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on relaxation
to help you
prepare yourself
for New York.

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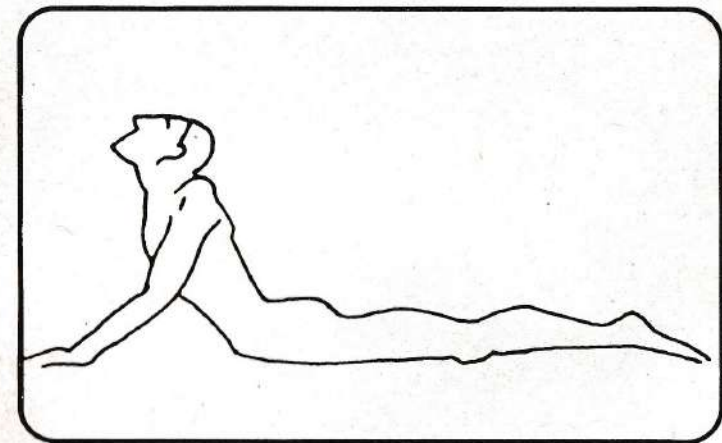
As a little extra aid to relaxation, we are pleased to offer you this beginner's guide to yoga.

Like Air-India, it won't make the stresses and pressures of New York disappear.

But it will help you to face them with a little more confidence.

MINI GUIDE TO YOGA

by ANNE SAKER



MEDIA publication

For some years Anne Saker has successfully been teaching Yoga to people whose ages range from 7 to 70. Her love for this intriguing subject, coupled with a desire to help has taken her to wide variety of places to teach and lecture.

She has shown to many that Yoga exercise and relaxation holds the key to fulfillment. Through fitness comes vitality and awareness, which generally improves all aspects of life. This simple book written by her for the businessman and patron of AIR-INDIA, provides a way to relaxation in its most beneficial form.

INTRODUCTION

The adepts of Yoga are called Yogis. The influence of Yoga on Asiatic culture and civilization has been and is very considerable. In more recent times, Yoga as a way of life has spread to western countries, especially in its elementary form Hatha Yoga. Hatha Yoga aims at improving our control of both mind and body. It is not a religion or a mystic cult but really a technique. In working with the body, it is the mind, both conscious and unconscious that is the aim.

The wonderful advantages of mental and physical health to be gained from the practice of Hatha Yoga, in its purely material sense could not fail to impress, thus an ever increasing number of people seek its immediate and beneficial results. A popular and practical form of Yoga has been created, the widespread practice of which has had a strong influence on the development of Indian civilization.

If the Indian people strike us with their calm demeanour, their self mastery, it is in no small measure due to this fact. Yoga is the path — it is the path shown to us by the age-old Hindu wisdom, to find health, happiness and peace of mind, not in the nebulous beyond, but here and now. Our industrial civilization has produced prodigious results, of which we can be justly proud, yet it is certain that the ever increasing nervous and mental

tension our civilization implies, had need of some sort of steadying counter balance. I think this might well be found in simplified forms of Hatha Yoga.

No one has a greater need to unwind than the businessman. In order to maintain maximum efficiency and alertness he must be fit and vital. The pressures of business result in a constant bombardment from all directions at once, therefore the demands made upon him both mentally and physically are enormous. In nature there are times or seasons where a cycle of activity and growth takes place, nature in her wisdom does not ask a tree or a plant to grow all the year round, this would only deplete it's resources, which would make it fail in it's efforts.

Nature provides a period of hibernation where all the forces are withdrawn in order to recharge and conserve energy. No piece of machinery be it mechanical or animal can run on for ever without a watchful eye. We only care for ourselves when it is too late and the symptoms have developed into some illness. Prevention is better than cure, an ache or a pain is a body signal, we are being warned that we need to calm down and take things easy. Obviously, we no longer hibernate as such any more, neither can we just drop everything when we want to, but what we can do is to realise that we need to relax. Yoga techniques make this possible even under the most demanding of situations. Tension is our worst enemy, it stops the natural flow of things, interfering with the smooth running of our affairs. In Yoga we learn that the body and mind need to work together, that one depends upon the other for it's state. A relaxed body means a relaxed mind and vice versa. All the mental efforts that we make register in our body, and unless this tension is released it builds up until it cannot be contained any more. The trouble lies in our lack of awareness. When we are occupied in doing something we do it with all the forces of the body. For instance when eating a meal we usually eat too

fast and lose all the enjoyment of eating. We eat in a nervous manner, not being conscious of what we are doing. However can we hope to function in the fullest sense if our actions are separate from our mental state? It takes a lot of energy to move a heavy physical body around, and we waste so much more of it when tense and agitated. By relaxing the body thus conserving energy the mental capacity is enlarged and therefore improved. This will manifest itself in better memory, concentration, less irritability and in general a much calmer state of mind.

Yoga training re-educates our vital instincts and thereby it tends to lead us back to normal physiological conditions of human nature, thus assisting us to rid ourselves of a host of physical ills, to extend our days of youth and activity, and the span of a useful life.

Most people think of Yoga as being a series of near-impossible positions, when in fact it is quite simple, after a little practice. There are of course the more advanced lessons that call for considerable practice, but these are unnecessary for the programme we have in mind. The exercises I have outlined in this booklet, if practised regularly, will leave you refreshed and wonderfully relaxed quite the opposite feeling one gets from the practice of the more conventional forms of exercise that tend to leave one fatigued. Through Yoga exercises we not only conserve, but store new energy.

It is the aim of this booklet to provide a simple basis for daily practice so that those who are only able to give the minimum amount of time may benefit. The importance of the exercises is to bring about suppleness of the spine, where stiffness sets in as the years advance. Each posture stretches the physical frame, muscles and tissue, thereby ensuring good circulation of the blood and

invigorating vital organs and glands essential to good mental and physical health — leaving the whole system refreshed and invigorated.

The body mechanics or metabolism depends upon the gland secretions for running efficiency, the delicate balance of hormones so necessary for good health. These hormones plus the vital minerals and vitamins absorbed from our food, and oxygen from the air we breathe are carried around the body by the blood circulation.

Yoga also teaches you the “art of breathing”. Breath is life, and if you know how to breathe you shall extend your span of life on this earth. Breathing is the most important biological function of our bodies. In order to understand the importance of correct breathing, a brief review of applied biology will help us to recall a few facts, all of which you probably know. A breath, as Yogi Ramakrishna explains, is begun by the blood being pumped out fresh and clean from the heart through the arteries into the capillaries where it nourishes and cleanses. There also it collects the waste matter of the body and returns by way of the veins to the heart. The blood is now dull, blue, laden and foul. It is then forced into the lung air cells by tiny hairlike blood vessels. A breath of air is inhaled and the oxygen contacts the impure blood through the blood vessels which are thin enough to admit oxygen. There a form of combustion takes place and we exhale carbon dioxide and other impurities. This process repeats itself with each breath, so it is only common sense to breathe deeply and often. Obviously, unless sufficient fresh air reaches our lungs, the whole system remains impure, with the waste matter returning to our system again and again.

Breathing exercises also form an important part of the technique of relaxation, which is one of the most outstanding accomplishments of Yoga.

Breathing exercises, coupled with the posture Savasana or the Pose of the Dead is the most remarkable and efficient way to achieve complete relaxation.

Most people unfortunately have little time to devote to these exercises, so I usually suggest splitting them up, doing the postures in the morning when the mind is fresh and also because they are best done on an empty stomach. It also helps to put you in a good frame of mind to meet the needs of the day. The exercises for relaxation, Savasana and the Complete Breath some time in the evening or before going to sleep. Relaxing the mind and the body will help you enjoy a good night's sleep and awake refreshed. It is said that ten minutes of complete rest in Savasana combined with the Complete Breath is equal in benefit to a night's sleep. Even if you are sixty or older, it is not too late to start as regular practice will gradually loosen up those stiff joints and make you feel younger and healthier. If you find the postures difficult (as most of us do in the beginning) remember not to force yourself into them. With practice your body will loosen up and the postures will become easier for you to perform. With patience good habits will replace bad ones.

The exercises in this booklet are in sequence, starting with the most simple warming and limbering movements. Whereas one can pick one or two at random, the best results are to be gained from performing them in order.

The Yoga postures should never be hurried. To gain full benefit, even if there are only five minutes to spare for exercises or relaxation adopt an attitude of leisure and peace. It is a good idea in the beginning to do one or maybe two exercises, not trying to start with too much of a programme. Gradually as the benefits become noticeable so the desire to enlarge the session grows. Even in small

beginnings there is benefit to be found, all that is needed is the regular contact for the seed to germinate.

Anyone who has suffered from a recent illness, or who has a body weakness should consult a doctor before taking up exercise. Also for the best results from Yoga one should perform the postures on an empty stomach, three to four hours after eating, depending upon the size of the meal.

Exercise 1

Stretching



Benefits

To ease stiffness and tiredness from the body, a good start or finish to any day. Opens and strengthens the spine. Helps to improve the posture by toning up the whole muscle structure that gives support. Gets the circulation going, which can make you feel a bit light headed, but leaves you feeling really invigorated.

Stand with your feet placed together arms down by your sides.

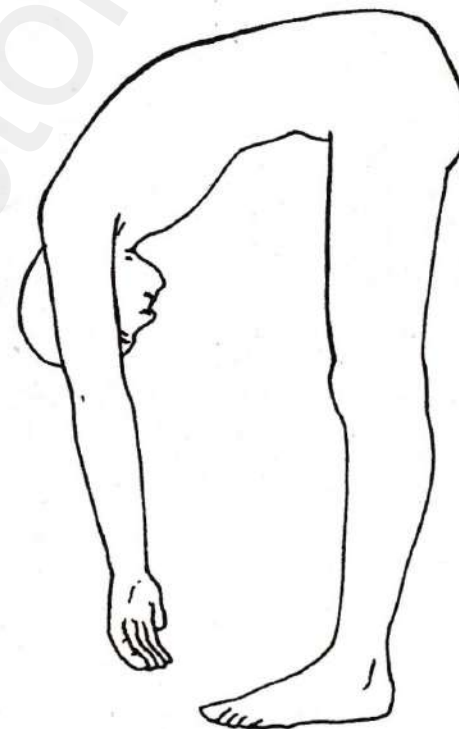
Slowly begin to inhale, at the same time raise your arms. Take them out to the side and up over your head. Hold onto one of your thumbs and pull up strongly right through your body. (See illustration). Pull up your knee and thigh muscles. Pull in your stomach and lift your chest. Stretch as tall as you can, and hold. When you feel you have done enough, begin to exhale and lower your arms to gently replace them by your sides.

The movement of your arms makes you do the Complete Breath quite naturally. Try to co-ordinate the breath with the movement, should you find yourself a bit breathless then put in extra breaths.

Repeat once.

Exercise 2

Forward Relaxation



Benefits

The shoulder and neck areas are one of the worse affected by tension and stiffness. This exercise releases and relaxes the back, shoulders, neck and face. Good for relieving any aches and pains due to tiredness and lack of oxygen.

The position enables an extra supply of rejuvenating and revitalising blood to flow into the upper part of the body, which is of great benefit to the health and appearance of your hair, skin and eyes.

This exercise follows quite naturally from the previous one. As you complete the stretch for the second time, drop your chin onto your chest and fold over forwards. Let your arms drop and dangle toward the floor. Close your eyes, and relax your jawline, neck and shoulders. Breathe slowly and steadily in and out of your nose all throughout the exercise. Keep your thigh muscles pulled up tight, they are the only point of tension and therefore take the weight of your body. This is the only control kept in this posture.

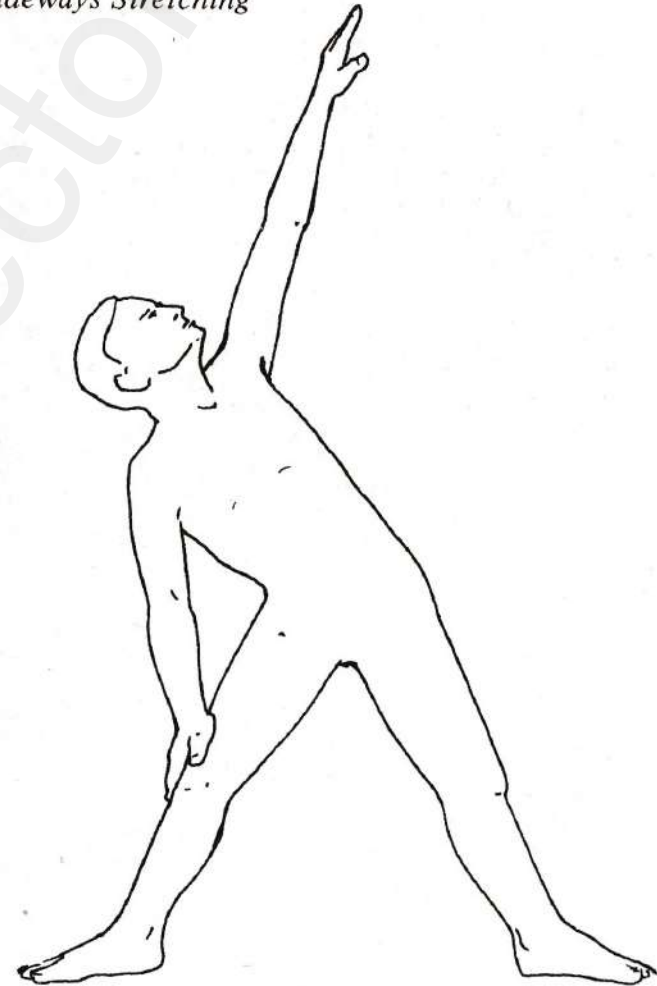
Do not push to touch the floor, but rather relax and let the weight of the upper part of your body slowly pull you down. (See illustration).

Hold this position for as long as you are comfortable, if possible until you feel the tensions relax. Come out of it slowly, uncurl starting from the base of your spine, leaving your head and arms until last.

Once is usually enough for this posture, but it can be repeated if you feel it is necessary. In fact it is a good exercise to do at any time you feel a bit drained as it is very refreshing.

Exercise 3

Sideways Stretching



Benefits

Stretches the waistline muscles, trimming them. Brings flexibility to the spine. Tones up and strengthens your body and legs.

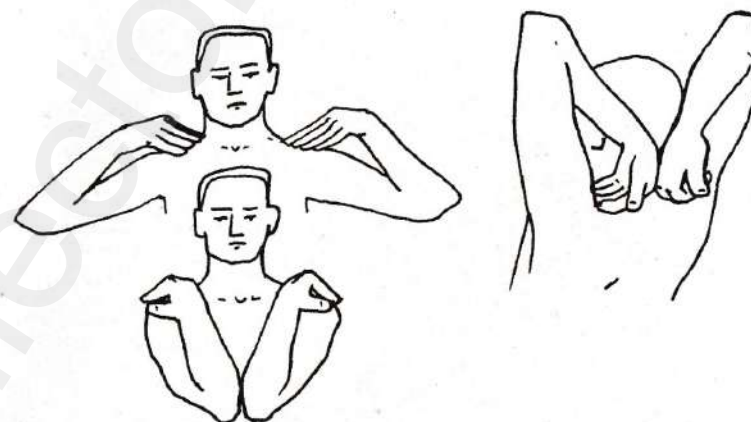
Place your feet comfortably apart. Breathe in and stretching through your arms bring them out one side. Slide the hand down your leg as far as it will go, while the other stays upwards. Take care not to lean forwards or back, but imagine that you are between two panes of glass.

Stay in this position for as long as it is comfortable, breathing slowly and steadily all the while. (See illustration). On an inhalation, gently return to the upright position. Breathe out and bring your arms down ready to repeat on the other side.

To do this exercise once on either side is generally enough, but if you want an extra stretch then repeat again.

Exercise 4

Shoulders



Benefits

Loosens up and relieves tensions in your shoulders and shoulder blades. Both the movement and the breath help to expand the chest capacity. Improves bad posture, correcting a tendency to slouch.

Still standing with your feet together, place your fingertips onto your shoulders. Now imagine that you are making circles with your elbows, and that those circles are to be as big as possible. Keeping your fingertips on your shoulders all the time bring your elbows to touch at the front, and then up and around to touch the backs of your hands together behind your head. Then take your elbows back and down to complete the circle. (See illustration).

Having done this once try it with breath co-ordination. Breathe in as you bring your arms up and out. Hold the breath and posture slightly when

the backs of your hands are touching. Breathe out as you bring your arms down.

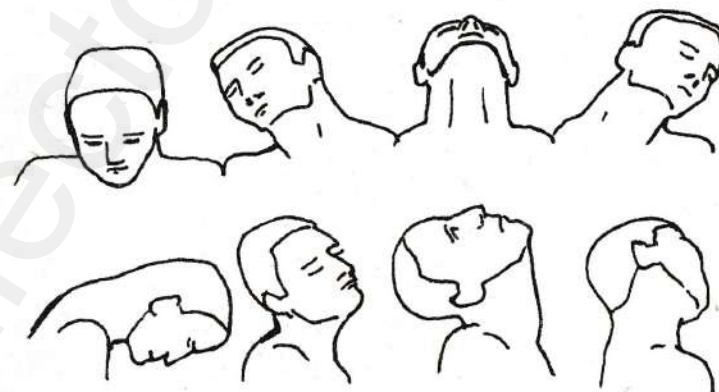
Do this three times continuously.

Now rotate in the opposite direction. Start with your elbows touching in front, bring them down and circle round to the back and up, breathing in as you do so. Hold, and then breathing out slowly bring your elbows forward and down to touch again in front.

Do three times continuously, making six circles in all.

Exercise 5

Circling the Head



Benefits

As time and stress take their toll the facial and neck muscles begin to lose their elasticity and start to sag, thus do the lines of tension become part of our expression, showing in our appearance. Use of this exercise helps to build up awareness of the need for relaxation, and as the stiffness caused by tension disappears the facial and neck muscles will stretch and firm up, toning the whole area giving a more youthful and calm appearance.

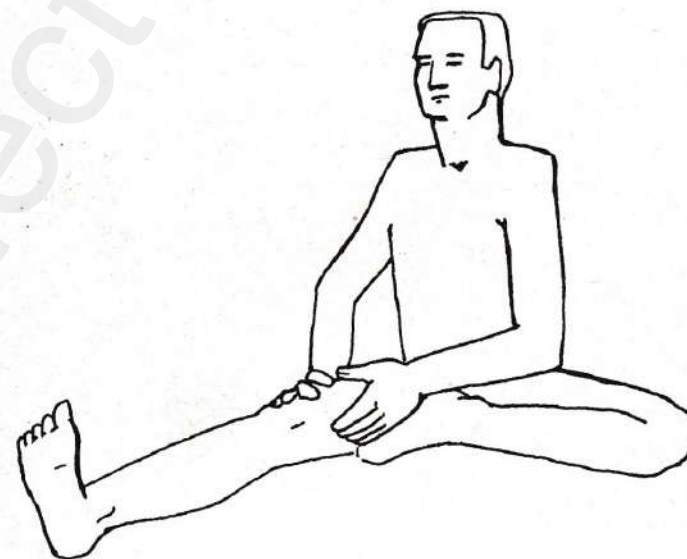
Sitting in an easy cross-legged position or on any chair or stool, ensure the freedom of movement of the back and head. (See illustration). Drop the head forward and completely relax the neck and shoulders. Moving from the waist, using the whole upper part of the body, let the head roll in a circle. Do not push it around but rather let it loll. In doing this the head moves completely freely and eases one of the worst tension spots we have.

Circle from three to five times continuously in one direction, then repeat the other way. Remember to keep the jaw relaxed; yawning, sighing and deep breathing will all help.

This exercise is usually noisy and painful to start with but done for a few minutes daily quickly becomes a very pleasant way to relax.

Exercise 6

*Head to Knee or
Paschimatanasana*



Benefits

Gives suppleness to the spine, hips and legs, by loosening them gradually. Sends a good supply of fresh blood to the spinal nerves. Pulling in the stomach causes the massage of the internal organs toning up the liver, kidney and pancreas. Helps to improve constipation.

Sitting on the floor with the back as straight as possible and the right leg extended before you, bend in the left leg and place the foot as high as possible to form a right angle. (See illustration). Inhale, and as you exhale take your hands down

your right leg aiming to take hold of your right foot, or as far down the leg as you can reach. As you go down pull in the stomach and bring the elbows toward the floor, keeping your arms bent.



Try to touch the forehead to the knee. (See illustration). Hold for a couple of seconds, inhale and sit up, bringing the hands back to the top of the thigh. Three times with the right leg, change and repeat with the left, keeping the breathing as smooth as possible. This asana can also be done with both legs extended in front, taking one hand down each leg.

Exercise 7

*Shoulderstand and Simple Shoulderstand
Sarvagāsana*

*Plough Posture, or
Halāsana*

Benefits

The inverted postures are an extremely important part of the Yoga session. Their beneficial effects are numerous and widespread. They can help you to regain youthfulness and delay wrinkles, clear and revitalise the complexion, improve eyesight, stimulate hair growth, cure insomnia by calming the nerves, relieve varicose veins and hemorrhoids.

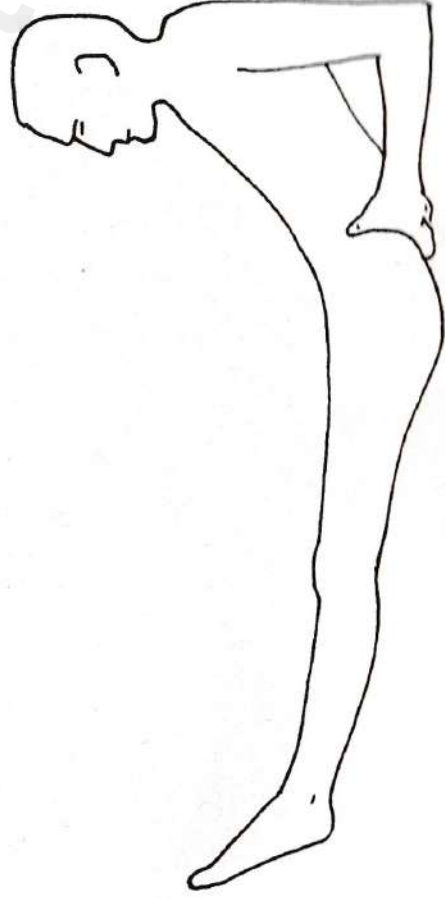
These effects are caused by reversing the pull of gravity which causes sagging of tissues and displacement of vital organs, and by putting pressure on the Thyroid and Para Thyroid glands, which are the master glands of the whole Endocrinal gland system that keeps us balanced mentally, emotionally and physically. Also by sending an extra supply of blood to the head and upper part of the body it cleanses and revitalises. It helps to stretch the spinal cord and feeds and massages the spinal nerves.

I have chosen two of the inverted postures, the Shoulderstand and the Plough, which, though two different exercises, are usually done together.

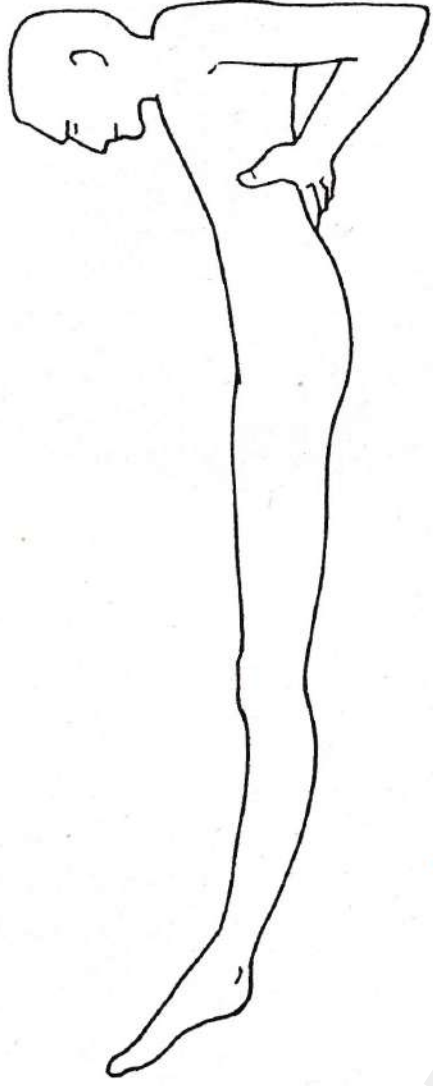
Shoulderstand

Lie down on your back and slowly lift the legs and body up into a vertical position. Place the

hands as near to the shoulder blades as can be managed comfortably. Beginners usually start by supporting the hips or waist, known as the Half Shoulderstand. (See illustration).



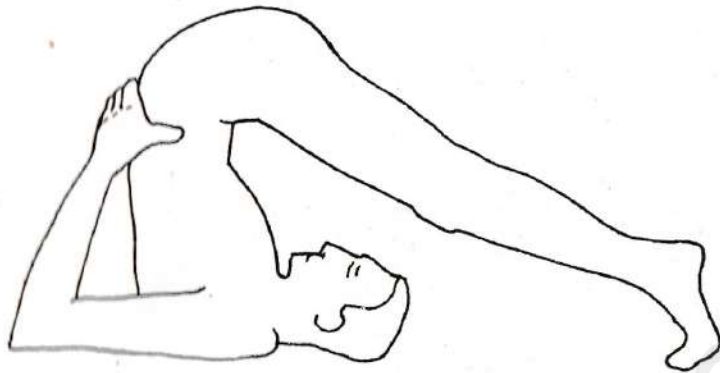
With practice they are able to get into a straight line from the shoulders up. (See illustration). The chin is pressed closely into the chest, thus putting pressure on the Thyroid. Close the eyes and breathe deeply using the stomach.



Stay in this position only as long as comfortable. A lot of beginners find this a painful posture, and indeed, some cannot get into the half shoulderstand. Remember, do not push yourself into painful positions; with a little patience and a relaxed attitude of determination it soon becomes easy.

Plough

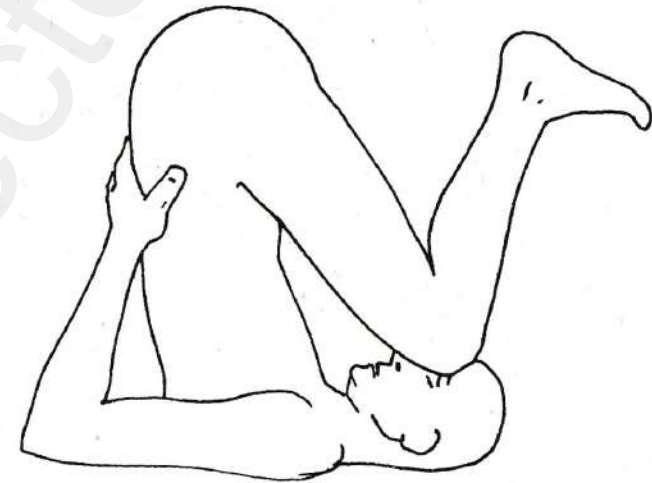
From the Shoulderstand, slowly lower both legs over the head, keeping both knees as straight as possible trying to touch the floor behind your head with your toes. (See illustration). Again, retain only as long as comfortable, keeping the breathing slow and rhythmic. Return to the Shoulder Stand, and down into the Pose of the Dead, supporting the body the whole time. Relax to restore circulation.



Simple Shoulderstand

Use of this simplified position enables you to benefit from the good effects of the Shoulderstand; it's practise is highly recommended to anyone who finds any difficulty with the more

demanding positions, as it alleviates strain on your back, neck and chest and allows you to relax. It makes a good beginning from which one can easily progress.

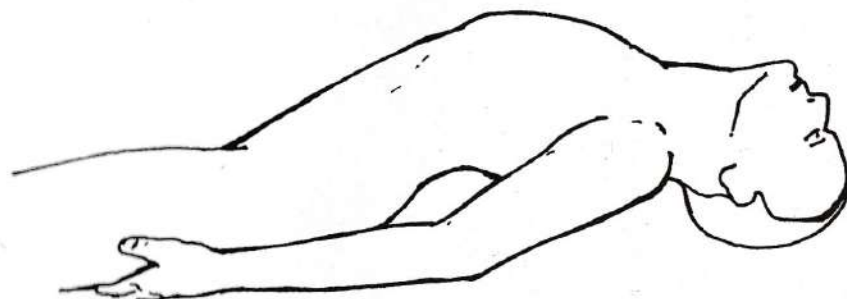


Warning

Anyone suffering from high blood pressure or a weak heart should not attempt the inverted posture without first seeking medical advice.

Exercise 8

*Fish or
Matsyasana*



Benefits

Acts as a counter position to the Shoulderstand. Stretches from the abdomen to the chin. Strengthens the back. Stimulates the adrenal glands. Good for toning and stimulating the abdominal organs, which helps to cure constipation.

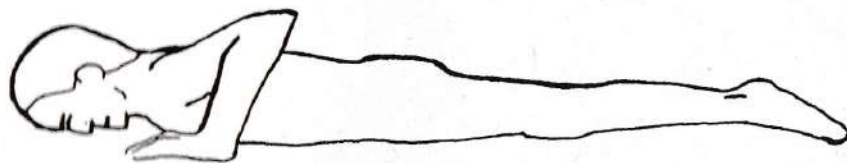
Lying flat on your back, bring your legs together and tense them. Tuck your fingers under the top of the back of your thighs at the point where your buttocks begin. Push with your elbows on the floor and arch your back as much as you can. (See illustration). Arch so that only the top of your head and your seat remain on the floor. Keeping your legs tensed and pushing with your elbows helps to take some of the strain off your back enabling you to attain maximum arch and stretch.

In this posture your lungs have complete freedom of movement, so breathe deeply using the Complete Breath if possible.

Hold this position for as long as you can, and when you are tired simply relax back on the floor. Make sure that you straighten out your spine properly, paying especial attention to the small of your back and neck. Relax completely to restore circulation.

Exercise 9

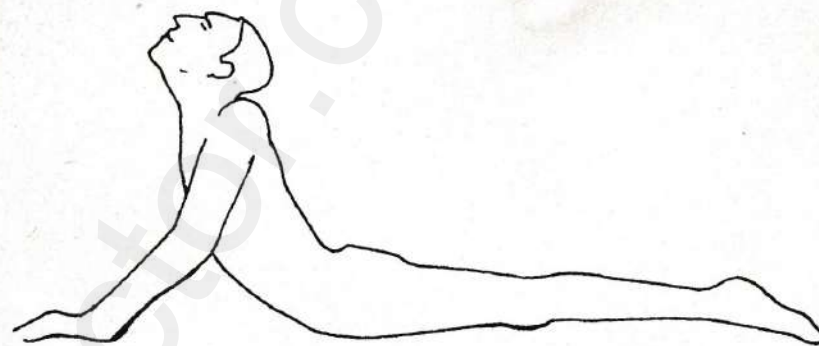
*Cobra, or
Bhujangasana*



Benefits

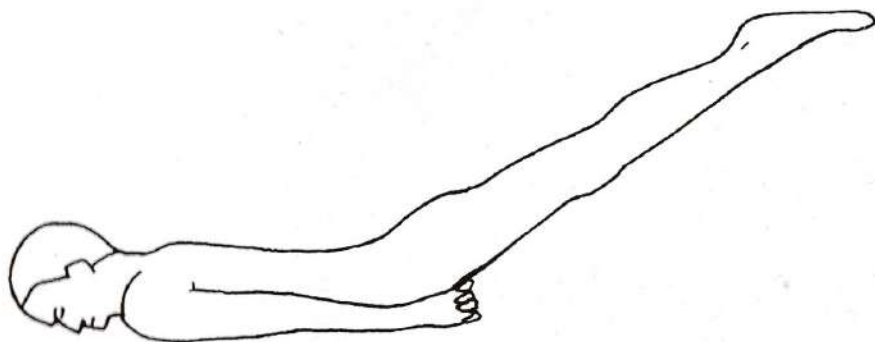
Strengthens and straightens the back and spine. Excellent for stretching the neck, chest and stomach areas as well as thighs. Affects the Adrenal Glands, massages vital organs and tones up the sex glands.

Lie flat on the stomach with the face downwards, putting the forehead on the floor. Place the hands palms down comfortably parallel with the shoulders. (See illustration). Lifting the head up and back as far as possible, inhale and, using the back muscles, pull up the shoulders and upper part of the body. Finally, using the hands, push up and back, keeping the pelvis on the floor to ensure proper positioning of the spine. (See illustration). Breathe out holding the posture for a couple of seconds then slowly lower, reversing the process and bringing the forehead to rest on the floor. Repeat three times. (See illustration overleaf).



Exercise 10

*Locust or
Salabhasana*



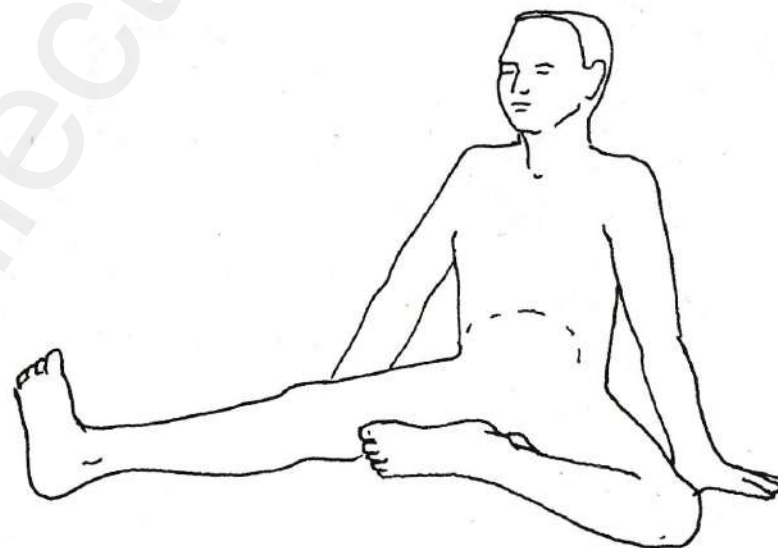
Benefits

In this posture the spine and lower back are strengthened. It also helps to cure backache. Massages and tones up the abdominal organs, and improves the whole respiratory system.

Lying face downwards, this time place the chin on the floor. Clench fists and keeping the arms straight place under thighs. The fists can be turned so that the knuckles face downwards touching the floor, or alternatively sideways so that the thumb and forefinger touch the floor and the knuckles face outwards. (See illustration). Keeping both legs straight lift the left first, using the muscles at the small of the back. Do not let the hip come up; keep both hips square to the floor. Hold for as long as comfortable, lower and repeat with the right leg. Inhale deeply, and remembering which muscles to use raise both legs. (See illustration). Hold and then lower while exhaling. Repeat twice starting again with alternate legs.

Exercise 11

*The Spinal Twist or
Ardha-Matsyendrasana*



Benefits

The Spinal Twist is a very good general exercise that helps to keep the spine elastic, sends an extra supply of fresh blood to the spinal nerves. Massages and tones up the abdominal organs, relieving constipation and dyspepsia.

Sitting on the floor, bend in the left leg, bringing the foot close to the body and keeping the knee on the floor. (See illustration 1). Then bending the right leg, cross it over the left and place the sole of the foot down forming a triangle with the floor. (See illustration 2).

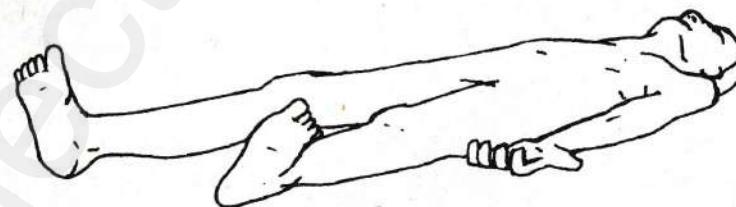


Slightly turn the body until you can place the right knee under the left armpit. Keeping left arm extended, take hold of the right foot. (See illustration 3). The right arm is bent behind the back; twist the body as far round as possible to the right, and looking behind you hold for a few seconds breathing shallowly. Change and repeat to the other side.



Exercise 12

The Pose of the Dead – Deep Relaxation or Savasana and The Complete Breath



Benefits

Deep Relaxation calms down the whole system, both physical and nervous. It also helps to restore balance and eases mental strain. The Complete Breath also helps calmness, cleanses and purifies the body and massages the vital organs, muscles and nerves.

Lying down flat on your back, relax your breathing. Place your arms by your sides with the palms of the hands facing upwards and close your eyes. (See illustration). One by one, lift each leg and arm a couple of inches from the floor and let it fall freely back. Roll your head from side to side a couple of times. Start to relax the muscles consciously, beginning from the toes and working upwards. Relax toes, arches, ankles, calf muscles, knees and thighs, seat, abdomen, small of the back, chest and rib cage, fingers, hands and arms, shoulder blades and shoulders, lower jaw and tongue, eyelids and forehead, and lastly the top of the head. Then relax the tensions from the

nervous system; feel them drain away from the body and leave you free from the worries of daily life, what you have to do next, or later on. This is your time, set aside by you to relax and forget.

There are many Yoga breathing exercises, but they cannot be successfully performed without first mastering the basic breath. The Complete Breath is an exaggerated form of how we breathe when asleep, when natural body rhythms take over without interference from the subconscious mind where habits are stored. The mouth remains closed with the jaw still relaxed. As you begin to inhale, push the stomach out — this pulls down the diaphragm and fills the lower part of the lungs. Then fill the middle part of the lungs by expanding the chest sideways. Finally, fill the top of the lungs by lifting and expanding the top of the ribs and collar bone. Hold for a few seconds and as you begin to exhale, tense the stomach — this brings the diaphragm back into position. Push down the sternum or breast bone so that the air is expelled from the top of the lungs first. Finally, pull in the stomach to ensure complete exhalation.

This all sounds very complicated; most people find difficulty when beginning. Don't be disheartened if you cannot do it — just practice regularly, starting with four or five breaths at a time. It is tiring and you may experience a certain amount of dizziness. This is because of the unaccustomed amount of oxygen that you are taking in. It is not possible for anyone to keep up the Complete Breath continuously — it is too much — but it does have the effect of establishing a pattern of slower and deeper breathing.

Having relaxed our bodies and done the breathing, we are left to contend with the mind, the most difficult part of ourselves to relax. To help with this we imagine pleasing scenes — for example, lying in a field of flowers or sunbathing

on a sandy beach. You can use whatever you like as long as it conjures a relaxed pleasure in your mind. This is called using an Ashram or retreat. Make it as real to you as possible, the result being that the mind relaxes and our bodies are filled with a sense of well-being.

This combination of exercises can be done at any time of the day, but for practicality's sake I suggest to do them in bed before sleep. Remember to do them every day.

Try this one the next time you are flying across the Atlantic —

Take advantage of the peaceful and relaxed atmosphere created by AIR-INDIA as these conditions provide the perfect opportunity to use this exercise.

This useful and beneficial Yoga practice is to create a mental ashram or spiritual retreat. This is done by visualising (Recalling to memory) a pleasant scene.

It is a tradition that each student in the early days of his training learns to create his own personal sanctuary, into which he withdraws mentally for peace and rest in times of stress. It is a very quick and effective method of escape from our usual environment. It is particularly good as a means to quieten an over active or tired mind and to relax the body.

Recall a beauty spot you have visited, a quiet garden full of beautiful flowers, or visualise yourself lying in a green meadow on a summer day, or on a beach sunbathing. It does not matter whether you are recalling an actual experience or are creating it in your mind for the first time, it will be found to be equally refreshing and relaxing.