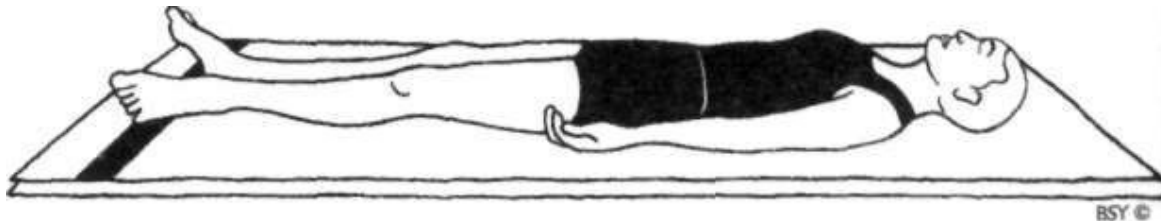


# SHAVASANA



## **Shavasana (corpse pose)**

Lie flat on the back with the arms about 15 cm away from the body, palms facing upward. A thin pillow or folded cloth may be placed behind the head to prevent discomfort. Let the fingers curl up slightly.

Move the feet slightly apart to a comfortable position and close the eyes.

The head and spine should be in a straight line.

Make sure the head does not fall to one side or the other.

Relax the whole body and stop all physical movement.

Become aware of the natural breath and allow it to become rhythmic and relaxed.

Begin to count the breaths from number 27 backwards to zero. Mentally repeat, "I am breathing in 27, I am breathing out 27, I am breathing in 26, I am breathing out 26", and so on, back to zero.

If the mind wanders and the next number is forgotten, bring it back to the counting and start again at 27. If the mind can be kept on the breath for a few minutes the body will relax.

**Duration:** According to time available. In general, the longer the better although a minute or two is sufficient between asana practices.

**Awareness:** Physical - first on relaxing the whole body, then on the breath and counting.

Spiritual - on ajna chakra.

**Benefits:** This asana relaxes the whole psycho-physiological system. It should ideally be practised before sleep; before,

during and after asana practice, particularly after dynamic exercises such as surya namaskara; and when the practitioner feels physically and mentally tired. It develops body awareness. When the body is completely relaxed, awareness of the mind increases, developing pratyahara.

**Practice note:** Try not to move the body at all during the practice as even the slightest movement will create muscular contraction.

A personal mantra may be repeated with every inhalation and exhalation.

**Variation:** While lying in shavasana, become aware of the right hand and relax it.

Slowly become aware of the right wrist, elbow, armpit, right side of the waist, right buttock, right thigh, right knee, calf, heel, sole of the foot, and relax them one by one.

Repeat this process with the left side of the body and all the parts of the head and trunk.

Make sure that each part of the body is relaxed, feel each part merging into the floor.

Repeat this process a few times and all the tensions will be removed.

**Practice note:** For maximum benefit, this technique should be performed after a hard day's work or just before sleep.

**Note:** *This asana is also known as mritasana, the dead man's pose.*