

middle of your back and up to your shoulder girdle. Follow your spine to where your neck and shoulders meet. Keep going all the way up to your topmost vertebra, deep in the center of your head. Feel the entire length of your spine as you easily free your neck, allowing your spine to lengthen and your back to widen.

- ◆ Become aware of your right shoulder blade, then your left shoulder blade. Let your awareness move from point to point in this way, on both sides of your body. Feel your upper arms, armpits, elbows, lower arms. The palms and backs of your hands, wrists, fingers, and thumbs. Have a feeling awareness of your chest, your navel, your abdomen.
- ◆ Move your feeling awareness up through your collarbone to your throat. Up to your chin, your jaw, your mouth, your eyes. Your eyebrows, the space between your eyebrows, your ears, your nostrils, your nose, your forehead. Have a feeling awareness of the top of your head, then of your entire head.
- ◆ Become aware now of your whole body, every part, all at the same time. Keep your eyes closed and be silent for a moment. Have a feeling awareness in every cell of your body. The whole body together, sitting on the chair in the room. Perfectly still. Take your time—and in stillness, observe the flow of consciousness throughout.
- ◆ Stay in that silence and notice how you feel. Do you feel different from when you began this exercise? Do you feel any warmth or lightness in your body? Do you notice a feeling of release, a shift of energy?

Feel the healing source of vital energy within you. Pause and savor the moment, and know that everything you are looking for is right here, right now. It doesn't take much effort, and there is no absolute method—only attention, observation, and feeling.

Limb Three

WILL AND POWER

COOPERATING WITHIN

The combination of will and power is the act of cooperation. Limb Three of Emotional Yoga involves choosing to cooperate with an emotional experience through deliberate intention. Instead of worrying about a situation or suffering because of it, you learn to focus on it, join with it, and then cooperate with it. You exercise your will by intending to move toward it.

Nothing about the way you think, feel, or will is arbitrary. Every conscious idea or feeling is connected to a particular act of will. For example, when you enter a stuffy room, you open a window; when you hear your name being called out, you answer. The foundation of your life is built on this simple connection between your thinking, feeling, and willing.

When you choose to cooperate with something it's because you intend to do so. Your life is your choice. If you have lost the feeling that you have freedom of choice, you need to strengthen your will and power. You need to take responsibility and commit to what you choose.

The energy of willful cooperation is a fully conscious one. When you co-

operate with yourself, you give yourself the ability to be who you are. You consciously take the actions that influence your life. You take responsibility for yourself. In the yoga of will and power, your physical body senses your passion and acts. Willful cooperation is what gives you the freedom to change.

In Emotional Yoga, will and power also incorporates your desire to seek and metabolize uncomfortable emotions and to digest and move them through. This action is both emotional and physical. When you enter your body to move your emotions through, you create an energy exchange between your physicality and your emotionality. You allow for the healing process to occur. A profound chemical transformation takes place within you, dissolving tensions and grounding you in the here and now.

An Exercise in Cooperation:

Whenever you exercise your body and mind, do it to expand yourself rather than to fix something. Nothing about you is faulty. Don't make these exercises a punishment. Have a goal and a vision. Tell yourself that you want to be in the best possible emotional and physical shape right now. Then discover and envision what that shape is. Let your emotional experiences become a vehicle for discovery. Let them motivate you, help you to set goals and take risks.

Motiv and *emotion* have the same root in the Latin word *movere*, which, as I mentioned earlier, means "to move." Emotions move you to pursue your goals. They are powerful motivators, internally shaping how you act. The links between your feelings and what you think, say, and do are real and sustaining. Feelings affect your achievements. Those internal meters and subtle signals telling you what you are feeling are ongoing guides to let you know how you are doing.

Use this exercise to let your emotions guide what you want, value, and wish to accomplish. Which would you most like to do, create, or achieve? Do your actions match your desires? Your achievements are your desires in action. Be clear about what you desire, then choose your steps with the intention of realizing those desires.

Take time to align yourself each day to what you value most. You may sit for a moment in the morning at home, at your desk before work, or in the evening prior to bed. Write down your answers and reflect on them. Honor yourself. Be honest and spontaneous as you complete the following phrases:

- ◆ What I want is . . .
- ◆ What I want and I am allowing is . . .
- ◆ What I want and I am *not* allowing is . . .
- ◆ What I do *not* want is . . .
- ◆ What I do *not* want, and I am allowing is . . .
- ◆ What I do *not* want, and I am *not* allowing is . . .

The use of true will and power gives you the intention and energy to act on what you want. It develops character, integrity, and the ability to be true to your conscience, rather than follow the impulses of others or be dominated by external conditions. Will and power requires focus of attention, which is a form of physical and emotional self-discipline.

When your mind is aligned and cooperating with your deeper intelligence and purpose, you are practicing will and power. You are flexing your emotional muscles.

BODILY EXERCISE (ASANA)

The third limb of yoga is asana, or bodily exercise. Asanas are usually thought of as the exercises that make up the practice of yoga. The term *asana* means "posture" or "pose," but the Sanskrit word *asana* comes from the root *as*, which means "to sit." Being seated is "the act of being steady," both emotionally and physically. When your body is alive and your breathing is free, your biological energy is flowing. You become awake and aware of your moods and emotions. You connect your body with your emotional self. You build a physical platform for responding to your emotional needs.

As you practice the asanas, you become aware that your emotions are in-

Will and power develops self-cooperation and motivation, linking what is inside you to the outside physical world.

When you stand tall and straight, you feel better. When you enter your body, you enter your emotions.

WHAT MOVES YOU?

A few years ago I heard a fascinating remark: "There is no such thing as a completely sick person, or a completely healthy person. There are only those who move more and those who move less." If movement means life, lack of movement means lack of life. Realistically, if you put yourself in a chair for eight hours curled over a keyboard or calculator, and you do this day after day, your body will probably have the makings of a structural disaster. If you don't move it, you'll lose it. This goes for your emotions as well. Staying emotionally wound up makes for its own kind of disaster.

You *need* to move. You are a body in motion—dynamic—not static like a piece of sculpture. Your body has a living pulse inside, a fluid flow of energy and intelligence. The more you move, the more intelligence you feel. The more intelligence you feel, the more emotionally alive you are.

Yoga is movement. In yoga, there is a big difference between movement and exercise. Movement in your body is a neuromuscular event as well as an emotional one, resulting from the integrated activity of your entire nervous system. Your nervous system initiates, controls, and monitors all movement within your body and mind, and connects all the parts with its intelligence. If you move your body, you move your emotions. Moving your emotions will similarly affect your body. Whenever you move, you transform things.

So, when you move, what moves you? Is it your emotions, your intelligence, or your muscles? Did you ever think of muscles as being intelligent? As a matter of fact, the intelligence of muscles is extraordinary. Muscles have been given a bad rap. They are thought of in terms of brute force—something to pump up. But muscles are not the opposite of brains; muscles are not dumb. They have a remarkable intelligence-gathering capacity. Once you learn how to apply this intelligence to your emotions, you will gain both sensitivity and power. This you can learn through the movements of yoga.

What about moving your emotions? Have you ever watched a film of a tiger chasing a gazelle? As you observe the predator chasing his prey, the fear in your body begins building. Your stomach tightens, your heart beats faster,

side your body, where even deeper messages and memories are stored. It is here, in your somatic experience, that your emotions are found and healed.

The postures of yoga can be used as therapy to strengthen your ability to cope with emotional and physical stress and influence a range of complex bodily changes: increased alertness and muscle tone, improved heart rate, stabilized blood pressure, deeper respiration, and increased circulation to the muscles. These transform the way you use your body in daily life. The result is overall immune strengthening, increased ability to transform negative qualities of the mind, and conditioning of the entire system.

As you perform the asanas, you cooperate with your body and mind to look inside yourself moment by moment. You bring attention to what you feel, and you clarify your emotions. The more focused, specific, and personal your asanas are, the more emotionally transformative they become.

The third limb of yoga teaches you how to use your body as a vehicle for emotional self-healing and balance. As you move within the postures, you learn either to expand your energy and tonify your system or to settle and reduce the agitations of your body and mind. Asanas become more than just bodily postures. They become emotional tools for deep transformation and change.

Posture or Bodily Exercise (Asana)

Yoga Sutra, ch. 2, v. 46.

Asana or posture is that which is stable and comfortable. When properly practiced, one is both alert and relaxed.

You are always in a physical posture. You can't avoid it. You are also always in an emotional posture. Your body is not emotionally innocent. It is directly related to the emotional state you find yourself in. This connection between the body and the emotions is so strong, you can almost observe people's moods by watching them walk across the room. You can tell if they're excited, disappointed, or mad, simply by seeing them move.

The reverse can also hold true. Notice that when you change your walk from a downhearted trudge to an excited clip, your mood shifts as well.

your breath gets shorter. Just watching an animal being chased triggers the fight-or-flight response of your sympathetic nervous system. Once the film is over, you notice almost immediately that your feelings begin to dissipate. As time passes, the sensations of fear cease to exit. Your emotions have moved—from calm to anxious, to fearful and back to calm again. Emotions such as fear, anxiety, apprehension, and fright always take a cycle. They build to a climax, slow down, and eventually disappear. This cycle happens all the time in response to some threat, physical or emotional.

Emotional crisis or trauma takes you back to your animal ancestry and to your human origins as well. It shows you your system is utterly resilient, because you can change your emotional state from being struck—even as a result of a traumatic event—to a healthy emotional flow. The more you're conscious of how your emotional current moves through you, the more emotionally resilient you'll be.

Part of the ability to move your emotions has to do with specifically moving your body. Your body plays a primary role in your emotional moves. Through the asanas of yoga, you can design whole new sequences of emotional intervention. The capacity for shaping your emotional state reaches its heights through the practice of asana.

Let's look at the fundamental tools of asana from the perspective of Viniyoga. Viniyoga has to do with the application of the tools of yoga, rather than a particular yoga style. It is a methodology for understanding and utilizing ancient principles, making them relevant to your personal needs. Through Viniyoga you learn how to link the various practices of yoga to your daily life.

The following principles of asana will prepare you to move deeply and effectively in the postures described later.

A HEALTHY SPINE

The spine is the pathway of the emotions. Every sensation you have passes through your spinal cord. The spine is also the structural core and the foundation of every movement you make. True strength means maintaining a balanced relationship between all parts of your spine—your head, neck,

shoulders, upper back, lower back, and pelvis. A healthy, balanced, erect spine is possible when all the parts relate to the whole. The health of your spine is linked to the health of your whole body. In fact, having a youthful, flexible spine *means* having a youthful, flexible body.

Any movement you make can be observed from the perspective of your spine. Reaching for a can of soup on the top shelf extends the muscles of your spine. Bending to tie your shoes stretches your lower back. The only difference between this and doing the asanas is that with the asanas, you *consciously intend* to move. You explore the natural functioning of your body and at the same time you apply some intelligence to it. Moving your spine with intelligence and intention balances the energy in your spine and aligns your emotional body. This is the goal of the asanas—to bring life to your spine and freedom to your motion.

There are many different ways the spine can move. In the practice of asana, all the classical postures are categorized and designed according to the five movements of the spine:

1. Forward bend
2. Backward bend
3. Lateral bend
4. Twist
5. Extension

These five movements can be done in any of the following six positions or directions:

1. Sitting
2. Kneeling
3. Standing
4. Prone (lying on your stomach)
5. Supine (lying on your back)
6. Inverted

PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

Once you learn the strategy behind what you are doing, you'll feel a lot more confident as you perform the postures. Learn the principles of asana before you begin your practice.

For a more complete and detailed understanding of how to apply yoga to individual needs, I recommend Gary Kraftsow's book, *Yoga for Wellness* (Perigee Putnam, 1999).

The practices for the following limbs include the elements of these principles:

1. Breathing and Movement

As you move, you'll place emphasis on your breathing and how it affects your spine.

2. Repetition

You'll move into and out of a pose many times and then combine movement with staying in a pose.

3. Sequencing

You'll include an intelligent order to your practice.

4. Adaptation

You'll adapt the form of the asana to meet your individual needs.

1. Breathing and Movement

Breathing is one of the most important principles of asana. Therefore, throughout your practice, all movement should be a natural extension of your breath. The action of breathing is what links your attention to the movement of your spine. In this way, your breathing guides the movement from the inside. It is the medium through which the movement happens. The postures actually emerge from your breath.

Here are some guidelines for coordinating your movement with your breath:

- ✦ With any movement you do *away* from the center of your body, and as you extend your spine, you inhale. This includes the actions of ax-

By combining the different spinal motions and positions, you create a full range of movement possibilities for your body.

The asanas change the chemistry of your muscle tissue by expanding and contracting your muscles as you move. This creates balanced strength as well as flexibility. When you apply both muscular contraction and muscular relaxation (the shortening and the lengthening of your muscles) as you execute a pose, you feel a different sense of the posture. This "swinging effect" of moving back and forth, or flexing and extending the antagonistic muscle groups in sequence, brings considerable circulation and suppleness to the muscle tissue. Moving pumps your energy and blood flow and has a powerful effect on your emotional energy. By shifting your emphasis from staying in the pose to moving in the pose, you allow your body to find its own natural balance. This dynamic approach is the opposite of forcing balance through the effort of holding still.

When you put together conscious attention, deep breathing, and stretching your muscles, you massage, stretch, and tone your spine and deeply affect your internal fluids, organs, and glands. You gain not only physical strength but immune strength, stamina, and flexibility in a way that no other exercise can bring.

To get the most from these bodily exercises of yoga, it is better not to practice them randomly. Take the exercises one step at a time, make them appropriate for you, and eventually you will arrive at a place you have not been to before.

Physically, arriving somewhere new can look like this: "Today, I sit on the floor and can barely stretch my legs. After several weeks of practice, I can not only sit erect, but I can stretch and bend forward easily." Emotionally, it can look like this: "Today, I feel sluggish and slightly depressed. After my practice, I feel happier, balanced, and more invigorated. Now I feel like going out, or working on my project, or playing with the kids." Spiritually, it may look like this: "I feel I have grown and moved to deeper level." When you use the tools of yoga sequentially, over time, and integrate them together, the impossible becomes possible.

ial extension and arching your upper back, as in a back bend. When you inhale, you encourage expansion of the upper chest and the vertical lengthening of your spine. Emotionally, inhalation is associated with increased energy, strength, nourishment, and cultivating positive feelings.

- ◆ With any movement you do *toward* or *into* the center of your body, and as you compress your abdomen, you exhale. This includes the actions of forward bending, twisting, and lateral bending. When you exhale, you encourage abdominal contraction and the bending or flexion of your spine. Emotionally, exhalation is associated with stabilization, relaxation, purification, and the shedding of negative feelings.

This natural relationship between movement and breath occurs in all poses, from the simplest to the most complex. Every movement is done through a full, conscious breath. Breathing is the best part of the game. So, try to stay deeply aware of your breathing.

In yoga, your breathing should never be arbitrary. Always apply it consciously, right from the start. Don't just slap the breath on top of the movement like a piece of cheese on a sandwich. Breathe first, then move. Your movement develops out of your experience of the flow of your breath. If you keep your attention on your breathing the whole time, you will experience miraculous effects.

2. Repetition

Repetition is a powerful tool for changing your emotional energy. As Duke Ellington once said, "To swing is to be at one with the universe." Swinging is such a great image. It takes the idea of a static pose and shoots loads of life into it. Although you don't actually swing back and forth as you move, having the image of swinging helps you think of letting go, as if you were dancing the pose. It moves your energy and changes how you feel.

When you perform the asanas, you will link your awareness to your

movement and to the controlled flow of your breath. Your awareness moves as you breathe, and your breathing swings as you move. In this way, you become one with the pose.

There are three distinct ways in which you will perform movement in the asanas:

- ◆ **GYNAMICALLY:** When you move dynamically in a posture, you will repeat the movement several times by starting in a position, moving toward another position, and then moving back to the starting position again.
 - ◆ **STATICALLY:** To stay means that you remain in the posture and hold it for one or two breaths. Staying usually comes after you move into and out of the pose a number of times. Staying allows you to explore the posture and go deeper. This brings emotional stability and strength. As you stay in a pose, you will continue to breathe deeply and link the awareness of your breathing to the movement of your spine.
 - ◆ **BEING STATIC DOES NOT MEAN YOU ARE BEING RIGID.** It means that you are comfortable, and you can be in the pose without effort. You must *feel* the pose, not just hang out in it.
 - ◆ **COMBINING DYNAMIC AND STATIC:** The effects of the posture will change when you combine the practices of repeating the movement and staying in the pose. For example, you may repeat a pose by moving in and out of it a few times to warm up your body and prepare yourself to stay. Then you can hold the pose for a few breaths and repeat the cycle.
- In the asana practices that follow, you will never actually "arrive" at a pose. On a deeper level, there is no such thing as a pose at all. The asanas are only moments flowing through you.

3. Sequencing

Sequencing means arranging the different parts of a practice so they fit together in an intelligent way. The word *vinyasa* literally means “arranging,” or “placing” the body, mind, or breath in a certain direction that leads to a particular goal. A vinyasa or sequence refers to the steps required to achieve that goal.

Sequences should always be practical and appropriate for the moment. For example, in the morning, starting at a candle or sitting in a lotus position for two hours may not be ideal. If you are depressed, simply meditating may not help. You might need to build your energy or stimulate your body and mind, in which case you would choose something to help you wake up, stimulate and invigorate you, loosen your stiff body, or prepare you for your morning activity or work.

A different sequence works when you are agitated. You may want to relax and settle your energy, not agitate yourself more. But in order to settle down, you may need to begin with invigorating movements, gradually calm your energy, and end with relaxation. Your evening practice should also support your needs—warming up before jogging, relaxing your body after a grueling day of work, or getting ready for a night out dancing. Learning to weave your practices into the nuances of your life is an art. However short or long, the sequences you choose should always be appropriate for your emotional state, and never arbitrary.

☉ **COUNTER POSES.** In all asana sequences, you will use counter poses to take your body in the opposite direction from the previous pose or series of poses. Counter poses help balance your body and eliminate any resistance or strain that may have accumulated in your practice.

☉ **REST:** To complete your sequence, it is best to use rest. By resting, you give your body time to absorb the experience of your practice as you bring your attention back to yourself. Resting comfortably relaxes your entire system. If you need to, you can also rest between the movements or at any time during your program.

☉ **ADAPTATION.** A sequence can be long or short and can include any number of elements within its framework. If you listen to your body as you go, and take it one step at a time, you will never feel any disturbance or strain.

4. Adaptation

Adapting means tailoring the asanas to meet your specific conditions. However you adapt the poses, respect who you are, not who you *think* you should be. Go at your own pace. Stick to using a few sequences over a period of time to meet the physical needs of your body or help you with your emotional condition. Just remember to keep adjusting your sequences to your needs. Continue to monitor how you feel.

At any time during your practice, if it doesn't feel good, adjust the form of your pose. Change the base by widening or narrowing your stance, or by adjusting the moving part by bending your knees, your elbows, or moving one arm at a time. The posture becomes increasingly effective and fulfills its function when it makes you more conscious of your body. This brings you deeper.

SKILL IN ACTION

Life is movement. You can't stay in one place and continue the journey. So keep moving, but do it in style.

Choose a comfortable, warm place to practice, away from distractions. Bathe or take a shower first to wake up or to let go of the day's activities. Prepare to turn your attention to yourself. Wear loose, clean clothing, and have a mat, blanket, or towel on hand to define your yoga space. It's better not to eat right before you practice, so wait for a couple of hours after your last meal.

Do your postures on the floor, a mat, or even a firm bed. Have a chair nearby to sit on between poses, during your breathing practice, or for use in adapting the postures. The only other equipment you'll need is an open, re-

laxed, at ease frame of mind. (If you don't have this when you start your practice, you will by the time you're finished!)

Linking Awareness, Movement, and Breath

In the exercises, keep your breathing simple, and you will find that your breath comes naturally as you move. Your breathing should initiate the movement. Place your conscious awareness at the "origin of movement" by being very present in your mind as you begin to breathe. Your mind goes to your breath and the movement follows. The expansion and contraction of your muscles occurs via the movement of your breath. When your breath ends, your movement will stop naturally.

As you continue breathing and moving, notice how the relationship builds between the two. It's a kind of meditation, where your movement follows the continued flow of your breath. Keep your breathing soft, uniform, and reasonably long, and become aware of the stillness at your center, as everything merges into one.

This is "skill in action"—a fusion of rhythm, deep connection, and endless delight. It's like making a dance. As choreographer Twyla Tharp said, "Put yourself in motion."

Step 1. Self-referral Awareness

- ◆ Start by sitting down on the floor or the chair, and be with yourself for a moment. Find yourself and your awareness—the awareness that is always available to you. Begin all your practices from this quiet place inside yourself, and you will establish a foundation for going even deeper. This state is not an altered state of consciousness. Rather, it is already occurring in your natural state of awareness. As you are sitting, observe whatever bodily feelings are present. Notice that this takes no effort at all. It is comfortable and easy. It is effortless awareness.

Step 2. Breathing Awareness

- ◆ When you feel ready, deepen your breathing and continue to breathe easily through your nose. Notice that as your attention shifts to your breath, your posture naturally begins to change. Your posture and your breathing are intimately connected. Feel this natural relationship between your movement and breath for a minute or two.

- ◆ As you continue breathing, notice that there is an effortless pause between each of your breaths. Every time your breathing turns the corner there is a moment or pause preceding the beginning of the next breath. Each breath seems to arise out of this pause between your inhalation and exhalation. Stay alert to this pause as you continue to breathe consciously.

THE WHISPERING BREATH

- ◆ If you are not already breathing with a soft airy sound, try something for a moment. Whisper the word *Ha*. And listen to where this breath originates in your throat. Now close your mouth, breathe through your nose, and create this same soft whispering sound occurring when you breathe from the back of your throat (without vocalizing). It sounds smooth and light, a rushing sound, like the wind through the trees. Keep this air sound going softly, both on your inhalation and exhalation.

- ◆ You are consciously controlling the flow of your breath by creating a valve as you slightly contract the glottis muscle at the back of your throat. Feel the sensation of the breath in your throat rather than in your nose. Breathe slowly and deeply, and listen to the sound of your breath. Let the air do it for you. There is no need to force it in or out. Just keep your breathing very smooth. And feel the sensation. I call this the Whispering Breath.

- ◆ This breathing technique is known as Ujjayi Pranayama. It helps you to stay focused and attentive, invigorates as well as calms your body,

smooth, gradual, even flow, your body is released back into its natural motion. I call this the Wave—it's a magnificent motion of your breath.

Step 3: Movement: Three-in-one Resonance

✦ Now put your consciousness, movement, and breathing together into one fluid process. As you move in the asanas, let each posture draw your attention inward and evoke the healing response. These postures are merely vehicles to help you heal. Try not to think of them as icons or positions you need to worship or master. Instead, think of them as tools of awareness that will bring you greater health. The asanas have no value in and of themselves except in how they serve your life, in how they heal you emotionally.

Oddly enough, it's what happens *after* your asana practice that counts: how you make the experience resonate in your life and in your work, day after day. This is the intention behind every practice. Asanas are there to improve the feelings within your body, and when you feel your body and mind from within, you experience them not as separate parts but as one integrated whole. So let the poetry run through you when you move. When you practice the asanas, let them be uniquely yours. Then they'll give your whole life punch.

Following are three asana practices:

1. The first practice is designed to illustrate a *Langana* (reduction) approach.
2. The second practice is designed to illustrate a *Brhmana* (tonification) approach.
3. The third practice is designed to illustrate a *Samana* (balancing) approach with support.

✦ Remember to breathe fully and deeply in every posture. This helps you to keep your attention inward and supports a meditative state.

and allows you to extend, lengthen, and deepen your breathing during the practice of asana. The more strongly you do it, the more heating effect it has. The slower and softer you do it, the more cooling effect. Now, as you perform the movements of asana, continue using this smooth, even, whispering sound of your breath.

THE WAVE

- ✦ On your next inhalation, begin to emphasize the action in your upper chest first, allowing your breath to move down toward your navel. Inhalation from your chest—rather than your belly—encourages the expansion of your rib cage, the lengthening and extension of your spine, and the stretching of the front of your body.
- ✦ When you inhale, your diaphragm contracts downward, allowing the air to be drawn into the lungs. Inhaling from your chest rather than from your belly facilitates the extension of your spine, the elevation of your rib cage, and the expansion of your chest.
- ✦ As you exhale, progressively tighten your abdominal muscles from the pubic bone to your belly, and from your belly to the solar plexus. You will feel a slight gathering motion back into the center of your belly as your lower back rounds. Exhalation encourages the contraction of your abdomen and the stretching or flexion of your lower spine.
- ✦ When you exhale, your diaphragm moves upward, pushing the air up and out. As you consciously contract your belly on exhale, you stabilize the connection between your pelvis and your lower back.
- ✦ Inhalation is a wave from the top down, and exhalation is a wave from the bottom up. *The inhale moves in and down. The exhale moves up and out.* As your diaphragm moves, your breath moves, and as your breath moves, your spine moves.
- ✦ Continue breathing in this wavelike motion, and keep your attention on the natural rhythmic flow of your breath. Through this

It also engages your muscles, and sends tone, energy, and awareness throughout your body.

- ☛ You may keep your eyes closed in some of the postures but not in the standing ones. Or you may lower your gaze.
- ☛ Keep your attention following the flow of your breath. The awareness of your breath is what's most important, so please notice the breathing variations.

Lagana (reduction) Practice

Intention: to deepen stability and relaxation, to increase circulation and purification, to emphasize exhalation and hold after exhalation, forward bends and twists.

1.

Apanasana, Downward-Moving Vital Energy Posture

START lying on your back, knees bent, feet off the floor, placing your hands on or behind your knees.

EXHALE gently bring your knees and thighs toward your chest.

INHALE move your knees away from your chest, straightening your arms.

KEEP your hands on your knees, arms and shoulders relaxed. On exhalation, gradually tighten your belly, dropping your chin slightly as you pull your knees in.

REPEAT 8 times, progressively lengthening the exhalation with each repetition.



2. *Cakravakasana, Goose Posture*

START on your hands and knees, hips aligned over your knees, and hands and wrists under and in alignment with your shoulders.

INHALE lift your chest forward and up.

EXHALE gently contract your belly, round your lower back, and bring your chest toward your thighs.

KEEP your chin slightly down as you come up, leading with your chest. On exhale, drop your chin and try to bring your chest toward your thighs before sitting on your heels. Avoid dropping your lower back or excessively rounding your upper back.

REPEAT 4 times, lengthening the exhalation with each repetition. Then exhale halfway down and pause—holding 2 seconds after exhale—then exhale all the way down, and hold 2 seconds after exhale. Inhale as you come up. Repeat 4 times.



INHALE



EXHALE

3. *Uttanasana, Upright Stretch Posture*

START standing, arms at your sides, feet hip distance apart. (not shown)

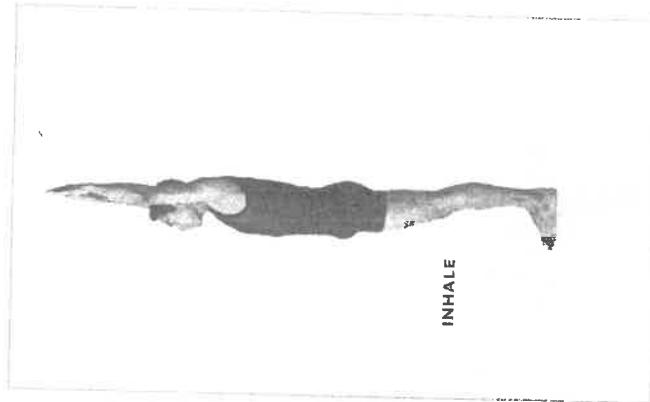
INHALE raise your arms overhead from the front.

EXHALE bend forward, knees slightly bent, bringing your belly and chest toward your thighs, hands next to your feet.

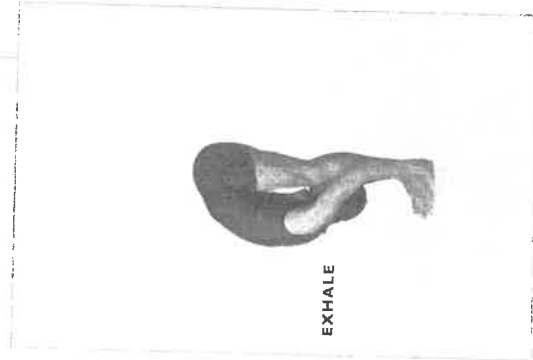
INHALE lift your chest and arms forward and up, flattening your upper back as you come up.

BEND your knees and elbows slightly. Do not lift your spine with your head and neck.

REPEAT 4 times, progressively lengthening the exhalation with each repetition. Then stay in the forward bend for 4 breaths: 2 times hold for 2 seconds after the exhalation, and the last 2 times hold for 4 seconds after the exhalation.



INHALE



EXHALE

4.

Parivrtti Trikonasana, Twisting Triangle Posture

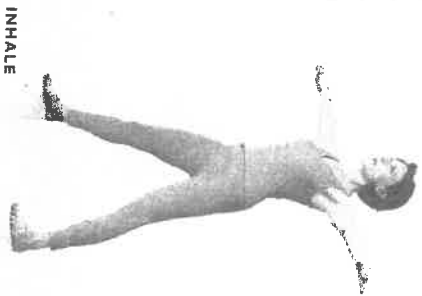
START standing with your feet parallel, slightly wider than your shoulders, and your arms out to your sides at shoulder level.

EXHALE bend forward and twist. Bring your left hand to the floor, twisting your shoulders to the right; right arm up, head turning up toward your hand.

INHALE lift your chest, bringing your arms back out to your sides, as you come up to standing. Repeat on the other side with your right arm down, left arm up.

NOTE (as necessary) the knee toward which you are twisting. On exhale, tighten your belly and bend forward first, then twist.

REPEAT 4 times, alternating sides, then stay in the twist position 4 breaths on each side; 2 breaths hold for 2 seconds after the exhalation, and the last 2 breaths hold for 4 seconds after the exhalation.



INHALE



EXHALE

5.

Vajrasana, Kneeling Posture

START standing on your knees, legs slightly apart, arms at your side. (not shown)

INHALE raise your arms from the front overhead.

EXHALE bend forward as you sweep your arms behind your back onto your sacrum, and bring your chest to your thighs, head down. To gently stretch your neck, you may also turn your head to one side on exhalation, resting on your cheek. (variation not shown)

INHALE lift your chest forward and up, expanding your chest as you sweep your arms wide out to the sides, and up overhead. Bring your head to center as you come up.

TIGHTEN your belly on exhale, and try to bring your chest to your thighs before sitting on your heels. Avoid lifting your spine with your head and neck. **REPEAT** 8 times. If turning your head, alternate sides with each repetition.



INHALE



EXHALE

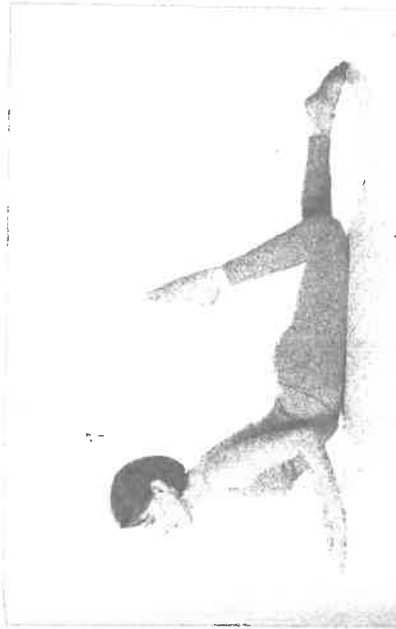
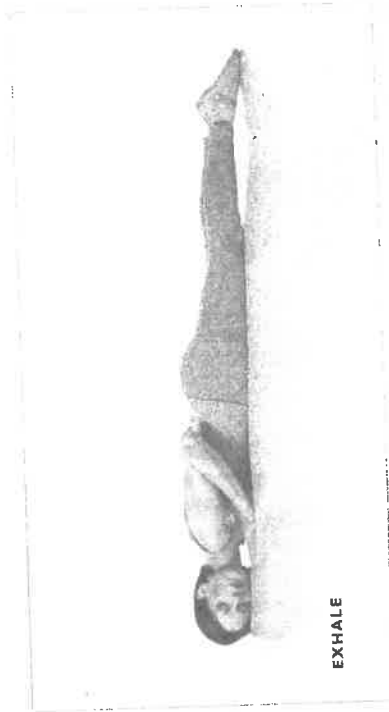
6. *Bhujangasana*, (adaptation) Cobra Posture

START lying on your belly, palms on the floor next to your shoulders, head turned to one side.

INHALE lift your chest, bending one knee, and turn your head to the center. **EXHALE** lower your chest to the floor, bringing your leg down, and turning your head to the opposite side.

LET the head follow the spine as you lift your chest, without collapsing your neck backward. On inhalation, pull back with your hands as you push your chest forward. Lift your chest with your back rather than push up with your hands.

REPEAT 4 times, alternating each leg and turning head away from active leg. Repeat 4 times, bending both knees on inhalation as you lift your chest. Then stay up in the backbend position with both knees bent for 4 more breaths.



7.

Urdhva Prasaritha Padasana, Upward Spread Posture

START lying on your back, knees bent, arms at your sides. (not shown)
INHALE raise your arms overhead to the floor behind you, flattening your spine and stretching your legs upward.
EXHALE bring your thighs toward your belly, hands on your knees, widening your knees slightly apart.
REPEAT your elbows and knees slightly as you extend them. On inhalation, keep your chin down slightly and keep your buttocks on the floor.
REPEAT 6 times, lengthening the exhalation, and holding 2 seconds after each exhalation.



8.

Jathara Parivrtti, Abdominal Twist

START lying on your back with your arms out to your sides. Extend your left leg to a ninety-degree angle.
EXHALE and twist, bringing your left leg toward your right hand, and turning your head to the opposite side.
INHALE lift your leg back up to a ninety-degree angle.
REPEAT lift your shoulders as much as possible on the floor; your knees can bend.
REPEAT 4 times on one side. Then stay in the twist for 4 breaths. Repeat on the other side. When staying in the twist, inhale and slightly extend your spine, exhale and tighten your belly, deepening the twist.



9.
Janu Sirsasana, Head to Knee Posture

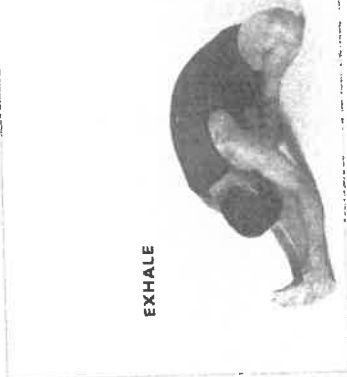
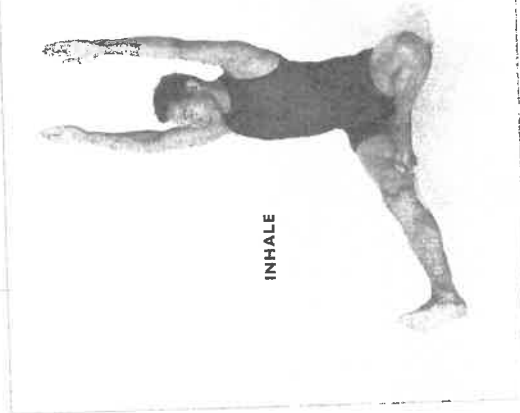
START with one leg extended forward, the other leg bent with your heel to the opposite inner thigh, arms overhead.

EXHALE tighten your belly and bend forward, bringing your chest toward your thigh, hands to your foot.

INHALE lift your chest and arms forward and up, flattening your upper back, arms overhead.

BEND your extended knee slightly to stretch your low back.

REPEAT 4 times lengthening the exhalation with each repetition. Then stay down 4 breaths, holding 2 seconds after the exhalation (2 times) and then 4 seconds after the exhalation (2 times). Repeat on the other side. As you stay in the posture, extend your spine on inhalation, lifting your chest slightly. On exhalation, tighten your belly, deepening the forward bend.



10.

Dvipada Pitham, Two-Footed Posture

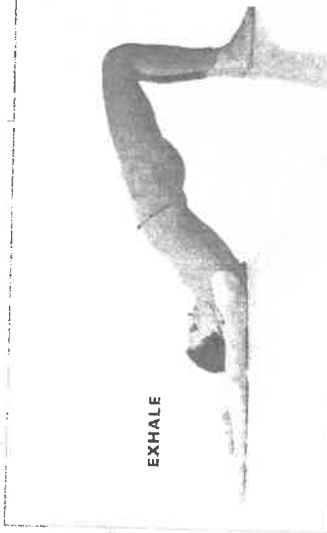
START lying on your back, arms to the sides, knees bent, feet on the floor, parallel and slightly apart.

INHALE lift your pelvis, and bring your arms overhead to the floor behind you, keeping your chin down and your neck lengthened.

EXHALE tighten your belly, and bring your arms and your spine down, unwinding the spine from the top down, one vertebra at a time.

PRESSES down on both feet as you come up, keeping your neck and chin relaxed.

REPEAT 4 times, lengthening the exhalation with each repetition. Then stay up for 4 breaths, holding 2 seconds after each exhalation (2 times), then holding 4 seconds after each exhalation (2 times).



11.

Savasana, Corpse Posture

START lying on your back, arms to your sides, palms up.

CLOSE your eyes.

KEEP your body and mind completely relaxed, having an alert feeling awareness.

STAY for at least 3 to 5 minutes or longer.



Brhmara (tonification) Practice

Intention: to gradually build and increase energy, then return to relaxation, to emphasize inhalation and hold after inhalation, nourishment, continuous strong movements, and backward bends.

1.

Vajrasana and *Cakravakasana* Vinyasa,

Kneeling and Goose Posture

START standing on your knees, arms overhead.

EXHALE bend forward, bringing your arms to the floor in front of you.

INHALE lift your chest and come forward and up onto all fours.

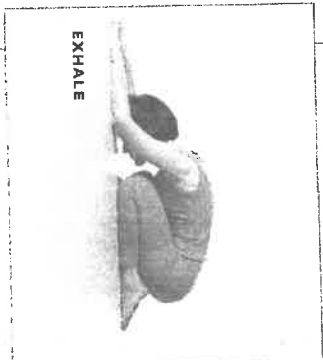
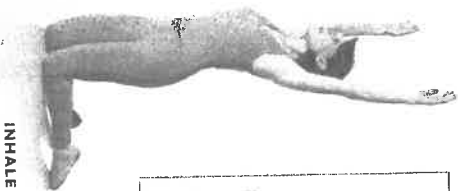
EXHALE gently contract your belly, round your low back, and bring your chest toward your thighs.

INHALE lift your chest and bring your arms forward and up, flattening your upper back and return to standing on your knees, arms overhead.

Note: perform these postures as one continuous movement sequence.

KEEP your chin slightly down when coming up on all fours, as you lead with your chest. On exhale, drop your chin and try bringing your chest toward your thighs before sitting on your heels. Avoid dropping your lower back or excessively rounding your upper back.

REPEAT 8 times, progressively lengthening the inhalation with each repetition, and holding 2 seconds after each inhalation.



2. Samasthiti and Tadasana, Equal Stability
and Straight Tree Posture

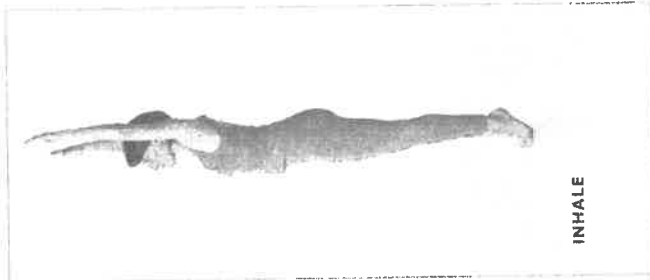
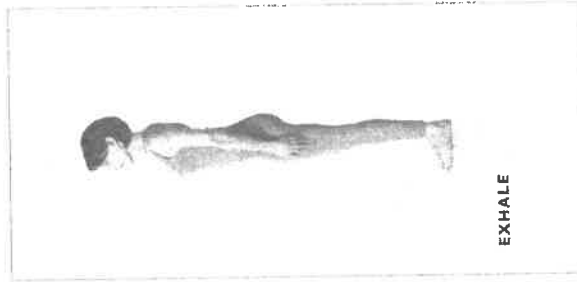
START standing, arms at your sides, lengthening your head and neck and widening your back.

INHALE rise onto your toes, bringing both arms overhead.

EXHALE lower your arms as you come back to standing.

EXTEND spine and lift your head slightly on inhalation as you lift your arms. Bring your chin slightly down on exhalation as your arms come down.

REPEAT 8 times, progressively lengthening the inhalation and the hold after inhalation—holding 0, 2, 4, then 6 seconds—repeating each (2 times).



3. Ardha Uttanasana, Half Upright Stretch Posture

START standing with your arms overhead, feet slightly apart and parallel.

EXHALE bend forward, bending your knees slightly, and bringing your belly and chest toward your thighs, hands next to your feet.

INHALE lift your arms and chest forward and up, coming up halfway.

EXHALE tighten your belly as you bend forward, bringing your chest toward your thighs, hands next to your feet.

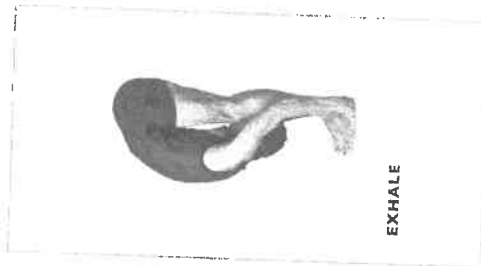
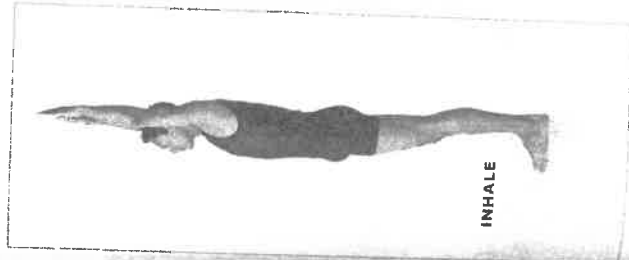
INHALE come all the way up to standing, extending your chest and arms forward and up, arms overhead.

Note: perform these postures as one continuous movement sequence.

KEEP your head in alignment with your spine as you flatten your upper back.

On exhalation, bend your knees to help stretch your lower back. On inhaling up halfway, avoid excessive arching of your lower back.

REPEAT sequence 6 times, holding 2 to 4 seconds after each inhalation.



4.
Parsvottasana and Virabhadrasana Sequence,
Side Stretch and Warrior Postures

START by stepping forward with one foot, your back foot turned slightly out and your arms overhead.

EXHALE Bend forward over your front knee, bending your front knee, bringing your chest to your thigh, and your hands next to your feet.

INHALE lift your torso and bring your arms up, keeping your front knee bent, open your chest and arch your upper back while moving your chest slightly forward, elbows slightly bent, shoulders back.

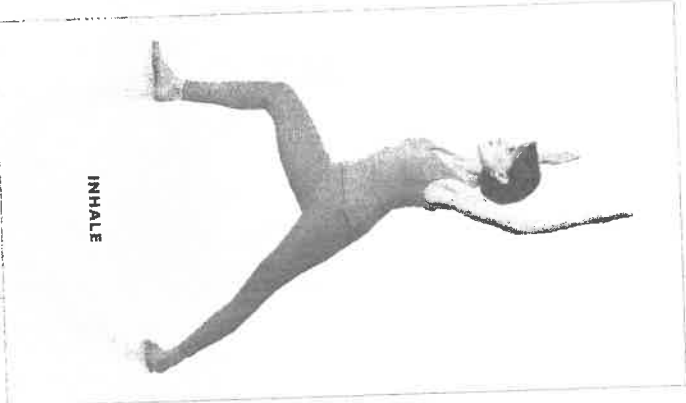
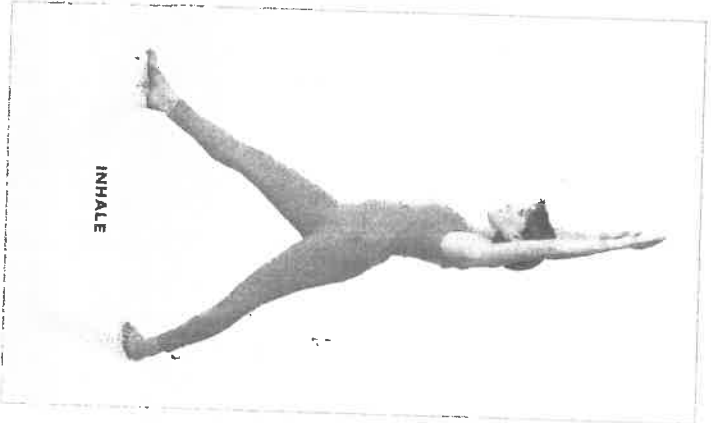
EXHALE bend forward over your front knee, bending your front knee, bringing your chest to your thigh, and your hands next to your feet.

INHALE come up to starting position, legs straight, and arms overhead.

Note: perform these postures as one continuous movement sequence.

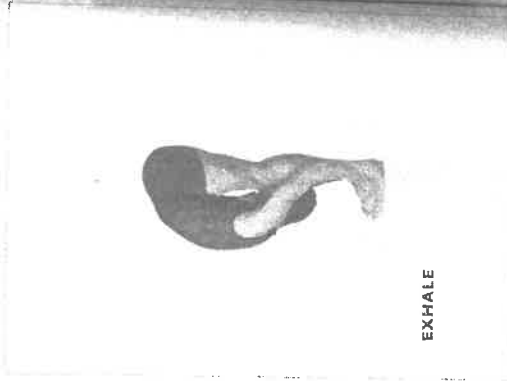
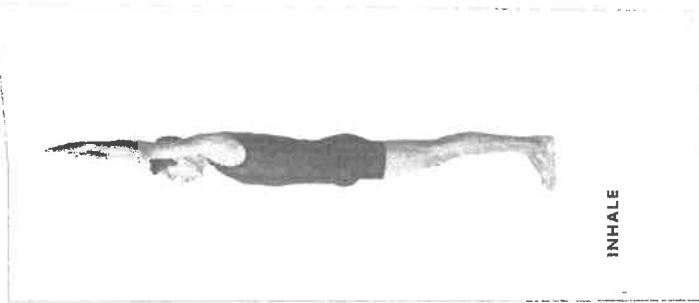
FEEL the opening of your chest without excessively arching your lower back. Keep your back heel down.

REPEAT 4 times on each side, holding 4 seconds after the inhalation.



5. Uttanasana and Ardha Utkatasana Sequence, Upright Stretch
and Half-Squat Postures

START standing with your feet slightly apart, arms overhead.
EXHALE bend forward with your knees slightly bent, bringing your belly and chest toward your thighs, hands next to your feet.
INHALE lift your chest and arms forward and up, flattening your upper back as you come up to standing.



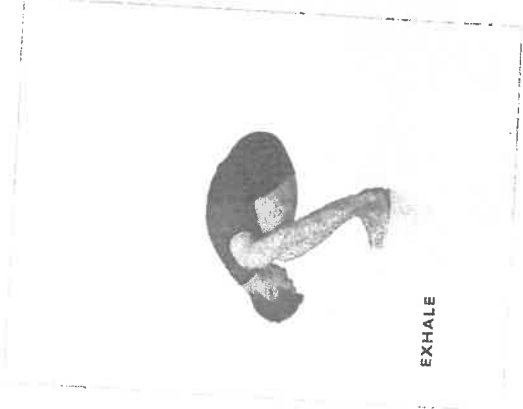
EXHALE bend forward into a squat, bringing your chest to your thighs, knees and hips parallel to the floor, hands next to your feet.

INHALE lift your chest, moving your arms forward and up, flattening your upper back as you come back up to standing.

Note: perform these postures as one continuous movement sequence.

CAUTION: Flatten your belly on exhalation. Flatten your upper back on inhalation and avoid excessive arch in your lower back. Knees are bent until standing.

REPEAT the entire sequence 6 times.



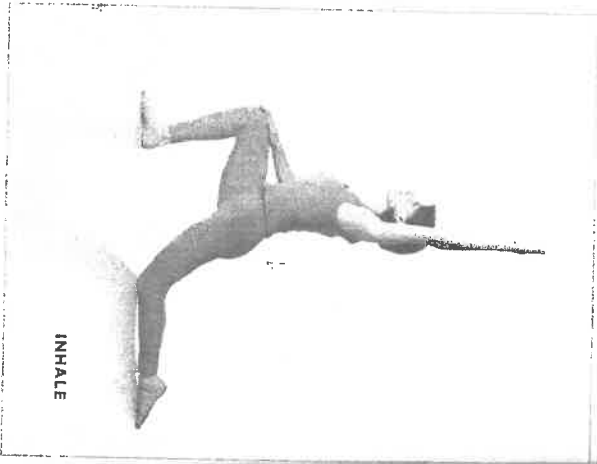
6. *Ekapada Ustrasana, One-Footed Camel Posture*

START standing on one knee in a lunge position, your front knee at a ninety-degree angle to the floor, both hands on your knee.

INITIAL lunge forward and lift your chest as you bring one arm up (opposite your front leg), as you stretch your abdomen, thigh, and chest.

FINAL lower your arm as you move back to starting both hands on your knees.

REPEAT 4 times. Then for the next 4 repetitions, stay with your arm up—first for 1 breath, then 2, then 3, then 4 breaths. Repeat the entire sequence on the other side. While staying in the position, keep pushing your chest slightly forward, lifting your arm while stretching the front of your body.



7.

Salabhasana, Locust Posture

START lying on your stomach, legs together, your head turned to one side, hands behind your back, resting on your sacrum.

INITIAL lift your chest, sweeping both arms up overhead and lifting both legs, bringing your head to the center. Lift chest slightly before your legs.

FINAL lower your chest, sweeping your arms behind your back, lowering both legs and turning your head to the opposite side.

REPEAT 6 times, and then stay up for 2 breaths, and repeat (2 times). When staying on inhale, lift your chest slightly higher.



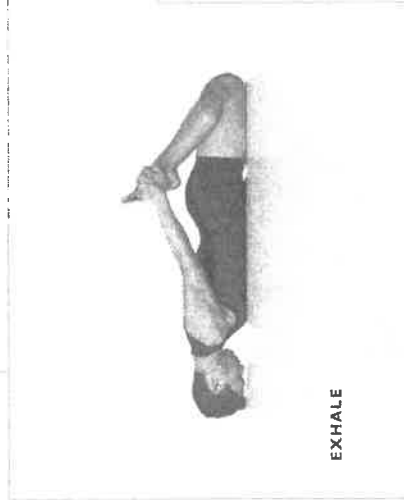
8.
Dhanurasana, Bow Posture

START lying on your stomach, hands holding on to your ankles, forehead resting on the floor.

INHALE lift your chest up and bring your shoulders back, while pulling back on your legs, and lift your knees off the floor.

EXHALE bring your chest and knees down, resting on your forehead.

REPEAT 4 times. Then stay up for 4 breaths, lifting your chest slightly higher with each inhalation.



9.
Vajrasana, Kneeling Posture

START standing up on your knees, legs slightly apart, arms at your sides.

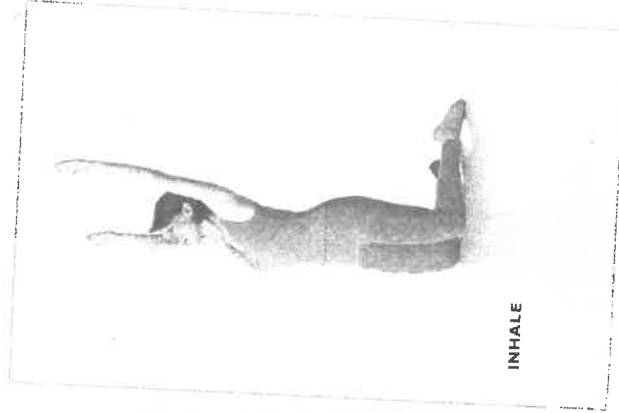
INHALE raise your arms from the front overhead.

EXHALE bend forward as you sweep your arms behind your back and onto your sacrum, and bring your chest to your thighs, head down. To gently stretch your neck: You may turn your head to one side on exhalation, resting on your cheek (variation not shown)

INHALE lift your chest forward and up, expanding your chest as you sweep your arms wide out to the sides, and up overhead.

BRING your chest to your thighs before sitting on your heels. Avoid lifting your spine with your head and neck

REPEAT 6 times. If turning head, alternate sides with each repetition.



10.

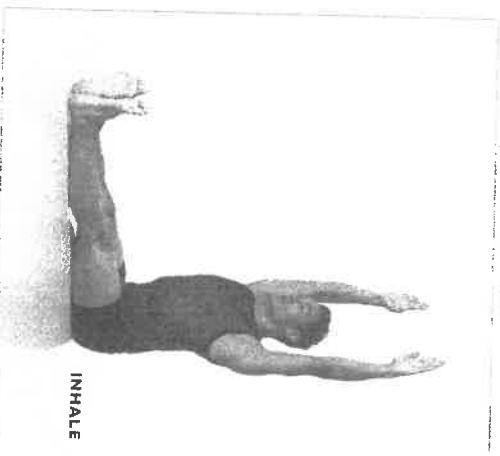
Pascimatanasana, Stretch to the West Posture

START sitting with both legs straight out in front of you, your spine lengthened, arms overhead.

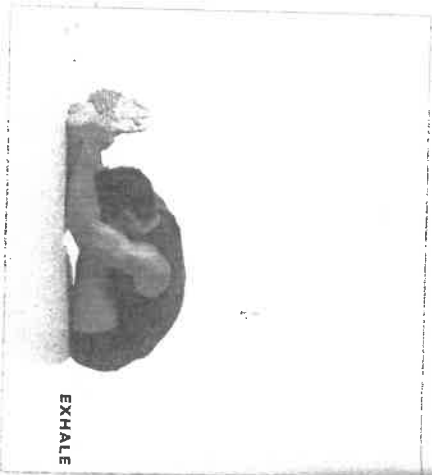
EXHALE bend forward, slightly bending your knees, bring your chest toward your thighs, hands holding your feet.

INHALE lift your arms and chest forward and up, flattening your upper back as you come up, arms overhead.

REPEAT 4 times, then stay in the forward bend for 4 breaths. While staying in the posture, extend your spine on inhalation, lifting your chest slightly. On exhalation, tighten your belly, deepening the forward bend.



INHALE



EXHALE

11.

Dvipada Pitham, Two-Footed Posture

START lying on your back, arms to your sides, knees bent, feet on the floor, parallel and slightly apart.

INHALE lift your pelvis and bring your arms overhead to the floor behind you, keeping your chin down and your neck lengthened.

EXHALE tighten your belly and bring your spine down, unwinding it from the top down, one vertebra at a time.

RELEASE down on your feet as you come up, keeping your neck and chin relaxed.

REPEAT 6 times.



EXHALE



INHALE

12.

Savasana, Corpse Posture

START lying on your back, arms to your sides, palms up.

CLOSE your eyes.

KEEP your body and mind completely relaxed, having an alert feeling awareness.

STAY for at least 3 to 5 minutes or longer.



Samana (Balancing) Practice with Support

Intention: to deepen stability and relaxation, to build confidence and endurance, to create strength and flexibility, to emphasize lengthening both the inhalation and exhalation and hold after inhale and exhale, calming sounds, and simple movements and breathing seated in a chair with support.

1.

Seated Movement and Breathing with Sound

START sitting in a chair, feet parallel, head slightly bowed, and hands over your heart.

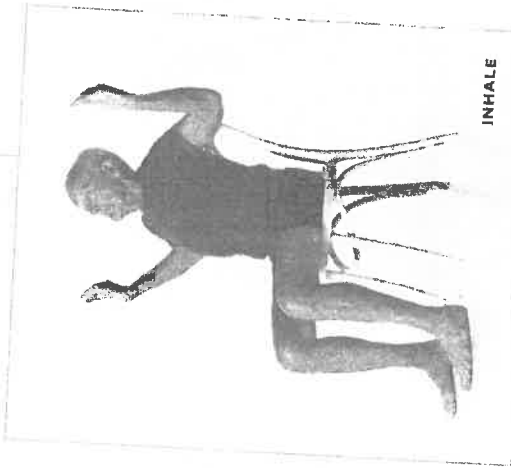
INHALE raise your arms wide out to the sides, opening your chest, and lifting your head and arching your back slightly. Pause for a moment.

EXHALE tighten your belly, bringing both hands to your heart, and then pause.

REPEAT 4 times, and then repeat 4 more times, opening your mouth and sounding the word *Ahhhh* or *Ma* as you exhale, slowly placing both hands over your heart. Pause there with your head slightly bowed after each repetition.



EXHALE



INHALE

2.

Uttanasana, Upright Stretch in a Chair

START sitting in a chair, hands on your knees. Lengthen your spine and neck, and widen your back. (see photo p. 104)

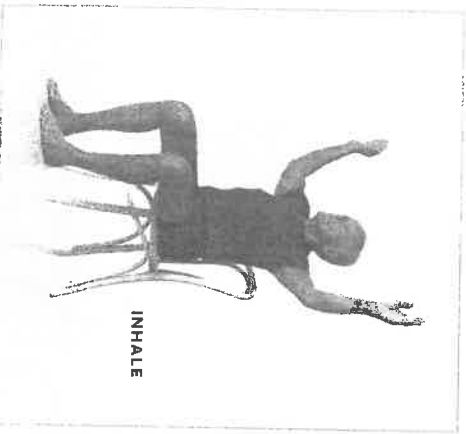
INHALE lift your arms wide out to the sides.

EXHALE bend forward, bringing your belly and chest toward your thighs, hands next to your feet.

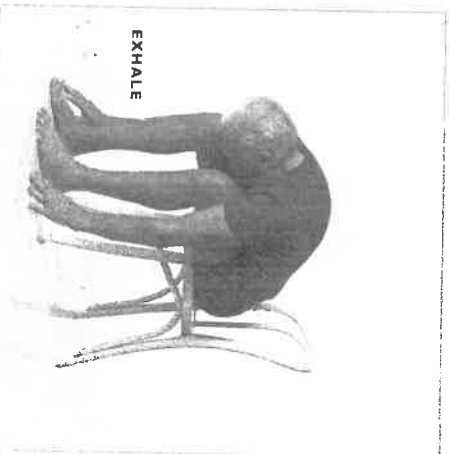
INHALE lift your chest, flattening your upper back as you come up, arms up and wide out to the sides.

REPEAT your hands to shoulder level on inhaled, with elbows slightly bent, lifting your chest. On exhalation, you can also slide your hands down your legs to your feet.

REPEAT 8 times. Gently deepen both the inhalation and exhalation with each repetition.



INHALE



EXHALE

3.

Parvottanasana, Side Stretch with Support

START by stepping forward with one foot, your back foot turned slightly out, hips facing forward, arms overhead.

EXHALE bend forward over your front knee, bending your front knee, and bringing your chest toward your thigh, hands resting on the chair.

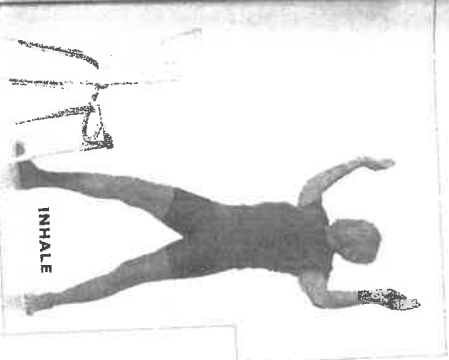
INHALE lift your chest forward and up, keeping your hands resting on the chair, arch your upper back, with elbows slightly bent, shoulders back.

EXHALE tighten your belly and bend forward over the front knee, keeping your knee bent, and bring your chest toward your thigh, hands still resting on the chair.

INHALE lift your chest forward and up, and bring your arms up overhead, straightening the front knee.

Note: perform these postures as one continuous movement sequence. **KEEP** your breathing slow, steady, and smooth.

REPEAT 4 times on each side.



INHALE



EXHALE



INHALE

4.

Seated Rest with Breathing

START sitting upright in a chair; your spine and neck lengthened, your back widened, and hands on your thighs. Close your eyes.

INHALE slowly and deeply from your upper chest first.

EXHALE gently and slowly, gradually tightening your belly from the bottom up.

REPEAT for 10 breaths. Gently deepen both your inhalation and exhalation, keeping the exhalation slightly longer than the inhalation, and pause slightly after each breath.



5.

Cakravakasana, Goose Posture

START on your hands and knees, hips aligned over your knees, and hands and wrists under and in alignment with your shoulders.

INHALE lift your chest forward and up.

EXHALE gently contract your belly, round your lower back, and bring your chest toward your thighs.

KEEP your chin slightly down as you come up, leading with your chest. On exhalation, drop your chin and try to bring your chest toward your thighs before sitting on your heels. Avoid dropping your lower back or excessively rounding your upper back.

REPEAT 8 times.



6.

Bhujangasana, Cobra Posture

START Lying on your belly, palms on the floor next to your shoulders, head turned to one side.

INHALE Lift your chest and turn your head to the center.

EXHALE Lower your chest to the floor, turning your head to the opposite side.

LET Your head follow the spine as you lift your chest, without collapsing your neck backward. On inhalation, pull back with your hands as you push your chest forward. Lift your chest with your back rather than push up with your hands. Keep shoulders down.

REPEAT 8 times With each repetition, gently lengthen the inhalation and pause.



EXHALE



INHALE

7.

*Ekapada Apanasana, One-Footed Downward-Moving
Vital Energy Posture*

START Lying on your back with one knee bent and foot on the floor and one knee bent and foot off the floor; placing your hands on or behind your knee.

EXHALE Gently bring your knee and thigh toward your chest.

INHALE Move your knee away from your chest, straightening your arms.

KEEP Your hands on your knees, with arms and shoulders relaxed. On exhalation, gradually tighten your belly, dropping your chin slightly as you pull your knee in.

REPEAT 8 times on one side, then repeat on the other side, progressively lengthening the exhalation and pause with each repetition.



INHALE



EXHALE

8.

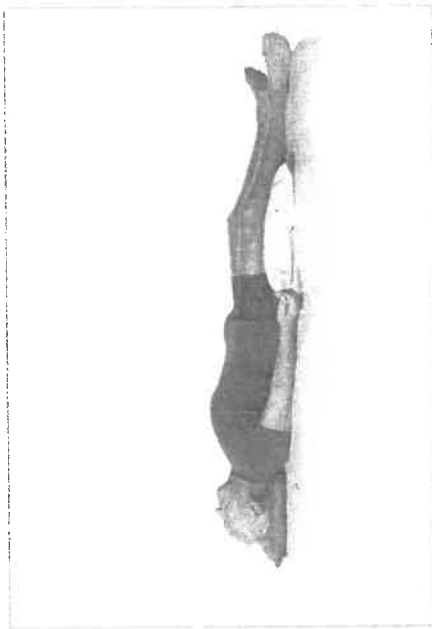
Savasana, Corpse Posture with Support

START lying on your back, arms to your sides, palms up, with a comfortable support under your head and your knees.

CLOSE your eyes.

KEEP your body and mind completely relaxed, having an alert feeling awareness.

STAY for at least 3 to 5 minutes or longer.



Limb Four

LOVE

DISCERNING THE DIFFERENCES

Love is the glue that holds things together as well as the boundary that defines and separates them. This discernment quality sees the difference between two things and holds them separate so that they may know each other. One end of love is absolute separation. The other end is absolute union. In our relationships, we discern our differences so that we may know both ourselves and one another.

To discern means to see, recognize, discriminate, or distinguish. When you discern something, you recognize that it's different from something else. You specifically recognize that it is different from *you*. As Limb Four of Emotional Yoga, Love is the ability to perceive yourself as the one who is discerning your emotions. When you connect yourself with an emotion, you hold it apart from you in order to perceive it as separate. In an emotional self-inquiry, you discern the difference between yourself, what you feel, and the discernment process itself. You exist on the cusp between yourself and the emotional experience. Within this state of clarity you discover the mean-

