



PROGRAM E-17

**OM SRI SURYA VA NAMAH  
OM SRI CHANDRA VA NAMAH  
OM SRI BUDDHA VA NAMAH**

THE AWAKENING

### **Chair Yoga**

Although yoga asana is a deep and complex study, in the Awakening course a few *basic* asanas should be performed for a number of key reasons:

The practice of a few key simple asanas will help you to remove stress and strain from your body.

Stretches to the physical body allow more blood to flow into the key organs, keeping them younger and more vital.

Stretching the spine 'opens up', as it were, the spinal area so that the life-force (prana) can more easily flow through and circulate around the physical and astral bodies, awakening them from their dormant state to an active state....

Lastly, and very importantly, the practice of key asanas makes it possible for the physical body to remain

completely motionless -- at full attention without tension. This will enable you to transcend 'body awareness', and move into a deeper and fuller state of mind awareness.

One of the key goals of asana practice is to help balance the life forces flowing through the physical body in order to bring about a state of bio balance.

Asanas are one way to help balance your life forces, and thus your mind and life, assisting you to move from surface mind states and enter into deeper mind states.

It is not wise to come home from work, school, or any other stressful worldly condition and immediately begin yoga -- whether that be asana practice or meditation.

It is important to have a psychological adjustment period from the conditions of the outer world, before moving into the inner world. Why? Because the mind, wisely so, has a built-in 'turn-off' switch to protect itself from the negative suggestions of external conditions. If you immediately begin yoga, the off switch will tend to negate the positive effects of your yoga practice, be it asanas or meditation.

This adjustment period occurs when you transfer your consciousness from the solar state to the lunar state, in which the 'on' switch is then turned on.

Your mind needs to orient itself to the symbolism of the change from the pingala state to the ida state.

Another way of saying this is that you are moving from a state of 'word-words,' to a state of 'feeling' (not to emotions!)

You might start with the practice of savasana, or total relaxation pose. (See pp. 83-85 of *The Spiritual Science of Kriya Yoga* (SSKY)).

Next, neck rolls should be practiced for a few minutes (pp. 87-88, SSKY).

Now you can practice your asanas to develop your meditation pose. I suggest the adept's pose (pp. 185-187, SSKY), or easy pose (p. 179, SSKY).

Over and above this, it is wise to do simple yoga practices at work, at your desk or in a chair, to help reduce stress, and regenerate energy, making your mind more effective and creative.

Here are a few practices that can be done almost anywhere. Because these exercises are performed in a chair, the practice has come to be known as '**chair yoga**'.

These yogic exercises help your body to relax, making your mind clearer, and the workload less stressful. Do practice them daily for just a few minutes.

The goal of these simple yoga practices is to stretch the body so as to improve blood flow to the vital organs.

The simple task of stretching your body will also improve the circulation of the life-force (prana), in order to feed the energy centers of your physical, mental and astral bodies.

## **SEATED TWIST:**

Begin by sitting upright in a chair. Put your feet flat on the floor. If your feet do not touch the floor, use a lower chair, or put a book under each foot.

Now, gently stretch your spine. Do this by pressing your 'bottom' into the chair and pulling your head upward using the muscles of your body – not your arms.

Next, be sure that your shoulders are lowered and not up.

Now, relax and breathe peacefully.

Next, take your left hand and bring it down and across your body, placing it on the outside of your right thigh.

Now, extend your right arm straight up, pressing the upper arm to your right ear.

Then gently twist your body towards the right. Make the twist from the solar plexus (belly button) area.

Gently hold the twist and breathe into the pose a few times. Then slowly untwist your body and relax, putting your hands in your lap for a short time.

Now, prepare to twist to the left. Take your right hand and place it on the outside of your left thigh.

Then extend your left arm straight up, pressing the upper arm against your left ear.

Then gently twist your body towards the left. Twist from the solar plexus area.

Gently hold the twist and breathe into the pose a few times. Then slowly untwist your body, putting your hands in your lap and totally relaxing for a short time.

### **NECK STRETCH:**

Most people hold most of their tension IN their jaw, neck and shoulders. Therefore, a good quality neck stretch can be very helpful to reduce bodily stress, and more importantly, remove tension in the neck, allowing sufficient blood flow to the brain.

The lack of sufficient blood flow to the brain and the lack of enough water in the physical body are key reasons for mental malfunctioning in middle age.

Sit up straight in a chair with your feet flat on the floor. Now press your buttocks into the chair, and at the same time lift your leveled head straight up. However, be sure that you press the shoulders down.

Now, increase the stretching by raising your right arm up, and then bending it over the head, putting the **right** hand on the **left** ear.

You should feel your right side opening up.

Next, holding this position, tilt your head to the right shoulder. Do this slowly, and you will feel the left side of your neck stretching. Remember: do not lift the right shoulder to meet the head. Make the head move to the right shoulder.

Remain in this posture for a few moments (if comfortable), and breathe slowly and deeply. About five breaths should be enough.

Lift your right arm and lower it to your side, slowly lifting and bringing your head upright.

Now rest for a short time and then repeat the process on the other side.

Raise your left arm up, and bend it over the head, putting the **left** hand on the **right** ear.

You should feel your left side opening up.

Next, holding this position, tilt your head to the left shoulder. Do this slowly, and you will feel the right side of your neck stretching. Do not lift the left shoulder to meet the head. Make the head move to the left shoulder.

Remain in this posture for a few moments (if comfortable), and breathe slowly and deeply. About five breaths should be enough.

Lift your left arm and lower it to your side, slowly lifting and bringing your head upright.

Rest for a time.

Now, when you have rested a bit, again press your buttocks into the chair, and at the same time lift your leveled head straight up to elongate your spine. (This is important to be sure that you do not 'pinch' a nerve).

Then put your hands at the back of your head, near the top, and slowly and very gently push the chin down towards the chest area.

You will feel a stretching of the muscles in the back of the neck. Take a few slow, deep breaths. Release the gentle pressure and slowly lift the head up.

Rest a short time, and then place your hands on your forehead, and very, very gently push the head back in order to strengthen the muscles in the front of the neck. Hold only a short time, and return the head to its upright position.

Put your hands in your lap and rest for a longer time.

### **EYE EXERCISES:**

When the body becomes strained or stressed it can manifest with the eyes becoming sore.

To see if your eyes are sore, close them and move the eyes like a windshield wiper a few times, and you will discover if, and how sore they are.

To regenerate and also to remove the soreness and tiredness from the eyes, just close the eyes very tightly for a few seconds, and then suddenly open and relax the eyes and face.

Repeat this 3 to 5 times, and then rest.

This will bring fresh blood to the eyes, regenerating them.

After a short rest, close your eyes again, and imagine a large clock face with the numbers on it. Point your eyes at 12 o'clock and rotate them in a large circle, clockwise, 3 to 5 times, and then rest.

After resting for a time, point your eyes at 12 o'clock again, and rotate them in a large circle -- but this time in a counter clockwise rotation. Do this 3 to 5 times.

Rest.

Next, with eyes still closed, focus at 3 o'clock, and then rapidly move the eyes from 3 o'clock to 9 o'clock. Move the eyes rapidly back and forth from 3 to 9, and then 9 to 3. Do this about 10 times.

Now, finish the eye exercises by closing your eyes and relaxing. As you relax, rub your hands together very fast until you can feel the palms of your hands heat up. This generally takes 10 to 15 seconds.

Now, with the palms heated up, gently place them on your closed eyes. Feel the healing warmth calm and regenerate your mind and eyes.

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OM

Shanti & Prem,

Goswami

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