



DAILY YOGA SESSION

BASIC RULES

- The best time to do asanas & pranayama is early morning, about half hour after getting up or early evening before dinner.
- Never practice on a full stomach. Wait at least three hours after eating a main meal, about one hour after eating a light snack and about half an hour after drinking juices.
- After practice, wait for a quarter of an hour before eating.
- Don't practice immediately after getting out of bed, since you'll be too stiff.
- Don't practice just before bed, since their stimulating effect may prevent you from being able to sleep easily.
- Don't take a hot shower or bath immediately after yoga, since this draws blood away from the internal organs and glands to the skin.
- Exercise in a well ventilated room.
- Use a Yoga mat or a thick rug.
- Wear loose clothing, since tight clothes will restrict the circulation to some areas of the body.
- Fix a comfortable time of the day for yoga and make it a part of your routine. It is necessary to practice regularly for longer time for good results.

AVOID:

If you are suffering from medical conditions like high blood pressure, dizziness and serious eye problems, it is inadvisable to do inverted postures (headstand, shoulder stand etc). If in doubt, see a doctor before you start.

The First Two Weeks

In some cases you may feel worse for up to two weeks after starting practice. This is because yoga causes the body to eliminate toxins, which spend some time in the blood before being eliminated. The more toxins you have, the worse you will feel in the beginning. Some of the symptoms you may experience are a slight increase in your usual aches and pains, and a little stiffness. Your body may become slightly bloated and you may feel a bit drowsy. You may feel sore in the back, neck and shoulder muscles for a couple of weeks. To minimize any soreness, start gently and don't overdo it. Above all, never give up. Any discomfort will only be temporary and you will start to feel much better in a relatively short time.

In summary

- **Asanas should be done slowly, steadily and should be comfortable.**
- **Awareness should be focused on changes occurring inside your body.**
- **Breathing should be normal**
- **Eyes should be closed and you should maintain a gentle smile on your face.**

STARTING YOUR DAILY ROUTINE

PAVANMUKTA ASANA SERIES - NECK ROLLS (2 minutes)

Clockwise

Rotate neck 360 degrees **clockwise**. Inhale during the first ½ of the roll and exhale for the second ½

Repeat 5 times taking 1 minute in total

After completing 5 rounds slightly, tilt head to the right and then to the left; this will reduce any signs of dizziness

Anti-clockwise

Rotate neck 360 degrees **anti-clockwise**. Inhale during the first ½ of the roll and exhale for the second ½

Repeat 5 times taking 1 minute in total

After completing 5 rounds slightly, tilt head to the right and then to the left; this will reduce any signs of dizziness

Do not hold breath at any stage but try and breathe smoothly



TADASANA - MOUNTAIN POSTURE (2 minutes)

Improves posture, balance and self-awareness.

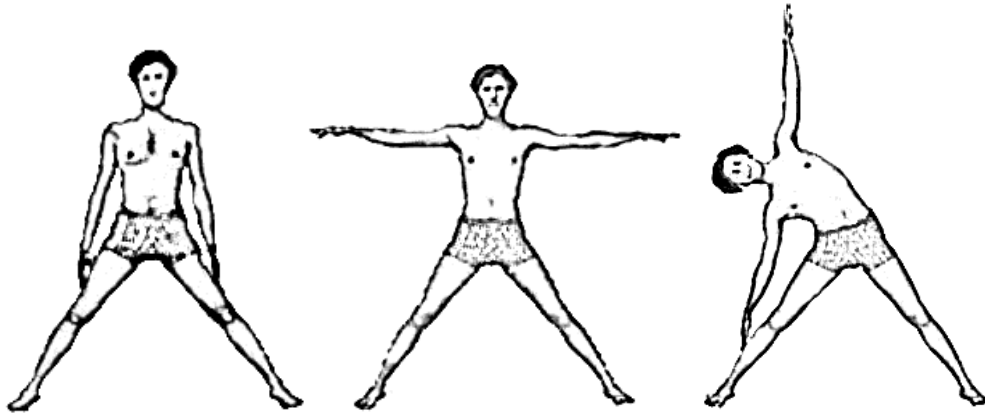
Stand with feet together, hands at your sides, eyes looking forward. Raise your toes then place them back down on the floor. Feel your heel, outside of your foot, toes and ball of your foot all in contact with the floor.

Breathe. As you inhale, imagine the breath coming up through the floor, rising through your legs and torso and up into your head. Reverse the process as you exhale and observe your breath as it passes down from your head, through your chest and stomach, legs and feet.

Hold for 5 to 10 breaths, relax and repeat 3 times.



TRIKONASANA OR THE TRIANGLE POSTURE – 3 minutes



Technique

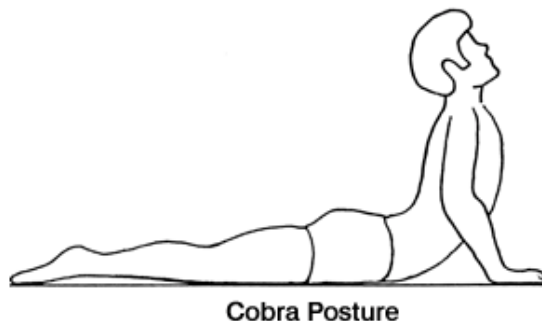
1. Place your feet about 3 feet away from each other. Stretch your arms sideward at shoulder height, palms facing down.
2. Throughout, keep arms and legs fully stretched, rotate your pelvis back, and extend your spine.
3. Swing your hips to the left as you stretch out to the right.
4. Place your right hand on your right knee and extend your left arm straight up toward the ceiling. Do not allow the right arm to support any weight. Let your legs support you.
5. Extend evenly on both sides of your body. Don't compress the lower ribs and hyper-extend the upper ribs.
6. Look straight ahead or up at your left hand.
7. Relax your body and the senses. Breathe evenly through your nose. Return to erect position slowly, keeping your spine straight and long.
8. Duration: 30 seconds to 1 minute.

Repeat with the left side.

Beneficial Effects

- This asana stretches and develops the muscles of the spine and eases the pain in the back and neck.
- It corrects lateral distortions of the spine. *However, people suffering from sciatica must practice it carefully.*
- The lateral movements of the trunk strengthen and fortify the abdominal and hip muscles
- It tones the muscles of the feet and the ankles and makes the hips and thighs more flexible.
- It relieves constipation, tones and stimulates the nerves situated in the lumbar area of the spine. This positively influences all abdominal organs and especially the genital-uterine system.

Cobra Posture (Bhujangasana) – 3 minutes



Technique

1. Lie on your stomach and place your hands on the floor beside the pectoral muscles.
2. Place your hands, palms down, under the shoulders on the floor. Inhale, and without lifting the navel from the floor, raise your chest and head, arching your back. Stretch your body as much as possible.
3. At this point, you may take both your arms behind your back and hold the posture.
4. Keep the pose for 30 seconds, gradually increasing to 45 seconds.

Beneficial effects

- This asana affects the adrenal glands, sending them a richer supply of blood.
- Tones the ovaries, uterus and liver.
- Muscles of the back, abdomen and entire upper body are strengthened.
- Aids in relief and elimination of menstrual irregularities and relieves constipation.
- People suffering from gas after meals will find this pose very useful.
- Excellent for slipped discs. It adjusts displacements in the spinal column and tones the sympathetic nerves.
- Beneficial for backache due to overwork or long hours of standing.

Warning: Not recommended if you are suffering from peptic ulcer, hernia or hyperthyroid. When bending the body backwards, be sure not to make any violent jerks, as this may injure rigid muscles.

Half Locust Pose (Ardha Shalabhasana) – 3 minutes



Beneficial effects

1. This posture benefits the pelvis and the abdomen.
2. Muscles of the back are toned and developed.
3. Improves the general blood circulation in the lower limbs and alleviates constipation.

Recommended for the management of sciatica & slipped disc.

Technique

1. Lie flat on the stomach with the hands under the thighs, with palms downwards or hands clenched.
2. Keep both the legs straight throughout the practice.
3. Place the chin on the floor, slightly stretched forward to give the best possible stretch to the neck muscles and nerves.
4. Using the back muscles, raise the left leg as high as possible, keeping the other leg straight, relaxed and in contact with the floor.
5. Retain the position for- as long as is possible without strain.
6. Do not tilt or twist the pelvis.
7. Lower the leg to tile floor.
8. Repeat the same movement with the right leg.

Caution

After finishing this posture, the breathing will be rather rapid. Do not repeat the posture until your breathing returns to normal.



THE CORPSE – SAVASANA

- 5 minutes

Relaxes and refreshes the body and mind, relieves stress and anxiety and quiets the mind.

Possibly the most important posture, it is usually performed at the end of a session with the goal being conscious relaxation. Many people find the "conscious" part the most difficult because it is very easy to drift off to sleep while doing Savasana.

Begin by lying on your back, feet slightly apart, arms at your sides with palms facing up. Close your eyes and take several slow, deep breaths. Allow your body to sink into the ground. Try focusing on a specific part of the body and willing it to relax. For example, start with your feet, imagine the muscles and skin relaxing, letting go and slowly melting into the floor. From your feet, move on to your calves, thighs and so on up to your face and head. Then simply breathe and relax. Do not sleep. Stay in the pose for at least 5 minutes.

VAJRASANA - Preferred posture for Pranayama

Benefits

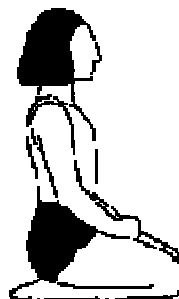
Improves digestion and stimulates the digestive processes. This asana can be done after having food for good digestion.

Caution

Those suffering from knee pain should avoid this posture.

Technique

1. Sit on your knees keeping them together
2. Drawing both toes together, and with heels apart, sit on them. Keep your hands straight



- on the respective knees.
3. Breathe normally with your spine straight. Relax your hands
 4. Sit in this asana for 1 to 5 minutes

PRANAYAMA

The Sanskrit word Prana means 'vital force' or 'cosmic energy'. It also signifies 'life' or 'breath'. 'Ayama' means the control of the Prana. Hence Pranayama means the control of the vital force by concentration and regulated breathing.

1. Dirgha Pranayama (Sectional breathing) – 5 minutes

Known as the "complete" or "three-part" breath, dirgha pranayama teaches how to fill the three chambers of the lungs, beginning with the lower lungs, moving up through the thoracic region and into the clavicular region.

Benefits

Promotes proper diaphragmatic breathing, relaxes the mind and body, oxygenates the blood and purges the lungs of residual carbon dioxide.

Technique

Sit with your spine erect, or lie down on your back. Begin taking long, slow, and deep breaths through the nostrils. One should always inhale and exhale through the nose. The small screen of hair inside the nose not only filters the air, but also prevents impurities such as dust, harmful gases, minute insects, etc., from penetrating into the organism.

Abdominal breathing

- Relax your whole body and place your right hand on in front of your abdomen
- As you inhale, draw air deep into the lower lungs and feel your abdomen pushing out.
- As you exhale, feel your abdomen contract like a balloon.
- Keep the breath smooth and relaxed and do not strain.
- Repeat 3 times with each inhale and exhale lasting 5 seconds.

Middle Breathing

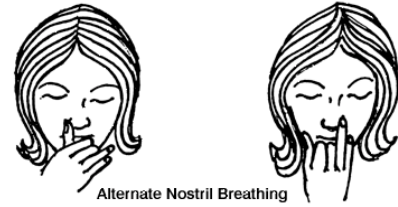
- Contracting your abdominal muscles, breathe in and expand the mid-chest region by allowing the rib cage to open outward to the sides. Try not to take any air into your lower lungs
- Exhale and feel your rib cage contracting
- Repeat 3 times with each inhale and exhale lasting 5 seconds.

Upper breathing

- Contract the abdominal and chest muscles – this will prevent air entering the lower and middle section of the lungs
- Breathe in by moving your collarbone and shoulders toward your chin
- Exhale by moving your collar bones and shoulder away from your chin
- Repeat 3 times with each inhale and exhale lasting 5 seconds.

Full Yogic Breathing

- This is a combination of the three mentioned above
- Inhale by expanding your abdomen, then chest and finally shoulders
- Exhale smoothly by first contracting the shoulders, then chest and finally abdomen
- Both in and out breath should be smooth and last 7-10 seconds



Nadi Sodhana Level 1 (Alternate Nostril Breathing) – 5 minutes

Nadi means “psychic passage” or a specific pathway through which prana flows throughout the body. Sodhana means to purify.

The flow of breath is controlled by the fingers of the right hand as shown in the illustration. This is called Nasika Mudra



1. Sit in Vajrasana or any comfortable posture and become aware of your breath
2. Close the right nostril with the thumb
3. Slowly inhale and exhale through left nostril 10 times.
4. Switch by closing the left nostril with the ring finger and breathe through the right nostril 10 times.
5. If the mind wanders, slowly bring it back to the breathing
6. Now repeat 3 and 4 except exhale twice as long as the inhalation. For e.g. if you inhale to a count of 4 seconds, exhale to a count of 8 seconds

Avoid if you have a cold or if your nasal passages are blocked in any way. Forced breathing through the nose may lead to complications. In Pranayama it is important to follow this rule: under no circumstances should anything be forced. If you use the nostrils for breath control they must be unobstructed.

Next, proceed with Sakshi Bhava – Body awareness and breath awareness