

STEP BY STEP LESSONS

These Step By Steps were written 30+ years ago from my youthful point of view. In those days I made more mountains out of molehills. Still, they hold up fairly well¹.

INTRODUCTION

Many people are loathe to follow step by step instructions. It's not for nothing that they say, "When all else fails, read the instructions". I am fairly certain one could learn Yoga just fine using only the full-page illustrations of the essential dynamics. That said, these Step by Steps would be useful for some, especially those learning completely on their own from scratch. In any case, I'm offering two very different ways to learn so that folks can mix and match to suit their individual learning style.

These lessons give in-depth instruction in the most basic beginning Yoga postures. A solid understanding of these basic postures will be invaluable for the correct and productive practice of the intermediate and advanced postures you will attempt in the years ahead. In fact, all the advanced postures use the same basic approach, but in more challenging ways.

Many people may well prefer learning the postures using the full-page illustrations of the essential dynamics rather than following these lessons. Nevertheless, most everyone would benefit by looking over this material, at least somewhat, to see what they may have overlooked.

¹ Sure, all this could benefit from less use of passive voice along with better editing, photos, examples and so on... maybe someday (although I *do prefer* the simplicity of those black and white photos). In any case, I feel a careful, occasional review of the first dozen pages of this book would serve most folks even better..

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DIRECTIONS FOR THE LESSONS¹

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As there are many stages to learning Yoga and many aspects to each posture, I have broken the instruction down into five sections. When you begin a new posture, read through these instructions, try doing what you can, and then look over the full-page illustration of essential dynamics given for that posture (pages 14-167)..

The introduction to each posture:

The suffix of each posture's Sanskrit name is ASANA, which means posture, so I omit the word "posture" in the translation. Following the translation, I give a short description.

Next, I summarize some traditional views concerning how the posture affects the body. Take these with more or fewer grains of salt. Meaning, while I've found some effects to be very true, others are little more than old wives' tales, as I see it anyway.

¹ I was thinking of doing a short online video to cover the beginning postures. Then I thought, perhaps there is good video already online. Ha! Obviously, I don't get out online much! The following four videos, taken together, shed light on the 'big picture' as well as the fundamentals.

The easiest approach is to just Google the title. The first title, "Yoga GURU...", has 6 segments. After watching 1/6, simply change the 1/6 in the search window to 2/6 and search again. Continue on up to 6/6. The second title, "... Yoga Demonstration, Sydney..." covers the basics nicely for 90 minutes. The last three videos are interesting for various reasons.

Yoga GURU -- B. K. S. Iyengar - The Ultimate Freedom Yoga [1976] 1/6

B.K.S. Iyengar - Yoga Demonstration, Sydney, 1983

B.K.S. Iyengar 1938 newsreel Part 1
(search also for Part 2 and Part 3)

BKS Iyengar in 1977

BKS Iyengar Practicing

Step by Step Lessons

I. Basic Procedure:

Follow these basic steps initially. When you can perform the posture from memory according to these steps you are ready to study and apply the information given under III. and IV. (Perfecting and Teaching).

II. Variation Procedure:

This shows easier variations of the posture to practice by those too stiff or weak to perform the Basic Procedure. However all students should read over these variations and practice them a few times, as there are points covered here that will benefit.

III. Perfecting Procedure:

Begin this section after a few weeks or months working on the Basic procedure. Don't try to absorb all this information in one reading—it can take years to fully master. It's more effective to occasionally reread and review this information and integrate it into your practice little by little. Trying to get everything at once makes a confusing and tense experience! That is not what you've come to yoga for is it?

IV. Teaching procedure:

Here are various teaching and learning techniques, along with additional aspects of the posture. This information is valuable to all, whether you plan to teach or not—in any case, you are teaching yourself! The information given here can enable you to develop your practice without the aid of a teacher, or at least with a minimum of classroom instruction.

It would be also helpful to study Iyengar's book "**Light On Yoga**". Here you will find further information on the history of the posture, its meaning, its effects, and details of its practice.

*"In liberty from the bonds of attachment,
do thou therefore the work to be done:
for the man whose work is pure attains
indeed the Supreme". Bhagavad-Gita 3-19*

LESSON I

1. TADASANA

(Mountain)

Tada means mountain and sans or asana means posture. Here one learns to stand as firm and stable as a mountain. Mountains never tire in standing and neither do we if we learn active standing. In Tadasana the body feels light so we are able to stand longer periods of time with less fatigue. We stand mindfully and not just hang on our bones.



Fig. 1-1

I. Basic procedure

1. Stand with feet together, toes and ankles touching, and adjust the body weight so it's equally distributed. We often tend to stand with the greatest proportion of our weight either on the heels or on the balls of the feet.
2. Tighten the muscles of the buttock and curl the tailbone in towards the anus. This plus contracting and lifting the lower abdominal muscles raise the pubic area, Fig. 3-4
3. Tighten the thigh and calf muscles that will in turn raise the kneecap and lock the legs straight by locking the knee joint, Fig. 3-10. Both this and point 2 above are covered more thoroughly in the next posture..
4. Keep the arms at the sides locked at the elbow as you did with the knee above. Draw the shoulders back and lift the back of the neck backward and upward toward the ceiling. Extend and stretch the spine upward, in effect lifting you up from the spine, Fig. 1-1.
5. Keep the head erect, chin down and gaze to the front.

II. Variation procedure:

This posture may be done with the feet spread one foot or so apart and the hand and

arms may be placed where you like. You can practice standing this way at other times of the day, e.g., while standing in a line, brushing teeth, etc. Don't over tighten the muscles; just keep them firm, active and alive.

III. Perfecting procedure:

1. Stooped shoulders, hanging head and a floating chin are some of the weaknesses in the posture of modern man. The first and most important point in posture:



Fig.1-1, Fig.1-2, Fig.1-3

keep the back of the neck extended upward, which takes care of the head, shoulders, and chin. This can be made easier by imagining yourself dangling from the sky on a string which is connected to and lifting you from the back of the neck at the first thoracic vertebrae, Fig. 1-1.

Maintain this *lift* in most Yoga postures and other activities throughout the day. Physical aspect, like this, can influence mind greatly. Another example of this is how putting a smile on one's face can actually lighten one's frame of mind. Here, this *lift* effects endurance, concentration, and emotional control, all of which will be found lacking to a certain degree when you hold yourself as shown in Fig. 1-2.

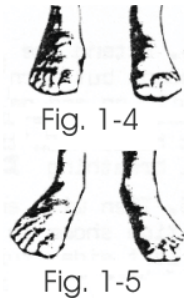
2. A more intense drawing back of the shoulders is required in many Yoga postures (Fig. 1-3). Care should be taken not to lift the shoulders as you draw them back. It's just the opposite. Try to roll them down your back toward the buttocks, feeling them somewhat heavy.

Simultaneously extend the front chest (sternum) and the side chest (side ribs near the armpits) forward, outward and upward towards the head. This whole movement causes the shoulder blades to draw in nearer together and the chest to open up.

These points concerning the head, neck and shoulders can be applied in all activities to

reduce tension and keep one fresh all day. This will be especially helpful for those who must stand, sit or walk long hours.

3. The ankles are raised and kept perpendicular to the floor, Fig. 1-4, and not allowed to sag or slang as shown in Fig. 1-5. This holds true for all Yoga postures whether the feet are apart or together.



When the feet sag the body weight is borne on only one side of the foot, or on the heel or ball of the foot. The body weight should be distributed evenly over the foot area, from heel to toe and along outside edge. Notice that when the ankles are raised, the arches are also lifted which can help relieve aching feet.

One should continue to maintain this lift on the ankles when walking. Many shoe wearing city folk walk with sagging ankles and their feet angled outward like a duck. This leads to poor weight distribution and they tire out quickly. If this is you, try walking with a parallel stride. This is achieved by the ankle lift and by lifting the big toe (or having it already lifted) when the foot hits the ground. This draws the foot inward slightly correcting the problem. The only difficulty is in remembering to maintain this lift until you replace this bad habit. When one walks barefoot, the toes are automatically raised, especially after stubbing them a few times.

Developing and maintaining good posture habits requires constant watchfulness. This is true for maintaining anything. In the end, this practice of watchfulness benefits all aspects.

IV. Teaching hints

Most of the principles used in Tadasana are true for ALL standing Yoga postures and most of the other Yoga postures. Look for the similarities and stress them to your student while he is performing other postures.

When teaching this posture, have the student stand with back touching the wall. Press his shoulder and small of the back as close the

wall as they will go. This brings the chest and pubic region outward. The head should touch the wall with the student trying to press the back of the neck near the wall as possible. Doing with natural muscle tone, without tension keeps the diaphragm relaxed.

3. UTTHITA TRIKONASANA

(Three angle-extended)

This posture tones the leg muscles and removes leg and hip stiffness. It gives one a sense of balance, strengthens the whole body and reduces fat. Due to the lateral twist it relieves backaches and awakens the chest. The principles of this posture and

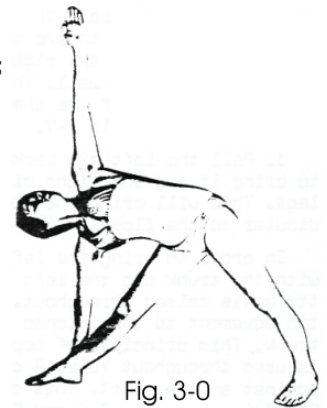


Fig. 3-0

Tadasana are basic to all standing postures introduced later on. The standing postures are among the most difficult in Yoga to master; at the same time, nearly everyone regardless of age or physical condition can attempt them. They develop a stiff and weak body very quickly.

I. Basic procedure:

1. From Tadasana inhale deeply and upon the exhalation jump spreading the feet three feet apart and parallel to each other. Extend the arms to the sides, locked at the elbows, with



Fig. 3-1

palms facing downward. Look straight to the front and take several breaths, Fig. 3-1.

2. Turn the right foot 90° to the right and turn the left foot slightly to the right. Then with an exhalation slowly bend the trunk laterally to the right and place the hand on the ankle (Fig. 3-2) pull left trunk back and then place palm of the right hand on the floor to the right of the right foot.

3. Simultaneously extend the left hand upward toward the ceiling with the left arm firmly locked straight at the elbow. Press the right hand firmly to the floor and bring the trunk in line with the legs, Fig. 3-7.

4. Extend the back of the neck as you did in Tadasana (Fig. 1-1) but turn the head as far to the left as it will go and gaze up past the outstretched left hand. Hold this posture for 30 sec. with full breathing, Fig. 3-0.

5. Then with an inhalation return to the position shown in Fig. 3-1. Repeat steps 2-4 on the left side, turning the left foot left 90° and bending the trunk to the left.

6. After holding the left side for 30 sec. with full breathing, return on an inhalation to the position shown in Fig. 3-1. Then with an exhalation, jump back to Tadasana.

II. Variation procedure:

If you are unable to place the palm of the hand on the floor, spread the fingers on the right hand and only place them on the floor.

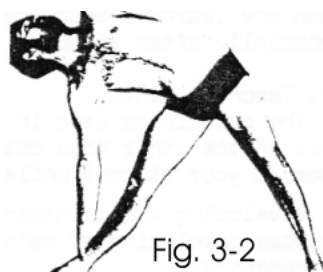


Fig. 3-2

If this too you are unable to do, then just grasp the ankle as far down on the right calf as possible. Gripping the ankle firmly, move the trunk until it is in line with the legs. On no account are the legs to bend; just go as far as possible toward the floor keeping them locked straight, Fig. 3-2.

III. Perfecting procedure:

1. One cause of backache can be sunken lower spine. When this curve in the spine is great, the upper body weight is unevenly distributed on the vertebrae of the lower lumbar and sacral regions of the spine, Fig. 3-3.



Fig. 3-3 Fig. 3-4

Many Yoga postures work at countering this curve. Contract the lower abdominal muscles and lift them in slightly toward the spine. Simultaneously contract the buttock muscles and roll them in towards the anus, which swivels the hip forward, and upward slightly raising the pubic region and reducing the lower curve, Fig. 3-4.

2. As you bend to the right, extend the right arm and the right side ribs straight outward—really reach to stretch this. You bend only from the lowest



Fig. 3-5 Fig. 3-6

part of the spine, keeping the abdomen, chest, and shoulder in line, Fig. 3-5. Try to feel the right hip dig deep into the side of the trunk. Also as you are bending, roll the left shoulder and left side of the chest backwards toward the wall (in Fig. 3-7); simultaneously push the right shoulder and right side of the chest away from the wall. This action keeps the median line of the right side of the chest in line with the median line of the right leg, Fig. 3-7.

3. Roll the left hip backwards towards the wall (Fig. 3-2) to bring it and the right hip in line with the trunk and the legs. This will bring the nipples in line with and perpendicular to the floor, Fig. 3-7.



Fig. 3-7 Fig. 3-8

In order to bring the left hip to the rear and in line with the trunk, dig the left rear heel into the floor keeping its ankle raised (Fig. 1-4) throughout. In a sense, this is a movement antagonistic to the intense bending on the right side of the trunk. This principle of opposing yet complimentary forces is used throughout Yoga. You challenge one area of the body with/against another area. Can you see how this challenge is lacking in Fig. 3-8, in Fig. 3-6 and in Fig. 3-3?

4. The right foot is turned 90° to the right from the right hip. The right thigh muscle is pulled up tight and rolled to the right revolving

the whole of the leg around so that it, and its kneecap, are in line with the right foot..

The thigh and calf muscles of the legs are pulled tight enough to raise the kneecap into the thigh. The more this is done, the more the skin on the back of the knees is stretched tight. This locking of the knee is done on all Yoga postures where the leg is supposed to be straight, as in Fig. 3-9, not Fig. 3-10.



Fig. 3-9 Fig. 3-10

As you stay in this posture, (or move into and out of it) maintain an even pressure over the whole of the foot, from toe to heel and from side-to-side, keeping the ankles raised throughout.

5. In the position shown in Fig. 3-1, extend the arms out to the side stretching them as though you are being pulled apart by two people. Simultaneously keep the shoulders rolled back and the chest extending upward with the back of the neck raised as described in Tadasana [1]. The arms should be locked at the elbows just as the legs are locked at the knee. The fingers are also extended and locked at the knuckles, causing the hands to be somewhat bow shaped, Fig. 3-11. This applies to all standing postures where the arms are extended straight.



Fig. 3-11

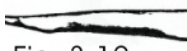


Fig. 3-12

Notice in Fig. 3-0, how the left arm is extended towards the ceiling. Turn the head to the left and gaze towards it. The head should turn until you see the thumb of the left hand with the right eye, yet while still keeping the head in line with the rest of the body. The right hand is placed on the floor firmly with the fingers in line with the toes of the right foot making the right arm perpendicular to the floor.

IV. Teaching procedures:

Have the beginner practice the posture first with the left hand on the left hip, with the

thumb poking into the back of the hip. Have him use this hand to push the pubic region forward, and concentrate on getting the trunk and the hip in line with the legs as shown in Fig. 3-7.

If the student practices the posture with his back touching the wall you can then push his shoulder against the wall, which brings his trunk in line with his legs.

6. VIRABHADRASANA I

(Warrior I)

This posture, dedicated to one of Sivas warriors in Hindu mythology, is strenuous when done correctly, or when attempting to do it correctly. It strengthens the body and reduces fat in the hips. It relieves neck, back, hip, and shoulder stiffness and ache. It also tones the ankles and knees and promotes full breathing.



Fig. 6-0

I. Basic procedure:

1. From Tadasana [1], inhale and then on the exhalation jump, spreading the feet 3-4 feet apart (Fig. 3-1). Keeping the shoulders rolled back, revolve the arms from the shoulder until the palms face upwards. Then stretch the arms as though two people were pulling you apart. On an inhalation, raise them above the head joining the palms, Fig. 6-1. Keep the arms as straight as possible throughout.



Fig. 6-1

2. Turn the right foot 90° to the right and the left foot slightly to the right. Then on an exhalation revolve the



Fig. 6-2

left hip and trunk as far as possible to the right. The whole trunk from head to pubis should face 90° to the right in line with the right leg, Fig. 6-2.

3. On an exhalation, bend the right leg until the thigh is parallel and the calf is perpendicular to the floor. Throw the head back as far as it will go and gaze up toward the palms. Extend the chest and stretch the whole trunk upwards. Hold this posture for 30 sec. with normal breathing. Fig. 6-0.

4. Return to the position shown in Fig. 6-2 on an inhalation and then on the exhalation bring the trunk to the front, Fig. 6-1. Repeat steps 2-4 on the other side, turning the left foot 90° to the left and the right foot slightly to the left, etc. After holding this posture on the left side for 30 sec., return to positions in Fig. 6-2, 6-1, inhale, and jump back to Tadasana [1] on the exhalation.

II. Variation procedure:

If it is too difficult to join the hands above the head and keep the arms rather straight, you can move the palms apart just enough (about 6 inches) to permit you to straighten and lock the arms.

Remember it's more important to keep the left leg straight than to bring the right thigh parallel to the floor, so don't sacrifice the locked straight left leg for any other aspect of this posture.

III. Perfection procedure:

1. Often, the upper chest and shoulders are not stretched up as much as they should be, but instead sag. Try to feel you are opening up your armpit. Raise the arms and the shoulders, extending them from the side ribs, so that the side ribs and the nipples are lifted up several inches from their natural position. Move the shoulder blades in towards each other as though you were trying to press them together. Really stretch up toward the ceiling, and simultaneously draw the arms and shoulders backward so they are in line with the trunk, Fig. 6-1, 6-2 6-0.

2. While maintaining this upward lift of the trunk, and keeping the knees locked, revolve the hip, screwing the left hip into the



Fig. 6-3

Fig. 6-4

right one. Feel like you are trying to touch the left hip to the right thigh. The buttock muscles are tightened drawing the tailbone in towards the anus. Simultaneously dig the left heel into the floor, and using this as leverage, pull the right hip tightly into the abdomen, rotating from Fig. 6-4 into Fig. 6-3.

3. In order to keep the hip rotation you achieved in step 2 above, bend the right leg by sinking the trunk directly down towards and perpendicular to the floor. Avoid slanting the trunk forward.

The squaring of the right leg is a problem for most. Bring the kneecap in line with the ball of the right foot Fig. 6-5. The more you bend the right leg, however, the more difficult it is to keep the left one straight. Counter this tendency by pulling the left thigh and calf muscle until it's as firm as stone, and keeping the left ankle lifted (Fig. 1-4), dig the left heel into the floor.



Fig. 6-5

Fig. 6-6

4. A common error for many is leaning the trunk and the arms too far forward once they are in the final position of Fig. 6-0. One must continue applying the principles in point 2 above. Try to bend from the lower part of the lumbar region of the spine, tightening the buttocks and curling the tailbone in towards the anus.

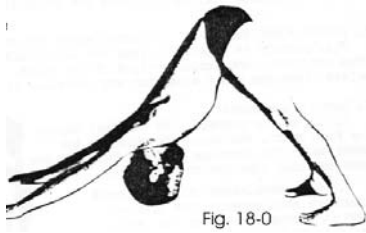
IV. Teaching procedure:

Pressing your thigh into the student's buttock, push his trunk lower to the floor until his right thigh is parallel to the floor. Gently pull his trunk and shoulder / arms back until the trunk is perpendicular to the floor. Check to see that the kneecap doesn't extend beyond the toe of the right foot. You can place their hands on the hip throughout the movement, or just during the preliminary swivel to simplify.

18. ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA

(Downward facing dog)

This posture removes fatigue and restores energy. It relieves pain and stiffness in the heels, limbers the shoulder blades and relieves arthritis there. It is beneficial for sufferers of high blood pressure and has restorative effects similar to Sirsasana (headstand)



I. Basic procedure:

1. Lay on the stomach with palms by the side as though you were doing push ups. Place the feet one foot apart and with an exhalation, straighten the arms and lift the buttocks toward the ceiling. Keep the feet and the hands parallel to each other.
2. Move the chest in towards the knees so that the crown of the head rests on the floor, but doesn't press into the floor; it merely touches it.
3. Keep the back straight or a little concave, bending from the base of the spine. Hold this posture for 60 sec. or longer with full even breathing. Gaze should be held at nose level and focused beyond the feet.

From the position shown in Fig. 18-0, the student may move directly into the next posture, Fig. 19-0. On an inhalation, keeping the arms straight, pull and rotate the trunk forward. Rest the tops of the feet on the floor and thrust; extend the chin toward the ceiling.

II. Variation procedure:

The heels may be kept off the floor until the ankle flexibility is better developed. Likewise, the head may be kept off the floor until the shoulder flexibility is better developed, but in both cases, one continues to aim at touching both these points to the floor.



III. Perfecting procedure:

1. For those who can do Uttanasana [11], (lesson III), move the feet back from Uttanasana 3-4 feet, and spread them one foot apart. Then apply points 2 and 3 above.
2. Keep your heels 2-3 inches off the floor initially, resting body weight on the balls of the feet and palms. Raise and lock the kneecaps and push the palms firmly into the floor. Pull the thigh and calf muscles tight as usual but this time roll the buttock muscle outward, opening up the anus area, and raising the tailbone upwards toward the ceiling. This is opposite to the standing postures where we roll buttocks inward tightening the anus area.

Once you achieve the maximum extension possible, slowly lower the heels to the floor, keeping the ankles lifted. Push the heel into the floor from the calf.

3. Thrust the sides of the ribs towards the buttocks. Pull the chest to the rear as though you wished to touch it to the knees/thighs. Roll it in towards the abdomen.

Think of opening up the armpits and rolling the shoulder and shoulder blades backwards and in towards the spine. See Fig. 18-2. Compare this with the insufficient opening up of the armpits shown in Fig. 18-3. Aim for open - rising buttocks with open lowering chest.

IV. Teaching procedure:

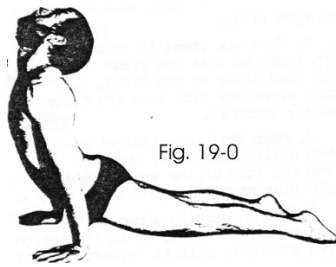
Stand close in behind the student with your right thigh between his legs. Place one end of the loop rope around the student's waist where the thigh meet the pelvis, and loop the other end around your neck. Lift the student's buttocks upward and backward slightly by raising your trunk/neck up. Simultaneously press the students lower mid back region downward towards his feet with both hands.

You may instead just gently press the student's shoulders down towards his feet.

19. URDHVA MUKHA SVANASANA

(Upward facing dog)

This posture is especially good for people with stiff backs as it rejuvenates the lumbar and sacral regions of the spine. It further strengthens the wrists, promotes chest expansion and increases circulation in the pelvic region.



I. Basic procedure:

1. Lie on the stomach with the feet spread one foot apart, and place the palms by the waist as in the previous posture, but with the toes pointing straight to the rear.
2. On an exhalation raise the trunk upward by straightening the arms and pull it forwards (which drags the feet forwards slightly). Keep the legs locked at the knees throughout. Bend from the lower back region and lift the upper chest and shoulders toward the ceiling.
3. Stretch the head back as far as it will go and lock the joints of the elbows. Gazing steady at nose level or upward between the eyebrows, hold this position for 30-60 sec. Breathe fully and evenly. Then with an exhalation return to the floor.

II. Variation procedure:

Guard against the tendency to sacrifice the firmly locked kneecaps for a small gain in back-bend. As with all Yoga postures the degree of movement is not as important as the correctness of movement. The palms may be placed further up by the ribs if necessary in the beginning.

III. Perfecting procedure:

1. Don't tense the muscles of the forehead and around the eyes if gazing upward between the eyebrows.
2. It's important to place the hands far enough back towards the hip that balance is only possible with a maximum back bend. This

is done by sliding the trunk forward and bending it backwards, thus bringing the hips nearer the arms and resting the body weight on the palms and the tops of the feet.

Bend from the lowest part of the spine, keeping the upper part straight. Feel as though you are trying to make space in the lower spine extending it lengthwise as you bend it. This movement is increased by tightening and rolling the muscle of the buttocks inward and by tightening the anus muscle. Simultaneously spread and open out the groin/pubis area. Notice that this is the opposite buttock movement as done in the previous posture

Fig. 19-1 shows insufficient forward movement of the trunk towards the arm. Compare this with the position shown in Fig. 19-0. Elbows are facing outward which weakens the movement. Keep them facing straight to rear as in Fig. 19-0.



3. On each exhalation, try for a little more back-bend and chest expansion. Lock the knees and elbows a little tighter and squeeze the buttocks inward toward the anus a little more. Extend the head back and the chin up a little further.

Giving an extra push on each or every other exhalation intensifies the posture and increases its benefits. This extra push involves tightening muscles to the degree required (as in raising the kneecaps to lock the legs) but it also involves relaxing muscles or joints to the degree required to make space in the lower back to bend further, and open up the groin area.

4. Don't sag or hang the trunk down from the shoulders. Raise the trunk, roll the chest outward, roll the shoulders backward and lift the sternum upward.

IV. Teaching procedures:

The student may not achieve much bend in the beginning, which is fine. Just insist that he

keep his arms and leg lock straight and that he pull his trunk forward as much as possible.

Place the crown of your head against the student's sternum and both hands around his lower back. Pull his trunk forward while simultaneously pushing his chest backward and upward with your head. Put a weight on the buttock (10lbs. more or less)

23. VIRASANA I & II

(Hero)

There are four separate movements to this posture. The first two are covered now and the others later. In general, Virasana develops the knees and can 'cure' rheumatic pains in them if done daily.

The posture in Fig. 23-1 is well suited for meditation [48], pranayama [47], or just sitting. The spine is kept erect eliminating back pain that can come from sitting without back support. The posture in Fig. 23-0, removes stiffness in the shoulders and fingers and wrists, and so is helpful to all office workers.

I. Basic procedure:

1. Sit on the floor with the knees touching and the feet spread 18 inches apart, or just enough so that the buttock can rest between them. Toes are pointed to the rear and pressed flat to the floor.
2. Place the wrists on the knees with the arms locked straight. The ends of the first finger and the thumbs are joined lightly and the other three fingers are extended out straight, Fig. 23-1.
3. Hold this posture for as long as you like with normal breathing. Gaze at nose level, and focus the eyes out past the fingers. This completes the first movement.

Fig. 23-0



4. From the first movement, take the hands off the knees and interlock the fingers so that the thumb of the right hand rests on top of the thumb of the left hand. Turn the palms outward and raise the hands over the head. Stretch the arms upward and backward as though you were going to touch the ceiling.

5. Maintain this stretch with full even breathing for 30 sec. Gazing straight ahead. On an exhalation lower the arms to the knees and then release the finger lock. Interlock the fingers again only this time so the thumb of the left hand rests on the thumb of the right hand, and raise the hands over the head and hold for 30 sec.

II. Variation procedure:

If your knees are too stiff to allow you to place the buttocks on the floor, place a folded blanket under them and sit on this. Use progressively less under the buttocks as flexibility improves.

III. Perfecting procedure:

1. When you place the buttocks on the floor, roll the calf muscle outward away from the thigh to allow greater contact between the buttock and the floor. Hold your trunk as you did in Tadasana [1], rolling the shoulders backward, extending the spine and the back of the neck upward, and extending the chest outward.
2. Keep the arms locked at the elbows, Fig. 23-1. Compare this with Fig. 23-2 where the attention has lapsed. This completes movement one.
3. In the second movement move the arms with an outward thrusting force when raising them upward, Fig. 23-3. This pulls the shoulders backward when the arms come in line with the trunk, Fig. 23-0.

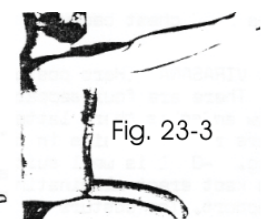
Fig. 23-1



Fig. 23-2



Fig. 23-3



4. When the hands are over the head, stretch them and the shoulders up from the side ribs. The side ribs, nipples and shoulders rise two or three inches above their position in Fig. 23-3. This causes the shoulders and the upper arms to push closer in toward the ears. This intensive stretch upward tends to make the facial muscles tighten so deliberately keep them as relaxed as possible.

IV. Teaching procedure:

1. For the first movement, Fig. 23-1, place your knee against the student's lower back and place your hands on his shoulders. Gently push his lower back concave and roll his shoulders backward.
2. For the second movement, Fig. 23-0, also push the lower back in slightly. Next, draw the shoulders and arm back until they are perpendicular to the floor and in line with the rest of the trunk.
3. To get the upward extending of the arms and shoulders place a board on his palms, press it down slightly, and have him push the board upward against your downward pressure.
4. Check to see that he is raising the back of the neck and bringing his head backward so that the back of the head is in line with the upper back. There is a tendency for the head to droop forward. But as the head is brought back facial strain tends to increase so then the student must relax facial muscles, especially around the mouth and in the neck.

16. ARDHA NAVASANA

(Half ship posture)

This posture strengthens the abdominal muscles and the back. It also has a beneficial effect on the liver, gallbladder, and the spleen.



I. Basic procedure:

1. Sit on the floor and with interlocked fingers, place the hands behind the head just above the neck. Pull the kneecaps up into the thighs and keep the ankles touching.
2. On an exhalation, recline the trunk backwards, about 45°, until the feet begin to rise off the floor. Raise the legs until the feet are level with the head, about 18 inches off the floor, forming a very obtuse angle with the trunk.
3. The weight of the body should rest on the buttock and not on the spine proper. Some pressure however will be felt on the tip of the tailbone. With the gaze between the eyebrows and focused beyond the toes, hold this posture for 30-60 sec. with shallow breathing.

II. Variation procedure

The following posture may be an easier variation for Ardha Navasana [16] for some people. Try it.

17. URDHVA PRASARITA PADASANA

(Up stretched out foot)

Beginners may find that even a stay of 30 sec. is not possible. You can alternate between Ardha Navasana and the following variation.



1. Lie on the back with arms stretched beyond the head, palms up. Lock the kneecaps and touch the ankles together.
2. On an exhalation, raise your legs until they are perpendicular to the floor, then lower them in several stages, holding each stage 15 sec. Above all, be sure to keep your back flat to floor throughout to avoid back strain.
3. Alternately, exhale and lift the legs one foot off the floor and hold for 15 sec. Then, exhale and raise them another foot and hold 15 sec., Fig. 17-0. Next, exhale and raise them until

they're perpendicular to the floor. Hold for 15 sec. Finally, repeat this sequence in reverse order as you lower the legs to the floor.

III. Perfecting procedures:

1. In Ardha Navasana, instead of raising the sternum and extending the chest as in the previous posture, depress both inward into the chest cavity. Push the ribs of the frontal chest into the abdomen keeping the back convexly curved as possible. Roll the upper chest and shoulders towards the feet without lifting the trunk any further off the floor. This action makes only shallow breathing possible which increases the posture's effects.

The trunk should be reclined to the point where the body weight begins to fall on the end of the spine. Rise up just a little and hold the trunk at this angle, just on the "edge". Balance can be difficult in the beginning.

2. After the trunk is in position, raise the legs until the feet are in line with the head. Be sure to keep the feet high enough by looking directly ahead to the ankle. The elbows tend to drift in toward each other, therefore keep the tips of the elbows in line with the forehead.

IV. Teaching procedure:

Keeping the back convex with the chest depressed into the abdomen can be difficult while in the pose due to balance fatigue. To free the student to concentrate on the movement described in point 1 of the Perfecting procedure, have him keep the legs on the floor. Start with legs to floor and slide palms down along the thighs. You can also stretch hand out.

Next, the student does a partial sit up by raising the trunk until the shoulders are 5—12 inches off the floor. Extend the arms straight towards the feet with palms on the leg. He tries to touch his hands as far down the leg as possible toward the feet without raising the trunk any further. Instead, he must focus on curving the back and shoulders as convex as possible. Make sure he doesn't hold the breath at any time during this or during the proper posture.

26. BHARADVAJASANA I

(This posture is dedicated to the father of an ancient Indian hero.)

This posture prepares those with stiff backs for the more advanced lateral twisting postures latter on. It makes the back supple and helps those with arthritis.

I. Basic procedure:

1. Sit on the floor with both legs to the right of the hip.

Place the right ankle on the instep of the lower left foot, as shown in Fig. 26-1.

2. With an exhalation, turn the trunk to the left as far as it will go and place the right hand palm down, under the knee of the left leg just above the knee. Then on the next exhalation swing the left arm behind the back and grasp the right arm just above the elbow.

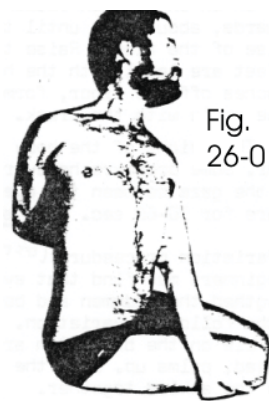
3. Once a firm grip is established, straighten out the right arm as much as possible and continue twisting the trunk to the left as far as it will go.

4. Turn the head to the right and gaze over the right shoulder. Hold the posture for 30 sec. with full breathing. Release the grip and turn back to the front on an inhalation. Repeat the posture on the other side.

II. Variation procedure:

If it's difficult to rest the buttock on the floor with the legs to the side you can place a blanket folded several times or a pillow under the buttocks.

Beginners usually can't twist around enough to grasp the right arm with the left hand. They may follow the same procedure principles above but instead of grasping the arm they can place the arm about 8—12 inches behind them, pressing it firmly into the floor. Move this left



arm as far to the right side of the body as it will go and lock it at the elbow, Fig. 26-1.

Another variation is to do the posture facing a wall or table and with your hands, use this wall or table for leverage to help you twist yourself around.

Yet another variation is simply sit with straight legs. Then, grasping the left leg with the right hand and twisting the trunk to the left, place the left hand behind you on the floor. Now continue rotation as described in step 3 and 4 above.

III. Perfecting procedure:

1. Extend the chest and lift the sternum as shown in Fig. 26-2. Fig. 26-3 shows the chest with too little "life" in it. This chest extension and lifting of the sternum gives a "proud" character, beauty to the pose and intensifies its effects. This is the type of extension aimed for in most Yoga postures.



Fig. 26-2

Fig. 26-3

2. Draw the left shoulder back and roll it downward while simultaneously extending the right shoulder to the right. This screwing action of the shoulders is similar to that of the hips in Virabhadrasana I [6].

3. Keep the ears on a parallel plain to the floor by not allowing the head to tilt to either side, nor to the back or front. To do this, maintain the extension at the back of the neck as described in Tadasana [1] while you twist your head as far as it will go to the right until you are looking directly over your right shoulder.

IV. Teaching procedure:

The teacher can place his knee on the student's lower middle back and his hands on the student's shoulders. Push the back in concave and simultaneously pull the shoulders back and twist them around.

13. SAVASANA

(Corpse posture)



Fig. 13-0

Here you imitate a corpse. Keeping the body and the mind at this degree of stillness while maintaining full consciousness invigorates and refreshes mind and body.

In Savasana, you learn to relax consciously—a difficulty invaluable in the modern stressful world. This posture relieves fatigue quickly and when done with steady, smooth, and full breathing soothes the entire nervous system and calms the mind.

I. Basic procedure:

1. Lie flat on a firm surface, face up, with the whole body from head to toes in a straight line. You can place a folded cloth over the eye to keep out light. Place the arms at a 45° angle to the body with the palms turned up. Keep the heels together with the toes apart.

2. Gaze downward at nose level with eyelids shut and eyes focus to infinity. The jaw should be just firm enough that the teeth touch each other just slightly. The tongue is kept passively resting on the lower palate.

3. Consciously feel the whole body, part by part. Relax each part in turn until the whole body is felt heavy and still. Especially important parts to relax are the face, hands, and shoulders as these store much tension.

Aim at getting all parts of the body symmetrical i.e. the hands equally opened, the left leg as relaxed as the right, the left side of the back in contact with as much of the floor as the right, etc.

4. Now that the body is symmetrical and relaxed, you begin to soothe the nerves by rhythmic breathing. Start by breathing deeply

for a minute or two, then begin to slow the rate of breath down gradually so that eventually you have such slow even respiration that no air is felt moving through the nostrils.

5. The exhalations may be made longer and smoother than the inhalations. If the mind continues to wander, pause breathing for a few seconds, without strain, after each exhalation. It can also help to count the breaths, which loosens the “mind” from the “thoughts”.

Your consciousness will drop thought as it feels and follows the breath. We begin by having the mind “control” the breathing, but this gradually reverses and we find ourselves letting the even breath “control” our mind, calming and soothing it.

Stay in Savasana for 5 to 15 min. with normal gentle breathing as described above or with Pranayama [14] breathing. Remember that even a few minutes in this posture when done correctly will invigorate the mind and body substantially.

II. Variation procedure:

Those who have trouble relaxing can try this simpler variation. Here the body is positioned the same as above but one aims only at relaxing every thing. The gaze is not held a nose level, but relaxed and rests still where it wants. The jaw is completely relaxed but the lips are still kept touching and closed lightly.

One feels every part of the body as though it were melting stone. Often the facial muscles are tensed up unconsciously. Feel the skin of the face; let it sag down towards the floor. Open up the eyebrows, temple, and forehead area. Apply points 3, 4, and 5 above to this posture.

III. Perfecting procedures:

1. To insure that the body is in a straight line, lift the head and line the body up straight, Fig. 13-1. Lower the head with the back of the neck ‘rising’ as in Tadasana [1]. If the head tilts back so that the neck arches further off the floor making the chin roll upward, concentration drifts.



Fig. 13-1

2. The legs are stretched from the heels as if you are trying to push some objects (the opposite wall for example) with your heels. Toes, heels, and anklebones are joined. After a few seconds of intense stretching, relax the leg completely and let the toes and ankles separate. Now, the legs should feel slightly stretched out from the leg sockets.

3. Simultaneously bend the arms at the elbows with tightly clenched fists, Fig. 13-1. Stretch the upper arms from their sockets in the shoulder by trying to touch “the opposite wall” with the elbow. Then straighten the arms out and relax them completely. Now the skin on the back of the arms should feel slightly stretched.

4. Open the hands, palms up, as you straighten the arms, stretching them as much as possible. Then, relax them completely allowing the fingers to curl into their natural position, Fig. 13-0. One may straighten out the fingers in a similar but more relaxed manner a few times to get as open a hand as possible in a relaxed condition and so releasing any tension stored in the hands. Open the mouth as if you are screaming, stretch face muscles in monster face and then relax it completely.

5. Feel the whole body in a creative way. Ask yourself if this part, or that part, is tense or not. Ask yourself if the legs are touching the floor at the same spot with the same degree of “heaviness”. Feel the shoulders heavy, and sagging into the floor, with as much of the shoulders touching the floor as possible in the relaxed condition. The chest then feels open and free.

6. The tongue lies passively with a relaxed lower jaw and the muscles around the mouth soft and relaxed. Feel the cheeks as heavy lumps of clay, letting them sag down to the floor. Feel the whole face, letting the skin there fall away from the skull and sag to the floor. Guard against

tightening the eyebrows and forehead area—not only in Savasana, but throughout the day. Much tension is stored here unconsciously. Open up the furrows of the skin between the eyebrows and raise the eyebrows slightly then relax them completely. Feel the eye sockets and relax the muscles and skin surrounding them. Now everything, every part of your body should be completely relaxed. Even the inner organs are felt heavy and sagging down towards the floor.

7. You can remain relaxed in this way with normal light breathing or practice pranayama [14] first to soothe down the nervous system and then go to normal breathing. Applying the procedures above on exhalations works best. For example, as you exhale feel the finger and palms open up and relax. On the next exhalation, feel the legs and arms heavy, and on the next feel the facial muscles sag, and so on.

Finally surrender the self. Expel all thoughts, pride, ego, vanity, etc., along with the exhaled air. Just as each exhalation rids the body of stale air and CO₂ let it also help rid the mind of its stale thoughts and expectations. Exhale the “self” with the air of each exhalation until you are nothing in a dark empty void. Feel as though the air in each exhalation is blowing yourself out of yourself, your body, releasing you into the infinite universe. See Meditation [48] and Pranayama [14, 47].

IV. Teaching procedure:

To help the student relax, etc., try some of the following;

1. Press his shoulders down to the floor and hold them there with your palms applying 10-20 lbs. pressure for a minute or so. Then pull the arms out from the sockets of the shoulders slightly and press the palms and the fingers to the floor. In some cases, a light weight may be placed on the fingers and palms to keep them open. Pull the students head away from the shoulders so that the neck comes closer to the floor and the chin rolls in toward the throat.

2. Press down lightly on his closed eyes with your fingers, then rubbing with the fingers, stretch the skin of his forehead from the eyebrows down to the temples Do the same for any other part of the body that seems to be tensed. Sometimes placing a heavy weight (10-50 lbs) on tense places relaxes them, if left on for several minutes or longer, i.e., 20-30 lbs. on the thighs, 10-20 lbs. on the shoulders, etc.

3. Spend the first few minutes of Savasana speaking to the student on the different points covered in the basic and perfecting procedure above to remind him of what he is aiming for.

The following can help students doing pranayama [14] in this posture:

1. Fold a blanket so it's 8+ inches wide, 36+ inches long and 1+ inches thick. Place this under the student from the bottom of the lower lumber vertebrae to and including the top of the head. Alternately, place a wood block (or book) about 8" x 12" x 2" under the upper trunk from the shoulders to the lower rib and place a folded blanket or another block under the head raising it to the same (or higher) height.

Either of these techniques allows the arms to fall away from their sockets in the shoulders, raises the chest, and opens it up for freer breathing.

2. Lift the student up slightly by placing your hand around the lumber region in order to get more of his neck and shoulders on the floor. This makes the lower back a little more concave. Pulling and rolling the students hips downward toward the feet will get similar results.

Conclusion - Lesson I

If, after a month of daily practice, you can do all but one or two of the nine postures covered in lesson I, continue on to lesson II if you like. Otherwise, continue working on these postures until you feel ready to go on.

There is no time restriction on how many weeks or even years you stay on a particular lesson. Although 3-4 weeks per lesson probably suits

most people with the interest to go to the end of this course. On the other hand, one need never go beyond lesson one. You can stop at any lesson and practice it daily, or when you want; continue to the next lesson only if and when you want to. Each lesson gives the body a balanced workout.

LESSON II

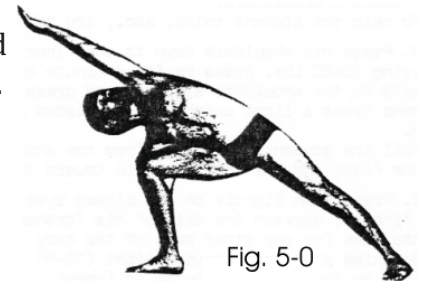
3. UTTHITA TRIKONASANA

30 sec. each side with full even breathing

5. UTTHITA PARSVAKONASANA

(Side angle posture)

This is an good strengthening and reducing exercise. It relieves sciatic and arthritic pains, tones the ankles, knees, and increases peristaltic activity.



I. Basic procedure:

1. From Tadasana [1], inhale and on the exhalation jump, spreading the feet 4 feet apart, about a foot more than for Utthita Trikonasana, similar to Fig. 3-1. Turn the right foot 90° to the right and the left slightly to the right.
2. On the exhalation, bend the right leg at the knee until the thigh is parallel to the floor. The kneecap shouldn't extend beyond the right toes.
3. On the next exhalation, stretch and bend the trunk to the right laying the right side ribs along the right thigh and covering the outer part of the right knee with the right armpit. Place the right palm on the floor next to the right foot and extend the left arm out straight over the left ear.
4. Stretch the back part of the body (upper side) from the fingers of the left hand to the heel of the left foot as if there were two people stretching you apart. Feel the skin along the side ribs draw tight. Turn the head and gaze upward past the left arm toward the ceiling, holding this posture for 10 sec. with full breathing. Then on an inhalation return to the initial position (similar to Fig. 3-1), and repeat the posture on the left side.

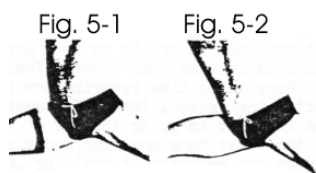
II. Variation procedure:

This posture is made a little easier by placing the left hand on the left hip instead of stretching it out over the ear. Place the hand so the thumb digs in towards center of the spine near the pelvis. Then as you stretch the trunk and the left leg use this hand to push the hip downward and the left side of the trunk backward. Then the arm may be briefly stretched out over the left ear or extended straight up as in Trikonasana [3] Fig. 3-0.

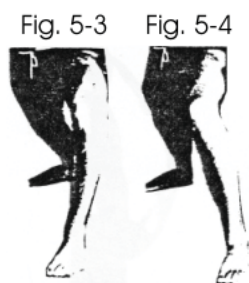
If the distance between the feet is decreased the thigh will not come parallel to the floor. The posture will thus be less challenging and effective, but will allow you to build up your strength more gradually.

III. Perfecting procedure:

1. Keep the trunk, from the navel to the sternum, perpendicular to the floor as you bend the right leg. This is done by sinking straight down, drawing the chest area back and pulling it upright. Simultaneously push the left hip into the left side ribs, making the angle of the hips the ribs as acute as possible, Fig. 5-1. Remember to raise the pubic region as show in Fig. 3-4.



2. There is a certain antagonistic force in the direction of movement of the two legs. While bending the right leg during the posture, the bending right knee is moved and held outward, Fig. 5-3., so the kneecap is directly in line with the foot rather than tilting inward, Fig. 5-4. Simultaneously push the left leg hard to the rear, pressing the left foot flat to the floor and locking the kneecap. To keep the ankle lifted, imagine that you are lifting and stretching the left calf to touch the wall to the rear.



3. When the right leg is bent 90°, lower the right side of the chest to the right thigh. As you lower the chest to the knee rub it along into and

across the right thigh, with the rubbing pressure felt running from the outside to the inner side of this thigh. Simultaneously with the same twisting movement rooted in the lower waist, roll the left side of the chest and ribs backward.

4. The buttock muscle is rolled in toward the groin such that the groin skin is stretched and extended towards the navel. Keep the left hip down, rolled backward and straight in line with the rest of the left side of the body. With the proper bending and twisting movement above the body will be in a line similar to that showed in Fig. 3-7, with the nipples perpendicular to the floor and both hips in line with both shoulders.

5. The head is kept straight in line with the body and turned enough so that the left arm may still be seen by the right eye if the left one is shut momentarily. Keep this outstretched left arm in line with the rest of the body not letting it swing up or down, or side-to-side.

6. An intense alternative: Place the right shoulder on the left side of the knee rather than of the right side. This enhances leverage where the upper arm and inner knee press each other.

IV. Teaching procedure:

Insist on students performing each step perfectly whenever their ability allows. i.e. when jumping 4 feet the feet should be parallel or even slightly turned inward, hands locked at the knuckles, Fig. 3-11, knees locked, Fig. 3-9, etc.,

This and some of the other standing postures can be done with the rear foot touching the wall. Have the student press the heel to and extend his calf toward the wall as covered in point 2 above. This raises the rear left ankle slightly putting 'life' into it, and pressing the foot flat to the floor.

6. VIRABHADRASANA I

30 sec. on each side with full breathing.

10. PRASARITA PADOTTANASANA I

(Spread leg stretching posture)

This posture develops the hamstring and abductor muscles of the leg. It is a semi-inverted posture and so has some of the effects

as Sirsasana (headstand). Circulation is increased in the trunk and head and the digestive powers are increased.



Fig. 10-0

I. Basic procedure:

1. From Tadasana [1] jump on an exhalation and spread the feet 4-5 feet apart. Raise both hands over the head and stretch backward and upward, Fig. 10-1. Inhale deeply and then on the exhalation bend forward placing the palms on the floor, and looking straight to the front, Fig. 10-2. Remember to keep the kneecaps lifted up into the thigh.



Fig. 10-1

Remain in position shown in Fig. 10-2 for 15 sec. with full even breathing. Then on an exhalation, lower the trunk further to the floor until the head touches it lightly resting directly between the feet. Now move the palms in until they too are in line with the head and the feet. Fig. 10-3

2. Stay in this posture for 30 sec. with full breathing gazing straight to the rear. Then on an exhalation, raise the trunk up to position in Fig. 10-2, inhale deeply and on the exhalation return to position in Fig. 10-1 and jump back to Tadasana.

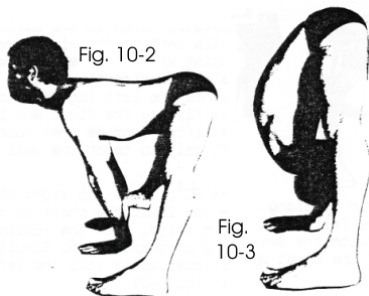


Fig. 10-2

Fig. 10-3

II. Variation procedure:

In the beginning, one probably can't touch the head to the floor, but you can aim it towards the floor. The very stiff beginner can grasp the ankles, shins, or knees, instead of putting his hands on the floor. He should bend as far as possible always making sure that the legs are locked; this is far more important than the degree of bend you attain.

One can also place the hands on the hips and bend. Any variation is as good as the basic posture if it is your maximum ability and if you do it with the greatest degree of watchfulness of which you are capable.

III. Perfecting procedure:

1. The feet are kept parallel to each other throughout the whole movement. Have the toes slightly turn in toward each other, which lift the arch and the ankle, Fig-10-0.

2. When bending into the position in Fig.10-2, extend the chest outward to the front while pulling the shoulders and arms backward and upward. Doing this helps keep the back straight so that you bend only from the lower lumbar region. If the hands are allowed to drop faster than the head when moving, then one bends from the wrong part of the spine, Fig. 10-4.

3. As you bend into position in Fig. 10-2, extend the chin upward so you continue to gaze to the front. The back should be kept as concave as possible throughout the bending movements. Compare Fig. 10-2 with the same done incorrectly in Fig. 10-4, where the bend is occurring at the mid back region.



Fig. 10-4

IV. Teaching procedure:

Have the students thrust the hands upward, and stretch backward before bending forward to help loosen the spine for the bend. This posture has the same buttock movement as in Adho Mukha Svanasana [18]. The buttocks are rolled outward and upward towards the

ceiling; this opens up the groin and anus area. Slap or tap the student's thighs upward to re-enforce this awareness and 'brush' them outward. Slap or tap the back to re-enforce awareness to the concaveness to aim for.

18. ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA

50 sec. with full breathing.

19. URDHVA MUKHA SVANASANA

60 sec. with full breathing.

24. VIRASANA III

(Hero)



Fig. 24-0

Stay in the first movement, Virasana I. Fig. 23-1, as long as you like with normal breathing. Stay in the second movement, Virasana II. Fig. 23-0, for 60 sec. with full breathing. Now do this third movement, Fig. 24-0, as described below. The third movement stretches the shoulders. It opens up the pelvic region and removes stiffness in the lumbar and sacral regions of the spine.

I. Basic procedure:

1. From the second movement, Fig. 23-0, release the finger lock and turn the palms to face the front. Spread the knees apart as far as possible.

2. On the exhalation bend trunk forward, placing your chest and abdomen between the thighs as close to the floor as possible.

3. Stretch your arms out in front of you as far as they will go, and stretch the head back so the chin rubs the floor, extending toward the hands. Gaze between the eyebrows towards the hands. Stay in this posture for 30-60 sec. with normal even breathing.

4. On an inhalation, return to the position in Fig. 23-1

III. Perfecting procedure:

1. As you bend forward maintain as much of the upward extension of the arms and

shoulders of the second movement, Fig. 23-0, as possible. The arms are lifted high and lowered to the floor along with the head and trunk.

2. Sink your chest and abdomen down to the floor pressing as much of them on the floor as possible, This is done by relaxing the pelvis / leg joints and opening them up, and by rolling the buttock muscle outward as in Adho Mukha Svanasana [18].

Simultaneously continue extending and stretching your arms to the front as far as they will go. Open up the armpits.

IV. Teaching procedure:

Push the lower back down toward the floor, as this is where the bend must come from. Try place the student's palms on blocks (or books) 2-6 inches high off the floor in order to increase his awareness of the need to keep the back and arms as straight as possible.

16. ARDHA NAVASANA

30-60 sec. with shallow breathing.

26. BHARADVAJASANA I.

30 sec. each side with full breathing.

13. SAVASANA

5-15 min. with normal breathing or pranayama [14]

LESSON III

3. UTTHITA TRIKONASANA

30 sec. each side with full breathing.

5. UTTHITA PARSVAKONASANA

30 sec. each side with full breathing.

6. VIRABHADRASANA I

30 sec. in each direction with full breathing.

10. PRASARITA PADOTTANASANA I.

30 sec. in each position with full breathing.

18. ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA

50 sec. with full breathing

19. URDHVA MUKHA SVANASANA

50 sec. with full breathing

21. SALABHASANA

(Locust posture)



This posture develops the sacral and lumbar regions of the spine, and strengthens the abdominal and leg muscles. The pressure on the abdominal area aids digestion and relieves gastric trouble. The prostate gland and the bladder are also benefited.

I. Basic procedure:

1. Lie face down on the floor with the ankles touching and the hands by the hip.
2. With an exhalation lift the head, chest, and legs (simultaneously) as high as possible off the floor and extend the arms straight to the rear.
3. Stay for 50 sec. with normal breathing and gaze between the eyebrows. Then lower the feet and chest to the floor slowly and rest.

II. Variation procedure:

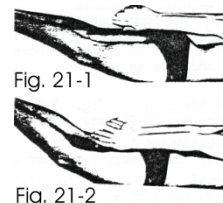
Beginners should follow the same procedure as above but for a shorter time, and with a smaller degree of leg and chest lift. If this is still too strenuous you can place the hands down on the floor and raise only the head and

the legs. An even easier variation than this is to lift only one leg at a time and hold for 10 sec. while the other leg remains on the floor.

III. Perfecting procedure:

1. The chin is extended outward and raised upward, which stretches the neck. The ribs are lifted until they are almost entirely off the floor. Aim at resting the body weight on the lower abdomen area between the navel and the pubes.
2. Contracting the buttock muscle and rolling it in towards the anus brings added lift to the legs. The thigh muscle is stretched and the legs extended, locked straight, and touching each other as closely as possible (at the thighs, knees, ankles). Lock the arms at the elbows, and hands at the knuckles.

Compare Fig. 21-1, which shows correctly locked knees, elbows, and knuckle joints to the same area done with less attention, as shown in Fig. 21-2.



3. The shoulders are lifted and rolled back towards the feet. Feel as if you are trying to pull the shoulder blades inward in order to touch each other.

IV. Teaching procedure:

Have the student try to get a maximum chest lift by allowing him to leave the legs on the floor. You can hold them down for him, while he tries to lift his ribs and chest off the floor. Then hold the students legs up 6-10 inches off the floor and have him lift off again according to the Basic procedure for this posture.

Next, have him aim for a maximum leg lift by allowing him to keep the trunk on the floor, with the arms at the sides.

One can also do the posture with legs bent at the knee, the thighs 6 inches apart, and the shins perpendicular to the floor. On an exhalation, lift the chest and legs as in the basic posture. Brings the legs together, attempting to touch

the knees while maintaining the same degree of lift. You can pull students arms back.

23. 24. VIRASANA

Stay in the first movement Fig. 23-1, as long as you like with normal or Pranayama breathing. Stay in the next two movements, Fig. 23-2, Fig. 24-0, for 60 sec. each with full breathing.

15. PARIPOORNA NAVASANA

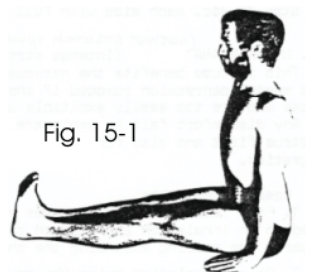
(Entire boat posture)

This posture strengthens the back and the stomach and helps reduce fat around the waist. It works on the intestines and relieves the bloating sensation in the abdomen.



I. Basic procedure:

1. Sit on the floor with palms by the side, legs locked at the knee, and arms locked at the elbow. Extend the chest and lift the back of the neck. This is a Yoga posture called Dandasana (staff posture). Fig. 15-1



2. With an exhalation recline the trunk backwards and raise the legs until the feet are a foot or so higher than the head and touching at the ankles. Now aim at balancing on the soft part of the buttock only so that no part of the lower spine touches the floor.

3. Extend the arms straight past the knee, parallel to the floor, with the palms facing each other. Extend the arms as far passed the knee as possible by raising the trunk and legs further and pulling them in towards each other.

4. Hold this position for 30 sec. with normal breathing, gazing toward the

feet. Increase the length of stay to 60 sec., and then return to Dandasana.

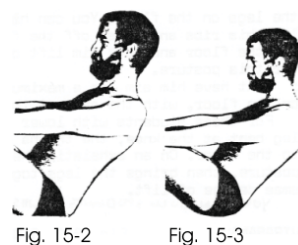
Or, go directly into the next posture Ardha Navasana [16] by lowering the legs to 18 in. off the floor, curving the back and lowering the trunk. Finally, place the interlocked hands behind the head.

II. Variation procedure:

Beginners may be unable to position the palms by the knees let alone past them, or raise the legs higher than the head, but they should always aim for this. Whatever the degree of leg lift possible etc, ensure that the back, arms and legs are kept straight and balance is on the soft part of the buttock.

III. Perfecting procedure:

The back of the neck is lifted and extended backward (Tadasana [1]) and the back is kept some-what concave . The sternum is lifted and the chest extended towards the feet, while the shoulders are rolled backward, Fig. 15-2. This is opposite to the movement done in Ardha Navasana, Fig. 15-3.



IV. Teaching procedure:

Place a chair under the student's calves to support his legs, thus freeing him to concentrate on getting the correct type of lift of the trunk and the proper chest expansion.

16. ARDHA NAVASANA

10 sec. with normal breathing.

26. BHARADVAJASANA I

Stay 10 sec. each side with full breathing.

11. UTTANASANA

(intense stretch posture)

This posture benefits the nervous system. The spinal nerves are rejuvenated and mental depression relieved if the posture is held for longer than 3 minutes. Those who are easily excitable will find this relaxing.

Discomfort felt by beginners in the headstand may be relieved by doing this posture before and after doing a headstand. It relieves menstrual pains and aids digestion.

I. Basic procedure:

1. From Tadasana [1] raise the arms over the head on an inhalation and stretch them upward towards the ceiling and thus expanding the chest. Fig.11-1



Fig.
11-1

2. On an exhalation, swing the trunk and the arms radially outward and downward in a semi-circle arc. Then place the hands palms down, on the floor behind you as far as they will go until the chest is pressed flat against the thighs.

3. Place the head on the shins and rocking forward slightly on the balls of the feet. Move the hips forward so that the legs are perpendicular to the floor. Stay in the posture for 1-5 minutes with full breathing. Maintain the lock on the knees and the elbows and gaze either between the eyes or at nose level

4. Return to Tadasana in two steps. First upon an inhalation lift the head off the shin and raise the chin as high as it will go without lifting the palms. Then on the following exhalation raise the palms off the floor and raise the trunk back to Tadasana.

II. Variation procedure:

Mainly concern yourself here with maintaining a concave back during the forward bend. Keep the legs locked, arms extended outward and lifted along with the shoulders. Turn the head up so the chin extends towards the outstretched hands.

One should not be concerned with “touching the floor” as this only encourages incorrect



Fig. 11-0

bending. Instead, think of getting an expanded chest as close to the thighs as possible. On no account should the legs ever bend, even the slightest in order to get you lower to the floor. Such cheating only cheats yourself.

III. Perfecting procedure:

1. Keep the back concave while bending, Fig; 11-2. Extend the arms, chin, and chest outward and lift the shoulders keeping all in line with the trunk. Concentrate on moving from the lowest part of the spine.

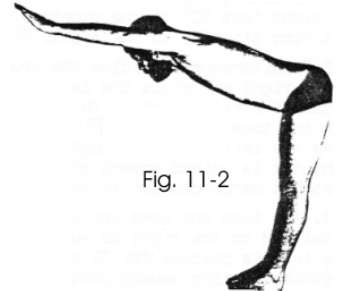


Fig. 11-2

2. After you are in the final position, adjust the body weight and spread it evenly over the feet, from toes to heels, and from big toe to small toe. In order for the legs to be perpendicular to the floor there may be a little added pressure on the balls of the feet. People often tend to stand with more weight on their heels.

3. When the thighs are pulled tight, the skin of the leg feels like its being drawn upward and inward. Simultaneously stretch the side ribs and shoulders down towards the floor, rubbing the thighs with the chest. The skin of the ribs should feel like it is being pulled down wards. This challenging (or antagonistic) action is common throughout Yoga; here the movement on the thighs being upward and on the trunk being downward. Keep shoulder relaxed and abdomen firmly in.

II. Teaching Procedure:

The posture may be done with the arms folded over the head, but using the same principles of movement as above. This eliminates the tendency to “touch the floor” and so one can concentrate on extending the trunk.

As a variation have the student place his feet 6 inches apart with arms folded. This is used as a rest posture to catch ones breath after strenuous postures. You can have him

stand with feet 12 inches away from a wall and with his buttocks resting on the wall, which leaves the student free to concentrate on the upward pull of the thighs and the downward stretch of the ribs and shoulders.

Get the student to open up the buttock, rolling the muscle of the buttock outward and away from the anus raising it upward as done in Adho Mukha Svanasana [18]. If the posture is done against the wall, the student can pull his buttock muscle upward with his hands and then maintaining this lift he should rest this raised buttock back on the wall.

Have student grasp his ankles first and pull himself, his trunk, in towards his thigh as much as possible before he places his palms on the floor behind him.

Watch out for caving-in ankles and the resulting falling insteps (Fig. 1-5). Have the student turn his toes inward until they touch while keeping his heels apart, as a variation that lifts the ankles and helps lock the knees.

13. SAVASANA

5—15 minutes with normal or Pranayama breathing.

LESSON IV

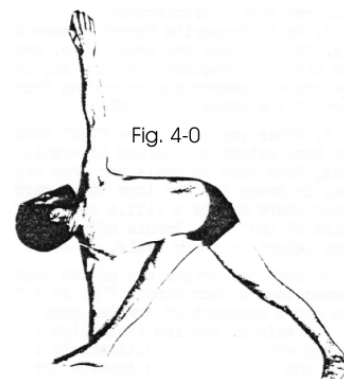
3. UTTHITA TRIKONASANA

30 sec. each side with full breathing.

4. PARIVRTTA TRIKONASANA

(Three angle posture revolved)

This posture gives a good lateral twist increasing blood supply in the lower parts of the spine, which helps relieve pains in the lower back. The muscles of the back, hip, thigh, calf, and hamstrings are strengthened and toned. It has an invigorating effect on the abdominal organs and promotes full chest expansion.



I. Basic procedure:

1. From Tadasana [1] inhale deeply and exhaling jump spreading the legs 3-4 feet apart. Turn the right foot 90° to the right and move the left foot slightly to the right.

2. Simultaneously, revolve the trunk and bend to the right; place the left hand, palm down, outside the right foot, with the fingers in line with the toes.

As the left hand is brought to the floor, the right one is raised and thrust toward the ceiling and held stretched perpendicular to the floor, Fig. 4-0.

3. The legs and arms are locked and the trunk is twisted to the right as much as possible. Stay in this posture for 30 sec. with normal breathing, gazing upward past the right hand. Then on an inhalation return to position similar to Fig. 3-1. Repeat on the left side.

II. Variation procedure:

If you are still too stiff to place the hand on the floor, grasp the ankle. You can also move the feet

closer together and place the right hand on the hip instead of stretching it upward. This makes the balance easier. Use the grip of the hand on the hip to push the right shoulder backwards. Use the grip of the hand on the ankle to pull the left shoulder in line with the right foot.

You can also place your left hand on the inside (instep side) of the forward foot on the floor as close to this foot as possible, and still keep balance.

III. Perfecting procedure:

1. The whole of the right leg should be turned 90° to the right along with the right foot. Both right and left feet should touch the floor completely. The left leg is extended hard to the rear, which pushes the outer side of the left foot firmly to the floor.

2. The firm extension of the left foot to the rear gives leverage to the twisting action of the lower spine via the left hand which also presses hard into the floor.

Pressing hard into the floor, using the left arm as a lever, screw the left shoulder to the right. At the same time, thrust the upper right shoulder backward.

This results in the arms, shoulders, and the trunk held in a perpendicular line to the floor, which allows the head to be turned enough so that the extended right hand (thumb) can still be seen when the right eye is shut momentarily, Fig. 4-1. Compare this with insufficient twisting of the trunk and shoulders shown in Fig. 4-2.



IV. Teaching procedure:

Always have the student take a deep inhalation in Tadasana [1] before jumping on an exhalation. Follow up on the breathing, insuring that extension movements are done

on an exhalation, and the return or recovery movements are done on the inhalation. Encourage him to breathe as evenly as possible, and not hold his breath at any time.

Instead of placing the hand on the floor, have the student place his hand on his shinbone, or rest it on a bench. He then turns his trunk until his shoulder is directly over his foot and the arm is perpendicular to the floor. This gets the student more aware of the twisting of the trunk that is aimed for when the hand is placed on the floor.

5. UTTHITA PARSVAKONASANA

10 sec. on each side with full breathing.

6. VIRABHADRASANA I

10 sec. on each side with full breathing.

10. PRASARITA PADOTTANASANA I

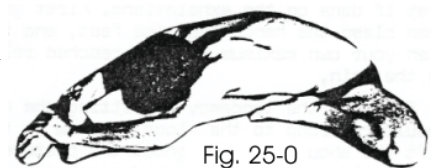
10 sec. in each position with full breathing.

25. JANU SIRSASANA

(Knee head posture)

The abdominal organs are toned through doing this posture regularly.

The effect is especially pronounced on the kidneys. This posture develops frontal flexibility and tones the shoulder muscles.



I. Basic procedure:

1. From Dandasana [15] Fig. 15-1, place the left heel at the junction of the thigh and the groin, with the big toe of the left foot touching the inner side of the right thigh. Push the bent left knee as far back as you can, forming an obtuse angle between the left shinbone and the extended right leg. Place the left hand on left knee and the right hand by right hip.

2. Draw the shoulders back, raise the sternum, and extend the chest.

Stretch the spine upward and forward, and lift the back of the neck. Then, bending



forward, extend the arms and grasp the ball of the right foot. Fig. 25-1

3. Bend further forward on your following exhalations until the chin rests beyond the knee. Now, exhale deeply and extend the arms past the right foot; grasp the wrist of the right hand with the left hand, Fig. 25-0

4. With each exhalation, push the chest further downward rubbing it along the center of the thigh. Gazing between the eyebrows towards the feet, hold this position for 30 sec. with full breathing.

Then with an inhalation raise the head and chest off the leg, stretch the chin upward gazing toward the ceiling, and extend the spine making it concave again. Straighten up on the exhalation and repeat on the other side, this time grasping the wrist of the left hand with the right hand.

II. Variation procedure:

Those who are not able to reach the toes can grasp the extended leg with both hands as far down towards the foot as possible. The principle of movement here is the same as for Uttanasana [11], Fig. 11-0. One doesn't aim at touching the feet but instead tries to extend the whole trunk forward, Fig. 25-2.



Maintain a lifted and extended chest and concentrate on bending from the lowest part of the spine, near the sacral region, keeping the rest of the back from lumbar to the neck concave or as flat as possible.

III. Perfecting procedure:

1. When the angle between the shin of the bent leg and the straight leg is as obtuse as possible, place both hands on the floor by the hips and lift the buttocks slightly off the floor. Simultaneously rotate the hip slightly so the trunk faces forward. Increased

pressure on the left hip will now be felt due to the obtuse angle of the left shin/leg challenging the forward facing trunk.

2. Throughout the movement, the kneecap is pulled so tight (locking the right leg) that the skin on the back of the knee touches the floor. Keep the right foot perpendicular to the floor, not allowing it to slant either side-to-side or front to back. Extend the heel from the calf and curl the toes in slightly towards the head, keeping the toes in a line parallel to the forehead.

3. Raise the ribs, lift the center of the chest and chin, and extend them upward and outward throughout the bending movement. Much of the bending force comes from this frontal area, and if properly applied the vital lower back bend will follow naturally. One extends the floating ribs and sternum and aims at "touching the feet with them". This eventually results in the chest being rubbed down the thigh towards the feet, with the center of the chest touching the center of the leg.

4. Bend forward gradually, inch by inch. You will find this bending coming best if done on the exhalations. First, grasp the toes, then the balls of the feet, then clasp the hands past the feet, and finally grasp the wrist beyond the feet. When your own maximum bend is reached, relax the chin and rest it on the shin.

5. Don't let the elbows and shoulders droop to the floor as show in Fig. 25-3. Lift the shoulders throughout the posture, pushing the shoulder blades in towards each other and keep the elbows level with the toes of the right foot, as shown in Fig. 25-0, 25-1.



6. Put special attention on pulling the ribs on the side of the body of the bent left leg down toward the floor, Fig. 25-1, and extend the shoulder on this side towards the straight leg on the other side. This helps keep the back level where otherwise it tends to slant.

7. For that extra bit of bend, one can pause breathing momentarily at the end of each exhalation. After a year or two of practice, one will be able to grasp the wrists Fig. 25-0. Here the hand on the same side of the body as the straight leg is clenched firmly into a fist (not overly tight please) and its wrist is then held firmly by the hand on the bent leg side of the body. Remember to change wrists when repeating the posture on the other side.

IV. Teaching procedure:

Place a folding chair in front on the student, and have him place the toes of his straight leg on the lower cross tubing of the chair. He then grasps the legs of the chair instead of his foot and this helps him keep his back level while bending forward.

You can also help by pushing the side of the trunk on the bent leg side of the body towards the floor, and lift up any drooping elbows.

Students who can't reach their foot may loop a towel or rope around the extended right foot and grasping both loose ends, pull their trunks forward.

18. ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA

60 sec. with full breathing

19. URDHVA MUKHA SVANASANA

60 sec. with full breathing

21. SALABHASANA

30-60 sec. with normal breathing.

22. USTRASANA

(Camel posture)

In this posture, the spine is stretched backward and toned while the pelvis is thrust forward. A flexible spine is one of the best insurance against the feebleness that comes with old age.



Fig. 22-0

I. Basic procedure:

1. Kneel on the floor with the thighs and feet touching, and place the palms

on the hips with the thumbs pressing into the lower spine, Fig. 22-1,

2. On the exhalation curve the trunk backwards and place the palms on the soles of the feet, Fig. 22-0. Simultaneously stretch the chest upward and the thighs forward

3. Press the feet with the palms, throw the head back as far as it will go, and push the lower spine towards the thighs. This movement, plus the upwards and forward stretching of the thighs, pushes the pelvis forward away from the feet.

4. Hold this posture for 10 sec. with normal breathing, gazing between the eyebrows at the wall behind you. Release the hands one by one and straighten the trunk.

II. Variation procedure:

The bend will come a little easier for beginners if the legs are kept 8-12 inches apart at the knees and feet. After completing one bend with knees apart, repeat the posture with the knees and feet touching.

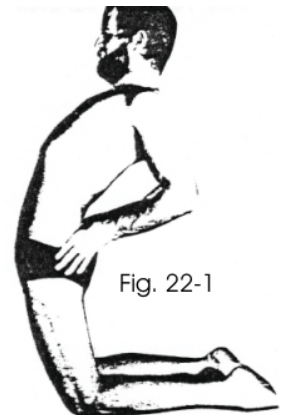


Fig. 22-1

If you can't touch the palms to the feet, keep them on the hip and bend as far back as possible, Fig. 22-1. Study and apply point #1 of the Perfecting procedure below; concentrate on pushing the pelvis forward.

III. Perfecting procedure:

1. The palms are placed with the thumbs resting on the spine. Dig the thumbs into the spine at the point of bend and thrust the pelvis forward while bending the trunk backward. Open up the lower spinal vertebrae with massaging pressure from the thumbs.

2. Roll the buttocks in toward the anus, tightening the anus and opening out the groin area. This movement feels like one is curling the tailbone inward and simultaneously spreading

open and lifting the groin. This is very important for achieving advanced back-bends later.

3. Raise the sternum and open up the chest by pulling the shoulder blades in towards each other. The lower floating ribs however are pushed downward toward the pelvis. Simultaneously move the lower lumbar part of the spine upward towards the navel and thrust the thighs and the buttocks forward until the thighs are perpendicular to the floor.

4. The ankles can be grabbed to give leverage for pulling the shoulders downward toward the feet. The chin is stretched to the rear with the head thrust back as far as it will go.

IV. Teaching procedure:

The teacher faces the student and leaning over him places his hands on the students lower back, or alternately loops a rope under this area and hold the ends. Have the student grasp the ankles firmly while you lift and draw his ribs and pelvis forward.

Encourage the student to open up the groin, tighten the buttock muscle, and curl it and the tailbone in toward the anus. Simultaneously have him "make space" in the lower lumbar region by stretching the lumbar vertebrae laterally during the bending movement. This develops the bend in the proper area of the spine instead of higher up on the spine as often occurs.

23. VIRASANA

Stay as long as you like with normal breathing.

23. 24. VIRASANA II. and III.

60 sec. each with full even breathing.

15. PARIPOORNA NAVASANA

60 sec. with normal even breathing.

16. ARDHA NAVASANA

30-60 sec. with normal to shallow breathing.

26. BHARADVAJASANA I.

30 sec. each side with full breathing.

11. UTTANASANA

1 to 5 minutes with full breathing.

13. SAVASANA

5-15 minutes with normal breathing or pranayama.

LESSON V

3. UTTHITA TRIKONASANA

10 sec. each side with full breathing.

4. PARIVRTTA TRIKONASANA

30 sec. each side with normal even breathing.

5. UTTHITA PARSVAKONASANA

30 sec. each side with full breathing.

8. VIRABHADRASANA III

(Warrior posture)

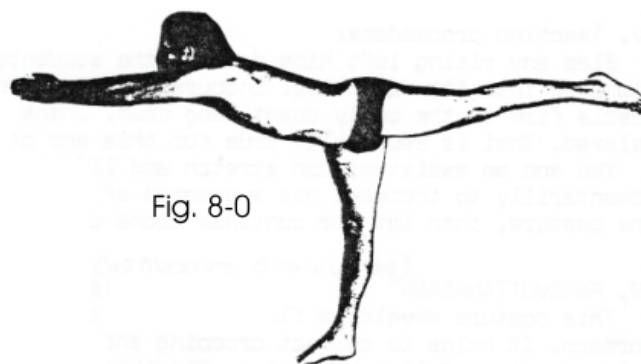


Fig. 8-0

This posture improves one's sense of balance and increases poise by developing power and agility. It strengthens the shoulders, abdominal muscles, back, hip, and leg muscle and it develops firm ankle support.

I. Basic procedure:

1. Inhale deeply and with an exhalation jump, spreading the legs 4 feet apart. Do Virabhadrasana I [6] Fig. 6-0, on the right side briefly.

2. On an exhalation, lower the trunk to the thigh, Fig. 8-1, and take several full breaths. Then, on an exhalation, lift the trunk off the thigh and raise the left leg as you straighten and lock the right one.

3. Lift and extend the arms forward and the left leg backward until the whole body is parallel to the floor, Fig. 8-0. Stretch yourself out horizontally as though two people were pulling you apart, one at each end.

4. Gazing out beyond the extended hands, hold the posture for 20-10 sec. with full breathing. Return to posture in Fig. 8-1 on an exhalation and inhaling return to Virabhadrasana I [6] and repeat on the other side.

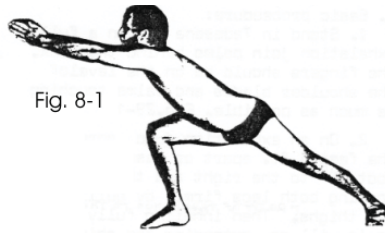


Fig. 8-1

II. Variation procedure:

If the balance is too difficult or the posture too strenuous you can try the posture with the hands placed on the waist, thumbs pointing toward the spine. This helps you feel where your hips are, whether they are level and parallel to the floor as they should be, or slanted to the floor as explained below.

III. Perfecting procedure:

1. Many tend to lock the thumbs of the joined hands either in this posture or in Virabhadrasana I [6], Fig. 8-2. Instead, rest the thumbs side by side as shown in Fig. 8-3. Guard against tilting the hands up, down, or to the side; just extend them to the front. The same applies to the rear foot. It should be in line with the left leg with the toes pointing directly to the rear.



Fig. 8-2



Fig. 8-3

2. Keep the sternum raised with the chest stretched outward and forward throughout the lifting movement. The lifting of the body off the floor is accomplished by a shifting forward of the body weight and not just by lifting upward: the arms and chest are thrust forward as the right leg is straightened, thus swinging the body slightly forward as it is raised.

The degree of lift possible on the left rear leg is partly determined by the extent of tightening of the right leg, so raise the left leg further by pulling the right kneecap up into the thigh.

4. Though the left leg is held high, the left hip is kept down level with the right hip and

parallel to the floor. Fig. 8-4 shows the left hip raised too high; compare this with the same hip correctly rolled downward and inward toward the right leg as shown in Fig. 8-0.

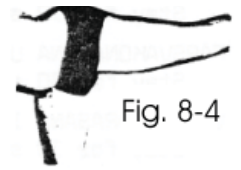


Fig. 8-4

5. Balance is often more difficult when the ankles are loose. Concentrate on firming them and the rest of the right leg such that the whole leg from the bottom of the right foot to the hip is felt to be the trunk of an oak tree rooted firmly in the ground.

IV. Teaching procedure:

Slap or tap any rising left hips down so the students remember to keep it rolling downward into the right leg. Encourage the student to keep the abdominal muscle firm so the belly doesn't hang down. Check to see that their faces are relaxed. This is especially true for this and all other strenuous postures.

You and an assistant can stretch and lift the arms and left leg of the students momentarily to increase his awareness of the height and stretch aimed for in the posture. Then let him continue alone aiming for that.

9. PARSVOTTANASANA

(Side stretching posture)

This posture develops flexibility in the wrists and tones the muscles of the forearm. It helps to correct drooping shoulders,

drawing them back, which helps develop fuller breathing. Flexibility and elasticity are increased in the hips and spine.

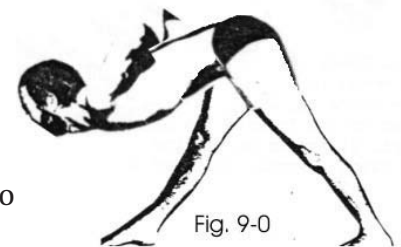


Fig. 9-0

I. Basic procedure:

1. Stand in Tadasana [1] and on a full exhalation, join palms behind the back. The fingers should be on the level of the shoulder blades with the palms touching as much as possible. Fig. 9-1

2. On an exhalation, jump and spread the feet 3 ft. apart or less. Turn the right foot 90° to the right and the left foot 70° to the right. Lock both legs firmly by pulling the kneecaps up into the thighs. Rotate the trunk 90° to the right. Then inhaling fully, throw the head back as far as it will go, extending the chin and shoulders to the rear. Fig. 9-2



Fig. 9-1

3. On a full exhalation bend the trunk forward halfway, take a full breath and exhale and bend until the abdomen rests flat on the right thigh. Then place the chin on the shinbone of the right calf. Fig. 9-0

4. Stay in this posture for 30 sec. with normal breathing, holding the gaze between the eyebrows and focused toward the feet. With a full inhalation, raise the trunk up. Turn the left foot 90° to the left, etc, and repeat the posture on the left side, then jump back to Tadasana [1] and finally release the palms from behind the back.

5. Keep the lower teeth touching lightly on the upper teeth throughout the movements, especially when stretching backward, Fig. 9-2. This holds true for the other postures in Yoga: keep a firm un-clenched jaw.



Fig. 9-2

II. Variation procedure:

You won't be able to achieve a maximum bend with your trunk pressed right against your thigh for a few years at least, so be patient. Don't be concerned at all with touching the head to the knee or the chin to the shin for this will lead to faulty bending techniques. Just bend as much as you can while keeping the back as straight as you can, always thrusting the trunk forward and aiming it toward the center of the thigh.

The joining of the palms behind the back is usually difficult in the beginning and one may

only be able to touch the fingers. Do whatever you can; increased flexibility will come slowly by surely. The wrist could be grasped by the hand behind the back, or the hands placed on the hips for awhile until wrist flexibility improves.

III. Perfecting procedure:

1. It is easier to press the palms flat behind the back if you exhale very deeply, lift the chest, and stretch the shoulders and elbows back fully.

2. The hips are turned to face the front. One imagines screwing the left hip of the rear leg into the right hip of the forward leg. This squaring of the hips to the front is achieved by digging the rear leg into the floor and using it as leverage to propel its hip forward. Simultaneously dig the front leg into the floor and using it as leverage, push its hip backward toward the rear foot. Initially, keep the pubic area rising when you bend backward.

3. With an exhalation, bend forward from the lowest part of the spine (sacral). Suck the abdominal area near the navel in towards the spine as you exhale and extend the chest and the trunk outward and forward, Fig. 9-3. This action helps maintain the concave bend in the lower back. The diaphragm is moved down toward the leg but at the same time is elongated and thrust forward. Keep the center of the chest in line with the center of the thigh as in Janu Sirsasana [25].



Fig. 9-3

4. In the bending movement, push the right leg deep into the right hip, making this hip/leg junction as acute as possible, as was done in Trikonasana [3]. Simultaneously revolve the other hip, and imagine that you're aiming to touch it to the right leg.

5. Keep extending the chin outward and upward during the forward bend movement. Only after you have achieved the fullest bend possible, for you, can you lower your chin to the leg.

6. Tighten and lengthen the muscle on the inner thigh and calf, turning the right thigh and kneecap well to the front. Use the antagonistic force of the thighs to give maximum rotation of the hip, while insuring that the body weight is evenly distributed over the entire foot.

IV. Teaching procedure:

Make sure the legs are pulled tight at the knees and that the student is aiming to press the chest to the thigh, rather than the head to the knee.

Have the student place his hands on his hips and push them until the hips face the front.

For the first several months to a year have the student do this posture keeping his chin extending upward and outward. Once he has attained enough strength and flexibility to press some of his abdomen on his upper thigh, he may lower his head towards the leg.

10. PRASARITA PADOTTANASANA

10 sec. each position with full breathing

12. SARVANGASANA

(Supported whole body posture)

The Sarvangasana posture is the mother of yogic postures. It has a curative effect on most common ailments, especially those of the head and chest area, i.e. asthma, bronchitis, palpitations, breathlessness, and sore throats. Regular practice of this posture reduces common colds and sinus problems. It soothes the nerves and thus benefits sufferers of epilepsy, hypertension, insomnia, those with nervous breakdowns, and those prone to be easily irritated. Due to the inversion of the body, the abdominal organs are activated, relieving pains in this area and causing the bowels to move freely. It also helps to relieve urinary and menstrual disorders. Regular practice twice a day relieves



Fig. 12-0

anemia and brings new vitality, especially to those recovering from a long illness.

Those with high blood pressure should do Halasana [29], for several minutes before doing this posture.

I. Basic procedure

1. Lie flat on the floor with the hands, palms down, by the side. On an exhalation, raise the legs until they are perpendicular to the floor, Fig. 12-1. On the next exhalation, with legs lock straight, lift the lower trunk off the floor by pressing down on the floor with the palms, and roll it and the legs over the head until you are balanced on your upper back.

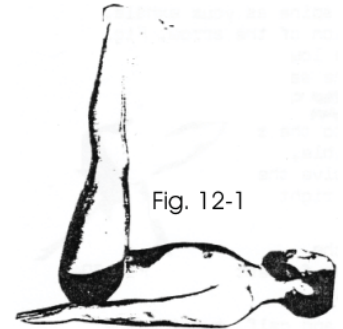


Fig. 12-1

2. Bend the arms at the elbows and, placing the palms on the back of the ribs, push the trunk and legs further forward toward and over the head. Simultaneously lift the legs up vertically overhead. The hands should press the trunk toward the chin until the shoulders are lying well on the floor supporting the body weight, and the breast bone is firmly pressed to the chin, Fig. 12-0.

Now only the head, neck, shoulders and arms rest on the floor; the rest of the body is thrust upward perpendicular to the floor.

3. Stretch the shoulders away from the neck so that the lower back part of the neck can be pressed firmly to the floor (similar to the extension of the back of the neck in Tadasana [1]). Then bring the elbows in toward each other until the space between them is not more than the width of the shoulders.

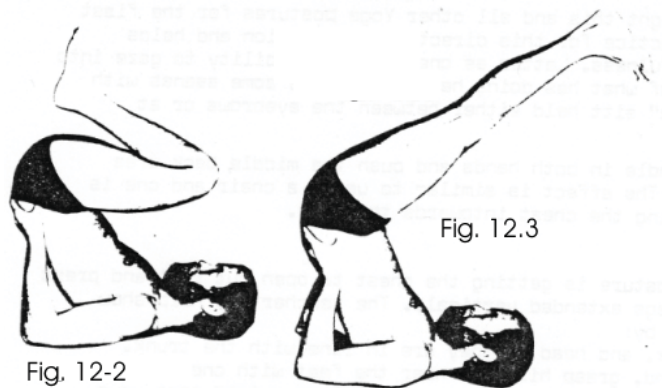
4. Stay in this posture for 5-15 minutes with normal breathing. Gaze at nose level focusing on the center of the chest. Then release the hands and return slowly in the reverse order in which you went up.

II. Variation procedure:

Many find it difficult in the beginning to raise the body up in this way, and to this extent, due to stiff neck vertebrae and general body weakness. Instead of keeping the legs stiff throughout the movement bend them at the knees and pull them in towards the chest. Then lift up the trunk with the palms on the back as shown in Fig. 12-2.

Keeping the legs bent push the buttocks forward toward the head. When the chest is fairly perpendicular to the floor, straighten the legs vertically overhead, Fig. 12-0.

If the neck is so stiff that you are unable to bring the body perpendicular to the floor, push the trunk toward the head as much as possible and then straighten the legs and hold with normal breathing for up to 5 minutes, Fig. 12-3.



Those who are flexible enough to bring the body perpendicular to the floor may still be too weak to hold it vertical, but instead tend to drop the buttocks backward and swing the legs over the head similar to Fig. 12-2 only to a lesser degree. One may use a chair to counteract this to make longer and effective stays in this posture possible. Read the Teaching Procedure point below.

III. Perfecting procedure:

1. Raise the body up slowly and smoothly, keeping the legs locked and feet touching throughout. Do all movements on an exhalation. After staying in the posture for 5-15 min. lower the body to the floor in the reverse order that you went up in. Do this extra slowly. From Fig. 12-0 slowly lower the body continuing

to press the back of the neck as near to the floor as possible. This helps relieve any built up pressure on the neck vertebrae.

2. Place the hands on the back with the index finger pressing the lower rib of the back. From here, lift the trunk forward and upward until the sternum comes forward and presses into the chin firmly. Look at the center of the chest to aid your concentration on keeping the sternum flat and pressing into, or at least toward the chin.

3. To further open out the chest, concentrate on lifting the area between the navel and the sternum upward toward the ceiling. Simultaneously lift the lower back and hips, roll the buttocks in toward the anus, tighten the anus muscle, and push the buttock and pubic area forward.

4. Remember to keep the ankles touching, knees locked, and the legs held in line with the rest of the trunk perpendicular to the floor. Extend the heels from the calves, as in the standing postures, as though you wanted to push them into the ceiling.

5. Aim at lifting the area between the shoulder blades (near the first thoracic vertebrae) inward towards the sternum and extend the floating side ribs on the back upward towards the hips, thus eventually the fingers of the hands may be placed, interlocked, behind the back with the index fingers pressing the lower ribs.

6. Keep the eyes open throughout this and all other Yoga postures for the first couple of years of regular practice for this directs the attention and helps overall watchfulness. Later as one develops ability to gaze into the body and is keenly aware of what he is doing, he can practice asanas with eyes closed but with the "gaze" held either between the eyebrows or at nose level.

7. One may hold a broom handle in both hands and use it to push the middle back area upward and forward. This effect is similar to using a chair and one is able to get maximum lift pushing the chest in towards the chin.

IV. Teaching procedure:

The main problem in this posture is getting the chest to open out flat and press the chin, while keeping the legs extended vertically. The teacher can help show the student what is aimed for by doing the following:

First, adjust his chin, neck, and head so they are in line with the trunk. Approach the student from behind; grasp his legs near the feet with one hand and around the knees with the other such that his feet and calves extend past your right or left shoulder/ear. Then press your knee into his lower back and push this area forward towards his head while at the same time keeping his legs locked straight and leaned back slightly, pulled up toward the ceiling.

A chair may be used by those still too weak to hold their body perpendicular to the floor. Here the student holds the legs of the chair and pulls it toward him such that the edge of the seat pushes his buttocks forward. Simultaneously he slant his legs slightly back from vertical (and so away from the head) until his back is slightly concave.

The pressure from pushing the chest into the chin is often uncomfortable for beginners and breathing is difficult due to pressure on the throat. To relieve this, place one or two folded blankets under the shoulder/elbow area, allowing the head and upper neck to rest off the blanket on the floor. Then perform the posture as usual.

Beginner's elbows will constantly drift apart wider than the shoulders, and the student loses important leverage. This can be countered by placing the upper arms (near the elbows) through a looped rope, which then holds the elbows to the required distance.

In order to get the student to lift the area between the shoulder blades at the first thoracic vertebrae try gently poking him in that region with the ball of your foot. You can also put the loop rope around him at this point and gently pull his upper chest toward you

(and his head) while keeping his shoulders back by pressing them with your feet.

To get the proper heel extension as explained in point 4 on the preceding page, press a board or heavy weight momentarily down on his heels. He must then extend his heels from the calf to keep the weight up.

- 25. JANUSIRSASANA
30 sec. each side with full breathing.
- 18. ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA
60 sec. with full breathing.
- 19. URDHVA MUKHA SVANASANA
60 sec. with full breathing.
- 21. SALABHASANA
30—60 sec. with normal breathing.
- 22. USTRASANA
30 sec. with normal breathing.
- 23. 24. VIRASANA
Stay as long as you like with normal or pranayama breathing.
- 23. 24. VIRASANA
60 sec. each with full even breathing.
- 15. PARIPOORNA NAVASANA
60sec. with normal even breathing.
- 16. ARDHA NAVASANA
10-60 sec. with shallow breathing.
- 26. BHARADVAJASANA I.
10 sec. each side with full breathing.
- 11. UTTANASANA
1 to 5 min. with full breathing. This can be done any time during your Yoga practice that you feel fatigue.
- 13. SAVASANA
5-15 minutes with normal breathing or Pranayama.