



# YOGA THERAPY

Diabetes and its Prevention

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# **Yoga Therapy - Diabetes and Its Prevention**

We have compiled a Yoga Asana sequence specifically for people suffering with diabetes to help them manage their condition, and for people at high risk of developing diabetes as a preventative measure.

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# Introduction

We have been inspired to write this book, as many of our close family members and friends are now suffering from diabetes. A combination of poor diet and little exercise, has fast tracked this disease into an epidemic. We have shown them various sequences, and they have all seen improvements from weight-loss to clearer vision, and reductions in medication.

After spending a long time writing up almost identical sequences for them, we thought it would be better to create a book, in hope that it can also help others. We want you to regain a life that isn't dominated by this disease, and help you move towards to a happy state of health. Stress levels are a major contributing factor in diabetes (and we've all heard that yoga reduces stress). When we're stressed, our blood sugar levels increase, putting a strain on the entire body. The use of controlled breathing techniques, postures, and meditation will enable you to relax the body and manage your stress more effectively. This will help to regulate cortisol, and other stress hormones, which is very important in the treatment and prevention of type 2 diabetes, and its related complications.

Weight management is another important consideration associated with diabetes. Regular practice of yoga asana (postures) will help you to shed those extra pounds, taking the stress off your organs. The physical practice of yoga, strengthens and exercises the muscles. This increases the glucose uptake by muscular cells, which in turn, helps to lower blood sugar levels, improve circulation and also reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Many yoga postures also stretch and massage the internal organs, (including the pancreas). In this sequence we have focussed on postures, which can help to stimulate the production, and regulation of insulin.

## **Studies and References**

Although in our personal experience people have greatly benefitted from yoga in diabetes treatment, we know that many of you would like to see evidence of this (and rightly so). Given below is the summary of various studies done by renowned institutes, on the effect of yoga on diabetes.

### **Journal Of The Association Of Physicians Of India**

Extensive well designed studies were conducted from a period of 1978-1995 to assess the effect of yoga in the treatment of diabetes at the Vemana Yoga Research Institute, Secunderabad. These studies have confirmed the useful role of yoga in the control of diabetes mellitus. Fasting and postprandial blood glucose levels came down significantly. Good glycaemic status can be maintained for long periods of time. There was a lowering of drug requirement and the incidence of acute complications like infection and ketosis was significantly reduced. There were significant changes in the insulin kinetics and those of counter-regulatory hormones like cortisol. There was a decrease in free fatty acids. There was an increase in lean body mass and decrease in body fat percentage. The number of insulin receptors was also increased. There was an improvement in insulin sensitivity and decline in insulin resistance. All these suggest that yogic practices have a role even in the prevention of diabetes. There is a beneficial effect on the co-morbid conditions like hypertension and dyslipidemia.

Summary of the results can be found out at <http://www.japi.org/february2007/R-121.pdf>

### **National Center For Biotechnology Information**

A 2007 review looked at 25 studies (conducted between 1970-2006) that evaluated the metabolic and clinical effects of yoga in adults with diabetes mellitus-2. Beneficial changes were found in several areas including glucose tolerance and insulin sensitivity, lipid profiles, blood pressure, oxidative stress, coagulation profiles, pulmonary function and specific clinical outcomes

For more information, go to:

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2176136>

India: The emerging diabetes and coronary heart disease capital

# **Emerging trend of coronary heart disease and diabetes.**

Here are a few facts and figures.

There are nearly 347 million people all over the world suffering from diabetes and this number is likely to double in the coming years. In India, there are nearly 50 million diabetics. – World Health Organizations (WHO) estimate

According to an article by Reuters, India has an estimated 77 million pre-diabetics (It is the state in which some but not all of the diagnostic criteria for diabetes are met).

Type 2 diabetes is occurring a full decade sooner in Indians, when people are between 20 and 29 years old.

Globally diabetes is consuming an ever greater portion of medical costs, accounting for approximately 10 per cent of all health care spending according to the journal Diabetes Research and Clinical Practice in 2010. Around 90 percent of global sufferers have Type 2, a form the WHO says is “largely the result of excess body weight and physical inactivity... (a) growing global problem”. Half of all diabetes sufferers die of cardiovascular disease, according to the WHO.

According to the World Congress of Cardiology, it is estimated that by 2020, heart diseases will be the cause of over 40 per cent deaths in India as compared to 24 per cent in 1990.

According to the November 2009 issue of Harvard Men’s Health Watch, as many as 10 per cent of all heart attacks in men occur before the age of 45.

## **Reasons :**

Sedentary lifestyle, obesity, stress, high-blood pressure, high cholesterol levels, diabetes, family history are some other factors that increase chances of heart ailments.

High-fat, high-sugar, fast food outlets proliferate in Indian cities, catering for a hard-working, time-poor population eager to spend its new-found cash, with Western brands often chosen as a visible sign of wealth.

Eating high levels of refined carbohydrates and saturated fat and not enough fruits and vegetables contributes to weight gain, thereby increasing the risk of diabetes.

Smoking is invariably a common factor in almost all the young patients

Many believe the diabetes rate began to skyrocket when Indians stopped living off the land and began using government rations. The high number of cases among South Asian people has been attributed to genetic factors, including a predisposition to storing more fat. A decline in physical activity through increased car use and a lack of open spaces for exercise is another major factor for the increase in the number of diabetics.

**Overweight and obesity:** (BMI over 25 kg/m<sup>2</sup>) have been estimated to account for about 65–80% of new cases of type 2 diabetes. The risk is a function of the age of onset and the duration of obesity, and weight gain during adult life.

### **Effects:**

**Diabetes and heart:** Diabetes and coronary heart disease are closely related. Diabetes contributes to high blood pressure and is linked with high cholesterol which significantly increases the risk of heart attacks and cardiovascular disease.

**Diabetes and strokes:** Similar to how diabetes affects the heart, high blood pressure and cholesterol raises the risk of strokes.

**Diabetes and eyes:** A relatively common complication of diabetes is diabetic retinopathy. As with all complications, this condition is brought on by a number of years of poorly controlled or uncontrolled diabetes. Diabetic retinopathy has a number of symptoms. Retinopathy is caused by blood vessels in the back of the eye (the retina) swelling and leaking. High blood pressure is also a contributing factor for diabetic retinopathy.

**Diabetes and kidneys:** The kidneys are another organ that is at particular risk of damage as a result of diabetes and the risk is again increased by poorly controlled diabetes, high blood pressure and cholesterol. Diabetic nephropathy is the term for kidney disease as a result of diabetes.

Some other effects of Diabetes is on the nerves (numbness, lack of arousal) and disturbed digestion.



## **How can you lower your risk?**

**Get Moving**—and turn off the television and play real games: Studies have shown that just 30 minutes of moderate exercise a day, five days a week is enough to promote good health and reduce the chance of developing type 2 diabetes.

**Control Your Weight:** Excess weight is the single most important cause of type 2 diabetes. Being overweight increases the chances of developing type 2 diabetes seven fold. Being obese makes you 20 to 40 times more likely to develop diabetes than someone with a healthy weight.

**Tune Up Your Diet:** Choose whole grains and whole grain products over highly processed carbohydrates. Skip the sugary drinks, and choose water, coffee, or tea instead (with less sugar). Choose good fats instead of bad fats.

If You Smoke, Try to Quit

## **How Yoga helps in Diabetes?**

The diagnosis of Diabetes can be overwhelming and to be honest quite scary, luckily whether you are in advanced stages of the disease or have just been diagnosed, doctors and health experts have found that simple lifestyle choices can help to control, and even reverse the symptoms. I will talk about food choices in another article, but for now I will explain about yoga for diabetes and how the practice of yoga can really make a difference for you, in your life.

There are two types of diabetes. Type 1 which is autoimmune and the body destroys the pancreatic cells. Type 2, (sometimes called adult onset diabetes, although we are seeing more and more cases in children), which occurs because the cells develop a type of insulin resistance, which can be triggered by health problems such as high sugar diets, obesity, and stress etc.

### **Health of the Nervous System:**

People with diabetes are at risk of developing problems with autonomic nervous system, which are the nerves that you can't consciously control. Problems that can arise from this are anything from bowel movements to the regulation of heart rate and blood pressure. It can also affect the peripheral nervous system, leading to reduced movement and sensation, or numbness. First in the feet and later into the hands. Many asanas (postures) in yoga, particularly back bending help to remove blockages from your central nervous system (running up the spine), this can improve the functioning of the autonomic nervous system and preliminary evidence (see the link <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12613392>) suggests it can improve nerve conduction.

### **Massaging the Internal organs:**

In the same way that you might find yourself rubbing your achy muscles after lots of physical exertion, particular postures can press or massage the internal organs. This increases blood flow to the area bringing more oxygen.

Postures (particularly the twisting postures) compresses the abdomen against the thigh and induces stomach breathing, as a result the internal organs (kidneys, liver, pancreas etc.) are massaged, speeding up the blood circulation and cleansing effect (removal of toxins, blood is the carrier of the toxins as well as the nutrients).

Similarly massaging of the pancreas will happen which will rejuvenate it and increase the production of the pancreatic cells and the insulin. This is how yoga differs from other forms of exercises.

### **Stress Reduction;**

Stress is a major contributing factor to diabetes. When we are stressed it increases the secretion of glucagon, which is responsible for increasing the blood glucose levels. Stress also releases cortisol, adrenaline, which can trigger food cravings. If you can consistently take a few minutes a day to practice a combination of the yoga asanas (postures), pranayama (breathing exercised), and meditation or just taking time out to calm down, you will help to reduce stress in the mind and body. It will help you to make healthier choices in all aspects of your life.

### **Weight loss & lower blood pressure**

Diabetes symptoms often get worse with high blood pressure, (or hypertension).

High intensity sequences like the Surya Namaskar (sun salutation) can help to reduce weight and extra fat, which in turn will keep the blood pressure in check.

### **Lowers the blood sugar level:**

As explained earlier, the various postures of Yoga massage the internal organs and increase the insulin sensitivity helping to decrease the blood sugar level. Also sequences like Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutations) will burn the glucose and the fats decreasing the sugar level in the body.

## Precautions

Listen to your body, if ANYTHING does not feel good for you, stop immediately. You know your body better than anyone.

Even though it is generally recommended to practice yoga on an empty stomach, anyone taking medication for diabetes (who is at risk of blood sugar levels dropping) should eat something before the practice. Also if you feel any dizziness or other signs of hypoglycaemia you should have some sugar.

Avoid drinking alcohol the night before a practice (if you have drunk alcohol save the practice for the afternoon) as alcohol suppresses the process by which the liver generates extra glucose for about twenty hours after consumption.

Anyone currently taking medication to lower blood sugar levels must make sure to carefully monitor their readings throughout the initial months of practice, because it is possible that your glucose levels may drop dangerously low, causing a hypoglycemic reaction. What once was an appropriate dose of insulin or oral medication may now be too much. Also if you increase the intensity of your practice, make sure to monitor carefully.

Anyone with diabetes is at high risk of retinal detachment; this is why everyone suffering from type 1 or type 2 diabetes should go for regular check-up with an eye doctor. All inversions (postures where your head comes below the level of your heart) including adho mukha svanasana (downward facing dog), will increase pressure behind the eyes, these postures have many benefits, but please consult ophthalmologist before attempting.

Do not reduce or alter your medication without consulting a Doctor first. It is possible that people suffering from type 2 diabetes, with proper diet and yoga can eliminate the use of medication, but this should not be done without medical supervision.

If you inject insulin, be aware of the injection site. For example if you inject into the abdomen, then perform twisting postures this may cause the insulin to be released into the body more quickly than normal. Sticking to a sequence rather than always trying new postures will allow you to listen to your body and feel the effects of each asana. If you feel you need to adjust your insulin levels speak to your Doctor first.

Anyone suffering complications as a result of their diabetes should avoid extreme heat, so styles of yoga like Bikram (hot yoga) should not be practiced.

In students with type 1 diabetes (less often with type 2) whose blood sugar is running very high before class, a vigorous practice can precipitate ketoacidosis, a true medical emergency. Marked by sky-high blood sugars (over 300), dehydration, and increased levels of acid in the blood, diabetic ketoacidosis can cause such symptoms as thirst, weakness, lethargy, nausea, and confusion.

Strength and flexibility cannot be achieved in a day. Do not push your body too hard to get into the postures, try the variations instead. You will gradually achieve the strength and flexibility.

## **Part I – Asana Sequence**

# **SURYA NAMASKAR – Sun Salutation**

An ancient yogic tradition of worshipping the rising or setting of the sun (surya). It is thought that if the day and night were like breathing dawn and dusk would be the pause between the inhalation and exhalation (kumbaka) and the perfect time for reflection, meditation, or yoga practice.

The sequence can be used in preparation for other postures heating up and stretching the body, bringing the connection between movement and breath. It can also be used as a complete exercise in itself. It tones and stretches the muscles, massages the inner organs, helps to relieve constipation, speeds up the metabolism, and helps to reduce weight. Even spending 15 minutes of your day practicing the Sun Salutations can be used to calm the mind, and promote health and balance in the body. There are a few different variations of Surya Namaskar, for this book on diabetes therapy I am going to focus on the ‘Hatha Yoga Salutation’

## **Surya Namaskar Hatha Yoga**

Unlike the Ashtanga sequences, the exact origins of this sequence are still somewhat of a debate. With some claiming that sun worship originated in Vedic times, and was combined with offerings to the sun, and others believing that Sun Salutation was invented by the Raja (king) of Aundh (a former state in India) in the early 20th century.

This sequence of movements or asanas can be practiced on varying levels of awareness, ranging from that of physical exercise, with the aims of physical health and wellbeing. To a consciousness practice incorporating asanas (posture), pranayama (breathing techniques), mantra (chanting), and meditation, to bring mental wellbeing and a state of balance between the body and the mind.

Whatever your motives for practicing, it’s certainly a positive way to start, or end your day.

This variation of Surya Namaskar has 12 steps as described below.

### ***1. PRANAMASANA***

Keep the eyes closed. Stand upright with the feet together. Bring the palms to meet in the centre of your chest. Relax the whole body, make sure your weight is spread evenly over the feet.



#### ***Modifications:***

If you suffer with lower back problems, or if your knees/thighs are rubbing together, bring your feet parallel hip width apart.



## ***2. Inhale - HASTA UTTANASANA***

Bringing the hands shoulder width apart, lift them up over the head, and reach back relaxing your neck. You should bend the back slightly but not so that you feel pain in the lower back.



***Modifications:*** Keep the hands straight up if you have problem bending back

### **.3. Exhale – UTTANASANA**

Bend forwards from the hips bringing the palms of the hands to the floor on either side of the feet.

#### ***Modifications:***

- 1 .If you have slipped disc or lower back problems keep the knees bent, and the abdomen touching the thighs. Bring your palms come to the floor.
2. If you cannot reach the floor place the hands onto the shins/ankle until you have increased your flexibility. Focus on tipping the hips and keeping the back straight.



#### ***4. Inhale – ASHWA SANCHALANASANA***

Stretch the right leg back and tuck the toes under, while lunging forward and bending the left knee. The left foot remains flat on the floor and the right knee comes onto the floor. Raise the chest up, open the shoulders and look to the sky.



## ***5. Exhale – ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA***

Press the palms down onto the floor, and step the left foot back beside the right. Lift the hips up into the air, trying to create a straight line between your wrists shoulders and hips. Work on straightening the legs and bringing the heels to the ground. Take a few breaths.

### ***Modifications:***

Keep the knees slightly bent if the hamstrings are short.



## **6. Exhale – ASHTANGA NAMASKARA**

Come onto your toes. Keep the hands still, lower the knees, chin, and chest to the floor. The hips and abdomen remain raised.

### ***Modifications:***

If it is not possible to lower the knees chin and chest simultaneously, first lower the knees then the chin and chest together.



## 7. *Inhale* – **BHUJANGASANA**

Roll the toes back but keep the hands in place, slide the chest forward and raise the torso up. Rolling the shoulders back and away from the ears, tilting the head back to look to the sky. The hips and thighs should be on the floor, and the arm will remain slightly bent.

### *Note:*

Keep the buttocks and thighs engaged (squeezed) to prevent problems in the lower back.

Make sure that the weight of the torso comes onto your arm muscles not your joints



## **8. Exhale – ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA**

Keeping the hands in the same position lift the hips up, and roll the toes back bringing the heels to the ground, lengthening through the spine, bringing the shoulders towards the ankles. Take a few breaths here. As you exhale lifting the hips towards the sky and pressing the hands into the ground. (Same as step 5)



## ***9. Inhale – ASHWA SANCHALANASANA***

Bring the right foot forwards between the hands, and push the pelvis forwards and down. Lift the torso and tilt the head back, arching the back and looking up to the sky (Same as step 4 with the right leg)





**10. Exhale – UTTANASANA**

Bring the left foot next to the right, and straighten the knees. Bring the crown of the head towards the floor. (Same as step 3)



***11. Inhale – HASTA UTANASANA***

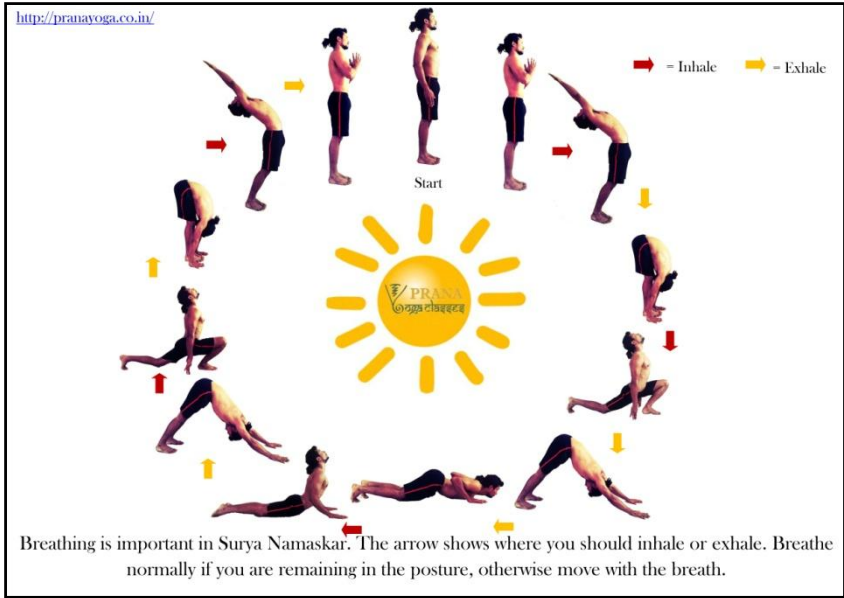
Keeping the arms shoulder width apart, raise the torso with spine as straight as possible. Bring the hands up over the head, and reaching back, bending slightly. (Same as step 2)



## *12. Exhale – PRANAMASANA*

Bring the palms together in front of the chest centre. (See step 1)  
Make sure your weight is spread evenly over your feet. Keep the leg and abdominal muscles active and focus on the breath.





Here is the whole Surya Namaskar sequence with the inhalations and exhalations for each posture

If possible try to complete 5 rounds of Surya Namaskar, then proceed with the following sequence

# **UTTHITA TRIKONASANA- Extended Triangle Posture**

Utthita - Extended or Stretched  
Trikon - Triangle (Three Angle)



**Steps:**

- 1 Stand with your feet together, weight spread evenly.
2. Inhale, step the right foot back 3 to 3.5ft (about the length of one of your legs)
3. Turn your right toes to the back and your left toes in slightly. Keep both legs extended with the knee caps lifted.
4. Exhale, bend the trunk sideways to the right, bringing the right palm near the right ankle (beginners can keep their right palm on the knee, shin bone or the ankle, whatever is possible). If possible, the right palm should rest completely on the floor.
5. Stretch the left arm up, bringing it in line with the right shoulder, look at the thumb of the left hand.
6. Remain in this posture for 10 deep breaths.
7. Inhale and come back up repeating the posture on the other side.

**Modifications:**

1. If you are struggling to balance you may want to place a block (or thick book) near your front foot to place your hand on.
2. If you have high blood pressure or if you feel your neck straining you can look to the toe.
3. If you have problems with your shoulder bring the hand onto the hip.

**Benefits:**

1. Strengthens the thighs, knees, and ankles
2. Stretches the hips, groins, hamstrings, and calves; shoulders, chest, and spine
3. Relieves backache
4. It corrects minor deformity in the legs, and aligns the bones.

**Contraindications:**

1. Diarrhoea, Headache, Low blood pressure
2. Heart Condition: Practice against a wall. Keep the top arm on the hip.

# **PARIVRTTA TRIKONASANA - Revolving Triangle Posture**

Parivrtta - Revolving  
Trikon – Triangle (Three Angle).



## ***Steps:***

1. Stand with your feet together, weight spread evenly.

2. Inhale, step the right foot back 3 to 3.5ft (about the length of one of your legs)
3. Turn your right toes to the back and your left toes in slightly. Keep both legs extended with the knee caps lifted.
4. Exhale, rotate the trunk and bring the left palm to the floor by the outside of the right foot
5. Inhale, stretch the right arm up, bringing it in line with the left arm and look at the right thumb.
6. Keep pressing both feet into the ground, the outer side of the left foot should be on the ground.
7. Remain in this posture for 10 deep breaths,
8. Inhale and come back up to the centre
9. Exhale, repeat the posture on the other side.

***Modifications:***

1. If your hand does not reach the floor you can put the palm on the ankle, or shin whatever is possible.
2. If you have high blood pressure or if you feel your neck straining you can look to the toe.
3. If you have problems with your shoulder bring the hand onto the hip.

***Benefits:***

1. Stretches the spine, thighs, hips, calves, and hamstrings
2. Opens the chest to improve breathing
3. Relieves mild back pain
4. Stimulates the abdominal organs and increases digestion

***Contraindications:***

1. Low blood pressure, Migraine, Diarrhoea, Headache, Insomnia
2. If you have a back or spine injury, only perform this posture under the supervision of an experienced teacher.



# VIRABHADRASANA I - Warrior 1

Virbhadra is the name of a Warrior from the legends of India.



## *Steps:*

1. Stand with your feet together, weight spread evenly.

2. Inhale, step your right foot back about 4ft (a little more than the length of one leg). Turn the toes to face the back, bring your left foot in about 45 degrees.
3. Exhale, rotate your torso to the right, squaring the hips towards the right foot (pull the right hip back and push the left forward)
4. Inhale, bring both hands up, join the palms and look to the thumbs.
5. Exhale, bend your right knee. Make sure that the knee is above the ankle. If the knee comes in front of the toes this may lead to injury.
6. Stay here for about 10 deep breaths. Keep stretching the fingers up towards the sky.
7. Inhale, straighten the knee, bring your hands down and pivot the feet to the opposite side.
8. Exhale, repeat on the other side.

***Modifications:***

1. If you have shoulder problems you may need to keep the hands shoulder width apart.
2. Adjust the distance between your feet so that you are stretching the hip and the knee is not coming in front of the ankle.

***Benefits:***

1. Stretches the chest, shoulders, neck, abdomen, hips, and groins.
2. Strengthens the shoulders, arms, back muscles, thighs, calves, and ankles.
3. Strengthens diaphragm, can help with breathing problems.

***Contraindications:***

1. High blood pressure keep looking forwards

## VIRABHADRASANA II- Warrior 2



### *Steps:*

1. Stand with your feet together, weight spread evenly.
2. Inhale, step your right foot back about 4ft (a little more than the length of one leg). Turn the toes to face the back, bring your left foot in about 45 degrees.
3. Raise your arms up, parallel to the floor with the shoulders relaxed and away from the ears. Look towards the tip of the right fingers.
4. Keep the hips and the shoulders open, imagine you are between two panes of glass, keep pulling the left hip back and the right forward.

5. Exhale, bend your right knee. Make sure that the knee is above the ankle. If the knee comes in front of the toes this may lead to injury. If you are not feeling a stretch in the hip increase the distance between your feet.
6. Stay here for 10 deep breaths. Make sure the back foot is pressing firmly into the ground.
7. Inhale, straighten the knee, keeping your hands in the same position, and pivot the feet to the opposite side.
8. Exhale, and repeat on the other side.

***Modifications:***

If you are unable to keep your hands up, you may bring them down between sides.

***Benefits:***

1. Opens the hips, and tones the pelvic floor.
2. Strengthens and stretches the legs and ankles
3. Stretches the groins, chest and lungs
4. Stimulates abdominal organs including pancreas
5. Increases stamina
6. Relieves backaches, especially through second trimester of pregnancy
7. Therapeutic for carpal tunnel syndrome, flat feet, infertility, osteoporosis, and sciatica

***Contraindications:***

1. Diarrhoea
2. High blood pressure
3. Neck problems: Don't turn your head to look over the front hand; continue to look straight ahead with both sides of the neck lengthened evenly.

# **UTTHITA PARSVAKONASANA - Extended Side Angle Posture**

Utthita -Extended  
Parsva - Side  
Kon – Angle

## **Variation 1**



## Variation 2



### *Steps:*

1. Stand with your feet together, weight spread evenly.
2. Step your right foot 4ft down the mat (a little more than the length of one leg). Turn the toes to face the back, bring your left foot in about 45 degrees. The right heel should be in line with the left heel.
3. Inhale, lift your arms so that they are parallel to the floor with your palms facing down. Lightly contract your thighs, and rotate slightly out so your kneecap is pointing to the short edge of your mat.
4. Exhale, pressing your left foot into the floor, bend your right knee over your right ankle, so that the shin is perpendicular to the floor. (If you find the knee is coming over the toes increase the distance between your feet until it comes directly above the ankle) and bring the right palm down to the outside of the right foot (Variation 1) if it does not reach place your forearm on top of the thigh (Variation 2)
5. Inhale, pull in your abdomen to prevent curving of the lower back, and lift the left arm up over your head creating a straight line with your leg, palm facing towards the ground.
6. Try to open your chest as much as possible bringing the top of the left arm over your ear. Keep the thighs contracted and look up to the left hand (if this hurts your neck you may look to the floor)

7. Stay here for 10 deep breaths
8. Inhale, straighten your right leg, bring the spine up keeping the arms horizontal.
9. Exhale, pivot your left foot out, your right foot in a little.
10. Repeat on the left side.

***Benefits:***

1. Strengthens your thighs, hips, knees, and ankles
2. Stretches your groin, back, spine, waist, ankles, and shoulders
3. Expands the chest and lungs, increasing lung capacity
4. Massages and stimulates your abdominal organs aiding in digestion
5. Increases endurance and stamina
6. Can reduce, constipation, Infertility, Lower backache, Osteoporosis, Sciatica, Menstrual discomfort.

***Contraindications:***

1. High or low blood pressure
2. Knee injuries
3. Headache
4. Neck problems

# VRIKSHASANA- Tree Posture

Vriksha - Tree



## ***Steps:***

1. Stand with the feet together weight spread evenly, arms by the side, chin parallel to the ground, thigh muscles and abdomen engaged.



2. Shift your weight to the left foot, keeping the inner big toe pressed firmly into the floor
3. Inhale, bend your right knee, hold onto the ankle, and place the sole against the inner left thigh, and bring the heel as close to the groin as possible.
4. Exhale, release the left hand.
5. Inhale, bring the left hand straight up, and then the right hand up, joining both hands, looking to the thumbs or any fixed point in front of you.
6. Stay for 30seconds to 1minute.
7. Exhale, release the hands and the right foot.
8. Inhale repeat on the other side.

***Modifications:***

If it is not possible to bring both hands up try just bringing the left hand up and keep holding the ankle with the right hand. Or bring your hands to your hips

***Benefits:***

1. Strengthens spine, thighs, knees, calves, and ankles.
2. Stretches the groins and inner thighs, chest and shoulders
3. Improves sense of balance
4. Relieves sciatica and flat feet
5. Improves concentration
6. Improves special awareness

***Contraindications:***

1. Headache
2. Insomnia
3. Low blood pressure
4. High blood pressure: Don't raise arms overhead

# PARSHVOTTANASANA- Intense Side Stretch Posture



### *Steps:*

1. Starting with the right foot about 3ft in front of your left, toes pointing to the front edge of your mat.
2. Turn your left foot about 60° and square your hips to the front (pulling your right hip back a little and pushing the left forwards)
3. Inhale, bring your hands to namaste/prayer position behind your back, open the shoulders and chest, looking up to the sky.
4. Keep your thigh muscles engaged.

5. Exhale, keeping the shoulders opened back, fold the body forwards from the hips. Reach the chin towards your shin. Keep working on pulling the right hip back so the hips stay parallel, and keep the spine long.
6. Stay here for 10 deep breaths, focussing on your body alignment.
7. Inhale, lift the body up, open out the shoulders looking up to the sky.
8. Exhale, twist the right foot in and the left foot out. Square the hips to the back of your mat.
9. Inhale, open the chest up towards the sky stretching up through the torso
10. Exhale folding down from the hips over the left leg, this time working on keeping the left hip pulled back.
11. Relaxing into the posture as you exhale reaching your chin towards your extended leg.
12. Inhale raise the body up
13. Exhale release the arms come back to standing.

***Modifications:***

If it is not possible to bring your hands to this position hold your wrists or elbows, trying to keep the chest and shoulders open

***Benefits:***

1. Stretches the hips and hamstrings
2. Lengthens the spine
3. Relaxes and opens the shoulders and neck
4. Stimulates digestive organs
5. Improves sense of balance
6. Calms the mind
7. Reduces symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome (if hands are in namaste/prayer posture)

***Contraindications:***

1. Headache
2. Insomnia

# PASCHIMOTTANASANA - Intense West Stretch

Paschim – West (Yoga would traditionally be practised facing the rising sun so the front of the body is referred to as east and the back is referred to as west)

Uttana – Intense

This posture is full of benefits, but also not free from risks. Especially people with weak backs, you need to listen to your body and modify the posture accordingly.



## *Steps:*

1. Start sitting on the floor with the legs outstretched. You may want to sit on a blanket for support. Relax the whole body.
2. Inhale, lengthen the abdomen and lift the chest.
3. Exhale, bend forwards from your hips (**NOT YOUR WAIST**) as if you were being pulled down from your navel. Keep the shoulders open (pulled away from the ears) and the head up.
4. Reach forwards and hold the big toes in a lock with the middle and index fingers, (if you cannot hold the toes, bring your hands to your ankles or shins).
5. Inhale, straighten the arms, lengthen the torso, bring the sternum forward.
6. Exhale bring the chest and abdomen down to the thighs and the elbows out to the sides.

7. Stay in this position for 5 deep breaths, allowing the muscles to relax as you exhale.
8. Unless you can lay comfortably with your chest on your legs keep the head up to make sure you don't round the lower back.
9. Focus on stretching the hamstrings rather than getting the head to the knees.

***Modifications:***

1. Hold onto the shins or ankles
2. Use a strap around the feet
3. For anyone with lower back pain Bend the knees and link the arms underneath so that the abdomen comes onto the thighs. Slowly straighten your legs as far as is comfortable with your body still on your legs.

***Benefits:***

1. Stretches the hamstrings, spine, shoulders and hip joints
2. Massages the pancreas (good for diabetics)
3. Improves digestion
4. Can relieve menstrual discomfort
5. Reduces headache, anxiety and reduces fatigue
6. Can be used to improve fertility
7. Balances high blood pressure
8. Reduces insomnia, and sinusitis
9. Reduces abdominal fats and helps metabolism

***Contraindications:***

1. Asthma
2. Back injuries (slipped disc etc.) If you have any back injuries and want to perform this posture do so under the guidance of a qualified teacher.



# JANU SIRSHASANA- Head to Knee Posture

Janu- Knee  
Sirsh – Head



## **Steps:**

1. Sit with legs out stretched and the heels and toes together.
2. Inhale, bend the right leg and place the sole of your foot on the left inner thigh bringing the heel a close as possible to the groin. Press the knee down towards the floor
3. Lengthen the spine and open the shoulder.
4. Exhale, slowly bend forward from your hips (**NOT YOUR WAIST**) as if you were being pulled down from your navel, sliding the hands down the right leg and hold onto of the foot.
5. Work on touching the chin to the shin bone.
6. Hold the position for about 30 seconds breathing deeply.
7. Inhale come back to the initial position and repeat on the other side.

## ***Modifications:***

1. Hold onto the ankle or shin, as far as you can reach
2. Use a strap around the extended foot.

## ***Benefits:***

1. Stretches the hamstrings and increases the flexibility in the hip joints.

2. Tones and massages the entire abdominal and pelvic region, including the liver, pancreas, spleen, kidneys and adrenal gland.
3. It helps to remove excess abdominal fat, and stimulates circulation to the nerves and muscles of the spine.

***Contraindications:***

1. Slipped disc
2. Sciatica
3. Herniated disc

# BHUJANGASANA-Cobra Posture

Bhujang – Cobra/Serpent/Snake



## *Steps:*

1. Lie down on your stomach, with your legs straight with toes pointing backwards, and the feet together.
2. Place the palms on the floor in front of the shoulders, with fingers spread and pointing forward. Keep the elbows tucked close to the body.
3. Inhale, press down into the palms (particularly the base of the index finger) and lift the chest off the floor, draw your shoulders down and away from the ears.
4. Make sure your pubic bone is still in contact with the ground. Arch your back further and look up.
5. Hold the posture 20 deep breaths.
6. Exhale, keeping the elbows tucked into the sides lower back down to the floor, repeat if desired.

## *Modifications:*

1. Keep the feet hip width apart.
2. You can leave the arms bent (as in photo) or straighten them if you are flexible.

## *Benefits:*



1. Strengthens the spine
2. Stretches chest and lungs, shoulders, and abdomen
3. Stimulates abdominal organs like liver and kidney, and pancreas.
4. Improves appetite, and alleviates constipation.
5. Soothes sciatica
6. Therapeutic for asthma as it deepens breathing.
7. Can reduce menstrual pain

***Contraindications:***

1. Back injury
2. Pregnancy
3. Hernia,
4. Intestinal tuberculosis
5. Hyperthyroidism
6. Carpal tunnel syndrome

# **TIRYAK BHUJANGASANA- Swaying Cobra posture**

Tiryak – Swaying

Bhujang – Cobra/Serpent/Snake



## ***Steps:***

1. Lie down on your stomach, with your legs straight with toes pointing backwards, and the feet together.
2. Place the palms on the floor in front of the shoulders, with fingers spread and pointing forward. Keep the elbows tucked close to the body.
3. Inhale, press down into the palms (particularly the index finger) and lift the chest off the floor, draw your shoulders down and away from the ears.
4. Make sure your pubic bone is still in contact with the ground.
5. Exhale, and twist the head to look over the right shoulder.
6. Hold the posture anywhere from 15 to 30 seconds, breathing deeply. Inhale, look to the centre,
7. Exhale, lower the chest onto the floor.
8. Inhale and repeat on the other side.

## ***Modifications:***

1. Keep the feet hip width apart.

2. You can leave the arms bent (as in photo) or straighten them if you are flexible.

***Benefits:***

1. Strengthens the spine
2. Stretches chest and lungs, shoulders, and abdomen
3. Stimulates abdominal organs like liver and kidney, and pancreas.
4. Improves appetite, and alleviates constipation.
5. Soothes sciatica
6. Therapeutic for asthma as it deepens breathing.
7. Can reduce menstrual pain

***Contraindications:***

1. Back injury
2. Headache
3. Pregnancy
4. Hernia,
5. Intestinal tuberculosis,
6. Hyperthyroidism
7. Carpal tunnel syndrome

# MAKARASANA – Crocodile / Dolphin Posture

Makar – Sea Monster



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## *Steps:*

### *Variation 1*

1. Lie on your stomach, lift your chest up and bring your elbows under your shoulders.
2. Place the palms on the cheeks and adjust the elbows so that your neck (cervical region) and the lower back (lumbar region) have got the same amount of pressure/stretch.
3. Stay here up to one minute, breathing deeply.

### *Variation 2*

1. From variation 1, bend your right knee trying to kick your hips with the heel, then straighten the right knee and repeat with the left. Keep alternating this motion for up to one minute while breathing deeply.

***Benefits:***

1. Gives relief from the back and shoulder pain.
2. Good for herniated disc, slip disc, disc prolapsed and spondylitis. (Its advised to remain in this asana for extended period of time as it encourages the vertebral column to resume its normal shape and release the compression of the nerves. You can do this posture while watching TV or reading)
3. It stretches the chest and strengthens the diaphragm, so it's a good posture for asthma.
4. Massages the abdominal organs.

***Contraindications:***

1. People with exaggerated lumbar curve.

# USHTRASANA - Camel Posture



## Ushtra - Camel

### *Steps:*

1. Start in a kneeling position, sitting on your heels, with your knees and feet touching
2. Exhale, lift your hips up, and bend backwards holding the right heel with right hand and left heel with left hand.
3. Inhale, push the hips forwards and let the head relax backwards, squeeze the buttocks and keep the chest lifted.
4. Hold the posture for 10 deep breaths
5. Exhale, release the hands, and bring the hips down onto the heels.

### *Modifications:*

1. Keep the toes tucked under
2. To reduce the intensity, spread the knees and ankles hip width apart
3. To increase the intensity, hold the right heel with left hand and left heel with right hand

***Benefits:***

1. Helps to increase lung capacity, and is beneficial for asthma sufferers.
2. Stimulates abdominal organs, including the pancreas.
3. Loosens the vertebrae and stimulates the spinal nerves.
4. Relieves backache, rounded back and drooping shoulders
5. Stimulates the thyroid gland, helping with metabolic issues.
6. Increases blood circulation to brain.
7. Improves digestion.

***Contraindications:***

1. Injuries related to neck, knees or back

# **KUMBHAKASANA - Dolphin Plank Posture**

Kumbhaka – Breath Retention

The English name comes from the dolphin like action of the dynamic version of this posture.



## ***Steps:***

1. Start kneeling on the floor,
2. Interlock your fingers and place the forearms on the floor, so that your hands and elbows make an equilateral triangle.
3. Shift the weight onto the arms, and step the feet back straightening your knees.
4. Your toes should be tucked under.
5. Make sure that your ankles, knees, hips, and shoulders are in one straight line.
6. Hold the position for about 30 seconds taking deep steady breaths.
7. Lower your knees and relax

## ***Modifications:***

You may want to start practicing this posture with your knees on the ground, but try to make sure not to sink or lift your hips out of line.

## ***Benefits:***

1. Calms the brain and helps relieve stress and mild depression
2. Strengthens the arms and legs, and core (especially the lower back),
3. Tones the abdominal muscles
4. Stretches the arches of the feet, hamstrings, and calves.
5. Helps prevent osteoporosis



***Contraindications:***

1. Shoulder injury
2. Neck injury.

## MARICHYASANA C

Marichi was the name of a Sage (Holy Man) from Indian legends. He was the son of Brahma (the creator)



### *Steps:*

1. Sit with your legs straight out in front of you, bend your right knee putting the foot on the floor, with the heel as close to the right sitting bone as possible. Keep the left leg strong, foot rotated slightly inward, toes pulled back.
2. Inhale, raise the left arm straight up, keep lengthening through the spine, as if there were a string pulling you up from the top of your head.
3. Exhaling, place your right hand onto the floor just behind your tail bone (bring the hand a little further away if this is not possible). Bring your left elbow to the outside of your right knee keeping the hand in the air. Use your elbow to pull yourself deeper into the twist. Remember to keep the spine long and the shoulders open. Gazing over your right shoulder
4. Breathe deeply and hold for 30 seconds to 1 minute.

5. Exhale release, reverse the legs and twist to the left for an equal length of time.

***Benefits:***

1. Aids digestion (the twisting action promotes elimination and stimulates the abdominal organs)
2. Opens up and relieves tension from the shoulders (good for office workers or people with sedentary jobs)
3. Good for diabetics, as it stimulates the pancreas
4. Strengthens and stretches the spine
5. Stretches the intercostal muscles (muscles between the ribs) helping you to breathe more deeply
6. Can relieve menstrual discomforts

***Contraindications:***

1. Diarrhoea
2. Serious back or spine injury
3. High blood pressure
4. Migraine/Headache

# SHASHANKASANA - Hare Posture

This is a resting posture for relaxing the whole body.



## ***Steps:***

1. Start kneeling on the floor, with your toes pointing back
2. Exhale, and relax your torso forward over the thighs.
3. Stretch your arms out in front of you like the ears of a hare

## ***Modifications:***

Separate the knees, particularly if you find that the posture is squashing you abdomen or restricting breathing

## ***Benefits:***

1. Relaxation of the body
2. Counter to backward bending postures
3. Calming the mind

## ***Contraindications:***

Discomfort - As these postures are supposed to be relaxing for the body, if you are finding discomfort or any difficulty in breathing, move to a different position where you can relax.

# SUPTA PAWANMUKTASANA - Reclining Wind Release Posture

Supta – Reclining/ Sleeping

Pawan - Wind

Mukta - Release



## *Steps:*

### *Variation 1*

1. Lie down on your back with your hands by the side of the body.
2. Exhale, bend your right knee, interlock your fingers around the right shin bone, and try to pull the knee as close to the chest as possible. (It's

important to start with right leg because it presses the ascending colon and then the left leg which presses the left colon and hence relieving from gas and constipation)

3. Take a deep Inhale
4. Exhale, lift your head and shoulders up bringing the nose to the knee.
5. Keep the left leg straight pulling the toes back.
6. Remain in this final position for 30 seconds breathing deeply
7. Exhale, come back down slowly and straighten the leg
8. Repeat with the left leg.

### ***Variation 2***

1. Lie down on your back with your hands by the sides of the body.
2. Exhale, bend both your knees and bring them close to the chest.
3. Inhale, interlock your fingers around the shin bones just below the knees.
4. Exhale, lift your head and shoulders up to bring the nose to the knees.
5. Remain in this position for 30 seconds breathing deeply
6. Exhale, release the posture.

### ***Benefits:***

1. It massages the pelvic muscles and the reproductive organs; it can therefore help with impotence, sterility and menstrual problems
2. It strengthens the lower back and loosens the vertebrae.
3. Releases gas

### ***Contraindications:***

1. High blood pressure.
2. Sciatica,
3. Slipped disc.

# SUPTA HASTA PADANGUSHTASANA - Reclining Hand to Big Toe Posture

Supta – Reclining/ Sleeping

Hasta - Hand

Pada - Foot

Angust – Big toe



## *Steps:*

1. Start lying on your back with your legs stretched out, and arms by your sides, you may put a thin cushion or folded blanket under your head to increase comfort.
2. Exhale, bend your right knee, bringing it close to the chest. Grasp the big toe between the middle and index fingers of the right hand. Keep pushing your left heel away from the body with the leg strong.
3. Inhale, raise your right leg up, and straighten it, try to keep the shoulders on the ground (if this is not possible use a belt or strap around your foot).
4. Hold the posture breathing deeply, deepening the stretch as you exhale
5. To exit exhale and release the foot, lowering it slowly to the ground,
6. Repeat with the left leg

## *Modifications:*

1. If you don't yet have the flexibility to perform the full posture, use a belt/strap around your foot as mentioned above
2. Keep the knee slightly bent

***Benefits:***

1. Opens the hips
2. Improves digestion and reduces constipation
3. Lengthens the hamstring muscles
4. Releases gas
5. Sciatica

***Contraindications:***

1. Diarrhoea
2. High blood pressure, place a pillow under the head
3. Headache/ migraine



# **PARIVRTTA SUPTA HASTA PADANGUSHTASANA - Revolved Reclining Hand to Big Toe Posture**

Parivrtta - Revolving  
Supta – Reclining/ Sleeping  
Hasta - Hand  
Pada - Foot  
Angus – Big toe



## ***Steps:***

1. Start with lying down on your back and spread your arms by the side of the body.
2. Bend your right knee and hold the right big toe with the left hand.

3. Turn towards your left and try to straighten your knee (don't worry if it doesn't straighten completely).
4. Spread your right arm on the ground perpendicular to the body, palm facing up.
5. Work on trying to bring your right shoulder and right arm on the ground. Stay in this posture for 30 seconds breathing deep.
6. Inhale, bend your knee, bring it back to the centre.
7. Exhale, straighten the knee. Repeat the same on the other side.

***Modifications:***

1. If you don't yet have the flexibility to perform the full posture
2. Use a belt/strap around your foot as mentioned above
3. Keep the knee slightly bent
4. Hold round the back of the knee/calf instead of the toes

***Benefits:***

1. It makes hip joints flexible.
2. Improves digestion and reduces constipation
3. Lengthens the hamstring muscles
4. Releases gas
5. Relieves lower back pain

***Contraindications:***

1. Diarrhoea
2. High blood pressure, place a pillow under the head
3. Headache/ migraine

# **SALAMBA SARVANGASANA - Supported Shoulder Stand**

Salamba – Support  
Sarv – All  
Anga – Limb  
Asana – Posture



***Steps:***

1. Lie on your back with your arms by the sides of your body (palms down)
2. Inhale, pressing your hands into the floor, lift your legs up perpendicular to your body (so your toes are pointing to the ceiling) -if you need to bend the knees to do this that is fine-
3. Exhale, bring the legs behind your head (bend the knees if you need to) so that the back and hips come up off the floor.
4. Bend the elbows (keeping them as close to each other as possible) and place the hands on the back.
5. Inhale, raise the legs directly overhead, supporting the back with the arms and hands. Keep the feet together and the toes pointing to the ceiling. (You may not have a completely straight body to begin with, but work on bringing your hands further down your back to allow you to get more lift)
6. Relax your throat and tongue, and open your shoulders back so that they are taking the weight and not the top of your spine. Squeeze your thighs together and engage you abdominal muscles.
7. Hold for as long as your feel comfortable and can breathe properly.
8. Exhale, bring the feet behind the head again (bend the knees if necessary)
9. Inhale, bring the arms down to the side of the body, using the hands as breaks.
10. Exhale, SLOWLY roll the back down onto your mat, bringing the legs down last

***Modifications:***

1. Place a folded blanket or cushion under your neck
2. Practice near a wall

***Benefits:***

1. Stretches the shoulders and neck
2. Tones the legs, buttocks, and abdomen
3. Regulates metabolism digestion (if it is too slow OR too fast)
4. Calms the brain and helps to relieve stress and mild depression
5. Stimulates the thyroid (T3 and T4 hormones) helping with weight issues.

6. Helps relieve the symptoms of menopause
7. Reduces fatigue and alleviates insomnia
8. Helps to reduce varicose veins
9. Alleviates chronic headaches and migraines
10. Can be used to treat asthma, infertility, and sinusitis

***Contraindications:***

1. Diarrhoea
2. Headache
3. High blood pressure (just come to 1/2 shoulder stand with the hands supporting the hips not the upper back)
4. Menstruation (just bring the legs perpendicular to the floor, don't lift the hips)
5. Neck injury
6. Pregnancy: If experienced with this posture, can continue to practice it late into pregnancy. Don't take up the practice of Sarvangasana after you become pregnant.
7. Glaucoma

# SHAVA UDARAKARSHANASANA - Universal Spinal Twist

Shava – Sleeping/Corpse

Udar – Torso

Arkashan – Twist



## ***Steps:***

1. Start lying on your back
2. Exhale, bend your right knee and place the right sole on the left knee, keeping the left leg extended.
3. Inhale, bring your left hand onto right knee, and spread your right arm out perpendicular to your body, palm facing down.
4. Exhale, and bring the right knee towards the floor on the left side of the body. Making sure your shoulders stay on the floor.
5. Turn the head and look to the right hand.
6. Breathe deeply, relaxing into the posture, focussing on sinking your shoulders into the floor. Allow yourself to stay here for some time
7. Inhale, lift the right leg up
8. Exhale, extend and bring your arms to your sides
9. Repeat with the opposite leg

## ***Benefits:***

1. Relieves pain from the lower back, waist, and pelvic area.

2. Can reduce abdominal fat
3. Helps to realign hips
4. Relaxes spinal tension

***Contraindications:***

Avoid this posture if it causes pain.

# SHAVASANA – Corpse Posture

Shava – Corpse/Sleeping





***Steps:***

1. Lie down on your back with your feet a little wider than hips width apart.
2. Relax the ankles
3. Adjust the spine and neck so they are straight.
4. Leave the palms facing upwards.
5. Take the tongue away from the top of the mouth.
6. Stay in this posture for 5 – 10 minutes, completely relaxing your body, and more importantly your mind. Remain aware and awake, but try to keep the body and mind still. Keep your attention on your breath.

## **Part II – Pranayama and Kriya**

# Pranayama

So we have gone through a sequence of asana's (postures), but we also wanted to include a few other techniques that can help to regulate body functions.

Unless otherwise stated these practices are best done in the morning before food and after going to the toilet.

In the pranayama exercises keep the mouth closed and breathe through the nose.

## *Pranayama*

Prana - is the life force or vital energy that, according to yoga exists in all things (including your body).

Ayama - is defined as extension or expansion.

The techniques we use to expand this energy mostly consist of controlling the breath, as breath and prana are very closely linked although not completely the same thing. These practices provide the bridge between the body and the mind. Learning to control the breath will help you to control the mind, bringing calmness in times of stress and energy when you are feeling lethargic.

We have chosen two practices that can be particularly helpful for people suffering with diabetes, although we do advise starting the initial practice under the guidance of a qualified teacher.

## *Breath Awareness*

Before you begin try to become aware of your natural breathing, listen to hear for irregularities. Which part of your body moves is it just your chest? your Chest and Abdomen or just your abdomen.

Feel the cool air coming into your nose as you inhale and warm as you exhale.

# Kapalabhati

Kapalabhati - Shining Skull or frontal lobe cleansing

Kapala - Skull

Bhati - Shining

This Practice involves active exhalation and passive inhalation.

## *Technique*

Sit in a comfortable position either on the floor or a chair making sure the spine is erect and straight

Close your eyes

Exhale and try to squeeze all of the air out of your lungs, then take a deep inhale.

Contract the abdominal muscles to give a short forceful exhalation (as if you were blowing your nose), and repeat for 10 'pumps' before taking a normal breath.

Allow the breath to return to the natural state, this completes one round.

Complete three rounds.

Over time you can increase the number of 'pumps' in each round.

The inhalation should happen automatically by the movement of your diaphragm do not force it (imagine a bicycle pump and the sound it makes as you push the air out and no sound as the air comes in).

## *Benefits:*

1. Increases metabolism
2. Use as a treatment for bronchial asthma
3. Reduces anaemia
4. Clears mucous from the system
5. Activates the small intestine, adrenals and pancreas
6. Brings a feeling of alertness and clarity to the mind
7. Helps to relieve chronic constipation

## *Contraindications:*

1. (Do not practice on a full stomach)
2. Pregnancy
3. Recent surgery
4. Incontinence
5. Stomach Ulcers
6. Hernia

# Nadishodhana

Nadi Shodana - Nerve Purification

Nadis - this is the network that the prana moves through in our bodies it can be compared to the nervous system in western medicine

Shodana - Purifying

## ***Technique:***

Sit in any comfortable posture with the spine straight. Left hand rests on the knee, right hand comes into Vishnu Mudra (middle and index fingers are folded towards the palm, as shown in the photo.)



The right thumb is used to close the right nostril and the ring and little fingers are used to close the left nostril.

Close your right nostril with the thumb and inhale through the left nostril.

Release the thumb, close the left nostril with the ring and little fingers, and exhale through the right nostril.

Then inhale through the right nostril press the thumb down lift the fingers and exhale through the left. This is one round

***Stage one:*** Keep the inhalation and exhalation the same length, starting with 5 seconds and increasing up to 20, until you can do this with ease.

***Stage two:*** Now extend the exhale so it is twice as long as the inhale.

Start with inhaling for 5 and exhale for 10seconds and increase this up to 15 and 30

## ***Benefits:***

1. The body temperature is maintained
2. Helps to bring balance in the minds and body
3. Brings down the heart rate
4. Treatment for High Blood Pressure

***Contraindications:***

1. Cold
2. Flu
3. Fever
4. Anyone with heart problems should only do stage one

# Agnisar Kriya

AgnisarKriya  
Agni – Fire  
Sar – Essence  
Kriya – Action

The main purpose of Agnisar is to boost the metabolism and ensure proper functioning of all of the abdominal organs. Just a 5 minute daily practice can bring a big change in the body. This comes under the category of cleansing techniques.

A quick note about Bandha's before starting this practice.

The Sanskrit word Bandha means hold, tighten or lock. We use these in yoga to bring power to the body and change the direction of energy within our bodies.

There are four Bandhas:

Jalandhara (chin) – Bringing the chin into the chest

Moola (root) – Lifting of particular muscles in the pelvic floor (perineum in men and opening of the cervix in women)

Uddiyana (flying) – tensing and contraction of the lower abdominals (below the navel) similar to the feeling when you cough

Maha (Combination of all three).

## ***Technique:***

For Agnisar Kriya we will be using JalandharaBandha.

Sit in a comfortable position (here we demonstrating Bhadrasana soles facing up and the big toes touching), place the hands on the knees, and hunch the shoulders up.

Inhale deeply and retain the breath. While holding the breath bend your head forward and try to touch the chin to the chest (JalandharaBandha).

Pull the abdomen in (as if with a vacuum in the chest, bringing it as far in as possible) then relax the abdomen. Repeat 10 times before taking a breath.

Inhale, relax the shoulders and release the lock

Gradually increase up to 50 repetitions







***Benefits:***

1. Improves digestion, and regulates the appetite.
2. Massages and strengthens the abdominal organs increasing the blood flow to the pancreas, liver etc.
3. Increases metabolism.

***Contraindications:***

1. High Blood Pressure
2. Heart Disease
3. Acute duodenal peptic ulcers
4. Over active thyroid
5. Chronic Diarrhoea



**Disclaimer:** This book is not intended as a substitute for the medical advice of physicians. The reader should regularly consult a physician in matters relating to his/her health and particularly with respect to any symptoms that may require diagnosis or medical attention.

We also have a website where we have instructions for many other yoga postures, along with information about us, and posts on healthy living.

<http://pranayoga.co.in/>

If you have any suggestions feel free to write to us at  
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