

### You're at the right place, right now, IF...

- You want true health- physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual
- You want your body, energy, mind and emotions to support you in living your potential
- You want to cut through the clutter of conflicting wellness 'tips' received everyday
- You're tired of chasing health 'goals' through dieting, gym-ming and running
- You want well-being to be your default state of being and not a goal to chase

If YOU are ready to stop being taken for a ride, and get in the driver's seat of your journey to well-being then this series of guidebooks is for you. To be your companion in the journey towards well-being, irrespective of your age, background, ailment or health issue.

### The Secret Sauce - Yog

The "secret sauce" to reversing ailments, to being healthier than we were ten years ago, to thriving and reaching our potential is Yog. Yog is NOT Yoga. "Yoga", the "modern" oversimplified version of Yog, is a set of physical contortions - Asanas and Pranayama. Yog is a system for living, not just practices for wellness. Adapted to today's context, Yog can make us achieve far more than just reversal of diseases.

### About the 'From Yoga to Yog' Series

This 5-part series of books gives an insight into yog - the science to remove the root cause behind "dis-ease" and restore internal harmony. Well-being and harmony in our external reality is a natural outcome of this state.

- 1) From Treatments for Illness to Yog for Wellness
- 2a) From Obsessive Diets to Yogic Aahaar
- 2b) From Excessive Exercising to Yogic Vyaayaam
- 2c) From Struggling with Emotions to Yogic Vichaar
- 3) From Doing Yog to Being in Yog

### At the end of this journey, you will have

Well-being  
Independence  
A healthy community

All profits from the sale of this book go to Swasth Yog Foundation, an initiative of Swasth Foundation, India

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Youtube: [tinyurl.com/swasth-yog-institutue](https://www.youtube.com/swasth-yog-institutue)



From **EXCESSIVE EXERCISING** to **YOGIC VYAAYAAM**

Garima Gupta Kapila

## "FROM YOGA TO YOG" SERIES

• PART 2B •

# From **EXCESSIVE EXERCISING** to **YOGIC VYAAYAAM**

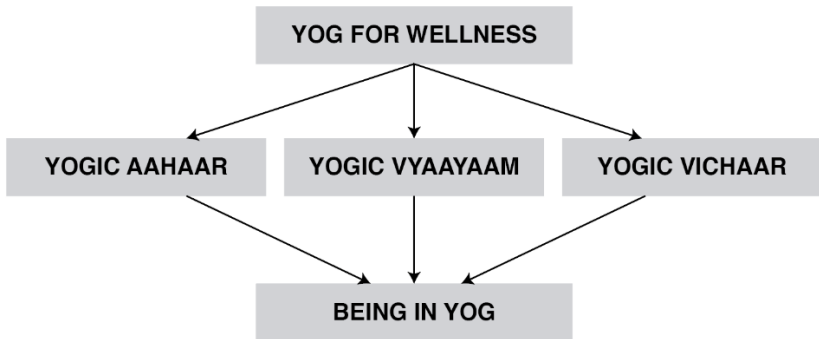
Stop putting your body to exhaustion and start doing enjoyable, healing Yogic practices, **PEACEFULLY.**



Garima Gupta Kapila



Map to **“FROM YOGA TO YOG”** Series



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### **Legal Disclaimer:**

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You are responsible for your own choices, actions, and results. In the spirit of taking personal responsibility for your decisions, you should seek the services of a competent health care provider before beginning any improvement program.

# Dedication

## Peace, Love, Joy for All

May our body, energy, mind and emotions be in harmony (Yog)  
May we be aligned with our true self  
May each of us feel – “I’m free to be me”  
May we all live fully and freely

This book is dedicated to the countless, selfless Yogis  
who undertook the hardest journey of all – the journey inwards –  
and shared its fruit - Yog - with the world, for the world.

ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः  
सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।  
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु  
मा कश्चिद्दुःभागभवेत् ।  
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Om Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah  
Sarve Santu Niraamayaah |  
Sarve Bhadraanni Pashyantu  
Maa Kashcid-Duhkha-Bhaag-Bhavet |  
Om Shaantih Shaantih Shaantih ||

### Meaning:

- 1: Om, May All be Happy,
- 2: May All be Free from Illness.
- 3: May All See what is Auspicious,
- 4: May no one Suffer.
- 5: Om Peace, Peace, Peace.

# Acknowledgements

To...

... my parents, Mahipal & Geeta, for giving me the gift of life and molding me into who I am

...Sundeeep, my spiritual partner in life and the wind beneath my wings

...Mukeshaanand, for transforming me, from the inside out

...my mother-in-spirit, Pamila, for her boundless love and blessings

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...Vaishali and Priti, for being the backbone for the pilot batches

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# Table of Contents

Is this Book for me?.....	i
How to use this book? .....	vii
<b>Chapter 1 – Introduction to Yogic Vyaayaam.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 2– Enablers For Effectiveness Of Yogic Practices ..</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Chapter 3– Loosening Practices .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Chapter 4– Yog Aasan .....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Chapter 5 – Praanaayaam.....</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>Chapter 6 – Relaxation.....</b>	<b>156</b>
<b>Chapter 7 – Meditation &amp; Mindfulness.....</b>	<b>164</b>
<b>Chapter 8 – A Change Plan.....</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>Chapter 9 - And Then Some More.....</b>	<b>193</b>
<b>Additional Resources and About Us.....</b>	<b>203</b>
About Swasth Yog Institute .....	204
About our Well-being Programs.....	214
About our mother organization – Swasth Foundation .....	220
My Journey .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Resource People and Institutions ..	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
References.....	231



# Is this Book for me?

## *Are you at the right place?*

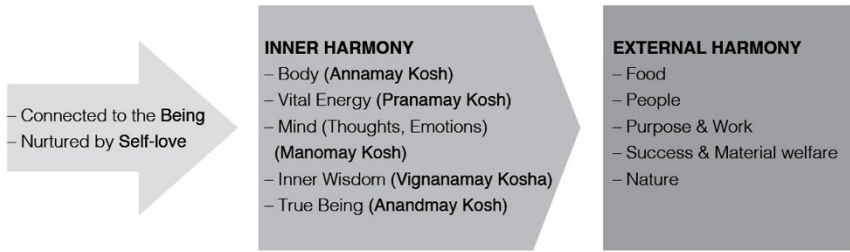
- Do you wish to enjoy true health – physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual?
- Do you want your body, energy, mind and emotions to be in harmony? Do you want them to actively support you in living your potential?
- Are you tired of chasing your health ‘goals’ through dieting, gymming, running, reading?
- Do you want well-being to be your default state of being, and not a goal to chase frantically?
- Do you want to cut through the clutter of conflicting wellness ‘tips’ you receive from myriad sources every day?
- Are you ready to stop being taken for a ride, and get in the driver’s set of your journey towards well-being?

If so, this guidebook is for you. To be your companion as you undertake the journey towards well-being. Your age, background and type of chronic ailment or health issue do not matter. What matters is your intention.



***Let's face it!***

- We have a problem: Today, we are less healthy than our less 'advanced' older generations
- Unfortunately, the problem is worsening: Life is becoming longer, but NOT healthier.
- Fortunately, the problem is reversible: The miracle of life has given our body the ability to recover and heal itself.
- But the "right" tools for reversal seem hard to find today: There is an overload of often conflicting tools and information, retractions of previously accepted "research" after long-term studies leaving people confused.
- Consequently, we have given our power away: Powerless, we have outsourced our health to providers (doctors, dieticians, yoga teachers, healers, therapists) and technology (fit-bits, Google, apps)
- The "modern" approach to well-being is fundamentally flawed: Most modern wellness practitioners have a flawed approach - reductionist and silo-ed. Dieticians reduce the food we consume to nutrients and schools of thought fight over the importance of proteins or carbohydrates or fats. Gym instructors work with isolated body parts, in a bid to build out specific muscles. Neither of them addresses the importance of our mind. Dieticians feed us fear and guilt. Gym instructors nurture strong bodies but give rise to inflexible and hyperactive minds.
- The key to well-being lies with(in) us: Ancient Indian researchers (Yogis) had given us the science to remove the root cause behind "dis-ease" and make well-being our default state. The "secret sauce" to well-being is Yog. Yog is NOT Yoga. It empowers us to take charge of our health and our life, to reach and live our true potential.



***We believe and know, beyond doubt, that***

...your body, energy, mind and emotions can be your greatest supporters to reach your potential

...health is your natural state of being, and you can be healthier today than you were a decade ago

...the journey towards well-being can be full of peace, love and joy

**SOME TOOLS USED**

- Yogaasan, Breathing & Loosening Practices, Praanaayaam
- Yogic Relaxation
- Body Wisdom & Awareness
- Yogic & Ayurvedic Food
- Laughter Yoga
- Mindfulness & Meditation
- Chanting & Sound Resonance
- Affirmations & Mirror Work
- Life Coaching
- Emotion Release Tools
- Creative / Art based therapy

***This guidebook will do the following***

- Make well-being attainable: Enable you to make simple, but profound changes to your life. Provide tools that are feasible for integration in your life in minimal budget and time.
- Present a bouquet of integrated tools: Addressing the body, energy, mind and emotions holistically through different tools
- Bridge the gap between the East & the West: Present ancient Ayurvedic and Yogic concepts adapted to today's context with modern tools
- Empower, instead of creating dependencies: Build knowledge of foundational principles, helping you to choose information presented by various health service providers and technology
- Make this a joyful journey: Help you discover your inner child, hidden talents, and dreams in the process...

***At the end of this journey, you will have***

- **Swaasthya (Well-being):** A tangible, measurable difference in health which YOU can perceive. A feeling of well-being.
- **Swaraaj (Independence):** The knowledge and motivation to continue your journey to well-being independently.
- **Sah-parivaar (A healthy family):** Tools to impact and influence the health of your friends & family.

**Health Issues addressable directly, with a HIGH impact**

- Muscular pains & fatigue, especially in the back and neck
- Joint Pains
- Gastro-intestinal disorders such as Acidity, Peptic Ulcers, IBS, Piles, irregularities in Bowel movements & Urination
- Obesity or excessive weight gain
- Headache or Migraine
- Menstrual problems, PCOD/PCOS
- Imbalances in appetite, sleep, energy levels
- Better management and reduction of side effects/complications of chronic ailments
  - Hypertension, Cholesterol
  - Asthma
  - Metabolic disorders such as diabetes
  - Hormonal imbalances such as Thyroid, Acne
  - Arthritis (Osteo and Rheumatoid)
  - Auto-immune disorders

**Health Issues addressable indirectly, with SOME impact**

- Relief from acute or infectious diseases such as malaria, diarrhoea, pain, and tuberculosis
- Neurological disorders (e.g. epilepsy, movement disorders such as Parkinson's disease, Speech and language disorders, Injury to brain, spinal cord and peripheral nerves, Sleep disorders, Behavioural /cognitive syndrome)
- Mental & mood disorders, anxiety & depression, phobias, eating disorders (e.g. anorexia nervosa, bulimia)
- Rehabilitation post accidents, health shock such as , Cerebro-vascular stroke, surgery, geriatric cases
- Problems in external organs such as skin allergies, ENT disorders, Dental issues
- Any other ailments not covered in “addressable section”

### ***Are you the right fit for this journey?***

With power comes responsibility. For our health too! If you wish to merely get rid of pain, you can take painkillers or countless therapies available. But if you wish to restore your body's innate healing capacity, and get in the driver's seat of your journey to well-being, you need to commit to some responsibilities:

- Honoring the commitment towards your well-being, by reading!
- Commitment to modifying your lifestyle and habits in line with recommendations
- Taking out 45 minutes every day for self-care
- Completing reflection questions and experimental activities to maximize your learning— such as health status measurement questionnaire, health diary, checklists to track activities

The following questions will help you in determining if you're at the appropriate inner and outer juncture in life to undertake this journey.



#### **Questions for Reflection**

- What health challenges am I facing currently?
- How are these health challenges impacting the quality of my life?
- What could happen, if this situation continues for a few years?
- What is my intention behind undertaking this journey to well-being?
- If this happens, what would be the impact on my life?
- To meet my health goal, what am I ready to commit to?

# How to use this book?

## How is this series structured?

This is a 5-series book addressing the body, energy, mind and emotions, holistically

- 1: Yog for Wellness (Yogic Philosophy of disease genesis and healing pathway)
- 2a: Yogic Aahaar (what we call Nutrition)
- 2b: Yogic Vyaayaam (what we know as 'Yoga')
- 2c: Yogic Vichaar (approach to Mind & Emotions)
- 3: Being in Yog (how to use the tools, to be in Yog)

## How to approach this series?

The first book covers foundational concepts of Yog, and it is highly recommended that you read it, before reading anything else.

Based on this, you can select which Yogic tool(s) – Yogic Aahaar, Yogic Vyaayaam and Yogic Vichaar – you wish to explore for your well-being. Each of the three books has a deep dive into focus Yogic tools for well-being. You may choose one, or two or all three. We suggest choosing the path that is most aligned to your temperament, and which you will be most committed to implementing in life. As without implementation, these ideas will only stay on paper and not translate into your physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual well-being!

The last book makes it easier for you to stay committed to the tool(s) of your choice, and most importantly, to make the journey towards your well-being joyful and therefore, sustainable. This is not a crash dieting or exercising or detox program that you implement once and forget. This is a way of life!

Hence, it is highly recommended, that you read the last book in the series, along with, or after the selected tool(s).

### **Note on the journey through the series:**

The secrets to fully utilizing the benefit of any Yogic tool for well-being are in the first and the last books. Without them, the essence of the tools will be lost. Yogic Aahaar will become the same as obsessive dieting, Yogic practices will be no different from mindless exercising. It will be like using a supercomputer as a calculator for addition. You will be able to add, yes, but will not be tapping into the amazing abilities of the supercomputer.

### **How to make the most of the 3 books on Yogic tools?**

Yogis outlined a 3-step process to integrating any new knowledge – Shraavan (श्रवण, listening or reading), Manan (मनन, reflection and contemplation) and Nididhyaasan (निदिध्यासन, integration). Modern research on learning is also echoing this approach.

This book has been designed accordingly. For each tool, the book explains overarching principles of each tool, provides activities for self-reflection or experiencing concepts and provides supporting information, checklists and formats to enabling you to get started and stay on track through self-tracking.

The implication for you is that reading this book to build fundamental concepts is only 10% of the impact. To get the other 90% of the impact, we suggest you do the following:

- **Reflect:** Reflect deeply during and at the end of each chapter, before moving to the next. Compare what is written with your past experiences, or your future experiences if you haven't

been aware in the past. Use the self-reflection questions and maintain a separate journal to track your responses.

- Do: Get started and implement the learnings in your life!
- Experiment and Experience: Do the activities or real-life experiments in the book for experiencing concepts. Guided audios for many exercises mentioned are available on our YouTube channel (see Resources at the end). Approach the activities with an open mind and heart. Be aware of the holistic experience of implementing the learnings in your life. Trust your experience more than the words in this book!
- Persevere: Stay on track. Implement this for 6 weeks to start with. Using self-tracking formats and checklists given in the book and read the last book for troubleshooting advice for commonly faced issues.
- Enjoy: Most, most important of all, enjoy the journey! More important than the % of insights you implement, is the % of joy you experience during this journey. After all, everything we do or want in life, is for joy, right? If you implement nothing, but stay joyful throughout your journey, your well-being is guaranteed!

*And remember, the goal is not to finish the book,  
but to bring it alive in your life!*

**Welcome to the world of peace, love and joy!**



# **Special Note on how to read this part in the series**

## **Part 2b:**

### **From Excessive Exercising to Yogic Vyaayaam**

You can use this guidebook and accompanying videos to learn and practice a set of Yogic Vyaayaam which is safe for people suffering from a wide range of ailments. Sustained practice of the set prescribed in this book has benefited people suffering from conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, back or neck pain, acidity, piles, headaches, PCOD, infertility.

Having said that, even simple Yogic Vyaayaam practices such as those explained in this book are potent. If used correctly, they can contribute immensely to our well-being, and if used incorrectly, they can also cause severe damage. If you have any severe chronic health issues or are recovering from a severe acute ailment, we highly recommend having a trained Yoga therapist prescribe you practices. If you're only suffering from ailments mentioned in Book 1 as addressable through this series of books, you can practice these safely.

However, in the spirit of taking full ownership for your health, stay alert and aware about the impact of each practice on your body. If something seems very uncomfortable or not suiting you, stop that practice immediately. Our body is our greatest teacher, more than any book or yoga instructor or guru. Trust your intuition and your body's signals.

Also, it is very likely that you will find the practices mentioned here are overly simple. We have become so used to seeing pictures

and videos of headstands, 180-degree splits and mind-boggling bodily contortions in the name of yoga, that it seems that anything less than that is not good enough. In the spirit of true scientific enquiry, which is about accepting something based on proof, we would urge you to consider doing the practices taught in this book. If you're already gymming, swimming, cycling, soul-cycling, running, cross-fitting, walking, or engaged in any other physical activity, you need not stop it. Add this to your routine and see the difference for yourself. Because more important than what you do, is how you do it, and how regularly you do it, which this book aims to explain more.

#### How you can use this book

- to supplement your existing practice. You will be able to minimize adverse effects, and draw more benefits from what you're already practicing
- if you want to evaluate whether to even start learning "Yoga", this book will support you in understanding the impact of Yogic practices, based in sound reasoning.
- If you're new to yoga and looking to experience the benefits of Yogic Vyaayaam for yourself, you can learn using this book and accompanying videos (post consultation from a Yoga therapist if needed, as explained above)
- if you're looking to start learning with a Yoga instructor, this book will support you in evaluating your instructor – does he/she really understand what he/she is teaching?

After 3 months of practice, if you wish to learn advanced Yogic practices such as Bandhaas, Kriyaas, and advanced Aasans, you can approach a certified Yoga Instructor.

**A word of caution about learning from Yoga instructors:**

While the explosion of Yoga studios and exponential growth in the number of Yoga instructors been a boon for many, it has come with challenges as well. Yoga instructors are not trained to deal with people with chronic health issues. We have seen many cases of people's health issues worsening because the Yoga instructor applied a one-size-fits-all approach and recommended practices which were not suitable for the specific person.

The standards for certification of Yoga instructors have not been rigorous so far, resulting in people becoming instructors without understanding key theoretical and practical aspects.

Also, in the West and increasingly even in India, Yogic Vyaayaam is being seen purely as physical postures and evaluated through the reductionist analytical approach that we have come to call 'scientific' today. This interpretation has led to postures which are very harmful for certain conditions, being prescribed as safe, including by doctors and yoga instructors. An example of this approach is inverted postures being branded as safe for women during menstruation. Any serious yoga practitioner who understands the *PanchKosh*(5 dimensions of existence according to Yogic philosophy) knows how incorrect this is, for many reasons, though it may not appear so anatomically.

## **Chapter 1**

# **Introduction to Yogic Vyaayaam**

### **Importance**

To view Yogic Vyaayaam (sometimes called Yogic practices) not just as physical exercise, but an intervention with our PanchKosh

## **What are Yogic practices**

Yogic Vyaayaam or Yogic practices refer to practical, simple tools that we can use to reach a state of internal harmony, i.e. Yog of our body, energy, mind and emotions. These practices are what are commonly called “Yoga” these days. They include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Loosening and Breathing practices
- (b) Praanaayaam
- (c) Aasan
- (d) Yogic Relaxation Techniques
- (e) Meditation and Mindfulness practices (*Dhaarna, Dhyaan*)

Note: Many other practices such as Mudras, Bandhas and Kriyaas are part of the scope of Yogic Vyaayaam but are not included in this book for starting practitioners, due to safety reasons. These practices are potent – if done correctly, they can support us immensely. But if done incorrectly, they can lead to severe damage. Rather than trying to do more practices, we highly recommend focussing on less and doing them regularly to see their impact. Participants in our programs have experienced profound changes in their body, energy, mind and emotions after doing seemingly simple Yogic practices for 6-7 weeks.

## **Difference between Yogic practices and Non-Yogic equivalents**

Today, in the name of yoga, a lot of “new age” schools are propounding contortions such as Beer Yoga, Goat Yoga, Hot Yoga, Power Yoga...the list is endless!

Simply by observing, one can understand whether the practice is being done in a Yogic manner or not. The exact same physical movement itself can be done in two completely different ways.

Hence a Yogic practice is not just about what to do, but more importantly about how to do. Below are the key differences in the “how” between Yogic practices and their Non-Yogic equivalents. We have coined the term “Non-Yogic Equivalents” to focus on the “how” of doing practices, beyond the what. This will become clear after reading the differences mentioned below:

### **1) Part of the body used**

Yogic practices work with all parts and organs of the body - Internal and external organs; Smallest to biggest muscles; Other systems involved beyond muscles and joints – digestive, respiratory, circulatory, nervous, etc

Non-yogic equivalents work with selectively parts of the body - Internal organs are often not emphasized, since the focus is on big muscles (remember the frequent usage of names of specific muscles such as “Quads”, “Glutes” in common gymming or running parlance?. Also, as illustrated above, most of the focus is on muscles and joints, and cardiovascular system. Remember, Yogic practices work on these systems, but do not focus only on them. In fact, they widen the scope to holistically include other systems.

### **2) Pattern of movement**

In Yogic practices, the movements are smooth and rhythmic, the speed is slow and gentle. Multiple repetitions are not required in Aasanas as staying in the position is important. Dynamic yogic practices focus on strength and stamina through pace and repetitions, but there are many other differences in the way they are done, as compared to non-yogic equivalents.

Non-Yogic practices are characterized by jerky movements (e.g. suddenly lifting weights), fast actions are important and the stress on repetitive movements

### **3) Breath (Praan-may Kosh)**

In Yogic practices, breath plays a very important role. Every practice has a breathing pattern aligned to the physical movement for full effect. Harmonious involvement of breath with body movements signals the conscious engagement of Praan-may Kosh in addition to Ann-may Kosh.

In Non-yogic equivalents, breath often does not have a role to play and is done independently of the movement

### **4) Role of mind (Manomay Kosh)**

In Yogic practices, the practice is done along with awareness of its effect on the body, breath and mind. The belief is that “Praan (life force) flows where attention goes”. We take care to honor our own body's capacity and focusing only on ourselves.

In Non-yogic equivalents, the focus is on doing and completing the exercise, not it's impact. The mind is usually involved externally – e.g. listening to instructor, watching TV, listening to music. Given our attention is outward, the full internal potential of these practices is not realized. Pushing excessively beyond capacity is the motto and source of pride. This often stems with a comparison with others.

### **5) External conditions**

Yogic practices are done in silence, mostly with eyes closed, so that full focus can be inwards. They are done without Air

conditioning, and not even directly under a fan, though natural ventilation is encouraged, such as through an open window. Further, they are done on empty stomach, with morning and evening preferred. Practices are not advised to be performed during menstruation. No external equipment is needed - only a mat! That too, ideally a cotton one. Hence, anyone and everyone can afford this practice, and be able to perform it anywhere, even while travelling. Practitioners wear loose, cotton clothes without footwear.

Non-yogic equivalents are done with loud music or TV on as an entertainment for mind. They are often done in rooms without ventilation, and with an AC. They can be do anytime, sometimes at night, any time of the month. Often, people go to gyms at night after work. They require external equipment, often so costly that it can only be available in a shared space such as a gym. Practitioners wear tight, nylon clothes and footwear.

## **6) Impact on practitioner**

Performing Yogic practices has a direct impact on quietening mind as it acts as a moving meditation. Over time, it leads to a soft, flexible body, which is able to harden like a diamond when needed. There is negligible chance of injury if body's capacity and precautions followed. It also enhances mental and spiritual being of practitioners.

After non-yogic equivalents, the mind can become more agitated. Physically, the body becomes bulky, hard, stiff body (refer to films with heroes having six-packs, biceps!). Further, there is a high chance of injury due to sudden movements and pushing oneself beyond capacity.





### **Real-life example**

A non-Yogic approach is quite evident in the “marathon” fad these days. We often undertake marathons well beyond the capacity of their body. Even if we somehow manage to complete the marathons, we often end up with broken knees, sore backs, twister ankles, stiff bodies which need to be nursed back to health over the next few months, or even heart attacks!

What causes these issues? We! We inflict this damage upon ourselves, by extending ourselves way beyond our capacity. We’re likely find the root cause in our very motivation to sign up for a marathon. To match peers, to impress others, to feel good about themselves, to gather medals, to compete on timings, to post on social media – our motivations are often external. Driven by fear, rather than joy.

Is running bad for health? No! There are documented cases of Yogis being able to run faster and longer, than most of us can imagine, without any of all the supporting equipment! This is because they have prepared the real internal equipment – their body, vital energy, mind and emotions – and can harness them effectively to derive the maximum ‘mileage’ in the minimum fuel.



## Practical Activity

We will try to do the same physical movement in a few different ways, to understand the profound impact of engaging our PanchKosh while doing a Yogic practice.

Physical Movement: Stand with your back and neck in one straight line, and your arms resting next to your thighs. Raise one arm till it becomes perpendicular to the ground. Raise it further till its vertical and the fingers of that hand are pointing towards the ceiling. Now bring back the arm to its starting position.

**Method 1:** Keep your eyes open. Do this movement 2-3 times at a medium pace – not too fast, and not too slow. Do it as you would have done, with the least amount of instructions given to you. Note the changes in your body.

**Method 2:** Do this with your eyes closed. Match the pace of movement with your breath – this will require your mind to be fully present and not distracted. Breathe and simultaneously raise your arm till it is parallel to the floor. Turn the palm upwards so that it faces the ceiling, while simultaneously breathing out. Now breathe in and continue the journey upwards, ensuring you pace your movement such that your arm reaches its final position just as you have inhaled fully. Stay in this position while breathing normally for ten seconds.

Now, reverse all the steps to bring your arm down - lower your arm as you breathe out, turn the palm downwards at the parallel position while breathing in and take your arm back to its starting position while breathing out. Note the changes in your body with your eyes closed. Reflect on what changed in your experience as you involved your breath and mind into your practice and adjusted the pace.

**Method 3:** Do this with your eyes fully closed and your full attention drawn inwards, focussed on the arm. This time, bring down the pace of movement drastically from Method 1. Imagine that your arm is like the seconds hand of a clock. Do the movement at half the pace of the seconds hands of the clock! Meaning it should take at least one minute for the arm to be fully raised. And another one minute to come back to it's original position. The transition of the palm at the mid-way parallel position (twisting it so that it faces the ceiling when going up, and faces the floor while coming down) should be done at an even slower pace. Thus, the entire activity should take 2.5 to 3 minutes. Note the changes in your body with your eyes closed. Reflect on what changed in your experience as you brought down the pace.

You will find many more micro and macro changes taking place in your body as you involve the PanchKosh and adjust your pace such that instead of the body adjusting to the mind's pace, it's the mind that adjusts to the body's pace. This "yogic" method elevates the simplest of practices into a meditation in motion, and leads to sublimation of the many mental, vital and physical toxins in our body. These principles are also used extensively in the increasingly popular field of Trauma healing through somatic experiencing.



### Reflection Question

If you've been doing any physical activity – such as a walk, cycling, spinning, swimming, running, going to a gym, or even “yoga” reflect on the nature of your practice and what changes you would like to make based on the above, in order to make the activity more “yogic”?

 Key Points

- Yogic practices include, but are not limited to:
  - (a) Loosening and Breathing practices
  - (b) Praanaayaam
  - (c) Aasan
  - (d) Yogic Relaxation Techniques
  - (e) Meditation and Mindfulness practices (*Dhaarna, Dhyaan*)
- The exact same physical movement itself can be done in two completely different ways. Hence a Yogic practice is not just about what to do, but more importantly about how to do.

## **Chapter 2**

# **Enablers For Effectiveness Of Yogic Practices**

### **Importance**

The same physical practice, if done effectively  
can have a much deeper impact on us

It is said that “Praan follows attention”, i.e. wherever our attention goes, is where our life-giving energy also goes. Thus, the same physical practice, if done in a Yogic manner can have a much stronger impact.

- (a) Create our internal circumstances by engaging all our Kosh-s, not just the body (Ann-may Kosh)!
- (b) Create external circumstances in line with the needs of the practice

Before commencing practice, it is important to keep two other things in mind:

- 1) Each and every step in a yogic practice has a reason and hence must be followed.
- 2) Doing this as per our ability, while being stable and comfortable is extremely important. While it is tempting to open our eyes and compare ourselves with others practicing next to us, and trying to be as flexible as them, we need to know that everybody’s ability is different. Flexibility is not the only parameter of success in practice! Further, our own abilities increase with time as we practice regularly.

### **Create our internal circumstances by engaging all our PanchKosh**

#### **Body (Ann-may)**

- Movements are smooth and rhythmic instead of fast and jerky
- Doing as per our own pace (our breath, instead of trying to match it with others.
- Doing as per our capacity – body is stable and comfortable, no shaking as it’s a sign of going beyond capacity. We stretch

ourselves a little, but be comfortable

- Maximizing the degree of movement of the part, till the point of comfort (no pain)
- Following precautions, not doing if contra-indicated for a condition

### **Breath (Praan-may)**

- Match the body movements with breath, wherever there is a breathing pattern.
- Usually, we breathe in when we expand the body or when the body is raised against gravity.
- Never holding breath, else Praana flow can get blocked. Remember, we hold the posture, not the breath!
- Always breathing through the nose, instead of mouth. For many reasons! This also ensures we don't stretch beyond capacity
- Breathing to be slow, rhythmic, deep

### **Mind (Mano-may)**

- Keeping eyes closed so that the focus is inwards. Exception: If there is a need to balance your body or to avoid nausea.
- Focus on changes happening in the body, not just the local site but adjacent areas also
- Focus on macro and micro changes:
  - Macro - Stretch in the muscles, comfort level, breath, blood circulation
  - Micro – Vibrations, mind and emotions



### **Inner wisdom (Vigyan-may)**

Always listening to the body, breath and mind and adjusting course accordingly

### **Inner Bliss (Aanand-may)**

Doing practices from a state of ease and joy, instead of with irritation and forced discipline



#### **Reflection Question**

Based on the above, reflect on how you want to change your approach to your practice?

## Create external circumstances

Creating favourable external circumstances also enables effective practice

### Where:

- **Clean, quiet** room without music or noise as it helps keep focus inwards
- **No AC.** Not directly below the fan. Windows open for **ventilation.** Not switching on AC/fan immediately after practice. The warmth in room helps body to open up. During practice, internal heat generated adds vitality and sweat removes toxins. Sudden cooling down of body by an AC or fan disturbs the above process.

### When

- Do on an **empty stomach**, i.e. 3-4 hours after lunch (with grains), 2 hours after fruits and salad or vegetables (without cereals) or 30 minutes after more than 1 glass of liquids. Empty stomach condition ensures that the digestive process happens properly, since that process also requires Praan (life energy)
- Do at a **conducive time**, ideally morning, before starting home/office work or evening before sunset. In the morning, a relatively quieter mind supports practice, and our body becomes ready and flexible for the day. In the evening, the mind is more active with thoughts generated during the day, but the body has become more open due to movement. This flexibility supports practice and the turbulent mind gets quietened

## **How**

- Wear **loose clothes**, that enable body to stretch comfortably, the lungs to inhale and exhale with ease.
- Clothes should be made of **cotton or natural fabric**. This enables body to “breathe”, and sweat
- **Barefoot** (without footwear), for grip on the ground
- Food intake should be at least 30 minutes after practice, as many internal changes happen in the body post practice
- No practice during menstruation, as many internal change are going on in the body. This is best used as a period for rest, relaxation, reflection and contemplation.



### **Reflection questions**

Based on the above, reflect on what changes you need to make to the following: (a) the room where you practice (b) when you practice (c) your clothing (d) link with meals

## **ANNEXURE**

### **MECHANISM OF ACTION OF YOGIC VYAAYAAM**

Yogic Vyaayaam designed based on a holistic and balanced understanding of our system. Relaxation and stimulation act as balancing factors for each other. Most of the issues that we face today is due to overstimulation. The field of trauma healing through somatic experiencing is leveraging this principle for releasing deep mental and physical trauma. This is especially true when we slow down the vyaayaam practices considerably. The converse is also true that when we slow down our practices, and use alternate stimulation and relaxation, some deep mental and physical traumas maybe released, even if we didn't intend them to.

What is trauma? These trauma are simply incomplete actions that have been trapped due to the actions initiated by the reptilian brain which was cut short or paused by the neo-cortex. For e.g. we had an argument with someone at work or home, but could not express or experience our emotions fully, or our emotions persisted post the argument. As humans living in society with norms, we can't complete our fight-flight-freeze reactions physically, unlike animals. Our neocortex (human brain) stops our reptilian brain from engaging in these reactions and take socially acceptable measured responses.

All the trauma we have gone through is stored in the reptilian brain, it is the oldest part of the brain, situated at the base of the skull, directly connected to the spinal chord, which gives out the flight/fight signals when feeling threatened.

These incomplete actions are thought to be the root of a lot of physical and mental discomfort and trauma. Slowing down vyaayam allow the release of these trapped incomplete actions or trauma and hence the root of a lot of our diseases.

Yogic Vyayam is performed very slowly, while being grounded. The slower and focused nature of yogic Vyayam helps connect the neocortex brain with the reptilian brain. This way our thoughts, emotions and body's reflexes are all connected.

While grounding when one is sitting with feet touching the ground and on a high back chair, that gives adequate support to the shoulders and nape of neck, the reptilian brain feels supported and not threatened. Slow movements help release stored emotions and trauma of years gone by, which may be stored in the body as chronic aches, pains or strain or an emotion one is not even aware of. This release brings about ease in the physical and emotional body

Similar to water dripping, drop by drop on a stone and making the surface of the stone smooth, the impact of these practices is remarkable, when done with consistency.

When one does the Vyaayaam slowly, mindfully focusing on breath, a similar process takes place, gently and slowly so that the body let's go of stuck energies and moves towards vibrant flow of energy and praan.

Any discomfort in our Ann-maya Kosh does cause imbalance in our Manomay Kosh. When one is in pain or uneasy, it's difficult to stay positive. In fact, till the time the body is moving, it is impossible to be mentally still. By doing yogic vyaayam in the correct manner, one can move towards the true state of Yog - Chitta Vritti Nirodhah (cessation of the modifications of the mind).



## Key Points

- It is said that “Praan follows attention”, i.e. wherever our attention goes, is where our life-giving energy also goes. Thus, the same physical practice, if done in a Yogic manner can have a much stronger impact. The key to doing this is to
  - (a) Create external circumstances in line with needs of the practice
  - (b) Create our internal circumstances by engaging all our Kosh-s, not just the body (Ann-may Kosh)!
  
- Of the multiple guidelines shared, the following are very important to minimize damage to our body resulting from incorrect practices
  - Do on Empty stomach
  - Doing this as per our ability, while being stable and comfortable is extremely important.
  - Following precautions, not doing if contra-indicated for a condition
  - Never holding breath

## Which practices are suitable for me?

Before starting the yogic practices, it is very important to know which practices are suitable for you. Read the contra-indications given in the table and note down practices that you should not do, based on your health.

Tick against the practice which you can do and cross against the ones that are contraindicated for you based on your health.

<b>Practice</b>	<b>Contra-Indications (Who should NOT do the practice)</b>	<b>Tick (do) / cross (not do)</b>
<i>Group 1 loosening</i>	Everyone can do	
<i>Group 2 loosening</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint pain</li> <li>• Back pain</li> <li>• Above 65 years age</li> </ul>	
<i>Relaxation</i>	Everyone can do	
<i>Pranayaam</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common praanayaam – everyone can do</li> <li>• Specific pranayaam – as per blood pressure and/or pulse.</li> </ul>	
<i>Joint pain practices</i>	Everyone can do	
<i>Aasan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint Paint</li> <li>• Recent surgery</li> <li>• Some aasans are contraindicated in Hypertension, backpain and for specific conditions (given in detail in aasan chapter)</li> </ul>	

Make a summary of the practices you CAN do:

**YOGIC VYAAYAAM - Full Practice Set**

Centering (Front, Back, Left, Right, Center)*					
LOOSENING PRACTICES					
STANDING	HANDS	ELBOW TO NECK	SPINE	WAIST TO KNEE	CALF TO FEET
Arms Open/ Close	Finger Stretch (Open/ Close)	Elbow Open/ Close	Twist*	Waist Rotate	(w) Calf stretch*
Up/Down Ankle Stretch*	Wrist Rotate	Shoulder Rotate	Front bend*	Knee Rotate	(w) Ankle rotate*
Fingers lock & stretch- AUM	Palms Stretch (1)	Neck move * (1)	Back bend	(w) Knee bend*	(w) Toe bend
Breathe – (4x)	Breathe – 4x	Breathe – 4x	Breathe – 4x	Breathe – 4x	Breathe – 4x

\* Eyes open & balance kept

(w) Use wall support and/or open eyes based on ease and balance



JOINTPAIN	AASAN		
Passive toe rotation	Relax at Sthitil Dandaasan – 2 breaths	Relax at Shithil Makraasan – 2 breaths	Relax at Shavaasan – 2 breaths
Kneecap movement	<b>SITTING</b>	<b>PRONE</b>	<b>SUPINE</b>
Kneecap tight and release	<b>Tiger breath</b> Relax at Vajraasan	<b>BhujangAasan</b>	<b>Pavanmukt Aasan</b>
Knee Rotate	<b>ShashaankAasan</b>	Relax at Shithil Makraasan	<b>Dorsal Stretch</b> breath Relax at Shavaasan
Knee bend and open	Relax at Vajraasan	<b>ShalabhAasan</b> Relax at Shithil Makraasan	<b>Setubandh Aasan</b> Relax at Shavaasan
Half butterfly	<b>Bhadraasan</b>	<b>Nauka Aasan</b> breath	<b>Crossed Legs</b> (simplified Supta Matseyndr Aasan)
	<b>Vakra Aasan</b> Relax at Sthitil Dandaasan – 2 breaths	Relax at Shithil Makraasan – 2 breaths	Twist Relax at Shavaasan – 2 breaths

### RELAXATION

- Viprit Karni (A-Kara)
- A-U-M
- Shav Aasan
- Quick Relaxation Technique
- Part-by-Part Relaxation

<b>PRAANAAYAAM</b>
<p><b><u>Specific to condition (Choose one of these)</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>High BP:</b> Chandra Anulom Vilom (Left in, Right out) – 9</li> <li>• <b>Low BP:</b> Surya Anulom Vilom (Right in, Left out) – 9</li> <li>• <b>Other Participants:</b> Deep Breathing (a) Nose-in Mouth-out Sigh (b) Nose-in Mouth-out Loud (c) Nose-in Mouth-out Quiet (d) Nose-in Nose-out Quiet (e) Nose-in Nose-out Very Slow – 3 Round each</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Common and safe for all</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nadi Shuddhi / Anulom Vilom – 5 Rounds</li> <li>• Full Yogic Breath (Abdominal, Chest, Shoulder, All) – 3 Rounds each</li> <li>• Bhramari in Shanmukhi Mudra – 5 Rounds</li> </ul>

<b>MEDITATION – 5 minutes</b>		
<p><b>Body (Ann-may Kosh):</b></p> <p>Part-wise Body Awareness</p> <p>Breath-Body Awareness &amp; Synchronization</p>	<p><b>Breath (Praan-may Kosh):</b></p> <p>Heartbeat focus</p> <p>Pulse focus</p> <p>Breath observe (Nose, Path inside, match with body)</p>	<p><b>Mind (Manomay Kosh):</b></p> <p>Silence</p> <p>Sound (Mantra, Japa)</p> <p>Image (Symbol, Deity, Metaphor)</p>
<b>PRACTICES FOR PEACE, LOVE, JOY – 15 minutes</b>		
<p><b>Peace</b></p> <p>What - Faith, Surrender, Gratitude</p> <p>How – Journal, Contemplate, Express, Pray</p>	<p><b>Self-Love</b></p> <p>Sanjeevani Affirmation</p> <p>Remembering own qualities</p> <p>Mirror Work</p> <p>Loving Body touch/ massage</p>	<p><b>Joy</b></p> <p>Music – sing/ play/ listen</p> <p>Draw/Paint/Crafts</p> <p>Write/Read</p> <p>Dance/ Drama</p> <p>Time in Nature or whatever gives joy</p>

## **Chapter 3**

# **Loosening Practices**

### **Meaning**

These are also called also called Shithilikaran Vyayam or Upa Yoga or Sukshma Vyayam.

Shithilikaran means loosening and Vyayama means exercises. Hence, these loosen the body and prepare it for Asan practice.

For this reason, it is advisable to learn and practice them before Aasan-s.

## **Purpose**

Loosening practices have the following benefits:

- Loosen various joints in the body
- Flex the spine, by repeatedly stretching and relaxing different muscles
- Remove lethargy in the body
- Develop the stamina of the body
- Discipline the body-mind complex

*It is important to note that while the impact of a loosening practice may appear to be local to that area, if we are aware, we will observe the impact extends to many other parts of the body. E.g. the impact of ankle rotation extends upto the hip joint.*

It is advisable to practice these before starting practices such as Aasan. This is similar to athletes “warming up” before engaging with more strenuous exercises.

## **How to find loosening practices?**

We’ve selected some practices and posted videos on our YouTube channel. Other organization and individuals have also posted videos online (e.g. Isha Foundation has shared Upayoga)

## **Who can do?**

These practices are advisable and safe for most chronic ailments. The set prescribed here has been done comfortably by participants from 16 to 75 years of age. We have simplified spinal twists through a “chair yoga” version, where participants can do this sitting on a chair, as opposed to standing, which can be strenuous. “Chair yoga” can be easily done in office settings, or for older people. Caution is advised in case of physical issues such as imbalance, giddiness, any accidents, or deformities.

**Specific enablers for effectiveness  
(compared to overall guidelines)**

*Almost all guidelines for effective Yogic practices apply to Loosening practices also. Some exceptions are:*

- *The same posture does not need to be held. Instead, it is a continuous movement with some rounds of repetition, which enables the body part to loosen up*
- *Can be done 1 hour after meal (since they are gentler, except spinal bends and twists)*
- *Can be done during periods (except spinal bends and twists)*

<b>LOOSENING PRACTICES</b>					
<b>Centering (Front, Back, Left, Right, Center)*</b>					
<b>STANDING</b>	<b>HANDS</b>	<b>ELBOW TO NECK</b>	<b>SPINE</b>	<b>WAIST TO KNEE</b>	<b>CALF TO FEET</b>
Arms Open/ Close	Fingers Stretch (Open/ Close)	Elbow Open/ Close	Twist	Waist Rotate	(w) Calf stretch*
Up/Down Ankle Stretch*	Wrist Rotate	Shoulder Rotate	Side bend*	Knee Rotate	(w) Ankle rotate*
Fingers lock & stretch-AUM	Palms Stretch (1)	Neck move * (1)	Front bend*	(w) Knee bend*	(w) Toe bend
Breathe – (4x)	Breathe – 4x	Breathe – 4x	Back bend	Breathe – 4x	Breathe – 4x
			Breathe – 4x		

## Notes on sequencing of Set of Loosening Practices

- **STANDING BREATHING:** Opens up the lungs and expands lung capacity through stretching and chanting. This is the pre-requisite for a good Yogic practice and impacts Praan-may Kosh.
- **HANDS:** Damaged most commonly these days by repetitive computer and desk work.
- **ELBOW TO NECK:** Most affected part due to the incorrect posture caused by continuously sitting on desk at work and typing.
- **SPINAL MOVEMENTS:** They flex the spine, by repeatedly stretching and relaxing different muscles. This prepares the body to stretch limbs, which are extensions from the backbone.
- **WAIST TO KNEE:** Opens up the hip and knee joints, stiffened due to the sedentary lifestyle.
- **KNEE TO FEET:** These parts bear all the weight of the body. Stretching the leg muscles and loosening the joints is very important to carry out daily functions like walking, climbing etc.

Done in this manner, loosening practices don't just open up the body, but also smoothen the flow of Praan. We may experience harmonization of Praan while doing these practices, through body signals such as yawning, flatulence, belching, the urge of defecate, etc. Instead of feeling embarrassed and trying to stop these natural responses, we can listen to our body and let the harmonization happen!

## **Enablers for effective practice explained**

The previous chapter had explained how to do yogic practices effectively. Below, we share how to apply this learning for Loosening practices.

### **1) Body (Ann-may)**

- Movements are smooth and rhythmic instead of fast and jerky. For e.g. Neck rotation is not just up-down, left-right movement but a full circle
- Doing as per our own pace (our breath, instead of trying to match it with others. For e.g. Breathing practices (e.g. Arms open & close) will be different as per varying needs
- Doing as per our capacity – body is stable and comfortable, no shaking as it's a sign of going beyond capacity. We stretch ourselves a little, but be comfortable. For e.g. Back-bending practices (e.g. spinal twists) are where we typically over-do, in trying to touch our hands to the ground, etc
- Maximizing the degree of movement of the part, till the point of comfort (no pain). In rotations, we try to make as big a circle as possible. E.g. in neck rotation, when the neck is sideways – try to touch shoulder, when up – feeling stretch on throat, when down – touching chin to upper chest
- Following precautions, not doing if contra-indicated for a condition. Problems may become worse, if not followed e.g. Paadhast aasan not in backpain, Kapalbhaati not in high BP

### **2) Breath (Praan-may)**

- Match the body movements with breath, wherever there is a breathing pattern. Usually, we breathe in when we expand the body or the body is raised against gravity. For e.g. in Breathing practices (e.g. Arms open & close), arms move in sync with breath.
- Never holding breath, else Praana flow can get blocked. For e.g. In spinal twist, when we go up/down/side and stay in that position, we continue breathing
- Always breathing through the nose, instead of mouth. For many reasons! This also ensures we don't stretch beyond capacity. For e.g. In dynamic practices such as jogging, we should do till the point we can breathe through our nose

- Breathing to be slow, rhythmic, deep. Breathing practices encourage deepening, which supports in subsequent practices

### **3) Mind (Mano-may)**

- Keeping eyes closed so that the focus is inwards. Exception: If there is a need to balance your body or to avoid nausea. Examples of exceptions: Keeping eyes open during Vrikshaasan (tree pose) to maintain balance, and in Ardha Chakraasan, Paadhastaasan to avoid nausea
- Focus on changes happening in the body, not just the local site but adjacent areas also. For e.g. The impact of neck rotation goes beyond the neck and extends to spine and head
- Focus on macro and micro changes: Macro changes such as stretch in the muscles, comfort level, breath, blood circulation. Micro changes such as vibrations, mind and emotions. For e.g. In neck rotation: feel the stretch in all sides of neck and throat, how the spine is stretched, how blood circulation in head increases, a possible slight tingling or vibration in head and observe that thoughts likely to reduce post practice

**4) Inner wisdom (Vigyan-may):** Always listening to the body, breath and mind and adjusting course accordingly. For e.g. Observing minutely if a particular practice is suiting us less or more.

**5) Inner Bliss (Aanand-may):** Doing practices from a state of ease and joy, instead of with irritation and forced discipline. Do Praanaayaama to calm mind down. If mind is still resisting practice, better to go out for a walk, or dance or listen to music!





## **Key Points**

- Loosening practices are also called also called Shithilikaran Vyayam or Upa Yoga or Sukshma Vyayam. Shithilikaran means loosening and Vyayama means exercises. Hence, these loosen the body and prepare it for Asan practice. For this reason, it is advisable to learn and practice them before Aasan-s.
- While the impact of a particular loosening practice may appear to be local to that area, if we are aware, we will observe the impact extends to many other parts of the body.
- Some exceptions to the Yogic practice guidelines for loosening practices are:
  - The same posture does not need to be held. Instead, it's a continuous movement with some rounds of repetition, which enables the body part to loosen up
  - Can be done 1 hour after meal (since they are gentler)
  - Can be done during periods
- Sequence
  - STANDING BREATHING
  - HANDS
  - ELBOW TO NECK
  - SPINAL MOVEMENTS
  - WAIST TO KNEE
  - KNEE TO FEET

## Loosening Practices Group 1

Recommended for patients with joint pain, back pain and above 65 years of age. Caution is advised in case of health issues such as imbalance, giddiness, and accidents or deformities.

**Note: All the practices after the “Standing” Set are to be done on a chair without arms**

LOOSENING PRACTICES					
Centering (Front, Back, Left, Right, Center)*					
STANDING	HANDS	ELBOW TO NECK	SPINE	WAIST TO KNEE	CALF TO FEET
Arms Open/ Close	Fingers Stretch (Open/ Close)	Elbow Open/ Close	Twist  Side bend*	Waist Rotate	(w) Calf stretch*
Up/Down Ankle Stretch*	Wrist Rotate	Shoulder Rotate	Front bend*	Knee Rotate	(w) Ankle rotate*
Fingers lock & stretch- AUM	Palms Stretch (1)  Breathe – 4x	Neck move * (1)  Breathe – 4x	Back bend  Breathe – 4x	(w) Knee bend*  Breathe – 4x	(w) Toe bend  Breathe – 4x
Breathe – (4x)					

## **Standing Relaxation – Taadaasan Shithil**

- Come to standing position
- Keep a gap between your legs, as much as the gap between shoulders or buttocks, so that they remain comfortable.
- Your body weight should be equally divided between both legs.
- Place your hands behind the body.
- The head should be comfortable – relaxed back or on one side or upright.



## **Standing Aasan Readiness - Taadaasan Sthiti**

- To get into position, join the legs.
- Keep your hands beside your body.
- The head, neck and back should be straight and in a straight line.
- Head facing the front



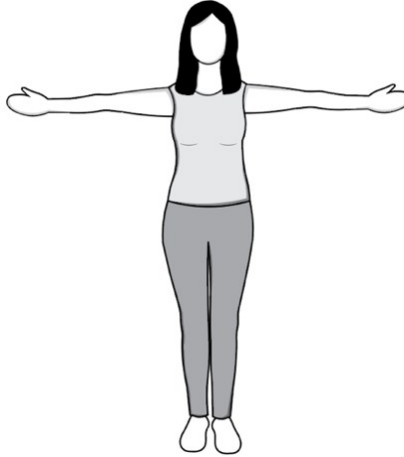
## Centering



- Stand in Taadaasan- join your feet, stand straight, hands touching your thighs
- Close your eyes
- Slowly lean forward, without bending your back, feel your weight of the entire body on your toes
- Slowly lean backwards, without bending your back, feel your weight on the heels
- Come to the center, without bending your back, lean to the right, feel your weight on the right edge of the foot
- Lean to the left, without bending your back, feel the weight on the left edge of the foot.
- Come to the center, Feel the surface awareness on the entire surface of your feet.
- Relax your entire body and feel all the changes taking place throughout the body.

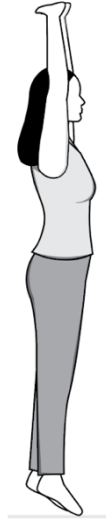
## **Set 1: Standing**

### **1) Arms open/close**



- Stand straight in Taadasan.
- Close your eyes.
- Outstretch your arms in front of you at chest level and join the palms.
- While inhaling slowly, open your hands outward at the level of the shoulder with the palms facing forward.
- Feel the stretch in your arms.
- While exhaling, slowly, bring your hands back together in front of your chest and join the palms.
- Do this 2 times.
- **\*\* And then rest in Taadaasan for 2 breaths**

## 2)Up/Down Ankle Stretch (eyes open)

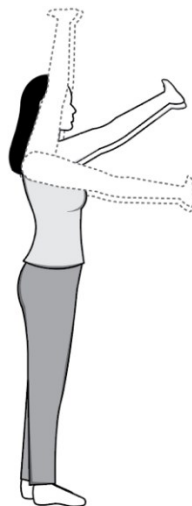


- Stand straight in Taadaasan.
- Keep your eyes closed.
- Place your palms on your thighs
- While inhaling, lift your arms overhead, Feet should be flat on the ground.
- Stretch the fingers towards the sky.
- Stretch your arms and shoulders straight; straighten your hand so that the whole body stretches.
- While exhaling slowly, bring your hands back down on your thighs.
- Do this 2 times.
- And then rest in Taadasan.

**\*\*And then rest in Taadaasan for 2 breaths**

### **3)Fingers lock and stretch – AUM**

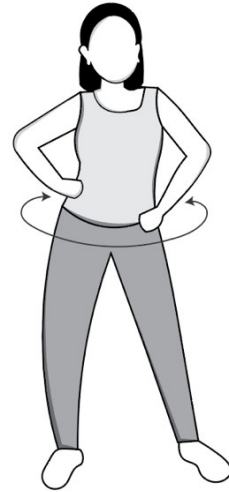
- Stand straight in Taadaasan with your eyes closed.
- Keep your hands on the chest and interlock your fingers.
- Relax the shoulders.
- Stretch your hands in the front at your chest level (parallel to floor).
- Inhale slowly and turn the palms out, while stretching the hands away from the body
- While exhaling, bring your hands back towards the chest, while chanting the sound "Aa".
- Turn your palms towards your chest and rest them on the chest.
- Relax the hands and shoulders.
- Next, stretch your hands in front of your forehead (roughly 45-degree angle to floor).
- Take in a deep breath, and turn the palms outside, while stretching the hands out
- Breathing out slowly, bring your hands towards the chest, while chanting the sound "Uu".
- Turn your palms towards your chest and rest them on the chest.
- Relax the hands and shoulders.
- Now stretch your hands over your head (roughly 90-degree angle to floor)
- Take in a deep breath, and turn the palms outside, while stretching the hands out towards the sky/ceiling
- Breathing out slowly, bring your hands towards the chest, while humming like a bee - "Mm".
- Turn your palms towards your chest and rest them on it.
- Relax your hands and shoulders.



**\*\*And then rest in Taadaasan for 2 breaths**

#### 4) Waist rotation

- Keep your eyes closed
- Spread the legs widely, about two to three feet apart based on comfort.
- Keep your hands on the waist, fingers in the front and thumb on the back to support the waist.
- Rotate from the waist making as big circle with your waist as you can.
- In a slow circular movement - move to one side, then move forward, then towards the other side and then back.
- Do 2 rounds. While rotating the waist, keep your legs fixed on the ground so that knees don't bend.
- Synchronize one round of breathing (inhale and exhale) to one round (rotation).
- One inhalation corresponds to half a circle, one exhalation corresponds to the other half
- Do 2 rounds in the reverse direction
- Ensure slow pace, synchronization with breath, maximum range of movement with ease



***Perform the next practices while seating on a chair.***

***Relax on the chair, keep your hands on your thighs.***

***Take 4 deep breaths.***

***Slowly inhale (pause). Exhale.***



## Set 2: Hands

### 1) Fingers Stretch

**Note: Patients with osteo arthritis should be careful while doing this. Do very gently, do not strain your fingers.**



- Sit on the chair; rest your back on the floor.
  - Ensure that your feet are flat on the ground; you can keep a folded mat below your feet if your legs are not entirely touching the ground.
  - Keep your eyes closed.
  - Lift both arms; keep them outstretched in front of you at shoulder level.
  - Slowly close your fists with your thumb inside and tightly squeeze.
  - Slowly open your fists and extend each finger outward and backward toward you, as much as possible.
  - Do 2 rounds
  - Synchronize one round of breathing (inhale and exhale) to one round (squeeze and open).
  - Ensure slow pace, synchronization with breath, maximum range of movement with ease
- \*\*And then relax for 2 breaths**

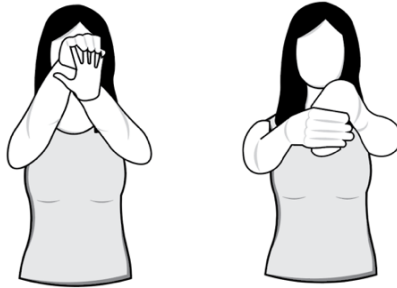
## 2)Wrist rotation



- Keep your eyes closed.
- Be seated, ensure back is rested and feet are flat on the ground.
- Lift both arms; keep them outstretched in front of you at shoulder level.
- Close your fists with your thumb inside.
- Slowly rotate your fists from the wrists,
- First inwards, then upwards, outside, downwards and then inwards
- Do 2 rounds
- Keep the part of the arms till elbows still.
- Move only the part from the elbow to the wrist.
- Make as big of the circle with your wrists as you can.
- The movement should be as slow as possible, synchronize one rotation with one breath.
- Do 2 rounds in the reverse direction.
- First outward, then upwards, inwards, downwards and again outwards.
- Synchronize one round of breathing (inhale and exhale) to one round (squeeze and open). One inhalation corresponds to half a circle, one exhalation corresponds to the other half
- Ensure slow pace, synchronization with breath, maximum range of movement with ease.

**\*\*And then relax for 2 breaths**

### 3)Palms up/down; front/back.



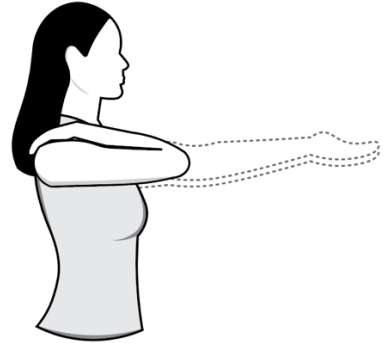
- Keep your eyes closed
- Be seated, ensure back is rested and feet are flat on the ground.
- Keep one arm outstretched in front of you at shoulder level.
- The fingers should be towards the sky and the palm facing outwards.
- With your other hand, slowly stretch your fingers inwards towards yourself hold the stretch tightly for one round of breath. Slowly release.
- Now turn the palm towards you and with your other hand slowly stretch the fingers towards you, hold the stretch tightly for one round of breath. Slowly release.
- Next, turn the wrist down so that the fingers are towards the ground and the palm is on your side.
- Slowly stretch the fingers to your side tightly
- Now turn the palm outwards and stretch the fingers tightly toward yourself, hold it for one breath. Slowly release.
- Similarly, do it with the other hand at a slow pace.
- Palm upwards facing the front, stretch
- Palm upwards facing you, stretch
- Ensure slow pace, synchronization with breath, maximum range of movement with ease
- Palm downwards facing you, stretch
- Palm downwards facing the front, stretch

**\*\*And then relax for 4 breaths**

### Set 3: Elbow to Neck

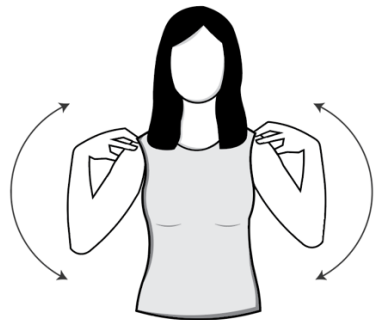
#### 1) Elbow Open/close

- Keep your eyes closed.
- Be seated, ensure back is rested and feet are flat on the ground.
- Lift both arms; keep them outstretched in front of you at shoulder level.
- Start by bending your arms at the elbow slowing bringing your fingers toward your shoulder.
- Now slowly straighten arms from the elbow.
- Do 2 rounds
- Synchronize one round of breathing (inhale and exhale) to one round (opening and closing).
- Ensure slow pace, synchronization with breath, maximum range of movement with ease



#### 2) Shoulder rotation

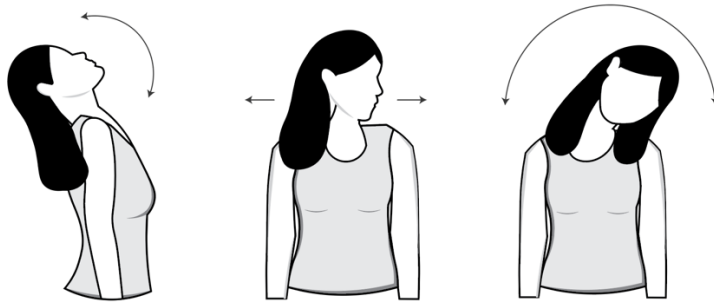
- Keep your eyes closed.
- Be seated; ensure feet are flat on the ground.
- Sit straight do not rest your back for maximum movement of the shoulders.
- Bend the arms at the elbows and place your fingers on the shoulder.
- Lift and join your elbows in front.
- While inhaling, Lift the elbows upwards and then towards the back.



*From Excessive Exercising to Yogic Vyaayaam*

- While exhaling, rotate the elbows downwards and join them in the front.
- Do 2 rounds.
- Make as big of a circle with your elbows as you can.
- While rotating, fingers should stay still on the shoulders.
- Do 2 rounds in the reverse direction
- While inhaling, take the elbows backwards and then towards the neck
- While exhaling, raise elbows above the head and join them in the front
- Ensure slow pace, synchronization with breath, maximum range of movement with ease

### 3) Neck move (Side to side; Front /Back)



- Keep your eyes open throughout this practice. Close your eyes ONLY if you are comfortable. Prepare mentally for left, right movement.
- Be seated, ensure back is rested and feet are flat on the ground.
- Slowly turn your neck to the Left while exhaling. The rest of your body remains fixed facing forward.
- Slowly turn your neck back to center while inhaling
- Turn your neck to the Right while exhaling slowly, your nose aligning with your shoulder
- Turn the neck back to the center while inhaling slowly
- Inhale and exhale once, preparing mentally for forward, backward movement
- While exhaling, bend your neck forward slowly till chin touches the chest, with a stretch at the neck.
- While inhaling, move the neck slowly back to center and then backwards until you feel the stretch in the throat.
- Slowly, while exhaling, lower your neck back to center.
- Inhale and exhale once, preparing mentally for sideways tilt
- While exhaling, slowly tilt the neck to left so that the left ear touches the left shoulder
- While inhaling, come back and tilt to the right side; keeping the shoulders still
- Feel the stretch on the left side of the neck.
- While inhaling, come back to the center

Relax on the chair, keep your hands on your thighs.

**Take 4 deep breaths.**

**Slowly inhale (*pause*). *Exhale.***

**Feel the sensations in your: your full arm, shoulders and, Neck (both sides, back and front); throat;**

## Set 4: Spine

### 1) Twist (2)

**Contraindications:**  
**Severe back pain**

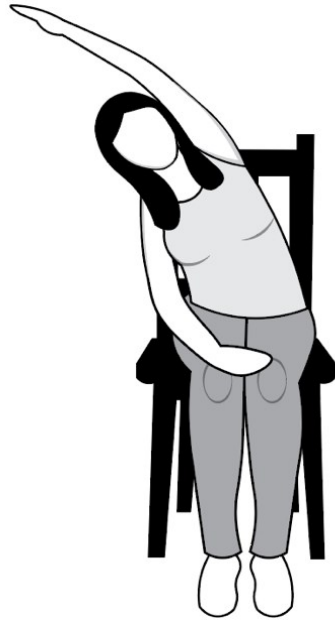
- Keep your eyes closed.
- Be seated; ensure back is rested and feet are flat on the ground.
- Hold the back rest of the chair with right hand.
- While inhaling, raise your left hand at shoulder level, palm facing downwards.
- Slowly exhale and twist your body and neck towards right side and try to hold the back rest.
- Adjust your left hand for maximum twist.
- Stay in the position for few breaths.
- While inhaling straighten the body and rest your hands on the thighs.
- Repeat from the other side.





## **2) Side bend \* (2)**

- Keep your eyes closed.
- Be seated; ensure back is rested and feet are flat on the ground.
- Hold your left thigh with your right hand for better support.
- While inhaling, raise left hand sideways parallel to the ground
- Turn palm upwards and raise hand straight up till it touches the ear.
- Exhale; bend to the right side from the waist as per your body's capacity.
- Do not lean forward or backward. Bend in the same plane.
- Inhale and come up to the center.
- Repeat on other side



### 3) Forward Bending

#### **Contraindications - Severe back pain, Vertigo**

- Keep your eyes closed.
- Be seated; ensure back is rested and feet are flat on the ground.
- Bring your hands towards the chest and interlock the fingers.
- Stretch the hands forwards, with palm facing inwards.
- While exhaling, bend forward from your lower back.
- Relax the neck and chest on your thighs.
- Stretch your hands as per your comfort, stay in the position for few breaths.
- Inhale and come up.
- Rest your hand on the thighs.



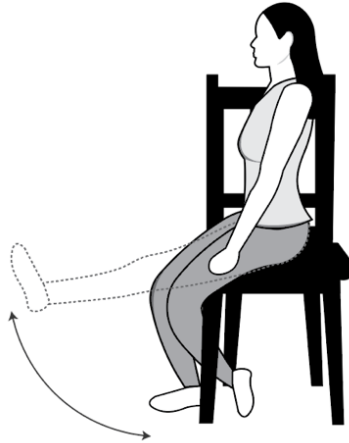
#### **4)Backward bending**

- Keep your eyes closed.
- Be seated; ensure feet are flat on the ground.
- Turn to the side and sit on one side of the chair.
- Interlock the hands behind your back, palms facing inwards.
- While Inhaling, bend your back and neck backwards.
- Stretch the hands backwards as per your comfort.
- Stay in the position for few breaths.
- While exhaling, straighten the back and neck.
- Rest your hand on the thighs.
- Relax on the chair, keep your hands on your thighs.
- **Take 4 deep breaths.**



**Slowly inhale (pause). Exhale.**  
**Feel the sensations in your neck, arms and back.**

## Set 5: Knee to Feet



### 1) Knee bend\*

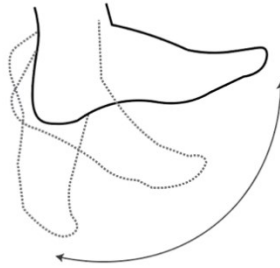
- Keep your eyes closed.
- Be seated; ensure your back is rested and feet are flat on the ground.
- Slowly raise one leg off the floor in front of you, and straighten your bent knee in front of you.
- Do 2 rounds.
- Synchronize one round of breathing (inhale and exhale) to one round (bend and open).
- Do 2 rounds on the other leg.
- Ensure slow pace, synchronization with breath, maximum range of movement with ease

## 2) Calf stretch \*

- Keep your eyes closed.
- Be seated; ensure your back is rested and feet are flat on the ground.
- You can use stool to support your legs if needed.
- Raise one foot slightly above the ground.
- From the ankle, slowly stretch your foot and toes forward, away from the body.
- Then, slowly stretch your foot and toes upwards and backwards, towards the body
- First downwards and then upwards at the same gentle pace.
- Do 2 rounds.
- Synchronize one round of breathing (inhale and exhale) to one round (forward and backward stretch).
- Lower the raised foot slowly to the ground.
- Switch sides and do 2 rounds
- Ensure slow pace, synchronization with breath, maximum range of movement with ease



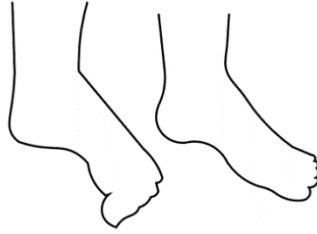
## 1) Ankle Rotation\*



- Keep your eyes closed.
- Be seated; ensure your back is rested and feet are flat on the ground.
- You can use stool to support your legs if needed.
- Raise one foot slightly above the ground.
- And rotate your leg from the ankle slowly.
- Rotate first downwards, inwards, upwards and then outwards.
- Do 2 rounds.
- Synchronize one round of breathing (inhale and exhale) to one round (rotation).
- Make as big circle with your ankle as you can.
- Now rotate your foot in the reverse direction for 2 rounds
- One inhalation corresponds to half a circle, One exhalation corresponds to the other half
- Lower the raised foot slowly to the ground.
- Do 2 rounds with the other leg.
- Ensure slow pace, synchronization with breath, maximum range of movement with ease

## 2) **Toe Bending**

- Keep your eyes closed.
- Be seated; ensure your back is rested and feet are flat on the ground.
- You can use stool to support your legs if needed.
- Raise one foot slightly above the ground.
- And squeeze your 5 toes together down & away from your body.
- Now slowly release and then pull back the toes in the opposite direction toward the body.
- Do 2 rounds
- Synchronize one round of breathing (inhale and exhale) to one round (squeeze in and open).
- Lower the raised foot slowly to the ground.
- Do 2 rounds with the other leg.
- Ensure slow pace, synchronization with breath, maximum range of movement with ease



Relax on the chair, keep your hands on your thighs.

**Take 4 deep breaths.**

**Slowly inhale (pause). Exhale.**

**Feel the sensations in your: Whole leg (Shank, thigh); ankle, knee and hip joints**

Loosening Practices  
**Group 2**

**Loosening practices are advisable and safe for most chronic ailments (except joint pain, back pain) and can be done comfortably by participants below 65 years of age. Caution is advised in case of health issues such as imbalance, giddiness, and accidents or deformities.**

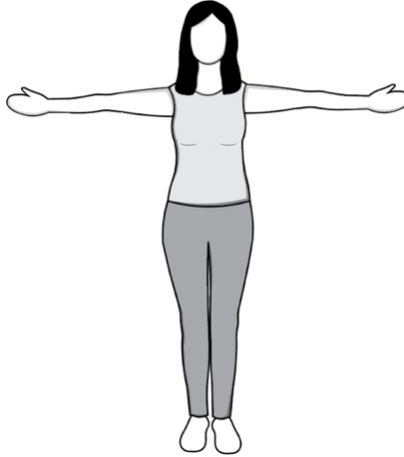
<b>LOOSENING PRACTICES</b>					
<b>Centering (Front, Back, Left, Right, Center)*</b>					
<b>STANDING</b>	<b>HANDS</b>	<b>ELBOW TO NECK</b>	<b>SPINE</b>	<b>WAIST TO KNEE</b>	<b>CALF TO FEET</b>
Arms Open/ Close	Fingers Stretch (Open/ Close)	Elbow Open/ Close	Twist	Waist Rotate	(w) Calf stretch*
Up/Down Ankle Stretch*	Wrist Rotate	Shoulder Rotate	Side bend*	Knee Rotate	(w) Ankle rotate*
Fingers lock & stretch- AUM	Palms Stretch (1)	Neck move * (1)	Front bend*	(w) Knee bend*	(w) Toe bend
Breathe – (4x)	Breathe – 4x	Breathe – 4x	Back bend	Breathe – 4x	Breathe – 4x
			Breathe – 4x		

\* Eyes open (w) Wall support needed \* and (w): Choose one or both options based on ease and balance



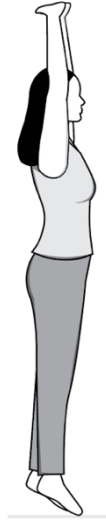
## **Set 1: Standing**

### **4) Arms open/close**



- Stand straight in Taadasan.
- Close your eyes.
- Outstretch your arms in front of you at chest level and join the palms.
- While inhaling slowly, open your hands outward at the level of the shoulder with the palms facing forward.
- Feel the stretch in your arms.
- While exhaling, slowly, bring your hands back together in front of your chest and join the palms.
- Do this 2 times.
- **\*\* And then rest in Taadaasan for 2 breaths**

### 5)Up/Down Ankle Stretch (eyes open)

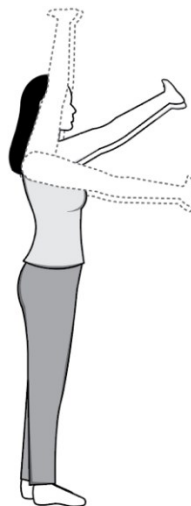


- Stand straight in Taadaasan.
- Keep your eyes closed.
- Place your palms on your thighs
- While inhaling, lift your arms overhead, Feet should be flat on the ground.
- Stretch the fingers towards the sky.
- Stretch your arms and shoulders straight; straighten your hand so that the whole body stretches.
- While exhaling slowly, bring your hands back down on your thighs.
- Do this 2 times.
- And then rest in Taadasan.

**\*\*And then rest in Taadaasan for 2 breaths**

## **6)Fingers lock and stretch – AUM**

- Stand straight in Taadaasan with your eyes closed.
- Keep your hands on the chest and interlock your fingers.
- Relax the shoulders.
- Stretch your hands in the front at your chest level (parallel to floor).
- Inhale slowly and turn the palms out, while stretching the hands away from the body
- While exhaling, bring your hands back towards the chest, while chanting the sound "Aa".
- Turn your palms towards your chest and rest them on the chest.
- Relax the hands and shoulders.
- Next, stretch your hands in front of your forehead (roughly 45-degree angle to floor).
- Take in a deep breath, and turn the palms outside, while stretching the hands out
- Breathing out slowly, bring your hands towards the chest, while chanting the sound "Uu".
- Turn your palms towards your chest and rest them on the chest.
- Relax the hands and shoulders.
- Now stretch your hands over your head (roughly 90-degree angle to floor)
- Take in a deep breath, and turn the palms outside, while stretching the hands out towards the sky/ceiling
- Breathing out slowly, bring your hands towards the chest, while humming like a bee - "Mm".
- Turn your palms towards your chest and rest them on it.
- Relax your hands and shoulders.



**\*\*And then rest in Taadaasan for 4 deep breaths**

## Set 2: Hands

### 4) Fingers Stretch



**Note: Patients with osteo arthritis should be careful while doing this. Do very gently, do not strain your fingers.**

- Sit on the chair; rest your back on the floor.
- Ensure that your feet are flat on the ground; you can keep a folded mat below your feet if your legs are not entirely touching the ground.
- Keep your eyes closed.
- Lift both arms; keep them outstretched in front of you at shoulder level.
- Slowly close your fists with your thumb inside and tightly squeeze.
- Slowly open your fists and extend each finger outward and backward toward you, as much as possible.
- Do 2 rounds
- Synchronize one round of breathing (inhale and exhale) to one round (squeeze and open).
- Ensure slow pace, synchronization with breath, maximum range of movement with ease

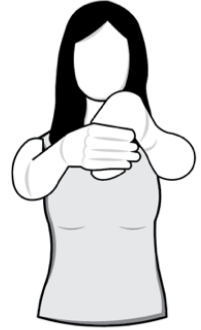
## 5)Wrist rotation



- Keep your eyes closed.
- Be seated, ensure back is rested and feet are flat on the ground.
- Lift both arms; keep them outstretched in front of you at shoulder level.
- Close your fists with your thumb inside.
- Slowly rotate your fists from the wrists,
- First inwards, then upwards, outside, downwards and then inwards
- Do 2 rounds
- Keep the part of the arms till elbows still.
- Move only the part from the elbow to the wrist.
- Make as big of the circle with your wrists as you can.
- The movement should be as slow as possible, synchronize one rotation with one breath.
- Do 2 rounds in the reverse direction.
- First outward, then upwards, inwards, downwards and again outwards.
- Synchronize one round of breathing (inhale and exhale) to one round (squeeze and open). One inhalation corresponds to half a circle, One exhalation corresponds to the other half
- Ensure slow pace, synchronization with breath, maximum range of movement with ease

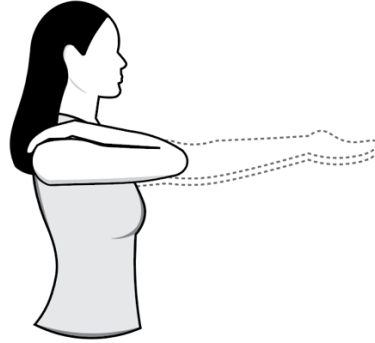
**6) Palms up/down; front/back.**

- Keep your eyes closed
- Be seated, ensure back is rested and feet are flat on the ground.
- Keep one arm outstretched in front of you at shoulder level.
- The fingers should be towards the sky and the palm facing outwards.
- With your other hand, slowly stretch your fingers inwards towards yourself hold the stretch tightly for one round of breath. Slowly release.
- Now turn the palm towards you and with your other hand slowly stretch the fingers towards you, hold the stretch tightly for one round of breath. Slowly release.
- Next, turn the wrist down so that the fingers are towards the ground and the palm is on your side.
- Slowly stretch the fingers to your side tightly
- Now turn the palm outwards and stretch the fingers tightly toward yourself, hold it for one breath. Slowly release.
- Similarly, do it with the other hand at a slow pace.
- Palm upwards facing the front, stretch
- Palm upwards facing you, stretch
- Ensure slow pace, synchronization with breath, maximum range of movement with ease
- Palm downwards facing you, stretch
- Palm downwards facing the front, stretch



## **Set 3: Elbow to Neck**

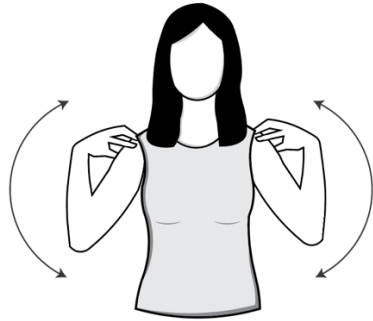
### **4) Elbow Open/close**



- Keep your eyes closed.
- Be seated, ensure back is rested and feet are flat on the ground.
- Lift both arms; keep them outstretched in front of you at shoulder level.
- Start by bending your arms at the elbow slowly bringing your fingers toward your shoulder.
- Now slowly straighten arms from the elbow.
- Do 2 rounds
- Synchronize one round of breathing (inhale and exhale) to one round (opening and closing). Ensure slow pace, synchronization with breath, maximum range of movement with ease

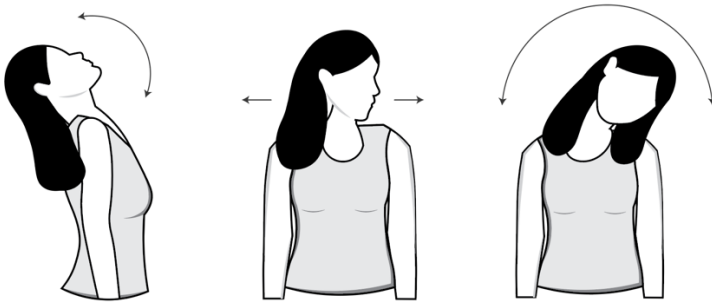
## 5) Shoulder rotation

- Keep your eyes closed.
- Be seated; ensure feet are flat on the ground.
- Sit straight do not rest your back for maximum movement of the shoulders.
- Bend the arms at the elbows and place your fingers on the shoulder.
- Lift and join your elbows in front.
- While inhaling, Lift elbows upwards, then towards the back.
- While exhaling, rotate the elbows downwards and join them in the front.
- Do 2 rounds.
- Make as big of a circle with your elbows as you can.
- While rotating, fingers should stay still on the shoulders.
- Do 2 rounds in the reverse direction
- While inhaling, take the elbows backwards and then towards the neck
- While exhaling, raise elbows above the head and join them in the front
- Ensure slow pace, synchronization with breath, maximum range of movement with ease





**6) Neck move (Side to side; Front /Back)**



- Keep your eyes open throughout this practice. Close your eyes ONLY if you are comfortable. Prepare mentally for left, right movement.
- Be seated, ensure back is rested and feet are flat on the ground.
- Slowly turn your neck to the Left while exhaling. The rest of your body remains fixed facing forward.
- Slowly turn your neck back to center while inhaling
- Turn your neck to the Right while exhaling slowly, your nose aligning with your shoulder
- Turn the neck back to the center while inhaling slowly
- Inhale and exhale once, preparing mentally for forward, backward movement
- While exhaling, bend your neck forward slowly till chin touches the chest, with a stretch at the neck.
- While inhaling, move the neck slowly back to center and then backwards until you feel the stretch in the throat.
- Slowly, while exhaling, lower your neck back to center.
- Inhale and exhale once, preparing mentally for sideways tilt
- While exhaling, slowly tilt the neck to left so that the left ear touches the left shoulder
- While inhaling, come back and tilt to the right side; keeping the shoulders still
- Feel the stretch on the left side of the neck.
- While inhaling, come back to the center

Relax on the chair, keep your hands on your thighs.

**Take 4 deep breaths.**

**Slowly inhale (*pause*). *Exhale*.**

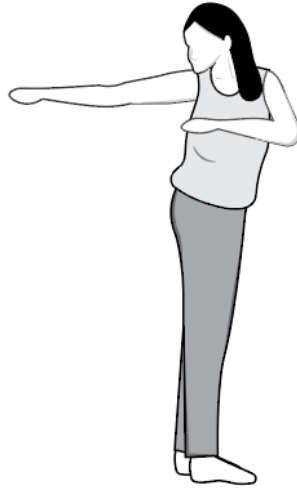
**Feel the sensations in your: your full arm, shoulders and,  
Neck (both sides, back and front); throat;**

## Set 4: Spine

### 1) Twist (2)

**Contraindications: Severe back pain**

- Keep your eyes open throughout this practice for balance. Close your eyes ONLY if you are comfortably balanced.
- Spread the legs about hip distance apart.
- While inhaling, raise the hands sideways parallel to the ground, keep the legs firm on the ground.
- Exhale, Twist to left from the waist keeping the left hand straight, bend the right hand at the elbow and bring it close to your chest.
- Simultaneously twist the neck and imagine looking at your outstretched left hand.
- Inhale and come back to the center.
- Do the reverse – while exhaling, twist to the right from your waist up to the neck, twist to the right.
- Imagine looking at your outstretched right hand
- while Inhaling, come back to the center.
- Do 2 rounds on both sides.
- Ensure slow pace, synchronization with breath, maximum range of movement with ease



## 2) Side bend \* (2)

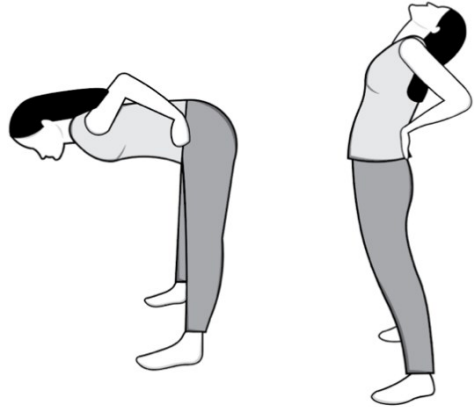


- Keep your eyes open throughout this practice for balance. Close your eyes if you are comfortably balanced.
- While inhaling, raise one hand sideways parallel to the ground
- Turn palm upwards and raise hand straight up till it touches the ear.
- Exhale; bend to the other side from the waist as per your body's capacity.
- Do not lean forward or backward. Bend in the same plane.
- Inhale and come up to the center.
- Repeat on other side.
- Do 3 times along with the breath.

### 3) Front / back bend

#### **Contraindications - Severe back pain, Vertigo**

- Keep your eyes open throughout this practice for balance. Close your eyes ONLY if you are comfortably balanced.
- Spread the legs widely, about two to three feet apart based on comfort.
- Keep your hands on the waist, palms supporting your back.
- Slowly bend backwards while inhaling
- While exhaling, slowly come up and then bend forward from your lower back as per your body's capacity.
- While inhaling come up and continue for 2 rounds
- Inhale, bend back. Exhale, bend forward from lower back
- Keep your knees straight throughout the practice.
- Ensure slow pace, synchronization with breath, maximum range of movement with ease



Relax in Shithil Tadasan – Feet apart, standing straight, Hands by your thighs and relaxed

**Take 4 deep breaths.**

**Slowly inhale (pause). Exhale.**

**Feel the sensations in your neck, arms and back**

## Set 5: Waist to Knee

### 1) Waist rotation

- Keep your eyes closed
- Spread the legs widely, about two to three feet apart based on comfort.
- Keep your hands on the waist, fingers in the front and thumb on the back to support the waist.
- Rotate from the waist making as big circle with your waist as you can.
- In a slow circular movement - move to one side, then move forward, then towards the other side and then back
- Do 2 rounds. While rotating the waist, keep your legs fixed on the ground so that knees don't bend.
- Synchronize one round of breathing (inhale and exhale) to one round (rotation).
- One inhalation corresponds to half a circle, One exhalation corresponds to the other half
- Do 2 rounds in the reverse direction
- Ensure slow pace, synchronization with breath, maximum range of movement with ease



## 2) Knee rotation

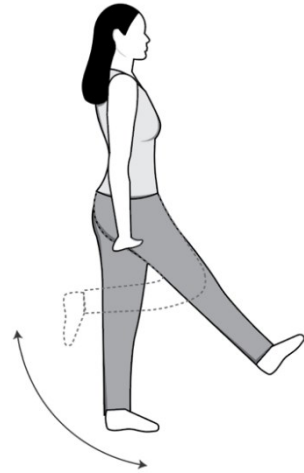
### **Contraindication: Knee pain**

- Return to a normal comfortable standing position with your feet together
- Bend forward slightly and place your hands gently on your knees
- Fix your legs firmly to the ground.
- Keep your eyes closed.
- Rotate from the knee slowly moving the knees together to one side then slowly forward, then towards the other side and then back in a slow circular movement.
- Do 2 rounds
- Synchronize one round of breathing (inhale and exhale) to one round (rotation).
- One inhalation corresponds to half a circle, One exhalation corresponds to the other half
- Do 2 rounds in the reverse direction
- Ensure slow pace, synchronization with breath, maximum range of movement with ease



### 3) Knee bend

- For the knee bend, Keep your hands on your waist as before
- Keep your eyes open and fixed at a point in front of you. Take support of the wall with one hand (if needed)
- Slowly raise one leg off the floor in front of you while consciously fixing the other leg firmly to the ground.
- Slowly extend and straighten your bent knee in front of you.
- Do 2 rounds.
- Synchronize one round of breathing (inhale and exhale) to one round (bend and open).
- Before, changing legs remember to keep your eyes open and fixed on a point in front of you.
- Do 2 rounds on the other leg.
- Ensure slow pace, synchronization with breath, maximum range of movement with ease



Relax in Shithil Tadasan – Feet apart, standing straight, Hands by your thighs and relaxed

**Take 4 deep breaths.**

**Slowly inhale (pause). Exhale.**

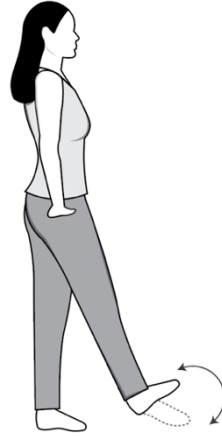
**Feel the sensation in your: Waist & Whole Legs especially the knees.**



## **Set 6: Calf to Feet**

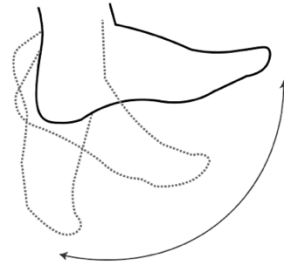
### **1) Calf stretch \***

- Hands on the waist
- Keep your eyes open and fixed at a point in front of you. Take support of the wall with one hand (if needed)
- Raise one foot slightly above the ground.
- From the ankle, slowly stretch your foot and toes forward, away from the body.
- Then, slowly stretch your foot and toes upwards and backwards, towards the body
- First downwards and then upwards at the same gentle pace.
- Do 2 rounds.
- Synchronize one round of breathing (inhale and exhale) to one round (forward and backward stretch).
- Lower the raised foot slowly to the ground.
- Switch sides and do 2 rounds
- Ensure slow pace, synchronization with breath, maximum range of movement with ease



## 2) Ankle Rotation\*

- Keep your eyes open and fixed at a point in front of you. Take support of the wall with one hand (if needed)
- Raise one foot slightly above the ground.
- And rotate your leg from the ankle slowly.
- Rotate first downwards, inwards, upwards and then outwards.
- Do 2 rounds.
- Synchronize one round of breathing (inhale and exhale) to one round (rotation).
- Make as big circle with your ankle as you can.
- Lower leg slowly to the ground.
- Now rotate your foot in the reverse direction for 2 rounds
- One inhalation corresponds to half a circle, One exhalation corresponds to the other half
- Lower the raised foot slowly to the ground.
- Switch sides and do 2 rounds
- Ensure slow pace, synchronization with breath, maximum range of movement with ease



### 3) Toe Bending

- Take support of the wall with one hand (if needed)
- Keep your eyes closed.
- Now breathing in, raise one foot slightly above the ground.
- And squeeze your 5 toes together down & away from your body.
- Now slowly release and then pull back the toes in the opposite direction toward the body.
- Do 2 rounds
- Synchronize one round of breathing (inhale and exhale) to one round (squeeze in and open).
- Lower the raised foot slowly to the ground.
- Switch sides and do 2 rounds
- Ensure slow pace, synchronization with breath, maximum range of movement with ease



Relax in Shithil Tadasan – Feet apart, standing straight, Hands by your thighs and relaxed

**Take 4 deep breaths.**

**Slowly inhale (pause). Exhale.**

**Feel the sensation in your whole leg, calf, ankle, feet and toe**

## **Chapter 4**

# **Yog Aasan**

### **Importance**

Yog-Aasan are one of the eight limbs of Patanjali's Ashtaanga Yog, and hence a vital, powerful tool

## **Yog is NOT Aasan alone!**

The word Aasan literally means a sitting position, or, in a broader sense, posture.

Our body can take innumerable postures. Among these, certain postures have been identified as “yog aasan” or yogaasan. These are postures that can take us on to a higher dimension or higher perception of life, and to a state of internal harmony, i.e. Yog in our body, mind and breath.

Yogaasans can be used to sit for extended periods of time (as in meditation) or a series of positions. A team created by the Government of India, as of 2010, had identified 900 Aasans from 35 ancient texts. Of these 84 are understood to be classical Aasans.

However, of the 195 verses in Patanjali's Yog Sutras, only 3 are dedicated to Aasan. Thus, we can see that while Aasan is an important tool in Yog, it is one of the many! One might wonder how Patanjali's Yog sutras captured them all in 3 verses! Let us read the actual verses:

**स्थिर सुखं आसनं**

**Sthir Sukham Aasanam**

***An Aasan is steady and comfortable***

स्थिर/Sthir = stable/steady/still;

सुखं/Sukham = state of ease/comfortable

**प्रयत्नशैथिल्य अनंतसमापत्तिभ्यां**

**Prayatn Shaithilya Anant Samapatti**

***Let go of the effort and merge with the infinite***

प्रयत्न/Prayatr = Effort;

शैथिल्य/Shaitilya = Let go / Release / Relax;

अनंत/Anant = Infinity;

समापत्तिभ्यां/Samaapattibhyaam = Unite / Merge / Connect

**The beauty of these verses is that we can apply them in the narrowest, and in the widest sense:**

- **Narrowest interpretation:** While performing an Aasan, our body should be steady and at ease. Initially, there will be some stretch, but the final posture, we should let go of all effort and see our body as merged with the space around us. This means that our body is sthir, i.e. not paining or shaking or trembling.
- **Broader interpretation:** While performing an Aasan, all our Koshas, should be in the above state – our body, breath, mind. When we perform asanas this way, we will notice that we reach a very different state.
  - Our breath should be steady, at ease and effortless. If in the final posture, we are panting heavily or needing to breathe through our mouth, we are extending ourselves beyond our capacity.
  - Our mind should be steady, at ease, relaxed, and connected with the universal consciousness. While performing an Aasan, we do not strain our mind, focus it on the posture, in a state of ease.
- **Broadest interpretation:** Not just while performing an Aasan, but in life itself we are in the state above - whether we are engaged in action or rest, flowing or still, speaking or silent. **We live our life with stillness (steadiness), joy (comfort), ease (effortless), connection (merger) – whether dealing with the world outside or inside.**



ततो द्वन्द्वानभिघातः  
**Tato dvandvaanabhigātaḥ**  
**This results in a victory over duality of life**

ततः/tataḥ = from that (from the mastery of posture)  
द्वंद्व/dvaṅdva = pairs of opposites; dualities; dichotomies of life (e.g. wanting and not wanting; birth and death; happiness and sorrow);  
अनभिघातः/anabhigātaḥ = freedom from attack; victory; mastery  
अन/an = not + अभिघातः/abhigātaḥ = attack; defeat

**Hence, Patanjali Yog Sutras have not outlined each Aasan mechanically, but the most important principles to keep in mind while performing any of the 84 or 900 + Aasans!** Even if we apply the interpretation in the narrowest sense, the physical act of performing an Aasan becomes much more than an exercise. It becomes a slow motion, like dance, leading from one posture to another posture. It becomes meditation in motion.

**Specific enablers for effectiveness**

All guidelines for effective Yogic practices apply to Yog Aasan. Some important ones to be kept in mind, which are different from loosening practices:

- **Stay in the final posture for a few breaths. Important to remember that we hold the posture, NOT breath!**
- **Do on Empty stomach**
  - 3-4 hours after lunch (with grains)
  - 2 hours after fruits and salad or vegetables (without cereals)
  - 30 minutes after more than 1 glass of liquids
- **Do NOT perform during periods**

An Aasan is a very potent tool for our inner well-being. Just like a correctly performed Aasan can yield innumerable benefits,



incorrect practice can also create health issues! We need to be aware of which Aasan is suitable for the current state of our body, and which is not. Following key points/precautions and not doing a contra-indicated Aasan takes care of our safety.

However, let us not become a slave to this information! When some “yoga experts” guide us through asanas, they keep mentioning all the diseases and keep saying “this will cure”. We do not think that it is such a good practice. Of course this knowledge is there that this particular asana will cure this particular disease. But when we are doing the asana there is no need to take in all that information. When we are feeding in the computer, the supercomputer - our brain, in addition to talking about the posture; we are feeding in those diseases too. During the practice, we just be in that posture and not think about it's benefits. Health and reversal of diseases will be a natural outcome, not something we will need to actively work towards! Every posture should be Sthira sukha āsanam - stable, comfortable and pleasurable. Every asana has to be done with stability and comfort. So, initially stretch little more than you can and relax.

***The knowledge of what asanas cure what disease should be separate from the practice of the asana itself.***



### Reflection

Based on the above, what changes do you need to make to your Aasan practice?



## Key Points

- Patanjali Yog Sutras have not outlined each Aasan mechanically, but the most important principles to keep in mind while performing any of the 84 / 900 + Aasans!
  - स्थिरसुखंआसनं / Sthir Sukham Aasanam = An Aasan is steady and comfortable
  - प्रयत्नशैथिल्यअनंतसमपत्तिभ्यां / Prayatn Shaithilya Anant Samapatti = Let go of the effort and merge with the infinite
  - ततोद्वद्द्वानभिघातः / Tato dvandavnabhigatah = Freedom from the dualities of the mind.
  
- **Interpretations of verses on Aasan:**
  - Our body should be steady and at ease. Initially, there will be some stretch, but the final posture, we should let go of all effort and see our body as merged with the space around us. This means that our body is sthir, i.e. not painful or shaking or trembling.
  - If in the final posture, we are panting heavily or needing to breathe through our mouth, we are extending ourselves beyond our capacity.
  - While performing an Aasan, we do not strain our mind, focus it on the posture, in a state of ease.
  - We live our life with stillness (steadiness), joy (comfort), ease (effortless), connection (merger) – whether dealing with the world outside or inside.
  
- **Specific enablers for effectiveness** - All guidelines for effective Yogic practices apply to Yog Aasan. Some important ones to be kept in mind, which are different from loosening practices:
  - Stay in the final posture for a few breaths. Important to remember that we hold the posture, NOT breath!
  - Do on Empty stomach
    - 3-4 hours after lunch (with grains)

- 2 hours after fruits and salad or vegetables (without cereals)
- 30 minutes after more than 1 glass of liquids
- Do NOT perform during periods
- Just like a correctly performed Aasan can yield innumerable benefits, incorrect practice can also create health issues! Following key points/precautions and not doing a contra-indicated Aasan takes care of our safety.
- During the practice, we just be in that posture and not think about it's benefits. Health and reversal of diseases will be a natural outcome, not something we will need to actively work towards!

**Generic step-wise teaching technique for Aasan –  
15 min per practice**

#	Step	What instructor does	Purpose for participants	Expected time (min)
1	Introduction & Demo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State name of Aaasan and reason</li> <li>• Show video till Aasan</li> </ul>	Prepare for what is coming and get an overview of what to do	3
2	Explanation	Pause video, read out (a) Benefits (b) limitations / contra-indications (c) key points and	To note if their condition allows them to do the practice, and understand Aasan in depth	2
3	Visualization	Ask participants to close their eyes and mentally imagine themselves doing the practice	Internalized in memory in a powerful manner	0.5
4	Trial practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask participants with contra-indications to only observe</li> <li>• Ask participants to practice with video on. Sit and note common mistakes being made</li> </ul>	Try for themselves and see challenges faced, which can be asked as a question	2.5

4	Deeper understanding – practical & theoretical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share common mistakes and their corrections.</li> <li>• Answer any questions from participants</li> <li>• Explain any modifications for those who are unable to practice</li> </ul>	Common mistakes get corrected and questions get answered.	3
5	Re-demo	Participants observe again through video till Aasan	Clearer idea of what to do	2.5
6	Silent, Correct practice	Ask participants to practice again without any help from video, move around making corrections	Confidence of being able to do well, with personal support	1.5

## Which practices are suitable for me?

Before starting the yog aasan it is very important to know which aasan are suitable for you. Read the contraindications given in the table and note down practices that you can follow based on your health.

Tick against the practice which you can do and cross against the ones that are contraindicated for you based on your health.

Type of aasan	Aasan	Contraindications	Tick/ cross
Sitting	Tiger Breath (Marjarasan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severe back pain</li> <li>• Knee or hip injury</li> </ul>	
	Shashank aasan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vertigo</li> <li>• slipped disc</li> <li>• high blood pressure, and heart-related problems.</li> </ul>	
	Bhadra aasan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knee injury</li> <li>• Hip joint (hip) injury</li> <li>• Ankle injuries</li> </ul>	
	Vakra aasan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unhealed surgery of the stomach</li> </ul>	
Prone	Bhujang aasan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hernia</li> <li>• Back injuries</li> <li>• Carpal tunnel syndrome</li> <li>• Pregnancy</li> <li>• Recent abdominal surgery</li> <li>• Cervical spondylitis</li> </ul>	

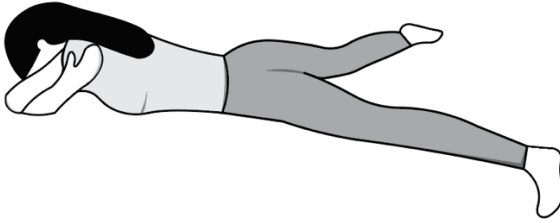
	Shalabh aasan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pregnant women</li> <li>• Abdominal surgery</li> <li>• Headache or Migraine</li> <li>• Spinal cord injury</li> <li>• Diabetes</li> <li>• Heart disorder</li> </ul>	
	Nauk aasan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asthma</li> <li>• Headache</li> <li>• Abdominal surgery</li> <li>• Pregnant</li> <li>• Heart disorder</li> <li>• Insomnia</li> </ul>	
Supine	Pavan Mukta aasan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anyone with an Abdominal surgery</li> <li>• Hernia</li> <li>• Haemorrhoids</li> <li>• Pregnant women</li> </ul>	
	Dorsal stretch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asthma or breathing problem</li> <li>• Abdominal surgery</li> <li>• Pregnant woman</li> <li>• Neck pain</li> <li>• Spinal problems</li> </ul>	
	Setubandh aasan	Patients with Knee Pain.	
	Crossed legs	Everyone can do it.	

List down practices prescribed for you below:

<b>Aasan (3 sets x 3 practices per set) – 10 minutes</b>		
Note: Transition from breathing to Aasan based on health, practice		
<p>Relax at Sthitil Dandaasan – 2 breaths</p> <p><b>SITTING</b></p> <p><b>Tiger breath (Marjarasan)</b> Relax at Vajraasan</p> <p><b>Shashaank Aasan</b> Relax at Vajraasan</p> <p><b>Bhadr Aasan</b> Relax at Sthitil Dandaasan</p> <p><b>Vakra Aasan</b> Relax at Sthitil Dandaasan – 2 breaths</p>	<p>Relax at Shithil Makraasan – 2 breaths</p> <p><b>PRONE</b></p> <p><b>Bhujang Aasan</b> Relax at Shithil Makraasan</p> <p><b>Shalabh Aasan</b> Relax at Shithil Makraasan</p> <p><b>Nauk Aasan</b> Relax at Shithil Makraasan – 2 breaths</p>	<p>Relax at Shavaasan – 2 breaths</p> <p><b>SUPINE</b></p> <p>Pavan Mukta aasan Relax at Shavaasan</p> <p><b>Dorsal Stretch</b> Relax at Shavaasan</p> <p><b>Setubandh Aasan</b> Relax at Shavaasan</p> <p><b>Crossed Legs</b> (simplified Supta Matseyndr Aasan) Twist Relax at Shavaasan – 2 breaths</p>

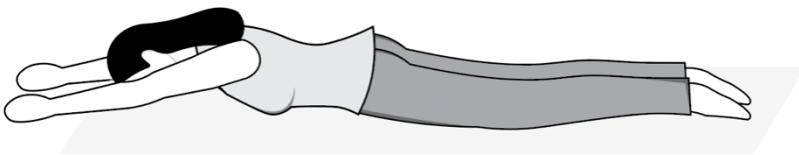


## **Prone Relaxation – Makraasan Shithil**



- Lie on your stomach by turning around from shavaasan, taking support of your arms
- Spread out your legs, with heels facing each other.
- Toes pointed outwards
- Adjust the distance between your legs according to your comfort.
- Fold your hands one by one.
- Place the left hand on right shoulder, right hand on left shoulder.
- Place your chin on the cross made with both hands.
- You can also bend and rest your head on one side, if needed.

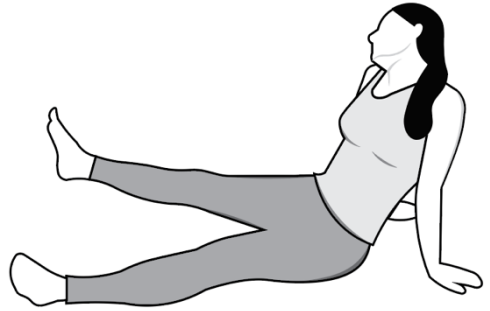
## **Prone Aasan Readiness - Makraasan Sthiti**



- Join your legs.
- Soles towards the roof, toes pointing downwards, away from body.
- Stretch hands above head.
- Forehead should be on the ground.

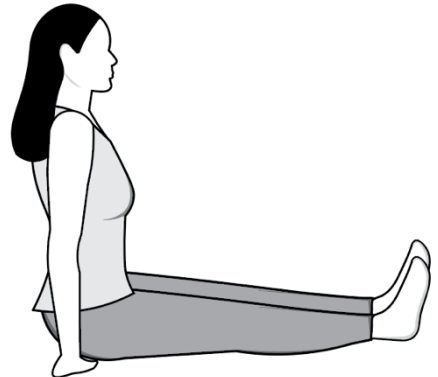
## Sitting Relaxation – Dandaasan Shithil

- Sit on a mat with your legs stretched out in front
- Move the hands back, fingers facing backwards
- Relax the back, tilting it backwards slightly so that it can relax
- Keep a comfortable gap between your legs and adjust your body for ease
- To get maximum comfort, keep at least a shoulder-width gap between your hands. Move your arms back and forth until you find the ideal position where your back and upper body is relaxed
- Relax the neck as well - you can keep it straight or keep it back or you can relax it on any side by resting on the shoulder.

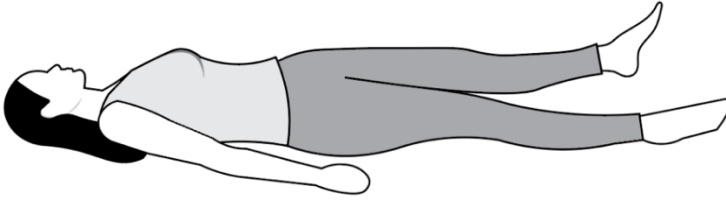


## Sitting Aasan Readiness – Dandaasan Sthiti

- Keep your feet and legs stretched out in front
- Keep the hands on the side of the hips, fingers towards the front
- Keep your back and neck straight
- In the final position, keep the neck and back in a straight line



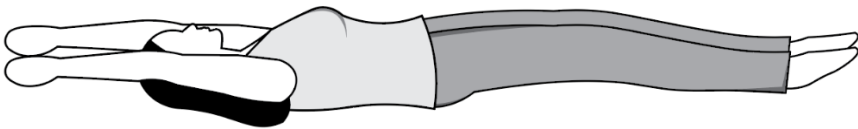
## **Shavaasan: “shav” means dead body**



### **Supine Relaxation – Shavaasan Shithil**

- Tilt the body one side to get into the position of shavaasan.
- With the help of elbow and keeping the other hand in front of the chest, bring the body down slowly.
- Lie on your back.
- Spread the legs and keep a gap in the middle so that you can relax.
- Ankle inwards and feet fingers outwards.
- Hands should be slightly away from the body, palms towards the ceiling
- Relax all the body parts slowly and let the whole weight of the body fall on the ground.

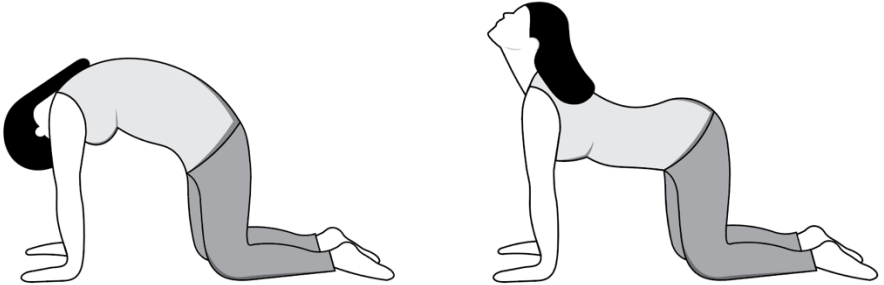
### **Supine Aasan Readiness - Shavaasan Sthiti**



- Join both legs to get into position.
- Move both hands above the head.

## Sitting Aasan

### Tiger breath (Marjarasan)



Marjarasan	'Marj' means cat
Reason for name	The final position is like a tigers/cat's pose
Starting Position	Dand Aasan

#### Getting into the Aasan:

- Close your eyes.
- Lean forward and place the hands flat on the floor in line with the shoulders with finger pointing forwards.
- Arms, thighs and feet should be shoulder width apart. Arms and thighs perpendicular to the floor.
- Do not move forward or backward keep your and keep your arms straight.
- While inhaling raise the head and look at the ceiling, and depress the lower back downwards.
- While exhaling arch the spine upwards, pull the stomach in, bend the head downwards bringing the chin towards the chest

#### In the final Aasan position:

- Hold both the poses for few breaths.
- The hands and knees should be stable in the table top position, shouldn't move forward or backward.

- The elbows should be straight through out.

**To leave the posture:**

- Come back to vajrasan
- Release one leg at a time and come out of vajrasan
- Relax in Dand Aasan.

**Benefits**

- Chest expansion very beneficial for asthma
- Stretches the muscles and relieves back and neck pain
- Improves blood circulation
- Reduces discomfort during periods
- Helps curb frequent headache

**Who cannot do this? (Contra-indications)**

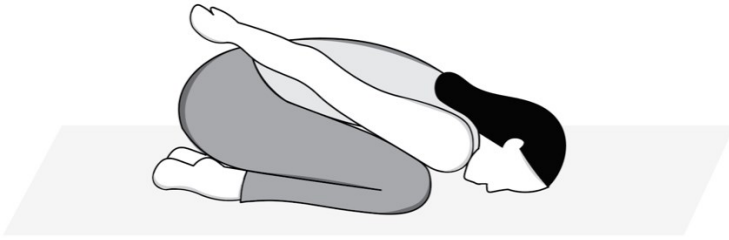
- Severe back pain
- Knee or hip injury



**Key points**

1. Arms, thighs and feet should be shoulder width apart. Arms and thighs perpendicular to the floor.
2. Do not move forward or backward keep your and keep your arms straight.
3. While inhaling raise the head and look at the ceiling, and depress the lower back downwards.
4. While exhaling arch the spine upwards, pull the stomach in, bend the head downwards bringing the chin towards the chest
5. Hold both the poses for few breaths.

## Shasank aasan



Meaning	'shash' means 'hare' and 'ank' means 'lap'.
Reason for name	The final position looks like a Hare resting
Starting Position	Dand Aasan

### Getting into the Aasan:

- Sit comfortably in Vajrasana and keep your palms on your thighs.
- Hold the right wrist with the left hand
- Now exhale and bend forward.
- Try to touch your forehead to the ground.

### In the final Aasan position:

- Keep your elbows and shoulders relaxed and loosely hanging towards the ground.
- Stay in this position as long as possible while breathing continuously.

### To leave the posture:

- Then slowly inhale and raise up head first, then shoulders, then chest and lastly the abdomen
- Release both hands and place them on the thighs
- Release one leg at a time and come out of vajrasan
- Relax in sitting position.

## **Benefits**

- Relaxing posture.
- Tones the pelvic muscles.
- Stimulates the abdomen organs.
- Massages the abdominal muscles.
- Can help in sexual disorders.
- Gives a good relaxing stretch to the spine.
- Practicing this pose helps improve the circulation of blood to the scalp, face, and brain.
- It gives a nice glow to the face.
- This pose helps in regulating the adrenal glands.
- The stomach, spleen and liver are also activated, thus helping in their functioning.
- The Hare Pose is also beneficial to the reproductive organs.
- Refreshes the brain and relieves depression, insomnia, and mental fatigue.
- It improves concentration and memory.
- Relaxes the nervous system.
- It helps reduce emotional instability and anger

## **Who cannot do this? (Contra-indications)**

- Vertigo
- Slipped disc
- High blood pressure, and heart-related problems.



### **Key points**

1. Exhale and bend forward.
2. When you are coming out of the pose, you should always end with a slow inhalation as it can cause lightheadedness.
3. Keep your elbows and shoulders relaxed in final position.

## Bhadr Aasan / Bhadr Kon Aasan



Meaning	Bhadr means tied. Kon means angle.
Reason for name	The legs are bent to make the angle
Starting Position	Dand Aasan

### Getting into the Aasan:

- Come to Dand Aasan position.
- Bend the knees slowly.
- Pull the soles of your feet together and pull them towards you.
- Pull your feet as close as you can, without discomfort.
- Slowly release the knees towards the floor so that they are relaxed.
- And let the knees fall into contact with the floor.
- Hold the toes with hands and interlock your fingers.
- Keep the back and stomach straight.
- The neck is also straight.
- Eyes closed.

### Step 1: Knee Movement

- Move the knees up and down slowly.
- Let the knees rise above and go down as much as possible.



- Instead of putting greater focus on fast speeding, focus on the movement, i.e. less speeding and a higher degree of movement.
- Do this 5 times.
- Keep in mind - the back is straight and the front of the neck, the back and neck are in a straight line.
- Stay.

### **Step 2: Put and release pressure on the knee**

- Place hands on both the knees and put pressure on the knees, pushing them towards the floor.
- Then release the thrust.
- Do this 5 times, slowly.
- Doing this will gradually increase the flexibility of the body.
- This was the preparation of posture.

### **Step 3 (Aasan):**

- Adjust the position back to the posture.
- Take the legs towards the body.
- Keep hands interlocked.
- Bring the knees to the ground.
- Keep the back and neck straight.
- Stay in this posture for 1 to 5 minutes, with normal breathing

### **Step 4: Relax the legs**

- Open the lock of hands to get out of the asana and hold the knees.
- While getting up slowly, bring the knees towards chest.
- Keep feet together.
- Relax your joints by keeping the head straight or on the knees.
- After resting, open the legs and let them be back in front, as in Dand Aasan
- Relax in Dand Aasan.

**Benefits of this posture:**

**Stretches in these muscles**

- Internal parts of thighs
- Knee muscles
- Flat feet [feet]

**Many benefits for women**

- Reduces discomfort during periods
- Eases transition into menopause
- Infertility
- Pregnancy

**Help in other diseases**

- Mild depression, anxiety and fatigue
- Hypertension (BP)
- Asthma

**Who cannot do this? (Contra-indications)**

- Knee injury
- Hip joint (hip) injury
- Ankle injuries



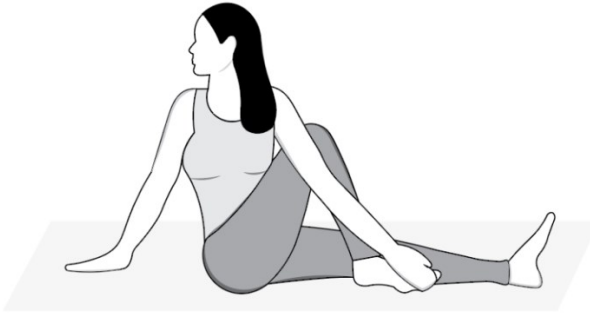
**Key Points**

1. Keep eyes closed.
2. Keep breathing normally while doing this Aasan.
3. First, move the knees
4. Then put and release pressure at the knee
5. Stay in the Aasan Posture
6. Hold the toes with the hands and keep them locked.
7. The back and stomach are in the straight line
8. The neck is also straight on the front side.
9. Collapsing the legs together, relax.

**Note:** Bring legs as close to the body as you can, without discomfort. Keep the soles of the feet together. Leave the knees on the floor and try to get the in touch with the floor.

**Special tips:** Patients suffering from sciatica should practice this asana by sitting on a pillow. Continuous practice of this is good till the end of pregnancy. If there is a knee injury, do the Aasan by placing blankets under the outer thighs.

## Vakra Aasan



Meaning	Vakr means twist
Reason for name	In the final position, the portion of the body above the way is twisted
Starting Position	Dand-Aasan

### Getting into the Aasan:

- Bend one leg in the knee.
- Keep the soles of the bent leg next to the knee of the other leg.
- Move the arm of the same side as the leg that is bent. Move the hand behind the back, fingers facing away from the body.
- Support the body weight on that hand.
- Raise the other arm while breathing in.
- Twist the body while exhaling, move the arm to the outside of the bent knee and try to touch the fingers of that leg.

### In the final position

- Keep the back straight
- Move the neck back, towards the hand supporting the body from the back. Look back over the shoulder
- Shoulders should be in a straight line
- The leg which is not bent is completely relaxed
- Stay in the position for a few moments, while breathing normally

### **To come out of the Aasan**

- Breathe in and bringing back the crossed arm. Straighten your neck and shoulders simultaneously.
- Then release the hand behind you and bring it next to the thigh.
- Straighten out the leg and come to Sthiti
- Repeat the same from the other side.

### **Benefits**

#### **Getting into the Aasan**

- Spine / Back
- Hip joint

#### **Impacts the stomach region**

- Reduces fat around the waist
- Strengthens muscles
- Helpful for digestive issues (such as constipation)
- Supportive in diabetes
- Activates chakras in the region
- Improvement in lung capacity

#### **Who cannot do this? (Contra-indications)**

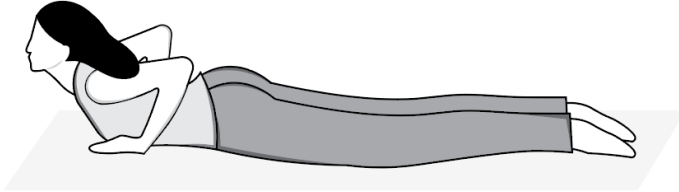
Unhealed surgery of the stomach



#### **Key Points**

1. Keep eyes closed
2. Raise the other hand while breathing, twist body while breathing out. To bring back the crossed arm, inhale and raise arm while straightening the neck and shoulders
3. Keep the back straight
4. Neck should be bent in the same direction as the leg which is twisted, looking back over the shoulder
5. Shoulders in a straight line
6. The leg which is not bent is completely relaxed

## Prone Aasan Bhujang Aasan



Meaning	Bhujang means snake
Reason for name	The body in the final position looks like a cobra raising its hood and is ready to attack
Starting Position	Makr Aasan

### Getting into the Aasan:

- Fold the arm with elbow and keep the palm at the level of the chest.
- Keep the elbows close to the body.
- Keep feet together and fingers facing back.
- Gently lift your head and shoulders while inhaling and tilt the neck back.

### In the final Aasan position:

- Do not lift the lower body part from the chest to the ground.
- Keep your palm on the floor to ensure that your weight is not on the hands.
- In this position, stay for a few moments with normal breathing.

### To leave the Aasan:

- Lean the shoulders down slowly while exhaling, then your chin, nose and finally, place the forehead on the floor.
- And rest in Makr Aasan.

### Variation # 2 - In the final Aasan position:

- While inhaling, slowly raise your head, shoulders and this time, chest; tilt your neck backwards.
- Do not lift the lower body part from the ground.
- Your weight will remain on hands.
- Stay in this position for some time while breathing normally.

**To leave the posture:**

- Lean the shoulders down slowly by breathing, then your chin, nose and finally, place the forehead on the floor.
- And rest in Makr Aasan.

**Benefits of this Aasan:**

**Stretch in these parts**

- Lungs
- Shoulder
- Chest
- Stomach
- Spinal cord

**Activation and Energization**

- Digestion
- Breeding
- Urine
- Metabolism

**Help in other problems**

- Lowers abdominal fat
- Helps in Lung problem

**Who cannot do? (Contra-Indications)**

- Hernia
- Back injuries
- Carpal tunnel syndrome

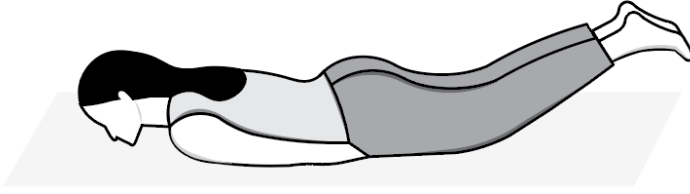
- Pregnancy
- Recent abdominal surgery
- Cervical spondylitis

 **Key Points**

1. Keep eyes closed.
2. Breathe in, raise your head, shoulders. Tilt the neck back too.
3. Keep the elbows close to the body.
4. In Variation # 1 - Do not lift the lower body from the ground. To check that your weight is not on the hands, try lifting the palm from the ground.
5. Lower the shoulders while exhaling slowly. Bring your chin, nose and the forehead on the ground.



## Shalabhasan



Meaning	A locust is called Shalabh in Sanskrit.
Reason for name	Our body looks like a locust in the final position
Starting Position:	Makr Aasan

### Getting into the Aasan:

- Keep the eyes closed.
- Keep chin on the floor
- Make fists with both palms and keep them under both thighs
- Inhale, raise one leg, without bending the knee

### In the final Aasan position:

- Toes of raised legs should be away from body, at the back side.
- Raised leg should be straight.
- Support thighs from the fists.
- Keep chin stable on the ground.
- Stay in this position while normally breathing.

### To leave the Aasan:

- Take your leg down slowly while breathing out.
- Similarly do posture with the other leg.
- Then do this posture by raising both legs together.

### Benefits of this Aasan:

#### Supports in these problems

- Back pain
- Sciatic pain

- Spinal cord (spondylitis)
- Kidney disorders
- Thyroid
- Reduces fat
- Stomach
- Waist
- Hips

### **Stretching in the muscles and the strengthening of the joints**

- Hips
- Thigh
- Legs
- Lower abdomen
- Diaphragm

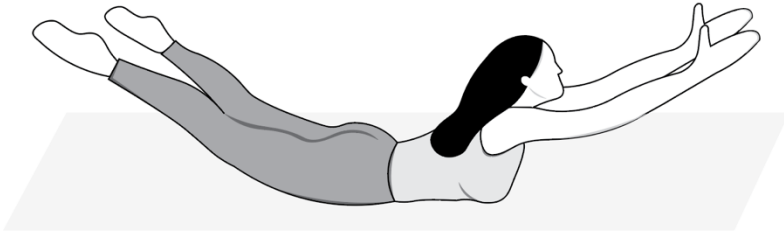
### **Who does not have to (Contraindications?)**

- Pregnant women
- Abdominal surgery
- Headache or Migraine
- Spinal cord injury
- Diabetes
- Heart disorder



1. Keep eyes closed.
2. Keep chin on the floor
3. Make fist and keep under both thighs
4. Raised toes should be away from body.
5. Toes of raised legs should be away from body, at the back side.
6. Breathing in, lift the leg up. Lower your legs slowly while exhaling.

## **Nauk aasan (Boat pose)**



### **Getting into the aasan:**

- Keep the eyes closed.
- Keep chin firmly on the floor. Keep feet together and fingers facing back.
- Extend both arms forward and above the head. Elbows straight. Stretch the body.
- While inhaling, slowly raise off the ground the palms, elbows, chin followed by the chest and raise the legs, thighs up.

### **In the final Aasan position:**

- The legs, thighs, chest and hand and head should be held above the ground for few breaths.
- Balance the weight on your stomach.
- Ensure knees and elbows are straight and stretched.

### **To leave the Aasan:**

- While exhaling, slowly come bring your legs and hands down.
- Rest in makraasan for few breaths.

### **Benefits of this Aasan:**

- Stretches and Strengthens muscles
- Back
- Shoulders

- Chest
- Legs
- Abdomen

**Who cannot do? (Contra-indications)**

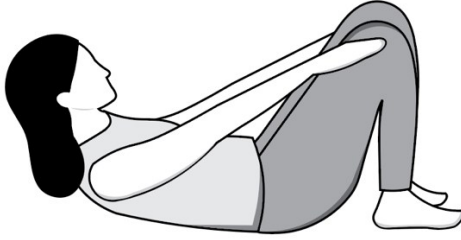
- Asthma
- Headache
- Abdominal surgery
- Pregnant
- Heart disorder
- Insomnia



**Key Points**

1. Inhale and raise both the arms and legs together.
2. The legs, thighs, chest and hand and head should be held above the ground for few breaths.
3. Balance the weight on your stomach.
4. Ensure knees and elbows are straight and stretched.
5. While exhaling, slowly come bring your legs and hands down.

## Supine Asana Dorsal Stretch



Meaning	Dorsal is related to upper side or upper back
Reason for the name	While doing this, the upper and back parts of the body are manipulated.
Starting Position	Shav Aasan

### Getting into the aasan:

- Bend the legs at the knees and bring them to the butt (hip), the soles remain on the ground.
- Now exhale, bring the hands up.
- And with that raise your shoulders and head from the ground as well.
- Hold up hands, head and shoulders together.

### In the final Aasan position:

- The hands are on the side of the knees.
- Stay in this posture with normal breathing as long it is comfortable.
- Feel the changes that occur in the body.

### To leave the Aasan:

- Breathing in, bring back the hands and keep the shoulders and head on the ground.

- Relax in Shav Aasan.

**Benefits of this Aasan:**

**Stretches in these muscles**

- Shoulder
- Spine
- Stomach (toning)

**Activation and energization**

- Kidney
- Liver

**Help in other diseases**

- Constipation
- Stress
- Fatigue

**Who cannot do? (Contra-indications)**

- Asthma or breathing problem
- Abdominal surgery
- Pregnant woman
- Neck pain
- Spinal problems

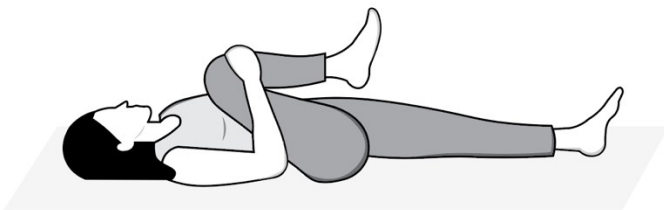


**Key Points**

1. Keep eyes closed.
2. While exhaling, bring the hands up. While inhaling, bring back the hands, shoulders and head to the ground.
3. Move arms, head and shoulders together.
4. In the final position of the Aasan,
5. The hands should be on the side of the knees.
6. Stay in this posture with normal breathing until it is comfortable.

**Note:** Feel the changes that occur in the body.

## Pavan Mukh Aasan



Meaning	Pavan means air, Mukh means to leave
Reason for the name	When you do this, the air in the body gets released
Starting Position	Shav Aasan

### Getting into the Aasan:

- Breathing, raise one leg straight up.
- While exhaling, bend the same leg in the knee and hold it with both your hands and bring closer to your chest.

### In the final Aasan position:

- The other leg should be stable and comfortable on the ground.
- Keep head on the ground.
- Stay in this position for a while, while breathing normally.
- Feel the changes happening in your back.

### To leave the Aasan:

- Breathe in and release both hands.
- Straighten the leg.
- Keep the leg on the ground while breathing out slowly.
- Come to Shav Aasan and repeat the same posture with the other leg.

### To do this Aasan with both legs

- Come to the starting position.
- Fold both legs from the knees.

- With the help of hands, pull the legs towards the chest.
- In this aasan, keep breathing normally as long as comfortable.
- While doing both legs, raise legs while keeping them folded at the knees.
- To exit the Aasan, while exhaling, bring the feet on the ground.
- Come into Shav Aasan.

**Benefits of this posture:**

**Stretches in these muscles**

- Neck
- Back
- Belly
- Spine

**Improvement in digestive system**

- release of stranded air
- improvement in blood circulation
- relief from constipation

**Benefits for women**

- infertility
- Stretch in pelvic muscles
- Massage of reproductive organs
- Improvement in menstruation

**Helps reduce fat**

- Belly
- thighs
- buttocks

**Who cannot do? (Contra-Indications)**

- Anyone with an Abdominal surgery
- Hernia
- Haemorrhoids
- Pregnant women





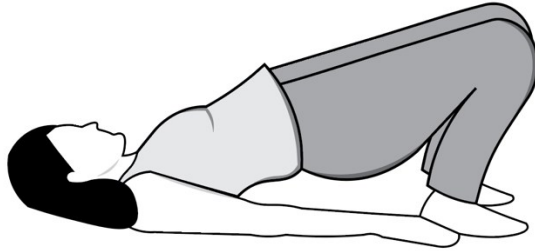
## **Key Points**

1. Keep eyes closed.
2. Breathing in, lift the leg up and while exhaling, pull it towards the chest.
3. Bend the leg from the knee and hold it with both your hands and close it to your chest. Drag towards the chest as much as you can.
4. The second leg remains stable on the ground.
5. Head stays on the ground.
6. While doing both legs, raise legs while keeping them folded at the knees.

**Note:** Feel the change happening in your back.

Do not try to pull the thighs very close and create tension.

## Setubandh Aasan



Meaning	Setu means bridge, bandh means lock.
Reason for name	Our body looks like a bridge in the final position.
Starting Position	Shav Aasan

### Getting into the Aasan:

- Keep the eyes closed.
- Bend your legs at the knees and bring them close to your body.
- Keep feet in line with buttocks (hips), bring hands close to feet.
- If the hands are touched by the heel, then hold the ankles with your hands.
- Breathing in, raise your back and hip.

### In the final Aasan position:

- Keep your weight on shoulders and feet and knees.
- Keep head on the ground.
- Tighten your buttocks and try to lift the back off the ground.
- As long as it is comfortable, keep breathing normally in this aasan.

### To leave the Aasan:

- While exhaling, gently bring back your back on the ground.
- Straighten the legs and take rest in Shav Aasan.

### Benefits of this Posture:

#### Stretch to these muscles

- Back

- Neck
- Spine
- Chest

### **Help in these issues**

- Thyroid
- Hypertension (BP)
- Sinus
- Asthma
- Insomnia
- Osteoporosis

### **Influence on the abdominal area**

- Digestion
- Reduces pain in menstruation

### **Who cannot do? (Contra-Indications)**

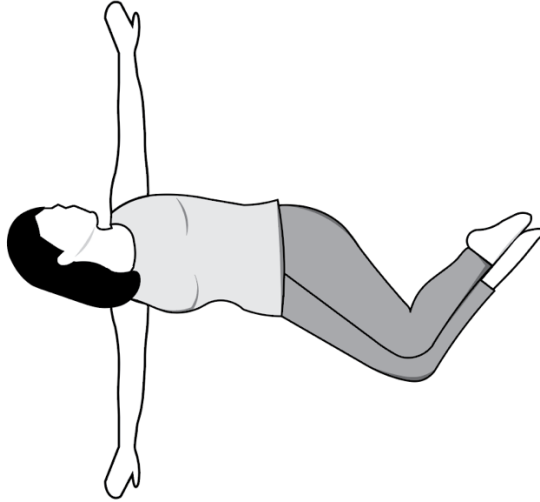
Patients with Knee Pain.



1. Keep eyes closed.
2. Fold the legs from the knees and keep them in line near the buttocks (hip) and hold the ankles with hands
3. Keep hands on the ground all the time.
4. Breathing in, raise your back and buttocks (hips), while exhaling, gently bring your back and your waist back to the ground.
5. Keep your weight on the shoulders and legs and knees.
6. Keep the head on the floor.

**Note:** First tighten your butt, and then try to lift the back off the ground.

## Crossed legs lumbar stretch



Meaning	Cross Legs refers to Twist of The Legs Lumber refers to the lower back
Reason for the name	In this position the spine gets stretched by twisting the leg.
Starting Position	Shav Aasan

### Getting into the Aasan:

- Keep the eyes closed.
- Bend your knees and keep both legs close to each other.
- Keep both hands straight on the ground at the level of the shoulder, palms facing the ground.
- Twist the folded legs to one side while exhaling.
- And rotate the head the other way.

### In the final Aasan position:

- Make sure that your two legs are parallel to each other.
- Both knees and head stay on opposite side.

- Stay as long as you are comfortable in this position while breathing normally.

**To leave the Aasan:**

- Inhaling, bring both legs up.
- Straighten your head too.
- Now do it in the other direction also.

This Aasan can be done in two other ways.

1. Keep shoulder level gap between both your legs and follow the same steps. The knee of the leg above, should be near the heel of the lower leg.
2. Raise one leg and wrap it on your other leg. Follow the same steps. Likewise bend the other leg and repeat in both directions.

**Benefits of this posture:**

- Reduces back pain
- Leads to stretching of the entire back muscle.
- Improvement of lung capacity.

**Who cannot do? (Contra-Indications)**

- Everyone can do it.
- Slow caution in acute back pain.

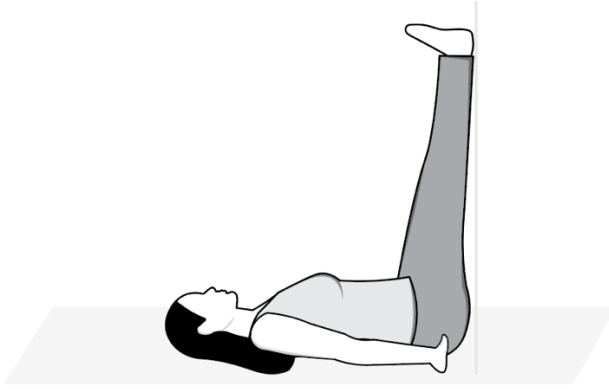


## Key Points

1. Keep eyes closed.
2. Keep both hands straight on the ground at the level of the shoulder, palms facing the ground.
3. Fold your knees and keep both feet together with each other or keep shoulder gap between them, or lift one foot and wrap it on your other leg.
4. Twist your legs on one side while exhaling, and lift both the legs while inhaling.
5. Both feet and head stay in opposite side.

**Note:** Pay attention to your back.

## Viprit Karni



Meaning	Viprit means reverse
Reason for name	In the final position, our feet are up and we are on the ground.
Starting Position	Shav Aasan

### Getting into the Aasan:

- Lie close to, and parallel to the wall.
- Then raise both your legs one by one and let them rest on the wall.
- Place both hands by the side of the body or let them rest on the stomach, as you are comfortable.

### In the final Aasan position:

- Heel is towards the sky/ceiling.
- Keep hips as close as possible to the wall
- Keep the legs straight, not bent at the knee.
- Keep hands relaxed.
- Stay in this position while inhaling normally, and feel the changes in your body
- Slowly move your awareness into the whole body – from toes of your legs to the waist, and then from your chest to the head.
- While breathing deeply, chant “Aa” 3 times.

- Stay in this position while inhaling naturally, and feel the vibration in your body
- Feel the blood circulating from feet to head.

**To leave the posture:**

- Gently slide both your legs down the wall.
- Take some rest in Shav Aasan

**Benefits of this Aasan:**

- Help in the reproductive system
- Improves blood flow
- Reduces menstrual pain
- Supports testicular problem
- Reduces problems of ovaries
- improves digestion

**Supports issues in the head area**

- Eye problems
- Ear problems
- Migraine
- Headache
- Depression
- Insomnia

**Provides relief in other problems**

- Thyroid
- Neck pain
- Back pain
- Spinal cord
- Piles
- Hernia
- Swelling in the heel
- Foot pain
- Digestive system

**Who cannot do this? (Contra-indications)**



- Menstruation and even 1-2 days before and after
- Glaucoma (eye disease)



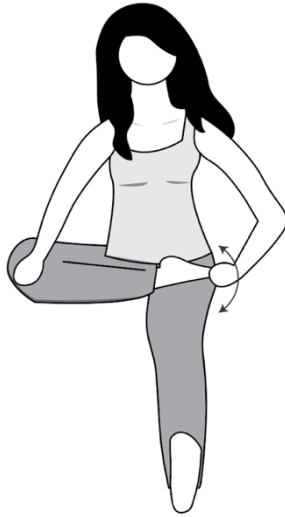
### **Key Points**

- Keep eyes closed.
- Keep breathing normally through it.
- Lie parallel to the parallel side of the wall.
- Keep the hips as close to the wall as possible.
- Take support of the wall while moving feet up and down.
- Keep the feet straight, not bent at the knees.
- Keep both hands in the side of the body or rest your palms on the stomach such as you are comfortable.
- Take a deep breath and pronounce “Aa” 3 times.

### **Special tips:**

- This is easier to do with a pillow; pillow can be used for comfort.
- Bring the feet down if there is a tingling in the feet.

## Practices for Knee Pains

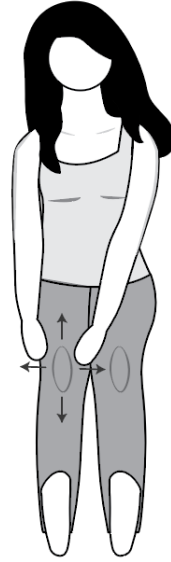


### Passive Toe Rotation

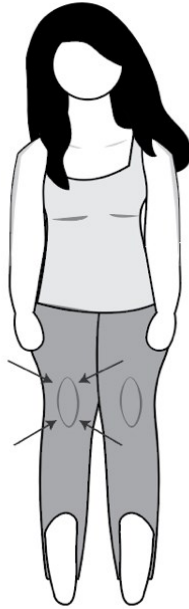
- Sit in Dandaasan position.
- Keep your eyes closed.
- Fold one leg from the knee and place it on the other thigh.
- Holding the toes with the hand, rotate very slowly in clockwise direction - 10 rounds.
- Then gently rotate in the opposite direction (anti clockwise) - 10 rounds.
- Do this with the other leg.

## **Kneecap Rotation**

- Sit in Dandaasan position.
- Keep your eyes closed.
- Hold the kneecap between the thumb and index fingers of both your hands.
- Gently move the kneecap in all four directions.
- First, Push the kneecap in upwards with the help of the thumb, catching the kneecap as it moves, with the fingers resting above. Then push the kneecap in downwards with the help of the index fingers, catching the kneecap as it moves, with the thumbs resting below - 10 rounds.
- Then, to do this sideways, hold the kneecap with one index finger at each side. Push the kneecap towards the left with the right finger, catching the kneecap as it moves, with the left finger. Then push the kneecap towards the right with the left finger, catching the kneecap as it moves, with the right finger. - 10 rounds
- Then hold the kneecap with all fingers and slowly move round - 5 rounds in clockwise direction and 5 anti-clockwise.
- Keep all your attention on the knee.
- Do this with the other leg.



## Kneecap tight & release



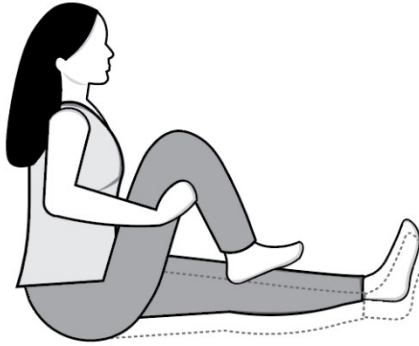
- Sit in Dandaasan position.
- Keep your eyes closed.
- To tighten your kneecap, tighten your thigh muscles.
- Release the tight muscles.
- This is one round – tighten and release.
- Keep full focus on the knees.
- The rest of the legs should not move.
- Do 10-20 rounds

## **Knee rotation**



- Sit in Dandaasan position.
- Keep your eyes closed.
- Fold one leg from the knee and bring it to 90 degrees.
- Interlock the hands and hold the thigh from behind.
- Let the lower part of the leg, below the knees hang freely
- The other leg should be straight on the ground.
- The lower leg part of the leg, below the knee has to rotate.
- Clockwise (clockwise) - 5 times.
- Anti-clockwise - 5 times.
- Do this with the other leg.

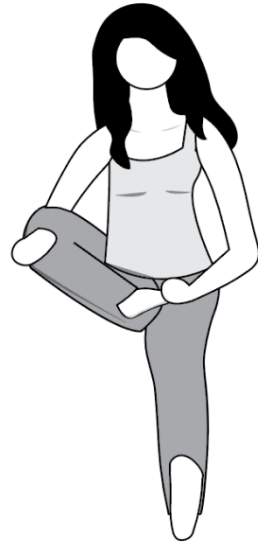
## Knee bend & open



- Sit in Dandaasan position.
- Keep your eyes closed.
- Fold one leg from the knee and bring it to 90 degrees, raising the heel above the ground.
- Interlock the hands and hold the thigh from behind.
- Let the lower part of the leg, below the knees hang freely
- The other leg should be straight on the ground.
- Now move the foot towards your body, without touching the heel on the ground.
- And then away from the body.
- This is one round - feet towards the body, and then away from the body.
- Stay focused on the knee.
- Do 10 such rounds and set foot on the ground and relax.
- Do this with the other leg.

## **Half butterfly**

- Sit in Dandaasan position.
- Keep your eyes closed.
- Fold one leg into the knee and place the heel on the thigh of the other leg.
- Hold the ankle of the foot with one hand so that it does not slide down.
- Place the other hand on the bent knee.
- Slowly raise the knee up towards the chest with the hand.
- And push down slowly, try to touch the knee to the ground.
- This is 1 round - knee up and then down.
- Do 10 such rounds.
- Do this with the other leg.



### **Benefits of Practices for Knee Pains**

- joints become strong
- stretch on the muscles
- Increases leg flexibility
- Gives ease and comfort

### **Who cannot do it?**

- knee / heel surgery in the last six months
- Leg/knee injury that is not yet healed

### **Important information**

- Sit in Dandaasan position.
- Keep your eyes closed.
- Back, neck and rest of body remain straight and relaxed
- Always keep the other leg straight and relaxed.
- Abdomen chest not move back

- Do not move the feet by yourself, lift or drop the weight on the arm
- Do the movements slowly and comfortably.
- Stay focused on the knee.

You can do this easy by sitting in a bed or on a mat on the floor with your back against the wall.



## **Chapter 5**

# **Praanaayaam**

### **Importance**

Praanaayaam offers us a gateway to regulate vital energies of Praan-may Kosh, and to master life itself

### **Meaning**

प्राणस्यआयामइतिप्राणायाम

(Praanasysa aayaam ati Praanaayaam)

(Translation: Praanaayaam is the regulation of Praan)

Praan is the life force and vital energies which form the 2nd sheath of existence – Praan-may Kosh. The literal meaning of Praan (प्राण) and its colloquial usage (प्राणनिकलजाना) indicates that Praan is what differentiates life from death. We are alive only as long as the life force of Praan resides in the body (Ann-may Kosh). The presence of Praan in a body is indicated by many functions such as breathing, digestion, excretion, reproduction, circulation, heartbeat, brain processing related to sense organs, etc.

**Breathing is one of the main functions of the force of Praan**, and by regulating it, we can regulate Praan, one of the Panch-Kosh. **Yogic practices to regulate our Praan are called Praanaayaam.**

It is interesting to observe that of all the Praanic forces (e.g. digestion, blood circulation) breathing is the only function we can actively and consistently regulate. In scientific language, it can be said that breathing is a bridge between the involuntary and voluntary functions – as it is both involuntary and voluntary. Yogis probably had this insight, which they used to devise Praanaayaam!

### **Impact of Praanaayaam**

Our breathing pattern impacts our well-being.



#### **Real-life observation**

In nature, especially in **mammals**, and in vertebrates to a certain extent, there is a curious co-relation between breathing rate and lifespan - **the slower they breath, the longer they tend to live**. Here's some sample data of a few mammals' respiratory rate and average lifespan.

- **Mouse:** Breathing rate = 90 to 170 /min, Life = 1.5–3 years
- **Rabbit:** Breathing rate = 30–60 /min, Life = 5–6 years
- **Monkey:** Breathing rate = 30–50 /min, Life = 20–30 years
- **Dogs:** Breathing rate = 20–30 /min, Life = more than 10-20 years
- **Human:** Breathing rate = 15–18 /min, Life = 60–80 years
- **Whales & Giant Tortoises:** Breathing rate = 4–6 /min, Life = more than 100 years

How we breathe, therefore, has the potential to impact our well-being!

Our breathing pattern is influence-able by other Panch-Kosh. Also, due to years of incorrect practice, our breathing patterns have become distorted. Incorrect breathing has unknowingly become a cause of dis-ease.



### **Real-life observation**

Our breathing pattern is not constant during the day! When we are angry, in fear or anxiety, we tend to take short, shallow, fast breaths. Conversely, when we are relaxed or meditation, if we observe carefully, our breath becomes deeper, slower and rhythmic.

As per Yog Vashishtha, all Aadhij Vyaadhi (stress-born disease) first starts in the mind (Manomay Kosh). It then percolates to Praan-may Kosh, and if still not corrected, affects the body (Ann-may Kosh).

By taking our breathing back to it's natural manner and pattern, we can positively impact our emotional and physical well-being.



### Real-life observation

We may remember a common advice given to us by elders when we are very angry or upset – to take 10 deep breaths and count till 10. The principle being used here is very simple – just like emotions (Manomay Kosh) can influence breathing (Praanmay Kosh), the reverse is also true!

### Correcting our breathing



### Real-life observation

The way a baby breathes is very different from how we, as adults breathe. The baby's stomach gets filled up and goes up with inhalation and then completely “deflates” with exhalation. This is called diaphragmatic breathing, abdominal breathing, belly breathing or deep breathing. We as adults have forgotten this natural pattern, and primarily use our chest, with little involvement of our belly.

The most common corrections we need to make in our breathing are:

**Typical mistake #1:** Fast, shallow breathing, typically thoracic/chest only – not using our full lung capacity. This should be replaced with slow, deep breathing involving all the lobes of our lungs – from diaphragm to chest and clavicles

**Typical mistake #2:** Irregular breathing (erratic or jerky) should be replaced with regular breathing (smooth and rhythmic)

**Typical mistake #3:** Mis-alignment between breathing and natural body movement should be replaced with

synchronization between breathing and natural body

movement

**Typical mistake #4:** Breathing through mouth should be replaced with breathing through nose



### Experiment

Let us try to understand our current breathing patterns! To do this, we close our eyes and continue to breathe normally. We do NOT alter our breathing pattern consciously, only observe it. Just like we do with thoughts in meditation. No attempt to change what is happening. Now, placing the palm of one hand on our stomach, we observe the co-relation between our breathing and stomach movement.

- What happens when we breathe in? Does our stomach go in (contract) or go out (expand)?
- What happens when we breathe out? Does our stomach go in (contract) or go out (expand)?

The correct answer is for the stomach to go out (expand) when we breathe in, like a balloon expands on being filled with air. And for the stomach to go in (contract) when we breathe out. However, many of us adults, have developed the reverse, unnatural breathing patterns!



### Reflection Question

Based on the above, what changes do you need to make in your breathing pattern?

## Guidelines for practicing Praanaayaam

The overall guidelines for Pranaayam are the same as that for Yogic practices. Some additional precautions to be followed in all Praanaayaam practices :

1. Face, neck and back straight
2. Body, back and face relaxed, not tense
3. Appropriate gap between successive rounds of the specific Pranayam to increase effectiveness
4. Eyes closed
5. Comfortable pace. Not too fast (self-test is that forehead should remain relaxed)
6. Other hand on the knee (Palm up, thumb touching the forefinger). Hand relaxed at the elbow and not straight.

### Full Set of Praanaayaam

<b><u>Breathing &amp; Praanaayaama (1 + 3)</u></b>
<p><b>High Blood Pressure or Pulse:</b> Chandra Anulom Vilom (Left in, Right out) – 9</p> <p><b>Low Blood Pressure or Pulse:</b> Surya Anulom Vilom (Right in, Left out) – 9</p> <p><b>All Others:</b> Deep Breathing (a) Nose in Mouth out Loud (b) Nose in Mouth out Quiet (c) Nose in Nose out Quiet – 5 x 3</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nadi Shuddhi / Anulom Vilom – 5 Rounds</li> <li>• Full Yogic Breath (Abdominal, Chest, Shoulder, All) – 3 Rounds each (4 types)</li> <li>• Bhramari in Shanmukhi Mudra – 3 Rounds</li> </ul>



### Reflection Question

Go through guidelines for Praanaayaam practices and videos on our YouTube channel and identify - what changes do you need to make in how you practice Praanaayaam?



### Experiment

Close your eyes and observe your breath and mind. Feel your breathing pattern – the speed, depth, sync with body, irregularity in pattern, if any. Observe the overall speed of thoughts as they come in and go. After observing for a few moments, practice 7 continuous rounds of Bhramari in Shanmukhi Mudra, pausing only to breathe in between rounds. After completion, drop your hands and observe your your breath and mind again. Enjoy the state of ease and relaxation of the breath and mind!



### Key Points

- Praan is the life force and vital energies which form the 2nd sheath of existence – Praan-may Kosh.
- Breathing is one of the main functions of the force of Praan
- Yogic practices to regulate our Praan are called Praanaayaam
- Our breathing pattern impacts our well-being.
- Today, incorrect breathing has unknowingly become a cause of dis-ease.
- By taking our breathing back to it's natural manner and pattern, we can positively impact our emotional and physical well-being.

- The correct breathing pattern is slow, deep, smooth, rhythmic, through nose and with synchronization between breathing and natural body movement
- The overall guidelines for Pranaayam are the same as that for Yogic practices. Some additional precautions to be followed in all Praanaayaam practices:
  - Face, neck and back straight
  - Body, back and face relaxed, not tense
  - Appropriate gap between successive rounds of the specific Prananyam to increase effectiveness
  - Eyes closed
  - Comfortable pace. Not too fast (self-test is that forehead should remain relaxed)
  - Other hand on the knee (Palm up, thumb touching the forefinger). Hand relaxed at the elbow and not straight.



## **Deeper Understanding – Special tips to learn Praanaayaam**

### **Generic step-wise technique for learning Praanaayaam – 20 min per practice**

#	Step	What instructor does	Purpose for participants	Expected time (min)
1	Introduction	Name of Praanaayaam and reason	Prepare for what is coming	1
2	Demo & key points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show full video, ask participants to note key points and contra-indications</li> <li>• After the video, explain key points</li> </ul>	Get an overview of what to do, and to note if their condition allows them to do the practice	4
3	Trial practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask participants with contra-indications to only observe</li> <li>• Ask participants practice with video on, if needed. Sit and note common mistakes being made</li> </ul>	Try for themselves and see challenges faced, which can be asked as a question	2
4	Deeper understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share common mistakes and</li> </ul>	Common mistakes get	10

	– practical & theoretical	<p>their corrections.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answer any questions from participants</li> <li>• Explain any modifications for those who are unable to practice</li> </ul>	corrected and questions get answered.	
5	Re-demo	Participants observe again through video (till key points only)	Clearer idea of what to do	1
6	Correct practice	Ask participants to practice again, move around making corrections	Confidence of being able to do well, with personal support	2

## **Bhramari**

- **The right syllable (N):** Chant “M” and then “N” and see difference in where the vibration gets produced. The vibration in N is at the top of the head region
- **The right pitch and volume:** Try various modulations of sound and see how the same sound can be made in different ways, E.g. (a) high pitch from throat (b) soft and low volume (c) deeper pitch and from abdomen. Experience a different type of vibration in each case. Find out your pitch and volume which matches your body's vibration and “feels right”.
- **The impact of Shanmukhi on Bhramari:** Do 1 round of Bhramari with Shanmukhi and 1 without. Do this twice. Experience the difference and impact of Shanmukhi on 3 things – (a) light (b) sounds from external environment (c) vibrations felt during Bhramari

## **Yogic breathing**

- **Abdominal breathing** – First practice with support of hand to push stomach in during exhalation and relax during inhalation
- **Clavicular breathing** – First practice with exaggerated shoulder movement – upwards during exhalation and down during inhalation to feel air entering lobes

## Sukhaasan Posture



### Instructions

1. Sit in comfortable position, with knees bent and legs crossed.
2. Ensure your head and neck are in a straight line.
3. Keep in mind that your spinal cord is straight.
4. Keep both elbows below the shoulders and leave the shoulders down loosely.
5. Keep the palms on the knees; palm should face towards the sky.
6. Relax the hand completely; it should be turned from the elbow and not straight.
7. The whole body should be straight and relaxed (without any stress)

## **Chandra Anulom Vilom**

### **Nasikaa Mudraa**

- Bend the middle finger and the index finger of the right hand.
- The thumb, the little finger and its sharp finger (ring finger) will remain open.
- Use the thumb to close the right nostril.
- To close the left nostril, use the little finger and its wing finger (ring finger)
- Relax, resting the right hand on the chest.



### **Chandra Anulom Vilom**

- Keep eyes closed.
- Make Naasikaa Mudraa with your right hand.
- Close your right nostril with the right thumb.
- Breathe in slowly from the left nostril, and gently breathe out completely from the left nostril
- This is one round - breathing in from the left nostril, and breathing out of the left nostril
- Do such 9 rounds.
- After doing this, do Naadi Shuddhi (Anulom Vilom) 5 times.

### **Benefits**

Help in mental problems

- Mental imbalance
- Anxiety
- Stress

### **Influence on the respiratory system**

- Bronchitis

- Asthma
- Improves lung function
- Cleans the nostrils

### **Other benefits**

- Help in hypertension – Blood Pressure more than 130/90
- Pulse - more than 85
- Helps to Increase weight

### **Who should not do this (contraindications)?**

- Low blood pressure – BP less than 90/60
- Low pulse - less than 65
- Allergy
- Cold
- Obesity



### **Key Points**

1. Keep eyes closed.
2. Make naasikaa mudraa by bending middle finger and index finger of right hand
3. Relax the right hand on the chest.
4. Breathe from the left nostril; breathe out from the left nostril.
5. There is no sound in the movement of breath.

**Note:** During the gap between rounds, become aware of the path of the breath inside the body.

Reduce the practice of Chandra Anulom Vilom during winters.

Prescription for high blood pressure (when and how often)

- Can do this several times a day.
- Do Chandra Anulom Vilom 27 times, followed by Naadi Shuddhi (Anulom Vilom) 9 times
- Always do Anulom Vilom after Chandra Anulom Vilom.

*From Excessive Exercising to Yogic Vyaayaam*

- Do not practise this frequently if you do not have high blood pressure (BP).
- If you have high BP since a long time, ensure you get a regular check-up done and continue practice of Chandra Anulom Vilom.

## Surya Anulom Vilom

### Nasikaa Mudraa

- Bend the middle finger and the index finger of the right hand.
- The thumb, the little finger and its sharp finger (ring finger) will remain open.
- Use the thumb to close the right nostril.
- To close the left nostril, use the little finger and its wing finger (ring finger)
- Relax, resting the right hand on the chest.



### Surya Anulom Vilam

- Keep eyes closed.
- Make Naasikaa Mudraa with your right hand.
- Close your left nostril, using the little finger and its wing finger (ring finger)
- Breathe slowly from the right nostril, and gently breathe out completely from the right nostril
- This is one round - breathing inside the right nostril, and breathing out with the right nostril.
- Do such 9 rounds.
- After doing this, do Naadi Shuddhi (Anulom Vilom) 5 times.

### Benefit

Help in mental problems

- Mental imbalance
- Depression
- Worry



- Stress

### **Influence on the respiratory system**

- Bronchitis
- Asthma
- Improves lung function
- Allergy
- Cleans the nostrils

### **Other benefits**

- Low blood pressure – BP less than 90/60
- Low pulse - less than 65
- Reduces obesity

### **Who should not?**

- Heart disorders
- Epilepsy
- Patients with hypertension - BP more than 130/90
- Pulse - more than 85
- Low weight

### **Important information**

1. Keep eyes closed.
2. Make naasikaa mudraa by bending middle finger and index finger of right hand
3. Relax the right hand on the chest.
4. Breathe from the right nostril; breathe out from the right nostril.
5. There is no sound in the movement of breath.

**Note:** During the gap between rounds, become aware of the path of the breath inside the body.

### **Prescription (when and how often)**

- Can do this several times a day.

- Do Surya Anulom Vilom 27 times, followed by Naadi Shuddhi (Anulom Vilom) 9 times
- Always do Anulom Vilom after Chandra Anulom Vilom.
- Do not practise this frequently if you do not have low blood pressure (BP). Do not do it to reduce obesity.
- If you have low BP since a long time, ensure you get a regular check-up done and continue practice of Surya Anulom Vilom.

## Deep Breathing

### Instructions

Sit down in Sukhaasan.  
Keep your eyes closed

#### 1) Sigh loudly (say 'haah' loudly) while breathing out through the mouth:

- Take deep breaths from the nose.
- Breathe out by saying 'haah' loudly.
- This is one round - breathing in through the nose, breathing out with the mouth, saying 'haah' loudly.
- Do this 3 times.



#### 2) Sigh (say 'haah') while breathing out through the mouth.

- Take deep breaths through the nose.
- Breathe out by saying 'haah'.
- This is one round - breathing in through the nose, breathing out with the mouth, saying 'haah'
- Do this 3 times.

#### 3) Breathing out through the mouth, without making any sound

- Take deep breaths through the nose.
- Breathe out of the mouth without making any sound
- This is one round - breathing in through the nose, breathing out with the mouth, without any sounds
- Do this 3 times.

#### 4) Breath in and out through the nose, deeply

- Take a deep breath in through the nose.

- Breath out through the nose, deeply
- This is one round - breathing in through the nose, breathing out through the nose, deeply
- Do this 3 times.

**5) Breathe in and out through the nose, very slowly, without any sound.**

- Take a slow, deep and silent breath in through the nose.
- Exhale very slowly via your nose without the slightest noise.
- This is one round - breathing in through the nose, and exhaling slowly through nose without any sound.
- Do this 3 times.

**Benefits**

- Takes exhaustion away, leaving a feeling of freshness.
- Calms down mind, reduces thoughts in the mind.
- Safer than Kapalbhathi for hypertensives

Who does not have to do (contraindications)

All can do it.



## Key Points

Keep eyes closed.

1. First, breathe in through the nose, and breathe out through the mouth with a loud sigh
2. Then, breathe in through the nose, and breathe out through the mouth with a sigh
3. Then inhale through the nose, exhale through the mouth without a sound
4. Then breathe in through the nose, exhale via nose deeply
5. Then breathe in through the nose, exhale slowly via nose, without any sound.

**Note:** During the gap between each round, become aware of the breath - Feel the path of the breath inside the body, while breathing in and out.

## Naddi Shuddhi

Meaning	This praanaayaam harmonizes the two main naadis (energy channels) through which Praan flows – Ida and Pingala
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### Naasikaa Mudraa

- Move the middle finger and thumb of the finger (index finger).
- The thumb, the small finger and its wing finger (ring finger) will remain open.
- Use the thumb to close the right nostril.
- Use the small finger and its wing finger (ring finger) to close the nasal passage.
- Relax hand on chest.

### Naadi Shuddhi:

- Sit down in Sukhaasan.
- Keep eyes closed.
- Make naasika mudra with your right hand and close your right nostril with the right thumb.
- Exhale completely out of the left nostril.
- Breathe in slowly from the left nostril.
- Close the left nostril and open the right nostril.
- Slowly and completely exhale out of the right nostril.
- Breathe in slowly from the right nostril.
- Close the right nostril and open the left nostril.
- This is one round - breathing out and in from left nostril, breathing out and in from right nostril
- Repeat. Take out the breath slowly and completely out of the left nostril. Breathe in and out from the left nostril
- Do such 9 rounds.

## **Benefits**

- Help in mental problems
- Mental imbalance
- Depression
- Worry
- Stress
- Influence on the respiratory system
- Bronchitis
- Asthma
- Improve lung function.
- Allergy
- Clean and balance nasal

## **Who should not do it?**

All can do it.

## **Important information**

1. Keep eyes closed.
2. Make nasal mudra – twist middle finger and finger thumb (index finger) of right hand
3. Relax hands on the chest.
4. Breathe in and out of the same nostril and then with the other.
5. There is no sound in the movement of breath, if head begins to ache, feels heavy, or feel restless, means there's more pressure in the lungs.



## **Key Points:**

- Maintain gap between successive breaths and be aware - feel the path of breath
- Anulom Vilom Praanaayaam is also known as Naadi Shuddhi.

## Yogic breathing

### Sectional breathing - Abdominal

- Keep eyes closed.
- Take a deep breath and let your stomach expand.
- Exhale completely while slowly shrinking and sucking in your stomach.
- Do this 3 times.
- To learn this Praanaayaam, in the beginning, keep your palm on the stomach (navel) for a few days. You may need to push in your stomach while exhaling, in order to correct your breathing pattern.
- Note that as you breathe in, stomach swells out, and as you breathe out, stomach shrinks in.



### Sectional breathing - Thoracic (Chest)

- Keep eyes closed.
- Expand your chest while taking in a deep breath.
- Simply shrink your chest and let the breath go out.
- Do this 3 times.
- To learn this praanaayaam, in the beginning, place a palm on the chest for a few days. This will help you match your breathing with movement of your chest.
- Note that as you breathe in, the chest and ribs (rib cage) expand in all directions. And as you exhale, the chest goes in.

### Sectional breathing – Clavicular (Shoulder)



- Keep your eyes closed.
- Take in a little breath and lift your shoulders slowly.
- Bring your shoulders down while exhaling slowly.
- Do this 3 times.
- To learn this Praanaayaam, in the beginning, place your palm on the collar bone (Lower part of the throat) for a few days.
- Note that as you breathe in, shoulders rise up, and as you exhale shoulders come down. This breathing is more shallow than abdominal and thoracic breathing.

### **Complete yogic breathing**

- Keep your eyes closed.
- Make Brahma mudraa - Make a fist by closing your thumb and covering it with the four fingers. Face it towards the sky/ceiling, join both fists near the lower abdomen and rest your hands on the thighs.
- Take a deep, long breath. Inflate your stomach first, then inflate your chest and then lift up your shoulders.
- While exhaling slowly, first shrink your stomach, then shrink the chest and then bring your shoulders down.
- Do not notice that as you breathe in, stomach and chest swell and shoulders rise up
- And as the breath exits, the stomach and chest go in and the shoulders come down
- Do this 3 times.

### **Benefits**

- Corrects breathing pattern
- Increases lung capacity
- Calms down
- Increase energy in the body
- Increases flow of praan in the body

**Who shouldn't do this (contraindications)?**

Everyone can



**Key Points**

1. Keep eyes closed.
2. First breathe into the stomach
3. Then breathe into the the chest
4. Then breathe into the shoulder
5. Order of complete yogic breathing - from the stomach, chest and shoulders
6. Breath must match with the movement of the body. Breathe in, body bulges out and breathe out, it shrinks in.

**Note:** As you breathe in, notice how the body is expanding, how the life force is going in.

## **Bhramari Praanaayaam**

### **Instructions**

- Sit down in Sukhaasan.
- Keep eyes closed.
- Taking a deep breath, pronounce the sound of a bee humming - “Nn”.
- Stay alert in the gap between two rounds – notice the vibration that is spreading in the body, the calmness of mind, lessening of the thoughts and the breathing pattern becoming stable.
- Do this 3 times.



### **Performing this praanaayaam in the Shanmukhi mudraa:**

Making shanmukhi mudraa:

- Close the eyes, ears and lips with both hands.
- Keep the thumbs in the ear so that sound does not come in.
- Keep two fingers (index and middle) on the eyes so that the light does not go in.
- Cover the lips and face too, with the ring and little fingers.

Taking in a deep breath, chant “Nn”.

Stay alert in the gap between two rounds – notice the vibration that is spreading in the body, the calmness of mind, lessening of the thoughts and the breathing pattern becoming stable.

Do this 3 times.

Keep your hands in shanmukhi mudraa only. When the vibrations stop and the thoughts enter the mind again, bring your hands down.

### **Benefits**

Improvement in these things

- Soothing the nervous system
- Improving voice and melody of voice
- Quickly healing internal wounds

**These things become lesser:**

- Stress, tension
- Anger
- Worry
- Blood Pressure
- Mental disorder
- Throat disorders (tonsils, throat pain)
- Insomnia
- Disturbance in the Nervous System and Mind

Good for meditation.

**Who cannot do it (contraindications)**

Everyone can



## **Key Points**

1. Keep eyes closed.
2. Use Shanmukhi mudraa – cover eyes with index and middle fingers, keep thumbs on ears, ring and little fingers on lips and face
3. Taking a deep breath, pronounce “Nn”- in a way that the sound and pitch matches with the natural vibration of the body.
4. The sound “Nn” should come from within, from the stomach.  
The volume should not be faint
5. Stay alert in the gap between two rounds – notice the vibration that is spreading in the body, the calmness of mind, lessening of the thoughts and the breathing pattern becoming stable.
5. Keep your hands in shanmukhi mudraa only. When the vibrations stop and the thoughts enter the mind again, bring your hands down.



## **Chapter 6**

# **Relaxation**

### **Importance**

These are critical tools to enable us to perform at our potential.

## Why Relax?

Particularly when we are in a stressful situation, we need relaxation techniques for anxiety and when the flight or fight response is triggered. There are so many opportunities for anxiety and getting triggered in our life: someone cuts us off in traffic, an unsupportive manager at work who shouts at us, colleagues who don't support us at work, an argument with your partner or children, an unexpected change of circumstance in our work or family life. Some are more sensitive than others and can easily get overwhelmed, they would actively seek relaxation and relaxation techniques in whichever form it comes—short term or long term.

There is another approach to relaxation too. Just like we send a vehicle for preventive maintenance, if we pro-actively practice relaxation techniques, we can maintain our well-being at perform at our potential.



### Real life example

Consider a tank of water which is full of dirt. If the water is constantly moving, can you clean the tank? No! In order to clean it, you first have to wait for the water to become still. Once that happens, the dirt automatically settles down, and can be filtered out. Likewise with our body and mind! Only when we allow them to rest, do they come to a state of ease, from where we derive a renewed energy.

### Why learn how to relax?

- **We have forgotten the art of relaxing!** Has anyone ever told you to “just relax” and it made you even more tense, anxious or irritated? It seems to have the opposite effect of helping us become at ease and happy. It seems tricky, right? Of course you would love relaxation, but in the heat of the moment, it's a



different story. So we look forward to holidays, weekends and vacations as an effort to organize relaxation into our lives. However, that doesn't mean we let the stress build until we can get to that place of relaxation in the form of a weekend, vacation or holiday. We would like to have at our disposal, relaxation techniques and relaxation exercises that we can use everyday and anytime.

- **Relaxation now means many things to different people:**
  - For some people, it means having a drink or taking a pill although the effects are temporary as a relaxation technique. The understanding of relaxation is particularly new to the western world, where the emphasis is on effort, achievement and instant results.
  - On the other hand, the east has developed profound wisdom regarding the art of relaxation techniques and have incorporated relaxation training into the very fabric of the culture. Therefore, it may mean practicing some form of mind-body modality such as Tai Chi, Yoga, Qi-Gong, or Meditation that serve as relaxation training or relaxation techniques.
  - For some people, relaxation means being lax, i.e. leaving all effort and becoming lazy, such as lying down or sitting in front of the TV for hours

With regard to effort and relaxation, a leading Yogi, Sadhguru clarifies:

*Why we are talking about effortless living is just this – to bring relaxation to every activity that you perform. Right now if I ask people to relax they will become lax. If I ask people to be intense they become tense. Do you see the difference ? You have to learn to be intense and relaxed. If you can maintain your intensity and relaxation together, all the potential you have will always be used to its fullest.*

*For example, you love to climb mountains, lets say. Climbing a mountain involves tremendous amount of physical effort. But if you love to climb mountains, every step you take, every painful step that you take, you become more and more joyous. The legs are paining, the whole body is paining, but it is so beautiful. There is no effort in it – in your experience there is no effort. Body there is effort, yes.*

*If you don't apply your mind and body, don't think that it is effortless. It is laziness. Not applying yourself is laziness. Effort comes mainly because somewhere we stop enjoying what we are doing. So effortless is in terms of your experience, not in terms of applying yourself. But if you don't apply yourself, it is laziness. It is not effortless.*

Learning relaxation techniques helps us learn how to be intense and relaxed at the same time. Have you ever seen someone doing Yogic practices? It involves tremendous focus and effort, yet is also movement where the muscles and the breath are completely relaxed. This is an example of relaxation training.

### **What to Relax?**

Primarily the 3 Koshas – Ann-may, Praan-may, Manomay. The mis-alignment of these causes stress. This can arise due to under or over activity. Also, getting in touch with Vigyaanmay and Anandmay Kosh.

### **How to Relax?**

**Sleep** is an often under-estimated, but very important tool for relaxation. All creatures in nature sleep. We should get minimum 6 hours of sleep at night. The earlier we sleep at night, the better it is. Ideally, in villages, people eat post sunset, and sleep within 2 hours of that. But the modern, urban lifestyle and working hours don't allow this for most of us. Yet, we can make adjustments from our side to sleep on time. Many people stay awake post mid-night

– we should most definitely avoid that, at the very minimum ! As our body comes into alignment, we will notice that in a few months or years, our need for sleep will automatically reduce. But the starting point for most of us is that we are sleep deprived, hence, initially, improving the quantity and quality of sleep is important.

Oh, how we love it when someone gives us a **massage** ! But we need not depend on others to avail this wonderful relaxation technique. The science behind massages (nerve endings, energy channels, etc) has been used by numerous alternate therapies such as accupressure, accupuncture, Ayurved, reflexology, Su-Jok and Laughter Yog (clapping). We can bring this into our life through 3 simple ways: (a) Clapping vigorously during Laughter Yog (b) Using a foot scrubber while taking a bath (ideally use a mud one) (c) Massaging our own hands (one massages every part of the other) – refer to online hand reflexology videos to know more.

**Specific Relaxation techniques** such as Yog Nidra, Deep Relaxation Technique, Quick Relaxation Technique, Instant Relaxation Technique. The last three techniques have been developed by SVYASA Yoga University Bangalore. Rigorous research has proven the 20-25 minutes of rest through such techniques provides the same level of rest that we typically get after 5-6 hours of sleep.

**Art-based relaxation** to connect to our sources of joy. Based on our disposition, we can choose from a range of activities and hobbies, including but not limited to - Music – sing/ play/ listen; Draw/Paint/Crafts; Write/Read; Dance/ Drama; Gardening

## When to relax

Relaxation techniques do not have any contra-indications in terms of when they can be done! Some times to consider doing them are:

- In the Morning (After Yogic practices)
- Short breaks at work, during the day
- Before going to sleep at night
- On a weekend
- During periods
- When we are mentally or emotionally disturbed
- When we are unwell



### Practical Activity

- Try a self-massage and observe the impact on you
- Try one of the specific relaxation techniques and observe the impact on you



### Reflection Activity

Based on the above:

- What changes do you need to make to your sleep?
- When will you incorporate a small self-massage (of hands or feet) into your routine?
- What hobby or forgotten source of joy do you wish to re-cultivate in your life

 **Key points**

- Why relaxation
  - Particularly when we are in a stressful situation, we need relaxation techniques
  - Just like we send a vehicle for preventive maintenance, relaxation techniques, if done pro-actively from our side, can help us maintain our well-being at perform at our potential.
- Why learn how to relax
  - We have forgotten the art of relaxing!
  - Relaxation now means many things to different people

Learning relaxation techniques helps us learn how to be intense and relaxed at the same time.

- What do we relax?
  - Primarily the 3 Koshas – Ann-may, Praan-may, Manomay. The mis-alignment of these causes stress. This can arise due to under or over activity.
  - Also, getting in touch with Vigyaanmay and Anandmay Kosh.
- Relaxation techniques do not have any contra-indications in terms of when they can be done! Some times to consider doing them are:
  - In the Morning (After Yogic practices)
  - Short breaks at work, during the day
  - Before going to sleep at night

- On a weekend
- During periods
- When we are mentally or emotionally disturbed
- When we are unwell
  
- Additional techniques for deeper relaxation:
  - Sleep: We should get minimum 6 hours of sleep at night. Many people stay awake post mid-night – we should most definitely avoid that, at the very minimum !
  - Massage: We can bring this into our life through 4 simple ways: Clapping vigorously during Laughter Yog, Using a foot scrubber while taking a bath (ideally use a mud one), Massaging our own hands (one massages every part of the other)
  - Specific Relaxation techniques: Deep Relaxation Technique, Quick Relaxation Technique, Instant Relaxation Technique
  - Art-based Relaxation: Hobbies and Activities to connect to our inner sources of joy

## **Chapter 7**

# **Meditation & Mindfulness**

### **Importance**

The most important and widely used tool  
which can enable just for physical wellness,  
but also our spiritual evolution

## What is meditation?

### A Yogi, Sadhguru, explains

*The moment we utter the word “meditation,” there are all kinds of misconceptions about it. First of all, the English word “meditation” doesn’t mean anything in the sense, if you close your eyes and sit, in English we call it “meditation.” You can sit with your eyes closed and do many things. There are many dimensions. You can do japa, tapa, dharana, dhyana, samadhi, shoonya [different meditative practices and states of experience]. Or you might have just mastered the art of sleeping in vertical postures!*

*So what is this thing that we call as meditation? Generally we assume that people are referring to what is known as dhyān or dhyāna. In that context of referring to dhyān as meditation, it is not something that you can do. Nobody can do meditation. The reason why most people who have tried meditation have come to the conclusion that it’s very difficult or impossible is because they are trying to do it.*

*You cannot do meditation but you can become meditative. Meditation is a certain quality. It is not a certain act. If you cultivate your body, your mind, your energies and your emotions to a certain level of maturity, meditation will naturally happen. It is just like if you keep the soil fertile, if you give it the necessary manure and water and if the right kind of seed is there, it will grow and bloom into flowers and fruits.*

*Flowers and fruits will come out of a plant not because you want it, but simply because you created the necessary, conducive atmosphere. Similarly, if you create the necessary atmosphere within yourself, on all the four dimensions of who you are, then meditation will naturally flower within you. It is a certain fragrance that one can enjoy within himself.”*

*Various scientific studies have proved that meditation techniques have a range of benefits such as greater coherence within the*



*brain, improved sleep, drop in stress and anxiety, a boost in mental alertness and focus, and an increase in self-awareness. Almost every leading organization has now incorporated Mindfulness into it's employee well-being programs.*

### **How to practice mindfulness**

Mindfulness means observing and focusing on whatever is happening in the present moment, in a non-judgmental way. Our minds are usually elsewhere - thinking about the past or worrying and planning for the future. Mindfulness is a way to come back to the present. When we're being mindful, we become keenly aware of ourself, our thoughts and our surroundings. But we simply observe these things as they are, without reacting to them or judging them. When thoughts or other distractions arise, we observe those as well, and come back to focusing on whatever we were being mindful of.

Some illustrations of how to practice mindfulness:

- We can focus on what's outside us. Like looking one by one at every object on my desk, including each ones colours and details. Or holding something in our hand, and focusing on its texture and weight as we move it.
- While we're eating, we can focus on the smell, sight, texture of our food and observe ourself eating it
- We could be taking a walk and focusing on how we're taking every step, feeling how our foot hits the ground and comes back up. Or observe the fine details of what is around us.

This is why mindfulness is not just a technique but it's a way of being.



### **Real life example**

Thanks to so many technological advancements, we do much less physical work than our ancestors, even our grandparents did. But why do we find ourselves exhausted at the end of the day?

Because our mind is working much harder!

No one can travel faster than the mind ! Even the sun's rays take 8 minutes to reach the Earth. On the other hand, we can immediately imagine being on a planet, being 100 years old, life 200 years before us, etc. Imagine the kind of energy used in this work! Now, if our mind was constantly moving from one place to another, one time to another, one topic to another – how much energy would get used. No wonder we feel so fatigued at the end of the day!



### **Experiment**

Close your eyes for 3-4 minutes and just observe the flow of your thoughts, as if you are watching a movie. Let the thoughts come and go. Become aware of where all your mind goes, without judging yourself for having any of the thoughts. Open your eyes after 3-4 minutes.

Note - Where all did your thoughts go in this brief period of time? You may find that it went to all sorts of places (within the room where we're sitting, the space around us, our home, our workplace, etc). Not only this, thoughts travel across time – going to the past, present, future – in less than the blink of an eye.

## Illustrative List of Relaxation and Mindfulness Techniques

Below are various types of techniques. Note that while the techniques are mapped to one Kosh, their impact is on all.

### **1) Body awareness and relaxation (focus on Annamay Kosh):**

Here, different parts of the body are “relaxed” through auto-suggestion by the mind, different parts of the body are observed, the breath and body are synchronised (to correct misalignment). This also includes tools which enable us to “listen” to the signals of the body, and to treat our body with love and care

*Illustrative techniques: Instant Body Relaxation; Quick Body Relaxation; Deep, Part-wise Body Relaxation; Part-by-Part Body Awareness; Breath-Body Awareness & Synchronization; Listening to Body Wisdom; Loving Body touch/massage*

### **2) Breath awareness and relaxation (focus on Praanamay Kosh):**

This includes awareness of subtle manifestations of Praan (heartbeat, pulse), observing our natural breathing pattern and changes in various parts of the body and regulation of breath through various forms

*Illustrative techniques: Heartbeat focus; Pulse focus (by touching index finger to thumb); Breath observe – Nose (changes inside the nose); Breath observe – Path (from nose to lungs); Breath observe – Body changes (how the body moves as we inhale and exhale); Deep breathing; Chanting – AUM; Bhramari in Shanmukhi •*

### **3) Emotional and mental awareness and relaxation (focus on Manomay Kosh):**

Techniques encompass awareness of the state of our mind, connecting with our intuition and inner wisdom, expression of thoughts in non-direct forms and cultivating love within

*Illustrative techniques: Mind Awareness in Silence; Gibberish; Affirmations; Future Visualization; Mirror Work ( Louise Hay)*

**3) Mindfulness in daily life (focus on Manomay Kosh):** We learn to observe and focus on whatever is happening in the present moment, in a non-judgmental way

Illustrative techniques: *Examining an object in depth; While eating; While walking*



### Reflection Activity

Based on your nature, choose at least 3 types of mindfulness techniques from the above list. Create time to practice these during the day.



### Key Points

- You cannot do meditation but you can become meditative. Meditation is a certain quality. It is not a certain act. If you cultivate your body, your mind, your energies and your emotions to a certain level of maturity, meditation will naturally happen.
- Various scientific studies have proved that meditation techniques have a range of benefits such as greater coherence within the brain, improved sleep, drop in stress and anxiety, a boost in mental alertness and focus, and an increase in self-awareness
- Mindfulness means observing and focusing on whatever is happening in the present moment, in a non-judgmental way. When thoughts or other distractions arise, we observe those as well, and come back to focusing on whatever we were being mindful of.

## **Annexure – Frequently Asked Questions about Mindfulness**

### **Q: What is mindfulness?**

- Mindfulness means observing and focusing on whatever is happening in the present moment, in a non-judgmental way.
- Our minds are usually elsewhere - thinking about the past or worrying and planning for the future. Mindfulness is a way to come back to the present.
- When you're being mindful, you become keenly aware of yourself, your thoughts and your surroundings. But you simply observe these things as they are, without reacting to them or judging them.
- When thoughts or other distractions arise, you observe those as well, and come back to focusing on whatever you were being mindful of.

### **Q: Why has mindfulness become so popular at workplaces in the west?**

- Most of the time you're on autopilot mode, and in the past you could get by in a job like that. You just show up and get stuff done.
- But today, there is so much more pressure, uncertainty and information overload. To be successful, you need to be able to focus, to stay resilient to pressure, to be a responsive leader and use the power of observation to make smart choices.
- There is solid evidence out there on how mindfulness helps in these areas
- So almost every leading company in the west, from Google and Apple to McKinsey and Deutsche Bank, has integrated mindfulness into their employee wellbeing programs

### **Q: Can you give me some examples of how its done?**

- One approach is pausing whatever you're doing and taking a few minutes to practice mindfulness, by either observing yourself or what's around you.
  - You could focus on your breath (as you would in meditation) or you could do a body scan where you focus on each part of your body one at a time and notice how its feeling
  - Or you can focus on what's outside you. Like looking one by one at every object on my desk, including each ones colours and details. Or holding something in my hand, and focusing on its texture and weight as I move it.
- You can also practice mindfulness while doing something else.
  - While you're eating, you could focus on the smell, sight, texture of your food and observe yourself eating it.
  - You could be taking a walk and focusing on how you're taking every step, feeling your foot hit the ground and come back up. Or trying observe the fine details of what is around you.
  - This is why mindfulness is not just a technique but its a way of being.

**Q: How can I use mindfulness specifically at work?**

- Mindfulness helps you in your work irrespective of when you practice it – whether 5 minutes in the morning or a few times throughout the day. By consistently practicing it everyday, you increase your attention, improve your judgment, become less reactive, and feel happier.
- But you can also use it specifically during certain situations at work
  - When you're upset, worried or stressed, your attention and thoughts are all over the place. Pausing to become mindful of whats happening to you or around you helps stabilize

your attention, have a clearer mind and be able to make better choices in what you do or how you respond.

- Even if you aren't stressed, you can use mindfulness to sharpen your presence and decision making. For example, just before an important meeting, you can become mindful of your breath and body and use it to center yourself.

### **Interesting fact**

In 2007, a veteran engineer at Google, Chade-Meng Tan, assembled leading experts in mindfulness, neuroscience and emotional intelligence to develop an internal course for his fellow Googlers. It quickly became the company's most popular training program, called Search Inside Yourself.

Interest from outside Google was so great that the Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute (SIYLI) was established in 2012 as an independent non-profit organization. Today, SIYLI is a globally recognized program, which trains companies and non-profits around the world, including India.

Source: Self-Care course designed by Megha Modi





## **Chapter 8**

# **A Change Plan**

### **Importance**

A well-structured, practical time can enable us to incorporate Yogic Vyaayaam into our routine with ease and joy

## **Week 1: Set Intention, mobilize resources to start practicing (Chapter 1-2)**

Before starting Yogic Vyaayaam, it's important mobilize resources such as space, support from famil and a set time

- Conduct a Baseline Assessment to understand your starting level of health - Blood Tests for your specific health issue (e.g. Diabetes, Cholesterol) or other Measurement (e.g Blood Pressure, Weight) and the comprehensive Swasth-Scale (Book 1)
- Set an intention to do Yogic Vyaayaam for 2 months and listen to your body (support from Book 1)
- Share your intention with your family to get their support (with support from Book 1)
- Set aside an undisturbed 40 minutes for yourself, either as single slot, or in multiple short slots (with support from Book 3)
- Create a daily practice schedule and revise your meal & sleep timings so that they're aligned to your practice schedule (with support from Book 3)
- Gathered the relevant external aids – space, loose clothes, yoga mat or durree (Chapter 2)
- Start sleeping latest by 11:45pm, roughly at the same time each day, and ensure you get 6 hours of sleep
- Learn Loosening practices using the methodology explained below

### **How to I effectively learn the Yogic Vyaayaam explained in this book, on your own**

You can! You will need someone to support you initially, it could be a friend or family member or anyone else. The person need not be a certified Yoga instructor, but should be alert. Most importantly, you should be aware and alert at all times and never

push yourself too hard! Below is a 8-step method designed on best practices for learning, for you to learn a practice within 18 to 24 minutes.

**Step # 1: Introduction & Demo (3 minutes)**

Read name of the practice and reason, see video till the practice demo, Mentally, prepare for what you are learning and an overview of what you will do

**Step #2: Understand (2 minutes)**

Pause video, and understand the practice in depth by reading (a) Benefits (b) Limitations / contra-indications (c) Key points and note if your condition allows you to do the practice. Proceed with the following steps only if your condition is not contra-indicated for the particular practice.

**Step #3: Visualization (0.5 minutes)**

Close your eyes and mentally imagine yourself doing the practice. This internalizes the practice in your memory in a powerful manner

**Step #4: Trial practice (2.5 minutes)**

Practice with the video on. If possible, ask someone to compare your practice with the video and key points and observe your mistakes. This helps you to try the practice and experience it yourself

**Step #5: Deeper understanding – practical & theoretical (3 minute)**

Understand from the person observing, your mistakes and their corrections. Read any suggestions on modifications if you are unable to practice

**Step#6: Re-demo (2.5 minutes)**

Observe the video again till the practice, to get a clearer idea of what to do

**Step #7: Silent practice with live corrections (3 to 9 minutes)**

Practice again without any help from video, but with a person supporting you to make corrections as you practice. This will give you the confidence of being able to do the well, with personal support. Do this multiple times if needed, till you get the practice right independently.

**Step #8: Correct, Silent practice without corrections (1.5 minutes)**

Practice again without any help from video, or person. This will give you the confidence of being able to do the well, without personal support

**Note:** In the plan below, 40 minutes are used daily, but their distribution across types of Vyaayaam is different

**Week 2 to 3: Setting the Foundation through Loosening & Joy (Chapter 3)**

- Do Loosening Practices in the morning. Initially do the practices slowly initially, doing each practice 3 times and taking a total of 10-12 minutes
- Repeat the same in the evening
- Add a practice to your schedule that is your source of joy. It can be art, music, being in nature, reviving an old hobby. Do this for at least 15-20 minutes a day
- Take out extra time to learn practices to be started in the next phase, using the recommended learning methodology
- Start maintaining a daily log of the changes you are beginning to observe in your body.

**Week 4 to 5: Add Praanayaam & Meditation (Chapter 4, 7)**

- Now do loosening practices only once a day

- In the time left, do Praanayaam – with 3 rounds of each practice
- Add a 5 minute meditation anytime during the day
- Continue staying in touch with your source of joy for 15 minutes a day
- Start filling daily checklist given in the Annexure for ease of tracking
- Take out extra time to learn practices to be started in the next phase, using the recommended learning methodology
- Read Book 3 to stay motivated and find solutions to common challenges

**Week 6 to 9: Add Aasan or Joint Pain with a Relaxation (Chapter 5-6)**

- Loosening Practices, each practice 1-2 times (8 minutes)
- Praanaayaam (5 minutes)
- A short meditation (5 minutes)
- Do Joint pain practices for knee pains. Otherwise do Aasan practice (7 minutes)
- Joy – Laughter Yog / Art / Music etc (10 minutes)
- Relaxation during the day (5 minutes)
- Continue filling daily checklist given in the Annexure for ease of tracking
- Revise your daily schedule if needed (with support from Book 3)
- At the end of Week 9, conduct a Midline Assessment using the comprehensive Swasth-Scale (Book 1). Note the various changes that have come about in your sleep pattern, energy

levels, mental clarity and other parameters as indicators of the shift in your well-being

Based on the above results, decide whether you want to continue!

**Week 9 to 26:** Continue with your routine

**Week 26:** Conduct an Endline Assessment to understand the impact on your level of health - Blood Tests for your specific health issue (e.g. Diabetes, Cholesterol) or other Measurement (e.g Blood Pressure, Weight) and the comprehensive Swasth-Scale (Book 2). Based on this, take a decision on whether to continue with this, or switch back to your earlier habits!

## DAILY HEALTH CHECKLIST

### What are the essentials to start the journey of Yogic Vyaayaam?

Baseline health assessment – Blood Tests & other Measurement		Baseline health assessment – fill Swasth Scale (Book 1)	
Set intention to do Yogic Vyaayaam for 2 months to see the difference in yourself		Obtained support of family to not be disturbed during Yogic Vyaayaam	
Set aside 40 minutes for self every day (single slot, or multiple short slots)		Created your daily practice schedule (Book 3)	
Gathered relevant external aids – space, loose clothes, yoga mat or durree		Revised your meal & sleep timings so that they're aligned to your practice schedule	

**How am I moving towards well-being through  
Yogic Aahaar every day?**

<b>Guideline – Whether followed everyday?</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>Th</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sa</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>YOGIC VYAAYAAM (25 minutes)</b>	<b>Total : _____ / 280 points</b>								
Loosening Practices (8 minutes)	10 pts								/70
Praanaayaam (5 minutes)	10 pts								/70
A short meditation (5 minutes)	10 pts								/70
Aasan / Joint pain practices (7 minutes)	10 pts								/70
<b>Deep Rest to PanchKosh (15 minutes)</b>	<b>Total : _____ / 280 points</b>								
Joy – Laughter Yog / Art / Music etc (10 minutes)	25 pts								/175
Relaxation during the day (5 minutes)	5 pts								/35
Sleep: Latest by 11:45pm, roughly same time daily	5 pts								/35
Minimum 6 hours of sleep	5 pts								/35



<b>Moving Forward with Awareness</b>		<b>Total: _____ / 40 pts</b>	
How many points would you like to give yourself, for your efforts towards Yogic Vyaayaam? - Trying to listen to and follow the signals of your body - Drawing inspiration from and staying grounded in your intention - Taking decisions as per your well-being - A feeling of love and care for your body			/40
<b>Total : _____ / 600 pts</b>			
Need deeper reflection about your intention and commitment for well-being, external support needed (< 30%)  179 points or less	Good start, need to consolidate and move forward now! (30% - 50%)  180 to 299 points	Congratulations, you've come more than half the way, a few more steps to go ! (50 – 80%)  300 to 479 points	Excellent ! (80% +)  480 points or more

<b><u>Success:</u></b> What did you do well? What makes you proud of yourself?	<b><u>Planning for future:</u></b> What do you want to do differently from next week?

**What challenges are preventing you from moving towards your Yogic Aahar? How will you address them?**

**What is the positive impact on your body, energy, mind and emotions are a result of your effort so far?**

## Full Practice Set

Centering (Front, Back, Left, Right, Center)*					
LOOSENING PRACTICES					
STANDING	HANDS	ELBOW TO NECK	SPINE	WAIST TO KNEE	CALF TO FEET
Arms Open/ Close	Finger Stretch (Open/ Close)	Elbow Open/ Close	Twist*	Waist Rotate	(w) Calf stretch*
Up/Down Ankle Stretch*	Wrist Rotate	Shoulder Rotate	Side bend*	Knee Rotate	(w) Ankle rotate*
Fingers lock & stretch-AUM	Palms Stretch (1)	Neck move * (1)	Front bend*	(w) Knee bend*	(w) Toe bend
Breathe – (4x)	Breathe – 4x	Breathe – 4x	Breathe – 4x	Breathe – 4x	Breathe – 4x

\* Eyes open& balance kept

(w) Use wall support and/or open eyes based on ease and balance

JOINTPAIN	AASAN		
Passive toe rotation	Relax at Sthitil Dandaasan – 2 breaths	Relax at Shithil Makraasan – 2 breaths	Relax at Shavaasan – 2 breaths
Kneecap movement	<b>SITTING</b>	<b>PRONE</b>	<b>SUPINE</b>
Kneecap tight and release	<b>Tiger breath</b> Relax at Vajraasan	<b>BhujangAasan</b> Relax at Shithil Makraasan	<b>Pavanmukt Aasan</b> <b>Dorsal Stretch</b> breath
Knee Rotate	<b>ShashaankAasan</b>	<b>ShalabhAasan</b>	Relax at Shavaasan
Knee bend and open	Relax at Vajraasan	Relax at Shithil Makraasan	<b>Setubandh Aasan</b> Relax at Shavaasan
Half butterfly	<b>BhadrAasan</b>  <b>Vakra Aasan</b> Relax at Sthitil Dandaasan – 2 breaths	<b>Nauka Aasan</b> breath Relax at Shithil Makraasan – 2 breaths	<b>Crossed Legs</b> (simplified Supta Matseyndr Aasan) Twist Relax at Shavaasan – 2 breaths

### RELAXATION

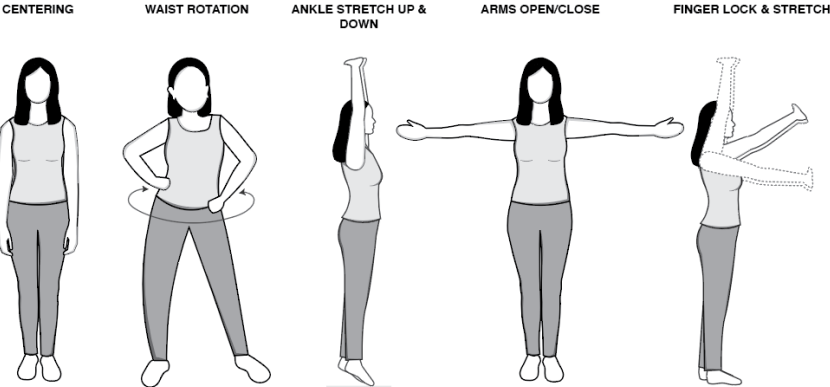
- Viprit Karni (A-Kara)
- A-U-M
- Shav Aasan
- Quick Relaxation Technique
- Part-by-Part Relaxation

<b>PRAANAAYAAM</b>
<p><b><u>Specific to condition (Choose one of these)</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>High BP:</b> Chandra Anulom Vilom (Left in, Right out) – 9</li> <li>• <b>Low BP:</b> Surya Anulom Vilom (Right in, Left out) – 9</li> <li>• <b>Other Participants:</b> Deep Breathing (a) Nose-in Mouth-out Sigh (b) Nose-in Mouth-out Loud (c) Nose-in Mouth-out Quiet (d) Nose-in Nose-out Quiet (e) Nose-in Nose-out Very Slow –3 Round each</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Common and safe for all</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nadi Shuddhi / Anulom Vilom – 5 Rounds</li> <li>• Full Yogic Breath (Abdominal, Chest, Shoulder, All) – 3 Rounds each</li> <li>• Bhamari in Shanmukhi Mudra – 5 Rounds</li> </ul>

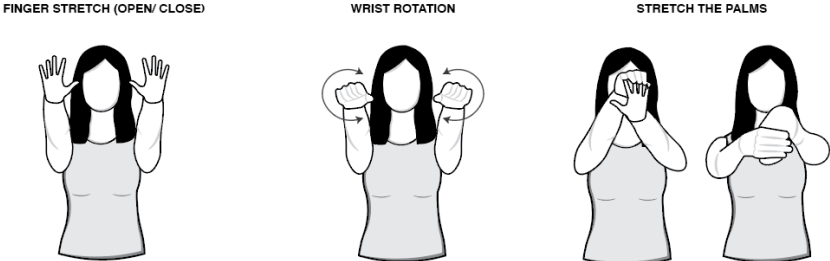
<b>MEDITATION – 5 minutes</b>		
<p><b>Body (Ann-may Kosh):</b></p> <p>Part-wise Body Awareness</p> <p>Breath-Body Awareness &amp; Synchronization</p>	<p><b>Breath (Praan-may Kosh):</b></p> <p>Heartbeat focus</p> <p>Pulse focus</p> <p>Breath observe (Nose, Path inside, match with body)</p>	<p><b>Mind (Manomay Kosh):</b></p> <p>Silence</p> <p>Sound (Mantra, Japa)</p> <p>Image (Symbol, Deity, Metaphor)</p>
<b>PRACTICES FOR PEACE, LOVE, JOY – 15 minutes</b>		
<p><b>Peace</b></p> <p>What - Faith, Surrender, Gratitude</p> <p>How – Journal, Contemplate, Express, Pray</p>	<p><b>Self-Love</b></p> <p>Sanjeevani Affirmation</p> <p>Remembering own qualities</p> <p>Mirror Work</p> <p>Loving Body touch/ massage</p>	<p><b>Joy</b></p> <p>Music – sing/ play/ listen</p> <p>Draw/Paint/Crafts</p> <p>Write/Read</p> <p>Dance/ Drama</p> <p>Time in Nature or whatever gives joy</p>

# Annexure Loosening Practices

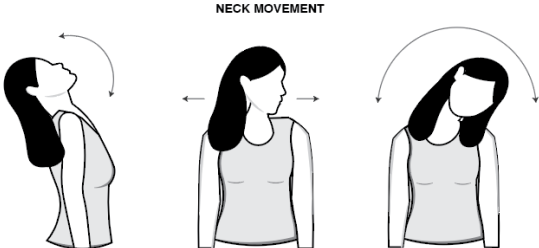
## Set 1: STANDING



## Set 2: HANDS



## Set 3: ELBOW TO NECK



### Set 4: SPINE

FRONT BEND



BACK BEND



TWIST

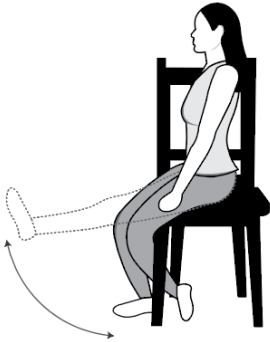


SIDE BEND



### Set 5: KNEE TO FEET

KNEE BEND



CALF STRETCH



ANKLE ROTATE



TOE BEND



## Annexure – Praanaayaam

SUKHAASAN



YOGIC BREATHING



BHRAMARI PRAANAAYAAM



DEEP BREATHING



SURYA ANULOM VILOM



CHANDRA ANULOM VILOM



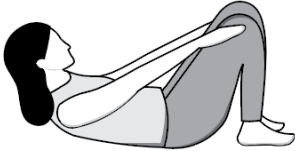


# Annexure – Yog Aasan

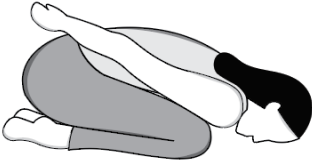
BHADR AASAN/ BHADR KON AASAN



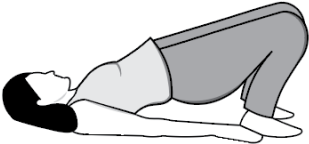
DORSAL STRETCH



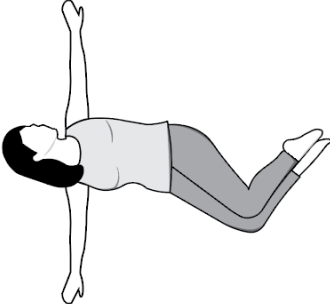
SHASANK AASAN



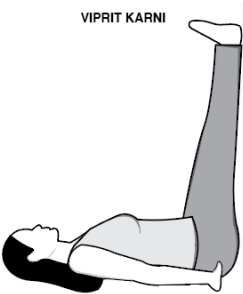
SETUBANDH AASAN



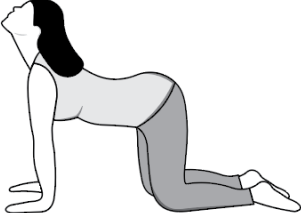
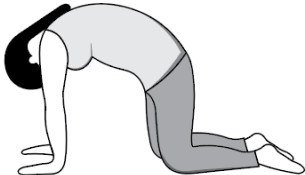
CROSSED LEGS LUMBAR STRETCH



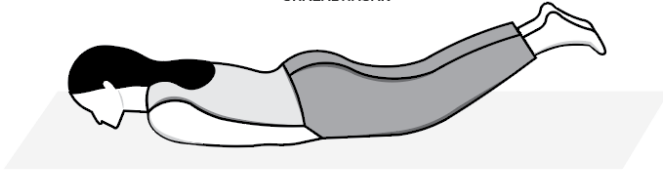
VIPRIT KARNI



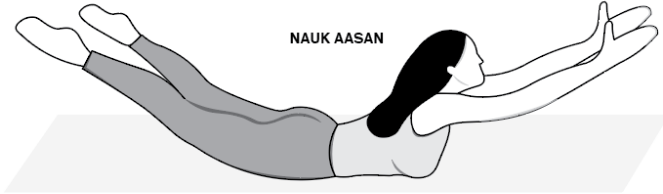
MARJARASAN



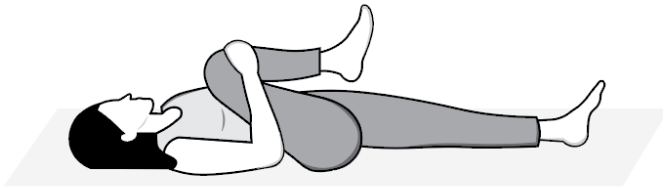
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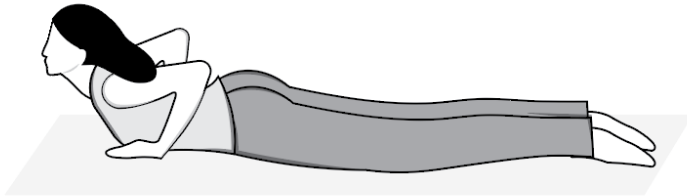
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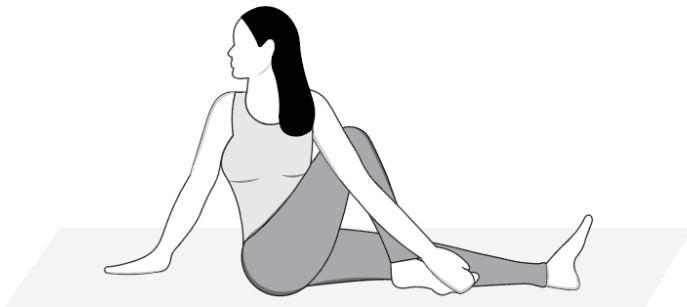
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BHUJANG AASAN



VAKRA AASAN

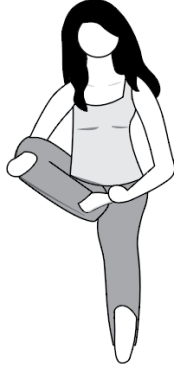


## Annexure – Joint Pain

**KNEE CAP ROTATION**



**HALF BUTTERFLY**



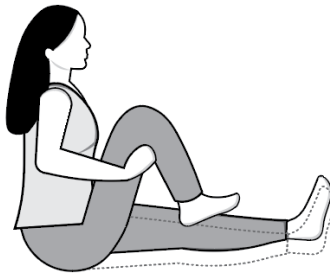
**KNEE CAP TIGHT & RELEASE**



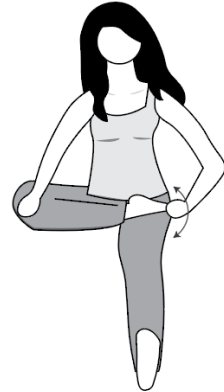
**KNEE ROTATION**



**KNEE BEND & OPEN**



**PASSIVE TOE ROTATION**





## **Chapter 9**

# **And Then Some More...**

### **Importance**

Reading and practicing Yogic Vyaayaam is likely to open up many questions in our minds, some of which are attempted to be answered below.

***Question: Yogic Vyaayaam are completely natural, so why aren't they safe for everyone? Why do they have contra-indications or limitations?***

One could ask same question for a snakebite! Or even a natural, herbal medicine. It is a common misunderstanding that Yogic practices don't have any side effects. This has led to them being taught on a mass scale to people, without any information on their contra-indications. While they benefit a huge proportion of people, we often don't get to know about the small but real percentage of people who end up with a more serious problem than before. This is because Yogic practices are potent. If used correctly, they can contribute immensely to our well-being, and if used incorrectly, they can also cause severe damage.

If you have any severe chronic health issues or are recovering from a severe acute ailment, we highly recommend having a trained Yoga therapist prescribe you practices. If you're only suffering from ailments mentioned in Book 1 as addressable through this series of books, you can practice these safely.

However, in the spirit of taking full ownership for your health, stay alert and aware about the impact of each practice on your body. If something seems very uncomfortable or not suiting you, stop that practice immediately. Our body is our greatest teacher, more than any book or yoga instructor or guru. Trust your intuition and your body's signals.

***Question: Why is so much emphasis given to relaxation, even during simple practices?***

Typical, western models of physical exercise involve a lot of physical and mental stimulation. This is definitely helpful, as it leads to people losing weight and feeling good about themselves, and becoming more active, alert and energetic. In fact, it is a myth that Yogic practices only slow and not rigorous. There are an

entire sets of Yogic practices which are harder and more stimulating than cross-fitting and weight-lifting! One such set is called “Angamardana” – which literally means killing your organs (body) 😊

However, yogis designed Yogic practices based on a holistic and balanced understanding of our system. And a balancing factor for stimulation is relaxation. In fact, most of the physical and mental health issues we face today are a result of over-stimulation. The increasingly popular field of trauma healing through somatic experiencing is leveraging this principle of Yogic Vyaayaam for releasing deep mental and physical traumas, even those across generations. The great Yogi Vivekananda stressed on the importance of learning how and when to focus and de-focus.

The seemingly simple Pranaayam “Anulom Vilom” also called “Naadi Shuddhi” achieves this balance in a simple manner! Each of our nostrils is associated with an opposing aspect of the nervous system – the left nostril is linked to the parasympathetic system (which relaxes us) and the right nostril is linked to the sympathetic system (which stimulates us). No doctor or medical textbook mentions this, as they look at the nose purely anatomically! But each nostril continues to impact the body as it is designed to, just as the sun continues to rise from the East whether we recognize that or not.

The evidence for these opposing functions of the left and right nostrils has now been established using modern scientific instruments and methodology as well. However, both nostrils are not equally active within us at all times. Alternate nostril breathing through “Anulom Vilom” achieves this balance, without us having the slightest of idea! Chandra and Surya Anulom Vilom Pranaayam also leverage this knowledge by helping us regulate our blood pressure and pulse without support of any medications!

Again, it would be a mistake to assume that the benefit is only at a physical or nervous system level. The very name “Naadi Shuddhi” refers to how this purifies the channels through which Praan

passes, indicating the benefit is at a “vital” level also. Extending this based on our understanding of Panchkosh, we can understand the benefits extend to mental, physical and spiritual level also.

***Question: Ok, then how do I relax?***

During all Yogic Vyaayaam, relax at the level of PanchKosh – your body, energy, thoughts and emotions. Refer back to the chapter on Aasan – and embody the two Sanskrit Sutras on Aasan in your practice. Further, the chapter on relaxation mentions a host of other techniques.

Relaxation enables sublimation of many physical and mental traumas, and provides deep rest to our nervous system.

***Question: If I don't have enough time, can I leave my practice mid-way?***

We do not recommend leaving your practice mid-way. We saw in the example above on Anulom Vilom, how our body is designed to deliver functions that we ourselves may not be fully aware of. Yogic Vyaayaam, which relax and stimulate specific body parts, organ systems or praanic energy flows, also work in ways that we may not truly understand, and run the risk of leaving in a state of imbalance, if we leave our practice mid-way.

For instance, most Yogic Vyaayaam have a counterpose, or a complementary practice. Bhujang Aasan and Shalabh Aasan are complements. Pavanmukt Aasan and Setu Bandhaasan are complements. Forward and backward bending are complements. The set of Yogic Vyaayaam defined in this book is based on these complements. Hence, completing the set is important.



If for any reason, you do need to cut short your practice, we recommend definitely completing the sub-set that you have started – e.g. Loosening Practice, or Praanaayaam or Aasan. Also, we recommend closing your practice with any short relaxation technique (could even be Shav Aasan), instead of just getting up and carrying on with your daily activities in a spurt. This would provide your system the opportunity to restore it's natural internal balance of functions.

***Question: I find that when I'm practicing, my mind gets easily distracted and many new ideas get generated, or I remember things I had forgotten. This disrupts my practice.***

This means the Yogic practice is at work! Yogic practices lead to deep internal cleansing through 'sublimation' of trapped thoughts and emotions which lead to disease in our body. Here, without undergoing an externally induced detox or Ayurvedic PanchKarma or without talking to a therapist, we are letting our body, breath and mind become channels for sublimation. It is natural to therefore feel restless and find many thoughts arising within. Sometimes, a certain pose may evoke a sudden emotional response from us. In moments like this, we can support this sublimation by adopting the mental attitude that Patanjali has prescribed in his 2 powerful verses on Aasan. Keeping our mind steady (sthiram) and focussed on the practice, not getting disturbed by the disturbance (sukham), and taking our mind away from the thoughts and towards the feeling of expansion and deep silence present within us at that very moment (anant sampapatti). Our practices thus become meditation in motion.

***Question: What is the nature of benefit derived from Yogic Vyaayaam?***

Each Yogic practice benefits us at multiple levels, corresponding to our constitution, i.e. our PanchKosh. This implies that practices

have physical, vital, mental & emotional and spiritual benefits. The extent of benefit derived will deepen, as our practice deepens. Though we will derive benefits at all levels, even if we are not aware of them. But deeper awareness definitely deepens the impact, based on the principle – Praan flows where attention goes.

***Question: I've learnt all the practices, and am able to do them easily! What next?!***

Patience ☺ Yog is not about doing, it is about being. Yogic practices are designed to get us to a state where we can see our true state, a state in which the question “what next” melts away. While it is true that learning other practices will give us additional benefits, we should examine where the need to do more is coming from.

Is it driven by the feeling that we aren't doing enough? Have we moved from one race to another? Let us first learn to draw the real, deep benefits from our existing practice.

Remember the maxim - “Less is more”? The author of Yog Sutras, Patanjali has given the solution to our internal mental and emotional churning – Abhyaas (practice) and Vairagya (non-attachment). Abhyaas refers to constant, unbroken practice done with faith for a long time. Vairagya refers to not being attached to our likes (e.g. wanting to learn advanced practices) and dislikes (not wanting to do slow, “simple” practices).

One test of when we are ready to move to more “difficult” or “advanced” practices – when the compulsive desire to learn those practices vanishes, and we are settled in our current practice, is when we're ready! At this point, you can find more some practices to add to your routine. Till the time we find ourselves resisting these simple practices, it means we have to go deeper and cultivate more Abhyaas and Vairagya.

***Question: Ok, so how do I deepen my practice?***

The first and the most important guideline is to follow and embody the 2 Sutras explained in the Chapter of Aasan in your practice. A powerful lever, which will enable you is awareness.

First start by being aware of your body and breath, and learning to co-ordinate them. This naturally involves the mind as well.

Then start going deeper into your body changes. Start with observing macro changes in various parts of the body, such as muscles, bones, internal organs. Then move to micro changes such as internal blood circulation, vibrations, tingling, weight and temperature. As you deepen your awareness, the impact on your body will also deepen.

Increasingly maintain your awareness at all levels – physical, mental and emotional. Observe what specific thoughts or emotions come up during specific practices, without getting lost in them. Observe what brings you to a state of peace, love and joy.

A natural outcome of this will be a shift in your practice – your breath will automatically become slower and deeper, resulting in you taking more time to do the same practice. You will be able to stay in the same Aasan longer, starting from a few seconds or breaths and moving towards a minute and even more. Your body will start opening up, becoming more supple and flexible, and very hard when needed. You will start being more calm and less anxious during the rest of the day. These are signs that you're on the right track!

***Question: I wish to learn Yoga in depth, formally. What are some institutions teaching Yoga in the traditional, unspoilt manner?***

Isha Yoga Center, Isha Foundation  
Swami Vivekaananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana (SVYASA)  
Kaivalyadhama  
Sivananda Yoga  
Bihar School of Yoga  
The Yoga Institute, Santacruz Mumbai

**Additional Yogic Vyaayaam - Level 2**

**Dynamic Loosening (20 Rounds each)**

<b>JOGGING*</b>	<b>SPINAL TWISTS</b>	<b>OTHERS</b>
Normal Forward Backward Sideways	Front-Back Side Twist	Rocking Rolling Alternate Parvataasan & Bhujangaasan

**Mukha Dhouti followed by Quick Relaxation Technique**

**Pranayaam (3 Rounds)**

Kapaalbhaati – 50 to 100 times is one round, followed by a gap  
Cooling Pranaayaam – (a) Shitali (b) Shitkari (c) Sadant

**Aasan**

Vriksh Aasan*	Shashaank Aasan
Ardha Chakra Aasan*	Gomukh Aasan
Ardha Kati Chakra Aasan	Vakr Aasan
Paad-Hast Aasan	

\* Practices requiring eyes to stay o

And Then Some More...

## **Additional Resources and About Us**

# About Swasth Yog Institute

## Our Vision:

For all to live fully and freely

## Our Mission:

To create an ecosystem  
which enables a state of internal harmony (Yog)  
within each individual's body, vital energies, mind and emotions,  
thus freeing them to be their true, full Self,  
and reach their potential.

## **Current reality**

A state of internal harmony within our body, vital energies, mind and emotions, enables us to be our true self, and reach our potential. Today, one or more of these are misaligned, within many of us. e.g. we are great problem solvers, but our ability to deal with emotions is limited. We are focused on creating a conducive external environment for us, but our inner landscape gets lesser attention. The result of this widespread internal misalignment is visible in the form of “dis-eases” across individuals, families, organizations and society.

Some indicators of “dis-eases”, i.e. absence of natural ease are: Increasing incidence of mental and psychosomatic (“stress-born”) chronic ailments in *individuals*, strain in relations in *families*, *depression* amongst youth resulting in suicides, disengagement and attrition in *organizations*, damage to the *environment*, and increasing *crimes rates* and *inequities in society* (such as income and gender)



### **What makes the situation persist?**

An individual is directly touched by a range of other individuals and institutions across one's lifecycle – parents, school, college, employers, media, healthcare and wellness providers, to name a few. A conducive ecosystem with many pieces in the puzzle – education, professional growth, organizational development, healthcare and wellness – can enable harmony over the entire lifecycle of an individual.

Sadly, the ecosystem today is far from its potential. Our education includes language, science and math, but does not teach us how to handle ourselves. Employers invest more resources on strategies and skill-building than culture building, role-modeling and supporting staff to be their best. Incentives of healthcare providers are not aligned to health. There is limited formal support for life changing transitions such as starting work, getting married, becoming a parent, and retiring.

Many issues prevent stakeholders in the ecosystem from contributing effectively – settling to address symptoms rather than the root cause, silo-ed approach with little cross-sectoral collaboration, misaligned incentives, to name a few.

### **How will we create a new ecosystem?**

We will build and nurture a community of leaders, who can support a range of individuals, institutions and communities to reach their potential, living their own potential in the process.

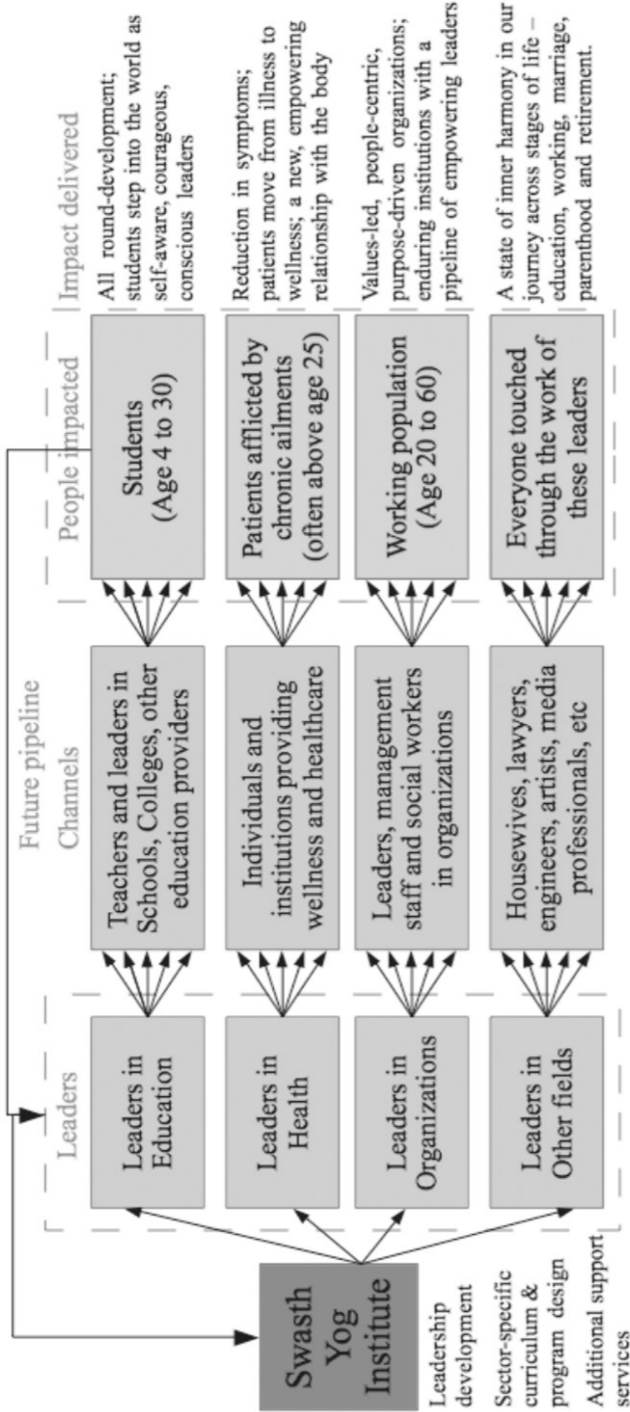
Based on a harmony-centered approach (Yog), the leaders will operate with

- Internal harmony (with our true 'self' by aligning all dimensions of our being)
- External harmony: Driving social transformation in a way that

allows us to stay true to ourselves while also bringing forth the potential in others

This will be achieved through

- **Leadership Development programs** to build self-led leaders who embody being the change they wish to see in the world. We will focus primarily for 3 sectors – health and wellness, education and running organizations especially in the development sector. The programs will be customized to meet leaders of leaders with varying contexts and skill-level, catering to management as well as grassroots leaders.
- **Sector-specific Curriculum & Program design** to enable leaders to tangibly integrate the learnings in the sector of their work. The in-house curriculum will support practical application of Yog in the above sectors. Leaders will be certified to conduct these programs for social transformation
- **Additional support services** such as consulting, research, quality monitoring and entrepreneur incubation to establish new enterprises.



## **Key principles behind program design and resulting decisions**

**Affordable:** Developing our Intellectual Property (IP) instead of using expensive existing IPs; disruptively affordable pricing; range of price points to meet the needs of various segments

**Accessible:** Offered in regional languages; usable across sectors (e.g. organization development, education, wellness); Open source model for IP; modular programs to suit participant need

**Sustainable:** Fee-based delivery; cross subsidization models; remuneration for staff; expanding internal talent pipeline; based on time-tested Yogic wisdom of inside-out transformation

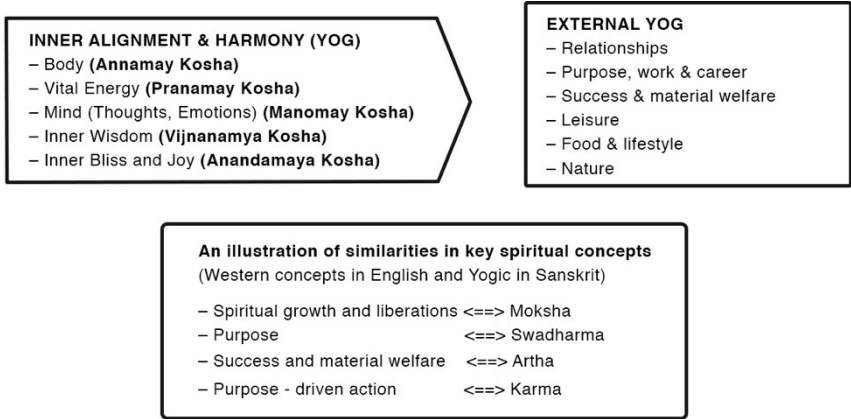
## **Our Secret Sauce – Yog**

**The Potential:** History is replete with examples of luminaries realizing their potential as individuals and as leaders of social transformation - Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekaananda, Albert Einstein, Maya Angelou...We believe this potential lies in people from all walks of life - managers and entrepreneurs, teachers, social workers, doctors, housewives, artists, media professionals, lawyers and engineers.

The “secret sauce” to build stronger ecosystems enabling us to thrive and reach our potential is Yog. Yog is the science to restore internal harmony within all dimension of existence – our Body, Vital Energy, Mind & Emotions, Inner Wisdom and Joy. Yog is a system for living. Its power can be compounded with aligned modern tools such as mindfulness, life coaching, body wisdom, somatics, affirmations, art-based therapy, non-violent communication, to name a few.

Adapted to today's context with aligned modern tools, Yog can make us achieve far more than reversal of dis-eases. Yog can

bring us closer to our true potential – as individuals, organizations, and societies. This is a universally applicable approach needing minor local customizations.



### First area of focus – health and wellness

Our focus post conception in 2017 has been to establish a solid proof of concept in one sector – health and wellness. We are building Swasth Yog Institute as an action research center focused on building a community empowering health eco-system that integrates the knowledge of the west and the wisdom of the east.

This is enabled through the following key activities:

- Knowledge building and research
- Integration of knowledge into standards & processes (SOPs)
- Conducting training
- Monitoring quality of health and healthcare services and service providers to build accountability
- Providing Certifications

### Highlights of first two years

- **Well-being Curriculum Design:** We designed “*Sanjeevani*”,

a 55-hour course for patients suffering from various chronic conditions. ~100 participants across 8 cohorts underwent the program and experienced an average 67% reduction in symptoms over an 8-week period. The multi-disciplinary research resulted in a documented standardized curriculum and program design which is modular, customized and scalable with quality audio-visual content.

- **Clinic-in-a-box Design:** Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Standard Treatment Guidelines (STGs) to deliver accountable primary care services, piloted through our network of 24+ Swasth India Medical Centers.
- **Training of Health Professionals:** Primary care physicians certified to treat key non-communicable diseases – hypertension and diabetes. A pilot undertaken to develop a new cadre of health coaches who can deliver the Wellness Curriculum, enabling communities to take charge of their well-being.
- **Early pilots of Leadership building:** Emotional intelligence workshops facilitated and personal coaching delivered to ~75 leaders across levels in Swasth with a panel of 20 life coaches over a 3-6-month period. The program received satisfaction ratings of 88%, and 92% of leaders reported an increased sense of their leadership potential – increase in confidence, better interpersonal relationships and clarity on vision for themselves.
- **Quality Monitoring:** An accountability system designed for ongoing measurement of quality of service delivery by a health system. The system was piloted with over 200 staff members of Swasth Foundation, simulating a range of players in the health ecosystem – medical professionals, clinical assistants, health coaches, warehouse, pathology lab, back-end services.
- **Certification and Key partnerships:** Affiliation from VYASA (mother organization of India's only Yoga University) to offer

Yoga Instructor Certification courses.

### **Journey ahead**

From 2019 onwards, we intend to build on the foundation in health through the following areas of focus:

- **Research & Knowledge Building:** A Randomized Control Trial (RCT) to assess and establish impact of the wellness program “Sanjeevani” on chronic ailments. Knowledge Building in additional domains such as women’s health, dentistry, acute diseases, child health, other chronic diseases, cancer.
- **Development of Integrated standards:** Standard Treatment Guidelines (STGs) integrating Allopathic & Ayurvedic drugs. Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) for various players of a health system (simulated internally at the mother organization, Swasth Foundation)
- **Community Empowerment:** Development of additional consumer warranty products and designing other interventions to enable communities to hold healthcare providers accountable
- **Training a wide range of leaders:** Building self-led leaders equipped with key skills to Lead from the Self - coaching, training, partnering and management. This will maximize their potential and enable them to create a multiplier effect at their workplace. Various programs will be designed and offered, such as building the first cadre of Health Coaches with women from low-income communities, and training doctors on self-leadership and prevention modalities
- **Quality Monitoring:** Develop a comprehensive accountability system to measure quality of processes and medical protocols
- **Additional Partnerships to offer certifications** to Life

## Coaches, Trainers and in Nutrition

Additionally, we will take our first steps in education and organization building by

- Training middle level managers and supervisory staff in a non-profit
- Piloting a leadership building intervention with school leaders in education

**The Dream:** As Vivekaananda said, each soul is potentially divine. We believe these seekers are everywhere – as teachers, housewives, social workers, doctors, lawyers, engineers, artists, media professionals, managers and entrepreneurs. We aim to ultimately be accessible to anyone who wishes to access their divinity to reach their potential, and enable others to do the same.



# About our Well-being Programs

## **Programs to support our journey to Well-being**

The flagship program conducted by Swasth Yog Institute is “Sanjeevani” - a 55-hour course over a 7 week period for anyone suffering from conditions such as Diabetes, HTN, Arthritis, PCOD, Thyroid, Back pain, Chronic Acidity. Well-being is addressed through a group course and personalized health coaching.

## **SOME TOOLS USED**

- Ayurvedic & Yogic Food
- Body Wisdom & Awareness
- Mindfulness & Self-awareness
- Aasans & Praanaayaam
- Creative / Art based therapy
- Life & Health Coaching
- Sound Resonance
- Affirmations & Mirror Work
- Emotional release & handling

## **RANGE OF INTERVENTIONS**

- Group Sessions
- Health level measurement
- Self-learning resources
- Personal consultation
- Diet & Lifestyle assessment
- Assessment of Learning
- Whatsapp Support Group
- Cooking demos & pot-lucks
- Participant-led celebrations at end!

**What does the course offer?**

- **“Swaasthya” (Wellness):** A tangible, measurable difference in health which YOU can perceive. A feeling of well-being, being active and energetic.
- **“Swaraaj” (Independence):** All the knowledge, motivation and skills you need to be able to continue on your journey to reversing your ailment independently, over time
- **“Sah-Parivaar” (With family):** Tools to impact and influence the health of your family, friends and larger community

### Impact of intervention

Batches covering a wide range of participants – age groups, ailments, levels of severity, geography and cultural backgrounds have undergone the course and experienced the following results:

- **High engagement** - 98% satisfaction, 85% attendance, 85% successful completion rate ( $\geq 70\%$  marks in theory & practical assessments).
- 60% **reduction in symptoms** on a self-reported scale covering over 50 parameters.
- 95% of the participants reported **feeling empowered** to take charge of their health.
- **Reversal of many ailments** such as PCOD, Infertility and Hypertension post the course.
- In a **long-term impact** survey administered 6-12 months post course completion, 95% participants reported to be in a better state of well-being than a year ago, and 56% felt that the course had made a significant impact on their life.

### What makes the program unique

- **Sustainable solution** for long-term health – addresses the

root cause of ailments

- Interventions at **multiple levels** – body, mind, vital energy, inner wisdom & being
- Grounded in a **holistic understanding** of Yog & Ayurved, but adapted to today's context, using relevant modern tools
- Meets the needs of a **wide range** of participants – age groups and background, type of ailments and levels of severity
- In-depth understanding of concepts through a **combination of theoretical and experiential learning** and practice
- Extended course duration, so that participants can **experience measurable changes** in state of health (previous batches of participants have experienced a 30-50% reduction in their symptoms)
- **Empowers participants** to take health in their hands, and walk their path independently after program completion
- A **joyful journey!** Participants discover their inner child, hidden talents, and dreams in the process...

### **Innovations in the delivery of program**

- **Use of a Wellness curriculum:** The curriculum is **holistic, modular** (deliverable in a range of formats, levels and modules), **customized** (to target conditions) and **scalable** with quality (audio-visual content).
- **Financially sustainable model for course delivery:** The program has been primarily delivered to low-income communities served by Swasth Foundation. A user-fee based model can ensure recover ongoing operating costs of conducting courses (rent, trainer salaries, marketing, learning material)
- **Course Delivery:** Multiple formats can be created to suit the needs and interests of participants. People can choose from a variety of **modules** as per interest or relevance for their health **condition**. Each Module can be broken down into **levels**, making it easier to integrate changes gradually, and also building

motivation to move up levels over time.

**Illustrative formats of modular courses which can be derived from the main course**

- **Module-wise**: E.g. Nutrition, Healthy Cooking Alternatives, Understanding Diabetes, Yogic Aasan and Praanaayaam, Emotional release techniques, Art-based therapy (e.g. Performing arts)
- **Condition-wise**: Diabetes, Child Nutrition, Hypertension
- **Timing formats**: Daily, Bi-weekly, Weekly, Fortnightly, Monthly
- **Duration of engagement**: 1 Day, 1 week, 6-8 week, ongoing wellness journey

**Note**: These are “courses”, not workshops. Courses follow best practices of teaching to maximize engagement and learning outcomes for the participants, facilitate in-depth understanding of concepts through theoretical and experiential learning, consist of rigorous theoretical and practical assessments, and ultimately equip participants to continue walking their path independently post the intervention.

**Why does this approach work?**

1. **Multi-dimensional** approach to well-being
2. **Addresses root cause of ailments**
3. **Measurable** impact on health outcomes
4. **Cuts through the clutter of conflicting “tips”** by integrating traditional and modern sciences
5. **Participant-centric** intervention design

**Key success factors and how they manifest in program design**

**Multi-dimensional** approach to well-being –

The program integrates interventions for the PanchaKoshas, the 5 Yogic sheaths of existence - Body (Ann-may Kosh), Vital Energy (Praanaamay Kosh), Mind (Thoughts, Emotions) (Manomay Kosh), Inner Wisdom (Vignanamay Kosha), Inner Bliss and Joy (Aaanandmay Kosh)

Addresses **root cause** of ailments –

Takes an “inside out” approach by addressing underlying stress/emotions, which are the root cause of ailments. This has been established by Yogic sciences. The field of Psycho-endo-neuro-immunology too, has established the link between emotions and health, for chronic ailments.

**Measurable impact** on health –

Over 50 parameters are tracked regularly, enabling participants and health coaches to see progress, and course correct accordingly.

**Cuts through the clutter** of “tips” –

Integrates time-tested traditional wisdom (such as Yog, Ayurved) with modern sciences (such as Allopathy, Psychology, Mindfulness, Nutrition)

**Participant-centric design –**

- Focus on simplification and practical application of knowledge
- Participants empowered to take health in their hands, and walk their path independently
- Wide variety of offerings and formats available
- Personalized lifestyle modification planning, individual prescriptions for Aasan/ Praanaayaam
- A joyful journey! Participants discover their inner child, hidden talents and dreams along the way...

## **About our mother organization – Swasth Foundation**

Swasth Foundation ([www.swasth.org](http://www.swasth.org)) is a not-for-profit social enterprise founded in 2009 and committed to health and joy for all. Swasth's mission is to build and demonstrate a sustainable and accountable health eco-system with joy. Towards this mission, Swasth Foundation operates 2 programs in addition to Swasth Yog Institute:

**Swasth India Medical Center:** India's largest non-governmental clinic network comprising 24 neighborhood one-stop-shop primary health centers offering comprehensive health services in 2 departments – family medicine and dentistry. Each as a one-stop-shop, each clinic treats infectious diseases like fever, malaria, dengue and also manages chronic diseases like hypertension and diabetes. The clinic also performs dental procedures from extractions and root canal, to oral surgeries and dentures. Swasth's clinics offer innovations, the first of the kind in the healthcare space - like the lowest price guarantee and reporting time guarantee on Pathology Lab Services; 3-year warranty on dental treatment and a safety warranty on family health treatments. Each of these, is an enforceable quality assurance, designed to deliver a patient-centric experience.

**Aanand Aalaya (“Abode of Joy”):** A wellness center operated by a health coach – a new cadre of health professionals who harmonise the wellness disciplines of Yog and Life Coaching, thus empowering the community to take charge of their own health. The center conducts various workshops and screening camps in the community and offers wellness services like yoga classes, yoga courses, nutrition courses, etc at the center. At Swasth, our impact and outcome metrics reflect our commitment to delivering high-quality, patient-centric, affordable

services at scale to the urban poor. Our programs are designed to deliver high-quality at low cost (half of market rates), in a scalable and self-sustaining manner. As of 2019, Swasth has served 800,000+ patient visits, delivering direct savings of ~INR 10 crore of patients, with a 4.2-star rating.

*At Swasth Foundation, we aim for all to be in Self and experience health and joy. This is reflected in our motto - 'Swasth Raho, Aaanandit Raho' (Be in Self, Be in Joy)*



## My Journey

by **Garima Gupta Kapila, Founder of Swasth Yog Institute**

*Garima graduated from IIT Delhi in 2005 and started her career as a management consultant at McKinsey & Company's India practice. She joined Teach For India (TFI)'s core start-up team in October 2008 and setup operations in Mumbai and managed its subsequent scale-up. She moved to Swasth in 2012, heading multiple verticals over the next 3 years focusing on improving performance & productivity, institutionalizing systems & processes as well as training staff for scale. In 2015, she took up the role as the COO of Swasth, overseeing Operations & Quality Improvement.*

*Garima has an avid interest in Yoga, and established the Swasth Yog Institute, after obtaining a Post Graduate Diploma in Yoga Therapy (and Yoga Instructor's course) from S-VYASA, India's only Yoga University. She is also a Certified Professional Coach from the International Coaching Federation (ICF) and completed her ACC accreditation from ICF in 2018. Additionally, she obtained a Plant-Based Nutrition Certificate with a scholarship from the T. Colin Campbell Center for Nutrition Studies in 2019. A life-long learner Garima is currently pursuing an MS in Yoga from SVYASA, studying Integral Somatic Psychology and has commenced her journey in research as a Lown Scholar selected by the Harvard School of Public Health.*

I have a deep desire for seeing a world where we can all live fully and freely, where each of us can feel – “I'm free to be me”. A world where all of us can reach our highest potential, with the full support of our body, in our endeavors.

*This is my belief:* The human body is an advanced machine, designed to last for over a hundred years, and support us in our quest to achieve our highest potential, to be the best we can be. The miracle of life has given our body the ability to recover and heal itself. Ailments can be reversed, health restored, immunity built for future well-being. It IS possible to reverse the effects of aging, and to be healthier than we were 10 years ago!

This belief is not born out of reading books and having intellectual conversations, but by living this truth. As I look back, I see three distinct chapters unfolding simultaneously in my life.

### **Chapter one – From Yoga to Yog**

At the age of 23, while living my professional dream, as a consultant in India's premier management consultant firm, I had to reluctantly go to a Yoga ashram for a month, due to a debilitating back-pain, not solvable through any form of western or a range of alternative treatments including Ayurvedic massages, Yoga Aasanas and even Hypnotherapy. It was here that I discovered "Yog" (now known as Yoga) preserved in its true form. I learnt that Yog (literally meaning "union" or "harmony") is not bodily postures & contortions – but being connected to the body, vital energies, emotions, thoughts and inner joy. This connection took me to the root cause of my ailment – misalignment between my corporate work and my interest in the social sector. The way my body responded as I connected with this underlying cause was nothing short of miraculous. Since that time in 2007, my backpain has never returned, whether I'm swimming, running, trekking or working late. In the process, I also discovered a way to dissolve the conflict between my skills and interests – becoming a consultant in the social sector practice of the Firm where I worked.

I also got to know of thousands of cases of successful disease reversal through Yogic practices, documented & validated by modern scientific research. Over the next 10 years, this interest in well-being led me to dozens of explorations and readings. I also got trained formally and completed my Yoga Instructor's Course, followed by a Post Graduate Diploma in Yoga Therapy from S-VYASA, India's only Yoga University.

## **Chapter two – From Diets to Ayurvedic & Yogic Aahaar**

Along the way, I also discovered the importance of *Yogic Aahaar* (food) in today's context. All around – there were so many diets being proposed – high-carb, low-card, high-protein, low-protein, paleo, keto, fruit, vegan... While these diets looked at the body's need for nutrients, it was rare to find practitioners who saw *Aahaar* in a yogic manner – i.e. considering the food's vital energies, the effect of combining foods in a meal, the role of our mind and emotions in Aahaar. I found the answer in Ayurvedic principles, with some tweaks in application, given our context today.

Applying these in my life led to gradually shedding the excess weight I had put on, my skin clearing up, and a feeling of freshness and lightness through the day. The result - today, I feel 10 years younger and 10 times happier! My belief became rock solid when I found my family members also reversing many health issues they had come to accepted as part of life, by applying the learnings. There was a gradual reduction in medications for hypothyroid, high blood pressure, diabetes and nutrient deficiencies which being taken for several years by my mother-in-law (our first patient, who whom I'm forever grateful!).

Also, I understood the failures of prevalent approaches towards well-being - traditional sciences have been oversimplified today – yog has become “yoga” and Ayurved has become “Ayurveda”. Yoga is understood as a series of asanas and pranaayaams, and

Ayurveda is associated with Panchakarma massages and medications. Further, pure practitioners of these sciences have sometimes failed to adapt their “language” and practices to the modern context, or have retreated into secrecy to preserve the purity of their practice. On the other hand, “modern” western science suffers from an overload of information, conflicting research, mounting evidence on the damaging “side” effects of medications and surgical interventions and multiple retractions of widely accepted “modern” research after being disproved by long-term studies.

### **Chapter three – Harmony within Mind and Emotions**

One more piece in my journey needed to be aligned – my personality led by my mind and emotions

The story of the first 33 years of my life had been a struggle of finding, and trying to attain my highest potential. For the longest time, I believed the way to do that was to become **free and perfect**. This quest for perfection drove me to become an over achiever at a young age – top 100 All India Rank in IIT, get the dream job as a management consultant, and head teams of 100+ people in my 20s. At a personal level, my desire was always to be “strong, confident, independent”, unlike the stereotypical women. This made me rise above “feminine” looks and emotions, take charge of my life, live life at my own terms and not as per societal norms.

Until I realized, that even after doing and getting all the above, I wasn't happy. The more I achieved, the more worthless I felt. The more I fought norms, the more I felt imprisoned. Externally, I had all the freedom and validations I needed – supportive parents, spouse, in-laws, friends, colleagues as well as resume value achievements to die for. But none of it made me feel perfect and free. As I cut needs, desires, relationships and external measures

of success, by giving up the corporate sector and transitioning to a simpler life in the development sector, I was healthier and happier, but still felt imprisoned and unworthy. Until I realized the person holding myself back was me. And then I started fighting myself. Trying to change myself. Become a better human being. I meditated, travelled, attended workshops, read, tried to give importance to relationships, did whatever I could to “find myself”. The process was tough! It was so hard to become a yogi – the more I tried, the harder it seemed!

And then I realized, where these 2 intense needs were coming from:

- The need for freedom, was actually the need to be free from my self-limiting beliefs, and to step into my Being, like a child. But I did not recognize that my need for freedom had become so intense, that I had become bound by it!
- The need to achieve my highest potential, which often manifested in a manic drive for perfection, stemmed from the insecurities I had developed myself, in my early childhood years and reinforced to myself throughout life.

I realized that to break this vicious cycle of wanting freedom and to be perfect – I had to step away from “wanting” to “being”. I am, right here, right **now**, free and the best I can be. I have that choice at every instant. The free child I want to find again, lives inside me. To access it, the place to start is **LOVE**. Love and acceptance for myself – my mistakes, wrong-doings, shortcomings, life choices, past, present, future.

#### **Chapter four - Domino effect**

Suddenly, the pieces started fitting together. I was doing the same activities, but the feeling and therefore the outcome changed. Writing became a way to facilitate a dialogue between my inner child and critic, workshops became an avenue to test out small

changes in my being, work became a means to be connected to my fellow human beings, meeting family and friends became an avenue to share and exchange ideas, music a means to access and express the whole range of my emotions, reading a way to receive messages from the universe.

And then small changes in **outcomes** began to emerge – prose changed to poetry, restricted movements to freely dancing, doing to being, later to now. In the process, I re-discovered many **parts** inside me – the innocent inner child, my feminine part, my masculine strength, the parental critic who actually wants the best for me.

I began to **feel** things I had forgotten –

- Love for all parts of me, and others
- Joy at the lightness of being, externalized through creative expression
- Harmony within (mind, body, soul, emotions, masculine-feminine) and outside (relationships, nature)
- Freedom from myself
- Gratitude

Most of all, I learnt to get truly connected to the source of answers to all questions – my inner self / voice / wisdom / intuition. I was no longer alone, I always had a companion inside!

## Chapter five - Unravelling the mystery

With this being, I could unlock the secret which I had almost given up on being able to understand! Yes, I found the purpose of my life. *Ma raison-d-etre*. The reason for the birth of this earth-bound visitor, I. The most liberating part of this knowledge, was that I was but an instrument in the hands of God.

It started as designing a well-being program based on the principles of Yog and Ayurved, but adapted correctly in today's context, combined with relevant modern tools & research. In doing so, I feel blessed to have been able to combine all the skills in my palette – engineering a well-being program, delivering measurable impact through management principles, incorporating best practices in adult learning techniques, knowledge of yog therapy, nutrition and life coaching. This led me to Swasth Yog Institute.

Now the goal for me has shifted. I'm no longer looking to be perfect, and free. Because I AM perfect. I am a child of God. And knowing that has made me free. Knowing my purpose, which seemed burdensome for a while, doesn't seem so anymore. My purpose exists, with or without me knowing it. My purpose, like my life, is not mine! I am an instrument of God or whatever other name we wish to give to the universal force that creates, sustains and destroys us. if I can enable the universe to meet its will through me, then I will have lived fully and freely, and also reached my highest potential.

# Resource People and Institutions

Sharing, not hoarding is the spirit of yog, of union. In this spirit, we have created the following YouTube channel with resources for well-being: <https://tinyurl.com/swasth-yog-institute>  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzP\\_q2xogzk4Zf7J56Mkn\\_g](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzP_q2xogzk4Zf7J56Mkn_g)

The channel contains videos of recipes as per Yogic Aahaar guidelines, Yogic practices (such as Praanaayaam, Asan, Loosening Practices, Dynamic Practices), Guided Audios for Meditations, Talks on Spirituality, to name a few. All are welcome to use and refer these resources. Also, feel free to email us to get access to the templates and checklists used in the book.

Following organizations and people could be potential resources for you, as you chart out your journey. Their work has been a great support to us in re-discovering Yog, and we are forever indebted to them.

## **Yog, Ayurved & Body Wisdom**

- Isha Foundation
- Kaivalyadhama (Lonavala)
- The Yoga Institute (Santacruz, Mumbai)
- Swami Vivekaananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana
- Dr Robert Svoboda
- Dr Claudia Welch
- Suzanne Scurlock-Durana

## **Life Purpose Work**

- Mission Impossible Leadership Program



## **Emotional development**

- Leadership That Works (LTW)
- Indian Society for Applied Sciences & Behaviour (ISABS)
- Dr Wasundhara Joshi (*Changeworks*)
- Louise Hay
- Manav Sadhana
- Sukhvinder Sircar (*Joyous Woman*)
- Vikram Bhatt (*Leadership That Works*)

## **Yogic Aahaar - Food, Nutrition**

- Vaidya Atreya Smith
- Dr Vasant Lad
- PHC Clinic and Nutrition Science (*Bengaluru*)
- Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (*PCRM*)
- Sanctuary for Health and Reconnection to Animals and Nature (*SHARAN*)
- The Health Awareness Center (*THAC*)
- T. Colin Campbell Center for Nutrition Studies

## **Spirituality**

- Art of Living
- Chinmaya Mission
- Isha Foundation
- Mukeshaanand (<http://www.mukeshaanand.org/>)
- Ramana Maharshi Ashram
- Vipassana

# References

## Additional Reading – Books

Course documents of Post-Graduate Diploma in Yoga Therapy, SVYASA University

Course documents of Yoga Instructors Certificate, SVYASA University

Yoga Instructor Reading Material by Quality Council of India

## Useful Websites, Additional Reading, Video Links

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asana#Number\\_of\\_positions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asana#Number_of_positions)

<https://www.artofliving.org/yoga/patanjali-yogasutra/knowledge-sheet-83>

[http://isha.sadhguru.org/yoga/yoga\\_articles\\_hatha\\_yoga\\_asanas/asanas-guide-align-divine-sadhguru/#1](http://isha.sadhguru.org/yoga/yoga_articles_hatha_yoga_asanas/asanas-guide-align-divine-sadhguru/#1)

<https://www.innerengineering.com/online/blog/how-to-just-relax>

<http://isha.sadhguru.org/yoga/meditations/benefits-of-meditation/>

<https://www.innerengineering.com/online/blog/so-you-think-you-want-to-meditate>

## Guided Tutorial for Hand Reflexology –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSW22KMwfto>