

YOGASANAS



CSR Prabhu

CSR PRABHU : RESUME

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At CMC, he was a project leader with the responsibility for the development of design of a relational DBMS (RDBMS). While in USA, He was a consultant to Florida Savings and Loans, Orlando, NASA at Cape Canaveral, Florida and Hughes Aircraft Corporation, Irvine, California, on various assignments in database application areas.

He also has teaching and research experience at the University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida. He has guided a large number of student research projects at masters level and has several papers to his credit.

At NIC, New Delhi he was responsible for the Computerisation of the Ministry of Programme Implementation and at NIC, Hyderabad, he was Head of the Software and Training Division. As the National Coordinator of GISTNIC (General Informatics Service Terminal, National Informatics Centre), he has developed a large number of public databases in areas such as tourism, education, economy, census, rural and traditional technologies during 1990-1997.

He was State Informatics Officer for Tamil Nadu during 1997 to 1999 where he coordinated the development of the software for a generalised "Block Information System" and also "Taluka Information System". He also organised a National Seminar on 'Datawarehousing in Government' in Chennai.

He was the Chairman of Programme Committee of 9th International Conference on Management of Data (COMAD 98) in 1998 at Hyderabad. He was the Event Chairman of National Conference on Mobile Computing, held at Hyderabad in December, 2000.

He was the State Informatics Officer for Andhra Pradesh during the period 2000-2006. In Andhra Pradesh he was

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responsible for the successful implementation of a number of e-governance projects such as Collectorate 2000 and e-Panchayat. The e-Panchayat Project was conceived, initiated and implemented by him and is under operationalisation in 475 village panchayats in Andhra Pradesh.

He has authored six text books in frontier areas in Computer Science: (1) Semantic Databases Systems: A Functional Introduction (1992), (2) Object Oriented Database Systems : Approaches and Architectures (1998), (3) Datawarehousing Concepts, Methodologies, Products and Applications (2000), (4) Bluetooth Technology and its applications with Java & J2ME (2005), (5) e-Governance – Concepts and Case Studies (2005) and (6) Grid and Cluster Computing (2008). He was also the Editor of the Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Management of Data (COMAD 98). He was the Editor of Proceedings of National Conference on Mobile Computing held at Hyderabad in 2000. He was elected and served as the Chairman of Computer Society of India, Hyderabad Chapter for 2002-2003 and 2003-2004.

He was awarded the Oracle eGovernance Excellence Awards for “Innovation with IT” and “e-Panchayat” in January, 2006. He was also awarded the “Skoch Challenger Awards” for “e-Panchayat” and “Rural e-Seva” in March, 2006.

Presently he is the Head of NIC's Disaster Recovery (DR) Centre at Hyderabad and is involved in designing and implementing an e-governance grid for India (e-ggI), covering all the States and District Centres over the NICNET.

Yoga

He began his training in Yoga at the age of 8 from his mother Late Smt. Ch. Venkata Laxmi. Formal training in Yoga from the age of 10 (in 1964) was received at Sri Ramakrishna Math from Late Shri Suri Raghava Dikshitulu, a disciple of Swami Dharendra Brahmachari and Swami Satyananda Saraswati, Founder of Bihar School of Yoga. He was also trained under the Bihar School of Yoga style for Hatha Yoga. He was also trained under various teachers and Swamis for higher Raja Yoga practices. He was especially trained in Pranayama towards Samadhi by HH Swami Sheelananda Bharati Maharaj of Dhuniwala Sansthan (Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh, India) at Hyderabad during 1971-1976. He began teaching Yoga over 40 years ago and has 45 years experience of Yoga practice. He established many Yoga centres in India and his students are teaching Yoga in various centres in India, USA and Russia. He has authored two books on Yoga: (1) Yogic Sukshma Vyayama, (2) Yoga Asanas.

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YOGASANAS

CSR Prabhu

Introduction

This is the Second Book in Yoga Series by the Author (The First Book was on Yogic Sukshma Vyayama, a set of 50 standing exercises, for all parts of the body). The reader may first read the First Book and practise the same before Yoga Asanas.

In this book we have provided a brief description, effects and benefits of all the important Yoga Asanas in the correct sequence as given in the book. The sequence is very important, to be strictly followed while practising Yoga Asanas. If some Asanas are to be dropped due to any reason they can be dropped but the same sequence has to be maintained. Asanas have to be practised with empty stomach either early morning (5-8 A.M.) or in the evening (6-8 P.M.). Tight Underwear (Langot) is essential. All the Asanas are required to be practised as slowly as possible with appropriate breathing and concentration. It is absolutely essential that you learn all asanas only from an experienced teacher. Shavasana (rest) has to be practised at the end (and also in between whenever required).

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1 **SUPTA PAVANA MUKTASANA** (LYING WIND RELEASE POSTURE)

POSTURE : Lie on the back with the feet extended. The left leg should be bent both at the groin and the knee. It should be held firm against the chest by encircling it with the arms. The head, the shoulders, and the right leg should also be raised above the ground. The posture should be repeated by bending the right leg. Finally both legs can be bent, followed by rolling motion sideways and also front ward. Breathe out when you press the leg on the abdomen and breathe in while releasing to stretch to normal position. Concentrate on the navel.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS : Wind in the abdomen and indigestion are symptomatic of a poorly functioning gastro-intestinal system. This weakness is relieved by the practice of this asana. Due to the pressure exerted on the abdomen by this asana, the colonic accumulations of gases are pressed out through the anorectal passage.

Note: Same posture in sitting position (with each leg and both legs) is called **Utkata Pavana Muktasana**.

3
PASCHIMOTTASANA
(POSTERIOR-STRETCH POSTURE)



2 **PASCHIMOTTANASANA** (POSTERIOR-STRETCH POSTURE)

POSTURE : One leg (at a time) should be stretched forward with hand clinging the toes. Breathing out, bend forward so as to touch the head to the knee. Later both the legs should be stretched together on the ground and, by making an effort, the toes should be firmly held with the hands. The head should be placed on the knees. Concentrate on the lower back of the lower spinal chord.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS : The practice of this asana ensures proper circulation of blood in the whole body. It makes the spine resilient, which in turn cures many diseases. Those who have heavy thighs and buttocks can derive extraordinary benefit from its practice. Dermatological (skin) diseases are cured. The waist becomes supple. The odours of the body are removed and a pleasant aroma is generated. The Prana and Apana get united. The practice of this asana relieves arthritis, sciatica, backache, pain in the knees, the thighs and the legs. The face becomes radiant and the mind gets repose. Irritable persons are advised to practise this asana. It also induces a keen appetite for food. Further, a variety of worms infesting the gut get killed and eradicated through the practice of this asana. The usefulness of this asana is in direct proportion to the length of time it is practised. This asana should not be practised with jerks.

Note: For beginners it may be difficult to bend forward so as to touch the head to the knee (while breathing out). However, repeated long time practice will gradually loosen the back and the head can reach the knees nearer and nearer. Better bending is possible if you lie down and come up with a swing.



3 **VAJRASANA** (ADAMANTINE POSTURE)

VAJRASANA SERIES

POSTURE: Squatting on the toes and placing the heels beneath the anus, the hands are placed on the thighs while keeping the trunk and the neck erect. The asana can be performed also with the heels placed on either side of the buttocks. Bending forward with hands at the back touch the head to the ground while exhaling. This is called **Sasankasana**, which can be practised six times.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS : The body gets strong and firm from the practice of this asana. Hence the yogis have named it Vajrasana, implying that through its practice the body becomes like adamantine Vajra. Through this the toes, knees, legs and thighs get strong. It is extremely useful for those who are prone to excessive sleep. It has proved useful for students and those who keep late hours at night. It should be practised for 5 minutes after meals, when the flow of the nadis (pranic channels) is usually downwards, the asana reverses this flow and it ascends and thus helps in the speedy digestion of food. The essence derived after the digestion of food is so wholesome and pure that the whole body, including the bones and the nadis, becomes like adamant. This is the only asana that is permitted to be practised immediately after food and no other asana is permitted upto three-and-a-half hours after food. Vajrasana, which is performed by keeping the feet on the sides of the anus makes the thighs adamant and is a bestower of many perfections and supernatural faculties (Siddhis) to the yogi, in the long run, by higher yogic practices. Sasankasana, the forward bend on Vajrasana, is beneficial in constipation, gastritis, obesity and other abdominal related problems.



4 SUPTA VAJRASANA (LYING-ADAMANTINE POSTURE)

POSTURE : Sit in Vajrasana and swing the trunk backwards while breathing in until the head touches the ground. Both hands should be placed on the thighs, or touching the chest. Take normal breaths in that position and return back upwards while inhaling.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS : This asana relieves fatigue, it makes the waist resilient and the chest broad. If it is practised from early childhood, asthma can be prevented. It relieves painful conditions of the back and the knees. It is good for the throat and diseased tonsils. The asana proves useful in certain cases of ocular disease as well. It is useful for the restoration of the dislodged 'navel' to its normal position, but all such techniques should be learnt from a teacher of yoga. A special feature of the asana is that, by improving circulation of blood, it makes for a healthy body. Hence, it has been named Supta Vajrasana.

Note: Vajrasana followed by Sasankasana (forward bending) and Supta Vajrasana (backward bending) repeated (upto six times) make a full cycle. The breathing process and sequence is very important: While bending forward always breathe out. While coming up always breathe in. Again while going back bending backward breathe in and breathe out after touching the head to the ground. Take a few normal breaths and come up breathing in. This set of three asanas repeated, results in many benefits such as reduction of the abdominal fat, improved digestion, overcoming constipation and also indigestion with gastritis. It also helps improve the flexibility of the spinal cord. This set can be practised right on the bed while waking up.

ARDHA MATSYENDHARANA
(HALF-MATSENDHARANA POSTURE)



5 **ARDHA MATSYENDRASANA** (HALF-MATSYENDRASPINE-TWIST POSTURE)

POSTURE : Sit on the ground with the left leg bent and the heel under the anus. The right foot should then be placed near the left knee on the ground. The left arm should encircle the knee and the hand should grasp the toes of the right foot. The right arm should be taken behind the back around the waist in an attempt to touch the navel. While looking straight in front the chin should touch the shoulder. The asana should be repeated by using the alternate limbs. Breathing can be normal. The head can be turned back while exhaling and turned front while inhaling.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS : The physiological benefits of this asana are similar to those of Full or Purna Matsyendrasana. The asana is as efficient in the eradication of disease as it is for unifying Prana and Apana in Sushumna and for awakening Kundalini in order to attain deep contemplation and self-realization(Samaadhi). However, since not more than one person in thousand can do it correctly, the great yogi Matsyendranatha, moved by his compassion for men, invented this half-Matsyendrasana, so that those who could not practise the Matsyendrasana may derive almost as much benefit from Ardha-Matsyendrasana. The Matsyendrasana stimulates gastric secretion. Various abdominal disorders such as flatulence, enlargement of spleen, liver disorder, intestinal disorder, all can be effectively and prevented. Worms in the in intestines and gastro-intestinal tract can be removed. Medical tests have proved that this asana provides immense benefit in the cases of diabetes mellitus. The spinal chord becomes supple and flexible.

Note: Full or Purna Matsyendrasana requires the foot to be kept on the lap (touching the abdomen) instead of keeping on the ground as in the case of Ardha or Half Matsyendrasana. This posture is extremely difficult and thus half pose is popular.



COMING
(COM)

THE FIRST
THE SECOND
THE THIRD
THE FOURTH
THE FIFTH
THE SIXTH
THE SEVENTH
THE EIGHTH
THE NINTH
THE TENTH
THE ELEVENTH
THE TWELFTH

6 **GOMUKHASANA** (COW-HEAD POSTURE)

POSTURE : Sit on the ground with the left leg bent so that the heel touches the anus. The right leg also should be bent so that the right heel touches the left buttock. Care should be taken that the left foot remains straight, touching the ground, and the toes of the right foot also touch the ground. The right arm should be raised and bent at the elbow behind the shoulders towards the back. The left arm should be bent upwards behind the back so that all the eight fingers of both the hands are interlocked. Then the right elbow should be lowered as far as possible. During all this, the eyes have to be kept open and the respiration has to go on as usual. The process should be repeated by starting this time on the right side instead of the left as described above. This would result in bringing the right foot near the anus.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS : The practice of this asana gives strength to the feet, knees, and waist. The arms and shoulders develop. The chief and unique characteristic of this asana is that it is helpful in diseases of the lungs. Patients of asthma and phthisis (tuberculosis of the lungs) should specially practice it because the respiratory movement of the lung on the side on which it is performed is almost stopped and the other lung works more rapidly and vigorously. By alternating its practice, the resting lung can be forced into a state of increased activity. This way the cleansing as well as the haemo-circulatory actions on the lungs are initiated and enhanced. It is possible to inhale markedly greater amounts of oxygen than is ordinarily needed. In this manner, innumerable pores and alveoli of the lungs get cleaned up. It is on this account that yogis have held the practice of this asana to be of a general utility for all types of individuals.



7 **USHTRASANA** (CAMEL POSTURE)

POSTURE: Lying face downward, bend the knees and hold the legs just above the ankles. Then raise the body from the waist upwards while inhaling. Laying face upwards both the legs bent and holding the legs, the body should be contracted powerfully, as shown in the photograph. Hold the breath at the top position. Return to normal position while exhaling.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS: The practice of the asana removes constipation and stimulates the gastric secretions. It also relieves ache or colic of the abdomen. A distinctive and important aspect of this asana is that it restores the displaced 'navel' to its normal position. The vertebral column (spine) becomes resilient. It also postpones the onset of old age and senility. It is useful as a general preventive against disease. It is a must for patients of diabetes mellitus. Besides, it is rated an excellent general prophylactic, if practiced daily. Patients of hernia should avoid it.



8 SAVASANA OR MRTASANA (CORPSE POSTURE)

POSTURE, EFFECTS AND BENEFITS

Lie on the ground on the back with the outstretched hands placed near the buttocks with the palms upward. The heels must touch each other while the toes point outwards. The whole body should be relaxed to the extent of a feeling of being separated from the body. All the parts of the body-neck, chest, shoulders, waist, back, belly, eyes, knees, legs, feet, and hands-should be completely relaxed. It should be ensured that not even the smallest part of the body remains tense. However tired a person may be, if this asana is performed for even ten or fifteen minutes, it will give total relaxation. Regular practice can bring down blood pressure and help in cases of hypertension, high blood pressure, anxiety and stress, resulting in tranquility, calmness and peace. Those who either have no capacity for work or who tire out soon must practise this asana. It has to be performed by all yogis, amateurs and adepts alike, because, without this asana, the fatigue generated in the minute nerves and tissues by the performance of various asanas and pranayama cannot be relieved; it is the Savasana alone which can remove it. The yogis get relief from the fatigue produced by the Pranayama, which is practised continuously for many hours, by the performance of this corpse posture. The corpse posture is so intimately linked with Sirhsasana that it is imperative to perform Savasana for half as long a period as was devoted to the performance of Sirhsasana. It is useful for the yogis to sleep in Savasana. The asana is also utilised for the attainment of samadhi (a state of deep meditation). The Savasana removes physical as well as mental fatigue, and has been accorded a pride of place in the science of yoga. Savasana is a unique feature of the yogic system of exercises and is unparalleled by any other exercise in the whole gamut of physical education, being a process in which not only is



there no active contractile tension generated in the motor organs of the body, but an attempt at active relaxation is made to include every part of the body. This creates unexpected physiological possibilities. The unsurpassed relaxation provided by this asana can, in part at least, be explained in physiological terms. During the state of profound muscular relaxation, the muscle tone, and consequently the intra-tissue tension, falls precipitously. This results in a marked lowering of the peripheral extra-vascular-resistance against that of arterial blood and blood pressure can be reduced. In consequence, on the one hand, more nutrients and oxygen enter the muscle mass and thus help in providing the requisite raw materials for releasing energy and, on the other hand, provide a ready outflow of accumulated waste materials, metabolic intermediaries (some of which are markedly toxic even in low concentrations), and gaseous end-products like carbondioxide. A flushing out of these substances relieves the metabolic checks. It is believed that the feeling of fatigue in the exercised muscles is an account of the accumulated lactic and other acids. A diminution in their concentration by their being flushed out as well as by their quick disposal due to enhanced oxygen levels would and does result in relief from the sense of fatigue. This asana can be performed at anytime in between asanas for the purpose of rest and relaxation. All asanas should be practised only if no feeling of fatigue or tiredness is felt. Therefore by practicing Savasana it is possible to recover from fatigue. It should be practised at the end of Yogasana session without fail and also in between the asanas whenever felt necessary or exhausted. It can be practised any other time also for relaxation and rest, any time during the day or night.

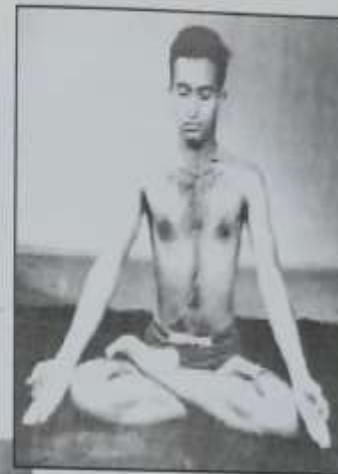
9 PADMASANA (LOTUS POSTURE)

PADMASANA SERIES

POSTURE : Sit on the ground with heel of the left foot resting on the right thigh so as to be as close as possible to the navel. Then, the right foot should be placed on the left thigh in such a way that the heels touch each other as near the navel as possible. The vertebral column and the body from the waist upwards should be kept erect. Care should be taken that the knees touch the ground. The hands should be placed in the lap, palms upward. The whole procedure is to be repeated by altering the sequence in which the feet are placed on the thighs. Keeping the hands in the lap enhances the effect of Laghima Sakti and the body gets lighter. Keeping the hands on the knees enhances the effect of gravity, and the body gets heavier. In the beginning the yogi should try to cultivate the Laghima Sakti and the hands should be kept in the lap. The practice of keeping the hands in the other position is as efficacious and useful in Padmasana. Padmasana is used for meditation, prayer, worship and Pranayama, it has the added distinction in that it is decidedly more effective and useful than Siddhasana for physical well-being. For Pranayama, Padmasana is essential. Only when a person is able to sit in Padmasana for 15 minutes at a stretch is he considered fit for undertaking Pranayama, because Padmasana is the only asana in which the posture remains undisturbed even when, during Pranayama, the body is buoyed up. The yogi sitting in Padmasana is lifted from the ground and is suspended in mid-air. A yogi like this becomes possessed of superhuman powers and faculties.

Effects and benefits: Regular practice of this asana relieves constipation, indigestion and flatulence. It improves digestion and strengthens the thighs and calves. It is considered more useful to women than to men because it has a beneficial effect on the womb. Therefore, all the asanas based on Padmasana should be specially practised by women. This Padmasana annihilates all ailments. Although difficult, it is capable of being perfected by all intelligent persons on earth who practise it. The yogi, seating himself in Padmasana, should bow down to the great teacher of yogis, Lord Siva, and should practise pranayama after fixing his gaze on the tip of his nose. Here the practice of Pranayama has been indicated in Padmasana because, as mentioned above, perfect Pranayama can be performed only in Padmasana. Svatmarama, a disciple of Goraksanatha, writes : If the yogi seated in Padmasana directs the breath after full deep inspiration into the path of Susumna Nadi, he gets liberated; there can be absolutely no doubt about it.

18



19

10 YOGA MUDRA

POSTURE: On Padmasana bend the head forwards with hands either in the front folded together or at the back (both are valid variations) while breathing, out until the head touches the ground. Then come up, breathing in, to reach normal erect position. Repeat this process six times.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS: This will help remove gas in the abdomen, clear constipation (especially after taking lots of water), reduces abdominal fat and removes backache.

Note: Padmasana, Yogamudra (i.e bending forward in Padmasana) and Matsyasana (i.e bending backwards in Padmasana) may be repeated alternatively about six times. This will help remove constipation (especially if performed after taking some warm water added with a little salt). Improves the back, removes backache, indigestion in addition to all the benefits of both Yoga Mudra and Matsyasana.



11 MATSYASANA (FISH POSTURE)

POSTURE: After sitting in Padmasana, the head is taken backward in such a way that the occiput (i.e. the highest point on the rear of the cranium) touches the ground arched and raised from the ground. The left foot should then be held with the right hand and, subsequently, the right foot with the left hand, while the elbows touch the ground. The knees must touch the ground and the back should be arched to the extent that the body is supported merely on the occiput and the knees. When this asana has been mastered even the forehead can be made to touch the ground. The hands are kept free behind the neck in performing this asana in water, for floating in water. Breathing is normal while in Matsyasana.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS: Ocular defects can be cured by this asana. It is also effective for ailments of the throat, like tonsil diseases. The spine becomes resilient and constipation is relieved. It is also very useful for diabetic patients and for curing aching knees and the back. A special feature of this asana is that it is possible to rest in water in this posture without drowning. The asana is a potent prophylactic against the development of pulmonary ailments, and is specially useful against the maladies of the uterus. The menstrual flow becomes regular and normal, and dryness of skin and coarseness of the features can also be improved; the skin becomes smooth and the face becomes radiant. It is for this reason that women take to this asana oftener than men, and they are well advised to do so though the asana is bound to prove useful to all. For the eradication of many dangerous, irremediable, and supposedly incurable diseases, this asana is extremely helpful.



12 **BADDHA PADMASANA** (BOUND LOTUS POSTURE)

POSTURE : The left foot should be placed on the right thigh and the right foot on the left thigh so that the heels touch each other just beneath the navel. The hands should be taken behind the back in order to grasp the toes ; the right hand should grasp the toes of the right foot and vice versa. Sit erect, keeping the whole body, including the vertebral column, straight.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS : The asana is helpful in ailments of the abdomen such as chronic splenomegaly, and other splenic as well as hepatic disorders. It is good for digestion. It improves digestion so rapidly, at times, that it has been rightly named Bhasmasana (the ashing posture). Even deep-seated pyrexial ailments (called bone-fevers in Ayurveda) are benefited by it. Practice of the asana makes one immune to cold weather. The asana is useful for the practice of pranayama as directed towards the purification of the nadis. Its practice very quickly unifies the prana and the apana, which in turn generates concentration of the mind, beatitude and lightness of the body, in short, the supreme goal of yogis. The asana is equally good for sick and the healthy as well as for the yogi. It is rather difficult to perform, but a gradual practice for three months usually results in a mastery over it.



13 (A) **KUKKUTASANA** (COCK POSTURE)

POSTURE : After assuming the posture of Padmasana, the arms are inserted between the thigh and the calf on either side, so that the forearms below the elbows emerge. The hands should then be placed on the ground leaving a space of four fingers in between. The whole body should then be lifted up as far as possible so that the weight is placed on the hands.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS : The practice of this asana makes the hands, the arms, and the forearms as well as the elbows extremely strong. The asana is particularly useful for gunners and riflemen and for all those who have to use their arms. The practice of the asana makes the body firm. Persons with weak and narrow chests or with cooked arms must practice it. Those who develop tremors or cramps while writing, or those who get easily tired, should also practice this asana. It has been held to be useful for all: householders, mendicants, yogis, soldiers, policemen, farmers and musicians. It is also known to help overcome impotency.



13 (B) **BAKASANA** (CRANE POSTURE)

On Padmasana climb up to the elbow with the knees as shown in the picture - inhale while climbing up and hold the breath while on top and climbing down exhale the breath and return to Padmasana



14

GARBHASANA (FOETUS POSTURE)

POSTURE: Place the left heel on the right thigh and the right heel on the left thigh. Insert the arms through the space between the calf and the thigh; they should go so far down that the elbows emerge below the calves and the thighs. The knees should then be raised towards the shoulders as far as possible and the hands should be placed on the jaws. The body is maintained in this position.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS :

It is believed that this asana increases the intake of oxygen by the body accompanied by the consequent elimination of carbon dioxide from the system. This results in making the entire body of the yogi beautiful and the face radiant. The asana combines all the advantages of Padmasana and Baddhapadmasana and is particularly useful for women. Its effect on the womb is excellent and unparalleled to any of the other asanas. Its practice proves very useful and of therapeutic value in a number of uterine ailments. Should a young girl at the age of 14 or so start the practice of this asana, there will be almost no chances of uterine disorders developing in later life. If women practice this asana before childbirth they would hardly suffer any pains. The practice of the asana after childbirth helps in restoring vitality and beauty within a period of three months. A large number of uterine disorders are cured by this asana if performed by women. It is immaterial whether they wish to bear children or not. The health of a woman is in no small measure dependent upon the health of the uterus. Irregularities in the menstrual period and in the duration of the menstrual flow, abnormalities in the colour of the monthly discharge, or giddiness during menses are all symptomatic of an unhealthy womb. These disorders in turn may result in a variety of consequential disorders such as sterility or possibly the birth of deformed or weak children. The asana is useful not only for women but for men as well. Some persons give up the practice of this asana because it is difficult. This is a grave

mistake. The practice of this single asana alone provides more benefits than other asanas, since it exercises practically every part of the body; every tissue and organ has its blood circulation improved; the abdomen, lungs, chest, shoulders, waist, thighs, knees, calves, buttocks, spine and all other parts of the body gain strength and agility. The practice of this asana wards off the onset of senility and its regular practice is rejuvenating. Every student of yoga should practise it and realise its untold potentialities.



15 **PADMAMAYURA ASANA** (LOTUS PEACOCK POSTURE)

POSTURE:

On PadmaAsana bend forward over the elbows and balance on the elbows as shown after breathing out and holding the breath out (no breathing while, balancing). The elbows should converge on to the navel. The body should be kept horizontal while balancing on the elbows. In advanced conditions one can "walk" i.e., move the hands forward while on Padmamayurasana.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS:

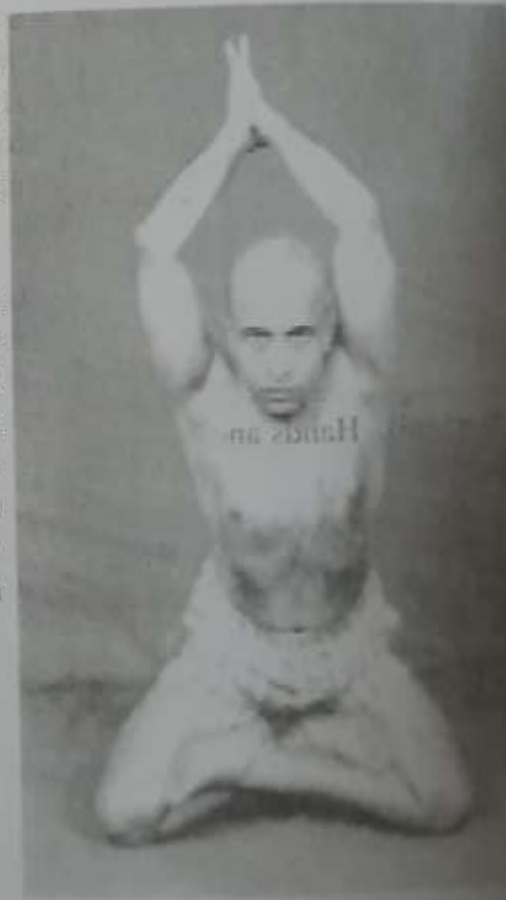
The benefits of this asana are similar to those of Mayurasana. The main emphasis is on the digestive system – on digestive process and appetite. The regular practice of this asana enhances the digestive fire (Jatharagni). Hands and Legs are also strengthened.



16 PARVATASANA (MOUNTAIN POSTURE)

POSTURE : Sitting on the ground, the left foot should be placed on the right thigh and the right foot on the left thigh, just as in Padmasana. The body is then lifted so that it is supported only on the knees. The arms should be raised upwards with the palms together and the body should be kept steady like a mountain.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS : The body becomes firm and the knees as also the thighs get strong, and the balancing power of the body as a whole increases tremendously. This asana is excellent for dancers. Though apparently simple, it is extremely difficult to perform, since it requires that the whole body should be balanced on a precarious base. The asana relieves pain in the knees and beautifies the calves. It is equally useful for men and women and specially useful for those with bent and crooked bodies or a stoop.



17 JEEVANMUKTA ASANA



POSTURE: On Padmasana stand up on the knees (Parvatasana). Then lie down forward on the chest. Then lift up the head, chest and shoulders with the hands holding tight the calf muscles of the leg as shown in the figure, while holding the breath. Exhale while coming down to ground position.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS: Excellent for improving the flexibility. Improves chest condition.

18 MAHA VEDH

POSTURE: On Padmasana with hands on front on both sides lift up the whole body as high as possible and then drop it suddenly with a thump.

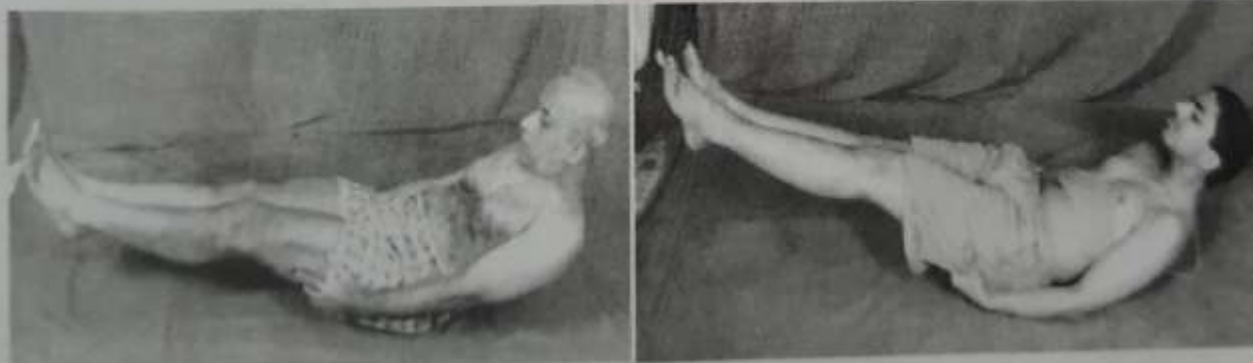
EFFECTS AND BENEFITS : Strengthens the hands, the back, enhances the kundalini awakening.



19 **UTTANA ASANA** (NABHI CHAKRA SHUDDHI)

POSTURE: The following four asanas (19,20,21,22) are aimed at purifying the abdominal region (Nabhi Chakra Shuddhi). All ailments of this region are rectified and abdominal organs are strengthened. Lie down flat on the ground. join the two legs tightly; keep the hands tight on side wards on hip. Now while inhaling, lift both the legs and head simultaneously (so as to balance entire body on the back only with hands glued to the thighs) while holding the breath. Balance the body with centre of gravity on the navel. Return back to Savasana (rest) while exhaling.

BENEFITS: This asana helps restore to normalcy any displacement of the navel. Also helps in improving the functioning of all the abdominal organs, surrounding the navel.



20 **DHANURASANA** (BOW POSTURE)

POSTURE : Lie down on the chest, lift up the legs upto the navel and hold your feet (ankle) (or in advanced cases toes themselves). Lift up the chest inhaling and come down exhaling. (Hold the breath after lifting and before bringing down). Rocking is possible while inhaling and exhaling (exhale while coming down and inhale while going up).

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS : The practice of this asana makes the body supple and resilient. It has definite advantages for the vertebral column. According to the teaching of yoga, good health, longevity, and the absence of disease are in direct proportion to the suppleness and resilience of the spine. The practice of this asana also improves the circulation of blood. It is a panacea for persons with paunches and heavy buttocks and for those who suffer from flatulence. The asana makes the shoulders and the neck strong and the waist slim. The body becomes beautiful and radiant. The eyes sparkle and eyesight improves. Those with high blood pressure or heart diseases must not practise this asana.



21 **CHAKRASANA** (WHEEL POSTURE)

POSTURE : Lie on the back with the feet on the ground, touching the buttocks. The palms are placed on the ground by the side of the head. The body is then raised while inhaling to such an extent that it assumes the shape of an arc. After remaining in this posture for some time with held breath, the body should be rested on the ground and the asana should be repeated many times. A variation consists in raising the body on the toes instead of on the feet. Some persons perform yet another variation, which consists in raising the arms backward while standing so as to touch the ground with the hands while keeping the back arched. In advanced stages one can walk on hands and legs in this posture.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS : It is claimed that senescence (old age) is delayed by the practice of this asana. It directly affects the vertebral column (spine), on account of which the body becomes resilient and supple, the waist slim, and the chest broad. Premature stiffening of the spine induces the onset of old age in man. Chakrasana, which counters this development, is, therefore, an asana of prime importance. The asana has an effect also on the knees, upper limbs, and the shoulders. The asana is specially useful for removing the rigidity of the bones and joints of the thoracic cage. This osteo articular apparatus is essential for respiratory movements.



22 MATSYASANA (FISH POSTURE)

POSTURE: After sitting in Padmasana, the head is taken backward in such a way that the occiput (i.e. the highest point on the rear of the cranium) touches the ground and raised from the ground. The left foot should then be held with the right hand and, subsequently, the right foot with the left hand, while the elbows touch the ground. The knees must touch the ground and the back should be arched to the extent that the body is supported merely on the occiput and the knees. When this asana has been mastered even the forehead can be made to touch the ground. The hands are kept free behind the neck in performing this asana in water, for floating in water. Breathing is normal while in Matsyasana.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS: Ocular defects can be cured by this asana. It is also effective for ailments of the throat, like tonsillar diseases. The spine becomes resilient and constipation is relieved. It is also very useful for diabetic patients and for curing aching knees and the back. A special feature of this asana is that it is possible to rest in water in this posture without drowning. The asana is a potent prophylactic against the development of pulmonary ailments, and is especially useful against the maladies of the uterus. The menstrual flow becomes regular and normal, and dryness of skin and coarseness of the features can also be improved; the skin becomes smooth and the face becomes radiant. It is for this reason that women take to this asana oftener than men, and they are well advised to do so though the asana is bound to prove useful to all. For the eradication of many dangerous, irremediable, and supposedly incurable diseases, this asana is extremely helpful.

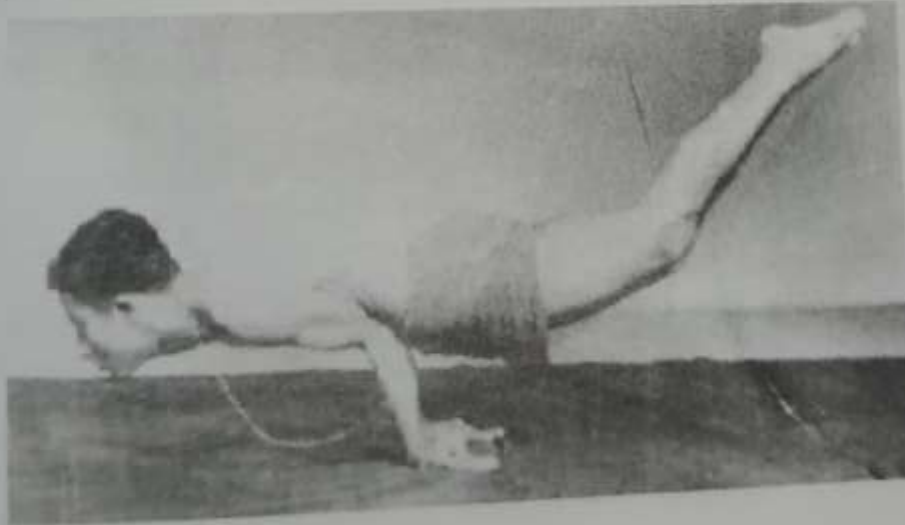
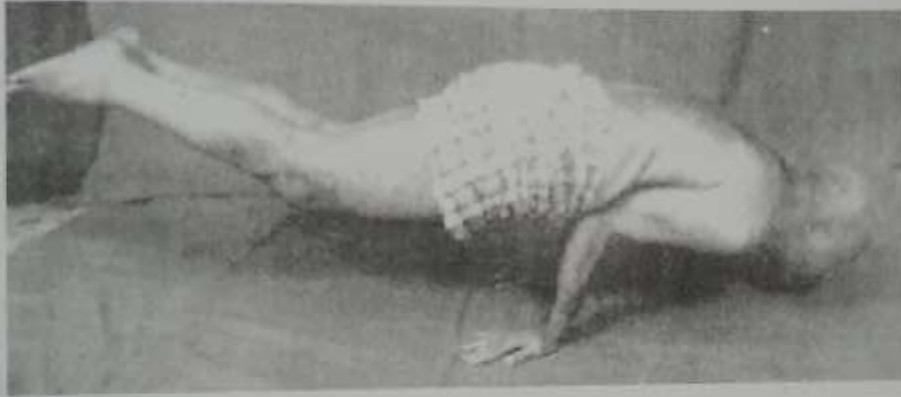


MAYURASANA (PEACOCK POSTURE)

POSTURE : The anus should rest on the heels, while the soles are kept in contact and the knees about 18 inches apart. The hands should be so placed between the knees that they are slightly apart, not more than 21/2 inches. The elbows should be lifted from the ground in such a way that the weight of the body is borne on the hands. For the first few days the exercise should extend only thus far. Later, attempts should be made to extend the lower limbs straight backward like the wings of a peacock, while the head is kept straight. The point to be emphasised after exhaling is that the elbows should touch the body at the navel and the weight of the whole body should be on the hands. After attaining some mastery, it is possible to perform this asana by supporting the body on one hand. However, for deriving maximum benefit from this asana, it is not essential to master this later variation. Even the usual method has all the beneficial effects of this asana. In advanced condition one can walk on the hands.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS : The practice of this asana cures indigestion, constipation and flatulence can be cured in just ten days of practice. This Mayurasana removes all maladies of the abdomen. It helps in digesting the excessive and unwholesome quantities of food, and, by stimulating and generating the digestive 'fire' of the stomach, even the bitterly poisonous elements (in the diet) are annihilated. The peacock feasts on a venomous creature like the serpent without being affected by its poison, and not only digests it but also prefers it to all other food. It is believed that the peacock eats more than any other bird and that the "fire" of its stomach remains ablaze all the time. It is, therefore, thought that those who practice this asana also succeed in getting rid of abdominal ailments. It is equally effective against chronic enlargements and other disorders of the spleen as well as for diseases of the liver. Even unwholesome food yields nourishment. It is claimed in the classics on yoga that with its help even poison can be easily assimilated. A person who can practise it for 15-20 minutes at a stretch (which is almost impossible in modern times) becomes immune to

the poisonous effects of snakes and scorpions just as the peacock is. This asana is also extremely useful for defective eye sight. Patients of myopia or hypermetropia should practise it daily. The hands and arms become extremely strong and it is highly beneficial for the lungs as well .



24 SARVANGASANA (ALL-LIMB POSTURE)

POSTURE : Lie on the back, while keeping the legs extended, while inhaling the feet should be gradually raised to the maximum position, straight to 90 degrees to get "L" shape. The hands support the ribs while breathing normally. Legs should be held straight and should be held in this position. The body from the hips to the shoulders should be as straight as possible. The feet are then gradually returned to their original position. Advanced feats are also shown in the picture – not for normal practice. Patients of high blood pressure and heart disease should not practice this asana.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS : The exercise of this asana allows the blood vessels of the feet to return blood effortlessly to the heart, and also improves circulation of blood in general. As a result, a large number of dermatological disorders are cured. The asana is the foremost amongst the asanas for reducing obesity. The paunch vanishes, the body becomes beautiful, the eyes radiant, and the face relaxed. Patients of high blood pressure are warned against its practice till their blood pressure has been normalised by other yogic practices. Women derive great benefit from the practice of this asana. Abnormal mobility of the uterus is treated by the practice of this asana along with that of the abdominal lock (Uddiyana bandha). Its practice also eradicates pelvic pains due to the abnormal mobility of the womb. The asana should never be performed with jerks, else the nadis may get dislodged. Should the nadis be found displaced on account of a faulty performance of the asana, causing pain, the Sarvangasana should be immediately followed by the performance of Ustrasana (Camel posture). This would eliminate the pain instantly. Normally after Sarvangasana Series, a brief Savasana should be followed by Matsyasana (Fish Posture). The practice of Sarvangasana makes the spine resilient and this in turn bestows health, beauty, and rejuvenation to the body. The lack of elasticity and the onset of rigidity of the spine is believed to be an important factor in senility. Hence, in the discipline of Yoga, particular attention is paid to keep the spine healthy and resilient. The practice of this asana removes bad odours from the body, makes the waist slim, and reduces obesity. It can be usefully practised by all-children, young persons, old men, and women.



Handstand
Handstand
Handstand
Handstand
Handstand

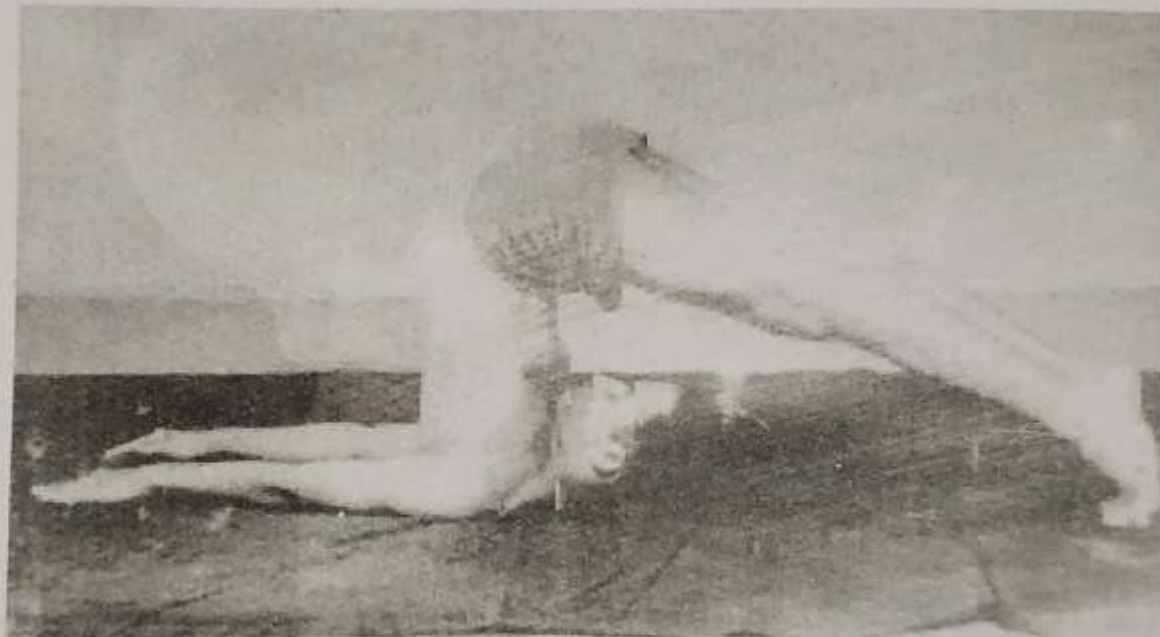


25 **HALASANA** (PLOUGH POSTURE)

POSTURE:

On Sarvangasana bring down the legs (behind the head) so as to touch the feet to the ground and keep this for 2 minutes (with normal breathing then return back to normal (via Sarvangasana).

Benefits: Excellent for curing constipation. Removes all back aches and makes the back supple and flexible.



26 **KHATWANGASANA** (COT POSTURE)

POSTURE:

On Halasana hold both the toes of the feet with both the hands now stretch the legs side wards while inhaling and then swing forward with legs held by hands as shown in the figure. Then while exhaling swing back to Halasana. Swing back and forth for several times. Finally return to Shavasana.

BENEFITS: This asana is excellent for curing and preventing all back and spinal chord problems; it gives a through massage to the spinal chord and back..



27 YOGINIDRA ASANA

POSTURE:

On Halasana bend knees, push the legs behind the head so as to make the feet act as a pillow to the head. Then clasp your body (up to buttocks) with your hands as shown in the photograph.

BENEFITS: Gives total control of the body in terms of its flexibility – an advanced asana.



28 **MATSYA ASANA** (FISH POSTURE)

POSTURE:

This asana is already explained previously (in Padmasana series.)

IMPORTANT NOTE: It is compulsory that Matsyasana be practised again now after completing the Sarvasangasana series. The duration of practice of Matyasana has should be more than half of the duration for which Sarvngasasana was practised. This is compulsory requirement.



29 **SHALABHASANA** (GRASSHOPPER POSE.)

POSTURE:

Lie down on the chest with hands hidden below the thighs. (with palms open upwards) now while inhaling, lift up both the legs (without bending the knees.) as high as possible. Bring them down while exhaling

BENEFITS: Excellent for back and spinal cord. The back is made supple and flexible.

NOTE: In advanced stages. It is possible to bend the legs. so as to make the feet touch the head.



29 SHALABHASANA (GRASSHOPPER POSE.)

POSTURE:

Lie down on the chest with hands hidden below the thighs. (with palms open upwards) now while inhaling, lift up both the legs (without bending the knees.) as high as possible. Bring them down while exhaling

BENEFITS: Excellent for back and spinal cord. The back is made supple and flexible.

NOTE: In advanced stages. It is possible to bend the legs, so as to make the feet touch the head.



46



47

30 **BHUJANGASANA** (COBRA POSTURE)

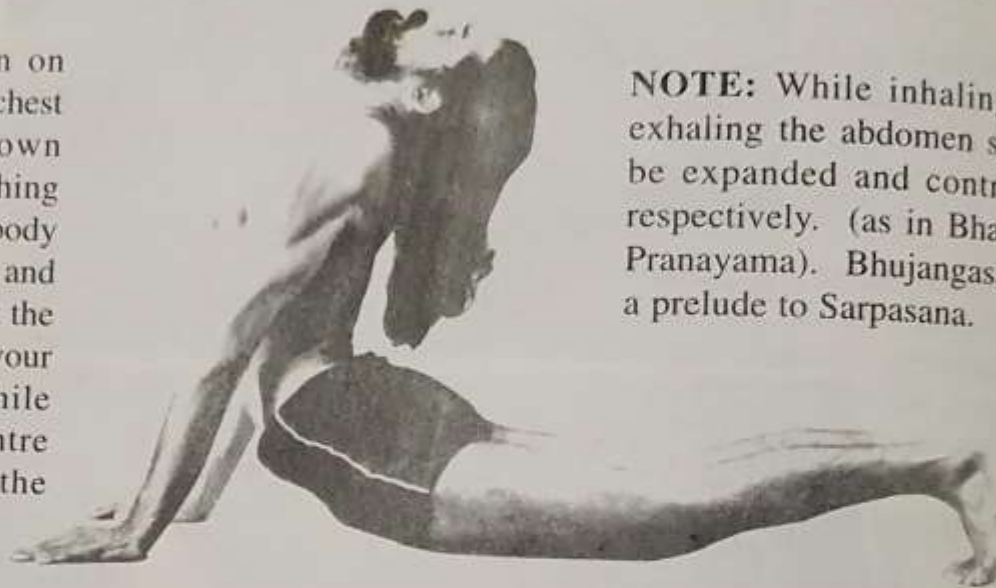
POSTURE: Lying on the abdomen, the lower limbs should be joined together and kept close to the ground. While the body from the toes to the navel touches the ground, the hands should be kept sideways and, resting on them, the body above the navel should be lifted above the ground, as high as possible, while inhaling so that it resembles the hood of a cobra. Before that a variation is that both the hands are kept near the ears and the chest is lifted along with the hands while inhaling.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS : The practice of this asana relieves constipation, indigestion, and flatulence. It is very useful for patients with chronic constipation. The yogic practice known as Sankhaprakshalana, which is one of the six yogic cleansing procedures and used for cleansing the whole gut from the mouth through the small and large intestines to the rectum, is possible only on account of Sarpasana after Bhujangasana. The practice of this asana makes the waist slender and the chest broad and is very useful for reducing corpulence. The body becomes beautiful. This is equally useful to all men, women, and children; young and old; the healthy or the sick. Patients of hernia are strictly warned against its practice.



31 SARPA ASANA (SNAKE POSTURE)

POSTURE: Lie down on chest and now lift up the chest on the hands as shown without the knees touching the ground. The whole body is balanced on the hands and toes only as shown. Lift the head up, inhale and turn your head left (or right) while exhaling Return to centre while inhaling repeat the same 12 times.



NOTE: While inhaling and exhaling the abdomen should be expanded and contracted respectively. (as in Bhastrika Pranayama). Bhujangasana is a prelude to Sarpasana.

32 SHANKHA PRAKSHALANA ASANAS

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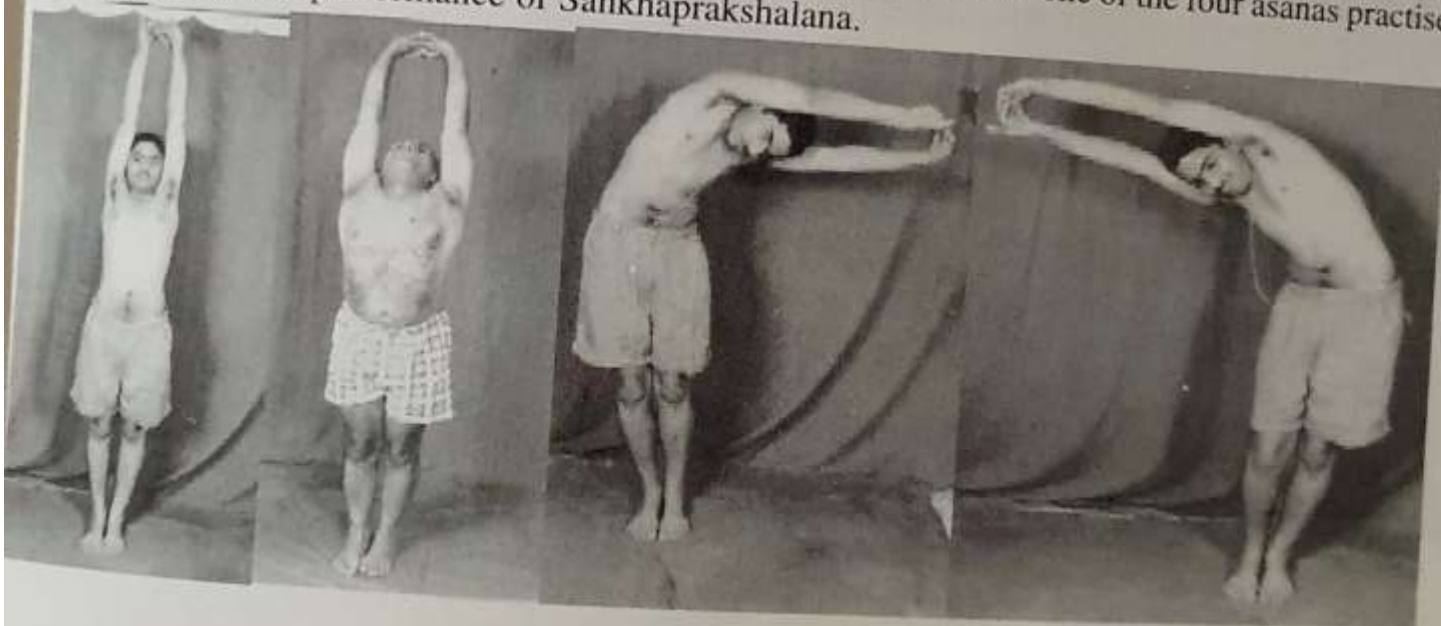
The Shankha Prakshalana series comprises of four asanas: The first is Sarpasana (see Asana No. 31. First practise Sarpasana and then the following:

33

URDHVA HASTOTHANASANA (UPSTRETCHED ARMS POSTURE)

POSTURE : Stand on the ground, with the arms raised and the fingers of the hands interlocked, the trunk should be swung alternately to the right and to the left. (exhaling while turning sides and inhaling while coming back to the centre).

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS : This asana relieves constipation very quickly. It makes the waist slim, the chest broad and removes fatty deposits on the hips and the buttocks. It increases height and relieves painful conditions of the ribs. A special use of the asana is made in the procedure known as Sankhaprakshalana (Conch-cleansing) or Varisara, one of the six yogic cleansing procedures, used for the cleansing of the entire intestinal tract of the abdomen. This is one of the four asanas practised in sequence for the performance of Sankhaprakshalana.



34 **KATICHAKRASANA** (LUMBAR-WHEEL POSTURE)

POSTURE : Stand on the ground with feet twelve inches apart and arms out stretched in front of the chest. Swing towards the left as far as possible, and then towards the right. The arm on which side the body is swinging should be kept straight while the other arm should be bent. (Inhale while returning to the front and exhale deeply while turning back left and right). Repeat it six times both ways.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS : The waist becomes slim and supple and the chest expands. It is recommended to persons of short stature. It relieves constipation and makes the lumbar region extraordinarily strong. The ribs acquire resilience whereby many respiratory ailments, even tuberculosis of the lungs, can be prevented. The shoulders, neck, arms, abdomen, back, and thighs are strengthened. It is equally useful for men as well as women. Though easy to perform, yet the asana has many advantages. This is the Third Asana in the Four Asanas of Shankha Prakshalana Asana Series (Conch cleansing).



35

UDARAKARSHANASANA (BELLY-SUCTION POSTURE)

POSTURE : Keep the distance of a hand-span between the feet and sit in Khagasana (or Bird Pose – Indian Toilet Pose). Then, keeping the hands on the knees, push the right knee with the right hand close to the left foot, about an inch above the ground. This should be followed by a similar movement of the left knee towards the right foot.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS : This asana cures indigestion and ensures normal digestion of food. Its practice is also an unfailing remedy for constipation. It is fourth of the four asanas used in sequence for the conch-cleaning (Shankha-prakshalana) procedure which cannot be achieved without it. The asana relieves pain in the lower limbs and acts as a sure prophylactic against the maladies of the joints of the lower limbs. The feet develop great strength, and therefore, it has been held to be of great use to those who have to walk long distances.

Finally practise Savasana for rest and recovery. In actual Shankha Prakshalana these above four Asanas are to be practised in the same sequence after taking one glass of warm saline water. A cycle like this can be repeated several times for intestine cleansing).

Important Note: For details of performing Shankha Prakshalana contact Teacher. Performing it without personal guidance of an experienced teacher is dangerous and strictly prohibited.



36 MISCELLANEOUS ASANAS GUPTASANA (CONCEALED POSTURE)

POSTURE: Sit on the ground with the left foot so placed that the heel comes in contact with the anus. Then, by lifting the buttocks, place the right foot on top of the left in such a way that the toes are concealed under the thigh of the left leg. While seated, the hands should be extended beyond the knees and the trunk kept absolutely erect. The right heel must press against the anus and should not lose contact with it.

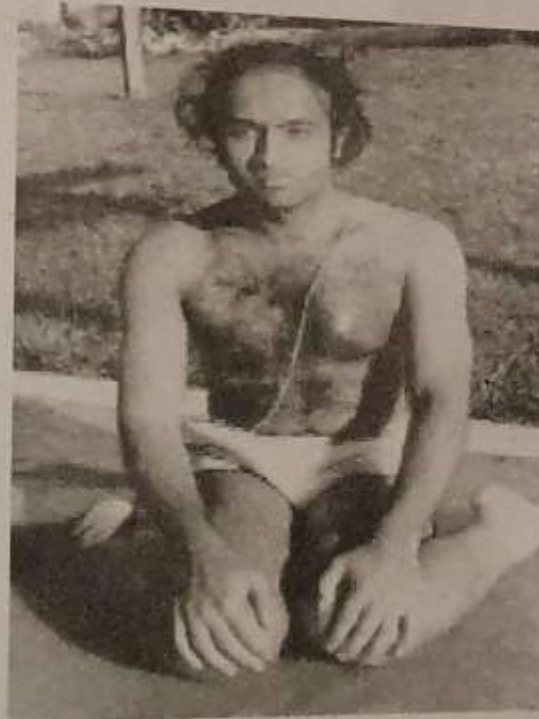
EFFECTS AND BENEFITS: The practice of this asana is cure for wet dreams and other seminal disorders. Seminal incontinence and sexual hyper excitability are also relieved. It has been held to be very useful for diseases of the urethral system. The Chitrakhya Nadi is directly affected, on account of which the circulation of blood in the genital organs improves. The asana makes it possible to practise uninterrupted celibacy, and cures seminal disorders and many ailments of the anus and genitalia. Even the minutest of the nadis cannot escape the beneficial effects of Guptasana. It is useful for all. Practised with the abdominal lock (Uddiyana Bandha) or the basal lock (Mula Bandha), the serpent power (Kundalini) gets awakened. It is impossible to describe all its virtues. Not only are the feet concealed in this asana, but its qualities and virtues are also concealed. It is for these reasons that it has been aptly named Guptasana by the yogis.



37 **MANDUKASANA** (FROG POSTURE)

POSTURE : Squat with the heels by the side of the buttocks. The knees should be joined together and the palms, one above the other, ought to be placed near the navel. Then the body should be bent forward and the head slightly raised to resemble a frog.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS: The practice of Mandukasana unifies the Prana and the Apana. The body gets lighter so that the buoying up of the body after Pranayama is facilitated. The variant of the standard asana, which is mentioned above, is used predominantly, if not exclusively by the yogis. However, the standard method is easy to practise even for ordinary persons. The asana is particularly useful for those who want to hop and jump, for abdominal ailments-most of which get cured by it-and for persons with protuberant bellies, and also those who suffer from shortness of breath, and who, on that account, have to breathe more than 15 times a minute. It is also a cure for flatulence. The collection of gases in the upper segments of the gut is forced up and the collection in the lower segments is forced out by this asana.



38 PAKSHI ASANA (BIRD POSTURE)

POSTURE: Sit on ground with legs stretched longer wide apart maximum possible upto 160 degrees. Catch hold of the toes with hands. Breathing out, bend forward so as to touch the forehead to the ground. Then again lift up breathing in. Repeat it three times.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS: Excellent exercise for the back, improve flexibility of the trunk and the legs.



39 **BRAHMACHARYA PUSHTI** (CELIBACYPOSTURE)(PADANGUSHTASANA)

POSTURE: On the toes of right leg balance the body as shown; in the picture while holding the breath Similarly repeat on the left foot.

BENEFITS: Enhances sex control (Brahmacharya). Controls premature ejaculation and improves sexual virility.



40 **DWIPADA BHUJASANA** (LEGS ON SHOULDERS POSTURE)

POSTURE: As shown in the photograph place both legs with the thighs on the shoulder inhaling while lifting up on hands. Join the feet as shown. Hold the breath for a while. Then return to normal position, exhaling.

BENEFITS: This asana strengthens the arms, legs and the spinal chord.



41

TRIKONASANA (TRIANGULAR POSTURE)

POSTURE: Stand with legs wide apart (as much as possible). Stretch your hands parallel to the ground. Take a deep breath and while breathing out, bend right side wards so as to touch the toes of right foot with right hand while breathing out again come up to normal position breathing in. Repeat the same left side and so on six times. Also repeat alternatively i.e., touching the toes of the left foot with right hand as vice versa, with the same breathing steps as above.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS: Excellent exercise for improving flexibility and strength of legs, hands and trunk. In paralytic condition also, the flexibility of hands and legs can be developed.



42 **VIMANA ASANA** (AEROPLANE POSTURE)

POSTURE: Stand erect with hands stretched side wards. Then bend forward while breathing out with the (hands still stretched in the same position) and lifting up left leg into the air until the chest becomes parallel to the floor, with head raised up as in the posture, hold the breath for a while, before returning to the normal position. Repeat the same with the right leg stretched.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS: Improves the strength and flexibility of legs, trunk and hands. Improves the coordination and balance of the body.



43 **GARUDASANA** (EAGLE POSTURE)

POSTURE : Stand on the ground in such a way that the right leg gets intertwined with the left, and the arms are also intertwined with each other like the strands in a rope. The intertwined hands should be placed in front of the chest like the beak of the eagle.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS : The asana is immensely helpful in cases of enlargement of the testicles. It should be practiced leaning forward to obtain speedier relief. It provides great strength to the feet and thighs, and is of special benefit to those who have to walk long distances. Its practice even for a short while after a journey on foot quickly relieves fatigue. Any ache or arthritic disorder of the knees, the feet, and other joints, as well as pain or tremulousness of the shoulders, the elbows, the arms, and the forearms, is cured by the practice of this asana. It has also been found to be useful for patients of ano-rectal and urinary maladies.

Now practice Savasana for rest and relaxation, for recovery.



44 SURYANAMASKAR (SALUTATION TO THE SUN)

This is an independent set of exercises, can be practised separately, after completing all Asanas:

POSTURE : Stand facing east, the direction of the rising sun. Folding the hands reverently before the Lord Sun, place them on the chest to worship the sublime Deity, just as they are placed for greeting any distinguished person. After this, the arms, and in fact every part of the body, should be kept absolutely rigid. The arms are then raised and, at the same time, while the body from the feet to the waist and the extended arms are kept straight, the trunk, from the waist to the shoulders, is arched slightly backwards. The arms are then swung forward and downward slowly, so as to touch the ground by the side of the feet, while the head touches the knees. While doing so, the body should not be bent at the knees. Standing upright, again the left foot should be taken backwards with a jerk while the chest is kept expanded and taut. The arms should be lifted upwards and backwards. The left foot should be brought back to its initial position with a jerk while lowering the arms, and the right foot should be carried backwards. Again, the arms are gradually lifted upwards and the chest arched slightly backward and kept taut. Lowering the hands to touch the ground, the feet should be taken backward, while the buttocks are kept raised as much as possible and the whole body kept rigid should be lowered to such an extent that it should remain just above the surface of the ground but for the hands and the toes. The chest should be pulled up and, while supporting the body on the hands

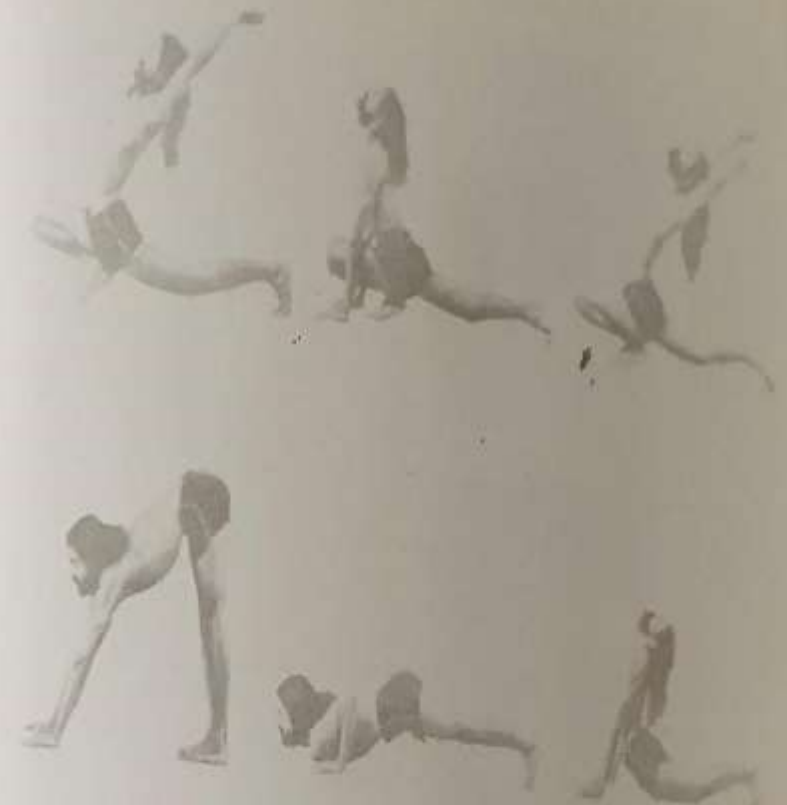
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and the toes, the chest and the head should be stretched backwards. Then the feet should be brought forward between the hands with a jump. The waist should be lifted up and the legs should be kept absolutely straight while the head is kept on the knees. Then, the arms should be raised and, keeping the body rigid, the hands should again be folded in front of the chest. **EFFECTS AND BENEFITS :** Surya-Namaskara is rated one of the best yogic exercises since, through it alone, the benefits of asanas, mudras as well as pranayama can be attained. It induces the inflow of pure vital air in sufficient quantities in the lungs, which makes the body glow like the sun. This is also the reason for its being called Surya-Namaskara. Like the sun, this exercise also has twelve divisional components. For each part of the body, there is, theoretically, a provision of a separate and distinctive type of Surya-Namaskara, so that not even the tiniest part of the body escapes its wholesome influence. It broadens the chest and beautifies the arms



Dermatological disorders are prevented and those who already have them can be cured. It relieves constipation and stimulates digestion. Curing the abdominal complaints, it also reduces the paunch. Its practice makes the spine and waist flexible. It is useful for all, but pregnant women should not continue its practice after the third month of pregnancy. Though popular and commonly known in this country, many do it without proper guidance and, therefore, do not derive any benefit from it. It is a useful exercise for gunners and manual labourers and particularly recommended for those of short stature or with crooked bodies. Some authorities hold that the practice of Surya-Namaskara is of advantage when performed in open air and bright sunshine. Sentinence and celibacy are easily achieved by its practice. Lethargic and lazy persons can also derive great advantage. Patients of hernia are warned against its practice. Surya-Namaskara should be performed in the morning since the exercise has a definite relationship to the sun and full advantage is only derived by its being performed at the right time. Now practise Savasana for adequate rest and recovery.

Note: The whole Suryanamaskara can be repeated as per the capacity. Mantra of Surya also can be chanted before starting every time.



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SIRSHASANA (HEAD STAND)

POSTURE : Roll a piece of cloth into a coil, similar to the one used by peasant women (called genduri or indai) to support pitcher of water or other heavy articles on the head. On this rolled cloth, place a side of the head. This area, which is considered the most appropriate for the performance of this asana, is four-finger broad-half of which is on the forehead below the hairline, and the other half just above the hairline. The fingers should be interlocked and placed. After placing the head on the genduri as described above, the knees should be raised to such an extent that the legs are absolutely straight. The legs should then, one by one, be drawn towards the trunk so that they are raised. When the body gets properly balanced in this position, the legs can be straightened. A sudden attempt at straightening the legs without attaining equilibrium may result in a fall. It may take months and even years to acquire the proper balance and skill required for performing Sirshasana. Some even spend a life-time and yet fail to achieve the proficiency required in performing Sirshasana without any external support. The asana can prove harmful if performed with the support of a wall because this may result in overtaxing the body's capacity. However, when it is performed in the manner described above, it is impossible to do it beyond the limits of one's physical reserves; the moment the physical capacity is exceeded the position cannot be maintained. After completing the asana, stand erect and raise the arms. The fist should be repeatedly and alternately clenched and relaxed, at least 10 times. After this, the body should be gently massaged upwards. This massage prescribed to provide the necessary physiological-mechanical corrective to the haemo-dynamic state of the body when standing erect and upright after having finished the Sirsasana. It is believed that, on the resumption of the erect posture after the Sirsasana, the blood that has collected in the heart and the cranio-cerebrum rebounds in a fast stream. The abnormal flow can cause damage to the finest tissues. The gentle massage is aimed at slowing down the blood stream so that blood can circulate without causing any undesirable effects. After this, the Shavasana (Corpse posture) should be



performed for atleast half as long as the time taken in performing the Sirshasana. Shavasana causes the blood to be satisfactorily re- distributed in the body, hence the necessity of performing it after Sirshasana. If Sirshasana is not followed by Shavasana, harmful effects are likely. Hence, it must follow Sirshasana for an appropriate length of time. Should the nostrils be blocked before starting Sirshasana, the attempt should be given up; at least one nostril should be open and functioning for the passage of breath during Sirshasana other wise the fine tissue components of the brain are likely to be damaged. Those who cannot take a simple, nourishing, and balanced diet should not perform the asana. For a practice of the asana beyond ten minutes, it is essential to observe strict celibacy and to take plenty of milk and ghee (clarified butter). If the asana is performed unmindful of these precautions and safeguards, harmful consequences may follow. A wrongly performed Sirshana could generate a host of diseases. Premature graying of hair, falling of hair, disorders of the eyes, mental weakness, dislodgment of the navel, wet dreams, and mental diseases can result from it. Such disorders, resulting from a wrong performance of this asana, can be and have been rectified by performing it properly.

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS : There is hardly any ailment which cannot be cured by its correct performance. It combines all the beneficial effects of all asanas. Its practice provides relief in ocular disorders, premature graying of hair, blood dyscrasia, lepromatous and allied diseases, spermatorrhoea, menstrual disorders, and the like. In wet dreams, fistula and other ano-rectal maladies, coryza and respiratory catarrh, Sirshasana by itself proves remarkably and unfailingly effective. An outstanding feature of the asana is that a number of mental diseases can be cured by its practice. Even lunatics have been treated and cured by it. However, Sirshasana ought to be practised only after learning it properly from an accomplished teacher. Patients of heart disease and high blood pressure are strictly forbidden the practice of this asana until some other yogic techniques have cured these diseases. Sirshasana makes the blood of the entire body flow to the brain the heart, and the upper parts of the body. Practice of the asana even for a day proves sufficient to keep the heart toned up for a number of days. Sirshasana also helps in the sublimation



of sex energies. The semen is rid of all impurities. As a result the face becomes radiant and relaxed and the eyes sparkle. A marvelous attribute of the asana is that one who performs it correctly and regularly may never becomes really old.

Very Important Note:

- (a) Teacher's guidance is absolutely essential.
- (b) After Sirshasana it is absolutely essential to take rest in Savasana or Corpse Pose for adequate time.
- (c) Sirshasana should be practised only upto 1 or 2 minutes or more depending on the stamina and ability.
- (d) Normally Shavasana is immediately practised after Sirshasana (without standing upright) - take necessary guidance from teacher.

