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SŪKṢMA VYĀYĀMA - PAVANMUKTĀSANA I

Anti-rheumatic exercises - *ānavātī rodhaka vyāyāma*

The *pavanamuktāsana* series was first introduced in the west by the teacher swami Satyānanda, which led many people to believe that it originated there in the Bihar school of yoga. But this is a misconception, as the *pavanamuktāsana* belongs to a much older tradition that was taught as a part of the *sūkṣma vyāyāma*, the subtle yogic exercises, which had already been established through the teacher Dhīrendra Brahmācārī.

The way that this *pavanamuktāsana* is offered here is different than originally taught by Satyānanda. Here they are rendered as they are taught in our Kundalini Yoga tradition. This anti-rheumatic series is far more than a series against joint pain. It is a very energetic series that can break energy blockages and stimulate the spinal fluid. It can also expand consciousness and has strong healing properties for the mind and body. Since this series works strongly on the flow of energy along the spinal cord, it is advisable to relax in *śavāsana* in between the exercises and whenever a tickling sensation occurs. This helps to calm the nervousness system and to integrate the energy.

Since these exercises are supposed to be subtle and work with one's energy body rather than with the physical, one should practice them with firm focus on breath and rhythmic movement.

Approximately 60 – 90 minutes.

Prāraṃbhik Sthiti

Base position. Sit straight up with your legs stretched out, place your hands either on your knees or behind your buttocks with your fingers facing backwards. Make sure your spine is straight and your posture embodies energy.



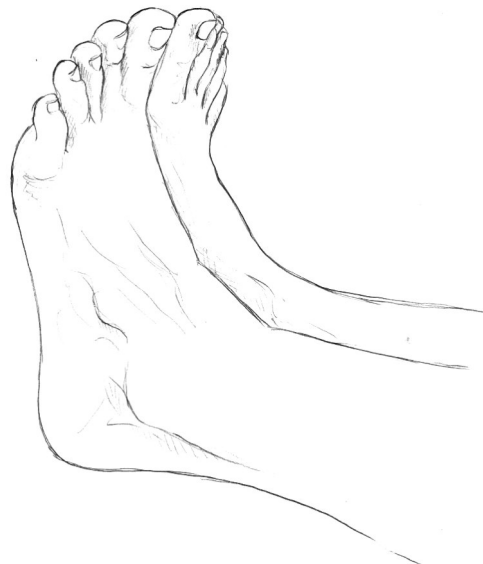
Pādāṅguli naman

Toe bending. Sit in base position with your legs stretched out and the feet slightly apart and focus on your toes. Keep your face open and your eyes firmly fixed on your toes. Wherever your eyes wonder there you go. Since these excises are subtle it is important that you remain where you are supposed to be. Bend your toes forward and back towards your body with rhythm of your breath. Your breath should be deep and intense throughout the exercise, this will stimulate the *prāṇa* and make it flow.

In the end inhale bend the toes towards your body enter, hold the breath. Then exhale bend the toes away from your body centre and hold the breath outside.

Deep, rhythmic breath, 1-2 minutes.

Note: Holding the breath is called *kumbhaka*, one should hold the breath with *mūlabandha* and as long comfortably possible. Hold the breath till a sensation of silence or the lightening emerges from the centre. In my opinion the only difference between hatha and kundalini yoga is the diligent focus on *kumbhaka*. When *kumbhaka* is performed with complete concentration, even the simplest exercise turns into kundalini yoga.

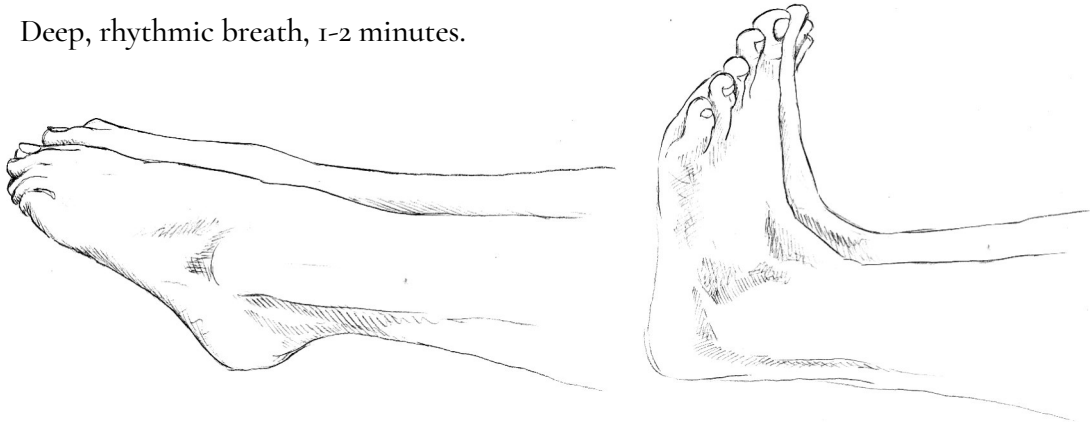


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Kulph naman

Ankle bending. Remain in the same position and start to bend your feet from the ankle forward and backwards in the previously described manner. Keep the breath rhythmic and passionate. In the end hold the breath in in the inhalation, and gently pull the center during the exhalation.

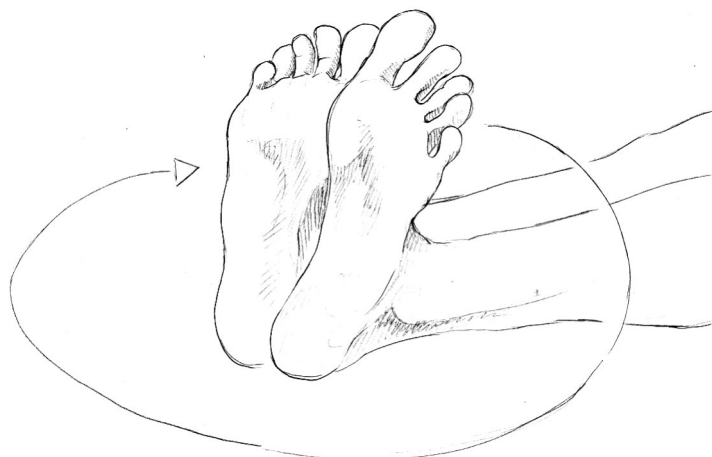
Deep, rhythmic breath, 1-2 minutes.



Kulph cakra

Ankle rotation. Remain in the same position with the feet closed and touching one another. Start to rotate both of your feet from the ankles. Observe the rotation with maximum attention. Observe with an innocent but unbroken attention just like a child would observe a new and fascinating toy. Be gripped by it. Nothing is simple, let the magic unfold. Synchronize with your breath. After a while change direction.

Step2. Open your feet slightly just 20 cm apart. Start to rotate your feet from the ankles in opposite directions. Synchronize the breath. Keep the breathing deep. When you finish, inhale and move the breath gently into the center and pull the feet up. Exhale, hold and push the feet down. Change directions and repeat.



Deep, rhythmic breath,
1-2 minutes.

Kulph ghūrṇan

Ankle crank. Take your right knee with both hands, elevate the knee and pull it to the chest, push the knee outwards and gently take your right ankle and lift it on top of the right thigh.

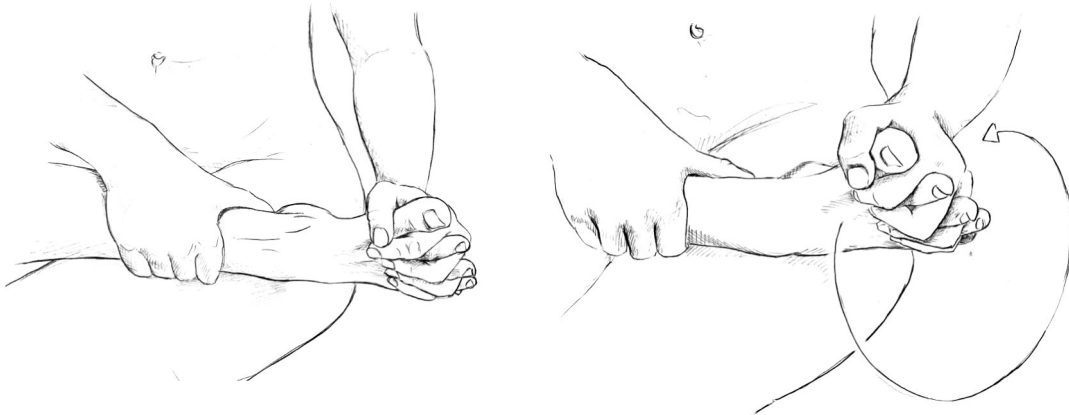
With your right hand hold firmly your ankle, you must feel that you have strong grip. Take the fingers of your left hand and one after the other interlace the fingers of your left hand with the toes of your right foot.

Once you are in this position elevate your spine and open your chest, look deep inside, and start to slowly and deeply to rotate your right foot with the rhythm of your breath. When you inhale move the foot up, when you exhale push it down. Be aware the movement is deep, and the foot itself is not actively involved in the movement. pay full attention like a curious child.

In the end inhale, hold and take time. Exhale hold and take your time, then relax.

Gently move the leg horizontally outwards, then bring the knee up to the centre and stretch the right leg, repeat the same procedure on the other side.

Deep, rhythmic breath, 1-2 minutes on each side.



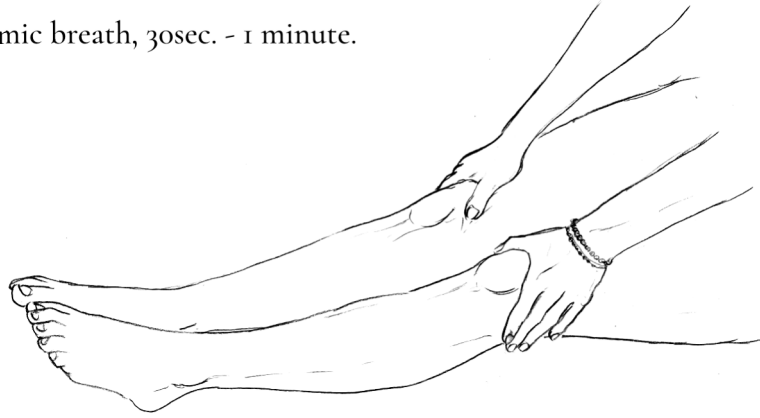
Jānuphalak ākarṣaṇ

Kneecap contraction. Sit again in the base position with your legs stretched out. Bring your hands on your knees, your thumbs and index fingers rest on both sides of your kneecaps.

With the rhythm of your deep breathing contract the muscles of your thighs so

that the kneecaps move upwards. Hold the breath and the kneecaps gently after the inhalation. Then exhale slowly and relax them. Enjoy the internal massage of your knees - vitality will flow.

Deep, rhythmic breath, 30sec. - 1 minute.



Jānu naman

Knee bending. From the base position, bring both hands underneath your right knee and interlock your fingers with the palms turned upwards. Then pull your knee towards your chest and exhale while you lengthen your spine. Inhale and stretch the leg out over the ground with your arms stretched out as well. Look at your toes. With a deep rhythm start to stretch and bend your knee. <Keep your chest open. Breathe deep and allow the rhythm to carry you away. In the end, inhale, stretch and hold. Then exhale, contract and hold. Breathe and lower your leg to the ground. Repeat on the other side.

Deep, rhythmic breath, 1-2 minutes on each side.



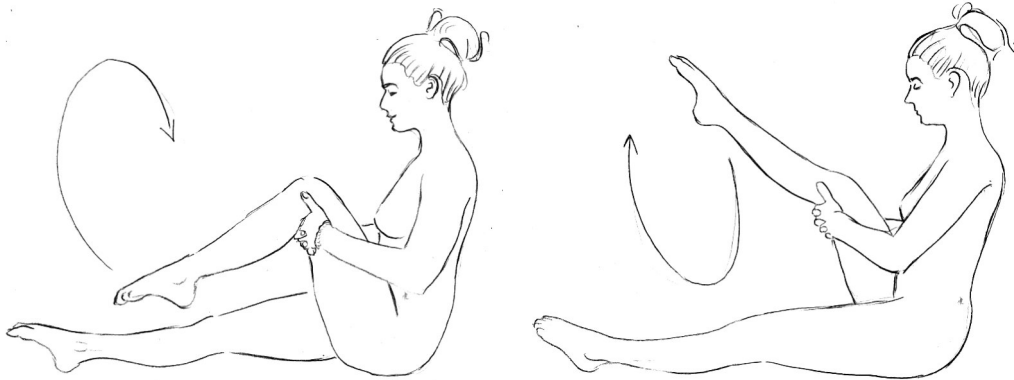
Jānu cakra

Knee rotation. Just like in the previous exercise interlock your fingers under your thigh, open your chest and pull the knee up. Gently start to describe a circle with your foot and lower leg but keeping the thigh in position, the thigh will rotate

gently outwards and inwards but without moving up or down. Synchronize with your deep breathing, so the leg is stretched in inhalation and bend in exhalation. In the end deeply inhale, exhale, hold pull the knee to the chest and relax.

Concentrate on this movement, it is meditative by nature.

Deep, rhythmic breath, 1-2 minutes on each side.



Ardha titali āsana

Half sided butterfly pose. From the base position with the legs stretched out, elevate the right knee, move it to the side and let the right ankle rest on the left thigh. Again, interlock your fingers of your left hand with the toes of your right foot starting from the little finger and small toe, one after the other. Straighten your spine and relax your face if you wish close your eyes and gaze inwards.

Slowly start to pull your leg to the chest and inhale. Exhale and push it to the ground. Move your hand in circular motion around your knee pulling and pushing it gently. Gradually become faster and more rhythmic and gaze inwards. After a while, inhale and straighten your spine. Hold the breath inside and gaze into the silence. Exhale



gently and push the knee to the ground and hold the breath there.

Move your foot outwards, the knee upwards, and then straighten the leg. Repeat the same procedure for the other side.

Deep, rhythmic breath, 1-2 minutes on each side.

Pūrṇa titalī āsana

Full butterfly pose. Sitting in the base position with the legs stretched out, bring both of your knees to the chest just like in *bījāsana*, and contemplate the centre. Elevate the spine and feel the sky above you. Then after a few breaths, open your knees slightly and bring the hands between your legs. Interlock your fingers, with your hands holding your feet, and allow your thumbs to close over your big toes. Then let your feet rest on the ground and straighten your spine.



Gently start to move your legs up and down like a butterfly flying. Keep the breath deep. Move slowly and then faster and in the end, slowly again. The breath doesn't need to be synchronized with the movement. Smile and enjoy flying like a butterfly. In the end, inhale, stretch, exhale and bend forward. Remain in the stretch for a few breaths.

Fly joyfully 2-3 minutes.

Śroṇi cakra

Hip rotation. Again, come into the same position as in *ardha titalī āsana*. Let your right-hand rest on your right knee.

Slowly and with an open face and focus, start to rotate your knee in a circle. Synchronize your breath with the movements. When you inhale, the knee moves upwards. When you exhale, it moves downwards. Move with the highest attention, this happens inwards. After a while change direction.

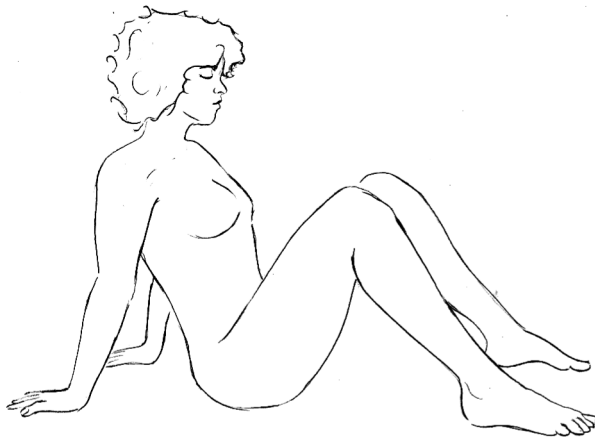
Move your foot outwards, the knee upwards and then straighten the leg. Repeat

the same procedure for the other side.

Deep, rhythmic breath, 1-2 minutes on each side.

Makra vyāyāma

The crocodile exercise. From the base position bring your knees up and feet on the ground. Open your legs so your feet are about 40cm apart.



Bring your arms behind your body, fingers pointing backwards, arms stabilize the torso upwards.

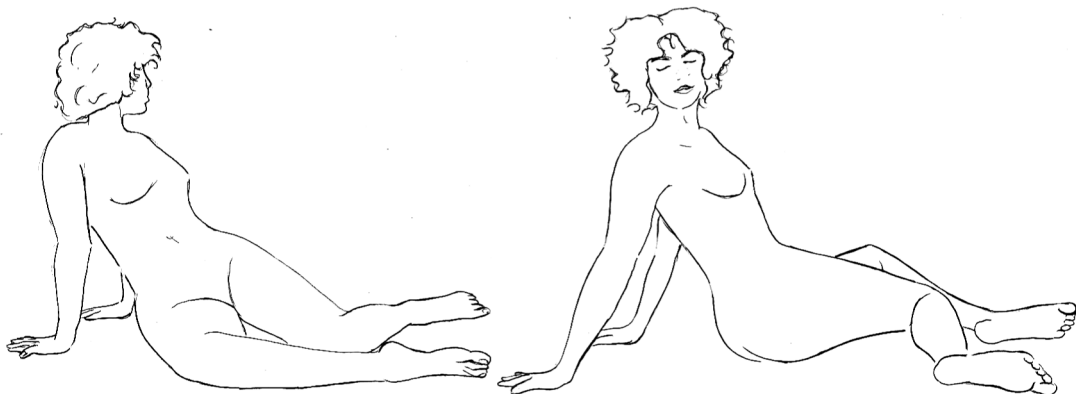
Inhale and open your belly and chest. Exhale and let your legs fall to the left while turning your head to the right. Inhale and bring your knees again upwards and your head turning

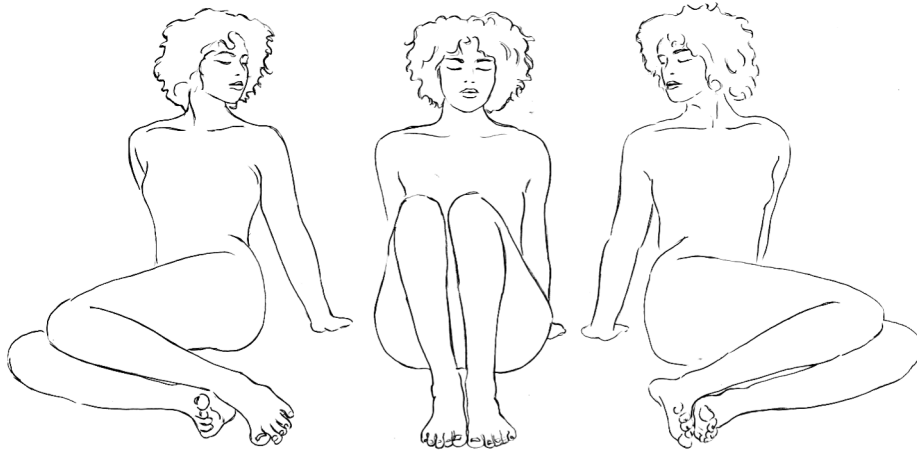
to the centre. Exhale let your knees fall to the right and your head turns to the left.

Move in this manner with deep, rhythmic breath, from one side to the other. 1-2 minutes.

Step 2. Then close your feet and knees like in the illustration above and perform the same exercise but with closed legs, this way the stimulation will move up the spinal cord.

Move with deep, rhythmic breath, from one side to the other. 1-2 minutes.





Śavāsana

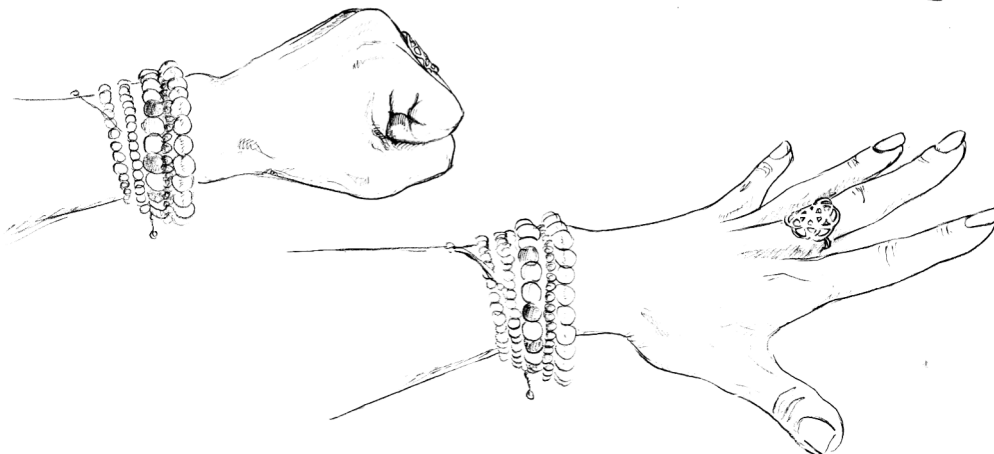
Lay on your back with your palms facing upward. Let the vibration settle in silence. This exercise stimulates the spinal channel like no other. Deep rest for at least 2 minutes is mandatory.

Muṣṭika bandha

Hand Clenching. Sitting in the centre in *sukhāsana*, stretch out your arms to the front and open your fingers wide. Gaze forward firmly with your face open. In the exhalation clench your fist with your thumbs inside, in the inhalation open the fingers wide again, choose a good rhythmic pace. In the end inhale open your hands hold and gaze inside. Then exhale slowly.



Deep, rhythmic breath, 1-2 minutes.



Mañibandha naman

Wrist bending. Still sitting in easy pose with your arms stretched out horizontally in front of you. Close your fingers but keep them stretched out and start to bend your hand from the wrist. Inhale push your palm forward and your fingers up. Exhale and bend the hand down from your wrist. Also here choose a good rhythmic pace. In the end inhale push the palm forward and hold. Exhale slowly and relax.

Deep, rhythmic breath, 1-2 minutes.



Mañibandha cakra

Wrist joint rotation. Still sitting in *sukhāsana* with your arms stretched out horizontally in front of you. Bend your left hand down at the wrist as you support your left arm with the right wrist under your elbow. With the left arm still



stretched out, close your fingers and form a fist with your thumb clenched inside. Very slowly and clearly start to rotate the fist from the wrist, with the palm facing downwards at all times. Synchronize the movement with your deep breathing. In the end, inhale, bend the fist upwards, contemplate the center and hold. Exhale slowly and relax both arms.

Invert the posture and repeat the exercise.

Deep, rhythmic breath, 1-2 minutes on each side.

Kaphoṇi naman

Elbow bending. Bring both arms to the side, palms up and inhale, this opens *mahā-prāṇa* – the great Energy. Then bring both arms to the front and open the fingers slightly, so to form a cup like shape with them. In the exhalation bend the elbows so to bring the hands to the shoulders. In the exhalation stretch them again. Choose a good rhythmic pace. In the end stretch the arms out and hold. Exhale slowly and relax.

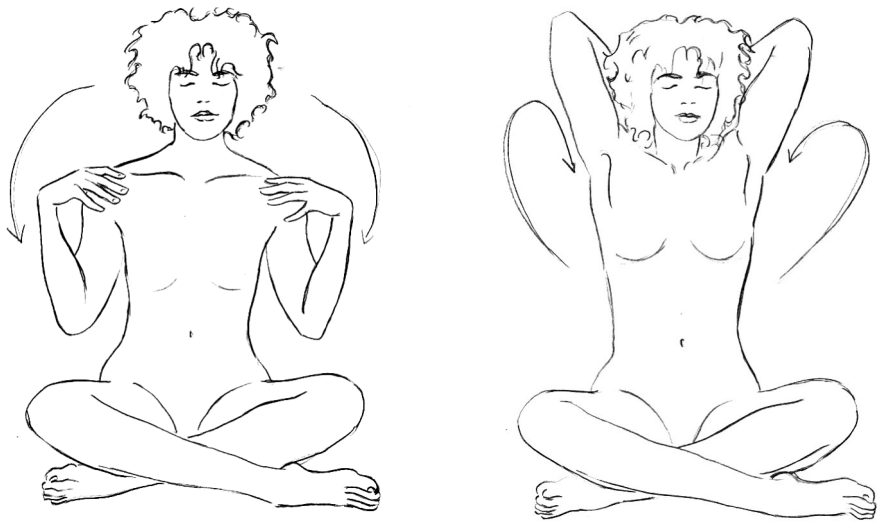
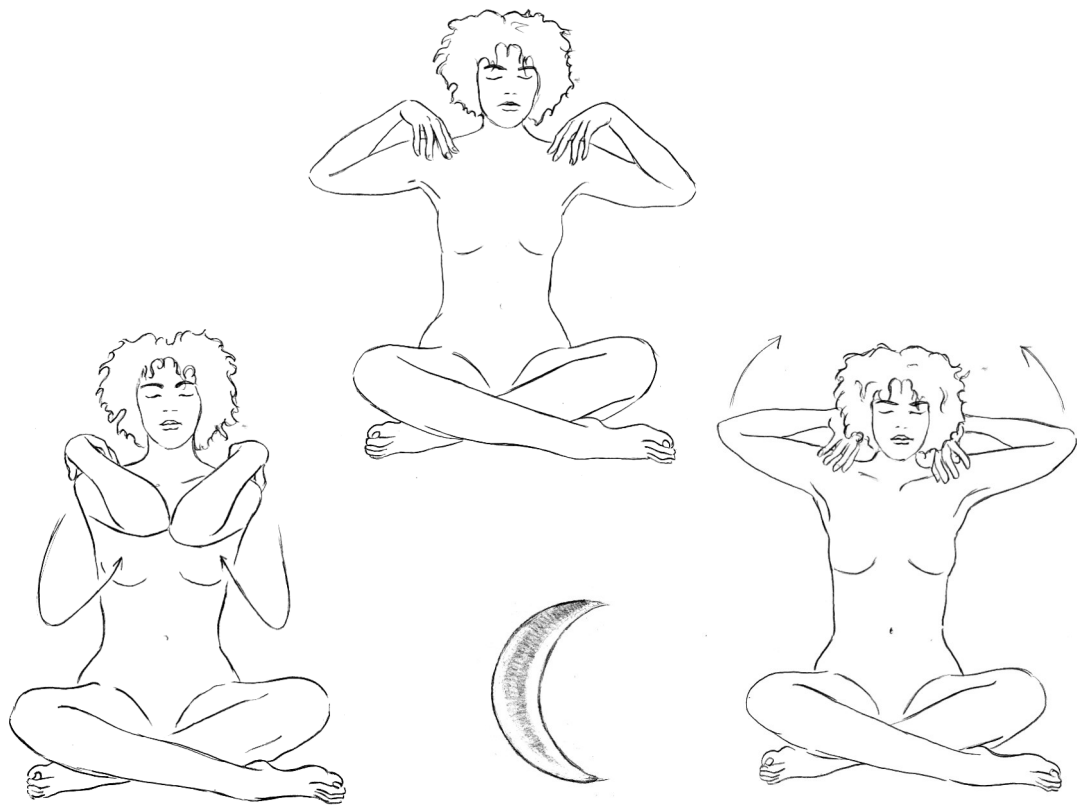


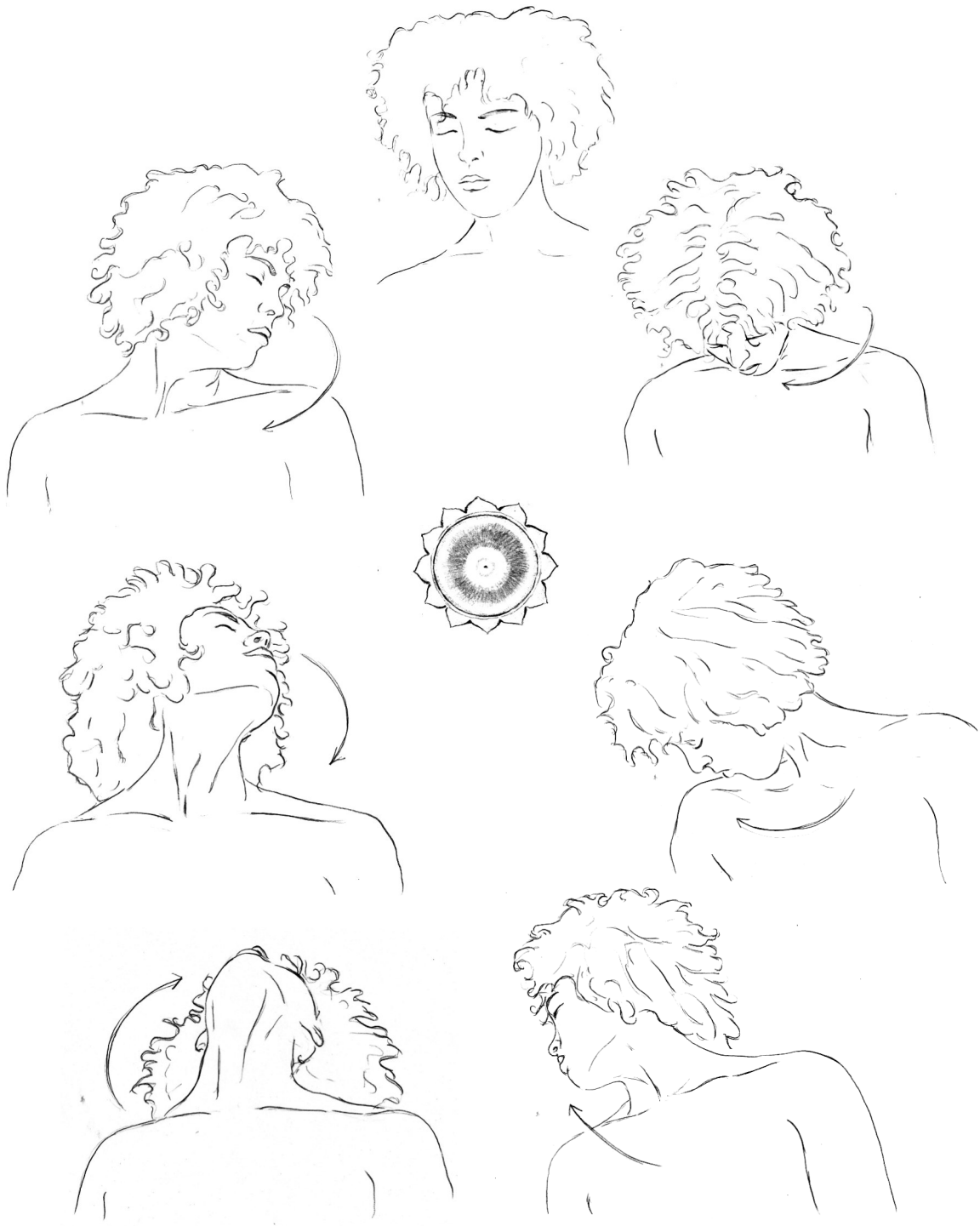
Deep, rhythmic breath, 1-2 minutes.

Skandha cakra

Shoulder rotation. Open your arms to the side, palms facing upwards. Bring your hands on your shoulders with the fingers in cup shape. Inhale and very slowly bring your elbows up till your hands are behind your neck, slowly in course of this inhalation bring the elbows behind you and make the arms rotate backwards and downwards. Describe a full circle. When your arms come forward exhale and contract the chest, when the arms move further let the elbows touch each other in front of your face. Rotate with deep breathing slowly in one direction, then change directions.

Deep, rhythmic breathing, 1-2 minutes in each direction.





Grīva sañcālana

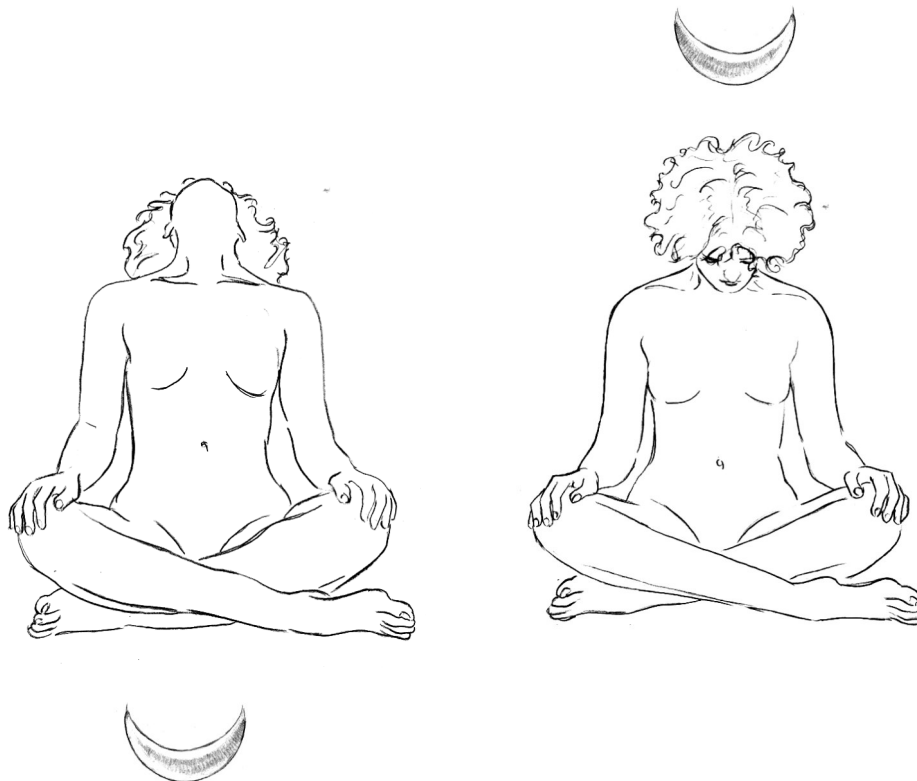
Neck movements. Straighten your spine and gently start to move your head to the left when inhaling and then to the right when exhaling, breath slow and deep. After a while invert the breathing. When you move your head, pay attention to explore the maximum range of movement.

Then come to the centre and start to rotate your head gently along the chest and neck. Role your head slowly and consciously from one shoulder to the neck, to the chest, to the opposite shoulder. Synchronize your breath with the movement. After a while reverse the movement. Sink into the movement.

Move your head in deep, rhythmic breathing, 1-2 minute in each direction.

Jālandhara bandha

The lock of the infinite source of cosmic nectar. Inhale and move your head to the neck, feel the pressure in your neck, close your eyes and rise. Imagine a bright light burning on your forehead. Hold the breath deeply in your body and be silent. Exhale slowly and put your chin to the chest, look inside and bow down in front of the great sky. Hold the breath outside.



Move very slowly in this manner 3 - 5 deep breaths. Welcome home,

Śavāsana

Lay on your back with your palms facing upwards. Contemplate the ocean of life,
your home.

Be thankful



Summary

<i>Prārambhik Sthiti</i>	Base position
<i>Pādāṅguli naman</i>	Toes bending
<i>Kulph naman</i>	Ankle bending
<i>Kulph cakra</i>	Ankle rotation
<i>Kulph ghūrṇan</i>	Ankle crank
<i>Jānuphalak ākarṣaṇ</i>	Kneecap contraction
<i>Jānu naman</i>	Knee bending
<i>Jānu cakra</i>	Knee rotation
<i>Ardha titalī āsana</i>	Half sided butterfly pose
<i>Pūrṇa titalī āsana</i>	Full butterfly pose
<i>Śroṇi cakra</i>	Hip rotation
<i>Makra vyāyāma</i>	The crocodile exercise
<i>Śavāsana</i>	Corpse pose
<i>Muṣṭika bandha</i>	Hand clenching
<i>Maṇibandha naman</i>	Wrist bending
<i>Maṇibandha cakra</i>	Wrist rotation
<i>Kaphoṇi naman</i>	Elbow bending
<i>Skandha cakra</i>	Shoulder rotations
<i>Grīva sañcālana</i>	Neck movements
<i>Jālandhara bandha</i>	Cosmic water lock
<i>Uṣṭrāsana</i>	Camel pose
<i>Śaśankāsana</i>	Rabbit pose
<i>Bīja Nyāsa</i>	Placing the seed sounds
<i>Śavāsana</i>	Corpse pose