

STRETCH POSE

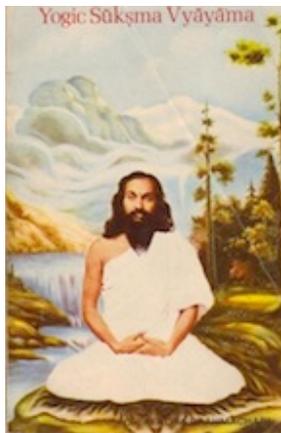
KUNDALINI YOGA ASANA





UTTANAPADASANA foot (Pada) stretch (uttana) pose (asana)

FROM: "Yogic Suksma Vyayama " (First published 1956)



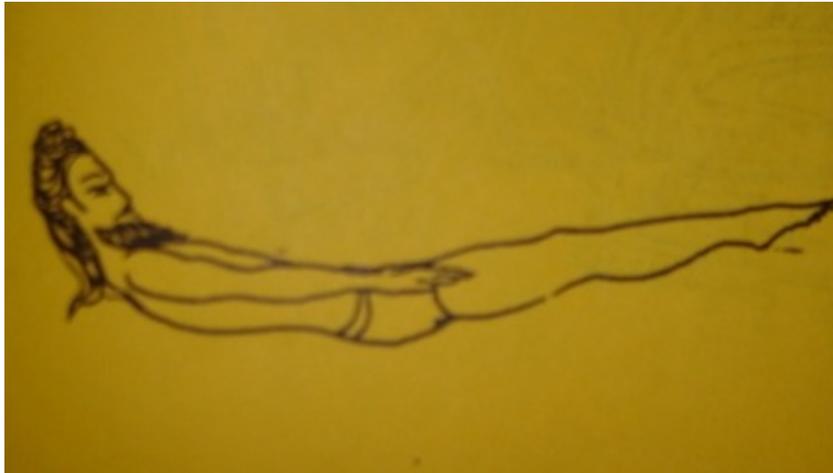
Dhirendra Brahmachari

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS:

THE ASANA HAS A UNIQUE EFFECT ON THE BODY. SINCE THE WHOLE BODY GETS BALANCED AT THE WAIST, THE NAVEL-CENTRE (NABHI-CAKRA), WHICH IS ANATOMICALLY ALMOST IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BODY (WHICH, AS MANIPURA CAKRA IN THE TRADITION, IS BELIEVED TO BE THE CENTRE AND SOURCE OF 72,000 NADIS), IS AFFECTED.

IT IS BELIEVED THAT FOR THE HEALTH OF AN INDIVIDUAL IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE NAVEL CENTRE SHOULD BE IN ITS NORMAL POSITION. ITS DISPLACEMENT, EITHER UPWARDS OR DOWNWARDS, SIDEWAYS OR OBLIQUELY, RESULTS IN A

VARIETY OF ABDOMINAL DISORDERS LIKE PAIN IN THE ABDOMEN,FLATULENCE,INDIGESTION,DIARRHOEA ETC.



Navel Point (Nabhi Chakra) what is it ?

The sacred Upanishads says : "Tan-nabhi mandale cakram procyate mani-purakam Urdhvam medhrad-adho nabheh kande yonih khag-andavat. Tatra nadyah samutpannah sahasranam dvisaptatih. Tesu nadi-sah- sresu dvi-saptatir-udahrtah. Pradhanah prana-vahinyo bhuyas-tasu dasa smratah."

"In the centre of the stomach the navel centre reposes in the circle known as Manipura. Between the navel and the last bone of the spinal column is the navel centre shaped like a bird's egg. This encloses within itself the starting points of seventy two thousand nerves of which seventy-two are vital. Of these, again, ten are the most important. In order to have proper control over these ten nerves, one has to take special pains."

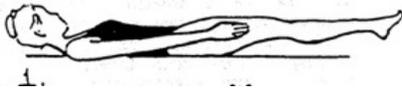
Practice makes perfect...IF your practice is correct, done the proper way.

Active Stretch Pose: for beginner's or after injuries or accidents.

Begin in Pose #2 Exhale in pose #2 ,



Inhale in Pose #1 extend legs (hold 5-10 sec. , then exhale back to Pose #2 with knees to chest)



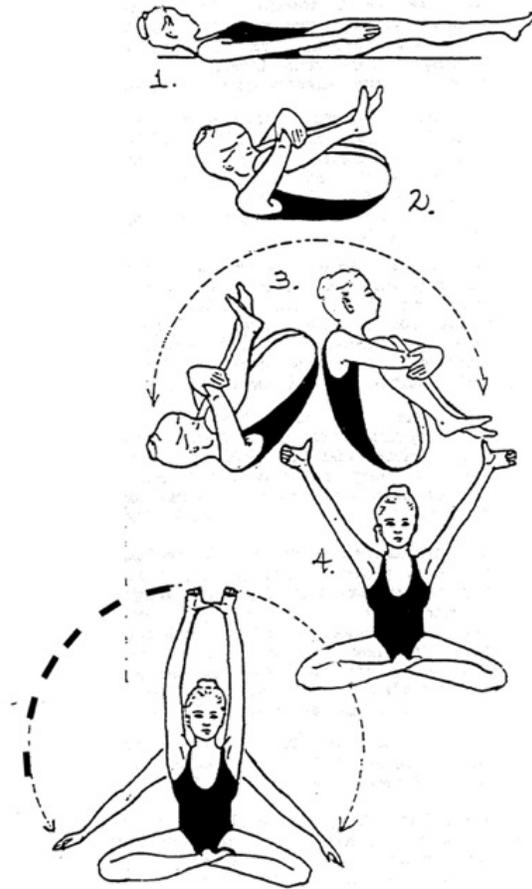
(Repeat 5-10 X) then relax completely in corpse pose.

Adjust the exercise to your body, don' t strain.
Gradually build up your stamina and focus.

Another modification that can be used is to place one's palms under the buttocks, palms flat to to the ground, so as to elevate the pelvic area.

Stretch Pose , the first exercise in morning routine called the "Wake-up Series" given by Yogi Bhajan.

Good to warm-up the whole spine before stretch pose by doing "cat-cow exercise" or "camel ride".



1. Stretch Pose (Uttanapadasana)
2. Knees to Nose (Pavan Muktasana)
3. Rock on spine
4. Ego Eradicator

1. Stretch Pose: Lying on back, arms and legs kept straight, raise feet, head and hands 6” off the ground and hold with Breath of Fire for 2 minutes or as long as possible. Eyes should look at big toes, and hands point towards feet. If the waist comes up, place hands beneath hips for support. If held less than a minute, rest and repeat pose, increasing time daily.

Sets the navel.

2. Nose to Knees: Bend the knees and clasp legs with arms, raising head so that nose comes between knees and hold with Breath of Fire for 2 minutes.

Combines Prana with Apana.

3. Spinal Rock: In same position, rock back and forth on the spine from neck to tailbone for 1 minute.

Distributes pranic energy and relaxes spine.

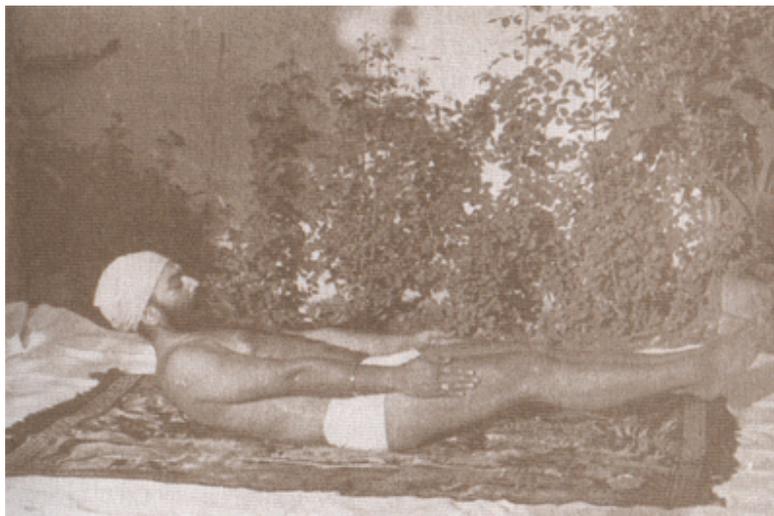
4. Ego-Eradicator: Sit in Easy Pose and raise arms to 60° out to the sides, fingertips on pads of fingers, thumbs extended straight up and hold with Breath of Fire for 2 minutes. Then deeply inhale and VERY SLOWLY raise arms until thumb tips touch overhead, flatten hands and slowly arc them down, sweeping the aura with the palms, collecting any darkness, negativity or sickness, and press and release it into the earth, to clean and energize the aura.

Feel light around you and meditate on that light.

Each pose is done 1-3 Min. with Bhastrika (Breath of Fire)

After the last exercise relax your effort, let the energy circulate and integrate body, mind, aura.

Correct way:

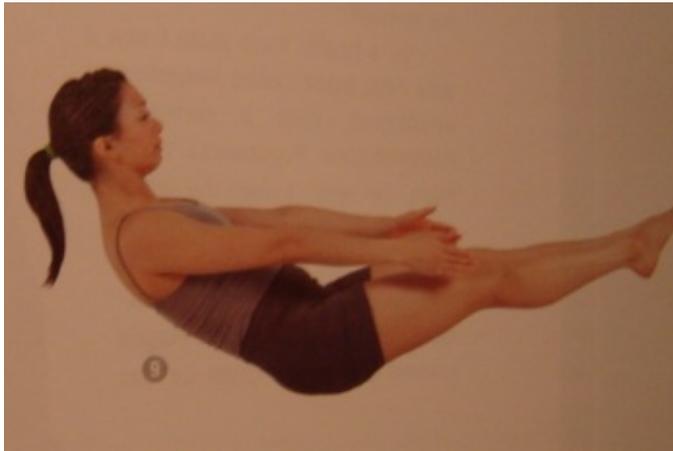


YOGI BHAJAN (founder of modern Kundalini Yoga) demonstrating what he called "STRETCH POSE". Photo taken in India before he came to N.America. He was 39 years old at the time. (1968)

1.) Stretch Pose

Lying on back, put heels together, point toes forward, lift heels 6 inches off ground. Raise the head same height and focus eyes on toes. Arms are off ground, not touching hips, fingertips towards toes. Begin breath of fire (BOF) for 1 minute. Inhale, hold the breath, exhale and relax. If you feel energetic, do up to 3 minutes.

Many kriyas (yoga exercise sets) of Kundalini Yoga use this traditional asana. It can also be practiced by itself, it is however practical to warm up before attempting it, and then come into shavasana to relax.



INCORRECT WAY: Wrong asana.
This asana is called "Ardha Navasana" (half-boat pose)
Lower back is not flat to floor.

NABHI CHAKRA CHIKITSA : NAVEL POINT THERAPY

As part of Ayur Vedic science and also belonging to the yogis. This esoteric practice forms a central part of Kundalini Yoga and the ancient yogic science. In the early days (1969-70's), Yogi Bhajan stressed the importance and necessity of having a strong base (foundation) and "nabhi adjustment" and "nabhi kriyas" or sets were common place in his classes.

What exactly is the navel point?

Yogis tell us that the "navel point" is the center of energy distribution of the subtle anatomy. The central starting point of the complex system of nadis and chakras. The focal point of physical energy: the center of life, health, inner strength, balance.

The "navel point" should be centered directly under the umbilicus in a healthy individual, however the ebbs and flows of the physical existence in time and space and the daily stress of GRAVITY. Yogis have recommended the daily practice of certain asanas to strengthen and adjust this "navel point".

Western science (i.e. applied kinesiology) tells us that the yogis concept of "navel point" corresponds with "the point of maximal pulsation of the abdominal aorta" in relation to the umbilicus(belly button).

The daily practice of "stretch pose" UTTANAPADASANA places the body in a position of self-sustained pressure that corrects the deeper muscular imbalances (iliopsoas ,diaphragm) and in doing so re-centers the "navel point" where it should be. Also harmonize the pelvic/spinal alignment.

How to test for the NABHI:

After maintaining "stretch pose" for as long as comfortable.

Then relax in SAVASANA .

Then one can easily join the fingertips with the thumb forming a small circle and firmly press straight down at the navel.

One should feel the "belly pulse" under the fingertips. If the pulse is in the center, then the navel is correctly adjusted.



Dhirendra Brahmachari says:

FOR MEN AND WOMEN : When the patient is in the Corpse Pose, after doing the Uttanapadasana, the examiner should close the five fingers, of his hand and place them on the patient's navel. If the navel is found to be pulsating like the heart, everything is in order. If the navel beat is found to emanate from anywhere but the right spot, the navel is not functioning normally. The present position of the navel is where it is found pulsating.

If not the following sequence of asanas was recommended by Yogi Bhajan, to adjust the "navel point".

Navel Adjustment Kriya

1) UTTANAPADASANA



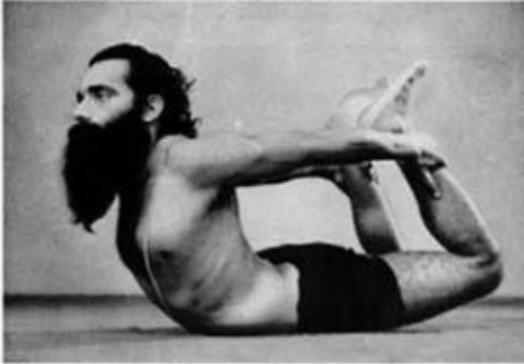
Figure No. 107

Self-Treatment of the Navel. 1. For Men. 2. For Women.

Navel 107

1) **Stretch Pose:** Lying on the back, place the heels together, point toes forward, and lift the heels six inches off the ground. Raise the head to the same height, eyes focused on the toes. Arms are off the ground (not touching hips) with fingertips towards the toes. Begin breath of fire for one minute. Inhale, hold, then relax. It is possible to build the time up to three minutes.

2) DHANURASANA



Picture No. 206 Self Treatment of the Navel: Second Step: The Uprights. Naval Clinic

2) **Bow Pose:** Roll onto the stomach. Reach back and grab the ankles. Pull up so the navel and sex organs are on the ground with the neck arched back.

Begin breath of fire for up to three minutes. Then inhale, hold a few seconds, exhale, and apply root lock. Gracefully relax on the stomach.

3) CHAKRASANA



Picture No. 207 Self Treatment of the Navel: Third Step: The Colicross. Naval Clinic

3) Wheel Pose: On the back, put the palms on the floor above the shoulders. Move the feet flat on the ground by the buttocks. Now, carefully arch up so the navel is the highest point of the body. Look at the thumbs on the floor. Take a few long deep breaths to center the attention so you do not become dizzy, and then do breath of fire for 30 seconds to one minute. Inhale, hold a few seconds, and slowly come down.

4) MATSYASANA

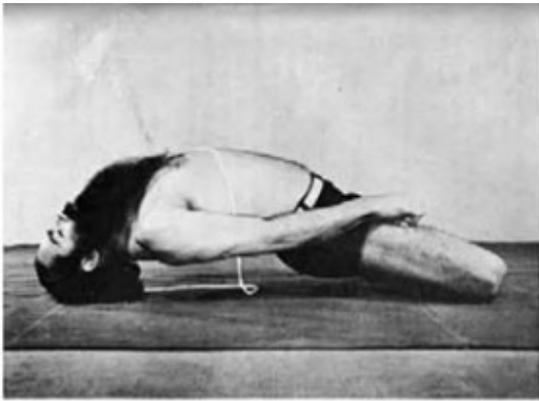


Figure No. 10
Self Treatment of the Neck: The Matsyasana.
Nand Chitr

4) Fish Pose: Cross the legs in lotus and grab the big toes. Put the head on the ground while lying on your back. Arch the neck, back, chest, and the navel up. Do breath of fire for two to three minutes, then inhale, hold, and relax.



Yogi Bhajan in Shavasana

EFFECTS AND BENEFITS :

The Shavasana removes physical as well as mental fatigue, and has been accorded a place of pride in the science of yoga. Shavasana is a unique feature of the yogic system of exercises and is unparalleled by any other exercise in the whole gamut of physical education, being a process in which not only is there no active contractile tension generated in the motor organs of the body, but an attempt at active relaxation is made to include every part of the body. This creates unexpected physiological possibilities. The unsurpassed relaxation provided by this asana can, in part at least, be explained in physiological terms. During the state of profound muscular relaxation, the muscle tone, and consequently the intra-tissue tension, falls precipitously. This results in a marked lowering of the peripheral extra-vascular-resistance against the arterial blood. In consequence, on the one hand, more nutrients and oxygen enter the muscle mass and thus help in providing the requisite raw materials for releasing energy and, on the other hand, provide a ready outflow of accumulated waste materials, metabolic intermediaries (some of which are markedly toxic even in low concentrations), and gaseous end-products like carbon- dioxide. A flushing out of these substances relieves the metabolic checks. It is believed that the feeling of fatigue in the exercised muscles is an account of the accumulated lactic and other acids. A diminution in their concentration by their being flushed out as well as by their quick disposal due to enhanced oxygen levels would and does result in relief from the sense of fatigue. The asana is also utilized for the attainment of samadhi(a deep state of meditation).



Historical photo (1974) taken in India of YOGI BHAJAN (Left) and his Teacher DHIRENDRA BRAHMACHARI (right) of the Vishwayatam Yoga Ashram (of new Delhi), where Yogi Bhajan was a senior instructor before coming to N.America in 1968.



Swami Dhirendra Brahmachari on the dais (teacher's bench) lecturing to Swami Vishnudevananda and Yogi Bhajan. Dhirendra's only time in the USA (1975), guest of Yogi Bhajan in LA.

Both yogis / teachers have left his earth plane, but their legacy lives on in their teachings , and the many lives they have touched.

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Kundalini Journal

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