

CLASSICAL YOGA

Asana & Pranayama



Nepal Yoga
Academy



Enhance Your
Practice
with this Book

108 Asanas with over 270 Variations

Dr. Chintamani Gautam, Ph.D. in Yoga





Nepal *Yoga*
Academy



Government of Nepal

Hon. Girirajmani Pokharel
Minister of Education,
Science and Technology



**Ministry of Education,
Science and Technology**
Singhadurbar, Kathmandu, Nepal

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Message

Nepal withholds rich traditions and philosophy having ancient origins linked with human development and civilization, much of which are relevant even in modern times. I believe, our ancestors gave the world profound wisdom of Vedas and Upanishads, yoga and Ayurveda, grammar, and linguistics. The educational and intellectual discourses around the world are guided by our profound ancient knowledge and values of rich eastern philosophy of education. Yoga to me is a most precious gift given by the nature, decrypted and popularized by our ancestors since ancient time, for human body and mind to get connected with nature throughout the life. It is the practice of uniting the mind and body in order to achieve the perfect harmony between both. It helps a person to get higher level of consciousness by getting control over the body in all aspects like physically, mentally, socially and intellectually. In recent times Yoga has been widely accepted and popular globally but as modern yoga has spread around the world and many books on it being published globally, I feel authors have sometimes departed from the classical principles of yoga.

I am very happy that Dr. Chintamani's new book on Yoga "Classical Yoga: Asana and Pranayama" is being published and I believe this book will be useful amongst readers to consolidate in their lifestyle fundamental principles of yoga. I would also like to thank and congratulate one of Nepal's foremost modern students of yoga, Dr. Chintamani on his new book on Yoga. I hope that this book allows the world to gain from the long history of yoga developed here in the Himalayan region. Hopefully, this book will provide information for an art of living that goes far beyond only physical exercise too. I am always looking for ways to add yoga, Ayurveda, and ancient healing systems to our schools and our whole society, so that we can apply this knowledge to our lives to make society healthy and prosperous. I believe that spreading yoga as much as possible is a key aspect for creating the most happy and harmonious society possible, I believe this book will serve these purpose too.

Finally, I would like to express my best wishes to the writer and readers of this book for a healthier life and harmonious society.

Girirajmani Pokharel
Minister
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.



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Disclaimer

This book is not meant to be, nor should it be, used to diagnose or treat medical conditions. For diagnosis or treatment of any medical problem, consult a physician. The author cannot be held responsible for any injuries or problems occurring from the practices described herein. The author and publisher have used their knowledge to the best of their abilities in preparing this book, however, they make no guarantees as to the effects of yogic principles on health and well-being.

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For inquiries contact:
yogichintamani@gmail.com

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Editor: Mathew Docherty
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FOREWORD

Yoga is an individual journey into oneself. There is no competition, judgement, or ego. I find myself reminding this to my students quite often. Many of them arrive with preconceived notions of what yoga is (a sequence of asanas) and how to practice each posture (forcing the body into the most advanced variation possible). In modern yoga, there are many different styles of asanas, which focus more on flow and flexibility rather than understanding safety and alignment. The vast amount of online content has contributed to the information overload. These confusions and biases need to be addressed. The goal of this book is simple: to provide the most effective way to safely practice asanas.

My personal journey into yoga began when I was 17 years old, searching for a cure for specific health issues I had. Initially, I focused on the physical aspects of the practice (asanas), learning autodidactically from books in order to heal myself. However, over time I became aware of the magnitude of such a comprehensive holistic approach, which has shaped my teaching as well as transformed my life.

Over the span of three years, I combined more than two decades of my personal teaching experience, theoretical knowledge, practice and students' observations to compile this guide book. I have taught students of a wide range of ages, health conditions, and levels of practice. In my personal research, I have a special interest in asanas for different diseases and physical issues. For the past ten years, I have also led teacher training courses with people from all over the world. The most challenging part in writing this book was to gather different perspectives and figure out

what the easiest and most effective method of teaching each posture is. The constant feedback loop from my students allowed me to do this. The writing process has in turn made my teaching more systematic.

The intention of this first edition is to be a practical guide, which everyone could easily understand and implement in their daily practice and instruction. The tone is conversational. Therefore, the language is simplified. Certain articles and pronouns have been omitted. The vocabulary is meant to be accessible to practitioners with variable levels of English comprehension.

The postures in this book are introduced to the practitioner in a workshop format with instructions given for each asana: how to get in and out of the posture safely, how to breathe effectively, tips for alignment and deepening the posture, modifications and advanced variations, safety precautions, and physical/therapeutic benefits. The aim of this book is to be an accessible introduction for beginners, an instructive guide for intermediate-level practitioners, and a thorough reference source for yoga teachers. The book does not cover flow or sequencing techniques because they are not found in classical yoga. However, the methods learned here are directly applicable to other styles of modern yoga. While primarily asana-based, brief sections on pranayama and cleansing techniques have also been included. Before beginning the practice, please read the General Rules of Asana Practice section carefully.

Have a joyful yoga journey! Namaste.

EDITOR'S NOTE

It is from within that the mind is quieted; by restraining the senses and removing expectations a window of peace can be found. This is the goal of yoga.

With this book, Dr. Chintamani has created a practical guide to the physical practices of yoga, written in an accessible and understandable manner. It takes the reader slowly and safely, with great illustration and explanation, through the major asana and pranayama practices, therefore, suitable for beginner and advanced student alike. This book beautifully combines step-by-step instructions, clear illustrations, benefits, precautions and therapeutic benefits of each asana, as well as the Sanskrit meanings and pronunciations.

I first met Dr. Chintamani, affectionately known among his students as Guruji, in 2017 when I visited his Nepal Yoga Retreat. I found his classical yoga style accessible which, combined with his deep philosophical understanding and knowledge of the ancient Vedic texts as well as his personal connection toward all of his students, made for an unforgettable experience. He has created a caring community in Nepal which has imparted a deep understanding of the complex components of yoga to thousands of students spanning the globe. In this

role as an editor, I am honoured to have been given the opportunity to further study and work with Guruji.

Guruji is a highly qualified and experienced yoga philosopher and teacher. Not only does he instruct his students, he leads by example through a wealth of knowledge and exemplary practice. Additionally, his nurturing and supportive system is deeply valued by all of his students. His holistic approach to the practice and study of yoga immediately inspired me, as, not only do the classes focus on the classical aspects, such as pranayama and asana, but also bring yoga off the mat, allowing the philosophical aspects to be implemented into everyday life. It is only when yoga is approached in such a holistic manner that it can have a true and long-lasting effect.

Mathew Docherty



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General Rules of Asana Practice

Basic considerations before you begin

Basic Considerations

- Bathing before practice helps to avoid the risks of slipping by removing any oils from the hands and feet, and increases blood circulation. Bathing about 20 minutes both before and after practice refreshes the body and mind. It is better to take a quick, cold shower after practice.
- The best time for asana practice is auspicious dawn (an hour before and an hour after sunrise) or late in the evening (an hour before and an hour after sunset) to help energize the body and mind for the day, or calm down and prepare for rest.
- Practice should be done in a clean place with good air circulation, free from insects, and noise.
- Wear comfortable, moisture wicking (sweat absorbing) clothes that allow your body to move freely for practicing yoga.
- Do not practice asana on a bare floor. Always use a folded blanket/ yoga mat/thick bed sheet for yoga practice.
- Before you start asanas/pranayama/ meditation, clear your nostrils and throat of all mucus.
- If you are new to the practice, do so under the supervision of an experienced teacher to learn how to do the poses safely and effectively.
- Asana names – Classical yogic books give a relatively concise list of traditional poses. We now have thousands of poses from various modern gurus. Many poses have multiple names in either Sanskrit or

English. We benefit from doing the poses, and not from the names, so we should not worry or focus too much on knowing the correct name for each pose.

Ego/Mental Preparation

- Be mindful and observant of your mood during practice. Avoid feelings of negativity toward a particular pose, peer, or teacher. These feelings only distract your focus from your practice and progress.
- Though ego is important to achieving the goals of yoga, we try to have as little ego as possible while practicing poses. Avoid feeling competitive with others or yourself. Don't have expectations of what you should be capable of, or how quickly you should progress. Yoga is a lifelong practice. Be patient. Progress takes time.

Food/Digestion

- Drinking warm water before practicing is beneficial for removing lactic acid, toxins, and waste products from your system.
- Before starting practice, the bladder and bowels should be emptied if possible. However, a cup of tea, coffee, or milk can help energize the body and mind before practice.
- Fasting – when doing short term fasting, performing poses is very good while drinking a lot of water to remove toxins/waste products from your

body. When doing long term fasting, be careful with more intense, high energy, or balancing poses which require more energy, and focus more on stretching/relaxing poses to conserve energy.

- Food takes around 3 hours to pass from the stomach after eating. Therefore, it is only recommended to practice 3 hours after eating. When practicing within 3 hours of eating, be extra cautious with any abdominal compression/intense stretching.
- If you are experiencing digestive issues such as indigestion, constipation, and diarrhea, be extra careful with poses that compress or stretch the core.

Health Issues/Injuries

- If you have heart problems, neck or spinal injuries, arthritis, hernia, or other serious physical problems, consult your doctor before trying new and challenging poses. Practice with the supervision of an experienced yoga teacher. If you have a neck injury, be particularly careful with poses that activate or stretch the upper back or involve bending/rotating the neck.
- If you have asthma, be extra cautious with pranayama or restrict poses that can lead to intense breathing, or intense balancing poses where you may feel short of breath.
- If you have insomnia, be extra

cautious with intense balancing poses or poses that may be tiring.

- When doing any of the poses, it is not safe if you feel extreme strain/compression/pain/cramps. Be careful when you are new to a pose. When you are experienced, be aware of your physical limits and ensure that you are doing the pose properly while distributing tension/strain as evenly as possible.
- If you have a fever, it is best to avoid practicing asana, especially intense poses that increase breathing, blood circulation, or heat in the body. Try cooling Pranayamas (Sheetali and Sheetkari), relaxation techniques like Yoga Nidra, meditation, and Shavasana.
- If you have a migraine, avoid poses that tend to increase blood pressure or blood flow to the head, including highly strenuous and inversion poses.
- Surgery can take many months to fully recover from, so be careful while practicing up to a year afterwards (consult your doctor). Be extra cautious when you feel pain/stretching in the area that was operated on. During this time, try to focus on poses that don't involve the area that was operated on.
- Though many poses require caution for those with high or low blood pressure, if it is maintained and under control through medications or other means, these precautions can be ignored.
- In the Precaution section of each pose, 'Avoid' and 'Be careful' are general suggestions, especially for new practitioners. However, everyone's 'body' is different, and what is difficult for some people (even with the same ailments) is easier for others. So be extra cautious when trying a pose for the first time. The precaution and general benefits for each pose are not a complete list. Each practitioner needs to be aware of his own experiences of what types of poses are risky for him, and what benefits he gets from each pose.

Pregnancy/Menstruation

- If you are pregnant, you should generally avoid poses that involve compression or intense stretching of the abdomen, as well as inversion poses. You should be extra cautious by practicing with an experienced yoga teacher during Pranayama, clenching techniques, and challenging poses. Generally, be careful in the first trimester, avoid one-leg balancing poses and inversion poses particularly in the second and third trimesters.
- Be extra cautious when performing yoga while menstruating. Use your past experiences to guide your asana choices.

Performing Poses

- Whenever you perform poses with intense stretches or ones that strongly activate a muscle group, always follow up with an appropriate counter pose to balance out the body. For inversion poses, Tadasana is a good choice for a simple counter pose.
- Before fully getting into many poses, we hold our posture half-way for a few moments to allow time for muscles/tendons/fascia to fully adjust before bending/stretching/arching further. This also allows time to calm the mind and reflexes, and to warm up.
- Follow the specific instructions of how to get into, hold, and come out of each posture to provide general guidelines of how to perform the posture safely and effectively. Beginners should follow these instructions; however, experienced practitioners are free to modify as needed, according to their anatomical structure and physical capabilities.
- It is recommended to hold many poses for around 30 seconds, but more or less than 30 seconds is ok. Don't force yourself to hold longer than what is safe for you, and if you are familiar with a pose, you are

free to hold for longer. Generally, it is advised not to hold any stretch for more than 2 minutes at a time to avoid potential issues with nerves, tendons, and blood vessels. Experienced practitioners that have trained themselves to hold a position for longer are generally safe because of their training.

- When practicing poses, avoid any tension or activation of muscles that are unrelated to the pose. Particularly, keep the face relaxed.
- It is easier to balance in many poses by focusing your gaze on a fixed point. When you are experienced and stable, you can practice with the eyes closed.
- Relax for at least 10 to 15 seconds after each pose to release tension and allow blood to circulate throughout the body. After finishing your practice, lie down in Shavasana for 10 to 15 minutes to release any tension left in the mind and body.
- It is advised to perform more strengthening poses in the morning when you are fresh and full of energy. Performing more stretching and balancing poses is good in the evening to refocus the mind, and to release lactic acid/waste products from your muscular system after a day of being physically active or a long day of sitting at the office. Stretching/balancing poses in the evening also help prepare you for deep sleep.

Benefits of stretching

- Stretching improves blood flow, which increases the supply of nutrients throughout the body, helps release lactic acid from the muscles, and move toxins and waste products out of the body through the lymphatic system. Stretching also improves the range of motion that your muscles can safely move through, helps release areas of tension in your fascia (connective tissue), and helps realign the body. It improves the elasticity of your veins and nerves, too.

- While practicing a pose, focus your mind on affected areas of the body to develop more stability, control, strength, flexibility, and coordination.

Using Props

- In traditional yoga, there is no use of props. As an individual practice, yoga is about working from your current abilities and improving at your own pace, therefore avoid comparison and competitiveness. Because of this, we don't recommend relying on props. If a prop is necessary to perform a particular pose, you may want to practice a similar pose for now; or ask yourself whether or not you need to be able to do that particular pose. However, if a prop for a particular pose really feels necessary to make progress or avoid injury, don't hesitate to use one.

Coordinating Breath with Poses

- There are two main rules for when to inhale/exhale in asanas:

Breathing Rule 1: Exhale whenever you are contracting the chest or abdominal region. Inhale whenever you are opening/expanding these regions.

Breathing Rule 2: Inhale whenever you are performing a pose against gravity. Exhale whenever you are performing a pose in the same direction as gravity. Example: Inhaling while raising your arms overhead while standing/sitting upright, or while lifting your hips in Kandasana; exhaling while lowering your body back to the floor from Dhanurasana.

- Focus on inhaling and exhaling ("Inhale. Exhaling, stretch further") at key stages of poses to help maintain core strength, control, safety, balance, mental focus, and prevent injury.

- For all the poses, try to breathe only through the nose. Avoid breathing through the mouth, even for exhalation.
- Prioritize Rule 1 over Rule 2.

Advanced Poses

- Many advanced poses reference simpler poses. Advanced poses should only be done by experienced practitioners. We assume that they are already familiar with simpler poses, and how to do them appropriately.
- Because advanced poses already require you to be an experienced practitioner who is physically capable, no modifications are given for most of these poses.
- Before doing more advanced poses, simpler poses should always be mastered first. Beginners should always start with simple poses and work their way toward more advanced/complex poses. Advanced poses are best practiced with an experienced teacher.



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Relaxation Poses

In classical styles of asana, relaxation is required after each posture. This is an essential part of every asana session and relaxation poses should be performed before, during and after sessions in order to give the body the rest it needs.

They aid the body in recovering from muscle strain. This in turn allows blood and lymphatic fluids

to flow easily, normal breathing to resume and heart rate to decrease. Even when at rest you may still be holding tension so you need to consciously release contraction of the muscles in order to truly relax. This is accomplished through the mindful practice of the resting asanas. These poses can be used alone or in combination with other

counter poses or tension relieving postures. An example would be to lay on your back and hug the knees into the chest. Then, rock along and around the spine, or perform Ananda Balasana (Happy Baby Pose) before going into Shavasana after a particularly challenging sequence of asanas.

01

Shavasana Corpse Pose



TECHNIQUE:

Technique: Lay on your back with the feet slightly wider than hip distance. Relax the ankles and allow the toes to fall to the sides. Arms slightly away from the sides with palms up and fingers relaxed. Spine and head should be straight with shoulder blades flat on the floor. Scan the body for tension

and make necessary adjustments to release. Take slow deep breaths. To release: Wiggle the fingers and toes bring the arms overhead and stretch. Exhale, bend the knees and roll to the left side. Inhale and use the hands to press up into a seated position.

VARIATION

Blankets and bolsters may be used under the low back or knees. Blankets can be used for warmth.

BENEFITS

- Calms the brain and helps relieve stress and mild depression
- Relaxes the body
- Reduces headache, fatigue and insomnia
- Helps lower blood pressure

PRECAUTIONS

If you suffer from back injury or pain use lower back support. Pregnant women after the first trimester should avoid this posture.

02

Shishu Asana

Baby Pose



TECHNIQUE:

Lie on your stomach. Extend the left arm straight along the left side. Stretch the right arm and bend the elbow at 90 degrees. Place the palm facing

down in front of the face. Extend the right leg about 90 degrees with the knee slightly bent. Take slow deep breaths.

VARIATION

Practice alternately on both sides.

BENEFITS

- Relieves lower back tension
- Relaxes the body

PRECAUTIONS

Not suitable during pregnancy.



03

Makarāsana

Crocodile Pose



TECHNIQUE:

Lie on your stomach with feet slightly apart and relaxed. Stack your arms under your head,

holding your elbows, and allow the forehead to rest on the forearm. Take slow deep breaths and relax.

VARIATION

Raise the head and shoulders and rest the chin in the palms with elbows on the floor.

BENEFITS

- Reduces stress and tension
- Promotes sleep
- Regulates blood pressure
- Reduces anxiety

PRECAUTIONS

Not suitable during pregnancy.

04

Sthirasana Needle Pose



SITTING TECHNIQUE:

Sit with legs outstretched and feet greater than hip width apart, arms straight behind you, holding your torso up. Rest your head naturally to one side.

BENEFITS

- Relaxes the body
- Regulates blood pressure

PRECAUTIONS

Be careful if you suffer from any shoulder pain.



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STANDING TECHNIQUE:

Stand straight with feet hip width apart. Spine straight and chin parallel to the floor. Interlock the fingers or hold the left wrist with the right hand with straight arms. Close the eyes and take slow deep breaths.

VARIATION

Hold right wrist with left hand. Hands may be held at the sides with palms facing forward.

BENEFITS

- Relaxes the body
- Relieves tension



SURYA NAMASKARA

Salutation to the Sun

Surya Namaskara, also known in English as Sun Salutation, (lit. salute to the sun) is a well-known sequence of asanas.

These series of movements and asanas can be practiced with varying levels of awareness, ranging from physical exercise to complete sadhana, which incorporates asana, pranayama, mantra and chakra meditation.

Without the Sun, there will be no life on Earth. Surya Namaskara is a series of twelve physical postures and breath synchronization. These alternating backward and forward bending postures flex and stretch the spinal column through its maximum range, giving a deep stretch to the whole body. Often, after a hard day's work, we just flop down on the couch "apparently" relaxing our bodies -

but in reality not rejuvenating them. The stagnant energies remain locked up and the organs remain de-oxygenated to a large extent. Surya Namaskara has a profound effect on detoxifying the organs through copious oxygenation, and it has a deeper relaxing effect. Surya Namaskara or Sun Salutation is an ancient technique of paying respect or expressing gratitude to the Sun that is the activating source of all forms of life on the planet. Just knowing how to do Surya Namaskara is not enough. It is also important to understand the science behind this ancient technique, because a deeper understanding will bring forth the right outlook and approach towards this sacred and powerful yogic technique.



Why start the day with Surya Namaskara?

Surya Namaskara is a set of twelve postures, preferably to be performed at sunrise. The regular practice of Surya Namaskara improves blood circulation throughout the body, maintains health, and helps one remain disease-free. There are numerous benefits from the practice for the heart, liver, intestine, stomach, chest, throat and legs. From head to toe, every part of the body is greatly benefitted by incorporating this routine into your daily life, which is why it is highly recommended by all yoga experts. These postures can be used as a link between warm-ups and asanas and can be performed at any time on an empty stomach. However, morning time is considered to be the best for practicing Surya Namaskara as it revitalizes the body and refreshes the mind, preparing us to take on all tasks of the day. If performed in the afternoon, it energizes the body instantly and if practiced at dusk, it helps you unwind. When performed at a fast pace, Surya Namaskara is an excellent cardiovascular workout and a good way to lose weight.

SURYA NAMASKARA SEQUENCE

01

Pranamasana/Namaskarasana

Prayer Pose

Stand straight with feet together. Inhaling, bring arms up and exhaling bring the palms together in front of the chest. Concentrate on standing straight, steady, and in a prayerful attitude. This posture helps to induce a state of introspection, relaxation and calmness. It activates the anahata chakra. This is a pose where one meditates on the Sun God.



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02

Hastottanasana/Urdhva Namaskarasana

Raised Arms Pose

Inhaling, stretch both arms above the head, palms together facing inward. Arch the back and elongate the whole body. Try and reach as high as you can to get a better stretch. This posture stretches the chest and the abdomen and lifts the Prana (energy) to the upper parts of the body, propelled by inhalation. It helps to stretch the whole body. It aids to correct the spinal arch and also improves the integrity of the spine.



03

Padahastasana

Hand to Foot Pose

Exhaling, bend the body forward and down, keeping the spine straight. Avoid collapsing the chest or "over-rounding" the upper back. Keep the legs straight and perpendicular to the ground. The knees may be bent a little if needed. This posture massages the abdominal organs, especially the liver, kidneys, pancreas, adrenals, uterus and ovaries. A healthy flow of blood is sent to the spinal nerves as they are stretched and toned. The hamstring muscles and calf muscles are stretched and toned. Inversion increases blood flow to the brain. The Prana is channeled to the lower regions of the body, propelled by exhalation.



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04

Ashwa Sanchalanasana

Equestrian Pose

Inhaling and extend the right leg back, drop the knee to the ground and flatten the foot. The left knee is bent and placed between the hands keeping the foot flat on the ground. Lift the spine and open the chest. Concentrate on the center of the eyebrows. This asana improves the overall health of the body and strengthens the back, abdomen and thigh muscles. It promotes mobility of the knee joints, strengthens the body to maintain good posture and prevents back problems. As the neck is also stretched, it is also beneficial to the functioning of the thyroid gland.



05

Parvatasana

Mountain Pose

Exhaling and bring the left leg back to join with the right leg. Simultaneously, raise the buttocks and lower the head between the arms, so that the body forms a triangle with the floor. Try to place the heels flat on the ground. Focus your awareness at the neck area, while maintaining the posture. This pose strengthens the nerves and muscles in the arms and legs, stretches the calf muscles and Achille's tendons and makes the spine straight and taut. This asana helps in boosting self-confidence. Also, due to increased blood flow to the upper body and shoulders, it aids to improve brain function, and reduces anxiety and depression.



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06

Ashtanga Namaskarasana

Salute with Eight Parts Pose

Holding the breath out, gently drop both knees to the ground and slowly slide the body down at an angle as you bring the chest and chin to the ground. All eight limbs - toes, knees, chest, hands and chin touching the floor. The buttocks are kept up. This posture sends additional blood to the upper body area helping to rejuvenate the nerves. Besides strengthening the leg and arm muscles, this pose develops the chest and gives flexibility to the region of the spine between the shoulder blades.



07

Bhujangasana

Cobra Pose

Inhaling, lower the hips while pushing the chest forward and upward, straighten the arms until the spine is fully arched and the head is facing up. The knees and lower abdomen remain on the floor. Focus the awareness at the base of the spine and feel the tension from the forward pull. This pose gives dynamic expansion to the organs of the chest and abdomen, relieving many ailments, such as: asthma, constipation, indigestion, kidney and liver problems. It is helpful in relieving tension in the back muscles and spinal nerves.



08

Parvatasana

Mountain Pose

Exhaling, lower the torso, place the feet on the floor and lift your hips while lowering your head toward the ground. Place your feet flat on the ground and raise the hips. This is a repetition of step five.



09

Ashwa Sanchalanasana

Equestrian Pose

Inhaling swing the right leg forward between the hands. The left leg remains back. This is a repetition of step four.



10

Padahastasana

Hand to Foot Pose

Exhaling, bring the left foot forward. Join both legs and straighten them. This is a repetition of step three.



11

Hastottanasana/Urdha Namaskarasana

Raised Arms Pose

Inhaling, raise the torso up and slightly bend backward. This is a repetition of step two.



12

Pranamasana/Namaskarasana

Prayer Pose

Straighten the body and bring the hands in front of the chest. This is a repetition of step one.



VARIATION

One round of Surya Namaskara burns approximately ten calories for the average person. To maintain the interest of your students, increase their strength and stamina and to burn more calories, you can incorporate dynamic Surya Namaskara sequences:

- 4,5,9,5 -Lead up to steps four & five and then jump to step nine, then back to step five, then back to step four. Repeat several times

before moving to Step ten. Make sure that at steps four and nine alternate legs are forward each time (eg. four is right foot back, nine is left foot back).

- 5,6,7 -Lead through step seven and jump back to repeat step five, six and seven. Repeat the sequence several times before moving through to step eight.

Allow students to rest adequately by taking a break to breathe after

finishing the sequence. Take the next sequence slowly, so that their heart rate can return to normal.

When Surya Namaskara is performed dynamically, the gain is more physical, while if performed slowly with breath awareness, the benefits are rather mental and spiritual.

GETTING INTO POSITION

Method 2

Come into Chakrasana (Wheel Pose), with crown of head resting on the floor. Lower the elbows while keeping them under shoulders. Inhale. Exhaling, push the torso toward the head, rest the crown of the head between your palms. Inhale. Exhaling, carefully walk feet closer to your head, bending your knees and lifting your heels up. Hold for a few moments to allow the body to adjust. Take pressure off your head, and roll your forehead onto the floor. Inhale. Exhaling, bring your feet closer to the head, balancing your weight on your forearms and pushing your torso farther toward the forearms. Carefully lift your feet up and touch them to the crown of the head. Hold with normal breathing for as long as comfortable.

COMING OUT OF POSITION

Slightly relax the body. Carefully lower your toes back to the floor, and roll the crown of your head back to a comfortable position. Exhale. Inhaling, press your arms up and carefully walk your feet away from the shoulders. Exhaling, slowly bend your elbows, lowering the head and shoulders to the floor. Bending your knees, bring your spine and hips to the floor. Straighten legs and bring arms down to your sides, returning to starting position. Inhale, exhale, and relax.



TIPS

- * Lowering and lifting movements of the legs should be smooth and under control the entire time.
- * While lowering or lifting your legs, activate the glute, back, and core muscles to avoid injuries.

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Precautions

AVOID

If you have high or low blood pressure, herniated (slipped) disc, or chronic/serious neck or back problems.

BE CAREFUL

If you have high blood pressure; abdominal hernia; get dizzy easily; or have neck, shoulder, back, hip, or pelvic issues.

Benefits

GENERAL

Stretches the entire front of the body (ankles to throat). Strengthens arms, shoulders, back, glutes, thighs, hamstrings, calf muscles. Improves body posture, rounded shoulders, flat feet, digestion, balance, and concentration.

THERAPEUTIC

Helps to alleviate piles and varicose veins.