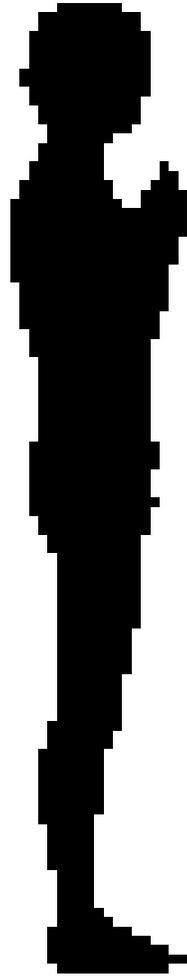


CHAPTER SIX



YOGA

Sit/Easy Position – Sukhasana



Sit cross-legged with hands on knees. Keep your spine straight. Focus on your breath. Take 5-10 slow, deep breaths. On the next inhale, raise your arms over your head. Exhale and bring your arms down slowly. Repeat 5-7 times.

Sukhasana is a starting position that helps focus awareness on breathing and the body; helps strengthen lower back and open the groin and hips. ■

Lotus Pose – Padmasana



Keep the right foot on the left thigh. If the right knee easily touches the floor, then bend the left knee, take hold of the left foot with both hands, gently glide it over the crossed right leg and place it on the right thigh. This will give symmetrical placement of the legs and you are in lotus position. The hands should be kept on the knees with palms open, and the thumb and second finger of each hand should touch forming a letter O. Close the eyes. Breathe normally.

Note: Do not fold legs forcefully. It takes few days for the legs to bend smoothly without pain and discomfort. For the first few days, practice folding only one leg. This half lotus posture is also called 'Ardha Padmasana'.

Padmasana is a very popular meditation pose. This posture keeps the spine erect; helps keep the joints in flexible condition. ■

Corpse Pose – Savasana



Lie down on your back, in a quiet place. Place the arms beside the body, palms upturned. Keep heels slightly apart. Keep the eyelids closed, but the eyeballs should move freely within. Loosen all the tensions in the body. Breathe slowly and deeply, feeling a sense of calm relaxation come over your whole body.

The Corpse Pose is an excellent posture for total relaxation. It stimulates blood circulation and exercises inner organs. ■

Please note:

Be kind to yourself when you practice yoga. Go slowly, especially in the beginning, and listen to your body. It knows what it can do. If it says, "stop", stop. Don't push it. Yoga is not a competitive sport. You don't win points for matching a picture in the book. If you push too hard, you probably won't enjoy it, and you may hurt yourself. Always do it within your limit.

It is suggested to do mild stretching exercises from neck to feet before doing any of the above asanas as well as Suryanamaskar. ■