

## CHAPTER FIVE



# YOGA


**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 asanas and Suryanamaskar. ■

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## Warrior Pose II – Virabhadrasana II



From Tadasana (Mountain Pose - ) shift the body weight to left leg and take a big step forward with the right leg. Feet are still hip width apart, looking forward, with straight spine. Inhale and place the arms out in front of body. On an exhalation, slowly open the left arm across the chest until the arms and the spine are in a T position, turning at the waist and opening and turning out the back foot slightly, at a 45\* angle. Breathe normally. After few seconds, step forward and come back into tadasana. Repeat with the other side.

***Virabhadrasana builds good posture and confidence, stretches and strengthens legs and groins. The counter pose for this asana is Balasana (child's pose - ).*** ■

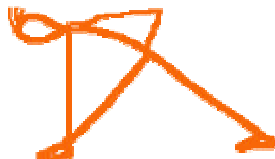
## Warrior Pose III - Virabhadrasana III



Stand two arm widths away facing a wall. From Tadasana shift your weight to one leg. Bend the leg with the shifted weight and on the exhalation raise the arms forward and the other leg backward with arms aligned with the back leg. Bend forward, placing your hands on the wall for support. One will be in a T position with arms and back leg. Do not go down past this straight line. Breathe normally. After few seconds, bring the arms back to sides while lowering the leg back to tadasana to maintain balance. Repeat with the other side.

***Virabhadrasana improves posture; builds confidence and might; strengthens legs, shoulders and knees. The counter pose for this asana is Balasana. ■***

## Triangle Pose - Trikonasana



From Tadasana take a big step forward or backwards. The body weight should be evenly shifted in the center. The front left foot must be looking forward while turn the right back foot out slightly, at a 45\* angle. Inhale and raise the arms in front, and on an exhalation, slowly open the right arm until the body is in a T position. Place the right arm on the hip, and hinge forward, and while turning at the waist, drop the left arm to the ground. Breathe normally. After few seconds, slowly raise the body back to tadasana. Repeat with the other side.

***Trikonasana stretches back and waist; opens chest and improves balance. The counter pose for this asana is Balasana.***

## Tree Pose - Vrksasana



Stand beside a wall. From Tadasana, with left hand on the wall and the right hand on the hip, shift the body weight to left leg, and raise the right foot to the ankle of the planted foot. Once balance is gained, slowly raise the right foot to your mid calf. Breathe normally. Look forward. Once balance is gained, release the hand from the wall and float the arms above head, shoulder width apart. Then slowly lower the arms and slide the right foot back down to tadasana. Repeat with the other side.

***Vrksasana strengthens legs, and spine; stretches groin; improves concentration and balance. The counter pose for this asana is Balasana. ■***

## Side stretch - Parsvottanasana




Hold arms together behind the body, keeping your spine straight and shoulders back. From Tadasana, take a big step forward with your right leg. Feet are still facing forward and hip width apart. On an exhalation, hinge forward at the waist keeping your spine and legs straight. Both feet still planted and the left heel down. Head drops to front knee however far one can go without over extending oneself. Breathe normally. Then slowly raise the body back up and step back into tadasana. Repeat with the other side.

***This posture improves balance, stretches hamstrings, back of legs and back. The counter pose for this asana is Balasana. ■***

## Seated forward bend - Paschimottanasana




From Dandasana (sitting pose - ) place the hands on the hip bones. Keeping the spine neutral, on an exhalation, hinge forward at the waist, only to the level comfortable. Do not over extend. Breathe normally and don't stay too long.

***Paschimottanasana stretches legs; stretches and strengthens back and opens hips. The counter pose for this asana is Tadasana (mountain-pose). ■***

## Bound Angle Pose/Butterfly pose I - Baddha Konasana



From Sukhasana (sit/easy position - ) , bend your knees and draw the soles of your feet together. Holding your feet with both hands, ease them in further towards your body. Gently bounce your knees to the floor. As an advanced variation, bend your arms and use your elbows to push your knees gently towards the floor. Keep your back straight and look forward.

***Baddha Konasana remedies poor posture by stretching and strengthening the muscles of the legs and the back. ■***

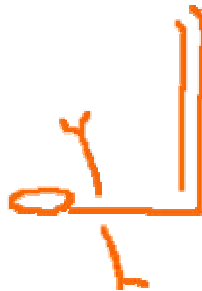
## Pelvic lift – Setu Bandha



Lie down on the floor in savasana (corpse pose). Bend the knees, with the arms loose by the sides. Exhale and lift from the pelvis up, onto an inch, keeping the spine straight. Come down the same way, fully on the spine. Repeat a few times. Try to create space between shoulder blades. From savasana gently turn to the left side, place the hands on the floor and get up slowly.

***Setu Bandha strengthens back, bottom, thighs, and shoulders; strengthens pelvis. The counter pose for this asana is Balasana.***

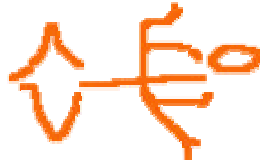
## Legs up the wall - Viparita Karani



Come close to the wall in a seated position. With half of the sitting bones next to the wall, swing your legs up so they are straight on the wall. Lie down with back flat and neck straight looking up. \*Do not move your neck to look at the instructor or other students. Stretch the arms on the sides to make a T with the back. Breathe normally. Stay in this position for few seconds. Then bend your legs and turn over to one side before coming up to a seated position.

***Viparita Karani relieves stress, and reduces fatigue. It stretches legs; opens chest; relieves swollen legs and feet. The counter pose for this asana is Balasana (child's pose).*** ■

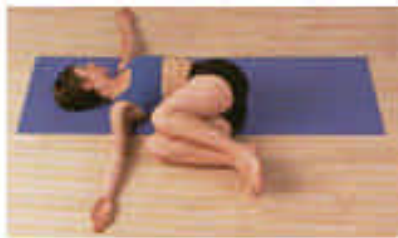
## Reclining angle pose/Butterfly pose II – Supta Baddha Konasana



From Savasana, bend your knees, placing feet on the floor still hip width apart. On an exhalation, drop the knees wide to either side of the body. Inhale and raise the arms to the ceiling and on an exhalation cross them at the elbows and let them drop to either side of the body as if hugging oneself. Breathe normally. Stay in this pose for few seconds. Then raise your arms back to ceiling and repeat on the other side. Now bring the arms and legs back to center, turn gently to left side, place hands on the floor and slowly get up from savasana.

***Supta Baddha Konasana is calming and relieves stress. It stretches groins, pelvic floor and opens hips; stretches shoulders. The counter pose for this asana is Balasana. ■***

## Jathara Paravritti



From Savasana lift bottom up a few centimetres and move them to the left about 2 hands width and place them down again. Now lift the knees and feet and roll them both to the right till they both rest on the floor to the right side of the body. Try to have a right angle at both the hip and knee

joints. Stretch the arms to the sides to form a T with the back. Lift the head and turn to look over the left shoulder. Stay in this pose for 4 breaths, letting the in-breath start at the belly and come up to the chest and on the out-breath, progressively let go of every muscle. Roll back and re-adjust everything to the centre and then go the opposite way. Bottom up and to the right - then down, knees and feet up and to the left and then down, arms at sides, head up and to the right. After completing both sides rest in savasana and slowly get up from the left side.

***This twist is fantastic for all the internal organs and for releasing tightness in the back. It is also a great preparation for relaxation exercises like savasana. ■***

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## Apanasana



From Savasana, take the feet off the floor and bring the thighs to a vertical position. Place the hands on the knees and without taking the head off the floor, exhale, while bringing the knees towards the torso. Try to let the abdominal\_muscles do most of the work, letting the hands help a little toward the end of the movement. On the inhalation, allow the knees to move away to the starting position, while bringing the arms overhead to the floor behind the body. Repeat slowly few times, being sure to breath out as the knees come towards the body and breath in when they move away. Rest in savasana and slowly get up from the left side.

***Apanasana helps digestion and elimination and limbers the lower back. ■***