

ASANAS

'Asanas' means a steady and comfortable posture.

Normally, it is taken to be physical exercise, but this does not carry its full significance.

Each person is made up of three aspects i.e. Body, mind and consciousness, which merge together to constitute one whole being. Asanas aim at influencing all these three aspects and synchronizing them into one harmonious whole.

Correct performance of Asanas requires participation of one's whole being in relation to the physical position and movements, the breath, relaxation of the muscles, etc.

Asanas loosen up the joints of the body, stretch and tone up the muscles and remove poisons which tend to accumulate in various parts of the body.

They also harmonize the nervous system and they improve the functioning of the internal organs such as heart, lungs, abdominal organs, endocrinal gland, blood vessels etc. It leads to better health and longevity.

Asanas make the body relaxed, strong, supple, free from ~~aches~~ and pains, and this, in turn, brings about emotional and mental calmness and confidence.

The greatest and roost profound benefit of Asanas comes through the influence of the asanas on the pranic and mental bodies, harmonizing the ~~process~~ occurring below the normal level of perception. It is this influence that can bring about remarkable improvements in. the overall health and one's attitude towards life.

Guidelines to be observed in practicing Asanas.

Asanas should be performed in a clean and well ventilated place.

A rug or a blanket should be placed on the floor.

The Asanas should preferably be practiced in the morning.

Asanas should not be performed after the meals, at least not before three hours after meals.

Keep the body and mind relaxed during the practice. There should be no tension.

Breathing should be through the nostrils and not through the mouth.

Eyes should be closed as far as possible during the practice.

Movements of the body and the muscles should be slow and controlled.

Control and regulation of breath is an important aspect of Asanas.

If one feels physically or mentally tired he should relax.

Do. not overstrain or overstretch the muscles.

The programmes of Asanas should be carefully chosen and practiced regularly and systematically.

After performing the Asana relax the body and mind completely.

There is no restriction of age or sex for practicing Asanas.

SAITHALYASANA

(Relaxation Pose)

Sit on the floor with legs outstretched in front of the body.

Separate the knees, moving the legs apart.

Bend the right leg and place the sole of the right foot against the inside of the left thigh. The whole of the right leg should rest on the floor.

Carefully fold your left leg so that the left foot lies beside the left buttocks.

Place your hands on your right ankle.

Relax the whole body and exhale.

Then while inhaling, slowly raise your arms upwards, keeping them together and straight, until they are eventually vertical above the head at the end of the inhalation.

Then exhale, twist the trunk slightly and bend forward over the right knee.

Bend forward as far as possible, but with practice try to touch the forehead on the ground directly in front of the right knee.

Relax the whole body.

Remain in this final position as long as comfortable. Breathe slowly and deeply.

Then, as you inhale, raise the arms, head and trunk until the arms are vertical.

Exhale and lower your arms.

Repeat the same process, adjusting the body position so that the left sole presses against the right thigh, and the right leg folded backwards.

Benefits:

This Asana is very beneficial for the whole body, particularly for the back and abdomen, and the spinal cord, brain and internal abdominal organs.

Padmasana (Lotus Pose)

This is one of the best meditative asana.

Sit with the legs stretched forward.

Slowly fold one leg and place the foot on the thigh of the opposite leg,

The sole of the foot must face upwards, with the heel in contact with the front of the lower abdomen.

When you feel comfortable, fold the other leg in the same way, also placing the foot on the top of the opposite thigh. In the final pose both knees should rest comfortably on the floor.

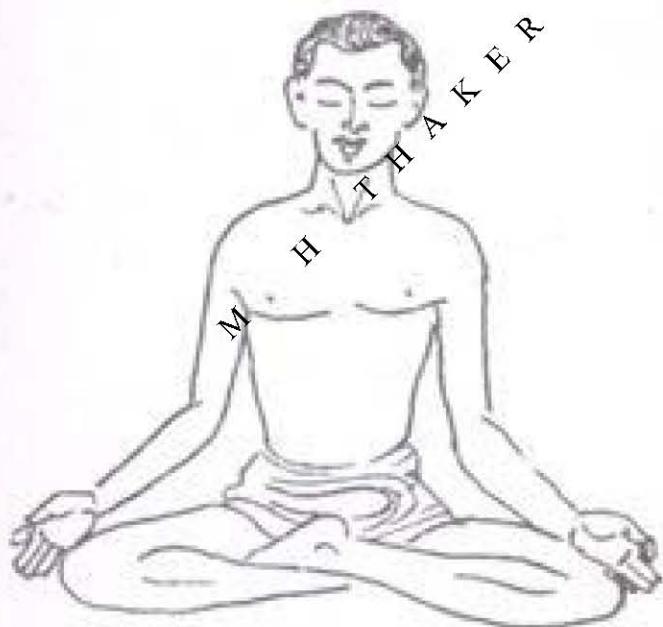
Hold the back and head upright, but without strain. Close the eyes.

Benefits:

Padmasana induces mental calmness, which is the essential prerequisite for pranayama and meditative practices. This tranquility also helps to bring about physical health and mental equilibrium on a permanent basis. This asana also tones the organs, muscles and nerves in the abdominal and pelvic regions.



PADMASANA



SIDDHASANA

Siddhasana

Sit with the legs stretched in front of the body.

Fold your right leg and place the sole of the right foot against the inside of the left thigh.

Your right heel should be placed so that it presses against the area between the anus and the genitals (the perineum). This is an important aspect of Siddhasana.

Then fold your left leg and place the left foot on the top of the right calf.

If possible try to adjust the position of the left heel so that it presses into the pelvic immediately above the genitals. Your gentle should therefore lie between the two heels.

Grasp your right toes and pull them upwards into the space between the left thigh and calf.

Adjust the body so that it is comfortable. The knee should be in contact with the ground.

Hold the spine and head upright, yet relaxed.

Benefits:

Siddhasan gives essentially the same benefits as Padmasana..

Vajrasana

Kneel on the ground with your knees close or slightly apart.

Position the feet so that your toes touch each other. 

Rest the arm beside the body.

Bring the buttocks down on to the heels, at the same time taking support with the help of hands on the floor.

Try to sit on the heels.

Let the weight of your trunk be supported on your feet without support of your arms.

Hold your head upright. The head, neck and back should be in one straight line.

Place your hands on top of your legs, near the knees.

Relax the arms and the whole body.

Benefits:

Vajrasana is a very relaxing position. Conducive to mind and body.

It is an excellent meditative asana.

Note;

In the early stages, it may be difficult to sit on the feet without support of the arms.

Beginners, who find that their heel ache after a very short time in this position. and should return to the normal position and then sit down on the floor with the legs outstretched. Bend one leg, hold the ankle and vigorously shake the foot until the signs of stiffness disappear. Repeat with the other leg.

Then again sit in Vajrasana.

Veerasana

This is a simple asana which can be used for meditative, practices.

Sit with the legs outstretched in front of the body.

Bend the left leg and place the left foot under and to the side of the right buttock. Now bend the right leg over the top of the left leg, placing the right foot beside the left buttock.

Arrange the position of the knees so that one is above other.

Hold the head, neck and back upright.

Place the hands either on the feet, or on the knees, one: on top of the other, palms facing downwards.
Relax the whole body.

Benefits.

This is a comfortable sitting position for-those people who cannot sit in the more difficult meditative asanas. Like all meditative asanas, it is conducive to physical and mental equilibrium

Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose)

Lie flat on the stomach on the floor, face down, with eyes closed, legs straight and the soles of the feet uppermost.

Place the palms of the hands flat on the floor, directly underthe shoulders. The fingers should point forward.

The arms should be bent with the elbows facing backward.

Rest the forehead on the floor. Close the eyes.

Relax the whole body.

Breathe out slowly and deeply.

As you breathe in, slowly bend your head backwards so that the chin eventually points forwards and the neck is compressed.

Slowly start arching the spine backwards, at the same time slowly raising the head and shoulders off the ground.

Continue to slowly arch the back and raise the trunk of the body as far as flexibility will allow.

Take care not to straighten the arms (keep the elbows bent), do not lift the abdomen off the floor. Only the trunk should be bent back. Try to keep the navel in contact with the ground.

Keep the legs closed together, straight and relaxed.

In the final position, the back of the head should point towards your feet.

Hold to this final position as long as comfortable, breathing slowly and naturally.

On exhalation, return to the starting position slowly in the reverse order as described above.

The movement must be slow and synchronized with the breath.

Throughout the body, back and legs must be fully relaxed.

At the end of the movement, the nose should brush with along the flour and the forehead eventually rest on the ground.

Relax the whole body.

Repeat this a number of times.

THAĀKĒR

Benefits:

Increases flexibility of the back.

lumbers the spine, relieving tension in the spinal region.

In particular, it influences the kidneys and the ~~ad~~renal glands.

Kidneys purify our blood. Bhujangasana improves the efficiency of the Kidneys.

The adrenal glands, situated on top of the kidneys, are also made to work more efficiently. These glands secrete various hormones which have repercussions on our mind and body. The secretion of adrenaline which affects our nervous tensions and relaxation, is regulated.

Cortisone, another, major hormone secreted by adrenal glands, is closely connected with rheumatism. Bhujangasana by encouraging correct secretion of the hormone is useful in relieving rheumatism.

The spine is the major channel which carries all the nervous impulses from the brain to the body. Efficient nerves require good blood system, Bhujangasana loosens the spine and tones up the nerves, resulting in better communication between the brain and the rest of the body.

The Asana massages the organs of the abdomen and the pelvis, such as the stomach, pancreas, liver, gall bladder, sexual and eliminative organs.

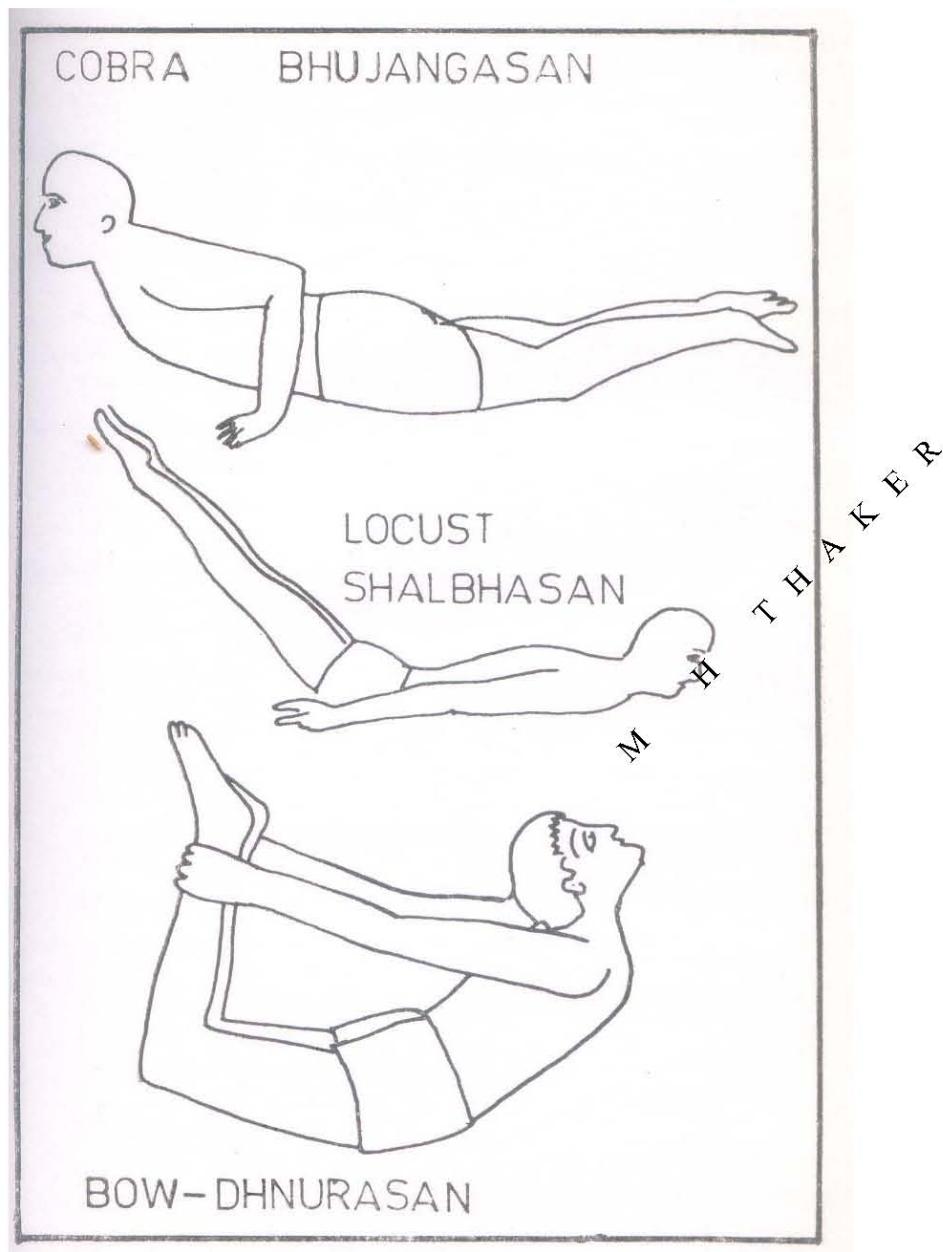
People who suffer from chronic back ache, or neck ache or generally stiff spine can benefit from this asana.

The thyroid gland is also regulated. This plays a large part in maintaining a healthy body.

This asana also helps in removing extra fat.

Caution:

Persons who suffer from peptic ulcers, hernia, intestinal tuberculosis or hyperthyroidism should not do this asana.



Shalabhasana (The Locust Pose)

position:

Lie flat on the ground. face downwards.

Legs should be straight with feet together, the soles should point upwards.

The arms can be placed under the body or on either side of the body.

Keep the chin in contact with the ground throughout the practice.

The shoulders should be as near as possible to the floor, and should remain so throughout the exercise.

Relax the whole body; close the eyes.

Breathe out deeply.

Method 1 :

Inhale deeply, hold your breath and raise both legs, keeping them together and straight (knees should not be bent)

The elevation of the legs is produced by pressure applied on the arms and contracting the lower back muscles.

Hold the legs in the raised position while retaining your breath.

Try to stretch your chin in front of you as much as possible but maintaining contact with the ground.

Hold the final position as long as possible without strain.

Slowly lower the legs and exhale.

Relax the whole body.

Then allow the breathing to return to normal. Breathe out deeply and then breathe in deeply and repeat another round by raising the legs as mentioned above.

Repeat as many times as is possible without strain. While doing the Asana, try to allow the abdomen to sustain most of the body weight

Method 2 :

Lie flat on the floor face downwards as mentioned above.

Keep the left arm under the body and the right hand stretched above your head.

Raise the left arm and the left leg, keeping the arm fully stretched and leg straight (knees should not be bent).

Hold for a few seconds

Lower the left arm and the left leg slowly.

Repeat the same movements as above, reversing the side of the body, i. e. by raising the right arm and the right leg.

After the breathing returns to normal, repeat the posture with both arms and both legs, by stretching both arms straight over the head.

Breathe in deeply, and hold it while lifting both the arms and legs.

Hold the position as long as possible without strain, and exhale while slowly bringing down the arms and the legs.

Relax.

Benefits:

Shalabhasana stimulates the whole automatic nervous system, particularly the parasympathetic outflow, which allows the internal organs to carry out their functions.

Shalabhasana helps in keeping the autonomic nervous system in an efficient order by stretching the nerves and improving blood circulation.

All the abdominal organs are massaged.

The pressure of the abdomen due to the weight of the body is transmitted to the lungs and heart via the diaphragm, improving the functioning of both these vital organs.

Shalabhasana has been found useful for relieving sciatica and mild forms of slipped disc.

Rids the thighs of excess fat.

Shalabhasana complements Bhujangasana (the cobra pose),

While Bhujangasana exercises the top part of the body, Shalabhasana correspondingly exercises the lower part of the body.

For this reason, it is advisable to perform the two asanas one after the other.

Caution:

This Asana comparatively requires a greater degree of physical effort. .

As such, persons who suffer from coronary thrombosis, or high blood pressure, should not practice this.

Persons suffering from hernia, peptic ulcer, Intestinal tuberculosis and similar ailments should not do this asana.

Dhanurasana (The Bow Pose)

Stage 1:

Lie on the left side with the head resting on the palm of the left hand.

Raise the left leg with the knee bent.

Grasp the ankle with the right hand and gradually push away the leg so that the right elbow is straightened.

Push the abdomen forward and arch the spine. Retain this position as long as convenient without strain.

Return to the original position gradually.

Repeat the exercise on the other side of the body.

Stage 2:

Lie flat on the floor, facing downwards,

Bend the legs at the knees and bring the heels as close as possible to the back.

Reach back with your hands and grasp the anklets of each leg.

Keep the feet together so that the toes remain in contact. Place the chin on the floor.

Breathe out deeply while on the ground. Breathe in deeply.

Then tense your leg muscles and try to straighten your legs. This will arch your thighs and lift your chest and head off the ground.

The only muscular contraction should be in the legs.

The back, arms and the rest of the body should be as much relaxed as possible.

The arms should remain straight and passive.

Hold the head high and raise your chin.

Adjust your position in such a manner that the soft portion of the abdomen (the belly) supports the weight of the entire body on the ground.

Hold the breath in the final pose.

Stay in the final pose as long as it is comfortable. Do not strain.

Slowly relax the legs and muscles and return to the starting position.

When you reach the ground, breathe out.

Relax the whole body for a short time until respiration becomes normal.

Repeat the practice.

As you advance in the practice of this Asana, try to lift the legs higher off the floor, using the hands as levers. Knees should be kept together.

Note:-- 1. Do not tense the back in order to raise the body. only the leg muscle should be used.

2. Make sure that your hands wrap around the ankles and not the feet.

3. Keep the feet together so that the toes remain in contact throughout the entire practice.

4. The weight of the body in the final pose should rest on the soft part of the abdomen (belly) and not on the ribs.

5. The arms should not be bent, but kept straight.

Benefits:

Dhanurasana complements Bhujangasana and Shalabhasana. as its main influence is on the intense intra-abdominal pressure.

Dhanurasana is very useful in overcoming lethargy and sluggishness in mind and body, as it has a direct effect on the solar plexus at the navel. The nerves are brought into maximum efficiency, which leads to improved functioning of the whole body, especially the digestive, eliminative and reproductive organs.

The liver, kidneys, pancreas and the entire alimentary canal are massaged and aligned. It helps to alleviate constipation, dyspepsia, sluggishness of the liver, diabetes and excess fat.

The Spinal Column is aligned and rejuvenated. This relieves stiffness and aids circulation of blood.

Dhamuasana massages the heart.

It is useful for alleviating various chest disease ; improves breathing process.

The various endocrine glands are massaged and toned notably the thyroid and the adrenals.

This helps to alleviate various types of rheumatism.

caution:

People suffering from weak heart, high blood pressure, hernia, peptic and duodenal ulcers, appendicitis colitis, and other abdominal diseases should not do this Asana.

This Asana should not be practiced after meals at least for 3.to 4 hours.

Shashankasana
(Rabbit Posture)

Sit in 'Vajrasana' i. e. sit on the heels with the top of the feet on the floor, so that the buttocks rest on the heels.

Place the hands on the knees, and comfortably straighten the back,

Relax the whole body and close the eyes.

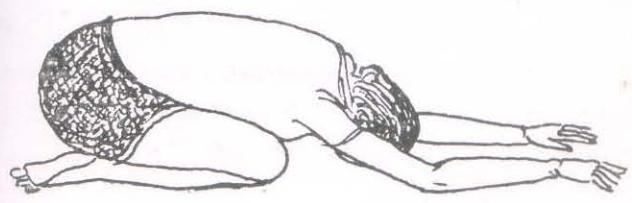
Inhale slowly, and at the same time, slowly raise the arms, keeping them straight.

Slowly exhale, and bend forward.

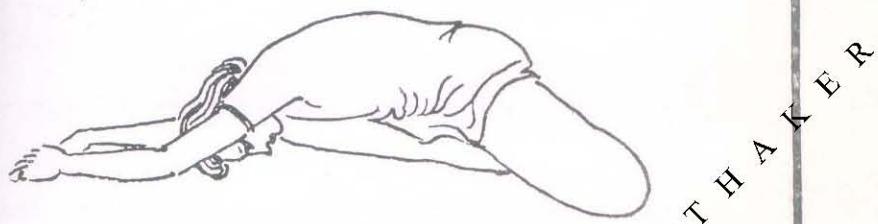
Continue the bend forward, until the palms and forearms rest on the floor. Rest the forehead on the floor.

Stay in this final position for a comfortable length of time.

Breathe slowly and deeply.



SHASHANKASANA



SAITHALYASANA

M H T H A K E R

Inhale, and slowly raise the head, arms and trunk to the vertical position.

Slowly exhale and lower the arms, and return to the original position.

Slowly increase the duration of the final pose.

Benefits:

Shashankasana stretches the back muscles and keeps the vertebra apart. This rejuvenates all the back nerves and important spinal nerves.

The deep breathing during the final pose applies a powerful massage to abdominal organs. This helps to remove and prevent various abdominal disorders like constipation and indigestion.

This Asana is very comfortable and relaxing both to the mind and the body.

VARIATIONS OF SHASHANKASANA

Variation 1 :

Sit in 'Vajrasana',

Hold two arms behind the back and clasp the right wrist with the left hand,

Relax the whole body and close the eyes.

Exhale slowly and bend the whole body until the forehead touches the floor.

Remain in this position, breathing slowly and deeply.

After some time, slowly raise the trunk while inhaling, and return to the standing position.

Variation 2 :

Sit in 'Vajrasana',

Instead of holding the arms behind the back (as in variation 1) the fists are placed in front of the soft portion of the abdomen, just below the navel, the knuckles touching each other.

Exhale slowly and bend the body forward until the forehead touches the floor.

Variation 3 : (Also called 'Pranam8sana')

Sit in 'Vajrasana'.

Clasp the lower part of the calves just above the ankles with hands.

Bend forward and place the crown of the head on the floor in front of the knees.

Raise the hips slowly until the thighs are as vertical as possible.

Breathe normally.

Remain in this pose as long as possible.

Slowly reverse the process and return to the standing position.

Benefits :

This 'Asana' directs extra blood to the brain.

In helps removing tiredness, and mental fatigue, and certain types of head ache

Matsyasana

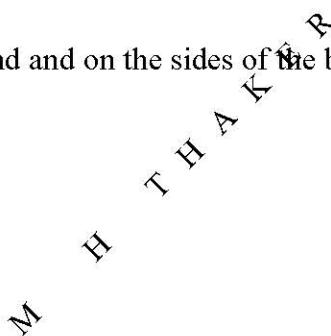
(The Fish Pose)

Sit in 'Padmasana' (Lotus pose)

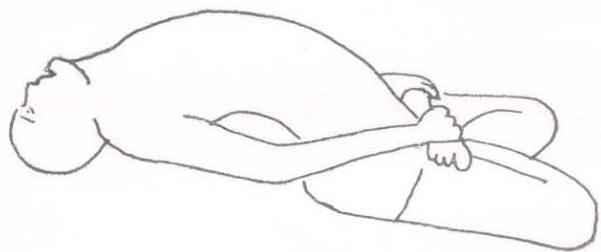
Leaning backwards:

Lean slightly backwards

Place the hands on the floor slightly behind and on the sides of the buttocks.



FISH - MATSYASAN



SPINAL TWIST
ARDHA MASTYENDRASAN

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Support the weight of the body on the straight arms.

Bend the arms, one after the another, so that both elbows rest on the ground.

At this stage, the trunk and head should be supported above the ground behind the buttocks.

Final Position:

Bend your head backwards so that you can see the floor behind your head.

Slowly slide your arms forward away from your head and lower the top of the head towards the floor.

Gently allow the top of the head to support the body weight.

Adjust the position of the head to attain maximum arch of the back.

Relax the arms, the weight of the body being supported by the head, buttocks and legs.

Grasp the big toes with the hands.

This is the final pose.

Stay in this final pose as long as is comfortable.

Breathe slowly and deeply

Then return to the starting position - 'Padmasana' - by executing the stages in the reverse, order using the arms to raise the body back to the upright position.

Matsyasana is a counter-pose for all forward-bending Asanas such as Sashankasana.

It should be performed after any of such type of Asana.

Benefits :

Matsyasana helps to alleviate various types of digestive disorders. It improves breathing process and is beneficial to those who suffer from asthma or lung ailments. It revitalizes the organs in the pelvic regions.

Caution :

Those who suffer from peptic ulcer, hernia or any serious spinal ailments and ladies in advanced stage of pregnancy should not do this Asana..

Supra Valrascma

(Supine posture)

Sit in 'Padmasana' (Lotus Pose).

Bend backwards at the waist, and place both elbows to rest on the ground. (As in Matsyasana - the fish pose).

Arch the spine so that the crown of the head can rest on the floor. Gently allow the top of head to support the body weight.

Keep the neck arched and place the hands on the thighs.

Adjust the position of the head to. get the maximum arch of the back.

Keep the eyes closed and breathe slowly and regularly.

Stay in this position as long as comfortable.

Return to original position - Padmanasana - by executing the stages in the reverse order.

Benefits

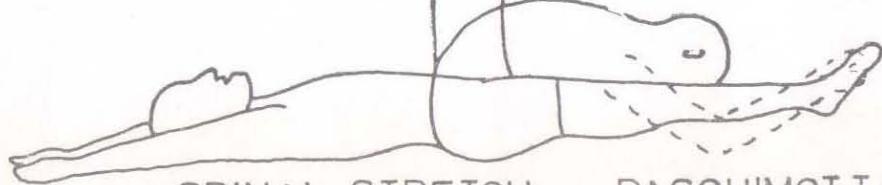
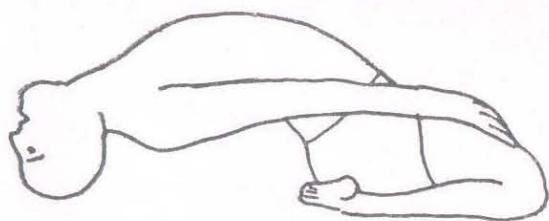
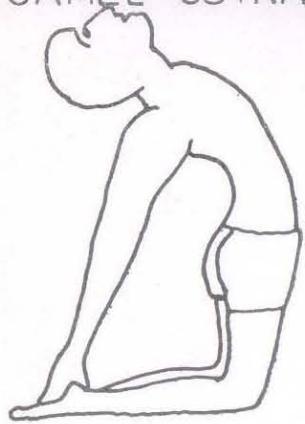
This asan is a counter pose to all forward bending asanas like Paschimattanasana, Sarvangasana etc.

It helps to develop the chest in men and firms and builds the breasts in ladies.

This asana gives the same benefits as 'Matsyasana' and can be performed in place of Matsyasana.

CAMEL USTRASAN

SUPINE
SUPTAVAJRASAN



SPINAL STRETCH

PASCHIMOTTANASAN

M
H T H A K E R

Ushtrasana (The Camel Pose)

Kneel on the floor, adjusting the knees and feet so that they are separated by the same width as the hips.

The top of the feet should rest on the ground. In the starting position, the thighs, trunk and hand should be vertical.

Lean backward slightly. Turn to the right side and grasp the right heel with the right hand.

Straighten the arm, allowing the arm to support the weight of the body.

Grasp the left heel with the left hand.

Drop the head back.

Relax the whole body, especially the back muscles. Utilizing the back muscles, gently push the thighs, pelvis and abdomen forward arching the spine.

Relax the muscles of the neck, legs, arms and back as much as possible.

Breathe normally.

Remain in the final pose as long as is comfortable.

T H A T E

Then return to the standing position by tensing all the muscles and reversing the process.

Benefits:

This Asana stretches the whole of the chest and abdomen. It is useful for abdominal ailments associated with kidneys, intestines, and liver.

The spine is also given a backward bend, thereby loosening the vertebrae and stimulating the spinal nerves.

This Asana is beneficial to those who suffer from backaches, neck ache, stiffness of spine etc.

Sarvangasana
(Shoulder Stand)

Stage 1:

Raising Legs:

Lie flat on your back with both legs straight and together. Straighten your arms and place them beside the body, palms down wards.

Completely relax the whole body.

Hold the breath.

Slowly raise your legs, by contracting the abdominal muscles and/or pressing the arms against the ground, if needed be in the earlier stage. The movement should be gradual and with control.

At this position, the buttocks and head should be on the ground and the legs should be vertical.

Remain in this position for a short time.

Stage 2 : Final Pose

Elevate the legs further off the ground by pressing the arms and hands against the floor, and contracting the abdominal muscles.

Raise the buttocks and legs slowly, until eventually your back is vertical, with the body supported by the two arms and hands, the back of the neck, the shoulders and the back of the head.

Transfer the pressure on the arms to the elbows and upper arms.

Hold the fore-arms upwards and place the hands on the back of the Chest.

Gently push the chest forward so that it presses firmly against the chin.

Straighten the legs so that they are vertical.

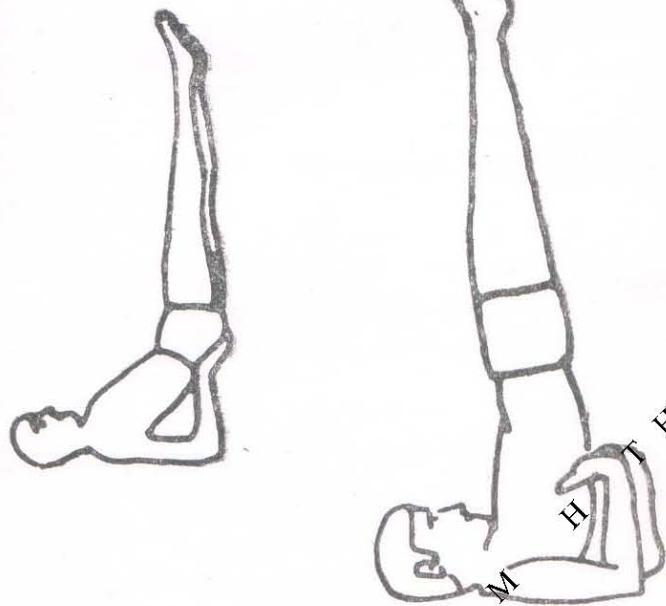
Keep your legs and feet together throughout the movement.

The body should be supported as much as possible by the shoulders, the back of the neck and the back of the head.

PLOUGH
HALASAN



VIPRITKARNI



S H A K E R

SHOLDERSTAND-SARVANGASAN

This is the final pose.

Close the eyes. Relax the whole body, Breathe deeply and slowly

Stage 3 : Returning to the standing position:

Bend the legs at the knees, and bring the knees near the forehead.

Slowly release the position of the hands and place them on the floor.

Slowly lower the buttocks to the floor.

Lower the legs to the ground.

Completely relax the body when it is again flat on the floor.

Precautions;

The movement of the body during raising and lowering should be slow, graceful and controlled. No jerks.

Don't raise the head off the floor throughout the entire practice.

There should be no tension in the legs in the final pose. They should be relaxed.

The chest should be pressed against the chin, but without straining the neck but the chest should be pressed towards the chin. The chin should not be pressed towards the chest. This is important.

The legs should not be separated or bent. They should be kept straight and together throughout the entire practice.

One should not practice Sarvangasana ;

1. If he/she feels physically tried.
2. During the period of illness, fever, cough, cold etc.
3. until after 3 hours after meals.
4. Ladies during menstruation and advanced stages of pregnancy.

Sarvangasana can be done by persons of all ages. old and. young, male or female.

People should not perform 'Sarvangasana' without seeking expert advice, if they suffer from the following:

- (i) Weak heart or high blood pressure.
- (ii) Excessively enlarged Thyroid.
- (iii) Weak blood vessels in the eyes.
- (iv) Cerebral thrombosis.
- (v) Arteriosclerosis.
- (vi) Slipped discs..

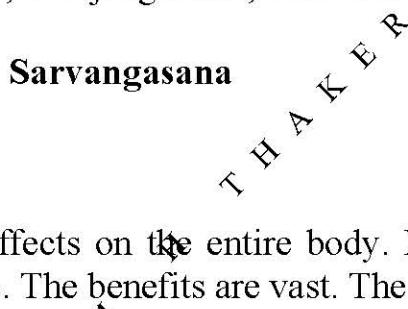
Counter pose :

It is important to practice a counter pose after an inverted Asana.

The counter pose can be any asana which bends the head backwards, to remove the tension in the neck.

In the case of Sarvangasana any of the following asanans can be practiced as a counter pose.

'Matayasana', 'Stupa Vajrasana', 'Bhujangasana', 'Chakrasana'. 'Ushtrasana'.



Benefits:

Sarvangasana has beneficial effects on the entire body. It should be an integral part of everyday Asana programme. The benefits are vast. The following are some :

It has direct influence on thyroid glands and helps to remove many diseases and to maintain good health of the entire body.

It improves the blood supply to the brain, and increases brain power.

It improves the flexibility of the vertebral column and the nerves that pass through the neck and brain.

It is very useful for asthmatics, those who suffer from slight high blood pressure, piles etc.

Regular practice helps to remove various types of digestive ailments, diabetes.

It is useful for toning the legs and removing fatigue.

Finally, Sarvagasana is an excellent method for obtaining mental tranquility and helps to bring harmony and peace in man's life.

Halasana
(the Plough Pose)

Basic Form:

Lie flat on your back, with both legs straight and together.

Straighten the arms and place them beside the body - palms facing either upwards or downwards.

Completely relax the body: breathe in deeply.

Slowly raise the two legs to the vertical position, by contracting the abdominal muscles and pressing the arms against the floor if need be, in the earlier stages.

Then fold the legs over to the top of the head. keeping them straight. As the legs are raised over the head. the buttocks and hips should also be raised.

Breathe in deeply and hold the breath.

Gently lower the feet towards the floor behind the head and touch the toes to the ground behind the head.

(this will require gradual practice) There should be no stressing. This is the final pose.

The hands and arms can:



- (i) either remain in the same position i.e. flat on the floor or
- (ii) the forearms folded and palms placed behind the hips.

In the final pose, relax the whole body, keeping the legs straight.

Breathe slowly and deeply.

Remain in the final pose as long as comfortable.

Then return to the standing position, by reversing various movements.

The movements should be slow and controlled using the abdominal muscles as much as possible.

Legs should be brought down gently to the ground.

The back of the head should remain in contact with the ground throughout.

Benefits:

'Halasana' gives the same benefits as 'Sarvangasana'. It is forward bending and semi-inverted pose. It has more emphasis on the back, abdomen and the pelvis. It leads to better efficiency of the body.

It is most beneficial with Sarvangasana.

These two can be performed one after the another, followed by a Counter pose.

Variation of 'Halasana':

There are many variations of Halsana, which have distinctive advantages. They are performed from the final pose of Halasana. These variations can be practiced individually or one after the other.

Variations 1 :

Starting pose is final pose of basic Halasana.

From the final pose of Halasana, gradually move the toes nearer towards the back of the head. Grasp the toes with the hands to accelerate the process. The legs should be kept straight and together.

Relax the body as much as possible.

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Breathe slowly and deeply.

This variation stretches the lower back.

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Variation 2 :

From the final pose of the basic Halsana, gradually move the toes away from the back of the head.

Place the hands behind the hips. The toes should be as far away from the head as is comfortably possible.

The legs should remain straight and together.

Relax the body. Breathe slowly and deeply.

This variation produces accentuated stretch of the upper back and neck.

Variation 3:

From the final pose of basic Halasan , place the arms on the floor behind the head.

Grape the big toes with the fingers.

The toes should be moved as far away from the head as possible.

Hold the final pose breathing deeply and slowly. Relax tension and relax.

This variation stretches all the back muscle and toe nerves.

It also massages the kidneys and adrenal glands.

Variation 4 :

From the final pose of the basic Halasana. separate the legs by about half a meter.

Bend the legs and bring the knees as close as possible, towards the shoulders and the ears.

Place the knees on the ground.

The thighs should be folded as closely against the chest as possible.

The top of the feet should lie flat on the ground.

Wrap the arms around the back of the- knees and head.

Try to relax the body. Breathe deeply and slowly.

In this variation, the neck muscles are given a powerful stretch. The cervical (neck) vertebra muscles loosened and the nerves tuned. It also squeezes and massages the thyroid and parathyroid gland in the throat.

Simha Asan (Lion Pose }

Sit in Vajrasana..

Spread the knees a few inches, the toes should remain in contact, Palms can be on the ground or on the knees, with fingers spread, elbows pointing backwards.

Bend slightly forward, tensing the body and assume the position as If you were a lion about to spring. Give maximum stretch to the front of the neck and tilt the head backwards.. Keep the eyes open and the tongue struck out.

Keep your gaze on the center of the brows or on the tip of the nose.

Inhale deeply. While exhaling, produce a clear loud, steady, vocal sound, 'Ha' from the throat.

Repeat a number of times.

There are a number of variances of doing Simha Kriya'.

This is an excellent exercise for the face, bringing fresh blood to the face, to keep the skin firm and enlivened. It also helps to massage the throat and vocal cords. It is an useful practice for removing pharyngitis, Laryngitis and other throat ailments, sore throat etc.

Makarasana
(The Crocodile Pose)

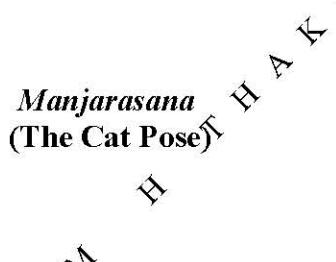
Lie flat on the stomach with the head and shoulders raised off the ground.

Hold the head cupped in the palms with the elbows resting on the ground.

Relax the whole body, close the eyes and breathe rhythmically.

Benefits:

This is simple 'Asana' for those who suffer from spinal or lung ailments. Lie in the 'Asana' as long as you can.



Sit with the knees on the ground.

Lean forward and place both hands flat on the ground, in front of the knees, in such a position that when your trunk is horizontal, the arms should be vertical.

The thighs should be vertical.

Relax the whole body.

Arch your neck upwards, while exhaling so that it forms (makes) a hump.

Contract the abdomen, as far as possible.

At the end of the exhalation, your head should be between the arms, facing towards the thighs.

Slowly depress your back, and raise your head as you breathe in. At the end of the inhalation, the face should be facing upwards and the spine should be arched as much as possible in a concave curve. Expand the abdomen as far as possible while inhaling.

Then raise your back upwards, while lowering the head and breathing out.

Repeat the process, as many times as can be comfortably done.

Benefits: .

This 'Asana' loosens up the spine, and is beneficial to persons with rigid spine and chronic back ache or neck ache.

It has a beneficial influence on the internal organs of digestion, reproduction and elimination.

This 'Asana' is particularly beneficial to women.

Ardha Matsyendrasana
(Half Spinal Twist Pose)

Sit on the floor with both legs stretched in front of the body. Bend the left leg at the knee, and bring it close to the groin area.

Grasp the right leg and carry the foot over the left knee.

Place the right foot, so that the sole is flat on the floor and the ankle close to left-knee, outside, the foot and toe shall point forward.

Place the right hand on the floor to balance, and then lift the left hand over the right knee so that you can grasp the right ankle.

The elbow of the left arm should be firmly against the right knee.

Relax the whole body, especially the back. Keep the trunk straight and vertical, and twist it towards the right arm, which should be resting on the floor slightly behind you.

Then turn the face in the same direction as the trunk so that you face over the shoulders.

Make the sure that the trunk and head are upright and that the back muscles are relaxed.

In the final position, the shoulders should remain at the same level.

Breathe slowly and deeply.

Remain in the twisted position as long as it is comfortable.

Then release the twist and return to the starting position, and straighten both the legs.

Repeat the twist on the other side of the body by the opposite arms and legs.

This Asana keeps the spine healthy and flexible, promotes circulation of blood, and relieves tension and stiffness throughout the body. This is also beneficial in the treatment of back ache, neck ache, head ache, cases of sciatica and stiffness of the body.

Shavasana
(The Corpse Pose-Complete Relaxation)

Stage 1:

Lie flat on your back in the supine position. (Place a small pillow far resting your head and shoulders).

Rest the arms in line with and in each side of the body but slightly away from the body. The palms should face upwards, and the hands should not be clenched. Legs should be straight and slightly separated close your eyes.

Try to feel the different parts of the body in contact with the floor. This is important for developing the awareness of the different parts of the body.

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

b) Now feel the contact between the floor and the right heel for a few seconds.

Repeat the same with the left heel.

c) Now feel the contact between the floor and the right arm, right hand, left arm, left hand, the middle of the back each shoulder, back of the hand, and finally the whole body -feel the contact for a few seconds at each point of contact.

Next, try to feel that your whole right leg:

a) is heavy and is sinking into the floor. Feel the right leg become limp.

Do this for a few seconds.

b) Repeat this with the left leg

c) Repeat the same thing with your right arm, then, the left arm.

Feel your shoulders slump into the pillow.

Remove load from the shoulders.

Relax completely during the entire duration of the practice.

Try not to move any part of the body during the practice.

Maximum benefit is derived if your attention is totally involved in the practice.

This practice is meant to give complete relaxation of the mind and the body, which is a first requirement for the practice of Yoga.

Stage 2:

Lie on your back in the supine position as described in stage 1.
Eyes and mouth should be closed. The body should be completely relaxed.

NOW;

Feel that your head is very heavy.
Feel the heaviness of the whole body.

Imagine that your whole body is so heavy that it is sinking into the floor.

Feel the gravity acting through every party of the body and pulling it towards the ground.

NOW:

Watch the space or blankness in front of your closed eyes.

Imagine that this space surrounded your whole body and that your whole body is in the middle of this space.

Try to imagine that your body is slowly sinking in that space, slowly and slowly.

Feel your body sinking, sinking into the depths of that infinite space.

Do this for few number of times, or two minutes or if you like even longer.

NOW:

Become aware of your breath -becoming aware of the flow of breath in and out of your nostrils.

At the end of the practice, slowly open your eyes, stretch your hands, then your arms, stretch your feet and legs and become aware of the surroundings.

The whole practice should be done with full alertness and awareness of all the process at each stage, and without any tension.

The aim of 'Shavasana' is to gain a high state of relaxation while being fully awake.

Practice Of 'Shavasana' a few times every day is beneficial to persons who suffer from high blood pressure, neurasthenia., diabetes and other ailments directly related to excessive stress.

Yogamudra

Sit in Padmasana.

Close the eyes.

Hold the hands behind the back either with the fingers of both the hands interlocked or with the left hand holding the right wrist.

This is the starting position.

Relax the whole body.

Breathe slowly and deeply.

Then inhale deeply.

Exhale while slowly bending the trunk forwards.

Try to touch your forehead on the ground in front of your body; if this is not possible, merely bend forwards as far as you can comfortably.

This is the final pose.

Relax the whole body, especially the back, as much as possible. Breathe slowly and deeply, feeling the expansion and contraction of the abdomen.

Stay in the final position for as long as you can. Then slowly raise the body to the starting position, while breathing in.

This is the basic technique.

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Breathing:

Breathing should be synchronized with the physical movement during Yoga Mudra. This is important, For clarity, the breathing sequence is listed below.

Breathe normally in the starting position, while relaxing the mind and body. Then inhale deeply once before bending forwards. Exhale as you lean forwards. Breathe deeply and slowly in the final pose. Inhale as you return to the starting position,

Counter pose :

Yoga Mudra is a forward bending asana. Therefore, it is ideally preceded and followed by a backward bending asana, such as Ushtrasana, Bhujangasana or Shalabhasana.

Benefits :

Yoga Mudra is most useful for relaxing the whole mind and body.

As such it is an excellent prelude to meditative practices. This asana helps to improve the functioning of the organs in the abdominal and pelvic regions, and can help to alleviate various types of sexual disorders.

Sirhasana
(Head Stand)

Sirhasana should be gradually developed and practiced in stages. The initial stages have to be practiced and perfected before the attempting to final pose.

Sirhasana should be practiced with a blanket or thin cushion, , to protect the top of the head.

Place the blanket on the floor.

1) Kneel in front of the blanket.

Interlock the fingers.

Place the forearms flat on the blanket so that the elbows are about 10 inches apart.

Lean forward and place the head on the floor, with the top of the head resting on the blanket.

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Wrap the interlocked arms around the back of the head, and adjust them so that they firmly support the head.

2.Lift the knees of the floor. Shift the position of the toes so that they rest on the floor.

Straight the legs so that the body is supported on the head, two arms and the toes of the feet.

Slowly bring the toes nearer to the face, so that the knees come nearer the chest. This will make the back move towards the vertical position.

3. Keeping the vertical, slowly bend the legs.

close as possible to the chest.

Transfer all the body weight on to the arms and the head. Lean forward, and raise the foot, and lift both feet off the ground keeping the knees close to the chest.

Keep this position for a few seconds, maintaining balance.

Slowly raise your legs, adjusting the position the position of the trunk to counterbalance the weight of the legs.

Fold the legs upwards and backwards as so that the heels move towards the buttocks. Maintain equilibrium.

Keeping the knees near the buttock, slowly raise the knees upwards. The knees should point directly upwards and the feet pointing downwards.

The spine and the thighs should be in line, straight and vertical.

Slowly raise the feet so that they point upwards and the legs become straight.

The whole body should be in one straight line.

This is the final pose of Sirshasana

Relax the whole body as much as possible.

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Close the eyes.

Breathe slowly and deeply.

Stay in the final pose as long as is comfortable, say 10 minutes.

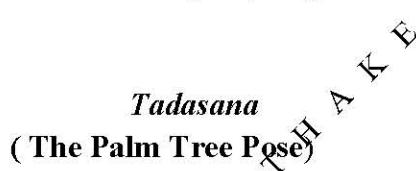
Then return to the starting position on the floor, by performing the stages in the reverse order. The body should be lowered slowly and with control and should not be dropped down.

To come down, first slowly bend the knees, and slowly lower them to the chest, letting the trunk tilt forward a little to maintain the balance. When the knees came close to the chest, lower feet to the ground keep the head on the ground for a minute after you came down.

Raise the head and return to the starting position..

Rub the palms of the hand together and place them on the face, rubbing them lightly over it.

After Sirshasan, it is essential to do a counter-pose, e. g. Tadasana, to return to normalcy the body functions.



Stand erect with your feet about 6 inches apart. Keep the eyes open throughout the practice.

Gaze at a point in front of you, or above you, but the gaze must be fixed on the point throughout the entire practice

Interlock the fingers of both the hands. Hold your arms directly above your head.

Gently adjust your hands so that the palms face upwards. Stretch your whole body upwards as far as possible. Stretch your arms, keeping the fingers interlocked.

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Raise yourself on tiptoe, trying to stretch up as high as you can.

Remain in this final position for a few seconds, but keeping your gaze fixed on the chosen point.

Lower the body, and bend and relax the arms.

Allow the backs of your hands to rest on your head. Rest for a few seconds, and then repeat another round.

Benefits :

This 'Asana' develops a sense of balance. The whole body is stretched, and it loosens the entire spinal column. The abdominal organs and muscles are also toned up.

Tiryaka Tadasana . (Wind blown Palm Tree Pose)

Stand erect with the feet about 6 inches apart.

Stretch your arms about your head,, fingers interlock in the same way as described for 'Tadasana'.

Gaze at a point in front of you or above you. Throughout the practice, the gaze must remain fixed on the point.

Stretch your whole body and raise yourself on tip toes. (4)

Maintain this stretched position, and bend your body to the right.

Return to position (4) and bend the body to the left.

Repeat this round, bending the body alternately to the right and the left, keeping always the arms in line with your body.

Note :

Try to bend the body from the waist. Keep the body stretched to the maximum, and balanced on the balls on your feet.

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Trikonasana (The Triangle Pose)

There are distinct variations of performing of Trikonasana. They all start from the same standing position with legs apart.

Variation 1 :

Stand erect with the feet 2 to 3 ft apart. Lift the arms sideways to the shoulder level, with the palms turned upwards and inhale. The arms and shoulders should be in one straight line and parallel to the ground.

Bend slowly to the right and exhale. Touch the right toe with the fingers of the right hand. The left leg must be kept straight. Do not bend forward.

Your arms should remain in one straight line, with your head facing forward — the right hand touching the right foot, and simultaneously the left hand pointing upwards.

While inhaling raise the body and while exhaling turn the head upwards to the left and gaze at the left hand.

Repeat this a few times.

Return to the standing position by reversing the movements.

Inhale while straightening the body and returning to the standing position.

Repeat the same movement, bending to the left.

This completes one round. . Perform a number of rounds.

Variation 2 :

The procedure is the same as in variation (i) up to the point where you touch the right foot with the right hand, head facing forward, and the left arm raised vertically.

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Now, slowly swing your left arm downward over the left side of your head, and touching the left ear. Do not bend forward; but the whole body should be in one vertical plan©.

Slowly return to the starting position.

Repeal the same process, leaning the body to the left. Return to the starting position.

This is one round. Perform a number of times.

Variation 3 :

Stand in the same position as for variation (i). Place both palms on the sides of the waist.

This is the standing position.

Lean to the right side, while slowly sliding the right hand down the right hip and leg, towards the right foot; try to touch your foot with the right hand.

Simultaneously raise your left hand upwards, towards the arm-pit, keeping the palm always in contact with the left side of your chest.

Do not bend the body forward. Your legs, arms, trunk and head should as far as possible in the same vertical plane.

Slowly return to the starting position, bringing your right hand upwards and pushing the left hand downwards to the original position at the side of the waist.

Repeat the same process, now bending to the left side.

This is one round. Perform few rounds.

Variation 4 :

Start with the feet as wide apart as possible. Place your hands behind your back and hold the left wrist with the right hand. This is the starting position.

Twist the hips to the right, keeping the feet in the same position.

Slowly bend to the right side, and try to touch the right knee with the nose.

The left leg should be kept straight, but the right leg may slightly be bent at the knee.

This is the final position, to the starting position.

Hold for a second or two; and return

Repeat and the same process, bending to the left side.

This is one round.

Perform a few rounds.

Variation 5 :

Stand erect with your feet 2-3 ft. apart.

Stretch the arms side ways horizontally.

Bend forward at the waist so that your head, trunk and arms are in the same horizontal plans.
Look forward.

Turn your waist to the right and touch your right foot with your left hand.

Turn the hands in such a way that when the left hand touches the right foot, the right hand points directly upwards.

At the end of the movement, turn your head and look upwards
at your right hand.

Stay in the final position for a second or two.

Then twist your body in the opposite direction, touching your left foot with your right hand, and the left hand positioning upwards straight.

In this way twist your body a few times.

Then return to the starting position.

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Hold your breath while twisting your body to each side. Breathe in as you resume the standing position. Breathe out as you lower your arms.

All the different variations can be performed one after the other.

Benefits:

This asana influences the region of the waist. The spinal nerves, and the entire nerves system, are toned up. It loosens up the muscles and joints of the body, fortifies abdominal organs, and helps in releasing constipation.

Pavana Muktasana (The Wind Releasing Pose)

Lie flat on your back.

Relax the whole body.

Bend the right leg and bring the thigh and knee as near as to the chest as possible. The other leg should remain straight.

Place the hands over the knee and interlock the fingers.

Gently pull the knee nearer to the chest. Relax the whole body keeping the straight leg, back and head on the floor.

Breathe in slowly, simultaneously raising the head and shoulders. At the end of the inhalation, the forehead, nose, chin and neck should touch the right knee, or as close to it as possible.

Hold the breath for a short time in this raised pose. Exhale slowly and lower the head and shoulders to the floor.

Then Inhale again while repeating the same procedure.

Do a number of rounds.

Then straighten the bent leg and relax the whole body for a short time.

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Then bend the other leg towards the chest and repeat the same procedure, the same number of times.

Straighten the left leg and relax the whole body for a short time. Now fold both legs and draw towards the chest.

Repeat the same process of raising the head and shoulders, as mentioned above.

Do a few rounds.

Straighten both legs and relax the whole body.

Benefits:

This Asana gives excellent massage to the abdominal organs. This helps in relieving the ailments associated with the inefficient functioning of the abdominal organs.

It also tones up the back muscles and spinal nerves.