
2

Body Perfection

2.1 Introduction

Yoga and massage is the oldest system of personal development. It also helps in attaining and maintaining good health.

2.2 Objectives

After reading this lesson you will be able to :

- understand yoga and its advantages
- differentiate between good and bad postures
- learn different asanas for attaining perfection
- know about balanced diet
- master techniques of body massage

2.3 Meaning of yoga

Yoga is a complete science of life that originated in India thousands of years ago. It is the oldest system of personality development in the world, encompassing the body, mind and spirit.

Yoga means union. It also means concentration. It is a drawing together of the fragments within ourselves to make us whole.

However, most of us, when we start to practice yoga are not trying to reach this goal; we are concerned with trying to improve the quality of our lives. Yoga is simple and practical. Its physical and mental disciplines can be followed by anyone.

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Advantages and Importance of Yoga

1. It keeps the body fit and supple
2. It relieves tension
3. It tones up and relaxes the body
4. It helps in self-realization
5. It cures many ailments
6. It is good for health and beauty
7. It is lightly stimulative
8. Fatty tissues are reduced
9. The activity of the skin gland is stimulated
10. The nerves are soothed and rested.

2.4 Posture

Visual Poise

People judge you by the way you act, as well as by the way you look. The way you carry out simple activities – sitting, walking, and so forth – is important in presenting the best of you. A bit of practice and exercise will help you to perform them naturally.

Standing



The correct posture creates beautiful body alignment and graceful balance. To check your posture, stand with your back to a wall, with your feet slightly apart, and your heels about 3 inches from the wall. Now lean back. If your back, head, and shoulders all touch the wall, your back is straight, the way it should be. If you find this position uncomfortable, you need to strengthen your back with exercises.

When standing, turn your body slightly to make the front view look slim and tall. Your forward foot should be pointed straight ahead, while the back foot should be at about a 45° angle to the front foot. Your weight should be evenly distributed between the feet. Your knees should be slightly relaxed and never locked.

Walking

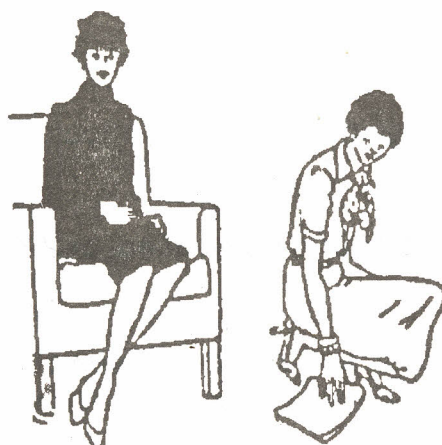
- 14 Walking should be a smooth, gliding, rhythmic action that conveys an

effect of ease and confidence. Your feet should move parallel to each other. Do not take too long strides or too short steps, and walk with as little noise as possible. Your shoulders should be relaxed so that the arms will swing easily, the palms of the hands facing inward. Your head should be held high.



Sitting

Walk directly to the chair, turn around, and pause in the basic standing position. Touch the chair with the back of one leg, move one foot slightly under the chair, and sit down. Let the foot that is under the chair take most of your weight as you sit down, with your back straight, head up, and knees together. Do not lean against the chair and lean with the buttocks as you sit down.



Intext Question 2.1

1. Indicate whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F):
 - (a) Yoga tones up and relaxes the body.
 - (b) Physically unfit people can not do yoga.
 - (c) Standing, walking and sitting are the main characteristics

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of postures.

(d) Standing postures can't be changed with regular exercise.

2. Walking should be

- (a) Smooth
- (b) Gliding
- (c) Rhythmic
- (d) All the above

3. Yoga is for

- (a) Overall development
- (b) Body building
- (c) Weight reduction
- (d) Mental Peace

Before you begin yoga

There are some basic guidelines which should be followed before beginning yoga practice:

- Wait for 4-5 hours after a heavy meal or 2-3 hours after a light snack.
- Empty the bladder and move the bowels before you start. Supported Sarvangasana and Ardha Halasana will help.
- Practise in loose-fitting clothing and bare feet.
- Work on a non-slip mat or floor. Especially in the winter, the floor should not be too cold.
- Fold blankets neatly when preparing to use them, as any creases will disturb your practice.
- Remove hard contact lenses.
- Seek advice if you experience difficulties in practice. Your

difficulty may be a common one, and there is likely to be a solution. In the meantime, avoid straining.

Level

The practice of postures and pranayama will vary according to the level and experience of the student. The basic poses should be practiced on a regular basis and should never be forgotten. One method is to vary the type of postures done each day, for instance, standing poses one day and sitting poses the next. Always include inverted poses. Beginners should concentrate more on standing poses.

Individual Needs

In home practice you have to be sensitive to your own needs and to be aware which postures are helpful in different circumstances. For example, standing poses are invigorating, whereas forward bends are calming.

This is one approach to practice. The other is to discipline yourself to do a particular programme irrespective of personal inclination. The first approach makes you sensitive and the second develops will-power. Both need to be learnt.

If there is a health problem for which a certain group of postures are prescribed, then this particular programme should be adhered to.

Structure

Yoga practice should have structure. A basic guide is to start with simple poses or those which allow the body to stretch; then to continue with the main group or groups of postures selected for that day, and to end with relaxing poses that allow the work done to be assimilated by the body.

Self-discipline

Practising at home requires and develops self-discipline and an independent understanding of the postures. It is a good idea to remember some of the postures and the instructions given. The

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building up of correct habits will give a firm foundation in yoga, leading to confidence in practice and greater knowledge.

Repetition of Postures

It is usual to repeat some of the postures when practicing, such as standing poses, sitting poses and twists, so long as this does not cause fatigue. However, do not repeat the inverted postures and recuperative positions.

Timings in the Postures

Guidance is given in the Asana section for the timing of each posture. In the beginning do not stay long in the postures, until you become familiar and you gain stamina. Do not strain to hold a posture. Gradually increase the time spent in each so that the postures – as well as your health– improve.

Breathing in Postures

Do upward movements with an inhalation, downward movements with an exhalation. That is, start a movement at the beginning of an inhalation or exhalation, and conclude it at the end of the same breath if possible. Do not hold the breath in the postures.

Menstruation

Women should not do inverted poses during menstruation as these interfere with the natural outflow of blood. There is a whole range of postures which are suitable at this time.

2.5 Yogic Exercises — Prior instructions and Precautions

Now we will learn few yogic – exercises. But to learn yogic exercise we have to understand the instruction and precautions regarding them.

Given below are the time, place and situation related instruction. Read them and understand –

- Exercise should always be done on mattress, sheet or blanket

spread out on the floor.

- Place should be neat and clean, open and well-ventilated.
- Practice at normal temperature.
- If due to some reason you are not able to practice in the morning, then practice in the evening, 3-4 hours after lunch.
- Try to practise at appropriate time and place.
- According to weather conditions wear loose garments.
- One should practise everyday, but not on days when you have high fever, extreme pain or your mind is absolutely depressed.
- While practicing or after practicing if you experience physical pain, then do not do these exercises and do consult a yogic guru.
- Females should not practice during menstruation
- Initially exercise must be done under the supervision of a teacher.

2.6 Precautions Related to this System

Method to practice is given below. For practicing we should follow only this method.

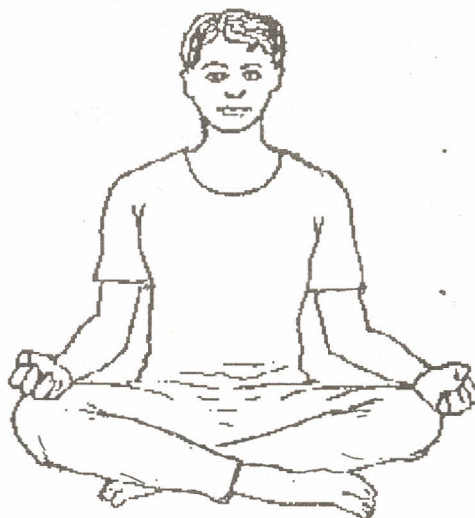
- Pray before and after practise.
- For lying in supine position, first lie down on left or right side and after that turn on your back. Similarly while getting up, turn on your left or right and with support of your hand, sit up. Do not lie or get up directly while lying on the back.
- Before doing exercise, it is important to be in a state of consciousness.
- It is important to relax after practise in all situations. After doing exercise in supine position, do shavasana, and after doing exercise while lying on stomach, do makarasana and normalize your breath.
- For exercises to be done while sitting, use the sukhasana, vajrasana or padmasana posture.

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- For exercises done while sitting, keep your spine, neck and head straight.
- All exercises are interrelated. Every exercise forms a base for the next exercise, therefore, practise should be done in the given series; like for climbing stairs we first climb the first step and then another.
- The practise done everyday and assigned is based on the capacity of normal person. According to one's capacity one can increase or decrease. Practise as per your capability, neither less nor more than the capacity.
- Do not try to do these exercises with force or jerks.

2.7 Yoga Asanas

1. **Sukhasana** – This asana is one of the classic meditative pose which help to straighten the spine, slow down metabolism and still the mind.



Sukhasana

2. **Vajraasana** – This asana resembles a thunderbolt, the weapon of Indra, King of the Hindu Gods. It makes the body strong. It should be performed for 5 minutes after taking meal as it helps to digest the food. This asana can be used for pranayama and

mediation. You can stay in this position as long as you are comfortable.



Vajrasana

3. **Padmasana** – This looks like a lotus. The lotus is a powerful symbol in Indian spirituality, a pure and beautiful flower floating on the water with its roots in the mud beneath, and is beneficial for ladies. It should be practiced at least 15 minutes daily.

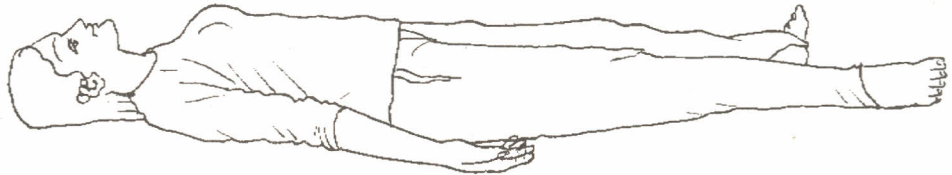


Padmasana

4. **Savasana** – Lying full length on the back on the ground like a corpse is called Savasana. This removes tiredness caused by the other asanas and brings calmness of mind. This asana is very beneficial for a tired body. It relaxes the mind and body. It should be attempted atleast for 10 to 15 minutes for full benefits.

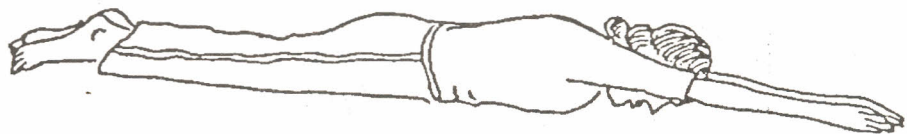
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Savasana would be an essential end to asanas. Most of us, of course, don't have ideally balanced, strong or supple bodies and we need to rest physically at the end of our practice.



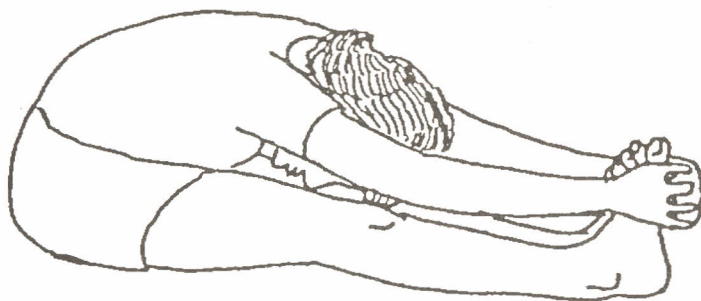
Shavasana

5. **Makarasana** – This resembles the makar (crocodile). This asana is very good for the stomach. It refreshes the body and keeps the mind cool.



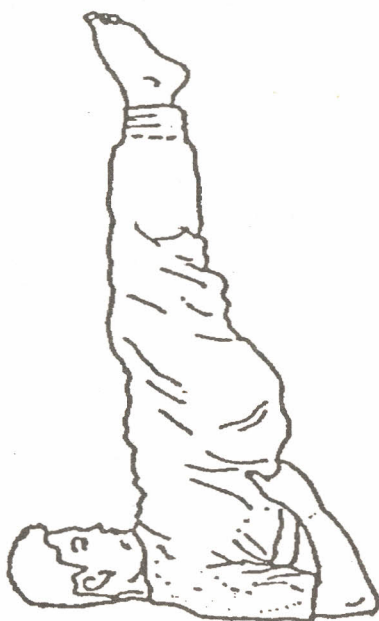
Makarasana

6. **Paschimottanasans** – This asana stretches the whole of the back of the body from the heels to the head. If you suffer from lower back pain or a slipped disc you should not attempt it. This increase the blood circulation. This is a cure for many ailments. It keeps the mind cool.



Paschimottanasana

7. **Sarvangasana** – This has many benefits if it is practiced daily. It cleans your mind and reduces anxiety. It is also useful in relieving constipation and headaches. It has a very good effect on all parts of the body.



Sarvangasana

8. **Halasana** – Hala means plough. It bends and stretches each part of the body. It is an excellent restorative for exhaustion brought on by physical fatigue and stress of the day.

A Sarvangasana and Halasana are practiced after each other

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then they form a balanced sequence as they have complementary effects.



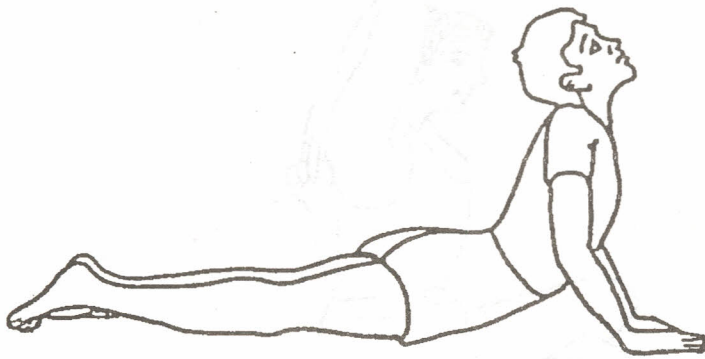
Halasana

9. **Salabhasana** – It helps in broadening chest. It is very good for the shoulders and stomach. This helps in curing constipation. This asana is particularly good for females.



Salabhasana

10. **Bhujangasana** – This asana resembles a snake with its head up and about to strike. This requires flexibility and strength in the lower back. This helps in curing constipation, indigestion, etc. It gives a glow and a beauty to the body.

**Bhujangasana**

11. **Dhanurasana** – This resembles the bow. This pose has the same energy and tension that is felt in the archer's bow which bends and he draws the string back. The spine is fully and evenly stretched between the legs and arms which have to work with equal strength. It is also like the graceful shape of a bridge, the arms and legs being the four pillars supporting the structure. This asana makes the body soft and flexible. It is good for the eyes also. This asana helps in reducing fat from the stomach and hips.

**Dhanurasana**

12. **Gomukhasana** – This asana resembles the face of cow and that is why it is called Gomukh Asana. This gives strength to the waist, knees and feet also cures ailments related to lungs and it is very good for asthmatic patients.



Gomukhasana

We are what we eat. This statement is true in more sense than one. Food is of course necessary for our physical well-being. But as well as this also has suitable affect on our minds, since the essence of food forms the mind. A natural diet or a pure or "Sattvic" one is based on fresh, light, nutritional food such as fruit, grains and vegetables. It keeps the body lean and the mind clear and sharp, making it most suitable for the practice of yoga. Full of prana, a pure and moderated diet is the best possible guarantee of physical and mental health, bringing harmony and vitality to both body and mind.

The yogic way of eating is quite simply the most natural. The sun, air, soil and water combine to produce the fruits of the earth – vegetables, fruit, legumes, nuts and seeds.

2.8 A Well – Balanced Diet

A diet that is properly balanced not only provides the correct amount of essential nutrients, but matches the needs of the individual as well, both in nutritional requirements and in food preferences and eating habits. It is far from being a strict, monotonous regimen consisting of nothing apart from 'healthy' foods.

The Major Nutrients

1. Protein — Proteins are extremely important for building the body.
2. Carbohydrates — Both for growth and building of the body and

its repair. Carbohydrates generally form the bulk of our diets.

3. Fats — Fats contain carbon, hydrogen and oxygen and provide the most concentrated form of energy.
4. Fibre
5. Minerals
 - (a) Calcium
 - (b) Iron
 - (c) Other essential minerals – Iodine, Phosphorus, Copper, Cobalt, Zinc, Manganese and Magnesium.
6. Vitamins
 - (a) Vitamin A – Fish liver oil, milk, cream, butter and egg yolks.
 - (b) Vitamin B – Yeast, wheat germ, yoghurt, rice, banana, milk, chicken.
 - (c) Vitamin C – Fresh fruits and vegetables, oranges, lemon, black currant, tomatoes, watercress, and human milk.
 - (d) Vitamin D – Fish liver oil, egg, milk, butter, sunlight and orange peel.
 - (e) Other Vitamins – E and K, wheat, germ oil and the green leaves of lettuce, green peanuts, spinach and cabbage.

The body's major need is for energy, and normally we meet this need by eating a mixture of proteins, fats and carbohydrates.

Great efforts have been made to work out exact figures for the nutritional needs of the so-called 'average' person. However, it is now becoming increasingly clear that such figures are accurate only when applied to large groups of people for when an average figure is probably fairly representative, and that individual needs can vary above and below these averages.

We have to adapt to different diets without detriment to our health. The first principle is to eat as wide variety of foods as possible, because this will ensure that any nutritional deficiency of one particular food will be cancelled out by the relative excesses of others. Remember

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that no single food can provide completely adequate nutrition. The second principle is embodied in the old saying 'all things in moderation'.

Although we tend to think of many foods in terms of 'good' or 'bad', these labels can be misleading. For example, a 'good' food such as milk if drunk in excess would effectively become 'bad', while 'bad' foods such as those containing high levels of sugar or fat, are harmless, or even beneficial, when eaten in small quantities.

| <i>Your 24 hours food intake</i> | <i>Non-veg.</i> | <i>Veg.</i> |
|---|------------------------|--------------------|
| Egg | 1 | — |
| Milk | 250 gms | 500 gms |
| Meat, chicken, Fish, | 200 gms | — |
| Cereals | 300 gms | 300 gms |
| Pulses | 50 gms | 50 gms |
| Vegetable | 50 gms | 100 gms |
| Root vegetable (potato and Arbi) | 25 gms | 25 gms |
| Cooking Fat | 15 gms | 15 gms |
| Fruit | 1 (100 gms) | 1 (100 gms) |

Food to be avoided—

1. All fried food, e.g. puri, paratha, mathari, samosa etc.
2. Sweets, sugar, gum candy, glucose, ice cream, pastries, cake, jam-jelly, chocolate, squash etc.
3. All alcoholic drinks and cold drinks

Foods to be eaten or recommended :

Raw vegetables, carrots, tomato, onion, lettuce, cucumber, salads nuts and fruits

Plain clear soup, Lemon juice and soda etc.

Sample Menu

| Break fast | Lunch | 4.00 P.M. | Dinner |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|
| Porridge | Roti-Rice | Tea | Soup, Roti, Rice |
| Egg | Lentil | | Meat/Fish, Paneer |
| Bread one toast | Vegetable | | Rajmah |
| Milk or tea | Curd | | Lentil |
| | Salad | | Vegetable |
| | | | Salad |

Intext Question 2.2

1. State whether following statements are True or False.
 - (a) Yoga must be practised wearing loose fitting clothes and barefeet.
 - (b) Exercise need not to be done in series.
 - (c) Vajra Asana help to straighten the spine.
 - (d) Dhanurasana resembles the bow.
 - (e) Carbohydrates and fats provide energy.
 - (f) Minerals and Vitamins are not important for the healthy living.

2.9 Light Yogic Exercises**1. Neck and Shoulders**

Many people hold tension in their necks and shoulders, leading to stiffness, bad posture and to tension headaches. Repeating these five exercises eases tension, increases flexibility and tones the muscles.

- (a) Neck Rolls
 - (i) Head back: forward
 - (ii) Face far right: far left

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(iii) Head forward, chin to chest: right ear to right shoulders: back: left ear to left shoulder: then opposite.

(b) Shoulder Lifts

(i) Right shoulder up: down, left shoulder up: down

(ii) Both shoulders up : both shoulders down

2. Eye Exercises

Like any other muscles, the eye muscles and exercise if they are to be healthy and strong,

(a) Eye Exercises

(i) Look up: down

(ii) Look far right: far left

(iii) Look to right: bottom, left

(iv) Look up, then circle round clockwise: then anticlockwise.

3. Palming : Rub your palms together vigorously until they feel warm. Now cup you hands closed eyes, without pressing. The heat and darkness relaxes your eyes.

4. Standing with your feet together, then inhale and raise your arms above your head. Lift your head up, making yourself as tall as possible, so as to lengthen the spine.

5. Stand with your feet well apart (about 3- feet). Point your left foot to the left, and your right foot slightly to the left. Stretch your left arm out at shoulder level and bring the right arm straight up, against your right ear. Now inhale.

6. As you exhale, bend to the left and slightly forward to bypass your ribs. Slide your left hand down your left leg and hold on the lowest part you can reach. Look out at your right hand. Take several full breaths in this position before releasing it. Repeat, bending to the right.

2.10 Body Massage

Massage is one of the easiest ways of attaining and maintaining good health and something we all do naturally: It is a healing instinct, innate in us all, to rub an aching shoulder or stroke a furrowed brow. Headaches, aches and pains, insomnia, tension and stress can all be alleviated with one simple instrument - our hands/vibrator.

History of Massage

Massage probably goes as far back in history as the existence of man. It is probably the oldest form of medical treatment, and has been used throughout history by all cultures. It was called an atripsis by the Greek physician, Hippocrates and referred to tripsis, friction, manipulation, rubbing or shampooing by other writers. Our use of the word massage is relatively new, and probably derives from the Arabic word "masah" which means to stroke with the hand.

Ancient Chinese, Indian and Egyptian manuscripts refer to the use of massage to prevent and cure diseases and to heal injuries. The earliest mention of massage appears in a Chinese book dating about 2700 B.C.

Massage has always been greatly valued in India, and practically everyone you meet here knows how to massage. Mothers massage their babies, and later children are taught to do the same for their parents. Massage is incorporated in Ayurvedic treatment - an Indian system of medicine dating back to 1800 B.C. with herbs, spices and aromatic oils being rubbed into the skin.

Today once again, the therapeutic value of massage is being recognized. It is regaining its rightful place in health care, as a complement to other medical treatment, and as a means of helping us all to maintain positive health.

2.11 Giving a Massage

Back Massage : A good back massage enhances the well being of the whole body.

1. **Stroking :** Start with your hands at the lower back, your thumbs

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on either side of the spine and your fingers pointing towards the head. With relaxed hands, stroke firmly up the back, lean out your hands using your body weight to apply pressure. This movement can be given on the neck and shoulders and buttocks.

2. **Kneading** : It is an extremely versatile movement. When done rhythmically, it can have a tremendously soothing effect.

Turn to face across the body and with your hands facing each other take a handful of flesh with alternate hands. Start at the hips and work up the sides of the body, continue kneading the neck muscles and bones of the neck. Over the shoulders and up the neck to the bone of the skull.

3. **Circle Stroking** : Place both hands on the right side of the back, one a little higher than the other. Slide the upper hand down the side in a large curve, and the lower up on the spine continue stroking in this manner.

4. **Pressure** : You can relax the small muscles on either side of the spine with a series of firm pressures. Start at the lower back, with your thumbs on either side of the spine. Press firmly, then release and repeat a little further up. Apply this pressures around the body triangle at the bone of the spine.

Finish off back massage by working on the main part of it.

5. **Cradling** : With relaxed hands facing each other, do some open handed kneading on the lower back. Do not grasp and squeeze the flesh, simply away your hands back and forth in a deep penetrating stroke.

6. **Criss crossing** : Put one hand on each side of the waist, with the fingers of both hands facing away from you. Pull your hands firmly up the sides of the body slide them up and part each other and down the other side.

7. **Pummelling** : Make loose fists with your hands and pummel all over the back. Start on the buttocks and move up the back, avoiding the kidney area.

Leg Massage : When massaging the legs press very lightly over the bony areas. Ask your patron to lie on her back.

Stroking : Cup your hands over the ankle and stroke up the front and side of the leg. Slide down to the ankle.

The following movements can also be used while massaging the leg—kneading —The calf and the thighs, Criss Crossing — Calf, Thighs, Thumb — On the knee, Criss –Crossing, Pummelling and Skin Rolling.

ARM Massage : The techniques are almost exactly the same as those used on legs.

Stroking : Stroke firmly up the arm with your hands slightly cupped so that the pressure is deep on the muscle but light over the bones. When you reach the top of the arm, open your hands out and stroke round the shoulder.

The following movements can be employed while massaging the arm— Kneading, Elbow Massage, etc.

Abdomen Massage : Place a pillow under your patron's knee to help relax the back and the stomach muscles. One can massage the stomach by giving.

1. **Stroking** : Stroke slowly up to the ribs, pull your hands out to the sides and glide them down circling the navel.
2. **Kneading** : Knead the whole area, starting with the hip on the far side of the body, alternately squeeze and release the flesh.

Chest and Neck Massage : Massage can help to stretch and relax the chest muscles, thus relieve aching in the upper back and neck. Put a small cushion or a thick folded blanket under your patron's head so that her neck is perfectly relaxed. You can manage this area by

1. **Stroking** : Stroke down the chest to the breast.
2. **Knuckling** : Make your hands into fists and ripple your fingers round to make small circular movements with your knuckles.
3. **Kneading** : Knead the fleshy area in front of the armpit.

2.12 What have you learnt

In this lesson you have learnt

- Good and appropriate posture
- Meaning, basics and advantages of yoga, precautions and prior information while undertaking yoga.

Notes

- Some common and popular yoga Asans and their benefits.
- Balanced diet
- Light Yogic exercises and massage.

2.13 Terminal Questions

1. How does yoga help us?
2. List some of the precautions to be taken in practising yoga.
3. What are the important nutrients of balanced diet?
4. Explain some eye exercises.

2.14 Answers to Intext Questions

2.1

1. (a) T (b) F (c) T (d) F
2. (d)
3. (a)

2.2

1. (a) T
(b) F
(c) F
(d) T
(e) T
(f) F