

Asana: 1 - Agnisara Kriya (Awakening Digestive Fire Practice)



Series/Group: Pranayama Practice/Meditation

Benefits/Comments: Agnisara, or "fanning the fire", activates the digestive fire and energizes the body. It is a breathing and abdominal exercise that has a stimulating effect on metabolism, strengthens the immune system and is helpful for diabetes. It strengthens and stimulates the abdominal and pelvic area promoting optimum health of the abdominal organs. It increases energy levels. It is said that, if in a given day you do no other physical exercise, do this one practice. Practice on an empty stomach, preferably in the early morning and after the bowels have been emptied.

** Note ** The word agni means "fire", the word sara means "essence" and the word kriya means "action".

** Contraindications ** Do not perform this exercise if you have high blood pressure, heart disease, acute duodenal or peptic ulcers, overactive thyroid gland, chronic diarrhea or are recovering from an abdominal operation. Consult a Doctor before practicing this technique if there is any disease of the lower abdominal region.

** Pregnant or Menstruating ** Do not perform this if you are pregnant or menstruating. It is however a good postnatal exercise to tighten and strengthen the abdominal and pelvic muscles.

Variation Comments: Standing with hands on knees.

Transition Out: Tadasana

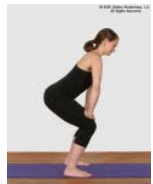
Drishti: Point on floor

Low/High Reps: 1 / 1



Technique: 1

Description: Stand upright with your feet a foot to a foot and a half apart. Your knees are in alignment with your feet. Keep your back relaxed.



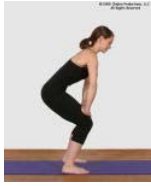
Technique: 2 Drishti: Point on floor

Description: Bend your knees slightly and bend your upper body forward to a 60-70 degree angle. Place your hands just above your knees on your thighs with your elbows extended. Your arms are supporting most of the weight of your upper body.

Technique: 3

Description: Take a few natural breaths as you notice the mild effort required to breathe because of the force of gravity in this position.

Asana: 1 - Agnisara Kriya (Awakening Digestive Fire Practice)



Technique: 4
Description: Take a deep inhale focusing your attention on the lower abdomen. As you exhale, contract the muscles in the lower abdomen working your way in and up the abdomen through the middle abdomen to the upper abdomen and ending with the intercostal muscles of the rib cage keeping the tension in all areas as you progress. Exhale with measured breath throughout the whole exhale and exhale as thoroughly as possible. You want to focus your exhale on control not speed.



Technique: 5
Description: Now inhale and reverse the process. Relax your chest, upper abdomen, middle abdomen and then your lower abdomen.

Technique: 6
Description: Repeat steps 4 and 5 beginning with 9 rounds up to 108 rounds. Practice daily in a controlled fashion. Control is very important to receive maximum benefits. Remember this is not a stomach lift as it starts with the pelvis and ends at the pelvis.

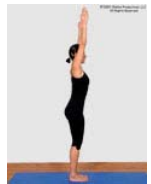
Technique: 7
Description: When you have completed your rounds, inhale up to Tadasana slowly.

Asana: 2 - Uttanasana (Forward Extension)



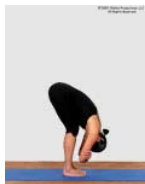
Series/Group: Forward Bends
Benefits/Comments: Stretches the hamstrings, calves and hips. Strengthens the thighs and knees.
Variation Comments: Variation clasping elbows
Transition Out: Samasthiti
Drishti: Nose
Low/High Reps: 1 / 1

Technique: 1
Description: Stand with your feet hip-width apart (8-10 inches).



Technique: 2
Description: Inhale tuck your tailbone, engage Mula Bandha, raise your arms overhead and clasp your elbows.

Asana: 2 - Uttanasana (Forward Extension)



Technique: 3 Drishti: Nose
Description: Exhale full forward bend placing your hands on the floor. Bend your knees if necessary. Drop the head allowing the weight of the head to lengthen the cervical spine. As you fold forward, hollow out the space below the navel as this will assist in elongating the spine. While maintaining strong straight legs fold deeply enough through the pelvis to create a straight spine. Press your front body onto your legs allowing no light to seep through. This insures integrity of the lower lumbar. Also, make sure your thighbones are rolling slightly inward from the top. Do not roll in from the knees as this will create a knee knock which is incorrect. Relax your head and hold for 5 breaths.

Technique: 4
Description: Inhale up to a standing position keeping a straight spine.

Technique: 5
Description: Exhale release your arms to your sides.

Asana: 3 - Malasana Variations (Garland Pose Variations (yogi squats))



Series/Group: Standing
Benefits/Comments: Increases lower body flexibility and reduces stiffness as we age. Squatting opens your pelvic area and hips. It also can help relieve lower back discomfort and stiffness.
Variation Comments: Hands in prayer position
Transition Out: Samasthiti (Perfect Standing)
Drishti: Forward
Low/High Reps: 1 / 5

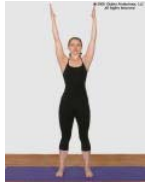


Technique: 1
Description: Stand in Samasthiti in the center of your mat and face the long edge of the mat.



Technique: 2
Description: Step your feet to a wider stance, more than hip-width, with your toes out.

Asana: 3 - Malasana Variations (Garland Pose Variations (yogi squats))



Technique: 3
Description: Inhale your arms over your head keeping your gaze forward.



Technique: 4
Description: Exhale full forward bend taking your hands to the floor in front of you.



Technique: 5
Description: Take an inhale while you are in your forward bend.



Technique: 6
Description: Exhale begin to squat by lowering your pelvis toward the floor to a comfortable but strong position. Keep your knees in the same direction as your toes.

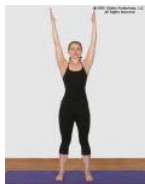


Technique: 7
Description: Inhale your hands into Namaste (prayer position). Feel yourself lengthening your spine out of your pelvis to the top of your head as if someone has a string on the top of your head pulling you toward the ceiling. You should feel a nice stretch in your inner thighs/groin area. Hold this pose for 5-8 Ujjayi breaths.



Technique: 8
Description: Exhale place your hands on the floor in front of you and slowly lift your sit bones back up to the ceiling with your legs straight into a forward bend.

Asana: 3 - Malasana Variations (Garland Pose Variations (yogi squats))



Technique: 9
Description: Inhale sweep your arms to the side with a straight spine and come up slowly to a standing position.

Technique: 10
Description: Repeat steps 3-9 for 1-5 cycles.



Technique: 11
Description: Exhale release the pose and stand in Samasthiti for a few breaths.

Asana: 4 - Kapalbhati Pranayama (Cleansing Breath)



Series/Group: Pranayama Practice/Meditation

Benefits/Comments: Energizes the mind for mental activity. It can remove sleepiness in preparation for meditation. Purifies the Ida and Pin Gala nadis (subtle passage in which the prana moves). The Ida is the nadi that terminates at the left nostril and the Pin Gala terminates at the right nostril. It balances and strengthens the nervous system as well as tones the digestive organs.

The Sanskrit work "Kapal" means cranium or forehead and "bhati" means light, splendor, perception or knowledge. So it is a practice which brings a state of light or clarity to the frontal region of the brain.

**** Contraindications **** Should not be practiced by anyone with high blood pressure, vertigo, heart disease, epilepsy, stroke, hernia or gastric ulcer.

**** Note **** If you experience any pain or dizziness, stop the practice and sit quietly for some time. When the sensation of pain or dizziness has passed, you can try the practice again with more awareness and less force. If it continues, you need to consult a yoga teacher for guidance.

Be sure to practice on an empty stomach 3-4 hours after meals. You can perform this at any time of day. You can practice it after an asana practice and before meditating.

Variation Comments: Sitting in Sukhasana. The repetitions refer to the number of rounds.

Transition Out: Sukhasana (Easy Pose) with natural breathing.

Drishti: Eyes Closed

Low/High Reps: 3 / 5

Asana: 4 - Kapalbhata Pranayama (Cleansing Breath)

Technique: 1

Description: Repeat steps 3 and 4 as rapid breaths in succession for 10 breaths. This completes 1 round of Kapalbhata Pranayama. Practice 3-5 rounds.

**** Note **** Be sure to use your abdomen and not your chest for this breath work. You can increase the number of respirations from 10 to 20 as your abdominal muscles become stronger.



Technique: 2

Description: Sit in Sukhasana (Easy Pose). Keep your spine straight and your hands resting on your knees in Jnana mudra. Relax your whole body and your face. Close your eyes.

Technique: 3

Description: Exhale and empty your lungs.

Technique: 4

Description: Take an inhale slowly and deeply through your nostrils filling your belly 3/4's full with air.

Technique: 5

Description: Exhale with intention by contracting your abdominal muscles and release the air from your belly. Think of it as a "snap" of the belly toward the spine. Don't strain as you do this. You are forcing your exhale and your body will automatically take care of the inhale.

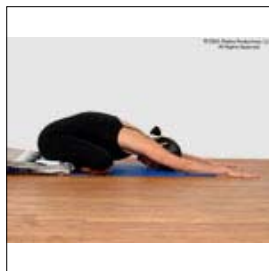
Technique: 6

Description: Let your inhale happen passively. Your body will naturally respond to the forced exhale with an inhale. Just let it happen. There should be no effort to inhale. It is spontaneous.

Technique: 7

Description: When you have completed your rounds, release the breath and sit comfortably breathing naturally. Become aware of the feelings you are having. You may feel emptiness and calm.

Asana: 5 - Sukhasana (extended) (Easy Pose (extended))



Series/Group: Forward Bends

Benefits/Comments: Stretches the back, shoulders and arms. Opens the hips.

Variation Comments: Variation with Arms Extended

Transition Out: Sukhasana

Drishti: Nose

Low/High Reps: 1 / 1

Asana: 5 - Sukhasana (extended) (Easy Pose (extended))



Technique: 1

Description: Support your hips with one or two blankets. Sit in cross-legged position with your feet extended 6-8 inches from your groin line.

Technique: 2

Description: Inhale your spine up straight and strong.



Technique: 3

Description: Exhale place your elbows on your knees and extend the front body away from the pelvis. Ground out through the sit bones. You are moving in two different directions. From your waist down extend your energy into the floor. From your waist up extend your energy through the top of the head. Hold for one minute. Breathe!



Technique: 4

Description: If you feel as if you can move deeper into this asana, extend your arms in front of you and fold forward from the pelvis. Feel your pelvis tilt forward as you remain grounded through the sit bones. Hold for one minute. Breathe!

Technique: 5

Description: Inhale come up slowly with a straight spine.

Technique: 6

Description: Now, switch your leg positions and repeat steps 3-4.

Technique: 7

Description: Inhale come up slowly with a straight spine.

Technique: 8

Description: Exhale release the pose.