

## Lesson 1

Yoga is not an ancient myth buried in oblivion.  
It is the most valuable inheritance of the present.  
It is the essential need of today and the culture  
of tomorrow.

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



## Kriya Yoga: An Introduction

All of us have potential which is beyond even our wildest dreams, but most of this potential remains untapped. Each person has the capacity to experience different planes of consciousness, yet most of us live in the lower planes, without experiencing higher levels of existence, or even believing that they exist.

Many people are unhappy in the world, dissatisfied and yet not sure what is lacking in their lives. The basic reason for this unhappiness is our attachment to the material plane of existence. Once we gain a glimpse of higher spheres of consciousness, then our unhappiness and discontent automatically fade away.

There are various systems of yoga, such as raja yoga, kundalini yoga, etc., which are widely propagated throughout the world. All are aiming at transcendental states where one starts to commune with one's inner being. Most of the systems emphasize the importance of concentration as a means of withdrawing consciousness from the outside surroundings and directing it into the innermost realms of the mind.

Without becoming too involved in the field of semantics, let us first of all define what is commonly understood by concentration. Concentration implies the focussing of one's consciousness towards one point, either external or internal, to the exclusion of all other subjects or thoughts. Now this is not such an easy process, for our consciousness in connection with our minds is habituated to movement from one point to the next, from one object to another. Any attempt on our part to subjugate the consciousness and make it dwell on one point imposes strain on the mind resulting in tension and frustration at our failure to curb its wandering tendency.

If you observe yourself you will find that your consciousness has a natural tendency to have a diverse perception and to move from one object to the next. Try to concentrate on one thing for a few minutes and you will

convince yourself of this fact. You will be conscious of a never-ending stream of thoughts, some that seem related to each other and others that seem totally unconnected. This occurrence of unconnected thoughts is known as distraction (*vikshepa*) and is a limitation of the mind.

Many systems of yoga tell you to place an object in front of you or to visualize an internal image, concentrate on it, and lo and behold you will start to explore the subconscious depths of the mind. Although the method is correct and can bring wonderful experiences, it takes no consideration of the wandering tendency of our consciousness, which makes concentration impossible for most people. Concentration is possible only if a person is very relaxed mentally and physically. Most people cannot relax, or if they do it is on rare occasions. For this reason the mind continually projects streams of differing thoughts to conscious perception. As such, to ask most people to concentrate is impossible. And if they try to concentrate, they will tend to try to suppress the disturbing factors in the mind and create more tension in themselves.

Concentration is something that occurs spontaneously in a very relaxed mind and body. Until relaxation is achieved, concentration, real concentration that is, remains impossible. A system is required which progressively leads a person to deeper states of relaxation, until concentration becomes the spontaneous activity of consciousness. This system is the system of kriya yoga.

Before we talk about kriya yoga, let us briefly discuss where concentration, relaxed concentration that is, will lead us. The fruit or culmination of deep one-pointed concentration is the occurrence of the spontaneous state of meditation. Most people have heard of meditation, yet very few people have actually experienced it. It arises only under conditions of almost abnormal relaxation (yes, abnormal

is the right word, for most people never experience deep states of relaxation; even during sleep they are plagued by subconscious worries, phobias, fears, etc.) of both mind and body, together with a high state of conscious alertness. Many people think that they are meditating, but in fact they are probably not. Modern scientific instruments can even show whether a person is in a state of meditation or not. These instruments measure electrical wave patterns emitted from the brain. The frequency and amplitude of these brain waves indicate the inner state of mind.

During concentration there is a continuity of consciousness and this condition allows our subconscious forces to rise up. The hidden psychological patterns in the subconscious mind start to manifest. Normally, because of our mental distractions, we are totally unable to contact or express our inner power. During deep periods of concentration we start to understand the deeper aspects of our being.

So the fruits of concentration are substantial. Many people, whether they have experienced meditation or not, know that great things are in store for them if only they can concentrate deeply. Because they are not relaxed, however, they force their consciousness to dwell on one point. Of course they are only following the instructions of most systems of yoga or yoga teachers. They don't realize that the systems of yoga are correct, but that they presuppose a reasonable level of relaxation, something that is not attained by most people today. The result of this forced concentration is greater tension and frustration. Meditation eludes them. To repeat: it is not the method that is wrong; its failure to bring results in most cases is due to the fact that people are not ready for the system. Most people have too many disturbances in their minds to be able to concentrate. Once the deep-rooted complexes have been removed, the ones that most of us are not aware of, then relaxation becomes possible; it becomes natural and deep. Meditation starts to occur spontaneously. No effort is required.

Questions arise such as "How can most people learn to explore their minds?" "If they cannot concentrate what should they do?" "How can one attain meditational experience?" This is where kriya yoga comes to the rescue. Kriya yoga seems to defy or contradict the

basic rules of yoga. It says that you should not try to concentrate your mind. Don't make any effort to bring about one-pointedness. Leave your consciousness freedom of movement, but let it try to follow prescribed internal movements. Kriya yoga accepts most people's limitations; if you are unable to concentrate then another method must be used to accomplish the same final result.

Kriya yoga is more interested in awareness than concentration. What do we mean by awareness? By awareness we mean conscious attention of thoughts or of objects, either external or internal, without necessarily being one-pointed. Simultaneously, and this is most important, the word awareness implies that the individual knows that his attention is at a particular place or on a train of thought. The word implies a relationship between the activity of perception and the perceiver. If a person does not know he is perceiving something, then he is not aware. Awareness implies that the individual does not try to suppress an ever-arising stream of thoughts, even if they have nothing to do with his direction of perception; he merely lets the thoughts arise and disappear, remaining as a witness to them. Other people might understand something different by the word awareness, but the previous explanation is what we mean. When a person is sufficiently relaxed, especially in the deeper layers of the subconscious mind, then awareness will lead to one-pointedness or concentration.

Kriya yoga does not presuppose concentration or even withdrawal of your awareness from the outside surroundings. As such, it is more suitable for most people today, since they are habituated to extroversion and to an awareness which tends to move here and there, and not dwell on one point to the exclusion of others. If you cannot concentrate and your conscious perception jumps here and there, it doesn't matter - just carry on your kriya yoga practices without becoming worried or frustrated. Kriya yoga doesn't ask you to withdraw your mind to one point; it asks you to do just the opposite - to actually move your awareness, to rotate your consciousness from one point to another.

The very word *kriya* means activity or movement, and in this context activity or movement of awareness or consciousness. The word *kriya*

also means practical or preliminary and in this sense it means the preliminary practice which leads to yoga; yoga here meaning the culmination, the union, the final result of practice, not the process as we normally understand it. Thus as we have already explained, in contrast to other forms of yoga, kriya yoga does not ask you to curb your mental fluctuations, but asks you to purposely create activity in your consciousness. In this way, mental faculties are harmonized and flower into their fullest potential, and coordination is brought about between the nervous system and the brain.

The source of the practices of kriya yoga goes back into antiquity and slowly evolved over a period of time through practice and experience. Eventually the practices, or kriyas, were written down and can still be found in the numerous tantric texts. These were written in Sanskrit, and to date only a few have been translated into other languages. The full form of kriya yoga consists of a combination of over seventy kriyas. Out of these kriyas, about twenty or so are commonly known.

Kriya yoga has been taught to large numbers of people throughout the world. Many people have gained wonderful benefits, yet others have gained little or nothing even though they might have practised regularly and with enthusiasm. The fault generally lies in the sequence of the practices. If the sequence is wrong, then the system of kriya yoga loses its full power, for the different kriyas bear a close relationship to each other. As an analogy, consider music. There are a certain number of musical notes. If these notes are played in a certain order, then beautiful music can result. If they are played in another sequence, then ear-jarring noise can result. The sequence is of the utmost importance. It is the same with the kriya yoga practices.

Another important requirement of successful practice of kriya yoga is the correct preparation. Again, many people learn kriya yoga as their first introduction to yoga practices in general, and so gain little or no benefit because their bodies and minds are not ready and they lack the ability to perform basic yogic techniques. A full preparation is essential and includes the following:

1. *Body control and sound health.* This is a basic aim and is achieved through hatha yoga. by body control we do not mean the type of

control that people in circuses have developed, but sufficient to perform yogic practices, including kriya yoga, with ease. Health, needless to say, is of utmost importance, not only for more advanced kriya yoga practices but for everyday life. If you have some disease or pain it is very difficult to think of anything else, let alone try to practise kriya yoga or any other higher form of yoga practice. For this reason, the initial aim of yoga should be to make you radiate health by removing existing ailments or by improving your present condition of health. It is by doing asanas, pranayama and various body cleansing techniques, as outlined in Book I and II, that we can attain this required state of vitality.

Once we have attained sufficient body control and health, then the practices of kriya yoga become very easy, for your awareness can follow the kriya yoga techniques without being continually disturbed by body discomfort or illness. We can actually forget the body and direct our awareness in other directions.

2. *Proficiency in mudras and bandhas.* These will be fully discussed in forthcoming lessons. However, as a brief description, we can say that both mudras and bandhas are methods of stimulating nerve plexuses and endocrinal secretions and for activating bio-energies in the body. Mudras are also sometimes intended as symbolic expressions of inner mental or psychic feelings. This is a very basic description.

3. *Development of breath consciousness.* What is breath consciousness? It is very easy and can be developed by anyone with practice. It is merely being aware of the fact that: "I am breathing in and I am breathing out". This can be done even while you are talking, or working, or when the mind is engaged in other directions, as well as when you are sitting comfortably with your eyes closed. It can be done at any time and under any circumstances, even while you are reading these words and simultaneously understanding everything that is written. With practice it is possible to undertake all your daily activities and still maintain this breath awareness.

Awareness of your breath implies that you are simultaneously aware of your consciousness. In other words, if you are aware that you are breathing then you are automatically aware of your own awareness. Most people forget the fact that they are aware or conscious; they

are so wrapped up in their thought processes and actions that they do these things automatically. So by being aware of your breath you continually know that you are aware of your conscious being; you no longer lose yourself in mental and physical activity. This is a very important point to remember.

As a slight digression, consider the difference between an animal and a human being. An animal eats food, sleeps and performs various other activities during the course of its life. A human being also eats food, sleeps, etc. but has one distinctive feature: the capacity to know that he is acting, whereas an animal performs various actions without knowing it. There is also a distinct difference between various stages of human development. All humans think, yet some who are more aware are able to watch themselves thinking. They are able to stand outside themselves and watch the thinking process occurring within their mind. This is the aim of breath awareness: to continually remind you of your ability to be aware of your consciousness and to be a witness or a spectator of your mental and physical activities. Breath awareness is an essential part of kriya yoga.

4. *Location and familiarity with the psychic passages and chakras.* A psychic passage is a pathway or channel in which your breath awareness, or psychic consciousness can flow or move. There are various different pathways, one of which is in the centre of the spinal column, from top to bottom. It is easy to describe the route of the psychic pathway, but the practitioner must develop and experience the flow of breath consciousness in the psychic pathway for himself. One must be aware of the breath and feel the movement of breath in the passage.

There is a good reason why this rotation or movement of consciousness is an integral part of kriya yoga. These psychic passages pass through various nerve plexuses in the body, particularly those pertaining to the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. The mere fact that you are aware of these places has a stimulating influence which awakens nerve impulses, which bring about psychological and biochemical changes in the body. This can be experienced even after a short period of practice in the form of calmness, tranquillity and clarity of thought. The reason

for this result is that these plexuses are connected directly to brain centres and to endocrinal glands. Of particular significance are the two parasympathetic nerve outflows in the region of the base of the spine and the top of the spine. The parasympathetic nervous system tends to reduce nervous tension, in opposition to the sympathetic nervous system, which tries to produce tension and the readiness of the mind and body to withstand external events. Awareness of the lower and upper parts of the spine or the spinal psychic passages is an important part of kriya yoga. This brings about relaxation of the body and mind by stimulating the parasympathetic nervous system. Additionally there are many other factors involved, however they will be explained later.

Kriya yoga has been traditionally associated with secrecy, since its methods were always passed on from guru to disciple by word of mouth. Because of this system of teaching, many myths have arisen. People have come to the conclusion that kriya yoga is a secret system, meant only for the few. Some people have begun to believe that one must possess many special qualifications to learn and practise kriya yoga and that one must be a celibate with strict abstention from sexual life. All these ideas are totally wrong. Kriya yoga can be practised by all people without exception. Why should it be limited to a few chosen persons? We do, however, emphasize that adequate preparation is essential for positive results; but in this sense it is no different from anything else that you learn or study in life. If you want to perfect any skill, whether it is mechanical, medical or whatever, you have to start from basic principles and techniques.

Kriya yoga does not ask you to abstain from your sexual life. Why should it? Sexual activity is a natural part of life, so why abstain from it? Kriya originated from the ancient system of tantra, and of all the spiritual systems tantra is the most understanding regarding sexual life. In fact, under correct circumstances tantra has encouraged the use of sex as a means to evolve spiritually. Of course there is much written about the conservation of sexual energy and its sublimation into spiritual power. This idea has been sadly misunderstood. When people write about sublimating sexual energy and directing it into higher channels they generally

miss the whole point. The transformation of seminal fluid into *ojas* or spiritual power is often mentioned but again misunderstood. Actually it is the transformation of sexual thoughts into spiritual directions that is implied here. Many people waste enormous amounts of mental power and energy continually dwelling on sexual fantasies and so on. If this same energy could be channelled into spiritual pursuits, then many fruits could be gained.

It is not necessary to abstain from sexual relations. Continue your sexual relations, but don't dwell continually on sexual thoughts. Direct your mind in other directions, not necessarily spiritual; towards work, study or whatever you are interested in. In this way you will find new dimensions of power in your thinking and physical activities. This is the meaning of sublimation of sexual energy. The practice of kriya yoga definitely does not ask you to change your way of life.

From the experience of teaching different techniques of yoga, we have noticed a distinct and remarkable difference between people's reaction to kriya yoga and other systems that require concentrated effort. When people try to concentrate they tend to become more tense and develop headaches, the opposite, of course, to what is intended. After a short time they become frustrated, start to lose interest in the practices and start to scratch, fidget and generally feel uncomfortable. They start to open their eyes and their awareness begins to wander more than it did before the start of the practices. There seems to be a reaction to this concentration and their mind rebels and does exactly the opposite to what is intended. With kriya yoga, however, there is a noticeable difference. Because they are not asked to concentrate deeply, only to do their practices, the awareness seems to spontaneously become one-pointed and relaxed. The mind is like a naughty child. If you tell it to do one thing it will do exactly the opposite. So by asking it to concentrate, it wanders. In kriya yoga, by asking it to wander if it wishes, it seems to want to become one-pointed. From this state, meditation can spontaneously arise and your awareness can start to explore the vast layers of the subconscious and unconscious mind.

When you begin to understand and to know what lies in the deeper recesses of your mind, the vast mental reservoir about which you are

not normally aware, it is then that you can start to eradicate the phobias and fears, complexes and tensions which make your life unhappy. It is these subconscious, negative mental *samskaras* (impressions) which continually act below the surface of your normal consciousness and cause mental disturbances. Often you feel unhappy and depressed. Sometimes you may know, but generally you don't understand why you feel this way, only that you do. The cause lies with these fears, phobias, bad memories, etc. By becoming aware of them, by delving into the mind you automatically start to neutralize their negative influence on your life. If you don't know what the root cause of your unhappiness is, how can you rectify the situation? The more of these problems that you remove, the happier your life will become. This is also the way to cure emotional imbalances, nervous disorders and all the different types of psychological problems that plague people throughout the world. Other methods of making people's lives happier have been tried but there is only one sure way - relax your mind, know your mind and throw out the rubbish that exists there.

The first obstacle in yoga is relaxation of the mind while being fully aware. If you can attain a sufficient degree of mental relaxation, then automatically your awareness will start to introvert, to explore the mind. This will probably occur on the superficial levels at first, but eventually you will start to see your deeper problems in the form of symbolic visions. This is the stage at which you really begin to remove your deeper problems. If you relax the mind and then sleep, you will gain nothing because you will not be conscious of your mind and its contents. Your awareness is not there.

We have found that the ideal method for the man of today is kriya yoga. Without suppressing the wandering tendency of the awareness and thereby causing more tension in the mind than was there to begin with, kriya yoga aims at making your awareness spontaneously one-pointed. In this way, your awareness automatically introverts and so starts to reshape the activities of the mind to eventually bring about a state of equanimity or tranquillity. Kriya yoga allows you to filter out the morass, the quagmire of complexes, fears, etc. in your mind which make life an unhappy affair. No strain or mental effort is

required to remove these problems. You merely do your practices and in the course of time your mind will become clearer.

There are no restrictions or barriers to those who want to practise kriya yoga. Your age, diet, social position, religion or whatever, will not bar you from practising. All you need is the interest and effort to change your life.

It is our intention to make the system of kriya yoga available to everyone who is interested, because large numbers of people are now ready to reap the benefits of kriya yoga, yet cannot because they lack knowledge of the system. If you feel that kriya yoga is for you, then we hope that you will sincerely take up the practices systematically illumined in this book, and will start today to prepare yourself for the subtle science of kriya yoga.



## Hatha Yoga: Jala Neti

Yogic science gives as much importance to certain cleansing processes as it does to asanas or pranayama. Without regular cleansing of the system you will not gain maximum benefits from your practices. Without purification of the body one will not be ready for the higher practices of yoga. When the body is free the mind also functions properly.

Body cleansing is gained through the practice *oishatkarmas* or the six purificatory techniques.

They are very important from the point of view of physical and mental health, and these simple techniques are also highly valuable in healing internal disorders.

There are six main groups of shatkarmas or yogic cleansers as follows:

1. *Neti*: nasal cleansing, including jala neti and sutra neti.
2. *Dhauti*: cleansing of the digestive tract, including danta dhauti, vatsara dhauti and so forth.
3. *Nauli*: abdominal massage.
4. *Basti*: colon cleaning.
5. *Kapalbhati*: purification and vitalization of the frontal lobes.
6. *Trataka*: blinkless gazing.

Each of these groups contains more than one practice such as jala neti, vaman dhauti (or kunjla kriya), moola shodhana etc., which will be described at various stages throughout this book<sup>1</sup>. They are all excellent practices which are designed to purify the whole body and bring about first class health. They also bring clarity and harmony to the mind. We suggest you try some of them.

The first technique we will give is jala neti.

### JALA NETI

Jala neti is a process of cleaning the nasal passage with salt water, and is essential in allowing free breathing as required in many of the practices we will teach you, as well as in helping to ensure your good health.

### The functions of the nose

The nose is the body's organ for ensuring that the air that enters the lungs is of sufficient purity and warmth not to cause harm. The air that we inhale is rarely suitable for entry into the lungs. It is generally too cold, too dirty and too germ-ridden. It is the function of the nose to rectify this situation.

First of all, the air we breathe contains dust and small insects. These larger impurities are initially screened out by the vibrating hairs at the entrance to the nasal passages. These hairs vibrate in the opposite direction to the air as it enters the nose and prevent impurities from proceeding further.

In the deeper regions of the nose there are special bony structures which are covered with a thick, spongy, germicidal mucus membrane, through which circulates a large, rich supply of blood. The mucus membrane follows a long winding air passage which ensures that all the inhaled air comes in contact with the membranes. These mucus membranes remove millions of germs that are contained in the air and which could cause the lungs much harm, and in fact do in the case of pulmonary tuberculosis, bronchitis, etc. This mucus membrane also removes small particles of dust that have passed through the first defence of the hairs. This membrane both heats and moistens the air to a level which will not harm the lungs. Cold and dry air can result in much injury to the lungs.

Deeper in the nose there are a set of glands which further help to eliminate germs that have managed to escape the previous defences. Additionally, our sense of smell prevents us inhaling noxious gases. As soon as we smell something unpleasant we immediately stop breathing, or if possible seek clean, fresh air.

By now the reader should be aware of the importance of the seemingly insignificant organ - the nose. It should also be obvious why it is so unhealthy to breathe continually through

the mouth as so many people do. When air is inhaled through the mouth instead of the nose, it escapes all the mechanisms of the nose which prepare the air for admittance to the lungs. All the dust, germs, cold and dry air directly enter the lungs. The mouth and throat do have mechanisms for removing these impurities and air conditions, but they are nowhere nearly as efficient as the nose.

If the nose is blocked, or if the mucus membranes are profusely covered in impurities, then the nose cannot perform its duties effectively. In fact if the nose is completely blocked, then one is forced to breathe through the mouth. And we have already explained the disadvantages of this process. This is the reason why we blow our noses: to remove these impurities and to allow the nose to operate efficiently. However, the normal nose blowing does not remove all impurities. Ingrained, dry mucus can remain. This is one of the reasons that the practice of neti was developed: to ensure the best possible cleaning of the nose.

There are other reasons for the use of neti such as the stimulation of various nerve endings in the nose; this leads to improvement in the brain and organs to which these nerves connect and also helps in the stimulation of ajna chakra, the midbrain psychic centre.

### Equipment

A pot or lota (pitcher) should be used to introduce salt water into the nostrils. There are various designs and even a teapot can be used if nothing else is available. We recommend the shape of the pot to be as shown in the accompanying picture. This pot is known as a **neti lota**. It can be made of brass or any other suitable material which does not contaminate water, but the important thing to remember is that the nozzle on the end of the spout should be suitably sized so that the end fits comfortably into your nostril.

### Salt water

The water used in the practice should be pure and lukewarm; body temperature is the ideal temperature for pouring the water into your nose. The water should then be mixed with clean salt in the proportion of one teaspoonful per half litre of water. Make sure the salt is fully dissolved in the water. People often

wonder why salt water is introduced into the nostrils instead of ordinary water. The reason is very simple and very practical. Saltwater has a much higher osmotic pressure than ordinary water, which means that salt water is not easily absorbed into the delicate blood vessels and membranes in the nose, whereas ordinary water is. If you try this practice with ordinary water you will discover for yourself, in the form of discomfort or a little pain in the nose. However, we don't suggest you do this, though it is not at all dangerous.

In conclusion, salt water is ideal for jala neti, because while it thoroughly cleans the nostrils of impurities it is not absorbed into the delicate nasal membranes. As such no discomfort will be felt when the water flows through the nose.

### Posture

One may either sit in a squatting position known as kagasana<sup>2</sup>, or one may assume a standing position, bending the shoulders and head forwards. This position is most suitable for doing neti into a sink or wash basin, while the other position, kagasana, can be done in the garden or in a shower.



### Technique

Fill the neti pot with the prepared salt water. Hold the bottom of the pot with one hand, as shown in the accompanying picture.

Gently insert the end of the nozzle into the end of the left nostril (or, if this is blocked into the right nostril).

There should be no force involved, but the nozzle should press firmly against the side of the one nostril so that no water leakage occurs. Progressively tilt your head to the right side while simultaneously raising the neti pot in such a way that water runs into the left nostril. Make sure that you keep your mouth wide open so that you can breathe. Some people say that the mouth should be closed and the breath held during the practice, but we feel

this complicates, especially for beginners, a practice that is essentially very simple. If the pot is in the correct position, if your head is tilted at a suitable angle and if there is a tight fit between the nozzle and the sides of the nose, then the water should flow in through one nostril and out through the other nostril. It doesn't matter if water flows into your mouth or throat, but if the practice is performed correctly with relaxation this should not happen. Allow the water to flow through the nostrils for 10 to 20 seconds.

Then remove the neti pot and remove the water and impurities from your nose by closing the left nostril and breathing quickly and forcibly through the other nostril. Don't blow so hard, however, that you damage your nose and cause bleeding. In this respect the practitioner should use his/her discretion. Now close the right nostril and blow forcibly through the left nostril.

Now pour water into the right nostril for about 20 seconds and repeat the same process.

Again pour water into each of the nostrils in turn, repeating the same technique just described.

*Drying the nostrils:* after completing this practice the nostrils must be dried and any further impurities removed.

Stand erect. Bend forwards so that the trunk assumes a horizontal position.

Close one nostril by pressing the side of the nose with the thumb. Breathe in and out vigorously up to 10 times in quick succession. The exhalation should be especially emphasized to expel the moisture from the nostrils. Repeat the same procedure with the other nostril closed. Then repeat the same procedure with both nostrils open.

This simple practice should remove most of the moisture from the nose. If moisture remains the vigorous breathing should be repeated until the nose is perfectly dry.

### **Duration**

Once the practitioner is familiar with the technique, the whole practice can be completed in a short period of time. Not including preparation of the water, the whole process should take less than five minutes.

Neti is ideally practised early in the morning before breakfast. However, if necessary, it can be practised at other times of the day, excepting

straight after meals. Once a day is sufficient, though if one has nasal catarrh, a cold or any other specific ailment, it may be practised more times.

### **Limitations and precautions**

People who suffer from chronic bleeding of the nose should not do neti without expert advice. Make sure that the water is not too hot when you introduce it into the nostrils. Do not breathe in and out too deeply when removing the moisture from the nose; we are trying to improve the condition of your nose, not damage it. Also, if the sinuses are blocked with mucus, be careful not to blow your nose hard. It is very easy to push the mucus further into the cavities. Ensure that the salt fully dissolves in the water before pouring it into your nose.

Be careful to hold the head correctly and not to hold the neti pot too low. In order for the water to flow into one nostril and out the other, the water level in the pot must be higher than the region at the back of the nose, where the two nostrils merge with each other. If you tilt your head too much then the water will go down your throat instead of the other nostril. If you tilt the pot too much the water will merely overflow out of the pot. You must adjust the position of your head and the pot so that they are at correct levels.

People who have great difficulty passing water through the nose may have a structural blockage such as a polyp. Expert advice should be sought. If there is a slight burning sensation in the nose during your first attempt with salt water, don't worry. This will disappear as your nose tissue becomes accustomed to contact with water.

### **Benefits**

Neti is the best method of preventing and eliminating colds. An effective cure for the common cold has not yet been found. Neti is not foolproof, but it goes a long way to solving the problem. A cold indicates something significant, namely that your body is in a weakened condition. If this was not the case, the cold virus would be unable to penetrate the defences of your system; your autotherapeutic powers would be strong enough to withstand such an attack. The cold virus flourishes in nerve tissue, particularly the olfactory nerves in the nose. During a cold, neti greatly helps by removing

the accumulated mucus in the nose, this being a breeding ground.

Regular practice of neti when you don't have a cold keeps the nasal passages working at optimum efficiency and thereby helps to maintain a healthy body. Remember, breathing through the mouth or insufficient treatment of the inhaled air prior to entry into the lungs, due to nasal blockage and congestion, can encourage the onset of disease, by allowing germs to infect the lungs, or by generally weakening the state of health of the body.

Neti is also a help in curing sinusitis, ailments of the eyes, nose and throat, tonsillitis, catarrh, as well as inflammation of the adenoids and mucus membranes. It is effective in removing headaches, insomnia and tiredness. Neti has a subtle influence on the various nerves which end in the nasal passages, such as the olfactory bulb and other adjacent nerves which innervate the eyes, ears, etc. This has a very soothing influence on the brain and can help to relieve such ailments as migraine, epilepsy, depression, tension, etc.

Neti helps in no small manner to prevent and cure lung diseases such as asthma, pneumonia, bronchitis, pulmonary tuberculosis, etc., for the reasons already mentioned. Respiration becomes much easier, which leads to an improved intake of oxygen, improved removal of carbon dioxide and consequently better health.

#### **Importance of neti in yogic physiology**

The science of yoga maintains that the flow of air in each nostril alternately changes. If you test this for yourself, you will find this to be true. At present one of your nostrils is admitting more air than the other. After some time the other nostril will admit the greater amount of air.

This alternate flow of breath through the two nostrils in turn has a profound influence on the energy cycle of man. It controls our thinking and physical activity, our introversion and extroversion. This cycle has a great bearing on our mental and physical health.

Now if one or both of the nostrils are permanently blocked, then this natural alternation of breath flow cannot occur. Our health can suffer. This is another reason why jala neti is so important; it cleans both nostrils and allows the breath to alternate freely between the two.

#### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> See the index of practices at the end of the book.

<sup>2</sup> See Topic 3 of this lesson.

## Asanas: Pre-Meditative Exercises

Most people today are physically very stiff. you can test this for yourself: from a standing position, keep your legs straight and bending forwards try to touch your toes with your hands. If you can't (please do not force or strain), then this shows that your body is stiff. Because of this stiffness most people cannot sit in one position for a very long time, as is necessary in higher yogic practices, without feeling the urge to move their limbs in response to discomfort. The following simple exercises are designed to generally loosen up your body and prepare you for eventual mastery of meditational asanas. There are many possible loosening up exercises, far too many for daily practice. The following exercises are selected ones which we feel give optimum results, especially when performed systematically in the order that we have described them.

### Preparations

1. Practise in a well ventilated, unobstructed room. Do not practise in a gale-force wind or draught.
2. Use a folded blanket or rug placed on the floor.
3. Wear comfortable clothing which doesn't obstruct free movement. Use common sense in this respect.
4. Please do not use unnecessary strain or force in any of the exercises. Though you may find that your muscles are a little stiff to begin with, they will begin to stretch even after a few days of regular practice.<sup>1</sup>

### GOOLF GHOORNAN (ANKLE CRANK)

The first of these pre-meditative asanas loosens up the ankle joints.

#### Technique

Sit on a blanket.  
Stretch both legs out in front of the body.



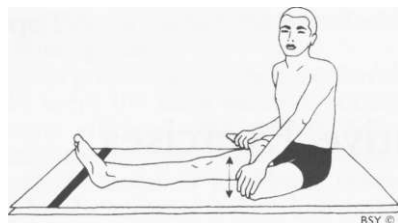
Bend the right leg.  
Hold the right ankle with the right hand.  
Place the right foot on the left thigh, as near as possible to the groin.  
Hold the right toes with the left hand.  
Mentally say to yourself: "I am loosening up my ankle joints and with practice they will become loose."  
Simultaneously rotate your ankle 10 times clockwise.  
Try to relax your foot as much as possible, rotating your foot about the ankle with your left hand.  
Repeat 10 times anticlockwise.  
Repeat the whole process, 10 times clockwise and 10 anticlockwise, with the left foot folded on the right thigh.

### ARDHA TITALI ASANA (HALF BUTTERFLY)

This exercise specifically loosens up the thigh, knee and ankle joints.

#### Technique

Remain sitting as in the previous exercise.  
Fold the left leg.  
Place the left foot on the right thigh.  
Place the left hand on the top of the bent left knee.  
Relax your whole body, especially the folded leg.  
Gently push the left knee up and down.



The bent leg should be as relaxed as possible, the movement being applied by the left arm. Simultaneously, mentally repeat to yourself: "I am loosening up my ankle, knee and hip joints and will eventually be able to touch the floor with my folded knee."

Move your knee up and down 50 times. After completing slowly straighten your bent leg, without jerking or twisting the knee.

Then bend your leg, bringing your heel to the buttocks and lastly straighten it again. This releases muscular tension.

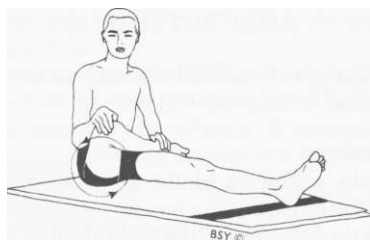
Fold your right foot on to your left thigh.

Repeat the same process, moving your right knee up and down 50 times.

*Note:* With practice and the right mental approach everyone should eventually be able to touch the knees to the ground. We emphasize that you must adopt the correct mental attitude; in other words, if you expect to eventually touch the floor with your knees, then you will.

#### (HIP ROTATION)

This exercise helps to strengthen the muscles and joints of the legs in preparation for meditational poses.



#### Technique

Fold the left foot on the right thigh as in the previous exercise. Hold the bent knee with the left hand. Rotate the knee clockwise 10 times. Simultaneously mentally repeat to yourself: "I

am loosening up my legs and will eventually be able to touch the floor with my knees."

Allow your bent leg to remain passive, using the force of the left arm to rotate the knee.

Repeat 10 times anticlockwise.

Now straighten your bent leg, without jerking or twisting the knee. Bend the leg once, bringing the right heel near the buttock- Then straighten the leg. This removes muscular tension and further loosens the joints.

Repeat the same procedure with the other leg folded.

*Note:* We emphasize the importance of the mental repetition while performing the exercises. The whole point of it is to loosen up the legs so that you can eventually touch the knees on the ground. If you don't have this goal in mind, the exercise is 75% less effective.

Some people may find the exercise easier if they hold the foot of the folded leg with the opposite hand while rotating the knee with the other arm.

#### UTTHANASANA (SQUAT AND RISE POSE)

This exercise strengthens and loosens the whole leg, specifically the knees. When it is perfected, one should be able to squat comfortably on the ground with both heels flat on the floor.



#### Technique

Stand erect with your feet about 1 metre apart. Interlock your fingers in front of your abdomen and allow your arms to hang freely. Slowly bend your knees and lower your trunk about 20 cms.

Return to the erect position.

Again descend, this time slightly lower.

Return to the erect position again.

Lower the body again.

Your hands should be 30 cms above the floor.

Rise again.

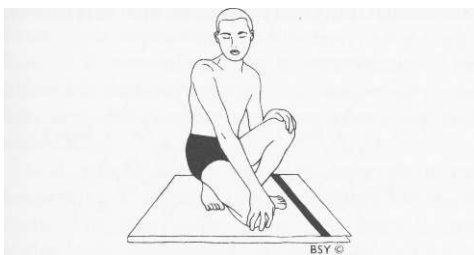
Lower to the final lowered position with hands

on the floor. Return to an erect position and relax.

**Note:** The final position, practised with hands on the knees, is known as kagasana, the crow pose.

#### KAWA CHALASANA (CROW WALKING)

This again is an excellent exercise for loosening and strengthening the legs.

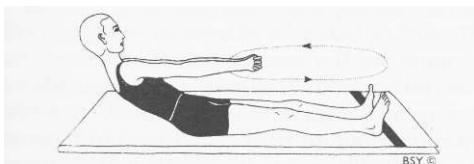


##### Technique

Assume kagasana. Make sure the palms are on your knees. Start slowly to walk in this position. You can either walk on tiptoe or keeping the feet flat on the floor. Spend half of your practice on tiptoe and the other half of your practice on the flats of your feet.

#### CHAKKI CHAIANASANA (CHURNING THE MILL)

This is an excellent exercise for shoulders, lower back, lower abdomen and waist. It is a movement which many Indian ladies use when they grind corn between two grinding wheels.



##### Technique

Sit on the floor with the legs outstretched, feet apart.  
Interlock your fingers.  
Straighten your arms at shoulder height.  
Rotate your hands in as big a circle as possible on a horizontal plane.  
Keep your arms straight throughout the whole exercise.

Lean forward and try to make your interlocked hands pass over the top of the feet at the outer stroke of the circle.

Then try to lean backwards as far as possible, keeping your feet on the ground, so that your hands pass over the top of your thighs.  
Rotate your hands 10 times clockwise, then 10 times anticlockwise.

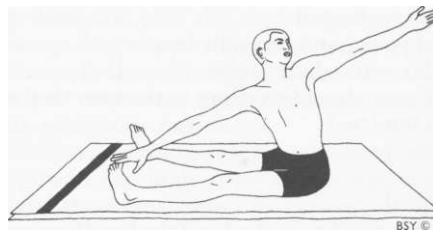
Lie back and relax yourself completely.

##### Breathing

Breathe in as you lean backwards. Breathe out as you lean forwards. When you can easily perform the physical movement alone, coordinate your breathing with the movement. When the practice has been mastered with the breathing added, then become aware of the movement of the muscles of the lower back as the exercise is performed.

#### GATYATMAK MERU VAKRASANA (DYNAMIC SPINAL TWIST)

This exercise gives the whole spine a good twist in both directions and thereby loosens up the vertebrae and tones important spinal nerves.



##### Technique

Remain in the same sitting position as the previous exercise.

Separate your legs as far apart as is comfortable.

Raise the arms on each side of the body to shoulder height, keeping them straight.

The arms should stay in a straight line throughout the exercise.

Lean forward and touch your left foot with your right hand.

In this position the left arm should point backwards, in exactly the opposite direction to the right arm. Both arms should form one straight line.

The head should be turned to gaze at the arm extended behind you.

Now twist your trunk in the opposite direction, touching the right foot with the left hand, the head turned in the opposite direction towards the right hand behind the back. This is 1 round. Do 10 to 20 rounds. As the body becomes more flexible the legs should be spread further apart. Keep the legs straight throughout the exercise.

### Breathing

Inhale as you twist the body to either side and exhale as you centre your body.

## GREEVA SANCHAIANA (NECK MOVEMENTS)

All nerves connecting the different parts of the body must pass through the neck to reach the brain. The following movements tone up these vital nerves and generally loosen up the neck vertebrae. It is also an excellent method of reducing tension and inducing calmness of mind. It can also help relieve headaches caused by too much tension in the neck and shoulder regions.

### Technique

Sit cross-legged.  
Rest your hands on your lap.  
Relax your whole body.  
Let your shoulders drop; make sure they are not hunched.  
Close your eyes.

### Stage 1

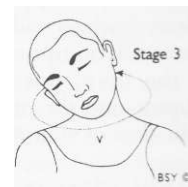
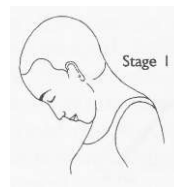
With control, very slowly tilt the head forwards. Then slowly return the head to the upright position. Slowly tilt the head backwards. Then tilt the head forward again to a normal position. This is 1 round. The whole movement should be completed in 1 smooth motion. Do 10 rounds.

### Stage 2

Bend the head to each side, with the ear going towards the shoulder, in the same slow motion that was performed in the previous exercise. Do 10 rounds. We recommend that the time of rotation for 1 round be reduced to 15 seconds eventually.

### Stage 3

Slowly rotate your head clockwise in as large a circle as possible. Ensure that the shoulders are remain as relaxed as possible throughout the practice. Rotate 5 to 10 times. Then repeat the same rotation in the anti-clockwise direction. Throughout the practice watch the space in front of the closed eyes. Try to imagine that your body is floating in this space and that your head is detached from your body. This will help to induce relaxation.



### Notes

<sup>1</sup> For full details on the rules and preparation for asana



## Pranayama: Breathing

Breathing is a process that we rarely give any thought to. It occurs automatically without our awareness, yet at the same time it is something that most people do incorrectly. If breathing is a spontaneous function of the body, how is it possible to do it incorrectly? The answer is that our respiratory muscles become lazy and cease to give optimum inhalation and exhalation.

Our whole life is entirely dependent on breathing. If we stop breathing then life itself ceases in the body. Life and breath are intimately connected. Remember, when a person dies we say that he expires, the same word used for breathing out, or for breath leaving the lungs. We can survive for a few days without drinking water, a few months without taking food, but how long can the average person survive without drawing air into the lungs? In most cases no more than a few minutes. It is written in the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, the ancient text on yoga: "Life is the period between one breath and the next; a person who only half breathes, only half lives. He who breathes correctly, acquires control of the whole being." The ancient yogis were fully aware of the importance of breath; no breath no life; breath is life.

In yoga it is said that each person has a fixed number of breaths allocated to him. If one breathes slowly then one will live longer, for the number of breaths is allocated for the lifetime; if one breathes rapidly the given number of breaths are used up more quickly resulting in a shorter life span. Whether you accept this idea or not, there is nevertheless a great deal of truth in it. A fast breathing rate is associated with tension, fear, worry, etc. which tends to lead to bad health, unhappiness and of course a shorter life. A person who breathes slowly is relaxed, calm and happy, which is conducive to longevity. A person who breathes quickly tends to inhale small volumes of air and exhale the same small volumes; this tends

to allow germs to accumulate in the lower areas of the lungs. Conversely, a person who breathes slowly tends to also breathe deeply and thereby fill the lungs to a greater depth. This helps to remove stagnant air from the lower reaches of the lungs and to destroy the breeding ground of germs and the germs themselves. There are other reasons that relate longevity to slow and deep breathing. For example, deep breathing imparts a good massage to the abdominal organs via the diaphragm. This is a natural and essential subsidiary function of the breathing process, which is often overlooked. The massage of the liver, stomach, etc. keeps them in good working order by expelling old, impure blood and allowing pure, oxygenated blood to replace it. Shallow breathing connected with fast breathing does not give the internal organs the massage they require. This can lead to various diseases. It, in itself, does not cause them, but tends to encourage the onset in conjunction with other body factors.

Shallow breathing also leads to insufficient oxygen in the body. This causes functional disturbances and illnesses concerned with circulatory, digestive and nervous systems, since the efficiency of these systems is entirely dependent on healthy, well-nourished nerves and organs, which depend completely on oxygen for survival.

These are a few examples of how insufficient breathing can have negative repercussions in our lives, yet most people in the world do not breathe properly. The modern way of life has put us out of touch with the natural life rhythm. Our lives, our body functions, our way of living is intended normally to be guided by rhythms in our internal and external surroundings. Our heartbeat and breathing rate harmonize with each other to give perfect cooperation under normal situations. Our lives are determined by the rhythms of the daily sunrise and sunset together with the rhythm of the

moon and stars in more subtle ways. Consider animals. Their whole life is, or seems to be determined by rhythms of nature. Birds migrate according to the seasons. Animals mate and sometimes change their fur or feathers in accordance with seasonal changes. Certain species of fish and eels travel thousands of miles at a certain time of the year to spawn in a particular locality. Science has not yet been able to tell us what causes this, but it seems more than likely that some rhythm of life stimulates or triggers a brain function which automatically makes them follow mixed patterns of behaviour.

What is it that causes thousands of ants to work in harmony with each other for the benefit of the ant community? There seems to be some rhythm in their actions which leads to an integrated whole. What this rhythm is no one knows, yet we can see it when we study the activities of ants, or bees, or termites, etc. Without this uniformity there would be complete chaos.

It is the same with humans. Our activities should be determined by the natural rhythms around us. We should be in harmony with our surroundings. It is this that is conducive to a happy life. Yet modern, industrialized, materialistic life has cut us from the influence of these natural cycles. For these reasons we suffer disease and feel alienated from our surroundings. This is a common feeling among modern people - they cannot relate to life or the things around them.

How does all this relate to respiration? During bygone days man was more receptive to the rhythms of nature. Perhaps he was not aware of many of them, but he nevertheless flowed with them and allowed them to influence him in the way that was intended. This includes even the process of breathing. There was absolutely no need for him to consider whether he was breathing correctly or not - his very way of life was in tune with nature and sufficient to ensure that breathing was correct. His active way of life encouraged the lungs to work at optimum efficiency. His relaxed way of life encouraged correct breathing instead of imposing an almost continual inhibition and unnatural load on the respiratory system as modern man does. Modern man through fear, competition and hatred does not allow the respiratory system to work as it should. We

take quick shallow breaths which in a way is in accordance with the fast, superficial modern way of life. Compare this with the life of a farmer, who generally has a good breathing rhythm and consequently good health. His active way of life is conducive to good, deep and slow respiration. He has the time and inclination to see himself in relationship to nature. He relaxes and tunes in with his surroundings.

There are a large number of factors that influence our breathing. For example, if we take a cold shower, automatically we must breathe deeply; it is a conditioned response. Yet most modern people rarely have a cold shower; instead they take a hot bath. Ancient man had no choice. A cold brisk atmosphere encourages deep breathing, yet modern man spends as little time as possible in the open, preferring to hibernate in air-conditioned and heated apartments. As such he loses touch with a natural stimulator of rhythmic breathing. Primitive man did not need to be taught how to breathe properly; it happened as an automatic response to his surroundings.

In comparison, the surroundings and way of life of modern man does not encourage correct breathing. It is for this reason that today most people have to learn how to breathe properly. They have to relearn what in fact is natural for them. They have to reactivate their nervous reflexes so that their breathing becomes normal and harmonious to life and health.

Those people who are very active by nature will probably already breathe correctly. The people we are mainly talking about, regarding bad breathing, are those persons who spend their lives cooped up in an office during the day and in their homes watching television or listening to the radio at night. It is these people who need to be educated to breathe properly. It is the people who develop so much mental tension during their workday that they have absolutely no energy or inclination to do anything active when they return home. Think of how many diseases are caused or at least aggravated by faulty breathing. These include asthma, bronchitis, pulmonary tuberculosis and large numbers of other ailments indirectly caused by starving our body of the oxygen nourishment that it needs as a result of shallow respiration.

### Breathing capacities

A person who is reasonably relaxed and sitting inhales and exhales approximately half a litre

of air (this is called tidal volume in physiology) at a time. Now if that same person expanded his chest and abdomen to the maximum that is possible and thereby drew more air into the lungs, it would be possible for him to draw in approximately an extra two litres. This is over and above the normal half litre that can be inhaled. This extra volume of air that can be inhaled is known as the inspiratory reserve volume in physiology. If after normal expiration the chest and abdomen are contracted as much as is comfortably possible, then it is possible to expel an extra one and a half litres of air from the lungs, over and above the half litre that is exhaled during normal respiration.

This is referred to as expiratory reserve volume. There is also some air that will remain in the lungs even after the deepest exhalation. This is due to the fact that the lungs can never be fully deflated; the lungs can never be squeezed sufficiently by the chest and the diaphragm to remove all the air. This is known as the residual volume. It is generally in the order of one and a half litres.

Let us compare the normal volume of respiration with the maximum that can be respired:

normal volume of respiration + inspiratory reserve volume + expiratory reserve volume = 4 litres.

This gives a total of four litres, which is eight times the normal volume of inhalation and exhalation.

Most people while sitting breathe less than half a litre of air and so their lung usage is actually less than one-eighth their capacity. It is for this reason that learning to breathe properly is so important.

### Why slow breathing?

By now the advantages of deep breathing should be obvious, but what about slow breathing? Why not breathe deeply and quickly? The reason is simple. Time is required to transfer oxygen from the lungs to the blood and for carbon dioxide in the blood to be transferred into the lungs for expulsion into the air. If one breathes rapidly, then the optimum oxygen and carbon dioxide exchange is not leached in the lungs. If the

respiration is slow then the optimum transfer can be achieved. This is why depth and speed of breathing are so important in relation to each other. The deep breathing allows maximum intake for each respiration and slow breathing allows optimum exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide.

### The mechanics of breathing

Do you know how air is drawn into your lungs? You know that it happens, but do you know why? This is important, because if you understand how you breathe, then you will know how to correct improper breathing habits.

The breathing process functions briefly as follows. Consider the lungs to be two very flexible and strong bags which can be inflated or deflated as air flows in or out of them during inhalation and exhalation respectively. The lungs have the ability to expand greatly and also can be contracted into a small space.

The lungs are surrounded at the top and sides by the thorax or the ribcage, and at the bottom by a very important flat muscle called the diaphragm. The diaphragm separates the abdomen from the lungs. The lungs are not fixed to the diaphragm or the ribcage but they nevertheless closely follow any change in shape of this enclosure.

If the ribs expand and the diaphragm moves down (tidal volume) + 2 litres of inspiration then there is a tendency for a vacuum to be created between the outside of the lungs and the enclosure. Since a vacuum is not normally tolerated in nature the lungs automatically expand to fill it. They expand in such a way as to assume the same shape as the enclosure. In this way air is drawn into the lungs and inhalation takes place. Similarly, when the ribs contract and the diaphragm moves upwards due to release of muscular contraction, then the lungs are squeezed. This pushes air out of the lungs. Exhalation takes place.

This is the operation of breathing. The more the lungs are expanded and contracted, the deeper will be the breathing. It is to this subject that we turn next.

### Different methods of breathing

We can split the process of breathing into three parts: abdominal or diaphragmatic breathing, intercostal or middle breathing and clavicular or upper breathing.

1. *Abdominal breathing.* This type of breathing is associated with the movement of the diaphragm and the outer wall of the abdomen. When relaxed this muscle arches upwards towards the chest. During inhalation it is flattened as it moves downwards, which compresses the abdominal organs and eventually pushes the front wall, the belly, of the abdomen outwards. This movement enlarges the chest cavity, downwards, allowing the lungs to expand and thereby draw in air from the surroundings. Relaxation of the muscles which pull the diaphragm downwards allows the diaphragm to move upwards again to reduce the volume in the chest cavity and thereby cause exhalation. This form of breathing draws in the greatest amount of air for the least muscular effort. It is often hampered, however, by tight belts and clothing which prevent movement of the belly outwards.

2. *Middle breathing.* This form of breathing is achieved by movement of the ribs. During expansion of the ribcage outwards and upwards by muscular contraction, the lungs are allowed to expand - this results in air being drawn into the lungs from the front side and inhalation taking place. When the muscles which control the movement of the ribs (the intercostals) are relaxed, then the ribs move downwards and inwards. This compresses the lungs and exhalation takes place.

3. *Upper breathing.* In this case the inhalation and deflation of the lungs is achieved by raising the shoulders and collarbone. This method requires much effort for little output. Very little air is inhaled and exhaled since this movement cannot change the volume of the chest cavity very much. Women often tend to restrict themselves to this type of breathing by wearing tight brassieres, corsets and belts which restrict the abdominal and middle breathing.

4. *Yogic breathing.* Yogic or deep breathing combines all these three modes of breathing - abdominal, middle, upper - into one harmonious movement. It is this type of breathing that we are interested in developing, since only yogic breathing can give the maximum inhalation and exhalation of breath.

### **Preparations**

The purpose of this practice is to make the practitioner aware of the three different types

of respiration, and incorporate them into yogic breathing.

Do not wear any clothing that will impede movement of your chest and abdomen.

Practise on a folded blanket, lying on a solid floor.

This exercise can be performed lying down in shavasana', or sitting in a cross-legged position, in which case you should make sure that your spine is as straight as possible without straining.

Place a cushion or folded blanket under the buttocks if necessary.

All breathing should be performed through the nose and not through the mouth.

The place to practise is in a well-ventilated clean room, with no breeze that might cause you discomfort.

## **1. ABDOMINAL BREATHING**

Relax your whole body.

Place one hand on the front of the abdomen on the navel. This is to indicate to you that your abdomen does indeed move up and down. Breathe out slowly and completely, and remember that it is this movement of your diaphragm that is responsible for your abdominal breathing.

As you breathe out feel your abdomen contract; the navel will move toward the spine.

At the end of exhalation the diaphragm will be totally relaxed and will be bowing upwards into the chest cavity.

Hold your breath for a second or so. Then breathe in.

Try not to expand the chest or move the shoulders. Feel your abdomen expand, the navel moving upwards.

Try to breathe in slowly and deeply.

At the end of inhalation your diaphragm will be bowing in the direction of the abdomen; your navel will be at its highest point.

Hold your breath for a second or two. Then exhale again, slowly and completely.

Again try to feel your navel moving towards the spine.

At the end of exhalation your abdomen will be contracted, the navel will be at its nearest point to the back.

Hold the breath for a short time, inhale and then repeat the whole process.

This is abdominal breathing.

Continue this practice for 10 to 20 respirations, or more if time permits.

## 2. MIDDLE BREATHING

Assume a lying or sitting position as already described. Ensure that you are as relaxed as possible. In this practice the idea is to breathe by utilizing the movement of the ribcage.

Throughout the practice try not to move the abdomen; this is done by slightly contracting the abdominal muscles.

If you wish you can place your hands on the side of the chest to feel the expansion and contraction of the ribs. Breathe in slowly by expanding the ribcage outwards and upwards. You will find it impossible to breathe deeply because of the limitation on the maximum expansion of the chest. Remember, try not to utilize the abdomen for inhalation.

At the end of inhalation, hold your breath for a second or two.

Then slowly exhale by contracting the chest downwards and inwards.

Keep the abdomen slightly contracted, but without straining.

At the end of exhalation hold your breath for a short time.

Again breathe in slowly.

Repeat this process 10 to 20 times or more if time permits.

## 3. UPPER BREATHING

In this type of breathing you should try not to expand and contract either your abdomen or chest.

This is not so easy but try.

Keep your hands on your chest so that you can determine whether your chest is moving or not.

Slightly contract the muscles of the abdomen. Now try to inhale by drawing your collarbone and shoulders toward your chin.

This might be a little difficult at first. A good method is to inhale and exhale with a sniffing action; this automatically induces upper breathing.

Exhale by letting the shoulders and collarbone move away from the chin. There is no need to perform this type of breathing for very long; just enough to appreciate its operation, and the fact that it requires much effort and does

not induce or expel very much air from the lungs.

We have practised and experienced the three different types of breathing.

Now we have to integrate them into one harmonious whole to achieve yogic breathing.

## 4. YOGIC BREATHING

This combination of the three types of breathing induces optimum volume of air into the lungs and expels the maximum amount of waste air during exhalation.

### Technique

Inhale slowly by allowing your abdomen to expand.

Try to breathe so slowly that little or no sound of breath can be heard.

At the end of abdominal expansion, start to expand your chest outwards and upwards.

At the end of this movement draw your collarbone and shoulders toward your head.

This completes 1 inhalation.

The whole process should be one continuous movement, each phase of breathing merging into the next, without there being any obvious transition point.

There should be no jerks or unnecessary strain.

Your breathing should be like the swell of the sea.

The rest of the body should be relaxed. Now start to exhale.

First relax your collarbone and shoulders.

Then allow your chest to move, first downwards towards the feet and then inwards.

After this allow the abdomen to contract.

Don't strain but try to empty the lungs as much as possible by drawing or pulling the abdominal wall as near as possible to the spine. Again the whole movement should be a harmonious whole.

This completes 1 round of yogic breathing.

Hold your breath for a second or two at the end of each inhalation and exhalation.

Inhale and do another round.

Do up to 5 rounds on your first day of practice.

Don't strain.

Every day increase your practice by 2 rounds, or as time permits.

Ten minutes yogic breathing is a reasonable length of time to eventually aim at. With enough practice you will find that the whole

movement will occur naturally. No effort will be required.

### **Summary**

A few minutes of yogic breathing daily can work wonders. It will make you much less susceptible to illness, and you will acquire more power, vitality and calmness in your daily activities. Your thinking and clarity of thought will improve.

The deep systematic yogic breathing will tend to retrain breathing nerve reflexes that may have ceased to be active by lack of use. In other words, at present you might be breathing only from the chest, hardly using the abdomen at all. Yogic breathing will start to make you breathe abdominally, intercostally and clavicularly during the day, and therefore allow you to inhale the full amount of air that your body requires for nourishment and good health.

To develop the yogic breathing as an automatic and normal function of the body, try to develop the habit of consciously breathing yogically for a few seconds or minutes. If you feel tired or angry, sit down, or if possible lie down, and practise yogic breathing. If you can breathe slowly then your mind will become calm and revitalized.

### **Notes**

1 For details on shavasana refer to Topic 5 of this lesson.

## The Art and Science of Relaxation

Relaxation is an art, for there are various practices which one can develop and utilize to bring about relaxation of the mind and body, transforming life into an expression of well-being. Relaxation is also a science, for it is based on solid scientific fact.

Relaxation sounds easy - one merely closes the eyes and sleeps. But, in fact, for most people relaxation, deep relaxation, is very difficult. While resting, their minds are in a state of turmoil and their bodies are continually tossing and turning, and the muscles twitching. The biggest obstacle to overcome is for people to actually take active steps to bring about relaxation, to develop and use the various techniques that are available. Because most people cannot relax, in the real sense of the word, they will find that their whole lives will change by just being able to relax. It is such a simple thing, but it can bring wonderful results.

Relaxation is essential in everyone's life. By relaxation we mean a release of tension in both the mind and body for a period of time to allow complete rest and revitalization. This is the whole reason for sleep, but because of the tension-filled lives that most people now lead in the daytime, sleep no longer performs its functions properly. Many people find that they don't relax even during sleep - they continue to worry and try to solve their problems. This does not lead to the rest that the body and mind require. People wake up in the morning still exhausted and this state remains throughout the day. It is a vicious circle - for they again go to sleep that same night with the accumulated tensions of the day as well as the exhaustion that has accumulated from numerous nights of insufficient rest during sleep. It is no wonder that when the weekend holidays arrive many people spend much of their time sleeping - they need it. It is for this reason that modern man needs to know systematic techniques which specifically induce relaxation.

Sleep is still necessary, but it needs to be sup-

plemented with techniques that quickly and efficiently remove worry and stress.

It seems to be a contradiction, but it is nevertheless true that those persons who can easily relax can do more work, can enjoy life more, need less sleep and tend to have smoother social relationships in all spheres of life. Now you might ask: "What about lazy or lethargic people, they are completely relaxed, yet not working?" Actually this is something different. A lazy person is someone who is either full of so many mental disturbances that he is unable to direct his willpower towards some activity or achievement, or his mental makeup is such that he is reluctant to do anything. This is different from relaxation. A person who can truly relax is able to recuperate mental and physical power and focus it in one direction when required. This is in fact willpower, the ability to direct one's whole being toward the attainment of one objective without distraction. Relaxation leads to strong willpower. Tension leads to dissipation of energy and attention in all directions.

During yoga classes wonderful changes can be seen in people. Many people walk into class with tension written on every line of their face and on every word they speak. Aggression pervades them. Their bodies are filled with tension, worry and unhappiness. They start practices, not necessarily difficult ones, and slowly but surely the stress and emotional turmoil begins to evaporate. They generally don't know it, but the yoga teacher can see the transformation on their faces. The students only realize their relaxation at the end of the lesson when they find that they are smiling, really smiling, not superficially, for the first time in days, and that they are actually singing to themselves as they walk down the street. They find that in comparison to before the lesson they are feeling light, carefree and have confidence in themselves. This is not an exception but the rule. These people by the

systematic process of relaxation techniques have changed their whole attitude towards themselves, to other people and life in general. This transformation may only last for an hour or so, but it leaves a wonderful impression on the mind, and helps to permanently encourage a more relaxed attitude towards life. It is a starting point from which you can fully begin to enjoy mental and physical relaxation as a normal part of your life, whether during intense activity, sleep or whatever, and not as something that you experience only occasionally, perhaps during yoga practices.

We want your life to be an expression of relaxation and joy. The way is by cultivating the ability to relax under all conditions and at all times. Everything you practise in yoga brings about relaxation and a thorough revitalization of the body and the mind, whether it is by means of asanas, pranayama, meditative practices or whatever. Yet there are some special techniques which are very simple, which specially bring about relaxation in a short period of time. These will be discussed at the end of this topic and at various stages throughout the book.

### **Mechanics of tension**

The root cause of mental and physical tension is faulty thinking in relation to other people and to our surroundings. Our way of thinking does not harmonize with our external environment. This results in conflicts of interest between ourselves and other people. Our internal environment does not match our pattern of existence. In other words we live in the same way that a fish would out of water - continually fighting our surroundings instead of merging and flowing with life.

Consider life as a jigsaw puzzle. If each piece of the puzzle fits and is in the right position, then the picture is complete and in balance. But if some pieces don't fit or if they belong to a different jigsaw puzzle, then there is no unity. It is the same with people in the world: when there is conflict with their outer surroundings, there is disharmony. Generally there are few changes that an individual can make to the external environment, and so the change to bring harmony must come from the internal environment, namely one's attitude to life and other people. When you peacefully coexist with your surroundings, and no longer separ-

ate yourself, then tension is removed: you begin to relax.

The factors that prevent man from fitting in with his surroundings are fear, hatred, dislike and jealousy, etc. These are accumulated since birth and cause a disruptive interaction with others. These remain mainly in the subconscious layers of the mind, but have an enormous influence on our daily life. Let us take a simple example. Perhaps one person is scared of the dark because as a young child he was accidentally locked up in a small, dark cupboard. The resulting fear continues into adulthood, so that now he is always afraid of the dark. Whenever he has to walk in the dark he becomes tense and fearful. This is only one example and perhaps an extreme one. Other people have inferiority complexes, others a fear of heights etc., all because of previous unpleasant experiences. Our minds are full of such fears and complexes, and these are the major cause of tension in our lives.

### **Physical manifestations of mental tension**

Normally the body's muscles are supplied with a continuous weak influx of nerve impulses from the brain. This is known as muscular tone and maintains the muscles in a healthy and prepared condition for instant action if required.

Every psycho-physiological disturbance every negative and destructive emotion causes conflict in the brain. This interferes with the normal tonic rhythm of the muscles and keeps them in an abnormally high state of tension. This over-activation of the muscles without the corresponding muscular activity results in a continual drain of energy from the body. This is like leaving the car lights on - after some time they drain all the power out of the battery. If you turn the lights off when they are not needed then the energy of the car battery will be conserved. It is the same with the muscles - if you turn off the tension in life then you can conserve your body energy.

Why does this drainage of energy through muscular contraction occur? The reason is simple. When you think something, the body automatically prepares itself to transfer the thought into action. The brain and body are two parts of the same unit; they are not separate. Take an example: after a hard and particularly tense day at work a man returns



home, feeling angry and looking for a way to relieve his frustrations. As a result he may become angry with the neighbour's dog for no apparent reason, but just as he begins to walk towards the dog to kick it, an inner order from the brain centres warns him that the dog will bite. This causes indecision and the muscles remain in a state of tension, ready for action. This kind of emotion, with or without translation into physical action, results in dissipation and wastage of energy. The result is chronic fatigue. For many people these emotional disturbances and their corresponding detrimental physical effects are almost a continuous part of life. People are continually feeling anger, fear, jealousy, etc., which makes them perpetually tense in mind and body and ultimately leads to disease, either physically or mentally or both.

There are further repercussions of this continuous muscular tension. The larger energy demands of the muscles require the circulatory, respiratory systems, etc. to work harder to maintain the higher supply of energy. The body operates in a higher gear. This increased demand on the body processes influences all the muscles controlling the inner organs - intestines, heart, lungs and blood vessels. The organs and the associated muscles are required to work harder and under extreme conditions for protracted lengths of time. This can eventually lead to their partial or total failure and this is when disease manifests itself. Initially the organs might work less efficiently and one's health will insidiously decline, perhaps so slowly that it cannot be noticed at first. This is inevitable, if one cannot fully relax oneself for some time during the day or night.

There are various other related outcomes of tension. For example, with emotional responses, adrenaline is automatically injected into the bloodstream from the adrenal glands. This subject has been widely discussed. It is an instinctive mechanism which prepares the body for maximum efficiency and readiness during emergencies. The adrenaline causes contraction of the muscles, constriction of blood vessels, increases the heart and respiratory rates, speeds up the thought processes and so on - all the things that are necessary to resist danger. As is to be expected, its continual presence in the bloodstream leads to con-

tinuous muscular general body and mental tension. It is impossible to relax with adrenaline being continually pumped into the blood.

This adrenaline response system is absolutely necessary, but only during emergencies. An example would be if a car suddenly and unexpectedly appeared around a blind corner where you were walking. It is the adrenaline which is almost instantly released into the blood, which makes you afraid and jump to the side of the road to avoid injury. But its use is only intended for emergency situations. In the fast modern world of today this emergency response system is abused, for most people view every situation in life as a crisis. They are continually on their guard, angry, fearful, hateful, etc. The adrenaline is pumped into the bloodstream almost as fast as it can be manufactured. How is it possible for them to relax?

There are further repercussions of tension. The whole endocrine system is forced to operate at a high level, to cope with the corresponding high level of body functioning. This eventually leads to organic malfunctioning and inefficiency, which in turn is the cause of many modern ailments - diabetes, sexual sterility, ulcers, strokes and so on.

Digestive ailments are generally caused by tension, whether it is indigestion or stomach ulcers. Tension interferes with the normal digestive functions, which in turn causes the ailment. Added to this is the fact that tension leads to hasty eating habits, which results in insufficient mastication and digestion, which in turn leads to overwork of the digestive organs and their eventual reduction in efficiency.

As a body becomes weaker through tension, it simultaneously becomes less and less able to face the onset of bacterial infection. When a body is strong and healthy, it has a very powerful autotherapeutic strength to resist bacteriological disease. This power is weakened in a body that is unhealthy or tension ridden. The body becomes a target for the onset of disease.

The body is like any other machine, even though it is infinitely more complex. If it is misused or made to work abnormally it starts to develop faults. These are in the form of arthritis, heart trouble, constipation, diabetes, asthma, etc. These ailments are so prevalent

today, even children of just a few years of age are starting to manifest disease symptoms.

Removal of most ailments, their prevention, a happy life and a flight into higher consciousness is impossible unless we can start to give our mind-body complex a rest. Easier said than done you might say. Well, to be permanently relaxed we agree takes time and effort. In fact, a very high state of permanent relaxation is a very advanced state of yoga called *sahaja samadhi* (spontaneous and natural equanimity) which automatically implies higher consciousness. But systematic relaxation for a few minutes when one feels tired can be easily carried out using the methods explained in this book. The tranquillity that you gain will give you a new, more relaxed platform from which to continue your daily life, even if this sense of well-being only lasts for a few hours.

#### **Mechanics of relaxation techniques**

How can we relax and learn to do it well? As is often the case, for the answer we have to look towards the animals; or to those humans less disturbed by the tumultuous world, namely our children. When a child sleeps it forgets all problems. When a child sleeps it really sleeps, if it plays then it really plays and when it works it works. There is full intensity in the activity at hand. Adults have the habit of mentally working when they sleep and play, and of sleepwalking when they work. So one basic rule of relaxation is to shut off thoughts on a conscious level about things that you have completed. Don't dwell or brood over problems. Your subconscious mind actually has great powers to solve problems without any need for the thought processes to be at a conscious level. When you have fed the necessary data into the mind about any particular topic, forget it. The mind will churn out the answer when it is required. Your conscious brooding on the problem in an effort to aid the process does not help. Have more trust in the capabilities of your mind.

Relaxation techniques start by taking your consciousness away from emotionally charged thoughts and directing it to activities that are emotionally neutral such as the awareness of your breath or different parts of your body. It is almost impossible for anyone to remain or to become tense and angry when their attention is directed towards their big toe. In this

way, relaxation techniques stop the ceaseless and futile cycle of brooding on problems. Simultaneously the muscles are consciously relaxed. Most people, however, may find this a difficult process. During yoga lessons people are told to relax, and though their bodies remain stiff and tense, they believe that they are fully relaxed. It is only when the teacher lifts their arm upwards, and the arm remains straight instead of being limp, that they realize just how stiff the muscles really were. Relaxation techniques require you to consciously order your muscles to relax. Over a period of time of practice it should become possible. It is absolutely normal with animals to be able to consciously command the muscles to let go. When an animal or child relaxes or sleeps, its muscles sink towards the floor, and where possible assume the same shape as the floor. This is a good indication that there is no undue muscular tension remaining.

When you immobilize your whole body, as you do in relaxation practices, and systematically relax different parts of the body, what exactly happens? Of course the muscles are relaxed, something they probably very much need to be. Since the muscles are not being used, both the sensory nerves, which send messages from the muscles to the brain and the motor nerves, which send messages of action from the brain to the muscles, cease to function. This cuts off your consciousness of the body. The more you are able to relax and not move the muscles, the less aware of your body you become. You feel light and euphoric because of this disconnection between mind and body. In deeper states of relaxation you will find that your mind seems to be completely detached from your body. This disconnection produces wonderful effects. The muscle cells, nerve cells, organ cells, blood vessels, etc. become totally relaxed and in this way are revitalized. And of course regions of the brain are given much needed rest from the continual influx of sensory data from the body and the outside world. Further, awareness of different parts of the body or the breath coaxes the mind away from normal patterns of worry or discontent. This has a wonderful calming influence on the mind. The amount of benefits gained from relaxation techniques is in direct proportion to the degree of mental awareness on the practice in hand. If you are not aware of

the mechanics of the practice then you will gain little or no results. But if you remain aware throughout the practice, then a few minutes relaxation in this way can be worth more, and be more refreshing than many hours sleep.

Many ailments are caused by inhibitions imposed on the body functions by the higher brain centres. By disconnecting your awareness from your body, the lower brain centres are allowed to carry out their duties without hindrance from the higher brain centres. The lower brain centres then start to restore equilibrium in the muscle body tone and endocrinal system. Further, your awareness on different parts of the body, or whatever, as prescribed by the practice, removes stress and fear. As such the adrenal glands stop injecting adrenaline into the blood system. This brings the body down to a lower level of activity. The whole body is allowed to rest from its continual stimulation.

All the previously mentioned factors interrelate with each other. A reduction in thoughts and worries reduces the adrenaline level in the blood. The reduction of adrenaline in the blood reduces the intensity of emotional and mental conflicts and so on. The overall result must be experienced to be believed: an indescribable feeling of freedom from mental turmoil. You must try it for yourself.

### **Mental programming**

Now we have a problem. You have experienced calmness and have rested your body by performing the prescribed relaxation technique. Yet ten minutes later you meet someone whom you intensely dislike. Your tranquillity and well-being immediately disappear. Adrenaline is released. You become your abnormal 'normal' self-depressed, angry, aggressive and uptight self. Your mind has been programmed to respond in that manner. You had no choice but to be angry when you happened to meet that person.

Your brain is a computer and it has been conditioned since birth. You responded in the way that you did because of your mental programming. You are at the mercy of the way that your mind has been conditioned to act. The root cause of your chronic tension lies in your emotional reactions to people and situations around you. And your reaction is determined by your conditioning. Is there no

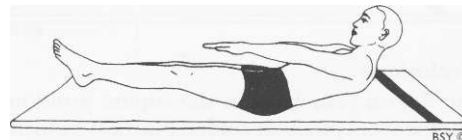
way out of this dilemma - anger, fear, etc? The answer is to change the program in your brain so that you don't respond in a negative way when you meet a particular situation. However this cannot be achieved overnight. But with patience it can be done. It is this subject that we intend to discuss in the next lesson<sup>1</sup>.

### **Practices for relaxation**

It may seem surprising, but the first step in attaining deep relaxation through asanas is to tense the whole body. It is only after applying muscular tension to the entire body that you can subsequently allow your whole body to relax. Think of when you did a particularly hard day's physical work. Do you remember how easy it was to lie down on the bed and rest or sleep? This assumes, of course, that you did not over-exercise your body to make it ache at the end of the day.

### **NAUKASANA (BOAT POSE)**

This is a very good asana for relaxing the muscles and joints of the body. It brings immediate relief to people suffering from nervousness and tension.



### **Technique**

Place a folded blanket or rug on the floor. Lie flat on the blanket facing upwards (supine). Rest your straight arms on the floor beside your body with palms facing downwards.

Breathe in deeply and retain the breath inside. Simultaneously raise your legs, arms and shoulders off the ground.

Ensure that the arms and legs remain straight. Point your arms towards your feet.

Try not to raise the feet or shoulders more than 15 cms from the ground.

Stretch and tense the whole body.

Feel that every muscle is tensed.

Don't strain, but try to hold this raised position for as long as possible, while retaining your breath.

Aim at eventually maintaining the raised position for at least a slow count of 10, though

at first a count of 2 or 3 is sufficient. Then allow yourself to slump back to the floor, but without letting your head strike the ground.

Let the body sink into the floor.

Slowly count from 1 to 60.

This completes 1 round.

Perform 3 rounds.

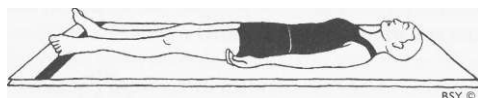
After completing 3 rounds of naukasana remain in the supine pose and relax in shavasana.

### **Simpler variation**

Naukasana requires great effort. Those people who find it impossible to raise their body should tense the whole body while remaining on the ground. However, this alternative is much less effective than the raised position.

### **SHAVASANA (CORPSE POSE)**

This asana is also known as mitrasana (the dead man's pose). In this topic we will consider only part 1 of shavasana<sup>2</sup>.



### **Technique**

Lie flat on your back in the supine position. Place a small pillow or folded blanket behind your head with the corners pulled under the shoulders; this ensures that your neck and shoulder muscles can relax. Don't use a thick pillow for this will tend to cause more tension by arching your neck upwards excessively. Rest the arms in line with and on each side of the body. Leave a little space between the arms and the side of the body.

The palms should face upwards and the hands should not be clenched.

The legs should be straight and slightly separated.

Close your eyes.

Try to feel the different parts of your body in contact with the floor. This is most important for it starts to develop your awareness of the different parts of the body.

Feel the contact between the floor and the buttocks. If you feel that the muscles of the buttocks are pulled together, release them.

Keep your attention on the pressure between the floor and the buttocks for a few seconds until you think that this area of the body is relaxed.

Now try to feel the contact between the ground and the right heel for a few seconds.

Repeat the same thing with the left heel.

Now- feel the contact between the floor and the right arm, right hand, left arm, left hand, middle of the back, each shoulder blade, the back of the head and finally the whole body;

spend a few seconds at each point of contact.

Next, try to feel that your whole right leg is very heavy and that it is sinking into the floor. If you cannot feel this heaviness, don't worry: a little practice is necessary in the beginning.

Feel the right leg become limp.

Repeat the same thing with the left leg. Feel the heaviness of the whole leg and that the leg is becoming limp and sinking into the floor. Do this for a few seconds.

In turn repeat the same thing with the right arm and the left arm.

If there is tension in your hands, perhaps your hands are partly clenched, release the muscular contraction.

Feel your shoulders slump into the pillow; remove the load from your shoulders.

Many people, because of tension, habitually hunch their shoulders. Let them sink into the pillow.

Now drop your lower jaw; let it sag, but keeping your mouth closed.

If you feel yourself frowning, try to release the muscular tension on your forehead.

Throughout the practice your worries or problems may keep appearing.

Tell these problems that they will receive your attention after a few minutes, but now you are practising shavasana. Don't suppress the thoughts if they occur; merely continue to direct your attention to the systematic relaxation of the different parts of the body in the way we have already explained.

If you have time repeat the same process again..

If you have managed to carry out these instructions in the way described, with awareness, then you should find that you have attained a wonderful relaxed state, physically and mentally.

When you finish the practice, gently move and clench your hands, move your feet and slowly open your eyes.

### **Awareness and duration**

This practice gives maximum benefits if your attention is totally involved in the practice. If you do shavasana without enthusiasm then it will not give the required results. A little mental effort is necessary, but without mental strain.

The duration of the practice should suit the time that is available; the longer the better. For normal purposes five or ten minutes is sufficient. Naukasana takes between three and four minutes, so in combination they take little time, especially in relation to the vast benefits that they can give.

### **Sequence**

Shavasana is ideally practised after naukasana, because while it creates the tension, shavasana releases it. Shavasana can and should be practised whenever you feel tired or tense. It is such a simple practice, yet it can bring wonderful results. It should also be performed after yoga exercises or asanas, and between the practices if you feel a little tired.

### **Movement and covering**

try not to move your body at all during the practice of shavasana. There is a very good reason for this: even the slightest movement will bring certain muscles into play. As such you are immediately creating muscular contraction, the very thing we are trying to eliminate.

Some people may find it uncomfortable to lie on the floor with only a pillow under their head. In this case pillows may also be placed under the knees, to take up the gap between the floor and the back of the knees, and under the small of the back in the region of the waist. The support of these extra cushions will help you to attain more relaxation. Don't lie on a soft bed or mattress as this will not allow you to distinguish whether you are relaxing the muscles or not. If the atmosphere is cold or if there are any small insects in the air, cover yourself with a large sheet or blanket. But the covering should not be too heavy.

### **Benefits**

Basically shavasana relaxes the whole physiological-psychological system. A relaxed mind allows you to see and relate to the world and the people around you in a more realistic light, carry out your work more smoothly and attain more happiness in life.

A tense mind automatically implies a tense body. From this combination result the majority of diseases which inflict mankind. Shavasana, by relaxing the mind-body complex, helps to relieve and prevent disease. Its benefits are inestimable. The reader should not believe us when we say how effective this practice is - you should try it and find out for yourself.

### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Book I, Lesson 2 Topic 7

<sup>2</sup> Book I, Lesson 2 Topic 8

## Daily Practice Program

The following programs are selected to give you maximum benefits for the time that is available. They are intended as rough guides only and the student must add or omit practices according to his preferences, capabilities and circumstances.

Practice of the full program is recommended for maximum benefits physically, mentally and spiritually, and will fully prepare you for future practices especially the advanced techniques of kriya yoga. However, those who don't have the time to do all the practices should try to do as many as they can and aim to eventually

achieve practice of the full program. If necessary the practices can be divided so that some are done in the morning and others in the evening, whenever time is available.

From our experience we recommend that the techniques contained in each lesson be thoroughly mastered before progressing on to the next set of practices. Generally this takes a minimum of fifteen days and on the average one month. This is very important and an essential prerequisite for the eventual success of your sadhana.

Practice	Rounds	Minutes
<b>Program 1:</b> duration 53 minutes		
Jala Neti	—	4
Goolf Ghoornan	10 clockwise	
	10 anticlockwise	2
ArdhaTitali Asana	50 each leg	3
Shroni Chakra	10 clockwise	
	10 anticlockwise	3
Utthanasana	10 rounds	3
Kawa Chalasana	—	3
Chakki Chalanasana	10 clockwise	
	10 anticlockwise	3
Gatyatmak Meru Vakrasana	20 rounds	3
Greeva Sanchalanasana	10 stage 1	1
	10 stage 2	1
	10 stage 3	3
Naukasana	3 rounds	4
Shavasana	—	10
Breathing	—	10
		53

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**Program 2:** duration 1/2 hour

Jala Neti	—	4
Ardha Titali Asana	35 each leg	2
Shroni Chakra	6 each way	2
Utthanasana	6 rounds	9
Kawa Chalasana	—	2
Gatyatmak Meru Vakrasana	15 rounds	2
Naukasana	3 rounds	4
Shavasana	—	7
Breathing	—	5
		<hr/> 30

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**Program 3:** duration 1/2 hour

Jala Neti	—	3
Ardha Titali Asana	35 each leg	2
Kawa Chalasana	—	2
Gatyatmak Meru Vakrasana	15 rounds	2
Naukasana	3 rounds	3
Breathing	—	3
		<hr/> 15

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