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EFFECT OF ASANAS ON SCHOOL BOYS – A STUDY

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INTRODUCTION:

Today's "Representative Child" is described as stressed out, under nourished, and sedentary. The complexity posed by these profiles demands treatment that taps into both the physical and the psychosocial domain. A study by Parshad found the state of the mind and that of the body to be intimately related. If the mind is relaxed, the muscles in the body will also be relaxed. Stress produces a state of physical and mental tension. Yoga, developed thousands of years ago, is recognized as a form of mind-body medicine. There are many forms of Yoga with emphasis on various aspects of body mechanics, fitness, and spirituality. Parshad's study demonstrates that Yoga's physical postures and improves muscle strength, flexibility, blood circulation and oxygen uptake and hormone function. In addition, Parshad found that relaxation induced by meditation helps to stabilize the autonomic nervous system with a tendency toward parasympathetic dominance; physiological benefits that follow help individuals who practice yoga to become more resilient to stressful conditions and reduce a variety of important risk factors for various diseases for example body postures and Thyroid etc.

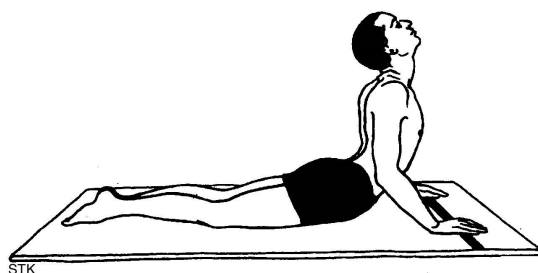
1. BHUJANGASANA

Bhujanga means a serpent. In this posture, lie flat on the floor, face downwards, lift the body up from the trunk and throw the head back like a serpent about to strike.

Technique

1. Lay on the floor face downwards. Extended the legs, keeping the feet together. Kept the knees tight and the toes pointing.
2. Rested the palms by the side of the pelvic region.
3. Inhaled, pressed the palms firmly on the floor and pulled the trunk up Took two breaths.
4. Inhaled, lifted the body up from the trunk until the pubis was in contact with the floor and stayed in this position with the weight on the legs and palms.
5. Contracted the anus and the buttocks, tightened the thighs.
6. Maintained the pose for about 20 seconds, breathing normally.
7. Exhaled, bent the elbows and rested the trunk on the floor. Repeated the pose three times and then released.

Effects : The posture is a panacea for an injured spine and in cases of slight displacement of spinal discs the practice of this pose replaces the discs in their original position. The spinal region is toned and the chest fully expended.



2. PADMASANA

Padma means a lotus. This is the lotus posture, one of most important and useful asanas.

Technique

1. Sat on the floor with the legs straight.
2. Bent the right leg at the knee, held the right foot with the hands and placed it at the root of the left thigh so that the right heel was near the navel.
3. Then bent the left leg, and holding the left foot with the hands place it over the right at the root, the heel being near the navel. The soles of the feet were turned up. This is the basic Padmasana pose.
4. People not used to sitting on the floor seldom have flexible knees. At the start they will feel excruciating pain around the knees. By perseverance and continued practice the pain will gradually subside and they can then stay in the pose comfortably for a long time.
5. From the base to the neck the spine remained erect. The arms were stretched out, the right hand being placed on the right knee and the left hand on the left knee. The forefingers and the thumbs were bent and touch each other. Another way of placing the hands was in the middle where the feet cross each other with one palm upon the other.
6. Changed the legs position by placing the left foot over the right thigh and the right foot over the left thigh. This will develop the legs evenly.

Effects : After the initial knee pains have been overcome, Padmasana is one of the most relaxing poses. The body being in a sitting posture, is at rest without being sloppy. The position of the crossed legs and the erect back keeps the mind attentive and alert. Hence it is one of the asanas recommended for practicing Pranayama (breath control).

On the purely physical level, the pose is good for curing stiffness in the knees and ankles. Since the blood is made to circulate in the lumbar region and the abdomen, the spine and the abdominal organs are toned.



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3. MARICHYASANA

This asana is dedicated to the sage, Marichi.



Techniques

1. The subject sat on the floor in Dandasana. Bent the right knee, and pulled the right foot toward the right thigh till it touched the right buttock. Kept the toes pointing forward and pressed the foot down on the floor. Placed the palms on the floor beside the buttocks and fingers pointed forward.
2. Exhaled, and lifted the spine. Turned the torso ninety degree to the right. Bent the left arm and moving the left shoulder forward, stretched it out against the right thigh. Extended this arm from the arm pit to the elbow. (Did not allow the left leg to tilt to the left and the body weight did not fall on the right palm).
3. Pressed the right ankle down on the floor and turned the torso further to the right (Pushing the left arm pit against the outer side of the right knee helps to rotate the torso more effectively. The turning must be from the waist and not the chest). Then with exhalation encircled the right knee with the left arm.
4. Exhaled and lifted the right palm off the floor. Took the right arm behind the back. Bent it, and brought it toward the left hand. Then, first held the fingers, then the palm, and finally the wrist of the left hand with the right hand. Lifted the torso and rotated further to the right. Turned the head to the left and looked over the shoulders. This pose was maintained for 20 seconds with even breathing.

Effects : Regular practice of the asana stretches the entire body and rejuvenates it, increases energy levels, tones and massages the abdominal organs, improves the functioning of the liver, spleen, pancreas, kidneys and intestines. Reduces fat around the waist line, alleviates backache, relieves lumbago.



4. HALASANA

Hala means a plough, the shape of which this posture resembles, hence the name. It is a part of Salamba Sarvangasana and the continuation thereof.

Technique

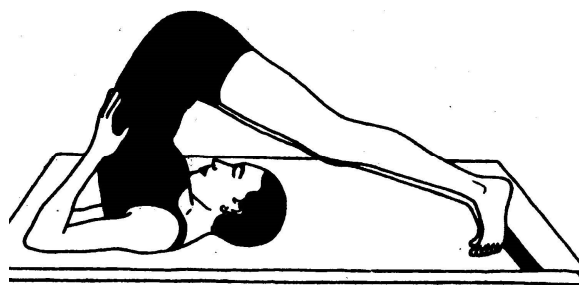
1. Did Salamba Sarvangasana I with a firm chinlock.
2. Released the chinlock, lowered the trunk until the shins were perpendicular to the floor.

3. Brought the bent knees over the forehead before lowering the legs to the floor and breathed evenly.
4. Swung the hips and buttocks over the head until they were perpendicular to the floor and in line with the shoulders. Then slowly straightened the legs, and lowered them until the toes rested on the floor. Raised the chest, bringing the sternum to touch the chin. Stretched the arms on the floor in the direction opposite to that of the legs. Then interlocked the fingers firmly at the knuckles, rotated the wrists until the hands pointed towards the ceiling. Stayed in this pose for a minute with even breathing. (Iyengar, 2001).

Note: 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 leaving the left thumb first on the floor, follow the inter-lock, 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, elbow and wrists.

5. Released the hands. Reaided the legs up to Sarvangasana and gradually slid down to the floor. Lay flat on the back and relaxed.

Effects : The effect of Halasana is the same as that of Sarvangasana. 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 also cured by interlocking and stretching the palms and fingers.



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5. SAVASANA

In this asana the body is kept as motionless as a 'corpse'. The word 'sava' means corpse in Sanskrit. Savasana removes fatigue and soothes the mind. Each part of the body is positioned properly to achieve total relaxation when we practice this asana, organs of perception – the eyes, ears and tongue – withdraw from the outside world. The body and mind become one, and we can experience inner silence. This asana is the first step in the practice of meditation.

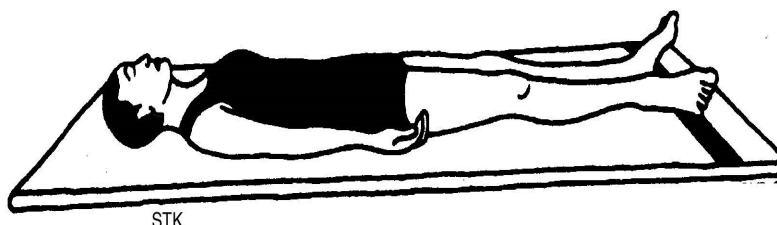
Technique

1. The subject sat in Dandasana, the weight was equally distributed on both buttocks bones and breathed evenly.
2. Bent the knees and brought the heels closer to the buttocks and held the tops of the shins. The back was kept straight.
3. Lowered the torso towards the floor, by placing the forearms and palms on the floor, and bent back on the elbows without moving the feet and knees.
4. Lowered the torso to the floor, vertebra by vertebra, until the back of the head rests on the floor. Turned the palms to face the ceiling, closed the eyes, then straightened the legs one by one.



5. Relaxed the legs, allowing them to drop gently to the sides. The knee caps dropped to the sides equally. Moved the arms away from the torso without raising the shoulders off the floor. Pushed the collar bones out to the sides. Kept the eyes closed and focused on the breathing for 7 minutes.

Effects : Helps to alleviate nervous tension, migraines, insomnia and chronic fatigue syndrome, relaxes the body and eases breathing soothes nervous system and brings peace of mind, enhances recovery from all long term or serious illness.



Relaxation Segment

The subjects performed Savasana for relaxation. In good relaxation one feels energy flow from the back of the head towards heels not the other way round. Lying upon one's back on the ground at a full length like a corpse is called 'savasana'. This removes the fatigue caused by the other asanas and induces calmness of mind

Table

Showing Training Schedule for Asana Practices

S.No	Name of Asana	During - Weeks		
		I to IV	V to VIII	IX to XII
1	Bhujangasana	3 minutes	4 minutes	5 minutes
2	Padmasana	3 minutes	4 minutes	5 minutes
3	Marichyasana	3 minutes	4 minutes	5 minutes
4	Halasana	3 minutes	4 minutes	5 minutes
5	Savasana	5 minutes	5 minutes	5 minutes

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