

Yogic Sukshma Vyayama



CSR Prabhu

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Humble Dedication



I humbly prostrate
and take pride to dedicate this book
to my most beloved and affectionate teacher,
late **Shri Suri Raghava Deekhitulu** whose kindness
and favours on me and my life cannot be repaid
and who helped and guided me all my life
since childhood till recently, when he
left all of us for a heavenly abode.
May we all have his blessings..!

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Preface

I am a most unlikely yoga practitioner. My name is Peter Theobald and I am a 33 old, Managing Director of a Computer Security Company. Yoga and me were poles apart for the first 28 years of my life. I never even went near a yoga class by mistake and I never attached any value to this great science - which was a grave injustice. Anyway, I got hooked on my first exposure.

My introduction to Yoga began when at 28 in 1995. I attended a lecture demonstration by Birju and Zubin, students of Yogacharya Shri B.K.S. Iyengar. I was very impressed and immediately enrolled for their classes. Thus began my journey into the fascinating and infinite world of yoga. I practised this method for a full three years. Am indeed very grateful to Birju. Aarti, Rajvi, Zubin, Jawahar and many of their teacher colleagues for introducing me to this wonderful world of yoga. Though initially I had lot of trouble, after three years practice I became reasonably proficient at most of the asanas. I owe a debt of gratitude to all the teachers at the Iyengar school who patiently taught me everything. I was so impressed that I convinced, cajoled and bullied my entire family - sister, wife, mother, brother and brother-in-law to join me. To their eternal credit, they not only did, but supported and encouraged me.

My next yoga teacher was Jehangir Palkhiwala, who also a student Shri B.K.S.Iyengar. However he combines the principles of natural hygiene and yoga. From him I learnt the value and importance of a daily practice, how to build a routine of my own, how to practise on my own at home, and how to manage without any props — even a blanket.

I then chanced upon a book by Shri Desikachar, son of Shri T. Krishnamacharya, a great Yogi of this century and Guru of Shri B.K.S.Iyengar I was immediately attracted by his concept of

Viniyoga, where the yoga practice is customised for the individual, to suit his current physical state and his objectives. I learnt the importance of breathing both while performing asanas and also pranayama. I also learnt the importance of doing the asanas gently, systematically, planning a practice, having an objective of the daily practice. But most important of all, I got an exposure to Vedic Chanting, the most simple, beautiful, yet powerful practice, which I still practice almost everyday. In fact though I was a physical kind of person, I most enjoyed this chanting practice. I was immediately attracted to it and it brought tears to my eyes when I heard in the first time.

In between I also got a brief exposure to what is called "Astanga yoga", also known as Power Yoga, propagated by Shri Pattabhi Jois, through Tim and Olivia Allegra, who were his students. Shri Pattabhi Jois was also a disciple of Shri Krishnamacharya. This form of yoga is very powerful and physically demanding one, which integrates all the asanas with the Surya Namaskar. I just took one class of this to get a flavour of it but did not pursue it further since I found it too physically strenuous.

Finally, through accident (or may be God's design) I met my current teacher Shri C.S.R. Prabhu, at the most unlikely place, a computer conference on Y2K. Here we started talking and he gave me a lot of interesting information about traditional yoga. I was as usual immediately attracted to this and I went to Hyderabad specially on a couple of trips to learn from him. From him, I got a comprehensive, holistic, and traditional way of learning and practising yoga. I learnt the importance of kriyas i.e. the cleansing practices. At first I was reluctant and I found the practices unnatural and difficult to do, but later I found that the quality of the pranayama after doing the kriyas is something that just cannot be described or compared to my earlier practice. The whole face, nose, throat, chest, all seemed opened up and cleaned up. Next I learnt Sukshma Vyayama, a most wonderful form of exercise which is unique to this system. In fact that is what this book is all about. I then learnt the sequence of performing asanas with necessary precautions. I then learnt basic pranayama. My learn-

ing is still going on. Finally and most importantly I learnt of the existence of several of ancient classical yoga texts such as Gheranda Samhita, Hathayoga Pradeepika, and most importantly Bhagavat Gita. I never even knew that Bhavat Gita was a yogic text until I heard Shri C.S.R. Prabhu reciting it from memory verbatim word for word in Sanskrit, and explaining its meaning. I was never so flabbergasted in my life by such a prodigious display of memory. Therefore, after the practice I learnt here, I felt it was very holistic, with initial cleaning, Sukshma Vyayama, asanas, pranayama, Dhyana, and then logical and theoretical study of the Sanskrit texts.

I really found this system and method of teaching of yoga unique. I thought that many more people would be benefited by doing this practice. Therefore after discussion with my teacher Shri C.S.R. Prabhu, we have decided to bring out a complete series of books on the traditional and holistic yoga practice. The first part of the series will be on Hatha Yoga and second part on Raja Yoga. In the Hatha yoga series, we will have Sukshma Vyayama, and then Asanas and Kriya, Pranayama and then the classic yogic texts. We planned to do the same thing for Raja Yoga. If the response to the first series is encouraging. In Hatha Yoga we thought that since there are lots of good books on Asanas, there is no immediate need or urgency to bring one out first. It can be managed later. The most important thing was to bring out the book on Sukshma Vyayama, which is a simple, powerful, unique system of exercises that can be practised by everybody. That is how you are holding the first book in your hands.

Of course a lot of people have helped in the production of this book. My teacher Shri C.S.R. Prabhu has painstakingly written or dictated almost every word of the texts. He also consented to kindly answer all the questions that I put to him, that appear in the chapter on interview. My mother, Mrs Vasantha Rao, herself a serious yoga practitioner, provided invaluable assistance of typing in the whole book. My sister Vishalakshi, for doing part of the recording work, and editing the book as well. My wife Rita, for accompanying me on my trips to Hyderabad and also leaving me free to edit the book and add student's comments for each exercise.

We produced a DTP version in the first attempt 100 copies and now we are publishing 1000 copies in print.

Without any further delay I will now hand you over to Shri C.S. R. Prabhu, who will explain to you the intricacies and beauty of Sukshma Vyayama. Good luck to all of you and from my side there is only one suggestion. This is not a book to read and keep on your book shelf. If you want any benefit you must practise. We will be putting up a web site and conducting workshops and retreats to help you learn and continue this wonderful practice, and enjoy a long and healthy and disease free life.

I would like to end by quoting my teacher's slogan for this book, which is a sloka from the Hatha Yoga Pradeepika:

"Vapukrishatvam, vadane prasannatha, nadasphutatvam, nayanesu nirmale.

Arogata, bindu jayognideepanam, nadi visuddhih, hatha yoga lakshanam".

This simply means, slim body, cheerful face, clear and resonant voice, clear and sparkling eyes, disease free health, control over sensual passions, having pure and clean nadis (psychic channels), are the qualities of a Hatha Yoga practitioner. This is what we are aiming for, no less and I am sure we can accomplish this by faithfully practising the yoga system as propounded by teachers like Shri C.S.R. Prabhu.

Bombay,

10th April 2000.

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Interview of Mr. PRABHU by Peter Theobald (during May 2000)

Q : Mr. Prabhu, can you tell us something about your early life and how you got involved with yoga?

A : Well, the first yoga interaction I had was with my mother. She found that as a child I was vulnerable to all sorts of childhood health problems. So she thought by teaching me yoga I could overcome these problems and become a healthy child. I was 8 years old when she taught me Asanas. Though she had some exposure to Naturopathy and Yoga, she was only an amateur. So she took me to a professional yoga teacher, Shri Suri Raghava Deekshitulu. Shri Dikshitulu, who is now 97, years old, was teaching yoga in Ramakrishna Math in Secunderabad in 1964. I learnt Yoga in Vivekananda Hall, which is so called because Swami Vivekananda once visited there. I, therefore, had the privilege of learning from Shri Suri Raghava Dikshitulu from 1964.

Q : Can you tell us something more about your guru and his background?

A : Shri Suri Raghava Dikshitulu did his graduation in Nizam's College in Hyderabad during mid part of this century under European teachers. He then joined Nizam's Railways and later South Central Railway. He was with Railways for a long time and he was posted to Hyderabad and Akola. When he was in Akola he was having some eczema on his neck. He was suffering from it for 30 to 40 years. He was about 50 years old at that time. In 1952 or 1953 when he was

posted in Akola he was staying alone and he had the opportunity of meeting unexpectedly a great Yogi of this century, Shri Dharendra Brahmachari, who was at that time conducting a Yoga training camp in Akola. So Shri Suri Raghava Dikshitulu spoke to Shri Dharendra Brahmachari about his skin problem. Swami Dharendra Brahmachari asked him to come to the Yoga course of one-month duration during which time he was taught various Yogic kriyas, Sukshma Vyayama and yogasanas. He was also taught Shankhaprakshalana which had the miraculous effect of removing the eczema from his neck of which he was suffering for 30 years. That had such a strong impact on his personality that he decided that he should stop taking up any other work once he retires, and dedicate to popularise Yoga because he got the benefit in his own life. So he underwent a Yoga teachers training course at Yogashram, Delhi and Jammu where he was given a Certificate as Yogasanacharya. I had the fortune of meeting him at this time. In 1964 he retired from Railways and started teaching Yoga as a life mission - propagating yoga for one and all in this great country with large population. So he started off his yoga teaching at Secunderabad, Ramakrishna Mutt at Vivekananda Hall in 1964, when I had the great fortune and privilege of learning from him for five years. After that he shifted from this place to another centre in Secunderabad and handed over the Centre to me and we shifted even from that center to another building called Geetha Bhavan in Secunderabad. So we continued in Geetha Bhavan till 1971-72 where I was teaching in Secunderabad Yogic kriyas, Sukshma Vyayama and Asanas to many, including some of Lions Club members. Then, finally I was taken to a place called Ashok Nagar in Hyderabad and given accommodation and a Hall for yoga teaching in 1972. I taught there till 1976 as that is where my teacher used to teach and he placed me in his place. This is the brief history of my Yoga practice and teaching in Hyderabad and after which I shifted to Bombay to do my M.Tech. in IIT, Bombay.

Q. So that means you have been practising yoga for 35 years and during this time how much you have been teaching?

A: Yes, I have not been teaching during the first few years roughly 4 to 5 years during which time I was learning and assisting my teacher in teaching. I was not teaching directly, but as time passed by my teacher thought I was a good assistant and therefore I can be given independent charge. So he used to go and start the class and do it for a while and then handover the charge to me and he would move to another place and start fresh class. In this manner I was teaching as a 'right hand' to Shri Deekshitulu at various Centres including Gandhi Gyan Mandir in Hyderabad in 1974.

Q: So you have been teaching at that young age to older people. How did you feel about it?

A: It does not matter because it so happened that the only people who were interested in Yoga during those days were old people, though now-a-days young people are also getting interested. But those days yoga was the taboo. People used to think that people who practise Yoga will go to Himalayas and become Sanyasins. So nobody was allowed to go towards yoga, whereas the old people were any way retired and they can as well become Sanyasins and so they used to come to learn yoga. You will be surprised to know that my best student who was teaching in my place after I left for US was himself a retired Station Master of Indian Railways. He was 70 years when I left and he passed away recently at the age of 85. with good health till the end.

Q: Mr. Prabhu, can you tell something more about your actual Yoga? For the benefit of the readers can you describe the type of yoga training you underwent with your teacher Shri Suri Raghava Dikshitulu, in the sense you used to go to his classes and what is his method of teaching and how many students were in the class

so that people can get an idea of how the classes were conducted and instructions where imparted in those days?

A : OK, that is an interesting question. Now the classes start normally at 630 a.m. and end at 730 a.m. or 8 a.m. There were about 20 to 30 people. All the men would wear shorts with a 'langot' inside. Most of the students were males because very rarely ladies used to come. We however did have a special class for ladies only where no men were allowed. So in the gents class, my teacher used to stand on one side and all others on the other side. My teacher also used to wear shorts and do the exercise along with the students. He used to start with the prayer to the Supreme Being and then begin the class with Yogic Sukshma Vyayama - which we described in this book. As you will see this exercises the whole body literally from top to toe- every organ, part, muscle, bone and joint along with breathing and muscular control and movement. This would take about half an hour, followed by Shavasana. This used to be followed by all the Asanas, from Pawana Muktasana to Shavasana, including Vajrasana series, Padmasana series, Nabhi Chakra Shuddhi, Salabhasana, Sarvangasana, Halasana, Surya Namaskar and standing poses like Trikonasan, Veera bhadrasana, Parsva Konasan, ending up with Shirshasana and Shavasana. In between he used to do Shavasana as and when students felt tired. This was followed by the Pranayama session, where Hatha yogic pranayamas were practised followed by Om Meditation. That would be the end of the session. This used to go on for the whole month since that was the duration of the course. In the beginning there would be only a few asanas and then gradually adding, until at the end there would be about 30 asanas, entire Sukshma Vyayama, one or two Pranayamas, couple of Kriyas and then the Meditation. Usually people were expected to attend the 30 day course and then practise at home. This was the Hatha Yoga class.

After that for a few interested students we had the ad-

vanced course where we would teach advanced Asanas, some of the advanced Pranayamas and advanced Kriyas such as Shankha Prakshalana and Vastra Dhauti and Basti. Normally we used to avoid these things for beginners and Sankha Prakshalana was performed at the end of the course and Vastra Dhauti was only taught for specialised cases who had serious health problems, where it was absolutely essential. Otherwise it was being avoided as it is risky, if done improperly. This was basically the overall system.

Q : As a child, did you have a natural attraction for yoga or did you have to be forced into it?

A : Well, I was never forced. As I said, when I was about eight years old, my mother taught me the first Asanas, about a dozen basic ones. I already had that kind of orientation before I met my teacher and I can count three factors for my total commitment to Yoga — one is my mother, who was a great inspiration. She was a very forceful personality, dominant, aggressive and very knowledgeable in Sanskrit scriptures and philosophy. She also had interaction with many Yoga experts, gurus and Swamis. She also had a good understanding of Naturopathy and Ayurveda. So she influenced me to a very great extent in going towards Yoga as she knew that Yoga was going to take care of my physical life completely. It's almost like a health insurance. The second major factor was that I had seen the very bad health of my father, suffering from and finally dying out of epilepsy and earlier he had several health problems like constipation, memory loss etc. I learnt in the hard way how important it was to maintain good health, at any cost. In fact that was my slogan "good health at any cost", after seeing people like my father who were suffering from problems that multiply and finally they die at a very early age of 60 or 65. So I decided that in my life I'm not going to fall sick, come what may. Whether it means even a whole lifetime of dedication to something which can ensure good health. And that something was Yoga, as I found in my

teacher's thrust and missionary zeal of propagating Yoga. He insisted "health first - total health and perfect health".

Usually, every man we see around us is not healthy, though he says he is OK. If you just probe a little bit you can make out a lot of problems. They take medicines, and almost all go to doctors and take pills. They cannot live without medicines and doctors. And health, if at all achieved through medicines and doctors, is no health at all. It's like taking loans from others and saying you have a lot of money. So health without medicines, without going to a doctor is perfect health, hundred percent perfect health. This was the thrust of the ideology of my teacher which he was propagating in a big way. It exactly fitted with my background of seeing the suffering of my father on one hand and the ideological base my mother had in health development. So I found that it is absolutely essential to maintain good health. And if you want to have perfect health, there seemed to me no other system other than Yoga that could do the job. There may be other systems also, but they appear to be more difficult than Yoga. Yoga is viable, practical, accessible and available. It is the only system that can guarantee good health without medicines and doctors. I am proud to say that barring the couple of accidents I had in my life where I had some fractures and so on, I have not taken medicines or consulted doctors for any ordinary health problem throughout my life.

Even when I had food poisoning at IIT Bombay hostel, and the Director of IIT, Bombay Mr Dey in 1977 insisted that I take some medicine, I refused to take. Over 250 other students took medicines and survived, but I managed only with the help of yoga. Unfortunately as a result of this poisoning I lost patches of hair and became bald prematurely. On a couple of other occasions I had accidents but no serious fractures so I have not taken the medicines. That is the kind of commitment and tenacity with which I have practised yoga.

Of course, when you have a fracture you have to take medi-

cal attention and you come under the control of doctors. Sometimes we will lose consciousness and we have no choice in exercising our control but otherwise, in a conscious state under normal circumstances, I have been successful in achieving good health without any other support for the last 30-35 years.

Q : As I understand, you have not restricted your learning of Yoga to Hatha Yoga practices. You have made the move into Raja Yoga also. Can you tell us how you got introduced to Raja Yoga?

A : Well, my career in Hatha Yoga started in 1964 and I reached the peak of learning and teaching more or less by 1971. So my teacher Mr. Dikshitulu found that there is nothing more he can teach me, nor can I learn anything new to teach others in Hatha Yoga. So he thought that I am the right person to go to the higher level of Raja Yoga, the objective of which is to go to the Samadhi state or the state of Self Realisation.

I would like to comment at this stage that the word "Yoga" has been largely misinterpreted and misunderstood. It has been interpreted as purely a physical culture, which is not true. Even Hatha Yoga makes it very clear in the classical texts that Hatha Yoga is only a preparation for Raja Yoga and Raja Yoga is the real Yoga where you have the spiritual goal of self or God Realisation.

A person who stops at Hatha Yoga is just a perfect animal because even an animal will be very healthy and flexible. Acrobatics or gymnastics cannot be equated with Yoga, which unfortunately has been happening of late. The real goal of yoga is to go into the higher states of Realisation not in psychological terms but in spiritual terms. To learn what is the Ultimate Truth and the Ultimate Reality and what is the nature of the Self. Who am I? What is the nature of the Universe? How are the Self and the Universe related? These questions can be answered only by experience of the state of Self Realisation which is achieved in the Samadhi state

which is the deepest possible meditative state. This can be achieved in several ways, one of which is Pranayama as per the Raja Yogic system elaborated by Patanjali. But I have found a lot of people discussing Patanjali at depth but practising only Asanas and nothing else, which is a great disservice to the cause of Yoga. So, I realised that the total concept of Yoga can be understood or experienced only when you go into the higher levels of Raja Yoga.

So my Hatha yoga teacher Mr. Dikshitulu took me to another teacher of higher yoga to my next guru Swami Sheelananda Bharati, who was a great Yogi and Saint of this century. I had the great good fortune and privilege, possibly because of my past karma, to get introduced to him as a student.

Q : Is it possible to give us some idea of the Raja yoga teachings?

A : I would like to defer this discussion to a later date because the issues involved are too deep to be dealt with superficially. I spent about 15 or 20 years learning and practising Raja Yoga — learning for the first ten years or so from my teacher, Swami Sheelananda Bharati, who was capable of entering into the Samadhi state at will, and also capable of making someone else enter that state. He also had extraordinary faculties developed like reading your mind, talking about the future, curing people by touch and other things like that. Of course he never tried to demonstrate or capitalize on that. Compare that with many people who may or may not have powers of a minor nature but nevertheless they try to capitalize on that and claim that they have supernatural or godly powers. They have large followings and establishments and make a lot of money. But my teacher was against all this. He believed in anonymity and detachment. He had no interest in establishing Ashrams or generating lot of following, money, name and fame. He was so advanced in the spiritual development that all these are very small things. He was beyond all

this. He maintained a very anonymous existence and he taught to very few people on a very selective basis. He would not even speak to many of the people who wanted to meet him.

As I have said before, I was singularly fortunate to have found a guru of that kind and I could reach reasonably good levels in Raja Yoga. I would not claim highest level but definitely I was able to go close to that only because of my teacher. I had to stop also at one stage because there was a final decision to be taken whether I would like to dedicate my whole life exclusively to Yoga and to become a monk - to enter into the Samadhi state and be cut-off from society? Or would I like to continue with my studies and take up some employment and then get married and be a family man. That decision was not taken by me but by my mother who made a choice that she will not permit me to go into Monkhhood permanently without getting back to the worldly life. So she took a decision and informed my teacher that she will not permit me to go into that line of life. My teacher therefore asked me to stop my practices which were just a little away from the Samadhi state. So you may say that I had the misfortune of having to stop my advanced higher yogic practices at that stage. And even though I kept in touch with him 20 years after that — he passed away a few years ago — there was no possibility that I would go back to that stage in Yogic development and go on the other side of life. So I had to satisfy myself with whatever I achieved in my life and carry on as a householder

Q : Coming back to your teaching, over a period of 35 years, how many students do you think you must have taught?

A : I have taught at Hyderabad to a large number of students for about 15 to 20 years. I have not kept account of the students but it would probably be around 50,000. I was also teaching in Bombay, Delhi and Pune when I was stay-

ing in the cities for my education or work -- that would be perhaps another 5000. I was in the US for three years in Orlando, Boston, Atlanta and Los Angeles and I have my students in all these areas. Some of them are teaching also. I also had a Russian student named Mikhail Altaisky from Dubna (near Moscow) - he is now teaching Sukshma Vyayama in Russia.

Q : Mr. Prabhu, despite knowing so much and having practised yoga to such a depth, you have still kept a relatively low-profile compared to some of the other yoga exponents. Why is this so?

A : Well, a film actor will be more famous than a philosopher, but the point is that for the last 5 to 7 years or so I have virtually given up teaching except for a very few people. There are various reasons for this — the people who were coming to learn were not serious enough, and I stopped operating my Yoga Centre since I had to travel a lot on my job. There were also other delicate issues involved. The Yoga teacher today unfortunately is not in a very respectable position — I'm sorry to say this — because all and sundry have become Yoga teachers - some even after learning for only two or three months. I found it increasingly difficult to put myself in the same boat as the other so-called Yoga teachers. I thought it better not to equate myself with these novice and mediocre teachers and compete with those whose full-time job is to make money out of yoga teaching. I, on the other hand, have my own profession and do not depend on yoga for my income and in fact do not wish to make Yoga my source of income.

Q : So you have decided not to propagate this Yoga system widely?

A : The thrust of our approach in the 60s and 70s when my teacher and myself were propagating Yoga in a big way was that Yoga was very beneficial to mankind, therefore people should learn, practise etc. This was because there were very few people willing to learn and practise in those days in



India. Upto the 80s also we were continuing that. But in the 90s we have taken a separate approach. My teacher, of course, has had to change because he has become very old and his children and doctors are not allowing him to move about very much, so he is constrained to his house and just teaches the few people who come there. In the 90s, I had a lot of constraints too, because of my professional activities.

I'm afraid that there has been too much commercialisation of Yoga. Of course it has become a lot more popular now than it was earlier, thanks to the TV etc. But along with the popularity came the degeneration of standards. This is a very serious matter. On one hand, the environmental degradation became very serious — doing serious Yoga in polluted cities such as Bombay, Delhi and even Hyderabad to some extent, is going to cause more damage to health and spiritual development than any benefit. Inhaling poisonous gases and retaining them longer in the lungs in greater capacity and greater volume than normal, is definitely dangerous. Normally the body, in such an environment, tries to repel these poisons, and inhale as little as possible (shallow breathing) to minimise the damage. While practising Yoga, on the other hand, we try to inhale deeply and hold the breath so you end up taking more intake of polluted air with several carcinogens.

Unmindful of this, several modern Yoga teachers are continuing to teach yoga and even Pranayama in polluted places, maybe to make money since their living depends upon it. Yoga has become a source of employment and income, source of business. I believe that some people have made a lot of money out of this. Unfortunately, this is not the aim of Yoga. Another point is, the dilution of standards of teaching. There are 50 to 60 people sitting in one class. Firstly, it is impossible for any Yoga teacher to concentrate on all the persons in this large group. But yet, each and every person in this large group of people needs to be personally attended to ensure that they are practising it



correctly. Otherwise carelessness and callousness could lead to severe problems.

As a result of all this, the position of the Yoga teacher has lost a lot of its respect and charm and uniqueness. In many places now there seem to be more yoga teachers than students. I must make it clear that I am not trying to criticise all the other yoga teachers who are my brothers. I honour them and respect them and have all love and affection for them but the problem of dilution of standards that I'm talking about has to be acknowledged and addressed. I would say that each and every person who comes to learn yoga cannot judge what is the standard of the teacher. The moment somebody puts up a board in the public place or puts an advertisement, he becomes a teacher. He attracts a lot of people who hardly know anything about Yoga and are not able to judge whether he is being taught correctly, by a competent person. Though I agree with the well intentioned attitude of these teachers, however good or bad they may be, it turns out that the education imparted — the quality of teaching is very often dismally bad in many places and that is probably one of the reasons why the real yoga techniques are not being taught because they are very delicate and serious. Callous or careless teaching of these techniques could only lead to implications in terms of negative health effects. I have seen cases of this nature.

One of the fallouts of the excessive proliferation of Yogic teaching is that the real powerful techniques like Yogic Kriyas, advanced Pranayamas or Bandhas, Mudras and Asanas are forgotten and becoming extinct. What is taught is risk free, slow movement and simple Yogasanas where there will be not much of benefit and not much of risk. What can be achieved in a Yogic Kriya in a day's time or in a week's time in terms of the impact on the physiology or the pathological condition, will probably now take six months or one-year or never, by going through very simple exercises of Yogasanas only. Mostly the people are concentrating on Asanas alone- but I am very clear from my teach-

ers and other pronouncements of the classical texts in Sanskrit that the asanas without the Yogic Kriyas, particularly, will be of little use. They will be of some benefit definitely, but it'll be just a little or very little, if not too little. The Kriyas become the first and foremost step to be taken before one goes to Asanas also, let alone going to pranayama, which is very advanced. Most of the Yoga teachers today do not teach them as they may not have expertise in this system.

Another tendency which I have noticed of late, which I am unable to approve, is using big and impressive words such as Meditation, or Prānāyama or Samadhi and so on. Using such big words for simple techniques being taught in the class. People hardly know Pranayama but they conduct classes where they end up teaching very simple things in polluted environment which are hardly elementary aspects of pranayama. States as Samadhi are very advanced which only one in one billion could achieve. However people use big names and big boards to attract students either because of missionary zeal or commercial tendencies. I have spoken to some of the people who have attended these classes. One of them told me that after attending the course, she got high blood pressure problem and her husband got heart problem. I was very shocked and when I discussed what is happening, I realised there were a lot of mistakes being done. For example in terms of the timings, this lady was practising some kind of Pranayama at around noon time, and doing all kinds of wrong things. I would only like to quote from the Hatha Yoga Pradeepika,

*"Pranayamena Yuktena Sarva Roga Kshyayo Bhavet
Pranayamena Viyuktena Sarva Roga Samudbhavaha"*

which means, by the correct type of pranayama practice all the diseases, maladies and disorders can be cured, rectified, controlled or prevented, but at the same time, wrong type of Pranayama — wrong in terms of timing or speed or process or procedure or quality of air, it could lead to initia-

tion of all kinds of diseases and problems, like high Blood Pressure, Heart Disease. In extreme cases one could even lose one's mental balance or end up in a hospital. This is one of the main reasons why in ancient times Hatha Yogic techniques, and for that matter the entire Yoga system was kept very secret. It's not that there was some kind of suppression or anything like that, but the fact is that once the knowledge is proliferated in the wrong way to the wrong people at the wrong time, it leads to dangerous if not calamitous results.

Q : You have referred to some ancient yoga texts. How important it is for a student of Yoga today to have some understanding of these texts?

A : The system of Yoga has descended to us from the Vedic civilisation of more than 5000 years, right from the Indus Valley civilisation where the Yogic postures were found in terracota images. The references to the Yoga system were right in the Vedas, but the word Yoga surprisingly was never there. But the root of the word Yoga, 'yuj', which means 'to join', is very much used in many of the mantras in the Yajur Veda. So it is used in the context of joining — joining the intellect with the Supreme Being, the mind with the Supreme Being — joining the Jivatma with the Paramatma. This has been brought out very clearly in the Vedas. The Upanishads were more relevant in this context, since they were going deeper into the aspects of higher Yoga and there are 13 Yoga Upanishads which have also covered the Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga. Then, much later the texts like Hathayoga Pradeepika etc., of the medieval period, appeared, some of them were written by Jains.

It will be essential to study all these lines and also the Patanjali Yoga Sutras to acquire good grasp of the system of Yoga, its philosophy and practice.



Introduction

Sukshma Vyayamaa is an ancient component of Yoga, not known to most of the schools of Yoga today in the world. This was developed, designed and propagated originally by his *His Holiness Maharishi Karthikeyaji Maharaj* of the Himalayas. He had great kindness and compassion for humanity and taught Swami Dharendra Brahmachari, who in turn, propagated it to the modern world, including the Nehru family. Dharendra Brahmachari also produced books and established institutions in Jammu and Delhi and travelled throughout the country to teach a large number of people. Shri Suri Raghava Dikshitulu of Secunderabad learnt from Shri Dhirendrandra Brahmachari in the 1950s and I had the great fortune of learning from Yogasana Acharya Shri Suri Raghava Dikshitulu from in 1964 onwards.

Yogic Sukshma Vyayama was developed by Maharishi Kartikeya Ji Maharaj on the basis of some of the most essential, but normally not understood, mysterious aspects of Hatha Yoga relating to the Mudras and Bandhas. Though the Hatha Yoga literature is explete with references to the profound importance attached to the Bandhas and Mudras, many of the modern Yoga schools both in India and abroad have ignored this aspect, perhaps due to their own ignorance of this subject. It is also true that the Bandhas and Mudras are very complex, can be practised by advanced Yogis in the original form as prescribed in the yogic texts namely Hathayoga Pradeepika, Siva Samhita and so on.

The science of Yoga was originally restricted to the Yogis who had renounced the world and who had given up all attachments and had gone into the forest or the Himalayas. Yoga was taught and practised only by them. But in the recent times some of the smaller, simpler and easier components of the Yoga system were brought out of the mystery and secrecy that shrouded

them, for the benefit of the modern society by Shri Dhirendra Brahmachari and various other Yoga experts. So, in conformity with the approach of bringing some of the simplified and easier aspects of Hatha Yoga to the common people and normal society, this system of Sukshma Vyayama was developed, designed and propagated by His Holiness Maharishi Karthikeyaji Maharaj.

As mentioned earlier, Yogic Sukshma Vyayamaa is a unique system of exercises not available anywhere in the world, in any other form either in the Yogic domain or in the physical culture domain. It is so sensitive, so powerful, so scientific, so deep and yet so simple that even a child after crossing the age of ten can easily practise it and derive benefit. The benefits claimed are very great and there are also experiences corroborated by the lakhs of disciples of Shri Dhirendra Brahmachari, my teacher Sri Dikshitulu and my many of my own students. The benefits of Yogic Sukshma Vyayama are so great that even without practicing the rest of the aspects of Hatha Yoga such as the Asanas, it is possible to derive tangible benefits in a very quick manner.

The other beautiful and more important aspect of Yogic Sukshma Vyayamaa is, that it is the only system of exercises in the world where each and every part of the body, i.e., each organ, each joint and each muscle is taken into consideration, and a particular exercise or set of excercises associated with a specific type of breathing in a specific type of position with a specific point of mental concentration is prescribed.

So, starting with the top that is the head, we cover :

various parts of the brain,

the eyes, nose, ears, and neck,

the shoulders, arms and arm joints, finger joints and even fingertips

the upper chest , middle chest and abdomen and trunk in different aspects

the thighs and buttocks, even organs like rectum/anus and the bladder (for which excercises are very rarely prescribed)

the knees, ankles, foot, foot muscle and joints, toes and finally the big toe.

So, literally "from top to toe" is the coverage in the above mentioned sequence, which is something very unique in the entire world, in the past, present and possibly the future too.

So the Yogic Sukshma Vyayama, as is implied by the name, is meant for the subtle body or *Sukshma Sarira*. It is not meant for the gross body or *Sthula Sarira*. There is a separate set of exercises for the gross body - *Sthula Vyayama* which succeeds *Sukshma Vyayama*. It has only six exercises of gross nature comparable to other gross exercises such as swimming and running or various physical exercises. *Yogic Sukshma Vyayama*, however, is on a different basis. It is meant for the subtle body of the human being, as per Indian traditional philosophy. As per the Yogic philosophical tradition, there are five bodies for every individual - the physical and the subtle: the *annamaya sarira*, *pranamaya sareera*, *manomaya sareera*, *vijnanamaya sareera* and *anandamaya sareera*. So, *Sukshma Vyayama* deals with the second level, that is the subtle body or the *pranamaya sareera*.

The main features or components of *Sukshma Vyayama* are (1) breathing (2) concentration point (3) actual exercise - which involves movement of the organs. Breathing of different types: very light or very fast or very deep, sometimes through the mouth, although mostly through the nose. This is a brief about *Sukshma Vyayama*.

The benefits, once again, are immense and are direct and immediate, within a month of regular practice,

preferably twice a day, morning and evening, or once a day in the morning,

before bath if warm water, or after bath if cold water,

before any kind of food,

with a tight underwear and shorts,

on a mattress,

either open air or indoors,
without any cold or heat or rain,

will lead to development of extraordinary levels of capabilities and faculties of various aspects of the personalities both mental and physical.

For those who have maladies and problems of serious kinds, *Sukshma Vyayama* alone is capable of curing and preventing without taking the help of *Asanas* or other aspects of *Pranayama* or *Kriyas*. Though we do not prohibit the other aspects, *Sukshma Vyayama* is solely capable of handling all problems, both curing and preventing, and increasing the strength and vigour of different organs and systems in the body.

The foundation of *Sukshma Vyayama* is on *Mudras* and *Bandhas*, along with breath control, muscular control and locks of different kinds. The word *Bandha* means "the lock" and, according to the *Hatha Yogic* literature, there are three fundamental *bandhas*: *Moola Bandha*, *Uddiyana Bandha* and *Jalandhara Bandha*. *Moola Bandha* deals with the rectum, anus, control and lock by breath control either in exhalation or inhalation, with retention of breath i.e. after you exhale you retain or after you inhale you retain. *Moola Bandha* can be practised in both options. But in *Sukshma Vyayama*, it is practised only in the inhalation option, i.e. you inhale and pull up your rectum and anus after pulling up the buttocks, thighs and legs. In traditional *Hatha Yoga*, however, the same *Moola Bandha* is performed in *Padmasana* both in the inhalation-retention mode or exhalation-retention mode.

Coming to *Uddiyana Bandha*, which is complete exhalation followed by a deep contraction of abdominal muscles (commonly called *rectus muscles*) and holding them up without breathing. It is also called *Ajagara Mudra*. It is said the *Ajagara* or the python, exhales and creates a vacuum and sustains that retention for a long time. When it sees the prey it releases the retention and due to the suction process there is a great force of air that causes the prey to run into the python's mouth after which

the python closes its mouth for good. It is also called Uddiyana Bandha because of the exhalation and retention after the contraction of the abdominal muscles. This is a profound mudra and it can overcome all digestive problems, increase appetite to a great extent, reduce fat in the abdominal muscles, remove gastritis and diabetic conditions, activate the pancreas and control the liver. A large number of activities related to digestion can be regulated and controlled by Uddiyana Bandha which is the central point of Sukshma Vyayama - Udara Shakthi Vikasaka. The abdominal exercises start with Uddiyana Bandha. We perform abdominal breathing in different positions and different postures to get different effects of similar nature with respect to the abdomen.

The third and final Bandha is the Jalandhara Bandha, which is a "chin lock" with exhalation-retention or inhalation-retention mode. The retention is done with a chin lock with closed eyes. The chin is pressed against the chest, with the eyes closed, with retention of the breath either after exhalation or after inhalation. This is called Jalandhara Bandha. This Bandha has immensely beneficial effects on the heart, lungs, brain, concentration power and on the eyes. It is dangerous to open the eyes when Jalandhara Bandha is performed as eyes may be affected adversely. So Jalandhara Bandha becomes the central point in half a dozen Sukshma Vyayama exercises where retention is involved, motion of the hands and motion of the head is involved. This is a summary of the three bandhas.

*"Jalandharodyanana Moola Bandhaan
Jalpanti Kanthodara Paayu Moolan
Bandha Traye Asmin Parichiyamane
Bandhah Kuto Daruna Kala pasath ?*

Sankaracharya says "for he who practises the three Bandhas, where is the Bandha for him from the deadly noose of the time Kala Pasa?"

*Jalandharodyanana Moola Bandhair
Unnidritaayam Urgananaayam*

that "female snake" in the bottom of the abdomen will be woken up by the three Bandhas and goes up into the higher levels of the body and absorbs into higher levels of consciousness like Samadhi and in fact the snake is nothing but the Kundalini Sakthi in the body. It is called Kundalini because it is wound up like a snake. It has got nothing to do with the real snake and it is only a figure of speech and Jalandhara, Moola and Uddiyana Bandha will be awakening the snake which is dormant and sleeping in all the human beings and is awakened in enlightened human beings.

So, from converting a man from an ordinary average mortal to Jnani an Enlightened one, it is the Kundalini which performs the transformation, leading to Moksha for reaching the Samadhi state. So these three bandhas will be acting on the Kundalini also. Therefore Sukshma Vyayama, though it looks very simplistic, is also going to awaken the Kundalini, if performed correctly over a long period of time on a regular basis. The other aspects of classical Hatha Yoga which have been incorporated into the package of Sukshma Vyayama, by his Holiness Maharishi Katikeyaji are the Sambhavi Mudra, Shanmukhi Mudra and also Trataka. The eye exercises are from Trataka, and the ear exercise is Shanmukhi Mudra which was used in the classical yoga to get into the trance state of deep meditation though in Sukshma Vyayama it is only used for calming and quietening the mind for a common man.

To conclude, Sukshma Vyayama has in it the Mudras and the Bandhas in simplified form, along with breath control and exercises pertaining to all parts of the body, about 50 in total.

★ ★ ★

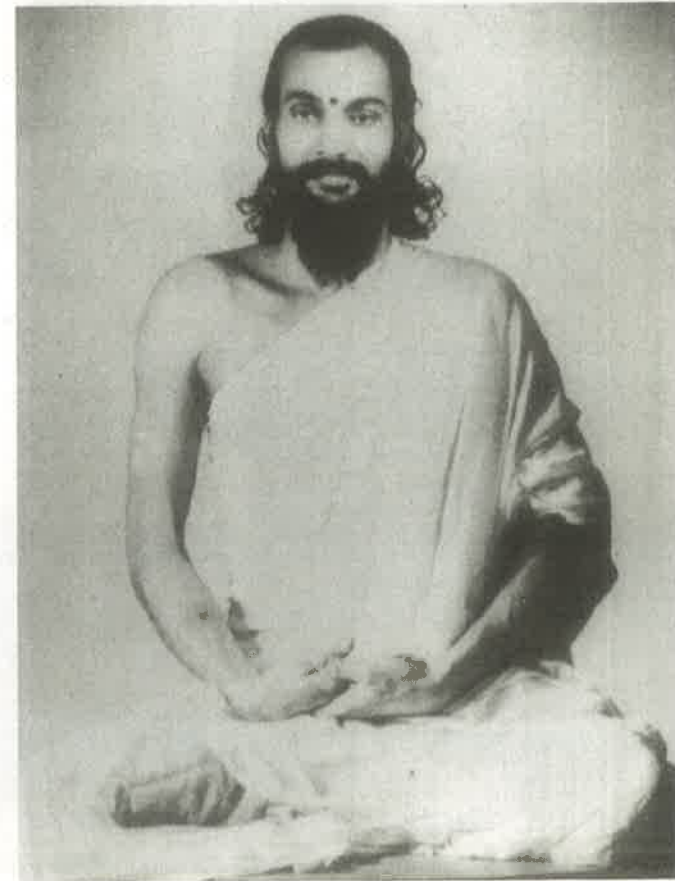
His Holiness Maharishi Karthikeyaji Maharaj

He is the founder of Sukshma Vyayama and is believed to have lived for three hundred and fifty years. It is believed that he took pity over all the people who could not perform yoga asanas for whatever reason (old age, stiff body, ill health, weakness etc). He felt they should not lose out on the benefits of yoga and hence devised this simple system of exercises that cover the entire body and have all the basic aspects of asanas, pranayama, bandhas & mudras. Since all the exercises are to be done from a standing position, they can be done by almost everybody. If you can stand, you can do Sukshma Vyayama. Further Sukshma Vyayama is an exercise for the subtle body and as it incorporates bandhas and mudras too, it has very powerful effects.



Shri Dhirendra Brahmachari

Disciple of Maharishi Karthikeyaji Maharaj, was a very famous Yogi in India and popularized Sukshma Vyayama. He was also the teacher of Pandit Nehru and Indira Gandhi. Unfortunately, after his untimely death in an air crash in recent years, his whole yoga movement devoluted and Sukshma Vyayama was no longer widely taught or propagated. We are thus making this effort to resuscitate this wonderful form of yogic exercises.



Shri Suri Raghava Dikshitulu

Learnt yoga from Shri Dhirendra Brahmachari at the age of 50. He then spent the rest of his life propagating yoga. Passed away at the ripe age of 97 in October 2000. He taught Sukshma Vyayama to Shri C.S.R.Prabhu, who in turn has also been practising and teaching yoga for over 30 years. Shri Prabhu is making the effort to restore Sukshma Vyayama to its past glory by writing and posing for most of the photographs in this book.



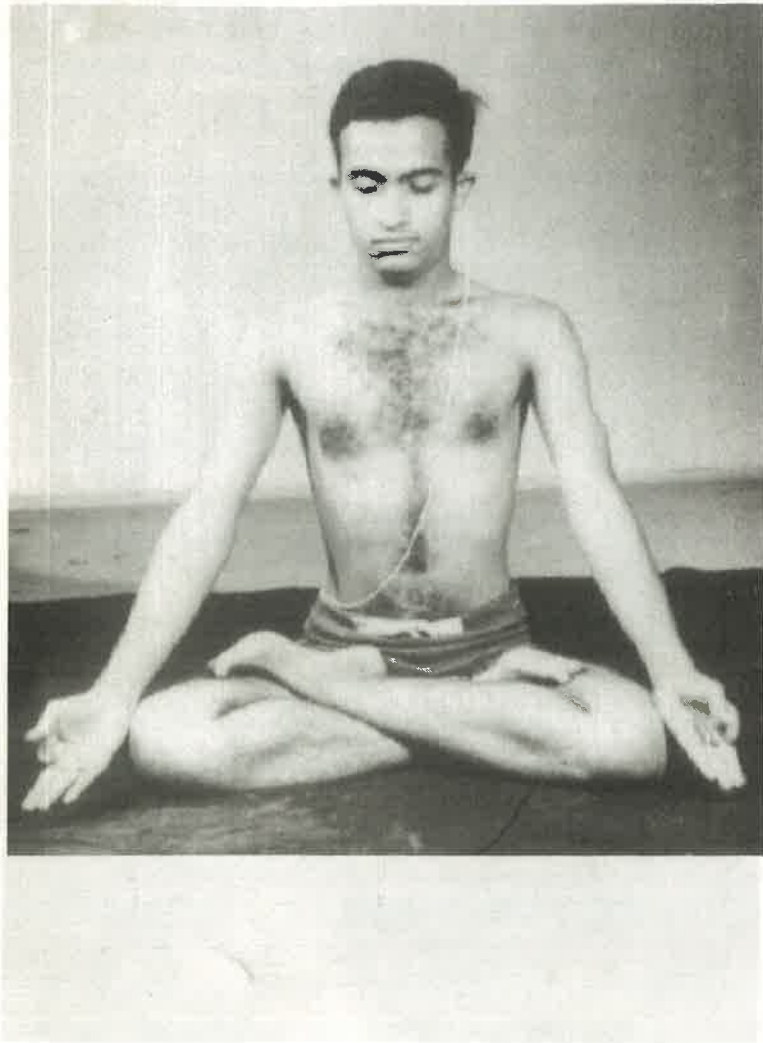
Smt. Venkatalaxmi

My mother, who was a yogini, and my first guru before I learnt from Shri Dikshitulu.



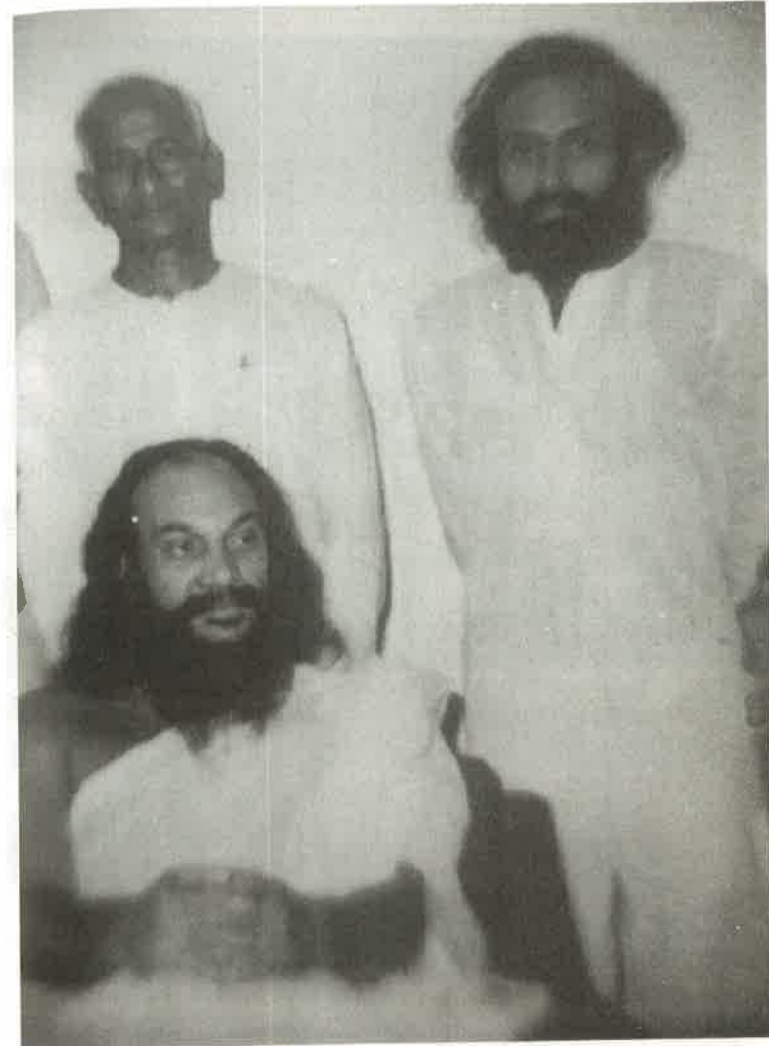
Shri CSR Prabhu

Photograph from my younger days.



Yoga Teachers lineage

A rare photograph with Shri Bhirendra Bramachari (seated),
Shri Dikshitulu (standing left) and myself in 1980.



A Yoga Class

One of my student batches at Gandhi Gyan Mandir, Hyderabad in 1984.



His Holiness Swami Sheelananda Bharati Maharaj

My guru for Raja Yoga, Higher Pranayama and Higher Yoga towards Samadhi.





Yogic Sukshma Vyayama

These yogic subtle exercises are very simple, requiring very little physical effort, yet they have substantial beneficial effects, when performed slowly and correctly.

Yogic Sukshma Vyayama can be safely practised by anyone of any age and will not cause any harm even to the physically weak and debilitated.

A few simple precautions :

1. These exercises may be performed only before taking any food (solid or liquid), early in the morning anytime between 4 a.m. and 8 a.m. Food can be taken after 20 minutes after exercise.
2. A cold or warm water bath may be taken 15 minutes before the exercises.
3. After the exercises, a warm water bath may be taken (after 15 minutes) – NOT cold water bath.
4. The exercises can be performed in the evening also, 4 hours after food and between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. Food can be taken after 20 minutes after exercise.

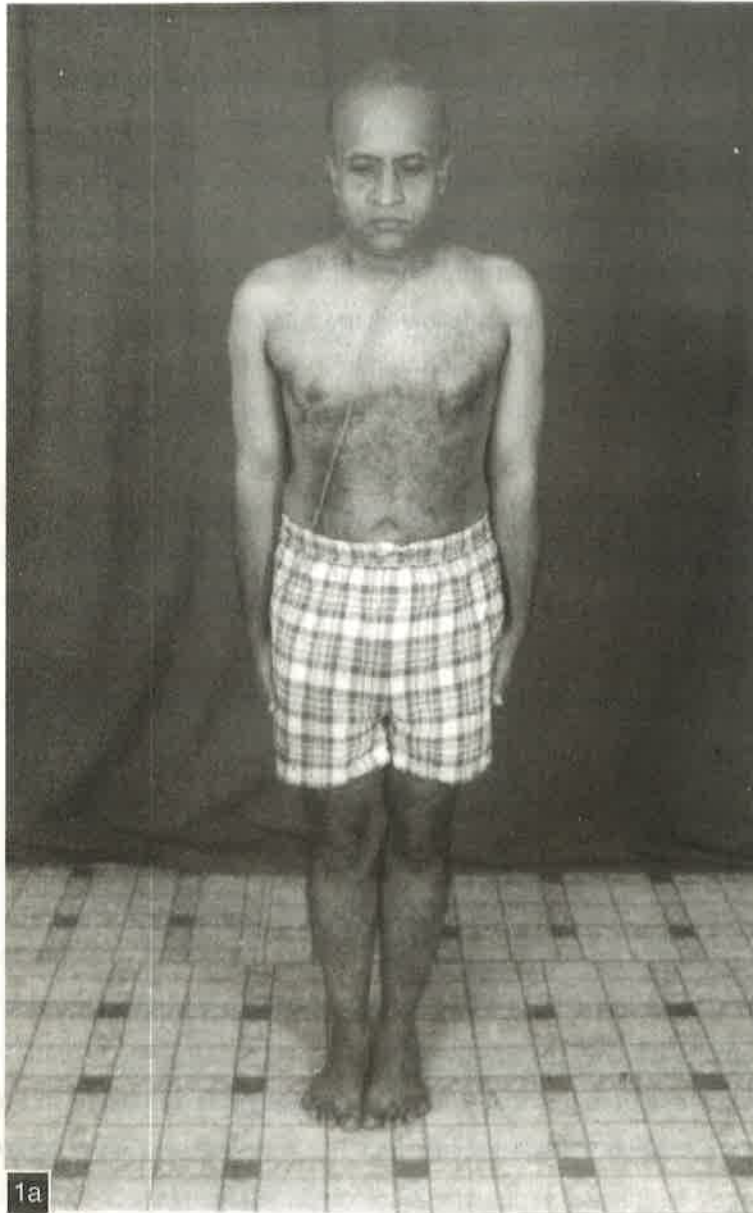
Basic posture :

Seen alongside is the basic posture for almost all the exercises. You have to stand erect with your hands firmly by your sides, with your palms touching the thighs. The head is held erect, not dropping down or bending back. The eyes are looking straight ahead. Pay close attention to the feet. In a few exercises, you will be specifically told to keep your feet apart but by and large, you have to keep the feet together. It is not just the toes but the whole foot up to the heels which are to be kept together. This is a bit tricky because your body now has a very narrow base to balance upon. In some exercises when you are moving with your feet in this position, you tend to lose your balance. This is nothing to get worried about - as you continue your practice, you will no longer lose your balance. In other words, as a simultaneous benefit, over a period of time your sense of balance improves.

But this is not just physical. Because you are always concerned about your balance, your mind stays focused on what you are doing and does not wander around. The awareness is on the exercises is very important. . All yogic exercises are combination of posture, movement, breath and mind. If you stand casually with your feet apart, you do not have to worry about balance and there is more of a tendency for a mind to wander. And if the mind is not there while doing the posture, but is roaming around at your office or in New York, it is not yoga anymore and it degenerates into just normal physical exercise. All the subtle benefits of Yoga

are lost. Concentration on a specific organ in the body is a must, while doing the corresponding exercise. Similarly the correct breathing also is a must - inhalation or exhalation or retention, as the case may be. Any violation all the above rules dealing with breathing, concentration, duration, bathing time and food time can lead to undesirable and some times even harmful effects. Therefore it is essential to follow all the rules correctly for obtaining correct results.





**1. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Uccarana-Sthala-
Tatha-Visuddha-Cakra-Suddhi -
Cleaning the Pharynx**

Posture :

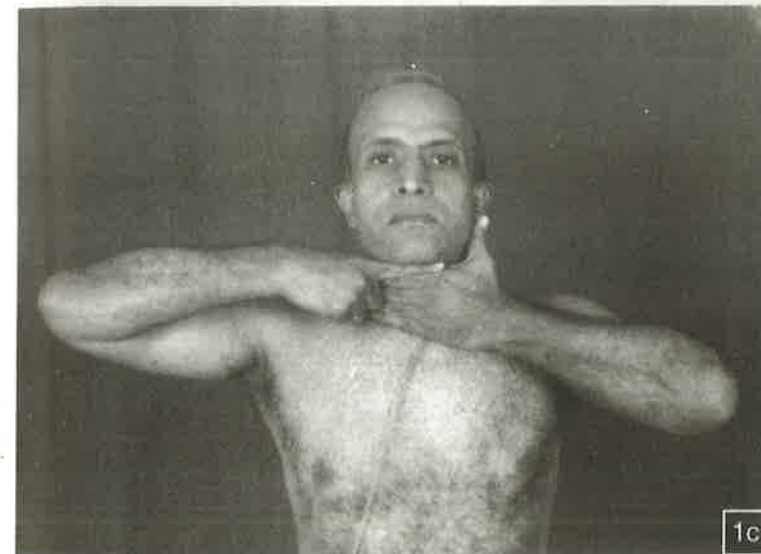
Assume the basic posture with feet together, body erect, head slightly backward, eyes open, mouth closed and chin 2-1/2" above the sternal notch (base of throat) and hands tightly held to the sides. The chin should be five finger widths above the throat — figures 1b and 1c. Once the head is correctly positioned, remove the fingers and return them to the sides and assume the basic position (Figure 1a).

Exercise :

Breathe rapidly (inhale and exhale) with quick, deep breaths (just upto the throat) 20 to 30 times. The rapidity and force of breathing helps clear the throat.

Concentration :

On the Vishuddhi Chakra or Larynx





Benefits :

Clears and cleans up both the throat and pharynx of phlegm. The voice becomes clear, stronger and more resonant. Useful for singers, orators and to those who want to get rid of lisping.

Students' Comments :

Vishuddhi Chakra - refers to the throat chakra, which is the Centre from which voice emanates. Shuddhi means cleaning.

When we wake up in the morning, there is a tendency for some phlegm to accumulate here, which is why you hear several people clearing the throat in the morning. This exercise completes the process and ensures that all the phlegm is removed.

Though the breathing needs to be rapid and forceful to be effective, initially, breathing may tend to be a little slow and shallow. Do not force it and try to speed it up in the beginning -it could do harm. Do it at a pace you are comfortable with.

Similarly if you are not able to manage 20 to 30 repetitions, you can start with 10 and slowly work upwards. With practice you will find it will improve until you almost sound like a steam engine.

This gradual progress until you reach the desired level applies to all the exercises, though you will need to do a bare minimum of repetitions for each specific exercise for it to have the desired effect. Though the exercises themselves are very gentle and it is inconceivable that they could cause any harm, starting slow and progressing slowly is a further insurance against any problems. This advice applies to you especially if you are above 50 or if you are unfit or having any other health problem.



2. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Prarthana Prayer

Posture : Figure 2a and 2b

Eyes closed feet together hand in Namaskar position with thumbs touching the sternal notch (a small pit between the collar bones)

Concentration :

On the Supreme Being, Paramatma or OM

Exercise :

Concentrate on the Supreme Being until achieving deep concentration. Try to do it for at least two minutes. After that relax and bring the hands back to the normal position.

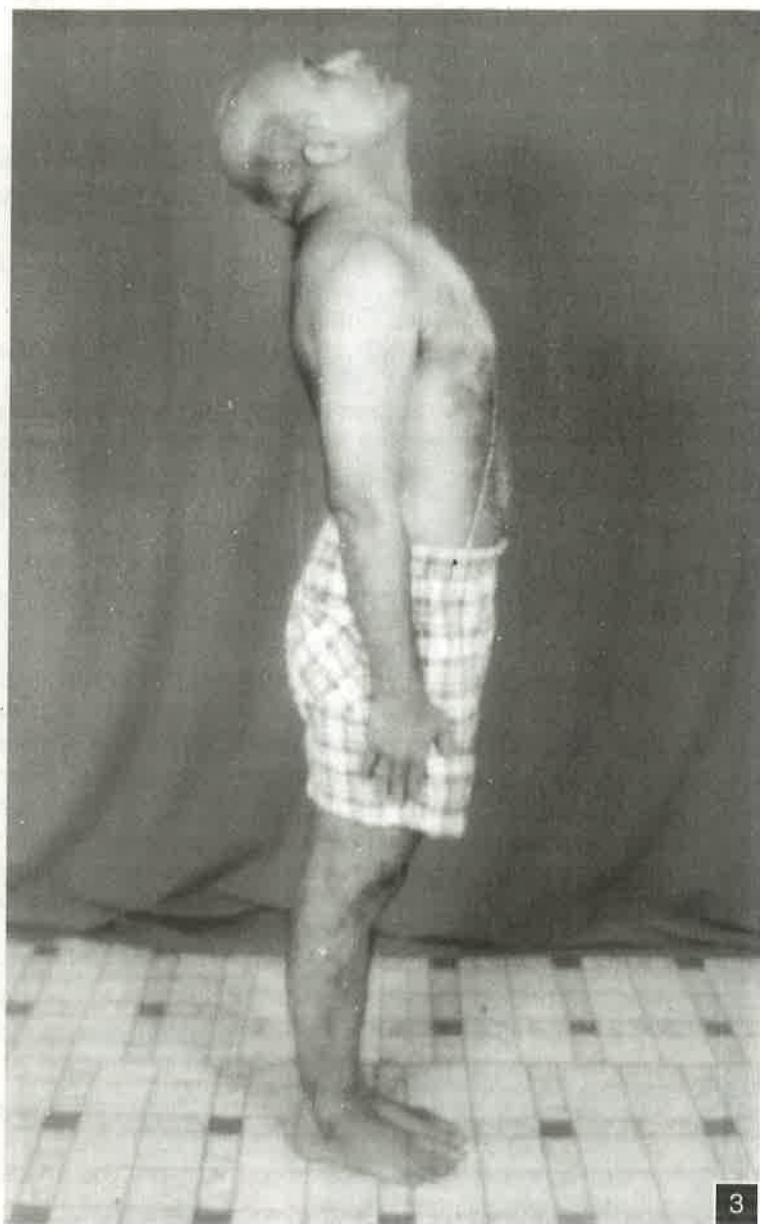
Benefits :

Increases the power of concentration and develops spirituality. Also sets the tone for all the exercises that follow.

Students' Comments :

- **Prarthana** means prayer. It is believed that this exercise will help you to make contact with your inner self. According to Yoga traditions, there is a nerve in the sternal notch which when pressed results in increasing the power of concentration and calming the mind. Do not worry if you cannot reach either the Supreme Being or your Inner Self when you start off. Even if you succeed to just calm and quieten your mind so that the rest of exercises proceed in a peaceful and graceful fashion, that is enough. If you are running about or tense for any reason before beginning the practice, this brief pause and moment of quietude will ensure that you do not carry forward your mental tensions into the practice, and get maximum benefit from it.

- Look carefully at the peace and tranquillity on the face of Shri C.S.R.Prabhu in the close-up figure 2b. There is not a line or crease of worry in the face. That gives you an idea of what we're trying to get at.



3. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama- Buddhi-Tatha-Dhruti-Sakti-Vikasaka

Developing the mind and the will power

Posture :

Assume the basic posture - Feet together, hands tight by the sides of the body. Body should be light and erect with the mouth closed. Now tilt the head back as much as possible (Figure 3 a)

Exercise :

Breathe in and out rapidly in quick succession (as in the Exercise No.1), 20 to 30 times at a stretch

Concentration :

On the back of the head (crown of the head where the tuft is kept), the seat of mind and willpower in the brain.

Benefits :

Improves mental faculties such as concentration and retention.

Students' Comments:

Sakti means strength or power

Vikasaka means build up, progress or increase on exercise for that

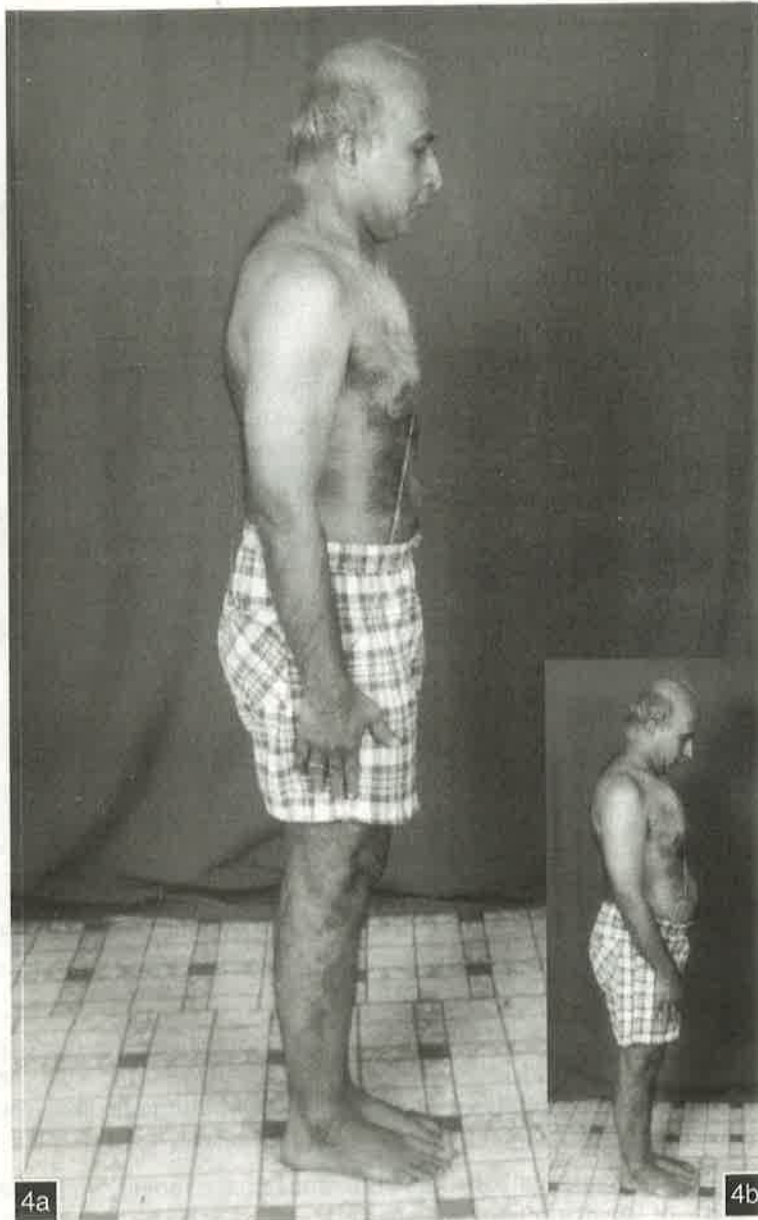
Buddhi means higher mind

Dhruti means the will power to hold something strongly

Therefore what the name of this exercise means is that it increases the power or builds up the strength of your mind and willpower

It may be difficult to focus your attention on the back of your head at first. Try by closing your eyes and trying to imagine the back of your head and what it feels like. You will slowly begin to experience the feeling.

The same caution of slowly increasing the rapidity and force of breathing applies here too.



4. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Smarana-Sakti-Vikasaka Developing the Memory.

Posture : (Figure 4)

Same as exercise No.3 except that the position of the head will be erect, in the normal position, with the eyes on a fixed spot on the floor, 5 feet in front of the your feet (head tilted at 45 degrees).

Exercise :

Repeat rapid breathing, quick and deep as in the previous exercise but concentrate on the top centre of the head

Benefits: Improves memory, removes mental strain, and helps to recover from nervous exhaustion

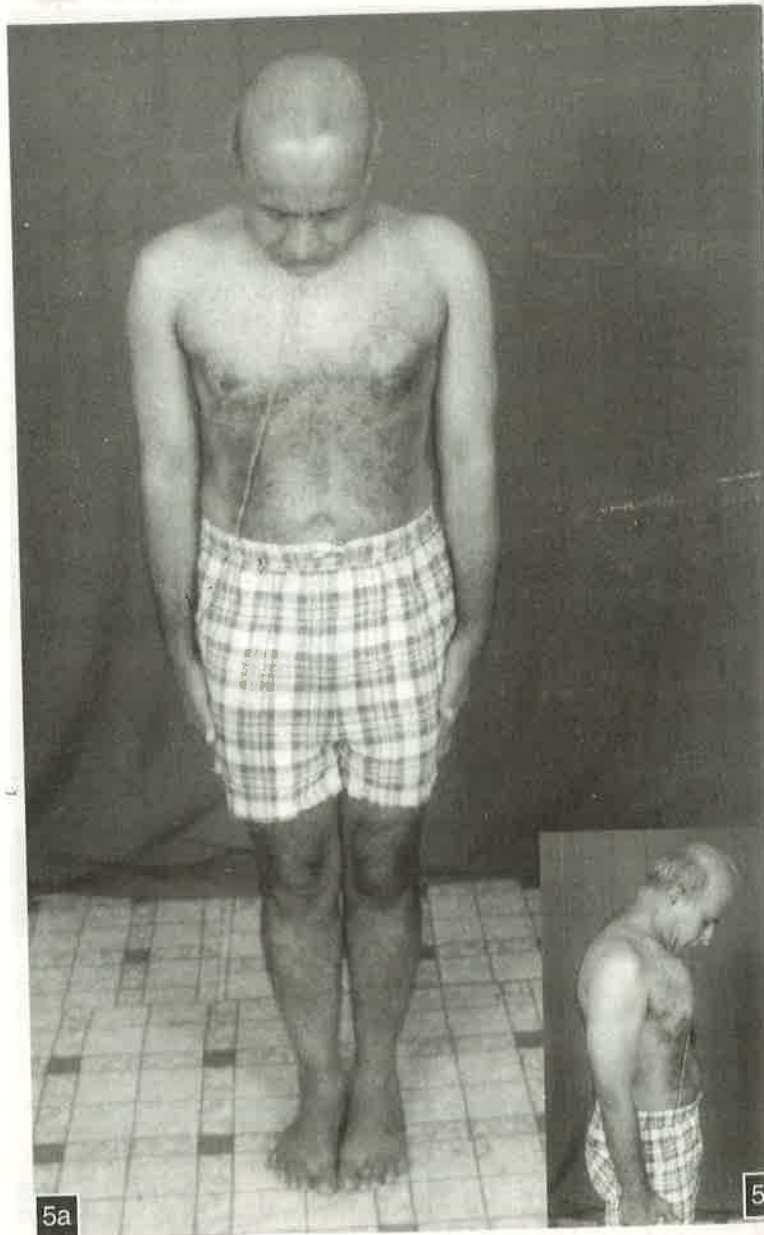
Students' Comments:

Smarana means memory

Therefore this exercise aims to improve your memory.

The concentration point is on the brahma-randhara, located on the top of your head

You might find it even more difficult to locate or concentrate on this spot as compared to the previous exercise. But as usual, perseverance will pay.



5. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Medha-Sakti-Vikasaka Developing the intellect

Posture :

Same as above, but the head bent forward, pressing the chin to the chest with the eyes closed. See figures 5a and 5b to get a front and side view of the posture

Exercise :

Rapid breathing in and out, quick and deep, 20 to 30 breaths.

Concentration :

On the depression formed at the back of the neck, when the neck is bent forward with the chin pressing on to the chest

Benefits :

Improves intellectual abilities such as intelligence and intuition.

Exercises 3 to 5 have significant beneficial effects on the various parts of the brain. This is a result of the pressure exerted on the nerves of the neck and the spinal cord by holding the head in three different positions. Jalandhara Bandha or the chin lock, used in exercise No.5, which results in the most acute bending of the head, may produce better nutrition to the endocrine glands, which have a broad spectrum of benefits on the human body.



6b

6. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Netra-Sakti-Vikasaka Improving the eyesight

Posture :

Feet together, body tight, spine erect and head straight.

Exercise :

Method 1 - Fix your gaze on the centre of the eyebrows without blinking. The eyes must squint while doing so. See figure 6c. Now lift your head up and back as much as possible. See figure 6b. Fix and continue to gaze without blinking until eyes feel tired or start watering. Then close your eyes and come down back to normal. Repeat five times

Method 2 - Look at your fore finger and raise your head while continuing to look at the forefinger (see figure 6b). When your head will go back no more, then stop (obviously). Hold this position, and keep looking at your fore finger without blinking. At one point of time, usually within half a minute, the eyes will start burning or watering. At that time close your eyes and bring your forefinger to the middle of your eyebrows at the same time bringing your head back to normal. Repeat this 6 times.

Concentration :

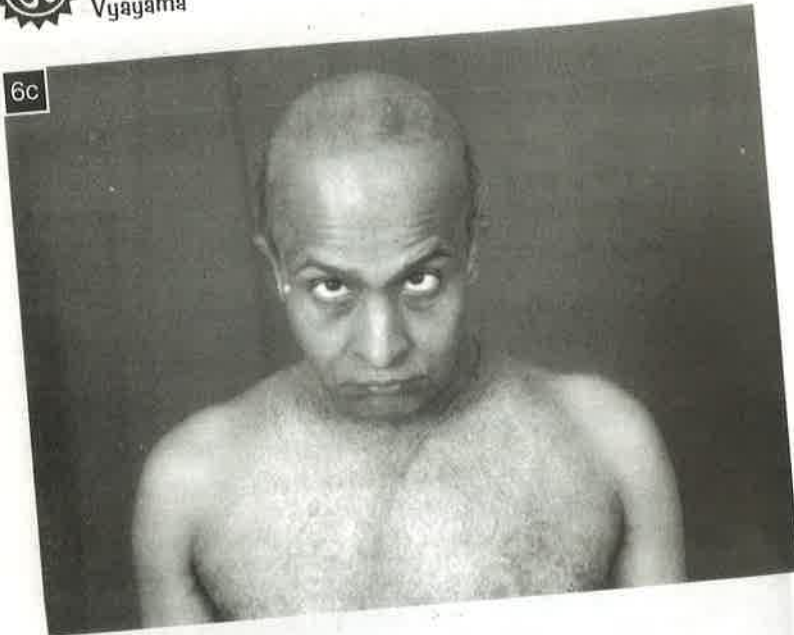
On the centre of eyebrows.

Benefits :

Improves muscular power, balance and co-ordination of the muscles in the eyeball thereby resulting in improved eyesight over a long term. The muscles controlling the Iris, which influence the amount of light entering the eye, are also exercised and so are the muscles attached around the lens, which contract and expand to enable the eye to focus on an object. In a nutshell the entire neuro muscular system of the eye gets a complete workout. This exercise is also useful to improve the power of concentration



6c



Precaution :

No bright direct light, either natural or artificial, should fall on the eyes while performing this exercise. If facing the Sun, turn away before performing this exercise.

Students' Comments :

Netra means eyes or eyesight

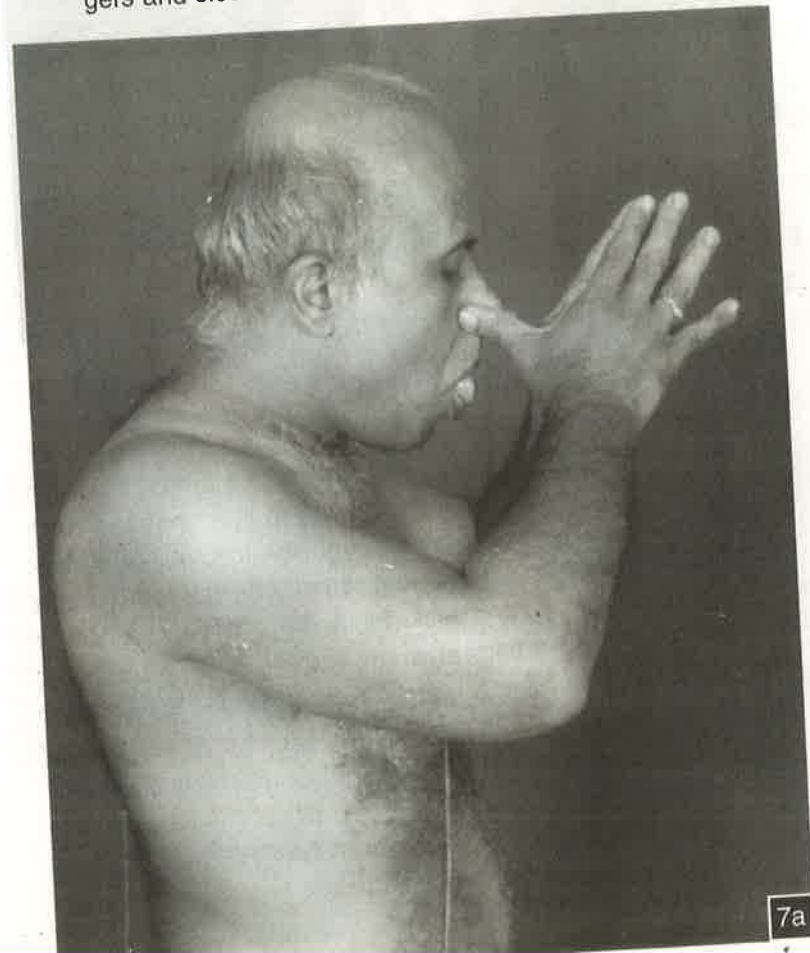
This is a simplified form of Trataka, the yogic exercise for training the eyes. The key point is that you should not blink while you are gazing at the tip of your forefinger. The moment you blink, or if the eyes burn or water, close them immediately and bring the head down.



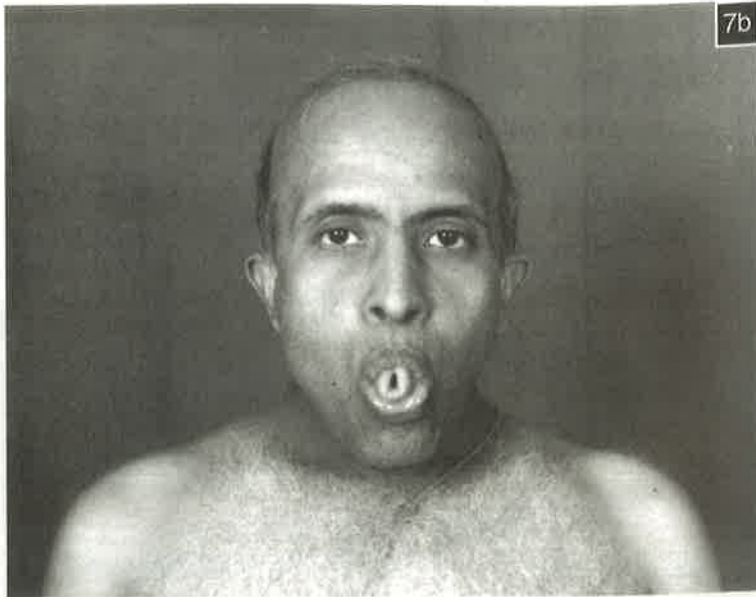
**7. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Kapola-Sakti-Vardhaka
Rejuvenating the cheeks**

Posture :

With feet together, standing erect, join the tips of the fingers and close nostrils with two thumbs (Figure 7a).



7a



Exercise :

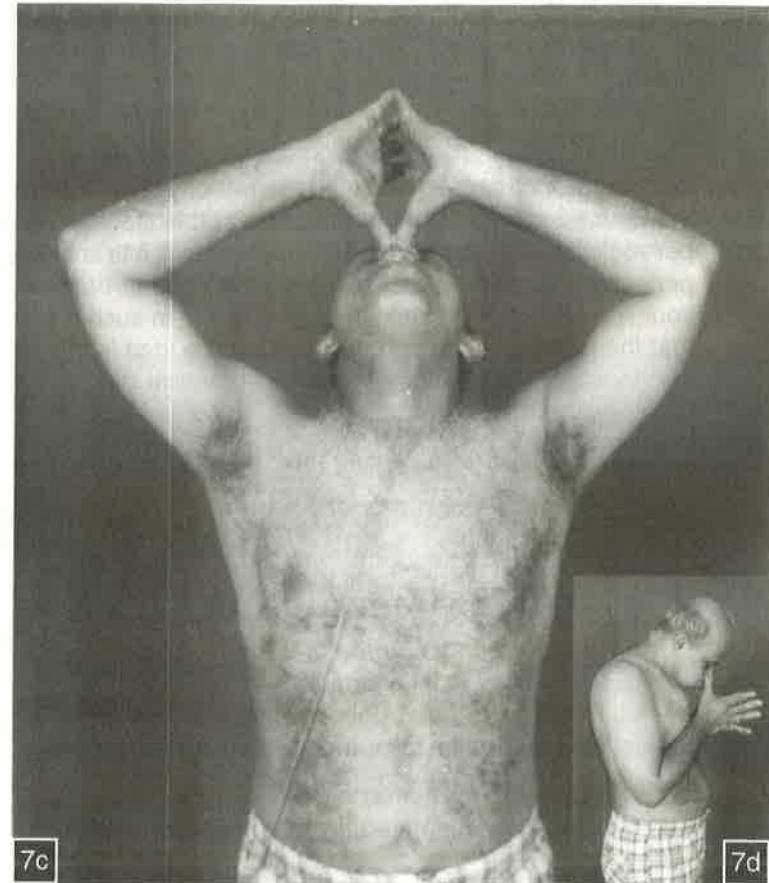
Keep your eyes open and pout your lips in the shape of crows' beak. You will have to first make a tube out of your tongue in between your lips as shown in figures 7b. Now suck in the air vigorously through the tongue (7a) in between open lips with a hissing sound. And at the same time lift your head up and back (Figure 7c). When you cannot bend your head back anymore stop, then close the eyes, and bend the head forward to press the chin to the chest (7d), and blow out the cheeks. Now hold the breath so for as long as you can without strain or difficulty. When you feel that you cannot hold your breath anymore, lift up the head, and release the fingers from the nose and breath out through the nose normally. Repeat 6 times.

Concentration :

On the throat while holding the breath with chin pressed to the chest

Benefits :

Cheeks get a fresh bloom. Sunken & hollow cheeks fill up. Teeth become stronger, gums healthier, pimples and boils disappear. This exercise basically aerates and oxygenates the entire oral cavity (tongue, teeth, gums, cheeks etc),





which otherwise does not get much fresh air. The muscles of the face often get flabby because they get no exercise other than while speaking or eating, which is not enough. This exercise gives them all a complete work-out.

Students' Comments :

Kapola means cheeks

This exercise is a lot easier to do than to describe. All you have to do is to block your nostrils with your fingers, breathe in through the mouth while lifting your head. Then drop your head to the chest, puff up your cheeks and hold your breath for as long as you can. When you are cannot hold it any longer, release your fingers that are closing the nostrils, lift your head up and breathe out.

You may not be able to make a tube out of your tongue in the manner shown in the photograph in this lifetime. As per yogic tradition you have several lives in which to achieve perfection. Right now, just place your tongue in between your lips and suck the air in through the lips, in such a way that the air passes through the tongue. The idea is to cool and moisten the breath as you breathe in with the help of the saliva on the tongue.

The key points in this exercise are

- a) to block the nostrils properly so no air enters except through the mouth
- b) to hold the breath for as long as you can comfortably. Do not come up in a hurry. Gradually try to increase the period of holding your breath. When the breath is held inside the body in this manner it circulates all over distributing nutrients and collecting all the waste very effectively, than when compared to a normal, short breath.

When this exercise is performed properly, the entire mouth and nose area feels aerated, light, and cleaned up



8. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Karna-Sakti-Vardhaka Improving the Power of Hearing or Shanmukhi Mudra

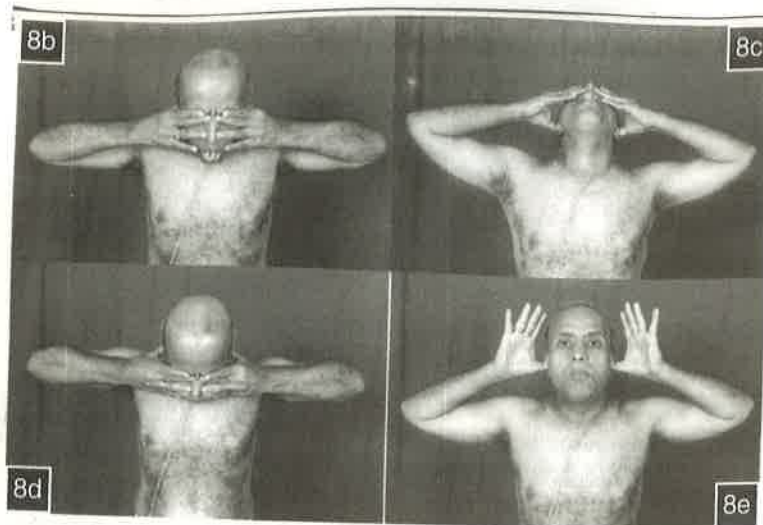
Posture :

Feet together, stand erect

Exercise :

Plug your ears with thumbs (Figure 8 a). Close your nostrils with ring fingers and close your eyes with the fore and middle fingers (Figure 8 b). Make your tongue into a tube as in the previous exercise (Figure 7 b). Now while lifting your head up and back, sucking in air while pouting the mouth. The air should pass through the tongue in between the open lips. Stop when your head does not go back any more (Figure 8 c). The breathing process is identical as in the previous exercise.





After breathing in fully, close the mouth, bend the head forward and press the chin to the chest, hold the breath with eyes closed while pressing the chin to the chest. Hold the breath as long as you can while puffing the cheeks - (Figure 8d). Once you cannot hold your breath any longer, slowly lift up the head, remove the fingers covering nose and eyes, and, exhale through the nose. **Do not open the ear** -continue to close the ears with thumbs through the repetitions (Figure 8e).

This constitutes one repetition. Do 6 such repetitions - sucking in, holding and breathing out without opening the ears. After the sixth time unplug the ears after exhaling.

Concentration :

On the ears

Benefits :

Improves hearing capacity. This exercise results in creation of pressure inside the mouth thereby forcing air through Eustachian tubes. The healthy functioning of these tubes is essential for good hearing capabilities and equalization of pressure inside and outside the ear. This exercise ensures free vibration of the ear drum required for proper hearing

The Jalandhara Bandha (Chin Lock), a part of the exercise (while pressing the chin to the chest), stimulates the endocrine glands and the nervous system with wide ranging beneficial effects.

Students' Comments :

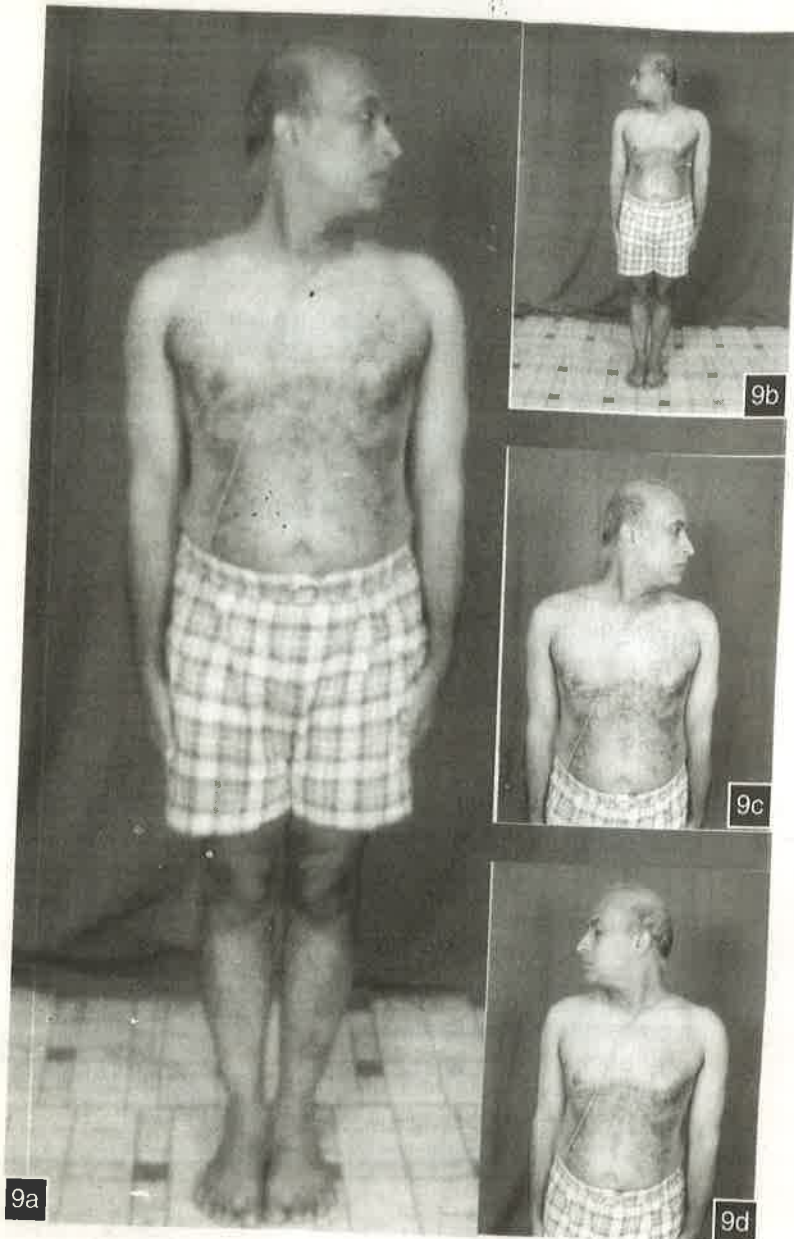
Again an exercise much easier to do than describe.

The key point is **to keep the ears blocked with the thumbs for the entire duration of the exercise**. The moment you remove the thumbs, the exercise is over. Do not start over if this happens - just proceed to the following exercise.

If you have an overworked nervous system, you might see flashing lights or colours when you have closed your eyes, nose and ears. They should go away each time you breathe out. In case you feel any discomfort or giddiness, discontinue or reduce the exercise.

If you do this exercise properly, you will feel that the entire head and all the internal passages are getting cleaned up and are feeling light and easy.

This exercise is a simplified form of Shanmukhi Mudra, a powerful spiritual exercise. It is said that when you close your ears, nostrils, eyes and mouth, all external stimuli are cut off and you can hear the pure inner sound (Anahata Nada), after the passage is purified with the exercise.



9. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Griva-Sakti-Vikasaka-1 Strengthening the neck-1

Posture :

Feet together, stand erect, mouth closed and eyes open.

Exercise (a) :

Turn the head to the left and then to the right, slowly and steadily (without jerks). Repeat this alternate motion (left to right and right to left) 6 to 12 times in total (breathing being normal). Figures 9 a b c d

Exercise (b) :

Lift up the neck to the maximum and then bring down to the minimum. Repeat 6 to 12 times (breathing in while going up and breathing out while coming down. (same as in Figures 5 a and 3 a)

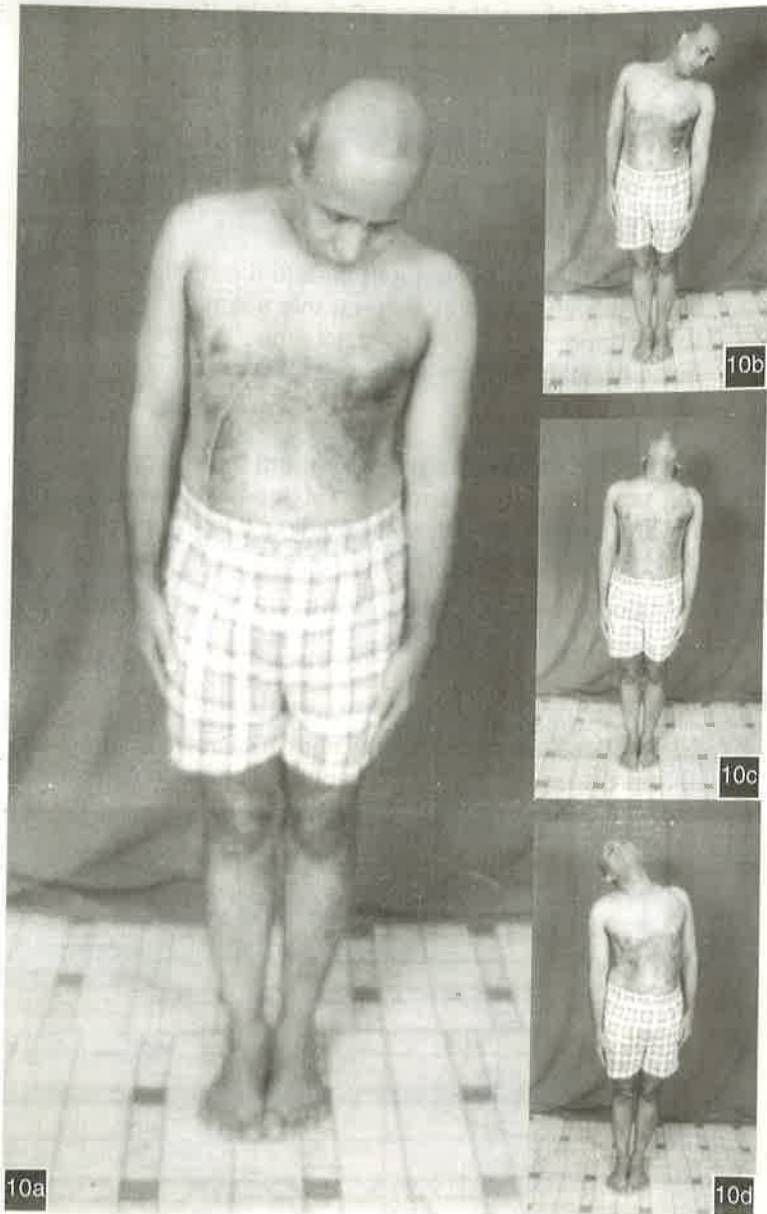
Concentration :

On the neck

Benefit :

Strengthens and beautifies the neck. The voice is improved, throat diseases can be prevented. Helpful in Spondylitis cervical conditions.

Precaution : Should be practised very slowly and softly.



10. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Griva-Sakti-Vikasaka-2 Strengthening the neck – 2

Posture :

Feet together, stand erect

Exercise :

Revolve your head starting from the left, then backwards, then to the right and then normal. The whole moment until the head comes in back to the front is considered one rotation. Now go back in the reverse direction i.e. right to left with one rotation. (Figures 10 a b c d) Repeat 6 to 12 times

Concentration :

On the neck

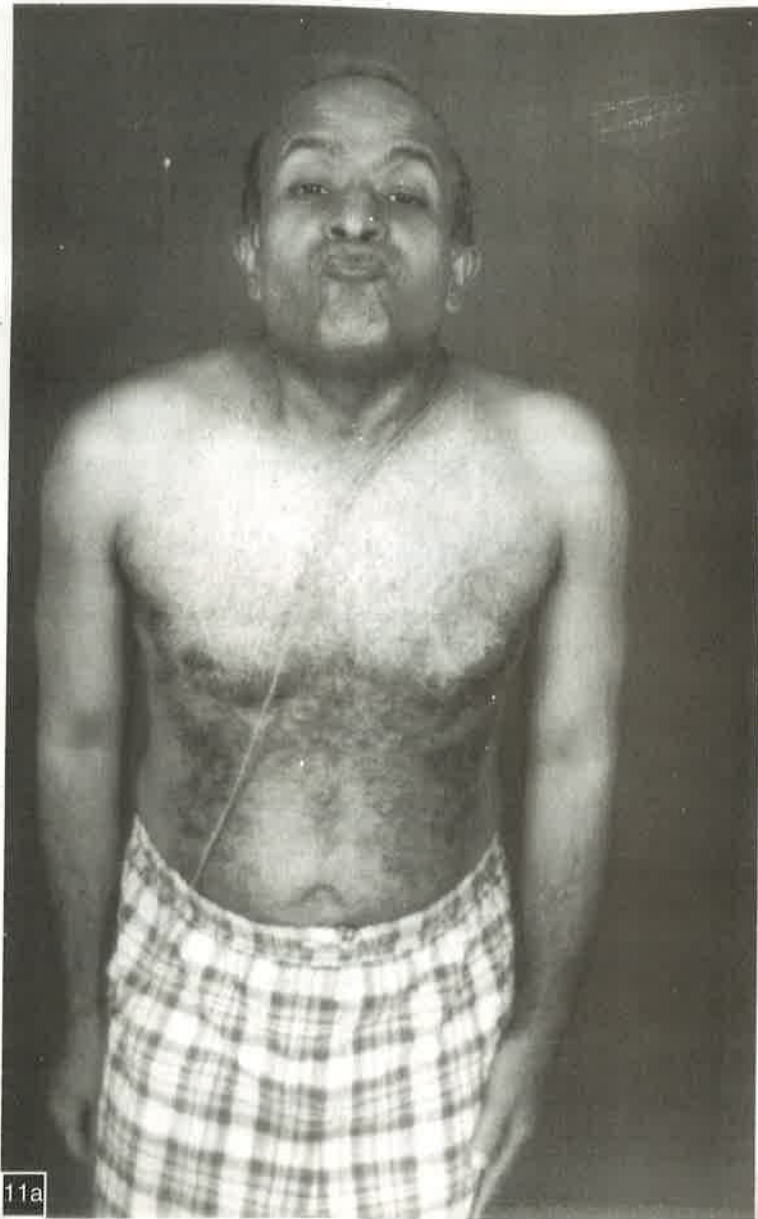
Benefits :

Improves the shape of the neck as well as its vigour. Stiff necks can be prevented. Also beneficial in cervical spondylitis.

Students' Comments:

The key point in this exercise is to keep the head and neck loose and free. Do not apply any force to rotate the head. There should be no tension in the neck. The head should drop freely and move freely in all directions. Let the weight of your head determine your movements.

Since this rotation of the head might be an unfamiliar movement for you, the first few times you may lose your balance and not be able to keep your feet together. This will improve rapidly with daily practice.



11. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Griva-Sakti-Vikasaka-3 Strengthening the neck-3

Posture :

Feet together, stand erect.

Exercise :

Bend your head forward and crane it from the base of the neck front and out, pushing your throat forward, contracting your neck muscles and breathing in through the nose with a hissing sound. When your head is back up, then exhale. (Figure 11 a and b)

Concentration :

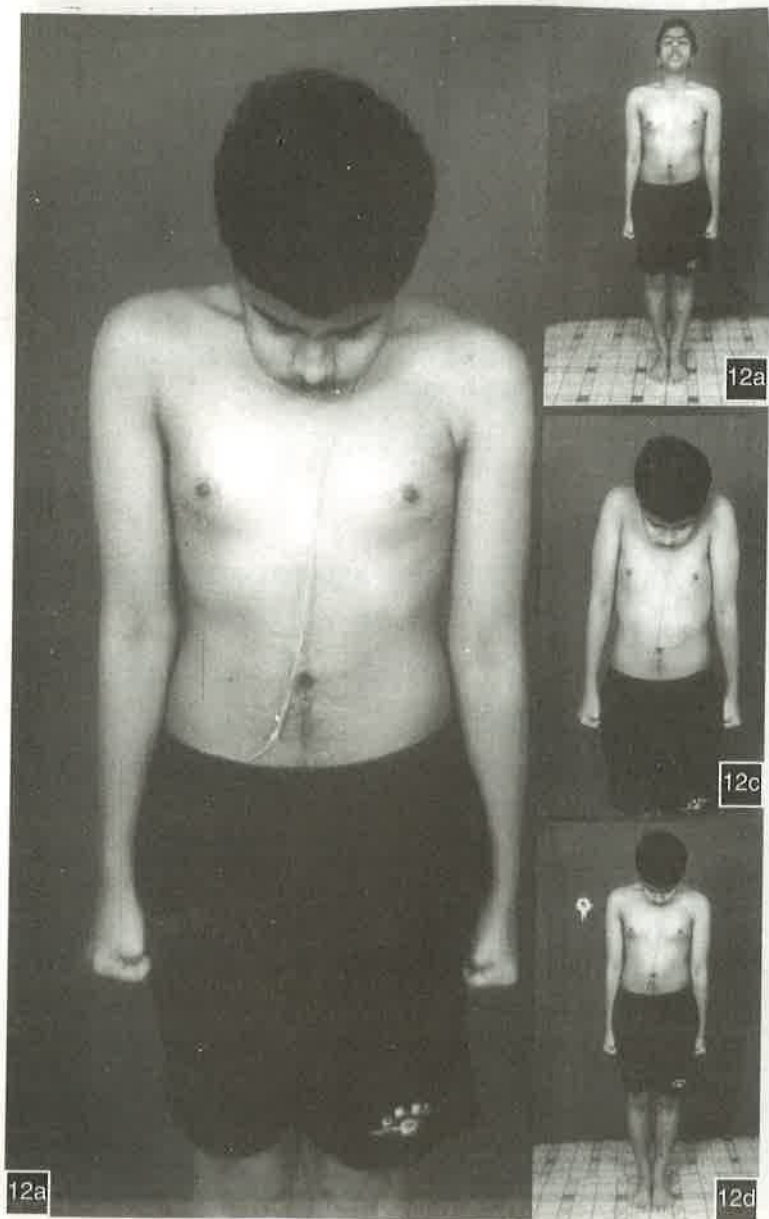
On the neck

Benefits :

Improved neck, also beneficial in case of tonsillitis, laryngitis, pharyngitis, etc. Voice improves and speech defects such as stammering can be overcome by long practice.

The entire series of exercises from 1 to 11 covers the neck, throat and head. You can repeat this at any time in the day especially if you feel that you have a heavy head, head pain or stiff neck. You will feel refreshed and can concentrate better.





12. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Skandha-Tatha-Bahu-Mula-Sakti-Vikasaka

Developing the strength of the shoulder blades and joints

Posture :

Feet together, stand erect with both fists closed with all fingers tucked into the fist (the thumb is tucked first then the four fingers folded on top of the thumb)

Exercise :

With mouth pouting forward (as in Exercise 7 and 8), suck in air through the tongue in between open lips (Figures 7 b and c), lifting your head upwards and backwards. (Figure 12 a), then puff your cheeks, and holding your breath and move your head down until the chin presses against the chest (on the sternal notch). Keep your cheeks puffed up and eyes closed. (Figure 12 b) Close your eyes while pressing the chin to the chest.

Now, while holding the breath and keeping the back straight, move the shoulders vigorously up and down. Keep the arms straight and stiff without bending at the elbows. (Figure 12 c & d). Repeat this up and down movement of the shoulders about 6 to 12 times. When you can hold your breath no more, lift up the head, open your eyes and release your breath gradually through your nose.

Concentration :

On the shoulder joints

Benefits :

Improves the vigour of shoulders and shoulder blades by toning up the muscles, blood vessels and joints. Prevents frozen shoulders.



13. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Bhuja-Bandha-Sakti-Vikasaka Strengthening the upper arms

Posture :

Feet together, stand erect with closed fists (thumbs tucked inside the fists). Fists should point forward.

Exercise :

Keep the hands (with fists closed) in an "L" shape at an angle of 90 degrees at the elbow. (Figure 13 a). Breathe in while extending both the hands forward to the level of shoulders, keeping the fists closed. (Figure 13 b). Exhale while bringing the hands back into the original position. (Figure 13 a)

Concentration :

On the upper arms muscles.

Benefits :

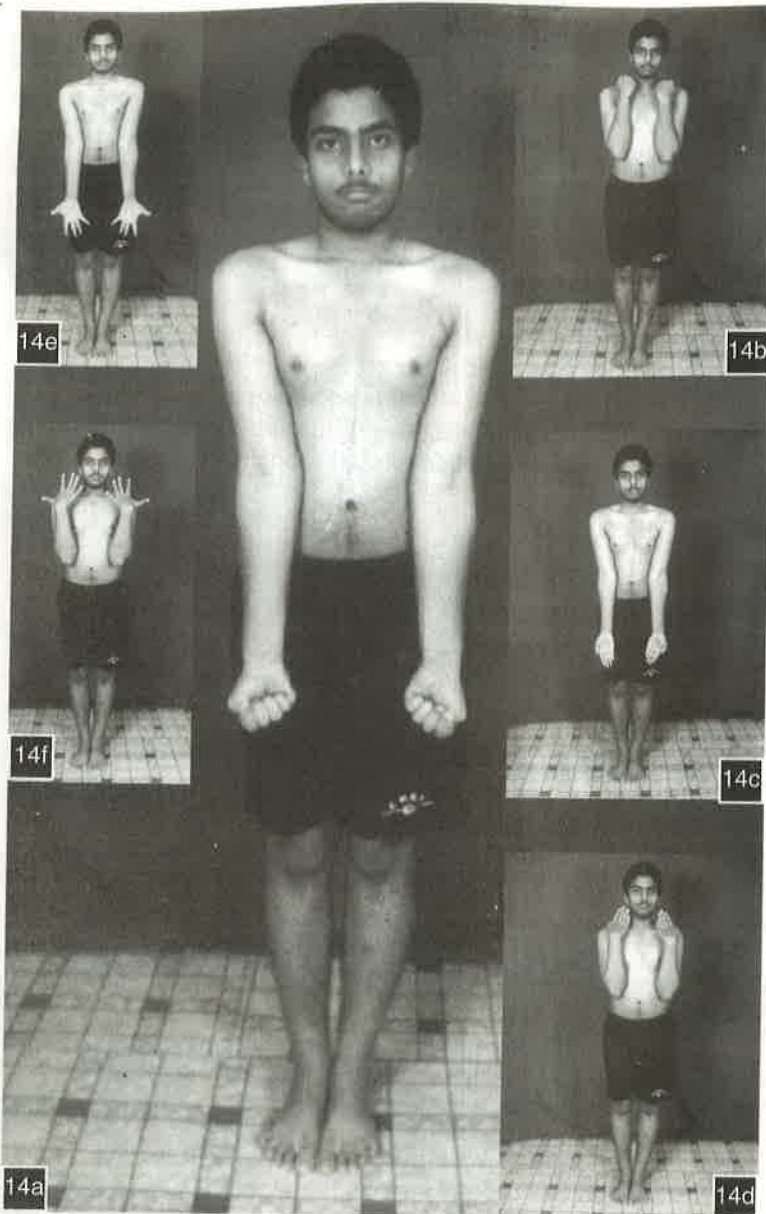
Improving significantly the strength of the biceps, arm muscles. Heavy arms will become slender and strong. Both the elbow joints as well as the upper arm muscles are strengthened.

Students' Comments :

The idea is to push the arms forward forcefully and bring them back in an equally vigorous motion. It therefore exercises the entire arm.

Remember to co-ordinate the breathing with the movement, breathing in while pushing the hands out and breathing out while bringing them back. Initially this can get a bit confusing and you might make a mistake in breathing, so pay close attention until you have got it right.

This exercise can get quite strenuous, so it is advisable to start with few repetitions and then increase gradually.



14. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Kaphoni-Sakti-Vikasaka Strengthening the elbow.

Posture :

Feet together, stand erect, arms straight downward with fists clenched (thumb tucked in).

Exercise (A) :

Raise both the clenched fists upto to the level of shoulders vigorously, with the upper arm being held stiff, while breathing in. Then bring back to the original position while breathing out. Repeat 6 to 12 times. (Figure 14 a and b)

Exercise (B) :

This is identical to the previous exercise except that the palms are open and fingers held close to each other. (Figure 14 c and d)

Exercise (C) :

Again identical to the previous exercise except that the fingers are spread out as wide as possible. (Figure 14e and f)

Concentration :

On the elbows.

Benefits :

Cures malfunctioning and malformation of elbows and strengthens joints. Circulation of blood in arteries of the arms is accelerated. Also beneficial to arthritic and rheumatic cases.

Students' Comments :

Remember that this is an elbow exercise, so keep the upper arm, from the shoulder to the elbow, immobile. All the action takes place elbow downwards.

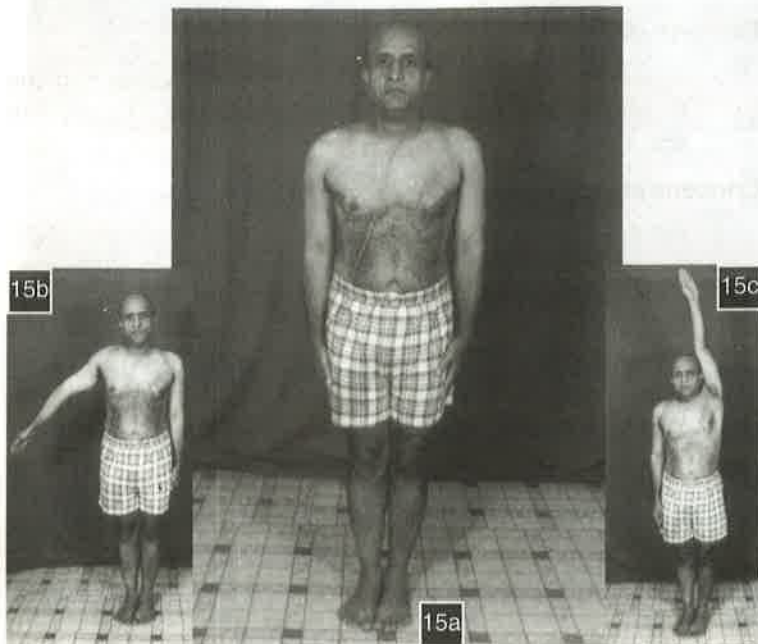
15. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Bhuja-Valli-Sakti-Vikasaka Strengthening Arms.

Posture :

Feet together, body straight with arms at your sides, palms open and fingers together. (Figure 15 a)

Exercise (A) :

While breathing in deeply, lift your right hand up sideward (Figure 15 b) then up to the top, almost touching the side of your head. Do not bend the arms anywhere including at the elbows. The arms and the body should form a straight line (Figure 15 c). Then bring it down to original position while breathing out slowly. Repeat 6 to 12 times. The hand **should not touch** the head while going up, or the thigh while coming down.



Exercise (B) :

Repeat (A) above with the left hand. (Figure 15 d and e)

Exercise (C) :

Repeat the above exercise with both the hands at the same time. Both hands should go up and come down simultaneously without touching each other at the top or the thighs while they are down.

Concentration :

On the arms.

Benefits :

Strengthens the arms while improving their shape.

Students' Comments :

The important part of this exercise is that the arms should not touch the thighs while coming down or the head while going up. This means that the arms do not get any rest during the exercise and are working all the time. It also means that you cannot casually flap your arms up and down, but have to pay close attention where they go up to and when to stop. Similarly you cannot just drop your arms down but have to have complete control over the movement until the arms reach down. You have to be continuously aware of your entire arm from your shoulder to your fingertips and have to focus your attention on it. That's what makes the difference.



16. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Purna-Bhuja-Sakti-Vikasaka
Developing the arms



16a

Posture :

Stand erect, feet together, hands with clenched fists (thumbs also tucked in).

Exercise (A) :

Inhale deeply through the nose and then hold the breath. While holding the breath rotate your whole right arm in a circular manner (in clockwise direction) as many times as you can, while holding the breath. Finally breathe out with a hissing sound while thrusting the arm forward at the shoulder level as if you are delivering a punch.

Exercise (B) :

Repeat the above in reverse direction (anti-clockwise).

Exercise (C) :

Repeat with left arm rotating clockwise

Exercise (D) :

Repeat with left arm rotating anti-clockwise

Exercise (E) :

Repeat with both hands simultaneously rotating clockwise

Exercise (F) :

Repeat with both hands simultaneously rotating anti-clockwise

Figures 16 a b c d e f g h i j



16b



16c



16d



16e



16f



16g

Concentration :

The arm joint

Benefits :

Tones up the nerves. The whole arm becomes stronger and more shapely.

Students' Comments :

This is one of the most vigorous exercises in the whole set and can get a bit tiring. Take a few seconds rest in between the exercises.

Begin by rotating your arms slowly and then gradually increase the speed. The last few rotations should be at top speed. However do be careful and do not swing you arms around with all your might. Chances are that you might pull or dislocate a muscle. So do not get carried away, but keep control of your arms. Also slowly work at holding your breath for longer periods of time. You can see the strong arms of the author in picture.



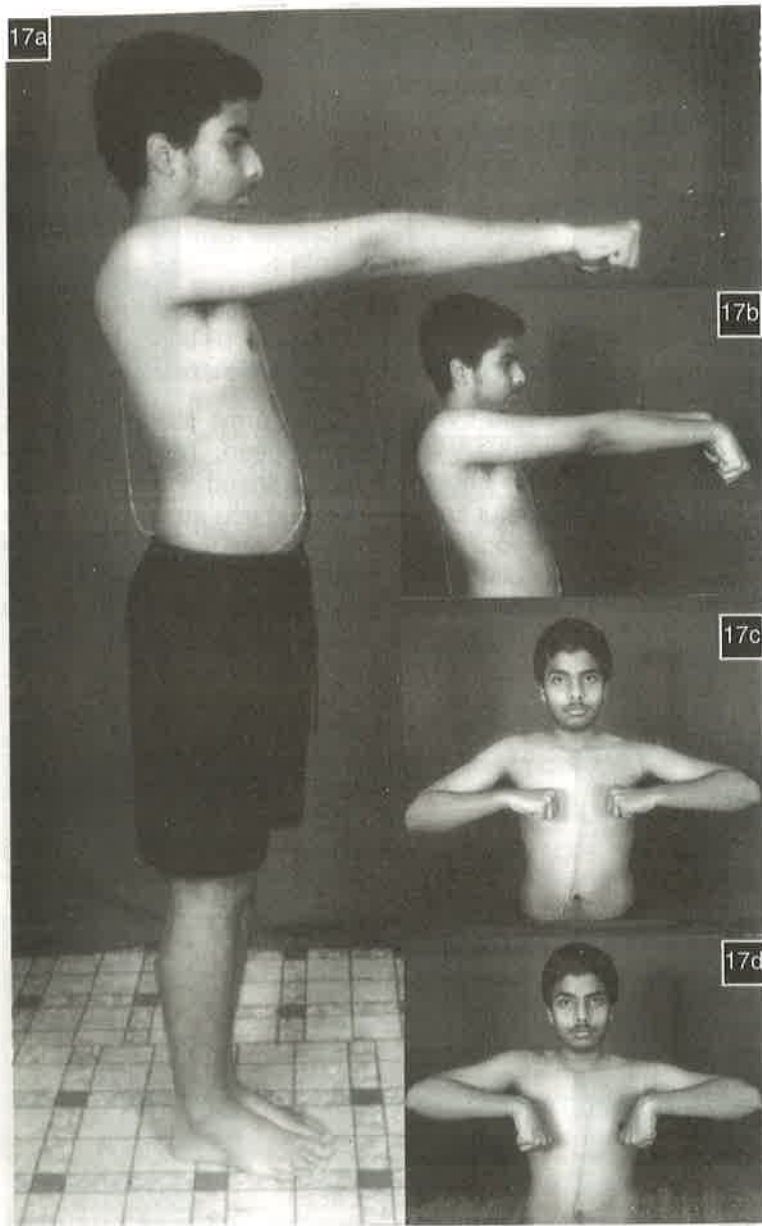
16i



16h



16j



17. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Mani-Bandha-Sakti-Vikasaka Developing the wrists

Posture :

(A) Feet together, stand erect and stretch your arms to the front at the level of shoulders with fists closed tight and the thumbs clasped inside the fist. Fists should point forward.

Exercise (A) :

Move the wrist up and down to the maximum and minimum possible with normal breathing. Repeat 6 to 12 times. (Figure 17 a and b)

Concentration :

On the wrist joints.

Posture (B) :

Bend the arms at elbows with the closed wrists. Wrists near the centre of the chest as shown in the photograph.

Exercise (B) :

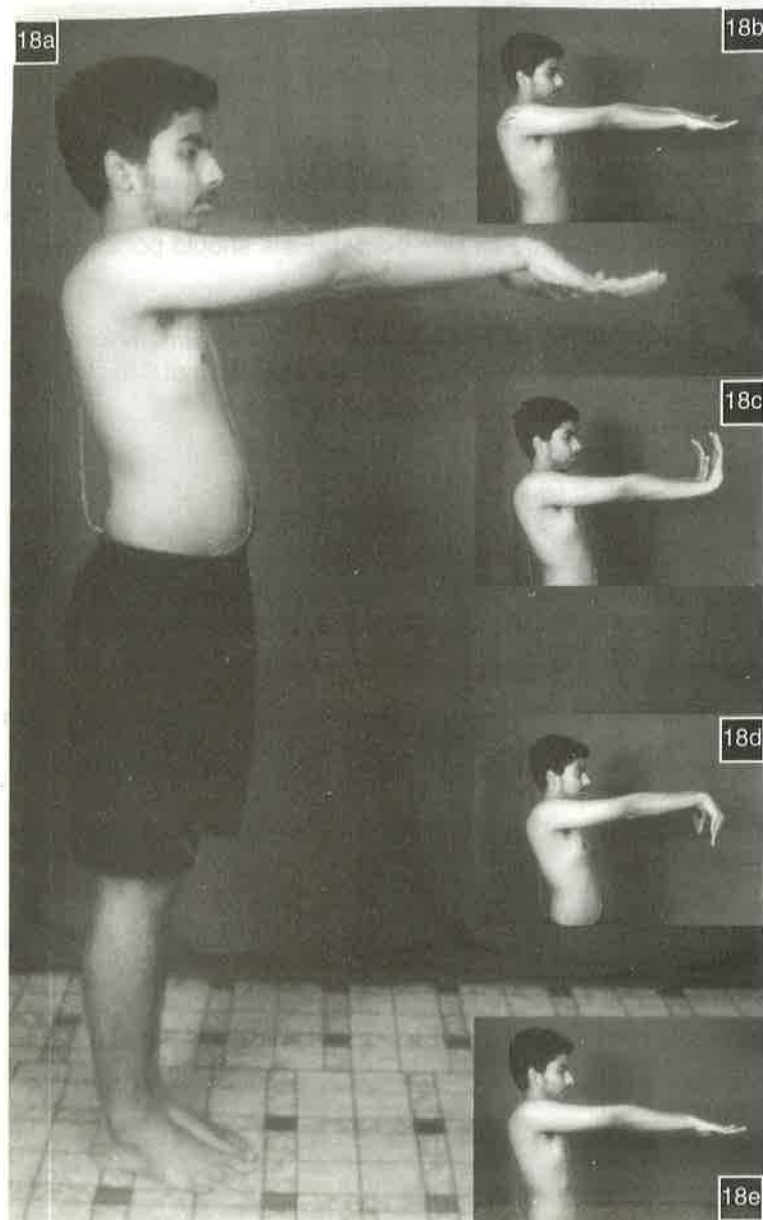
Repeat the movement of the wrists up and down with closed fists 6 to 12 times (Figures 17 c and d)

Concentration :

On the wrist joint

Benefits :

Strengthens wrist joints, removes pains in wrist joints due to arthritis or rheumatism.



18. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Kara-Prstha-Sakti-Vikasaka Developing the back of the hand.

Posture (A) :

Feet together, stand erect and stretch your arms in front with palms open and fingers close together.

Exercise (A) :

Move the wrist joint up and down, keeping the palms open as shown, with normal breathing.

(Figure 18 a b c d e)

Posture (B) :

Bring the arms in front of the centre of the chest with open palms

Exercise (B) :

Repeat the movement – up and down with normal breathing.

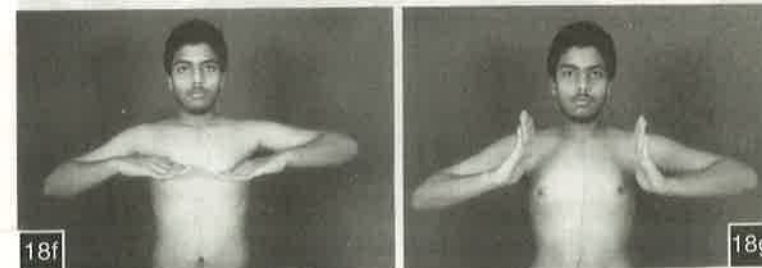
(Figure 18 f and g)

Concentration :

On the hands.

Benefits :

Strengthens and remove pains in the back of hands.





19. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Kara-Tala-Sakti-Vikasaka Developing the palms.

Posture (A) :

Feet together, stand erect, stretch the arms forward with open palms and fingers stretched out wide, as far apart, and tightly.

Exercise (A) :

Move the wrist joints up and down (6 to 12 times) with stretched fingers and normal breathing.

(Figure 19 a and b)

Posture (B) :

The same posture, this time raising the arms sideways, keeping the elbows bent and open palms in front of the chest as shown.

Exercise (B) :

Move wrist joints with open palms and stretched fingers up and down (6 to 12 times) with normal breathing.

Concentration :

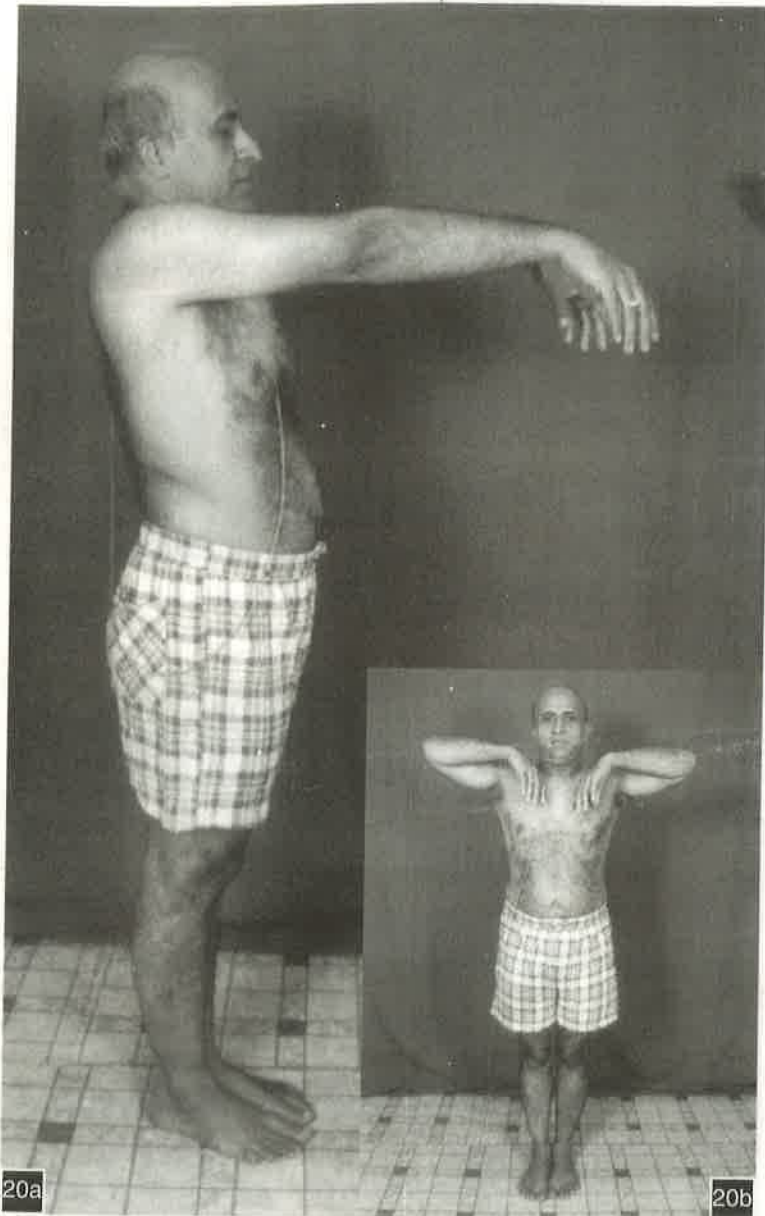
On the finger joints

Benefits :

Strengthens the palms and removes pain in the palms.

Students' Comments :

In exercises 17 to 19, try and get the maximum range of movement in the wrists. While moving the wrist up, try and touch the top of your forearm, and while moving it down, the bottom of the forearm. Of course this level is quite difficult to reach, but when you try this, you ensure that you are moving your wrist to the maximum extent. *Keep your awareness on the fingers and wrists at all times.*



20a

20b



20. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Anguli-Mula-Sakti-Vikasaka Developing the finger joints

Posture (A) :

Feet together, stand erect with the body relaxed. Raise the arms forward, parallel to the ground, at shoulder level

Exercise (A) :

Vigorously shake the fingers loosely, as if there is some sticky tape stuck to your fingers which you are trying to shake off. After shaking the fingers vigorously for half a minute, stretch your hands forward in a straight line at shoulder level and relax the fingers entirely holding them very loose. The entire arm is stretched out stiff and only the fingers are left loose. Do this for about a minute (Figure 20a).

Posture (B) Exercise (B) :

Repeat the same with folded elbows. Palms in front of the centre chest, for 1 to 2 minutes. (Figure 20 b)

Concentration :

On the fingertips

Benefits :

Finger joints are strengthened and pains are relieved.

Students' Comments :

If you do this exercise properly, when you relax your fingers after shaking them vigorously, you will find the blood circulation to your fingertips has increased and you can actually see the skin on your fingertips turning reddish. You might also feel a tingling sensation in your fingertips.



21. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Anguli-Sakti-Vikasaka Strengthening the fingers.

Posture :

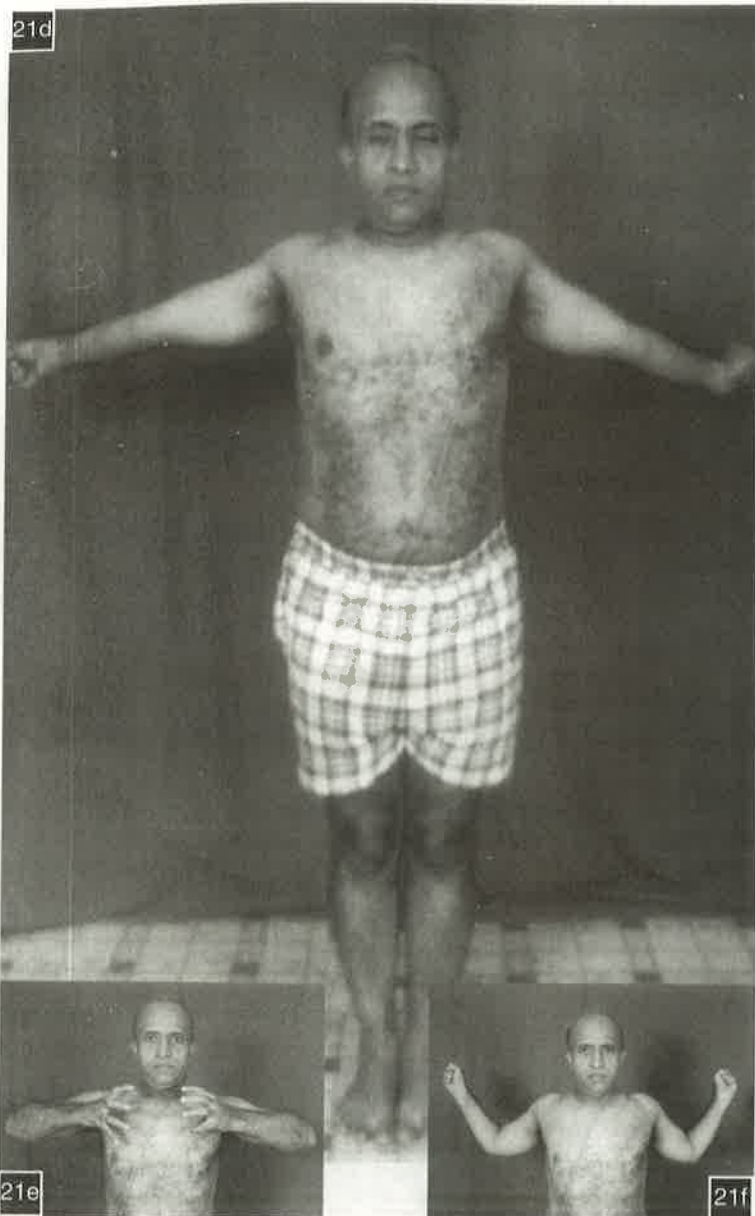
Feet together, stand erect and stretch the hands forward with fingers open but bent as if to clasp a heavy object. The fingers look like a cobra's hood

Exercise :

While breathing in, pull the hands backwards slowly while clasping the imaginary heavy object backwards until you reach the chest level with your hands. Now do not touch the chest but go sideward towards the back of shoulders and then drop your arms down by your sides, opening the palms fully to normal. You will breathe out only after releasing the fingers (when they are behind the shoulders). Repeat 6 times

(Figures 21 a b c d)





Concentration :

On the imaginary heavy object.

Posture (B) Exercise (B) :

Instead of starting with the arms stretched in front, keep the palms in front of the centre chest with elbows bent. Then once again, clasp the imaginary heavy object with fingers pull them to the side as if to tear the heavy object apart. Start the breathing in while starting the movement and breathe out at the end. Repeat 6 times. (Figures 21 e f d)

Benefits :

All the above exercises are for the hands – to strengthen the wrists, knuckles, palms and fingers. They also stimulate the action of the heart, thereby improving the condition of heart and curing minor maladies. These exercises are specifically recommended for writers, sculptors, typists or those who operate computer keyboards or musical instruments.

Students' Comments :

Do not be in a hurry while doing this exercise. Imagine you are pulling a really heavy object so you have to pull with all you might and cannot go fast. This exercise brings into use all the muscles, tendons and ligaments in the entire arm.

The entire set of exercises from 13 to 21 is for the arms and fingers. The exercises are very helpful to cure conditions such as carpal tunnel syndrome or repetitive stress injuries caused to the wrists and fingers by working long hours at a keyboard. Typical symptoms such as numbness in the fingers can be relieved by these exercises

**22. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Vaksha-
Sthala-Sakti-Vikasaka-1**
Developing the chest -1 (Upper Chest)

Now we get started with the chest area and lower down, since we have already covered all the organs above the chest.

Posture :

Feet together, stand erect, with hands on the sides (Figure 22 a)



Exercise :

While breathing in, lift both the arms up together in the front. (Figure 22 b). Lift them up above the shoulders vertically and then while continuing your inhalation, keep lifting the arms up and back while bending backwards and much as you can. (Figure 22 c and d). When you have reached the final position (Figure 22 e) keep holding the breath without bending either the knees or the elbows. Exhale out slowly while returning the arms back to normal position on your sides. Repeat 6 to 12 times.

Concentration :

On the upper chest

Benefits :

Highly beneficial for all chest conditions, the chest expands and becomes strong. Tuberculosis, asthma and chronic bronchitis can be tackled with this exercise. A weak heart can be strengthened by this exercise if performed regularly.

Students' Comments :

Observe the artistry, symmetry, and grace of the posture. When both the arms are being lifted up (Figure 22 b), they are moving together as if one. When you are bending backwards a complete arch is formed. You can see the hands becoming horizontal and parallel to the ground in the final position (22e).

You may not be able to bend backwards very much in the beginning, although you must try to do as much as you can.





**23. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Vaksa-
Sthala-Sakti-Vikasaka-2**
Developing the chest 2 (Lower Chest)

Posture :

Feet together, stand erect with the arms by the sides and palms of hands turned inwards (towards your side thighs).

Exercise :

While inhaling through the nose lift your shoulder joints upward, then bend backward from the waist as far as you can go, at the same time lower your arms behind you as much as you can, without bending the knees or elbows or holding the breath. While exhaling, slowly return back to normal position. Repeat 5 times.

(Figures 23 a b c d)

Concentration :

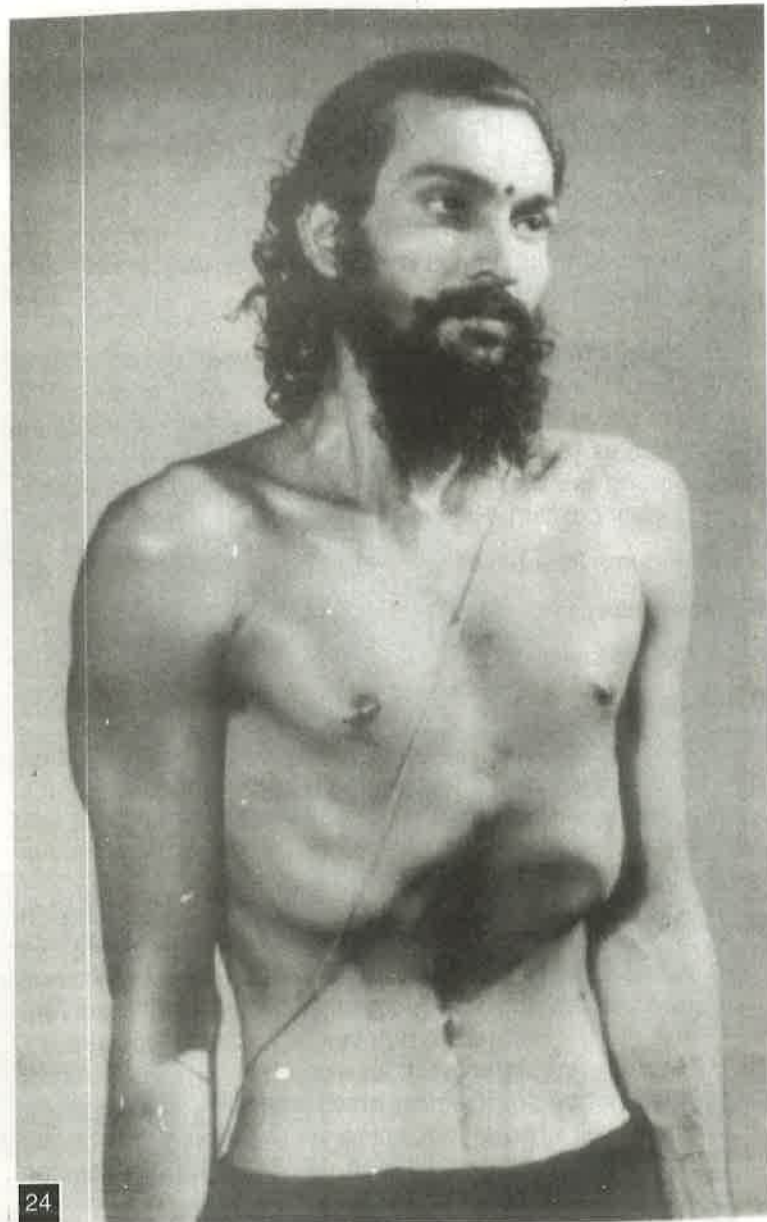
On the lower chest.

Benefits :

Same as for exercise No.22 above with the additional benefits of giving vitality and strength to chest and back. Arms also are strengthened. The back will be straightened and weak persons can become stronger with an improved shape of the chest.

Students' Comments :

As we grow older, the spine loses its flexibility and we tend towards developing a stoop and hunchback. In fact, you see many older people permanently stooping forward and cannot even stand erect, let alone bend the back. All this need not be so. Regular practice of this exercise in particular will ensure your entire spine remains supple and flexible even through old age and keep the back straight throughout your life.



24



24 Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Udara-Sakti-Vikasaka-1 Developing the abdominal muscles-1

Posture :

Feet together, stand erect.

Exercise :

Exhale slowly and while doing so contract (or withdraw) your abdomen hollow and deep inside, as if attempting to touch your spine to the abdomen. After having exhaled completely, hold the breath in that position as long as you can. (Figure 24) Then slowly release the abdomen while inhaling. Repeat 3 to 4 times.

Concentration :

On the navel

Benefits :

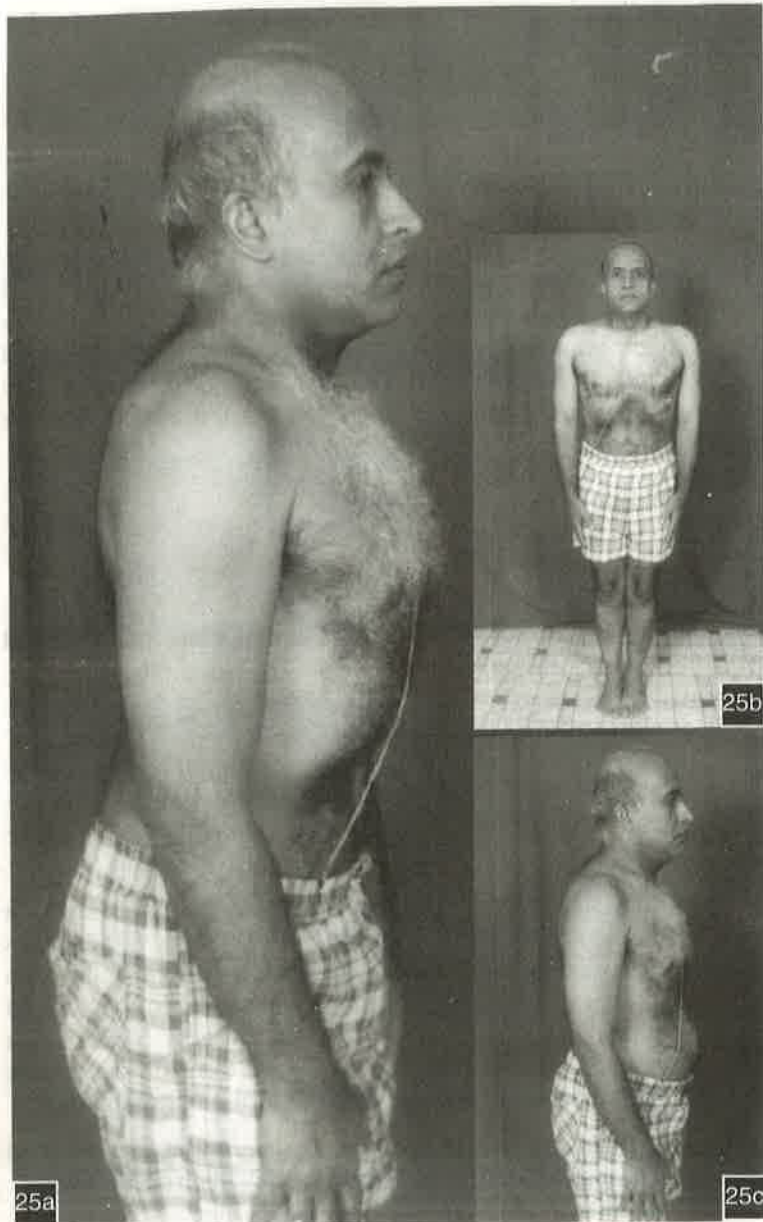
Improves appetite, overcomes indigestion, gastritis and constipation, and helps stimulate digestive organs.

Students' Comments :

In the photograph Shri Dharendra Brahmachari has demonstrated this posture. Notice the extent to which the stomach has been pulled in until it almost seems that the stomach is in two dimensions only - no depth.

Also notice there is no strain whatsoever on the face. This is the ideal posture, which we can only achieve after perhaps years of practice. But even if we do as much as we can, this exercise is of tremendous benefit to the internal organs. In fact one of the unique aspects of Sukshma Vyayama is, that it not only exercises the external organs but also gives a thorough workout to the internal organs.

This exercise has its' origin in Uddiyana Bandha which is given great importance in classical Hatha Yoga system.



25. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Udara-Sakti-Vikasaka-2 Developing the abdominal muscles-2

Posture :

Feet together, stand erect with the neck raised, one inch above normal. (Figure 25 a)

Exercise :

Exhale (breathe out) while contracting the abdomen deep inside (Figure 25 b) and breathe in while expanding forward to the maximum (Figure 25 c). Repeat breathing in and out rapidly 10 to 20 times. The breathing should be rhythmic. The inhalation and exhalation should have a bellows effect on the abdomen (breathe in-abdomen out, breathe out-abdomen in)

Concentration :

On the navel

Benefits :

Overcomes indigestion and constipation. Beneficial in reducing abdominal fat.

Students' Comments :

Note the stomach pulled in Figure 25 b and the stomach distended (expanded) in Figure 25 c.

Also there should be no tension on the face - see the pictures.

The breathing should be rapid. The stomach should move in and out in the manner of a blacksmith's bellows kindling a fire (no retention is required at any stage)



26a



26. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Udara-Sakti-Vikasaka-3 Developing abdominal muscles-3

Posture :

Feet together, stand erect and look back while bending the head backwards as far as it can go. (Figure 26 a)

Concentration :

On the navel

Exercise :

Repeat abdominal breathing and movement as in the previous exercise 10 to 20 times. (Figures 26 a and b)

Benefits :

Same as the previous exercise.



26b



27a

27. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Udara-Sakti-Vikasaka-4 Developing the Abdominal muscles-4

Posture :

Feet together and stand erect, look at a spot on the ground five feet forward from your toes (Figure 27 a) (the head bent at 45 degrees).

Exercise :

Repeat abdominal breathing with movements of the abdomen synchronized with inhalation (Forward movement) and exhalation (backward movement). (Figures 27 a and b)

Concentration :

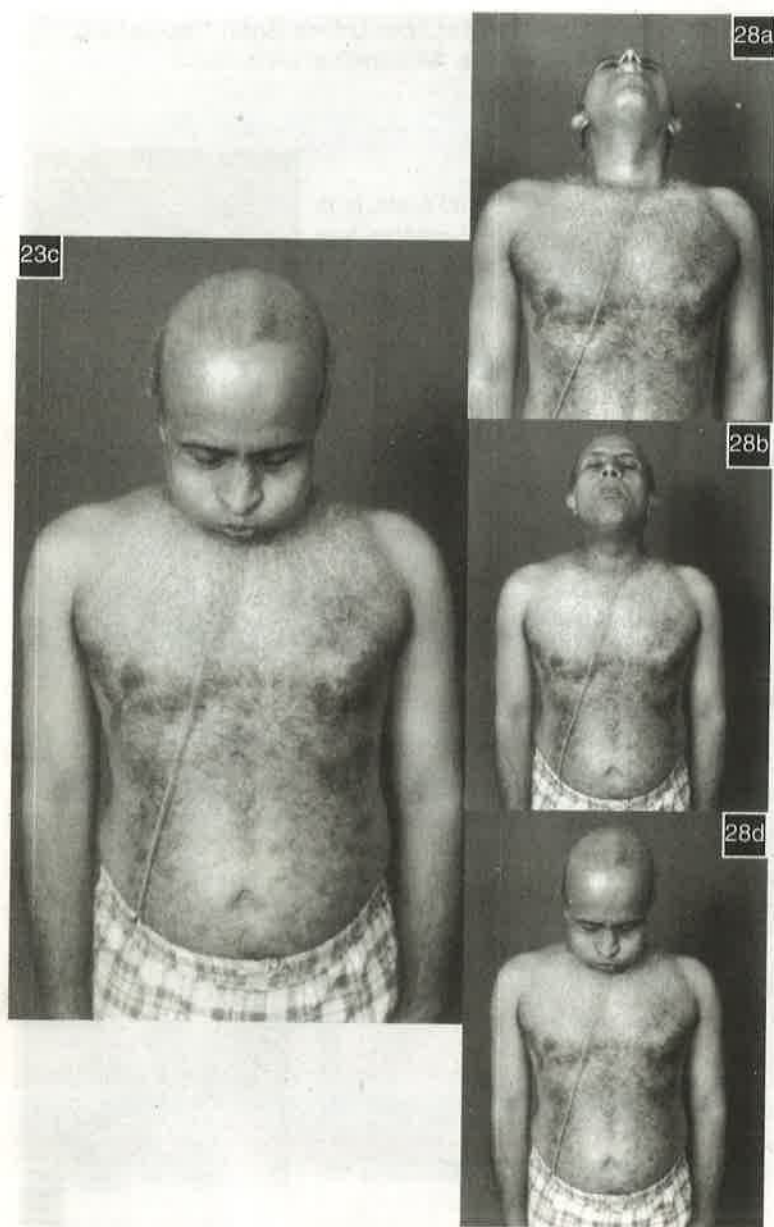
On the Navel.

Benefits :

Same as the previous exercises.



27b



28. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Udara-Sakti-Vikasaka-5 Developing the abdominal muscles-5

Posture :

Feet together, stand erect.

Exercise :

Pouting your lips forward with tongue in the centre (Figure 7 b and c), suck in air through the mouth with a hissing sound as you are lifting your head up and back. After reaching the maximum, drop your head down until the chin presses down against the chest with cheeks puffed up. Now retain (hold) the breath with both the mouth and eyes closed. When you cannot hold the breath any longer, lift up the head, open the eyes and slowly exhale through the nose. Repeat 3 times.

(Figures 28 a b c d)

Precautions :

Make sure that you do not retain the breath too long lest you start feeling giddy. The eyes **must** be closed. Exhale very slowly and noiselessly. Do not breathe out violently as you could cause harm.

Benefits :

Same as above

Students' Comments :

This exercise is called Kaka Mudra with Jalandhara Bandha (chin lock). It is given great importance in the classical Hatha Yoga system.



29. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Udara-Sakti-Vikasaka-6 Developing the abdominal muscles-6

Posture :

Feet together, stand erect. Bend forward at the abdomen upto a 60-degree angle, while placing hands on your hips, fingers backwards and thumbs in front.

Exercise :

Repeat the abdominal bellow breathing 10 to 20 times by contracting the abdomen inside while breathing out (exhalation) and expanding forward while inhalation (breathing in). (Figure 29 a and b)

Concentration :

On the navel.

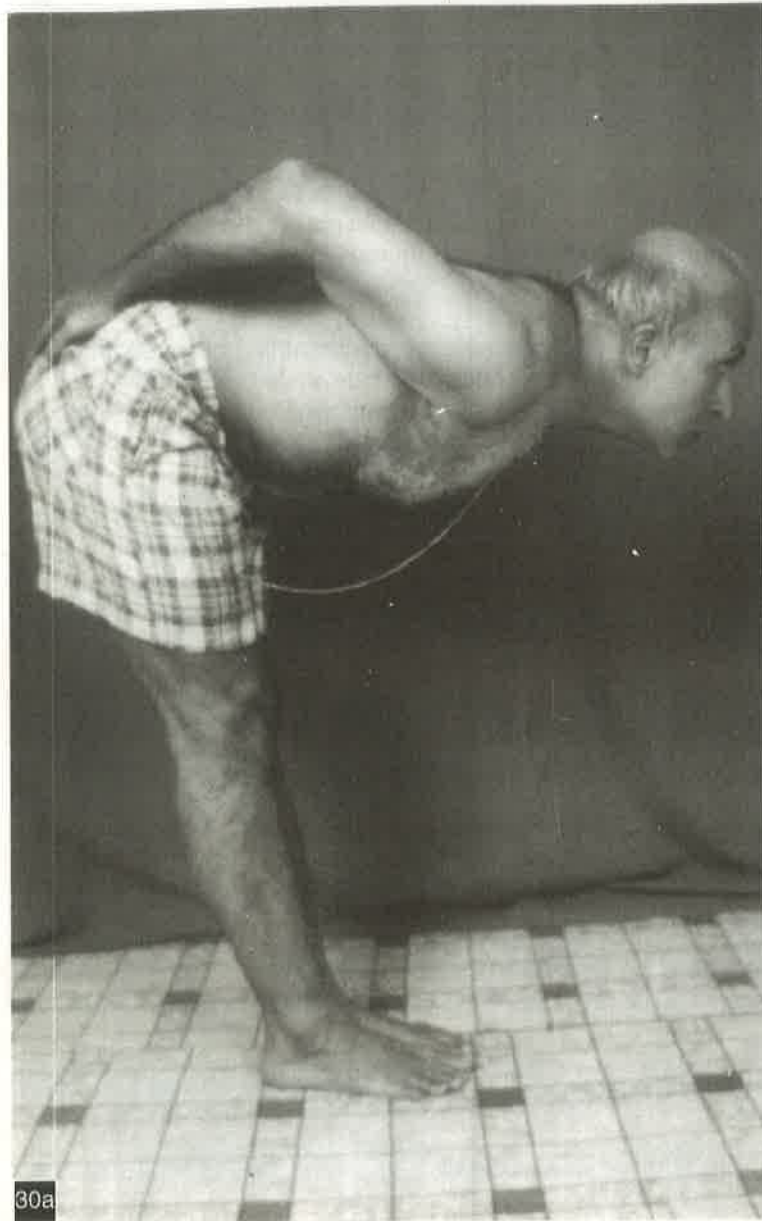
Benefits :

Improves digestion.
Also reduces abdominal fat and overcomes constipation.

Students' Comments :

Note the position of the abdomen - pulled in during exhalation and pushed out during inhalation.





30. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Udara-Sakti-Vikasaka-7
Developing the abdominal muscles-7

Posture :

Same as above (Exercise No. 29) but trunk bent further forward to an angle of 90 degrees.

Exercise :

Same as above (Exercise No. 29) abdominal bellow breathing (in and out) 10 to 20 times. (Figure 30 a and b)

Concentration :

On the navel.

Benefits :

Same as above





31

**31. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Udara-Sakti-Vikasaka-8:
Developing the abdominal muscles-8.**

Posture :

Stand feet together, hands by the side and head straight.

Exercise :

Breathe out completely (exhale). Do not inhale. Now without either inhaling or exhaling, move your abdomen in and out, rapidly contracting and expanding respectively. When you cannot hold the breath anymore and feel an urge to inhale, gradually return to the normal standing position while breathing in.

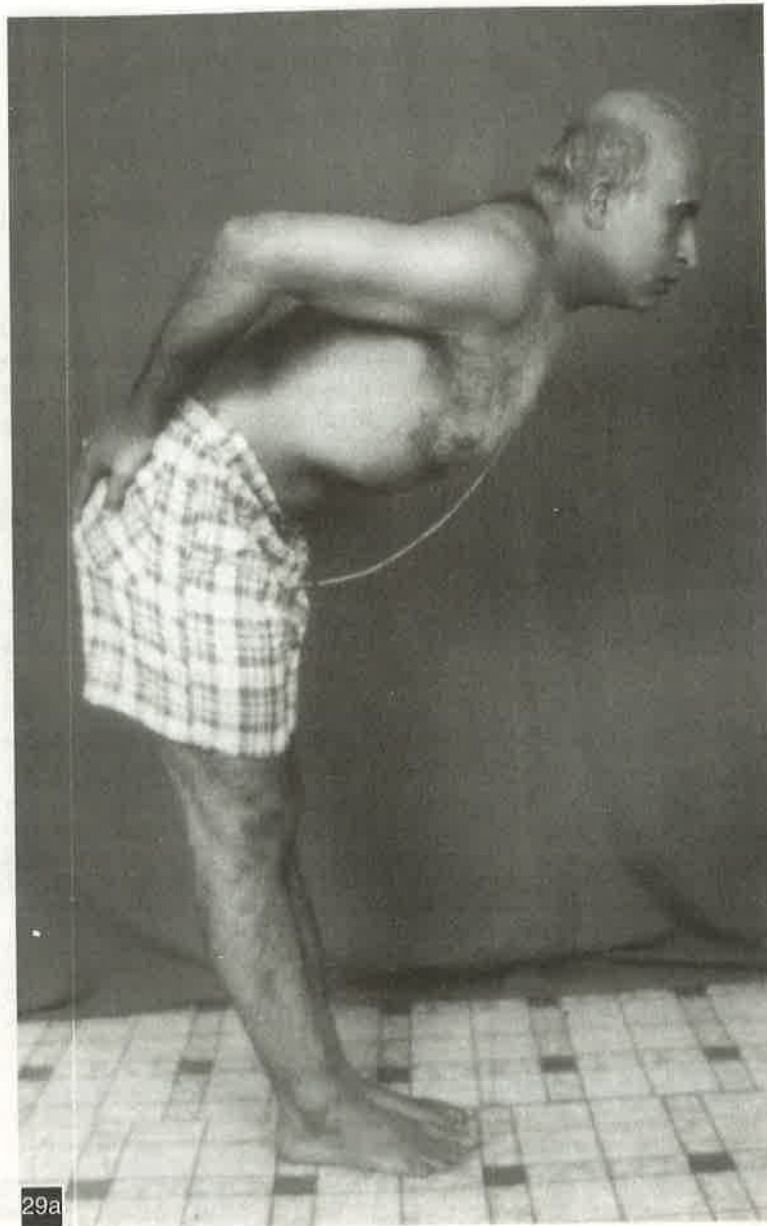
Concentration :

On the navel

Students' Comments :

The most important thing in this exercise is that you breathe out completely and do not breathe in. Therefore almost all the air has been expelled from your lungs and your breathing is suspended. In this situation, you now begin to exercise the muscles by moving the abdomen in and out. When you cannot hold the breath any longer, slowly come up while inhaling.

This is an Internal exercise so no real illustration is possible.



29a

32. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Udara-Sakti-Vikasaka-9. Developing abdominal muscles-9

Posture :

Same as the previous exercise (No.31), only bend the trunk to the angle of 60-degrees.

Exercise :

Same as Exercise No. 31. (Figure 29 a). I.e. shake your abdomen, moving it forward and backward rapidly (without breath)

Students' Comments :

During this exercise the abdomen is shaken rapidly (as if you are shaking a wet cloth off water drops) after inhaling and without inhaling. After finishing you stand up erect while inhaling and then normal breathing to follow.



30a

33. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Udara-Sakti-Vikasaka-10 Developing abdominal muscles-10

Posture :

Same as the previous Exercise (No.31) only bend forward upto an angle of 90 degrees.

Exercise :

Same as previous exercise No.31 (Figure 30 a)

Concentration and Benefits :

Same as previous exercise (No.31),

Benefits for the exercise no 31, 32, 33 are towards reducing the fat in the abdomen, improving the digestive capability and improving the appetite in addition to help acquire control over abdominal muscles



30b

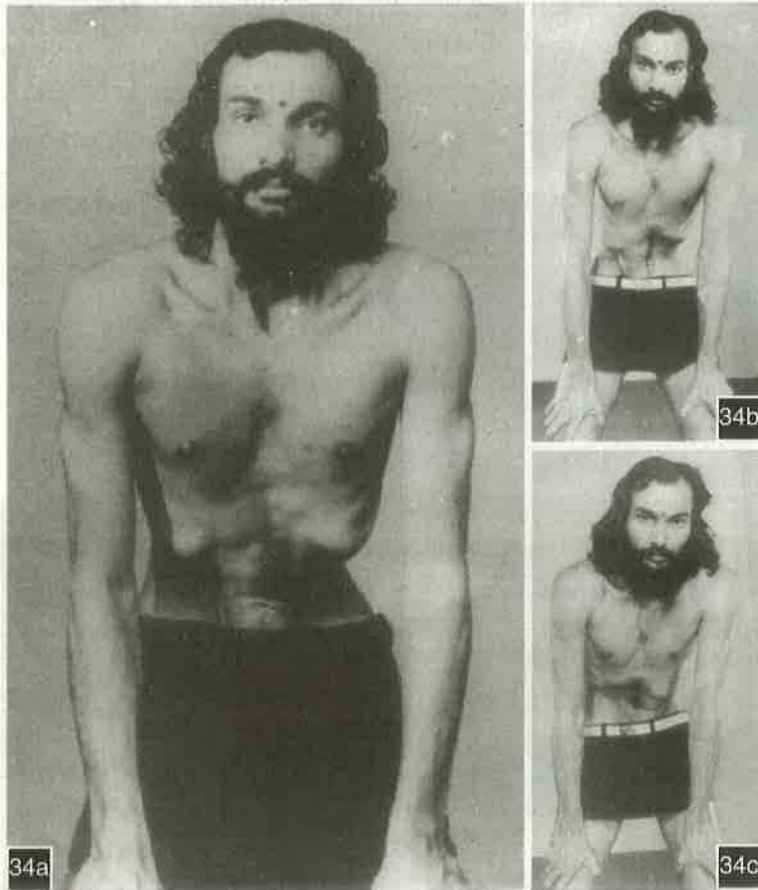
30c

34. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Udara-Sakti Vikasaka-11 Nauli

Nauli is a very special exercise for the abdominal muscles

Posture :

Keeping hands on the knees four inches above the knees, bend forward a little and sink down a little, a four inches, breathe out completely and press the thighs above the



knees so as to bring out a cylindrical column in the middle of the abdomen. (Figure 34 a)

Exercise :

Having reached this posture, lift the left hand and the column in the abdomen will move to the other side. (Figure 34 b) Now lift the right-hand and it will move to the opposite side (Figure 34 c). This is like churning. Do this 2- 3 times without breathing in. When you cannot hold the breath anymore, release it while breathing in and stand up to the normal position. Repeat this whole exercise 2 to 3 times.

Concentration :

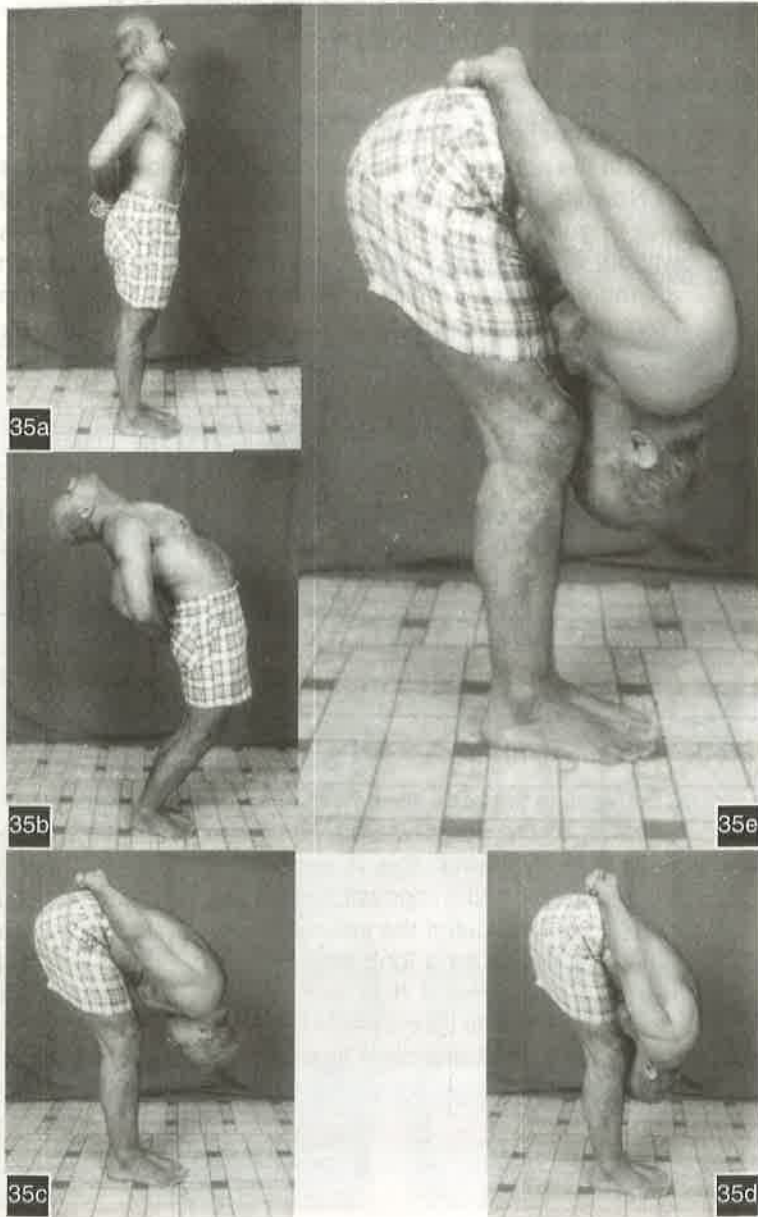
On the navel

Benefits :

This is the most powerful exercise for the abdominal muscles and it improves the appetite and removes indigestion, constipation, obesity and gastritis. It has a tremendous effect on the pancreas so it is very useful in diabetes. Nauli is one of the six famous Kriyas of Hatha Yoga. It is very useful even though it does not involve any direct cleaning as in the case of Neti and Dhauti.

Students' Comments :

The Nauli is the recti abdominis, which forms the front linear wall of the abdominal cavity. Of all the exercises in Sukshma Vyayama, this is probably the most difficult. Beginners will find it impossible. Hence do as much as you can. Do not despair if the column does not stand out. You have to practise for a long time before you can even feel the column, even if it is not visible. Shri Dhirendra Brahmachari, who is probably one of the best people to show this difficult exercise, has demonstrated Nauli.



35. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Kati-Sakti-Vikasaka-1 Developing the trunk muscles-1

Now that we are finished with the abdomen, we move on to trunk

Posture :

Stand erect with feet together and form a fist (thumb tucked in) with your right-hand. Holding the fist behind your back and place your left palm on the right fist. (Figure 35 a)

Exercise (A) :

While standing erect take a deep breath and bend backward to the maximum extent you can while breathing in (Figure 35 b). Then while breathing out, start bending forward and bend to the maximum extent so as to press the head to the knees. (Figures 35 c d e). Exhale completely when you press the head to the knees, then immediately get up and bend backwards continuing the exercise. Repeat this back-front movement 5 times.

Exercise (B) :

This time form a fist with the left hand and place the right palm over it. Now repeat the exercise.

Concentration :

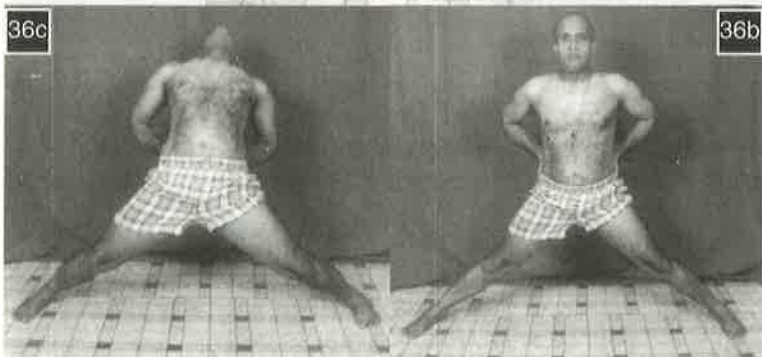
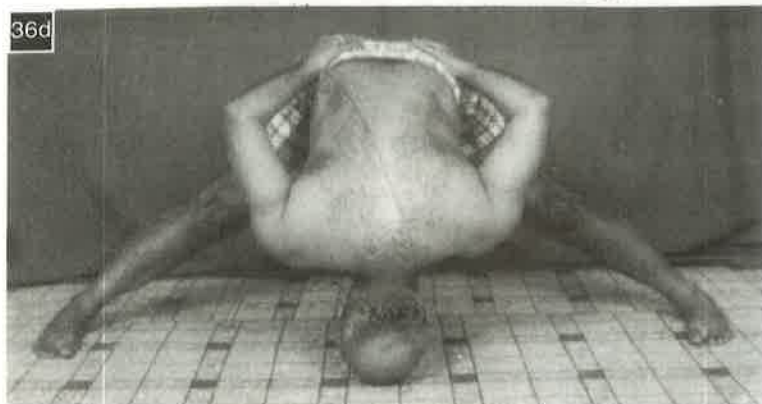
On the back of the trunk

Benefits :

Releases the trunk joint muscles, removes the pain in the back due to various causes like arthritis, rheumatism. Ensures maximum flexibility and mobility in the spine, keeping you young, supple and fit.

Students' Comments :

Initially it will be difficult to bend backwards and forwards with both your feet together. There will be a tendency to lose your balance. Practice makes perfect.



36. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Kati-Sakti-Vikasaka-2 Developing the trunk muscles-2

Posture :

Stretch your legs apart to the maximum with the hands on the hips. (Figure 36 b)

Exercise :

While breathing in, bend backwards (as done previously) (36a) the maximum you can, and while breathing out bend forward as much as you can, trying to touch your head to the ground without bending the knees (36d). Hold it for a second and then lift up the head while breathing in and start bending backwards again while breathing in. Repeat this back-front movement 5 to 6 times. (Figures 36 b, a, d)

Concentration :

Bottom of the back.

Benefits :

Same as previous exercise. Removes pain in the back of all kinds. Improves and strengthens the back and makes it more flexible. The vertebral column is made more flexible, supple and agile.

Students' Comments :

While with regular practice you will be able to bend backwards to the extent shown in the photograph, it may be a bit longer before you can touch your head to the floor while bending forward.



37c

37. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Kati-Sakti-Vikasaka-3 Developing the trunk muscles-3

Posture :

Stand erect with hands on the sides (the basic position as in exercise '0')

Exercise :

While breathing in, bend your neck and chest backwards and while breathing out bend forward with a swing, so as to touch the head to the knees. At same time raise the hands back upwards from the back. Once the head touches the knees, return back to the normal standing position with hands coming back to the sides. Ensure that your hands do not touch your thighs or your knees.

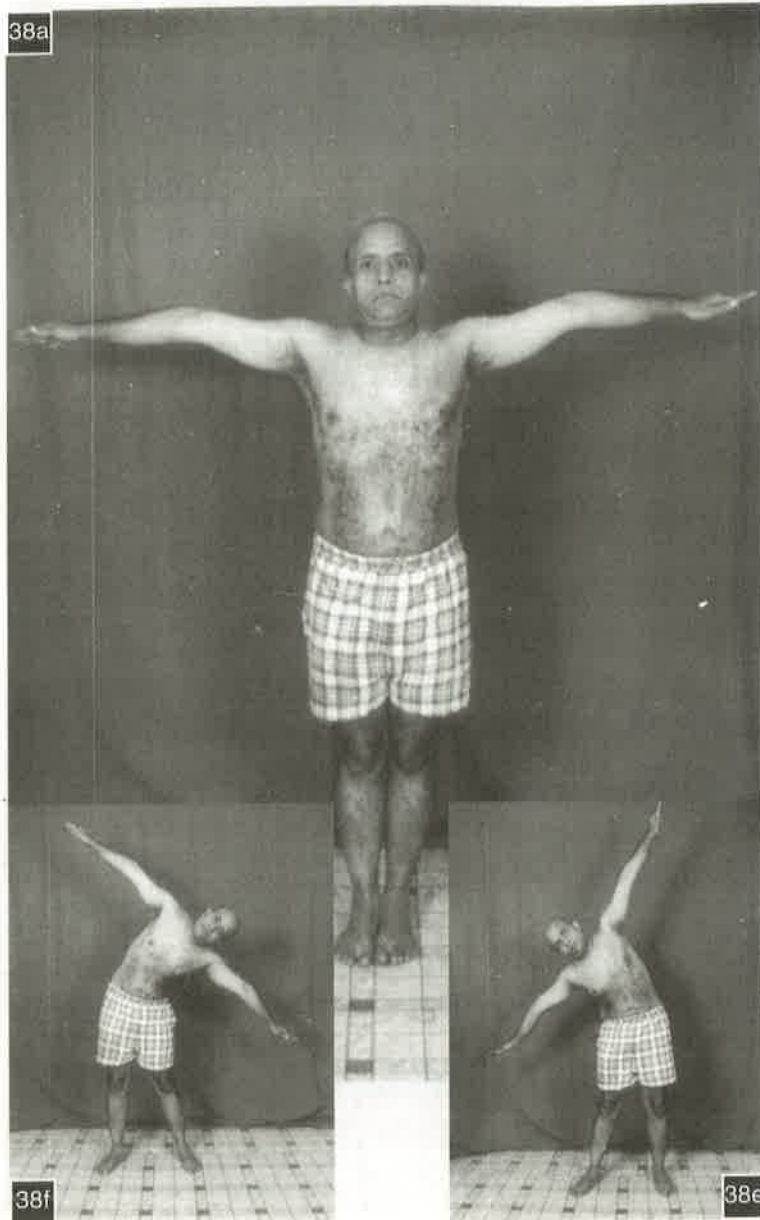
(Figure 37 b and c)

Concentration :

On the back

Benefits :

Makes the back very supple and strengthens it. Removes all the pains in the back. Also creates mobility in the upper arm joint



38. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Kati-Sakti-Vikasaka-4 Developing the trunk muscles-4

Posture :

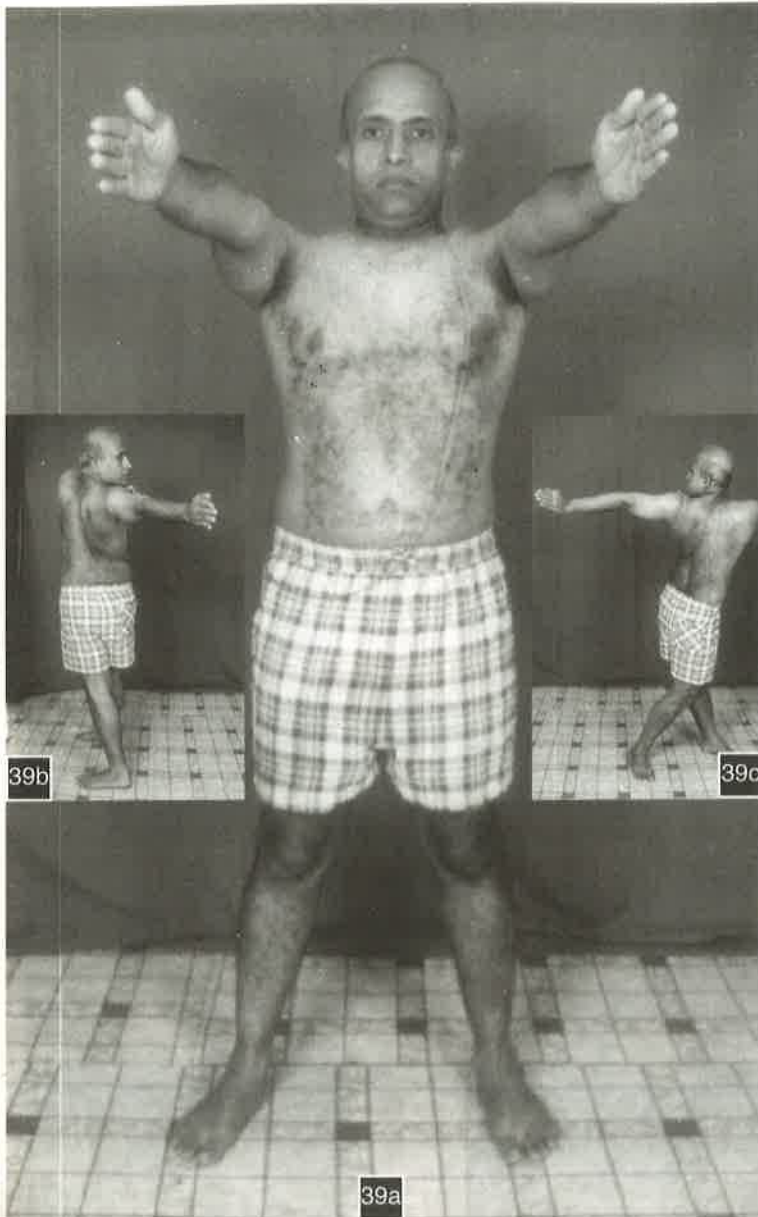
Stand erect with feet together, stretch hands sideward (Figure 38 a)

Exercise (A) :

Without bending the hands, bend the trunk to the left while breathing out. Try to touch your calf with your fingers and then return to the standing position while breathing in. Now bend the trunk to the right while breathing out and return to the standing position while breathing in. Bend to the maximum extent possible. Take care that both your arms are extended outwards in a stationary position and do not move up or down. Similarly ensure that the trunk does not go forward or backward. The only movement is from side to side in **one horizontal plane**. Repeat this 6 times

Posture (B) Exercise (B) :

Repeat the same exercise this time with your feet one foot apart. (Figures 38 e, f)



39. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Kati-Sakti-Vikasaka-5 Developing the trunk muscles-5

Posture :

Feet two feet apart. Keep your arms in the front of you, parallel to the ground, two feet apart. The arms should be stretched forward, fingers close together, palms open and facing each other (Figure 39 a)

Exercise :

Take a deep breath, and without moving your legs, swing back to the right, throwing your hands back with the twist of the trunk. Twist it with a swing to the maximum extent possible; if possible face the front momentarily by moving 180-degrees or even upto 300-degrees while breathing out. Return to the normal position while breathing in. Repeat the same in the other direction, that is towards the left, and then again to the right and so on. Repeat each right-left movement 6 to 12 times (Figures 39 b and c)

Concentration :

On the back

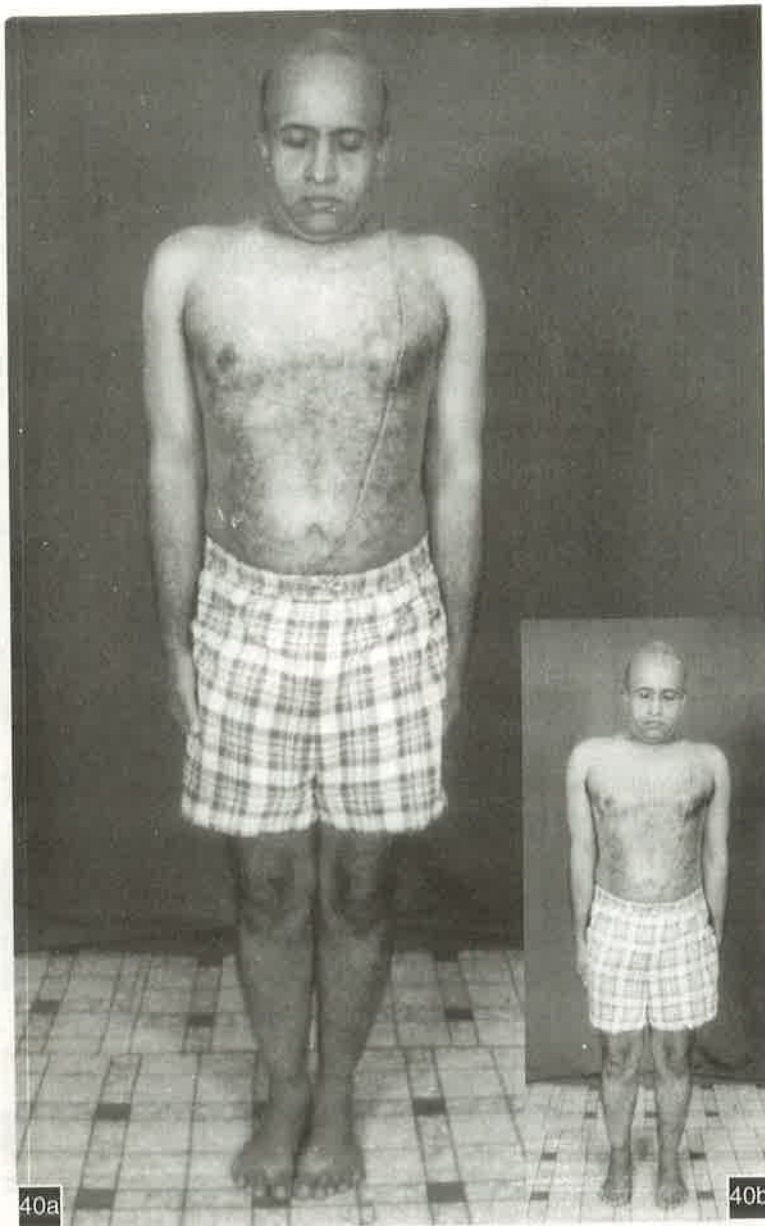
Benefits :

Immense benefits of releasing all the joints in the spinal cord, flexibility and agility. Removes all kinds of back aches.

Students' Comments :

This is one of the asanas (called otherwise Katichakra Asana) that form a part of the powerful kriya "Shankaprakshalana", details of which will be covered in the book on Kriyas.

On the whole, these five exercises for the trunk and back make them supple and symmetrical. You might even feel a bit taller as all the individual bones and muscles in the spine are stretched out to their maximum capacity and not compressed. Flabby backs and droopy chests will be things of the past with regular practice of this exercise.



40a

40b

40. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-muladhara-cakra-suddhi Developing the Muladhara Chakra

Posture :

Stand erect with feet together (Figure 40 a)

Exercise (A) :

Tighten your legs, buttocks and thighs, and pull up the buttocks while breathing in and holding the breath. In this process also pull up and hold the rectum and anus pulled up. Hold this posture and your breath as long as you can, then release the breath along with the muscles of the buttocks and thighs. In the process, the anus and rectum also get pulled up and contracted inside. Repeat this contraction 3 to 6 times.

Exercise (B) :

Keep your feet 2-3 inches apart and repeat the same pulling up motion as the previous exercise, tightening the legs first then the thighs and the buttocks and pulling up the rectum and anus while breathing in and holding it as long as you can. When you cannot hold anymore, release your breath and release your muscles. (Figure 40 b)

Concentration :

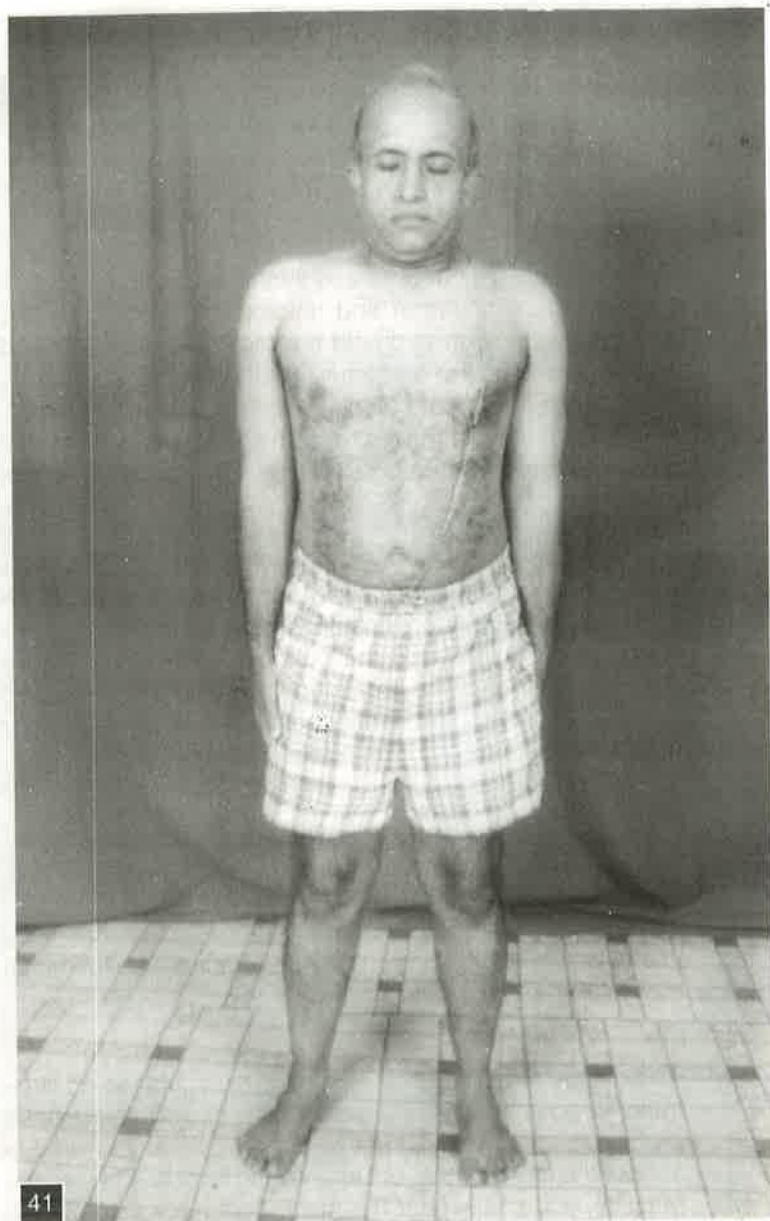
On the base of the body at the Muladhara Chakra.

Benefits :

Extremely useful in constipation, piles, and fissures. Also useful in family planning. It helps in improved elimination of waste products of the kidney.

Students' Comments :

This unique exercise is for internal organs, and so no illustration is possible. The sensation while pulling up the anus and the rectum is similar to that when you feel you want to answer the call of nature but are holding it back. After regular practice, you can repeat the movement quite vigorously.



41

41. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Upastha-Swathistana-Dhithana-Chakra-Suddhi

Posture :

Stand erect with feet one foot apart (Figure 41).

Exercise :

Contract your legs, thighs and buttocks, and pull up the rectum and also the genital organs. All of these have to be contracted upwards while holding the breath after breathing in. When you cannot hold the breath anymore, release the breath and release the organs and the muscles.

Concentration :

On the Muladhara or the base chakra which is the point between the internal part of the anus and genital organs.

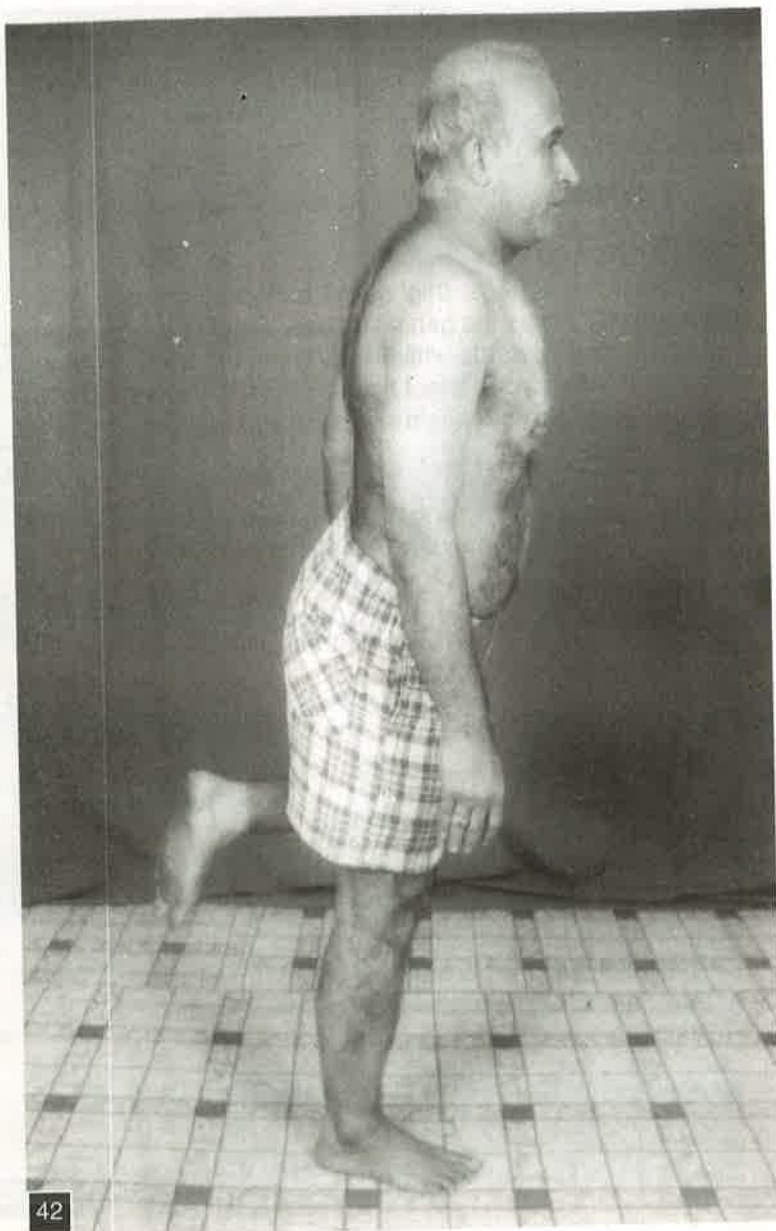
Benefit :

Sperm control, family planning and also having effect on constipation, piles, fissures etc.

Students' Comments :

Again no illustration is possible for this unique exercise for the internal organs.

These last two exercises look simple but have immense internal effects. They help stimulate the pelvic centre and the plexus of nerves located there. Nerves apply from here go to the lower part of the intestine as well as to the pelvis, sphincter, and the genito-urinary system. All of these, which are normally not exercised at all, get stimulated and their functioning improves.



42

42. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Kundalini- Sakti-Vikasaka

Posture :

Stand erect with your hands at your sides

Exercise :

Kick the centre of your buttocks with your heels, one after the other, as hard as you can, while jumping up, as if you are jogging. Repeat this for at least one or two minutes

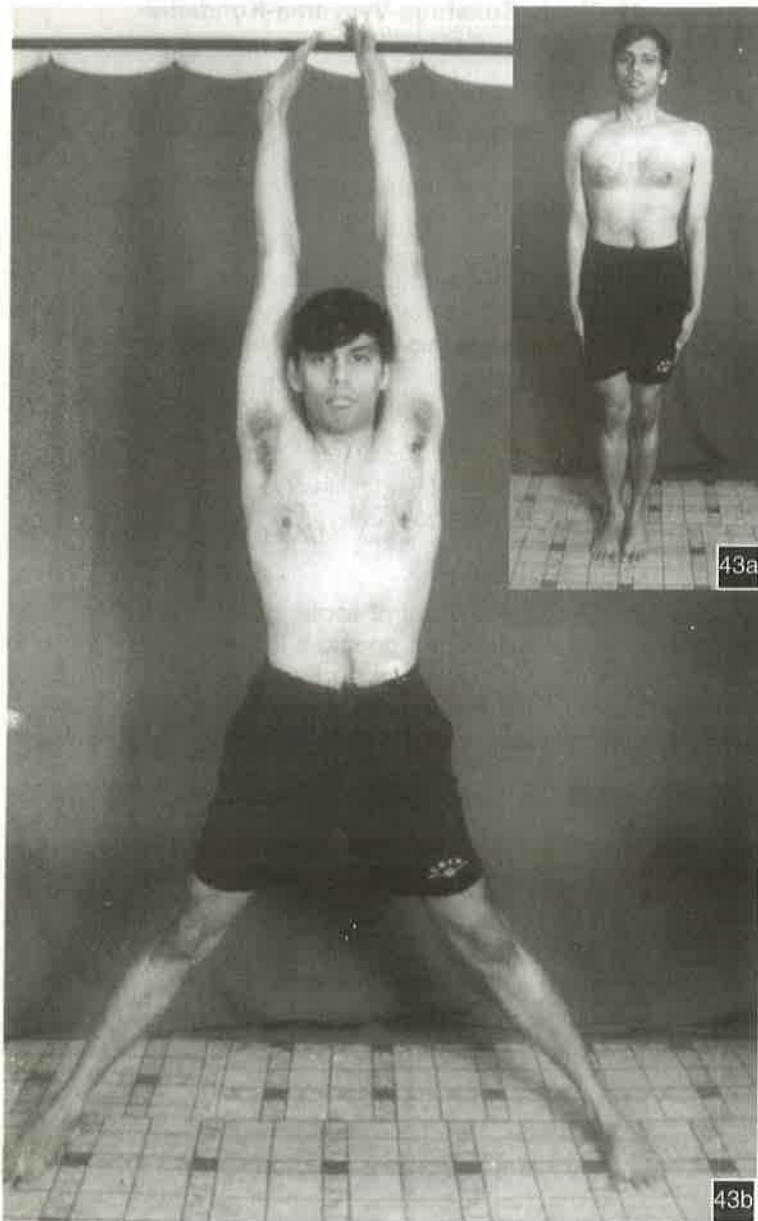
(Figures 42 a b c d)

Benefits :

Improves the power of Kundalini, though it may not be able to awaken it on the spot

Students' Comments :

There is a huge amount of esoteric literature available on Kundalini so we will not go into it in detail here. Suffice to say that this exercise stirs up the mystic power, which is said to reside at the base of the spine.



43. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Jangha-Sakti-Vikasaka-1 Developing the thighs

Now we move on to the legs

Posture :

Stand erect with the hands on the sides.

Exercise (A) :

While inhaling, jump, throwing the feet apart as wide as you can, simultaneously throw the hands upwards so as to almost touch each other above the top of your head, back-to-back. Now breathe out and jump back to normal position. Ensure that when your arms come down, they do not touch the thighs. Neither should your legs bend at the knees. Repeat 6 to 12 times. (Figures 43 a and b)

Exercise (B) :

Perform the same exercise by reversing the process of inhalation and exhalation i.e. instead of inhaling while lifting hands up and exhaling when your hands come down, you exhale while lifting the hands up and inhale when your hands come down. Repeat 6 to 12 times

Concentration :

On the thighs

Benefits :

Makes the thighs slender and strengthens them and removes aches & pains.

Students' Comments :

This exercise resembles the conventional "jumping jack" exercise, with the difference that it is done with full awareness, synchronised with the breath, not allowing the arms to touch either the head on the way up or the thighs on the way down.

This exercise can be quite strenuous if done rapidly although you should proceed with caution.

44. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Jangha-Sakti-Vikasaka-2 Developing the thighs-2

Posture :

Stand with feet together, extend your hands forwards (parallel to the ground) with your palms facing the ground.

Exercise (A) :

Now bend the body at the knees and thighs so that it appears that you are sitting on an imaginary chair. Hold the chair position with your thighs parallel to the ground, while breathing out. Hold the position without breathing in, for a few seconds. (Figure 44 a) Then return back to the normal standing position while breathing in. Ensure that the heels and toes do not arise from the ground. Also try to keep the knees together.

Exercise (B) :

Feet together stand erect with hands to the sides. Stretch the hands to the sides at the level of the shoulder. Stretch the knees to the side, as if the knees and the hands are in the same plane, which is your body's plane. Then exhale and bend down vertically in that plane six inches so as to get a diamond shape between the knees with the legs. Stay in that position while holding the breath for a few seconds. Stand up again to the normal position, while breathing in. Repeat this 3 to 6 times



44a

(Figure 44 c and d)

Concentration :

On the thighs.

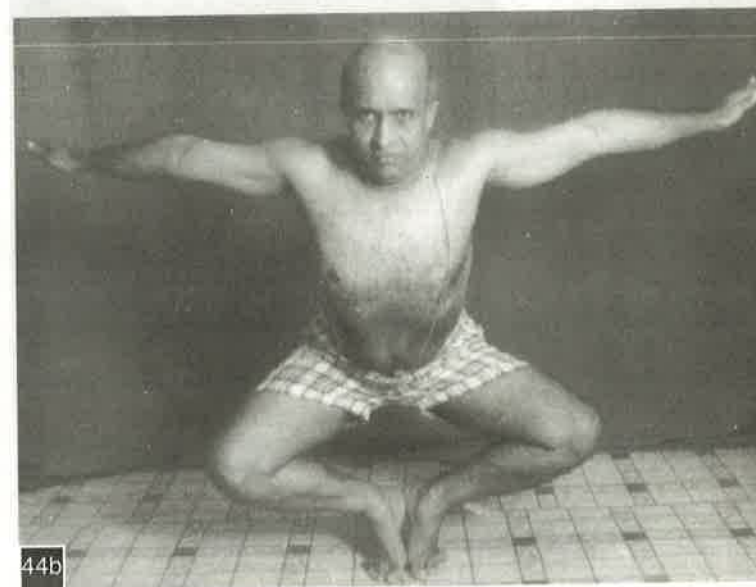
Benefits :

Extremely useful to develop the thighs and to relieve knee pains. Strengthens the knee and relaxes the knee joints.

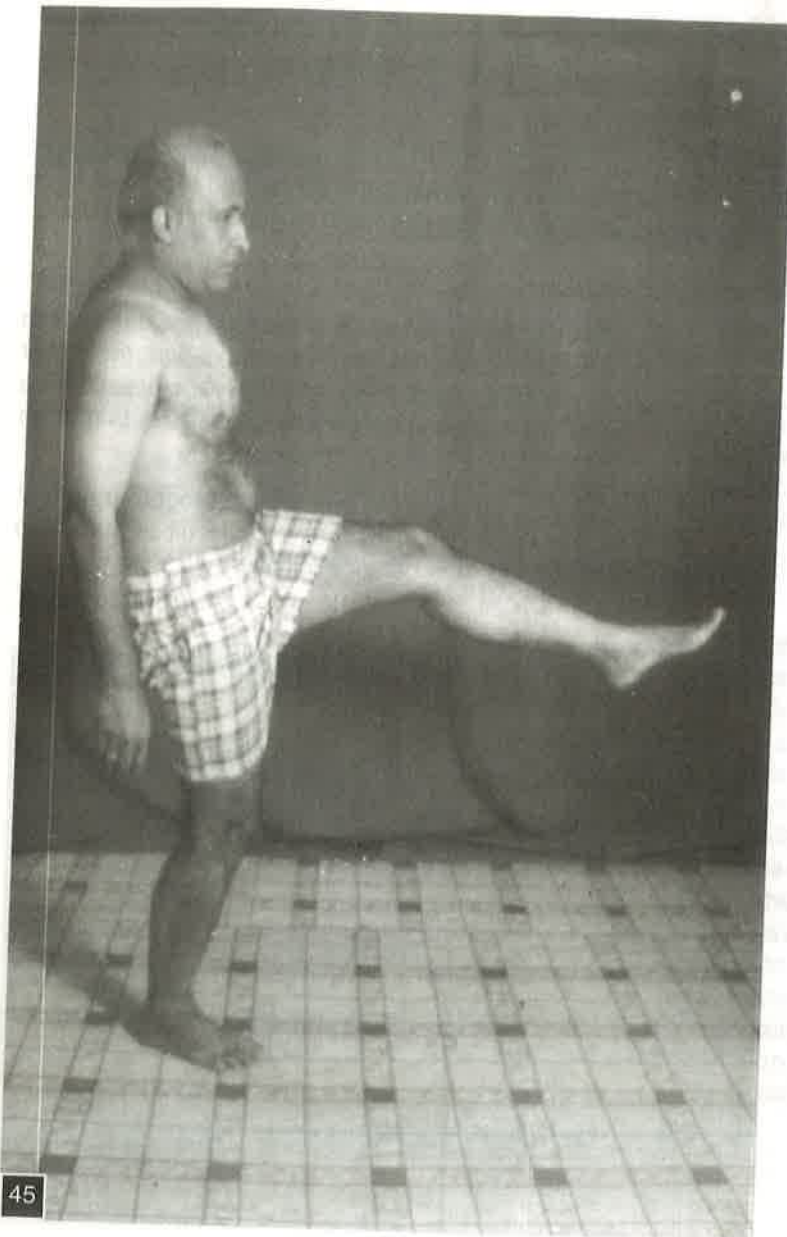
Students' Comments :

If it is difficult to hold the breath in the final position in both the exercises, you can breathe normally at first, then after sufficient practice, do it while holding your breath. The exercise is a bit strenuous on the knees and thighs so proceed slowly.

In exercise (B), note that the feet are kept together both at the toes and the heels. This may be difficult at first. Also you might tend to lose balance initially.



44b



45



45. Yogi-Sukshma-Vyayama-Janu-Sakti-Vikasaka Developing the knee joints

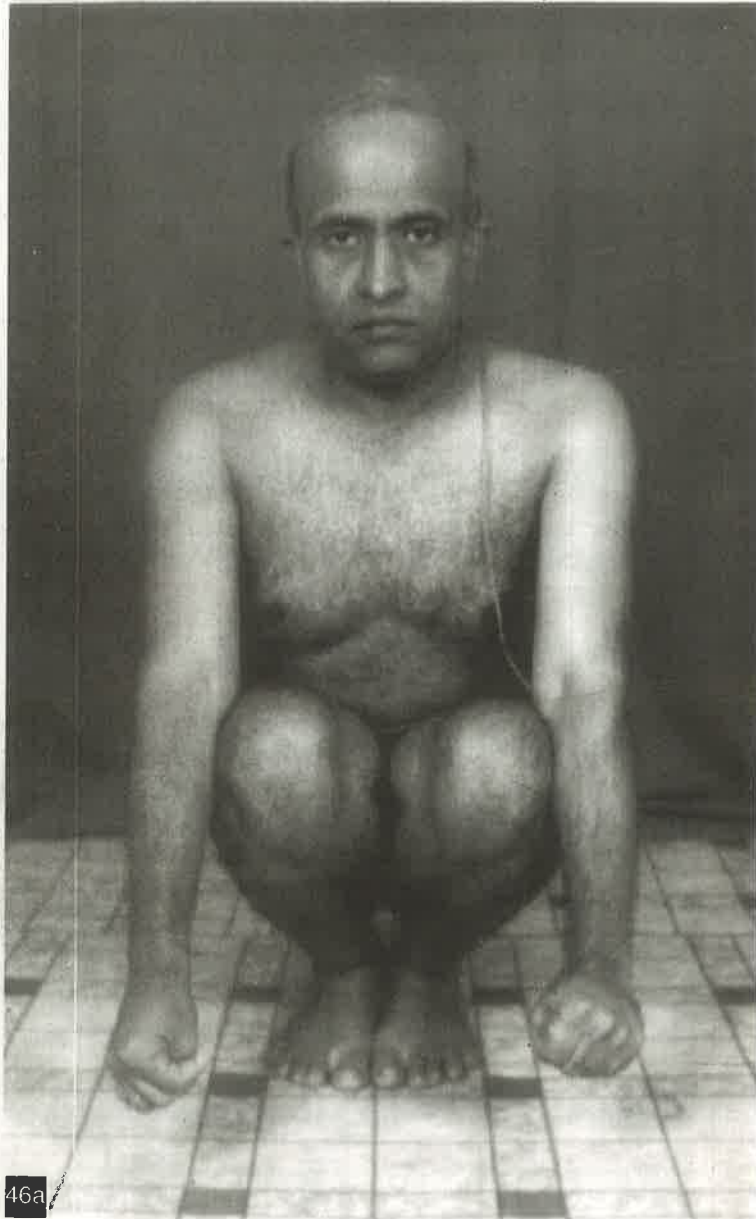
Posture :

Stand erect with feet together. Now lift your left leg, and kick with it. First kick backwards, trying to touch your buttocks with the heel and ankle and then immediately kick forward. Try to kick at the height of the thighs in the front. Now perform the same exercise with the other leg. Repeat alternately with both legs for 6 to 12 times.

(Figure 45 a)

Benefits :

Relaxes the knee muscles and joints. Removes pains due to exhaustion, arthritis or rheumatism. Beneficial to sportsmen for improving their performance. Footballers might find this particularly useful.



46a

46. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Pindali-Sakti-Vikasaka Developing the ankle joints

Posture :

With feet together, standing erect, clench your fists

Exercise :

While inhaling through the nose, squat down as far as you can, with your arms held out in front of you, parallel to the ground. Keep your knees close to each other and do not raise the soles of your feet from the ground. Now hold your breath stand up and describe one full circle with your arms (as in exercise 16). Then exhale sharply. This is basically the Indian exercise called "baithak"

(Figure 46 a b c)

Concentration :

On the ankle joints

Benefits :

Extremely beneficial for ankle pains, strengthens the ankles.
Beneficial for sportsmen.



46b



46c



47

47. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Pada-Mula-Sakti-Vikasaka Developing the calves

Posture :

Stand erect with feet together and hands at sides

Exercise :

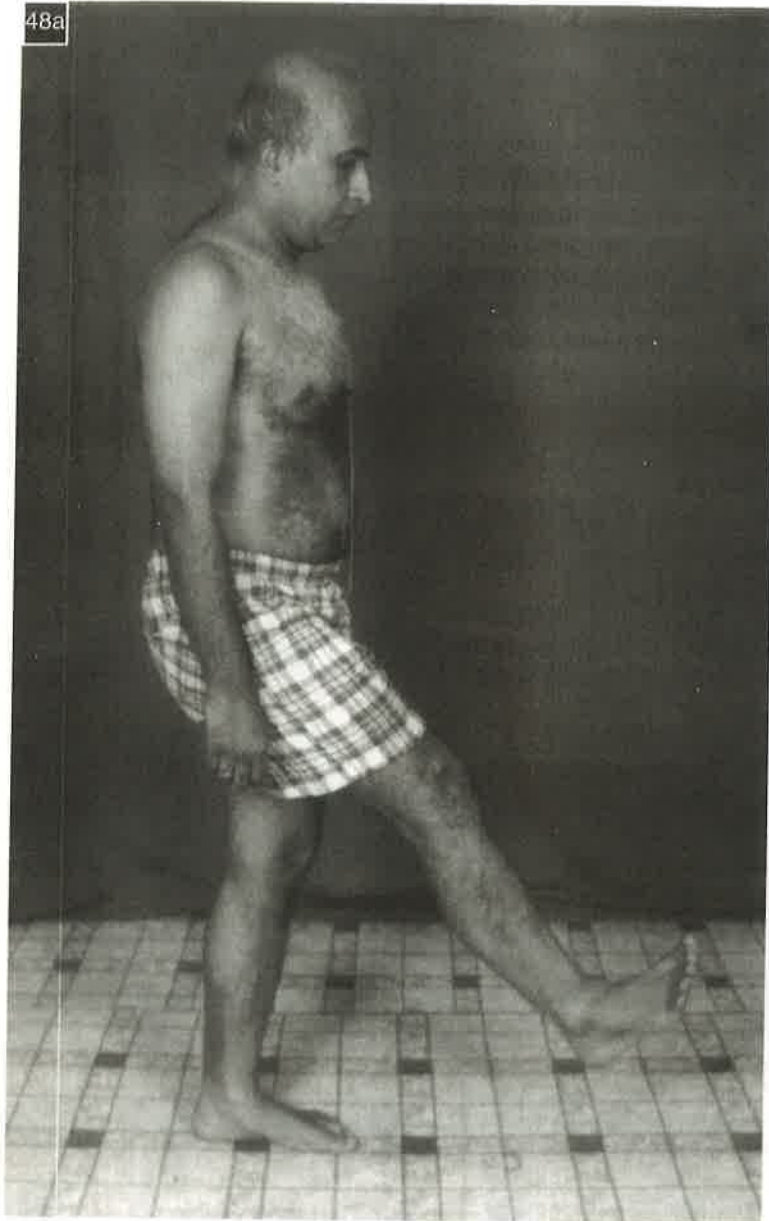
Stand up on your toes, lifting your heels off the floor and then come down on your heels to the normal standing position. Repeat this 6- 12 times in a spring like, bouncing motion. Keep the heels and toes together throughout the exercise

(Figure 47 a and b)

Benefits :

This is an excellent exercise for the calves. If done properly you will feel the calf muscles getting stretched. Rheumatic conditions are cured with regular practice.

48a



48. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Gulpha-Pada-Prstha-Pada-Tala-Sakti-Vikasaka

Developing the strength of the ankle, ankle joints and base of the foot

Posture :

Stand erect with both feet together.

Exercise :

Lift and stretch one leg about six inches above the ground in the front and start revolving just the ankle joints to draw a zero first clock wise and then anti clock wise six times in each direction. Repeat the same with the other leg. Ensure that your knees do not bend. (Figure 48 a b c d e)

Benefit :

Strengthens toes and feet and also relieves rheumatism of the ankles.

Students' Comments :

The normal tendency is to trace out a small "0". You should try to trace out a 'as big a "0" as possible with the ankle and feet. This will ensure a complete rotation of the joint.



48b



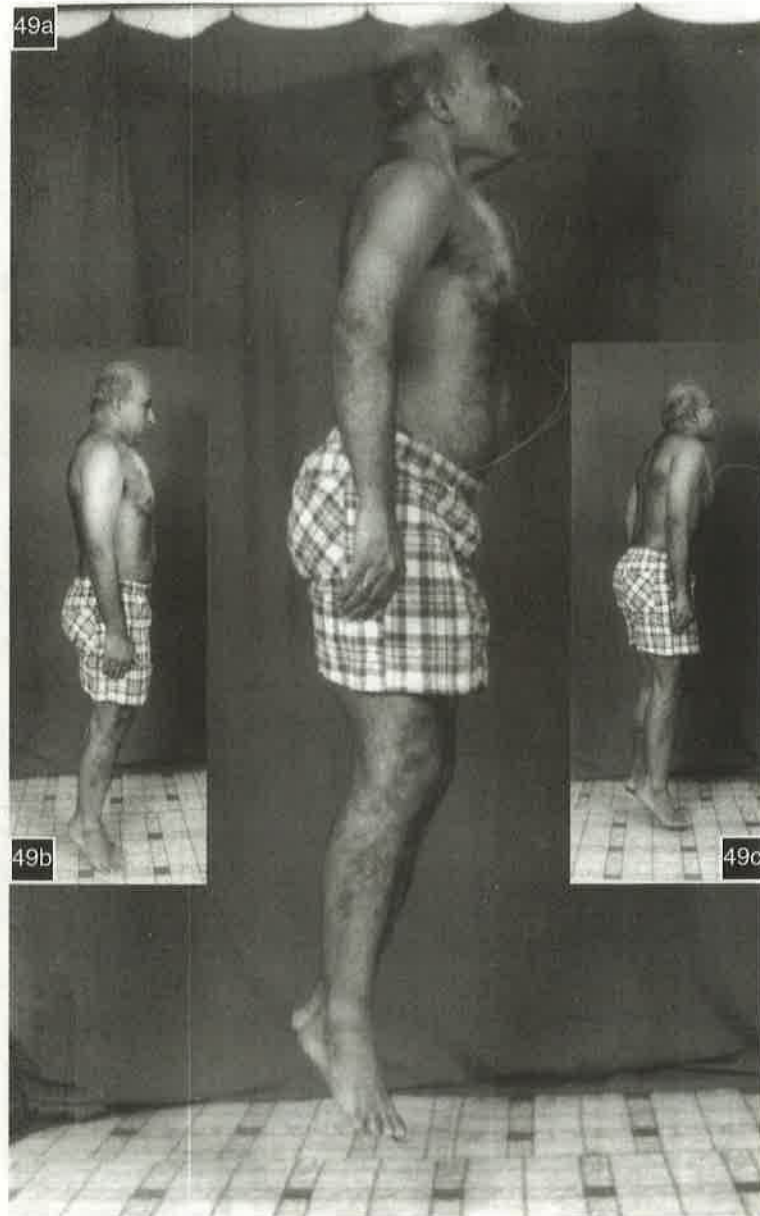
48c



48d



48e



49. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Padanguli-Sakti-Vikasaka Increasing the strength of the toes.

Posture :

Feet together, stand erect with hands on the sides.

Exercise :

Start bouncing up and down on your toes, pumping your heels up and down but without lifting your toes off the ground. Slowly lift your toes of the ground by jumping up and down slowly and then jump as high as you can. Without bending the knees, elbows or any other part of the body - land on your toes alone. Gradually slow down until you come to a halt.

(Figures 49 a b c)

Benefits :

Appearance of toes improved, deformity gets corrected. Makes the toes elastic. Beneficial for runners and people living in hilly areas.

Students' Comments :

While jumping, try to land on the same spot, i.e. the same part of your feet should make contact with the same part on the ground. This will bring some discipline into the jumping and not result in aimless jumping all about the place.

This exercise gives a workout to the lymphatic system. The same principle is used in exercising on a trampoline or rebounder, where you are working against gravity.



50. Yogic-Sukshma-Vyayama-Pada-Angusta-Sakti-Vikasaka Developing the big toe

Posture :

Stand erect with feet together and hands to the sides.

Exercise :

Bend the four fingers of the toes backward keeping the big toe stretched normally outside. Do this on both feet joining both the big toes together on the ground. Keeping the ankles together, lift up onto the big toe at the same time raise your arms upwards. The whole body will rest on both the big toes just for a second (Figures 50 a and b).

Concentration :

On the big toe

Benefits :

Immensely useful in removing the pains in the toes and strengthening the toes. Strengthens the heart also, as the big toe is related to the heart.

Students' Comments :

Initially you will find it difficult to bend the four toes backwards. You might want to support yourself against a wall with one hand and bend down to adjust your toes backwards with the other hand.

Also, initially your big toes may not be strong enough to bear your entire body weight, so you will have to perform sustained practice before you can do this exercise.

This is the last exercise of the Suksma Vyayama.



51a



51b



Shavasana

Finally the concluding posture will be 'Shavasana' or the corpse pose. This is the last exercise where you lie down flat on the floor and give complete rest to your body. Do not lie on a soft bed or a hard floor. Just lie down on a mat or blanket, placed on the floor. Lie flat on your back, without using any pillows. Lie down till your breathing and heart beat become normal, and all your muscles are relaxed. Lying down helps the blood to flow evenly through the body and the fatigued limbs are refreshed. Let go of all your muscles and feel as if every part of your body is sinking into the floor. Let your hands fall naturally by your sides, palms facing upwards and let your feet also fall sideward. Try to keep your mind quiet and do not entertain any thoughts especially strenuous ones.

Study Figure 51a carefully. See the total relaxation on every part of the body as well as on the face.

Before getting up, lie down for a minute on your left side first and then simultaneously on right side. Then again in central position before getting up slowly only after you feel you are totally relieved and no more rest is needed.

Students Comments :

Do not skip this very important cooling down posture, where all the muscles that have been worked and stretched, relax and come back to normal, ready for the daily activities. All the benefits of the entire 50 exercise set gets accumulated and activated during this rest, so do it well.

Note :

1. Sthula Vyayama or Rigorous Exercises, can be practised after Sukshma Vyayama, followed by Shavasana.
2. Asanas can be practised after Shavasana
(A seperate book is available for Asanas).