



UNIT 6



Yoga



Yoga is a journey of self-discovery that balances our body, mind, and inner self. This holistic approach nurtures our physical, mental, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual well-being. Furthermore, the practice of yoga strengthens us from within and cultivates determination, inner strength, and courage. In Grade 8, we will explore how yoga helps us find inner peace and gain a deeper understanding of ourselves. We will also explore the philosophical roots of yoga, understanding its ancient wisdom, and how it remains relevant in our modern lives. Let us prepare to embark on this beautiful journey that will transform us into healthy, happy, and peaceful individuals.



About Yoga

Yoga is more than just stretching and bending; it is an ancient science that guides us towards a harmonious life. It teaches us how to cultivate a natural balance among the body, mind and emotions. This inner harmony is inspired by nature's perfect balance, just as it harmonises day and night or the changing seasons. The Bhagavad Gita defines yoga as “*samatvam yoga uchyate* (2.48)”, meaning “Yoga is a state of balance.”

The key to achieving this state is to focus on the present moment, and enjoying what is happening right now rather than dwelling on the past or anticipating the future. This practice naturally reduces stress and brings freedom from desires. Furthermore, it helps us mindfully connect with the world while teaching us to be kind, compassionate, and understanding towards others' feelings. Let us now turn our attention to the yoga practices that further deepen our connection to the present moment.

Do you remember those amazing yoga poses we learnt in Grade 7, like the graceful *Marjariāsana* and the energising *Sūrya Namaskāra*? We explored the concept of *Pancha Kośha* to gain a deeper understanding of the different layers of the self. We even mastered some challenging poses like the *Utkatāsana*, *Sarvāgāsana*, *Danurāsana*, and the *Matsyāsana*. We also learnt to regulate our breath with *Bhastrika Prāṇāyāma* and discovered the benefits of *Hasta Mudrā*. Now, let us continue this fascinating journey by deepening our understanding, and learning a few more practices.

In this grade, we will explore how yoga can support us, particularly as we navigate changes and learn to manage our emotions. We will explore *Yama* and *Niyama* and learn how to apply them in our daily lives. We will also learn *Sūkṣhma Vyāyāma*, *Sthula Vyāyāma*, *Sūrya Namaskāra*, *āsana*

(yoga postures), relaxation techniques, *Hasta Mudrās* (hand gestures), *Ṣaṭkarma* (cleansing practices), *Prāṇāyāma* (breathing exercises), *Pratyāhāra* (learning to control our senses), *Dhāraṇā* (focusing our minds), *Dhyāna* (meditation), and *Krīḍā Yoga* (yoga games). These practices will help us concentrate, manage distractions, and find inner peace in the present moment.

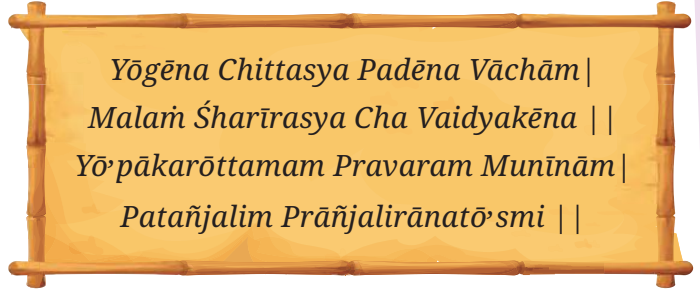
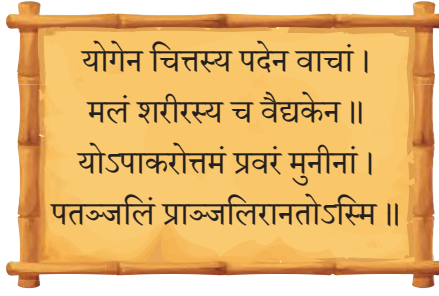
Yoga session structure for teachers

To begin the yoga session, recite the following prayer. This opening prayer is a special way to express gratitude to Maharishi Patañjali for his teachings that promote a healthy mind, clear speech, and a healthy body.

General instructions to begin and end a yoga session

- Sit comfortably in *Sukhāsana* with the spine upright.
- Close your eyes, relax the facial muscles, and bring awareness to the breath.
- Place the hands in *Chin Mudrā* and observe the natural rhythm of the breath for a few moments.
- Then, take a deep, slow breath in. As the breath is released, gently chant “Om.”
- Bring the hands to *Namaskāra Mudrā* and chant the following prayer.
- Notice any changes or sensations that arise after chanting.
- Rub the palms together softly, place them over the closed eyes, and gently open the eyes into the warmth of the hands.

Opening Prayer



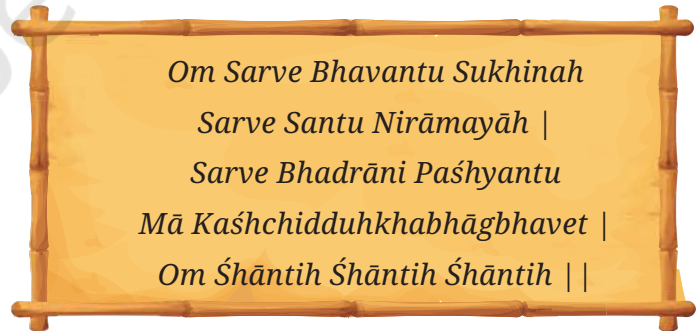
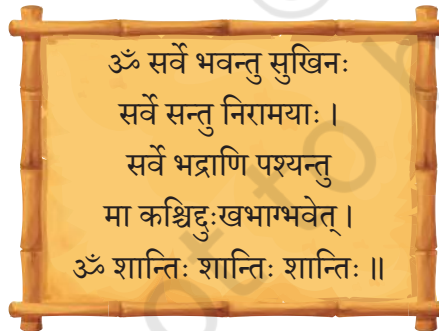
Meaning of the prayer

I bow with folded hands to the great Maharishi Patañjali, who removes the impurities of the mind through yoga (*Yoga Sutrā*), the impurities of speech through grammar (*Vyākaraṇa*), and the impurities of the body through medicine (*Āyurveda*).

After the opening prayer, follow the session plan for various yogic activities. These activities include *Yama* and *Niyama*, *Sūkṣhma Vyāyāma*, *Śhithilikarana Vyāyāma*, *āsanas*, *Prāṇāyāma*, *Pratyāhāra*, relaxation, *Dhāranā*, *Dhyāna*, and *Krīḍā Yoga*.

End each yoga session with the closing prayer given below. This prayer helps students absorb knowledge and reinforces the day's learning in a positive and joyful way.

Closing Prayer



Meaning of the Prayer

May all be happy. May all be free from illness. May all see what is auspicious. May no one suffer. Let there be peace everywhere.

Chapter 1

Yoga for Daily Life

Yoga, with its rich and vast history, has been practised for thousands of years. Over time, various masters documented their techniques and experiences in ancient yoga texts. These texts are more than just books; they are treasure chests holding the profound wisdom of yoga masters. This wisdom passed down through generations, illuminates the path of yoga, offering guidance on ethical living, physical postures, breath regulation, and mental discipline.

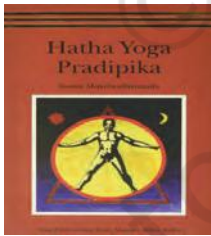
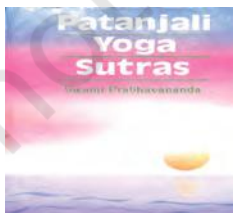
Some of the most important yoga texts are as follows:

- ***Patañjali Yoga Sutra***: Maharishi Patañjali's *Yoga Sutra* is the initial systematic text of *yoga sādhana*. It has four *pāda* (chapters), and contains 195 short, concise, and powerful statements that guide us on the path of yoga. These *sutras* teach us various important concepts, such as *Ashtānga Yoga*.
- ***Haṭha Pradīpikā***: This text discusses the practical aspects of yoga and is divided into 4 chapters. Swami Svātmārāma is the author of this text. It explains how to practise *āsanas*, *Ṣhaṭkarma* (six cleansing techniques), *Prāṇāyāma*, *mudrā*, *Bandha* (neuromuscular or energy locks—muscle contractions that facilitate energy flow) and *Samādhi*.
- ***Gheraṇḍa Samhitā***: The *Gheraṇḍa Samhitā*, written by Rishi Gheraṇḍa, is a practical guide to yoga comprising seven chapters. It teaches *Saptānga Yoga*, a step-by-step method that begins with body exercises and leads to inner understanding. It talks about *Ṣhaṭkarma*, *āsana*, *mudrā*, *Pratyāhāra*, *Prāṇāyāma*, *Dhyāna* and *Samādhi*.

The *Bhagvad Gītā*, an ancient scripture, shares deep wisdom about Yoga, with Shri Krishna guiding Arjuna through various paths of yoga across 18 chapters. Similarly, the *Yoga Vāsistha*, a revered text, features Sage Vāsistha illuminating Shri Rama on yogic principles for understanding life and finding inner peace. Both these texts, along with Maharishi Patañjali's structured *Yoga Sūtras* and the practical guidance found in the *Haṭha Pradīpikā* and *Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā*, offer valuable insights into the core ideas and teachings of yoga from different periods of ancient Indian history. These texts emphasise that yoga is much more than just physical postures; it is a holistic way of living. By understanding and applying their teachings, we can enhance our physical and mental well-being, learn to live with integrity and mindfulness, become better individuals, and contribute positively to society.

Activity 1

Write a few sentences in your own words on the texts given in boxes. Name your favourite sacred text or philosophical scripture in the box below.

1.		
2.		

3.		
4.		

ACTIVITY 2

Find your yoga treasure!

1. Try to find a quote or explanation about yoga that inspires you. This could be a saying from the *Yoga Sutrās*, a verse from the *Bhagavad Gītā*, or any other spiritual text or words from a great person.
2. Write down what the quote or explanation means to you in a few sentences.
3. Share your favourite quote and its meaning with your classmates or family members.
4. Now, let us create a yoga quote collage! Collect your favourite inspiring quotes about yoga and arrange them into a visual display.

Notes for the teacher

- Help the children understand the teachings by inviting them to share their thoughts and engage in open discussions.
- Motivate them to practise the principles of yoga in their daily lives, such as compassion, discipline, and honesty.

Having explored the ancient texts, let us now learn about their practical application through the practice of *Yama* and *Niyama*.

YAMA AND NIYAMA

Yama

As we all know, *Ashtāṅga Yoga* consists of eight limbs, the first of which is *Yama*. *Yamas* are universal guidelines for being good that everyone, everywhere, at any time, should try to follow, regardless of their religion or region. *Yama's* principles help us become good citizens who care for others. Patañjali's *Yoga Sutras* explain these disciplines as follows:

अहिंसासत्यास्तेयब्रह्मचर्यापरिग्रहा यमाः ॥ २.३० ॥

Ahimsāsatyāsteyābrahmacharyāparigrahā Yamah || 2.30 ||

Yama consists of five principles: *Ahimsā* (non-violence), *Satya* (truthfulness), *Asteya* (non-stealing), *Brahmacharya* (moderation), and *Aparigraha* (non-possessiveness).

By practising these *Yamas*, we can create a peaceful and harmonious society where everyone feels valued and respected.

ACTIVITY 3

Understanding the Yamas

1. Choose any one *Yama*, and explain it in your own words with the help of an example. How would you practice it in your day-to-day life? You can also draw a simple picture to illustrate it.
2. Discuss in the group how the *Yamas* can help us become responsible citizens.

ACTIVITY 4

Yamas in Action

Imagine the following situations. For each situation, write down how you would act and explain why.

- A friend is spreading false rumours about you to other classmates.
- You find a lost wallet with money at the school playground.

- You want to buy a new expensive item such as a mobile, even though your old item is still working.
- You go to the fair and spot your favourite ice cream. You want to buy it even though you are suffering from a cold.

Now, create one situation related to the above *yamas*.

Notes for the teacher

- Encourage students to relate the *yamas* to their experiences.
- Facilitate a class discussion following the activity, allowing students to share their answers and perspectives.
- Emphasise that even small actions can make a difference.

Now, let us explore yogic concepts for cultivating ourselves into better individuals.

Niyama

Through *Yamas*, we learn to interact with the world in a kind and honest manner. *Niyamas* help us focus on our inner self. Maharishi Patañjali provides us with five *Niyamas*, personal guidelines that help us lead a joyful and fulfilling life.

The five *Niyamas* are *Śhaucha* (cleanliness), *Santoṣha* (contentment), *Tapas* (self-discipline), *Svādhyāya* (self-study), and *Īśvara Praṇidhāna* (surrender to the divine). *Niyama* teaches us to look within, rather than focusing solely on what is happening around us.

शौचसन्तोषतपःस्वाध्यायेश्वरप्रणिधानानि नियमाः ॥ २.३२॥

śhauchasantoṣhatapahsvādhyāyeśvarapraṇidhānāni niyamah || 2.32 ||

1. **Śhaucha (Cleanliness):** *Śhaucha* means physical and mental purity. We can practise it by keeping the body clean, eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly. For mental purity, we can chant the mantras (*japa*), perform selfless service, and cultivate cheerfulness and compassion for others.

2. ***Santoṣha (Contentment)***: *Santoṣha* means finding joy and peace. It teaches us that true happiness is not just about having more things, but instead, it is about appreciating what you already have in your life. When we practice *Santoṣha*, we feel calm and at ease. We can also cultivate a deeper sense of contentment by appreciating the good in others, being kind to everyone, finding joy in giving, and learning to forgive. This does not mean we ignore our potential to grow, instead, it is about truly enjoying what we have, even with its limitations, much like a child who finds pure happiness in small, simple things.
3. ***Tapas (Self-discipline)***: *Tapas* means self-discipline, dedication, and determination. Cultivating *tapas* empowers us with the inner strength to pursue our goals and navigate life's challenges diligently. It is the willpower that enables us to remain disciplined in our actions, stay consistent in our efforts, and even willingly set aside immediate comforts for the sake of achieving a larger objective.
4. ***Svādhyāya (Self-study)***: *Svādhyāya* means self-study, which helps us develop self-discipline. We can understand ourselves better through activities like reading, meditation, and self-reflection. Even when we do any task with focus and effort, we learn more about ourselves. Additionally, gaining knowledge through books and experienced persons enriches your understanding and makes life easier and happier.
5. ***Īśhvara Praṇidhāna (Surrender to the divine)***: *Īśhvara Praṇidhāna* means completely surrendering to a higher power. By regularly engaging in self-study, we grow in self-awareness, which in turn can lead us to develop a deep trust in this higher power. We can nurture this profound devotion by practising *bhakti* such as through prayer and by reading inspiring devotional texts. This dedicated practice

has the power to transform our entire being, preparing us to understand and live a life of higher purpose.

Activity 5

Let us understand and apply the five *Niyamas* in our daily lives. For each *Niyamas* explain how it helps you live a better life by using the questions below as a guide.

1. Choose just one of the five *Niyamas* that you want to focus on for a short while.
2. Instead of a big goal, think of one small, simple wish related to that *Niyama*. If you choose 'being more organised', your small wish could be 'I want to feel happy with whatever I already have.'
3. How will you know if you are making your small wish come true?
4. Is your small wish something you can really do?
5. Why would making this small wish come true be a good thing for you?
6. How long do you hope to make this small wish happen?

Śhaucha: Physical and mental purity

Let us learn more about *Śhaucha*. *Śhaucha* refers not only to the physical cleanliness of the body but also to the mental purity of the mind. To maintain mental purity or health, let us explore and understand the *Ariṣaḍvargas*, which are like enemies of the mind.

The *Ariṣaḍvargas* are six negative forces that can disturb our minds. They are:

Ariṣaḍvargas (Six major enemies of the mind)					
Desire (Kāma)	Anger (Krodha)	Greed (Lobha)	Attachment (Moha)	Arrogance (Mada)	Jealousy (Matsarya)

Think of your mind as a calm, clear pond. *Śhaucha* means keeping this mental pond clean and free from any dirt. When the pond is clear, you can see everything within it beautifully. But if it gets dirty, everything becomes blurry and hard to see.

Let us read a story to gain a deeper understanding of how to keep our mental pond pure and clear.

The story of Anjali and the clear pond

Anjali, a young teenager, often found solace in observing the village pond. Its usual state of pristine clarity, mirroring the expansive sky, evoked a sense of tranquillity and joy within her. The pond's transparency allowed her to witness the vibrant life beneath the surface, where she observed the fish in their natural habitat. However, the pond's condition was not always peaceful. Following turbulent weather or instances of pollution, the water would become murky and disturbed. This transformation saddened Anjali, as the loss of the clear reflection obscured the pond's beauty, concealed its inhabitants, and created an overall sense of disorder.

One day, Anjali's grandmother used the pond as an example to explain the nature of the human mind. She explained that when our thoughts are pure and untainted— Śhaucha— we





experience a state of mental clarity and emotional well-being, much like the pond in its clear state. We can perceive situations and emotions with accuracy and achieve inner peace. However, negative emotions, such as envy, anger, greed, attachment, and sadness, act like pollutants, clouding our minds and distorting our perceptions.

Anjali understood the analogy and began to apply the principle of purity, or *Śhaucha*, to her mental state. When she experienced feelings of superiority or a desire to be the best, she reminded herself of the unique strengths and talents inherent in every individual. When confronted with anger towards her brother, she practised mindful breathing and sought to understand his perspective. She discovered that by maintaining a clear and uncluttered mind, she was able to experience greater peace, improved focus, and healthier relationships. She recognised that cultivating inner purity was essential for a fulfilling and balanced life.

Activity 6

1. Look at the messy thought bubble and clear thought bubble and write your messy thoughts in the speech bubble in simple words. For example, "I want more toys", "Wanting too much, getting angry easily, feeling jealous."
2. In the clear thought bubble write down the clear thought or the way you want to deal with the messy thoughts in simple words. For example, "It is okay to want things, but I have what I need." "Remind yourself to be grateful for what you have, take three deep breaths before reacting, focus on enjoying what you have right now, congratulate your friend genuinely and focus on your own strengths."



3. Draw lines connecting each 'messy thought' bubble to a 'clear thought' bubble that could help deal with it.
4. If your mind feels like a garden with messy weeds, what is one small thing you can do today to start taking care of it?

Just as Anjali learned to keep her mental pond clear, the *Yama* and *Niyama* principles guide us in living a clean and pure life, both in our actions and thoughts. By following these guidelines, we can keep the 'waters' of our minds calm and clear, leading to inner peace and a better understanding of ourselves and the world around us.

Chapter 2

Yoga Sādhana

Just like learning to play music requires time and regular practice, yoga also demands strong willpower and consistent effort. This steady, long-term practice in yoga is known as *Abhyasa*. *Abhyasa* means practising regularly without giving up or getting distracted and doing so with respect. By engaging in *Abhyasa*, we can develop the right mindset and a strong foundation for our yoga journey.

When yoga is practised consistently, it enables us to apply the right kind of effort, focus, and energy and work efficiently towards achieving our goals. This mindset can help us succeed in various areas of life, such as studies, art, sports, and more.

SŪKṢHMA VYĀYĀMA (Joint loosening practices)

Do you remember those exercises we did in the previous grade to loosen our shoulders and neck muscles? This year, we will learn some new exercises to loosen the muscles of our hips, legs, and ankles.

You might remember learning about *Sūkṣhma Vyāyāma* in previous grades. These gentle exercises are like a warm-up for our body. They improve joint mobility, reduce stress, and enhance flexibility and strength.

Let us now learn *Sūkṣhma Vyāyāma* for the body's lower limbs, such as the toes, ankles, knees, and hips. This set of practices helps to loosen the joints and improve flexibility. These practices are also known as the *Pawanamuktāsana* series.

1. *Padānguli Naman* (Toes Bending)

Sthiti

STEP 1: While inhaling, spread the toes of both feet.

STEP 2: While exhaling, compress the toes. This completes one round.

Repeat this practice for 10 to 15 rounds.

Come to *viśhrānti*.



Sthiti



Step 1



Step 2



Viśhrānti

2. *Goolf Naman* (Ankle Bending)

Sthiti

STEP 1: While inhaling, stretch both feet forward.

STEP 2: While exhaling, bend both feet backwards. This completes one round.

Repeat this practice for 10 to 15 rounds.

Come to *viśhrānti*.



Sthiti



Step 1



Step 2



Viśhrānti

3. Goolf Chakra (Ankle Rotation)

Sthiti

STEP 1: Slowly rotate both feet clockwise for 5 rounds.

STEP 2: After completing, rotate both feet anticlockwise for 5 rounds.

Come to *viśhrānti*.



Sthiti



Step 1



Step 2



Viśhrānti

4. Janu Naman (Knee Bending)

Sthiti

STEP 1: Bend the right knee and hold it with your hands.

STEP 2: While inhaling, straighten the right leg.

STEP 3: While exhaling, bend the leg at the knee. This completes one round. Continue for 5–10 rounds.

STEP 4: Release the folded leg.

Come to *viśhrānti*.

Repeat the same sequence with the other leg.



Sthiti



Step 1



Step 2



Viśhrānti

5. Janu Chakra (Knee Rotation)

Sthiti

STEP 1: Bend the right knee and hold it with your hands.

STEP 2: Gently rotate the lower leg in a clockwise direction, moving it from the knee. Repeat for 3–5 rounds.

STEP 3: Now gently rotate the lower leg in an anticlockwise direction, moving it from the knee. Repeat for 3–5 rounds.

STEP 4: Release the folded leg.

Come to *viśhrānti*. Repeat the same sequence with the left leg.



Sthiti



Step 1



Step 2



Viśhrānti

6. Ardha Titali (Half Butterfly)

Sthiti

STEP 1: Bend your right leg and place your right foot on your left thigh. Place your right hand on your right knee and hold your right foot with your left hand.

STEP 2: While inhaling, gently move the right knee towards the chest.

STEP 3: While exhaling, gently push the knee downwards and try to touch it to the floor. This completes one round. Practice 10–15 up-and-down movements.



Sthiti



Step 1

STEP 4: Release the folded leg.

Come to *viśhrānti*.

Repeat the same sequence with the other leg.



Step 2



Viśhrānti

7. *Poorna Titali* (Full Butterfly)

Sthiti

STEP 1: Bend the knees and bring the soles of the feet together, pulling the heels close to the body. Hold the feet with both hands.

STEP 2: Gently move the knees up and down towards the floor. Do not use any force. Repeat the practice for 10–20 rounds. Release the folded legs after the practice.

Come to *viśhrānti*.



Sthiti



Step 1



Step 2



Viśhrānti

Notes for the teacher

- Encourage the students to practise with awareness and correct breathing patterns.
- Once the students master these practices, other variations can be introduced. Refer to previous grade textbooks.
- After every two or three practices, the teacher can ask the students to close their eyes and quietly focus on their natural breathing. This will help them bring mindfulness (awareness) to all the joints that were practised.

STHŪLA VYĀYĀMA

In the previous grade, we learnt about spinal flexibility. In this grade, let us explore *Sthūla vyāyāma* and improve our physical stamina.

Sthūla vyāyāma refers to a set of yogic exercises involving more vigorous movements than simple stretches. These exercises help improve overall physical fitness, strength, and flexibility. Often called ‘loosening exercises’, *Sthūla vyāyāma* typically involves repetitive movements that prepare the body for more advanced yoga practices or other physical activities. Think of them as a way to warm up the body and prepare it for more intense activity.

1. *Rekhā gati* (line walking)

Come to a standing posture.

STEP 1: Stand with your left foot flat on the ground. Bring your right foot forward. Place the heel of your right foot so it gently touches the toes of your left foot.

STEP 2: Take twenty steps forward. With each step, make sure the heel of your front foot touches the toes of your back foot. Try to walk in a straight line as you take these steps.

Relax in *viśhrānti*.



BENEFITS

- This *vyāyāma* helps to improve focus and balance.

2. *Hriday-gati* (yogic jogging)

Also known as the 'Locomotive Exercise', it is named so because it resembles a moving train engine.

Come to a standing posture.

STEP 1: Bend your arms at the elbows as if you are holding something up.

STEP 2: Run forward on your toes, taking twenty small steps. As you run, move your arms forward and backwards like the pistons of a train engine.

STEP 3: When your right leg moves forward, push your right arm forward and your left arm backwards. Do the opposite when your left leg moves forward. Your feet should flick back from your knees so they almost touch your buttocks as you run. Breathe in and out sharply and deeply through your nose. Take twenty steps forward.

STEP 4: After taking twenty steps forward, immediately move backwards the same distance. Maintain the same arm and leg movements and continue the sharp breathing. When your arms move backwards, ensure your elbows do not go further back than your body.

Relax in *viśhrānti*.



BENEFITS

- This *vyāyāma* expands and strengthens the chest.
- It builds the muscles in the thighs and calves.
- It is ideal for those who enjoy running and other sports.

3. *Ūrdhva-gati* (Up movement)

Come to a standing posture.

STEP 1: Place your feet about one foot apart. Bend one arm at the

elbow so that your forearm is straight out in front of you.

STEP 2: Stretch your other arm straight up towards the sky. Keep the palms of both hands open and facing away from you, with the fingers of both hands together.

STEP 3: Bend your left knee slightly as if you are about to take a step. At the same time, stretch your right arm further upwards. Then, straighten your left knee and bring your right arm back to its starting position.

STEP 4: Now, bend your right knee slightly and stretch your left arm upwards. Straighten your right knee and bring your left arm back to its starting position. Breathe in as you stretch your arm up and bend your knee. Breathe out as you return to the starting posture. To begin with, repeat this entire sequence (left knee/right arm, then right knee/left arm) 20 times.



Relax in *viśhrānti*.

BENEFITS

- This *vyāyāma* is good for the arms and legs.
- It improves blood circulation throughout the body.

Notes for the teacher

- Encourage patience and help students understand that flexibility and strength develop over time with consistent practice.
- Be prepared to offer modifications or simpler variations for those who find the exercises challenging.
- Briefly explain the benefits of each exercise, linking them to physical (strength, flexibility, balance, circulation) and mental (concentration) well-being.
- Encourage students to practise these exercises at home, paying close attention to proper form and instructions.

Chapter 3

Āsana

Now that we have explored the importance of preparatory practices by loosening our joints, let us practise the *Sūrya Namaskāra* and other *āsanas*.

SŪRYA NAMASKĀRA

In Grade 7, we learnt how *Sūrya Namaskāra*, a sequence of 12 *āsanas*, helps stretch, strengthen, and rejuvenate our body and mind. It's an excellent way to greet the sun and start the day on a positive note.

In Grade 8, we will explore the different names of the Sun and how chanting them during *Sūrya Namaskāra* can instil positive qualities within us.

Each round of *Sūrya Namaskāra* begins with the chanting of 'Om' followed by a specific name of the Sun. These names are a part of a *mantra*— sound combinations believed to positively influence our minds, making them more active, efficient, and healthy.

It is believed that chanting the Sun's name while performing the *Sūrya Namaskāra* helps us develop qualities like friendship, devotion, energy, health, strength, and vigour. By focusing on these positive qualities associated with the Sun, we connect with the divine and bring these virtues into our lives.

Note

Ratha saptamī, also known as *sūrya saptamī*, is a special day to celebrate the Sun's powerful energy and marks an important change in its path. To honour this, we can practice the beautiful flow of twelve yoga poses known as the *Sūrya Namaskāra*. On *Ratha saptamī*, it is wonderful to perform these twelve postures twelve times, like a moving prayer to the Sun.

Starting prayer for the practice

Adopt the *Namaskāra Mudrā* and chant the prayer:

हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण सत्यस्यापिहितं मुखम्।
तत्त्वं पूषन्नपावृणु सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये॥

*Hiraṇmayena Pātreṇa Satyasyāpihitam Mukham ।
Tat Tvam Pūshannapāvriṇu Satyadharmāya
Drishtaye ॥*



Meaning of the prayer

“Your golden orb masks the entrance to truth and reality, like a lid on a golden vessel. Oh, Sun, remove this covering to reveal truth and reality.” This prayer is taken from the *Īshāvasyopaniṣhad*.



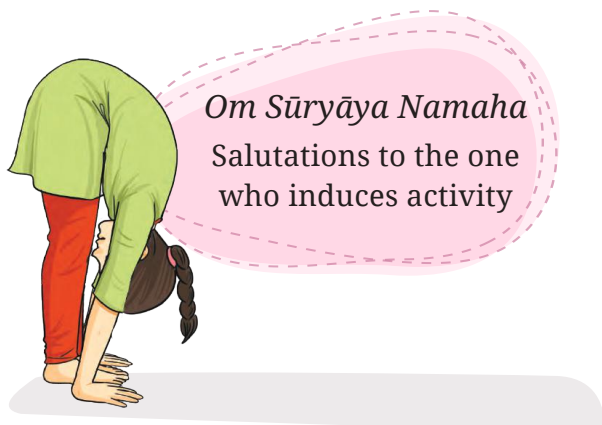
Om Mitrāya Namaha
Salutations to the
friend of all

STEP 1: Praṇāmāsana



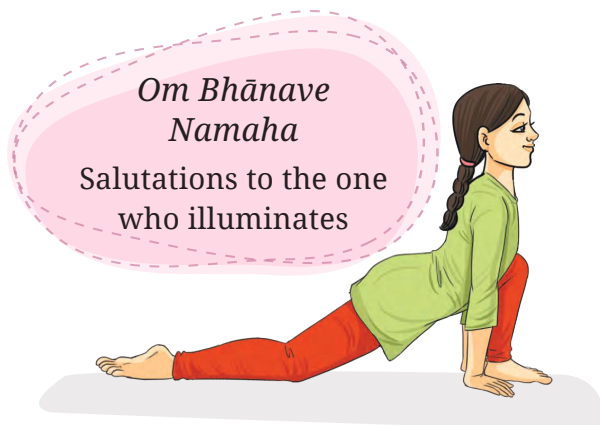
*Om Ravaye
Namaha*
Salutations to the one
who shines

STEP 2: Hasta Uttānāsana



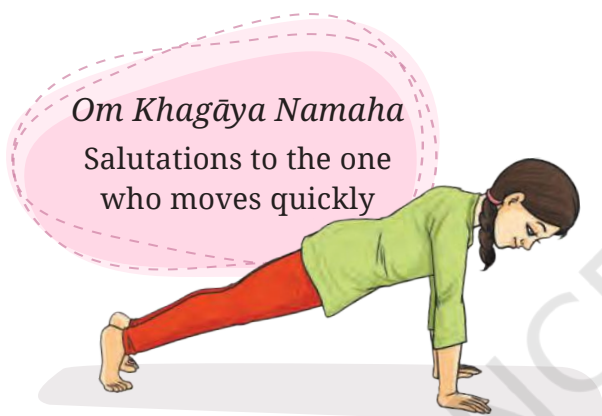
Om Sūryāya Namaha
Salutations to the one
who induces activity

STEP 3: Pādahastāsana



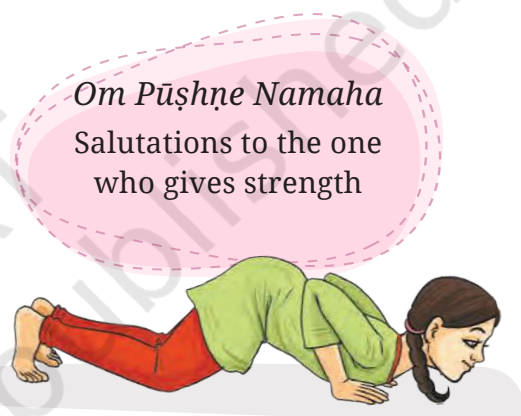
*Om Bhānave
Namaha*
Salutations to the one
who illuminates

STEP 4: Aśhvasaṅchalanāsana



Om Khagāya Namaha
Salutations to the one
who moves quickly

STEP 5: Dandāsana



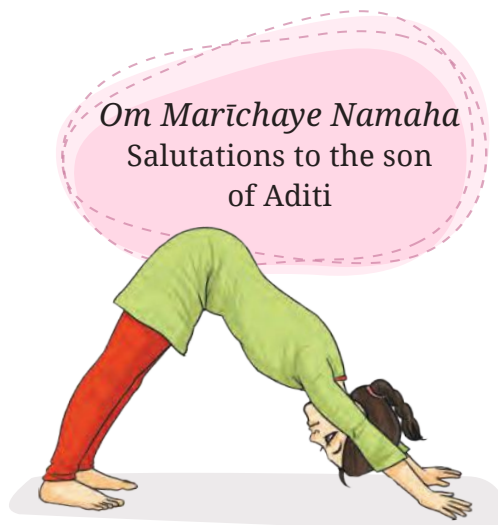
Om Pūṣhṇe Namaha
Salutations to the one
who gives strength

STEP 6: Sāṣṭāṅga Namaskāra



*Om Hiranya
Garbhaya Namaha*
Salutations to the golden
cosmic self

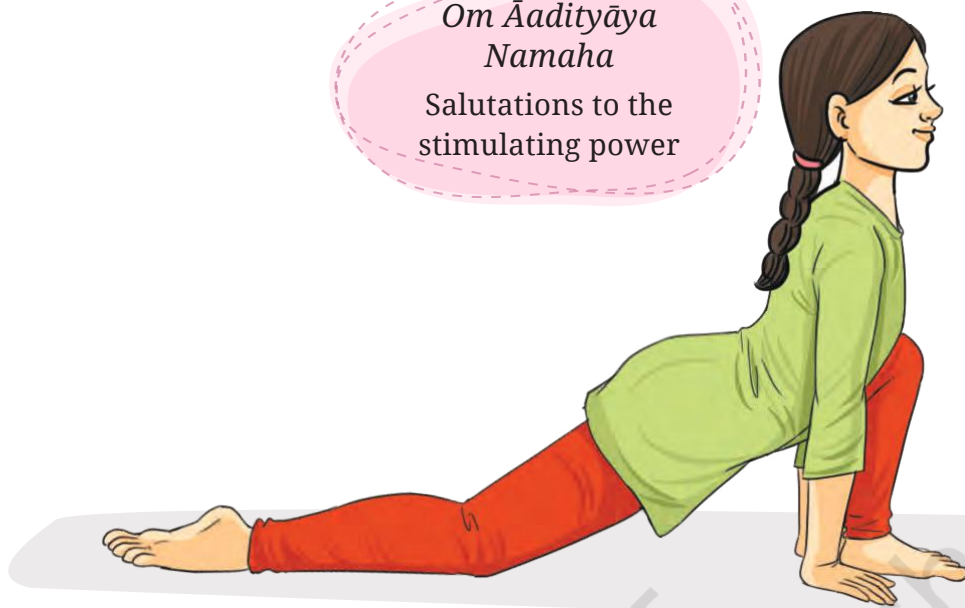
STEP 7: Bhujangāsana



Om Marīchaye Namaha
Salutations to the son
of Aditi

STEP 8: Parvatāsana

*Om Āadityāya
Namaha*
Salutations to the
stimulating power

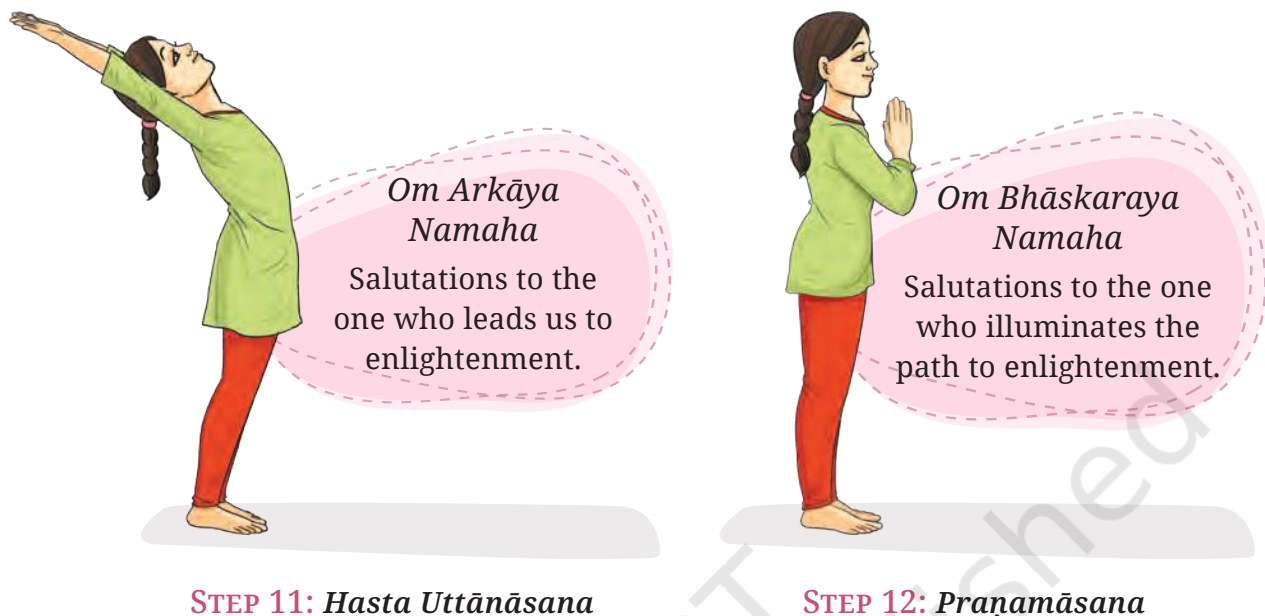


STEP 9: *Aśhvasañchalanāsana*

Om Savitre Namaha
Salutations to the
one who is worthy of
praise.



STEP 10: *Pādahastāsana*



Notes for the teacher

- Ensure that students perform this practice smoothly and without any jerky movements.
- Encourage them to coordinate each movement with their breathing.
- As a variation, students can hold each posture for a few seconds.
- Refer to the Grade 7 Physical Education and Well-being textbook for benefits and limitations.

Introduction to *Āsanās*

In Grade 7, we explored several asanas that helped improve our balance, concentration, and flexibility. This year, we will learn new *āsana* to enhance stability, balance, and flexibility. We will also focus on how to perform these *āsanas* with ease and effortlessness.

Yoga is known for its many practices, but *āsanas* is the most popular. Some people even think that practising *āsanas* is all that yoga is about! Long ago, spiritual seekers

used *āsanas* mainly to prepare us for meditation. Today, we understand that *āsanas* can also help us manage the challenges of daily life.

In the Yoga Sutras, Maharishi Patañjali described *āsana* as a means to cultivate a positive mindset. However, it is important to remember that *āsanas* are more than just physical exercises. They should be practised carefully and slowly, with full attention and awareness of the breath. *Āsanas* teach us how to care for and maintain our physical bodies. When we practise them, we use them as a foundation to turn our attention inward.

As the *Yoga Sutrā* of Patañjali describes—

स्थिरसुखम् आसनम् ।

***Sthirasukham āsanam* | (2.46)**

That is, the posture should be steady and comfortable.

This is key to performing *āsanas*. It means that we should aim for physical and mental stability and comfort in any posture. *Sthira* means ‘steady’, so holding the posture steadily is important. When you first start practising, it may feel challenging and even a little uncomfortable. However, do not worry! With regular practise, the *āsana* will become easier and more comfortable to do. *Āsanas* are often categorised into various groups to help us understand and practice them better; these include meditative, cultural, relaxing, and balancing poses.

Before learning new *āsanas*, we must reinforce our understanding and practice of the ones we explored in the previous grades. These postures, which include poses like *Ardhakati chakrāsana*, *Padmāsana*, *Bhujangāsana*, *Śhalabhāsana*, *Utkaṭāsana*, *Sarvāṅgāsana* and *Matsyāsana*, are beneficial for building strength, flexibility, and balance. By revisiting these *āsanas*, we reinforce our understanding of their correct techniques and prepare our bodies for the more challenging *āsanas* that we will learn in this Grade.



Ardhakati chakrāsana



Utkāṭāsana



Gomukhāsana



Padmāsana



Bhujangāsana



Śhalabhāsana



Matsyāsana



Uttanapadāsana



Sarvāṅgāsana



Sarla Dhanurāsana

In this Grade, we will practice the following *āsanas*:

- Standing – *Vīrabhadrāsana* (Variation II), *Garudāsana*
- Sitting – *Paśhchimottānāsana*, *Parivṛitta Janu Śhīrṣhāsana*, *Suptavajrāsana*, *Utthita Padmāsana*
- Prone – *Dhanurāsana*
- Supine – *Pavanamuktāsana*

Perform each *āsana* under the teacher’s guidance and follow the steps provided.

For safe and effective *āsana* practice, remember the following guidelines:

- Always begin with warm-up exercises, such as *Sūkṣhma Vyāyāma* to prepare your body. Practise on an empty stomach, preferably in the morning. Breathe naturally through your nose with slow, deep breaths, and wear comfortable, loose clothing.
- Avoid strain and overstretching; listen to your body’s signals. Focus on proper alignment and maintain a calm mind during practice. Conclude with a relaxation posture, such as *Śhavāsana*, and strive for consistent, daily practice for optimal benefits.

For additional guidelines, please refer to the Grade 7 textbook.

***Vīrabhadrāsana* (Warrior Pose) – Variation II**

Vīrabhadrāsana, also known as the Warrior Pose, is named after the mighty warrior *Vīrabhadrā* (*Vīra* meaning ‘warrior’, *Bhadra* meaning ‘best’). This legendary figure, associated with *Sadāśhiva*, arose from Lord Shiva’s anger to fight injustice, famously destroying Daksha’s *yajna*. He symbolises focused strength and righteous power.

Practising this pose helps us connect with that warrior spirit, developing physical strength, flexibility, and balance. Mentally, it cultivates the determination, courage, and confidence needed to face life’s challenges, just like *Vīrabhadrā*.

Let us now learn, step by step, how to achieve this posture.

Prārambhika Sthiti (Starting Position)

STEP 1: Inhale and spread your legs 3 to 3½ feet apart. Turn the right foot 90° and the left foot 60°, and simultaneously raise both arms so they are parallel to the ground, with palms facing down.



Sthiti

Step 1

STEP 2: Exhale and bend your right knee so that your right thigh is parallel to the ground and your left leg is angled, with your knee straight. Keep the body from the waist to the head upright and centred. If comfortable in the posture keep the eyes closed. Remain in this posture for 10 seconds, maintaining ease and comfort.



Step 2

Step 3

Viśhrānti

STEP 3: Inhale, straighten your right knee, and return to a standing position.

STEP 4: Exhale, bring your legs together, lower your arms, and return to *prārambhika sthiti*.

Repeat the same sequence on the left side.

Relax in *Śhithila Tāḍāsana*.

BENEFITS

- *Vīrabhadrāsana* is good for the thighs and the upper part of the body.
- It relieves stiffness in the shoulders, neck, and back.
- It helps tone the ankles and knees.
- It improves lung capacity.
- This *āsana* helps calm the mind, build self-confidence, and reduce anxiety and stress.

LIMITATIONS

- Those with acute knee, hip and back pain must avoid this practice.

Notes for the teacher

- Students struggling with balance can keep their feet slightly wider apart or use a wall for support.
- Encourage students to also practise *Vīrabhadrāsana* variation I, which was introduced in the previous grades.

Garudāsana (Eagle Pose)

Garuda in sanskrit means eagle. In this posture, the arms and legs are crossed with the palms facing each other, resembling an eagle—hence the name *Garudāsana*.

Prārambhika Sthiti (Starting Position)

STEP 1: Inhale, and while exhaling, lift the left leg and wrap it around the right knee from the front, taking it behind the right calf. Lock the ankle of the right leg with the left foot.

STEP 2: Inhale, and as you exhale, wrap the arms by placing the right elbow inside the slightly bent left elbow, trying to bring the palms together.



*Prārambhika
sthiti*

Position the palms so that they resemble an eagle's beak.
Maintain balance, focus on a point, and stay in the posture.

STEP 3: Inhale, exhale, and release the hands.

STEP 4: Inhale, exhale, and release the legs.

Relax in *Śhithila Tāḍāsana*.

Repeat the same practice on the left side.



Step 1



Step 2



Step 3



Step 4



Viśhrānti

BENEFITS

- *Garudāsana* improves concentration, balance, and coordination.
- It strengthens the muscles and loosens the joints of the shoulders, arms, and legs.

LIMITATIONS

- Students with joint injuries must avoid this practice.

Note for the teacher

Ensure that students perform *Sūkṣhma Vyāyāma* exercises for the upper and lower parts of the body to improve flexibility before practising the *āsana*.

Paśhchimottānāsana (Back stretching pose)

Paśhchimottānāsana, also known as the ‘Seated Forward Bend’, deeply stretches the entire back of the body, from head to heels. The Sanskrit name perfectly describes this action— *Paśhchim* means ‘back’, and *uttāna* means ‘intense stretch’, literally translating to ‘intense stretch of the back’.

Let us learn, step by step, how to achieve this posture.

Prārambhika Sthiti (Starting position)

STEP 1: Inhale, raising both hands vertically so that the biceps touch the ears and the palms face forward.

STEP 2: Exhale, then bend your trunk forward from the lower back. Stretch the arms and hands parallel to the ground. With further exhalation, form hooks with the index fingers and hold the big toes. Stretch your lower back further away from your trunk and rest your face on your knees. Bend the hands at the elbows and relax the abdominal muscles. Stay in the posture with normal breathing. Stay in this posture for 10 counts with ease and pleasure.

STEP 3: Inhale and slowly raise your hands so that your biceps touch your ears, and your palms face forward.

STEP 4: Exhale, bring your hands to the ground, and return to *Sthiti*.

Relax in *Śithila dandāsana*.



*Prārambhika
sthiti*



Step 1



Step 2



Step 3



Step 4



Viśhrānti

BENEFITS

- *Paśhchimottānāsana* is an excellent yoga pose to improve back flexibility.
- It improves digestion and bowel movement and helps relieve constipation.
- This *āsana* helps calm the mind and slow down thoughts, which in turn reduces stress levels.

LIMITATIONS

- Students with back problems, heart issues, or who have recently undergone abdominal surgery should avoid this practice.

Note for the teacher

- Ensure that students perform *Sūkṣhma Vyāyāma* exercises for the upper and lower parts of the body to improve flexibility before practising the *āsana*.

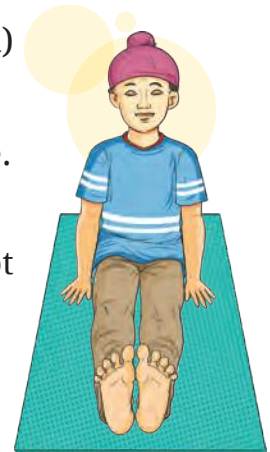
Parivṛitta Janu Śirṣhāsana

This posture means Revolved (*Parivṛitta*) Head (*Śhira*) to Knee (*Janu*) Pose.

Let us learn, step by step, how to achieve this posture.

Prārāmbhika Sthiti (Starting Position)

- STEP 1:** Bend the left leg at the knee and bring the left foot towards the right inner thigh.
- STEP 2:** Inhale and raise the hands upwards so that the biceps touch the ears, with the palms facing forward.
- STEP 3:** Lengthen the spine, and while exhaling, twist the torso towards the right leg, reaching for the right foot with the right hand.
- STEP 4:** Raise the left arm, and with further exhalation, bring it over the head and hold the right foot with both hands. Tuck the chin and turn the head towards the ceiling.



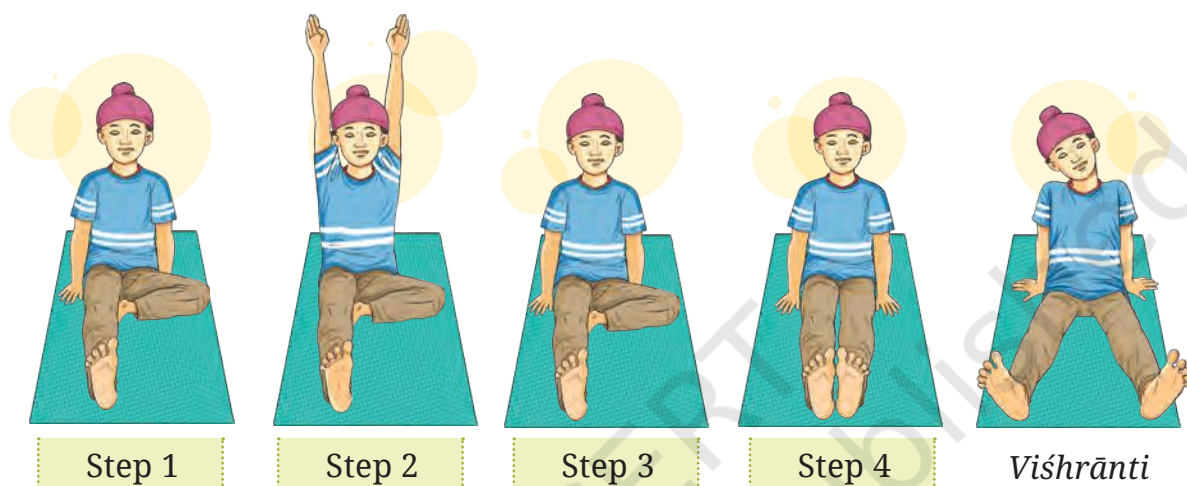
*Prārāmbhika
sthithi*

STEP 5: Inhale, release the left arm, and slowly release the right arm, stretching both hands above the head.

STEP 6: With further inhalation, turn the torso back to the centre.

STEP 7: While exhaling, release both hands and place them by your sides, near the thighs.

STEP 8: Exhale, release the left leg, and return to *Prārambhik Sthiti*. Relax in *Śhithila Danḍāsana*.



BENEFITS

- *Parivritta Janu Śhīrṣhāsana* improves mobility and flexibility in the back.
- It stimulates the abdominal organs.
- It opens up the hips and chest for better posture and breathing.
- This *āsana* calms the nervous system and reduces stress and anxiety.
- It promotes mindful breathing, helping to create a sense of relaxation.

LIMITATIONS

- Students with knee injuries, back pain, shoulder pain, or a stiff neck should avoid this practice.

Note for the teacher

- Ensure students loosen their hip joints by doing forward and backward bending or *chakki chalana* before practising.

Supta Vajrāsana (Sleeping thunderbolt pose)

Supta Vajrāsana, also known as the ‘Sleeping Thunderbolt Pose’, is a variation of *Vajrāsana*. It helps to improve digestion and calms the mind.

Let us learn how to do this pose step by step.

Prārambhika Sthiti (Starting position)

STEP 1: Fold the legs one at a time and sit into *Vajrāsana*.



Prārambhika sthithi

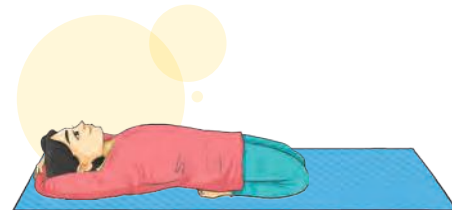
STEP 2: Inhaling, bend backwards, supporting yourself with your elbows and palms. Stretch your body and place your head on the ground. Lie flat on your back. Keep your hands crossed above your head and your knees close to the ground. Remain in this posture for 10 seconds, breathing normally.



Step 1

STEP 3: Exhaling, and with the support of your elbows and palms, return to *Vajrāsana*.

STEP 4: Release your legs and come into *Danḍāsana*.



Step 2

Relax in *Śhithila Danḍāsana*.



Step 3



Step 4



Viśhrānti

BENEFITS

- It stimulates the digestive, respiratory and nervous systems, calms the mind and improves focus.
- This *āsana* helps calm the mind and body, promoting emotional balance.
- It improves focus and instills a sense of freedom and lightness, creating a positive attitude toward oneself and the world.

LIMITATIONS

- Those with knee, hip, elbow, wrist, or back pain must avoid this practice.
- Students who have recently had abdominal or knee surgery must avoid this.

Note for the teacher

- If students do not have the needed strength and flexibility, they can be asked to take a little gap between their knees and legs.

Utthita Padmāsana

Padmāsana in Sanskrit means ‘Lotus Pose’. In this posture, the body is lifted off the ground while in the lotus position.

Let us learn, step by step, how to achieve this posture.

Prārambhika Sthiti (Starting Position)

STEP 1: Inhale and exhale. Fold the right leg and place it at the root of the left thigh. Inhale and exhale again, then fold the left leg and place it at the root of the right thigh.

STEP 2: Place the palms beside the hips. While inhaling, use your strong core and arms for support and lift your body off the ground, pressing your palms firmly into the floor. Keep the spine, neck, and head erect.



*Prārambhika
sthithi*

Remain in the posture for a count of ten, breathing normally.

STEP 3: While exhaling, slowly lower the hips back to the floor.

STEP 4: Inhale and exhale. Unfold the left leg, inhale and exhale again and unfold the right leg. Come to *Sthiti*.

Relax in *Śhithila Danḍāsana*.



Step 1



Step 2



Step 3



Viśhrānti

BENEFITS

- *Utthita Padmāsana* strengthens the fingers, wrists, arms, and abdominal muscles.

LIMITATIONS

Students who have wrist, ankle, and knee injuries must avoid this practice.

Notes for the teacher

- Ensure that the students can perform *Padmāsana* comfortably.
- If students struggle to lift, they can gently sway their upper body forward to help themselves up.

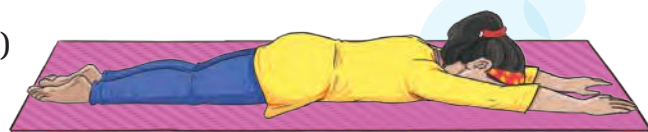
Dhanurāsana (Bow Pose)

Dhanur in Sanskrit means bow. This posture resembles a bow, and hence it is called *Dhanurāsana*.

Let us learn how to perform this posture step by step.

Prārambhika Sthiti (Starting position)

STEP 1: While inhaling, fold both legs at the knees and catch the ankles with both hands, keeping the arms straight. Bring the heels close to the buttocks.



Prārambhika sthiti

STEP 2: Inhale and raise your head and chest as high as possible from the floor, tilting your head back so that your posture resembles a bow. Keep the eyes closed, and the face relaxed. Hold this position with normal breathing for a count of ten.



Step 1

STEP 3: Slowly lower the thighs and head to the ground while exhaling.



Step 2

STEP 4: Release the hands and legs, then stretch both arms above the head with the palms facing down. Rest the forehead on the ground.



Step 3

Relax in *Makarāsana*.



Step 4



Viśhrānti

BENEFITS

- *Dhanurāsana* gives good stimulation and flexibility to the back.
- It improves digestion.
- For girls, it helps relieve menstrual disorders.
- This *āsana* helps uplift energy levels and reduces lethargy and tiredness.
- It helps soothe the mind, reduces depression and anxiety, and instils courage.

LIMITATIONS

- Those who have headaches, neck injuries, recent abdominal surgery, or back problems must avoid this practice.

Note for the teacher

- Forward-bending postures, such as *Parvatāsana* or *Śhaśhānkāsana* should follow this *āsana*.

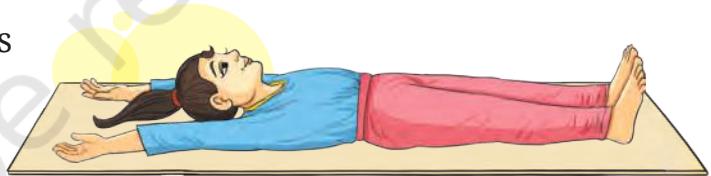
Pavanamuktāsana (Wind relieving pose)

This *āsana* is also known as the ‘Wind-Relieving Pose’. It helps remove gas and waste from the body by improving digestion and bowel movements.

Let us learn, step by step, how to achieve this posture.

Prārambhika Sthiti (Starting Position)

STEP 1: Inhale, then slowly raise both legs to a 90° angle.



Prārambhika Sthiti



Step 1

STEP 2: Exhale, bend both knees and bring them towards the chest until the thighs touch the stomach. Interlock the fingers and clasp the hands around the shin bones below the knees. With further exhalation, try to touch the knees with the tip of the nose.

Stay in the posture with normal breathing for a count of ten.

STEP 3: Inhale, place the head on the ground, slowly release the knees, and raise the legs to 90°.

STEP 4: Exhale and slowly lower the legs back to the mat.

Relax in *Śhithila Śhavāsana*.



Step 2



Step 3



Step 4



Step 5

Step 6



Step 7

Viśhrānti

BENEFITS

- *Pavanamuktāsana* is an excellent practice to strengthen the abdominal muscles.
- It improves digestion and helps relieve acidity and constipation.
- It provides relief from menstrual problems and back pain.
- This *āsana* reduces stress and anxiety, promoting relaxation and mindfulness.

LIMITATIONS

Students with a hernia, recent abdominal surgery, or leg surgery should avoid this *āsana*.

Note for the teacher

- Variations of *Pavanamuktāsana* can be given to students (refer to the *Khel Yoga* Grade 6 textbook).

Yoga Nidrā

Yoga Nidrā is an effective way to relax and energise the body and mind. It is a helpful tool for deep relaxation while staying alert. It is excellent for reducing stress, improving focus, and promoting a sense of balance. One might look asleep, but they remain aware inside.



Like warming up before yoga practice and cooling down afterwards, *Yoga Nidrā* is a perfect way to end a yoga routine.

It helps the body use energy wisely, relaxing the whole system. This prepares us for *Prāṇāyāma* and meditation. So, always plan enough time for *Yoga Nidra* at the end of your *āsana* practice!

Step-by-step instructions for *yoga nidrā*

1. Lie comfortably on your back in the *Śavāsana* pose. Gently close your eyes and relax. Take a few slow, deep breaths in and out. Remember to breathe calmly. Let us begin by focusing gently on the right foot. Feel the right foot relaxing as you keep the attention there for a moment. Now, slowly shift your focus up to the right knee, right thigh, and finally to the right hip. Be aware of the entire right leg and feel it relaxing.
2. Now, gently shift the focus to the left foot. Feel it relaxing as you hold the attention there for a moment. Slowly move the focus up to the left knee, the left thigh, and finally, the left hip. Become aware of the entire left leg, allowing it to relax completely.
3. Now, bring the attention to the lower body— your pelvis (lower limbs), stomach, navel, and chest.
4. Bring attention to the right shoulder, right arm, palm, and fingers. Do the same for the left shoulder and left arm, palm and fingers. Next, focus on the throat, face, and the very top of the head.
5. While in this relaxed state, take a deep breath in. Notice how the body feels, and relax and enjoy this peaceful stillness for a few minutes.
6. Now, slowly become aware of the body and the space around you. Gently roll onto the right side and stay there for a few more minutes.
7. When you are ready, slowly sit up. Take the time, and when you feel comfortable, gently and gradually open your eyes. You can then rub the palms together to create warmth and gently cup them over the eyes.

Benefits of *Yoga Nidra*

- *Yoga Nidra* is an effective tool for achieving deep relaxation and rejuvenation.
- It calms the nervous system and balances endocrine secretions.
- It helps release emotional tensions.
- It withdraws the mind from excessive mental activity and calms it.

Notes for the teacher

- Use clear and simple language that students can easily understand.
- Encourage students to visualise the body parts they are focusing on. This helps them connect with their bodies on a deeper level.
- Use a calm and soothing tone of voice to guide students through the practice.
- Allow sufficient time for each practice step; do not rush the students.

Kriyās

Kriyās are special yoga techniques designed to purify the body from the inside out. While we all practice some form of cleansing daily, like bathing or brushing our teeth, yoga *kriyās* go deeper, targeting the internal organs. Over time, yogis have developed many *kriyās*, but six major ones, called the *Ṣhhaṭa Kriyās*, are considered the most important and comprehensive.

They are:

1. *Neti* – Cleaning the nostrils
2. *Dhouti* – Cleaning the digestive tract
3. *Bastī* – Cleaning the bowels.
4. *Naulī* – Rolling the abdominal muscles
5. *Trāṭaka* – Gazing at one point
6. *Kapālabhāti* – Cleaning the frontal region of the brain

In this grade, let us learn more about *Kapālabhāti*. *Kapāla* means ‘skull’, and *bhāti* means ‘shining’, so *Kapālabhāti* means ‘shining skull’. In the *Haṭha Yoga* texts, it is classified under the *Ṣhaṭ Kriyās*. This practice involves active, rapid exhalation, while inhalation is a passive process.

Practise guidelines

- While practising *Kapālabhāti*, keep the body relaxed.
- Never force the breath during the practice; start with 10 to 15 exhalations.
- Practise this on an empty stomach.
- Try to maintain a steady rhythm throughout the practice.
- Girls should avoid this practice during menstruation.

Step by step guide for the practice

- Sit in a comfortable posture, such as *Vajrāsana* or *Sukhāsana*, with the spine erect, face relaxed, and eyes gently closed.
- Adopt *Chin Mudrā*.
- Inhale once, then exhale rapidly, like a blacksmith’s bellows, drawing the abdominal muscles inward as the air is expelled through the nostrils.
- This practice can be performed for 10 to 20 exhalations, depending on one’s capacity.
- When the practice is stopped, the breath halts automatically. This state is called *Sahaja* or *Kevala Kumbhaka*, and it is considered the most critical aspect of *Kapālabhāti*, which must be experienced.
- When the breath stops naturally, the mind also becomes still, which is the ultimate goal of yoga practice.

BENEFITS

- *Kapālabhāti* helps eliminate excess *Kapha doṣha*, particularly mucus that accumulates in the head-neck region.
- It improves upper and lower respiratory health.
- It balances and strengthens the nervous system.
- It enhances focus and concentration.
- It provides a gentle massage to all the abdominal organs.

LIMITATIONS

Students with spinal issues or heart-related conditions should avoid this practice.

Notes for the teacher

- Encourage students to practise step-by-step with clear guidelines and precautions, allowing them to explore the benefits of this breathing technique safely.
- Discuss with students their experiences regarding how many exhalations they could achieve or whether they experienced *Kevala Kumbhaka* after practising.
- As a variation, students can also adopt *Brahma Mudrā* while practising.
- If students feel lightheaded or dizzy, they should stop the practice.

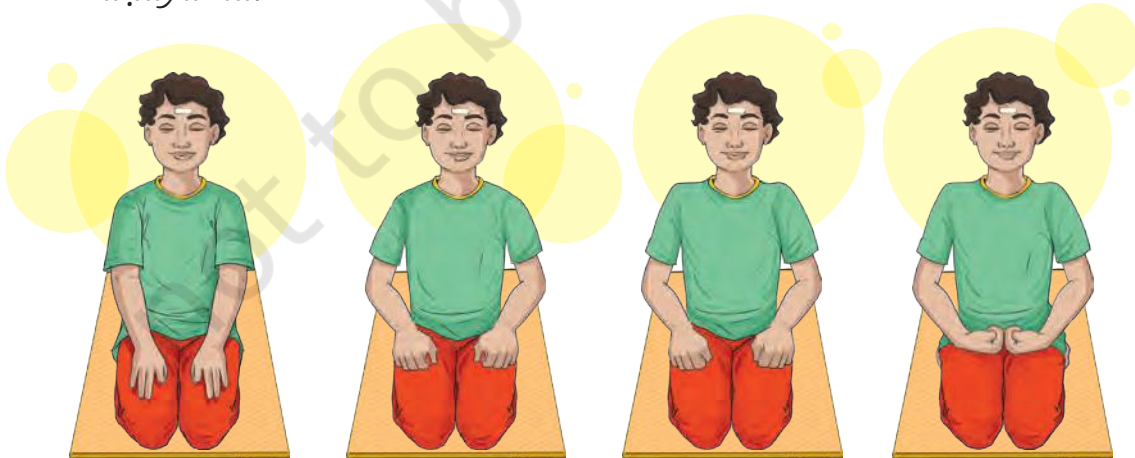
Chapter 4

Prāṇāyāma

Our daily habits, from exercise and work to sleep and even food, greatly affect Prāṇa. *Prāṇa* is the vital energy needed by our physical and subtle layers, without which the body would perish. It is the *prāṇa*, or life force, within us that nourishes the mind and keeps the body alive. In our bodies, our thoughts, feelings, and imagination have an even stronger influence on this energy.

While often described as breath control, *Prāṇāyāma* is more than just breathing exercises. The word *Yama* means to control or regulate, usually referring to rules or codes of conduct. *Prāṇāyāma* goes beyond simple respiration, and is best practised after performing *āsanas* (yoga postures) as part of a complete yoga routine.

Before we learn *Prāṇāyāma* in this Grade, let us review our practice from the previous Grade, such as Sectional Breathing, *Nāḍīśhuddhi Prāṇāyāma*, *Bhrāmarī Prāṇāyāma* and *Bhastrikā Prāṇāyāma*.



Sectional Breathing



Nāḍīśhuddhi Prāṇāyāma



Bhrāhmārī Prāṇāyāma



Bhastrikā Prāṇāyāma

For safe and effective *Prāṇāyāma*, remember these guidelines:

- Always breathe naturally through your nose.
- Sit comfortably with your back straight. Start slowly, gradually increasing your practice time.
- If you feel dizzy or have respiratory issues, inform your teacher immediately.
- Remember, *Prāṇāyāma* is about gradual progress, so consistent practice will bring positive changes.

(Refer to *Khel Yoga Grade 6 textbook* for the above practices).

In this Grade let us learn additional *Prāṇāyāma* practices such as *Sūrya Bhedana Prāṇāyāma* and *Chandra Bhedana Prāṇāyāma*.

Sūrya Bhedana Prāṇāyāma

Sūrya Bhedana Prāṇāyāma, is also known as right nostril breathing. In this practice, we inhale (breathe in) through the right nostril and exhale (breathe out) through the left. Here's how to do it — remember to keep your eyes, temples, eyebrows, and forehead completely relaxed throughout the practice.



Prārambhika Sthiti (Starting position)

- STEP 1:** Sit in *Vajrāsana* or *Sukhāsana* with the spine erect, the face relaxed and the eyes gently closed. Adopt *Chin Mudrā* in both hands and place it on the thighs.
- STEP 2:** Adopt *Nāsika Mudrā* in the right hand. Stay in this posture with normal breathing for a count of ten.
- STEP 3:** Gently close the left nostril using the ring and the little fingers of the right hand. Inhale through the right nostril.
- STEP 4:** Close the right nostril with the thumb, open the left nostril and exhale.
- STEP 5:** After the practice, drop the right hand, adopt *Chin Mudrā* and observe the changes.

Repeat the practice for 5 rounds.

BENEFITS

- *Sūrya Bhedana Prāṇāyāma* strengthens the immune system and increases the efficiency of the digestive system.
- It destroys the intestinal worms as per *Haṭha Pradīpikā*.
- It relieves asthma, colds, low blood pressure and gastric problems.
- It increases the body temperature and helps in weight loss.

LIMITATIONS

- Students with heart problems should avoid this practice.
- Students suffering from fever should avoid this practice completely.
- Never practise *Sūrya Bhedana Prāṇāyāma* after eating.

Chandra Bhedana Prāṇāyāma

Chandra Bhedana Prāṇāyāma is also known as left nostril breathing. In this practice, we inhale (breathe in) through the left nostril and exhale (breathe out) through the right. Here is how to do it—remember to completely relax your eyes, temples, eyebrows, and forehead throughout the practice.



Prārambhika Sthiti (Starting position)

STEP 1: Adopt *Chin Mudrā* in both hands and place it on the thighs.

STEP 2: Adopt *Nāsikā Mudrā* in the right hand.

Stay in the posture with normal breathing for a count of ten.

STEP 3: Gently close the right nostril using the thumb of the right hand. Inhale through the left nostril.

STEP 4: Close the left nostril with the ring and the little finger, open the right nostril and exhale. One cycle of inhalation and exhalation forms one round.

STEP 5: After the practice, drop the right hand, adopt *Chin Mudrā* and observe the changes.

Repeat the practice for 5 rounds.

BENEFITS

- *Chandra Bhedhana Prāṇāyāma* cools the body and reduces body heat.
- This practice reduces laziness.
- It is beneficial for relieving stress and agitation.

LIMITATIONS

- It should not be practised during winter.
- Students suffering from asthma and heart disease should avoid this practice.

Notes for the teacher

- Ensure students do equal rounds in both nostrils and do not overdo the practice.
- Encourage students to share their experiences after the practice.

MUDRĀS

Mudrās are gentle yet powerful movements, often involving the hands, that act like a silent language of your body. These movements can shift how you feel, think, and see the world around you, making you more focused and aware. Sometimes, a *mudrā* uses your whole body, combining *āsana*, *Prāṇāyāma*, and focused visualisation. Ancient yoga texts consider *mudrās* a key part of yoga, best learnt after you are comfortable with basic yoga practices, as they help to refine the inner awareness and clear any major energy blocks.

In this Grade, let us learn how to perform *Taḍāgī Mudrā*.

Taḍāgī Mudrā: The Pond Gesture

In Sanskrit, ‘*Taḍāgī*’ (तडाग) means a human-made pond or reservoir, and ‘*Mudrā*’ (मुद्रा) means a seal or gesture. So, *Taḍāgī*

Mudrā is like creating the shape of a pond with your body in a seated forward bend. This yoga pose involves sitting, using a specific breathing method, and focusing the mind, including gently drawing the stomach inward. It combines body, breath, and awareness to create the 'pond gesture' (*mudrā*). This *mudrā* should be practised on an empty stomach early or at least three hours after the last meal.



Step-by-step instructions for Tadāgi Mudrā

Come to *Danḍāsana*

- STEP 1:** Sit with the legs stretched out and feet slightly apart. Close your eyes and relax the whole body, especially the abdominal region.
- STEP 2:** Now slowly lean forward and grasp the big toes with the thumb, index and second finger.
- STEP 3:** Keep the head facing forward, now inhale slowly and deeply, expanding the abdominal muscles to their fullest extent.
- STEP 4:** Now, exhale slowly and deeply while relaxing the abdomen. Repeat the breathing for 5 times and then slowly release your toes and return to *Danḍāsana*.

Relax in *Śhithila Danḍāsana*.

BENEFITS

- *Tadāgi Mudrā* strengthens the diaphragm and tones the pelvic floor muscles.
- This mudra improves the appetite and cures digestive disorders.

LIMITATIONS

- Students who have undergone recent surgery and hip or leg injury should avoid this practice.
- Students with heart disease and hernia should avoid this practice.

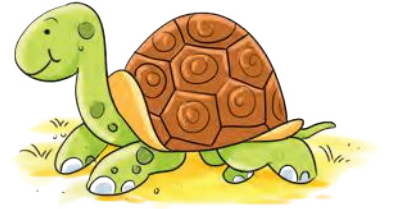
Notes for the teacher

- Students can attempt three rounds in one session and gradually progress to five rounds.
- Ensure students do not move their body while doing the practice.

PRATYĀHĀRA

Pratyāhāra, is the fifth limb of *Ashtānga Yoga*, which teaches us to focus our minds by gently drawing our attention away from distractions. It is like turning down the noise of the outside world to better hear what's happening within us. *Pratyāhāra* is a practice that helps to calm our mind by training our five senses (sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell) to draw nourishment from within, rather than just from the outside world.

The word *Pratyāhāra* comes from Sanskrit—*Prati* means ‘away from’, and *āhāra* means ‘nourishment.’ Thus, *Pratyāhāra* refers to withdrawing the senses from external stimuli. Think of it like a tortoise drawing its limbs into its shell for protection; in the same way, *Pratyāhāra* teaches us to withdraw our senses from distractions gently.



By practising *Indriya Pratyāhāra*—the control of the senses—we learn to turn our attention inward. When you want to concentrate, try gently pulling your awareness away from what you see, hear, taste, touch and smell. With regular practice, your ability to focus will strengthen, as if placing a ‘Do Not Disturb’ sign on your mind to preserve your concentration.

Here's a verse from the *Kathā Upaniṣhad*.

तां योगमिति मन्यन्ते स्थिरामिन्द्रियधारणाम्
Tam yogamiti manyante sthirāmindriyadhāraṇām

“That is called Yoga, where the senses are controlled and held steady.”

ACTIVITY

My Inner Tortoise Shell

- Sit in a comfortable place with your eyes gently closed.
 - Try to focus on your breath, even when there are many distractions around you. For example, noises or a yummy smell from a bakery might pull your attention away.
 - Now, imagine you are like a tortoise. Slowly and gently, pull your senses inward, like a turtle drawing its head and legs into its shell.
-
- **Sight:** Gently stop focusing on what is in front of you. Imagine your eyes are closed—even if they are open—and focus only on the darkness behind your eyelids.
 - **Hearing:** Try not to pay attention to the sounds around you. Instead, listen only to your quiet thoughts.
 - **Smell:** Gently ignore any smells in the air. Notice the air as it comes in and out of your nose.
 - **Taste:** Be aware of the taste in your mouth, but do not try to change or focus on it too much. Just let it be.
 - **Touch:** Notice how your body is sitting or resting. Observe the sensations, but do not get too involved in them. Just be aware.

Take a few slow, deep breaths while your ‘senses are inside your shell.’ Notice how your mind feels a little quieter and more still.

After a minute or two, gently bring your awareness back to the outside world. Notice how you feel.

Think about how it felt to pull your attention inward gently. Did it help you feel more focused or calmer? This simple practice is a little taste of *Pratyāhāra*, learning to create your own ‘inner shell’ to protect your focus. You can try this anytime you need to concentrate.

This skill can also be helpful in many situations, like studying, paying attention in class, or dealing with overwhelming feelings.

DHĀRAṆA, DHYĀNA AND SAMĀDHI

Notes for the teacher

- Read the activity beforehand to familiarise the students with the steps and the intended experience.
- You may choose to play soft, calming background music.
- Briefly discuss how focusing inward can enhance students' learning and understanding.
- Encourage students to share their experiences.

Dhāraṇa, *Dhyāna* and *Samādhi* are limbs of *Ashtāṅga* Yoga that help calm and still the mind. These practices are about learning to control the mind and improve focus. In them, the mind becomes the most important tool. Understanding how our mind works is the key to being healthy and happy—these three practices support this understanding. They lead to a state where we can control our thoughts, gain wisdom, and experience deep peace and joy. Essentially, they involve training the mind to concentrate on one specific object.

Focus means keeping your attention on a single point. It has two main aspects—first, it involves keeping the mind within a specific boundary, not allowing it to wander. Second, even when many things try to distract you, focus is about actively choosing to stay with that one thing. Focusing takes effort, and the more distractions there are, the harder it becomes.

What is *Dhāraṇa*?

This ‘spot’ for meditation could be a thought, an object, or a sound (like a mantra). Fixing the mind on one of these is called *Dhāraṇa*.

Dhāraṇa means ‘holding’ or ‘absorbing’ focus and is about concentrating on a specific area or object. It is not about focusing on a tiny point but rather about keeping the mind within a specific boundary. You can focus on many things, depending on your intention. For example, some ancient teachings suggest focusing on the navel to understand the human body or on the throat to control hunger and thirst. You might also focus on a statue, the story of a wise person, or even the breath. Practising *Dhāraṇa* helps us become more aware of ourselves and less ignorant. It makes the mind more stable and less prone to wandering, bringing peace and emotional balance.

In this grade, let us learn the art of focusing through the practice of *Jyoti Trāṭaka*.

Our eyes are amazing organs that allow us to see the world around us. However, with its stresses and increased screen time, modern life can negatively affect our vision. Yoga offers a practice called *Trāṭaka*, which may help reduce stress and improve specific eye problems.

Trāṭaka means ‘steady gazing’ or ‘concentrated viewing.’ It is a practice where you focus on an object or a symbol. In *Jyoti Trāṭaka*, we use the light or flame of a lamp as the point of focus, and preparatory exercises are performed before practising it.

Let us now follow a step-by-step preparatory practice for *Jyoti Trāṭaka*.



Step 1



Step 2



Step 3



Step 4

Sit in *Sukhāsana* or *Vajrāsana*.

STEP 1: Tilting left and right with the right eye closed

Close your right eye. With your left eye open, gaze at the light while tilting your head to the right and left. Do not blink. After a few rounds, do simple palming.

STEP 2: Tilting left and right with the left eye closed

Now close your left eye. With your right eye open, gaze at the light while tilting your head to the right and left. Do not blink. After a few rounds, do simple palming.

STEP 3: Bending forward and backwards with the right eye closed

Close your right eye. With your left eye open, gaze at the light while moving your head forward and backwards. Do not blink. Then do simple palming.

STEP 4: Bending forward and backwards with the left eye closed

Close your left eye. With your right eye open, gaze at the light while moving your head forward and backwards. Do not blink. Then do simple palming.

Notes for the teacher

- During the practice, use dim light.
- Ensure the students move their heads gently and slowly.
- Encourage students to do palming after each step to relax.

Preparation of light

In a darkened room (the room does not have to be completely dark), place a lamp or candle on a table. Have students sit in a circle around the table, each about an arm's length away from the other. Carefully light the lamp or candle.

DHYĀNA

Dhyāna is like a smooth, steady stream, like oil flowing without interruption. It is a state of deep focus where your mind is completely absorbed in one thing. Think about the times when you have been so immersed in a game or music that you did not notice anything else— that is a taste of *Dhyāna*.

In yogic texts, *Dhyāna* is compared to a smooth stream of oil. When oil is poured from one vessel to another, it flows seamlessly, like a continuous stream—*Tailadhāravat*. *Dhyāna* should be continuous, like *Tailadhāravat*.

Now let us practice simple meditation techniques, step by step.

- Sit comfortably in *Sukhāsana* or *Vajrāsana*, with your spine erect and eyes closed.
- Slowly move your awareness to your breath. Observe your breathing for a few moments as you inhale and exhale.
- If thoughts arise in your mind, don't worry. Gently bring your attention back to your breath.
- Practice this for a few minutes. This is *Dhyāna*, focusing on your breath and allowing your mind to become calm and peaceful.

Samādhi

Samādhi is like reaching perfection in something you have practised for a long time. Think of a master musician who plays their instrument so well that it seems like an extension of their body. That effortless skill and oneness with the instrument is similar to *Samādhi*. It is a natural state that happens when you have truly mastered something.

Krīḍā Yoga

Krīḍā means play, but it is much more than just fun and games. It is vital to healthy development, fostering physical and mental well-being. *Krīḍā Yoga* is an inherently joyful activity, driven by our natural desire to move and explore. It does not require strict rules or pre-planned outcomes. It is about active participation, not just watching. When we engage in *Krīḍā*, we often create our own ‘rules’ and explore movement without the pressure of being ‘right’ or ‘wrong.’

Nāmasmaranam

Nāmasmaranam is an indoor game, normally played in groups. This game improves memory.

How to play

- All students must sit in a circle.
- When the whistle blows, each student must identify a yogic concept (such as *Yama*, *Niyama*, names of the sun, *āsanas*, *Prāṇāyāma*, or *Mudrās*) individually.
- Students who cannot name a concept or repeat a previously mentioned one will be considered out.
- A special clap or cheer can be given at the end of the game.



Notes for the teacher

- Variations are encouraged to make the game enjoyable.
- As a variation, include a section where students have to pair the name of the *āsanas* or *Prāṇāyāma* with its benefits.
- Ensure all students participate in the game.

HA-HA-HA

Ha-Ha-Ha is a fun, circular group game. It helps us become more aware of ourselves and others, and also helps us develop healthy emotions. Playing this game can improve lung capacity.

How to play

- All students sit in a circle.
- At the sound of the whistle, the first student says “HA” once.
- The second student says “HA HA” twice.
- In this way, the third student says it three times, the fourth student says it four times, and so on, but not more than five times.
- The words must be spoken clearly.
- Those who laugh or miss the number are considered out.



Notes for the teacher

- Different sounds can be used as variations to make the game enjoyable.
- It is a fun game, so do not exert too much pressure on the students.

Nurturing emotional well-being during the transition phase

Growing up, especially during the exciting yet sometimes overwhelming period of adolescence (ages 10 to 19), you can

face many rapid changes in your body, mind, and feelings, including puberty. To navigate this transition smoothly and blossom into healthy adults, it's crucial to develop positive ways to handle challenges. This involves understanding our culture, being mindful of our thoughts, staying determined in our efforts, and choosing supportive friends.

When it comes to managing emotions during this time of change, it's very important to remember that if you're experiencing emotional turbulence, reaching out is key. Talking about your feelings and sharing them with a trusted elder, teacher, or counsellor is much healthier than keeping them bottled up or isolating yourself. Practices like meditation can also be incredibly helpful in understanding and balancing your emotions. Besides this, engaging in creative activities, pursuing hobbies, and spending time connecting with nature through nature walks can also play a significant role in maintaining emotional well-being. By building these positive values and skills, you'll be better equipped to stay healthy, happy, and make good choices as you mature.

Yoga practices for anxiety and anger management

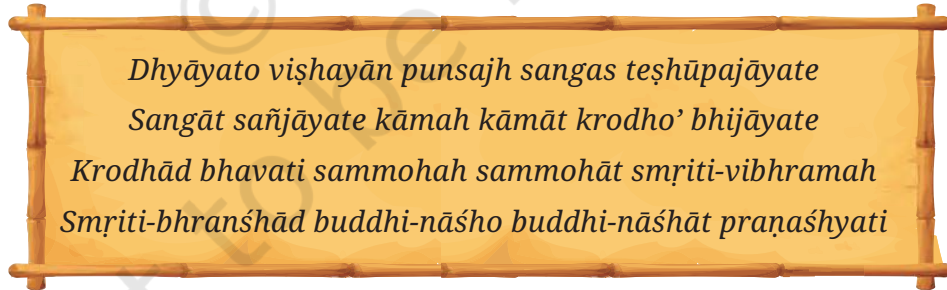
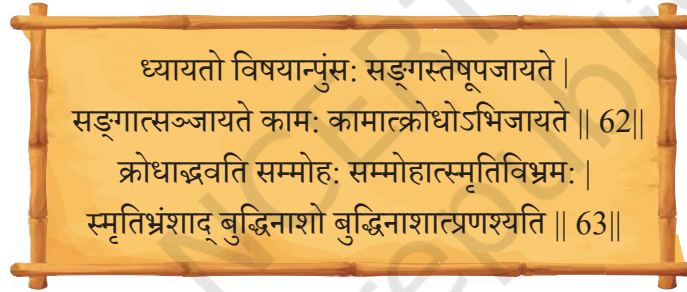
While anxiety and anger are natural responses we all experience when faced with life's stresses, intense or frequent feelings can negatively impact our well being. Yoga provides us with valuable tools to manage these emotions. A consistent daily practice that includes loosening exercises, *Sūrya Namaskār*, *āsanas*, relaxation techniques, *Prāṇāyāma*, *Mudrās*, and *Dhyāna* can help us navigate anxiety and anger, leading to a calmer and more balanced life.

It's important to remember that while yoga is a powerful support for coping with everyday stress and preventing intense feelings, it is not a replacement for professional help. If you find that frequent or intense anxiety or anger significantly disrupts

your daily life, reaching out for guidance from health experts is a positive step. Seeking help from a counsellor or psychologist is normal and should not be considered something to avoid. Just like we seek help for physical health, taking care of our mental and emotional well-being is equally important.

NOTE: Adolescents often experiences frustration and anger when they cannot get what they want. But did you know that these feelings can start with our own thoughts?

The *Bhagavad Gītā*, explains it this way—If you keep thinking about something you like, you start to become attached to it. This attachment then grows into a strong desire to have it. When you cannot get what you really want, this desire can turn into anger.



Assessment

The assessment section is to check your understanding and application of yoga.

Yoga for Daily Life

ASSESSMENT	YAMA	NIYAMA	ŚHAUCHA AND ARIṢHADVARGAS
Identification of concepts			
Understanding of concepts			
Application of concepts with personal examples			
Overall Comprehension			
Total score			

Teachers evaluation sheet

CRITERIA	EXCELLENT (3 POINTS)	GOOD (2 POINTS)	FAIR (1 POINT)	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (0 POINTS)	TEACHER'S COMMENTS
Identification of Concepts	Clearly identifies and explains the concept.	Identifies the concept.	Tries to identify the concept.	Shows little interest in identifying the concept.	
Understanding of Concepts	Clearly explains the meaning of the concept.	Explains the meaning of concepts.	Attempts to explain the concept with some confusion.	Shows little or no interest in understanding the concept.	
Application with Personal Examples	Provides clear and relevant personal examples for applying the concept in daily life.	Provides personal examples for applying the concepts.	Provides weak or unclear personal examples for the concepts.	Does not provide personal examples for the concepts.	
Overall Comprehension	Demonstrates a strong understanding of how these concepts relate to a healthy and balanced life.	Demonstrates a good understanding of how these concepts relate to a healthy life.	Shows some understanding of the connection between these concepts and healthy living.	Shows little understanding of how these concepts relate to a healthy life.	

Yoga Sādhana

ĀSANAS				
ASSESSMENT QUESTION	STANDING	SITTING	SUPINE	PRONE
Name of the āsanās				
Body alignment while performing the āsanās				
Awareness of breath while performing the āsanās				
Stability while performing the āsanās				
Understanding the āsanās benefits and limitations				
Total Score				

Teachers evaluation sheet

CRITERIA	EXCELLENT (4 POINTS)	GOOD (3 POINTS)	FAIR (2 POINT)	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (1 POINT)	TEACHER'S COMMENTS
Identify the name of the āsanās	Is able to pronounce the name accurately with its meaning	Is able to pronounce, not able to say the meaning	Partly able to pronounce the name	Unable to identify the āsanās	
Body Alignment	Demonstrates proper alignment and understanding of the posture	Generally good alignment with minor deviations	Noticeable misalignments	Significant misalignments	
Awareness of Breathing	Breath is fully integrated with movement and awareness	Generally mindful of breath with occasional coordination	Breath is often shallow with limited coordination	Little to no awareness of breath	
Stability	Maintains steadiness and balance throughout the posture	Mostly stable with slight movements	Some instability and difficulty maintaining balance	Significant instability and inability to maintain balance	
Understanding the āsanās Benefits and Limitations	Clearly and accurately explains the posture benefits and limitations	Explains the posture benefits and limitations with minor inaccuracies	Explains some of the posture benefits and limitations but with significant inaccuracies	Unable to accurately explain the posture benefits and limitations	

Prāṇāyāma

I am a breathing exercise, a path to inner might, Inhaling the sun's warmth, with the nostril on your right. The left passage releases, the breath flows free and clear, Relaxing face and mind, banishing all fear. I boost your body's shield.

What am I?

I am a breath that whispers cool through the left passage I enter, and out the right I flow, letting tensions go. When minds are feeling troubled, and worries start to bloom, I offer gentle stillness, and banish anxious gloom.

What am I?

Teachers evaluation sheet

CRITERIA	EXCELLENT (4 POINTS)	GOOD (3 POINTS)	FAIR (2 POINT)	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (1 POINT)	TEACHER'S COMMENTS
Understanding of <i>Prāṇāyāma</i>	Clearly and accurately understands the instructions	Partly understands the instructions	Tries to understand the instructions	Unable to follow the instructions	
Participation in Practice	Puts in a complete effort and demonstrates the ability to understand instructions	Puts in complete effort and demonstrates the ability to understand instructions	Tries to put effort in understanding the instructions	Unable to follow the instructions	
Overall Engagement and Interest	Engages fully and shows clear interest	Engages partially and shows some interest	Tries to engage	Unable to engage	