

YOGA CLUB

Guide Manual



Purash Kanpur Haridas Nandi Mahavidyalaya

‘Yoga is the settling of the mind into silence. When the mind has settled, we are established in our essential nature, which is unbounded Consciousness.’

- Patanjali

‘Freedom of the soul is the goal of all Yogas.’

- Swami Vivekananda

‘The rhythm of the body, the melody of the mind, and the harmony of the soul create the symphony of life.’

- B.K.S. Iyengar

Foreword

The word ‘yoga’ in Sanskrit comes from the root ‘yuj’, meaning ‘to attach, join, harness, yoke’. Yoga enables us to unite our body, mind, and soul harmoniously. The word is also interpreted as a process of ‘connecting’ or ‘uniting’ our human soul with divine.

Yoga involves physical postures to improve both physical health and mental serenity. It is composed of different asanas or postures. The various techniques of yoga can lessen chronic pain, lower blood pressure and reduce insomnia. It also increases physical flexibility, strengthens muscles, improves respiration as well as cardio-vascular health. It maintains balanced metabolism. Yoga enhances digestion capacity, helps to reduce weight and improves overall energy and vitality. Apart from physical benefits, yoga helps us to manage mental stress and trauma. It enhances our ability to bounce back. Consistent participation in yoga can enhance our mental serenity and understanding. It helps us in cultivating an optimistic perspective on life. Yoga improves our self-awareness.

Purash Kanpur Haridas Nandi Mahavidyalaya has a Yoga Club that promotes yoga among its students and faculty. The Yoga Club’s Guide Manual offers in-depth guidance on how to incorporate beneficial yoga poses into your daily routine.

Om Sarve Bhavantu Sukhina

Sarve Santu Niraamayaah

Sarve Bhadraanni Pashyantu

Maa Kashcid-Duhkha-Bhaag-Bhavet

May all be happy. May all be free from illness. May all see what is auspicious.
May no one suffer.

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Ardha-chakrasana



Definition:

In Sanskrit language, ‘Ardha’ means half and ‘Chakra’ means wheel. In this posture, the shape of the body takes the shape of half wheel, therefore it is called Ardha-chakrasana.

Technique:

Stand erect on the ground with feet together.

Keep your hands by the side.

Bend the elbows and support lower back with the palms.

Now, slowly exhale and bend backward as much as possible.

Try to maintain the posture with normal breathing and without losing the balance.

Inhale and slowly come up to the original position.

Benefits:

This asana gives relaxation to the neck and back muscles, especially of lower back.

It improves flexibility of the spine.

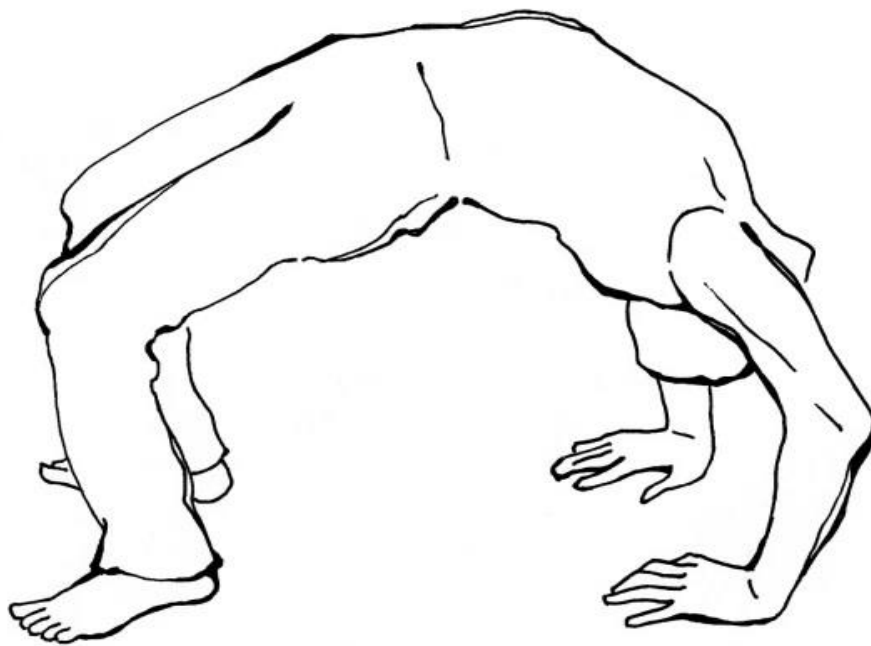
It helps to remove fat from the sides of the body.

It also removes stiffness from hip joints.

Precaution:

Individuals with neck, spinal, or hip injuries, ulcers, or hernias should refrain from performing this pose. Be cautious if you experience vertigo. The backward bending motion in Ardha-chakrasana can trigger dizziness.

Chakrasana



Definition:

‘Chakra’ means wheel. In the final position of this asana, body takes the shape of a wheel, hence the name.

Technique:

Lie on the back, knees bent and heels touching the buttocks and feet 12 inches apart.

Raise the arms; bend the elbows; place the palms on the floor above the shoulders beside the head.

Inhale and slowly raise the trunk and arch the back.

Gently drop the head and straighten the arms and legs as much as possible.

Remain in this posture for as long as comfortable; then come back by slowly lowering the body so the head rests on the floor.

Lower down also the rest of the body and relax.

A variation consists in raising the body on the toes instead on the feet.

Benefits:

It is claimed that practice of this asana delays senescence (effects of old age).

It makes the vertebral column resilient and supple, the waist slim and the chest broad.

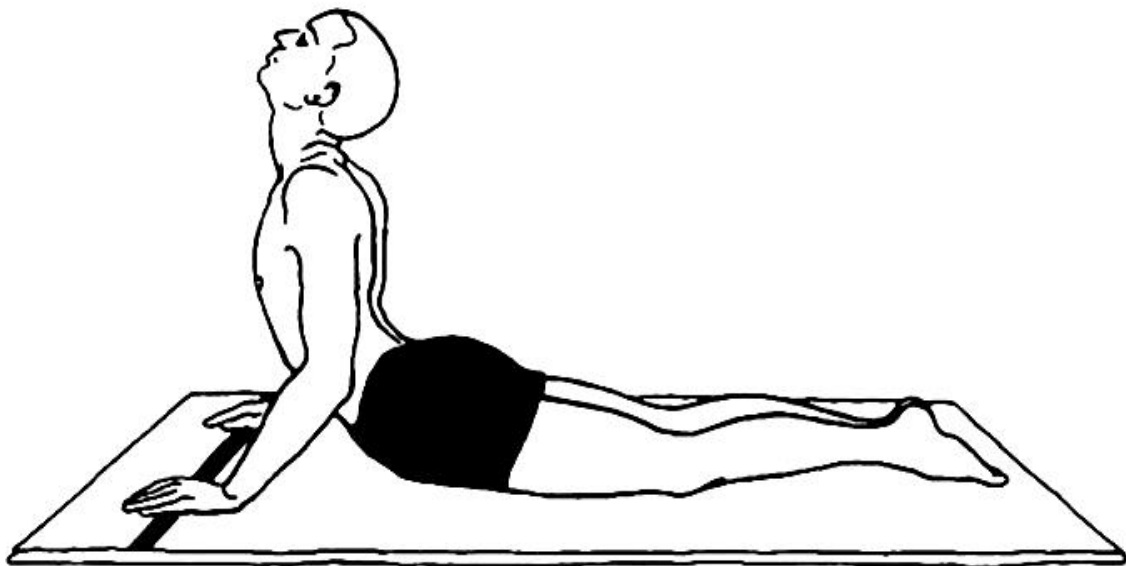
This asana is good for knees, upper limbs and shoulders.

It is especially useful in removing rigidity of the bones and joints of the thoracic cage.

Precaution:

People suffering from severe cardiac problems, high blood pressure, vertigo, abdominal inflammation and hernia should not practise it.

Bhujangasana



Definition:

‘Bhujanga’ means cobra. The final position of this asana resembles the shape of a cobra.

Technique:

Lie down on stomach with legs together, toes pointing outwards, hands by the sides of the thighs, palm facing upward and forehead resting on the ground.

Fold hands at the elbows, place palms on the ground to the sides of the shoulder; thumbs should be under the armpit.

Bring chin forward and place it on the ground, gaze in front.

Slowly raise the head, neck and shoulders.

Raise the trunk up to the navel and raise the chin as high as possible.

Maintain the posture for as long as comfortable.

Then slowly bring the body down on the ground, starting from upper part of the navel region, thorax, shoulder and chin; and lastly place the forehead on the ground.

Place the hands by the sides of the thighs; and relax.

Benefits:

This posture affects muscles of the back.

It is beneficial for relieving flatulence after meals.

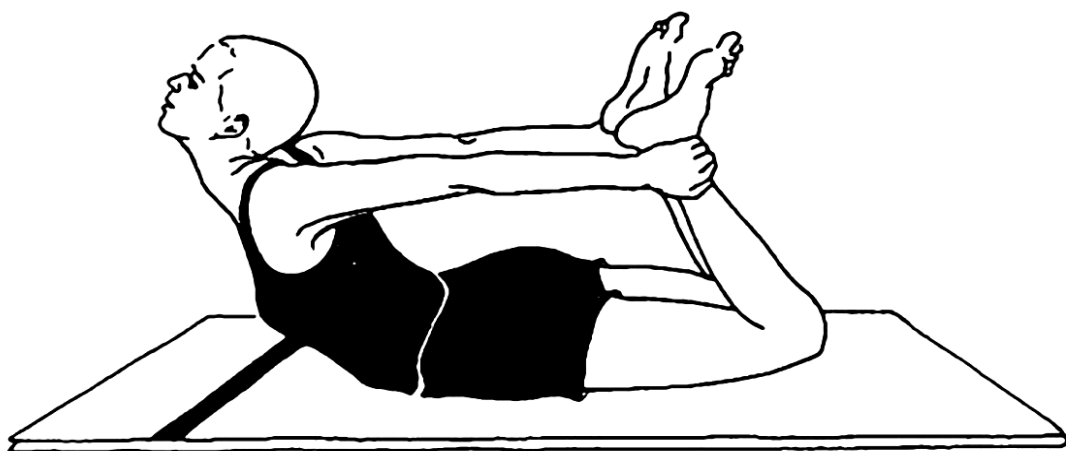
It can relocate slipped disc, removes backache and keeps spine healthy.

It tones the ovaries and uterus, and helps alleviate menstrual and other gynecological disorders.

Precaution:

It is strictly prohibited for the patients of hernia and in case of abdominal injuries.

Dhanurasana



Definition:

In Sanskrit, 'Dhanu' means bow. In the final pose of this asana, the body takes the shape of a bow; hence this asana is named as Dhanurasana.

Technique:

Lie down in prone position.

Exhaling bend the knees and hold the ankles with hands.

While inhaling raise the thighs, head and chest as high as possible.

Try to maintain weight of the body on lower abdomen.

Join the ankles.

Look upward and breathe normally.

While exhaling, bring down the head and legs up to knee joint.

Maintain this position for some time and slowly come back to the original position.

Benefits:

Dhanurasana decongests the entire abdominal region and its organs.

The liver and pancreas are massaged in this asana.

It is therefore, useful in diabetes mellitus.

The ligaments, muscles and nerves in the back are given good stretch.

The spinal column is rejuvenated.

It is beneficial for treating back pain.

It helps to alleviate constipation, dyspepsia and sluggishness of the liver.

It straightens the hunched back and drooping shoulders.

It helps restoring the displaced navel to its normal position.

It regulates the digestive, excretory and reproductive organs in the body.

It is useful in treatment of chest ailments.

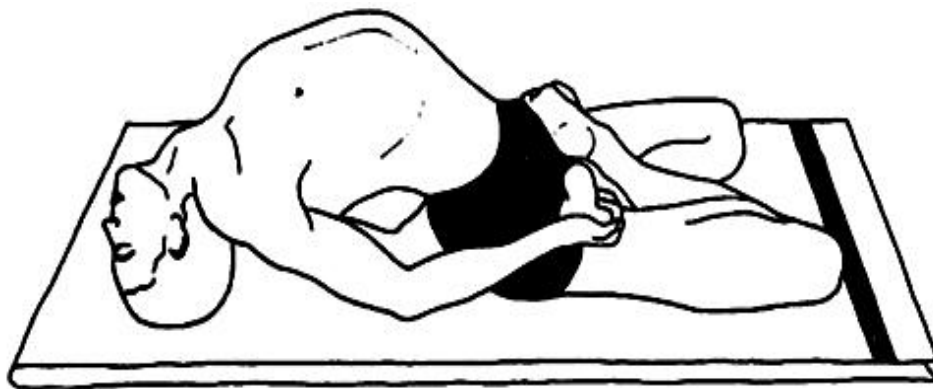
It stimulates and regulates the thyroid and adrenal glands.

Precaution:

People suffering from hernia should avoid to practising Dhanurasana.

People suffering from peptic ulcer or duodenal ulcer, appendicitis, colitis, high blood pressure should consult a Yoga expert before practising this asana.

Matsyasana



Definition:

In Sanskrit ‘Matsya’ means fish. In the final position of this asana, the body takes the shape of a fish; hence the asana is known as Matsyasana.

Technique:

Sit in Padmasana.

Slowly bend backward and lie on your back completely.

Lift the upper back with support of elbows and palms and place the crown of your head on the ground.

Hold the left foot with the right hand and subsequently the right foot with the left hand, resting the elbows on the floor.

The knees must touch the ground and the back should be arched to the extent that the body is supported on the head and the knees.

Maintain the final posture.

While returning, release the toes, place palms on the ground, straighten the head with the help of hands and come up slowly.

Relax in Savasana.

Benefits:

Matsyasana gives an excellent massage to the abdominal organs and cures constipation.

It is effective in treatment of throat diseases.

It expands the chest and is useful in lungs and respiratory disorders.

It relaxes the muscles of upper back and makes the spine resilient.

It is beneficial in cases of knee and back pain.

The pelvic region is given a good stretch.

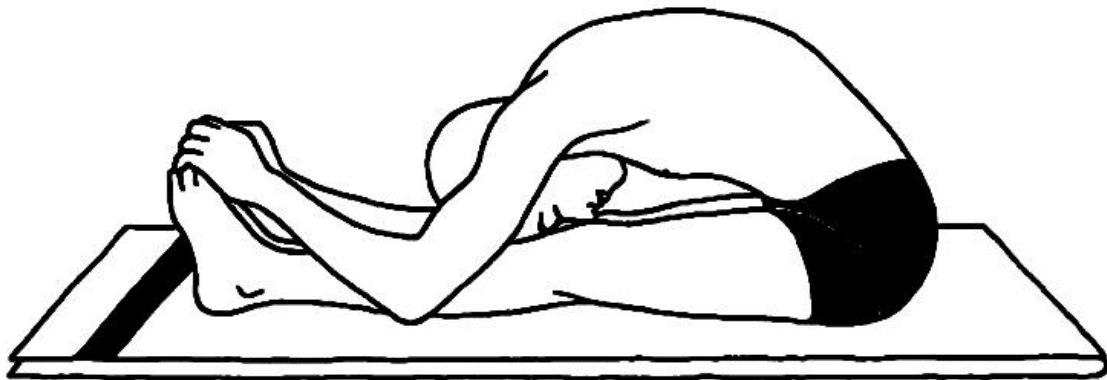
It is useful for ladies in preventing and curing various forms of sexual malfunctioning.

It is good for the women suffering from uterus problems and diabetes.

Precaution:

People who are suffering from peptic ulcer, hernia or any serious spinal ailments should not do this asana without expert advice.

Pashchimottasana



Definition:

‘Pashchima’ means posterior and ‘Uttana’ means stretch out. In this asana, the back side of the body including the spinal column gets stretched, hence is the name. Stretching both the legs straight on the ground and holding the big toes with hands, one should stay in this position with one's forehead placed on one's knees. This is called Pashchimottasana.

Technique:

Sit on the ground, stretching both the legs in front.

Place hands by the sides with palms resting on the ground.

Fingers should remain together pointing forward.

Loosen your back muscles and bend the body forward as far as possible.

Maintaining this pose for as long as comfortable.

To come back, loosen your hands and place them where they are comfortable.

It would be easier if they are put on the thighs.

Practise this asana daily and keep trying forward bending little more till you are able to hold big toes of the legs with forefingers of respective hands.

The navel should be touching the thighs.

Bring chest and head close to the legs as much as possible; and place the elbows by the side of the legs on the ground.

Maintain the posture as per the capacity. Come back by raising chest and head from the legs.

Benefits:

It strengthens abdominal muscles.

It is helpful in removing constipation, obesity, dyspepsia, seminal weakness and skin diseases.

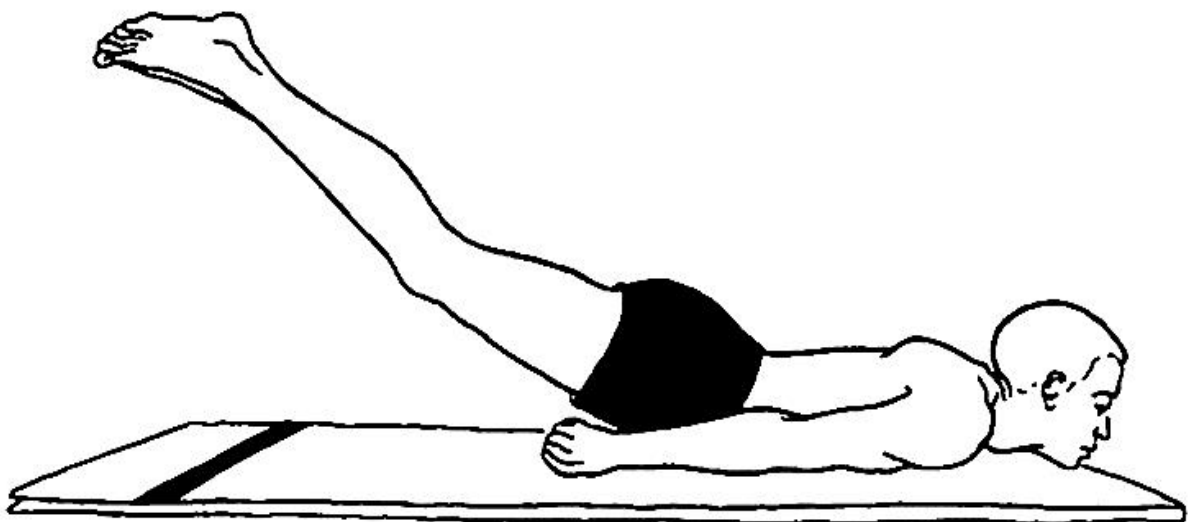
It reduces the possibilities of sciatica.

Those practising it for more than three minutes should practise Uddiyanabandha in the middle of the asana.

Precaution:

Those suffering from ulcer in abdomen should not practise it.

Salabhasana



Definition:

The meaning of 'salabha' is locust. In the final position of this asana, body resembles the shape of a locust, hence the name.

Technique:

Lie down in prone position, place the palms below the thighs, join the heels.

Inhaling, press the palm downward and lift the legs as high as possible.

Look upward and breathe five times.

Exhaling bring down the legs. Release the hands.

Benefits:

Salabhasana for asthma patients.

It purifies blood and improves its circulation.

Precaution:

Those suffering from high blood pressure, heart disease and having complaint of asthma should not practise it.

Gomukhasana



Definition:

In Sanskrit language ‘Gomukha’ means cow’s face. In this asana, the position of the legs takes the shape of Gomukha. Therefore, it is known as Gomukhasana.

Technique:

Sit erect, stretching both legs together in front.

Place your hands by the side, palm resting on the ground with fingers together.

Fold left leg from the knee and place it on the ground by the side of right buttock.

Similarly fold right leg from the knee; bring it over left leg and place right heel by left buttock.

Raise left arm, bend it at the elbow and take it below the shoulders towards the back.

Interlock the fingers of both the hands behind back.

Now, try to extend the head backwards against elbow as much as possible.

Stay in this position for as long as comfortable and then return to the original position.

Repeat the same by changing the position of the legs and hands.

Benefits:

The practice of this asana strengthens muscles of the back and biceps.

It removes pain in hip and lower extremities.

It helps in making the spine straight,

This asana is very useful in arthritis and dry piles.

It is useful in frozen shoulders, neck pain and cervical spondylitis.

It gives good exercise to the lungs and helps in respiratory diseases.

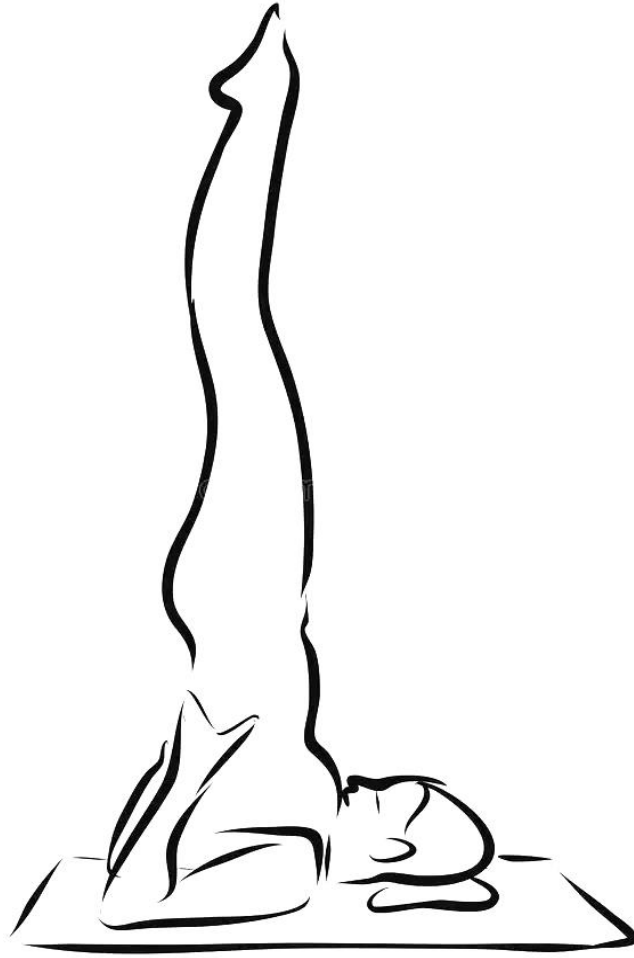
Precaution:

Those suffering from bleeding piles should not practise it.

Sarvangasana

Definition:

The term comes from the Sanskrit ‘sarva’, meaning ‘all’, ‘anga’ meaning ‘limb’, and ‘asana’ meaning ‘pose’ or ‘posture’. Thus, Sarvangasana means the asana which influences all limbs of the body. Sarvangasana also known as Shoulderstand Pose and it is called the ‘Mother of all Yoga Poses’ because it benefits the entire body and also mind.



Technique:

Take supine position, hands straight by the side of the thighs, palms resting on the ground.

Slowly raise the legs together without bending at the knees by pressing the hands. Stop at 30° angle.

Raise the legs little more and stop at 60° angle.

Now slowly bring it to 90° angle.

Pressing the hands, bring the legs towards head by raising the buttocks up. Raise the legs, abdomen and chest. Form a straight line. Place the palms on your back for support.

Place the chin against the chest (jugular notch).

Maintain the position as long as comfortable.

Slowly return back to the original position.

While doing this, first lower the buttocks with hands supporting the back; slowly place the buttocks on the ground and bring the legs at 90° angle.

Gradually bring the legs down; place them on the ground without bending them at the knees; and return to the starting (supine) position.

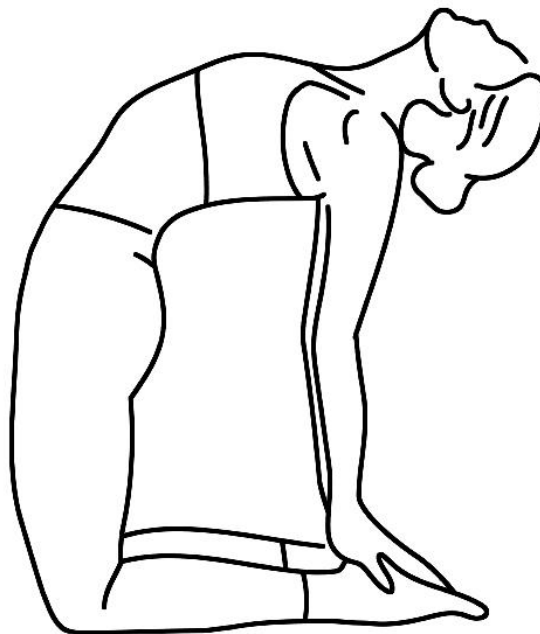
Benefits:

This asana removes the symptoms of immature old age and early greying of hair. It is helpful in treatment of diseases like dyspepsia, constipation, hernia and visceroptosis, piles, uterus prolepses and problems related to endocrine glands.

Precaution:

People suffering from high-blood pressure, epilepsy, neck pain, sciatica and lumbar pain should not practise it.

Ustrasana



Definition:

‘Ustra’ means camel. The body in this posture resembles the posture of a camel, hence the name.

Technique:

Kneel down on the floor.

Keep your thighs and feet together, toes pointing back and resting on the floor. Bring the knees and the feet about one foot apart and stand on the knees.

While inhaling bend backward.

Be careful not to jerk the neck while bending backward.

With exhalation place the right palm on right heel and left palm on left heel.

In final position, thighs will be vertical to the floor and head tilted backwards.

Weight of the body should be evenly supported by the arms and legs.

This asana should be practised after Sarvangasana as a counter pose to enhance the benefits of Sarvangasana.

Benefits:

Ustrasana is extremely useful for defective eyesight.

This is useful in back pain and neck pain.

It helps to reduce fat over the abdomen.

It is helpful in digestive problems.

Precaution:

Those suffering from high blood pressure, heart disease, hernia should not practise it.

Vajrasana



Definition:

This can be considered as a meditative posture. While practising it for meditative purposes, one should close his/her eyes at the final stage.

Technique:

Sit with legs extended together, hands by the side of the body, palm resting on the ground, fingers pointing forward.

Fold the right leg at the knee and place the foot under the right buttock.

Similarly folding the left leg, place left foot under the left buttock.

Place both the heels so that the big toes overlap each other.

Position the buttocks in the space between the heels.

Keep hands on respective knees.

Keep the spine erect, gaze in front or close the eyes.

While returning to the original position, bend a little towards right side, take out your left leg and extend it.

Similarly extend your right leg and return to the original position.

Benefits:

This asana strengthens thigh muscles and calf muscles.

This asana is good for digestion.

It provides firm base to the spine and keeps the spine erect.

Precaution:

Persons suffering from piles should not practise this asana.

Padmasana

Definition:

The name Padmasana is from the Sanskrit 'Padma' which means 'lotus' and 'Asana' that means 'posture'. Padmasana, a quintessential pose in yoga, is revered for its profound benefits in enhancing meditation and fostering inner peace. This cross-legged seated pose, resembling the petals of a lotus flower, promotes physical equilibrium and mental calmness.

Technique:

Sit on the floor. Stretch your legs out straight in front of you.

Bend your right leg at the knee.

Place your right foot on your left thigh with the help of your hands.

Now, fold the left leg too at the knee.

Once again, hold your left foot with your hands and bring it to rest on your right thigh.

At this point, both your feet should be close to the navel. Ensure that the soles of your feet are turned upward.

Stretch your arms out. Let your palms rest against your knees.

Sit erect while maintaining the posture.

Benefits:

Padmasana is a type of meditation that encourages controlled breathing and helps to calm the mind and soothe the nerves, which is an effective way to improve mental health. It also helps people achieve mental tranquility.

Practising padmasana before bed encourages focused and deep breathing, which promotes restful, sound sleep at night.

It strengthens the knee and ankle joints.

It improves the digestive system by increasing blood circulation in the abdominal region.

It reduces menstrual complications and lessens muscle cramping.

It also enhances blood circulation around the lungs and boosts respiration.

Precaution:

Individuals with recent surgeries, arthritis, knee or ankle injuries, hip problems, or limited flexibility in the hips should avoid Padmasana.



Meditation

Who sees you when you meditate during the night? He is the Hearer, the Omniscient.

– Al Quran Karim, Surah Ash-Shu'ara, 218-220

Meditation is a practice which helps us to declutter our mind from worldly distractions and to achieve calmness and control over self. It washes away the dusts of delusions. Meditation awakens our inner core.

Meditation is a common practice in various cultural traditions. Meditation is prominently featured in the spiritual practices of Jainism, Buddhism, and Hinduism, with its origins dating back to the Upanishads. Similar methods of meditation can be found in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, focused on remembering, praying to, and being devoted to God. It is also carried out without being influenced by any religious or spiritual beliefs.

Meditation involves both physical and mental techniques. Meditation can be guided or unguided. During guided meditation, a teacher leads you through the steps. It is beneficial for those who are new to it. During self-directed meditation, individuals can select their preferred speed and techniques.

There are different types of meditation. Here are only few:

Focused breathing-

Focused breathing involves sitting calmly and concentrating on your breathing.

How to do it?

Sit comfortably while maintaining good posture with a straight spine.

Watch the inhale and exhale of your breath.

Begin to focus more on the gaps between your inhale-exhale.

Breathe in and out.

Observe as they begin to grow larger.

Attempt to maintain a very stable body position and inhale gently.

If your thoughts drift, return to focusing solely on the breath.

Four-square breathing-

Four-square breathing can help in those moments when stress takes over and you need an immediate way to relax your mind and body.

How to do it?

Inhale for 4 seconds.

Hold the breath for 4 seconds.

Exhale for 4 seconds.

Hold the breath for 4 seconds.

Repeat this cycle 12 to 15 times or more as needed.

Anxiety-relief meditation-

Anxiety-relief meditation can calm the nervous system through the use of visualization and deep breathing.

How to do it?

Find a comfortable position.

Close your eyes and breathe deeply.

While keeping your eyes closed, question yourself: 'In which part of my body am I storing this anxiety?'

Concentrate on that specific area of your body.

In your thoughts, associate a color, shape, or texture with the feeling of anxiety.

Now focus on your exhale.

As you exhale, imagine the anxiety exiting your body.

Remain in contemplative meditation until you feel fully satisfied.

Mindfulness meditation-

This form of meditation requires being mindful of your thoughts and emotions, allowing you to observe your thought processes.

How to do it?

You can either remain seated quietly or engage in a repetitive task while practising.

Pay attention to your breath, or to every motion during the activity.

Repeat multiple times.

‘Do nothing’ meditation-

This meditation allows you to pause and reflect on yourself during busy bustle of life.

How to do it?

Pause. Stop whatever you’re doing and just pause.

Take deep breath.

Exhale slowly.

Focus on your inhale and exhale.

Repeat it few times.

Positive affirmative meditation-

Positive affirmative meditation helps us to overcome negativity and negative self-talk.

How to do it?

Sit calmly in comfortable position.

Breathe quietly.

Focus on your inhale and exhale.

On every inhale, tell yourself in your mind:

I am grateful.

I am happy.

I am strong.

On every exhale, tell yourself in your mind:

I wish well-being of all.

I wish peace to the world.

I am sending love to everyone.

Repeat this multiple times until you feel fully satisfied.

Transcendental meditation-

Transcendental meditation enables us to go beyond our material identity and realize our inner potential.

How to do it?

Sit quietly in a comfortable position keeping your spine straight.

Close your eyes.

Breathe slowly.

Tell yourself in your thoughts:

When my body falls asleep, I remain awake in my dream.

Then I am not my body.

Concentrate on this thought.

Repeat this 3 times.

Now try to observe your mind concentrating on this thought.

Tell yourself in your thoughts:

My mind is thinking that I am not my body.

I am watching my mind thinking this.

Then I am not my mind.

Concentrate on this thought.

Repeat this 3 times.

Now with every exhale tell yourself:

I am beyond my body and my mind.

I am light.

I am love.

I am truth.

Repeat this cycle for few times.

There is no single universal meditation method for everyone and every situation. It's crucial to clarify your goal for meditation and to discover the suitable technique before you meditate. You can also combine different meditation methods based on your timetable or personal circumstances.



FAQ

1. Which time is best for Yoga practice?

In general, yoga practice is recommended in the morning or the early evening.

2. How to select asanas for Yoga practice?

It's helpful to know that some poses are energizing and some are calming. You have to choose right asana for right time of the day. Asanas which stimulate our body and mind are recommended in morning. During evening practice, relaxing asanas would be more appropriate.

3. How often should I practice yoga?

Even if you practice once a week, you'll feel the difference. Try to do 20 minutes every day if possible.

4. Can I eat before yoga?

Leave at least two hours between a main meal and yoga. Digestion of food requires energy and when you do yoga straight after a meal, your energy goes to the muscles you're exercising and the body can't digest the food properly.

5. Should I practise yoga when I'm on my period?

It is better to stop practising vigorous Yoga postures during menstruation. Listen to what your body tells you.

yuñjannevaṃ sadātmānaṃ yogī niyatamānasah
śāntiṃ nirvāṇaparamāṃ matsaṃsthāmadhigacchati

Thus, always keeping the mind balanced, the Yogi, with the mind controlled, attains to the Peace abiding in Me, which culminates in total liberation.

(Bhagabadgeeta, Chapter 6, Verse 15)

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Yoga Club and Sports Committee



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