

YOGA IN 7 EASY LESSONS

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PRELIMINARY YOGA INFORMATION

NAMASTE!

THE WORD "NAMASTE" IS SANSKRIT AND MEANS "I RECOGNIZE THE GREAT GOODNESS IN YOU." IN THIS COURSE WE WILL TEACH YOU THE FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS AND PRACTICE OF YOGA AS FOLLOW:

- (1) DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING
- (2) SEATED POSITIONS
- (3) STANDING POSITIONS
- (4) INVERTED POSITIONS
- (5) TWISTING POSITIONS
- (6) SEQUENCES
- (7) MEDITATION

ALL YOU NEED IN ORDER TO SUCCEED IS A NEW DIRECTION, NEW INSIGHT, AND A NEW SELF-DISCIPLINE. YES, IT WILL TAKE SOME WORK ON YOUR PART. THE NICEST THING ABOUT IT, HOWEVER, IS THAT SOMEONE HAS ALREADY DONE A LOT OF THE WORK FOR YOU BY PUTTING TOGETHER THIS COURSE FOR YOU.

YOGA IS NOT A RELIGION. IT CAN FACILITATE SPIRITUAL BELIEFS AND PRACICES, BUT IN AND OF ITSELF IS NOTHING MORE THAN A DISCIPLINE. YOGA IS EASY TO LEARN, AND ITS MAIN PURPOSE IS TO COORDINATE (AND THEREBY IMPROVE) THE FUNCTIONS OF THE BODY AND

MIND. YOGA IS A SET OF SPECIALIZED EXERCISES THAT STRENGTHEN A PERSON'S MENTAL AND PHYSICAL CAPABILITIES.

THERE IS NOTHING MYSTERIOUS ABOUT IT.

THESE INSTRUCTIONS WILL PROVIDE EVERYTHING YOU NEED RIGHT NOW. THERE IS A METHOD OF TRAINING BEING USED HERE THAT WORKS, AND YOU WILL GET A LOT OUT OF IT. THE MAIN IDEA IS TO ALLOW YOURSELF TO FEEL IT. REMEMBER THIS AS YOUR TRAINING THEME: NOT TOO LITTLE, NOT TOO MUCH.

THE GOAL IS NOT TO HURRY BUT TO LEARN. AND TO LEARN WELL REQUIRES A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF SELF-DISCIPLINE, COMMITMENT AND MOTIVATION THAT YOU SUPPLY. YOGA IS NOT ONE THING; IT IS MANY THINGS AND TAKES MANY FORMS.

HOWEVER, THERE WILL ALWAYS BE CERTAIN BASIC ELEMENTS THAT MAKE FOR YOGA, AND THOSE ARE PRESENTED IN THE LESSONS THAT FOLLOW.

LESSON (1)
DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

THEORY:

IN HUMAN ANATOMY THE DIAPHRAGM IS A THIN SHEET OF MUSCLE THAT SEPARATES THE ABDOMINAL CAVITY FROM THE CHEST CAVITY. IT IS LOCATED AT ABOUT THE BOTTOM OF THE STERNUM AND RUNS HORIZONTAL ACROSS THE TORSO. THE MAIN FUNCTION OF THE DIAPHRAGM IS TO ASSIST BREATHING. WHEN THE ABDOMEN (THE BELLY) GOES OUTWARD, THE DIAPHRAGM IS PULLED DOWN AND THE LUNGS FILL WITH AIR. WHEN THE ABDOMEN IS CONTRACTED AND PULLED INWARD, THE DIAPHRAGM IS PUSHED UP AND THE LUNGS EMPTY OUT THE AIR.

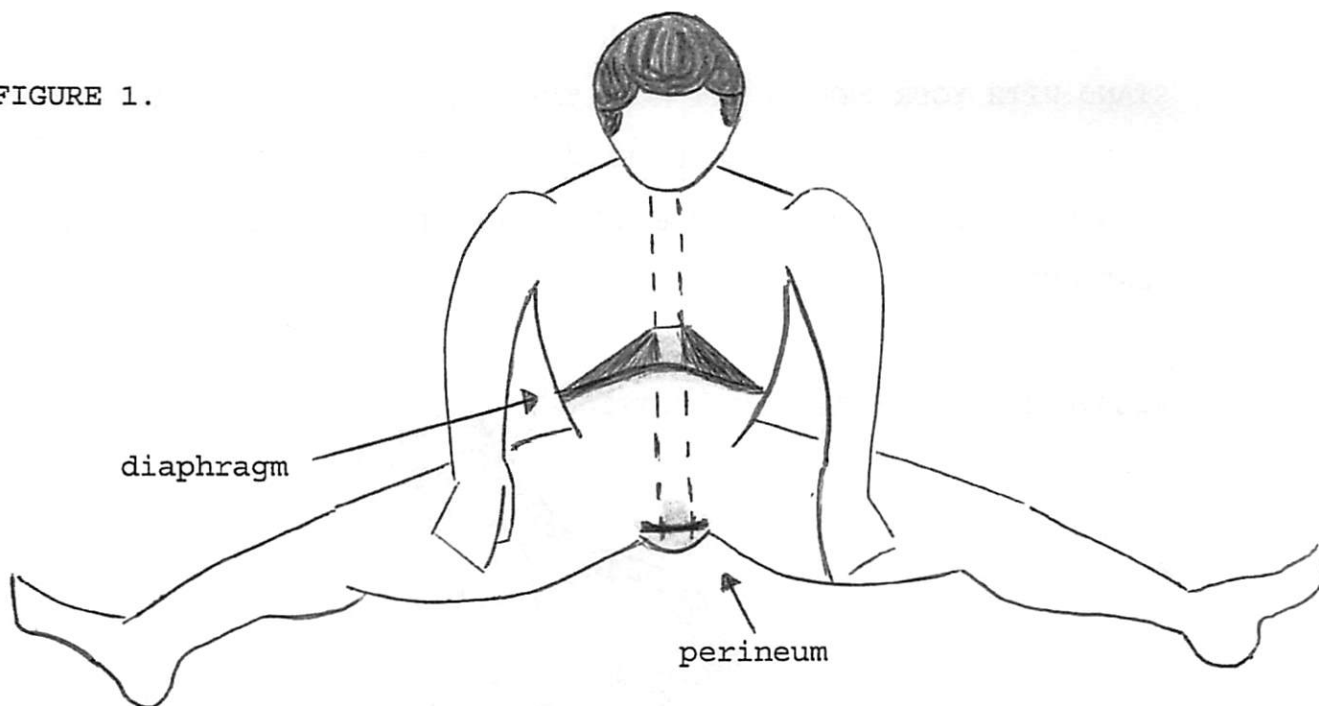
BECAUSE HUMAN BEINGS WALK UPRIGHT (AS OPPOSED TO BENT FORWARD OR ON ALL FOURS), THE NATURAL ACTION OF DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING IS OFTEN COMPROMISED. IN OTHER WORDS, PEOPLE OFTEN BREATHE WITH THE ACTION OF THEIR CHEST ONLY. SINCE THE LUNGS HAVE NO MUSCLES OF THEIR OWN, IT IS NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE USED AIR AT THE BOTTOM OF THE LUNGS TO BE EMPTIED BY WAY OF CHEST BREATHING ALONE.

IN YOGA, THE BREATH AND THE LIFE FORCE ENERGY IN THE BREATH IS CALLED "PRANA," AND THE ACTION OF BREATHING OR BREATH CONTROL IS CALLED "PRANAYAMA." PROPER DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING IS THE CORNERSTONE OF YOGA, AND THIS IS WHY IT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING OF ALL TO LEARN. IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO LEARN BECAUSE IT IS THE NATURAL WAY FOR HUMAN BEINGS TO BREATHE. THERE ARE

ALL KINDS OF BREATH-CONTROL TECHNIQUES IN YOGA, AND ALL OF THEM INVOLVE THE USE OF THE DIAPHRAGM.

ONCE BASIC DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING IS LEARNED, THE NEXT PART TO LEARN IS HOW TO CONTROL THE RHYTHM. EACH BREATH SHOULD BE MEASURED AND DEEP AND SMOOTH. THE BELLY IS ALLOWED TO RELAX AND GO OUT WHEN INHALING, AND THE BELLY IS TIGHTENED AND PULLED IN WHEN EXHALING. THE PELVIC FLOOR OR "PERINEUM MUSCLES" ARE ENGAGED AT THE BOTTOM OF THE EXHALE:

FIGURE 1.



THE PRACTICE IS ESSENTIAL TO PROPER LEARNING AND PROPER TECHNIQUE. THE MAIN IDEA IS TO CONTINUE THE PRACTICE OF DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING UNTIL IT IS MASTERED. IT IS RECOMMENDED TO PRACTICE EVERY DAY FOR AT LEAST TWO WEEKS. WHEN YOGA POSITIONS ARE BEING PRACTICED LATER IN THE COURSE, THE DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING WILL BE MAINTAINED WHILE HOLDING THOSE POSITIONS. ADDITIONALLY, YOU WILL LEARN THE TECHNIQUE

CALLED "ROOT LOCK" (MULA BANDA) .

THE ROOT LOCK IS APPLIED AT THE VERY END OF THE EXHALATION WHEN THE ABDOMINAL MUSCLES ARE TIGHTENED AND PULLED INWARD AND THE LAST AIR IN THE LUNGS IS BEING PUSHED OUT. THE SPHINCTER MUSCLES AND PELVIC FLOOR ARE CONTRACTED AND LIFTED AT THE END OF THIS MOVEMENT.

PRACTICE:

STAND WITH YOUR FEET A BIT MORE THAN SHOULDER WIDTH APART, BEND YOUR KNEES, AND LEAN FORWARD WITH YOUR HANDS ON YOUR THIGHS AND ELBOWS SLIGHTLY BENT. LOOK UP AND STICK YOUR TAIL BONE OUT:

FIGURE 2. MAIN BREATHING POSITION



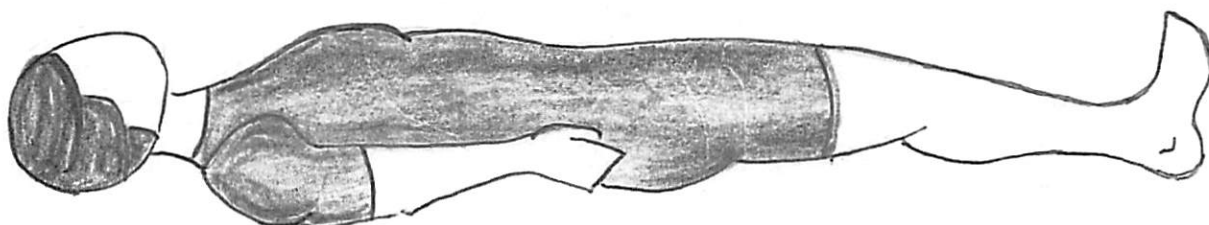
NOW, USE YOUR BELLY TO BREATHE WITH. WHEN INHALING, LET YOUR

BELLY RELAX AND BOW OUTWARD (YOU CAN EVEN PUSH IT OUT A LITTLE BIT). WHEN YOU BEGIN TO EXHALE, TIGHTEN THE MUSCLES IN YOUR BELLY AND PULL YOUR BELLY INWARD TO FORCE THE AIR OUT OF YOUR LUNGS.

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU HAVE JUST LEARNED DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING. OVER THE NEXT TWO OR THREE DAYS, STOP WHATEVER YOU ARE DOING SEVERAL TIMES EACH DAY AND PRACTICE FROM THIS POSITION. TAKE TEN (10) BREATHS EACH TIME AND COUNT THEM ON THE EXHALE. THESE EXERCISES WILL MAKE YOU FEEL GOOD!

USE DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING WHEN YOU ARE SEATED. JUST PLACE YOUR HANDS OVER YOUR BELLY SO YOU CAN FEEL THE ACTION. ALSO, WHEN YOU LIE DOWN, LIE FLAT ON YOUR BACK IN THE "CORPSE POSE" (SAVASANA), PLACE YOUR HANDS OVER YOUR BELLY, AND PRACTICE IN SETS OF TEN BREATHS. ALWAYS COUNT ON THE EXHALE:

FIGURE 3. (SAVASANA)

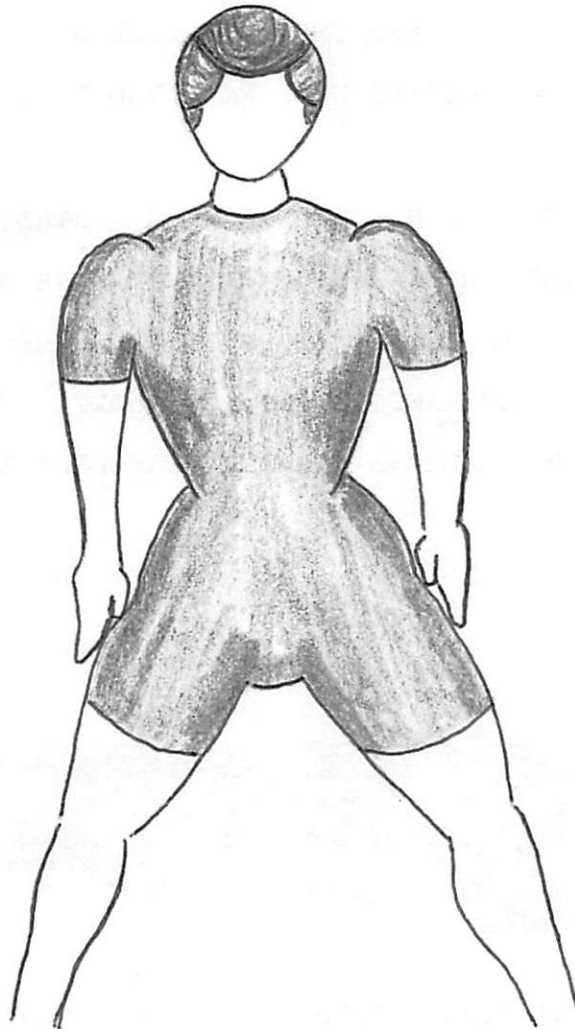


AFTER YOU GET THE RHYTHM, BEGIN TO INCLUDE YOUR ROOT LOCK (MULA BANDA) BY REMEMBERING TO TIGHTEN YOUR BELLY MUSCLES WHILE EXHALING. WHEN YOU GET TO THE END OF THE EXHALATION, CONTRACT YOUR SPHINCTER AND PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLES AND PULL THEM UPWARD. (NOTE: THE ROOT LOCK CAN BE HELD IN PLACE WHILE

INHALING AND WHILE EXHALING, BUT FOR NOW SIMPLY ENGAGE IT WHILE EXHALING.)

ONCE YOU FEEL YOU ARE BREATHING WITH YOUR BELLY REGULARLY AND NATURALLY, BEGIN THE FOLLOWING EXERCISES AND INCLUDE THE ROOT LOCK:

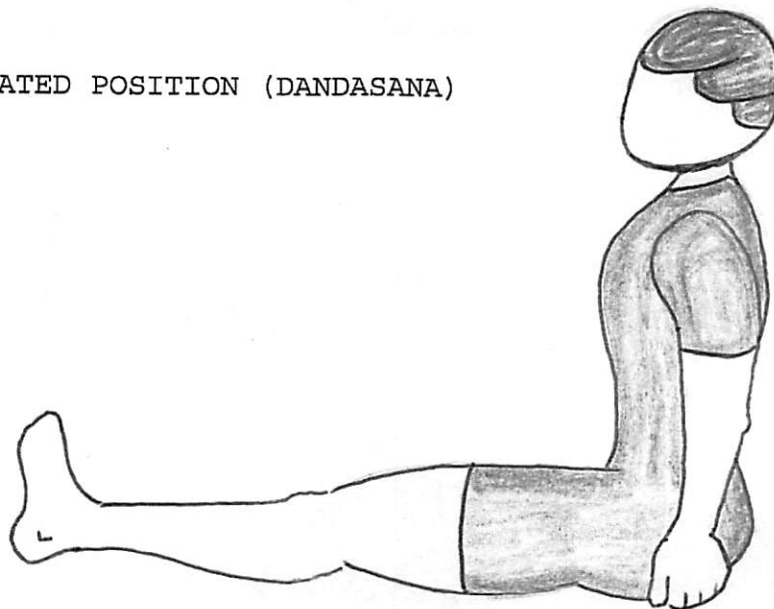
FIGURE 4. STANDING POSITION (TADASANA)



IN THIS POSITION YOU ARE STANDING WITH YOUR FEET ABOUT SHOULDER WIDTH APART, WITH YOUR ARMS AT EASE, CHEST OUT, AND SHOULDERS BACK. THE PRACTICE IS TO BEGIN BELLY (DIAPHRAGMATIC) BREATHING, COUNTING ON THE EXHALATION WHEN YOU ENGAGE THE ROOT

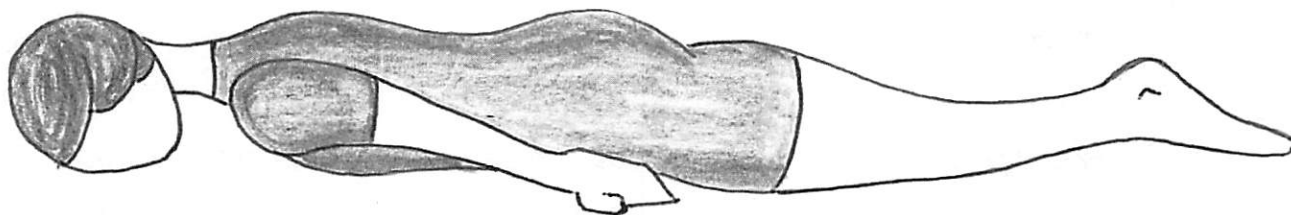
LOCK, AND GET TEN (10) REPETITIONS IN THIS POSITION.

FIGURE 5. SEATED POSITION (DANDASANA)



IN THIS POSITION YOU ARE SEATED ON THE FLOOR WITH YOUR BACK STRAIGHT, YOUR LEGS EXTENDED STRAIGHT OUT IN FRONT OF YOU, AND YOUR HANDS ON THE FLOOR NEXT TO YOUR HIPS. AGAIN, ENGAGE THE BELLY BREATHING WITH THE ROOT LOCK AT THE END OF THE EXHALE AND PERFORM TEN (10) FULL BREATHS.

FIGURE 6. PRONE POSITION (SAVASANA)



IN THIS POSITION YOU ARE LYING FACE-DOWN ON THE FLOOR WITH YOUR HANDS EITHER AT YOUR SIDES OR OUT IN FRONT OF YOU AND YOUR LEGS EXTENDED. MOST OF YOUR BODY WEIGHT IS ON YOUR

ABDOMEN. GO AHEAD AND DO TEN (10) BREATH REPETITIONS HERE AS WELL. BE SURE TO MAKE THESE BREATHS AS FULL AS YOU ARE ABLE TO (EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE LYING ON YOUR BELLY AND MAY FIND IT HARDER TO BREATHE IN THAT POSITION).

FIGURE 7. MAIN BREATHING POSTURE



FINALLY, PRACTICE BREATH CONTROL AS FOLLOWS:

1. MAKE THE INTAKE OF AIR ABOUT TWICE AS LONG AS THE RELEASE OF AIR (THIS HAS THE EFFECT OF CREATING AN ENERGIZED FEELING IN YOUR BODY). BUILD UP TO TEN (10) BREATH REPETITIONS.
2. MAKE THE RELEASE OF AIR ABOUT TWICE AS LONG AS THE INTAKE OF AIR. (THIS HAS THE EFFECT OF RELAXING YOUR BODY.) BUILD UP TO TEN (10) REPETITIONS ON THIS EXERCISE AS WELL.
3. TAKE NICE BIG BREATHS AND HOLD IT WHILE YOUR LUNGS ARE

FULL. MAKE A MENTAL COUNT OF HOW LONG YOU ARE HOLDING IT.
THEN EXHALE ALL OF THE AIR IN YOUR LUNGS AND HOLD RIGHT THERE
(WITHOUT TAKING IN ANY AIR) AND COUNT. DO THIS EXERCISE THREE
(3) TIMES ONLY.

REMEMBER THAT IT IS BEST TO BREATHE THROUGH THE NOSE WHILE
PRACTICING YOGA. IT IS ALSO UP TO YOU TO PERFECT THESE
TECHNIQUES TO YOUR SATISFACTION BEFORE MOVING ON TO THE NEXT
LESSON.

END OF LESSON (1). NAMASTE.

YOGA LESSON (2)

SEATED POSTURES

THEORY:

THE POSITIONS IN YOGA ARE CALLED "ASANAS" AND THEY HAVE PURPOSES OTHER THAN STRETCHING. IN FACT, STRETCHING IS PROBABLY THE LEAST IMPORTANT PART OF YOGA TRAINING. ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PURPOSES OF YOGA IS TO GRADUALLY REMOVE WHATEVER KEEPS THE LIFE FORCE ENERGY (PRANA) FROM FLOWING FREELY THROUGHOUT THE BODY AND MIND OF THE PRACTITIONER ("YOGI" FOR MEN; "YOGINI" FOR WOMEN). THE CLEANSING AND PURIFICATION OF ALL PHYSICAL SYSTEMS AND MENTAL CHANNELS IS THE MAIN GOAL OF YOGA: NOTHING MORE, AND NOTHING LESS.

THIS IS HOW THE PRACTICE OF YOGA OFTEN LEADS TO THE RETURN OF PHYSICAL HEALTH AND VITALITY AS WELL AS MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL IMPROVEMENT. THE LIFE FORCE ENERGY IN THE BREATH IS WHAT CIRCULATES WITHIN AND THROUGHOUT THE BODY AND MIND AND, WHEN UNOBSTRUCTED, BALANCES EVERYTHING.

THE SEATED POSITIONS (ASANAS) ARE THE EASIEST TO LEARN. IN ADDITION, THE SEATED POSITIONS TEND TO AFFECT THE FIRST AREA OF THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM THAT OFTEN CONTAINS OBSTRUCTIONS (THE TAILBONE OR "COCCYGEAL PLEXUS"). THE TECHNICAL DETAILS ARE NOT IMPORTANT.

THE SEATED POSITIONS INCREASE BLOOD FLOW TO THE MUSCLES AND TO THE INTERNAL ORGANS, GENERALLY. THE AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

IS CLEANSSED AND STRENGTHENED AS WELL. THE MOST BASIC HUMAN INSTINCTS AND EMOTIONS ARE THOUGHT TO BE CONTAINED AT THIS LEVEL.

THESE POSITIONS ALSO NURTURE THE LIVER, KIDNEYS, AND PANCREAS WHILE BUILDING MUSCLE STRENGTH IN THE BACK, HIPS, LEGS AND ABDOMEN. THE STRETCHING OF THE HAMSTRINGS, QUADRICEPS AND LOWER BACK (LUMBAR AREA) TEND TO INCREASE FLEXIBILITY, BALANCE AND BLOOD FLOW IN THOSE AREAS. IT IS NOT UNUSUAL FOR A PRACTITIONER TO HAVE AN UNEXPLAINABLE RELEASE OF PENT-UP EMOTION AFTER HAVING PERFORMED SEATED POSITIONS.

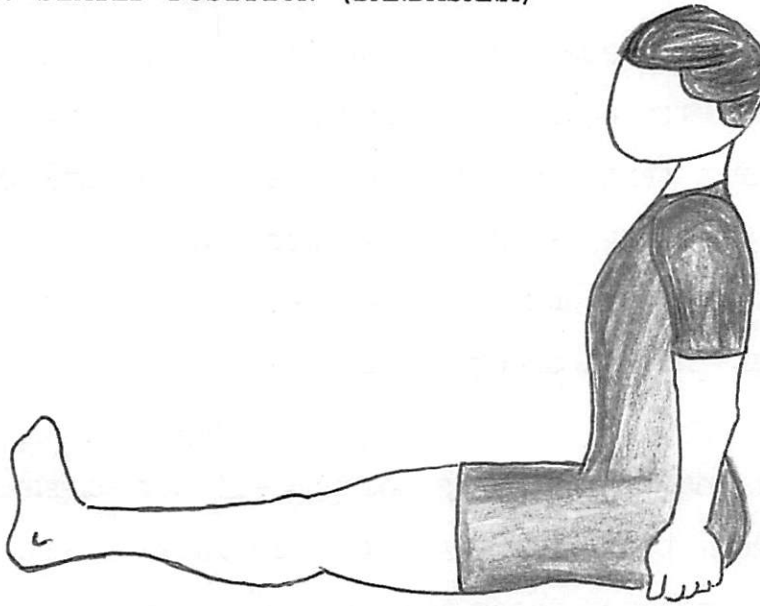
AGAIN, THE POSITION ITSELF MEANS NOTHING WITHOUT DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING AND ROOT LOCK. THE MAIN IDEA IS TO RELAX AND BRING THE BODY INTO A POSITION WHERE THE LIFE FORCE ENERGY--VIA THE BREATHING TECHNIQUE--CAN BE ACTIVATED WITHIN THE TARGETED AREA(S). IT IS A BIG MISTAKE TO PRACTICE YOGA WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT DOES.

PRACTICE:

NOW IS A GOOD TIME TO MOVE FORWARD IN YOUR PRACTICE WITH A SENSE OF EASE AND READINESS. BEFORE BEGINNING ANY POSITION(S), TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES AND SOCKS. THERE IS NOTHING TECHNICAL ABOUT ANY OF THESE POSITIONS, BUT EACH POSITION DOES HAVE DIFFERENT (OR SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT EFFECTS). THE REPETITION IS CALLED PRACTICE, BUT THERE IS ALSO A BALANCE IN THIS. YOU DO NOT WANT TO GO OVERBOARD. REMEMBER: NOT TOO LITTLE AND NOT TOO MUCH.

FIND A SPOT ON THE FLOOR THAT IS ROOMY AND COMFORTABLE FOR YOU
(PREFERABLY WHERE YOU WILL NOT BE UNDULY DISTURBED) :

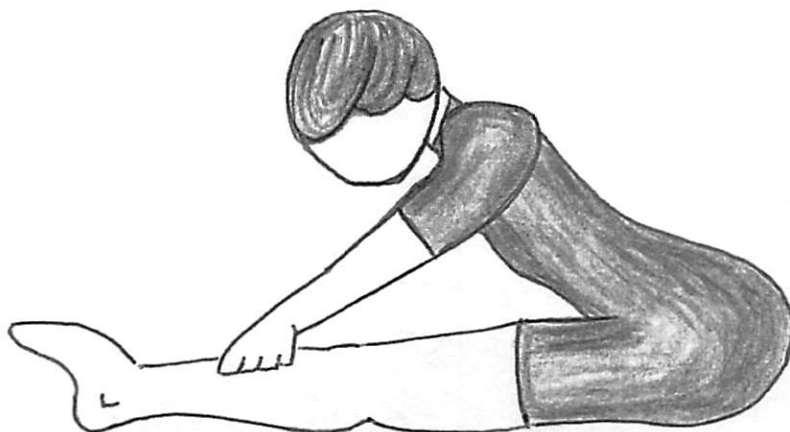
FIGURE 1. SEATED POSITION (DANDASANA)



IN THIS POSITION YOU ARE SITTING ON THE FLOOR WITH YOUR BACK STRAIGHT AND YOUR LEGS STRAIGHT OUT IN FRONT OF YOU. YOUR HANDS ARE ON THE FLOOR NEXT TO YOUR HIPS, AND THEY ARE GIVING YOU SUPPORT AND KEEPING YOUR SHOULDERS BACK. REMEMBER TO KEEP YOUR TAILBONE CURLED OUTWARD AND THEN ENGAGE DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING (WITH ROOT LOCK ON THE EXHALE) FOR TEN (10) REPETITIONS.

YOU SHOULD FEEL GROUNDED AND FIRM. IT IS GOOD TO KEEP YOUR BACK NICE AND STRAIGHT, CHEST UP AND OUT, WITH LEGS RELAXED. THERE IS NO HURRY TO COMPLETE ANY POSITION. THE GOAL IS TO PERFORM THE POSITION PROPERLY.

FIGURE 2. SEATED POSITION (PACHIMOTTANASANA)

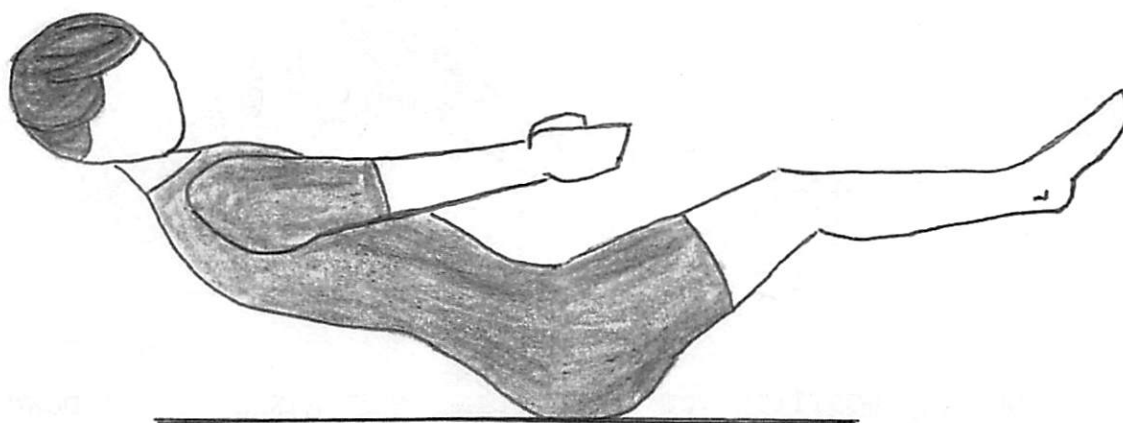


IN THIS POSITION YOU ARE PLACING YOUR HANDS AS FAR DOWN ON YOUR LEGS AS YOU CAN AND LEANING FORWARD OVER YOUR LEGS. YOU SHOULD FEEL THE STRETCHING OF YOUR HAMSTRINGS.

DO NOT TRY TO GO TOO FAR. YOU SHOULD STOP THE STRETCH WHERE IT BEGINS TO HURT AND BACK OFF A LITTLE AND STAY RIGHT THERE. WHILE THE POSITION HAS YOUR ATTENTION, IT IS MORE DIFFICULT TO USE DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING (NOT TO MENTION ROOT LOCK). THE SOLUTION IS TO MAINTAIN YOUR ATTENTION ON THE BREATHING FIRST. PROPER BREATHING IS ALWAYS THE FIRST PRIORITY, NOT THE PHYSICAL POSITION.

SO, GO AHEAD AND GET TEN (10) NICE SMOOTH DEEP REPETITIONS OF DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING (WITH THE ROOT LOCK, OF COURSE) RIGHT HERE. REMEMBER: YOU MAY NEED TO BUILD UP TO TEN (10) NICE SMOOTH DEEP BREATHS. WHEN BEGINNING, GET FIVE (5) BREATHS.

FIGURE 3. SEATED POSITION (PARIPURNA NAVASANA)



THIS POSITION IS A LITTLE MORE STRENUOUS. THE WAY TO BEGIN IS TO USE YOUR HANDS TO BALANCE YOUR WEIGHT, LEAN BACK SLIGHTLY AND LIFT YOUR LEGS. (IF NECESSARY, YOU CAN ALSO BEND YOUR KNEES A LITTLE.)

YOU ALSO MAY NOT BE ABLE TO HOLD THE POSITION FOR TEN (10) BREATHS, SO TRY FIVE (5) BREATHS FIRST. REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE BALANCING ON YOUR TAILBONE (COCCYX) AND THE MUSCLES IN YOUR BACK, LEGS AND ABDOMEN ARE CONTRACTED.

AN ALTERNATIVE IS TO BALANCE ON YOUR TAILBONE WHILE BENDING YOUR LEGS AND HOLDING THE KNEES. (THE MAIN IDEA IS TO PRESSURIZE THE BODY WHILE CONTINUING TO ENGAGE DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING ROOT LOCK ON THE EXHALE.)

FIGURE 4. SEATED POSITION (BADDHAKONASANA)



THIS POSITION IS MOSTLY SELF-EXPLANATORY. YOU PUT YOUR LEGS OUT TO THE SIDE AND BRING YOUR FEET TOGETHER AT THE PERINEUM. AT THE START, YOU DO NOT WANT TO STRETCH TOO MUCH, SO LEAVE YOURSELF A LITTLE ROOM. (THE LAST THING YOU WANT IS A PULLED GROIN, SO GO EASY.)

YOUR KNEES CAN BE LEFT IN THE AIR IF THEY DO NOT COMFORTABLY REST ON THE FLOOR. EVENTUALLY EVERYTHING WILL ADJUST. THIS TAKES A LOT OF THE PRESSURE OFF (AND THIS IS A STRETCH POSITION, NOT A PRESSURE POSITION.)

THERE IS NO DOUBT IT WILL FEEL AWKWARD AT FIRST TO BE IN THIS POSITION, BUT EVENTUALLY IT WILL LEVEL OUT. REMEMBER: KEEP YOUR FOCUS ON THE BREATH AND THE BREATH REPETITIONS. TRY NOT TO MOVE AROUND OR ADJUST TOO MUCH ONCE YOU FIND A POSITION.

AT FIRST, GET FIVE (5) BREATHS (UNLESS YOU FIND IT EASY TO GET YOUR TEN (10) BREATHS IN) .

ALTOGETHER, YOUR PRACTICE OF THIS LESSON IS MAYBE TEN (10) COMPLETE SESSIONS (HOWEVER LONG THAT TAKES). YOU WILL NOT MASTER THE POSITIONS IN THAT TIME, BUT YOU WILL BE FAMILIAR ENOUGH WITH THEM TO MOVE ON TO LESSON (3). ALL OF THIS IS PRELIMINARY AND BASIC TRAINING.

IDEALLY, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO PERFORM THE FOUR (4) POSITIONS IN ANY SEQUENCE WITH A FULL TEN (10) BREATHS EACH BEFORE YOU PROCEED TO THE NEXT LESSON. THIS WILL BE YOUR GOAL.

END OF LESSON (2). NAMASTE.

LESSON (3)
STANDING POSTURES

THEORY:

THERE ARE A LOT OF STANDING POSITIONS IN YOGA. THIS IS DUE TO THE FACT THAT THEY ARE VERY BENEFICIAL. ALL OF THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF HEALTH AND FITNESS ARE INVOLVED: BALANCE, STRENGTH, COORDINATION, ENDURANCE AND FLEXIBILITY. THE STANDING POSITIONS ALSO REQUIRE MORE FOCUS, CONCENTRATION AND AWARENESS GENERALLY.

ALTHOUGH THERE ARE SOME DIFFICULT STANDING POSITIONS IN YOGA, THESE ARE ONLY FOR VERY ADVANCED PRACTITIONERS. IN YOGA THEORY, THE PRIMARY LIFE FORCE ENERGY (KUNDALINI) LIES DORMANT--INACTIVATED--AT THE AREA OF THE TAILBONE. WHEN THIS ENERGY IS ACTIVATED THROUGH THE PRACTICE OF YOGA (OR IN ANY OTHER WAY), IT TRAVELS UP THE MAIN ENERGY PATHWAY IN THE BODY, WHICH IS THE SPINE OR BACKBONE (SUSHUMNA NADI). IT RELEASES ENERGY AS IT MOVES UPWARD TOWARD THE CROWN OF THE HEAD (SAHASRARA CHAKRA).

THE BACKBONE HOUSES THE SPINAL CORD, WHICH IS THE SUPER HIGHWAY OF THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM. EVERY ACTION OF THE BODY ORIGINATES AND IS PROCESSED THROUGH THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM. THE AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM REFERS TO TWO PARTS: THE SYMPATHETIC AND PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEMS. THE SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM INVOLVES THE CONTRACTION OF THE BODY/MIND, AND THE PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM INVOLVES THE RELAXATION

OF THE BODY/MIND.

YOGA INVOLVES ENGAGING THE PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM. HOWEVER, MANY OF THE STANDING POSITIONS ENGAGE THE SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM, AND THIS IS ALSO NEEDED. THE BACK-AND-FORTH BETWEEN CONTRACTION AND RELAXATION IS A CONSTANT THEME. AGAIN, A BALANCE BETWEEN THESE STATES IS PREFERABLE.

INDEED, IN YOGA THERE ARE TWO PRIMARY PARTS OF LIFE FORCE ENERGY: ONE IS THE FEMININE PREMISE AND THE OTHER IS THE MASCULINE PREMISE. THEY ARE COMPLIMENTARY OPPOSITES THAT WORK TOGETHER TO SUSTAIN LIFE AND TO IMPROVE LIFE. THE MASCULINE IS FORCEFUL AND ACTIVE AND CALCULATING; THE FEMININE IS RESERVED AND SUBDUED AND EMOTIONAL.

THESE PREMISES ARE IN THE BREATH, IN THE STATE OF MIND, AND IN THE ACTIVITY OF THE BODY: CONTRACTION AND RELAXATION, SYMPATHETIC AND PARASYMPATHETIC, HARD AND SOFT. THESE ENERGIES ARE THE BACKBONE OF THE ELECTROMAGNETIC OR SUBTLE BODY, AND THEY TRAVEL THROUGH CHANNELS (NADIS) THAT COME TOGETHER AND CONNECT AT CERTAIN JUNCTURES (CHAKRAS) ALONG THE VERTICAL LINE OF THE BACKBONE. THESE ARE THE EQUIVALENT OF NERVE CENTERS IN THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM.

LIFE FORCE ENERGY (I.E., BREATH OR "PRANA") CARRIES CERTAIN KINDS OF INFORMATION THAT IS STORED AND REGULATED AT THE NERVE CENTERS (CHAKRAS)--LIKE DATABASES. THIS INFORMATION INCLUDES THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, INSTINCTS, IMPRESSIONS, HABITS, ATTITUDES, MEMORIES, ETC. THE MAIN IDEA IS TO EXPAND HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS

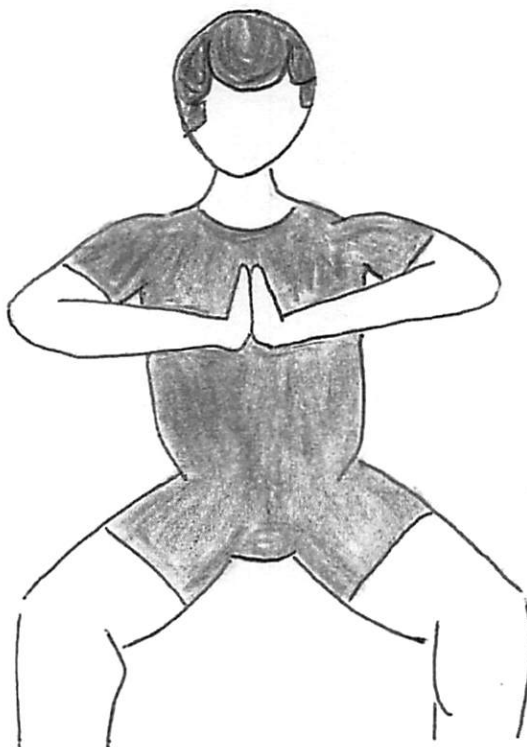
BY OPENING THESE NERVE CENTERS AND BECOMING AWARE OF THE INFORMATION CONTAINED THEREIN.

YOGA IS NOT ALL THAT COMPLICATED. IT IS SIMPLY THE PRACTICE OF USING THE BREATH TO OPEN THE NERVE CENTERS. THE VARIOUS POSITIONS ARE USED TO HELP ACCOMPLISH THIS FEAT OF GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT. YOGA IS A MIND SCIENCE THAT IS USED IN ORDER TO EXPAND HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS.

PRACTICE:

THE FIRST STANDING POSITION IS VERY EASY TO PERFORM BUT IS ESSENTIAL TO ANY YOGA PRACTICE. YOU MAY HAVE ALREADY NOTICED THAT EVERY POSITION IS HELD FOR TEN (1) DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHS WITH THE ROOT LOCK. TEN IS A PERFECT NUMBER, BUT IF TEN PROVES TO BE TOO MUCH, CUT IT TO FIVE (5).

FIGURE 1. STANDING POSITION (TADASANA)



THIS IS MODIFIED A LITTLE. STAND WITH YOUR FEET MORE THAN SHOULDER WIDTH APART, AND BE SURE TO BEND YOUR KNEES AND LOWER YOURSELF INTO A SOLID STANCE. PUT YOUR HANDS TOGETHER OVER THE CENTER OF YOUR CHEST (MUDRA) AND KEEP YOUR BACK STRAIGHT. GET A NICE FULL TEN (10) BREATHS RIGHT HERE, AND ENGAGE THE ROOT LOCK ON EACH EXHALE.

ONE THING TO BEGIN NOW IS A KIND OF BREATH CONTROL AT YOUR THROAT (UJJAYI). WHEN YOU EXHALE, TIGHTEN THE THROAT AND MAKE IT A LITTLE BIT HARDER FOR THE AIR TO PASS. IT SHOULD MAKE A SLIGHT SOUND LIKE "AHHH." THIS IS NOT A BIG DEAL RIGHT NOW, BUT IT IS A VALID PART OF THE PROCESS.

FIGURE 2. STANDING POSITION (SAMA-STHITI)



IN THIS POSITION YOU SIMPLY STAND UP STRAIGHT AND BEND BACKWARD A LITTLE. YOUR ARMS CAN EITHER BE EXTENDED OVER YOUR HEAD OR THEY CAN BE ON THE SIDE/BACK OF YOUR LEGS TO GIVE SUPPORT.

THE BEND IS MOSTLY IN THE LOWER BACK; KNEES ARE SLIGHTLY BENT FOR BETTER BALANCE. IF NEED BE, YOU CAN PUT ONE LEG BACK WITH YOUR HANDS EITHER OVERHEAD OR ON YOUR WAIST. THE MAIN PURPOSE IS TO ACHIEVE A BACKWARD BEND FOR A FULL TEN (10) BREATHS.

BE CAREFUL NOT TO LOSE YOUR BALANCE! IF YOU FEEL DIZZY AT ANY TIME, STOP WHAT YOU ARE DOING AND COLLECT YOURSELF BEFORE PROCEEDING.

FIGURE 3. STANDING POSITION (UTTANASANA)



IN THIS POSITION YOU BEND OVER, PLACE YOUR HANDS ON THE FRONT OF YOUR LEGS AND STRETCH THE BACK AND THE HAMSTRINGS. AT FIRST, THIS POSITION WILL USUALLY BE A BIT TIGHT. ONCE AGAIN, REMEMBER TO GO EASY!

YOUR BACKBONE WILL BE STRETCHED OUT, AND THE BACK OF YOUR LEGS WILL BECOME FLEXIBLE. IT IS IMPORTANT TO RELAX AND BREATHE

INTO THE POSITION--AND NOT TO TRY TO GO TOO FAR TOO FAST! GET TEN (10) FULL BREATHS.

THE BREATHING IS GOING TO BE SLIGHTLY MORE DIFFICULT IN THIS POSITION BUT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO DO IT. WHATEVER YOU DO, DO NOT BOUNCE UP AND DOWN! (AND IF YOU HAVE SERIOUS HEALTH OR BACK PROBLEMS, CONSULT WITH A PHYSICIAN BEFORE DOING ANY KIND OF YOGA POSITION(S).)

FIGURE 4. STANDING POSITION (UKATASANA)



IN THIS POSITION YOU HAVE YOUR LEGS TOGETHER AND SQUAT DOWN AS IF YOU ARE GOING TO SIT IN A CHAIR. YOUR HANDS ARE EITHER OUT IN FRONT OF YOU, RAISED IN THE AIR SLIGHTLY FORWARD, OR ON YOUR HIPS (IF YOU CANNOT HOLD YOUR ARMS OUT).

ONCE AGAIN, WHEN YOU STRIKE THE CORRECT POSITION, DO NOT MOVE AROUND. YOU MUST KEEP THE BODY STILL IN THE POSITION. AND THEN GET YOUR TEN (10) FULL BREATHS FROM THIS POSITION.

THIS POSITION DOES STRENGTHEN THE HIP AND KNEE JOINTS, THE

THIGH MUSCLES, AND THE ANKLES. IT TENDS TO GATHER AND FOCUS ATTENTION, CONCENTRATION AND BALANCE. THE WEIGHT IS KEPT MOSTLY ON THE HEELS AND THE LEG MUSCLES ARE CONTRACTED. THE FEET SHOULD BE POINTING STRAIGHT AHEAD.

REMEMBER: EACH LESSON SHOULD BE PRACTICED AT LEAST TEN TIMES BEFORE MOVING TO THE NEXT LESSON. THERE ARE GOOD REASONS FOR THIS KIND OF SELF-DISCIPLINE.

END OF LESSON (3). NAMASTE.

LESSON (4)
INVERTED POSTURES

THEORY:

YOGA IS THOROUGH. IT AFFECTS EVERY PART OF THE HUMAN BODY AND MIND. THERE IS NOTHING AT ALL LEFT TO CHANCE. FOR PURPOSES OF THIS LESSON, THE INVERTED POSITIONS INVOLVE THE HEAD BEING LOWER THAN THE HIPS.

ONE REASON FOR INVERSION IS TO USE GRAVITY TO GET MORE BLOOD TO THE BRAIN. BUT THIS IS NOT THE ONLY REASON. WHEN THE BODY IS TURNED UPSIDE DOWN (OR SIGNIFICANTLY TILTED THAT WAY), THERE ARE UNIQUE CHANGES IN BOTH THE BODY AND THE MIND. IN THE BODY, THE NORMAL PRESSURES ON MUSCLES, LIGAMENTS, BONES, BLOOD VESSELS AND INTERNAL ORGANS ARE REVERSED. THE HEART, FOR EXAMPLE, IS MADE TO PUMP BLOOD AND PROCESS OXYGEN MUCH DIFFERENTLY.

THE EFFECT OF GETTING A LOT MORE BLOOD INTO THE BRAIN HAS SOME BENEFITS AS WELL. THE BLOOD CARRIES OXYGEN, AND THE BRAIN LOVES OXYGEN. THE MORE OXYGEN THE BRAIN GETS, THE BETTER THE BRAIN FEELS. THERE ARE PROBABLY MANY ADDITIONAL BENEFITS THAT TIE INTO THE PRACTICE. SOME EARLY PRACTITIONERS PERFORMED ONLY HEADSTANDS, SO THERE MUST BE SOMETHING TO IT...

IN THESE LESSONS ONLY LIMITED INVERTED POSITIONS WILL BE LEARNED. THESE WILL BE MORE THAN ENOUGH, HOWEVER, TO SATISFY ALL OF THE GOALS INVOLVED. AND, THEY ARE FAIRLY EASY AND

QUITE SAFE.

THE INVERTED POSITIONS ALSO HAVE OTHER BENEFITS. THEY TEND TO STRENGTHEN THE SHOULDERS AND NECK; THEY ARE GOOD FOR A PERSON'S METABOLISM, PARTICULARLY THE THYROID GLAND; THEY INFUSE THE EARS, EYES, NOSE AND MOUTH WITH RICH BLOOD; THEY TEACH A CERTAIN KIND OF DISCIPLINE AND CONFIDENCE.

THERE ARE MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL BENEFITS, TOO. THE POSITIONS ARE TO BE ACCEPTED WITH AN OPEN MIND, AND THEY ARE TO BE MAINTAINED EVEN WHEN THEY FEEL SOMEWHAT UNCOMFORTABLE. THIS TRAINS THE PRACTITIONER TO RELAX IN THE MIDST OF CONFLICT OR CONTROVERSY.

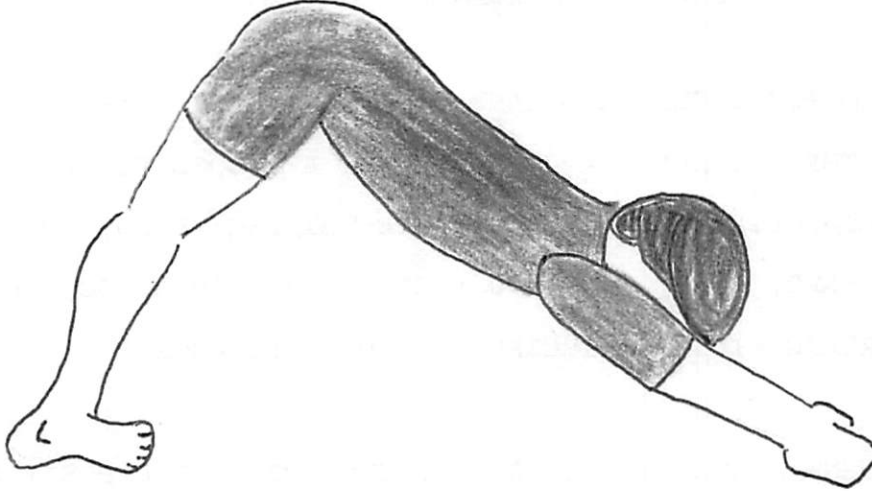
ALL IN ALL, THE INVERTED POSITIONS ARE REQUIRED FOR A WELL-ROUNDED PRACTICE. ALTHOUGH THEY ARE NOT NECESSARILY EASY, THEY ARE NECESSARY. WITH PROPER INSTRUCTION AND UNDERSTANDING, THE VALUE OF THESE POSITIONS BECOMES APPARENT.

PRACTICE:

THE POSITIONS THAT FOLLOW ARE EASY TO PERFORM. THEY ARE ALSO AMONG THOSE THAT ARE THE MOST POPULAR IN YOGA PRACTICE. YOU WILL NOT NEED TO DO ANYTHING SPECIAL. USE THE SAME BREATHING TECHNIQUE, THE SAME PRACTICE AREA, AND THE SAME POSITIVE APPROACH.

FIGURE 1. INVERTED POSITION (ADHO MUKHA SVANSANA)

FIGURE 1. INVERTED POSITION (ADHO MUKHA SVANSANA)



YOU CAN BEGIN ON YOUR HANDS AND KNEES AND LIFT YOUR TAILBONE INTO THE AIR. YOUR ARMS ARE LEFT STRAIGHT OUT IN FRONT OF YOU WITH THE WEIGHT MOSTLY ON YOUR PALMS. AT FIRST, YOU WILL LIKELY NEED TO KEEP THE KNEES SLIGHTLY BENT.

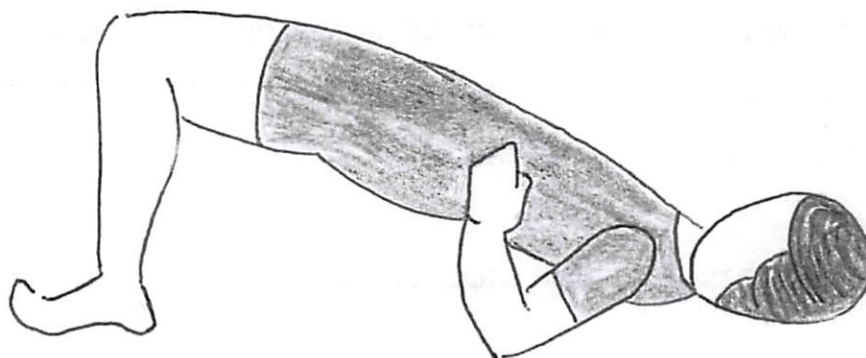
THIS POSITION IS COMMONLY KNOWN AS "DOWNWARD-FACING DOG." (IT AND "UPWARD-FACING DOG" ARE PROBABLY THE BEST KNOWN OF ALL YOGA POSITIONS.) IF THE WEIGHT ON THE HANDS AND WRISTS IS TOO MUCH, YOU CAN BEGIN THE POSITION ON YOUR ELBOWS AND KEEP YOUR KNEES BENT A LITTLE MORE. THE MAIN FOCUS IS KEEPING YOUR HEAD BELOW YOUR WAIST.

YOU WILL PROBABLY WANT TO BEGIN WITH FIVE (5) BREATHS ON THIS POSITION AND WORK YOUR WAY UP TO TEN (10) DURING YOUR TEN PRELIMINARY PRACTICES (I.E., THE RECOMMENDED NUMBER OF PRACTICES OF THIS PARTICULAR LESSON BEFORE MOVING TO THE NEXT LESSON).

EVENTUALLY YOU WILL BE ABLE TO KEEP YOUR ARMS AND LEGS STRAIGHT AND MASTER THIS POSITION. LIKE ANYTHING ELSE, YOU

WILL GET BETTER AT IT WITH PRACTICE.

FIGURE 2. INVERTED POSITION (SETU BANDA SARVANGASANA)



FOR THIS POSITION YOU BEGIN BY LYING FLAT ON YOUR BACK WITH YOUR KNEES BENT AND YOUR FEET FLAT TO THE FLOOR BENEATH THEM, HANDS PRESSING AGAINST THE FLOOR AT YOUR SIDE. AND NOW YOU SIMPLY LIFT YOUR WAIST UP AS HIGH AS YOU CAN AND HOLD RIGHT THERE.

THE WEIGHT IS ON YOUR FEET AND YOUR SHOULDERS. (NEVER PUT THE WEIGHT ON YOUR NECK OR HEAD IN THIS POSITION.) IF YOU HAVE TROUBLE HOLDING A FIRM POSITION, YOU CAN USE YOUR HANDS TO HELP SUPPORT YOUR WEIGHT BY PLACING THEM ON YOUR WAIST.

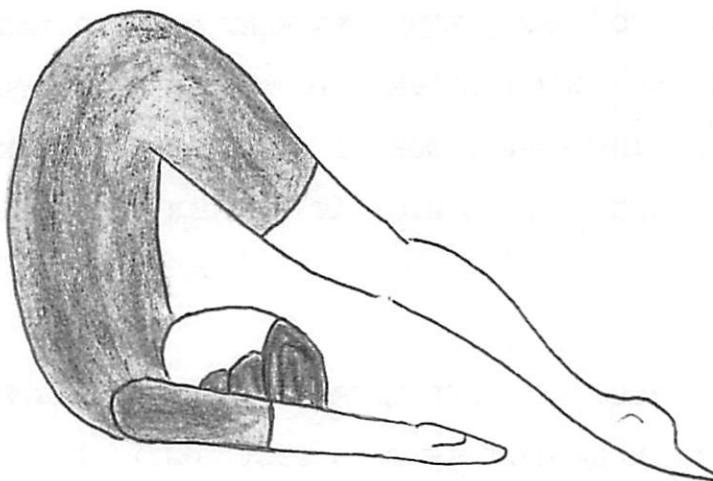
THIS POSITION IS ONE OF THE ABSOLUTE BEST POSITIONS FOR OBTAINING A FULL AND COMPLETE SET OF DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHS WITH BOTH THE UJJAYI TECHNIQUE OF SOUND/REGULATION IN THE THROAT AND THE ROOT LOCK (MULA BANDA) AT THE PERINEUM.

AGAIN, YOU ARE LIKELY GOING TO PERFORM BETTER BY BEGINNING

WITH FIVE (5) BREATH REPETITIONS. IT WILL BE RELATIVELY EASY, HOWEVER, TO WORK YOUR WAY UP TO THE FULL TEN (10) BREATH REPETITIONS YOU WANT. REMEMBER THAT YOGA IS NOT A RACE; IT IS ALL ABOUT USING SIMPLE TECHNIQUES IN COMBINATION AND GETTING THESE RIGHT BY WAY OF PRACTICE.

SO, ONCE YOU HAVE SECURED A STABLE POSITION, GO AHEAD AND GET YOUR TEN (10) BREATHS IN. YOU WILL BE ABLE TO GET STRONG ROOT LOCKS FROM THIS POSITION AS WELL.

FIGURE 3. INVERTED POSITION (HALASANA)



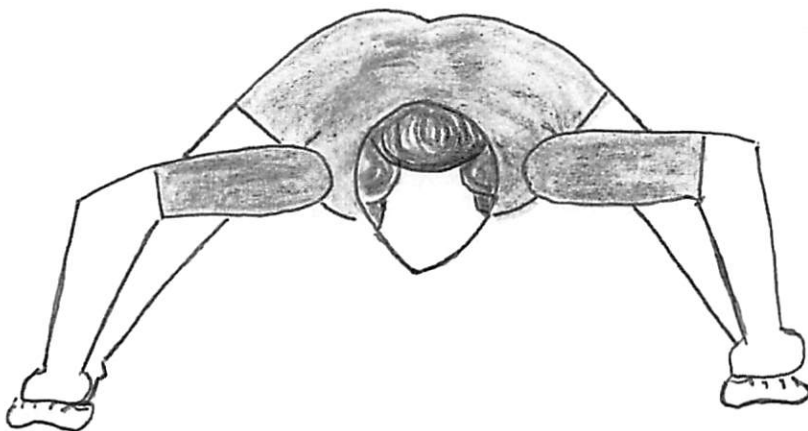
FOR THIS POSITION YOU BEGIN BY LYING ON YOUR BACK WITH YOUR HANDS PRESSING AGAINST THE FLOOR AT YOUR SIDE. THEN YOU SORT OF LIFT YOUR LEGS AND HIPS AND SWING THEM UP AND OVER YOUR HEAD. (NOTE: YOUR LEGS MAY HANG IN THE AIR OR YOUR FEET MAY TOUCH THE FLOOR. IN THE BEGINNING, YOUR KNEES WILL BE BENT TO RELIEVE PRESSURE.)

YOU WANT TO BE CAREFUL WITH THIS POSITION THAT YOU DO NOT

PLACE TOO MUCH PRESSURE ON YOUR HEAD AND NECK OR LOWER BACK. THIS POSITION IS A TOUGH ONE, BUT IT IS NOT SO TOUGH THAT YOU CANNOT MASTER IT. JUST GO EASY!

ONCE YOU SECURE YOUR POSITION, TRY NOT TO MOVE. THE IDEA IS TO RELAX INTO IT AND ENGAGE THE DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING WITH UJJAYI AND MULA BANDA. GO AHEAD AND GET YOUR TEN (10) BREATHS AND THEN ROLL BACK OUT OF THE POSITION NICE AND EASY.

FIGURE 4. INVERTED POSITION (PRASARITA PADOTTASANA)



TO BEGIN THIS POSITION, STAND UP AND SPREAD YOUR LEGS WIDE. NOW, SLOWLY BEND FORWARD WITH YOUR BODY AND USE YOUR HANDS ON YOUR LEGS TO BALANCE. WHEN YOU GET TO THE POINT WHERE YOU CAN GO NO FARTHER, STOP RIGHT THERE AND LOOK UP.

HOLD STILL RIGHT IN THIS POSITION AND GET YOUR TEN (10) FULL AND SMOOTH BREATHS. REMEMBER YOUR UJJAYI (USUALLY AN "AHHH" SOUND ON THE EXHALE AND SOMEWHAT OF AN EQUAL SOUND ON THE

INHALE). YOUR ROOT LOCK SHOULD ALSO BE PRONOUNCED FROM THIS POSITION.

THE INVERTED POSITIONS ARE A PART OF THE YOGA PROCESS AND, THEREFORE, CANNOT BE IGNORED. YOU WILL ALSO FIND THEM TO BE RELAXING YET DYNAMIC. REMEMBER THAT THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM NUMBER OF PRACTICES OF THIS LESSON IN TEN (10) BEFORE YOU CAN MOVE ON TO THE NEXT ONE.

END OF LESSON (4). NAMASTE.

LESSON (5)
TWISTING POSTURES

THEORY:

IN YOGA THE TWO OPPOSITE ACTIONS/POSITIONS ARE BALANCED. IN OTHER WORDS, A FORWARD BEND IS FOLLOWED BY A BACKWARD BEND, A TWIST TO THE RIGHAND SIDE IS FOLLOWED BY A TWIST TO THE LEFTHAND SIDE, THE RIGHT SIDE UP IS FOLLOWED BY THE UPSIDE DOWN. THIS ALL FOLLOWS THE EXAMPLE OF THE BREATH AND OTHER BIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SYSTEMS.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF YOGA IS TO PRODUCE HAPPINESS, HEALTH AND EFFECTIVENESS. THE CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES DO NOT CONTROL THE OUTCOME ONCE THE PRACTICE OF YOGA COMES INTO PLAY. IT DOES REQUIRE A CERTAIN MINIMAL DISCIPLINE THAT THE PRACTITIONER MUST SUPPLY. YOU WILL GET MORE OUT OF IT, HOWEVER, THAN YOU PUT INTO IT (BECAUSE THE RESULTING BENEFITS MULTIPLY AS THE PRACTICE IS PERFECTED).

THE TWISTING POSITIONS ROTATE THE BODY. THESE ACTIONS TEND TO TWIST THE BACKBONE FROM ONE SIDE TO THE OTHER SIDE. THIS ALLOWS THE FULL FUNCTIONING OF THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM. YOGA IS ALL ABOUT ACHIEVING A HIGHER LEVEL OF AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING. THIS MEANS THAT YOGA FACILITATES PERSONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

UNLIKE SOME FORMS OF EXERCISE, YOGA INTENDS TO RELAX AND EMPOWER THE BODY AND MIND RATHER THAN DEplete THEIR ENERGIES.

MOST PEOPLE GO ABOUT THEIR DAILY LIVES UNDER THE SPELL OF INCOMPLETE UNDERSTANDING (AVIDYA) . BUT THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY OF DEVELOPING A CLEAR AND PROPER UNDERSTANDING (VIDYA) , WHICH IS A MORE SUBSTANTIAL UNDERSTANDING THAT LEADS TO OVERALL PEACE OF MIND.

PART OF THE PRACTICE OF YOGA IS TO BECOME MORE AND MORE AWARE OF THOUGHTS, FEELINGS AND SENSATIONS IN BOTH THE BODY AND MIND. THE TWISTING POSITIONS ARE AIMED DIRECTLY AT INDUCING A DEEPER AWARENESS, AND THIS HELPS TO BREAK LOOSE THE OBSTRUCTIONS AND IMPURITIES (SAMSKARAS) IN AND THROUGHOUT THE BODY AND MIND.

THE PRACTICE IS NOT ABOUT HOW FAR A PRACTITIONER CAN TWIST HIS OR HER BODY. THAT PART IS INSIGNIFICANT. THE TWISTING OF THE BODY PUTS THE LUNGS, DIAPHRAGM AND ABDOMINAL MUSCLES IN A DIFFERENT POSITION AND, THEREFORE, HELPS TO IMPROVE THEIR FUNCTION.

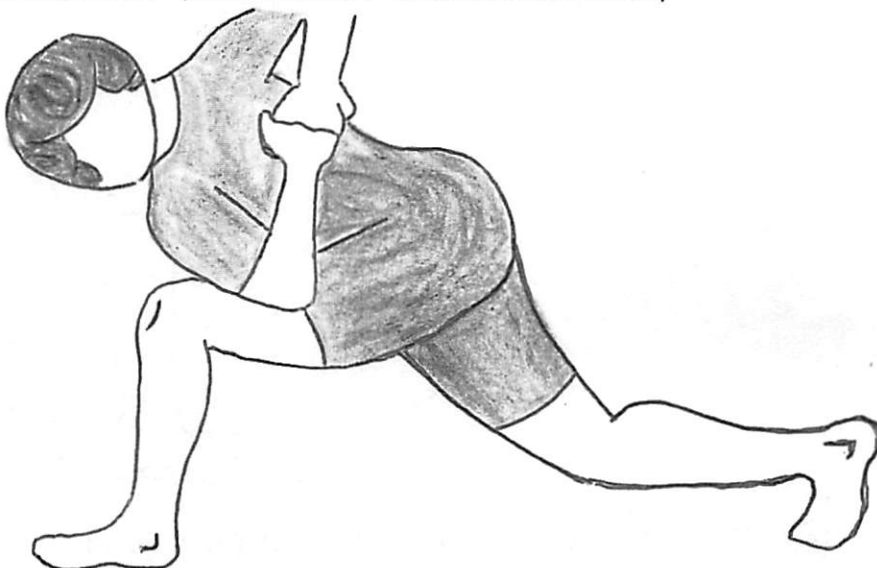
PRACTICE:

YOU CAN PERFORM A TWISTING POSTURE FROM JUST ABOUT ANY POSITION: STANDING, SITTING, LYING PRONE, LYING SUPINE, EVEN INVERTED. IN THIS LESSON THE TWISTING POSITIONS WILL BE EASY TO LEARN, BUT THEY WILL NOT BE INSUBSTANTIAL BY ANY MEANS.

THIS LESSON IS THE FINAL LESSON ON CATEGORIES OF POSITIONS. THERE ARE REASONS WHY THE LESSONS ARE ARRANGED IN THIS WAY. IT DOES NOT MEAN YOU ARE LEARNING THE MOST DIFFICULT POSITIONS

LAST. IN FACT, YOU ARE LEARNING A LIMITED NUMBER OF POSITIONS SO THAT YOU CAN EASILY MASTER THEM (WITH A MODICUM OF INTEREST, MOTIVATION AND EFFORT).

FIGURE 1. TWISTING POSITION (PARIVRITTA PARSVAKONASANA)



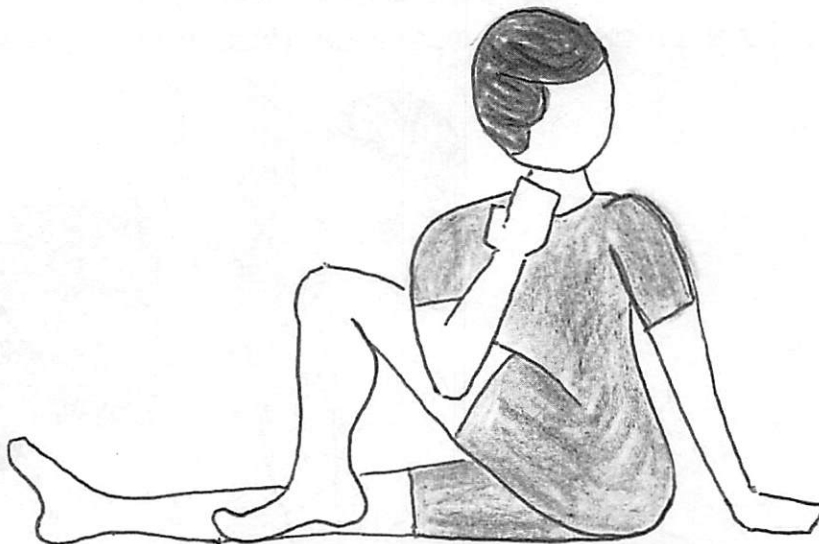
IN THIS POSITION ONE LEG IS BENT AT THE KNEE AND HELD FORWARD WHILE THE OTHER LEG IS STRAIGHT BACK. THE BODY IS THEN TWISTED INTO THE BENT KNEE, AND THE ELBOW IS USED TO STABILIZE THE POSITION. IF NEED BE, YOUR BACK LEG CAN BEND AT THE KNEE AND REST ON THE FLOOR FOR BETTER BALANCE AND SUPPORT.

TURN YOUR HEAD AND NECK IN THE DIRECTION OF THE TWIST AND LOOK UPWARD AT THE CEILING. HOLD THIS POSITION FOR TEN (10) BREATHS TOGETHER WITH UJJAYI BREATH CONTROL IN THE THROAT (AN "AHHH" NOISE) AND THE CONTRACTION OF YOUR PERINEUM MUSCLES (I.E., ROOT LOCK).

IF YOU FEEL DIZZY OR SICKLY, IT IS PROBABLY A GOOD SIGN. THESE POSITIONS DO LOOSEN AND ELIMINATE TOXIC SUBSTANCES FROM THE BODY. IF YOU HAVE HAD TOO MUCH COFFEE AND NOT ENOUGH

WATER BEFOREHAND, YOU MIGHT FEEL SOME DISCOMFORT AS WELL (JUST DRINK MORE WATER NEXT TIME) .

FIGURE 2. TWISTING POSITION (ARDHA MATSYENDRASANA)



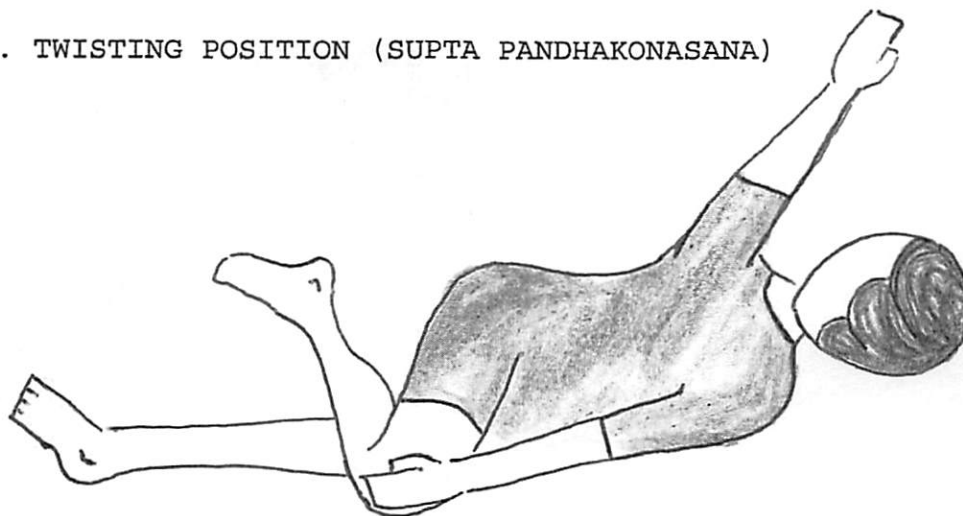
IN THIS POSITION YOU ARE SEATED ON THE FLOOR WITH YOUR LEGS STRAIGHT OUT IN FRONT OF YOU. THEN YOU GRAB AROUND ONE LEG AND BRING YOUR FOOT OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE OF YOUR OUTSTRETCHED LEG AND PULL IT TO THE TOP OF THE LEG (OR AS FAR AS YOU ARE ABLE) .

THEN, YOU TWIST YOUR BODY INTO THE BENT KNEE AND PUT THE OPPOSITE ELBOW OVER IT. YOU USE YOUR OTHER ARM TO BALANCE WITH (BUT TRY NOT TO PUT TOO MUCH OF YOUR WEIGHT ON THE BALANCING ARM) . IT IS BEST IF YOU CAN ALSO TURN YOUR HEAD THE SAME WAY (I.E., INTO THE TWIST) AS FAR AS YOU CAN.

NOW, HOLD THIS POSITION VERY STILL AND BEGIN YOUR TEN (10) BREATH REPETITIONS (AGAIN, WITH UJJAYI AND MULA BANDHA) . THIS EXERCISE IS GOOD FOR THE BACK, FOR INTERNAL ORGANS, AND FOR THE SPINE ITSELF.

WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED ONE SIDE, DO THE OTHER SIDE THE SAME WAY.

FIGURE 3. TWISTING POSITION (SUPTA PANDHAKONASANA)



IN THIS POSITION, YOU LIE ON YOUR BACK AND STRETCH YOUR LEGS FORWARD. THEN YOU BEND ONE LEG AND BRING THE HEEL EVEN WITH THE KNEE JOINT OF THE OUTSTRETCHED LEG. THEN YOU TWIST THE LOWER HALF OF YOUR BODY SO THE BENT KNEE GOES OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE OUTSTRETCHED LEG.

ONE ARM/HAND IS USED TO HOLD THE BENT KNEE IN PLACE (PREFERABLE ALL THE WAY AGAINST THE FLOOR), AND THE OTHER ARM IS STRETCHED STRAIGHT OUT TO THE SIDE. YOUR HEAD IS TURNED TOWARD THE OUTSTRETCHED ARM/HAND.

NOW YOU CAN GO AHEAD AND GET TEN (10) BREATHS RIGHT HERE. WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED ONE SIDE, DO THE OTHER SIDE THE SAME WAY. THIS POSITION IS GOOD FOR YOUR NECK AND SHOULDERS, THE LOWER BACK, AND THE HIPS GENERALLY.

FIGURE 4. TWISTING POSITION (UTTHITA TRIKONASANA)



IN THIS POSITION YOU STAND WITH YOUR LEGS WIDE APART AND REACH DOWN WITH THE ARM/HAND ON ITS OWN LEG WHILE REACHING STRAIGHT UP INTO THE AIR WITH THE OTHER ARM/HAND AND LOOKING UP AT THE CEILING.

THIS POSITION TENDS TO SHAPE THE LEGS AND WAIST AND STRENGTHENS THE HIPS, INTERNAL ORGANS AND ABDOMINAL MUSCLES. IT CAN ALSO HELP TO ELIMINATE CONSTIPATION AND OTHER INTESTINAL PROBLEMS.

ONCE YOU ARE LOCKED INTO THE POSITION GO AHEAD AND PERFORM THE DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING FOR TEN (10) COMPLETE REPETITIONS. REMEMBER TO ALSO ENGAGE YOUR ROOT LOCK AND UJJAYI TECHNIQUES.

IT IS ESSENTIAL TO DISCIPLINE YOURSELF NOT TO JUMP AHEAD IN YOUR TRAINING. IT IS UP TO YOU WHETHER YOU PERFORM MORE THAN

TEN PRACTICES BEFORE MOVING ON, BUT THERE SHOULD NOT BE FEWER THAN TEN.

END OF LESSON (5). NAMASTE.

LESSON (6)

SEQUENCES

THEORY:

YOGA IS MANY THINGS. IT IS A PHILOSOPHY, A WAY OF LIFE, A DISCIPLINE, A PERSPECTIVE, AN EXERCISE, AND A SET OF VALUES. AMONG THE MANY COMPONENTS OF YOGA IS THE CONTINUITY OF POSITIONS. THIS CAN BE CALLED A SEQUENCE OF POSITIONS (VINYASA), AND IT LENDS A SENSE OF INDIVIDUALITY TO EACH PRACTITIONER OF YOGA.

ALTHOUGH THE SEQUENCE OF POSITIONS IS A MATTER OF INDIVIDUAL CHOICE, THERE ARE CERTAIN GUIDELINES THAT SHOULD BE FOLLOWED. FOR EXAMPLE, A POSITION THAT INVOLVES A FORWARD BEND SHOULD BE FOLLOWED BY A POSITION THAT INVOLVES A BACKWARD BEND. IF A PERSON TWISTS IN ONE POSITION, THAT PERSON SHOULD ALSO TWIST IN THE OPPOSITE POSITION. AGAIN, A STANDING POSITION SHOULD BE BALANCED OUT WITH AN INVERTED POSITION, A CONTRACTION WITH A RELAXATION POSITION. THE PRIMARY GOAL IS TO BALANCE COMPONENTS.

A PROPER YOGA SEQUENCE FLOWS FROM ONE POSITION TO THE NEXT POSITION, SEAMLESSLY. THERE DOES NOT NEED TO BE A LONG SEQUENCE OF POSITIONS IN ORDER TO BE EFFECTIVE. GENERALLY, THE SEQUENCE(S) IS A MATTER OF PERSONAL CHOICE.

IN DETERMINING A SEQUENCE THERE IS USUALLY A LOT OF TRIAL SEQUENCES FIRST. THE PRACTITIONER ACTUALLY BUILDS HIS OR HER

OWN SEQUENCE(S), AND THESE ARE NORMALLY WHAT PROVES TO WORK FOR THE INDIVIDUAL. THERE ARE ANY NUMBER/KIND OF POSITIONS A PERSON CAN USE TO BUILD A SEQUENCE, BUT THE BASIC AND TRADITIONAL POSITIONS USUALLY WORK OUT THE BEST.

ORIGINAL YOGA WAS STATIC. IN OTHER WORDS, THE PERSON GOT SET IN A POSTURE AND DID NOT MOVE. THE MAIN FOCUS WAS ALWAYS ON THE BREATH AND THE EFFECTS OF CERTAIN BREATHING TECHNIQUES. THE PRIMARY GOAL WAS ALWAYS TO PURIFY THE BODY AND MIND BY BREAKING DOWN OBSTRUCTIONS AND ELIMINATING TOXINS. THE SEQUENCING OF POSITIONS WAS A NATURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRACTICE.

ONE OF THE EARLIEST SEQUENCES--AND MOST POPULAR EVEN TODAY--IS CALLED "SUN SALUTATION." IT IS A SERIES OF SIMPLE POSITIONS, ONE FOLLOWING ANOTHER, THAT IS WELL-BALANCED, PRACTICAL AND EVEN ENJOYABLE. IN THIS LESSON, THE SUN SALUTATION WILL BE USED FOR AN EXAMPLE OF A PROPER SEQUENCE OF POSITIONS. (WE WILL CUT IT DOWN TO ITS MOST BASIC POSITIONS, HOWEVER.)

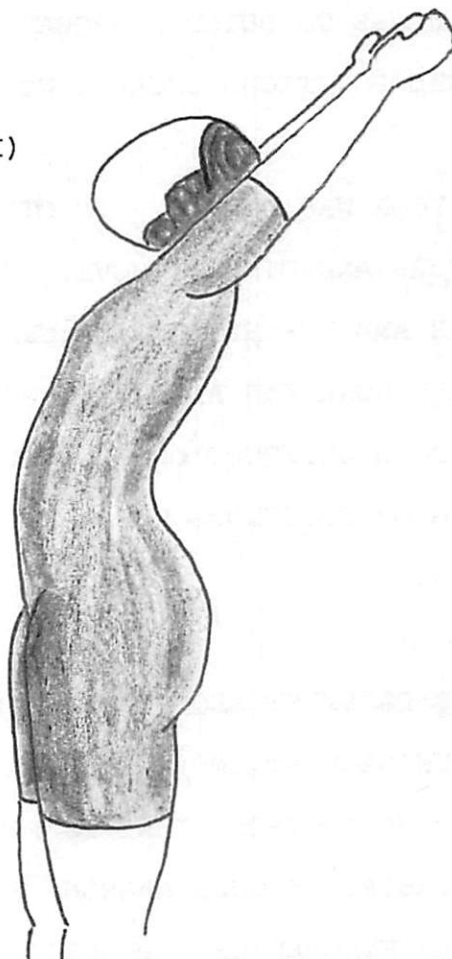
PRACTICE:

THE PRACTICE HERE IS NOT ALL THAT MUCH DIFFERENT FROM WHAT YOU HAVE ACHIEVED IN THE PRECEDING LESSONS. THE MAIN IDEA HERE IS TO SHOW YOU HOW TO BUILD A SEQUENCE OF POSITIONS (VINYASA) FOR YOURSELF, SO THAT YOU CAN PRACTICE YOGA ROUTINELY AND GET THE MOST OUT OF IT.

THE SUN SALUTATION (SURYA NAMASKAR) IS A FINE EXAMPLE OF A

SEQUENCE OF POSITIONS THAT MAKES SENSE. YOU WANT TO ALLOW YOGA TO WORK FOR YOU, AND YOU WANT TO LISTEN TO WHAT YOUR BODY IS TELLING YOU.

FIGURE 1. SEQUENCE (SAMA-STHITI)



IN THIS POSITION YOU ARE STANDING STRAIGHT UP WITH YOUR FEET ABOUT SHOULDER WIDTH APART AND YOUR ARMS AT YOUR SIDES. YOU THEN RAISE BOTH ARMS OVER YOUR HEAD, KEEPING THEM STRAIGHTENED OUT AND BRINGING YOUR HANDS TOGETHER. YOU BEND BACKWARDS SLIGHTLY, LOOK UP AND BACK AS FAR AS YOU CAN, AND HOLD RIGHT THERE.

OBVIOUSLY, THIS POSITION IS A CONTRACTION POSITION. NEARLY EVERY MUSCLE IN YOUR BODY WILL BE CONTRACTED. HOLD FOR FIVE (5) DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHS, UJJAYI CONTROL AND ROOT LOCK INCLUDED. (NOTE: YOU MAY OR MAY NOT WISH TO INCREASE THE

NUMBER OF BREATH REPETITIONS FOR EACH POSITION.)

FIGURE 2. SEQUENCE (UTTANASANA)



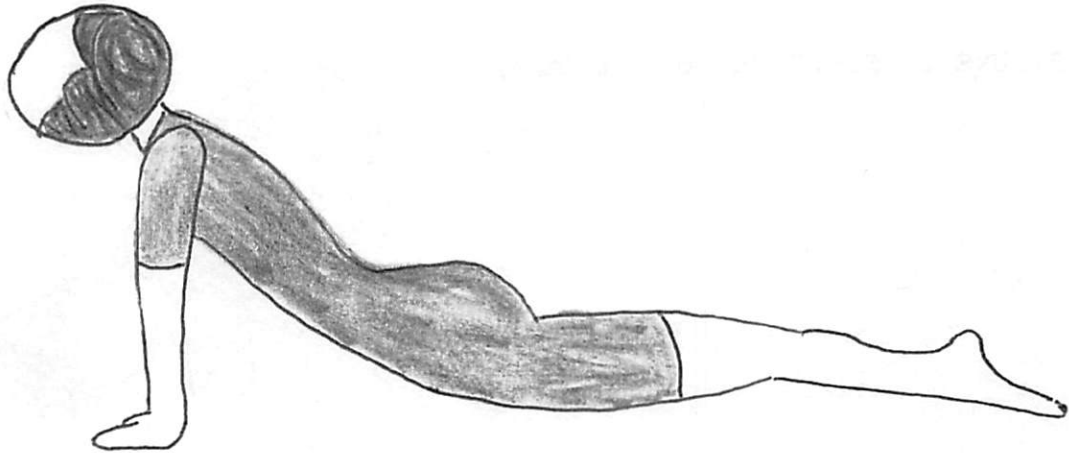
THIS POSITION FOLLOWS IMMEDIATELY. YOU WILL NOT HAVE TO ADJUST VERY MUCH. SIMPLY BRING YOUR HANDS BACK OVER TO THE FRONT OF YOUR BODY AND REACH DOWN AS FAR AS YOU CAN (YOU CAN PUT YOUR HANDS ON YOUR LOWER LEGS FOR SUPPORT IF YOU LIKE).

THIS IS A RELAXED POSITION. YOUR BODY IS HANGING DOWN, YOUR HEAD IS HANGING DOWN, AND YOUR ARMS ARE HANGING DOWN. BREATHE INTO THE POSITION AND RELAX MORE AND MORE ON EACH BREATH. YOU SHOULD FEEL THE STRETCH ON YOUR HAMSTRINGS, HOWEVER.

GO AHEAD AND TAKE FIVE (5) BREATH REPETITIONS IN THIS POSITION.

REMEMBER THAT YOUR BREATHING--THE WAY YOU ARE PROCESSING AND CONTROLLING YOUR BREATH--IS ALWAYS THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF YOGA. DO NOT FORGET TO EMPLOY UJJAYI AND MULA BANDA.

FIGURE 3. SEQUENCE (URDHA MUKHA SVANASANA)

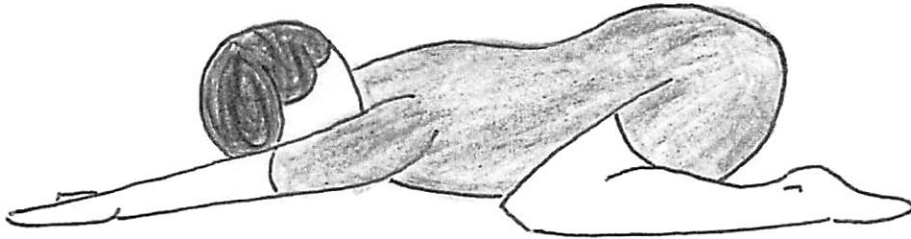


FROM THE PREVIOUS POSITION, PLACE YOUR HANDS ON THE FLOOR IN FRONT OF YOU AND STEP YOUR LEGS BACK SO YOU CAN LOWER YOUR PELVIS AREA TO THE FLOOR. YOUR FEET, LEGS AND HIPS SHOULD ALL BE IN CONTACT WITH THE FLOOR, MUSCLES CONTRACTED (PARTICULARLY THE BUTTOCKS). YOUR UPPER BODY SHOULD BE HELD UP BY YOUR ARMS AND YOUR BACK SHOULD BE BENT. YOUR HEAD SHOULD BE BENT BACK, AND YOU SHOULD BE LOOKING UP AT THE CEILING.

AGAIN, YOU CAN TELL THAT THIS IS A CONTRACTION BECAUSE A LOT OF YOUR MUSCLES ARE FLEXED OR TIGHTENED. THE INTRA-ABDOMINAL PRESSURE IS INCREASED, WHICH SQUEEZES INTERNAL ORGANS AND GLANDS. REMEMBER THAT ONCE YOU GET SET IN A POSITION, DO NOT MOVE!

NOW GET YOUR FIVE (5) BREATHS, MAKING THE "AHHH" OR "HAAA" SOUND IN YOUR THROAT AND LOCKING THE PERINEUM MUSCLES ON THE EXHALE. (NOTE: IF YOU FEEL DIZZY IT IS USUALLY A SIGN THAT YOU NEED TO DRINK MORE WATER IN THE HOURS PRIOR TO PRACTICE.)

FIGURE 4. SEQUENCE (BALASANA)



IN THIS POSITION YOU WILL MOVE DIRECTLY FROM THE PREVIOUS POSITION BY MOVING YOUR BUTTOCKS DOWN TOWARD YOUR HEELS. YOUR ARMS ARE STRETCHED OUT IN FRONT OF YOU, AND YOUR FOREHEAD IS RESTING ON THE FLOOR. YOUR BODY WEIGHT IS MOSTLY ON YOUR KNEES.

THIS IS A PEACEFUL AND RELAXING POSITION. IT CALMS THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM AND BALANCES THE LIFE FORCE ENERGY THROUGHOUT THE BODY. YOUR BREATH REPETITIONS CAN BE MORE RELAXED HERE AS WELL, BUT YOU MAY FIND IT SO RELAXING THAT YOU WANT TO GET TEN (10) RIGHT HERE.

NOW, THIS SEQUENCE (FIGURES 1.-4. ABOVE) IS VERY BASIC. BUT YOU CAN TELL HOW MANY OF THE POSITIONS YOU HAVE ALREADY LEARNED CAN BE USED TO BUILD YOUR OWN SEQUENCE OF POSITIONS.

AND, YOUR SEQUENCE OF POSITIONS MAY VERY WELL CHANGE OVER TIME AS YOU DEVELOP YOUR PERSONAL PRACTICE. YOU WILL NEED TO EXPERIMENT IN ORDER TO SEE HOW CERTAIN POSITIONS FEEL TO YOU AND HOW THEY FIT TOGETHER IN YOUR SEQUENCE. (NOTE: YOU CAN

BEGIN A SEQUENCE WITH ANY POSITION, REALLY.)

END OF LESSON (6). NAMASTE.

LESSON (7)

MEDITATION

THEORY:

YOGA IS MEDITATION (DHYANA). THE BASICS OF MEDITATION INVOLVE TECHNIQUES FOR KEEPING THE BODY STILL AND THE MIND QUIET. THERE ARE MANY FORMS OF MEDITATION, BUT ALL OF THEM SEEK TO BRING ABOUT AN ALTERED STATE OF MIND.

HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS IS DETERMINED BY BRAIN WAVES. ORDINARY WAKING CONSCIOUSNESS PRODUCES WHAT ARE CALLED "BETA" BRAIN WAVES. MEDITATION PRODUCES "ALPHA" WAVES, WHICH ARE MUCH MORE SMOOTH AND RELAXED. THERE ARE MANY ADDITIONAL BENEFITS CREATED BY THE PRACTICE OF MEDITATION, AND THESE AFFECT BOTH THE BODY AND THE MIND GENERALLY.

THERE ARE DIFFERENT WAYS TO ENGAGE MEDITATION. FOR EXAMPLE, IN PARTS OF ASIA IT IS COMMON TO LISTEN TO THE SOUNDS OF NATURE. IN INDIA, MANY PEOPLE REPEAT A WORD OR A PHRASE OVER AND OVER AGAIN. IN JAPAN, THEY COUNT THE BREATH REPETITIONS. IN THE WEST, PEOPLE SING OR EVEN EXERCISE TO ACHIEVE AN ALTERED STATE OF MIND.

THESE LESSONS INVOLVE WHAT IS CALLED "ROYAL YOGA" (RAJA YOGA).

THERE ARE THREE (3) PRIMARY PARTS OF THIS YOGA: DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING WITH UJJAYI AND MULA BANDA (PRANAYAMA), PRACTICE OF POSITIONS (HATHA), AND MEDITATION (DHYANA). THE MAIN GOAL IS TO ACHIEVE A HIGHER STATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS, AWARENESS AND

UNDERSTANDING SO THAT THE PRACTITIONER CAN ENJOY A BETTER LIFE AND BECOME A BETTER HUMAN BEING (SAMADHI) .

SOME PEOPLE THINK THAT MEDITATION IS STRENUOUS AND BORING. IT IS NEITHER. IT IS A DISCIPLINE THAT INVOLVES TRAINING AND PRACTICE, FOR SURE. BUT WHEN THE TRAINING IS CORRECT, MEDITATION IS NOT AT ALL DIFFICULT, MONOTONOUS OR PAINFUL TO PRACTICE.

THE BENEFITS OF MEDITATION HAVE BEEN DOCUMENTED BY NUMEROUS WELL-ESTABLISHED ORGANIZATIONS (MEDICAL, SOCIAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL INCLUDED) . THERE IS SO MUCH CONSENSUS ON THE SUBJECT THAT THE BENEFICIAL EFFECTS OF YOGA ARE BEYOND ANY DOUBT WHATSOEVER. ANYONE WHO IS WANTING TO IMPROVE THEIR MENTAL AND /OR PHYSICAL HEALTH CAN MOST CERTAINLY DO SO BY ENGAGING IN THE ROUTINE PRACTICE OF MEDITATION.

THE MEDITATION IS USUALLY PERFORMED DIRECTLY FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF THE SEQUENCE OF POSITIONS.

PRACTICE:

THE PRACTICE OF MEDITATION IN THIS LESSON INVOLVES DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING WHILE SITTING. YOU WILL BE AMAZED BY HOW SIMPLE AND EASY MEDITATION REALLY IS. THERE ARE, OF COURSE, TRADITIONAL POSITIONS THAT ARE USED EXCLUSIVELY FOR MEDITATION.

FIGURE 1. MEDITATION (SUKHASANA)



IN THIS POSITION YOU ARE SEATED ON THE FLOOR WITH YOUR LEGS
CROSSED. YOU MUST KEEP YOUR BACK RAMROD STRAIGHT AND THE
CROWN OF YOUR HEAD PUSHING UPWARD TOWARD THE CEILING. YOUR
CHEST IS LIFTED, YOUR SHOULDERS, NECK AND JAW ARE RELAXED AS
MUCH AS POSSIBLE.

KEEP AN ARCH IN YOUR LOW BACK, AND LET YOUR HANDS REST
COMFORTABLY ON YOUR THIGHS. NOW, BEGIN YOUR DIAPHRAGMATIC
BREATHING (WITHOUT THE UJJAYI BREATH CONTROL OR ROOT LOCK).
NICE FULL RELAXED BREATHING IS WHAT YOU WANT HERE. TO BEGIN,
DO ONLY (10) BREATHS.

THE MAIN IDEA IS TO FOCUS YOUR MENTAL ATTENTION ON THE BREATH
ITSELF AS IT TRAVELS IN AND OUT OF YOUR BODY. KEEP THE INHALE
ABOUT THE SAME LENGTH AS THE EXHALE SO THAT YOU GET A GOOD BAL-
ANCE. (NOTE: BE SURE TO EXHALE FULLY SO THAT YOU EXPEL THE
AIR IN THE VERY BOTTOM OF YOUR LUNGS.)

YOU ARE NOT TRYING TO THINK OF ANYTHING AT ALL. YOU WANT YOUR

MIND TO BE BLANK BECAUSE THIS IS THE ACTION THAT IS GOING TO EXPAND YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS. WHEN YOU ARE ABLE TO MAINTAIN A RELATIVELY BLANK MIND FOR TEN (10) BREATHS YOU WILL BE READY TO ADD MORE.

THE GOAL IS TO SLOWLY WORK YOUR WAY UP TO FIFTY (50) OR ONE HUNDRED (100) BREATHS. YOU WILL BE ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH THIS BY ADDING FIVE (5) OR TEN (10) BREATHS AT A TIME. (WARNING: YOU WILL NOT ADD FIVE (5) OR TEN (10) BREATHS EACH TIME YOU PRACTICE; YOU WILL NEED TO MAINTAIN PROPER BREATHING AND CLARITY OF MIND FOR AT LEAST FIVE (5) CONSECUTIVE PRACTICES BEFORE BEING ELIGIBLE TO INCREASE THE NUMBER.)

HERE ARE ANY NUMBER OF YOGA POSITIONS THAT FACILITATE PURE MEDITATION (AS DESCRIBED ABOVE). BELOW ARE THREE (3) OF THOSE:

FIGURE 2. MEDITATION (TADASANA)

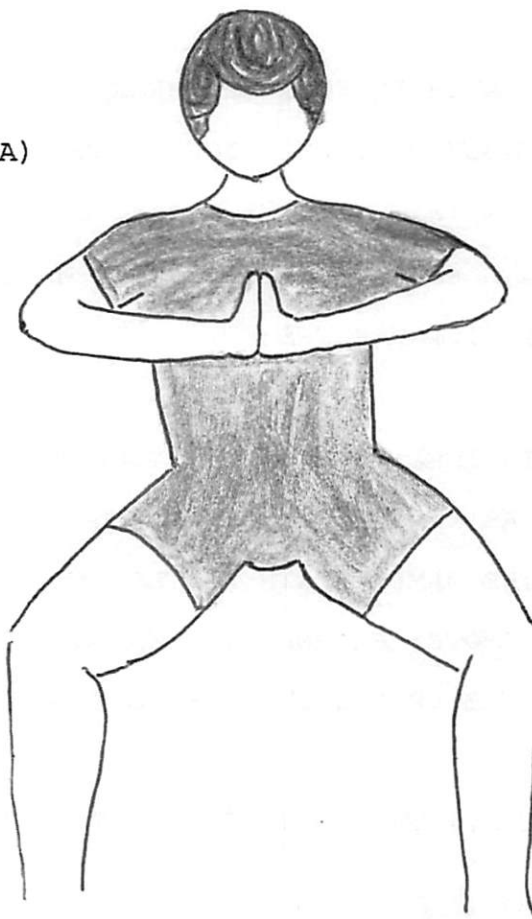


FIGURE 3. MEDITATION (BALASANA)

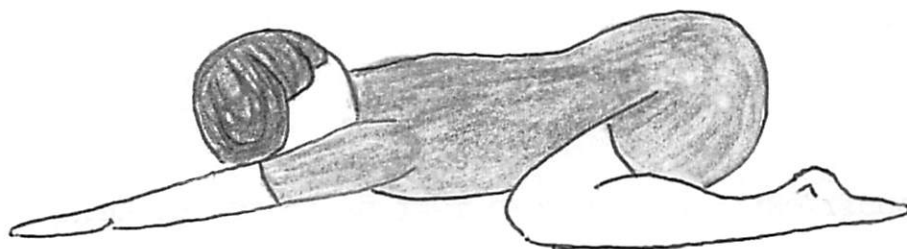
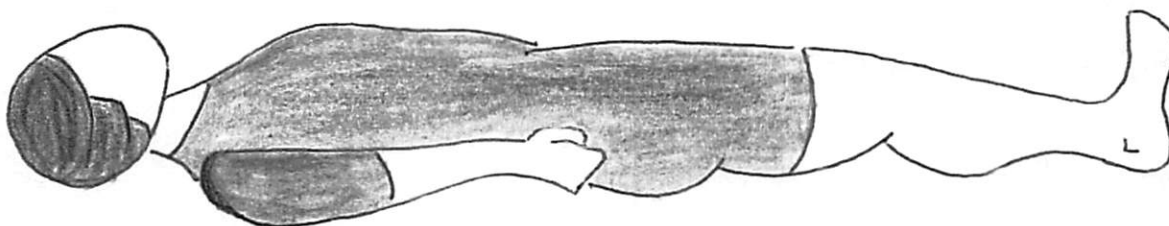


FIGURE 4. MEDITATION (SAVASANA)



AS YOU CAN SEE, THESE ARE POSITIONS YOU HAVE ALREADY LEARNED. THESE CAN BE USED FOR EASY MEDITATION. REMEMBER THAT THERE SHOULD BE A FORMAL POSITION FOR MEDITATION THAT IS MAINTAINED WITH A STRAIGHT BACK, RELAXED SHOULDERS, AND PROPER BREATHING TECHNIQUE.

ALSO, IN A SUPINE POSITION SUCH AS SAVASANA YOU MAY DRIFT OFF

INTO SLEEP, WHICH IS NOT RECOMMENDED BECAUSE IT INTERFERES WITH THE DISCIPLINE. YOU MUST BE ABLE TO, EVENTUALLY, REMAIN IN THE ALPHA STATE OF MIND WHILE MEDITATING.

THE ACT OF PURPOSEFULLY MEDITATING (THAT IS, ADDING MEDITATION AFTER THE PERFORMANCE OF YOUR STANDARD SEQUENCE) IS IMPORTANT AND SHOULD NOT BE EXCLUDED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. IT IS ANOTHER STEP IN THE PROCESS OF PERSONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

THERE ARE ADDITIONAL APPLICATIONS THAT DEAL WITH BUILDING BETTER QUALITIES, VALUES AND SKILLS OF THE PERSONALITY. FOR OUR PRESENT PURPOSES, THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THESE LESSONS IS ENOUGH.

IF NEED BE, YOU CAN BEGIN THE STUDY AND PRACTICE OF THESE LESSONS ALL OVER AGAIN. YOU CANNOT GO WRONG IN OBTAINING THE BEST KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE AVAILABLE.

END OF LESSON (7). NAMASTE.

APPENDIX 1.

APPENDIX 1.

SELF-TALK DIRECTIVES

--I COMMIT TO BEING EFFECTIVE RATHER THAN BEING "RIGHT," AND THIS MEANS (1) FOCUSING ON WHAT WORKS, (2) PLAYING BY THE RULES, (3) ACTING AS SKILLFULLY AS I CAN, (4) DOING WHAT IS REQUIRED OF ME TO REACH MY GOALS, AND (5) LETTING GO OF NEGATIVE THOUGHT(S) AND EMOTION(S)

--I INTEND TO MAINTAIN A CALM DETACHMENT AT ALL TIMES, INCLUDING (1) NOTICING BUT NOT BECOMING ATTACHED TO AN OUTCOME, (2) DOING ONE THING AT A TIME AND NOT BEING DISTRACTED, (3) MAKING WISE DECISIONS ABOUT HOW TO PROCEED IN ANY GIVEN MATTER, (4) BEING PATIENT AND WAITING UNTIL THE TIME IS RIGHT, AND (5) MAINTAINING SILENCE AS A RULE

--I WILL USE DISTRESS TOLERANCE SKILLS WHEN FACING A CRISIS, INCLUDING (1) COUNTING MY BREATHS, (2) DOING SOMETHING TO TAKE MY MIND OFF OF THE EVENT, (3) SELF-SOOTHING, (4) TALKING TO A FRIEND, AND (5) PRACTICING RADICAL ACCEPTANCE

--I AM DETERMINED TO MANAGE ANY UNHEALTHY OR NON-BENEFICIAL IMPULSES, HABITS AND/OR DESIRES BY: (1) NOTICING THE NEED TO AVOID SUCH BEHAVIOR, (2) WAITING FOR AT LEAST 10 MINUTES BEFORE ACTING, (3) RATING THE INTENSITY OF THE URGE ON A SCALE OF 1-10, (4) WEIGHING OUT THE PROS AND CONS, AND (5) TAKING OPPOSITE ACTION WHEN APPLICABLE

--I WILL MAINTAIN MY MOTIVATION AND SELF-ESTEEM BY: (1)
KNOWING THAT I HAVE THE SAME WORTH AND RIGHTS AS ANYONE ELSE,
(2) TAKING STEPS TO KEEP MYSELF ENERGIZED, (3) ALLOWING
MYSELF TO MAKE MISTAKES, (4) ACTUALLY FEELING GOOD ABOUT
MYSELF AND MY LIFE, AND (5) STAYING BUSY ON MEANINGFUL
PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

--I WILL ADVANCE MY PEOPLE SKILLS BY (1) BEING COURTEOUS,
RESPECTFUL AND HELPFUL TO EVERYONE, (2) LISTENING, WATCHING
AND ATTUNING MY SENSES TO WHAT OTHERS ARE COMMUNICATING, (3)
TAKING A GENUINE INTEREST IN OTHERS, (4) REFUSING TO TAKE
UNDUE, WRONGFUL OR UNFAIR ADVANTAGE OF ANOTHER, AND (5)
SEEKING MUTUAL BENEFIT(S) BY WAY OF AGREEMENT