

Yoga ~ Home Practice

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Subhash Rao

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sam@samraoyoga.com

ISBN XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Printed by Instantpublisher.com

Yoga ~ Home Practice

- Yoga philosophy tells us that human beings have 3 components: **body, mind and spirit**.
To achieve a contented life we need to attend to the needs of:
body: through physical side and proper functioning of the body to give us good health.
Mind: through knowledge and experience.
Spiritual: through inner peace.
- **Our challenges**: We have several sources that contribute to our body's challenges. Technology, sedentary life style, visual media, possessions, continual stress of work to name a few. All of these aspects build up and manifest themselves in several ways.
Through persistent backaches, neck and shoulder pains, headaches, and in many cases in more serious ailments like high blood pressure, skin conditions, migraines, Irritable Bowl Syndrome and so on.
- **Yoga Practice**. Yoga is a way to bring help into our whole being to counter these challenges. Physical postures strengthen the body and creates a feeling of well-being.
The practice of *pranayama* (breathing) calms the mind.
Practice of meditation has long been recognised as an aid to spiritual growth.
- **The practitioner**. Yoga is a practical philosophy and anyone, irrespective of age and gender can “start from where they are” and build upon our body's natural resources to support our well being.
- **Home Practice**. This manual is only for practicing Yogis. It is essential that you attend a regular yoga class and have ongoing guidance from a teacher. This manual will then help to build your own home practice, where you do not have verbal instructions as in a class.

Yoga ~ Home Practice Caution !

- Be aware of your limits and be kind to yourself when you practice yoga in your own home
- Start “from where you are” and listen to your body. Allow each posture to “grow” over a long period of time.
- If you push too hard, and desire quick gains you are likely to hurt yourself and you will lose interest. Yoga is about patience.
- Use this manual only to supplement your regular class practice and work with advise from your teacher. Make sure your teacher is aware of your home practice.
- Follow all the safety rules your teacher applies during your regular class practice
- Do NOT do inverted postures during menstruation, or if you have high blood pressure and/or taking any kind of medication.
- Do NOT practice if you have had any recent surgery. Discuss with your doctor, before you start any Yoga practice.

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- Always err on the side of caution. Always discuss with your teacher, if you have any doubts about practicing yoga on your own

Yoga ~ Home Practice

8 limbs of YOGA

Patanjali was an ancient sage and seer who first systemised the path of Yoga into 8 limbs. Each limb is but a part of our self and is theorised as follows;

1. **YAMA:** The moral commandments (Non violence, truthfulness, non stealing, restraint and religious study, and non covetousness.)
2. **NIYAMA:** The voluntary vows (Purity, contentment, fortitude, willingness to learn and devotion to one's self to achieve 'yoga' or union)
3. **ASANA:** Physical postures A scientific system of exercise and physical discipline that promotes physical and mental well-being.
4. **PRANAYAMA:** breath control. breathing practises that promote a balanced, less stressed frame of mind.
5. **PRATYHARA:** Sense withdrawal from the external world into the interior self. The control of mental energy to preserve personal energy
6. **DHARANA:** Concentration of mind on a particular point or object. Development of the concentration
7. **DHYANA:** Meditation. An uninterrupted flow of concentration, thus correct concentration leads inevitably to meditation.
8. **SAMADHI:** Self-realisation. Samadhi is the end result of dhyana; when the yogi becomes at one with the universal

Yoga ~ Home Practice Hints

- First establish an area where you are going to practice. You only need enough room to lay down your yoga mat. Any extra room is a bonus.
- For the first 4 weeks, start from the first posture and hold each posture for no more than one minute.
- Establish in your mind the instructions and observe your breathing. Use the breathe and exhalation, as you go into the posture.
- After 4 weeks, choose 2 or 3 postures in each section, and begin to hold each posture longer than a minute but less than 3 minutes

Yoga ~ Home Practice Hints

Initial stretch

Balasana + Stretch

Child-posture + stretch



- **Sit back on the back of your heels**

- **Allow the fronts of the feet to stretch. Use blocks to sit on, at first, and gradually build the stretch.**

- **Hands on knees and make the spine up-right.**

- **Slowly fold forward and stretch the hands in front, feeling the stretch at the armpits.**

- **Hold the posture for a few breaths and allow the stretch to become comfortable.**

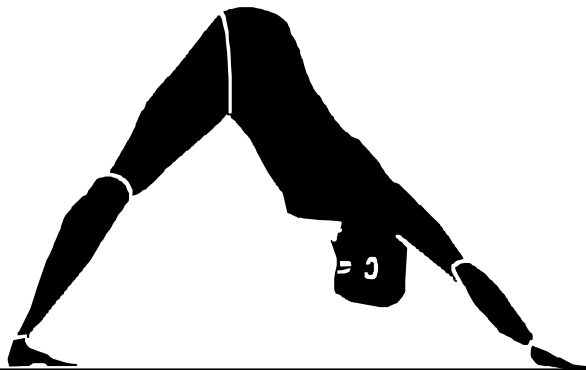
Benefits

- **Effects the lymphatic system**
- **Stretches the spine in readiness to start your yoga practice**
- **Allows the mind to quieten down.**

Adho Mukha Svanasana

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Down-Face Dog



- Lie face down, on your mat.
- fronts of feet on the mat, hip-width apart
- Palms by the side of rib cage.
- Elbows up towards the ceiling.
- On exhalation, push your bottom/hip up towards the ceiling.
- Legs straight, don't bend at the knees.
- Stay for 1-2 mins.
- Come down on knees, lie face down

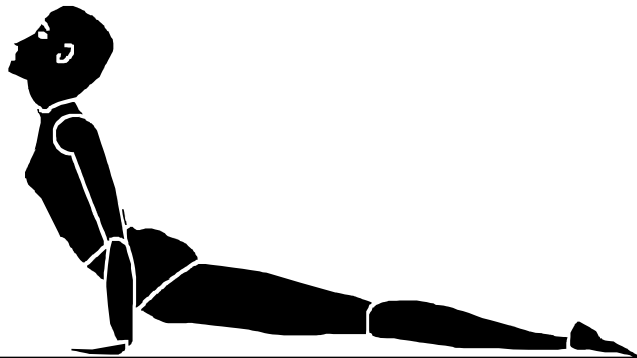
Benefits

- Removes fatigue from whole body
- Relieves pain/stiffness in heels
- Eradicates stiffness in shoulders
- Stretches calf muscles.

Urdva Mukha Svanasana

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Up-Face Dog



- Lie face down on your mat, front of feet on mat and hip-width apart.
- Palms by the side of chest.
- Elbows up in the air.
- Exhale and lift the head and the upper body, peel the body off the mat.
- Lift knees off the floor.
- Lift collar bones, chest out.
- Look up, if back of neck is ok.
- Stay for 1 min.
- Release down on knees
- Release down to floor.

Benefits

- Rejuvenates the spine
- Increases lung capacity
- Blood circulation improves in pelvic region

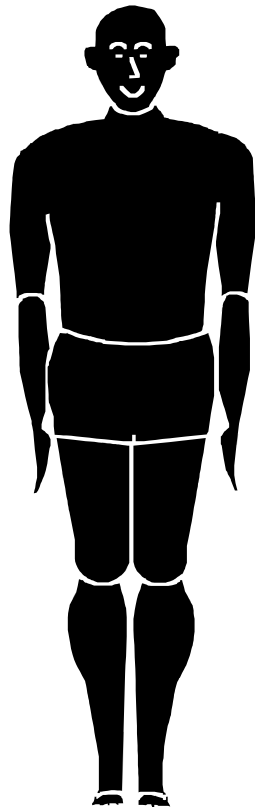
Yoga ~ Home Practice

Standing

Tadasana

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Mountain Pose



- Stand up right with feet together
- Heels, knees and big toes touching.
- Pull up the thigh muscles
- Pull belly-button towards the spine
- Roll shoulders back / open the chest
- Palms slightly facing forward
- Balance weight on toes and heels.

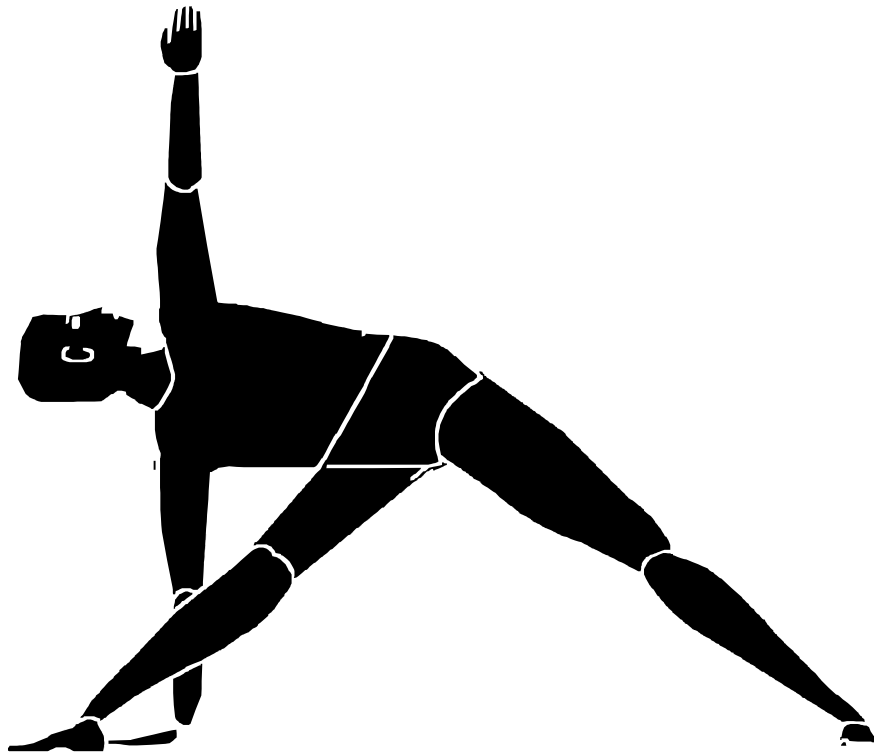
Benefits

- Master the art of standing properly
- Balance the weight on toes/heels
- Improves posture

Trikonasana



Triangle Pose



- Start in Tadasana, Mountain pose.
- Exhale, jump or walk feet apart. Check they are 3-4 feet apart.
- Raise arms in line with shoulders.
- Turn left foot in by 20-30 degrees, right foot out by 90 degrees.
- Exhale and stretch to your right.
- Lower right arm onto shin, ankle or floor, left arm up to ceiling.
- Do not bend forward, legs straight and strong, look up to left thumb.
- Imagine both shoulder blades are in contact with an imaginary wall behind you
- Stay for 1-2 mins. Exhale and release, hands on hips, Feet facing forward.
- Repeat on the other side, right foot in, left foot out.....

Benefits

- Tones leg muscles, removes stiffness
- Relieves back aches
- Stretches the ankles

Vrkasnana

Tree Posture



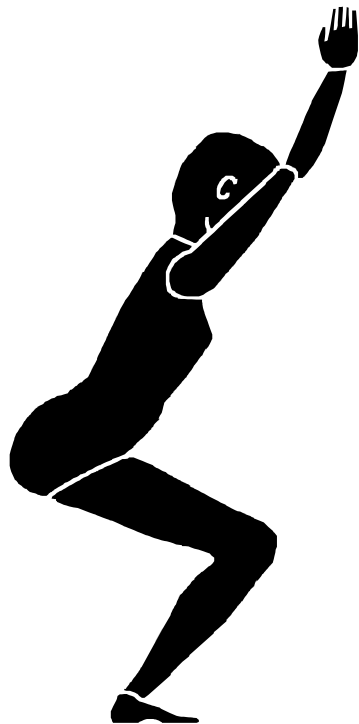
- **Start in Tadasana, Mountain pose.**
- **Focus on a spot in front of you**
- **Shift body weight on right foot**
- **Bend forward and help lift left leg and place the foot on inside of right thigh, toes pointing down.**
- **Balance and slowly Raise arms above head.**
- **Stay for 1-2 mins.**
- **Release and come back into Tadasana**
- **Repeat on the other side.**
- **Focus and balance.**

Benefits

- **Tones leg muscles.**
- **Develops a good sense of balance**

Utkatasana

sitting on a chair



- **Start in Tadasana, Mountain pose.**
- **Raise arms straight above your head.**
- **Bring upper arms closer to ears.**
- **Exhale, and bend knees**
- **Lower the trunk and imagine sitting on a chair.**
- **Look ahead**
- **Hold posture for 30 secs and breathe.**
- **Inhale and come up and then release the arms down**
- **Stand in Tadasana.**

- **This is a strong posture. Build length of stay slowly to 1 minute and over.**

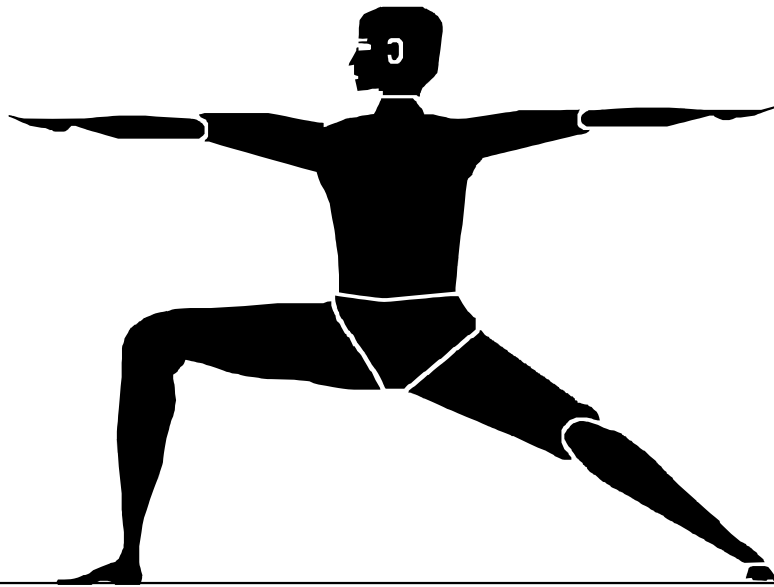
Benefits

- **Removes stiffness in shoulders**
- **Ankles become stronger**
- **Abdominal organs are toned**

Virabhadrasana II

ॐ

Warrior Two



- Start in Tadasana, Mountain pose.
- Inhale and jump feet apart. 4 ft.
- Raise arms in line with shoulders
- Turn left foot in by 30 degrees and right foot out by 90 degrees, hips facing forward.
- On exhalation, bend the right knee
- Observe that knee is directly above ankle
- Keep torso upright and breathe
- Turn head to right and focus on right middle finger.
- After 30 secs. Release, come back and put hands on hips, feet forward
- Take 3 to 4 deep breaths
- Repeat on the other side

Benefits

- Leg muscles develop and grow stronger
- Increases calf and thigh muscle flexibility
- Tones abdominal organs

Virabhadrasana I

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Warrior One



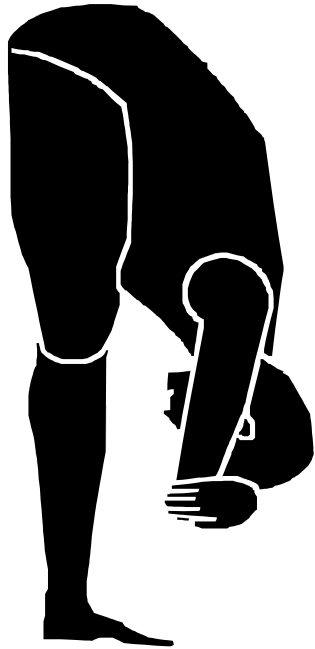
- Start in Tadasana, Mountain pose.
- Inhale and jump feet apart. 4 ft.
- Raise arms in line with shoulders
- Turn left foot in by 30 degrees and right foot out by 90 degrees, hips facing forward.
- On exhalation, turn the palms up.
- Take hands above your head.
- Rotate the torso and face the right knee.
- Bend the right knee and drop the hips, observe that knee is directly above ankle
- Keep torso upright and look up to the ceiling.
- After 30 secs. Release, come back and put hands on hips, feet forward
- Take 3 to 4 deep breaths
- Repeat on the other side

Benefits

- Leg muscles develop and grow stronger
- Increases calf and thigh muscle flexibility
- Encourages blood flow to the spine and hips.

Uttanasana

Forward bend



- Start in Tadasana, Mountain pose.
- Feet hip-width apart, hands on thighs.
- Exhale, slowly bend forward, slide hands down, lead with the chest.
- Fold arms at the elbows
- Let the head hang down
- Allow releases in lower back
- Keep legs straight
- Release arms and hold big toe with index finger and thumb.
- Raise your head to look up, through the eyebrows
- Release back down
- Slide hands up and release slowly back into Tadasana.

Benefits

- Tones the liver, spleen and kidneys
- Rejuvenates the spine
- Hold pose for 2 minutes to eliminate heavy head feeling.

Yoga ~ Home Practice

Sitting

Badda Konasana

ॐ Cobblers pose



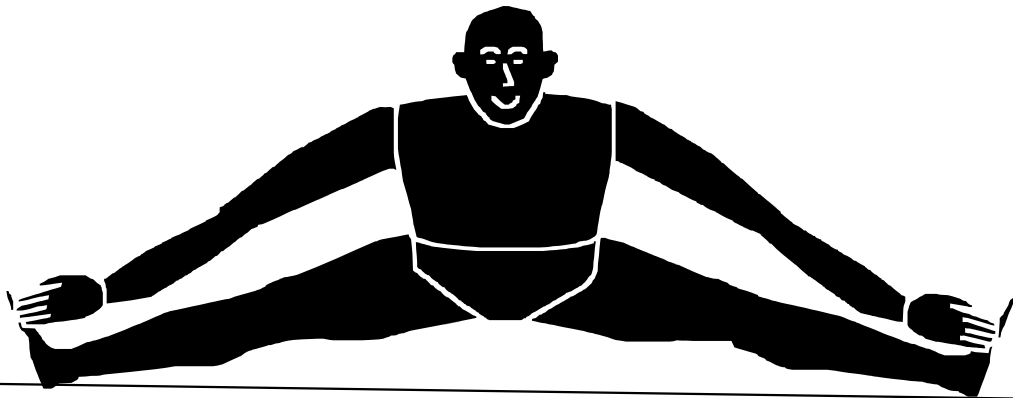
- Sit with legs stretched out in front.
- Bend the knees and bring the soles of the feet together.
- Straight back (use block if needed)
- Hold feet with both hands, fingers around the toes.
- Outside of both feet to rest on the floor.
- Release at the thighs and let the knees move towards the floor.
- Place elbows on thighs and slowly bend forward with a straight back
- Gently put pressure on to help lower the knees further down
- Stay for 1-2 mins
- Bring knees to upright with hands
- Release and straighten legs

Benefits

- Posture is recommended for those suffering from urinary problems
- Relieves sciatica pain
- Increases blood supply to prostate gland

Upavista Konasana

Wide legs stretch



- Sit on floor with legs stretched out in front of you.
- Move legs sideways and widen the distance between the legs
- Rest the back of knees on the floor.
- Straight back, bend forward
- Catch the toes (or shins).
- Keep spine straight and extend ribs.
- breathe and stay for 1-2 mins.
- Inhale and release
- Build the posture slowly, moving the upper chest towards the floor.

Benefits

- Stretches the ham strings
- Helps blood circulation in pelvic region
- Relieves sciatic pains

Janu Sirsana

'Head to Knee' stretch



- Sit with the left leg stretched out.
- Bend right leg at the knee and place right heel against left thigh
- Angle between the thighs, 90 degrees
- Hands above your head and stretch up before exhaling to bend forward and interlace fingers beyond the foot.
- Use a belt if required, and build the posture over time.
- Lean forward with a straight back and hold for a few breathes
- Keep back of left knee on the floor
- Exhale and let the spine curve
- Hold both sides of foot and bring forehead towards the knee.
- breathe and stay for 1-2 mins.
- Inhale and release
- Change legs and repeat

Benefits

- Aids digestion
- Tones and activates the kidneys
- Increases blood circulation around prostate gland

Ardha Matsyendrasana

Half 'lord of the fishes' twist



- Sit on floor with legs stretched out in front
- Bend the left knee and take the left heel under and sit right buttock in the arch.
- Use block to give extra balance
- Bend right knee, reach out and lift the right foot and place it on the other side of the left thigh.
- Place left elbow on outer side of the right knee.
- Place right hand behind you, on the mat, and lift the spine and collar bones
- Slowly twist to your right, develop the twist over period of time.
- Stay for 1-2 mins
- Release then straighten legs
- Repeat on the other side

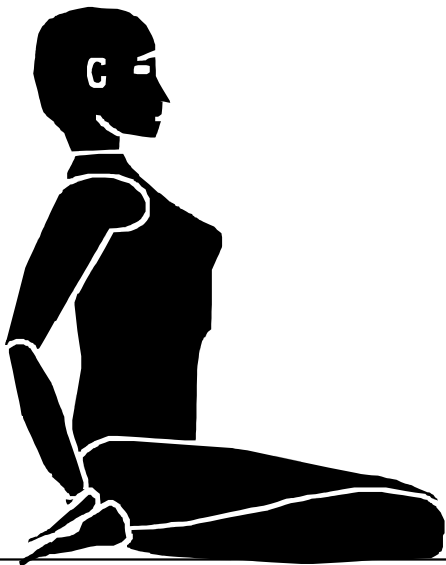
Benefits

- Abdomen is squeezed
- Increases blood flow to prostate and the bladder region

Virasana

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Hero posture



- Kneel and keep knees together.
 - Spread the feet to hip width apart.
 - Lower the body and sit on the mat.
 - USE block(s) to sit on and to slowly extend the stretch around knees.
 - Stay for a few breaths, keeping back erect
 - Lean back on arms behind, fingers pointing away, open the chest.
 - Inhale and release on exhalation.
 - More advanced students can lean back on their elbows.
 - Extend the stretch by laying back on the floor. Arms above head.
 - Do NOT push the knees if there is any pain or discomfort.
- Build posture over time to full extent, supta virasana, laying down hero !

Benefits

- Develops flexibility in muscles of thighs and shins
- Relieves painful legs, especially after standing for a long periods.

Sukhasana

Easy pose.



- Sit in the middle of your mat, with legs folded.
- Use a block to sit on, and to help keep back upright (sit on edge of block)
- Join the palms together and place the thumbs on the chest.
- Tuck the chin in slightly
- Sit comfortably.
- Allow the breathing to come to normal before going on to more postures.

Benefits

- Great posture to finish the practice with.

Yoga ~ Home Practice

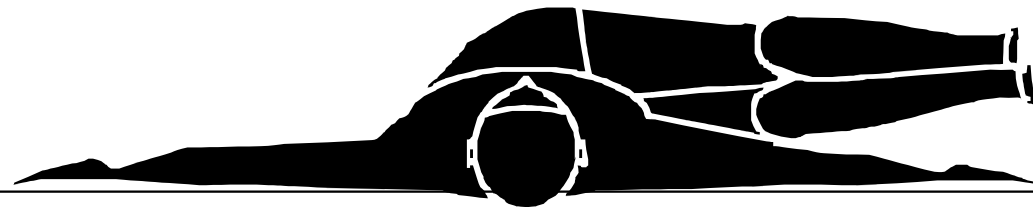
Laying down and inverted

Jathhara parivertanasana

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Stomach Twist

- Lie on back on the mat.
- Stretch arms out in line with shoulders
- Exhale and raise both legs up, soles of feet showing to the ceiling.
- Exhale.. and move both legs sideways, down towards the floor and the fingers, but keep them from touching the floor.
- Both shoulders remain on floor.
- Hold for a few breathes.
- Return to centre and take both legs to the other side.
- Repeat twice
- From the centre release legs down slowly, use the stomach muscles



Benefits

- Reduces excess fat
- Eradicates sluggishness of the liver, spleen and pancreas
- Abdominal organs are kept trim and toned.

Pascimottanasana

'back stretch'



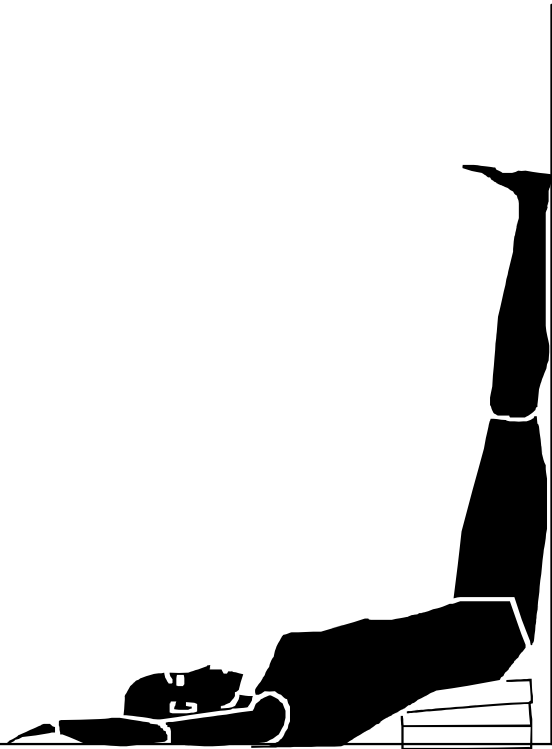
- Sit with legs stretched in front.
- Palms on the floor, besides the hip
- Exhale and reach with both hands for the toes, turning from the hip joints.
- Use a belt to help you keep back straight
- Release belt and bend forward
- Hold for 1 – 2 minutes
- Release on exhalation
- Sit upright with palms on floor besides the hip.

Benefits

- Tones the abdominal organs
- Tones the kidney
- Improves digestion

Viparita Karani

legs up the wall



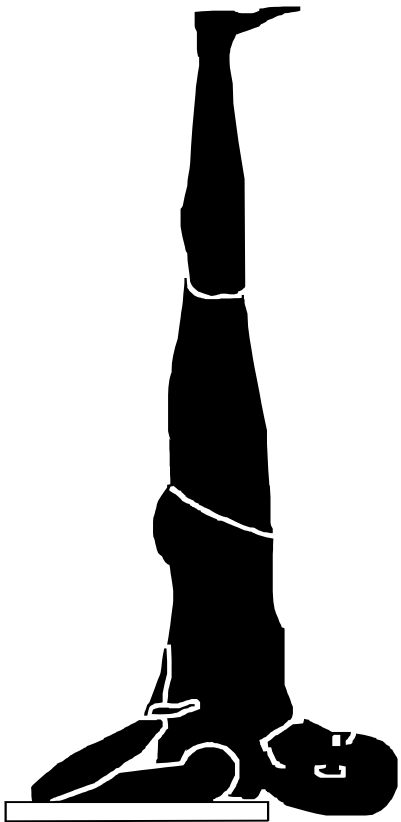
- Place a folded yoga mat or a blanket on the floor, against the wall.
- Sit sideways on the edge of the mat with one hip touching the wall.
- Bend the knees and keep hands on the floor.
- Swing the legs up the wall and at the same time slide the hip around by 90 degrees.
- Keep both buttocks touching the wall.
- Back of head on the floor, press the shoulders down, hands over the head.
- Stay for 5-10 mins.
- Slide back to the side and come out of the posture.

Benefits

- Restful posture for all internal organs
- Drains venous blood without need for pressure from the heart

Sarvangasana

supported shoulder stand.



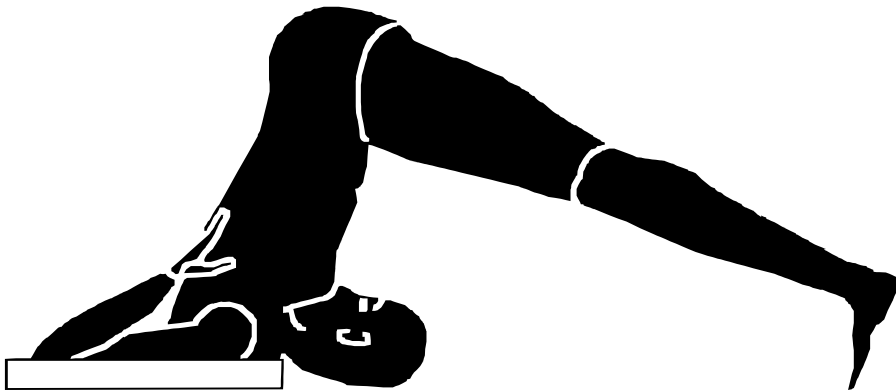
- Lie flat on floor, hands by side of hips.
- Pull the elbows in towards the chest.
- Exhale and bend knees to the chest
- Exhale and raise hips off the floor, bend arms at the elbows and support the back.
- Exhale and raise the trunk and legs until perpendicular to floor.
- Use the hands to keep lifting the spine upwards.
- Breathe and stay in position for 1-5 minutes
- To release allow legs to bend and 'walk' the spine down to the floor
- More experienced Yogis go into Halasana, the plough posture and stay for 2 – 3 minutes.

Benefits

- Inverting the body allows all the organs to release in opposite direction to normal gravity pull.
- Venous blood flows back without too much pressure from the heart.

Halasana

Plough posture.



- Do sarvanghasana, shoulder stand, first.
- Lower the trunk slightly and lower legs until toes touch the floor.
- Use blocks or a chair to support the feet and build the pose gradually.
- Only when the toes touch the floor, stretch the hands away from the feet with palms on the floor.
- Stay in the posture for 1-5 mins.
- Slowly release and 'walk' the spine down. Use the palms to support the descent.

Benefits

- Restful posture for all internal organs
- Spine receives an extra supply of blood
- Relieves back ache

Navasana

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Boat Posture



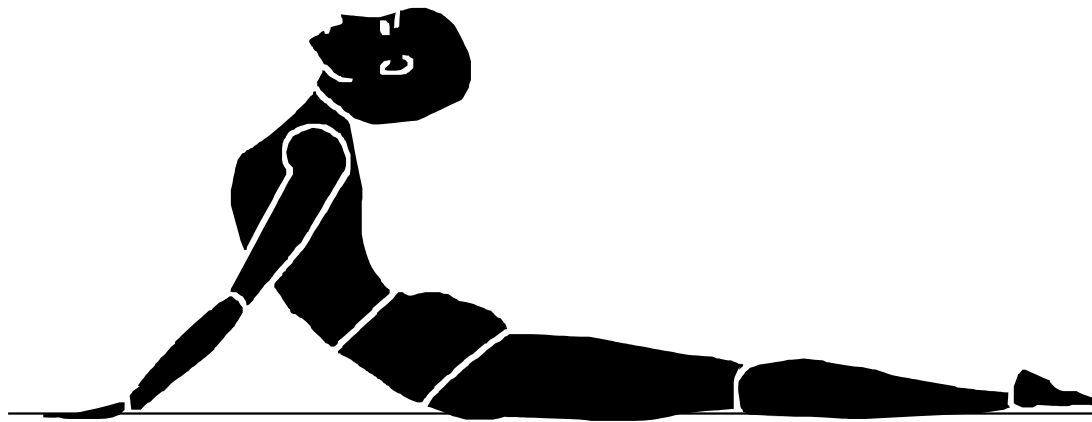
- Sit on the mat with legs out front
- Bend legs at the knees.
- Hold the back of thighs and slowly straighten the legs
- Legs are 45 degrees to the floor.
- Balance on the sacrum area and raise the arms to the side of the knees, palms facing each other.
- Stay for a few breaths. There will be shaking in the front part of the body.
- Shaking will go as muscles and nerves work out their coordination.
- Release the posture and relax back on to the floor.

Benefits

- Relieves bloating sensation in the abdomen.
- Reduces fat around the waistline.
- Tones the kidneys

Bhujangasana

Cobra



- Lie on floor, face down, legs extended and front of feet on the floor.
- Rest palms under the shoulders.
- Inhale, press the palms down and lift the head and chest up.
- breathe.
- Keep tops of thighs on the floor
- Awareness to the lower back.
- Look straight ahead. If neck is ok then raise the head and look up.
- Stay for a few breaths. breathing evenly.
- Exhale and release down to the floor.
- Repeat pose 2 to 3 times.

Benefits

- Tones the spine
- Chest is expanded and lungs become more elastic
- Improves lower back awareness

Ustrasana

Camel pose



- Kneel on the floor, thighs and feet together.
- Fronts of the feet are on the floor.
- Palms on hips and slowly curve the spine backwards. Hold for a few breaths.
- On an exhalation lower the palms and rest right palm on right heel, left palm on the left heel.
- Press down on heels and draw the head back.
- Push the spine away from the head.
- Breathe and observe where the breath is going.
- Stay for a few deep breaths.
- Release and rest on the heels, back straight.

Benefits

- Corrects drooping shoulders
- Spine is stretched and toned

Dhanurasana

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Bow posture



- Lie on your front, forehead on the mat.
- Exhale and bend your legs at the knees
- Stretch the arms back and hold the ankles with each arm
- Exhale and raise the head and the upper body
- Push the feet away from the head and raise the thighs off the floor.
- Arms are straight like the bow string.
- Only the abdomen and pubic bone are on the floor
- Breathe
- Stay for a few breaths and focus on extending the posture by pushing the legs away.
- Exhale and release down to the floor, forehead on the floor and rest.

Benefits

- Spine is stretched back
- Tones all the abdominal organs

Salabhasana

Locust posture

- Lie on your stomach, forehead on the floor.
- Arms are stretched besides the hip
- Exhale and lift the head up, lift the chest up.
- Lift the legs off the floor and extend the arms above the line of the legs.
- Breathe and stay as long as possible.
- Release and lie down, forehead on the floor and arms besides the hip.
- Repeat the posture 2 to 3 times.



Benefits

- Posture aids digestion and relieves gastric troubles.
- Spine is stretched and becomes more elastic.
- Bladder and prostate gland also benefit.

Savasana

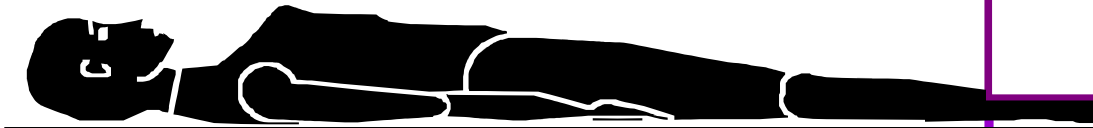
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'corpse' posture

- Lie flat on your back, back of head on the floor. Cover yourself with a sheet or a blanket.
- Keep hands by the side, palms facing up.
- Close your eyes and relax.
- Use visualization to take your awareness to all the major joints and observe

- Stay for 5 to 10 minutes and increase relaxation time as practice progresses.

- Steady and smooth breathing will sooth the nerves, calm the mind.
- Savasana is the best antidote to stress.



Benefits

- The most important posture at the end of a long practice of Yoga Asanas.