

Malasana

Garland pose (Mala means garland) The posture resembles a garland of hands around the body.

(with wall support for sacrum, arms extended parallel to floor)
(away from wall, heels on rolled blanket, arms extended parallel to floor, knees together)

- Read:
 - o Gem at 86, 88, 161-163
1. Sit in Dandasana (Plate 23). Raise the knees and squat on the haunches with the feet together and the inner sides of the feet, the thighs, and the calves touching each other. The backs of the thighs touch the calves and hinges of the heels.
 2. Stretch the arms forward, in line with the shoulders, with the palms facing the floor (Plate 45).
 3. Now, take the arms backwards, entwine the shins, and hold the back of the ankles and heels with the hands. Exhale and stretch spine forward (Plate 46).
 4. Stay in this position for 10 to 15 seconds with normal breathing.
 5. Remove the hands from the ankles, bend the trunk forward, take the arms behind the back and clasp your hands. Stretch the spine towards the head so that it is parallel to the floor (Plate 47).
 6. Maintain this posture for 10 to 15 seconds, breathing normally. Watch this three points:

- (i) each position is more difficult than the previous one and stretches different parts of the body;
 - (ii) watch the range of movement of the ankles;
 - (iii) watch how firmly the palms have to be gripped in order to expend the spine.
7. Release the hands, lift up the trunk, sit on the buttocks, and release the feet.

Special instructions:

- 1) For those who are overweight the position shown in plate 45 is very helpful, as it strengthens the back.
 - 2) Entwine the arms round legs and rest the head on the knee to relieve backaches.
- o LoY at 262-266
- There are two different techniques for doing this asana which are given below
1. Squat on the haunches with the feet together. The soles and the heels should rest completely on the floor. Raise the seat from the floor and balance. (Plate 317)
 2. Now widen the knees and move the trunk forward.
 3. Exhale, wrap the arms round the bent legs and rest the palms on the floor. (Plate 318)
 4. Take the hands one by one behind the back and clasp the fingers. (Plate 319 and 320)

5. Then stretch the back and neck up.
6. Remain in this position for 30-60 seconds breathing normally.
7. Now exhale, bend forward and rest the head on the floor. ((Plate 321) Stay in this position also for 30-60 seconds with normal breathing.
8. Inhale, raise the head from the floor and return to position 5.
9. Release the hands and rest on the floor.

- o List classification according to Gem, pp. 95-105.

p.98 Section II: Asanas: Forward Bends #28

The second section consists of forward bending asanas in which posterior portion of the body is stretched and extended. These prepare the body to proceed further and bring consistency and evenness in the development of physical and mental pliability.

- o List 3-5 key points to get shape of pose.
- o List 2-3 common teaching points.
- o List key benefits.

The asana tones the abdominal organs and relieves backaches.

Should be practiced if one suffers from numbness, heaviness, and aches during menstruation. For complaints such as cramp in the muscles, pain in the stomach, waist, and back, heaviness in the abdomen, and burning sensations practice the following: Baddha Konasana (Plate 35), Supta Baddha Konasana (Plate 38, 39), Upavistha Konasana (Plates 40, 41), **Malasana** (Plate 46), Virasana (Plate 49), Supta Virasana (Plate 58), Bharadvajasana I (Plate 125), Maha Mudra (Plate 210), Viloma Pranayama I & II, and Savasana (Plate 212).

This posture is a boon for women as it relieves backache and removes arthritic pains of the knees and the ankles. It is good for bleeding piles.

It is one of the asanas that are extremely beneficial for women, especially for those with menstrual problems. With these asanas the menstrual cycle is regulated and menstrual disorders corrected. These asanas also tone the abdominal organs, prevent the accumulation of fat in the region of the lower abdomen, and assist in the more efficient functioning of the excretory system. They strengthen the spine and the muscular system of the lower back and waist. They relieve one from backache and rheumatism. They should be practiced regularly and gradually their duration should be increased. They have a soothing and relaxing effect on the brain.

- o List contraindications.
- o List modifications for:
 - Neck and shoulder pain
 - Sore knees
 - Sore backs
 - Sore hips



Salamba Sarvangasana I

Salamba Sarvangasana I (supported Shoulderstand) All-limbs Pose

Alamba means a prop, a support and sa together with or accompanied by. Salamba, therefore, means supported or propped up. Sarvanga (Sarva=all, whole, entire, complete; anga=limb or body) means the entire body or all the limbs. In this pose the whole body benefits from the exercise, hence the name.

Salamba means with support. Sarvanga means the entire body. In this asana the whole body benefits, hence the name.

- Read:
 - PC at 84
- lie on your back with your shoulders on a spread blanket and head on the floor
- have the arms straight by the sides, elbows straight, hands extending towards the feet
- roll the shoulder bones back and down, the shoulders should be away from the head
- bend your knees towards the chest
- press the hands down and swing the legs above the head
- raise the hips and trunk up perpendicularly, the chest comes to touch the chin
- support the back with the palms of the hands, pressing the upper arms down
- raise the hips further
- straighten the legs

- stay in the position for a minute in the beginning with even breathing. Later, increase the duration from three to five minutes
- exhale, release the hands and gradually slide down

Preparation for Salamba Sarvangasana with the support of the wall – Lie down on your back with bent legs and be very close to the wall. Put the feet on the wall. Press the bottom of the feet against the wall. Lift the buttocks and back up. Go closer to the wall. Support the back with the palms and learn to lift the trunk as high as possible.

- Gem at 45, 53, 54, 82, **197-201**, 215-216
 1. Spread a blanket, folded fourfold, on the floor. Lie flat on the back with the legs and the feet touching each other. Tighten the knees and stretch the arms alongside the body. Keep the shoulders down and move away from the head. Keep the palms facing down. The head and the neck should be in line with the spine (Plate 80). Stay in this position for a while, breathing normally.
 2. Exhale and bend the knees over the chest. Stay in this position for 5 seconds (Plate 81)
 3. Press the hands down and with slight swing raise the waist and the hips, keeping the knees bent and letting them reach beyond the head. Support the hips with the hands and raise the trunk (Plate 82). Take a breath.
 4. Raise the hips and the thighs further and support the back with the hands (Plate 83). The body, from shoulders to knees, is now perpendicular to the ground. The top of the sternum touches the chin. Keep the palms on the back where the kidneys are situated, with the thumbs pointing toward the front of the body and four fingers pointing towards the spine.
 5. Contract the buttocks so that the lumbar region and the coccyx remain tucked in and straighten the legs towards the ceiling (Plate 84).
 6. Stay in this final position for 5 minutes with normal breathing. Gradually increase the duration. In the initial stages 2 to 3 minutes are sufficient. Observe the following points:
 - (i) press the palms and the fingers into the back to straighten the whole body from armpit to toes;
 - (ii) do not allow the elbows to spread outwards, but keep them in as much as possible;
 - (iii) keep the shoulders back and away from the direction of the head; move the upper arms towards each other.
 7. Exhale, bend the knees, and gradually slide the buttocks and the back downwards without jerking the spine. After reaching the position as in Plate 82, release the hands from the back, take the buttocks down to the ground and straighten the legs.

Special Instructions:

- (1) Those who cannot do this asana independently should seek help of an assistant in the beginning. Come to position as in Plate 81, and ask the assistant to hold the ankles and to push the legs in the direction of the head; at the same time you should raise the hips and the back and come to the final position of the asana (Plate 84). Keep your body erect and firm while the helper supports your back and buttocks with the knees.
- (2) If no assistance is available, a chair or a stool can serve the purpose. Release the hands from the back one by one and grip the chair or the stool while maintaining balance (Plate 86).
- (3) Or, follow Section VIII "Yoga Kurunta", (Plates 164, 164a).
- (4) If this is not possible, first learn to perform Halasana. While in Halasana, stretch the legs upward, one by one, and come to Salamba Sarvangasana.

After mastering Technique A, learn Thechnique B which follows:

1. Lie flat on the floor (Plate 80).
2. Straighten the knees and lift both the legs together so that they are at right angles to the trunk. (See Urdva Prasrita Padasana, Plate 109; in the illustration the arms are extended over the head, but here keep them alongside the body.) Keep the toes pointing upwards. Breath normally.
3. Exhale and raise the legs higher, in the direction of the head, by lifting the hips and the back from the floor. Support the back with the hands.
4. Keep the trunk at right angles to the floor and extend the legs further up towards the ceiling.
5. Exhale, bring the legs in line with the buttocks. Tuck the back, the waist, and the buttocks inwards so that the body is perpendicular to the floor (Plate 84).
6. Breathing normally, stay in this final position for 5 minutes or longer, observing the following points:
 - (i) stretch the back of the trunk up;
 - (ii) broaden the chest;
 - (iii) tighten the knees and do not turn the thighs outwards;
 - (iv) keep the feet together.
7. Exhale, release the hands and gradually slide down until the back is on the floor and the legs are perpendicular (Plate 109). Lower the legs, keeping them straight.

Special instructions:

- (1) The elbows should not be more than a shoulder-width apart. Widening the distance will result in the collapse of the chest.
- (2) While lifting the body up, the top of the sternum should touch the chin in Jalandhara Bandha (see Ch.XIV, Nos. 29-31), but there should be no choking in the throat; if you cough at this time or on lowering the body, it is a sure sign of pressure on the throat. Do not try to touch the chin to

the sternum bone. Rather, the action should be reverse: lift the chest in such a way that the sternum touches the chin, otherwise the benefits of Sarvangasana are lost.

- (3) If the chest is not properly lifted, there is difficulty in breathing. Do not turn the neck sideways for easy breathing, but broaden the chest and raise the trunk.
 - (4) Some will experience breathing difficulty due to heavy breasts or improper lift of the chest. They should raise the height of the blanket by folding it again, or by adding another folded blanket some two or three inches high atop the first one. The fold of the top blanket should come a few inches away from the edge of the lower one to make room for the head to rest on the lower fold so that the shoulders and the lower cervical area (C6, C7) may rest on the upper fold. Now perform Sarvangasana. This additional blanket increases the height by 2 to 3 inches and helps one to breathe freely, relieving the pressure on the thyroid glands. This method (Plate 87) makes Sarvangasana easy to perform.
 - (5) Those who have heavy buttocks will find that their legs lean forwards, forming an angle and resulting in heaviness in the chest. They should take the aid of a rope (Plates 164, 164a), a bench (Plate 86), or an assistant.
- LoY at 57, 205-213

Technique for beginners

1. Lie flat on the back on the carpet keeping the legs stretched out, tighten the knees. Place the hands by the side of the legs, palms down. (Plate 219) Take a few deep breaths.
 2. Exhale, bend the knees. (Plate 220) Take two breaths.
 3. Raise the hips from the floor with an exhalation and rest the hands on them by bending the arms at the elbow. (Plate 221) Take two breaths.
 4. Exhale, raise the trunk up perpendicularly supported by the hands until the chest touches the chin. (Plate 222)
 5. Only the back of the head and neck, the shoulders and the backs of the arms up to the elbows should rest on the floor. Place the hands in the middle of the spine as in Plate 222. Take two breaths.
 6. Exhale and stretch the legs straight with the toes pointing up. (Front view: Plate 223. Back view: Plate 224)
 7. Stay in the position for 5 minutes with even breathing.
 8. Exhale, gradually slide down, release the hands, lie flat and relax.
 9. If you cannot do the asana without support use a stool and follow the technique. See Plate 225.
- List classification according to Gem, pp. 95-105.

p.99 Section IV: Asana: Inverted #38

The fourth section deals with inverted postures which help one recover from strains and stresses of everyday life. They give vitality, mental balance, and emotional stability.

p.101 Section VIII: Asanas: Yoga Kurunta #79

The eighth section deals with "Yoga Kurunta" which is a method of performing the asanas with the help of a rope to enable one to attain accuracy, agility, and balance. It is good for stiff people, old people, and for those who have fear complexes or who cannot perform the asanas independently.

- List 3-5 key points to get shape of pose.
- List 2-3 common teaching points.
- List key benefits.

p. 200-201

Sarvangasana is one of the most beneficial of all the asanas. If Sirsasana is King, Sarvangasana is the Queen of all the asanas. Where Sirsasana develops the manly qualities of will-power, sharpness of the brain and clarity of thought, Sarvangasana develops the feminine qualities of patience and emotional stability. It is considered to be the mother of asanas. As a mother struggles through her life for the happiness of her children, the "mother of asanas" strives for peace and health of the body. It is no exaggeration to call this posture "Trailokya Cintamani" "a rare gem among the three worlds".

Sarvangasana, as its name implies, has an effect on the entire system. Due to inverted position, venous blood taken to the heart for purification without strain because of the force of gravity. Oxygenated blood is circulated to the chest area, relieving breathlessness, asthma, bronchitis, throat ailments, and palpitation. The posture is of great help in anemic conditions and in case of low vitality.

Due to the firm chinlock the thyroid and parathyroid glands get ample supply of blood, thereby increasing their efficiency in maintaining the body and the brain in good balance. Because the head remains firm due to the chinlock, the nerves are soothed, the brain is calmed, and the headaches disappear. Common ailments such as colds and nasal disturbances are cured by the practice of this posture.

Sarvangasana is very soothing to the nervous system and therefore good to practice when one is tensed, upset, irritated, fatigued, or when suffering from nervous breakdown and insomnia.

It is an excellent aid to digestion and elimination, to free the body of toxins, to rid one of constipation, to cure one of intestinal ulcers, colitis and piles.

It corrects urinary disorders, uterine displacement, and menstrual disorders.

It gives peace, strength, and vigor to the practitioner and is recommended as the best recuperative treatment after long illness. To avoid prolonged illness and to maintain robust health, practice Sarvangasana.

p. 215

They (Sarvangasana and its variations) are good for stomachaches, diarrhea, intestinal disorders, and ulcers. They relieve abdominal irritation.

In all, the asanas from this section have a great curative value in diseases of lungs, disorders of the chest and the throat, biliousness, acidity, diabetes, dysentery, complaints of the liver and spleen, morbid conditions of the bladder, the uterus and the ovaries. They are valuable for headaches, brain disorders, loss of memory, and emotional problems.

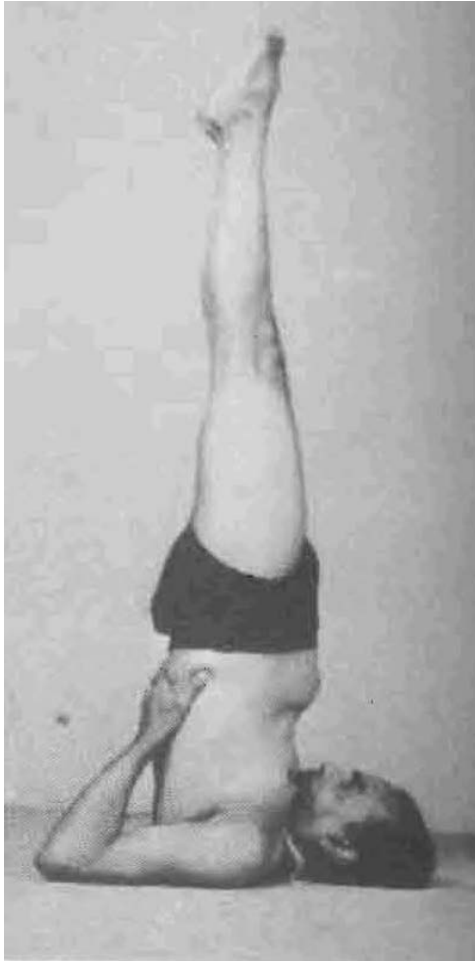
p. 53

Deficiency in the internal secretion of the thyroid gland can result in miscarriage. Women should therefore practice asanas such as Sirsasana, Sarvangasana, Setu-bandha Sarvangasana, Janu-Sirsasana from section IV and II before conception takes place. The importance of the proper functioning of the ductless glands for good health cannot be over-emphasized and Yogasanas are truly beneficial to safeguard against miscarriage owing to defects or abnormal conditions such as inflammation or displacement of the uterus.

- List contraindications.
- List modifications for:
 - Neck and shoulder pain

Often people complain of neck pain or choking, which is either due to fear or lack of proper lift in Salamba Sarvangasana. In that case, fold extra blankets for the shoulders so that the head remains lower than the shoulders. However, the shoulders, upper arms and elbows should remain in one level on the piled blankets.

- Sore knees
- Sore backs
- Sore hips



Halasana

Plough Pose (Hala means Plough; this postures resembles a plough.)

(feet on stool)

- Read:
 - o PC at 88-89
 - a) swinging from the floor
 - adjust the blankets as for Salamba Sarvangasana.
 - lie down on your back.
 - bend your knees, take a swing, raising the legs and buttocks up.
 - take your toes to touch the floor.
 - place your palms on your back, support your back, raise the spine up, maintain the lift of the chest.
 - keep both of the legs straight, knees tight.

- exhale, bend knees and roll down.
- b) from Salamba Sarvangasana
- be in Salamba Sarvangasana.
- keeping the legs straight exhale and lower them both to the floor until the toes touch the floor. Take the chest and hips slightly back while you do this.
- keep the palms on the back to help keep the back lifted and perpendicular to the ground.
- keep the shin bones and thighs lifted.
- if you are unable to control the legs, do one at a time.
- to come up, inhale and lift the legs up to Sarvangasana.
- either come down or do the following variations.

o Gem at 45, 54, 79, 80, 82, 84, 87, 89, 90, 92, 93, 120, 141, 273-274, 258-259 , **201-203**

1. Be in Salamba Sarvangasana (Plate 84).
2. Lower the legs over the head from their vertical position, taking the chest and the hips slightly back to maintain the extension of the body.
3. Exhale, do not bend the knees but extend the legs further, and place the toes on the floor.
4. Remove the hands from the hips and extend the arms beyond the head. Do not bend the elbows. Keep the palms facing the ceiling (Plate 88).
5. Stay in this final position for 3 to 5 minutes, breathing normally. Gradually increase the duration. Observe the following points:
 - (i) extend the trunk towards the ceiling;
 - (ii) tighten the knees so that there considerable space between the face and the thighs;
 - (iii) press toes firmly to the ground and stretch the hamstrings so that the thighs, the buttocks, and the back of the trunk are raised.
6. Take the buttocks back, bend the legs, and raise the feet upwards; come to the position as in Plate 82.
7. Slide down, keeping the palms by the sides (Plate 81). Extend the legs (Plate 80).

Special Instructions:

- (1) Those who are on the heavier side and cannot rest the feet on the floor, or who cannot keep the trunk upright if the feet are down, should follow the technique given below:
 - (i) place a stool 1½ to 2 feet high near the head;
 - (ii) lie flat on the back (Plate 80);
 - (III) bend the knees and bring the thighs towards the abdomen (Plate 81); take a few breaths;
 - (iv) exhale and with a swing raise the buttocks and the back off the floor; keep hands on the back (Plate 82);

- (v) place the toes on the stool; keep the arms stretched over the head or extended backwards, or hold the edge of the blanket with the hands and press the arms down to raise the trunk (Plate 89)
- (vi) stay 3 to 5 minutes, breathing normally;
- (vii) place hands on the back, bend the knees and take the buttocks back;
- (viii) lift the feet off the stool and carefully slide down (Plates 82, 81, 80).
- (2) In conditions where there is much fat around the stomach or the thighs, where there are headaches, migraines, breathing difficulties, high blood pressure, profuse bleeding, or where the nerves have to be rested, Halasana should be practiced as shown on Plate 90, with the eyes closed. The thighs should rest completely on the stool. This relieves one from pressure on the diaphragm and from a feeling of tightness in the head. If the breasts are heavy, a blanket on the floor, as described for Sarvangasana, is helpful. The arms should be pointing towards the feet.
- (3) When you become skillful and can practice Halasana as in Plate 88, both the arms should be extended behind the back, away from the direction of the feet. First hold the side of the blanket and stretch the arms as in Plate 89. In this position the shoulders are stretched and the chest is broadened (Plate 91).
- (4) For hot flushes, practice Halasana as shown in Plate 90.

- LoY at **156-157**

- LoY p.216-220

It is a part of Sarvangasana I and a continuation thereof.

1. Do Salamba Sarvangasana I (Plate 223) with a firm chinlock.
2. Release the chinlock, lower the trunk slightly, moving the arms and legs over the head and resting the toes on the floor. (plate 238)
3. Tighten the knees by pulling up the hamstring muscles at the back of the thighs and raise the trunk. (Plate 239)
4. Place the hands in the middle of the back and press it to keep the trunk perpendicular to the floor. (Plate 240)
5. Stretch the arms on the floor in the direction opposite to that of the legs (Plate 241)
6. Hook the thumbs and stretch the arms and legs. (Plate 242)
7. Interlock the fingers (Plate 243) and turn the wrists so that thumbs rest on the floor. (Plate 244) Stretch the palms along with the fingers, tighten the arms at the elbows and pull them from the shoulders.
8. The legs and the hands are stretched in opposite directions and this stretches the spine completely.
9. While interlocking the fingers, it is advisable to change the interlock. Suppose that the right thumb touches the floor first, maintain the position for a minute. Then release the grip and bring the left thumb first on the floor, follow the interlock, finger by finger and stretch out the arms for the same length of time. This will lead to harmonious development and elasticity of both the shoulders, elbows and wrists.

10. In the beginning interlocking will be difficult. By gradual practice of the above mentioned positions, you will interlock the fingers easily.
11. In the beginning it is also difficult to keep the toes firmly on the floor behind the head. If you lengthen the timing and stretch of Sarvangasana I (Plate 223) before doing Halasana, the toes will remain longer on the floor.
12. Remain in the attainable position from one to five minutes with normal breathing.
13. Release the hands. Raise the legs up to Sarvangasana I and gradually slide down to the floor. Lie flat on the back and relax.

For persons suffering from high blood pressure the following technique is recommended for doing Halasana before they attempt Salamba Sarvangasana I

1. Lie flat on the back on the floor.
2. Exhale, slowly raise the legs to a perpendicular position and stay there breathing normally for about 10 seconds.
3. Exhale, bring the legs over and beyond the head and touch the toes on the floor. Keep the toes on the floor and the legs stiff at the knees.
4. If you have difficulty in keeping the toes on the floor, then place a chair or a stool behind the head and rest the toes on it.
5. If the breathing becomes heavy or fast do not rest the toes on the floor, but on a stool or chair. Then fullness or pressure is not felt in the head.
6. Extend the arms over the head, keep them on the floor and stay in this position with normal breathing for 3 minutes.
7. Throughout the asana, gaze at the tip of the nose with the eyes shut.

- o List classification according to Gem, pp. 95-105.

p.99 Section IV: Asana: Inverted #48

The fourth section deals with inverted postures which help one recover from strains and stresses of everyday life. They give vitality, mental balance, and emotional stability.

p.102 Section VIII: Asanas: Yoga Kurunta #79

The eighth section deals with "Yoga Kurunta" which is a method of performing the asanas with the help of a rope to enable one to attain accuracy, agility, and balance. It is good for stiff people, old people, and for those who have fear complexes or who cannot perform the asanas independently.

- o List 3-5 key points to get shape of pose.
- o List 2-3 common teaching points.

Learn to maintain the lift of the spine as in Ardha Halasana when the toes touch the floor.

- o List key benefits.

Halasana is beneficial in headaches and fatigue; it soothes the brain and the nerves; it relieves hot flushes. It is curative in menstrual and urinary disorders. It is good for arthritis and stiffness of the shoulders and the arms.

The effects of Halasana is the same as that of Sarvangasana I. (Plate 223) In addition, the abdominal organs are rejuvenated due to contraction. The spine receives an extra supply of blood due to the forward bend and this helps to relieve backache. Cramps in the hands are cured by interlocking and stretching the palms and fingers. People suffering from stiff shoulders and elbows, lumbago and arthritis of the back find relief in this asana. Gripping pain in the stomach due to wind is also relieved and lightness is felt immediately.

The pose is good for people with tendency for high blood pressure. If they perform Halasana first and then Sarvangasana I, they will not feel rush of blood or the sensation of fullness in the head.

Halasana is a preparatory pose to Paschimottanasana. (Plate 160) If one improves in Halasana, the resulting mobility of the back will enable one to perform Paschimottanasana well.

- o List contraindications.
- o List modifications for:
 - Neck and shoulder pain
 - Sore knees
 - Sore backs
 - Sore hips

