

Lessons In Yoga Exercises



On asanas.

1. Salutation to Âdinatha (Siva) who expounded the knowledge of Hatha Yoga, which like a staircase leads the aspirant to the high pinnacled Raja Yoga.
2. Yogin Swatmarama, after saluting his Gurû Srinatha explains Hatha Yoga for the attainment of Raja Yoga.
3. Owing to the darkness arising from the multiplicity of opinions people are unable to know the Raja Yoga. Compassionate Swatmarama composes the Hatha Yoga Pradipika like a torch to dispel it.
4. Matsyendra, Goraksa, etc., knew Hatha Vidya, and by their favor Yogi Swatmarama also learnt it from them.
5. The following Siddhas (masters) are said to have existed in former times:- Sri Adinatha (Siva), Matsyendra, Natha, Sabar, Anand, Bhairava, Chaurangi, Mina Natha, Goraksanatha, Virupaksa, Bilesaya.
6. Manthana, Bhairava, Siddhi Buddha, Kanthadi, Karantaka, Surananda, Siddhipada, Charapati.
7. Kaneri, Pujoyapada, Nityanatha, Niranjana, Kapali, Vindunatha, Kaka Chandiswara.
8. Allama, Prabhudeva, Ghoda, Choli, Tintini, Bhanuki, Nardeva, Khanda Kapalika, etc.
9. These Mahasiddhas (great masters), breaking the sceptre of death, are roaming in the universe.
10. Like a house protecting one from the heat of the sun, Hatha Yoga protects its practisers from the burning heat of the three Tapas; and, similarly, it is the supporting tortoise, as it were, for those who are constantly devoted to the practice of Yoga.
11. A yogi desirous of success should keep the knowledge of Hatha Yoga secret; for it becomes potent by concealing, and impotent by exposing.

12. The Yogi should practice Hatha Yoga in a small room, situated in a solitary place, being 4 cubits square, and free from stones, fire, water, disturbances of all kinds, and in a country where justice is properly administered, where good people live, and food can be obtained easily and plentifully.

13. The room should have a small door, be free from holes, hollows, neither too high nor too low, well plastered with cow-dung and free from dirt, filth and insects. On its outside there should be bowers, raised platform (chabootra), a well, and a compound. These characteristics of a room for Hatha Yogis have been described by adepts in the practice of Hatha.

14. Having seated in such a room and free from all anxieties, he should practice Yoga, as instructed by his gurû .

15. Yoga is destroyed by the following six causes:-- Over-eating, exertion, talkativeness, adhering to rules, i.e., cold bath in the morning, eating at night, or eating fruits only, company of men, and unsteadiness.

16. The following six bring speedy success:-- Courage, daring, perseverance, discriminative knowledge, faith, aloofness from company.

17. The ten rules of conduct are: ahimsâ (non-injuring), truth, non-stealing, continence, forgiveness, endurance, compassion, meekness, sparing diet, and cleanliness.

18. The ten niyamas mentioned by those proficient in the knowledge of Yoga are: Tapa, patience, belief in God, charity, adoration of God, hearing discourses on the principles of religion, shame, intellect, Tapa and Yajna.

Asanas.

19. Being the first accessory of Hatha Yoga, asana is described first. It should be practiced for gaining steady posture, health and lightness of body.

20. I am going to describe certain âsanas which have been adopted by Munis like Vasistha, etc., and Yogis like Matsyendra, etc.

Swastika-asana.

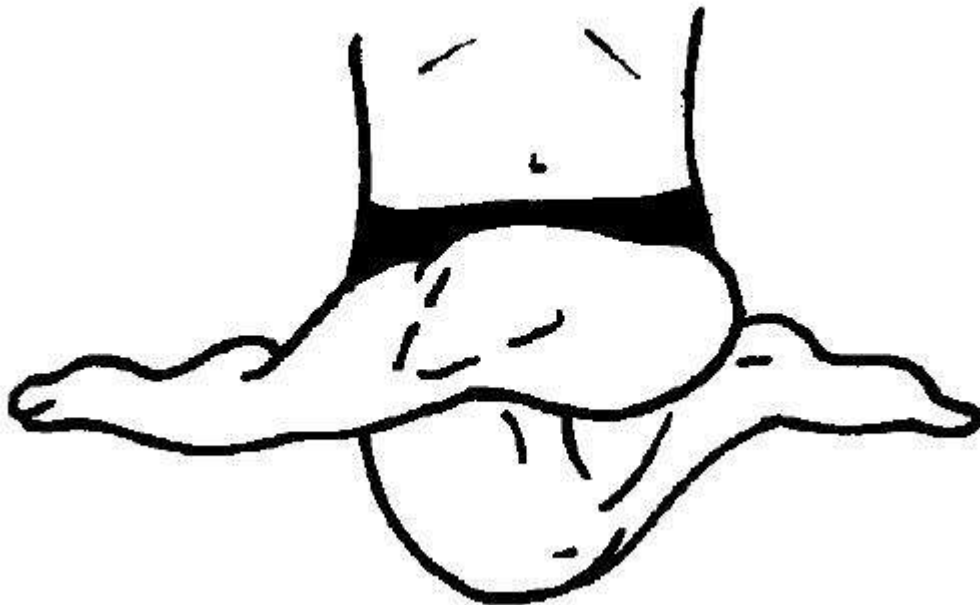
21. Having kept both the hands under both the thighs, with the body straight, when one sits calmly in this posture, it is called

Swastika.



Gomukha-asana.

22. Placing the right ankle on the left side and the left ankle on the right side, makes Gomukha-asana, having the appearance of a cow.



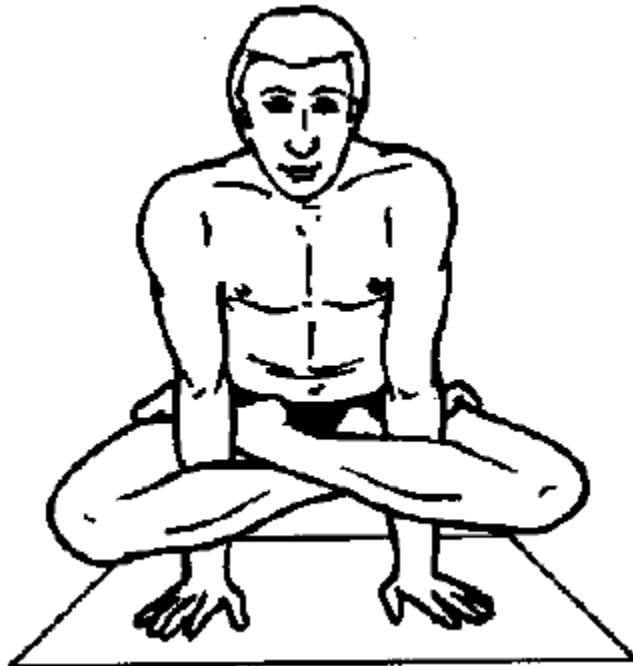
Virasana.

23. One foot is to be placed on the thigh of the opposite side; and so also the other foot on the opposite thigh. This is called Virâsana.



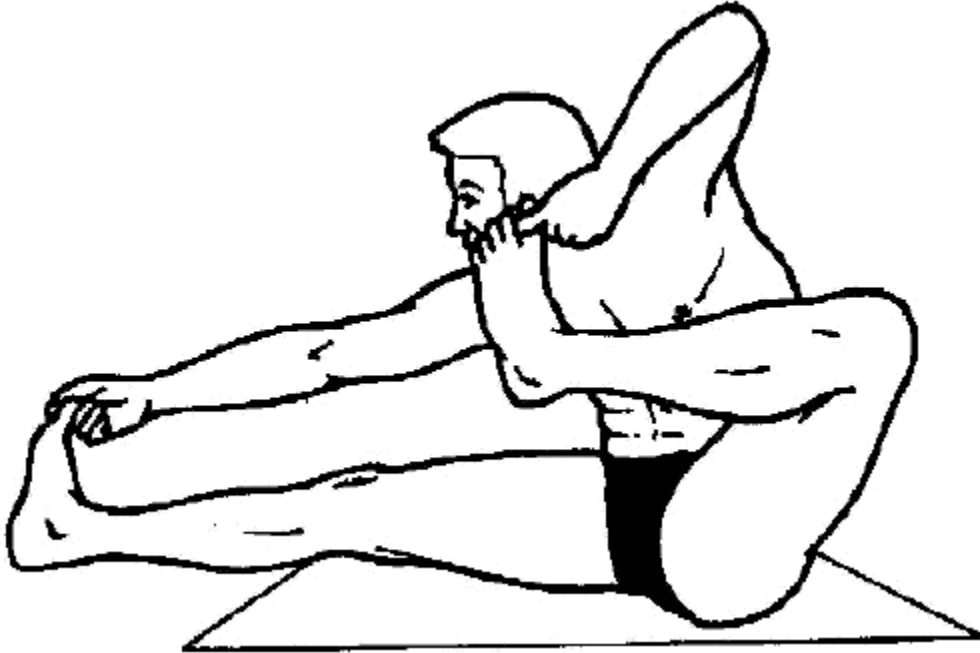
Kurmasana.

24. Placing the right ankle on the left side of the anus, and the left ankle on the right side of it, makes what the Yogis call Kurma-âsana.



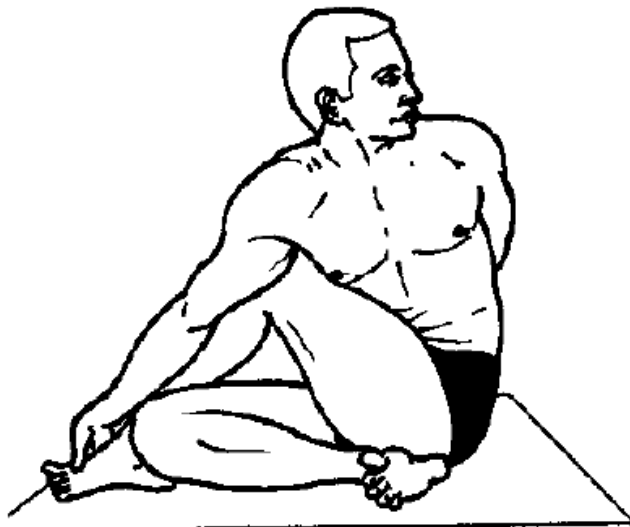
Kukkuta asana.

25. Taking the posture of Padmâ-âsana and carrying the hands under the thighs, when the Yogi raises himself above the ground, with his palms resting on the ground, it becomes Kukkuta-âsana.



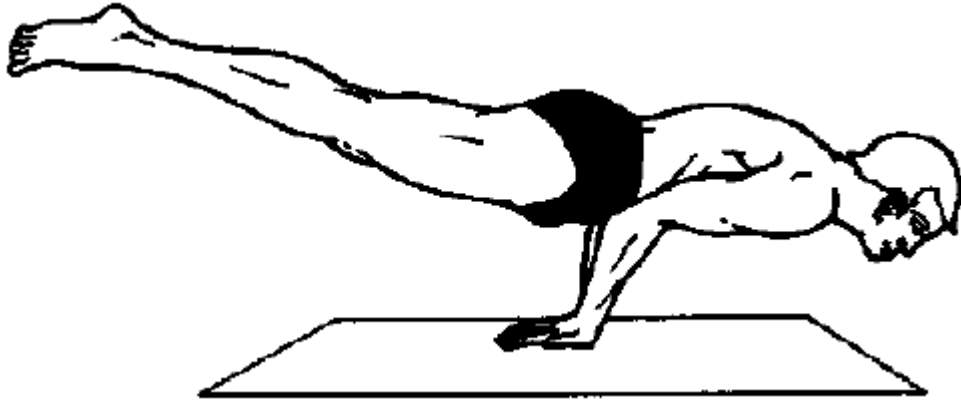
Utana Kurma-asana.

26. Having assumed the Kukkuta-asana, when one grasps his neck by crossing his hands behind his head, and lies in this posture with his back touching the ground, it becomes Uttana Kurma-asana, from its appearance like that of a tortoise



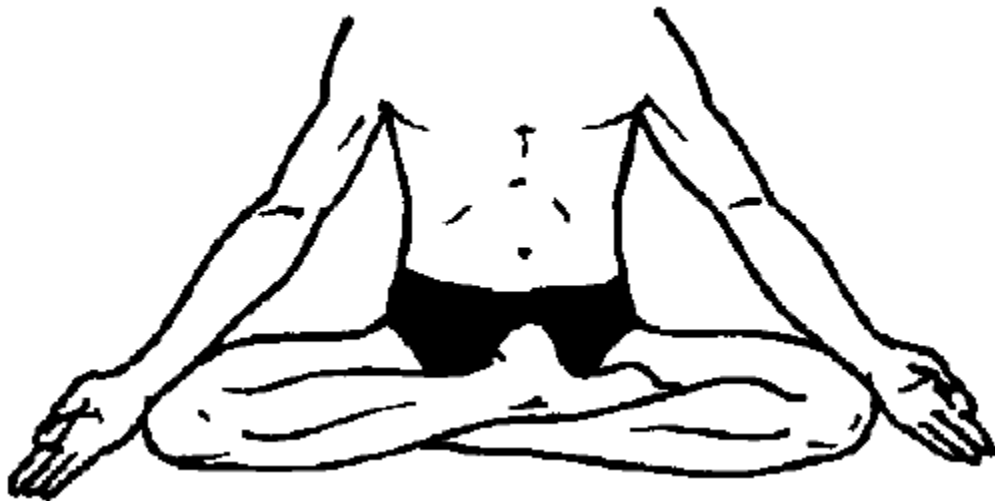
Dhanura asana.

27. Having caught the toes of the foot with both hands and carried them to the ears by drawing the body like a bow, it becomes Dhanura âsana.



Matsya-asana.

28-29. Having placed with the right foot at the root of the left thigh, let the toe be grasped with the right hand passing over the back, and having placed the left foot on the right thigh at its root, let it be grasped with the left hand passing behind the back. This is the âsana, as explained by Sri Matsyânatha. It increases appetite and is an instrument for destroying the group of the most deadly diseases. Its practice awakens the Kundalini, stops the nectar shedding from the moon in people.



Paschima Tana.

30. Having stretched the feet on the ground, like a stick, and having grasped the toes of both feet with both hands, when one sits with his forehead resting on the thighs, it is called Paschima Tâna.

31. This Paschima Tâna carries the air from the front to the back part of the body (i.e., to the susumna). It kindles gastric fire, reduces obesity and cures all diseases of men.



Mayura-asana.

32. Place the palms of both hands on the ground, and place the navel on both the elbows and balancing thus, the body should be stretched backwards like a stick. This is called Mayura-asana.



33. This âsana soon destroyed all diseases, and removes abdominal disorders, and also those arising from irregularities of phlegm, bile and wind, digests unwholesome food taken in excess, increases appetite and destroys the most deadly poison.

Sava-âsana.

34. Laying down on the ground, like a corpse, is called Sava-âsana. It removes fatigue and gives rest to the mind.

35. Siva taught 84 âsanas. Of these the first four being essential ones, I am going to explain them here.

36. These four are:-- The Siddha, Padma, Sinha and Bhadra. Even of these, the Siddha-âsana, being very comfortable, one should always practice it.

The Siddhâsana.

37. Press firmly the heel of the left foot against the perineum, and the right heel above the lingha. With the chin pressing on the chest, one should sit calmly, having restrained the senses, and gaze steadily at the space between the eyebrows. This is called the Siddha âsana, the opener of the door of salvation.

38. This Siddhâsana is performed also by placing the left heel on the Medhra (above the penis), and placing the right one next to it.

39. Some call this Siddhâsana, some Vajrâsana. Others call it Mukta âsana or Gupta âsana.

40. Just as sparing food is among Yamas, and Ahimsâ among the Niyamas, so is Siddhâsana called by adepts the chief of all the âsanas.

41. Out of the 84 âsanas Siddhâsana should always be practiced, because it cleanses the impurities of 72,000 nâdis.

42. By contemplating on oneself, by eating sparingly, and by practicing Siddhâsana for 12 years, the Yogi obtains success.

43. Other postures are of no use, when success has been achieved in Siddhâsana, and Prâna Vâyû becomes calm and restrained by Kevala Kumbhaka.

44. Success in one Siddhâsana alone becoming firmly established, one gets Unmani at once, and the three bonds (Bandhas) are accomplished of themselves.

45. There is no âsana like the Siddhâsana and no Kumbhaka like the Kevala. There is no mudrâ like the Khechari and no laya like the Nada (Anahâta Nâda).

Padmâsana.

46. Place the right foot on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh, and grasp the toes with the hands crossed over the back. Press the chin against the chest and gaze on the tip of the nose. This is called the Padmâsana, the destroyer of the diseases of

the Yamis.

47. Place the feet on the thighs, with the soles upward, and place the hands on the thighs, with the palms upwards.

48. Gaze on the tip of the nose, keeping the tongue pressed against the root of the teeth of the upper jaw, and the chin against the chest, and raise the air up slowly, i.e., pull the apâna-vâyû gently upwards.

49. This is called the Padmâsana, the destroyer of all diseases. It is difficult of attainment by everybody, but can be learnt by intelligent people in this world.

50. Having kept both hands together in the lap, performing the Padmâsana firmly, keeping the chin fixed to the chest and contemplating on Him in the mind, by drawing the apâna-vâyû up (performing Mula Bandha) and pushing down the air after inhaling it, joining thus the prana and apâna in the navel, one gets the highest intelligence by awakening the sakti (kundalini) thus.

N.B.-- When Apâna Vâyû is drawn gently up and after filling the lungs with the air from outside, the prana is forced down by and by so as to join both of them in the navel, they both enter then the Kundalini and, reaching the Brahma randra (the great hole), they make the mind calm. Then the mind can contemplate on the nature of the atmana and can enjoy the highest bliss.)

51. The Yogi who, sitting with Padmâsana, can control breathing, there is no doubt, is free from bondage.



FIGURE 11

Figure 11.]

The Simhâsana.

52. Press the heels on both sides of the seam of the Perineum, in such a way that the left heel touches the right side and the right

heel touches the left side of it.

53. Place the hands on the thighs, with stretched fingers, and keeping the mouth open and the mind collected, gaze on the tip of the nose.

54. This is Simhâsana, held sacred by the best Yogis. This excellent âsana effects the completion of the three Bandhas (the Mulabandha, Kantha or Jâlandhar Bandha and Uddiyâna Bandha).

The Bhandrâsana.

55 and 56. Place the heels on either side of the seam of the Perineum, keeping the left heel on the left side and the right one on the right side, holding the feet firmly joined to one another with both the hands. This Bhadrâsana is the destroyer of all diseases.

57. The expert Yogis call this Goraksa âsana. By sitting with this âsana, the Yogi gets rid of fatigue.

58. The Nadis should be cleansed of their impurities by performing the mudrâs, etc., (which are the practices relating to the air) âsanas, Kumbhakas and various curious mudrâs.

59. By regular and close attention to Nâda (anâhata nâda) in Hatha Yoga, a Brahmachari, sparing in diet, unattached to objects of enjoyment, and devoted to Yoga, gains success, no doubt, within a year.

60. Abstemious feeding is that in which 3/4 of hunger is satisfied with food, well cooked with ghee and sweets, and eaten with the offering of it to Siva.

Foods injurious to a Yogi.

61. Bitter, sour, saltish, green vegetables, fermented, oily, mixed with til seed, rape seed, intoxicating liquors, fish, meat, curds, chhaasa pulses, plums, oil-cake, asafoetida (hinga), garlic, onion, etc., should not be eaten.

62. Food heated again, dry, having too much salt, sour, minor grains, and vegetables that cause burning sensation, should not be eaten. Fire, women, travelling, etc., should be avoided.

63. As said by Goraksa, one should keep aloof from the society of the evil-minded, fire, women, travelling, early morning bath, fasting, and all kinds of bodily exertion.

64. Wheat, rice, barley, shâstik (a kind of rice), good corns, milk, ghee, sugar, butter, sugarcandy, honey, dried ginger, Parwal (a vegetable), the five vegetables, moong, pure water, these are very beneficial to those who practice Yoga.

65. A yogi should eat tonics (things giving strength), well sweetened, greasy (made with ghee), milk butter, etc., which may increase humors of the body, according to his desire.

66. Whether young, old or too old, sick or lean, one who discards laziness, gets success if he practices Yoga.

67. Success comes to him who is engaged in the practice. How can one get success without practice; for by merely reading books on Yoga, one can never get success.

68. Success cannot be attained by adopting a particular dress (Vesa). It cannot be gained by telling tales. Practice alone is the means to success. This is true, there is no doubt.

69. âsanas, various Kumbhakas, and other divine means, all should be practiced in the practice of Hatha Yoga, till the fruitóRâja Yoga is obtained.