



PARAM YOGA

॥ a joyful yogshala ॥

TEACHER TRAINING COURSE PHYSICAL PRACTICES



PARAM YOGA

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FUNDAMENTALS

CORRECT BREATHING

The details of correct breathing have been elaborately described in an earlier chapter. A

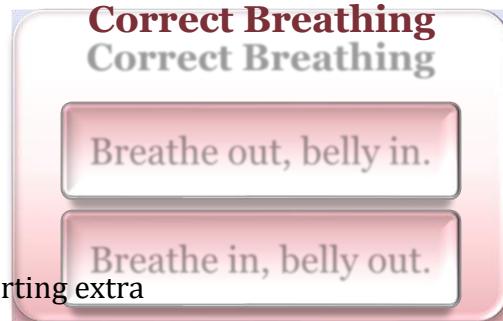
quick reminder will serve us well here.

Breathing should be

- Deep **Breathe out, belly in.**
- Rhythmic
- Smooth-flowing
- Not reverse **Breathe in, belly out.**

So, as you exhale, belly moves inwards, without exerting extra force.

As you inhale, belly moves outwards, without allowing belly to bloat out completely.



BACK-IMPRINTING/TAIL-BONE TUCKED DOWN

During all asana practice, or any physical activity, for that matter, the spine should not be curved excessively. Most of us suffer from an over-arched lower back and we need to correct this curvature that has potential to lead to lower back ache. To make sure, this arch doesn't get accentuated when we practice yoga or any other exercise, we have to make sure the lower back is elongated.

It is like wearing a natural belt around the lower back, except that this is made out of your own muscles. Most importantly, it gives the lower back, the much needed support. This is a matter of habit and you can get started as follows.

- Lie flat on your back. Bend your legs at the knees, your heels at a comfortable distance from the hips.
- As you exhale, pull the navel in and press your lower back towards the floor. This is what we call back-imprinting.
- This will slightly lift the tail bone away from the floor. This engages all the abdominal belt muscles.
- Breathe with your chest as you hold the position for 5-10 seconds • Inhale to relax.
- Repeat as many times as you can till the pelvic movement registers.
- Apply this as you sit, stand and work out. When you sit and stand, the back behaves as if it has imprinted it. However, because of the changed orientation from supine to straight back, the tail-bone is now tucked downwards, staying away from the lower back.

If you do not have an excessive lower back curvature, you still need to engage your abdominal muscles and tuck tailbone downwards gently.

POSTURAL ALIGNMENTS

	Standing	Sitting	Sleeping	Exercising
Knees <u>Angle at knee > 90°</u>	- Unlock - Feet alignments* - Squeeze thighs, pull up knee cap	<u>on floor:</u> - Avoid sitting cross-legged directly. - Sit with stool, bolster, cushion <u>on chair/while driving:</u> - Hip level above knee level - Feet rest comfortably on floor and not hang down - Don't cross leg over leg - Don't keep one leg under the other (automatic car)	<u>on back:</u> bolster below knee <u>on side:</u> angle at knee > 90°, should not curl up completely.	<u>Avoid:</u> vajrasan, veerasan <u>Lunges:</u> Knee below hip level (knee over ankle and knee pointing towards 2 nd and 3 rd toes is assumed)

*Feet alignments:

- Hip-width distance between inner edges of feet
- Outer edges of feet parallel to each other
- Equal weight between right and left foot
- Equal weight on three points of feet. That is, between
 - front and back of feet and outer and inner and outer edges of feet

	Standing	Sitting	Sleeping	Exercising
Lower Back	Feet alignments*		<u>on back</u> : Bolster below knee <u>on side</u> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - thick pillow between knees - lower leg straight; top knee bent and pushed forward bolster below top knee and thigh <u>on belly</u> : strictly avoid	<u>Avoid</u> : bhujang, shalabh (acute pain) <u>Forward bends</u> : knees bent <u>Backbends</u> : navel in and pelvic tilt <u>Sidebends</u> : Upper shoulder shouldn't come forward - even more important than normal
<u>Pelvic tilt</u>				
Upper Back	- Broad shoulders - Shoulders rolled back		<u>on back</u> : pillow height such that forehead and chin are parallel to floor <u>on side</u> : pillow height such that tail-bone, spine and neck are parallel to floor	<u>Avoid</u> : Inversions, plank, push-ups <u>Side-bends</u> : Upper shoulder shouldn't come forward - even more important than normal Neck in line with spine even more important than normal
<u>Head glide</u>				
<u>Lowered shoulders</u>				

SAFETY GUIDELINES

Listen to your body, breath and mind.

If there is anything you take away from this section of the book it should be this that if it doesn't feel good in body, breath and mind, it is not right for you at this moment. The same asana, the same time of day, the same room could still feel different. Usually, your breath is a good guide. If your breath is smooth, rhythmic and in your control, you are headed in the right direction. If your breath feels laboured and out of control, it is time to back off, slow down and go easy for a bit.

There are times when it is "mind over body" and you need to push yourself to hold one more second, one more breath. There are other times when it just doesn't feel right. As you get into the habit of keeping your mind with your practice, you will learn to tell the difference between the times you can push yourself and the times when pushing will do harm.

Beginners would do well to increase intensity and hold-time gradually over weeks of consistent practice.

Under no circumstance should you tolerate pain, tingling, or numbness.



SUKSHMA VYAYAMA

Micro Movements

SUKSHMA VYAYAMA

WHAT IS SUKSHMA VYAYAMA

Sukshma means subtle and can be translated here to mean micro. *Sukshma vyayama*,

Principles

developed by Maharshi Kartikeya and propagated by Dhirendra Bramhachari, are exercises that involve tiny and slow range of breaths movements to work on the inner muscles of the

Slow

Slow movements said joint.

Slow breaths

Slow movements

Concentration

While one can think of these exercises as warm- **Concentration** ups, but when done slowly and with focus and when coordinated with breath, *sukshama vyayama* has a far deeper and long-lasting impact. Slow breaths and slow movements keeps these exercises from becoming merely mechanical in nature.

The list of *sukshama vyayama* mentioned in this section are far from exhaustive. We have only discussed some of the more common ones.

BENEFITS

- Improves coordination because of the coordinated breath and movements.
- Tones the nerves, reducing stress.
- Increases blood circulation at the concerned joint.
- Facilitates flow of energy through the body, to ultimately awaken the *kundalini*.

Through all these practices remember to keep top of shoulders relaxed away from the ear unless otherwise mentioned.

All repetition counts are meant for beginners. You can increase counts as you progress in your practice.

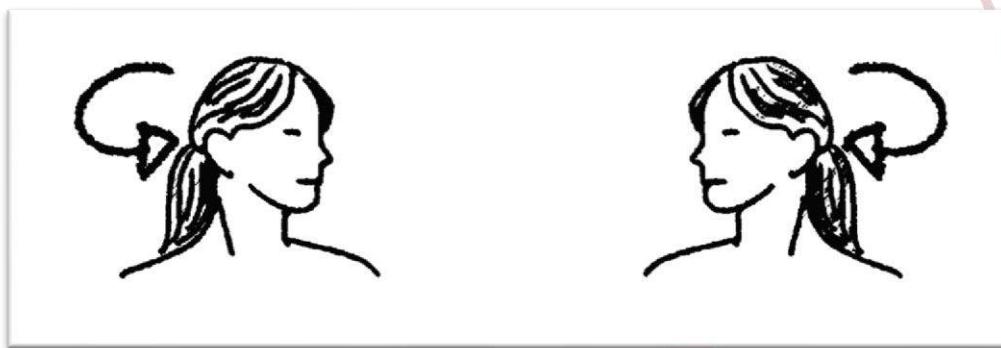
SIDE-TO-SIDE ROTATION

Starting position: Feet together, stand erect, relaxed neck

Steps:

1. Inhale.
2. As you exhale, gently turn your head towards your right, looking to your right side.
3. As you inhale gently lift your head up to the centre.
4. As you exhale, gently turn your head towards your left, looking to your left side.
5. As you inhale gently lift your head up to the centre.
6. As you exhale, gently turn your head back to the right side.
7. This makes for one round.

8. Repeat 10 times.



FRONT-TO-BACK STRETCH

Starting position: Feet together, stand erect, relaxed neck

Inhale.

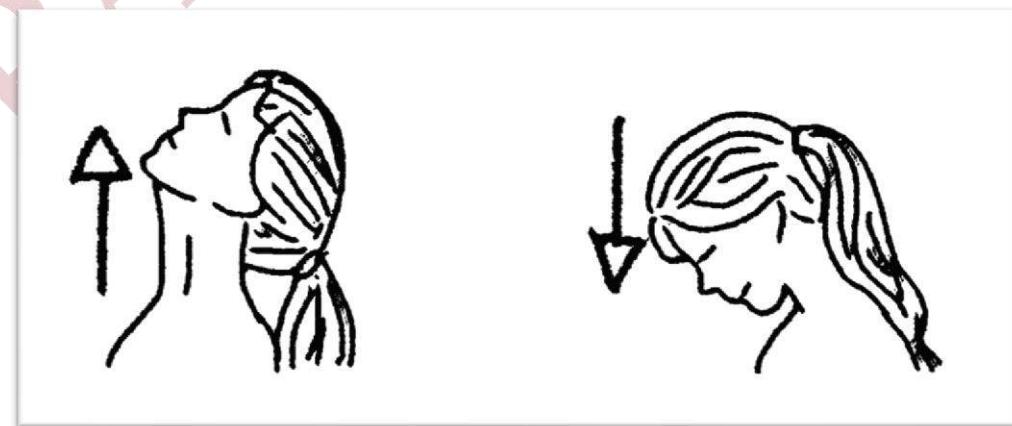
As you exhale, drop your head forward, taking your chin towards the chest, towards the sternal notch.

As you inhale, lift your head up and drop it back taking your chin away from the chest till the back of your head touches the nape of your neck.

As you inhale, lift your head up and drop it forward again.

This makes for one round.

Repeat 10 times.



Steps:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

SIDE-NECK STRETCH

Starting position: Feet together, stand erect, relaxed neck.

Steps:

1. Inhale.
2. As you exhale, gently stretch your head towards your right, bringing your right ear to the top of your right shoulder.
3. As you inhale gently lift your head up to the centre.
4. As you exhale, gently stretch your head towards your left, bringing your left ear to the top of your left shoulder.

NECK AND FACE SKIN STRETCH

Starting position: Feet together, stand erect, relaxed neck.

Exhale through the nose as if blowing out into bellows and make the veins of your

- Strengthens the neck
- Lengthens the cervical spine.
- Diseases peculiar to the throat, such as tonsilitis, laryngitis, pharyngitis etc. can be kept in check.
- Singers and orators find it helpful to maintain a healthy voice.
- Speech issues such as lisping and stammering can be worked upon.

SKANDA SHAKTI VIKASAKA: SHOULDER MOVEMENTS

SHOULDER SHRUGS

Starting position: Feet together, stand erect, relaxed neck .

Steps:

1. As you inhale, lift the top of your shoulders towards your ears, shrugging them (elevation).
2. As you exhale, drop shoulders away from the ears (depression).
3. Repeat 10 times.



5. As you inhale gently lift your head up to the centre.
6. As you exhale, gently stretch your head back to the right side.
7. This makes for one round.
8. Repeat 5 times.

Steps:

1. Inhale.
2.
 neck stand out. Pull your belly in.
3. As you inhale, let your belly bulge out.
4. This makes for one round.
5. Repeat 25 times.

Benefits

SHOULDER ROTATIONS

Starting position: Feet together, stand erect, relaxed neck.

Steps:

1. Bend your elbows and bring your finger tips to your shoulders.
2. Rotate the arms to bring the elbows forward, upward, backward and downward.
3. This makes one round.

4. Repeat 10 rounds
5. Repeat in the reverse directions.



BHUJA SHAKTI VISAKA: ARM MOVEMENTS

BHUJA VALLI SHAKTI VIKASAKA: ARM RAISES

Starting position: Feet together, stand erect, relaxed neck.

Steps:

1. As you inhale, and turn your right arm from the shoulder joint to face your palm outwards. Palms are open, with the fingers together.
2. Exhale
3. As you inhale, raise your right hand from the side, and bring it above your head.
4. As you exhale, bring the hand down.
5. Repeat 10 times
6. Repeat with your left arm.
7. Take both arms up and down together, coordinated with your breath. The arms don't touch the head nor each other.

PURNA BHUJA SHAKTI VIKASAKA: ARM SWINGS

Starting position: Feet together, stand erect, relaxed neck.

Steps:

1. As you exhale, clench the right palm into fists with the thumbs tucked in.
2. Exhale through the nose and hold your breath in.
3. With breath held in, swing your right arm in a circle as many times as you can.
4. When you cannot hold your breath any longer, stop with your arm bent at the elbow.
5. Breathe out forcefully while thrusting your arm forward at shoulder level.
6. Repeat with same arm in the opposite direction.
7. Repeat both directions with the left arm.
8. Repeat both directions with both hands together.

Benefits:

- Arms and hands become shapely.
- Entire length of the arms becomes stronger.

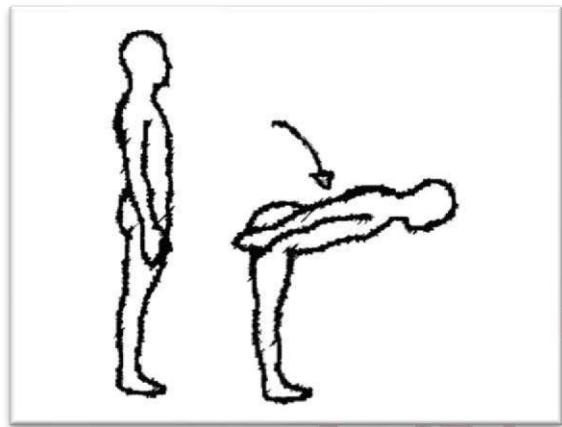
KATI SHAKTI VIKASAKA: WAIST MOVEMENTS

FORWARD AND BACK BENDS

Starting position: Feet together, stand erect, relaxed neck.

Steps:

1. As you exhale, fold forward till your torso is in line with your hips horizontally at 90°
2. Inhale, as you come up and bend backwards mildly.
3. This is one round.
4. Repeat five times.



WIDE-LEG FORWARD AND BACK BENDS

Starting position: Feet together, stand erect, relaxed neck.

Steps:

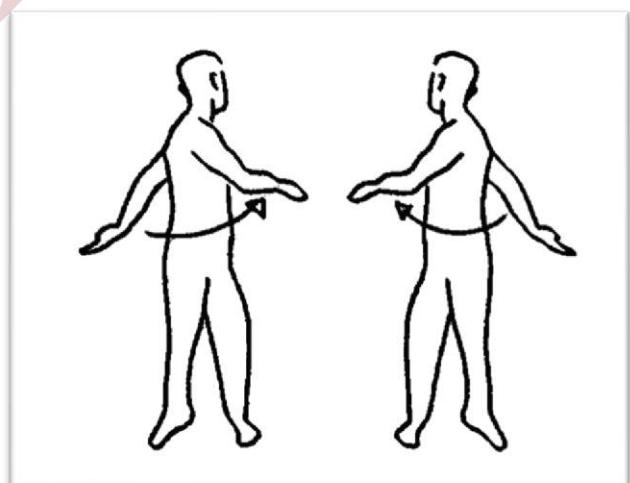
1. Stretch your legs apart as far as possible.
2. Place arms on hips, pointing the fingers behind, and the thumbs in front.
3. As you inhale, bend back from the waist as far as you can go.
4. This is one round.
5. Repeat ten times.

TRUNK TWISTS

Starting position: Feet together, stand erect, relaxed neck.

Steps:

1. As you exhale, twist from the waist towards your right side.
2. As you inhale, come back to the centre.
3. As you exhale, twist from the waist to the left.
4. As you inhale, come back to the centre.
5. This makes one round.
6. Repeat 5 times.



JANGHA SHAKTI VIKASAKA: THIGH MOVEMENTS

Benefits:

- Strengthens thighs and makes them shapely.
- Thin limbs acquire healthy flesh, while flabby ones get rid of the superfluous flesh.

SQUATS A

Starting position: Feet together, stand erect, relaxed neck.

Steps:

1. As you inhale, lift your arms up to shoulder in front of you, parallel to the floor.
3. As you inhale, bend your knees till your thighs are parallel to the floor. Keep knees together.
Make sure your heels and toes are on the floor.
Maintain this position for as long as you can.
As you inhale, come back to standing position.
Repeat 10 times.

Precautions:

Sensitive knees: Bend knees only till it is comfortable.

Sensitive lower back: Keep feet and knees apart.

SQUATS B

Starting position: Feet together, stand erect, relaxed neck.

As you inhale, lift your heels up, and spread your arms sideways.

Exhale.

As you inhale, take knees away from each other as you bend your knees but without sitting on your heels.

While in this position, hold your breath in for as long as you can.

As you exhale, slowly come back to standing position.

Repeat five times.

Precautions:

If you find it difficult to hold your breath, breathe normally till you are comfortable. Five times to begin with.

2. Exhale.

4.

5.

- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
-
-

Steps:

- 1.
- 2. 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

JANU SHAKTI VIKASAKA: KNEE MOVEMENTS

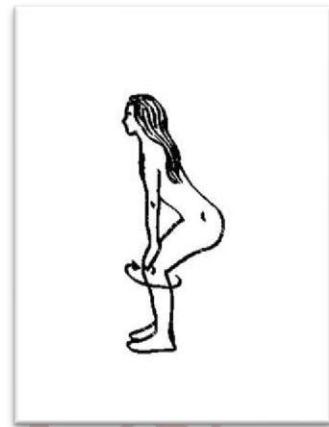
KNEE ROTATIONS

KNEE ROTATIONS

Starting position: Feet together, stand erect, relaxed neck.

Steps:

1. Bend your knees, pushing your hips behind, tucking your tailbone down.
2. Place your palms just above your knees.
3. Move your knees in clock-wise circles.
 - o Inhale for the first half of the circle and exhale for the second half of the circle.
4. Repeat 5 times.
5. Repeat in reverse direction.



KNEE KICKS

Starting position: Feet together, stand erect, relaxed neck.

Steps:

1. As you inhale and keep your upper body erect, raise your right foot forward with a jerk of the knee and push it backward to have the heel touch the buttock.
2. Repeat 10 times.
3. Repeat on the other side.

Benefits:

- Improves the circulation of blood in the knee region.
- Helps with rheumatic condition of the knees.
- Particularly efficacious for football players.

Precautions:

- Sensitive knees: Reduce the intensity of the jerk.

PADANGULI SHAKTI VIKASAKA: TOES AND ANKLE MOVEMENTS

PADA-MULA SHAKTI VIKASAKA A: HEEL LIFTS

PADA-MULA SHAKTI VIKASAKA A: HEEL LIFTS

Starting position:
Feet together, stand erect, relaxed neck.

Steps:

1. As you inhale, lift your heels up to stand on your toes.
2. As you exhale, bring body down to standing position.
3. Repeat 25 times, raising and lowering your body in a spring-like motion.

PADA-MULA SHAKTI VIKASAKA B: LIGHT JUMPS

Starting position: Feet together, stand erect, relaxed neck.

Steps:

1. Make sure your core and things are engaged.
2. Balancing on the toes, jump up as high as you can, coming down on the toes.
3. Make sure your jumps are light.
4. Use toes to the maximum.
5. Try to jump down on the same spot from which you jumped.
6. Repeat 25 times.

Benefits:

- Strengthens calves and brings symmetry.
- Strengthens soles of feet • Helps with rheumatic conditions.

Precautions:

- Sensitive knees: Just lift and lower heels instead of jumping.

GULPHA-PADA PRISTHA-PADATALA SHAKTI VIKASAKA: TOE CIRCLES

Starting position: Feet together, stand erect, relaxed neck.

Steps:

1. Stretching one foot forward and hold it about 9 inches off the ground.
2. Make a circle with your ankle from right to left.
3. Repeat 10 times.
4. Make a circle with your ankle from left to right.
5. Repeat 10 times.
6. Repeat with the other foot.

Benefits:

- Strengthens toes and feet.
- Helps with rheumatism of the ankles.



STHOOLA VYAYAMA

Macro Movements

WHAT IS STHOOLA VYAYAMA

Sthoola means gross as opposed to subtle and can be translated here to mean macro. *Sthoola vyayama* typically involves two or more joints and is intended to increase the heart rate. They can be thought of as cardio exercises.

BENEFITS

- Reduces stress.
- Manages weight issues.
- Improves and maintains spine flexibility. • Alleviates digestive disorders.

SARVANGA PUSHTI: TRUNK CIRCLES

Starting position: Feet together, stand erect, relaxed neck.

Steps:

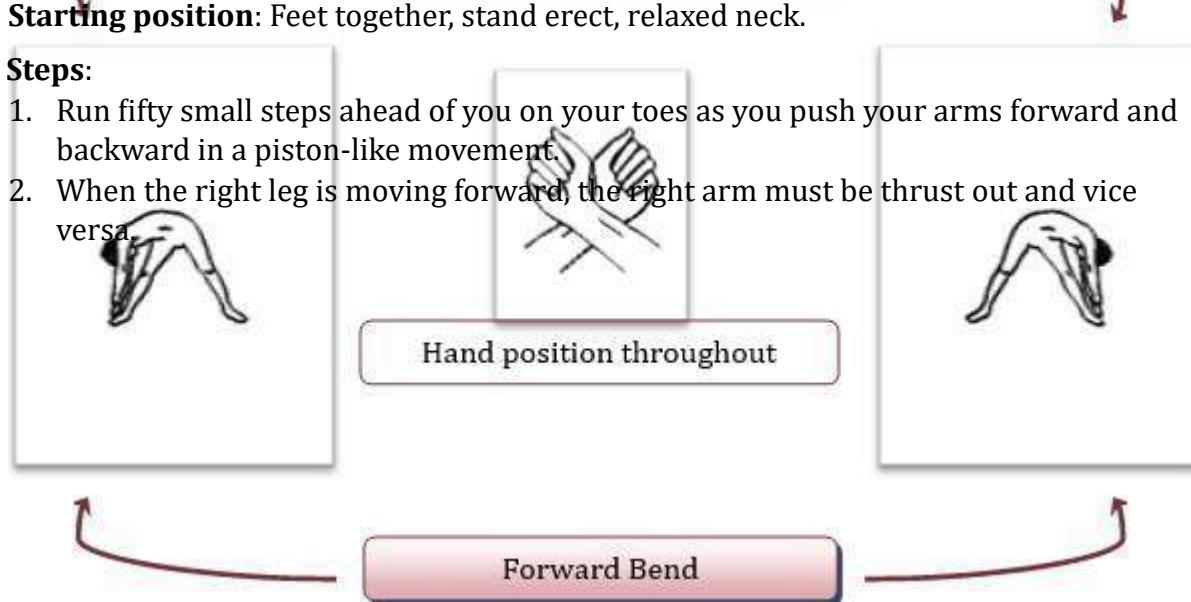
1. Stretch feet as wide apart as possible 2. Form fists with the thumbs tucked in.
3. Place one wrist upon the other.
4. As you inhale, take arms up together and mildly bend backwards.
5. As you exhale bend towards right ankle and in a forward bend to the centre.
6. Continuing the exhalation, go towards the left ankle.
7. As you inhale. Start lifting trunk with arms up a mild backbend
8. As you exhale, bring hands in front
9. Repeat on other side.
10. This makes one round.
- The body becomes supple and strong.
11. Repeat twice.
- Helps release stiff backs.

HRID GATI: LOCOMOTIVE EXERCISE OR ENGINE DAUD

Starting position: Feet together, stand erect, relaxed neck.

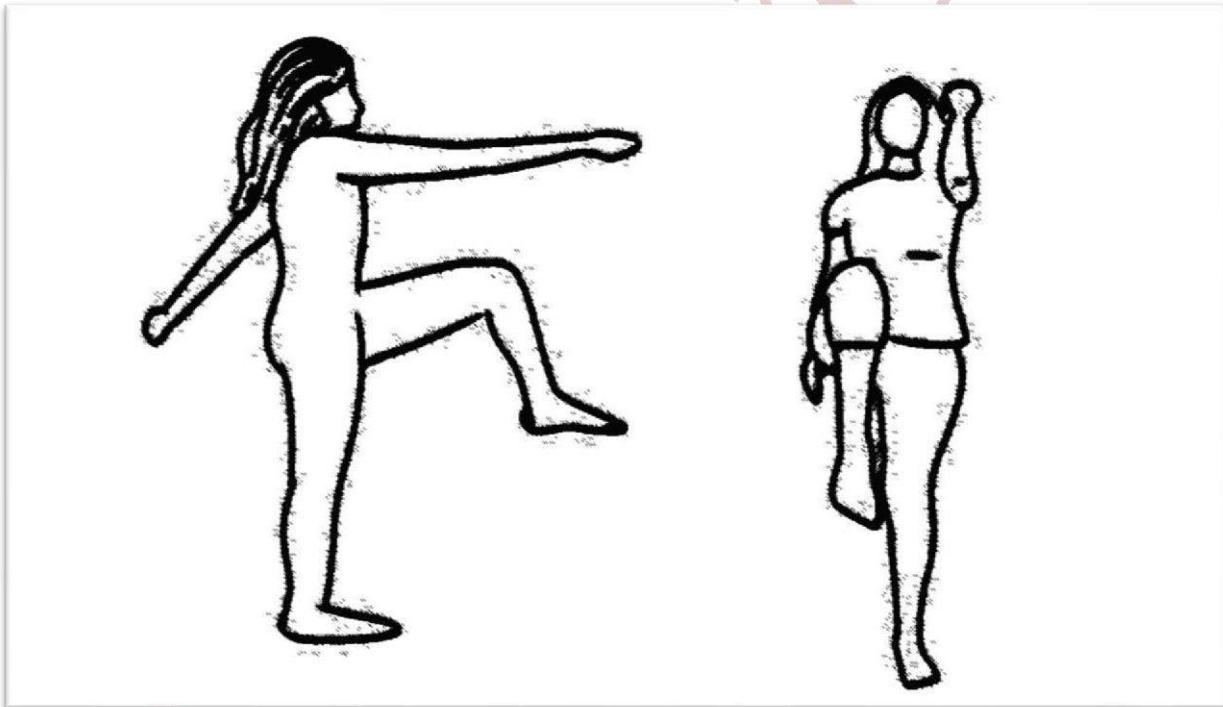
Steps:

1. Run fifty small steps ahead of you on your toes as you push your arms forward and backward in a piston-like movement.
2. When the right leg is moving forward, the right arm must be thrust out and vice versa.



Strengthens and tones muscles, strengthening entire body.

3. The feet, while running, must be thrown back from the knee so as to hit the buttocks.
4. Breathing in and out sharply and deeply through the nose producing the hissing sound of an engine.
5. After going forward 50 steps, move backward the same distance with the same movement.
6. While going backwards, make sure that elbows do not go beyond the level of the body.
7. Repeat for five minutes.



Benefits:

- Re-vitalises the entire body.
 - The chest expands.
 - Strengthens thighs and calves.
- Loss of extra fat while thin persons will find their limbs acquire flesh.
- Recommended for those in the army or in the police force or those interested in athletics, particularly running.

ASANAS

COMMON ALIGNMENTS

Unless otherwise specified:

- Head:
 - centred
 - in line with neck

- chin parallel to floor
- Neck:
 - in line with spine
 -
- Shoulders:
 - squared
 - in one plane
 - balls of shoulders rolled back to broaden chest
 - lowered away from ears
- Spine: on top of tailbone
- Hips:
 - squared
 - equal weight on both sides
 - gently squeezed
- Thighs:
 - gently squeezed, to pull kneecaps up
- Knees:
 - kneecaps pulled up
 - neither falling inward nor outward (as if holding a brick in between thighs)
 - on top of ankles
- Feet:
 - Hip-width distance between inner edges
 - Outer edges parallel
 - Equal weight between
 - left and right foot
 - toe mounds and heels of each foot
 - outer and inner edges of each foot

These alignments are repeated in the specific asanas only if the normal tendency in the particular asana is to go against the said alignment.

COMMON BENEFITS

ALMOST ALL POSTURES

- Strengthens spinal muscles and improves flexibility.
- When done right, bring calm and peace to the mind.

FORWARD-BENDS

- Relaxes the neck muscles.

sides long

- Makes mental submission to the pose easier, thus bring focus inward more easily.
- Stretch back muscles.
- Stretch hamstrings.
- Strengthen quadriceps.

SIDE-BENDS

- Stretch the sides of the torso, the latissimus dorsi muscles.
- When done right, contracts and strengthens the other side of the torso.

BACK-BENDS

- Opens chest,
- Strengthens back muscles.

TWISTS

- Squeeze and release the abdominal muscles improving functioning.

HIP-OPENERS

- Opens groin area increasing flexibility of inner thigh muscles.

BALANCING POSTURES

- Improves sense of balance.
- Helps make both sides of body to the same levels of strength and flexibility.

INVERSIONS

- Helps see the world from a different perspective.
- Uses core.

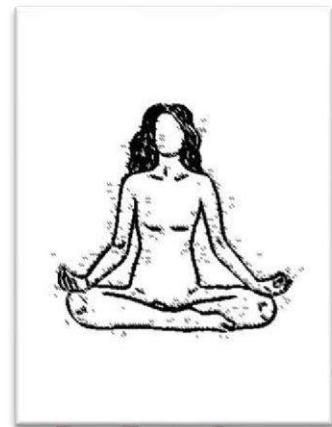
2. SUKHASANA (सुखासन)

Asana category: Seated, hip-opener

English name: Easy pose

ALIGNMENTS

1. Hips: equal weight on both sides.
2. Spine: Stacked over tailbone.
3. Neck: Stacked over spine.
4. Head: Over neck, not leaning forward or behind.



STEPS

1. A normal cross-legged seating posture.
2. If you are habituated to keeping the same leg forward whenever you are seated in *sukhasana*, make a conscious effort to keep the other leg forward.

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Sensitive knees:
 - Widen the angle at the knees to more than 90° or
 - Sit on a stool or chair
- Sensitive lower back: sit on a cushion or on a stool or chair.

BENEFITS

- Stabilises posture.
- An easy meditative pose.
- Alternate to padmasana.

2. PADMASANA (पद्मासन)

Asana category: Seated, hip-opener

English name: Lotus pose

ALIGNMENTS

1. Hips: equal weight on both sides.
2. Spine: Stacked over tailbone.
3. Neck: Stacked over spine.
4. Head: Over neck, not leaning forward or behind.



STEPS

1. Starting posture: *dandasana*.
2. Lift right leg up in palms.
3. Place outer edge of right foot in the groove between the left thigh and abdomen.
4. Place outer edge of left foot in the groove between the right thigh and abdomen.
5. To release:
 - let go of top leg and then bottom leg.
 - Shake legs about
6. Repeat with left leg first.

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Sukhasana
- Sensitive knees:
 - One leg in *padmasana* and other in *sukhasana*
 - Avoid the posture if the above causes knee pain.
- Sensitive lower back: Sit on a cushion or stool.

BENEFITS

- Stabilises spinal posture.
- Considered the best post for meditation because it allows for free flow of prana.

TTC LEVEL 1

3. VĀTRĀSANA (वात्रासन)

Asana category: Seated

English name: Thunderbolt pose

ALIGNMENTS

1. Knees: together.
2. Hips: equal weight on both sides.
3. Spine: Stacked over tailbone.
4. Neck: Stacked over spine.
5. Head: Over neck, not leaning forward or behind.



STEPS

1. Starting posture: Stand on knees, with knees at hip width distance.
2. Bring toes together, keep heels apart making a V out of the feet.
3. Place hips between heels.
4. Rest palms on thighs.
5. To release, bring legs forward one by one.

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Sensitive knees:
 - Place a cushion or a rolled napkin behind the knees, in the wedge formed by the thighs and the calves.
 - Avoid the posture if knee hurts
- Sensitive ankle:
Place cushion below ankles. If sensitive knees too, keep more distance between thighs and calves.

BENEFITS

- Stabilises posture.
- Easy on the lower back.
- Improves digestion.

Asana category: Seated, hip-opener

English name: Butterfly pose

ALIGNMENTS

1. Hips: equal weight on both sides.
2. Spine: Stacked over tailbone.
3. Neck: Stacked over spine.
4. Head: Over neck, not leaning forward or behind.



STEPS

1. Starting posture: Dandasana or sukhasana.
2. Bring soles of feet together.
3. The heels can be close to groin or away, depending on the part of the thigh and hips being worked upon.
4. Exhale: Let the thighs go down. Initiate movement from thighs, not knees
5. Inhale: Lengthen spine.
6. To release: support knees with palms and bring them together.
7. To release, stretch legs back to starting posture.

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Sensitive knees:
 - Support the knees with blocks or rolled towels.
 - Reduce the angle at the knee only to the extent that is pain-free.
- Sensitive lower back: Sit on a cushion or stool.

BENEFITS

- Works on contracting outer hips and stretching inner thighs.
- Relieves menstrual pain.
- Forward-bend variation is a gentle warm-up for hip-opening practices.
- Supine variation is a relaxing cooling down posture.

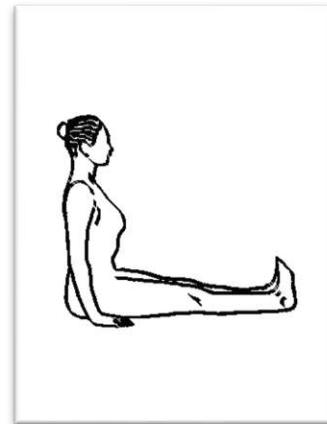
Asana category: Seated

English name: Staff pose

TTC LEVEL 1

ALIGNMENTS

1. Sitting bones and tailbone: Equal weight on both sides.
2. Tailbone: tucked down.
1. Thighs knees, ankles and feet: together.
2. Thighs: pulled towards abdomen.
3. Centre of heels: rested on floor.
4. Soles: spread out.
5. Chest, waist, spine: lifted.
6. Torso: neither leaning forward nor behind.
7. Head, neck, spine: in one line.
8. Shoulders: lowered, drawn back, and squared.
9. Palms: on floor, beside hips.
10. Fingers: pointing forward.



STEPS

1. Sit on mat with legs extended in front at hip-width distance.
2. Use hands and move the flesh under buttocks to the side to feel the sitting bones.
3. Push inner heel and big toe mound away from body and pull toes towards body.
4. Press inner edges of entire legs on floor.
5. Pull thighs towards abdomen to lift kneecaps, while calves are pressed on floor.
6. Lengthen spine by pressing palms on floor.
7. Keep shoulders wide, chest lifted and torso long.
8. Glide head in to bring chin parallel to the floor.
9. Every inhalation, broaden chest.
10. Every exhalation, pull navel in and lengthen spine.

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Beginners/inflexible practitioners: if back rounds, sit on a cushion.
- Sensitive lower back or knees: roll blanket/towel(s) under knees.
- Sensitive lower back: increase distance between feet.

BENEFITS

- Tones and strengthens the abdominal, chest and leg muscles.
- Lifts sagging abdominal walls.
- Lengthens leg ligaments.
- Relieves congestion in asthmatics.

Base posture for most sitting postures.

Asana category: Seated, Twist

English name: Simple spinal twist pose

ALIGNMENTS

1. Sitting bones: body weight equally distributed – 2.

Extended leg:

- toes and knee: pointed to ceiling
- thigh: grounded

3. Bent leg:

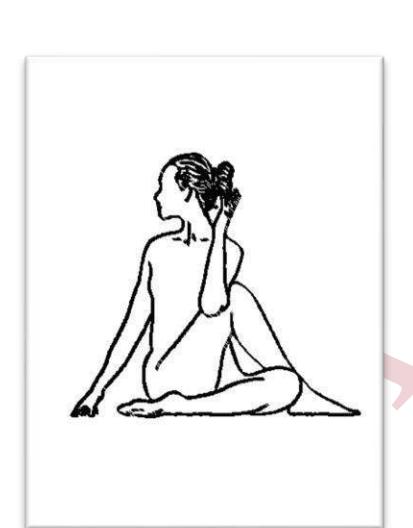
- knee: pointed to ceiling
- foot: close to inner knee of extended leg

4. Shoulders:

- lowered, drawn back, and squared
- perpendicular to hips
- collar bones separated away from each other
- shoulder blades: pushed in towards spine
- avoid leaning on the palm behind

5. Navel: drawn in gently; Tailbone: tucked down

6. Twist initiated from waist



STEPS

1. Start in posture: *dandasana* (दण्डासन)

2. Fold right leg, bring right foot close to left inner knee.

3. Point right knees, left toes to the ceiling.

4. Engage the left thigh and keep foot from dropping on the side.

5. Inhale, raise left hand to the ceiling.

6. Exhale, initiate the twist from the waist and bring left elbow outside right knee.

7. Inhale, raise right hand to ceiling.

8. Exhale, twist torso to the right, placing right palm behind the right hip.

9. Every inhalation, broaden chest.

10. Every exhalation, deepen the twist by using left elbow as an anchor against knee
○ turn mid-rif, chest, shoulders in that order.

- turn neck only after twist is complete, keeping shoulders relaxed.

11. If steady, wrap right palm around the waist from behind. 12. To release,

- exhale and slowly unwind the twist bringing torso back to centre.

- release hands and bring legs back to *dandasana*.

○ Repeat on other side.

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS: PRECAUTIONS:

- If sitting bones lift off floor, place blanket/cushion under the buttock that is sinking.

TTC LEVEL 1

- Sensitive knees: slightly increase the distance between bent leg's foot and hips.
- Sensitive cervical area: avoid turning neck to look behind.

BENEFITS

- Increases flexibility of the back and torso. Rotates spine effectively.
- Massages and tones abdominal organs. Preparatory pose for advanced twists.

Asana category: Seated, Hip-opener

English name: Cow face pose

ALIGNMENTS

1. Knees: lined on top of each other, facing the front.
2. Heels: close to opposite side's outer hips.
3. Hands: in contact with spine.
4. Shoulders: lowered, drawn back, and squared.
5. Top hand:
 - elbow pointing up and behind head,
 - side of head pressing against arm's inner side.
6. Bottom hand:
 - elbow point down,
 - arm drawn closer to spine.
7. Back, spine: erect, without arching lower back.
8. Head, neck: in line with spine.

STEPS

1. Starting posture: *dandasana* (दण्डासन) 2.
Fold right leg to bring heel close to left hip.
3. Fold left leg over right leg.
4. Bring left heel close to the right hip.
5. Press heels down, lift hips up and bring sitting bones down.
6. Raise right hand at shoulder level
 - palm facing up, and
 - thumb pointing behind.
7. Fold right hand to point the elbow to the ceiling.
8. Draw the inner arm close to the ear.
9. Place the palm on the upper back between the shoulder blades.
10. Raise left hand at shoulder level, palm facing down, thumb pointing in front.
11. Internally rotate left arm at shoulder joint to have
 - palm facing behind, and
 - thumb pointing down.
12. Fold left hand to point elbow down.

13. Draw arm as close to the spine as possible.
14. Clasp both sets of fingers together.
15. Inhale, broaden chest, roll balls of shoulders behind to make the clasp firmer.

16. Exhale, draw navel in, straighten head-neck-spine without arching lower back.
17. To release, let go of lower hand, upper hand, upper leg, lower leg in that order, and come back to *dandasana*.
18. Repeat on the other side.

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

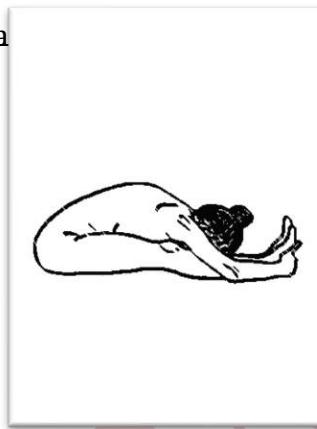
ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Beginners/inflexible practitioners: use belt/napkin to bridge gap between hands.
- **Asana Category:** Seated, Forward-bend
- **Contraindications:** Severe cervical, shoulder or knee problems.
- **English name:** Seated forward bend pose

BENEFITS ALIGNMENTS

- Stretches the ankles, hips, thighs, shoulders, triceps, and a

1. Toes: facing the ceiling.
2. Kneecaps: pulled up.
3. Back of legs: grounded.
4. Navel: drawn in
5. Tailbone: tucked down.
6. Torso: as close to the legs as possible.
7. Chest: expanded.
8. Shoulders: lowered, drawn back, and squared.
9. Elbows: bent.
10. Crown of head: going towards feet.



STEPS

1. Starting posture: *dandasana*
2. Inhale and raise hands up to bring arms behind ears.
3. Engage thighs to pull kneecaps up.
4. Keep calves grounded.
5. Push inner heel and big toe mound away from body and pull toes towards body.
6. Lengthen the spine and sides of the torso.
7. Exhale, fold forward at the hip joint, leading with the chin and chest.
8. Maintain a concave back.
9. Hold leg wherever palms reach on the legs, trying to reach the feet.
10. Every inhalation, lower shoulders and lift elbows to shoulder level to broaden chest.
11. Every exhalation, pull navel in and push torso forward without arching lower back.
12. Bring nose close to legs and crown of head towards the feet, while neck is elongated.
13. To release, inhale and

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- slowly walk hands up on the leg,
- lift torso up vertebra by vertebra to come back to *dandasana*. **ALTERNATIVE AND**

PRECAUTIONS:

- Beginners / inflexible practitioners: sit on a cushion/block to elongate spine. •
Sensitive lower back and knees:
 - bend knees slightly,
 - roll blanket/towel(s) under knees,
 - increase distance between feet.
- Contraindication: severe back problems

BENEFITS

- Stretches the hamstrings and spine.
- Tones the abdominal organs.

Asana category: Seated, Hip-opener

English name: Frog pose

ALIGNMENTS

1. **Buttocks:** on heels.
2. Toes: pointing behind.
3. Knees and thighs: together.
4. Navel: drawn in.
5. Tailbone: tucked down.
6. Shoulders: lowered, drawn back, and squared.
7. Forehead: touching the floor/prop.



STEPS

1. Starting posture: *dandasana*.
2. Fold knees, bring lower legs under thighs.
3. Place buttocks on heels.
4. Align the torso with the hips, keeping spine erect.
5. Make fists of the palms.
6. Exhale, place fists on either side of the navel.
7. Inhale, lengthen spine.
8. Exhale, fold forward at hip joint, leading with chin and chest, keeping buttocks on heels.
9. Every inhalation, broaden chest.
10. Every exhalation, draw navel in, bring forehead closer to floor, buttocks firmly on heels.

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

11. To release, inhale lift torso up, release fists and bring legs forward to *dandasana*.

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Beginners / inflexible practitioners: If buttocks lift up when forehead touches floor, then place cushion/block under the forehead.
- Sensitive knees: place cushion between back of thighs and calves.
- Sensitive lower back: place cushion/block under forehead to reduce the forward bend.
- Inflexible ankles: place cushion under ankles.
- Contraindications: Pregnancy, menstruation, recent abdominal surgery, severe knee problems.

BENEFITS

- Stretches ankles and thighs.
- Stimulates pancreas to produce insulin hormone.
- Flattens stomach.
- Burns extra fat from thighs, stomach and hips.
- Reduces menstrual cramps (practice when not menstruating).
- Strengthens back muscles.
- Relieves constipation and flatulence.

Asana category: Seated

English name: Extended frog pose

ALIGNMENTS

1. Torso: on top of hips
2. Shoulders: Squared



STEPS

1. Starting posture: *Vajrasana*.
2. Take knees away from each other, while toes remain together.
3. Raise your right arm, fold it at the elbow.
4. Place the palm below the left shoulder on the left shoulder blade.
5. Fold the left arm and place the palm on the right shoulder blade.
6. To release, slowly remove the left arm and then right arm; bring the knees together back to *vajrasana*.

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Sensitive knees and ankles: same as for *vajrasana*.
- Sensitive shoulders: practice without lifting hands up.
- Contraindications: Arthritis, hernia, and back problems, pregnancy and menstruation, pain in the elbow, severe pain in the shoulders, knees or ankles.

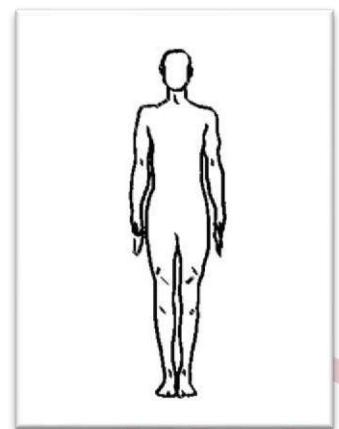
BENEFITS

- Stretches back muscles relieving stiffness.
- Stretches the diaphragm and lungs to facilitate breathing.
- Relieves stiffness in shoulder from sitting at computer for long hours.

Asana category: Standing
English name: Mountain Pose

ALIGNMENTS

1. Toes in, heels out.
2. Ankles, knees, hips stacked over each other.
3. Sternum lifted up, without arch in lower back



STEPS

1. Toes in, heels out, inner and outer edges of feet pressed on mat.
2. Knee caps pulled up by engaging thighs.
3. Glutes lightly squeezed.
4. Navel drawn in towards spine, by half an inch.
5. Tail-bone tucked in by engaging lower abs.
6. Sternum lifted up to lengthen sides of torso, without arching lower back.
7. Chin gliding in to bring
 - neck in line with upper back,
 - chin parallel to floor.
8. Top of shoulders pulled away from ears, and balls of shoulders pushed back.
9. Hands straight at elbows, fingers straight.
10. Equal weight on both feet.
11. Free-flowing breath should be normal.

BENEFITS

- Activates major muscles like thighs, glutes, core thus reducing weight on the joints and slowing down their wear and tear.
- Builds awareness of correct posture.
- Aligns all the joints in their proper positions restoring muscle balance.

Base posture for all standing postures.

Asana category: Standing, Side-bend

English name: Half-waist wheel pose

ALIGNMENTS

Tadasana alignments, plus

1. Hips: squared, bent side pulled to body's mid-line.
2. Shoulders: squared, top shoulder pushed back.
3. Top arm: over ear, fingers pointing to ceiling.
4. Bottom arm: pointing to floor.
5. Chest: broad, lifted up, without arched lower back



STEPS

1. Starting posture: *tadasana*.
2. Rotate right arm outward, turning palm to face the right side.
3. Inhale, raise right arm to ceiling to reach right ear.
4. Place right arm behind right ear, if possible.
5. Lower shoulders away from ears.
6. Tuck tailbone down.
7. Exhale, moving from the hip joint, bend to left:
 - Engage right outer hip to keep it from jetting out or coming forward,
 - Turn torso towards ceiling to keep right shoulder from falling forward,
 - Engage left side of torso to keep it from sinking.
8. Right fingers point to the ceiling.
9. Press right outer foot down.
10. Slightly tuck chin in to align neck with spine.
11. Equally distribute body weight on both feet.
12. Every inhalation, expand chest and keep torso from falling forward.
13. Every exhalation, breathe into the stretch on right side.
14. To release: gently lift torso back up, and bring hand down back to *tadasana*.
15. Repeat on other side.

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS

- Sensitive shoulder: keep top hand down.

BENEFITS

- Stretches arms and sides of the body.
- Prepares body for side bending postures.

Half Moon Pose (Ardha Chandrasana)

Asana category: Standing, Back-bend

English name: Half wheel pose

ALIGNMENTS

Tadasana alignments, plus

1. Neck: in line with spine.
2. Lower back: on top of hips, not pushed forward



STEPS

1. Starting posture: *tadasana*.
2. Inhale, lift arms up, palms facing each other.
3. Try to take arms behind ears.
4. Tuck tailbone down.
5. Slightly tuck chin in to align neck with spine.
6. Equally distribute body weight on both feet.
7. Every inhalation, expand chest.
8. Every exhalation, tuck tailbone down.
9. To release: gently lift torso back up, and bring hands down back to *tadasana*.

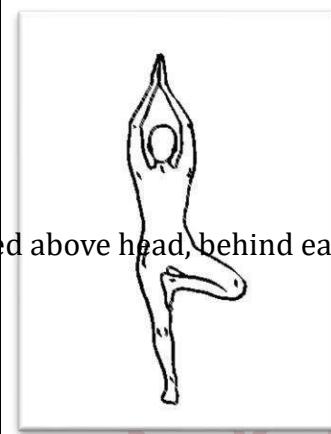
BENEFITS

- Stretches arms and sides of the body.
- Prepares body for back-bending postures.

Asana category: Standing, Balancing, Hip-opener
English name: Tree pose

ALIGNMENTS

1. Standing leg: *tadasana* alignments.
2. Floating leg:
 - heel: at top of standing leg's inner thigh,
 - toes: pointing down, ◦
 - knee: pointing to the side.
3. Hips: squared.
4. Torso: lifted up, without arching lower back
5. Arms: lifted above head, behind ears.
6. Palms: in *namaskara* (नमस्काश्मी).
7. Tailbone: tucked in.



STEPS

1. Starting posture: *tadasana*.
2. Fan toes out, place foot firmly down to make a strong base.
3. Shift body weight slightly to the left leg, lift right heel up.
4. Rotate right leg outward from hip joint to open right groin to the maximum.
5. Bend right knee, reach with right hand to hold right ankle.
6. Lift right foot up, place right heel at the root of the left thigh, at left side of groin.
7. Point toes to floor.
8. Tuck tailbone in.
9. Engage abdominal muscles.
10. Firmly press right foot against left inner thigh and resist with left inner thigh.
11. Fix gaze on a steady point at eye level.
12. Lower shoulders and raise arms to ceiling parallel to each other:
 - palms facing each other, or
 - touch palms together into a namaste.
13. Every inhalation, expand chest.
14. Every exhalation, stretch sides.
15. To release, lower hands, and step down back to *tadasana*.
16. Repeat on other side.

ALTERNATIVES AND PRECAUTIONS:

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Sensitive shoulders or beginners: place palms either
 - on waist to balance better
 - in front of chest in *namaskara*.
- Beginners: use wall support without leaning on it with either
 - back against wall, or
 - standing leg side by the wall, placing finger tips on wall
- Contraindication: headache, insomnia, low blood pressure

BENEFITS

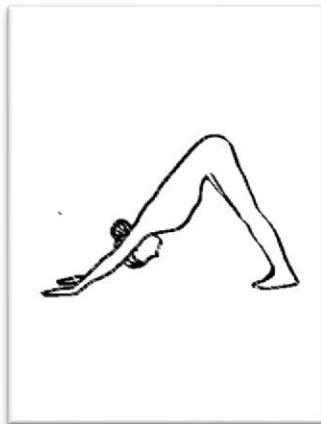
- Strengthens thighs, calves, ankles, and spine.
- Stretches inner thighs, chest and shoulders.
- Gradually develops arch of flat feet.

Asana category: Standing, Forward-Bend

English name: Downward-facing dog

ALIGNMENTS

1. Feet: hip-width apart
 - o outer edges parallel to each other
 - o heels attempting to press floor
2. Palms and feet: aligned vertically
3. Palms: shoulder-width apart
 - o entire palm pressing on floor, especially, index finger and thumb mounds
4. Shoulders: square, in line with each other
 - o pulled away from ears
 - o chest wide
5. Head and neck: in line with spine
6. Spine: straight pushing tailbone upwards
7. Tail-bone: tucked in



STEPS

1. Starting posture: Animal pose: palms below shoulders, knees below hips.
2. Spread all fingers out distributing weight equally over entire palms.
3. Press palms on mat, and lift knees off mat.
4. Push hips towards ceiling, while tailbone is tucked down.
5. Try to straighten knees with engaged quads to pull knee-caps up.
6. Raise heels up, try to push heels towards mat, as close as possible.
7. Lengthen spine by:
 - o Draw navel in to push hips up.
 - o Pull top of shoulders away from ears.
8. Straighten elbows.
9. Upper arms rotate outward to have eyes of elbows face each other.
10. Upper arms stretch without changing palm position.
11. Without sinking at wrists, open armpits out to widen chest and push chest towards thighs.
12. Pushed buttocks up towards ceiling.
13. Push front of thighs, quads towards the back of the thigh.
14. Maintain head in line with spine.
15. To release, knees gently come down to floor, sit on your heels, stretch arms forward and relax in shashankasana (described below).

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Sensitive lower back: bend knees slightly.
- Do not lock or hyperextend your knees.
- Do not lift head up, which causes unnecessary strain on neck.

BENEFITS

- Uses 98% of all muscles.
- Slows down the heart rate, calms the mind.
- Strengthens the ankles and tones the hips.

Asana category: Standing, Forward Bend
English name: Wide-legged forward bend

ALIGNMENTS

1. Feet: 4-5 feet-width apart
2. Outer edges of feet: parallel, pressed firmly
3. Head and palms: in line with feet
4. Hips: in same plane as heels
5. Upper back: wide



STEPS

1. Starting posture: *tadasana*.
2. Increase distance between feet 4-5 feet-width apart.
3. Feet face forward and outer edges press down placed parallel to each other.
4. Lengthen torso.
5. Exhale as you bend forward from the hip joint, maintaining torso's length.
6. Place palms on floor, torso-length away, with shoulders over wrists.
7. Increase distance between feet, only to the extent that:
 - knees are pulled up through engaged thighs and NOT pushed back, • outer edges stay pressed on floor,
 - inner thighs don't sink or slacken.
8. Lift trunk up to make it parallel to floor, leading with chin and chest.
9. Once stable, walk palms back to come in line with feet.
10. Bend elbows to bring forearms perpendicular to floor
11. Once stable, with long torso, gradually point crown of head towards floor.
12. As you maintain, with every exhalation, try to bring • Crown of head towards floor, and • torso between legs.
13. To release
 - walk hands forward,
 - reduce distance between feet,
 - engage core, and gradually bring torso up, • walk feet back to *tadasana*.

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Knee caps pulled up continuously, don't lock/push knees back at any point.
- In final posture, there should be no weight on crown of head.

BENEFITS

BENEFITS

- Stretches: hamstrings, inner and outer thigh, souls of feet, inner ankles.

45

- Blood flows to the torso and head.
- Preparatory pose for standing and hip-opening postures.
- A safe alternative to *shirshasana* (शीरोऽसन).

Asana category: Standing, Forward Bend

English name: Hands-to-feet pose; Standing forward bend pose

ALIGNMENTS

1. Outer edges of feet: parallel.
2. Ankles, knees, hips: stacked over each other.
3. Buttock bones: aligned with heels.
4. Navel: pulled in; tailbone: tucked in.

STEPS

1. Starting posture: *tadasana*.
2. Squeeze thigh muscles to pull kneecaps up.
3. Inhale and turn the shoulders out to rotate arms outwards.
4. Raise arms up while top of shoulders are lowered away from ears.
5. Shift body weight to toe mounds, while grounding heels firmly.
6. Exhale, bend forward from hip joint, lead with heart to keep back straight.
7. When back starts rounding, bring hands down, while looking up.
8. Lengthen spine, and bring torso downwards, as close to legs as possible.
9. Gently drop crown of head towards feet.
10. Align buttocks over heels, maintaining body weight on toe mounds till you release.
11. Once stable, let head hang, loosen neck and lower crown of head to toes.
12. Every exhalation, pull navel in, take torso to legs and crown of head to toes.
13. Every inhalation, widen chest to lengthen spine.
14. To release:
 - bend your knees,
 - as you inhale, either
 - bring arms close to ears and lift up from the hip joint, or ·
 - slide your palms over legs and come up like a rag doll.

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Inflexible hip joint/hamstrings: place hands in front of feet or on blocks. • Advanced: hold big toe with thumbs, and index and middle fingers. This is **padangushthasana** (पादांगुष्ठासन).

BENEFITS

- Calms mind with flow of blood directed towards head.
- Stretches hamstrings and calves.
- Improves flexibility of the hips.
- Relieves tension in back, shoulder, and neck • Tones abdominal muscles.

- Back to tadasana. **ALTERNATIVE AND**

PRECAUTIONS:

- Fold forward at hip joint and not at waist or upper back.
- Sensitive lower back and knees: keep knees bent throughout.

Asana category: Standing, Side-bend

English name: Triangle pose

ALIGNMENTS

1. Front foot: turned to same side
 2. Back foot
 - at 80°-angle with mat's midline
 - outer edge pressed firmly
 3. Front heel in line with centre of back foot's arch
 4. Both kneecaps: pulled up
 5. Both thighs: externally rotated
 6. Torso: in one plane
 7. Shoulders: stacked over each other
 8. Bottom hand: behind front leg or lightly placed on leg **STEPS**
1. Starting posture: *tadasana* (ताडासन).
 2. Increase distance between both feet to bring them 3-4 feet apart.
 3. Turn right foot to right side, rotating right leg from the root of the thigh.
 4. Turn left foot slightly in to make an 80°-angle with mat's midline.
 5. Ensure right heel lines with left foot's arch.
 6. Press outer edge of left foot on mat.
 7. Pull both kneecaps up.
 8. Squeeze left thigh and glutes to push left hip in line with right hip.
 9. Draw navel in and tuck tailbone down.
 10. Lift sternum up to lengthen the sides of the torso.
 11. Lift both hands up at shoulder level, palms facing down.

12. Exhale and glide torso to the right
 13. Without losing the length of the torso on the right side, bring ○ right armpit to the right leg, and ○ right hand behind the right foot.
 14. Attempt to turn chest towards ceiling, without sinking on the right side.
 15. Bring torso in one plane such that chest, hips, and back of head are all in one line.
 16. Lift left hand up in line with the shoulder and stack both shoulders in one line.
 17. Turn neck to look at left palm.
- 18. Every inhalation, send left side of torso behind to keep torso from falling forward.**
- 19. Every exhalation, bring right side of torso under left side to keep it from sinking.**
- 20. To release, turn right foot in, walk feet in back to *tadasana*. Repeat on the other side.**

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Sensitive knees: keep knees soft.
- Sensitive shoulders: keep top hand on waist.
- Inflexible or beginner practitioners: rest bottom hand lightly on front leg.

BENEFITS

- Stretches inner thighs. Strengthens the thighs.

Asana category: Prone Back-bend

English name: Cobra pose

ALIGNMENTS

1. Palms: placed under the shoulders, facing down
2. Shoulders: pulled away from ears
3. Balls (front) of shoulders: lifted away from floor;
4. Torso: lifted up to navel (navel on mat)
5. Neck: elongated
6. Gaze: at the floor
7. Toes: pointed

STEPS

1. Lie down on belly, with palms beside the hips and forehead on mat.
2. Separate legs to get feet hip-width apart.
3. Lift one leg up straight from hip,
 - point its toes,

- stretch the leg as if someone is pulling from behind, ○
bring it down.
 - repeat with other leg.
4. Bring palms on either side of the chest, right under the shoulders.
 5. Throughout the posture:
 - ensure pelvic tilt is done,
 - tuck elbows towards torso, ○
gently squeeze buttocks, ○
press toes on floor.
 6. Roll the balls of the shoulder back.
 7. Inhale, lift shoulders and chest off the floor, lifting torso only until the navel.

8. Keep forehead parallel to the floor to hold neck in line with the spine.
9. Imagine a neck collar around neck and raise chin away from chest with the collar on. This keeps the neck from cringing and maintains its length.
10. Every inhalation, expand chest and attempt to lift a little more.
11. Every exhalation, draw navel in to ensure pelvic tilt.
12. To release,
 - o exhale, bring your chest, shoulders and head down
 - o rest in *makarasana* (described below).

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Sensitive lower back: widen the distance between the feet.
- Sensitive neck: continue to keep neck in line with spine instead of lifting chin up.

BENEFITS

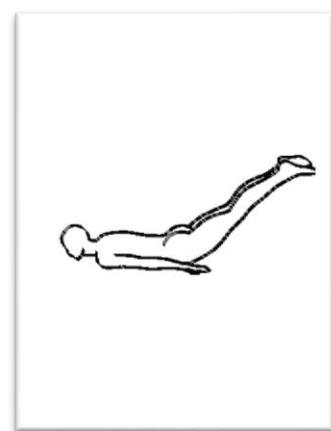
- Strengthens all back muscles.
- Tones abdominal muscles.
- Improves functioning of digestion, and abdominal organs.
- Improves breathing.
- Helps to reverse rounded upper back.

Asana category: Prone Back-bend

English name: Locust pose

ALIGNMENTS

1. Legs:
 - o lifted from hip joint
 - o straight at knees
2. Toes: pointed
3. Fists: under upper thighs, palms facing each other
4. Chin and chest: on mat
5. Shoulders: lowered away from ears



STEPS

1. Lie down on belly, with palms beside the hips and chin on mat.
2. Separate legs to get feet hip-width apart, point toes out.
3. Lift one leg up straight from hip,
 - o point its toes,
 - o stretch the leg as if someone is pulling from behind,
 - o bring it down.
 - o Repeat with other leg.
4. Make fists and place them face-up under upper thighs.
5. Exhale, draw navel in.
6. Inhale, lift both legs up together from the hip joint.
7. Every inhalation, lift legs up higher.
8. Every exhalation, ensure navel is drawn in.
9. To release, exhale, and bring legs down. Rest in *makarasana* (described below).

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Sensitive lower back: widen the distance between the feet
- Sensitive cervical area: keep forehead on floor instead of chin.

BENEFITS

- Strengthens all back muscles.
- Tones the gluteal muscles and thighs.
- Improves functioning of digestion, and abdominal organs.
- Improves breathing.

Asana category: Back-bend

English name: Camel pose

ALIGNMENTS

1. Knees, shins and feet: parallel to each other; hipwidth distance apart
2. Shoulders: lowered away from ears, rolled behind
3. Chest: lifted up
4. Thighs, hips: stacked over knees
5. Front of torso: elongated
6. Chest: expanded
7. Back of neck: elongated
8. Chin: away from chest



STEPS

1. Starting posture: *vajrasana*
2. Stand up on the knees.
3. Keep knees at hip-width distance, Flatten ankles by turning toes out.
4. Imagine firmly holding a brick between the thighs.
5. Place palms, fingers facing down, on lower back, use them to lengthen lower back.
6. Lower the shoulders away from ears.
7. Ensure pelvis is tilted.
8. Inhale, roll the balls of the shoulders pressing the shoulder blades towards spine.
9. Draw navel in, tightening your abdomen.
10. Slowly lift sternum up, push shoulder blades in, and arch from the middle back.
11. Ensure that the thighs and hips stay above the knees through the posture.
12. As you bend backwards, maintaining pelvic tilt, straighten hands to reach heels.
13. Imagine a neck collar around neck and drop head behind with the collar on.
14. This keeps the neck from cringing and maintains its length.
15. Every inhalation, expand chest and lift sternum up further.
16. Every exhalation, draw navel in, pelvis tilted to keep lower back from arching.
17. To release, exhale,
 - o gently tuck chin towards chest,
 - o draw the palms back up the thigh,
 - o lead with the chest, to straighten the spine and bring torso back on the hips,
 - o bring palms back to the lower back, return to *vajrasana*.

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Beginners / Inflexible practitioners / Sensitive lower back:
 - o Curl toes in to raise height of the heels and reduce the required back-bend, or
 - o Place a bolster horizontally on heels (flat ankle or curled toes), reach for back edge of bolster instead of reaching for heels.
- Sensitive knees: Place a cushion under knees.

BENEFITS

- Sensitive cervical area: Avoid dropping head behind.

BENEFITS

- Helps to reverse rounded upper back. | Massages abdominal organs.
- Improve breathing. | Stimulates thyroid glands

Asana category: Prone Backbend
Ardha dhanurasana (अर्ध धनुरासन)
English name: Bow pose

ALIGNMENTS

1. Ankles: flexed, pressing on hands
2. Hands: hold ankles
3. Chest: expanded and lifted from navel
4. Navel, pelvis: on the mat
5. Thighs: lifted up
6. Knees: parallel and hip-width distance apart



STEPS

8. Lift chest, shoulders and head up, keeping neck in line with the spine.
9. Lift thighs off the mat from the hip joint.
10. Push heels away from hips while pressing on the palms.
11. Ensure knees stay hip-width distance apart and parallel to each other.
12. Imagine a neck collar around neck and raise chin away from chest with the collar on. This keeps the neck from cringing and maintains its length.
13. Every inhalation, expand chest and attempt to lift thighs and chest a little more.
14. Every exhalation, draw navel in to ensure pelvic tilt.
 - bring knees down,

1. Lie down on belly, hands stretched over head, palms facing down.
2. Place forehead on floor to lengthen back of the neck. 3. Bend right knee, bringing heel close to the hip
4. Hold the ankle with right hand.
5. Lift chest up as much as possible.
6. Bend left elbow and place forearm on the floor, a little ahead of the torso.
7. Lift right thigh up from the hip joint.
8. Push the heel away from the hip.

Repeat on left side.

Dhanurasana

1. Lie down on belly, hands by the side of the body, palms facing up.
2. Place forehead on floor to lengthen back of the neck.
3. Bend both knees and place them at hip-width distance.
4. Flex feet at ankles.
5. Bring heels on the hips.
6. Roll the balls of shoulders behind.
7. Hold ankles with hands.

15. To release,

- bring chest and hands down
- rest in *makarasana* (described below).

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Beginners / inflexible practitioners / sensitive lower back / sensitive knees:
- Use belt around ankles and hold the belt at a comfortable instead of holding ankles.
- Sensitive knees:
- Avoid getting feet close to hips, keep angle at knee joint more than 90°.
- Sensitive lower back: Increase distance between legs, but not by too much. If it continues to hurt, alternate between *bhujangasana* (भुजंगासन) and *shalabhasana* (शलभासन).
- Sensitive neck: Keep neck in line with spine instead of lifting chin up.
- Contraindications: severe knee and lower back problems (alternate between *bhujangasana* and *shalabhasana*).

BENEFITS

- Strengthens back muscles.
- Improves breathing.
- Massages abdominal organs.
- Helps to reverse rounded upper back.

Asana category: Back-bend

English name: Upward/Reverse Plank

ALIGNMENTS

1. Wrists: under shoulders.
2. Toes: pointed.



STEPS

1. Starting posture: *dandasana* with palms behind the hips.
2. Press the palms so as to push the sides of the chest forward.
3. Inhale, press palms and heels on the floor and lift torso, hips and legs off the floor.
4. Continue to apply pressure on the floor with palms to lift the sides of the chest up.
5. Lift the tailbone up to further lift the hips up.
6. Straighten legs.
7. Place the toes on the floor.
8. Lift the chin up to throw the head back.
9. Maintain for a few breaths.
10. Release to *dandasana*.

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Inflexible ankles: Don't place toes on floor, instead point them towards the legs
- Sensitive neck and shoulders: Don't throw head back, keep in line with spine.
- Contraindications: Carpal tunnel syndrome, wrist, shoulder injuries

BENEFITS

- Strengthens the wrists, triceps, back and legs
- Stretches the shoulders, chest and front ankles
- Improves rounded shoulders
- Boosts mood.

26. Bhujangasana (Cobra pose)

Asana category: Prone

English name: Crocodile pose

ALIGNMENTS

1. Relaxing posture.

STEPS

1. Lie on belly.
2. Place palm on palm, and forehead over upper palm.
3. Feet can be turned in or out depending on how lower back feels.

BENEFITS

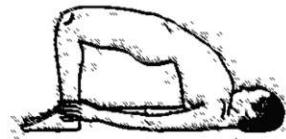
- Counter pose for back-bends.

Asana category: Supine Inversion

English name: Bridge pose

ALIGNMENTS

1. Feet: parallel to each other
2. Feet and knees: hip-width distance apart
3. Glutes: gently squeezed
4. Sternum: lifted towards the chin
5. Shoulders: rolled back
6. Back of neck: elongated
7. Hands: stretched on floor | Palms: facing floor
8. Chin: pulled towards the chest



STEPS

1. Lie down with back on the floor, bend knees placing the feet flat on the floor.
2. Separate heels to hip-width distance and walk them under the knees.
3. Press palms down on the floor, beside your hips.
4. Exhale, bring navel towards the spine, press the back on floor for pelvic tilt.
5. Maintain the pelvic tilt through the pose.
6. Keep pressing feet's inner edges to keep knees and legs parallel.
7. Inhale, slowly lift the hips and lower back away from the floor.
8. Press top of shoulders on the floor, move shoulders blades towards chest to lift middle and upper back until hips align with knees.
9. Press shoulder blades firmly into the back as arms firmly press on mat.
10. Every inhalation, broaden chest to lift sternum towards chin.
11. Every exhalation, engage core and legs to keep knees parallel to each other.
12. To release,
 - starting from the upper back down to the hips, gently bring spine down,

CHATUSHPADASANA (चतुष्पादासन)

From setubandhasana,

13. lengthen the arms towards the ankles gripping the ankles with all five fingers.
14. lift hips up a little bit more with every breath.

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Beginners / Inflexible practitioners: If hands are unlikely to reach ankles in *chatushpadasna*, before beginning the pose, place a belt around both ankles and hold the belt at both ends.
- Contraindications: Severe cervical issues, late term pregnancy, severe knee injury.

BENEFITS

- Stretches your chest, neck, spine and hips.
- Strengthens your back, buttocks, and hamstring muscles.
- Calms your brain and central nervous system.
- Massages abdominal organs and improves digestion.

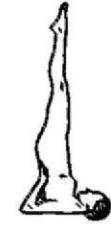
Asana category: Supine Inversion

English name: Shoulder stand

Prop required: 2-3 firm blankets, sticky mat

ALIGNMENTS

1. Shoulders: pulled away from ears.
2. Sternum: lifted.
3. Elbows: in line with shoulders.
4. Hips: exactly over the shoulders.
5. Chest: towards the chin.



STEPS

1. Fold blankets to a size that supports width of shoulders and length of upper arms.
2. Stack the blankets over each other, to make room under shoulder.
3. While this is optional, a sticky mat over the blankets will keep upper arms in place.
4. Lie on blankets, position top edge of shoulders 2 inches away from blanket's edge.
5. Rest back of head on the floor.
6. Place arms by the torso such that elbow are in line with shoulders.

7. Bend knees, and draw navel in firmly.
8. Exhale, press arms against the floor to lift feet, knees and back towards the ceiling.
9. As the back lifts, place entire palms on the lower back.
10. Keep elbows from flaying outwards, slide the palms towards the middle back.
11. Lift the pelvis to bring the torso and legs perpendicular to the floor.
12. Bring feet and knees together.
13. Bring chest towards chin while firmly pressing upper arms and shoulders down.
14. At no point, should there be any strain on the neck.
15. Every inhalation, broaden chest.
16. Every exhalation, draw your navel in and lift body some more.
17. To release,
 - slowly bend knees to bring them towards the chest,
 - place arms on floor,
 - keeping head on floor, slowly and carefully roll the back on the ground, • once hips descend, slide down to entire body on floor, • rest for some time before coming up.

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Beginners: Use wall support.
- Contraindications: severe cervical or lumbar problems, menstruation, pregnancy, uncontrolled high blood pressure, eye or inner ear infection, diarrhoea.

BENEFITS

- Stretches shoulders
- Improves flexibility of upper spine.
- Calms the brain and nervous system.
- Stimulates the thyroid and prostate glands.
- Improves bowel movements.
- Helps relieve menopausal symptoms.

Asana category: Supine Inversion

English name: Plow pose

ALIGNMENTS

1. Shoulders: pulled away from ears.
2. Arms: stretched straight behind back and pressed down.
3. Elbows: in line with shoulders.
4. Buttocks: pointed to the ceiling.

5. Thighs: pushed to the ceiling.



STEPS

1. Starting posture: *sarvangasana*.
2. Ensure firm support to lower back with both palms.
- 3. Slowly lower legs and feet over the head towards the floor.**
4. Continue to draw elbows towards each other.
5. At no point, should there be any strain on the neck.
6. Maintain hips over shoulders.
7. Slowly extend legs completely on the floor, bringing curled toes on the floor.
8. Move torso to make it perpendicular to the floor.
9. Push the front of the thighs towards the ceiling.
10. Push the heels away from the body.
11. Stretch hands straight behind your back, with interlocked fingers.
12. Every inhalation, expand chest.
13. Every exhalation, draw navel away from floor, push thighs up and heels away from body.
14. To release, exhale,
 - slowly bend knees,
 - bring thighs to belly,
 - contract abdominal muscles,
 - slowly roll the back down on the floor.
 - once hips rest on the mat, slide down till buttocks are on the floor, ○ rest for a few minutes before turning to one side and coming up.

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Beginners/inflexible practitioners:
 - if legs/lower back feel tense while lowering legs, slightly bend knees.
 - continue to take support of palms on back instead of straightening them.
 - use wall support where feet can be placed on the wall.
 - If toes don't reach the floor, use a bolster(s) to rest the toes.
- Contraindications: severe cervical or lower back problems, menstruation, pregnancy, uncontrolled high blood pressure, eye or inner ear problems, diarrhoea

BENEFITS

BENEFITS

- Stretches the shoulders. | Improves flexibility of spine.
- Calms brain and nervous system.
- Stimulates the thyroid gland.
- Massages the abdominal organs and improves digestion.
- Relieves menopausal symptoms.

Asana category: Supine Inversion

English name: Half-shoulder stand / Legs-up-the-wall pose

15. Prop required: bolster, cushion/blanket

ALIGNMENTS

1. Head and neck: rested on the floor
2. Hips: lifted
3. Shoulders: pulled away from ears
4. Arms: spread at shoulder levels
5. Palms: facing the ceiling
6. Legs: straightened and stretched against the wall
7. Buttocks: as close to the wall as possible



STEPS

1. Place the long side of a bolster along the wall. Place the cushion/blanket about torso-length away from the wall.
2. Sit sideways on the bolster, buttocks as close to the wall as possible.
3. Turn around to face the wall, and place legs on the wall.
4. Walk the buttocks towards the wall, if they drifted away while turning.
5. Walk the feet up until entire back of the legs touch the wall.
6. While the lower back is on the bolster, the rest of the spine is off the bolster.
7. Rest shoulders on the mat.
8. Adjust the cushion/blanket such that the head is on the prop.
9. Inhale, open shoulder blades, allow arms to rest at shoulder level, palms facing up.
10. Every inhalation, expand chest and broaden shoulders.
11. Every exhalation, draw navel in and lengthen legs on wall.
12. To release,

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Lift up taking support of upper hand's palm. **ALTERNATIVE AND**

BENEFITS

PRECAUTIONS:

- Contraindications: menstruation, severe eye problems.

BENEFITS

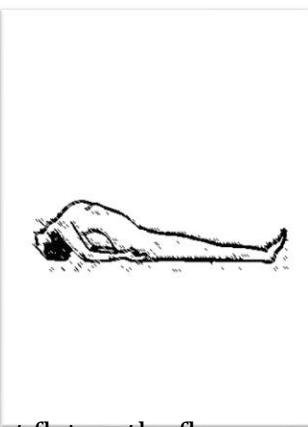
- Stretches the back muscles, relaxing them.
- Opens the chest area to improve breathing.
- Reduce inflammation and soreness in the abdominal area.

Asana category: Supine Back-bend **English**

name: Fish pose

ALIGNMENTS

1. Chin: pointed to ceiling.
2. Shoulders: lowered away from ears.
3. Shoulder blades: towards spine.
4. Crown of head: lightly rested on floor.
5. Leg position: options mentioned in step 9.



STEPS

1. Lie down with back on the floor, bend knees placing the feet flat on the floor.
2. Place arms by the torso, palms down.
3. Ensure tailbone is tucked down.
4. Place palms under hips and bend elbows.
5. Press floor with forearms, to lift chest and upper back away from floor.
6. As the head automatically glides back towards shoulders,
 - press the elbows once again to lift the head off the mat,
 - lift the chin towards the ceiling,
 - place the crown of the head on the mat.
7. Push the shoulder blades towards the spine to maintain the lifted chest.
8. Glide the chin further away from the sternum.
9. Legs can assume any of the following positions,
10. that doesn't bring any discomfort to the lower back or neck:
 - bent knees with feet flat on the floor, or
 - legs extended straight on the floor with flexed ankle, or
 - legs crossed in *sukahsana*, or *padmasana*.
11. Every inhalation, expand chest.
12. Every exhalation, draw navel in and extend spine.
13. To release,
 - exhale, engage belly,
 - inhale, press forearms to gently lift head off the floor,
 - gently tuck chin in, bring the back on the floor.

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

BENEFITS

- Contraindications: uncontrolled high blood pressure, severe eye problems, severe lower back problem, severe cervical problems • Sensitive lower back/neck:
 - use one of the non-crossed leg positions
 - or place bolster along spine, with tailbone on floor.

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BENEFITS

- Stretches hip flexors and intercostal muscles.
- Stretches and tones the front of neck and abdominals.
- Helps to reverse rounded upper back.
- Counter pose for *sarvangasana* and *halasana*.

30. SHASHANKASANA (CRICKET POSE)

Asana category: Seated

English name: Child's pose

ALIGNMENTS

1. Hips: equal weight on both sides.
2. Spine: Stretched or rounded depending on intent.



STEPS

1. Starting posture: *Vajrasana*.
2. Fold forward from hip joint.
3. If intent is to stretch spine: hands extended, and spine straight.
4. If intent is to use as counter pose for backbend: hands by the side, spine rounded.
5. To release, slowly roll spine back up to *vajrasana*.

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Sensitive knees:
 - Place a cushion or a rolled napkin behind the knees, in the wedge formed by the thighs and the calves.
 - Avoid the posture if knee hurts

BENEFITS

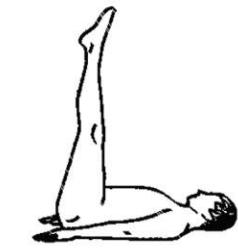
- Relaxing and recovery pose
- Counter-pose for back-bends
- Good posture to start session with to bring focus inwards.

Asana category: Supine

English name: Raised legs pose

ALIGNMENTS

1. Legs: perpendicular to torso
2. Toes: pointing towards shins
3. Thighs: together or hip-width distance apart
4. Hands: along the body, palms by hips
5. Neck: neutral
6. Navel: drawn in
7. Tailbone: tucked down



STEPS

1. Lie on the back, legs straightened out.
2. Exhale,
 - o pull belly towards the spine by engaging abdominal muscles,
 - o tuck tailbone in, by pulling upper hips towards heels.
3. Keep the abdominal muscles engaged throughout the practice
4. Inhale, raise both legs up till they are at a 90°-angle with the torso.
5. Avoid lifting neck or shoulders up.
6. Every inhalation, broaden chest.
7. Every exhalation, ensure engaged abdominal muscles.
8. To release, exhale, bring legs down.

BENEFITS

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Beginners / tight hamstring / reduced core strength / sensitive lower back:
 - o place palms under upper hips to offer support,
 - o slightly bend knees while lifting, maintaining and bringing down knees, or
 - o do single leg raises.
- Advanced practitioners: As core strengthens, try lowering legs as close to floor as possible.
- Contraindications: Pregnancy, menstruation, recent abdominal surgery, severe lower back problems.

BENEFITS

- Strengthens the deep abdominal muscles, back and thighs.
- Tones the lower abdominal muscles.
- Improves digestion, blood circulation to the lymph nodes and joints.
- Prepares the body for advanced asanas.

Asana category: Supine, Restorative
English name: Wind relieving pose

ALIGNMENTS

1. Tailbone: on floor, at all times
2. Knees: together and close to chest
3. Chest and shoulders: lifted towards thighs
4. Shoulders: lowered, drawn back, and squared
5. Neck: elongated
6. Tip of nose: towards knees



STEPS

1. Lie on back, exhale to deflate abdomen.
2. Bend knees and bring thighs on abdomen.
3. Interlock fingers and clasp hands on shin bones, just below knees.
4. Exhale, raise head and shoulders.
5. Try to bring nose in the space between the knees.
6. Every inhalation, broaden chest.
7. Every exhalation, draw thighs in closer to chest.
8. To release, inhale, slowly lower head and shoulders. Drop feet to floor.

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Sensitive knees: hold legs between thigh and calves instead of pulling shins in.
- Very sensitive knees: keep knees at an angle greater than 90°.
- Sensitive lower back: keep one foot on the floor and bring only one thigh to chest, repeat on other side.
- Contraindications: high blood pressure, sciatica, slipped disk.

BENEFITS

- Strengthens lower back muscles.
- Releases tightness between vertebrae.
- Massages abdomen and digestive organs.
- Reduces flatulence and relieves constipation.
- A counter pose for back-bend, side-bend or forward-bend poses.

33 - Savasana (Corpse)

Asana category: Supine

English name: Corpse pose

ALIGNMENTS

Entire body: loose.



STEPS

1. Lie on back.
2. Entire body relaxed.
3. Allow legs to flop to the sides.
4. Let palms be along the body about six inches away from body.
5. Palms facing up, fingers curled naturally, thumbs away from fingers.
6. Shoulders relaxes, away from ears, and going towards floor.
7. Head facing ceiling and not to either side.

ALTERNATIVE AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Support neck if chin points towards ceiling.
- Support knees if lower back or knees feel uncomfortable.

BENEFITS

- A must-do after every workout session as a part of the cool down routine.
- This is when the entire sessions physical practice assimilates into energy that can be used for the day/week ahead.
- Prepares body for pranayama/meditation practice.

SURYA NAMASKARA

Surya namaskara (सूर्य नमस्काश्ची) are a sequence of *asanas* (आसन) performed in a flow, as a salutation to the Sun God. They are also known as sun salutations.

Surya namaskara can be considered as a form of worship of the sun, to please the Sun God and to seek his blessings. Very early in the civilisation, the sun was recognized as the one who gives and sustains life. Without the transformative warmth of the sun, life, at least as we know it, would cease to exist.

There are numerous references to praising the Sun to enhance good health and prosperity, in the vedas (वेद). Some of these hymns were a part of the nitya karma vidhi (नित्य कर्म विधि), the daily rituals necessary to be spiritually inclined.

Surya namaskara can be practised on varying levels of awareness—from simply physical exercise to meditation to a disciplined practice that incorporates asana, pranayama (प्राणायाम), mantra (मंत्रो) and chakra (चक्र) meditation.

Benefits

Surya namaskara is considered *sarvanga sundara vyayama* (सर्वांग सुंश्लेषण व्यायाम), that is a beautifully holistic form of exercise. It builds strength, endurance, and flexibility. •

Exercises the muscles, joints, and ligaments of the body.

- Improves posture.
- Tones the muscles.
- Brings flexibility, strength and balance.
- Strengthens the spine and abdominal muscles.
- Strengthens and stimulates the digestive, nervous and respiratory systems.
- Expands the rib-cage, increasing lung capacity, which smoothens breaths.
- Excellent cardiac workout to enhance blood circulation and strengthen heart.
- Reduces fat.
- Activates the thyroid, parathyroid, pituitary, adrenal, testes and ovarian to regulate the hormones produced.
- Almost 95% to 97% of the muscles are worked.
- The alternate stretching and contraction of muscles and organs have a two-fold effect
 - removes impure blood and fills the purified blood
 - strengthens muscles and organs
- The whole body above the waist is dynamically bent forward and stretched up alternately at least four times per Namaskar.

Mantras are an integral part of performing the *surya namaskara*. Chanting mantras with awareness brings about a sense of well-being and calmness. These mantras are combinations of chants that produce a specific effect on the mind and its functioning.

The mantras are formed from letters of the Sanskrit alphabet. Each letter has a specific frequency and a corresponding effect on the consciousness. The energy hidden in the structure of the mantra is significant. The mantras have a subtle yet tremendous impact when chanted in the said sequence and manner.

Each *surya namaskara* mantra has three parts:

1. *Aum or Om* (ॐ)
2. *Bija akshara* (बीज अक्षर)
3. Names of Surya God **Om**

This is known as the pranava mantra (प्रणव मंशी), that which runs through *prana* (प्राण), that is breath in this context.

Om is said to be the sound that existed at the time the universe was created. It is considered as the original sound that contains all other sounds, all words, all languages and all mantras.

BIJA AKSHARA

The *bija* mantras are sounds that don't mean much literally. But, they create powerful

BIJA AKSHARA

vibrations within the mind and body.

Bija means a seed and *akshara* means letter or alphabet. The use of the word *bija* implies the potential of a seed, under appropriate circumstances, to become a full-blown tree with leaves, flowers, and fruits. This seed is therefore considered as a blueprint of the tree it is to produce. The *bija akshara* therefore refers to its capacity to strengthen the body and the mind.

Each *bija* mantra also has an associated chakra. Chanting the *bija* mantra therefore brings about efficient functioning of the glands related to the respective chakra. It also enhances the emotional and spiritual qualities related to the chakra.

The *bija* mantras associated with *Surya Namaskar* are:

1. *hraam* (ह्रो॒ा॒०)
2. *hreem* (ह्रो॒॒॒०॒०)
3. *hroom* (ह्रो॒ू॒म)
4. *hraim* (ह्रो॒ ०॒०)
5. *hroum* (ह्र॒)
6. *hraha* (ह्र॒०॒ः)

Each *bija akshara* can be further broken down into three parts:

- **h:** represents the element *akasha* (आकाश), the sky. It is also called *mahaprana* (महाप्राण). The source of its pronunciation is at the heart region. It empowers the heart to perform all its functions in a better manner.
- **r:** represents the element fire, hence it is called *agni-bija* (अग्नि बीज). The source of its pronunciation is at the forehead's centre. The palate and the brain experience a gentle vibration owing to the 'r' in the *bija* mantra. The result is good taste and better intellect.
- **Svara** (स्वर), vowel: is a sound pronounced with minimum friction in the vocal cord that creates minute vibrations that work as follows:

- **ee**: the palate, the vocal cord and the nasal area are cleared of mucous. It also improves the functioning of the *anahata* (अनाहत) and *swadishthana* (स्वादिष्ठान) chakras.
- **oo**: the stomach, small intestine, pancreas improve in their functioning making the digestive system strong. It also improves the functioning of the *manipura* (मिणपुश्चे) chakra.
- **ai**: this vowel combination works on the kidney and urinary passage making the organs strong.
- **ou**: this vowel combination work upon the excretory system making the organs strong and sensitive. It energizes the *mooladhara* (मूलारूद्धोश्चे) and *swadishthana* chakras.
- **aha**: in the last *bija akshara* creates strong vibrations (all others are minute vibrations) in the upper chest and throat region, which helps to overcome coughs, cold and bronchitis.

NAMES OF SURYA GOD

Every year the sun passes through twelve different *rashis* (राशि), phases. According to Hindu astrology each phase has specific attributes or moods, and in each of these twelve moods the sun is given a different name.

The last word in each *bija* mantra is *namaha*, which means salutation.

These elements combine to make 12 mantras:

1. om hram mitraya namaha (ॐ ह्रामं मित्राय नमः)
2. om hreem ravaye namaha (ॐ ह्रीं रवये नमः)
3. om hroom suryaya namaha (ॐ ह्रूमं सूर्याय नमः)
4. om hraim bhanave namaha (ॐ हैं भानवे नमः)
5. om hraum khagaya namaha (ॐ हौं खगाय नमः)
6. om hrah pushne namaha (ॐ हः पूष्णे नमः)
7. om hrram hiranya garbhaya namaha (ॐ ह्रामं हिरण्य गर्भाय नमः)
8. om hreem marichaye namaha (ॐ ह्रीं मरीचये नमः)
9. om hroom adityaya namaha (ॐ ह्रूमं आदित्याय नमः)
10. om hraim savitre namaha (ॐ हैं सवित्रे नमः)
11. om hraum arkaya namaha (ॐ हौं अर्काय नमः)
12. om hrah bhaskaraya namaha (ॐ हः भास्कराय नमः)

Pranamasana (प्रणामासन) Normal breathing
Inhale, back-bend

<i>Ardhchakrasana</i> (अर्धचक्रासन)	Feel a stretch at the front portion of the body. Tones the muscles of abdomen, chest, forearms and upper arms. Exhale, forward-bend Contract the abdomen. Improves functioning of abdominal glands and digestive functions.
<i>Hastapadasana</i> (हस्तपादासन)	Increases blood supply to facial muscles, eyes and brain. Inhale, back-bend Back leg's knee should be touching the mat. Chest should be expanded.
<i>Ashwasanchalana</i> (अश्वसंचालन)	Front leg's foot should remain between the hands. Knee on top of ankle. Tones calf and thigh muscles Exhale, forward bend
<i>Parvatasana</i> (पवधतासन)	The legs and arms should be straight Aim to press the heels down without straining yourself. Stretches hamstrings.
<i>Shashankasana</i> (शशांकासन)	Inhale and exhale Gives a break to make it easy on the back.
<i>Ashtanga Namaskara</i> (अष्टाङ्ग नमस्कार)	The head should slide forward closer to the mat. Arms and shoulders bear the weight, while hips remain up.
<i>Bhujangasana</i> (भुजंगासन)	Hold breath out Inhale, back-bend
<i>Parvatasana</i>	Exhale, forward-bend
<i>Shashankasana</i>	Inhale and exhale
<i>Ashwasanchalana</i>	Inhale, back-bend
<i>Hastapadasana</i>	Exhale, forward-bend
	<i>Ardhchakrasana</i> Inhale, back-bend

MUDRA



Sit in a meditative pose such as the *sukhasana*, *vajrasana*, *padmasana*, *siddhasana*, *swastikasana*, etc. Pick a posture in which you can sit comfortably for the length of your practice. Ensure that your back is held straight and your chest and head held up high aligning the neck and head on top of the spine.

Do not sit in a posture that causes pain or discomfort and distracts the mind. If it is not possible to sit on the ground, then you can sit on a chair.

Close your eyes and take some deep breaths with the awareness of the breathing

Benefits:

- Creates pranic circuits, which redirect and maintain the flow of energy in desired directions.

CHIN MUDRA (चिन मुद्रा)

Steps:

1. Bring your thumb and forefinger together to form a circle.
2. Place the nail of your index finger against the soft pad of the thumb.
3. Extend the other three fingers.
4. Place the palm facing upward on the thighs, close to the knees.

Benefits:

- Creates a pranic circuit, which redirects and maintains the flow of energy.
- Improves and increases concentration, even during meditation.
- Increases energy and stamina.
- Promotes better sleep patterns.
- Relieves stress and any unnecessary tension in the body.

CHINMAYA MUDRA (चिनमय मुद्रा)

Steps:

1. Create *chin mudra*.
2. Roll three straight fingers towards the thumb mound.

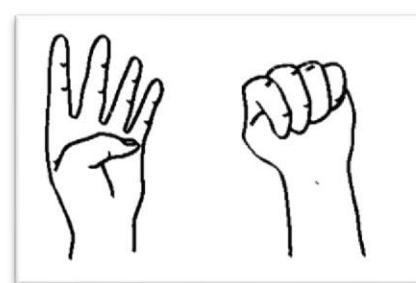
Benefits:

- Positively impacts the energy in the thoracic region.
- Promotes breathing in the mid-section of the lungs.
- Improves digestion.

BRAHM MUDRA (ब्रह्म मुद्रा)

Steps:

1. Place the thumb at the base of the small finger.
2. Curl the other four fingers over the thumb, forming a light fist.
3. The palms are placed on the thighs facing upwards.

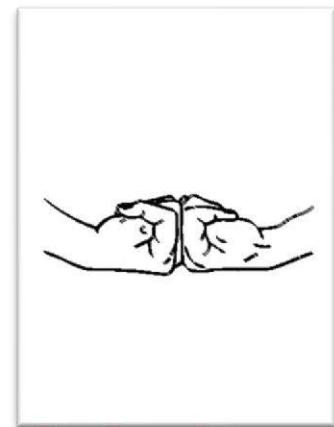


process.

ADI MUDRA (आदि मुद्रा)

Steps:

1. Form *brahm mudra*.
2. Place the fists near the navel, knuckles touching each other.

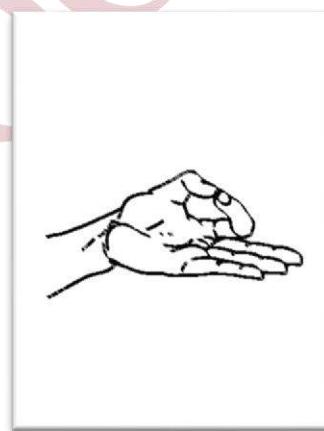


GYAAN MUDRA (ज्ञान मुद्रा)

1. Bring the tips of your thumb and forefinger together to form a circle.
2. Extend the other three fingers.
3. Place the palm facing upward on the thighs, close to the knees.

Benefits:

- Relaxes the body.
- Focus the mind on meditation.
- Relieves stress.

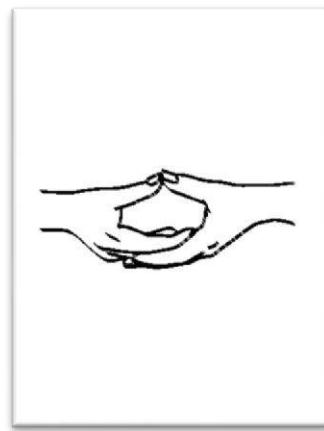


DHYAAN MUDRA (ध्यान मुद्रा)

Place the palms facing upward on the thighs or the knees. The back should be straight. Now bring your hands together on your lap.

Place your left palm over the right palm in the shape of a bowl, tips of both thumbs touching each other to form a triangle.

Place the palms at the level of the navel or on the thighs.



-
-
- **Steps:**

-
-
-

Steps:

- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

Benefits:

- Brings positivity in thinking.
- The triangle formed by both thumbs and fingers, represents the three jewels of Buddhism: Buddha, sangha (community), dharma (teachings).
- Improves memory

BANDHAS

Same sitting posture instructions as for *mudras*. *Bandhas* are locks applied to optimise the use of energy flow within the body. These are powerful practices and they are best performed under the guidance of an experienced teacher.

Contraindications: Menstruation, pregnancy, chronic digestive issues, chronic respiratory issues, high blood pressure, cardiac issues.

MOOLA BANDHA (मूल बंड)

English name: Root lock.

This practice involves drawing the *mooladhar chakra*, the root chakra up and in. The root chakra is said to be located at the base of the torso, or the perineum, which is the area between your anus and genitals.

Steps:

1. As you inhale, gently contract the perianal muscles and lift them upwards.
2. Hold as long as you are comfortable and as per instructions accompanying the other practice you are doing.
3. As you exhale, release the breath.
4. Practice for around 2 to 5 minutes, twice a day.
5. You can also apply moola bandha as you hold postures or during pranayama.

Benefits:

Your pelvic floor muscles support your bladder, bowels, and womb. Weakening of these muscles due to age or childbirth can lead to urinary incontinence. Moola bandha strengthens these muscles.

JALANDHARA BANDHA (जालंशी बंर)

English name: Chin lock

Steps:

1. Inhale so your lungs are about two-thirds full 2. Hold your breath in.
3. Draw your chin back closer to your chest and drop it down gently. making a double chin. ◦ Don't force your chin in.
4. At the same time, lift your sternum towards your chin.
5. When you can no longer hold your breath, gently lift your chin up.
 - Do not hold your breath forcefully. In fact release the breath slightly before you reach the point when you feel like you can't hold the breath in any longer.
6. Finish your inhalation and then exhale.
7. Similarly, you can apply this *bandha* while holding breath out too.



Contraindication: Cervical issues.

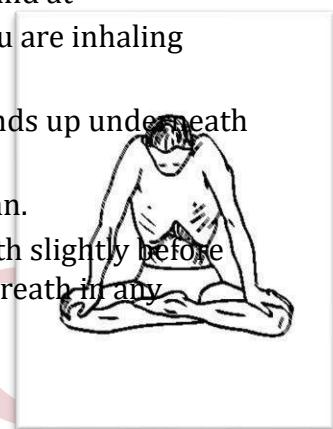
UDDIYANA BANDHA (उद्धियान बंर)

English name: Diaphragm lock

Uddiyana bandha is the only practice in hatha yoga that stretches the respiratory diaphragm. This practice uses the abdominal upward movement during exhalation to push the dome of the diaphragm to the highest possible position.

Steps:

1. As you exhale, pull your abdomen in.
2. For this *bandha*, after you have exhaled completely pull your belly in a little more.
3. While holding the breath out, do a mock inhalation using your chest, locking your glottis and restraining air from entering your lungs, and at the same time relax your abdomen. So you behave as if you are inhaling but don't actually inhale.
4. Your upper abdomen will form a deep concavity that extends up underneath your rib cage. This is *uddiyana bandha*.
5. Hold your breath out for as long as you can comfortably can.
6. Do not hold your breath forcefully. In fact release the breath slightly before you reach the point when you feel like you can't hold the breath in any longer.



7. Once you feel like inhaling, relax your mock inhalation, letting your chest and abdominal organs drop and your abdomen release forward.
8. Gently inhale without gasping.

Precaution:

- Practise this lock on an empty stomach and bowel.
- This *bandha* should be applied only on external retention of breath.

Contraindications: Hiatal hernia, ulcers.

Benefits:

- Exhalations are more complete and breaths more comfortable and more efficient.

MAHA BANDHA (महाबन्ध)

This *bandha* combines all the three *bandhas* mentioned above together. By definition, then this bandha can be applied only on external breath retention.

Steps:

1. Exhale.
2. Apply *moola bandha*.
3. Apply *jalandhara bandha*.
4. Apply *uddiyana bandha*.
5. Hold for as long as you comfortably can.
6. Release *uddiyana bandha*.
7. Release *jalandhara bandha*.
8. Release *moola bandha*.

YOGA NIDRA

Yoga= union, nidra

(योग) = sleep

Yoga nidra originates from ancient tantric practices. This practice was revived when Swami Satyananda Saraswati, founder of the Bihar School of Yoga in Munger, eastern India. Since then, it has been adapted and presented it in a systematic manner in the 1960s.

It can be thought of as psychic sleep or deep relaxation, where one appears to be asleep, but mind is alert and aware. Consistent practice of *yoga nidra* leads to self-inquiry, with each session taking us deeper into our meditation practice.

In psychological terms, the state of mind achieved in *yoga nidra* is called hypnagogic state, a state between sleep and wakefulness, where you gain access to the subconscious mind.

Yoga nidra should be a part of your regular practice, especially when you are on the path of meditation and self-discovery.

It can also be used as a relaxation practice when one is exhausted. It can help deal with insomnia, but should be practiced during the day time.

The duration of *yoga nidra* can range from 15 minutes to 2 hours, depending on the practitioners level of practice.

STAGES:

PREPARATION

It is important to relax the body completely before one begins a *yoga nidra* session. This relaxation can be induced by awareness of stillness, position, breath, and listening to the external sounds with *sakshi bhava* (साक्षी भाव), an attitude of being a witness.

It is performed in *shavasana*, corpse pose with no movement.

INTENTION SANKALPA

At the beginning of the session, you mentally repeat reinforcements like, "I will not sleep, I will remain awake." This is so that you don't fall asleep during the practice.

Then, you mentally repeat a *sankalpa* (संकल्प), an intention for the session. It is a short, positive resolve to be repeated thrice. It can be anything from, "I will not stress about xyz" to "I am healthy and happy." to "I am." This is done with an attitude of complete faith and acceptance.

ROTATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Next, the awareness is rotated around the different body parts in a systematic ordered manner.

- First awareness runs through the right side of the body,
- then the left side of the body,
- then the back of the body, from the buttocks to the back of the head, • the front of the body.
- Then awareness is brought to major parts of the body.
- Eventually the entire body is brought into awareness all together. and lastly

BREATH AWARENESS

In this stage, you simply become aware of the natural breath.

OPPOSITE FEELINGS AND SENSATIONS

In this stage, you imagine the experience of pairs of opposite feelings or sensations like heat and cold, heaviness and lightness, pain and pleasure, love and hate, and so on. The thinking mind is only able to focus in one direction at any one time, it cannot move simultaneously in two opposite directions at once. Thus when instructed to do so, it stops thinking and becomes silent.

VISUALIZATION

The awareness is taken to the *chidakasha* (चिदकाशा), the dark space in front of the closed eyes. At this point, you can visualise images or symbols, which can also include

VISUALIZATION

smell of the earth after rain, the ocean at night, a steady candle flame and so on. You might experience these visualisations appear and disappear automatically, as you progress in your practice.

SANKALPA

You are reaching the end of the practice. At this point, you mentally repeat the *sankalpa* from earlier in the session thrice, with equal faith and acceptance.

ENDING THE PRACTICE

At this point, you might be in a deep state of meditation. So, when you are ready to end the practice, slowly externalise your awareness by listening to sounds, and becoming aware of objects and persons in the room that you are in. Then, slowly move your body parts one at a time and stretch the body. When you are sure you are fully out of the deep state of meditation, slowly sit up and open your eyes.