PG YG S1-03 (DSC)

TWO YEAR MASTER'S DEGREE COURSE

(CBCS in Accordance with NEP 2020)

SEMESTER - I

PRACTICAL - YOGA PRACTICES- I

Guru Prasad Das School of Interdisciplinary and Vocational Studies

KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

This is the third Discipline Specific Core (DSC) course of the MA Yoga Programme. This course introduces the learners to YOGA PRACTICES- I. This course will introduce you with the various topics of Yoga practices asana, pranayama, mudra bandha, shatkarma and meditation. There are fourteen units in this course. The 1st unit introduces you to prayer. The 2nd unit deals with Yogic Sukshma Vyayama. The 3rd unit is about the Dhyanasanas discussed in detail. The 4th unit is about the Resting postures. The 5th unit is about the Surya Namaskar discussed in detail. The 6th unit is about the Cultural postures (Standing) discussed in detail. The 7th unit is about the Cultural postures (Sitting) discussed in detail. The 8th unit is about the Cultural postures (Supine).

The 9th unit is about the Cultural postures (Prone). The 10th unit deals with the Breathing exercise/Pranayama. The 11th unit is about the Mudra and Bandha. The 12th unit is about the Mudras. The 13th unit is about the Shatkarmas. The 14th unit is about the Meditation.

While going through a unit, you may also notice some text boxes, which have been included to help you know some of the difficult terms and concepts. You will also read about some relevant ideas and concepts in 'LET US KNOW' along with text we have kept 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS' questions in each unit. These have been designed to self-check your progress of study. The hints for the answers to these questions are given at end of the unit. We advise that you answer the questions immediately after finish reading the unit in which these questions occur. We have also included a few books in the 'FURTHER READING' list which will be helpful for further consultation.

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UNIT 1: PRAYERS

UNIT STRUCTURE

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1.2 Introduction

1.3 Guru Vandana Prayer

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1.6 Sthiti positions for Standing Asanas

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1.8 Sthiti positions for Supine Asanas

1.9 Sthiti positions for Prone Asanas

1.10 Let us Sum up

1.11 Further Reading

1.12 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.13 Model Questions

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, the students will be able to –

- about the meaning of Guru Vandana Prayer
- about the meaning of Gayatri Mantra Prayer
- about the meaning of Patanjali Vandana Prayer
- about techniques of various Sthiti positions of Asanas

1.2 INTRODUCTION

Prayer is a kind of connection with God. We accomplish this by praising Him, admitting our sins to Him, thanking Him and asking Him for our wants and desires. Prayer is important because it can create a stronger relationship with God, provide guidance and consolation, increase faith, allow for intercession, assist resist temptation and align one's will with God.

Prayer entails emptying out your heart to God, telling Him about your joys and sorrows. Everyone in the universe should pray. It draws people closer to God and can be a powerful cause for change in their life. Because of their inherent faith, teaching our Play Group youngsters to pray is one of the simplest tasks. A youngster can begin learning to pray before he or she learns to read or write. A child can sense the quality just by observing the family's elders pray. Praying, like any other positive habit, can be reinforced as an early part of life.

On the other hand, in yoga asana practice, the starting position is Sthiti. Sthiti literally translates as "to stand" or "to be in a state of". Yoga, as a practice, frequently emphasizes striking a balance between effort and ease, strength and flexibility and stability and comfort, which is related to the concept of Sthiti.

1.3 GURU VANDANA PRAYER

GURU VANDANA

गुरुर्ब्रह्मागुरुर्विष्णुःगुरुर्देवोमहेश्वरः
गुरुःसाक्षात्परब्रह्मतस्मैश्रीगुरवेनमः
ॐशान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Gurur Brahma Gurur Vishnu Gurur Devo Maheshwaraha
Guru Saakshaat Para Brahma Tasmai Sri Gurave Namaha
ॐ Shanti Shanti Shanti:

Meaning: Guru is unquestionably the representative of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. He creates, sustains and eliminates the weeds of ignorance. Here I salute such a Guru. ॐ Shanti Shanti Shanti:

The true definition of Guru is “one who dispels the darkness of ignorance”. Gu signifies “darkness of ignorance” and Ru means “one who removes”. This Shloka identifies the Guru as none other than Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, Shiva the destroyer of ignorance. By doing so, he frees the disciple from the ocean of samsara, the trap of Maya and thereby achieves Moksha. For this, we humbly and gratefully acknowledge the Guru.

1.4 GAYATRI MANTRA PRAYER

GAYATRI MANTRA

ॐ भूर्भुवःस्वःतत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं
भर्गोदेवस्यधीमहिधियोयोनःप्रचोदयात् ।।

Om Bhuur-Bhuvah Svah Tat-Savitur-Varennyam
Bhargo-Devasya-Dhimahi Dhiyo-Yo-Nah-Pracodayaat ||

Meaning: Let us embrace God, the Creator and Energizer of the Universe, the Giver of Happiness, the Protector, the basis of all life, the Creator and Energiser of the Universe, the Giver of Happiness, the most excellent and the Purifier of all, to direct our minds in the right direction.We reflect on the most adored Supreme Lord, the creator, whose effulgence (divine light) illuminates all regions. May the holy light illuminate our intellect.

In the Gayatri mantra, Bhur, Bhuvah and Suvaha represent the body, life force and soul respectively. Bhur refers to the earth, which is simply a mixture of components. This refers to the human body, which is likewise a composite of materials. The term bhuvah refers to the life force that causes the body to vibrate. Suvaha alludes to Prajnana-shakti, which supports the life force. This Prajnana-shakti is referred to as continuous integrated awareness. This is also referred to as radiation. Man possesses all three qualities: materialisation, vibration and radiation.

1.5 PATANJALI VANDANA PRAYER

PATANJALI VANDANA

योगेनचित्तस्यपदेनवाचां ।
मलंशरीरस्यचवैद्यकेन ।।
योऽपाकरोत्तमंप्रवरंमुनीनां ।
पतञ्जलिंप्राञ्जलिरानतोऽस्मि ।।

Yogena Cittasya Padena Vaacaam |
Malam Shariirasya Ca Vaidyakena ||
Yo-Apaakara-Uttamam Pravaram Muniinaam |
Patanjalim Praanjaliraa Nato-Asmi ||

Meaning: The term “yogena” refers to yoga practice as a whole, rather than just physical postures. “Chittasya” refers to the mind or consciousness. This statement says that yoga may transform and purify the mind. “Padena” represents speech, whereas “vacham” relates to the words or language we employ. This statement says that practicing yoga helps purify our words, resulting in more deliberate and uplifting conversation. The term “malam” denotes impurities or toxins, whereas “ Shariirasya” alludes to the physical body. This statement implies that yoga can assist cleanse the body, removing physical impurities and boosting overall well-being. “Vaidyakena” refers to the role of healer or physician. In this sense, it represents yoga’s transforming potential to heal and restore balance in the body, mind and soul. “Yopakarot” indicates that the practitioner is performing a specific action. It represents the individual’s active participation and dedication to the transforming process enabled by yoga. The term “tamaham” refers to the person who conducts the aforementioned action. It can be understood as the seeker or practitioner who actively participates in the transforming process. “Pravaram Muniinaam” means the most wonderful of Muni or the sage. “Patanjalim Praanjaliraa Nato-Asmi” refers to Patanjali, I bow down with my hands folded.

1.6 STHITI POSITIONS FOR STANDING ASANAS

Tadasana or mountain posture, is a foundational standing yoga pose that serves as the foundation for all other standing poses. The name is derived from the Sanskrit words tada, meaning mountain and asana. Standing upright is referred to as Danda-Sthiti.

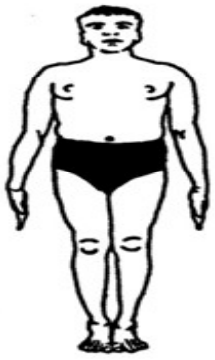


Image source: Yogic Suksma Vyayama, by Dhirendra Brahmachari

- Maintain a straight neck, back, and lower back.
- Maintain a straight back and an unwavering gaze front.
- Place both hands straight, palms contacting your thighs.
- The heels and great toes should come into contact.
- Breathing should be normal.

1.7 STHITI POSITIONS FOR SITTING ASANAS

For any sitting asana, we begin with the sthiti position Dandasana.

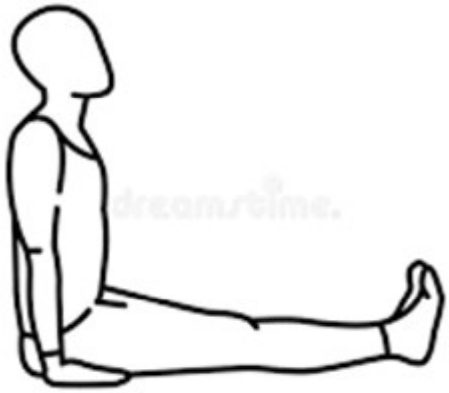


Image source: https://www.google.com/dandasana

- For dandasana sit on your yoga mat, spine straight and legs out in front of you.
- Manually separate the flesh of your buttocks from your sitting bones. This means you'll be able to feel exactly how you sit on the ground underneath you.
- Keep your hands on the ground beside your hips, fingers pointing forward, palms lightly pressing down.
- Check your shoulders to ensure you're not pressing too hard and relieve any tightness.
- Make sure not to lock your elbows. If your arms aren't long enough for your heels to reach the floor, rest as much of your hand on the ground as feasible.
- Pull your legs together. Engage your leg muscles, thigh muscles twisting inward, and kneecaps pointing straight up. Stretch your calf muscles. Push the backs of your knees against the floor. Your legs should be long and straight.

- Be firm without being aggressive.
- Your back should be at 90 degrees to the floor. Make sure you're not sagging forward or arching your back.
- Hold your chest open while maintaining full back length and pulling your tailbone lower.
- Your abdomen should feel slightly engaged in this position. Sit tall, as if a cord was pulling you up from the crown of your head.
- Your legs should feel energetic and your torso should feel lighter.
- Breathe normally and easily. Hold this stance for as long as you feel comfortable.

1.8 STHITI POSITIONS FOR SUPINE ASANAS

- Lie on your back.
- Stretch both arms above the head, biceps touching the ear, palms facing downward.
- The head should be kept straight, the chin should rest on the floor, and the legs should be together, soles facing up.
- Relax the entire body in the same as description of Shavasana. Relax the entire body and focus on the natural and rhythmic breath.

1.9 STHITI POSITION FOR PRONE ASANAS

- Lie down on the prone with the hands above the head, keeping straight alongside the head, resting the palms on the ground, touching the chin on the floor, and both legs together soles facing up.
- Keep the whole body from toes to head in a straight line.
- Relax the entire body and focus on the natural and rhythmic breath.
- Relax the entire body in the same as description of Shavasana.
- This is the sthiti position for the prone pose.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1: What is the importance of prayers in our day-to-day life?

Q2: What do you mean by Sthiti position in yoga?

Q3: Write down the meaning of Patanjali Vandana Prayer

Q4: Write down the meaning of Guru Vandana Prayer



1.10 LET US SUM UP

- Prayer is important because it can create a stronger relationship with God, provide guidance and consolation, increase faith, allow for intercession, assist resist temptation and align one's will with God. Prayer entails emptying out your heart to God, telling Him about your joys and sorrows.
- In yoga asana practice, the starting position is Sthiti. Sthiti literally translates as "to stand" or "to be in a state of". Yoga, as a practice, frequently emphasizes striking a balance between effort and ease, strength and flexibility and stability and comfort, which is related to the concept of Sthiti.



1.11 FURTHER READING

- Vivekananda S. (1991). *Padavali*. RNR Printers and Publication, Chennai.
- *Vyasa Puspanjali* (2008), Swami Vivekananda Yoga Prakashana, Gavipuram Circle, Banglore.



1.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: Prayer is a kind of connection with God. We accomplish this by praising Him, admitting our sins to Him, thanking Him and asking Him for our wants and desires. Prayer is important because it can create a stronger relationship with God, provide guidance and consolation, increase faith, allow for intercession, assist resist temptation and align one's will with God.Prayer entails emptying out your heart to God, telling Him about your joys and sorrows. Everyone in the universe should pray.

Answer to Q2: In yoga asana practice, the starting position is Sthiti. Sthiti literally translates as “to stand” or “to be in a state of”. Yoga, as a practice, frequently emphasizes striking a balance between effort and ease, strength and flexibility and stability and comfort, which is related to the concept of Sthiti.

Answer to Q3: The term “yogena” refers to yoga practice as a whole, rather than just physical postures. “Chittasya” refers to the mind or consciousness. This statement says that yoga may transform and purify the mind. “Padena” represents speech, whereas “vacham” relates to the words or language we employ. This statement says that practicing yoga helps purify our words, resulting in more deliberate and uplifting conversation. The term “malam” denotes impurities or toxins, whereas “ Shariirasya” alludes to the physical body. This statement implies that yoga can assist cleanse the body, removing physical impurities and boosting overall well-being. “Vaidyakena” refers to the role of healer or physician. In this sense, it represents yoga’s transforming potential to heal and restore balance in the body, mind and soul. “Yopakarot” indicates that the practitioner is performing a specific action. It represents the individual’s active participation and dedication to the transforming process enabled by yoga. The term “tamaham” refers to the person who conducts the aforementioned action. It can be understood as the seeker or practitioner who actively participates in the transforming process. “Pravaram Muniinaam” means the most wonderful of Muni or the sage. “Patanjalim Praanjaliraa Nato-Asmi” refers to Patanjali, I bow down with my hands folded.

Answer to Q4: The true definition of Guru is “one who dispels the darkness of ignorance”. Gu signifies “darkness of ignorance” and Ru means “one who removes”. This Shloka identifies the Guru as none other than Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, Shiva the destroyer of ignorance. By doing so, he frees the disciple from the ocean of samsara, the trap of Maya and thereby achieves Moksha. For this, we humbly and gratefully acknowledge the Guru.



1.13 MODEL QUESTIONS

Very Short Answer Questions

1. What is the starting position of yoga asanas called?
2. Define the word "Sthiti".
3. Which asana is known as the mountain pose?
4. What does the word "Guru" mean according to the Guru Vandana shloka?
5. What are the three aspects represented by Bhur, Bhuvah, and Suvaha in the Gayatri Mantra?
6. Who is the sage praised in the Patanjali Vandana?
7. Name the sthiti position for sitting asanas.
8. At what stage of life can a child begin to learn prayer?
9. Which posture is the sthiti position for supine asanas?
10. What does "Danda-Sthiti" refer to?

Shorts Questions:

1. What do you mean by Sthiti Position?
2. Why Prayers are important in our day-to-day life?
3. Who is Guru, mentioned in the prayer?
4. Describe any three benefits of prayer.
5. Explain how a child can learn prayer even before reading or writing.
6. What is the significance of the Gayatri Mantra in terms of its spiritual message?
7. Write a short note on the meaning of the Guru Vandana.
8. How does the Patanjali Vandana describe yoga's effects on mind, speech, and body?
9. What elements are balanced in the concept of Sthiti during yoga practice?
10. How does prayer align a person’s will with God?

Long Questions:

1. Write down the Guru Vandana prayer with the meaning of the prayer
2. Explain the Sthiti position of Supine Asanas
3. Write a note on various prayers used in our day-to-day life
4. Explain the Sthiti position of Standing Asanas

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UNIT 2:YOGIC SUKSHMA VYAYAMA

UNIT STRUCTURE

2.1 Learning Objectives

2.2 Introduction

2.3 Procedure of Buddhi Tatha Dhriti Shakti Vikasaka

2.4 Procedure of Smarana Shakti vikasaka

2.5 Procedure of Medha Shakti Vikasaka

2.6 Procedure of Netra Shakti Vikasaka

2.7 Procedure of Kapola Shakti Vikasaka

2.8 Procedure of Karna Shakti Vikasaka

2.9 Let us Sum up

2.10 Further Reading

2.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.12 Model Questions

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, the students will be able to –

- to acquire practical knowledge about Yogic Sukshma Vyayama.
- to know about the techniques of Yogic Sukshma Vyayama.
- to know the benefits of Yogic Sukshma Vyayama.

2.2 INTRODUCTION

Yogic Sukshma Vyayama is a series of delicate, gentle exercises that aim to activate and mobilise the body's joints and subtle energy pathways. Sukshma Vyayama is a sequence of yogic activities that loosens your joints and clears energy blockages. This method has a significant purifying impact, which boosts body energy. Suksham vyayama, an ancient yoga practice, is taught at most yoga institutions worldwide. His Holiness Maharshi Karthikeyaji Maharaj of the Himalaya was the one who created

and spread this tradition. Out of the kindness he taught this technique to Swami Dhirendra Brahmachari, who spread it to the modern world, including the Nehru family. Dhirendra Brahmachari built institutions in Delhi and taught a significant number of people around the country, in addition to producing books. Yogic Sukshma Vyayama focuses on the subtle body (Sukshma Sharira). Sukshma Vyayama, a type of yoga, has a unique approach. According to Indian traditional philosophy, this is for the subtle body of humans.

2.3 PROCEDURE OF BUDDHI TATHA DHRITI SHAKTI VIKASAKA

How to do Buddhi Tatha Dhriti-Shakti Vikasaka:

- Stand upright, feet together, hands resting on the thighs on the side of the torso.
- Close your mouth, lean your head back as far as possible and keep your eyes wide open.



Image source: Yogic Suksma Vyayama, by Dhirendra Brahmachari

EXERCISE:

- Use the bellows method to quickly and violently inhale and exhale (Bellows Effect) through the nostrils while focusing on the crown of your head.
- For beginners, 25 times are enough.

Benefits: Buddhi Tatha Dhriti Shakti Vikasaka has been shown to improve attention, breath awareness and the removal of excess phlegm from the throat and nose canal.

Precautions: Avoid if you have had recent injuries or surgeries to your arms, shoulders, rib cage, neck, chest, heart, or spine and those with vertigo should practice safely and under proper supervision.

2.4 PROCEDURE OF SMARANA SHAKTI VIKASAKA

How to do Smarana Shakti Vikasaka:

- Stand upright, feet together, hands resting on the thighs on the side of the torso, normal breathing.
- The mouth should be in its natural position and the eyes should be focused on a place 5 feet in front of the toes.



Image source: Yogic Suksma Vyayama, by Dhirendra Brahmachari

EXERCISE:

- Focus on the Brahmarandra, which is the Yogic name for the area right under the anterior fontanel.
- Inhale and exhale rapidly through the nose (Bellows effect), 25 times at first.

Benefits: This is especially beneficial for cases of mental tiredness. There is a significant improvement in memory. This practice is beneficial for anyone whose job produces mental pressure and nervous weariness.

Precautions: Individuals with a recent injury or surgery to the arms, shoulders, rib cage, neck, chest, heart, or spine should avoid this activity, while those with vertigo, BP difficulties should practice safely and under professional supervision.

2.5 PROCEDURE OF MEDHA SHAKTI VIKASAKA

How to do Medha Shakti Vikasaka:

- Stand upright, feet together, hands resting on the thighs on the side of the torso, normal breathing.
- Then take a deep breath in and exhale, lowering your chin to rest on the sternal notch.

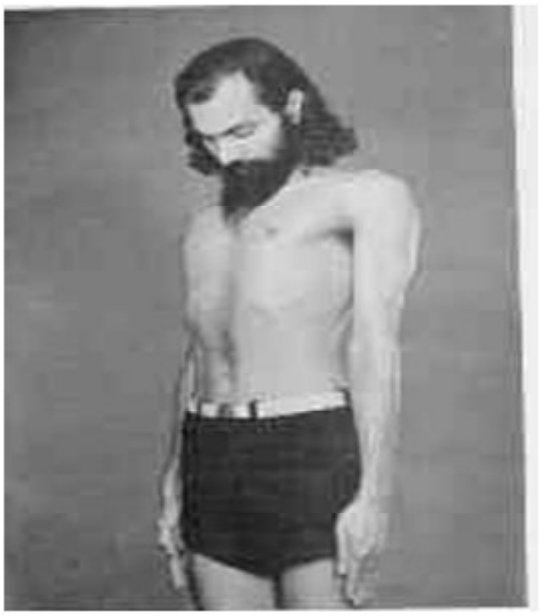


Image source: Yogic Suksma Vyayama, by Dhirendra Brahmachari

EXERCISE:

- According to Yogic science, the centre of intellectual vigour is located in the depression at the back of your neck. Concentrate here with full force.
- Start the bellows breathing exercise by inhaling and exhaling with equal intensity. In the beginning, 25 times.

Benefits: It is an extremely efficient treatment for brain disorders and memory enhancement. It has been demonstrated to be especially effective in feeble-minded children. It is especially effective for migraines. It is being evaluated for advanced mental disorders.

Precautions: Individuals with a recent injury or surgery to the arms, shoulders, rib cage, neck, chest, heart, or spine should avoid this activity, while those with vertigo, BP, and Spondylitis should practice safely and under professional supervision.

2.6 PROCEDURE OF NETRA SHAKTI VIKASAKA

How to do Netra Shakti Vikasaka:

- Stand upright, feet together, hands resting on the thighs on the side of the torso, normal breathing.
- Then take a deep breath in and with exhalation, head tilted back as far as it will go.

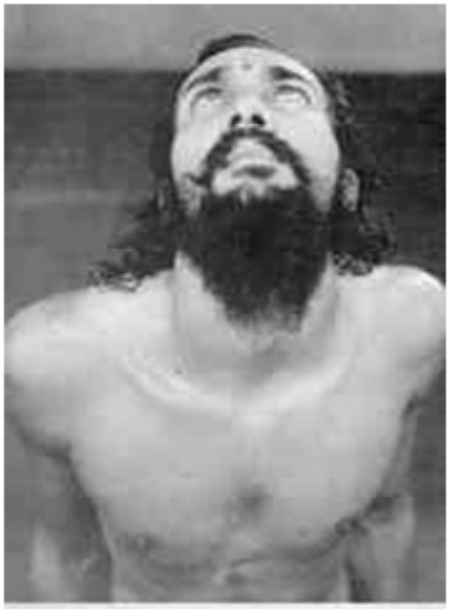


Image source: Yogic Suksma Vyayama, by Dhirendra Brahmachari

EXERCISE:

- Concentrate on the region between your brows without eyes blinking.

The eyes must squint while doing so.

- If your eyes become fatigued or watery, pause the exercise and resume after a short rest. It can be practiced five minutes in the beginning.

Benefits: This workout stimulates the autonomic nervous system's mucociliary plexus, nerve fibres that move the eyeball and internal ocular components. It enhances eyeball movement by improving muscle power, balance and coordination.

Precautions: Avoid if you have serious eye conditions, high blood pressure, glaucoma, myopia or have recently had injuries or surgeries to your arms, shoulders, rib cage, neck, chest, heart or thoracic or cervical spine.

2.7 PROCEDURE OF KAPOLA SHAKTI VIKASAKA

How to do Kapola Shakti Vardhaka:

- Stand upright, feet together, hands resting on the thighs on the side of the torso, join the tips of the fingers and close the nostrils with the both thumbs.



Image source: Yogic Suksma Vyayama, by Dhirendra Brahmachari

EXERCISE:

- Hold your eyes open and pout your lips in the shape of a crow's beak.

- Suck in air through your mouth with a sibilant sound and blow out your cheeks.
- Close your eyes and put your chin against the sternal notch of your throat. Hold your breath for as long as possible.
- Relax your neck, open your eyes and gently exhale through your nose. In the beginning, it can be practiced for five times.

Benefits: The Kaki mudra requires aeration and oxygenation of the mouth cavity. Normal breathing closes the mouth and prevents fresh air from entering, allowing bacteria to proliferate unfettered. Frequent powerful air jets on teeth and gums can prevent and treat oral infections.

Holding a pouted mouth and puffing up the cheeks can activate facial muscles that are typically passive except for speaking or eating. These muscles become flabby as a result of their prolonged inactivity. It gives your cheeks a fresh glow. The teeth get stronger.

Precautions: Avoid if you have Heart problems, high blood pressure Spondylitis or have recently had injuries or surgeries to your arms, shoulders, rib cage, neck, chest, heart, or thoracic or cervical spine.

2.8 PROCEDURE OF KARNA SHAKTI VIKASAKA

How to do Karna Shakti Vardhaka:

- Stand upright, feet together, hands resting on the thighs on the side of the torso, close your mouth, plug your ears with your thumbs and close your eyes with your index fingers.
- To mimic a crow's beak, wrap your mouth with your middle and third fingers while pouting.
- Suck in the air, blowing out your cheeks and place your chin on the cavity of your throat. Hold your breath for as long as possible.
- Then allow your neck return to normal. Maintain your stance, gradually open your eyes and exhale through your nostrils.



Image source: Yogic Suksma Vyayama, by Dhirendra Brahmachari

EXERCISE:

- While holding your breath, keep your cheeks fully puffed out.

Benefits: Pressure inside the mouth pushes air through the pharyngo-tympanic tube (Eustachian tube), which connects the mouth cavity to the middle ear. Proper functioning of this tube is crucial for balancing pressure within and outside the ear. Without it, the ear drum cannot vibrate freely, leading to poor hearing. The Jalandhara bandha (bent neck) stimulates the endocrine glands and neurological system in this region. “By closing your ear-holes, nostrils, eyes and mouth you purify the passage of sound and then you hear the pure (inner) sound”.

Precautions: Individuals with ear infections, vertigo or high blood pressure should practice safely and under professional supervision, while those who have recently been injured or had surgery on their arms, shoulders, rib cage, neck, chest, heart, or spine should avoid this activity.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1: What do you mean by Sukshma Vyayamas?

Q2: What are the benefits of Netra Shakti Vikasaka we have?

Q3: What are the Aims and Objectives of Sukshma Vyayamas?

Q4: Mention any five benefits of Sukshma Vyayamas.



2.9 LET US SUM UP

- Most yoga systems recognize 48 Sukshma Vyayamas. These yogic exercises are frequently attributed to Dhirendra Brahmachari, a well-known yoga teacher who promoted the practice of Sukshma Vyayama.
- Yogic Sukshma Vyayama focuses on the subtle body (Sukshma Sharira). It is not intended for the gross body or Sthula Sarira.
- Sukshma Vyayama is a sequence of yogic activities that loosens your joints and clears energy blockages. This method has a significant purifying impact, which boosts body energy.



2.10 FURTHER READING

- Brahmachari, D. *Yogic Suksma Vyayama*, Gurukul School of Yoga Science.
- Saraswati,S.S. *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha*, Yoga Publication Trust, Munger.



2.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: Sukshma Vyayama is a sequence of yogic activities that releases the stiffness of the joints and clears energy blockages. This method has a significant purifying impact, which boosts body energy. Suksham vyayama, an ancient yoga practice, is taught at most yoga institutions worldwide.

Answer to Q2: This workout stimulates the autonomic nervous system's mucociliary plexus, nerve fibres that move the eyeball and internal ocular components. It enhances the eye sight and eyeball movement by improving muscle power, balance and coordination.

Answer to Q3: Sukshma vyayamas aim loosens your joints and clears energy blockages and achieve a condition of peaceful clarity, balanced energy and physical and mental lightness. Sukshma vyayama can help prepare your body and mind for more difficult yoga positions.

Answer to Q4: Sukshma Vyayama, a series of gentle, rhythmic movements aimed at joint mobilization, provides numerous benefits such as improved blood circulation, joint health, increased flexibility, improved concentration, stress relief, energy boost, preparation for more difficult yoga poses and overall body awareness, all while promoting relaxation and calming the mind.



2.12 MODEL QUESTIONS

Very Short Answer Questions

1. Who was the original creator of Yogic Sukshma Vyayama?
2. Which yogi spread Sukshma Vyayama to the modern world?
3. What type of body does Sukshma Vyayama primarily focus on?
4. What is the Bellows effect in Sukshma Vyayama?
5. Name any one benefit of Buddhi Tatha Dhriti Shakti Vikasaka.
6. Which exercise is especially helpful for improving memory and fighting mental fatigue?
7. What is the focal point of concentration in Medha Shakti Vikasaka?
8. Which exercise improves muscle coordination and eyeball movement?
9. What mudra is used in Kapola Shakti Vikasaka?
10. Which Sukshma Vyayama practice helps in balancing pressure in the ear?

Shorts Questions:

1. Who is the founder of Sukshma Vyayama?
2. In the series of Sukshma Vyayama, how many Postures are there?
3. Write any 2 benefits of Sukshma Vyayama?
4. Mention any five names of Sukshma Vyayama.

5. How does Buddhi Tatha Dhriti Shakti Vikasaka enhance breath awareness and attention?
6. Describe the procedure and mental benefit of Smarana Shakti Vikasaka.
7. What is the significance of Medha Shakti Vikasaka in treating brain-related issues?
8. Outline the steps and key precaution for practicing Netra Shakti Vikasaka. 9.Describe the main actions involved in performing Kapola Shakti Vikasaka.
10. Explain how Karna Shakti Vikasaka benefits the ears and internal sound awareness.
11. What precautions are common across most Sukshma Vyayama practices?

Long Questions:

1. Explain the procedure of any five Sukshma Vyayama.
2. Write a note on benefits of any five Sukshma Vyayama?
3. Explain in details the purpose of Sukshma Vyayama.
4. Explain any five Sukshma Vyayama with their meaning.
5. Discuss the historical origin and global propagation of Yogic Sukshma Vyayama.
6. Highlight the roles of Maharshi Karthikeyaji Maharaj and Swami Dhirendra Brahmachari.
7. Compare and contrast the techniques and benefits of Buddhi Tatha Dhriti Shakti Vikasaka, Smarana Shakti Vikasaka, and Medha Shakti Vikasaka.
8. Describe in detail the steps, benefits, and precautions of Netra Shakti Vikasaka.
9. Analyze how Kapola Shakti Vikasaka and Karna Shakti Vikasaka work on the facial and auditory systems, respectively. Include scientific and yogic perspectives.
10. Explain how different Sukshma Vyayama practices contribute to the purification and activation of the subtle body (Sukshma Sharira).

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UNIT 3: DHYANASANA (MEDITATIVE POSTURES)

UNIT STRUCTURE

3.1 Learning Objective

3.2 Introduction

3.3 Goal and Purpose of Dhyanasana

3.4 Techniques, Benefits and Precaution of Dhyanasana

- 3.4.1 Sukhasana
- 3.4.2 Vajrasana
- 3.4.3 Padmasana
- 3.4.4 Swastikasana
- 3.4.5 Siddhasana

3.5 Let us Sum up

3.6 Answer to Check Your Progress

3.7 Further Reading

3.8 Model Questions

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to know:

- about the meaning of dhyanasana
- about the goal and purpose of dhyanasana
- about techniques or methods of dhyanasana
- about benefits of dhyanasana
- about precautions of dhyanasana

3.2 INTRODUCTION

The unit entitled "Dhyanasana (Meditative Postures)" is the third unit of this course. In this unit an analytical introduction of dhyanasana has been put forward. Dhyana is a Sanskrit word that means "contemplation and meditation". It is the seventh limb of yoga in the Ashtanga yoga system,

(eight-limbed path). The word dhyana comes from the Sanskrit root words dhi, which means "mind," and yana, which means "moving" and "asana" means posture or pose. Hence, dhyanasana means the postures in which one do meditations; Dhyana is the ability to merge with the object of concentration. For example, someone who has achieved dhyana may feel as if he has become the light which they are focusing on during meditation. Dhyana seem's considered an essential process in yoga for the attainment of real emotion stability and integration of personality. This process of dhyana has to be practiced in a very relaxed way to attain the beneficial results claimed for it. Some poses that are commonly used for dhyana include: Easy pose (Sukhasana), Accomplished pose (Siddhasana), Thunderbolt pose (Vajrasana), Lotus pose (Padmasana), and Swastikasana (Auspicious pose).

3.3 GOAL AND PURPOSE OF DHYANASANA

The main purpose of the dhyanasana is to allow the practitioner to sit for extended periods of time without moving the body and without discomfort. Only when the body has been steady and still for some time dhyana will be experienced. Dhyan requires the spinal column to be straight in sitting asana which is done in very few asanas. Furthermore, in high stages of dhyana the practitioner transcendents the body. The dhyanasana therefore needs to hold the body in a steady position without conscious effort.

3.4 TECHNIQUES, BENEFITS AND PRECAUTION OF DHYANASANA

3.4.1 SUKHASANA (easy pose)

The term “asana” is a Sanskrit word meaning “pose” and “seat” or “seated,” while “Sukha” translates to “ease,” “bliss,” and “comfortably.”

Sthiti: Dandasana

Technique:

- Sit in Dandasana, keeping both legs straight in front of the body.
- Bend any one leg and place the foot under the opposite thigh. Then bend the other leg and place the foot under the opposite thigh.
- Place the hand on the knees in chin or jnana Mudra. Keep the head, neck and back upright and straight, but without strain.
- Then close the eyes. Relax the whole body. The arm should be relaxed not straight.

Benefits: One of the simplest and most easy positions for meditation is sukhasana. People who are unable to sit in the more challenging meditation positions can use it without experiencing any negative effects. It promotes equilibrium between the mind and body without generating discomfort or tension.



Precautions: People suffering from arthritis in the knee, hips and feet should avoid sitting on the floor and those suffering from sciatica pain should avoid this posture.

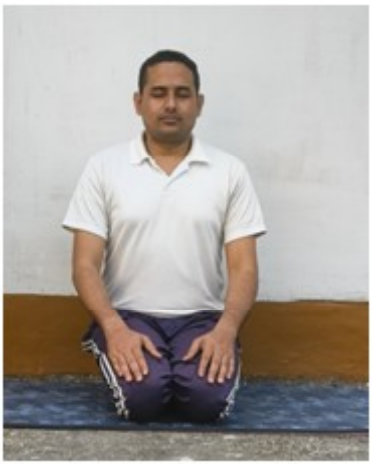
3.4.2 VAJRASANA (Thunderbolt or diamond pose)

The name comes from the word vajra, which mean “thunderbolt” or “diamond” and asana means “posture”.

Sthiti: Dandasana.

Techniques:

- Sit in Dandasana, fold the right leg and bring the right heel under the right buttock.
- Sitting on the right heel, fold the left leg and bring the left heel under the left buttock.
- Sit erect comfortably with the buttocks resting between both the heels and palms resting on the thighs. Now both of the knees on the floor keeping them closer.
- Bring the big toes together and separate the heels. Lower the buttocks on to the inside surface of the feet with the heels touching the sides of the hips.
- The back and head should be straight but not tense. Avoid excessive backward arching of the spine.
- Close eyes; relax the arms and the whole body. Breathe normally and fix the attention on the flow of air passing in and out from the nostrils.





Benefits: It is one of the meditative postures. This keeps the spine erecte and prevents drowsiness. It stimulates Vajra Nadi at the ankle which increases the awareness. It is helpful for cases of varicose veins, and prevents deep vein thrombosis. The asanas makes the ankle flexible and prevents flat foot. This is the only posture which can be performed even after heavy food.

Precautions: People suffering from stiff ankle due to Rheumatic problems may avoid this posture.

3.4.3 PADMASANA (lotus pose)

Padmasana is a Sanskrit term that refers to the Lotus Pose. The word is derived from Sanskrit word: padma, which means “lotus” and “asana” which meaning “seat” or “posture”.

Sthiti: Dandasana.

- Sit with the legs straight in front of the body.
- Slowly and carefully bend one leg and place the foot on top of the opposite thigh. The sole should face upward and the heel should be close to the pubic bone.
- When this feels comfortable, bend the other leg and place the foot on top of the opposite thigh.
- Both knees should, ideally, touch the ground in the final position. The head and spine should be held upright and the shoulders relaxed.
- Place the hands on the knees in chin or jnana Mudra. Relax the arms with the elbows slightly bent and check that the shoulders are not raised or hunched.
- Close the eyes and relax the whole body. Observe the total posture of the body. Make the necessary adjustment by moving forward or backward until balance and alignment are experienced. Perfect alignment indicates the correct posture of Padmasana.

Benefits: The Padmasana allows the body to be held completely steady for long periods of time. Its holds the trunk and head like a pillar with the legs as the firm foundation. As the body is steadied, the mind becomes calm. This practice direct the flow of prana from mooladhara chakra in the perineum to sahasrara chakra in the head heightening the experience of meditation. This practice applies pressure to the lower spine, which has a relaxing effect on

the nervous system. The breath becomes slow, muscular tension is decreased. This posture also stimulates the digestive system.



Precautions: Those who are suffering from sciatica or having weak or injured knees should not perform Padmasana. The Padmasana should not be attempt until flexibility of knees has been developed through practices of the pre-meditation asana. It is not advisable during pregnancy as the blood circulation in the legs is reduced.

3.4.4 SWASTIKASANA (auspicious pose)

The name comes from the Sanskrit word Swastika, which is a symbol of auspiciousness and asana mean posture.

Sthiti: Dandasana

Technique:

- Sit with both legs straight in front of the body, gently bend the left knee and place the sole of the left foot against the inside of the right thigh so there is no contact between the heel and the perineum.
- Then gently bend the right knee and place the right foot in the

space between the left thigh and calf muscle so that there is no contact between the heel and pubis.

- Grab the toes of the left foot and pull them up into the space between the right calf and thigh.
- Adjust the position so that it is comfortable. The knees should be firmly on the floor. Spine straight place the hands on the knees in chin and adopt jnana or chinmaya mudra. Maintain in this position for at least 10-15 minutes.



Benefits: It is a useful alternative to difficult meditative asana. It helps the legs and hips are not rotated outwards as in the other meditation postures, rather the knees are brought to the centre. This asana affects the pelvic structure and stretches the outer rather than the inner muscles of the thigh. This position also massages and tones the pelvic and reproductive organs. It's often used as a preparatory asana for meditation and pranayama.

Precautions: Those suffering from knee pain or injuries can take the support of a cushion or folded blanket, or consult with yoga trainer before practicing swastikasana.

3.4.5 SIDDHASANA (accomplished pose or perfect pose)

The name of this asana comes from Sanskrit word, “siddha” mean “accomplished” and “asana” mean “pose”.

Sthiti: Dandasana.

Techniques:

- Sit with both legs straight in front of the body.
- Gently bend the right leg and place sole of the foot flat against the inner left thigh with the heel pressing the perineum (the area midway between the genitals and anus).
- Then bend the left leg and push the toes and outer edge of the left leg into the space between the right calf and thigh muscles.
- Place the left ankle directly over the right ankle so that the ankle bones are touching and heels are one above the other.
- Press the pubis with the left heel directly above the genitals. The genitals will therefore lie between the two heels.
- If it is difficult then simply place the left heel as near as possible to the pubis. Grasp the right toes and pull them up into the space between the left calf and thigh.
- Again adjust the body so that it is comfortable. Sit on top of the right heel. This is an important aspect of Siddhasana. Adjust the body until it is comfortable and the pressure of the heel is firmly applied.
- The legs should be locked with the knees touching the ground and the left heel directly above the right heel. Make the spine erect and feel as though the body is fixed on the floor. Place the hands on the knees in jnana, chin or chinmaya Mudra and close the eyes, relax the whole body.



Benefits: The practice of siddhasana directs the energy from the lower psychic centres upward through the spine, stimulating the brain and calming the entire nervous system. The position of the lower foot at the perineum presses mooladhara chakra, naturally applies moola Bandha and the pressure applied to the pubic bone presses the trigger points for swadhisthana, automatically activating vajroli Mudra. These two psycho muscular locks redirect sexual nervous impulses back up the spinal cord to the brain, establishing control over the reproductive hormones which is necessary in order to maintain brahmacharya for spiritual purposes. Prolonged periods in siddhasana result in noticeable tingling sensations in the mooladhara region which may last for ten to fifteen minutes. This is caused by a reduction in the blood supply to the area and by a rebalancing of the pranic flow in the lower chakras. This practices redirects blood circulation to the lower spine and abdomen toning the lumbar region of the spine, the pelvic and the abdominal organs and balancing the reproductive system and the blood pressure.

Precautions: If suffering from discomfort or pain place a folded cloth or piece of sponge between the legs at this point. Avoid the asana, if injuries in knee, hips or spine area.



LET US KNOW

Dhyana is a Sanskrit word that means “contemplation and meditation”. It is the seventh limb of yoga in the Ashtanga yoga system, (eight-limbed path). The word dhyana comes from the Sanskrit root words dhi, which means “mind,” and yana, which means “moving” and “asana” means posture or pose.

The main purpose of the dhyanasana is to allow the practitioner to sit for extended periods of time without moving the body and without discomfort. Only when the body has been steady and still for some time dhyan will be experienced.

Dhyan requires the spinal column to be straight in sitting asana which is done in very few asanas.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1. What is dhyanasana?

Q 2. Name few dhyanasana.

Q 3. What is purpose of dhyanasana?

Q 4. Write an important benefits of sukhasana.

Q 5. What is most important precaution the practice of sukhasana?

Q 6. What is the meaning of Vajra?

Q 7. What is the best time for the practice of Vajrasana?

Q 8. What is the Sanskrit term of Padmasana?

Q 9. What is main benefit of the practice of swastikasana?

Q 10. In which disease should be avoiding the practice of siddhasana?



3.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed the following topics:

- Dhyana is a Sanskrit word that means “contemplation and meditation”.
- The word dhyana comes from the Sanskrit root words dhi, which means “mind,” and yana, which means “moving” and “asana” means posture or pose.
- Dhyana has to be practiced in a very relaxed way to attain the beneficial results claimed for it.
- Dhyanasana are commonly used for dhyana which includes: Easy pose (Sukhasana), Accomplished pose (Siddhasana), Thunderbolt pose (Vajrasana), Lotus pose (Padmasana), and Swastikasana (auspicious pose).
- Purpose of the dhyanasana is to allow the practitioner to sit for extended periods of time without moving the body and without discomfort.

- The dhyanasana therefore needs to hold the body in a steady position without conscious effort.
- People who are unable to sit in the more challenging meditation positions can use sukhasana without experiencing any negative effects.
- Those suffering from arthritis in the knee, hips and feet should avoid sitting on the floor and suffering from sciatica pain should avoid sukhasana practice.
- Vajrasana is helpful for cases of varicose veins, prevents deep vein thrombosis. It makes the ankle flexible and prevents flat foot.
- People suffering from stiff ankle due to Rheumatic problems may avoid Vajrasana practice.
- Padmasana practice direct the flow of prana from mooladhara chakra in the perineum to sahasrara chakra in the head heightening the experience of meditation.
- Swastikasana affects the pelvic structure and stretches the outer rather than the inner muscles of the thigh.
- Those suffering from knee pain or injuries can take support of a cushion or folded blanket or consult with yoga trainer before practicing swastikasana.
- The practice of siddhasana directs the energy from the lower psychic centres upward through the spine, stimulating the brain and calming the entire nervous system.
- The practice of Siddhasana redirects blood circulation to the lower spine and abdomen toning the lumber region of the spine, the pelvic and the abdominal organs and balancing the reproductive system and the blood pressure.
- If one suffers from discomfort or pain place a folded cloth or piece of sponge between the legs in the practice of siddhasana

3.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: Dhyanasana is the asana for the practice of dhyana or meditation.

Answer to Q2: Dhyanasana comprises of: Easy pose (Sukhasana), Accomplished pose (Siddhasana), Thunderbolt pose (Vajrasana), Lotus pose (Padmasana), and Swastikasana (auspicious pose).

Answer to Q3: The purpose of dhyanasana is to allow the practitioner to sit for extended periods of time without moving the body and without discomfort.

Answer to Q4: People who are unable to sit in the more challenging meditation positions can use it without experiencing any negative effects.

Answer to Q5: Suffering from arthritis in the knee, hips and feet should also avoid sitting on the floor and suffering from sciatica pain should avoid this posture.

Answer to Q6: Vajra, which mean “thunderbolt” or “diamond”.

Answer to Q7: Best time for the practice of Vajrasana is after meal (lunch/ dinner/breakfast).

Answer to Q8: Sanskrit term of Padmasana is derived from Padma meaning “Lotus” and Asana meaning “Posture”.

Answer to Q9: The practice of swastikasana affects the pelvic structure and stretches the outer rather than the inner muscles of the thigh.

Answer to Q10: Avoid this asana, if injuries in knee, hips or spine.

3.7 FURTHER READING

1. Saraswati S.S, *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha*, Yoga Publication Trust, Munger, Bihar.
2. Muktibodhananda S., *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, Yoga Publication Trust, Munger, Bihar.
3. Nagendra H.r., *Yoga for Diabetes*, Swami Vivekananda Yoga Prakashan, Kepegowda Nagar, Banglore.

4. Saraswati S.N., *Gherananda Samhita*, Yoga Publication Trust, Munger, Bihar.



3.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

1. What is the meaning of the Sanskrit word “Dhyana”?
2. What does the term “Asana” refer to?
3. Name the posture commonly known as the “easy pose.
4. What is the Sanskrit term for the “lotus pose”?
5. Which meditative posture can be performed even after eating?
6. What does “Siddhasana” literally mean in Sanskrit?
7. Which dhyanasana is suitable for beginners with limited flexibility?
8. Which body part is specifically stimulated in Siddhasana to activate moola bandha?
9. What is the root position (sthiti) for all meditative postures mentioned?
10. Name any two mudras that are used in meditative postures.

Short Questions

1. What is the root position (sthiti) for all meditative postures mentioned?
2. Write about the dhyanasana with their name in brief.
3. Discuss about the dhyanasana.
4. Discuss about the techniques, benefits and precautions of dhyanasana.
5. What is importance of dhyanasana?
6. Describe about techniques, benefits and precaution of Sukhasana.
7. Describe about techniques, benefits and precaution of Vajrasana.
8. Describe about techniques, benefits and precaution of Padmasana.
9. Describe about techniques, benefits and precaution of Swastikasana.
10. Describe about techniques, benefits and precaution of Siddhasana.

Long Questions

1. Describe two precautions to be followed while practicing Padmasana.
2. How does Padmasana help in directing the flow of prana?
3. Mention the key difference in leg positioning between Swastikasana and Siddhasana.
4. What makes Dhyanasana essential for emotional stability and personality integration?

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UNIT 4: RESTING POSTURES

UNIT STRUCTURE

4.1 Learning Objective

4.2 Introduction

4.3 Goal and Purpose of Resting Postures

4.4 Techniques, Benefits and Precaution of Resting Postures

4.4.1 Shavasana

4.4.2 Makarasana

4.5 Let us Sum up

4.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

4.7 Further Reading

4.8 Model Questions

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to know:

- about the meaning of resting postures
- about the goal and purpose of resting postures
- about techniques or methods of resting postures
- about the benefits of resting postures
- about precaution of resting postures

4.2 INTRODUCTION

Resting asanas in yoga are designed to promote relaxation, rejuvenation, and recovery. They typically involve gentle stretches that allow the body to rest. The resting asana should be performed before and after the asana session and at any time when the body becomes tired. The asanas in this group appear very easy at first, yet the main principle of releasing the muscular tension should not be avoided. The muscles often seem to be completely relaxed but, in fact, tightness still remains.

4.3 GOAL AND PURPOSE OF RESTING POSTURES

The asanas given in this unit provides complete rest to the body. Constant postural abnormalities put excess strain on the muscles of the back and just lying down does not relieve it. These resting asanas practice, which are done in the prone position, are very relaxing to the spine and related structures. They are especially recommended for any back or spinal problems. These postures can be adopted during any time of the day for any comfortable duration. By engaging in these poses, practitioners can tap into their parasympathetic nervous system, triggering the body's relaxation response and promoting a sense of calmness and tranquility. The resting postures in this unit are Shavasana, Makarasana.

4.4 TECHNIQUES, BENEFITS AND PRECAUTION OF RESTING POSTURES

4.4.1 SHAVASANA

The name Shavasana is from Sanskrit Śava, “corpse” and Āsana, “posture” or “seat”. The alternative name Mritasana is from Sanskrit mrita, “death”. It eliminates tiredness and promotes calmness of the mind.”



Techniques:

- Lie down on the back with the legs spread as wide and arms relaxed to both sides of the body by keeping the palms facing upward and the eyes closed.
- The whole body is relaxed on the floor with an awareness of the chest and abdomen rising and falling with each breath.

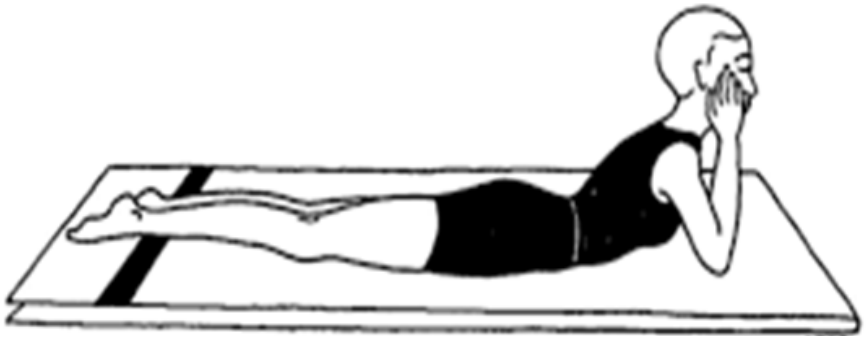
- Any muscular tension the body finds is consciously released as it is found. All control of the breath, the mind and the body is then released for the duration of the asana.
- The asana is released by slowly deepening the breath, released the fingers and toes, reaching the arms above the head, stretching the whole body, and exhaling while bringing the knees to the chest and rolling over to the side in a fetal position, drawing the head in the right arm. From here, one can push up into a seated position. Drowsiness or restlessness of the mind while in Shavasana may be counteracted by increasing the rate and depth of breathing. While in Shavasana, it is important to be in a neutral position.

Benefits: This practice can relax the whole psycho-physiological system. It should ideally be practiced before sleep and, before, during, and after asana practices. It develops body awareness, when the body is completely relaxed, awareness of the mind increases, for the body, which develop pratyahara.

Precautions: Do not move the body at all during the practice as even the slightest movement disturbs the practice. This practice should be performed after a hard day's work, before evening activities or to refresh the body and mind before sitting in meditation or just before sleep.

4.4.2 MAKARASANA

The name comes from the Sanskrit word "makara" that mean "crocodile" or "monster", and "asana" mean "posture" or "seat".



Techniques:

- Lie down in prone position (on abdomen) on the floor.
- Raise the shoulder and head; rest the chin on the palms of the hands with the elbows on the floor. Keep the elbows together for a more pronounced arch to the spine.
- Now separate the elbows away to relieve excess pressure on the neck.
- In the Makarasana the effect is felt at two points; the neck and lower back. If the elbows are too far in front, tension will be felt in the neck; if they are drawn too close to the chest, tension will be felt more in the lower back.
- Adjust the position of the elbows so that these two points are equally balanced. The ideal position is when the whole spine is equally relaxed. Relax the whole body and close the eyes.
- After sometimes, again become aware of the body and surroundings and gently release the posture.

Benefits: Makarasana is very effective for people suffering from slipped disc, sciatica, and lower back pain. They should remain in this asana for extended periods of time as it encourages the vertebral column to resume its normal shape and release compression of the spinal nerves. Asthmatic people or who have any other lung ailments should practice this simple asana regularly with breath awareness as it allows more air to enter the lungs.

Precautions: Those who have back conditions like exaggerated lumbar curve should not practice this asana if any pain is experienced.



LET US KNOW

Resting asanas in yoga are designed to promote relaxation, rejuvenation, and recovery. They typically involve gentle stretches that allow the body to rest. The resting asana should be performed before and after the asana session and at any time when the body becomes tired. Constant postural

abnormalities put excess strain on the muscles of the back and just lying down does not relieve it. These resting asanas practices, which are done in the prone position, are very relaxing to the spine and related structures. They are especially recommended for any back or spinal problems. These postures can be adopted during any time of the day for any comfortable duration.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1. What are the main purposes for the practice of resting posture?

Q 2. Write few names of resting posture.

Q 3. What is the meaning of savasana?

Q 4. What is the timing for the practice of savasana?

Q 5. What is the meaning of Makarasana?

Q 6. What the main benefits of the practice of Makarasana?



4.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have discussed the following topics:

- Resting asanas in yoga are designed to promote relaxation, rejuvenation, and recovery.
- The resting postures typically involve gentle stretches that allow the body to rest.
- The importance of resting asana is that it should be performed before and after the asana session and at any time when the body becomes tired.
- The asanas in this group appear very easy at first, yet the main principle of releasing the muscular tension should not be avoided.
- Constant postural abnormalities put excess strain on the muscles of the back and just lying down does not relieve it.
- The resting asanas practices which are done in the prone position are very relaxing to the spine and related structures.
- The resting postures are specially recommended for any back or spinal problem.

- Resting asanas provide a unique space for both the body and mind to reset and recharge.
- The resting postures practitioners can tap into their parasympathetic nervous system, triggering the body's relaxation response and promoting a sense of calmness and tranquility.
- The resting postures in this unit are Shavasana, Makarasana.



4.6 FURTHER READING

1. Saraswati S.S., *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha*, Yoga Publication Trust, Munger, Bihar.
2. Muktibodhananda S., *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, Yoga Publication Trust, Munger, Bihar.
3. Nagendra H.R., *Yoga for Diabeters*, Swai Vivekananda Yoga Prakashan, Kepegowda Nagar, Bangalore.
4. Saraswati S.N., *Gheranda Samhita*, Yoga Publication Trust, Munger, Bihar.



4.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: Resting asanas in yoga are designed to promote relaxation, rejuvenation, and recovery.

Answer to Q2: Savasana, Makarasana.

Answer to Q3: Shavasana is from Sanskrit Sava, "corpse" and Asana, "posture" or "seat". The alternative name Mritasana is from Sanskrit mrita, "death". It eliminates tiredness and promotes calmness of the mind."

Answer to Q4: It should ideally be practiced before sleep and, before, during and after asana practices.

Answer to Q5: Makara means "crocodile" or "monster", and "asana" means "posture" or "seat".

Answer to Q6: Makarasana is very effective for people suffering from slipped disc, sciatica, and lower back pain.



4.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Answer Questions

1. What is the main purpose of resting asanas in yoga?
2. Name two resting asanas discussed in this unit.
3. When should resting asanas ideally be practiced?
4. What does the Sanskrit word "Shava" mean?
5. What position is adopted for Makarasana?
6. Which posture is also known as the “corpse pose”?
7. Which resting posture is especially beneficial for sciatica and slipped disc?
8. What body part should be consciously relaxed in Shavasana?
9. What is the Sanskrit meaning of the word “Makara”?
10. Which nervous system is activated by resting asanas?

B) Short Answer Questions

1. Write the technique of practicing Shavasana.
2. What are the benefits of practicing Makarasana?
3. Explain the purpose of resting postures in yoga.
4. Mention any three benefits of Shavasana.
5. State the precautions to be taken while practicing Shavasana.
6. How should the elbows be positioned in Makarasana and why?
7. What happens when the practitioner practices resting asanas regularly?
8. In which position should one lie during Makarasana?
9. How does Shavasana help in developing pratyahara?
10. Who can benefit the most from regular practice of Makarasana?

C). Long Questios

1. Compare and contrast Shavasana and Makarasana with respect to their techniques, benefits, and target areas.
2. How do resting postures contribute to physical and mental relaxation? Illustrate with examples from the unit.

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UNIT 5: SURYANAMASKAR

UNIT STRUCTURE

5.1 Learning Objectives

5.2 Introduction

5.3 Goal and Purpose of Suryanamaskara

5.4 Techniques, Benefits and Precaution of Suryanamaskara

5.5 Let us Sum up

5.6 Further Reading

5.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

5.8 Model Questions

5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to know:

- about the meaning of Suryanamaskara
- about the goal and purpose of Suryanamaskara
- about techniques or method of Suryanamaskara
- about benefits of Suryanamaskara
- about precaution of Suryanamaskara

5.2 INTRODUCTION

Surya Namaskar, also known as Sun Salutation, is a yoga practice that involves a sequence of 12 linked asanas or poses. Suryanamaskara is a yoga-based exercise for over all personality development, including body, mind, and intellect. It is a gift of Indian heritage to mankind. Any able-bodied person from 8 years to 80 years can perform surya namaskara. It is especially beneficial for students and children in their growing age. It enables them to achieve balanced physical growth, a healthy and efficient body, and a balanced state of mind, it also enhances work efficiency through concentration, alertness, memory development, and emotional control. Surya namaskara tones up the functioning of various systems in the body,

such as the sensory, respiratory, digestive, circulatory, muscular, and nervous systems. Mantras chanted while performing the Surya namaskaras generate minute vibrations in the body that correct the functioning of exocrine and endocrine systems.

5.3 GOAL AND PURPOSE OF SURYANAMASKARA

The human body is nature's one of the most marvelous creations. It is one of the most perfect machines destined to work efficiently for hundred years, as per shastras. It is incumbent to maintain this machine properly with proper diet, exercise, rest and relaxation. We know that Yoga specifically deals with mind and body balance. Yoga provides us with simple remedies, facile skills, and procedures for good health and life style. Asana gives physical and mental power and tones the body-mind for further exercise. Surya Namaskar is often referred to as the Sun Salutation. The Asanas included in surya namaskara help to burn excess fat around the neck, chin, arms, shoulders, hips, abdomen, thighs, buttocks, and the chest. Surya Namaskar improves the quality and circulation of blood in the body, thus helping with detoxification.

5.4 TECHNIQUES, BENEFITS AND PRECAUTION OF SURYANAMASKARA

Techniques:

- Stand erect with legs together and without bending any parts of the body. Let the toes, heels, and thigh be joined. The body should be erect without stiffness and relaxed.
- Brings the palms together to namaskar Mudra. Place them, on the chest with thumbs touching the middle of the chest spread out. Maintain full inhalation and slow exhalation.
- Look forward, close eyes gently with relaxed smiling face. Recall the meaning of dhyana shloka chant it and feel the vibration of the mantra in the whole body.

  “Hiranmayena Patrena, Satyasyapihitam Mukham
  Tat tva Pusan Apavrnu Satya Dharmaya Drstaye”

Meaning of mantra: Like a lid to a vessel, O Sun, your golden orb covers the entrance to truth; kindly open thy entrance to lead me to truth.

Every asana is performed by chanting Omkara with Bija Mantra followed by the twelve names of the Sun. The Bija Mantras following the Omkaras are combinations of two sounds, Ra, and Ha with variations caused by six vowels: Hram, Hrim, Hrum, Hraim, Hroum and Hrah. There are subtle effects of the sound vibrations of chanting the Om and Bija Mantras on the different system and parts of the body. In the bija mantra Hram sound effect as a stimulus to the brain, heart, alimentary canal, respiratory organs such as nose, windpipe, throat, lungs and chest and upper ribs. Hrim invigorates the throat, palate, heart, respiratory and digestive organs. Hrum strengthens the liver, spleen, stomach abdomen, hypogastria, uterus and intestines. Hraim stimulates kidneys. Hroum normalise the function of the rectum and anus. “Hrah develops the chest and throat.

1. Om Hram Mitraya Namah
2. Om Hrim Ravaye Namah
3. Om Hrum Suryaya Namah
4. Om Hraim Bhanave Namah
5. Om Hroum Khagaye Namah
6. Om Hrah Pushne Namah
7. Om Hram Hiranyagarbhaya Namah
8. Om Hrim Maricaye Namah
9. Om Hrum Aditaya Namah
10. Om Hraim Savitre Namah
11. Om Hroum Arkaya Namah
12. Om Hrah Bhaskaraya Namah

Step 1. Pranamasana (Prayer pose)

- Stand on tadasana, standing upright with the feet together.
- In the Namaskar Mudra, put the hands together in front of the chest while keeping your eyes closed and slowly bending both elbows.
- Giving homage to the sun, the origin of life, in the mind.
- Let your entire body relax. Breathing should be normal.



Benefits: The pose establishes a state of concentration and calmness in preparation for the practice to be performed.

Precautions: Do not stiffen the body be relaxed.

Step 2: Hastauttasana (raise arms pose),

- Breathe inhale raise the both hands duly stretched, palms continued to be joined together all along.
- As hands are on both sides of the head, allow the upper arms to touch the ears and bend back in the waist.
- Feel the stretch on entire front portion of the body from navel to the throat and corresponding contraction in the back and spine.
- Do not bend the knees and elbows. Keep the upper arms and ears aligned throughout.



Benefits: Elasticity of lungs as they are stretched, flexibility of spine as it gets contracted, toning of muscles of abdomen, chest, forearms and upper arms as they get stretched.

Precaution: People suffering from spinal disorder such as cervical and lumber spondylitis person should avoid this practice. Do not bend knees and elbows; keep the upper arms and ears aligned throughout.

Step 3: Padahastasana (standing forward bend pose)

- Breathing exhale straightening the spine then bend the forward directing top of the head towards ground and allow the palms to touch the ground.
- Make an attempt to place palms by the side of the feet and allow the forehead to come close to the knee caps.
- Upper arms and the ears should align. Do not bend the knee.



Benefits: Increases suppleness of spine as it gets stretched, improves functioning of abdominal glands and digestive functions. Increases blood supply to facial muscles, eyes and brain. It helps to improve the memory, concentration and nervous system.

Precaution: Upper arms and ears are should be aligned. Do not bend knees and go to the extent body permits.

Step 4: Ashwa Sanchalanasana (Equestrian pose)

- Breathing inhale place the palms on the side of and in the line of feet. Fold the left knee allowing it to come closer to the left shoulder.
- The left thigh should touch the left side of the chest. Left leg forward and right leg back.
- Lower the spine and arch up the chest and thoracic region and look up, fixing the gaze at a point approximately at 45-degree angle to the ground.
- Palms and left foot should be in the same line. Do not look down or bend the neck.



Benefits: Activates surya nadi leading to toning of sympathetic nervous system's functions. It improves the eyesight as gaze up. Improve functioning of thyroid glands as throat is stretched up. Tones up lungs and functioning of abdominal glands. Tones the calf muscles and thigh muscles.

Precautions: Palms and left foot should be in the same line. Do not look down or bend the neck.

Step 5: Parvatasana (mountain pose)

- Breath exhale keeping the position of palms and feet intact, raise the waist.
- Direct top of the head towards ground and push the chin closer to the throat.
- The body shaped like inverted V. Push the heels on the ground that sole are completely pressed on the ground.
- Do not bend the elbows and knees.



Benefits: Improve thyroid glands functioning as chin and throat come closer. Calf muscles and thigh muscles gets toned. Flexibility of floor muscles of the feet is enhanced.

Precautions: Do not bend elbows and knees.

Step 6: Astanga Namaskara (salute with weight parts or points)

- Raise the body from the fifth position and stretch forward without disturbing palms and toes.
- Rest the forehead, nose, chest and knees on the ground.
- Do not rest abdomen on the ground and raise the hips little upward. Breathing fully and hold the breath.

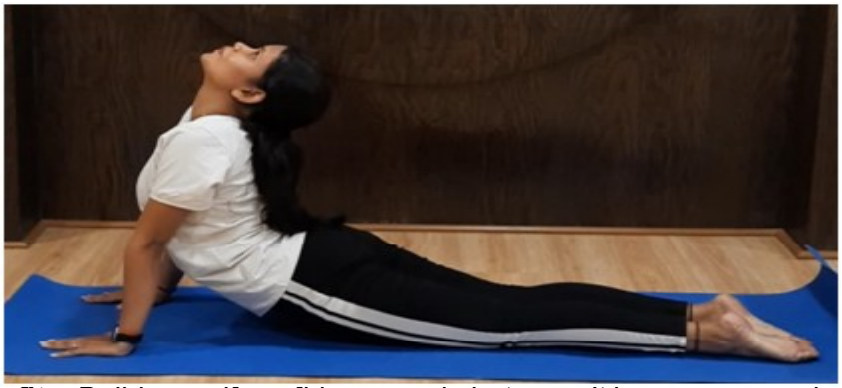


Benefits: Ajna cakra is activated as forehead is rested on the ground leading to self control. Jalandhara and Uddiyana Bandhas take place effortlessly which is conductive for Bahya kumbhaka leading to stability of mind.

Precautions: Toes, Knees, chest, palms and forehead should be touching on the ground.

Step 7: Bhujangasana (cobra pose)

- Breathe inhale and raise the head towards the ceiling/sky by arching the spine and raising the whole body from the ground.
- The body should be rested on palms and toes only.
- Do not rest the knees on the ground and try to straighten the toes on the floor.



Benefits: Build up self confidence and alertness. It increases suppleness of the spine. Enhance elasticity of lungs. Palms, wrists and toes are strengthened.

Precautions: Do not rest knees on the ground. Straighten the toes on the floor.

Step 8: Parvatasana (mountain pose)

- The hands and feet do not move from position 7.
- From Bhujangasana assume parvatasana.
- Keep the arms and legs straight, grip the floor with the toes and use the strength of the arms to raise the buttocks and lower the heels to the floor.
- Exhale while raising the buttocks.

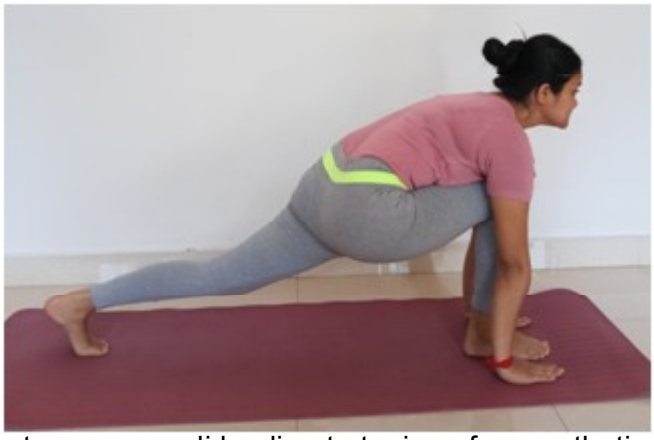


Benefits: Improve thyroid glands functioning as chin and throat come closer. Calf muscles and thigh muscles gets toned. Flexibility of floor muscles of the feet is enhanced.

Precautions: Do not bend elbows and knees.

Step 9: Ashwa Sanchalanasana (Equestrian pose)

- Keep the palms flat on the floor and right foot in place.
- Bend the left leg and bring the left foot forward between the hands.
- Simultaneously lower the right knee so that it touches the floor and push the pelvis forward.
- Tilt the head backward arch the back and gaze at the eyebrow centre.
- Breathing inhale while assuming the pose.



Benefits: Activates surya nadi leading to toning of sympathetic nervous system's functions. It improves the eyesight as gaze up. Improve functioning of thyroid glands as throat is stretched up. Tones up lungs and functioning of abdominal glands. Tones the calf muscles and thigh muscles.

Precautions: Palms and left foot should be in the same line. Do not look down or bend the neck.

Step 10: Padahastasana (standing forward bend pose)

- Bring the right foot forward next to the left foot.
- Straighten both legs.
- Bring the forehead as close to the knees as possible without straining.
- Exhale while performing the movement.



Benefits: Increases suppleness of spine as it gets stretched, improves functioning of abdominal glands and digestive functions. Increases blood supply to facial muscles, eyes and brain. It helps to improve the memory, concentration and nervous system.

Precaution: Upper arms and ears should be aligned. Do not bend knees and go to the extent body permits.

Step 11: Hastauttasana (raise arms pose),

- Keep the arms and spine in a straight line.
- Raise the torso and stretch the arms above the head.
- Keep the arms separated, shoulder width apart.
- Bend the head, arms and upper trunk backward slightly.
- Inhale while straightening the body.



Benefits: Elasticity of lungs and they are stretched, flexibility of spine as it gets contracted, toning of muscles of abdomen, chest, forearms and upper arms as they get stretched.

Precaution: People suffering from spinal disorder like cervical and lumber spondylitis should avoid this practice. Do not bend knees and elbows; keep the upper arms and ears aligned throughout.

Step 12. Pranamasana (Prayer pose)

- Breathe inhale come up slowly straightening the spine, raising the chest, shoulder, head and neck back to normal position with palms joined in namaskara Mudra as in sthiti.
- Do not stiffen the body, be relaxed.



Benefits: The pose establishes a state of concentration and calmness in after the asanas are performed.

Precautions: Do not stiffen the body be relaxed.

NOTE: Suryanamaskara should be performed with empty stomach. Ladies should be avoiding during periods and during pregnancy. People suffering from hernia, spinal disorders, and high blood pressure should be avoiding suryanaaskara.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1. How many poses are there in Surya Namaskar?

Q 2. What is Surya Namaskar?

Q 3. When is Surya Namaskar performed?

Q 4. What are the benefits of Surya Namaskar?

Q 5. How is Surya Namaskar performed?

Q 6. What are some of the benefits of the poses in Surya Namaskar?



5.5 LET US SUM UP

- Surya Namaskar, also known as Sun Salutation, is a yoga practice that involves a sequence of 12 linked asanas or poses.
- Suryanamaskara is a yoga based exercise for over all personality development body, mind and intellect, it is a gift of Indian heritage to mankind.
- It is especially beneficial for students for children in their growing age.
- It enables them to achieve balanced physical growth, healthy and efficient body, and balanced state of mind, enhanced work efficiency through concentration, alertness, memory development and emotional control.
- Surya namaskara tones up the functioning of various systems in the body, such as the sensory, respiratory, digestive, circulatory and muscular and nervous systems.
- Mantras chanted while performing the namaskaras generate minute vibrations in the body correcting the functioning of exocrine and endocrine systems of glands.
- Surya Namaskar is often referred to as the Sun Salutation. This Asana helps burn excess fat around the neck, chin, arms, shoulders, hips, abdomen, thighs, buttocks and the chest.
- Surya Namaskar improves the quality and circulation of blood in the body thus helping with detoxification.



5.6 FURTHER READING

1. Saraswati S.S., *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha*, Yoga Publication Trust, Munger, Bihar.
2. Nagendra H.R., *Yoga for Diabeters*, Swai Vivekananda Yoga Prakashan, Kepegowda Nagar, Banglore.
3. *Surya Namaskara an instruction booklet*; Vivekananda Kendra Prakashan Trus, Triplicane, Chennai.



5.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: There are total 12 poses in Surya Namaskar.

Answer to Q2: Surya Namaskar is a series of yoga poses that stretches, tones, and relaxes the body. It's also known as sun salutation or sun dance.

Answer to Q3: It's usually performed at dawn or sunset facing the sun.

Answer to Q4: It can help with weight loss, improve sleep, and strengthen muscles and joints. It can also help with digestion, complexion, and stress levels.

Answer to Q5: The poses are often paired with Surya mantras, a specific chant. The steps are performed in a chronological order.

Answer to Q6: Stretching the hamstrings, calves, and lower back can promote flexibility and calm the nervous system.



5.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

Objectives type questions

1. How many poses make one set in Suryanamaskara?
2. What are repeat asanas in Suryanamaskara?
3. How many Bija Mantra chants in Suryanamaskara?
4. Who should be avoiding the practice of Suryanamaskara?

Short Questions

1. Write any three benefits of practicing Surya Namaskar regularly.
2. Mention any three precautions to be followed while practicing Surya Namaskar.
3. What are the effects of Bija mantra “Hroum” on the body?
4. Describe the technique and one benefit of Padahastasana.
5. Explain how Surya Namaskar aids in emotional and intellectual development.
6. Why is Surya Namaskar considered beneficial for children and students?
7. What are the effects of chanting mantras during Surya Namaskar?
8. Explain the technique and precaution of Astanga Namaskara.
9. List any three physical regions where Surya Namaskar helps in reducing fat.
10. State the contraindications for the practice of Surya Namaskar.

Essay type questions

1. Describe the 12 steps of Surya Namaskar with brief techniques, benefits, and precautions.
2. Explain the role and physiological effects of chanting Om and Bija Mantras during Surya Namaskar.
3. How does Surya Namaskar contribute to the overall personality development of an individual?
4. Describe the Bija Mantra including the benefits of Bija Mantras.
5. What is the goal and purpose of Surya Namaskar as described in traditional yoga philosophy?
6. Elaborate on the scientific and yogic significance of Surya Namaskar for health and lifestyle management.
7. Analyze how Surya Namaskar affects the functioning of internal systems such as respiratory, digestive, circulatory, and nervous systems.
8. Write in detail about the spiritual and psychological aspects involved in the practice of Surya Namaskar.
9. Describe the significance of the dhyana shloka and its meaning as chanted before Surya Namaskar.

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UNIT- 6: CULTURAL POSTURES (STANDING)

UNIT STRUCTURE

6.1 Learning objectives

6.2 Introduction

6.3 Asanas - Cultural Postures (Supine)

- 6.3.1 Tadasana
- 6.3.2 Vrikshasana
- 6.3.3 Utkatasana Parivarta trikonasana
- 6.3.4 Parivarto trikonasana
- 6.3.5 Padahastasana
- 6.3.6 Ardha-chakrasana
- 6.3.7 Kati-chakrasana
- 6.3.8 Trikonasana

6.4 Let us Sum up

6.5 Further Reading

6.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

6.7 Model Questions

6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, the learners come to know:

- will be able to know about (name of the asana)
- will understand the techniques to perform these asanas
- will understand the proper alignment of these asanas
- will understand the benefits of these asanas
- will understand the precautions to be followed in these asanas
- will be able to develop flexibility, strength, balance and mind-body coordination through regular practice

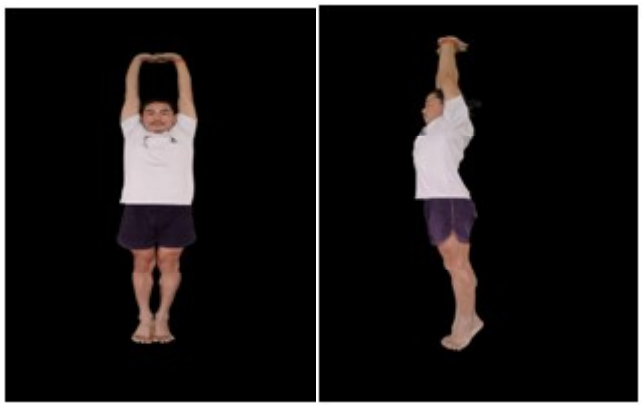
6.2 INTRODUCTION

Asanas are physical postures or poses practiced in yoga to promote physical health, mental well-being, and spiritual growth. The word **"asana"** is

derived from the Sanskrit root **"ās"**, which means "to sit" or "to be present." Traditionally, asanas were primarily seated postures meant for meditation. However, over time, they have evolved into a comprehensive system of physical movements that improve flexibility, strength, balance, and relaxation.

6.3 ASANAS

6.3.1 Tadasana



Tada means palm tree or mountain. This asana teaches one to attain stability and firmness and forms the base for all the standing asana.

Sthiti: Standing posture

Technique: Stand with feet 2 inches apart. Interlock the fingers, and turn the wrist outwards. Now inhale, raise the arms up. Bring them in line with the shoulders. Raise the heels off the floor and balance on the toes. Stay in this position for 10-15 seconds. Exhale, bring the heels down. Release the interlock of the fingers and bring the arms down parallel to the trunk, and come back to the standing position.

Benefits:

- Helps to increase height up to a certain age.
- This asana brings stability to the body, helps to clear up congestion of the spinal nerves, and corrects faulty posture.

- Improves Balance.

Precaution: Avoid lifting the toes in case of acute cardiac problems varicose veins and vertigo.

6.3.2 Vrikshasana



Vriksa means tree. The final position of this asana resembles the shape of a tree, hence the name.

Sthiti: Standing posture

Technique: Stand with feet 2 inches apart.Focus on a point in front. Exhale, bend the right leg and place the foot on the left thigh. The heel should be touching the perineum. Inhale and extend the arms up and join the palms. Stay in the position for 10 to 30 seconds and breathe normally. Exhale and bring the arms and right foot down. Relax and repeat the asana from the left side.

Benefits:

- It tones up the leg muscles and rejuvenates the ligaments also.
- Improves neuro-muscular coordination, balance, endurance and alertness.
- Improves balance and stability by strengthening the legs and core muscles.
- Enhances concentration and mental focus.
- Stretches and strengthens the thighs, groins, and arms.
- Improves posture and alignment, helping to create a sense of groundedness and calm.

- Stimulates the root chakra (Muladhara), promoting a sense of security and stability.
- Can help alleviate stress and improve mental clarity.

Precaution: Please avoid this practice in case of arthritis, vertigo, and obesity.

6.3.3 Utkatasana





Utkata means intense, powerful, or chair-like. In this asana, the body is positioned as if sitting on an imaginary chair.

Sthiti: Standing posture

Technique: Stand upright with your feet together, arms by the side, and body relaxed.Inhale and raise both arms straight above the head, keeping them shoulder-width apart, palms facing groundward. Exhale and bend the knees as if sitting on an imaginary chair, ensuring your thighs are parallel to the ground or as per your capacity. Keep the spine elongated and the chest open, ensuring the back does not arch excessively. Maintain the knees aligned with the toes, not extending beyond them. Fix your gaze at a point straight ahead for balance. Hold the posture with normal breathing for as long as it is comfortable. Inhale and straighten the knees to return to the standing position. Exhale and bring the arms down to the sides.

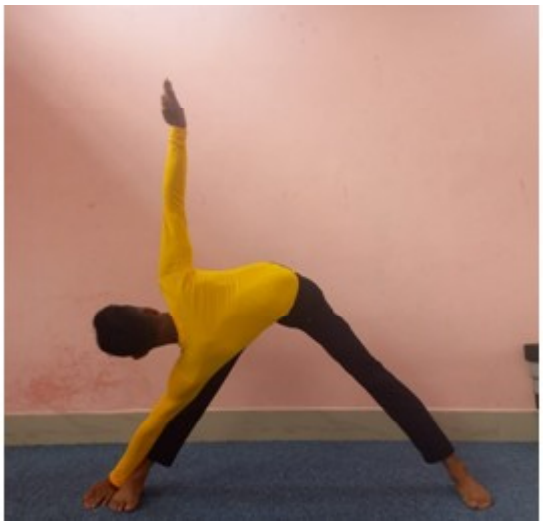
Benefits:

- Enhances stability, endurance, and focus.
- Helps to develop determination and willpower.
- Strengthens the thighs, calves, ankles, and spine.

- Tones and strengthens the abdominal organs and improves digestion.
- Stimulates the heart and diaphragm, improving circulation and breathing.

Precaution: Avoid this posture if you suffer from severe knee pain, arthritis, or any hip, knee, or ankle injuries. Those with low blood pressure or headaches should practice under guidance. Pregnant women should practice this asana only under the supervision of an experienced teacher.

6.3.4 Parivarta Trikonasana



Parivarta means "revolved" or "twisted," and **Trikonasana** means "triangle pose." This asana involves a twisting motion that stretches and strengthens various parts of the body.

Sthiti: Standing posture

Technique: Stand erect with feet more than shoulder width apart and raise the arms sideways to shoulder level. This is the starting position.Bend forward. Twist the trunk to the right, bringing the left hand to the right foot. The right arm should be stretched vertically so that both arms form a straight line. Look up at the right hand. Hold the final position for a few seconds, feeling the twist and stretch of the back. Return back to the center. Raise the body to the starting

position, keeping the arms outstretched to the sides. Repeat to the other side. This is one round.Do not lower the arms, practice 5 to 10 rounds.

Benefits:

- Regular practice will help to reduce waistline fat.
- It stimulates the nervous system and alleviates nervous depression.
- This general affects the muscles on the sides of the trunk, the waist and the back of the legs.
- It improves digestion, it also strengthens the pelvic area and tones the reproductive organs.

Precaution: Those who have been suffering from severe back conditions should avoid this asana

6.3.5 Padahastasana



Padahasta means "hands to feet." In this asana, the body is bent forward, and the hands reach the feet.

Sthiti: Standing posture

Technique: Stand with the spine erect, feet together and hands beside the body. Relax the body. This is the starting position. Distribute the weight of the body evenly on both feet. Slowly bend forward, first bending the head, taking the chin towards the chest, then bending the upper trunk, relaxing the shoulders forward, and letting the arms go limp.Bend the mid-trunk and finally the lower

trunk. While bending forward, imagine that the body has no bones or muscles. Do not strain or force the body. Place the fingers underneath the toes or bring the palms to the floor beside the feet. If this is not possible, bring the fingertips as near to the floor as possible. Relax the back of the neck. The body is bent forward with the knees straight and the forehead close to or touching the knees. Hold the position, relaxing the whole back. Slowly return to the starting position in the reverse order. This completes one round.Relax in the upright position before continuing the next round.

Benefits:

- Spinal nerves are stimulated and toned.
- This asana massages and tones the digestive organs, alleviates flatulence, constipation and indigestion.
- Inverting the trunk can increase vitality, improve metabolism and concentration and help with nasal and throat diseases.
- The dynamic form of padahastasana also helps to remove excess weight.

Precaution: This asana should not be practiced by people suffering from serious back problems, sciatica, heart disease, high blood pressure or abdominal hernia. Cautions for inverted postures apply.

6.3.6 Ardha-Chakrasana



Ardha-Chakra means half-wheel. In this asana, the body is bent backward resembling the shape of a half-wheel.

Sthiti: Standing posture.

Technique: Stand straight with feet together and arms alongside the body. Place the palms on the lower back, fingers pointing downward, supporting the lumbar spine. While inhaling, bend backward from the lumbar region, keeping the knees straight. Gently tilt the head backward and stretch the chest upward. Ensure the weight of the body is evenly distributed on both feet. Maintain the final position with normal breathing according to your capacity. While exhaling, return to the standing position. Relax in Samasthiti (standing relaxed posture).

Benefits:

- Helps strengthen the shoulders and upper back.
- Helps improve posture by reducing stiffness in the back and shoulders
- Expands the chest and enhances lung capacity, promoting better breathing.
- Improves flexibility and strength of the spine, particularly in the lumbar region.
- Tones the abdominal muscles and stimulates abdominal organs, improving digestion and reducing constipation.

Precaution: Avoid this asana if suffering from vertigo, severe lower back pain, or spinal disorders.Individuals with hypertension or heart-related issues should practice under expert supervision.Those with recent spinal or abdominal surgery should refrain from practicing this asana. Avoid excessive backward bending to prevent strain on the lower back.

6.3.7 Kati-Chakrasana

Kati-Chakrasana is a simple standing twisting pose that increases flexibility and strength in the spine and waist. **"Kati"** means **"waist,"** and "Chakra" means "wheel" or "rotation."



Sthiti: Standing posture

Technique: Stand erect with your feet shoulder-width apart. Keep your arms relaxed by your sides. While inhaling, raise both arms to shoulder level with palms facing each other. Exhale, twist the upper body to the right side. Place your left hand on the right shoulder and your right hand on the back. Gaze back over the right shoulder as far as comfortable, keeping the spine straight. Maintain the position with normal breathing according to your capacity.While inhaling, return to the center. Repeat the movement on the left side.

Benefits:

- Improves flexibility of the spine and waist.
- Strengthens the abdominal muscles and tones the spinal nerves.
- Improves digestion and stimulates the abdominal organs.
- Enhances the functioning of kidneys and helps in reducing waistline fat.
- Relieves tension in the lower back and promotes relaxation.

Precaution: Avoid, if suffering from severe spinal injuries, recent abdominal surgeries, or hernia. Individuals with vertigo or severe back pain should perform this under expert guidance. Synchronize your breathing with the twisting movement. Avoid jerky or forceful twists to prevent strain on the back or spine.

6.3.8:Trikonasana



Trikona means triangle. In this asana, the body forms a triangular shape by stretching the torso and arms, maintaining balance and stability.

Sthiti: Standing position.

Technique: Stand upright with your legs about 3-4 feet apart. Keep your arms by your sides and gaze forward. Turn your right foot 90 degrees outward and your left foot slightly inward. Keep both heels in alignment.While inhaling, raise your arms sideways to shoulder level, palms facing downward. Exhale and bend sideways to the right, bringing your right hand to rest on your right ankle-shin, or floor beside the foot (as per the capacity). Ensure your arms form a straight line. Extend your left arm toward the ceiling, keeping it in line with your shoulders. Turn your head to gaze at your left thumb. Ensure your body is aligned and not leaning forward or backward. Hold the position with normal breathing according to your capacity. To release, inhale and come back to the upright position. Exhale and lower your arms. Repeat on the left side.

Benefits:

- Improves flexibility of the legs, hips, and spine.
- Stimulates blood circulation and strengthens the legs, knees, and ankles.
- Enhances balance, stability, and focus.
- Stretches the hamstrings, groin, and hips.

- Relieves back pain and stiffness.
- Massages abdominal organs, improves digestion, and reduces waist fat.
- Energizes and rejuvenates the body, reducing fatigue and stress.

Precaution: Avoid this asana if you have severe back or neck pain, or a recent injury in the hips, knees, or ankles.People with vertigo or low blood pressure should perform with caution and under guidance.Pregnant women may practice with modifications and guidance from an expert. Avoid twisting the body; keep the chest open and aligned.Focus on the stretch in the sides of the body, hips, and shoulders, and balance on the legs.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1: What is the meaning of Tadasana?

Q2: Why is Vrikshasana called the “Tree Pose”?

Q3: How does Utkatasana strengthen the lower body?

Q4: What are the main benefits of practicing Parivarta Trikonasana?

Q5: How does Ardha Chakrasana improve lung capacity?

Q6: Write in detail about on Tadasana and Vrikshasana.

Q7: Write down the techniques and benefits of Utkatasana and Parivarta trikonasana.

Q8: Write in detail on padahastasana and Ardha chakrasana.

Q9: Write in detail about on Katichakrasana and trikonasana.



6.4 LET US SUM UP

- Asanas are physical postures in yoga that promote overall well-being.
- They improve flexibility, strength, balance, and relaxation while reducing stress and anxiety.
- Asanas are classified into different types, such as standing, sitting, forward bending, backward bending, twisting, inverted, and balancing postures.

- Regular practice of asanas enhances physical health, mental clarity, and spiritual awareness.
- Along with pranayama (breathing techniques) and meditation, asanas form the foundation of a holistic yogic lifestyle.



6.5 FURTHER READING

- Saraswati. S.S.(2009). *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha,* Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India.
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6.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: Tadasana, also known as Mountain Pose, means “Palm Tree Pose” or “Mountain Pose” in Sanskrit. It symbolises stability, balance, and alignment.

Answer to Q2: Vrikshasana resembles a tree standing tall with one foot rooted into the ground and the other placed on the inner thigh or calf, mimicking a tree’s steady posture

Answer to Q3: Utkatasana (Chair Pose) engages the thighs, calves, glutes, and core muscles, building strength and endurance in the lower body while improving balance.

Answer to Q4: Parivrtta Trikonasana (Revolved Triangle Pose) improves spinal flexibility, strengthens the legs, enhances digestion, and increases balance and coordination.

Answer to Q5: Ardha Chakrasana (Half Wheel Pose) expands the chest, opens the lungs, and improves respiratory function, enhancing oxygen intake and lung efficiency.

Answer to Q6: Tadasana, also known as Mountain Pose, is a standing posture that forms the foundation for most standing yoga poses. It

helps improve posture, balance, and alignment, and Vrikshasana, or Tree Pose, is a balancing posture that strengthens the legs, core, and improves mental focus.

Answer to Q7: Utkatasana, or Chair Pose, is a standing posture that strengthens the thighs, glutes, and core while improving endurance.

Technique of Utkatasana- Start in Tadasana (Mountain Pose). Inhale and raise your arms overhead, keeping them shoulder-width apart. Exhale and bend your knees, lowering your hips as if sitting back into an imaginary chair. Ensure your knees do not extend beyond your toes and your back remains straight. Hold for 30 seconds to 1 minute, breathing deeply.

Benefits of Utkatasana:

- Strengthens the thighs, glutes, and core.
- Tones the arms and legs.
- Improves balance and concentration.
- Increases stamina and endurance.
- Stimulates the heart and improves circulation.
- Parivrita Trikonasana is a twisting variation of the traditional Triangle Pose, which helps improve flexibility and detoxify the body.

Technique of Parivarta trikonasana - Start with your feet wide apart, around 3-4 feet.Turn your left foot out 90 degrees and right foot slightly in. Extend your arms out at shoulder height, keeping your chest open. Exhale and rotate your torso to the left, bringing your right hand to the floor or a block, and your left arm reaching toward the ceiling. Hold for 20-30 seconds, then switch sides.

Benefits of Parivrita Trikonasana:

- Improves flexibility in the legs, spine, and hips.
- Strengthens the core, legs, and arms.
- Stimulates digestion and detoxifies the body.
- Increases balance and coordination.
- Enhances spinal mobility and posture.

Answer to Q8: Padahastasana is a forward fold that stretches the hamstrings and improves flexibility in the lower back, and Ardha

Chakrasana, or Half Wheel Pose, is a backbend that stretches the chest and improves spinal flexibility.

Ans to Qn 9. Katichakrasana is a simple standing twist that helps improve spinal flexibility and digestive health, and Trikonasana, or Triangle Pose, is a standing pose that stretches and strengthens the legs, hips, and spine.



6.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions

1. What is the root meaning of the word “asana”?
2. What is the meaning of ‘Tada’ in Tadasana?
3. Name the asana that imitates the shape of a tree.
4. What does ‘Utkata’ mean in Utkatasana?
5. What does ‘Parivarta Trikonasana’ literally mean?
6. In Padahastasana, where are the hands placed in the final posture?
7. What does ‘Ardha Chakrasana’ signify?
8. Which asana involves a gentle spinal twist and is named after the waist?
9. What does ‘Trikona’ mean in Trikonasana?
10. Mention one benefit of practicing Tadasana.
11. Which chakra is stimulated by Vrikshasana?
12. Name one precaution for practicing Utkatasana.
13. Which asana helps in reducing waistline fat?
14. In which posture is the body bent backward resembling a half wheel?
15. What is the standing starting position called in yoga?

B) Short Questions

1. Briefly describe the origin and purpose of asanas in yoga.
2. Explain the technique of performing Tadasana.
3. List any three benefits of Vrikshasana.
4. What are the steps involved in performing Utkatasana?
5. Write down the key benefits and one precaution for Parivarta Trikonasana.

6. Describe the movement sequence of Padahastasana.
7. What are the benefits and precautions of practicing Ardha Chakrasana?
8. Explain the technique and advantages of Kati-Chakrasana.
9. How is Trikonasana performed? List any two of its benefits.
10. State any three common precautions that apply while performing standing asanas.

C) Long Questions

1. Explain in detail the evolution of asanas from seated meditative poses to dynamic physical movements.
2. Compare and contrast the techniques and benefits of Tadasana and Vrikshasana.
3. Describe the technique, benefits, and precautions of Utkatasana and Padahastasana.
4. Write a detailed account of the method, physical effects, and precautions of performing Parivarta Trikonasana and Trikonasana.
5. Discuss how Ardha Chakrasana and Kati-Chakrasana benefit the spine and digestive system. Include precautions.
6. Illustrate how regular practice of the described standing asanas contributes to physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.
7. Analyze the role of alignment, breathing, and balance in performing asanas effectively, citing examples from at least three asanas from the list.

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UNIT 7: CULTURAL POSTURES (SITTING)

UNIT STRUCTURE

7.1 Learning objectives

7.2 Introduction

7.3 Cultural postures (Sitting)-

- 7.3.1 Janusirasana
- 7.3.2 Vakrasana
- 7.3.3 Ardha-Kurmasana
- 7.3.4 Ardha Chandrasana
- 7.3.5 Ekpad Skandhasana
- 7.3.6 Kona-Paschimottanasana

7.4 Let Let us Sum up

7.5 Further Reading

7.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

7.7 Model Questions

7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to know:

- will be able to know about (name of the asana)
- will understand the techniques to perform these asanas
- will understand the proper alignment of these asanas
- will understand the benefits of these asanas
- will understand the precautions to be followed in these asanas
- will be able to develop flexibility, strength, and mind-body coordination through regular practice

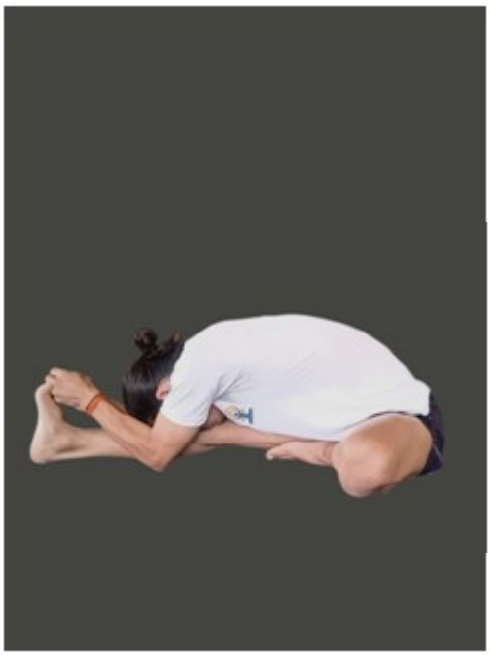
7.2 INTRODUCTION

Asanas are physical postures or poses practiced in yoga to promote physical health, mental well-being, and spiritual growth. The word **"asana"**is

derived from theSanskrit root "**ās**" which means to sit or be present. Traditionally, asanas were primarily seated postures meant for meditation. However, over time, they have evolved into a comprehensive system of physical movements that improve flexibility, strength, balance, and relaxation.

7.3 CULTURAL POSTURES (SITTING)

7.3.1 Janusirasana



In this asana, **Janu** means knee, and **Siras** means head. It is a seated forward bend where the head touches the knee, enhancing flexibility and calming the mind.

Sthiti: Dandasana (Staff Pose), Legs extended straight in front, feet together, and spine erect.

Technique: Begin by sitting with both legs stretched out straight. Keep the spine erect and the feet together. Bend the right knee, bringing the sole of the foot to touch the inner left thigh. Ensure the right knee points towards the floor. While inhaling, extend the spine and lifting the chest up. Exhale, lean forward from the hips, bringing the chest towards the left leg. Reach for the left foot with both hands,

and if possible, touch the forehead to the knee. Keep the left leg straight, with the toes flexed, and ensure the left thigh remains grounded. Maintain the final position while breathing deeply and steadily. To release, slowly rise up, lengthen the spine, and extend the right leg back to Dandasana. Repeat the same on the other side.

Benefits:

- Helps to calm the mind, reducing stress and anxiety.
- Improves flexibility in the hamstrings, groin, and lower back.
- Stretches the spine, improving posture and alleviating tension.
- Tones and stretches the legs, especially the inner thighs and knees.
- Stimulates the abdominal organs, enhancing digestion and relieving constipation.
- Effective in promoting relaxation, providing a gentle stretch to the back and neck.

Precaution: Those with severe hamstring injuries, lower back pain, or knee issues should avoid or modify this asana. People with sciatica or herniated discs should practice with caution or under expert guidance. Pregnant women should avoid deep forward bends or practice with modifications. Maintain a straight back throughout the pose to prevent strain. Focus on long, smooth breaths, and avoid overstretching.

7.2.2 Vakrasana



Vakra means twisted. In this asana, the spine is twisted, which has a rejuvenating effect on its functioning.

Sthiti: Dandasana

Technique: Bend the right leg, and place the right foot beside of the left knee. As you exhale, twist the body to the right. Bring the left arm around the right knee and clasp the right big toe or place the palm beside right foot. Take the right arm back and keep the palm on the ground with the back straight. Remain in the posture for 10-30 seconds with normal breathing and relax.Take out your hands with exhalation and relax. Repeat the same on the other side.

Benefits:

- Helps to increase the flexibility of the spine.
- Helps to overcome constipation, and dyspepsia.
- Stimulates pancreas and helps in the management of diabetes.

Precaution: Please avoid this posture in case of severe back pain, vertebral and disc disorders, after abdominal surgery and during menstruation.

7.3.3 Ardha-Kurmasana



Ardha means half, and **Kurma** means tortoise. In this asana, the body takes the shape of a tortoise stretching its head and limbs forward, which provides deep relaxation and stretches the back, shoulders, and hips.

Sthiti: Vajrasana.

Technique: Sit in Vajrasana (kneeling position with hips on heels. Raise both arms over the head, keeping them shoulder-width apart and palms facing each other. As you exhale, slowly bend forward

from the waist, stretching your arms forward, and rest your forehead on the floor. Keep your buttocks resting on your heels and stretch the arms as far forward as comfortable. Maintain the posture for 10-30 seconds with normal breathing. Inhale and slowly return to the starting position. Relax in Vajrasana.

Benefits: Relieves stress and tension by calming the mind. This stretches the spine, shoulders, and hips, improving flexibility. Helps reduce fatigue and enhances blood circulation to the head. Aids digestion by gently massaging abdominal organs.

Precaution: Avoid this posture in case of severe knee, back, or hip injuries. Refrain from practicing after recent abdominal surgery. Not recommended during pregnancy or for those with vertigo or high blood pressure.

7.3.4 Ardha Chandrasana



Ardha means Half and Chandra means Moon. In this asana, the body is shaped like a halfmoon. It is an elegant pose that challenges balance, stability, and strength, while promoting flexibility in the body.

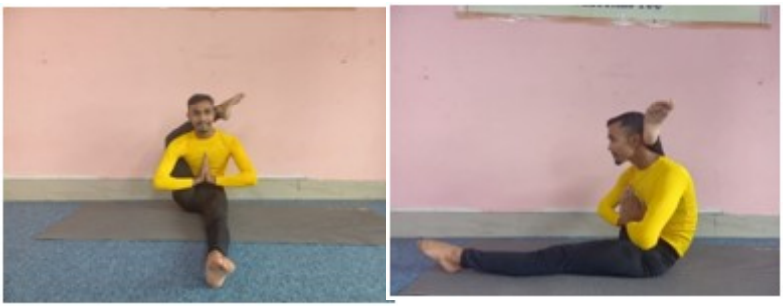
Technique: First, practice ashwa sanchalanasana and, in the final position, maintain the balance. While inhaling, raise the arms up over the head and join the palms together. Arch the head and upper trunk as far back as comfortable without straining. There should be a gentle curve like a crescent moon from the tip of the fingers to the tip of the toes. Hold the posture according to the capacity.Now, exhale lower the arms, and place the hands on the floor. Release the pose and relax. Repeat from the other side.

Benefits:

- Opens the hips and chest.
- Enhances spinal flexibility.
- Improves balance and stability.
- Stimulates digestion and relieves stress.
- Increases concentration and mental focus.
- This asana loosens up and strengthens the entire skeletal structure.

Precaution: Those who have low blood pressure and vertigo avoid this asana. People with severe lower back conditions, sciatica, and lumbago should avoid this asana. Awareness of smooth control movement and balance of the body.

7.3.5 Ekpad Skandhasana



Ekpad means one leg, and Skandhasana refers to the pose emphasising the shoulders. This asana involves balance and stretching, which rejuvenates the body and enhances coordination.

Sthiti: Dandasana.

Technique: Sit with your legs straight out in front of you, spine erect. Draw your belly button towards your spine to stabilize your body. Inhale and lift one leg straight up from the knee, keeping your foot flexed. Keep your lifted leg straight, your hips square to the floor, and your spine long and straight. Push firmly into the ground with the leg that is seated to maintain balance. Direct your gaze straight ahead to maintain focus. Repeat from the other side.

Benefits:

- Stretches the inner thighs, groin, and hips.
- Strengthens the legs, especially the quads and calves.
- Enhances balance and stability.
- Improves flexibility in the lower body.
- Promotes mental focus and concentration.
- Stimulates blood circulation in the legs and hips.
- Energizes and revitalizes the body.
- Tones and strengthens the core muscles.

Constrain-indications: Avoid this asana if you have a recent injury in the knees, hips, or ankles. Those with knee or hip problems should practice with caution. Pregnant women should avoid deep knee bends and consult an expert before practicing. If you experience dizziness, stop the practice and consult a healthcare provider. Keep the spine straight and avoid collapsing the chest. Focus on engaging the core muscles to protect the lower back and maintain balance.Perform the asana slowly and with control to avoid injury, especially if you are new to the practice.

7.3.6: Kona-Paschimottanasana



Kona means angle, and **Paschimottanasana** refers to a forward bend stretch targeting the posterior (west) side of the body. This asana helps improve flexibility and toning the body.

Sthiti: Dandasana

Technique: Sit in Dandasana with your legs stretched straight in front of you and keep your back erect. Spread your legs apart as

much as comfortably possible, forming a wide angle.Inhale deeply and as you exhale, bend forward from the hips.Stretch your arms forward and try to touch the toes of each foot, keeping the spine straight.Keep your head in line with the spine and your gaze forward or downward. Remain in this posture for 10-30 seconds with normal breathing, and then relax.Slowly return to the initial position with inhalation.

Benefits:

- Calms the mind and relieves stress.
- Enhances flexibility in the hips, thighs, and spine.
- Improves digestion and stimulates abdominal organs.

Precaution: Avoid this asana in case of severe back pain, sciatica, hernia, or recent abdominal surgeries.Pregnant women and those with high blood pressure should practice it with caution under expert guidance.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. What is the correct breathing technique while performing Janusirasana?

Q2. What does "Vakrasana" mean in Sanskrit?

Q3. Which part of the body is stretched the most in Ardha-Kurmasana?

Q4. Is Ardha Chandrasana helpful for back pain?

Q5. What does Ekpad Skandhasana focus on?

Q6. Write in detail about Janusirasana and Vakrasana.

Q7. Write down the techniques and benefits of Ardha kurmasana and Ardha Chandrasana.

Q8. Write in detail about Ekpad Skandhasana and Kona-Paschimottanasana.



7.4 LET US SUM UP

- Asanas are physical postures in yoga that promote overall well-being.
- They improve flexibility, strength, balance, and relaxation while reducing stress and anxiety.
- Asanas are classified into different types, such as standing, sitting, forward bending, backward bending, twisting, inverted, and balancing postures.
- Regular practice of asanas enhances physical health, mental clarity, and spiritual awareness.
- Along with pranayama (breathing techniques) and meditation, asanas form the foundation of a holistic yogic lifestyle.



7.5 FURTHER READING

- Saraswati. S.S.(2009). *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha,* Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India.
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7.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: Inhale while lengthening the spine, exhale while bending forward, and maintain slow, deep breathing throughout the pose.

Answer to Q2: "Vakrasana" comes from the Sanskrit word *"Vakra"*, meaning **twisted or curved**, referring to the spinal twist in the pose.

Answer to Q3: The lower back, shoulders, and abdominal muscles are stretched the most in Ardha-Kurmasana.

Answer to Q4: Yes, it strengthens the lower back, improves spinal alignment, and enhances flexibility, which can help alleviate back pain.

Answer to Q5: It focuses on hip mobility, leg flexibility, and balance, strengthening the lower body and core muscles.

Answer to Q6: Janusirasana, or Head-to-Knee Pose, is a seated forward bend that stretches the hamstrings and spine while calming the mind and relieving stress. The name comes from *Janu* (knee) and *Sirasa* (head), which indicates bringing the head toward the knee, and Vakrasana is a seated twist that improves flexibility in the spine and tones the abdominal muscles. *Vakra* means "twisted" in Sanskrit, indicating the rotational nature of the pose.

Answer to Q7: Technique of Ardha Kurmasana (Half Tortoise Pose) - Sit with your legs extended straight in front of you and your arms at your sides.Inhale, and as you exhale, hinge at your hips and lower your torso toward the floor.Bring your forehead to the ground, and stretch your arms out in front of you on the mat. Stay in the pose for 20-30 seconds, then gently return to sitting.

Benefits of Ardha Kurmasana:

- Stretches the spine, shoulders, and neck.
- Improves flexibility and posture.
- Calms the nervous system and reduces stress.
- Stimulates digestion and relieves constipation.
- Provides a gentle opening to the chest and lungs.

Technique of Ardha Chandrasana (Half Moon Pose): Start in a standing position and step your feet about 3-4 feet apart. Turn your right foot out 90 degrees and your left foot slightly in. Hinge at your hips, placing your right hand on the floor or a block while lifting your left leg parallel to the floor. Reach your left hand toward the ceiling, creating a straight line from your left foot to your left hand. Stay in the pose for 20-30 seconds, then switch sides.

Benefits of Ardha Chandrasana:

- Strengthens the legs, core, and arms.
- Improves balance and stability.

- Stretches the hamstrings, hips, and spine.
- Opens the chest and lungs.
- Enhances concentration and focus.

Answer to Q8: Ekapad Skandhasana is a dynamic hip-opening and leg-strengthening pose that mimics a low squat with one leg extended. It's great for improving flexibility in the hips and legs, and Kona-Paschimottanasana is a seated forward bend that stretches the hamstrings and lower back, while providing a gentle opening to the hips.



7.7 MODEL QUETIONS

A) Very Short Answer Type Questions

1. What is the meaning of the Sanskrit root "as"?
2. Which seated asana involves bringing the forehead to the knee?
3. Name the asana that mimics the shape of a half-moon.
4. What is the initial position (Sthiti) for Vakrasana?
5. Which asana is beneficial for diabetes by stimulating the pancreas?
6. Name the asana where one leg is lifted while seated in Dandasana.
7. What is the base posture (Sthiti) for practicing Ardha Kurmasana?
8. Which cultural posture enhances flexibility in the hips and spine using a wide-legged stretch?
9. What precaution should pregnant women take while performing forward bends?
10. Which asana is named after the tortoise?

B) Short Answer Type Questions

1. Write any three benefits of Janusirasana.
2. Describe the meaning and physical shape of Ardha Chandrasana.
3. Mention the steps to perform Ardha Kurmasana.
4. List three precautions to be taken while practicing Ekpad Skandhasana.
5. What are the main physical benefits of Kona-Paschimottanasana?
6. Explain the cultural and meditative origins of asanas.
7. What is the meaning of Vakrasana and what is its major benefit?

8. Mention the technique of performing Janusirasana in brief.
9. Name any three asanas from the sitting cultural posture group.
10. State three benefits of Ardha Kurmasana.

C) Long Answer Type Questions

1. Describe in detail the steps, benefits, and precautions of Janusirasana.
2. Discuss the evolution of asanas from meditative postures to comprehensive physical practices.
3. Explain the technique and advantages of performing Vakrasana.
4. Elaborate on the significance, steps, and benefits of Ekpad Skandhasana.
5. Describe the technique, physical effects, and necessary precautions of Ardha Chandrasana.
6. Write a detailed note on Ardha Kurmasana including its technique, benefits, and limitations.
7. Compare and contrast Janusirasana and Kona-Paschimottanasana in terms of technique and benefits.
8. Explain the posture and benefits of Kona-Paschimottanasana with special reference to spinal flexibility.
9. Highlight the importance of breath and spinal alignment in cultural sitting postures.
10. Discuss the health benefits and limitations of seated cultural postures in modern yoga practice.

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UNIT 8: CULTURAL POSTURES (SUPINE)

UNIT STRUCTURE

8.1 Learning objectives

8.2 Introduction

8.3 Cultural postures (Supine)-

8.3.1 Uttan Padasana

8.3.2 Pavan-Muktasana

8.4 Let us Sum up

8.5 Further Reading

8.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

8.7 Model Questions

8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to know:

- will be able to know about Uttan Padasana and Pawan muktasana
- will understand the techniques to perform both asanas
- will understand the proper alignment of both asanas
- will understand the benefits of both asanas
- will understand the precautions to be followed in both asanas
- will be able to develop flexibility, strength, and balance through regular practice

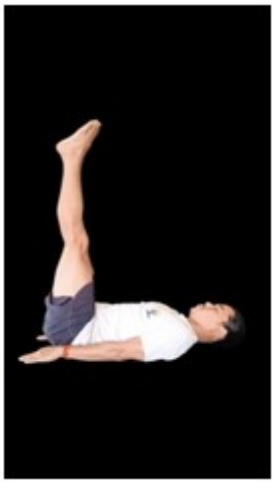
8.2 INTRODUCTION

Asanas are physical postures or poses practiced in yoga to promote physical health, mental well-being, and spiritual growth. The word **"asana"** is derived from the Sanskrit root **"ās"**, which means "to sit" or "to be present." Traditionally, asanas were primarily seated postures meant for meditation. However, over time, they have evolved into a comprehensive

system of physical movements that improve flexibility, strength, balance, and relaxation.

8.3 CULTURAL POSTURES (SUPINE)

8.3.1 Uttan Padasana



Uttan means raised, and **Pada** means legs. In this asana, the legs are raised upwards, creating a powerful stretch and activation of the abdominal region.

Sthiti: Supine posture or Shavasana

Technique: Lie down on your back with the body straight, hands resting beside the thighs, and palms facing down. Keep the feet together and toes pointing upwards. While inhaling raise both legs slowly to 30°, 45°, or 90° depending on your capacity, keeping them straight and avoiding any bending at the knees. Keep the arms and shoulders relaxed, with the lower back in contact with the ground. Maintain the final position with normal breathing according to your comfort and capacity. While exhaling, slowly lower the legs back to the floor without jerking. Relax in Shavasana.

Benefits:

- Enhances the strength of the hip flexors and lower back.
- Strengthens the abdominal muscles and tones the digestive organs.

- Improves blood circulation in the lower abdomen and pelvic region.
- Helps reduce abdominal fat and manageconditions like diabetes.
- Improves digestion and stimulates the functioning of the pancreas, kidneys, and liver.

Precaution: People with severe back pain, hernia, high blood pressure, or recent abdominal surgery should avoid this practice. Pregnant women should refrain from practicing this asana. Those with sciatica or lumbar spondylitis should perform under expert guidance. Keep the lower back stable to avoid strain. Focus on the contraction of abdominal muscles and the stretch in the lower back.

8.3.2 Pavan-Muktasana



Pavan means air or wind, and **mukta** means release. This asana is also known as the Wind-Relieving Pose, as it helps release trapped air from the stomach and intestines.

Sthiti: Supine posture or Shavasana

Technique: Lie flat on the back with legs extended and hands by the sides, palms facing downward. While inhaling, bend the right knee and bring it towards the chest. Interlock the fingers and clasp them around the shin just below the knee. Press the thigh against the abdomen gently while exhaling. Ensure the left leg remains straight and in contact with the ground. Raise the head and shoulders slightly, bringing the chin towards the knee while maintaining the grip. Stay in the final position for a few seconds to a minute, breathing normally according to your comfort. To release, lower the head and shoulders while exhaling, then extend the bent leg back to the starting

position. Repeat the same steps with the left leg, and then perform with both legs together. Relax in Shavasana.

Benefits:

- Relieves bloating, indigestion, and constipation by massaging the abdominal organs.
- Strengthens the abdominal muscles and improves flexibility in the hip and knee joints.
- Gently stretches the lower back, relieving tension.
- Soothes the mind and improves focus, promoting relaxation.
- Useful in managing gas, flatulence, and other digestive discomforts.

Precaution: Pregnant women should refrain from practicing this pose. People with recent abdominal or spinal surgery, hernia, or severe back pain should avoid this asana. Those suffering from severe neck pain should avoid lifting the head and keep it relaxed on the ground. Avoid applying excessive pressure on the abdomen while holding the pose. Keep the breath synchronized with the movement for maximum benefit.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. What are the benefits of Uttan Padasana for digestion?

Q2. What are the contraindications of Pavanmuktasana?

Q3. Write in details about on Uttan padasana.

Q4. Write down the techniques and benefits of Pavanmuktasana.



8.4 LET US SUM UP

- Asanas are physical postures in yoga that promote overall well-being.
- They improve flexibility, strength, balance, and relaxation while reducing stress and anxiety.
- Asanas are classified into different types, such as standing, sitting, forward bending, backward bending, twisting, inverted, and balancing postures.

- Regular practice of asanas enhances physical health, mental clarity, and spiritual awareness.
- Along with pranayama (breathing techniques) and meditation, asanas form the foundation of a holistic yogic lifestyle.



8.5 FURTHER READING

- Saraswati. S.S.(2009). *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha,* Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India.
- Muktibodhananda.S.(2016). *Hatha Yoga Pradipika,* Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India.
- Saraswati. S.N.(2012). *Gherenda Samhita,* Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India.



8.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: Uttan Padasana (Raised Legs Pose) strengthens the abdominal muscles and stimulates digestive organs, helping to improve digestion. It enhances blood circulation to the digestive system, reducing issues like constipation, bloating, and indigestion. The asana also strengthens the lower abdomen, which aids in better functioning of the intestines.

Answer to Q2: Pavanmuktasana (Wind-Relieving Pose) should be avoided by individuals with recent abdominal surgery, hernia, severe back pain, or spinal issues. Pregnant women and people with high blood pressure or heart problems should also refrain from practicing this pose. Additionally, those suffering from severe neck pain should avoid lifting the head while performing the asana.

Answer to Q3: Uttanpadasana, also known as the Raised Leg Pose, is a foundational yoga posture that primarily targets the core, lower back, and legs. This asana is excellent for strengthening the abdominal muscles and improving flexibility in the hip flexors. The name

Uttanpadasana is derived from the Sanskrit words *Uttana* (raised or extended) and *Pada* (leg), making it a posture focused on raising and extending the legs.

Answer to Q4: Pavanmuktasana is a simple yet effective yoga pose that focuses on releasing air from the body, promoting better digestion, and easing tension in the abdomen. The name is derived from *Pavan* (wind) and *Mukta* (release), indicating the relief of trapped gas and bloating.



8.7 MODEL QUETIONS

1. What is the meaning of the word “asana”?
2. What is the root meaning of the Sanskrit word “as”?
3. Name any one supine cultural posture.
4. What does “Uttan” mean in Uttan Padasana?
5. What does “Pavan-Muktasana” translate to in English?
6. What is the starting posture (Sthiti) for Uttan Padasana?
7. Write three benefits of Uttan Padasana.
8. List any three precautions for practicing Uttan Padasana
9. What are the digestive benefits of Pavan-Muktasana?
10. How does Uttan Padasana benefit the abdominal region?
11. Describe the importance of breathing in Pavan-Muktasana.
12. What are the main contraindications for Pavan-Muktasana?
13. Describe the technique, benefits, and precautions of Uttan Padasana in detail.
14. Explain how Pavan-Muktasana is performed and how it supports digestive health.
15. Write a detailed note on the role of supine postures in improving core strength and abdominal health.

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UNIT- 9: CULTURAL POSTURES (PRONE)

UNIT STRUCTURE

9.1 Learning objectives

9.2 Introduction

9.3 Cultural Postures (Prone)

9.3.1 Bhujangasana

9.3.2 Ardha Shalabhasana

9.4 Let us Sum up

9.5 Further Reading

9.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

9.7 Model Questions

9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to know –

- will be able to know about Bhujangasana and Shalabhasana
- will understand the techniques to perform both asanas
- will understand the proper alignment of both asanas
- will understand the benefits of both asanas
- will understand the precautions to be followed in both asanas
- will be able to develop flexibility, strength, balance, and mind-body coordination through regular practice

9.2 INTRODUCTION

Asanas are physical postures or poses practiced in yoga to promote physical health, mental well-being, and spiritual growth. The word **"asana"** is derived from the Sanskrit root **"ās"**, which means "to sit" or "to be present." Traditionally, asanas were primarily seated postures meant for meditation. However, over time, they have evolved into a comprehensive system of physical movements that improve flexibility, strength, balance, and relaxation.

9.3 CULTURAL POSTURES (PRONE)

9.3.1 Bhujangasana



Bhujanga means snake or cobra. In this asana, the body is raised like upper face of a snake.

Sthiti: Prone posture or makarasana

Technique: Lie down in prone position with the abdomen on the floor, and both feet together. Chin touches the floor, feet touching the ground and soles of the feet uppermost. Place both palms near the chest, and bend the elbows slightly. While inhaling lift the chest up, roll the shoulder back and open the chest. Keep the navel in touch with the ground. Maintain the final position with normal breathing according to the capacity. While exhaling come back to sthiti position. Relax in Makarasana.

Benefits:

- This asana improves spinal flexibility especially the dorsal spine, keeps the spine supple and healthy, strengthens the muscles in the arms and back, and is useful in the management of back and bronchial problems.
- It tones the ovaries and uterus, effective in relieving menstrual irregularities and in some gynecological disorders. Stretch and relaxation give deep awareness, leading to deep relaxation of abdominal organs. This asana also enhances the breathing.
- It also stimulates the appetite, relieves constipation, and is beneficial for all the abdominal organs especially the liver and kidneys. It also reduces the abdominal fat.

Precaution: Those who have been suffering from peptic ulcer, hernia, intestinal tuberculosis or hyperthyroidism should not practice this asana without the guidance of an experienced teacher. Those who had recent abdominal surgery may avoid this asana for a minimum of 6 months. Keep the legs stable so that no tension is felt on the lumbar spine.

9.3.2 Ardha Shalabhasana



The name **Ardha** Shalabhasana comes from Sanskrit, where Ardha means half and **Shalabha** means locust. In this asana, the body takes the shape of a half-locust.

Sthiti: Prone posture or Makarasana

Technique: Lie flat on the stomach with the legs together, arms by the sides, and chin resting on the floor. Extend the arms forward, palms facing down, or keep them under the thighs, palms touching the floor for support. While inhaling, slowly lift one leg (right leg first) straight up without bending the knee, as high as comfortable. Keep the other leg, abdomen, and pelvis firmly grounded. Maintain the position for a few breaths, focusing on the stretch in the lower back and thighs. While exhaling, slowly bring the lifted leg down to the ground. Repeat the process with the left leg and then with both legs.

Relax in Makarasana after completing the rounds.

Benefits:

- Strengthens the lower back, buttocks, and hamstring muscles.
- Improves flexibility of the spine and tones the lower body.
- Stimulates abdominal organs and aids in digestion.
- Helps in relieving sciatica and lower back pain.
- Improves blood circulation in the pelvic region.

Precaution: Individuals with severe lower back pain, hernia, or recent abdominal surgeries should avoid this practice. Pregnant women and those with peptic ulcers or severe spinal injuries must avoid this asana. Ensure smooth and controlled movements without jerks.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. What is the correct breathing technique for Bhujangasana?

Q2. What is the best time to practice Ardha Shalabhasana?

Q3. Write in details about on Bhujangasana.

Q4. Write down the techniques and benefits of Ardha Shalabhasana.



9.4 LET US SUM UP

- Asanas are physical postures in yoga that promote overall well-being.
- They improve flexibility, strength, balance, and relaxation while reducing stress and anxiety.
- Asanas are classified into different types, such as standing, sitting, forward bending, backward bending, twisting, inverted, and balancing postures.
- Regular practice of asanas enhances physical health, mental clarity, and spiritual awareness.
- Along with pranayama (breathing techniques) and meditation, asanas form the foundation of a holistic yogic lifestyle.



9.5 FURTHER READING

- Saraswati. S.S.(2009). *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha,* Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India.
- Muktibodhananda.S.(2016). *Hatha Yoga Pradipika,* Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India.
- Saraswati. S.N.(2012). *Gherenda Samhita,* Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India.



9.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: The correct breathing technique for Bhujangasana is : Inhale while lifting the chest, hold the breath for a few seconds in the lifted position, and exhale while lowering the body back to the mat.

Answer to Q2: The best time to practice Ardha Shalabhasana (Half Locust Pose) is in the morning on an empty stomach or at least 4–5 hours after a meal if practiced later in the day.

Answer to Q3: Bhujangasana, commonly known as the Cobra Pose, is a classic backbend yoga posture that strengthens the spine, opens up the chest, and stretches the abdomen. The name *Bhujangasana* is derived from the Sanskrit word *Bhujanga*, meaning “serpent” or “cobra,” and *Asana*, meaning “pose.” This asana mimics the posture of a cobra with its hood raised.

Answer to Q4: Ardha Shalabhasana, or Half Locust Pose, is a prone asana that targets the lower back, core, and legs. This pose is a gentle variation of the full Shalabhasana (Locust Pose), making it a good choice for beginners or those seeking to gradually build strength in their back and core muscles.

Techniques of Ardha Shalabhasana: Lie flat on your stomach with your arms by your sides, palms facing down, and legs extended straight. Press your pubic bone into the floor and engage your abdominal muscles. Inhale and lift your right leg off the floor while keeping it straight. Lift it to a height

where you feel a stretch but do not strain. Keep your leg extended and your foot flexed, holding the position for 15-30 seconds, while keeping your upper body relaxed. Exhale and lower your right leg back to the floor, then repeat the process with the left leg. After both legs are practiced, relax in the starting position and breathe deeply.

Benefits of Ardha Shalabhasana:

- Strengthens the lower back, glutes, and legs.
- Tones the abdominal muscles and improves core stability.
- Increases flexibility in the spine and hips.
- Improves posture and spinal alignment.
- Stimulates the digestive organs and promotes better digestion.
- Enhances balance and coordination.



9.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

1. What is the meaning of the Sanskrit word “asana”?
2. What is the original purpose of asanas in traditional yoga?
3. What does the term “Bhujangasana” mean?
4. What is the base (sthiti) position for Bhujangasana?
5. In Bhujangasana, which part of the body should remain in contact with the ground?
6. What does “Ardha Shalabhasana” mean in Sanskrit?
7. Which muscle groups are mainly strengthened by Ardha Shalabhasana?
8. What is the relaxation posture used after prone asanas?
9. Name one precaution to be taken while performing Bhujangasana.
10. Which asana is helpful in relieving sciatica?

B. Short Questions (Answer is about 150 words)

1. Define asanas and explain their purpose in yoga.
2. Briefly describe the traditional and modern understanding of asanas.
3. Explain the technique of performing Bhujangasana.

4. Mention three physical benefits of Bhujangasana.
5. List any two precautions to be kept in mind while performing Bhujangasana.
6. Describe the process of performing Ardha Shalabhasana.
7. What are the benefits of Ardha Shalabhasana for the lower body?
8. Write any two conditions in which Ardha Shalabhasana should be avoided.
9. How does Bhujangasana affect the abdominal organs?
10. Compare the base positions (sthiti) of Bhujangasana and Ardha Shalabhasana.

C. Long Questions (Answer in about 300-500 words)

1. What are asanas? Explain their evolution from seated meditative postures to a complete physical system.
2. Describe in detail the technique, benefits, and precautions of Bhujangasana.
3. Discuss the steps of performing Ardha Shalabhasana. What are its benefits and contraindications?
4. How do Bhujangasana and Ardha Shalabhasana contribute to spinal health and digestion?
5. Explain the role of prone cultural postures in improving physical and mental well-being, with reference to Bhujangasana and Ardha Shalabhasana.

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UNIT 10: BREATHING EXERCISE/PRANAYAMA

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.1 Learning objectives

10.2 Introduction

10.3 Breathing Exercise

- 10.3.1 Sectional Breathing
- 10.3.2 Yogic Breathing
- 10.3.3 Nadi Shuddhi
- 10.3.4 Anulom Vilom
- 10.3.5 Bhramari

10.4 Let us Sum up

10.5 Further Reading

10.6 Answers to check your progress

10.7 Model Questions

10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you:

- will be able to understand the yogic breathing practices and Pranayama
- will understand the methods of practicing yogic breathing practices and pranayama
- will be able to practice the techniques correctly
- will be able to know the benefits of these practices
- will able to know the precautions for these practices

10.2 INTRODUCTION

Pranayama is a way to understand prana and its effects on the human body and mind. There are different breathing techniques to influence the pranic energy, bringing balance to the body and control over the mind.

Breathing is a key to practicing pranayama. The word pranayama is a combination of two words prana and ayama, which means the control and extension of the prana or vital energy. There are three main stages of breathing: inhalation (Pooraka), retention (kumbhaka) and exhalation (Rechaka). By controlling these three stages in different ways, various pranayama techniques are followed.

10.3 BREATHING EXRCISE

10:3.1 Sectional Breathing

Sectional breathing is a technique which focuses on training different parts of the lungs separately to improve breathing efficiently and lung capacity. It is divided into three sections: Abdominal breathing (Diaphragmatic), thoracic breathing (Chest) and clavicular breathing.

Abdominal breathing:

Sit in a comfortable meditative asana with both hands on jnana mudra or lie down on your back. Keep your eyes closed and relax the whole body. Observe the natural breath for some time. Inhale while expanding the abdomen as much as possible without expanding the chest. Exhale slowly and completely using the diaphragm.

Feel that the movement of the diaphragm is responsible for the abdominal movement. While you breathe out feel the abdomen and navel moving inward towards the spine. At the end of exhalation, the diaphragm will be totally relaxed. This is one round of abdominal breathing. Try not to expand the chest or move the shoulders. Feel the abdomen expanding and navel rising. Repeat the whole process. Continue the practice for 50 breaths or up to 10 minutes.

Benefits:

Increase supply of oxygen and nutrients to cells throughout the body. Helps increase the supply of blood. Relaxes muscle cramp and relieves tension.

Chest breathing:

Sit in a comfortable meditative asana with both hands on jnana mudra or lie down on your back. Keep the eyes closed and relax the whole body. Concentrate on the natural breath rhythm and maintain unbroken breath awareness. Then inhale by slowly expanding the chest as per the capacity and comfortability. Feel the movements of individual chest outward and upward, be aware of the expansion of the chest region. During chest breathing, the abdomen remains passive and only the chest move. Then exhale slowly and deeply with total awareness. Continue chest breathing for a few minutes, pausing slightly after each inhalation and exhalation.

Benefits:

Increases the capacity of lungs. Engages and strengthens the intercostal muscles.

Relieving prolapse of the internal organs of lower chest.

Clavicular breathing:

Sit in any meditative posture with both hands on jnana mudra or lie down on your back. Keep your eyes closed and relax the whole body. Then inhale fully, expanding the ribcage. When the ribs are fully expanded, inhale a little more until expansion is felt in the upper portion of the lungs, just below the collarbones which also move upward slightly. Then exhale slowly, releasing the upper chest first. Relax the rest of the ribcage back to the normal position. Continue for a few more breaths. During the practices try to avoid movements of the abdomen and the chest.

Benefits:

Clavicular breathing ventilates the upper lobes of the lungs. It helps in increasing awareness of breath control and lung expansion.

10.3.2 Yogic Breathing

Sit in a comfortable meditative asana or lie down on your back. Inhale slowly and deeply allowing the abdomen to expand fully. Feel the air

filling the bottom of the lungs. After full abdominal expansion, expand the chest outwards and upwards by continue the inhalation. At the end of this movement, inhale a little more and feel the air filling the upper lobes of the lungs, the shoulders should move up slightly. This completes one inhalation. The whole process should be one continuous movement of each phase of breathing merging into the next. Then start exhaling by relaxing the lower neck, upper chest and then allow the chest to contract downward and then inward.

Next allow the diaphragm to push upward and toward the chest by moving the abdomen in with exhalation. This complete one round of yogic breathing. Perform 5 to 10 rounds initially and slowly increase to 10 minutes.

Benefits:

Higher energy levels. Lowers stress and anxiety levels. More awareness and mental clarity.

10.3.3 Nadi Shodhana Pranayama

The word nadi means 'channel' or 'flow' of energy and shodhana means 'to purify'.Therefore, Nadi shodhana means that practice which purifies the nadis. It activates and harmonizes ida and pingala nadis.

Technique:

Sit in any comfortable meditative asana, Keep the head and spine straight. Close the eyes and relax the whole body. Then adopt nasagra mudra with the right hand and place the left hand on knee in jnana mudra. Close the right nostril with the thumb, and inhale through the left nostril. Use the ring finger of the hand to gently close the left nostril and hold the breath to capacity and release the right nostril and exhale. Keeping the left nostril closed, inhale through the right nostril, gradually fill the abdomen and perform the kumbhaka as before then exhale completely through the left nostril. This is complete one round. The same pattern continuous for each

additional round. It is important that the breath remains slow, gentle and relaxed throughout the practice.

Duration: 5 to 10 rounds or 10 to 15 minutes daily.

Benefits:

Balances the left and right side of the brain and brings balance to the masculine and feminine energies. Supports the ability to concentrate. Clears and release toxins from bodily channels. Infuses the body with oxygen.

10:3.4 Anulom Vilom

Technique:

Sit in any comfortable meditative posture with a straight spine. Place the both hands on the knees. Fold the right hand's middle and index fingers into the palm. Close right nostril with thumb and inhale slowly through left nostril. Close left nostril with ring finger and exhale through right nostril. Repeat the pattern, alternating between nostrils.

Benefit:

Reduce tension and promote a sense of calm and relaxation. Improves concentration and focus, improve breathing, boosts the respiratory system

10:3.5 Bhramari Pranayama

Technique:

Sit in any comfortable meditative asana with both hands on knees in jnana mudra.

Keep spine erect, eyes are closed and relax the whole body. Then take both arms by sides and bend the elbows, bringing the index finger to the ears and fold the remaining fingers. Breathe in through the nose and exhale slowly producing a sound resembling the hum of a male bee. The humming sound should be smooth, even and continuous for the duration of the exhalation. This is one round. At the end of exhalation, breathe in deeply and repeat the practice.

Duration: 5 to 10 minutes is sufficient in the beginning then we can increase to 10 to 15 minutes.

Contra-indication:

It should not be practiced while lying down. People with severe ear infection should refrain from doing.

Benefit:

It relieves stress, tensions, It relieves anxiety, insomnia, It helps to reduced blood pressure.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. What do you mean by Nadi?

Q2. What is sectional breathing?

Q3. What is abdominal breathing?

Q4. How is Anulom Vilom different from Nadi shuddhi?



10.4 LET US SUM UP

- Abdominal breathing is a deep, slow and relaxed way of breathing that primarily engages the diaphragm.
- Chest breathing is a shallow and rapid form of breathing that primarily uses the intercostals muscles (Muscles between the ribs) to expand the chest.
- Clavicular breathing involves the movement of the clavicles (collarbones) and shoulders rather than the diaphragm or lower ribcage.
- Yogic breathing is a comfortable and balanced way of breathing that combines both chest breathing and abdominal breathing ensuring maximum oxygen intake.
- Anulome vilome technique focuses on breathing alternately through the left and right nostrils bringing the harmony to the body and the mind.
- Sit comfortably in padmasana, sukhasana.
- Keep the back straight, shoulders relaxed and eyes closed.
- Breathe naturally for a few moments before starting.

- Use Nasagra mudra to regulate nostrils.
- Close the left nostril with the thumb and inhale slowly through the left nostril.
- Close the left nostril with the ring finger, release the right nostril and exhale through the right nostril.
- Inhale through the right nostril then close it and exhale through the left nostril. This is one round.
- Bhramari pranayama is a calming and soothing breathing technique that involves making a humming sound similar to that of a bee during exhalation.
- The practice helps to calm the mind, reduce stress and improve concentration.
- Inhale deeply through your nose and focus on the breath.
- Exhale slowly and steadily creating a humming sound with mouth closed. The sound should be soft and gentle.
- Continue this process for 5-10 rounds of breathing with each exhalation lasting as long as is comfortable while maintaining a steady, even sound.
- 'Nadi' refers to energy channel and 'Sodhana"means 'Purification'.
- Nadi Suddhi pranayama helps in purifying the energy channels (Nadi) in the body.
- To Practice Nadi Suddhi sit in a comfortable meditative posture, Padmasana, Sukhasana.
- Keep the spine straight, shoulder relaxed and eyes closed.
- Close right nostril with the thumb and inhale deeply through the left nostril.
- Inhale through the right nostril then close it and exhale through the left nostril. This is complete one cycle.
- Nadi suddhi can performed with breath retention (Kumbhak).



10.5 FURTHER READING

- Saraswati. S.S.(2009). *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha,* Yoga Publications Trust, Mungar, Bihar, India.

- Muktibodhananda.S.(2016). *Hatha Yoga Pradipika,* Yoga Publications Trust, Mungar, Bihar, India.
- Saraswati. S.N.(2012). *Gherenda Samhita,* Yoga Publications Trust, Mungar, Bihar, India.

Note: For the benefits of sectional breathing follow the book 'Anatomy and Physiology of Yogic Practices" published by Kaivalyadhama. Author MM Gore.



10.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: The word nadi means 'channel' or 'flow' of energy.

Answer to Q2: Sectional breathing involves consciously breathing into different sections of the lungs- abdominal(diaphragmatic), thoracic (Chest) and Clavicular (Upper lungs). It helps in developing full lung capacity, improving breath control and enhancing oxygenation.

Answer to Q3: Abdominal breathing is practiced by enhancing the action of the diaphragm and minimising the action of the ribcage.

Answer to Q4: Anulom vilom is a form of Nadi shuddhi pranayama. While Nadi-shuddhi focuses on deep purification of nadis. There is Kumbhak in Nadi Shuddhi pranayama, whereas there is no kumbhak in Anulom Vilom pranayama. Anulom Vilom is more about balancing the left (Ida) and right (Pingala) energy channels, promoting calmness and mental focus.



10.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very short Questions

1. What does the word 'Pranayama' mean?
2. Name the three stages of breathing in Pranayama.
3. What are the three types of sectional breathing?
4. Which muscle is primarily used in abdominal breathing?
5. What is the main benefit of chest breathing?

6. What part of the lungs is ventilated through clavicular breathing?
7. Define Nadi Shodhana.
8. Which mudra is used in Nadi Shodhana practice?
9. What kind of sound is produced during Bhramari Pranayama?
10. Mention one contraindication of Bhramari Pranayama.

B. Short Questions (Answer is about 150 words)

1. Explain the significance of breathing in the practice of Pranayama.
2. Describe the technique of abdominal breathing.
3. What are the benefits of clavicular breathing?
4. Outline the procedure of Nadi Shodhana Pranayama.
5. What are the benefits of practicing Yogic breathing?
6. Describe any two benefits of Anulom Vilom Pranayama.
7. Mention the steps involved in the practice of Bhramari Pranayama.
8. What is the difference between chest breathing and abdominal breathing?
9. What are the physiological benefits of sectional breathing?
10. State the meaning and purpose of Nadi Shodhana.

C. Long Questions (Answer in about 300-500 words)

1. Explain in detail the three stages of breathing in Pranayama and their significance.
2. Discuss the different types of sectional breathing, their techniques, and associated benefits.
3. Elaborate on the process and advantages of Yogic breathing.
4. Describe the technique of Nadi Shodhana Pranayama and explain its physical and mental benefits.

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UNIT 11: MUDRA-BANDHA

UNIT STRUCTURE

11.1 Learning objectives

11.2 Introduction

11.3 Bandhtraya

11.3.1 Jalandhar Bandha

11.3.2 Uddiyana Bandha

11.3.3 Moola Bandha

11.4 Let us Sum Up

11.5 Further Reading

11.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

11.7 Model Questions

11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing the unit the students will understand the –

- conceptual Knowledge of methods of practicing Bandha-Mudra.
- will able to practice
- understand the benefits and precautions of the practices

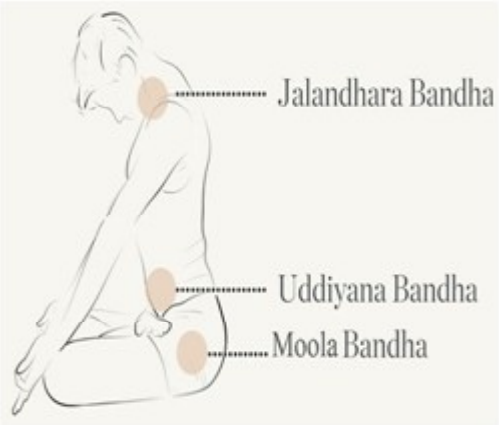
11.2 INTRODUCTION

Bandha is a Sanskrit term that means - 'to hold', 'tighten' or 'lock' which regulate the flow of energy. The purpose of a bandha is to lock the pranas in particular areas and redirect their flow into sushumna nadi for spiritual awakening. When the bandha is released, this causes the energy to flood more strongly through the body with an increased pressure.

11.3 BANDHATRAYA

Bandhatraya refers to the three key energy locks or Bandhas. These locks are used in pranayama and other yogic practices to regulate

prana and channelize it effectively within the body. The three main bandhas are: Jalandhar bandha (Throat lock), Uddiyana bandha (Abdominal lock) and Moola bandha (Root lock).



11.3.1 Jalandhar Bandha

According the text Gheranda Samhita sitting in any meditative posture, contracting your groin and applying the chin on the chest is called Jalandhara Bandha. It binds all the sixteen bases located in the body, that is, by doing this, all the bases also get bonded automatically. Even death is destroyed by the practice of the Jalandhara Bandha. If Jalandhara Bandha is practiced continuously for six months, it gives all kinds of siddhis to the seeker. Jalandhara bandha is proved by six months of practice.



Technique:

Sit in a comfortable meditative asanas such as Padmasana or Siddha/Siddha Yoni asana.

Knees should be in firm contact with the floor. Place the palms of the hands on the knees. Close the eyes and relax the whole body. Inhale slowly and deeply, retain the breath inside, while retaining the breath, bend the head forward and press the chin on the collarbone (Visible dip in between the neck). Straighten the arms and lock them firmly into position, pressing the knees down with the hands. Simultaneously, raise the shoulder upward and bend forward. This will ensure that the arms stay locked. Thus enhancing the pressure applied to the neck. Stay in the final position for long as the breath can be held comfortably, do not strain. To release, relax the shoulders, bend the arms and slowly release the lock. Raise the head and then exhale; repeat the practice when respiration is returns to normal.

Duration:

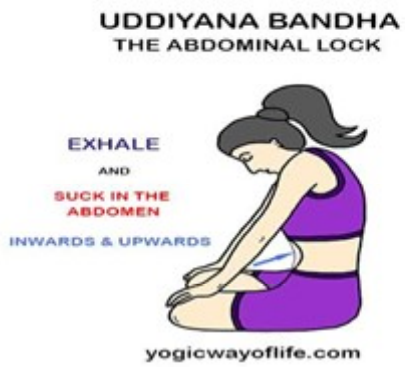
Jalandhara bandha can be performed as long as the practitioner is able to retain the breath comfortably. Maintain a count while retaining the breath and gradually increase the count. This practice may be repeated up to 5 times.

Contra-indication:

Those having cervical spondylitis, High blood pressure, and Heart disease should avoid this practices etc.

11:3.2 Uddiyan Bandha

According the text Gheranda Samhita, pulling the navel region located in the stomach and above it backward is called Uddiyana Bandha. Through Uddiyana Bandha, the life energy continuously moves upwards. This Uddiyana bandha is like a lion in front of an elephant of death. This Uddiyana bandha is considered to be the most important of all the bandhas. By practicing Uddiyana Bandha, the seeker attains liberation or salvation on his own without any special effort.



Technique:

Sit in padmasana, Siddhasana or Siddha yoni asana with the spine erect and knees should be in contact with the floor. Place the palms of the hands flat on the knees.

Close the eyes and relax the whole body. Inhale deeply through the nostril and exhale fully through the mouth, emptying the lungs as much as possible. Hold the breath outside. Raise the shoulder for further extension of the spinal cord. Lean forward and press on the knees down with the palms of the hands. Straighten the elbows. Then spontaneous jalandhara bandha is performed, pressing the chin on the collar bone. Contract the abdominal muscle inward and upward. Hold the abdominal lock with the breath out for as long as capacity of the practitioner. Then slowly release the abdominal lock (Uddiyana bandha), bend the elbows and lower the shoulders. Raise the head and then slowly inhale, repeat the practice when respiration is returned to normal.

Duration:

Practice three rounds in the beginning and gradually increase to ten rounds over a few months as the system becomes adapted to the practice.

Contra-indication:

Persons suffering from colitis, stomach or intestinal ulcer, heart disease and pregnant women should avoid this practice.

Benefits:

Uddiyana bandha is helpful for many abdominal and stomach ailments including constipation and Indigestion, The digestive fire is stimulated and abdominal organs are all massaged and toned, the adrenal glands are balanced, removing lethargy and soothing anxiety.

11:3.3 Moola Bandha

According the text Gheranda Samhita the practitioner should first keep his navel region and spinal cord (backbone) straight while pressing the yonisthan (the place under the scrotum) with the heel of the left foot, close to the anal passage. In this way, this is called Moolbandha is supposed to end the old age of the seeker. Any person who wishes to cross this ocean of life, he should go to a secluded place and practice this Moolabandha properly with a steady mind. By the practice of this mudra, all the bondages of the seeker are destroyed and the accomplishment of Prana Vayu is attained. Therefore, a yoga practitioner should practice this mudra thoroughly, sacrificing laziness completely by being silent.

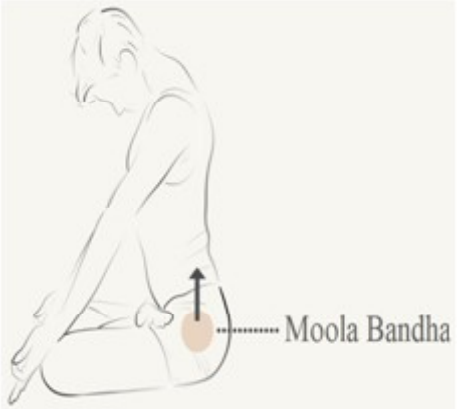


Fig: Moola bandha

Source: pranaawekening.com

Technique:

Sit in any comfortable meditative pose, but preferably siddhasana/ siddha yoni asana which press the heels into the perineum, keep the hands on the kness in either jnana or chin mudra, close the eyes and relax the whole body and the spine is erect. Be aware of the

natural breath for a short time. Then focus the awareness on the perineal/vaginal region. Contact this region by pulling up the muscles of the pelvic floor and then relax the muscles slowly and evenly. Keep the rest of the body relaxed. Continue to contract and relax the perineal/vaginal region evenly as possible. Repeat 10 times with maximum contraction and total relaxation.

Contra-indication:

Don't practice during menstruation. Avoid if having chronic hemorrhoids. Moola bandha promotes the rapid energy growth; it may result in hyperacidity if wrongly performed.

Benefits:

It stimulates the pelvic nerves and tones the uro-genital and excretory systems.

Intestinal peristalsis is stimulated by relieving constipation and piles.

It is beneficial for anal fissures, ulcers.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. Which mudra helps in attaining all siddhis?

Q2. Complete the statement- Uddiyana bandha is like a lion in front of …….

Q3. What is Moola bandha?

Q4. What is the spiritual significance of Bandhas in Yoga?



11.4 LET US SUM UP

- The Sanskrit word bandha means to 'hold', 'tighten' or 'lock'. The bandhas aim to lock the pranas in particular areas and redirect their flow into sushumna nadi for the purpose of spiritual awakening.
- There are three bandhas: Jalandhara bandha, Uddiyana bandha & Moola bandha. If all the three bandhas practiced together it will called as Maha bandha.
- Jalandhar bandha involves tucking the chin to the chest which compresses the throat and regulates the flow of prana. It helps balance the thyroid and parathyroid gland.

- It is usually practices with retention of breath either inside or outside.
- Uddiyana bandha involves pulling the abdomen inward and upward after exhaling completely.
- It helps in improving digestion, metabolism and energy flow.
- Moola bandha engages the pelvic floor muscles. It is performed by contracting the pelvic muscles to awaken energy and stabilises the Mooladhara chakras.



11.5 FURTHER READING

- Saraswati. S.S.(2009). *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha,* Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India.
- Muktibodhananda.S.(2016). *Hatha Yoga Pradipika,* Yoga Publications Trust, Mungar, Bihar, India.
- Saraswati. S.N.(2012). *Gherenda Samhita,* Yoga Publications Trust, Mungar, Bihar, India.



11.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: Jalandhara Bandha.

Answer to Q2: An elephant of death.

Answer to Q3: Moola banda is the root lock that involves contraction of the perineum (Pelvic floor muscle).

Answer to Q4: Bandhas help control prana (Vital energy), directly it upwards toward higher consciousness. They are essential for Meditation, Chakra activation, Kundalini awakening.



11.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very Short Questions

1. What does the Sanskrit word “Bandha” mean?
2. What is the main purpose of practicing Bandha in yoga?

3. Name the three main Bandhas in yoga.
4. What is Jalandhara Bandha also known as?
5. In which yogic text is Jalandhara Bandha described?
6. What is the visible physical action in Uddiyana Bandha?
7. Which Bandha is considered the most important according to yogic tradition?
8. Which body part is targeted in Moola Bandha?
9. During which condition should Moola Bandha be avoided?
10. What is the common sitting posture used for practicing all three Bandhas?

B. Short Questions (Answer in about 150 words)

1. Define Bandha and explain its energetic purpose in yoga.
2. What is Bandhatraya and name its three components.
3. Briefly describe the technique of Jalandhara Bandha.
4. Mention two benefits and two precautions of Uddiyana Bandha.
5. Describe the role of Moola Bandha in yogic practices.
6. What are the contraindications for performing Jalandhara Bandha?
7. Write a short note on the benefits of Moola Bandha for digestive health.
8. How does Uddiyana Bandha help in managing anxiety and lethargy?
9. Which posture is preferred for practicing Moola Bandha and why?
10. What effect does releasing a Bandha have on energy flow in the body?

C. Long Questions (Answer in about 300-500 words)

1. Explain the concept of Bandha in yoga. How does it affect the flow of prana in the body?
2. Describe in detail the technique, duration, and contraindications of Jalandhara Bandha.

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UNIT 12: MUDRAS (HASTA MUDRA, MAHA MUDRA, MAHAVEDHA, ASHWINI MUDRA)

UNIT STRUCTURE

12.1 Learning Objective

12.2 Meaning and Definition of Mudra

12.3 Aim and Objectives of Mudra

12.3.1 Hasta Mudra

i. Jnana Mudra

ii. Panch Prana Mudra

iii. Panch Tatva Mudra

12.3.2 Maha Mudra

12.3.3 Maha Vedha Mudra

12.3.4 Ashwini Mudra

12.4 Misconception about Mudra

12.5 Let us Sum up

12.6 Further Reading

12.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

12.8 Model Questions

12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this chapter you would be able to –

- understand the concept and types of mudras
- practicing mudras correctly
- understand the benefits of mudras
- understand how mudras work in our body and prana

12.2 MEANING OF MUDRAS

Mudra is a Sanskrit word that means "gesture" or "seal." It refers to symbolic hand, eye, or body positions used in yoga, meditation, dance, and rituals to channel energy and convey deeper spiritual meanings. Mudras

are widely practiced in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Indian classical dance forms.

There are different types of mudras that target specific elements like fire, air and ether. Practicing mudras like Jnana, Prana, and Apana can benefit physical and mental health by improving memory, breathing and digestion. Mudra may involve the whole body in a combination of asana, pranayama, bandha and visualisation techniques, or it may be a simple hand position. Mudras are introduced after some proficiency has been attained in Asana, Pranayama and Bandha. The Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Gheranda Samhita and other Yogic texts consider Mudra to be a Yoganga, an independent branch of Yoga. Gheranda Samhita describes 25 Mudras. Hatha Yoga Pradipika and Hatharatnavali describes 10 Mudras. 108 mudras are used in regular Tantric rituals. Mudras are also used in Indian Classical Dance. There are over 200 mudras in bharatanatyam and over 250 in mohiniattam.

12.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF MUDRA

The nadis and chakras constantly radiate prana which normally escapes from the body and dissipates into the external world. By creating barriers within the body through the practice of mudra, the energy is redirected within. For example, by closing the eyes with the fingers in shanmukhi mudra, the prana being radiated through the eyes is reflected back. In the same way, the sexual energy emitted through vajra nadi is redirected to the brain through the practice of vajroli mudra. Tantric literature states that once the dissipation of prana is arrested through the practice of mudra, the mind becomes introverted, inducing states of pratyahara, or sense withdrawal and dharana, concentration. Because of their ability to redirect prana, mudras are important techniques for awakening kundalini. For this reason, they are extensively incorporated in kriya and kundalini yoga practices.

12.3.1 Hasta mudra

Introduction:

The hand mudras are meditative mudras. They redirect the prana being emitted by the hands back into the body. Mudras, which join the thumb and index finger, engage the motor cortex at a very subtle level, generating a loop of energy that moves from the brain down the hand and then back again. Conscious awareness of this process rapidly leads to internalization. The mudras that are formed by joining the thumb and different fingers are known as Hasta Mudra. The energy from the body radiates out mainly through the tip of the nose, lips, fingertips, and toes. When the thumb comes in contact with the other fingers, energy is directed back to vitalize various parts of our body. This is called a circuit bypass. They generate a loop of energy that moves from the brain down to the hand and then back again. They redirect the prana emitted by the hands back into the body.

i) Jnana mudra: (psychic gesture of knowledge)



Jnana: Means “knowledge” or “wisdom” in Sanskrit

Mudra: Means “gesture” or “seal” in Sanskrit

Jnana mudra is a hand gesture that involves touching the tip of the thumb to the tip of the index finger. It’s a prominent mudra in yoga believed to improve concentration, memory, and mental clarity.

Steps to perform Jnana mudra:

1. Sit comfortably with your spine straight and shoulders relaxed
2. Lightly touch the tips of your thumb and index finger together
3. Extend and relax your other fingers
4. Rest your hands on your thighs with your palms facing up
5. Breathe naturally
6. Hold the mudra for 5 to 45 minutes

Jnana mudra is simple but important psycho-neural finger locks that make meditation asanas more powerful. The palms and fingers of the hands have many nerve root endings which constantly emit energy. When the finger touches the thumb, a circuit is produced, which allows the energy to travel back into the body and up to the brain that would normally dissipate into the environment. When the fingers and hands are placed on the knees, the knees are sensitized, creating another pranic circuit that maintains and redirects prana within the body. In addition, placing the hands on the knees stimulates a nadi, which runs from the knees up the inside of the thighs and into the perineum. This nadi is known as gupta or the hidden nadi. Sensitising this channel helps stimulate the energies at mooladhara chakra.

The index finger represents individual consciousness, the jivatma, while the thumb symbolises supreme consciousness. In Jnana mudra, the individual (index finger) is bowing down to the supreme consciousness (the thumb), acknowledging its unsurpassed power. The index finger, however, is touching the thumb, symbolising the ultimate unity of the two experiences and the culmination of yoga.

ii) Panch prana mudra:

Pancha Prana mudras are a set of hand gestures that are used to balance the five types of life energy, or Prana. The five Prana are Prana, Apana, Samana, Udana, and Vyana. Each Prana governs a different part of the body and its functions.

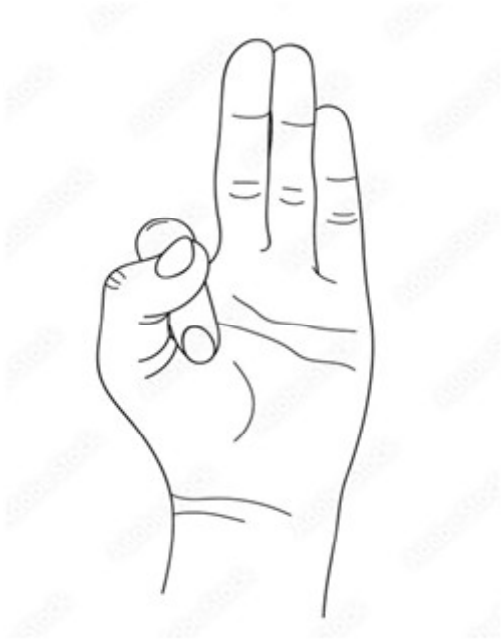
ii. a) Prana vayu Mudra:

- **What it does**: Balances the Prana Vayu, which is the air element that controls breathing and energy
- **When to do it**: Can be done in the morning on an empty stomach, or after eating

Like the air (Vayu) around us, Prana is always in “motion.” There are 5 types of Prana commonly known as the Pancha Pranas, each with its own name and its functions within the body. These are: Prana-Vayu, Apana-Vayu, Samana-Vayu, Udana-Vayu, and

Vyana-Vayu. Prana Vayu Mudra is a hand gesture used in yoga and meditation to balance the flow of Prana Vayu, or life force energy, in the body. It's said to help with anxiety, depression, and insomnia.

How to do Prana Vayu Mudra



1. Sit comfortably in a relaxed position
2. Rest your hands on your knees
3. Touch the tips of your thumb, ring finger, and little finger together
4. Keep your index and middle fingers extended
5. Take several deep breaths
6. Focus on the energy flowing into your body

Benefits of Prana Vayu Mudra

- Can help to reduce anxiety, depression, and insomnia
- Can help calm the mind and body
- Can help deepen spiritual practice
- Can help activate the Ajna Chakra, Crown Chakra, and Anahata Chakra

ii.b) Apana vayu mudra:



Apana Vayu Mudra is a yoga mudra that is said to help with physical, mental, and emotional health. It is also known as Mrta Sanjivani Mudra, which means “one that brings along life from death”.

How to perform Apana Vayu Mudra

1. Sit in a comfortable position with a straight spine.
2. Extend your arms forward with your palms facing up.
3. Fold your index finger towards the center of your palm.
4. Cross your thumb over your index finger.
5. Touch the tips of your thumb to the tips of your middle and ring fingers.
6. Keep your little finger straight and your elbows straight.
7. Close your eyes and take deep, relaxed breaths.
8. Hold the position for 15–30 minutes.

Benefits of Apana Vayu Mudra

- May help with digestion, constipation, and gas
- May help reduce lower back pain
- May help improve circulation
- May help detoxify the body
- May help improve the immune system
- May help stimulate internal organs
- May help relieve symptoms of heart attack
- May help relieve symptoms of menstrual pain
- May help reduce blood pressure

ii.c) Samana Vayu mudra:



Samana Vayu Mudra is a hand mudra that involves touching the tips of the fingers and thumb together, and applying gentle pressure. It's said to balance the body's energies and improve digestion. Samana Vayu Mudra is associated with the Manipura Chakra, which is located behind the navel. It's also known as Makulamudra because it resembles a bud.

How to do it?

1. Close your eyes and keep your spine erect
2. Touch the tips of all your fingers and your thumb
3. Apply gentle pressure
4. Breathe deeply
5. Hold the position for 15 to 20 minutes.

Benefits:

- **Digestion**: Helps with digestion, bloating, gas, constipation, and other digestive disorders
- **Tridosha balance**: Helps balance the body's energies
- **Confidence**: Can help boost confidence and improve relationships
- **Calmness**: Can help improve calmness and clarity
- **Strength**: Can help develop strength in the body
- **Concentration**: Can help improve concentration

ii.d) Vyan vayu mudra:



Vyana vayu mudra is a hand gesture that is said to improve blood circulation and regulate blood pressure. It is a combination of Jnana Mudra and Akash Mudra.

How to perform Vyana vayu mudra

1. Sit comfortably,
2. place both hands on your knees with palms facing upwards, and gently bring the tips of your index and middle fingers to touch the tip of your thumb, keeping the ring and little fingers extended.

Benefits of Vyana vayu mudra

- Improves blood circulation
- Regulates blood pressure
- Reduces sluggishness and dullness
- Increases enthusiasm
- Improves energy
- Purifies vata dosha

How to practice Vyana vayu mudra

Sit comfortably, place hands on your knees with palms facing up, bring the tips of your index and middle fingers to touch the tip of your thumb, keep the ring and little fingers straight, and maintain this position for 10-15 minutes while focusing on your breath

- Perform the mudra 2–3 times a day for 50 minutes each.

ii.e) Udana Vayu Mudra:



Udana Vayu Mudra, also known as Inner Smile Mudra or Laughter Mudra, is a hand gesture that is said to help with the flow of energy in the body. It is a yogic practice that is often performed during meditation.

Technique:

1. Sit comfortably
2. Place hands on your knees with palms facing up
3. Bring the tips of your index, middle, and ring fingers to touch the tip of your thumb
4. Applying gentle pressure, while keeping your little finger straight

Benefits of Udana Vayu Mudra

Udana Vayu Mudra helps to regulate the blood flow to the brain and helps in effortless thinking, creativity and intellectual sharpness.

It can improve memory.

It improves the respiratory function and alleviate asthma by ensuring smooth breathing.

Udana Vayu Mudra improves voice and speech control.

iii. Panch tatva mudra:

Pancha Tattva mudras are hand gestures that help balance the five elements in the body. The five elements are fire, water, air, earth, and space. The body is made up of 5 elements. When these 5 elements

are not in balance, we get various physical and psychological ailments.

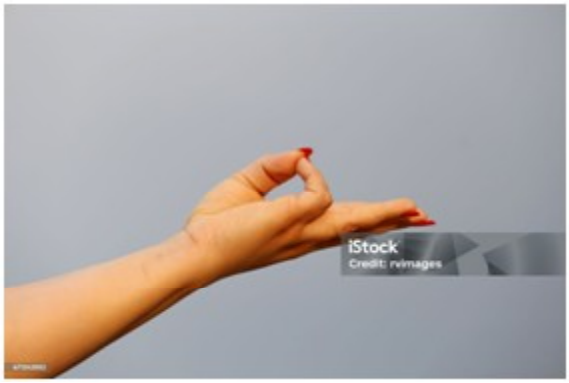
The 5 fingers of the hands represent 5 elements.



How it works

- The five fingers of the hand represent the five elements.
- Mudras are specific finger positions that activate the organs and glands associated with each element.
- Practicing mudras can help regulate the functioning of organs and create balance in the body.
- Mudras can also help transform one element into another, or reduce or create an element.

i) Jal Mudra:



Jala mudra is a hand gesture in yoga that is also known as the “gesture of water” or “seal of mental clarity”. It is a symbolic representation of the water element in the body.

What does it do?

- Jala mudra is said to promote balance, fluidity, and emotional well-being
- It can help with rehydration, blood circulation, and joint lubrication
- It can help restore the sense of taste, which can be lost during chemotherapy
- It can help strengthen intuition and communication skills

Technique:

Use your thumb and little finger to make the gesture

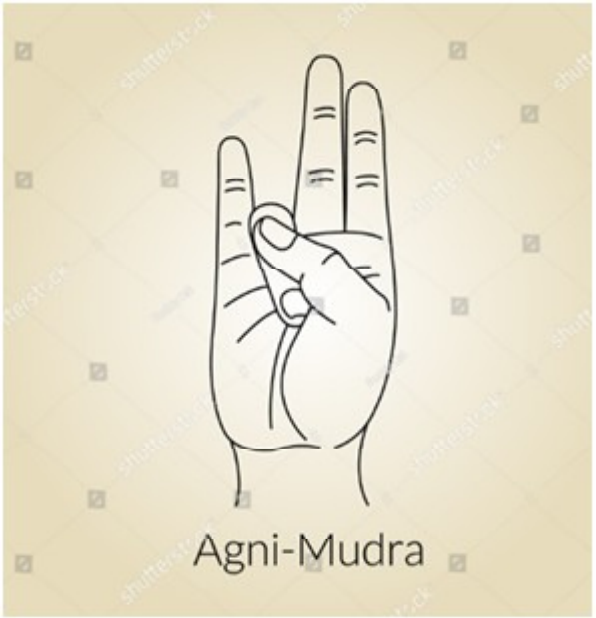
sit comfortably

place your hands on your knees with palms facing up, and gently touch the tips of your little finger and thumb, keeping the other fingers extended

When should you avoid it?

- If you have a perpetual cold and cough
- If you have excess phlegm or cold
- If you are highly hydrated

ii) Agni mudra:



Agni Mudra is a hand gesture in yoga and meditation that's also known as the "gesture of fire" or "gesture of the sun". The word "agni" is Sanskrit for "fire" and "mudra" means "hand gesture" or "seal lock".

How to do Agni Mudra

1. Close your eyes and keep your spine erect.
2. Curl your ring finger and little finger towards your palm so that their fingertips touch your root of the thumb.
3. Extend your other two fingers.
4. Apply gentle pressure to your ring finger with your thumb.
5. Breathe deeply and hold the gesture for 15 to 20 minutes

Benefits of Agni Mudra

- **Digestion**: Agni Mudra is believed to improve digestion and metabolism.
- **Energy**: It's thought to increase energy levels and promote a sense of warmth and vitality.
- **Respiratory issues**: It may help relieve coughs, colds, asthma, and bronchitis.
- **Weight loss**: It may help reduce weight.
- **Stress**: It may help reduce tension and cholesterol.

iii) Prithvi Mudra:



Prithvi Mudra

Prithvi mudra is a hand gesture used in yoga and Ayurveda that translates to "Earth mudra". It's a symbolic seal that's thought to promote healing and spiritual balance.

How to perform Prithvi mudra

Gently touch the tip of your ring finger to the tip of your thumb on each hand, keeping the other fingers extended and relaxed, and hold for 10-20 minutes while sitting comfortably

Benefits of Prithvi mudra

- Strengthens muscles, tendons, and other tissues.
- Reducing joint pain and inflammation.
- Enhances Skin Health: By balancing the earth element, Prithvi Mudra improves skin health, reducing dryness and promoting properties like pinkness, firmness, and nutrient supply essential for healthy skin.

Why is Prithvi mudra important?

- It's thought to awaken the earth element in the body
- It's thought to stimulate the mooladhara chakra, which is associated with the earth element
- It's thought to promote a sense of stability and connection to the earth

It's best to perform Prithvi mudra under professional guidance.

ii) Akash mudra:



Aakash mudra is a hand gesture that translates to "gesture of space" in English. It's a symbolic gesture used in yoga and Ayurveda to increase the sense of space within the body.

How to do Aakash mudra

- Sit comfortably
- Touch the tips of your middle finger and thumb
- Extend the other fingers
- Rest your hands on your knees with palms facing up
- Focusing on spaciousness and openness.

Benefits of Aakash mudra

- Increases mental clarity
- Expands awareness
- Facilitates spiritual growth
- Enhances intuition
- Promotes inner freedom
- Alleviates feelings of heaviness
- Promotes a sense of lightness

iii) Vayu mudra:



Vayu Mudra

Vayu Mudra is a yoga hand gesture that translates to “air seal” or “air gesture” in English. It’s a practice that involves folding the index finger below the thumb to balance the air and fire elements in the body.

How to perform

1. Sit comfortably with a straight spine.
2. Fold your index finger toward the base of your thumb.
3. Inhale deeply through your nose.
4. Practice for 5-15 minutes during meditation or asana practice.

Benefits

- **Improves breathing**: Vayu Mudra can help with respiratory function and ease breathing.
- **Reduces joint pain**: Vayu Mudra can help reduce joint pain caused by trapped air.
- **Helps with digestion**: Vayu Mudra can help with gastric problems.
- **Helps with neurological disorders**: Vayu Mudra can help with neurological disorders like Parkinson's disease.
- **Helps with gout**: Vayu Mudra can help reduce gout symptoms by improving blood circulation.
- **Helps with emotional release**: Vayu Mudra can help release repressed emotions and reduce fear and worries.

12.3.2 Mahamudra



Maha means great and Mudra means gesture or seal. Hence, Mahamudra means "the great psychic gesture." Mahamudra is a hatha yoga gesture (mudra) whose purpose is to improve control over the sexual potential. The sexual potential, associated with apana, is essential in the process of awakening of the dormant spiritual energy (Kundalini) and attaining of spiritual powers (siddhi). Mahamudra, also known as the Great Gesture pose, is a yoga pose that involves pressing the heel into the perineum and compressing

the throat. It is said to have many physical and mental benefits. Mahamudra combines the physical, pranic, and mental dimensions of yoga. It harmonizes the flow of prana in ida, pingala, and sushumnanadis and leads toward awakening of kundalini shakti.

PROCEDURE OF MAHAMUDRA

Preparation

1. Sit in Dandasana (legs extended forward).
2. Relax the body and ensure the spine is erect.

Steps

1. Bend the right leg and place the heel against the perineum (between anus and genitals).
2. Keep the left leg straight with toes pointing upward.
3. Hold the big toe of the left foot with both hands — right hand from above, left from below.
4. Inhale deeply and perform Jalandhara Bandha (chin lock).
5. Apply Mula Bandha (perineal contraction) simultaneously.
6. Retain the breath (AntarKumbhaka) as long as comfortable.
7. Concentrate on the flow of prana along the spinal path (sushumnanadi).
8. Exhale slowly and release the bandhas.
9. Repeat the same process on the other side (bend left leg, extend right leg).

Benefits of Mahamudra

Physical Benefits

Stimulates the pelvic region and reproductive organs.

Improves functioning of the digestive system.

Relieves constipation and urinary disorders.

Strengthens spinal nerves and tones muscles of the back.

Pranic / Energetic Benefits

Harmonizes ida, pingala, and sushumnanadis.

Directs prana upward through sushumna, preparing for kundalini awakening.

Balances vital energy flow, increasing vitality.

Mental & Spiritual Benefits

Calms the mind and increases concentration.

Develops mental steadiness and introversion.

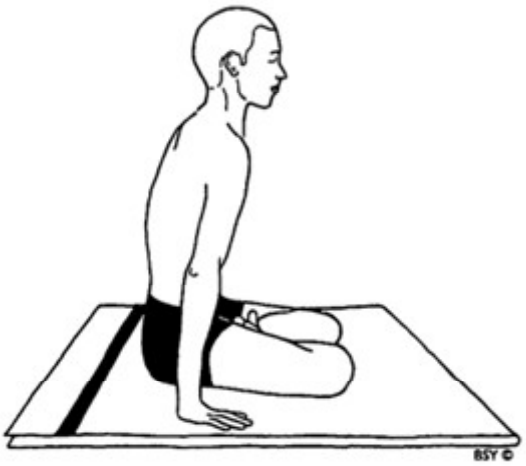
Removes emotional disturbances.

Leads toward deep meditation and spiritual awakening.

Precautions

It should be practiced on an empty stomach and after preliminary training in bandhas.

12.3.3 Mahavedh Mudra



Maha Vedha Mudra is one of the physical Mudra or gestures/seals. Meaning- this Mudra practice requires performing bodily postures. Let us simplify its meaning by breaking it down into simple parts:

"Maha" means "Great. "Vedha" is a Sanskrit word that means "penetrating or piercing." Mudra - "Mudra" as we all know, can be translated into "a gesture or seal."

This Mudra is also known as "The Great Piercing Mudra." Maha Vedha and Maha Bheda seem quite similar but are two different gestures. This Mudra helps to activate Kundalini Shakti by activating the Mooladhara Chakra (the root Chakra). This Mudra practice involves assuming body posture. This Mudra is more dynamic than most of the other Mudras. While practicing this Mudra, a Yogi assumes Maha Bandha as well, which we know is a combination of Three main

Bandhas: Jalandhar Bandha, Uddiyana Bandha, and Moola Bandha. This technique belongs to hatha yoga and is a preparatory technique for the kriya yoga practice of tadan kriya.

How to Do Maha Vedha Mudra?

- In Maha Vedha Mudra, we practice specific dynamic movements, which is why it is considered more dynamic than all the Mudras. This Mudra practice specifically required good strength of arm and core muscles. And also requires good hip joint mobility so that Padmasana can be assumed without difficulty.
- Start by sitting in Padmasana (Lotus Pose). Extend your neck and spine.
- Take a few deep breaths and relax your entire body.
- Now, keep both of your arms by the side of your thighs. Fingers are pointed forward and palm facing downward so that it would seem like you are gripping the floor with your fingers.
- Your arms and your shoulders should be relaxed.
- Now, slowly take a deep breath in.
- And retain your breath while you assume Maha Bandha.
- Now, straighten your arms while lifting your entire body weight on your arm. Make sure to keep the spine comfortable, which Jalandhar Bandha should be maintained as it is.
- Keep your core and arm muscles active.
- Now, gently beat your buttocks down thrice while maintaining your entire concentration on the Mooladhara Chakra.
- Slowly and gradually release the Jalandhar Bandha, and then slowly release the Mudra with exhalation.
- This was the first round of Maha Vadha Mudra.
- Practice it for a few more rounds once your breathing becomes normal again.
- You can assume all three Bandhas instead of Jalandhar Bandha. This will help to maximize the benefits.

Benefits of Maha Vedha Mudra

- This Mudra practice is great to awaken the Kundalini Shakti or

the Serpent Power.

- This Mudra practice helps to activate the Mooladhara Chakra.
- As mentioned earlier, this Mudra is dynamic and helps tone up the shoulder and abdominal muscles.
- Maha Vedha Mudra can help internalize the senses, bringing mental peace.
- This Mudra helps to keep the hip joint mobile.
- This Mudra practice improves endocrine system functioning by activating the pineal gland. It is also believed that it helps to keep the pituitary gland healthy.
- If you want to follow a spiritual path, then this Mudra practice is a great way of doing so.
- Maha Vedha Mudra's practice helps to delay the aging process.

12.3.4 Ashwini Mudra



Ashwini mudra is a yogic mudra that involves contracting and relaxing the anal sphincter muscles. **"Ashwini** means **'horse.'** The practice resembles a horse's movement with its anus sphincter immediately after evacuation of the bowels.

Just as a horse loosens its anus by repeatedly contracting its , similarly, the act of contracting and expanding the anus is called Ashwini Mudra. The secret of the horse so much power is within

this posture. As you know, engine power is measured in horsepower because power of any thing is measured by horsepower.

Benefits:

- **Improved digestion**: Ashwini mudra can help improve digestion.
- **Improved health**: Ashwini mudra can help improve overall health and well-being.
- **Improved sexual performance**: Ashwini mudra can help improve sexual performance.
- **Improved respiratory system**: Ashwini mudra can help improve the respiratory system.
- **Improved mental health**: Ashwini mudra can help improve mental health.
- **Improved circulation**: Ashwini mudra can help improve circulation.
- **Improved immune system**: Ashwini mudra can help boost the immune system.

Technique of Ashwini Mudra:

1. Starting Position:

Sit comfortably in Padmasana (Lotus Pose), Sukhasana (Easy Pose), Vajrasana (Thunderbolt Pose), or even in a lying position if preferred.

Keep your spine straight and shoulders relaxed.

Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths to center yourself.

2. Inhalation:

Take a slow, deep inhale through the nose, expanding your abdomen.

As you inhale, remain relaxed without engaging any muscles yet.

3. Contraction (Ashwini Mudra):

As you exhale slowly, contract the anal sphincter muscles (as if stopping the urge to pass stool).

Hold the contraction for a few seconds (start with 3–5 seconds and gradually increase over time).

4. Relaxation:

Inhale deeply again and relax the anal muscles completely.

Maintain awareness of the sensation and energy flow in the pelvic region.

5. Repetition:

Continue this contraction and relaxation process for 10–15 rounds.

Over time, increase the duration of holding the contraction.

Precautions:

Don't strain yourself while performing Ashwini mudra.

12.4 MISCONCEPTION ABOUT MUDRA

There is a common misconception that Mudras are solely spiritual and have no scientific basis. However, growing evidence suggests that Mudras can have tangible physical and mental health benefits.

Understanding Limitation

While Mudras are beneficial, they should not be seen as a cure-all. It's essential to practice them as part of a holistic approach to health and well-being.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. What is Mudra?

Q2. Which Mudra increases concentration?

Q3. Which Mudra boosts immunity?

Q4. Which Mudra reduces stress?

Q5. Which Mudra improves digestion?

Q6. Which Mudra balances elements?

Q7. Which Mudra helps in weight loss?



12.5 LET US SUM UP

In the practice of Hatha Yoga, mudras—often referred to as "seals" or "gestures"—play a pivotal role in directing and channeling the body's vital

energies. These subtle yet potent techniques are designed to facilitate the flow of prana (life force) within the subtle body, thereby enhancing the practitioner's physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.

The classical text, Hatha Yoga Pradipika, dedicates significant attention to mudras, underscoring their importance in the yogic journey. These practices are not merely physical gestures but are integral to achieving higher states of consciousness and inner harmony. By incorporating mudras into their routine, practitioners can experience benefits such as improved concentration, balanced energy levels, and a deeper connection to their inner selves.

In essence, mudras serve as powerful tools within Hatha Yoga, acting as conduits that harmonize the body's energies, support mental clarity, and promote spiritual growth. Their consistent practice can lead to profound transformations, aligning the practitioner with the deeper dimensions of yogic discipline.



12.6 FURTHER READING

1. Iyenger, K.R.(2013).*The science of yoga mudras*, Sapna book house.
2. Prakash Rao, D., & Deepthi, D. (2021). *Sampoorna Mudra Vignan: A complete guide to mudras*. Dharanipragada Prakash Rao.
3. Niranjanananda Saraswati, S., & Satyananda Saraswati, S. (2014). *Mudra Vigyan: Philosophy and Practice of Yogic Gestures*. Yoga Publications Trust.



12.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: Gesture

Answer to Q2: Dhyan

Answer to Q3: Prana

Answer to Q4: Jnana

Answer to Q5: Apana

Answer to Q6: Prithvi

Answer to Q7: Surya



12.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions:

1. What does the Sanskrit word “Mudra” mean?
2. Name two religious traditions that use Mudras.
3. Which Yogic texts describe 25 Mudras?
4. How many Mudras are used in Bharatanatyam?
5. What is the main purpose of performing Mudras?
6. Name any two Mudras from Pancha Prana Mudras.
7. What does Jnana Mudra symbolize?
8. Which finger represents individual consciousness in Jnana Mudra?
9. Which Chakra is associated with Samana Vayu Mudra?
10. What does Prithvi Mudra help to awaken?
11. What is the alternative name of Apana Vayu Mudra?
12. What element does Jal Mudra balance?
13. What does Agni mean in Sanskrit?
14. How many elements are balanced by Pancha Tattva Mudras?
15. What is the recommended posture for practicing Hasta Mudras?

B) Short Questions:

1. Describe the symbolism of Jnana Mudra in Yoga.
2. What is the aim of practicing Shanmukhi Mudra?
3. List any three benefits of Apana Vayu Mudra.
4. Write three benefits of practicing Prana Vayu Mudra.
5. How is Samana Vayu Mudra performed?
6. Explain how Hasta Mudras help in redirecting prana.
7. What are Pancha Tattva Mudras and what is their function?
8. Write the procedure to perform Vyana Vayu Mudra.

9. Mention three physical benefits of Prithvi Mudra.
10. How does Agni Mudra affect digestion and energy levels?
11. What are the steps to perform Udana Vayu Mudra?
12. Explain the concept of “circuit bypass” in the context of Mudras.
13. Describe the technique and benefits of Aakash Mudra.
14. What precautions should be taken while practicing Jal Mudra?
15. How does Vayu Mudra balance the air and fire elements in the body?

C) Essay Questions:

1. Discuss the significance of Mudra in Yoga with reference to classical texts like Hatha Yoga Pradipika and Gheranda Samhita.
2. Explain the philosophical and yogic symbolism of Jnana Mudra and its method of practice.
3. Describe the five Pancha Prana Mudras and their individual benefits.
4. How do Mudras help in preserving and redirecting prana within the body?
5. Explain the method, benefits, and symbolism of Apana Vayu Mudra in detail.
6. Describe the Pancha Tattva Mudras and explain how each one relates to the five elements.
7. How do Hasta Mudras assist in internalization and concentration during meditation?
8. Compare and contrast Prana Vayu Mudra and Udana Vayu Mudra in terms of technique and benefits.
9. Explain how different Mudras contribute to awakening Kundalini and achieving higher states of consciousness.
10. Analyze the role of Mudras in Yogic therapy, focusing on both physical and mental well-being.

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UNIT- 13: SHATKARMAS

UNIT STRUCTURE

13.1 Learning Objectives

13.2 Introduction

13.3 Aim and Objectives of Shatkarma

13.4 Misconception about Shatkarma

13.5 Shatkarma

13.5.1 Jala Neti

13.5.2 Vaman Dhauti

13.6 Let Us Sum Up

13.7 Further Reading

13.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

13.8 Model Questions

13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to –

- understand the concept and two type of internal cleansing practices (Shuddhi kriya)
- practice Jalaneti and Vaman Dhauti
- understand the benefits of Jalaneti and Vaman Dhauti Understand the concept and health benefits of Jalaneti and Vaman Dhauti

13.2 INTRODUCTION

Shatkarma is a set of six yogic cleansing techniques that are used to purify the body and mind. This is one of the preliminary practices of Hatha Yoga. The word "shatkarma" comes from the Sanskrit words "shat" means" six" and "karma" means "action". The shatkarmas are six preliminary purificatory practices described in the Hatha Yoga Pradipika. Their purpose is to remove "gross impurities", cure a range of diseases, and prepare the body for pranayama, trapping the breath so as to force the vital energy prana into the central sushumna channel, allowing kundalini to rise, and so

to attain moksha, liberation. The six Shatkarmas are: 1. Neti, 2. Dhauti, 3. Nauli, 4. Basti, 5. Kapalabhati, and 6. Trataka.

How to practice Shatkarma:

Many yogis recommend doing at least some of the Shatkarmas every three to six months.

13.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF SHATKARMA

The aim and objective of Shatkarma is to cleanse the body by removing impurities and toxins, thereby preparing the body for deeper yogic practices like pranayama and meditation, while also achieving a balance in the body's three humours (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha) through six specific cleansing techniques, ultimately leading to physical and mental purification; essentially, it's about achieving inner purity to facilitate spiritual development.

Key points about Shatkarma:

- **Six cleansing techniques:**

The practice includes six main techniques: Neti (nasal cleansing), Dhauti (digestive tract cleansing), Basti (colon cleansing), Nauli (abdominal massage), Kapalbhati (breath purification), and Trataka (eye gazing).

- **Balances Tridosha:**

A key goal is to balance the three doshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha) in the body, which are considered essential for overall health.

- **Preparation for deeper practice:**

By cleansing the body, Shatkarma is believed to prepare the body and mind for deeper yogic practices like pranayama and meditation.

- **Removal of toxins:**

The practice aims to remove accumulated toxins from the body, promoting overall well-being.

13.4 MISCONCEPTION ABOUT SHATKARMA

A major misconception about 'Shatkarma' is that it is solely about punishing or retaliating against someone for their actions, whereas its true meaning is about understanding the natural law of cause and effect, where

every action creates a reaction, and focus is on personal growth and transformation rather than seeking revenge.

A misconception about Shatkarma is also that it is quick fix for all health problems and can be practiced aggressively without proper guidance, potentially leading to harm; while Shatkarma is a powerful cleansing technique, it should be practiced carefully under the supervision of qualified Yoga teacher to avoid negative effects and ensure proper technique, especially with practices like Basti, Dhauti and Nauli.

13.5 SHATKARMA

13.5.1 NETI (JALA)

Introduction: Neti kriya is one of the six yogic purification kriyas (popular as shatkarma). It is a yogic nasal cleansing exercise and is solemnly used for nasal sinus cleansing and purifying the nasal passages.

Anyone can practice neti kriya, including children and elderly people. According to many yoga practitioners, one can reach higher levels of harmony between body and mind by practicing shatkarmas daily. Neti is usually practiced with a neti pot filled with lukewarm saline water. The two main variants are jala neti (using water) and sutra neti (using string). It's ideally practiced in morning before asanas and pranayama.

Preparation for jala neti:

To prepare for Jal Neti, you need to mix a small amount of non-iodised salt (like sea salt or rock salt) into lukewarm water, creating a saline solution, and then fill a neti pot with this mixture; ensure the water is slightly warmer than your body temperature and that you use a clean, sterilised neti pot; always practice under the guidance of a qualified yoga teacher, especially if you are a beginner. The ideal temperature of water for Jalaneti is around 38-40°C (slightly warmer than body temperature).



PROCEDURE:

Jala Neti (nasal cleansing with water)

- Stand squarely, legs apart, body weight evenly distributed between the two feet and lean forward.
- Tilt the head to the right side and place the nozzle in the left nostril. Open the mouth slightly and breathe through the mouth.
- Keep the whole body relaxed and let the water pass out through the right nostril.
- When you have used half of the water, remove the lota, remain bending forward, centre the head and let the water run out of the nose.
- Close the right nostril with the fingers and blow gently through the left nostril so that all the remaining water comes out.
- Practice in the same way, passing the water through the right nostril.
- Throughout the whole practice, keep breathing through the mouth and do not attempt to breathe through the nose.
- When blowing the nose, do not blow very hard. Otherwise, any remaining water may be pushed into the ears.
- It is important to remove all the water after the practice so that irritation of the sinuses and mucous membranes does not occur.
- Although you can practice neti in a squatting posture, it is best to stand.

- If you experience pain in the nose during the practice, the quantity of salt is incorrect. Too little salt will create pain, and too much salt will cause a burning sensation.
- It is advisable to practice bhastrika or kapalbhati pranayama after jala neti. This will dry the nose and generate heat in the nostrils.

When to perform?

Neti can be practiced every day if you are suffering from sinusitis, colds, insensitivity to smell, nosebleeds, headaches, eyestrain, or eye infections. Otherwise, it is best to practice only once or twice a week.

PRECAUTION:

Avoid jala neti in the following conditions:

- If the person recently had nose or ear surgery
- If the person has a bleeding nose
- If the person has a facial wound that hasn't healed
- If the person has neurologic or musculoskeletal problems
- If the person has a chronic nose infection

PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF JALA NETI:

Jala neti, a practice of nasal irrigation using saline water, primarily produces a physiological effect by cleansing the nasal passages, removing mucus and allergens, improving sinus drainage, and enhancing blood circulation within the nasal mucosa, potentially leading to benefits like reduced congestion, improved breathing, and relief from allergy symptoms; it can also contribute to a feeling of mental clarity by stimulating the nasal nerves and promoting relaxation.

Key physiological effects of jala neti:

- **Nasal cleansing:**

The primary effect is the removal of accumulated mucus, dust, and allergens from the nasal passages, which can help to clear congestion and improve breathing.

- **Sinus drainage:**

By flushing the nasal cavity, jala neti can promote drainage from the sinuses, alleviating sinus pressure and discomfort associated with sinusitis.

- **Improved mucosal function:**

The saline solution can help to soothe irritated nasal mucosa, reducing inflammation and promoting healthy mucosal function.

- **Enhanced blood circulation:**

The process of nasal irrigation can increase blood flow to the nasal passages, potentially aiding in healing and reducing inflammation.

- **Nervous system stimulation:**

Some practitioners believe that jala neti can stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system, leading to relaxation and stress reduction.

BENEFITS:

1. Practicing Jal Neti regularly will maintain nasal hygiene by cleaning bacteria and dirt trapped in the upper respiratory system.
2. Jal neti calms the sensitive tissues in the nose, preventing a bout of rhinitis or allergies.
3. Jal neti is especially beneficial for people suffering from asthma since it makes breathing much easier.
4. Regularly cleaning your sinuses can keep sinusitis at bay, and prevent headaches.
5. Dry coughs, sneezing bouts, sore throats, etc are greatly reduced by practising jal neti regularly.
6. Jal neti is also known to clear the ducts of the eyes, improving vision.
7. The warm flushing of the sinuses calms the nervous system, reducing stress and relieving tension.

- CONTRAINDICATION:
- **Nose bleeds**: Avoid jala neti if you have a bleeding nose.

- **Ear infections**: Avoid jala neti if you have an ear infection.
- **Recent nose or ear surgery**: Avoid jala neti if you've recently had nose or ear surgery.
- **High blood pressure**: Be careful when drying your nose after jala neti, as forceful drying can cause dizziness.
- **Incomplete facial trauma**: Avoid jala neti if you have incompletely healed facial trauma.
- **Neurological or musculoskeletal problems**: Avoid jala neti if you have neurological or musculoskeletal problems that increase the risk of aspiration.

13.5.2 DHAUTI (VAMAN)

INTRODUCTION:

"Vaman" means to "vomit" in Sanskrit, and "Dhauti" means "to cleanse," so Vaman Dhauti literally means "vomiting to cleanse."

Vaman Dhauti, also known as Kunjal Kriya, is a yogic cleansing practice that involves intentionally inducing vomiting after consuming a large quantity of salt water, essentially "flushing" the stomach and upper digestive tract to remove accumulated toxins and undigested food particles; it is considered one of the six purification techniques (Shatkarma) in Hatha Yoga, primarily aimed at cleansing the stomach and oesophagus.

PROCEDURE:

PREPARATION OF WATER:

- Wash your hands thoroughly and ensure your nails are trimmed to avoid any irritation while inducing regurgitation.
- Prepare around 1-2 liers of warm water, mixing 1 teaspoon of salt per liter to create a saline solution. The water should be at body temperature to prevent discomfort.



Steps:

- Stand near a sink, toilet, or in an outdoor space. Drink 6-8 glasses of the prepared saline water quickly. It is important to drink fast rather than sipping it slowly to fill your stomach completely.
- Once your stomach feels full, the urge to vomit will arise naturally. Lean forward slightly, keeping your trunk as horizontal as possible.
- Open your mouth and use the index and middle fingers of your right hand to press the back of your tongue gently. This will stimulate the gag reflex, causing the water to be expelled from your stomach.
- If the water does not come out on the first attempt, press your fingers farther back on your tongue or apply more pressure.
- Continue this process until most or all of the water has been expelled. Once the water runs clear, the stomach is considered cleansed.
- After completing the practice, rinse your mouth with clean water and rest for 30 minutes before eating or drinking anything.

BENEFITS OF VAMAN:

1. Vaman gives an effective wash to our digestive system. Hence, it helps to eliminate all diseases caused by poor digestion.

2. The most significant benefit of this technique is that it improves the strength of the entire digestive system.
3. Vaman is a blessing for those who suffer from the problem of cough and excessive mucus. It removes that extra mucus from the oesophagus and gives relief from the cough.
4. If you perform this practice regularly, it releases the gas from the stomach. It also minimises the poor breathing issue.
5. Vaman is beneficial for curing several diseases like acidity, indigestion, asthma, headache, etc.
6. This technique helps to rebalance our nervous system. Thus it strengthens our whole body.
7. Salt is an excellent cleaning agent. When we drink salt water, it neutralises the acids and reduces the feeling of burning.
8. While performing Vaman, the thorax area opens up due to drastic contraction. Thus, it assures more blood supply to the entire stomach area and respiratory tract.
9. Vaman helps to overcome throat disorders like sore throat
10. During the process of expelling, muscular contractions of the stomach wall occur. This result in toned abdominal muscles.
11. Vaman effectively removes excess mucus, undigested food, and toxins from the stomach, promoting better digestion.
12. The saline water neutralises stomach acids, helping to alleviate symptoms of hyperacidity and heartburn.
13. By clearing excess mucus, Vaman can relieve respiratory issues such as asthma, bronchitis, and sinus congestion.
14. The practice helps clear mental fog and lethargy, enhancing focus and emotional balance.

PRECAUTIONS:

1. It would be best if you did this practice in the morning on an empty stomach.
2. For general health, you could do it once a week. However, you can practice Kunjal Kriya whenever you feel discomfort in your digestive system.

3. People with low blood pressure, high blood pressure, heart problems, ulcers, and stomach hernias should avoid this technique.
4. Before inserting your fingers into the mouth, ensure your nails are not sharp and clean.
5. Jala Neti, or nose washing, is advised after conducting Kunjal.
6. Avoid eating for 30 minutes.

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

People with following health conditions should not perform Vaman Dhauti:

- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Stomach ulcers
- Colitis
- Pregnancy
- Digestive disorders
- Hiatus hernia,
- Dehydration
- Acute infections
- Chronic diseases.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

- Vaman Dhauti should be performed under the guidance of a trained yoga instructor.
- After performing Vaman Dhauti, you should consume Yayagu.
- You should avoid eating meat, drinking alcohol, coffee, and tea, and taking spicy food and sweets after performing Vaman Dhauti.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. What is Jalaneti?

Q2. What type of water is used in Jalaneti?

Q3. What is the ideal temperature of water for Jalaneti?

Q4. What are the benefits of Jalaneti?
Q5. How often should Jalaneti be practiced?
Q6. Can Jalaneti help with sinusitis?
Q7. What precautions should be taken while doing Jalaneti?
Q8. Is Jalaneti safe for children?
Q9. What is Vaman Kriya?
Q10. What type of water is used in Vaman?
Q11. When is the best time to perform Vaman?
Q12. What are the benefits of Vaman?
Q13. Can Vaman help with acidity and indigestion?
Q14. How much water should be consumed before vomiting in Vaman?
Q15. Are there any contraindications for Vaman Kriya?
Q16. Can Vaman be practiced daily?
Q17. How does Vaman differ from medical emesis?



13.6 LET US SUM UP

Shatkarma is a set of six Hatha yoga purification techniques that cleanse the body and mind. The word “Shatkarma” comes from the Sanskrit words shat means “six” and karma means “action”. Shatkarma prepares the body for yoga practices like asana, pranayama, and meditation. It helps balance the body’s three humours: Kapha (wind), Pitta (bile), and Vata (mucus). It removes toxins and impurities from the body. It helps improve physical and mental well-being.

In conclusion, both Jala Neti and Dhauti, considered part of the Shatkarma practices in Yoga, are valuable cleansing techniques that significantly improve overall health by purifying the nasal passages and digestive tract respectively, leading to benefits like enhanced respiratory function, better digestion, and improved mental clarity when practiced correctly and under guidance; essentially promoting detoxification and preparing the body for deeper yogic practices like pranayama.



13.6 FURTHER READING

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- Frawley, David. *Neti: Healing Secrets of Yoga and Ayurveda.* Twin Lakes, WI: Lotus Press. ISBN 0-940985-85-3.
- Jefferson, Warren (2005). *The Neti Pot for Better Health.* Summertown, Tennessee: Healthy Living Publications. ISBN 978-1-57067-186-9.



13.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: Jalaneti is a yogic cleansing technique that involves pouring warm saline water through one nostril and letting it flow out from the other nostril to clear the nasal passages.

Answer to Q2: Lukewarm, distilled, or boiled water mixed with salt is used.

Answer to Q3: Around 38-40°C (slightly warmer than body temperature).

Answer to Q4: Clears nasal congestion, improves breathing, removes allergens, prevents sinus infections and enhances mental clarity.

Answer to Q5: It can be done daily in the morning or as needed, especially in cases of congestion or allergies.

Answer to Q6: Yes, it helps drain mucus, reduce inflammation, and relieve sinusitis symptoms.

Answer to Q7: Use clean water, proper salt concentration, and dry the nose afterward to prevent infection. Avoid if severely congested.

Answer to Q8: Yes, but under supervision and with a reduced water quantity.

Answer to Q9: Vaman Kriya is a yogic cleansing practice where a person drinks warm saline water and voluntarily induces vomiting to cleanse the stomach.

Answer to Q10: Lukewarm water with salt (non-iodized rock salt or sea salt).

Answer to Q11: Early morning on an empty stomach.

Answer to Q12: Removes excess mucus, detoxifies the digestive tract, improves digestion, helps with acidity, and enhances mental clarity.

Answer to Q13: Yes, it helps flush out excess acid and undigested food, relieving acidity and indigestion.

Answer to Q14: Around 1 to 1.5 liters of warm saline water.

Answer to Q15: Yes, people with high blood pressure, ulcers, pregnancy, hernia, or heart conditions should avoid it.

Answer to Q16: No, it is usually practiced once a week or as per guidance from a yoga expert.

Answer to Q17: How does Vaman differ from medical emesis?

Vaman is a controlled and voluntary yogic practice for cleansing, while medical emesis is usually due to illness, toxins, or medication side effects.



13.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

Very Short Answer Questions:

1. What does the word “Shatkarma” mean in Sanskrit?
2. How many cleansing techniques are included in Shatkarma?
3. Name any two techniques included in Shatkarma.
4. What is the main purpose of Shatkarma?
5. Which ancient yogic text describes Shatkarma?
6. What are the three doshas that Shatkarma aims to balance?
7. What is Neti kriya used for?
8. What kind of water is used in Jala Neti?
9. When should Neti be ideally practiced?
10. What is the ideal water temperature for Jalaneti?
11. What does “Vaman” mean in Sanskrit?
12. What is another name for Vaman Dhauti?
13. When should Vaman Dhauti be practiced?
14. How much salt is recommended per liter of water for Vaman Dhauti?
15. Can people with high blood pressure perform Vaman Dhauti?

B) Short Questions:

1. Mention any three objectives of Shatkarma.
2. List the six techniques of Shatkarma.
3. What is the misconception about Shatkarma?
4. What are the two main types of Neti?
5. Write the steps to prepare water for Jala Neti.
6. List any three physiological effects of Jala Neti.
7. What precautions should be taken while practicing Jala Neti?
8. What are the benefits of Jala Neti for respiratory health?
9. Describe the role of salt in Vaman Dhauti.
10. What precautions should be taken before and after performing Vaman Dhauti?

C) Essay Questions:

1. Explain the purpose and significance of Shatkarma in Hatha Yoga.
2. Describe in detail the procedure of Jala Neti and mention its physiological effects.
3. What are the benefits and contraindications of Vaman Dhauti (Kunjal Kriya)?
4. Discuss how Shatkarma prepares the body for advanced yogic practices like pranayama and meditation.
5. Write a detailed note on the misconceptions and necessary precautions related to Shatkarma practices.
6. Compare and contrast Jala Neti and Vaman Dhauti in terms of method, benefits, and precautions.

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UNIT -14 - MEDITATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

14.1 Learning Objectives

14.2 Introduction of Meditation

14.3 Meditation in Ashtanga-yoga

14.4 Pranav Meditation

14.5 Soham Japa

14.6 Benefits of Meditation

14.7 Let Us Sum Up

14.8 Further Reading

14.9 Answer to Check Your Progress

14.10 Model Questions

14.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you would be able to –

- know about the meaning of meditation and its importance
- understand the meditation as explained in Patanjala Yoga Sutra
- know the technique of Pranav meditation
- know the technique of Soham japa
- explain the benefits of Pranav Meditation and Soham Japa

14.2 INTRODUCTION

Meditation is an important limb of yoga, mentioned in the Ashtanga yoga of Maharshi Patanjali and the Saptanga Yoga of Maharshi Gheranda. Concentrating the mind on one object for an extended period of time is called meditation. Maharshi Patanjali has introduced meditation as **तत्र प्रत्ययैकतानता ध्यानम्** ।।3.2।।, meaning, meditation is an unbroken flow of consciousness toward the chosen point of focus. There are many types of meditation. Maharshi Gheranda as described three kinds of meditation –

1. Sthoola Dhyan (meditation in the physical form of guru)
2. Jyoti Dhyan (meditation on lighting lamp) and
3. Sukshma Dhyan (meditation in subtle form of guru).

In Upanishads, various meditations techniques are explained. Pranav Meditation and Soham Japa are the important meditations which lead one to self realization. In this unit we will learn the techniques and benefits of these two meditations. In ancient times, sages and saints used to meditate on God. Meditation is an activity in which a person tries to bring his mind into a particular state of consciousness. When mind concentrates and focuses in the internal objects such as Manipur chakra and Lotus petals in the Heart region etc. or in the external objects such as images of deity, raising Sun, Moon etc. for long duration without any fluctuations, this is the state of meditation. Dharana itself turns into Dhyana, and Dhyana itself turns into Samadhi. In the meditation state the meditator forgets his surroundings and even him-self means there is no consciousness that one is practicing concentration. The three Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi together constitute Samyama means completely mastery over the psychic process or a complete control of mental concentration. Meditation develops spiritual and mental powers.

14.3 MEDITATION IN ASHTANGA-YOGA

Ashtanga yoga means eight-limbs of yoga. In Patanjala Yoga Sutra these eight-limbs are the systematic disciplines of yoga. They are Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyan and Samadhi. Through the practice of Ashtanga yoga, sadhaka can uplift their mind and soul towards the higher consciousness i.e. oneness with supreme reality. In this Ashtanaga yoga Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama are comes under the Bahiranga Sadhana, and Dharana, Dhyan and Samadhi comes under the Antaranga Sadhana, whereas Pratyahara makes the bridge between these two Bahiranga and Antaranga Sadhana. As soon as a yogi succeeds in pratyahara, he gets full control over his mind and senses. Due to which he can stabilize his mind wherever he wants. In this way,

binding, stabilising or focusing the mind at any one place is called Dharana. This is the state before meditation and after pratyahara.

At whatever internal or external place where dharana has been practiced, the uniformity or consistency holding the mind at that place is called Dhyan. There should not be any interference of any other knowledge or attitude that has been formed. When a Yogi forgets his personal identity and gets absorbed only in the object of meditation, then that state is called Samadhi.

14.4 PRANAV MEDITATION

In Patanjala Yoga Sutra it is clearly mentioned in Samadhi Pada verses no. 23, 24, 25 and 27 that samadhi comes from surrendering to consciousness. Consciousness is the pure self, untouched by any afflictions, actions, the effects of actions, or their imprints. It is the source of limitless knowledge. The expression of supreme consciousness is OM, the symbol of Ishwara is pranav. Pranav japa is simply OM meditation.

Technique -

- Sit in any comfortable meditative posture.
- Relax the body and mind completely
- Close the eyes and take a deep breath and start chanting OM for minimum 10 times.
- Feel the vibration of OM chanting in the mind and start chanting OM mentally, allow the mind to repeat OM continuously without break.
- After a while the chanting slows down, one should be able to have an unbroken stream of the japa in one's mind.
- Make the chanting softer & softer, gentler & gentler, and more & more effortless.
- Feel the vibration of OM chanting in a particular part of the body and later throughout the body.
- Again slow down the japa of OM and observe the gap between OM. Feel the deeper silence.
- The deep experience of the silence helps to expand the awareness of the body and mind. This silence is the source of creativity, power,

knowledge and bliss.

- Feel this silence in the heart region; let one OM emerge as an audible sound that diffuses into the entire body.
- Enjoy the beautiful vibrations.
- Now, slowly blink the eyes, open the eyes gently and come out of meditation.

Benefits -

- Pranav japa helps to relax the mind and body which leads to achieve a disease free body and peaceful mind.
- It removes the fluctuation of the mind and controls the waves of the mind.
- This meditation particularly helps to direct the deeper silence of the mind.
- It improves the awareness of the breath and mind in the heart region.
- Through the practice of pranav japa, one's feels the blissfulness state of mind i.e. sat-chit-ananda.



https://www.herzindagi.com/hindi/advice/om-chanting

14.5 SOHAM JAPA

Soham is comprised of two Sanskrit words. **'So'** and **'Ham'** where 'So' means – That or Paramatma (universal soul) and 'Ham' means – I or Jivatma (individual soul). Therefore **'Soham'** means - I am that. Soham is also known as Ajapa Gayatri Japa. The uninterrupted mantra repetition of So and Ham during inhalation and exhalation respectively. In this meditation, one should be aware of the breath going inside the body and outside the

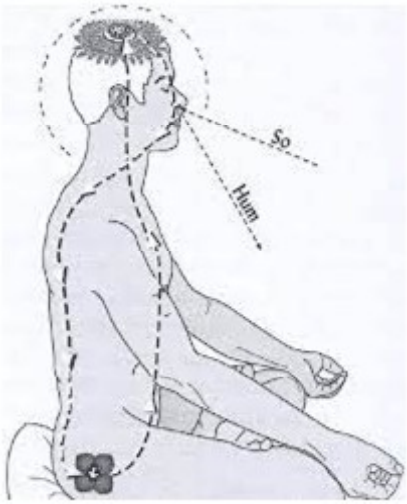
body. The classical yoga texts Gheranda Samhita and Shiva Samhita mentioned about the soham japa. In the 5th Chapter of Gheranda Samhita while describing Kevali Pranayama, it is mentioned that the soul of every living being repeats 'Ham' with each exhalation and 'So' with each inhalation. Every human being takes 21,600 breaths during one day and night. This is called (Hamso or Soham) ajapa Gayatri. Every living being always keeps on repeating this mantra. A Yogi must do it consciously.

Technique -

- Sit in any comfortable meditative position and adopt Jnana Mudra.
- Relax the mind and body completely.
- Gently close the eyes and focus on the nose tip.
- Spine and neck should be straight.
- Take five slow and deep breaths through the both nostrils**.**
- Now, inhale slowly while chanting the sound 'Soooooooooo' mentally, then slowly exhale while silently chanting the sound 'hammmmmmm'.
- During this japa, meditate that 'I am that supreme entity'. After spending about half the time in meditation, feel that your awareness is expanding and merging with the universal consciousness.
- Continue to chant silently the mantra in rhythm with breath.
- At the end of the meditation, try to remain with the all inclusive awareness and the sense that all is included in you.
- When someone does this constantly all the time, it becomes spontaneous. This is Ajapa Gayatri.

Benefits –

- Soham mantra helps to attain enlightenment.
- It bestows one with peace and liberation.
- Soham mantra helps to attain Samadhi, destroys all modification of the mind.
- This meditation brings towards the higher consciousness.



https://liveayurprana.com/blogs/windows-to-ayurwellness/so-ham-mantra

14.6 BENEFITS OF MEDITATION

Meditation can have many benefits, including:

- Stress reduction: Meditation can help you manage stress and reduce negative emotions. You may also learn to look at things that cause stress in a new way.
- Improved focus: Meditation can help you focus longer and improve your attention span.
- Better sleep: Meditation can help you fall asleep faster and improve the quality of your sleep.
- Reduced pain: Meditation can help reduce pain and improve your ability to regulate emotions.
- Lower blood pressure: Meditation can help lower blood pressure over time, which may help prevent heart disease.
- Reduced anxiety: Meditation can help reduce anxiety and other mental health problems like social anxiety, obsessive-compulsive behavior, and phobias.
- Improved memory: Meditation can help improve your memory and mental clarity, which may help fight age-related memory loss and dementia.

- Increased compassion: Meditation can help you better understand yourself, find your best self, and increase positive feelings and actions toward others.
- Improved self-awareness: Meditation can help you become more self-aware and focus on the present.
- Improved creativity: Meditation can help you become more creative.
- Improved patience: Meditation can help you become more patient.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. What is meditation?

Q2. What are the limbs of Ashtanga Yoga?

Q3. What is Pranav Meditation?

Q4. What is Soham Japa?

Q5. Is Soham japa is also known as Ajapa Gayatri Japa?



14.7 LET US SUM UP

From the above explanation of this chapter, we discussed the following topics-

- One-pointed awareness, of an object for an extended period of time is dhyana or meditation.
- Meditation is not a practice. It is a state of continuous effectual flow of consciousness without any obstruction. That is why it is said that meditation is never practiced.
- Maharshi Patanjali discussed the Ashtanga Yoga (Eight limbs of yoga), he divided Ashtanga Yoga into two Sadhana as Bahiranaga Sadhana including Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama and Pratyahara. And Antaranga Sadhana including Dharana, Dhyan and Samadhi. A practitioner can attain the Rajayoga by doing these practices. These are necessary for the upliftment of soul.
- Merging one's awareness with the universal consciousness is meditation.
- Pranav japa is the OM meditation.

- Deep silence helps to expand the awareness of the body.
- Soham japa is the unification with universal soul through individual soul.
- The uninterrupted mantra repetition of So and Ham while inhalation and exhalation stated that it is Soham Japa.
- Meditation improves self- awareness, patience, creativity, memory and deeper connection with the supreme reality.
- Meditation reduces anxiety, depression, mental obstructions etc.



14.8 FURTHER READING

1. Karambelkar, P.V., (2017). *Patanjala Yoga Sutra.* Kaivalyadhama S.M.Y.M. Samiti, Lonavala, Pune.
2. Saraswati, N., (2012). *Gheranda Samhita,* Yoga Publication trust, Munger, Bihar, India.



14.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: One-pointed awareness of an object is dhyana.

Answer to Q2: The eight limbs are- Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyan and Samadhi.

Answer to Q3: Pranav is the symbol of Ishawara i.e. OM. Therefore OM chanting is pranav meditation.

Answer to Q4: Soham is the combination of So and Ham, where So means 'That' and Ham means 'I' that means ' I am that'.

Answer to Q5: Yes, Soham japa is also known as Ajapa Gayatri Japa.



14.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Answer Questions

1. What is meditation according to Maharshi Patanjali?
2. Name any two types of meditation described by Maharshi Gheranda.
3. Which mantra is used in Pranav meditation?

4. What does the word 'Soham' mean?
5. What is Ajapa Gayatri Japa?
6. Which yogic limb does meditation (Dhyana) belong to in Ashtanga Yoga?
7. How many breaths does a human being take in a day, as mentioned in the Gheranda Samhita?
8. What is the final state that follows Dhyana in the yogic path?
9. Which chakra is commonly meditated upon in internal meditation?
10. Name one physical benefit of meditation.

B) Short Answer Questions

1. Briefly explain the three types of meditation described by Maharshi Gheranda.
2. Write the step-by-step technique of Pranav meditation.
3. Describe the technique of Soham meditation.
4. Differentiate between Dharana and Dhyana.
5. What is Samyama in yogic practice?
6. Mention four psychological or mental benefits of meditation.
7. What is the role of Pratyahara in Ashtanga Yoga?
8. Explain the concept of Ajapa Gayatri Japa in the context of Soham meditation.
9. How does Pranav meditation help in achieving Sat-Chit-Ananda?

Long Answer Questions

1. Explain the significance and role of meditation in the framework of Ashtanga Yoga.
2. Discuss the philosophy and practice of Soham Japa as described in classical yoga texts.
3. Describe in detail the technique and benefits of Pranav meditation.
4. Elaborate upon the transformation of Dharana into Dhyana and finally into Samadhi.
5. Compare and contrast Pranav meditation and Soham meditation in terms of technique and benefits.
6. Explain the concept of meditation as described by Patanjali and Gheranda with examples.

7. Write a detailed note on the spiritual, physical, and psychological benefits of meditation.
8. Describe how meditation can lead to self-realization according to Upanishadic and yogic traditions.
9. Analyze the process and importance of Samyama in the path of yogic mastery.
10. How does regular meditation influence mental clarity, emotional stability, and overall health?

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