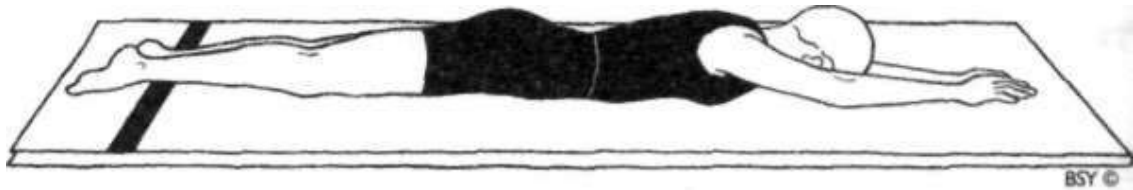


ADVASANA



Advasana (reversed corpse pose)

Lie on the stomach.

Stretch both arms above the head with the palms facing downward. The forehead should be resting on the floor. Relax the whole body in the same way as described for shavasana.

If there is difficulty breathing or a sense of suffocation is experienced, a pillow may be placed under the chest.

Breathing: Natural and rhythmic. The number of breaths may be counted as in shavasana while gently pushing the abdomen against the floor.

Duration: For relaxation in the treatment of ailments, it should be performed for as long as possible. Before or during an asana session, a few minutes is sufficient.

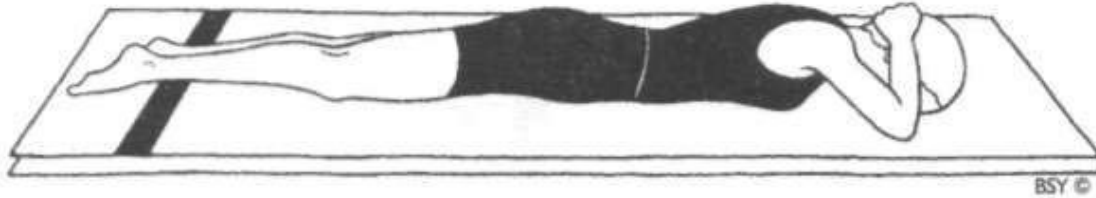
Awareness: Physical - on the breath, the number of breaths and relaxing the whole body.

Spiritual - on ajna or manipura chakra.

Benefits: Recommended for those with slipped disc, stiff neck and stooping figure. People with these conditions will also find this asana an excellent sleeping position.

Practice note: Mantra may also be synchronised with the breath as in shavasana.

JYESTIKASANA



Jyestikasana (superior posture)

Lie flat on the stomach with the legs straight and the forehead resting on the floor.

Interlock the fingers and place the palms on the back of the head or neck.

Allow the elbows to rest on the floor.

Relax the whole body and become aware of the breathing process as described for shavasana.

Breathing: Natural and rhythmical.

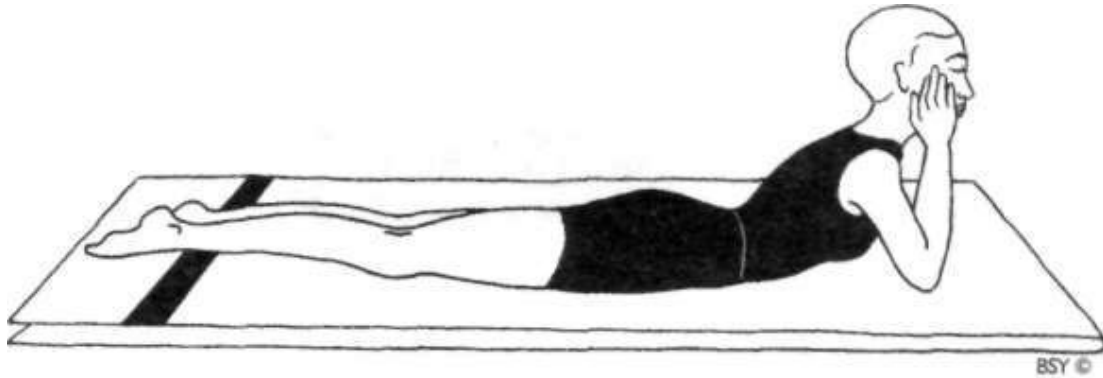
Awareness: Physical - on the breath and relaxing the whole body. Feel the soothing warmth of the palms melting away the tensions in the neck and related areas.

Spiritual - on ajna or manipura chakra.

Benefits: This asana is helpful for all spinal complaints especially cervical spondylitis and stiff neck or upper back.

Variation: This asana may also be performed with the fingers of both hands interlocked and placed under the forehead, palms facing up.

MAKARASANA



Makarasana (crocodile pose)

Lie flat on the stomach.

Raise the head and shoulders and rest the chin in the palms of the hands with the elbows on the floor.

Keep the elbows together for a more pronounced arch to the spine. Separate the elbows slightly to relieve excess pressure on the neck. In makarasana the effect is felt at two points: the neck and the lower back. If the elbows are too far in front, tension will be felt in the neck; if they are drawn too close to the chest, tension will be felt more in the lower back. Adjust the position of the elbows so that these two points are equally balanced. The ideal position is when the whole spine is equally relaxed.

Relax the whole body and close the eyes.

Breathing: Natural and rhythmic.

Duration: For as long as possible.

Awareness: Physical - on the breathing process or counting the breath with concentration on the lower back, and relaxing the whole body.

People with back or spinal complaints may practise breathing in, moving the awareness up along the spine from the tail bone to the neck and breathing out, bringing the awareness back down from the neck to the tail bone. Imagine that the breath is moving up and down the spine like mercury in a glass tube. This will quickly activate the healing energies in this area. For lower back pain due to tension, concentrate on this area and feel it expanding

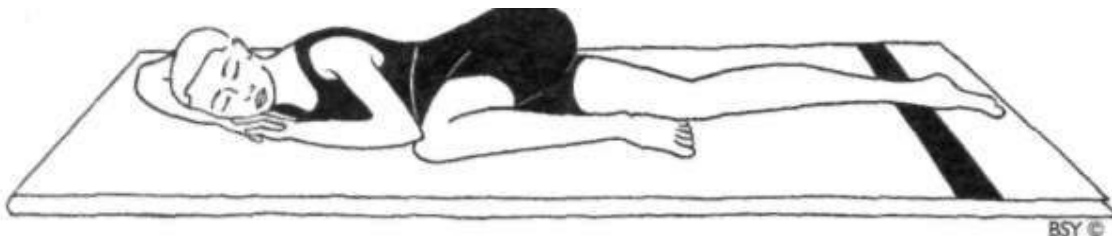
and relaxing with every inhalation and exhalation.

Spiritual - on manipura chakra or on the nose tip if practising nasikagra drishti.

Contra-indications: Those with back conditions should not practise this asana if any pain is experienced.

Benefits: This asana is very effective for people suffering from slipped disc, sciatica, lower back pain or any other spinal disorder. They should remain in this asana for extended periods of time as it encourages the vertebral column to resume its normal shape and releases compression of the spinal nerves. Asthmatics and people who have any other lung ailments should practise this simple asana regularly with breath awareness as it allows more air to enter the lungs.

MATSYA KRIDASANA



Matsya Kridasana (flapping fish pose)

Lie on the stomach with the fingers interlocked under the head. Bend the left leg sideways and bring the left knee close to the ribs.

The right leg should remain straight.

Swivel the arms to the left and rest the left elbow on the left knee. If this is not comfortable, rest it on the floor.

Rest the right side of the head on the crook of the right arm, or a little further down the arm for more comfort.

Relax in the final pose and, after some time, change sides.

This position resembles a flapping fish.

Breathing: Normal and relaxed in the static pose.

Duration: Practise this asana for as long as possible on both sides. It may also be used for sleeping and resting.

Awareness: Physical - on the breath and relaxing the whole body.

Spiritual - on manipura chakra.

Benefits: This asana stimulates digestive peristalsis by stretching the intestines and helps remove constipation. It relieves sciatic pain by relaxing the nerves in the legs. People with backache, for whom the practice of forward bending asanas is not recommended, may practise matsya kridasana as a counterpose after backward bending asanas. In the later months of pregnancy, lying on the back may cause pressure over major veins and block the circulation. In such circumstances, this posture is ideal for relaxing, sleeping or practising yoga nidra. The bent knee and the head may be supported on a pillow for further comfort. This asana also redistributes excess weight around the waistline.