Description of Selected Yogic Exercises

The following are the selected Yogic Asanas given as experimental treatment.

PADMASANA

Padmasana (the lotus pose)

Sit with the legs extended forward, fold one leg and place its foot on the top of the opposite thigh. The sole of the foot must be upward and the heel should touch the pelvic bone. Fold the other leg and place its foot on top of the other thigh.

Breath

Normal breathing. (Swami Satyananda Saraswati, 1993)
Paschimottanasana (the back stretching pose)

Sit on the floor with the legs straight in front of the body, the lower arms on the thighs. Relax the whole body, especially the back muscles. Slowly bend the body forward. Try to grasp the big toes with the fingers and the thumbs. If this is impossible then hold the heels, the ankles or the legs as near to the feet as possible. Again, consciously relax the back and leg muscles. Keeping the legs straight and without utilizing the back muscles, only using the arms, pull the trunk a little lower toward the legs. This should be a process without any sudden movement or excessive strain anywhere in the body. If possible, without strain, touch the knees with the forehead. Remain in the final pose for a comfortable length of time, trying to further relax the whole body, and then slowly return to the starting position.

**Breath**

Breathe normally in the sitting position. Exhale slowly while bending forward. Inhale while holding the body motionless. Exhale as you pull the trunk further forward with the arms. Breathe slowly and deeply in the final pose. Inhale while returning to the starting position. If the final pose is not held for a long time the breath may be retained out side. *(Swami Satyananda Saraswati, 1993)*
MATSYASANA

Matsyasana (the fish pose)

Sit in padmasana. Bend backward, supporting the body with the arms and elbows, until the crown of the head touches the ground. Hold the big toes and rest the elbows on the floor. Arch the back as much as possible. Remain in the final pose up to 5 minutes. Do not strain.

Breath

Breathe deeply and slowly in the final pose. (Swami Satyananda Saraswati, 1993)
ARDAH M A T S Y E N D R A S A N A

Ardha matsyendrasana (the half spinal twist pose)

Sit with the legs straight in front of the body. Place the right foot flat on the floor outside the left knee. Bend the left leg to the right and place the left heel against the right buttock. Place the left arm outside the right leg, and with the left hand hold the right foot or ankle. The right knee should be as near as possible to the left armpit. Turn the body to the right, placing the right arm behind the back. Twist the back and then the neck as far as possible without strain. Remain in the final pose for a short time and then slowly return to the starting position. Change the legs and repeat to the other side.

Breath

Exhale while twisting the trunk. Breathe as deeply as possible without strain in the final pose. Inhale while returning to the starting position. (Swami Satyananda Saraswati, 1993)
BHUJANGASANA

Bhujangasana (the cobra pose)

Lie on the stomach with the legs straight and the feet extended. Place the palms flat on the floor under the shoulders. Rest the forehead on the ground and relax the body. Slowly raise the head and the shoulders off the ground, bending the head as far back as it will go. Try to raise the shoulders without using the arms, only utilizing the back muscles. Now bring the arms into action and slowly bend the back as much as possible without strain until the arms are straight. Keep the navel as near to the ground as possible. Hold as long as comfortable. Practice up to 5 times.

Breath

Inhale while raising the body from the ground. Breathe normally in the final pose. If the final pose is held for a short time, retain the breath inside. (Swami Satyananda Saraswati, 1993)
SARVANGASANA

Sarvangasana (the shoulderstand pose)

Lie flat on the back with the feet together, the arms by the sides and palms flat on the ground. Using the arms as levers raise the legs and back to a vertical position. Bend the elbows and use the arms as props to steady the back by pressing it with the palms. The trunk and legs should extend straight up, forming a right angle with the neck, the chest pressing against the chin.

*Breath*

Retain inside which assuming and returning from this asana. Practice normal breathing when the body is steady in the raised position. *(Swami Satyananda Saraswati, 1993)*
Dhanurasana (the bow pose)

Lie flat on the stomach and inhale fully. Bend the knees and hold the ankles with the hands. Tense the leg muscles and arch the back. Simultaneously raise the head, chest and thighs as high as possible. Keep the arms straight. Hold for as long as is comfortable. Practice up to 5 times.

**Breath**

The breath may be retained inside in the final pose or slow, deep breathing may be practised. (*Swami Satyananda Saraswati, 1993*)
HALASANA

Halasana (the plough pose)

Lie flat on the back with the arms straight and beside the body, palms facing downward. Keeping the legs straight, slowly raise them to the vertical position above the body. Only use the stomach muscles to raise the legs. Do not use the arms. Simultaneously bend the trunk upward, hips first. Slowly lower the legs over the head and touch the floor with the toes of both feet. Keep the legs straight, bend the arms and place the hands on the back as in sarvangasana. Relax the body.

Breath

Retain the inside while assuming and returning from the pose. Breathe slowly and deeply in the final pose. (Swami Satyananda Saraswati, 1993)
TRIKONASANA

Trikonasana (the triangle stretch pose)

Stand erect with the feet about 3 feet apart. Raise the arms sideways to form one straight line. Turn the body to the left while bending the knees slightly. Bring the left hand to the left foot, keeping the two arms in line with each other. Return to the standing position, keeping the arms in a straight line. Repeat to the opposite side. Practice 5 times.

Breath

Inhale while raising the arms. Exhale while bending. Inhale while straightening to the vertical position. (Swami Satyananda Saraswati, 1993)
SHAVASANA

Shavasana : (The corpse pose)

Lie flat on the back with the arms beside and in line with the body, palms facing upward. Move the feet slightly apart to a comfortable position and close the eyes. Relax the whole body. Do not move any part even if discomfort occurs. Let the breath become rhythmic and natural. Become aware of the inhalation and exhalation. Count the number of respirations: I in, I out, and so on. Continue to count for a few minutes. If the mind starts to wander bring it back to the counting. If you can keep the mind on the breath for a few minutes, the mind and body will relax.

Breath

Normal Breathing. (Swami Satyananda Saraswati, 1993)
The following are the selected *Yogic Pranayamas* given as experimental treatment.

**NADI SUDDHI** (Sun and Moon Breath)

**Meaning**

Nadi Suddhi means the alternate nostrils breath or Sun and Moon Breath. It is also called Anuloma Viloma Pranayama, Anuloma and Viloma means with the hair and against the hair respectively or we might say, with the grain and against the grain.

**Procedure**

Sit in a comfortable sitting posture. Close the right nostrils by right thumb and slowly, smoothly and deeply inhale the air through the left nostril. Then close the left nostril by right hand little and ring fingers. Open the right nostril by releasing the right thumb, now slowly and smoothly breath out the air through right nostril. Then slowly, smoothly, and deeply inhale the air through right nostril. Then close the right nostril by the thumb. Gently open the left nostril by releasing right hand little and ring finger. Now slowly and smoothly breathe out the air through left nostril. This is called one round or cycle 3 to 5 cycles can be practised in a practice session (*Chandrasekaran, 1999*).
**UJJAYI** (Victorious Breath)

**Meaning**

In Sanskrit *jaya* means ‘victory’.

**Procedure**

Sit in a comfortable sitting posture. Exhale fully, using either nostrils or mouth. This is preparatory to the start of the breath proper. Draw air in through both nostrils in a slow and continuous flow, by partly closing the glottis. The abdominal muscles must be kept under control and contracted slightly throughout inhalation in order to get expansion at the thoracic cage. Hold the breath comfortably for a few seconds by applying all the three bandhas. The air should then be exhaled, while the glottis is kept half-closed and the abdominal muscles are slightly contracted tighter in order to the lungs to be emptied as much as possible. This is called one round or cycle 3 to 5 cycles can be practised in a practice session (*Chandrasekaran, 1999*).

**SITALI** (Cooling Breath through Tongue)

**Meaning**

In Sanskrit *sitali* means ‘cool’. Sitali pranayama produces the cooling effect on the body and mind.

**Procedure**

Sit in any meditative pose. Extend the tongue and fold the sides to form a narrow tube. Inhale slowly and deeply through the folded tongue. Close the mouth and keep the tongue as it is in the normal. Retain the breath for few seconds by performing all the three bandhas and close the nostrils by the traditional method. Slowly release the *jalendhara bandha* and open the nostril passages. Gently let the
air out slowly and continuously through both nostrils. After the complete exhalation of the air, slowly release the *uddiyana bandha* and *mula bandha*. This is called one round or cycle 3 to 5 cycles can be practised in a practice session (*Chandrasekaran, 1999*).

The following is the selected *Yogic Meditation* given as experimental treatment.

**OBSERVING THE BREATH**

In this type of meditation we are concentrating our mind on our breathing. Sit in a comfortable sitting position with the spine, neck and head should be erect and centered. Keep your breathing as normal as possible. Gently close your eyes. Try to observe the breathing process i.e. the way in which how the air goes in and out on the respiratory tract. Be in this position for 10 to 15 minutes (*Chandrasekaran, 1999*).  

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