform and can be done by anyone regardless of age.

1. Sit in Vajrasana, the Thunderbolt pose or the kneeling pose. Place your hands on the thighs and breathe in a relaxed manner.
2. Raise both your hands above the head, palms facing forward. The arms should be in line with the shoulders.
3. Slowly bend down and bring the hands forward, till the hands and forehead touched the ground. Exhale while you are bending forward.

4. In the final position the forehead and hands rest on the ground. Rest in this position for as long as you are comfortable. In the final position slow rhythmic and relaxed breathing can be done.
5. Exhale slowly and come back to the starting position (kneeling pose).
6. Repeat this process for 5 to 10 rounds depending on time and comfort.

**SUKHASANA**  
**THE EASY SITTING POSE**



### **Benefits of Shashankasana (The Hare Pose)**

1. This asana relaxes the mind and relieves depression.
2. It tones the pelvic muscles and relieves sciatic pain.
3. It can help in sexual disorders.
4. It gives a good relaxing stretch to the upper body.

### **Shashankasana Variation**

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

1. To do this variation, start in Vajrasana or the kneeling pose.
2. Then bend the body forward, till your head touches the ground in front of you (or as much as possible).
3. Simultaneously take the hands and pull them behind the back, clasping the right wrist with the left hand.
4. Exhale while bending down.
5. Remain in this position for as long as comfortable. Slow and relaxed breathing can be done in the final position.
6. For releasing the pose, raise the body up again to the erect position as you breathe in.

## **3.2 LYING ASANAS**

### **3.2.1 Pawanmuktasana (Gas Release Pose)**

1. Start in Shavasana or the supine resting pose. Lie down on the floor on your back with both hands on the sides.
2. Bring the two feet together and slowly lift up the legs, without bending the knees, until it is 90 degrees to the floor.
3. Now bend your knees and bring the knees closer to the chest.
4. Hold the legs below the knees, with both your hands and further pull the folded legs towards your chest. Encircle the knees with the hands.



5. Try to touch the chin on the knees and breathe normally.
6. Hold on to this position for as long as you are comfortable.
7. One can also try to rock and roll, forward and backward in this position. This will give a good massage to the spine. One may also roll to the side, from left to right and right to left without releasing the position.
8. To release the pose, bring the neck back to the floor and release the hands. Place the hands on the floor on the side of the body. Raise the leg back to the 90 degrees position. Then slowly bring down the legs to the floor while exhaling.

### **PAWANMUKTASANA GAS RELEASE POSE**



#### **Benefits of Pawanmuktasana (Gas Release Pose)**

1. It helps to remove gas from the intestines.
2. Pawanmuktasana improves digestion and relieves constipation.
3. It gives a good stretch to the neck and back muscles.
4. The rocking and rolling action makes the spine flexible. It can correct minor postural defects in the back.
5. Pawanmuktasana strengthens the lower back muscles.
6. For women, this pose is useful for menstrual problems.
7. It increases the blood supply to the internal organs including the reproductive organs in both male and female.
8. Pawanmuktasana helps with impotence and sterility in males.

#### **Contraindications for Pawanmuktasana**

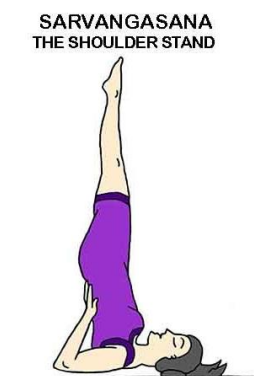
1. Those who have had recent surgery of the abdomen should avoid this pose.
2. Pawanmuktasana should not be practiced by pregnant women.
3. Those with hernia and piles should not do Pawanmuktasana.
4. If there is any strain on the neck, the neck can be placed on the floor instead of touching the knees.

### **3.2.2 Sarvangasana (Inverted Shoulder Stand Pose)**

1. Start with the supine position, lying on your back in a relaxed way. Let the hands rest on the floor next to the body and breathe normally.
2. Try to raise the legs slowly till the legs are almost 90 degrees to the floor.
3. Now place the hands under the lower back at the waist level. Use the hands and elbows for support to raise your body up further.



4. The breath should be held inside when you are raising the body to the vertical position
5. Use the support of the hands to raise the trunk further up, till the whole body is vertical. At this stage the body weight rests on the shoulders. Hands and elbows remain as props to support and balance the body.
6. In the final pose the body is vertical, 90 degrees to the floor and the chin presses against the chest.
7. Remain in this position according to your comfort. For health benefits 3 – 5 minutes every day is good enough. Though practitioners can go up to 15 minutes for spiritual benefits.
8. Breathe normally while maintaining the steady raised position.
9. While releasing the position, the breath is held inside and the body is slowly brought down to the supine position.
10. Sarvangasana can also be practiced before Halasana. After performing Sarvangasana, one can bend the legs further back and touch the ground above the head. Then, this becomes Halasana.
11. After performing Sarvangasana, usually a counter asana is practiced to relieve the stretch of the neck. Matsyasana is commonly practiced after Sarvangasana as it bends the neck in the opposite direction giving a counter stretch to the neck. Ushtrasana and Supta Vajrasana can also be used as a counter pose for Sarvangasana. Please note that the duration maintained for the counter pose (with backward bend of the neck) should be roughly half the duration of Sarvangasana.



### **Benefits of Sarvangasana (The Inverted Shoulder Stand Pose)**

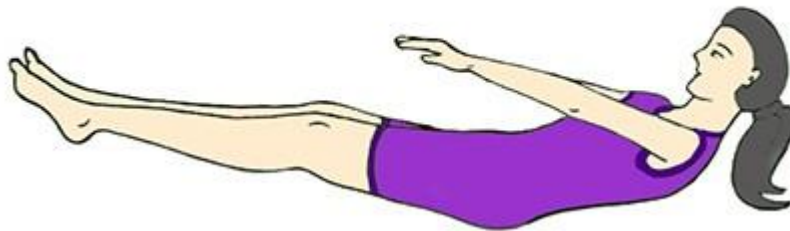
1. The chin press during Sarvangasana stimulates the thyroid glands. It is good for those suffering from hypothyroidism. The thyroid gland also controls the effectiveness of other hormones. This will help to balance the functions of other endocrine glands.
2. The chin press also activates the spiritual center in the neck region called the Vishuddhi chakra which is closely associated with the thyroid glands and general health.
3. The inverted pose relieves the gravitational weight from many organs and helps in piles, hydrocele and certain kinds of hernia.
4. Sarvangasana is good for those suffering from elephantiasis as it tends to reduce the inflammation in the legs.
5. It tones the spine, the neck, the intestines, other organs in the abdomen and thorax and the shoulders.
6. Sarvangasana can help to reduce fat around the waist region.

7. As its name suggests, Sarvangasana gives benefits to the entire body and hence is a 'Queen' among asanas.
8. Sarvangasana is one of the important poses integrated into yoga routines in all schools of yoga because of its varied benefits.

### **3.2.3 Naukasana (The Boat Pose)**

1. Lie flat on the floor with hands on the sides. Let the palms face downwards.
2. Start Inhaling and simultaneously raise the legs, arms and the upper body.
3. The weight of the body will rest entirely on the buttocks. In the raised position, the toes should line up with the palms.
4. Hold the breath and remain in this position for as long as you are comfortable.
5. While returning to the original position exhale.
6. Relax the entire body and remain in Shavasana until you are ready to repeat the process. One may do this 2 to 5 times according to one's capacity.

#### **NAUKASANA - THE BOAT POSE**



#### **Benefits of Naukasana (The Boat Pose)**

1. Naukasana strengthens the abdominal muscles.
2. It helps to remove belly fat.
3. It improves digestion.
4. Naukasana tones and improves the health of all organs in the abdomen especially the liver, pancreas and kidneys.
5. It strengthens the muscles of the arms, thighs and shoulders.
6. It stimulates intestinal peristalsis.

#### **Contraindications for Naukasana**

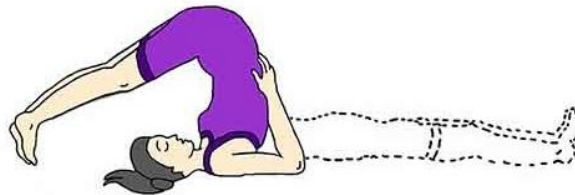
1. Those suffering from ulcers, severe arthritis and low blood pressure should not do Naukasana.
2. Women should avoid this asana during pregnancy and during periods.

### **3.2.4 Halasana (The Plough Pose)**

1. Start in supine position, lying on your back.
2. Relax fully and breathe normally. Keep the legs together and the hands should be kept close to the body.
3. Hold your breath and slowly raise the legs to vertical position. Use only the muscles of the waist and stomach to do this. Do not use the arms to lift the legs.

4. Move the legs further back as much as possible. At this stage one can use the hands to support the lower back and to further push the waist and trunk, until the legs touch the floor.
5. Move the legs as further from the head as possible. At this stage one achieves a chin lock. Pressure is put on the thyroid glands.
6. Maintain this position for few seconds to few minutes depending on your level of comfort.
7. Come back to the normal supine position. Relax all the muscles and breathe normally.
8. After this asana, once can do any backward bending asana (like Ushtrasana, supta vajrasana, chakrasana, etc.) as a counter pose.

## **HALASANA** **THE PLOUGH POSE**



### **Benefits of Halasana**

1. It helps to reduce fat around the waist.
2. It stretches the abdominal organs especially the intestines, the kidneys and the pancreas and improves the health of those organs. This is good for diabetic patients.
3. The chin lock puts pressure on the thyroid glands and helps to balance metabolic rate.
4. Halasana can improve digestion, relieve piles and constipation.

### **3.2.5 Chakrasana (Wheel Pose)**

1. Lie down on your back with hands on the side.
2. Bend your knees and bring your heels as close to the buttocks as possible. The heels should be about 1 foot apart.
3. Now raise your hands and bring it back next to the ears. Place the palms on the floor with the fingers pointing towards the shoulders.
4. Lift your body up with the support of the palms and the feet.
5. Rotate the head slightly, so that your gaze is towards the floor.
6. Stretch your thighs and shoulders. In the final position your body looks like an arch, almost like a wheel.
7. Maintain this position, according to your capacity.
8. To release the position, lower your body till it touches the ground. Straighten your legs. Hands can go back to the original position to the sides.
9. It should be followed by forward bending poses to counteract the pressure created by the back bend.

**CHAKRASANA**  
THE WHEEL POSE



### **Benefits of Chakrasana (Wheel Pose)**

1. Chakrasana strengthens the back and abdominal muscles.
2. It tones the organs in the abdomen including the digestive, excretory and reproductive organs.
3. It strengthens arms, shoulders, wrists, abdomen and spine.
4. Perform chakrasana to expand your chest and lungs.
5. It stimulates the thyroid gland.
6. Chakrasana is excellent for those suffering from back pain.
7. It tones the liver, pancreas and kidneys.

### **Contraindication for Chakrasana (Wheel Pose)**

1. Chakrasana should be avoided by those suffering from cardiac ailments.
2. Those who suffer from high blood pressure should also avoid this pose.
3. If you are suffering from vertigo you may do this pose with caution under supervision.
4. Those who have undergone recent surgeries should not attempt this pose.

### **3.2.6 Bhujangasana (The Cobra Pose)**

1. Lie down on your stomach with hands on the side, toes touching together.
2. Bring your hands to the front at the shoulder level, with palms resting on the floor.
3. Slowly raise your trunk and head with the support of the palms alone. The arms should be bent at the elbows.
4. Arch your neck slightly backwards, so that the pose looks like a cobra with raised hood.
5. Breathe normally and feel the stomach press against the floor.
6. Hold the asanas for few seconds in the beginning stages. One may go up to 2 minutes as one progresses.
7. You can release the pose by bringing the hands back to the sides and resting your head on the forehead. Then, place the hands under your head like a pillow. Bend and rest your head on one side and breathe normally.

**BHUJANGASANA**  
THE COBRA POSE



**Benefits of Bhujangasana (The Cobra Pose)**

1. Bhujangasana strengthens the back muscles especially the lower back.
2. It increases flexibility of the spine and the muscles around it.
3. It tones the organs in the lower abdomen, the digestive organs, the urinary and reproductive organs.
4. It tones the buttock muscles.
5. Bhujangasana can correct some of the menstrual irregularities.

**Contraindications for Bhujangasana (The Cobra Pose)**

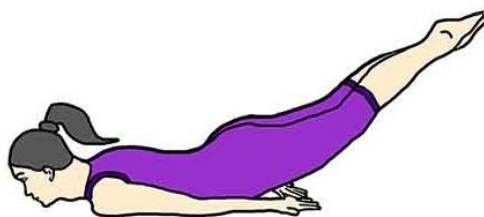
1. Bhujangasana should be avoided if you have any spine or hip injury.
2. Those who have severe pain in the lower back, can do the simpler version of Bhujangasana, namely the Sphinx Pose.

**3.2.7 Shalabhasana (The Locust Pose)**

**The Half-Locust Pose or Ardha Shalabhasana, Steps to perform Half Locust Pose**

1. Lie on your stomach with the chin stretched and touching the ground. Keep the hands on the side.
2. Slowly bring your hands under the legs to support them.
3. Inhale slowly and deeply and lift your right leg upwards, without bending the knees, as much as you can and without straining. Maintain this position for few seconds, maximum up to half a minute.
4. Slowly release the position by bringing down the right leg back to the original position. Exhale during this process.
5. Rest for few seconds and breathe normally and deeply.
6. Now, try the above steps with your left leg lifted above the ground.
7. This process can be done a few times alternating between the right leg and the left leg.

**SHALABHASANA**  
THE LOCUST POSE



### **Shalabhasana or the Full-Locust Pose**

1. The full locust pose is similar to half Locust Pose, except that you should lift both the legs together in the step 3 in the above section.
2. Maintain the position for few seconds to maximum half a minute, without straining.
3. Bring down both legs back to the starting position.
4. After the asana, one can rest by putting the arms below the head like a pillow and resting the head on one side. Breathe normally and deeply in the resting position.

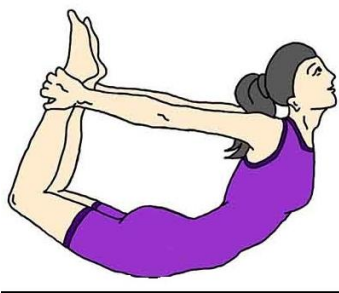
### **Benefits of Shalabhasana (The Locust Pose)**

1. Shalabhasana strengthens the lower back muscles
2. It gives flexibility to the back muscles and spine.
3. It can strengthen the shoulders and neck muscles.

### **3.2.8 Dhanurasana (Bow Pose)**

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

**DHANURASANA  
THE BOW POSE**



### **Benefits of Dhanurasana (Bow Pose)**

1. Strengthens the back and abdominal muscles
2. Stimulates the reproductive organs
3. Opens up the chest, neck, and shoulders
4. Tones the leg and arm muscles
5. Adds greater flexibility to the back

6. Alleviates stress and fatigue
7. Relieves menstrual discomfort and constipation
8. Helps people with renal (kidney) disorders

Full body sequences like Padma Sadhana also include Dhanurasana (Bow Pose).

### **Contraindications of Dhanurasana (Bow Pose)**

Ladies should avoid practicing this yoga pose during pregnancy. Also, do not practice Dhanurasana (Bow Pose) if you have

1. High or low blood pressure
2. Hernia
3. Neck injury
4. Pain in the lower back
5. Headache or migraine
6. Recent abdominal surgery

## UNIT-IV

### **4.1 RELAXATIVE / Meditative Asanas**

#### **Shavasana – Corpse Pose – Yoga Asana for Relaxation**

Shavasana, the corpse pose is a yogic relaxation pose. The name comes from the sanskrit words Shava meaning “corpse” and Asana meaning “posture”. Shavasana is the simplest and the main relaxation pose used in yoga. It is usually performed at the beginning and at the end of yoga practices. It is also used as a resting pose between other yoga asanas.

In Shavasana, emphasis is given to slow, rhythmic and relaxed breathing. The yogic breath is a complete breath done with full awareness. The abdomen, the chest and the neck (clavicular region) expands during a relaxed deep breath. As one relaxes more, the abdominal breathing is more prominent. We may have the habit of breathing from the chest and neck region when we are tense. You may observe that when we are relaxed, the abdominal breathing takes over.

1. Lie down on the floor on your back.
2. Place your hands next to the body, slightly spread out with palms facing upwards.
3. Spread your legs at a slight angle and feel as relaxed as possible.
4. Consciously relax all the muscles in your body from head to toe.
5. Let your breathing be slow and deep. Focus your attention on your belly and observe the slow and rhythmic abdominal breathing.
6. You can maintain this position for as long as you need ranging from 5 – 30 minutes. Make sure you don't sleep during the process.
7. To release this position, take a few deep breaths and slowly roll over to the side. Use your arms and raise yourself to the seated position.

### **SHAVASANA THE CORPSE POSE**



#### **Benefits of Shavasana**

Shavasana releases stress from all muscles in the body. It relaxes the body and mind, giving a sense of wellbeing. It can be done after a workout or after performing other asanas. Shavasana rejuvenates and rebuilds the body. Shavasana decreases the heart rate, the rate of respiration and the blood pressure. Shavasana reduces the metabolic rate, gives deep relaxation, reduces anxiety, alleviates mild depression and improves sleep.



## **Balasana (The Child's Pose)**

1. Start with the kneeling position. Keep the feet and toes together.
2. Now, spread your knees slightly apart. Inhale slowly and deeply.
3. Slowly bend forward and let your chest rest between the thighs. Exhale as you are bending down. Let your hands be in front of you and resting on the floor, palms facing the mat.
4. Adjust your pelvis and sacrum in such a way that your abdomen rests between the inner thighs and the back is stretched forward.
5. The forehead should rest on the floor and palms facing downwards, fully touching the mat. The arms should be in line with the knees and fully stretched out and relaxed. If you have difficulty resting the forehead on the floor, you may use a pillow for support.
6. Breathe normally in this position and feel the deep relaxation. Remain in this position for as long as you are comfortable.
7. To release the pose, move your hands back and slowly raise yourself up to the kneeling position. To rest further, one can lie in the supine position (Shavasana) to relax the legs and lower back if required.

### **BALASANA THE CHILD'S POSE**



## **Benefits of Balasana (The Child's Pose)**

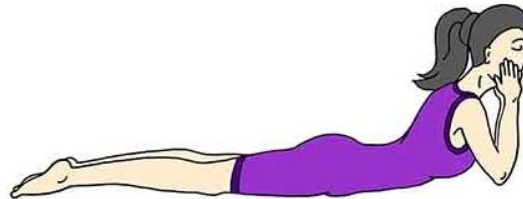
1. Balasana is a good resting pose and removes fatigue.
2. It relieves stress and anxiety and makes the mind peaceful.
3. Balasana can be used for those who are in deep emotional stress. This asana releases emotional pain when done with deep and slow relaxed breathing.
4. It releases stress in the shoulder and lower back. It gives a good stretch to the shoulder muscles, back muscles and the arms.
5. It can be used by those suffering from neck pain as well as lower back pain. Those with lower back pain should follow it up with a counter backward bend pose like Makarasana or Bhujangasana.
6. This pose stretches the spine and lengthens it.

## **Makarasana (Crocodile Pose)**

Makarasana is a deeply restorative posture that is part of the Padma Sadhana sequence. Crocodile pose relaxes the entire nervous system and is an excellent posture to use in between back strengthening poses. It gets its name from the Sanskrit words, Makara, meaning crocodile, and asana, meaning pose.

1. Lie down on the floor on your stomach with your hands folded under the head.
2. Place the palms on your shoulders in a relaxed way and close your eyes.
3. Stretch the legs as far as possible. The toes should point outwards.
4. Relax the whole body. Breathe normally and slowly. Feel the whole body touching the ground and the deep relaxation in all your muscles.
5. Relax in this posture for 2 – 5 minutes.

**MAKARASANA  
THE CROCODILE POSE**



**Benefits**

1. Provides deep relaxation
2. Releases tension in the back
3. Relieves stress

**Releasing the Makarasana Position**

1. Slowly bring the feet together.
2. Unfold the arms and come to the Prone Position.

**Precautions**

- Pregnancy

**Alternate Method for performing Makarasana**

There is an alternate method of performing this asana.

1. Lie down on your chest with head on the floor
2. Place the elbows on the ground. And raise your head and shoulders.
3. Rest the head in the palms of the hands.
4. The legs should be kept straight and relaxed.
5. Keep the eyes closed.
6. Remain in this position for 2 – 5 minutes

**Releasing the Position**

1. Slowly remove the palms from under the chin and roll over and lie down on your back.
2. If you feel any tension in the back muscles, you may want to do a slight forward bend, without strain. Please remember that too much of forward bending should be avoided by patients with slipped disk.

## **Sukhasana (The Easy Sitting Pose)**

1. Sit on the floor with legs stretched out. Always use a yoga mat or a cushion or a carpet while sitting on the floor.
2. Fold the left leg and tug it inside the right thigh.
3. Then fold the right leg and tug in inside the left thigh.
4. Keep the hands on the knees. Jnana mudra or Chin mudra can be used if you are using this posture for meditation.
5. Sit erect with spine straight.
6. Relax your whole body and breathe normally.
7. Maintain this position for as long a comfortable.

**SUKHASANA**  
**THE EASY SITTING POSE**



### **Benefits of Sukhasana (the Easy Sitting Pose)**

Sukhasana is the most suited sitting posture for beginners. It is good for practice of meditation and pranayama. Those who have tight hips, cannot sit in advanced postures like Padmasana. For them it is the easiest alternative.

Once you are comfortable with Sukhasana, you should move on to more advanced sitting postures like Ardha Padmasana, Padmasana or Siddhasana for meditation. If you are meditating for less than 30 minutes per session, Sukhasana may be sufficient. But to hold the body steady for longer durations, one needs to adopt more advanced sitting postures.

This is the easiest yoga pose for meditation. It is the simple traditional cross-legged sitting posture. Sit on the floor with legs crossed and the feet placed under the knees. Relax, breathe normally and keep the spine and neck straight, with chin slightly raised. Place the palms on the knees or the thighs. Close your eyes and practice meditation.

## **Padmasana (Lotus Pose)**

1. Sit on the floor comfortably. Assume the simple cross legged pose where the legs are folded.
2. Lift the left leg and place it on the right thigh.
3. Now lift the right leg and place it over the left leg. The knees must touch the floor. If it doesn't, don't worry. With practice it will, when the legs become flexible.
4. Pull and adjust the legs so that soles of the feet face upwards and the heels are tucked in at the waist level near the pelvic bone.

5. Now, make the spine straight, broaden your chest (to avoid stooping) and place the hands in the gap between the feet. Place the left palm over the right palm. Relax the muscles in the abdomen and chest. Relax the shoulders completely.
6. You may close your eyes. Breathe slowly and deeply. Let the awareness be on the breathing process. Experience the perfect balance and alignment of the entire body.
7. Maintain this position for as long as comfortable. Those who wish to use this pose for meditation should sit for at least 20 minutes. Slowly increase it so that your duration of meditation too can increase. At some point the legs may start to pain. At this point, slowly release the legs. Massage the legs gently. Over a period of time, you will be able to sit for long duration in this asana. Those who are young will master this asana quickly. After an age of 30 – 35 years, the body is less supple. Of course, with practice anyone, even those above 60 years, can master this asana. One attains Asana Siddhi if one sits in a posture for three and half hours. One need not go to such extremes; even 30 minutes to an hour is good enough for most practitioners.
8. One of the main points to be noted in meditative asanas is that the body should be absolutely still and relaxed. There should be no pains or stress, otherwise instead of meditating, attention will be drawn to the body and its discomforts. One may use a soft support (soft pillow, cushion, etc.) under the buttocks to achieve the comfort.
9. Padmasana can also be done with the left leg over the right leg. In this case, first the right leg is placed on the left thigh. Then the left leg is placed over the right leg. But traditionally, it is practiced the other way (with right leg over left leg). If you notice statues of Lord Buddha which are excavated from ancient temples, which are over 2000 years old, you will see that the right leg is placed over the left leg.
10. The yogic text Hatha Yoga Pradeepika says that one should gaze at the tip of the nose and keep the tongue touching the roof of the palate during meditation in Padmasana. This is supposed to help the prana (apana vayu) raise up the spine.

**PADMASANA**  
**THE LOTUS POSE**



**Position of hands in Padmasana (Lotus Pose)**

Padmasana can also be done with hands resting on the knees. In this case, the elbows are slightly bent and the hands rest on the knees, with palms facing upwards. Chin mudra or Jnana mudra can also be performed with the fingers.

## **Benefits of Padmasana (Lotus Pose)**

1. Padmasana is considered one of the best asanas for meditation. It holds the body steady and straight for long durations.
2. Steadiness of the body calms the mind. Awareness of the breathing process also helps to steady the mind. There is an intricate connection between the body and mind. A steady body can help to bring steadiness in the mind.
3. During practice, keep the spine straight. This helps to channel the energy from the lower spiritual centers or chakras upwards towards Sahasrara chakra. The erect spine aids the free flow of prana along the spinal cord.
4. Padmasana tones the coccygeal and sacral nerves. This pose restricts the blood flow to the legs and redirects it to the abdominal region. It improves digestion as well.
5. Sitting in Padmasana can relieve many mental and emotional problems.
6. Hatha Yoga Pradeepika says that a yogi frees himself from all bondages, if he controls his breath, sitting in Padmasana.
7. It is an excellent pose for practicing advanced pranayama techniques.

## **Contraindications of Padmasana (Lotus Pose)**

1. Those who have any problem with the knee joint should not do Padmasana.
2. Avoid this pose if you have any hip injury.

## **Vajrasana (The Thunderbolt Pose)**

1. Vajrasana is a sitting posture. To start, stand on the knees with the lower legs together and stretched backwards, the two big toes crossing each other.
2. Lower your body and sit on your heels. Your buttocks will be resting on the heels and the thighs on the calf muscles.
3. Keep your hands on your knees and keep the head straight.
4. Concentrate on the breath and observe the process of inhalation and exhalation.
5. One may close the eyes, to get good concentration and to calm the mind.
6. Remain in this position for at least 5 – 10 minutes. In the initial stages, there may be pain in the legs when you sit in this position. When that happens, release the asana and stretch your legs. Massage the ankles, knees and calf muscles with your hand. With practice one can go up to 30 minutes or more in this position.

**VAJRASANA**  
THE THUNDERBOLT POSE



## **Benefits of Vajrasana (The thunderbolt Pose)**

1. Vajrasana modifies the blood flow in the lower pelvic region. It reduces blood flow to the legs and increases the blood flow to the digestive organs. This increases the efficiency of the digestive system and helps those with weak digestion to digest a full meal easily.
2. It helps to prevent acidity and ulcers by improving the digestion.
3. It is a good meditative pose for those suffering from sciatica and severe lower back problems.
4. Slow and rhythmic breathing in Vajrasana can induce a meditative state.

## **Contraindications for Vajrasana (Thunderbolt Pose)**

1. Those suffering from severe knee pain should not practice Vajrasana.
2. Those who had any recent surgery of legs or waist should avoid this asana.
3. If you feel any pain in the ankles, release the pose and massage the ankle with your hands.
4. Pregnant women should try this asana only with their knees apart in order to avoid stress on the abdomen.

## **Swastikasana or the Auspicious Pose**

Sit on the floor and spread the legs in front of you. Now, fold the left leg and place the sole of the left foot on the inner side of the right thigh. Then bend the right leg and keep the right foot between the left thigh and the calf muscles. Tuck the right foot in between the calf and thighs to lock the pose. Keep your spine and neck straight and breathe normally. Place your hands on the knees or the thighs. This is Swastikasana, a good yoga pose for meditation for beginners.

## **Siddhasana or the Accomplished Pose**

Sit on the floor in the easy cross legged position. Take the left foot and place it under the perineum (for males). For females, the left foot can be placed it within the labia majora of the vagina. Now place the right foot on the left thigh or tucked between the thigh and calf muscles. Keep the spine and neck straight and breathe normally. Place the hands on the knees or thighs. This is Siddhasana which is highly acclaimed in yogic texts.

In all the above yoga poses for meditation, there is always a doubt as to which leg should come on top. Traditional texts, for example, mentions that in Padmasana or Lotus pose, the left leg should come on top of the right leg. But there is no such hard and fast rule. The right leg may also be placed on top of the left leg. This is true for all the above mentioned poses. Just select what is comfortable for you.

Apart from these classical poses, there are few other sitting poses which can be used as yoga pose for meditation. Vajrasana and Bhadrasana are few of them, but may not be suited for all.

If you have any serious problem with your knees or leg muscles, you may also sit on a chair and practice meditation. The only condition is that you should keep the spine straight and relax the trunk, shoulders and neck. Ensure that your breathing is smooth and steady.

## **4.2 PRANAYAMA**

**“Pranayama Paramo Tapah”** that means Pranayama is supreme spiritual practice. Pranayama is itself austerity.

For beginners and therapeutic purpose, we do only Swaasa Kriya and next level we can follow the pranayama and advance pranayama as well.

### **Deep Breathing:**

Sit in meditative posture. First exhale and use a light uddiyan bandha and mool bandha. Inhale slowly and deeply. The belly comes out. Exhale slowly. The belly comes in. Practise it for 3 to 5 minutes. Concentration will be on breathing or navel (Manipur chakra)

### **Anuloma Viloma Swaasa Kriya (Pranayama):**

Sit in meditative pose. Close the eyes. Put the hand on the left knee. Put the left hand nostril with right thumb. Inhale slowly and evenly through the nostril, filling the lungs close the left nostril with ring finger and exhale through right nostril. It is one round. Now repeat the process 5-10 times.

### **Naadi Shodhan Pranayama:**

Naadi Shodhan is the psychic network purification. It has four techniques. If somebody wants to learn this pranayama very well, it takes 42 days to learn Naadi Shodhan in literal way with Yoga Guru.

**Technique-1:** Preparatory phase- Inhale and exhale through left nostril 5 to 10 times and through right 5 to 10 times.

**Technique-2:** Inhale through the left and exhale through the right nostril. It is called Anuloma- Viloma (Alternate nostrils breath)

**Technique-3:** If you retain the breath it becomes Naadi Shodhan pranayama. The ratio is IN: IR: EX = 1:4:2 = 10: 40: 20 second and starting from 1:1:1, for 20 rounds. After good practice ratio should be 1:1:2, 1:2:2, 1:4:2. Repeat the rounds 5-20 gradually.

### **Advance Pranayama:**

- i. with Jalandhara Bandha
- ii. with Jalandhara and Moola Bandhas

**Technique-4:** The ratio is IN: IR: EX: ER = 1:4:2:2 = 10: 40: 20: 20 second and starting from 1:1:1:1, for 20 rounds. After good practice ratio should be 1:1:2:1; 1:2:2:1; 1:2:2:2; 1:3:2:2; 1:4:2:2. Repeat the rounds 5-20 gradually.

**Advance Pranayama:**

- i. with Jalandhara Bandha
- ii. with Jalandhara and Moola Bandhas
- iii. with Tri bandha.

**Plaviini pranayama:**

Sit in any meditative posture. Place the hands on the knees. Keep the body erect. Close the eyes. Keeping the mouth in a round shape, start shipping the air in the same manner in which water is shipped. Let the stomach be floated with air. When the stomach is filled with air, close the mouth for a few moments and hold the air, close the mouth for a few moments and hold the air inside. Keeping the tongue out and bending from the lumbar region. Exhale the air completely out of the lungs. Repeat this process three times or more.

**Ujjai Pranayama:**

Sit in any meditative posture or in any other comfortable pose. Keep the hands on the knees. Close the eyes and mouth. Contract the lower part of the tongue, the glottis and inhale in such a way that a sound is produced, of a mild and uniform pitch like snoring (khanratey). Use light uddiyan bandha. Exhale slowly, inhale from the nostrils to the throats and then to the heart. Retain it with comfort. While exhaling visualize the movement of the prana from heart to throat, from throat to nostrils. Exhale slowly.

**Bhastrika Pranayama:**

Sit in a meditative posture. Keep the hands on the knees. Close the eyes. Adopt the process of goldsmith's bellows or like a panting dog. Inhale and exhale rapidly and forcibly. Close the left nostril with the two fingers of the right hand. Now close the right nostril and inhale and exhale rapidly. Do this 15 times for each nostril. After that practice with both nostrils. Finish with outer kumbhaka.

**Chandrabhedhi Pranayama:**

Sit in a comfortable posture. Put left hand on the left knee in gyana mudra. Placing the two first fingers of the right hand at the root of the thumb. Close the right nostril with the help of right thumb. Inhale deeply through the left nostril with the help of the ring finger. Retain the breath in antrik kumbhaka. Perform the three bandhas while doing kumbhaka exhale slowly through the right nostril. Every starting will be through left and exhalation through the right nostril.

**Suryabhedhi Pranayama:**



The whole process is same as Chandrabhedhi pranayama. But only the one difference is that inhalation is implemented through right nostril and the exhalation through left nostril every time. Repeat this 5 times in beginning and increase the rounds gradually.

**Sheetali Pranayama:**

Sit comfortably. Take out the tongue and fold it lengthwise like a tube. Draw in air through the mouth with a hissing sound the retain as long as you can with comfort, keeping the mouth closed. Then exhale slowly through both the nostrils. Repeat this 6 times.

## **Bhramari in Shanmukhi Mudra**

Bhramari is a Sanskrit term which derives its name from 'Bee', as exhalation sound produced in this pranayama resembles the 'Humming Sound (hmmm)' of a bee.

This pranayama has its roots from ancient yogic text Hatha Yoga Pradipika (HYP), where it's described one among 8 classical breathing techniques. Its mention in HYP is seen in this way:

Fill air quickly, making noise like wasp (black Bee like species) and expel it slowly with same noise, this practice flow wave of ecstasy in Yogindras mind.

**In Bhramari Pranayama**, as you exhale, the ear canal is closed with index fingers and humming sound like a bee is produced from the back of the throat.

One good thing I personally feel about bhramari breathing, even after the long hours of practice it, little impulses of humming sound continues vibrating in my body and mind. It makes me feel and resonates with the inner silence of body & hence, concentrating on work becomes much easier.

When one is comfortable in practicing basic bhramari, practice it with Shanmukhi mudra.

In Shanmukhi [6 (shan) mukhi (gates)] mudra, 6 gates through which external agency enters in the body (2 ears, 2 eyes, nose, and mouth) are shut using five fingers.

This mudra is said to be a door to the state of pratyahara (sense withdrawal), 5th in 8 limbs of yoga.

## **Steps to Perform Bhramari with Shanmukhi Mudra**

Sit in a relaxing position and place your hand on your face.

Your thumbs should be placed on the tragus and fore-finger touching the inner eye corners.

Make sure to not put any pressure on your eye-balls.

Place your Middle finger on the sides of your nose and ring finger above your lips.

Proceed with placing your pinky finger below the lips and start with inhaling and exhaling air.

While exhalation, produce humming sound along with all the fingers positioned on your face. With humming sound, feel the calmness with sensation begin in your head area.

Repeat the process 5-6 times.

## **Bhramari Pranayama Benefits**

Bhramari produces noticeable changes in alpha, theta, and gamma brainwaves, research done on electroencephalogram (EEG) 1 has shown it.

Alpha Brainwave – It gives deep relaxation and seen in light meditation.

Theta brainwave – Its dominance increases creativity, learning, reduces stress and seen in deep meditation.

Gamma Brainwaves – It's found in every part of the brain and helps to cure insomnia. In a yogic intervention 2, it was seen, Basic Bhramari is great tranquilizer. It immediately affects the cardiovascular system which decreases high blood pressure with a slight fall in heart rate.

When bhramari performed with closed eyes (as in Shanmukhi mudra), it has a soothing effect on the nervous system and hence relieves from insomnia. Bhramari is considered a good preparatory practice to concentrate & create a meditative environment in the mind for meditation.

Bhramari improves hearing capacity – In the biological process, NO plays a role of impulse messenger at the cellular level. Bhramari breath increases the production of nitric oxide (NO) in the blood vessels. Hence, more sound waves generation leads to improved quality of hearing.

Bhramari increases memory and concentration power – NO is also responsible for transmitting information between neurogenic cells in the brain. In this way, the increased transmission of information improves memory and concentration power of a person.

When Bhramari practiced with Jalandhar bandha (chin to chest lock) it directs sound waves to pass through the throat. These humming sound waves of bhramari help in curing thyroid.

Bhramari increases the body's defense mechanism through NO to fight against bacterial, viral and fungal infections.

### Precautions

- Do not put pressure on your tragus while making the humming sound.
- Do not put your fingers inside your ear but on the tragus.
- Don't pressurize your face or eyeballs while performing bhramari.
- Make sure to not exceed your exhalation limit while producing a humming sound.
- Keep your lips slightly apart while making humming sound or the vibrations.

### Contraindications

- After 3 to 4 hours of having a heavy meal, don't practice this breathing exercise.
- Try not to produce high pitch humming sound during pregnancy.

<https://www.yogicwayoflife.com/trikonasana-the-triangle-pose/>





My friend asked me to put this: <https://youtu.be/QPVjUyGKm9g>