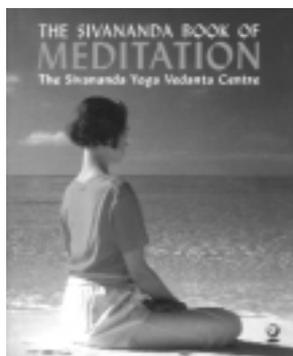


Book Preview



Continuing our preview of *The Sivananda Book of Meditation* we look at Chapter 2 called *The Yogic Lifestyle*, and the section which deals with yoga asanas and their benefits

Before starting your exercise session, it is important to relax in the corpse position. This allows the body to rest and reinvigorate completely in a very short period of time.



CHAPTER TWO THE YOGIC LIFESTYLE PREPARING BODY AND MIND

1 HEADSTAND

Strengthens the respiratory and circulatory systems

Improves disorders of the eyes, ears, nose, and throat; improves eyesight and hearing

Relieves varicose veins

Relieves kidney problems and constipation

Relieves pressure on the lumbar and sacral areas of the lower back

Encourages deep exhalation, removing toxins from the lungs

Increases hair growth through increased circulation to the scalp

Stimulates the pineal and pituitary glands, revitalizing the entire mind and body

Aligns the spine

Increases circulation to the brain improving memory, concentration, and intellectual capacity

Counteracts nervous disorders and anxiety

Improves quality of sleep

Increases confidence

2 SHOULDER STAND

Prevents kidney disease, bone disease, and muscle weakness

Keeps the neck and spine strong and elastic

Relieves varicose veins

Massages the heart

Strengthens the throat and thoracic regions

Removes mental sluggishness

Cures insomnia and depression

Improves quality of sleep

Helps painful menstruation and gynaecological disorders

Purifies the blood and improves circulation

Regulates the thyroid gland in the throat. The thyroid regulates:

Metabolism and heat production

Protein synthesis

Growth and development

Heart rate and blood pressure

Calcium levels in blood and tissues

3 PLOUGH

Stretches the spinal muscles and ligaments and opens up the spinal discs, rejuvenating the entire spine

Nourishes the spinal nerves

Relieves and prevents back and neck arthritis and stiffness

Releases tension from the cervical region of the spine

Strengthens the muscles of the back, shoulders, and arms

Massages the internal organs

Relieves indigestion and constipation

Stimulates the liver and spleen

Reduces obesity

Relieves insomnia

'It is important to take good care of your body. Take regular exercise to keep it strong, flexible, and free from tension'

THE SUN SALUTE



THE SUN SALUTE

The sun salute stretches and strengthens all the major muscle groups of the body. It improves the intake and flow of oxygen, stimulating the respiratory system and bringing increased blood flow, warmth, and energy to the whole body. The nerves are gently toned and allowed to relax, sense perception becomes more

acute, and concentration is enhanced. Positions 1 and 12 establish a state of concentration and calm;

Positions 2 and 11 stretch the abdominal and intestinal muscles, exercise the arms, and stretch the spine;

Positions 3 and 10 prevent and relieve stomach ailments, reduce abdominal fat, improve digestion and circulation, and make the spine supple;

Positions 4 and 9 tone the abdomen and

the muscles of the thighs and legs and make the hips flexible;

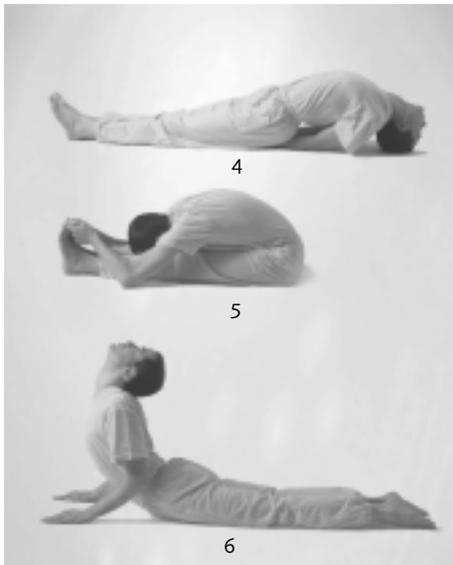
Position 5 strengthens the muscles of the arms and shoulders;

Position 6 strengthens the muscles of shoulders, arms, and chest;

Positions 7 strengthens the muscles of the upper back and arms;

Position 8 strengthens the nerves and muscles of the arms and legs and tones the spine.

Book Preview



'You need to be in good health to maintain the perfect stillness required for the practice of meditation'

4 FISH

Removes stiffness from the cervical, thoracic, and lumbar regions of the back, bringing increased blood supply to these parts

Massages the neck and shoulders

Corrects round shoulders

Increases lung capacity

Relieves asthma

Stimulates and massages the parathyroid glands in the back of the neck, which helps prevent tooth decay and increases bone strength and plasticity

Stimulates and tones the pituitary and pineal glands

Regulates moods and calms the emotions

Strengthens and cleanses the respiratory system

Keeps the spine supple

5 SITTING FORWARD BEND

Reduces excess weight in the waist area

Reduces enlargement of the liver and spleen

Massages, stimulates, and tones the digestive organs, increasing digestive power

Massages the kidneys, liver, and pancreas

Regulates the functions of the pancreas, which controls carbohydrate metabolism and blood sugar levels

Regulates the intestines and increases peristalsis

Invigorates the entire nervous system

Stretches the muscles in the back of the body

Increases flexibility in the hip joints

Alleviates disorders of the urino-genital system

6 COBRA

Increases flexibility of the spine, relieving curvature of the spine

Relieves asthma and other respiratory problems

Tones and massages the deep and superficial muscles of the back

Invigorates the nerves and muscles of the spine

Relieves lumbago and lower back pain

Tones the abdominal viscera

Tones the ovaries and uterus in women, relieving menstrual problems

Tones the adrenal glands

Relieves constipation

Relieves backache caused by overwork or long hours of standing

7 LOCUST

Relieves sluggish digestion

Strengthens the abdominal walls

Massages the pancreas, liver, and kidneys

Increases the blood supply to the neck and throat

Increases flexibility in the cervical region of the back

Strengthens the muscles of the upper back

Relieves lower back pain and sciatica

Stimulates digestion

8 BOW

Increases flexibility of the entire spine

Invigorates and massages the digestive organs

Removes abdominal fat

Relieves constipation, dyspepsia, and gastro-intestinal disorders

Regulates the pancreas, aiding those suffering from diabetes

Strengthens the abdominal muscles

Strengthens the respiratory system and relieves asthma

Prevents rheumatism of the legs, knee joints, and hands

Massages the back muscles

Keeps the spine elastic

Improves blood circulation

9 HALF SPINAL TWIST

Rotates the spine, keeping it elastic

Relieves lumbago and rheumatism of the back and hips

Tones and stimulates the sympathetic nervous system

Increases circulation

Stimulates the liver and the large intestine

Tones the gall bladder, spleen, and kidneys

Massages the digestive organs

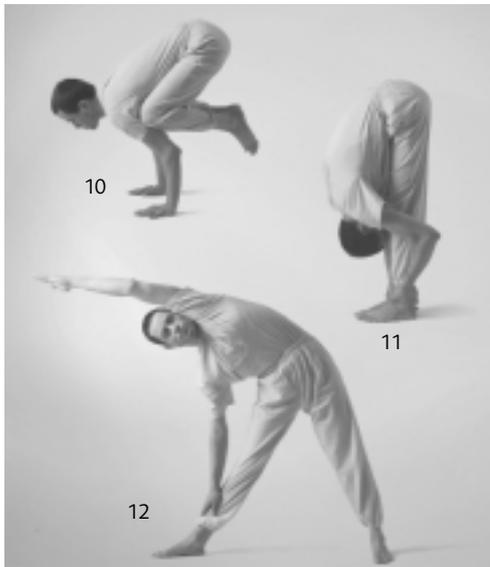
Relieves constipation and indigestion

Regulates the secretion of adrenalin and bile

Relieves asthma

Strengthens the deep muscles of the back

Corrects stooping shoulders, bent back, and poor posture



10 CROW

Strengthens the arms, wrists, and shoulders
 Increases breathing capacity
 Stretches the fingers, wrists, and forearms
 Increases the powers of concentration
 Removes sluggishness
 Promotes mental and physical balance

11 STANDING FORWARD BEND

Increases the length of the spine
 Mobilizes the joints, making the spine elastic
 Invigorates the entire nervous system
 Stretches the hamstrings
 Increases blood supply to the brain
 Removes excess weight from the waist

Makes the body feel light
 Relieves constipation
 Tones the spinal nerves
 Relieves sciatica and low back pain

12 TRIANGLE

Tones the spinal nerves and abdominal organs
 Increases peristalsis of the digestive tract
 Promotes hip flexibility
 Relieves nervous depression
 Stimulates the appetite
 Strengthens the pelvic area
 Reduces excess weight from the waist ■

*Photography by Paul Forrester
 Published by Gaia Books ISBN 1-85675-124-4*



CLICK! Behind the Scenes

MAKING THE BOOK OF MEDITATION

Asanas,
 hair spray,
 and laughter – all in a day's
 photoshoot...



CAUGHT ON CAMERA!

Above: Swami Kailasananda and staff members on the photoshoot for the asana sequences in *The Sivananda Book of Meditation*