

MPCC-103: YOGIC SCIENCE

UNIT 2 – Methods of Yoga:

2.2: - Meaning, types and technique of Asana:

Asana is traditionally defined as a “Seat.” Most commonly, it is the seated posture used for meditation. More typically now in yoga, the term is used for any physical posture of Hatha yoga.

Asana is the third Limb of Ashtanga Yoga, following after the Yamas and Niyamas. Asana means be hold the body pasture in a firm, pleasant and relaxed position. Asana is the physical practice of yoga poses.

In the yoga Sutra of Patanjali consciously defined yoga “Sthiram Sukham Asanam” means, ‘that position which is comfortable and steady.’

- **Types and techniques of asana:**

Some schools of yoga Classified on the basis of the movement and final pose of the asana. Thus the Asanas are classified into three types 1. Meditation Asana 2. Relaxation Asana and 3. Cultural Asana.

1. Meditation Asana:

Meditation asana aims to prepare the practitioner to sit for extended periods of time without moving the body and without discomfort. When the body is Steady and still in the sitting position for a long period then only meditation is experienced. Meditation required the spinal column to be straight and very few can satisfy this condition. Some of the meditation Asanas are Padmasana, Sukhasana and Siddhasana.

- **Techniques of Padmasana:**

- i. Sit on the ground with leg straight.
- ii. Bend the right leg at the knee, hold the right foot with the hand and place it at the root of the left thigh so that the right heel is near the navel.
- iii. Then bend the left leg and hold the left foot with the hands close it over the right thigh at the root and Hill near the navel. The soles of the feet should you turned up.

2. Cultural Asana:

Cultural asanas are meant for culturing the body and mind. For a Yogi, Physical health is more important, and then only he will be able to practice his Sadhana. Cultural postures are mainly aimed to Physical culture and thereby maintain the health of the body. Most of the Asanas are comes under the category of the cultural posture.

On the basis of final position and movements cultural asanas can be further classified as follows - i.Backward bending asana (Bhujangasana), ii.Forward bending asana (Paschimottanasana), iii.Spinal twisting asana (Ardha Matsyendrasana), iv.Inverted asana (Sirshasana), v.Balancing asana (Vrikshasana).

- **Techniques of Vrikshasana:**

- i. First stand properly and straightly, and place your feet together keep your knees completely straight.
- ii. Keep your arms at the particular sides.
- iii. Now fold your right leg at the knee joint. By using your both hands, put the right heel on the left thigh as high as could be expected under the circumstances. Your toes indicating downwards.
- iv. Now try to balance yourself on the left leg.
- v. Join your palms and fingers and place them to the mid-section of your chest, at that point your fingers should indicating upwards like Namaskar pose, Now breathe in and lift up your held hands gradually over your head.
- vi. Repeat the pose with your other leg.

3. **Relaxation asanas:**

Relaxation asana are meant for the relaxation of the body and mind. These asanas should be performed after the session and at that time when the body become tired. The asanas in this type appear very easy and fast, yet to do them properly is quite difficult, because the tension in all the muscles of the body must be consciously released to get complete relaxation. The important asanas for relaxation are Savasana and Makrasana.

○ **Techniques of Savasana:**

- i. Lie flat on the back on the ground,
- ii. Place the hands a little away from the thighs with palm facing up,
- iii. Keep the fists slightly closed,
- iv. Stretch the legs out,
- v. Keep the eyes closed,
- vi. Keep the feet apart,
- vii. Breathe slowly, rhythmically and naturally,
- viii. Consciously and gradually relax muscle and each part of the body from feet to head,
- ix. Direct the attention to the breathing, to the soul and to the God,
- x. Retain the meditation for a few minutes.

● **Classification on the basis of starting position:**

Different schools of yoga classified Asanas in different types; one method of classification is on the basis of starting position of Asanas. This is the major types of classification. Thus the Asanas are classified into three types: 1. Standing, 2. Sitting and 3. Lying Position.

1. **Standing Asanas:**

Position: Stand in normal position with the heels join together, the toes apart, keep the hands close to the body.

Every man needs the balancing power in his body. In order to increase or to develop the existing balancing power in the body, asana can be practiced from the standing position

The following Asanas can be practiced from standing position – Tadasana, Vrikshasana and Trikonasana etc.

2. **Sitting Asanas:**

Position: Sit on the floor with legs extended forward. The toes and Heels are pointed together. The body should be kept erect. Hands should be placed on the Floor by the side of the buttocks.

Yogic practices are mainly concerned about the control of body and mind. Asanas play a vital role to achieve this purpose. Sitting asanas are intended for bringing the mind to a relaxed state. The meditative postures are all done from this position. These asanas not only develop the mental health but also stimulate the physiological functions of our body systems. The asanas included in the sitting positions have all possible movements of the Vertebral Column like erect, forward bend, backward bend and twisting posture.

The following asanas can be practiced from sitting position - Padmasana, Sukhasana, Paschimottanasana, Ardha matsyendrasana etc.

3. **Lying Asanas:** There are two types of lying position – **i. Prone position** and **ii. Supine Position.**

i. Prone position: Lie prone with face download, the following can be practiced from the prone position - Makarasana, Salabasana, Bhujangasana, Dhanurasana etc.

ii. Supine position: lie on the floor with face facing upward. The following asanas can be practiced from supine position – savasana, Sarvangasana, Halasana etc.

3.2 Effects of Asana on various systems of human body:

Asanas involve a variety of postures, which affect Various Systems of our body. Asanas have a profound impact on the systems of the human body. The muscles, bones, nervous system, respiratory, circulatory and digestive systems of the human body are greatly benefited from regular practice of Asanas.

- **Effect on Skeletal System:**

- Regular practice of asanas helps regain joint mobility and reduce Spinal disorders.
- Helps to strengthen the peripheral areas of the joints,
- Prevent injuries and make the bones stronger.
- Disorders in the body such as osteoporosis, Scoliosis, spinal pain and Arthritis are all improved in measurable degrees through the practice of asanas.
- Asanas increasing the joint flexibility.
- Long term benefits of asanas include reduced pain and improved posture.

- **Effect on Muscular System:**

- As a result of regular and correct practice of Asanas, the tensed muscles get relaxed and thus in turn ensure a proper balance in the muscle groups.
- Asanas improve muscle tone and coordination.
- Muscles get stronger and flexible.
- Reduce muscle Stiffness.
- Asanas reduce the fat in the abdomen and waist.

- **Effect on Nervous System:**

- Focusing the mind on the breath, Asanas combine to ease the nervous system.
- Make a healthy spine that obviously plays an important role in vitality and renovation (restoration).
- Soothes the brain and removes tension in the nerves, and consequently the brain becomes calm.
- Keep the spinal cord and its supporting areas encouraged and enhance the sensitivity of the nerves.
- Develop the reaction ability.

- **Effect on Cardiovascular System:**

- Help the blood pressure and heart rate to normalize.
- Yoga Asanas strengthens the heart muscle, thus resulting in better circulation and less possibility of heart disease.
- It strengthens core muscles while it keeps blood circulating throughout your body.
- Results in better venous return.
- It improves blood flow which inturn keeps the organs healthy and free from toxins.

- **Effect on Respiratory System:**

- Regular practice of asanas contributes to improves the extensibility of the muscles including the diaphragm, That increases lung volume.
- In view of lowering of heart rate, more time is available for oxygen and carbon-di-oxide exchange in the lungs.
- Asanas also cause one to take slower and deeper, and healthier breaths.

- **Effect on Digestive System:**

- Asanas improve the efficiency of the organs of digestive system.
- It enhancing the function of proper assimilation and elimination of wastes.
- Asanas facilitates secretion of digestive juices in required quantities thus improving digestion.
- They also help in the removal of gases, which interfere with digestion.

- **Effect on Endocrine System:**

- Asanas regulate and control the secretion of hormones from all glands in the body.
- These hormones facilitate maintenance of proper chemical balance at the cellular level.
- Asanas also help in the maintenance of proper harmony between the nervous system and the endocrine system.
- Like Sirsasana, standing forward bend increases blood flow to brain that improves the functioning of brain and hypothalamus along with improving the functioning of pituitary and pineal gland.
- Halasana and shoulder stand improve the functioning of thyroid and parathyroid gland resulting the proper growth and development.
- Ardh matsendrasana, Balasana and Mundakasana will stimulate pancreas for the release of insulin and glucagon from pancreas that regulates blood sugar.
- Setubandhasana and Bhujangasana will stimulate testes and ovaries for better function.
- Relaxation asanas reduces the secretion of cortisol to keep the mind calm and at ease.

Asana affects every cell of the body. It brings about better neuro-effector communication, improves strength of the body, increases the optimum functioning of all organ-systems, increases resistance against stress and diseases and brings tranquility, balance; positive attitude and equanimity in the practitioner which makes him lead a purposeful and healthier life.

Reference:

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