

An award winning  
Therapeutic Yoga book

Illuminating  
Lives with  
**Yoga**



Geeta Iyer



## ILLUMINATING LIVES WITH YOGA

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### **PRECAUTIONARY NOTE**

Consult a medical professional, before starting your personal practice. Especially when there is any injury or illness or after any kind of surgery or during pregnancy. Please read carefully the cautions and guidelines.



## GAYATRI MANTRA

OM BHUR BHUVAH SVAHA  
TAT SAVITUR VARENYAM  
BHARGO DEVASYA DHEEMAHI  
DHIYO YO NAH PRACHODAYAT

*We meditate upon the divine mother  
Thou art most illuminous pure and adorable  
May there be peace in the three phenomenal worlds  
Inspire and guide our intellect in the right direction*

Gayatri Mantra is a powerful mantra from the Rig Veda that purifies, guides, protects and heals. It removes darkness and brings light. Everyone can chant this mantra.

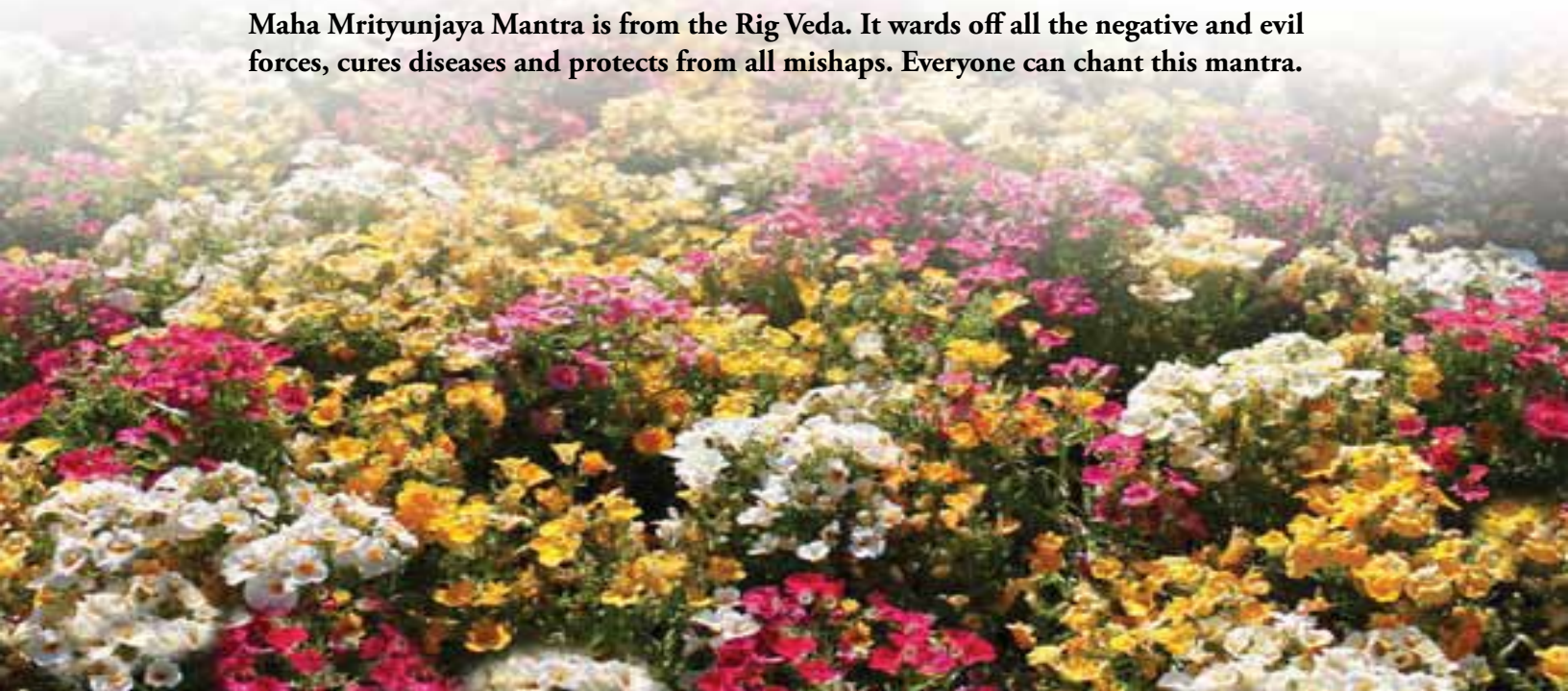


## MAHA MRITYUNJAYA MANTRA

OM TRAYAMBAKAM YAJAMAHE  
SUGANDHIM PUSHTI VARDHANAM  
URVA RUKAMIVA BANDHANAT  
MRITYOR MUKSHEEYA MAMRITAT

*A worship to Lord Shiva the three-eyed one  
Representing the Sun Moon and Fire  
May He release us from the bondage of death  
For the sake of immortality  
Just as a ripened cucumber is liberated of its  
Bondage from its stalk*

Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra is from the Rig Veda. It wards off all the negative and evil forces, cures diseases and protects from all mishaps. Everyone can chant this mantra.



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**ASATO MĀ SAT GAMAYA  
TAMASO MĀ JYOTIR GAMAYA  
MRITYOR MĀ AMRITAM GAMAYA**

*Lead us from unreal to real  
Lead us from darkness to light  
Lead us from fear of death to knowledge of Immortality*



**LOKĀ SAMASTĀ SUKINŌ BHAVANTŪ**

*May the entire universe  
Be filled with  
Peace, Joy, Love and Light*



# The Author



*Yoga is a pleasant inward journey of purification that illuminates life beyond pain.*

*Immerse yourself in this amazing journey of self transformation and experience peace and lasting happiness.*

*Geeta Iyer*

Geeta is one of the most widely known and respected yoga teachers in India. She is practicing and teaching Yoga for over two decades. Geeta has been trained in the Iyengar Yoga style, Swami Satchidananda's Integral Yoga style, and in Swami Sivananda Yoga style. She has a graduate degree in psychology and is a trained classical dancer.














Geeta has had the opportunity to attend many yoga classes in India and in USA. She has extensive experience teaching individual and group classes for private and corporate clients in both countries. Through her experience she has acquired remarkable ability to assess her student's capacities and limitations.

Geeta's wisdom, her expertise and ongoing study of psychology and physiology are a core component of her unique approach. Her teaching style is based on understanding of yoga philosophy as a scientific approach to self development and self transformation. Her style reflects on her deep understanding of human anatomy and her ability as a yoga teacher to tailor the practice sequence to meet her student's needs.

Geeta believes that positive attitude is essential for practice, to overcome limitations and resistance, and integrate mind, body and breath. She empowers her students to discover their hidden strengths and educates them on the underlying philosophy of yoga practice. She inspires her students to incorporate the principles of yoga in their everyday lives.

Geeta's experiences as a yoga practitioner and a teacher has motivated her to write this book and share the amazing benefits of yoga with the larger community.

# What is Yoga

-  Yoga is a timeless tradition from *Rig Veda* with a history of over 5000 years
-  Yoga means uniting individual soul *Jeevatma* with universal soul *Paramatma*
-  Yoga is *Citta Vritti Nirodah* means, yoga controls the fluctuations of the mind
-  Yoga is an ancient philosophy that educates on health and harmonious living
-  Yoga is a science of self-awareness, self development and self-transformation
-  Yoga is a holistic discipline that integrates body and mind, creates perfect balance
-  Yoga is not just physical exercise, it builds emotional stability and calms the mind
-  Yoga is a powerful health discipline that heals many health issues without medicine
-  Yoga is a way of life that boosts positive energies and improves quality of life
-  Yoga bestows self understanding, love, knowledge, wisdom and happiness
-  Yoga awakens the spiritual self, makes the practitioner experience inner divinity
-  Yoga is a natural therapy that makes one look healthy, youthful and beautiful
-  Yoga is an amazing inward journey that illuminates life beyond pain and suffering



# Truths about Yoga

**M**ost people think yoga is a physical exercise that improves body flexibility. They are interested in fast paced activities and find yoga slow paced and uninteresting. They do not realize that fast paced activities cause fatigue, exhaustion and disturb the mind and body balance.

Some people think yoga is only an alternative therapy that provides relief for headaches, arthritis, back pain, high blood pressure, diabetes and other ailments. Such people attend yoga classes till their issues get fixed, and discontinue their practice. Very few people are aware of the true benefits of yoga.

Some people think yoga is a religious practice that deals with rituals. This is not true. Yoga is a basis of all religions. It educates the practitioner on self understanding, love, selfless service, management of pain and peaceful living.

When yoga practice starts in childhood, it is a great blessing for the children. Their systems will function well, posture and mental abilities will improve, there will be awareness of right and wrong, children will develop positive thinking and emotional stability. Their immune system will be strengthened and will be free from disease.

Yoga is for everyone. It is never too late to start yoga; one can start yoga even after attaining age sixty. Yoga is a gift for all ages and a boon for the old age. It infuses vitality in the old age, develops abilities to adapt to changing situations, builds confidence and makes the extra years meaningful.

The only necessity is to learn yoga from a knowledgeable and experienced teacher who will understand the needs of the individual, provide proper guidance and right knowledge.

# Calming the Restless Mind

**M**ind or *manas* is a store house of desires, thoughts and emotions. The thought waves or *Vrittis*, form impressions or grooves in the mind. Every time a thought is repeated, impressions become deeper and it becomes difficult to remove them. The thought waves are like a record player that goes on and on, moving from one thought to another, from the present to past and surface as pleasant or unpleasant memories. Pleasant and selfless thoughts bring peace and joy, while unpleasant, selfish thoughts bring pain and misery.

*Manas-mind*, is the desiring or pleasure seeking part. *Citta-mind*, is the subconscious part, storing past experiences. *Buddhi-mind*, is the intellectual part, that is connected to the consciousness providing knowledge of good and bad, intuition and wisdom. *Ahamkara-mind*, is the false mind or ego, which is an embodiment of pride, anger, hatred, greed, jealousy and fear. These negative emotions project negative energies and destroy the inner balance. If you learn to control your ego and negative emotions, your mind will become strong, there will be more clarity and you can solve many problems with ease.

The deep impressions formed in the mind by thought waves from the past are called *Samskaras*. These are accumulated deep rooted impressions or habit patterns in the consciousness. Through *Svadhyaya* or self-study of thoughts, feelings, emotions and actions and through *Samyama* or deep sustained focus, we can transform the old habit patterns that harm and cultivate good *Samskaras* and live happily.

*Sage Patanjali's 'Yoga Sutras'* provide practical and scientific solutions to awaken and direct the mind to the right path. 'Yoga Sutras' is a bible of 196 aphorisms, hidden with profound meanings. Many saints have given their commentary on yoga sutras for everyone to understand and practice in their lives.

## Tips from Sage Patanjali's Yoga Sutras

- With dedicated, regular practice of *Asanas*, *Pranayama* and *Dhyana*, the powerful cleansing tools of Yoga, you can control ego and calm the restless mind.
- Through *Abhyasa* or constant practice and *Vairagya* or dispassion or non-attachment, to worldly things and pleasures, seen or heard, you can control ego and calm the restless mind.
- Cultivate *Pratipaksha Bhavanam* or opposite emotions to calm your mind. When you have anger or hatred replace them with compassion and love.
- Great obstacles of peace are *Avidya* or ignorance, *Asmita* or egoism, *Raga* or attachment /attraction to worldly pleasures, *Dvesha* or hatred, *Abivinesah* or fear of death or desire to live.
- Cultivate *Maitri* or friendliness with happy people, *Karuna* or compassion with sad people, *Mudita* or delight with virtuous people, *Upekshanam* or disregard towards wicked people. You can easily control ego and calm the restless mind.
- Dedicated and long duration practice of *Pranayama* along with *Kumbhaka* will control ego, the senses and calm the restless mind.



# Hatha Yoga

**H**atha Yoga is a popular health promoting discipline in the world. Its origin is traced to the writings of Swami Swatmarama, the first book on asanas and pranayama written in the 15th century called '*The Hatha Yoga Pradipika*'. Hatha Yoga integrates and balances the two sides of the body.

**Ha** means sun and **Tha** means moon. **Hatha** means willful or forceful. Sun or masculine is the right side, while moon or feminine is the left side. Both sides provide energy for stability, strength and balance.

## AIM OF HATHA YOGA

- 🕯 To balance prana, the energy that moves upwards to the brain
- 🕯 To balance apana, the energy that moves downwards to the pelvis
- 🕯 To balance mind-body-breath and promote inner harmony and peace
- 🕯 To balance opposites; hot and cold, pain and pleasure, loss and gain
- 🕯 To balance every aspect of an individual, make life painless and peaceful

## POWERFUL TOOLS OF HATHA YOGA

### ASANAS

*Asanas* are specific geometric postures designed to suit the anatomy of human body. They are much more than physical exercise because they provide perfect mind-body balance. *Asanas* connect body and mind, remove blocks and imbalances, mobilize inactive muscles and joints and promote ease and harmony. *Asanas* are performed with deep awareness and guided by specific breathing. They must be learnt from an experienced yoga teacher.

*Sage Patanjali* the father of yoga, defined asana as *Sthira, Sukham, Asanam*. *Sthira* means stability, steadiness, firmness, *sukham* means ease, relaxed, comfortable, *asanam* means postures. It takes several years of dedicated practice to accomplish perfect mind-body integration, control, balance and harmony and experience *sthiram* and *sukham* in every asana.

### PRANAYAMA

*Pranayama* is the conscious expansion of inhalation and exhalation in a specific manner. It is a scientific process of internal purification, draws the mind inwards and connects to deeper levels of consciousness. Pranayama refreshes and energizes the brain, calms the mind, removes stress, negativity and makes all the systems function well. They must be learnt from an experienced yoga teacher.

*Sage Patanjali* reiterates that controlling the restless mind is not possible without controlling prana. When pranayama is practiced with dedication and commitment for many years, *avarana* or mental veil or disturbances that covers *prakasa* or inner light or wisdom will be removed. When there is *prakasa*, there will be no confusion, and no sadness, the mind will be clear like a crystal, experiencing peace and happiness.

# Principles of Practice

## 🕯️ **Faith and Motivation**

To undertake this pleasant inward journey, faith and strong motivation are the key requisites.

## 🕯️ **Positive Attitude**

Positive attitude removes tensions and provides focus and positive energies for inner transformation.

## 🕯️ **Assessment of Present Condition**

Before you begin your practice, assess and accept your present physical and mental condition.

## 🕯️ **Inward Gaze**

Inward gaze or *antara drishti*, develops deep inner awareness, improves alignment, stability and balance.

## 🕯️ **Self Awareness**

Self-awareness, leads to self-understanding and facilitates physical and mental transformation.

## 🕯️ **Breathing Power**

Breathing is the core of yoga practice. It draws mind inwards, integrates mind and body, refreshes brain and other organs and promotes overall well being.

## 🕯️ **Internal Alignment**

Alignment of the inner body, enhances stability, grace comfort, heals and brings harmony.

## 🕯️ **Managing Pain**

Pain is a natural sensation caused by stiffness. Tolerance and patience are essential for managing pain.

## 🕯️ **Determination and Effort**

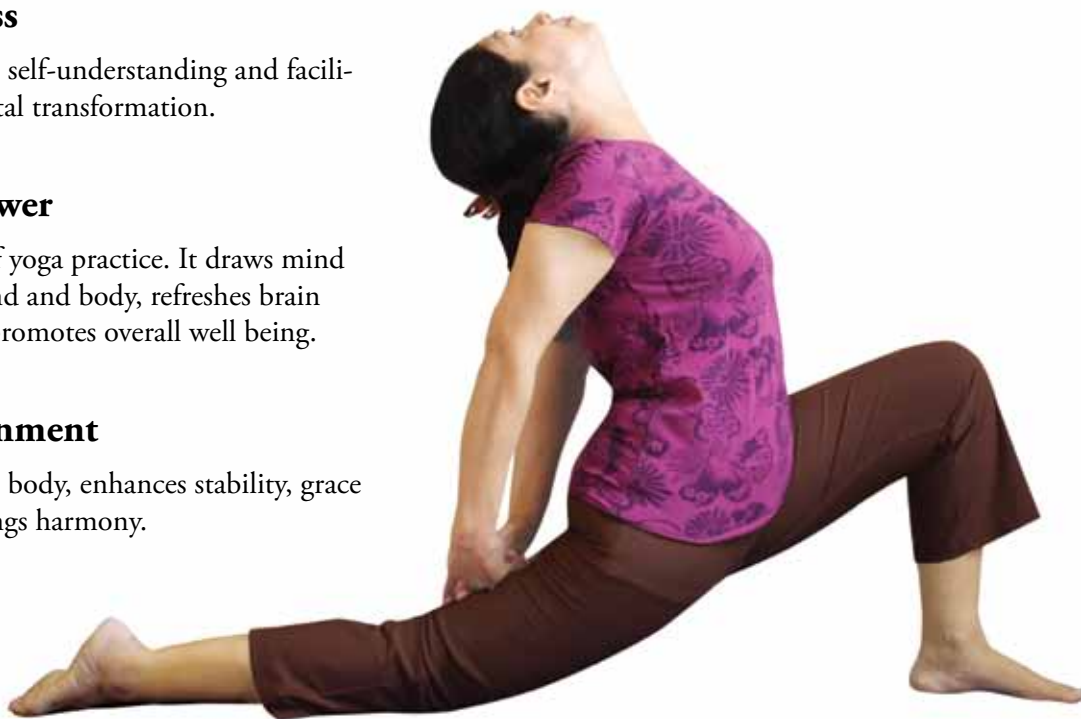
Determination and effort are powerful inner qualities that provide optimum abilities to achieve the desired goal.

## 🕯️ **Passion and Joy**

Practicing yoga with passion and joy, will be an effortless, uplifting and an enjoyable experience.

## 🕯️ **Regularity and Commitment**

Set a time for your everyday practice. Make a commitment with yourself to practice every day. Just a short duration of practice day after day, will bring dynamic changes in you.



# Surya Namaskar

## Sun Salutation

*Surya = Sun or Sun God, Namaskar = bow to*

*Surya Namaskar* is a salute to Lord Surya or Sun God. According to the vedic texts, worship of Sun God promotes good health “*aarogyam bhaskaraath iccheth.*” The ancient yogis practiced *Surya Namaskar* every early morning, facing the sun to greet the new day and derive divine energies for health and prosperity.

*Surya Namaskar* is not an asana but a yoga warm up that refreshes and energizes. It limbers the body and mind for asana practice. It is a dynamic sequence of twelve postures, repeated to make a set of twenty-four postures. Five to ten sets are performed at a time to promote biological changes.

Each posture is performed by inwardly chanting a mantra and feeling the hidden powers of divinity. Breath is rhythmically synchronized with the movements. When practiced with awareness in a slow pace the gain is physical, mental and spiritual. When practiced mechanically in a fast pace, the gain is only physical.

### Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Improves self awareness, flexibility, agility and strengths
- Relieves fatigue, lethargy, stiffness, tensions and pain
- Increases stamina and builds positive energies
- Develops mind focus, alertness and confidence
- Reduces negative energies, excess weight and burns toxins





## Instructions for Practice

1. **Om Mitrāya Namah** (Salutations to the friend)  
Pranamasana Exhale, stand upright, with your hands in the prayer position. Look inwards.
2. **Om Rāvaye Namah** (Salutations to the ever shining)  
Hasta Uttanasana Inhale, raise your hands up, gently bend backwards. Look upwards.
3. **Om Sūryāya Namah** (Salutations to the cosmic light)  
Pada Hasta Asana Exhale, bend forward, stretch your legs, press your palms on the floor, on the sides of your feet. Look downwards.
4. **Om Bhānave Nama** (Salutations to the illuminator)  
Anjaneya Asana Inhale, stretch your right leg far behind. Arch your spine. Look forwards.
5. **Om Khagāya Namah** (Salutations to the performer)  
Adho Mukha Svanasana Exhale, take your left leg far behind. Align your legs back and stretch your limbs. Look downwards.
6. **Om Pusne Namah** (Salutations to the nourisher)  
Ashta Anga Namaskara Inhale, bring your toes under, knees down and hips up. Exhale, rest your chest and chin on the floor. Look downwards.
7. **Om Hiranya Garbhāya Namah** (Salutations to the cosmic power)  
Urdhva Mukha Svanasana Inhale and raise your head and chest, lift your thighs and pelvis off the floor. Stretch forward and arch your back. Look upwards.
8. **Om Marīcāye Namah** (Salutations to the cosmic rays)  
Adho Mukha Svanasana Exhale, press your palms and feet on the floor, raise your hips up and lower your head. Stretch your legs and hands. Look downwards.
9. **Om Adityāya Namah** (Salutations to the son of Aditi)  
Anjaneya Asana Inhale, bring your right foot forward between your palms. Stretch your left leg back. Arch your back and open your chest. Look forward.
10. **Om Sāvitre Namah** (Salutations to the stimulator)  
Pada Hasta Asana Exhale, bring your left foot forward, straighten your legs, bend forward. Stretch your hands downwards. Lower your head. Look downwards.
11. **Om Arkāya Namah** (Salutations to the elixir of life)  
Hasta Uttanasana Inhale, roll up, straighten your back, stretch your hands up and bend backward. Look upwards.
12. **Om Bhāskarāya Namah** (Salutations to the enlightener)  
Pranamasana Exhale, stand upright, with your hands in the prayer position. Look inwards.

# Guidelines for Asana Practice

- 🕯️ Asanas can be practiced by people of any age, ability or condition
- 🕯️ Consult a doctor if you have cardiac or any other medical problem
- 🕯️ Learn asanas from a knowledgeable and experienced yoga teacher
- 🕯️ Those with health issues, must practice with the guidance of a teacher
- 🕯️ Inform your teacher about your health issues and about your lifestyle
- 🕯️ Start your asana practice three to six months after delivery or any surgery
- 🕯️ Avoid practice during fever, diarrhea or any condition that drains your energy
- 🕯️ Practice half an hour after taking a beverage and four hours after a meal
- 🕯️ Keep your stomach, bowels and bladder empty before your practice
- 🕯️ A bath before and after your practice will refresh your body and mind
- 🕯️ Wear modest, loose, comfortable clothing, that will allow free movement
- 🕯️ Warm up your body before practice; cold and stiff muscles may cause injury
- 🕯️ Practice in a well ventilated and clean room, only on a non-slip yoga mat
- 🕯️ Do not practice asanas on a bed or on sand or on any uneven surface
- 🕯️ Respect your body and listen to your body; do as much as your body allows
- 🕯️ Start your practice with relaxation asanas, when you feel dull or exhausted
- 🕯️ Follow the given cautions and instructions to avoid discomfort or injury
- 🕯️ During menstruation avoid leg lifts, backward bends, inversions and twists
- 🕯️ Pregnant women must practice with guidance of an experienced teacher
- 🕯️ Practice everyday at the same time with passion and commitment

# Standing Strengthening

Standing asanas provide perfect awareness and foundation for sitting and inverted asanas. Beginners must practice these asanas for several months to enhance overall flexibility and strength.

Standing asanas, stretch and strengthen the skeletal and muscular systems, build overall stability, strength, endurance and balance. These asanas strengthen the major muscle groups, such as the hamstrings, quadriceps, rectus abdominals, hips and the entire spine.

Standing upright and steady is an art that promotes anatomical alignment, stability and harmony. To stand steady for few minutes requires deep awareness, mind-body perfect integration and control. Standing on a single leg is challenging for the body and mind; it improves concentration and overall strengths.

Some asanas provide a natural traction effect to the spine, align the spinal discs, expand the chest, strengthen the joints, correct physical defects such as knocked knees, bowed legs, drooped shoulders, hunched back that are caused due to habitual wrong postures.

Standing asanas are classified into vertical stretches, one-leg balancing asanas, lateral bends, backward bends, forward bends and twisting asanas.

Props such as wall, straps, blocks, cushions are used to manage stiffness, remove strain, prevent injury, improve alignment and develop comfort.

# Tadasana | Mountain Posture

*Tada = Mountain.* Tadasana is standing steady like a mountain, hence the name. It is also called *Samasthiti* meaning standing with stability, with body weight evenly distributed between the two sides, creating a perfect balance.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Corrects hunched back, bowed legs, knocked knees, drooping shoulders
- Improves inward focus, posture, shoulder and spine flexibility, confidence
- Step 4, improves shoulder and spine mobility, relieves frozen shoulders, back pain

**Instructions** Place your feet parallel, press the four corners of your feet and ground them firmly. Gently lift your knee caps and steady your legs. Breathe smoothly, remove all tensions, fix your eyes inwards and find your centre. Practice the hand variations given with a focused mind.

### CAUTIONS

Support your back against a wall when you have insomnia, dizziness, high BP, severe back pain.

**Duration | 30 seconds to 1 minute**

**Practice on a non-slip yoga mat**

Props: Wall, strap

Urdhva Hasta Tadasana  
*Stretch hands upwards*



Urdhva Hasta Baddha Tadasana  
*Elbow-clasp on head level*



Paschima Hasta Baddha Tadasana  
*Elbow-clasp on waist level*



4

Paschima Hasta Tana Tadasana

Hold the straps fixed on the wall, and slowly walk away from the wall till your shoulders and hands are stretched backwards. **Stay steady with focus for a minute.**

**To come out**, slowly walk backwards and release your hands.



### TIPS

- Fix your gaze on a spot, and direct your mind inwards.
- Spread your toes, increase the surface area of your feet.
- Proper body alignment is essential to experience benefits.

# Vrkshasana | Tree Posture

*Vrksha = Tree.* This asana resembles a tree, hence the name. Balancing on one leg is physically challenging and mentally demanding for everyone.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Aligns and strengthens, builds bone and muscle density
- Improves focus, concentration, stability, balance, serenity, confidence
- Develops overall awareness, corrects joint and muscular imbalances

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have uncontrolled high BP, headache, knee or ankle pain, dizziness, depression, insomnia.

**Duration | 30 seconds - 1 minute**  
each side

**Practice on a non-slip yoga mat**



1

Stand in *Tadasana*. Lift your right leg and place the foot on your inner thigh of left leg. Inhale, stretch your hands up, press your palms in '*Anjali Mudra*.' **Stay steady with even breathing.** Release and get back to *Tadasana*. Repeat with your left leg.



2

Stand in *Tadasana*. Place your right foot on the opposite thigh. Up turn the foot and point your knee downwards as in *Ardha Padmasana*. Place your palms in '*Anjali Mudra*' and feel the warmth. **Stay steady with even breathing.** Release and get back to *Tadasana*. Repeat with your left leg.

Do not bend your knee

***Anjali Mudra** or Namaste means my soul bows to you. A traditional gesture for greeting people with respect, love, humility. This mudra stimulates pressure points, connects to subtle energies, and refreshes brain and heart.*

3

Stand in *Tadasana*. Lift your left leg, bend the knee and grasp your foot with both hands and press it close to your buttocks. **Stay steady with even breathing.** Release the leg and get back to *Tadasana*. Repeat with your right leg.



Stretch and press your foot

### TIPS

- Fix your gaze on one spot and direct your mind inwards.
- Spread your toes and increase the surface area of your balancing foot.
- Distribute your body weight evenly on the four corners of your foot.
- Use wall support if you cannot balance steadily on one leg.

# Trikonasana | Triangle Posture

*Trikon = Triangle.* This asana outwardly creates three triangles, hence the name. It alternatively stretches and compresses the sides, strengthen the rib-cage, muscles in abdomen and pelvis and boosts metabolism.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Relieves stiff neck and shoulders, back pain, knee and ankle pain
- Relieves fatigue, acidity, diabetes, menstrual and menopausal problems
- Reduces body weight, removes excess fat around your waist and abdomen

1

### For Beginners

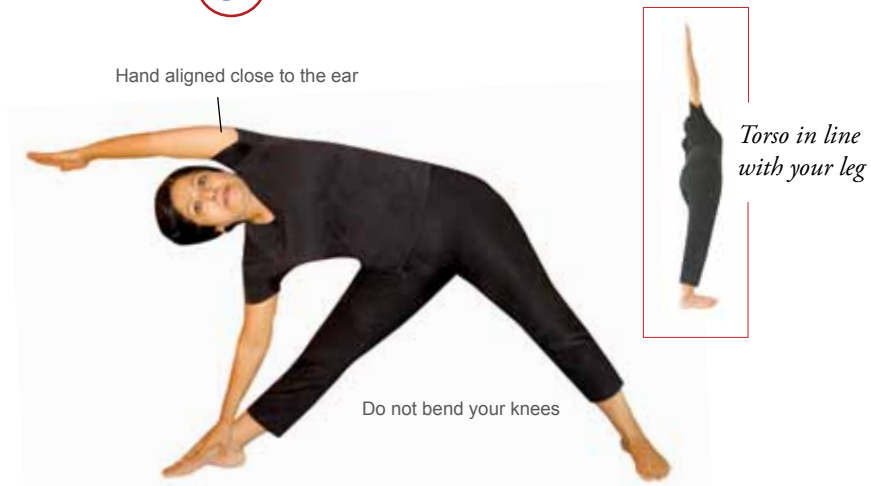
Place your right foot at 90 degrees angle close to a wall, your left foot 3 feet away. Place your right hand on the side wall exhale, stretch to the right and rest your left hand. **Stay steady.** To come out, inhale, release turn and repeat on left side.



2



3



Inhale, raise your left hand, keep it close to your ear. Exhale and stretch to the right side, stretching your left hand parallel to the floor. Look to the front. **Stay steady with even breathing.** To come out, inhale and release. Repeat on the other side.

*Experienced means those practicing with dedication for over 1 year*

## CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have dizziness, diarrhea, uncontrolled high BP, hip or ankle injury, insomnia.

**Duration | 30 seconds each side**

**Practice on a non-slip yoga mat**

Props: Wall, blocks

## For the Experienced

Stretch deeper to the right and rest your palm on the block behind your ankle. Raise your left hand upwards, and gaze upwards. **Stay steady.** To come out, inhale, release and repeat on the left side.

## TIPS

- Align your hips square to your body, before bending.
- Practice with wider stance and deeper extension to the side.
- Do not overstretch and strain.
- When body weight taken by your legs, upper body is light.
- Those with stiff shoulders must practice step 3, carefully.



# Ardha Chandrasana | Half Moon Posture

*Ardha = half, Chandra = moon*

The limbs and torso are stretched to a side; the body outwardly resembles half moon, hence the name. The wall and the block, provide stability, help to properly align and achieve perfect and easeful lateral extension.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Relieves stiff shoulders, spine, hips, groins and hamstrings
- Relieves low back pain, knee pain, sciatica, hernia, hemorrhoids
- Relieves cervical spondylosis, depression, asthma, acidity, ulcers
- Relieves prostate, incontinence, menstrual and menopausal problems

Stand in *Tadasana* with your back against a wall. Turn your left foot at 90 degrees angle. Exhale, bend your knee and your torso to the left side, and rest your palm on the block, placed few inches away from your left foot.

With support of your left leg and left hand, exhale and raise your right leg up sideways and stretch it out gently. Extend the knee of your balancing leg and stretch your right hand upwards in line with your left hand. Let go tensions and raise the leg as high as possible. Turn your gaze upwards or look straight ahead. **Stay steady with focused even breathing.**

**To come out**, exhale and get back to *Tadasana*. Breathe few times and repeat on the other side.

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have hip, neck, shoulder injury, insomnia, diarrhea, during menstruation and in the 3rd trimester of pregnancy.

**Duration | 1 minute each side**

**Practice on a non-slip yoga mat**

Props: Wall, blocks



### TIPS

- Align your hips and spine properly and support them on the wall.
- The wall is great; it provides alignment, balance, stability and comfort.
- The extension of the upper arm acts as a lever to ease and extend the sides.
- To improve stability, lower the raised leg and focus on your breathing.
- The palm on the block, takes off some weight from the balancing leg, helps to open your hips and lift your upper leg higher to the hip level.

# Parsava Konasana | Side Angle Posture

*Parsava = side, Kona = angle* A deeper lateral bend that extends the sides, chest, abdomen and pelvis. It is a neat progression from Virabhadrasana II.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Relieves low back pain, sciatica, diabetes, stiff shoulders and neck
- Relieves prostate, menstrual and menopausal problems
- Improves muscle and joint flexibility and strength
- Reduces fat around the waist, abdomen, hips and thighs

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have diarrhea, dizziness, uncontrolled high BP, knee or ankle injury, insomnia.

**Duration | 20 seconds - 30 seconds**  
each side

**Practice on a non-slip yoga mat**

Props: Blocks

1

## Parsava Konasana

Place your legs four feet apart, turn your left foot 90 degrees, right foot a little inwards. Inhale and raise your right hand upwards; exhale and bend your left knee and gently bend to the left side. Rest your left arm on your thigh. Stretch your right arm over-head in line with your ears.

**Stay steady with focused even breathing.**

**To come out**, inhale and gently release. Repeat on the other side.



2

## Utthita Parsava Konasana

### For the more flexible

Place your palm on a block behind your ankle. **Stay steady with focused breathing.** Repeat on the other side.

### TIPS

- Distribute weight evenly in the legs.
- Align your bent knee above your ankle joint to form a right angle.
- Practice step 2, only when you are flexible, steady and confident.



# Parivrtta Trikonasana



## Revolving Triangle Posture

*Parivrtta = revolve, turn around, Trikona = triangle.*

This asana creates twist in a triangle, hence the name.

### Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Stretches hamstrings, ankles, knees, improves spine and hip flexibility
- Relieves stiff neck, stiff shoulders, low back pain, sciatica
- Relieves diabetes, gall bladder stones, menstrual and menopausal problems
- Reduces weight, removes excess fat around your waist and abdomen

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have dizziness, diarrhea, uncontrolled high BP, a migraine, hip injury, insomnia.

**Duration | 20 seconds to 30 seconds**  
each side

**Practice on a non-slip yoga mat**

Props: blocks



Stand in Tadasana, spread your legs 4 feet wide apart. Turn your feet slightly outwards. Inhale, stretch your hands to the sides in line with your shoulders. **Stay steady with focused even breathing.**

From step 1, exhale and turn to the left side keeping your hips and pelvis stable and your legs steady. **Stay steady with even breathing.**

From step 2, exhale and bend forward place your right hand on the floor and stretch your left hand upwards. **Stay steady with even breathing.** Inhale and roll up. Repeat on the other side.



4

### For more flexible people

From step 1, exhale and rotate the upper body from hips to the opposite side ie left side. Rest your right palm on your left foot. Stretch your left hand upwards and look backwards. **Stay steady with focused even breathing.** Inhale and gently roll to the centre. Breathe few times and repeat on the other side.

### TIPS

- Distribute body weight between your legs and lighten your trunk.
- Those with stiff shoulders and hamstrings can rest their palm on a block or on a low stool.

# Virabhadrasana | Warrior Posture

*Vira = hero, Bhadra = blessed, Virabhadra = a powerful and blessed warrior*

These asanas build strength, vigor and stability like a warrior, hence the name. They demand mindfulness and determination to meet the body challenges.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Strengthens and stabilizes legs, hips, pelvis, spine, chest
- Relieves fatigue, back pain, asthma, arthritis, acidity, sciatica
- Reduces fat in thighs, relieves menstrual and menopausal problems

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have uncontrolled high BP, insomnia. Virabhadrasana III must be avoided during menstruation. Virabhadrasana III and IV must be avoided during pregnancy.

**Duration | 20 - 30 seconds**  
each side

**Practice on a non-slip yoga mat**

Props: Wall, blocks

## Virabhadrasana I

Place your legs four feet apart and turn your torso to a side. Turn your front foot 90 degrees pointing straight ahead and your back foot 60 degrees turned inwards. Keep your hips square and steady your legs. Inhale, stretch your hands upwards. Exhale, bend your front knee. If you are confident, move your head back and look upwards. **Stay steady with focused even breathing.** Alternate your legs and repeat on the other side.



## Virabhadrasana II



Place your legs four feet apart, with your right foot turned 90 degrees, left foot turned little inwards. Inhale, extend your hands in line with your shoulders with palms facing down. Exhale, bend your right knee as you stretch your left leg. Keep your torso straight and chest open. Turn your head to the right side, fix your gaze on a spot on your right hand. **Stay steady with focused even breathing.** **To come out,** inhale and gently release the lunge. Repeat on the left side.

## Virabhadrasana III

Stand in *Tadasana*. Take your left leg backwards, gently shift weight on the front leg. Exhale and raise the left leg as high as your hips. Steady your balancing leg and align your hips. Fix your eyes on a spot, stretch your hands to the front and lengthen your spine. If you need support, face a wall and reach your fingers on the wall.

**Stay steady with even breathing.**

**To come out**, bring your leg and hands down and get back to *Tadasana*. Repeat with your other leg.



## Virabhadrasana IV

Get into *Virabhadrasana II*. Take your hands to the back and clasp your wrist or interlace your fingers. Exhale and bend forward to a side. Rest your palms on the floor and your head on a block. **Stay steady with focused even breathing.** **To come out**, inhale and gently roll up. Repeat on the other side.



### For the more flexible

Firm your legs and gently stretch forward. Rest your head on the floor with your hands bound at the back.

**Stay steady with focused breathing.**

**To come out**, inhale and slowly roll up. Repeat on the other side.



### TIPS

- A positive attitude is essential for stability and balance.
- Distribute your body weight evenly between your legs.
- Ground your feet firmly and steady your legs.
- Breathe evenly and manage your pressures and tensions.
- Practice with props for proper alignment and comfort.



# Uttanasana Intense Forward Stretch Posture

*Uttana = intense extension.* A refreshing forward bend made easy with props.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Refreshes brain, calms mind, relaxes heart, massages abdomen
- Relieves back pain, knee pain, hip pain, low and high BP
- Relieves mental fatigue, anxiety, depression, insomnia, hemorrhoids
- Relieves indigestion, diabetes, menstrual and menopausal problems

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have spinal disc displacement, a migraine, vertigo, diarrhea, during pregnancy.

**Duration | 1 minute - 5 minutes**

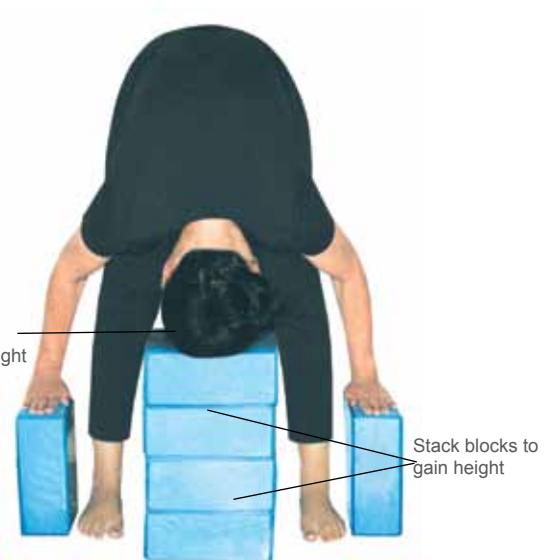
**Practice on a non-slip yoga mat**

Props: Blocks, stool

1

### For Beginners

Place your feet about twelve inches apart. Place a block on the outer side of your feet and stack few blocks in the centre. Inhale raise your hands high and exhale, bend forward. Rest your head and your palms on the blocks. Close your eyes, soften your fore-head and remove tensions. **Stay steady with focused even breathing.**



2

### For those with health issues



3

### For the Experienced

Stand in *Tadasana* with feet twelve inches apart. Exhale, bend forward and move your head close to your knees. Press your palms on either side of your feet. Keep your eyes open and observe. **Stay steady with focused breathing.**

**To come out**, place your hands on your knees, inhale and slowly roll up.



### TIPS

- Ground your feet firmly for stability.
- If your hamstrings hurt, micro bend your knees for a while and stretch.
- Relax your shoulders, neck and head.

*Experienced means those practicing with dedication for over 1 year*



# Parsvottanasana | Intense Side Stretch Posture

*Parsava = sideways Uttana = intense extension*

This asana is an asymmetrical forward bend that requires deep awareness.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Stretches hamstrings, improves hip, spine and shoulder flexibility
- Refreshes brain, strengthens legs, spine and abdomen
- Relieves joint pains, indigestion, diabetes and menopausal problems
- Reduces fat in the thighs and abdomen, builds stability, confidence

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have diarrhea, uncontrolled high BP, arthritis, dizziness, migraine, insomnia, during pregnancy.

**Duration | 30 seconds - 1 minute**

**Practice on a non-slip yoga mat**

Props: Blocks, a strap



### For Beginners

Place your feet four feet apart and turn to a side. Inhale and raise your hands, exhale and stretch forward. Rest your palms on the blocks. **Stay steady.** Inhale and roll up. Turn to the other side and repeat.



### For the Experienced

Hold a strap away from your hips. Exhale, bend forward, stretch your hands upwards and head downwards. **Stay steady with focused breathing.** Inhale and gently roll up. Turn to the other side and repeat.



Take your hands to the back, press your palms and fingers together to form back-side namaste. Inhale, bend backwards and look upwards. **Stay steady.**



In continuation from step 3, inhale and straighten your back, exhale and stretch forward. Look down breathe and stay steady. Alternate your legs and repeat steps 3 and 4.

### TIPS

- Inward focus is essential for mind-body control and to maintain steadiness.
- Do not over stretch and strain.
- For backside-namaste refer to page 108.

# Prasarita Padottanasana | Intense Leg Stretch Posture

*Prasarita = stretched, Pada = leg or foot, Uttana = intense extension*

This asana is called semi-inverted asana, as it promotes partial reversal of many organs. Those who cannot practice *Sirsasana*, can practice this asana.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Refreshes brain, calms the tense mind, relaxes heart and lungs
- Massages abdomen and pelvis, strengthens legs, hips and spine
- Relieves anxiety, depression, low and high BP, insomnia, hemorrhoids
- Relieves fatigue, back pain, diabetes, menstrual and menopausal problems

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have vertigo, diarrhea, migraine. Practice only step 1, during pregnancy.

**Duration | 3 minutes - 5 minutes**

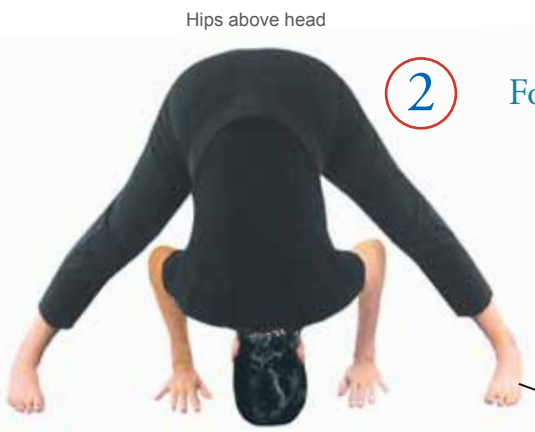
**Practice on a non-slip yoga mat**

Props: Blocks



### For Beginners

Stand with your legs four feet wide apart. Exhale, stretch forward and reach your hands either on the wall in the front or on the blocks kept on the floor. **Stay steady with even breathing.**



### For the Experienced



**Step 2.** Exhale, stretch forward and rest your head on the floor, with your palms on either side. Spread your fingers wide and bend your elbows. **Step 3.** Stand upright and take your hands behind, press your palms together to form back side namaste. Exhale, stretch forward and rest your head on the floor. **Stay steady with focused even breathing.**

**To come out,** lift your head off the floor, gently bend your knees and walk your feet closer. Inhale and slowly roll up to the upright position.

*Experienced means those practicing with dedication for over 1 year*

### TIPS

- Do not press much weight on your head.
- For back-side namaste refer to page 108.

# Reclining Releasing

Reclining asanas are practiced after standing asanas. They are easy and must be practiced everyday by everyone. Practice using props, to improve alignment, stability and comfort.

Reclining asanas are designed in the supine position (resting on the spine) and in the prone position (resting on the abdomen.) The asanas in supine and prone positions complement each other, refresh the vital organs and improve their functions.

Reclining asanas correct neuro-muscular, chemical and other imbalances. They release tensions and congestions from the legs, hips, pelvis and abdomen and rest the spine, lungs and heart.

Reclining asanas prepare the body and mind for the sitting asanas, forward and backward bending asanas and the inverted asanas.

# Supta Urdhva Padasana Reclining leg lifts

*Supta = reclining or lying down, Urdhva = upward, Pada = leg*

This asana removes fatigue and pain from spine, hips and legs.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Relieves low back pain, varicose veins, leg pain, hernia, incontinence
- Step 1 drains stagnated fluids, reduces swelling, knee and low back pain
- Step 2 tones the abdomen, reduces fat in thighs, hips and abdomen
- Step 3 relieves hemorrhoids, prostate, menstrual and menopausal problems

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have hip injury, headache, during menstruation and pregnancy.

**Duration | 30 seconds - 1 minute**

Do as much as your body allows

**Practice on a non-slip yoga mat**

Props: A strap, cushions

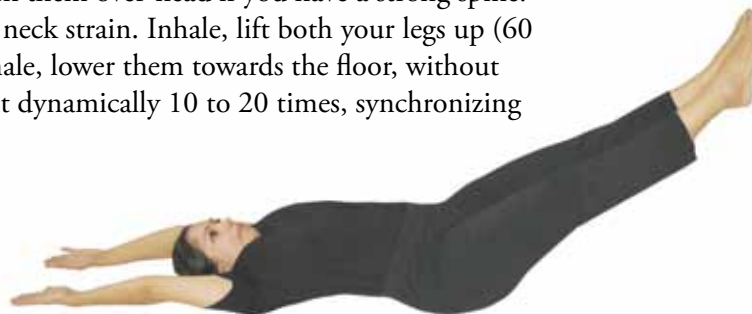
## 1 Supta Urdhva Eka Padasana

Lie down on the floor with your feet pressed on a wall. Loop a strap on your right foot, inhale and lift your leg upwards with the strap. Rest your head and shoulders. **Stay steady with focused breathing.** Exhale, lower your leg on the floor. Repeat with your left leg.



## 2 Supta Urdhva Dvi Padasana

Tuck your hands under your hips or stretch them over-head if you have a strong spine. Rest your head on a soft cushion to avoid neck strain. Inhale, lift both your legs up (60 degrees) without bending your knees. Exhale, lower them towards the floor, without touching the floor. Practice this movement dynamically 10 to 20 times, synchronizing your breath.



## 3 Supta Urdhva Konasana

Bend your knees and hold your big toes firmly. Stretch your legs wide apart. **Stay steady with even breathing.** **To come out,** bend your knees, release your hands and rest your feet on the floor.



# Supta Padangusthasana | Reclining Big Toe Posture

*Supta = reclining or lying down, Pada = foot, Angusta = big toe*

This asana provides perfect traction effect in your hips, pelvis and legs corrects mis-alignment and enhances circulation.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Improves flexibility and strength in the legs, hips, pelvis, spine, abdomen
- Relieves low back pain, sciatica, hernia, hip and knee pain, low and high BP
- Relieves incontinence, prostate, menstrual and menopausal problems

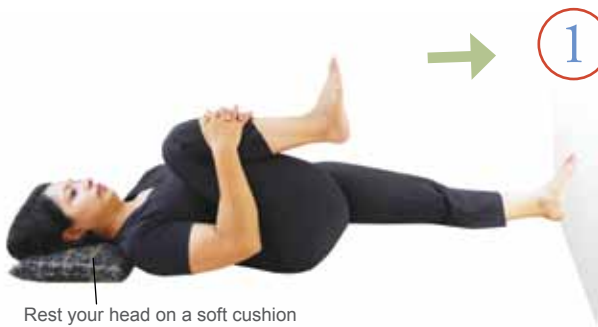
### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have a migraine, spine, hip injury, diarrhea.

**Duration | 1 minute - 2 minutes**  
each side

**Practice on a non-slip yoga mat**

Props: Wall, cushions, strap



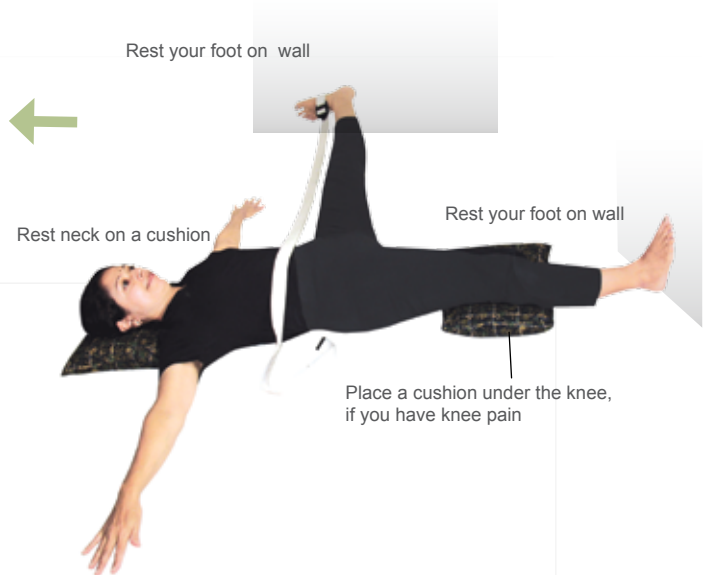
Rest your head on a soft cushion

## 1 Ardha Pawana Muktasana

Lie on your back with legs outstretched. Inhale, draw your right knee and hug it with both hands. Keep your left leg stretched on the floor with the foot pressed on the wall behind. **Stay steady with focused breathing.** Release the knee hug and repeat with your left leg.

## 2 Supta Padangustasana

Lie on your back in a corner of a room, that has wall on two sides. Inhale, stretch your left leg to the left side using a strap and rest the foot on the side wall. In the meanwhile, allow the right leg to stretch and place the foot on the wall behind. **Stay steady with focused breathing.** Exhale and bring the left leg to the centre on the floor. Re-position your body and repeat with your right leg.



Rest your foot on wall

Rest neck on a cushion

Rest your foot on wall

Place a cushion under the knee, if you have knee pain



Thigh must not pop up

## 3

### For the Experienced

Grasp your big toe firmly and stretch the leg to the side. Do not allow the opposite thigh to pop up. **Stay steady with focused breathing.** Bend your knee and bring the leg back to the centre. Repeat with your other leg.

*Experienced means those practicing with dedication for over 1 year*



# Supta Baddha Konasana Reclining Bound Angle Posture

*Supta = reclining, or lying down, Baddha = bound, Kona = angle*

This asana is a relaxing and a healing variation of *Baddha Konasana*.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Relieves chest congestions, back pain, high and low BP, depression
- Relieves acidity, ulcers, hernia, diabetes, incontinence
- Relieves prostate, menstrual and menopausal problems
- A boon for pregnant women; relieves abdominal-pelvic discomfort, back pain, uterine fatigue, improves circulation, promotes easy delivery

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have diarrhea, hip or knee injury.

**Duration | 3 - 5 minutes**

**Practice on a non-slip yoga mat or on a firm mattress**

Props: Cushions, bolsters

Lie on your back, with your head and your spine on cushions, your hips and pelvis on the floor. Bend your knees and extend them to the sides. Press the soles of your feet together, in front of your perineum. Roll your shoulders down and broaden your chest. Place a bolster under the knees to avoid strain in your groins, inner thighs or knees. Keep a mudra in your fingers. **Stay steady with focused even breathing.**



**To come out**, draw your knees closer, breathe few times and roll your body to a side before you sit up.

### TIPS

- Cushions or bolsters prevent strain and provide comfort.
- A relaxing counter posture for *Setu Bandhasana*.
- Practice throughout pregnancy.



# Supta Virasana | Reclining Hero Posture

*Supta = reclining or lying down, Vira = hero*

This asana refreshes and renews the organs; a healing variation of *Virasana*.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Strengthens immune system, stimulates vagus nerve, improves circulation
- Relieves flatulence, acidity, ulcers, diabetes, heaviness after meals
- Relieves asthma, palpitations, fatigue, low and high BP, insomnia
- Relieves chronic leg pain, prostate, menstrual and menopausal problems
- Relieves vomiting, indigestion, breathing problems during pregnancy
- A boon for pregnant women; rejuvenates organs, prevents nausea, varicose veins, back pain, uterine fatigue, promotes good sleep and easy delivery

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** if you cannot sit in *Virasana*, or when you have ankle, knee, hip or spine injury, during menstruation.

**Duration | 3 - 10 minutes**

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat or on a firm mattress**

Props: Cushions, bolsters

Sit in *Purna Virasana* refer to page 47. Hold your ankles and rest your elbows and forearms on the floor, gently recline backwards. Rest your spine and head on cushions and place your hands along sides your body or stretch them up. **Stay steady with focused even breathing.**



**To come out**, hold your ankles, and press your elbows on the floor and slowly lift your head and spine off the floor. Sit up in *Virasana*.

**A restful counter posture:** Exhale, stretch your torso forward, rest your forehead on a cushion, raise your hips and close your eyes. Breathe evenly. **Stay calm for few seconds.**

### TIPS

- Approach this asana with an open mind.
- Experience the front body extension through upper thighs. The thighs may initially hurt.
- Beneficial after your meals and before retiring to bed in the night.
- Practice throughout pregnancy using props.



# Matsyasana | Fish Posture

*Matsya = fish, Matsyendra = lord of fishes or name of a legendary saint*

This asana resembles a fish and hence the name.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Stimulates brain, pituitary gland, lungs, heart and diaphragm
- Relieves fatigue, thyroid problems, neck pain, asthma, bronchitis
- Relieves hemorrhoids, indigestion, incontinence, menopausal problems

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have uncontrolled high BP, migraine, insomnia and during menstruation and pregnancy.

**Duration | 30 seconds - 1 minute**

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat**

- 1 Lie on your back with your legs together, hands along the sides your body. Inhale and press your forearms into the floor. Raise your head and chest and place the crown of your head on the floor. Balance your weight on your hips, elbows and forearms. **Stay steady with even breathing.**



- 2 Sit in *Padmasana*, refer to page 46. Press your forearms on the floor. Recline to the back, raise your sternum, and rest the crown of your head on the floor. **Stay steady with focused even breathing.** With hand support, gently sit up. Repeat by changing leg position.



- 3 Sit in *Purna Virasana*, refer to page 47. Hold your ankles, press your forearms on the floor and gently recline backwards. Raise your sternum and rest the crown of your head on the floor. **Stay steady with focused even breathing.**



**To come out**, move your head neutral, rest your head and spine on the floor. Turn your head from side to side few times to correct imbalance in your neck. With support of your hands and your breath, gently sit up.

# Jatara Parivrttasana | Abdominal Twist Posture

*Jatara = stomach, Parivrtta = twist*

This asana realigns, massages and strengthens abdomen, hips, buttocks, spine.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Relieves stiffness and pain in hips, spine, neck and shoulders
- Massages abdominal organs, relieves indigestion, diabetes, acidity, ulcers
- Relieves menopausal problems, reduces excess fat in hips and abdomen

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have abdomen or spine injury, during pregnancy and menstruation.

**Duration | 1 to 3 minutes**  
each side

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat**

Props: Wall, a strap, cushion

1

### For Beginners

Lie on your back, inhale and lift your right leg up using a strap. Hold the strap with your left hand and turn your head to the right side. Exhale and stretch the right leg to the left side. Extend your right hand in line with your shoulders and rest your left foot on the wall behind. **Stay steady with focused even breathing.** Change your body position and repeat on the other side.

Place the foot on the wall above the floor



Reach the foot on the wall

2

### For the Experienced

*Without the strap and wall*

Hold your big toe and stretch your leg to the side. **Stay steady with even breathing.** Inhale and bring your leg back to the centre. Breathe and repeat on the other side.



3

Extend your hands in line with your shoulders. Turn your head to the left side. Bend your knees, exhale, roll to right side and stretch out your legs. **Stay steady with even breathing.** Bend your knees and roll to the centre. Breathe and roll and stretch your legs to left side. **To come out,** bend your knees and roll to the centre. Straighten your legs and relax.



Rest your shoulder on the floor

*Experienced means those practicing with dedication for over 1 year*

# Backward Rejuvenating

Backward bends refresh, invigorate, energize, strengthen and create mind and body balance. They align and integrate the front and the back of the body, strengthen the spine, enhance lung capacity, extend the heart, nourish the abdomen and pelvis. They stimulate the brain and the endocrine glands, increase alertness, improve stamina, grace and confidence. Backward bends also correct postural defects such as rounded shoulders and hunched back.

In our everyday lives we often bend forward but not backwards. Hence backward bending asanas become challenging and difficult for many people even for dancers and athletes. They face a lot of physical and mental resistance, which can be overcome with the guidance of a competent yoga teacher.

Backward bends are designed in standing, reclining and sitting positions. Props such as wall, table, chair, blocks and cushions are used to reduce strain improve alignment and provide comfort in the asana.

# Bhujangasana | Cobra Posture

*Bhujanga = cobra, snake*

This asana resembles a snake with its hood raised and hence the name.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Aligns the spinal discs, energizes lungs, heart and abdomen
- Relieves back pain, asthma, acidity, ulcers, indigestion, hemorrhoids
- Relieves breathlessness, vertigo, menstrual and menopausal problems
- Reduces body weight, corrects double chin and hunched back

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have back injury, a migraine, insomnia, uncontrolled high BP, during menstruation and pregnancy.

**Duration | 20 - 30 seconds**

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat**

Props: chair, table, wall

1

Lie face down with your legs few inches apart. Rest your forehead on the floor and place your palms in line with your forehead. Move your elbows close to your chest. Inhale raise your head and chest and balance on your forearms. Broaden your chest and look to the front. **Stay steady with focused even breathing.** **To come out**, exhale, slowly roll down. Rest in *Makarasana*.



2

Place your palms in line with your chest and rest your forehead on the floor. Inhale, raise your head and chest off the floor. Look upwards. **Stay steady with focused even breathing.** **To come out**, exhale and roll down. Rest in *Makarasana* refer to page 71.



3

## Standing Bhujangasana with props

Inhale and gently bend backwards. Stay steady for few seconds. Exhale and slowly come out of the back bend.



### TIPS

- Beginners can stay for short duration.
- Breathe smoothly and continuously.
- Keep your mouth closed and breathe only through your nose.



# Dhanurasana Bow Posture

*Dhanur* = bow. This asana resembles a bow, hence the name. The hands form the string of a bow that pulls the trunk and the legs up.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Enhances lung capacity, elasticity of the spine, stimulates abdomen
- Refreshes brain, pituitary gland, heart, stabilizes emotions
- Relieves asthma, back pain, shoulder pain, ankle and leg pain
- Relieves diabetes, hemorrhoids, menstrual and menopausal problems
- Reduces weight, removes excess abdomen fat, controls over-eating

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have uncontrolled high BP, shoulder, spine, hip, knee injury, ulcers, hernia, migraine during menstruation and pregnancy.

**Duration | 20 seconds - 1 minute**

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat**

## 1 Ardha Dhanurasana

Lie down in *Makarasana*. Bend your right leg, hold the ankle with your right hand. Bring your forehead on the floor. Place your left hand in the front. Inhale and lift your head, chest and right leg up. **Stay steady with even breathing.** To come out, exhale and release. Repeat with your left leg.



Straighten your leg

Lift your thigh off the floor



Pull your legs up

Lift your thighs off the floor

Balance on your abdomen

## 2 Dhanurasana

Lie in *Makarasana*. Bend your legs and grasp your feet or your ankles firmly. Rest your forehead on the floor and move your knees closer. Inhale and lift your head, chest, legs and thighs off the floor. Balance on your abdomen and pelvis and look to the front. **Stay steady and breathe freely.** To come out, exhale and gently release. Rest in *Makarasana*.

## 3 Parsava Dhanurasana

Hold your feet firmly and roll freely from side to side few times. To come out, roll back to the centre, release and rest in *Makarasana*.



### TIPS

- Practice step 1, for few weeks and improve flexibility.
- Do not apply force and pull your legs up; you may hurt your joints and muscles.
- Practice step 3, on a carpet to avoid discomfort and strain.



# Urdhva Mukha Svanasana

## Upward Facing Dog Posture

*Urdhva = upward, Mukha = face, Svana = dog*

This asana resembles a dog's stretch with head upwards, hence the name.

### Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Relieves fatigue, asthma, slip-disc, back pain, neck pain, wrist pain
- Relieves sciatica, indigestion, menstrual and menopausal problems
- Reduces excess weight, increases muscle and joint strength

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have spine injury, uncontrolled high BP, shoulder or elbow pain, migraine, carpal tunnel syndrome, hernia, during menstruation and pregnancy.

**Duration | 20 seconds - 1 minute**

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat**

1

### For Beginners

Lie face down with your feet few inches apart and your toes under. Place your palms below your chest, with elbows tucked in. Rest your forehead on the floor. Press your palms and toes on the floor, inhale, raise your head, chest and thighs off the floor. Bend backwards, broaden your chest and look upwards.

**Stay steady with focused even breathing.** **To come out**, exhale and slowly release. Rest in *Makarasana*.



Do not move your palms or feet

2

### For the Experienced

A variation of step 1. Press the tops of your feet and palms into the floor, as you lift the trunk off the floor. Stretch forward arch your back and look upwards. **Stay steady with focused breathing.**

**To come out**, exhale, and slowly release. Rest in *Makarasana*. Refer to page 71.



Legs off the floor

### TIPS

- Distribute body weight evenly between your hands and legs.
- Spread your fingers wide and stretch.
- Breathe freely and continuously.
- Practice several times to gain strength.

*Experienced means those practicing with dedication for over 1 year*

# Viparita Dandasana | Inverted Staff Posture

*Viparita = inverted Danda = staff or stick*

An invigorating and healing asana made easy with the props.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Refreshes brain, pituitary gland, removes fatigue, improves confidence
- Enhances lung capacity, strengthens the heart, stabilizes emotions
- Relieves asthma, sinusitis, thyroid problems, back pain, low BP
- Relieves acidity, hemorrhoids, diabetes, prolapse of bladder and uterus
- Relieves depression, prostate, menstrual and menopausal problems

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have high BP, eye or ear problem, neck pain, insomnia, a migraine, during menstruation and pregnancy.

**Duration | 2 minutes - 5 minutes**  
Do as much as your body allows

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat**

Props: A chair, cushions

1

Lie down on your back with your spine raised on cushions and your head lowered towards the floor. Rest the crown of your head on a cushion. Stretch your legs in line with your hips and rest the feet on the wall behind. Place your hands along sides your body. **Stay steady with focused even breathing.**



2

Sit on a chair facing the wall taking your legs through the back of the chair. Hold the sides of the chair and slowly arch to backwards with your head hanging close to the floor. Allow the crown of your head to rest on stacked cushions. Stretch your legs and rest the feet on the wall. **Stay calm and steady with even breathing.**

**To come out**, hold the sides of the chair firmly and move your feet to the floor. With the support of the hands and legs lift your head off the cushions and your upper back and slowly sit up. Ground your feet on the floor, close your eyes and breathe.



# Ustrasana | Camel Posture

*Ustra = camel* This asana resembles the neck of a camel, hence the name. It develops energy and conserves it. Builds inner strengths, just as a camel has incredible capacity to conserve enough water for long period of time.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Refreshes the brain, calms the mind, builds confidence, emotional stability
- Corrects hunched-back, rounded-shoulders, prolapse of pelvic organs
- Relieves back pain, asthma, diabetes, menstrual and menopausal problems
- Improves organ functions, energy, reduces weight, removes excess fat

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have high or low BP, cardiac problem, headache, shoulder, knee pain, insomnia, diarrhea, back injury, during menstruation and pregnancy.

**Duration | 20 seconds - 1 minute**  
Do as much as your body allows

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat**

Props: Wall, a folded blanket

1



### For Beginners

Kneel on the floor with your knees and feet hip-width apart. Place your palms on your buttocks, extend your elbows and shoulders back. Inhale, expand your chest, move your head up and bend backwards. Hold your hips. **Stay steady with even breathing.**

**To come out,** exhale and release the bend.



Balance on your legs

2

### For the Experienced

From step 1, inhale, grasp your heels or your soles. Drop your head freely to the back and breathe smoothly. **To come out,** exhale, move your head and straighten your spine.



Stretch your hands

3



Kneel on the floor two feet away from a wall, with your back facing the wall. Inhale, bend backwards, reach your palms on the wall behind. Extend your abdomen and chest forward and look upwards. **Stay steady with focused even breathing.**

**To come out,** exhale, move your head and straighten your spine.



Gently press on the wall

4



### A restful counter posture

*Adho Mukha Virasana.*

Refer to page 72.



### TIPS

- Practice step 1, for several weeks to improve flexibility and confidence.
- If your knees hurt, place a folded blanket under your knees.
- If your shoulders are stiff, rotate them clockwise and anti-clockwise.
- Breathe freely and continuously.
- The counter posture relieves dizziness.

*Experienced means those practicing with dedication for over 1 year*

# Setu Bandhasana | Bridge Posture

*Setu = bridge, Bandha = lock or control, Setu Bandha = construction of a bridge*

The formation of an arch with extension of the spine resembles a bridge, hence the name.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Massages the brain and neck, improves lung and heart functions
- Relieves back pain, hip pain, asthma, thyroid problems
- Relieves fatigue, high and low BP, vertigo, anxiety, depression
- Relieves diabetes, prostate, menstrual and menopausal problems

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have back or hip or knee pain migraine, during menstruation and in the 3rd trimester of pregnancy.

**Duration | 30 seconds - 1 minute**  
Do as much as your body allows

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat**

Props: blocks

### 1 Preparation

Lie on your back, bend your knees and place your hands on the sides, your feet hip-width apart with heels close to your buttocks.



### 2

From step 1, press your head, shoulders and forearms on the floor, inhale and raise your back as high as you can. Press your hands and your shoulders on the floor. **Stay steady with even breathing.**



### 3

Place two yoga blocks, under your back and feel the difference. This posture provides better alignment and comfort and you can stay longer in the posture. **Stay steady with even breathing.**



### TIPS

- Those with stiff neck, can stretch their hands over-head on the floor.
- Step 2, provides relief for stiff shoulders, elbows, wrists and fingers. Interlace your fingers and press them on the floor below your spine and feel the benefits.
- Step 3, promotes anatomical alignment and stimulates vital organs and glands.

**To come out**, exhale and gently lower your back to the floor. Straighten your legs and rest for few seconds.

# Urdhva Dhanurasana | Upward Bow Posture

*Urdhva = upward, Dhanur = bow*

The body takes shape of a bow, to shoot the arrow in the upward direction. This asana is also called *Chakrasana* or wheel posture.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Refreshes and nourishes brain, heart, lungs, abdomen, kidneys
- Relieves asthma, thyroid, hemorrhoids, anxiety, depression
- Relieves constipation, prostate, menstrual and menopausal problems
- Reduces excess body weight, controls over eating, boosts confidence
- Prevents ageing of the organs, joint pain, stagnation of blood, infertility

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have uncontrolled high BP, diarrhea cervical spondylosis, back and wrist pain, a migraine, cardiac problems, menstruation and during pregnancy.

**Duration | 10 - 30 seconds**  
Do as much as your body allows

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat**

Props: Wall, blocks, a bolster

1

### For Beginners

Lie on your back with your knees bent, your head and spine rested on a bolster. Place blocks on either side of your head. Press your palms on the blocks, exhale and lift your head and spine. Rest the crown of your head on the bolster and balance. **Stay steady with focused even breathing.** Repeat few times.



2

Press your palms firmly on the blocks, exhale and lift your trunk and head off the bolster. Stretch your hands, and legs and hang your head freely downwards in line with your hands. Breathe steadily. **Stay steady with even breathing.**

**To come out,** exhale and slowly lower your head and back on the bolster. Breathe few times. Straighten your legs and relax. Repeat few times.



3

### For the Experienced

**Without using props**  
Instructions in step 2.



### TIPS

- Practice step 1, several times to build strength and confidence.
- Inward focus is essential for stability and balance.
- Breathe freely and continuously.
- Practice with a competent teacher if you have difficulties.

*Experienced means those practicing with dedication for over 1 year*



# Sitting Awakening

Sitting asanas awaken, restructure, realign and strengthen the hips, pelvic and abdominal areas. They enhance flexibility, remove tensions, congestions and imbalance caused due to habitual wrong postures and unhealthy lifestyle.

Sitting on the chair for long hours causes strain to the muscles and joints in the legs and hips. There is inactivity in the hamstrings, quadriceps, hips, knees and ankle joints.

Beginners face lot of difficulties in performing many asanas because of the stiffness in the muscles and joints. The use of props such as strap, cushion, folded blanket and wall, will reduce strain, improve alignment, stability and comfort.

It is advisable, to practice the sitting asanas with the guidance of a competent teacher and this helps to overcome mental and physical resistance.

Sitting asanas like *Sukhasana*, *Padmasana* and *Siddhasana* are recommended for meditation and pranayama practice. They perfectly align the legs and hips, straighten the spine, tone the pelvis and the abdomen. These asanas integrate, improve mind focus, stimulate the brain, open the heart and promote wellbeing.



# Dandasana | Staff Posture

*Danda = staff, stick*

*Dandasana* is the foundation for sitting asanas.

Duration | 1 - 3 minutes

Props: Wall, strap

## 1 Dandasana *Improves alignment*



Sit down with your legs outstretched in the front and aligned together. Point your toes upwards, palms to the sides of your hips and lengthen your spine. If you have a weak spine, support your back against a wall.

## 2 Parivrtta Dandasana *Refreshes the spine*



Sit in *Dandasana*, and grasp your left shoulder with your right hand. Straighten your spine and turn your head to the left side. Stay steady and breathe evenly. Repeat on the other side.

# Siddhasana | Accomplished Posture

*Siddha = proficient, accomplished*

*Siddha* is an evolved person, who has abilities to awaken the hidden potential energies.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

Duration | 1 - 5 minutes

- Purifies the energy channels, enhances the vital energy
- Strengthens spine, hips, knees, calves and ankles joints
- Improves mind focus, reduces stress, builds confidence

Sit in *Dandasana*. Bend your left leg and place the heel against centre of your perineum and press the sole against your inner right thigh. Place your right heel over your left heel, and gently slide and tuck your toes between your calf and left thigh muscles. It is locking your feet and improving stability and strength in the legs. Repeat by alternating legs.

### TIPS

- Avoid practice when you are suffering from sciatica, ankle or knee injury.
- Locking the feet, will help the pranic energy to flow freely into the spine.



# Padmasana Lotus Posture

*Padma = Lotus.*

The positioning of the legs, resemble petals of a lotus, hence the name.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Corrects imbalances in the legs and hips, improves shape of the legs
- Corrects knocked knees, hunch back, relieves back, hip, ankle pain
- Calms the mind, refreshes brain, spine and abdomen, reduces excess fat
- Relieves hemorrhoids, sciatica, menstrual and menopausal problems

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you cannot bring your leg up, when you have knee, hip or ankle injury.

**Duration | 1 - 7 minutes**

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat**

Props: Wall, cushions, blocks

1

### Preparation

Sit in *Dandasana*, and place your right leg over your left thigh. Support your back against a wall, place your palms on the floor and lengthen your spine. Repeat with your other leg.



2

### Ardha Padmasana

Sit in a cross legged position. Place your right leg over your left thigh and straighten your spine. Keep a mudra in your fingers. Repeat with your left leg.



3

### Padmasana

Place your right leg over your left thigh and left leg over your right thigh. Bring your feet close to your groins. Straighten your spine. Keep a mudra in your fingers.

**Stay steady with focused breathing.** Repeat by alternating your legs.



4

### Gorakhasana

Sit in *Padmasana*. Place two yoga blocks in the front. Pressing on the blocks, and shifting some weight on them, inhale lift your hips off the floor. Balance on your knees, lengthen your spine and look to the front. **Stay steady with focused breathing for 10 to 20 seconds.**



### TIPS

- For perfect inner balance, repeat by changing leg positions.
- Do not pull your feet up with force. You may hurt yourself.
- It will take many years of committed practice to master this asana.

# Virasana | Hero Posture

*Vira = hero.* This asana is also called *Vajrasana* or thunderbolt posture.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Strengthens spine, hips, thighs, knees, ankles, abdomen, pelvis
- Relieves pain in low back, buttocks, ankles, heels
- Relieves leg pain, calcaneal spurs, gout
- Relieves low and high BP, diabetes, indigestion, acidity, corrects flat feet
- Relieves incontinence, prostate, menstrual and menopausal problems
- During pregnancy strengthens the hips, spine, pelvis, knees and legs

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have spine, hip, knee or ankle injury.

**Duration | 3 - 7 minutes**

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat**

Props: Cushions, folded blanket



1

### Virasana

Kneel down on the floor with soft cushions under your feet and over your calves and rest your buttocks on them. Straighten your spine. Keep a mudra in your fingers. **Stay steady with even breathing.**

2

### Parvatasana

*Refreshes all the systems.*

Inhale and stretch your hands upwards, interlace your fingers and turn them outwards. Connect the tips of the thumbs together. **Stay steady with even breathing.**



3

### Purna Virasana

*For those with flexible ankles and knees*

Move your feet to the sides of your hips and rest your buttocks on cushions. Align your knees closer and straighten your spine. Extend your chest and place your hands on your thighs. **Stay steady with even breathing.**



### TIPS

- Beginners can practice on a firm bed.
- Practice steps 1 and 3, after a meal.
- Do not practice step 2, after a meal.
- Cushions help to stay for a longer time.
- This is a beneficial counter posture for *Viparita Karani* and *Sarvangasana*.

# Navasana | Boat Posture



*Nava = boat.* This balancing asana, outwardly resembles a boat, hence the name.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Strengthens upper thighs, hips, pelvis and abdomen
- Relieves hernia, thyroid, menstrual and menopausal problems
- Refreshes brain, heals diabetes, removes fatigue, infuses vitality
- Reduces excess body weight and fat around abdomen and thighs

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have diarrhea, uncontrolled high BP, migraine, hernia, sciatica, hip or spine injury, slip-disc, pregnancy.

**Duration | 30 seconds - 1 minute**

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat**

Props: Wall, strap, folded blanket

### 1 For Beginners



Sit in front of a wall, and place your feet on it. Fix a strap on the wall about three feet above and hold the strap. Stretch your legs and hands, straighten your spine and balance on your sit bones. **Stay steady with even breathing.**

### 2 For the Experienced



Sit with your legs together and outstretched. Press your palms on the floor, fix your gaze within, exhale, lift your legs off the floor. Stretch your hands, engage your core muscles, fix your gaze and balance on your sit bones. **Stay steady with even breathing.**

### 3 For the more flexible



Sit in *Dandasana*, bend your knees and grasp your big toes. Exhale, and stretch your legs upwards. Straighten your spine, fix your gaze. **Stay steady with even breathing.**

**To come out**, gently release and get into *Baddha konasana*, refer to the next page.

### TIPS

- Inward focus and a positive attitude is essential for maintaining balance.
- Stability in the hips will promote balance.

# Baddha Konasana



## Bound Angle Posture

*Baddha*= bound, restrained, *Kona* = angle

This asana stretches opens hips, pelvis and releases the hidden potential energy.

### Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Relieves low back pain, sciatica, hernia, diabetes, ulcers
- Relieves incontinence, prostate, menstrual and menopausal problems
- A boon to pregnant women; strengthens pelvis, promotes easy child birth

#### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have diarrhea, prolapse of pelvic organs, hip or knee injury.

**Duration** | 3 - 10 minutes

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat**

Props: Wall, cushions



1

### Baddha Konasana

*Enhances pelvic and hip strength*

**Fig 1.** Sit in *Dandasana*. Bend your knees and stretch them to the sides. Press the soles of your feet together. Hold your ankles.

**Fig 2.** Sit on a cushion and hold a strap fixed on the wall.



*With props*

2

### Parsava Baddha Konasana

Raise your right hand over head, exhale and stretch to the left side. Rest your left elbow on your left thigh and hold your feet. Stabilize your knees and hips. **Stay steady with even breathing.** Repeat on the other side.



3

### Adho Mukha Baddha Konasana

*For the more flexible*



Exhale, stretch forward and rest your forehead on the floor. Stretch your hands, close your eyes, breathe smoothly and relax.

#### TIPS

- If your knees lift up, do not push them down. You may hurt your joints and ligaments.
- To improve pelvic flexibility and strength practice everyday.



# Upavishta Konasana Seated Wide Angle Posture

*Upavishta = seated Kona = angle*

This asana stretches tight hips, pelvis and hamstrings.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Relieves asthma, low back pain, sciatica, hernia, arthritis
- Relieves varicose veins, prostate, menstrual and menopausal problems
- Enhances flexibility and strength in the hips and pelvis, helps pregnancy

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have diarrhea, prolapse of pelvic organs, spine, hip, knee or ankle injury.

**Duration | 3 - 5 minutes**

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat**

Props: Wall, cushions

### 1 Upavishta Konasana

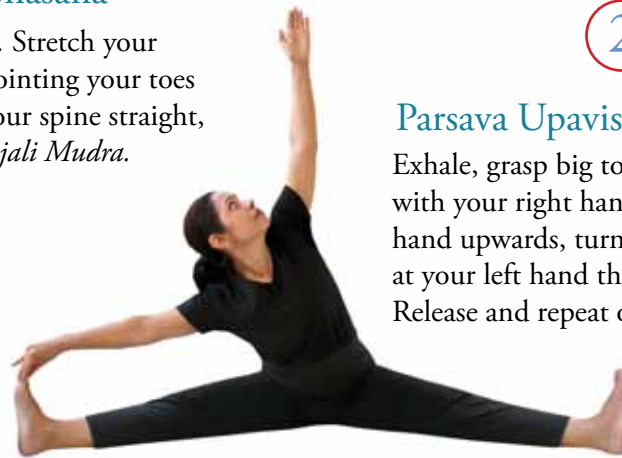
Sit in *Dandasana*. Stretch your legs wide apart pointing your toes upwards. Keep your spine straight, your hands in *Anjali Mudra*.



### 2

### Parsava Upavishta Konasana

Exhale, grasp big toe of your right leg with your right hand. Stretch your left hand upwards, turn your head and gaze at your left hand thumb. **Stay steady.** Release and repeat on the other side.



### 3 Parsava Adho Mukha Upavishta Konasana



Turn your torso to a side, exhale and stretch towards your foot. Inhale and lift up. Repeat on the other side.

### 4 Adho Mukha Upavishta Konasana

*For the more flexible*



Exhale and stretch forward. Rest your forehead on the floor and relax.

### TIPS

- Practice *Prasarita Padottanasana* as preparation. Refer to page 28.
- If your hamstrings are stiff, your knees may pop up. Let it be.



# Gomukhasana | Cow Face Posture

*Go = cow, Mukha = face*

The legs and hands position, resembles the face of a cow, hence the name.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Relieves incontinence, cramps, prostate, menstrual, menopausal problems
- Relieves shoulder, back pain, cervical spondylosis, carpal tunnel syndrome

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have hip, knee or ankle injury, shoulder pain, hernia, sciatica, during 2nd and 3rd trimesters of pregnancy.

**Duration | 3 - 5 minutes  
on each side**

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat**

Props: A cushion, a strap

1



### For Beginners

Sit in *Dandasana* refer to page 45.

**Fig 1** Bend your left leg, place the foot close to the side of the right hip. Bend your right leg, place the foot on the outer side of the left knee. Align your hips horizontal. Clasp your upraised knee and straighten your spine. Get back to *Dandasana*, alternate your legs and repeat on the other side.

**Fig 2** Stretch your right leg further to the side, aligning the upraised knee above the left knee. Hold your ankles and lengthen your spine. Get back to *Dandasana*, alternate your legs and repeat on the other side.

2



### Gomukhasana

*For the more flexible*

Sit as in fig 2 with your left knee upraised. Stretch your right hand up, bend your elbow backwards. Place your left hand on your mid-back, turn your palm out and your fingers pointing upwards. Clasp the fingers of your right hand. Use a strap if your fingers do not connect. This position creates a twist in your arm.

**Stay steady with even breathing.** Gently release and repeat on the other side by alternating your hands and legs.

### TIPS

- It is easier to practice the hands back twist, standing in *Tadasana* (page 18) or sitting in *Virasana* (page 47).

# Malasana Squat Posture

*Mala = impurity or faecal waste*

This posture aids digestion and promotes effective excretion of faecal waste.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Strengthens the nervous, skeletal, muscular, digestive, excretory systems
- Relieves low back and ankle pain, vertigo, constipation, hemorrhoids
- Relieves irritable bowel syndrome, menstrual and menopausal problems
- During pregnancy strengthens hips, legs and pelvis, promotes easy delivery

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have hip, knee, ankle pain or injury, varicose veins, hernia, sciatica.

**Duration | 1 - 2 minutes**

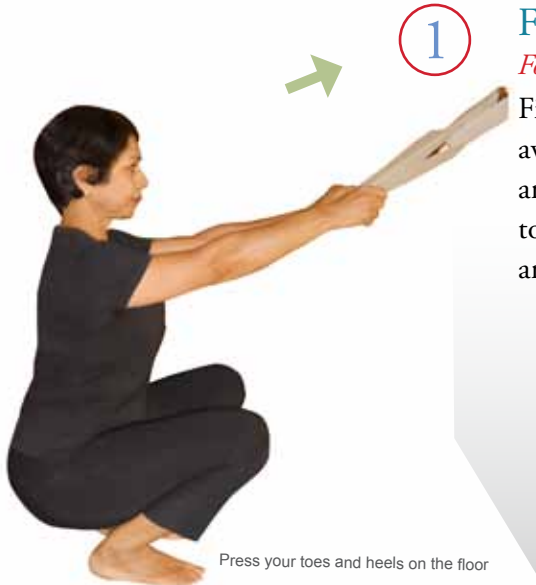
**Practice on non-slip yoga mat**

Props: A strap

### 1 For Beginners

*For the stiff people*

Fix yoga strap on a hook or grill and hold them firmly. Walk few feet away from the wall, place your feet hip width apart, bend your knees and lower your hips towards the floor. Straighten your spine and look to the front. The strap helps to relieve pressure from the legs and knees and provides comfort. **Stay steady with focused even breathing.**



### 2

**Malasana** Sit on your on your buttocks, hips, thighs and legs. Ground your feet firmly on the floor and stretch your hands to the front. Engage your core muscles for better control and balance. **Stay steady with even breathing.**

### 3 For the more flexible

Widen your knees, take your hands around your ankles and interlace your fingers. Exhale and stretch forward towards the floor. Look down and balance your body weight on your toes and your heels. **Stay steady with even breathing.**

### TIPS

- Balance body weight evenly on your feet.
- In step 3, extend your knees outwards, shift some body weight on your toes.



- Everything that happens in our lives is with a purpose to teach us some good lesson. Let us accept and move on with a smile.
- When we perceive the experiences in our lives as stepping stones to larger possibilities, there will be no disappointments.
- Attachments to worldly pleasures and material objects, cause disturbances in the mind and distort the image of reality.
- Failures are not setbacks, but learning experiences providing opportunity.
- The biggest weapon of offence is our tongue. The wound caused by the tongue takes a long time to heal. We must think and measure our words before we speak.

*—Words of wisdom from ancient Indian sages*



# Janu Sirsasana | Head to knee Posture

*Janu = knee, Sirsa = head*

The head rests on the knee, hence the name. This sitting forward bending asana prepares the body for *Paschimottanasana*.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Enhances functioning of lungs, heart and abdominal-pelvic organs
- Relieves anxiety, depression, migraine, back pain, diabetes, hemorrhoids
- Relieves high and low BP, prostate, menstrual and menopausal problems
- Reduces body weight, excess fat in the abdomen, controls over eating

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have respiratory problems, dizziness, hip injury and during pregnancy.

**Duration | 30 seconds - 1 minute**  
on each side

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat**

Props: A strap, bolster

## 1 For Beginners

Sit in *Dandasana* (page 45). Bend your right leg, press the sole of your right foot against the inner thigh of left leg. Loop a strap on your left foot, hold it firmly. Exhale, and gently stretch forward. **Stay steady with even breathing.** **To come out**, inhale and roll up. Repeat on other side.



## 2 Janu Sirsasana *For the more flexible*



Bolster will press knee down



Stretch your hands beyond your feet



Sit in *Dandasana*. Exhale and stretch forward and grasp your foot. Rest your fore-head or chin on the cushion placed on your leg or if you are more flexible rest on your knee. Close your eyes. **Stay steady with focused even breathing.** **To come out**, inhale and gently roll up. Repeat on the other side, by alternating your legs.

### TIPS

- Practice standing forward bends for many weeks as preparation.
- Do not stretch in haste and cause muscle resistance and pain.



# Paschimottanasana | Intense West Stretch Posture

*Paschima = west, back side of the body, Uttana = intense extension*

The back-side or the west-side of the body is well stretched and hence the name. This asana is also called *Ugrasana* or powerful asana, because it arouses gastric fire, that burns toxins, negativity and improves overall health.

## CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** if you have asthma, spinal slip-disc, back or hip injury, colitis, vertigo, diarrhea, during pregnancy.

**Duration | 1 - 5 minutes**

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat**

Props: A bolster

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Refreshes brain and mind, rejuvenates spine, massages abdomen
- Relieves migraine, high and low BP, hemorrhoids, depression, insomnia
- Relieves diabetes, constipation, menstrual and menopausal problems
- Infuses vitality, reduces weight, removes excess fat from hips and abdomen

### 1 For Beginners



Rest your head

Press the back of your legs into the floor

Sit in *Dandasana*. Inhale and raise your hands upwards and lengthen your spine. Exhale and stretch forward and hold your feet. Rest your chest and head on a bolster. **Stay steady with focused even breathing.** **To come out**, inhale and gently roll up.



### 2 Paschimottanasana *For the more flexible*

Exhale and stretch forward and grasp your big toes. Loosen your shoulders, rest your chest on your thighs and your head on your knees. Close your eyes and just relax. **Stay steady with focused even breathing.** **To come out**, inhale and gently roll up.



Lengthen your spine

Rest your head

## TIPS

- Practice standing forward bends as preparation.
- To avoid muscle resistance, stretch gently and slowly.
- Soften your abdomen, focus on lengthening your spine.
- The more you relax the deeper you can stretch forward.



# Parivrtta Virasana Twist in Hero Posture

*Parivrtta = twist, Vira = hero*

This asana is a rejuvenating variation of *Virasana*. The hands are the supporting levers that provides stability and promotes the twist.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Energizes spine, lungs and heart, massages abdominal organs
- Relieves neck and back pain, vertigo, indigestion, acidity, diabetes
- Relieves leg pain, gout, calcaneal spurs, corrects flat feet
- Relieves incontinence, prostate, menstrual and menopausal problems
- Reduces fat around abdomen, thighs and hips, reduces weight

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have ankle, knee injury, cardiac problems, diarrhea, insomnia, migraine, during menstruation and pregnancy.

**Duration | 30 seconds - 1 minute**  
each side

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat**

Props: Cushions, a block

1

For those who can sit in Purna Virasana

Preparation



Press your heel and calf

Back view



2

Parivrtta Virasana



**Fig 1.** Sit in *Purna Virasana*. Refer to page 47. Place your feet to the sides of your hips. Massage your feet, ankles and calves.

**Fig 2.** Inhale and straighten your spine. Place your right hand on the side of your left knee and your left hand on a block placed behind your hips. Exhale and turn to the left side and look over your left shoulder. **Stay steady with even breathing.** Repeat on the other side.

**To come out,** inhale and gently turn to the centre. Get into *Dandasana*. Refer to page 45.

### TIPS

- Keep your feet close to your hips.
- Turn your head right to left and soften your neck.
- When you twist, contract your abdomen and feel the squeeze.

# Marichyasana | Simple Spinal Twist

*Marichi = ray of light, son of Brahma the creator, or the father of humanity*

This asana is named after *Marichi*, the saint who created it.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Relieves asthma, back pain, hip pain, vertigo, cervical spondylosis
- Relieves sciatica, acidity, diabetes, constipation, incontinence
- Relieves gall bladder stones, prostate, menstrual and menopausal problems

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have uncontrolled high BP, a migraine, spine, hip or knee injury, diarrhea, insomnia, during pregnancy.

**Duration | 30 seconds - 1 minute**  
on each side

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat**

Props: A chair, a block

Soften your neck



### 1 For those who cannot sit on the floor

Sit tall on a chair, with your feet grounded on the floor. Exhale and turn your torso to the left side with your right hand on your left knee and left hand on the back of the seat. Straighten your spine. Turn your head and over look your left shoulder. **Stay steady with focused even breathing.** **To come out**, inhale and release the twist. Repeat on the other side.

### 2 Marichyasana 1

Sit in *Dandasana*. Bend your right knee, place the foot across your left thigh. Hug the upraised knee with your left hand and place your right hand on a block close to your hips. Inhale, lengthen your spine, exhale, turn to your right side and look over your right shoulder. **Stay steady with even breathing.** **To come out**, inhale and release the twist. Repeat on the other side.



### 3 Marichyasana 2

Sit in *Dandasana*. Bend your right knee and place the foot close the body. Stretch your left shoulder forward and press the elbow to the side of the upraised knee. Grasp your right ankle firmly. Place your right hand palm on the floor close to your hips and lengthen your spine. Keep your left leg stretched on the floor. Exhale and turn to the right side and make the twist. **Stay steady with even breathing.** **To come out**, inhale and release the twist. Repeat on the left side.



### TIPS

- Draw your abdomen in and lengthen your spine before you twist.

# Ardha Matsyendrasana | Half Spinal Twist Posture

*Ardha = half, Matsya = fish, Indra = Lord*  
*Matsyendra* is a legendary sage who created this asana.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Refreshes and tones brain, lungs, heart, abdominal and pelvic organs
- Relieves pain in the neck, shoulders, wrists, spine, hips, ankles
- Relieves back pain, diabetes, vertigo, gall bladder and kidney stones
- Relieves incontinence, prostate, menstrual and menopausal problems
- Reduces excess fat around the thighs, hips and abdomen

### 1 Preparation

*Loosens tight muscles and joints*

Sit in *Dandasana*. Bend your left leg, place the heel close to the side of your right buttocks. Grasp your right foot with your left hand and stretch the leg up to the left side. Place your right hand on the floor close to the hips and lengthen your spine. **Stay steady with focused breathing.** Release your leg and repeat on the other side.

### 2 Ardha Matsyendrasana

Sit in *Dandasana*. Bend your right leg and place the heel close to left buttocks. Place your left foot close to the right knee. Stretch your right shoulder forward, press the elbow on the side of upraised knee and grasp your left ankle with your right hand. Place your left hand, close to your buttocks and lengthen your spine. Exhale draw your abdomen in, turn to your left look over your left shoulder. **Stay steady with even breathing.** **To come out,** inhale, turn to the centre and release the twist. Repeat by alternating your legs.

**CAUTIONS**  
**Do not practice** when you have hip, ankle, spine injury, hernia, migraine, insomnia, during menstruation and pregnancy.

**Duration | 30 seconds -1 minute**  
 each side

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat**

**Not for Beginners**



### TIPS

- Practice Gomukhasana as preparation; page 51.
- Sit on a folded blanket to correct hip imbalance.
- Straighten your spine before you make the twist.
- When you slump, spinal rotation is limited.

# Inverted Exhilarating

*Inverted asanas* are the essence of asana practice. They reverse the action of the gravitational force, efficiently remove toxins, slow the ageing process, boost positive energies and change the perspective towards life. Oxygenated blood to the brain is increased, neurotransmitters essential for well being are increased, blocks and congestions are removed and immunity is increased.

*Semi-inverted asanas* are *Prasarita Padottanasana, Adho Mukha Svanasana, Viparita karani*. They prepare the body and mind for inverted asanas.

*Sirsasana* is called the King of asanas. This asana floods the brain with oxygenated blood develops clarity, concentration, will power and courage. It creates optimum heat in the body required for healing and burning the toxins, strengthens vital organs and glands, correct imbalances and promotes health and longevity.

*Sarvangasana* is called the Queen of asanas. This asana floods oxygenated blood in the trunk and brain, develops toleration, patience, builds emotional stability and balance. It strengthens the shoulders, neck, lungs, heart and spine, nourishes thyroid glands, enhances circulation, energizes the vital organs and enhances metabolism.

*Halasana and Karnapidasana* are extensions of *Sarvangasana*. Many people find these asanas claustrophobic because the head is confined under your legs and pressure builds up in the face, neck and chest affecting breathing. With the guidance of a competent teacher one can overcome these inner obstacles.

# Adho Mukha Svanasana | Downward Facing Dog Posture

*Adho = downward, Mukha = face, Svana = dog*

This is a semi-inverted asana; it resembles a dog's stretch, hence the name.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Relieves mental and physical fatigue, anxiety, depression, insomnia
- Relieves low and high BP, diabetes, cervical spondylosis, back pain, sinusitis
- Relieves acidity, incontinence, menstrual and menopausal problems

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have headache, retina problem, vertigo, insomnia, during menstruation and in the 3rd trimester of pregnancy.

**Duration | 1 minute - 5 minutes**

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat**

Props: Wall, ropes, bolster



1

### For people with health issues

Fix two yoga ropes on the wall, one foot above your hips. Stand upright with your back facing the wall. Insert your legs into the ropes and walk few steps to the front. Exhale, bend forward, place your palms on the floor and spread your fingers wide. Walk your feet backwards, lower your head, raise your hips and balance. Rest your head on a bolster.

**Stay steady with focused breathing.**

2

## Adho Mukha Svanasana

From *Urdhva Mukha Svanasana*, (page 39) press your palms and feet into the floor, exhale and raise your hips and lower your head. Either rest your head on a bolster or on the floor. Do not press much weight on your head. **Stay steady with focused breathing.**



3

**Counter posture** *Adho Mukha Virasana*. Refer to page 72.



### TIPS

- Do not move your palms or feet and disturb alignment.
- Distribute body weight evenly between hands and legs.
- Spreading fingers wide, minimizes tension in the wrists.
- Pressing toes in the floor, enhances awareness and stability.
- When calf muscles are stiff, heels will not rest on the floor.
- Soften your eyes and forehead, manage your head pressure.



# Viparita Karani | Inverted Action Posture

*Viparita = opposite, Karani = action*

In this asana, there is increased circulation and 'no action' and hence the name. To overcome physical and mental stress, the ancient yogis created *Viparita Karani* (opposite of action or no action.) When there is no action, the brain, heart and mind are relaxed and tensions are removed. *Viparita Karani*, promotes quick venous return. The stagnated impure blood and lymph from the legs move to the core for purification and elimination. This opposite action improves circulation and enhances overall health.

## CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have until 3 months after any surgery, uncontrolled high BP, a migraine, during menstruation and in the 3rd trimester of pregnancy.

**Duration | 10 - 20 minutes**

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat**

Props: Wall, bolsters

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Alleviates leg pain, knee pain, varicose veins, swelling in the legs
- Relieves fatigue, thyroid problems, cervical spondylosis, asthma
- Relieves low and high BP, depression, anxiety, hemorrhoids
- Reduces excess body weight, promotes faster recovery after illness



Lie on the floor parallel to the wall with your buttocks close to the wall. Slowly move your head away from the wall and take your legs up on the wall. Rest your head on a soft cushion to support your neck. **Stay for 10-20 minutes with focused even breathing.**



Raise your hips and rest them on bolsters. Keep a mudra in your fingers and stay focused on your breath.

**To come out**, rest your hips on the floor, bend your knees and roll to a side. Breathe few times and sit in *Virasana*, refer to page 47.

**Varicose Veins** are bulging, bluish twisted veins in the legs. Too much of pressure in the veins weaken and damage the valves. This causes impure blood to flow backwards and collect resulting in bluish-bulging veins.

# Sarvangasana | Shoulder Stand

*Sarva = all, Anga = parts*

This asana is called 'Queen of Asanas' as it provides overall benefit.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Massages brain, heart and lungs, balances hormones and emotions
- Relieves depression, anxiety, asthma, bronchitis, sinusitis, headaches
- Relieves thyroid problems, palpitations, leg pain, enhances metabolism
- Relieves high and low BP, diabetes, indigestion, varicose veins, constipation
- Relieves hemorrhoids, incontinence, menstrual and menopausal problems
- Energises lymphatic system, strengthens immune system, prevents diseases

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have retinal detachment, high BP, cardiac disease, neck, inner ear, or dental issues, spinal-disc problems, menstruation, during pregnancy, or until six months after any surgery.

**Duration | 3 -10 minutes**

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat**  
Folded blanket is optional

**Not for Beginners**



1

### Preparation

Sit in *Dandasana*, exhale and stretch forward. Hold your big toes with your thumb and index fingers, loosen your shoulders and rest your elbows on your knees. Stretch your legs, (front and back) loosen your hips and elongate your spine. Let go all tensions. Soften your abdomen. **Stay for 20 seconds with focused breathing.**



2

### Sarvangasana

From step 1, roll back on the floor raise your legs, hips and spine off the floor. Hold your lower back and straighten your spine. Draw your elbows closer and move your palms to your mid-spine. Feel the extension in your back neck. Fix your gaze on your chest or close your eyes and focus on your breathing. Observe the sensations. **Stay steady with focused even breathing.**

3

### Niralamba Sarvangasana

*Shoulder stand without hand support*  
*Requires more effort and strength.*



4

### Variation 1

*Improves mobility and strength.*

Exhale, lower your left leg on the floor behind your head, keeping your right leg upright. Hold your back firmly and bring your leg to the centre. Breathe few times. Repeat with your right leg.



5

### Variation 2

*Strengthens spine, hips and pelvis.*

Exhale, bend your legs, and press the soles of your feet together in front of your perineum, with your knees extended to the sides as in *Baddha konasana*. Hold your back firmly with your hands and stay for a minute.

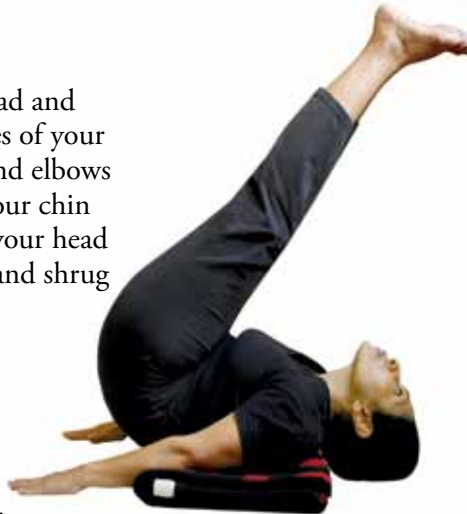


6

### Come out gracefully

Take your legs over your head and place your hands to the sides of your back. Press your forearms and elbows on the floor, gently move your chin upwards, press the back of your head on the floor, look upwards and shrug your shoulders.

Exhale and slowly roll your legs to the floor, without lifting your head off the floor. Rest your body, close your eyes and focus on your breathing.



### TIPS

- Keep your mind free from thoughts.
- Do not talk, cough or move your head.
- When you develop back pain, come out of the asana immediately.
- It takes several months to straighten the spine and align legs in line with hips.
- Those with high BP, thyroid problems, must practice with an experienced teacher and learn the proper technique.
- In step 3, the muscles in the neck, spine and abdomen support body weight.
- Practice *Matsyasana*, steps 1 or 3 as a counter posture. Refer to page 34.
- Practice *Jatara Parivartasana*, step 3, as a counter posture. Refer to page 35.

***Sarvangasana** nourishes brain, heart, lungs, all abdominal organs and the endocrine glands. Impure blood from lower extremities flow smoothly into the heart and the heart is relaxed. The brain is nourished, the spine becomes stronger and the mind calm.*

# Halasana | Plough Posture

*Hala = plough.* This asana resembles a plough, hence the name. Promotes a fulfilling experience, prepares for *Sarvangasana* and *Sirsasana*.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Massages and energizes brain, neck, lungs, heart and abdomen
- Relieves insomnia, fatigue, anxiety, depression, sinusitis, vertigo
- Relieves colitis, diabetes, hemorrhoids, thyroid problems
- Relieves incontinence, prostate, menstrual and menopausal problems
- Reduces body weight, stabilizes emotions, calms restless mind

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice**, when you have eye or ear problems, a migraine, cervical spondylosis, vertigo, hernia, spine issues, during menstruation, pregnancy, or until six months after any surgery.

**Duration | 3 minutes - 5 minutes**

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat**  
**Folded blanket is optional**

Props: Wall, folded blanket

**Not for Beginners**

1

## Ardha Halasana

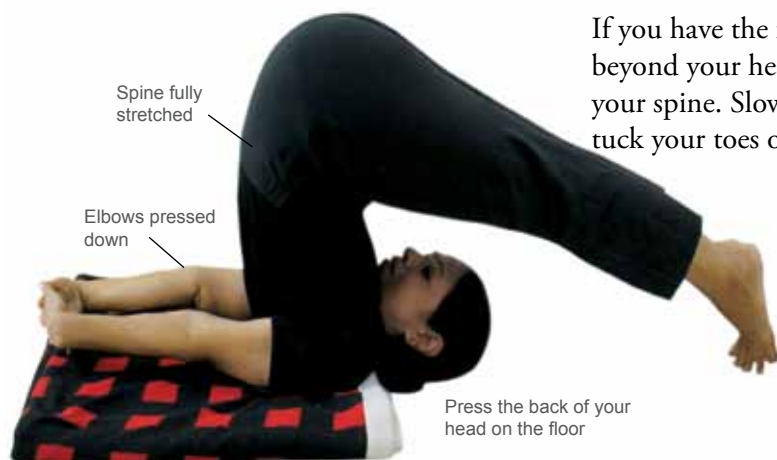
Sit in *Paschimottanasana*, step 1 for few seconds. Refer to page 55. Inhale and press your hands on the floor and roll backwards. Raise your legs and hips off the floor and extend your legs beyond your head. Rest your feet on a wall behind. This is for those people who cannot balance steadily on their head and shoulders. Stretch your hands on the floor, behind your back and interlace the fingers. **Stay steady with inward focus and even breathing.**



2

## Halasana

If you have the flexibility and confidence, stretch your legs beyond your head and stretch your hands on the floor behind your spine. Slowly walk your feet away from your head and tuck your toes on the floor, with your heels facing back.



Your hips must be raised almost above your head. Do not move your head or shoulders. Fix your gaze on your abdomen or close your eyes and focus on the sensations. Manage pressures in your head and chest. **Stay steady and calm with even breathing.**

3

### Prasarita Konasana in Halasana

*Wide-angle posture*

*Develops deep awareness.*

Stretch your legs wide apart and rest your toes on the floor. Keep your head and shoulders firm, stretch your hands behind your back and interlace your fingers. Close your eyes. **Stay steady with focused even breathing.**



Rest your head and shoulders

4

### Karnapidasana

*Blocked-ears posture*

*Provides soothing internal massage.*

Gently bend your knees and bring them close to your ears with your hips raised upwards. Rest your toes on the floor, stretch your hands parallel to your legs. Close your eyes and focus on the sensations within. **Stay steady with focused breathing.**



Close your eyes and relax

5



**Come out gracefully** Place your hands to the sides of your body, and press them on the floor. Move your head backwards, lift your chin, and shrug your shoulders. Look back and breathe few times. Exhale and roll your spine slowly on the floor. Bring your legs and spine to the floor without lifting your head off the floor. Rest for few seconds.



*Halasana* renews, heals and energizes all the organs, promotes physical and emotional stability and balance.

#### TIPS

- Pain in the neck is common; it is a sensation of healing.
- Experienced practitioners can practice after *Sarvangasana*.



# Sirsasana | Head Stand

*Sirsa = on the head. Standing on the head.*

The ancient yogis called this asana as “King of Asanas” because the *nectar of immortality* ‘*Amrita*’ is retained in the brain for a longer time. This uplifts the spirits, boosts vitality, strengths, heals diseases and promotes longevity. Since it is supported by the hands it is also called *Salamba Sirsasana*.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Boosts oxygenated blood to the brain, pituitary and pineal glands
- Increases clarity, concentration, memory, sharpens sense organs
- Heart is massaged, energized and relaxed, enhances circulation
- Relieves and prevents depression, migraine, diabetes, hemorrhoids, insomnia
- Relieves and prevents thyroid, prostate, menstrual and menopausal problems
- Prevents ageing of the organs, strengthens lymphatic and immune system
- Controls ill-effects of ageing, builds youthful vitality and confidence in old age

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have high BP, glaucoma, detached retina, ear, neck, spine problems, vertigo, palpitations, insomnia, obesity, pregnancy, menstruation, or until six months after a surgery.

**Duration | 1 minute -10 minutes**

**Folded blanket is mandatory**

Props: Wall, a folded blanket

**Not for Beginners**



1

### Preparation

*Calms and improves focus, prepares for active reversal.* Spread a folded blanket, few inches from a wall. Close your eyes and rest your body and mind for few seconds in *Adho Mukha Virasana*. Refer to page 72.

2

### Ardha Sirsasana step 1

*Promotes focus*

Rest your forearms on the blanket, with your elbows shoulder-width apart. Interlace your fingers. Form a perfect frame work with your forearms, wrists and fingers to support your head. Within this frame-work, place the crown of your head on the blanket, snuggle the back of your head against your fingers and open palms. Remove tensions from your fingers and connect every finger freely to the head. Focus on grounding your head properly.



Frame work of your hands



Elbows shoulder-width apart

3

Raise your hips above your head



Press your toes and walk them close to your head.

Ground your head properly

## Ardha Sirsasana

*The legs become lighter and active as the body weight is transferred to the head and hands.*

Turn your toes under and press them on the floor. Lift your knees off the floor, stretch your legs and raise your hips high. Keep your neck long and relaxed. When you are comfortable, slowly walk your feet closer to your head until your hips are aligned above your head. Do not move your head or your hands. Stay steady.

4 Optional



*Helps to align the head and rest of the body.*

When your head is properly grounded lift your feet off the floor and place them on the wall behind. Keep your legs bent. Breathe evenly, and stay steady for few seconds.



Rest your feet lightly on the wall

5

## Sirsasana



*The balance shifts from crown to bregma; relaxes forehead, eyes and face.*

**Bregma** is the spot which is one inch to the front of the crown of head.

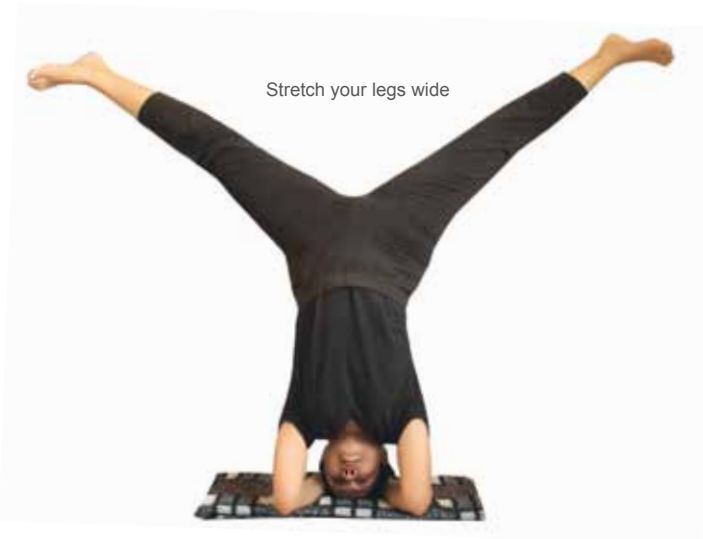
Gently release feet from wall, stretch your legs and lengthen your spine. You may rest your heels and your hips on the wall if you are not steady. Distribute 70% of body weight on your head and the rest of the weight balanced on your forearms. Unlock your fingers, keep them free from tension and allow the fingers to support the back of your head.

**Stay mentally calm for 5 minutes.**



### *Benefits of using wall as a prop*

*In Sirsasana, most of the body weight is on the head. Since the human head and neck are not designed to take extra pressure and weight, wall-support for Sirsasana is mandatory for all the beginners. The wall prevents from awkwardly falling down, prevents injuries, improves alignment and comfort, removes fear, builds confidence.*

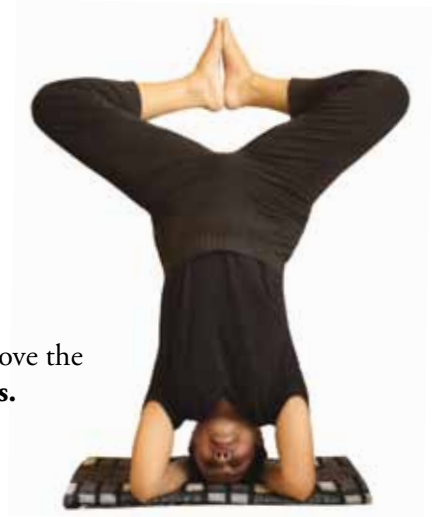


## Prasarita Konasana in Sirsasana

*Wide-angle posture*

*Stabilizes the head and lightens the legs.*

When your head is stable, you are comfortable and confident. Stretch your legs wide apart to the sides. **Stay steady for 30 seconds.**



7

## Baddha Konasana in Sirsasana

*Bound-angle posture*

Bend your knees and press the soles of the feet together. Align your feet above the perineum and extend your knees sideways. **Stay with focus for 30 seconds.**



8

## Come out gracefully

Descend gracefully with an exhalation. Keep your head rested and your eyes closed. Move your hands to the sides of your head.

**Stay for 20 seconds or more.**



9

## Adho Mukha Virasana

Refer to page 72.



10

## Uttanasana

Keep your head downwards, ground your feet, and get into standing forward bend. Hang your head down, breathe freely. **Stay for 10 seconds.**



## TIPS

- Practice with your teacher for several weeks before beginning your personal practice.
- Initially, practice in a corner wall and get the three-sided support.
- Ask someone to lift and hold your legs till you gain confidence.
- Do not tense your fingers, neck, or move your head or elbows.
- Be focused, positive and calm.
- Practice in front of a mirror and make necessary adjustments.
- Mental preparation is important.
- Experienced practitioners can practice this before *Sarvangasana*.

*Sirsasana* requires passion and strong determination. It uplifts your spirits and changes your perspective towards life.

# Yogic Relaxation

**Yogic relaxation** is consciously resting every part of the body and emptying the mind of thoughts and worries. It is a natural way of re-charging the mind and the body. While the body is rested, the brain is awake and alert, the breath is shallow, and the mind is free from disturbing thoughts.

Yogic relaxation is a state of partial sleep, when the body sinks into a state of stillness, the mind unwinds from the external noise and transcends to deeper levels of consciousness. At the end of relaxation, the practitioner feels totally refreshed, renewed, and peaceful. Yogic relaxation is an essential practice at the end of each day for all the people who lead fast paced and stressful lifestyles.

**Relaxation asanas** are designed in the supine, prone and sitting positions. Choose the asana that suits your present body and mind condition. Props such as eye pillows, blankets, cushions are recommended for use to improve comfort.

# Supine Relaxation

This asana is called *Savasana* or corpse posture. It creates stillness inside and prepares for a graceful surrender to the inner divinity.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Relieves exhaustion, uncontrolled high BP, asthma, diabetes
- Relieves anxiety, depression, chronic fatigue, headache
- Improves mind-body strength after prolonged illness

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice**, in bright glaring light, when you have back or hip injury, in between asana practice.

**Duration | 10 - 20 minutes**

**Practice on non-slip yoga mat or on a firm bed**

Props: Cushions, crepe bandage

Lie on your back, with your legs two feet apart and your hands 45 degrees away from your body. Turn your palms out close your eyes, remove thoughts. Lock your attention on your breath and allow your body to sink comfortably. With auto suggestion relax and feel the wave of relaxation rising from your legs to your head. As tensions vanish, you will feel disconnected from the external noise. Observe your relaxed body, soft, shallow breathing and calmness in the mind. Experience the overall stillness.

Close your eyes



## For high blood pressure

Cover your eyes with a crepe bandage



## For back pain



**To come out**, roll gently to a side preferably to the right side, close your eyes and breathe few times. Press your hands into the floor, and lift your head and torso off the floor. Sit up.



### TIPS

- Set a timer for 20 minutes.
- Let your body unwind and your mind quietly observe.
- Focus inwards, infuse relaxation through conscious breathing and auto suggestion.
- People who are sleep deprived or exhausted will drift into deep sleep in few minutes.
- In pregnancy rest your head and upper back on soft pillows.



# Prone Relaxation

This asana is called *Makarasana* or crocodile posture. It is practiced between backward bending asanas, performed in the prone position.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Relaxes the brain, calms the tense nerves, relieves overall stress
- Relieves fatigue, flatulence, depression, anxiety, insomnia

Lie on your abdomen with your legs few inches apart. Rest your head with your cheek to the side and place your hands around your head like a pillow. Close your eyes and allow your body and mind to rest. Lock your mind with your breath to prevent mind from wandering. Transfer your body weight to the mother earth, clear your mind of all the thoughts, feel light and peaceful.



Make your hands a pillow

**To come out**, take your hands to the sides of your body and bring your legs closer. Place your palms below your chest and press them on the floor. Rest your forehead on the floor, inhale, lift your head and chest off the floor. Sit up in *Virasana*. Refer to page 47.

*Yogic relaxation* is a conscious relaxation technique that reduces stress and stress related issues. Muscular activity is diminished, motor neurons are silenced, the tensions, pressures and pain are removed. Awareness shifts from outside noise to inside quietness and an aura of peace is created.

## CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have neck pain, cardiac problems, after any surgery and during pregnancy.

**Duration | 5 - 10 minutes**

**Practice on a non-slip yoga mat or on a firm bed**

## TIPS

- Set a timer for 20 minutes.
- Let your body unwind and your mind quietly observe.
- Widen your collar bones and shoulder blades.
- Focus inwards and infuse relaxation through conscious breathing and auto-suggestion.

# Sitting Relaxation

This asana is also called *Adho Mukha Virasana* or downward facing hero posture. It is sequenced after backward bends and inverted asanas. Practice when you are mentally stressed or exhausted.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Relaxes mind, brain, eyes, ears, heart, abdomen, spine, legs
- Relieves high BP, migraine, back pain, diabetes, depression, insomnia
- Relieves exhaustion, hemorrhoids, menstrual and menopausal problems

Sit in *Virasana* with cushion under your hips and legs. Place some cushions in the front. Exhale and stretch forward and rest your head on the cushions. Place your hands in a position that is comfortable for you. Close your eyes, soften your forehead and relax.



## CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have vertigo, knee or hip injury. During pregnancy raise your hips higher with your abdomen above the floor.

**Duration | 5 - 15 minutes**

**Practice on a non-slip yoga mat or on a firm bed**

Props: Cushions

## TIPS

- Set a timer for 20 minutes.
- Focus on the centre of your forehead and feel calm.
- The use of crepe bandage provides soothing effect.
- Mentally chant a mantra.

**Pineal gland** in the mid-brain serves as a biological clock. It is called as seat of the soul or the third eye. When darkness sets in, pineal gland secretes a hormone called **Melatonin** which induces sleep in the night. Insufficient secretion of melatonin will lead to sleep problems. Relaxation asanas enhance the functions of pineal gland and promote sound sleep every night.

# Pranayama

## Regulation of Life force

*Prana = oxygen or vital energy or life force, Ayama = control or regulate or expand*

**Breathing** is the most important function in the body, the only natural way of getting oxygen and all other functions largely depend upon it. Oxygen is 'prana' or vital energy; it is a nutrient that keeps one alive and healthy.

**Prana** is the life force that controls mental and physical functions. Insufficiency of *prana* can lead to many health issues. When *prana* is expanded in a rhythmic way, there is increased vitality, stability, calmness, longevity and good health. The ancient yogis realized this truth and developed many types of *Pranayama*.

**Pranayama** is conscious prolongation of inhalations, exhalations and retentions. It is a scientific technique that purifies, energizes, calms, relaxes and heals the body and mind. The brain and other organs are nourished, there is more energy and better adjustments to changing situations. Pranayama corrects the nasal cycle (one side of the nose is more active than the other), improves respiratory rate (number of in-breaths and out-breaths per minute.)

**Puraka** or inhalation is a conscious, and rhythmic process of enhancing vital energy. This process expands the consciousness and improves overall energy.

**Rechaka** or exhalation is a conscious, process of removing impurities from body and mind. Exhalations must be longer than inhalations, because carbon-dioxide has a longer route and travels in the opposite direction. Smooth and prolonged exhalations remove impurities efficiently and enhance well being.

**Kumbhaka** or retention is conscious holding of the breath without tensing any part of the body. *Kumbhaka* is not meant for beginners. There are two types of *kumbhaka*. *Antara Kumbhaka* is retention after inhalation and *Bahya Kumbhaka* is retention after exhalation. The latter is difficult and people with health issues must avoid it.

# Asanas for Pranayama Practice

Sitting on the floor in yogic postures with a straight back and balancing right and left sides is not easy for everyone. Props such as cushions and wall are recommended to improve anatomical alignment and balance. Sitting on a cushion helps to lengthen your spine and maintain the natural curvature. “A straight spine keeps the brain alert.”



Sukhasana

*A preparatory posture for beginners*



Ardha Padmasana

*A preparatory posture for beginners*



Siddhasana

*Siddhasana is the most rewarding posture for yogis and renunciates. It purifies all the energy channels, balances body-mind, stabilizes and sublimates sexual energy.*



Padmasana

*Padmasana creates balance from feet to head. Neuro-muscular imbalances are corrected, brain and spine are refreshed and the restless mind becomes calm.*

# Breathing during Asana Practice

Conscious and regulated breathing during asana practice has huge benefits on the mind-body health. All the movements in asanas are initiated and guided by specific breathing. Inhalation is initiated, when lengthening the spine, stretching the hands upward, bending backward, coming out of a forward or lateral bend or a twist. Exhalation is initiated, when bending forward or lateral, or when making a twist, coming out of backward bends and when bringing the hands down. While you stay steady in an asana, your breathing must be soft and even.

## Guidelines for Pranayama Practice

- 🕯️ Learn pranayama from a knowledgeable yoga teacher
- 🕯️ Six months of regular asana practice is a prerequisite
- 🕯️ Backward bending and inverted asanas must be mastered
- 🕯️ Get sufficiently motivated, focus inwards, have a positive attitude
- 🕯️ Practice in a clean and well ventilated place, not in an air-conditioned room
- 🕯️ Do not practice when hungry, when depressed or when you are ill
- 🕯️ Your mind must be free from thoughts and locked with your breath
- 🕯️ Body must be at ease, free from discomfort, tensions and pain
- 🕯️ Practice three hours after a meal and one hour after a beverage
- 🕯️ Your bowels, bladder and stomach must be completely empty
- 🕯️ Close your eyes, wrap a crepe bandage around your forehead and eyes
- 🕯️ Avoid abrupt practice, jerky movements and noisy breathing
- 🕯️ Exhalations must be slow, smooth and longer than your inhalations
- 🕯️ To master pranayama, one requires many years of dedicated practice

## Best time to Practice

*Brahmamuhurt* or *Amritavela* is the best time for learning and practicing *Pranayama*. It is the early hours of each day, three hours before sunrise between 3 am and 5.30 or 6 am. This time of the day is considered very auspicious and hence is called *Amritavela*. During *Brahmamuhurt* the natural elements are in their purest form and divine vibrations are freely projected in the atmosphere. Activities performed during this time, is well absorbed and preserved.

*Pranayama* practiced during *Brahmamuhurt*, renews and resets the bio-rhythm, purifies mind, infuses positive thoughts, removes negativity and *tamas* (dullness), sharpens *buddhi* (intellect) and channelizes it in the right direction, promoting contentment and peace.



# Ujjayi Pranayama | Victorious Breath

*Uj = superior, Jaya = victory; Ujjayi = victorious*

Duration | 5 - 15 minutes

This pranayama expands the lungs, refreshes the brain, broadens the chest like a victorious conqueror, hence the name. The vibrations and sound created in the throat is nourishing, calming and healing.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Refreshes brain, calms and stimulates vagus nerve and cranial muscles, enhances lung capacity
- Nourishes throat, vocal cords, relieves thyroid problems, asthma, bronchitis, migraine
- Relieves high and low BP, acidity, anxiety, depression, insomnia, sleep apnea, snoring

## Ujjayi Pranayama

Sit straight and close your eyes. As you inhale and exhale direct your breath through your throat, constricting your throat muscles, creating hollowness and a subtle vibration and sound in the throat. During inhalation a subtle 'hssing' sound is created, during exhalation a subtle 'haa' sound is created. Beginners will have some difficulties; but with regular early morning practice they can overcome the difficulties and master this pranayama within few weeks.

### For people with health issues



Wrap a crepe bandage over your fore-head and eyes. Practice *Ujjayi pranayama* lying down with your head and upper back rested on soft cushions.



### For the Experienced (a variation)

Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes. After a deep inhalation, hold your breath for few seconds and engage *Jalandhara bandha* for few seconds. Refer to page 86. Release the bandha, move your head neutral and exhale steadily through both nostrils or only through your left nostril by closing the right nostril.

### Benefits of exhalation through left nostril

Exhalation through left nostril, energizes cells in the right lobe of the brain. It enhances memory power, visual perception, creative and intuitive abilities, controls negativity and helps to relax mind and body.

*Vagus Nerve* is a remarkable cranial nerve and longest nerve in the body that controls the functions of throat, voice box, wind pipe, thyroid glands, lungs, heart and abdomen. It stimulates brain and heart, wraps around the abdomen and controls thoughts and feelings.

With the activation of vagus nerve, the neurotransmitter '*acetylcholine*' is released in the nervous system. This neurotransmitter improves attention, learning abilities, memory power, controls stress-related damages in the whole body, calms and relaxes mind and body.

## TIPS

- Set a timer for 15 minutes.
- Beginners can practice this lying down with their upper back and head slightly raised.
- Do not clench your teeth, tense your face or strain your throat or lungs.
- Those with thyroid problems and high BP, must practice with a knowledgeable teacher.
- The subtle sound created, calms your mind.

Experienced means those practicing with dedication for over 1 year

# Kapalabhati Pranayama | Skull Shining Breath

*Kapala = skull, Bhati = that which brings light*

This pranayama lightens the skull, brings fresh glow on the face and hence the name. A unique cleansing pranayama, that facilitates perfect flushing out of impurities through the nostrils.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Refreshes the brain, balances chemicals and fluids, energizes all systems
- Builds muscle and bone mass, increases stem cells in bone marrow
- Relieves anaemia, allergies, asthma, sinusitis, migraine, thyroid, arthritis
- Relieves low and high BP, cholesterol, triglycerides, heart problems
- Relieves diabetes, kidney problems, menstrual and menopausal problems
- Reduces excess body weight, helps to control and withdraw from cigarette smoking

## Preparation

Sit straight in a comfortable position and close your eyes. Practice active and even abdominal breathing for two minutes.

## Kapalabhati Pranayama

After partial inhalation exhale forcefully with sharp 'puffing' sound by drawing your abdomen in. This pranayama is just systematic sharp forceful exhalations, with the rapid contractions of the abdominal muscles. The toxins are perfectly removed from the cellular level through your nostrils.

In this pranayama, inhalations are automatic and passive. Please do not pay attention to them. The passive inhalations help to relax the abdominal muscles and facilitate forceful exhalations with perfect rhythm.

## For Beginners

Place one hand on your abdomen and other on your chest. Practice one forceful out-breath every second. Do it for ten to twenty times and pause for two to three seconds and restart.

After few weeks of dedicated practice, there will be ease in your practice and the pauses will reduce. You can increase the speed to two forceful out-breaths per second. Maintain the speed throughout your practice.

The big challenge is to keep your face, chest and shoulders free from tension. To prevent thoughts, just focus on the internal movements.

*Experienced means those practicing with dedication for over 1 year*

## CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** during fever, menstruation, pregnancy, until four months after any surgery and four months after child birth.

## Duration | 15 - 30 minutes

Practice twice everyday  
Keep a mudra in your fingers



## TIPS

- Set a timer for 20 minutes.
- Sit on a cushion, support your back against a wall.
- Learn and practice with a teacher because a wrong practice can hurt you and lead to health issues.
- People with health issues, must practice slowly with several pauses, synchronizing out-breaths with movement of the abdomen.
- Do not lift your shoulders or chest or make monkey faces; this will develop imbalances.
- As you progress, increase your speed to two sharp expulsions per second and maintain this speed.
- Practice during *Brahmamuhurt*, refer to page 75.

# Sitali Pranayama | Cooling Breath

*Sitali = cooling.* This pranayama naturally cools the cells in the body, hence the name. A unique pranayama where inhalations are through the mouth and exhalations are through the nose.

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Reduces heat, cools the brain, eyes, ears, nose, mouth and skin
- Purifies blood and air passages, quenches thirst, appeases hunger
- Prevents migraine, high blood pressure, stabilizes sweat glands
- Controls sweating of palms, hot flushes and anger

### CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have cold, congestion in chest, cough, asthma, tonsillitis and high BP.

### Duration | 5 - 15 minutes

Keep a mudra in your fingers

## Preparation

Sit straight in a comfortable position and close your eyes. Lock your attention inwards and smoothly breathe for few times.

## Sitali Pranayama

Stick out the tip of your tongue, between your pursed lips. Curl your tongue lengthwise like a flexible tube. Inhale deeply through your mouth allowing the air to pass through the tube of your tongue. After full inhalation, withdraw your tongue in and close your mouth. Consciously pause for one or two seconds. Exhale slowly and steadily through both nostrils.

Let your exhalations be the same length as your inhalations or even longer. Longer exhalations are soothing and calming. They remove excess heat and toxins from the body, build abilities to adjust and adapt to changing situations.



## For the Experienced (two variations)

1. Practice retention of breath for few seconds, after every inhalation. Exhalations must be smooth, long and steady, through the nostrils.
2. After every inhalation hold the breath and engage in *Jalandara bandha* or chin lock for few seconds. Release the *bandha* and move your head neutral and exhale steadily through the throat as in *Ujjayi pranayama*.

As you progress, feel the cooling effect gradually spreading from the throat to your eyes, ears, face, chest and the rest of the body.

*Experienced means those practicing with dedication for over 1 year*

### TIPS

- Practice in front of a mirror to learn the correct technique.
- Inward focus is essential for rhythm.
- Practice on hot days or after a vigorous yoga practice.
- Practice before going out in the sun and prevent a migraine attack.
- Exhalations must be slow, steady, long, and not abrupt or fast.

# Nadi Shodana Pranayama | Alternate Nostril Breathing

*Nadi=energy channel, Shodana = purification* This purifies the nervous system, energy channels, hence the name. It is also called *Anuloma Viloma*.

Duration | 10 - 15 minutes

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Balances the right and left hemispheres of the brain, improves brain functions
- Balances acid and alkaline levels, brain chemicals and fluids, controls blood pressure
- Corrects imbalance in the nasal cycle, cleans up the respiratory passages
- Relieves fatigue, anxiety, depression, sinusitis, migraine, menstrual problems



*Vishnu Mudra* resembles the conch or the shank of Lord Vishnu and hence the name. Bend index and middle fingers towards your palm and keep the other fingers upright.

**Nadi Shodana Pranayama** Sit straight and close your eyes. Keep *Vishnu Mudra* in your right hand. Close your right nostril with your thumb. Through left nostril, exhale slowly, steadily and inhale deeply. Close your left nostril with your ring and little fingers. Through your right nostril, exhale slowly, steadily and inhale deeply. Repeat this cycle several times for at least ten minutes. Come out of the practice, as you inhale through your right nostril. Bring your hands down and exhale through both nostrils.



## For the Experienced

After every inhalation, hold your breath for few seconds. Exhale slowly and steadily through the opposite nostril. The duration of retention of breath, will vary from person to person. It largely depends on your lung capacity and your present mind set. During retention of breath there should be no pressure or strain.

### TIPS

- Set a timer for 10 or 15 minutes.
- Count your inhalations and exhalations to maintain focus and rhythm.
- Exhalations must be much longer than inhalations.
- Do not practice retention, when you are sick or when you have high BP.

# Brahmari Pranayama | Bees Breath

*Brahmara = a large bumble bee*

The sound created resembles the sound of a bee, hence the name.

**Duration | 5 - 15 minutes**  
Practice twice everyday

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- Refreshes and nourishes the brain, calms the mind, balances hormones, improves confidence
- Relieves high BP, mental stress, anxiety, depression, anger, fear, insomnia



**Sunmukhi Mudra** By closing the seven gates of perception, we can easily control our thoughts and hear the inner sound of Aum. Close your ears with thumb, your eyes with index and middle fingers. Place your ring and little fingers near your nostrils and below your lips. Drop your elbows downwards and focus inwards.

**Brahmari Pranayama** Sit straight and close your eyes. Use Sunmukhi mudra or wrap a crepe bandage on your forehead covering your eyes and ears. Inhale deeply, exhale through your nose creating a humming sound that vibrates as Aum. This sound vibrates in the head, refreshes brain, calms tense nerves and the restless mind.

### CREPE BANDAGE

This is a soft, elastic material available in the pharmacies. It provides a soothing effect for eyes, forehead and mind. It promotes concentration and boosts the benefits of practice.



*'OM' or 'AUM' or 'PRANAVA'*

*OM* is a mystical and powerful mantra, a divine reality and a cosmic sound vibration. Repetitive chanting of *OM* refreshes brain and transcends the mind from negative to high positive energies.

### TIPS

- Set a timer for 15 minutes.
- Exhalations must be slow and longer than inhalations.
- Use of crepe bandage keeps the hands free and mind focused.
- Practice before going to bed if you have anxiety and insomnia.



- All the limitations in us are self imposed. When we have the capacity to get bound by them, we also have the capacity to get liberated from them.
- A pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity, but an optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty.
- Learning from the events in our lives is an experience that expands our intellect and brings positive direction to our lives.
- A glorious future awaits us, when we make sincere efforts to change our negative energies to positive energies.
- When the body is healthy, the mind and the heart open to positive aspects of life and develop abilities to face realities boldly with a smile.

— *Words of wisdom from ancient Indian sages*








# Energy Conservation

The ancient yogic texts, *Shiva Samhita*, *Gheranda Samhita* and *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, have emphasized the importance of everyday practice of *mudras* and *bandhas* for proper distribution of energies and promoting mind-body balance.

*Mudras* are for everyone, they awaken cosmic energies, purify mind, body and soul. They are finger postures performed by pressing two finger tips together, by flexing and stretching the other fingers in a particular manner. *Mudras* stimulate electro-magnetic energies, activate dormant nerves, correct imbalances and heal many ailments. They are engaged during pranayama and meditation and while practicing certain asanas.

## EACH FINGER REPRESENTS AN ELEMENT

-  Thumb finger represents *Agni* or fire
-  Index finger represents *Vayu* or air
-  Middle finger represents *Akash* or ether
-  Ring finger represents *Prithvi* or earth
-  Little finger represents *Varun* or water

*Bandhas* are unique internal energy locks that conserve and distribute the vital energy within the body and prevent it from flowing outwards. Bandhas are engaged only during *Kumbhaka* or retention of breath. They are advanced techniques that are designed to improve circulation, vitality, stability in the torso and promote overall strength.

# Mudras | Energy Seals

Duration | 5 - 15 minutes

## Gyana Mudra | Knowledge Seal

### Benefits

- Transcends ego, calms the mind, promotes wisdom
- Stimulates brain and pituitary gland, improves memory and sleep
- Relieves mental pressures, migraine, controls high BP
- Changes negative to positive emotions, helps overcome addictions

Press the tips of your thumb and your index finger. Keep your middle finger, ring finger and little finger upright.



## Vayu Mudra | Wind Seal

### Benefits

- Strengthens bones, muscles, joints, relieves pain
- Balances air within, clears nasal blocks, removes flatulence
- Relieves arthritis, gout, cervical spondylosis, sciatica

Fold the tip of your index finger on the base (pad) of your thumb. Press your thumb over it. Keep your other fingers upright.



## Sunya Mudra | Zero Seal

### Benefits

- Relieves ear infections, ear pain, tinnitus, deafness
- Relieves vertigo, thyroid problems
- Relieves and prevents nausea during travel

Bend your middle finger, and press your thumb firmly over it. Keep your index finger, ring finger and little finger upright.



## Apana Mudra | Descending Energy Seal

### Benefits

- Detoxifies the body and revitalizes all the systems
- Relieves tooth-ache, high BP, diabetes, hemorrhoids
- Relieves indigestion, constipation, kidney and gall bladder stones
- Relieves prostate, menstrual, menopausal problems

Press the tips of your middle, ring finger and your thumb together. Keep your index finger and little finger upright.



## Apana Vayu Mudra | Descending Wind Seal

### Benefits

- Corrects imbalances in the five elements fire, air, ether, earth and water
- Relieves cardiac problems and prevents heart attack
- Relieves flatulence, acidity, gastritis, migraine, joint pain
- Removes impurities in blood, improves circulation

This is a combination of apana and vayu mudra. Place your index finger as in Vayu mudra, and your middle, ring, and thumb finger as in Apana mudra.



## Prithvi Mudra | Earth Seal

### Benefits

- Relieves fatigue, builds tolerance, stamina and balance
- Relieves emotional instability, anxiety and depression
- Reduces weight in overweight individuals
- Increases weight in underweight individuals

Press the tips of your ring finger and your thumb together. Keep your index finger, middle finger and little finger upright.



# Surya Mudra Sun Seal

## Benefits

- Raises inner heat, removes lethargy, increases balance
- Relieves stress, common cold, reduces cholesterol
- Relieves diabetes, cholesterol and high blood pressure
- Improves digestion, overall strength and stability

Bend your ring finger, and press your thumb over it. Keep your index, middle and little fingers upright.



# Prana Mudra Vital Energy Seal

## Benefits

- Improves circulation, reduces fatigue and refreshes
- Boosts vitality, strength, improves stamina and immunity
- Relieves eye problems, improves vision
- Helps to recover fast from long term illness

Press the tips of your little finger, ring finger and your thumb together. Keep your index finger and middle finger upright.



# Varuna Mudra Water Seal

## Benefits

- Relieves kidney and prostate problems, incontinence, bed-wetting
- Improves fluid balance, moisturizes dry skin, helps psoriasis, eczema
- Relieves, burning eyes, dryness of the mouth, improves taste sensation

Press the tips of your little finger and your thumb together. Keep your index finger, middle and ring fingers upright.



## TIPS

- Mudras can be practiced anywhere and at anytime, preferably in the sitting position.
- Mudras can be practiced with one hand, if both the hands cannot be used.



# Bandhas Energy locks

*Bandhas = lock or hold.* Bandhas are neuro-muscular locks, that cleanse, energize and distribute prana all over the body. When three *bandhas* are performed at the same time is *Maha Bandha*.

**Not for Beginners**

## CAUTIONS

**Do not practice** when you have headache, ulcer, fever, cardiac problems, until four months after any surgery, during menstruation and pregnancy.

**Duration | 10 - 30 seconds**

## Benefits with everyday practice for few weeks

- **Jalandhara Bandha** refreshes the brain, nourishes the heart, relieves high BP, headaches sinusitis, thyroid and respiratory problems, insomnia
- **Uddiyana Bandha** relieves diabetes, dyspepsia, indigestion, removes toxins, reduces excess abdominal fat, maintains youthful vitality
- **Mula Bandha** strengthens the pelvic floor, stabilizes the sacrolic joint, relieves tail bone pain, hemorrhoids, bladder, prostate, menstrual and menopausal problems

# Jalandhara Bandha Chin lock

**Jalandhara Bandha** binds energy in the throat, chest and head. Inhale deeply, hold your breath moving your head and chin downward. Bring your chin close to your collar bones, and feel the compression in your throat. Close your eyes and stay for few seconds with focus. Move your head neutral, exhale gently and release the *bandha*. Practice several times.



# Uddiyana Bandha Abdominal Lock

**Uddiyana Bandha** binds energy in the abdomen. It is best learnt standing. Stand with your legs two feet apart. Bend your knees, place your palms on your thighs, lean forward and lower your head. Inhale deeply, exhale quickly with a force. Hold your breath and draw-in your abdomen. Do not tense your face or chest. Stay steady for few seconds. Inhale soften your abdomen and release the *bandha*. Practice several times.

# Mula Bandha Anal lock

**Mula Bandha** locks and distributes energy in the pelvis and abdomen. Sit in a comfortable position, inhale deeply. Hold your breath, locate, contract and draw your anal muscles inwards and upwards, as if you are stopping the urine stream. A positive attitude and inward focus is essential to identify and contract these muscles. Exhale smoothly and release the *bandha*. Practice several times.

## TIPS

- Bandhas must be learnt from a knowledgeable teacher.
- Mastery of *kumbhaka* is essential.
- Incorrect practice may lead to imbalance and health issues.
- The best time to practice is during '*Brahmamuhurt*' refer to page 75.

# Yogic Healing

**Yogic healing** is an ancient healing system that begins by understanding the individual and targeting the cause of illness. It is a holistic approach that considers every aspect linked with the individual to heal physically, mentally and emotionally and not just the disease. It taps the hidden potential to restore balance and emphasizes cultivating healthy and productive habits by eliminating unhealthy and destructive habits.

**Asanas, Pranayama and Meditation** are powerful healing tools that remove rigidity, tensions, control negative emotions and ego, refresh the brain and all the systems.

**Proper diet** and mindful eating is very essential for good health. 80% of health issues are caused due to eating unhealthy foods. A balanced vegetarian diet (Sattvic) that is easily digestible is recommended.

**Laughter** is a natural way of releasing stress and pain. It refreshes the brain, strengthens the immune system, prevents and cures many health problems.

**Sleep** is a very important activity that helps renew and restore. 8 hours of sleep in the night is essential for everyone. It is a healthy to sleep before or by 9 pm. and wake up at 4 am.

**Mantra chanting** removes disturbances from the mind and promotes well being. Regular chanting of the Maha-mantras such as *Gayatri Mantra and Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra*, purify, calm, protect, bestow health and lasting happiness.

**Sat-Sangh** is interacting with positive, contented and happy people. Satsangh has a healing effect on the mind and body. Regular interaction with such people will rejuvenate and restore health.

Yogic healing is not a quick fix but a sure and lasting remedy for many health issues. The practitioner will experience a 'new life' free from pain and disease.

# Acidity and Ulcers

## Relief without Medicine

**Acidity** is a disorder of the digestive system, caused by excess acid secretion in the stomach. When not treated in time, acidity can lead to headaches, ulcers, bone loss, and other health issues.

**Causes** Mental stress, anxiety, eating spicy hot and fried foods, excess caffeine, lot of sweets, alcohol, smoking, hyperthyroidism, keeping stomach empty for long periods.

**Symptoms** Belching, bloating, burning sensation in the chest and abdomen, pain and lack of appetite.

**Asanas and Pranayama** massage the digestive organs, reduce acid secretion, increase alkaline secretions, eliminate excess wind, heal the damages, improve appetite and provide complete relief.

**NOTE** Every individual has a different lifestyle and the cause will be different. The sequence given will be effective but can be changed to suit your present body and mind condition. Avoid postures that cause discomfort and pain. Practice with determination and a positive attitude.

**Duration** Practice each asana for 1 to 5 minutes.



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TRIKONASANA

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ARDHA CHANDRASANA

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STANDING BHUJANGASANA

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ARDHA MATSYENDRA ASANA

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SUPTA BADDHA KONASANA

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SUPTA VIRASANA

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JATARA PARIVRTTASANA

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VIPARITA DANDASANA

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PARIVRTTA VIRASANA

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VIPARITA KARANI

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SUPINE RELAXATION

PAGE 70

## PRANAYAMA

with Crepe Bandage

**Duration 15 minutes each**

### Ujjayi Pranayama Page 76.

Energizes the 'Vagus nerve', controls acid secretion, enhances digestion.

### Kapalabhati Pranayama Page 77.

Massages abdominal organs, reduces acid secretion, increases alkaline.

### Nadi Shodana Pranayama Page 79.

Relieves mental stress, corrects nasal cycle, relaxes, reduces acid secretion.

## Cultivate a Healthy Lifestyle

- Start your day with three glasses of warm water.
- Every morning, take 1 tbsp aloe-vera juice, diluted in 1 tbsp water.
- Drink two to three litres of warm water during the day.
- Avoid drinking water or juice while eating; they dilute digestive enzymes.
- Eat frequent small meals every two hours, to avoid acid production.
- Avoid pre-cooked frozen foods and stale foods; they are acidic and harmful.
- Drink either, raw cabbage juice, raw bottle-gourd juice, raw banana stem juice, aloe-vera or wheat grass juice, on an empty stomach in the morning. They are all alkaline and heal acidity, heart burn and ulcers very quickly.
- Include herbs and spices like mint, basil, cinnamon, ginger, turmeric, cumin, coriander, sesame, fennel and poppy seeds in your diet.
- Eat light low calorie dinner, three hours before going to bed.
- Eat foods rich in Vit A: dark green, yellow and orange vegetables and fruits.
- Eat foods rich in Vit C: broccoli, green leafy vegetables, asparagus, apples, kiwi fruit, strawberries, oranges, lime.
- Avoid spicy and fried foods, hot pickles, high calorie sweets, jam, pasta, coffee, tea, soda, alcohol and cigarettes.
- Practice once a week all the asanas in this book, after reading the cautions.

# Asthma and Bronchitis

## Relief without Medicine

**Asthma** is a chronic respiratory disorder caused by swelling of the tissues in the air passages.

**Causes** Common cold, sinusitis, mental stress, anxiety, heredity, pesticides, irritants like cotton dust, pollen dust, drugs, animal hair, extreme weather conditions.

**Symptoms** Tightness in the chest, shortness of breath, wheezing, coughing.

**Bronchitis** is inflammation of mucous membrane that lines the air tubes in the lungs.

**Causes** Flu, polluted environment, chain smoking.

**Symptoms** Shortness of breath, fever, painful cough with thick mucus, running nose, frequent headache, chest pain, and sometimes back pain.



**Asanas and Pranayama** is a natural remedy that cleans the air passages, heals damages, improves circulation in the brain and other organs and builds overall energy. The practice enhances lung capacity, improves diaphragm flexibility and strength, clear blocks and congestions from the air passages, heal inflammations, remove tensions from the muscles, improve respiration and provide lasting relief.

**NOTE** Lung conditions vary in every individual. The sequence given will be beneficial for everyone. All the asanas improve lung capacity and strength. Avoid postures that cause discomfort and pain. Practice with faith and with a positive attitude

**Duration** Practice each asana for 2 to 5 minutes.



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TADASANA

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STANDING BHUJANGASANA

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VIRABHADRASANA II

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ARDHA CHANDRASANA

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URDHVA MUKHA SVANASANA

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SETU BANDHASANA

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DHANURASANA

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USHTRASANA

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SUPTA VIRASANA

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URDHVA DHANURASANA

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11

SARVANGASANA

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12

SUPTINE RELAXATION

PAGE 70

## PRANAYAMA

with Crepe Bandage

**Duration 15 minutes each**

- **Ujjayi Pranayama** Page 76. Improves lung capacity.
- **Kapalabhati Pranayama** Page 77. Strengthens lungs, removes blocks and congestions.
- **Nadi Shodana Pranayama** Page 79. Clears air passages, relieves chest congestion, mental stress.

## Food triggers

Identify and eliminate

Soya, peanuts, wheat, dairy products, eggs, bread, blue cheese, citrus fruits, jams, wine, beer, additives, artificial colours, preservatives, canned foods, soy sauce and certain sea food.

## Cultivate a Healthy Lifestyle

- Drink two litres salted warm water during the day to keep the airways moist.
- Keep your surroundings free from pollen dust, dust-mites animal hair, and cigarette smoke.
- Clean your home with a vacuum cleaner; use an air purifier.
- Do not go out, when there is cold blast of wind.
- Eat foods rich in Vit A, Vit B, Vit B6, Vit C, Vit E, for strengthening the lungs and the immune system.
- Eat foods rich in magnesium to relax the tense nerves and muscles and keeps the airways clean.
- Eat home cooked vegetarian food, avoid eating non vegetarian food and food from the restaurant food.
- Avoid all the dairy products if there is excess mucus.
- Include, green leafy vegetables, whole grains, dry figs, nuts, sunflower and pumpkin seeds.
- Take light dinner, at least three hours before going to bed.
- Eating the wrong foods can instantly trigger an attack.
- Practice once a week, standing strengthening, backward bending asanas *Supta Virasana* and twists given in this book.

# Back Pain

## Relief without Medicine

**Back pain** is a common complaint amongst many youngsters today. It is experienced when there is pressure on the spinal nerves, damage to the ligaments or vertebrae or misalignment of the inter vertebral discs in the spine. When discs lose their cushioning ability, they become stiff and cause pain.

**Causes** Wrong postures, a slipped disc, herniated disc, injury, pinched nerve, sedentary lifestyle, obesity, emotional stress, osteoporosis, pregnancy, old age, weak abdominal muscles, wearing high-heeled footwear.



**Asanas and Pranayama** repair the damages, align the discs, relax the tense nerves, strengthen the spine and the connecting areas. Regular practice will provide permanent relief.

**NOTE** Every individual has a different lifestyle. The sequence given is simple and will be beneficial. Do not overstretch and strain.

Practice two times every day with a positive attitude. Avoid postures that cause back pain.

**Duration** Practice each asana for 3 to 5 minutes.



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TADASANA

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UTTANASANA ON TABLE

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STANDING BHUJANGASANA

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4

STAND-LIFT-STRETCH

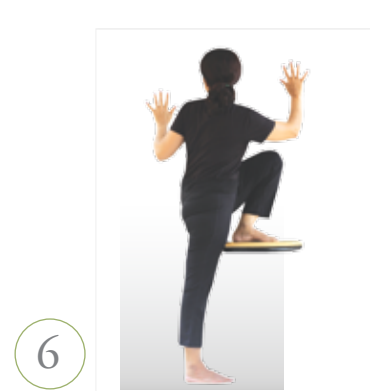
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5

PASCHIMA HASTA TANA TADASANA

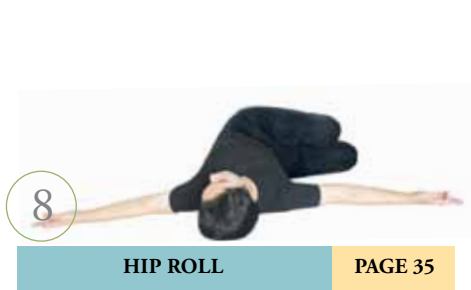
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6

TWIST ON STOOL

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**Step 4** Stand upright in front of a wall. Fix a strap on a hook in the wall or on a window grill. Hold the strap firmly. Lift your left leg up and rest the foot on the wall. Straighten your spine. Feel the traction effect in your legs and hands. Repeat with your right leg.

**Step 5** Place one leg on a high stool, lengthen your spine. Steady the balancing leg. Place your palms on the side wall. Exhale, turn and twist your torso. Stay steady. Inhale, come out of the twist. Go to the other side and repeat.

**PRANAYAMA**  
*with Crepe Bandage*

Support your back against a wall

**Duration 15 minutes each**

- **Nadi Shodana Pranayama** Page 79.  
Relaxes the nerves, relieves stress, calms the mind.
- **Kapalabhati Pranayama** Page 77.  
Strengthens the muscles, bones and nerves, relieves pain.

**You are as old as your spine**

Yoga science regards spine as the most important part in the body because, the spine connects and supports the skull, chest, hands, abdomen, pelvis and legs.

**Cultivate a Healthy Lifestyle**

- Correct your postures and avoid carrying heavy weight.
- Avoid sitting for long time because it exerts pressure on the buttocks muscles, hips and lower back.
- Avoid caffeine - coffee, tea, chocolates, aerated drinks. Avoid alcohol and smoking. They deplete calcium and increase pain.
- Avoid fatty, fried and hot spicy foods, since they aggravate pain.
- Eat foods rich in Vit C: dark green vegetables, broccoli, beet, cabbage, radish, tomatoes, citrus fruits, strawberries, kiwi, raspberries, cranberries, grapefruit, papaya, pineapple, guava.
- Eat foods rich in calcium such as milk, yoghurt, cheese, almonds, sesame seeds, green leafy vegetables.
- Eat foods rich in magnesium: whole grains, legumes, dark green leafy vegetables, dried figs, almonds, walnuts.
- Avoid wearing high-heeled shoes and do not lift heavy weight.
- Avoid sleeping on your stomach; sleep straight on your back.
- Practice once a week standing and twisting asanas.

# Diabetes

## Relief without Medicine

**Diabetes Mellitus** is a common metabolic and lifestyle disorder caused due to high levels of sugar in the blood and urine. Insufficient production of insulin, a hormone secreted by pancreas, increases blood sugar levels, or when the body cells do not respond effectively to insulin. When this imbalance is not corrected, it can lead to heart and kidney disease, vision impairment and other problems.

**Causes** Heredity, obesity, stress, physical inactivity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, unhealthy eating habits.

**Symptoms** Lethargy, fatigue, frequent urination, weight loss, craving for sweets, excessive thirst, increased hunger, blurred vision, slow healing of wounds, increased susceptibility to infections, numbness in the hands and feet.



**Asanas and Pranayama** massage the abdomen, increase gastric fire, burn and dissolve excess sugar, regulate the functions of liver and pancreas. They also avert blocks in the coronary arteries, improve digestion, functions of the kidneys and lungs. They provide abilities to manage everyday stress and cure diabetes completely in few months.

**NOTE** Every individual has a different lifestyle. The sequence given is thoughtfully designed to suit the diabetic. Practice everyday with determination and positive attitude. Avoid postures that cause discomfort and pain.

**Duration** Practice each asana for 3 to 5 minutes.



1

TADASANA

PAGE 18



2

TRIKONASANA

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3

UTTANASANA

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4

SUPTA URDHVA PADASANA

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5

NAVASANA

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6

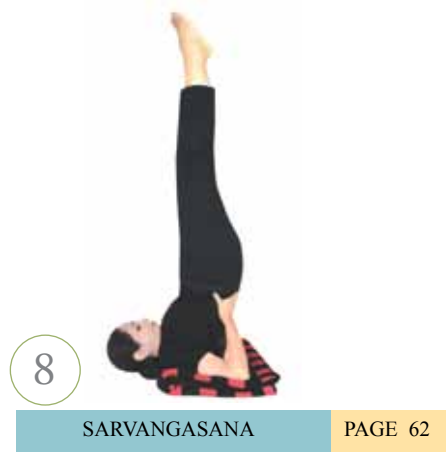
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7 DHANURASANA

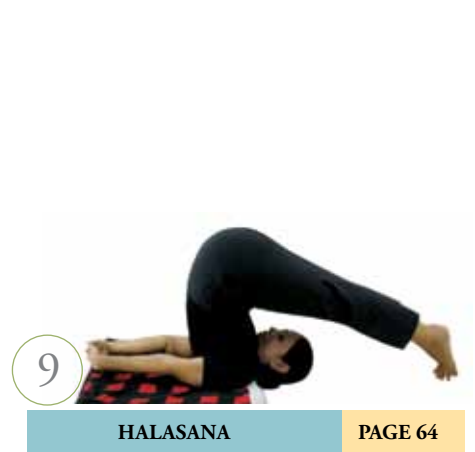
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SARVANGASANA

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PASCHIMOTTANASANA

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SUPTA VIRASANA

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12

ADHO MUKHA VIRASANA

PAGE 72

## PRANAYAMA

with Crepe Bandage

Duration 15 - 20 minutes each

- **Kapalabhati Pranayama** Page 77.

Energizes the pancreas, dissolves excess sugar, controls overeating of wrong foods and heals the disorder.

- **Nadi Shodana Pranayama** Page 79.

Reduces stress, calms the nerves, controls increase of cortisol hormone.

- **Chromium** is an essential mineral that regulates and balances sugar levels in the body. It is a cholesterol burner, a muscle builder and a powerful weapon against heart disease and related problems.

- **Low Glycaemic Index foods** are complex carbohydrates, high in fibre, that control blood sugar levels, nourish pancreas and heal diabetes naturally.

## Cultivate a Healthy Lifestyle

- Go for a brisk walk in the morning before your asana and pranayama practice. Practice *Surya Namaskar*.
- Eat frequent small meals for better digestion. Avoid rice.
- Start your day with few glasses of water to cleanse your systems. Drink two litres water during the day.
- Eat chromium rich foods: broccoli, whole grains, oats, nuts, soya beans, bengal gram, black gram, bottle gourd, pomegranate, pineapple, banana, black pepper, thyme, basil, cheese and other milk products.
- Include two tablespoons of flax seed powder in your everyday diet. Flax seed powder stabilizes blood sugar level. Mix it along with the cooked food. Do not cook it.
- Eat bitter melon, sprouted or cooked fenugreek seeds, green leafy vegetables, bottle gourd, gooseberry.
- Drink freshly made juice of cucumber, bitter melon, tomato and gooseberry before breakfast.
- Eat fruits low in sugar such as pears, apples, strawberries, cherries, plums, peaches, guavas, pomegranates.
- Practice inverted asanas, after learning them from a teacher.
- Check your blood sugar regularly.



# High Blood Pressure

## Relief without Medicine

**High Blood Pressure** is a rise in the pressure exerted by the blood on the artery walls, and the heart works harder to pump blood into the arteries. The normal BP is 120/80 and the high BP is 140/90 and above. The first number is systolic pressure (when the heart contracts) and second number is diastolic pressure (when the heart relaxes). If the blood pressure remains high for a long time, it can lead to heart attacks, strokes, kidney and other problems.

**Causes** Heredity, mental stress, sedentary lifestyle, overweight, excessive smoking, excessive alcohol, contraceptive pills, kidney problems, hormonal imbalance, overeating fatty foods and old age.

**Symptoms** are usually not outwardly evident. This condition is discovered only during medical examination.

**Asanas and Pranayama** remove stress and tensions, calm the nerves, relax the heart and refresh the brain. The arteries and capillaries are dilated, made elastic and their functions improved. Forward bends are beneficial in calming the frontal lobe of the brain and must be practiced with a crepe bandage. Rest the forehead on soft cushion to remove pressure and feel the soothing effect.

**NOTE** Every individual has a different personality and lifestyle. The sequence is carefully designed to relieve hypertension. It relaxes tense nerves and disturbed mind. Avoid postures that cause discomfort.

**Duration** Practice each asana for 3 to 10 minutes.



1 ADHO MUKHA VIRASANA PAGE 72



2 ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA PAGE 60



3 PRASARITA PADOTTANASANA PAGE 28



4 SUPTA PADANGUSTASANA PAGE 31



5 SUPTA BADDHA KONASANA PAGE 32



6 SUPTA VIRASANA PAGE 33



7 SETU BANDHASANA

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VIPARITA KARANI

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ADHO MUKHA UPAVISHTA KONASANA

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10

JANU SIRSASANA

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11

ADHO MUKHA VIRASANA

PAGE 72



12

SUPINE RELAXATION

PAGE 70

## PRANAYAMA

with Crepe Bandage

Duration 15 minutes each

- **Ujjayi Pranayama** Page 76.  
Refreshes the brain, energizes the vagus nerve, improves circulation.
- **Kapalabhati Pranayama** Page 77.  
Efficiently remove toxins and pressures and enhance energy.
- **Nadi Shodana Pranayama** Page 79.  
Reduces anger and stress, calms the mind and balances hormones.
- **Brahmari Pranayama** Page 80.  
Relieves mental stress, anxiety, depression, improves night sleep.

### How much salt you must take

Those with hypertension, must take half a teaspoon of salt in a day. Excess salt tightens the arteries, draws more water in the blood and raises blood pressure. Potassium balances the ill effects of salt, relaxes arteries, maintains normal heart beat, and reduces high blood pressure.

## Cultivate a Healthy Lifestyle

- Go for half an hour walk everyday, before your asana practice.
- Start your day with three glasses of luke warm water.
- Reduce your excess body weight if you are overweight.
- Control your anger; practice pranayama and inverted asanas.
- Unwind and indulge in activities that make you relax.
- Eat light and early dinner; three hours before going to bed.
- Eat low sodium, low fat, low calorie, high fibre vegetarian diet.
- Eat foods rich in folic acid, Vit B6 and Vit B12, magnesium to protect and keep your heart healthy.
- Fruits have high potassium and Vit C; have a meal of only fruits.
- Eat foods rich in potassium: avocados, pulses, tomatoes, celery, steamed or baked unpeeled potatoes, spinach, beets, lima beans, bananas, apples, melons, peaches, plums, pears, kiwi, oranges, apricots, figs, dates, raisins, walnuts, almonds, milk, yogurt.
- Eat foods rich in Vit C: broccoli, green leafy vegetables, red and green capsicum, apples, kiwi fruit, strawberries, oranges.
- Eat a low sodium diet. Avoid canned and processed foods.
- Avoid caffeine, chocolates, colas, alcohol and cigarettes.
- Practice forward bending asanas everyday to calm and refresh.
- Check your blood pressure every month without fail.

# Knee Pain

## Relief without Medicine

**Knee Pain** is the result of decrease in the synovial fluid that lubricates the knee joint. There is stiffness, lack of flexion or extension in the knee joint.

**Osteoarthritis** is wear and tear of the joints that develops gradually with stiffness. It is common in middle age. **Rheumatoid arthritis** is inflammation of the muscles, tendons, membranes lining the joints. This is an autoimmune disease that can affect people of all ages.

**Causes** Obesity, knee injury, long hours of sitting or standing, improper standing, no proper exercise, extreme cold weather, menopause and old age.



**Asanas and Pranayama** improve awareness and alignment, repair the damages, increase lubrication, relieve pain, make the joints supple and strong. They improve mobility and provide relief from pain.

**NOTE** The cause and knee damage will be different in every individual. This sequence is beneficial for most of the people. They gently stretch and relax the inflamed tissues improve circulation and heal. Use props and avoid postures that cause discomfort and pain. Practice with dedication two to three times everyday.

**Duration** Practice each asana for 1 to 5 minutes.





**Steps 4, 5, 7** Practice gently and repeat with your other leg. In steps 5, 7, rest your knees on a soft cushion.

### PRANAYAMA

with Crepe Bandage

**Duration 15 minutes each**

▪ **Kapalabhati Pranayama** Page 77.

Improves bone and muscle mass, reduces inflammation, strengthens muscles ligaments and joints.

▪ **Nadi Shodana Pranayama** Page 79.

Reduces stress, calms your mind, balances hormones, reduces pain.

Flax seed provides nourishment, reduces and prevents inflammations, nerve disorders, cancer and bad cholesterol. It contains proteins, vitamins, minerals, that nourish, fibre that stabilizes blood sugar, lignans that fights cancer, omega-3 fatty acid that boosts brain functions.

## Cultivate a Healthy Lifestyle

- Sit down and drink two glasses of warm water, every morning.
- Drink two litres (12 glasses) of water during the day.
- Reduce your body weight if you are over weight.
- Take two tbsps, aloe-vera juice mixed in four tbsps of water.
- Drink herbal or green tea; avoid caffeine, black tea and coffee.
- Eat plenty of yellow and orange fruits and vegetables, like carrots, apricots, squash, mangoes, oranges, melon; they are alkaline and antioxidant in nature.
- Eat green leafy vegetables, celery and sprouts, they are alkaline.
- Alkaline foods dissolve deposits in the joints and relieve pain.
- Include flax seeds to reduce inflammation in the joints.
- Avoid refined, fatty, fried, spicy foods; they are acidic, upset the biorhythm, increase inflammation and aggravate pain.
- Do not climb stairs till your knees are completely healed.
- Practice standing strengthening and reclining asanas, when your knee pain is reduced.

# Migraine and Tension Headache

## Relief without Medicine

**Migraine** is a throbbing one-sided headache, felt on the front or on the sides of the head. It is a vascular headache, caused by dilation of temporal arteries in the brain. The pain intensifies with the enlargement.

**Tension Headache** is prolonged dull pain and sensations of pressure on the back of head and neck. Tensions in the neck can lead to headache and it is difficult to distinguish tension headaches from migraines.

**Cause** Heredity, hormonal imbalance, drop in blood-sugar levels, mental stress, anxiety, lack of sleep, exposure to hot sun, exposure to bright light, improper breathing, muscle fatigue due to wrong postures, reading while travelling, skipping breakfast, fast paced stressful lifestyle, eating foods that contain tyramine. Tyramine is a compound (amine) found in aged foods, preservatives, leftover foods in the refrigerator for more than 48 hours.

**Symptoms** (Migraine) Throbbing headache on one side, nausea, loss of appetite, blurred vision, disorientation, depression, restlessness, disturbed sleep.

### When you have a migraine

- Take a shower and wrap crepe bandage on your forehead eyes and rest.
- Rest in a dark room, avoid bright flashing light.
- Gently massage your head, neck and shoulders.
- Press pressure points below the skull, behind the ears for at least one minute.
- Keep ice pack or a wet cloth on your forehead and on the back of your neck.
- Drink lots of glasses of water, fresh tomato juice, or fresh herbal drink with ginger.
- Eat healthy at frequent intervals.
- Avoid foods with excess salt and sugar.

### When you don't have a migraine

Practice asanas and pranayama everyday as preventive care. Dedicated practice remove tensions and constrictions in blood vessels, calm tense nerves, enhance circulation, balance hormones, relieve negative stress, anxiety, depression, clear blocks in sinus glands, increase secretion of serotonin, the happy chemicals in the brain.

**NOTE** The sequence is thoughtfully designed. Follow the sequence and practice it everyday in a quiet place with determination and commitment. Positive attitude and a calm mind will help heal faster.

**Duration** Practice each asana for 3 to 7 minutes.



1

RELAXING YOUR HEAD

BELOW



2

PRASARITA PADOTTANASANA

PAGE 28



3

PASCHIMOTTANASANA

PAGE 55

**Step 1.** Close your eyes and gently press on your temples with your palms and fingers. Feel the relaxing sensation.



4



SARVANGASANA

PAGE 62

5



SIRSASANA

PAGE 66

6



ADHO MUKHA VIRASANA

PAGE 72

### PRANAYAMA with Crepe Bandage

Duration 15 minutes each

- **Kapalabhati Pranayama** Page 77.  
Removes tensions, relaxes the eyes, refreshes the face and brain.
- **Nadi Shodana Pranayama** Page 79.  
Relaxes the nerves, calms the mind and balances hormones.
- **Brahmari Pranayama** Page 80.  
Removes anxiety, calms the mind and promotes good sleep in the night.



**Jala Neti** is a nasal cleansing tool that cleans nasal and sinus passages, removes excess mucous and bacteria. It refreshes the brain, face, eyes, improves mental clarity, relieves nasal blocks, asthma, allergies, sinusitis and headaches.

**Instructions** Fill a neti pot with luke warm salted water. Lean over a sink, tilt your head sideways, insert the spout of the pot into a nostril. Breathe freely through your mouth. The water flows through one nostril and comes out through the other. Blow your nose, repeat through other nostril. Use clean water to avoid infection. Excess salt and excess heat can cause burning sensation. Practice neti twice or thrice a week.

### Food triggers

Identify and Eliminate

- Monosodium glutamate (MSG), vinegar, ketchup, hot pickles.
- Soya products, avocados, coconut, cucumber, caffeine, chocolates.
- Oranges, grapefruits, pineapples, lemons, over-ripe bananas.
- Stale bread, sour bread, pizza.
- Foods with added salt, blue cheese, aged cheese, sour cream, tinned foods.
- Foods rich in fat and in calorie.
- Almonds, pistachios, walnuts, cashews, pecans, peanuts.
- Excess alcohol, red wine, beer, sherry and champagne.

### Cultivate a Healthy Lifestyle

- Maintain a headache diary to identify the food triggers and avoid eating those foods.
- Eat small meals, every four hours. Do not skip any meal.
- Drink at least 15 glasses of water during the day.
- Eat one or two fresh and ripe banana every morning.
- Massage your head, neck and shoulders twice a week.
- Sleep for 8 hours is very essential in the night; sleep deprivation can trigger an attack.
- Reduce taking refined sugar as they cause chromium deficiency.
- Eat foods rich in magnesium: whole grains, cereals, pulses, dried figs, nuts, green leafy vegetables, sesame seeds.
- Eat foods rich in calcium: milk and milk products, dark green leafy vegetables, broccoli, almonds, sesame seeds.
- Avoid going out in the sun, when you have the trigger.
- Disturbed mind will reduce serotonin levels and trigger an attack, so keep your mind free from disturbing thoughts.

# Depression

## Relief without Medicine

**Depression** is a common mental illness that develops in many people during their lifetime. It is an emotional despair with persistent regret, hopelessness, anxiety and sadness. A mental condition that can affect your social life, relationships, career, sense of self-worth and purpose. Psychoanalysts have described depression as anger and hatred turned inwards.

**Cause** Heredity, hormonal imbalance, low serotonin and norepinephrine, nutritional deficiency, mental stress, loss of a parent or spouse, losing a job, menopause, past emotional abuse, lack of sleep in the night.

**Symptoms** Mood changes, anger, lack of appetite, excessive eating with cravings for carbohydrates and high calorie sweets, low self-esteem, inability to do the routine work, excessive fatigue, inability to take decisions, poor concentration, forgetfulness, sense of worthlessness and suicidal instincts.



**Asanas and Pranayama** boost self awareness, and self control; they stimulate the endocrine glands, hypothalamus, increase the mood enhancing chemicals like serotonin and norepinephrine in the brain and reduce the secretion of stress hormone cortisol. There is physical freshness, agility, increased alertness, clarity, motivation, confidence, joy and emotional stability.

Longer exhalations during pranayama, mantra chanting and meditation will remove disturbing thoughts, and clean up the consciousness.

**NOTE** The sequence is thoughtfully designed for all people suffering from mild to severe depression. Avoid postures that cause discomfort and pain. Practice regularly with determination and a positive attitude.

**Duration** Practice each asana for 1 to 5 minutes.



1 SUPTA BADDHA KONASANA PAGE 32



2 UTTANASANA PAGE 26



3 ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA PAGE 60



4 SETU BANDHASANA PAGE 42



5 URDHVA DHANURASANA PAGE 43



6 SARVANGASANA PAGE 62



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HALASANA

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8

KARNAPIDASANA

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PRASARITA PADOTTANASANA

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10

SIRSASANA

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11

UPAVISHTA KONASANA

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12

ADHO MUKHA VIRASANA

PAGE 72

### PRANAYAMA with Crepe Bandage

#### Duration 15 minutes each

- **Kapalabhati Pranayama** Page 77.  
Removes fatigue, refreshes the brain reduces mental stress, controls over-eating, improves overall energy.
- **Nadi Shodana Pranayama** Page 79.  
Relaxes the nerves, balances hormones, improves self esteem and confidence.
- **Brahmari Pranayama** Page 80.  
Removes anxiety, dullness, sadness, promotes good sleep in the night.

### Serotonin and Norepinephrine

These are powerful chemicals in the brain that regulate physical and mental health. Prolonged stress, exhaustion, taking long term anti-depressants, alcohol, unhealthy diet, excess caffeine, cause serotonin deficiency. This builds fatigue, anxiety, lethargy, mood swings, low motivation, fear and sadness.

## Cultivate a Healthy Lifestyle

- Go for morning walk everyday before yoga practice.
- Go for swimming and get frequent head massage done.
- Laugh several times in a day; make laughter your habit.
- Practice meditation every morning and evening after work.
- Be friendly with happy people; spend more time with them.
- Drink two litres water in a day to relieve mental stress.
- Eat plenty of mixed fruits every morning as a meal.
- Eat three meals everyday and do not skip any meal.
- Drink herbal or green tea to keep the brain refreshed.
- Avoid caffeine, such as black tea and coffee, because they contribute to depression and sleeplessness.
- Avoid alcohol; it can increase anxiety and depression.
- Eat foods rich in Vit C : green leafy vegetables, red capsicum, apples, kiwi fruit, strawberries, oranges.
- Eat foods rich in magnesium: whole grains, cereals, pulses, figs, nuts, green leafy vegetables, pumpkin and sesame seeds.
- Eat foods rich in calcium: milk and milk products, dark green leafy vegetables, broccoli, almonds, sesame seeds.
- Foods high in omega-3 fatty acids such as walnuts, flaxseeds, soybeans enhance cellular energy and keep the brain healthy.
- 6 to 8 hours sound sleep in the night is essential to start the next day with freshness, renewed energy and joy.

# Insomnia

## Relief without Medicine

**Insomnia** is sleeplessness; a lifestyle disorder where there is difficulty in falling asleep and waking up much earlier. It is characterised by lack of sufficient sleep in the night, leading to functional impairment the next day.

**Cause** Anxiety, depression, overwork, mental stress, major illness, high blood pressure, indigestion, late night meals spicy and rich in fat, excess consumption of alcohol and caffeine.

**Biological Clock** is located at the suprachiasmatic nucleus of *Hypothalamus* in the brain. This clock controls circadian rhythm - the 24 hour time keeper in human body. When insomnia persists for over a month, the biological clock gets disrupted, leading to exhaustion, brain degeneration, memory loss and sometimes lead to accidents while driving on the road.



**Asanas and Pranayama** stimulate *pineal gland* and *hypothalamus*, increase *melatonin*, the hormone secreted by *pineal gland* and promote sound sleep.

All symptoms and side effects of insomnia are alleviated. The nervous system is relaxed, circulation is improved negative thoughts and emotions are eliminated and mind is calm. A calm mind promotes sound sleep.

Mantra chanting and meditation are also effective tools that refresh the brain and calm the mind.

**NOTE** The sequence nourishes brain and pineal gland, increases secretion of *melatonin* and promotes sound sleep in the night. Practice everyday with a positive attitude.

**Duration** Practice each asana for 3 to 10 minutes.



1

SUPTA BADDHA KONASANA PAGE 32



2

SUPTA VIRASANA PAGE 33



3

ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA PAGE 60



4

SETU BANDHASANA PAGE 42



5

PRASARITA PADOTTANASANA PAGE 28



6

SIRSASANA PAGE 66



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SARVANGASANA

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HALASANA

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KARNAPIDASANA

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PASCHIMOTTANASANA

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11

ADHO MUKHA VIRASANA

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12

SUPINE RELAXATION

PAGE 70

### PRANAYAMA with Crepe Bandage

Duration 15 - 30 minutes each

- **Kapalabhati Pranayama** Page 77.  
Removes fatigue, refreshes the brain, reduces mental stress.
- **Nadi Shodana Pranayama** Page 79.  
Relaxes the nerves, balances hormones, stabilizes emotions and calms the mind.
- **Brahmari Pranayama** Page 80.  
Refreshes the brain, removes pressures and worries and promotes sound sleep.

### What else disrupts biological clock

- **Jet Lag** The time change, when travelling through different time zones reverses biological clock. It takes few days to reset the bio-clock.
- **Night Shift** Working in the night reverses the sleep cycle and disrupts functioning of systems.
- **Blindness** Blind people often experience sleep problems because they cannot distinguish between darkness and light.

## Cultivate a Healthy Lifestyle

- Go for brisk morning walk everyday before yoga practice.
- Swim everyday; swimming refreshes the Hypothalamus.
- Drink two litres water in a day to relieve mental stress.
- Practice pranayama with long exhalations, before meditation.
- Practice meditation for 20 minutes before going to bed.
- Your bedroom must be clutter free, clean and peaceful.
- Develop a regular sleep routine, by going to bed and waking up, at same time everyday. Sleep by 9 pm, wake up by 5 am.
- Eat light and nourishing dinner three hours before sleeping.
- Take a warm shower before going to bed in the night.
- Eat nutrient rich diet to optimise your brain functions.
- Eat plenty of mixed fruits every day as a separate meal.
- Eat foods with plenty of whole grains and pulses.
- Eat foods rich in magnesium, calcium and Vitamin B.
- Drink herbal or green tea to keep the brain refreshed.
- Avoid alcohol and tobacco; they destroy your ability to sleep.
- Avoid caffeine, such as black tea, coffee, soda, certain drugs because they contribute to insomnia.
- Drink warm milk with sugar at bedtime to promote sleep.
- Do not go to bed hungry, nor go to bed with heavy a stomach.



# Neck Pain

## Relief without Medicine

The Neck is the critical part of the human body that holds your head. In addition to supporting the head, the neck allows head flexibility, extension, rotational and lateral movements. The neck muscles tighten and are strained, when the head is heavy with tensions. A forward head, rounded back, shoulders elevated and rolled forward, cause fatigue in and around the neck. This happens when you work long hours with the computer. Many people habitually tighten their neck and shoulders when they are working or reacting to stressful situations. If neck pain is neglected for several months, it can lead to cervical spondylosis, vertigo, shoulder pain, headaches, dizziness, back pain and disturbed sleep.

Asanas and Pranayama create awareness remove stiffness and tensions, heal the pain, relax the muscles and nerves in the neck, face, ears, shoulders and spine. They improve flexibility, strength and provide permanent relief from pain.



**NOTE** Every individual has a different lifestyle. The sequence given will strengthen the neck muscles and nerves and will heal neck pain in few weeks. Practice slowly and gently three times everyday with a positive attitude.





Close your eyes and drop your chin down to your chest. Roll your head to the left shoulder, to the back, to your right shoulder and to the centre. Repeat anti-clockwise direction.



**SHOULDER SHRUG**

Repeat on the other side



**STAND -STRETCH -TWIST PAGE 109**

Repeat on the other side



**MARICHYASANA ON CHAIR PAGE 57**

Repeat on the other side

### PRANAYAMA

*with Crepe Bandage*

**Duration 15 minutes each**

- **Kapalabhati Pranayama** Page 77.  
Removes muscle rigidity and pain, improves circulation.
- **Nadi Shodana Pranayama** Page 79.  
Relieves stress, balances hormones and calms tense nerves and muscles.

## Cultivate a Healthy Lifestyle

- Pay attention to your postures during the day.
- Keep your spine straight and do not pop your head to the front. This will cause strain in neck.
- Massage your neck and shoulders everyday or whenever you feel the strain and pain.
- Sleep on your back for few weeks. Avoid turning to the sides it may hurt your neck.
- Use a soft pillow that will rest your neck.
- Practice pranayama whenever you are stressed.
- Practice neck exercises before retiring to bed.

# Cervical Spondylosis

## Relief without Medicine

**Cervical Spondylosis** is wear and tear and narrowing of tissues, vertebrae and discs in the neck. This is a long term degenerative disorder that progresses with age.

**Causes** Computer desk posture, slouching your back and popping your head forward, no proper exercise, mental stress, over work, nutritional deficiency.

**Symptoms** Stiff neck, pain in the neck and shoulders, numbness in the hands and sometimes headaches, disturbed sleep in the nights.



**Asanas and Pranayama** improve awareness, correct disc misalignment, heal wear and tear, strengthen the cervical vertebrae, relax tension in the muscles and nerves and provide permanent relief.

**NOTE** The sequence given provides range of movement to the cervical spine and shoulders. They help to energize and ease the tensions. Begin your practice with the neck exercises given in pages 106 and 107. Follow the sequence and avoid postures that cause you discomfort and pain. Practice two to three times everyday.

**Duration 1 minute to 5 minutes each asana**



1

TADASANA

PAGE 18



2

TRIKONASANA

PAGE 20



3

PASCHMA HASTA TANA TADASANA

PAGE 18



4

ADHO MUKHA VIRASANA

PAGE 72



5

BACK-SIDE NAMASTE

BELOW



6

GOMUKHASANA

PAGE 51

**Back-side namaste or Paschima Namaskar** This massages and heals the fingers, wrists, forearms, upper arms and shoulders. It realigns the cervical spine, refreshes the brain, lungs and heart. With practice it relieves and prevents pain.



7 ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA PAGE 60



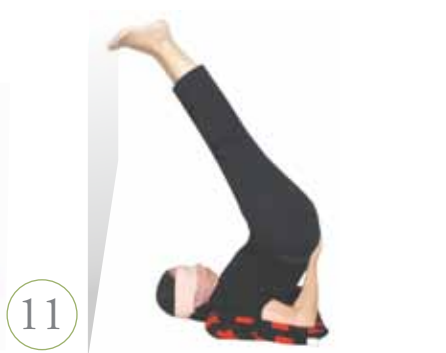
8 STAND -STRETCH -TWIST BELOW



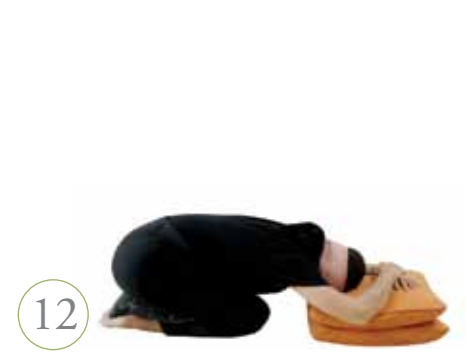
9 JATARA PARIVRTTASANA PAGE 35



10 MARICHYASANA PAGE 57



11 VIPARITA KARANI PAGE 61



12 ADHO MUKHA VIRASANA PAGE 72

- Step 4** A refreshing and healing variation of a sitting forward bend, with head rested, hands stretched to the back.
- Step 8** Stand in the upright position. Place two chairs, one in front and the other to your back. Take your left leg to the back. Hold the front chair with your left hand, turn to the right. Hold the back chair with your right hand and feel the twist. Stay steady and breathe evenly. Inhale and come out. Repeat by interchanging your legs and hands.

### PRANAYAMA

with Crepe Bandage

**Duration 15 minutes each**

- **Kapalabhati Pranayama** Page 77.  
Improves bone and muscle mass, enhances circulation, builds strength.
- **Nadi Shodana Pranayama** Page 79.  
Reduces mental stress, relaxes the tense nerves, muscles and joints.
- **Brahmari Pranayama** Page 80.  
Calms the restless mind, reduces anxiety, promotes sound sleep.

### Cultivate a Healthy Lifestyle

- Drink atleast two litres of water during the day.
- Massage your neck, shoulders and hands everyday.
- Manage your stress and control your anger.
- Practice pranayama everyday and whenever stressed.
- Keep hot or cold pack when you have pain.
- Use a soft, comfortable pillow while sleeping.
- Practice neck and hand exercises before sleeping.
- Practice *Viparita Karani* before sleeping.
- Practice postures given in pages 110 and 111.
- Practice standing and reclining asanas after 2 weeks.

# Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

## Relief without Medicine

**Carpal Tunnel Syndrome** is a repetitive stress injury, with pain in fingers, wrists, forearms and shoulders. It is caused by swelling in the tendons and pinched median nerve in the wrist. The median nerve controls sensations in the fingers and hands. Carpal tunnel is a narrow canal in the wrist with two rows of eight small carpal bones, bundles of tendons that attach muscles to the bones.

**Causes** Over-use of hand muscles, for a long time, without giving them sufficient rest.

**Symptoms** Pain and numbness in fingers, wrists, forearms, travelling to the shoulders and neck, loss of strength, tingling sensation, disturbed sleep.

**Asanas and Pranayama** increase awareness of the habitual awkward postures of the neck, shoulders and wrists that cause pain and injury. They remove the tensions, congestions and inflammations, ease compression of the median nerve, improve muscle tone, refresh the brain, enhance circulation, increase strength in fingers and wrists and provide permanent relief.

**NOTE** Every individual has different strengths. Follow the sequence. Practice the stretches given in page 112. Avoid postures that cause discomfort.

**Duration 30 seconds to 1 minute**

Practice two to three times everyday



1

ANJALI MUDRA

PAGE 19



2

FLEX & STRETCH

NEXT PAGE



3

PRANA MUDRA

PAGE 85



4

APANA MUDRA

PAGE 84



5

WRIST MOVEMENT

NEXT PAGE



6

WRIST ROLL

NEXT PAGE





7

FINGERS STRETCH

BELOW



8

FINGERS STRETCH AND BEND

BELOW



9

PADMASANA SIDE STRETCH

BELOW



10

UTTANASANA ON TABLE

PAGE 26



11

PASCHIMA HASTA BADDHA TADASANA

PAGE 18



12

ADHO MUKHA VIRASANA

PAGE 72

- Step 2** Press together your palms and fingers firmly and feel the warmth. Interchange and repeat.
- Step 5** Hold your forearm and move your wrist up down. Repeat the wrist movement in your other wrist.
- Step 6** Roll your wrists, in clockwise and anti-clockwise direction.
- Step 7** Interlace and stretch your fingers outwards. Keep your shoulders relaxed and your chest open.
- Step 8** Fingers interlaced and stretched. Change hand position and repeat.
- Step 9** Sit in Padmasana, with your back against a wall. Raise your right hand, exhale, stretch from your waist to the left side. Keep your hips steady. Rest your left hand on the side wall. Repeat on the other side.

## PRANAYAMA

with Crepe Bandage

**Duration 15 minutes each**

- **Kapalabhati Pranayama** Page 77.  
Improves bone and muscle mass enhances circulation and strength.
- **Nadi Shodana Pranayama** Page 79.  
Reduces mental stress, relaxes tense muscles and nerves.
- **Brahmari Pranayama** Page 80.  
Calms the mind, reduces pain, builds confidence, promotes sound sleep.

## Cultivate a Healthy Lifestyle

- Take frequent breaks during stressful activities. Learn to relax.
- Massage your forearms, wrists and fingers everyday.
- Place ice pack on your fingers, wrists and forearms.
- Elevate your elbows and wrists on a pillow when you lie down.
- Drink at least two litres water in a day; water reduces stress pain.
- Develop a habit to stretch and relax in between your work.
- Eat a balanced vegetarian diet, reduce salt and sugar.
- Eat foods rich in Vit B6: chick peas, bananas, avocados, potatoes.
- Eat foods rich in Vit E: wheat germ, green leafy vegetables, avocados, whole grains, almonds, hazelnuts, sunflower seeds.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine and smoking; they interfere with blood circulation, deplete calcium and will aggravate pain.
- Practice all the postures given in pages 108 and 109.

# Frozen Shoulder and Tennis Elbow

## Relief without Medicine

**Shoulder Pain** is caused due to wear and tear of the ligaments, or inflammation of the tendons in the shoulder joint. The shoulder joint is a ball and socket joint, which requires all round movement to keep the joint flexible and prevent stiffness and pain.

**Tennis Elbow** is pain in the elbow joint caused due to over use of the forearm muscles. This leads to wear and tear in the tendons that connect the elbow joint.

**Causes** Over-use of hand muscles without giving them sufficient counter movement and rest.



**Asanas and Pranayama** provide a massaging effect to the joints, tendons, ligaments and the connecting muscles. They reduce inflammation, relieve pain and provide permanent relief.

**NOTE** Every individual has a different lifestyle and the cause for the pain will be different. The sequence given will benefit everyone. Avoid postures that cause discomfort and pain.

**Duration 1 to 2 minutes each asana**  
Practice two to three times everyday



1

TADASANA ELBOW CLASP PAGE 18



2

LATERAL BEND WITH STRAP PAGE 20



3

FORWARD STRETCH PAGE 27



4

SHOULDER ROLLS BELOW



5

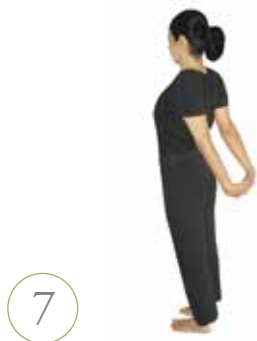
SHOULDERS BACK STRETCH PAGE 18



6

SQUAT WITH ROPES PAGE 52

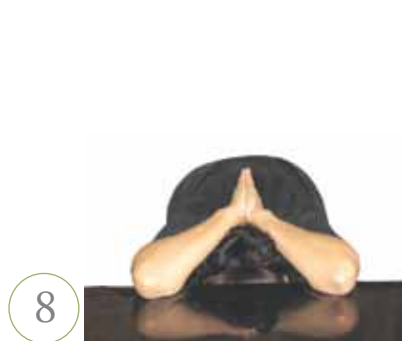
**Step 4** Practice shoulder rolls 5 times clockwise direction and 5 times anti-clockwise direction.



7

HANDS BACK STRETCH

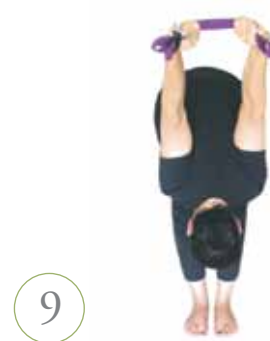
BELOW



8

SHOULDER STRETCH  
ON TABLE

BELOW



9

REVERSE ROTATION  
OF SHOULDERS

BELOW



10

PADMASANA SIDE STRETCH

BELOW



11

BACK-SIDE NAMASTE

PAGE 108



12

ADHO MUKHA VIRASANA

PAGE 72

- Step 7** Stand upright, interlace your fingers and stretch your hands away from your hips.
- Step 8** Stand close to a table, with legs apart. Stretch forward, rest your head and elbows on the table. Bend your elbows, press your palms and rest them on the back of your neck. Close your eyes and breathe evenly.
- Step 9** Hold a strap to the back, hip-width apart, exhale, bend forward, with hands up, shoulders rotating in the reverse direction. Stretch your legs, manage your pressures, focus down and breathe steadily.
- Step 10** Sit in Padmasana, support your back against a wall. Raise your right hand, exhale, stretch to the left side from your waist. Rest your left hand on the side wall. Stay steady and breathe evenly. Repeat next side.

## Cultivate a Healthy Lifestyle

### PRANAYAMA

with Crepe Bandage

**Duration 15 minutes each**

- **Kapalabhati Pranayama** Page 77.  
Builds bone and muscle mass, renews and strengthens muscles and joints.
- **Nadi Shodana Pranayama** Page 79.  
Calms tense nerves and muscles, balances hormones and relieves pain.

- Start your day with two glasses of warm water; drink at least three litres of water in a day.
- Take high protein and mineral diet to strengthen bones and muscles.
- Massage your shoulders, elbows and forearms with a relaxing gel.
- When you have pain, keep a hot press and then a cold press.
- At work stretch your hands upwards and sideways, every two hours.
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol and sweets; they prevent calcium absorption, cause muscle fatigue and overtime lead to pain.
- Sleep straight on your back in the night, with your elbows rested and raised on pillows. Do not sleep on the side for few weeks.
- Practice asanas given in pages 106 & 107, 108 and 109.

# Food for Mind & Body

**T**he food you eat determines your physical, mental and emotional health. Many people do not realize this truth. They eat unhealthy food all the time and destroy their health. Unhealthy foods are precooked frozen foods, pizzas, deep fried foods, hot-spicy, overcooked food, burnt food, chips, burgers, colas, refined grains that do not have fibre, foods that contain too much sugar, salt, artificial colour and preservatives. Such foods have no nutritive value; they increase fat and bad cholesterol, weaken the digestive system and lead to ill-health.

Many people are not aware that water is an essential ingredient for the body and mind. Water is a natural detox that eliminates waste and toxins, refreshes the brain, carries nutrients, promotes digestion, prevents dehydration, reduces stress, prevents headaches, improves concentration and dissolves all the excesses. It serves as a lubricant, regulates body temperature and is vital for health just like oxygen. Drink at least twelve glasses of water everyday for good health.

Beverages such as tea, coffee, wine, beer and aerated drinks, have no calories, no vitamins and minerals. They contain caffeine, sugar, alcohol and chemicals that deplete natural energies and destroy mind-body balance. Drink home-made vegetable and fruit juices. They have vitamins, minerals and anti-oxidants, aid digestion, refresh brain, promote weight loss, nourish and heal cells, tissues, glands and organs. They rejuvenate mind and body after a surgery, provide good relief for ulcers, high blood pressure, fatigue, bad cholesterol, diabetes, cardiac and kidney problems.

A well planned vegetarian diet meets all nutritional needs of body and mind and also prevent diseases. Ensure your diet has all the essential nutrients. Snack on fresh fruits, keep your stomach light when you go to bed. If you work under great stress, drink plenty of water, 4-5 glasses of green tea in a day. To improve mind and body health, change your attitudes, choose the right food that will nourish and heal. When you make small changes in your diet and lifestyle, you will experience big changes in your health.





# Guidelines for Healthy Eating

- Begin your day with three glasses of luke warm water
- Sit and sip water and mix it with saliva before swallowing
- Drink at least twelve glasses of water every day
- Breakfast is an important meal, please do not skip it
- Eat at regular times every day and enjoy every meal
- Eat when your mind is calm; do not eat when angry
- Take vegetarian food, avoid non-vegetarian food
- Take fruits, vegetable juices as a meal if you are stressed
- Eat slowly and chew your food well; do not eat in a hurry
- Eat to fill half your stomach and do not over-eat
- Avoid all food that are too hot or too cold in temperature
- Avoid drinking water or fruit juice during your meals
- Drink water one hour before and one hour after your meals
- Drink green tea everyday; it is alkaline and antioxidant
- Snack on fresh fruits, nuts and dried fruits; avoid junk foods
- Avoid eating the food that have excess salt and excess sugar
- Excess sugar and salt destroy the mind and body strength
- Have light and low calorie dinner three hours before sleeping
- Sit in *Virasana* or recline in *Supta Virasana* after your meals
- *Supta Virasana*, relieves heaviness and digests food faster
- Fruit-fast once a month will cleanse your digestive system



# Top 12 Foods that boost Brain Power



Spinach, kale, amaranth, collards, contain Vitamins C, E, K, that nourish and strengthen the brain cells reduce cognitive decline and boosts brain functions.



Beet root contain betaine, an anti-depressant that calms nerves. Nitrate in beets enhances nerve functions and circulation in the brain.



Broccoli reduces cognitive decline, helps to maintain blood count, increase blood platelets and boost the brain functions.



Blue berries have phytonutrients that boost learning and motor skills, remove toxins and prevent Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.



Green tea has EGCG catechins that improve memory, brain growth, prevent Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.



Banana has tyrosine, that boost chemicals norepinephrine and dopamine in the brain promote concentration and memory power.



Walnuts have high DHA a type of omega-3 fatty acids that promote brain potential. Rich in melatonin a hormone that promotes sleep.



Flax seeds have folate that protects brain from cognitive decline. Omega-3 fatty acids, prevent anxiety, depression, dementia and Parkinson's.



Almonds contain riboflavin and L-carnitine, vitamin E, zinc, boost brain activities, prevent cognitive decline and Alzheimer's disease.



Sweet potatoes are rich in carotenoids, contain anti-oxidant and anti-inflammatory agents that promote cognitive growth.



Curcumin an active component in turmeric protects nerves, controls plaque around brain, prevents Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.



Tomatoes have lycopene, an anti-oxidant and carotenoid that nourishes and protects brain prevents Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.

# Yogic Diet

**Yogic diet** is a balanced, vegetarian diet that fulfils all the nutritional needs for mind-body balance. Eating the right food, in the right quantity, with the right attitude and at the right time are the tenets of a yogic diet. The ancient yogis classified food into *Sattvic*, *Rajasic* and *Tamasic* based on the three gunas or attributes present in every individual. viz., *Sattva* (purity), *Rajas* (activity), *Tamas* (inertia). These gunas exist in different degrees in every individual and change from time to time.

**Sattvic diet** is freshly cooked, clean vegetarian food, organic, that is grown in harmony with nature and is cooked with love. Seekers of wisdom take this diet.

- **Bhagavad Gita** (17 : 8) describes Sattvic food as “promoting life, virtue, strength, health, happiness and satisfaction.”

**Sattvic foods** are balanced combination of whole grains, legumes, pulses, fresh fruits and vegetables, except onions, garlic and mushrooms. They include dry fruits, milk and milk products, natural sugars like jaggery and honey. Spices include coriander, cumin, fennel, fenugreek, black pepper, sesame, carom seeds, pomegranate seeds, ginger, holy basil, mint, cardamom, cinnamon and turmeric. Plant based oils include sesame, sunflower, olive and coconut.

**Rajasic diet** is over stimulating and destroy the mind-body balance. These foods cause restlessness to the mind, arouse negative emotions and lead to circulatory and nervous disorders. Sattvic foods when eaten in a hurry or with a negative attitude become Rajasic.

- **Bhagavat Gita** (17: 9) describes Rajasic food as “excessively hot, spicy, bitter, salty, pungent, burning the tongue.”

**Rajasic foods** are stimulants such as coffee, tea, colas, chocolates, tobacco, onion and garlic. They include hot-spicy, sour, fried, refined food and food with added salt and chillies.

**Tamasic diet** causes heaviness, dullness, lethargy and destroy body’s ability to withstand stress, lower the resistance to disease. They do not have ‘prana’ for mind-body balance. Sattvic food when burnt, or over-eaten or reheated several times becomes Tamasic. Honey when cooked, becomes tamasic. Overripe and rotten fruits are tamasic.

- **Bhagavat Gita** (17:10) describes Tamasic food as “stale, rotten, tasteless, impure, unripe and overcooked.”

**Tamasic foods** are meat, fish, chicken, eggs, mushrooms, onion, garlic, vinegar, drugs, alcohol old, stale, burnt and overcooked food.

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