

Fantastic **40**

40 HEART-FRIENDLY YOGA & EXERCISES TO STAY HEALTHY

Do you know?

Favorable lifestyle habits lower heart disease risk by **nearly 50%**.

Yoga & exercises **lower blood pressure, blood sugar & cholesterol.**

It also improves heart rate & blood circulation.

Here's a **step-by-step instruction** to practise **heart friendly yoga & exercises.**





Yoga: The wise path for a healthy heart. 01

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Yoga:



The wise path for a healthy heart

Yoga has been in existence since hundreds of years and is still popular. It offers a multitude of heart benefits.¹

- Like any other form of exercise, it can improve the cholesterol and blood sugar levels by improving metabolism.
- It can help to lower blood pressure by improving artery relaxation.
- Breathing and meditation in yoga helps to slow down the heart rate and prepares for a good night sleep.
- Helps to reduce anxiety and stress.
- Burns calories and helps to tone muscles.



Yogic Therapy can be effectively used to control high blood pressure and coronary artery disease as it brings significant reductions in serum cholesterol, triglycerides, free fatty acids, blood glucose, and body weight. It also improves physical fitness and helps to increase the person's efficiency.

Ayush Ministry , Government of India



It is also recommended to follow a healthy yogic diet to obtain maximum benefits with Yoga which includes increased intake of the following food items.²



Onion and garlic



High fibre diet



Flaxseed oil



Dark coloured berries



Vegetables like cabbage cauliflower and broccoli



At least 2 liters of water every day



Green leafy vegetables



Soy



Green tea and herbal tea



Oat bran

A word of advice.....

Yoga has immense benefits for people and is an effective way to keep the heart healthy. However, some yoga poses should be performed only under medical supervision in case of pre-existing heart problems. It is good to check with a doctor before starting these yoga poses.

Yoga-Asanas

for a healthy heart



01 Tadasana - Mountain pose

PROCEDURE

- Stand straight with feet together and hands on the sides of the body.
- Slowly clasp the hands and raise them above the head
- Try to stretch as much as possible with the heels raised.
- Hold the position for 10 to 20 sec.
- Exhale and slowly come back to the basic position.
- Repeat the posture for 3 to 5 rounds.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- Helps strengthen the vertebral column and the heart.
- Deep breathing expands the lungs.



02 Ardha Matsyendrasana - Sitting half spinal twist pose



PROCEDURE

- Sit straight with the legs stretched.
- Slowly fold the right leg inside and place it near the left hip, then fold left leg and place it on the other side of the right leg.
- Now with the right hand taking it around the knees, try to hold the left knee or toe.
- Take the left hand behind the waist and twist back.
- Hold the position for 10-20 sec. Release and repeat with the left leg folded.
- Slowly exhale, come back to the starting position.
- Repeat 3-5 times

HEALTH BENEFITS

- Opens the sides of the chest when performed on the left and right sides.
- Relieves thoracic or mid back spinal tension.

03

Bhujangasan – Cobra Pose



PROCEDURE

- Lie down on the abdomen with both hands and legs together.
- Slowly place the hands under the shoulders and chin on the ground.
- While inhaling slowly, try to raise head, neck and upper body with elbows inside and bent.
- Without applying much pressure on the arms try to raise up.
- Hold for 10-20 sec and slowly exhale, come back to the starting position.
- Repeat the posture 3-5 times.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- Stretches the chest and invigorates the heart.

04

Dandasana - Stick pose

PROCEDURE

- Sit with legs extended forward and hands alongside hips and straighten the arms.
- Touch the big toes together and keep a small amount of space between the heels.
- Flex the ankles, drawing the toes back. Press forward with the big toe mounds.
- Rotate the inner thighs in and down and press down with the femurs.
- Extend the chest away from navel and broaden the collarbones.
- Draw the heads of upper arms back while loosening front ribs.
- Inhale to lengthen the spine.
- Stay, if possible, for five deep breaths with the legs fully active.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- Facilitates a good posture as it strengthens the back.
- Stretches the shoulders and chest.



05

Makara Adho Mukha Svanasana- Dolphin plank pose



PROCEDURE

- Come onto all fours and form a table such that the back of the body forms the table top and hands and feet form the legs of the table.
- Slowly shift the weight of the body to the front and ensure that the shoulders are aligned with the wrists.
- Slowly, lower the arms till the forearms touch the floor. The palms should be pressed to the floor at this time
- Keeping the legs straight, position the heels directly above the toes.
- Fix the gaze on the floor and keep back and knees straight.
- If possible, palms should be facing each other.
- While inhaling, slowly pull the abdominal muscles in and relax them while exhaling.
- Stay in this posture for a few breaths before returning back to Adho Mukha Svanasana.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- Strengthens the shoulders and abdomen.
- It also calms the body and balances the mind.

06

Marjariasana- Cat pose

PROCEDURE

- Come onto all fours and form a table such that the back of the body forms the table top and hands and feet form the legs of the table.
- Keep the arms perpendicular to the floor, with the hands directly under the shoulders and flat on the ground; knees are hip-width apart.
- Look straight ahead.
- While inhaling raise the chin and tilt head back, push the navel downwards and raise the tailbone. Slightly compress the buttocks.
- Hold the Cat pose and take long, deep breaths.
- Follow this by a countermovement: While exhaling, drop the chin towards the chest and arch the back up as much as possible; relax the buttocks.
- Hold this pose for a few seconds before returning to the initial table-like stage.
- Continue five or six rounds before coming out of this yoga posture.



HEALTH BENEFITS

- Allows the heart rate to settle and become soft and rhythmic.
- It also boosts blood circulation.

07

Paschimottanasana-Two legged forward bend pose

PROCEDURE

- Begin in Dandasana, sitting on the edge of a folded blanket. Press the heels away from the body; press palms or finger tips into the floor beside the hips.
- Inhale. Keeping the front torso long, exhale and lean forward from the hips. Lengthen the spine to fold toward legs without rounding the back.
- Stretch the hands out along the outside of each leg as far as they go. If possible, hold the sides of the feet with hands.
- With each inhalation, lift and lengthen the front torso just slightly; with each exhalation, release a little more fully into the forward bend. If holding feet, bend the elbows out to the sides and lift them away from the floor.
- Stay in the pose from 1–3 minutes.
- To come up, release feet, inhale and lift the torso by pulling the tailbone down and into the pelvis.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- This posture brings the head lower than the heart which helps in reducing the heart rate and respiration while allowing the entire system to relax.



08

Salamba Bhujangasana - Sphinx pose

PROCEDURE

- Lie on the stomach with toes flat on the floor and forehead resting on the ground.
- Keep legs close together, with feet and heels lightly touching each other.
- Stretch the hands in front with palms facing downward and arms touching the ground.
- Taking a deep breath in, slowly lift the head, chest and abdomen while keeping the navel on the floor.
- Pull the torso back and off the floor with support of the arms.
- Keep breathing with awareness, as the spine curves vertebra by vertebra.
- Ensure that the feet are still close together and head facing straight ahead.
- Breathing out, gently bring the abdomen down, chest and head back to the floor.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- It is a mild back bending posture that gently opens the chest and stretches the lungs and shoulders.
- Helps in improving blood circulation while relieving the body from stress.



09 Shavasan – Corpse pose



PROCEDURE

- Lie straight on the back with ease.
- Keep a distance of about one and half feet between legs.
- Place hands straight on the ground at the distance of six inches from the body.
- Let the palms face upward, fingers should remain slightly curled, and eyes closed.
- After maintaining it for some time, return to the normal position.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- It is the counter pose for all yoga postures.
- Allows the body and the breath to relax and is a stress buster.
- Improves the overall health of the heart and body.

10 Utkatasana- Chair pose

PROCEDURE

- Stand erect with feet slightly apart.
- Stretch hands to the front with palms facing downwards. Do not bend elbows.
- Bend the knees and gently push the pelvis down as if sitting in an imaginary chair.
- Be comfortable while being seated.
- Ensure that the hands are parallel to the ground.
- With awareness, sit straight and lengthen the spine. Relax.
- Keep breathing and sink deeper into the chair by gradually going down while ensuring that the knees don't go beyond the toes.
- Keep going down slowly and then sit down in cross-legged posture.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- This posture increases the heart and respiration rate.
- It stretches the chest and stimulates the heart.



11 Vrikshasana -Tree pose



PROCEDURE

- Stand tall and straight with arms by the side of the body.
- Bend the right knee and place the right foot high up on the left thigh. The sole of the foot should be placed flat and firmly near the root of the thigh.
- Make sure that the left leg is straight and ensure balance.
- Once well balanced, take a deep breath in, raise the arms over the head from the side, and bring palms together in 'Namaste' mudra.
- Look straight ahead in front at a distant object to maintain a steady balance.
- Ensure that the spine is straight, body taut and take in long deep breaths. With each exhalation, relax the body.
- With slow exhalation, gently bring hands down from the sides and gently release the right leg.
- Stand tall and straight as in the beginning of the posture.
- Repeat this pose with the left leg off the ground on the right thigh.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- It broadens the shoulder and strengthens the heart muscles.
- This pose helps in developing a firm and balanced posture.

12 Utthita Hastapadasana- Extended hands and feet pose

PROCEDURE

- Begin in Tadasana (Mountain Pose).
- Stretch hands to the sides with palms facing downwards. Do not bend elbows.
- Straighten the spine through the neck, balancing the head evenly between the shoulders so that the chin is parallel to the floor.
- Inhale and hop (or lightly step) to spread the feet about 4-5 feet wide, while extending the arms out straight at the same time.
- Actively stretch from shoulders to the tips of the fingers and from hips to heels.
- Hold posture for several long, deep breaths.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- This pose helps in weight control; hence helps in maintaining heart health.
- Stretches the chest muscles and strengthens legs.



13

Veerabhadrasana -Warrior pose



PROCEDURE

- Stand straight with legs wide apart by a distance of at least 3-4 feet.
- Turn the right foot out by 90 degrees and left foot in by about 15 degrees.
- Lift both arms sideways to shoulder height with the palms facing upwards
- Breathing out, bend the right knee and ankle forming a straight line
- Ensure that knee does not overshoot the ankle.
- Turn the head and look to the right.
- Stretch the arms further and try to push the pelvis down.
- Hold the yoga posture and keep breathing while going down.
- While breathing in, come up.
- Breathing out, bring the hands down from the sides.
- Repeat the yoga posture for the left side by turning the left foot out by 90 degrees and the right foot in by about 15 degrees.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- This pose improves balance in the body and increases stamina.
- It improves blood circulation and releases stress.
- It keeps the heart rate under check.

14

Trikonasana-Triangle pose

PROCEDURE

- Stand straight with feet wide apart.
- Turn the right foot out 90 degrees and left foot in by 15 degrees.
- Now align the center of the right heel with the center of the arch of left foot.
- Ensure that the feet are pressing the ground and the weight of the body is equally balanced on both the feet.
- Inhale deeply and while exhaling, bend the body to the right, downward from the hips, keeping the waist straight, allowing the left hand to come up in the air while the right hand comes down towards floor.
- Keep both arms in straight line. Rest right hand on the shin, ankle, or the floor outside the right foot.
- Stretch the left arm toward the ceiling, in line with the shoulders.
- Keep head in a neutral position or to the left, eyes gazing at the left palm.
- Stretch maximum and be steady. Keep taking in long deep breaths.
- While inhaling, come up, bring the arms down to the sides, and straighten the feet.
- Repeat the same on the other side.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- It is a posture which promotes cardiovascular exercise.
- The chest expands as breathing becomes deep and rhythmical.
- It also increases stamina.



15 Dhanurasan – Bow Pose



PROCEDURE

- Lie down on the abdomen with both hands and legs together.
- Slowly fold the legs at the knee joint and get it closer to the hips.
- Try to hold the ankles on both the sides.
- Slowly inhale and try to pull the legs back by making the hands straight and try to raise the upper body.
- Hold the position for 10-20 sec
- Exhale slowly, come back to starting position.
- Repeat 3-5 times.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- Opens up and strengthens the heart region.
- Stimulates digestion.
- Strengthens upper back and improves posture.
- Reduces lower back pain.

16 Adho Mukha Svanasana- Downward facing dog pose

PROCEDURE

- Come onto all fours and form a table such that the back of the body forms the table top and hands and feet form the legs of the table.
- While exhaling, lift the hips up, straightening the knees and elbows, to form an inverted V-shape with the body.
- Hands are shoulder width apart, feet are hip width apart and parallel to each other. Toes point straight ahead.
- Press the hands into the ground and widen the shoulder blades. Keep the neck lengthened by touching the ears to the inner arms.
- Hold the downward dog pose and take long deep breaths. Look towards the navel.
- Exhale. Bend the knees, return to table pose. Relax, repeat 3 times.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- Stretches the lungs and strengthens the chest muscles, which increases lung capacity.



17 Ardha Pincha Mayurasana - Dolphin pose



PROCEDURE

- Get down on the knees and hands.
- Keep the forearms on the floor; ensuring that the elbows and shoulders are in the parallel line.
- Now raise the spine and buttocks while tucking the toes and keeping the legs straight.
- Make sure that the shoulder blades are firm.
- Now release the neck by moving shoulders away from ears.
- After that walk in towards the arms.
- At this point take 4 to 6 deep breaths and hold the position for 30 to 60 seconds.
- Slowly release and get back on the knees and hands. Repeat.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- Increases stamina and strengthens the upper body.
- Increases blood flow into the head
- It prepares the person for more heart opening postures.

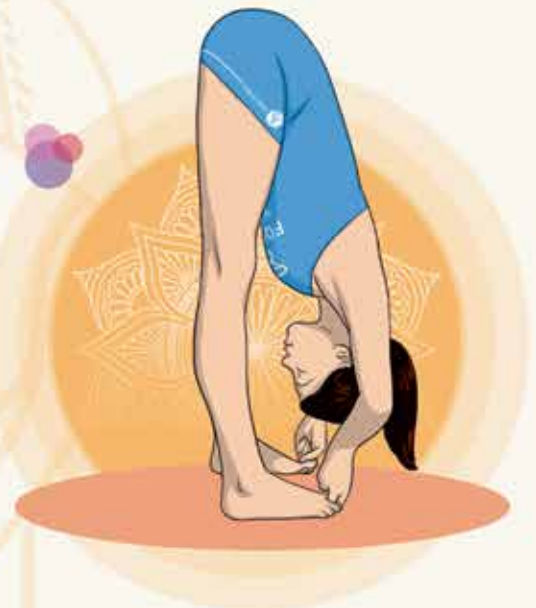
18 Padangusthasana- Big Toe Pose

PROCEDURE

- Stand upright with inner feet parallel and about six inches apart.
- Keeping legs completely straight, exhale and bend forward from hip joints, moving the body and head as one unit.
- Slide the index and middle fingers of each hand between the big toes and the second toes. Then curl those fingers under and grip the big toes firmly and press the toes down against the fingers.
- With an inhalation, lift the body as if trying to stand up, straightening the elbows, exhale and lift the buttocks. Repeat 3 times.
- Finally exhale, bend elbows out to the sides, pull up on the toes, lengthen the front and sides of the body, and gently lower into the forward bend.
- Release the toes, bring hands to the hips, and re-lengthen the body.
- With an inhale, swing the body and head as a single unit back to upright position.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- Relieve stress, anxiety and calms the brain.
- Improves digestion, helps in insomnia or sleep problems.



19 Setu Bandhasana- Bridge pose



PROCEDURE

- Lie down on the back with hands and legs together.
- Slowly fold the legs and try to get it closer to the hips.
- Slowly, while inhaling try to raise the hip up as much as possible.
- Try to hold the ankles and hold the position for 12-20 seconds, and slowly while exhaling come back.
- Stretch the legs forward and come back to the base position.
- Repeat the posture for 3 – 5 times.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- Facilitates deep breathing.
- It stretches the spine and the chest.
- It also improves blood flow to the chest region.

20 Salamba Sarvangasana -Half shoulder stand pose

PROCEDURE

- Lie on the back with hands on each side.
- With one movement, lift the legs, buttocks and back to come up high on shoulders. Support the back with the hands.
- Move the elbows closer towards each other, and move the hands along the back, creeping towards the shoulder blades.
- Keep the legs and spine straight by pressing the elbows down to the floor and hands into the back.
- The body weight should be supported on the shoulders and upper arms and not on head and neck.
- Keep the legs firm and lift the heels higher. Bring the big toes straight over the nose and point the toes up.
- Keep breathing deeply and stay in the posture for 30-60 seconds.
- To come out of the posture, lower the knees to forehead. Bring the hands to the floor, palms facing down.
- Without lifting the head slowly bring the spine down completely to the floor.
- Lower the legs to the floor. Relax for a minimum of 60 seconds.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- Calms the brain and helps relieve stress and mild depression.
- Stimulates the thyroid and prostate glands and abdominal organs.
- Stretches the shoulders and neck.



21 Uttanasana- Standing Forward Bend pose



PROCEDURE

- Stand in mountain pose (Tadasana).
- Lengthen up and slowly fold forward.
- Bring the fingertips to the floor. Keep the head lifted and shoulder blades back and down while touching the fingertips to the floor.
- Release through the head and breathe. Let the head hang and hold the fold.
- Take deep inhalations through the nose and long exhalations through the mouth
- Slowly rise on an inhale.
- Return to mountain pose and pause for a moment. Repeat

HEALTH BENEFITS

- Helps relieve back stiffness and neck tension.
- Increases hip flexibility and brings equilibrium to the body weight distribution.
- Improves blood flow to head and heart

22 Gomukhasana – Cow-face pose

PROCEDURE

- Sit down comfortably on the ground and bend the knees.
- Stack the right knee directly over the left knee. The legs should be as close to the buttocks as possible.
- Take left arm behind and bend the elbow. Try to reach the hand towards the shoulders.
- Now take the right arm overhead, bend the elbow and try to interlock fingers of both hands.
- Hold this position for at least 30 seconds and then repeat the same on the other side.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- One of the best ways to get relaxation.
- Relieves shoulder tension and opens the chest and lungs.
- Lowers blood pressure and heart rate - the main symptoms of stress.



23

Surya Namaskar- Sun Salutation

- Inhale
- Exhale

Surya Namaskar or Sun Salutation is a combination of 12 yoga poses.

Step 1: Prayer pose-Pranamasana



- Stand at the end of mat, keeping feet together and distribute weight on both feet equally.
- Broaden the chest and relax the shoulders. Breathe in and lift both arms up from the sides.
- Exhale and bring the palms together in a prayer position in front of chest.

Step 2: Raised arms pose – Hasta uttanasana



- Breath in and lift the arms up and back.
- Make sure that the biceps are close to ears.
- Make effort to stretch the whole body starting from the heels up to the finger tips.

Step 3: Hand to foot pose – Hasta Padasana



- Breathing out and bend forward from the waist while keeping the spine straight.
- Exhale and completely bring the hands down to the floor besides the feet.

Step 4: Horse pose – Ashwa Sanchalanasana



- Breath in and push the right leg as far back as possible.
- Bring the right knee to the floor and slowly look up.

Step 5: Stick pose – Dandasana



- Breath in and take the left leg back
- Bring the whole body in a straight line.

Step 6: Salute with eight parts or points – Ashtanga Namaskara



- Gradually bring the knees down to the floor then exhale.
- Slightly take the hips back and slide forward. Relax the chest and chin on the ground.
- Elevate the buttocks a little bit.

Step 7: Cobra pose – Bhujangasana



- Slide forward and raise the chest up into the Cobra pose.
- Keep the elbows bent and fixed in this pose.
- Keep the shoulders away from the ears and slowly look up.

Step 8: Mountain pose – Parvatasana



- Breath out and lift the hips as well as tail bone up.
- Put the chest downwards to create an inverted V pose.

Step 9: Horse pose – Ashwa Sanchalanasana



- Breath in and bring the right foot forward in between both the hands.
- Bring the left knee down to the ground.
- Press the hips down then look up.

Step 10: Hand to foot pose – Hasta Padasana



- Breath out and bring the left foot forward.
- Keep palms on the ground.
- Knees may be bent slightly to avoid discomfort.

Step 11: Raised Arms Pose- Hastauttanasana



- Breath in and roll the spine up,
- Make the hands go up and bend backwards a little bit
- Push the hips slightly outward.

Step 12: Prayer Pose- Pranamasana



- Exhale and first straighten the body.
- Bring the arms down back into prayer pose.

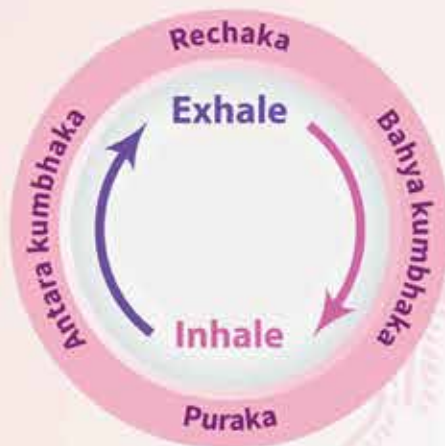
HEALTH BENEFITS

- Active inhalation and exhalation throughout the steps keeps the blood oxygenated and lungs ventilated.
- When practiced regularly and at a fast pace, it stretches the abdominal muscles helping to reduce weight around the stomach area, tones the abs and strengthens the muscles
- Benefits the heart muscles and corrects irregular heartbeats.
- It improves the capacity of the lungs, stimulates oxygen supply and regulates it to all the vital organs in the body.

Pranayama

for a Healthy Heart

Pranayama is an ancient breathing technique that originates from yogic practices in India. It involves controlling the breath in different styles and lengths. A pranayama cycle has 3 phases Puraka, Kumbhaka and Rechaka.³



HEALTH BENEFITS

- Pranayama can help improve cognitive functions. Helps to improve auditory and sensory-motor skills.
- It can help improve lung function and may aid recovery from pneumonia and strengthen lungs that suffer from asthma.
- Lowers stress and aggression, anxiety levels and any negative feelings associated with it.
- May help reduce hypertension or high blood pressure.
- The benefits of such stress reduction include reducing the chance of strokes, peripheral vascular disease and coronary heart disease.
- Helps in managing psychosomatic diseases include migraine headaches, ulcers, and psoriasis.



A word of advice.....

As pranayama are a type of breathing exercises, it may not be suitable for people already suffering from heart ailment or high blood pressure. It is always best to consult with the doctor before beginning any pranayama routine. Pranayama should be practiced slowly and its strength and duration may be increased gradually.

24

Kapalbhati Pranayama – The Skull-Shining Breathing

Inhalation

Slow
&
Normal

Exhalation

Quick
&
Forceful



PROCEDURE

- Sit in a comfortable meditative pose. Keep the spine erect.
- Place the hands on the knees, breathe normally and relax the whole body.
- Relax the whole body and make sure the spine is straight.
- Now, breathe in and out rapidly, with exhalation being forceful. The inhalation should be passive and normal.
- During exhalation the belly goes inside towards the thorax, forcing out the air from the lungs. Relax during inhalation and fill the lungs again with fresh air.
- After the number of rounds, relax and breathe normally, till the breathing rate comes back to normal.
- Repeat this process about 3 times in the initial stages.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- Cleans the sinuses and can relieve cerebral thrombosis.
- It is the best practice available to oxygenate the blood.
- Helps to remove abdominal fat and is an excellent practice for obesity.
- May help to reduce risk of heart blockage.

25

Bhramari Pranayama - Humming Bee Breath

PROCEDURE

- Sit in a comfortable meditative pose. Keep the spine erect.
- Breathe normally and relax the whole body.
- Keep the mouth closed and the teeth apart.
- Plug both the ears with the index fingers and close the eyes
- Take a slow deep breath and fill the lungs fully.
- Then exhale slowly, making a continuous humming sound from the throat. The sound should reverberate in the head.
- Feel the sound vibration in the head. Be aware of only the continuous drone that the sound produces, similar to the humming sound of the bee.
- This is one round.
- Start with 5 rounds and increase it as per convenience.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- Calms the nerves and reduces tension and anxiety.
- Helps to reduce blood pressure.



26

Anulom-Vilom Pranayama- Alternate Nostril Breathing



PROCEDURE

- Sit in a comfortable meditative pose. Keep the spine erect.
- Breathe normally and relax the whole body.
- Close the right nostril with the thumb and draw in air from the left nostril. Do this very slowly, till the lungs are full.
- Now release the thumb and close the left nostril with the ring finger. Then breathe out slowly through the right nostril.
- Next take the air in from the right nostril and then release it through the left nostril (after closing the right nostril with the thumb).
- This is one round of Anulom Vilom Pranayama.
- Start with 5 rounds and increase it up to 20 rounds in one sitting.
- Also, the duration of inhalation can start from 2 seconds and go up to 20 seconds or even beyond.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- Balances the two hemispheres of the brain, bringing about peace and tranquility.
- Helps in strengthening the heart.
- It can reduce weight in some practitioners depending on their body constitution and is a good practice for obesity.

27

Bhastrika Pranayama- The Bellow's Breath

PROCEDURE

- Sit in a comfortable meditative pose. Keep the spine erect.
- Breathe normally and relax the whole body.
- Keep the body erect and close the mouth.
- Inhale and exhale in rapid succession. During this process a hissing sound is produced.
- Start with 10 inhalations and exhalations per round.
- It can be increased over a period of time.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- Increases the oxygen content in the blood. Extra oxygen replenishes the entire body.
- Increases lung capacity.
- Daily practicing this pranayama is considered good for hypertension.

Rapid Forceful Breathing

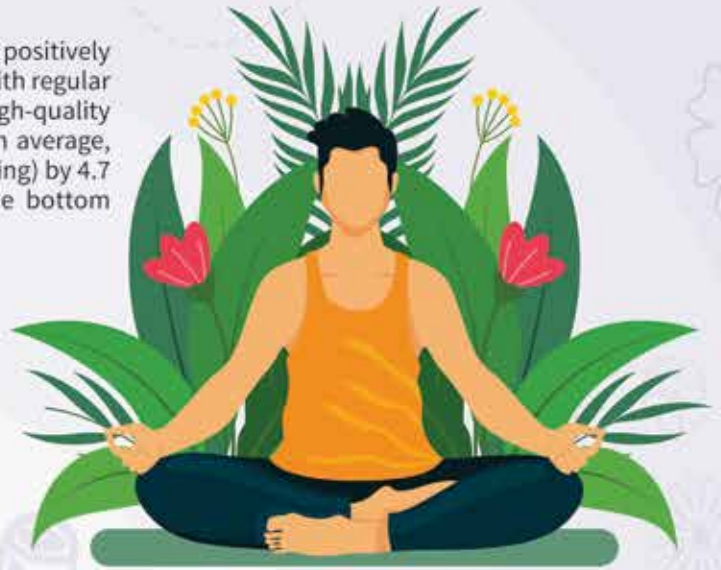


Meditation

Regular meditation practice protects against heart diseases. It can positively affect heart rate variability (HRV) which is a sign of healthier heart. With regular meditation, a person may be able to raise their HRV. A number of high-quality studies also show that meditation can lower blood pressure. On an average, meditation lowers systolic blood pressure (the top number in a reading) by 4.7 milligrams of mercury (mmHg) and diastolic blood pressure (the bottom number) by 3.2 mmHg.⁴

HOW TO SIT FOR MEDITATION

- Sit quietly and close eyes. Breathe slowly.
- Relax all body muscles, beginning with the feet, legs, and thighs.
- Shrug shoulders and roll the neck to the left and then right.
- On each exhalation, say the word "peace or Om".
- Try to focus the mind and do not let thoughts wander.
- Go back to repeating the pattern.
- Continue for five to 10 minutes.



Meditation Mudras

"Mudra" is a Sanskrit word which means 'gesture'. It guides the body to flow energy in a way that benefits health. Practicing these mudras regularly can keep heart health in great condition. For doing meditation mudras, sit in a comfortable Padmasana position. Make sure to sit on a mat, not on the floor. Place hands on thighs or knees, and let them rest. Each mudra is composed of different fingers and has a different impact on the body.³

28 Prana mudra

PROCEDURE

- Touch the tip of the ring and little fingers, with the tip of the thumb, and keep the other fingers extended. Close eyes and practice the mudra.
- Practice the mudra at anytime.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- It can activate dormant energy in the body.
- It boosts the proper functioning of lungs, energizes the heart, and improves blood circulation.
- Practicing this mudra can also enhance immunity and eyesight.



29

Surya mudra or Agni mudra



PROCEDURE

- Bend the ring fingers of both the hands, placing its tip at the base of the thumb.
- Make sure the thumb is pressing the top of the ring fingers.
- Keep the other fingers stretched outward.
- Close the eyes, breath and practise the mudra.
- Make sure to apply moderate pressure on the ring finger, using thumb.
- The surya mudra can be performed before meals, twice a day for about 15-20 minutes.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- It stimulates the metabolic functioning of the thyroid gland.
- This helps to lower the levels of bad cholesterol, thereby reducing the chances of heart blockage.

30

Apana vayu mudra

PROCEDURE

- Fold the index finger in towards the center of the palm.
- Now join the tip of the middle and ring fingers with the tip of the thumb.
- Keep the little finger straight.
- Now without disturbing the finger arrangement, close the eyes and chant Om for better concentration.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- It helps to prevent heart attacks as well as relieves heaviness in the heart.
- It also controls headache, anxiety, and panic, and can also improve digestive fire and lung capacity.



31

Rudra mudra



PROCEDURE

- Fold the index and ring fingers towards the thumb, and let the tip of both fingers touch the thumb.
- Make sure to press the fingers with the thumb.
- Leave the remaining fingers extended.
- Close the eyes and focus on breathing.
- Now for better concentration, chant om or focus on breathing.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- It helps to enhance willpower and improve self-esteem.
- Practicing this can help to keep cardiac health in top condition.

32

Ganesha mudra

PROCEDURE

- Bring both the palms closer to touch in the offering gesture i.e. anjali mudra.
- The palm of the left hand should face outward, while the palm of the right hand should face the left palm.
- Clasp the fingers of the left hand with the fingers of the right hand.
- While stretching them in opposite ways, exhale and take slow breaths, while releasing the stretch.
- Now, change the position of the hands and repeat this six times.
- The benefits can be achieved, when practised on an empty stomach or early in the morning.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- Relieves stress and boosts mood.
- This mudra is ideal for people with high cholesterol.
- Practicing ganesha mudra can strengthen the heart, improve blood circulation, and open up the heart chakra.



Exercises

for a Healthy Heart

Eating healthy and staying active are the two most important things that can be done to prevent heart disease and improve well-being.⁶ The American Heart Association recommends the following for physical activity in adults.⁷

- Get at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes per week of vigorous aerobic activity, or a combination of both, preferably spread throughout the week.
- Add moderate- to high-intensity muscle-strengthening activity (such as resistance or weights) on at least 2 days per week.
- Spend less time sitting. Even light-intensity activity can offset some of the risks of being sedentary.
- Gain even more benefits by being active at least 300 minutes (5 hours) per week.
- Increase amount and intensity gradually over time.



Moderate-intensity aerobic/cardiorespiratory exercises

150 mins every week

at least 5 days, each time 30 mins or longer



Vigorous-intensity aerobic/cardiorespiratory exercises

75 mins every week

at least 3 days, each time 20 mins or longer



Muscle strengthening

twice a week

Stretching

2-3 times per week

Moderate-intensity Exercise

Gets the heart rate up and benefits the heart by improving cardiorespiratory fitness. The heart beats faster and the person breathes harder than normal, but he/she will still be able to talk. It can be said as a medium or moderate amount of effort.

- brisk walking (at least 2.5 miles per hour)
- water aerobics
- dancing (social)
- gardening
- tennis (doubles)
- cycling slower than 10 miles per hour

Vigorous intensity Exercise

Will push the body a little further as they require a higher amount of effort. The person may feel warm and begin to sweat and won't be able to talk much without getting out of breath.

- hiking uphill or with a heavy backpack
- running
- swimming laps
- aerobic dancing
- tennis (singles)
- cycling 10 miles per hour or faster
- jumping rope

A word of advice.....

If you have any health concern, health experts suggest that you talk to your doctor before starting any exercise program.

Here are some of the best exercises to keep the heart healthy.

33 Walking

Walking, particularly speed walking, is a great way to condition the heart. Brisk walking raises the pulse rate up and is easier on joints than other kinds of exercises.



34 Weight training

Training with weights assists to build muscle mass and burn fat. Not only using weights, things like push-ups, squats, or even pull-ups help in building muscle and add to the bone and heart health.



35 Swimming

Swimming laps can be a full-body exercise that will condition the body as well as heart. Distinct from other exercises, swimming is easy on joints and permits movement of the body without a lot of pain.



36 Interval training

Training which shifts back and forth between short bursts of high-intensity exercise with longer times of active recovery — is an incredible method to get a full-sized exercise in a short time. Raising and bringing down the pulse assists with burning calories and improves the functions of arteries and veins.



37 Cycling

Cycling has been shown to help decrease the dangers of heart disease. It uses the large muscles of the legs, which assist in elevating the pulse rate.



38 Core Workouts

Workouts like pilates help to strengthen core muscles and improves adaptability and balance, thereby encouraging to live better with a fitter heart.



39 Dance

Dancing is a good approach to keep the heart healthy. It can extend from high intensity to low depending on the person's ability and inclination.



40 Elliptical

The benefits of an elliptical machine for the heart health is that it gives both upper- and lower-body exercise immediately. The elliptical leg movement imitates running with the lower effect of cycling. Simultaneously, the rhythmic arm movement gets blood streaming to the back and shoulder muscles.



A word from our Instructor.....

Yoga is an ancient science that improves flexibility and balance and has now been proven to boost cardiovascular health. Yoga improves heart health by increasing circulation and blood flow. In addition, practising yoga can help lower blood pressure, cholesterol, blood glucose levels and heart rate, which can all add up to a lower risk of hypertension, stroke, and heart disease. Maintaining a regular yoga practice can provide physical and mental health benefits that extend much beyond the mat.

Rajesh Sharma

Certified Yoga instructor, Fitness trainer & Life coach, Mumbai

- Yoga and Fitness instructor with 13 years of teaching experience
- Has a certificate in power Yoga, Fitness Training and Diploma in nutrition and diet planning
- His articles on fitness were published in renowned newspapers like Times of India, Hindustan and Mid-day

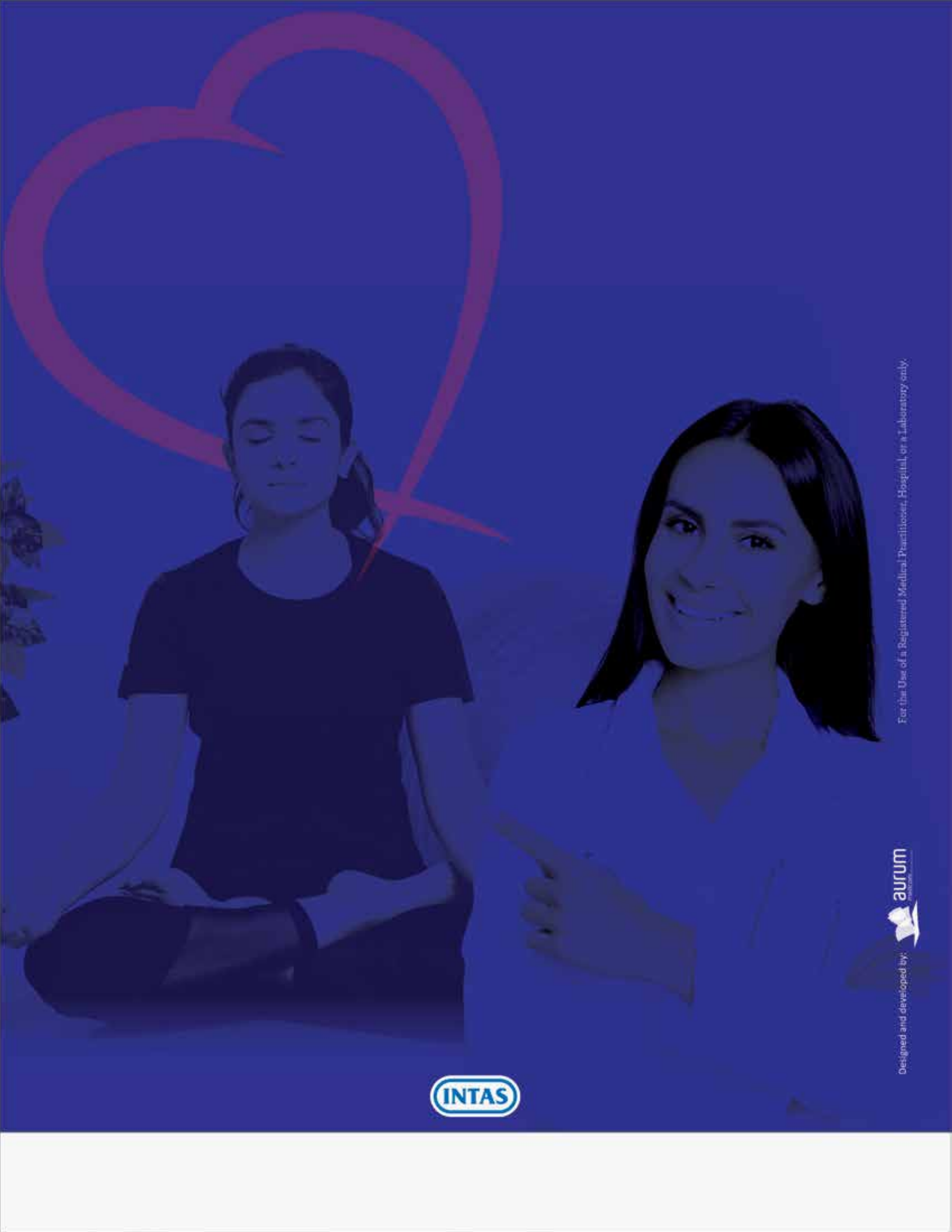


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