

Series 4

Progressive Yoga Vidya Training

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Progressive
Yoga Vidya Training
Series 4

With kind regards, ॐ and prem

Sriani Niranjan

Progressive Yoga Vidya Training

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Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

*Practice classes conducted during
the Progressive Yoga Vidya Trainings (Level 1)
held in October 2016 and October 2017
at Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth,
Bihar School of Yoga, Munger*



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The purpose of this book is to provide relevant information regarding yoga practice; it is not a practice book and it is not to be used for teaching oneself or others. All yoga training is to be learned and practised under the competent guidance of a person well versed in the practice. It is the responsibility of the practitioner to choose the teacher and the manner in which the classes are being conducted. Bihar School of Yoga is not responsible in any way for the individual's choice.

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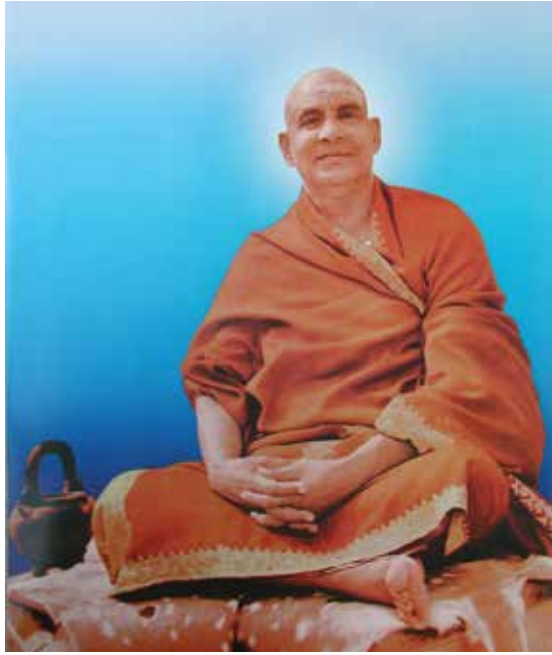
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Dedication

*In humility we offer this dedication to
Swami Sivananda Saraswati, who initiated
Swami Satyananda Saraswati into the secrets of yoga.*

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The 2nd Chapter of Yoga

Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati established the Bihar School of Yoga in 1963, in order to fulfil the mandate of his guru, Swami Sivananda Saraswati. The mandate Swami Satyananda received was to propagate the science of yoga and take yoga from “shore to shore and door to door”. In the days of Swami Sivananda, yoga was far from the globally recognized and accepted word it is today. Yoga was considered a spiritual practice reserved for sannyasins and renunciates who had renounced society and were seeking enlightenment. It was not seen as something that could be incorporated into society and practised by the general public.

When the Bihar School of Yoga was established, the philosophy, practices, applications and lifestyle of yoga as practical and scientific systems were unknown, even in Indian society. From the beginning, yoga training and propagation by the Bihar School of Yoga took the form of intensive residential programs, in which yoga was taught as a way to qualitatively enhance physical health, mental peace, emotional harmony. A sequence of progression in yoga was defined fifty years ago by Swami Satyananda, by giving systematic training first in hatha yoga, raja yoga, and kriya yoga, as *bahiranga yoga*, external yoga. Simultaneously, training in *antaranga*, internal, aspect of karma yoga, bhakti and jnana yoga was provided through the lifestyle and inspiration of the ashram environment. A holistic or integral yoga system developed in which the yoga aspirant

could awaken and integrate the faculties of head, heart and hands. The different *angas*, limbs, of yoga become the means of attaining this personal harmony and integrated expression.

In the early 1940s, the subject of yoga was propagated across the world by teachers and masters of different traditions, introducing the idea that through the practice of yoga one could explore the body, mind, emotions, and have a glimpse into one's spiritual nature. The first-generation teachers focused on bringing the knowledge of yoga to human society according to the need of the society at that time. In the 1960s, yoga was seen as a physical culture. In the 1970s, it was seen as a way to overcome stress, anxiety, tension and to improve the physical and mental functions. In the 1980s, research into the various possibilities and potentials of yoga to assist and promote physical and mental health took the forefront. By the 1990s, a rapid increase in the popularity of the practice of asana was evident across the globe. The asana component of yoga had been accepted worldwide and other components of yoga were relegated to the background and largely ignored by the mainstream practitioners and majority of yoga teachers. Today, 28 million people are practising yoga in the United States alone, and statistics estimate 300 million practitioners worldwide.

In 2013, the World Yoga Convention was conducted in Munger to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the Bihar School of Yoga. Over 50,000 yoga practitioners, teachers, students and aspirants participated in this historic event either in person or through the internet. The Convention was a milestone that marked the completion of fifty years of yoga propagation. The mandate of taking yoga from shore to shore and door to door was fulfilled. Over a fifty-year period, with the help of yoga aspirants and well-wishers all over the world, a yogic renaissance had taken place. The chapter of yoga propagation was complete and when one chapter closed, the next chapter opened.

Thus the World Yoga Convention also heralded the beginning of the second chapter of the Bihar School of Yoga.

The hallmark of this second chapter is a new vision of yoga not as a practice but as a *vidya*, a wisdom to be understood, imbibed and expressed in life. This understanding of the fundamental need for integral development was the vision of Swami Satyananda, which he imparted and taught through the concept of the *yoga chakra*, or the wheel of yoga.

The second chapter of the Bihar School of Yoga and the teachings which are being presented are not concerned with propagation of the practices of yoga. Isolated practices of yoga do not bring about the qualitative change and spiritual evolution intended and envisaged by the seers. The transcendence of the negative and restricting conditions and the real evolution and growth of the personality takes place only when the *vidya* of yoga is comprehended, absorbed and realized.

The profundity of yogic understanding must increase and the depths of yoga must be fathomed, if the *vidya* is to be realized and maintained for future generations. The experience and wisdom of accomplished yogis and spiritual scientists is recorded in the scriptural and classical texts detailing each *anga* of yoga. The second chapter teachings are a progressive effort to discern and elucidate the experiences and realizations of the ancient seers, within the blueprint of the *yoga chakra*.

For individual aspirants, the challenge of the second chapter is to deepen the understanding and experience of yoga. Practice is merely an introduction to yoga, which is limited by personal motivation and constraints. The *yoga vidya* dimension is accessed only when one moves from practice to *sadhana* and makes a sincere effort to experience the aims defined by the different *angas* of yoga. Until that sincerity awakens, the commitment to adhere to the system and the *vidya* of yoga is lacking. With sincerity, seriousness and commitment, each aspirant has to accept responsibility for their own development and betterment in life.

Ultimately, yoga is a lifestyle. It is not a practice. For, once the yogic principles are imbibed and become part of life, the attitudes, perceptions, interactions, the mind, actions and

behaviours will improve. To meet the challenge of the second chapter, the expressive and the behavioural components of yoga, the antaranga and the bahiranga aspects, have to come together. When head, heart and hands unite, an ordinary moment can become divine. An ordinary life can become a divine life.

Introduction

Progressive Yoga Vidya Training – Series 4 presents the theory and practical component of asana, pranayama, mudra and bandha as taught by Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati during the Progressive Yoga Vidya Trainings held in October 2016 and October 2017 at Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth.

As part of the 2nd Chapter of Yoga, the understanding of well-known practices is expanded and the practitioner is led to a new and deeper experience with clarity and simplicity. The awareness is guided and developed systematically through each practice so that the whole being, from the physical to the subtler levels, is involved and able to benefit.

After Swamiji conducted a class, the same was repeated by BSY sannyasins over two or three days so that the method and intent of each practice could be imbibed by the aspirants. The focus of the 2nd Chapter is the quality of practice.

These original teachings are an inspiration and a guide for the practice of hatha yoga as conceived for the 2nd Chapter of Yoga. They help aspirants to deepen their understanding and experience of hatha yoga. At the same time, they learn more about themselves, their strengths, weaknesses, limitations, ambitions, needs and requirements, in the five dimensions of their being. They learn to respect

the aim and purpose of hatha yoga as part of *yoga vidya*, the science of yoga.

This book is not a teacher's manual but is intended for the serious, sincere and committed aspirants who wish to undertake the journey of exploration for their own growth and evolution in yoga and their day-to-day life and receive a glimpse of Swamiji's vision for the 2nd Chapter.

Progressive Yoga Vidya Training – Series 4 follows the same format as the *Theory & Practice Sessions* of the original publication *Progressive Yoga Vidya Training – Series 1*, including explanations, practice tips and notes. The satsangs given during these trainings have been published in separate books titled:

Progressive Yoga Vidya Training – Series 3

Progressive Yoga Vidya Training – Series 2

**Progressive
Yoga Vidya Training
2016**

Origin of Asana and Pawanmuktasana, Pancha Kosha, Purpose of Pranayama



The importance of bringing the body and mind to a state of relaxation and one-pointedness before the start of asana and pranayama practices is often underestimated. In Swamiji's classes, in every session the preparation for Shanti Path was a complete practice in itself.

PREPARING THE BODY AND MIND WITH SHANTI PATH

Sit in a comfortable posture. Body upright and straight, hands on the knees in jnana mudra or chin mudra. Gently close your eyes. With the eyes closed become aware of your whole body. Complete awareness of the whole body. Observe the whole body mentally. Imagine that there is a full-length mirror in front of the body. In the mirror, see a

reflection of your body from the top of the head right down to the toes. Visualize yourself. See your body posture in the reflection of the mirror. Gazing at the reflection of the body mentally, observe the state of physical relaxation and stillness. If there is any tension, tightness or discomfort in the body, become aware of that. Relax yourself and prepare yourself for the practice of asana and pranayama.

Now bring your awareness to the eyebrow centre. In front of the closed eyes, focus on the dark space known as *chidakasha*, the space of the mind. In the centre of *chidakasha*, in the centre of the dark space, visualize the image of a candle flame burning brightly.

Keeping the awareness on the flame, breathe in completely and chant the mantra *Om* three times with me.

(*Om* chanting and *Shanti Path*)

Remain seated for a few moments, observing the stillness of the body and the silence in the mind. Now slowly bring the hands together and rub the palms. Feel the heat that is created. Once the palms are hot, place them over the eyes and then slowly open your eyes.

Origin of asana

It has been claimed that asanas number in the thousands. There are those who say that there are 840,000 asanas, corresponding to the number of different life forms and yonis that people take birth in. Others say there are 72,000 asanas. If you look at the available yogic literature, you will not find 72,000 asanas or even 1,000 asanas. The asanas that have been published in various scriptures like the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, *Hatharatnavali*, *Gheranda Samhita* and other classical texts of hatha yoga are not more than 200.

The classical asanas are one group. Another group are the practices to prepare the body for asanas, the preparatory asanas. Classical asanas are the officially recognized yoga practices. Originally, their purpose was to help the yogis of the past who used to spend a lot of time in meditation. I will give you one example. When I practise *panchagni* I have to

sit for at least eight hours. After sitting for eight hours, I need to move my body: twist my body, open my body, relax my body, return my body to a dynamic state from a passive, static state. In the same way, yogis in the past used these asanas to revive their body after sitting for a long time in meditation.

The classical hatha yoga asanas were the strong, advanced and difficult ones, but their purpose was to aid yogis in their meditation. After sitting for a long time, *chakrasana* or the wheel pose is a good counterpose to help the back. When the blood has been draining down into the area of the hips and waist for eight hours, do the headstand and the blood comes back to the head. This is the way the asanas were used by the yogis.

Sukshma vyayama or subtle movements

The body also becomes stiff after sitting for a long time. To be able to move into a yogic posture easily and fluently, you have to loosen up the body. The stiffness and tightness has to be removed from the body so that you can practise the asanas. For this, another set of exercises was developed which was known as *sukshma vyayama*, subtle movements or exercises. Before people practise karate, they do a warm-up in which they move their hands and loosen each and every joint. Similarly, the *sukshma vyayama* are not asanas in themselves, but they are used to facilitate coming into a yoga posture. The *sukshma vyayama* existed throughout the ages as complementary practices to hatha yoga asanas. However, there was no sequence, progression or clarity on how these subtle exercises should be practised. When our guru, Sri Swamiji, looked into yoga, he put all the subtle exercises, the *sukshma vyayama*, together and created a new sequence of exercises, which we today know as *pawanmuktasana*. You will not find reference to the *pawanmuktasana* series in any of the classical yogic literature, as they do not exist as such. The *pawanmuktasana* series are part of *sukshma vyayama*, the purpose of which is to loosen up the body, to prepare the body for the practice of asanas.

In the 1960s, when yoga was just starting its comeback in India, I remember that instead of asanas, it was the sukshma vyayama which was practised. There was a yoga evangelist in the 1960s in India called Dharendra Brahmachari. He was the one who revived sukshma vyayama and brought this system of warm-up exercises to all the schools in India in the sixties and early seventies. That was the yoga throughout the country. At that time, we did not practise asanas: no chakrasana, no headstand, no mayurasana, no surya namaskara, only sukshma vyayama.

Purpose of pawanmuktasana

Pawan means wind, air; *mukta* means to release; *asana* is a posture or movement. Thus the pawanmuktasana series of practices are those which release gas, wind and flatulence from the body, and regulate the flow of prana. Sri Swamiji went one step further. He classified the sukshma vyayama in three categories, which we know as pawanmuktasana part 1, anti-rheumatic exercises; pawanmuktasana part 2, anti-gastric exercises; and pawanmuktasana part 3, the shakti bandha kriyas. These became the primary practices of yoga. This classification of the sukshma vyayama in three groups also corresponds to the humours that affect the physical body: *vata*, gas; *pitta*, bile; and *kapha*, mucus. These are regulated with the practice of pawanmuktasana. From the perspective of ayurveda, diseases come in when there is excess or imbalance in one of the doshas, whether vata, pitta or kapha. When you have a cold, kapha or mucus, is activated. When you have indigestion, pitta or vata is activated.

Sri Swamiji devised the pawanmuktasana series as a progression to manage the three humours, the three conditions which affect the body in a negative manner. Pawanmuktasana part 1 is for vata, removing blockages from each and every joint. Pawanmuktasana part 2 is for pitta, with an emphasis on eliminating blockages in the abdominal area. Pawanmuktasana part 3 is for kapha, mucus. Practising these three in sequence regulates the three humours, the

three conditions of the body. When these are managed, health is experienced. This progression and sequence of pawanmuktasana is the contribution of Sri Swamiji in the area of yogasana.

Awareness of five koshas

In the first lesson of our yoga training, Sri Swamiji told us that yoga is not physical exercise. Asanas are not physical exercises; they are postures which have far-reaching effects on the human personality. The personality is composed of five different bodies, known as *annamaya kosha*, the physical body; *pranamaya kosha*, the energy body; *manomaya kosha*, the mental body; *vijnanamaya kosha*, consciousness; and *anandamaya kosha*, the spiritual body. In any asana that we do, even if it is a subtle movement like pawanmuktasana, we should acquire the skill to access all the five bodies in one practice. Sri Swamiji began by teaching us how to perform an asana and connect with the experience of all five bodies. This involved visualization, awareness and intent, defining what we were trying to achieve and experience. For this, he gave us five stages of concentration for every practice.

The first stage is awareness of the simple, physical movement, how you are moving your body. If you are moving the hands, you are aware of the muscular movement that is taking place. When opening and clenching the fist, you are aware of the movement of every muscle, every stretch and every contraction that is happening in the body. That awareness connects you with the physical body.

In the second stage of practising an asana, you connect the breath with the movement. While practising the asana you are inhaling and exhaling, inhaling and exhaling. At this stage, it is not the physical movement which is important, but an awareness of the body being moved by the breath. You are not moving the body; the breath is moving the body. Your inhalation and exhalation become the medium through which you move into and come out of an asana. The breath is the primary focus, not the posture. When you become aware

of the breath and observe the breath with the posture, you connect with pranamaya kosha.

The third stage Sri Swamiji introduced was visualization of the asana while practising. Not everyone can perform a perfect asana. We all have our limitations; the body has its limitations. Many people cannot do paschimottanasana, but they can bend forward touching the toes. When you visualize yourself practising, you should visualize the perfect posture. Although your body is not doing the posture perfectly, in your mind you see yourself in the perfect posture. In the course of time, that visualization of the perfect posture will allow you to move into the asana with ease. By creating the perfect visualization of the posture which you are practising, you are stimulating the mind, which then takes over to guide the body. To do this, you may either visualize yourself from the outside perspective, as if you were another person, or from the point of view where your eyes are. That is the third stage, connecting with manomaya kosha.

The fourth component is concentration on a chakra while you are in the asana. You do not identify with the posture; you identify with the chakra and the experience in that part of the body. That is the fourth stage, to access vijñanamaya kosha.

Finally, in the fifth stage Sri Swamiji added the mantra of the chakra. While you are in an asana, you repeat the mantra of the chakra which is being stimulated in that asana.

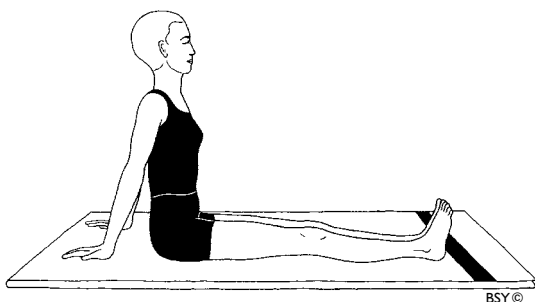
For each practice, whether it was pawanmuktasana or chakrasana, we would apply the same five stages of concentration. We used to do all of them in sequence. As an example, if we practised pawanmuktasana, the first five movements would be with muscle awareness, the next five with breath awareness, the next five with visualization, the next five with chakra awareness, and the final five with mantra awareness. This way, each practice was done 25 times, not five or six or ten as they are usually done. Over a period of time, practising the asanas 25 times also gave tremendous physical stability, stamina and flexibility. This was how we

started learning from Sri Swamiji, in a specific and systematic manner.

Today we are going to begin with the same pawanmuktasana series. I will lead you through them with the various stages of awareness and visualizations. Let us see if you can imbibe the teachings of Sri Swamiji in your own yoga practice.

***Note:** After each practice, Swamiji gave the instruction to relax for a few breaths and observe and relax whichever part had been exercised. This principle was followed in every session and sequence.*

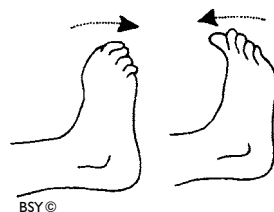
PAWANMUKTASANA PART I (foot & leg movements)



SWAN tip: In the base position, check that the spine is upright and straight, not reclined and not in an easy pose. If you are sitting up straight, your navel and chin will be aligned.

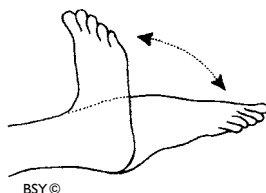
Padanguli naman (toe bending):

5-5-5-5-5; movement awareness-breath awareness-visualization-chakra awareness-mantra awareness.



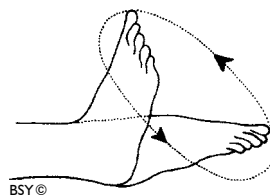
Goof naman (ankle bending):

5-5-5-5-5; movement awareness–breath awareness–visualization–chakra awareness–mantra awareness.



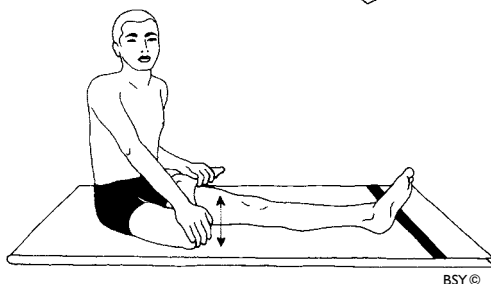
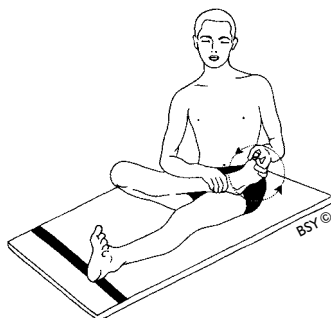
Goof chakra (ankle rotation):

5-5-5-5-5; movement awareness–breath awareness–visualization–chakra awareness–mantra awareness (both clockwise and anticlockwise, with each foot separately).



Goof ghournan (ankle crank):

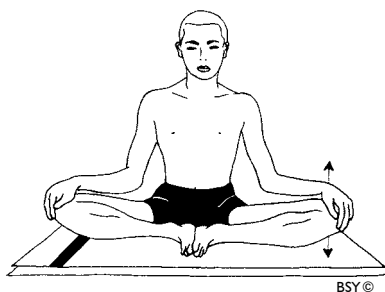
5-5-5-5-5; movement awareness–breath awareness–visualization–chakra awareness–mantra awareness (both clockwise and anticlockwise, with each foot).



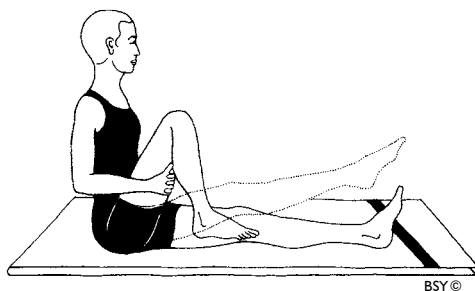
Ardha titali asana (half butterfly): 50 movements (with each leg).

Poorna titali asana (full butterfly): 50 movements.

SWAN tip: Holding the feet with your hands, pull the heels close to the body, as close as you can while keeping the



spine straight. Move the knees up and down in a rapid movement, without the help of the hands. The hands are used to press the knees down only when the knees are more than 9 inches from the floor.

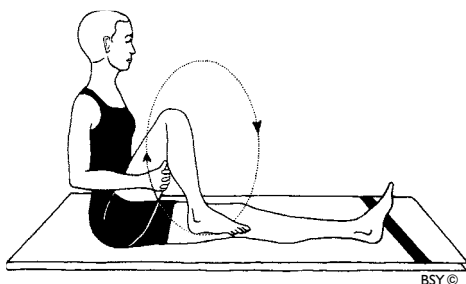


Janu naman (knee bending): 5-5-5-5-5; movement awareness-breath awareness-visualization-chakra awareness-mantra awareness (with each leg, then both legs).

SWAN tips:

- When practising with both legs, hold the back of the thighs with your hands, without interlocking the fingers.
- At first, when you are trying to find your balance with the legs stretched out, you may need to lean back a bit into a pose similar to naukasana, but without reclining fully. Eventually you should come to the correct posture, which is sitting upright with the spine straight.

Janu chakra (knee crank): 5-5-5-5-5; movement awareness-breath awareness-visualization-chakra awareness-



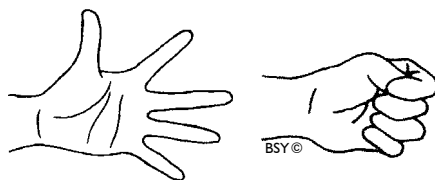
mantra awareness (both clockwise and anticlockwise, with each leg and then 10 rounds with both legs).

SWAN tips:

- It is easier on the knees if you rotate each knee first in one direction, then return to the first knee for rotation in the opposite direction.
- This is an important practice for the knees. The weakest part in each one of us is our knees, which have to carry the weight of the entire body. This practice allows the rotation of the lower leg, frees up all the tight and stiff ligaments and exercises the nerves beneath the kneecap.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Moving awareness from one body part to the other to relax that part 3. Observation of the flow of breath in the nostrils, cool on inhalation and warmer on exhalation 4. Externalization.

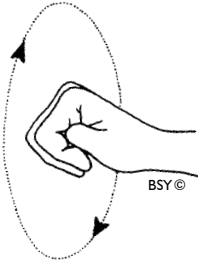
PAWANMUKTASANA PART I (hand, arm and shoulder movements)



Mushtika bandhana (fist clenching): 5-5-5-5-5; movement awareness-breath awareness-visualization-chakra awareness-mantra awareness.

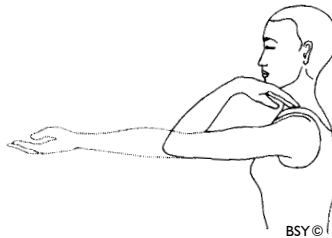
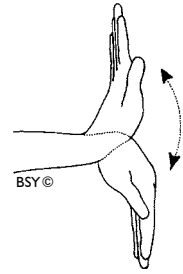
Manibandha naman (wrist bending):

5-5-5-5-5; movement awareness-breath awareness-visualization-chakra awareness-mantra awareness.



Manibandha chakra (wrist rotation):

5-5-5-5-5; movement awareness-breath awareness-visualization-chakra awareness-mantra awareness (clockwise and anticlockwise, both wrists together).

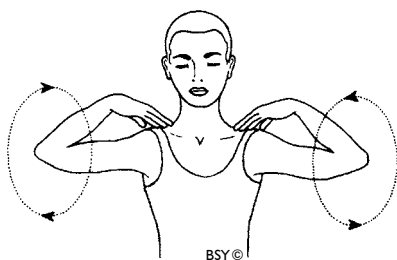


Kehuni naman (elbow bending): 5-5-5-5-5; movement awareness-breath awareness-visualization-chakra awareness-mantra awareness.

Variation 1: 10 rounds. Starting with the fingertips on the shoulders, stretch the arms out sideways with the inhalation. Bend the elbows and return the fingertips to the shoulders with the exhalation.

Variation 2: 10 rounds. This time, from the same starting position, stretch the arms upward, bringing the hands to namaskara over the head with the inhalation. Return the fingertips to the shoulders with the exhalation.





Skandha chakra (shoulder rotation): 10 rounds (both forward and backward).

***Note:** The specific chakras and mantras that were used with the practices during the training are not mentioned, as this must be learnt in the presence of a master.*

Experiment with pawanmuktasana

About nine or ten years ago, the army regiment in Bihar was inducting new recruits for the army. The regiment contacted us, as they wanted to do an experiment with yoga: using yoga to train the recruits in physical stamina. We agreed to do the experiment. I devised a program for the army in which the most important elements were the pawanmuktasana series and surya namaskara, nothing more than that.

We started teaching a group of recruits pawanmuktasana, and became the laughing stock of the whole army camp. While the other army personnel would march and run and lift weights and do push-ups, building up their muscles and stamina, the members of the yoga unit could be seen sitting on the floor moving their toes. The others would look at us and laugh, saying, “All of you are going to fail. You are not doing anything to increase your strength or stamina.” We continued, practising each movement up to 50 times.

At the end of the training program, when the final test was taken, thirteen people from the army group failed and only three from the yoga group failed. The yoga group had more stamina; they were able to regulate their heartbeat; they were able to regulate their breathing; they were able

to regulate their pulse. Where the normal soldier required one hour to rest, those trained in yoga were ready to march again in twenty minutes. A few months later the Kargil war happened and this yoga unit from Bihar was sent to the frontlines. There they were monitored by the central command, which was monitoring all the movements and locations of the army. The yoga group, after marching, would practise shavasana and breath regulation, reduce their heartbeat and be ready to march when everyone else was still exhausted and breathing hard from climbing and carrying weights while marching. After the war was over, all the soldiers from the unit were promoted to sharp-shooters due to their capacity for concentration. Yoga gives you concentration.

Practising fifty rounds of pawanmuktasana every day gives you much more stamina and physiological strength than the spurt movements that people do. You go to a gym, you do thirty push-ups, and then you fall flat. It's a spurt, not sustained physical activity, whereas this experiment proved that in yoga the energy level was maintained throughout the day, even in extreme conditions, if you could only monitor your physiological responses to the situation. This effect was achieved just by practising the pawanmuktasana series. We did not teach anything else except pawanmuktasana part 1 and 2, surya namaskara, and some standing postures. This training made the yoga group in the army better than their own unit.



PAWANMUKTASANA PART I (neck & head movements)



Greeva sanchalanasana (neck & head movements): 5 rounds (in each direction: forward and back, looking over the shoulders, to the side to touch the ear to the shoulder; and head rotation both clockwise and anticlockwise).

SWAN tip: In the first practice, keeping the spine upright and straight, simply drop the head and place the chin in-between the collar bones. Inhaling, raise the head gently and look up. Do this without bending backwards.

SHAVASANA WITH BREATH OBSERVATION

Lie down comfortably in shavasana for a few moments. Feet slightly apart, palms facing up, head in a straight line with the body, eyes closed. Surrender the whole body to the floor. There should be nothing tight, there should be no tension in the body. The body is completely relaxed, like a rag doll, free from all stiffness and tension. Check the whole body and let go of any tensions in the right leg, the left leg, the right arm, the left arm, the back, the neck,

the head, the trunk, the abdomen. Complete relaxation of the whole body. Awareness of the whole body lying on the floor in shavasana.

Now become aware of your natural breath. Observe your breath and the rise and fall of the abdomen. As you breathe in, feel the navel rising up, and as you breathe out, feel the navel coming down. Observe the breath and the rise and fall of the navel with every inhalation and exhalation. With every inhalation, the body recharges itself. The prana shakti enters the body, recharging the whole body. With every exhalation, the body relaxes a little more. Expansion and relaxation of the navel. Do not change the flow, the rhythm or the speed of breath. Just observe the natural breath and observe the rise and fall of the navel with every incoming and outgoing breath. When the navel rises, the whole body expands like a balloon; when the navel comes down, the whole body relaxes, like a deflating balloon. With each breath in, the body expands a bit more, and with each breath out, the body relaxes a little more than before.

Now slowly externalize the mind. Move the toes, feet, legs, fingers, hands, arms, turn the head from side to side. Take a deep breath in and stretch the whole body. Then gently sit up.

Pranayama in classical yoga

From the perspective of classical yoga, there is only one pranayama: nadi shodhana. It is nadi shodhana pranayama which increases in length and duration and retention. In the final stage of nadi shodhana pranayama, you have to inhale for 12 seconds; you have to hold the breath in four times of 12 seconds; then you have to exhale twice of 12 seconds; and you have to hold the breath out twice of 12 seconds. This means that one breath takes almost two minutes. That is the final pranayama which we are aiming to master.

The yogic literature says to keep the count in pranayama with Gayatri mantra, which has 24 *matras* or beats, which

comes to about 12 seconds. This means one Gayatri for inhalation, 4 for internal retention, 2 for exhalation, and 2 for external retention. That is the final pranayama. Nadi shodhana is the most important pranayama, for it fills the lungs up to capacity; increases the volume of air intake and expulsion of air; and it builds up the physical capacity to fill up on air, to hold the breath, to exhale and to be empty, in all conditions.

Seasons for practising pranayama

Sri Swamiji has classified pranayamas into three groups: vitalizing, tranquillizing and balancing. The vitalizing ones are the dynamic breathing practices which create heat in the body. The cooling or tranquillizing ones are pranayamas that remove the heat from the body and bring coolness. The balancing ones harmonize the flow of ida and pingala and the activity of the nervous system. Although many pranayamas are described in the book *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha* and also in *Prana Pranayama*, the instructions have been kept general. However, there are certain rules and regulations about when to practise pranayama, and which pranayama to practise first.

In India, due to the climate, there are times when certain pranayamas are practised and not others. In the West, the climate is not the same, therefore different rules apply. In normal teaching, you begin with nadi shodhana pranayama in a simple manner. Once nadi shodhana has been learnt, people want to do something different, so generally teachers move into other practices like kapalbhāti and bhāstrika. This is not incorrect. However, when you do a sadhana to have a specific result from the pranayama, there are different times for different pranayamas. For example, the vitalizing pranayamas which create heat in the body – kapalbhāti, bhāstrika, surya bheda pranayama and others – are to be practised in the cold months of November, December, January and February.

There is one yoga evangelist in India who advocates 6,000 bhāstrika breaths in one hour to reduce weight.

Many people have followed the recommendation and have required intervention, as suddenly they started experiencing high blood pressure and various other cardiovascular problems. This is due to doing it in the summer in intense heat. The result is the drying up of the body from inside, drying up of the water in the body and thickening of the blood, which then puts pressure on the heart. Let it be clear: yoga practices are safe provided you practise them under guidance and according to the instructions. Any misuse of a practice will create a crisis.

In Satyananda Yoga in India, the way we teach pranayama has always been specific. There are seasons to practise each pranayama. The vitalizing pranayamas are practised in the four winter months: November, December, January and February. The cooling pranayamas are practised during the summer months: May, June, July and August. The balancing pranayamas are practised in March, April, September and October. This is the rule for the practice of pranayama in extreme climatic conditions, like India or other equatorial regions. In the West we have not bothered about this seasonal rule. Where the temperature is more moderate, all pranayamas can be practised. The body itself seeks to create the right conditions of heat or coolness. Not surprisingly, people in the West practise more bhasrika and kapalbhata due to the weather, and less sheetali or sheetkari, which cools the system. If it is snowing and cold, zero degrees outside, you want to practise bhasrika and kapalbhata, not sheetali and sheetkari. This way, even the climatic conditions become a factor in the practice of pranayama.

When we were learning from Sri Swamiji, he used to make us do all the dynamic pranayamas in the winter months; in the summer months all the cooling pranayamas; in the normal, manageable months the balancing pranayamas. This was the system that we learnt, starting with nadi shodhana pranayama.

Purpose of nadi shodhana

Nadi shodhana pranayama is also a term coined by Sri Swamiji. In kriya yoga, inhalation and exhalation are known as *arohan* and *awarohan*, ascending and descending breath. In the language of classical pranayama, nadi shodhana is known as anuloma viloma, inhalation and exhalation, or *anuloma* and *viloma*, respectively. These are the names you will come across in the yogic literature: anuloma viloma and arohan awarohan. You will not find the name nadi shodhana. Sri Swamiji gave the name nadi shodhana to the pranayama of arohan awarohan or anuloma viloma as it indicates the purpose of the balancing pranayamas. The *nadis* are the conductors of prana shakti; *shodhana* means to clean, to purify. What is being purified and cleaned here are the passages that conduct the prana shakti throughout the body.

In most other traditions, the practice of alternate nostril breathing is spoken of only as *anuloma-viloma*, which means inhalation-exhalation. However, Sri Swamiji used the term nadi shodhana, for that is the term indicating the purpose and depth of the practice. It is not only about breathing in through one nostril and out through the other. The nadis are the conductors of prana shakti; shodhana means to clean, to purify. Through this practice you are purifying and cleaning the passages that conduct the prana shakti throughout the body.

You will have learned that there are 72,000 nadis in the body. Many people think of the 72,000 nadis as nerves in the body, or as channels like the arteries and veins, but nadis are more subtle; they are the pathways of prana. Nadis were originally defined in *marma vijñana*, the knowledge of marma, which was the forerunner to acupressure and acupuncture. Marma vijñana is the original practice, which was developed further by the Chinese and named acupuncture and acupressure. The Chinese did a lot of work on the nadi system, as they discovered the nerve meridians. They outlined the flow of the nerve meridians and discovered that if you put pressure here, this will be the

effect; if you put a needle there, that will be the effect. Using pressure and needles alters the flow of prana shakti. As a result, acupuncture, acupressure and the study of the nerve meridians have become the main source of information about nadis. However, originally the subject of nadis was dealt with in marma vijnana, which speaks of 72,000 channels that conduct the flow of prana to each and every organ, system, joint and muscle.

These flows of prana are controlled and guided by two major nadis: pingala and ida, the solar and lunar energies, prana shakti and chitta shakti. Prana shakti manages the physical behaviour of the body and chitta shakti manages the subtle behaviour of the mind. They are not two different things; they are part of the same. You have muscles and you have strength. A muscle is physiological, made up of fibres; strength is not physiological, it is just the strength of those physiological fibres. If you see a muscle, there is bound to be strength; they are part of the same structure, although the muscle and strength can be experienced separately as well. Prana is like a muscle and chitta is like the strength of the muscle; they function together. Prana is the one managing the body: the movement, nourishment and sustenance of annamaya kosha, and chitta is the subtle one managing the internal, mental functions and the psychological and psychic behaviour. Ida and pingala are the two main pathways for the flow of prana, one gross, the other subtle; they control all the nadis in our body. Every other nadi flows out of them and purification of these two nadis is the primary purpose of nadi shodhana pranayama.

Pawanmuktasana Part 1, Kosha Awareness, Progression of Shavasana, Balancing Pranayama

Pawanmuktasana part 1

In the systems of sukshma vyayama the practices are given depending on the type of asana the aspirant is performing. Sri Swamiji selected and categorized the practices into the three groups of pawanmuktasana exercises. Observing the physical condition of modern bodies – the stiffness, the tightness of the muscles and organs, the pain due to contractions and stresses in the body – Sri Swamiji put together all those practices which relate to the bones. These are the practices of pawanmuktasana part 1. In these practices, you move each and every joint of the body starting from the toes, working your way up to the hands, and coming to the head. All the joints are moved.

Stiffening of the joints is a problem that people face in their old age. There are physiological reasons for that stiffening and there are external factors, like a sedentary lifestyle. People hardly move or walk. This situation is quite chronic in Asian countries. In western countries people are more aware of the need for physical exercise, and you see people jogging, running and going for a morning walk. In Asian countries, physical training has not been given much importance, possibly due to the heat.

In such an environment, pawanmuktasana came as a big relief. The whole system of pawanmuktasana was useful as it allowed people to connect with their bodies in a manner

that they had never connected before. In pawanmuktasana, for the first time, you actually observe your toes and the movement of the toes; you guide and control that movement; you can exert pressure according to your choice, strong or gentle. In this way the mind gets connected to each and every part of the body and recognizes the body as a unit. It recognizes the need for the body to be healthy. That is one aspect of pawanmuktasana part 1.

The second aspect is the loosening up of all the tight areas of the body. While you sleep at night, the acids in the body accumulate in the joints. This makes you feel stiff when you wake up in the morning. With movement, the body becomes free of these acids, and you feel the ease. Pawanmuktasana part 1 is practised to release the accumulations of acids and gases from the body.

Finally, pawanmuktasana part 1 is practised as preparation for the classical asanas. After practising pawanmuktasana for a month, you can squat comfortably and easily, even if you have never squatted in your life. Pawanmuktasana develops flexibility and looseness, which allows you to adopt a posture. I personally find the pawanmuktasana series to be the most useful practice. In other asanas, there are dynamic movements, there is stretching and pulling, but they are not done joint by joint and part by part. This is the only group of practices which allows you to work with the whole body, from toes to head. I don't do advanced asanas, but I do pawanmuktasana 364 days of the year. It keeps the body moving. When there is a need, depending on the practice which I am doing, I can practise advanced asanas, but as regular sadhana it is only pawanmuktasana part 1.

Deepening awareness of the koshas

To dive into your koshas, into your subtle bodies, your awareness has to be contained in the practice and in what you are visualizing or repeating mentally. To focus on annamaya kosha, you know about the bones and muscles of the physical body. In the first rounds of practice, observe the

muscle movement and become aware of the physical body as I see you, as you see me. Pranamaya kosha is not visualized as the physical body but as a body of sparklers. When you burn sparklers, the sparks radiate in all directions.

In the practices today, visualize the outline of the body and inside that darkness see the sparkles. That is the visualization of pranamaya kosha. The visualization in manomaya kosha will remain blank, just chidakasha space. On the vijnanamaya kosha level, chakra visualization will be in chidakasha; even if you are visualizing mooladhara, visualize it in chidakasha, not below. Anandamaya kosha will again be blank, with the chakra disappearing when you repeat the bija mantra. The awareness will be focused on the vibrations of the mantra.

PAWANMUKTASANA PART I

Padanguli naman (toe bending): 5-5-5-5-5; movement awareness-breath awareness-visualization-chakra awareness-mantra awareness.

Goolf naman (ankle bending): 5-5-5-5-5; movement awareness-breath awareness-visualization-chakra awareness-mantra awareness.

Goolf chakra (ankle rotation): 5-5-5-5-5; movement awareness-breath awareness-visualization-chakra awareness-mantra awareness (both clockwise and anticlockwise, with feet together).

Goolf ghoornan (ankle crank): 5-5-5-5-5; movement awareness-breath awareness-visualization-chakra awareness-mantra awareness (both clockwise and anticlockwise, with each foot).

Sustaining the practice

When you do the practices five, six, seven or ten times, you are performing the movement but it is not actually affecting the body in any manner. When you do them 25 times and continue even after the body starts feeling tired, this builds up the strength and the stamina of the muscles and joints. What you are finding difficult today, in a week's time will be possible with ease and without feeling tired. From Sri Swamiji's perspective, it is always better to do a practice 25 times rather than 10. Here we are covering all the koshas. Even if you do not think of the koshas, just doing a practice 25 times will take your body to the extreme. Sustaining the practice will get you over the tiredness and give you a second wind. Then you will notice the effect of the asanas, as they reach the deeper layers of your nature and personality.

Ardha titali asana (half butterfly): 50 movements (with each leg).

Poorna titali asana (full butterfly): 50 movements.

Janu naman (knee bending): 5-5-5-5-5; movement awareness-breath awareness-visualization-chakra awareness-mantra awareness (with each leg, then 10 rounds with both legs).

Janu chakra (knee crank): 10 rounds (both clockwise and anticlockwise, with each leg and then both legs).

SWAN tip: When you practise with both legs together, imagine that you have a chalk held in between the toes and you have to draw a big circle with the chalk on a blackboard. Maintain that visualization and follow the round of the circle with your feet.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Moving awareness from one body part to the other to relax that part 3. Observation of the flow of breath in the nostrils

4. Becoming one with the coolness of the breath on inhalation and warmth of the breath on exhalation
5. Externalization.

Mushtika bandhana (fist clenching): 5–5–5–5–5; movement awareness–breath awareness–visualization–chakra awareness–mantra awareness.

Manibandha naman (wrist bending): 5–5–5–5–5; movement awareness–breath awareness–visualization–chakra awareness–mantra awareness.

Manibandha chakra (wrist rotation): 5–5–5–5–5; movement awareness–breath awareness–visualization–chakra awareness–mantra awareness (clockwise and anticlockwise, both wrists together).

Kehuni naman (elbow bending): 5–5–5–5–5; movement awareness–breath awareness–visualization–chakra awareness–mantra awareness.

Variation 1: 10 rounds sideways.

Variation 2: 10 rounds stretching the arms up.

Greeva sanchalana (neck & head movements): 5 rounds (in each direction: forward and back, looking over the shoulders, to the side to touch the ear to the shoulder, and head rotation both clockwise and anticlockwise).

SWAN tips:

- When moving the head forward and back, simply drop the head forward as far as it goes naturally, then give it a gentle push to try to touch the middle of the collar bones with your chin. Then lift the head up and look up to the ceiling.
- If there is any feeling of dizziness or light-headedness in any of the movements, become aware of that sensation in the body and stop the movement. Observe the state of lightness until it stabilizes.

SHAVASANA WITH TRIANGULAR BREATH I

Lie down comfortably, feet slightly apart, arms beside the body with the palms open, head straight. Gently close your eyes, and with the eyes closed surrender the whole body to the floor. There should be nothing tight, nothing uncomfortable in the body. Nothing should divert the attention to the body. Let the whole body experience a state of relaxation, comfort and ease.

Now observe the rise and fall of the navel with every inhalation and exhalation. When you inhale, feel the expansion of the abdominal muscles and the rising of the navel. When you exhale, feel the relaxation of the abdominal muscles and the navel coming down. Observe your breath by observing the rise and fall of the navel. There should be no effort in breathing. The breath is natural; you are simply observing the breath, and the rise and fall of the navel. Each time the navel rises, it is like a balloon filling up with air; each time the navel comes down, it is like a balloon being deflated. When you inhale, feel the prana shakti expanding the whole body. When you exhale, feel the deepening relaxation.

Bring the awareness to the body and the breath. Be aware of the breath and the movement of the abdomen. Be aware of the mind observing the breath. Be aware of the feeling of expansion and relaxation of the body with each incoming and outgoing breath. Observe the expansion of the body and the relaxation of the body. In a spontaneous manner, experience the expansion of the whole body along with the rising of the navel, and experience the relaxation of the whole body when you breathe out.

Now stop this practice and experience the breath rising from the left toes, moving up the leg and up the left side to the eyebrow centre as you inhale. From the eyebrow centre, visualize the breath moving down the right side, down the right leg and out through the right toes with the exhalation. With the next inhalation, feel the breath enter



through the right toes, move up the right leg and up the right side to the eyebrow centre. As you exhale, see the breath move down the left side, into the left leg and out the left toes. Your breath moves in the shape of a triangle, flowing up the left leg and down the right leg, then up the right leg and down the left leg. Take a complete, long breath from the toes to the eyebrow centre and from the eyebrow centre down to the toes.

Now start adding colour to the breath. When you are inhaling or exhaling through the left side, visualize the breath as blue. When you exhale and inhale through the right side, visualize the breath as red. So when you breathe in up the left leg and then up the left side to the eyebrow centre, the colour of the whole pathway and the whole breathing process is blue. When you exhale from the eyebrow centre down the right side, into the right leg and out the right toes, the visualization of the breath is red. Again, inhaling through the right toes, up the leg and up the right side to the eyebrow centre, the colour of the breath is red. While exhaling down the left side, into the left leg and out the left toes, the colour of the breath is blue.

Visualize the colour of the breath as blue at the time of inhaling up the left side. Visualize the colour of the breath as red at the time of exhaling down the right side. Again, inhaling up the right side, the breath is red, exhaling

through the left, the breath is blue. Develop a clear pathway and experience of the movement of the breath from the toes to the eyebrow centre and down. See the blue breath moving up the left side, and the red breath going out through the right side, the red breath comes in up the right side, and the blue breath going out the left side. In this manner, observe the natural breath, and the colour of the breath.

Now stop this visualization and become aware of the outer environment. Become aware of the sounds. Become aware of the people around you. Slowly move your toes, feet, legs, fingers, hands, arms. Turn the head from side to side. Take a deep breath in and stretch your whole body, then breathing out gently sit up.

Progression of shavasana

There is a sequence to the practice of shavasana. Generally people simply say, “Lie down and relax,” calling that shavasana or the relaxation pose. Lying down and relaxing can be the pose, but it is not the experience of shavasana. It is not the pose which is important, but cultivating a deeper experience in shavasana. Therefore, shavasana has a progression. We are using such a progression here. For example, when we practise the first shavasana, the breath is experienced in the nostrils. In the second shavasana, the breath is experienced as expansion and relaxation of the navel. In the third shavasana, the breath is up through the left, down through the right, up through the right, down through the left. In the fourth progression, the breath is visualized in the colour blue on the left side and red on the right side.

An arrogant yoga teacher starts straight with the advanced colour visualization. The simple yoga teacher follows the progression. I want you to be a progressive teacher and for that you need to control your own desire to teach. You should recognize the need of the people you are teaching rather than what you want to teach. This is a crucial point in teaching.

People like to teach what they themselves enjoy practising and not what the student needs. You might feel happy doing a particular asana, but that asana is not for the other person. You have to follow the progression in your teaching.

The same applies to a simple practice like shavasana for with each experience of shavasana, you are sensitizing your awareness to recognize a condition of the body which is deeper than the previous condition. The more you are able to sensitize your awareness, the more understanding you will have of the different koshas. Thus, shavasana is not just a pose of relaxation; it is also a progression. In the first stage, it is simple relaxation with breath awareness and observation of the cold and warm sensations in the nasal passage. The second stage is the expansion and relaxation of the navel. In the third stage, the awareness is on the breath moving from the left to the right side, and from the right to the left side in the form of a triangle. The fourth component that is introduced is the colour of the breath. There are many other components that we will deal with as we practise them.

Visualizing the colour of the breath is an important component, and useful in the practice of pranayama. Generally, people simply plug one nostril, breathe in and breathe out, and call that pranayama. When you add visualization of colour to the breathing process, you are not only observing the breath; you are trying to sensitize your nature to experience the prana shakti. On the left side prana is blue in colour, and on the right side prana is red – ida and pingala. Visualizing the colour, you are developing sensitivity and awareness of the flow of ida and pingala. That becomes useful in the practice of pranayama. It is also applied in further stages of nadi shodhana pranayama when you have gained mastery over the normal breathing pattern and are able to control and regulate the flow of breath.

We will practise nadi shodhana pranayama in different stages, but today's practice will be the basic or preliminary stages of nadi shodhana pranayama. We will move progressively from the basic to more advanced practice.

BALANCING PRANAYAMA

Nadi shodhana technique 1, preparatory practice: Equal inhalation and exhalation with count of 7, ratio of 1:1, 10 rounds through left nostril, 10 rounds through right nostril, 10 rounds through both.

SWAN tip: Inhale to a count of seven and exhale to a count of seven. Keep this counting constant all the time. Don't say, "Swamiji, I had only taken half a breath when you finished counting." That is wrong. Practise according to the instructions given. You will have to regulate your breath, either slowing your breath down or increasing the speed of your breath to fit the count of seven.



Nadi shodhana technique 2, alternate nostril breathing: ratio 1:1, 5 rounds.

Increasing lung capacity in pranayama

An important aspect of pranayama practice is to cross the threshold of your comfort in breathing. That is what pranayama aims for in every practice. Whatever the limit of your breath, each day you should go one step beyond that. If today you are comfortable breathing for 7 seconds, in your next practice you should do it for 8 seconds, then for 9 seconds. Each time you reach a state of comfort, add another second, each day increasing the length of your inhalation and exhalation. If there is any discomfort, stay for a few days

with the count with which you are having difficulty until you can breathe without straining yourself. When the ease comes in, again increase the count. This way, you are increasing your lung capacity at the physical level. You are forcing the lower lobe of the lungs to use air.

There are two ways of breathing. The modern body-building techniques say you have to breathe in through the chest in order to expand the chest. It is the reverse in yoga. We use the abdominal breath, not thoracic breathing. When you breathe in the upper lobe of the lungs, stress and tension is created. When the air goes in the lower lobe, relaxation is deepened. Therefore, yoga focuses more on abdominal breathing, which forces the lower lobes of the lungs to be activated. The tendency to breathe thoracically in pranayama should be avoided; the chest and the shoulders should not move. The movement is of the navel.

Purpose of bhramari pranayama

The final practice today will be bhramari pranayama, which is another balancing pranayama. If nadi shodhana balances ida and pingala, bhramari balances and regulates secretions of the hormones. Research has been done which shows that, with the practice of bhramari, melatonin can be produced in the brain. In normal conditions melatonin is produced only at the time of deep sleep, between 2 and 4 in the morning. This two-hour period between 2 and 4 o'clock is when we have the deepest and most relaxing sleep. Normally melatonin is only produced in the absence of light, in the pitch dark, but bhramari activates the production of melatonin whenever you do it, even during daytime. The quantity produced is less than at night, but the results are similar: relaxation, release of psychological stress and lowering of blood pressure.

Nadi shodhana is for the purification and balance of the ida and pingala channels; bhramari is for the regulation of the hormone secretions from the glands. With the nervous system relaxed and alpha waves emerging in the brain

after the practice of nadi shodhana pranayama, when the mind is more contained, focused and relaxed, the effect of practising bhramari pranayama is greater. It has a greater effect on the brain and gives you more benefits. For this reason, bhramari should always follow the practice of nadi shodhana.

Bhramari pranayama can also be practised in many different ways. Just as there is progression of nadi shodhana from normal breathing to regulated breathing, to controlled and guided breathing, there is also regular bhramari, controlled bhramari, guided bhramari, and there are also different postures and mudras used for bhramari in sadhana. One of the advanced forms of bhramari is closing all the doors of the body and practising bhramari with shanmukhi mudra.



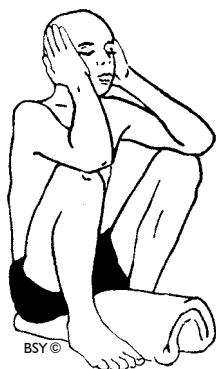
Bhramari pranayama (humming bee breath): 7 rounds.

SWAN tip: Notice the sound vibrations in the head in this basic variation of bhramari.

Variation: 5 rounds (with the armpits on the knees and palms covering the ears).

SWAN tips:

- In this variation, you will notice the sound vibrations in the heart. Sit with the legs in front, the feet at a distance of about two feet from the buttocks. Normally in nadanusandhana



asana you would place the elbows on the knees, but come forward placing the armpits on the knees, so your body is actually stooped. Then cover the ears with the palms, the centre of the palm putting pressure on the ear. Breathe in and as you exhale making a humming sound you will feel the chest vibrating.

- There is a connection between the heart and the head; you can actually feel the sound vibration coming down to the heart and you will notice the sound vibration affecting the heart.

Benefits of bhramari variation

There are many little practices that we use in India for relief of physiological conditions. One example is using hridaya mudra to regulate the heartbeat. Similarly, this bhramari variation is used for the management of cardiac problems and ischemia. It is good for relieving pain in the chest related to an angina pectoris attack.

There are other variations of bhramari. I introduced these two today, for the common understanding is that bhramari is mainly connected to the head; when you hum the effect is on the brain, on melatonin secretion, the pituitary and pineal glands, and all the organs and glands in the head. Only few people know that bhramari is also utilized for managing heart problems. The manner of practice is as we did it: with legs slightly extended and placing the upper arm or armpit on the knees. The armpit is advised for the more you go in, the more the vibrations are felt in the chest. The further you are from bringing the chest to the thighs, the more the vibration will be felt in the head. Once you get used to it and experience the benefit, I am sure many of you will start to do it at night to ensure a good night's sleep.

Ayurveda, Pawanmuktasana

Part 2, Nadi Shodhana

with Bandha

Ayurveda

As discussed previously, the practices of the pawanmuktasana series are part of the warm-up exercises for yoga which are known as *sukshma vyayama* or subtle movements. This *sukshma vyayama* was compiled by Sri Swamiji and organized in three different categories: anti-rheumatic, anti-gastric and shakti bandhas, corresponding with the three *doshas*, humours of ayurveda. We have worked with the anti-rheumatic exercises and now we embark on the anti-gastric.

Ayurveda is the ancient form of therapy of the Indian subcontinent. In fact, while we call it therapy, it is actually a lifestyle. *Ayu* means age, *veda* means knowledge, so *ayurveda* is knowledge of longevity.

Until the First World War, there was no emergency therapy, no allopathy. When people became sick, the treatment would seek to heal the body, not treat the symptom. Healing the body was known as ayurveda. It was only during the First World War, with the discovery of penicillin, that allopathy came into existence. The primary use of allopathy was originally on the frontlines. Allopathic medicine was developed to help soldiers on the battlefield to fight, by subduing the symptoms that they were experiencing and making them feel good enough to pick up their arms again. Since then, allopathy has been used more to treat the symptom and not the disease. If you have high blood

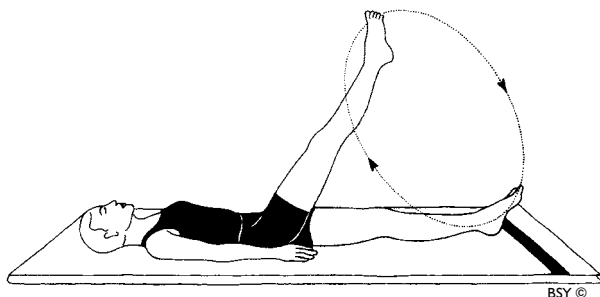
pressure, you pop a pill to reduce the pressure, but not to eradicate the cause of hypertension. Similarly with other illnesses and problems. You simply suppress the symptom from emerging and keep it from affecting your actions, performance and interactions in life. Therefore, allopathy is not a form of therapy to eradicate illness and disease; it is suppressing the symptoms for you to be able to function.

Ayurveda, on the other hand, deals with building up the physical systems through natural means. The various elements considered in ayurveda include diet, for diet plays a vital role in the health and stamina of the body; proper balanced exercise; intake of *aushadhi* or herbs, to develop the immunity of the body; routine and lifestyle regulation, to adjust the body clock to rise, eat and sleep at specific times; and the management of the doshas in the body. The three humours – kapha, vata and pitta – have been identified by ayurveda as the advance party, the scouts, before the army of the disease marches in. If you are able to manage the scouting party and maintain your physical equilibrium, many illnesses which arise due to kapha, vata and pitta imbalance can be avoided.

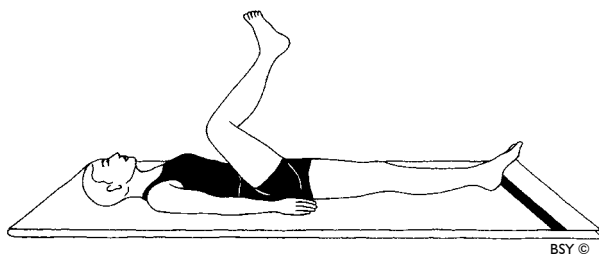
Naturopathy also became part of ayurveda. This is the use of water, mud, the sun's rays, and other natural elements. In this way, ayurveda comprises many different mutually supportive systems to regulate lifestyle and health. Pawanmuktasana part 2 also forms part of the exercise group in ayurveda, and deals with the stomach, the large and small intestines, liver, kidneys, pancreas, the whole digestive system and trunk region. The practices exert pressure and influence the digestive and cardiovascular systems.

In the practices today, the awareness will be of chakra and mantra.

PAWANMUKTASANA PART 2



Padachakrasana (leg rotation): 5–5; chakra awareness–mantra awareness (both clockwise and anti-clockwise with each leg and then with both legs together; each sequence followed by relaxation, observing the breath in the region of the navel).



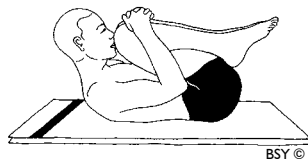
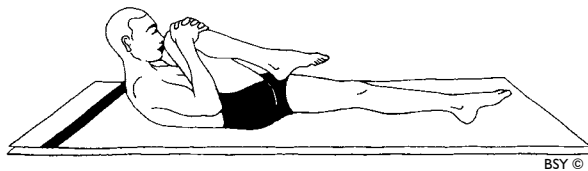
Pada sanchalanasana (cycling) with individual legs: 5–5; chakra awareness–mantra awareness (both forward and backward movement with each leg, followed by relaxation).

Pada sanchalanasana (cycling) with both legs: 5–5; chakra awareness–mantra awareness (both legs together, followed by alternate leg cycling both forward and backward at four different speeds).

Focus on the right chakra

There are specific chakras on which you have to concentrate while practising an asana. If you concentrate on a different chakra you will not feel comfortable and you may experience

physical blocks. Therefore it is important that you focus on the right chakra to allow the asanas to flow smoothly from one to the next.



Supta pawanmuktasana (leg lock pose): 5–5; chakra awareness—mantra awareness (with each leg and then with both legs, followed by shavasana, observing the rise and fall of the navel).

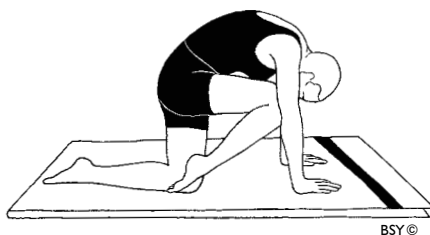
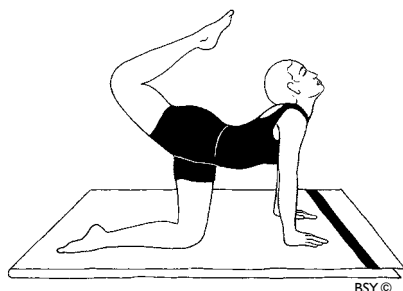
Relaxing deeper each time

Each time try to relax your body more than before. The deeper the relaxation in between practices, the easier it will be to perform the next asana. Shavasana is not just lying



on the floor and letting the body go; there is a conscious effort to deepen the state of physical, muscular and mental relaxation. If you are able to deepen your experience with each relaxation, the next practice of asana will become smoother and easier.

COUNTERPOSE FOR PAWANMUKTASANA PART 2

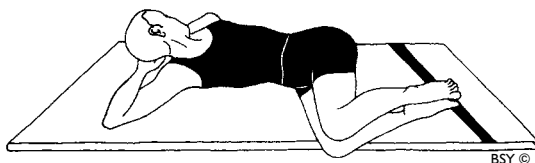


Vyaghrasana (tiger pose): 5 rounds (each side).

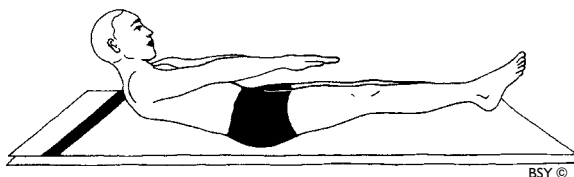
SWAN tip: In pawanmuktasana part 2 there is a lot of forward bending. The best counterpose for this is vyaghrasana.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor. 2. Alternate breathing from left toes to eyebrow centre, eyebrow centre to right toes and out, then from right toes to eyebrow centre, and from eyebrow centre out through left toes. 3. Visualizing every inhalation and exhalation on the left side as blue, every inhalation and exhalation through the right side as red. 4. Externalization.

PAWANMUKTASANA PART 2



Supta udarakarshanasana (sleeping abdominal stretch pose): 5 rounds (each side).



Naukasana (boat pose): 5 rounds (of each of three variations); chakra awareness—mantra awareness.

Variation 1: In the final position, the heels, arms and head should be 9 inches above the ground. Breathe in while raising the legs and upper body off the ground.

Variation 2: Tightening the whole body and making fists. Breathe in while on the floor and hold the breath in while raising the legs and upper body.

Variation 3: Keeping the feet together, raising the head, legs and arms higher, and trying to grab hold of the toes. Find your balance in the final position.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Observing the rise and fall of the navel and the expansion and relaxation of the abdomen 3. Alternate breathing from left toes to eyebrow centre, eyebrow centre to right toes and out, then from right toes to eyebrow centre, and from eyebrow centre out through left toes 4. Visualizing every inhalation and exhalation on the left side as blue, every inhalation and exhalation through the right side as red 5. Externalization.

***Note:** While in the beginning sessions all the five components (movement awareness, breath awareness, visualization, chakra awareness, mantra awareness) were practised individually, as the days progressed, practitioners were expected to have a spontaneous awareness of the first three components in every posture. The specific focus was on the last two components: chakra and mantra awareness. However, in practices where Swamiji felt that practitioners had difficulty coming to terms with the physical component itself, he focused on the physical aspect along with the breath.*

Consciousness and energy

Einstein had a theory, $E = mc^2$, by which energy equals matter multiplied by the speed of light squared. Yoga also has a theory: $C + E = m^2$. You have two hemispheres; one hemisphere is 'C' or consciousness, the other 'E' or energy. The logical, rational and linear hemisphere is C, and the artistic, intuitive, creative one is E. Putting C and E together equals m squared. 'M' is matter and the square is duality. So, energy and consciousness put together create the world of matter and duality. That is the yogic theory.

It is $C + E$ that has to be cultivated and for that we come to the practice of pranayama, as pranayama seems to have a direct effect on the human brain.

PRANAYAMA

Nadi shodhana with jalandhara bandha: alternate nostril breathing with internal retention, count of 10, ratio of 1:1:1, 3 rounds.

SWAN tip: When you finish, remain with the eyes closed and observe the breath in the nasal passage and feel the coolness of the breath at the time of inhalation and warmth at the time of exhalation.

Nadi shodhana with jalandhara bandha: alternate nostril breathing with internal and external retention, count of 10, ratio of 1:1:1:1, 3 rounds.



SWAN tip: Take five 5 normal breaths in between rounds.

Bhramari pranayama (humming bee breath) with forward bend: 7 rounds.

Variation 3: Sitting in a cross-legged posture or in vajrasana, bend forward and place the elbows on the floor in front of you, the chin held in your palms. In this variation, the spine is stretched completely.

SWAN tips:

- When making the humming sound, you will feel the sound vibration moving from the navel into the heart region. This has a soothing, calming effect on the heart. As you develop fluency in this practice, you will feel the vibration in the heart itself.
- In this variation, you cannot follow the normal rule of bhramari of keeping the teeth slightly apart. Here the pressure of the head on the palms closes the jaws and shuts the mouth completely.
- The back should be flat, not hunched. You should feel the stretch of the throat, as well as the stretch and pressure on the spinal vertebrae in the thoracic and cardiac region. The more you stretch your spine, the easier it becomes to feel the sound also in the lower regions.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Moving awareness from one body part to the other to relax that part, visualizing the part in chidakasha, physically relaxing and naming the part 3. Externalization.

Chakra Awareness, Pawanmuktasana Part 2, Bandhas

Chakra awareness

Sri Swamiji has given places of chakra concentration for asanas in the book *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha*. These should be followed to begin with. As a general rule, wherever there is maximum stretch, that is the point of focus. Focusing on the chakra wherever the maximum stretch is experienced is the only statement in the yogic literature. If the stretch is in the abdomen, the focus will be manipura. If the stretch is in the legs, the focus will be mooladhara. If the stretch is in the arms, the focus will be anahata or ajna. In this manner, Sri Swamiji identified the different chakras and noted them, and that is what we are following.

The same chakra has to be followed every day in an asana. It is not that you change once a week or once a month to something different according to your liking. The purpose is to bring about a sequential, progressive state. The purpose of this Progressive Training is yoga sadhana, to become immersed deeper, to experience the benefits that yoga talks about in the literatures. For this progressive advancement you need to focus on the same chakra every day. Just as an asana is identified by a posture, it is also identified by a chakra.

PAWANMUKTASANA PART 2

SWAN tips:

- Before beginning the practices, relax your body in shavasana for a few moments and mentally prepare yourself for the practice of pawanmuktasana part 2, the anti-gastric exercises.
- While doing both legs together, you can place your hands under the buttocks as a support.
- Whenever you are in shavasana between practices, feel the breath in the abdominal region. By watching the breath in the abdominal region, you will be able to regulate the breath. By controlling your breathing, you will be able to relax the whole body quickly.

Padachakrasana (leg rotation): 5–5; chakra awareness–mantra awareness (both clockwise and anti-clockwise with each leg and then with both legs together; each sequence followed by relaxation, observing the breath in the abdominal region and experiencing expansion and relaxation).

Pada sanchalanasana (cycling) with individual legs: 5–5; chakra awareness–mantra awareness (both forward and backward movement with each leg, followed by relaxation).

Pada sanchalanasana (cycling) with both legs: 5–5; chakra awareness–mantra awareness (both legs together, followed by alternate leg cycling both forward and backward at four different speeds).

Supta pawanmuktasana (leg lock pose): 5 rounds; chakra awareness (with each leg and then with both legs).

Vyaghrasana (tiger pose): 5 rounds (each side, as counterpose for pawanmuktasana part 2).



Naukasana (boat pose): 5–5 rounds (of each of the three variations, as in the previous session); chakra awareness–mantra awareness.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Observing the rise and fall of the abdomen with every incoming and outgoing breath.

Supta udarakarshanasana (sleeping abdominal stretch pose): 5 rounds (each side)

SWAN tip: The head should remain straight. Only the spine and the legs are moving.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Alternate breathing from left toes to eyebrow centre, eyebrow centre to right toes and out, then from right toes to eyebrow centre, and from eyebrow centre out through left toes 3. Visualizing every inhalation and exhalation on the left side as blue light for ida, every inhalation and exhalation through the right side as red light for pingala 4. Externalization.

BANDHAS

Opening the granthis

There are three areas in the body which tend to be affected by stress, pressure and conflict, both external and internal. These three areas are the neck area, the abdominal area and the area of the perineum. Whenever you are under stress or feeling anxious, either all three of these will contract and tighten up or one of them will be most prominent in contracting and tightening up. Where these three physical blocks take place in your body, there are three *granthis*, knots or plexuses. The perineal granthi is known as Brahma granthi; the abdominal granthi is known as Vishnu granthi; and the one in the neck is known as Rudra granthi. If you look at the literature on kundalini yoga, you will find there a guide to the chakras, but beyond the chakras something called kanda is also described. Kanda is a granthi. Kanda is also visible in the physical body. It is not connected to the chakra system; it is just a knot of nerves and nerve plexuses in the perineum.

The bandhas are used to influence these three granthis. When you practise moola bandha, the perineal lock, you are stimulating Brahma granthi, in the region of mooladhara. When you are practising uddiyana bandha, you are influencing the abdominal lock. With the practice of jalandhara bandha, you are eliminating the lock from Rudra granthi in the neck. The purpose of bandha is to remove these blocks. Bandha itself means to lock, to hold, to contain, to tighten, to tie in a knot. With the practice of bandhas you aim to open the three granthis. Once the granthis are open, physiologically, the impulses travel in the sensory and motor cortex without any obstruction. Pranically, the result is that prana flows equally in all the chakras and through the nadis without obstruction. The blocks which tighten up different parts of the body are released to allow the circulation of blood to happen and to activate the prana shakti. That is one purpose of bandhas: to open the knots.

Creating reverse pressure on the pranas

Another purpose of bandhas is to create reverse pressure on the pranas. In fact, there is only one prana; however, according to various functions of the body, it has been identified as different pranas. The one single prana is known as *prana shakti* or *maha prana*. The names given based on functions in the body are five: prana, apana, samana, udana and vyana. Three of these pranas are affected in bandha practice. Prana is the incoming breath and its location is in the ribcage, from the throat down to the diaphragm. You breathe in to survive, and prana affects the lungs and heart. Pranayama is doubly beneficial for any type of heart problem as one of its direct effects is on the lungs and heart. Apana is the downward moving force from the navel to the perineum; it is responsible for elimination of wastes from the body. Samana is the digestive fire, active between the ribcage and the navel, and responsible for digestion and assimilation.

When you practise moola bandha, you are actually reversing the flow of apana from downward pressure to upward pressure. When you practise uddiyana bandha, the pressure is exerted up into the chest and down towards the perineum, with emptiness in the abdominal area; this way prana is reversed. In jalandhara bandha, udana and prana are affected. Udana is located in the extremities, like the head, hands, arms and legs. Udana is the fourth prana; the fifth prana is vyana which is like the second wind, or the emergency prana. When people are running and feel tired, but see that they have 50 metres to the finish line, they get what is called the second wind. This is the energy, the stamina, which allows them to dash for another 50 metres, after which they collapse. That second wind is actually vyana kicking in after the energy depletes from the various organs of the body. As you are running, the legs and hands are moving, and there is depletion of udana. Vyana is like the emergency prana which supports the other four when they are in a state of depletion to again raise the level of prana shakti.

To sum up, the two purposes of bandhas are to release the granthis, the blocks, and to create a reverse flow in the different pranic movements in the body. Apana is pushed up, prana is pushed down, samana is emptied, udana is pressurized.

Practising bandhas

Bandhas become a powerful combination with pranayamas to pinpoint and focus prana shakti, and to awaken prana shakti. Initially, while you are training yourself to breathe in properly and to experience the pranic energy, pranayamas are stand-alone practices. Once you have command and mastery over your respiration, and are able to experience the flow of prana shakti in your body with the normal practice of pranayama, you can move into practising pranayama with bandhas. Bandha is used with pranayama for a specific purpose: stimulating a psychic centre or releasing a knot in the granthi, and allowing the prana to flow uninterrupted in the body.

The first bandha we will practise is uddiyana bandha, the abdominal one. Preparation for uddiyana bandha is done with agnisara kriya. *Agnisara* means stimulating the fire; *agni* is fire, *sara* is to increase, so agnisara is the practice which increases the internal fire. *Kriya* is the action which stimulates the fire.

PREPARATION FOR BANDHAS

Agnisara kriya (activating the digestive fire) variation: 3 rounds, 15 breaths each (from standing).

SWAN tips:

- Start from standing, with the feet shoulder-width apart. Breathe in deeply. Then expel the air through the mouth, bending forward with the knees bent and supporting your body by placing the hands on the knees. Holding the breath out, move the stomach in and out in 15 rapid contractions and expansions. After 15 movements of the stomach, stand upright and breathe in.

- Make sure you do not come up breathing; that is incorrect and will harm your body. It can affect the heart and it can affect the lungs. Breathe in only when you are standing upright.

PRANAYAMA

Nadi shodhana with jalandhara bandha and moola bandha: alternate nostril breathing with internal retention, count of 10, ratio of 1:1:1, 3 rounds.

SWAN tip: Take five normal breaths in between rounds.

Nadi shodhana with jalandhara bandha, moola bandha and uddiyana bandha: alternate nostril breathing with internal and external retention, ratio of 1:1:1:1, 3 rounds (increasing the count from 5 in the first round to 7 in the second round and then 10 in the third round).

SWAN tip: Take a few normal breaths in between rounds.

Bhramari pranayama (humming bee breath): 7 rounds.



SHAVASANA WITH TRIANGULAR BREATH 2

Lie down comfortably with the legs apart, arms beside the body with the palms open, eyes closed. Surrender the whole body to the floor. Visualize your body lying on the floor like a rag doll: effortless, tensionless, nothing tight, loose, comfortable and relaxed.

Observe the flow of the natural breath. See the flow of the breath in the whole body, ascending from the left side to the eyebrow centre, and descending from the eyebrow centre down the right side. Then again ascending up through the right side, and descending through the left side. Inhaling blue through the left, exhaling red through the right. Inhaling red through the right, exhaling blue through the left. Inhaling blue through the left. In this way, observe the movement of the breath and the coloured light. Move your mind, your awareness, with the breath: up the leg to the eyebrow centre, and from the eyebrow centre down the other leg. Continue with this practice for a few moments. Visualize half of your body as blue and half as red. Ida, the blue side, the left side. Pingala, the red side, the right side.

Experience the vastness within you. Experience the space within you. Experience the vastness, the space, the expansiveness within the body. Complete relaxation.

Now stop this practice and externalize the mind. Observe the outside sounds. Observe the people around you. Externalize the mind. Externalize the senses. Slowly move your toes, feet, legs, fingers, hands, arms, and turn the head from side to side. Take a deep breath in and stretch the whole body. Then gently sit up, keeping the eyes closed.

Pawanmuktasana Part 3, Control and Expansion of Prana

Shakti bandhas

Today we begin with the practice of the shakti bandha kriyas. They are also known as pawanmuktasana part 3. *Shakti* means energy, strength and stamina, and *bandha* means blocked. This group of practices releases the blockages of energy from the body. That is the literal meaning of the term shakti bandha.

In pawanmuktasana part 1, we performed movements for all the joints. The group of practices is known as anti-rheumatic, as their purpose is to remove the stiffness, the acids and the gases from the joints. Pawanmuktasana part 1 works on the level of vata: gases and air. Pawanmuktasana part 2 is called anti-gastric; it exerts influence on the digestive system, as well as the systems supportive of digestion. The emphasis is on the abdominal area. Pressure on the digestive region is created with leg rotations and other movements affecting the abdomen. While pawanmuktasana part 2 is for pitta, pawanmuktasana part 3 is for kapha, which is experienced in the chest, in the lungs, and in the abdominal organs. The series of practices of pawanmuktasana part 3, or the shakti bandhas, aid in removing kapha from the system.

Most of the body has been exercised in the previous movements – the legs, the arms, the head – but what has not been looked after is the spine. The spine is the centre

which, when free, gives you mobility, dynamism, vitality, stamina and strength. If the spine becomes stiff, that energy is blocked. You cannot even walk properly; there is pain in movement, in twisting, in bending, and there is loss of stamina, strength and energy. The focus of the shakti bandhas is to free the spine, to open up the vertebrae and to mobilize the spinal cord, so that all the stiffness, tension and tiredness can be released and flexibility of the spine can be acquired. With spinal flexibility and release of the vertebrae, the pads in between the vertebrae become free of pressure and there is a general sense of relaxation and vitality. As the upper body relaxes with the loosening of the spine, the shakti bandha postures also help expel the mucus from the lungs and the windpipe.

When we use the term shakti bandha, we are referring to specific practices that affect the spinal cord and that release the blocks in the spine. In the spine are all the plexuses, chakras and nerves together. When the whole spine is released from stress and tension, it also affects the brain.

PAWANMUKTASANA PART 3 (with legs out in front)

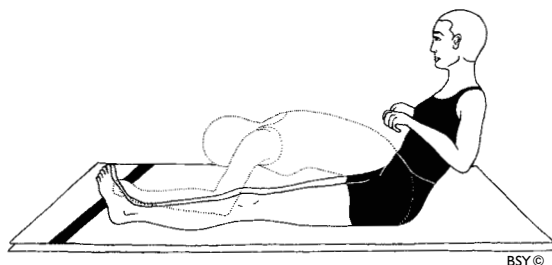


Rajju karshanasana (pulling the rope): 7 rounds (with each arm).

SWAN tips:

- Only the eyes move, while the head remains still.

- As you raise the arm, keep the elbow straight and feel the stretch along that side of the spine. This stretch affects the nerves, muscles and ligaments on the stretched side, with the release taking place all along the spine. You will also feel a small contraction on the opposite side and some slight pressure near the shoulder blade.
- This practice releases stiffness from the sides.



Nauka sanchalanasana (rowing the boat): 5–5; chakra awareness–mantra awareness (both forward and backward movements).

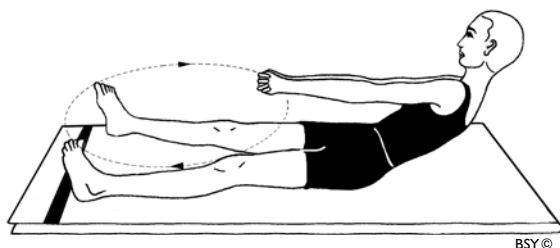
SWAN tips:

- Start with the hands in fists by the side of the knees. Breathing in, lean back and raise the arms; breathing out, bend forward.
- When you move back, lean about 45 degrees; that is the angle of the body for rowing your boat effectively.
- The major movements in this practice are in the hip region and shoulder blades. Moving back and forth helps the coccyx and the sacral areas to loosen up, and the rotation works on the area of the shoulder blades.

Chakki chalanasana (churning the mill): 5–5; chakra awareness–mantra awareness (both clockwise and anti-clockwise).

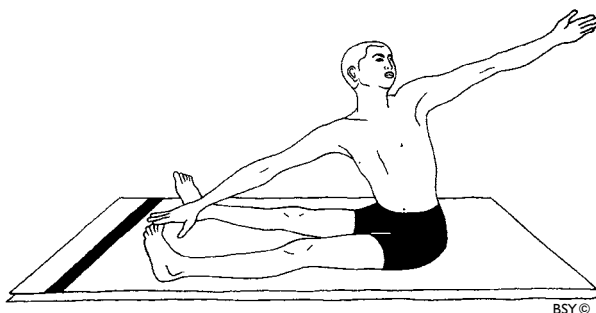
SWAN tips:

- Bend forward as much as you can, but lean back only 45 degrees.



- Like the previous practice, this rotation works on the coccyx and sacral areas, as well as the upper shoulder blade area.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Observing the flow of the natural breath in the nostrils 3. Observing sensations of coolness and warmth inside the nasal passage 4. Externalization.



Gatyatmak meru vakrasana (dynamic spinal twist): 10 to 15 rounds (to each side).

SWAN tip:

- When twisting, you should look at the back hand, so the neck is in a straight line with the spine, not bent forward. The twist is felt in the whole spine.
- The focus of this asana is on regulating the breath and synchronizing it with the movement.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Expansion of the abdomen with every inhalation and relaxation of the abdomen with every exhalation 3. Externalization.

Two types of shakti bandhas

There are two categories of shakti bandha practices. In the first group, consisting of four practices, the legs are stretched out in front, as you experienced in pulling the rope, rowing the boat, churning the mill, and the dynamic spinal twist. The remaining shakti bandhas are performed from squatting. Squatting is important for opening up the pelvic region. You will also notice that there is a greater stretch on the spine in the squatting pose. Since there is a wide variety of nationalities here, and not everybody is used to squatting, we will start with one preparatory practice.

PAWANMUKTASANA PART 3 (from squatting position)

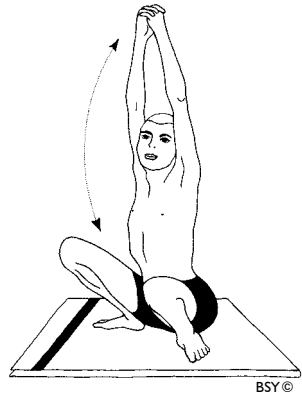


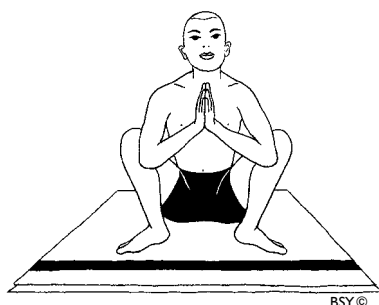
Utthanasana (squat and rise pose): 3 times 3 rounds; first round coming down 33%, second round 66%, third round 99%.

SWAN tip: Though not part of the shakti bandha series, utthanasana is important to learn how to squat and loosen up the joints.

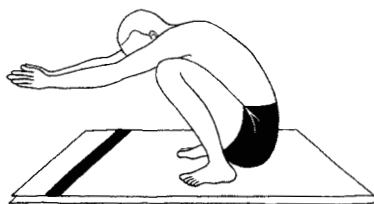
Kashtha takshanasana (chopping wood): 7 rounds.

SWAN tip: The movement in this practice is similar to pulling the rope, the first shakti bandha in the group that is performed with the legs straight.



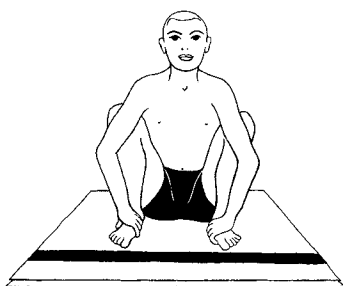


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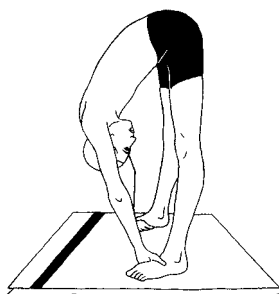


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Namaskarasana (salutation pose): 7 rounds.



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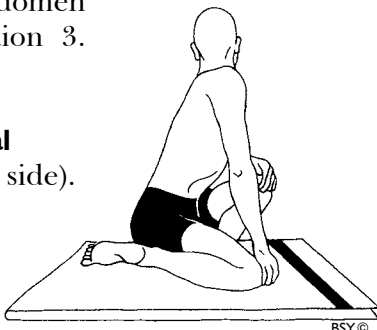
Vayu nishkasana (wind releasing pose): 7 rounds.

SWAN tip: Keep the fingers or hands tucked under the arches of the feet. Raise the buttocks as high as you can, and each time you practise, make one percent extra effort to stretch yourself until you are able to straighten the legs.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Expansion and relaxation of the abdomen with inhalation and exhalation 3. Externalization.

Udarakarshanasana (abdominal stretch pose): 5 rounds (each side).

SWAN tip: In this asana the spine is turned and twisted in a static posture, to loosen all the joints and vertebrae,

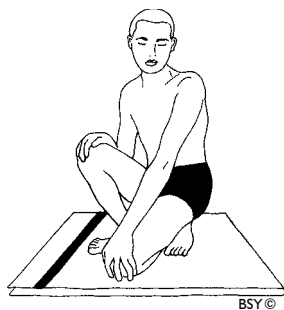


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and to release the pressure from the back.

Kauva chalasana (crow walking)

SWAN tip: When you pick up a broom to sweep, do it in crow walk.



Balancing the doshas

As you rotate the body, you are loosening up the mucus from inside. The squatting poses, combined with raising and lifting movements, create internal pressure and tend to bring the mucus up into the throat, from where you can expel it. Even though broadly speaking, pawanmuktasana part 3 is for kapha, pawanmuktasana 2 for pitta and pawanmuktasana 1 for vata, you should not be too rigid with these categories. Pitta, vata and kapha go together; it is their effects in the body that these practices help to manage.

In pawanmuktasana part 1, you are working with your limbs, although vata or gas is formed mainly in the abdomen. You also have pitta and kapha in the abdomen. Therefore, with the full series of pawanmuktasana the three doshas are brought into balance and any excess is expelled. It is only when this three-part series is complete that you can enter into the actual practice of asanas.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Alternate breathing in a V-shape from left toes to eyebrow centre, eyebrow centre to right toes and out, then from right toes to eyebrow centre, and from eyebrow centre out through left toes 3. Visualizing the flow of breath on the left side as blue light, the flow of breath on the right side as red light 4. Externalization.

Control and expansion of prana

Pranayama is generally viewed as breath control or regulation; however, the word 'pranayama' has two different meanings. The first meaning is found in the words prana

and yama. *Yama* means to control, so prana-yama is the control of prana. The second meaning comes from prana and *ayama*, dimension or expanding the dimension of prana. The two meanings indicate the two purposes of pranayama: one, to control the pranic flow, and two, to enlarge the pranic flow or expand the dimension of prana. You should consider both these ideas in your own practice and in your teaching. Are you teaching your students prana-yama or prana-ayama? You should begin with control and then move into expansion.

The control aspect is managed through the breath. The breath gives you the fluency to change the flow of prana: to become aware of it and regulate it by regulating the length of the breath. In prana-yama, control of prana, you use the breath. In the practice of prana-ayama, expansion of prana, you are not focusing on the breath; you are using visualization along with the breath, adding another element.

What you have been practising so far, closing one nostril and opening the other, closing that and opening the first one, is control of prana. You have been breathing in for 7 seconds, and then elongating the breath to 10, to 15, to 20, to 30. We have not come to prana-ayama, the expansion practice yet. In the first half of the course, the focus is on the breath and prana; if you are comfortable with the breath, then you can focus on your prana. You should not be turning black and blue holding the breath and thinking, 'How do I expand my prana?' That is not pranayama.

The breath-related practices are always taught before teaching the mind-related practices of pranayama. The first effort should be to elongate the process of breathing in and out. There has to be a conscious effort to lengthen the breath in every practice of pranayama. If you were breathing for 7 seconds yesterday, in and out, today you should breathe for 8, tomorrow you should breathe for 9, and the day after tomorrow you should breathe for 10 seconds. If you increase by one second every day, you will develop the capacity of the body to breathe in and out for 20 seconds, 30 seconds, over

a period of time. Once you have developed that mastery in controlling the breath, you can move into the ayama practice.

When you move into the ayama practice, there are other practices like prana nidra and prana vidya that help realize the potential of prana. The prana vidya practices can also be done with pranayama; that aspect has not yet been taught or touched, as breath regulation must be acquired before moving into the higher practices of pranayama. The tightness, breathlessness and agitation of the breath has to subdue before you move into pranic expansion. The physical body should not distract the mind. There should be enough command and mastery so the length of the breath or retention does not cause the heart to palpitate. If you can hold the breath for 20 seconds and the heartbeat is normal, that shows command over the breathing process.

PRANAYAMA

Nadi shodhana with jalandhara, uddiyana and moola bandhas: alternate nostril breathing with internal and external retention, count of 7, ratio of 1:1:1:1, 4 rounds.

SWAN tips:

- If you feel agitated, take a few deep breaths in and out. Begin the next round when the breath returns to normal.
- When you have completed the rounds, remain seated with eyes closed, observing the breath in the passage between the navel and the throat.

Bhastrika pranayama (bellows breath) with jalandhara and moola bandhas: 3 rounds (on each side and then with both nostrils), 10 bhastrika breaths with equal force in inhalation and exhalation, followed by inner retention with jalandhara and moola bandhas.

SWAN tips:

- Bhastrika is rapid breathing, with equal emphasis on inhalation and exhalation, unlike kapalbhata in which the

emphasis is only on exhalation. The same quantity of air comes in and goes out.

- In the first round of 10 breaths the speed is slow; in the second round the speed is medium; in the third round the speed is as fast as you can go without moving the shoulders, only the abdomen should move.
- The eleventh inhalation is long and deep. Hold jalandhara and moola bandhas for as long as you can comfortably, without counting.

SHAVASANA: ROTATING THE AWARENESS AROUND THE BODY

Lie down comfortably. The feet are slightly apart, arms beside the body with palms open, head straight and eyes closed. Mentally check each and every part of the body, releasing all tightness and tension from the body.

Observe the whole body mentally. Observe the right leg and relax the whole right leg. Awareness of the left leg. Relax the whole left leg. Observe the right arm and relax it. Observe the left arm and relax it. The trunk, the back, the head. Surrender the whole body to the floor. There is no voluntary control; there is no conscious control. The body is in a state of relaxation. We are going to check the whole body by moving the awareness through each and every part of the body, revitalizing, relaxing and de-stressing all these different parts which will be named.

As you hear the name of a body part, repeat the name after me mentally. Visualize the part of the body in chidakasha, and energize, relax the part that you are visualizing. In this way, we will move through the different parts of the body quickly, repeating the name of the part, visualizing, relaxing and energizing it. Starting from the right side. Right hand thumb, first finger, second finger, third finger, fourth finger, four fingers and thumb together, palm, back of the hand, wrist, lower arm, elbow, upper arm, shoulder, armpit, side, waist, right hip, right thigh, knee, calf muscle, ankle, heel,

sole, right big toe, second toe, third toe, fourth toe, fifth toe, five toes together. The whole right side, the whole right side, the whole right side. Awareness of the whole right side. Relaxation of the whole right side. Energization of the whole right side. Feel lightness in the whole right side.

Now bring your awareness to the left. Left hand thumb, first finger, second finger, third finger, fourth finger, four fingers and thumb together, palm, back of the hand, wrist, lower arm, elbow, upper arm, shoulder, armpit, side, waist, left hip, thigh, knee, calf muscle, ankle, heel, sole, left big toe, second toe, third toe, fourth toe, fifth toe, five toes together. The whole left side, the whole left side, the whole left side. Visualize, relax and energize the whole left side.

Now the back of the body. Right buttock, left buttock, right waist, left waist, right side of the back, left side of the back, the spinal cord, right shoulder blade, left shoulder blade, back of the neck, back of the head. The whole back, the whole back, the whole back.

Now the front: forehead, forehead, forehead, right temple, left temple, right ear, left ear, right eyebrow, left eyebrow, eyebrow centre, right eye, left eye, bridge of the nose, right nostril, left nostril, tip of the nose, the whole nose, right cheek, left cheek, upper lip, lower lip, chin, throat, right collar bone, left collar bone, right side of the chest, left side of the chest, depression of the chest, abdomen, right side of the abdomen, left side of the abdomen, upper abdomen, navel, lower abdomen. The whole body, the whole body, the whole body.

Feel the relaxation and energy in the whole body. Feel the lightness in the whole body. Now externalize the mind, become aware of the outer environment, become aware of the people around you. Externalize the mind, observe the body lying on the floor, the sounds, the noises around you, people around you, become aware of everything. Slowly move the toes, feet, legs, fingers, hands, arms, turn the head from side to side. Take a deep breath in and stretch the whole body, and then gently sit up with your eyes closed.

Pawanmuktasana Part 3, Raja Yoga Asana, Comfort in Pranayama, Shatkarma

PAWANMUKTASANA PART 3

Rajju karshanasana (pulling the rope): 5 rounds (with each arm).

Nauka sanchalanasana (rowing the boat): 5–5; chakra awareness–mantra awareness (both forward and backward movements, followed by relaxation of the body in the sitting position and awareness of the breath in the nostrils, observing the cool and warm sensation as you breathe in and out).

Chakki chalanasana (churning the mill): 10 rounds; chakra awareness (both clockwise and anticlockwise directions, followed by relaxation as above).

SWAN tip: The legs are as wide apart as is comfortable. The movement of the hands is over the feet, stretching the sides.

Gatyatmak meru vakrasana (dynamic spinal twist): 10 to 15 rounds (to each side).

SWAN tip: Breathe in to the centre from one side and breathe out to the other side in one smooth flowing movement.

SHAVASANA WITH AWARENESS OF RECHARGING AND RELAXING THE BODY

Lie down comfortably in shavasana, feet apart, arms beside the body, palms open, head straight, eyes closed. In this posture relax the whole physical body, observe the whole body mentally and allow the whole body to relax. Complete awareness and relaxation of the whole physical body. Surrender the whole body to the floor; observe your body lying on the floor, free of tension or tightness.

In this state of relaxation, observe the movement of the navel with every inhalation and exhalation. See the rise and fall of the navel. With every inhalation recharge the body with energy; with every exhalation deepen the experience of the body relaxing. At the time of inhalation, experience a feeling of lightness, buoyancy; at the time of exhalation, experience a deeper relaxation. Awareness of the breath, observing the rise and fall of the navel. Experience physical comfort, relaxation, lightness.

Now stop this practice. Externalize the mind. Slowly move the toes, feet, legs, fingers, hands, arms, turn the head from side to side. Take a deep breath in. Stretch the whole body and sit up with your eyes closed and then slowly open your eyes.

Comfort in asana

There are three trends in the practice of asana from the perspectives of hatha yoga, raja yoga and kriya yoga. The first trend, in hatha yoga, is dynamic. The second trend, in raja yoga, is more static. The third trend, in kriya yoga, evolves out of the second.

In the dynamic practices of hatha yoga, the focus is on body movement, not on concentration, comfort or stability. The body movement in hatha yoga is more like dynamic exercise, and many people practise in that manner. When you move beyond hatha yoga and come to raja yoga, the definition of asana becomes *sthiram*, steady, *sukham*, comfortable, *asanam*,

posture. These are the two criteria in raja yoga: steadiness and comfort of the posture. When you train yourself to be steady and comfortable in asana, the mind gradually goes into a state of pratyahara; the mind withdraws. That is the difference in the raja yoga asanas. The focus here is always on the mind, and on relaxing and quietening the mind. While hatha yoga makes the body and mind dynamic and active, raja yoga pulls the mind back from the body, from the asana. What we are doing today is the raja yoga practice. The asanas are the same, however; after every asana you will focus on the breath, the steadiness in the body, stability and comfort.

Comfort arises due to a mental state called happiness. You experience discomfort when there is no happiness in the mind. You are comfortable when your mind is at peace and happy. Therefore, while the physical body has to be still, steady and comfortable, the mind also has to be happy in the posture. That state of happiness will bring in the component of comfort. Thus, it can be said that asana is that in which one experiences steadiness and continuous happiness. While performing an asana, be happy in it. That will reflect in your posture and performance, and on how the body moves; the level of comfort will come in and the body will follow the mind. What you visualize, the body will do.

You have been visualizing the perfect posture, yet the body is not able to do it. If you are trying to do the perfect posture in one go, it can lead to mental agitation, as you are not identifying with what you can do but with your limitations. When you think, ‘I want to do like that but I can’t go beyond this’, it creates resistance and a feeling of anxiety. The idea of sukha or comfort is not only a physical condition but also a mental state where you do not demand your body to go beyond its capacity; you allow the body to find its own comfort and balance.

In the *Yoga Sutras* the definition of asana is given as *sthiram sukham asanam*. Until now you have been thinking of sthiram and sukham as two different conditions that one has to acquire in a posture. I have also been saying that. However,

the words can also be seen to mean one condition of *sthira sukha*, a steady feeling of comfort in the posture. This changes the whole understanding. The steadiness is not in the body; the steadiness is in the mind. When the mind remains in a state of comfort in a posture, that is a raja yoga asana.

In the following practice, we will have a break of a few moments between every asana. Every asana will be done keeping the eyes closed, focusing on the comfort in the practice. That is the raja yoga system.

PAWANMUKTASANA PART 3

Utthanasana (squat and rise pose): 3 times 5 rounds; first round coming down 33%, second round 66%, third round 99%.

Kashtha takshanasana (chopping wood): 9 rounds.

Namaskarasana (salutation pose): 7 rounds.

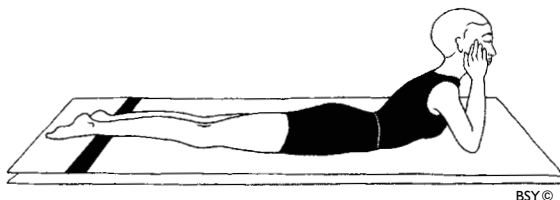
Sitting relaxation: Stretch your legs out in front, support the back with the hands, close the eyes. Bump the knees up and down for few moments, and then relax the whole body. In this posture relax the whole body. Feel the breath in the nasal passage. Feel the body becoming free from pain, stress and tension. Feel the body growing light. Observe and relax the whole body.

Vayu nishkasana (wind releasing pose): 9 rounds.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Alternate breathing from left toes to eyebrow centre, eyebrow centre to right toes and out, then from right toes to eyebrow centre, and from eyebrow centre out through left toes 3. Externalization.

Udarakarshanasana (abdominal stretch pose): 7 rounds.

COUNTERPOSES FOR PAWANMUKTASANA PART 3



Makarasana (crocodile pose)

SWAN tip: Become comfortable in this posture. Breathe normally, and when you are physically comfortable and relaxed, start counting your breath. Inhaling and exhaling is counted as one breath.

Dhanurasana (bow pose): 5 rounds (each side and both legs together).

With one leg: Keeping the feet together, place the arms beside the legs, bend the right leg and catch hold of the ankle, heel or foot. Keeping the left leg straight, raise the head, trunk and right knee while breathing in. Feel the stretch on that side. Breathing out, lower the right leg. Repeat on the left side.

With both legs: Knees and head move up together and come down together. Keep the head and shoulders in one line as you come up.



In the first three rounds, keep the knees together when rising up. In the last two, separate the knees.

Shavasana: 1. Awareness of the body free of all tension and stress, in a state of comfort and ease 2. Alternate breathing from left toes to eyebrow centre, eyebrow centre to right toes and out, then from right toes to eyebrow centre, and from eyebrow centre out through left toes 3. Visualizing a shaft of blue light on the left side, a shaft of red light on the right side 4. Externalization.

Comfort in pranayama

The primary pose for pranayama is padmasana, the lotus pose. Siddhasana or siddha yoni asana is the secondary pose. Otherwise, sit in the tertiary pose: any comfortable cross-legged posture.

Today we will repeat the practice of equal breathing in the ratio of 1:1:1:1. You should find your comfort level. If 10 is too much for external retention, make the count 7. You should not feel agitation at the end of the practice. If you feel agitated and short of breath, it means that you have either forced yourself to retain, exhale or inhale. In pranayama it is not a competition to see who can hold the longest and who can reach the maximum first. The point is to observe your comfort level, especially in internal retention and external retention.

In the course of time, gradually keep on increasing one second every day. That way, in one month you will be able to breathe in for 30 seconds. If you try forcing yourself from the first day, there will be chest problems: congestion, breathlessness, pain. Be conscious of the ratio and work with your lungs, with your breath, with internal retention, external retention, mudras and bandhas. If you follow the system, there will not be any shortness of breath after pranayama.

PRANAYAMA

Nadi shodhana with jalandhara, uddiyana and moola bandhas: alternate nostril breathing with internal and external retention, count of 7, ratio of 1:1:1:1, 3 rounds.

SWAN tip: Check your physical condition after the first round. Do you feel breathless or are you comfortable? If you are comfortable, increase the count by one. If you feel breathless, reduce the count by one.

Bhramari pranayama (humming bee breath): 7 rounds.



Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Rotation of awareness through different parts of the body, mentally naming, visualizing and energizing each part in quick sequence 3. Externalization.

Shatkarma

In hatha yoga, the first limb is *shatkarma* or the six actions. Within shatkarma first come the purificatory practices: neti, dhauti and basti. Neti is for the head; dhauti is for the upper tract and abdomen; and basti is for the lower intestinal tracts.

In the classical literature, kunjaj is known as vaman dhauti, *vaman* meaning to regurgitate. Kunjal is a more diplomatic name for vaman. The ancients did not worry about diplomacy and all that. They wanted to put the effect and the result into the name of the practice. The word kunjaj is a combination of two words: *jal* or water, and *kun* or warm. However, the actual word is vaman, to regurgitate.

Kunjaj and laghoo are not the only dhautis given in the hatha yoga texts. In the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, they are supported by three other types of dhauti: kapalarandhra dhauti for the forehead, danta dhauti or danta mool dhauti for the teeth, and jihva mool for the tongue. People generally know only of kunjaj and not the other dhautis. Similarly, neti is supported by two dhautis: karnarandhra for the ears and chakshu for the eyes. The complete practice is constituted of the three dhautis of neti and four dhautis of kunjaj. When you regurgitate the water in kunjaj, pressures and tensions are created in the micro-muscles in the forehead, eyes and ears. These tensions are removed by the dhautis. Neti, when combined with karnarandhra dhauti and chakshu dhauti, helps bring out the mucus, phlegm and gas from the head region.

During the first week you practised neti; this week it will be kunjaj and neti along with their respective dhautis. The next week will be the abdominal cleanse: laghoo shankhaprakshalana.

Body Movements, Cooling Pranayama

Asanas are not just physical postures that you do to feel good. There is a progression, and there is logic and science behind their practice.

Preparatory asanas

The first category of asanas is known as preparatory asanas. They are comprised of the sukshma vyayama which we now call the pawanmuktasana series. When I used to conduct classes in yoga centres in the West, I would follow a simple process. Each group in the pawanmuktasana series had to be practised for six months. In the course of six months, the body is prepared to adopt a posture; even the micro-stiffness leaves and flexibility comes in. Half of all physical problems can be avoided with the practice of pawanmuktasana. In the classes I used to teach, after six months many people would say, “I am totally free of my problem,” no matter what it was. They were regular in performing the pawanmuktasana series; as a result, the whole body was revitalized and realigned, and they were helped.

Movements of the body

The asanas in the second category include all the major movements of the body: they stretch and balance all the major muscles and organs of the body, harmonize them, and also eliminate the accumulation of toxins from the body.

There are five basic movements that the body can perform. The first movement is traction or stretching. The second movement is lateral bending. Twisting is the third major movement of the body. The fourth movement is forward bend and the fifth movement is backward bend. In addition to these there is a sixth movement: inversion, and a seventh: balancing.

There is a progression in the five basic movements as well. We will look into this progression with *tadasana*, *tiryak tadasana*, *kati chakrasana*, *surya namaskara*, *eka pada pranamasana* and *vipareeta karani asana*.

STANDING

Tadasana (palm tree pose) and 2 variations: chakra awareness.

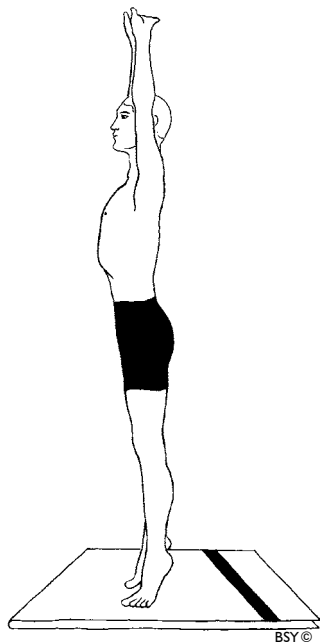
SWAN tip: Before commencing the practice, observe the swaying of the body. Try to balance the body, putting equal weight on your toes and heels.

Basic pose: 7 rounds.

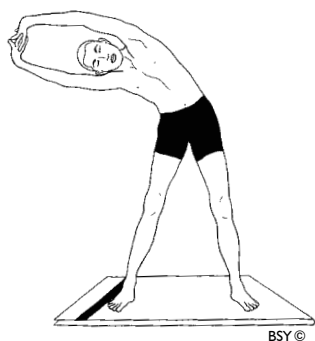
Variation 1: 7 rounds (stretching up and gazing at the back of the hands).

Variation 2: 3 rounds (with each leg; coming up on the toes, then raising one leg to the front).

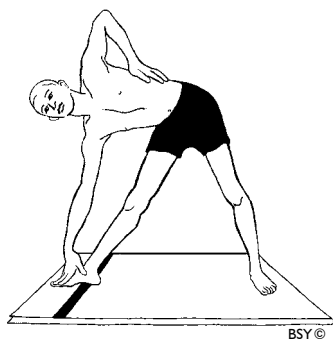
SWAN tip: The more you raise your leg the better it is. With practice you will be able to hold your leg horizontal to the floor.



Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Observing the breath in the nostrils, feeling the sensation of coolness with each inhalation and warmth with each exhalation 3. Externalization.



Tiryak tadasana (swaying palm tree pose): 5 rounds (to each side); chakra awareness.



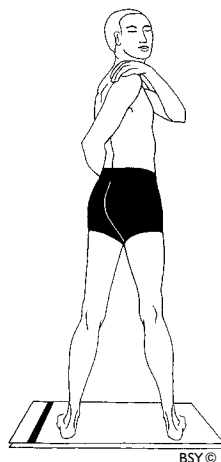
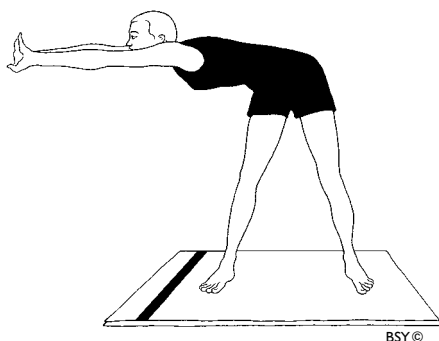
Trikonasana variation 3: 5 rounds (to each side); chakra awareness (standing with feet wide apart, sliding the right hand down the right leg with the exhalation, left hand coming up to the hip; coming back to standing with the inhalation and practising on the opposite side).

SWAN tip: After the practice, observe the body and the balance of the body. See if there is any swaying, any movement.

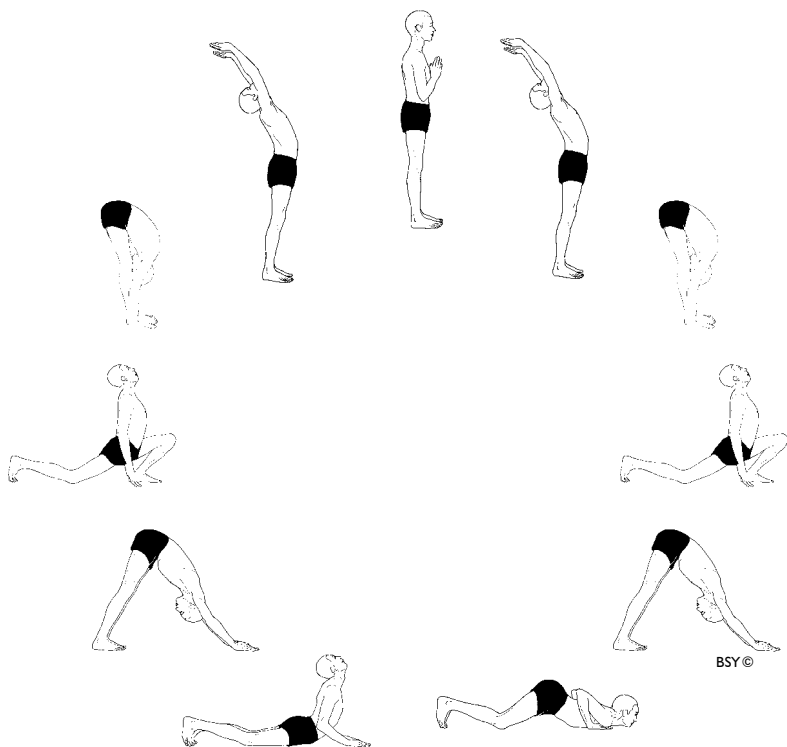
Kati chakrasana (waist rotating pose): 5 rounds; chakra awareness.

Tiryak kati chakrasana (swaying waist rotating pose): 3 rounds.

SWAN tip: The feet remain pointing to the front.



Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Observing the rise and fall of the navel with every inhalation and exhalation 3. Breathing in to fill the body with prana shakti, breathing out to release all stress and tension 4. Externalization.



Surya namaskara (salutations to the sun): 3 rounds; first round with movement and breath awareness, second round with visualization and chakra awareness, third round with mantra awareness.

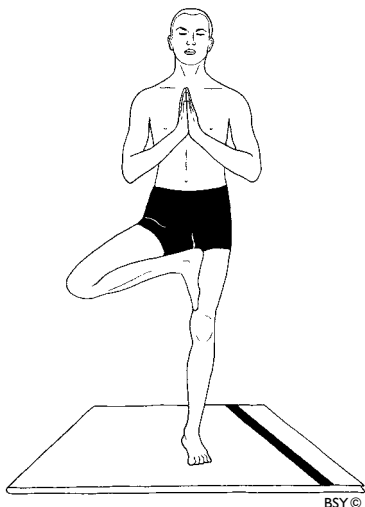
Round 1: Body movement and breath awareness.

Round 2: Visualization of body posture and focusing on both the chakra location in the body and its mental image.

Round 3: Bija mantras of the chakras. Repeat the corresponding mantra three times at each chakra.

Shavasana: 1. Body relaxation 2. Alternate breathing from left toes to eyebrow centre, eyebrow centre to right toes and out, then from right toes to eyebrow centre, and from eyebrow centre out through left toes 3. Externalization.

BALANCING



Eka pada pranamasana (one-legged prayer pose): 2 rounds (both sides); breath awareness—chakra awareness (with closed eyes).

Round 1: Breathe deeply, feeling the breath in the passage between the navel and the throat. Hold the posture for at least five breaths on each side.

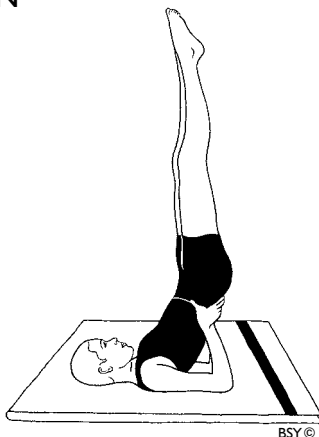
Round 2: Closing the eyes, take ten normal breaths focusing the awareness on the chakra.

SWAN tip: Follow the practice with shavasana to release all tension.

INVERSION

Vipareeta karani asana (inverted pose): 1 round (holding as long as comfortable); chakra awareness.

SWAN tip: When you cannot hold the posture any longer, bend your knees and slowly roll your back down to the floor, without lifting the head from the ground. Relax the whole body.



Shavasana: 1. Awareness of the body free of all tension and stress, in a state of comfort and ease 2. Alternate breathing from left toes to eyebrow centre, eyebrow centre to right toes and out, then from right toes to eyebrow centre, and from eyebrow centre out through left toes 3. Visualizing a shaft of blue light on the left side, a shaft of red light on the right side 4. Externalization.

COOLING PRANAYAMA

There are different types of cooling pranayamas or cooling breaths. The most common are sheetali, sheetkari, and chandra bheda pranayama. We will begin with chandra bheda pranayama, as it is similar to nadi shodhana. *Chandra* is moon and *bheda* means to pierce, so *chandra bheda* is to pierce the moon. Piercing the moon here means activating, controlling and harmonizing the left flow, ida nadi. By controlling the left flow, the right hemisphere of the brain is activated. For this reason, in chandra bheda pranayama only the left nadi is used.

Chandra bheda pranayama with jalandhara bandha: count of 10, ratio of 1:1:1, 5 rounds.

SWAN tips:

- Closing the right nostril, exhale through the left nostril completely, then inhale through the left nostril to a count of 10 seconds. Holding the breath in, practise jalandhara bandha for 10 seconds. No moola bandha in this. Raise the head, then exhale through the left nostril for 10 seconds.
- Do not breathe through the right nostril. The pingala nadi should be totally blocked.

Chandra bheda pranayama with jalandhara bandha, khechari mudra and ujjayi pranayama: count of 10, ratio of 1:1:1, 3 rounds.

SWAN tips:

- This time include khechari mudra and ujjayi breath. The tip of the tongue will be towards the back of the upper palate. Hold it there lightly; there is a tendency for the tongue to become tired if you hold that posture for a long time.
- If you need to release the tongue to relax it for a few seconds, you can do that in between the rounds.

Mudra

There are different types of mudras; mudra means money and it also means attitude. The Sanskrit word *mudra* comes from the root *mud*, which means ‘to make one happy’. Mudra is that which makes one happy. Mudras are external and physical, and also personal and internal. Money is an external mudra; when you receive money, you become happy. However, here we are not talking of money mudra; we are talking of the attitudinal mudra. This attitudinal mudra has the same purpose: to make one happy.

How do you become happy practising mudras? Happiness is a state of mind in which you experience undisturbed harmony. This harmony takes place at the level of prana shakti, when the dissipation of the pranas is contained. This harmony is experienced at the level of the mind; the balancing of the pranas reduces mental agitations and releases stress and anxiety. You lift yourself to a point where you are mentally at peace with yourself. When you are happy and at peace with yourself, that is the experience of mudra.

The application of mudras is seen in many different traditions. Indian classical dance uses mudras; the dancers use eye movements, head movements, hand movements, neck movements and body movements. They are all mudras. Religious mudras are another set of mudras. Pandits and brahmins use mudras during their rituals and worship for invocation.

What is used in yoga are psychic mudras. These psychic mudras regulate the flow of prana shakti. When you practise

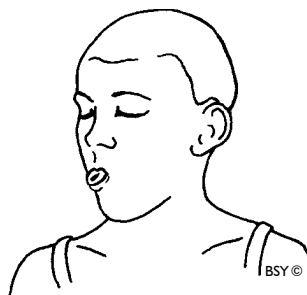
chin mudra or jnana mudra, the prana which is flowing out of your extremities is again taken back into the body; there is a recycling of prana shakti. Similarly, when you practise khechari mudra and turn the tongue back, you are creating an effect in the nerves at the back of the mouth. The nerves become stimulated, and this stimulation affects the brain. After the practice of khechari mudra, there is feeling of quietness and gentleness. The mudra has an effect on the nerves in the mouth and induces a tranquil state of mind, stopping mental dissipation. Similarly, other head mudras like shambhavi and bhoochari are intended to stop mental or cerebral hyperactivity.

In this manner, different mudras have been categorized into groups by different traditions and customs. The mudras used in yoga are for psychic awakening and psychic experience. If there is balance at this level, there is happiness. If there is imbalance, there is strife and disturbance.

In yoga, mudras are mostly used in conjunction with pranayama and meditative practices. The same is true of bandhas. Bandhas are sometimes used independently, but most often bandhas are used with pranayama to induce a deeper, more focused and one-pointed state of mind.



COOLING PRANAYAMA WITH MUDRA



Sheetali pranayama (cooling breath) with khechari mudra and ujjayi pranayama: 10 rounds (breathing in to the count of 10 through the tube of the tongue, retaining the breath for 3 seconds with mouth closed, and exhaling to the count of 10 using khechari mudra and ujjayi breath).

SWAN tips:

- Sheetali pranayama is a peculiar one, as here the tongue adopts a particular posture or mudra. You make a tube out of your tongue and stick the tongue out as far as you can. As you inhale fully with normal breath through the tube, experience the cool sensation in the mouth and in the throat. Then close the mouth, retain your breath for 3 seconds, adopt khechari mudra and begin to exhale using ujjayi breath.
- Hold the breath for a few seconds between inhalation and exhalation in this pranayama. It should not be one continuous process.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Moving the awareness around the major body parts 3. Awareness of physical relaxation 4. Externalization.

Standing Asana, Balancing Asana, Cooling Pranayama

STANDING

Tadasana (palm tree pose) and three variations:

SWAN tip: Place your weight equally on the toes and heels. Feel your body when the weight is placed equally. Be aware of the physical balance and stability. Minimize the swaying of the body.

Basic pose: 7 rounds.

Variation 1: 7 rounds (stretching up and gazing at the back of the hands).

Variation 2: 3 rounds (with each leg; coming up on the toes, then raising one leg to the front).

SWAN tips:

- Keep on trying and a point will come when your body will respond to what you are trying to do.
- After the practice, relax the body in a sitting posture.

Tiryak tadasana (swaying palm tree pose): 5 rounds (to each side).

Trikonasana variation 3: 5 rounds (to each side); chakra awareness (standing with feet wide apart, sliding the right hand down the right leg with the exhalation, left hand coming up to the hip; coming back to standing with the inhalation and practising on the opposite side).

SWAN tips:

- Bend to the side, not forward.
- After the practice, relax in a sitting posture. Feel your body, your back, your legs, see if there is any sensitive, aching or stiff part. Acknowledge that condition of the body and try to improve that condition in your next practice.

Kati chakrasana (waist rotating pose): 5 rounds (to each side); breath awareness.

SWAN tip: Coordinate the movements so that they flow into one another.

Tiryak kati chakrasana (swaying waist rotating pose): 3 rounds (to each side).

SWAN tip: You can look down or you can look to the back of your hands, as convenient, depending on the state of the neck.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Observing the breath in the nasal passage 3. Externalization.

Surya namaskara (salutations to the sun): 3 rounds; movement and breath awareness—chakra awareness—mantra awareness.

Sustaining the practice

One of the important things in the practice of surya namaskara is to be able to sustain the movement. Practise at a medium speed where the breath and the body move together: not slow, not fast and not with a jerk, but with gentle smooth movements. You should not be in a rush moving from one posture to the next. If you practise surya namaskara fast, it becomes exercise; if you do it slow, it becomes tiring; if you do it at a medium speed you can do 10 rounds comfortably. If you can sustain the medium speed for one round, then increase to two, then three, then four, then five and so on. You will find your body responding to the

postures, becoming stronger and more in your control. Your body will change, for here you are sustaining the practice. Remember the statement from the *Yoga Sutras* (1:14):

Sa tu dirgha kaal nairantarya satkara sevito dridhabhoomi.

Any practice that you do, should be done for an extended period of time, regularly and with faith. What is meant by an extended period of time, *dirghakala*? Instead of doing it for one or two rounds, you sustain it for ten rounds. The longer you do the practice, the more beneficial it is for the body. If you do it in a burst of activity, it is like exercise, and it is not creating the change that yoga wishes to create in your system. If you maintain your practice at a medium speed, you will find that your body will become more tired but it will also gain in strength and stamina. When you are able to sustain a practice and go one step beyond your limits, changes begin to happen in the body. If you stay within your comfort zone, asanas will remain a form of exercise and not create any change. Therefore, you have to break that barrier of ease and comfort and go one step further. In each class the barrier of the previous limitation has to be broken; try to do one inch more, half an inch more, and sustain that.

Shavasana: 1. Body relaxation 2. Observing the breath in the abdomen and the rise and fall of the navel 3. Externalization.

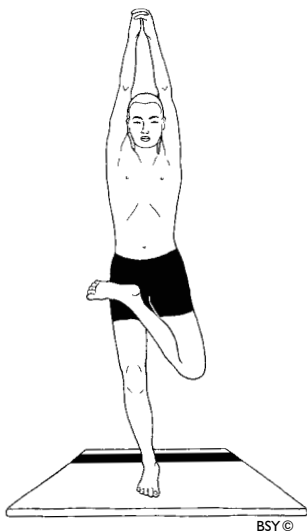
BALANCING

SWAN tip: After surya namaskara, it is good to do balancing asanas. This gives you better coordination between the left and right hemispheres of the brain, the motor and sensory systems, as well as the sympathetic and the parasympathetic nervous systems.

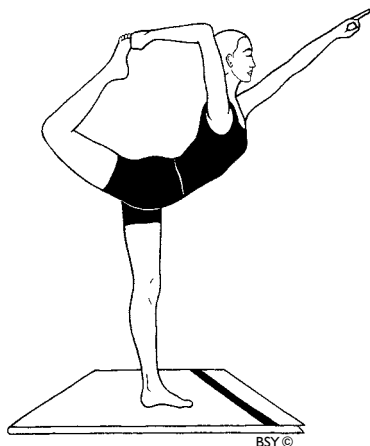
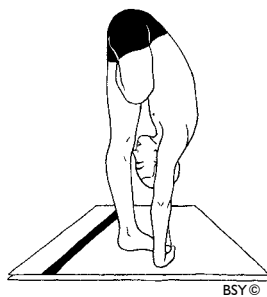
Eka pada pranamasana (one-legged prayer pose): 5 rounds (on each side).

SWAN tips:

- If you focus your awareness on the breath and visualize the breath as a straight up and down movement, your body will be more stable. Breathing long and deep helps you remain balanced for a longer period.
- If you can maintain eka pada pranamasana for thirty seconds on each side, that indicates the perfection of the posture.



Ardha baddha padmottanasana (half lotus forward bending): 3 rounds (on each side, followed by relaxation in a sitting posture).



Natarajasana (Lord Shiva's pose): 2 rounds (each side).

Shavasana: 1. Body relaxation
2. Alternate breathing from left toes to eyebrow centre, eyebrow centre to right toes and out, then from right toes to eyebrow centre, and from eyebrow centre out through left toes
3. Externalization.

INVERSION

Vipareeta karani asana (inverted pose): 1 round (holding as long as comfortable).

SWAN tip: While in the posture, be aware of the straight line to the toes from the eyes.

Shavasana: 1. Alternate breathing from left toes to eyebrow centre, eyebrow centre to right toes and out, then from right toes to eyebrow centre, and from eyebrow centre out through left toes 2. Visualizing a shaft of blue light on the left side, a shaft of red light on the right side 3. Externalization.

PRANAYAMA

SWAN tip: There are two times for practising chandra bheda: in the summer, when the outer temperature is warm and hot, to keep the body cool; and during deep meditation when you want to stop the external agitations and focus internally. At that time, to induce the state of pratyahara, chandra bheda is practised.

Chandra bheda pranayama with jalandhara bandha and moola bandha: count of 10, ratio of 1:1:1; 4 rounds.

SWAN tips:

- In this pranayama the breath flows through the left nostril only, as it is ida nadi which is worked with. To emphasize awareness of ida nadi, visualize the breath as blue.
- After each round, take three normal breaths.

Chandra bheda pranayama with jalandhara bandha, moola bandha, khechari mudra and ujjayi pranayama: count of 10, ratio of 1:1:1; 3 rounds.

Breath observation: After the practice, remain sitting quietly and maintain awareness of the breath. Develop the awareness of breathing in the spinal passage. When you

inhale, feel the breath moving up along the spinal passage from the coccyx to the midbrain, where the brainstem goes into the brain. At the time of exhaling, watch the breath move down from the brainstem to the coccyx. Cultivate awareness of the breath in the spinal passage, not in the nose, not in front of the body, but in the spine.

Breathing through a single nostril

I once visited a catatonic centre in the US. The caretaker asked how one could look after catatonics through yoga. I had absolutely no idea, as I had never seen a catatonic before in my life. They would not do anything I asked them to do: no asana, no pranayama, no yoga nidra. Then a thought came: why not block their left nostril with cotton wool and just keep them breathing through the right nostril. We stuffed cotton inside the left nostril of the people at the centre; after about six or seven hours of them breathing through the right nostril only, they responded to certain movements. They were able to bring their hand down or move their head or leg, whatever they were not doing before. That was an indication that if you control the flow of breath into one nostril, it can alter the physiological condition. In their case it was the solar energy which was activated. In meditation it is the lunar energy which you have to activate.

Sheetali pranayama (cooling breath) with ujjayi pranayama:

count of 10, ratio of 1:1, 20 breaths (exhaling with ujjayi breath).

SWAN tip: While breathing in, focus on the coolness of the breath in the mouth and in the throat.

Shavasana: 1. Body relaxation 2. Awareness of body parts, repeating the name, visualizing the part and energizing the part; all three things happening spontaneously, homogeneously 3. Externalization.

Progressive Yoga Vidya Training 2016

Joint Sessions with Raja Yoga Yatra 1

In the last week of the Progressive Yoga Vidya Training, the participants had joint classes with participants of the Raja Yoga Yatra 1. The focus was on the role of asana and pranayama in the system of raja yoga.

Categories of Asana, Pranayama in Raja Yoga, Bhramari Variations

From today we shall be looking at the postures of raja yoga and the preparation required for practising them. With the combined class with Raja Yoga Yatra 1, the Progressive Yoga Vidya trainees will also go through the raja yoga lessons.

Most people do not practise raja yoga. They only apply a few limited techniques of raja yoga. Asanas are not raja yoga. Pranayama is not raja yoga. Mudras and bandhas are not raja yoga. It is a different topic altogether.

Four categories of asana

There are four categories of asana. The first category, sukshma vyayama, known as the pawanmuktasana series, in fact consists of pre-asana movements which help to prepare the body to stay in an asana for an extended period of time. The second group is to tone and limber up the body, and to create balance between the sympathetic and the parasympathetic, the motor and the nervous systems.

The third group includes static postures like the peacock and the wheel, which are called the advanced asanas. Their purpose is to create changes at the organic and functional levels in the body, to rectify any imbalance or defect in the internal systems. In hatha yoga, the exercises of the third group are used for therapy as well, and the hatha yoga texts describe the therapeutic and physiological benefits of practising different asanas. The fourth group of asanas is the meditative

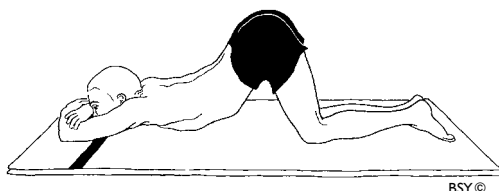
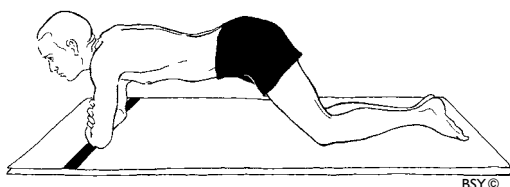
group. With this, raja yoga begins. Up to the third group, it is all hatha yoga. It is only when you complete the hatha yoga training and come to the fourth level of asana practice, that you begin with the raja yoga techniques.

The definition in raja yoga for asana is *sthiram*, stability, firmness or motionlessness, and *sukham*, comfort. These two words indicate the state of the body when you practise raja yoga asanas. They are not dynamic practices. In hatha yoga, the practices are dynamic, and they move from one into the other; they flow. Whether you do your practice fast or slow, each asana flows into another. In contrast, in raja yoga you hold one asana. That is the main difference between hatha yoga and raja yoga practice. In raja yoga, whatever position you are in, you hold yourself in that.

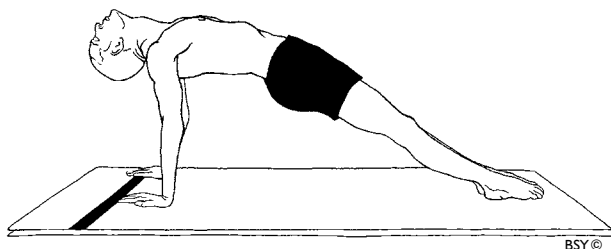
Furthermore, in hatha yoga you cultivate the awareness and understanding of the pancha kosha in each asana. In raja yoga, the dharana on the koshas is reduced from five to three: manomaya, vijnanamaya and anandamaya. Thus, the approach of raja yoga is through the mind whereas the approach of hatha yoga is through the body. When you do raja yoga asanas, although the practices are physical, the concentration is on manomaya, vijnanamaya and anandamaya.

ASANA

SWAN tip: Stay in each asana for a while as you focus on the chakra and mantra. For practices that include visualization, visualize yourself doing the posture in the perfect manner in your mind. Your body may not follow what you are imagining. Your body may only be able to do ten, twenty, thirty or forty percent of what you are visualizing, but in your mind see yourself in the perfect posture. Once you have seen yourself in the perfect posture, focus on the chakra and then on the mantra. This means awareness of three things: manomaya awareness through visualization; vijnanamaya awareness by focusing on the chakra; and anandamaya awareness through the mantra.



Uttan pristhasana (lizard pose): 5 rounds; chakra awareness—mantra awareness.



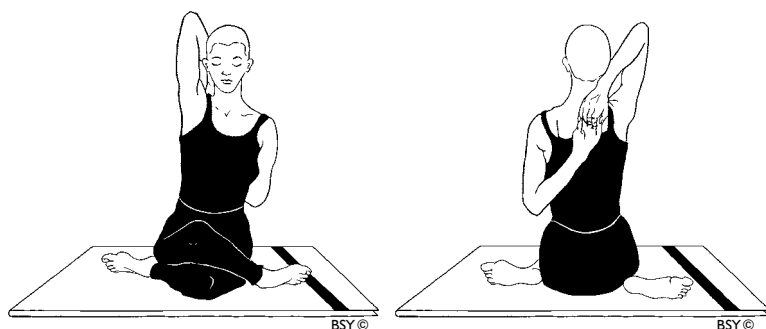
Setu asana (bridge pose) with 2 variations: visualization—chakra awareness—mantra awareness.

Variation 1: 3 rounds (regular setu asana).

Variation 2: 2 rounds (with each leg; in the final posture raising one leg as high as you can while still holding the arch of the body).

SWAN tip: Breathe in before moving the leg into the final position. Holding the breath, lift the leg. Hold it for as long as you can, then bring the leg down. Exhale only once you have lowered the leg. If you exhale while bringing the leg down, it will strain the muscles.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Awareness of the breath and the temperature in the nasal passage 3. Externalization.



Gomukhasana (cow's face pose): 2 rounds (on each side); chakra awareness—mantra awareness.

Round 1: Chakra awareness.

Round 2: Observing the breath between the navel and the throat; mantra repetition with the breath up and down.

SWAN tip: Try to make yourself physically comfortable within the confines of the practice.

BALANCING

SWAN tip: The next set of asanas are balancing practices. Balancing is important for moving into raja yoga. It allows the dissipated nerve functions to settle down and to develop coordination in movements, so that there is more stability in the body.

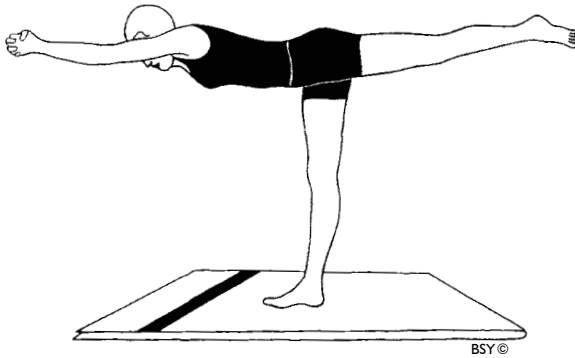
Eka pada pranamasana (one-legged prayer pose): 2 rounds (on each side); chakra awareness—mantra awareness (first round with chakra awareness; second round with closed eyes and mantra awareness).

SWAN tip: First focus on an external point. When you are steady in the posture, close the eyes. If you visualize the breath as long and steady, your body will be more stable. If the breath is coming in short gasps, the body will move. Try to breathe in a straight line, long and deep, synchronizing the mantra with the breath.

Relaxing in standing position: Observe the swaying of the body. Minimize the physical swaying by placing the weight equally on the toes and heels, on the left and right side; find your centre, find your balance.

Ardha baddha padmottanasana (half lotus forward bending): 2 rounds (on each side); chakra awareness—mantra awareness (first round with chakra awareness; second round with chakra and mantra awareness).

SWAN tip: After completing two rounds on each side, relax in a standing position.



Eka padasana (one-foot pose): 3 rounds; chakra awareness—mantra awareness (first round regular; second round with chakra awareness; third round with mantra repetition).

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Awareness of the breath in the abdominal region, experiencing lightness and energy with each inhalation and relaxation with each exhalation 3. Externalization.

Ardha titili asana (half butterfly): 50 movements (with each leg).

SWAN tip: Then keep the right foot on top of the left thigh and grab the toes of the right foot. Keep the left hand on

the left knee. Hold the posture for a few moments. Then change sides.

Poorna titali asana (full butterfly): 50 movements

PRANAYAMA

The only pranayama that is practised in raja yoga is nadi shodhana. There is no bhasrika, kapalbhati, bhramari, ujjayi, surya bheda, chandra bheda, plavini or moorcha. The statement in raja yoga is: inhalation is pranayama, exhalation is pranayama, holding the breath is pranayama. This refers specifically to nadi shodhana pranayama.

Nadi shodhana pranayama stops all the nervous and cerebral agitations, brings peace and calmness to the body and mind, and allows the perceptions and the mind to be introverted. Then pratyahara begins.

Nadi shodhana pranayama with jalandhara bandha, moola bandha and uddiyana bandha: alternate nostril breathing with internal and external retention, count of 10, ratio of 1:1:1:1; 3 rounds.

SWAN tips:

- Only breathe in or out when the body is upright. Breathing while coming out of the bandha can damage your body functions. First come out of the posture and then breathe. Rest for seven to ten breaths in between rounds.
- To practise nadi shodhana in the raja yoga style, you should have first perfected the hatha yoga form of nadi shodhana, that is, worked with your count, ratios, bandhas, and so on. You should have come to the point where you can modulate the breath comfortably, where the breath is naturally smooth, long and deep yet soundless, the balance between inhalation and exhalation is maintained correctly without the help of a count, and kumbhaka is effortless. However, we will still continue with the hatha yoga style.

Bhramari pranayama (humming bee breath) with 3 variations

Variation 1: 5 rounds (regular bhramari pranayama).

Variation 2: 5 rounds (legs bent and arms resting on the knees, if possible bringing armpits on the knees, and closing the ears with the thumbs).

Variation 3: 5 rounds (bending forward in a cross-legged position, with elbows on the floor and the chin cupped in the hands).

Three bhramari variations

In the three variations of bhramari pranayama, the location of the vibration, as well as of the concentration and awareness, are changed. The three primary locations are the head, throat and chest. The regular bhramari pranayama, sitting up straight and plugging the ears, affects the pituitary and pineal glands. The resonance is in the head. That is where you feel the vibration.

When you do bhramari with the knees bent and pressing against the armpits, the vibration comes down from the head to the throat and upper part of the chest. In this variation, the effect is more on the thyroid and parathyroid.

If there is a tendency of kapha accumulation, you will find that doing the throat bhramari clears the passage. Musicians also practise this variation to improve their voice.

The third variation is for the heart and the thymus. The vibration is felt primarily in the chest. I have used the chest variation on heart patients. They feel immediate relief from a range of heart problems, circulatory problems, angina pains, and gas shifting up and creating a feeling of pain in the chest. This practice is effective for managing heart conditions.

To sum up, this pranayama works on three different regions. You can use the variations based on your requirement: whether you want to bring relief to a heart condition, to manage the thyroid or parathyroid, for voice modulation, or for reducing stress and lowering hypertension.

Pranayama according to season

As mentioned previously, pranayamas have specific rules that we follow in India due to the weather. Where the weather patterns are more balanced, these rules are not followed. In places like India, on the equatorial belt, where the weather is quite extreme and changing regularly, different pranayamas are to be practised in different seasons. The heating pranayamas are practised in the months of November, December, January and February. The cooling pranayamas are practised in the months of May, June, July and August. The other pranayamas, balancing and regulating, are practised in March, April, September and October. If it is hot outside, the purpose of pranayama is to bring coolness; if it is cold outside, the purpose of pranayama is to create heat. From the yogic perspective, it is mainly the balancing pranayamas that are important. For therapy purposes, the heating or the cooling are used to improve certain conditions in the body.

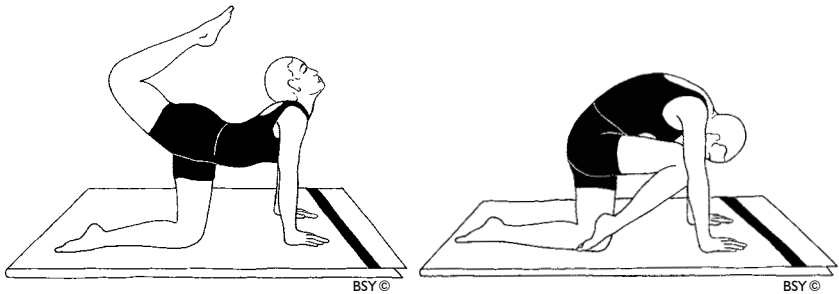
Sheetali pranayama (cooling breath) with jalandhara bandha: count of 10, ratio of 1:1:1; 5 rounds.

SWAN tip: If you need to slow down your exhalation, practise ujjayi as you breathe out.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Alternate breathing from left toes to eyebrow centre, eyebrow centre to right toes and out, then from right toes to eyebrow centre, and from eyebrow centre out through left toes 3. Externalization.

Balancing Asana, Meditation Asana, Pranayama in Bhadrasana

ASANA



Vyaghrasana (tiger pose): 5 rounds (on each side).

SWAN tips:

- Before commencing the practice, sit in vajrasana with awareness of the breath in the passage between the navel and the eyebrow centre.
- In between practising on each side, rest in shashankasana.

Uttan pristhasana (lizard pose): 3 rounds; chakra awareness, holding the final pose.

Setu asana (bridge pose) with 2 variations: chakra awareness.

Variation 1: 7 rounds (regular setu asana with shambhavi mudra and chakra awareness).

Variation 2: 1 round (with each leg; raising one leg as high as you can while still holding the arch of the body).

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Breath awareness and observation of the temperature of the air in the nasal passage 3. Externalization.

Balancing postures

You can try an experiment back at home. You will need four scales. Place two facing each other on one side and two facing each other on the other side. Place a wooden plank on top of the scales and stand on that. Get somebody to write down the weight of all the different scales on four sides. That will give you an indication of your body posture, how you stand and where the pressure is. The reading of the front scale may be 10 pounds, the back scale 30 pounds, one side 25 pounds, the other side 15 pounds. That is an indication of the imbalance of the body. Then adjust your weight. Try to place it equally on the toes and on the heels, and see if all the four scales give you the same reading.

Balancing postures are important in yoga as they give you command over the autonomic functions, over the sensory and motor nervous systems. They also stop the nervous agitations and dissipations. When people are nervous, get them to do one balancing asana, such as *eka pada pranamasana*, and you will see an instant shift; they will become quieter and calmer.

The balancing asanas are important before you begin the practice of advanced asanas, whether the peacock, the wheel or the headstand. These are the classical postures of yoga mentioned in practically all the books on yoga, not only hatha yoga but also kundalini and kriya yoga. The purpose of asana is to prepare the body, to balance the body, and then to move into the advanced asana group. In the advanced asana group it is not necessary to have great

physical strength; you need to know the trick for moving into a position, and how to find and keep your balance.

A needle can be made to stand upright just on its tip if it is perfectly balanced. It will fall over when the balance is lost. The same applies to your body, your mind and all your systems. If the balance is there, you can do anything. If the balance is not there, it is also indicative of the mental state, as it is the mind that has to create the balance. If your mind is dissipated, you will not be able to keep your balance in a physical posture. Just try keeping your balance in eka pada pranamasana while someone waves a hand in front of you. You will not be able to do it; you will lose your balance.

As mentioned previously, there is a sequence of progression in asanas: the preparatory pawanmuktasana group; asanas for general toning, stretching and bending, such as surya namaskara, the tadasana and trikonasana series; a third group affecting the internal organs with specific pressures and movements, to rectify any imbalance or malfunction of the body. The final group are the classical asanas. Their purpose is to go deeper into the psychic body. The classical asanas tend to have a greater influence on the chakras and the pranas than the other asanas.

The balancing asanas are part of the general toning. They allow you to find your stability and balance. This balance indicates harmony between the two hemispheres of the brain, the right and the left.

Going beyond limits

One major flaw in people's yoga practice is that it tends to be too dynamic. Dynamic practice is all right, but then the number of rounds that you practise should increase. Instead of 3 rounds, you should do 10 rounds, always seeking to go beyond the limitation that you have created for yourself. If you condition yourself by creating a limit in your mind, your body will respond in like manner. It will not be able to do more than 2 or 3 rounds. Adding more rounds is the effort in the dynamic hatha yoga system. The way we are doing

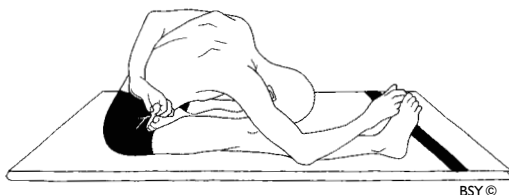
it today, in a slow and intensive manner, sustaining every practice, maintaining the posture, is the raja yoga system.

Eka pada pranamasana (one-legged prayer pose): 2 rounds (on each side); holding the final position for 7 breaths, feeling the breath move between the navel and the throat.

SWAN tip: When you finish the second round, relax in the standing position.

Ardha baddha padmottanasana (half lotus forward bending): 3 rounds.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Breath awareness observing the rise and the fall of the navel 3. Externalization.

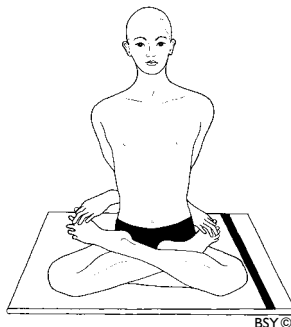


Ardha titali asana (half butterfly) and ardha padma paschimottanasana (half lotus back stretching pose): 2 rounds (on each side); after practising ardha titali asana 50 times on one side, keep the leg in position and practise ardha padma paschimottanasana, then change sides.

Poorna titali asana (full butterfly):
50 movements

Baddha padmasana (locked lotus pose)

SWAN tip: In this posture the heels press against the liver, kidney, spleen, pancreas, stomach and intestine. This pressure



stimulates the whole internal system. This asana is good for digestion and elimination of toxins. It is like the squeezing and releasing of a sponge in water when you want to clean it. This effect of squeezing and releasing the internal organs pushes out the stagnated blood, and allows the fresh blood in. The practice is particularly effective in the management of diabetes as it helps to reinstate the production of insulin.

Meditation asanas

There are certain postures which are used in yoga for meditation. The simplest of them is *sukhasana*, the easy pose. That is the beginner's pose. Novices who have not practised yoga sit in *sukhasana* and meditate. This pose does not do anything; it is only a sitting pose. *Vajrasana* is also a meditative pose. It has a specific effect in the form of pressure on a nerve meridian called *vajra nadi*, which is connected to digestion. The *vajra nadi* is compressed in the posture, and its stimulation improves digestion and elimination of toxins; it also helps to calm the mind.

The lotus pose, *padmasana*, is the primary meditation asana as it helps one to move into a meditative state. It works to improve and balance the three humours – *kapha*, mucus; *pitta*, bile; and *vata*, wind or air – by pressing on both sides of the digestive system. According to ayurveda, there are different types of bile production. The bile which you find in the stomach is yellow in colour. The bile that is in the spleen is red. The bile that is in the liver is green. Many times when people practise *shankhaprakshalana* and then do *kunjal*, they see red water come out. They panic thinking it is blood, but it is not blood; that is the red *pitta* of the spleen which comes out. The yellow bile goes out through the bowel movement; the green bile goes down and out; but the red bile is more acidic in content, so it comes out through vomiting.

When you practise *padmasana*, the pressure releases all the bile into the central tract, from where it can come

out with the urine or the faeces. Padmasana is useful for meditation as it eliminates kapha, vata and pitta. Once they are removed you simply move into a calm state of mind and then into meditation. This is why the lotus pose is preferred over all other meditation postures.

The second most important meditation posture is siddhasana. In siddhasana, you place the left or right heel against the perineum and the other heel on top of the first one; then you pull up the toes of the lower foot from between the opposite thigh and calf muscle, and you push down the toes of the top foot between the corresponding thigh and calf muscle. This blocks all movement of the base of the body. This asana, due to the pressure on the perineum from one heel, affects mooladhara, while the other heel is pressing swadhisthana. In siddhasana, these two chakras are under constant pressure. This direct influence on mooladhara and swadhisthana is the reason siddhasana is the practice used in kundalini yoga techniques; not sukhāsana or padmasana but siddhasana.

Although padmasana and siddhasana are called meditative postures, they are not only meditative postures. They have specific purposes: to stimulate particular psychic centres or nerve plexuses, or to eliminate and balance the humours of the body, allowing introversion to take place naturally and spontaneously. These meditative postures cannot be ignored. In fact, all other postures prepare you to practise them.

If you are truly interested in pursuing the objectives of yoga, ultimately you have to focus on practising your padmasana and siddhasana. At the end of every class there should be an attempt to sit in padmasana or siddhasana even if you start with just one minute and then gradually increase the duration.

PRANAYAMA



Nadi shodhana pranayama in bhadrasana (gracious pose) with jalandhara bandha and moola bandha: alternate nostril breathing with internal retention, count of 7, ratio of 1:2:1; 3 rounds; chakra awareness.

SWAN tip: Take five normal deep breaths after each round.

Sheetali pranayama (cooling breath) in bhadrasana (gracious pose): count of 7, ratio of 1:1:1; 5 rounds; chakra awareness (looking up to the ceiling during retention, exhaling with ujjayi pranayama).

SWAN tip: If you feel light-headed during the practice, reduce the length of the internal retention, and then gradually build it up.

SHAVASANA WITH TRIANGULAR BREATH 3

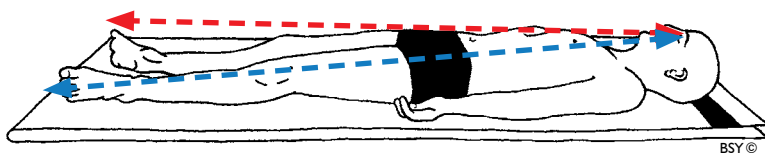
Lie down comfortably in shavasana. Feet slightly apart, palms facing up, head straight, eyes closed. Surrender the whole body to the floor. Complete awareness of physical relaxation. Just focus on relaxing. Let any thought come into the mind. Allow anything to happen in the mind. Keep your mind open to each and every experience, whether it is sleep, a negative thought, a thought of spiritual joy, awareness of the body, or remembrance of anything in the past. Do not focus on anything; remain relaxed and open.

Keep your body completely relaxed and your mind open to any experience. Concentrate on the body: the whole body, the whole body, the whole body.

Become aware of the absolute stillness of the body. Every night when you sleep, you become still, but you do not know it or experience it. You are not a witness to that stillness when you are sleeping. Here, now, you have to become a witness to the stillness. "I am still. I know I am still. I am motionless and I know it. There is no physical movement and I know it. The whole body is quiet and motionless and I am a witness to the state of the body."

Now focus the full attention on the natural breath. Every inhalation and every exhalation should be known to you. Experience the flow of the breath up the legs to the eyebrow centre and from the eyebrow centre down through the legs. When you inhale, feel the breath move up the left leg to the eyebrow centre, and when you exhale, feel the breath move down from the eyebrow centre through the right leg. Again, inhaling, the breath moves up the right leg to the eyebrow centre, and exhaling, the breath moves down from the eyebrow centre through the left leg. Experience your breath moving up through the left leg to the eyebrow centre at the time of inhalation, and down from the eyebrow centre through the right leg at the time of exhalation. Again, inhaling, the breath moves up the right leg to the eyebrow centre. Exhaling, the breath moves down into the left leg. In this way, develop awareness of the breath in the shape of a 'V', a triangle or a pyramid.

Now, as you breathe in from the left side, see the breath as a blue shaft of light. As you breathe out through the right side, see the breath as a red shaft of light. As you again inhale from the right side, it is the red shaft of light that moves up, and as you exhale from the left side, the blue shaft of light moves down. Visualize inhaling and exhaling through the left side always as blue light, exhaling and inhaling from the right side always as red light. Go on experiencing the movement of the breath and



the movement of blue and red light along with the breath. Inhaling through the left, visualize blue light moving up to the eyebrow centre; exhaling through the right, visualize red light moving down through the leg. Inhaling through the right, red light moves up to the eyebrow centre; exhaling through the left, blue light moves down. Inhaling through the left, blue light moves up. In this manner, observe the flow of the breath in the body and the colour in the body. Continue with this practice for a little while more. Awareness of the breath as blue and red light travelling up and down the sides of the body.

Now stop this practice and again externalize the mind. Become aware of the outer environment. Awareness of external sounds, of people around you. Slowly move your toes, feet, legs, fingers, hands, arms, turn the head from side to side. Take a deep breath in and stretch the whole body and then gently sit up.

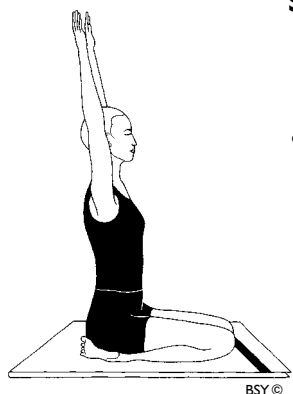
Asana Practice, Caring for the Knees, Balancing and Cooling Pranayama

ASANA PRACTICE

Ardha titali asana (half butterfly): 50 movements (each side).

Poorna titali asana (full butterfly): 50 movements.

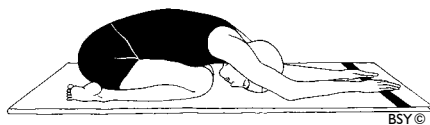
Janufalak akarshan (kneecap contraction): 5 rounds.



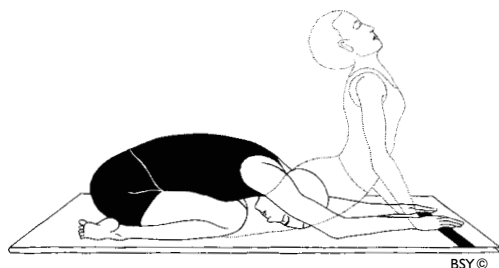
Shashankasana (hare pose): 3 rounds; breath awareness—chakra awareness—mantra awareness.

SWAN tips:

- Before beginning the practice, sit in vajrasana and develop awareness of the breath in the spinal passage, inhaling from the bottom of the spine to the eyebrow centre and exhaling from the eyebrow centre to the bottom of the spine.



- While moving in and out of the posture of shashankasana, maintain awareness of the breath in the spinal path. Breathing normally in the final posture, become aware first of the chakra and then the mantra.



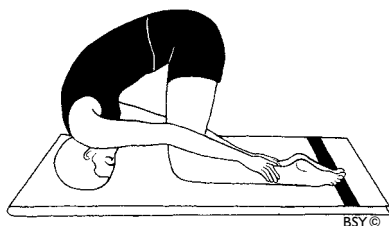
Shashank bhujangasana (striking cobra pose): 6 rounds; breath awareness—chakra awareness—mantra awareness.

Variation 1: 3 rounds (starting from vajrasana. Inhaling, raise the arms up above the head; exhaling, lower the upper body into shashankasana. Slide into bhujangasana on the next inhalation. Retain the breath in while holding the posture and bring the awareness to the chakra, followed by the mantra. Exhale back to shashankasana, raise the arms up above the head with the inhalation and bring them down on the knees with the exhalation).

Variation 2: 3 rounds (moving from shashankashana to bhujangasana and back, without raising the arms up in between rounds. In this variation there are two points of concentration: one while in shashankashana and one in bhujangasana).

SWAN tips:

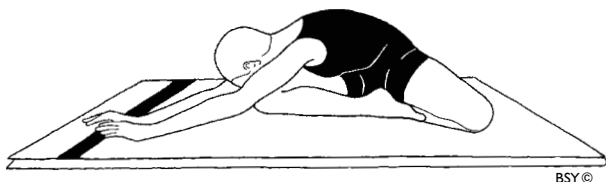
- Visualize the breath in the spine while moving in and out of bhujangasana.
- Hold bhujangasana and retain the breath in while bringing the awareness first to the chakra and then mantra. In shashankasana you have time to rest breathing normally. As you allow the breath to stabilize, bring the awareness first to the corresponding chakra and then the mantra.



Naman pranamasana (prostration pose): 3 rounds; breath awareness—chakra awareness.

SWAN tip: Maintain awareness of the breath in the spine while moving into and out of the posture. In the final position, the awareness is on the pressure point at the crown of the head.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Moving the awareness through different body parts 3. Breath awareness observing the temperature of the air in the nasal passage 4. Externalization.



Saithalyasana (animal relaxation pose): 5 rounds (to each side); chakra awareness—mantra awareness.

Caring for the knees

The knees are the least cared for part of the physical body. Even when people go to the gym, they are working with their chest and torso and arms, while the knees remain weak. When people put on extra weight, again the pressure goes to the knees. I have noticed that nowadays knee replacements are becoming common. After a certain age people start feeling the difficulty in their knees. That is pure carelessness.

If you care for your knees, they can do anything and everything; please remember that the knees are an important part of your body. If you care for them, a lot of old-age problems can be eliminated. Whenever you do knee-bending practices like vajrasana or the animal relaxation pose, it is necessary to stretch the legs, bump the legs, and also to pull the kneecaps a few times to ensure that there is no stiffness there, and that they are free and mobile.

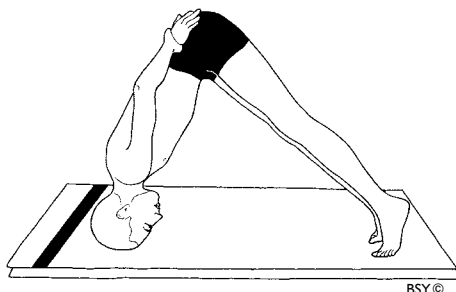
Merudandasana (spinal column pose): 3 variations; chakra awareness.

Variation 1: 5 rounds (regular naukasana).

Variation 2: 5 rounds (from lying down on the back, keeping the arms and the legs straight, raise the legs and upper body simultaneously and catch hold of the toes, calf muscles or ankles).

Variation 3: 5 rounds (from lying on the back, raise the legs and upper body simultaneously and catch hold of the toes, calf muscles or ankles; then spread the legs apart and hold the balance. Bringing the legs back together, lower the body to the floor).





Shavasana: 1. Making the body comfortable 2. Observing the expansion and contraction of the abdomen with each inhalation and exhalation 3. Externalization.

Bhumi pada mastakasana (half headstand): 2 rounds; chakra awareness—mantra awareness.

SWAN tips:

- First keep the hands by the head to support yourself. When you find that you are stable, lift one arm up and find your balance. Then bring this arm down. Lift the other one up, find your balance, and bring this down. When you feel stable, gradually try to lift both hands off the ground and clasp them behind the back.
- Keep the eyes open when you are in the posture.

Dhanurasana (bow pose): 3 rounds; chakra awareness—mantra awareness.

SWAN tip: Bend the knees and catch hold of your ankles with your hands. Lie there for a few moments breathing naturally and feeling your body, feeling the stretch, the comfort or discomfort, before moving into dhanurasana. Staying in this position for a few minutes before you sleep at night is beneficial for aligning the physical body.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Alternate breathing from left toes to eyebrow centre, eyebrow centre

to right toes and out, then from right toes to eyebrow centre, and from eyebrow centre out through left toes
3. Externalization.

Keeping the head straight

I have noticed that when people practise pranayama, there is a tendency to turn the head a little towards the hand which is holding nasagra mudra. Some people feel a restriction in the lungs and tend to turn this way. That is incorrect. The head and shoulders should always be facing front. Always ensure that you are looking straight ahead and that the elbow is not to the side, but also in front.

PRANAYAMA

Nadi shodhana pranayama with jalandhara bandha and moola bandha: alternate nostril breathing with internal retention, count of 7, ratio of 1:2:1; 4 rounds.

SWAN tip: After every round, take seven normal deep breaths.

Sheetali pranayama (cooling breath):
count of 7, ratio of 1:1; 7 rounds;
chakra awareness (exhaling with
ujjayi pranayama).



Sheetkari pranayama (hissing breath): 7 rounds.

Bhramari pranayama (humming bee breath): 7 rounds.

Shavasana: 1. Making the body comfortable 2. Rotation of awareness through the different parts of the body, mentally naming, visualizing and energizing each part in quick sequence 3. Externalization.

Surya Namaskara, Asana and Pranayama Practice

SURYA NAMASKARA

Surya namaskara (salutations to the sun): 2 rounds; movement–breath awareness–visualization.

Shavasana: 1. Body relaxation 2. Breath awareness observing the temperature of the air in the nasal passage 3. Externalization.

Surya namaskara (salutations to the sun): 2 rounds; chakra awareness.

Round 1: Mentally repeating the surya mantras in each position: position 1 anahata, *Om Mitraya Namah*; 2 vishuddhi, *Om Ravaye Namah*; 3 swadhisthana, *Om Suryaya Namah*; 4 vishuddhi, *Om Bhanave Namah*; 5 swadhisthana, *Om Khagaya Namah*; 6 anahata, *Om Pooshne Namah*; 7 vishuddhi, *Om Hiranyagarbhaya Namah*; 8 swadhisthana, *Om Marichaye Namah*; 9 vishuddhi, *Om Adityaya Namah*; 10 swadhisthana, *Om Savitre Namah*; 11 vishuddhi, *Om Arkaya Namah*; 12 anahata *Om Bhaskaraya Namah*. The chakras Swamiji instructed to focus on were different from what is traditionally used in the practice.

Round 2: Mentally repeating the bija mantras 3 times in every position.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Observing the rise and fall of the navel with every inhalation and exhalation 3. Breathing in to fill the body with prana shakti, breathing out to feel the relaxation of the whole body 4. Externalization.

ASANA

Shashankasana (hare pose): 4 rounds; breath awareness—chakra awareness—mantra awareness (with normal breathing in the final posture).

Shashank bhujangasana (striking cobra pose): 5 rounds; breath awareness—chakra awareness—mantra awareness.



Saithalyasana (animal relaxation pose): 3 rounds (to each side); chakra awareness—mantra awareness.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Alternate breathing from left toes to eyebrow centre, eyebrow centre to right toes and out, then from right toes to eyebrow centre, and from eyebrow centre out through left toes 3. Externalization.

Naman pranamasana (prostration pose) with 2 variations

Variation 1: 3 rounds (regular naman pranamasana, coming back to vajrasana each time).

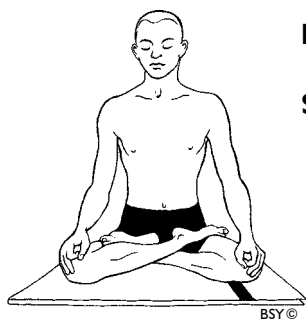


Variation 2: 10 rounds (remaining in forward bend and raising and lowering the buttocks).

Ardha titali asana (half butterfly): 50 movements (on each side).

Poorna titali asana (full butterfly): 50 movements.

Ardha padma paschimottanasana (half lotus back stretching pose): 3 rounds (each side).



Padmasana (lotus pose): alternately with one leg on top, then the other.

SWAN tip: For most people, one side is more comfortable, the other side slightly more difficult. You should have fluency in maintaining the pose on both sides, without any discomfort. Practise what is uncomfortable and make yourself

comfortable. Gradually the discomfort will go away.

Dhanurasana (bow pose): 3 rounds (each side and both legs together).

With one leg: Bend the right leg and catch hold of the ankle, heel or foot with the right hand. Keeping the left leg straight and the left arm out front, raise the head, trunk and right knee while breathing in. Feel the stretch on that side. Breathing out, lower the right leg. Repeat on the left side.

With both legs: Knees, head and trunk move up together and come down together.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Alternate breathing from left toes to eyebrow centre, eyebrow centre to right toes and out, then from right toes to eyebrow centre, and from eyebrow centre out through left toes 3. Visualization of a blue shaft of light on the left side and a red shaft of light on the right side 4. Externalization.

PRANAYAMA

Nadi shodhana pranayama with viloma, 2 variations: chakra awareness.

Variation 1: 3 rounds; breathing in 7 steps, breathing out sliding down. Breathing in and out through the left nostril, breathing in and out through right nostril, and breathing in and out through both nostrils is one round.

Variation 2: 3 rounds; breathing in 7 steps, breathing out sliding down. Breathing in through the left nostril, breathing out through the right nostril, breathing in through the right nostril and breathing out through the left nostril is one round.

Bhramari pranayama (humming bee breath): 5 rounds.

Sheetali pranayama (cooling breath): 5 rounds; long deep inhalation, count of 10 on exhalation (exhaling with ujjayi pranayama).

Sheetkari pranayama (hissing breath): 5 rounds.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Rotation of awareness through the different parts of the body, mentally naming, visualizing and energizing each part in quick sequence 3. Externalization.

**Progressive
Yoga Vidya Training
2017**

Pawanmuktasana Part 1, Shavasana and Pranayama with Triangular Breath



Every asana that is dynamic in nature falls in the category of hatha yoga, as opposed to the static asanas used in raja yoga intended for reaching meditative states. Hatha yoga has a clear purpose: to balance and regulate the flow of ida and pingala, the prana shakti and chitta shakti, in the body and the mind with the practice and application of asanas. Thus the purpose of hatha yoga asanas is to help harmonize the pranic and mental systems using physiological movements. This means that the asanas you do on the physical level must balance the pranic system, the *pranamaya kosha*, as well as the mental system or *manomaya kosha*. From the perspective of hatha yoga, asana is not just a physical exercise. Asana is a means by which you can harness and regulate the vital forces and the mental forces to prepare the ground for the second stage of yoga, which is raja yoga.

Purpose of pawanmuktasana

Among hatha yoga asanas are certain simplified movements which are not really asanas in themselves, but preparatory practices. These remove the stiffness, tightness and tensions from the body, muscles, joints and ligaments, and enable you to move into an asana. This sequence of practices to prepare the body for asana has been named pawanmuktasana by Sri Swami Satyananda. Traditionally and classically, they are known as sukshma vyayama. *Sukshma* means subtle, *vyayama* means exercise or movement; so these are the subtle movements. This name has been changed by Sri Swamiji to pawanmuktasana.

When we were taught yoga, we were told by Sri Swamiji that asana practice comes at the end. First the body has to be prepared with the practice of pawanmuktasana or the sukshma vyayama. Only when the body is ready can you move into the practice of asana where you are supposed to hold and retain the posture for as long as possible comfortably. Thus, in the yoga propagated by Sri Swamiji, the movements of the pawanmuktasana series have become the lead practices or the frontline practices, allowing you to come to a stage where your body can perform asana with perfection and derive the right benefit. You will find that in the Satyananda Yoga system classes always begin with the pawanmuktasana series, not with asanas. That is appropriate as people's bodies are stiff and tight due to their habitual postures and lifestyle.

When people practise pawanmuktasana, the general tendency is to do each movement only a few times, to loosen up the various parts of the body, and then move into the asana practice. However, we were taught to practise each movement not 5 or 10 times but 25 times. Doing 25 rounds takes your body to its limit. When you move your toes forward and backward 25 times, then you feel the muscles, the aches and pains, and tiredness in that area. When you go through different parts of the whole body 25 times each, the body does get tired; however, the stiffness or pain in the

body after the practice is a sign that there is a condition of weakness in the body which is being removed.

Practising an asana 5 times, or only for as long as one is comfortable and moving into shavasana the moment there is strain or stiffness, is for people in society. It is for those who have limited time and other obligations, duties and responsibilities. Those who are devoted to the path of yoga have to break out of the shell of weakness. That can only happen if you are able to sequentially build up your pawanmuktasana practice by adding one round each day. In the beginning there will be strain, tiredness and pain. As you increase the rounds every day, after some time you will find that you can cover more ground without becoming tired. In yoga, you are not bringing the body to the point of pain; you are taking it to the point of tiredness where weakness can manifest. This way, the weakness can be removed and the body part strengthened.

Fivefold awareness of asana

To deepen the experience of the asana during the 25 rounds of practice, there are five levels of awareness on which the mind has to be focused:

1. *Physical movement*: For the first 5 rounds, the focus is on the physical, muscular movement, the bending and stretching of the muscles and joints. This is an experience of annamaya kosha.
2. *Focusing on the breath*: The following 5 rounds are done with awareness of the breath. Following the breath makes the practice easier and simpler. By moving the mind away from the physical movement and focusing it on the breath and allowing the movement to follow the breath, the experience moves to pranamaya kosha.
3. *Visualization of a perfect practice*: The next 5 rounds are for manomaya kosha, visualizing the practice being done perfectly even if the physical body is not performing it in a perfect manner. If you cannot touch your toes and can only bend half-way, the visualization still has to be of the perfect practice. This is to inspire the body, showing it the

position which it should come to eventually. You will find that once you begin to visualize the perfect posture while continuing to do the practice in the imperfect manner, gradually the posture will change. The body will loosen up and follow the mind.

4. *Chakra awareness*: Movements 16 to 20 are done with chakra awareness. Each asana has a centre where the concentration has to be placed. This awareness is not confined to the seven chakras of the body; it can also be placed on the *marma sthanas*, the points where pranas are generated in different areas of the body and from which they are distributed. When doing the pawanmuktasana practice of padanguli naman, for example, you can either concentrate on the relevant chakra or you can concentrate on the marma sthana of the toes, and experience the release of prana by observing the marma sthana of the toes. However, we will work with the seven major chakras. Chakras help you to disconnect from the body, internalize the awareness and move into the field of vijñanamaya kosha. The physical movement happens spontaneously while the entire mind is focused on the particular centre.
5. *Mantra*: In the last segment, during movements 21 to 25, the focus is on the mantra of the chakra.

Sri Swamiji taught that each asana should be done 25 times. Every five movements, you need to have the resilience to shift the mind, the concentration and awareness, from body to breath to visualization to chakra to mantra. That has to happen spontaneously and naturally.

SWAN tip: Whenever you do your own practice, include the five components slowly and gradually, even if you believe you are an advanced yoga practitioner. First practise the three components: muscle movement, breath and visualization. When you are comfortable with these three, add the fourth one, which is chakra visualization. When you are comfortable with that, add the fifth component, mantra awareness.

***Note:** The specific chakras and mantras that were used with the practices during the training are not mentioned, as this must be learnt in the presence of a master.*

PAWANMUKTASANA PART I (foot & leg movements)

SWAN tip: Stretch the legs in front, feet together. You can support your back, keeping the spine upright and straight. Head straight. In this posture, become aware of the whole body and the comfort of the body. If there is stiffness or tightness and you want to shift your hands a bit to become slightly more comfortable, you can do so, but be relaxed in the upright posture.

Padanguli naman (toe bending): 5–5–5; movement awareness–breath awareness–visualization.

Goof naman (ankle bending): 5–5–5; movement awareness–breath awareness–visualization.

Goof chakra (ankle rotation): 5–5–5; movement awareness–breath awareness–visualization (both clockwise and anticlockwise, with each foot and then with both feet together).

Goof ghoornan (ankle crank): 5–5–5; movement awareness–breath awareness–visualization (both clockwise and anticlockwise, with each foot).

Ardha titali asana (half butterfly): 50 movements (performed with each leg immediately after the ankle crank without changing the pose).

Poorna titali asana (full butterfly): 50 movements.

SWAN tip: Join both soles together and bring the heels as close to the perineum as possible. Holding your toes with your hands, move the knees up and down. As you move the knees, bend slightly forward. Keep on moving the

knees and slowly bending forward. Go as far as possible while continuing to move the knees.

Janu naman (knee bending): 5–5–5; movement awareness–breath awareness–visualization (with each leg).

SWAN tip: Keep the heel three inches above the ground when straightening the leg.

Janu naman (knee bending): 5–5–5; movement awareness–breath awareness–visualization (with both legs).

SWAN tips:

- Instead of interlocking the fingers, hold the back of the thighs with your hands.
- Keep the heels three inches off the ground when straightening the legs.
- For people who live in the West, flexing the legs is a good exercise to strengthen the knees. When walking, running, jumping or sitting, the knees only have limited frontal movement. This complete bend and stretch movement strengthens the ligaments and the muscles in the knees, allowing you to move into many asanas which weak knees do not allow you to do.

Janu chakra (knee crank): 5–5–5; movement awareness–breath awareness–visualization (both clockwise and anticlockwise, with each leg and then both legs).



SWAN tips:

- Twisting the knee is not a natural movement, especially for stiff bodies. Start with gentle movements at first and gradually extend the rotation of the lower leg. Stop if you feel pain.
- Notice the difference when you extend the practice to 15 rounds, 20 rounds, 25 rounds. The whole physical experience changes. Initially you feel tiredness in the part which has been exercised, but as you develop this sequence and routine, you will be surprised at what you can achieve.

***Note:** Swamiji adjusted the number of rounds based on the ability and stamina of the participants; however, as he mentioned, the ideal practice consists of 25 rounds with all the five levels of awareness.*

SHAVASANA WITH BREATH VISUALIZATION I

Lie down in shavasana for a few moments. Lie down comfortably. Feet slightly apart. Arms beside the body with palms facing up. Head in a straight line with the spine. Eyes and mouth gently closed. In this lying position, surrender the whole body to the floor. Just allow the body to flop on the ground like a rag doll, totally free from tension and tightness. Move your awareness through the different parts of the body and make sure that there is no tension. Make sure that there is nothing tight and your body is relaxing while it is lying on the ground. Surrender the whole body to the floor.

Now become aware of the breath. Observe the flow of the natural breath. Visualize the breath moving from the toes of both legs up to the eyebrow centre with the inhalation; at the time of exhalation, the breath flows down from the eyebrow centre into the legs and out through the feet and toes of both legs. Develop this awareness of the breath. Breathing in through both feet and coming to the eyebrow centre, then breathing out from the eyebrow centre into the legs and out through both feet.

Now, as the breath moves from the feet to the legs and then up, the two streams join at the perineum and the breath follows the spinal path to the forehead. As you exhale, the breath moves as one stream down to the perineum and there separates into two flows, going down the two legs and out. As the breath flows through the legs and out, feel both legs relax. Feel the flow of the breath in the legs.

Now visualize breathing in through the left leg and coming up to the perineum, and then breathing out through the right leg. The breath only comes half-way up the body. Breathing in through the left leg up to the perineum and out through the right leg. Breathing in through the right leg up to the perineum and out through the left leg. Develop this awareness, develop this visualization of the breath: the V-shaped breath moving from the toes of the left foot, up the leg, to the perineum, and then exhaling, going down the right leg to the foot and out through the toes. Then again, inhaling through the toes of the right foot and coming up to the perineum and exhaling down the left leg and out through the toes of the left foot. As the breath moves between the two legs, observe each and every part of the leg where the breath is moving, and relax that part. Surrender the leg completely.

Now stop this practice. Externalize the awareness. Slowly move the toes, feet, legs, fingers, hands, arms, turn the head from side to side. Take a deep breath in and stretch the whole body.

Visualization of the breath in alternate breathing

You have completed the first half of pawanmuktasana part 1, which is from the feet to the hips. In shavasana, I have used a visualization in which you are breathing in through one leg, up to the perineum, and moving down the other leg, then breathing in through that leg, up to the perineum or mooladhara, and breathing down the other leg. This focus on the legs and feet corresponds to the first part of pawanmuktasana part 1.

In the next part, when we have completed pawanmuktasana part 1 for the upper part of the body, the breath awareness in shavasana will be up through one arm to the eyebrow centre and out through the other arm. So we are doing two visualizations in shavasana. The first is the lower triangle and the second is the upper triangle.

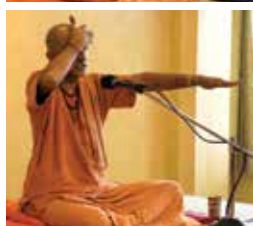
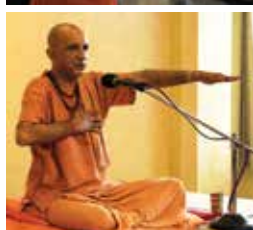
PAWANMUKTASANA PART I (hand, arm, shoulder, neck and head movements)

SWAN tip: You can sit in any comfortable posture with your legs either crossed or stretched out for the pawanmuktasana part 1 practices for the upper body.

Mushtika bandhana (fist clenching):
5-5-5; movement awareness–breath awareness–visualization.

Manibandha naman (wrist bending):
5-5-5; movement awareness–breath awareness–visualization.

Manibandha chakra (wrist rotation):
5-5-5; movement awareness–breath awareness–visualization (both clockwise and anticlockwise with each wrist and then with both).





Kehuni naman (elbow bending), 3 variations: forward, sideways, raising hands upward to namaskara: 5-5-5; movement awareness–breath awareness–visualization.

Skandha chakra (shoulder rotation): 5-5-5; movement awareness–breath awareness–visualization (both forward and backward).



Greeva sanchalana (neck and head movements): 5 (forward and back, looking over the shoulders, to the side to touch the ear to the shoulder, and head rotation both clockwise and anticlockwise).

SWAN tip: Practise five times only in each direction.

***Note:** After each practice, Swamiji gave the instruction to relax for a few breaths and observe and relax whichever part had been exercised. This principle was followed in every session and sequence.*

SHAVASANA WITH BREATH VISUALIZATION 2

Lie down comfortably in shavasana. Feet apart, arms beside the body with the palms open, head straight, eyes closed. Become aware of and mentally observe the whole body. Surrender the whole body to the floor. See your body lying on the floor like a rag doll – without any tension, tightness or discomfort. Develop a clear visualization of the body, lying on the floor in a state of relaxation, in the pose of shavasana. Check each and every part of the body and make sure that there is nothing tight. Make sure that there is no tension. Simply surrender the body to the floor. Now become aware of the breath. This time, visualize the breath entering through the left hand and flowing up the arm to the eyebrow centre. At the time of exhalation, visualize the breath flowing out through the right arm and hand. Then inhaling through the right hand up to the eyebrow centre and exhaling down through the left hand. Develop an awareness of the breath as it moves from the left hand to the forehead, and from the forehead to the right hand, then from the right hand to the forehead, and from the forehead to the left hand. In this manner, continue with the visualization of the breath. Develop this awareness of the breath. As the breath moves through the arm to the forehead and from the forehead through the other arm, feel these parts of the body relax.

Now, bring your attention to the region of the navel. Feel the breath in the navel region. At the time of inhalation, the navel moves up. At the time of exhalation, the navel comes down. When there is expansion, when the navel is going up, feel your whole body expand. When the navel

comes down, at the time of exhalation, feel your whole body relax. Develop the awareness of expansion and relaxation with every incoming and outgoing breath. Now stop this practice and externalize the awareness. Become aware of the outer environment. Slowly move your toes, feet, legs, fingers, hands, arms, turn the head from side to side. Take a deep breath in and stretch the whole body and then gently sit up.



PRANAYAMA – TRIANGULAR BREATH

Keeping the eyes closed, sit in a comfortable posture. Spine upright and straight, hands on the knees in jnana mudra or chin mudra. Eyes gently closed.

In the sitting posture, become aware of the body as a triangle. The right arm is the right side of the triangle, the head is the tip of the triangle, the left arm is the left side of the triangle and the legs are the base of the triangle. See your body as a triangle.

As you breathe in, see the breath move from the left knee to the tip of the triangle, the head. As you exhale, see the breath move down from the head to the right knee. Then hold the breath out and move your awareness from right to left, following the base of the triangle. Then again breathe in when you come to the left knee. So you are inhaling, exhaling and retaining the breath out. Inhaling, exhaling and retaining the breath out. Inhaling, exhaling and retaining the breath out. Make the breath as slow, long and deep as you comfortably can.

The amount of time taken by the inhalation should be the same as the amount of time taken in exhalation; the external retention should also be of the same length. You can keep a count to ensure this uniformity. Choose a number which is comfortable to you. Five seconds in, five out, five hold. Seven seconds in, seven out, seven hold. Ten seconds in, ten out, ten hold. Choose whatever is comfortable, ensuring that you do not run short of breath while holding the breath out.

Now reverse the process, inhaling up from the right knee, exhaling down the left side, then moving the awareness from left to right while holding the breath out. See the body as a triangle and feel the movement of the breath up and down the sides and along the base of the triangle.

Now stop this practice and externalize the awareness. Become aware of the outer environment.

Pawanmuktasana Part 2, Yantra Pranayama

PAWANMUKTASANA PART 2

SWAN tips:

- For pawanmuktasana part 2, which is the anti-gastric series, you will do each movement 15 times, and then one movement with chakra awareness and one movement with mantra awareness, so a total of 17. You need not do up to 17 if the body does not permit it. Just do as much as you can comfortably, even if it is 5 or 6 or 7 rounds. Then stop, remain in shavasana, and participate in the next part of the practice. Gradually you will have to build up your physical capacity to do each posture 25 times. Then the practice of the asana will be considered to be mastered.
- The breath has to be synchronized with the movement. If your movement is fast, the breathing will be fast. So try to follow the natural breath and coordinate your movement with the breath, not breath with the movement. The breathing has to be normal and natural.

Padachakrasana (leg rotation): 5–5–5–1–1; movement awareness–breath awareness–visualization–chakra awareness–mantra awareness (both clockwise and anticlockwise with each leg and then 10 rounds with both legs together; each sequence followed by relaxation; see below under shavasana).

SWAN tips:

- Before beginning the practices, lie down in shavasana and take some time to relax the whole body.
- Inhale the leg up, exhale down, pacing the movement with your breath.
- Make sure that you rotate your leg the same number of rounds clockwise and anticlockwise. Do as much as you can comfortably, whether it is 25 rounds or 10 rounds.

Shavasana for deep relaxation:

- After completing the rotation on one side, relax the whole leg from toes to hips. Take your mind into the leg. Observe every part, every muscle, every ligament, every joint, and just relax them. Let the whole leg flop on the floor without any tension or tightness. Feel the expansion of the leg with every inhalation and relaxation of the leg with every exhalation. With expansion prana flows into the leg, with exhalation the whole leg relaxes.
- Each time you relax, push the breath into the organ, part or limb which has been exercised. Feel the expansion of that particular part, feel vitality in that part when the breath moves there. Experience a deep relaxation when the breath moves out of there at the time of exhalation.
- After completing the practice, relax the whole body. Become aware of the breath in the abdominal region. Become aware of the rise and fall of the navel with every incoming and outgoing breath. With each inhalation, feel the energy moving into the body, prana shakti moving into the body. With each exhalation feel the body relax a bit more than before.
- Now repeat the leg rotation with the other leg and repeat the relaxation in shavasana.

Pada sanchalanasana (cycling): 5–5–5–2–2 with individual legs; movement awareness–breath awareness–visualization–chakra awareness–mantra awareness (both forward and backward movement with each leg and then 10

rounds with both legs together; each sequence followed by relaxation as in leg rotation).

SWAN tips:

- This practice is efficient for strengthening the knees. After the age of fifty, this is one practice that everybody should do regularly.
- Start by raising the leg up ninety degrees. This is to stretch and open up the leg muscles. Then start the forward movement of cycling.
- The heel should not touch the floor.
- When the knee comes to the body, you should be breathing out as there is a contraction of the abdomen. When you raise the leg and take it forward, breathe in. It may feel slightly odd, even then try this for five rounds and then reverse the breath to see which one is easier for you. The correct variant is breathing out when you are contracting and breathing in when you are expanding the body.

Pada sanchalanasana (cycling) with both legs: 25–25 (forward and backward movements with five speeds like a gearbox; each sequence followed by relaxation).

SWAN tip: With the forward movement, start slowly and then build up the speed with each count of five until you reach 25. After relaxing for a few seconds, again practise 25 times but in reverse order, coming down from fifth gear to fourth to third to second to first.

SHAVASANA WITH BREATH VISUALIZATION 3

Lie down comfortably. The feet are slightly apart, arms beside the body with palms open, head straight and eyes closed. Mentally check each and every part of the body, releasing all tightness and tension from the body.

Surrender the whole body to the floor. There should be no conscious control or tension or stress in any part of the body. Since the movement has involved the legs and waist, focus the breath in your legs.

Breathe in through the left toes up to the perineum and navel, and then breath out down from the navel and perineum through the right leg and out through the toes. Breathe in through the right toes coming up to the perineum and navel and exhale through the left leg and out through the left toes. Feel the breath rise up the left leg to the lowest part of the perineum, then up to the highest part of the navel, filling that region. While exhaling feel the breath move out through the right leg. When you inhale again the breath moves up through the right leg, filling up the region between the perineum and the navel; as you exhale it goes out the left leg. Experience the breath in the lower half of the body, moving the breath and the awareness from the left toes up along the left leg to the region above the perineum and below the navel, filling the entire region with air, and exhaling the air through the right leg. Then again inhaling through the right leg and exhaling through the left leg.

Now bring in colour visualization. Every inhalation and exhalation on the left side is to be seen in the colour blue. Every inhalation and exhalation on the right side should be seen in the colour red. So when you are breathing in through the left you are breathing in blue light, blue air. When you are breathing out through the right you are breathing out red light, red air. In this manner see, experience and visualize the flow of breath in your legs up to the navel.

Now stop this practice and externalize the awareness. Become aware of the outer environment. Slowly move your toes, feet, legs, fingers, hands, arms, turn the head from side to side. Take a deep breath in and stretch the whole body and then gently sit up.

Supta pawanmuktasana (leg lock pose): 5 rounds; breath awareness (with each leg and then with both legs; each sequence followed by relaxation).

SWAN tips:

- Lift the head and try to touch the forehead to the knee while exhaling. Inhaling, lower the head and shoulders back down.
- Apart from the contraction of the abdominal region, there is also a strong stretch in the cervical and neck areas in this asana. You may feel slight discomfort due to the pulling and stretching of the muscles and ligaments in this region, rarely stretched in the course of daily movements. It is therefore advised to begin with 5 rounds only and build up the number of rounds gradually.

SHAVASANA WITH BREATH VISUALIZATION 4

Lie down comfortably. The feet are slightly apart, arms beside the body with palms open, head straight and eyes closed. Mentally check each and every part of the body, releasing all tightness and tension from the body.

Surrender the whole body to the floor. There should be no conscious control or tension or stress in any part of the body. Experience your body, the upper half of the body: how does it feel? Go into the sensations in the upper part of the body: shoulders, neck and cervical area.

Now, visualize the breath moving up through the left hand to the eyebrow centre, and flowing out from the eyebrow centre down through the right hand, then coming in through the right hand to the eyebrow centre and going out from the eyebrow centre through the left hand.

Visualize the inhalation and exhalation on the left side as blue, the inhalation and exhalation on the right side as red. Inhaling blue air, blue light from the left hand to the eyebrow centre, exhaling red air, red light from the eyebrow centre down into the right arm and out through the fingers. Again, inhaling red light and red air from the right hand to the eyebrow centre, and exhaling blue light, blue air.

Now experience the whole body expanding with the incoming breath and relaxing with the outgoing breath.

The entire body expands like a balloon, and then relaxes, totally free of all tensions and tightness like a deflated balloon. Feel the expansion and relaxation.

Now externalize the mind, become aware of the outer environment, become aware of the people around you. Observe the body lying on the floor, the sounds, the noises around you, people around you, become aware of everything. Slowly move the toes, feet, legs, fingers, hands, arms, turn the head from side to side. Take a deep breath in and stretch the whole body, and then gently sit up with your eyes closed.

Supta udarakarshanasana (sleeping abdominal stretch pose): 5 rounds; breath awareness (each side).

SWAN tip: Complete awareness and relaxation of the whole body at the end of the practice. Feel the different sensations that you can experience in your body: tingling, warmth, tightness, relaxation, heat. Whatever may be the sensation in the body, whatever may be the feeling in the body, just be an observer of all the experiences of your body.

Counterpose: Makarasana (crocodile pose)

SWAN tip: In makarasana, direct your awareness to the spine. Be comfortable, and try to observe the movement of breath in the spinal passage. When you inhale, the breath comes up along the spine to the crown of the head. When you exhale, the breath goes down from the crown of the head to the tip of the coccyx bone. Feel the flow of breath in the spinal passage.

Reverse snow angel: 1 round from advasana (to each side and then to both sides together).

SWAN tips:

- This is a new practice. You remember how children lie on the snow and make a snow angel by moving the arms and legs? You will do that but in reverse.

- Start by lying on your front with both arms extended out, legs together. Stretch the left leg out, open it as much as you can; the left arm will come down to meet it and touch the knee, thigh, calf muscle or toes. This is half a snow angel. Slide back the arm and leg, and then do the other side. Feel the stretch in the hamstrings. This is a good way to open up the hips and the legs and stretch out the muscles on the inside of the thighs. Finally, practise with both sides together, spreading both legs wide apart and then bringing the arms down. Return to the starting position by bringing the legs together and the arms up.
- Breathe in when you are coming to the starting position, and breathe out as you take the arm and the leg to the side. Breathe normally in the final position.

SHAVASANA WITH BREATH VISUALIZATION 5

Lie down comfortably in shavasana. Feet apart, arms beside the body, palms facing up, head straight, eyes closed. Be aware of the whole body. Be aware of the whole body and surrender the whole body to the floor. Move your awareness through each and every part of the body, and make sure that there is nothing tight, nothing tense. Once again, become aware of the breath. This time visualize the breath in one flow from mooladhara to sahasrara. As you inhale, feel the breath rise from mooladhara to sahasrara. As you exhale, see the breath move down from sahasrara to mooladhara. Experience the flow of breath in the spinal passage. In one straight line the breath moves from mooladhara to sahasrara at the time of inhalation. In one straight line the breath moves from sahasrara to mooladhara, in one exhalation.

Now mentally experience the breath coming in through the left side of the body and exiting from the right side, then coming in from the right side of the body and exiting through the left side. Your body is simply a cross-current of the flow of prana. The prana flows from the left to the

right and then from the right to the left. When you inhale the prana flows in, when you exhale the prana flows out. When you inhale the prana flows in, when you exhale the prana flows out. The entire left side of the body breathes in and the entire right side of the body breathes out. The entire right side of the body breathes in and the entire right side of the body breathes out.

Now, slowly stop this practice. Once again become aware of the body on the floor. Observe the contact points between the body and the floor. Become aware of those parts of the body that are touching the floor, starting with the heels and coming up to the back of the head. Experience the contact between the body and the floor. In one glimpse, experience the whole body in contact with the floor.

Now stop this practice and slowly move your toes, feet, legs, fingers, hands, arms, head from side to side. Take a deep breath in and stretch the whole body, and then slowly and gently sit up facing this way.

PRANAYAMA

Breath awareness: Sit in a comfortable posture, keeping the body upright but not tense. Relax the shoulders and observe the flow of breath. Begin by observing the flow of breath in the nasal passage. Feel the breath move in the nasal passage. Then feel the breath in the throat. Feel the breath move in the lungs. Feel the breath push the diaphragm and experience the movement of the navel. These are the areas where the breath is to be experienced: inside the nasal passage; in the throat; in the lungs, filling the lungs; and the filled lungs pushing the diaphragm down, thus causing the movement of the navel.

Triangular breath with outer retention: 7 rounds x 2, using nasikagra mudra, ratio of 1:1:1.

SWAN tips:

- The focus of this practice is on developing the capacity to hold the breath, for perfection in pranayama is seen in kumbhaka. Perfection of pranayama is not measured by how long you can breathe in and breathe out, though that has its own importance. In order to move into the higher practices or dimensions of yoga, the capacity for kumbhaka, retention, has to be enhanced.
- During outer retention, sometimes a slight stress can be felt in the lungs or the chest. If that condition develops, reduce the count so you are not straining yourself. Try not to be breathless at the end of the practice.

To begin, inhale through the left nostril. Feel the breath coming up with the inhalation from the left side to the eyebrow centre. When you exhale, feel the breath going down from the eyebrow centre through the right side. When the exhalation is complete, hold the breath out and move the awareness from the right to the left side. Again breathe in through the left, breathe out through the right, hold the breath out, moving the awareness from right to left. You will do this 7 times in this direction and then 7 times in the opposite direction.

The length of inhalation, exhalation and retention should be equal. Start with a count of 7. If it is too easy, increase the count to 10. If it is still too easy, go up to 15.

Once you have completed 7 rounds in each direction, bring the hand down and focus on the breath in the spinal passage, with the awareness moving between mooladhara and sahasrara.

Bhramari pranayama: 7 rounds.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Awareness of contact between body parts and the floor 3. Awareness of sensation of touch between clothing and skin 4. Externalization.

YANTRA PRANAYAMA I

Sit in a comfortable posture, body upright and straight, eyes gently closed. Become aware of the triangle that your body forms while seated on the floor. The knees are two points of the triangle and the coccyx is the third point. In this sitting posture, the base of the body is a triangle. Visualize a triangle painted on the ground and yourself sitting on it. So from the front you are sitting on a Shakti triangle, an inverted triangle, with the two knees in front and the coccyx at the back. The body adopts the image of the Shakti triangle, the downward pointing triangle. The tip of that downward pointing triangle is at mooladhara chakra.

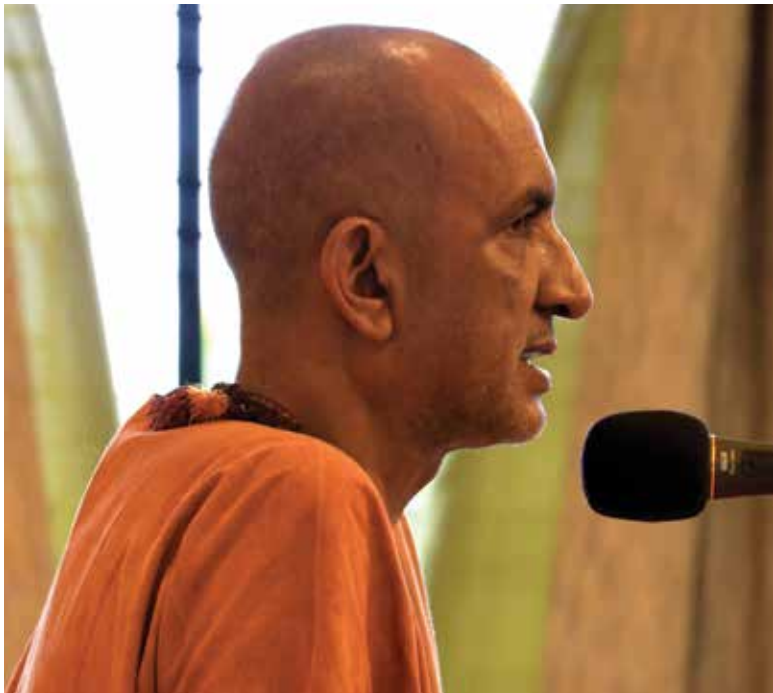
Now observe the breath extending from the tip of the triangle up along the spinal path into the region of sahasrara at the crown of the head. Exhaling, observe the breath moving from the crown of the head to the tip of the coccyx bone where the triangle drawn on the floor meets the coccyx. Feel the movement of breath.

Your body is supported by the Prakriti triangle and the breath comes up from that Prakriti triangle to sahasrara. Now, while exhaling, from sahasrara the breath divides in two and flows down into both the arms with the hands placed on top of the knees. Again, while inhaling, the breath comes up the spine from the tip of the Shakti triangle at the coccyx to sahasrara, and while exhaling, the breath flows down from sahasrara in two streams through the arms to the knees. Develop this awareness for some time.

Now externalize the mind, become aware of the outer environment, become aware of the people around you. Externalize the mind, observe the body lying on the floor, the sounds, the noises around you, people around you, become aware of everything. Slowly move the toes, feet, legs, fingers, hands, arms, turn the head from side to side. Take a deep breath in and stretch the whole body, and then gently sit up with your eyes closed.

Shakti and Shiva triangles in yantra pranayama

This was an introduction to a style of pranayama called yantra pranayama, which is an advanced version of nadi shodhana. It has to be developed gradually. What you did today was visualize an inverted triangle drawn on the floor and yourself sitting on it, with the knees representing the two outer points and the spine representing the tip of the triangle. The passage of the breath was in the spine. Then you had to divert the single breath into two streams coming down into the arms. This then becomes the Shiva triangle, the upward triangle, formed at the front from the knees to the head. The connecting link of the Shiva and Shakti triangles is the spine, as the tip of the Shakti triangle is at the base of the spine and the tip of the Shiva triangle is at the top of the spine. Pranayama takes place in this region of the spine.



Pawanmuktasana Part 3, Experiencing Prana

The practices of pawanmuktasana part 3 are known as the shakti bandhas. *Shakti* means energy and *bandha* means block, so shakti bandhas are practices that remove the energy blocks from the body. From working with the physical body and subtle experiences in the body, now we move on to the aspect of prana. The shakti bandha series involves physical postures or movements, yet the focus is more on the pranic movement.

The book *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha* specifies areas of the body where pranic tension is experienced in a given practice. If you go deeper into the study of the *marma sthanas* or pranic points in the physical body, you will discover more such points. Chakras are in the psychic body, while the flow of prana is experienced in the pranic body. Marma sthanas are minor pranic centres situated in the physical extremities or at the beginning or end of a particular organ or muscle system, such as toes, ankles, thumb-tips, mid-calf, and so on. When the body is tired and you press these marma sthanas, the energy begins to move again. The shakti bandhas aim to clear these pranic blocks using physical movement and exercise.

The first shakti bandha is a simple one: *rajju karshan-asana* or pulling the rope. Now, why is this asana not in pawanmuktasana part 1 which involves the movement of the shoulders and arms? The reason is that inside the shoulder

blades, on the sides of the shoulder blades where the muscles enter into the shoulder blades, there are marma points. If you press these points around the shoulder blades, you will feel relief, as if a big burden has been removed from the chest. You will feel light. The back becomes freer. So when you are moving the arms up and down in a controlled movement, the shoulder blade is also moving and massaging the marma areas. This will initially bring out the tiredness and then energy will flow in. Similarly with the other pawanmuktasana part 3 practices.

PAWANMUKTASANA PART 3 – SHAKTI BANDHAS

Rajju karshanasana (pulling the rope): 10 rounds; sparsha awareness (touch awareness of shoulder blades sliding and moving).

SWAN tip: Try this practice with sparsha awareness, with your eyes closed, visualizing the shoulder blades. Feel the contact between the shoulder blades and the surrounding muscles and bones. Feel the stretch and expansion as you move the hands up and down. Try to focus the awareness on the gentle movement which you can feel between the shoulder blade and the inner muscles and bones.

Nauka sanchalanasana (rowing the boat): 5–5–5; movement awareness–breath awareness–visualization.

SWAN tips: In addition to the threefold awareness, the focus in this practice is on manipura chakra. As you move forward and go back, feel the stretch along the abdomen, navel, stomach, and observe the awareness shifting to manipura chakra.

Chakki chalanasana (churning the mill): 5–5–5; movement awareness–breath awareness–visualization.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Relaxing each and every part of the body, beginning from the right

leg up the right side, then the left leg up the left side, the back, the front, the head and face 3. Externalization.

Vayu nishkasana (wind releasing pose): 10 rounds; breath awareness.

SWAN tips:

- Be gentle with your body and your spine, and remember any limitations or problems. Those with slipped disc, sciatica, vertigo, hypertension or a hip replacement should avoid this practice.
- Afterwards relax the knees by bending and straightening them a few times from the sitting posture.

Namaskarasana (salutation pose): 10 rounds; breath awareness.

SWAN tips:

- The awareness in this practice is on the movement of the knees. The knees are like wings, coming together and then again moving out.
- At the end of the practice, stretch the legs out in front, observing the breath. Feel the breath in your legs. At the time of inhalation, feel the expansion in both legs. At the time of exhalation, feel the relaxation in both legs.

Udarakarshanasana (abdominal stretch pose): 10 rounds.

SWAN tip: Those who cannot keep the feet firmly planted on the floor can keep standing on the toes for this practice. The key is pushing one knee towards the floor and the other in towards the body. That creates tension or pressure in the abdominal region.

Shavasana with breath visualization (feet to eyebrow centre): 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Observing the breath 3. Alternate breathing from left toes to eyebrow centre, eyebrow centre to right toes, then from right toes to eyebrow centre, and eyebrow centre to left toes 4. Visualizing the breath as blue light on the left side, red light on the right side 5. Externalization.

Gatyatmak meru vakrasana (dynamic spinal twist): 10 rounds (at a fast pace).

Shavasana with breath visualization (toes to perineum, hands to eyebrow centre): 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Observing the breath 3. Alternate breathing from the left toes to the perineum, perineum to right toes, then from right toes to perineum, and perineum to left toes 4. Visualizing blue and red light on left and right sides respectively 5. Alternate breathing from left hand to eyebrow centre, from eyebrow centre to right hand, then right hand to eyebrow centre, and eyebrow centre to left hand 6. Externalization.

COUNTERPOSES FOR SHAKTI BANDHAS

In the shakti bandhas, the major movements have been forward movements. Therefore, some counterpose is required.

Bhujangasana (cobra pose): 5 rounds each of 3 variations:

Variation 1: Elbows are pointing upward, lifting the chest up, keeping the navel on the ground.

Variation 2: Sphinx or saral bhujangasana, the forearms are on the floor with the palms downwards on each side of the head. Forearms and elbows are close to the body. Raise the head, shoulders and chest by bringing the upper arms to the vertical position. Elbows, forearms and hands remain on the floor.

Variation 3: From sphinx straighten the arms fully.

Shalabhasana (locust pose): 5 rounds (with each leg and then with both legs).

Matsya kridasana (flapping fish pose): to relax between backward bends.

SWAN tip: This posture can be used for relaxation and also

as a counterpose to all the backward bends that have been done so far.

Dhanurasana (bow pose): 5 rounds with each leg and then 1 round with both legs, holding the posture.

SWAN tip: Start with one side at a time, bending the right leg and holding the ankle with the right hand. The left hand rests under or beside the left leg. Inhaling raise the right leg, keeping the left straight. Then practise on the other side.

Shavasana with awareness of sensations in the physical

body: Lie down comfortably. The body is in the shavasana posture; the eyes are gently closed. Relax the whole body, surrender the whole body.

Become aware of the sensations inside the physical body. What are the sensations in the different parts? Heat, tingling, muscular movement, whatever the sensation in any part of the body, become aware of those sensations. Develop complete awareness of all the physical sensations that you can experience in your physical body. The feeling of heat and warmth, the feeling of tingling and vibrations, the feeling of heaviness or lightness. Whatever the feeling, sensation or experience, go deep into it. See the whole body relaxing and be aware of all the sensations.

Now stop this practice and become aware of the outer environment. Become aware of the external sounds. Slowly move the body, toes, fingers, legs, arms, head from side to side. Take a deep breath in and stretch the body, and then slowly sit up facing this side, and then open your eyes.

PRANAYAMA

Nadi shodhana: triangular breath with shambhavi mudra and nasikagra drishti: With shambhavi mudra at the end of inhalation and start of exhalation, nasikagra drishti during external retention; count of 15, ratio of 1:1:1, 3 rounds.

SWAN tips:

- This builds on the practice in which you inhaled from the left knee to the eyebrow centre, exhaled down the right side to the right knee, then held the breath out and moved the awareness from right to left. The same was repeated in the reverse direction.
- Here you are including the practice of shambhavi mudra at the end of the inhalation. As the in-breath reaches the shoulder, the head gradually goes back and the eyes gaze at the eyebrow centre in shambhavi mudra. On the exhalation, the head returns to the centre and shambhavi mudra is released. With the rest of the exhalation, the awareness moves from the opposite shoulder down to the knee. Practise nasikagra drishti or nose tip gazing while holding the breath out as the awareness moves from one knee to the other along the base of the triangle.

Nadi shodhana: triangular breath with nasagra mudra, shambhavi mudra and nasikagra drishti: Adding nasagra mudra to the previous practice; alternate nostril breathing with internal and external retention; ratio of 1:4:2:2, 3 rounds.

SWAN tips:

- This time you have to breathe in faster. Take a full breath in at a count of 5, hold the breath for a count of 20, exhale for 10 and hold the breath out for 10.
- Hold nasagra mudra throughout the practice.
- Move the head back while inhaling and fix the gaze at the eyebrow centre in shambhavi mudra. While holding the breath in, return the head to the centre and release

shambhavi mudra. At the end of the internal retention, bring the gaze back to shambhavi mudra once again. Release shambhavi while exhaling. During the external retention, practise nasikagra drishti.

- Rest for 5 to 7 deep, long breaths after each round.

Nadi shodhana with nasagra mudra, jalandhara bandha, moola bandha, shambhavi mudra and nasikagra drishti:

Adding jalandhara bandha and moola bandha to the previous practice; alternate nostril breathing with internal and external retention; ratio of 1:4:2:2, 3 rounds.

SWAN tips:

- For this practice, add jalandhara and moola bandha during the internal and external retentions. Let go of nasagra mudra when applying the bandhas and during retention. Use nasagra mudra for inhalation and exhalation.
- Practising with the bandhas is more demanding. You have to gradually build it up. Initially you may feel out of breath, but with practice, after a couple of months, this will be easy for you. You have to come to a point where you can be comfortable in the ratio that is appropriate for the practice of pranayama. Right now, you are only breathing in and breathing out. Some people can breathe in to a count of 5, some to a count of 20, but no one is practising pranayama, for the ratios leave you with a feeling of breathlessness or palpitation. If you sustain the ratio for some time, you can move into the practice of pranayama.
- Apply nasagra mudra. Move the head back while inhaling and fix the gaze at the eyebrow centre in shambhavi mudra. While holding the breath in, return the head to the centre and release shambhavi mudra; then move the head forward into jalandhara bandha, shift the gaze to the nosetip in nasikagra drishti and assume moola bandha, contracting the perineum. Still retaining the breath in, release the bandhas, bring the head up to the centre and then back into shambhavi mudra. Release shambhavi at the beginning of the exhalation. During the external

retention, once again assume jalandhara bandha, moola bandha and nasikagra drishti.

Nadi shodhana with nasagra mudra, jalandhara bandha, uddiyana bandha, moola bandha, shambhavi mudra and nasikagra drishti: Adding uddiyana bandha to the previous practice; ratio of 1:4:2:2, 3 rounds.

SWAN tips:

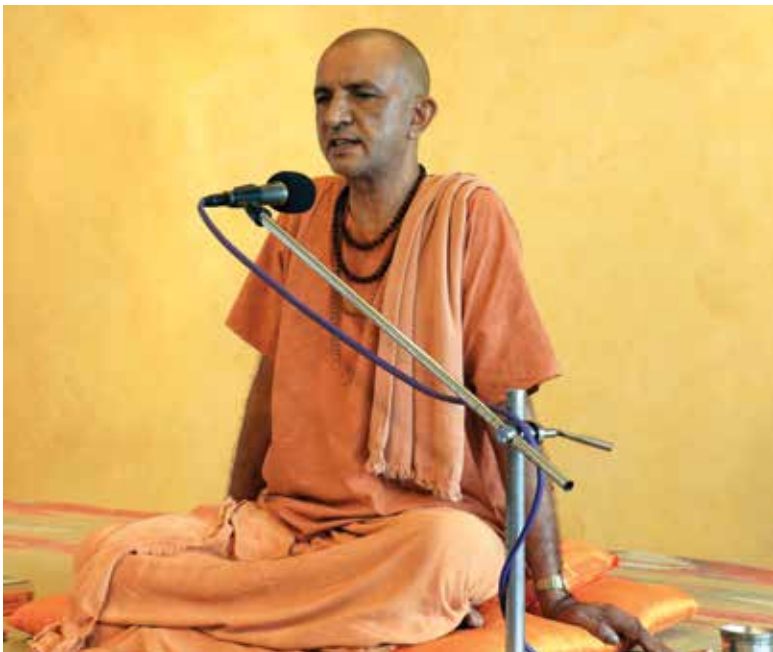
- When you become comfortable with this simple ratio of 1:4:2:2, together with the combination of mudras and bandhas, the actual pranayama practice begins.
- This time, add uddiyana bandha during the external retention.
- Before beginning, exhale with both nostrils to prepare.
- Using nasagra mudra, inhale, tilt the head back and apply shambhavi mudra. Holding the breath in, bring the head to the centre and then down while applying jalandhara bandha and moola bandha. Release moola bandha, then jalandhara bandha. Lift the head up and back, still holding the breath in, coming back to shambhavi. As you begin exhaling, release shambhavi, bring the head forward into jalandhara bandha, gazing at the nosetip. While holding the breath out, apply uddiyana bandha and then moola bandha. Release moola bandha, uddiyana bandha and jalandhara bandha. Breathe in. Continue in this manner.
- Remember to have a break in between each round to normalize the breathing.

SHAVASANA WITH EXPANSION AND RELAXATION OF BODY

Lie down comfortably in shavasana. Surrender the whole body to the floor. Become aware of all the different sensations that you can observe in the body. Become aware of all the parts where you are holding tension and stress and release the tension. Become aware of the deepening state of relaxation.

Observe the breath flowing in and out of the body. At the time of inhalation, feel the whole body expand, getting bigger and bigger. At the time of exhalation, experience the whole body coming back to normal. Expansion and normalization of the body with every incoming and outgoing breath. With expansion there is a feeling of energy and lightness, with relaxation there is absolute lack of voluntary control over the body. The body is stress-free, tension-free, like a rag doll lying on the floor. Observe the expansion and vitality in the body; then observe the relaxation. Continue with this practice until you are easily able to experience vitality and relaxation in your body and in your mind.

Now stop this practice, externalize the awareness. Slowly move your toes, feet, legs, fingers, hands, arms, turn the head from side to side. Take a deep breath in and stretch the whole body and then gently sit up.



Standing Asana, Vajrasana Series, Balancing Asana, Nadi Shodhana with Gayatri Mantra

STANDING

Tadasana (palm tree pose) and two variations: 5 rounds in each variation (each leg in variations 1 & 2); coordination of breath with the movement.



Variation 2: Lift your heels and stretch up the arms in regular tadasana. Hold the posture, then lift the left leg up in front, hold it horizontal for a few seconds, and bring it back down. Do the same with the right leg: lift, hold, and bring it down.

If you have trouble with the balance, try keeping the feet flat on the ground.

With each round, try to bring the leg a little higher.

As you hold the leg up, hold the breath in.

Variation 3: Instead of the leg moving to the front as in variation 1, now lift it to the side. Raise the left leg to the left, hold it, and bring it back down. Then stretch the right leg to the right side, hold, and bring it down.

Keep it simple, with the feet flat on the ground.



Basic tadasana: Finally, practise the basic tadasana to release the tensions and stresses from the body.

Relaxation in the standing posture:

Keeping the eyes closed, observe the whole body mentally.

Relax the body in the standing posture, relax the breath.

Kati chakrasana (waist rotating pose): 5 rounds.



Tiryak kati chakrasana (swaying waist rotating pose): 5 rounds.

SWAN tip: Keeping the legs apart, interlock the fingers with the palms down. Inhale and raise the arms up. Then exhale and bend the body to the horizontal position, hold the breath and twist the upper body to the right side. Still holding the breath, come to the left side and then to the centre. Now, breathe in and come up, breathe out, hands down. This is one round.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Observation of the natural breath 3. Watching the breath in the abdominal region, experience expansion with inhalation and relaxation of the abdominal region with exhalation 4. Externalization.

Utthanasana (squat and rise pose): 3 times 3 rounds; first round coming down 33%, second round 66%, third round 99%.



Druta utkatasana (dynamic energy pose): 1 round; coming down all the way into a squatting pose.

SWAN tip: This is a variation of utthanasana. Hold the hands in pranam mudra, arms straight up over the head.

Shavasana with breath visualization (toes to perineum): 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Alternate breathing from left toes to perineum, perineum to right toes and out, then from right toes to perineum, and from perineum out through left toes 3. Externalization.

VAJRASANA SERIES

Marjari asana (cat stretch pose): 5 rounds.

Vyaghrasana (tiger pose) with 2 variations: 5 rounds (on each side) for each.

Variation 1: Starting from marjari asana, raise the right leg out straight behind you, find your balance and then lift



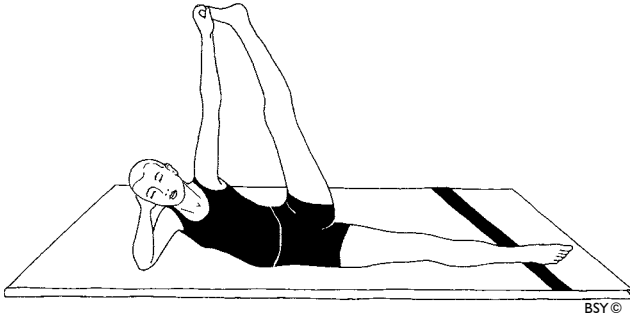
the left arm up. Breathe normally and hold. Lower the left arm and right leg. Repeat on the other side.

Variation 2: This time raise the right leg and right arm, and then the left leg and left arm.



Shavasana with breath visualization (fingertips to eyebrow centre): 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Alternate breathing from left hand to eyebrow centre, eyebrow centre to right hand and out, then from right hand to eyebrow centre, and from eyebrow centre out through left hand 3. Externalization.

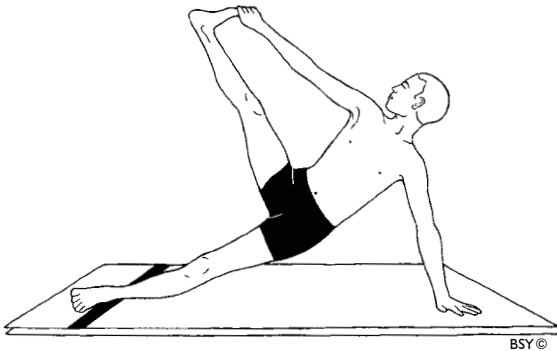
BALANCING



Buddhasana or meru akarshanasana (spinal bending pose):
3 rounds (each side).

SWAN tips:

- Buddhasana is the posture in which Buddha used to meditate. Lie down on your side like the reclining Buddha. Now in this reclining position, raise the right leg up and grab hold of the ankle, shin or toes. Breathe normally. Breathing out, bring the leg down. Repeat on the left side.
- Keep the whole body in one straight line.



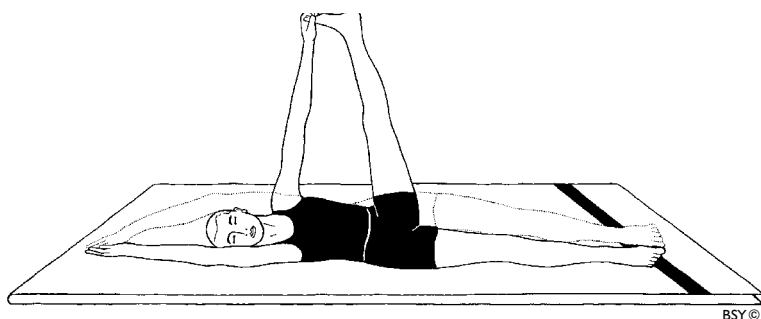
Vasishthasana (Sage Vasishtha's pose): 1 round (each side).

SWAN tips:

- You may have heard of Sage Vasishtha who was the guru of Sri Rama. There is an asana in his name, Vasishthasana,

and it is said he used to meditate in that posture. It is similar to the reclining Buddha. This time, you come up on your hand so that you are balancing on your hand and feet. Then you raise the right leg up and catch hold of your ankle, shin or toes. Then come down and relax. Repeat on the left side.

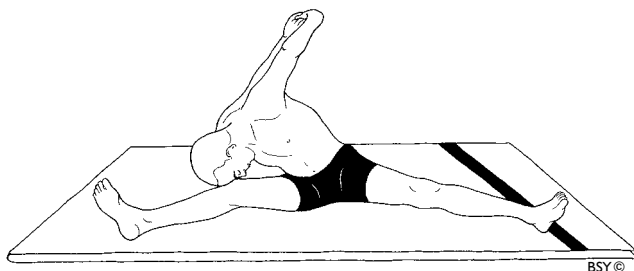
- Keep the hips off the ground in one straight line. Raise the leg up once you have found the balance. While holding the posture, try to remain still.



- There is another variation to the practices we have done, called hasta pada angushthasana. This is the simple one, then comes buddhasana, then vasishthasana. These can be practised in a sequence where the side of the body is first flat on the ground, then slightly bent, and then supported on the hand and feet.

Shavasana with breath visualization (toes to eyebrow centre): 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Alternate breathing from left toes to eyebrow centre, eyebrow centre to right toes and out, then from right toes to eyebrow centre, and from eyebrow centre out through left toes 3. Externalization.

FORWARD AND BACKWARD BENDING



Pada prasar paschimottanasana (legs spread back stretch pose): 3 rounds (to each side and to the centre).

SWAN tips:

- Try to raise the arms as much as possible.
- People with spinal problems, slipped disc and sciatica should avoid this.

Setu asana (bridge pose): 3 rounds.

SWAN tips:

- Setu asana is a counterpose for paschimottanasana.
- You can either breathe normally or retain the breath, whatever is more convenient and comfortable. Hold for as long as you can comfortably.
- When you lift your hips up, try to keep the feet flat on the ground.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Expansion and relaxation of body with inhalation and exhalation 3. Alternate breathing from left toes to eyebrow centre, eyebrow centre to right toes and out, then from right toes to eyebrow centre, and from eyebrow centre out through left toes 4. Visualize a beam of blue light when breathing in and out on the left side, red light when breathing in and out from the right 5. Externalization.

PRANAYAMA

Nadi shodhana with Gayatri mantra: alternate nostril breathing; ratio of 1:1:1:1, 1 round.

SWAN tips:

- Before starting, take a deep breath in through both nostrils and exhale.
- Breathe in through the left for the duration of the Gayatri mantra, hold the breath in for another Gayatri mantra, breathe out through the right for the length of a third Gayatri mantra, hold the breath out for a fourth Gayatri mantra, and so on.

Om bhoorbhuvahsvahtatsaviturvarenyam.

Bhargodevasyahidhiyoyo nahprachodayaat.

Nadi shodhana with Gayatri mantra, jalandhara bandha, uddiyana bandha and moola bandha: ratio of 1:1:1:1, 2 rounds.

SWAN tip: This time practise jalandhara bandha and moola bandha when you are holding the breath in and the three bandhas or maha bandha when you are holding the breath out.

Triangular breath with Gayatri mantra: ratio of 1:1:2, 4 rounds, moving the awareness from the right to the left hand with the external retention.

SWAN tips:

- Visualize the triangle to guide and direct your breath.
- Use nasagra mudra to close one nostril on inhaling and on exhaling; bring the hands down for the duration of the external retention.

Nadi shodhana with Gayatri mantra and the three bandhas: ratio of 1:4:2:2, 1 round.

Kumbhaka

In the advanced pranayama practice, there is a lot of emphasis on retention, not so much on inhalation or exhalation. If you go into the advanced pranayama practice, you are inhaling to the ratio of 1, you are holding 4, exhaling 2, and holding 2. The duration of internal retention is always longer than the duration of inhalation or exhalation. There is a specific reason why there is so much emphasis on kumbhaka.

Kumbhaka brings you to the state of *kevala kumbhaka*, spontaneous retention of breath. That spontaneous retention of breath is desired for higher yogic practices. To hold the breath in for four repetitions of the Gayatri mantra, then exhale for two Gayatri mantras and hold the breath out for two Gayatri mantras, you need to regulate your breath, keep it slow and deep, according to the speed of the mantra.

In the past I have spoken about Swami Nadabrahmananda, who was a disciple of Swami Sivananda and who had perfected the art of kumbhaka. He could hold his breath, in internal or external retention, for one hour or more.

When *kevala kumbhaka* or spontaneous retention of breath takes place, the pranas are activated. As long as you breathe, prana is combined with the breath and the pranic awareness is with the breath. When you stop breathing and move into *kevala kumbhaka*, only the pranas move, not the breath. This was seen in Swami Nadabrahmananda, in research done by Dr Elmer Green at the Meninger Foundation. They found that even after blocking all the pores of his body with wax and plugging all the orifices of the body, so that Swami Nadabrahmananda could not breathe even a micro-breath, he was playing the tabla while holding the breath. A coin was put on his head and it was moving up and down, due to prana. He survived one hour without breathing as his pranas were active.

In the definition of pranayama, the first component is prana-yama, which is breath control, and the second component is prana-ayama, which is expanding the dimen-

sion of prana. When you are practising nadi shodhana, during inhalation and exhalation you are doing prana-yama, but when you are holding the breath and trying to become comfortable in that state of retention, whether external or internal, you will begin to notice the effect of the pranic shakti, the expansion of the dimension of prana inside the body; that is prana-ayama.

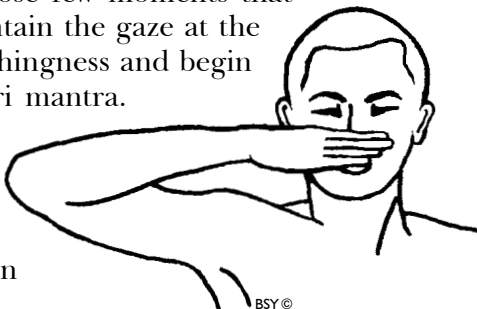
MUDRA

Shambhavi and bhoochari mudra with Gayatri mantra:

ratio of 1:2, 3 rounds, inhaling with shambhavi, exhaling with bhoochari.

SWAN tips:

- For shambhavi mudra, raise the head to a 45 degree angle and fix the gaze at the eyebrow centre. Hold the gaze there for one Gayatri mantra.
- Keeping the eyes open, bring the eyes down and bring the hand in front of the nose, with the palm down, fingers together and the side of the thumb in contact with the top of the upper lip. Look at the little finger, then remove the hand and continue to gaze at the empty space where the little finger was for one Gayatri. That will only happen for a few seconds before your eyes again focus on something different, but for those few moments that you are able to maintain the gaze at the space, stare into nothingness and begin to repeat the Gayatri mantra. When the eyes begin to focus on something again, close them and just feel the sensations in the head.



SHAVASANA WITH VISUALIZATION OF THE BODY IN CHIDAKASHA

Lie down comfortably in shavasana, feet apart, arms beside the body with the palms facing up, head in a straight line with the body, eyes and lips gently closed. Observe the whole body mentally. Surrender the whole body to the floor.

Visualize yourself lying in shavasana. See yourself in chidakasha, practising shavasana. See your body in chidakasha, in the pose of shavasana, floating and then gradually sinking. Floating and sinking in the space of chidakasha. As the relaxation deepens, there is a sensation of floating. See yourself floating and sinking in the space of chidakasha. Now see your body lying on the floor. Try to develop the perception or vision of the body from the outside, just as I am able to see you lying on the floor. See your body lying on the floor in the pose of shavasana in a state of relaxation, comfort and ease.

Now become aware of the breath, awareness of the breath in the navel region. See the expansion and contraction of the navel with every incoming and outgoing breath.

Stop the practice of observing the breath and externalize the mind. Become aware of the outer environment. Awareness of outside sounds. Slowly move your toes, feet, legs, fingers, hands, arms, and turn the head from side to side. Take a deep breath in and stretch your whole body and then gently sit up, keeping the eyes closed. Rub your palms together, place them on the closed eyes and then slowly open your eyes.

Review of Asana, Nadi Shodhana with Gayatri Mantra

STANDING

Tadasana (palm tree pose) and two variations: 5 rounds in each variation (with each leg in variations 1 & 2); coordination of breath with the movement; inhale while raising the leg, exhale while bringing the leg down.

Variation 2 with each leg raising to the front

SWAN tip: When you are raising one leg up, there is a tendency for the spine to move back. Try to remain straight and simply raise the leg.

Variation 3 with each leg raised to the side



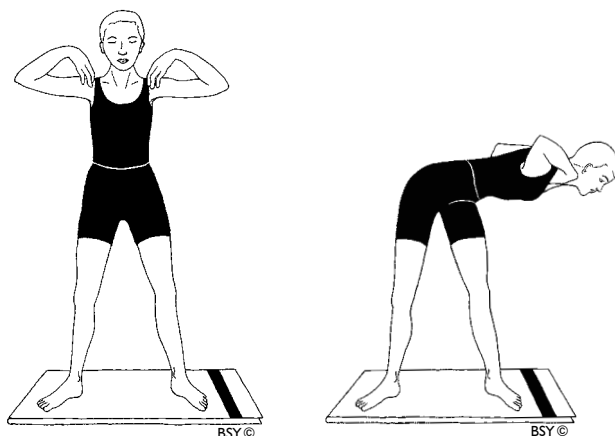
Tadasana and walking tadasana: After the fifth round of regular tadasana, walk in tadasana from the back of your mat to the front, turn around and go back, walking on your toes.

Relaxation in the standing posture:

Keeping the eyes closed, observe the whole body mentally. Relax the body in the standing posture; relax the breath.

Shavasana: 1. Settling the body 2. Observing the flow of natural breath in the nostrils, cool on inhalation, warmer on exhalation 3. Externalization.

Kati chakrasana (waist rotating pose): 5 rounds (to each side).



Meru prishthasana (spine and back pose) variation: 5 rounds (to each side), bending forward 90 degrees.

SWAN tips:

- Placing the fingers on the shoulders, keep the chest open and breathe in deeply while twisting to the right. Exhaling, bend forward; hold for five seconds; inhaling, come up to the centre; exhale to the other side.
- After the practice, bring the feet together. For a few moments, close the eyes and relax your whole body in the standing posture.



Tiryak kati chakrasana (swaying waist rotating pose): 5 rounds (to each side).

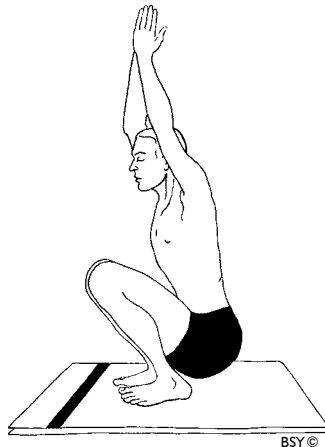
Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Seeing the body mentally lying on the floor in shavasana 3. Observation of the flow of breath in the nostrils, cool on inhalation and warmer on exhalation 4. Externalization.

SQUATTING

Utthanasana (squat and rise pose): 3 times 3 rounds; first round coming down 33%, second round 66%, third round 99%.

SWAN tip: Three times is enough to start with, but gradually increase one round per week to strengthen your knees and to be able to do the advanced practices better.

Vayu nishkasana (wind releasing pose): 3 rounds.



Druta utkatasana (dynamic energy pose): 3 rounds, full squat with the back and arms upright.

SWAN tip: *Druta* means fast, *utkata* means up and down, so you have to sit down fast and get up fast.

SHAVASANA: RELAXING BODY PARTS WITH BREATH

Lie down comfortably. Relax the whole body. Complete awareness of the whole body. Complete relaxation of the whole body. Surrender the whole body to the floor.

If any part of the body feels tired, focus your breath in that part of the body. If the knees feel tired, take your awareness into your knees. Breathe in and see the breath in the knees. See the muscles and the skin around the knees expand. When you breathe out, feel the relaxation in your knees. If you feel stiff in the lower back, direct your breath there. Expand the area with inhalation and relax the area with exhalation. Wherever you feel some tightness, discomfort, ache or pain, take your mind and breath to that part. Breathe in that part of the body. As you breathe in, feel the part of the body expand and relax, expand and relax, expand and relax. Check the whole body.

Relax the whole body. Be aware of the whole body, from the toes to the head. In one thought, one glimpse, experience and visualize the whole body. Visualize the whole body in one thought, one glimpse; visualize the whole body.

Now slowly move your toes, feet, legs, fingers, hands, arms, turn the head from side to side. Breathe in and stretch the whole body and then gently sit up.

VAJRASANA SERIES

Marjari asana (cat stretch pose): 5 rounds.

SWAN tips:

- From sitting in vajrasana (thunderbolt pose) come into shashankasana (hare pose) and then onto your fours. Keep the position of the hands and knees fixed.
- Make sure you do not bend your elbows when you practise this asana.



Vyaghrasana (tiger stretch pose): 5 rounds (on each side).

Variation 1: 5 rounds (on each side), raising and stretching the opposite leg and arm.

SWAN tips:

- Hold the final position in this and the following variation for five seconds, breathing normally. If you can, hold the breath.
- Relax the whole body in shashankasana, breathing normally, before practising the second variation.

Variation 2: 5 rounds (on each side), raising the leg and arm of the same side.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Complete relaxation of the whole body 3. Externalization.

BALANCING ASANA

Hasta pada angushtasana (finger to toe stretch): 2 rounds (each side), with upper hand resting on the thigh in the starting position.

SWAN tip: Breathe normally when you are in the final position.



Buddhasana or meru akarshanasana (spinal bending pose):
2 rounds (each side).



Vasishthasana (Sage Vasishtha's pose): 1 round (each side).

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Observing the flow of the natural breath in the abdominal region 3. Expansion of the whole body with inhalation and relaxation with exhalation 4. Externalization.

FORWARD AND BACKWARD BENDING

Pada prasar paschimottanasana (legs spread back stretch pose): 3 rounds (to each side and to the centre).

Setu asana (bridge pose): 3 rounds.

Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the body to the floor 2. Alternate breathing from left toes to perineum, perineum to right toes and out, from right toes to perineum, and from perineum out through left toes 3. Alternate breathing from left toes to eyebrow centre, eyebrow centre to right toes and out, then from right toes to eyebrow centre, and from eyebrow centre out through left toes 4. Externalization.

PRANAYAMA

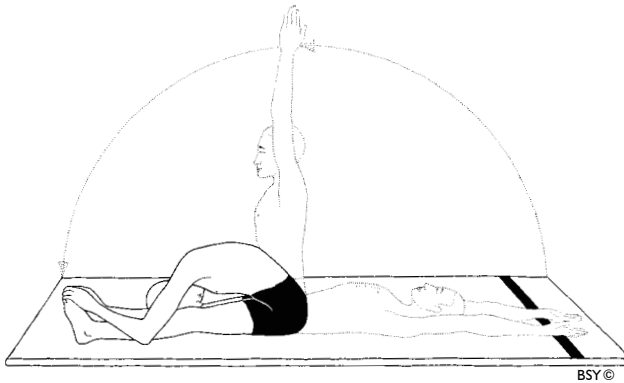
Nadi shodhana with Gayatri mantra: ratio of 1:1:1:1, 3 rounds.

Triangular breath with Gayatri mantra: ratio of 1:1:2, 3 rounds, moving the awareness from the right to the left hand on the first Gayatri mantra of the external retention, and then from the left to the right hand on the second Gayatri mantra of the external retention.

SWAN tip: At the end of the pranayama practice, keeping the eyes closed, observe the flow of breath in the spinal passage. See the ascent and descent of the breath along the spinal path. At the time of inhalation, the breath moves from the bottom of the spine to the top of the head. At the time of exhalation, the breath moves down from top of the head to the base of the spine. Observe the movement of the breath along the spine.

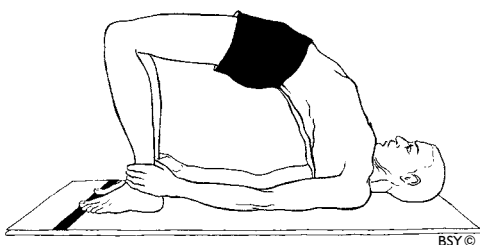
Paschimottanasana Series, Balancing Asana, Kapalbhati and Bhastrika Pranayama, Nadi Shodhana with Gayatri Mantra

FORWARD AND BACKWARD BENDING



Gatyatmak paschimottanasana (dynamic back stretch): 7 rounds.

Shavasana (short): 1. Surrendering the body to the floor
2. Observing the flow of breath in the abdominal region and watching it return to normal breath
3. Expansion of the body on inhalation and relaxation of the body on exhalation
4. Externalization.



Kandharasana (bridge pose) variation: 3 rounds, with arms crossed and placed on the chest.

Basic pose: 3 rounds, hands holding the ankles.

Shavasana (short): 1. Awareness of all the physical sensations in the body 2. Surrendering the whole body to the floor 3. Externalization.

Ardha padma paschimottanasana (half lotus back stretching pose): 2 rounds in each variation (on the same side, then change sides).

Variation 1: Bring the right foot on top of the left thigh, half lotus. Both hands on the left knee, breathing in arms up, exhaling forward, inhaling up, hands down with the exhalation.

Variation 2: This time, bring the right foot further over the left thigh and circle the waist with the right arm, with the right hand catching hold of the right foot or toes.

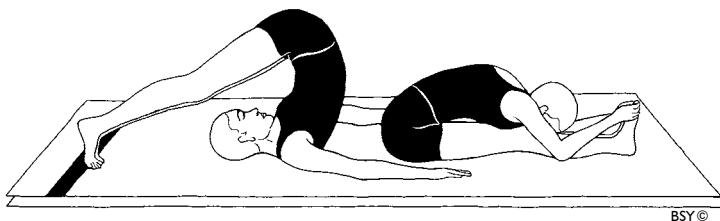
Repeat both variations on the opposite side.

Paschimottanasana variation: 5 rounds (on each side), with legs spread wide apart, twisting to one side to bend over one leg and then the other.

Counterpose: Utthan pristhasana (lizard pose): 2 rounds, holding the final position while breathing normally.

SWAN tip: Try to place your chest on the floor so that there is maximum stretch to the spine. Stay in the final position breathing normally and feeling the arch in your back.

Shavasana: 1. Relaxation of the whole body 2. Observing all the sensations in the body: lightness, tightness, tingling, warmth, tiredness, relaxation 3. Feeling the breath in the nostrils, cooler air on inhalation, warmth on exhalation 4. Externalization.



Druta halasana (dynamic plough pose): 7 rounds.

SWAN tip: Keep the hands beside the body. Breathing in, raise the legs and take them behind the head. Breathing out, come back down.

Shavasana: 1. Relaxation of the whole body 2. Alternate breathing from left toes to eyebrow centre, eyebrow centre to right toes and out, then from right toes to eyebrow centre, and from eyebrow centre out through left toes 3. Externalization.

BALANCING

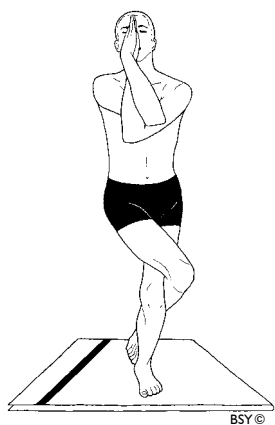
Eka pada pranamasana (one-legged prayer pose): 2 rounds (on each side), holding for 10 breaths.

SWAN tip: Keep the gaze fixed. As the practice develops, minimize all physical movements.

Garudasana (eagle pose): 2 rounds (on each side), bending the knees in the final position and bringing the upper body to a 45 degree angle.

SWAN tips:

- Wrap the right leg around the left leg, right arm around the left arm. Find your balance, slowly bend the knees



and bend the upper body forward 45 degrees while exhaling. Breathe normally in the final position, holding your body posture firm and fixed. Come up with an inhalation. Release the leg, release the arms. Practise on the other side.

- At the end of the practice, relax in the base standing pose: feet shoulder-width apart, eyes closed and relaxing the whole body.

Eka padasana (one foot pose): 2 rounds (on each side).

SWAN tip: Interlock the fingers and raise the arms above the head. Exhaling bend forward, shifting your weight to the right side and lifting the left leg until it is horizontal to the floor. Breathe normally. Inhaling come up, exhaling hands down. Then practice on the other side.

Utthita hasta padangusthasana (raised hand to big toe pose): 2 rounds in each variation.



SWAN tip: Bend the right leg, bring the knee to the chest, and catch hold of the right toes with your right hand. Breathe in and raise the left hand up. Then straighten the right leg in front of the body. Breathe out, bend the knee to the chest, bring the leg down, hands down. Then with the other side.

Variation: Bend the right leg and catch hold of your right ankle with the right hand. Inhaling, raise the left arm up. Exhaling bend your body

forward arching the back and bringing the right leg back (as in natarajasana, Lord Shiva's pose). Inhale to an upright position, then exhale to release the pose. Repeat on the other side.

SHAVASANA WITH BREATH VISUALIZATION 6

Lie down comfortably in shavasana. Feet slightly apart, arms beside the body with the palms open, head straight, eyes closed. Surrender the whole body to the floor. Complete awareness of the whole body. See the whole body lying on the floor in shavasana and relax the whole body.

Now feel the breath moving in your body. At the time of inhalation see the breath move from the left toes up to the eyebrow centre. At the time of exhalation feel the breath move from the eyebrow centre to the right toes. Inhaling, again see the breath move from the right toes up to the eyebrow centre. At the time of exhalation the breath moves down from the eyebrow centre to the left toes. Continue with this practice for some time. Watch every incoming and outgoing breath from the left toes to the eyebrow centre, from the eyebrow centre down to the right toes, from the right toes to the eyebrow centre, and then down to the left toes.

At the time of inhalation, visualize the colour of the breath moving from the left toes up to the eyebrow centre as blue. See a shaft of blue light moving with the breath from the left toes to the eyebrow centre. As you exhale down to the right toes, see the breath turn red and move down from the eyebrow centre to the right toes as a red shaft of light. Again inhaling from the right toes up to the eyebrow centre as a red shaft of light and exhaling from the eyebrow centre to the left toes as a blue shaft of light. See the movement of breath and light, blue and red. Blue ascending and descending on the left side. Red ascending

and descending on the right side. Complete awareness of breath and blue and red light.

As the awareness of the breath and the colours intensifies, develop the awareness of a cold or cool sensation on the left side of the body and a warm sensation on the right side.

Now stop this practice. Externalize the awareness. Slowly move the toes, feet, legs, fingers, hands, arms, turn the head from side to side. Take a deep breath in and stretch the whole body and then gently sit up.

PRANAYAMA

Kapalbhati pranayama (frontal brain cleansing breath) with nasagra mudra, jalandhara and moola bandhas: 5 rounds (with left, right and both nostrils); 10 exhalations through left nostril, followed by deep inhalation and inner retention to count of 10 with jalandhara and moola bandhas. Repeat on right side, repeat with both nostrils.

SWAN tips:

- *Kapal* means forehead and *bhati* means bellows, which ironsmiths used to fan their fire. The motion of kapalbhati is like blowing from the forehead. In the same way as when you blow your nose, the inhalation is silent and the exhalation is forceful.
- Close the right nostril with the thumb. After ten short exhalations through the left nostril, the eleventh breath will be a long and deep inhalation. Retaining the breath in, practise jalandhara and moola bandhas and count to ten. Release moola bandha, release jalandhara bandha, and exhale through the right. Repeat on the other side.

Bhastrika pranayama (bellows breath) with nasagra mudra, jalandhara and moola bandhas: 4 rounds (with left, right and both nostrils); 10 bhastrika breaths, followed by inner retention to count of 10 with jalandhara and moola bandhas.

SWAN tips:

- In bhastrika, the inhalation and exhalation are equal. Close the right nostril, keeping the left open and inhale and exhale rapidly ten times through the left nostril, followed by a long and deep inhalation. Then practise jalandhara and moola bandhas. Release the bandhas and exhale through the right. Repeat with the right nostril and then with both.
- Initially you may feel the movement of breath in the upper and lower chest, but once when you become comfortable with the practice of bhastrika, it is the abdomen which pumps the air in and out.

Nadi shodhana with Gayatri mantra: ratio of 1:2:1:2, 3 rounds.

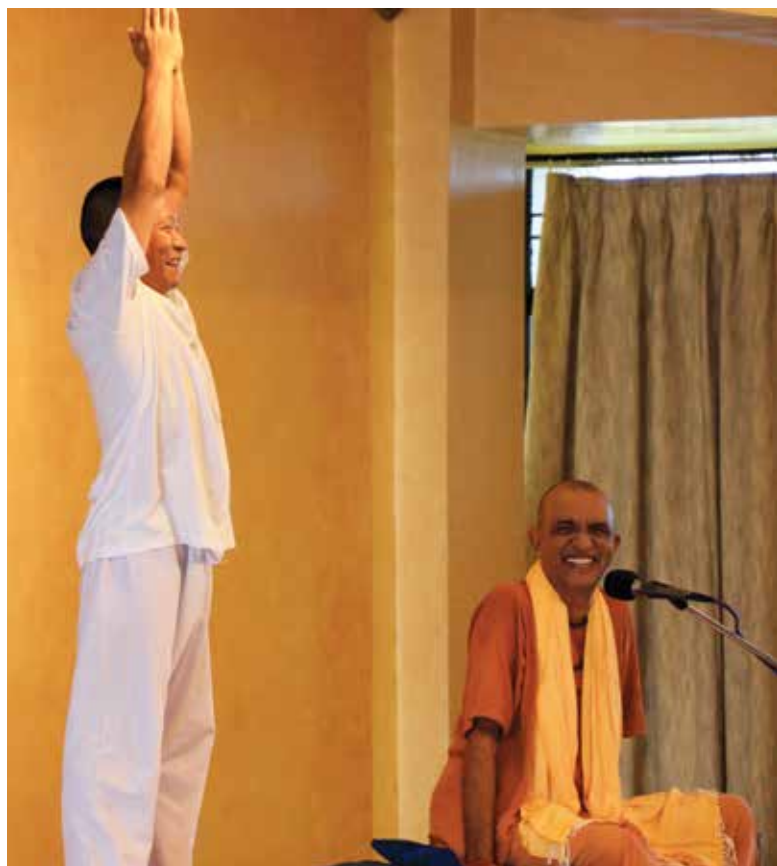
SWAN tip: The emphasis is on retention. There may be a tendency to feel tired after rounds, as you are not used to holding the breath twice the duration of the inhalation and exhalation. If you feel tired or out of breath, rest in between rounds for a few breaths.

SHAVASANA WITH AWARENESS OF BODY PARTS

Lie down comfortably, feet slightly apart, arms beside the body with the palms open, head straight, and eyes and lips gently closed. Become aware of the whole body lying on the ground. Try to see yourself in shavasana, relaxing, tension-free, stress-free, motionless. Try to see yourself mentally as you are right now, lying on the ground. See the whole body mentally.

Take your awareness into the right leg. Become aware of the whole right leg, from inside. Become aware of all the sensations inside the right leg. See the whole right leg mentally from the tip of the toes right up to the hips. Take your mind into the left leg and observe all the sensations in the left leg. Take your awareness into the right arm, and observe the whole right arm from the fingers to the

shoulder. Become aware of the left arm, feel the whole left arm. Observe the trunk, the whole trunk, the whole back of the body. Become aware of the space in the trunk. Become aware of the sensations. Awareness of the whole head, including face. Observe the whole body mentally. Now, slowly externalize the mind. Become aware of outside sounds and the environment. Complete awareness of the surroundings. Slowly move the toes, feet, legs, fingers, hands, arms, turning the head from side to side. Take a deep breath in and stretch the whole body and then gently sit up, keeping the eyes closed.



Fundamentals of Sadhana, Surya and Chandra Namaskara, Standing Asana, Kapalbhati, Sheetali and Bhastrika Pranayama

Sadhana practice

There are many different categories of asana: preparatory, forward bending, backward bending, standing, sitting, inverted, and so on. However, for a healthy person, only five or six asanas are important. Whatever is done beyond is chosen according to your personal needs for added benefits.

As you age and the systems become weaker, it is necessary to keep the body moving. The five important asanas are the basic ones that allow you to make all the different movements that a human body generally uses. They include: *tadasana* for traction or stretching the body vertically; *tiryak tadasana* for lateral stretching; *kati chakrasana* for twisting; a forward and backward bending asana, for which you can practise *surya namaskara* or any other asana of your choice; an inverted posture, whether *vipareeta karani asana*, *sarvangasana*, *sirshasana* or even *kandharasana*.

The six movements – traction, stretching, twisting, forward bending, backward bending, and inversion – fulfil most needs of the body. Depending on your requirement, stamina and capability, you can select one or two from each category and practise. It need not be *tadasana* or *surya namaskara* every day. It will be a comprehensive practice if you keep in mind the combination of movements and practise two asanas for stretching, two for the lateral stretch,

two for twisting, two for forward bending, two for backward bending, and one or two inversions. The minimum program consists of six to eight asanas covering the six major groups of movement.

As for pranayama, there has been an attempt to understand it not as a breathing technique but a means to go beyond the breath to the pranic level. From the yogic perspective, the pranic experience comes when you are able to perfect kumbhaka, not when you are inhaling and exhaling. Thus, for the purpose of sadhana and to deepen the experience, the effort should be to prolong the length of internal and external retention.

Breathing in and out are support systems for the practice of kumbhaka. You can think of inhalation and exhalation as two big poles on which little rungs are placed to create a ladder. The little rung is kumbhaka. When you climb up, you are not climbing up the poles, you are stepping on the rungs. Inhalation and exhalation are only the medium to move into the kumbhaka stage, to climb the rungs. Gradually try to increase the duration of kumbhaka, both internal and external. You will find that eventually it becomes natural and spontaneous. The moment the retention is spontaneous and effortless, and there is no forceful holding of the breath, you will be able to explore the pranic dimension, the pranamaya kosha. This is the aim of pranayama.

The perfection of kumbhaka is aided by the practice of bandhas in pranayama. Bandhas physically lock an area. This allows you to ease the pressure on the lungs as you hold the breath. In the advanced yogic practices, pranayamas are not stand-alone practices; they are always combined with mudras and bandhas. When pranayama is combined with mudras and bandhas, it becomes a tool of pratyahara, allowing you access to the pranamaya kosha. That is the whole intention of pranayama. Once you are in pranayama kosha, you can work with that energy field and perfect the art of prana vidya, prana nidra and other pranic practices that help deepen the awareness and take you to the next level of yoga practice.

We have covered the majority of intermediate and beginners asanas, as well as a few advanced asanas. One thing we have not yet practised is surya namaskara and its sister, chandra namaskara. Brother sun, sister moon. We are going to do these practices today.

SURYA NAMASKARA

Preparatory breathing practices: 15–20 rounds (each practice).

SWAN tip: These movements are good for releasing inner tension and stress and allowing free flow of breath in the body. They will remove any blocks, pressures or congestion that you may feel inside the body. The first movement provides a lateral stretch for the lungs, while in the second the stretch is vertical.

Practice 1: This practice is done from standing, with the arms stretched in front, palms together. With the inhalation, spread the arms to the sides; with the exhalation, clap or bring them together in the centre. When you breathe in the chest expands, when you exhale the chest contracts.

Practice 2: In the second practice, the arms move up and down instead of sideways. Breathing in, raise the arms in front of the body and up; breathing out, lower the arms to the sides.

SWAN tip: These are a basic preparation for the practice of surya namaskara. When you are finished, remain standing for a few moments with the eyes closed observing the effects of the practices in the chest and trunk of the body.

Surya namaskara (salutations to the sun): 3 rounds, first round dynamically, from the second round with mantra and chakra awareness, using the bija mantras: *Om Hraam*, *Om Hreem*, *Om Hroom*, *Om Hraim*, *Om Hraum*, *Om Hrah*.

SWAN tips:

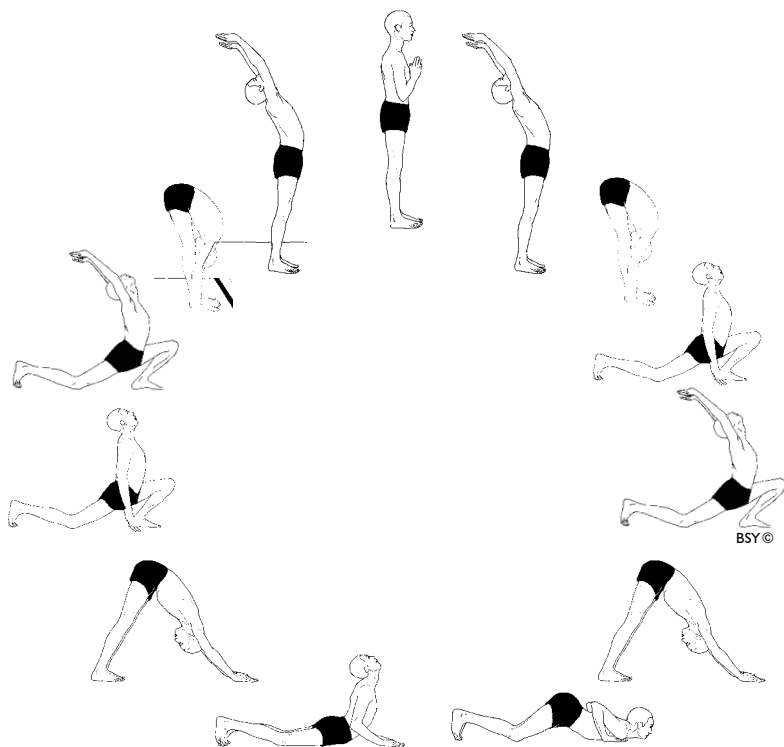
- In the first half round, the right leg is taken back for ashwa sanchalanasana, the fourth position; in the ninth position,

the right leg remains back and the left leg comes forward. In the other half round, the left leg will go back in number four and number nine, and the right will remain forward. In each half round, you are working with one half of the body.

- At the end of the practice, keeping the eyes closed, observe the balance of the body and try to minimize any swaying of the body. Place your weight equally on both feet, on the toes and the heels. Relax your whole body in the standing posture.

Chandra namaskara (salutations to the moon): 2 rounds.

SWAN tip: Instead of 12 positions, chandra namaskara has 14; the addition is of the half-moon or crescent moon pose. When you lift your arms up, bring the hands together in pranam mudra, so you actually look like a crescent moon.



SHAVASANA WITH SURYA NAMASKARA VISUALIZATION

Lie down comfortably in shavasana. Feet slightly apart, hands beside the body with the palms open, head straight. Gently close your eyes. Surrender the whole body to the floor. Mentally go through each and every part of the body. Check for any tension, tightness, stiffness or agitation and just surrender the whole body to the floor. Your body is like a rag doll lying on the floor: still, motionless, tensionless. Complete relaxation of the whole body.

Now bring the awareness to chidakasha. Mentally see yourself in posture number 1 of surya namaskara. See yourself performing posture number 1 of surya namaskara, number 2, number 3, number 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. Hands down. This time while you observe yourself in chidakasha performing the asanas of surya namaskara, focus on the location of the chakras in your body. 1 focus on anahata, 2 focus on vishuddhi, 3 focus on swadhisthana, 4 ajna chakra, 5 vishuddhi chakra, 6 manipura chakra, 7 swadhisthana chakra, 8 vishuddhi chakra, 9 ajna chakra, 10 swadhisthana chakra, 11 vishuddhi chakra, 12 anahata chakra. Hands down.

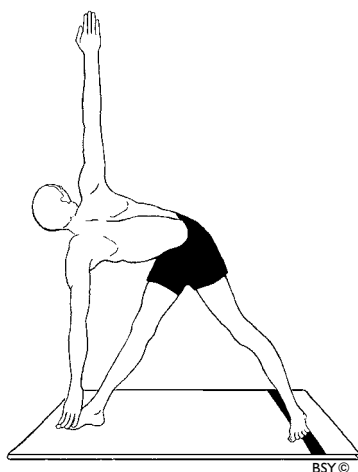
Once again practising the mental surya namaskara, visualize yourself in chidakasha. Maintain awareness of the chakra, and while focusing your awareness on the chakra, repeat the mantra mentally after me. 1 anahata chakra *Om Mitraya Namah*, 2 vishuddhi chakra *Om Ravaye Namah*, 3 swadhisthana chakra *Om Suryaya Namah*, 4 ajna chakra *Om Bhanave Namah*, 5 vishuddhi chakra *Om Khagaya Namah*, 6 manipura *Om Pushne Namah*, 7 swadhisthana *Om Hiranyagarbhaya Namah*, 8 vishuddhi *Om Marichaye Namah*, 9 ajna *Om Adityaya Namah*, 10 swadhisthana *Om Savitre Namah*, 11 vishuddhi *Om Arkaya Namah*, 12 anahata *Om Bhaskaraya Namah*. Hands down.

Now externalize the mind. Become aware of the outer environment. Slowly move the toes, feet, legs, fingers,

hands, arms, turn the head from side to side. Take a deep breath in and stretch the whole body and then gently sit up.

TRIKONASANA SERIES

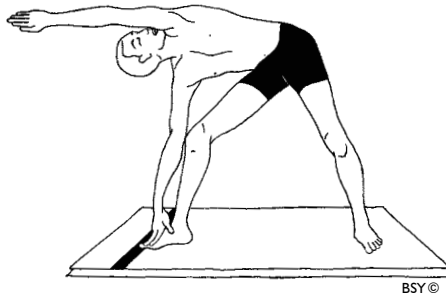
With surya namaskara and chandra namaskara, we have done the forward and backward movements. For twisting and lateral stretching, we will try some variations from the trikonasana series.



Trikonasana (triangle pose) variation 4: 15 rounds, performing the posture dynamically without returning to the vertical starting position between rounds.

SWAN tips:

- Feel the twist in the spine, especially in the lower back region.
- Relax the body in the standing position after the practice, and allow the breath to return to normal.



Trikonasana (triangle pose) variation 2: 5 rounds.

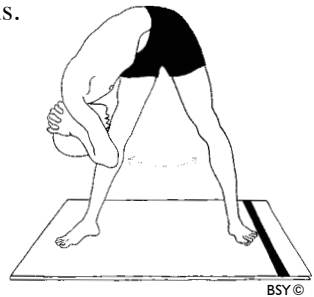
SWAN tips:

- This one is for the lateral stretch. Try to touch the right toes with the right hand. Holding the breath, take the left arm over the head so that there is a complete stretch and contraction.
- If there is difficulty keeping the forward leg straight while bending to the side, you can bend the knee slightly. In a triangle there are no bent lines, only straight lines, nevertheless due to physical stiffness, some people may need to bend the knee initially.
- Rest in the standing posture, with the feet together.

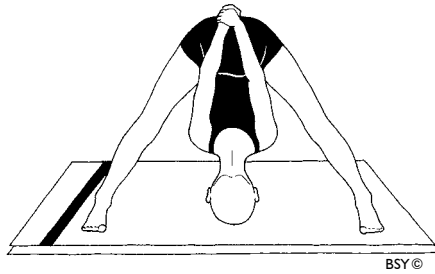
Dolasana (pendulum pose): 3 rounds.

SWAN tips:

- In this one you are not only bending forward and back; you are moving from side to side. This allows the vertebrae to also move. There is a circular motion, which brings flexibility and loosens the tight lower back muscles.
- If you feel slightly giddy, rest after each round.



Shavasana: 1. Surrendering the whole body to the floor
 2. Observation of the breath from toes to head while inhaling, from head to toes while exhaling
 3. Externalization.



Moordhasana (crown-based pose): held for about 30 seconds.

SWAN tips:

- The benefits of this asana are the same as those of the headstand. The only difference is, you are not raising the legs up. The weight is placed on the crown of the head but the legs are on the ground, supporting the body. The two legs and head form a triangle.
- Those with a weak neck should not attempt this asana.

Shavasana: 1. Awareness of the whole body and awareness of sensations in the head, developing a feeling of lightness in the head and the whole body 2. Alternate breathing from left toes to eyebrow centre, eyebrow centre to right toes and out, then from right toes to eyebrow centre, and from eyebrow centre out through left toes 3. Inhaling and exhaling blue breath on the left side and red breath on the right side 4. Externalization.

PRANAYAMA

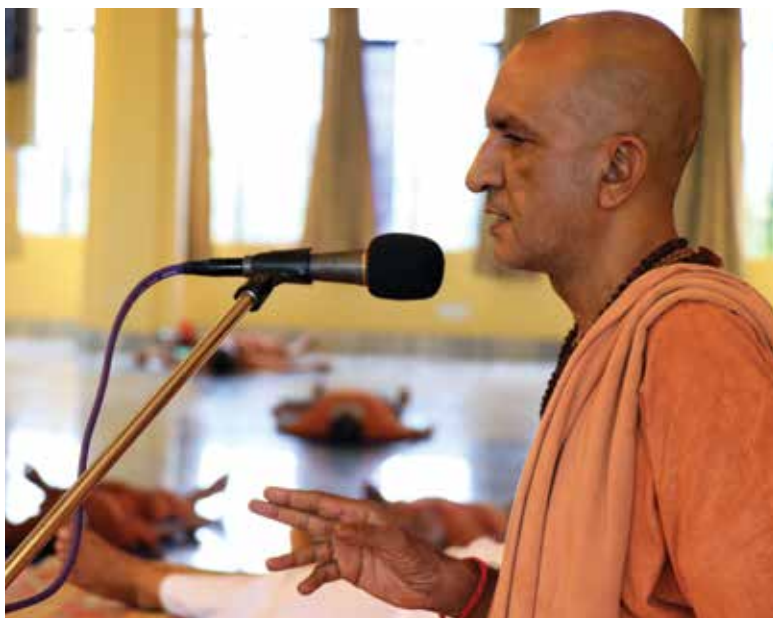
Kapalbhati pranayama (frontal brain cleansing breath) with nasagra mudra, jalandhara and moola bandhas: 3 rounds (on each side and then with both nostrils), 20 short exhalations through left nostril, followed by deep inhalation and inner retention to count of 10 with jalandhara and moola bandhas. Repeat on right side, repeat with both nostrils.

SWAN tip: Find a comfortable time for holding the breath in. You can hold it in for longer than a count of 10 as long as you do not feel breathless afterwards. Discovering your comfort level in kumbhaka is the main rule of this pranayama when you combine it with bandhas.

Sheetali pranayama (cooling breath): 25 natural breaths.

Bhastrika pranayama (bellows breath) with nasagra mudra, jalandhara and moola bandhas: 3 rounds (on each side and then with both nostrils), 10 bhastrika breaths with equal force in inhalation and exhalation, followed by inner retention to count of 10 with jalandhara and moola bandhas.

Shavasana: 1. Mentally observing the whole body, releasing tensions and tightness 2. Awareness of body parts, seeing each part internally 3. Externalization.



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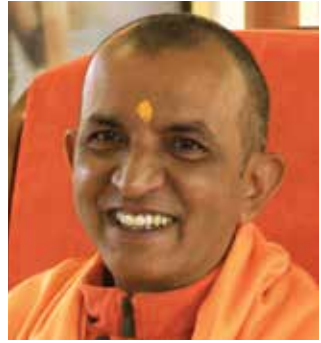
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Swami Niranjanananda was born in Rajnandgaon (Chhattisgarh) in 1960. Guided from birth by his guru, Swami Satyananda Saraswati, he came to live at the Bihar School of Yoga in Munger at the age of four where he received training in yogic and spiritual sciences through yoga nidra. In 1971 he was initiated into Dashnami sannyasa, and for twelve years he lived overseas, acquiring an understanding of different cultures and helping further his guru's mission to spread yoga 'from door to door and shore to shore'.



He returned to India in 1983 to guide the activities of Bihar School of Yoga, Sivananda Math and Yoga Research Foundation at Ganga Darshan. In 1990 he was initiated as a paramahansa sannyasin and in 1993 anointed spiritual preceptor in succession to Swami Satyananda Saraswati. He established Bihar Yoga Bharati, the first university of yoga, in 1994, Yoga Publications Trust in 2000, and a children's yoga movement, Bal Yoga Mitra Mandal, in 1995. He travelled extensively to guide seekers around the world until 2009, when he received the command to commence a new phase of sannyasa life.

In 2010, he established Sannyasa Peeth, to enable seekers to experience the spiritual and cultural traditions of India in their essence. The year marked his entry into a phase of higher sadhana and tirtha yatra.

In 2013, he conducted the World Yoga Convention in Munger to celebrate the golden jubilee of the Bihar School of Yoga, and launched a new era of yogic renaissance. In 2013 he also commenced the arduous panchagni sadhana. In 2014, he embarked on a Bharat Yatra, an all-India tour, transmitting the gift of yoga to all. Since then, Swami Niranjan has been working to develop the next stage of yogic training and teaching, and has initiated several programs to help people deepen their experience of yoga and imbibe the traditional wisdom. Simultaneously, he has revived various ancient knowledge systems and practices of India.

In 2017, he received the Padma Bhushan, the third highest civilian award given by the Government of India, for the outstanding work in the field of yoga.

Author of many classic books on yoga and other spiritual streams, Swami Niranjan is a magnetic source of wisdom on all aspects of yogic philosophy, practice and lifestyle. He ably combines tradition with modernity as he continues to work for his guru's mission.



In 2016 and 2017, the Progressive Yoga Vidya Training was held at Ganga Darshan Vishwa Yogapeeth. Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati inspires and guides aspirants to enter the 2nd Chapter of Yoga and connect to *yoga vidya*, the complete knowledge and wisdom of yoga. *Progressive Yoga Vidya Training – Series 4*, presents the hatha yoga classes conducted by Swamiji. Well-known practices are experienced with an understanding of the theoretical background and the possibility to access the five dimensions, or *koshas*, of our being.

Progressive Yoga Vidya Training – Series 4 is not a teacher's manual. To the serious, sincere and committed aspirant it is a source of information and inspiration to explore the vidya of hatha yoga.



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